

**Reigate Conservation  
Area Appraisal**

**Draft February 2015**

Reigate Town Centre Conservation Area



# **Reigate Conservation Area Draft 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 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 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**

The town is located south of the North Downs side and the M25, in the Holmesdale valley, to the north of the greensand hills. 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 Reigate conservation area is derived from the interrelationship between the format of a traditional and historic market town with high street, former castle and former priory and deer park, complemented by the later Georgian and Victorian expansion of the town. The predominant character of the Conservation Area buildings is vernacular and Georgian with Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment and expansion. There is a need to ensure the cohesiveness of the buildings is not eroded by insensitive development.

The town historically was one of the major towns in Surrey and the footprint development in the Conservation Area was well established by the Georgian period. The railway resulted in Victorian redevelopment and Victorian housing in the northern part of the Conservation Area, with another burst of redevelopment following the sale of the town in 1920, which resulted in some loss of Georgian buildings but was luckily limited by the opportunity for existing leaseholders and tenants to purchase their freehold.

### **Topography**

The town is situated about 80 metres above sea level, with the castle on the highest point above the town with the land gently dropping to the valley of the Wallace Brook in Priory park to the south. The town is situated in an area historically known as the Holmesdale valley, between the north downs ridge to the north and the greensand hills to the south.

### **Geology**

Reigate is on the sandy Folkestone Beds of the lower greensand with the Gault rising to the North Downs ridge to the north and the hard Sandgate Sand ridge to Priory park in the south.



#### Geological Map

Reigate is on the sandy Folkestone Beds of the lower greensand (green on the plan) with the Gault (blue) rising to the North Downs ridge to the north and the hard Sandgate Sand ridge to Priory park in the south.



### Contours

The Reigate Conservation Area is characterised by the hill of the castle falling away to the valley to the south.

## Land Use & Activity

Reigate Town Centre is an historic market town, most of which falls within a conservation area. It is an important commercial centre with a large number of shop units, around 150 units. The outer fringe of the area of area is a mix of residential and offices. Other important uses including two parks, the town hall, the school and a large supermarket.

In regard to retail, the centre has a high proportion of smaller retail units, many of which contribute to the character and highly valued townscape of the centre. Reigate in particular has a significant of ancillary space, typically storage, at upper floors which is increasingly resulting in expansion of floorspace for retail and leisure uses within the town centre. The three main shopping streets are oriented around the attractive focal point of the Old Town Hall. Reigate has a vibrant mix of independent boutique clothing units, complemented by a good selection of cafés and restaurants. The town has two foodstores, the smaller Marks & Spencer store along the High Street and the large Morrisons supermarket which lies behind the mainstreet in Cage Yard.



## 2) History and evolution

The manor was granted to William de Warenne in 1090 and it is believed that he built the castle at this time. Reigate is first mentioned in 1170. It was in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century that it was set out as a new town divided into burgage plots on previously unsettled land, under the protection of the castle. The earlier settlement of Cherchefelle in Chart Lane was abandoned when the new town was created. The intention of such a new town was to become a centre of commerce and location for markets and fairs, with borough status. Lords of the Manor created such settlements hoping to increase their revenue through expanding populations and the development of trade. A market was established before 1276, and it was a Borough by 1291. The name Reigate is from River Entrance as Wallace Brook flowed across the south entrance of Bell Street at this time.

The Priory was founded before 1240. Three chantry chapels also existed in the town during the medieval period. The St Thomas a Becket was on the site of the old town hall, the Holy Cross at the other end of the street in the island south of the Red Cross public house, and the St Lawrence Chapel survives today as a shop at 15 Bell Street. A market place is mentioned in West Street in 1441 but is believed to have moved to the Old Town Hall site, when the St Thomas a Becket chapel was converted to a market house at the reformation. This was replaced was the Old Town hall in 1728.

The castle declined after the reformation when the Priory was converted to a country house and became the new residence of the lord of the manor. Described as ruinous in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the castle was still standing in 1663, but by 1686 the keep had been demolished. A house survived on the site until 1777 when the land was converted to a park, becoming a public park in 1873.

The town formed an important stop on the route from London to the coast as well as east to west, with the north south route being a turnpike from an early period. It had the first turnpike road in Surrey in 1696. The London Road was turnpiked in 1755 and the Tunnel, being the first road tunnel in England, was constructed in 1823. This brought trade to the town with inns for accommodation, the market and shops for selling goods. The brewing industry in the town was one of the largest in Surrey, with Mellersh & Neale being the biggest brewer in the town. Oatmeal was also an important trade in the town, with the mills also used in the processing of barley for brewing.

The sand caves in the town produced fine sand for a number purposes including building sand, and were then used for the storage and maturing of barrels. The Reigate Stone quarries, important for the construction for medieval London would have brought prosperity to the town, including quarry owner's houses.

The inns declined with the stopping of the coach trade with the construction of the London to Brighton railway in 1838 but this and the opening of a railway station in 1847 resulted in an increase in population with a large number of mansions being constructed at this period.

The Priory today appears to be the converted remains of the Prior's Lodging of the north side of an original quadrangle. The church probably survived as the southern side of a quadrangle with gate house entrance before being demolished in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century as the tudor house was remodelled into a more fashionable classical

house. Architecturally the last major change was when in 1895 Lady Henry Somerset extended the house to the rear in brick. It is now a school.

A number of other buildings are worth noting. The 17<sup>th</sup> century jail, underneath the Samaritans, still stands by the Donkey Steps. The original Clock House or Cage was built at the same time as the Old Town Hall in 1728 to replace or supplement this. The Cage appears to have been rebuilt in 1780 with two floors to separate male and female prisoners. When the Cage was moved to Cage Yard, probably to give a more civilised appearance to the Market Place in 1811, the Clock Tower was added to the Old Town Hall. In 1785 the two bays of the Old Town Hall itself appear to have been enclosed as a prison for temporary holding of prisoners attending the quarter sessions.

The Borough of Reigate was incorporated in 1863 and met in the Old Town Hall, in the High Street. The present Town Hall was designed in 1898 by Hugh Macintosh and Reginald Newman and was completed in 1901. Originally, it was the Town Hall, Court House and Police Station and Fire Station, and was built in the Arts and Craft style, in a Renaissance manner, with red brick in English Bond and Welsh Green Countess Slates. The plasterwork and stone carving, cluding the ceiling in the Old Council Chamber, were by the notable stone carver, Abraham Broadbent.

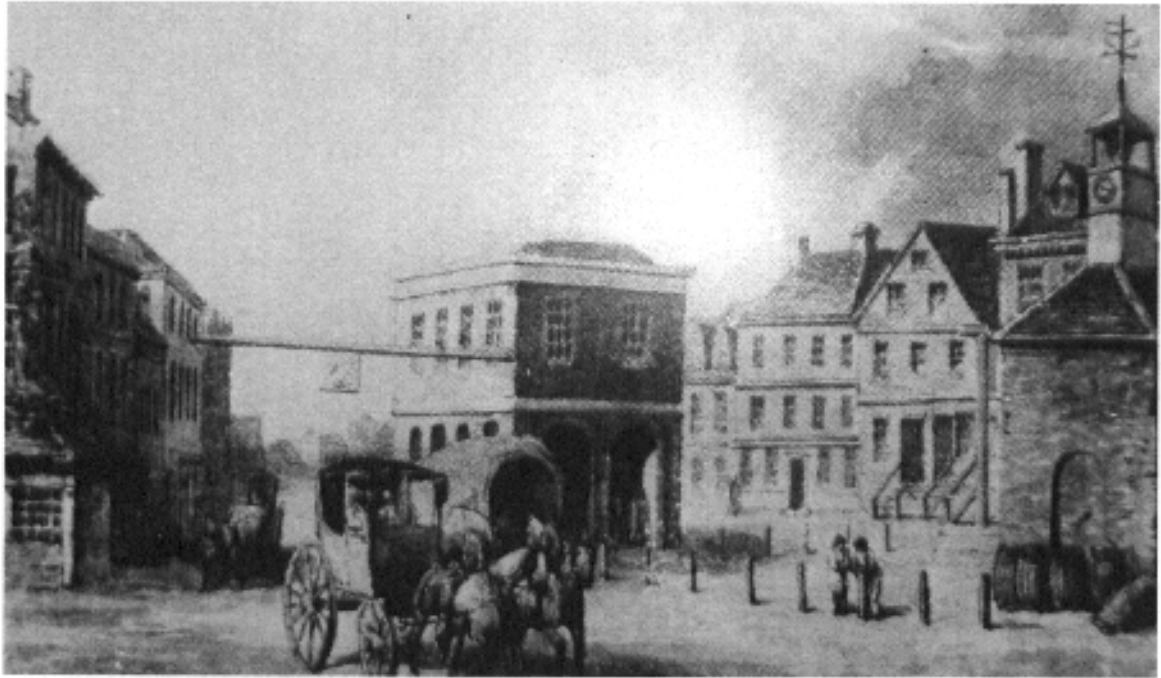
#### **KEY DATES**

1090 Castle built  
1170 New Town laid out by this time  
1240 Priory first recorded  
1541 Conversion of Priory to house  
1777 Conversion of Castle to park  
1728 Old Town Hall  
1823 Road Tunnel  
1898 New Town Hall  
1920 Construction of Church Street

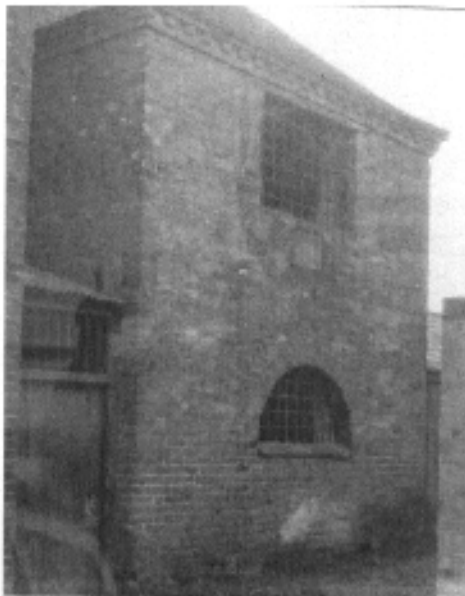
#### **Notable Buildings :**

1591 Slipshoe House  
1721 The Barons  
1784 Browne's Lodge

Reigate History Illustrations



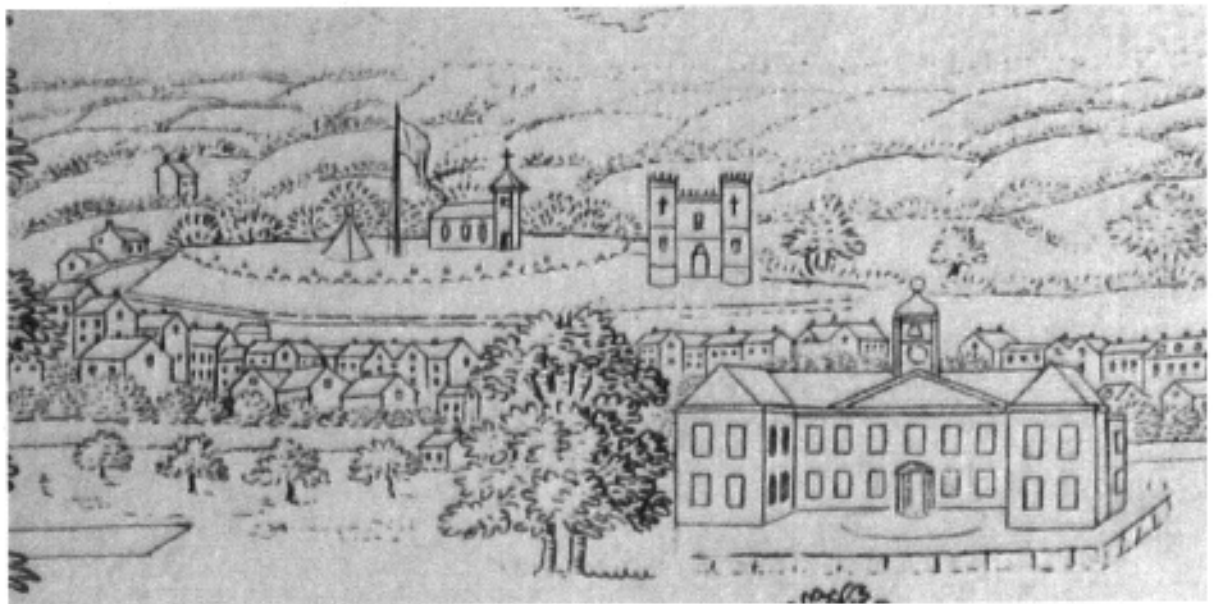
The High Street with Old Town Hall of 1728 and Cage ( 1728, rebuilt 1780 and demolished and rebuilt in Cage Yard in 1811) in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



The Cage rebuilt in Cage Yard 1811



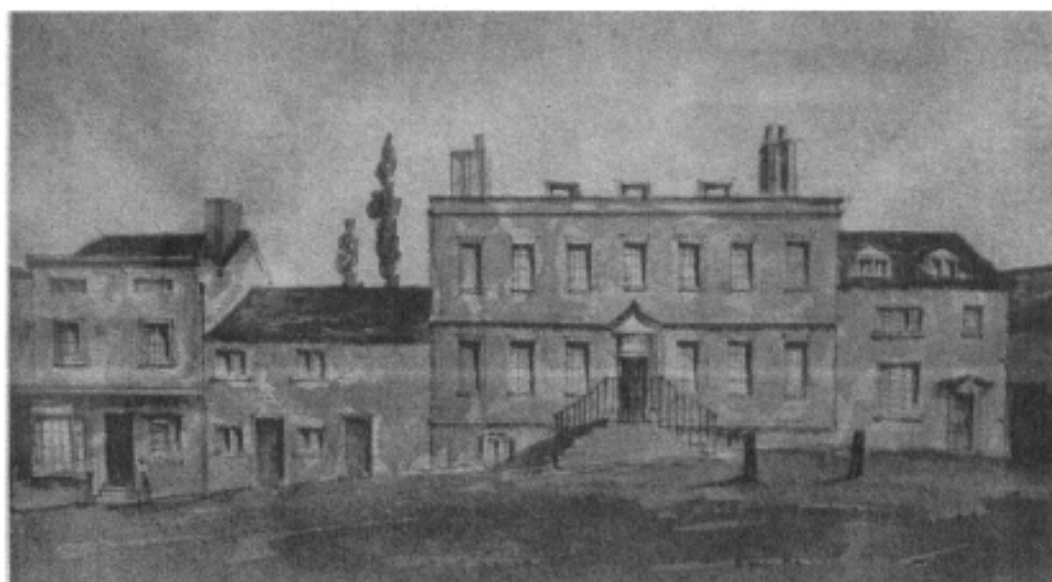
The High Street and Old Town Hall and Market Place in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the clock of the cage now placed on top of the town hall.



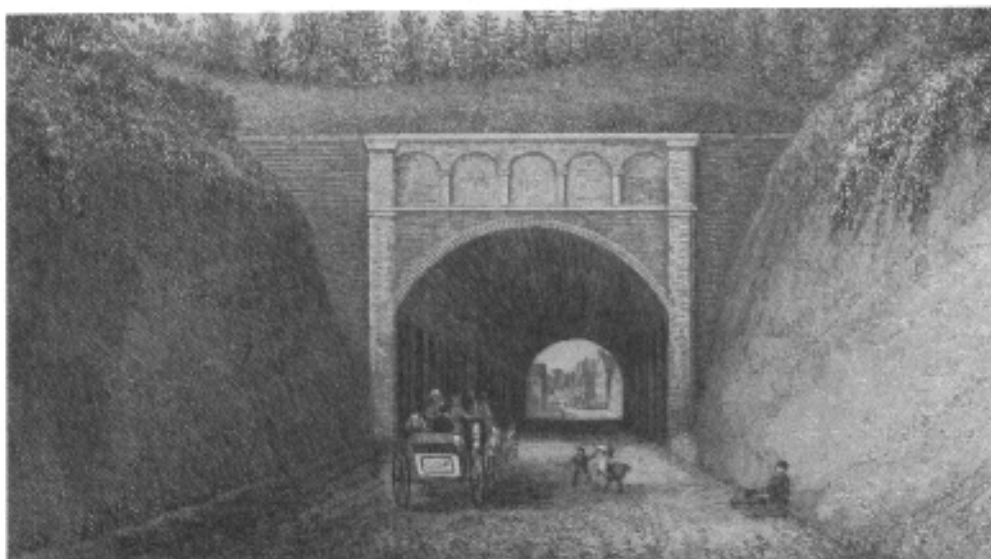
The Priory and Castle in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The chapel on the Castle was an 18<sup>th</sup> century folly used as a summer pavilion.



Bell Street in 1789, showing the now demolished White Hart, the principal coaching inn in the town. The road facing gable of the former St Lawrence's Chapel is recognisable. The text accompanying the print noted "His royal highness, the Prince of Wales, in his excursions to Brighthelmstone frequently dines here." The presence of two postillions and an outrider suggest this may depict such a visit. The coaching traffic added to the prosperity of the town.



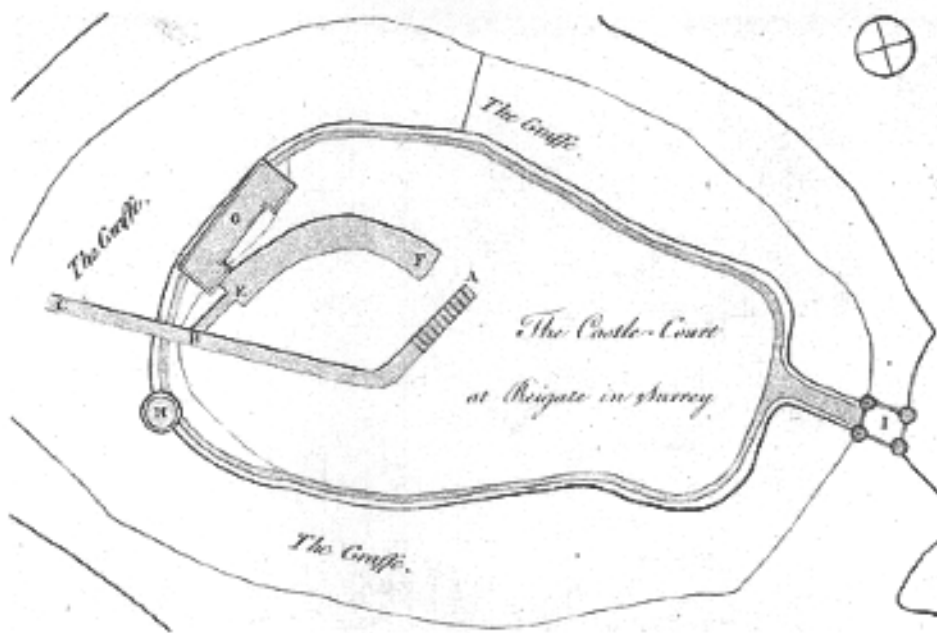
Church Street in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century



The Tunnel constructed in 1823, a dramatic entrance to the town with the woodland shade being in sharp contrast to the urban centre at the end.



The Barons an important landmark of circa 1710 (SHC)



Reigate Castle & Caves 1785



The west end of the High Street in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Slipshoe house is behind the cottages later demolished for road widening. The Red Cross is seen with its Georgian sashes and brickwork, before the Edwardian windows and roughcast were added.

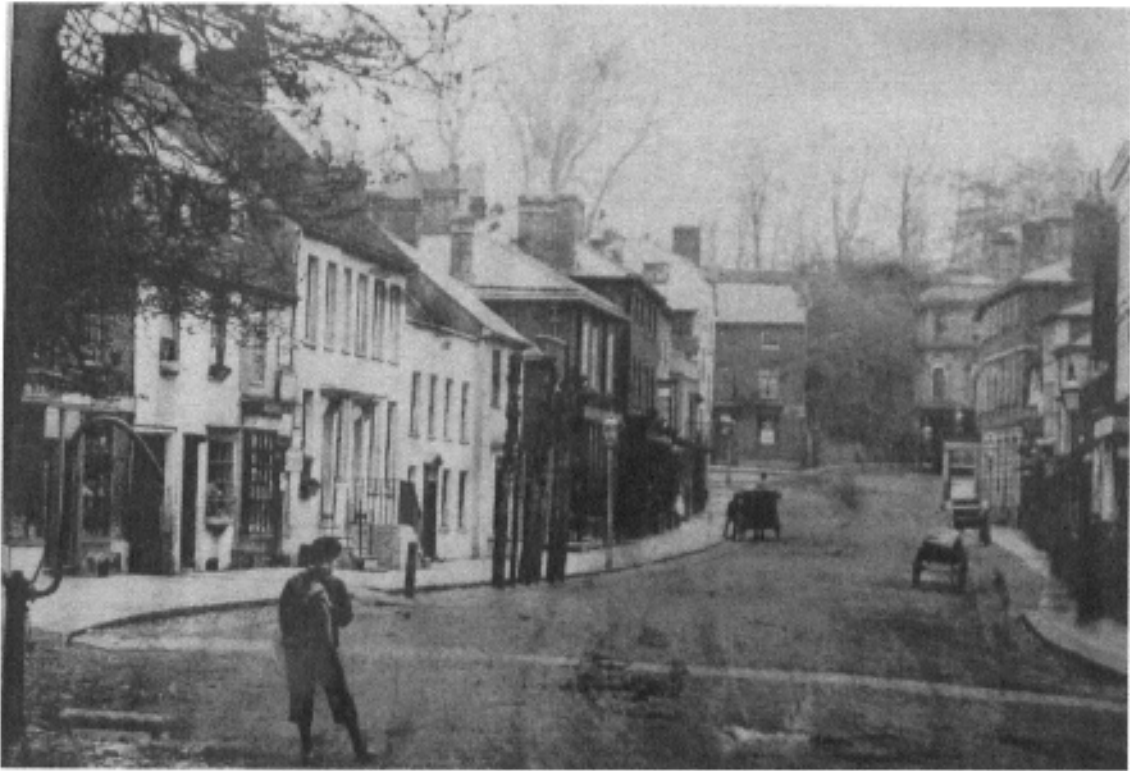


The Red Cross in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

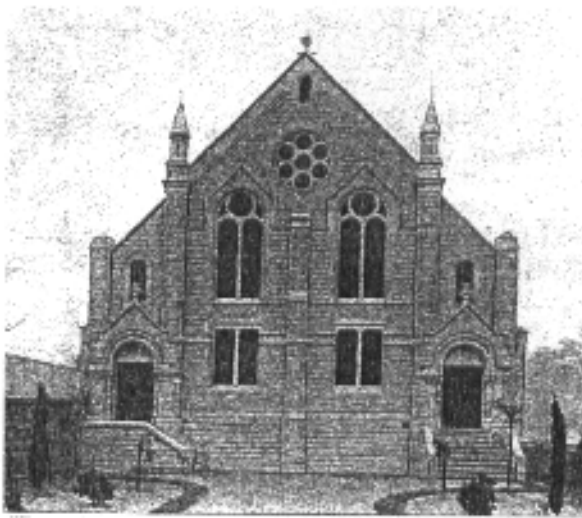


High Street looking east in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century





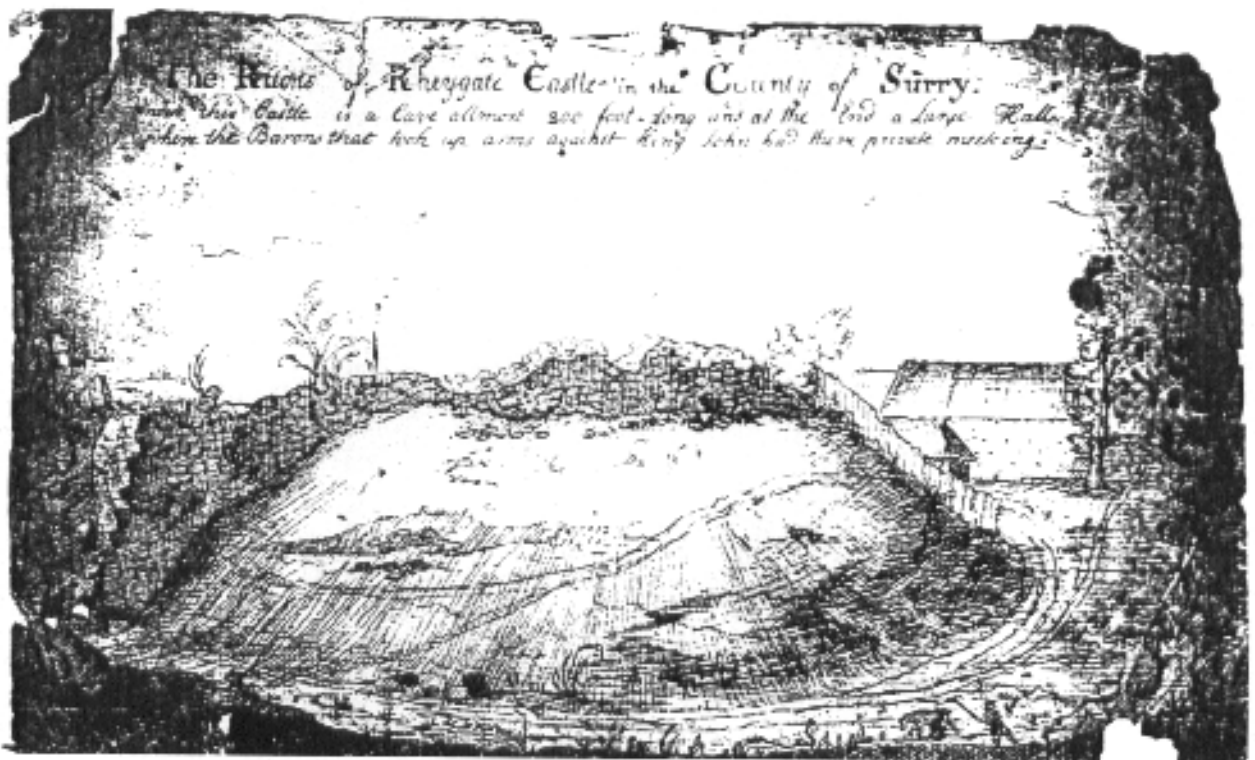
Bell Street in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century



Wesleyan Chapel in 1885, one of the few Victorian institutional buildings surviving from that period with the public hall and congregational church demolished.



The Crown Steps or Donkey Steps, High Street, Reigate. A landmark of the town, the ironstone steps are set wide for the horses which accessed the stables, now cottages at the top of the steps. The County have programmed repairs for the steps in 2016.



The earliest known view of Reigate Castle, probably late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The round town on the west end (left side of picture) is a notable feature and the barn on the outer bailey on the east. Both the tower, walls and barn have been demolished by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



West Street in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the tile hung cottages which are a distinctive feature of the town.



Slipshoe House in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most notable of the tile hung houses.



A bust of William Howard, 1st Baron Howard of Effingham (c. 1510 – 12 January 1573) the first residential owner of the Priory with Henry VIII's coat of arms in the pediment of the Priory. These carvings were probably originally situated in the gatehouse of the Priory which would have been located in the vicinity of the sunken garden.

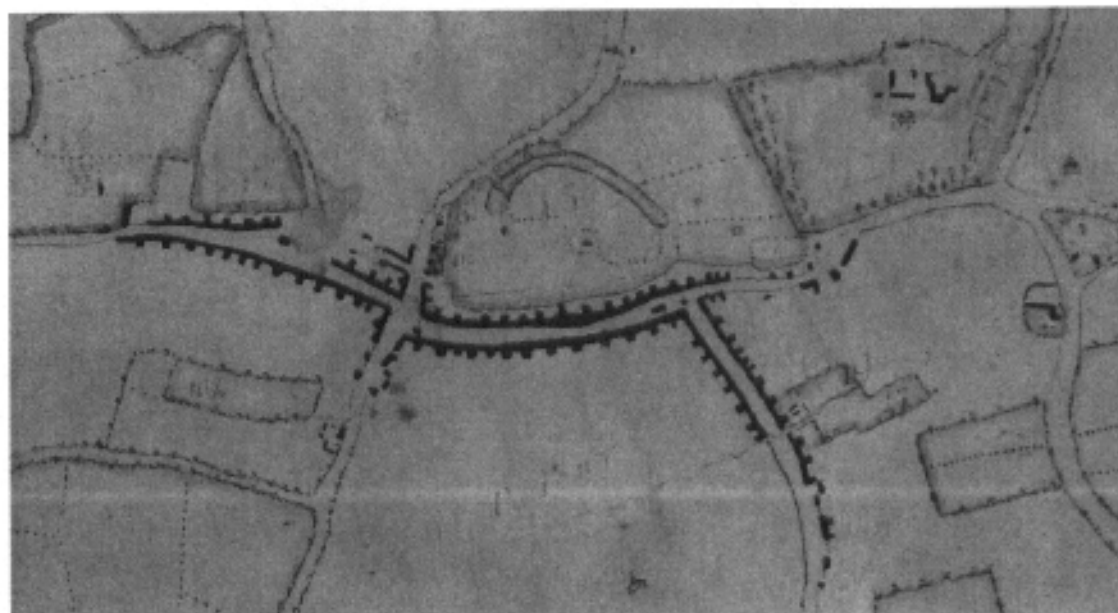
Reigate History in Maps



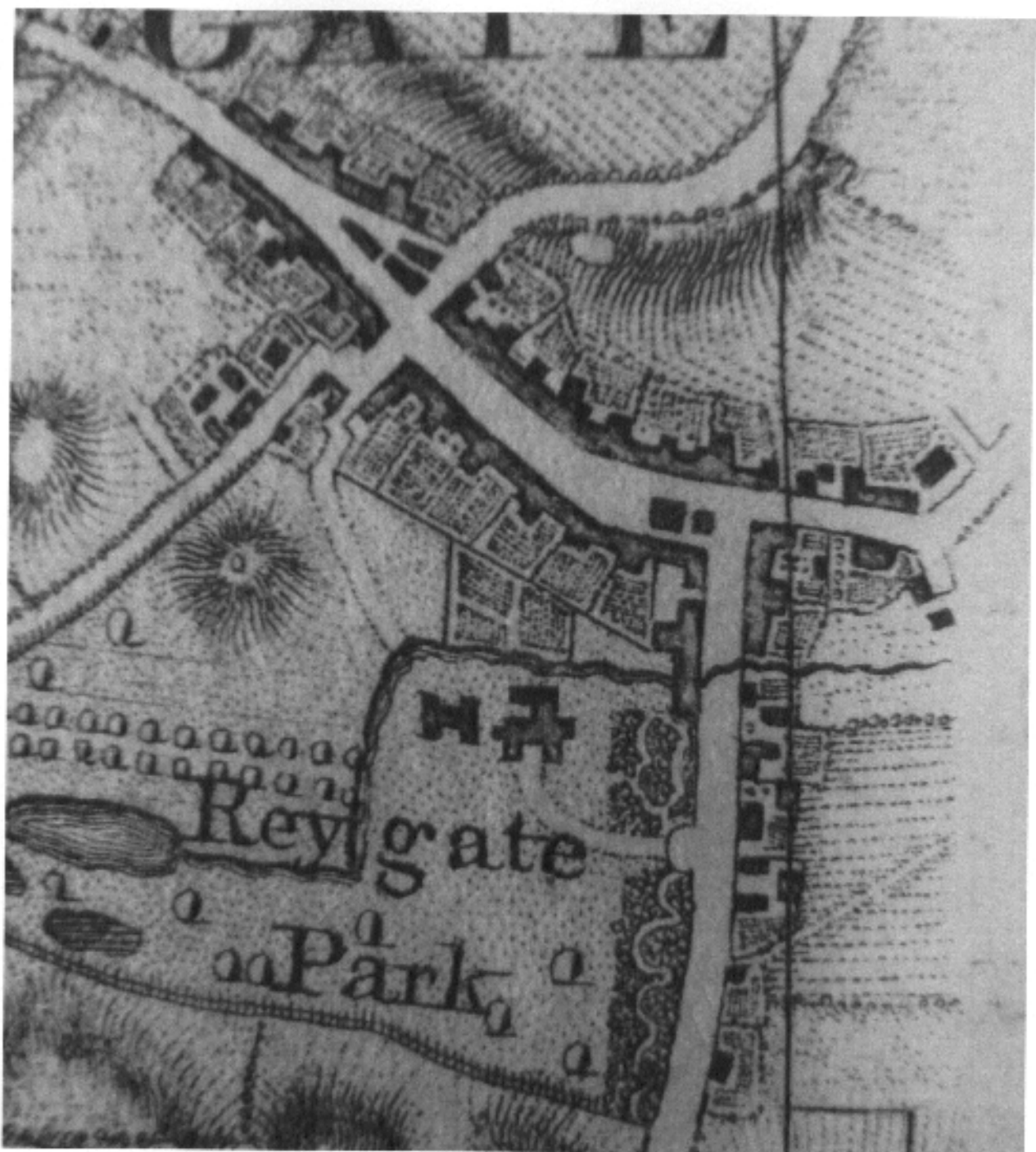
John Seller 1694



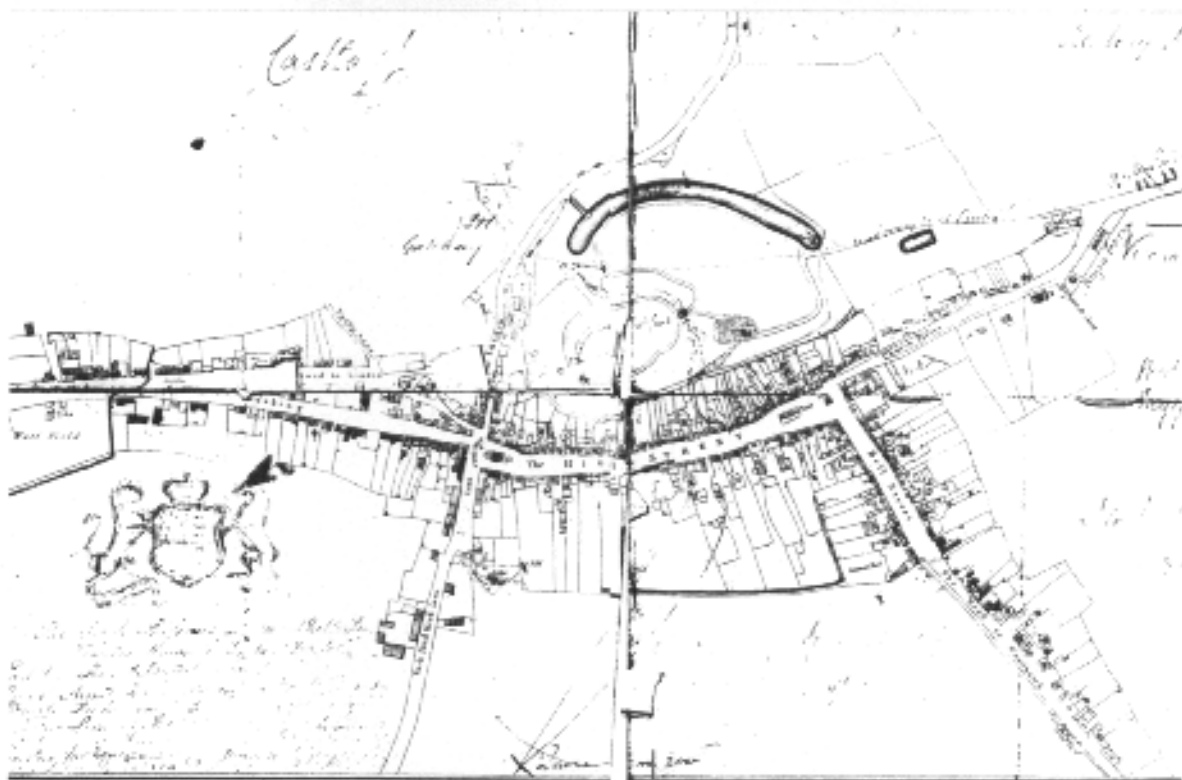
1729 Senex



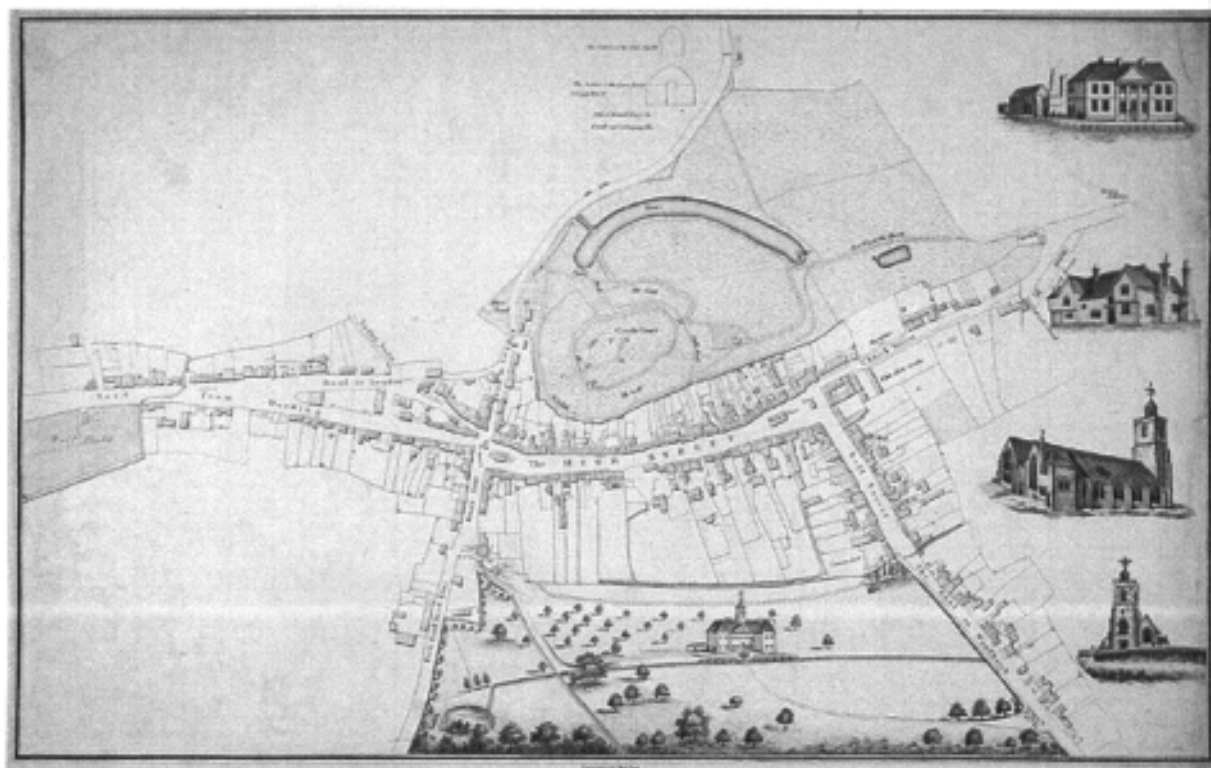
1773 map of Reigate (SHC)



Rocque 1768



Reigate 1785 (SHC)





Lindley & Crosley 1793





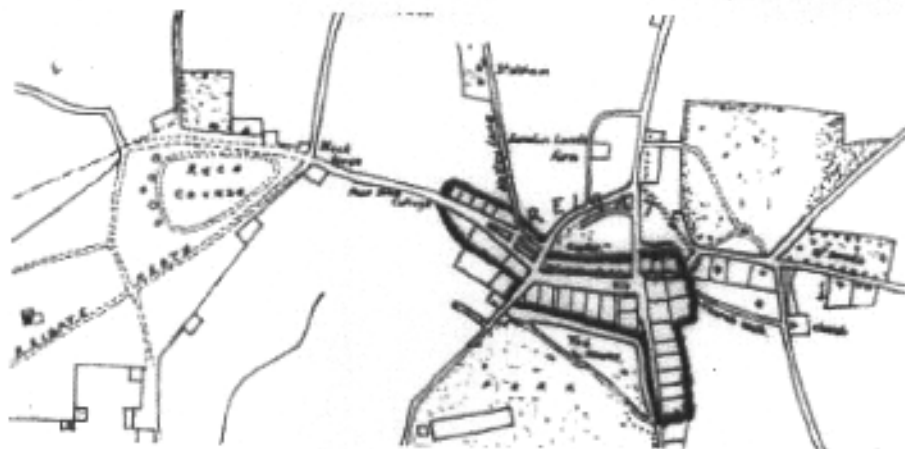
Ordnance Survey Manuscript 1808- 1810 and First edition 1816 prepared from this survey



Greenwood 1823



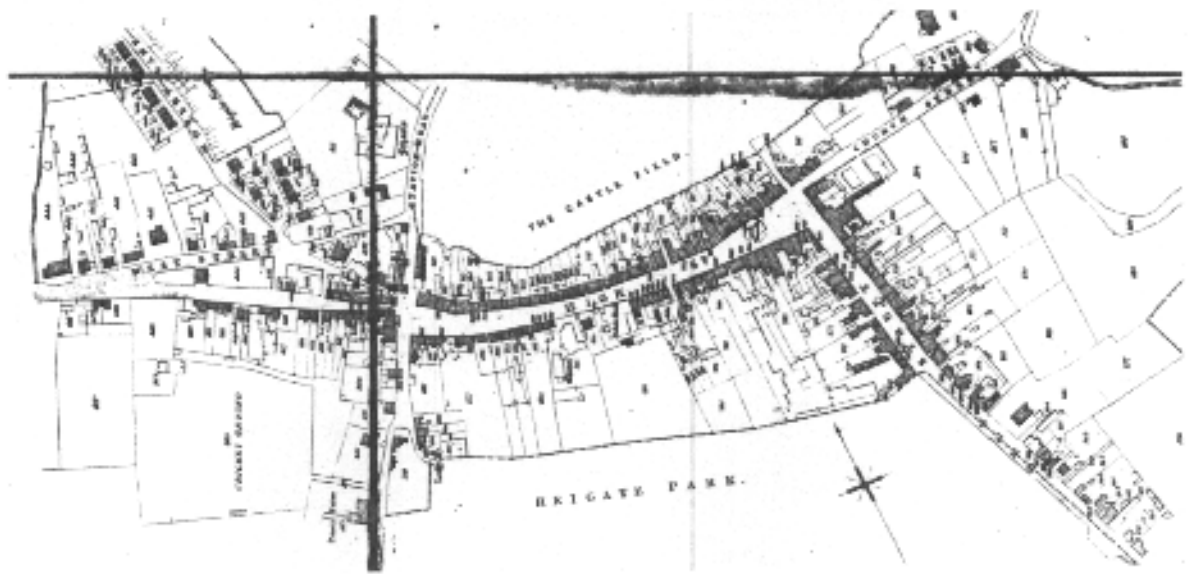
1831 Parliamentary Map



1835 map showing boundary of old borough



Reigate 1845



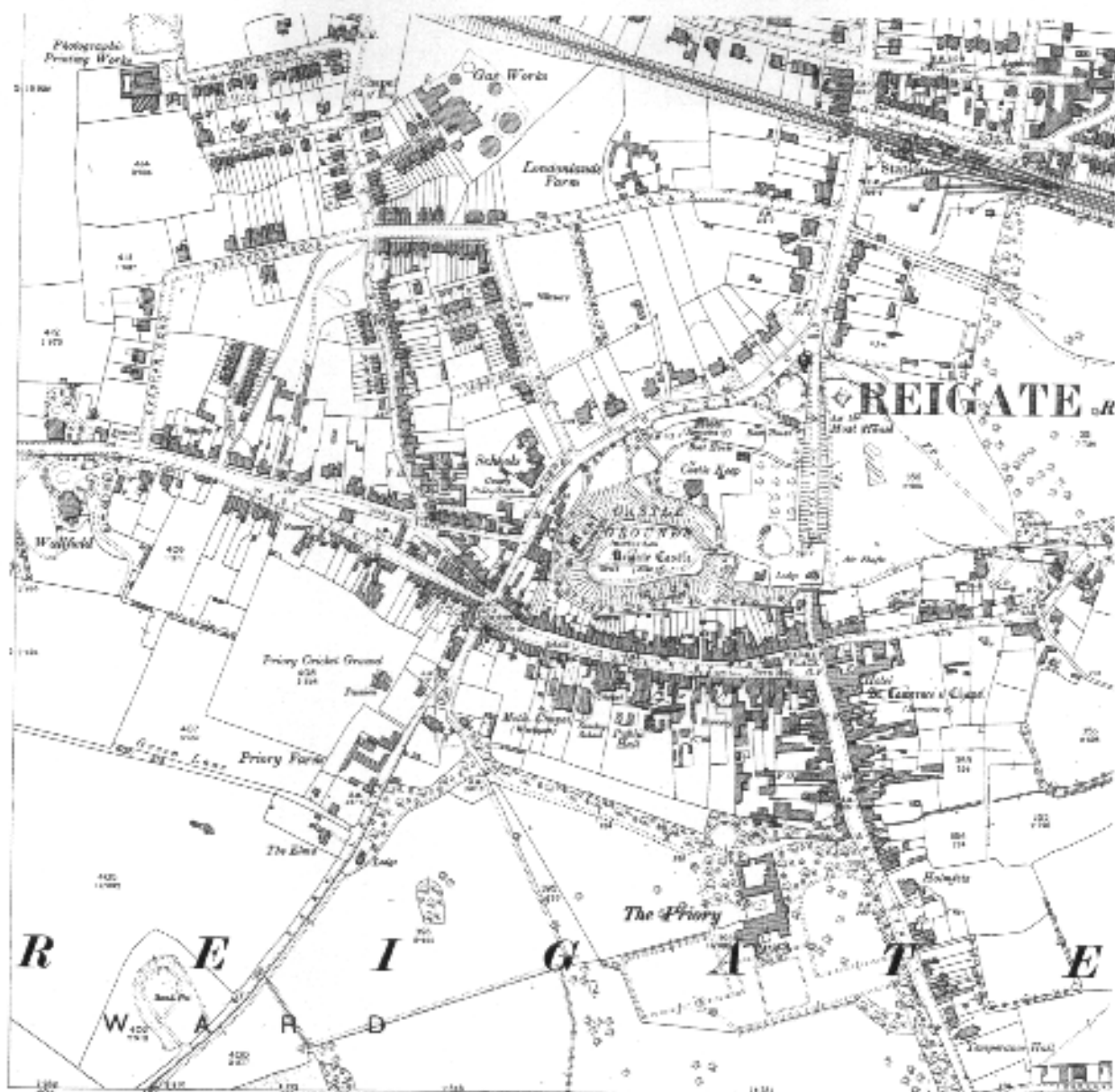
Reigate Tithe Map 1860 inset and wider map



# REIGATE Old Series OS



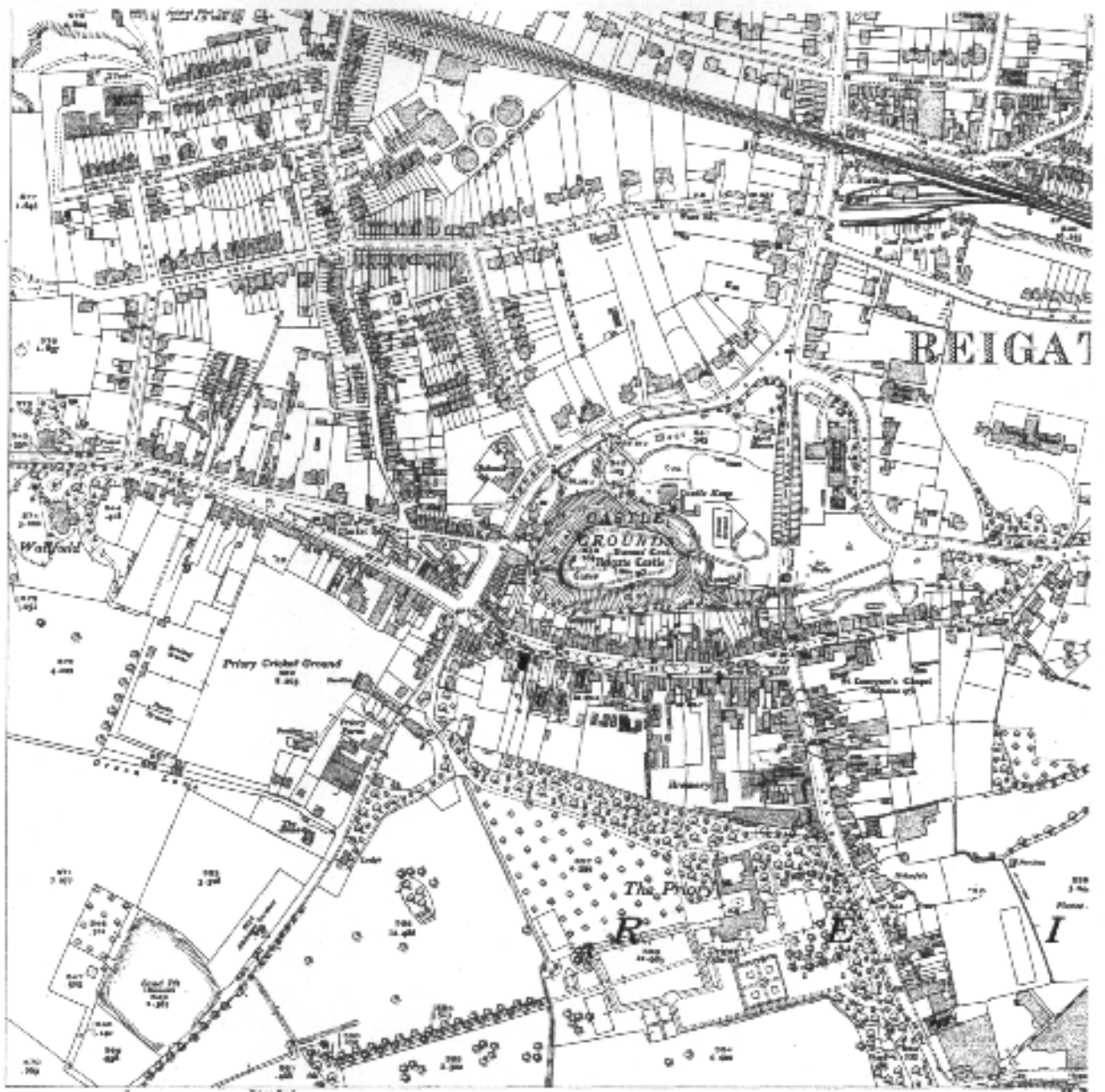
Surveyed 1870



Revised 1895



Revised 1912



Revised 1933



The following are the OS extracts for the Georgian houses at the far south end of Bell St on the next os sheet



Surveyed 1871



Revised 1895



Revised 1912



Revised 1934

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

#### Identity Areas

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 to split such areas into smaller identity or character areas. A number of sub-identity areas can be identified in the case of Reigate.

The three principal identity areas in Reigate are the historic town, the castle and the priory. There are a number of smaller identity areas. The Conservation Area can be divided as follows ;

Castle : The Castle is important as prominent hill, visible from Priory Park, important as park in its own right as well as the remains of the castle and baron's cave.

High Street : This is part of the new town laid out in the 11th century with narrow burgage plots, as space at the front was at a premium. These fronted the market areas which formed focal points in the town.

Bell Street : another part of new town laid out in the 11th century with narrow burgage plots.

The Priory : This has the character of an 18<sup>th</sup> century country house and park, with views over the town from Park Hill. The earlier use as a medieval Priory are largely hidden.

Church Street : A 1930's parade of shops that follow the detail and proportions of the Queen Anne and Georgian buildings in the town.

Tunnel Road : The 1823 Tunnel provides a leafy and rustic walk to the heart of the town centre. The caves provide a visitor attraction.

Donkey Steps/ Crown Steps : 17<sup>th</sup> century ironstone deep steps for horses, a rare feature.

Park Lane : A small enclave of houses with a classic enclosure of buildings around a green

West St : Medieval core round a former market place with Georgian expansion of houses to the west. The Cricket ground provides a rural setting and views in.

London Road : a collection of well spaced Victorian villas.

Bell Street Out of Town : A collection of substantial Georgian houses on the approach to town.

Nutley Lane : Cottages around a narrow lane

Hardwicke Road : Victorian stucco on one side and Late Victorian tile hanging on the other.

Evesham Road : Victorian tile hanging and red brick houses.

### **Prominent Buildings & Focal Points**

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

The Old Town Hall & Market Place : the centre of the town

The Castle : The historic birthplace of the town and location of its most famous cave

The Priory : The stately home of the town and town park

The Tunnel : A significant feature of the town, providing a sylvan approach to the town.

Slipshoe House : a prominent jettied tile hung house of 1591 set on a ridge by London Road

The Barons : a substantial Georgian house of 1721 at the end of Church St

Browne's Lodge : a substantial Georgian House of 1784 and Cedar of Lebanon in the heart of West St

The Town Hall : 1899 by MacIntosh and Newman

Crossroads of London Road, West Street, Park Lane and High Street : another focal point.

Wallfield : a large 1850 mansion set in substantial grounds in West Street by the notable Victorian architect James Knowles Snr.

The School : Former school and master's house of 1854 by Henry Clutton, in London Road

### **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 from Park Hill toward the Priory and Town, views to the Old Town Hall in the High Street and along Tunnel Road.

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

The medieval town frontages with its burgage plots are narrow, except for later consolidations. However even here the shop units widths are generally narrow. Plot sizes and width increase for higher status buildings on the approaches to town. The priory is set in open parkland. The buildings are generally two storey, with some occasional limited accommodation in the roof. Three storey buildings are generally Victorian and later parades such as parts of Church Street. Building generally have a wider solid to void ratio ie more wall than glass, with taller building having hierarchy in their window size.

## Reigate Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area, starting from north to Church Street and High Street, then West Street and London Road, and ending with Bell Street. Given the size of the Conservation Area, the comments are of a general nature, and not an exhaustive description of each feature. Absence of a specific mention does not mean the building is not so important. Mention is made of historic facts which contribute to the interest or understanding of a building which may not be readily apparent from just an external visual inspection.



## Tunnel

Approaching the Conservation area from the North along the historic London Road, the first houses that are encountered are a mid Victorian classical villa in Reigate Stone and a stucco regency villa. Beyond are some prominent Victorian Cedars of Lebanon, a characteristic but disappear feature of Reigate. These originally stood in the back garden of a villa in London Road.



## Town Hall

Straight ahead is the valley entrance to the 1823 Road Tunnel, the oldest in England. Historically this took the turnpike traffic to the heart of the town but now forms a pleasant shaded pedestrian access to the town. A large number of the town's caves are accessed from the tunnel, and served a dual purpose as a sand mine and cellars for storage of beer and wine. The town prospered as a stopping point on the road from London to Brighton.

Returning to Castlefield Road, the new Town Hall of 1899 by Newman and Macintosh is on the right, set in grounds landscaped by Cheals. The Town Hall originally comprised a police station, courts, town hall and fire station. The tower served as a hose drying tower and landmark based on the tolbooths of Macintosh's native Scotland. The stone carving and plasterwork of the town hall is by Abraham Broadbent, a notable stone mason. The brickwork is of red stock brick and the roof is of natural green slate, not characteristic of the town but very appropriate for an arts and crafts building.



## Castle

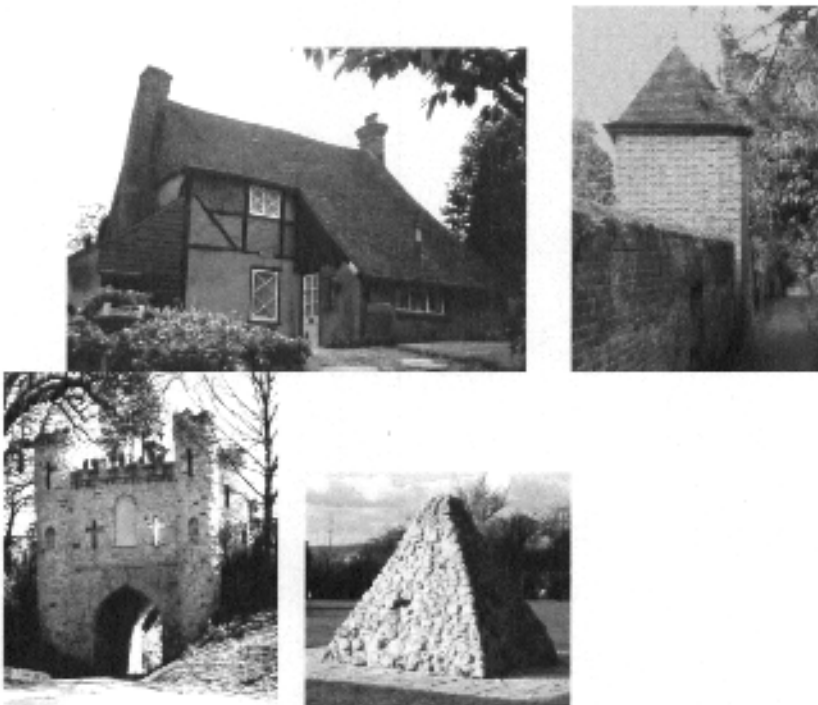
To south is one of the entrances to the Castle originally built in 1090. The first cottage past is Castle Keep Cottage, a Victorian lodge to Castle Keep, a Victorian house now demolished. Adjacent are good views of the Clock Tower but obscured by inappropriate cypress planting.

Next is Castle Cottage of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the only building still standing from the time of the occupation of the castle. The castle, an ancient monument, was demolished in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the remains cleared away in 1777 when a park was created, which became a public park in 1873. Castle Cottage has tank traps from the period of Castle Keep being the Home Guard headquarters in the second world war and dragon's teeth are found through the castle grounds. To the north of the cottage is a large hollow where caves collapsed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century during a cricket match.

The deep earthworks of the Castle survive, with inner and outer bailey, with the moat to the north and dry moats elsewhere. The Reigate Stone gateway

dates from 1777, and the Baron's Cave is situated on the lawn of the castle, with an small 18<sup>th</sup> century pyramid folly on top.

Castle Walk bounds the south side of the castle, with Georgian walls of brickwork and occasionally stone from the castle. At the west end is the former 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed stables for the crown inn, with an arched entrance to the Donkey Steps or Crown Steps of local ironstone, with deep steps for the use of horses acing the inn and stables. On the west side of the steps, underneath the Samaritans buildings is the 17<sup>th</sup> century Jail. Returning along Castle Walk is the two storey 18<sup>th</sup> century tower gazebo, looking on to Georgian terraced gardens. Further along Castle walk a single storey 18<sup>th</sup> century gazebo can be seen, once part of a pair, and at the end is a Georgian brick cottage.



### Church Street

Returning to the main road, the town is now entered at Church Street. The first building is 48, a white painted 18<sup>th</sup> century villa, followed by the key landmark building of The Barons, a Grade II\* Georgian house of 1721. The garden is by Frederick Gibberd of 1976 within Georgian garden walls.

Opposite is a 16<sup>th</sup> century cottage but most of the rest of Church Street is mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgian dating from when the street was widened. This resulted in the demolition of the town's main coach inn, which was rebuilt in Church St. The Prince Regent's Royal Warrant is still found on the front of the inn, now a restaurant. The building is designed to have the original White Hart

sculpture from the old inn at the top of the gable, and it would be desirable to have this reinstated.

The mid 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings are in the Queen Anne style and are well detailed and of good classical proportions, based on the Barons and Georgian buildings at the west end of the street. The street is terminated at its west end by the entrance to the tunnel. The tunnel entrance of 1823 is in a Romanesque style in gault brick.



## High Street

The most prominent building in the High Street is the Old Town Hall of 1728. It was originally the court house for the quarter sessions and then also used as the town hall in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The two listed K6 telephone kiosks within and adjacent are the only two kiosks in the Borough with statutory protection.

The Town Hall stands in the former market place. The street consists of a mix of two and occasionally three storey buildings, the bulk of the historic buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tile hanging is a notable and distinctive feature as well as brick and stucco. The units widths are historically small burgage plots, except where later consolidated.

A number of side yards are found with ironstone paving. Cage Yard contains the Cage prison of 1811. On the north side the Castle Steps and Donkey Steps lead up to the Castle Grounds. The Methodist Church of 1884 is set back from the street and the only building to have Reigate Stone facing survive towards the street. At the west end the street widens out, the site of a former chantry chapel and market house. A number of buildings are notable here, including the Red Cross public house, the butcher shop with its columned canopy and slipshoe house of 1591, a prominent example of tile hung vernacular and jettying.





## Park Lane

On the south side is Park lane, a small enclave of houses around a green with a red brick path. Geranium Cottage is a particularly picturesque example of late 17<sup>th</sup> century brickwork. On the south west side are the 1720's Pineapple Gate entrance piers to the Priory with its 16<sup>th</sup> century lodge adjacent. The large Victorian house on the south side was the dower house of Reigate Priory where the son of Lady Somers lived until the 1900's. It was the site of the former workhouse.

Further along behind Priory Farm, a 18<sup>th</sup> century façade with 16<sup>th</sup> century framing within is the cricket ground with the Pavilion and scoreshed of 1929 by Thompson & Walford. The cricket ground was established in the 1840's and the club founded in 1852. This looks towards the cottages and houses of West Street and the characterful north wall of the 18<sup>th</sup> century garden nursery incorporated in to the cricket ground in the 1840's.

Returning to Park Lane, Priory park is on the east side, with the remains of Lord Beatty's Polo Stables of 1937 and a Victorian estate cottage to the south and the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Moore Lodge on the west side.



## West Street

West Street is a mix of tile hung 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century houses with later Georgian and Victorian additions, of mostly two storeys, becoming more spacious towards the countryside. The central feature is Browne's Lodge of 1784, a tall Georgian brick building, with a large cedar of Lebanon at the front. The street is terminated at the end with Wallfield, a large 1850 mansion set in substantial grounds in West Street by the notable Victorian architect James Knowles Snr. To the north is Evesham Road with a good collection of late Victorian tile hung and brick houses.

West Street also contains a medieval undercroft at nos 16-18. Whilst the undercroft belonged to a house rather than a market hall, the original market place was in this location on the site of Browne's Lodge. The Forge was also a notable feature of the street and survived in use until the 1980's.



### Upper West Street

Upper West Street contains a good collection of Georgian and Victorian houses set on rising ground with an 18<sup>th</sup> century ironstone and purbeck stone embankment.



### Nutley Lane

Nutley Lane is a narrow lane with some Reigate Stone walls and cottages and one 16<sup>th</sup> century house. The former Nutley Hall has a large cave beneath.



### Slipshoe Street

Slipshoe Street contains the landmark Slipshoe House a jettied house and granary of 1591 with traditional tile hanging. Old Sweep's House at No 10 is one of the oldest houses in Reigate circa 1360.



### London Road

London Road starts with the brewhouse of the Red Cross, Victorian tile hung cottages and some Georgian buildings adjacent to the castle embankment.

Further up, London Road has the school of 1854 by Henry Clutton and large Victorian mansions on the north side, of stucco and one of Reigate stone and the castle moat on the south side.



### Hardwicke Road

Hardwicke Road beyond the school masters house of 1854 is stucco Victorian terraces on one side and tile hung Victorian houses on the other.



Returning to the town centre

### Bell Street

Bell Street, is similar to the High Street with narrow burgage plots, two storey buildings, with occasional three storey, of stucco and brick. The street starts at the top with Paxton Watson's shopping parade and former St Lawrence's medieval chantry chapel disguised as regency building on one side and the Knights shop on the other, a former tavern converted to a draper's shop in the 19th century. Further down the street, 16 Bell Street is a notable Georgian house with good portico. There is a mix of 16<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century and Georgian and Victorian buildings., plus a mid 20th century parade.

At the south end of the street are a collection of substantial Georgian houses on the east side of the street of painted brick and stucco. Before this, in Lesbourne Road, is a terrace of Victorian houses, notably unaltered.



On the west side of the street is Reigate Priory.

### The Priory

On the west side of Bell Street is the Priory and Priory Park, an important country house, now school, and public park that add considerably to the character of Reigate. The Georgian brick boundary walls are prominent feature.

Founded as a Priory before 1240, the building's main character is of an 18<sup>th</sup> century house, though the tudor house and earlier medieval structure are hidden within. Whilst converted to a house in 1541 its current appearance is the result of the remodelling of the house by the Parsons family in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is an 18<sup>th</sup> century stable building to the rear (this was never a tennis court, being a misreading of reference to a house in London) and the 18<sup>th</sup> century Eagle Gates which originally stood in Bell Street., but were moved to this location due to Lady Henry Somerset's temperance beliefs. The Georgian house has two ground floor halls, a library addition of 1805 and the Holbein fireplace (not by Holbein) and the impressive murals on the staircase of circa 1719 by John Laguerre, the son of Louis Laguerre. (They were formerly attributed to Verrio). Upstairs is an enfilade of rooms. The house was extended at the back in 1895.

The building is on a long lease as a county school. The opportunity should be taken to widen public access at the weekend and holidays to the most important historic parts of the building and the museum, so there is more intergration with the park when not in school use. This has been a historic objective, restated in 2005 as part of the management policy.

Heritage lottery funding upgraded the facilities in the park in 2004, including a new pavilion by the notable French architect Dominique Perrault. The early Georgian formal garden stood in the vicinity of the car park but the wilderness gardens of this period survive as boundaries to the south and eastern boundaries of the park. The informal open parkland landscape increased during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The sunken garden was created by Lady Henry Somerset in 1882, along with the monk's walk. There is a Victorian pet cemetery by Bell Street.



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

The town has benefited from a number of streetscape improvements. The 1965 Civic Trust and Reigate Society scheme removed the street clutter of lamp posts and replaced them with lanterns fixed to buildings. This has survived to this day and was a major improvement to the townscape of the town.

High Street and Bell Street were paved in natural Yorkstone in the 1990's, which has had a major positive impact on the perceived character of the town. A number of town centre management projects at the time resulted in improved street furniture. Quality natural materials were used in scheme for Upper West Street, Nutley Lane, Slipshoe Street and Castle Steps. The recent lottery funded scheme in Priory Park also resulted in good standards of footpaths and furniture

Ironstone cobbles are a feature of the town, often surviving in side passages and yards. The correct way to lay the ironstone is tightly packed without mortar joints, with any gaps filled with sand after laying. There is Victorian brick paving in Park lane and some Georgian Purbeck Stone kerbing to the ironstone in Upper West Street.

The County have noted their intention to repair the historic Crown Steps or Donkey Steps in the next financial year, an important feature of the town. This suffered from local damaged from defective drains.

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.

Traffic and parking issues are important issues which go beyond the reach of this character study. The configuration of circulation layout requires technical analysis in terms of traffic generation and capacity. The last study in this respect had suggested that to change the current layout would have an adverse effect on traffic congestion.

## **6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs**

The Priory has trees characteristic of the town with Yew being a prominent but small tree and lines of Lime are found along paths, and in the former Georgian Wilderness tree belt on the north and east boundaries of the Priory. The arboretum is not a historic feature, having been planted after Langley Taylor's recommendations in 1954. Oak and Horse Chestnut is also evident.

The Castle grounds is well planted with ornamentals from the nursery of William Wilson Saunders (1809 – 1879) who had had a great interest in exotic plants. He laid out the Castle Grounds in 1873, was an eminent member of the entomological, linnean and zoological societies as well being the Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society. He lived at Reigate between 1857 and 1874. His house Hillfields and nursery was in Raglan Road but has since been demolished. He founded the Holmesdale Natural History Club, one of the oldest in the country. Cedar of Lebanon and Wellingtons are a prominent feature in the town and would have come from his nursery. The West Street Cedars of Lebanon may have come from the early nursery that stood on the south side of West Street.

Beech trees, not generally found in the Conservation Area, occur in Tunnel Road due to the thin soils and steep banks. Holly is a noticeable feature of Tunnel Road. Self seeded Sycamore is a problem in the town.

### **Boundary Treatment/ Enclosure: Walls & Hedges**

Privet is the most common hedge species, with a limited amount of yew for some formal hedges. Portuguese laurel, cherry laurel and viburnum are found as shrubby species, as well as native holly and yew. Hawthorn is found on the rural boundaries.

Beech and Hornbeam hedges are a 20<sup>th</sup> century introduction and should be generally avoided as out of keeping with the overall evergreen nature of the Conservation Area.

Care must be taken to carefully consider any future tree planting in terms of both character and vistas.

Georgian brick walls are a feature of the area and some Reigate Stone walls survive as well. The flint walls in London Road are a late 19<sup>th</sup> century oddity as building flint is not found south of the north downs.



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

### **Controls operating in the Conservation Area**

#### **Designation of the Conservation Area**

The original Conservation Area was designated by Surrey County Council in 1973 and the last extension to the boundary was in 2009.

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

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 retention and reinstatement of traditional detailing is important. Reigate has suffered less than many of the Conservation Areas in the Borough, There is no retrospective control where there is no breach of planning so any improvements must be by persuasion or negotiation.

### **2) Shopfronts and Advertisements**

The Council already has robust adopted shopfront guidance. The control of unauthorised signs is a constant and unfortunately lengthy process. Officers have achieved considerable improvement over the years by the continuous enforcement against such signs and regularly negotiating signs and shopfronts that are well mannered and correctly proportioned.

### **3) East side of London Road**

The need for improvement of the hoarded sites on the east side of London is noted. The sites also offer the potential for improved access to the castle grounds.

### **4) West Street Car park**

The Local Plan notes the desirability of planting to soften the visual impact of West Street car park from London Road.

### **5) Pineapple Gates**

The restoration and reinstatement of the 1720's Pineapple Gates that stood in Park Lane is dependent on funds being available. They are currently in long term storage. There is potential for the project to be broken in to a number of stages.

### **6) Priory Stables**

The future of the stables needs to be addressed, with the paddocks returned to the park.

## **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 recently subject of review and reviewed again at the time of production of the appraisal and no boundary revisions are proposed.

## **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.

. 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