

Westerham Design Statement

October 2018

Westerham & Crockham Hill Design Statement

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of a Village Design Statement (VDS)

Design Statements are a form of planning guidance to identify the important aspects of the design and character of an area, which then assists developers and householders when designing new development to ensure buildings and associated works are in keeping with, and enhance, the existing character. The purpose of the Design Statement is not to determine where development should take place but is intended to influence and guide planning decisions. VDS's influence the way the statutory planning system operates locally. Some will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This means that it can become a material consideration in the planning system. Therefore a key aspect in the preparation of the statement is its compatibility with the statutory planning process. The design guidelines in the VDS refer to the relevant local plan and planning policies of Sevenoaks District Council Development Plan and aim to complement and provide further local clarification of these policies.

1.2 The Westerham & Crockham Hill Design Statement - What does it say?

The Design Statement will provide a description of the Parish of Westerham and Crockham Hill as it is known, observed, valued and loved by the local population in the year 2017, together with guidelines on how any future development should be managed. It will promote an understanding of the character and qualities of Westerham and Crockham Hill, and to indicate some guidelines for any change or development that may be proposed in coming years. It is not about resisting change - it's about managing change in a sensible and sensitive way.

1.3 Preparation and Consultation

A key aspect of Design Statements is that they are written and researched by local communities, with only advisory input from the District Council, and so represent a community view of how new development should be designed in order to retain a sense of place.

The Design Statement is built up from evidence and insight gathered from both the town of Westerham as well as the rural communities including the village of Crockham Hill.

The outcome of this VDS has been created by the people who live and work in the Parish. A task force of volunteers drawn from individuals, local organisations, schools and the National Trust carried out research, surveys and consultations to build an evidence base upon which the design guidelines proposed within this document are formulated. Their valuable input to this process has been greatly appreciated.

1.4 The way forward & how the VDS will be used

The VDS will be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for adoption as their Supplementary Planning Document for the next ten years, in support of the new SDC Local Plan (2015-2035) which is currently being drafted and which affects the Parish. It is intended for use by developers, Town Planners and residents in the form of guidance for future developments to the built form of the settlements that are sympathetic to the historic setting of the Parish whilst managing its growth and change in the future. It will be reviewed at the end of that time, even if no changes are needed.

The VDS has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Sevenoaks District Council's adopted Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. In particular, Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy requires that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan is also taken into consideration, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/landscape-management/management-plan/>

The policy states further that account should be taken of the guidance adopted by the Council, including Village Design Statements.

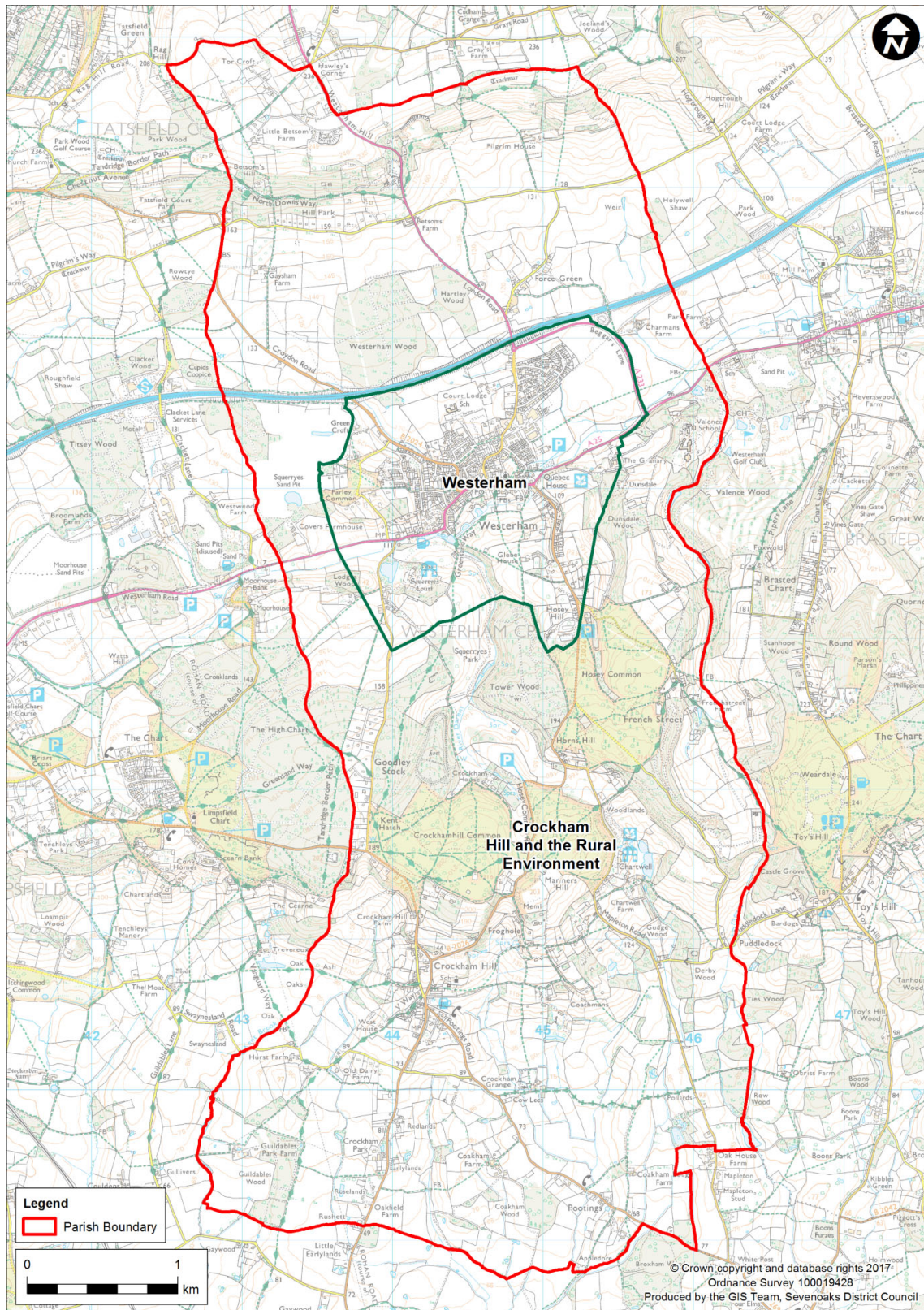
In accordance with paragraph 28 of the NPPF the VDS is proposed to be used to help applicants make successful applications by providing detailed specific guidance on the design of new development in the following areas;

The VDS is split into 2 sections:

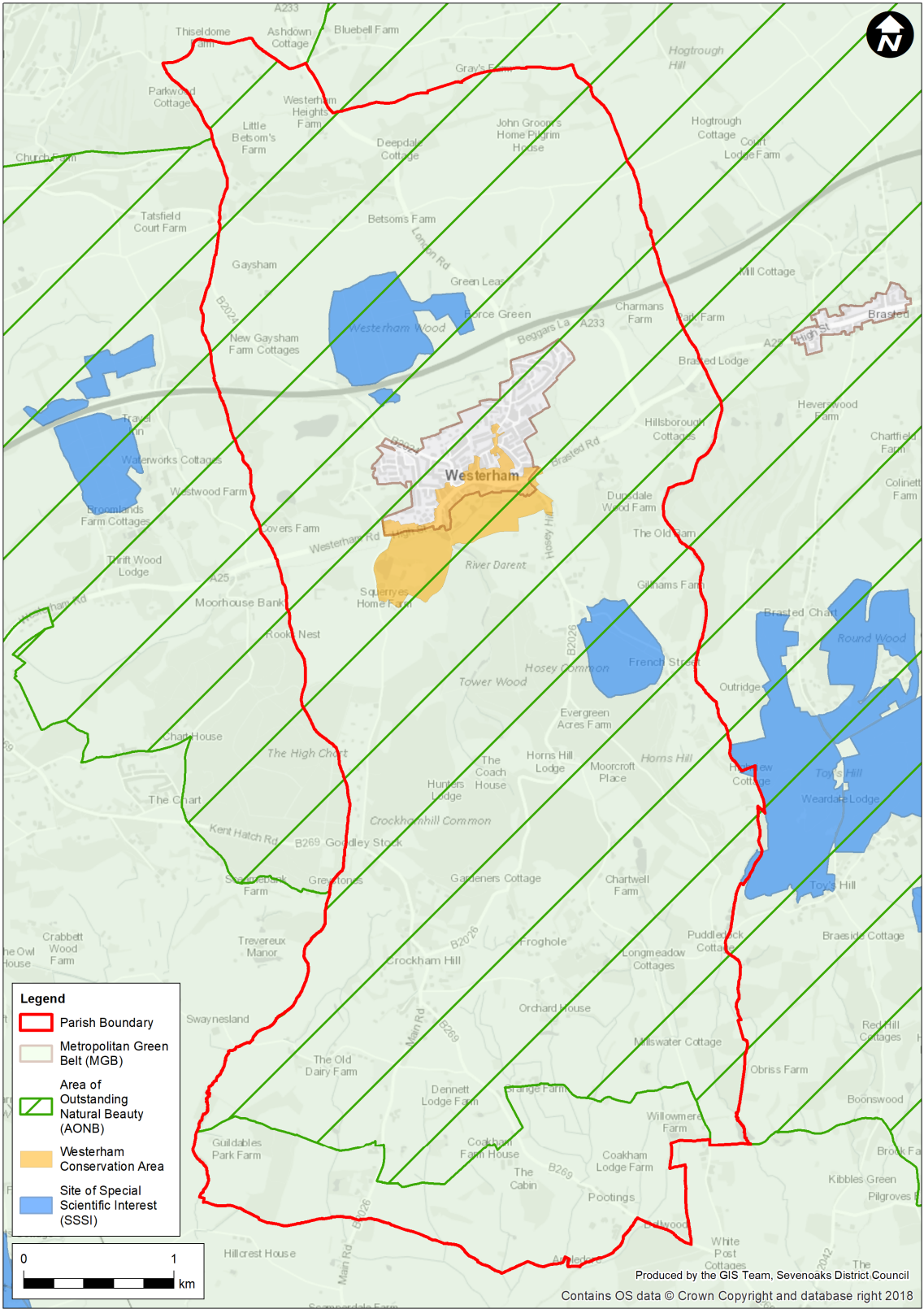
- Westerham Town and its environs
- Crockham Hill and the rural environment

1.5 Setting the Scene - The Parish

The Parish consists of two main settlements, Westerham Town & Crockham Hill including the surrounding rural landscape, which are covered separately for the purposes of the VDS. The VDS covers the Parish defined within the red line area on the map below together with the division of the two sections detailed above.



Below is a Constraint map showing Green Belt boundary, extent of AONB, Conservation Area boundaries and SSSI in the parish.



Westerham is the main settlement in the Parish. The Parish as a whole covers slightly over nine square miles, is just 22 miles from central London and is home to approximately 4500 people. The Historic town of Westerham is surrounded by countryside designated as Metropolitan Green Belt and washed over by AONB. Crockham Hill is located within both the Green Belt and given additional protection of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Local geology provides a rich variety of small hills and valleys, which provide an attractive setting for the Parish between the North Downs and High Chart at the head of the Darent river valley. Owing to the topography the openness of the surrounding countryside is very evident not only with vistas from within the town but across the Parish.

The single feature compromising the landscape is the M25 to the North of Westerham. Whilst initially giving relief to the A25 running through the centre of the town, the increase in traffic generated over the past 30 years means that very often the A25 becomes the motorway relief road clogging the town centre. The result is that pollution levels are recorded above statutory levels at certain points and restricted road width causes traffic queuing and long tailbacks at busy periods. Future development to the north of the town towards the motorway should have regard to air quality regulations.

The town of Westerham is increasingly a destination for tourists, encouraged by the history of the town and the facilities on offer. There are many cafes, pubs, restaurants and independent shops, and the town also has its own brewery and winery.

The location of the town on a main transport route and its accessibility to many larger towns accounts for the constant movement of people. The mix of uses encourages both the tourist industry and the local population to use the town and for it to serve a function as a destination for retail and industry. The location of Westerham with its convenient access to the M25 makes it attractive to businesses and several multi-national companies have chosen Westerham as a base. The retention of a varied mix of facilities to serve the function of the town as a destination for tourists and for businesses is essential to the vitality of the town, whilst also serving its local population.

The area to the north and south of the town is characterised by small hamlets and larger dispersed dwellings linked by country roads and lanes leading through Crockham Hill village towards Edenbridge. Crockham Hill is served by a junior school, local pub, which is a building of community interest as it serves as a focal point at the centre of the village, as well as a modern village hall. As the village is surrounded by Green Belt and is in the AONB new buildings are more limited and existing dwellings have often been developed and enlarged over time.

1.6 History of Westerham & Crockham Hill

Westerham

Westerham settlement dates back to pre-Saxon times and the Town obtained its market charter in 1227. It's most significant residential development took place in the 1970s extending housing along the Croydon Road and Old London Road, north of the A25.

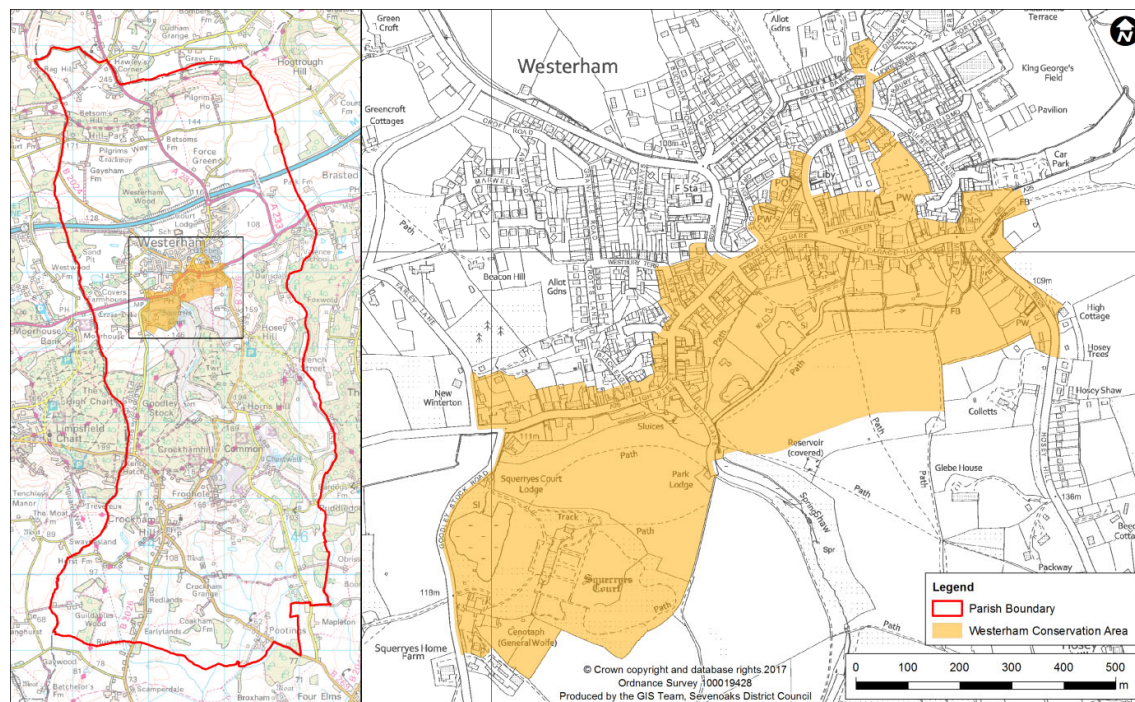
The Town remains centred around the Conservation Area and Green, which was the historic market place. Adjacent to this is the local church, which sits on a high point of the Town and is visible from a wide area as a visual focal point to visitors.

The town has many historic connections to important events and people including General Wolfe and Churchill, whose statues appear on the Green. The National Trust owns two significant historic properties at Quebec House and Chartwell as well as significant land around Crockham Hill. There are approximately 100 listed buildings in the Parish, many of them along the busy A25 that runs through the centre of the Town.

The single largest estate is Squerryes, owned by the Warde family for over three hundred years. It was bought by the first John Warde in 1731 and the Wardes still live there. For many hundreds of years the Squerryes Estate has owned a very large proportion of the land within the Parish boundaries, and has exercised a crucial influence on its development. The Estate continues to influence current and future development within and around the town.

The mix of historical buildings creates an eclectic and unique built area of Westerham representing its history and development over many centuries. The ribbon of small roads and lanes leading off the A25 provide character and visual definition to the town and its immediate countryside, across the valley and to the North Downs and South to the Kent Chart. The buildings beyond the A25 are mostly of two or three storeys and are subservient in character and appearance to the broader landscape beyond into the Green Belt.

The Conservation Area is located in the heart of the town as shown in the map below:



Crockham Hill

Similarly Crockham Hill village approached from the North from an elevated position gives unrestricted views across the Eden valley, south to the Weald of Kent and even Sussex. The focal point is the Church set on a prominent position in the village surrounded by its historical settlement and the local school. The village itself is washed over by the Green belt and has no defined village boundary. It is within and surrounded by AONB and residential houses are set sparsely along local lanes and roads surrounding the village, and many have been developed into often large and imposing properties set into the hillside. These are often prominent and, if not carefully constructed or landscaped, jar against the AONB when approached from the South and West.

Large estates with extensive parkland historically dominated the Parish and, whilst much of this has changed in the last century, the landscape still reflects this openness mixed with largely arable farming.

2. DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR WESTERHAM

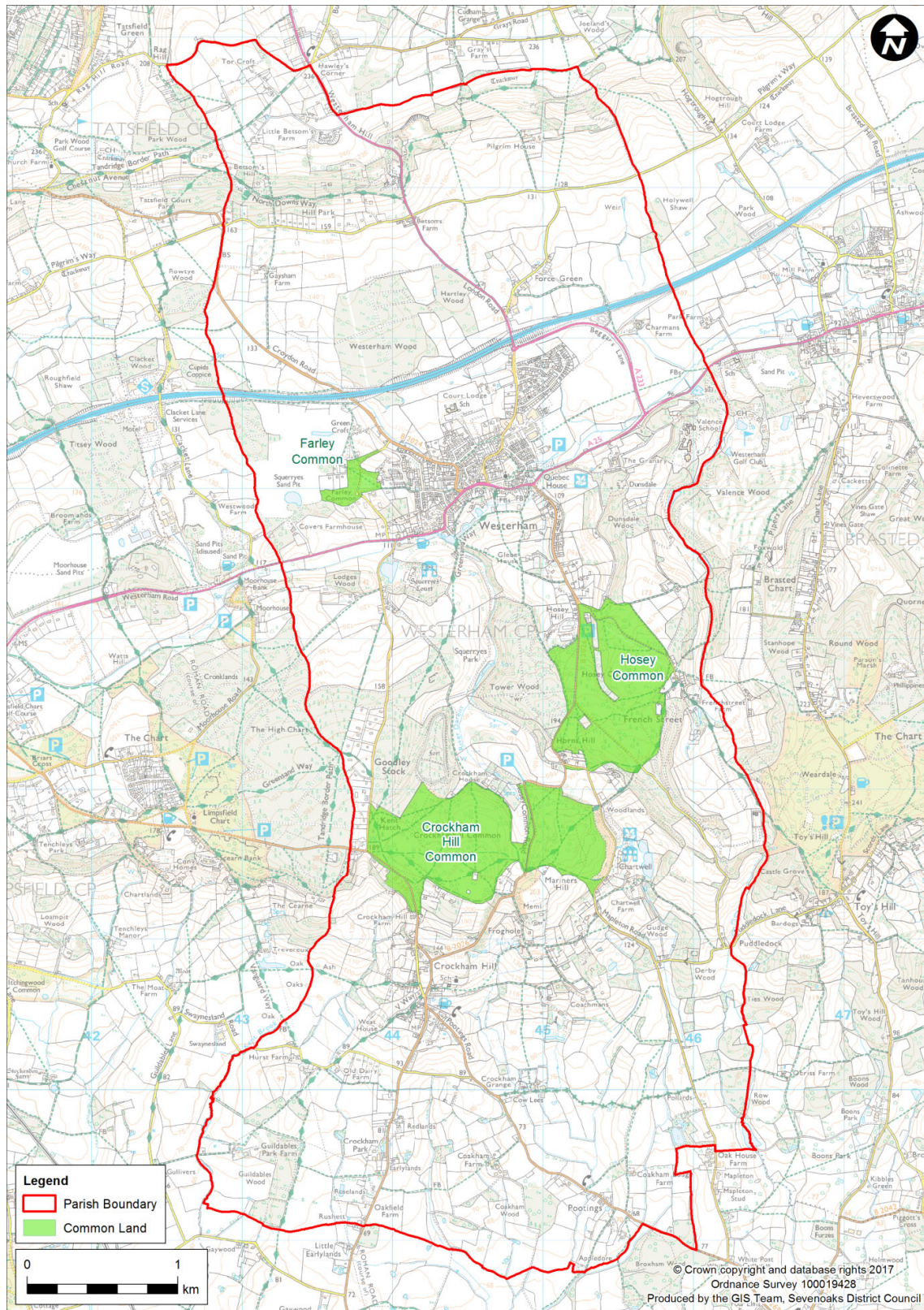
2.1 Landscape & Setting

Westerham is set in a broad east-west valley some twenty miles south-east of London, bounded by the North Downs to the north and the Greensand Ridge to the south. The River Darent rises in the Greensand and flows through the town; to the north the countryside is mainly farmland, while the south, except for Squerryes Park, is mostly woodland. Local geology provides a rich variety of small hills and valleys, with a range of soils yielding a profusion of types of trees and plants. The town itself is excluded from the Green Belt, but is washed over by AONB, these constraints help define the green setting for the town. The Conservation Area includes the historic centre of the town and some open parkland to the south, the Squerryes Court Estate and some of its park together with several well-known properties such as Quebec House, Pitts Cottage and the Kings Arms Hotel.

The town has a number of important open spaces that are integral to its character and setting. King George's Field is the largest of the town's open spaces and is used for a number of outdoor recreational uses. Allotments at Bloomfield, Currant Hill and Farley Lane provide visual amenity through their openness however due to changing social patterns and demographics usage has been declining in recent years. Any future development should have a due regard to their amenity value.



There are three historic commons in the parish, Hosey, Farley and Crockham Hill (shown on the map below), whilst much of this area has become wooded in the last century they were originally common grazing land and the chart was an open area on top of higher ground. The areas are very popular with visiting walkers, ramblers and cyclists and protected by both AONB and, in some areas, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status.



The Darent valley, in which Westerham sits, is widely regarded as very important in developing the future prosperity of the area through encouraging tourism and leisure pursuits. Protecting the visual integrity of this valley is key to its success. A project is

currently underway to extend the Darent Valley Path along its entire length from Westerham to Dartford; this will allow greater access along the valley not only to ramblers and walkers but safe riding for cyclists away from the busy A roads. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) refer to the special features of the Darent valley within its Landscape Character Assessment (2017). Key characteristics include the gentle undulating valley where long views can be gained towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge. Reference is made to the characteristic vernacular architecture and blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws. To the south of the town the area falls within the landscape character type referred to as Greensand Parks and Farmlands which extends towards Crockham Hill. Typical characteristics include a rural low density settlement pattern of scattered farms and hamlets with traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in rag stone and/or brick, some half tile hung, and with clay tile roofs.

Crockham Hill falls within the landscape character type defined as Cherts and is specifically referred to as a settlement nestled within a wooded scarp where properties have been built to take advantage of extensive views. Key characteristics include the long views over the Weald and narrow tree lined rural lanes.

There are a number of impressive views from Westerham to the countryside beyond. Most notable are those views eastwards from the War Memorial over rooftops to woods and fields beyond. Views of the North Downs can be gained from St Mary's church and throughout the Town are glimpses of long distance views through alleyways and gaps between buildings. These views to the AONB beyond give relief from the built form and offer a reminder of the rural nature of the setting of the Town.



There are areas of Ancient and semi-natural woodland to the south of the town, east of Mill Lane and along Spring Shaw. Westerham Mines SSSI is to the east of Hosey Hill. The wooded nature of land surrounding Westerham is evident from views within the town, particularly from the green looking east as the photograph overleaf demonstrates.

Westerham is an historic market Town with boundaries defined by its previous commercial activities including Breweries, Blacksmith, traditional trades, railway and farming. Its recent

developments beyond these boundaries have been largely residential estates and individual residences along the major link roads. These can present a hard edge to the landscape with brick walls, high wooden fencing and gates adversely impacting views of the Green Belt and AONB; as well as adversely affecting wildlife. It is important to encourage more natural boundaries and greater thought in landscape design and use, not just to protect views but to encourage biodiversity.

The relationship between properties and their environment creates a characteristic common to a particular area. It is important to understand and protect this. Changes to existing properties or proposed new buildings that do not share common characteristics to the area or enhance the local area would be inappropriate development.

Design guidelines

- LS1** There are a number of important views both into and out of the town. Most notable views are those eastwards from the War Memorial over rooftops to woods and fields beyond. The view of the North Downs from St Marys church is also particularly important. Gaps in development allow views to countryside and open space beyond. These important outlooks should be protected from any form of insensitive development as they form an integral part of the setting of the historic town. All new development should respond to the distinctive local character of Westerham and the views should be protected and enhanced (Core Strategy (CS) policy SP 1).
- LS2** The natural beauty of Westerham shall be conserved and enhanced, ensuring that it is not harmed by inappropriate development including the overdevelopment of existing plots, gardens and the introduction of back land development that is not in keeping with the form of development on the site and within the locality. The density of new development should reflect that of the surrounding locality and include provision for landscaping to protect and enhance street scenes and the local environment.



- LS3** Gaps between buildings should be retained, in particular in a street of traditional detached and semi-detached houses, to avoid a terracing effect and to allow for breathing space between buildings. (Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Residential Extensions)
- LS4** Open spaces that contribute to the identity of the settlement should be retained and enhanced wherever possible. Change of use of designated open spaces will not be acceptable unless it has been demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements, the loss will be replaced by an equivalent recreational provision or the development is for alternative sports/recreational uses (Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) Policy GI2).
- LS5** Proposals for new buildings or extensions to buildings should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of existing development in the area to ensure proposals do not adversely affect the silhouette of the existing town when viewed from the surrounding AONB. (ADMP Policy EN1).
- LS6** Existing trees should be preserved where appropriate and practical. Trees, which form an important part of the setting and character of the area, should be preserved and integrated into the development proposals where possible. Planting as part of any new development should be used to extend existing habitats around site boundaries and of a variety appropriate to the area (ADMP para 6.17 & Policy GI 1)



- LS7** New development should respect the topography and character of the site and surrounding area and landscaping proposals should form an integral part of new development proposals. Excessive hard landscaping of driveways and patios is not supported. Soft landscaping should be indigenous and harmonious to the area. (ADMP Policy EN1)
- LS8** Planning policies to protect Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings should be strictly applied.

2.2 Settlement Characteristics

Westerham has a strong community built around its historic roots. The nature of the Town has changed with much of the wider Sevenoaks district and now caters for commuters, tourists and leisure interests. Reflecting this, the Town has 17 restaurants, cafes and bars and is busy from early morning until late evening.

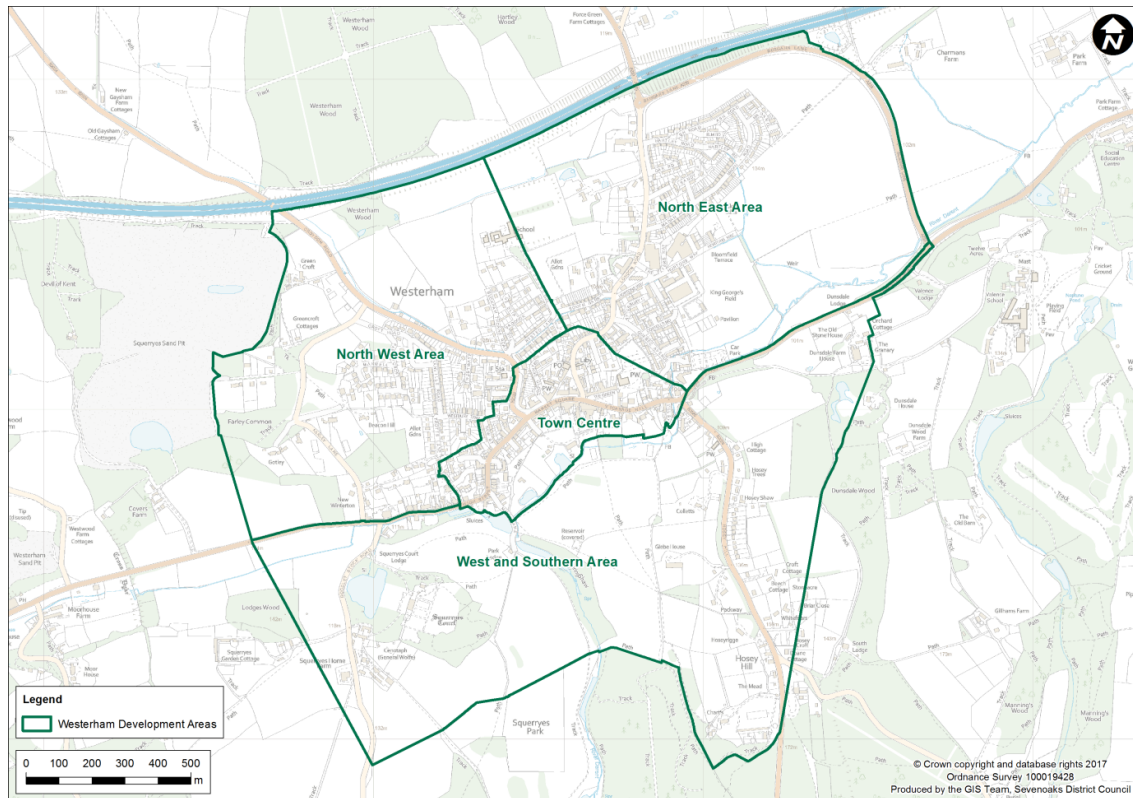


At weekends, football clubs from around the region play on the King George's playing field, which also provides a skate park, tennis courts and a bowls club.

Whilst there is a busy primary school there is no secondary provision and local children are transported to 17 different locations outside the Town, in all directions.

The nearest hospitals are in Bromley, Sevenoaks and Pembury some 11- 20 miles distant. There is one supermarket serving local needs. Whilst there is a regular bus service, 90% of journeys out of town are by car.

Westerham Town falls into four fairly distinct areas of development, shown on the following map and described below:



1) North East – This comprises the mainly residential area including Madan Road, Ash Road and Hartley Road. Part of Madan Road consists of Victorian properties with traditional features; however the main characteristic of this area is the estate style post war housing with generous front gardens, green verges and open spaces. Frontages of properties are generally open providing a spacious feel to the development, enhanced by the use of low hedging as boundary treatments on some properties. Other boundary treatments such as chain link fencing are also present but this detracts from the character of the area. Generous gaps are retained between groups of dwellings and dwellings are well set back from the road. The gaps between dwellings are important in avoiding a terracing effect. The northeast area is historically important in terms of its example of post war town planning and has characteristics that are important to retain, in particular the spacing commonality of style and openness.

2) North West - This comprises the areas of Croft Road, Farley Lane, Granville Road, Trotts Lane and roads bordering these. Characteristics of this area include lower density housing interspersed with the wooded areas. Properties here are more diverse in style and age whilst retaining the same homogenous visual sense of place from high density terraced roads leading to larger more dispersed properties on the outskirts of the town giving way to countryside beyond.

3) Historic Town Centre - The centre of Westerham comprises the main retail high street and the hub for tourists. One of the main characteristics is The Green, with its famous statues of Churchill and General Wolfe. The centre of Westerham is home to many of the town's listed buildings and at its heart is the Conservation Area. The main A25 runs through the centre of

the town, it runs parallel with the M25 and serves as its relief road in the event of motorway hold-ups.

The approach into the town from the west is characterised by the number of attractive buildings, including many that are listed, on the road frontage. The location of buildings on this frontage limits the width of the road, which is particularly evident on the approach from the southwest as you enter into the town centre.

4) South and West – The area to the south of the Town is dominated by the Squerryes estate with parkland and mixed woodland rising to the Chart. The two roads running south towards Crockham Hill and Edenbridge (Goodley Stock and Hosey Hill) are lined by older detached properties set back from the roads

Commerce

The main industrial area in Westerham lies to the north of the Town Centre and is known as Westerham Trading Centre, forming two parts to the east and west of London Road. The Crown building is on the north side of London Road and comprises a three storey brick office building, which has a overbearing appearance on the street scene. The majority of the industrial area is on the east of London Road comprising a number of low rise purpose built office buildings together with conversion of the old station buildings which are home to smaller workshop/industrial units.



There continues to be a shortage of available supply of office space in Westerham with a healthy demand for space of between 5,000 and 15,000 sq. ft (source: Karrison Property Report, February 2017). There is also a continuous demand for modern office space of between 1,000-3,000 sq. ft. for both freehold and leasehold (source: Karrison Property Report, February 2017). The lack of suitable accommodation to meet the demand is resulting in the town experiencing established businesses moving out or choosing to locate elsewhere. There are plentiful reasons for office occupiers to establish a business location in the town, including its excellent strategic location, although poor public transport and lack of public parking is a disincentive for some businesses. The demand for office space is from those businesses that do not need to access London readily.

Larger warehousing units within the town are occupied and there is demand for these units. High skilled employment units in a mix of sizes to meet demand, in an appropriate location, would be supported.

There are a number of options available to businesses needing to expand in the town. The biggest threat to the vitality and sustainability of the town's role as a location for businesses is the loss of existing office space to residential due to Permitted Development Rights. The town could potentially lose 250 – 350 staff and up to 15 businesses forced to move out of the town. This would be a considerable loss for the town's economy. Furthermore, the knock on effect to the remaining businesses is that rents may increase significantly over a relatively short period of time.

There is a clear need for additional land availability for employment uses in the town. Future development should encourage the provision of a mix of unit size capable of meeting the needs of new technology and relevant space for innovation for both start up and growing business, including live/work space. New development should respond to its setting and adhere to design guidelines in this VDS and in particular.

Loss of any further business/retail space should be critically assessed to avoid the Town becoming less capable of meeting an adequate range of local needs.

Transport

Westerham is situated on the main A25 trunk road running parallel with the M25 and often used as a relief road to traffic in event of congestion on the motorway. This creates serious problems with road width restrictions at two points either side of the Town Centre, slowing and limiting passing of commercial vehicles, which then increases the air quality issues, already rated as very poor. At these points the pathway is also significantly compromised, as commercial vehicles often have to mount the pavements to pass.

Running north are two feeder roads to Croydon and Bromley, and two "B roads" south to Edenbridge through Crockham Hill.

There are numerous small lanes, pathways and side roads linking historic parts of Westerham, and latterly the newer post war developments. These are an important characteristic of the town and provide vistas not familiar to passing traffic but invaluable to the residents and local communities, enabling them to walk and cycle around the town to avoid the A25. Protecting and enhancing these to ensure benefit is essential and future provision from further developments would be required to ensure the safety of residents walking and cycling around the town.

One of the most significant and damaging changes to the town in the last 25 years has been the increase in traffic and need for more parking in and around the town centre. On street parking is increasing, narrowing roads to single track and obstructing other road users as well as blighting neighbourhoods. In addition, front gardens are being lost to parking which has a detrimental impact on the street scene creating an urbanised effect.



Due to the increase in traffic and the need for parking identified above, the residents of Westerham would wish to see with any further residential development that adequate space should be provided for parking.

Design guidelines

- SC1** Westerham's unique historic setting contributes greatly to its local distinctiveness and will be protected from inappropriate development. Any proposed development shall retain and enhance the distinctive character of the town. (CS Policy SP1)
- SC2** New development proposals should be limited in scale to reflect the existing massing. High rise development will not be acceptable if it does not protect key views both into and out of the town. (ADMP Policy EN1)
- SC3** Any new infill development should be consistent with local character. It should respond to the distinctive characteristics of the locality in which it is situated. (CS Policy LO7)
- SC4** Existing employment uses in Westerham should generally be retained, where possible, and WTC will support regeneration and redevelopment to better meet the needs of, and strengthen, business. Any new buildings within the Westerham Trading Centre should respect the setting of the area and integrate with existing buildings, reflecting heights, scale and building materials used locally. Building heights should be considered carefully where they are close to residential areas to avoid a negative impact on amenity. Particular care should be taken where sites are located in close proximity to residential uses. (CS Policy LO7)
- SC5** Opportunity for landscape buffers and use of planting within employment sites will be welcomed. (ADMP Policy EN1)
- SC6** A range of shops, services and visitor attractions should be maintained in the town centre to ensure the protection and improvement of the vibrancy of the town to both residents and visitors. Changes to existing use classes (not permitted by Permitted Development) should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that such change would improve the range of services or encourage an increase in activity and visitors.

- SC7** Where a change of use, requiring planning permission, would necessitate additional car parking, evidence should be provided to demonstrate where this could be located. (ADMP Policy LT1)
- SC8** Traditional gardens and urban green space retains the green infrastructure of the town. Where planning permission is required to introduce hardstanding/vehicle parking care should be given to incorporating these qualities.
- SC9** In areas where there are clearly spaces around the buildings, spacing between all built form and the boundary of the property should be maintained at a minimum of 1 metre to avoid terracing and overdevelopment of individual plots thereby avoiding a detrimental impact on special character. (SPD Residential Extensions)
- SC10** Infill residential development should reflect the special character of the area in locality. All new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. (Core Strategy Policy SP7)
- SC11** All new developments including flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) should provide at least minimum vehicle parking in accordance with the current Kent County Council parking standards in order to provide appropriate levels of parking provision specific to local circumstances. Where appropriate this should also apply to situations where additional bedrooms are created. (ADMP policy T2)
- SC12** New development should be designed and sited to ensure that Heritage Assets and their settings are protected and enhanced. (CS Policy SP1)

2.3 Buildings and Materials

Westerham displays many different settlement characteristics. There are four fairly distinct areas within the town as referred to previously. The VDS provides overarching guidelines for building design and materials for the whole of Westerham.

One of the main aims of the VDS is to ensure that any future construction respects the historical value and interest of the town's character buildings, together with retention of the backdrop of the countryside visible within town from many viewpoints. New development must be designed to respect the setting of its locality, by way of scale, form, design and building materials.

There are many examples of good design within the town and also features that should be avoided. The guidelines aim to influence future development and improve the physical qualities of the town.



Extensions (loft/dormers)

It is accepted that extensions to existing dwellings provide the opportunity to enhance an existing property. There are however many poor examples of extensions within the town that are not in keeping with the scale and design of the existing building. Extensions that dominate the original building and are not subservient have a detrimental impact on the scale and form of the original property are considered to provide poor examples.

Within the Conservation Area policies of restraint apply to ensure the design of an extension must demonstrate that it will preserve or enhance the character of the area. Policies of restraint also apply in green belt areas in terms of size and proportion of extensions to dwellings to ensure the protection of the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst modern design can work in some scenarios, great care must be taken to ensure it is consistent with the form and character of existing buildings and other development in the locality. There are many important gaps in the town that allow views through to the landscape beyond. There is concern that extensions to buildings could result in the reduction of these gaps. There are particularly sensitive areas within the town where larger gaps form an integral part of the character of the area. These have been mentioned previously being the views eastwards from the War Memorial over rooftops to woods and fields beyond. Views of the North Downs from St Mary's church and throughout the Town there are glimpses of long distance views through alleyways and gaps between buildings. Views to the AONB beyond can give relief from the built form and offer a reminder of the rural nature of the setting of the Town.

Extensions to loft space are an increasingly popular option to provide additional accommodation. Whilst this can be carried out sensitively, there are examples where the scale of the roof extension creates a development unsympathetic to the existing building. Loft conversions have the potential to be very prominent and can be very difficult to integrate into an existing building or group of buildings. Due to the potential for unsympathetic designs, particular care should be taken in designing these schemes, in particular where there is a uniform group of buildings forming a characteristic roof profile within the street-scene. Poor examples of loft conversions include those where the extension dominates the roof form of the building, in particular those that span the width of the building and those that are located on the front elevation where there are no other front dormers in the street scene. Roof lights are considered to be much less conspicuous than dormer windows. Corner plots are particularly sensitive as they generally offer a degree of openness between road junctions and a sense of relief between developments.



Landscaping

Quite often new development, such as an extension to an existing property, can significantly reduce the amount of garden space available. The loss of garden areas at the front of a property is becoming more common owing to pressure for off-road parking, particularly in the north-east and north-west areas of the town demonstrated by parking to the front of properties and also on the open green spaces (amenity space) to the front of properties. This has had a harmful effect on the street scene as it has created an environment where streets and open spaces have become dominated by car parking and has resulted in the loss of open space which contributes the character of the street scene. Houses that are set back from the road, such as in the Madan Road, Hartley Road and Ash Road areas offer pleasant green spaces, which contribute to the street scene and soften the impact of the built form on the street scene. Where necessary low wooden bollards have been placed to protect the amenity green space, but these areas which contribute to the street scene should be preserved.

Boundaries

The character of an area can be significantly affected by the boundary treatment used in development. The post war housing in the North-East and North-West area of the town provides examples where boundary treatment defines the open character of the locality. Low rise natural hedging retains a sense of openness and provides a soft edge to the development. Low level fencing of an open nature, such as post and rail, also retains the open character. There are also examples of unsympathetic boundary treatment (such as close boarded fencing) on the frontage of properties that does little to enhance the area. The increased use of unsympathetic boundary treatments has eroded the attractive open spacious nature to some of the estate developments.

Care must also be taken over boundary treatments in the rural areas of town, where the openness of the Green Belt is an integral part of the character of the countryside.

Lighting

It is important to ensure that there is no significant nuisance to the amenity of surrounding properties caused by light pollution. Whilst it is appreciated that security lighting is necessary in some situations, this type of lighting can be invasive, particularly in a residential area, and developers should look at ways to reduce light spill in these situations. Restraint of lighting affecting public areas and neighbouring residences should be required as a consideration in any new development.

New development

The variety of ages and styles of buildings can add to the character of an area and tell a story of its evolving history. This is evident in many of the areas of Westerham. The overriding aim for the town is that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area. Whilst there are examples of where old and new can sit comfortably together, new development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the immediate surrounding area.

The spacing between buildings offers relief to high-density development and reflects the setting of the town, which is surrounded on all sides by countryside. The topography of the town and its surroundings lends itself to views both into and out of town. This feature must be an important consideration for any new development.



Solar Panels and Wind Turbines

Whilst it is appreciated that small scale renewable energy generation options achieves improved energy efficiency, solar panels and wind turbines have the potential to impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. They can also appear unattractive or prominent in the street-scene and are not commonplace in the town. We would therefore expect the provision of renewable energy, where needed, to be appropriately located and to not be provided in a way that would harm the amenity of surrounding residents. As technology changes, it is expected that so many of the current installations may become obsolete and it is important that these do not remain in place if they are no longer required as they only result in clutter where it is not necessary.

Signage, Street Furniture & Lighting

Signage is necessary for retail and business properties and there are good and poor examples in the town. The quality of detailing in developments can strongly influence the character of the town. Therefore the quality of signage (including road signs) and street furniture should reflect the scale of development and enhance the character of the area.

Car Parking

Parking is a cause for concern in the town. Whilst it is accepted that there is demand for car parking for residential properties, car parking can create a cluttered environment and there are many examples of the loss of front garden areas and open space to parking. Attractive street scenes can be created and retained by careful consideration of parking areas for new development. This can include the integration of landscaping where possible to break up parking areas or by providing parking to the rear of developments keeping the street-scene open in character and less cluttered.

Paving & Driveways

There are many examples of front garden areas replaced with hardstanding, many of which have been constructed with impermeable materials. The use of inappropriate surface materials can have a harmful impact on the character of an area and also can hinder drainage resulting in an increase in flooding and associated water pollution.

Design guidelines

- BM1** New development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the immediate locality. Parking and cycle spaces should be provided to the most current County Council standards and particular care should be taken in regard to the design and layout of car parking when the development increases the number of car parking spaces required on the site. Traditional materials should be used where appropriate. (EN1 ADMP)
- BM2** The scale, proportion and height of extensions should respect the character of the existing building. Materials should match the existing building. (SPD Residential extensions)
- BM3** Extensions should be to the rear of existing properties and side extensions avoided where this would create a terracing effect, particularly where an existing gap is an integral part of the street scene. The pattern of gaps in a street scene should be maintained. Front extensions will not normally be encouraged. (SPD residential extensions)
- BM4** Loft extensions should not detract from the roof profile of the existing dwelling and should follow the vertical lines of existing doors and windows. Front facing dormers will not normally be supported. Flat roof dormers should be avoided unless they are a characteristic of the existing dwelling (SPD residential extensions)
- BM5** Flat roof extensions will not usually be supported where they are not sympathetic to the principal building form or would be harmful to the scale and character of the existing property. Pitched roofs should reflect the form, pitch and materials on the main building. (SPD Residential Extensions)

- BM6** Signs should only be erected where they are essential and they should be carefully designed to ensure their size, style and siting is not unsympathetic to the locality. Visual clutter should be avoided. (Kent Design Guide)
- BM7** Lighting should be designed in relation to the function of the area that is being lit to avoid unnecessary light pollution. There should be no harmful impact on privacy or amenity for nearby residential properties as a result of lighting on developments. (ADMP Policy EN6)
- BM8** Landscaping proposals should be an integral part of any new development and should respect the topography and character of the site. (ADMP Policy EN1)
- BM9** The loss of traditional boundaries (such as hedges) should be avoided. Boundary treatment which is not characteristic of the area will not generally be supported.
- BM10** In the post-war housing areas to the north-east and north-west of the town frontages should not be totally enclosed behind high boundaries (above 1 metre) in order to retain the open character of these areas, unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed boundary treatment would not harm the street scene. (SPD residential extensions)
- BM11** Solar panels should be located on the rear of the property rather than the principle elevation, where practicable. Wind turbines shall be carefully assessed in terms of their impact on amenity and sensitivity of the locality. (SPD residential extensions)
- BM12** Paving and driveways are encouraged to be constructed using permeable non-slip materials, sympathetic to the immediate area. (ADMP Policy EN1)
- BM13** Open green space retains the green infrastructure of the town. Where planning permission is required to introduce hardstanding/vehicle parking care should be given to incorporating these qualities.
- BM14** Parking for new developments is encouraged to be located at the side or rear of a property to protect the street scene. Exceptions to this will only be supported with the provision of acceptable soft landscaping to provide relief from large areas of hard standing to the front of properties or where it can be demonstrated that the provision of parking to the front of the property would not harm the street scene. (SPD Residential Extensions)

3.DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR CROCKHAM HILL AND THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction

Crockham Hill extends over a rural landscape between Westerham on the A25 and Edenbridge to the South. The earliest records document individual houses including those at Pootings Manor and Chartwell from the 14th and 15th Centuries. Crockham Grange was a medieval moated manor and the largest landowner remains the Squerryes Estate. All of the land outside of the village envelope is designated Metropolitan Green Belt and a significant proportion enjoys the additional protection of the AONB designation. Appendix 1 contains a map of the village.

Whilst the last retail shop and post office closed at the turn of the century the village is a thriving community with a locally owned pub, a primary school, church, and well-used community hall.

The whole area is popular with ramblers, hikers, cyclists and tourists with the area criss-crossed with secondary and tertiary roads, footpaths and bridleways.

Employment is scattered with a few light industrial units at Crockham Park, converted farm buildings on National Trust land, and farming as well as the National Trust's most popular national attraction Chartwell House.

A brief history of the village is attached at Appendix 2.



3.2 Landscape and Setting

Crockham Hill lies high on the south facing slopes of the Greensand Ridge, with long distant views over the fields and woodland of the Weald to the south, southeast and southwest. These views, highly valued by residents and tourists, are the most important feature of the

village.



The landscape adjoining the village is intimate and small scale. Winding lanes, springs, small sloping fields and copses join together to form the wooded tapestry of the Weald.

Farmland, whose use has changed over the years, provides the second most important landscape feature of the village. The fields and woods are valued by all as a green breathing space, establishing the village as an independent entity, separated from the urban areas of Edenbridge and Westerham.

The landscape plays an integral part in the village. It is the result of many centuries of evolution. The pattern of roads, tracks, field boundaries and hedgerows is firmly rooted in the past. These patterns of historic landscape should be maintained.

There has been limited new agricultural building in recent years. Careful location and screening can help reduce any negative visual impact that such buildings might otherwise have. Any new structures such as agricultural buildings, domestic stabling and field shelters should be of a scale sympathetic to other agricultural buildings in the area, except where there may be justification for larger buildings to meet farming requirements.



All the roads and lanes in Crockham Hill have separate individuality, and parts of each differ in character.



Crockham Hill is crisscrossed with footpaths, many following the minor roads and tracks, and giving hikers spectacular views over the Weald. Both footpaths and bridleways are the pedestrian arteries of the community, prized and used daily by the people of Westerham, Crockham Hill and its many visitors.

Two major footpaths – The Vanguard Way and The Greensand Way pass through the village.

The rural area of Crockham Hill provides a distinctive local vernacular and a legible network of public footpaths and bridleways that provide opportunities for long distance views across the Low Weald between woodland.

Design Guidelines

- CHLS1** All new development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the immediate locality in order to protect the distinctive landscape character of the Crockham Hill. The pattern of the historic landscape and the key views should be protected and enhanced. The key views currently identified are looking north from Marlpit Hill towards Crockham Hill and the Chart hillside and south from Hosey hill and Mariners hill across the valley (CS policy SP 1)
- CHLS2** Where planning permission is required, proposals for new agricultural buildings, stabling and field shelters should respond to the scale and height of other agricultural and equestrian buildings in the area and be closely related to existing farm buildings or other groups of buildings that are well screened from public view, unless justification is provided as to its location, scale and design. (Policy LT2 ADMP)
- CHLS3** Proposals for the location of temporary or permanent mobile homes or caravans will not be supported unless they have a proven need for agriculture or forestry and the siting is acceptable in terms of location, access, environmental and local amenity considerations (Policy GB6 ADMP)
- CHLS4** The rural character of the narrow lanes and footpaths, together with the street scene that adjoins them, should be maintained and the opportunity to extend public footpaths would be supported (Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment 2017)

3.3 Settlement Characteristics

Crockham Hill consists a number of roads and lanes, each displaying separate characteristics. The more significant roads/lanes are detailed below. There are a number of listed in the village.

Main Road - The B2026 bisects the village carrying fast flowing traffic between Edenbridge and Oxted; and towards the A25 and M25.

From the north the B269 (Kent Hatch Road) bends sharply and narrows between steep walled banks and there is an outstanding view of the church tower with the village and Weald.

On the east side of the road is a group of stone built terraced cottages and seven brick built, tile hung, sash windowed terraced houses. They are staggered down the hill, and form an attractive entrance to the church, school, and village hall on Church Lane.





Further down and on the west side, The Royal Oak public house and the row of stone built cottages form an attractive group of buildings. The cottages are of an attractive domestic scale with white windows and doors, and small front gardens. 1-9 Royal Oak Cottages; nos. 10 & 11 Cambridge Cottages and 1-4 Hillside represent the earliest row of terraced houses in the village.

These two groups of terraced houses are very good examples of local materials and architecture; they form distinctive village features of pictorial merit. Opposite the Royal Oak, on a gentle mound, is Willys at Heath; 16th century, stone built, Listed, and an important part of the village street-scene.

Leaving the village heading south, the road levels out with fields and several houses on each side, including the tiny hamlet of Rushetts. The land then rises to Marlpit Hill. Unlike the north, there is no well-defined southern entrance to Crockham Hill.

Goodley Stock comprises a road, running from the Greensand ridge and B269 to Westerham, and two private roads. Most of the houses were built in the early part of the 20th century. They have large wooded gardens from land originally purchased from the Squerryes estate. Goodley Stock faces thick woodland on the Squerryes estate on both sides, and has no views.

Kent Hatch is part of the B269, and runs along the Greensand ridge from the Surrey border as far as Smiths Lane, where it becomes Main Road. The dominant feature is Kent Hatch, a large red brick and tiled Edwardian house now converted into four dwellings. Several houses, including Crockham Hill Farm (Listed), are set in the hillside on the west of Kent Hatch. On the east side a lane leads over the Common, with numerous footpaths, to Larksfeld (Listed), The Warren, and to the imposing 1910 Red House, which has two cottages.



Church Lane is a very busy lane as it leads down to the Village Hall with parking for approximately 60 cars, to Crockham Hill Primary School, and to Holy Trinity Church. It is surrounded by rolling fields and beautiful views, and is also part of a footpath leading across Church Fields to Froghole.

Although all three buildings are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt, flexibility may be required, to accommodate changing needs of the community.



Hosey Common Road - The B2026 turns north towards Westerham. The road climbs round the historic landscape past Froghole Lane, before winding by one or two houses and thick woodland.

Froghole Lane - Formerly a cart track winding between the steep side of Mariners Hill and the bowl of Froghole, the lane curves between indigenous hedges and steep banks, and crosses Jacobs Ladder – a track which climbs up to National Trust fields, and drops as a stepped footpath to Close Farm Lane. The whole of Froghole Lane is a footpath.



Froghole Farm and Froghole Oasts consist of quintessentially Kentish materials and design. They are very good examples of local materials and architecture and form a distinctive village feature, which is of pictorial merit.

Smiths Lane runs north from Main Road and the small Village Garden, and sloping steeply, again joins the main road a quarter of a mile highest is central to the village. From the lane you can walk to School, Hall or pub.

Oakdale Lane is part of the Vanguard Way footpath; this popular short lane has extensive views south and west, and forms an eclectic mix of house styles.



The eight houses just inside Oakdale Lane form a blend of differing ages and styles, and are good examples of local materials and architecture; they form distinctive village features.

Pootings Lane - A mile southeast from Crockham Hill, on Wealden clay is the hamlet of Pootings. The character of building is different with small white bungalows, white painted brick, white weatherboard, and grey slate roofs.



The terraced and single weather boarded houses between Meadow Cottage and Willowdene form a homogeneous street-scene of Kentish local style. They are good examples of local materials and architecture and they form distinctive village features.



Chartwell is listed for its historical importance as the home of Winston Churchill, as is its forecourt brick and tiled wall. It is a building of significance in the Parish and is a well-visited tourist attraction.

Design Guidelines

- CHSC1** Any proposed development shall retain and should enhance the distinctive character of the village and will be in keeping with the character of the immediate locality. The village will be protected from inappropriate development. (CS Policy SP1)
- CHSC2** Extensions to the rear of existing properties are preferred as they have less of an impact on the street scene. Any extensions to the side and rear of properties are encouraged to be in keeping with the scale and design of the property and not to dominate the existing property or site. Front extensions will only be permitted where they would not have a harmful impact on the existing property or street scene (SPD Residential Extensions)

3.4 Buildings and Materials

Crockham Hill's buildings are very traditional.



Examples of local materials and traditional design features can be seen readily in the village such as the wooden framed windows and use of stone in the images above and below.



The village centre and the few pre-1900 outlying farmhouses are of local golden brown sandstone/ragstone with chip stone pointing, slate or clay tile roofs large brick chimneys and small casement windows.

There have been new buildings or extensions, which follow these examples; their scale is domestic with a maximum of two storeys, small upright windows in proportion to larger wall areas. House roofs are steep-pitched (47-50 degrees) and often tiled with one-third/one-quarter hips at the ridge and tile-hung upper walls. Dormers have been kept small, and where

renovation or extension has been carried out, brick chimneys have been retained.

New Development

The aim of the VDS is to guide development so that it retains and reinforces the village's special qualities. Crockham Hill is not within a settlement boundary. Green Belt and AONB policies apply throughout the village to new development.

It is important that Crockham Hill retains its distinctive rural character. The majority of homes in the village offer a spacious setting allowing for a soft buffer to the open areas of countryside within which the village sits.

Walls

Brick and local ragstone are the most common building materials in the village. Upper floors often have timber framing with tile hanging matching the roof tiles. White painted rendering is used on the older terraced houses, and white painted weatherboard is prevalent in Pootings. There should be respect for local building materials and colours.





Roofs

Crockham Hill's roofs are mostly covered in Kent peg or nib tiles and slate. Some have the traditional Kentish 'barn hip' and gablet detail at the gable ends. Flat or shallow pitched roofs are not typical in the village and it is considered that they could introduce a discordant look to the village.



Windows

Traditional windows are the building element that most defines the age and character of a house. Traditionally being of wood, they are most exposed to rotting, and are increasingly being replaced by windows of unsuitable material, design, and detail.

Plastic windows have sections, which are almost twice as thick as wood, and coarsen the appearance whenever they are used. Wood or aluminium are considered to retain the original appearance to a greater degree.

Doors

Poorly maintained timber doors can rot. By replacing those with new doors of poor design and detail, the appearance of the house can be drastically altered. New doors should always match the original dimensions and scale of the door of the house as far as practicable.

Extensions

In general, extensions within the village have been sympathetically carried out. However, one or two recent exceptions now stand as permanent reminders of the attention to detail required. Apparently insignificant or small additions may contribute to the steady erosion of the area as a whole.



Dormer and loft windows

Loft extensions have been a popular development in many older properties with an additional 'spare' room with a small, rear dormer, created within the available loft space. When new dormer windows face the street the appearance may be of a third floor to the property. Front facing dormers are not considered to be typical of the village and could appear out of keeping particularly where there are no existing dormers in the front elevations in the street.



Solar Panels & Wind Turbines

Solar panels and wind turbines have the potential to have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and could also potentially have a harmful effect on a property within a sensitive location. They can also appear unattractive in the street-scene and are not a typical feature in the village.

Car Parking

Small village front gardens are an essential part of the character of a rural village. It is accepted that car ownership is increasing which creates a demand for additional parking. However the loss of front gardens to parking can have a harmful effect on the street-scene.

Boundaries

There is evidence of a historic pattern of field boundaries and hedgerows in the village that have been maintained. Well-maintained mixed and hawthorn hedgerows currently commonly bound the agricultural land bordering the local roads.



There have been examples in recent years of high close-boarded fencing and electric gates on new homes. These have an urbanising effect on the area, and give the properties an isolated and appearance and alienate the community.

Signage, Street Furniture and Lighting

There is no street lighting in Crockham Hill, which reflects its rural setting. Many properties have their own external lighting, such as security or porch lights, and these can be helpful to visitors. Such lighting should be carefully placed and angled, and not so powerful that they are detrimental to neighbouring properties.

Most aspects of signage, street furniture and lighting are the responsibility of Kent County Council.

There are examples of cluttered street furniture and signs that do not enhance the area.



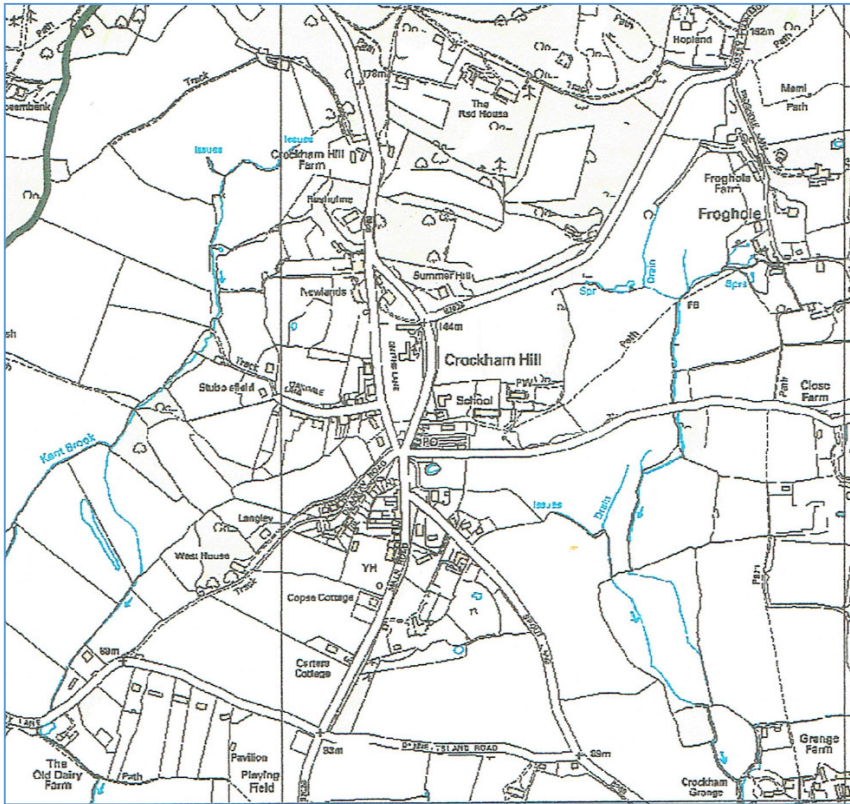
Design Guidelines

- CHBM1** New development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the immediate locality. It should also respect the character and distinctiveness of the village. Traditional materials should be used wherever possible. (ADMP EN1)
- CHBM2** The loss of traditional boundaries (such as hedges) should be avoided. Boundary treatment which is not characteristic of the area is not supported.
- CHBM3** Flat roof extensions will not be supported where they are not sympathetic to the principal form or would be harmful to the scale and character of the existing property. Pitched roof extensions should reflect the form, pitch and materials of the existing roof of the property. (SPD Residential Extensions)
- CHBM4** Solar panels should be encouraged to be located on the rear of the property rather than the principle elevation, where practicable, and only where there is no impact on amenity or harm to the AONB. Wind turbines shall be carefully assessed in terms of their impact on amenity and sensitivity of the locality. (SPD Residential Extensions)
- CHBM5** Loft extensions should not detract from the roof profile of the existing dwelling and should follow the vertical lines of existing doors and windows. Front facing dormers, which would be out of keeping with the street scene, will not normally be supported. Flat roof dormers should be avoided unless they are a characteristic of the existing dwelling (SPD residential extensions)
- CHBM6** The doors and windows of extensions should normally match the proportions, design and materials of the original building and follow the main lines of the existing openings. (SPD Residential Extensions)
- CHBM7** All new developments should provide at least minimum vehicle parking in accordance with the current Kent County Council parking standards in order to provide appropriate levels of parking provision specific to local circumstances. (ADMP policy T2)
- CHBM8** Lighting should be designed in relation to the function of the area that is being lit to avoid unnecessary light pollution. Effort should be made to considerably reduce the harmful impact on privacy or amenity for nearby residential properties or on the AONB as a result of lighting on developments. (ADMP Policy EN6)

Appendix 1 Crockham Hill Village Centre map

Appendix 2 Brief history of Crockham Hill

Appendix 1 –Crockham Hill Village Centre Map



Appendix 2 Brief History of Crockham Hill

With good drinking water, firewood, building materials, and a south facing elevated position, Crockham Hill must have been lived in for thousands of years. The earliest record though is the Iron Age Hill Fort east of Goodley Stock. The Roman Road from London to Lewis lies $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the centre of the village, and passes through the centre of Edenbridge.

One of the earliest records is of the 1596 Great Landslide when land to the south of Hosey Common Road subsided to form the bowl of Froghole.

There are documentary records of a number of the first houses – Pootings Manor (c1375), and Chartwell (14th century).

When medieval strip farming was superseded by enclosure in the 16th century, large estates and farms were formed. Old Dairy Farm in 1547; Mariners (1561) owned 430 acres; Close Farm had 196 acres in 1563; Hurst and Moat Farms were formed in the 1600s; Crockham Grange (Spout Farm) was built on a medieval moated site, and Houses like Spark Haw and Wellscoopers (1600), and Buttles Steps were also recorded. The Old House was a hostelry in 1618. The largest estate was Squerryes, still after nearly 300 years owned by the Warde family.

George Warde decided his local farm workers needed a church in Crockham Hill to save the long walk to St Mary's in Westerham. George Horseman cut local Chiddingstone stone at Church Cottages, and built Holy Trinity in 1842. The school followed soon after.



The original stone built houses of the village were clustered round a Toll House next to The Royal Oak, on the west side of the main road. In 1867 the Turnpike act led to the removal of this unpopular tollgate.

Agriculture changed in 1860 with the collapse of corn prices, and farmers started growing hops – and building oast houses. There are at least 14 of these tall circular or square buildings in the village. Wooden Cottages were built along the old drovers track at Pootings.

The fully agricultural nature of the village changed dramatically with the advent of the

railways in Oxted (1845), Sevenoaks (1862), and Westerham in 1882. Larksfield was built in the mid 1850s by Harriet Yorke, the sister of Octavia Hill. By the 1870s larger houses were being built, many of them sited on the Greensand ridge to make the most of the spectacular views. First Oakdale in 1870, Heath House in 1873, Lewins in 1876, Kent Hatch in 1904, and The Red House in 1910.

One of the most important developments for Crockham Hill was the formation of the National Trust. Octavia Hill had known the area for years, and after purchasing part of Toys Hill in 1898, Mariners Hill was bought, preserving wonderful views forever. Further purchases followed. Octavia Hill was buried in Crockham Hill in 1912.

The sale of Mariners with 240 acres in 1902 led to more houses on the ancient cart track round Froghole. High Quarry was built in 1905; Bossets, Acremead, and Little Court in 1910/11. The sale of more estates followed. Gradually houses have been built along a number of existing lanes running east and west off the Main road. Farmhouses and oasts became private dwellings, and pairs of farm cottages single houses.

In the twenties and thirties, individual houses with large gardens were built along Goodley Stock, Close Farm Road and Dairy Lane;

In 1934 the first social housing appeared in the form of brick houses built in five pairs next to the Royal Oak, to give better accommodation to families living in cramped farm cottages. Three more pairs followed after 1945, then flats for older people in the 50s and three pairs of bungalows for the elderly in the 60s.

Piped water was brought to Crockham Hill in the 1920s; gas has never been installed, and much of the outlying parts of the village are without main drainage.

In 1946 cricket and football pitches were formed on the new War Memorial Playing Field. The Village Garden was donated. In 2009 the School playing fields were leased, and fenced.

The 1947 Planning Act established the Green Belts, which have preserved all the countryside around Crockham Hill. The declaration of the whole area as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has further enhanced the protection of local countryside.

By 2000 the last of five or six shops in the centre of the village had been made into a house. The very popular school was expanded three times in the last 25 years; the ex-aircraft hangar, which the WI owned, was removed, and a new Village Hall (on a different site) was built in 1992; and has since been expanded.