Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
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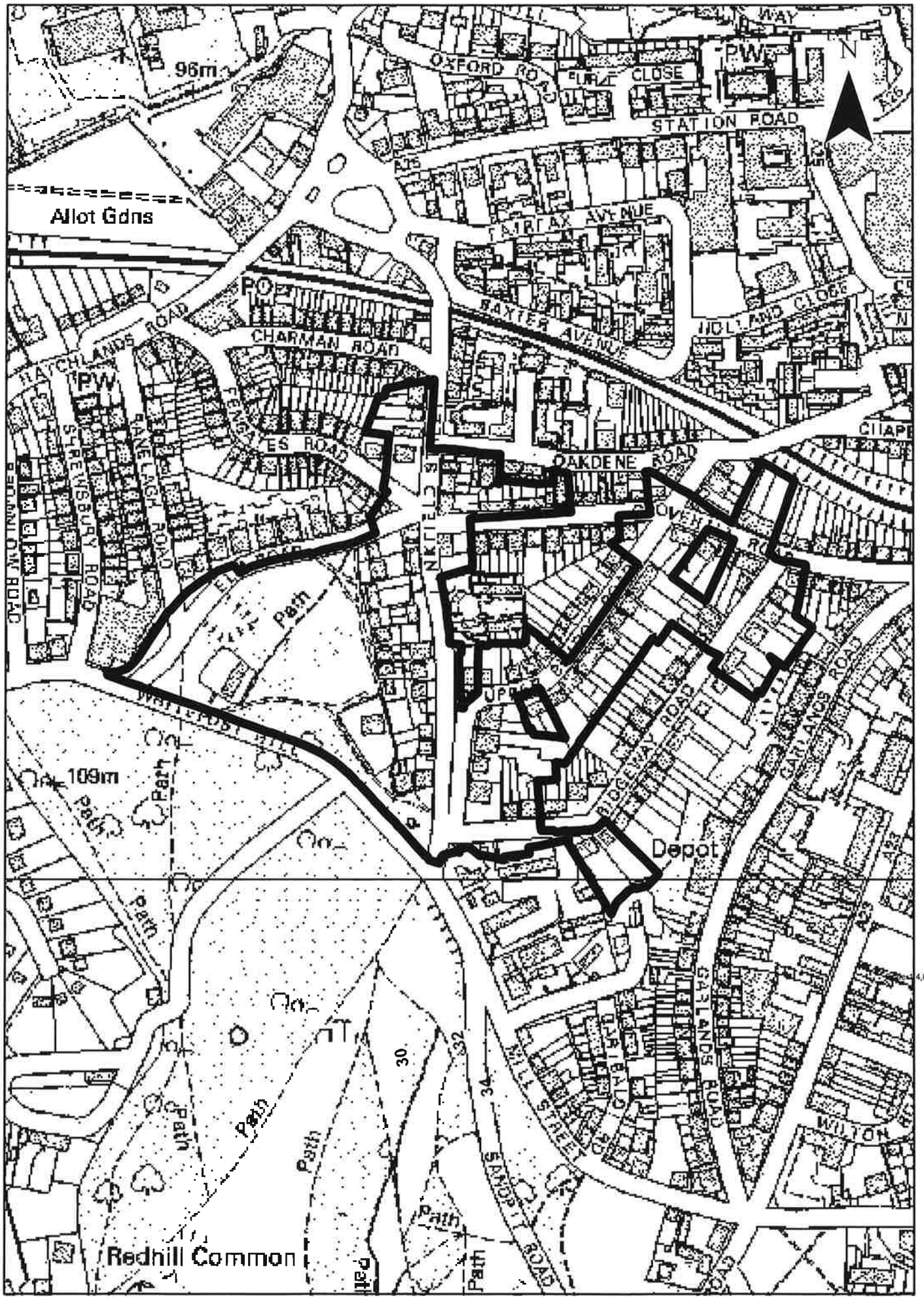
Linkfield Street Conservation Area Appraisal

Draft February 2015

Building and Development Services

Conservation Area - Linkfield Street, Redhill



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Linkfield St Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

February 2015

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Introduction

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas were first designated as a result of the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are defined in the legislation as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Section 69(1)(a)). The Borough contains some 21 Conservation Areas at present.

Designation gives the local planning authority greater control over extensions and demolition, the display of advertisements and works to trees. Special consideration has to be given to proposals for development or redevelopment within them, to ensure that the character or appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced. In most cases, however, conservation areas are living and working communities with both residential and commercial uses. The purpose of designation is not to stifle or prevent change and evolution, but to control it in such a way as to maintain and enhance character and local distinctiveness.

Purpose of Appraisal

Local authorities are advised by English Heritage to carry out appraisals that should identify the key features of the area and how they combine to give a place its particular character. By establishing what makes a place special and distinct, the local planning authority can more effectively ensure that change through development, or through other changes resulting from its own actions or those of other statutory authorities, do not undermine this character and can in fact enhance it.

As well as identifying the positive features of a place, an appraisal can also highlight areas where there is scope for improvement. This could be in terms of new development or redevelopment, or more small-scale improvements to, for example, the appearance of street furniture or signage. The results of appraisals can also be used to help prioritise available resources for environmental enhancement. This appraisal also sets out the Enhancement Scheme for the area, which makes reference to potential areas for enhancement, as well as providing guidance for use in the development control process.

The Planning (Listed Buildings And Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets in sections 71 a duty to formulate policies for preservation and enhancement. The Borough Local Plan Policy Pc 14 reinforces this objective. English Heritage guidance states that policies are needed that clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of an area it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and the means to achieve this. A clear assessment and definition of an area's special interest is needed.

The structure of this Conservation Area Appraisal is based on the English Heritage documents "Conservation Area Practice" and "Conservation Area Character Appraisals" and the RTPI's 'The Character of Conservation Areas' document. It follows the urban morphology approach of cascade from large to small elements.

Main Character and Basic structure
Topography and Geology

Main Character & Basic structure

Linkfield Street is located between Reigate and Redhill in the Holmesdale valley to the south of the North Downs and the M25. The special interest of a conservation area is derived from the interrelationship between the particular townscape and landscape features and it is this character, which the local planning authority will seek to preserve or enhance through statutory and discretionary controls. The special interest of the Linkfield Street conservation area is derived from its historic core, fronting common land, complemented by the later Victorian development and there is a need to ensure the cohesiveness of the buildings is not eroded by insensitive development.

The village remained as it had for centuries until the 1860's and 1870's when there was a flurry of building as Redhill expanded as a railway town.

Topography

Linkfield Street is situated on a ridge about 110 metres above sea level,, in the Holmesdale Valley.

Geology

The geology is greensand , a mix of Sandgate and Folkestone beds.

The bulk of the Conservation Area is on the Lower Greensand Sandgate Sand ridge.

Contours
The southern part is the summit of Whitepost Hill which falls steeply away to the north

Land Use & Activity

The majority of the Conservation Area is residential. There is also a public house, a shop and offices.

2) History and evolution

The first mention of Linkfield is in 1180. It's name is indicative of the presence of common fields, meaning a field divided by lynchets. Linkfield was a sub manor and tithing of Reigate. Linkfield Street itself is first mentioned in 1602. The tannery in Linkfield Street, was run by Thomas Blatt, a quaker in late 17th century, who lived at Fengates opposite. Consideration was given to establishing a meeting house in Linkfield Street but this was eventually established in Reigate. The oldest surviving building in the street is the White Lion, built around 1600. The Street was on the main north south route from London to the coast until the turnpike bypassed it in 1816. The area around Linkfield Street was also know as Redhill from an early period.

In 1854 Ebenezer Hooper bought the tannery. After ten years it was bought by Samuel Barrow, the business being transferred it to G A Bacon Ltd in the early twentieth century. It closed in 1961 and was demolished in 1970, except for the barn on the north side of Oakdene Road.

Ebenezer's son, Thomas Rowland Hooper (1845 -1938) by the 1870s was an architect. A number of buildings in the area bear his initials. His son, Vincent Hooper (1879 -1935) was also an architect.

Hooper's description of the area is a good summary of the historic village ;

What was Linkfield Street like in 1854? It was a hamlet, the largest group of houses in the parish except the town of Reigate. Opposite our house was the Fengates Estate with its residence, then old, still standing, and close by its little farmyard with cottage, barn and sheds. The cottage was occupied by the bailiff, Mr Edward Vigar. His good wife managed the dairy, which supplied milk to the district. They were faithful, worthy folk, who looked after their employer's interests.

South of the tanyard was an old wooden cottage and above it the village shop kept by Mr Gillham, a newcomer; above that was The White Lion, whose landlord, Stephen Brown, did carting and also kept a little latticed butcher's shop, where a small supply of meat was for sale on Fridays and Saturdays. Adjoining the inn yard were three cottages. Opposite the inn at the corner of Elms Road was a quaint pair of cottages built on a high bank. They were approached by rustic steps and outside was a draw well. Beneath the cottages was a curious tenement level with the road below. Its internal arrangement seemed to be dark and cavernous, and rather aroused our boyish curiosity, but the old dame who lived there did not encourage archaeological researches.

At the south of these, on the ascent of Redhill, the common began and facing it was the large cottage with steps, still standing, then some smaller dwellings. In the rear were others facing the common, west. The first off Elms Road, Rose Cottage occupied by Mr Moffat who was the architect for the new Earlswood Asylum for idiots; the second house was occupied by Mr Shelley, a surveyor with antiquarian interests. Above these were several ancient cottages, one, then adapted for an inn called The Rising Sun, kept by Mr Legg. Higher up and on the common a larger residence (now part of Whitepost House) was occupied by Mr Comber, builder and undertaker. This was the post office and sometimes in the darkness of a winter's evening I have gone fearfully to post my father's letters, stumbling over the mounds and holes on the common and glad when I had groped my way home again. Most of these cottages were occupied by natives, whose families had for generations lived in the district.

KEY DATES

1602 first mention of Linkfield St

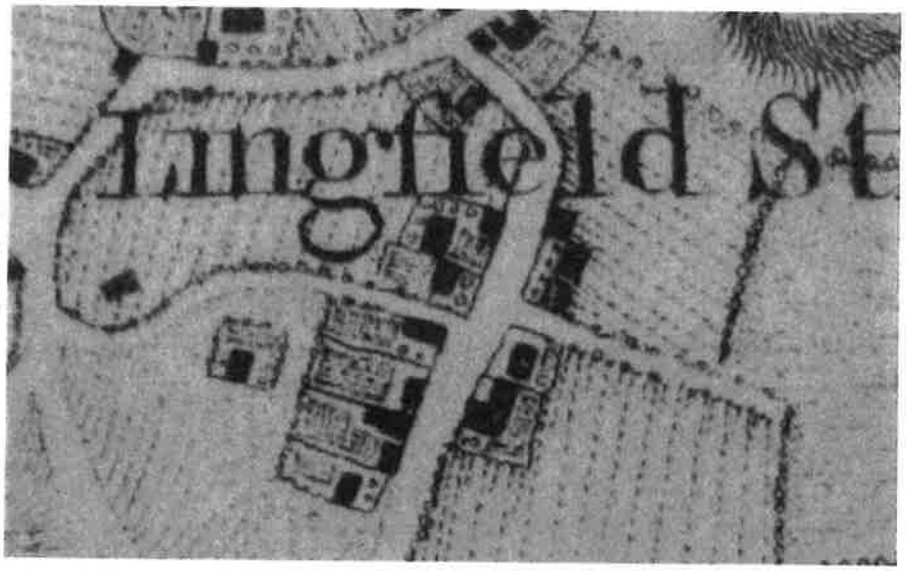
1816 turnpike bypasses Linkfield Street

1859 land to east sold for development

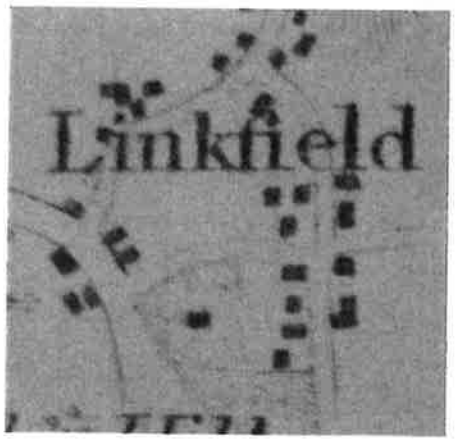
Linkfield Street in 1884 (SHC)

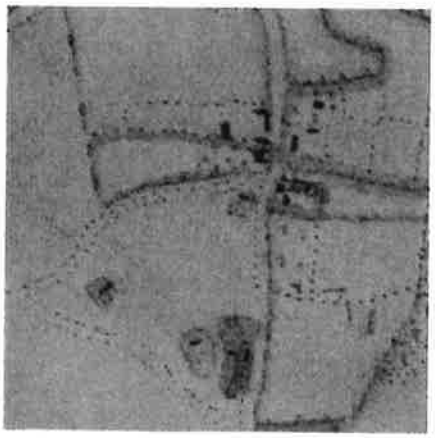
Linkfield St History in Maps

Senex 1729



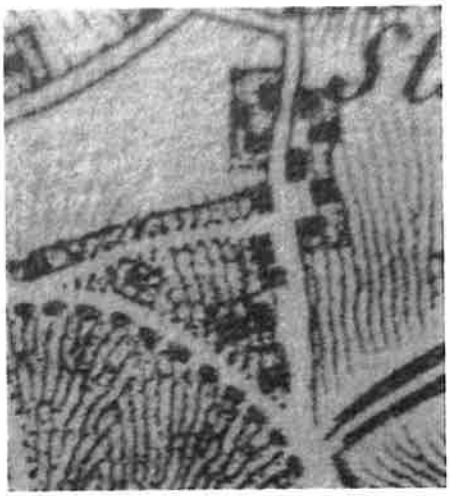
Rocque 1768





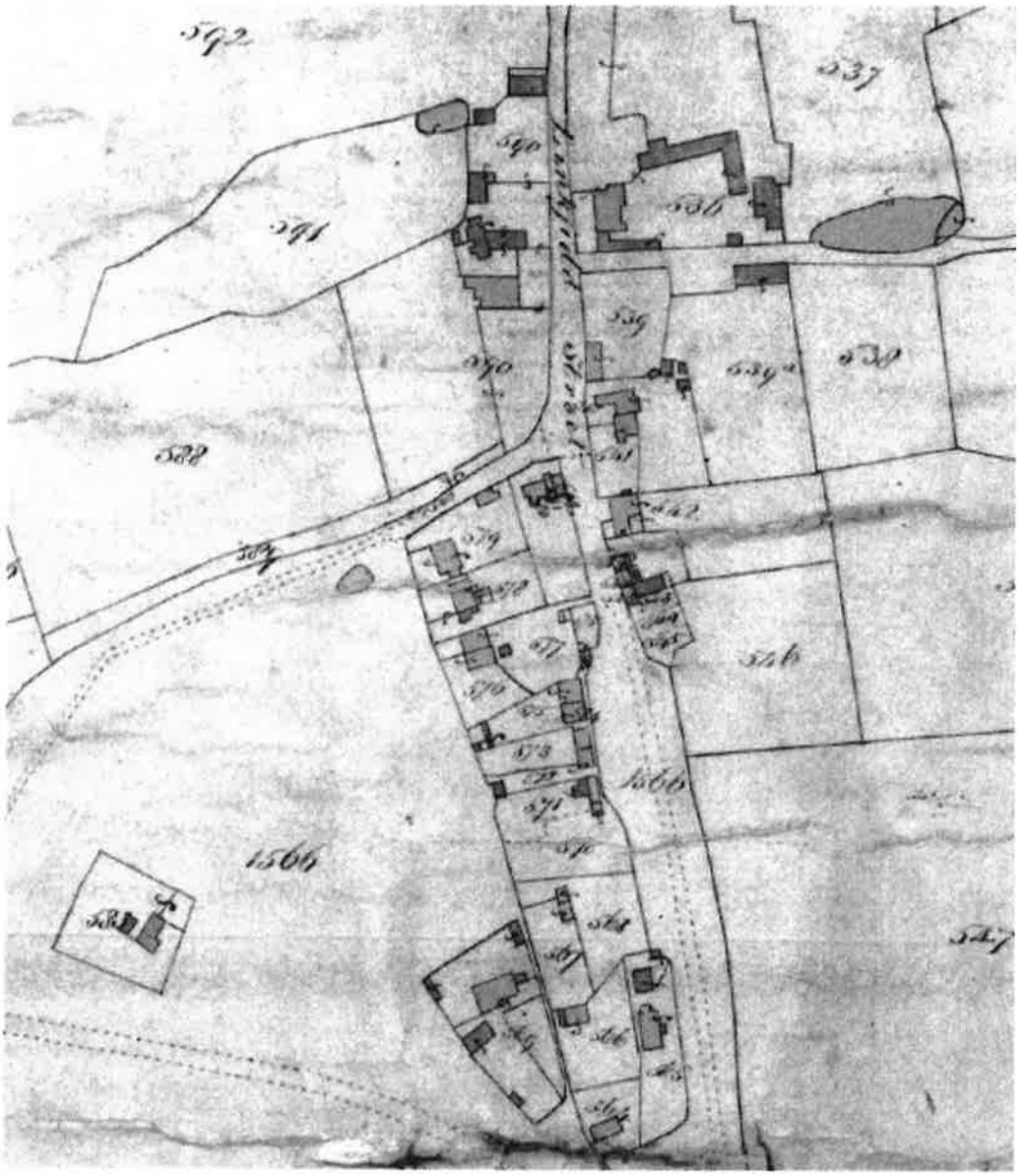
Lindley & Crosley 1793

1773 map (incomplete)

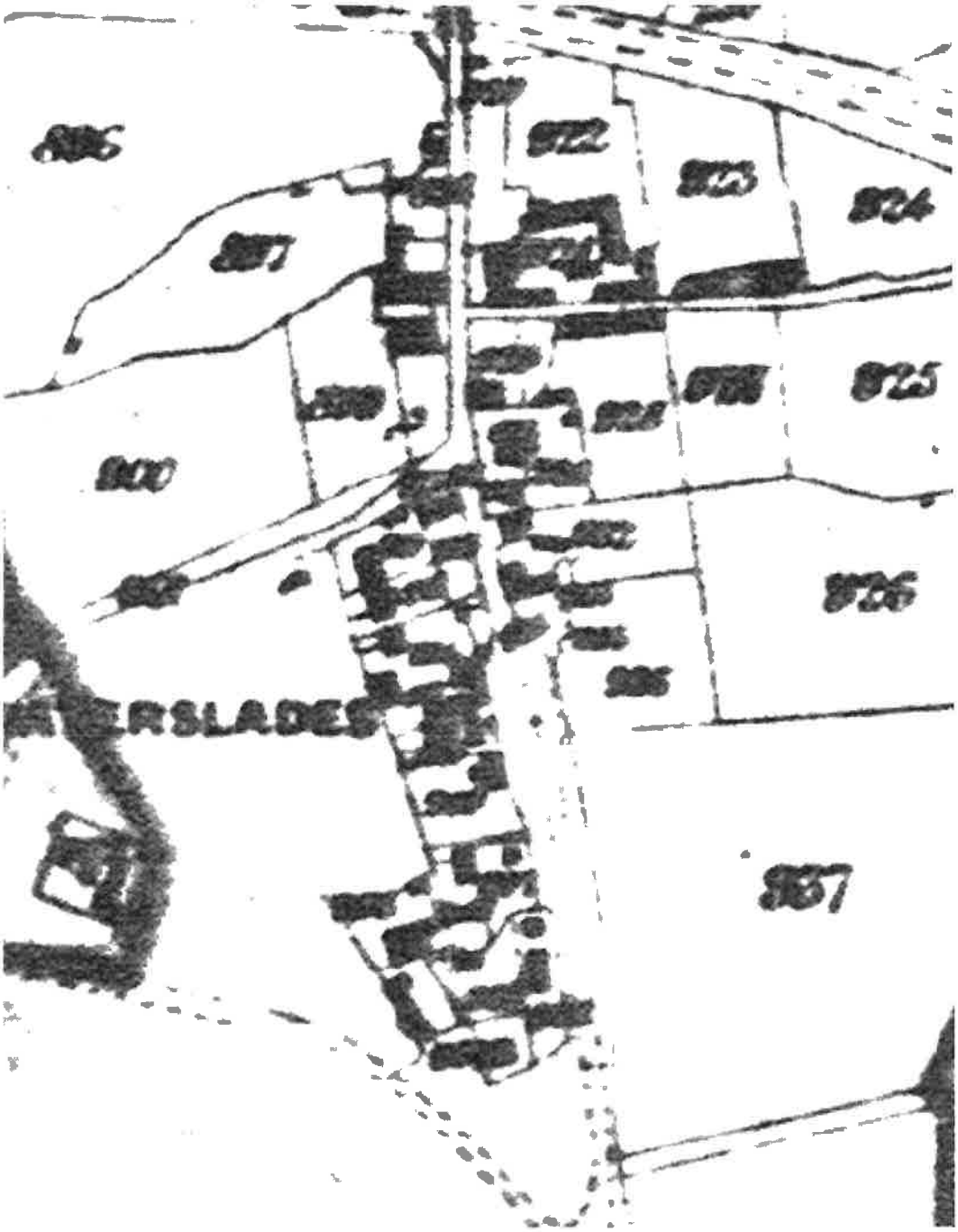


Ordnance Survey Manuscript 1808- 1810 and First edition 1816 prepared from this survey

Greenwood 1823

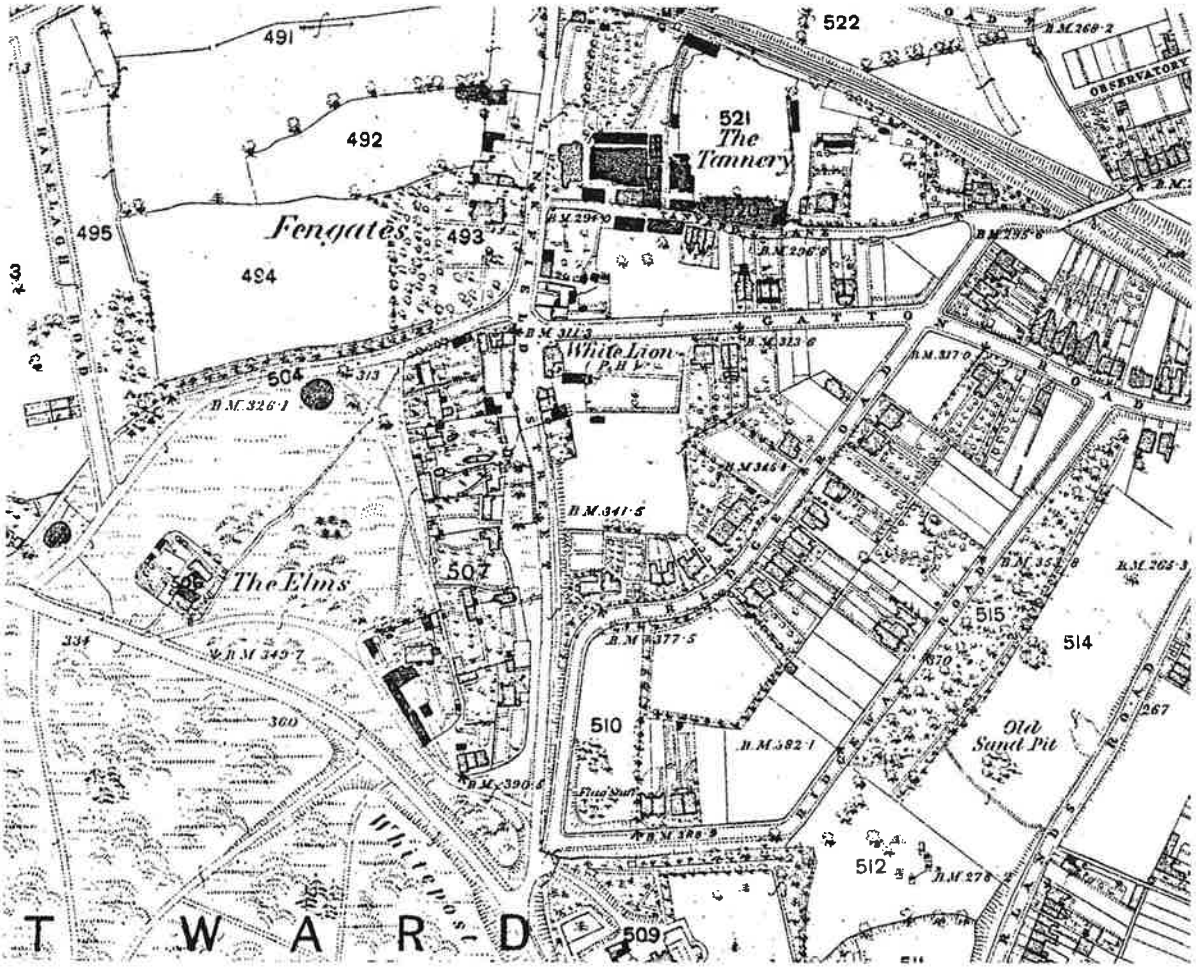


Reigate Tithe 1845

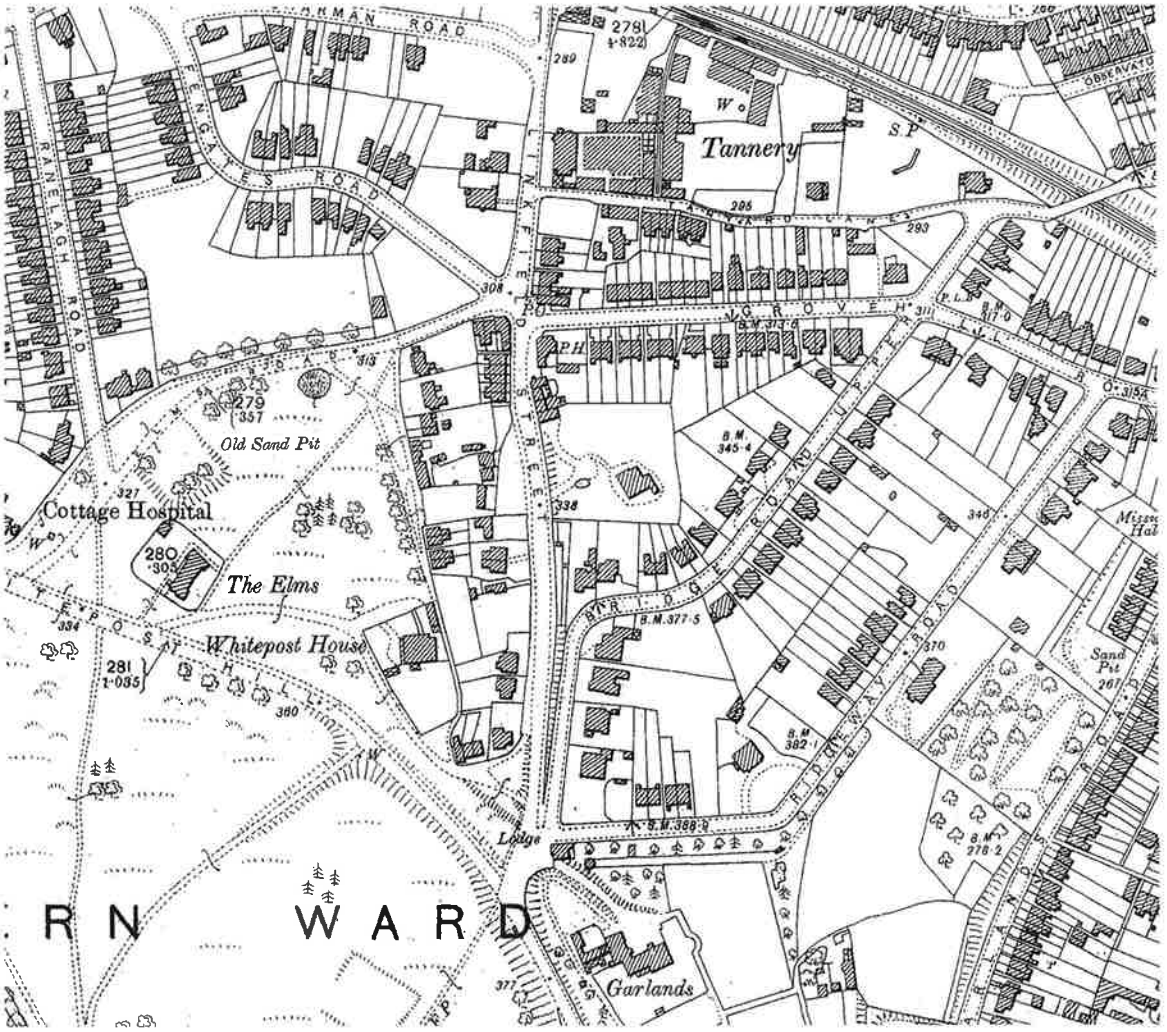


1860 Tithe Map

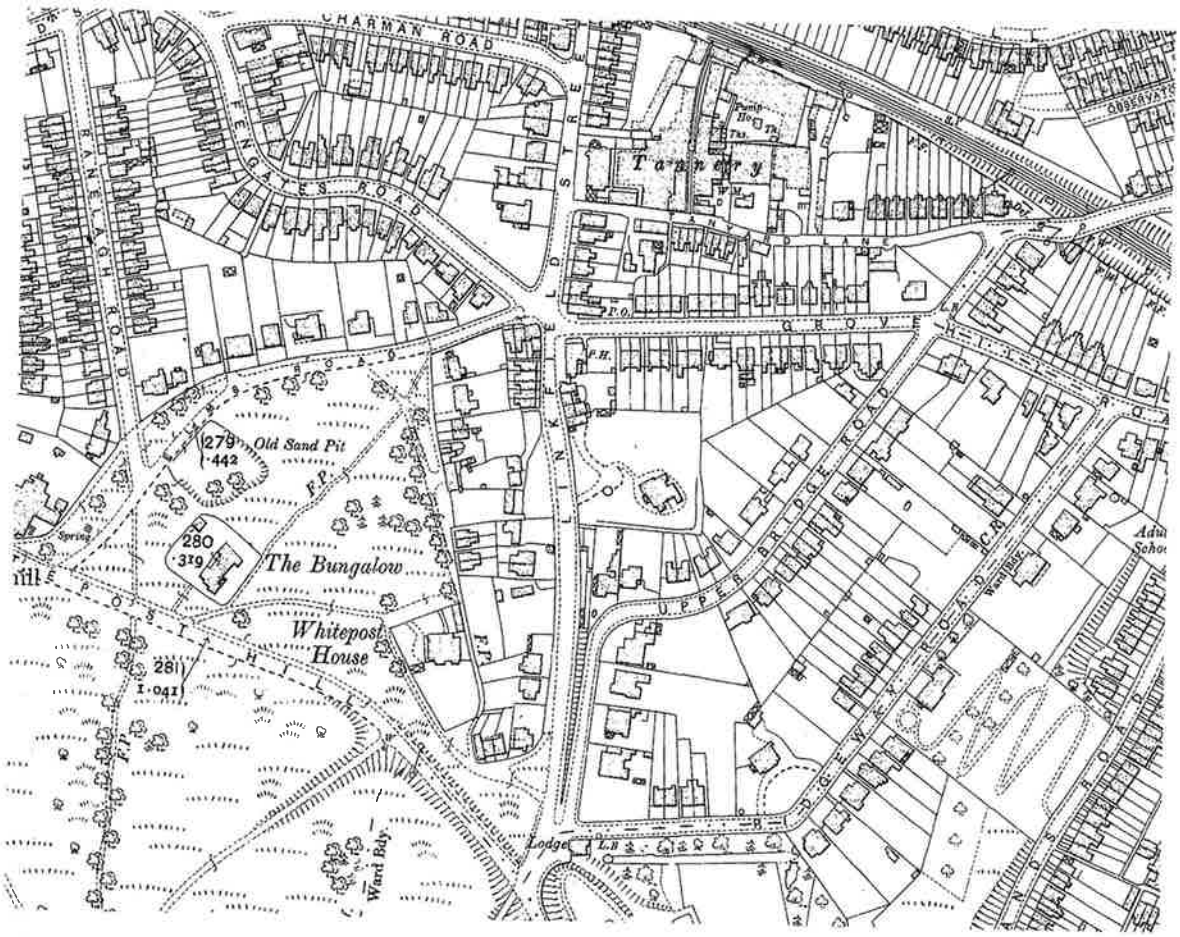
LINKFIELD ST



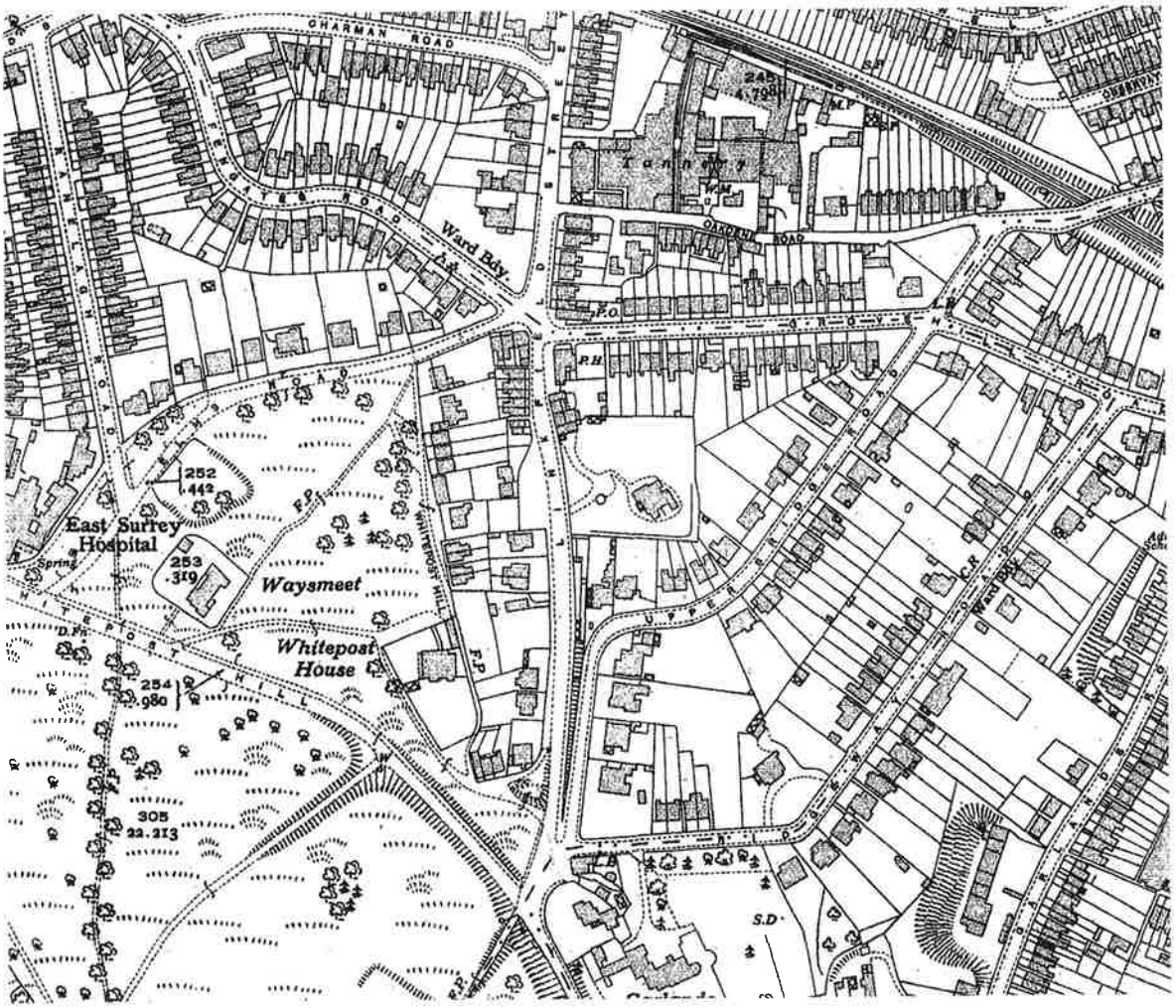
Surveyed in 1870



Revised in 1895



Revised in 1911



Revised in 1933

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

Starting at the north end of Linkfield Street, arts and crafts houses are in evidence.

Fengates House, an early Georgian house of unusually three storeys is a local landmark.

Opposite in Oakdene Road is a tannery barn.

Further up Linkfield Street are some Reigate Stone and Tile Hung Victorian villas

The White Lion of circa 1600 is another local landmark.

To the north of this is Grovehill Road, with greensand stone and tile hung villas but which have suffered from the conversion of front gardens to car parking.

Returning to the common 73 Linkfield Street is a picturesque landmark.

The leafy character and green verge has much character

At the top of the hill stands the former Lodge to Garlands of 1871 and probably by George Devey.

Upper Bridge Road starts with some houses by T.R.Hooper

Most of Upper Bridge Road are stucco Victorian villas.

Loss of landscaping and inappropriate \alteration can be an issue.

Hedges are prominent at the junction with Grovehill Road

These stucco houses form an impressive group

Ridgeway Road is characterised by Victorian gothic brick houses.

At the top of the road is another Hooper house

The road ends with some more Victorian villas.

25 & 26 Whitepost Hill are early 19th century tile hung cottages

Waysmeet is an early 18th century cottage with Victorian additions

The spring in Elm Road has an 18th brick spring head.

Return to Whitepost Hill the slope is impressive.

No 10 is early 19th century grade II listed building

At No 15 is the former public house, the Old Rising Sun

3) Spatial Structure & Pattern: Identity Areas, Rhythm: plot size, unit size

An identity area is an area which has an identifiable character. Conservation Areas can have composite characters as well as cohesive character. In both cases it is usually possible split such areas in to smaller identity or character areas. The two principal identity areas in Linkfield Street are the historic core, which forms the dominant character of the area and the Victorian development to the east.

Prominent buildings

A number of key focal points and landmarks can be identified. The principal landmarks are :

White Lion Public House (1600)

Fengates House (early 18th century)

73 Linkfield Street (early 18th century)

9-13 Ridgeway Road (19th century)

Lodge to Garlands (1871)

Views in & Out

A number of views can be identified which are memorable and help define the character of the area. The key views are the views of the cottages on the green and views across the common and down the hill.

Rhythm: plot size, unit size

The area has a rural village character in Linkfield Street and more Victorian character to the east. Plot sizes are relatively consistent through the area with the exception of some large houses and some areas of smaller terraced housing. Most properties have front gardens. Building lines are evident for some parts of the area.

Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail

Architectural Conventions

The area is typified by three types of building;

1)..The Vernacular. The historic buildings in the area dating from before the Georgian period. These are typified by peg tile roofs, 50 degree roof pitches, short roof spans, brick and tile hanging. The fenestration is characterised by mostly casement windows and some sash. Gabled roofs are most characteristic of most of these properties.

2) Late Georgian and Mid Victorian. These are mostly slate roofed painted stucco houses with low pitch hipped roofs and sash windows. Windows have a vertical emphasis, in their division. High floor ceiling heights are a characteristic.

3) Late Victorian
These are properties in the prevailing gothic style of time. These are mostly slate roofed brick houses with gabled roofs and roofs and sash windows. Windows have a vertical emphasis, in their division. High floor ceiling heights are a characteristic.

4) Arts & Crafts Influence

Some later buildings show the influence of the arts and crafts movement. These buildings utilise brick and clay tiles. The fenestration is characterised by mostly casement windows.

Fenestration

Fenestration is determined by age. The predominant character of the area is sash windows, with earlier cottages and later arts and crafts influenced buildings using casements.

Materials & Detail

The historic properties in the area are typified by the use of tile hanging and some brick. The late Georgian and mid Victorian properties use painted stucco and slate roofs. The late Victorian show a return to brick and the arts and crafts properties use brick with tile for the roof.

Illustrations of Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail by period

Vernacular: Historic farmhouses and cottages in the area from the pre Victorian period, are typified by short span 50 degree pitched roofs and the use of local materials such as peg tiles, flint and roughcast, with flint boundary walls.

Late Georgian and Mid Victorian : This is typified by the use of slate roofs and sash windows set back behind the reveal.

Late Victorian Gothic : Red brick houses with slate roofs and sash windows

Arts & Crafts : These are generally of brick and tile.

Typical Materials

Reigate Stone & Tile Hanging

Stucco & Slate

Brick & Clay Plain Tiles

5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape

The area has issues with high levels of parking and difficulties with unsuitable through traffic. There seem to be few issues with street furniture. There is little traditional street furniture and footscape. The railings and post at the top of Upper Bridge road of some local interest. The gulley with granite setts was retained outside the White Lion in recent road works. Kerbless edges are characterful feature of roads adjacent to the common.

The Borough Council will seek to influence the design of schemes affecting the conservation area. It will also seek to encourage the implementation of other improvements identified in this appraisal.

6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs

The area is characterised by a variety of native tree species including lime. Privet hedges are a common feature.

7) Development Management & Statutory designations: Listed Buildings & Article 4 Directions

Controls operating in the Conservation Area

Designation of the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area was designated in July 2010.

What is the Effect of Designation?

The principal differences from the normal form of planning control include:

a) Control over demolition. Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition

b) Greater control over works which would require planning permission. As many properties in the Area are not dwellinghouses and therefore do not have permitted development rights, external alterations such as changing windows or roofing materials would be controlled. 'Permitted development' rights for dwellinghouses are also more controlled.

c) Wider protection of trees. Six weeks notification to the Council will be necessary before the intended lopping, uprooting or felling of trees. (Trees less than 7.5 centimetres in diameter, at a height of 1.5 metres above the ground are exempt). (Works to trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order will continue to need formal consent.)

When considering proposals requiring Planning Permission or Conservation Area Consent regard will be had to whether they 'preserve' or 'enhance' the special character of the area. It should be remembered, though, that designation is not intended to stop change but to better manage new development so that it does not harm the area and even brings improvements.

Article 4 (2) Directions

Article 4(2) Directions control the following changes to dwellinghouses in the Conservation Area (It would be intended to serve an article 4(2) Direction on the area). All alterations or extensions facing an open space or highway will require planning permission, unless they are like for like repairs. Changes requiring planning permission would include, for instance, changing from timber to uPVC or Aluminium windows/doors or changing the style or design of window/door, changing from natural slate or handmade tiles to machine made, concrete or synthetic slates or tiles, or the insertion of rooflights or solar panels.

All Commercial Buildings and Flats that are in Conservation Areas or Locally Listed, already require planning permission for these material changes, as they do not have permitted development rights.

Listing

There are a number of statutory and locally listed buildings in the area, which are set out in the appendices. Where planning permission is required for a locally listed building Policy Pc10 of the Local Plan and NPPF would be a material consideration. There are also some local listed historic garden designations.

Development Management & Principles of Control

The area is largely one where the individual buildings mostly contribute to the character of the area and are desirable to retain. The general presumption therefore is in favour of retention.

The overall objective in terms of elevational treatment will be the encouragement of the reinstatement of original materials and detailing This includes original window detail, plain clay tiles and well detailed boundary treatments and their replacement with inappropriate details such as aluminium and upvc windows of various forms, concrete tiles and alien boundary materials such as larchlap fencing.

Schedules and maps of the listed buildings, the Article 4 Direction and the local Historic Garden designations the control of permitted development will be set out in the appendices.

8) Enhancement & Improvements

No extra funding is proposed for the enhancement of the Conservation Area but a number of the objectives can be achieved in part by the Development Management process.

The potential for enhancement appears to consist of the following key elements;

1) Townscape elevational treatment

The need to encourage reinstatement of traditional detailing is important. The loss of traditional painted timber windows in some prominent locations is regrettable. There is no retrospective control so any improvements must be by persuasion or negotiation.

2) Loss of landscaping to frontages

A number of frontages have been converted to parking areas with little regard to the quality of materials or the value of providing some vegetation such as hedging and shrubbery. An improvement to the quality of the environment could be achieved without compromising the provision of car parking, particularly by the provision of hedging between boundary and the use of traditional paving materials.

Resource Implications

Enhancement of the Conservation Area can be achieved in part by the Development Management process and encouragement to have respect for traditional forms, materials and detailing.

Review of boundaries

The boundary of the area was subject of review at the time of recent designation and no revisions are proposed at this review.

Other Statutory Authorities
Statutory authorities are not generally subject to control by the local planning authority, although the provision and maintenance of their services can have an impact on the conservation area. A copy of this Appraisal will be forwarded to the relevant service providers to highlight the need for sensitive treatment within the conservation area.

Responsibilities of Owners and Occupiers
This Appraisal has identified the buildings, open spaces and individual features that define the character of the conservation area. The siting and design of new development should be such that the appearance and character of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced, and this Appraisal will be used to assess whether development proposals achieve this aim.

It is hoped that residents and other occupiers will, through this Appraisal, be made aware of the contribution that they can make to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. This can be achieved through the retention of features such as chimneys and chimney pots, boundary walls and traditional windows, the use of appropriate materials in new build and repairs, and the general maintenance of properties and land. Alien materials such as upvc windows and concrete tiles should not be used.

Statement of Consultation
The draft version of this Appraisal will be issued for public consultation. Letters will be sent to all residential and business premises in the conservation area. These will outline the purpose of conservation area designation and invite comments on the draft appraisal.

Copies of the Appraisal will be sent to English Heritage, Surrey County Council and Local Societies. Their comments are invited. A press release will be issued. A public meeting will be held to consider the study. The responses made to the draft Appraisal will be considered and reported to the Council's Planning Committee