

**HERITAGE STATEMENT  
FOR  
PARAPET HOUSE LENHAM**

**Lee Evans Partnership Ref: 8047**



**June 2015**



**Lee Evans Partnership LLP**  
St John's Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2QQ  
tel: 01227 784444 fax: 01227 819102  
email: [architects@lee-evans.co.uk](mailto:architects@lee-evans.co.uk) web: [www.lee-evans.co.uk](http://www.lee-evans.co.uk)

## HERITAGE STATEMENT

### PART 1 – ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARAPET HOUSE AND THE PADDOCK BEHIND

#### 1.0 Introduction to this Statement

1.1 This statement has been prepared as a Heritage Statement to accompany an application for Planning Consent for the construction of 5 Houses behind Parapet House in Lenham.

1.2 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and the PPS5 Practice Guide. The PPS5 Practice Guide was produced to be read with the old Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) which has been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework. However, until a new set of guidance is produced the Practice Guide is still endorsed by the Government as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The guide emphasises the need for assessments of the significance of any heritage assets (even non-designated heritage assets) which are likely to be changed, so the assessment can inform the decision process. Significance is defined in the NPPF Guidance in the Glossary as *“the value of the heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historical. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also its setting”*. The setting of the heritage asset is also clarified in the Glossary as *“the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve”*.

1.3 This statement examines the “significance” of the buildings and assesses the extent of “harm” to the listed buildings, their setting and the impact on the conservation area, that would result if the alterations proposed are carried out.

1.4 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to address the following issues:

- Give a concise history of what is known about Parapet House and a summary of the major changes to the historic building and surrounding land over time.
- Analyse which characteristics of the buildings and site are architecturally and historically significant.
- The current condition of the buildings and their current approved use.

In the second half of the report I go on to analyse the impact of the proposed 5 new houses on the Listed Building and Conservation Area.

1.5 This statement has been prepared by Nicholas Lee Evans BSc(hons), Msc, Dip Arch RIBA SCA who is a Specialist Conservation Architect on the RIBA Conservation Registry, experienced in historic houses, and conservation areas in Kent.

## 2.0 The Site

- 2.1 Parapet House is an extended early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling located at the edge of the historic centre of Lenham village. The north eastern boundary of the building is located hard to the Maidstone Road and it is entered from a drive which comes up the front garden from the road. The principal elevation is sideways onto the main road.



*Front View of Parapet House from footpath*

Behind the house is the back garden and which leads up the boundary on the north-west side of Swadelands School's playing fields. The land to the south and the east of the house is a small field or paddock, surrounded by high and mature planting beyond, which is the village cricket club pavilion and ground. It is on this paddock that the new houses are proposed. To the east of the Parapet House is a line of terraced cottages which lead down into the Village Square. A footpath runs along the eastern boundary of the front garden and along the eastern and southern boundaries of the paddock. To the east side of the paddock is a piece of land behind the cottages, where there are current proposals for new houses.

- 2.2 The site lies entirely within the Lenham Conservation Area and is gently sloping away from the Village Square.

### **3.0 Designation**

Parapet House is a Grade II Listed building. The Listing description is attached in an Appendix. The house is in the Lenham Conservation Area.



***View of Paddock with the trees blocking view of the House during winter months.***

### **4.0 Ownership and Current Use**

- 4.1 Parapet House is currently owned by family descendants of the owners of the Chilston Estate. Chilston House is close to Lenham and the estate once owned much of the property in the village as well as the surrounding farmland. It is not clear why it was built, but I speculate it may have been constructed for an employee of the estate, such as a manager, who may have needed a horse to get around the estate. The building is still used as a dwelling but it now has long term tenants. The paddock behind is no longer used and has not been for over a decade, but once was presumably used to keep the horse of the residents of Parapet House, since there still remains a prefabricated stable and garden store building in the garden of the house on its western boundary adjacent to the field. Functionally, the equestrian use of the paddock is no longer attractive, or arguably viable, since it is a relatively

small field to keep a horse on and is now surrounded by areas of suburban housing and sports fields. Any muck heaps are also likely to have a detrimental impact on the neighbours. Horse-riders would also have a relatively unsafe and difficult hack along reasonably busy village roads, for some considerable distance before one reached the bridle ways on the outskirts of the village.

## **5.0 Planning History**

5.1 Maidstone Borough Council has recently identified the need for additional housing in the Lenham area. It is because of this call for sites, the present owners of Parapet House, with no use for the field, are seeking to redevelop the redundant paddock land behind the property for housing.

5.2 Planning Consent for housing has been refused and refused on appeal in the past for the paddock. Firstly in 1996, because “The development would, by reason of the loss of visually important and mature trees and the impact of the widened access and resultant reduction in the enclosed nature of the boundary of the site to Maidstone Road be detrimental to the character, visual amenities and appearance of this part of the Lenham Conservation Area and the surrounding area”

5.3 An alternative design approach was tried in 2006 which respected the trees and reduced the width of the access but it was refused because to quote the reason for refusal at the time;-

*“Maidstone Borough Council Urban Capacity Study (2002) shows that there is no overriding need to develop sites such as this in advance of the known availability of previously-developed sites in the Borough and the site itself has not been identified as suitable for development in the study”.*

5.4 Since this decision Maidstone Borough Council has identified Lenham as a village which can accommodate a significant amount of housing expansion following recent housing need studies. It is the applicants’ case that a housing development behind Parapet House could help meet the local need with little impact on the character of the village or surrounding landscape.



*Aerial photograph of the Village*

## 6.0 Archaeological Overview



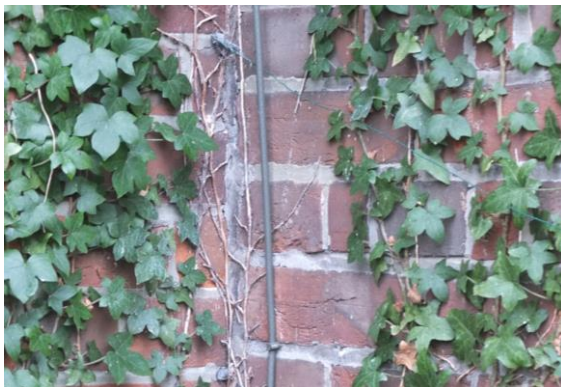
*Extract from KCC HER record plan*

- 6.1 An examination of the Kent Heritage Environment Records (HER) records indicate that there has been no archaeological finds noted within the immediate vicinity of Parapet House.

## 7.0 The Development of the House and Grounds

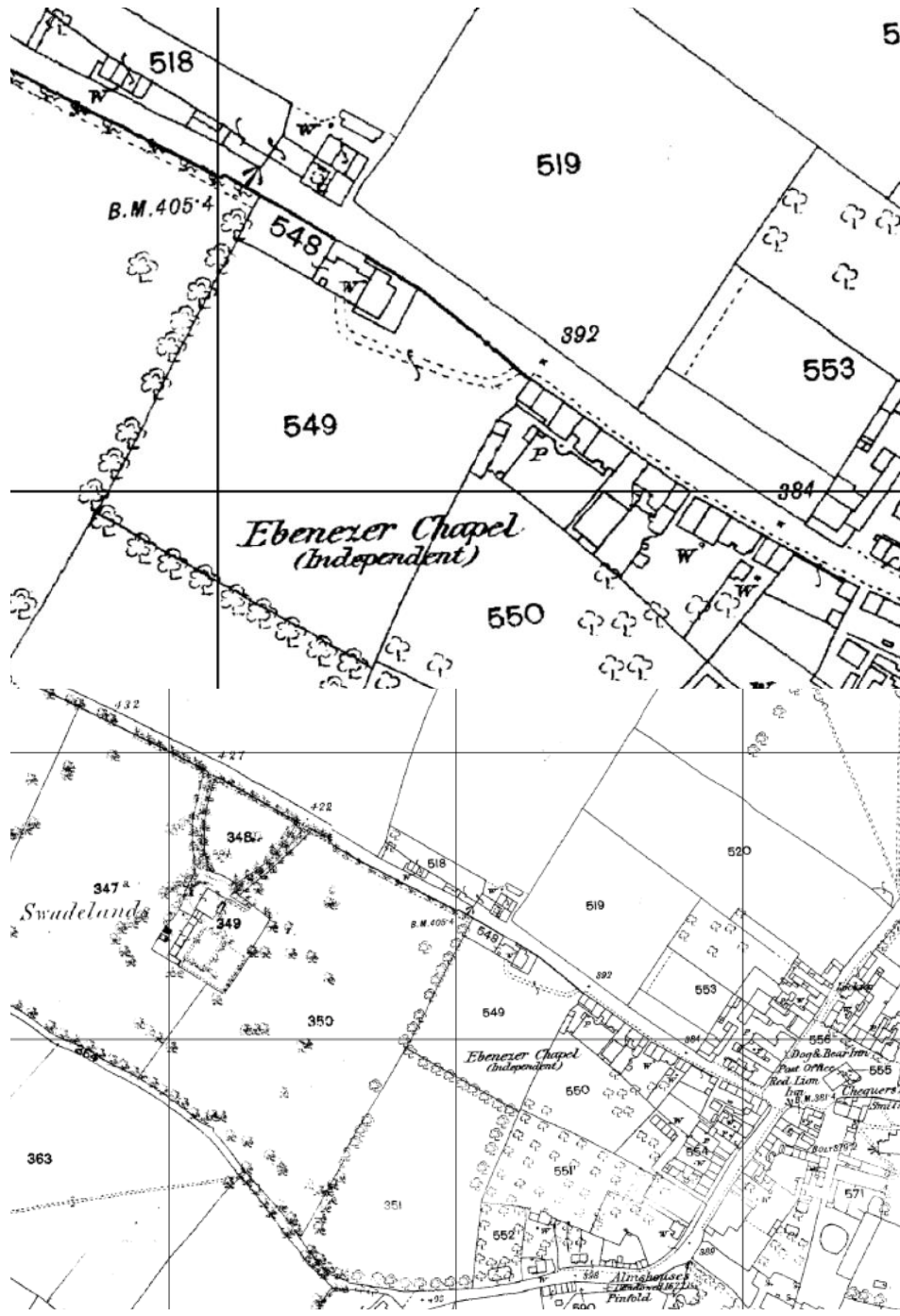
7.1 Parapet House can just be seen on the first Ordnance Survey plan for the area around 1868. It shows the house at the edge of the historic village with a couple of cottages on the opposite side of the road further west. The boundaries seem to be drawn very tightly around the property and a driveway going through the field to the south and east of the house leading to the stables at the rear of the house following the path of the current drive. I presume pedestrian access would have been from Maidstone Road via the small front garden of the property. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the west and south of Parapet House was a large Mansion called Swadelands and its grounds where the current secondary school is now located.

7.2 An examination of the house internally shows the original building was a typical modest Georgian house with a central narrow hallway and stairway with two narrow rooms off this hall on each floor. Behind these rooms under a catslide roof was a kitchen with a small cellar under. To the rear of the house and separated from it is a brick and flint rubble wall, are stables which are constructed with the same bricks used as the quoins. I suspect both the front of the house and the part of the rear stables were built together in the mid-late Georgian period. Later an extra bedroom was added on the road side with a living space below. Later still and before the first edition Ordnance Survey around 1868, a further extension along the road side added a hay loft and probably a kitchen below. The development of the house is easy to follow on site as each extension can be noted by the straight vertical brick joints in the corners of the junctions between the new and old house.

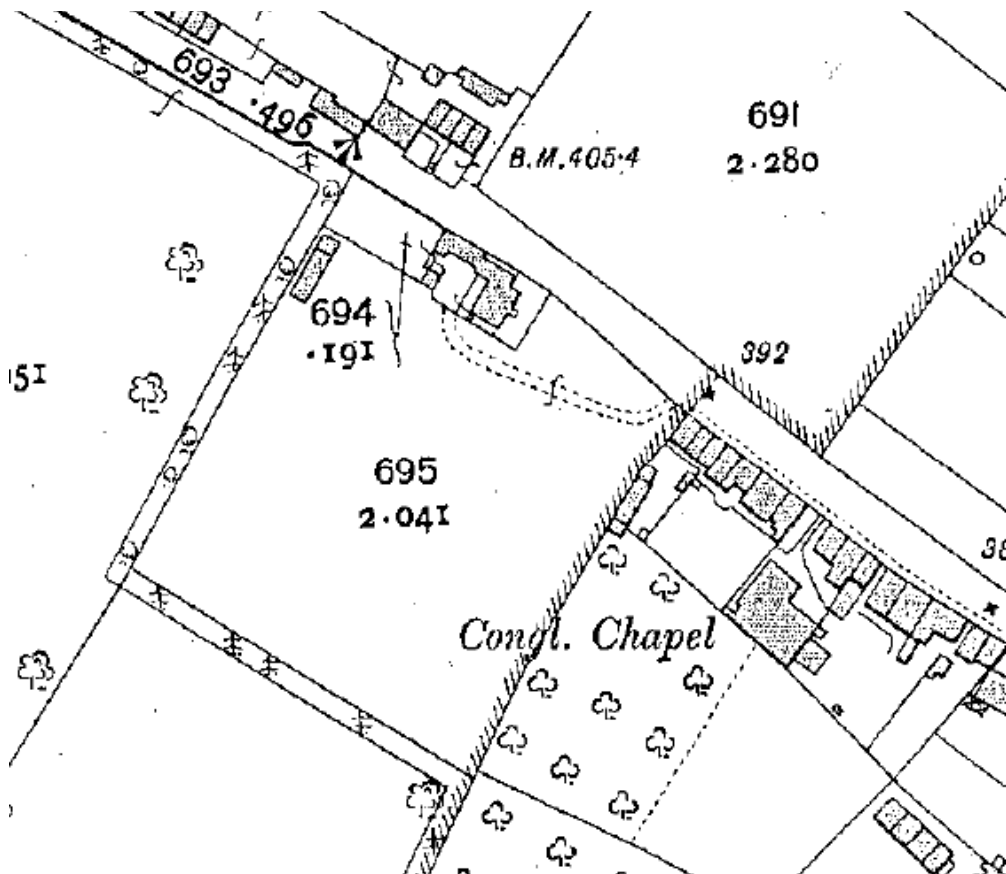


*Straight joints in the brickwork are visible which show the house was extended twice along the road side in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

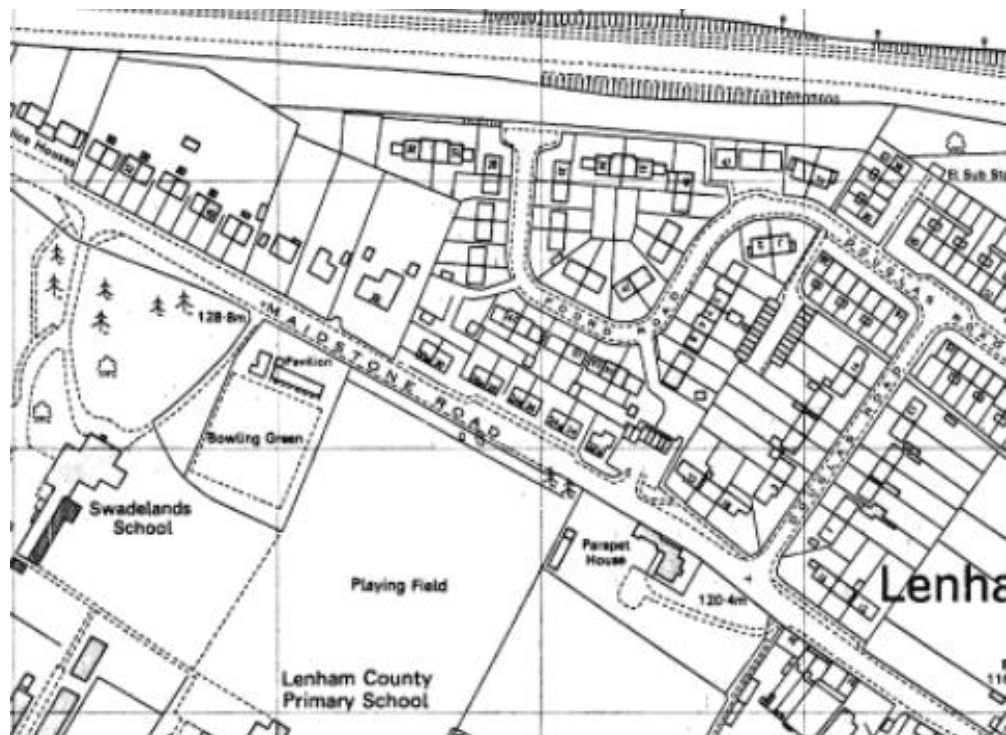
7.3 Finally in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an extension to add on a small study and bedroom over. In the 1897 Ordnance Survey Plan a range of buildings can be seen on the northern boundary where currently a garden shed stands.



Extracts from 1868 OS Plan



Extract from 1897 Ordnance Survey Plan



1961 Ordnance Survey plan showing a clear boundary between house and paddock differentiated.

- 7.4 The Ordinance Survey plans of the second half of the twentieth century, including the 1961 plan, show a strong demarcation line between the paddock and the house. The age of the fencing and the maturity of the trees and shrubs along the boundary also confirm that the current split between the paddock and house has been there for well over 50 years.
- 7.5 Architecturally, the house has some presence and elegance when seen from the “presentation” frontage facing the heart of the village. However, the house is not as large as it may be assumed to be from a superficial assessment of the front and side elevations. The habitable first floor area of the house is significantly smaller than the ground floor because the cat slide roof over the kitchen occupies much of the ground floor foot print. Also what looks like a two storey wing against the road on the northern side over the family room, has a hay loft over it connected with the stables behind.
- 7.6 Nick Dermott, a specialist heritage advisor, in his statement on a previous application for the paddock emphasises the modest nature of the original Parapet House thus:-
- “Parapet House, in its original form, is a provincial Georgian building such as might been designed by a competent local builder. It has a symmetrical “presentation” frontage that faces its own land, and beyond that the village centre. The cat-slide roofed outshot to the rear is of more of the rural and vernacular tradition such as would not have been found in a grander house of this period. The position of the house immediately side on to the road, further re-enforces its links with the modest dwellings which dominate the historic core of the settlement. The other “gentry” houses in the village, such as Grove House and the Vicarage are, or were entirely surrounded by their own grounds and sited back from the road. Both of these examples have presentation fronts that address planned landscapes; Parapet House clearly did not.”*
- 7.7 The house looks larger than it is in reality; the rooms are relatively small and there only 4 bedrooms. The garden behind the house and in front is large enough to ensure, in my opinion, the future well-being of occupants and continuance of the residential use as a single dwelling. In evidence of

this opinion I believe that to my knowledge, the paddock has not been used by the residents for at least 10 years. The owners recently cleared it as it was just derelict scrub land. Historically, the balance of evidence is probably that the garden once served as a paddock for the residents of the house to graze horses. Nowadays, this land is clearly redundant and whilst once one could stable the horse on the ground, it is not really large enough to be a sustainable paddock. Parapet House also enjoys a garden which is larger than most gardens in the heart of the village.

7.8 In summary, the house we see today is a product of a series of developments and extensions transforming a modest provincial Georgian house to create a building which looks grander and larger than it is, with its garden and a separate parapet behind.

## **8.0 CURTILAGE OF THE LISTED BUILDING**

8.1 The historical map evidence shows that the original grounds were sufficiently large to have a paddock for the resident's horse until such time in the twentieth century motor transport made the paddock redundant at which time the plans show a strong demarcation between the paddock and house. Unlike many similar larger plots the paddock was not incorporated into the garden of the house, probably because the house has been rented to tenants by the Chilston Estate rather than a property in owner occupancy.

8.2 It is interesting to note that both in the original 1868 and 1897 OS plans the paddock and the area west of the house now used as garden, had Field Parcel Numbers (548 and 549 in the 1868 plan and 694 and 695 in the 1897 plan) which implies the land was in agricultural use, not garden. These numbers were also used for park land such as in around the Swadelands mansion where sheep or deer grazed.

8.3 Parapet House only has one bedroom window in a late twentieth century extension which looks over towards the paddock and architecturally does not relate to the paddock with any of its principal rooms, windows or doors. This suggests that the paddock was never used directly for the enjoyment of the occupants.

- 8.4 Nick Dermott , a former conservation officer for Thanet Council in his statement to accompany the 2006 application also came to the same conclusion:-

*“the historic map evidence would suggest to me that the paddock was never incidental to the enjoyment of Parapet House, that is, within the its curtilage. The house in no respect addresses this land and the present house would have to be substantially altered to achieve an informal relationship with the paddock as a garden. Parapet House is indeed a modest dwelling and the present belt of trees that separate it from the paddock although relatively modern provide in my opinion the relatively generous setting of the house, certainly sufficient to protect its character.”*

- 8.5 There is no stick definition of what is the curtilage of a listed building and each case has to be individually assessed but one has to consider the, physical layout, ownership and historic use or function of the land, whether there is a close association between the house and the land in question, and whether its needed for the satisfactory amenity of the property. Whilst it is seems clear from the historic map evidence that the paddock was probably used in conjunction with the house and part of its “ownership curtilage” after inspection of the house, I would not consider it part of the “curtilage of the listed building” within the meaning of planning legislation. This is because the land almost certainly was a paddock as indicated by the field parcel number not part of a garden; the house does not relate architecturally to the land, and the ownership of the land and house was almost certainly by a large estate landowner who owned much of the village who probably owned adjoining parcels as well.

## **9.0 CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENT**

- 9.1 The proposed development falls within the Lenham Conservation Area and therefore Maidstone planning policy suggests that any development should respect the character of the Conservation Area.





*Photographs of courtyard development off principal roads around Lenham*

- 9.4 The heavily treed frontage of Parapet House along Maidstone Road, however, does contribute to the character of the area by providing an interesting contrast with the denser terraced development towards the historic heart of the village. It marks the end of an historic settlement in the medieval period and the start of the approach to the mansion house in a park setting that once stood at Swadelands on the western edge of the village.



*Photograph of the houses closer to the square along Maidstone Road.*

9.5 There is strong architectural character in the village which include the use of the following materials and architectural forms.

- Red stock brick walls
- Painted brick walls or rendered buildings in white or off-white colours
- Steep tiled roofs and dormers
- Feather edged boarding often painted white
- Painted timber external joinery
- Boundaries defined by walls or post and rail fencing
- Surfaces or courtyards and driveways often covered with brick behaviours of bonded gravel.

9.6 Parapet House with its red brick walls, tiled roofs, and well-proportioned painted joinery contributes to the character of the conservation area as does its setting.

## 10.0 **VIEWS INTO THE SITE**

10.1 The house is most visible as you travel away from the Square on Maidstone Road or from the footpath in front of the garden. It can be glimpsed through the trees from the paddock in winter but is larger obscured by the planting around its garden most of the year. For the general public the lawn and the driveway to the south west of the house form the setting of the house's elevation. The north west walls to the side of the house are hard to the road and therefore also clearly visible.

10.2 However, the paddock is only clearly visible to the public from the footpath running around it, the cricket pitch, and school playing fields. From the Maidstone Road the rising land and the mature belt of trees and shrubs on the west side of Parapet House's garden obscure views into the paddock. It is also very well hidden from distant views around the edge of the village. There are also no identified vistas from the site toward key historic landmarks. I therefore do not consider the paddock to be part of the current setting of the house now the tree belt between the garden and paddock has grown to maturity. This view was supported by the 2006 appeal Inspector.



*View of house from Maidstone Road.*

## **11 The Significance of the Existing Buildings**

### **Introduction**

- 11.1 In this section we discuss the individual buildings in more detail, describing the architectural features, historical and architectural significance, their condition, 'significance' and discussing the impact of the proposed changes. "**Significance**" is the term that Conservationists use to describe the value of a building to this and future generations. It can be used to describe the value of architectural and historical features, as identified by experts, but also the cultural value of a building or group of buildings to the history of the community. Historic fabric is a non-renewable resource which when lost can not be truly replaced. However, some fabric is more significant than other pieces of fabric. It is normal to make an assessment of how significant the fabric is in terms of local, regional, national & international importance. In assessing significance I use the following terminology:-

**Exceptional** – important at national to international levels

**Considerable** – important at regional or sometimes higher level.

**Some or Moderate** – usually of local value but of regional significance for group

**Negligible** – of little heritage value and adds little or nothing to the value of a site

**Negative** – detracts from the heritage value of the site

## 12.0 Surviving Historic Features

- 12.1 The listing description describes most of the significant features of the external building but the interior was not inspected. It picks out the features of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century original house; parapets; regular fenestration of sash windows with rubbed brick arches and the front door with moulded architrave and shallow hood with dentils. It also notes the features of the latter mid-19<sup>th</sup> century addition set back from the front elevation with hipped tiled roof and sash windows with voussoirs. The exterior of the house is therefore of **moderate architectural significance** and as part of the conservation area it is of local significance making a positive contribution to the character of the village.
- 12.2 Inside the house there are relatively few moderately significant surviving significant architectural features, however they include the original 4 panel doors, the original staircase with simple square balusters, and in the sitting room 19<sup>th</sup>-century fireplace and cupboards each side. The rooms are small and ceilings relatively low. These features are typical of a simple modest provincial Georgian house and give it **some significance** but they are not unusual or distinguished examples of early 19<sup>th</sup> century fabric.
- 12.3 The stable block wing to the rear of the house is relatively undisturbed and has an interesting hayloft, which sits above the existing family room which is interesting and of **moderate significance**.
- 12.4 Whilst the historic use of the house is not fully understood, if it was a house for an employee of the local estate this would also add considerable social and historic significance to the property.



*Photograph of the living room*

### **13.0 CONDITION OF THE LISTED BUILDING**

13.1 I inspected Parapet House and found it to be well maintained and no evidence that the listed fabric was at risk. This suggests that continuing the present division of land use between the house and garden and the separate use (or lack of use) of the paddock will not endanger the incentives of the owners to maintain the fabric or wish to alter the current use.

## **PART II**

### **14.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 14.1 In this section I discuss the proposed alterations and analyse the capacity for Parapet House to accept the proposed development without damaging significance. One of the key concepts when working on a historic buildings and historic landscapes, which is reflected in the Government policy and the planning legislation, and accepted conservation good practice, is that there should be no changes to the historic fabric unless it can be shown that there is a reason why change is needed, and care is taken to preserve the building's significance. This principle is not only outlined in the Practice Guide to PPS5 but also in the supplementary planning guidance produced by English Heritage in "Heritage Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment". Not with standing these principles the Government does accept there may be reasons why change is needed to heritage buildings to preserve them and to ensure continued use and maintenance. However legislation charges the authorities to balance any harm done to historic buildings architectural and historic value against the need for change.
- 14.2 There is no evidence that the paddock has ever been used as a garden to Parapet House and it is clearly not large enough to be a sustainable paddock in the future. Therefore, the loss of the ground from the ownership curtilage of the house would have little impact and not prejudice the maintenance and upkeep of the listed building. As mentioned above, I do not believe that the paddock has been in the curtilage of the listed building for a significant period in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into this millennium.
- 14.3 As each year goes by, and the trees and shrubs along the boundary between the garden and the paddock mature, blocking the impact on the amenity and privacy of the house. Reinforcement of this planting belt will also help mitigate the impact of new two storey houses in the paddock.
- 14.4 The principal rooms of the house face away from the paddock and only one bedroom in a relatively modern extension has a window which looks up the

rising ground, through the belt of trees and into the development site. Therefore the impact of new housing in the paddock would be minimal.

- 14.5 It is an established principle in the NPPF and English Heritage guidelines that land heritage assets be they land or property need uses which will ensure their maintenance. It is difficult to envisage what, usefulness the paddock may have if a housing development is not consented.

#### 15.0 **Impact on the Conservation Area**

- 15.1 The addition of new housing behind Parapet House and the trees along its southern boundary, I do not believe would significantly impact on the character of the Conservation Area, since only the oblique and distant views could be seen from the main road.

- 15.2 The footpath around the paddock does obviously have views into the development, but this footpath seems insecure and not supervised at present. The proposed design seeks to keep an area of open green in the south east corner of the site, as well as the mature trees to mitigate the change in the character of the paddock and the new houses would add security and supervision of the path.

- 15.3 The Inspector's decision in 2006, paragraph 18 accepts that the paddock is not part of the historic setting of the House :-

'In my view, the setting of the House includes the substantial existing garden area between Maidstone Road and the dense line of trees and shrubs that separates it from the paddock. I recognise that this screening was only planted some 30 or 40 years ago and may not always be there. However, this does not affect my opinion that the paddock is not part of the historic setting of the House. I am mindful also that the area of the paddock closest to the House is not proposed for development. In this context, I conclude that neither appeal proposal would harm the setting of Parapet House.'

15.4 However, he does in paragraph 14, feel that the appeal site in conjunction with the adjacent area of open space, make a contribution to the Conservation Area :-

'In my view the appeal site and the rest of the paddock in conjunction with the adjacent areas of open space make a significant contribution to the Conservation Area and its immediate setting. They have a rural character that contrasts with the dense pattern of development in the centre and provides a buffer between its historic core and the more modern development beyond. I consider the sub-division of the paddock and the introduction of development adjacent to the footpath would damage these distinctive qualities to the detriment of the appearance of the locality'.

It is relevant that the Local Planning Authority has recently granted planning permission (subject to a Section 106 Agreement being completed) for a development comprising 24 dwellings on the adjoining undeveloped land that is referred to in the earlier appeal decision. This recently consented site is wholly within the Conservation Area and is in closer proximity to listed buildings which adjoin it via the application site to Parapet House.

15.5 However, this conclusion is countered because surrounding the paddock is a cricket pitch, scrub land and school playing fields – whereas the modern development lies to the north and south of the site beyond the playing fields, Parapet House and the cricket pitch. The front garden of the House clearly provides a green buffer on the way out of the village. The paddock only marginally contributes to this transitional buffer. If the paddock was surrounded by the modern development it would function as a buffer, but in my view the real buffer is the cricket ground, school and the front garden of Parapet House. There are no important vistas toward key historic buildings elsewhere in the conservation area that are provided from the application site. Therefore, I conclude that the development of the paddock to meet the housing needs of the area, would only have a very marginal impact on the Conservation Area's character.

15.6 The choice of materials reflects those used in the Conservation Area including:-

- Red stock brick walls

- Painted brick walls or rendered buildings in white or off white colours
- Steep tiled roofs and dormers
- Feather edged boarding often painted white
- Painted timber external joinery
- Boundaries defined by walls or post and rail fencing
- Bonded gravel and brick paver driveway.

## **16.0 CONCLUSION**

16.1 The paddock behind Parapet House is hardly visible from the principal views in the Conservation Area, and any development here to meet the identified needs for housing in the village would have minimal impact. It is a sustainable site close to shops, schools and transport and whilst it once was used as a paddock for the house this close association has been broken and no longer viable. The new housing behind the house would not jeopardise the maintenance and upkeep of the house or significantly impact the amenity of the owners or the houses setting.

**Nicholas Lee Evans**  
**Lee Evans Partnership LLP**  
**June 2015**

## Listing Descriptions.

<b>Cross-ref.</b>	<b>Source description</b>
---	Scheduling record: English Heritage. List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
<1>	Monograph: West, J.. 1973. The Windmills of Kent. Windmills of Kent 1979 91 (J.West).
<2>	Unpublished document: Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit. 2002. Water & Sewage Industries Step 3 Report. Kent 3.
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	TQ 8964 5225
<b>Map Sheet:</b>	TQ85SE
<b>Parish:</b>	LENHAM, MAIDSTONE, KENT

LENHAM MAIDSTONE ROAD TQ 8952 (south side) 10/213 Parapet **House** 26.4.68. II House. Early C19 with early-to-mid C19 addition. Red brick with plain tile roof. At right-angles to road. 2 storeys with eaves band and plain brick-coped parapet. Hipped roof. Rear stack to right. Regular fenestration of 3 recessed glazing-bar sashes with rubbed brick voussoirs. Door with fielded panels in moulded archi- trave with shallow flat dentilled hood and 2-light rectangular fanlight. C19 addition to right, set back from front elevation; 2 storeys red brick with hipped plain tile roof and one recessed glazing-bar sash with rubbed brick voussoirs. Lower 2-storey addition to rear, with one 3-light ground-floor casement to road. Interior not inspected.  
Listing NGR: TQ8964952256

English Heritage, *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* (Scheduling record)