

Hastings Draft Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) Consultation 2026 – Response form

Part B: Complete this part for each comment you make (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Which part of the Plan or evidence base are you commenting on (enter policy number, paragraph or section)?

Strategic Policy SP7
And Sustainable Communities SC5 - 8:
Hastings Heritage Strategy and Action Plan
Strategic Objectives SO1 – 4 inclusive

Do you support or object to the policy, paragraph or section?

Support Object Comment

If your response is over 100 words, please enter an optional summary here (up to 100 words)

West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area should be more actively included within the planning of Hastings Borough Council, with investment to protect and celebrate its historical heritage, both in buildings and in memories as an important part of the borough, with its own history.

Enter your comments here (provide evidence/ references where possible, and tell us what changes you suggest that would address your concerns)

SP7, supported by the Strategic Objectives with the Hastings Heritage Strategy and Action Plan, sets out important strategies which are relevant for West St Leonards, but there is virtually no reference to West St Leonards and the history of West St Leonards Neighbourhood Area is mostly ignored, suggesting that the plan will continue to support development elsewhere in the borough, particularly in the Old and New town centres of Hastings.

In particular

- (a) There is reference to the St Mary's Church Ruin,
but not to:
- (b) the Bull Inn with its long history in the community on Galley Hill
- (c) the ancient history of the area, the changing estuary of Combe Haven, with inland ports pre Roman as well as Viking times
- (d) The pilgrims' paths across the estuary
- (e) The wreck of the Amsterdam, a registered wreck and an important part of the history of West St Leonards and the wider borough
- (f) The smuggling history of West St Leonards, which is much more realistic and likely than the <smugglers'> caves in Old Hastings, which would not have been practical for smugglers. In particular smuggling has been linked to the Bull Inn, with a tunnel from the beach to the Inn. The Bo-peep Pub,

whose name recalls the customs men, is also implicated. The tails of the sheep in the poem refer to the smugglers' swag.

- (g) the recent 19th and 20th Century industrial history, in particular around the development of the railways as well as a light industrial centre for Hastings – the steam laundry, brick works, and just outside the borough boundary the gas works, now the site of the Ravenside Shopping Centre
- (h) The leisure industry – reference is made to the St Leonards Pier and the Bathing Pool – but both have been lost and little interest has been shown by the Borough in enabling the area to develop. The particular case of the Bathing Pool site is dealt with separately in this response

The strategy and action plan needs to include reference to the needs of West St Leonards. The heritage aspects overlap with the sections on Green Spaces, Connectivity and the Economy.

As well as designating Local Green Spaces because of their heritage value, it is also possible to draw up and assess a list of non-designated heritage assets in the neighbourhood plan area over and above the existing listed buildings (see Historic England). These can then have a policy which requires the owner to seek planning consent if they aim to make any changes that would impact on the heritage asset.

With this in mind the forum are proposing a specific policy for non-designated heritage assets as follows:

Policy En3: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Development proposals that affect an identified non-designated heritage asset (listed below) should demonstrate how the proposal will preserve or enhance the significance of the asset. Where a proposal would demonstrably harm a non-designated heritage asset, the damage caused to the identity and character of the assets will be weighed against the overall benefits that would arise from the proposed development.

The Forum is in the process of identifying the particular sites and the current draft list is as follows:

Buildings

St Ethelburga Church, St Saviour's Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0AS

Early 20th Century church in a prominent location at the junction of Filsham Road and St Saviour's Road, constructed in 1929. Of local architectural and community importance, the church was designed by local architect, John Bernard Mendham (1886-1951), who is well known locally as the architect responsible for the designing of the now demolished Regal Cinema on London Road, St Leonards, the Roman Catholic Church of St. Anthony of Padua at Rye and St. Michael and All Angels at Bexhill. The building is traditional in design with elevations of brick and stone beneath a tiled roof. However, the interior of the roof was constructed to resemble that of a traditional Sussex Tithe Barn which adds to the character of the building.

Sources: <https://www.stethelburga.org.uk/stethelburgaparischurch.htm>;
<https://sussexparishchurches.org/architectsandartistsm/>

Tram sheds, the Old Tram Depot, Bexhill Road, St Leonards on Sea, TN38 8BG

Formerly known as Bulverhythe Depot, the Hastings and District Electric Tramway tram depot tram sheds dating from 1906 still contains the original tramlines providing one of the few remnants of the tramway which opened in 1905 and operated until 1929, when trolleybuses replaced the trams. This was the second tram depot in the area which was built when services started between St Leonard's and Bexhill in April 1906.

Sources: <https://1066.net/trolley/evidence.htm> ; <https://www.tramway.co.uk/2025/07/31/120-years-since-the-opening-of-the-hastings-and-district-electric-tramway/> ;
<https://www.bexhillmuseum.org.uk/access-centre/bexhill-transport-and-engineering/trams/>

Other buildings to consider:

19-59 West Hill Road (south side)
 67-71 West Hill Road (south side)
 50-78 West Hill Road (north side terrace)
 Green opposite 60-72 West Hill Road
 Cliff Cottage below the green on West Hill Road
 72-109, 110 Marina
 128-146 Marina
 19-22 Grosvenor Crescent

Landscape and structures**West Marina Gardens (also known as Grosvenor gardens)**

West Marina Gardens are a 1.5ha triangular public green space formed by the Sea Road esplanade to the south, Grosvenor Gardens to the west and Grosvenor Crescent along the north eastern side. Opened in 1891 by Hastings Corporation for public leisure and recreation, they made use of land newly-raised for coastal defence by spoil from railway tunnelling. Surviving largely as originally laid out, they comprise mainly open lawns with a perimeter path and include two seating shelters installed a few years later and the bowls club introduced in 1906. The Gardens contribute to the overall scenic quality of the main coastal road and are of historic interest for their social significance from providing construction work for unemployed labour, hosting military parades in WWI, converting to allotments in WWII and providing recreation for local people throughout their life. Since 1953, the Gardens have provided the setting for Charles Wilke's 1895 marble sculpture of Harold and Edith after the battle of Hastings and a link with the Brasseys, an influential family in Hastings in the second half of the C19 and early C20, (listed separately below).

Source: <https://www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/West-Marina-Gardens-Hastings.pdf>

Statue of King Harold and Edith Swan Neck

Marble sculpture of Harold and Edith ('Edith Finding the Body of Harold on the Battlefield of Hastings') located, since 1953, at the east end of West Marina Gardens. Made in 1875 by Charles Wilke for Lord Brassey, who was MP for Hastings at the time, it was gifted to the town for display in the Town Hall but never reached that destination and has been in various buildings in the town. From the 1930s onwards it has been located outside exposed to the elements, causing severe weathering to its surfaces and the loss of all fine detailing of. The sculpture is of significance for its link with the Brasseys, its rarity as Wilke's only known public sculpture and its role in providing local identity and distinctiveness, linking to the story of the battle of Hastings. A community group, the Friends of Edith now help protect the statue from further erosion and preserve it for future generations.

Sources: <https://friendsofedith.org.uk/>;
<https://pssauk.org/public-sculpture-of-britain/biography/wilke-charles-augustus-william/>

Hastings and St Leonards bathing pool site

Two raised, concrete paved plinths on the south-east and south-west corners of the rectangular site remain as remnants of the original 1933 bathing pool, which closed to public use in 1986 and was demolished by 1993. Designed and built by Sidney Little, the Borough Engineer, it has local significance as a prominent example of his contributions to the town. The design of the now lost building, intended to resemble a modern version of a Greek or Roman amphitheatre with curved, stepped terracing for spectators on one side and a curved deck for sunbathing on the other,

represented what has come to be seen as a transitional phase in lido design. It is also of historic interest for its social significance as the pool was hugely popular with residents and visitors to the town. It hosted swimming galas, beauty pageants and many national swimming and diving championships playing host to many international stars over the years. Tommy Mather the highboard diving champion from the 1934 Empire Games who introduced new methods of diving training including the use of belts and trampolines was recruited to manage the facility. Winifred Gibson a well known fitness expert of the time held her exercise classes on the decks of the pool. The wider site remains open to the public as a large open grassed area for informal recreation.

Source: <https://www.hastingsinfofocus.co.uk/2021/10/26/concrete-king/>

Wealden sandstone wall - West Hill Road

Sandstone wall approximately 1.4m high located on the southern boundary of the West Hill Road footpath from 117 Sovereign House in the east to the boundary with the Watling Tyres site to the west. Originally the boundary wall to the series of convalescent homes and the Eversfield Hospital buildings on the cliff top in this location, the wall has remained mostly intact as the boundary to these sites, in some cases long after the buildings have been demolished. The wall is a feature contributing to the local character and is a reminder of locally important heritage buildings and the social functions they provided to the area.

Sussex steps

Located adjacent to no.71 West Hill Road and now ending adjacent to the house called Sol I Mar, Sussex Steps, constructed in the 1870's when residential development started in West Hill Road as part of the expansion westwards of St Leonards, originally connected the newly developing West Hill Road to Caves Road and the seafront. Although the bottom half of the steps was destroyed by landslides in 2000, the remnant of the steps at the top end is a locally important feature.

There were comments at the exhibition on March 28 2026 about the benefits of reinstating the Sussex Steps as a good pedestrian access from West Hill Road and the surrounding residential area to the sea.

Source: <https://bsls.org.uk/blog/west-hill-road-in-the-1870s/>

St Leonards West Marina station platform

http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/s/st.leonards_west_marina/

The eastbound platform is still intact and it may still retain a line of original lampposts

There are these specific possibilities

- (a) Develop the old Bathing Pool Site as a destination site for visitors and local people
- (b) Improve the shopping area in Bexhill Road
- (c) Improve access to West St Leonards Station
- (d) Expand West St Leonards Station with a platform on the Bexhill line, east of the old West Marina Station
- (e) Throughout West St Leonards improve cycle routes – both east west and north south as well as bus and train services
- (f) Improve signposting
- (g) Designate and protect the open spaces in West St Leonards.
- (h) Designate and protect Heritage Sites in West St Leonards.

All comments will be taken into account ahead of the next stage, the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Plan, due to be published later in 2026.