

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework



Wilsley Green Conservation Area Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted October 2012

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Preface

This document has been prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in partnership with the Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CCAAC), with particular thanks to Peter Mellor.

The initial draft was prepared by the Conservation Studio.

www.theconservationstudio.co.uk

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Wilsley Green Conservation Area comprises a hamlet immediately to the north of the Weald town of Cranbrook.

1.2 The Conservation Area was originally designated in January 1989. It included the junction around Angley Road and Waterloo Road and, as well as significant Arts & Crafts buildings, the area included the treed approaches and the garden of Wilsley in recognition of the importance of the landscape.

1.3 This Appraisal originally commenced in 2007, involving consultation with local groups. The present updating was evolved locally, but was designed to correspond with the principles published by English Heritage in 2006.



Wilsley Green

The Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

1.4 The first conservation areas were designated in England under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and more than 9,500 now exist. Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any *"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."*

1.5 Conservation areas are diverse in size and character, but in general it is the special architectural quality and historic interest of the area that is of importance, rather than the individual buildings within it. Such designation gives the authority greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements in the conservation area. However, it also brings certain responsibilities. Under the terms of the 1990 Act, local authorities have a duty to review the extent of designation from time to time, to designate further areas if appropriate, to bring forward proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas (with public consultation) and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.

1.6 It is not just the local planning authority that has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area, who are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, which together contribute to the character of the conservation area.

1.7 Designation as a conservation area also raises awareness of an area's special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. Government planning guidance stresses that our built and natural heritage should be valued and protected for its own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that the responsibility for environmental stewardship is shared by everyone. Further guidance is provided through English Heritage and Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) web sites.

1.8 New development and change can take place in conservation areas, but designation should ensure that such proposals will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area.

The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal

1.9 The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Wilsley Green Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and Core Strategy 2010, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the Conservation Area.

1.10 Other purposes include undertaking a review of the Conservation Area boundary in accordance with section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local planning authorities – “*from time to time to determine whether any further parts of the area should be designated.*” The Appraisal also highlights particular issues and some of the elements that detract from the appearance or character of the Conservation Area, which provide the basis for potential future actions for improvement.

1.11 In turn, in order to provide a firm basis against which to assess proposals for development, the following key objectives for conservation areas have been established:

- To review the boundaries of the conservation area
- To define the key characteristics and features that contribute to its special character or appearance which should be preserved or enhanced, providing a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through planning decisions
- To record those principal elements that detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area and to identify opportunities for enhancement, potentially to be delivered through the Management Proposals or other initiatives
- To inform key agencies, including residents, whose activities impact on the conservation area and to maximise the investment by all such stakeholders in the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area to the benefit of their social and economic quality of life
- To promote the public's understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment
- To protect and maintain biodiversity

1.12 This Supplementary Planning Document forms part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework, which is set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. In terms of the consultation process, this document followed the Statement of Community Involvement and its preparation has been subject to the involvement of key stakeholders as well as a public consultation. This is set out more fully in Chapter 11 of this document.

1.13 This document has been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for development control purposes and will help guide the Council when making decisions about applications for development within, or on the edges of, the Wilsley Green Conservation Area. The Appraisal will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the Wilsley Green Conservation Area, such as the County and Borough Councils, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council, Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee and local businesses and householders.

Chapter 2: The Planning Policy Context

National Guidance

2.1 Government advice on the control of conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and an associated Historic Environment Planning [Practice Guide](#) (EH, DCLG & DCMS). Further advice about conservation area control, including the production of management proposals, was produced by English Heritage in 2006.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan and Core Strategy DPD

2.2 There are two development management policies in the current Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 which relate to conservation areas in general: Policies EN4 and EN5. Further policies about the control of development within Wilsley Green can also be found in the adopted Local Plan 2006, principally Policy EN1.

2.3 Policy EN4 seeks to control the demolition of buildings within conservation areas:

Policy EN4

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

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

2.4 Policy EN5 sets out criteria for determining whether a development is appropriate within a conservation area:

Policy EN5

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

1. **The proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces and vegetation which combine to form the character and appearance of the area;**
2. **The siting of the development would be similar to adjoining building frontage lines where this is important to the character of the conservation area;**
3. **The layout and arrangement of the building(s) would follow the pattern of existing development and spacing of adjoining plot widths where this is important to the character of the conservation area;**
4. **The scale, massing, use of materials, detailing, boundary treatment and landscaping would preserve or enhance the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;**
5. **The use, or intensity of use, would be in sympathy with the character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;**
6. **The proposal would not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; and**
7. **In meeting the parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.**

2.5 The adopted [Core Strategy](#) Development Plan Document, at Core Policy 4, states that *"The Borough's heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites and Historic Parks and Gardens will be conserved and enhanced and positive regard will be had to their settings."*

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

Other Local Plan Policies

2.7 There are a number of other general and specific policies in the Local Plan which are relevant to the Wilsley Green Conservation Area. Specific policy designations are set out in detail in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and the Proposals Map. They can be accessed via the Local Plan link on the Borough Council's website at <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan>. They can be summarised as follows:

- EN1 Design and other Development Control Criteria
- EN8 Outdoor Lighting
- EN10 Sites of Archaeological Interest
- EN11 Historic Parks and Gardens
- EN13 Tree Protection
- EN15 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest
- EN21 Areas of Important Open Space
- EN22 Areas of Landscape Importance
- EN23 Important Landscaped Approaches
- EN25 Rural Landscape Protection
- EN26 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- H11 Extensions outside Limits to Built Development

Chapter 3: Summary of Conservation Area's Special Interest

3.1 The distinctive features of the Wilsley Green Conservation Area include the following:

- A dispersed rural settlement with attractive wooded surroundings
- Most of the buildings are either listed or make a positive contribution, with little modern development
- The centre of the settlement is defined by a cluster of late 16th and 17th century houses and cottages
- The survival of medieval and slightly later buildings associated with the weaving industry
- A limited range of materials, chiefly red brick, clay tiles and white weatherboarding, give the buildings of the Conservation Area a consistent, locally distinct appearance
- Roofs, usually covered in handmade clay peg tiles, provide interest to the buildings
- Contained views of historic buildings along gently curving roads
- Some views out from the principal roads across rolling countryside and parkland
- Abundant tree planting reduces the visual impact of post-war and more recent housing developments
- Self-effacing front boundary treatments

Chapter 4: Location and Landscape Setting

Location and Activities

4.1 Wilsley Green lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at distances from 15 to just over 20 miles from the four larger towns of Tunbridge Wells (approximately west), Maidstone (north), Ashford (east) and Hastings (south). Agriculture was, until well into the 20th century, the region's main source of employment and income; today fruit acreage is less, and hop acreage is much less than the past, but mixed agriculture, together with horticulture and game rearing, continue to characterise this part of the AONB.

Topography and Geology



Back Lane

4.2 Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound lie on a ridge of high ground that overlooks Cranbrook Common to the north, the parkland around Great Swifts (now Oak Hill Manor) to the south east and Cranbrook to the south west. This would provide good views to the south east and south west; however, the thick tree belt that lines the edge of Great Swifts Park screens views to the south east. Similar dense tree planting, including some sweet chestnut coppice, blocks views to the north west. There are some gaps, however, such as the one to the north of Oak Cottages and between Guernsey Cottage and The Barracks, where the dense shrubbery and trees stop, providing views across the adjoining agricultural land. Some open vistas to the south are also notable over Cranbrook

School's playing fields.

4.3 The steady gradient provides long views along the roads running through the Conservation Area, which are terminated by the gradual bends in the road and the tall trees that line them.

4.4 Wilsley Green lies within the area of Lower Cretaceous geological deposits, which form the Hastings Beds and comprise sedimentary sand and clay deposits. The lack of a significant local source of building stone is reflected in the materials used throughout the settlement, which include a high proportion of red brick and clay tiles.



Valley to east



Waterloo Road South East

4.5 Historically, the sands and clays of the Weald supported significant areas of woodland and this still forms an important element of the wider landscape. As a result, the area has a strong tradition of timber-framed building construction, as well as other uses of wood, including weatherboarding.

Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

4.6 Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound developed as two scattered groups of buildings along the roads and around small areas of open space. This pattern of development has continued through ribbon development along the A229 to the north of the Conservation Area, including the area of the proposed extension to the north and along the A262 towards Sissinghurst. The Terracotta Restaurant, formerly The Windmill Public House and Windmill Cottages continue the settlement to the south along Waterloo Road. The buildings within the Conservation Area are now largely screened from the surrounding countryside because of the many mature trees which now lie within, and surround, the Conservation Area.

4.7 Wilsley Green is effectively shut off from Great Swifts to the south east by the thick tree belt that runs along the estate's boundary, although the lodge building and wrought iron gates with brick and stone piers provide an indication of its presence. The agricultural land to the north west is more accessible and is connected with the settlement via Whitewell Lane and fields adjoining the road. An area of orchards runs down the slopes beyond the ribbon development to the north east.



Cranbrook School Playing Fields

4.8 The area between Waterloo Road and Angley Road, to the south of the Conservation Area, has been infilled with post-war development. Some of the buildings currently inside the Conservation Area boundary form part of this development. The post-war buildings are partly screened from the Conservation Area by mature trees and hedgerows, but otherwise have an adverse influence on its appearance as a result of the utilitarian mid-20th century design of the buildings, as well as the general increased density of the built form.

4.9 Wilsley Green and all of the current Conservation Area lie within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the northern boundary of which runs along the A262. Wilsley Pound and the land to the north of the A262 lie just outside the AONB.

4.10 This area has been identified within the Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment 2002 (reviewed 2011) as a part of the 'Fruit Belt', which forms a band running from Matfield in the west to the borough boundary at Biddenden. The Conservation Area lies more specifically in an area noted as 'Cranbrook'. The key characteristic features of the local landscape area are:

- Gently undulating upland plateau that shelves towards the north
- Network of small watercourses that have been influential in the development of the area
- Intermittent views to the surrounding wooded ridges and hills
- Large fields of arable farmland divided by ghyll woodland and flailed hedgerows
- Numerous irregular, medium-sized pasture sheep fields, with thick hedges and shaw boundaries
- Orchards particularly concentrated around settled areas. There are some mature standards, but these appear to be in decline and, if replaced at all, tend to be replaced with dwarf trees
- High proportion of woodland. To the east this is the large coniferous plantation of Hemsted, whereas in the west a more deciduous character is created by Angley Wood
- Settlement is contained within the topographical and wooded framework
- The small town of Cranbrook has been termed the capital of the High Weald and is the focus of settlement. It is a distinctive town nestled in the landscape, with a strong vernacular townscape created by various brick, timber and weatherboard buildings

4.11 The modern A229 runs through the settlement on a historic roadway, which is recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 as Windmill Lane (now known as Quaker Lane). It is a busy road, with a high volume of through-traffic and includes a number of traffic islands, known locally as Silly Isles, at its junction with Waterloo Road, which is one of the main access roads into Cranbrook.

Biodiversity

4.12 The Conservation Area and its immediate surroundings contain a number of possible habitats that would support a variety of wildlife. There are several large areas of woodland in the immediate vicinity of the settlement and Conservation Area and part of the broad tree belt that runs around Great Swifts is included in the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area includes mature hedgerows and many large trees. Several properties within the Conservation Area have extensive gardens, which include large ponds. The Conservation Area also includes areas of agricultural land and the parkland of Great Swifts lies to the south east. The buildings of the Conservation Area may also provide nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats.

4.13 There is a notable presence of rhododendrons within the areas of woodland within the Conservation Area. These are important to Kent's historic landscape as an element of the planned planting of historic parks and gardens and a reminder of fashions for collecting exotic plants for the gardens of large houses over several centuries. Where they have been allowed to spread without control, however, they have had an adverse impact on biodiversity and wildlife conservation.

Chapter 5: Historic Development and Archaeology

Before the 14th century

5.1 Wilsley Green lies within the ancient Weald, or forest, which stretched some 120 miles from East Kent to today's Hampshire. The area is dominated by acidic clay and sandy soils, which have been poor for agriculture but supported economically valuable sources of timber for both building and fuel, as well as deposits of iron ore. The route of the modern A229 follows the line of the ridge of highland and may respect the course of an older, even prehistoric, route.

5.2 Evidence of iron smelting from at least the Roman period is recorded within the local area, including a Roman metal working site at Little Farningham Wood, approximately two and a half kilometres to the south east of Cranbrook. This has been designated as a Scheduled Monument. The Roman metal working site lay on a Roman road, which ran on a north-south alignment, but seems to have bypassed the area of Wilsley.

5.3 The place name Wilsley appears to be of Old English origin. The suffix *-ley* can record either a large clearing or a contained area of woodland belonging to a nearby settlement, or even a small settlement near to either of the above. It is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but may have formed part of a larger estate, possibly as a detached upland grazing area. Evidently, a settlement was established at, or around, a green within the wider area referred to as Wilsley, probably a small area of common land. The wide space taken up by the junction of the A229 and the B2189 (Anglely Road and Waterloo Road) may represent part of this green, although it is possible that it occupied a large area extending to the south west as far as Willesley House, or possibly even to Quaker Lane.



Anglely Road

Cranbrook's broadcloth industry



The Green (The Silly Isles)

5.4 The establishment of Cranbrook as a centre for cloth manufacturing, through the planned settlement of Flemish weavers in the 13th century, appears to have played a role in the development of the smaller settlement at Wilsley Green. It may have been at this time that the route from the road along the ridge down into the valley was formed, which is now represented by Waterloo Road. Although the town appears to have been the centre for the weaving activity and contained a number of fulling mills and other sites required for processing cloth, a number of cloth halls were established over a wider area surrounding the town, often in apparently isolated locations. Old Wilsley, on the south east side of Waterloo Road, represents a fine example of one of these. It was originally constructed

in the late 14th century, but has been considerably extended and altered. The Barracks, located further to the north, is another cloth hall, built later in the 15th century. A 'cloth hall' was the home of a weaver's family and also housed the large looms and other equipment used for weaving broadcloth.

**Providence Cottage**

House, Mercers Cottage, Oak Cottage, Rose Cottage and Ruby Cottage. Forge Cottage, on the south east side of Angley Road and Wilsley Farm Cottages further to the south west, were also built during the 17th century. Building of cottages in this rural location in the 17th century may reflect a phase of re-investment in agriculture in the area following the decline of the weaving industry.

5.5 The extent of the medieval settlement is not known, but was probably dispersed. Providence Cottage preserves part of a late 15th century hall house in the south west of the Conservation Area. Development in the 16th century included the building of four cottages in the south west of the Conservation Area, now Island Cottages on Quaker Lane.

5.6 Pound House, near The Pound, was built in the 16th century, probably as a hall house.

5.7 Evidence of further development in the 17th century is provided by the row of cottages on the north west side of Angley Road, including Mockbeggar House, no. 1 Wilsley Green, Middle

**Pound House**

From the 19th century

**Cottages at the Green**

5.8 The Wilsley Oast, on the north west side of Angley Road, is probably of late 18th or early 19th century construction. A second oast house is located at Wilsley Pound, to the north east, which is recorded as of 18th century construction. Oast houses, which are very characteristic of the Weald, were used for drying hops, used to flavour beer. The growing of hops in Kent increased in scale very rapidly during the late 18th and 19th century alongside the growth of industry and urbanism elsewhere in Britain. Many earlier oast or hop houses were replaced during the 19th century as the technology of hop drying developed.

5.9 Cottages were constructed on Angley Road in the mid 19th century at Upper Wilsley Green Cottages, filling in the line of settlement along the north west side of Angley Road. Further developments of cottages in the 19th century include the rows of terraces of three properties to the north of Pound House at Wilsley Pound. Cranemill Cottages were originally 'The Camden Arms' public house until it burnt down and was rebuilt into the cottages in the 1990s.

**Camden Villa**

5.10 Camden Villa, opposite Pound House, appears to be an early 19th century house, while the group of three pairs of semi-detached cottages at Camden Cottages, which follow the north side of the Sissinghurst road, are of later 19th century construction.

5.11 Windmill Cottages, standing on the west side of Waterloo Road to the south of the Conservation Area, are another row of three pairs of semi-detached cottages and bear a date stone of 1865.

**Oast House****Windmill Cottages**

**Willesley House**

5.12 Willesley House, which stands between Waterloo Road and Angley Road, incorporates parts of an 18th century house and a 17th century outbuilding. The building was, however, considerably altered in the late 19th century. It was modified and extended by the notable architect, Richard Norman Shaw, for the painter, John Calcott Horsely RA, as his first important domestic commission, between 1864 and 1870 and represents an early example of his trademark use of local materials and styles.

built as a lodge and stable block for Willesley House, also by Norman Shaw.

5.13 The Coach House, a little further to the south west on Angley Road, was

**The Coach House****Upper Willesley House Window**

5.14 Upper Willesley House, on the north west side of Angley Road and further to the north, is of similar date and may also be by Norman Shaw. The incised decorative plasterwork above and below the first floor bay windows is reminiscent of decorative plaster work at Willesley House.

5.15 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map, produced in the 1870s, shows the buildings in the central part of Wilsley Green much as they are today. To the north of the Goudhurst-Sissinghurst road (the former line of the A262), the settlement of Wilsley Pound included Pound House and the cottages along the north western side of the Maidstone Road, as well as Camden Villa and Camden Cottages on the north side of the A262 to Sissinghurst and Camden Lodge (now called Camden House) slightly further to the east.

5.16 The revision of 1938 records development along the south east side of the A229, as well as the construction of part of Pound Cottages to the north west of Pound House, on the A262 to Goudhurst. Oak Cottages, located on the corner of Angley Road and Whitewell Lane, were built in the Arts & Crafts style in the 1880s and were designed by Mervyn Macartney (further details are provided below, at paragraph 7.16).

**Oak Cottages****Modern Development**

5.17 The area to the south of the Conservation Area was developed for housing in the post-war period, with a range of building sizes, including bungalows and larger three-storey blocks. Utilitarian materials were used, although an attempt to reflect the vernacular tradition was made through the use of tile hanging to the first floor elevations of some of the larger buildings.

5.18 The northwards development of the settlement has continued in the later

20th century with further ribbon development along the A229 towards Maidstone at Wilsley Pound. Willesley House was used as a hotel (The Willesley Hotel) during the late 20th century, although it is now private residences and its grounds have been developed for housing both within, and immediately adjacent to, the Conservation Area.

**Development to the north**

5.19 Archaeology, which includes standing remains and built structures, as well as buried deposits, can add another layer of understanding to the evolution and present day significance of a settlement. Every building in the Conservation Area potentially contains information about how the building came to its present form, although this may be hidden below layers of later alterations and additions. Any activity that disturbs these layers may therefore provide an opportunity for new information, research, interpretation and education. Before granting permission for further changes, however, as set out in PPS5 at Policy HE6, the Borough Council may ask an applicant to provide an appropriate 'Archaeological Evaluation' of the building or land to help the Council reach an informed decision about the proposals.

5.20 As a scattered rural settlement with a low density of buildings, there is good potential for the survival of sub-surface remains of activity in addition to the historic buildings, which would date from the period of occupation at Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound. Particularly interesting areas for investigation would be the grounds surrounding the large medieval and early post-medieval buildings of Old Wilsley, Providence Cottage, The Barracks and Pound House, which may have potential to provide information on the origins and development of the settlement. They may also provide evidence of economic activity undertaken within it, including medieval remains or structures relating to cloth making. The pattern of roads, lanes property boundaries, etc. Within the conservation area form part of the settlement's historic landscape and should, where possible be respected.

5.21 The local Historic Environment Record (HER) is held by Kent County Council. For Wilsley Green, this includes records of a number of the many historic buildings within the Conservation Area. There are no records of finds of any sub-surface archaeological remains within the Conservation Area and there have been no programmes of archaeological investigation.

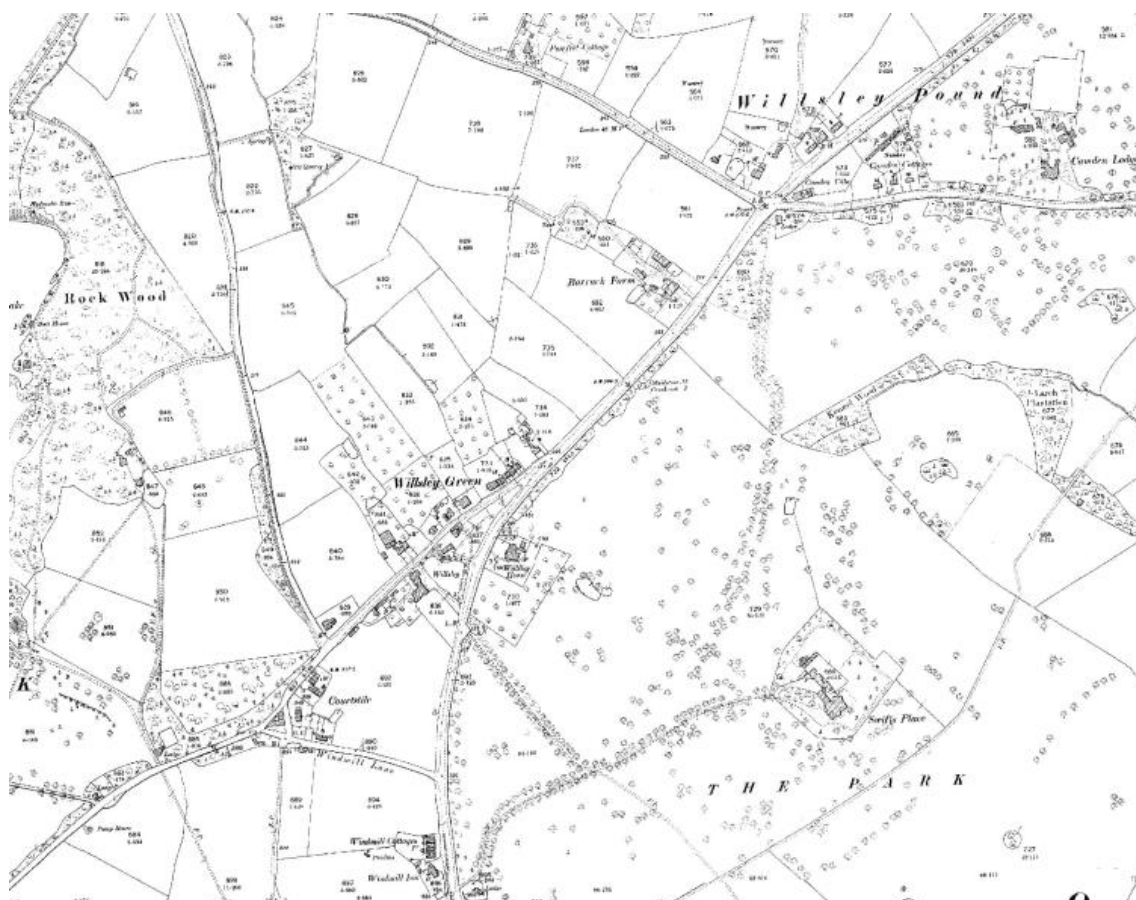


Figure 1 Wilsley Green 1899

Chapter 6: Spatial Analysis

Layout and Street Pattern



Tree lined road

6.1 Wilsley is a hamlet best described as an irregular row plan with two focii. It mainly comprises domestic scale properties, cottages and houses, with larger houses of The Barracks, Old Wilsley and Great Swifts.

6.2 Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound developed as two scattered groups of buildings along the roads and around small areas of open space. This pattern of development has continued through ribbon development along the A229 to the north of the Conservation Area, including the area of the proposed extension to the north and along the A262 towards Sissinghurst. The Terracotta Restaurant and Windmill Cottages continue the settlement to the south along Waterloo Road. The buildings within

the Conservation Area are now largely screened from the surrounding countryside because of the many mature trees which now lie within, and surround, the Conservation Area.

6.3 As a result of the dense tree growth throughout and around the Conservation Area, Wilsley Green retains the impression of a dispersed settlement, spread out along the two axial routes, with a focus of building at their convergence. This impression of dispersed settlement is maintained despite the dense, urban-style housing development that lies between Angley Road and Waterloo Road, outside the Conservation Area boundary.

6.4 Quaker Lane, mostly outside the Conservation Area, provides a route between the two southern parts of it, forming a triangle of streets. It is a route of some age, being shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the 1870s. The modern A229 includes the road that leads northwards from the end of Angley Road to the roundabout with the A262. To the south, part of Angley Road has been modernised, leaving a short stretch of the original road as a back lane leading to King's Cottages, Island Cottages and the entrance to Quaker Lane.



Island Cottages

6.5 The historic street pattern to the north has been altered as a result of the construction of a large Wilsley Pound roundabout and feeder roads that bypass the historic A262 Goudhurst-Sissinghurst road to the north. Beyond this, the settlement of Wilsley Pound is formed by linear development emanating from the central point of the former crossroads. This includes both historic and modern development along both sides of the Maidstone road (the A229) and on (mainly) the north sides of the A262.

Approaches

6.6 From the countryside, the southern approaches to Wilsley Green are characterised by densely planted boundaries enclosing the roads and affording only occasional glimpses of parkland. By contrast, the approaches to the northern part of the Conservation Area at Wilsley Pound are more open; from the west rising from open fields to the crest; and from the east views of parkland.

6.7 The wooded link between the two clusters of the hamlet reinforces the slight separateness.

Green Spaces, Trees and Landscape



Wilsley Pound

6.8 Green spaces within the Conservation Area include private gardens, areas of managed grass on roadside verges and traffic islands and a small area of amenity grassland between the 20th century development in Swifts View and Waterloo Road. Despite its name, Wilsley Green no longer retains a central village green, although there are wide grass verges bisected by the modern road system. A small area of municipal open space is also located at Wilsley Pound in the proposed northern extension to the Conservation Area, where a reconstruction of the Pound, used to corral stray animals from Cranbrook Common, now stands.

6.9 Trees and landscape make a very significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The many tall, mature trees running along the roadsides provide a sense of enclosure to most parts of the Conservation Area, in many places linking with high fences and walls to mask the most interesting buildings within the Conservation Area (such as Old Wilsley) from the public view.

6.10 Significant specimen trees include a group of three large evergreens, one to the north east of Upper Wilsley House, one to the north west of it and one on the opposite side of Angley Road. Although not readily visible from public areas, the 1920's garden at Wilsley is identified as being significant in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens. (nb details not available to the public)



Tree at Upper Wilsley House



Mockbeggar House

6.11 Two clipped and shaped yew trees to the front of Mockbeggar House also have landmark value. A line of poplars on the south side of Quaker Lane, outside the Conservation Area, makes a valuable contribution to views into, and out of, the Conservation Area.

6.12 Two large pines, standing at the entrance to Wilsley Pound and just before it on the Goudhurst Road, also stand out as fine specimen trees.

6.13 As a result of the enclosure created by the dense tree planting, the settlement has only a limited relationship to the wider landscape. Glimpses into the farming landscape to the north west, which is largely made up of small fields under permanent pasture and orchards, occur where the treelines break down for shorter, managed hedgerows to the north and south of Guernsey Cottage, to the south of Wilsley Farm and from the entrance to Whitewell Lane from Angley Road. Views to the west from Whitewell Lane look across the well-managed sports fields, which are surrounded by tall hedgerows.



Pine trees at Wilsley Pound



View to playing fields

6.14 At the south western corner of the Conservation Area, an area of coppiced woodland adjoins, and lies partly within, the Conservation Area boundary. Cranbrook Rugby Club, which is located to the south west of this woodland, is hidden from view by part of this mature tree growth.

6.15 To the south west, the boundaries of Cranbrook School's playing fields are low hedgerows, which allow views across the managed grassland to the trees at the rear of the school. The fall of the ground to the south is appreciated when looking along the tree-lined route of Waterloo Road from the southern edge of the Conservation Area.

6.16 The ground runs downhill steeply before turning out of view at Waterloo Place, marking the entrance to Cranbrook.



Waterloo Road south

6.17 Glimpses into the parkland to the south east are possible at the entrance lodge to Great Swifts on Waterloo Road. Further to the north, near to The Barracks, the treeline on the south west side of the A229 thins out, providing some glimpses of the views to the wide, open fields of the parkland beyond. These views look over a valley, which is terminated by an expanse of woodland at Hilly Wood. To the north, the gaps in the treeline to the south of the A262 to Sissinghurst provide further glimpses into this same parkland to the south.



Great Swifts Park

By contrast, the thick treeline and high hedgerows on both sides of the A262 to Goudhurst screen views to the countryside beyond. Development of housing on both sides of the A229 Maidstone road provides enclosure in this area, although some views across the valley to the north west are possible in places.

Focal Points, Focal Building, Views and Vistas

6.18 The subtle gentle curving lines of the roads through the Conservation Area create unfolding and changing views along their routes. Trees and groups of buildings punctuate views and form focal points where the roads straighten to provide longer views. For example, Wilsley Green, the space where Angley Road and Waterloo Road converge, provides such a location and is visible from several directions. The triangle formed by Island Cottages is another, less obvious, focal point, mainly notable because of the concentration of historic buildings.

6.19 Some of the finest buildings in the Conservation Area are essentially hidden from public view by tall treelines, hedgerows and boundary walls, so few buildings can be said to be truly 'Focal Buildings'. For example, little is visible of Willesley House, The Barracks or Old Wilsley from the main streets, so the visual focal points tend to be the more modest structures that form the nuclei of the settlement. These include the group of 17th century cottages at Wilsley Green, which provides a greater density of built form at the centre of the settlement, accentuated by the open spaces currently occupied by the road junction. These buildings create a harmony of scale and massing due their common features, siting and massing. Upper Willesley House also stands out as a result of the quality of its facade. The bay windows at first floor level, balustraded balcony and steeply pitched, tiled roof are typical details of the Arts & Crafts movement. The adjoining Wilsley Oast adds an element of vertical scale to the buildings on Angley Road, which draws the eye to the two circular kilns at its south western end.

6.20 As described above, views out of the Conservation Area to the surrounding countryside are limited by the dense tree planting alongside the roads. As a result, the most significant views from within the Conservation Area are those more contained along the roads, such as the views along Angley Road from the south west towards Wilsley Green, which include Wilsley Oast, Upper Willesley House and the cottages on the north west side of Angley Road. Views towards the green from the other routes are somewhat blighted by the unattractive traffic islands in the centre of the junction, although some are at least planted and not paved.

Chapter 7: Identity Areas and Significant Buildings

Identity Areas

7.1 Although the nature of the Conservation Area is of a sporadic hamlet, there are perhaps two identity areas within it that can be defined and can aid understanding:

- **Identity Area A:** Wilsley Green
- **Identity Area B:** Wilsley Pound

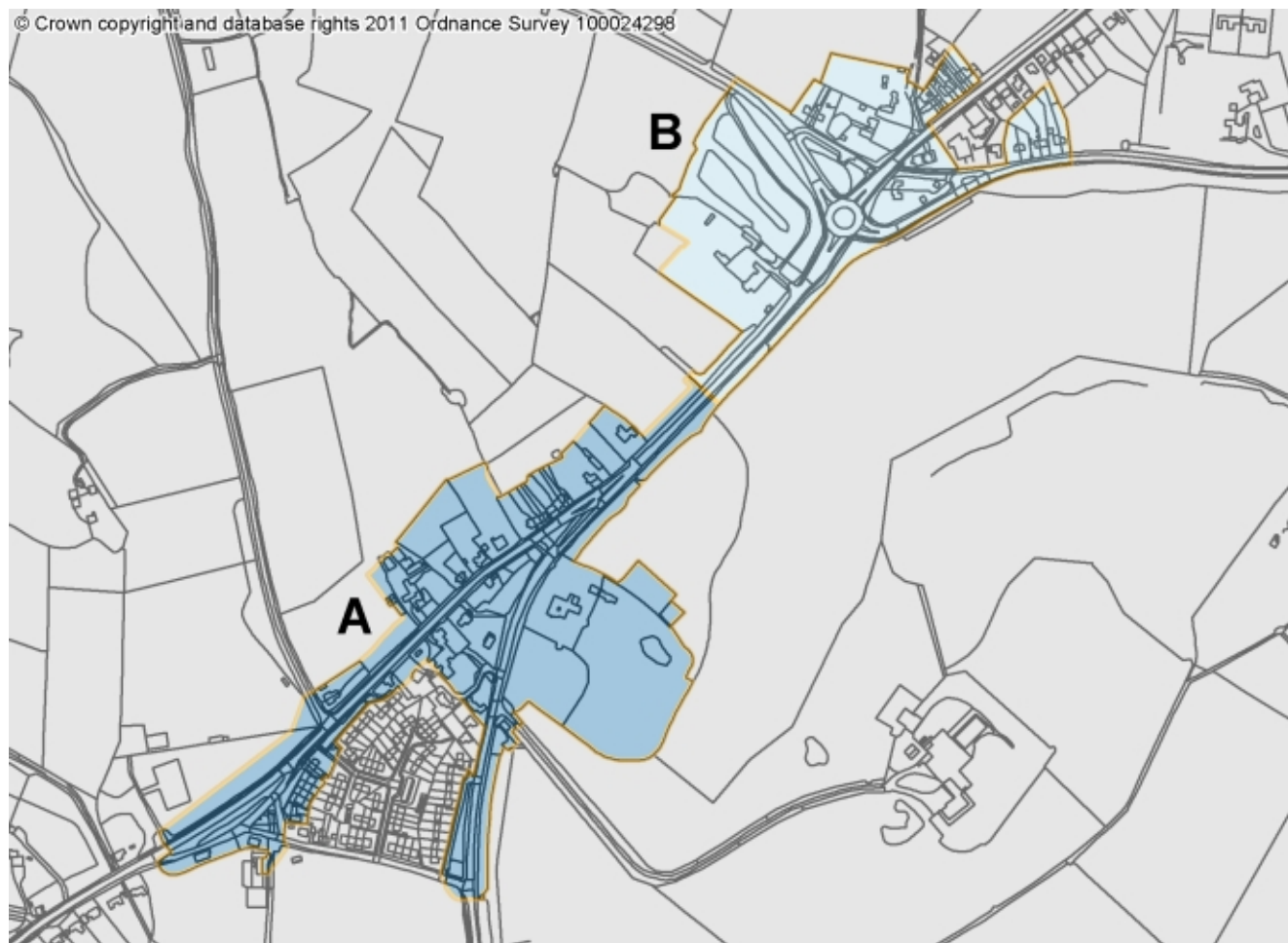


Figure 2 Character Area Map

Building Types

7.2 The buildings within the Conservation Area are predominantly residential in character, including both large houses and smaller cottages. Some retain elements of former agricultural structures, or have even been converted from buildings with other functions, including The Forge, Wilsley Oast and The Coach House. The lodge at the entrance to Great Swifts represents a further category, combining a residential and functional purpose.

Listed Buildings

7.3 The Conservation Area contains a total of 13 listed buildings, which includes one Grade I and one Grade II* building, the remainder being Grade II. The most important buildings are Old Wilsley (Grade I) and Willesley House (Grade II*).

Positive Buildings

7.4 In addition to the listed buildings, a further number of unlisted buildings have been identified as being buildings of 'townscape merit'. Buildings identified as having townscape merit will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Where a building has been heavily altered and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

7.5 Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), advises that when considering the impact of proposed development, great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage assets, such as conservation areas. The guidance note states that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

7.6 Buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, or that have a particular relevance to its special historical or architectural interest, are marked on the Townscape Analysis Map (Figure 4, Appendix 1).

Identity Area A: Wilsley Green

7.7 Old Wilsley is a late 14th and 15th century Wealden hall house. It was probably used as a cloth hall, meaning the residence of a wealthy cloth-weaving family, combining domestic and manufacturing uses in one building. It would therefore have housed the looms and other equipment that were needed in the manufacture of broadcloth. It is timber framed on a red brick plinth, with one area of sandstone walling on the left gable end. The facade is otherwise plastered, with a light orange-yellow earthtone plaster, with one central area of exposed close studding. The first and second floors are jettied. The roof is of plain clay tiles with bracketed eaves and returned gables to both left and right. The house stands in extensive grounds, which include at least two ancillary buildings. However, views of it are screened from the road by the high red brick wall and trees and its subsequent contribution to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area is currently minimal.



Willesley House

7.8 Willesley House is listed Grade II* as a result of its association with the eminent architect, Richard Norman Shaw. The building was commissioned by the nationally significant artist, John Calcott Horsley RA, who was a founder of the Cranbrook Colony of artists. It represents a good, early example of Shaw's use of local materials and vernacular forms to create a rambling, whimsical structure, which he added to an existing house. The original building is, in fact, an 18th century house that has been extended to the left and right to include a 17th century outbuilding. The 18th century building was constructed of red and blue brick chequer at ground floor level, with mathematical tiling at first floor level on the symmetrical five-window range, which retains large 12-pane

sash windows in open boxes.

7.9 The late 19th century extensions are of red brick, with areas of tile hanging at first floor level that make use of various styles, including mathematical and fish-scale tiling. They are designed to break down the symmetry of the frontage as part of the artistic ideal of a comfortable family house. Other windows are ovolo moulded transom and mullion casements. The glass-sided gazebo, which tops the structure, gives the building a pyramidal form and provides a very unusual and characteristic feature to the building.



Use of local materials



Bow Window

7.10 The large bow window of the artist's studio, which forms an extension of the 17th century outbuilding, overlooks Angley Road to the north and is the most publicly visible part of the building. Otherwise, Wilsley House is hidden from public view by tall hedges and garden trees and can only be viewed by entering the cul-de-sac in which it stands. Modern housing development to the west and east of the house has reduced the quality of its setting. The attached cottage to the rear of the building has recently been extended to create a larger house (Wilsley Garden Cottage).

7.11 Otherwise, the listed buildings are more modestly scaled and vernacular in form, so cottages built in the 16th and 17th centuries provide the most common type of listed building within the Conservation Area. Of these, the earliest is the 15th century house at Providence Cottages, Angley Road, which is two storeys high with exposed white weatherboarding at first floor level and red brick to the ground floor. The irregular roofline is hipped to the left and half-hipped to the right, with a prominent red brick chimney stack. A 19th century extension to the left is built with red brick, laid, unusually, on edge (rat-trap bond) with blue headers and red stretchers. The cottages form a picturesque group in a well maintained cottage garden setting, although there is some intrusion into this from the post-war housing development to the south.



Providence Cottages

7.12 Nos. 1-4 Quaker Lane, also called Island Cottages, are located close by and are also well detailed, but modestly sized, cottages. They are timber framed on a brick plinth, although the framing is hidden externally by white weatherboarding. The cottages have a complicated roof structure that changes height and includes valleys between the main building and various extensions, giving the group particular charm. A modern red brick extension to the north of the terrace sits slightly uncomfortably with the group.



Wilsley Green Cottages

7.13 The group of cottages at Wilsley Green, in the centre of the Conservation Area, forms a focal point and the densest concentration of buildings within it. The group falls into two groups, lying to the north east and the south west. Those cottages to the south west are taller, including attics above two storeys, although the roofline steps down from Oak Cottage and Rose Cottage to Beryl Cottage and Ruby Cottage.

7.14 These buildings date to the 17th century, but are clad in 18th and 19th century white-painted weatherboarding, while the terrace to the north east is faced in red brick at ground floor level, with fish-scale tile hanging to the first floor. Mockbeggar House sits slightly outside this group, is contemporary in date to its neighbours (but on a grander scale) and is faced in red brick at ground floor, with tile hanging above.



Wilsley Green Cottages

7.15 Forge Cottage, Angley Road, is another 17th century structure, with white weatherboarding above the red brick ground floor and a half-hipped clay tiled roof. The building's large brick chimney stack on the northern Angley Road frontage provides an indication of its former use. Wilsley Farmhouse, further to the south west, is another 17th century house with 19th century cladding, which includes white weatherboarding to the sides and incised plaster with tile hanging above to the front. It has now been divided into a pair of houses.



Oak Cottages

7.16 In addition to extending Willesley House, Norman Shaw also designed a lodge and stable, now called the Coach House, which lies further along Angley Road and is also listed. Opposite, Oak Cottages represent further characteristic Arts & Crafts-style development within the Conservation Area. This pair of symmetrical and well ordered cottages, completed in 1887, was designed by Mervyn Macartney, who was one of Norman Shaw's pupils from 1878 to 1881 and a founding member of the St George's Art Society, known later as the Art Workers' Guild. He is considered to be a founder of the Arts & Crafts movement along with Gerald Horsley, son of the owner of Willesley House. Oak Cottages have a red brick ground floor with decorative tile hanging above and two oriel

semi-dormer windows. The southern boundary of the surrounding garden has been replaced with a tall, modern fence, which screens a large part of the southern and eastern elevations from public view and intrudes into views along the street. An out-of-keeping covered gateway is located part way along the fence and modern garages have also been constructed to the east and north of the building. The alterations to the setting of this building are considered to detract from its special interest as a listed building and also to have adversely affected the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

7.17 They include Upper Willesley House, Angley Road, which should be regarded as the most important unlisted building in the Conservation Area. It has a near-square plan and a steeply pitched, hipped roof of clay tile with red brick at ground floor and fish-scale tile hanging to the first floor. The tile hanging sweeps out to form an overhang over the ground floor, into which a porch has been built. The three-window frontage has a central balcony over the entrance porch, with oriel bay windows to either side with round-headed lights. The decorative plasterwork above and below the oriel windows includes a 'heraldic' device of dolphins supporting an oval shield, which are flanked by panels with roses. The front elevation is topped by an off-centre ridge stack. A second, very broad ridge stack is placed on the return to the rear, with another at the back. The building has been extended backwards from this frontage, with the tile hanging giving way to red brick to the rear. The house appears to be of late 19th century construction and may be the product of Norman Shaw or one of his pupils.



Upper Willesley House

7.18 Wilsley Oast, which stands just to the south west of Upper Willesley House, is a traditional agricultural building, related to the historical development of the wider area and representing a building form characteristic of the locality. It was probably built in the early 19th century. It includes two circular oast kilns of red brick, with conical tile roofs topped by white cowls and the building is now in residential use. The attached building is of two storeys, clad with white weatherboarding with an 'M' shaped gable with raised valley facing the road. Regrettably, the windows are modern uPVC units.

7.19 The red brick and tile-hung cottages at nos. 1 and 2 Upper Willesley Green Cottages, Angley Road, are also 'positive'. They lie just to the south west of Wilsley Oast and Upper Willesley House and contribute to the appearance of the overall group.

7.20 The Lodge, Waterloo Road, is a pretty lodge building at the entrance to Great Swifts (currently known as Oak Hill Manor). It is dated 1936 on the front. The building is constructed using red brick with a half-hipped clay tile roof. It includes two storeys, although the upper floor is an attic lit by dormer windows and windows in the gable end. It is one of only two buildings along the eastern edge of the Conservation Area; the other, Old Wilsley, being largely concealed behind its boundary walls and trees.



Crane Mill Cottages

7.21 A number of buildings previously outside the Conservation Area boundary contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. To the south of the Conservation Area these include the late 19th century cottages (Windmill Cottages, Waterloo Road) and the adjacent former public house and Quaker Cottages, Quaker Lane.

7.22 Despite the linear and spread-out nature of the Conservation Area, the character of the area is relatively consistent throughout, without any individual 'Character Areas'. The current nature of activity within the Conservation Area is residential housing, sometimes using buildings which were once in agricultural use, such as the former oast house.

Identity Area B: Wilsley Pound

7.23 The Barracks, at the existing northern limit of the Conservation Area, is another substantial, high status 15th century cloth hall, which was used by the soldiers guarding French prisoners of war at Sissinghurst Castle during the Seven Years War, 1756-63. It is timber framed with weatherboarding at ground floor level and tile hanging above. To the rear, a series of extensions has exposed gables at right angles to the main block and red brick at ground floor level. It stands in large grounds with a number of associated outbuildings in similar materials, but again, is only glimpsed beyond high fences and hedges from the road.

7.24 In the proposed northern extension to the Conservation Area, at Wilsley Pound, lie four historic buildings, all listed Grade II. Pound House, Weavers Cottage and Gaythorne form one unit and adjoin The Oast House, a conversion of a former agricultural building.

7.25 To the north of the Conservation Area, in Wilsley Pound, positive buildings include the row of cottages at Hope Cottages on the Maidstone Road and Camden Villa and Camden Cottages on the Sissinghurst Road. These buildings are located within the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area.

Key Positive Features

- A dispersed rural settlement with attractive wooded surroundings
- Most of the buildings are either listed or make a positive contribution, with little modern development
- The centre of the settlement is defined by a cluster of late 16th and 17th century houses and cottages
- The survival of medieval and slightly later buildings associated with the weaving industry
- A number of early Arts & Crafts buildings by the eminent architects, Richard Norman Shaw and Mervyn Macartney
- Association of some of the buildings with the Cranbrook Colony of artists
- A limited range of materials, chiefly red brick, clay tiles and white weatherboarding, give the buildings of the Conservation Area a consistent, locally-distinct appearance
- Roofs, usually covered in handmade clay peg tiles, provide interest to the buildings
- Contained views of historic buildings along gently curving roads
- Some views out from the principal roads across rolling countryside and parkland
- Abundant tree planting reduces the visual impact of post-war and more recent housing developments
- Self effacing boundary treatments



View of historic buildings from road

Key Negative Features

- Heavy traffic passes along the A229 from Hastings to Maidstone
- High wooden fences have been erected along the roadside frontage of several key buildings, which are particularly visually intrusive
- Several larger buildings in the Conservation Area have high walls, fences, hedgerows and treelines that screen views of them from the road
- Some buildings have had windows replaced with uPVC units, which detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area
- Satellite dishes have been placed conspicuously on several listed buildings
- The setting of Wilsley House has been compromised by modern development
- The unpainted steel lighting columns throughout the Conservation Area are obtrusive and unsympathetic to the character of the historic buildings
- Traffic islands at the junction of Waterloo Road and Angley Road are not consistently surfaced and the bollards are poorly maintained
- The settlements of Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound are separated by a large roundabout and busy road
- Several buildings of significant historic and architectural interest (Upper Wilsley House and Wilsley Oast) have not been designated for statutory protection
- There is some pressure for on-street car parking along Angley Road and front gardens here are vulnerable to adaptation for car parking
- Wheelie bins add to street clutter throughout the Conservation Area
- Some intrusion from overhead wires
- Galvanised railings alongside the A229 and high close boarded fencing, both adjacent to The Pound.



Wheelie bins add to clutter

Chapter 8: Building Materials, Textures and Colours

Building Styles, Materials and Colours

8.1 The buildings of Wilsley Green include a mixture of structures in the local vernacular styles, as well as the materials and details of the more universal Arts & Crafts movement. These date to the mid to late 19th century and, as such, provide an early example of this type of building.

8.2 The cottages along Angley Road, facing the green, provide an interesting range of quite typically local details. They are all of two storeys or two storeys with attics and employ a limited range of cladding materials, which comprise white-painted weatherboarding, red brick (with some limited use of red and blue brick chequering) and tile hanging, often in decorative patterns. Usually, there is a change in the cladding materials used between the ground and first floors, presumably to reduce the pressure on weight bearing timbers. Although most of the buildings are timber framed, few of the frames are exposed.

8.3 The roofs are all of handmade clay tiles, but use a mixture of hipped, half-hipped and gable ended forms. Several buildings include two or more of these styles, often as a result of phases of truncation and/or extension. Several have a rambling appearance as a result of successive extensions. Nos. 1-4 Quaker Lane, for example, appear to include many phases of extension, which has resulted in the buildings possessing a very complex set of roof surfaces. The buildings have tall brick chimney stacks and, in some cases, these are very large. The chimney at the rear of Willesley House was purposely widened to create an inglenook fireplace.

8.4 The combination of weatherboarding and brick and tile construction gives the Conservation Area a strong white and brick red colour scheme, which is supported by the use of white on most exposed joinery. The vernacular materials and resultant colour scheme are copied to a degree in the Arts & Crafts buildings, although these also introduced areas of exposed timber framing, which adds a slightly different character to the south east side of Angley Road.

8.5 Several buildings have some areas of incised or decorated plasterwork, which was also taken up for the Arts & Crafts building of Willesley House, where it is used to lighten the tones of the building without otherwise compromising the quality of the materials. The plasterwork is white and further supports the impression of this colour throughout the Conservation Area.

8.6 Windows throughout the Conservation Area are mostly casements with small, leaded panes and often forming irregularly fenestrated elevations. The larger buildings, particularly Willesley House and Upper Willesley House, have more 'architectural' schemes of fenestration (intentionally irregular at Willesley House), incorporating tall sash windows. Many of the houses have dormer windows inserted to light attic rooms. In the Arts & Crafts buildings, again as at Willesley House, dormer and other unusually shaped windows were included in their design to add interest and variation across frontages.

8.7 The various extensions of the buildings of the Conservation Area, both large and small, give several of them a very mixed appearance. Providence Cottages, for example, retains the slightly organic shape of a 15th century hall house with the addition of a squared brick-built 19th century extension, which is a striking contrast. Norman Shaw's extensions of Willesley House do not hide the large 18th century building at its core, or the 17th century outbuilding that forms part of the northern wing. Nos. 1-4 Quaker Lane, Old Wilsley and The Barracks are all structures that incorporate elements of different dates, giving them a rambling and disorganised appearance. The use of a continuous scheme of cladding across the frontage of many buildings goes some way towards disguising the process of the incremental change and alteration.

Boundaries



8.8 The well established tree lines and tall hedgerows that line the roads throughout the Conservation Area also provide boundaries to properties. It is unfortunate that many of these now conceal some of the finest buildings in the Conservation Area, particularly Old Wilsley, which is located in the centre of the Conservation Area. This Grade I listed building has a tall, red brick garden wall in front of it, supplemented by trees along the grass verge outside, which screens the majority of the building from the road.

Post and Rail Fencing

of the Conservation Area, although it appears to be a relatively modern insertion.

8.9 Traditional Wealden post and rail fencing has been used in the south west



Picket Fencing

8.10 Several properties unfortunately now have high, wooden-boarded fencing around all, or part, of the boundaries, including nos. 1 and 2 Oak Cottages, Upper Willesley House, the rears of Willesley House and Wilsley Garden

Cottage and The Barracks, as well as Pound House in the proposed northern extension of the Conservation Area. These have clearly been inserted to increase the privacy of the properties and their surrounding gardens, as well as reducing noise and dust impacts from the busy road. In some locations, however, their overall effect is too dominant and they have had an adverse effect on the character of the Conservation Area.



Wooden-boarded Fencing

8.11 Picket fencing, typical of this part of Kent, has been used to define the boundaries of gardens around some of the smaller cottage properties, including Mockbeggar House, no. 1 Wilsley Green, Middle House and Mercers Cottage, as well as Island Cottages in the south of the Conservation Area. It has also been used for the gardens of properties at Swifts View, which adjoin the Conservation Area, and the modern property at Lavender Cottage just to the north of Willesley House. The picket fences provide a level of transparency to these boundaries, which contributes positively to the appearance of the Conservation Area by uniting the greenery of the cottage gardens with the open spaces of the Conservation Area. Unfortunately, some of these picket fences are not painted and are not well maintained.

8.12 The front gardens of Oak Cottages and Willesley House (viewed from Wilsley Gardens) are defined by low brick walls, which are in keeping with the character of the buildings and also provide a more inclusive barrier to views of the buildings than the high fences and hedgerows.

8.13 Within Wilsley Pound, in the proposed northern extension to the Conservation Area, the boundaries include a mixture of close-clipped and less managed hedgerows along the A229 Maidstone road, while the gardens of the row of houses at Pound Cottages are divided from each other by managed hedges with little formal division from the road. The later 19th century buildings of Camden Cottages have black-painted iron railings.

Public Realm

8.14 The majority of footpaths throughout the Conservation Area are exclusively surfaced with tarmacadam, with low concrete kerb stones. Some areas, including the western end of Quaker Lane and the north western side of the A229 between Guernsey Cottage and The Barracks, do not have any pavement.

8.15 Street lighting is supplied by tall, unpainted lighting columns with angled heads and no shades. They are fairly utilitarian and have a minor adverse impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.16 The overhead wires and telegraph poles within the Conservation Area are not overly conspicuous, partly as a result of the low density of housing and the presence of the many tall trees, which help to disguise them.



8.17 The traffic islands in the hamlet centre include two areas that are well maintained, with cut grass, and two that are covered by tarmacadam, with concrete kerb stones, which are unattractive and make a poor contribution to this focal point in the Conservation Area. Moreover, the traffic bollards in this area are poorly maintained and have a 'grubby' appearance, further reducing the location's appeal.

Traffic Islands

8.18 Overall, however, the complicated junction arrangement and extent of road does dominate the Wilsley Green part of the Conservation Area. Similarly, the large roundabout at the Pound dominates the environment. There is perhaps, though, less opportunity to improve this.

8.19 The open space at Swifts View, which includes a small area of hard-surfaced car parking, has a wide area of grass facing Waterloo Road, with some notable old trees and a modern bus shelter.

Chapter 9: Conservation Area Boundary Review

9.1 As part of this Appraisal, the boundaries of the Conservation Area have been critically reviewed. It was concluded that, for the most part, the current boundary still adequately reflects the area of special architectural and historic interest.

9.2 Three changes are proposed to the boundary, to the south and to the north of the Conservation Area: to the south, to include the cottages on Quaker Lane; and along Waterloo Road to include the former Windmill Inn and the row of late 19th century cottages; and to the north to include the historic focus of Wilsley Pound, the listed buildings of Pound House, Weaver's Cottage and Greythorne and The Oast House, Crane Mill Cottages along the A229 and Camden Villa and Camden Cottages along the A262.

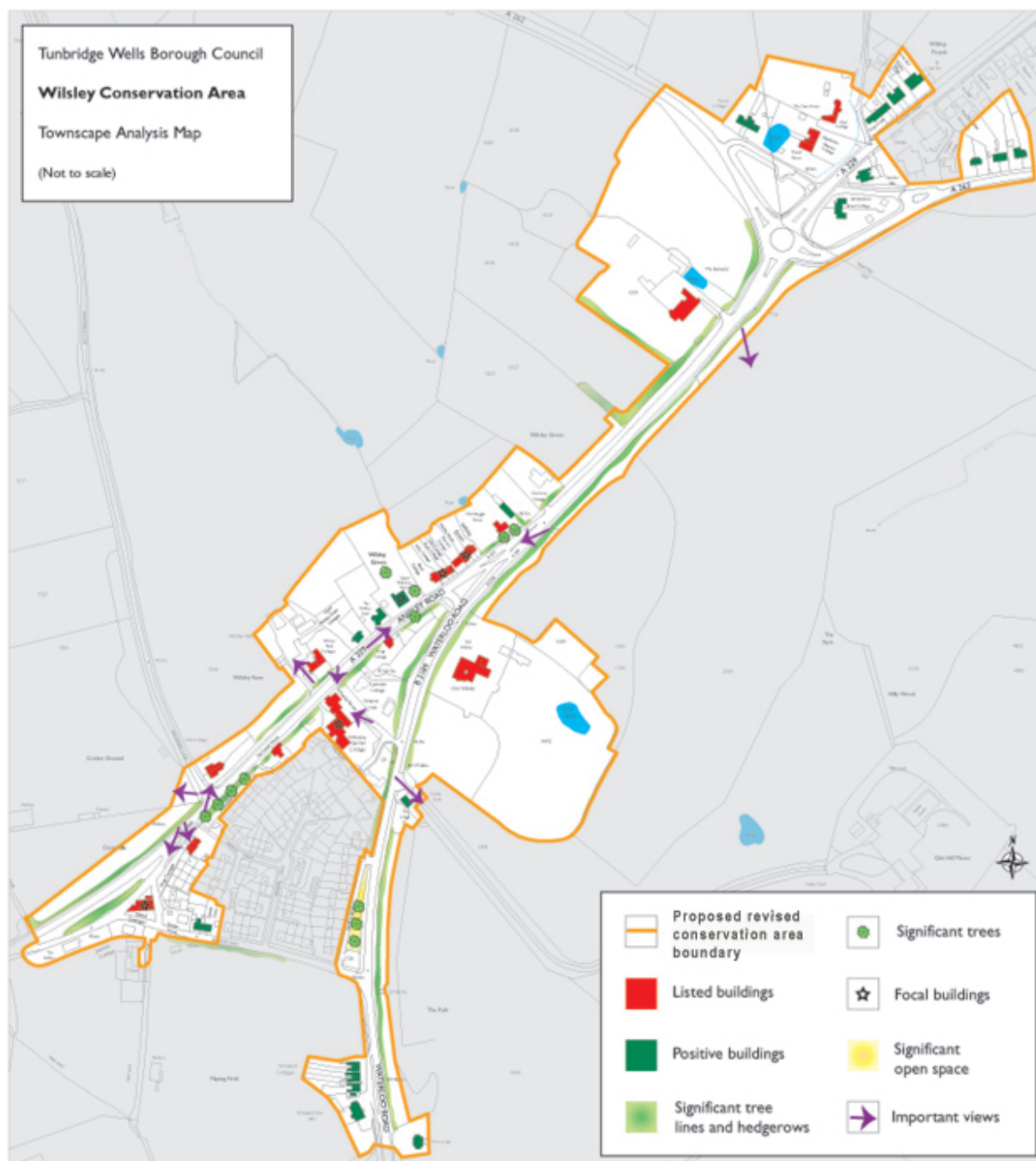


Figure 3 Adopted Conservation Area Boundary (see Appendix 1 for previous boundary)

Chapter 10: Issues

10.1 A number of detractors and opportunities have been identified in the Appraisal. None is trivial, but the following represent the more significant threats to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area, which should inform future consideration:

- **Traffic:** Traffic passing through the hamlet has a variety of direct and indirect impacts on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The flow of traffic through the settlement makes it difficult and dangerous to cross the road, particularly as the traffic is only limited to 60 miles per hour. The traffic also generates impacts from noise, the visual intrusion of vehicles travelling through the Conservation Area, vibration and dust. Indirectly, the traffic is a contributory factor to the erection of unsympathetic fences along the roadside frontages
- **Unsympathetic boundaries:** Modern wooden fences, erected along the roadside, have a negative impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area as a visual intrusion to the spaces and through screening parts of the historic buildings. Elsewhere, some traditional boundaries, including picket fencing, require maintenance and are currently in a poor condition, which has a negative impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area
- **Excessive screening of buildings:** Some of the oldest and most historically significant buildings in the Conservation Area are hidden from public view as a result of a lack of maintenance of hedgerows and trees, but also through the intentional planting of these and building of high boundary walls and fences in order to increase the privacy of these properties. Unfortunately, this has resulted in these buildings being significantly screened from the remainder of the Conservation Area and its character has been correspondingly compromised
- **Modern Development:** Areas of post-war and recent development lie within the Conservation Area and adjoin it to the south west. Use of unsympathetic forms, materials and detailing has impinged on the settings of several listed buildings and has a visually intrusive impact on them, particularly Willesley House. As a result, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area have been adversely affected
- **Conspicuous satellite dishes:** Satellite dishes have been erected on roadside elevations of a small number of listed buildings in the Conservation Area. The poor location of these is visually intrusive both to the buildings and the Conservation Area and has an adverse impact on its character and appearance
- **Street lighting:** The street lighting consists of unpainted steel lighting columns with low pressure sodium lamps. The unpainted steel lighting columns throughout the Conservation Area are utilitarian, out of scale and unsympathetic to the character of the historic buildings. The colour of the lighting detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area
- **Overhead wires:** Some areas of the Conservation Area, particularly the central area of Wilsley Green, are adversely affected by the presence of telegraph poles and associated wirescape, which are visually intrusive and detract from the appearance of the historic buildings and the wider Conservation Area.
- **Traffic islands:** The traffic islands at the junction of Waterloo Road and Angley Road have a variety of surfaces. Grass-covered surfaces are sympathetic to the Conservation Area and nearby grass verges and gardens. The tarmac covered islands stand out as visually poor, as do the poorly maintained 'keep-left' bollards. As the centre of the settlement and the surviving portion of a green, the potential of this location to form a space that provides a focus and identity to the Conservation Area/settlement is not currently realised. There have been plans for many years to change the road layout to give traffic priority to the A229 road. The current arrangement of the traffic islands needs to be investigated, at the same time with a view to allowing a larger grassed area, with all islands covered in grass rather than tarmac
- **Replacement of windows:** Traditionally, the windows of buildings in the Conservation Area have been small-paned, iron casement, wooden framed casements, or a small number of sash windows in the larger properties. Some of these have been replaced, or new windows inserted using uPVC units. These do not successfully reproduce the visual appearance of the original windows and

represent an erosion of the historic fabric of the Conservation Area, leading to a loss of some of its character and appearance

- **Wheelie bins:** As historic properties, many of the buildings in the Conservation Area do not have facilities for storing wheelie bins, which have an adverse visual impact on the Conservation Area through their unsympathetic design and general negative contribution to street clutter
- **Division of settlements:** Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound are related settlements and their historic buildings work together to create a combined character. The road improvement to the north of the Conservation Area included the construction of a large roundabout and busy road, which have created greater separation between the two areas. This has an adverse impact on the character of the settlement and the historic environment
- **Unlisted buildings considered to be of significant interest:** Two buildings (Upper Wilsley House and Wilsley Oast) are considered to be of significant historic and architectural interest. They are currently liable to largely uncontrolled alterations and potential loss of historic fabric, which would adversely affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as well as the buildings themselves
- **On-street parking:** There is currently some pressure from on-street parking along Angley Road. This has a visually intrusive impact on the surrounding historic buildings. There is also some pressure for the conversion of front gardens for parking bays, which detracts from the historic setting of the buildings, due to the removal of their front boundaries. The use of modern materials for hard landscaping is another issue that can have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- **Buildings in need of repair and maintenance:** A number of historic buildings are considered to be in a poor condition, requiring repair and maintenance. This is particularly evident in buildings on the south east side of Angley Road and the west side of the A229 to Maidstone

Chapter 11: Consultations

Introduction

11.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidance previously set out in [Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks](#) (PPS12) regarding preparation and consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents; also the recent National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, at para 155.

11.2 The most relevant Local Plan Policies are set out in this document at Chapter 2. The Supplementary Planning Document is intended to support these policies.

Consultation Process

11.3 A working group made up of officers from the Borough Council and representatives from the Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council and other key organisations was established originally in 2007, to discuss the principal issues facing the Conservation Area. A walkabout and workshop resulted in an informal initial draft Appraisal. This was then subject to scrutiny and input from key Council officers, and members of the Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee. As a result significant changes were made.

11.4 The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation received the report and approved the draft Appraisal on 18 April 2012 as the basis for public consultation.

11.5 The document was subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks between 30 April and 10 June 2012.

11.6 Documents available comprised: the draft Wilsley Green Conservation Area Appraisal SPD; Executive Summary; Statement of SPD Matters; Statement of Consultation; and map of the Conservation Area. These were available on the Borough Council's website and at the Gateway, Royal Tunbridge Wells, the Weald Information Centre, Cranbrook and all libraries in the Borough.

11.7 Organisations and individuals were notified in accordance with the Councils adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2006. Copies of the draft Appraisal and associated documents were sent to key local organisations, including the three Regulation 17 bodies.

Response to Consultation

11.8 The responses to the consultation were reported to the Cabinet Advisory Board on 24 September 2012 and to Cabinet on 18 October 2012 (Item CAB 88/12), where it was adopted as Supplementary Planning Document, as part of the Local Plan.

11.9 The report details the responses received and outlines the proposed changes to the document, where appropriate. The report and minutes of the meeting are available on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

11.10 The Appraisal was ratified at Full Council on 12 December 2012 as Supplementary Planning Document.

Notices

11.11 A notice of public participation was placed in a local paper advertising the formal consultation period and where the documents were available.

11.12 On adoption, relevant notices were placed in the London Gazette on 22 November 2012 and a local newspaper, in accordance with S.70 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1: Previous Conservation Area Boundary

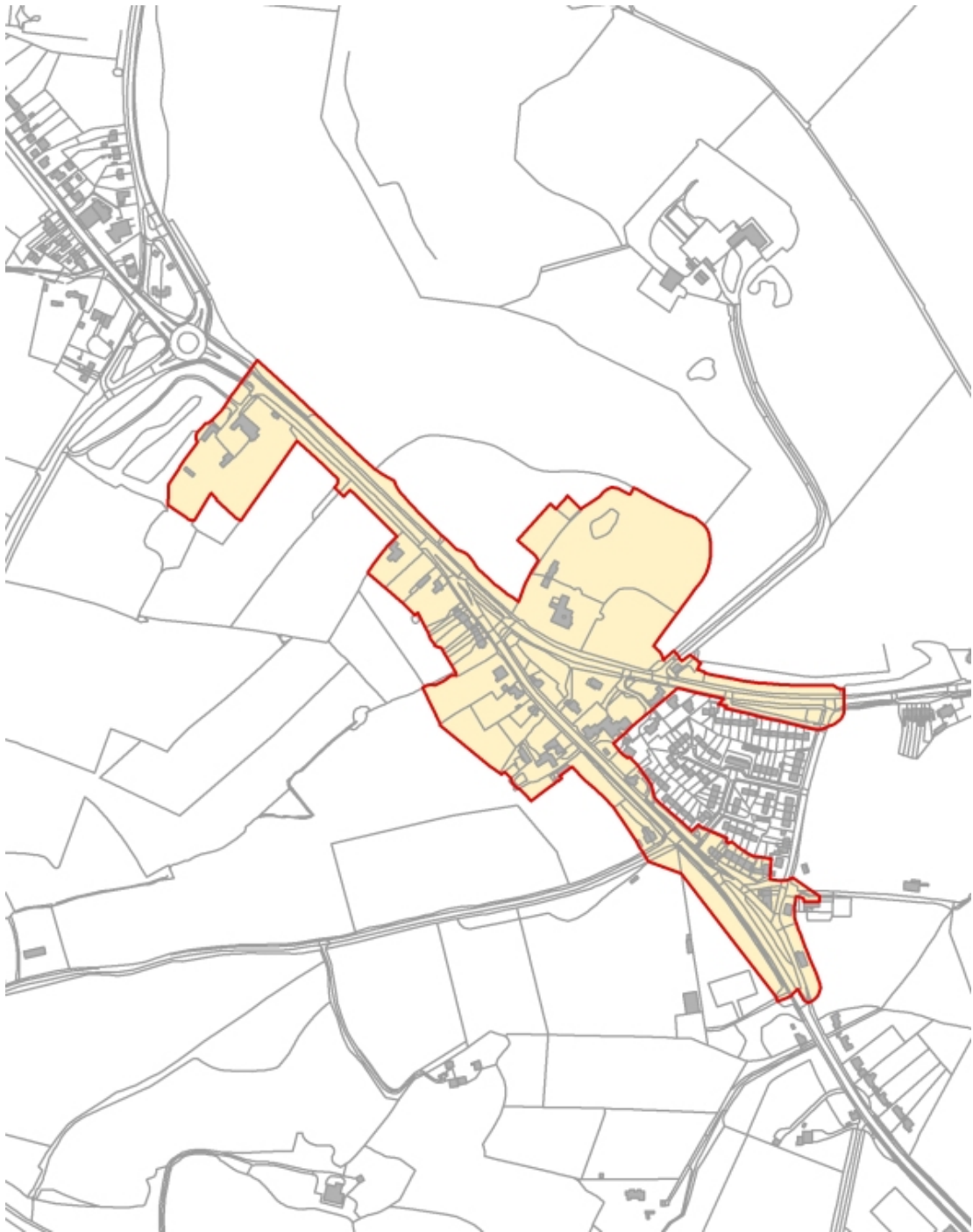


Figure 4 Previous Conservation Area Boundary

If you require this document in another format, please contact:

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