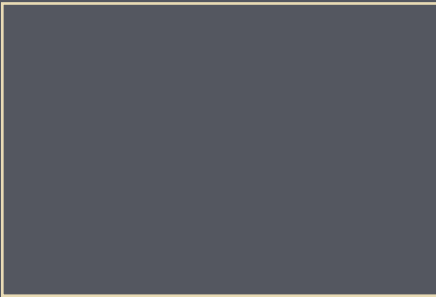


Hawkhurst

The Moor
Highgate and All Saints Church
Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)



Hawkhurst

Conservation Areas Appraisal

The Moor

*Highgate and All Saints Church
Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)*

*Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
in Partnership with
Hawkhurst Parish Council
and other local representatives*

**N G Eveleigh BA, MRTPI
Planning and Building Control Services Manager
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS

September 1999

Printed on environmentally friendly paper

Acknowledgements

The Borough Council would like to thank Hawkhurst Parish Council and other local representatives for their participation in the preparation of this guidance

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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 of 1967 and more than 8500 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. 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 within it.
- 1.2 Within a conservation area the planning authority has greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements. The aim of the controls is to retain buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Designation 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 However, it is not just the local planning authority which has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the Parish Council, who maintain some of the important open spaces at the heart of the conservation areas, and the residents and business people who live and work in the area and are responsible for maintaining their individual properties and gardens which together contribute to the character of the conservation area. Property owners in conservation areas are strongly advised to consult the planning authority before making changes to the outside of their property, trees or fences.
- 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 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 and high standards of design are important so that such proposals will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Hawkhurst Conservation Areas

- 1.6 The Parish of Hawkhurst is situated within the Kentish High Weald in a landscape of ridges and gentle valleys lying between the North and South Downs. There are three conservation areas within Hawkhurst.
 - The Moor,
 - Highgate and All Saints Church, and
 - Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)
- 1.7 The villages are surrounded by sweeps of arable land or pastures, within a framework of dense shaws, thick hedges and stretches of broad-leaved woodland. The centre of Highgate lies at the junction of two main roads, the A229 from Maidstone to Hastings and the A268 from Rye linking up with the A21 to London. Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green) lies to the west along the same ridge. The Moor is situated on the next ridge to the south of Highgate. There are striking views across the valley between the two ridges. All the three areas were originally appraised in 1972 and were judged to demonstrate sufficient quality and interest to merit designation as conservation areas. The conservation areas were designated in November 1972.

The Purpose of this Appraisal

- 1.8 This document attempts to define some of the key elements which contribute to the special historic and architectural character of the three conservation areas. 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, and the relationship between the built form and the landscape elements.
- 1.9 In addition, the appraisal records some of the principal elements which 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 and inappropriate street furniture as well as external influences such as traffic.
- 1.10 This appraisal will guide the local planning authority in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing enhancement proposals. It will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the villages, such as the County and Parish Councils and local traders and householders. The objective is to enable beneficial change within the conservation areas whilst preserving the characteristics which give the Hawkhurst conservation areas their special character.

Boundary Review

The Moor

- 1.11 The boundary for the conservation area was first designated in 1972, (revised in 1992 and 1999). The original boundary focused on The Moor, the large houses and estates to the south and east, and the closer knit development clustered round The Moor to the north and west. Some changes have been made to include buildings related to the Lillesden Estate and the entrance to a footpath and to exclude inappropriate modern development.

Highgate and All Saints Church

- 1.12 The boundary was first designated in 1972 (revised in 1992 and 1999). The original boundary was drawn tightly around the historic village centre and this approach has been endorsed in the 1999 review. Some changes have been made to include additional buildings and curtilages and to exclude inappropriate modern development.

Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)

- 1.13 The boundary was first designated in 1972 (confirmed in 1999). The original boundary was drawn around the small green and was subsequently extended to include 2 additional houses which contributed to the character of the conservation area. No further revisions to the boundary were proposed in 1999.
- 1.14 For all three conservation areas the landscape setting remains outside the boundary as it is currently protected through Structure and Local Plan policies.

2 Policy Background

Local Plan Conservation Area Policies

- 2.1 There are two policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (adopted March 1996) which relate to conservation areas. Policy EN4 seeks to control the demolition of buildings within conservation areas.

POLICY EN4

Proposals for the total or partial demolition of unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character or appearance 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, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to 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**
- 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 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 car parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.**

The detailed character appraisals contained in this document will assist in the interpretation of these policies.

Other Local Plan Policies

There are a number of other general and specific policies in the Local Plan which are relevant to Hawkhurst Conservation Areas. Specific policy designations are shown in figures 1,3 & 5 and may be summarised as follows:

Limits to Built Development

Under Policy LBD1, the limit to built development defines the built-up edge of a village beyond which countryside policies apply.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

Proposals affecting areas designated under Policy EN8 will only be permitted where the nature conservation value of the site would be protected.

Areas of Important Open Space and Areas of Landscape Importance

Policies EN18 and EN19 recognise and seek to protect the visual significance of open and landscaped areas within the villages.

Landscape Protection

Policy EN23 defines the boundary of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the High Weald Special Landscape Area around the three settlements.

Car Park

Existing car parking areas will be retained under Policy VP13.

Hawkhurst Shopping Area

Within the Hawkhurst Shopping Area, Policy SP7 seeks to protect the vitality and viability of the Local Shopping Area in the Highgate Conservation Area.

Special Policy Area

Policy SPA9 recognises the potential for sensitive development of land south of Rye Road whilst retaining important buildings and spaces. A Planning Brief, subsequently approved by the local planning authority, includes guidance for the redevelopment of land North and South of Rye Road, giving detailed guidance on what might be appropriate for both sites.

Recreation Open Space

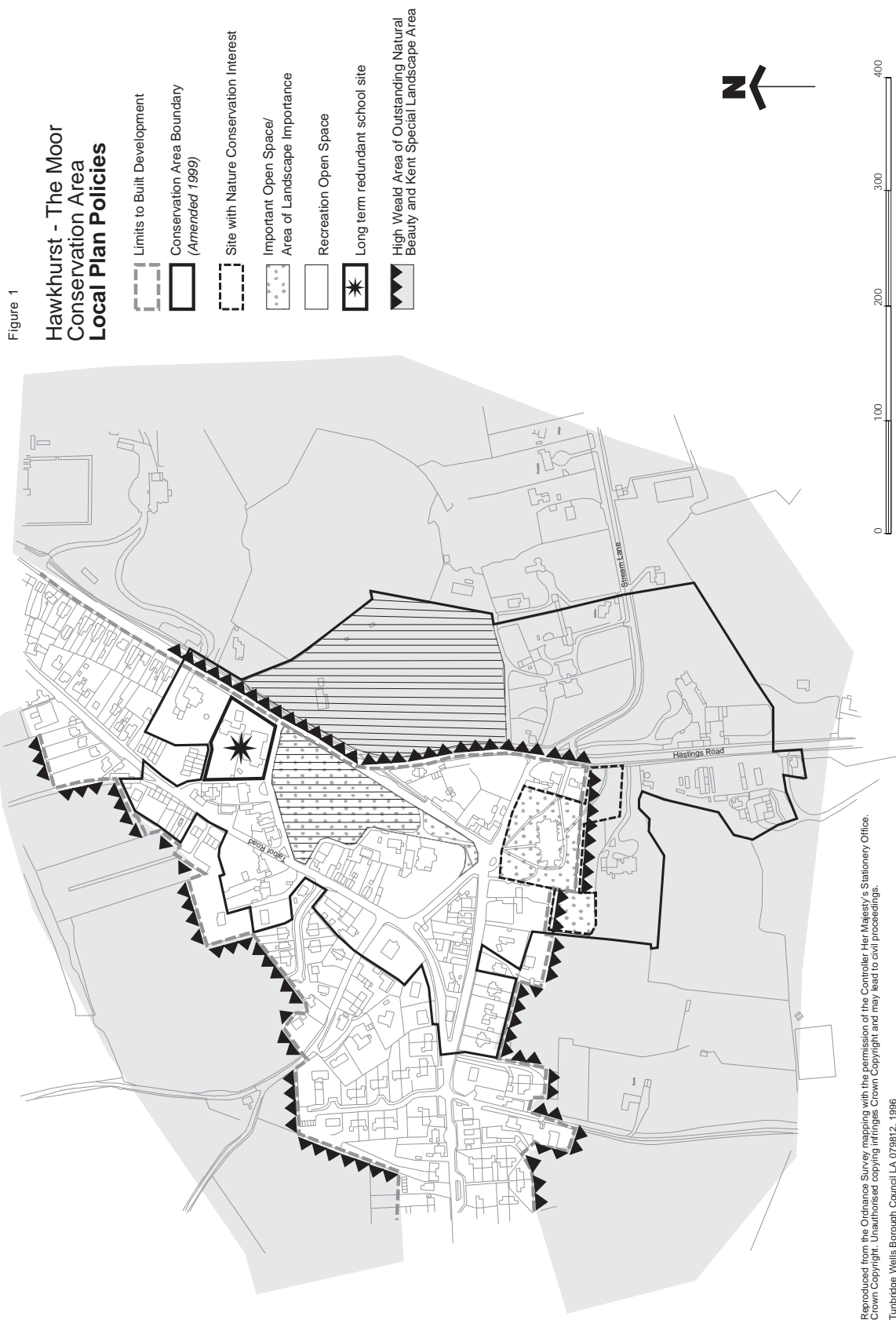
Policy R1 seeks to protect areas of open space for recreation use.

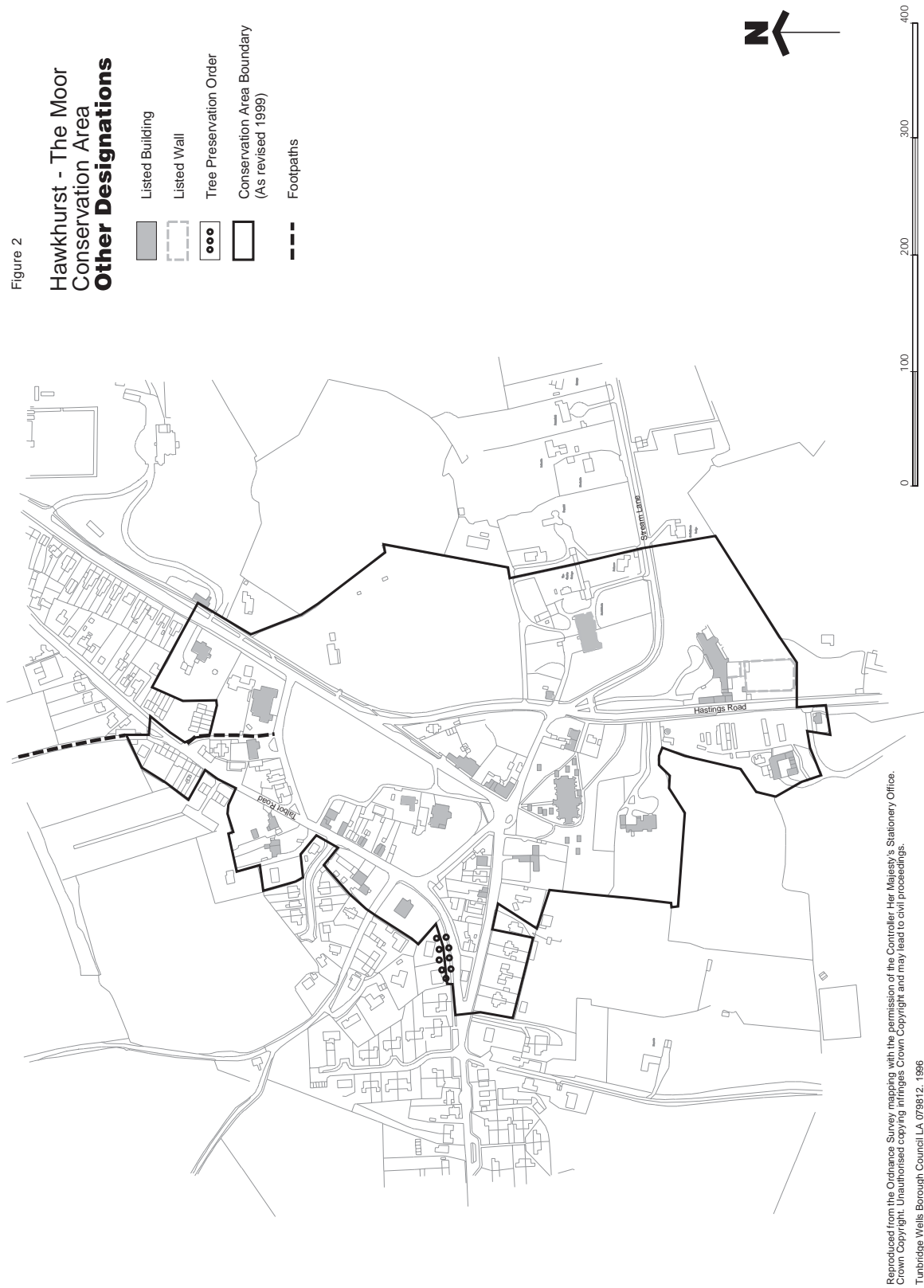
Other Designations

Finally, there are designations which are made through other legislation. These are summarised in figures 2,4 & 5 and include listed buildings, tree preservation orders and footpaths.



photo: John Hunt





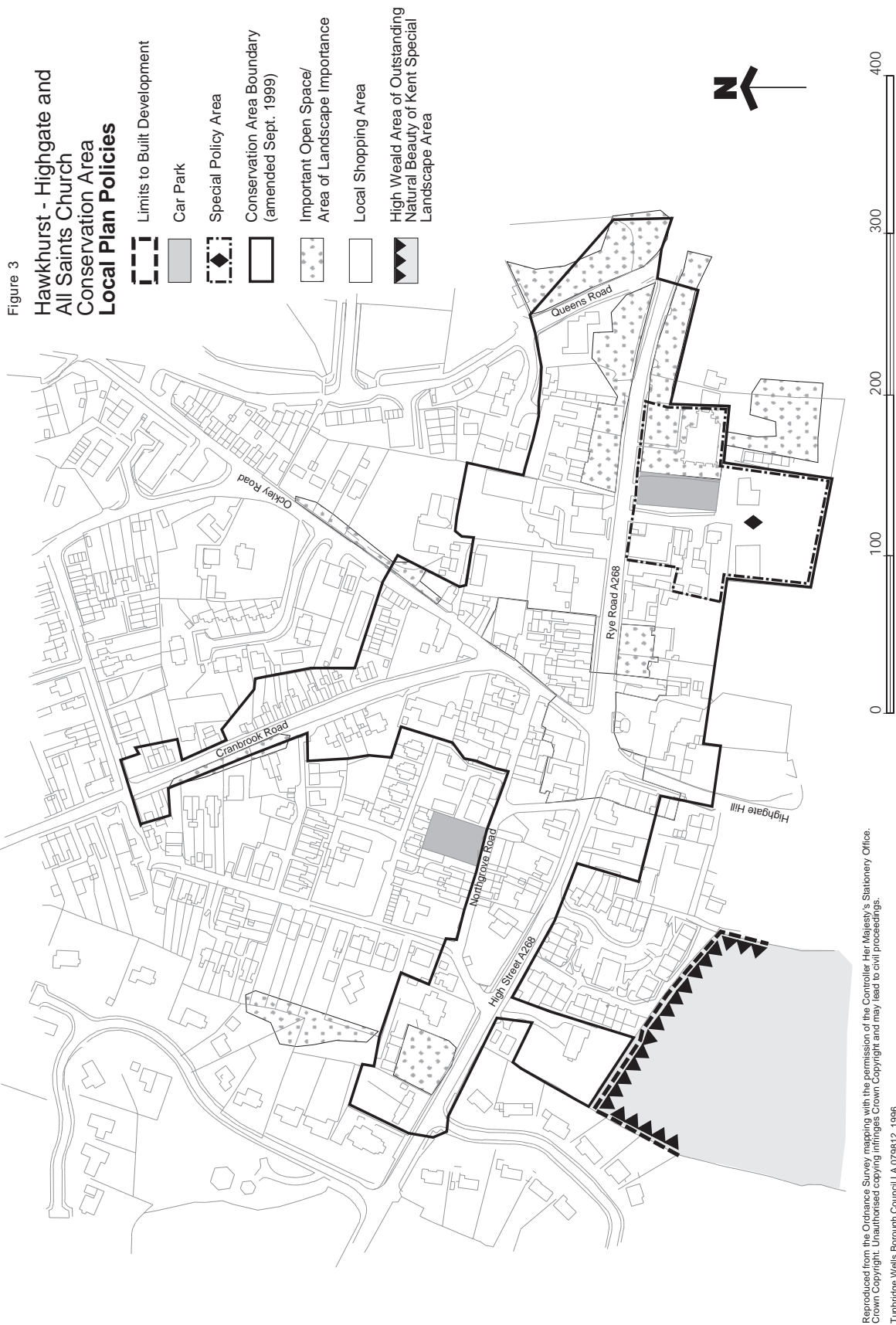


Figure 4

**Hawkhurst - Highgate and All Saints Church Conservation Area
Other Designations**

- Listed Building
- Listed Wall
- Tree Preservation Order
- Conservation Area Boundary (As revised 1999)
- Footpaths



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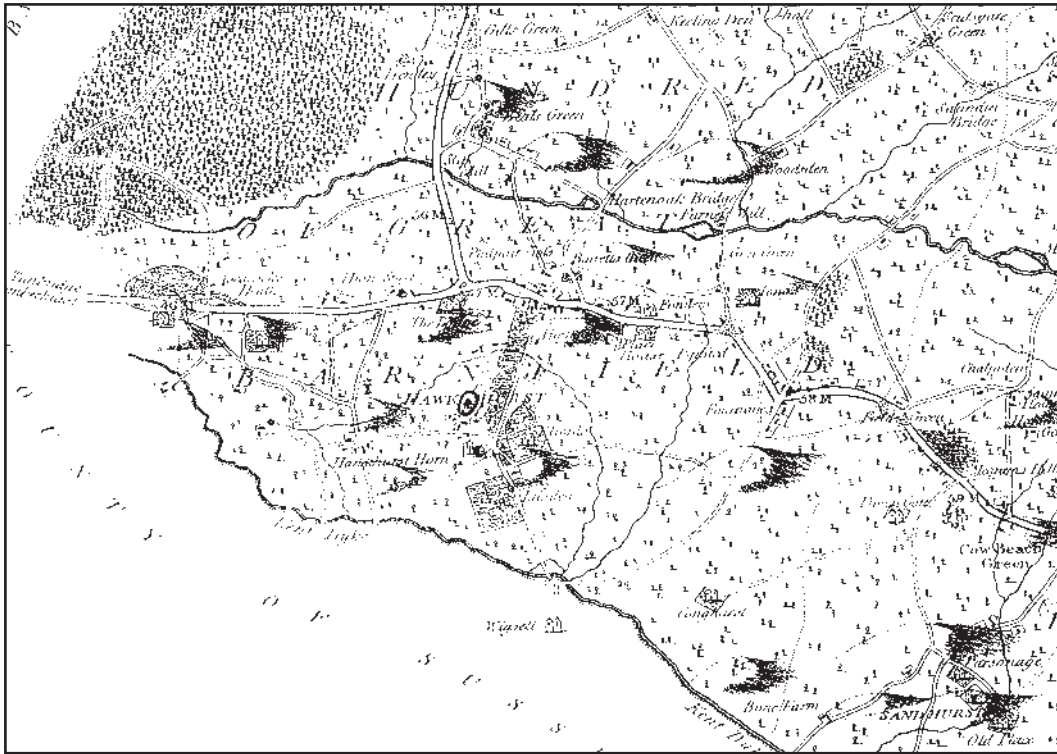


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3 Perceptions of Hawkhurst

- 3.1 In 1987 a charity named Common Ground launched the Parish Maps project to encourage people to share and chart information about their locality. These Parish maps are not intended to be a cartographic representation but rather a collection of features which the community considers to be of value.
- 3.2 As part of their continuing programme of initiatives to improve the image of Hawkhurst the Hawkhurst Village Society has instigated the production of a Parish Map. By various means they have encouraged people to say what they value in the village, to collect information and photos about all aspects of life here now – school, social life, workplaces, homes, etc. This is partly to help the artists depicting the village but also as a resource for future historians and for school projects.
- 3.3 Local people appreciate the 18th century Colonnade at Highgate and the Dunks Almshouses, from the legacy in 1718 of Sir Thomas Dunk of Tongswood whose family had been wealthy clothiers here. Also the jolly little building that is now the library but was given, as a fire-station, in memory of his two sons killed in the 1914-18 war by Mr C E Gunther, also of Tongswood.
- 3.4 The Moor area is prized for its comparative tranquillity. This, the original village with the green, old houses clustering round, the attractive pub and the beautiful old church is the part of Hawkhurst that people treasure most. It is here that fetes take place with their tug-o-wars, bouncy castles and coconut shies, attracting young people. Outside the church the tradition of a street market has returned at the feast of St. Laurence, an occasion for fun and meetings over the charity and trading stalls.
- 3.5 The general view amongst the old families of Hawkhurst is that the village has gone downhill. The railway and so many shops that they remember have gone and the traffic along the A229 and the A268 have spoilt the atmosphere especially at the Highgate cross-roads. People with cars tend to shop in the supermarkets and are hardly seen in the village.
- 3.6 However, things are improving. As villages go Hawkhurst is fortunate in having more shops than many and since the hanging baskets were put up and some of The Colonnade shops painted the centre looks much more attractive. In the spring too, the approach roads are cheerful with daffodils.
- 3.7 One of the reasons that the village did not unite to insist on a bypass when it might have been possible, is the general delight in the network of narrow lanes and countryside that would have been destroyed. People whizzing along the main roads have no idea of the byways where the tree canopies make a green tunnel, where primroses, wood anemones and even wild daffodils can be seen and where the sight of a fox or a badger is not unusual. There are mixed feelings about the conversion of All Saints Church but there is general agreement that on the many lovely footpath walks in the area the church spire guides one home.
- 3.8 Because the parish is so spread out with numerous hamlets – Gills Green, Iddenden Green, Four Throws, Highgate and The Moor – Hawkhurst has problems with a sense of community. This is somewhat ameliorated by the many clubs and organisations – and Thursdays. Thursday is the day when the WI Market opens at Dunk's Hall, the peripatetic fish man sets up his stall outside the Royal Oak and pensions are collected – all good excuses to meet people and have a chat.
- 3.9 Although there are fewer shops than there were before cars, more work places are appearing. Some are at Gills Green on part of the Kent Woodware site and Genalog in the nearby Oast, some at Springfield nearer Highgate and others off Northgrove Road and behind the Wealden Advertiser in Horns Road. The biggest development – and least obvious – is people working in the shed in the garden, in the attic or in the stable block. Modern technology making it possible to communicate easily with people far away. These are helping to bring life back to the village.

4 The Evolution of Hawkhurst



Extract 'A map of the Hundred of Great Barnfield'
E. Hasted – *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent 1798*

- 4.1 The name of Hawkhurst appears in several early documents but under different names. Hawkhurst appears in the Domesday Book as Hauochesten. It appears in the 11th Century Domesday Monacorum as Hawkashyrst, and in the Taxatio of 1291 as Hauekherst, (meaning the wooded hawk hill). In Saxon times, Hawkhurst was in the Royal Manor of Wye. After the Norman conquest, King William gave land in Hawkhurst as endowment to monks at Battle Abbey.
- 4.2 Small settlements, known as hursts, developed in clearings in the huge forest of Anderida which covered south east England. The Tunbridge Wells Sandstone ridges provided dry ground for houses above the Wadhurst Clay valleys. Today the area is known as the Weald, derived from the Saxon name Andredswald. The soils are relatively poor and early farming was restricted to grazing and pasture. The now busy roads (A229 and A268) were once old drove routes used to drive livestock from the North Downs into the wooded Weald for 'pannage', or a right to forage for autumnal nuts and mast.
- 4.3 Hawkhurst gained much of its prosperity from cloth and iron. The proximity of Cranbrook as a centre of the woollen industry influenced the area. Paper Mill Farm, Hinksden Road, dating from 1475 was built as a working house for cloth weavers. The area retains evidence of the former iron industry which flourished here from pre-Roman times up until the nineteenth century. Iron ore was dug out from the surface with local timber used to fuel the smelting process. Pig iron and then cannon were produced. In the seventeenth century, Furnace Mill in Water Lane, an iron foundry, manufactured cannons which were stored at what became known as Gun Green.
- 4.4 The three conservation areas in Hawkhurst; The Moor, Highgate and All Saint's Church, and Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green), are all within sight of each other across the valley, however, they each exhibit very different characteristics reflecting their historical development.

5 The Evolution and Form of The Moor

Pre 1400

- 5.1 The earliest reference to the Parish Church of St Laurence, on The Moor, is in a charter dated 1285. There is some evidence that there was a church in Saxon times, from around 1100. The main fabric of the church, however, dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with a fine east window built about 1360. Unfortunately the window was shattered when the church was partially destroyed by a bomb in 1944. The church, now restored, is made from local sandstone and the 75 foot tower is a landmark from the surrounding countryside. There are many important gravestones and memorial stones within the Churchyard.
- 5.2 An old oak reputed to be older than the Church grew at the edge of the churchyard. It was finally removed in 1945. An acorn taken from the original tree was planted in 1915 and grows in the churchyard today. Monks kept a vineyard at The Moor, which no longer exists. The three properties adjacent to the Church, Church Court, The Chantry and The Close formally comprised one building which was used for various purposes. The buildings had been given to the Church in the fifteenth century by John Parsons, and they were used as a workhouse during the eighteenth century. Subsequently, the buildings were divided up, extended and returned to residential use.
- 5.3 The Moor is a village green, the remains of the common land not enclosed by noblemen. Early in the thirteenth century Edward II granted a deed for 'ye patent of ye fayre of Hawkeherst'. The fair was to be held annually on 10 August, the feast of St Laurence the patron of Hawkhurst, and in addition a weekly market. The market was discontinued in the seventeenth century. An annual fair was held on the green by the Church from 1311 until the nineteenth century. The road and lane network into The Moor is perhaps indicative of the influence the market had in attracting people from the surrounding countryside.

1400 – 1800

- 5.4 During this period employment and income was provided by agriculture, cloth and iron industries. Although not everyone was employed and the Workhouse adjoining the Church was established in 1482, providing work and accommodation for paupers.
- 5.5 A number of large houses were built around The Moor. In the mid eighteenth century the local vicar built Wetheringhope, a large red-brick Georgian house opposite the Church, giving a sense of grandeur to the southern end of The Moor.
- 5.6 Other large houses and estates were built at this time. Elford's, a large rambling house with Tudor windows and bargeboarded gables, with a gatehouse, once belonged to a family named Castlemain. The house was divided into two dwellings and the walled garden and estate sold off. The main house has subsequently been restored to a single house. Lilsden or Lillesden with its significant estate, was owned by the Chittenden's, eminent clothiers in the sixteenth century.
- 5.7 Smuggling became an important influence in Hawkhurst during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were heavy taxes on the wool being sent to Europe, so farmers smuggled it out of the country. Demand for wool fell and smuggling of luxury goods into the country became widespread. In the early 1700's the Hawkhurst Gang of smugglers was notorious throughout southern England. The smugglers brought brandy, silk and tobacco up from Rye on packhorses, to be stowed in hidden cellars and passages before being sold on. The leader of the gang for some time was a man named Grey who lived at Seacox, Delmonden Road. The Smugglers Act 1736 was a concerted effort by the government to stamp out smuggling and by the mid eighteenth century the leaders had been caught and in some cases hanged and the gang disbanded.

1800 – 1950s

- 5.8 Employment during this period was still in agriculture, including hops, and also on the large estates in the area. The large houses of Collingwood, Elford and Lillesden required large numbers of people to operate. There were laundries, glasshouses and horses to care for. Stables and workers cottages, gas works chimney, water tower and walled gardens were required, the remains of which in varying conditions of repair, can be seen in the conservation area today.
- 5.9 In recognition of a notable local resident, Sir John Herschel Bart, the nineteenth century astronomer, a new window depicting the Wise men and the Star, has been added to St Laurence. Sir John lived in Collingwood House.
- 5.10 In 1850 the Brewery and Malthouse, unusual for a village of this size but making use of local hops, were founded at the edge of The Moor. The buildings remain, but in residential use. Likewise the bakery close to the Church, is now in residential use.
- 5.11 Prominent at the northern end of The Moor is the school. This was built in 1863 designed by Joseph Clarke and funded by Col. Edward Loyd.
- 5.12 In 1847 the public house changed its name from the Six Bells to the Eight Bells Hotel to reflect the increase in the Church peal from 6 to 8 bells.

1950s to present

- 5.13 Even though employment in agriculture and on the estates has declined, the pleasant rural setting is still highly sought after and today the character of the conservation area is predominantly residential with some low key commercial activity of shops and small businesses. The Church, Primary School and large houses set in landscaped grounds add a sense of grandeur to the conservation area with the smaller properties clustered round the north and west of The Moor. The Recreation Ground, Scout Headquarters and Public House provide opportunities for activities within the village with some employment offered by the dairy as well as local shops and businesses.
- 5.14 Remnants of the ancient forest can be found in the surrounding countryside and in the village itself there is a wealth of mature trees from specimen evergreens, particularly yews, the mature oaks surrounding the recreation ground and the lime avenue leading from The Moor to St Laurence's Church, to mature native species. The quantity and quality of tree cover contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area.



6 Character Appraisal

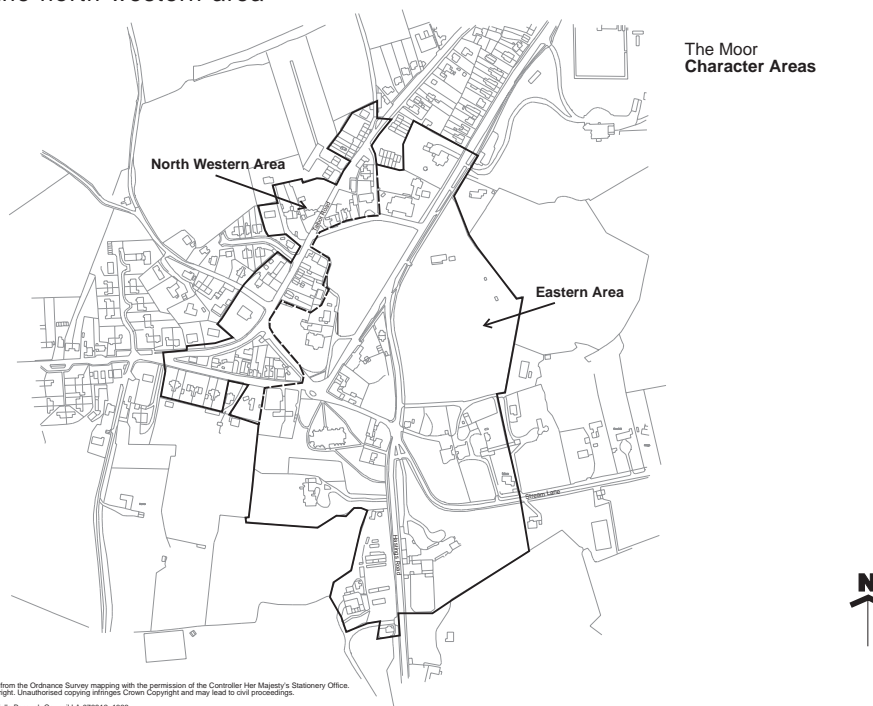
Context

- 6.1 The Moor conservation area is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is set in an elevated position on an east west ridge with long distance views over open countryside in many directions, particularly from The Moor itself, at the heart of the conservation area. The Moor is a gently mounded grassed village green along the top of the ridge. A quietness and peace prevails over The Moor punctuated with birdsong and the hubbub of daily traffic.

Approaches to the Village

- 6.2 The conservation area is approached by three main traffic routes. The busiest route, Moor Hill, rises up to the conservation area from the north opening out onto The Moor. Horns Road enters the area from the west and Hastings Road climbs up to the ridge from the south.
- 6.3 The general character of the conservation area is that of an eclectic and loose group of buildings and spaces together they form a coherent built environment which complements the strong characteristics of the natural environment. For the purposes of the presentation of this appraisal, the conservation area has been divided into two areas which exhibit some different qualities but which together form a coherent character due to their physical, architectural and historical relationship. The two sub-areas can be summarised as:

- the eastern area
- the north western area



Eastern Area

- 6.4 The eastern part of the conservation area is dominated by The Moor and other open spaces and is characterised by large estates and detached houses set in spacious grounds, with significant tree cover. At the highest point of the village the Parish Church of St Laurence with its square tower, set in a spacious churchyard, dominates the area. The scale of the buildings in this area, generally two or more storeys, and the extensive use of sandstone, demonstrates the former wealth of the area.

- 6.5 St Laurence's Church originates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and is central to the character of the conservation area. This impressive sandstone structure is a visible landmark from both within the conservation area and from outside due to its prominent position.
- 6.6 The existing spatial importance of the churchyard with many listed monuments, is important for the views, and setting, of the Church, and also for nature conservation. It provides a physical and visual link between the Church and the three adjoining houses Church Court, The Chantry and The Close to the west, and the Church and the Old Vicarage to the south. The row of mature trees (lime, horse chestnut and oak) include the previously mentioned descendant of the original old Churchyard oak, which, combined with the stone boundary wall, make an attractive setting for the Church. Also notable are mature yew trees standing sentinel over the graveyard.
- 6.7 To the west of the Church is the building divided into three dwellings: Church Court, The Chantry and The Close, a timber framed 15th century building with prominent dormer windows above the two storey structure. The building has been significantly altered since its earlier use as the village workhouse.
- 6.8 To the east of the Church, at the top of Hastings Road, is an important corner site with a two storey 18th century white weather-boarded timber frame house with bay windows adding interest to its main elevation. A brick path separates this building from a brick two storey detached house, prominent in front of the church. It was built in 1950 as a replacement for cottages demolished by a flying bomb.
- 6.9 Opposite the front of the Church, the principal elevation of Wetheringhope overlooks The Moor and offers the conservation area one of its most architecturally and historically important buildings. The two storey 18th century building with dormers can be seen through railings mounted on a brick wall. The privacy of Wetheringhope is secured to the south and west by walls and high evergreen hedging.
- 6.10 The track leading from Wetheringhope onto The Moor, lined with limes, guides the eye across The Moor to the shops on its northern side. The white posts and chain fence at this end of The Moor are in contrast to the more utilitarian concrete and wooden posts elsewhere on The Moor.
- 6.11 The track provides access to several properties. Vine Cottage is smaller in scale than Wetheringhope, a brick two storey structure with small dormers. The white woodwork and chimneys are clearly visible in this prominent position overlooking The Moor. A mixed evergreen hedge divides the private garden and public open space of The Moor. The gravel track then winds round the perimeter of The Moor and the principal elevation of the Malt House contributes to the quality of the area with its distinguished entrance doors and porch canopy. A number of outbuildings and garages do mar this extremely attractive aspect of The Moor.



photo: John Hunt

- 6.12 Across the road to the south east of Wetheringhope, a small triangular island site provides a unique mix of commercial, retail and residential development, together with the village pond. 1 & 2 Elfords Cottages, semi-detached Victorian houses, form a pleasing gateway to this island site when approached from the north.
- 6.13 Eight Bells Hotel is an important focal point for leisure activity. It has been refurbished recently after a fire and the two storey building, originally 18th century, uses vertical hung tiling at first floor level with white painted masonry below. Slate roofing completes the traditional materials as commonly exhibited in the conservation area. The building's setting is very important; it encloses the southern tip of The Moor although the adjoining car park and garage block would benefit from screening.
- 6.14 The south western corner of the island site is particularly attractive with neat white weatherboarded buildings. Chimney stacks punctuate the tile roofs as they cascade in a series of ridges down to the rear of the properties. The Old Bakehouse has changed from its former use to part office and part residential. A modern flat roofed frontage masks an older pitched roof structure.
- 6.15 The village pond completes the island site. The semi-secluded nature of the pond with ducks and wildlife, surrounding mature vegetation and enclosed by metal railings contributes to the peacefulness of the area. A cedar, horse chestnut and specimen contorted willow are key contributors to the area. Appropriate management of the surrounding vegetation would open up views of the pond and link it more closely to the rest of the conservation area.
- 6.16 Directly opposite the village pond to the east, lies a small white rendered gatehouse, Elford Lodge. The Victorian structure incorporates a single storey with garret. The prominent gabled end with decorative barge boards is clearly visible from various points within the conservation area although the estate behind is heavily screened by trees and shrubs in extensive grounds.
- 6.17 A walled driveway past Elford Lodge leads to Elfords. A grand gabled building, originally 15th century but remodelled more recently. Within the grounds of the house are 18th and 19th century estate buildings of traditional construction and material including a very attractive stable block, a two storey cottage and more recently a large greenhouse and swimming pool structure. The quality of the estate buildings and spacious setting remains even though a number of the buildings have been converted to private residential use. Privacy and seclusion is retained with a combination of close boarded fencing, dense evergreen hedging and trees on the boundaries.
- 6.18 Stream Lane winds into the conservation area and with the strong boundary treatment on either side of the road forms a green tunnel gateway into the conservation area from the south east. The trees and boundary treatment of Elfords is matched by a large group of trees and shrubs in the grounds of Collingwood House.
- 6.19 Entering the conservation area from the south, the brick and sandstone walls of the Collingwood House estate buildings standing above a grass verge and overhanging trees, create a gateway along Hastings Road. Collingwood House, built in 1810, is a very large three storey estate house with glimpses of its principal elevation just possible from the junction of Stream Lane and Hastings Road, through the farmyard gate set between stone pillars. The house, which until recently has been used as a school, is surrounded by estate buildings, stables, a walled garden and outhouses. The grounds of the house, including significant trees, provide a gracious setting for this important estate.

- 6.20 The Collingwood estate buildings are mirrored on the other side of the road by estate buildings belonging to the Lillesden estate. A mix of former agricultural buildings, greenhouses, workers' cottages and a striking brick gas works chimney serve as reminders of the historic significance of the estate. A former stable block and two storey brick coach house enclose a courtyard which nestles behind the other estate buildings. The estate buildings are mostly redundant and have suffered from neglect. Collectively, their historical significance and the charm of the materials, details and open space, set behind a mixed hedge, with a backdrop of mature boundary vegetation, make a significant contribution to the conservation area.
- 6.21 Lillesden House itself is not visible from the conservation area although the highly decorated red brick lodgehouse with a slate roof, small tower and yew trees in the garden, form part of the gateway both for the house and the conservation area. The ornamental parkland trees in Lillesden provide a significant backdrop to the conservation area.
- 6.22 A distinctive brick water tower is a focal point marking the end of the Lillesden estate. Beyond this the greenery closes in again and a secluded green driveway leads to the Old Vicarage, an elegant 19th century white painted house in a spacious setting with dramatic views of the countryside beyond. A significant oriental plane tree is notable in the garden of The Old Vicarage.
- 6.23 Looking north, Hastings Road rises towards the centre of the settlement. The fast, straight road corridor is clearly defined by well groomed hedging, timber boarded fencing and masonry walls.
- 6.24 A rusticated walled garden nestles between the Old Vicarage and St Laurence's Church. It is in a very tranquil, secluded location and provides the original access route for the vicar to the Church directly through the walled garden. The church, the walled garden and the Old Vicarage form a very important group of buildings historically.
- 6.25 An unexpected view of the Church opens up just past the entrance to the old Vicarage as the churchyard meets the road. Brick and stone paths beyond a gate in the brick wall invite people into the open space to the rear of the Church.
- 6.26 The Church is balanced across The Moor by the distinctive school building and the northern entrance to the conservation area. From the north east the gateway into the conservation area is formed by beech trees and garden hedges enclosing Moor Hill before opening up to views of The Moor itself. The gateway is characterised by a wide grass verge with young hornbeam and lime trees and a backdrop of a holly and hawthorn hedge with mature oak standards, lining the recreation ground.
- 6.27 Set behind the school and screened from the road by the holly hedge, Wychwood, is one of the few timber frame buildings within the conservation area. It is a two storey weatherboarded house with shutters and a plain tiled roof.
- 6.28 As the road crests the hill, The Moor unfolds. This large, grassed, slightly domed, roughly triangular, informal open space is at the centre of the conservation area with St Laurence Church behind forming the visual landmark at the southern end. The space is used for school sports and local events as well as walking and informal play. Predominantly two storey buildings surround the space, which because of their scale and height in relation to The Moor, retain a sense of openness within the heart of the conservation area. There are glimpses of the Wealden countryside from The Moor, emphasising the openness and the elevated ridge top position. The Moor contains very little planting, which maintains the open quality, with the exception of a dominant lime avenue to the south leading from The Moor towards the Church and single trees in both the north east and north west corner.

- 6.29 Adjacent to The Moor and somewhat divorced by the road traffic on the A229, are the King George V Playing Fields, the boundaries defined by mixed indigenous hedging and mature oaks and horse chestnuts. The green and open nature of the recreation ground with a significant line of mature lime trees to the east adds to the spacious feel of this part of the conservation area and links the area to the adjoining countryside. The pre-cast concrete garages attached to the modern pavilion on the recreation ground are faced with non matching brick and stark painted woodwork which are particularly prominent. The southern boundary of the recreation ground is marked by an enticing green lane which provides access to the Scout Headquarters and a number of properties formerly associated with the Elford estate.

The North Western Area

- 6.30 This part of the conservation area consists primarily of two storey traditional residential properties, with several small but important retail outlets. It focuses on the area either side of Talbot Road and Horns Road. The development is close knit, generally with small gardens. Building materials tend to be of the traditional type particularly white weatherboarding, brick, clay tiles, and white woodwork.
- 6.31 Framing The Moor on its northern boundary are the Primary School, several retail properties, the Post Office, Moor Stores and Hardware Shop and a number of residential properties. They provide a variety of architectural styles and materials but are unified by their two storey height, scale and mass together with their very important setting overlooking The Moor. White weatherboarding and detailing ensures visibility of the buildings from across The Moor. The colour of the shopfronts and displays add considerable interest to the area. People visiting the shops, telephone box, post box and the school all contribute to the movement, colour and life of this area.
- 6.32 Hawkhurst Primary School is a large, solid, single storey mid Victorian building which is highly decorated contrasting with the vast plain tiled roof punctuated by an ornate bell tower. Red brick has been used to great effect to highlight the dressed stone window heads and cills with dark and light brick band decoration on the south side. Set behind black hairpin steel railings, it is perhaps the most highly decorated and detailed building in the conservation area in a very prominent position overlooking The Moor. Within the school grounds, the open asphalt paved area and a number of temporary buildings detract from its setting.
- 6.33 Although set further back from The Moor, the Post Office is particularly prominent both day and night with its lighting and shopfront, and as a focus for local activity. The building is of late Georgian timber frame construction with traditional vertical tile hanging and painted brickwork at ground floor level. The informal open space in front of the post office provides car parking for the shops although the cluttered and untidy open area, general disrepair of the site furniture, and inappropriate signage could be improved to enhance the conservation area. A single yew provides a solid evergreen backdrop to this busy and somewhat cluttered scene. There is a public footpath running to the east of the site between the school and Post Office providing access from the north of the village.
- 6.34 The Hardware shop and The Moor Stores are attractive white weatherboarded buildings but with very different characters. The Hardware shop has a modern shop window and display area, filled with colourful merchandise. The Moor Stores is no longer in use as a shop but its former commercial use is an important characteristic of this part of the conservation area and the display windows and canopy should be retained. The bituminous paint added to the slate roof is in marked contrast to the clay tile and slate roofs in the area.

- 6.35 Returning to the footpath adjacent to the Post Office, the tarmac path passes north alongside the school playground and drops gently down to Talbot Road. Approximately half way down the footpath is a pair of red brick and tile hung semi-detached properties. The houses feel 'boxed-in' by the surrounding development and the proximity of the footpath. However, the use of traditional materials contributes to the conservation area in this semi-hidden location.
- 6.36 Beyond these houses the footpath narrows, giving a greater sense of enclosure. Some unsympathetic boundary treatment can be seen on the left in the form of a galvanised chain link fence but mixed hedging on the right boundary softens the effect. The paving, fencing and end barrier all offer opportunities for enhancement.
- 6.37 Across Talbot Road, is the start of a public footpath which marks the gateway into the conservation area from Talbot Road. It gently falls away in a green tunnel effect with over-hanging tree canopies, leading to open countryside beyond.
- 6.38 Adjacent to the footpath is Evergreen Cottage, a two storey brick and half tiled house. Behind the property is a group of large mature Norway spruce from which the Cottage takes its name, with distant views of a row of lombardy poplars.
- 6.39 Gently climbing up Talbot Road, is a terrace of small cottages called Mount Pleasant Cottages, the only terrace in the conservation area. The central property (No.5) is early Victorian, with an attractive pitched roof dormer providing a focal point. The house is flanked to its right by a later Victorian development of a similar size and materials with the exception of slate roofing. On No.5 Mount Pleasant's left, three red brick cottages indicate a later development of the terrace and complement the earlier designs. The properties are unified by their small front gardens enclosed by a cast iron railing stretching the length of the terrace, although the parked cars immediately in front of the houses do hide the fences and gardens.
- 6.40 Looking due north from outside Mount Pleasant Cottages the ground first falls away and then dramatically rises, giving long distance views of trees, roofscapes and the All Saints Church spire dominating the skyline.
- 6.41 Directly opposite Mount Pleasant Cottages is the Unigate Home Delivery Centre – a two storey red brick building with weatherboarding to part of the first floor front elevation and gable wall. The strong red colour of the gutters, pipes and window frames, the signage, large concrete forecourt, loading bay and canopy forcefully announce the presence of the building with no attempt to blend in with the surroundings.
- 6.42 There are distant views across the valley to Iddenden Green. Looking north west from the Unigate building the views between some modern dwellings, not within the conservation area, are a reminder of the open countryside abutting the conservation area.
- 6.43 Continuing up Talbot Road the character of the area changes. A greater sense of enclosure to the west is achieved by mature beech hedging and bay trees with two storey weatherboarded houses fronting the road while the eastern view opens to The Moor. A winding unsealed road to the right leads to Whites Cottage, a large white, two storey masonry house.
- 6.44 Moor Lodge with its beech hedge, is a large two storey house in a prominent position overlooking The Moor with an attractive white weatherboarded building used as a garage, directly behind. The property is set in spacious grounds with a very attractive Victorian, or earlier, garden wall flanking part of its northern boundary.
- 6.45 The 'Rockery' is an imposing two storey dwelling clad in feather edge boarding. A large modern garage screens the building from The Moor and deprives the conservation area of views of an attractive building. However, notable on this corner are a mature holm oak, beech and pine, giving this corner a shady character.

- 6.46 The Malt House and out building utilises uncharacteristic brick bonding which includes three courses of stretcher bond followed by a band of salt glazed headers every fourth course. The former out building makes a valuable contribution to Talbot Road with gabled feather edged timber painted boarding. A wall plaque indicates the former use and dates.
- 6.47 Nos. 1-5 Howes Cottages are two storey buildings collectively making a prominent statement to Talbot Road by the white painted timber cladding and painted brickwork and white picket fence surrounding tiny front gardens.
- 6.48 Some 10 metres beyond this particular group of properties are Nos 1 & 2 Jasmine Cottages. The building has black painted window surrounds and doors, a feature repeated many times within the conservation area. The principal elevation is spoiled somewhat by the introduction of modern semi-basement windows which bear no relationship to the original window design. A black cast iron railing along its frontage completes the picture.
- 6.49 Directly opposite Jasmine Cottages and set back from the road, lies Old Chestnuts, a well detailed brick and half timbered house. The Georgian property is flanked by Floral Cottage to its left and the shop and butchers to the right. The butchers is a substantial mid to late red brick Victorian building of much physical presence set well back from the road with a traditional paved/cobbled forecourt and gravel drive. This space combined with the mature lime and horsechestnut in the front garden of Old Chestnuts form a significant open space and focal point for this part of the village, in contrast to the surrounding gardens which are fenced and screened from public view. The butchers provides a good example of the low key but important commercial activity in the village.
- 6.50 Opposite the Talbot Road/Hensill Lane junction is a tall boundary wall of varying heights, part of which has evergreen (yew, holly, laurel, viburnum and bay) hedging above, forming a distinctive band of green as the wall curves around to the unmarked lane leading to St Laurence's Church. The garden wall is a traditional brick piers rusticated structure and is an important element of this part of the conservation area adding a sense of enclosure.
- 6.51 Moor House is an imposing white weatherboarded two storey building with a strong symmetrical emphasis. Two two-storey bay windows feature prominently on the frontage with a central porch which appears slightly oversized, encroaching on the first floor window cill directly above. The house stands in a prominent position on the corner of Hensill Lane and Talbot Road and directly opposite the lane leading to St Laurence's Church, although its visibility is partly screened by a close boarded fence.
- 6.52 As the road curves round to join the A229, White Cott can be seen on the left with views of the rear of other properties beyond. White painted weather boarding and two storey buildings predominate.
- 6.53 A holly hedge set in a grass verge joins to form an archway over the white picket gate leading to North Side, now replaced by a wall. North Side is a large two storey building with an unusual sandstone plinth approximately half a metre high and is one of the few houses within this part of the conservation area utilising stonework. North Side is a back to back semi-detached house with South Side. A gap between North Side and the adjoining converted blacksmith's forge allows views through to Horns Road and Lillesden Cottages, but at times is cluttered with parked vehicles.
- 6.54 The boundary of the conservation area rejoins Talbot Road at this point, including important yew and horse chestnut trees and hedging, but excluding two modern uncharacteristic houses.



photo: John Hunt

- 6.55 At the junction of Talbot Road and the A229 is a small Victorian cottage adjoining the converted stable block. The tapered garden boundary permitted by the road layout, with a mature ash tree on the corner is a focal point and together with the horse chestnut and yew trees on Talbot Road and the mature trees and hedges on the south side of Horns Road forms a double gateway into the conservation area.
- 6.56 Approaching the conservation area from the west along Horns Road (A229), are Lillesden Cottages. These former estate cottages were built mid to late 19th century. They have a considerable impact on the conservation area due to their steeply pitched roofs, the quality of detailing, and the trees, evergreen hedges and shrubs in the spacious front gardens. Another estate cottage Lillesden Frith, further along Horns Road, is half tiled and has more ornate detailing. The building is screened from the road by a substantial group of mature mixed planting including a distinctive feature scots pine which provides a visual link to the trees in the churchyard. The quality of these estate buildings is a reminder of the historical importance of the Lillesden Estate.
- 6.57 On the north side of Horns Road within the island site the cottages are older and built closer to the road. The row of houses flanking the A229 are predominantly detached two storey buildings with white weather boarding being prominent. They sit comfortably with each other and their surroundings. Looking north between the buildings there are glimpses of trees and roofscape beyond.
- 6.58 Forge Cottage has pleasant brick detailing above window cills and at plinth level. Adjoining the Cottage is a former stable building, although the conversion to residential use has not been carried out sensitively with poorly matched bricks and mortar work on Talbot Road and cream painted brickwork on Horns Road.
- 6.59 An area of land approximately 20 metres square incorporates a clutter of garden sheds but is partly screened by leylandii, holly and privet hedging forming the boundary to the road.
- 6.60 Crofton House is a single storey gable-ended structure probably built during the early part of the 20th century. An attempt has been made to match materials to the adjoining area, although planting of climbing plants might soften the impact of the brick walls immediately abutting the pavement.
- 6.61 Continuing along Horns Road a row of cottages along the north side is important for the use of white weatherboarding, detailing, chimneys, and yew hedging all characteristic of the locality.
- 6.62 At the end of the row of properties is Victoria House. This is a prominent Victorian former corner shop property, striking with uncharacteristic lime green feather edged boarding, dark green window surrounds and decorative fascias. The building directly abuts the pavement. Beyond Victoria House the sense of space increases significantly with views of The Moor, the churchyard and the road junction with grass verges. A lane leading to Talbot Road, enclosed by walls and hedges opens up to views of Moor House. When seen from in front of the church Victoria House acts as a visual full stop to the tighter knit, smaller scale north western part of the conservation area.



photo: John Hunt

7 Summary of Elements that Contribute to The Moor Conservation Area's Special Character

- 7.1 The detailed character appraisal has revealed several recurring themes whilst not intended as a definitive or ranked list, the following features are considered to make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and consequently are worthy of preservation or, where appropriate, future enhancement.

Green Spaces

- 7.2 The conservation area contains a considerable amount of public and private green open space, making an invaluable contribution to the conservation area. The Moor is characterised by its openness, framed by buildings, except on the eastern boundary. The recreation ground is adjacent yet has a different identity to The Moor, being bordered by hedging and trees to the west and south perimeters, but providing long distance views over countryside beyond the eastern boundary. The important open 'green' character of the area is further enhanced by Elford's Estate, Collingwood House and the grounds of St Laurence's Church, all of which have a semi-secluded setting. The village pond and its surrounding vegetation contributes significantly to the rural environment, offering considerable nature conservation interest.

Trees

- 7.3 Trees provide an important landscape framework, they help define the conservation area, particularly on its east and south boundaries. The roads within the area often feature trees enhancing the sense of enclosure. The trees frame the buildings and integrate them into the surrounding landscape and add focal points and seasonal interest.

Gateways

- 7.4 The primary routes into the conservation areas are characterised by distinct gateways defined by trees, walls and buildings. The west boundary is defined by a single mature ash tree at the junction of Horns Road and Talbot Road framed by trees on the double approach into the conservation area. From the north, a tree lined approach climbing up Moor Hill is a distinctive gateway. The approach from the south is dominated by the height of Collingwood House boundary wall and the building on its boundary, together with the elegant Lodge to Lillesden House almost directly opposite. A secondary approach into the conservation area from the north is via Talbot Road. The only terrace development within the area marks the entrance to the conservation area.

Variety of Building Materials

- 7.5 Traditional building materials are a strong characteristic within the conservation area. Some of the common materials include oak framing, fair faced brickwork, painted brickwork, pointed feather edge boarding and painted render. Clay peg tiles and natural slate for roofs and vertical tile hanging, painted softwood window frames with a contrasting paint surround. Several of the larger buildings including the St Laurence's Church make use of sandstone.

Contrast of Spaces/Density of Buildings

- 7.6 The Moor conservation area incorporates many Listed Buildings, reflecting its historic and architectural importance. It is possible to identify two areas of distinct character:
- eastern area. In this area open spaces predominate. Development is predominantly detached, larger in scale, with significant surrounding open spaces. The most significant buildings can be found in this area; St Laurence's Church is the most dominant visually within the conservation area, others including Collingwood House, the Old Vicarage and Little Elford's are significant houses set within their own landscaped grounds.
 - north western area. This is a tightly knit predominantly residential area, incorporating several low key retail and business premises. The mainly two storey development clusters round The Moor. Although many of the properties are detached, the spaces between them are small scale giving a close-knit feel to the area.

Style and Age of Buildings

- 7.7 The variety of building styles and the age of buildings (primarily dating from 18th century through to early 20th century) contribute to The Moor's character and reflect its incremental evolution. This variety is generally unified within a domestic scale and character.

Boundary Treatment

- 7.8 The conservation area is characterised by strong boundary treatment. There are brick and stone walls for example around the Church, Wetheringhope and Collingwood House. Hedges around the recreation ground, Wetheringhope and along Horns Road add strong green lines. Railings in front of Mount Pleasant Cottages and Jasmine Cottage on Talbot Road provide a contrasting style. Because of the impact of boundary treatments on the conservation area, consideration may be given to grants from the Borough Council to replace unsuitable fences.

Landmarks

- 7.9 St Laurence's Church and the school are two key landmarks at either end of the conservation area. In addition the church tower is clearly visible from outside the conservation area because of the ridgetop location of the village. Wetheringhope is highly prominent across The Moor and Victoria House is prominent on the road junction in front of the church.



8 Summary of Elements that Detract from The Moor Conservation Area's Special Character and Opportunities for Enhancement

- 8.1 Whilst recognising the overall quality of the conservation area, the appraisal has identified areas where there is scope for sensitive enhancement.

Spar Shop and Forecourt Area

- 8.2 The shop and forecourt provide a focus for village activity. However, the number and colour of the signs, poorly maintained surfacing materials, the clutter of railings, rubbish bins and other street furniture, all contribute to a messy appearance. In view of the importance of the site to village life and its high visibility across The Moor, better co-ordination of street furniture and a sensitive enhancement scheme, whilst retaining its rural character, could bring significant improvements to the conservation area.

Boundary Posts on The Moor

- 8.3 Boundary posts have been placed round the perimeter of The Moor to prevent parking on the grass. However, the posts are a mixture of materials and states of repair and have become intrusive. Sensitive replacement of inappropriate concrete posts and those which are damaged, would enhance the conservation area.

Unigate Dairies Site and Footpath Entrance

- 8.4 The concrete paved forecourt, loading bay and large canopy with excessive use of corporate colours makes this site intrusive in what is a low key commercial area. More discreet use of the corporate red, perhaps just on the main elevation would help reduce the impact of this collection of structures on the conservation area. In addition, the footpath immediately adjacent to the Unigate site which links Talbot Road to The Moor, has an unattractive appearance due to the chainlink fence and poorly maintained tarmac path. The entrance from Talbot Road adjacent to the Dairy could be enhanced with resurfacing, railings and more sensitive boundary treatment, such as the planting of mixed species hedgerow which would also serve to soften the impact of the Dairy building on the conservation area.



Signage at Junction of The Moor (A265) and Hastings Road

- 8.5 Approaching The Moor from the south along Hastings Road a clutter of road signs is very prominent just at the junction with The Moor road. These are particularly prominent in view of the open nature of The Moor opening out after the relatively enclosed nature of Hastings Road. Rationalisation, possibly a reduction in the number of signs and use of wooden posts could alleviate this particular detractor.

Maintenance and Management

- 8.6 On the whole the conservation area is tidy and its properties and spaces well maintained. However, a number of buildings and sites could easily be improved. Views of Lime Pond could be opened up to public view to enhance the open nature of the conservation area. The garages and car parking area for the Eight Bells Hotel could be screened from view with an appropriate planting scheme on the boundary. A dilapidated garage on Talbot Road detracts from the well-maintained appearance of the area. Appropriate maintenance is required before the garage collapses completely becoming even more of an eyesore in the conservation area.



New Development and Refurbishment Work

- 8.7 A number of recent developments and refurbishments have introduced details which are not consistent with the high quality of the conservation area. For example, the bricks and paintwork of the new garages attached to the sports pavilion are in stark contrast to the pavilion itself, the design and details of the refurbishment of the old blacksmiths is unsympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

9 The Evolution and Form of Highgate and All Saints Church

Pre-16th century

- 9.1 There was sporadic development in the Highgate area during this period reflecting the low-key agricultural use of the area. The two main roads through the village originated as drove routes used to bring livestock from the North Downs to forage for food in the forest.
- 9.2 There is evidence of shops at the cross roads from 1450 but the main centre for buying and selling would have been the market up on The Moor.

1500 – 1800

- 9.3 During this period the traffic on the roads from Rye and the south coast up to London was growing. Three cottages on the edge of Highgate Green, at the junction of the roads, were converted into a posting inn known as Commercial Inn and later, converted to the Royal Oak.
- 9.4 According to Richard Kilburne, the celebrated Kent historian who lived in Fowlers, Hawkhurst in the seventeenth century, the name Highgate derives from the fact that gates once stood along this ancient highway to give entry to the enclosed commons belonging to the Church, the highest gate being Highgate.
- 9.5 Development in the area was increasing. Under the will of Sir Thomas Dunk, the most famous member of a wealthy local family which owned much land in the parish, almshouses and a schoolroom for boys, with a schoolteacher's flat above were erected in 1723. The schoolroom now provides a public room for the village.
- 9.6 It is said that there are smugglers passages and tunnels from the Royal Oak, the Queens Head, Fowlers and other main buildings along the ridge. The road known as Highgate Hill was built in 1763 and a smugglers passage from the former Adams store on the south west corner of the road junction to Commercial Inn (now the Royal Oak) was found.
- 9.7 The Queen's Head Hotel, a posting house, was formerly the Home Farm House for the Fowlers Park Estate . There was a bowling green at the rear. This was closed in 1976 and has now been redeveloped for housing.

Nineteenth Century

- 9.8 The nineteenth century was a key period in the development of the Highgate area. Local benefactors and key individuals attracted by the convenient location of the village and its pleasant aspect with views over the Weald, influenced the development of the village as a commercial centre for the area.
- 9.9 The more recent commercial development of the village began towards the end of the eighteenth century, early nineteenth century when The Colonnade, a row of weather-boarded shops with a canopy over the pavement, was built.
- 9.10 Transport has played a key part in the form and development of Highgate. The village is situated on a ridge which has carried traffic from Rye to London since medieval times. The establishment of two post houses, the Royal Oak and Queen's Head, reflects the significance of this route. The railway was built at Gills Green, 1 mile north of Highgate in 1893. The centre focused on the junction of the two main roads at Highgate.
- 9.11 The branch line from Paddock Wood provided a link to London and during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was used by Londoners who were transported by rail to their annual hop picking in the Hawkhurst area.
- 9.12 Northgrove House, an asylum built by Dr Wm Milsted Harmer was established in 1839. It was burnt down in 1890, and all that remains is a brick gatepost on Northgrove Road marking the former entrance to the building.

- 9.13 All Saints Church was built in 1861 designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. It was built as a Chapel of Ease for the convenience of Highgate residents. The land was acquired by Canon Jeffreys, the rector and local benefactor, and was constructed in local sandstone. The spire (115 feet) can be seen from the surrounding countryside. A footpath now covered by gardens used to run east from the churchyard well to Fowlers Park. All Saints has had a relatively short life as a church and is now a redundant church for which an alternative use is being sought. St Laurence's, on The Moor remains the Parish Church for Hawkhurst.
- 9.14 In 1891 Hawkhurst School off Western Road, was erected as a memorial to Canon Jeffreys who had had such an influence on the village.
- 9.15 The provision of services and facilities continued with the erection in 1875 of the Victoria Hall by the Maynard Family, as a place for lectures and meetings.
- 9.16 Other significant buildings in the village provided employment for local people. Griffin Woodcock's Mineral Water Factory, converted from a house and stables, on Cranbrook Road, provided jobs, and today is occupied by a number of small businesses. At the junction of Western Road and Cranbrook Road William Rootes started a cycle business in 1897. This grew into an international motor vehicle business and the property is still known as Rootes House.
- 9.17 The post office in the centre of the village was once the central post office for the area, serving 70 towns and villages and providing employment. A small sub post office remains on the site but the majority of the building is now used by other businesses and for residential purposes.

Twentieth Century

- 9.18 In more recent times employment has been provided at the Kent Woodware factory which was established in 1911 at Gills Green. Subsequently the factory has expanded over the former station.
- 9.19 In 1921 a War Memorial was erected at the centre of the village in front of the Royal Oak. Local benefactors still influenced the development of the village when in 1921 a new fire engine and station was presented to the Hawkhurst Fire Brigade by C E Gunther of Tongswood. The building now houses the public library.
- 9.20 Two hundred years after it was opened the Sir Thomas Dunk's School for Boys closed in 1923. The Almshouses have been converted to flats and the schoolroom provides an extra public room.
- 9.21 The importance of transport has continued with the building of a new bus station in 1955. However, in 1961 the railway line was closed as part of the national changes by Lord Beeching.
- 9.22 In the 1960s a number of larger houses, such as Highfield and Fairview were demolished to make way for new housing estates at Mercers and Fairview respectively.
- 9.23 The population of the village has increased and there remain a wide range of shops and services within the village, including library, post office, banks, estate agents, chemist, cafes and restaurants and a petrol filling station.
- 9.24 It was transport that caused Highgate to grow originally and the effect of transport influences the character of the village today as the two main roads, busy with traffic, sever the village by restricting pedestrian movement and discouraging visitors from stopping to visit the wealth of historic buildings in this lively village.

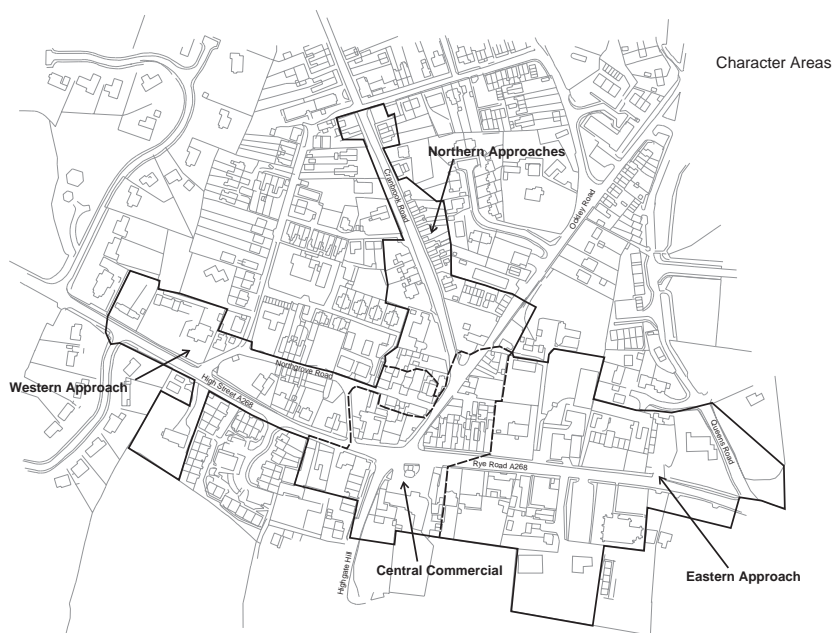
10 Character Appraisal

Context

- 10.1 Highgate sits on an east-west sandstone ridge within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The elevated position of the village, and in particular the spire of All Saints Church, ensure that the presence of the village is evident from the surrounding countryside.

Approaches to the Village

- 10.2 The conservation area is centred on the commercial and public buildings which grew up around the junction of two main traffic routes. The A268 is a ridge top road approaching the village from the east as Rye Road, and from the west as High Street. Cranbrook Road (A229) approaches the village from the north with Hastings Road approaching from the south.
- 10.3 The conservation area is generally one of tightly knit development interspersed with several important open spaces. The age and style of the buildings varies with the majority dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but some dating from much earlier.
- 10.4 For the purposes of the presentation of this appraisal, the conservation area has been divided into four areas which exhibit some different characteristics and which reflect the geographic approaches to the centre.
- Eastern approach – Rye Road
 - Western approach – High Street
 - Northern approaches – Cranbrook Road and Ockley Road
 - Central commercial area



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Eastern Approach – Rye Road

- 10.5 This part of the conservation area is relatively tranquil with large public/semi public buildings set back from the road and interspersed with significant open spaces and trees. The spaces are well defined by stone walls, iron railings, clipped hedges and hedgerows. The characteristic materials within the area are brick and stone with white weatherboarding and woodwork. The skyline in this area is of particular importance with the dominant spire, chimneys and cupolas.

- 10.6 The approach to the conservation area from the east is along a wide road with a 'gateway' formed by a narrowing of the view with the closeboarded fence overhung by significant trees and shrubs in the garden of Holly Shaw on the north side, and a strong line of mixed trees and shrubs bounding the gardens of properties on the south side. The landscaping within Holly Shaw consists of a varied mix of trees and shrubs close to the western and southern boundaries including beech, oak, holm oak, holly, cherry and laurel. There are three specimen beech trees close to the southern boundary which make a significant contribution to the well landscaped character of this approach to the central commercial area.
- 10.7 Moving through this 'gateway', the conservation area opens out to reveal the Queens Head Hotel. The Hotel is an attractive red brick with clay tile roof building with later additions of brick, white feather edged boarding and slate roofs unified by white paintwork and brick chimney stacks. The forecourt parking and profusion of signs announce the move from a rural to a more urban character although the number of signs could be rationalised successfully. The mature copper beech in front of the hotel is a significant landmark with a low mixed hedge surrounding the car parking area.
- 10.8 As the road curves to the left a single storey sandstone lodge nestling behind an evergreen hedge, marks the entrance to a former stable block now converted to residential use. The slate roof of the lodge continues a theme from the Hotel and links with the adjoining slate roof of Old Highgate House. This is a distinctive two storey Georgian house with off-white painted rendering. The large front garden with cast iron railings make a significant contribution to the spacious and well-maintained feel of this part of the conservation area.
- 10.9 The red brick and clay tile roof of Dunk's Almshouses provides a strong contrast with adjoining properties. This key building illustrates many of the characteristics of this particular area with brick chimneys and a landmark cupola clock tower. In common with other buildings in this area, the Almshouses are set well back from the road behind white 'hairpin' metal railings with a border including shrubs and flowering cherry. A mixed evergreen hedge bisects the open spaces of Old Highgate House and the Almshouses. The combination of space and greenery makes a significant contribution to the conservation area.
- 10.10 Opposite the Almshouses is All Saints Church. This magnificent sandstone building was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Although a new use is being sought for this church, its scale and position set well back from the road, and the visibility of the spire from long distance views ensure that the building makes an extremely important contribution to the conservation area. The space in front of the church bounded by a stone wall reflects and balances the open spaces on the other side of the road. There are a number of trees within the grounds of the church which contribute to the landscaped character of this part of the conservation area.
- 10.11 Adjacent to the church is a car park which is important for the functioning of the village. Some screening is offered with trees and shrubs on the eastern and western edges of the car park. However, the clutter of signs, the grit bin, and height restriction bar at the car park entrance and a muddy 'path' made by people taking a short cut from the car park to the pavement, are uncoordinated in design and positioning, and do detract from the conservation area. The land to the rear of All Saints car park includes fire-damaged single storey buildings, a modern barn and open space gradually becoming overgrown. The site which is currently fenced off, is predominantly flat with a sharp drop towards the southern boundary, although this was originally a sloping site. To the south on the slope, there is a hedgerow of largely self sown trees which forms a useful screen to the adjacent residential properties on Highfield Close. The slope and the hedgerow form an edge to the conservation area. The site is visible from outside the conservation area from longer views to the south. Redevelopment of the site offers opportunities to improve views from within and from outside the conservation area and add to the spacious nature of this part of the area.

- 10.12 An unmade track runs along the western edge of the car park to a number of residential properties. Towards the end of the track is Highfield Cottage, a stone clad building in a semi-secluded position. Beside the cottage a view of the rear of properties fronting Rye Road opens up, with brick and weatherboarded sheds and barns. A pair of semi-detached three storey Victorian red brick houses add height to help enclose the space in this part of the conservation area. Adjoining the semi-detached properties is a large timber former garage workshop which detracts from the conservation area. At the junction of the track as it rejoins Rye Road is the public library. This distinctive Arts and Crafts influenced red brick building adds to the diversity of the conservation area. It retains its original character and forms one of a number of public buildings set close to the pavement on this side of the road. The turret is a focal point almost mirroring the clock tower on the Almshouses on the other side of Rye Road.
- 10.13 Next to the library is part of the vacant garage workshop and Lloyds Bank. The scale, materials and character of the workshop are not in keeping with the conservation area. The signs and shopfront on the bank building are unduly prominent, not respecting the scale of the red brick Victorian building. The Victoria Hall is a prominent red brick building with Arts and Crafts characteristics, set back from the road behind an iron railing. A tall twin chimney stack with decorated brickwork adds a distinctive feature to the area. Unfortunately a bus shelter and noticeboards in front of the Hall detract from its setting. A track beside the Victoria Hall allows views out to the countryside.



photo: John Hunt

- 10.14 The North Ridge Medical Centre is a striking white weather-boarded property with pale blue window frames, chimneys and small dormers, once again set well back from the road. The front garden with some ornamental trees and enclosed by a privet hedge, is an important open space contributing to the spacious quality of this part of the conservation area. Adjacent to the surgery is All Saints Lodge, a three storey rendered house set back from the road. The boundary between the properties includes two mature locust trees.
- 10.15 The remaining properties on the Rye Road approach to the conservation area are the petrol filling station and Highgate Hall on the north side of the road with an overgrown garden to a disused bungalow to the rear. Clearly the petrol filling station is an important contributor to the vitality of the conservation area, the single storey red brick shop and canopy help enclose the space in front of the Almshouses. However, signage and to some extent the canopy intrude in front of the building line and have been difficult to incorporate into the conservation area. When approaching from the east the canopy roofs do contribute to the series of slate roofs between Highgate Hall and Queen's Mews.

- 10.16 Highgate Hall with white rendered walls, black window frames and white chimney stacks, is a striking building set back from the road behind a brick wall overhung by holm oak, laurel, holly and yew. Behind the Hall and the petrol station is a disused walled garden surrounded by an attractive brick wall and an overgrown garden to Fir Trees bungalow. There are a number of sheds and outbuildings on the site including a weatherboarded 'gothic' shed on the southern part of the site, the disused outbuilding within the walled garden, and a large workshop building which because of its bulk, size and materials, is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area. A mature holm oak immediately behind the petrol station and a lime tree in the rear garden of Highgate Hall provide a green back drop to the development. A track between Highgate Hall and the petrol station allows a rare view out of the conservation area into the significant open space behind.
- 10.17 Beyond Highgate Hall on the north of Rye Road and All Saints Lodge on the south side the character of the conservation area changes considerably, from the spacious, landscaped eastern approach to the tighter knit central commercial area.

Western Approach – High Street

- 10.18 The approach into the conservation area from the west is characterised by a mixture of old and modern residential properties generally two storey and set back from the road with small to medium sized front gardens. The boundaries are marked by railings, hedges and walls, and the predominant building material is brick with clay tile or slate roofs. Hedges and trees mark the gateway into the conservation area providing a sense of enclosure. There is an important tree belt along the north side of the High Street in front of Crane House, and to the south the conservation area boundary is set back from the road so that a line of trees including sycamore, lime, beech and laurel can be included. The intrusiveness of the close boarded fences on the south side is softened by ivy covering large areas of the fence.
- 10.19 Approaching from the west the first buildings within the area are Oakfield Cottages. The prominent clay tiled mansard roof with curved dormer windows make an unusual contribution to this approach to the conservation area and adding diversity to the range of building styles in the area. An attractive brick wall separates the Cottage gardens and Crane House Gardens which is set well back from the pavement behind a significant tree and hedge belt. A mixture of privet, laurel, holly and sycamore effectively screen the modern brick built Crane House Gardens.
- 10.20 Crane House is an interesting timber-framed and white weatherboarded house which has been refronted in painted brick. Myrtle Cottage, a double fronted white painted house set behind a neat laurel and holly hedge, is tucked in at the junction of High Street and Northgrove Road.
- 10.21 On the south side of High Street the conservation area is restricted to include only boundary planting apart from The Clearing an attractive two storey Georgian house. The house is secluded in a large garden with significant trees, copper beech, oak and yew, contributing to the green approach into the conservation area. Fairview, a 1970s housing estate, is not included within the conservation area as different coloured brick and tiles, flank walls and lack of front gardens facing the street give it a separate identity which conflicts with the traditional materials and orientation in this part of the conservation area. The brick wall fronting High Street is characteristic to the conservation area although again the colour of the bricks is inappropriate.
- 10.22 High Street and Northgrove Road enclose a large island of residential properties. Fronting High Street are The Cottage and Chestertons. The white weatherboarded and white painted facades with decorative bargeboards are strong features in this part of the conservation area. The large garden bounded by a mixture of closeboarded fencing and hedgerow, includes a mature sycamore/maple, holm oak and a number of yew trees, although private the garden contributes to the spacious green character of the area.

- 10.23 At this point the building line is closer to the road creating a sense of enclosure as the road progresses towards the centre of the conservation area. A red brick terrace of three properties with white window frames is given a sense of grandeur with cast iron railings and steps leading up to the front doors. The next property, Hurstlea House continues the brick and white window frame theme with the addition of decorative barge boards and porch canopy, and tall chimney stacks adding interest to the skyline. At street level, the rhythm of hedges and railings is interspersed with substantial brick gate piers providing attractive boundaries for the houses.



photo: John Hunt

- 10.24 Alma House continues the two storey brick and slate roof theme. This former butchers shop with the slaughterhouse behind has been converted to full residential use retaining the bow shop window and attractive diamond patterned quarry tiled forecourt. Iron railings and brick gate piers complete the row of residential properties in this part of the conservation area.
- 10.25 Returning to the junction of Northgrove Road and High Street the road narrows as it follows The Cottage garden wall around the corner. This striking brick wall with blue headers leads round to a series of small brick and white weatherboarded cottages immediately abutting the road. The rhythm of the white gables and the rat trap or Chinese bond brickwork are particularly distinctive. At the far end of Northgrove Road the view is stopped by a white gable end topped by white chimney stacks of No. 20 Ockley Road. The combination of the wall, cottages and garages close to the road with one gable slightly overhanging, creates a strong sense of enclosure and small scale of development. Moving along the road there are glimpses of the rear of properties which front the High Street with sheds, garages and outbuildings and in the distance the church spire. A small mews conversion with a 2m brick boundary wall completes the island site enclosed at the eastern end by Post Office Road,
- 10.26 Continuing along Northgrove Road is a small former chapel, now occupied by a small business. The simple single storey building is distinguished by its decorated gable end facing the road, the decorative ridge details and in particular the corbelled brick work at high level. At street level black iron railings lead to an arched doorway. Beyond the chapel there are glimpses of roofs of buildings facing High Street with the recurring theme of dominant chimney stacks.
- 10.27 Various other commercial buildings and a dilapidated garage are tucked in along Northgrove Road with a single storey brick building, formerly a school, forming the corner onto Cranbrook Road. The large windows and decorative corbelled brick work add important detail to this part of the conservation area.
- 10.28 At the junction of Northgrove Road with Cranbrook Road is an eclectic collection of buildings. The Ingles, cottages at the end of Northgrove Road, are white rendered with vertical tiling at first floor level and clay pegged roof tiles. The symmetry of the cottages, and particularly the roof line, is interrupted by the introduction of the early 20th century two storey structure which curves around the corner into Cranbrook Road with its simple facade. A band of ceramic glazed tiles between the ground and first floor level indicates its former usage by the Weald Electricity Supply Co. Ltd.

- 10.29 Northgrove Road branches away at a right angle from Cranbrook Road close to the commercial centre. The northern side of Northgrove Road includes two storey gabled Victorian red brick residential and commercial properties with adjoining Georgian houses clad in white painted weatherboarding. Flat roofed dormers are a strong feature within the larger building. Slate roofing dominates the group and echoes its common usage within the area. All the properties are set back from the road with car parking areas in front of the properties in response to the narrow street and proximity of the commercial area.
- 10.30 A distinctive feature of Northgrove Road is a buff coloured brick pier over 3 metres high with decorative tiling. An attractive multi-red brick boundary wall stands directly behind it, marking the boundary between the northern and western approaches to the conservation area. The brick pier, wall and the footpath are all that remain from the former asylum

Northern Approaches

- 10.31 There are two approaches into the conservation from the north. The main approach from the north west is Cranbrook Road; the secondary approach is from the north east along Ockley Road.
- 10.32 Traffic dominates the Cranbrook Road approach because of the steep hill rising to the narrow bend, with queues of traffic waiting at the traffic lights. Cranbrook Road is characterised on the east side of the road by small scale, generally two storey, close-knit development built right up to the pavement and on the west by considerable vegetation. This creates a sense of enclosure emphasised by overhanging trees and shrubs along parts of the approach. Red brick, slate roofs, white render and white weatherboarding are the predominant building materials within this part of the conservation area.
- 10.33 The northern boundary of the conservation area is defined by the junction of Western and Winchester Roads with Cranbrook Road. The 'gateway' is marked by two distinctive buildings. On the Western Road corner is an imposing two storey, red brick, Edwardian building known as Rootes House. Its dormer windows and distinctive first floor corner oriel window reflecting the affluence of Highgate residents at the turn of the century. The building is divided into two shop units, retaining the original shopfronts and architectural detail both of which contribute to the conservation area.



- 10.34 Opposite this building the gateway is completed by a two storey, white rendered corner shopfront, now offices, with a splayed entrance on to the corner of the junction. Further up the hill, 1-4 Watch Villas is a small late Victorian terrace of red brick situated close to the road. Many of the original features such as doors and sash windows have been replaced detracting from their appearance. Beyond the terrace the conservation area boundary immediately abuts the pavement, excluding two 20th century properties because of inappropriate design and materials.

- 10.35 The western side of Cranbrook Road is dominated by a long continuous group of mature trees and vegetation. The group includes ash, laurel, holly, sycamore and a monkey puzzle tree. The dense green embankment contributes to a sense of enclosure which is given greater significance by its elevated position. The natural screening also 'hides' several houses beyond, which fall outside the conservation area. The absence of a pavement along this section of Cranbrook Road contributes to the feeling of the rural environment extending into the village.
- 10.36 Opposite the green embankment is a distinctive but uncharacteristic property, No 16 Cranbrook Road. This is an early 20th century two storey building with a pronounced gable outline with overhanging eaves. The irregular stained timber boarding and heavy rendered gable end at first floor level suggests traits of the Arts and Crafts movement. A close boarded fence links No. 16 to 15 contributing to the sense of enclosure but detracts from the traditional character. Literally puncturing the fence is a large yew tree which helps screen the fence.
- 10.37 Continuing south, there is a row of narrow fronted properties, the majority being of two storey modest residential scale. Natural slate is the main roofing material with white painted brickwork, fair faced brickwork and white weatherboarding, the principal elevational treatments. The houses abut the pavement with front doors opening directly on to it. There are glimpses beyond the properties through narrow gaps between the houses to back gardens. Again replacement windows and doors detract from the overall quality but presumably offer some alleviation to residents from traffic noise.
- 10.38 A further small terrace is separated from the row of properties by gardens. These are two storey brick houses which are set back from the road slightly. At the southern end of this terrace, steps lead to a footpath linking Cranbrook Road to Ockley Road. Beyond the footpath entrance a hedgerow, including privet, holly and hawthorn, maintains the sense of enclosure with glimpses of garden behind. At this point the road gently curves to the right leading into the central part of the conservation area.
- 10.39 Returning to the tree-lined western edge of Cranbrook Road the bank ends with a secluded and shady footpath providing access to houses beyond the conservation area. Fronting Cranbrook Road are two late Victorian buildings with shops at street level. To the south of the shops is Holly Grove, a large two storey Victorian building set on an embankment above the level of the road. The property is shrouded in tree cover of beech, holly and laurel, partially screening it from view and continuing the sense of enclosure.
- 10.40 The sense of enclosure of this approach into the conservation area is reinforced at the end of the tree screen and gardens by a prominent and imposing 3 metre brick wall which reduces to half a metre as the road ascends. The wall has suffered from a lack of maintenance and repair, some recent unsympathetic brick replacements which detract from what was formerly an important and attractive boundary wall.
- 10.41 The wall defines the boundary of a triangular forecourt for a large two storey building set back from the road. This former factory is white rendered with black woodwork and makes a significant visual impact when leaving Highgate, but is screened by the boundary wall on entering it. The building is occupied by several small businesses, an example of a building adapted from its former use.
- 10.42 Beyond the old factory, attractive two storey Victorian gable ended properties with green painted guttering, abut the pavement maintaining the strong sense of enclosure. The 'solid' looking building and brick outbuildings at the rear form an important group highly visible from this approach into the central area.

- 10.43 Ockley Road is the northern area's secondary approach. This is a straight, slightly inclined road which is dominated by a dense group of mature trees on the eastern side of the road. The group includes oak, ash, holm oak, holly and elder and collectively are an important contributor to the conservation area forming a green approach from the north east. A close boarded 2 metre fence set in front of the trees, screens the road from an area of open land beyond.
- 10.44 On the western side of Ockley Road a group of three buildings known as Lavender Row is set to the back edge of the pavement. The buildings, with the trees opposite, provide a sense of enclosure along this section of the approach. The cream/yellow painted masonry walls represents an uncharacteristic colour within the conservation area, but contrasts rather than conflicts with other painted buildings. The three properties were originally residential but have been partly converted to commercial use. The alterations have not been entirely sympathetic with roller shutters to one property, whilst the others have introduced inappropriately detailed timber casement windows and doors.
- 10.45 Immediately to the south of Lavender Row is the small narrow footpath which leads to Cranbrook Road. Dense vegetation can be found on the left screening the path from the garden beyond. The footpath provides access to Numbers 1-8 Lavender Square. A row of two storey late 18th/early 19th century cottages with a range of render, weatherboarding and brickwork on the front elevations. The small scale nature of the buildings and the lack of an adjacent highway make the cottages unique within this tranquil secluded part of the conservation area. At the end of the footpath, steps lead down to Cranbrook Road and the distinct noise of vehicular traffic re-emerges.
- 10.46 Returning to Ockley Road, Weald House is a large, two storey white painted timber clad building set in a spacious garden. It is principally residential but incorporating a shop front on Ockley Road which has been retained because of its historical importance. Originally this building was a corn mill, then a pub and subsequently a shop known as Weald Bazaar. Between Weald House and the detached Fire and Stoves Store, views of gardens and Cranbrook Road beyond, open up. The space is bordered by white painted picket fencing which is uncharacteristic of the area, but not unattractive. Views of the garden of Weald House are important contributing open space to this part of the conservation area.
- 10.47 Opposite Lavender Row is Fir Tree Cottage, a pleasant and unusual single storey dwelling with uncharacteristic ogee arch window heads. The building is clad in white painted weatherboarding, contrasting with the black painted door and window frames. This colour scheme echoes other properties throughout the conservation area. Just to the south of Fir Tree Cottage is a gated track leading to the disused bungalow, garden and outbuildings.
- 10.48 Ockley Road merges with Cranbrook Road and this relatively calm, peaceful approach dramatically changes to the busier Cranbrook Road and the commercial heart of the conservation area.

Central Commercial Area

- 10.49 The commercial part of Highgate is the heart of the conservation area. The area is characterised by a lack of vegetation and development clustering round the spacious 'square'. The central 'square' is formed by two or three storey properties. The ratio of height of buildings to the width of the space and the gaps in the building line punctuated by the roads, reduce the sense of enclosure. The unity of the space is fragmented visually and functionally by the busy road junction and the curtilage boundary of the Royal Oak.

- 10.50 Most of the shops and services are located within this area including the post office, chemist, cafes and restaurants, banks and estate agents. The combination of vehicular and pedestrian traffic creates constant movement, noise and vitality in the area although the noise and volume of traffic can be intimidating to pedestrians. White weatherboarding is the principal cladding material in this part of the conservation area.
- 10.51 The main approaches into the village converge at the junction with key features acting as focal points across the large expanse of roads, parking and footways: The Colonnade, the War Memorial and oak tree in front of the Royal Oak, and the Post Office building.
- 10.52 The Colonnade is an important early 19th century row of shops particularly striking with white weatherboarding, and the canopy and supporting wooden columns projecting over the pavement. The canopy unifies the row of shops, with individuality and interest provided by different coloured shopfronts. The signage is relatively discreet allowing full appreciation of the design of The Colonnade. The well proportioned sliding sash windows and the low pitch slate roofs of varying heights add interest at first floor level. There is constant movement and life with pedestrians, shoppers and cars parking. The shops are a unique development within Highgate.
- 10.53 Maintenance and repair of the buildings has clearly become a problem with peeling paint, removal of blind boxes and uneven paving. The main detractor is the flank wall of The Colonnade facing west with peeling paintwork, a boarded up door and broken paving. This aspect is particularly prominent from the eastern and northern approach roads.
- 10.54 Opposite The Colonnade is an important open space with the War Memorial standing in front of the Royal Oak. The memorial is an important focal point at the centre of the village prominent on the junction. The clutter of signs, street and traffic lights and collapsible bollards across the car park, around the memorial is softened by the small planted area surrounding it, including a semi-mature oak. The inn sign is an attractive feature amongst the other signs.
- 10.55 The Royal Oak and attached buildings is an imposing two and three storey painted brick render and white weatherboarded building. At the Highgate Hill end of the building, the restaurant, No 1 Highgate Hill, and hairdressers stand tall above the crossroads. The Royal Oak itself is set back from the road behind a rather unsightly car parking area. The black window frames and decorative bargeboard on the gable end are distinctive features. The original 16th century building has undergone various later alterations and additions including the arts and crafts influenced porches but retains the appearance of a unified facade and adds to the eclectic mix of buildings in the centre of the village.
- 10.56 A narrow alley winds down beside the Inn to reveal a mixture of small scale white weatherboarded and tile hung buildings. The traffic noise diminishes and a smaller scale is recaptured. A 2 metre Victorian, traditional brick pierced, garden wall runs the length of the southern boundary of the ground around the Church/North Ridge properties, the remnant of Highfield House kitchen garden.
- 10.57 Adjacent to the Royal Oak is another prominent white rendered and weatherboarded building set back behind a modern tile hung single storey extension, at No 2 Rye Road. An adjoining single storey extension brings the building line to the edge of the pavement. The canopy and piles of goods for sale give a temporary feel to the unit. The glimpses of roofs and chimneys behind are a reminder of the historic building line set well back from the road.

- 10.58 The Post Office and a number of other commercial buildings are also prominent in the central area. The Post Office building is late Victorian with important detailing and a prominent oriel window facing the High Street. The white window frames, bargeboard and finial topped with a weathervane, together with chimney stacks and decorative ridge tiles contribute significantly to the skyline. The positioning of the telephone boxes detracts slightly from the front of this building. Two shop units adjoin the Post Office supporting the vitality of this side of the High Street although the glazed brick tiling surrounding one of the shop fronts is unfortunately poorly maintained.



photo: John Hunt

- 10.59 Beside the shops, Post Office Road links High Street to Northgrove Road. Its lack of pavement is a reminder of days when there was less traffic. The road has well defined borders with a brick wall and dense hedging surrounding a car park directly behind the Post Office. The striking yellow signage advertising Hawkhurst Glass and some later additions to the building do not detract significantly from the high quality of architectural detail and design including three decorative and distinctive brick chimney stacks.
- 10.60 Adjoining the Post Office on the eastern side is Highgate House. This white rendered and tile hung house is now in commercial use, set behind a beech hedge. The tall chimney stacks and gable with white bargeboards presents an attractive view when approaching up Highgate Hill.
- 10.61 No. 1 High Street, an estate agent has a profusion of signs and a flag advertising the presence of the shop in response to its relatively isolated location. The poorly designed and maintained shopfront adjacent, is particularly unfortunate in this prominent position as it detracts from the rest of the building. It forms the beginning of a small cluster of two and three storey buildings, white painted masonry and white painted weatherboarding. The residential use of the upper floors is emphasised by the use of flat roofs as balconies with iron railings. Steps leading to accommodation below pavement level add interest to the Cranbrook Road frontage.
- 10.62 The central 'square' is framed on the western edge of Highgate Hill by two blocks of two and three storey buildings with shops on the ground floor and residential above. Only the two storey building is within the conservation area. The scale of these 1970s brick buildings is appropriate for the conservation area, however, little consideration has been given to architectural detail. The footway rises up the hill in front of the shops behind a retaining wall, a tubular steel handrail is functional if unattractive but fortunately partially screened by a continuous band of vegetation.
- 10.63 The 1970s development returns along High Street opposite the Post Office. An unattractive single storey extension in non-matching brick and striking corporate blue detailing, is occupied by Barclays Bank. A drive beside the bank building provides access to a service courtyard for the shops fronting the road. This is well screened from public view.
- 10.64 Number 2 High Street is a substantial two storey stone clad building with a white painted two storey weatherboarded structure at the rear. The main building is set back from the pavement with a small lawn facing the High Street the signage clearly denotes commercial usage but respects the integrity of the building.

- 10.65 Another driveway beside the estate agent leads to a parking area and glimpses of the countryside to the south. The Royal British Legion is a solid two storey building which has been extended significantly at the rear. An uncharacteristic half timbered gable faces the street and a sense of grandeur is achieved with a flight of steps leading to double front doors. Unfortunately the white railings and replacement windows detract from this unusual building. A strong evergreen hedge between the Club and the modern 1970s housing estate marks the boundary of the conservation area which then continues directly along the High Street to the west.
- 10.66 The commercial area of Highgate extends along Cranbrook Road and the top of Ockley Road with a cluster of small scale local shops. The junction of Northgrove Road with Cranbrook Road is a strongly enclosed space with buildings immediately abutting the narrow pavement. Some poorly maintained buildings at the top of Cranbrook Road and the intrusive traffic combine to make this probably the most unattractive part of the conservation area.
- 10.67 The quality and interest of the conservation area is restored as the road opens out beyond 18/19 Ockley Road, and the shops and architecture can be appreciated more easily. Immediately opposite Northgrove Road is a row of three storey buildings with decorative black bargeboarding highlighting the gable ends above the road. The shops at street level add interest although pedestrians have little room to linger along this section. The black shopfront and terracotta coloured walls of No 19 Ockley Road, make a striking end to the row. A narrow alley beside the shop leads to a service yard area for the shops revealing a haphazard collection of sheds, outbuildings and garages and rear views of the white weatherboarding, slate roofs and tall chimneys of The Colonnade.
- 10.68 Beyond the alley the small shops bring life to this part of the conservation area. The small scale tile hung and white weatherboarded buildings with slate roofs have had shop fronts added at a later date. The stall risers, the rhythm of mullions, fascia boards and individual detailing add to the character of the area. In particular the glazed tiling and inlaid writing, first floor blind boxes of the (No 14), and the projecting shop front of No. 13 add particular interest.
- 10.69 The interest continues with a single storey 'island' building, No 9 Ockley Road, which lies on the corner of Ockley Road and Cranbrook Road. The curved shopfront with white mullions and detailing is a welcome relief as the view opens out after the enclosed space at the top end of Cranbrook Road. As the road forks to the north west and north east, long distance views of open countryside and trees can be seen as the land falls and then gently rises.
- 10.70 Highgate Hill (A229) approaches the main Highgate junction from the south. Number 2 Highgate Hill is a fine Victorian red brick property set high above the road, now in commercial use. The decorative bargeboard and finial, tall chimneys and use of white paint highlight the details of the building which is set in a garden framed with ash and sycamore.

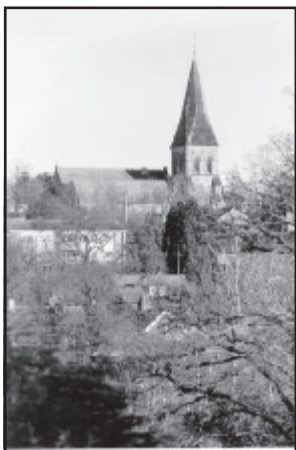


photo: John Hunt

The building with its restrained signage, contributes significantly to the quality of the conservation area. The white details and the evergreen shrubs link the building to the tall white weatherboarded buildings adjacent. The area of white weatherboarding with clay tiled roof and brick chimneys makes a dramatic picture as the road reaches the junction. The poorly sited signage indicates commercial use of the property and detracts from the overall appearance of the building. A concrete paved area interspersed with evergreen shrubs is slightly incongruous but does bring a finger of green into the heart of the conservation area although more significant planting and definition of this semi-public space would enhance the area.

11 Summary of Elements that Contribute to Highgate and All Saints Church Conservation Area's Special Character

- 11.1 The detailed character appraisal has revealed several recurring themes. Whilst not intended as a definitive or ranked list, the following features are considered to make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and consequently are worthy of preservation or, where appropriate, enhancement.

Variety of Building Materials

- 11.2 The conservation area displays a wide range of traditional building materials which are a key part of its character. Brick, painted brick, vertical hung tiling, weatherboarding with natural slate and tiles for roofing are commonly used. Although there is no strong pattern, the incidence of white weatherboarding is particularly prevalent in the central commercial part of the conservation area with brick and tile hanging in the more residential approaches.

Juxtaposition of Style and Age

- 11.3 The variety of building styles, the age of buildings from 18th century through to modern development, contribute to the diversity of Highgate's character and reflect its incremental evolution particularly Victorian, and arts and craft influences. Many of the buildings within the conservation area are unique with few examples of terracing or repetition of facades.

Contrast of Spaces/Density of Buildings

- 11.4 It is possible to discern slightly different character areas:
- eastern approach – relatively tranquil and spacious with large public/semi public buildings set back from the road and well defined boundary treatment.
 - western approach – generally two storey residential buildings set back from the road with well-defined boundary treatment
 - northern approach – small scale, generally two storey, close knit development built right up to the pavement.
 - central commercial – tightly knit commercial heart clustering round the spacious 'square'

Green Spaces

- 11.5 A number of private and semi-public green spaces with well defined boundaries contribute to the character of the eastern part of the conservation area and the setting of adjoining buildings. The Almshouses, the ground around All Saints Church and North Ridge Surgery are important.

Trees

- 11.6 Trees provide an important landscape framework within the conservation area. They contain and enclose spaces eg the ground around All Saints Church, enclosing the eastern, western and northern approaches and providing focal/reference points such as the copper beech in front of the Queen's Head and the holm oak behind the petrol filling station. Generally species are yew, beech, lime, oak and holm oak.

Chimneys/Skyline Features

- 11.7 The skyline of the conservation area is punctuated by a number of tall, elegant chimney stacks, often characterised by intricate brick detailing eg Highgate Hall and Victoria Hall. In addition to the Church spire a number of cupolas and bell towers add interest to the skyline eg on Dunk's Almshouses and the library.

Architectural Detailing

- 11.8 There are many fine examples of original architectural detailing. The best examples are of Victorian origin with decorative barge boards and finials, sliding sash windows, wrought iron railings, brick gate piers and ornate brickwork on chimney stacks.

Landmark Features

- 11.9 All Saints Church and the cupola on Dunk's Alms Houses form prominent, historic landmark features visible from many points within, and the Church from outside, the conservation area.

The Colonnade

- 11.10 The nineteenth century Colonnade is of particular importance to Highgate. Its prominent location on the crossroads and white weatherboarding ensures that it is visible to all visiting the village.

Boundaries Treatment

- 11.11 The eastern, western and northern approaches to the commercial area are characterised by brick walls, hedges, iron railings and stone walls often with trees and shrubs overhanging clearly defining boundaries and providing a strong sense of enclosure.

Movement

- 11.12 The conservation area is characterised by both pedestrian and vehicular movement. The busy crossroads ensure constant traffic noise and activity. Pedestrian movement continues despite the busy roads, moving between the different shops and services bringing vitality to the village.

Commercial Uses

- 11.13 The cluster of commercial uses within the conservation area brings activity and interest to this conservation area. The shops and businesses are generally at ground floor level.



photo: John Hunt



photo: John Hunt

12 Summary of elements that Detract from Highgate and All Saints Church Conservation Area's Special Character and Opportunities for Enhancement

- 12.1 A number of general issues were identified which apply to several sites or buildings throughout the conservation area. Many of the site specific matters centre round the heart of the area, the junction of the A229 and the A268 and the surrounding buildings. Focused action in this particular area may act as a catalyst to enhance other parts of the conservation area. The following items have not been placed in any particular order or priority.

The Colonnade

- 12.2 The Colonnade is one of the most architecturally and historically significant row of buildings within the conservation area, however, there is evidence of lack of maintenance and neglect. For example, paintwork in some places is peeling, there is a boarded up entrance and barbed wire at the top of Cranbrook Road, and uneven and broken paving, all detracting from this important feature. Consideration of improvement of the overall appearance with replacement and maintenance of paving materials, possibly painting the canopy and columns to unify the appearance, assistance to improve individual shopfronts, and general enhancement of the corner area at the top of Cranbrook Road could improve the appearance of this area considerably.



photo: John Hunt

A268/A229 Road Junction and 'Square'

- 12.3 The importance of this commercial area as the heart of the conservation area is undermined by the busy road junction, with large areas of tarmac, noise and fumes, discouraging pedestrians from crossing the roads and stopping to sit, and drivers from stopping in the village. The scale of the roads and the buildings surrounding the square space fail to provide a sense of enclosure and unity. In addition the unsightly car park, informal planting and clutter of signs all detract from the setting of the war memorial and oak tree which should be a key focal point for the area. The poor maintenance of buildings surrounding the square, for example The Royal Oak, also detract. The significance of this whole area in amenity as well as visual terms requires a radical and comprehensive improvements scheme looking at surfacing, crossing points, traffic light signalling, parking and planting, to enhance this major detractor. In addition sensitively located and designed signage, particularly to indicate parking, could be introduced.

Shopfronts and Corporate Colours

- 12.4 The character of the central area is strongly influenced by the retail and commercial uses and the appearance of their shopfronts and advertisements. A number of the shopfronts and adverts do not incorporate many of the basic principles of good design appropriate to a conservation area. For example, Barclays Bank and Lloyds Bank both make excessive use of their respective corporate colours and advertising. A reduction in the quantity of signs and choice of materials should be considered. This advice would also be applicable to the petrol filling station where the corporate green on the canopy intrudes on the character of the conservation area.
- 12.5 Alldays general store incorporates blinds inside the shop window, effectively turning its back on the conservation area. The 'solid wall' of obscured glazed double fronted shop is particularly inappropriate in this prominent, elevated corner position. A number of other shop fronts, including the unit adjacent to All Saints Lodge, and the adjoining shop at the top of Cranbrook Road are poorly maintained and have a temporary feel about them. Better attention to shopfronts and advertisements would help considerably to improving the image and attractiveness of the conservation area.

Boundaries

- 12.6 The conservation area is characterised by its boundary treatments which fall into general types in particular areas. These in turn reinforce the characteristics of these areas. There are some existing boundary treatments, however, that would benefit from maintenance or replacement. A concrete panelled wall to the left of the petrol filling station from Rye Road, is particularly inappropriate in this prominent location.

Car Parking

- 12.7 A number of places are used for car parking within the village. The main car park on Rye Road has a cluttered and untidy frontage. Some screening is offered with trees and shrubs on the eastern and western edges of the car park, however, an enhancement scheme could improve this detractor. There is parking outside The Colonnade on double yellow lines. In view of the need to maintain the vitality of the area it may be appropriate to reconsider the parking restrictions in this area. The parking area in front of the Royal Oak has been mentioned previously. Enhancement here would considerably improve this important central part of the conservation area.



Maintenance

- 12.8 Much of the conservation area is tidy and its properties and spaces are well-maintained. However, a number of buildings, roads, verges and empty properties, particularly in the central commercial area, could be improved easily through simple measures such as painting, decorating and regular maintenance.

13 The Evolution and Form of Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green)

Pre-1400

- 13.1 This hamlet grew up along a high east-west ridge covered in oak woodland of the Andredswald – The Forest of the Anderida (Pevensey), at the crossing point of two drove routes (now known as High Street and Slip Mill Road). The earliest reference to this area is to Schlepmele (Slippery Mill) in 1292 in the Assize Roles of Kent. There is a record at Battle Abbey from 1423 of ‘rents ‘ for Slipmill paid at Michaelmas. Although Slip Mill is outside the conservation area the mill was clearly linked to the settlement by the drove route and Slip Mill Road remains an important rural lane in the area.

1400 – 1800

- 13.2 Buildings grew up in the clearings in the forest with industrial uses adding to the low key agricultural use of the area. The relatively steep topography either side of the ridge combined with the cold, sticky clay soils of the geological outcrop of the Hastings Beds made farming difficult, and in turn promoted alternative means of prosperity.
- 13.3 The green is located on the site of a saw pit working with local timber particularly Sessile Oak which produced good sawdust for burning to smelt the iron. The charcoal burners lived in Iddenden Cottages. Situated directly to the north of the green is Sawyers Croft, formerly a pub called The Sawyers Arms, but nicknamed the ‘Snoring Cat’. The attached cottage is now known as Snoring Cat Cottage.
- 13.4 The Old Millwright Cottage situated on the Green was where mill machinery would have been built and repaired. In addition, there was a coach and cart workshop at Barnfield Farmhouse. The cottage known as The Foundry is a reminder of the importance of the iron industry in the area. The area as a whole retains evidence of the former iron industry which flourished here from pre-Roman times up until the nineteenth century. Iron ore was dug out from the surface with local timber used to fuel the smelting process. Evidence of iron workings and ponds can be found to the south of Iddenden House and Hatcham House.
- 13.5 Sawyers Oast and Old Batts Barn are residential conversions of what had all been part of the Great Pix Hall property. The oast providing evidence of the hop industry in the area during the nineteenth century.

1900 – present day

- 13.6 The attractive countryside with impressive views from its ridgetop position attracted new residents. Checker Tree House was built in 1908 by a Dutch sea captain with a flat roof from which to view the horizon. The idiosyncratic style and detailing of the house contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area today.
- 13.7 Industrial activities have completely died out within the conservation area. Gradually the buildings have been converted from their original industrial and agricultural uses to residential properties. The settlement is entirely residential now, only the names acting as a reminder of past uses. Glimpses of fields beyond the houses are a reminder of the surrounding agricultural use of the countryside today.

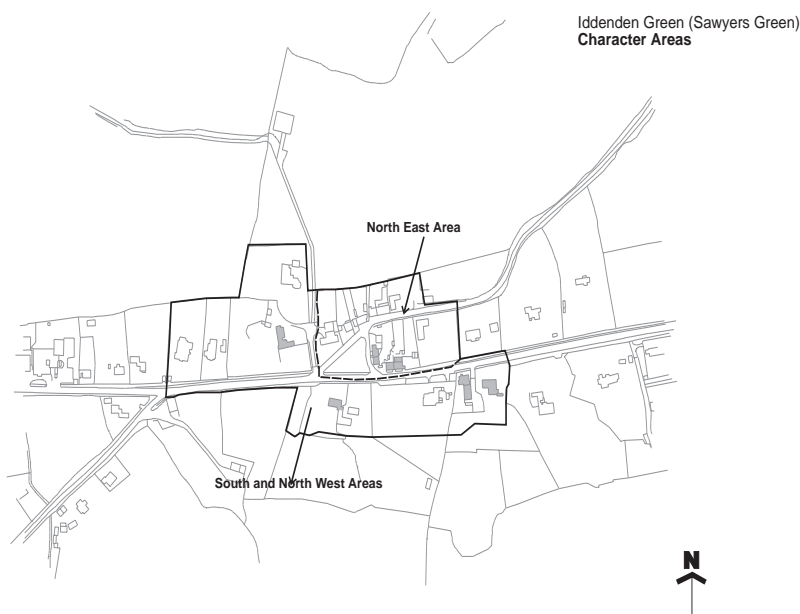
14 Character Appraisal

Context

- 14.1 Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green) conservation area lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with spectacular views of the Wealden countryside beyond the area to the north and south to The Moor.
- 14.2 The modest conservation area centres on the village green, a small triangle of land bordered by a single row of buildings on the north western and eastern boundaries. The buildings fronting the green are characterised by local materials particularly white weatherboarding, brick, and clay tile, and contrast greatly with the larger properties along the High Street which are set back and enclosed in their larger grounds behind stronger boundary features. Approximately a third of the buildings within the conservation area are listed, reflecting the area's architectural and historical importance.
- 14.3 The central green is the most important public open space in the hamlet. It provides a 'natural' focal point for visitors by road from all directions and can clearly be seen from most properties within the village. The westward facing Hawkhurst village sign symbolises the 'gateway' role the hamlet plays to the village of Hawkhurst from the west. Two young horse chestnuts have been planted on the green which will in the future reduce the openness of the green and screen attractive views of the cottages on the far side. As a strong backdrop to the green a row of mature scots pine dog legs across the conservation area connecting the north and south sides of the road.
- 14.4 A variety of boundary treatments, mainly hedges and fences and part formal and informal tree planting combine to link, and give enclosure to, the spaces and provide focal points and interest to the skylines.

Approaches to the Conservation Area

- 14.5 The area is approached by three main traffic routes. High Street (A268) from the west, High Street (A268) from the east, and Slip Mill Road from the north west.
- 14.6 For the purposes of the presentation of this appraisal, the conservation area has been divided into two areas which exhibit different characteristics. The two areas are linked by the Green itself.
 - south and north west of the A268
 - north east of the A268



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South and North West of the A268

- 14.7 This part of the conservation area is spacious and green with large residential properties set in medium/large plots. A range of traditional building materials are used providing a wealth of architectural detail. There are significant individual trees and groups of trees both evergreen and broad leaf deciduous in this area providing a green framework for the houses. The properties are in the main set back from the road and secluded from the main highway by strong boundary treatment seeking sanctuary from the noise and visual intrusion of the highway. The wide green verge adds to the spacious feel of this part of the conservation area, linking the residential properties visually with the village green.
- 14.8 The eastern approach from Highgate is a flat, straight road with a footpath north of the carriageway and well defined boundary treatment. The corridor effect is heightened by tall, dense, non-native conifer trees south of the carriageway which screen Barnfield Farmhouse, a three storey weatherboarded building, from the road. The sense of enclosure is maintained by a visually dominant two metre close boarded fence along the frontage of Barnfield Cottage and the adjoining Hatcham House, with a formal row of pollarded limes alongside. These limes and the grass verge in which they are situated form a significant landscape feature linking the residential properties to the east with the village green.
- 14.9 Barnfield Cottage is a two storey weatherboarded dwelling with a barn attached. The introduction of inappropriate windows has marred this attractive building. Hatcham House, a large imposing brick structure with fine brick detailing and soffits has a major impact on the skyline due to its prominent, distinctive brick chimneys. The brick gateposts add a sense of grandeur to the conservation area. A significant space adjoining the house is occupied by a tennis court bounded by mature oaks.
- 14.10 Set some fifty metres further west is Iddenden House, a large timber frame structure clad in weatherboarding. Since its construction in the 15th Century there have been several later additions to the property. It represents one of the earliest surviving properties in the conservation area. The house is screened from the main highway by mixed native hedging, predominantly hawthorn and holly and some privet.
- 14.11 The approach from the west along the A268 into the conservation area is also flat and straight with well defined boundaries creating a sense of containment. Close-boarded fencing, ornamental hedging and tree canopy cover are common features to the appearance to the first two properties within the conservation area. Long distance views to The Moor over the North Hill Sawmill Yard can be seen at the junction of North Hill Road. The southern boundary, past the closeboarded fencing of the Sawmill is characterised by a high native hedgerow of ash, holly, hazel, sycamore and hawthorn.
- 14.12 Checker Tree House and Merifield are two dwellings which exhibit similar characteristics to each other although uncharacteristic to the area. They are predominantly single storey flat roofed structures, early 20th Century in origin, with brick and stone chimney stacks dominating the structures and roofscape. They make a positive contribution to the area due to their unique design and contrasting features whilst embracing weatherboarding as the principal external wall finish to Merifield. Checker Tree House uses a 'heavy' textured render wall finish which contributes to traits of the Arts and Craft Movement. A mature beech and holm oak in the grounds of these two properties provide focal points and make a valuable positive contribution when viewed from both inside and outside the conservation area.
- 14.13 On the north side landscape treatment to the frontage of Great Pix Hall consists of a formal laurel hedge and raised earth mound, protected by an unsightly post and wire fence, combining to form an 'unnatural' landscape boundary. Behind this in the garden of Great Pix Hall a large mature yew tree creates a substantial evergreen focal point from surrounding views.

- 14.14 Great Pix Hall is approached by a private track heading directly north from the western end of the green. Half way along the track opens out into an informal courtyard, formerly the farmyard. Mild agricultural smells can be detected which contribute to the rural setting of this small but important private open space. From the track over the field gate entrance to the adjacent farmland the views to the north over the open countryside of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are spectacular.
- 14.15 Sawyers Oast is an attractive traditional building with oasts. The round kiln roof and cowl acting as a focal point when viewed from the footpath north of the conservation area and from within the conservation area above the rooftops. The spacious grounds incorporate a small pond which contributes positively to the setting of the oast as seen from the open courtyard just beyond the entrance to Sawyers Oast.



- 14.16 Looking west the roofscape of Great Pix Hall can be seen with its dominating chimney stacks. The southern view reveals glimpses of fast moving traffic on the A268, punctuating the peace and tranquillity of the 'farmyard' space.
- 14.17 The rear elevations of Old Batts Barn can be viewed when looking east, its former agricultural use being evident from the building's outline and wall openings. Again boundary treatment separates the building from the conservation area.
- 14.18 The front elevation of Old Batts Barn is clearly visible from the green with a large band of red/brown clay tiled roof, gleaming white windows and weatherboarded elevations. Once again this property serves as a reminder of the high number of former agricultural buildings now converted for domestic use but the beech hedge backed with leylandii and vehicular drive are 'suburbanising elements in response to the need for domestic privacy from intrusive traffic. The property also serves as a marker for the start of a row of properties along the north side of Slip Mill Road which frame and enclose the village green.

North East of the A268 (as far west as the private access road leading to Sawyers Oast)

- 14.19 A gap between Old Batts Barn and Penbyn marks the boundary between the two character areas of the conservation area. This area contains the smaller, tighter knit dwellings immediately abutting the road and enclosing Sawyers Green.
- 14.20 Penbyn, Snoring Cat Cottage and Sawyers Croft represent an important group of buildings fronting straight on to the green and highly visible with a mixture of materials but predominantly red brick, white woodwork and chimneys. They are 19th century in origin. Post-war additions have emphasised the separate private usage.
- 14.21 Lynton, The Old Mill Wright and Down Hall provide a pleasing harmonious group of dwellings with traditional external materials primarily white weatherboarding, providing a feeling of harmony, although inappropriate window design is evident.

- 14.22 Wedged between Sawyers Croft and Lynton is a gate opening onto a short narrow alley leading to a public footpath. Beyond this point are spectacular 180 degree views of open countryside, contrasting dramatically with the earlier sense of enclosure.
- 14.23 Beyond Down Hall, Slip Mill Road, a narrow lane with overhanging oak, holly and sycamore trees, gently descends and winds to the north offering a strong, 'green' corridor away from the conservation area. Two mature larches in the rear garden of The Foundry and a mature oak in the garden of Down Hall form important focal points from the Slip Mill Lane approach.
- 14.24 Framing the green on its eastern border are two attractive white weatherboarded cottages – 4 and 5 Iddenden Cottages. When approaching the conservation area from the west these two properties are particularly prominent forming an attractive backdrop for Sawyers Green. The half-hipped gable roof structure is an uncharacteristic architectural feature within the conservation area but common within the surrounding area.



- 14.25 The use of white weatherboarded materials continues along the main road with 1,2 and 3 Iddenden Cottages set at right angles to 4 and 5 Iddenden Cottages. The gable end is particularly prominent from the green and from the western approach. All the Iddenden Cottages are of a similar age, character and scale and contribute to the tighter knit feel to this part of the conservation area. A highly visible concrete panelled garage between Nos 3 and 4 is not in keeping with the conservation area in terms of its design and materials.
- 14.26 The Old Foundry, as the name implies, is yet another example of a house which originally had an industrial usage. The building is detached and semi-secluded being set well back from the highway. To the east of The Foundry a line of mature lombardy poplars help to define the north eastern boundary of the conservation area.



15 Summary of Elements that Contribute to Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green) Conservation Area's Special Character

- 15.1 The detailed character appraisal has revealed several recurring themes. Whilst not intended as a definitive or ranked list, the following features are considered to make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and consequently are worthy of preservation or, where appropriate, enhancement.

Open Spaces

- 15.2 The conservation area contains two areas of special green spaces which provide the focal point for built development. The green, located at the heart of the village, and the pond in front of Sawyers Oast make a significant positive contribution to the conservation area. The grass verge along the southern edge of the A268 also contributes to the character of the conservation area. The open quality is important to the character and should be retained.

Variety of building materials

- 15.3 The conservation area exhibits a wide range of traditional building materials which is a key part of its character. Fair-faced brickwork, painted weatherboarding, Kent peg tiles and slates for roofing, vertical hung tiles, sliding sash and casement windows are all common features within the area. White weatherboarding and window frames are the key materials around the green with red brick the dominant characteristic along the east west corridor.

Trees

- 15.4 There is a wide variety of trees for such a small conservation area. Individual trees and groups of trees provide focal points, skyline features, boundary definition and structure to the conservation area. The variety of trees, including lime, scots pine, lombardy poplar, yew, beech, oak, larch, ash and holm oak, adds texture, colour with seasonal impact. Maintenance of trees, bushes and hedges is important.

Chimneys and oast

- 15.5 The skyline is punctuated by a number of chimney stacks which are a prominent architectural feature of the area. The most important contributors include Great Pix Hall, Checker Tree House, Merifield and Hatcham House. Sawyers Oast also features as an important skyline element, particularly when viewed beyond the northern boundary of the conservation area. The simple brick chimneys on houses surrounding the green add considerable character to the conservation area.

Boundary Treatment

- 15.6 The A268 contains well-defined boundary treatment of varying quality and materials, in response to the impact of vehicular traffic. Natural boundaries include hedging and various mature trees. This is punctuated by inappropriate fencing and hedging materials in places. The Slip Mill Road approach is enclosed by a green leafy tunnel effect of over-hanging branches from medium/dense tree and vegetation cover.

Building Type

- 15.7 Although many buildings in the conservation area were originally built for industrial or agricultural usage, reflecting the settlement's historical heritage and evolution, they are now entirely residential and predominantly two storey in height.

Architectural detail

- 15.8 The area is particularly rich in architectural detailing. In particular, brickwork, good quality traditional sliding sash and casement timber windows and attention to detail incorporated within chimney stacks.



16 Summary of Elements that Detract from Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green) Conservation Area's Special Character and Opportunities for Enhancement

- 16.1 A number of general issues were identified which apply to various sites or buildings throughout the conservation area. Many of the detractors can be seen from the village green itself, which is unfortunate due to the importance of the space. The following items have not been placed in any particular order or priority.

Signs and Clutter

- 16.2 An abundance of road signage is evident within the vicinity of the village green. A review of road traffic signage requirements would seem appropriate.

Boundary Treatment

- 16.3 Along the southern boundary of Great Pix Hall bounding the A268, is an unsightly galvanised wire fence which is an uncharacteristic boundary treatment within the area. The elevated laurel hedge directly behind also detracts because of its non-native, character and the introduction of an artificial mound.
- 16.4 Conifer screening and close boarded, unpainted timber fencing to properties both to the north and the south of the A268 are strong detractors to the conservation area. In all these cases native species hedging should be considered in place of the existing boundary materials, with timber fencing set behind such screening if necessary.

Garage and Hardstanding Areas

- 16.5 The concrete panelled garage between 3 and 4 Iddenden Cottages is a detractor particularly because of its materials and prominence adjacent to the green. Re-building or screening should be considered. Hardstanding areas in front of some of the cottages replacing small cottage gardens, detract from the setting of the properties and the green.



Village Green

- 16.6 Concrete and timber posts (approximately 500mm high) surround the village green, defining the triangular green space and preventing parking on the green. The introduction of more recent replacement concrete posts has led to an ad-hoc, unkempt appearance around the green's perimeter. Regularisation of size and use of one material preferably wood, would help to alleviate this particular detractor.

- 16.7 Reducing the number of grass cuts per year on the green to promote nature conservation, has left the green with an 'untidy' appearance at certain times of the year. The two young horse chestnuts have been planted on the green which will in the future reduce the openness of the green and screen attractive views of the cottages, adversely affecting the open character of the conservation area.

Road Traffic

- 16.8 The speed and volume of traffic along the A268 has an impact on the character of the conservation area particularly from the associated noise. Clearer signage and traffic speed reduction would alleviate these problems.

17 Next Steps

- 17.1 This character appraisal will assist the Borough Council's decision and policy making in the following ways.
- The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in March 1996 and is being reviewed. This appraisal will feed into the review process and help in drawing up any new policies for the Hawkhurst area.
 - The appraisal will help in the interpretation of Policy EN5 of the Local Plan. Under this policy, development must meet certain criteria in terms of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area in which they are situated.
 - The appraisal will form the basis and focus for any future enhancement proposals in the conservation area.

18 Further Information

- 18.1 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.

Telephone 01892 526121
Fax 01892 544746

Or write to Planning and Building Control Services Manager
Town Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1RS

- 18.2 For enquiries regarding the Parishes of Benenden, Brenchley, Cranbrook, Frittenden, Goudhurst, Hawkhurst, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Sandhurst and Sissinghurst contact:

Telephone 01580 712771
Fax 01580 712649

Or write to Planning and Building Control Services Manager
Cranbrook Council Offices
High Street
Cranbrook
Kent TN17 3EN

Hawkhurst Conservation Areas

Key



Enclosure of space by buildings



Enclosure/partial enclosure of space by walls, fences etc.



Enclosure/partial enclosure of space by hedges, trees



Landmark – Key feature visible from many viewpoints



Focal Point – Significant element (e.g. building, trees) which forms the focus of a view



Vista – view stopped by significant feature



Rhythm – group of buildings with similar proportion or details



Landscape Framework – tree/shrub belt that makes a significant contribution to the structure and character of the conservation area



Locally important area of open space



Loss of enclosure



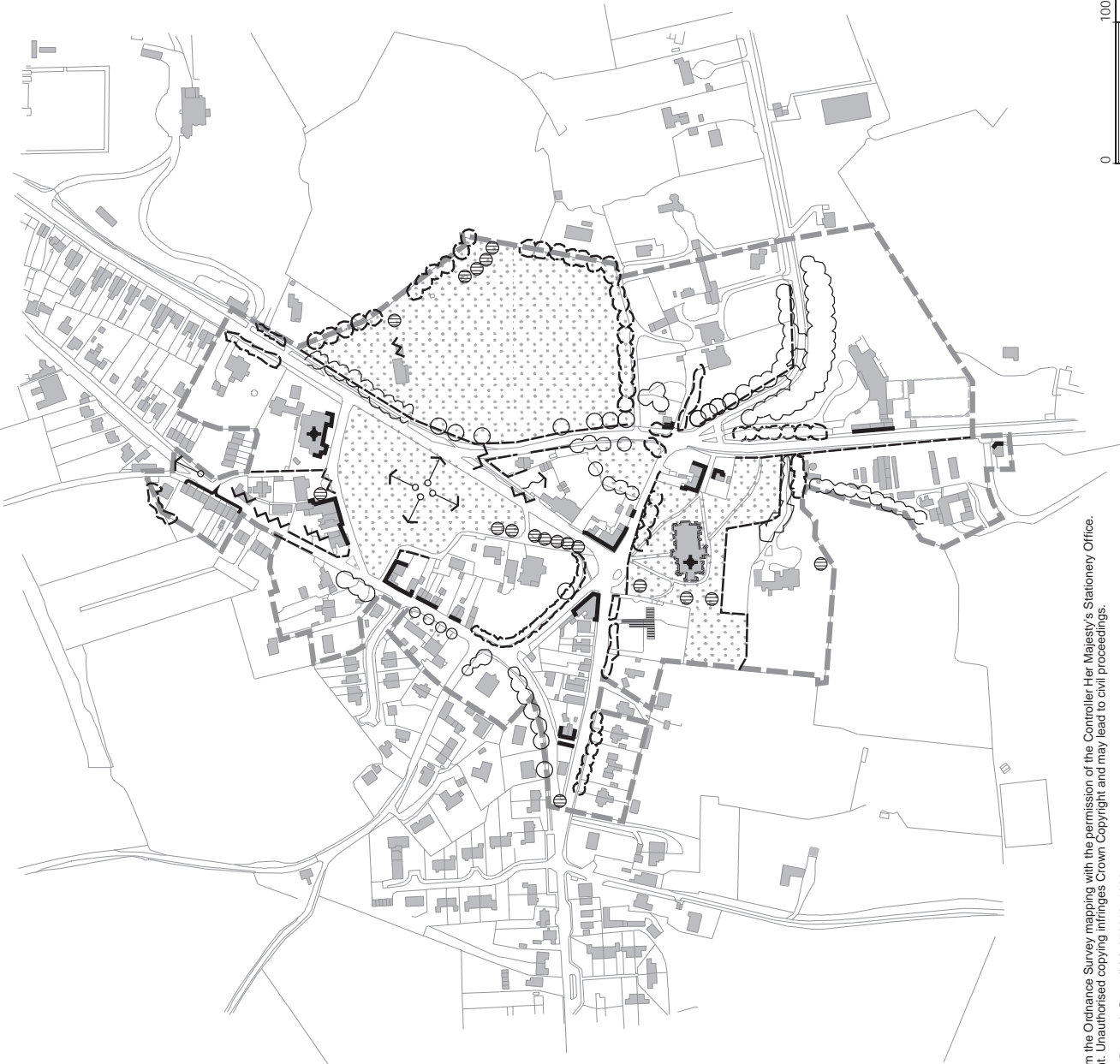
Intrusive elements



Conservation Area boundary (revised 1999)

Figure 6

**Hawkhurst - The Moor
Conservation Area**



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Figure 7

**Hawkhurst - Highgate and
All Saints Church
Conservation Area**



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Figure 8

**Hawkhurst - Iddenden Green
(Sawyers Green)
Conservation Area**



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