

**St Johns
Conservation Area
Appraisal**

Draft October 2014

St John's, Redhill Conservation Area



St Johns Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

October 2014

Introduction:

What is a Conservation Area?

Purpose of Appraisal

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- 2) History and evolution
- 3) Spatial Structure & Pattern: Identity Areas, Views in & Out,
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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.

Geological Map



St Johns is on the undulating Hythe Sands of the Lower Greensand with the rising Sandgate Sands to the north and the Wealden Clays to the south.



Contours

St Johns has a number of steep sandstone hillocks, the most notable being that on which the church is built.

Main Character and Basic structure Topography and Geology

Main Character & Basic structure

St Johns is located on the greensand ridge, to south of Redhill and north of the Weald plain. 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 St Johns Conservation Area conservation area is derived from St Johns Church as a central landmark building framed by groups of cottages on an undulating landscaping fronting the open common land. The organic nature of the cottage enclosures respect the contours of the landscape. The predominant positive character of the buildings is vernacular and Victorian, of an artisan nature. There is a need to ensure the cohesiveness of the buildings is not eroded by insensitive development. The enclosures from the Common had occurred by the early 19th century, the majority having 17th or 18th century origins.

Topography

The settlement is situated on the Greensand ridge about 110 metres above sea level.

Geology

St Johns is on the undulating Hythe Sands of the Lower Greensand with the rising Sandgate Sands to the north and the Wealden Clays to the south.

Land Use & Activity

The majority of the Conservation Area is residential and of a semi rural character. Other uses include a school, a shop and public houses.

2) History and evolution

KEY DATES

The area has its origins as enclosures on the Redhill Common, of medieval origin. These irregular enclosures, are sometimes known as squatter enclosures as sometimes they were obtained without title. In other cases they were granted by the Lord of the Manor in cases of hardship. The earliest surviving cottages are 10 & 11 Pendleton Road and the rear of the Plough, both 17th century timber framed cottages. Gradually the enclosures were subdivided and more cottages built, the general locality was known as Red Hill but the settlement becoming known as Little London in the 18th century, changing to St John's when the church was built. Carter's Cottages were built by Mr Carter in about 1815.

The next major change was the building of the church. The enclosure of common land for the building of a church and school was granted by Earl Somers, who as lord of the manor of Reigate, was empowered by custom to grant away common land with the consent of the copyholder tenants.

St John's was the original church of Redhill, built in 1843, on a site called known as Flint's Hill, adjacent to a now cottage occupied by a Mr Flint, now demolished. The centre of Redhill gained its own church when in 1848 St Matthews was built as a chapel of ease and in 1867 became its own parish.

The designer of the church was the architect James Thomas Knowles of Reigate. The flint boundary wall was built in 1867 as memorial to Rev William Kelk. The aisles were added to the nave of the church in 1869 by Ford & Hesketh. In 1889 the church was largely rebuilt to the design of the notable architect John Pearson, the designer of Truro Cathedral. The rebuilding took six years, with the new spire being erected in 1895.

John Loughborough Pearson (1817 -1897) was a church architect, whose principal work was Truro cathedral. Muthesius noted that he was "a figure surpassing all others in the new English church architecture", and Pevsner considered his churches "among the finest of their day not only in England but in Europe."

Pevsner said that Pearson wanted architecture that "sends you on your knees". His carefully worked out proportions and organised massing were largely devoid of ornament and built on a system of geometrical relationships, with an overall emphasis on the vertical. Other qualities are elegance and solidity. The Builder in its obituary of 1897 noted "his love of lofty proportions and of increasing their effect by every legitimate means" and he produced "miniature cathedrals, rather than simple churches." Pevsner noted that St Johns was strong and simple and "nothing else comes up to this" in Surrey.

St Johns church is important as a rare example of a completed church and spire by Pearson at his best, with an unrivalled setting on the crest of a hill. Only 5 of 25 Pearson's 'Cathedral Churches' were completed; Kilburn, Cullercoats, Leeds, Nottingham and St Johns, which has the best setting of these five. The 'Cathedral Churches' are characterised by verticality, a prominent spire, early English gothic tracery, high clerestorey and low aisles.

The church stands on a commanding position on the Common and is the central feature of the Conservation Area. It is located on a prominent greensand knoll, the last piece of high ground before the flat clay plain of the weald, with the spire prominent on this south side. This elevation is visible some distance to the south.

The original school opened in 1845 was designed by the architect Edmund Woodthorpe, paid for by compensation from the loss of common to the new railway line. The school was enlarged in 1861. As it was opposite the church, it became known as St John's School.

The lower school was opened in 1884. The architect was S.W.Haughton. The new lower building became the Boy's School and the infants and girls stayed in the old building. In 1910 the Upper School was demolished, replaced by a new school building by the Redhill architects T.R. and V. Hooper, reusing the clock from the old tower.

A hidden feature of the school is the air raid shelters, built in October 1939. There were 3 shelters, for infants, girls and boys which extend under the common. In 1941 the walls of the boys' shelter were painted under the guidance of art master Mr Allen with murals of children's stories such as Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe, Robin Hood and others.

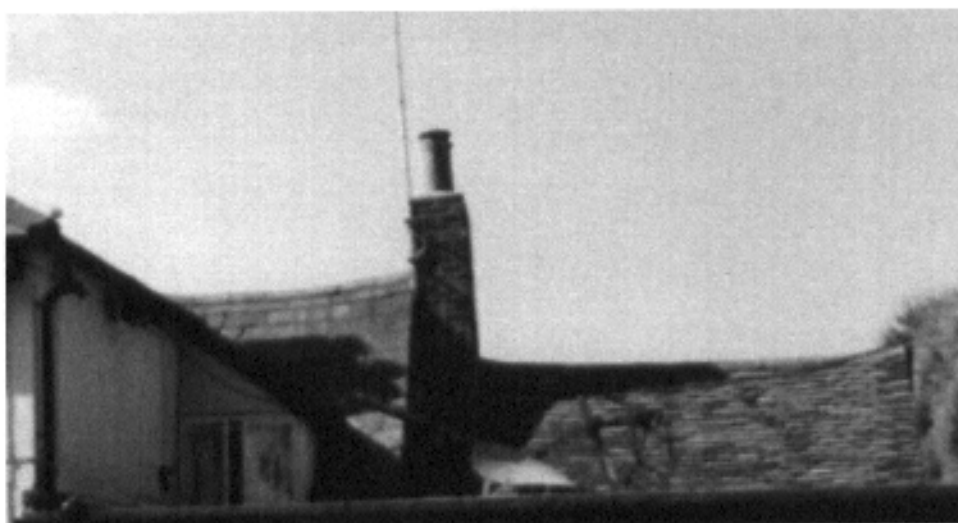
The 19th century saw an increase in artisans' cottages. The Bricklayer's Arms and cottages were demolished in King's Avenue in the 1930's and other cottages to the south were lost in clearances in the 1960's and 1970's. The Victorian laundry and cottages were also demolished in the 1970's and replaced with Ardshiel Drive. Concern at the level of redevelopment lead to the designation of the Conservation Area in 1977.

Key Dates

17th & 18th century enclosures
1843 Church built
1845 School built
1889-1895 Church rebuilt



10 & 11 Pendleton Road, an early 17th century timber framed house (SHC)



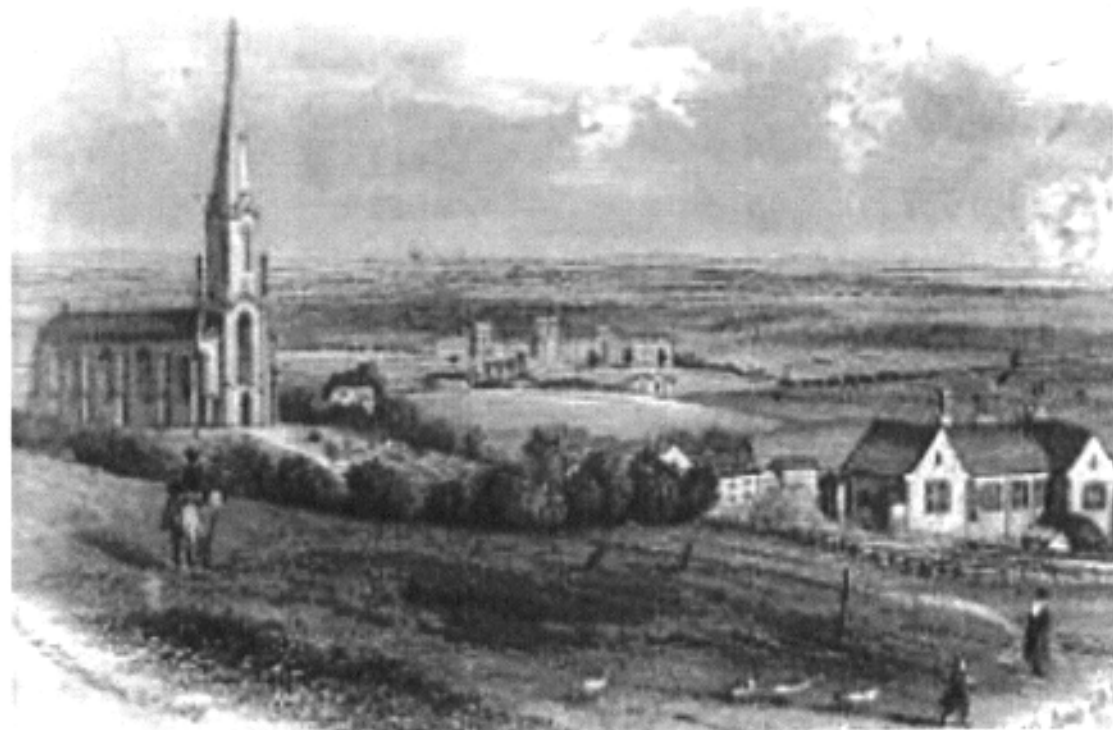
17th century timber frame cottage at the rear of the Plough.



Carter's Cottages built in 1815 by Mr Carter



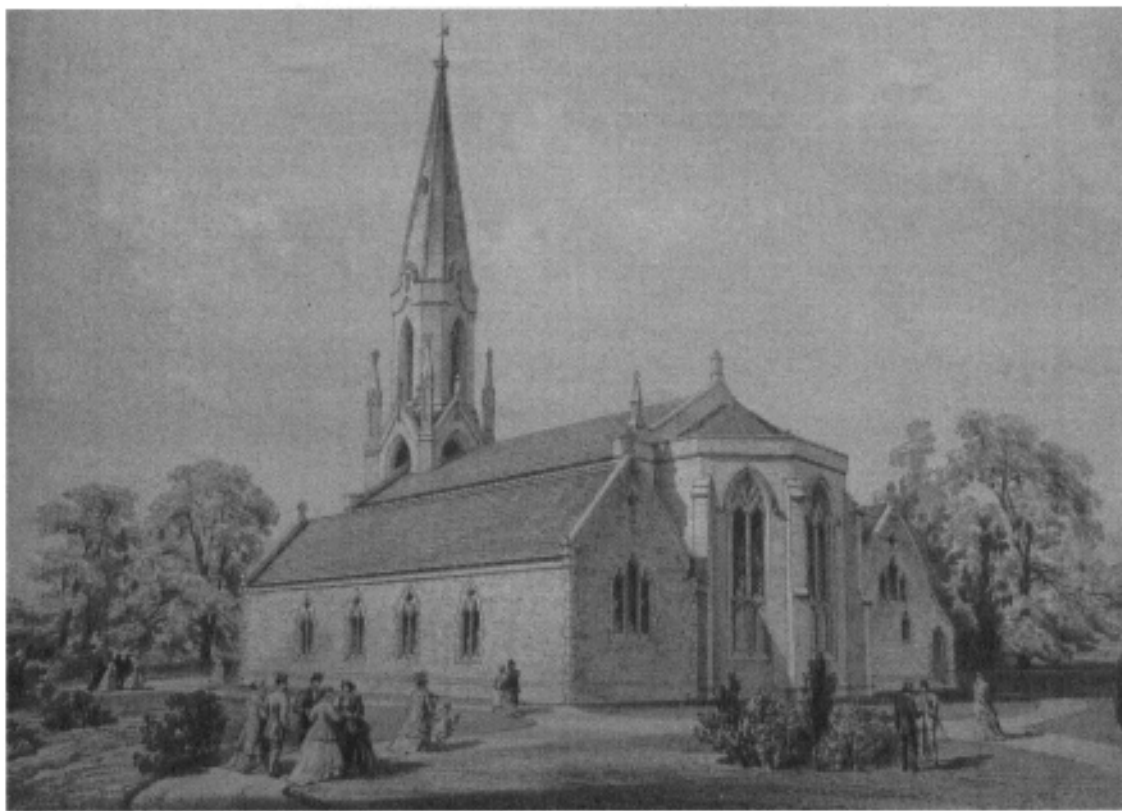
The Knowles church and St Johns in 1857



St Johns Church and school in 1857



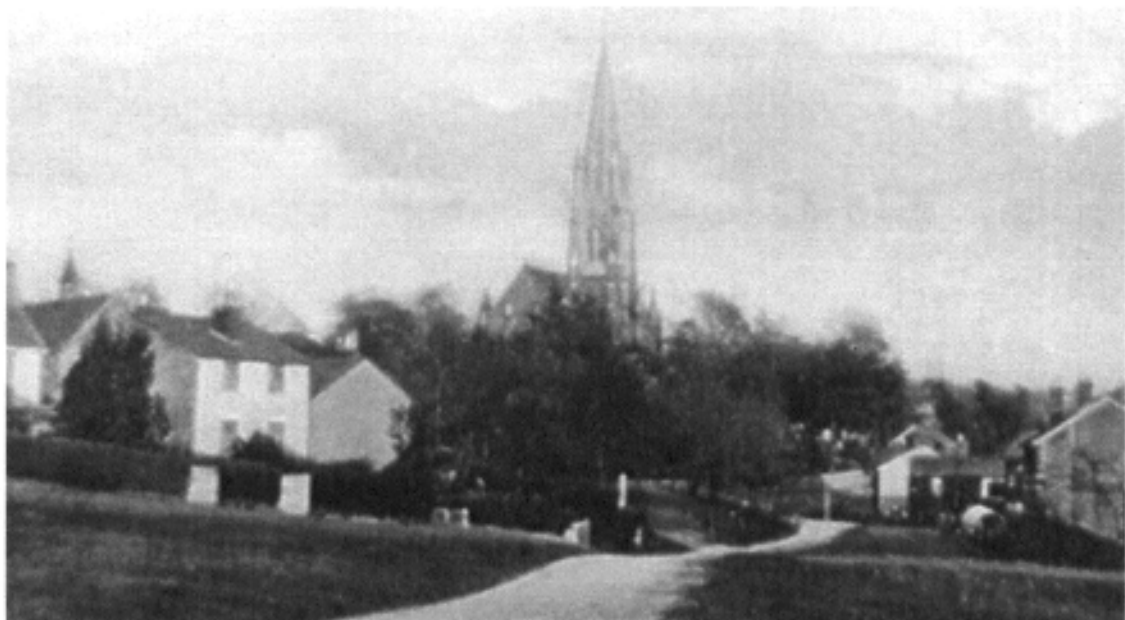
The school in 1845



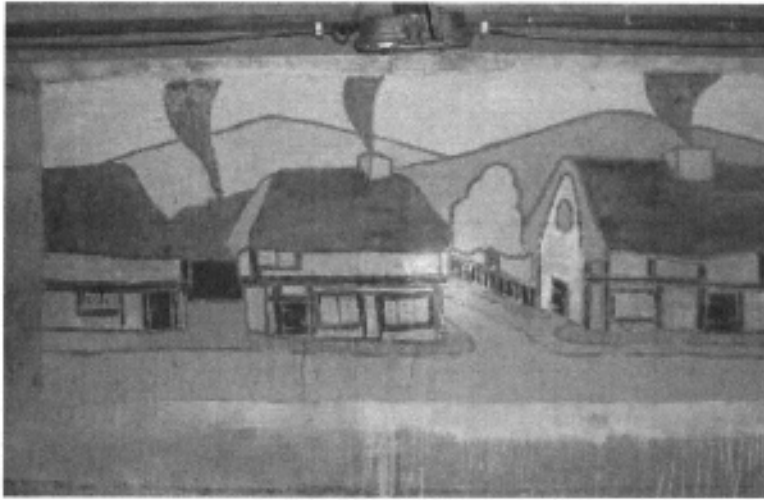
Ford & Hesketh's side aisles additions to the church in 1869



St Johns circa 1900. Note the turret on lower school as well as upper school.



The Common circa 1900



Murals in the Boy's school air raid shelter of 1941



The lower school of 1884



The Redhill Laundry site, now Ardshiel Drive.

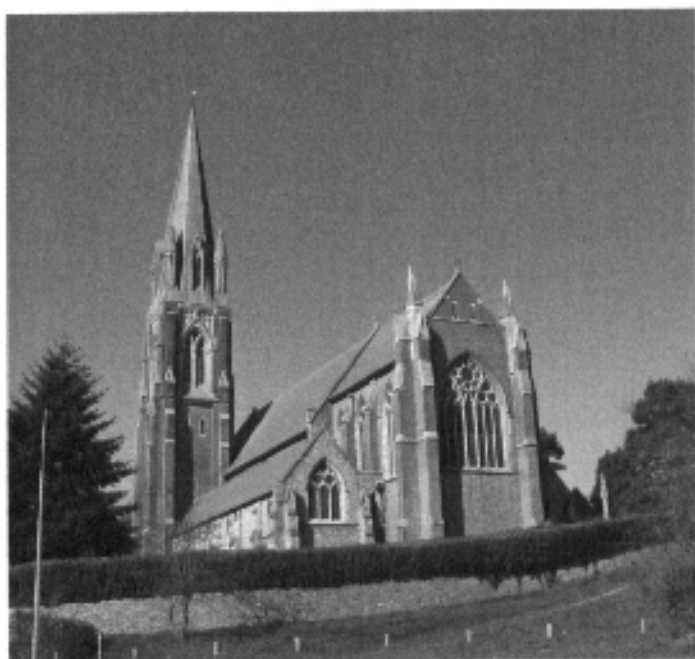




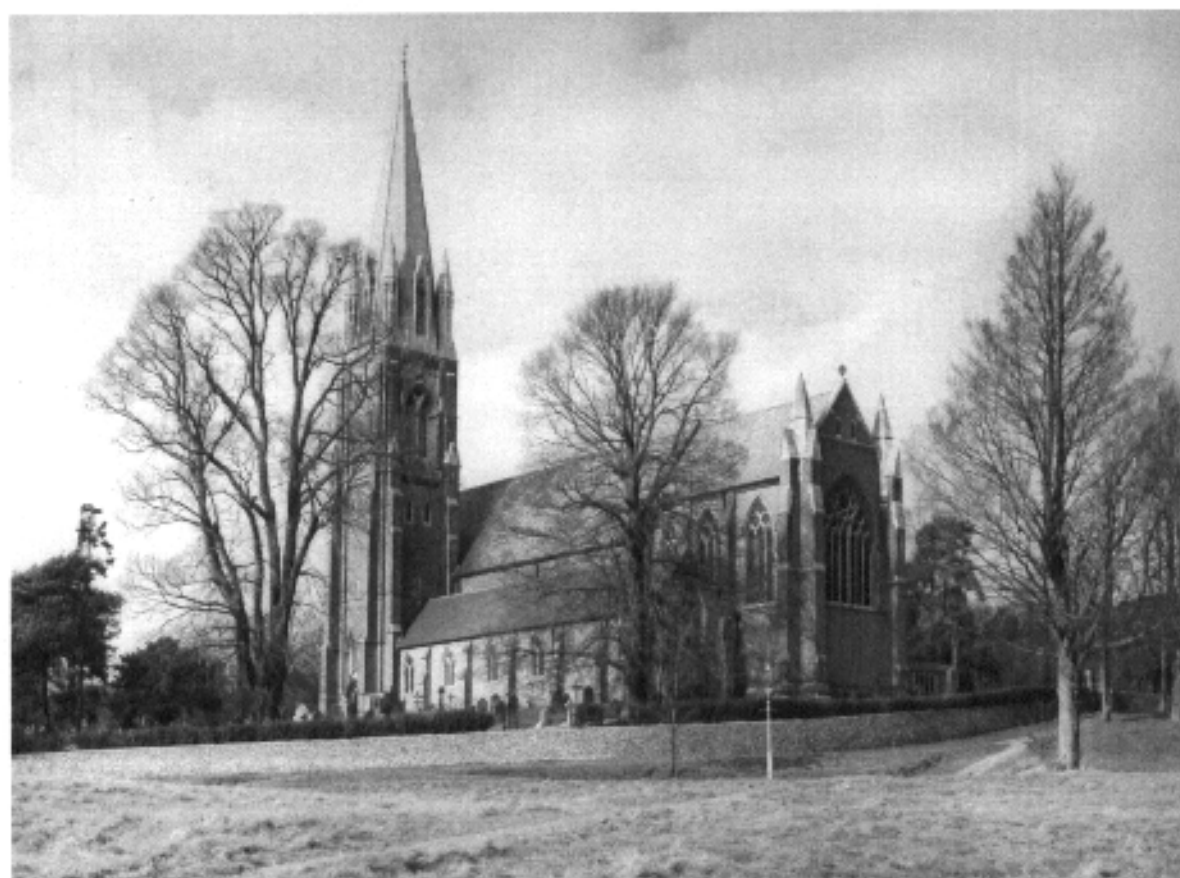
Hooper's 1910 Upper School with clock tower



The lantern cross war memorial in St John's church of 1918



Two views of St John's church the one blow in the 1960's with elm trees (SHC)





St Johns in the 1920's, showing the common land clear of trees.

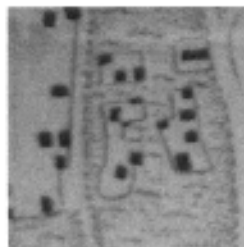
St Johns History in Maps



Senex 1729 with High trees Farmhouse at top and St Johns below



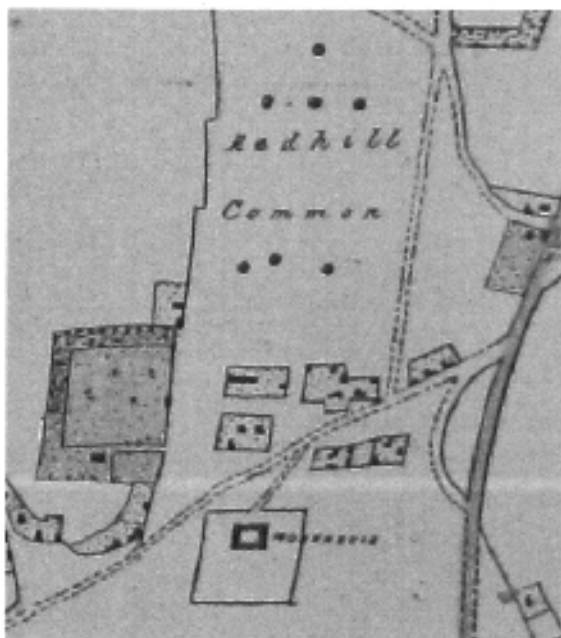
Rocque 1768



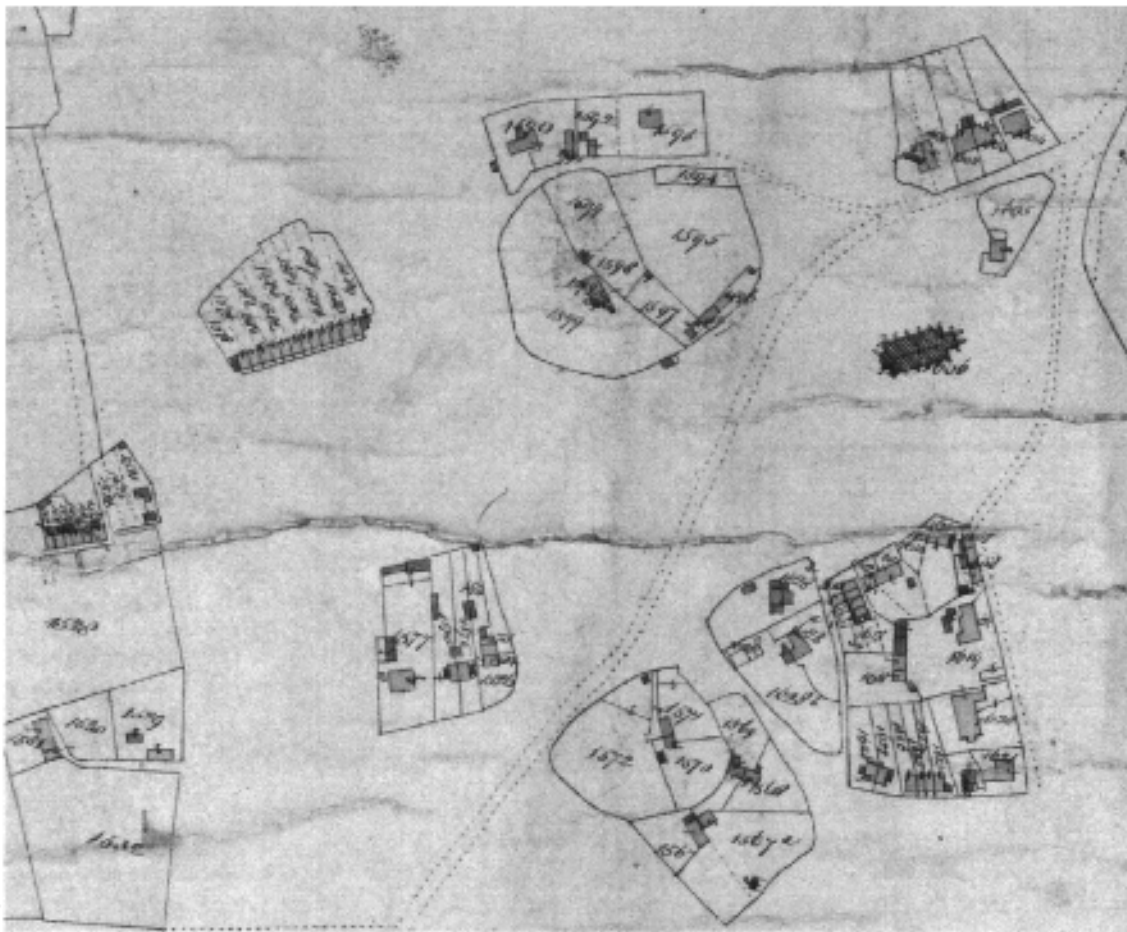
Lindley & Crosley 1793



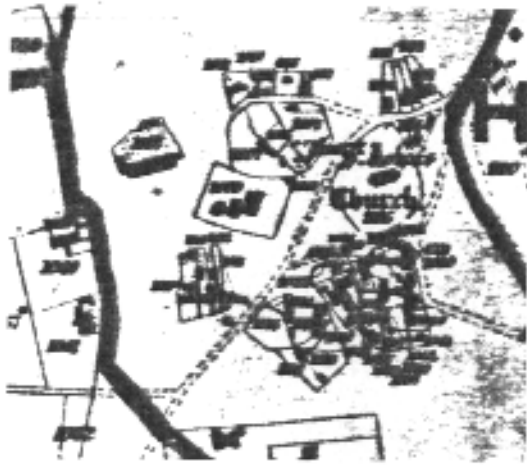
Ordnance Survey Manuscript 1808- 1810



1835 Parliamentary Plan



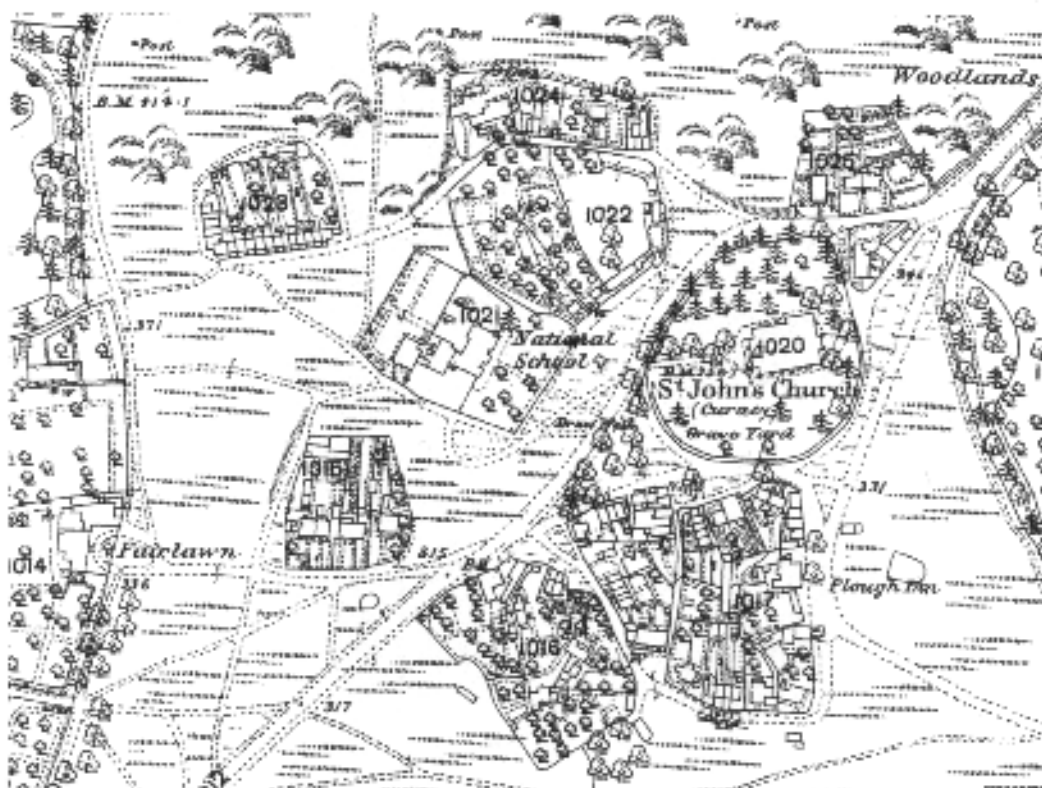
Tithe Map 1845



Tithe Map 1860

ST JOHNS Historical Maps

Ordnance Survey Old Series



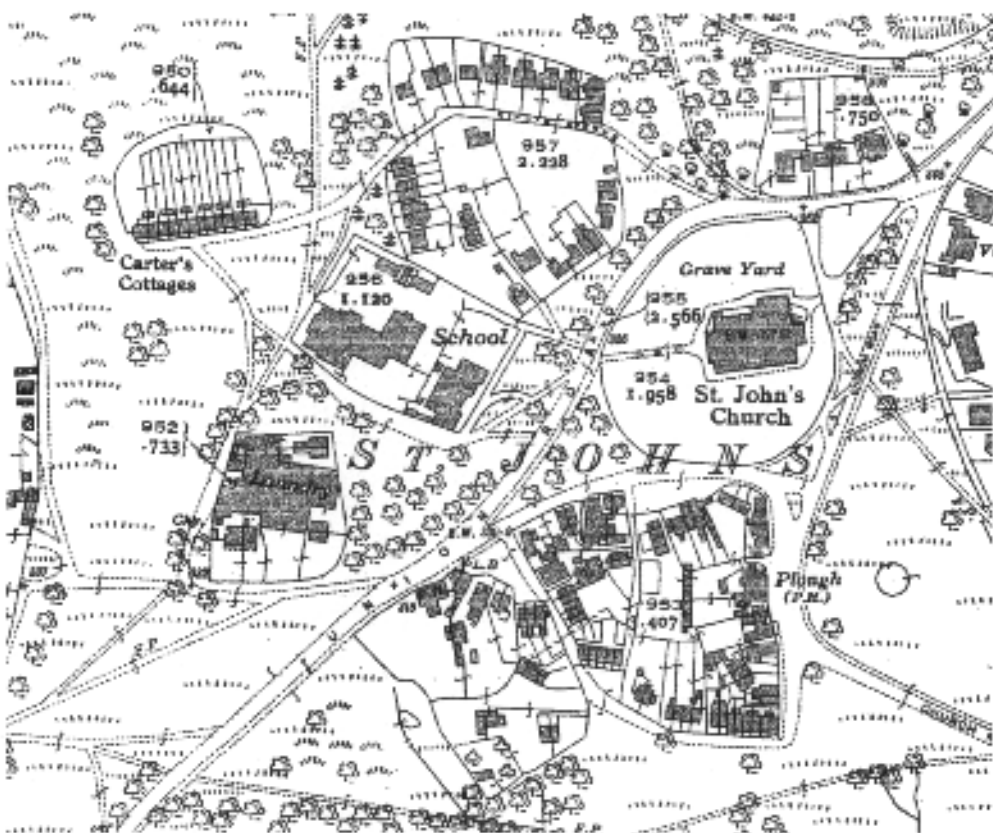
Surveyed 1871



Revised 1895



Revised 1911



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 to split such areas into smaller identity or character areas. Whilst a number of sub identity areas can be identified in the case of St Johns, it does have a relatively cohesive character of organic shaped enclosures on an undulating hilly landscape enclosing the central feature of the church.

The sub identity areas include St Johns Church and churchyard at the centre, the enclosures to the south, the school, Carter's Cottages and the enclosures to the north. Ardshiel Drive contributes little in terms of architecture but its organic shaped enclosure follows the general character of the area. The organic shaped enclosures combined with the undulating landscaping create an area that is uniquely different to other historic settlements in the Borough.

Prominent buildings

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

The Church : A visually prominent landmark high on a hill in the centre of the settlement.

The School : prominent buildings on a hill side location.

Carter's Cottages : An impressive group of cottages built circa 1815.
parish

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 of the church from the south, west, south east and east. From outside the area there is a view of the church from the north. A number of views have declined in historic value over the years, due to tree planting. There is a need to consider views and vistas when trees are planted so they frame view or are an active part of the composition, and also consider the impact of their future growth.

Rhythm: plot size, unit size

The area has a rural hamlet character, set on undulating hills with wide sweeps of grass between roundels of cottage plots. The church has a monument presence whilst the cottages are relatively modest sizes and plots, with a scattering of units, some within general buildings lines when they form small groups. Front gardens are often small.

Townscape analysis



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



On entering the Conservation Area on the west side the spire of St Johns is central to the view, though is more obscured by trees than historically would have been the case. The rural appearance is maintained by the kerbless verges. The Pendleton at 1 Pendleton Rd is on the right, historically know as The Elm Shades.



Turning left one passes Ardshiel Avenue, a 1970's estate but with a historic irregular enclosure set within the common, a feature of the area.



Further on, after turning right into King's Avenue is the upper part of St John's school, this element built in 1910 by Vincent Hooper, a local architect.



Further on are Carter's Cottages built by Mr Carter in 1815, unusual as for its length in a rural area, as a row of Georgian artisan cottages.



There is another glimpse of the school at this point.



33 to 27 are a pleasant group of later Victorian cottage



Further on, there is a mix of early 20th century and Victorian cottages, some of which have eoded their character by window replacement and vehicle dominated frontages with concrete hardstandings.



Returning back to the start with the western approach, on the south sidethere are a group of Victorian cottages next to the public house at 14-24 St Johns and some well mannered 1970's infill housing beyond.



On the north side is the lower school of 1884 set into a grassy hillside



On the opposite side of the road is the lime avenue in front of the church and the flint boundary wall of 1867.



Beyond the school, on the north side, is an important group of cottages 12 to 5 Pendleton Road. Set back at 8 & 9 is a listed 17th century timber frame cottage. 8 & 9 are listed 19th century stone cottages.



12 Pendleton Road



8 & 9 Pendleton Road,



10 & 11 Pendleton Road, Redhill



A significant tree was lost in the winter storms



Beyond this is an interesting group of historic cottages



2 & 3 Pendleton Road, Georgian brick cottages



1 St Johns , a pleasant Georgian house



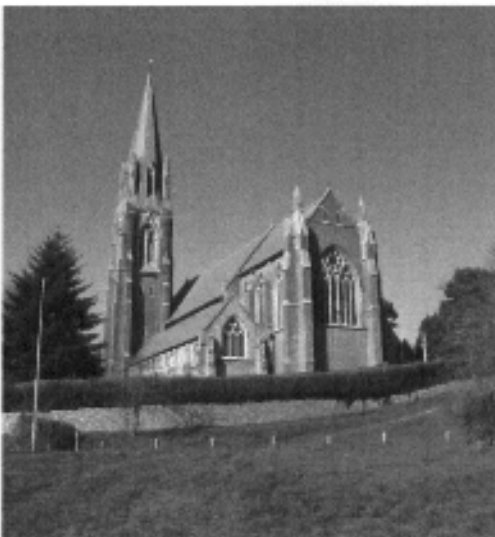
4 pendleton road, a house with early origins but extensively rebuilt in the late 19th century



We now reach the east approach to the Conservation Area, where the church again is the focal point.



In the churchyard is the war memorial



There is a fine view of the east window



Historically the main view of the church is to the south



The more distant view has been largely lost due to recent tree growth and planting



Directly to the south in Fountain Road is a good view of the spire



117 & 119 Fountain Road are listed cottages with 17th century origins



113 – 115 Fountain Road are modern whilst 11 is an altered 18th century brick cottage.



7 & 9 Church Road are locally listed 19th century stone cottages



This forms a pleasant group with the public house, The Plough, which incorporates a 17th century timber frame cottage. A view in the 1970's shows the substantial row of trees lining the street.



The Plough



Beyond this are some polite 1970's houses and a Victorian stucco terrace at 27 to 41 St Johns



Finally there is a small group of mostly modern houses at the end of this road, broken up by the contours of the land.

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 Victorian period. These are typified by peg tile roofs, 50 degree roof pitches, short roof spans, timber frame, painted brick or brick with burnt headers. The fenestration is characterised by mostly casement windows and some sash. Gabled roofs are most characteristic of most of these properties.

2) Mid Victorian. These are mostly slate roofed painted stucco, multistock brick or greensand stone houses with low pitch slate roofs or steeper clay tile and sash windows or casement windows.

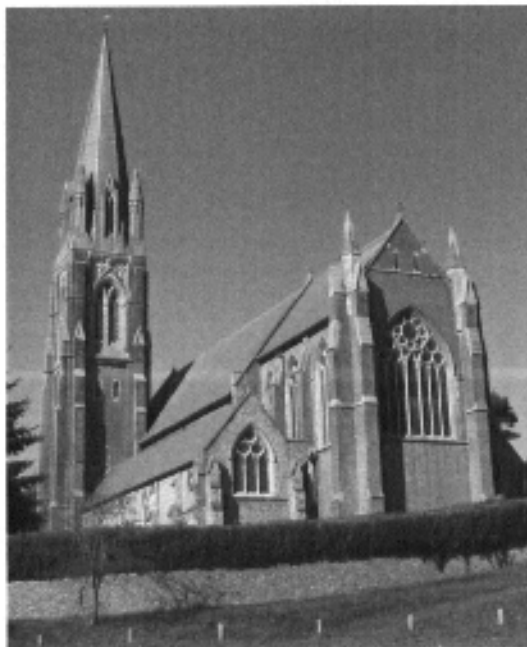
Fenestration

Fenestration is determined by age. The predominant character of the area is a mix of casement and sash windows.

Materials & Detail

The historic properties in the area are typified by timber frame, painted brick or brick with burnt headers or greensand stone. The Victorian period is mostly painted stucco or multistock brick. White painted joinery is typical of the area.

The Church has different materials to the rest of the area, with London Stock brick with Bath Stone dressings, flint aisles and boundary wall and a green slate roof. Green slate historically was from some Welsh quarries but is now imported as these reserves have been exhausted. Green slate was used for higher status buildings.



Illustrations of Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail by period



Vernacular: Historic 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.



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

Typical Materials



Greensand Stone

Flemish Bond brick with burnt headers



Multistock Brick & Slate

Stucco

Clay Peg Tiles

5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape

In recent years balancing the need for parking with the landscape character of the common has been a key topic. This seems to have been reasonably successfully achieved. The area is characterized by undulating grassland, with kerbless edges to the more the more rural roads and the tendency for footpath provision on one side of the road, or none at all on more minor drives, has kept the rural character.

Street furniture is limited. The most conspicuous features are the traffic lights on Pendleton Road and the wheelie bins in front of Carter's Cottages.

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 number of native tree species of the Greensand ridge. The native trees are Oak, Yew, Holly, Lime, and introduced Scots Pine, with the occasional Beech tree. There is a sober avenue of Limes in front of the west door of St Johns Church, but Scots Pines are the best and most striking feature of the churchyard.

Invasive species such as Sycamore and Norway Maple are dominant in the area, probably as the area became wooded in the 20th century, outcompeting native species. They tend to have problems of poor multi stem growth, self seeding in wind traps and a tendency to clump.

Tree planting has tended to be of imported but non-traditional ornamentals which erode the traditional character of the area, such as Red Oak. Planting has also impacted on vistas and viewpoints of the church, and loss of open landscape.

Boundary Treatment/ Enclosure: Walls & Hedges

In terms of boundary treatment the Holly hedge around the church is the most prominent feature. Holly is also found in hedges elsewhere in St Johns. The 1867 flint boundary wall of the church is at odds with the local geology, the nearest source of flint being several miles away but significant in its extent and character. There is some very limited use of the local greensand stone in the area, often for retaining walls. Other hedges tend to be of mixed native species, sometimes contained within timber palisade fences.

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 the Borough Council on the 31 March 1977.

No amendments to the boundary are proposed as part of the current designation.

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 PPS5 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 discouraging 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 including listed building designations and the Article 4 Direction 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.

The potential for enhancement appears to be principally townscape elevational treatment and management of vistas.

The need to encourage reinstatement of traditional detailing is important. St Johns has suffered less than many of the Conservation Areas in the Borough, but 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.



The more distant views of St Johns church has been largely lost due to recent tree growth and planting



Whilst wheelie bins are prominent in the townscape at Carter's Cottages, perhaps this could be resolved by siting the bins behind the boundary walls.

Resource Implications

Enhancement of the Conservation Area can be achieved in part by the Development Control 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 production of the appraisal and a revised boundary has been designated subject to confirmation after public consultation.

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