

# TONGE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



Wyvern Heritage  
and Landscape



Character Appraisal and Management Plan  
for Tonge Conservation Area

[Consultation Draft – October 2020](#)[Adoption Version – April 2021](#)

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## FORWARD

“Historic buildings and places add to the quality of people’s lives and help to create a sense of place that we all identify with.

As a community and as a local authority, we have a responsibility to safeguard our historic assets for future generations and to make sure that they are not compromised by unsympathetic alterations or poor quality developments. Conservation area designation and subsequent management is one way in which this can be achieved.

Conservation areas are not intended to halt progress or to prevent change. Rather, they give the local community and the Borough Council the means to positively manage change and to protect what is special about the area from being harmed or lost altogether.

Swale Borough is fortunate in having such a rich and varied mix of built and natural heritage. The Borough Council wants to see it used positively as a catalyst to sustainable, sensitive regeneration and development, and to creating places where people want to live, work, and make the most of their leisure time. To that end, we have reviewed the Tonge Conservation Area and the results of that review are set out in this document, which the Borough Council is now seeking constructive feedback on.

This is the second of a series of conservation area reviews which the Borough Council is committed to undertaking, following the adoption of the Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 - 2032, earlier this year.”



Councillor Mike Baldock,  
Cabinet Member for Planning and  
Swale Borough Council Heritage  
Champion

Mike Baldock

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**Note: Appraisal maps to be altered to show public right of way that cuts across the private area of land east of Becket Spring which was the former informal 'Tonge Country Park'**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Tonge Conservation Area

**Tonge Conservation Area** was first designated on 14.07.1987. The boundary of the Conservation Area was reviewed, and the boundary amended, and a summary Conservation Area Character Appraisal prepared on 27.02.2003.

It lies approximately 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) east of Sittingbourne town centre and close to the southern edge of the North Kent marshes. The small settlement is comprised of a small group of buildings clustered alongside a mill pond formed at the northern end of a shallow valley leading to the marshes.

### 1.2 The Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A Conservation Area is defined as *“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”* (s.69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It is the responsibility of individual Local Planning Authorities to designate and review Conservation Areas using

local criteria to determine and assess their special qualities and local distinctiveness.

The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect historic places and to assist in positively managing change, so that their significance is safeguarded and sustained. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic layout, use of characteristic or local materials, style, or landscaping. In accordance with the four types of heritage values set out in the core Historic England guidance document (Conservation Principles: Policies & Guidance), communal values – which are those derived from the meaning of a place for people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory – will be of particular relevance to this Conservation Area given the linkages between place names and remnants of bygone uses in the wider context of historical growth and development. Above all however, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are of special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation Areas provide for additional Controls over owners and landowners activities.

**Conservation Area status provides extra protection in the following ways:**

- Local planning authorities have control over most demolition of buildings.
- Local authorities have extra control over householder development.
- Special provision is made to protect trees.
- When assessing planning applications, the Local Planning Authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- Policies in the Local Development Plan positively encourage development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

### 1.3 The Purpose and Status of this Character Appraisal

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is a written record and assessment of the special architectural or historic interest which gives rise to the character and appearance of a place. The appraisal is a factual and

objective analysis which seeks to identify the distinctiveness of a place by defining the attributes that contribute to its special character. **It should be noted, however, that the appraisal cannot be all-inclusive, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.**

The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area as a whole and the effect of any impacts which bear negatively on its significance. In some cases, significance may only be fully identified at such time as a feature or a building is subject to the rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

Additionally, an appraisal can include management proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of an area by means of policies, action points, design guidance and site-specific design statements where appropriate. The objective of this plan would be to reinforce the positive character of a historic area as well as avoiding, minimising, and mitigating negative impacts identified as affecting the area.

An appraisal serves as a basis for both the formulation and evaluation of Development Plan policies, as a material consideration in the making of development management decisions by the Local Planning Authority, and

by the Planning Inspectorate in determining planning appeals. It can also heighten awareness of the special character of the place to help inform local Parish Councils in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, and individuals in design choices.

This Character Appraisal is supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan. It has been prepared in the context of the relevant national legislation and national and local planning policy and guidance provided by central government, Historic England, and the Borough Council itself, all of which are set out in Appendix 3 of this document.

The statutory duty of local planning authorities with regards to conservation areas are to provide the necessary background to, and framework for, a review of the Conservation Area boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area (Section 72).

In light of the way that the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy documents (such as this one) are developed and prepared in the above stated context and are also subject

to public scrutiny via a statutory public consultation period of a minimum of 21 days, following formal adoption by the Local Planning Authority, they then have sufficient weight or gravitas to form a significant material consideration in the development management process.

## 2.0. TONGE CONSERVATION AREA

### 2.1 Summary of Significance and special interest

- Surviving earthworks of Tonge Castle, and fortified manor - the earthwork and its environs have high potential for Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology.
- Archaeological potential for prehistoric and Roman activity in the landscape and perhaps focused on the spring.
- The spring and stream have paleo-environmental potential.
- Association with legend of Vortigern, Hengist and Horsa.
- Association between the spring, the cult of Thomas Becket and grounds of former leper hospital.
- The historic mills include rare and attractive examples of Kentish vernacular industrial architecture and history.
- History of milling dating from 1086 to the 20<sup>th</sup> century utilising wind, water, and steam power.
- The stream and millpond and their relationship to the castle and mills.
- Area of ~~informal recreation and~~ varied natural habitat to the south of the millpond.

**[Map1 current conservation area boundary and additions; Listed Buildings]**

### 2.2 Geographic character and Historical Development

The Conservation Area is located within a historic corridor for communication and settlement once associated with orchards and isolated farmsteads within a belt of arable land. It straddles the historic parish boundary of Tonge and Bapchild.

**[Map 2 Conservation Area Location and wider context]**

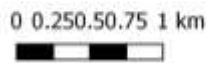
**[Map 3 Archaeological Context]**

#### **Prehistoric and Roman Context**

Swale as a whole is noted for its concentration of Palaeolithic evidence. The south-east research framework has undertaken an in-depth appraisal of the early Palaeolithic resource (Woban-Smith et al 2010 revised 2019), and Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Resource (Pope et.al. 2011 last revised 2019). 'Tonge Country Park' text on p7/9 maps to be removed.



**Map 1: Conservation Area boundary with proposed additions and Listed Buildings**

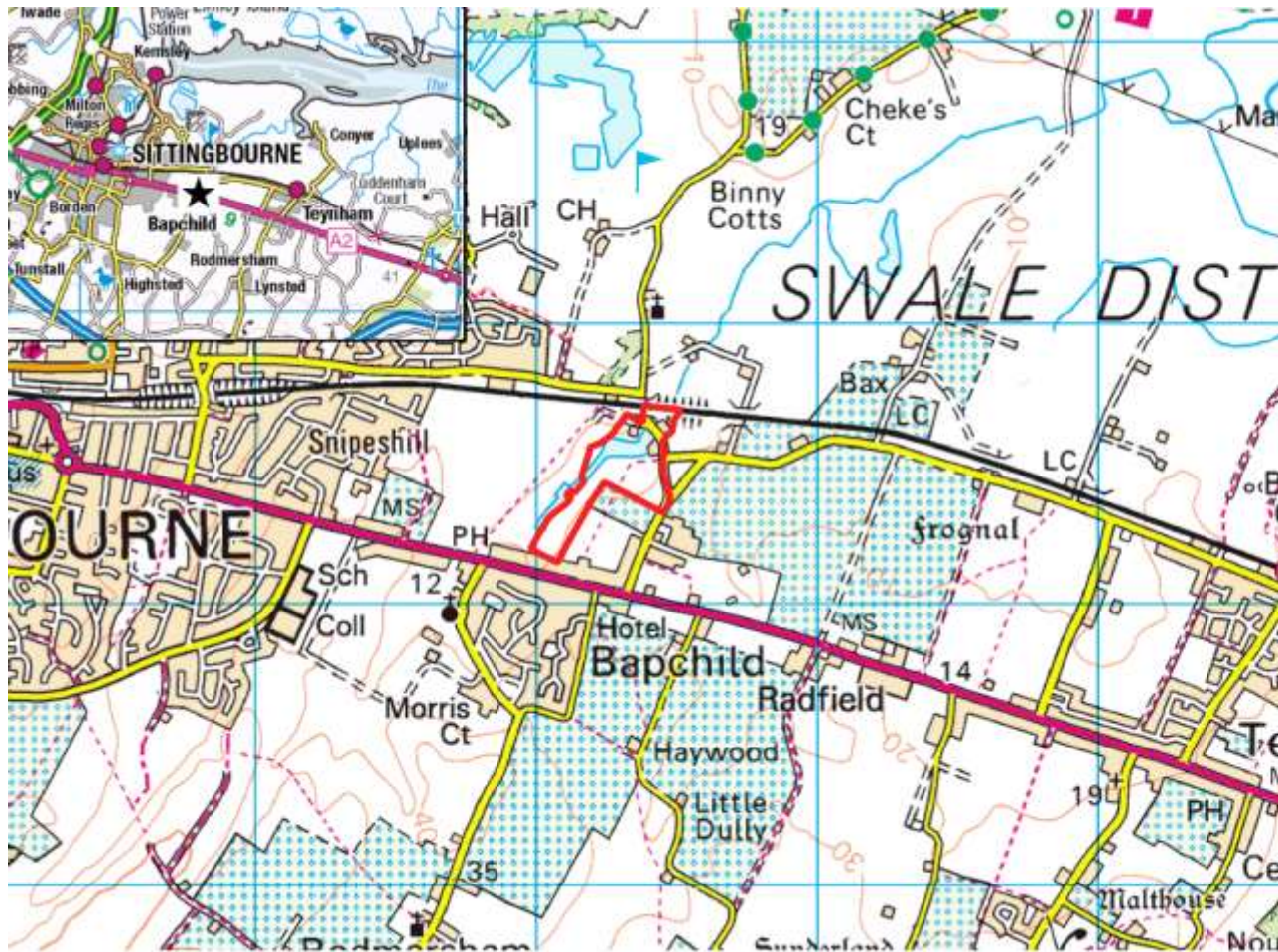


**Legend**

- ▭ Tonge Conservation Area
- ▭ Proposed boundary extension(s)
- ◆ Listed Buildings

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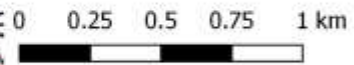




Legend

★ Location [Inset Map]

□ Conservation Area



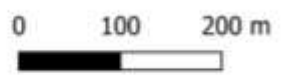
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**Map 2: Conservation Area location and wider context**



**Legend**

- Tonge Current CA Boundary
- Tonge Proposed Extension
- Tonge Castle Earthworks
- Archaeology Point**
- ◆ Iron Age/Roman
- ◆ Medieval
- ◆ Post Medieval
- ◆ Unknown
- Line of Roman Road



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**Map 3: Archaeological Context**

The resource for the early Palaeolithic is formed of areas where evidence has been recovered from natural geological deposits, most often lithics. These locations can also be sources of related biological and palaeo-environmental information. Some sites may represent single artefacts from a geological deposit that gathered material from a wide area whilst forming; perhaps including derived material from pre-existing older deposits. Others may contain dense accumulations of Palaeolithic material gently buried by steady accumulation of fine sediments, which have remained undisturbed since their burial. Residual Clay-with-flints deposits cap the high ground of the Chalk all around the Wealden Basin; and in some places, particularly north-east Kent, loessic deposits (generally mapped as 'brickearth') are also present. Northern and southern chalk dip-slopes are dissected by numerous dry valleys, filled with varying thicknesses of slope wash, gravel and colluvial brickearth.

There are within the North Downs dip slope in the region of Sittingbourne four key types of deposit (Woban Smith et al 2010 ibid 25):

- Moderately common lower-level post-Anglian fluvial deposits
- Residual deposits of clay-with-flint
- Abundant Coombe/Head deposits
- Head/solifluction gravel

Bapchild is associated with abundant Coombe/Head deposits. In general, these colluvial deposits occur at the base of slopes, on valley-sides, in dry valleys and in hollows in the landscape. Many outcrops are too minor to be represented in geological mapping, but these unmapped deposits also have great potential for important remains. In the area of Sittingbourne, the Coombe/Head deposits are associated with Levalloisian material relating to the lower/middle Palaeolithic. The area between Rainham and Sittingbourne is rich in Head/Gravel outcrops where it is likely that many outcrops remain unrecorded. The recorded outcrops relate to Pleistocene fluvial drainage north into the Swale (e.g. in the Ham Green, Upchurch, and Bobbing areas). Here also there is the potential for the recovery of lithics as was the case with finds in Bapchild in 1929. The same Head deposits in river valley deposits can be resources of Late Pleistocene palaeo-environmental deposits (Pope et al 2011: 6).

Evidence of Mesolithic activity has been found in the Tonge/Bapchild area. An occupation site was found in the late 1940s, it comprised lithics associated with a shell mound. Its location was cited as Tonge Hill Bapchild.

Neolithic flint scatters are also known across the wider landscape.

The recovery of prehistoric waterlogged deposits including boats is recorded associated with the heads of streams

The landscape was settled by the middle Bronze Age. A middle Bronze Age farmstead is known to the southwest adjacent to Pantenay Road. There is also a ring ditch and enclosure to the southwest of Scraps Hill Cottages which may also have Bronze Age origins.

It is possible that there was an Iron Age settlement based in the Bapchild – Tonge locality and centred on the spring although archaeological evidence is not available (Bannister 1995: 19). One shard of La Tene ware was recovered from the Tonge Castle excavations.

With the invasion of the Romans after AD43 it is widely accepted that a client kingdom was rapidly established which was probably absorbed into the Roman province by the end of the 1st century AD. The Watling Street quickly became a focus of Roman activity in the landscape focusing on the creeks and fleets which ran northwards down towards the Swale, and agricultural exploitation of the chalk dip slope to the south. Roman activity in the landscape has influenced the present day pattern of settlement and tracks/roads in the parishes. Watling Street, the main

Roman Road between London and Canterbury via Rochester forms the southern setting of the Conservation Area. Watling Street as it became known from the Roman period linked London with the channel ports of Dover and Richborough. The Romans paved the route and it continued to be an important transport corridor for subsequent activity, with many sites established alongside it in Roman, Saxon, mediaeval and later periods.

Roman evidence locally relates to Roman burial sites associated with the south side of Watling Street to the west of Bapchild. Roman field boundaries are also known to the east including to the immediate east of the Conservation Area at Hempstead Lane Farm.

*TIMELINE OF KEY HISTORIC DATES AND EVENTS (Based on Bannister, N 1995 Tonge Mill Historic Landscape Survey)*

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup> Century AD</i>	<i>Tonge and Bapchild parish part of a Jutish estate centred on Milton</i>
<i>AD 696</i>	<i>Bapchild site of important meeting between King Wihtred and the church.</i>
<i>AS 1086</i>	<i>Tonge Mill and church recorded in Domesday</i>
<i>C1100</i>	<i>Tonge Castle established</i>

DATE	EVENT
1181	<i>Leper Hospital of St James first recorded</i>
1381-82	<i>Edmund Mortimer died possessed of the toft of the Castle of Tong, together with the castle annexed to the said toft</i>
1424-51	<i>Richard Duke of York possessed the manor</i>
1471-72	<i>Manor in possession of the Duchess of York (manor house falls into disrepair)</i>
1542	<i>Tonge Mill granted to John Beke by Henry VIII</i>
1650s	<i>Manor of the castle and water corn mills in ownership of the Pordage Family</i>
1669-1784	<i>Manor and mill in possession of the Iles Family</i>
1759	<i>Medieval mill replaced by 18<sup>th</sup> century mill by Richard Hazard</i>
1837	<i>Large brick mill erected, and pond expanded.</i>
1840	<i>Mill and adjacent land belonged to Thomas Denne; windmill abandoned in favour of new water mill</i>
1866	<i>Steam power added with building of chimney and boiler.</i>
1879	<i>Mill purchased for £6550 (this included both the old and new mill, and surrounding land including cottages within Tonge Castle).</i>
1934	<i>Mill steam and water powered owned by Theodore Wicks</i>
1950	<i>Fire in New Mill, it is rebuilt without top floor.</i>

### **Brief overview of historic development of the parish from the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the present day**

Most archaeologists would now agree that the distinct cultural transitions witnessed during the 5th century were triggered by a substantial and sustained influx of Germanic migrants.

The parishes of Bapchild/Tonge has been identified as being part of a 5<sup>th</sup> century 'Jutish estate', which had its palace at Milton. It should be noted that notions that these cultural differences relate to monolithic ethnic groups of 'Jutes' and 'Saxons' have been subsequently revised. In Kent, the cultural diversity which comes to define the grave assemblages of the 6th and 7th centuries is already apparent in the first-generation cemeteries of the 5th century. The persistent 'Jutish' strand is but one of a multiplicity of influences (also drawing upon Saxon, Frisian and Frankish impulses). This reflects the fluid cultural geography of the Anglo-Saxon world and the role that sustained contacts with the continental homelands had in shaping an evolving Kentish identity.

The Milton estate was a royal *vill*, an estate centre where the royal *fyrd* (food-rent) was collected, whose long-term development was

intricately linked to the foundation of minster churches. Milton developed into fully-fledged or incipient urban centre during the Late Anglo-Saxon period. These core Anglo-Saxon lands subsequently passing to the crown and then William the Conqueror at the Norman conquest. Tonge and Bapchild churches are listed in the Domesday Monachorum as dependent on the church of Milton.

The Anglo-Saxon social system was based on farms and hamlets and became the basis for the Mediaeval pattern of settlement. Bapchild was an established settlement by the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Its name Bacca's Celde implies a pagan spring cult site which became Christianised. Landscape evidence suggests it predates the village of Tonge

**[Map Four: The 5<sup>th</sup> Century Anglo-Saxon estate centred on Milton]**

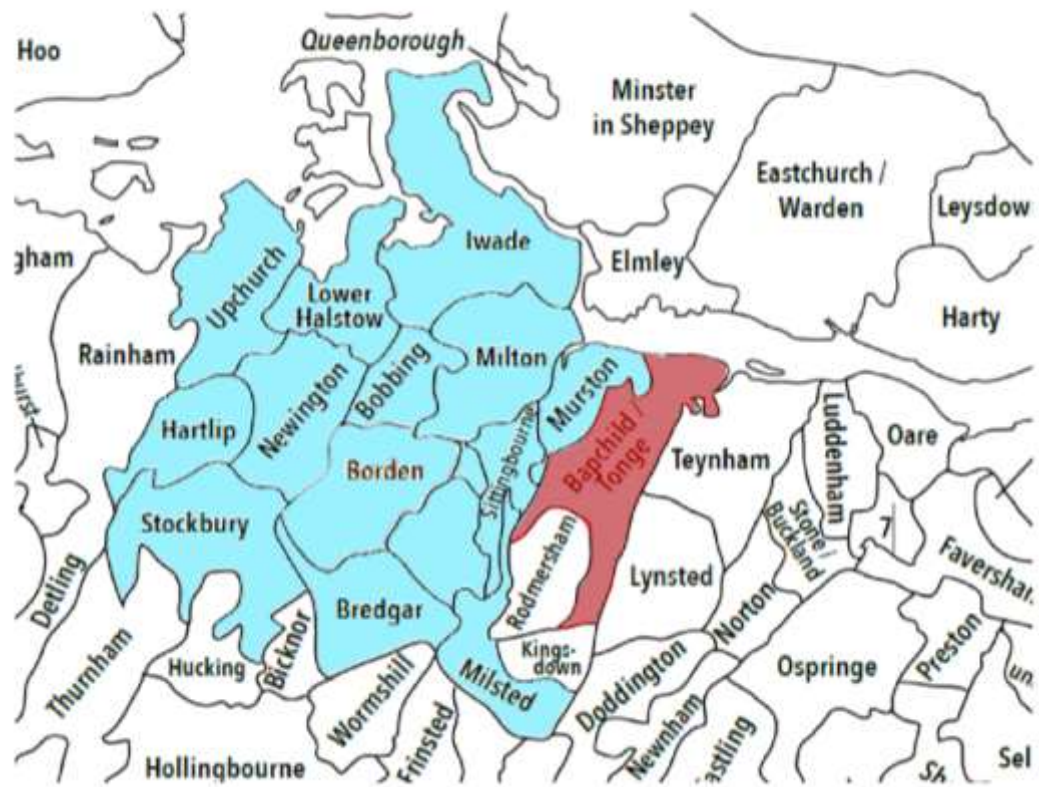
**Legend and Local Tradition associated with Tonge** Various historians and sources have suggested that the former Tonge Castle was the site at which the ancient King of the Britons – Vortigern (c. 425), made a pact with the Saxon leaders Hengist and Horsa to protect his kingdom against the Picts and the Scots, rewarding them for their services with a grant of land. Subsequently the Britons made war on the Saxon newcomers (first established in Kent) and four battles were fought, the

*last of which led to Vortigern's son Vortemir (the Saxon's leading opponent) being slain.*

*The story of Hengist and Vortigern has no archaeological evidence to support it. It is however likely that there was some form of fortified settlement at Tonge from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onward. Due to its strategic position on coastal lands and the ready supply of water from the springs at Bapchild.*



According to some specialist historians, there are a number of locations within the modern Swale Borough area that feature in the epic Old English Poem, Beowulf, notably Tonge and parts of the Isle of Sheppey.



**Map 4: The 5th Century Anglo-Saxon estate centred on Milton**

Tonge Village is recorded in Domesday as a Saxon Vill. The remains of Tonge Castle date from the 1100 at the time when the North coast was fortified by the Normans. There is the suggestion from the Domesday Book that a fortified Saxon manor was present on the site which then passed into Norman hands becoming a Motte and Bailey Castle. Archival evidence suggested that a mill was present at the same time as the castle and the pond may have formed part of the defences. The site lies on a strategic position between the Swale Estuary and the fertile land to the south. Excavations in 1932 and the mid-1960s reveals evidence for occupation between 1100 and 1400. It appears that the "castle" consisted of two enlarged hills, partly encircled by a deep moat. Only one mound was used for habitation - three building sites have now been revealed. Evidence of a Norman wooden building was found, which had been replaced by a substantial hall and associated buildings. The habitation therefore may have started as a Norman motte and bailey castle but developed into a fortified manor house and not a true castle. Occupation ceased during the late 13th century. The moat appears to belong to the late 13th or early 14th century

**Tonge Castle in context**

The castles, which survive in significant form in Kent, number about 30.

This is a relatively high density with one castle to about 30 square miles. They range from massive masonry castles to simple earthworks. Finally, there are the later mediaeval enclosure castles, which are principally

residential in function but may also have serious defences such as gatehouses.



The distribution of Kent's castles was

influenced by geography and strategic considerations. Of particular significance was the line of the Roman road from the harbour at Dover, through Canterbury, across the Medway at Rochester and on towards London; the major royal castles of Dover, Canterbury and Rochester lay along this vital communication. The majority of castles in Kent have their origins in earth and timber. The motte and bailey type are Allington, Binbury, Canterbury Dane John, Chilham, Coldred, Leeds, Newenden, Stowting, Tonbridge and Tonge. Many of Kent's castles seem to employ water defences.



The spring to the south of the Conservation Area is another important feature of the Mediaeval landscape which became associated with the cult of Thomas Becket.

Associated with the spring and lying just outside the southern boundary of the Conservation Area is the site of the Leper Hospital of St James at Puckleshall. Today this site is occupied by a row of terrace houses and their gardens on the north side of Watling Street. Their rear gardens open onto a raised platform above the stream which might have been associated with the hospital. In 1546 it consisted of a Chapel, house, barn stable and garden with land in Bapchild and Tonge. Another possible Mediaeval building is recorded in the Kent HER as being located to the west of the Spring known as St Thomas Hospital.

**The cult of Thomas Becket and the spring; and the leper hospital**

Watling Street is likely to have always been a busy route from the when it was first constructed, but in the mediaeval period, its degree of use, if it had ever in fact started to decline, increased again following the infamous murder of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. The brutal murder shocked the whole of Europe, threatened the stability of the Angevin empire, made the murder victim into one of the most celebrated saints in the Middle Ages, and established Canterbury as the centre of a pilgrimage cult that embraced the whole of the Latin west. The subsequent pilgrimage that developed in memory of Becket resulted in the increased development of inns along the Watling Street route (which passed through Canterbury on its way to Dover) and other developments including pilgrim hospitals.



Following Thomas Becket's death in 1170, the stream within the Conservation Area became known as Becket's Stream and for many years, it was believed to have healing powers. The spring head is still known as Thomas A Becket's Spring. A Mediaeval leper hospital was developed alongside the stream, and it is possible that the stream became a popular stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury.

Mediaeval hospitals were religious institutions, many were founded simply for the poor. They provided a home for those too handicapped or elderly to work - people who might otherwise have to beg in the streets if their families could not care for them. Other hospitals were hostels for pilgrims and other wayfarers. Leper Hospitals provided an infirmary for the segregation of Lepers away from the general population.

### **Mills at Tonge**

A mill has been associated with Tonge Castle since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The location of the water mills almost at the head of the stream flowing into Conyer Creek is ideal. It is suggested that the stream was navigable

almost to the springhead from the Roman period until the construction of the sluice at Tonge Level on Conyer Creek c.1846. It is possible that the current 18<sup>th</sup> century mill replaced the earlier Medieval Mill. There was also a windmill just north of the castle (shown on the 1820s map) which existed as late as 1834. A second large brick mill was erected in 1837 by Thomas Denne and the mill pond enlarged, a stream boiler and chimney were subsequently added. This started as a corn mill before becoming a provender mill. In 1950 the mill caught fire and was rebuilt without its top floor.

Tonge Pond has been a local recreation site for many years.

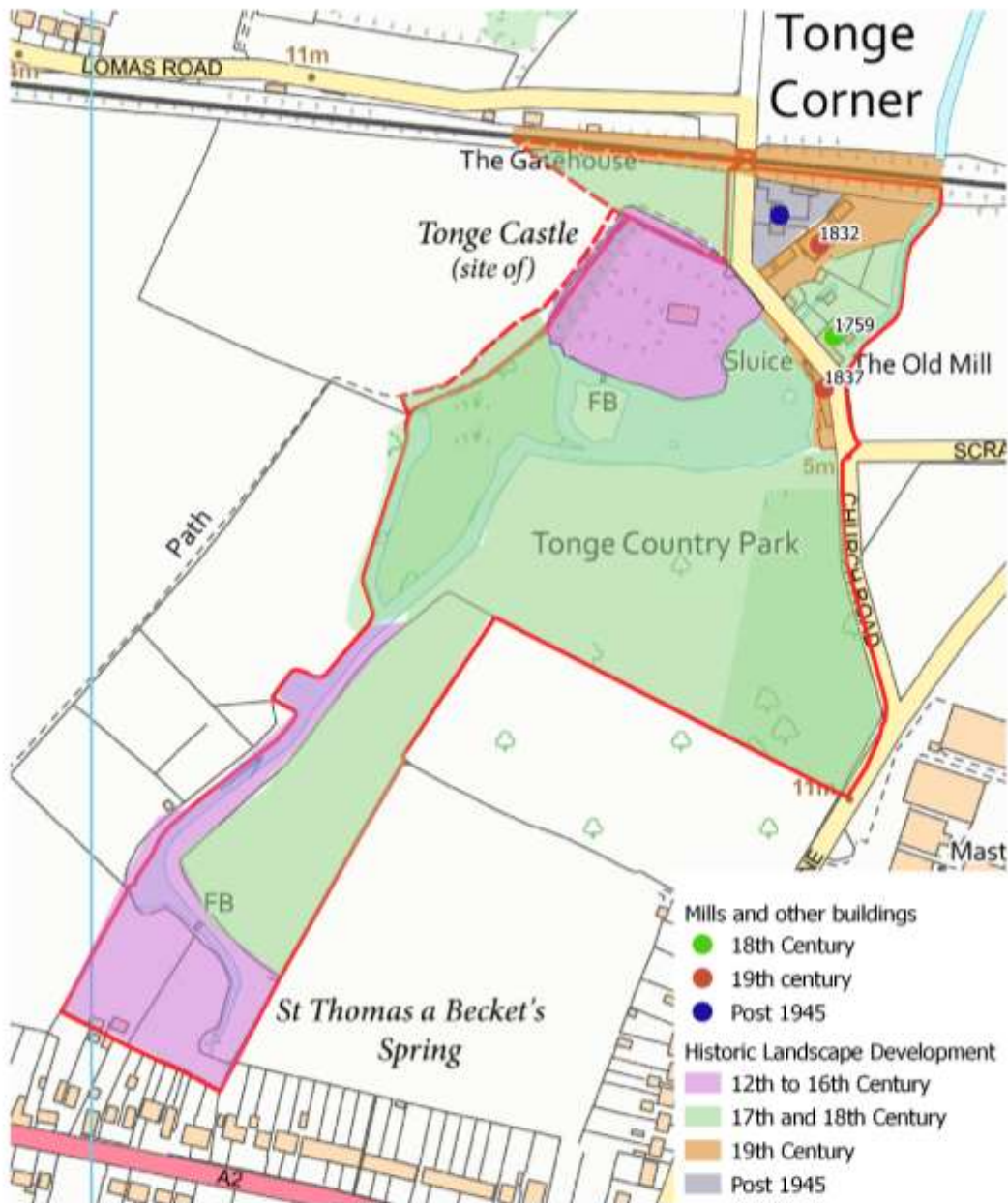
In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were watercress beds just upstream of the mill pond.

**[Map 5 Historical development – land and buildings]**

***Note Historical Development relates to evidence for past land uses not current land use or date of any surviving buildings***

**[Map 6 Historic Map sequence with modern aerial photograph]**

**[Tonge County Park text on p18 map to be deleted.](#)**



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**Modern Aerial Photograph 2016**



**1797 Ordnance Survey Drawing**



**Bapchild (1835) and Tonge (1836)  
Tithe Maps - amalgamated view**



**1897 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map**

### **Map 7: Historic Map Sequence with Modern Aerial Photograph**

Historic Mapping reproduced with permission of Kent Archives

### 2.3 Topography Geology and Landscape Setting

The Conservation Area lies at the head of a slight valley with the spring head at its apex to the south and the stream flowing northwards towards Conyer Creek. Tonge castle lies on an outlier of higher ground at Tonge Corner.



The Conservation Area is associated with the Thanet Formation - Sand, silt, and clay. This is a Sedimentary bedrock formed between 59.2 and 56 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. These are overlain by Alluvium - Clay, silt, sand and gravel formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

#### Landscape Setting

Natural England, with assistance from Historic England, has mapped and described the landscape character of England which has been divided into 159 National Character Areas. The Tonge Conservation Area lies within area 113. North Kent Plain [check].

Further valuable landscape character assessment work has been undertaken at the local level by the Borough Council resulting in the publication of the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (2011)

The Tonge Conservation Areas falls within the overarching Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area. The relevant LCT is Fruit Belt Landscape and the local Landscape Character Area is in number 42 Tunstall Farmlands.

Below is an extract from the relevant LCT descriptions detailing the most pertinent information. <https://www.swale.gov.uk/local-planning-guidance/>

Extract from **42. Tunstall Farmlands**

**Key Characteristics**

- Undulating, intimate, landscape composed of small hills and valleys.
- Complex geology of the fertile drift deposits, head gravel and London clay.
- Small-scale well managed network of orchards and occasional hop.
- fields. Elsewhere enlarged arable and grazing fields.
- Birthplace of commercial fruit growing at Osiers Farm.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows and shelterbelts.
- Tracks, lanes and historic buildings raised above adjacent areas, which is indicative of the area's susceptibility to flooding.
- Mixed traditional historic houses and farms. 20th century residential and commercial development.
- Main transport routes include the railway and A2.
- Important local landmark at Tonge Mill and pond.

**Landscape Description**

The topography of the area is quite unusual. Generally the area forms the northern part of the Lyn Valley. Within this valley the landscape is one of small hills and valleys. Springs commonly appear within these valleys and drain onto the marshes. The deep well drained loamy soils support a mixture of agricultural land uses. In the east fruit production is still the main function and the small-scale field pattern is strong. Further west the landscape has a more marginal exposed character and numerous orchards have been lost to arable production and sheep grazing. Generally this is an enclosed landscape. However, where fields have been enlarged and orchards lost, long views are present across

adjacent marshlands. The Sittingbourne to Faversham railway cuts across the landscape on an embankment, which somewhat isolates the areas to the immediate north and south.

Tonge Mill and its associated pond and stream are a popular local landmark and visitor destination, with the mill chimney and the English Elms around the pond visible in the wider landscape. The trees, spring, ponds and connecting stream are important in terms of their wildlife interest and the remains of Tonge Castle, to the rear of Tonge Mill, provide an important historic reference. To the south of the pond, the community woodland is forming a new landscape feature.

**Condition Moderate**

This is a landscape in moderate condition overall, although the landscape around the urban edges is often poor. It is a visually coherent area with a strong landscape pattern. In general the ecological integrity of the area is moderate. Orchards and associated boundary trees, the railway embankment and spring fed valleys are all important for biodiversity.

**Sensitivity Moderate**

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The rural landscape has retained many traditional agricultural functions, however modern farming practices and 19th and 20th century urbanisation have degraded the quality of localised areas.

## 2.4 Character Appraisal

### Summary

Tonge comprises a small, but fascinating, cluster of buildings set around an attractive mill pond. The long history of settlement here is of special interest, although there is a lot of further research which could be done (both archaeological and historical)

The stream, which continues to feed the pond, is of special historical importance as it provided one of the essential prerequisites for early habitation of the site and also the power for the mills.

The spring head is also of historic interest due to its association with Thomas Becket.

The buildings now present in Tonge include rare and attractive examples of Kentish vernacular industrial architecture, which nicely illustrate the use of locally-sourced building materials such as brick, tile and weatherboarding, and also in later work Welsh slate which had then become widely available. Also recorded in these structures is the historically important change from water to steam power.

The pond and its feeder stream are set within a relatively self-contained area of landscape with a range of habitats being present. The public access afforded to the area contributes to its appeal as a local amenity, although this is informal in nature.

The area's long standing history, the spring head, stream, unspoilt rural land to the east and the grouping of Kentish buildings in a picturesque situation alongside an attractive mill pond, together results in an area of special architectural, archaeological, and historic interest.

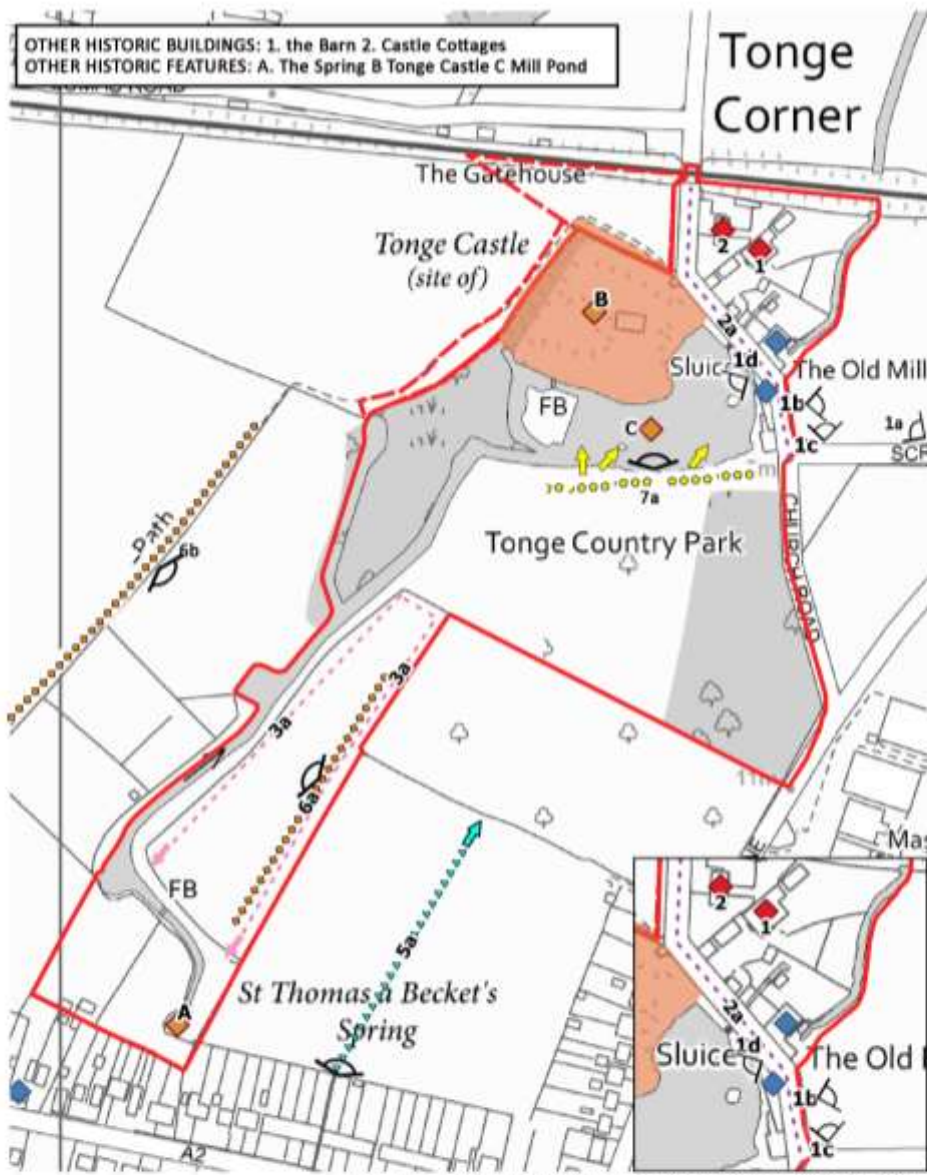
#### Key Positive Characteristics

- Tonge Castle earthworks.
- The spring head.
- The stream.
- The millpond.
- Land south of the millpond with a mix of habitats and informal recreational space.
- Two historic mill buildings with an interrelated history.
- Converted threshing barn associated with the mill.
- Mill chimney acting as a focal point in the landscape.
- Views across the pond to the mill and castle.
- Local views from within the vicinity of the mills.
- Views from the western setting of the Conservation Area.
- Informal semi-natural landscape which provides an appropriate setting to the historic mill buildings and in turn, also sustains an important ecological resource

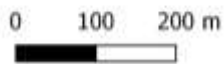
Tonge Country Park text on maps 7a/7b to be deleted



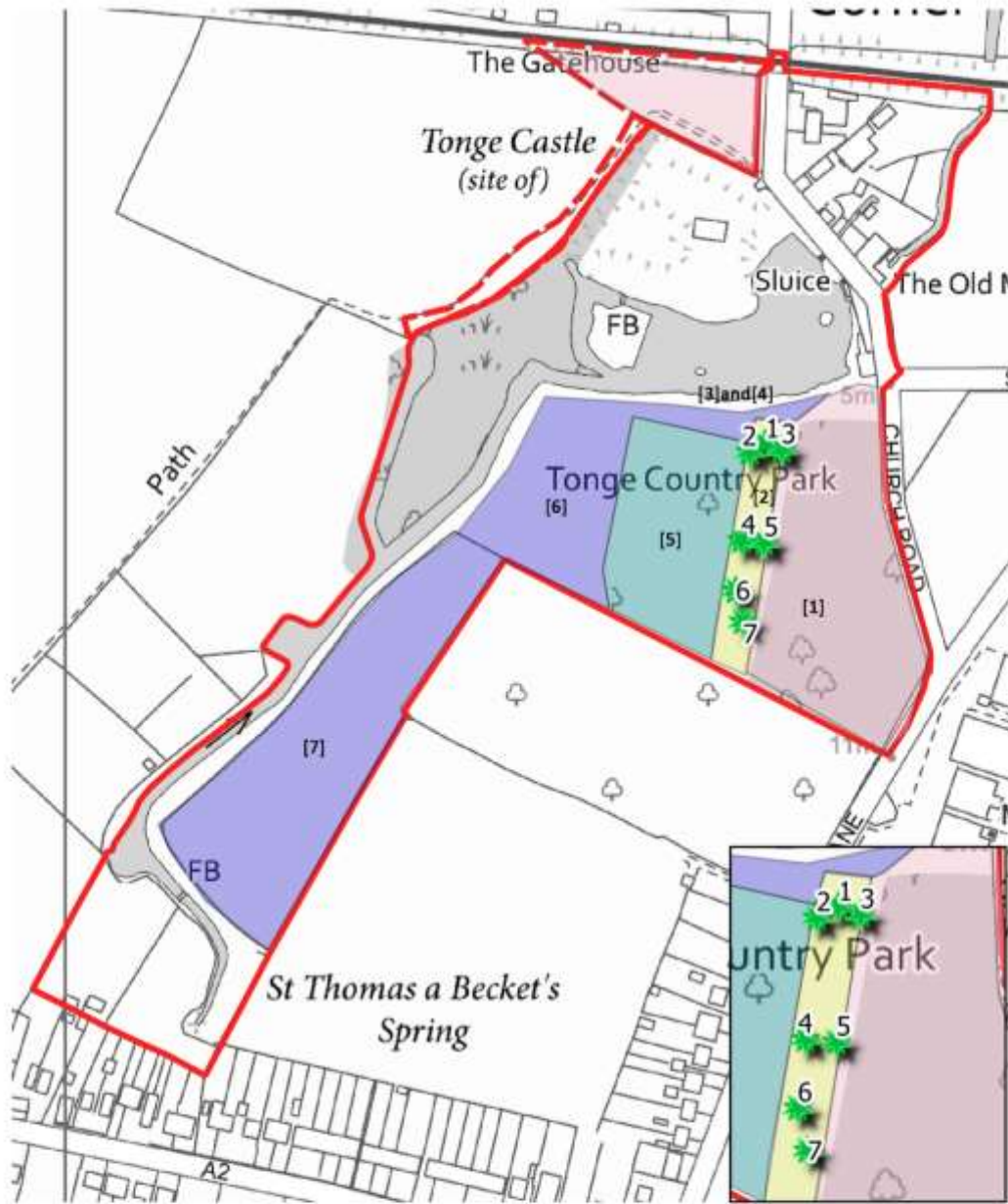




**Map 7a: Key Characteristics Historic Features and Views**



- Legend**
- Conservation Area and proposed extension
  - Views
  - 1 Fixed Views
  - 2 Dynamic views
  - 3 Dynamic views with focal point
  - 4 Panoramas
  - 5 Panoramas focal point
  - 6 Dynamic panorama
  - 7 Dynamic panorama with focal point
  - Historic Buildings
  - Other Historic features
  - Listed Buildings
  - Other Historic buildings



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**Map 7b: Key Characteristics  
Open Space and Trees**

0 50 100 150 200 m



**INFORMAL RECREATIONAL SPACE** [1] Native Woodland Planting [2] Area of Mown Grass  
[3]&[4] Views across pond [5] Traditional style orchard [6] Meadow and native woodland  
[7] Open meadow

**MEMORIAL OAKS (SEE INSET MAP)** 1. Jubilee Oak, Flanders Oak, Deville Oak, English Oak,  
Kentish Oak, Royal Air Force Oak, and Our Gracie

**Legend**

- key trees
- Conservation Area Boundary & Extension
- Open Space**
  - Formal
  - Informal
  - Other
  - Orchard

### **Spatial analysis – Archaeological Interest**

The spring head and spring may have been the focus of archaeological activity in the prehistoric and roman period and the landscape as a whole has good potential for recovering evidence of activity at this date.

Tonge Castle may be associated with earlier Iron Age activity.

The spring and stream have paleo-environmental potential.

Tonge Mill and its environs have been occupied since the early Mediaeval period, supported by evidence of the castle, fortified manor, and the continuity of milling from 1086 to the twentieth century. It therefore has high potential for Mediaeval and Post Mediaeval archaeology.

The castle itself has been altered and disturbed but there is the potential for undisturbed stratified archaeology to remain.

### **Spatial Analysis: Historic, Artistic and Architectural interest**

**[Map 7a Key Characteristics – Built Heritage and Views]**

**[Map 7b Key Characteristics – Open Space and Trees]**

### ***Tonge Castle***

This earthwork lies 10 m above sea level on the west side of a small south north valley. The surviving remains of Tonge ‘castle’ comprise earthworks standing some 7.5metres (25 feet) above sea level. A deep wide ditch, now dry, is present on the northeast and north-west sides which defines a rectangular central area. The south-western and south-eastern sides of this area are now bounded by a large pond, which occupies the southern portion of the original defence works. The pond is thought to be of late mediaeval date; it was later apparently deepened and enlarged sometime around the 1830s, which is believed to account for the disappearance of the ditch on the southern side. Alternatively, the castle may have always used the water as a defensive boundary. It consists of a very degraded and altered motte and bailey and later fortified manor. The site is now occupied by a bungalow built c1970s replacing 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages. The whole of the castle site is now a garden and tree planting now screen its ditch and banks on the northern side.

The Conservation Area boundary also includes a triangle of land to the north of Tonge Castle. This marks the former road access to the mill and

the castle and the site of the former windmill. Today it is an arable field

[note if boundary change accepted]

Windmill location maps (see last page of appendix iii) to be inserted here along with following supporting text: The location of the Windmill is shown on the OS Surveyors Map (dating to 1787: British Library) see Map B. This is located to the north of the site of the castle and south of the 19<sup>th</sup> century railway line, as shown on Map A (Source: 2016 KCC aerial photograph). Map C shows the 1787 map overlain over the modern aerial mapping confirming the location of this feature. The windmill was standing as late as 1834. The suggestion is that when the new water powered mill was built in 1837 by Thomas Denne, the windmill was abandoned (Bannister Report 1995: page 51). It is certainly not present on the 25 inch 1897 Ordnance Survey map. The tithe map identifies the field in which it sites as Mill Field.

### ***Thomas a Becket's Spring, the spring, and the Mill Pond***

The mill pond is fed principally by a flow of fresh water from Thomas a Becket's spring situated approximately 0.5 kilometre to the south (close to the present day alignment of the A2). This, together with other smaller springs, maintains the water level in the pond through the winter, although the flow can cease during summer droughts. The outflow of

water passes beneath Church Road and is channelled via leats through the garden of the Old Mill; the water courses then link back with the stream which passes on to the north. This supply of water was the reason for the development of the mills at Tong, perhaps also the reason for the original habitation of the site; the presence of the stream is consequently of special historical importance to the small settlement.

The spring head to the south of the Conservation Area is currently inaccessible due to scrub and undergrowth, it is possible that it is associated with built features, but this could not be assessed. Immediately to the west are two grass paddocks to the rear of the gardens of the houses on the north side of Watling Street (A2). These may have an association with the site of the former Leper Hospital and preserved the open nature of the stream on its south west side.

The stream itself is choked with weeds along its course

There is a wet woodland area at the northern end of the stream comprising willow and alder.

The pond has three small islands within it and one large square island on its western side accessible from the area of the castle to the north. This is referred to as garden island in historic documents.

Formatted: Superscript

***Land to the east of the stream and south of the Mill Pond***

This land has in recent times been used as a local country 'park'. The land remained privately owned and the only 'secure' access is the public right of way which leads from the mill along the southern side of the mill pond and exits the Conservation Area through a traditional style orchard. Nonetheless this land remains a locally valued and much used asset and includes the following components travelling from east to west [nos. refer to plan 7b]:

- Area of native woodland planting with remnant area of former car parking which needs attention [1]
- Area of mown grass with seven feature memorial oak trees relating to WW1, the armed forces and Kent. [2]



- Views across to the mill over the pond [3]

- Views to the castle, although the features are not easily appreciable [4]
- Traditional style orchard with the public right of way running down the area [5]



- Informal area of native woodland planting and meadow [6]



- Sloping meadow with informal grass paths round the outside. [7]



Despite the fact that this landscape has continued to evolve since the second world war, it retains significant historic interest which relates to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The juxtaposition of meadow, plantation and orchard retain the historic landscape components which have traditionally featured to the south side of the mill pond and east of the spring since at least 1797. The exact location of each type of historic land use has been reworked several times over the last 200 years, but the historic interest retained by the survival of each component remains. The components allow the historic rural context of the mill, pond, spring and castle to still be appreciated. Within this area therefore, the experience is of being within an area of historic rural

countryside. In addition, significant evolving views of heritage significance exist within the area. Moving northwards, these allow the architectural features of the mill buildings to be appreciated as well as the historic relationship between the pond, mill and castle. The sloping meadow to the south provides important views westward out of the conservation area and southward which allow the relationship between the spring and the A2 London Road (historically Watling Street) to be understood. The more formal area of mown grass with memorial oak trees now has historic interest in its own right, relating to the history of Kent, world war one and the armed forces more generally.

#### ***The Mills and associated buildings***

The mill buildings stand at the eastern end of the pond and are the defining feature of Tonge. The older of the two mills stands on the east side of Church Road and together with the mill house was built in 1759. A later mill stands on the opposite side of the road and occupies a narrow plot of land between the edge of the pond and the highway; date plaques show it to have been built between 1837-1866.

The juxtaposition of these two mills forces a distinctively narrowed bend into Church Road as it squeezes between the two buildings; the resulting pinch-point is an attractive and defining feature of the place.

The old mill, now converted into three dwellings, is timber-framed, and clad with white weatherboarding on the upper floors but has distinctive red brickwork with grey headers on the ground floor. The site of the original water wheel remains visible and is consequently an important link with the past. The large roofs are covered with mellowed Kent peg tiles. This is a truly picturesque mill, and an outstanding survival of Kentish vernacular industrial building, despite its original use having long since ceased. The upper section of the building leans severely away from the road 'as if it were reeling back' (Newman, Buildings of England) which results in a splendidly striking appearance. An attractive walled garden, through which the mill leats run, adjoins the building on the north west side; this garden, at the same level as the mill building, is set several metres below the level of the road to accommodate the drop in the flow of water over the original mill wheel.



*Photo: Garden to Old Mill looking along leat looking east*

To the north-west of the old mill lies a group of structures set around a concrete paved yard. The principal building here is a barn thought to have been constructed circa 1822; it is set at the far end of the yard and is brick-built with a slate-covered roof. It has been converted into a conference/wedding venue. Both the date and the manner of construction of this threshing barn are similar to that of the later mill complex so it seems reasonable to conclude that it was probably used for storing and processing crops prior to milling. Adjacent to the barn are a series of traditional style building used as hotel accommodation and adjacent to the road a three door garage. The conversion of these buildings to a hotel has been done very sympathetically and with its accompanying landscape gardens complement the historic mill buildings.

Around the corner from this yard stand Castle Cottages, a row of three, post-war houses built in yellow stock brick. These are modest in character, but their simplicity and straightforwardness are such that they are well suited to the rural location and their unaltered appearance is a welcome feature. By virtue of their location these houses are an integral part of the Tonge scene, especially in the important view from the south side of the pond.

The 'new' mill at Tonge, on the south west side of the road, is comprised of a number of individual buildings, and is mostly built in yellow stock bricks that were almost certainly manufactured in the nearby brickfields at Sittingbourne or Teynham. The first of these buildings was completed in 1837, and a second in 1866. Their design is essentially industrial in character; indeed, the buildings might be said to be appropriately austere in appearance. This industrial character is reinforced by a freestanding, 30m (100ft) high, tapering, square brick chimney which is a distinctive feature in its own right and a landmark in the local landscape. It also records the historically important switch from water to steam as the motive power in the milling process and is therefore an interesting commentary on the way in which a local business embraced change. The mill buildings, which latterly accommodated a bakery, are currently used

for a variety of purposes including offices and living accommodation. The survival of this industrial building, in such an attractive rural setting, is rather unusual in a Kentish context and consequently of special interest. There are views from the north side of the Mill across the Mill pond towards the Castle

#### **Boundary Treatment**

Carriageway edges are characterised by grassy banks, hedgerows, and soft verges. There is a less sympathetic chain link fence to the north of the Mill.

#### **Trees**

Group of seven memorial oaks to the south of the pond: Jubilee Oak, Flanders Oak, Deville Oak, English Oak, Kentish Oak, Royal Air Force Oak, and Our Gracie.

#### **Public Realm**

Development in Tonge is clustered almost exclusively around Church Road which is in essence a country lane; north and south of the settlement it passes between fields and orchards. The road twists and



turns through Tonge itself with delightful informality, most notably where it passes through the narrow gap between the two mills, where buildings are set perilously close to passing traffic; footways here are conspicuous by their absence.

### **Traffic and Movement**

Traffic is squeezed through the narrow gap between the two mills and pedestrians and cyclists have to share the carriageway with cars. There is a public footpath across part of the land to the south of the meadow and the rest of the land on the south side of the stream is accessed via informal grass paths.

### **Open spaces**

The land on the southern side of the pond has, by tradition, been accessible to the public for informal recreation such as picnicking and feeding the ducks. The land is experienced as a series of unfolding habitats and spaces including native woodland, mown grass with feature memorial trees, traditional orchard, semi wooded area with open glades and a large meadow to the south. This work has undoubtedly increased the appeal and value of the Conservation Area for informal recreation by local people.

### **Buildings and Building Materials; Features; Structures**

#### **Nationally Designated Heritage**



*Old Mill*

The Old Mill is a water mill now formed of two houses built in 1759. It is constructed of timber framed and weather boarded above a ground floor of chequered red and grey brick, with plain tiled roof. It is constructed of three storeys (the upper 2, timber framed, leaning severely away from the road) and paired modillion eaves to hipped roof.

Tonge Mill and Mill house built 1837 and 1866. It is constructed of yellow stock brick and slate roofs. Convex curving range of 4 buildings and stack along the roadside. The chimney is a landmark in the local landscape.

#### **Locally important Buildings**

None

#### **General building material discussion**

Walls: Timber framed and weatherboarding, yellow stock brick

Roofs: Slate and Tile.



*Tonge Mill*

## Features of Local Importance

Spring Head and Stream

Mill Pond and leat(s) to the west.

## Views

The assessment of views was divided into three concentric zones:

- long distance: views from beyond the area
- middle distant to and from the immediate setting
- historic (local) core: views from within the Conservation Area.

The views have been categorised accordingly:

1. **views, often framed vistas, from fixed positions to focal points (such as a churches)**

**View 1a** – Local view from outside of Conservation Area at Scraps Hill towards the mill. The significance of this view includes the ability to



appreciate the architectural features of the mill buildings as well as their historical relationship with each other and the field to the east. This field is a key component of the setting of the conservation area, preserving the original historic rural countryside setting of the mill buildings, which has alternated between pasture and arable over time.

**View 1b** – View eastward across area of historic grazing up to Scraps Hill from adjacent to the Old Mill. The railway embankment is screened by the trees on the left hand side of the picture. This field is a key component of the setting of the conservation area, preserving the original historic rural countryside setting of the mill buildings, which has alternated between pasture and arable over time.



**View 1c** View from just north of the junction of Scraps Hill and Church Road looking northwest. This view is similar to 1a but provides a closer up view of the mill buildings as well as their hisotircal relationship with each other and the field to the east. This field is a key component of the setting of the conservation area, preserving the original historic rural countryside setting of the mill buidings, which has alternated between pasture and arable over time.



**View 1d** - View westwards from North side of the new mill across the mill pond towards Tonge Castle. The significance of this view includes the ability to appreciate the architectural features of the mill buildings on the west side of the road, as well as the historical relationship between the mill and its pond. The same view also affords an appreciation of the relationship between Tonge Castle and the pond.



2. Dynamic views (experienced and evolving along a route, such as a street)

**View 2a** - Local views along Church Road, revealing buildings of historic interest as you travel past the mill from junction of Scraps Hill and Church Road to the Railway bridge. The bend in the lane means that the juxtaposition of the buildings gently unfolds enabling an appreciation of



the architectural significance of the mill buildings and the historic relationship between them, the pond and their setting to the east.

3. Dynamic views with a focal point

**View 3a** - Southwards from edge of meadow towards Spring Head and Watling Street. This is a dynamic view: travelling southwards, one becomes increasingly aware of the historic relationship between the spring and the channel of the stream, and one's eye is drawn to the area where the spring head is with the A2 London Road (historically Watling Street) behind. As discussed below, Watling Street is an important component of the conservaton area.



4. Panoramas

None

5. Panoramas featuring a focal point or points

**View 5a** - 180 degree view northwards towards chimney from outside of the Conservation Area where public right of way exits the settlements on the north side of Watling Street. From here you can appreciate the relationship of the spring, stream, and mill. The significance of this view is that you can appreciate the historical spatial relationship between the spring and the mill, with the mill chimney forming an eye catcher in the view. This is not something which can be appreciated when standing within the conservation area to the north.



6. Dynamic panoramas

**View 6a** - 180 degree westwards over stream out of Conservation Area [towards future countryside gap]. Views to and from this ridge of alnd are

currently in a state of flux. Formerly the arable field in this location would have been an important component of the setting of the conservation area preserving the historic rural countryside setting of the spring, stream and mill. The scalped land currently distracts the ability to appreciate this relationship. However, with the establishment of a countryside gap as part of the approved development scheme on this land, there is the expectation that a new sympathetic setting will be achieved.



**View 6b** - View from Public Right of way to the west of the Conservation Area looking east across stream and up the eastern side of the valley. This view provides an appreciation of the historic between the spring and castle. The scalped land currently distracts the ability to appreciate this relationship. However, with the establishment of a countryside gap as

part of the approved development scheme on this land, there is the expectation that a new sympathetic setting will be achieved.



7. Dynamic panoramas featuring a focal point or points

**View 7a** - Evolving views of Tonge Castle and the Mill on the south side of the pond with the chimney acting as a focal point. These are very significant, allowing an appreciation of many of the key positive components of the conservation area and the relationship between them.



## Setting

Heritage assets can gain significance from their relationship with their setting whilst views from within or outside an area form an important way in which their significance is experienced and appreciated.

Watling Street to the south of the Conservation Area is a key component of the setting due to its status as a major route from the Roman times onwards and its association in the Mediaeval period as a major pilgrimage route.

The land on the western side is now in arable use and virtually devoid of features such as hedgerows and trees; the absence of these features has undoubtedly spoilt the intimacy of the valley. [Note this will soon become a countryside gap as part of the new development to the west with the potential to greatly enhance the appearance of this area]

This contrasts with the eastern side of the valley (both within and beyond the Conservation Area). Here the landscape remains more varied with, for example, a mix of hedgerows, trees, and orchards still being present; this side consequently retains a more traditional appearance. There is a commercial orchard and field with rough grazing to the south and east of the Conservation Area boundary. This is then bounded by Hempstead

Lane with a modern ribbon development of houses and Hempstead Farm beyond to the west.

The eastern boundary of the Conservation Area is screened by mature trees and the sunken road at the top end of Church Road, meaning there are no views of the Conservation Area looking due east from the area of Scraps Hill.

The railway embankment, aligned east-west along the northern edge of Tonge, is an important feature in the local landscape, especially where the banks are covered with tree growth. This embankment has, in effect, severed Tonge visually from the wide sweep of low lying land to the north including the marshes so that it now forms a well-defined northern edge to the Conservation Area.

### **Assessment of Condition and Identification of Negative key characteristics**

#### Key Negative Characteristics

- Overhead wires radiating from a distribution pole in the public highway alongside the two mills are, however, an unwelcome intrusion into an environment of such special quality.
- The modern chain link fence alongside the lane to the north of the New Mill
- Condition of the stream and the spring head
- Condition of Tonge Castle, especially embankments.
- Road signage on Church Road is cluttered and in poor repair
- Former car park on eastern side of the Conservation Area in need of attention
- Setting to the west prior to creation of countryside gap
- Fly tipping was observed to be an issue on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area. Note this may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown ongoing at the time of the site visit.

Disused car park on eastern side of the Conservation Area



Cluttered signage on roads close to the mills

Chain link fence to north of the mill



Lane to the west of the Conservation Area (note soon to be transformed into Countryside Gap)

Overhead wires in vicinity of the mill





## 3.0. CONSERVATION AREAS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Conservation Area designation is not an end in itself. It is a way of recognising the special architectural or historic interest of an area with a view to putting in place a framework to sustain its character for this and future generations.

Conservation is not about preventing change; the Tonge Conservation Area is part of a living community and change is needed to sustain and meet their future needs. It is about positively managing change so that what we cherish today can be properly looked after and passed on to future generations in good condition. Conservation Area designation brings with it certain statutory controls and restrictions which are described below. It also affords the opportunity for others, such as the Parish Council, local amenity groups, Kent County Council, Kent Highways, individual householders, and local businesses to take part in positively managing the area.

It also can help identify opportunities where conservation can help to deliver wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits and

where there may be opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

This strategy is intended to encourage active involvement in the future management of the Conservation Areas.

### 3.1. Planning Policy and Guidance

See further Detail in Appendix 4.

#### **Current Statutes and National Planning Policies**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Section 66 in relation to Historic Buildings

#### **National Planning Policy Framework and supporting guidance**

#### **Historic England Guidance**

Historic England produce Good Practice Advice (GPA) and Advice Notes (HEAN).

## Swale Borough Council Development Plan - Local Plan Policies - Bearing Fruits 2031

**Core Objective 4.** *Conserve and enhance our historic and natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse declines in their condition.*

### **Policy CP8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

*To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:*

- 1. Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;*
- 2. Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM 32-DM 36;*
- 3. Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;*
- 4. Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;*
- 5. Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;*
- 6. Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future;*
- and 7. Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.*

Other relevant policies include:

- ST1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale
- CP4: Requiring good design

- CP7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- DM14: General development criteria
- DM16: Alterations and extensions
- DM32: Development involving listed buildings
- DM33: Development affecting a Conservation Area
- DM34: Development affecting scheduled monuments and archaeological sites

Note the next Local Plan will cover the period 2022-2038

### **Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance**

The following Planning Guidance has been adopted by Swale Borough Council supplementary to the Swale Borough Local Plan, 2008:

- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Kent Design

### **Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 -2032**

This strategy provides a framework for the designation, conservation, management and physical and economic regeneration of Swale's Historic

Buildings and Areas, including designated historic parks and gardens. From analysis of evidence on Swale's heritage and some early engagement with local stakeholders, a high level vision and set of five associated priorities have been identified.

### 3.2. Buildings at Risk

There are no designated heritage assets within the Tonge Conservation Area on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register or on the Swale Heritage at Risk Register.

Local heritage assets and features at risk have been identified in the management and action plan for each conservation area (section 6.5) These may be added to the local Heritage at Risk Registers if their significance is threatened by their condition. In such instances, the Council will notify respective owners and where possible, work with them to investigate opportunities for external funding to support efforts to conserve heritage assets included on the respective registers.

### 3.3. Condition and Forces for Change

Tonge Conservation Area is in good condition.

#### **Forces for Change**

- Uncertain future of the area currently used for informal recreation
- Pressure from commuter traffic and large vehicles using the Conservation Areas as a cut through
- Development on the western side of the Conservation Area

### 3.4. Management Objectives and Approach

#### **Householder Alterations**

Many minor householder alterations to unlisted buildings can be undertaken without the need for planning permission but the cumulative impact of ill-considered change to historic and/or traditional properties can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Opportunities to reinstate missing architectural features (such as sash windows, panelled doors, or roof coverings) and traditional boundary treatments will be encouraged by the Council and may be requested in

relation to planning applications for extensions and/or alterations, where appropriate.

The Council will seek to ensure that householder alterations which require planning permission positively enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **Public Realm/Street Management**

The public realm makes a positive contribution to the character of Tonge Conservation Areas. However, in rural conservation areas it is especially necessary to guard against standard highway 'improvements' which do not respect the special character of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area are affected by pressure from commuter traffic and large vehicles using the village as a cut through between the A2 and the M2. Chestnut Street is also affected by commuter parking.

Trees, orchards, and green space are all significant features of the Conservation Area. Positive management of highway trees and highway hedgerows will be an important aspect of maintaining the special character of the Conservation Area.

Highway maintenance and improvements will be carried out in accordance with Kent County Highways 'Highway Works and Heritage Assets: The Kent Protocol for Highway Works in Relation to Designated Heritage Assets' second edition, 2011, which contains specific provision for works in Conservation Areas.

The Borough Council and County Council will seek to ensure that the public realm of this Conservation Area is sensitively managed.

### **New Development Opportunities**

Any new buildings or renewal of existing sites need to consider the management priorities set out below. Development within the settings of the Conservation Area should conserve the historic grain of the mill and avoid the infilling of the remaining rural countryside setting to the east and south of the Conservation Area.

### 3.5. Conservation Area Objectives and Priorities for Management and Action

**Overarching Objectives: The Council will seek to ensure that the significance of Tonge Conservation Area is sustained and enhanced through:**

1. The preservation and enhancement of the area's special interest, character, or appearance
2. The preservation or enhancement of the setting of the conservation area and other designated heritage assets.
3. The safeguarding and better revealing the significance of any archaeology.
4. Protection and enhancement of landmarks, views, and vistas within and without the conservation area.

5. Protection of the landscape around the Conservation Area and the important role this plays in providing it with an attractive and contextually appropriate rural setting, which focuses on the heritage interest which informs the significance of the Conservation Area.
6. Safeguarding non-designated heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the significance of the area.
7. Safeguarding the network of public rights of way.
8. Safeguarding significant spaces.
9. Safeguarding significant trees, orchards, and woods.
10. Promotion of high quality design in new development which responds positively to context and the distinct characteristics of the conservation area.

Special Interest & Positive Characteristics (PC), Negative Characteristics (NC), Archaeological Potential/Significance (A) and Forces for Change (FC)	Objectives	Specific Management Guidelines	Other Actions
Archaeological potential for Early and Middle Palaeolithic archaeology and paleo-environmental information focused on the Coombe/Head deposits and the head/solifluction gravel (A)	Ob1 Ob3	Conserve and recognise archaeological sensitive/potential	
The spring and stream have paleo-environmental potential. (A)	Ob1 Ob3	Conserve and recognise archaeological sensitive/potential – consider impact of any future works on stream on palaeo-environmental potential	
Tonge Mill and its environs have been occupied since the early Mediaeval period, supported by evidence of the castle, fortified manor and the continuity of milling from 1086 to the twentieth century. It therefore has high potential for Mediaeval and Post Mediaeval archaeology. (A)	Ob1 Ob3	Conserve and recognise archaeological sensitive/potential	
Tonge Castle earthworks (PC)	Ob1 Ob3	Conserve archaeological sensitive/potential of the Castle	Application for Tonge Castle to be designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
Tonge Castle - potential for undisturbed stratified archaeology to remain. (A)			Undertake survey of earthworks and assessment of condition
Condition of Tonge Castle especially embankments (NC)			Bring banks and ditches into positive condition
The spring head (PC)	Ob1 Ob6	Policy for maintaining condition	Bring spring head into positive condition -
Condition of the spring head (NC)			
The stream (PC)	Ob1	Policy for maintaining condition	Bring water course into positive condition –

Special Interest & Positive Characteristics (PC), Negative Characteristics (NC), Archaeological Potential/Significance (A) and Forces for Change (FC)	Objectives	Specific Management Guidelines	Other Actions
	Ob6		undertake baseline natural and historic survey of features
Condition of the stream (NC)			
The millpond (PC)	Ob1 Ob6		
Land south of the millpond with a mix of habitats and informal recreational space (PC)	Ob1 Ob7 Ob8 Ob9		<del>Seek opportunities to bring former car park into positive management</del>
Former car park on eastern side of the Conservation Area in need of attention (NC)			Seek opportunities to secure future public access to the land
Uncertain future of the area <del>currently</del> formerly used for informal recreation (FC)			<del>(see separate note)</del>
Two historic mill buildings with an interrelated history (PC)	Ob1 Ob8		Declutter road signage and introduce traditional 'Kent' style traditional fingerposts along Church Road
Road signage on Church Road is cluttered and in poor repair (NC)			Ensure residents know how to report Fly Tipping and any incidents are quickly dealt with
Fly tipping was observed to be an issue on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area. Note this may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown ongoing at the time of the site visit. (NC)			Seek opportunities to underground wires.
Overhead wires radiating from a distribution pole in the			Seek opportunity to replace chain link fence with more <del>traditional wrought iron fencing</del>

Special Interest & Positive Characteristics (PC), Negative Characteristics (NC), Archaeological Potential/Significance (A) and Forces for Change (FC)	Objectives	Specific Management Guidelines	Other Actions
public highway alongside the two mills (NC)			<u>which still allows views across to the millpond appropriate replacement boundary treatment agreed in liaison with landowner.</u>
Modern chain link fence alongside the lane to the north of the New Mill (NC)			
Pressure from commuter traffic and large vehicles using the Conservation Areas as a cut through (FC)			
Converted threshing barn associated with the mill (PC)	Ob1 Ob8	Future development on this site should continue to enhance the relationship between the barn and the mill.	
Mill chimney acting as a focal point in the landscape (PC)	Ob1 Ob4	Ensure that the chimney is still visible as you move round the Conservation Area especially along right of way to the south.	
Local views from within the vicinity of the mills (PC)	Ob1 Ob4 Ob8	Retain views from the mills looking east and west	
Views across the pond to the mill and castle (PC)	Ob1 Ob4 Ob8	Retain views from the millpond towards the Mill and Castle especially along existing Right of Way	
Views from the western setting of the Conservation Area (PC)	Ob1 Ob2 Ob5 Ob10	Ensure new Countryside gap enhances setting of Conservation Area	Factors to consider include habitats to west of the stream, water course management, future of public access between the Conservation Area and the stream, views in and out of the Conservation Area (see separate note).
Setting to the west prior to creation of countryside gap (NC)			



Special Interest & Positive Characteristics (PC), Negative Characteristics (NC), Archaeological Potential/Significance (A) and Forces for Change (FC)	Objectives	Specific Management Guidelines	Other Actions
Development within the western setting of the Conservation Area (FC)			

APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Extracts from the National Heritage List for England (the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)

The statutory list is compiled and published by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport and is altered and amended from time to time. The list descriptions below were current in March 2016 but for more up to date information please visit the National Heritage List for England at [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/thelist](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/thelist). The omission of a building from this list should not necessarily be taken to indicate that it is not listed.

Features which are not specifically mentioned in the list description are not exempt from statutory protection which extends to the building, to any object or structure fixed to the building and to any structure within the curtilage of the building pre-dating the 1st July 1948.

### Tonge Mill

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1338569

Date first listed: 27-Aug-1952

Statutory Address: TONGE MILL, CHURCH ROAD

TQ 96 SW TONGE CHURCH ROAD (west side)

2/180 Tonge Mill 27.8.52 GV II

Mill and mill house. 1837 and 1866. Yellow stock brick and slate roofs. Convex curving range of 4 buildings and stack along the roadside. To left: 2 storey and hipped block with loft door and glazing bar sash on first floor, 2 blocked windows on ground floor. Centre: Mill house, 3 storeys on plinth with pilaster strip quoins and parapet. Two glazing bar sashes on second floor, 1 on first floor with loft door, 2 on ground floor with central boarded door in semi-circular headed surround with plaque over inscribed: T D 1837 To right: 2 storeys and sloping roof with 1 glazing bar casement and boarded door in large semi-circular headed surrounds on ground floor, with plaque over door, inscribed: B + S 1866 Similar block to right, no openings and chimney, approx. 100 foot height, square section and tapering with oversailing cornice cap.

Listing NGR: TQ9345163560

### Mill House Old Mill

Grade: II

List Entry Number:1069265

Date first listed:21-Mar-1985

Statutory Address: MILL HOUSE, CHURCH ROAD

Statutory Address: OLD MILL, CHURCH ROAD

TQ 96 SW TONGE CHURCH ROAD (east side)

2/175 Old Mill and Mill house

GV II

Water mill, now 2 houses. 1759. Timber framed, and weather boarded on ground floor of chequered red and grey brick, with plain tiled roof. Three storeys (the upper 2, timber framed, leaning severely away from the road) and paired modillion eaves to hipped roof. Three wood casements and shuttered window opening to right on second floor. 4 glazing bar sashes and blocked loft door to right on first floor, and 5 glazing bar sashes on ground floor with boarded door to right and door of 6 raised and fielded panels to left with traceried rectangular fanlight. Plaque at centre of ground floor inscribed: R H 1759

Listing NGR: TQ9343863589

## Appendix 2 Proposed amendments to Tonge Conservation Area boundary

As part of the review of Tonge Conservation Area, consideration has been given to whether the current boundaries accurately reflect the area which is considered to have special architectural or historic interest.

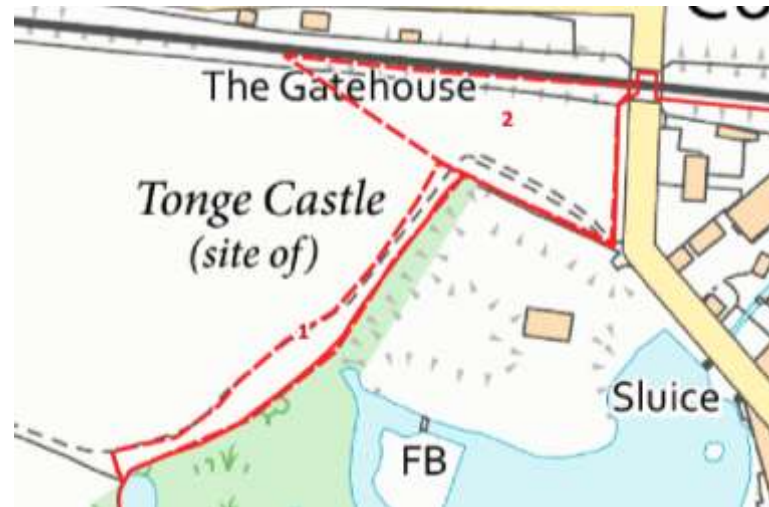
In large part, the area covered by the Conservation Area is considered to be appropriate in that it still possesses special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. However, there are two adjacent areas where it is proposed to alter or extend the boundary of the Conservation Area. These are shown on and are described below.

### Area TCA1 Land to the west of Tonge Castle

The proposal is to move the current Conservation Area boundary out by c10 metres to ensure that Tonge Castle is fully included within the Conservation Area. Currently the boundary as drawn is tight to the ditch of the castle.

### Area TCA2 Land to the north of Tonge Castle

The small triangle of land to the north of the Castle and south of the railway line follows the original access to the Castle and Mill and also includes the site of the former Windmill. This small (0.4 hectare) extension will ensure this important historical context is included within the Conservation Area.



## Appendix 3: Relevant legislation, national and local policy & strategies

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

➤ **Section 66** General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions.

(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

➤ **Section 69** Designation of conservation areas.

(1) Every local planning authority—

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority's area which is not for the time being

designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area. (4) The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

➤ **Section 71** Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

➤ **Section 72** General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.

(1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies, and how they are expected to be applied.

The NPPF covers the historic environment primarily in paragraphs 184 - 202 (Chapter 16).

### **National Planning Practice Guidance PPG**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

The PPG includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Historic Environment.

### **Guidance and Advice from Historic England**

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planning-system/>

#### ➤ **Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes (GPAs).**

These provide supporting information on good practice, particularly looking at the principles of how national policy and guidance can be applied.

- GPA1 - Local Plan Making
- GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- GPA3 - Setting and Views

#### ➤ **Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs)**

include detailed, practical advice on how to implement national planning policy and guidance.

- Historic England Advice Note 1 - Conservation Areas

- Historic England Advice Note 2 - Making Changes to Heritage Assets
- Historic England Advice Note 4 - Tall Buildings
- Historic England Advice Note 9 - The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings
- Historic England Advice Note 10 - Listed Buildings and Curtilage
- Historic England Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance

### **Swale Borough Council Heritage Strategy 2020**

[\[https://www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy/\]](https://www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy/)

The Council has developed a borough-wide heritage strategy to help it, along with key stakeholders and other interested parties, to protect and manage the historic environment in Swale in a positive and sustainable way, on a suitably informed basis.

A key element of the strategy is the setting out of the Council's overall vision and set of priorities, which it is hoped will align with the vision and priorities of local communities and local amenity societies as far as possible, in order that the strategy can be widely supported.

The strategy sets out a series of proposals in the associated initial 3 year action plan which are aimed at enabling the positive and sustainable management of different elements of the borough's historic environment for the foreseeable future. Priority is given to those parts of the borough's historic environment which are already suffering from, and at risk from negative change, and/or which face significant development pressure, threatening their special character. The proposed set of actions will involve joint project working with amenity societies and/or volunteers from the community wherever this is possible.

**Adopted Local plan Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017)**

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/media/files/localplan/adoptedlocalplanfinalwebversion.pdf>

Relevant objectives and policies within the local plan include:

➤ **Policy ST 1 Delivering sustainable development in Swale**

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:.....

8. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics;
9. Promote healthy communities through:..... e. maintaining the individual character, integrity, identities and settings of settlements;
12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (inc. historic landscapes).

➤ **Policy CP 4 Requiring good design**

All development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Development proposals will, as appropriate:...

2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place;
5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;.....
8. Be appropriate to the context in respect of materials, scale, height and massing;
  9. Make best use of texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials;
  10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area;
  11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure;.....

➤ **Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings**

Development proposals, including any change of use, affecting a listed building, and/or its setting, will be permitted provided that:

1. The building's special architectural or historic interest, and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, are preserved, paying special attention to the: a. design, including scale, materials, situation and detailing; b. appropriateness of the proposed use of the building; and c. desirability of removing unsightly or negative features or restoring or reinstating historic features.
2. The total or part demolition of a listed building is wholly exceptional, and will only be permitted provided convincing evidence has been submitted showing that: a. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or viable new uses and have failed; b. Preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and c. The cost of maintaining and repairing the building outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use.
3. If as a last resort, the Borough Council is prepared to consider the grant of a listed building consent for demolition, it may, in appropriate circumstances, consider whether the building could be re-erected elsewhere to an appropriate location. When re-location is not possible and demolition is permitted, arrangements will be required to allow access to the building prior to demolition to make a record of it and to allow for the salvaging of materials and features.

➤ **Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area**

Development (including changes of use and the demolition of unlisted buildings or other structures) within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area, will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special character or appearance. The Borough Council expects development proposals to:

1. Respond positively to its conservation area appraisals where these have been prepared;
2. Retain the layout, form of streets, spaces, means of enclosure and buildings, and pay special attention to the use of detail and materials, surfaces, landform, vegetation and land use;
3. Remove features that detract from the character of the area and reinstate those that would enhance it; and



4. Retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

➤ **Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites**

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.
3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

**Swale Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance**

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/local-planning-guidance/>

- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines **No 2: Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers**
- Swale Borough Council **No 3: The Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings.**
- Swale Borough Council Planning and Development Guidelines **No 8: Conservation Areas**

## Appendix 4: Select Bibliography and Acknowledgements

Bannister, N. 1995 Tonge Mill Historic Landscape Survey is an especially useful indepth study of the historic landscape context of Tonge Castle and Mill.

The South east Archaeological Research Framework can be accessed at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/south-east-research-framework>

Thank you for Simon Mason and his team from Heritage Conservation at Kent County Council for his assistance. The online version of the Kent Historic Environment Record can be accessed at <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared by Emma Rouse, Wyvern Heritage and Landscape on behalf of Swale Borough Council. [www.wyvernheritage.co.uk](http://www.wyvernheritage.co.uk)

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<https://www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-and-landscape/>

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~~PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT~~ADOPTION VERSION, APRIL 2021  
OCTOBER 2020

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