

**Goudhurst and Kilndown
Conservation Areas Appraisal
Supplementary Planning Document**



Adopted
June 2006

Gourdhurst and Kilndown Conservation Areas Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document

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1 Introduction

Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

- 1.1 The first conservation areas were designated in England under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and more than 9,500 now exist. Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'
- 1.2 Conservation areas are diverse in size and character, but in general it is the quality and interest of the area that is of importance, rather than the individual buildings or features within it. Such designation gives the Authority greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements in the conservation area. However, it also brings certain responsibilities. Under the terms of the 1990 Act, local authorities have a duty to review the extent of designation from time to time, to designate further areas if appropriate, to bring forward proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas (with public consultation) and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.
- 1.3 It is not just the local planning authority that has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area who are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, features and land which together contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- 1.4 Designation also raises awareness of an area's special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. Government planning guidance stresses that our built and natural heritage should be valued and protected for their own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that the responsibility for environmental stewardship is shared by everyone.
- 1.5 New development and change can take place in conservation areas, but designation should ensure that such proposals will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area.

Purpose and Status of this Appraisal

- 1.6 The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation Areas can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Local Plan, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the Conservation Areas. These two Conservation Areas have been included within the same document as they are within the same parish.

- 1.7 The character of a settlement is determined by more than just the age and style of buildings. It is also influenced by the positioning of the buildings, their use, the shape, size and use of spaces between them, the materials, colours and textures employed. Topography and the relationship between the built form and the landscape elements are also key elements of settlement character.
- 1.8 In addition, the Appraisal records some of the principal elements that detract from the appearance or historic character of the Conservation Areas. These detractors include development which is out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Areas, unkempt buildings and spaces, poor surfacing, inappropriate street furniture, clutter of street signs and inappropriate advertisements on business premises. These provide the basis for potential future actions for improvement and preparing enhancement proposals as set out in section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 1.9 The Borough Council is also required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as part of the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is to ensure conformity with other higher-level strategies and policies, to identify any sustainability issues and to ensure that the Supplementary Planning Document is as sustainable as possible. This is set out more fully in Section 12 of this document.
- 1.10 This Appraisal has been prepared in close partnership with a team of local people over a number of months and been subject to public consultation, This is set out more fully in Section 11 of this document.
- 1.11 This Supplementary Planning Document forms part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework, which is set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. It has been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for development control purposes and will guide the Local Planning Authority in making decisions about planning applications within, or affecting the setting of, the Conservation Areas. The Appraisal will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the Goudhurst and Kildown Conservation Areas, such as the County and Borough Councils and local traders and householders.

Goudhurst and Kildown Conservation Areas

- 1.12 The Parish of Goudhurst lies within the Kentish High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape in this area is generally one of undulating ridges and gentle valleys lying between the North and South Downs; a patchwork of orchards, hops, arable field and of pasture with scattered copses, and some more extensive areas of deciduous woodland. There are also historic parklands associated with major landowners.
- 1.13 The heavy clays of the High Weald have generally restricted historic roads and paths and settlements to the drier higher ground or ridge tops. Goudhurst and Kildown are no exception, with Goudhurst providing a dramatic example of this characteristic.
- 1.14 Goudhurst lies some 16.3 km (10 miles) south east of Royal Tunbridge Wells and 28.6km (17.7 miles) south west of Maidstone on the A262. The B2079, which passes through the village, leads to Bedgebury, Flimwell and the A21 to the south and Horsmonden and Winchet Hill to the north. Cranbrook lies 8.5km (5.3 miles) to the south east.

- 1.15 Kildown lies on a minor north south road 3.2km (2.0 miles) south west of Goudhurst and just a short distance north of the A21. There are direct road links east to Bedgebury and a number of footpaths west onto the Scotney Estate.
- 1.16 Goudhurst was originally designated as a conservation area in February 1970 and reassessed in January 1992. Kildown was designated separately as a conservation area in October 1981.

Boundary Review

- 1.17 As part of this Appraisal, the boundaries of the Conservation Areas were critically reviewed in accordance with section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local planning authorities – 'from time to time to determine whether any further parts of the area should be designated.'
- 1.18 Some changes have been made, with extensions to include additional areas and buildings which contribute to the special character, eg White's Farm to the south of Goudhurst, together with minor adjustments to match identifiable features on the ground and properly include trees and curtilages.
- 1.19 The wider landscape setting, which is important to the character of both Conservation Areas, remains outside the boundary, as it is currently protected through Local Plan policies and other designations, particularly the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Goudhurst's visual prominence makes it a particularly important part of the landscape of the High Weald in this area.

2 Policy Background

Local Plan Conservation Area Policies

- 2.1 There are two policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (adopted March 2006), which relate to conservation areas. Policy EN4 seeks to control the demolition of buildings within conservation areas.

POLICY EN4

Development involving proposals for the total or partial demolition of unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character of a conservation area will not be permitted unless an overriding case can be made out against all of the following criteria:

- 1 The condition of the building, and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use;**
- 2 The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, including efforts to find compatible alternative uses;**
- 3 The merits of alternative proposals for the site, and whether there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment; and**
- 4 Whether redevelopment will produce substantial planning benefits for the community, including economic regeneration or environmental enhancement.**

- 2.2 Policy EN5 sets out criteria for determining whether a development is appropriate within a conservation area.

POLICY EN5

Proposals for development within, or affecting the character of, a conservation area will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1 The proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces and vegetation which combine to form the character and appearance of the area;**
- 2 The siting of the development would be similar to adjoining building frontage lines where this is important to the character of the conservation area;**
- 3 The layout and arrangement of the building(s) would follow the pattern of existing development and spacing of adjoining plot widths where this is important to the character of the conservation area;**
- 4 The scale, massing, use of materials, detailing, boundary treatment and landscaping would preserve or enhance the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;**
- 5 The use, or intensity of use, would be in sympathy with the character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;**

- 6 The proposal would not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; and
- 7 In meeting the parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.

- 2.3 The detailed character appraisal contained in this document will assist in the interpretation of these Policies.

Other Local Plan Policies

- 2.4 There are a number of other general and specific policies in the Local Plan which are relevant to the Goudhurst and Kildown Conservation Areas. Specific policy designations are set out in detail in the Local Plan and the Proposals Map. They can be summarised as follows:

Limits to Built Development

Under Policy LBD1, the Limits to Built Development define the built up edge of Goudhurst and Kildown villages, beyond which a series of countryside policies apply.

Landscape Protection

Policies EN 26 & 27 protect the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the High Weald Special Landscape Area, which wash over the whole of the area of Goudhurst and Kildown.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

Proposals affecting areas designated under Policy EN15 will only be permitted where the nature conservation interest of the site would be protected.

Areas of Important Open Space and Areas of Landscape Importance

Policies EN21 and EN22 recognise the visual significance of open and landscaped areas within the Limits to Built Development of settlements.

Local Shopping Areas

Policy CR13 seeks to maintain the vitality and viability of the local area through the retention of particular uses, which serve local community needs in the village centres.

Shop Fronts

Policy EN6 seeks to ensure that traditional shop fronts are retained in the conservation areas and any new ones are in sympathy with the character of the area.

Advertisements

Policy EN7 seeks to ensure that advertisement proposals would not be detrimental to the appearance of the conservation areas.

Car Park

The existing car parking area in Goudhurst will be retained under Policy TP27.

Outdoor Lighting

[Figures 1 to 4]

Lighting can be a particularly sensitive issue in conservation areas and in countryside locations. Policy EN8 seeks to ensure that any proposals are appropriate.

Other Designations

- 2.5** Finally, there are designations that are made through other legislation. These are shown on the accompanying Heritage Designations maps, and include listed buildings and tree preservation orders. It is advisable to check with the Borough Council on detailed enquiries, as these designations are subject to changes.

3 Evolution and Form of Goudhurst and Kildown

Pre-Conquest

- 3.1 Goudhurst and Kildown lie only 3.2km (2 miles) apart in the High Weald, with Goudhurst to the north and Kildown to the south, and they share an interconnected history and common evolution. People were using the High Weald from as early as the Bronze Age and the villages probably originated as clearings in the great forest of 'Anderida' that covered the Weald until the Saxon period.
- 3.2 Goudhurst and Kildown are situated within the early Saxon administrative division of the Scray Lathe and the later division of the Marden Hundred.
- 3.3 Little is known of the early form of these settlements. However, the use of the High Weald is better understood. The Saxons are known to have used the Weald for swine pasture. Swine were brought into the wooded high weald pastures known as 'dens', to feed on acorns, in a right known as 'pannage'. These seasonal pasture movements created radial lanes, or droves, that survive as the road system and Rights of Ways that we see today. The seasonal returning to the wood pastures led to more permanent settlements, of which Goudhurst may represent an example.
- 3.4 The name Kildown appears in a number of different forms, including Gilden Down and Killdown. Kildown takes its name in part from the ridge or down it lies on and perhaps latterly from the charcoal kilns which were required to make iron. This industry is known to have origins in the Romano-British period within the Weald and intensified over the years to its height in the post-medieval period. The village may have started as temporary camps from which the workers would produce the charcoal and moved to a more permanent and substantial settlement as the demand became greater.

Norman Conquest

- 3.5 The origin of the name Goudhurst is unclear, but it may mean 'battle wood'. 'Hurst' (or hyrst) means separated wood, but the origins of 'goud' may originate from the Old English guo, meaning battle. The name may commemorate battle(s) which were fought here in early times. The earliest record of a name is 'Guithyrste' and dates from 1095. The settlement name changes over the 13th century from Guthurst/Gulherste, Gudhersten to Guthurste (KCC, 2003).
- 3.6 Although the settlement is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, the church is listed in the Domesday Monachorum, compiled at roughly the same time. The church carries an early dedication to St Mary the Virgin and it has been suggested that the church may have earlier Saxon origins (KCC, 2003). The first rector of Goudhurst is recorded in 1160 and in 1119 the church was bequeathed to the Canons of Leeds Priory, who held it until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century.
- 3.7 Minimal investigations into the early history of Kildown have left a number of gaps in the knowledge of the origin of this area, although the pattern and layout suggest an early history allied to that of Goudhurst. The nearby manor of Bedgebury, one of the oldest in Kent, has existed since AD 815. It is this manor to which the village was associated in the post-medieval period when the Culpepers owned the manor.

- 3.8 A few miles south of Goudhurst was the Priory of Combwell, established by Austin Canons by 1160. Very little remains of the Priory; however, within the Conservation Area the building now the Star and Eagle was formerly the monastic house attached to the church. The original church entrance was from the south, where Back Lane now runs (the original east-west route skirted the church). From the churchyard path you can see the door leading out into the churchyard where the old flagged path to the monastic house survives.
- 3.9 By the end of the 13th century, Goudhurst was an established village with a well-established farming community. It is recorded in 1255 that John de Hope was found crushed in a marl pit, which may relate to lime fertiliser for agriculture, or was part of the iron industry. The pond in the old market place and east of the Old Parsonage may be the relict elements of these early marl pits, although their date is unknown.

14th Century

- 3.10 In 1380 a fire burnt down much of Goudhurst, leaving very few remains of the early settlement. Only the church retains some of its thirteenth century masonry. The Canons of the Priory of Leeds were asked for money to help rebuild the settlement.
- 3.11 It is from this period that the settlement became a village. The local economy relied heavily on farming and by 1309 the village had a weekly market held on a Wednesday and an annual fair. This market and fair were granted during the reign of Edward II to Joane, widow of Roger de Bedgebury. The original market and fairs were held in the triangular area on the Plain. The land is delineated by the converging land routes, and the village pond lay in its apex.
- 3.12 Stallholders at both the market and the fairs paid rents to the Bedgebury family, but by the late fourteenth century Goudhurst market paid an annual rent to the Manor of Marden. Most of the parish of Goudhurst was held by the Manor of Marden (which the Hundred is named after), who rented it to various sub-holders, such as the Bedgebury family.
- 3.13 During this period, Goudhurst was one of the Wealden villages that prospered greatly after the arrival of the Flemish weavers, encouraged by Edward III to teach their skills to Englishmen. Weaving became the primary local industry, together with the wool trade from local sheep, giving rise to a period of prosperity that lasted almost three hundred years.
- 3.14 In the 14th century (1341), the Archbishop of Canterbury decreed that the annual tithe due to the Vicar of Goudhurst should include "onions and all other herbs sown in gardens". This led to a local argument about whether hop should be included among other herbs; the vicar and his supporters believed they should and the argument went their way with the result that, ever since, Kent hops have been said to grow in gardens rather than in fields or yards. The 'gardens' associated with many of the buildings are the remnants of these early hops plots, centred around the core of the Conservation Areas.
- 3.15 The villages were also in the Kentish iron-working region. The nearby Manor of Bedgebury had a famous foundry owned by the ubiquitous Culpeper family, which cast guns for the fleet that fought the Spanish Armada in 1588.

- 3.16 Goudhurst is at the centre of the Culpeper sites within Kent and Sussex, and was originally owned by the de Bedgebury family until 1450, when the Culpeper family purchased the estate. The Culpeper memorial is the most prominent in Goudhurst Church, commemorating four generations, but the painted effigies of the ironmaster, Sir Thomas Culpeper and his wife, form a rare monument of its kind.
- 3.17 The earliest memorial in St Mary's Church, Goudhurst, is a brass plate on the floor commemorating John, son of John de Bedgebury, who died in 1424. His home, Bedgebury Manor, was one of the oldest manors in England. His memorial shows him in a full suit of plate armour with his feet resting upon a lion. John de Bedgebury was recorded at the battle of Agincourt where he 'took five archers into the field'.

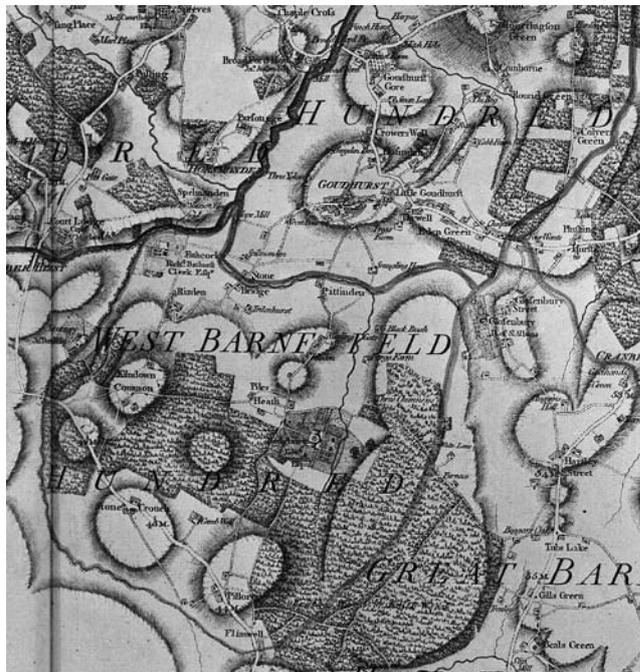
1500–1800

- 3.18 By the beginning of the post-medieval period, Goudhurst had a thriving cloth-making industry, a newly emerging iron-working trade and a strong agricultural base.
- 3.19 The prosperity of the 16th century led to a number of houses in Goudhurst, including Church House and Church Cottage and tenement plots along the north side of the High Street, the north side of the churchyard and east of North Road to name a few, being established along the Church Road, West Road, High Street and Balcombes Hill. It suggests that the use of Back Lane as the main road through Goudhurst had waned, with the creation of High Street. The Star and Eagle Inn is known to have been an inn since at least 1600, when it was called the Black Eagle Spread.
- 3.20 Locals will tell you that if you climb the top of Goudhurst church tower you will be able to see no fewer than 51 other churches from Romney Marsh to the North Downs. Some say it is 68 churches, but perhaps that was before the church tower was rebuilt, less loftily after the older one was struck by lightning in 1637.
- 3.21 John Speed's Map of 1610 depicts the village of Goudhurst (shown on the map as *Goodhurst*) and suggests that the settlement was considered to be of significance within the wider region. The 1769 Map by Andrews, Drury and Herbert shows how the location of the church would have served both Little Goudhurst, otherwise known as Tattlebury, in the north east part of the Conservation Area, and Goudhurst proper. Little Goudhurst appears as a cluster of large farmsteads and includes Maypole and Tattlebury House in the Conservation Area.
- 3.22 By the 18th century, after moving several times, the weekly Wednesday market failed and the annual fairs were reduced to one, and this was abolished in 1886 after a decline in the cloth and iron industry.
- 3.23 Kilndown's history and development is better known for this period than its earlier developments through its associations with the Bedgebury Estate and the later landowners, the Culpepers.



View from St. Mary's Church, Goudhurst

- 3.24 It was not until the 16th century that iron working became established in the Weald of Kent, and by 1574 two furnaces were established near Goudhurst: Sir Alexander Culpeper's furnace at Bedgebury, and Thomas Darrell of Scotney owned Chingley forge and furnace from 1574 to 1589 (now under the Bewl Reservoir). Sir Alexander encouraged iron foundries ('Furnace and Forge Farms') on his estate and cast guns for the fleet, which defeated the Spanish Armada. Kildown was the hamlet that produced the charcoal and provided workers for the estate.
- 3.25 Charcoal burners and their families lived where they worked, setting up rudimentary dwellings of wood and turf for the duration of their stay in that particular area. Although not necessarily labour intensive, charcoal production required constant supervision during the three days it took for each kiln to burn through. This industry was short-lived and was superseded in the eighteenth century by coke smelting.
- 3.26 The 1769 map by Andrews, Drury and Herbert shows Kildown as a number of farmsteads and associated gardens, and to the west of the site of the historic Bedgebury Manor (which was demolished by the 19th century). The map also indicates potential structures to the south of the former common and a number of large farmsteads to the south west of the modern settlement. An east-west routeway leads from the centre of the village towards the outskirts of the Bedgebury Estate to a settlement known as Piles Heath (this route survives today as Rogers Rough Road) which was probably part of the iron working process, and is thought to have been used as storage for either coppiced trees or charcoal, or both.



Andrews, Drury and Herbert Map
1769

1800–2005

- 3.27 Smuggling flourished throughout the Weald and in 1747 the whole area was being terrorised by the notorious Hawkhurst gang, led by the Kingsmill brothers, Thomas and George. The reign of terror ended when the Goudhurst villagers resisted the gang in an armed struggle led by an ex-army corporal William Sturt. On Monday 20th April 1747, the villagers fought the gang and won, with one of the brothers killed in battle and the other hanged a year later.

- 3.28 During the 18th century the villages fell into depression following the decline of the weaving and iron industries and fell back upon the increasing importance of the local fruit and hop growing industries.
- 3.29 In Victorian times, the villages became a boisterous and colourful annual hop-picking spree when thousands of Londoners and their families flocked to the country for the autumnal hopping, a tradition which lasted until the mid-twentieth century. Some hops are still grown in the area, but there has been a drastic decline in production over the past decades. The Hops Marketing Board was inaugurated in the rooms of the Vine Hotel, Goudhurst. [HIST/4 Hop Pickers in Goudhurst, 1950s]
- 3.30 In 1836, Bedgebury was purchased by Marshal Viscount Beresford, one of the field commanders of Wellington in the Napoleonic Wars. It was under his ownership that the church at Kilndown was built in 1841 to provide nearby religious services for the estate workers and to signify the importance of the estate. [HIST/3 Kilndown]
- 3.31 The historic maps of Andrews, Drury and Herbert (1769) and Ordnance Survey maps (1867–1969) of the area show that little development has occurred within the villages. Goudhurst remains relatively small, having not experienced the growth like some of the other market settlements in Kent, with little building outside the historic core and, where there is building, it is largely of 19th and 20th century in origin.
- 3.32 The expansion of Goudhurst and Kilndown in these centuries is due in part to the creation of the railway from Cranbrook in 1892. This line was extended in 1900 to Hawkhurst and became part of the South Eastern Railway. The line and station at Hope Mill were closed in 1961.
- 3.33 The population of Goudhurst remained constant over the last two centuries, only once rising above 3,000 in 1911. Emigration of Kentish workers and their families to the Dominions and America coincide with this stagnation and the lack of workers left a relatively agricultural community, with little or no industry.
- 3.34 During WWII, Goudhurst was a nodal point for the eastern command line and as such was a focus of command for this area of Kent. Little changed within the village during WWII, although in 1940 two parachute bombs destroyed most of the glass in St Mary's Church, Goudhurst, and now only a small panel of salvaged 15th century glass remains.
- 3.35** Relicts of the early historic landscape features survive within the Conservation Areas. Many of the roads, footways, ponds and garden plots are testament to the beginnings and development of these villages. In Goudhurst, the lack of development has left an historic core with many of its medieval features intact, and the village is a heritage asset to the county of Kent as a well-preserved historic Kentish settlement. Kilndown, by contrast with Goudhurst, remains a quiet village and, despite the imposing church, retains a strong rural character.

4 Landscape Setting of Goudhurst and Kildown

- 4.1 Goudhurst and Kildown are situated in, and surrounded by, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), including the High Weald, are nationally important designations for landscape and scenic beauty. Historic and unspoilt settlements like Goudhurst and Kildown, which have a strong historical and continuing relationship with the surrounding landscape, are an integral part of the character of the High Weald AONB.
- 4.2 The predominant geology of the High Weald is a series of hard sandstone strata underlain by heavy clays, giving rise to a high plateau and a combination that occurs across the High Weald of sandstone ridges and clay vales. The Teise cuts a flat river floodplain between the steep slopes of the upland plateau, which elsewhere is incised by steep and narrow ghyll valleys. Goudhurst lies on a high round-topped sandstone ridge with the highest point in the village at about 127M AOD and is set above the Teise valley, which lies to the west at about 30M AOD. Occupying one of the most dramatic hilltop locations in the High Weald, Goudhurst is a familiar and visible feature over a wide area. There are numerous locations within the village that offer panoramic views and/or glimpses between buildings over the surrounding countryside.
- 4.3 The village of Goudhurst spreads down from the ridge top and is clustered around the main crossroads below the church, but spreads further down the south west facing slopes with a prominent area of 20th century development. The surrounding rural area is typified by intricate patchworks of fields and hedgerows with wooded streams and lanes scattered with farm buildings and large country houses, including oast houses and ancient timber-framed Wealden hall houses. Farms are frequently large-scale buildings, often in association with barns and fruit packing sheds. Land cover is varied and includes orchard, hop gardens, pasture and arable fields. Orchards, and particularly hop gardens, have declined over recent decades, but tall windbreaks planted for these crops remain. Traditionally, the windbreaks were of alder and poplar, but the area around Goudhurst has a concentration of more recent plantings of Leyland Cypress conifer. Notorious for their quick growth and large size when mature, Leyland Cypress hedges need regular pruning to maintain their shape and control their size. Where hops and orchards have gone, many of these conifer hedges are now unmanaged and are becoming strong features in their own right. Unfortunately, these hedges do not interact well with the local flora and fauna and locally reduce light and restrict views.
- 4.4 The steeper slopes immediately surrounding the village of Goudhurst are covered by semi-improved pasture which stand out from the more intensively managed surrounding land. These areas are particularly important below North Road, Maypole Lane and around Balcombes Hill. Significant groups of trees occur in conjunction with these slopes on the edge of settlement, and frame views of the village, with many containing evergreen or large ornamental trees associated with historical buildings. These include a large group around Clay Hill and The Knowle, trees along Balcombes Hill and south of The Parsonage and trees around Tattlebury House. From between these groups of trees, and from the ridge top above, there are panoramic views across the surrounding countryside, particularly across the Teise valley to the west and successive dark wooded ridges of Bedgebury Forest to the south east.



View over High Weald from Goudhurst



View between buildings to High Weald beyond

- 4.5 Kildown, at about 110M AOD, lies upon the middle of a long, narrow and heavily wooded sandstone ridge about 3.2km (2 miles) to the south west of Goudhurst, and is reached from Goudhurst by crossing a small ghyll valley stream (a tributary of the Teise) and the line of the former Hawkhurst railway. The character of the landscape as one crosses the ghyll valley changes from the orchards and pasture around Goudhurst to one of expansive woodland and wooded farmland with pastures and shaws. To the west, and following the boundary of Ranters Lane/West Road, are the managed woodlands of the Scotney Estate, an historic parkland now owned by the National Trust, that prohibit any views westward from Kildown. To the south east is the historic Estate of Bedgebury, with the vast Forestry Commission-owned Bedgebury Forest beyond. The slopes around Kildown are less severe and dramatic than those around Goudhurst and woodland dominates the ridge tops, giving rise to a more enclosed and secretive landscape. Goudhurst can be seen from the northern edge of the village, but no other settlements can be seen from on the ground at Kildown. Kildown, obscured by trees to views from the wider landscape, can, however, be discerned by the church spire and prominent trees in the surrounding woodland. Important in these views and from within Kildown in maintaining the wooded character of Kildown are the few large trees in the village, particularly those around the church and Quarry Pond.
- 4.6 The character of the distinctive landscape that surrounds both Goudhurst and Kildown is described more fully in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 4.7 In the area around Goudhurst and Kildown, the High Weald contains a number of important habitats including woodland, hedgerows, ponds, streams, grassland and parkland, with many areas designated for the wildlife interest as national, regional or locally important wildlife sites. Birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, many of which are protected by law, are highly mobile and can be found anywhere across the High Weald, including within built up areas for much or part of their lifecycle. Of particular importance to Goudhurst and Kildown are some species of bats and birds, which commonly occur in the area in older buildings and, indeed, rely upon these buildings for roosting and nesting sites. Where the village adjoins areas of countryside and suitable habitat occurs within, or adjacent to, garden or open space areas, dormice, badgers, reptiles and amphibians are often encountered.
- 4.8 Kildown is surrounded by large areas of woodland, much of which is classified as Ancient Woodland. The historic parks of the Bedgebury and Scotney Estates are also close by. These estates, and other areas nearby, contain a number of designated wildlife sites. The churchyard at Kildown is designated a locally important wildlife site as a consequence of the lichen species found on the stonework of the church and the memorials.
- 4.9 Goudhurst has areas of semi-improved grassland on the steep slopes to the south and west. A county wildlife site can be found on the western slopes and land adjacent to Balcombes Hill was formerly a local designated wildlife site.



Kildown Church

5 Character Appraisal – Goudhurst

Context

- 5.1 The Conservation Area is centred on the heart of the village, but stretches along an open ridge to the east to include what was historically referred to as 'Little Goudhurst', the area around Tattlebury House. The designated area in Goudhurst covers a variety of plot patterns and spatial forms, including the compact village centre, village pond and open areas of rural and amenity landscape.
- 5.2 The focus of the village is the upper High Street, where the view terminates with St Mary's Church at the high point of the village. The unique and dramatic hilltop location gives a sense, in distant views, of a compact and singular settlement around the church. This masks the variety within, created by an intricate pattern of roads, paths and alleyways, of built form and open spaces.
- 5.3 Many of the buildings are early in origin and of substantial construction, reflecting in their quality the prosperous nature of the area.
- 5.4 Goudhurst has a vibrant local commerce with an array of local shops that include butchers, grocers, bakers, newsagent and general store, as well as other retail stores selling gifts and antiques. These shops are augmented by local services such as the doctors' surgery, hairdressers, estate agents, restaurant and pubs, to create a lively village centre. Other village facilities include the Ex-Servicemen's Club and the Parish Hall, both of which are well used for public and private functions.

Approach

- 5.5 Goudhurst is a medium sized Conservation Area with a variety and wealth of historical and architectural interest, in which the landscape is an important feature, both as setting and as an integral part.
- 5.6 For the purposes of the better understanding of its nature, the Goudhurst Conservation Area's seven character areas have been defined and described in terms of their building types, layout, related landscape and topography.
- 5.7 It should be noted that it is not intended to create hard divisions between the character areas. In the context of closely grouped buildings with a long development history there will, of course, be similarities and relationships between the character areas, particularly at the 'boundaries'.
- 5.8 The character areas are:
- 1 Lower High Street and Pond
 - 2 Upper High Street, 'Star and Eagle'
 - 3 Church and Limehouse
 - 4 Back Lane
 - 5 Wealden View
 - 6 Cricket Ground
 - 7 Tattlebury
 - 8 White's Farm

[Figure 5]

Character Area 1 – Lower High Street and Pond

- 5.9 The probable location of the original settlement was at the meeting point of the three routes from north and east Kent and from the Weald in the south, with the village pond immediately to the west – the setting for the first market place. The village would have grown up around this nodal point and around that of the church on the high ridge at the east end of the High Street.
- 5.10 Approaching the village from the south west (A262) across the Teise valley, the road rises up the slopes to Goudhurst with a generally open aspect, allowing glimpsed views along the twisting road of the village above.
- 5.11 The principal experience of the character area is that of passage, entering the village along the historic route from the south west; the semi rural road, Clayhill, briefly changing to a village street, West Road, before opening up into The Plain, the open market place at the lower focus of the village. The road runs straight, rising up to meet the first groups of buildings, with the High Street buildings forming a raised backdrop of jumbled red tile roofs, red brick and white painted weatherboarding.
- 5.12 The buildings are an eclectic group of vernacular houses and shops, either located on plots along the historic routes into the village, or facing more or less onto the central space, including the frontage of the Vine Hotel, which forms the transition point with the High Street buildings.
- 5.13 The buildings are 16th century and later, many evidently timber-framed, the upper stories jettied and now tile hung, with Georgian and Victorian casement windows. Most are in the vernacular style, in a pleasing variety; red clay tile hanging or painted weatherboarding and with 'kent peg' tiled roofs. The more modern buildings accord with the use of brick and tile, some with painted weatherboarding, with lead flashings and timber windows.
- 5.14 There is only a small amount of evidence of inappropriate 'modernisation', such as grey cement pointing, UPVC windows and PVC rainwater pipes, although these details and others, such as use of inappropriate paint types and colours, need to be controlled.
- 5.15 There is, of course, an accumulation of minor trespasses onto the historic character of the buildings, such as the replacement of original doors and windows with less appropriate designs, the loss of historic glass, the use of inappropriate paint colours, externally fitted satellite dishes and burglar alarms, telephone wires, aerials and other fittings.
- 5.16 The combination on Clayhill of a block of dense woodland to the north and properties on a high embankment to the south above the street creates a distinct gateway into the village as the road begins to level out. The building group on the embankment is a reasonably coherent set of semi-detached and terraced redbrick cottages of various dates. Nos. 1-3 Clayhill Cottages was originally a timber-framed hall house with a transverse wing, now divided.
- 5.17 The trees and dense roadside hedgerow of the woodland block to the north is set on a high ramped embankment of concrete with a pebble aggregate. The construction is possibly of the early 20th century or inter-war period and has been built to define and protect the road edge.



Top of Clayhill entering Goudhurst

- 5.18 Past the entrance to the modern housing development called 'The Old School', the buildings on the south east side of West Road are a cluster of older houses, informally grouped, mostly slightly set back from, and angled to, the street. The largest, West House and The Old Bricklayers, are late 16th century timber-framed buildings, much altered. The remaining cottages are of various dates, from the 17th century onwards.
- 5.19 The buildings on the north west side of West Road are set on a lower slope, mostly concealed behind an historic estate wall which here determines the street characteristic but which allows views of the buildings and the further landscape. The principal house, The Knowle, is largely obscured by the estate wall and cannot be seen from the immediate locality.
- 5.20 West Road broadens out to become 'The Plain', which forms a junction with the bottom end of High Street, North Road and Balcombes Hill. The former central market space has now lost some of its sense of place, as it has become principally a vehicle crossing point; its use as a public meeting place and for general pedestrian 'milling about' and informal exchange is therefore much restricted. The remaining impression is one of informality, as many of the buildings do not sit square onto the central space.
- 5.21 The loose open ground of the market place has been restructured by the delineation of the tarmac roads and kerbs, defining the village green and adjacent pond in the process. The pond has been formalised over the centuries by the addition of hard edges and its partial enclosure to become a popular 'village' pond, complemented by adjacent trees. A memorable and striking feature of the village, and provided with benches, it has become a popular spot for feeding the ducks.
- 5.22 The buildings still retain, however, an appropriate sense of public function, as opposed to the private residences and shops of High Street and North Road. The Ex-Servicemen's Club, the Parish Hall, the War Memorial, the Forge, the old Westminster Bank building (now an estate agent's office) are, or were, all appropriate market place buildings. The pond, the green and the water trough also create the necessary links with the historic function.
- 5.23 The old Forge and the former Butcher's House have been converted for private residential use with a corresponding loss of meeting place activity. The conversion of both the old Westminster Bank building and the small house between the Club and The Knowle, as estate agents' offices, do not perhaps provide the same focus.
- 5.24 The buildings are loosely grouped, detached structures, allowing broad views through to the landscape west and north of the village. However, the views have become restricted by infill development in the back plots behind the principal plots.
- 5.25 To the east, the Ex-Servicemen's Club House, formerly an oast house, sits rather uneasily in its immediate landscape and car park. The building dates to the 17th century, or possibly earlier; timber-framed but altered in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 5.26 The Parish Hall (1903) to the south is a good example of a modern building that uses local materials and details entirely appropriate to its setting. This building is sited square on to the pond, forming a strong visual focus for the central space.



Buildings and estate wall on West Road



Parish hall and pond

- 5.27 The Forge House and the attached Butcher's House to the east of the market place are 18th and 17th centuries in origin, the latter altered in the 19th and 20th centuries, but both with a blue chequer pattern to the ground floor brickwork and tile hung upper stories.
- 5.28 The Vine Hotel is an early timber-framed building with an 18th century frontage, extended in the 19th century, The external brickwork of the lower storey and the upper storey tile hanging to the principal elevation have been painted white, which contrasts unfortunately with the more common features of red clay tile hanging and white painted weatherboarding, but appears to be a common feature of inns in the area.
- 5.29 The Hotel is a key nodal point, the inn being located at the junction of the historic routes through the village. Furthermore, the building marks the transition point, visually and functionally, between three distinct character areas. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the setting of the building is degraded by the use of the key area in front of the hotel for car parking. The tarmac surfaces, the visually intrusive accumulation of vehicles and the untidy collection of 'pub garden furniture', create a scruffy and inappropriate context for the historic building, which also impacts on the quality of the general public space.
- 5.30 The single oddity is the 20th century Westminster Bank building, timber-framed with brick noggin, which is a brave but misconceived attempt at a vernacular building, and out of keeping with the rest of the group.
- 5.31 The quality of the building group does lose some impact through the use of generally inappropriate materials for details such as kerbs, railings, waste bins and particularly highway surfaces (tarmac).
- 5.32 The east boundary of the character area is defined by Balcombes Hill, which leads out of the village to the south east. The route is characterised by a high, planted embankment south of the Parish Hall, the only built feature being the utilitarian 20th century public toilet in brick, set in the tarmac public car park. Neither adds any value to the historic quality of the setting.
- 5.33 Opposite the toilet block is the entrance to the Old Parsonage (Character Area 4 – Back Lane) and the doctors' surgery. Embankments of timber palisades further detract from this area, which is part of an important and dramatic approach into the village and probably offers the most scope for improvements.
- 5.34 Leaving Balcombes Hill, west along the south boundary of the character area, a narrow vehicle lane leads past a pair of large, semi-detached, and one detached, modern houses, set in spacious gardens, rather out of keeping with the informal close grouping of the older houses and made more remote by being raised high on the top of the embankment.
- 5.35 Further to the west the road is enclosed by a featureless high brick retaining wall behind the new housing development at 'The Old School'. The wall is of poor quality and gives an unfortunate semi-industrial quality to the back street.
- 5.36 The lane ends in a small cluster of older cottages set in the back plots behind Clayhill and West Road. The public footpath here turns north to connect back to Clayhill, via a network of paths and passageways that are so characteristic of the village.



The Vine Hotel and crossroads

Character Area 2 – Upper High Street, ‘Star and Eagle’

- 5.37 This is the spine of the historic and present day village, connecting the lower market place to the church on the upper ridge.
- 5.38 In about 1650 the market was moved from the bottom of High Street to the open area in front of the church, between Church House and the Black Eagle Spread Inn. Although the market was fairly quickly moved back to its former position, the widened street, flanked by inns and shops, still retains echoes of the former public market activity. However, this sense has now been partly eroded by the delineation of the open space for vehicle and pedestrian use, by street furniture and by parked cars. The heavy vehicle traffic through the street also reduces its practicality for casual exchange by pedestrians.
- 5.39 One significant aspect of a place’s character that is often overlooked is the ambient noise. The present-day quality and level of noise surrounding and penetrating the buildings and open spaces is different to that experienced by residents and workers in the past, and therefore has a significant effect on the village’s character. It is the quality of noise rather than the level that has changed. Medieval towns and villages have been described in many contemporary documents as astonishingly noisy places. In the 15th century, for example, Thomas Dekker described the noise of London as an incessant din; *‘carts and coaches make such a thundering, ...in the open streetes is such walking, such talking, such running, such riding, such clapping too of windows, such rapping at chamber doors, such crying out for drink’*. The cries of vendors, the wagons, dogs, cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and chickens, the sound of running water in the channels and streams – the effect was a *‘constant reverberating roar’* in narrow streets. This complex human din has now been obliterated by the relatively monotone, mechanical noise of traffic, engines and tyre noise on the tarmac roads that is described by the British Medical Association as having *‘an impersonal quality that is both wearying and dehumanising, instead of a sign of vitality, a deadening monotony’*.
- 5.40 The High Street buildings are of 16th, 17th and 18th century in a consistent local vernacular language. The many original timber-framed houses have mostly been re-clad, concealed behind brick façades of Georgian, Victorian and later periods, some with surviving jettied upper stories that are tile hung or with white painted weatherboarding, with red clay peg tiled roofs and with Georgian and Victorian casement windows. All the buildings on the High Street frontage are listed.
- 5.41 The buildings are grouped in terraces with narrow passages giving access to the back plots. The groups are set at angles to each other and to the street. This visual complexity, together with the constantly varying red tile roof profiles and pitches, is a principal characteristic of the Conservation Area.
- 5.42 There is little intrusive ‘modernisation’, except for some instances of inappropriate or poor quality window and doorway insertions, or replacements. However, occasional interventions such as ‘Velux’ rooflights can be seen from some angles.
- 5.43 One or two of the houses have lost their chimneystacks, which reduces the visual complexity of the roofscape. This should be discouraged in the future.



View down the High Street

- 5.44 As a consequence of the hillside location, the entrances and windows opening onto half basements, in relation to the modern street level, add an interesting spatial dimension to the building frontages.
- 5.45 All the buildings on the High Street are in use as houses, shops and offices, which probably reflect the historic mix of uses. New shop fronts have been inserted at different times, providing a complex mix of styles (and qualities of design) on the street frontage.
- 5.46 Entering the High Street from the south west, at the bottom of the hill, the street façade on the north side curves up and to the right, forming a visually complex screen of red brick and tile façades and partly closing off the view of the churchyard on the high point.
- 5.47 The red tile hung, end gable wall of the Vine Hotel frames the entrance to High Street on the north side, followed by its former stable block, 18th century, in plain red brick. These buildings form a short terrace with a modest red brick and tile cottage and then the Bakery, another 16th century timber-framed house clad in the 18th century.
- 5.48 The south side of this stretch of High Street is fronted by a curving terrace of weatherboarded, timber-framed, two storey houses, some with shop fronts inserted. The historic character of the terrace is particularly fine. In the centre of the terrace, Fountain House shows its timber frame but is spoilt by a poor quality bay window insertion. The adjacent building, Bank House, has been rendered, which is out of keeping with the local vernacular.
- 5.49 The centre section of High Street curves slightly to the south as it rises, widening to form the historic public space and at the same time opening up views of the church.
- 5.50 On the north side here, a group of houses sits on an angled site formed between two narrow lanes that leave High Street to the north and west. This is a fine and cohesive group of historic cottages in red brick and tile, with steep and prominent roof slopes, but dominated by the four-storey Manor House. The inserted shop fronts are of moderate quality and the frontages are in danger of being degraded by shop signs and retracting blinds. The main frontage of Manor House, facing east towards the church, is a flat parapetted, Georgian re-cladding of the older timber-framed building.
- 5.51 Leaving High Street to the west, Hunts Lane passes behind the Vine Hotel, and a cluster of poor quality and badly maintained outbuildings. To the north, at the junction with North Road, is a pair of 18th century semi-detached houses.
- 5.52 Stoney Lane passes north between Manor House and its weatherboarded outbuildings and Goudhurst House. Hunts Lane and Stoney Lane are unpaved, passing between garden plots and back plot cottages, maintaining an important sense of rural village quality. The survival of these narrow lanes at odd angles between the buildings allows views of the wider landscape to break through.
- 5.53 At the top of High Street, the buildings to the north are grouped in pairs and set at an angle to the street, facing south and turning their faces away from the church.



Fountain House



Hunts Lane



Stoney Lane

- 5.54 Goudhurst House, once a single dwelling and once used as the poor house, is now divided into four, the ground floor comprising a newsagent's shop with an inappropriate shop front insertion, and a flat with two more flats above. The house has been re-roofed and re-clad with tiles in a rather mechanical fashion, affecting the quality of its historic character. The house has some mathematical tiling on the side walls; the brickwork of the long flank wall to Stoney Lane bears evidence of the development history of the building.
- 5.55 The last buildings on the north side of High Street are Church House and Church Cottage, a pair of 16th century houses altered in the 18th century and Grade II* listed. The insertion of garage doors in the lower storey frontage of Church House replacing an earlier shop front is unfortunate, but the building is still imposing, dominating the open space in front of the church.
- 5.56 Church House also marks the transition point between the High Street and churchyard character areas, the imposing frontage on the High Street contrasting pleasingly with the more modest cottage frontage on Church Road.
- 5.57 As with other buildings in the village, there are also some cement repairs to tile hanging and eaves, which, although discrete, should be discouraged.
- 5.58 Facing Church House across the street is The Star and Eagle Hotel - a fine 15th century timber-framed building, much altered in the 19th and 20th centuries but retaining many original characteristics and features. The imposing timbered frontage is, however, a 1930s alteration, replacing the 16th century façade.
- 5.59 The paired setting of Church House and the Hotel dominating the wide street is a strong visual reminder of the busy public activity that once took place in the street, strengthened by the gallery balcony on the upper storey of the inn.



The Star and Eagle Hotel



St Mary's Church and churchyard

Character Area 3 – Church and Limehouse

- 5.60 The church occupies a flat area of ridge at the summit of the High Street, forming the focal point of the streetscape and dominating the view from many places, raised up both by its location and by the banked burials in the churchyard. The wide churchyard is open to the sky and views all round, in direct contrast to the enclosed streets and 'keyhole' views experienced lower down in the village.
- 5.61 The ochre coloured masonry of the church, with the imposing, if short, 17th century tower, is also in visual contrast to the red brick and tile construction of the domestic architecture.
- 5.62 The main body of the church is 13th to 15th century; the exterior treatment is mainly Perpendicular Gothic, the widened aisles with flat arched windows concealing the older church inside. The west end tower was added in 1638/40, styled in a combination of late Gothic and classical popular at the time. The west end door, facing the High Street, is purely classical.
- 5.63 The church is encompassed on all sides by its graveyard, isolating it visually from the clustered buildings of the village. Back Lane defines the south boundary of the character area. The original churchyard boundary to the east was formed by a curved route, which was extended and 'squared off' when Back Lane was realigned in the mid-18th century. No trace of this boundary line now remains, and beyond the churchyard, to the east, is open ground.

5.64 To the north and west, the churchyard is encircled by the road and by clustered detached houses and short terraces of cottages along the line of the road. The buildings are an eclectic mix of Victorian and Georgian, but predominantly earlier, surviving houses, again consistently of brick and tile in the local style, originally on long garden/smallholding plots, the plot boundaries and landscape to the north still testifying to the presence of the village mill, now gone. Almost all of the houses and cottages are listed. The houses are in pairs or short terraces, either set close to, or back from, the roadside, creating a constantly changing rhythm.



Church Road

5.65 At the top of High Street the road turns north into Church Road, running around the churchyard. Church House sits on the turning point; the short stretch of road passes a small terrace of unlisted but fitting cottages under a single roof, then turns east again along the churchyard wall.

5.66 On the north side of the street are a series of long plots. The first house, on the corner, Lamberts, is originally a 15th century timber-framed house, now tile hung. The east end gable elevation and the concealed north façade still show the timber framing. Lamberts House is detached, set in a large open plot with a timbered barn set back from the road.



Lamberts

5.67 Moving east along the road, Lamberts is followed by a semi-detached pair of Victorian villas in red brick with slate roofs, then clustered pairs and short terraces of older houses, all in red tile and brick with hipped gabled roofs.

5.68 Nos. 1 and 2 and Nos. 3 to 7 are weavers' cottages, of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, all with red and blue chequered brickwork to the lower storey and jettied upper storeys. Nos. 1 and 2 are set back from the road with small hedged front gardens, but Nos. 3 to 7 and the succeeding houses are all set close to the pavement.

5.69 The next building, the Old Lime House, is of the same period and same construction but is distinguished visually by having a long 'catslide' roof over the upper storey, with three dormer windows, and a transverse wing at the west end with a gable end facing onto the road. Behind the Old Lime House is a cluster of brick barns and stables that form a busy backdrop when seen through the passages to either side of the house.



Old Lime House

5.70 Lime House is followed by a further pair of 17th century cottages, Glebe House and South View, the name of the former probably recalling that this was once church land. South View, the main range, has a Victorianised Georgian front with flat parapet and a small forecourt enclosed by railings, unusual for Goudhurst. This pair, and the following pair of cottages, Mill House and Little Mill House, have more the appearance of pairs of Victorian villas, having been heavily altered in the 19th century, with gable fronted wings and decorative bargeboards.

- 5.71 At the back of the Lime House plot is a 16th century house, now divided, known as Blackman's and the Old Cottage. Photographs taken of the land behind this house in the early 20th century still show the imposing structure of the windmill, now gone, although evidence remains on the ground and in the name of the adjacent cottage, Mill House.



Back Lane, looking up towards St Mary's Church

Character Area 4 – Back Lane

- 5.72 Back Lane in its present form dates from about 1768 and effectively forms the boundary to the south of the village, the agricultural fields falling away to the south and the backs of the historic High Street plots to the north. The south facing slopes are dotted with large, detached buildings, the pattern of development apparently having begun in Victorian times with the construction of the fine Victorian Vicarage, the Old Parsonage and other, later, detached houses on large plots. In the further landscape are isolated, older farms and remote cottages.
- 5.73 The lane establishes a clear division between the close clustered buildings of the village and the south facing slopes. The character of the lane itself is ambiguous; on one hand little more than a utilitarian service road giving rear access to the shops and businesses on High Street, on the other the only access for large houses to the south such as The Laurels and Fair Mead. The different approaches to the hedging, or absence of it, on either side of the lane, reflect this dichotomy.
- 5.74 Entering Back Lane from the south, the lane passes between the high brick side wall of the 17th century Butcher's House and its rear courtyard to the north, and a cluster of Victorian and 20th century houses, including the Surgery, the Old Parsonage, now divided into flats, and Amberley. These are in deliberately landscaped grounds that are perhaps out of keeping with the rural/village character of the older buildings.
- 5.75 On this lower slope, the north side of Back Lane has one detached 20th century villa, Rooftops. Although the Old Parsonage is very imposing in a confident, Victorian manner, none of these buildings is of architectural or historic interest.
- 5.76 As the lane rises higher towards the churchyard it recovers its older character; on the north side are informal clusters of utility buildings, barns, workshops and garages of many dates, built on the back plots of the high street houses and set amongst open car parks, garden walls and garage doors. The original smallholding use of the long garden/smallholding plots between Back Lane and the High Street has been lost to this piecemeal development over the centuries. The interest is provided by the interrupted views of the rear façades of the High Street houses and of the occasional older boundary walls and outbuildings. On the south side are open views of the agricultural fields.
- 5.77 At its upper end the lane passes between the churchyard walls, with the high-banked graveyard on one side and the more recent, 19th century burial grounds on the land to the south of the lane.
- 5.78 Back Lane turns north around the east end of the churchyard, here fenced with railings (renewed in 2005) rather than the stone wall on the other boundaries, and emerges into Church Road opposite the Old Lime House.



Back Lane with 19th century burial grounds on right



Stone steps from Maypole Lane

- 5.79 The southern reaches of the character area have no buildings, except for a short flight of old stone steps [sometimes referred to as the Priests' steps], giving access from Maypole Lane to the footpath across the field in front of the Old Vicarage.
- 5.80 The Vicarage itself is located at the east end of the character area on a high point of the ridge, detached and almost isolated from the village, but with fine views over the rolling landscape to the south.



Views out from the west side of North Road

Character Area 5 – Wealden View

- 5.81 This character area is centred on North Road, the old road leading north east from the market place crossroads.
- 5.82 Seen from The Plain, the road curves east and drops down slightly, partly closing the view of the further landscape. On the east side the road embankment rises up towards the high point of upper High Street and the churchyard, the backs of the High Street houses forming a picturesque backdrop to the view of jumbled red tile and brick. On the west side the land drops away, the detached houses and small groups of cottages backing onto open fields and revealing distant views of the landscape.
- 5.83 The development along North Road consists of houses, with one or two used as shops, either presently or previously. The older cottages are all close to the village centre; beyond the Conservation Area the housing is a 'ribbon development' of Victorian and Edwardian villas or 20th century family houses, with only one listed cottage, Spring Cottage, at a distance from centre.
- 5.84 The original historic plots are long garden/smallholding plots, as one would expect; the more recent plots are as long but generously wide. Some back plots have been converted to tarmac parking areas, which detracts from the visual amenity value of the setting.
- 5.85 Leaving the central junction, North Road is flanked on the right by the long blank wall of the Vine Hotel stable block, in red and blue chequer-patterned brick. The heritage value of the setting is undermined by an unplanned accumulation of electrical sub-station equipment, ill-considered signs, a utilitarian lean-to shed and unmanaged plant growth.
- 5.86 Further along, the entry to Hunts Lane connects to the High Street, with the flank wall of Nos. 1 and 2 Hunts Cottages facing the road and raised up on the embankment. Hunts Cottages is an 18th century cottage pair in an appropriate cottage garden setting.
- 5.87 To the west, an eclectic mix of tile-hung and weatherboarded detached houses and groups of cottages frames the entrance to North Road. The former garage site has now been developed with a terrace of modern residences, finished in white weatherboarding, generally designed to fit in, but with some uncomfortable detailing. The treatment of the narrow area in front of the houses, with loose cobbles and white painted fencing, is out of keeping with the general village vernacular.
- 5.88 The next house pair, The Stores, is used as a garment shop, the gable fronted south end with projecting fully glazed shop windows framing a central entrance. This is not an inappropriate use; the building shows signs of having been used as a store for a long time, but smaller paned shop windows would be more in keeping.



North Road from near the Vine Hotel



Redeveloped former garage site, North Road

- 5.89 This is followed by a fine and valuable row of listed cottages:
- Nos. 2 and 3 Cliffe Cottages, an 18th century row development, now a pair, in white painted brick with an upper storey of white painted weatherboarding and with small paned timber sash windows;
 - No. 4 Cliffe Cottages is 16th or 17th century, intact, with its black and white timber frame structure unobscured by weatherboarding or tile hanging; and
 - No. 5 is a 19th century gable-fronted addition, timber-framed and weatherboarded, with a slate roof.
- 5.90 The succeeding pair of slate roofed Victorian villas, Nos. 1 and 2 Grand View, is also within the Conservation Area, but not listed. Although not in the local vernacular, nor using characteristic materials, this is a pretty pair of semi-detached villas, spoilt slightly by being painted externally with cream masonry paint, obscuring the brickwork and stonework embellishments.



North Road with Nos. 1 & 2 Grand View on the right

Character Area 6 – Cricket Ground

- 5.91 This is open ground between Goudhurst and Tattlebury. There are no buildings of significance.
- 5.92 Leaving the village along North Road, the detached cottages to the north peter out giving way to views of woods and open fields, with long views to the north.
- 5.93 To the south, the view across the playing field is limited by the mature garden and high hedges of the Vicarage and of Queen Anne's House.



The Pavilion on the Cricket Ground

Character Area 7 – Tattlebury

- 5.94 Tattlebury lies to the east of Goudhurst. Also known as Little Goudhurst, it is a satellite settlement of the larger village, possibly originally an independent agricultural settlement or hamlet.
- 5.95 The hamlet is centred on a meeting point of historic routes at a curve in the road, with a pond to one side of the east road. As with Goudhurst, the natural focus of the hamlet, the public space at the meeting point of the old roads, has been undermined by vehicle traffic.
- 5.96 Tattlebury is characterised by its mix of small vernacular cottages and larger houses, generally of similar provenances, style and construction to the Goudhurst buildings. Of the three principal detached fine houses, Tattlebury House occupies a key position at the road junction. It is the most visible, built in the local vernacular and situated close in the centre of the building group.
- 5.97 Much of the Conservation Area is occupied by Maypole House and its buildings, standing within its walled grounds to the southwest of the hamlet. To the south west of Maypole House stands Queen Anne's House, also within its own substantial grounds, and not easily seen.



The approach to Tattlebury from Goudhurst

- 5.98 Approaching Tattlebury from Goudhurst, the old line of Church Road approached Maypole House directly, meeting the centre point of the estate's west boundary wall. The original line of the track then turned north running around the Maypole House estate and east again to the junction at Tattlebury House. In the 20th century the road was realigned for vehicle traffic, crossing the field to the north, flattening the sharp bends and forming the elliptical area planted with trees. This created a 'green' in front of Maypole House which, however, has little spatial relationship with the centre of the hamlet.
- 5.99 At the curve in the road, Tattlebury Corner, the first building in the cottage group is Tattlebury Gallery, a 16th century traditional cottage and shop, altered in the 19th century and clad in red and blue patterned brick with white weatherboarding. The cottage sits close to the edge of the road, dominating the corner. The east wing is clad in patterned tile hanging with a 19th century slate roof.
- 5.100 Close by, and to the east, is No.1 Tattlebury, a 16th century traditional house now divided into two residences. This house pair is set back from the road, with an open, hedged garden space in front.
- 5.101 After No. 1 Tattlebury is Oak Cottage, another 16th century traditional building clad in weatherboarding and with some exposed roughcast masonry work. Oak Cottage is built with its front face close by the road edge.
- 5.102 These cottage buildings form a visually cohesive and historically important group.
- 5.103 To the north of the road junction, Tattlebury House and its garden wall frame the entrance to the hamlet. The house sits close to the junction of the old routes, facing the pond which is now obscured by heavy, self-seeded planting. Tattlebury House is a late addition to the hamlet, possibly a replacement of an earlier cottage or house. The house has 19th century details, sash windows and a slate roof.
- 5.104 The east road, Cranbrook Road, begins to rise up away from the road junction, the more easterly buildings set higher on embankments than the buildings at the centre of the hamlet.
- 5.105 On the south side of Cranbrook Road, the Conservation Area extends a little further east to include The Garden House, a large detached house built on the rear plot of Oak Cottage, and finally, curiously, a utilitarian and featureless telecom exchange behind a wire fence.
- 5.106 Further to the east, outside the Conservation Area, the hamlet extends along a ribbon development of Victorian villas and modern detached houses.
- 5.107 To the north of the hamlet, Beresford Road narrows and falls to meet an interesting terrace of railway era brick cottages and a modern chapel. The group is now partly damaged by inappropriate redevelopment of some of the plots.



The green in front of Maypole House



Tattlebury House facing the pond

Character Area 8 – White's Farm

- 5.108 This is a group of farm buildings and cottages in an informal arrangement amongst large plots and fields, situated to the south of the village and separated from it by a four-way meeting point of old routes and tracks that appear unchanged to those mapped in 1769. The junction comprises Balcombes Hill to the north west, Maypole Lane to the north east, Bedgebury Road to the south west and a track to Smugley Farm to the south east.
- 5.109 Amongst the older buildings there is the listed White's Farmhouse, 17th century or earlier and Lower Maypole Cottage, 16th century or earlier. The arrangement of barns and cottages, together with the ponds and other structures, suggests an early farm settlement outside the original village, loosely based around White's Farmhouse.
- 5.110 More recent buildings are also listed and add to the character of the area and include White's, a Neo-Georgian style house built by local builders in 1905 and White's Cottage and White's Lodge, circa 1907. In the case of the latter of these the listing includes wall and gate piers, which add to the interest at the junction of roads.
- 5.111 The character of the roads is very rural, with Balcombes Hill and Bedgebury Road giving a dramatic approach to the village from Bedgebury. The significant vegetation flanking the road adds greatly to the character and is a strong feature in some distant views.



View down Bedgebury Road with White's Cottage on left



View up Balcombes Hill from the junction with Maypole Lane

6 Summary of Elements that Contribute to Goudhurst Conservation Area's Special Character

Key Characteristics

Topography

- 6.1 This is a dramatic hilltop village perched above the Teise valley. The village lies at the western end of a narrow east-west ridge on a promontory overlooking the Teise valley to the west, with steep slopes and ghyll valleys to the north and south. The ridge forms part of the undulating plateau of the High Weald. The village is arranged around two small plateaus, the higher with the church and the lower with the crossroads and pond, with surrounding houses set on sloping ground. Tattlebury lies to the east of the main village on the gently sloping ridge top.
- 6.2 This distinctive topography is a key characteristic of the village and has been an important factor in determining the settlement pattern and development of the village and is one of the main factors that today makes Goudhurst special.

Views

- 6.3 The hilltop location and steeply sloping sides offer panoramic views north, west and south across the High Weald and its river valleys and ghylls, with open views east along the ridge. The arrangement of buildings, roads and alleyways, and an absence of trees, create a series of framed, long distance views from within the built areas and are a reminder of the village's elevated position. The built form of the village and arrangement of streets and lanes create a number of pleasing vistas. The sparsely settled Teise valley and Bedgebury Forest dominate the wider views, creating a sense of remoteness countered by the strong, pastoral landscape surrounding the village of grazing pasture, orchards, hop gardens and shaw woodlands dotted with farmsteads cottages and church spires. Preserving these views and vistas, and the spaces that permit them, is a priority. Full account should be taken of the sensitivity of views and viewing locations in the consideration of any development proposal.
- 6.4 Equally important to views from the village, and of great importance to the local landscape, are views of Goudhurst from the surrounding countryside. In an area where settlements are often well screened with woodland, Goudhurst is a prominent skyline feature from the surrounding lower land and provides an important and unique local landmark.

Network of Roads, Lanes and Footpaths

- 6.5 The village is at the centre of a great variety and number of vehicular and pedestrian routes that radiate out from its hilltop location. The primary route, the A262, which passes through the centre of the village on the main axis of the church, provides a backbone for the secondary routes. The crossroads of the A262 with the B2079 provides a focus for vehicular traffic, but the footpaths and lanes permeate the whole of the settlement and stretch into the wider countryside. The lanes and footpaths emphasise and encourage both historical and present-day pedestrian activity and add greatly to the variety and intricacy of the built form. Designated footpaths include the circular Goudhurst Millennium Walk and the High Weald Landscape Trail.



View of Goudhurst from surrounding countryside



View down Hunts Lane

Community

- 6.6 Goudhurst has a range of shops and services, including a bakery, general store, local pubs and restaurants. Community facilities in the form of doctors' surgery, village hall and playing fields are also well provided for. The prosperity and vitality of local business and facilities of this 'self sufficient community' are a characteristic feature that is very important to the local residents.

Contrast

- 6.7 There is a sharp contrast between the dense and tightly packed built form and the open spaces of churchyards, pond, pasture and the wider countryside. The village itself sits in contrast to the surrounding rural landscape. The topography accentuates the contrast between the tightly packed streets and the open countryside, with the land falling away from the major settlement to create open aspects from the 'rear' elevation of streets and lanes.
- 6.8 The contrast in the village between differing areas of density, and between built and open areas, can easily be eroded by building extensions, new development or changes in land use. In considering any changes, the distinction between areas of density or openness should be maintained.

Variety of Spaces

- 6.9 The village contains a variety of spaces, from narrow streets and alleyways to wide and open sections of streets (top of High Street) and highway (crossroads). Narrow footpaths give way to wide-open spaces, and narrow lanes run adjacent to open churchyards and fields.

Legibility

- 6.10 The village has a simple and recognisable form with a clear hierarchy between routes, with a series of obvious and notable landmarks, including pubs, church and pond. Age, style and density of built form provide a clear differentiation and hierarchy between historical centre and outlying residential areas.

Materials

- 6.11 Red clay peg tiles are a dominant feature on both roofs and elevations. The large and varied roof patterns where they stagger up the slopes provide an interesting combination of pattern and form. The textures, colours and patterns of the tiles bring out the richness of the buildings and greatly add to the attractiveness and character of the area.
- 6.12 Red brick is the most commonly used building material for brick houses and garden walls and is also found in pavements. Some has also been used to infill panels in timber-framed buildings. Bonding is variable, with older buildings exhibiting the dark glazed brick ends that in some cases are used to form a distinctive pattern.
- 6.13 The red of brick and tile is contrasted by the black and white patterns of timber-framed buildings and white weatherboarding on others.

Roofscapes

- 6.14 In the historic core of the village, the grouping of the buildings in short terraces, set at angles to each other and to the street, together with the constantly varying roof profiles and pitches, results in a picturesque jumble of red tile slopes that is a principal characteristic of the Conservation Area.



Cottage on Church Road with tile hanging and white weatherboarding

Doors and Windows

- 6.15 The village exhibits a wealth of architectural detail in the façade and elevations of its buildings, most notably in the variety of size and design of windows and doors. This characteristic is most notable in the High Street where the lower floors of the stepped properties have shortened doors and basement windows, and those buildings with upper floors have large picture windows and bays overlooking the street.

Lack of Street Lighting

- 6.16 There is only one street lamp in the village and, at various Parish Council meetings over time, residents had expressed the wish that it should remain so. The absence of street lamps not only reduces street clutter, but also contributes to the special character of the village during dusk and evenings. The village and, most notably the High Street, rely upon the 'borrowed' light of buildings, which creates its own atmosphere. The lighting on the outside of The Vine is a good example of discreet, well-designed external fittings. By contrast, the church is lit by spotlights until 10.30pm and stands in sharp contrast to the dimly-lit streets. This effect can be appreciated in distant views from the surrounding countryside.

Street Signs

- 6.17 The village has few large road signs and, apart from the main road signs at the crossroads, street signage is generally discreet and in scale with its surroundings.

Landscape and Trees

- 6.18 Trees are not a particularly strong feature in the main area of the village, but notable groups are associated with the village pond, Clayhill and around Balcombes Hill. Trees are more prominent, and a stronger influence, around Tattlebury, with a notable group on the green at Maypole Lane. There is also a group of protected trees near Lamberts. The older churchyard has few trees, but historic photographic evidence suggests that there were more. The Victorian churchyard to the south of Back Lane is dominated by conifers, with a formal pattern of fastigiated yews.
- 6.19 The playing field and pastures between the church and Tattlebury divide the two settlement areas and allow the countryside to flow around the church. The rural setting of the church is defined by these open areas, together with the fields and churchyards south of Back Lane and the cottages with their backdrop of trees along Church Road.
- 6.20 The fields and open land that surround the settlement are an essential part of the setting of the village and a defining part of its character.

7 Summary of Elements that Detract from Goudhurst Conservation Area's Special Character and Opportunities for Enhancement

Traffic and Parking

- 7.1 The A262 is a busy road that provides access for important trade and tourism to the village. However, the High Street and Church Road, with its 'dog leg' bend and churchyard wall, are problematic for larger vehicles and high volumes of traffic. The proximity of traffic jams and large commercial vehicles and coaches to the buildings and spaces associated with the church and High Street are detrimental to the setting, fabric and appreciation of this important group of buildings.
- 7.2 It must also be recognised that the relaxed attitude to parking and the shared pedestrian/vehicular surfaces of the High Street provide a natural traffic calming effect, whilst allowing good access to shops and services. In addition, it must be recognised that alternative routes and/or controlled parking may be more damaging. Signing on the wider road network may discourage some larger vehicles, but many need to pass through the village to service local rural businesses.
- 7.3 The public car park and toilet block on Balcombes Hill is out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and, in contrast to the High Street, is poorly detailed. Within the village there is pressure for off-street parking to the rear of properties, which is having a detrimental effect on character and quality. The large car park of the 'Club House' is particularly noticeable. It should also be recognised that the sub-division of the road into pedestrian, vehicle and parking zones by the use of kerbs and different hard surfaces detracts from its older character as a wide, informal and unstructured public space.



Traffic on High Street



Balcombes Hill Car Park and toilet block

Road Markings

- 7.4 The rural character of Back Lane has been eroded by the use of standard highway road markings. The absence of road markings is an important part of the rural character and they should only be applied where absolutely necessary.



Poor quality and cluttered signs

Signs

- 7.5 Road and way marked signs that do exist often use inappropriate materials and/or design. In some cases there are several posts where one would suffice, which adds to the visual and physical clutter of the streetscape.

Footpaths and Alleyways

- 7.6 Condition is variable, with a number of poor details and surface treatments. The interface between village and country is often abrupt and poorly detailed. Junctions with lanes give priority to vehicular traffic and make little provision for the safe transition of pedestrians between footpath and highway.



Pathway onto North Road

Boundaries

- 7.7 Within the built area, closeboard fencing has been used and now encloses several sections of lanes and alleys. Brick walls are prominent in a number of locations, but often suffer from neglect.
- 7.8 The ragged post and wire fence and utilitarian five-bar metal field gate that fronts the paddock in Church Road opposite Queen Anne's is a detracting feature.



Closeboard fencing on Rope Walk

Inappropriate Planting

- 7.9 Ornamental shrub planting associated with the School Yard development is out of character with the rural locality and generally harder formal treatment of street frontages. Two young beech trees at the front of Manor Cottage in the High Street appear to have replaced more traditional planting of lime or chestnut. Beech is difficult to manage in such a location as a tree rather than a hedge and may in time become either too large and dominating, or, because of necessary pruning, unattractive. Limes and chestnut respond more readily to pollarding, which would be appropriate in this location.

Alterations

- 7.10 Throughout history, owners have repaired and modernised their properties, sometimes ill-advisedly, using whatever materials and techniques were available to them. Such alterations need not be large to alter the character of the building and cumulatively have serious implications for the quality, character and perception of the area. In the past, the nature of such improvements was limited by cost and the availability of non-traditional materials, at least to the majority. Recent fashions for improvement, however, including UPVC windows and doors, UPVC rainwater pipes, Velux windows and solar panels, are much more damaging. Modern plasticised paints, with a much wider range of colours, effect a subtle alteration of the appearance of buildings and of an area that often goes unrealised.

8 Character Area Appraisal - Kildown

Context

- 8.1 Kildown is a relatively small Conservation Area and is only part of a wider and dispersed settlement that stretches along the ridge to the south west. The area is focused on the heart of the settlement and includes the older and most prominent buildings.
- 8.2 Essentially a single depth of development guided by a network of minor roads, Kildown is a quiet village with a very rural character. A variety of street widths and edge treatments, together with the extensive forested boundary, adds to the rural charm and character of the settlement.
- 8.3 The generally small-scale dwellings contrast sharply with the large and imposing church and provide Kildown with a unique character and sense of place.
- 8.4 There is a village hall and recreation ground outside the Conservation Area to the south west of the village but the church, public house and the Quarry Centre at the heart of the Conservation Area remain the focus of public activity. The pub, although smaller than in previous decades, still retains a restaurant. The Quarry Centre, despite losing its post office, remains an important local facility much used by the local community.

Approach

- 8.5 Kildown is a small and compact Conservation Area which does, however, fall into three discrete parts, determined by the apparent periods of the development of the village; the historic road junction and centre of the hamlet, the church and environs, and the more recent development on Rogers Rough Road.
- 8.6 For the purposes better understanding its nature, the Kildown Conservation Area's three character areas have been defined and described in terms of their building types, layout, related landscape and topography.
- 8.7 It should be noted that it is not intended to create hard divisions between the character areas. In the context of closely grouped buildings with a long development history there will, of course, be similarities and relationships between the character areas, particularly at the 'boundaries'.
- 8.8 The character areas are:
- Church and Environs;
 - The Globe and Rainbow Inn; and
 - Rogers Rough Road.

[Figure 6]

Character Area 1 – Church and Environs

- 8.9 The church is the principal and defining building in the character area, a neo-Gothic design of 1839/41 by Anthony Salvin, for Marshal Viscount Beresford; later altered by Alexander Roos for A J Beresford Hope in 1840/5.
- 8.10 The church is built of sandstone with a slate roof. It is noticeably decorative in style with a high pierced parapet, paired lancet windows to the tower belfry, and fine iron strapwork enrichment to the west door. The tower is over the west door, set back from the road and creating an imposing presence behind the lych-gate.
- 8.11 The churchyard is entered through an impressive imported lych-gate, also in sandstone and with a stone tile roof, embellished with polished pink Peterhead granite shafts and with fine cast and wrought iron gates to the east entrance.
- 8.12 The church sits in a comfortable and classical relationship with its turfed burial yard, which falls away to the east, towards the backs of the adjacent houses. The churchyard contains a number of fine monuments and mature trees, including yews, which augment the character of the church. The churchyard is fenced to the north and west with hawthorn, which maintains an appropriate rural atmosphere.
- 8.13 To the north of the churchyard, on Church Road, is the 19th century school; the original Master's House to the rear with the school range facing the road. The Schoolhouse is in sandstone with a red tile roof, in a mock Tudor-Gothic style, with gabled dormers and hood mouldings over the windows. The Schoolhouse was built as a complement to the church. The two buildings are linked in the use of sandstone for their construction, and in their neo-Gothic styling and detailing.
- 8.14 To the south of the churchyard is a modern development, a short terrace and a pair of cottages set in open plots. These are of modern materials, the lower storeys of brick and the upper storeys in white painted weatherboarding with a suitably modest agricultural character. As with the Post House buildings, the houses are set well back from the road to allow for car parking and vehicle access to the churchyard. The setting here is slightly 'raw' and uncomfortable, and would be improved by planting.
- 8.15 From Church Road the topography of the character area is perceived as flat and open. However, the road does fall slightly towards the village centre, placing the church on a low rise above the surrounding buildings of the village and adding subtly to its imposing presence.
- 8.16 The buildings on the roadside to the south, from the churchyard to the central road junction, are united by the continuous masonry wall that edges the road, both the road and wall retaining some interesting historic details; stone roadside gullies, masonry details and lichens that increase the sense of its history.
- 8.17 On the west side of Church Road, opposite the church, is Quarry Pond, set low down at the base of an embankment. Last quarried in 1924, the pond and environs were transferred to the village, who improved and now maintain the site. Due to the screening effect of the self-seeded trees and undergrowth, the pond is not easily seen from this vantage point. However, fleeting glimpses of the reflecting water surface and the open sky above form an important component of the immediate character area.



Kildown Church



The Schoolhouse



Quarry Pond

Character Area 2 – Globe and Rainbow Inn

- 8.18 The church is detached from the natural focus of the village, the meeting point of the traditional routes from the north, south and south east, in front of the Globe and Rainbow Inn. The meeting point of these historic roads is open space, surrounded loosely by the inn, the village pond, the old forge (now a house) and the village hall. However, the inn has the closest physical relationship with the crossroads, the pond now being obscured by undergrowth.
- 8.19 This public space is, of course, now used as a vehicle crossroad. The inn (formerly the White Hart) would originally have dominated the public activity and general meeting space, but the relationship has been largely lost, not only because of the roads being given over to vehicles, but also by the redevelopment of part of the inn as housing, the public house function being preserved only in the lesser (stable) buildings to the north and no longer in a close relationship with the crossroad and meeting place.
- 8.20 The buildings around the road junction are a very eclectic group, with little in common except the use of red brick and tile as the principal materials. The spatial relationship between them is very loose.
- 8.21 The former inn building has a 19th century exterior but with some Georgian details, possibly cladding an older building. It is not, however, listed. The inn is of white painted masonry to the lower storey with red tile hanging to the upper storey, and with a red tile roof covering. Although the inn sign has been left in position on the upper south east gable, the conversion of the main building from inn to housing has resulted in some uncomfortable alterations to the building's character, in particular the division of external spaces and the inappropriate 'rustic' masonry garden wall and timber fencing.
- 8.22 Moving to the west, facing the inn across the road junction, is a pair of detached 19th century houses, Forge Cottage and Forge House, in red brick with red tile roofs, presenting paired gable fronts to the road with white painted bargeboards. The styling of these Victorian houses is rather suburban for the village setting and they have little in common with the other buildings of the older village, but the use of red brick and tile enables them to fit in reasonably well.
- 8.23 To the south of the Forge House pair, on the west side of Church Road, is the Quarry Centre, a small timber-framed and boarded dark cream building with a low pitch corrugated panel roof. Built in 1880 by the vicar of Kilndown as the Kilndown Church Club and Institute, its style matched that of an adjacent ladder maker's workshop. Passed to the village in 1980, it has, over the years, served as Post Office, shop and doctor's surgery. Today it still provides consultation facilities for a visiting doctor, a weekly shop and a meeting place for local groups and activities. The building is well cared for, and despite its humble 'workshop' origins, makes a positive contribution to the architectural variety and character of the village.
- 8.24 A track known as West Road runs off the road junction to the south west, from in front of Forge House and behind the Quarry Centre, opening up views of Quarry Pond, a flooded stone quarry. The pond is heavily screened on all sides by self-seeded trees and undergrowth, but does have some open grassed areas on its north and west banks, and is used as an informal public recreation area, maintained by the Kilndown Quarry Pond Management Committee.



The former Globe and Rainbow Inn



Forge Cottage and Forge House



Quarry Centre

- 8.25 The track passes two further small houses on its west side, Kilnwood and Quarry House, before entering the wooded area to the west of the village and ends at the A21. Kilnwood is within the Conservation Area; Quarry House, a Victorian or Edwardian detached villa, is outside it.
- 8.26 To the south of the Globe and Rainbow, across the road junction, is a 19th century house pair, the Post House and Pondsides Cottage, in red brick with half-hipped slate roof, and with a red tile-hung upper storey. The building is large in scale for the village setting, but the construction and style is appropriate to the general character of the village and the wider region. The building is set well back from the road, creating an imposing presence.



View down West Road to the Globe and Rainbow Inn

Character Area 3 – Rogers Rough Road

- 8.27 Leading south east from the village centre is Rogers Rough Road, an old track now flanked by large residential plots, possibly originating as smallholdings, and now occupied by a mix of houses of different dates, but mostly 19th and 20th centuries.
- 8.28 Leaving the road junction, and passing south east into Rogers Rough Road, the flank wall of Pondsides Cottage is to the south, the garden contained here by the old masonry wall turning the corner from Church Road. Along the north east length of Rogers Rough Road, immediately following from the inn, is a sequence of detached and semi-detached houses, mostly 20th century, with one or two Victorian villas with slightly more character.
- 8.29 The south west side of Rogers Rough Road is the same, once Pondsides Cottage has been left behind. The buildings on this side are built higher up on the embankment, the raised up church and its tower, and the back of the Victorian Schoolhouse forming a backdrop, the impression given being mostly of 20th century bungalows.
- 8.30 The gardens to these house plots are generally a combination of traditional planting with 'sophisticated' suburban designs, with many garden centre exotics which, together with the universal tarmac and gravel vehicle drives, contrast harshly with the rural characteristic of the village.
- 8.31 As the road travels south east from the junction at the inn, the land falls away to the east and south and views of the further landscape begin to open up between the houses and fences.
- 8.32 At the south end of the Conservation Area the last houses on either side are Summerhill to the west and Blackberry Cottage to the east, the latter listed, both older buildings of traditional construction and materials and of more appropriate character to the village.
- 8.33 The last of the buildings allows the road to open up to views of the Weald and distant landscape to the east, south and west.



Rogers Rough Road

9 Summary of Elements that Contribute to Kildown Conservation Area's Special Character

Topography and Views

- 9.1 This is a small ridgetop linear settlement on a narrow north-south ridge with a strong central focus of church, public house and community facility. Dense woodland to the east provides strong visual and physical containment. Tracks and the pond allow limited views into the woodland. The landscape is more open to the west, with open views available from the rear of the Christ Church, Rogers Rough Road and the rear of the Globe and Rainbow Inn, but woodland and wooded farmland dominate views which give rise to an enclosed and remote character.



Views from Rogers Rough Road]

Rural Features

- 9.2 The absence of a kerb and markings to the road, together with the wooded edges, maintains a rural feel throughout the village, which is reinforced by the backdrop of trees and occasional trackways leading into the woods. These 'soft' edges are reinforced by the predominance of grass verges and garden hedges and are a characteristic that should be maintained.



Hedges along Rogers Rough Road

Open Crossroads

- 9.3 The wide-open crossroads are the main focus of the village, which is dominated by the inn, which faces directly onto it. The Quarry Centre and adjacent properties are less obvious and are softened by the surrounding and encroaching woodland. The pond, once a prominent feature, is now largely hidden by vegetation so that it is separate from the built part of the Conservation Area. The track west onto the Scotney Estate now serves only a few properties.

Scale and Contrast

- 9.4 Properties are generally small and unimposing, giving rise to a generally small-scale domestic environment. The exceptions to this are the imposing Christ Church and the extensive single building of the Globe and Rainbow Inn. These two buildings are the dominant and defining landmark features of the settlement and are a direct contrast to the surrounding environment. By contrast, the Quarry Centre community facility is a low-key timber structure that blends harmoniously with its rural setting.



Kildown Church from the wide open crossroads

Materials

- 9.5 Red clay peg tiles, red bricks and white weatherboarding are common. Painted elevations, both brick and timber, are evident. The sandstone of the church and its associated walling is a strong material that has been used occasionally on other buildings.

10 Summary of Elements that Detract from Kildown Conservation Area's Special Character and Opportunities for Enhancement

Materials

- 10.1 Ragstone and concrete products have been used for boundary features to front gardens. These materials are inappropriate to the rural character of the area, which in its buildings exhibits the locally, more common use of brick and tile. These modern, or alien, materials should be avoided in favour of more traditional, stone brick or timber.



Inappropriate boundary treatment, Rogers Rough Road

Frontages

- 10.2 In addition, and as part of the comments on materials above, changes to frontages in Rogers Rough Road such as driveways, new boundary walls and gates, are detracting from the rural nature of the lane and the settlement.

The Quarry Pond

- 10.3 The pond is a striking feature much used by locals, but overlooked by many visitors, due to the increase in vegetation between the pond and road. Indeed, the pond itself is overshadowed by trees and hedgerows, so that the visual relationship between pond and village is extremely limited. Careful opening of views and more vigorous management of the surrounding vegetation could help achieve a better balance between connecting the pond visually with the village and physically protecting the pond from the road.

The Quarry Centre

- 10.4 The Quarry Centre, with the phone box and bus shelter, is an important and historical feature of the village and a focus for community activity. Maintaining the character and utility of this site is important and any change in this area needs careful consideration.

Footpaths and Tourism

- 10.5 Kildown lies at the centre of a network of Public Rights of Way between the major tourist attractions and walking areas of Bedgebury Forest, Scotney Estate, Goudhurst village and Bewl Water. This generates passing traffic, but there may be scope to improve visitor facilities and signage. It is important that any such changes are to benefit the local community and contribute to the character and upkeep of the Kildown Conservation Area.

Development

- 10.6 Some new development detracts from the Conservation Area by virtue of the insensitive selection of materials or the lack of response to the local architecture. A particular example is Steeple House in Rogers Rough Road. It is important that all new development respects the architecture and form of the village and uses local materials and styles. There is an area of land east of the church which has all the appearance of wasteland with development aspirations. Currently this detracts from the character of the village. Any new development in the village must respect the scale and hierarchy of the settlement.



Steeple House, Rogers Rough Road

Highway Features and Signs

10.7 There are both good examples (the timber pedestrian barrier opposite the church) and bad examples (the metal signs near the bus shelter at the Quarry Centre) of highway signs and furniture, but a generally positive feature is the lack of highway signs and structures. Highway 'improvements', or even general maintenance work, can result in the loss of small incidental features and creeping suburbanisation through the introduction of sign clutter, road markings and kerbs. The cobbled, open drainage channel along the church wall is one such feature that is at risk from highway 'improvements', and one which should be maintained.



Sign clutter in front of the Quarry Centre



17 Cobbled open drainage channel

[Figure 7]

[Figure 8]

11 Consultations

Introduction

- 11.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in PPS12 regarding preparation and consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 11.2 The most relevant Local Plan Policies are set out in this document at Section 2. The Supplementary Planning Document is intended to support these Policies.

Consultation Process

- 11.3 The initial preparation of the document was through a working group made up of consultants from Chris Blandford Associates, Borough Council officers, representatives from the Goudhurst Parish Council, Goudhurst History Society and other individuals.
- 11.4 The process included walkabouts by the working group of each of the two Conservation Areas in the parish. These were followed by a workshop session. The resultant informal initial draft Appraisal was then subject to scrutiny and input from members of the working group, together with other key Council officers.
- 11.5 The Cabinet received the report and the draft Appraisal which was approved on 10 March 2005 as the basis for public consultation. (Report No. 050310/CAB173).
- 11.6 The document was subject to public consultation ending 25 April 2005, with a staffed exhibition based in Goudhurst Parish Hall being held on 1 and 2 April 2005.
- 11.7 The consultation draft was also reported to the Borough Council's Western Area Planning Committee for comment on 18 April 2005, and was made available to all Borough Councillors.

Response to Consultation

- 11.8 The responses to the consultation were reported to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning on 9 June 2005 (Item 050610/002). The report details the responses received and outlines the proposed changes to the document, where appropriate. The report and minutes of the meeting are available from the Council's Committee Section on request, or can be viewed on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.
- 11.9 The Appraisal was ratified at Full Council on 13 July 2005 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Document, together with the revised Conservation Area boundaries.

Notices

- 11.10 Relevant notices were placed in the London Gazette on 29 September 2005, and a local newspaper, in accordance with S.70 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

[Two – 21 Public Consultation April 2005]

12 Sustainability

- 12.1 The Borough Council is required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) as part of the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is to ensure conformity with other higher-level strategies and policies, to identify any sustainability issues and to ensure that the Supplementary Planning Document is as sustainable as possible.
- 12.2 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation Areas Appraisal was undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates on behalf of the Borough Council in order to integrate sustainability considerations into the preparation of the SPD. Sustainability encompasses environmental, social and economic components.
- 12.3 Consultation with the four key national agencies was undertaken and any comments incorporated in the final SA/SEA. The SA/SEA was also consulted on alongside the SPD.

13 Further Information

- 13.1 For queries on planning matters or general conservation advice you are encouraged to consult the Borough Council's planning officers who will be pleased to assist.

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