



Ditchling

DITCHLING CONSERVATION AREA



CHARACTER APPRAISAL

April 2007



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Bench in the churchyard with a view to the South Downs

I.1 PURPOSE OF THIS APPRAISAL

This “Conservation Area Appraisal” seeks to record and define the special architectural and historic interest of the Ditchling Conservation Area, as a way of ensuring that the conservation area is both preserved and enhanced (as required by the legislation) for future generations.

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*”. It is the quality and interest of a whole area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation

area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This appraisal therefore satisfies the requirements of the legislation by defining the special character and appearance of the Ditchling Conservation Area, and by setting out a number of recommendations for its preservation and enhancement. It therefore provides a firm basis on which all new applications for development within, or on the edge of, the Ditchling Conservation Area can be assessed.

I.2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Following the approval of a first draft by Lewes District Council, copies of this appraisal and the accompanying maps were provided for local amenity groups, East Sussex County Council, and English Heritage. A copy was posted onto the Council’s website and a press release sent to local papers. [insert number] months were allowed for comments to be submitted, after which the final draft was completed. This appraisal was approved by Lewes District Council on [insert date] as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).



Ditchling Museum

1.3 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas are set out in the Lewes District Local Plan which was adopted in March 2003 (Policies H4-H8). The Council is currently drawing up revised policies as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF), which will ultimately replace Local Plans. This appraisal will form part of the LDF and will be supplemented in

due course by a further document (Ditchling Conservation Area Management Proposals) which will set out a programme for improvements and monitoring.

This document should also be read in conjunction the East Sussex Structure Plan and national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment.



Wings Place, West Street



Postbox in East End Lane

2 SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST

2.1 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

The special architectural and historic interest of Ditchling Conservation Area derives from a number of factors including:

- The village's historic cross-shaped street pattern and layout;
- The rural setting of the village in a pastoral landscape with views of the South Downs;
- The predominance of St. Margaret's Church which holds a prominent position on a knoll above the village and is a local landmark;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 49 of which are listed;
- Ditchling's historic role as a centre for the practice of non-conformist Christian denominations, continuing to this day in three extant non-conformist meeting houses/chapels in the village centre i.e. The Old Meeting House (Unitarian); Quaker Friends Meeting House; and the Emmanuel Chapel; and additionally a strict Baptist Chapel straddling the Northern boundary of the Parish;
- The prevalent use of local building materials in buildings and walls, notably timber framing, red clay tile, brick and flint;
- The picturesque area of the pond, Village Green and War Memorial between Old Manor House and St Margaret's Church;
- The area's trees and other vegetation particularly where this bounds a road, footpath or public place;
- The variety of construction and building materials used for boundary walls and railings;
- Its significant agricultural and sand-quarrying heritage much of the evidence of which still exists;
- The village's associations with notable early 20th century artists and craftspeople;
- The tranquil village atmosphere of East End Lane and the space in front of Pardons and East End House;
- Distinctive local features and details (e.g. red clay paviors, Sarsen stones, historic post boxes and old lighting columns) that give the village its special identity.



East End House



Wings Place, West Street

2.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR DESIGNATION

Located at the foot of the South Downs below Ditchling Beacon, Ditchling is a small historic village not far from Brighton in East Sussex. The village is set in open countryside and there are fine views out of the village to the South Downs. The village is famous for its association with Eric Gill, calligrapher and stone carver, and other artists and craftspeople who came to live in Ditchling in the early 20th century.

Ditchling is first recorded in a written document in A.D. 765 and, 300 years later, is noted in the Domesday Book as possessing a church and a mill. The village's historic origins are still apparent in Ditchling Conservation Area which covers the village's ancient street pattern and contains 49 listed buildings. The most notable are the grade I listed St Margaret's Church, which dates mainly from the 13th century, and a picturesque 16th century brick and timber-framed dwelling known as *Wings Place*, also listed grade I.

2.3 BOUNDARIES AND EXTENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Ditchling Conservation Area was first designated on 7th October 1969 (the first conservation area to be designated in Lewes District) and was extended on 14th September 1992.

The boundaries of Ditchling Conservation Area have been drawn to include the historic core of Ditchling and encompass almost all of the village's pre-1900 buildings with significant examples of architecture and building from the 12th to the 19th centuries.

All of the buildings and spaces beside the main north-south thoroughfare (North End, High Street, South Street) are included from the junction of Beacon Road to North End House.

In the eastern part of the village, the boundary encloses the whole length of East End Lane, a historic route through the village, from the High

Street to Lewes Road. Some unremarkable 20th century development that does not make a positive contribution to the special historic interest of the area has not been included, for example, Fieldway, The Dymocks and East Gardens.

The remainder of the village west of the High Street has been included because of the special architectural and historic interest of St Margaret's Church and environs, the buildings of Lodge Hill Lane and West Street, and the distinctive and picturesque area of the Village Green and pond. An area of open land on the outskirts of the village, north of Clayton Road, has been included in the conservation area in order to protect its landscape setting.

This appraisal includes a recommendation, detailed in Chapter 9 for the addition of two areas into the conservation area, one along Lewes Road, the other along Beacon Road.

The Watermen's Homes Conservation Area is a separate conservation area with a distinctively different character and appearance that lies just to the north of the Ditchling Conservation Area.



Church of St Margaret



The church is roofed with clay tile and Horsham stone slabs

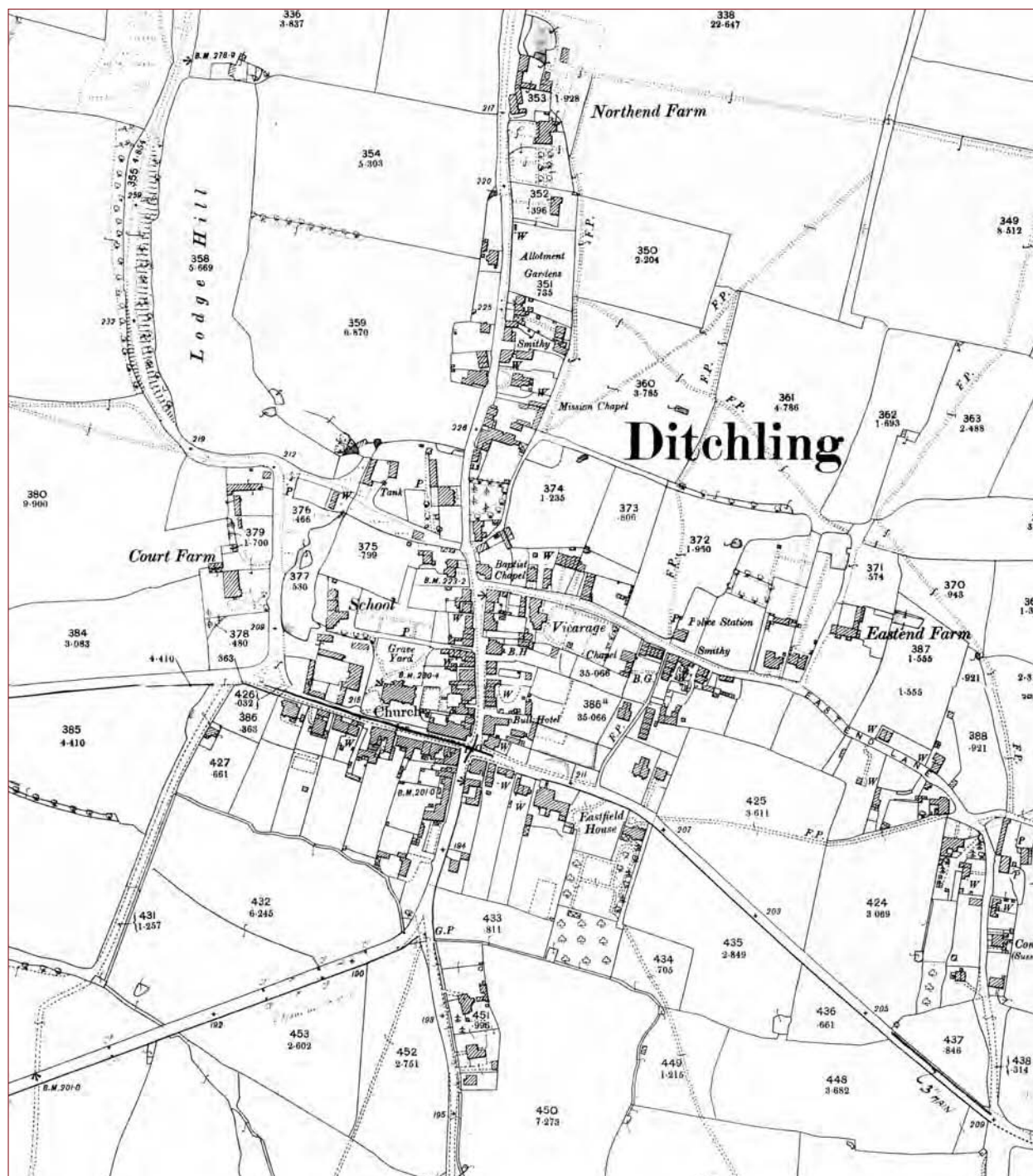
3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Parish of Ditchling is a fine example of an ancient Sussex strip parish extending from the Downs to the Weald. Sheep farming was common in the south, swine and cattle on the Lower Wealden clay to the north, and arable and pasture in between. The settlement of Ditchling grew up on the well drained greensand in the centre. It has been suggested that the village's name

derives from *Dicul*, a local Saxon chief. *Diccelenge*, an old form of Ditchling, may mean 'Dicul's people'. Legend has it that Lodge Hill is Dicul's burial place.

Ditchling is first mentioned in a written record in a document of A.D. 765 in which Aldwulf, a Saxon overlord, transferred a large area of land to the Canons of South Malling, near Lewes. Later it is recorded that the lands were held by King Alfred



Ordnance Survey 1898

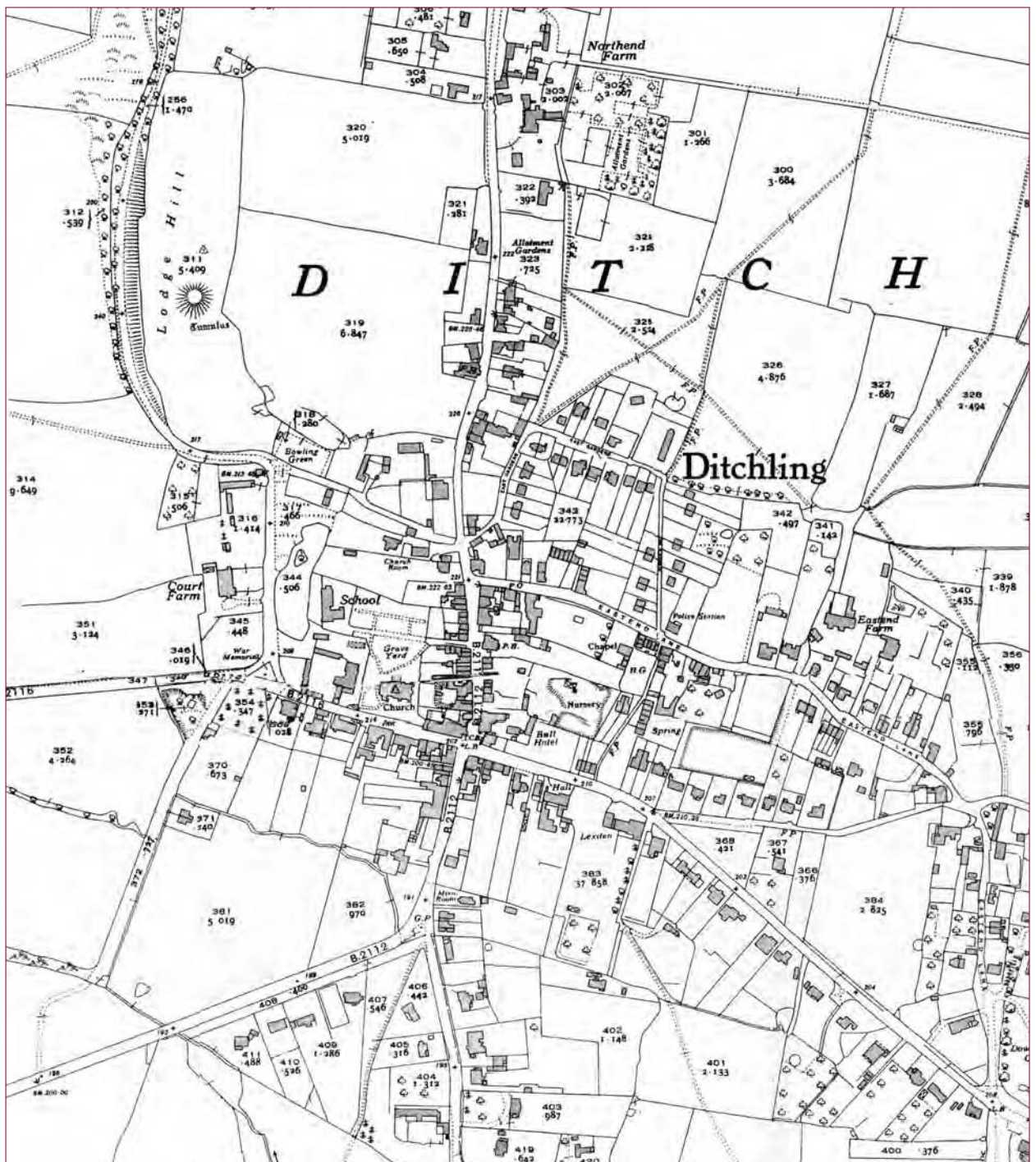
the Great. When Alfred died in the year A.D. 900, the lands passed to a kinsman, Osferth, and then reverted to the Crown under Edward the Confessor.

After the Norman conquest, the land was held by William de Warenne, possibly son-in-law of William the Conqueror. The land passed through several hands until it was owned by the Marquess of Abergavenny who held it until the 20th century.

It is probable that there was a church here in

Saxon times, a small rectangular building on the site of the current church's nave. The Domesday Book, completed in 1086, tells us that there was a church and a mill in Ditchling and the population was around 150 households. In 1090 William's son put the church and lands in Ditchling into the hands of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras in Lewes.

In 1312 King Edward II granted Ditchling a weekly market to be held on Tuesdays and a fair on St Margaret's Day – July 20th. At the Dissolution of



Ordnance Survey 1937

the Monasteries, St Margaret's Church was surrendered to Henry VIII because of the connection with Lewes Priory. In 1540 Henry VIII gave part of Ditchling Garden Manor (now Court Gardens) to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves.

There was a congregation of religious dissenters in the village in the 17th century and the building today known as The Old Meeting House, built in 1740, was the original meeting place of the General Baptists. Unitarians built a school for boys in 1815 and a National School was opened in 1836. Ditchling, like many other Sussex villages, was a focus for smuggling activities in the 17th and 18th centuries and beneath West Street there are apparently large inter-connected cellars once used by smugglers.

The rise of Brighton as a fashionable resort for the new craze for sea-bathing towards the end of the 18th century brought changes and increased prosperity to Ditchling life. In 1794 regular London to Brighton coaches stopped at The Bull to change horses before making their way up the steep hill over the Downs at Ditchling Beacon.

The London to Brighton railway line was given Royal Assent in 1837. Bricks from Ditchling Potteries on the Common and sand quarried from land east of the High Street were needed for the construction of the railway tunnel at Clayton and the narrow lane to Keymer was diverted and widened to take the loaded carts, today's Clayton Road. There were five sand quarries in the village quarried at different times.

The railway line to Brighton was completed in 1841 putting an end to Brighton-bound horse drawn coaches. Hassocks, to the west, gained a railway station and rapidly expanded whilst Ditchling remained a small rural village.

In the 18th and early 19th century there was a busy small scale pottery and brickyard at Ditchling Common, a few kilometres to the north of the village. Production was at first for local demand but later, in the late 19th century, the potteries began to produce terracotta that was exported throughout the country along the newly created railways.



Cotterlings, West Street



The Old Meeting House, The Twitten

In the early 20th century several artists and craftsmen moved to Ditchling, notably Eric Gill, artist and calligrapher, the painter Sir Frank Brangwyn and Edward Johnston, a calligrapher best known for designing the typeface that is used throughout the London Underground system.

Like many English villages, changes in agriculture mean that Ditchling is no longer a self-sufficient farming community and offers few opportunities for local employment. The influence of the artists and craftspeople who arrived in the early 20th century is still felt in the village's craft workshops and galleries but a change in national shopping patterns has resulted in the incremental closure of shops and pubs.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

Evidence of early settlement or activity in the vicinity of Ditchling has been found in the form of flint tools and implements. Ditchling Beacon is the

site of an Early Iron Age hillfort. Lodge Hill is topped by a Bronze Age barrow. Finds on the site include flint blades, microliths, scrapers, awls and some Neolithic pottery. The name Lodge Hill may stem from the area being used as a hunting lodge for King Alfred, who used to hunt in the area.

The remains of the main east-west Roman road in Sussex following the South Downs along the greensand passes through the village just north of Boddingtons Lane. This road links two north-south Roman roads, one from Shoreham Harbour to the west of London and the other from Lewes to the east of London. The road passes through Streat to the east of Ditchling, crosses the main road just north of Rowlescroft and passes below Lodge Hill. Some Romano-British Pottery has been found north of the Roman road just north-east of the village and several Roman coins have been found but there is no direct evidence of Romano-British settlement in the area.

4 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

4.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The village of Ditchling is situated in the west of East Sussex about 12 km north of Brighton and 12 km north-west of Lewes. The village lies around the intersection of two minor roads: the B2116 and the B2112. The B2116 is an east-west route between Hassocks and Lewes; the B2112 is a north-south route between Brighton and Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. A network of public footpaths links the village to surrounding countryside, to Keymer and to the small hamlets of Streat and Westmeston.

4.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

Ditchling lies in a picturesque setting in open countryside. The village sits on a small spur of land, on which St Margaret's Church is prominent, between the foot of the South Downs and Lodge Hill, a small hill north-west of the village.

From the sandstone knoll on which the church stands, the land falls slightly to east and south. Southward views of the Downs are a particular feature of the village which help to define its distinctive rural character. Conversely, the church

spire and village is easily visible from Ditchling Beacon, a high point on the South Downs, 2 km to the south of the village.

The presence of trees, both within and around the village, is notable. From the vantage point of Lodge Hill, a few minutes walk from the Village Green, there are good views to the east and a fine view of the pyramidal church spire and the warm-coloured red roofs of the village against the backdrop of the Downs. The view of the village from Lodge Hill across the Downs is at least as important as that of the reverse direction.

Ditchling lies just outside the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty whose boundary sweeps right up the built environment of the village, a pointer to the high quality surrounding landscape.

The village settlement and the land north of it, including the Common, has been recommended for inclusion in the South Downs National Park.

4.3 GEOLOGY

Ditchling lies on well drained greensand between Weald clay to the north and chalk to the south.



Rooftops of Ditchling from Lodge Hill



Village Green viewed from the churchyard

5.1 OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPE AND TREES

The most attractive and well used public open space in the conservation area is the area composed of St Margaret's churchyard, the Village Green, pond and War Memorial green. This area is well used in summer, provides a picturesque open setting for the church and is one of the distinctive features of the village.

Elsewhere there is little public open space. The graveyard in front of The Old Meeting House in The Twitten is a characterful spot that provides a fine setting for the 250-year old buildings. Large private gardens contribute to the generally spacious character of the area. Of particular note is the large garden of 4 High Street, north-east of The Bull. This was the site of a large sandpit from where sand was extracted to build the Clayton Tunnel, opened in 1841.

The front gardens of Pardons and East End House, bounded by open railings and fence, create an open space with a distinctly rural ambience in East End Lane. The large walled garden of Pardons and other private gardens are significant open spaces but, being enclosed and often out of sight of the public, do not impinge on the public realm. Two other areas are noteworthy: an area of allotment gardens in North End and a small open green of mown grass at Barfield Gardens.

The most distinctive landscape feature in the conservation area is the pond which helps complete the typical English ensemble of pond, village green and parish church – although the Village Green was, until 1965, part of the farmyard of Court Farm.

Ditchling benefits from a well-tree'd character where both groups and individual trees are important. Trees add significantly to the interest of the area and there are several specimen trees, or groups of trees, which make a positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area's buildings and focal points.

Those trees, and groups of trees, which are particularly prominent and make a contribution to the conservation area are identified on the Villagescape Appraisal map. In such a well tree'd area, it has not been possible to identify every notable tree and lack of a specific reference does not imply that it must not be of value.

Gardens to the front and rear of many of the properties are well kept, befitting a village with the oldest established Village Horticultural Society in England. The village won the county's 'best kept large village' competition in 1978, 1987, 1992, 1994 and 1997. The area's gardens, often stocked with traditional English 'cottage garden' plants, make a significant contribution to the attractive appearance of the conservation area.



Trees are a feature of the conservation area



Looking south west from beside Drove Cottages

5.2 FOCAL POINTS, VIEWS AND VISTAS.

There are many fine outlooks southward through the village towards the Downs which form a looming backdrop to the village's trees and buildings. The most notable southward views of the Downs are along the High Street, from the Village Green beside the church and from the lower end of East End Lane.

Over a field gate beside no. 17 North End there are open views of pasture and trees at the foot of Lodge Hill and from Boddingtons Lane one glimpses open country where a footpath ascends the hill.

Such views from within the conservation area to the wider landscape of pasture and Downs testify to the conservation area's setting in the landscape and make a significant contribution to overall character.

Within the conservation area itself the spire of St Margaret's Church, which is the most pre-eminent landmark from afar, is seen only from the west or from Lewes Road, being otherwise concealed by adjacent buildings and trees. The best views therefore are eastward from beside the pond and,

westward, from Lewes Road and, of course, in the immediate approach from West Street and Church Lane.

The crossroads at the centre of the village is another important focus within the conservation area. Buildings on the south-west and north-east corner are listed but the buildings at the other corners, though not architecturally distinguished, are nevertheless an important element in the streetscene and are identified as being 'positive buildings'.

The village has an attractive and lively roofscape composed of red clay tiled roofs, hips and gables, ornate chimney stacks and clay chimney pots. Because of the elevated position of St Margaret's Church, there are a number of points around the church from where this roofscape can be appreciated. From the elevated churchyard there is also a fine view of Wing's Place.

The stone War Memorial in a triangular green marks the entrance to the village from the west. This is the most attractive approach to the conservation area, offering a good view of the church, its flint boundary wall and the small green about the War Memorial.

6 DEFINITION OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST



Shops and business in High Street

6.1 CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND USES

The Ditchling Conservation Area is primarily residential with a small number of shops and businesses located close to the crossroads and along the High Street. There is no manufacturing or industry within the area and, with the notable exception of traffic, the area is quiet. East End Lane has a much more tranquil atmosphere than the two main routes through the village.

Shops include two 'corner shop' newsagents, a general food shop, a bakery and Post Office, a pharmacy, saddlery, estate agent, tea room, beauty and hair salon, antiques and craft and picture galleries. There are two pubs, The Bull and The White Horse; a third pub, The Sandrock, has recently closed and been converted to apartments.

The village has an active Anglican church together with a Quaker Meeting House, Emmanuel Chapel and Unitarian Chapel (The Old Meeting House) located within the conservation area. The village hall, primary school, local health centre and a car showroom are just outside. Immediately east of the conservation area is a recreation ground and the village supports a number of sporting and leisure societies.

A mini-roundabout controls traffic at the intersection of the two minor roads. This, combined with parked cars restricting the width of the already narrow streets, can lead to traffic congestion, to the detriment of the otherwise tranquil atmosphere of the village.

The village is an important visitor attraction. Its historic buildings, artistic links and picturesque setting make it a popular tourist destination. There is free parking behind the village hall and a limited amount of on-street parking. Buildings are in a generally good state of repair.



Looking South down North Street

6.2 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

The conservation area has a memorable historic character and appearance deriving from a varied collection of old buildings built in a rich mix of domestic architectural style and local building materials dating from the medieval period onwards.

There are 49 listed buildings in the Ditchling Conservation Area. The oldest is St Margaret's Church (grade I). Wing's Place is grade I and Cotterlings in West Street is grade II*. The rest are grade II.

There is no definable architectural unity within the conservation area. Although one can almost define an 18th century appearance to a large number of buildings, especially along the High Street, the area's early timber-frame buildings are often hidden behind later facades of brick or render.

Most of the conservation area's buildings are dwellings though some, of course, were originally built to carry out a particular business or trade with accommodation behind or above the workspace. Other building types include St Margaret's Church, The Old Meeting House in The Twitten and a Quaker Meeting House in the former slaughterhouse in East Gardens. There is a

former school, now the Museum, two grade II listed inns (The Bull and The White Horse) and an unusual triangular gazebo with a pyramidal roof in the garden of Pardons in East End Lane.

Some houses, like The Limes and Sopers in the High Street are prestigious houses with some architectural pretension; others, like Walnut Tree Cottage in East End Lane or The Old Vicarage in West Street, were originally cottages but have grown in size with the changing times.

Apart from St Margaret's Church, the medieval period is represented by timber-framed hall houses of a type commonly found in Sussex. Examples are Tudor Close, Lewes Road and Cherry Tree Cottage, East End Lane. Despite the prevalence of timber-framed buildings, only a few such as Wing's Place (West Street), Crossways (South Street) and Bank House (High Street) display their timber frames externally – many others have been re-fronted in the 17th and 18th century.

Eighteenth century buildings include Rowlescroft in North End and Chichester House, no. 11 High Street. The late 18th century/early 19th century is well represented but there are few 19th century buildings in the core of the area. The most notable are The Chestnuts and White Lodge in North End, The White Horse in West Street and



Eighteenth century buildings in West Street

The Sandrock in High Street. Later 19th century building took place on the approaches to the village, outside the conservation area. Sunnyside (Nos. 19-25 Lewes Road) is a good example of a late 19th century terrace.

Of interest from the 20th century is Barnfield Gardens, off East End Lane. This is a typical 1930s estate of six dwellings in a mock Tudor style encircling a small communal green – an asset to the area's range of architecture.

6.3 BUILDING MATERIALS AND LOCAL DETAILS

Historic villages are traditionally constructed from locally available building materials and Ditchling's most distinctive building material is red clay tile and clay brick manufactured locally at Ditchling Common. This warm-coloured material is present throughout the area on roofs, on walls and even underfoot.

Variation in colour and shape of tiles is used to decorative effect on roofs and walls. Twitten Cottage has alternate bands of plain and fishscale tiles; nos. 63/65 East End Lane displays diadems of fishscale tiles in a façade of plain tiles.

Cotterlings in West Street is a timber-framed building behind an early 18th century façade of black mathematical tiles. Mathematical tiles are clay facing tiles with one face moulded to look like a brick header or stretcher, most often hung on laths applied to timber-framed walls to give the appearance of brick. They can also be found on the south gable of Sopers in the High Street.

The second most typical building material in Ditchling is timber from the Wealden forests which was used for the carefully jointed timber frames of the area's medieval buildings as well as for later roof construction and internal joinery.

The use of stone is rare. Apart from the church there is no building in the area prestigious enough to warrant the cost of transport of a material not found nearby. St Margaret's Church walls have sandstone dressings as well as stone from Caen in Normandy, with local chalkstone internally. A small section of the roof is covered with Horsham stone tiles but the greater part of the roof is covered with the ubiquitous clay tile. The church's main walling material is flint but



Ditchling's characteristic building materials: clay brick and tile

elsewhere flint is more frequently used in boundary walls and is not common in house construction although no. 12 North End is a good example of a vernacular cottage constructed of flint with red brick dressings to windows and doors. An outbuilding to the rear of The Bull is similar in construction but with a greater proportion of flint.

After the beginning of the 18th century manufacturing processes improved, making brick a more affordable material. High quality brickwork can be seen at no. 23 High Street and at Sopers, two 18th century buildings constructed in red brick laid in Flemish bond with carefully raked thin mortar joints. Brick is also commonly used in chimney stacks and for dressings around window and door openings in the area's few buildings where flint is the main walling material.

Roofs in the area are most commonly covered with hand-made red clay tiles. After the coming of the railways in the 1840s, Welsh slate became more available and can be seen on 19th century buildings such as The Old Vicarage, West Street and Little Rowlescroft, North End, but red clay tile roofs are one of the most distinctive features of the area – even The Sandrock, dating from the late 19th century, is roofed with clay tile.

Windows vary in shape, size and style according to the age of the building but historic windows are invariably timber. Windows in the refronted timber-framed buildings are not standardised and only the conservation area's Georgian and Victorian buildings possess any uniformity in style, generally vertically sliding sashes. Nos. 2 to 4 Church Walk and no. 37 North End have unusual horizontal sliding casement windows.

6.4 POSITIVE BUILDINGS

In addition to the conservation area's 49 listed buildings and a further five contained in the Council's 'local list', a number of unlisted buildings have been noted on the Villagescape Appraisal map as being 'positive buildings' i.e. buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Buildings identified as 'positive' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the street-scape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impracticable, they are excluded.



No 69, East End Lane, a 'positive' building

With listed and locally listed buildings, 'positive buildings' help create the village's distinctive and interesting historic villagescape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.5 HISTORIC SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISING

The number of shops in the village is diminishing and there are a number of vacant shop windows,



Historic shopfront at no. 6 West Street

including some in former shops that have now become dwellings. Shopfronts are constructed in timber and most are modern.

The most notable historic shopfront is an 18th century curved bow window at no. 8 West Street and a less ornate early 19th century shopfront next door at no. 6 West Street.

Commercial advertising and signage in the village avoids garish colours. Glossy materials and fascias are illuminated, if at all, by external light fittings. Both The Bull and The White Horse display hanging baskets. Hand-painted lettering on the south gable of the Bull enhances an otherwise blank plain wall.

6.6 PUBLIC REALM: FLOORScape AND STREET FURNITURE

Pavements of red brick are one of the most notable aspects of Ditchling's floorscape. Brick paviors are present in the footways of all four streets that converge on the crossroads and are a feature of particular local distinction. They are laid parallel to, and sometimes at right angles to, the highway and are marked on the Villagescape Appraisal Map. It has been suggested that some of the older bricks came as ballast from Holland in ships coming to buy wool in about 1660. Some



Area of distinctive local floorscape

lengths are wholly modern; the difficulty of finding a modern source of a suitably matching brick pavior that meets current standards for public safety was resolved in the late 1990s.

There is a raised footway of brick beside Church Lane with a Sarsen stone to mark the corner. Where the High Street widens, north of the crossroads, flints in the pavement indicate land in private ownership – as opposed to the public footway marked by red paviors.

6.7 HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Wings Place in West Street has been known as *Anne of Cleves' House*. The house and its estates were supposedly given as part of the divorce settlement by King Henry VIII to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. There is no evidence that she lived there.

The village is noted for its associations with early 20th century artists and craftsmen who came to live in Ditchling inspired by its Downland setting and rural way of life. These include Eric Gill, artist and sculptor, who lived at Sopers, High Street from 1907-1913 and the painter Sir Frank Brangwyn who lived at The Jointure, South Street from 1918-1956. Other artists and craftsmen



Eric Gill, sculptor, lived at Sopers, High Street 1907-1913



Historic iron railings

were Ethel Mairet who revived the craft of handloom weaving; Edward Johnson, calligrapher and designer of the London Transport typeface and logo; Amy Sawyer, artist and writer; and Hilary Pepler, who founded St. Dominic's Press.

6.8 DISTINCTIVE LOCAL FEATURES

Within the conservation area are a number of local features that give the area a distinct identity. These features, which may relate to the area's history or locality, give the area its unique sense of place. The following features, though small, make a significant contribution to the area's special interest:

On the south side of the churchyard is a large block of Sarsen stone built into the flint retaining wall. Within the same section of wall there is a stone which bears the date of 1648. The two arches set into this wall are the vestigial remains of a 17th century forge.

The area contains three letter boxes: a 'GR' box in the wall beside Barber's Bank, Lewes Road; a red letter box distinctive in not having a royal monogram at The Old Post Office, 2 East End Lane, and a freestanding 'ER' letter box at the end of East End Lane. The red K6 telephone kiosk at the crossroads is a grade II listed building.

There is a disused water pump in St Margaret's churchyard and three tall drain vents in the village (one in The Twitten beside Sunnyside) – all are reminders of everyday life in 19th century

Ditchling. An iron ring in the wall outside Little Rowlescroft, North End remains from the days when the building was a saddler's and harness-maker's workshop.

Throughout the area are a number of old street lighting columns adapted for modern use. These white fluted columns are in scale with their surroundings and sensitively combine a historic feature with modern standards of street lighting.

The simple column of the War Memorial was designed by Eric Gill and letter-cut by Joseph Cribb, the first pupil of Eric Gill. It is a tangible link with the period when Ditchling was home to early 20th century artists and craftsmen.

Boundary walls and iron railings are a feature of the area especially in East End Lane. Flint and brick, in a variety of designs, is common with a coping of brick. Iron railings are also present, outside Sunnyside, Lewes Road for example or beside The Twitten.



Old street lighting column adapted for modern use

7 IDENTIFICATION OF CHARACTER AREAS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Though small in area, the villagescape of Ditchling Conservation Area varies: the close-packed, almost terraced appearance of the central cruciform of streets contrasts markedly with the spacious character of the Village Green and pond east of the church; East End Lane is a long, sinuous rural village lane whereas North End is wider, shorter and carries through traffic.

Taking into account age, topographical location and usage, the conservation area may be divided into the following four distinct and definable character areas.

THE FOUR CHARACTER AREAS ARE:

- Area 1: The village centre (High Street, West Street, South Street, Lewes Road)
- Area 2: East End Lane and The Twitten;
- Area 3: Lodge Hill Lane, Boddingtons Lane, Village Green and pond;
- Area 4: North End.

7.1 AREA I : THE VILLAGE CENTRE

HIGH STREET, WEST STREET, SOUTH STREET, LEWES ROAD

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

- Convergence of four streets at the crossroads in the centre of the village;
- Historic form and layout of High Street and West Street;
- The special historic interest of West Street;
- Views of the South Downs and St Margaret's Church;
- Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings;
- Notable historic shopfronts;
- Trees and hedgerows at the southern end of South Street;
- Attractive private gardens to the rear of residential properties;
- Two roadside trees in front of The Limes;
- The former homes of Eric Gill and Sir Frank Brangwyn;
- Lively and varied roofscape in which red brick and red clay tiles prevail;
- Red brick paviers which unify the floorscape of the four main streets;
- Old street lighting columns adapted for modern use;
- Open space behind The Bull Hotel.

VILLAGESCAPE

High Street was the commercial hub of Ditchling but is now mainly residential. There are few gaps between buildings and the street has a close-packed urban form broken only by Church Lane to the west and three vehicular accesses to the east: one to the back of The Bull, another to the

garages at the rear of no. 22 and a third to the back of The Sandrock. Two-storey is usual but no. 7 stands out, being a three-storey timber frame-building with an attic. Brick and tile prevail and the highway rises gently from the crossroads between pavements of red brick paviers. There are good views southwards to the Downs.



The Bull, a listed building in High Street

High Street is not uniform in width, narrowing after the crossroads before opening out between Church Lane and The Sandrock, narrowing again and becoming wider once more in front of The Limes. The effect of this is to give prominence to the gable end of two buildings, Sopers and The Bull. Two lime trees beside the pavement and a weeping birch in the front garden of no. 34 give the area a special distinction. Proceeding north, a bend in the road prevents northward views out of the village and it is beyond this point that the hedgerows and greenery of North End begin.

A high proportion of the buildings are listed and the street has an 18th century appearance. The Sandrock, with its Victorian detailing and style, seems at odds with the tenor of the rest of High Street but adds to the area's varied villagescape.

South Street falls away from the crossroads with historic character diminishing as one proceeds southwards. The west side of the street contains some fine historic buildings, the most notable being The Jointure, a 16th century timber framed house with an 18th century façade. The east side contains some unremarkable buildings from the end of the 19th century and later. No 2 South Street, dating from c.1880, is not a building of great architectural merit but holds an important corner location, especially viewed from High Street, because the crossroads is not precisely aligned.

West Street rises slightly from the crossroads, enclosed on both sides at first but opening out to the north at the churchyard where trees stand high above the road. The road is narrow; barely two cars' width at the junction and traffic can become congested. All the buildings on the south side are listed. This is an area of major historic villagescape overlooked by the fine parish church.

Only a short length of Lewes Road is included within the conservation area. No. 2 is one of the oldest buildings in the village, being a 15th century timber-framed hall house refronted with brick and tile-hanging.

On the opposite side of the road is the car park of The Bull Hotel with outdoor seating area behind a low brick wall. This area was the site of a square of old houses, demolished c. 1880, but a large two storey vernacular flint outbuilding remains.



Narrow entrance to The Twitten from Lewes Road

Demolition of these historic buildings behind The Bull and demolition of the building on the Lewes Road/South Street corner has eroded the historic character of the road which is now uniform in width, lacking the historic appearance of West Street. Looking west, there is a good view of St Margaret's Church above an interesting roofscape, slightly marred by overhead wires and traffic signs.

ISSUES

- Traffic congestion at the crossroads;
- Telephone control boxes in High Street and South Street are in need of painting;
- Insensitive re-instatement of the characteristic red paviers with red coloured cement;
- Use of concrete slabs and/or inappropriate brick paviers to the detriment of historic floorscape;
- Overhead wires intrude upon attractive views or vistas.

EAST END LANE AND THE TWITTEN



Greenery in East End Lane

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

- Historic winding thoroughfare;
- Generally tranquil village atmosphere of East End Lane;
- Open space and graveyard in front of the The Old Meeting House;
- Views of the South Downs from the southern end of East End Lane;
- Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, both listed and unlisted;
- Trees and other vegetation including well tended roadside gardens;
- The Twitten;
- The variety of construction and building materials used for boundary walls, notably brick and flint;
- Open space in front of Pardons and East End House where Fieldway crosses East End Lane;
- Old street lighting columns adapted for modern use;
- Red brick paviers in East End Lane;
- Barnfield Gardens, a small 1930s estate around a planned central green.

VILLAGESCAPE

East End Lane was an old road leading east from the main north-south thoroughfare, apparently used by the Priory monks to cart their produce

from Court Gardens Farm back to Lewes. Being a historic lane, it is not straight and varies in width. The lane's slight and frequent curves, which would be absent from a modern road, mean that views along the lane are frequently changing as buildings

or, more commonly, trees and high hedges obscure the onward view. The lane is a series of small, discreet and varied environments and its length is not immediately apparent.

From the formality of the High Street where old buildings sit close to the back of the pavement, the character of the lane changes to a more open informality as East End Lane approaches its junction with Lewes Road. Here grass verges have replaced pavements and modern dwellings sit concealed behind garden hedges. Finally there are views of the Downs. Pavements, which are intermittent or absent, are kerbed with natural stone.

Although there is a high proportion of late 20th century infill and modern accretions such as overhead wires, historic character and appearance is reinforced by the presence of ten listed buildings and a number of unlisted 19th century buildings and old roadside brick and flint boundary walls. The lane contains many mature garden trees.

The front gardens of Pardons and East End House, which face a widening in the road and inviting footpaths to Fieldway (westwards) and Farm Lane (eastwards), give rise to an unexpected open space that provides a spacious setting to the two fine historic buildings. This area has a distinct character quite different to the rest of East End Lane.

Barnfield Gardens is a typical 1930s estate of six mock-Tudor dwellings with steeply pitched tile roofs and tall chimney stacks encircling a small communal green.

The Twitten is a narrow pedestrian footpath that links East End Lane and Lewes Road. The footpath, barely more than a metre wide in places, is bounded on either side by a low wall of flint and brick or old iron railings. Though both entrances to The Twitten are narrow and enclosed, the footpath soon leads to one of Ditchling's most attractive open spaces in front of The Old Meeting House. From here there is a view of the Downs.

Nos. 9-21 is a short, tall terrace with tile-hung dormers and brick chimneys. Between these cottages and the listed Twitten Cottage is an area of grass and tombstones and east of this an open space with flat roofed garages and car parking/turning space. This area, not included in the conservation area, dilutes the special sense of enclosure and historic ambience that characterises the rest of The Twitten.

ISSUES

- Some modern developments, especially garages, are roofed in machine-made clay tiles or red coloured concrete tiles which do not have the distinctive colour or shape of hand-made clay tiles;
- The area of parking and garaging behind no. 42 East End Lane mars the special character of The Twitten;
- The Twitten is in need of re-surfacing or maintenance and repair.



Variety of building materials in East End Lane

LODGE HILL LANE, BODDINGTONS LANE, VILLAGE GREEN AND POND.

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

- Old drove road along Lodge Hill Lane and its continuation south known officially today as 'The Droveway';
- Picturesque ensemble of pond, Village Green and War Memorial green;
- Prominent views of St. Margaret's Church, the South Downs and surrounding countryside;
- St. Margaret's Church (grade I) which holds a prominent position on a knoll above the village;
- Ditchling Museum, housed in the former National School building;
- Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, notably St. Margaret's Church, Ditchling Court and The Old Manor House;
- Prominent trees and other vegetation, particularly willows beside the pond and individual trees on the green;
- Flint and brick churchyard wall;
- War Memorial designed by Eric Gill;
- Village Green created from a former farmyard;
- Pond with ducks and moorhens;
- Tranquil atmosphere in Boddingtons Lane.



Village pond

VILLAGESCAPE

This is the most picturesque corner of Ditchling with a distinctly different atmosphere to the village centre. The area is quiet except for traffic entering and leaving the village on the B2116 (West Street).

Lodge Hill Lane is part of an old drovers' route alongside Lodge Hill which continues southwards over the road beside the War Memorial and runs past the aptly named Drove Cottages which are included in the conservation area because of their historic interest. The fields on the left beyond Drove Cottages are important to the setting of the village.



View over St Margaret's Churchyard to the South Downs



The War Memorial green



Eighteenth century barn beside the village green

The Village Green is the focus of the area, around which are positioned St Margaret's Church, Wings Place, Cotterlings, the War Memorial, Ditchling Court and Old Manor House, restored former farm buildings, and the village pond. There are good distant views of all these historic buildings and more distant views to the windmills on top of the Downs. The surrounding area is well tree'd, particularly west of Cotterlings.

A rustic post and rail fence separates the road and a footpath to the church from the pond, but

a telegraph pole, litter bins and parked cars blight the otherwise idyllic setting. Elsewhere, willows and other greenery extends to the water's edge.

The area is mainly residential except for the recreational use of the Village Green. The area's few dwellings are in Lodge Hill Lane and Boddingtons Lane and are mostly detached and set well back from the road.

The Old Manor House and Ditchling Court (formerly Court Farm) is the most significant historic building in the area (listed grade II). Other buildings are 20th century or are the converted outbuildings of Court Farm. Lodge Hill Cottage, though much altered, is included in the Council's 'local list' and holds a prominent corner location, especially as viewed along Boddingtons Lane. Boddingtons Lane is an unsurfaced road with grassy verge, not open to through traffic, and thus a quiet leafy backwater.

ISSUES

- Litter bins and a telegraph pole beside the pond spoil the setting of the pond;
- Modern close-boarded timber fences are out of character with the conservation area's high quality railings and flint and brick walls.

NORTH END

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

- Historic route to the foot of The Downs and, via Ditchling Beacon, to Brighton;
- Views of surrounding countryside, especially Lodge Hill;
- Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings;
- The prevalent use of local building materials;
- Trees and mixed-species roadside hedges;
- Old street lighting columns adapted for modern use;
- Red brick paviors in roadside pavement;
- Well tended allotments.

VILLAGESCAPE

North End is an important entrance to the village. The road is a two lane road with a footpath on the eastern side and several vehicular entrances to properties on either side of the road. Cats' eyes in the road continue into the village until Forge House.

The roadside is characterised by hedgerows and front gardens. High, mixed species hedges and garden trees give the area the character of a rural lane though this is gradually eroded by road markings and traffic calming measures as one approaches the village centre.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, North End Farm marked the northern extent of the village. Today the road northwards from this point contains modern ribbon development and this is not included in the conservation area.

With the exception of Lappland, a 1980s dwelling, and part of the modern Dumbrells Court development, all of the dwellings along North End date from the late 19th century or earlier and all make a positive contribution to the varied architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. Nos. 12 to 15 directly front the road at the back of the pavement but other buildings are generally set back in spacious gardens. Bowries, Forge House and Forge Cottage are grade II listed timber-framed buildings from the 15th and 16th century. North Cottage,



Bowries, a timber-framed house in North End



Allotment gardens, North End



Grade II listed sixteenth century timber-framed building, North End



Northgate, North End

Rowlescroft, Chestnut and White Lodge date from the early 19th century. All are listed.

Traffic entering and leaving the village via North End is controlled by traffic calming measures comprised of two chicanes that artificially narrow the road with timber bollards, road markings and road signs. These are a regrettable intrusion into a rural conservation area but fortunately are located well away from the historic core.

The characteristic red paviers extend to just beyond no. 18. There are southward views of the

Downs outside Rowlescroft. On the west side, fields extend to the roadside in two places. The area is exclusively residential and contains generous back gardens as well as an area of well tended allotment gardens.

ISSUES

- The traffic calming measures intrude upon the rural ambience of North End.

8.1 AREA 1 :THE VILLAGE CENTRE

- Telephone control boxes in High Street and South Street are in need of painting;
- Insensitive re-instatement of the characteristic red paviers with red coloured cement;
- Unsightly and damaged bollards in the High Street;
- Traffic congestion at the crossroads;
- Overhead wires intrude upon attractive views or vistas.
- Use of concrete slabs and/or inappropriate brick paviers to the detriment of historic floorscape;



Traffic at the cross-roads

8.2 AREA 2 : EAST END LANE AND THE TWITTEN

- Some modern developments, especially garages, are roofed in machine-made clay tiles or red coloured concrete tiles which do not have the distinctive colour or shape of hand-made clay tiles;
- The area of parking and garaging behind no. 42 East End Lane mars the special character of The Twitten;
- High volume of on-street parking;
- The Twitten is in need of re-surfacing or maintenance and repair.

8.3 AREA 3: LODGE HILL LANE, BODDINGTONS LANE,VILLAGE GREEN AND POND

- Litter bins and a telegraph pole beside the pond spoil the setting of the pond;
- Modern close-boarded timber fences are out of character with the conservation area's high quality railings and flint and brick walls.

8.4 AREA 4: NORTH END

- The traffic calming measures intrude upon the rural ambience of North End.



An Article 4 Direction could help preserve the character of this building in The Twitten

9.1 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

There is already an Article 4 Direction in Ditchling covering all of the unlisted family houses in the core of the conservation area. The Article 4 Direction should be extended to cover all buildings identified as ‘positive buildings’ within the conservation area (see Villagescape Appraisal map) including the proposed extensions to the conservation area in Lewes Road and Beacon Road.

The Article 4 Direction requires that house owners or tenants obtain planning permission from Lewes District Council for a number of alterations, listed below, which would normally be considered permitted development. This is done to ensure that all alterations to these buildings are carried out sensitively and enhance the special character of the conservation area by using the correct materials and details.

Work which requires planning permission includes:

- Any alteration to a roof, including roof coverings, roof lights and solar panels
- Building a porch
- Erecting sheds and temporary buildings
- Building a swimming pool
- Building a hard standing
- Installing a satellite dish or antenna
- Removing, or building walls, gates, fences or other means of enclosure
- Exterior painting of previously unpainted surfaces or changes of external colour schemes
- Any enlargement or improvement or alteration such as an extension or conservatory
- Any changes to doors or windows, including changed materials, details and designs and types of decorative finish



Unightly telegraph pole and litter bins beside the pond

There is no fee for an Article 4 planning application and because the Council has powers of enforcement to ensure that any unauthorised work is rectified at the owner's expense, it is always advisable to contact the Planning and Environmental Services Department before commencing work. Because permission may also be required separately under the Building Regulations, it is also advisable to contact the Council's Building Control Department.

9.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

There are a number of sites where enhancement would be beneficial to the character and appearance of the Ditchling Conservation Area:

- Garages and parking area east of The Twitten;
- Pole and litter bins beside pond at western entrance to Village Green;
- Surface of The Twitten.

9.3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY CHANGES

Beacon Road and Lewes Road contain properties dating from the 1890s and early 20th century expansion of the village. It is recommended that the conservation area should be extended to include areas of Beacon Road and Lewes Road which contain good examples of domestic architecture from the period 1890-1930 and which form part of the history of the development of the village.

1. Proposed Beacon Road extension

Beacon Road is the continuation of South Street, an old route leading over the Downs to Brighton. Apart from South Gate, which was an early 19th century toll house, development of the lane south of the Clayton Road junction did not begin until the 1890s. Nos. 4 and 4a, 18 and 20, and 22 were built in the 1890s and remain relatively unaltered.

During the first decades of the 20th century,

further development continued southward on the east side of the road. Nos. 26, 28, 36, 38 (Gospels) Beacon Road date from this period. They are large dwellings set back from the road, retaining much of their original character.

Of particular note on the west side of Beacon Road is Hillway House and Hillway Cottage, nos. 15 and 17 Beacon Road, completed in 1930 in a vernacular revival style by Arthur Penty, listed grade II.

It is recommended that the conservation area boundary is extended to include these well maintained and relatively unaltered examples of late 19th/early 20th century domestic architecture, especially the grade II listed Hillway House, together with mature trees and other greenery. Together they create a locality that makes a significant contribution to the village's overall historic character and appearance.

2. Proposed Lewes Road extension

At the end of the 19th century, there was no development along Lewes Road east of Fieldway, which was then a footpath across open fields. By 1910 eight dwellings had been built on the south side, set back from the road with long gardens to the rear. These remain, some altered and extended, but mostly retaining their Edwardian architectural character and appearance. They are nos. 32, 34 and 36, 38, 40 (former home of Edward Johnson, calligrapher), 44 and 46. This Edwardian expansion of the village is a significant part of the village's history. In addition, the garden land south-west of no. 30 is important to the landscape setting of this proposed extension of the conservation area.

On the north side of Lewes Road, nos. 31/33 and no. 35 (dated 1891) are good examples of late 19th century dwellings contemporary with nearby Sunnyside (1898) (nos. 19-25 Lewes Road) which lies within the conservation area. The former are set back from the main road just beyond the entrance to Fieldway from where there is an important 'arrival' view of St Margaret's Church. To the north (rear) of these properties are a garden and an open car parking space with flat



Lewes Road (proposed extension)

roofed garages that is prominent in views from The Twitten.

It is recommended that the boundary is extended along the south side of Lewes Road to include good quality Edwardian houses (nos. 32, 34 and 36, 38, 40, 44 and 46) which make a positive contribution to the village's historic villagescape and the house and garden on no. 30 which is vital to landscape setting. It is further recommended that, on the north side of Lewes Road, nos. 27-35 (odd) together with the garden and parking space to the north is included within the conservation area because of the historic interest of the buildings and spaces and their importance to the setting of The Twitten.

APPENDIX I BIBLIOGRAPHY

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