

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

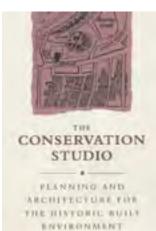
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In May 2007 Lewes District Council approved this document as planning guidance and therefore it will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to John Robinson of Iford Farm, who kindly showed me around the village, and to Margaret Thorburn, who lent me her very helpful study of Iford.



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SUMMARY

I.I KEY POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

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

Character Area 1: Along the C7

- Country road with scattered development along one side;
- A number of paired "positive" houses and the former village school;
- The Old Vicarage is the most important historic building, set well back from the road;
- Varied materials: flint, painted stucco, tile hanging;
- Spacious gardens backing onto fields;
- Stunning views to both east and west.

Character Area 2: Norton

- Winding country lane, enclosed by flint walls and hedging;
- St Nicholas's Church is listed grade I;
- Harmonious variety of building forms with houses, cottages and farm buildings all mixed together;
- Upper Stalls is a good group of former barns, sensitively converted into office use;
- Prestigious houses: Norton House, Iford Grange (II*);
- Hedging, metal railings and flint walls define boundaries;
- Use of flint, red brick, handmade clay tiles and Welsh slate;
- Views across neighbouring fields to east and west to the South Downs or Cliffe and Mount Caburn;
- Woodland behind farm buildings and in centre of the village;
- Open fields within the village.

Character Area 3: Sutton

- Winding country lane, enclosed by flint walls and hedging;
- High concentration of listed and positive buildings;
- Iford Manor and Iford Court are architecturally important buildings but largely hidden from the public viewpoint;
- Sutton House remains as a farmhouse, serving the local farm;

- Survival of original manor house (nos. I-3 Sutton Cottages) with interesting 17th century details;
- Spacious layout with detached or paired houses and cottages, set back slightly from the lane;
- Good group of 19th century farm buildings, built from flint;
- Mature trees and soft hedging for most of the boundaries;
- A public footpath across the fields provides stunning views to the South Downs and back into the conservation area;
- Other views eastwards towards Mount Caburn.



The former village school (on left)



Norton House (on left)



Views to the South Downs over Sutton

I.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This Character Appraisal makes the following recommendations (summary):

- Underground overhead wires;
- Prepare a Farm Management Plan for Iford Farm;
- Consider serving an Article 4(2) Direction to control alterations to *positive* unlisted family dwellings;
- Consider a 40 mph speed limit along the whole of the C7;
- Prepare a Tree Management Plan;
- Amend the conservation area boundary in one place: delete part of the field and farmyard in Sutton.

For the Townscape Appraisal map see Appendix 4



Views of Sutton House from the C7



Unlisted but "positive" cottages (Nos. 4 and 5 Sutton Cottages)



The South Downs from Sutton

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 THE IFORD CONSERVATION AREA

Iford is a small downland village a few kilometres outside Lewes, between the C7 Lewes-Newhaven road and the brooklands to the River Ouse. It forms one of several such settlements (Rodmell, Southease, and Piddinghoe) which lie just above the floodplain of the river as it travels towards the sea at Newhaven. Iford is very much a farming village, and many of the buildings and most of the land is owned by the Robinson family, who have farmed from Iford since the late 19th century.

The Iford Conservation Area was designated in 1972 by Lewes District Council and covers a section of the C7, encompassing the village school of 1872; the northern section of the village known as Norton; and the southern section, known unsurprisingly as Sutton, from where the more modern farm mainly operates. It includes a number of varied listed buildings including a manor house and church (St Nicholas's), dating in part to the early or middle 12^{th} century. The location close to the foot of the steep scarp slope (part of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) which leads up to the summit of the Downs provides stunning views in many directions. The Greenwich Meridian passes directly through the village.

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 lford 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 Iford Conservation Area, is set out in "Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology" (PPG16).

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the lford 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 Council 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 Iford 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, 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. 13 confirms that the following policies apply to the whole settlement of Iford, including the conservation area:

- Countryside Policies (which limit development) and the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) apply to all of the land within the conservation area, as well as to the surrounding countryside;
- There is therefore no Planning Boundary, as all proposals for new development will be assessed in the light of the above constraints.

There is a shortfall of Outdoor Sports and Informal Play Space within Iford and the Local Plan confirms that the provision of these facilities would be acceptable under District Wide policy CT1.

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.

2.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This document was initially drafted following a meeting with representatives from Iford Parish Council and local historians on 14th September 2006. A walkabout with a local parish councillor, John Robinson of Iford Farm, was held on the

26th 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.



Nos. 1 and 2 Vicarage Cottages are also "positive" buildings



Sutton is still very much a working farm



Old and modern farm buildings in Sutton

LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

3.1 LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES

Iford is located within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) four kilometres to the south-west of Lewes, the county town of East Sussex, just off the C7 Lewes-Newhaven road. The conservation area encompasses part of the C7, plus a winding street in the form of a rather meandering loop which connects a collection of residential, agricultural and other properties in the hamlets of Norton and Sutton.

Iford is primarily a residential and agricultural village with a large working farm in Sutton, complete with modern barns and outbuildings which sit within the conservation area. Another farmyard at Norton has now been largely converted into business units, although some modern buildings at the back of the farmstead are still used for storage. These cow sheds and milking parlours ceased to be needed for their original use in 2003, when the animals and machinery were sold. The farm now concentrates on rearing beef cattle and some arable crops on the lower slopes of the Downs where the soil is more suitable. Sheep are reared on the steep slopes of the Downs, and on the eastern edge of the village where the water meadows associated with the River Ouse provide rich pasture.

Iford has no facilities apart from a Village Hall, donated to the community by John Robinson's grandfather in the 1930s, and St Nicholas's Church. The larger houses (Norton House, Iford Grange and the Manor House) are now in private ownership, but some of the smaller houses and cottages are still owned by the Robinsons who live at Sutton House.

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Iford lies in a slight rise above the floodplain of the River Ouse, defined along its eastern edge by the 10 metre contour, which cuts through the southern part of the conservation area. The settlement is set back slightly from the steep scarp slope of the South Downs which lies to the southwest, with gently falling fields between which are used for growing crops such as wheat or oilseed rape. The strong line of the Downs dominates views to one side, and to the other (eastern) side, there are long views over the flat meadows (The Brooks) towards Lewes and Cliffe. Two small chalk mounds rise above this flat landscape,



Norton: farm buildings have been sensitively converted into offices



The village hall



View from the C7 towards Mount Caburn

called Upper Rise and Lower Rise, the result of glacial activity, and closer to Iford, and just within the conservation area boundary, another mound (Millborough) creates a partially wooded barrier to views to the north. On top of this mound is a clump of trees hiding the reservoir that feeds the village water supply. It is filled with water pumped from a borehole further to the east.

The geology below lford is mixed, with the underlying chalk providing flints for building

being the most important. Gault clay can also be found, as well as more mixed malm soils on the lower slopes of the Downs, suitable for arable farming or pasture. Lime, produced by burning chalk, was historically added to the clayey soils to improve fertility and texture. The Brooks were drained and improved in the early 19th century, following the straightening-out of the River Ouse to improve navigation and flood control. This produced rich pastureland which contributed to the success of the farms around lford from this period onwards.

3.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONSERVATION AREA TO ITS SURROUNDINGS

Iford is an open village with its western boundary clearly defined by the C7, with the lower slopes of the Downs beyond. Further away, the long gently undulating ridge of the South Downs is the most dominant feature. Long, straight droveways for sheep are a notable feature. To the north and south, Iford is surrounded by the descending slopes of the Downs, with large fields and stands of mature trees. To the east, the low, flat water meadows are quite bleak, although they are broken by three small mounds as previously mentioned.

The C7 is a busy road which creates a definite barrier between Iford and the South Downs. A footpath runs almost parallel to the road, connecting Rodmell, Southease, Iford, Swanborough and Lewes.

There are stunning views from the western side of Iford towards the South Downs, although the many mature trees within the village prevent these from the centre. Other views over The Brooks to the east open up the village and stop it feeling enclosed.

3.4 **BIODIVERSITY**

The whole of Iford lies within the South Downs AONB, a landscape of national significance with policies in both Structure and Local Plans for its protection. Cattle rearing and sheep grazing are the main farming activities, with arable crops being grown in rotation on the flatter fields.

Naturally occurring trees include willows, horse chestnut, hazel, ash and elder. A variety of birds, some of them from the river (heron, curlew, ducks and kingfishers) can be seen on The Brooks. In the field edges are many wild flowers including bull rushes, mallow, meadowsweet and cowslips.

There are no landscape conservation designations either within or close to the Iford Conservation Area.



Views towards Iford from The Brooks



View westwards from Iford



Sussex beef cattle grazing at Norton

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

4.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A number of early Saxon settlements appear to have been established in the area following the retreat of the Romans in the 4th 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 established a series 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, meaning farmstead - in Kingston, Sutton and Norton indicates that they were "inclusive" farming settlements of the Saxon settlement based at lford. Farming was probably concentrated on sheep rearing and growing crops such as wheat and barley.

Saxon England was divided into counties, rapes and hundreds. With Ashcombe and Winterbourne, lford was included in the Hundred of Swanborough or *Suanesburg*, but there is no evidence of a Saxon church in lford although a Saxon burial ground has been found not far away on the outskirts of Lewes. It is recorded that Iford or Niworde was held by King Edward's wife Edith, sister of Earl Godwine, at the Conquest but soon after William the Conqueror gave lford and other lands as a reward to his supporter William de Warenne, builder of Lewes castle and founder of the Cluniac priory at Southover. He in turn appears to have handed on Iford to his supporter Golda, who in about 1070 began building a small church, of which part of the chancel and tower still remain. By about 1090 he must have died as it was his son Hugh de Plaiz who gave the completed church to the priory, who would have provided monks to conduct services. In about 1200 the monks built a grange at Swanborough, and at about this time a font was provided for the church at lford which still remains although altered. By this time lford was called Yford. The Plaiz family owned Iford Manor until 1439, when it passed with other lands to Lady Bergavenny, whose family was still in control in 1543. In the late medieval period it appears that the village was split between two manors, Norton lying within the manor of Swanborough, and Sutton within the manor of Northease, and this split later resulted in land ownerships within the village being unusually diverse. At the Dissolution, the king granted the lands and property belonging to the monks to Thomas



St Nicholas's Church is an important landmark

Cromwell, and by 1584 the manor and its grounds in Norton had been acquired by Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst. His descendents, the De la Warrs, Earls of Dorset, owned the titles until 1879. Similarly, Sutton appears to have remained in the ownership of the Abergavennys until the late 19th century and some of the cottages in the village still retain an Abergavenny crest.

Over the centuries, various tenants and other land owners came and went but of note is the involvement of Thomas Rogers in 1660, whose descendants went on to own property in Kingston, and John Ade, who owned some land in Iford in the early 18th century. His daughter Mary Ade married Richard Hurley and it was his son, another Richard Hurley (1756-1818) who built the two large flint barns (one of them dated 1815) which still remain in Norton and Sutton. He and another Thomas Rogers are both named as lords of the manor of Iford in 1791. By 1835 Henry Hurley was said to hold five-sixths of the manor, and when he died in 1837 the manor passed to his niece Elizabeth (nee Hurley) Skelton, who had married Robert Rossetter (1821-1861). Mrs Rossetter donated land in 1871 for the building of Iford and Kingston school, opened in 1872. As there was no male heir to this marriage, the estate was sold to the Robinsons in the late 19th century. By this date all manorial rights had elapsed.

St Nicholas's Church is the oldest building in the village with tower and nave being partially early 12th century, fitting with the date of Hugh de Plaiz's gift. The chancel was added in the later part of the 12th century. The church was restored in 1874 when much of the nave was rebuilt.

The map of 1630 shows lford surrounded by thin strips of land which were finally removed after the Enclosure Act of 1830, which enabled the collecting together of the old medieval fields. Perhaps because the ancient (possibly Saxon) field boundary which cuts the village in half from east to west separated different portions of land ownership, the southern part of the village is not shown. However it is possible to trace the northern part of the land from the Lewes to Newhaven road, with a scattering of buildings where Norton now exists, and of course, the church. The names of "Hurly" and "Thomas" can also be traced on some of the fields. At some stage in the 17th century, the old manor house, now known as nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages, was built, complete with stone drip moulds. Other buildings of this period remain, namely nos. I and 2 Shepherds Cottages, a timber-



Late 19th century cottages in Sutton



Richard Hurley's barn in Sutton, dated 1815

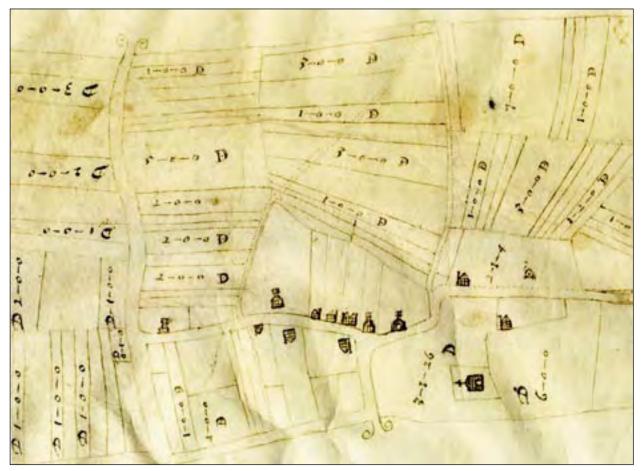


Nos. I and 2 Shepherds Cottages

framed building now faced in 19th century flint, and Oatlands Cottage, previously thatched and also heavily altered in the 19th century.

The commercial success of lford in the early 19th century is confirmed by the addition of a number of prestigious family houses to the village. The Enclosure Act of 1830 allowed the removal of the medieval strip fields, and the improvements to the Brooks provided rich pastureland for cattle and sheep. From 1837 high wheat prices generated still further income. By 1843 the population of the parish was 187 with 25 dwellings, mostly based in lford.

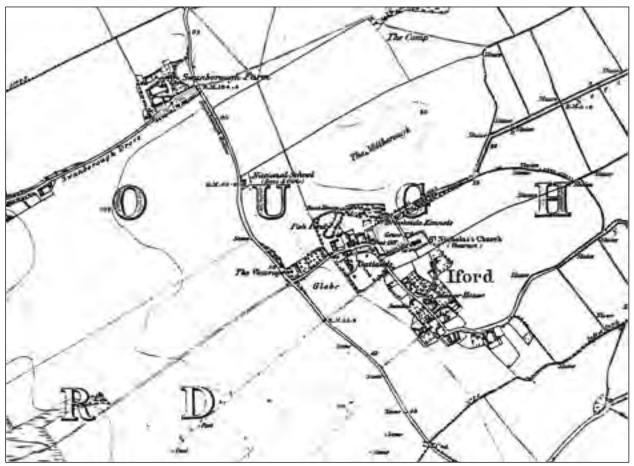
The 1873 map shows how the two hamlets – Norton and Sutton – were collected around



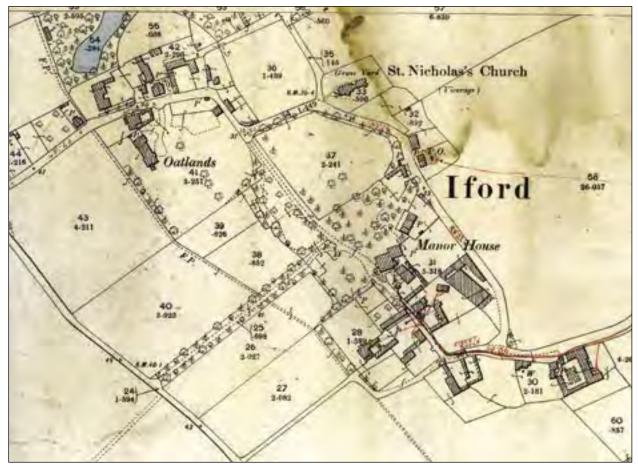
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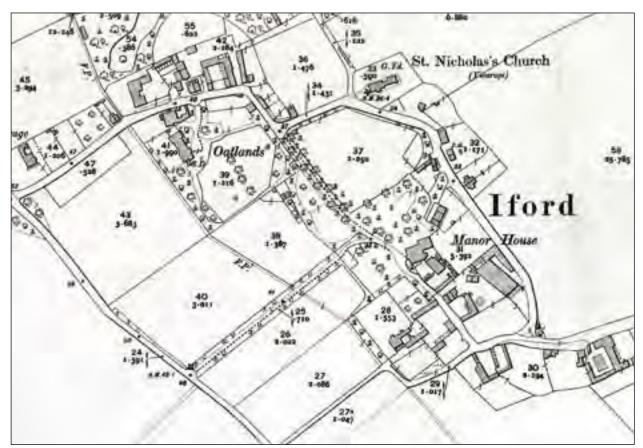
1873 Map



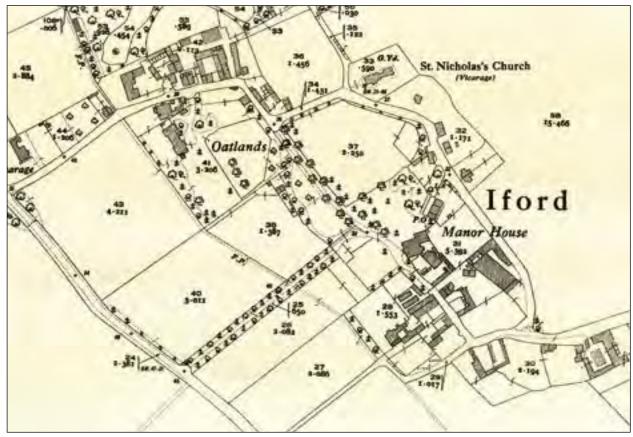
1879 Ordnance Survey Map



1898 Ordnance Survey Map



1908 Ordnance Survey Map



1929 Ordnance Survey Map

two separate farms. To the north, Oatlands has been built (in the 1840s), as has The Vicarage, built by the Reverend Donald in about 1822. Other buildings are mainly confined to barns and cottages with a Post Office. A large fish pond is shown in the wood to the north. In the south, the Manor House is central with five groups of farm buildings and some cottages as well as Sutton House, built in 1780 with a possibly earlier section to the rear. The Manor House of c1700 was rebuilt by Henry Hurley in about 1830 in the Tudor Gothic style.

The 1898 map shows little change to the buildings but there has been a major alteration to the layout of the village with the creation of a new lane to connect St Nicholas's Church around the eastern edge of the farm buildings to the south of lford. This was done in 1876 to provide greater privacy to Iford Manor which until then had faced the main street. The old lane, which can still be seen, then became a private road and a new entrance to the Manor was created with an avenue of trees and a prestigious new entrance to what is now the C7. In 1895 Elizabeth Rossetter sold the family land holdings in Iford to Joseph Robinson, a miller and baker from Crawley, and his brother Henry Robinson, a businessman of Blackheath. They subsequently bought Lower Rise and then Upper Rise farms, but it was not until 1964 further land was acquired, bringing the total to some 3,000 acres. During this time, the two separate farms at Norton and Sutton became known as Upper Stalls and Lower Stalls respectively. Iford Manor remained as a single dwelling (although used as a riding school between WWII and 1967) until the 1980s when it was converted into separate residential units.

The Robinson family now live in Sutton House and manage the farm with the help of 3 fulltime staff, compared to the 28 men and boys required for just 1,200 acres in the late 19th century, and around 80 staff in the 1920s. Since the 1980s a number of agricultural buildings within the village have been converted into offices, lford Manor has been sub-divided into two houses (The Manor and lford Court) and since 2003, the former dairy and cow stalls in Upper Stalls in Norton have been sensitively converted into modern office units. Large brown Sussex beef cattle graze peacefully in front of Iford Grange, and in the summer the short harvest period means the village becomes particularly noisy with busy tractors and other machinery.

4.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

Neolithic man inhabited the South Downs and there are remains of tumuli on the tops of the Downs overlooking the village. There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area.

The HER (Historic Environment Record) for Iford, held by East Sussex County Council, confirms the following designations in Iford:

- The whole of the village is an Archaeologically Sensitive Area
- There may be a shrunken medieval village close to lford
- Four buildings are included in Iford:
 - o St Nicholas' Church
 - o Iford Grange
 - o Iford Manor
 - o Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages (the original 16th century manor house)
- Three finds are recorded in Iford:
 - o Carved stone (undated)
 - o Bronze Age axe
 - o Roman Brooch (a Roman encampment may have been located close by)



View of Iford Court (Iford Manor behind) from the road



Grain drying equipment in Sutton

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5

5.1 PLAN FORM, SITE LAYOUT AND BOUNDARIES

Iford is a linear, rural village without any obvious centre, with the church located slightly away from the lane which connects the two hamlets of Norton and Sutton, the location of two separate farmsteads. The C7 marks the south-western boundary of the conservation area, and provides a separate character area towards Swanborough, where a number of 19th century cottages, and the village school of 1871, are located. The village lane (which is not named) winds through Norton, past the former farmstead of Upper Stalls, and then bends twice (representing in part the new road alignment of 1876) before reaching the church, which sits in a relatively remote location on the eastern edge of the conservation area. The land then continues into Sutton to the second farmstead, Lower Stalls, from where the modern farm mainly operates. The lane then twists back towards the C7, altogether forming an irregularly shaped loop.

These twists and turns provide a pleasing layout with a high number of listed buildings, arranged primarily in two ways - either at right angles to the lane, such as the former farm buildings at Upper Stalls, or set back slightly from the lane, facing the street and with tiny front gardens, as are most of the 19th and 20th century cottages. Generally these have side and back gardens which stretch to the boundary of the conservation area, usually defined by the beginning of the agricultural land. A few larger houses - Iford Grange, Iford Manor, Iford Court and Sutton House, have extensive gardens, mostly concealed by high flint walls or trees and shrubbery. There is a definite break between the two hamlets, marked by open fields and large groups of trees.

Flint walls are extremely significant in all locations. They are built with knapped flints and lime mortar without the brick copings found in more urban areas, as befits their rural location. Heights vary between one to over two metres high. A special feature of the conservation area are the examples of 19th century cast iron railings which can be found in various locations throughout the conservation area – most significantly outside The Vicarage, facing the C7; at the entrance to Iford Manor (the line of the old lane) near the Village Hall; and outside the church. Spear headed steel railings can also be seen outside nos. I and 2 Vicarage Cottages, but



The village lane winds through the conservation area (Norton)



Iford Grange can be glimpsed over its flint boundary wall



Railings at old entrance to Iford Manor



Timber fencing and hedges define some of the boundaries in the conservation area (C7)

these sit on a low brick plinth and are modern. 19th century "park" railings, made from wrought iron, mark the boundary to the field to the north-east of the Village Hall. The poor condition of some of these railings, and the issue of the high cost of maintaining the flint walls, is discussed further in this document. Of note is the wrought iron "kissing gate" which marks the public footpath across the field in front of Sutton House. There are a number of examples of more modern materials, such as the post and chain guard to the verge outside Coppernetts, a barbed wire fence to the north of Iford Farm, and several timber boarded fences, none of them particularly obtrusive, in various locations throughout the conservation area. Hedges also are used in places to define boundaries, such as the clipped hedging outside nos. I and 2 Shepherds Cottages. Elsewhere hedges are less "tidy" and define the edges of fields and roadsides. Gates tend to be traditional timber four or five bar gates, or simple timber palisade gates, mostly in keeping with the rural location.

5.2 LANDMARKS, FOCAL POINTS AND VIEWS

Because of the informal layout of the conservation area, and the twisting of the lane, there are few landmark buildings apart from St Nicholas's Church, lford Grange, and Sutton House. Of importance are the open spaces (described in 5.3 *Open spaces, trees and landscape*) which interweave between the buildings, and views across these open spaces are one of the major features of the conservation area. Of special note are:

Moving from the north:

- The view across the field in front of Iford Grange from the public footpath stile outside Vicarage Cottages;
- The views from the footpath towards the South Downs;
- Views across the fields to either side of the Village Hall;
- View along the farm track to the north of the church, and back across the fields towards lford;
- Views across the field between the church and lford Grange;
- View down the lane from the junction with the C7, terminating in the pink stucco of Sutton House.

These views are all marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map.



"Kissing gate" in front of Sutton House5.3 OPEN SPACES, TREES AND LANDSCAPE

There are no public open spaces in lford apart from the churchyard, which is relatively well concealed from the lane by trees and the building itself. The Village Hall has a Children's Playground immediately adjacent to it, and recently a large car park has been provided, accessed via the converted stables to the west of the hall.

Of special note however are the fields which lie within the conservation area, and which make a major contribution to its special character, providing an immediate link to the surrounding countryside. The most important field lies to the south of the church, and separates Norton from Sutton. This is highly visible and is lined by large, mature trees along two sides. On the western side is a formal avenue of trees, which define the old



View on northern edge of Norton



View from Norton towards The Brooks



Village Hall and play ground

lane which originally led down to Iford Manor. This lane is apparently no longer in use as the principal entrance is now directly from the C7, where a long driveway is also defined by another avenue of trees.

Between Iford Grange, Sutton House and the C7 are three fields, separated by the driveway to Iford Manor. The public footpath which leads across these fields provides ample opportunity to enjoy views across to the South Downs as well as more limited views into the village. To the north, the cottages and houses which face the C7 back onto fields, mainly used for horses, which are also defined by the continuation of the same footpath. To the east, the ground drops slightly beyond the church to the large, open fields of The Brooks, notable for deep ditches lined by willows and poplars.

Trees are particularly important around the Vicarage; behind Upper Stalls (where they conceal two former ponds, now somewhat overgrown); along the farm track towards The Brooks; around lford Grange and Iford Manor gardens; and around Sutton House.



Trees behind Upper Stalls



Seat outside St Nicholas's Church

5.4 PUBLIC REALM

Iford is a small rural village and the public realm reflects the countryside setting and informal, slightly untidy character of the settlement, reinforced by the working farm buildings in Sutton. Usually there are no pavements, just a road with "soft" grass verges. On the C7, some of these are protected by white plastic posts. Within the village, a rough hoggin is used for the Village Hall car park, and for the car park behind Upper Stalls. Other (private) driveways and farm tracks are roughly surfaced with gravel or concrete, appropriate in this rural setting.

Other features of note are:

- Narrow stone kerbings along the C7, marking the edge of a narrow tarmacadam pavement;
- A "traditional" finger post at the entrance to the village from the C7, made from plastic with black lettering;
- Wooden telegraph poles with some overhead wires;
- "Gothic" timber seat outside St Nicholas's Church;
- Traditional Sussex red brick paviors to part of the front pathway to the church;
- A modern telephone kiosk and a red cast iron post box are discretely located outside Manor Cottages.



Telephone kiosk and post box outside Manor Cottages

6 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 BUILDING TYPES

lford contains a pleasing mix of residential houses and cottages with a variety of agricultural buildings, both historic and more modern. St Nicholas's Church and Village Hall are the only variations from these types. There are five larger houses: The Vicarage, Norton House, Iford Grange, Iford Manor (with Iford Court) and Sutton House. All of the other residential properties are more modest houses or cottages, most of them built to house the farm workers. Of note are the examples of converted agricultural buildings, such as the barn opposite Norton House, and the barn (Flintwell) next to Iford Manor. In Norton, most of the former dairy buildings are now converted into offices. A variety of large, modern farm buildings dominate the southern end of the conservation area in Sutton.

6.2 LISTED BUILDINGS

There are 24 listed buildings or entries in the conservation area, all of them grade II apart from St Nicholas's Church, which is listed grade I, and Iford Grange, which is listed grade II^{*}. The flintbuilt church retains an early 12th century nave with a tower and chancel of the late 12th century. The shingle covered spire is a notable feature. The building was much restored in the 19th century. Iford Grange was built in the early 19th century and is stuccoed with sash windows and shallow, hipped slate roofs. The flint boundary walls and entrance gate piers are separately listed.

Other notable village houses date to the late 18th or 19th century. The Old Vicarage is stuccoed with sash windows and a shallow hipped slate roof, very similar to Iford Grange but smaller. Norton House is similar, with a rather austere north-facing front elevation and evidence for an earlier building inside. Iford Grange and Iford Court were originally built as one building in about 1830 by Henry Hurley. Its Tudor Gothic style, with pointed gables, knapped flint and casement windows is quite different to anything else in the conservation area. Sutton House was built in 1780, possibly on the site of an earlier building, part of which may remain in the rear extension.

Of the smaller residential listed properties, of note, but now heavily altered, is the 17th century former manor house now called nos. 1, 2 and 3



Norton House



Barn opposite Norton House



Sutton House



Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages



Oatlands Cottage



Nos. I and 2 Lower Stall Cottages



19th century "positive" building at Upper Stalls



"Positive" buildings at Lower Stalls

Sutton Cottages. This retains stone drip moulds and a steeply pitched half hipped roof with a large central chimney stack. The building was converted into cottages for farm workers after Iford Manor was built in the 1830s. Another very early building is Oatlands Cottage, until 1996 divided into two (nos. I and 2 Thatched Cottages), a 17th century building which has been faced in stucco with modern dormers cutting through the low eaves. Nos. I and 2 Shepherds Cottages are of a similar age, but have been refaced in flint, hiding the original timber-framing. The central chimney stack confirms the early date of construction. Other listed cottages are 18th or 19th century in date: no. I Lower Stall Cottages (no. 2, to which it is attached, retains a 17th century timber frame); and nos. 1, 2 and 3 Manor Cottages.

Listing also covers a number of agricultural buildings: two 19th century flint and brick barns at Upper Stalls and Lower Stalls (both built by Richard Hurley and dated 1843); the stables to the south-east of Iford Manor; and a former granary in Upper Stalls, now converted into offices.

6.3 POSITIVE BUILDINGS

There are a number of unlisted historic buildings in the lford Conservation Area which make a *positive* contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. 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.

Positive buildings vary, but generally they are 19th century cottages and agricultural buildings which retain their original form, details and materials. Of note are the many barns, stables and other outbuildings which form the farmsteads at Upper and Lower Stalls. Simple cottages in Norton and along the lane towards Sutton are also notable, especially where they retain the Abergavenny crest.

6.4 BUILDING STYLES, MATERIALS AND COLOURS

The historic buildings in Iford divide into a variety of types, according to use, but of note is the frequent use of flint, usually roughly knapped, with lime mortar and red brick dressings.

St Nicholas's Church is the only religious building and is faced in flint with a very attractive porch. The short, rather stocky square tower with its shingled spire is an important feature. The conservation area is also notable for a number of larger, more prestigious houses (The Old Vicarage, Norton House, Iford Grange, Iford Manor/Iford Court, and Sutton House) which have generous gardens and were mainly built in the late 18th or early 19th centuries. They are all two storeys high with a variety of pitched roofs, some of them quite shallow, reflecting the fact that they were originally roofed in Welsh slate rather than clay tile. Some buildings, like Norton House (and nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages), must once have been covered in handmade clay tiles but are now covered in slate. The use of painted stucco, sash windows and discrete Georgian details characterises these properties. Iford Manor/Iford Court is the exception, being built in the Tudor Gothic style with gables and a steeply pitched tiled roof. The front doors to these houses are always timber and are usually panelled.

The more vernacular residential buildings in the conservation area are also two storeys high but because many of them are 17th or 18th century, they have more steeply pitched roofs (suggesting the earlier use of thatch), low eaves and casement windows. Simple boarded timber doors are common. Most of these buildings are faced in knapped flint with red brick dressings to the windows and door openings. Sutton Cottages is the only secular building in the conservation area which retains stone dressings, confirming the early date of its construction. This building has an overall shape and form which is typical of the 17th century, with a steeply pitched half hipped roof, a prominent central chimney stack, and a central doorway, now blocked. Nos. I and 2 Shepherd's Cottages are similar in form, with the same shape of roof and a lobby entry floor plan, now altered to provide two separate dwellings.

The agricultural buildings are either timberframed, such as the barn to the south-east of Sutton Cottages, with black timber weather



Porch to St Nicholas's Church



Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages glimpsed through the surrounding agricultural buildings

boarding, or, more commonly, faced in flint. Lines of red brick, which create a decorative feature but which also have a structural use, can be seen on both of Richard Hurley's 19th century barns. These buildings have simple forms, rectangular or even square, with steeply pitched roofs covered in handmade clay tiles, clay pantiles, or slate.

To the east side of the lane towards Sutton are a number of more recent farm workers' cottages, dating from the late 19th century onwards, including nos. I and 2 Forge Cottages, which were built in 1974. New Cottages are a good example, built from brown brick, with attractive red tile hanging and machine made clay tiled roofs.



Nos. 1 and 2 Shepherd's Cottages



Detail of Richard Hurley's barn in Lower Stalls

The Village Hall is an unlisted building of the 1930s, faced in render with a machine made clay tile roof. Other cottages of the 1930s can be seen close to the church and along the C7. These are built from brown brick and simply detailed with pitched roofs again covered in machine made clay tiles.

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. Sometimes these cut through the very low eaves of the building, such as Oatlands Cottage. Horizontally sliding casements are an unusual detail on Manor Cottage. Sash windows are found on the more prestigious houses such as Norton House.



New Cottages



Manor Cottages



7 CHARACTER AREAS

The Iford Conservation Area divides into three character areas according to historical development, building form and uses, and location. These areas are:

- Area I: Along the C7;
- Area 2: Norton;
- Area 3: Sutton.

7.1 CHARACTER AREA 1: ALONG THE C7

The key positive features of this area are:

- Country road with scattered development along one side;
- A number of paired "positive" houses and the former village school;
- The Old Vicarage is the most important historic building, set well back from the road;
- Varied materials: flint, painted stucco, tile hanging;
- Spacious gardens backing onto fields;
- Stunning views to both east and west.

The key negative features of this area are:

- Constant very busy traffic along the C7;
- Poor condition of the pavements;
- Brown stained timber windows in the former school;
- Upvc windows to Hill View;
- Single storey extension to Old Vicarage Cottage;
- Poor condition of railings to The Old Vicarage.

7.2 CHARACTER AREA 2: NORTON

The key positive features of this area are:

- Winding country lane, enclosed by flint walls and hedging;
- St Nicholas's Church is listed grade I;
- Harmonious variety of building forms with houses, cottages and farm buildings all mixed together;
- Upper Stalls is a good group of former barns, sensitively converted into office use;
- Prestigious houses: Norton House, Iford Grange (II*);
- Hedging, metal railings and flint walls define boundaries;
- Use of flint, red brick, handmade clay tiles and Welsh slate;



The former village school



Railings to The Old Vicarage



Norton



Overhead wires are a discordant feature in Norton

- Views across neighbouring fields to east and west to the South Downs or Cliffe and Mount Caburn;
- Woodland behind farm buildings and in centre of the village;
- Open fields within the village.

The key negative features of this area are:

- Overhead wires in many locations are obtrusive;
- Car parking to some of the office units is not in keeping with the rural qualities of the area;
- Some functional modern farm buildings with untidy areas of land between;
- Painted flintwork is regrettable on Vicarage Cottages and Grange Cottages;
- Rather dominant rooflights on the residential barn next to Vicarage Cottages;
- Poor condition of iron railings at former entrance to Iford Manor, and the metal railings to field to north-east of the Village Hall;
- Timber garage behind no. I Church Cottages, close to field boundary.

7.3 CHARACTER AREA 3: SUTTON

Within the group of historic buildings which constitute the hamlet of Sutton is a working farm with a variety of modern farm buildings, some of them of very utilitarian appearance, which use modern materials such as concrete and metal sheeting. Whilst these buildings cannot be said to be particularly attractive (i.e. *positive*) they are very much part of the rural character of the conservation area and as such cannot either be described as *negative*.

The key positive features of this area are:

- Winding country lane, enclosed by flint walls and hedging;
- High concentration of listed and positive buildings;
- Iford Manor and Iford Court are architecturally important buildings but largely hidden from the public viewpoint;
- Survival of original manor house with interesting 17th century details;
- Spacious layout with detached or paired houses and cottages, set back slightly from the lane;
- Good group of 19th century farm buildings, built from flint;

- Mature trees and soft hedging for most of the boundaries;
- A public footpath across the fields provides stunning views to the South Downs and back into the conservation area;
- Other views eastwards towards Mount Caburn.

The key negative features of this area are:

- Overhead wires in many locations are obtrusive;
- Metal sheeting on the roof of the listed 19th century barn, with a concrete block single storey extension and holes in the roof of another pitched roof extension;
- Over dominant rooflights on no. I Lower Stalls Cottages;
- Poor condition of slate roof on nos. 1, 2 and 3 Sutton Cottages, and external soil vent pipe;
- Condition of timber-framed barn next to Sutton Cottages is poor.



View to Mount Caburn



Barn next to Sutton Cottages

8 ISSUES

The Iford Conservation Area encompasses an attractive historic settlement which includes a working farm. Many of the residential and farm buildings are in the same ownership although incrementally the larger village houses have been sold to outsiders. Particularly in Sutton are many modern farm buildings which are, at best, neutral in their contribution. Indeed, for some people the plethora of grain silos and other modern farm buildings might be considered detrimental. However, these buildings, and the agricultural activity they represent, are very much part of the character of the conservation area and therefore it does not seem appropriate to criticise their relative untidiness or utilitarian appearance. The single ownership of the much of the land and buildings also brings advantages in terms of controlling pressure for new development and ensuring high standards of repair and maintenance.

Overall Iford is a pretty village which is clearly a desirable location in which to live. The situation close to Lewes, with the proximity of the South Downs, adds to its attractions. However, there are still a few issues which could be addressed, either by the District Council, the Parish Council, the statutory undertakers, or the owner of Iford Farm, as follows:

8.1 UNDERGROUNDING OVERHEAD WIRES

Overhead wires are a dominant feature in many parts of the conservation area and electricity supplies are subject to frequent interruption.

8.2 FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN

There is currently no long term plan for the development of Iford Farm, encompassing issues like the future repair and maintenance of tenanted property, the removal of out-dated farm buildings, and the repair of features such as flint walls and iron railings. Further historic agricultural buildings may also come up for conversion at some stage.

8.3 ALTERATIONS TO UNLISTED POSITIVE BUILDINGS

A number of unlisted positive buildings have been altered using modern materials and details, like the stained timber windows in nos. I and 2 School Cottages on the C7.



Overhead wiring in the conservation area is unattractive



Modern agricultural buildings at Lower Stalls



Nos. I and 2 School Cottages

8.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CAR PARKING

Traffic along the C7 is both frequent and very fast. The junction with the northern section of the lane into lford is particularly dangerous.

8.5 TREES AND LANDSCAPE

Trees make an important contribution to the overall character of the conservation area but in places appear to be in need of tree surgery and other works. The ponds to the north of Upper Stalls Farm in Norton have silted up.

8.6 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

As part of the appraisal process, the conservation area boundary was reviewed. It was considered that one amendment could be made, as detailed in Chapter 9 *Recommendations*.



Busy traffic along the C7



Trees are very important in the Iford Conservation Area



9 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

9.1 UNDERGROUNDING OVERHEAD WIRES

• The District and Parish Councils could approach Southern Electricity to see if a phased undergrounding of the overhead wires could be agreed.

9.2 FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR IFORD FARM

 The District Council could approach the owner of Iford Farm to see if a long term Management Plan for Iford Farm, which would include the repair and maintenance of the various historic buildings and boundary treatments within the conservation area, could be drawn up.

9.3 ALTERATIONS TO UNLISTED POSITIVE BUILDINGS

- The District Council could consider serving an Article 4(2) Direction on all of the unlisted positive family dwellings in the conservation area to encourage the use of traditional materials and details. Article 4(2) Directions are made under the General Permitted Development Order 1995. Each Direction is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to family dwellings, which will now require planning permission. The Direction could cover the following types of alteration/work:
- All extensions of whatever size including porches on the front* of the building;
- (ii) Changing roof materials and the insertion of rooflights on the front-facing* roofslope;
- (iii) Replacing windows or doors on the front* elevation;
- (iv) The provision of a hardstanding (i.e. a parking area) within the curtilage of the house;
- (v) The erection of a wall, gate, or other means of enclosure facing the front*;
- (vi) The demolition of a wall, fence or gate facing the front*.

(*Front means facing a public highway, private road or waterway.)

9.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CAR PARKING

 The issue of busy traffic along the C7 affects the whole length of the road from Lewes to Newhaven. The imposition of a blanket 40 mph speed limit is already under discussion with East Sussex County Council and would be welcomed by local residents.

9.5 TREES AND LANDSCAPE

• The District and Parish Councils could produce a Tree Management Plan for the trees in the conservation area, including proposals to improve the woodland and ponds behind Upper Stalls Farm in Norton.

9.6 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

As part of the appraisal process, the conservation area boundary was reviewed. It was considered that one amendment could be made as follows:

• Delete part of the field and farmyard in Sutton, which encompasses modern farm buildings of no merit.



An Article 4 Direction would help to protect unlisted family houses from unsympathetic alterations (Red House, next to St Nicholas's Church)



Delete these modern farm buildings (left and centre) from the conservation area

APPENDIX I

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 lford 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 subdivision of the larger Saxon estates, which were fragmented in the course of the 12th and 13th 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 12th 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 tenurial 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 lawyerantiquary 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 18th 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 lford 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 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, lford 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 lford, 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 canalisations 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 Firle 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 17th 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 steampacket 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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The harbours of Sussex J H Farrant, (1976);

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LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

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

Polices 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 HI
- 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 H14



APPENDIX 3

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