

# **Netherne on the Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals**

Draft January 2014

Introduction:

What is a Conservation Area?

Purpose of Appraisal

- 1) Main Character & Basic structure, Topography, Geology
- 2) History and evolution
- 3) Spatial Structure & Pattern: Identity Areas, Views in & Out,  
Rhythm: plot size, unit size
- 4) Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail  
Boundary Treatment/ Enclosure: Walls & Hedges
- 5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape
- 6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs
- 7) Statutory designations: Listed Buildings & Article 4 Directions
- 8) Enhancement & Improvements
- 9) Activity and Land Use

## **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 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 2005 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 RTP1's 'The Character of Conservation Areas' document. It follows the urban morphology approach of cascade from large to small elements.

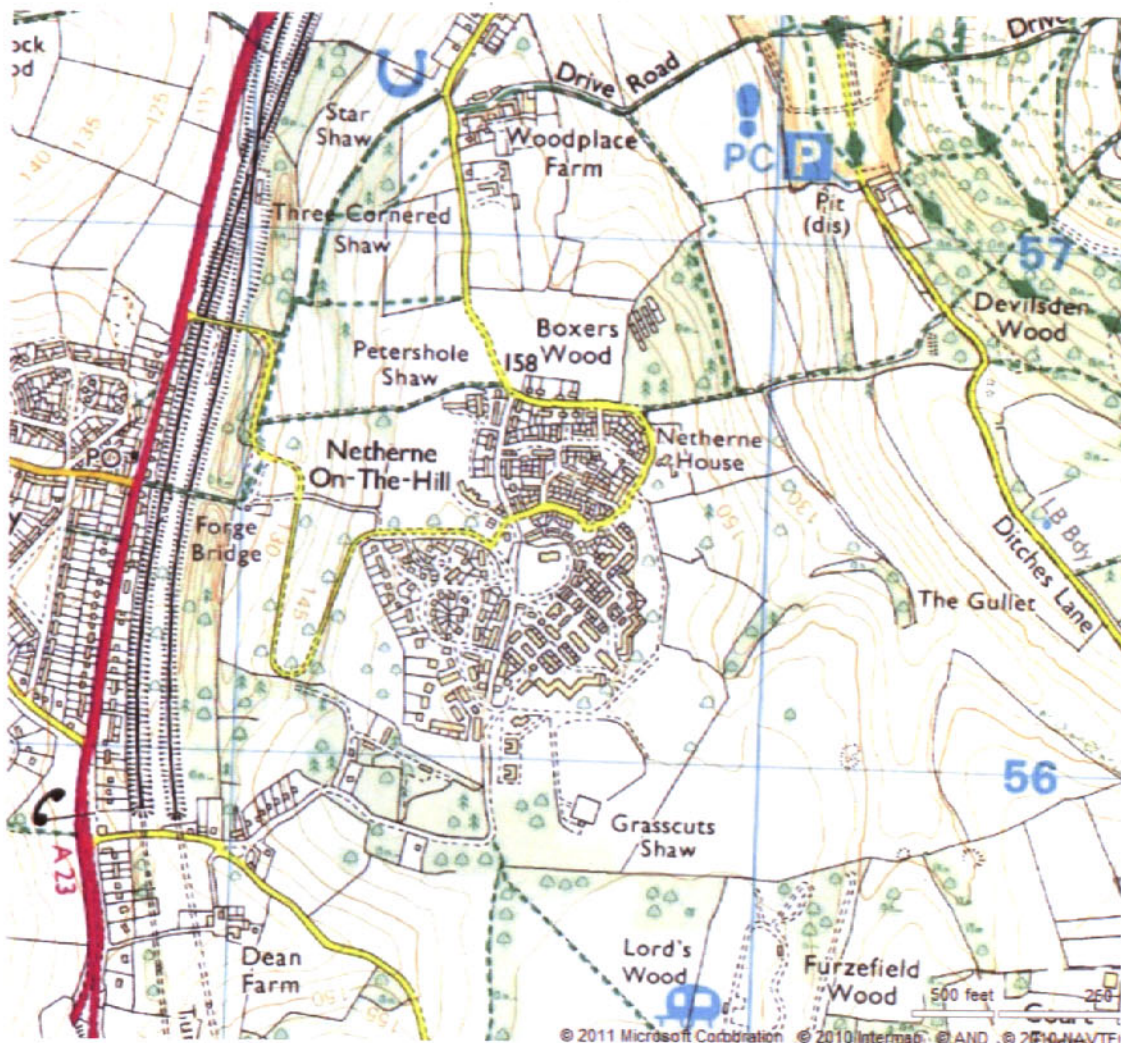
## Main Character and Basic structure Topography and Geology

### Main Character & Basic structure

Netherne is located on the North Downs chalk plain, to the north of the M25. The special interest of the Netherne conservation area is derived from its unity of character and the interrelationship of the buildings and the landscape. The predominant character of the buildings is Edwardian, following the character of earlier Victorian asylums but with arts and crafts elements. It is important to ensure the cohesiveness of the buildings is not eroded by insensitive development.

### Topography

Netherne is situated on the relatively flat summit of a hill or ridge about 170 metres above sea level, on the North Down plain, with considerable falls either side of the ridge to the east and west of dry valleys at 115 metres above sea level.



## Geology

Netherne is located on Pleistocene Glacial Clay with Flints hill laid over the Cretaceous Upper Chalk. The materials appear to have been imported in this case by rail, though take their reference from local red brick and clay tiles. Whilst flint appears at Netherne Farm there is no flint within the conservation Area itself.



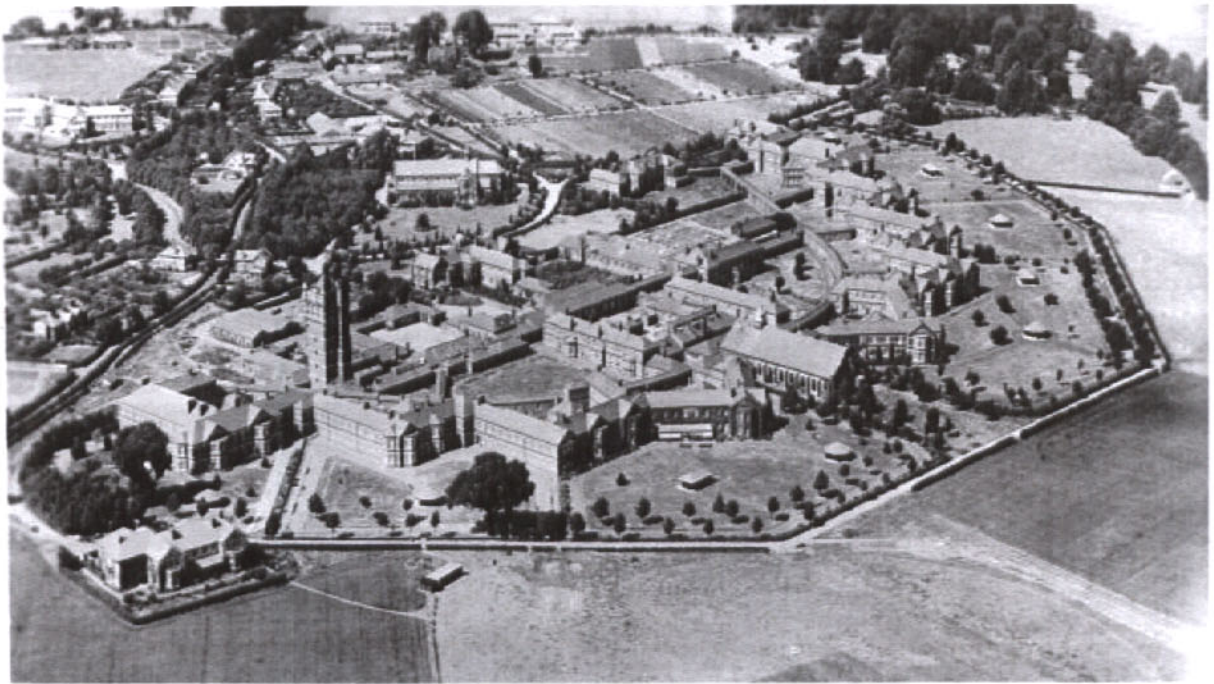
Geological Map of Netherne (brown is clay with flints, green is Upper Chalk) , (with 1895 OS for location)

## History of Netherne

Now known as Netherne-on-the-Hill is a village centred on the converted Netherne former asylum. Netherne Mental Hospital opened in 1909 and closed in 1994. The hospital was known to be progressive in both its treatment of, and rehabilitation from, mental illness throughout the period in which it operated. The former hospital estate was sold by the Secretary of State for Health to MJ Gleeson during 1995, with development of a new village commencing shortly afterwards. The Administration block, chapel, water tower, convalescent villas, echelon design ward blocks and staff cottages have been converted to residential use.

In 1898 the Surrey County Council purchased Netherne Farm as the site for a new Mental Hospital for the east part of the county to supplement the asylum at Brookwood in the west. The estate was purchased for £10,000 and a 960 patient hospital was to be built. In 1900 the prominent asylum architect G.T. Hine submitted plans for the new buildings. The Foundation stone for the Asylum was laid on the 18th of October 1905 and the hospital opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1909.

(source inc <http://www.thetimechamber.co.uk/Sites/Hospital/Netherne/Netherne.php> )



Surrey Flying Services in the 1920s (source <http://citynoise.org/article/4322> )

George Thomas Hine (1842 – 1916), the architect for Netherne,



George Thomas Hine (1842 – 1916) was a Nottingham architect who was the leading asylum architect in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was an expert in asylum design and planning, his principle contribution being the echelon design, a staggered design which was efficient in being orientated to the sun and its radial design minimising distances for services such as heating and hot food (as well as separating male and female patients into two halves). As well as the echelon plan form these township asylums also had standard features such as a recreation hall, administration block and chapel. His asylums were often of red brick with grey stonework. His later designs often features a polychrome white and red brick pattern.

In 1887 he won the competition for the new LCC asylum at Claybury and established a practise in London. In 1897 he became Consulting Architect to the Commissioners in Lunacy. His first asylum was Nottingham in 1875. From the 1880s he entered ten asylum competitions, winning five. He designed and saw completed four major LCC asylums (Claybury, Bexley, Horton and Long Grove), and his prolific output included new county asylums for Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Hampshire, Surrey, East Sussex and Worcestershire, as well as extensive additions to many others.

#### Principal Asylum Works

1875-80 Nottingham County

1887-93 Claybury LCC

1891-95 Sunderland County

1893 Isle Of Wight County

1897-02 Lincolnshire County Kesteven

1898 Bexley LCC

1900 Hertfordshire County Hill End

1900 Purdysburn Belfast.

1901 Somerset and Bath County Mendip

1901-02 Horton LCC

1901-03 East Sussex County Hellingly

1901-07 Worcestershire County Barnsley Hall

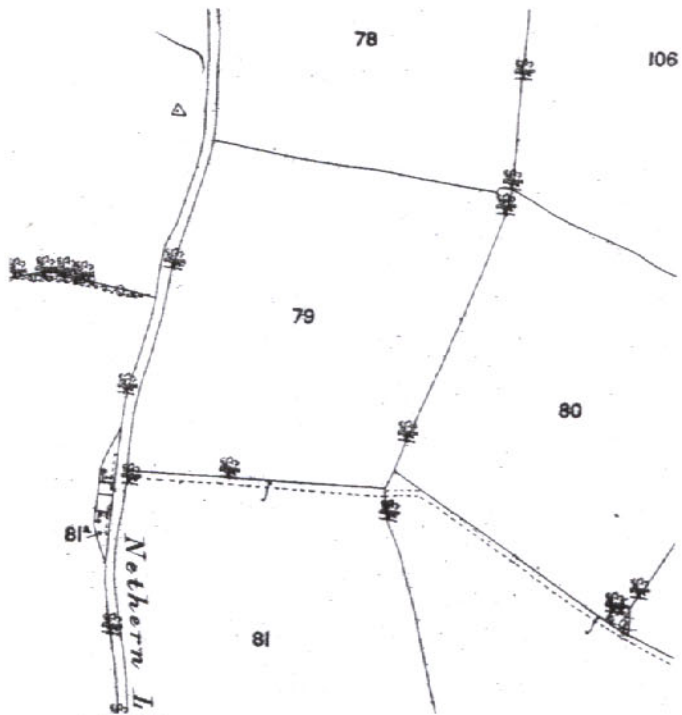
1901-09 Surrey County Netherne

1903-07 Long Grove LCC  
1912 Hampshire County Park Prewett  
1912 Gateshead

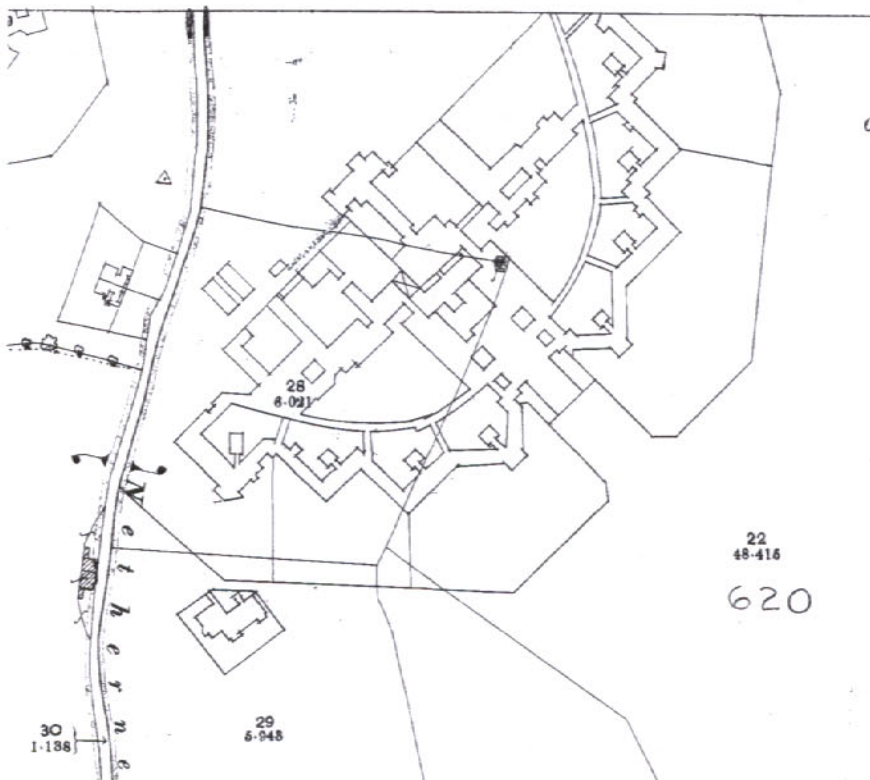
Sources: RIBA nomination papers, "Hospital and asylum architecture in England, 1840-1914: building for health care" by Jeremy Reginald Buckley Taylor

# NETHERNE Historic Maps

The Southern Part of the Site

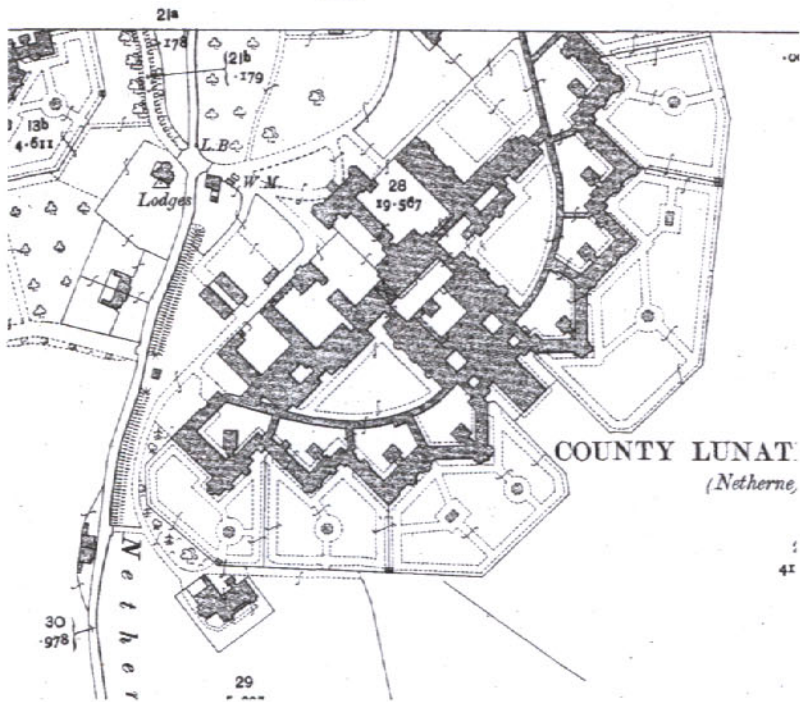


Surveyed 1867

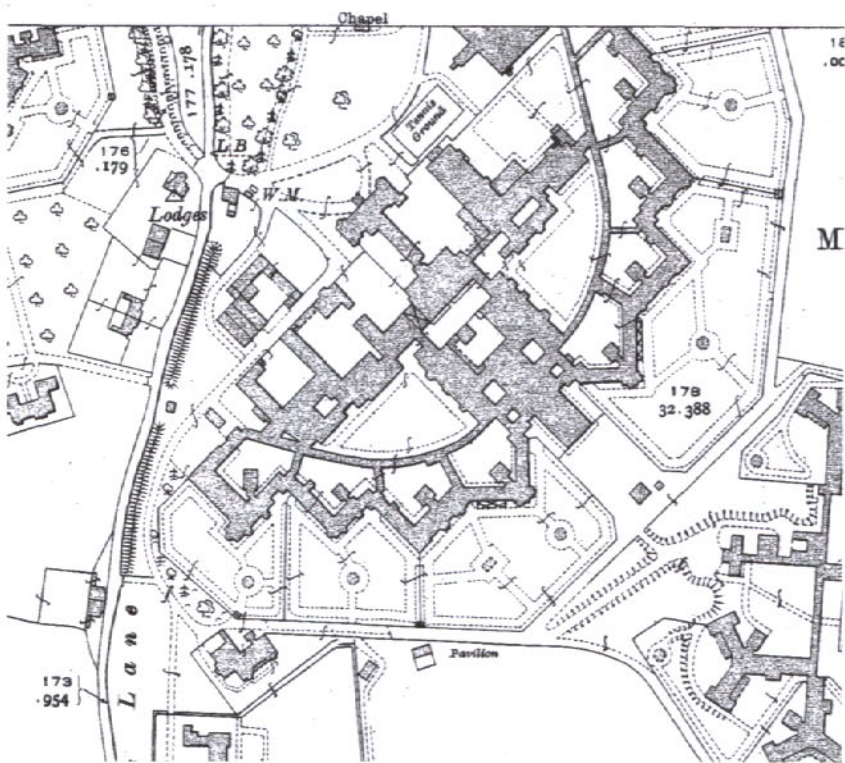


Revised 1896 ( The later Hospital of 1909 hand drawn over map)



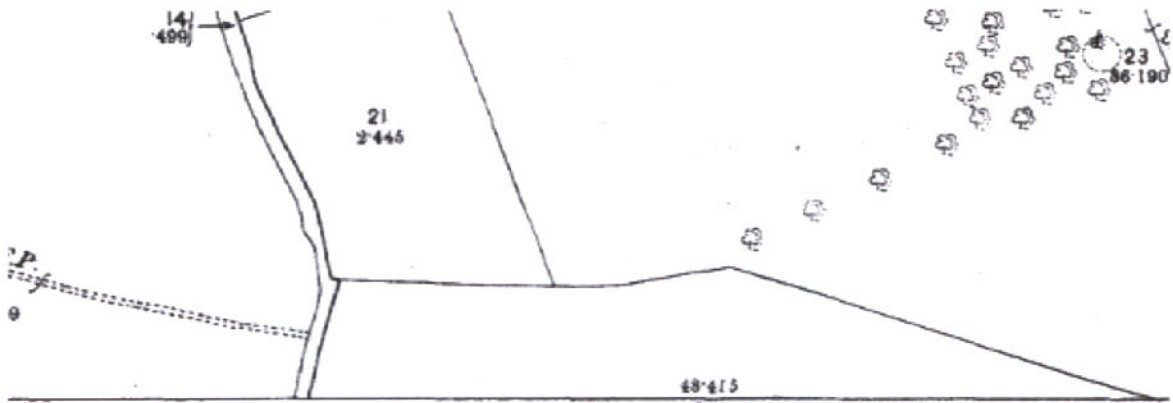


Revised 1910

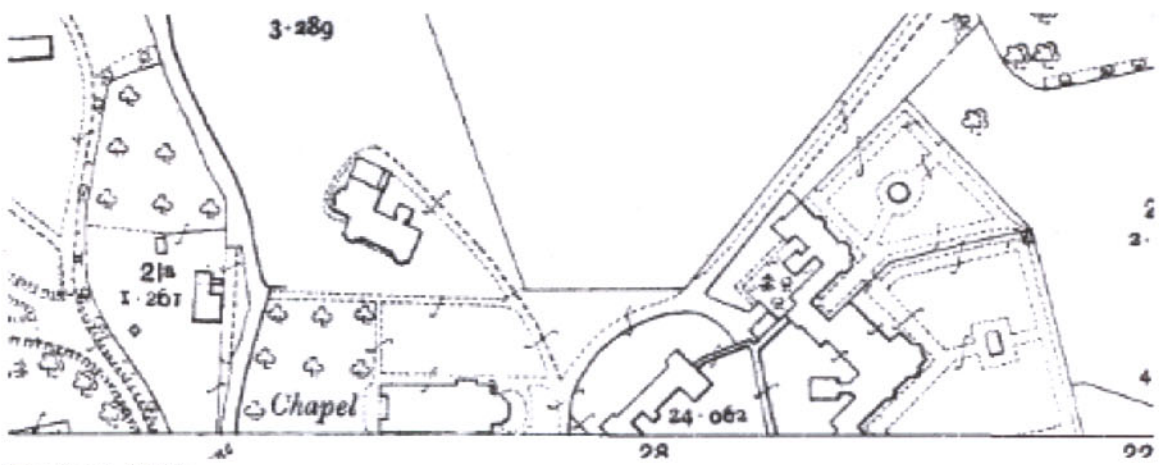


Revised 1933

The Northern part of the Site



Revised 1894



Revised 1910



Revised 1934

### **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. Whilst the Netherne Conservation Area has a relatively unified character it is possible to identify sub identity areas within the overall layout.

The two principal identity areas in Netherne are the "village green" with "town hall" (the former administration block) and church (the former Chapel, now fitness centre) which form the central core, and the echelon ward blocks and recreation hall which form the outer ring looking towards the open countryside.

#### **Prominent buildings**

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

The Administration Block: The block is in the Renaissance Free Style, with a central dome.

The Chapel: A brick chapel in the Early English Decorated style

The Water Tower : Approximately 150 foot tall the water tower is obviously a prominent landmark. As well as for water supply, asylums were required to have water towers because of the danger of arson.

The Recreation Hall : built in 1907 it is a central focal point with polychromatic Brick and Portland Stone banding in a Byzantine influenced style

#### **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 "village green", the recreation hall and the water tower. Views out to the open countryside are found on the outer ring And the silhouette of the water tower is visible on a number of distant views, particularly from the higher ground at Chipstead.

#### **Rhythm: plot size, unit size**

The central area has a rural village character with the original arts and crafts cottages freestanding in their own plots, cottage like ceiling heights and building lines generally set back. New development has been used to provide more enclosure to the village green. The outer echelons have a single uniform character set in open grounds. These former ward blocks have loftier ceiling heights and the verticality of the sash windows balanced with the horizontality of the stone stringcourses.

## **Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail**

### **Architectural Conventions, Fenestration, Materials & Detail**

The area is typified by three types of building;

#### 1) The Key Buildings.

Key buildings are been individually designed by G T Hine whose architectural compositions could often been very original and inventive. These have Portland stone features and red stock brick walling, heather slate roofs, usually of about 45 degrees, unless a feature such as a spire.

#### 2) Ward Blocks.

These have a more Victorian character with lofty ceiling heights and sash windows providing verticality. The materials are red brick, Portland stone string courses, heather slate and Staffordshire blue ridges. There are pirate hat flues to chimneys. Brickwork is in Flemish Bond and of handmade red stock brick. They are two storey in height.

#### 3) Staff Cottages

The former staff cottages are in an arts and crafts style, with casement windows and generally rough cast above ground floor. The roofs are of plain clay tiles.



The Recreation Block



The former Chapel



The Administration Block



Wards and Water Tower

### **5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape**

The key positive feature of Netherne in terms of Highways are the use of narrow than standard road widths, the preservation of the privet hedge layouts in the netherne lane vicinity and occasional flush roadways where low traffic is replacing footways. The street furniture is of reasonably high quality. The lamp columns are also of an attractive Edwardian design.



## 6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs

The "village green" has a number of Victorian exotics. The general area is interspersed with a number of native tree species of the Chalk downs. Privet hedges are a notable feature of the cottage gardens and Netherne Lane. Limes line the former airing courts to the echelons.



Cedar, Wellingtonia, Field Maple, Privet hedge and Lime



## **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 by the Borough Council.

#### **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. There are no Article 4(2) Directions at present.

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 locally listed buildings in the area. Where planning permission is required for a locally listed building Policy Pc10 of the Local Plan and PPS5 would be a material consideration. There is also a local listed historic garden designation.

## **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 only exception being some of the post war redevelopment.

The overall objective in terms of elevational treatment will be the encouragement of the retention of original materials and detailing This includes original window detail, plain clay tiles and well detailed boundary treatments such as privet hedges and avoiding 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 Control process.*

Unlikely many of the Borough's Conservation Areas, the recent redevelopment means that the area is relatively well ordered. There are relatively few shortcomings. The insertion of the mezzanine in the Chapel at the time of redevelopment as permitted development was regrettable in terms of the internal architectural space but it is unlikely there will be an opportunity to remove this. Occasionally the making good of brickwork is disappointing in terms of the bond or colour match but again it is likely that there would be an opportunity to improve on the work carried out. There has been a notable success in restoring the principal facade of the recreation hall, which had been damaged by later extensions for many decades. The overall quality of the Conservation Area is very high and conservation policies have ensured the character and layout as well as individual buildings have been preserved.

## **Land Use & Activity**

The majority of the Netherne Conservation Area is residential and of a tranquil nature. The former chapel is a fitness centre and swimming pool, the recreation hall serves as a community hall and there is one village shop within the Conservation Area.

## **Review of boundaries**

The boundary of the area was subject of review at the time of production of the appraisal and no revisions are proposed to the boundary.

## **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 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 and the Appraisal was publicised in the local press. 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