

Shoreham Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2019

This appraisal for the Shoreham Conservation Area supports the duty of Sevenoaks District Council to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

For details of the methodology employed in assessing the conservation area and preparing the appraisal, see the "Sevenoaks District Conservation Areas: an introduction to appraisals revised in 2019".

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1.0 Overview of Shoreham Conservation Area

Shoreham is an historic village in west Kent with a population of 2,041 (2011 census). It is four miles to the north of Sevenoaks and 19 miles south-east of central London. The village lies in the valley of the River Darent, giving it a sense of remoteness, even though the M25 is only a mile to the west. It is connected to Sevenoaks and London by the railway, which first opened in 1862. Shoreham lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Conservation area boundary

The Shoreham Conservation Area encompasses the whole of the historic village. Twentieth-century housing developments within and on the edges of the village are excluded from the conservation area.

Designation history

Shoreham Conservation Area was formed in 2019 by merging the Shoreham High Street and Church Street and the Shoreham Mill Lane Conservation Area. They were both designated in 1972 and subsequently extended in 2006.

Topography and geology

The topography of the village has been shaped by the River Darent, which flows through a gap in the North Downs, north of Sevenoaks. The High Street runs along the lower slope of the west side of the river valley. The rest of the village lies below, with the river meandering through it. Church Street connects the High Street to the bridge over the river and on to the parish church. The presence of the river and the views across the valley are crucial to Shoreham's sense of place and its special character.

The village sits on the band of chalk which forms the North Downs and in which flints


abound. As a result, there is no good local building stone, but much use is made of flint. Nearby are areas of clay which provided materials for making roof tiles and bricks.

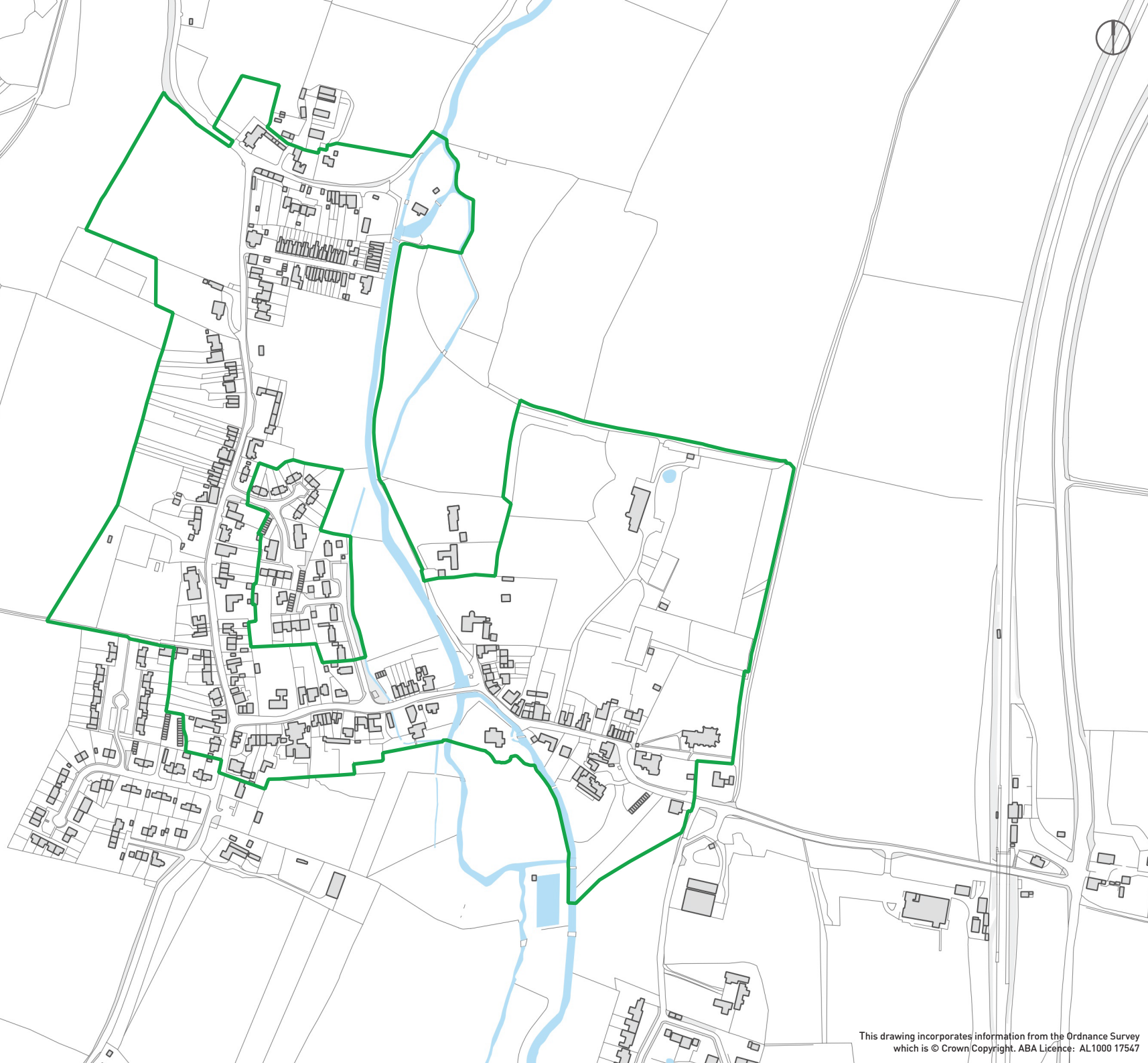
Summary of special interest

Shoreham is an attractive riverside village in a beautiful landscape setting. The main features of the special historic and architectural interest of Shoreham Conservation Area are:

- Rich in historic buildings comprising mainly small rural vernacular houses, including some late-medieval timber-framed houses, a fine parish church and good examples of Georgian domestic architecture;
- Predominantly a linear settlement developed along two main streets: High Street and Church Street;
- A well-defined boundary which preserves the village's rural character, with only limited twentieth-century expansion;
- A strong visual connection with the enfolding landscape of the Darent valley, made possible by its topographical position and the loose texture of its built form;
- Parish church tower provides an important landmark from vantage points within the valley;
- Townscape has a varied but harmonious character, thanks to the consistently small scale of buildings and the continued use of traditional Kentish materials and architectural styles;
- The area around the site of the old paper mill illustrates the impact of an industry of traditional importance to Kent;
- Traditional craftsmanship embodied in original building materials and architectural features.

Shoreham Conservation Area

 Boundary



2.0 Historical development

Beginnings

Shoreham developed as a farming community from the fifth century onwards, based around a ford over the River Darent and confined by the thickly wooded ridges of the valley. The earliest surviving building is the parish church, which has some fabric dating back to the early twelfth century.

Middle ages to 1800

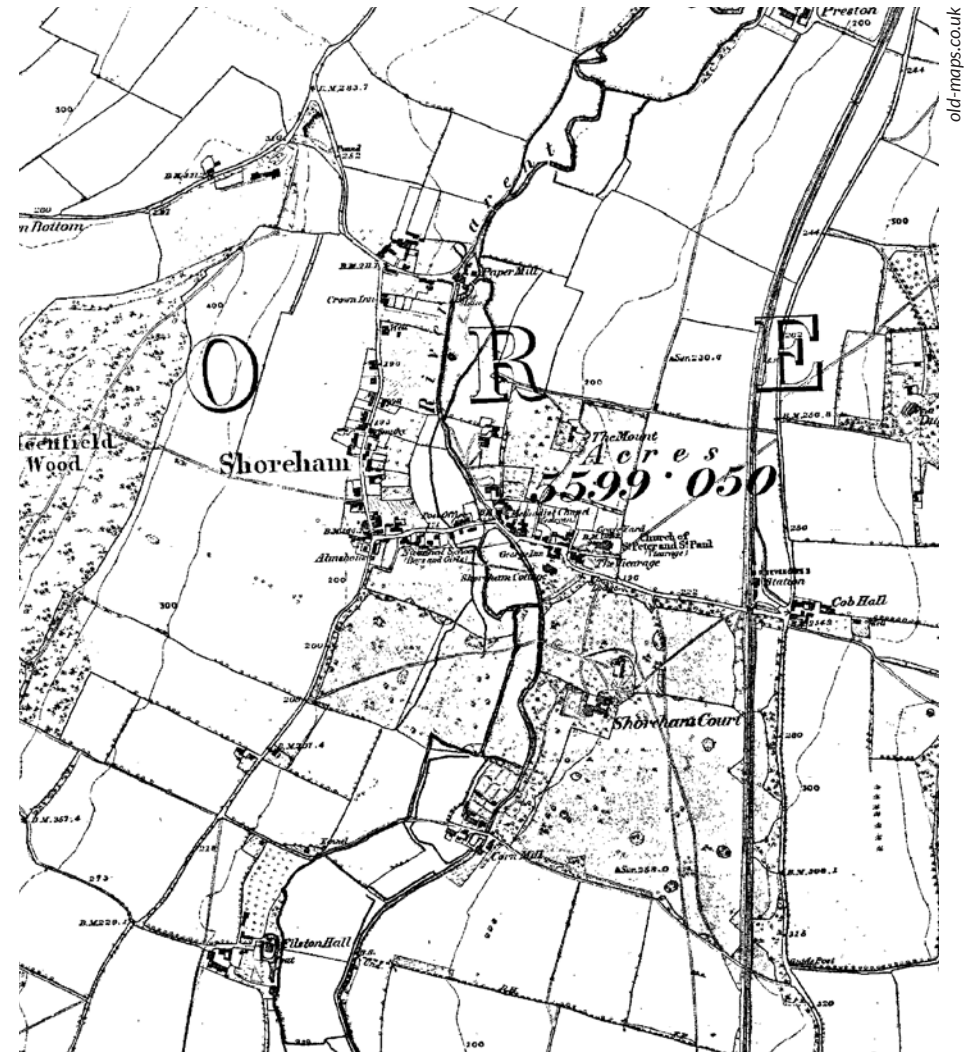
Growth of the village was very slow before the nineteenth century and it was concentrated in the area between the church and the river. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century several substantial timber-framed houses were built, including Ye Olde George Inn (originally a private house), Ivy Cottage and Tudor Cottage, and part of what is now Chapel Alley Cottages. In the same period the south aisle, south porch and rood screen were added to the church. A paper mill was established to the north of the village in 1690, taking advantage of the clean, fast-flowing water of the River Darent. Only the Mill House survives of what was once a large complex of mill buildings.

Nineteenth century

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the village was still an isolated agricultural community, poorly connected by road to the rest of Kent. Over the course of the century, however, the population almost doubled (from 828 in 1801 to 1,515 in 1901). The expansion included the construction of the Methodist chapel behind the Rising Sun (1836; no longer in use), a substantial mansion for the Mildmay family at Shoreham Place (1838; demolished 1950s) and the school (1841).

Impact of the railways

The railway arrived in 1862, on a new line between Sevenoaks and Swanley, connecting to an existing line into London. This boosted the local economy,



1871 edition of the Ordnance Survey

making it easier to transport agricultural produce and paper from the mill. On the back of his expanding profits, the mill owner, George Wilmott, built The Mount as his home in 1869. The railway also brought visitors into the area and it became popular with walkers and cyclists. Despite the increase in population, only one new street was developed, Crown Road, which was laid out in 1869 and developed with houses for the workers in the paper mill. In the High Street and Church Street a few new houses were added, increasing the density of the village.

1900–1945

In the early twentieth century Shoreham was a busy place with six pubs (of which four survive), a laundry, a Post Office, a school, three forges, and several shops including a bakery, a grocer and a draper. As well as the parish church there was a Methodist Chapel in the High Street and the Baptist Chapel in Crown Road. Yet there was also a good deal of poverty in the village and several cottages had to be demolished as unfit for human habitation, for instance those on the site of Marne Cottages.

In 1920 the War Memorial cross was cut into the hillside above the High Street by the villagers themselves. New houses were built by the local authority to the south-west of the village, in Mesnes Way and Bowers Road. The paper mill closed in 1926 and most of the buildings were demolished in 1936. The village was bombed sporadically during the Second World War, the damage including the destruction of Town Field Cottages (on the site of 72–76a High Street) and the loss of most of the stained glass windows in the church.

Post-1945

The village expanded significantly after the Second World War, with new developments in Boakes Meadow, Forge Way, Palmers Orchard and Mildmay Place (all excluded from the conservation area) and individual houses on the High Street and on Church Street south-east of the bridge. Most of the shops and businesses have closed during the twentieth century and the buildings converted to residential use, although four of the pubs survive, helped by Shoreham's



A view of Shoreham in the early nineteenth century by Samuel Palmer

continued popularity with walkers and cyclists. There have been no major additions to the village in the twenty-first century.

Historical associations

The artist Samuel Palmer (1805–81) lived in the village for eight years in the 1820s and 30s, during which time he was visited by, among others, William Blake. He lived for some of that time at Water House (marked by a plaque) and is associated with a number of other buildings in the village. John Wesley (1703–91) visited Shoreham regularly during the incumbency of the Revd Vincent Perronet in the parish and preached at the parish church. Verney Lovett Cameron (1844–94), son of another Vicar of Shoreham, was the first European to cross Equatorial Africa from coast to coast (he is buried in the churchyard and subject of a fine painting in the church).

3.0 Architectural and built character

3.1 Spatial character

Shoreham is a good example of a linear settlement developed gradually over centuries. It can be summarised as follows:

- The village has been built up around a river crossing, in a linear fashion along two main streets – High Street and Church Street – with little backland development prior to the twentieth century;
- The buildings are all small in scale, creating a sense of openness;
- Most buildings are grouped in pairs or in small rows of three to six buildings;
- The streets – with the exception of Crown Road – meander, and rise and fall, revealing and concealing views as one moves along them;
- In Mill Lane, the High Street and Church Street west of the bridge, most houses stand parallel to the street behind small front gardens, with low boundary fences or walls;
- On Church Street east of the bridge the buildings mostly come right up to the pavement and there are fewer gaps between buildings, creating a greater sense of enclosure;
- Varied building lines and gaps between buildings allow views into the landscape beyond;
- Trees make a very important contribution, framing – and sometimes interrupting – views inside the conservation area, but also hiding the village in views from the surrounding countryside;
- Clearly defined village boundaries.



Contrasting areas of looser and denser texture

3.2 Building forms and details

The historic buildings of the conservation area are typically small, simple in design and without any glaring contrasts between them. They can be characterised as having:

- A simple rectangular plan form, mostly two rooms deep;
- One or two storeys, with some attic storeys;
- Most buildings are in small groups or pairs;
- Various forms of traditional pitched roof, mostly gabled or hipped;
- Unbroken roof slopes without dormers or rooflights;
- Timber-framed sash or casement windows under flat or segmental arches;
- Planked and panelled timber doors;
- Brick chimneys, often tall and prominent;
- Historic extensions or ancillary structures projecting at the rear;
- Some nineteenth-century shopfronts survive in what are now domestic properties.



Simple building forms



Unbroken roof slopes



Hipped roofs



Historic ancillary buildings



19th-century shopfront



Tall brick chimneys

3.3 Architectural styles

The village buildings reflect a number of architectural styles. The predominant styles are:

- Kentish vernacular: a style characterised by the use of locally available materials that reflect local custom and building tradition. Characteristic features within Shoreham include timber frame walling, flint walling, tile hanging, clay tiled roofs and casement windows;
- 'Polite' Georgian domestic architecture, including facades added to earlier buildings, characterised by Flemish bond brickwork, stucco rendered elevations, sash windows and classical doorcases;
- Nineteenth-century Neo-Tudor;
- Victorian semi-detached and terraced mill workers' cottages in Crown Road;
- Vernacular revival houses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Kentish vernacular



Kentish vernacular



Neo-Tudor



Georgian domestic



Vernacular revival



Victorian workers' cottages

3.4 Traditional building materials

The use of a limited palette of traditional building materials which are characteristic of west Kent give the conservation area much of its special interest.

Earlier buildings are constructed of the materials that would have been readily available locally, while the late nineteenth-century interest in vernacular architecture led to a revival in historic styles, using a similar palette. The arrival of the railway allowed a wider range of materials from further afield to be used from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

The following materials all contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Pre-1800

- Some rubble walling is to be found in the church and Ye Olde George Inn;
- Timber-framed structures, dating to the fifteenth, sixteenth and early-seventeenth century;
- Tile-hanging, white-painted weatherboarding or plaster covering timber frames;
- Mathematical tiles, probably eighteenth-century, on the upper part of the east wall of Ivy Cottage, Church Street;
- Plain clay tile roofs, historically peg tiles, which have been the typical roof covering in Shoreham since the late middle ages;
- Eighteenth-century facades of locally hand-made orange to red bricks laid in Flemish bond, often patterned with blue headers;
- Flint used in combination with brick.



Rubble stone and timber frame



Timber frame



Tile-hanging and clay tile roofs



Mathematical tiles



Flemish bond brickwork



Brick and flint

Nineteenth and early-twentieth century

- Imported white and yellow bricks used at first in high status buildings and later more widely;
- Tile-hung upper storeys and red brick on vernacular revival buildings;
- Flint, used for houses and for the Victorian restorations of the parish church;
- Roughcast walls on early twentieth-century cottage-style houses, e.g. Marne Cottages, Church Street.



Yellow brick



Tile-hanging and red brick



Flint and brick



Roughcast and red brick

3.5 Boundaries and streetscape

A characteristic feature of the conservation area, which contributes strongly to its special interest, is the number of historic garden boundaries, especially on the High Street and the western part of Church Street. These are typically low and enclose small front gardens. Many modern boundaries also follow historic precedents and thereby contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

The most typical historic materials used are:

- Brick-and-flint walls;
- Wooden palings;
- Iron railings.

The conservation area is also notable for the scarcity of road markings and traffic signage, which contributes to their rural character.

There is very little street furniture contributing to character, except for a K6 telephone box on Forge Way.

Road and pavement surfaces are generally tarmac, with a mixture of granite and concrete kerbs, and as such do not make a strong contribution.



Brick-and-flint walls



Wooden palings



Iron railings



Unmarked roadway



Brick-and-flint walls



Brick wall and railings

3.6 Heritage assets, positive contributors and detractors

The buildings and structures of the conservation area contribute in different ways to its overall character and appearance, some positively (positive contributors including listed buildings), others negatively (detractors). The contributions of individual elements are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

Positive contributors

The conservation area contains a large number of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, all of which add to its architectural and historic interest. The extent of a building's contribution to the character and appearance of the area is not limited to its street elevations but also depends on its integrity as an historic structure and the impact it has in three dimensions. Rear elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards.

- *Listed buildings (designated heritage assets)*. Buildings or structures that have been designated by national government as having special historic or architectural interest at a national level. For further details, see <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/>
- *Positive contributors (non-designated heritage assets)*. These are unlisted buildings that help to shape the character and appearance of the conservation area. Some buildings may have suffered from unsympathetic alteration but could be restored to their original appearance relatively easily. A checklist for identifying positive contributors in a conservation area is given in the Historic England guidance *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2018).

Detractors

Some elements of a conservation area may be out of character due to, for example, their scale, use of materials or the way they relate to neighbouring buildings. These are identified as detractors.

3.7 Character Zones

Four zones of discernibly different character can be identified within the conservation area, based on their spatial character and architectural qualities, historical development and the contribution they make to the conservation area.

The features and individual characteristics of each zone that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area are summarised below. The boundaries of the Character Zones are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal:

Character Zone 1: High Street, Church Street west of the bridge, and Mill Lane

- Loose texture, with buildings standing mostly back from the street behind small front gardens and gaps between buildings;
- Open feel to the High Street because it stands on the sloping side of the valley;
- View west along Church Street as it rises up to meet the High Street, with the range of hills behind, is particularly attractive and characteristic;
- Many well-maintained front gardens, bounded by low walls, hedges or fences;
- A small number of modern buildings, which due to their modest scale and simple design do not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- At the entry from the north the historic boundary between village and open countryside is well preserved;
- Oxbourne House plays an important part in the townscape by providing a 'full stop' at the end of the village in views from the south;
- Mill Lane retains the character of a small rural lane, providing the transition between the village to the south and open countryside to the north.

Important views: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, A, C (see [Interactive map](#) for location of views)



Character Zone 2: Church Street east of the bridge

- A denser texture than Character Zone 1, with most houses and boundary walls built right up to the pavement or road;
- A series of more open spaces: the churchyard, the 'village square' in front of Ye Olde George Inn, the area by the war memorial and the triangle of land in front of Water House;
- The tightness of buildings against the street and the fact that the ground is flat means that the surrounding landscape is generally less of a presence than in Character Zone 1. An exception is the view looking westwards over the bridge to the hills in the distance and the war memorial cross (currently obscured);
- Entry to the village from the east; the built-up area of the village is still well-defined, with open fields giving way immediately to the boundary walls of the Old Vicarage and the Lodge on either side;
- A fine run of Georgian brick facades, from Bridge Cottage round to Little Record.

Important views: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, A, B, C (see [Interactive map](#) for location of views)



Character Zone 3: Crown Road

- New development of the 1870s, so less varied in age of buildings;
- A straight road tightly enclosed to both sides by pairs and terraces of nineteenth-century workers' cottages;
- No pavement;
- Due to the topography, views are channelled east over the valley;
- Distinct in having a river frontage, composed of 24 Crown Road and 1-8 Riverside Cottages;
- The most visible part of the conservation area from vantage points across the valley, due to relative lack of tree cover;
- Separated from the main built-up part of the village by the allotments.

Important views: 7, A, C, D (see [Interactive map](#) for location of views)



Character Zone 4: Open spaces

- Largely grassed areas with belts of trees around their edges, the exceptions being the Allotments and the grounds of The Mount, the latter cultivated as a vineyard;
- Views of the rear of buildings, which are generally less well-preserved than the fronts;
- Openness, greenery and mature trees provided by the open spaces significantly contribute to the rural character of the village and its setting;
- Important role in defining the shape of the village, preserving its historic form as a largely linear settlement crossing the flood plain of the River Darent;
- Allotments were the former common land of the village and define the historically detached nature of the Mill Lane/Crown Road area.

Important views: 6, 10, A (see [Interactive map](#) for location of views)



4.0 Views

Views make an important contribution to our ability to appreciate the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Three types of view have been identified, along with examples of each type. These are mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal. Such a list of views cannot be definitive, but illustrates the nature of views that are important to Shoreham Conservation Area.

Since there are no architectural set-pieces in the conservation area, the important views, with one exception, have come about by chance and combine the natural and the man-made in an attractive fashion.

The exception is the view from the war memorial by the bridge up to the war memorial cross on the hill which was consciously designed and is described on the war memorial's inscription. The view is currently obscured by tree growth, even in Winter.



Townscape views within the conservation area which include a mix of building types and materials and give a sense of the spatial character and architectural quality of the village. Trees play an important part in these views, but are sometimes intrusive (Views 1–3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14–17).



Contextual views which look out to the landscape beyond the conservation area and give an understanding of its topography and rural setting (Views 4–7, 10, 13).



Scenic views from outside the conservation area, which take in the village as a whole, together with its surrounding landscape and help to appreciate its rural setting and well-defined boundary (Views A, B, C and D).

5.0 Open space assessment

The large amounts of open space within and around the conservation area make a strong contribution to its character and appearance. The topography of the Darent Valley is vitally important to the character of the conservation area, both in the hills that rise above the village and in the water meadows by the river as it flows through the village. Open space enables an understanding and appreciation of the topography and preserves the linearity of its built form.

The extent of the contribution of individual parcels of open space depends on the way they are experienced. Hence, those which are visible in views from the main streets of the conservation area, or from the footpaths around the village make the greatest contribution.

Open space is defined as common land, farmland, countryside and recreational spaces (including allotments, school grounds, churchyards and cemeteries). Private gardens and private car parks are excluded.

The contributions of individual parcels of land are shown on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

Open space inside the conservation area

- The Allotments allow views eastwards across the valley from the High Street and preserve part of the water meadows in the heart of the village;
- The watermeadow to the south of the Allotments is prominent in the view over the village from the war memorial. The trees in the watermeadow provide the backdrop to many views within the conservation area;
- The land behind the High Street on the west side, including the Recreation Ground, is largely hidden from the rest of the conservation area and trees prevent any appreciation of it as an open space in longer views;
- The Mount vineyard helps to define the edge of the village in views over the valley and its trees provide the backdrop to many views within the conservation area.

Open space outside the conservation area

- The enclosure provided by the sides of the valley is an important aspect of the character of the conservation area and the ability to see the hills in long views from Church Street and between buildings from the High Street is fundamental to Shoreham's sense of place. The ability to see the 1914–18 war memorial cross on the hill from the war memorial within the village is particularly important to its historic significance and this view should be reinstated;
- Open space provides the foreground and background to scenic views of the village, from footpaths and from the railway, defining the edges of the village and creating a beautiful setting. The ability to see the church with fields behind and in front of it is particularly important.

6.0 Condition and issues

The character and appearance of the conservation area are generally well-preserved. There are, however, some issues which affect it and should be addressed in its ongoing management.

- Loss of front gardens for parking and the loss of front boundary walls, fences etc.;
- Because the houses are generally small, there is considerable pressure for extensions, which would detract if they were not of appropriate scale and materials;
- Over-scaled new buildings are harmful, especially in views from vantage points across the valley;
- Small porches have been added to many houses; some are of poor design, or are out of character for the host building and others disrupt the unity of a terrace or other grouping;
- The designed view from the war memorial to the cross on the hill is obscured by intervening tree growth;
- Plastic windows and doors, which are alien and unsympathetic materials for historic buildings and therefore detract from their character;
- Parking on the street and in front of houses is visually intrusive and detracts from the historic character and appearance of the streets;
- Lack of street lamps and limited amounts of traffic signage and road markings help to preserve the character of the conservation area and are prized by local people.



Obscured view from the war memorial



Loss of unity of a terrace of houses due to later additions

7.0 Management recommendations

Sevenoaks District Council has a statutory duty to review the management of conservation areas from time to time. The following recommendations have emerged from the assessment of the conservation area in Shoreham made in the preparation of this appraisal.

Guide for owners and residents on the effects of conservation area designation

Recommendation

Sevenoaks District Council will issue guidance about what it means to own a building in a conservation area and to encourage stakeholders to take an active part in the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

Conservation area designation brings with it additional responsibilities for owners and occupiers due to increased planning controls and particular requirements for materials and detailing in works to buildings. These are often outweighed by the benefits of living in an area of architectural integrity and traditional character, which people appreciate and which is often reflected in higher property values.

Design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings

Recommendation

When determining applications for planning permission, Sevenoaks District Council will take account of the 'Conservation Area Design Guidance' which is issued with the revised appraisals. The guidance will be reviewed periodically to maximise its effectiveness.

New buildings and alterations to existing buildings have an effect on the conservation area and Sevenoaks District Council will exercise its powers through the planning system to ensure that such changes preserve or enhance

the character and appearance of the conservation area. The design guidance has been drafted to help applicants in putting together their proposals. It will be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and revised if necessary.

Development in the setting of the conservation area

Recommendation

Applications for permission to develop in the setting of the conservation area should be determined with reference to the open space assessment in this appraisal.

The village's historic boundaries are still well-defined except at the south-west corner and as a result the conservation area has a well-preserved rural setting which contributes strongly to its character and appearance. Its position in a valley means that open space on the valley sides plays an important part in the way the conservation area is experienced. Development in its setting could therefore potentially have a harmful impact if erodes the village boundary where that is still well-defined or harms important views. As identified in this appraisal, different areas of open space around the conservation area make a different contribution to the character and appearance (see section 5.0).

Guidance

- Development on areas of existing open space which make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area is likely to have a harmful impact;
- Development in areas which make some contribution may be possible without causing harm, subject to design, siting, scale, density, choice of materials and retention of mature trees.

To help determine whether the impact of proposed development is harmful

to the character and appearance of the conservation area, applicants should undertake an assessment of the likely impact of their proposals on the built character of the area, on important views and on open space. Historic England's 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 3' (2nd edition 2017) provides advice on assessing impacts of development on the setting of heritage assets.

Enforcement

Recommendation

In implementing its Planning Enforcement Plan, Sevenoaks District Council should pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the special qualities of Shoreham Conservation Area.

The effective operation of the planning system depends on the ability to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with planning permission and to enforce against development carried out without planning permission. Sevenoaks District Council has adopted a Planning Enforcement Plan which sets out how it will respond to planning enforcement complaints. It can be downloaded from the Council's website: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069126/planning_enforcement

Conservation area boundary

Recommendation

Shoreham High Street and Church Street and Shoreham Mill Lane conservation areas should be combined to form the Shoreham Conservation Area and extended to include the properties on the High Street which are currently excluded, so as to preserve the integrity of the village as an historic settlement and provide consistency in future management.

The new boundary is mapped on the [Interactive map](#) at the front of this appraisal.

The historic village of Shoreham is currently divided into two conservation areas, yet there is strong historical and architectural continuity between the two areas. Although Crown Road (in the Shoreham Mill Lane Conservation Area) has a distinct built character, the rest of the Shoreham Mill Lane Conservation Area is in keeping with the general character of the larger Shoreham High Street and Church Street Conservation Area.

Given the linear nature of Shoreham's historic development it would aid protection of its character to include the whole of both sides of the High Street in the conservation area. Views up and down the street are important to the way it is experienced.

The properties that are recommended for addition to a single unified conservation area are nos. 40, 42, 44, 46–56, 72–76, 76a and 83, all in the High Street. Crown Field at the north end of the High Street is also recommended for inclusion.

- 40, 42, 46–56, 72–76, 76a High Street

These are all post-1945 domestic buildings, similar to others which are already included in the conservation area, such as nos. 7, 79 and 81. They fit within the general character of the conservation area, being modest in scale, simple in design and traditional insofar as they have masonry walls, pitched roofs and chimneys. Nos. 40–42 and 72–74 have tile kneelers, a nice detail in the Arts and Crafts tradition. The affordable homes (nos. 46–56) continue a tradition of social housing which stretches back to the almshouses of medieval origin on Filston Lane and constitutes an important part of the social and communal history of Shoreham. The front and side gardens to all these properties contribute to the character of the area, with the open fronted courtyard to the affordable housing development providing a small 'Green' and welcome breathing space within the streetscene.

- 44 High Street

No. 44 is an early twentieth-century, cottage-style building which uses a combination of brick and roughcast walling and clay-tiled roof seen elsewhere in the conservation area (e.g. at Marne Cottages). It stands behind a small front garden with a wooden paling fence in keeping with traditional boundary treatments in the conservation area. This building would therefore make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

- 83 High Street

No. 83 and its former coach house is one of a small group of larger houses dating from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century in Shoreham. It uses characteristic materials such as brick, tile-hanging and half-timbering with roughcast infill. Architecturally, and by way of its generous garden setting and the verdant bank towards the High Street, it makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

- Crown Field

Like the other open spaces in the conservation area, this piece of land contributes to important views, helps to define the boundary of the village and forms part of its rural setting. It affords a good view of the conservation area from the north (View 10, see section 4.0) and forms the backdrop to the Mill Lane area in scenic views of the village (Views C and D, see section 4.0). It has been assessed (see section 5.0) as making a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Article 4 directions

Recommendation

Article 4 directions should be made to protect historic boundary treatments and front gardens.

Article 4 (1) of the GDPO the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 allows for restrictions to be applied to permitted development rights, but the National Planning Policy Framework

(NPPF) requires that the purpose and extent of any restriction should be clear and justifiable.

As set out in this appraisal, an important part of the character of the conservation area is the way that many buildings are set back behind small front gardens, enclosed by low boundary fences, railings or hedges. The loss of both the boundary treatments and the gardens would weaken the enclosure to the street and have an urbanising effect and therefore be harmful. The area in front of 51 High Street, which has been paved over and has a wide gate for vehicular access, and the lay-by created to the front of 12 & 12a have been identified as detracting from the character of the conservation area.

In order to exercise control over such changes and protect the special interest and character of the conservation area, it is recommended that within the conservation area, planning permission should be required for development consisting of:

- The provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of a hard surface for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse as such (Class F of Schedule 2, Part 1 of the GDPO)
- The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure. (Class A of Schedule 2, Part 2 of the GDPO)

Public realm

Recommendation

Streets and public open spaces should be managed in a way that sustains their character and contribution to the conservation area.

A valued part of the character of the conservation area is the lack of street lamps and the relative scarcity of traffic signage, road markings, advertising and other forms of visual clutter. Maintaining this depends on public bodies more than on the owners of private property. Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Shoreham Parish Council should refer to Historic England's guidance in 'Streets for All' (latest edition 2018) in any public realm works they propose or carry out. For more information go to: www.historicengland.org.uk/publications/streets-for-all

Parking

Recommendation

Ways of encouraging use of public transport and possibilities for the provision of parking outside the boundaries of the conservation area should be explored.

Few houses have off street parking, so there is a lot of parking on the street – and pavement. This is visually intrusive and detracts from historic character of the streets and their picturesque appeal. The importance of front gardens and boundaries to the character of the conservation area means that their loss to provide off street parking would be even more harmful. Ways of encouraging use of public transport and possibilities for the provision of parking outside the boundaries of the conservation area should therefore be explored.

Village Design Statement

Recommendation

The Parish Council and local people could give consideration to whether a Village Design Statement should inform design of development in the village (including the parts which fall outside the conservation area), so as to extend community involvement and reinforce the design guidance issued with this appraisal.

Village Design Statements (VDS) are prepared by local people to guide new development in their villages (not restricted to the conservation area). They are used when assessing planning applications for development and other changes within villages. The statements have been adopted as informal guidance by Sevenoaks District Council and are used in assessing planning applications. Adopting a VDS for Shoreham would enable local people to express their views on design, both inside and outside the conservation area, and reinforce the design guidance issued with this appraisal.

Alan Baxter

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Reviewed by Richard Pollard

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