



# KINGSTON CONSERVATION AREA



## CHARACTER APPRAISAL

April 2007



In May 2007 Lewes District Council approved this document as planning guidance and therefore it will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

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## I SUMMARY

### I.1 KEY POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

This character appraisal concludes that the key *positive* characteristics of the Kingston Conservation Area are:

- Small linear village based on The Street, with a variety of historic buildings most notably St Pancras's Church;
- Attractive location on the lower slopes of the South Downs, with the River Ouse valley to the east;
- Just three kilometres away from Lewes, the county town of East Sussex;
- Informal layout of the houses, cottages, barns and other outbuildings mainly associated with agriculture;
- Spacious plots often defined by flint walls;
- Use of red clay roof tiles, red brick, flint and weather-boarding;
- Two significant public open spaces (The Village Green and St Pancras Green) as well as very important private open green spaces, all within the conservation area;
- Stunning views of the South Downs and beyond;
- 1960s and 1970s housing development has not spoiled the historic core of the village.

- Protect the trees and surrounding landscape;
- Change the conservation area boundary in two places:
  - Include the gardens to the rear of Barn Close;
  - Add The Holdings, built by East Sussex County Council under the 1919 Land Settlement Act for ex-servicemen and, as such, an unusual survival of Post-World War I housing, and therefore historically significant as an experiment in social engineering.



*The Street*

### I.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This character appraisal makes the following recommendations (summary):

- Improve the quality of new development and protect the conservation area from further infilling;
- Protect the rural character of the conservation area;
- Protect the green spaces within the conservation area;
- Consider traffic calming in Ashcombe Lane and Wellgreen Lane, and improvements to the public realm at the junction with The Street;



*Junction of The Street and Ashcombe Lane*



## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 THE KINGSTON CONSERVATION AREA

Kingston is a small downland village a few kilometres outside Lewes which was greatly extended in the 1960s and 1970s. The Kingston Conservation Area was designated in 1972 by Lewes District Council to preserve the historic core of the settlement, and mainly covers The Street, a no-through road which leads off a winding country lane towards the South Downs. It is centred on the early 14<sup>th</sup> century church of St Pancras, and includes a selection of listed former manor houses, farmsteads, barns and cottages, mainly built from local flint. The location at the foot of the steep scarp slope (part of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) which leads up to summit of the Downs provides stunning views in many directions.

### 2.2 THE PURPOSE OF A CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Kingston Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with English Heritage guidance as set out in “*Guidance on conservation area appraisals*” (August 2005). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within “*Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*” (PPG15). Government advice on archaeology, which is relevant to the Kingston Conservation Area, is set out in “*Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology*” (PPG16).



View to the South Downs from Ashcombe Lane

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Kingston Conservation Area by analysing its historical development, landscape setting, spaces, buildings and activities;
- Identify negative features and provide a list of improvements and actions, most of which will be the responsibility of Lewes District Council;
- Carry out a review of the existing conservation area boundary and make recommendations for change as appropriate.

English Heritage recommends that once a character appraisal is completed, a further document, the Management Proposals, is drawn up, ideally with the help and co-operation of the local community. This would provide more detailed guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement, based on the various issues identified in the character appraisal. It is hoped that the District will be able to fund this more detailed work at some stage in the future.

Survey work for this document was carried out in October 2006 by The Conservation Studio, when a full photographic record was also taken of the area and its buildings. Unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution, trees, water courses, views and areas and buildings for enhancement were noted amongst other matters and recorded on a Townscape Appraisal Map. The omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

Additionally the existing boundary of the conservation area was carefully surveyed and additions and deletions considered. These are detailed in Chapter 8 *Recommendations*.

## 2.3 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This document therefore provides a firm basis on which applications for future development within the Kingston Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework as set out in the East Sussex Structure Plan 1991-2011, the Brighton and Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, and in Lewes District Council's Local Plan, adopted in March 2003.

In the Local Plan, Inset Map No. 14 confirms that the following policies apply to the whole settlement of Kingston, including the conservation area:

- A Planning Boundary defines the extent of allowable development around Kingston. This encompasses the built-up part of the conservation area, but excludes the following sites from future development:
  - Farm buildings and field to the rear of Old Holdings Farm House and the village hall;
  - Fields to the south-west of Kingston Farm including Lattens and Manor Barn (although planning permission has been given - though not implemented - for the residential conversion of the flint barn in the middle of this area);
  - St Pancras Green.
- Countryside Policies (which limit development) apply to the land beyond the Planning Boundary;
- The South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers Kingston and the surrounding countryside.

Other policies in the Local Plan, which relate to listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology and new development are included at Appendix 2.

The 2003 Local Plan will shortly be replaced by a new *Local Development Framework*. This new planning system was established by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which abolishes Structure and Local Plans and replaces them with *Local Development Documents*. More information about this important change to the planning system can be found on the District Council's website: [www.lewes.gov.uk](http://www.lewes.gov.uk).

## 2.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This document was initially drafted following a meeting with representatives from Lewes District Council, Kingston Parish Council and local historians on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2006. A walkabout with some of these representatives was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006, when the extent of the conservation area boundary was discussed, along with some of the main problems and issues which face the community. Following this meeting, a first draft was agreed with the District Council and the document was then put on the District Council's website from mid-December 2006 for six weeks. After the completion of this period of public consultation, the final draft was produced and the document illustrated and printed.



*The Village Green*

### 3 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

#### 3.1 LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES

Kingston is located within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) three kilometres to the south-west of Lewes, the county town of East Sussex, on a lane (Wellgreen Lane-Ashcombe Lane) which links the C7 Lewes-Newhaven Road with the A27 main coastal road. The conservation area is centred on The Street, a no-through road which leads up to the Downs from where Ashcombe Lane becomes Wellgreen Lane.

Kingston is primarily a residential village although Kingston Farm still operates from the centre of the conservation area and provides a valuable link to the rural setting. The only other uses within the conservation area are St Pancras Church, the Juggs Public House, the Village Hall, and the modern barns and outbuildings of Holdings Farm, some of which are used to store hay. The former village shop and Post Office closed a few years ago. St Pancras Green provides open space for dog walking, cricket and football, and with the adjoining tennis courts, is a popular local facility, as is the playground on The Village Green, close to the Juggs Public House.

#### 3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Kingston lies in a slight valley on the lower slopes of the South Downs at a height of between 20 and 50 metres. The village is virtually surrounded by these downlands to the north, west and south, which results in a strong sense of enclosure. To the west, the scarp slope of the South Downs lies just within the conservation area and is a very dominant feature.

A modest stream emanating from a local spring flows through the village but this is now largely culverted although, after heavy rain, Wellgreen Lane is frequently flooded outside Snedmore. The stream now emerges just outside the built-up area to the north-east of Kingston, and flows down a shallow valley past Spring Barn Farm and eventually forms part of the Cockshut, a minor tributary of the River Ouse. This valley leads towards the C7 which connects the various historic villages which sit just above the edge of the traditional floodplain of the river.

Beneath Kingston is the extensive chalk of the South Downs which provides lime and flints for



*A view of Kingston from the South Downs*

building, and where the chalk meets the greensand, springs occur which may have provided the reason for early settlement. The local name Old Well Green for the area around Snedmore confirms the availability of water and it is from here that the stream trickles down towards the Cockshut. The fields on the lower slopes are covered in a brown malm soil, well mixed with flint and suitable for arable crops. Towards the River Ouse, the brooklands, cut by deep drainage ditches, provide water meadows which are suitable for grazing and hay making. Clay for brick and tile making is available locally, and there is evidence of a former clay pit on Snedmore.

### 3.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONSERVATION AREA TO ITS SURROUNDINGS

Kingston is defined by the South Downs on almost three sides, with open fields used mainly for rearing sheep. When the slopes are less acute, the land is also used for growing crops such as barley and cattle feed on a rotational basis. The village feels quite remote from the bustle of Lewes and nearby Brighton, and the busy roads which service them, and retains a tranquil rural character which must be preserved. Ashcombe Lane leads through the narrow cut of Ashcombe Hollow to reach the A27, which is in a dip and therefore generally out of both visual and hearing range from the village. Unfortunately this road connects the A27 and Newhaven via the C7 and traffic use at peak times (despite a 30 mph limit) is a detrimental feature.

Footpaths and restricted byways connect Kingston to Lewes past Spring Barn Farm or along Kingston Ridge. The Street leads directly up the Downs, connecting to the South Downs Way and Juggs Way restricted highway, an ancient footpath connecting Lewes to Brighton.

There are stunning views from only just above Kingston, on the way to the summit, over the village towards Lewes, the chalk pits of Cliffe, Mount Caburn, and eastwards towards Firl Beacon. Other views towards and from Kingston Ridge and Juggs Way are also important.

### 3.4 BIODIVERSITY

The whole of Kingston lies within the South Downs AONB, a landscape of national significance with policies in both Structure and Local Plans for its protection. Sheep rearing is the main farming activity, with the steep slopes to the west of the conservation area being notable for their parallel lines created by soil creep down the slopes, which



*The Street*



*A footpath connects The Street to St Pancras Green*



*Woodland at the end of The Street*

follow the contours. Arable crops are grown in rotation on the flatter fields.

The footpath at the end of The Street passes through an area of woodland (part of which is in the conservation area) which is designated in the Local Plan as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. This connects into a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which covers a section of the open chalk downland above, where in the spring a wide variety of chalk downland plants flower, including rare orchids. Two further Sites of Nature Conservation Importance lie outside the conservation area, covering two fields to the north-east of Ashcombe Lane.

## 4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

### 4.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

An early Saxon settlement appears to have been established in the area following the retreat of the Romans in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. At this time the Ouse valley would have been a tidal estuary with areas of easily worked fertile soil on its edges, and the Saxons seem to have created a number of farms at intervals along the river now partly represented by the established villages of Kingston, Swanborough, Iford (comprising Norton and Sutton), Northease, Rodmell, Southease, and Piddinghoe.

The name *-tun* in Kingston, Sutton and Norton indicates that they were “inclusive” farming settlements of the Saxon settlement based at Iford. The Old English *cyninges-tun* describes a place with a function, and it is possible that Kingston developed initially as a minor farmstead where wheat, barley, lambs and other produce was collected for the principal site at Iford. Saxon England was divided into counties, rapes and hundreds. Kingston was included in the Hundred

of Swanborough or *Suanesburg*, but there is no evidence of a Saxon church in Kingston, although a Saxon burial ground has been found not far away on the outskirts of Lewes.

It is recorded that Iford was held by King Edward's wife Edith, sister of Earl Godwine, at the Conquest but soon after William the Conqueror gave Iford and other lands as a reward to his supporter William de Warenne, builder of Lewes castle and founder of the Cluniac priory at Southover. There is no specific mention of Kingston in the Domesday Book of 1086, but in 1091 the De Warennes gave some of their lands at Kingston Manor to the monks of St Pancras including one acre on which to build a church. However it must have been delayed because the present building was not finished until soon after 1300, although the tower may be earlier. The font dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Until the Reformation, there was no incumbent as the monks led the services.



St Pancras Church

### *The Manor of Hyde*

By 1316 the Prior of St Pancras held all of Kingston Manor apart from some smaller parcels of land including one held by Richard and Simon de la Hyde. The land itself became known as Le Hide and later as Hyde Manor. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century much of the land around Kingston was owned by the Earl of Dorset who rented out Swanborough Farm to John Rogers, son of Thomas Rogers, vicar of Iford. His other son, also called Thomas, began his farming career acquiring leases and copyholds for land in Kingston, including possibly the building which is now called Hollowdown, where appears to have been the original Hyde Manor. His descendant, another Thomas Rogers, purchased another house on the other side of the road (now called Hyde Manor) in 1782, with over 160 acres of land, for £2,100. New outbuildings were immediately added including a stable block which retains a date plaque of 1783. At some time after 1834 it came into the ownership of the Goring family of Wiston in West Sussex who incrementally bought up the whole village including Kingston Manor. They retained ownership of much of the land around Kingston until 1908, when they sold the farmland and the farmhouse which is now called Hyde Manor. The house was in turn sold on in the 1920s when the owner decided to build himself a new house on the west side of the farmyard. The old farmhouse was renamed Hyde Manor at about this time.

### *Kingston Manor*

At the Dissolution in 1538, the land owned by the priory was sold, much of it, including Kingston Manor and its extensive lands, to Thomas Cromwell. He demolished many of the priory buildings, although parts were kept and extended to build himself a “great house”. At about this time, Kingston Manor was built using materials salvaged from the demolition work, which explains the inclusion of blocks of French limestone and the use of other high quality materials and details. In c.1773 the new owner of Kingston Manor commissioned a survey of his lands by J Merchant, and this was subsequently redrawn up by William Figg for the Duke of Dorset in 1779. This shows Kingston surrounded by thin strips of fields or *laines*, a medieval system of agriculture under which common fields of about one acre in size were divided into small strips and farmed by different owners. This system was eventually abandoned with the Enclosure Act of 1833. Some time after 1834 Kingston Manor was acquired by the Gorings, who had also bought Hyde Manor. This consolidation of established farms into large estates



*Hyde Manor*



*Kingston Manor*

was an important feature of land ownership in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Recent work at Kingston Manor has revealed much Priory stone and other details within the structure.

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was Hyde Manor that had become the principal farmhouse in the village, employing 24 men and 10 boys on some 1,300 acres where sheep rearing and the corn industry provided, until the agricultural depression in the latter part of the century, a profitable business. The growth of the village is confirmed by the building of a new school for both Iford and Kingston children, in Iford, in 1872. The Tithe map of 1842 shows the linear village and a scattering of farm buildings and cottages, much as today.

After the land reform acts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Gorings sold their holdings and ownership fragmented. In the 1920s new detached houses and bungalows were built along Kingston Ridge as homes for officers from the war, and a small group of cottages were provided at the same time off Wellgreen Lane, with some land, for returning



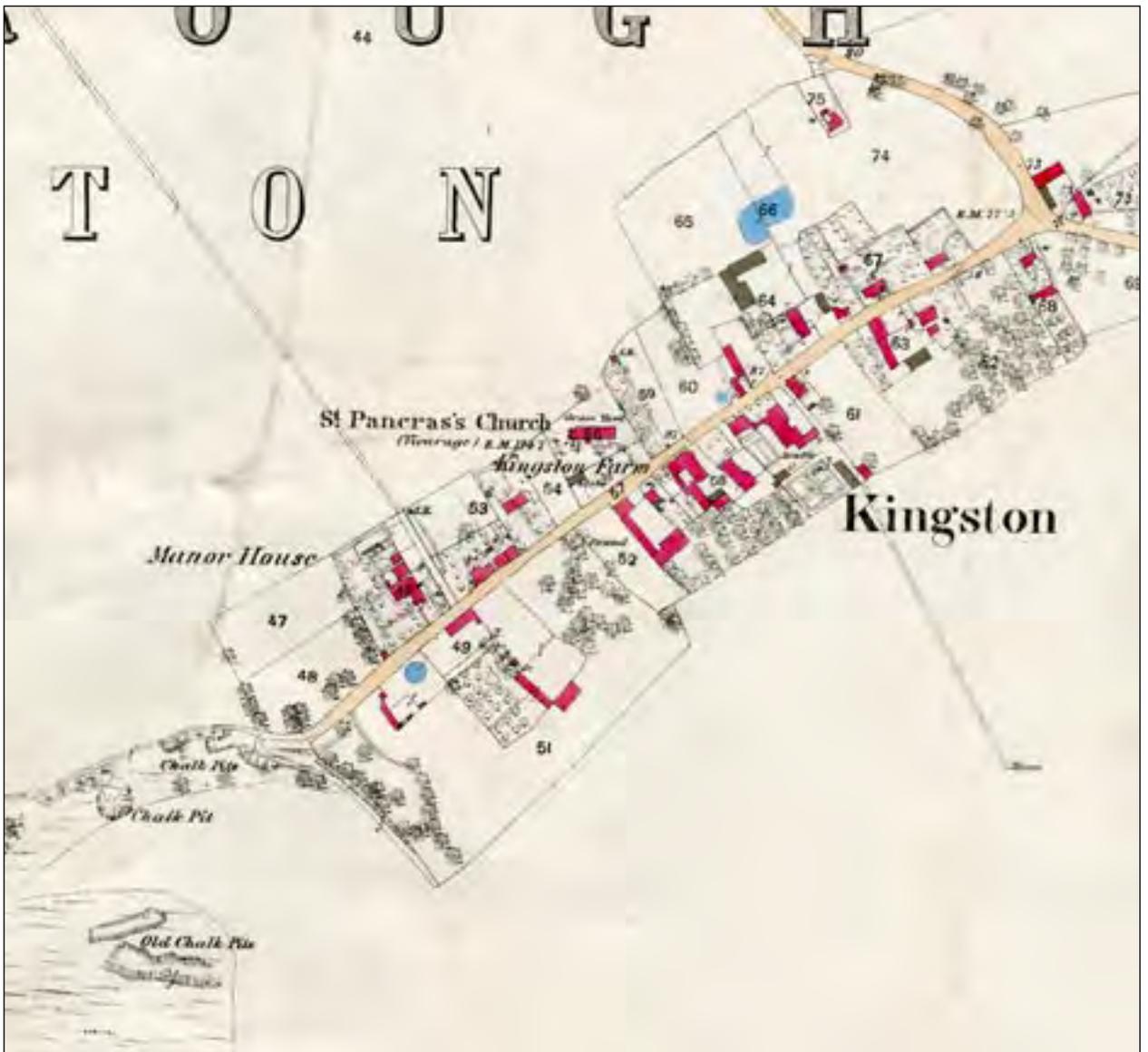
Kingston 1787



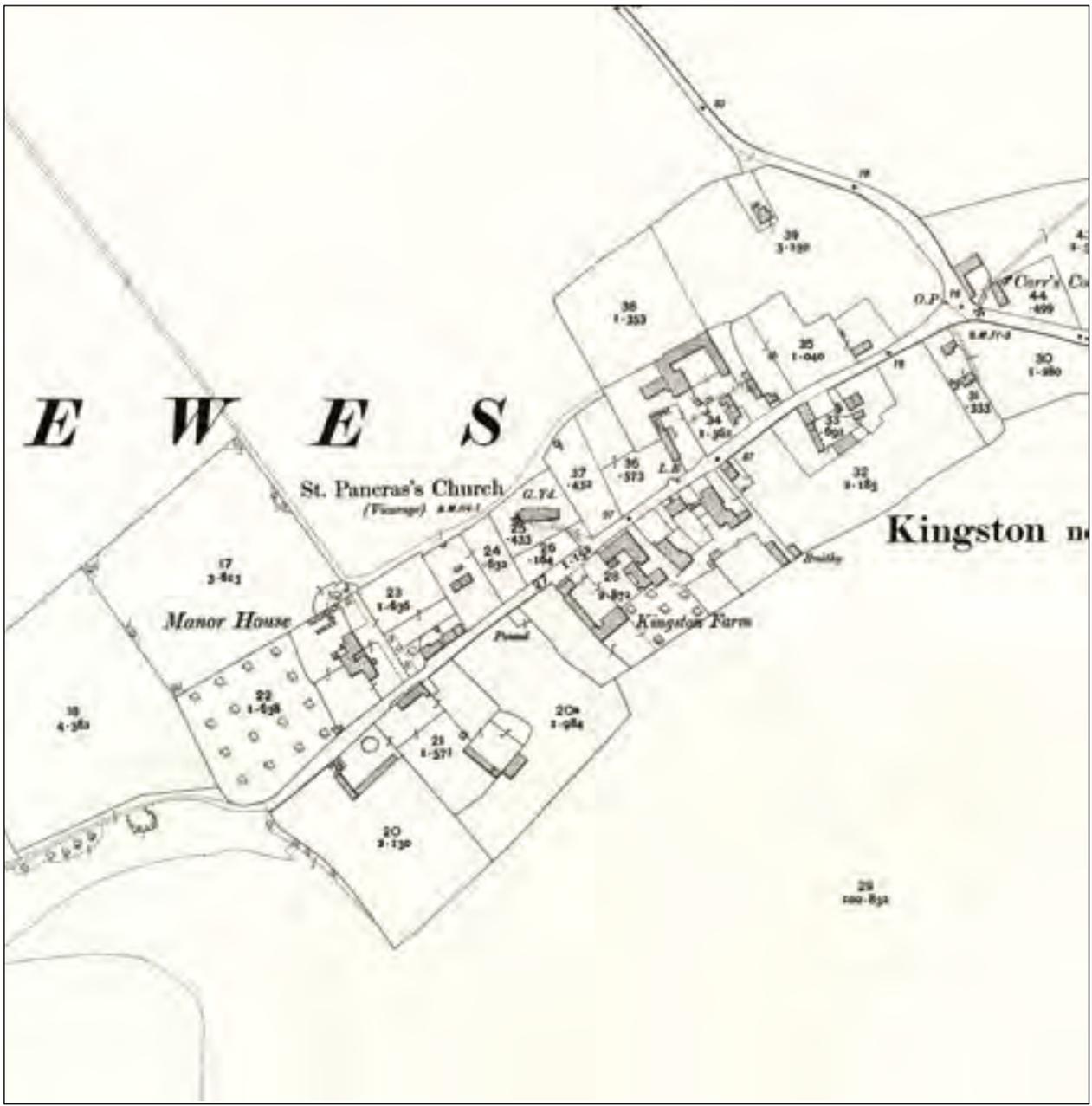
Kingston 1799



1842



1873 Ordnance Survey



1908 Ordnance Survey

soldiers (The Holdings). At the same time there was also more scattered development of new detached houses along Wellgreen Lane towards Lewes. Also in the 1920s, the rising population meant that there was a greater demand for burial space in the churchyard and a thatched barn, which had stood in front of St Pancras Church, was demolished.

In 1955 the Juggs Public House opened in a small cottage at the eastern end of The Street. In the 1960s and 1970s new housing estates were added immediately to the north-west of the village, and in 1965 a new primary school was built in Wellgreen Lane. The former farm buildings behind Hollow-down Cottages were converted, rather insensitively, at about this time, including some new development. The expansion of the village coincided with the development of Sussex University and many of the new residents were associated with the academic world. The creation of two large public open spaces, St Pancras Green and The Village Green, has created a useful buffer between the historic part of the settlement and more modern development, as has the retention of a stand of large trees behind St Pancras Church.

In the last few years Kingston has largely retained its rural qualities although there has been constant pressure for new development. Undoubtedly the worst example is the new house (No.3 The Street) which lies immediately to the east of St Pancras Church. Kingston Farm is still the centre of a family-run business although the more modern agricultural buildings behind Old Holdings Farmhouse appear to be only partly used for storage. The Juggs Public House is located in an early listed building on the north side of The Street and is a very popular venue, although its success has unfortunately resulted in the original tiny cottage being substantially extended over the years. Kingston Village Hall, built in the 1930s, is well used and the centre of village life. St Pancras Church also still provides spiritual support to the local population, and is well supported. Despite the provision of so much new housing, the village retains a strong sense of community although sadly the former Post Office and shop closed a few years ago so there are no local facilities. The Parish Council has recently applied to East Sussex County District to have St Pancras Green, The Village Green and Snedmore officially designated as "Village Greens", which will provide stronger protection from unsuitable development.

## 4.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

Neolithic man inhabited the South Downs and there are remains of tumuli on the tops of the Downs overlooking the village. Some Roman remains (small pieces of pottery) have been found on Kingston Ridge. There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area.



*View of St Pancras Church over St Pancras Green*



*Kingston Parish Hall*



Kingston Manor (old photograph)



Nos.8 and 9 The Street (old photograph)



Kingston Ridge - Sales brochure (1920s)



Old photograph of Hyde Manor and The Street (1930s)



Old photograph of The Street looking towards the South Downs



Old photograph of The Street



Kingston Poultry Farm



*View over Kingston from The South Downs (1930s)*



*Kingston from The Downs*



*Old photograph of view along The Street to the South*



*Old photograph of view towards Kingston from Lewes*

## 5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 5.1 PLAN FORM, SITE LAYOUT AND BOUNDARIES

The Kingston Conservation Area is notable for its linear form, with informal groups of houses, cottages and former and actual agricultural buildings, mostly listed. In places, modern residential development has taken place, although these buildings usually sit well back from the lane behind flint walls or planting and this helps to reduce their impact. An exception is the house (no. 3 The Street) which was built in the early 1990s and which dominates the eastern side of St Pancras Church. Another large house, Flintstones, is currently being built to the west of Kingston Manor, extending the built-up area towards the lower slopes of the South Downs. Garden sizes vary but are generally generous. Some of them, such as Hyde Manor and Kingston Lodge, are totally concealed by high walls or by the buildings themselves. Others, such as Hyde Manor East, Juggs Way and The Manor House, are more open and visible.

Although agriculture now has less importance as a primary activity, the survival of the Kingston Farm buildings, around a working farmyard, is important in maintaining the rural qualities of the village. This is reinforced by the large flint and brick barn next to Lattens, now used for storage. Another former farm group around Barn Close is less easily recognised as such because the original buildings have been converted and new buildings have intruded into the original layout.

The inclusion of the Village Green and St Pancras Green provide public open space which is well used, although the close proximity of the South Downs, with its many public footpaths, gives an important sense of openness beyond the edges of the conservation area. Footpaths link these spaces with the older and the newer parts of the village.

The sense of enclosure created by the many flint walls of varying heights which line The Street is fundamental to this character and very important in view along The Street. Red clay copings, half moon shape, finish these walls and protect the lime mortar below. Trees and shrubbery are also significant but it is notable how much additional greenery there is now in comparison to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when photographs show a much more open streetscape. The Village Pound, located



*No.3 The Street*



*Kingston Farm*



*Flint walls are very important in the conservation area (The Street)*

to the south-west of Kingston Farm, is contained by high flint walls. Close by, Hyde Manor retains 19<sup>th</sup> century spear-headed cast iron railings. There is also some use of timber fencing, mostly simple post and rail, and simple timber gates, both appropriate to the rural setting.

## 5.2 LANDMARKS, FOCAL POINTS AND VIEWS

The conservation area provides a number of well detailed, attractive historic buildings which together form a cohesive whole. St Pancras Church is the only landmark building, now somewhat compromised by modern development on its eastern side. The Juggs Public House is more dominant at the eastern entrance to the conservation area, due to the many extensions and also the inevitable activity associated with the commercial use. On the opposite side of the road, Carrs is notable in views down The Street. The barn to the south-east of Kingston Farm is another prominent building. There is no obvious “centre” to the conservation area because of the linear nature of the old village, although the church and its churchyard do provide some focus.

Views into and out of the conservation area are many and varied, but of note are the views out of the conservation area towards the Downs after Kingston Farm is reached. Views along The Street, focussing eventually on St Pancras Church, are also very important. For the energetic, a short “puff” up the hill provides wonderful views over Kingston towards Lewes and the River Ouse valley, with Mount Caburn in the distance. The most notable views are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

## 5.3 OPEN SPACES, TREES AND LANDSCAPE

The Village Green and St Pancras Green provide notable public open spaces which are well used, particularly the playground in The Village Green. In addition, there are other privately owned green spaces (fields) within the conservation area which make a special contribution to its rural qualities and which should therefore be protected from any new development. These are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

Trees are particularly important at the south-western end of The Street, closer to the Downs. Within the more built-up part of the conservation area, there are fewer mature trees, apart from the ones behind St Pancras Church and around St Pancras Green. Again the most important groups are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

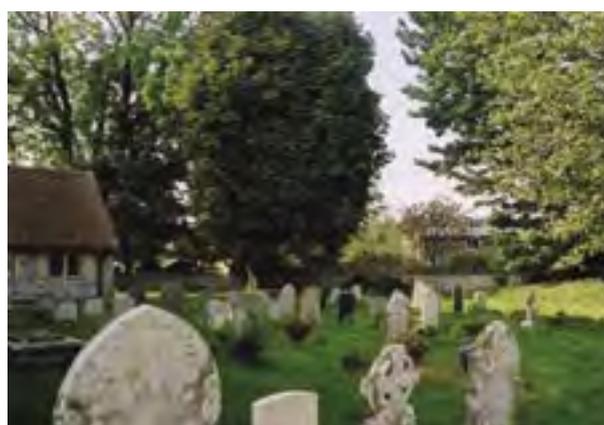
The village lies within the South Downs AONB and, as such, is surrounded by beautiful landscape, best appreciated from half way or even at the top



*The front barn at Kingston Farm is a prominent building*



*Views across St Pancras Green to the South Downs*



*Trees are very important in the conservation area (St Pancras Churchyard)*

of the hill above the village. Throughout much of the year this is occupied by sheep, who graze on the lower slopes of the Downs. In the spring and early summer, the area is enlivened by the sound of lambs and ewes calling to each other.

## 5.4 PUBLIC REALM

Pavements, where they exist, are covered in black tarmacadam, with generally modern concrete 100mm kerbing, although there are some sections of stone setts. Grass verges are also evident, particularly along Ashcombe Road and Wellgreen Lane.

There is no street lighting in the conservation area but there are a number of timber telegraph poles in The Street, with some unsightly wires.

At the junction of Ashcombe Road, Wellgreen Lane and The Street are a number of unsightly features: a green plastic litter bin, a “No Through Road” street sign, requiring repair or replacement; a modern telephone kiosk, and a street sign “The Street”, made from cast aluminium with black letters on a white background, fixed to a low timber rail on posts. More in keeping is the traditional finger post on the opposite side of the



*Entrance to The Street*



*Traditional finger post in Wellgreen Lane*



## 6 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

road, made from timber with black lettering.

### 6.1 BUILDING TYPES

The village is mainly residential so historic building types are mainly confined to larger detached houses (The Manor House, Juggs Way, Hyde Manor and Hyde Manor East, and Holdings Farmhouse) and more modest houses and cottages (e.g. Friars Cottage and Hollowdown, a larger property now converted into three cottages). Additionally, there are several former agricultural buildings which have been converted into houses: Manor Barn, Juggs Barn (actually two buildings), and the buildings which now face Barn Close. The Juggs Public House was once a small three bay cottage but has been substantially extended. Infill modern development is without exception residential apart from the 1930s Village Hall. Other buildings are still in active agricultural use, mainly the barns of Kingston Farm and the adjoining barn set back from Lattens. It is not clear whether the more recent buildings of Holdings Farm are still in agricultural use.

### 6.2 LISTED BUILDINGS

There are 23 listed buildings or entries in the conservation area, all of them grade II apart from St Pancras's Church which is listed grade II\*. This retains an early 14<sup>th</sup> century tower, square in footprint with a pyramidal roof. Built from local flint with stone dressings, it was heavily restored in 1874. The other listed buildings vary in use: four former farm houses (The Manor House; Holdings Farmhouse; Hyde Manor and Hyde Manor East; nos. 1-3 Hollowdown); smaller houses and cottages dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (The Juggs Public House; Rest Harrow and the former Post Office; Juggs Way; nos. 8 and 9 The Street; Friars Cottage; Kingston Lodge; nos. 6 and 7 The Street; Rough Down; and Carrs, in Wellgreen Lane, conveniently dated 1875). Converted barns are another notable group (Manor Barn; Hyde Cottage barn; and Juggs Barn). The barns at Kingston Farm are all listed, as are the walls of the adjoining Village Pound. A garden gazebo attached to The Manor House is an unusual survival.

### 6.3 POSITIVE BUILDINGS

There are just two unlisted historic buildings in the Kingston Conservation Area which make a *positive* contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, namely Shepherd's



*The Juggs Public House*



*Holdings Farm House*



*Rest Harrow*



*Gazebo to Kingston Manor*

Rest, a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century house on Ashcombe Lane, and the Old Forge, set back from The Street. These buildings have been identified during the survey process and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the Townscape Appraisal Map. There is a general presumption that positive buildings within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the District Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.

#### 6.4 BUILDING STYLES, MATERIALS AND COLOURS

The historic buildings in Kingston have a variety of styles, according to date, but they are basically very simple as befits their rural location. There are therefore no examples of any “polite” buildings, such as formal terraces or set pieces, rather the character is of simple, vernacular buildings which were built to house farm workers and the occasional farm owner or tenant in a slightly more prestigious building. The only houses of any pretension are Kingston Lodge, with its symmetrical front façade, and The Manor House. This dates to c.1540, and it clearly shows the signs of several building periods which have together formed a harmonious but rather eclectic whole.

More modest but of great historic interest are nos. 8 and 9 The Street, a pair of cottages nearby which were once one and appear to have been built as a lobby-entry house in the same period i.e. 1540-1560. Slightly earlier is Juggs Way, possibly the earliest secular building in the conservation area, which retains a crown post roof with blackened timbers in the roof, suggesting a double height open hall and therefore dating the building to pre-1550, when such halls became unfashionable.

Of the other buildings, early examples, such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century Holdings Farmhouse, Hollowdown Cottages and the former Post Office, are basically timber-framed and have gables which face the street. Both have been altered, but retain this basic shape. By contrast, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses and cottages usually face the street, with long, low eaves and pitched roofs, the ridges ending in axial brick chimney stacks. Roofs generally finish in gables, although the occasional half hip is evident, such as on Friars Cottage (a possibly early-17<sup>th</sup> century building) and on one of the flint barns at Kingston Farm, which also has a long catslide roof facing The Street. The age of Rest Harrow, an L-shaped cottage with a steeply pitched roof, is debatable as the overall form and roof line suggest an earlier

date than the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which is how it is listed. Many of these historic buildings have cellars and the gardens contain wells dug into the chalk below.



*Kingston Lodge*



*Nos. 8 and 9 The Street*



*Juggs Way*



*Gables face the Street*

Flints are used for walls to the buildings and boundary walls throughout Kingston, and this almost universal material gives the conservation area a very definite character. Knapped (split) flint, with red brick dressings to the quoins (corners), window openings and doors, are used for the majority of the listed buildings such as Rest Harrow, Friars Cottage, nos. 8 and 9, and Hyde Manor Barn. St Pancras's Church is also faced in roughly knapped flint with stone dressings. At Juggs Barn, flint panels have been placed in between the original timber framing, a modern aberration. Holdings Farmhouse also uses flint, but has 19<sup>th</sup> century clay tile hanging to the 17<sup>th</sup> century gables which face the street. Similar tile hanging can be seen on Hollowdown Cottages, the Juggs Public House, and on the first floor of nos. 6 and 7 The Street, where the presumably flint lower storey has been rendered but fortunately left unpainted. Similarly unpainted render can be seen on Kingston Lodge, where mid-19<sup>th</sup> century canted bays have been added to the ground floor front rooms, suggesting that the rendering may well date to this period.

Timber weather-boarding, covering 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century timber-framing, is also evident on the former Post Office (where it is painted white) and on Kingston Farm barns, where it is blackened, in an appropriately informal way.

There is some stone, but this is generally saved for the higher status buildings like St Pancras Church and The Manor House, where examples of Caen stone, taken from Lewes Priory, can be seen.

Hyde Manor is a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building which was altered in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and again in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Parts of the front elevation are faced in red mathematical tiles, the only example in the village but common in Lewes, whilst other parts retain red brick work with blue headers, creating an interesting chequer pattern.

Roof tiles throughout the conservation area are almost universally reddy-orange handmade clay tiles, providing a pleasantly uneven surface. The gazebo to The Manor, which probably dates to c.1840, has a much flatter roof and this is slated. The Manor House retains some Horsham stone roof slates, mixed with clay tiles, which again may have come from Lewes Priory. There may have been thatch in the village but there are no



*Red brick is used to create openings in the flint walls (Friars Cottage on left)*



*Stone window surrounds and corner quoins (St Pancras Church)*

examples any more.

Most of the cottages have paired casement timber windows with slim glazing bars, a typical vernacular detail. These are recessed well into the wall, with the windows sitting within their frames in the traditional way to create a flush surface, unlike the modern detail where the casement sits on the front of the frame. Some open along horizontal grooves rather than being side hung (Yorkshire or Sussex sashes). Sometimes these cut through the very low eaves of the building, such as nos. 8 and 9 The Street, where simple dormers are faced in clay tiles. Taller sash



*Carrs in Wellgreen Lane*

windows are also used where the status of the building was slightly grander, such as for Kingston Lodge and Hyde Manor. Front doors are very varied, but invariably are made from timber and usually painted. A good six panelled door can be seen on Hyde Manor, with a late 18<sup>th</sup> century door hood above. Kingston Lodge retains a pretty door hood, above an attractive six panelled door, probably of c.1800. More substantial porches are modern but generally (such as the flint one on Friars Cottage) unremarkable. Carrs in Wellgreen Lane is dated 1775 and retains a nicely detailed



*1970's development beyond St Pancras Green is not dominant*



*Use of handmade clay tiles for the roof and upper storeys ( Juggs Public House)*

## 7 ISSUES

Georgian doorcase and a six panelled door.

### 7.1 KEY POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

This Character Appraisal concludes that the key *positive* characteristics of the Kingston Conservation Area are:

- Small linear village based on The Street, with a variety of historic buildings most notably St Pancras Church;
- Attractive location on the lower slopes of the South Downs, with the River Ouse valley to the east;
- Just three kilometres away from Lewes, the county town of East Sussex;
- Informal layout of the houses, cottages, barns and other outbuildings mainly associated with agriculture;
- Spacious plots often defined by flint walls;
- Use of red clay roof tiles, red brick, flint and weather-boarding;
- Two significant public open spaces (The Village Green and St Pancras Green) as well as very important private open green spaces, all within the conservation area;
- Stunning views of the South Downs and beyond;
- 1960s and 1970s housing development has not spoilt the historic core of the village.



*Sub-division of the fields near to the conservation area*



*Flat roofed garages in front of Kingston Farm*

### 7.2 KEY NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

This Character Appraisal concludes that the key *negative* characteristics of the Kingston Conservation Area are:

*Spatial:*

- Erosion of historic layout from the 1960s onwards by modern infill development, leading to the incremental infilling of gardens and open space;
- Rural character is threatened by the possible further conversions of agricultural buildings;
- Flint walls in the conservation area must be protected and no further demolitions allowed;
- Trees in certain locations are in need of a Tree Management Plan;
- Fields close to the conservation area have recently been sub-divided and fenced,

erasing parts of the 1920s layout.

*Buildings:*

- Use of non-traditional materials;
- Some modern development is out of scale and dominant (e.g. no. 3 The Street);
- Over extension of some historic buildings (e.g. Juggs Public House);
- Flat roofed modern garages in prominent locations;
- Pavilion on St Pancras Green needs repairs/ replacing.

*General:*

- Heavy traffic at times along Wellgreen Lane/Ashcombe Road;
- Tatty signage and litter bins at the junction

with The Street.

## 7.3 ISSUES

The Kingston Conservation Area encompasses an attractive rural settlement with few obvious threats to its character, although incremental change could adversely affect the quality of the environment if not controlled properly. The buildings are generally in good condition and the area is clearly a desirable location in which to live. However there are a number of issues (which the District Council is mainly responsible for) which will need to be resolved if the conservation area is to be protected from unsympathetic changes. These are:

### 1 The quality of new development

The conservation area has already been subject to a large amount of infill development, mainly in the 1960s and 1970s, but some more recent. Further development would erode the character of the area by reducing open space, changing the historic form of development, and generating more traffic. The over-extension of existing buildings, such as has already happened at the Juggs Public House, is another issue. There are also many examples of unsympathetic garages in the conservation area, with flat roofs which do not fit in with the existing pitched roofs of the historic buildings.

### 2 Protecting the rural character of the conservation area

The conservation area once supported several farms although Kingston Farm is now the only working farm and Old Holdings Farmyard appears to be only in partial use for storage. These uses do provide a continuous link to the agricultural past of the settlement and should be encouraged to stay. The conversion of any more rural buildings into houses should be resisted where planning permission has not already been given.

The village has also been affected by the use of non-traditional materials, like the concrete blockwork to the public house car park, and the use of felt or other modern materials on flat roofed buildings, like the garages in front of Kingston Farm and Brambles.

The fields to the north east of the conservation area, beyond the boundary, have recently been degraded by the installation of new fencing and new stabling, to the detriment of the rural qualities of the area although new planting will help to



*Modern development on the north side of The Street (Brambles)*



*Protect the flint walls and the rural qualities of the conservation area*



*The cricket pavilion, St Pancras Green*

screen these features in due course.

The flint walls in the conservation area make a major contribution to the special character of the area and must be protected from demolition or neglect.

### 3 The protection of the green spaces within the conservation area

The Village Green and St Pancras Green are both popular open public spaces which need to be protected from future development and properly maintained to ensure their continued use.

The cricket pavilion on St Pancras Green requires

repair or replacement.

#### **4 Traffic management, car parking and the public realm**

Traffic can be heavy along Ashcombe Lane and Wellgreen Lane, particularly during the morning and evening rush hour. The location of Iford and Kingston Primary school along Wellgreen Lane makes speeding and heavy traffic a particular issue. The Juggs Public House is very popular and at weekends and Bank Holidays is particularly busy. This generates additional traffic and, despite a large car park, puts pressure on the informal, on-street parking which exists along The Street.

The junction of The Street with Wellgreen Lane/ Ashcombe Road is defined by wide grass verges, somewhat spoilt by a green plastic litter bin, an old “Dead-End” sign, and poor quality street signage.

#### **5 Trees and landscape**

The trees between St Pancras Green and St Pancras Church (which are in private ownership) are in need of improvement and the shrubbery needs some attention. This could perhaps be undertaken with the help of the Parish Council. A Tree Management Plan for the whole conservation area is another area of work which could be undertaken with the help of the District

and County Council tree and landscape officers.

#### **6 Conservation Area boundary review**

As part of the appraisal process, the conservation area boundary was reviewed. It was considered that a few amendments could be made, as detailed



*The Juggs Public House is very popular*



*The trees around St Pancras Church are in need of attention*

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

in Chapter 8 *Recommendations*.

Based on the various Issues identified in the preceding chapter, the following recommendations are made:

### 8.1 THE QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- The District Council should ensure that all new development in the conservation area adheres to Local Plan policies and to the spirit of advice contained in PPG15 about conservation area management. Generally, there should be a presumption in favour of retaining existing gardens and green open spaces, particularly those which contribute positively to the character of the conservation area and are noted as such on the Townscape Appraisal Map;
- Applications for new garages and other buildings should only be allowed where the new building does not impinge on the existing street scene.



*Open spaces like this one next to St Pancras Church should be protected from inappropriate development*

### 8.2 PROTECTING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- The District Council should seek to keep the agricultural buildings in the conservation area in their original uses, and should resist further planning applications for change;
- The District Council should ensure that all new buildings and extensions include traditional materials, particularly flint, brick and handmade clay tiles, and traditional details;
- The District Council could consider serving an Article 4 Direction on agricultural land to the north-east of the conservation area to protect it from further degradation.



*Agricultural buildings like these should be kept in their original use*

### 8.3 THE PROTECTION OF THE GREEN SPACES WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

- The District Council should support the Parish Council in their recent application to East Sussex County Council to have St Pancras Green, the Village Green and Snedmore officially designated as “Village Greens”;
- The Parish Council should seek the urgent repair or replacement of the cricket pavilion



*The Village Green children's play area*

on St Pancras Green.

#### 8.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, CAR PARKING AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- The County Council, in agreement with the District Council and Parish Council, could consider some traffic calming along Ashcombe Lane and Wellgreen Lane (of a sympathetic design) to reduce traffic speeds particularly during the morning and evening rush hour;
- Further extensions to the Juggs Public House should be resisted, to prevent further pressure on local roads and car parking;
- Improve street signage and the litter bin at the junction of The Street with Wellgreen Lane/Ashcombe Road.



*Traffic calming in Wellgreen Lane/Ashcombe Road*

#### 8.5 TREES AND LANDSCAPE

- A Tree Management Plan could be drawn up by the Parish Council in partnership with the District Council's Tree Officer, to provide a management regime for the trees in the conservation area, particularly the trees between St Pancras Green and St Pancras Church.



*Add these buildings in The Holdings*

#### 8.6 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

- As part of the appraisal process, the conservation area boundary was reviewed and the following changes are recommended:
  - Amend the boundary to the back of Barn Close to follow legal property boundaries;
  - Add The Holdings, built by East Sussex County Council under the 1919 Land Settlement Act for ex-servicemen and as such an unusual survival of Post-World War I housing, and therefore historically significant as an experiment in social



*Add these buildings in The Holdings*



engineering.

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUSE VALLEY

The development of the parishes of Kingston, Iford, Rodmell, Southease, Piddinghoe and Newhaven is intimately linked to the topography of the region, to the River Ouse and, especially in the case of the more northern parishes, to the economic and social magnetism of Lewes, the county town.

The early economic history of the area is exemplified by Southease, which was given to Hyde Abbey in Winchester by King Edgar in 996. The grant included Telscombe, which descended with Southease until 1546. This larger estate best illustrates many of the features which can be discerned from the later sources for the parishes in the valley. These linear estates, on an east-west alignment, enjoyed the widest possible range of the resources offered by the available topography: fish and water-transport from the river (and, in the case of Southease-Telscombe, the sea); grazing and hay-meadows on the low-lying riverside pastures or, in the local vernacular, brookland; rich arable at the foot of the Downs; and sheep-pasture and road transport on the high and well-drained chalk hills or Downs. What these territories lacked was woodland and clay, so these resources, which were essential for the exploitation of the rest, were obtained from the Weald to the north.

The Domesday record of 1086 provides a snapshot of these estates in a time of transition. Before the Conquest, much of the valley had been held as part of the enormous royal manors of Iford and Rodmell. With the creation of Rapes, large territorial divisions which also served as feudal baronies, the overlordship of the entire valley passed to the Warenne lords of the Barony of Lewes. It also removed most of the long-distance economic links of the southern parishes, and instead strengthened their connections with Lewes, the chief town of the barony, where many of the manors had houses. The Normans also began the process of sub-division of the larger Saxon estates, which were fragmented in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, partly as a result of pious grants to Lewes Priory by the Warennes and their tenants.

Domesday records churches at Iford, Rodmell and Southease; Kingston had a church, possibly built by Lewes Priory, by 1095, and the fabric of the church at Piddinghoe suggests a date early

in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Parish formation in the Ouse Valley was somewhat haphazard, and the medieval chapels recorded at Northease could easily have developed into independent ecclesiastical parishes under different tenorial circumstances. Although the pattern of early settlement is unclear, it seems that by the end of the medieval period most of the Ouse Valley villages were nucleated on sites lying on the 50-foot contour; that at Kingston seems to be planned, whereas the other settlements cluster around their churches in a more irregular manner.

The fully-fledged system of sheep-corn husbandry was described in detail by John Rowe, a lawyer-antiquary who acted as steward of one of the lords of the barony, in 1634. The system was still carried on through the means of common fields, called 'laines', divided into furlongs, which were themselves further sub-divided into strips. Although the strips were individually owned, each proprietor (or his farmer) accepted a common timetable of ploughing, sowing and harvesting, and a common rotation of crops. After the harvest, the arable was thrown open to the common sheep flock, which at other times grazed on the 'tenantry down', usually under the care of a shepherd employed in common by the tenants. It was folded by rotation on the tenantry arable, enriching the fields with manure, the flock acting as the 'moving dunghill' described by Arthur Young. Towards the river, the brookland was also held in common, each parcel being re-assigned every year by lot.

Although in the early medieval period the lands owned outright by manorial lords - the demesne lands - would have been interspersed with those held by their tenants, by 1500 such demesnes had been concentrated in blocks. Descending the valley, Kingston was held in Tenantry, Swanborough (a former Lewes Priory holding) in demesne, the northern half of Iford in Tenantry and the southern portion (with Northease) in demesne. Rodmell was largely held in Tenantry, and by 1808 most of Piddinghoe had been amalgamated into two large farms. The tendency of lords to purchase the interests of their manorial tenants, and of the larger tenants to acquire the property of their smaller neighbours, meant that by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century many of the open-field strips had been amalgamated into larger enclosures; but a sizeable acreage remained. In 1810, 690 acres were enclosed at Telscombe, 2527 acres at Kingston and

Iford in 1830 and 758 acres at Southease in 1836. The same process of engrossment tended to threaten the survival of the larger farmhouses, and to encourage both the conurbation of landless cottages and depopulation. By 1615 only one man remained at Iford who was deemed able to execute the office of constable, 'all the other inhabitants of any reasonable ability having removed to Kingston, where then dwelt at the least a dozen fit for that service'. In 1634 there were already 15 cottages in Rodmell and five in Iford. In 1676 the approximate population of the parishes of Kingston, Iford, Rodmell, Southease, Telscombe and Piddinghoe was 661, which had risen to 911 by 1801. After a mid-century peak of 1233 in 1841, by 1901 the total population had declined to 955, just below its level in 1811. By 1961 this figure had risen to 4742, but that figure is inflated by the inhabitants of Peacehaven within the boundaries of Telscombe; the figure without Telscombe is 1241, of which over 400 lived in the newly-expanded Kingston.

The economic importance of the River Ouse is clear from Domesday Book: the manor of Southease owed a rent of 38,500 herrings and £4 in respect of porpoises, Iford 16,000 herrings and Rodmell 3000 herrings. In the Roman period the river entered the sea at its present mouth, but by the early middle ages the growth of a shingle bar had driven it westwards to Seaford Head and created Seaford as the out port for Lewes. That harbour too was gradually effected by silting, and by the 1530s the meadows along the estuary, and indeed as far upstream as Sheffield Bridge, lay under water almost all the year. Even the two large islands of gault clay rising above the flood level close to Iford, were almost valueless because of their inaccessibility, and merely supported the rabbit-warrens of Lewes Priory. In the 1530s Prior Crowham of Lewes sailed to Flanders at his own expense and returned with two drainage experts. In 1537, when it was reported that levels 'lay in a marsh all the summer long', a water-rate was levied on lands in the level, which funded the cutting of a channel through the accumulated shingle below Castle Hill at Meeching. One of the earliest canalizations in England, it created Newhaven, which became the out port for Lewes and dealt a further blow to the miserable port of Seaford. At a stroke the flooding dispersed and water carriage along the estuary also improved. In 1556 Sir John Gage at Firlie owned a barge of three tons and there was a barge-house at the Lord's Place in Southover. The new cut was perfectly timed to allow Lewes merchants to take advantage of the development

of the iron industry, much of whose product was floated downriver from the Weald to Newhaven and shipped to London and abroad. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the harbour mouth at Newhaven was again impeded and, after half a century of inaction and ineffective solutions, a new harbour entrance was developed between 1733 and 1735. In 1766 John Smeaton produced plans for improvements to the Ouse, and by 1793 river barges could reach 23 miles up from the sea, and 29 miles by 1812. Nine barges and four boats working chiefly on the Ouse were based at Newhaven and three boats at Piddinghoe in 1804. Although described in 1823 as 'little better than a ditch', Newhaven Harbour was again improved in 1825, when the first steam-packet service was introduced. Until the creation of the modern A27 east of Lewes in 1817 and the turnpiking of the Newhaven to Brighton route in 1824, the only way north from Newhaven lay along the west side of the Ouse Valley through Southease, Rodmell and Iford.

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## APPENDIX 2

Record Society 34 (1928).

### LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

The relevant document is the *Lewes District Local Plan* adopted in March 2003.

Policies relating to conservation areas and listed buildings are included in *Chapter 8 The Historic Environment*.

The relevant policies are:

- Stewardship of the Historic Environment – Policy H1
- Listed buildings – Policy H2
- Buildings of Local, Visual or Historic Interest – Policy H3
- Conservation Area Designation, Review and Enhancement – Policy H4
- Development within or affecting Conservation Areas – Policy H5
- Commercial Activities and Conservation – Policy H6
- Traffic in Conservation Areas – Policy H7
- Archaeological Sites – Policies H9, H10 and H11
- Areas of Established Character – Policy H12
- Parks and Gardens of Special Interest – Policy H13
- Parks and Gardens of Local Interest – Policy



## APPENDIX 3

### H14 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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