APPENDIX I THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LEWES

View eastwards from Lewes Castle

It is generally accepted that the town of Lewes was founded at the end of the 9th century by King Alfred, as one of a network of burghs or fortified settlements. It was included on a list of such strongholds compiled in 919. But the landscape before Alfred’s struggle with the Danes was not without history, and from this pre-Lewes era dates what is arguably the town’s most significant landscape feature.

There is evidence of Iron Age settlers on Mount Caburn to the east of Cliffe, with terraced lychets and massive earthworks, and the whole of the South Downs is peppered with tumuli and other monuments from pre-historic people. Before Lewes was founded, the area now occupied by the upper town was the site of at least six massive mounds, all but two of which were swept away between 1779 and 1840. These mounds are discussed further in John Bleach’s article in the Sussex Archaeological Collections 135 (1997) ‘A Romano-British (?) barrow cemetery and the origins of Lewes’. The significance to early settlers of these monuments may (although this is hotly debated) have given the town its name: the Old English word hlaew signifies a hill, often an artificial one. This possibly sacred landscape was crossed by the route of a Roman road, connecting the coast at Brighton with Malling and beyond. Its route can still be traced along Juggs Road and Rotten Row, and the discovery of the remains of a wooden structure in the mud of the river close to Malling may represent the site of an early crossing. Archaeological investigation has also identified other early crossing-points, from Old Malling in the north, near to Southerham in the south, and below the site of the present Cliffe Bridge; but the suggestion that the rectangular earthwork around the churchyard of St John-sub-Castro may mark the edge of a Roman fort owes more to 18th century antiquaries than to any evidence. Roman villas have been found close to Lewes at Beddingham and Barcombe, and in Ripe and Chalvington, to the east of Beddingham, but the ancient field boundaries laid out on a grid, associated in the 1950s with Roman land-divisions, are more probably the result of medieval enclosures.
There is plentiful evidence that settlement continued in the area of modern Lewes after the departure of the Romans. An extensive pagan Saxon cemetery at Earwig Corner, first identified by Dr Gideon Mantell in 1830, was again disturbed by metal-detectorists in 2003, when a limited excavation confirmed the early dating of the finds. Another Saxon cemetery was discovered when a new house was built off Juggs Road in 1891; it was named Saxonbury House in honour of the finds, all of which dated from well before the foundation of Alfred’s **burgh**. In Cliffe, a late Saxon settlement is thought to have existed around the base of the cliffs where Chapel Hill now rises up the Downs.

The earliest Christian settlement was at Malling, where a minster had been established by the 8th century. This is now a separate conservation area. The **burgh** at Lewes utilised the strategic location of the hilly site which provided control over the east-west route along the Downs, and the north-south route along the River Ouse. The Saxons took full advantage of the local topography to defend their new settlement from Danish attacks, although they had to build a massive entrenchment, now occupied by Keere Street and Westgate Lane, to protect their western flank, now revetted by the line of the town walls. On the other three sides, the defences were provided by natural features: the valley of the Winterbourne stream to the south, the River Ouse to the east, and the steep valley which leads down to The Wallands to the north. The origins, extent and layout of the original settlement is discussed at length by Colin Brent in *Pre-Georgian Lewes*, drawing extensively on the research of John Houghton. Although an east gate stood at the bottom of School Hill in 1478 and the medieval wall followed the line of modern-day Friars Walk and Eastgate Street, there is plentiful evidence to suggest that the first circuit of defences was tighter on its eastern side, and that the original east gate lay on the crest of the hill, just beyond the present War Memorial. Here, housing the town bell **Gabriel**, stood the church of St Nicholas, originally referred to as Little St Peters and latterly as ‘the broken church’. It is likely that the layout of the town was completed by the time of King Alfred’s death in 899, and the settlement subsequently developed with a grid pattern of lanes and twittens (pedestrian alleys) many of which still lie between the High Street and Southover.

Even before the canalisation of the 18th century, the Ouse was navigable at high tide to villages that lay well north of Lewes. The river provided a natural link between the Weald and the sea at Newhaven, and Lewes grew to be an important port along a coast where natural harbours are few. King Athelstan minted part of his coinage in Lewes between 925 and 940. Two of the moneyers, Wilebald and Eadric, are the first townsfolk to be known by name, and one of Eadric’s pennies ended up in a hoard buried beneath the forum at Rome, and Lewes coins are regularly found in Scandinavia, but whether as a result of pillage, tribute or trade is uncertain. By the time of the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66) Lewes was paying substantial sums to uphold the king’s fleet, and the sophisticated financial regime recorded by the later Domesday book suggests that a thriving local economy had been under the control of Earl Godwin, the Lord of Lewes. By the Norman Conquest, separate smaller settlements may already have appeared to the south (Southover) and west (St Anne’s), and perhaps at the foot of the eponymous cliff. However, the Domesday survey’s inclusion, under Lewes, of 59 houses (20 of them uninhabited) across the river in Pevensey Rape, is more likely
to refer to the documented Warenne holding in Seaford than to what is now Cliffe, which a century or so later was firmly part of the Archbishop’s manor of South Malling. A church dedicated to St Pancras, possibly with the function of a minster, had existed in Southover before the survey and confirms the establishment of a separate settlement. Similarly, to the west, St Anne’s Church, a yard or two beyond the borough boundary, was associated with a holy well, probably suggesting a pre-conquest foundation and the existence of a local community.

To maintain order, William the Conqueror divided up Sussex amongst his most trusted companions to form six autonomous units called Rapes. Lewes’s defensive and administrative role parallels those of Chichester, Arundel, Bramber, Pevensey and Hastings, where the lords of the other five Rapes established castles, religious houses and seigneurial government.

Lewes Rape – a slice of land between Worth and the sea, including Lewes, was granted to William de Warenne. Here he established a castle, guarded to the north by a shell keep of about 1100, with a further mound (Brack Mount) which was probably also fortified. De Warenne and his wife Gundrada established a large priory at Southover, the monks coming from Cluny, a prestigious Benedictine house in Burgundy. They built a massive church, larger than Chichester Cathedral, on the edge of the flood plain of the Cockshut stream to the south of Southover. De Warenne also founded St Nicholas’ Hospital at the top of Western Road on the Spital triangle, which survived the Reformation as a parish workhouse until the middle of the 19th century, including a brief spell as a brothel for the benefit of the troops encamped on the Wallands during the Napoleonic emergency.

A bridge over the Ouse is recorded in 1159. In 1190 the Archbishop of Canterbury refounded

View from Lewes Castle to the south-west

Lewes Priory
the Saxon minster at Malling for a new Dean and six Canons, who may have established St Thomas à Beckett church in Cliffe at about the same time as a chapel-of-ease to the main church in Malling. During the 11th and 12th centuries Lewes therefore developed as three administratively separate towns: the High Street area under the control of the de Warennes; the Southover district, dependant on the religious house, under the control of its prior; and Cliffe, within the jurisdiction of the Archbishops of Canterbury, as Lords of the Manor of South Malling.

By 1241 a Franciscan friary (the Grey Friars) had been established on the land outside the east gate facing the river. In 1264 the Battle of Lewes briefly changed the way in which the country was governed. The victorious forces of Simon de Montfort took the king prisoner and the resulting treaty – the Mise of Lewes, brokered by the Lewes friars – allowed for greater consultation with the nobles and knights of the realm and established a form of government traditionally interpreted as the origin of the House of Commons. Long thought to have been fought near the old racecourse, recent research has proved that the battle began at what is now the prison crossroads, from which the king’s troops were forced back towards the castle. The king’s brother Richard, king of the Romans, was taken prisoner in a windmill, probably on the site of the present reservoir on the corner of St Anne’s Crescent, the castle was besieged and portions of the priory burnt.

Between 1266 and 1269 new town walls were built to protect from French raids, and further walls were added in 1314; some sections still remain, facing Westgate Street and forming the back boundaries of the houses on the east side of Keere Street. The barbican of Lewes Castle is probably the response to the crown’s order of 1336 that the fortress should be “securely guarded” as a precaution against the French.

Lewes continued to grow as a centre for trade so that by the end of the 13th century, the town and its separate small settlements supported 14 churches. However, in the 14th century, Lewes fell into economic decay, due to poor weather, crop failure and cattle-plague, the abandonment of the town by its feudal lords and the uncertainty caused by repeated French raids. Added to this were the devastating effects of the bubonic plague in 1349 and the revolt of 1381, when the castle was sacked and looted by rebels. At about this time, the town walls were strengthened at least twice, anticipating further attacks from the French. By the 14th century the high street of the suburb of Cliffe was probably fully built on a rammed chalk causeway, its drainage provided by a network of parallel sewers at right angles to Cliffe High Street; these were covered over only in 1828. As well as dealing with refuse, these drainage ditches provided a level of flood prevention, as the construction of the bridge at the western end of the causeway must have constrained the flow of the river. Some of the ditches may also have been used for boat building and wharves.

The confiscation of Lewes Priory in 1537 and the Franciscan Friary in 1538, followed by the fall of the college of canons at South Malling and the town’s chantries and fraternities, including the Brotherhood of Cliffe, in 1545, resulted in tremendous changes in Lewes. Between 1538 and 1545 several local churches were made redundant and eventually demolished: St Peter’s Church, outside Westgate; St Mary in the Market, on the corner of Station Street and High Street; and St Nicholas at the top of School Hill. The domestic buildings of Lewes Priory, the former Grey Friars outside Eastgate and Malling Deaney, were converted into private mansions, and their churches, conventual buildings and outhouses demolished or exploited as quarries. The prior’s lodgings at Southover, the greatest prize of all, was granted, with the manor, to Henry’s minister.
Thomas Cromwell. He attempted to establish his son Gregory, newly married to the queen’s sister, as a Sussex magnate, and material evidence of the embellishment of the building in Renaissance style survives in architectural fragments transposed to other buildings in the town. The Mount and Dripping Pan on the eastern edge of the priory precinct can probably be identified with garden features associated with this work. After Cromwell’s attainder, the manor of Southover became part of the divorce settlement of Henry’s fourth wife Anne of Cleves. She died in 1557 and in 1559 Elizabeth I granted the manor of Southover, with the Priory and its buildings, to her cousin Sir Richard Sackville, known to contemporaries as Fill-Sack on account of his massive wealth. His grandson was the first Earl of Dorset, and the Sackvilles became the town’s patrons and protectors, owning large amounts of land and property throughout Southover and Lewes, as well as their ancient patrimony throughout the eastern division of the county. During the brief reign of the Catholic Queen Mary (1553-8) seventeen Protestants, including several Lewesians, were burnt at the stake outside the Star Inn (later the Town Hall) in the centre of Lewes, shaping the strongly held Puritan ideals which can still be seen in Lewes during the celebrations on Bonfire Night.

In the later part of the 16th century, Lewes continued to act as an important centre for government, law enforcement and administration. A market house was built in the High Street in 1564 on the south-western corner of the road leading to the castle gateway, and the following year a sessions house, shared by Lewes’s rulers as a town house, was built in the middle of the road opposite the White Hart. A House of Correction (gaol) was built in Cliffe in 1608, financed by the ratepayers of the Rapes of Lewes and Pevensey. This was later used as a naval prison. The wealthy rebuilt town houses in stone – William Newton, a former lessee of the prior’s lodgings, built Southover Grange in 1572 using Caen stone taken from the Priory ruins. The widow of Sir Nicholas Pelham, whose monument at St Michaels famously records his repulse of a French assault on Seaford in 1545, developed a town mansion at what is now the White Hart Hotel, which she purchased with her son Thomas Pelham in 1568. The family also eventually acquired Pelham House in St Andrew’s Lane, rebuilt in 1579 for George Goring of Danny in Hurstpierpoint, again as an urban mansion, at a cost of £2,000. Elaborate panelling survives in one of its rooms, signed and dated by its carpenter John Hathorn, whose self-portrait serves as a slightly rustic addition to the otherwise wholly classical caryatids whose images support the ceiling. In 1583 George’s elder brother Sir Henry Goring of Ovingdean paid £160 for the Bull Inn within the West Gate, and erected a substantial flint mansion to its the rear. The inn continued to function, and access was gained to the mansion through a timber-framed porch, again employing caryatids in the form of crouching satyrs. Many other town houses were embellished in a similar way at this time: Fairhall in Southover in the 1560s, The Vine (now Shelley’s Hotel) in 1577 and Anne of Cleves House in 1599. Improvements to the River Ouse in the 1530s created a ‘New Haven’ at the mouth of the river,
encouraging further the development of Lewes as a port and centre for commerce. Prosperity increased, so that in the same century John Stansfield, a local merchant, bought Malling Deanery, rebuilt Malling Church and married off his only child to a Surrey landowner, Richard Evelyn, grandfather of the famous diarist. Here in 1636 Ann Sadler, a vicar’s daughter from Ringmer, married John Harvard, founder of the university in New England that bears his name.
Lewes, with its strongly Puritan ideals, supported parliament during the Civil War, although a sufficient number of Royalists could be found to enable the corporation to be cleansed of puritans after the restoration of 1660. Even under Charles II, the town retained its strongly puritan aspect; in 1676 the rector of Southover estimated that 24 out of the 67 adults there were nonconformists. The hysteria excited by the Popish Plot fuelled an elaborate ‘No Popery’ demonstration in the town on 5th November 1679, fully reported in the Domestic Intelligencer, a London newspaper. This is the first documented evidence of the Bonfire celebrations for which Lewes is still known.

In 1673 the merchant Thomas Pellatt rebuilt John Kyme’s 1540s mansion on the Grey Friars site as a brick house of six bays in the fashionable artisan mannerist style; it was here that King William IV and his wife Adelaide were entertained by the nonconformist merchant Nehemiah Wimble in 1830. This was the first royal visit to Lewes since Henry III had sought refuge in its walls in 1264, as the town’s radical MP Thomas Read Kemp somewhat pointedly put it at the banquet. In the first half of the 18th century the economy of Lewes was transformed by the patronage of Thomas Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle, a descendant of Sir Nicholas Pelham. The borough’s two parliamentary seats had a particularly wide franchise, and fortunes were regularly expended at election-time in order to secure or maintain the loyalty of the thoroughly bribable voters. Newcastle owned vast estates in the county and he and his political rivals bought or redeveloped further property in the town. Newcastle House (nos.181-2 High Street), built in the 1680s, was augmented by the ironmonger Benjamin Court in 1717, and later rented out as a coffee-house. In the same year the Pelham’s former town house was remodelled as a base for Whig supporters and named the White Hart, and in 1732 the Duke bought the Pelham Arms (then the Dog), at the western end of the High Street, as a meeting-place for the less genteel electors. In 1739 the Tory Thomas Sergison rebuilt The Star (now the town hall) to entertain his voters, and put in a fine Renaissance staircase from his disused mansion at Slaugham. Pelham House in St Andrew’s Lane was remodelled for the Catsfield branch of the family in the 1720s and again in 1790-1812.

Nonconformity continued to be important and a new Friends’ Meeting House was built for the Quakers in Friars Walk in 1784. At the same time Lewes’s role as a centre for the judiciary was reinforced when the assize judges returned to the town in 1716, and the Sessions House of 1565 was rebuilt by John Morris in 1761. The new building remained on its increasingly inconvenient site in the middle of the High Street – “a perfect nuisance … and a monument to the stupidity of those who fixed it there” – until 1812, when it was replaced by the present Crown Courts. The House of Correction in Cliffe was rebuilt in 1740, but replaced by a new county gaol, opened in North Street in 1793. This subsequently became a naval prison.
There was a great demand for new, more prestigious houses, and local property owners also rebuilt or refaced their old timber-frame gabled houses in brick or mathematical tiles, providing the elegant Georgian facades which characterize the main streets. Of note are Malling House (now the Sussex Police headquarters) of 1710; Malling Deanery (a thorough refacing of c1700); Shelles (a refronting of 1763 of the 16th century building); School Hill House (1715); Lewes House (c1815); Pelham House (a refronting); St Anne’s House (1719) and Barbican House (a refronting of the 16th century timber frame). However, despite this expansion, John Edward’s map of 1799 shows that the town was still highly concentrated along the High Street and Cliffe, with Southover and Cliffe quite separate parishes.

Cliffe Bridge was rebuilt in stone in 1727, and other improvements to local transport included the turnpiking of the main roads and improvements to the River Ouse and Newhaven harbour. In the later part of the 18th century, Lewes expanded as a centre for the local farming community, with its existing busy markets and shops. Manufacturing was also very important. In 1784 Nathaniel Polhill established the Lewes Foundry, in Foundry Lane, later owned by Ebenezer Morris, after whom Morris Road (built in 1891) is named. At some stage, possibly in the 17th century, but more likely in the 18th, part of the bailey became a bowling green and the castle keep was taken into private ownership and treated as a very large gazebo to a nearby garden, as described in John Farrant’s article in the Sussex Archaeological Collections 134 (1996) “A garden in a desert place and a palace among the ruins”.

Early 19th century Lewes was a bustling market town and inland port with industrial and trading activity centred on the river at Cliffe. An Act of 1806 established Town Improvement Commissioners, with powers to repave the streets; much of the brick paving found throughout the conservation area, and the cobbles in Keere Street, date to this period. The Commissioners were also able to buy buildings and set back their frontages, leading to the rounded corners to be seen on the Lewes Arms, no. 120 High Street, no. 56 Cliffe High Street (Bill’s) and other buildings in the town. In 1828 the still independent suburb of Cliffe obtained a
similar Act, and the Cliffe Commissioners’ first moves were to bridge over the sewers and to widen the High Street, to cope with the ever-increasing amount of traffic, by setting back its south side. Southover adopted a public statute, the Lighting and Watching Act 1833, to achieve similar powers. The first industrial funicular railway appeared at the Offham quarry in 1809, but by the time the mainline railway arrived in 1846 with a station in Friars Walk the riverside was crowded with wharves, warehouses, granaries, ironworks (the Phoenix), gas works, breweries, timber yards, shipyards, a stoneworks, a paper mill and a soap factory. In that year the Brighton railway line bisected the site of the former priory in Southover, revealing some of the ruins and the lead cists containing the bones of William and Gundrada de Warenne, which were placed in a purpose-built chapel in St John’s Church in Southover. This discovery also prompted the foundation of the Sussex Archaeological Society, one of the first in the country, in the same year. In the mid 19th century the Friars Walk station was demolished and replaced with a new station built on the site of the present station, the original station site becoming a goods yard. Throughout the 19th century, a number of prestigious educational, administrative, religious or commercial buildings were erected in the town. These are described more fully in the Chapter 7 Identification of Character Areas.
View over Southover towards the South Downs

Early 19th century map of The Pells area
Local residents played an important part in the growth and success of 19th century Lewes: John Baxter (1781-1832) developed the Sussex Express as an influential local paper; and his son George Baxter (1804-1867) was a pioneer of colour printing; three generations of the Every family supervised the development of the Phoenix ironworks at the northern end of North Street on the side of the Ouse; William Verrall, a local brewer and property owner, who lived at Southover Manor from 1837-1890; Albion Russell who, with his son-in-law G. F. Bromley, founded the Russell and Bromley chain of shoe shops; and Charles Dawson, the Uckfield solicitor who ‘discovered’ Piltdown Man.

Beginning in the 1790s, a New Town was developed on a group of urban crofts which had probably not been occupied since the early medieval period. Abinger Place, Sun Street, St John’s Street, Lancaster Street, North Street, East Street and Little East Street were gradually laid out in the northern part of the town, their development seemingly constrained by the limits of the borough boundary.

From the middle of the 19th century, Lewes went into a slight decline as the new railway siphoned off business from the river and roads. Barge traffic along the Upper Ouse Navigation collapsed and downstream, the only cargoes were coal, chalk and lime. The Agricultural Depression of the 1870s also affected the town, and the fashionable residents gradually looked further afield for entertainment: to Brighton, Eastbourne or Tunbridge Wells. A new prison opened in 1853 and the old gaol in North Street was sold to the Admiralty; here were incarcerated Finnish prisoners from the northern theatre of the Crimean war; a new monument to whose dead was raised by the Czar in 1877. The population of Lewes (including South Malling) rose very little from 9,845 in 1841 to 11,238 in 1891, but despite this, Victorian Lewes boasted some 70 public houses and seven breweries.
In the later part of the 19th century the centre of Lewes remained relatively unaltered, the more wealthy residents preferring to move out to the more spacious houses in St Anne's Crescent (from 1869), Wallands Crescent (1871) and later, to the Wallands estate, which was developed between 1890 and 1910. Artisan housing was provided in rows of terraced houses in the Pells, built between the 1880s and the early 20th century. The 1898 map of Lewes shows how densely developed this area was with lines of small terraced cottages facing North Street, Spring Gardens and Wellington Street.

In 1881 the Charter of Incorporation provided Lewes with its first mayor and, more importantly, brought the governance of the whole conurbation – Lewes, Cliffe and Southover – under a single authority for the first time. A new Town Hall was built in 1893, a refacing of the former Star Inn. The lordship of the manor of Lewes Borough continued to be shared by a number of local families – the Dukes of Norfolk, the Earls de la Warr and the Marquesses of Abergavenny – but only the latter had any influence on the development of the town. St Peter's Place, built in 1868 on Abergavenny land just within the borough boundary to guarantee a score of Tory votes, soon lost its purpose with the introduction of the secret ballot four years later.

20th century Lewes saw many changes associated with the gradual loss of its agricultural base and the closure of local industries, including the Phoenix Iron Works in North Street. New houses continued to be built in The Wallands until the start of World War I, and house-building commenced after the War north of the Wallands, including the construction of the Nevill (from 1933) and the Landport (from 1937) estates, the first a result of private enterprise by the Glyndebourne estate, the second the work of Lewes Borough Council (the land was compulsorily purchased) as a housing authority. This was allied to the regrettable demolition of a number of fine historic buildings in the town centre which were considered to be unfit for human habitation. Further buildings were lost due to bomb damage during World War II. The Malling Estate was also started in the 1950s, and in the 1960s the Wallands area was extended with the development of Fitzjohns and Clare Roads by Ringmer Buildings Works, a company owned by the Glyndebourne estate. At the same time, terrible flooding in Cliffe and other parts of APPENDIX 1

The closure of the Uckfield railway line in 1969 meant that the railway viaduct, which had bisected the bottom part of the High Street for so long, could be demolished. At about the same time, the County Council proposed the construction of an inner relief road across The Paddock to the north of the High Street and Cliffe, with a new river crossing. The resultant public outcry was led by the Friends of Lewes, an active local amenity society, and the idea was shelved apart from the creation of the Phoenix Causeway, which was built in 1968. The demolition of the Phoenix Ironworks, now the North Street Industrial estate also took place then. Just before, a new County Hall was opened off St Anne's Crescent, dominating views across the town from many directions.

In 1975-76 a new bypass was constructed to the south of the town, which removed the majority of the A27 traffic from the town centre, and the Cuilfail tunnel was built. In the 1980s a new pedestrian precinct was created by closing part of the eastern end of the High Street, between Eastgate Street and Railway Lane. This was partly a response and partly an encouragement to the flight of retail provision from the upper end of the High Street and from Southover: in 1980 the Lewes meant that the town centre was under water for nearly a week.
area between the War Memorial and the Westgate boasted a supermarket, two butchers, a greengrocer, fishmonger and baker.

Various gap sites in the town have gradually been filled in over the last 50 years. However, the principal streets retain their historic frontages as, by and large, modern development has not intruded, apart from in Eastgate Street, where Boots and Waitrose on the east side and the Bus Station and an extension to the Baptist Chapel on the west are prominent. In 1997 Brighton and Hove became a unitary authority and ceased to be part of East Sussex, resulting in a reduction in the numbers of County Council staff and the disposal of several County-owned buildings in the town.

Within the last twenty years, Lewes has lost its agricultural and industrial base as old businesses closed down or moved away. The cattle market moved out of Lewes only a few years ago, and the site, next to the railway station, was developed for housing. More recently, another large local employer, Baxters Printers in St Nicholas’ Lane, have closed, and the site will also be developed for housing. A timber yard operating from a site adjacent to the river is threatened with closure, and only Harvey’s Brewery, on the opposite bank of the river and very much part of the Lewes scene, survives as a reminder of the town’s industrial past. Lewes now relies economically upon the employment provide by the local Councils and Law Courts, the many professional offices in the town centre, and the schools and colleges within and just outside the town. A new library has been completed in the former garden of Lewes House, and tourism, aided by the attractive surrounding countryside and many specialist shops, is thriving and is helped by the proximity of the facilities of Brighton and the seaside. Lewes also has a very strong sense of community, despite many of the residents still working in Brighton or even London, enabled by the excellent railway links, including a new connection to Ashford in Kent. The town centre precinct has become a popular car-free space, used for monthly farmers’ markets and other events. The floods of October 2000 left a grim legacy in Cliffe, The Pells, and north of Phoenix Causeway, but some businesses have used the opportunity to rebuild and expand, particularly in Cliffe, where new shops, cafes and restaurants have emerged from the devastation. Recently, a new Residents’ Parking Scheme has been introduced as a means of controlling the large amount of commuter parking which previously littered the residential streets, and plans are afoot to improve the public realm in Cliffe High Street. Another idea, to include Lewes within the proposed new South Downs National Park, has been put forward but awaits confirmation by the Secretary of State.

From the 1840s the Bonfire Societies grew in strength after official attempts to curb them culminated in the Earl of Chichester reading the Riot Act from the steps of County Hall in 1847. In 1901 the Protestant Truth Society, an ultra-evangelical group, raised an obelisk on the downs overlooking the Culfail estate in memory of the 17 Protestants who were burnt at the stake in the 16th century. During the 19th century four separate societies were formed – Commercial Square (1855), Cliffe (1853), The Borough (1853), and Waterloo (c1858). In 1913 South Street was added, and now each society has its own firework display and bonfire. The celebration of the 5th November has since become an integral part of Lewes life, with the town being closed to all traffic to make way for the processions and the thousands of participants. However by the next morning the debris has been completely cleared away by the combined forces of the local authority and the bonfire societies and the town returns to normality.
### APPENDIX 2  BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Contains further useful bibliographies
**APPENDIX 3 USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS**

**Lewes District Council**  
Planning and Environmental Services  
Lewes District Council  
Southover House  
Southover Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1DW  
Telephone: 01273 484413

**South Downs Society**  
2 Swan Court  
Station Road  
Pulborough  
West Sussex RH20 1RL  
Telephone: 01798 875073

**Lewes Town Council**  
Town Hall  
High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 2QS  
Telephone: 01273 471469

**East Sussex County Council**  
County Hall  
St Anne’s Crescent  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1SF  
Telephone: 01273 471469

**English Heritage (South-East Region)**  
Eastgate Court  
195-205 High Street  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 3EH  
Telephone: 01483 252000

**Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)**  
37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY  
Telephone: 020 7377 1644

**The Victorian Society**  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park, London W4 1TT  
Telephone: 020 8994 1019

**Friends of Lewes Society**  
c/o Town Council Offices  
Town Hall  
High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 2QS  
Telephone: 01273 474357

**The Georgian Group**  
6 Fitzroy Square  
London W1T 5DX  
Telephone: 020 7529 8920

**Sussex Archaeological Society**  
Bull House  
92 High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1XH  
Telephone: 01273 486260
APPENDIX 4 GENERAL GUIDANCE

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE LEWES CONSERVATION AREA

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1 INTRODUCTION

In many of the Character Areas of the Lewes Conservation Area the special interest of the conservation area has been adversely affected by backland development, particularly the infilling of gardens to existing properties, or by insensitive modern development which fails to follow established building lines or existing forms of historic development. This is especially noticeable in The Wallands, parts of Southover, Grange Road, and in South Street in Cliffe.

Policies in the Local Plan (shortly to be the Local Development Framework) already seek the preservation of the special character of all conservation areas within the District. However, the following guidance is relevant for all future development within the Lewes Conservation Area:

2 THE NEED FOR CONTEXTUAL DESIGN

Most development opportunities within the Lewes Conservation Area will be on small, enclosed sites where the ‘context’ – the surrounding positive buildings and the form of historic plot development – may be obvious but still needs to be acknowledged. Therefore, for most sites a more traditional approach could be taken where new buildings respect the existing historic townscape. However, there will be some sites where a well designed, modern building is likely to be acceptable, but only where the new building responds to its immediate environment, in terms of scale, density, and general form. Materials and detailing must also be carefully considered.

All applicants for planning permission must also provide a ‘Design Statement’, to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how the building relates to its context.

3 URBAN GRAIN

The ‘urban grain’, or form of historic development, is particularly important in Lewes, especially in the town centre, where the tight urban grain, including the largely hidden private gardens, provides a townscape of great individuality. This is characterised by a mixture of twittens and wider streets, lined with long terraces of varied tiled, brick or stuccoed properties to either side. The rooftscape is also particularly important, with handmade clay tiles, laid on steeply pitched roofs, being an important local feature which is best viewed from Lewes Castle. For this reason, shallow pitched or flat roofs are not generally appropriate in the conservation area.

Sadly, in some places, identified in the Character Area descriptions, modern development has not followed historic precedents and large, bulky buildings sit awkwardly within the historic townscape. Examples include County Hall, Waitrose Supermarket; the Magistrates’ Court and NHS Offices, facing each other in Friars Walk; recent development off Harvey’s Way in Cliffe; and a variety of sites for modern housing in The Wallands.

This ‘urban grain’ is an important part of the character of the conservation area and should be protected. Proposals for new development must include a detailed analysis of the locality and demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local townscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios. This is particularly important on ‘backland’ sites where new development potential is very limited and must always be secondary in character to the more important primary buildings facing the main street. Large, bulky buildings are unlikely to be appropriate in the centre of Lewes, where a smaller, more domestic scale predominates.

4 SCALE AND DENSITY

Scale is the combination of a building’s height and bulk when related to its surroundings. The scale of any development should respect surrounding development, so, for instance, three storey office buildings may not be considered appropriate in a conservation area where most of the buildings are two storeys and in residential use. However, some modest changes in scale may actually be advantageous, as this reflects the variety of form in the town centre of Lewes where the buildings have developed individually for a variety of functions over a long period of time. For such schemes, the applicant must provide accurate elevations of the surrounding buildings, with proposed and existing dimensions, showing how the new development will relate to them.

Density is the amount of development (measured in terms of floor space or number of housing
units) related to the site area it occupies. In practice, it is the combination of density with layout, landscaping and other factors which determines the quality and ‘feel’ of new developments. As set out in government guidance in PPG 3, high density development, if carefully chosen and sensitively sited, can make good use of land and in principle the Council supports such schemes, where appropriate, in existing settlements. However, where the proposal lies within a conservation area such as Lewes, the requirements of the developer need to be more than usually sensitive to the environment. In taking account of existing densities within the conservation area, care must be taken to ensure sites are not overdeveloped. Developments which have a detrimental effect on the character of the conservation area will be resisted. It is especially important to consider how the area has developed over time and to recognise the differences in building form which can be attributed to different periods.

5 HEIGHT AND MASSING

Within the conservation area, there is a hierarchy of buildings according to their original use, which has resulted in the higher prestige buildings being generally taller and more sizeable than the domestic buildings. The most obviously important structure is Lewes Castle with its gatehouse and barbican, but other significant buildings within the town are the parish churches of St John the Baptist in Southover, St Michael’s and St Anne’s in the High Street, St Thomas’ in Cliffe, and St John sub Castro in The Pells. Other ‘noticeable’ buildings include All Saints Arts Centre in Friars’ Walk, Harveys Brewery in Cliffe, the Crown Court complex in the High Street, the Needlemakers Warehouse between Market Lane and West Street, and Lewes Station. The Town Hall and the Assembly Rooms are surprisingly not very dominant, being integrated into the historic streetscape, and facing relatively narrow streets where views are somewhat constrained. Otherwise, the buildings in Lewes are generally domestic in scale, and although they are varied in detail their general height and bulk is common, unified further by a common relationship to the street.

New development should reflect this hierarchy, and generally, the height of new development should match the adjoining buildings, although allowing for the inevitable variations in height and bulk which are natural to historic towns. For Lewes, this usually means two or three storeys, with lower heights in backland sites.

Massing is the combination of the scale of the development, its layout and its site coverage. For larger schemes, poor massing and over-intensive development leads to the creation of overshadowed areas, with poor quality spaces between the buildings. These create a threatening environment for pedestrians and reduce the opportunities for good quality landscaping. However, the majority of redevelopment sites in the Lewes Conservation Area will be modest in size, perhaps only large enough to accommodate one or two buildings at the most and the issue of massing is less relevant than scale, density and height.

6 APPEARANCE, MATERIALS AND DETAILING

The emphasis in any new development or alterations must always be on the need to provide a high quality of design. This might be an innovative modern design, providing a dramatic contemporary statement, or more usually, a traditional design in the local vernacular which fits less obtrusively into the existing historic townscape. The recent example of the new house in Grange Road, which has met with a very mixed reception locally, is perhaps a case in point where the overall scale of the new building is probably too large for the site.

However, all new development in the Lewes Conservation Area, whether modern or traditional, should carefully consider the prevailing form of existing development, taking into account scale, density, height and massing. These elements may be used to set out the basic form of the new building(s), including roof shape, roof pitch, height, depth of plan and, most importantly, the relationship of the new buildings to existing surrounding buildings and to the street. These elements are all controlled by the existing surrounding historic environment. Once this basic framework has been established and the general form and siting of the building agreed, the actual appearance of any new building may be either traditional or modern, providing some opportunities for a good designer to experiment with new materials and details. In all cases, a design...
Where a more traditional approach is appropriate, the Council will expect new buildings which are designed in a traditional form within the conservation area to be detailed in a manner appropriate to the historic setting. Roofs should be pitched and covered in handmade clay tiles, or natural slate. Local features such as gables, full or half hips may be suitable. Dormers and rooflights should usually be avoided, unless modestly sized and away from the public viewpoint. Chimneys may sometimes be required in certain locations where they add to the existing variety of rooflines.

Walls will usually be brick, tile-hung or weather-boarded. Occasionally, traditional feather-edged boarding (not modern ship-lap) might be appropriate, especially on rear elevations. This can be painted or stained an appropriate colour. Painted brick or render are more modern alternatives which may occasionally be appropriate. The inclusion of small decorative details, such as a string courses, shaped cills or lintels, recessed panels and other features can add interest and a sense of place but must be based on local precedent and used correctly.

Windows should be timber, painted not stained. Their design should reflect local styles, usually simple side-hung casements or vertically sliding sashes. If windows are to be double glazed, then these must be carefully designed. Avoidance of glazing bars (which can otherwise be far too thick and heavy in appearance) can assist in achieving a satisfactory solution. Consideration should be given to alternative ways of complying with Building Regulations if traditional windows are to be used. In all cases joinery details must be submitted with planning applications. Modern top-hung lights and modern materials, such as uPVC or aluminum, are generally unacceptable in the Lewes Conservation Area, particularly where the new building abuts a listed building or faces a principal street.

Front doors should also be painted timber, again reflecting local historic styles.

7 EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

Extensions to existing buildings require a similar approach to more major schemes in that they must take into account the prevailing forms of development, complement the form and character of the original house and use high quality materials and detailing. For listed buildings this is particularly important. Design should be of high quality, whether modern or traditional. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations. Extensions should not overlook neighbouring properties, lead to an unacceptable loss of garden space, or result in the loss of historic plot boundaries. Almost always, extensions should not dominate the original building.

8 BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

Traditionally, most boundaries in the conservation area are defined by brick or flint walls, with trees, soft hedging and timber fencing being more prevalent in the residential areas outside the town centre. For new development in Lewes, it is important that local materials and detailing are used and new boundaries following the historic precedent of brick and flint will help development to fit in to its context. Modern alternatives, such as concrete blocks, ranch-style timber fencing, or post-and-rail type fencing are not acceptable. Simple, close-boarded fencing, with timber posts, may be an alternative to brick in certain locations away from the public viewpoint but such fencing should be simply detailed, without any decoration such as a curved top or trellis. Replacement metal railings to front boundaries should be encouraged. Therefore, where required, new boundaries should utilise traditional materials and detailing, usually by specifying flint with brick copings. Modern materials, such as timber fencing, are generally not acceptable. Lewes is fortunate in having a number of local builders who are expert in the use of brick, flint, and lime mortars, and although the provision of these skills can be expensive, the results are well worth it.

9 STREET SURFACES

Existing historic street surfaces (brick, stone, cast iron) should be retained and enhanced. New brick or natural stone paving could be considered for parts of the conservation area. The retention of stone kerbs, particularly those made from local stone, is important. Dropped kerbs should also be retained to reinforce the traditional relationship of pavement to street surface.
APPENDIX 5  MAPS OF LEWES CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER AREA 1: CLIFFE
CHARACTER AREA 2: LOWER HIGH STREET
CHARACTER AREA 3: LEWES CASTLE AND MIDDLE HIGH STREET
CHARACTER AREA 4: UPPER HIGH STREET AND WESTERN ROAD
CHARACTER AREA 5: THE PELLS AND WEST STREET
CHARACTER AREA 6: THE WALLANDS
CHARACTER AREA 7: SOUTHOVER