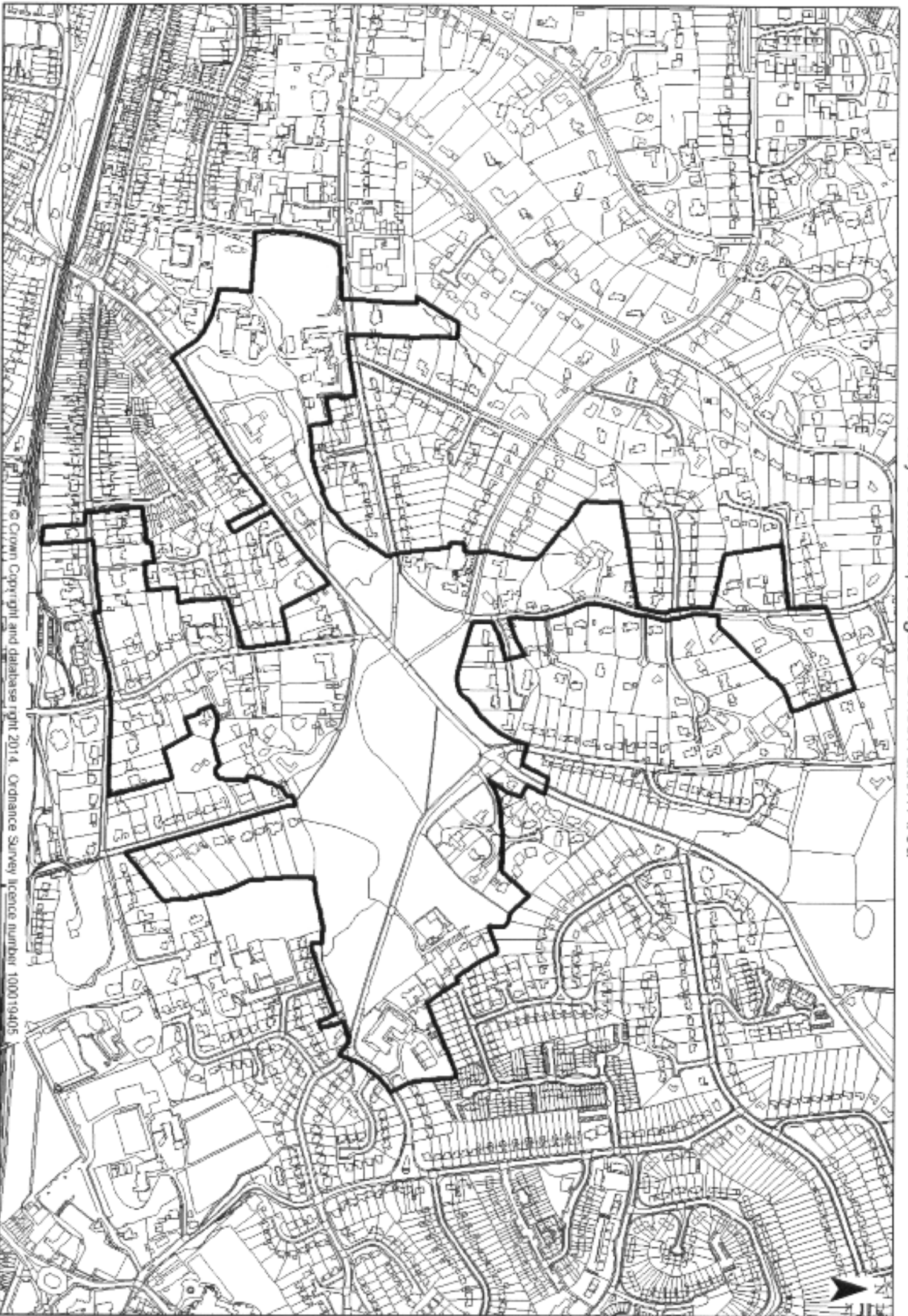




**Wray Common
Conservation Area
Appraisal**

Draft July 2014

Wray Common, Reigate Conservation Area



Wray Common Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

July 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 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 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

Wray Common is located on undulating gault clay just below the North Down ridge, on rising ground at about 120 metres above sea level, elevated above the town of Reigate to the south west. 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 Wray Common conservation area is derived principally from the substantial Victorian mansions in the vicinity of the common, the bordering mansions and their mature gardens and trees enclosing the common to form a cohesive character area. A key feature of the Common is the windmill.

Topography

The common is situated on rising ground about 120 metres above sea level, below the North Down plain. The source of Wallace Brook becomes evident at the west end of the Conservation area but is hidden from view. The ground rises to the north and at the north end of Gatton Road rises more steeply as the Reigate Stone and Chalk beds are reached.

Geology

Wray Common is located on the gault clay, with Reigate Stone and Chalk beds on the north edge of the Conservation Area. Reigate Stone was an important building material in the Conservation Area, the red coloured handmade tiles for tiles and tile hanging and bricks are from local alluvial clays, as the yellow gault clay was a difficult clay for the manufacture of bricks till the 19th century, Wray Common windmill being an example of gault clay bricks, though their yellow colour is hidden by tar paint. Flint is absent from the area as the chalk in the vicinity was largely lacking in flint.



Geological Map

Wray Common is on the undulating Gault Clay with the rising land of the North Downs Ridge Reigate Stone and Chalk on the north side.



Contours

The common itself is a gentle undulating valley with rising ground to the north

Land Use & Activity

The common forms a large percentage of the Conservation Area. The majority of private land in the Conservation Area is residential, with the Fire Brigade headquarters in the western corner.

2) History and evolution

The earliest significant activity in the area was the roman tile kilns around the Doods area, though there are no currently visible traces of this within the area. The common probably arose as a gathering place for cattle and the funnelling in points of a number of cross roads. This would have been a more important route being a direct access from London to Cherchefelle, the original settlement of Reigate, but would have declined after the town was moved to its present position below the castle in 1150. After this, the common would have been a backwater until the turnpike of 1807 would have increased its prominence. A cottage in the location of the later Northcote was the country home of Robert Waithman, MP and Lord Mayor of London in 1823. However there was no building in the area apart from Wray Common Windmill in 1824.

In 1847 the railway arrived in Reigate and with the founding of the Wray Park Estate plots were sold off for development on the west and north side of the Common in the 1850's. This gradually lead to other adjacent areas being developed with substantial Victorian mansions including the Wray Common Road area in the 1880's, though by the 1900's new mansions and their plots were decreasing in size.

KEY DATES

1807 Turnpike Road
1824 Windmill built
1847 Railway built
1850's Wray Park Estate established

2) History and Evolution Illustrations



Wray Farm House . This is the earliest surviving building in the Conservation Area , dating from the 16th century.



Watercolour of a tile hung cottage that stood on the site of Northcote on Wray Common, Reigate, owned by Robert Waithman, Lord Mayor of London and MP for London in the early 19th century, an early example of the purchase of humble farmhouses for leisure use. (SHC)



Wray Common Windmill was built in 1824 with adjoining weatherboarded miller's cottage and granary on staddles. The former front door with fanlight is on the right.



After the arrival of the railway in 1847 the Wray Park Estate was developed with houses being first built in Wray Park Road and then large houses on the bottom of Reigate Hill and edges of the Common, such as Hethersett above.



The Dingle, an early mansion house of 1857 built by Joseph Crosfield, tea merchant on the north east corner of the park of Reigate Lodge. The Crosfields were a prominent Quaker family. It is now part of the Surrey Fire & Rescue Headquarters.



St Davids, a house by 1860, was founded as a school in 1882 which survived till 1939. After the war it became a part of the Surrey Fire & Rescue Headquarters.



Laglands was designed in 1896 by Alexander Bell, the RIBA Vice president for the chairman of the Stock Exchange.



The Wray Common Road area was developed in the 1880's with houses mostly by the local architect Albert Venner

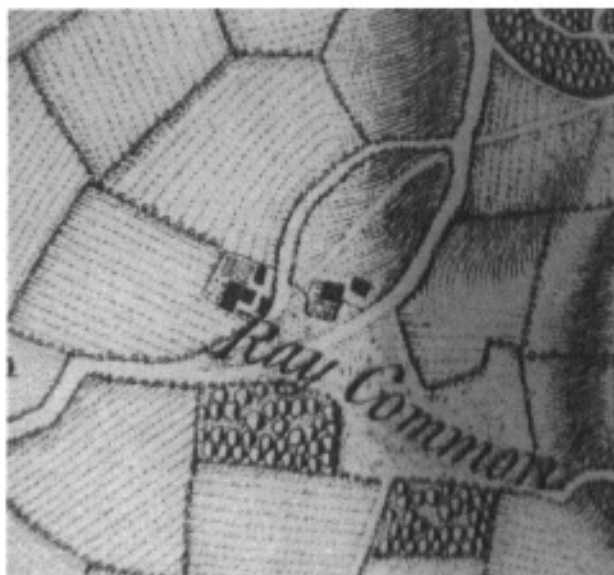


At the turn of the century more domestic scale of houses were built in The Way and Croydon Road.

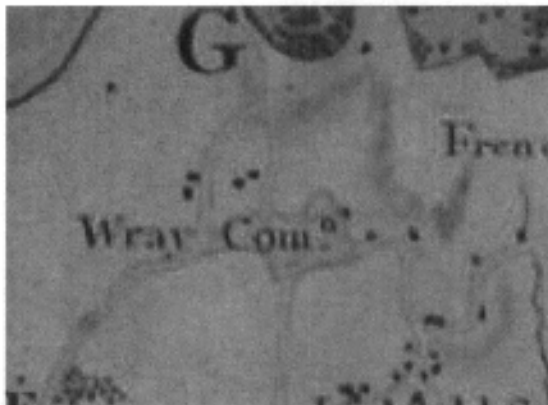


Little Gatton was rebuilt in 1934 by the architect Guy Church for Sax Rohmer, the author of the Fu Manchu novels. The Victorian Reigate Stone gothic house was rebuilt in the style of a Kenyan hunting loggia with stoep verandahs. The interior contains panelling from the Dining Room, Bar and Purser's Office of the Mauritania by Harold Peto. The house was then lived in by Sir Malcolm Campbell who worked on the Bluebird in the garage in the grounds.

Wray Common History in Maps



Rocque 1768



Lindley & Crosley 1793



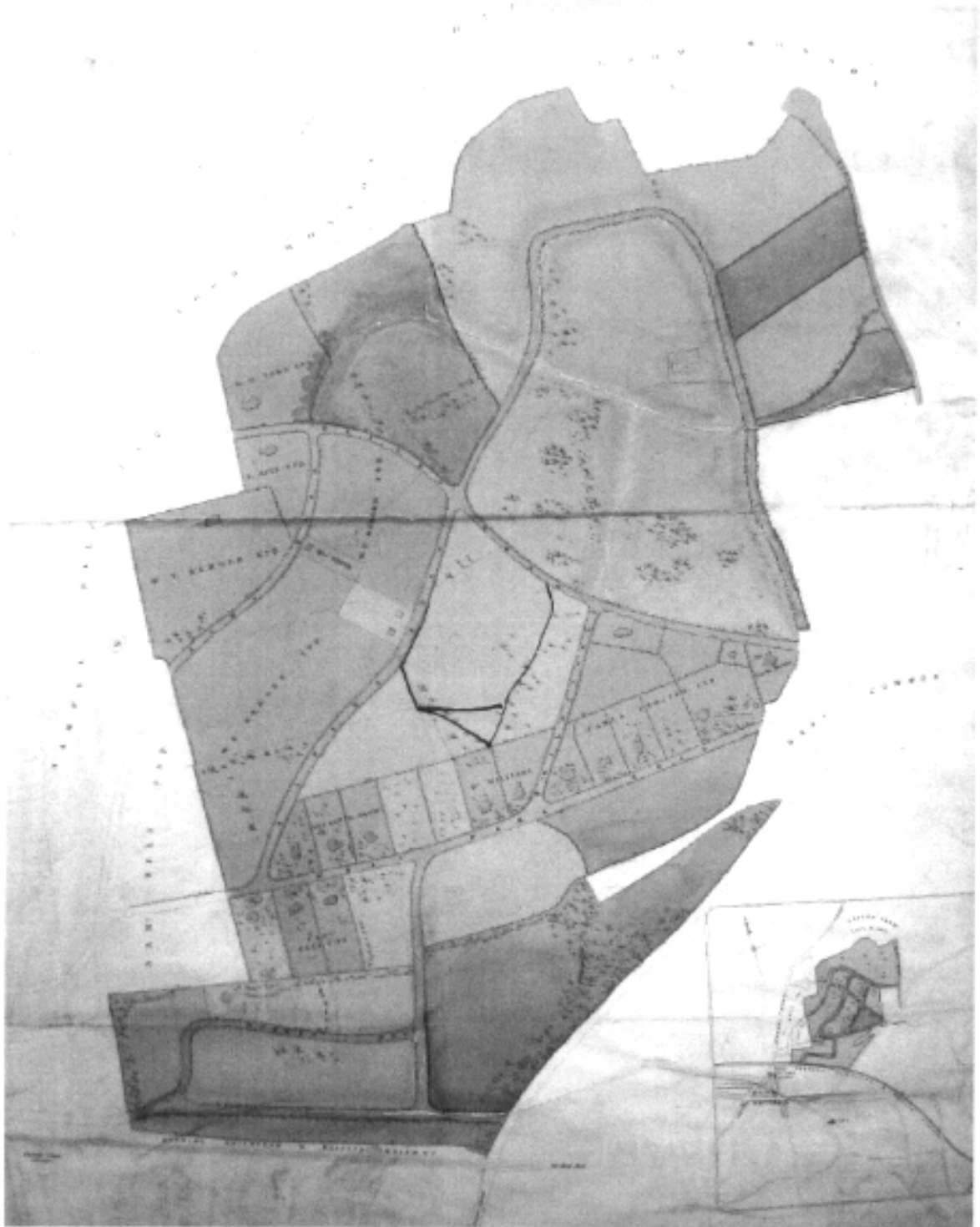
Ordnance Survey Manuscript 1808- 1810 with turnpike road of 1807



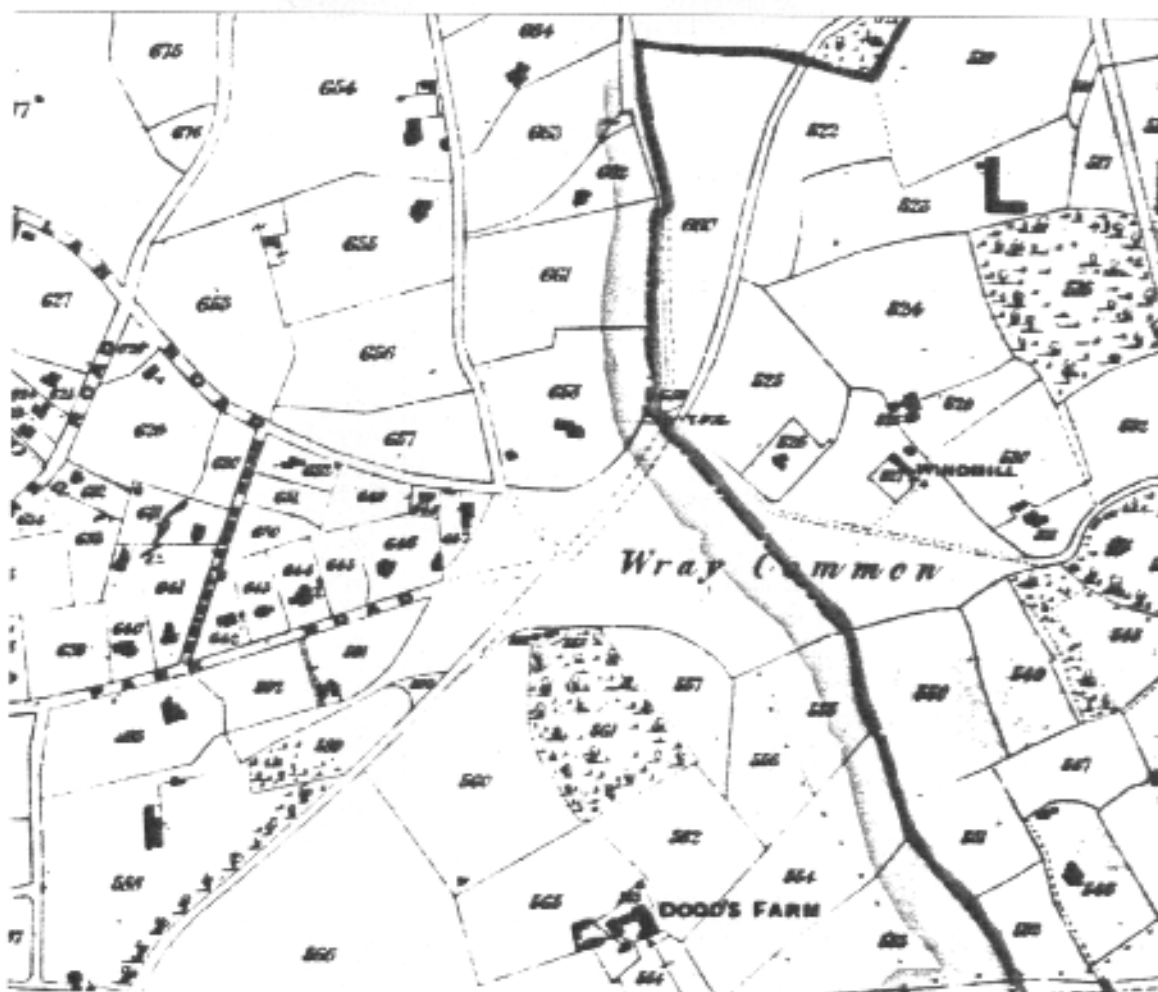
Greenwood 1823



Tithe Map 1845



Wray Park Estate map 1850's (Minet Library)

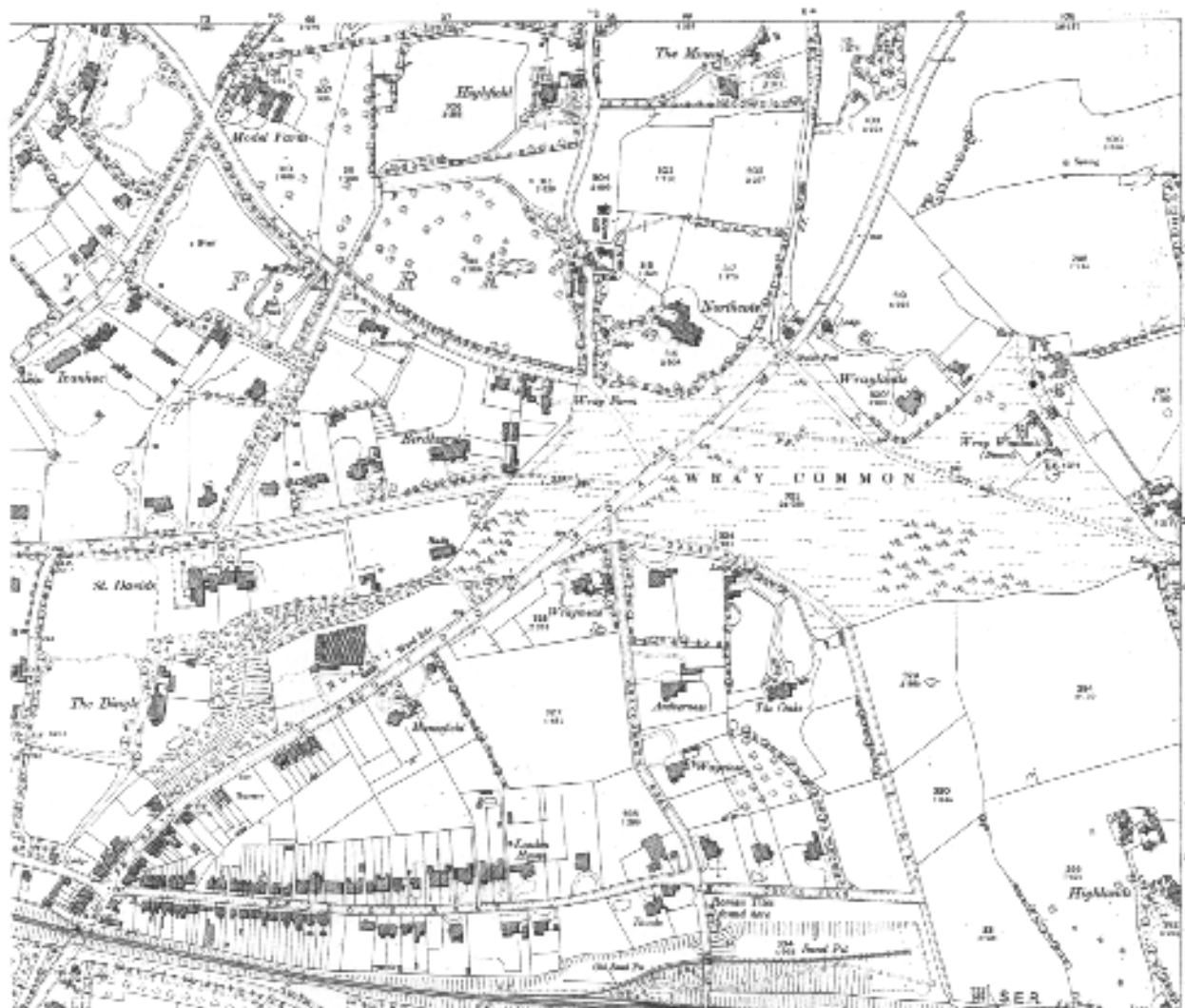


Tithe Map 1860

Wray Common Old OS Maps



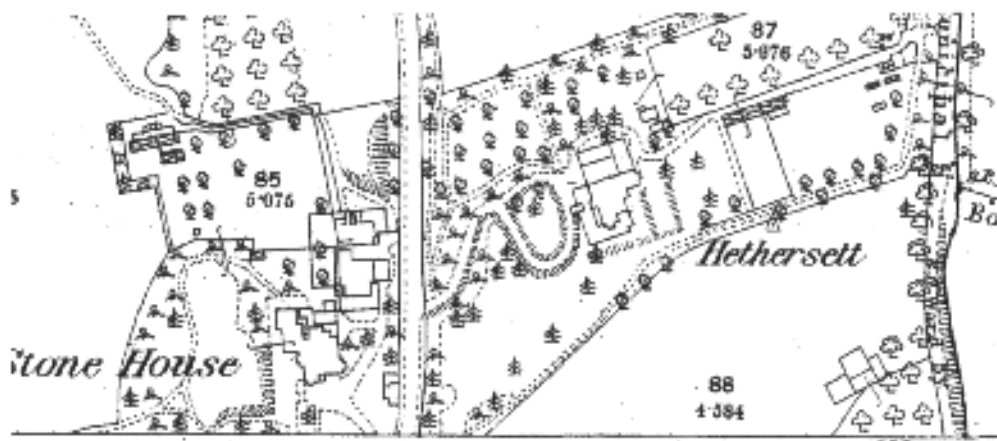
Surveyed in 1870



Revised in 1895



Revised 1912



Surveyed 1870



Revised 1895



Revised 1912



Revised 1933

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. A number of sub identity areas can be identified in the case of Wray Common.

The principal identity of the area is the character of large Victorian mansions in spacious grounds around the Common. Pevsner describes it as "a lush and effective open space surrounded by big houses in gardens, and a model of good open suburban landscape".

This can then be divided into a number of sub identity areas ; the Common, St David's, Wray Common Road, Gatton Road and the Way.

The Common : The undulating gault clay gives a lush grassland when cut short, with the surrounding Victorian mansions and their specimen trees giving enclosure, the windmill and Wray Farmhouse being prominent features.

St David's : The Fire Services is in two Victorian mansions set in spacious grounds, with specimens trees, with origins as the parkland of the Georgian country house Reigate Lodge.

Wray Common Road : A group of 1880's tile hung mansions by local architect Albert Venner

Gatton Road : A collection of stone Victorian mansions on around a lane rising up to the North Downs.

The Way : A group of Edwardian villas at the edge of the common.

Prominent buildings

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

The Windmill : A prominent tower windmill of 1824 of black tarred gault brick on the highest part of the Common.

Wray Farmhouse : a picturesque 16th century farmhouse on the edge of the Common with ornamental trees such as cedar in the grounds.

Wray Coppice : a substantial late Victorian tile hung mansion

St Davids : A large Reigate Stone Victorian mansion and school in substantial grounds with mature specimen trees

Hethersett : A Victorian mansion with tower visible from high points on the North Downs

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 common itself, the windmill, Wray Coppice, Wray Farmhouse and view from Reigate Hill towards the common.

Rhythm: plot size, unit size

The area has a semi rural character with large houses in substantial grounds, with building lines generally set back, with large footprints and high floor ceiling height.

Townscape analysis

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

Wray Common



The Common is extensive open and undulating grassland boundary by native and exotic hedge, shrubbery and tree species.



The windmill is a landmark on the east edge of the Common, though there is a need for tree management if these vistas are to be maintained..

A Preamble around the Common starting at the southern part of the Croydon Road entrance



Wraymead 151 Croydon Road is one of a group of large tile hung Victorian houses of the 1880's built in the vicinity of Wray Common Road.



To the east of Wray Common Road is the most impressive of these tile hung houses, Wray Coppice. The Scots Pines and hedge boundary enhance the view.



There are the number of supporting buildings in the form of gardener's cottages, coach houses and lodges of a smaller scale



Set back in its own spacious grounds is the Oaks, also of the 1860's



Further east is a Victorian Lodge of painted Reigate Stone



Further to the east is Wray Mill House. This is a large modern building which has different architectural conventions to the Victorian buildings in the area and it is recommended that, apart from Wray Mill Lodge, is omitted from the Conservation Area.



To the north west is the black tarred tower Windmill of 1824, a local landmark, with its granary on staddles and weatherbaored Miller's Cottage.

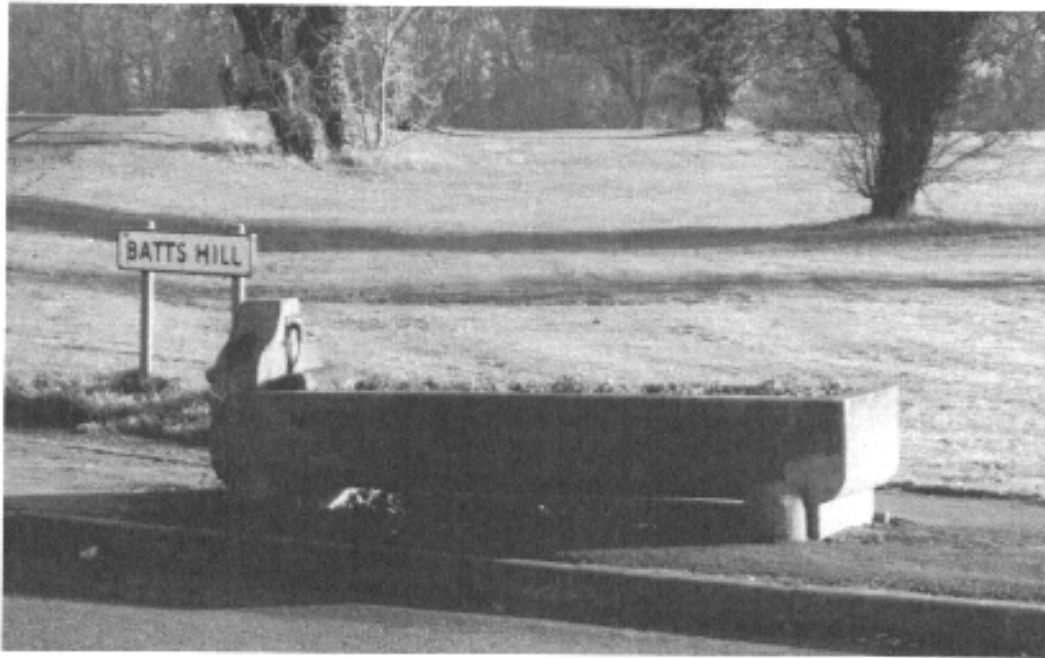


Wraylands is a substantial Victorian house of the 1850's with tile hanging typical of the area and a prominent turret.



To the north are the notable highway features of the Victorian finger post of the 1880's and a Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association horse trough





On the west side is Wray Farhouse, the oldest building in the area, dating back to the 16th century, with a setting of ornamental trees.

This finishes the preambulation round the Common. This is then followed by an examination of the roads off the Common, starting at Raglan Road next to Wray Farm house

Raglan Road



Round the corner is 86 Raglan Road, original part of Birdshurst, a Victorian mansion now demolished. It was possibly a dower house. The Coach house (below) is in Wray Park Road.



Wray Park Road

The main feature in Wray Park Road is St Davids, a former Victorian school in Reigate Stone, the fire and rescue service



At the back is the Chapel, built in 1882 when the house was converted to a school.



The late Victorian school Cricket Pavilion

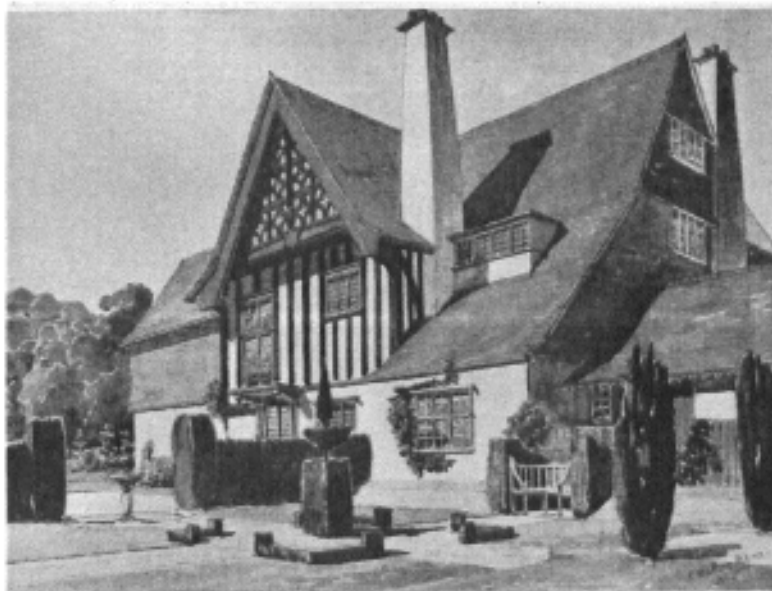
To the north is Brockmere , a substantial stucco mansion, one of the early Wray Park estate houses.



Croydon Road



51 Croydon Road was designed by T. Phillips Figgis in 1906 in an arts and crafts style.



Beyond this are a cluster of houses by the local architect, Albert Venner.



Further along is The Dingle of 1857 set in the former parkland landscape of Reigate Lodge, with Cedar trees and a prominent hedge boundary, now the Surrey Fire Service Headquarters. Its coach house also survives.



Coach house to The Dingle



142 Croydon Road on the south side of the road is a picturesque Lodge in local sandstone.

Wray Common Road

Along Wray Common Road are a number of large tile hung houses of the 1880's by Venner and others.



35 to 39 Wray Common Road



36 to 40 Wray Common Road



50 to 54 Wray Common Road



Wray Common Nursing Home

Doods Road



92 & 93 Doods Road is a neo georgian house of 1903 by Horace Field, a rarity in an area typified by asymmetrical gothic and vernacular influenced compositions.



The nursing home is an impressive turreted Victorian mansion but inappropriately altered and extended over the years



To the west of the nursing home are a number of substantial Victorian mansions



A Villa on the south side of the road is of local Reigate Stone

Doods Way



Carr End is another of the Venner tile hung houses found in Wray Common Road.

The Way



Gatton Road



The former Lodge to Northcote, a demolished Victorian mansion, was built in the 1850's and is an attractive Reigate Stone building



Further north is the former Lodge to Laglands at 3 Gatton Road, built of Bargate Stone. Both this and the house, now divided, were designed by the architect Alexander Graham, in 1896 for the Chairman of the Stock Exchange.





Further on is Little Gatton Lodge , built in Reigate Stone in the 1850's.



Little Gatton itself was transformed from a Victorian Gothic house to a Kenya style hunting lodge in 1934 by the architect G.Church for Sax Rohmer. The roof is of green slate.



The garage at Little Gatton is where Sir Malcolm Campbell worked on Bluebird.

On the east side of the road is the impressive turreted Hethersett., a mansion of the 1850's. 29 Gatton Road.



Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail

Architectural Conventions

The area is typified by mid to late 19th century large Victorian mansion in the Old English style ,with tile hanging predominant. The roofs are generally of handmade plain clay tiles , with some fishscale banding and decorative ridge tiles, 50 degree roof pitches, and gables. The composition is usually asymmetrical of an additive form, with short span gables projecting from a gabled or hipped roof. The fenestration is characterised by sash windows and some mullion and transom of vertical proportions, with high floor ceiling heights. Large vertical chimneys are an important part of a balance composition.

There are other materials evident such as slate, stucco, brick or Bargate Stone which nonetheless add to the cohesive character of the area of large Victorian mansions in large grounds. Smaller scale ancillary buildings are also found such as lodges and coach houses.

There are some Edwardian arts and crafts houses in the area, which evolved from the earlier tradition but at a smaller scale.

Fenestration

White painted sash windows predominate, with a proportion of mullion and transom windows also found, sometimes formed in Bath stone.

Materials & Detail

The properties in the area are typified by tile hanging, handmade clay tile roofs, red stock brick, Reigate Stone with gauged brick arches and brick or Bath stone dressings.

Illustrations of Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail by period



Vernacular: Only Wray Farmhouse survives from this period.



Victorian: This is typified by the use of tile hanging, handmade clay tile roofs, asymmetrical compositions with prominent chimneys.



Arts and Crafts: These are often smaller scale but still substantial versions evolved from the earlier Old English tradition.

Typical Materials



Tile Hanging



Red Stock Brick

Reigate Stone



Handmade Plain Clay Tiles

5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape

Wray Common is the central space in the area and was described by Pevsner as "a lush and effective open space surrounded by big houses in gardens, and a model of good open suburban landscape". The undulating and open grassland is a key feature, best appreciated when the grass is short and verdant. A negative but perhaps unavoidable aspect is the highly visible lamp columns. Tree planting has been limited to maintain the open vistas across the Common.

The area is relatively free of intrusive traffic signs. The historic finger post and horse trough are prominent features.

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.

Gravel is a traditional finish used for drives in the area, and another positive rural feature is the absence of kerbs on smaller roads, which give a rural appearance.

Wray Common Conservation Area Analysis of Public Realm

Identification of some issues from a Conservation Area view point



Three bollards in Wray Park Road detracting from the general openness of the Common.



A mix of galvanised posts cluttering the junction with Wray Lane. In the past the posts have been painted in accordance with the RFAC recommended colour of olive green which merge better with the landscape.



Tree planting needs to frame viewpoints and vistas on the Common and tree planting needs to have regard to the future potential of inappropriate planting location blocking vistas of landmarks such as the windmill.



The horse trough and finger post are important historic pieces of street furniture on the Common.



The Way is a good example of a pleasant kerbless road with gravel finished tarmac for a traditional and rural appearance.

6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs

The area is characterised by a number of native tree species, including Yew, Holly, Beech, Hornbeam, Oak and Scots Pine. Ornamental trees are also apparent such as Wellingtonia and Cedar

Boundary Treatment/ Enclosure: Walls & Hedges

In terms of boundary treatment, hedges predominate, such as hawthorn, privet, holly and laurel. Beech hedges should be avoided as not traditional to the area and the character of modern marcescent hybrid beech hedges bring an alien dead leaf character to an area know for its all year evergreen character. Boundary walls are rare but the occasional Reigate Stone wall is found.

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



Croydon Road is characterised by hedgerow boundaries and Yew trees. Hedge boundaries are typical of the area.



Scots Pine are a feature of Wray Coppice



At Wraylands is an unusually short and rounded Wellingtonia caused by lightning strike loss at the top of the tree.



Cedars of Lebanon are found through the area, such as this example at Wray Farmhouse.

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 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council on the 15th December 1988. The area was extended by the Borough Council on the 14 June 2006..

As part of the current process, amendment to the boundary to exclude Wray Mill House is suggested.

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 are 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 consist of the following key element;

Townscape elevational treatment

The need to encourage reinstatement of traditional detailing is important. Wray Common has suffered less than many of the Conservation Areas in the Borough, but the loss of traditional painted timber windows should be discouraged. There is no retrospective control so any improvements must be by persuasion or negotiation.

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 the exclusion of Wray Mill House is suggested.

Other Statutory Authorities

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

Responsibilities of Owners and Occupiers

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

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

Statement of Consultation

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

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