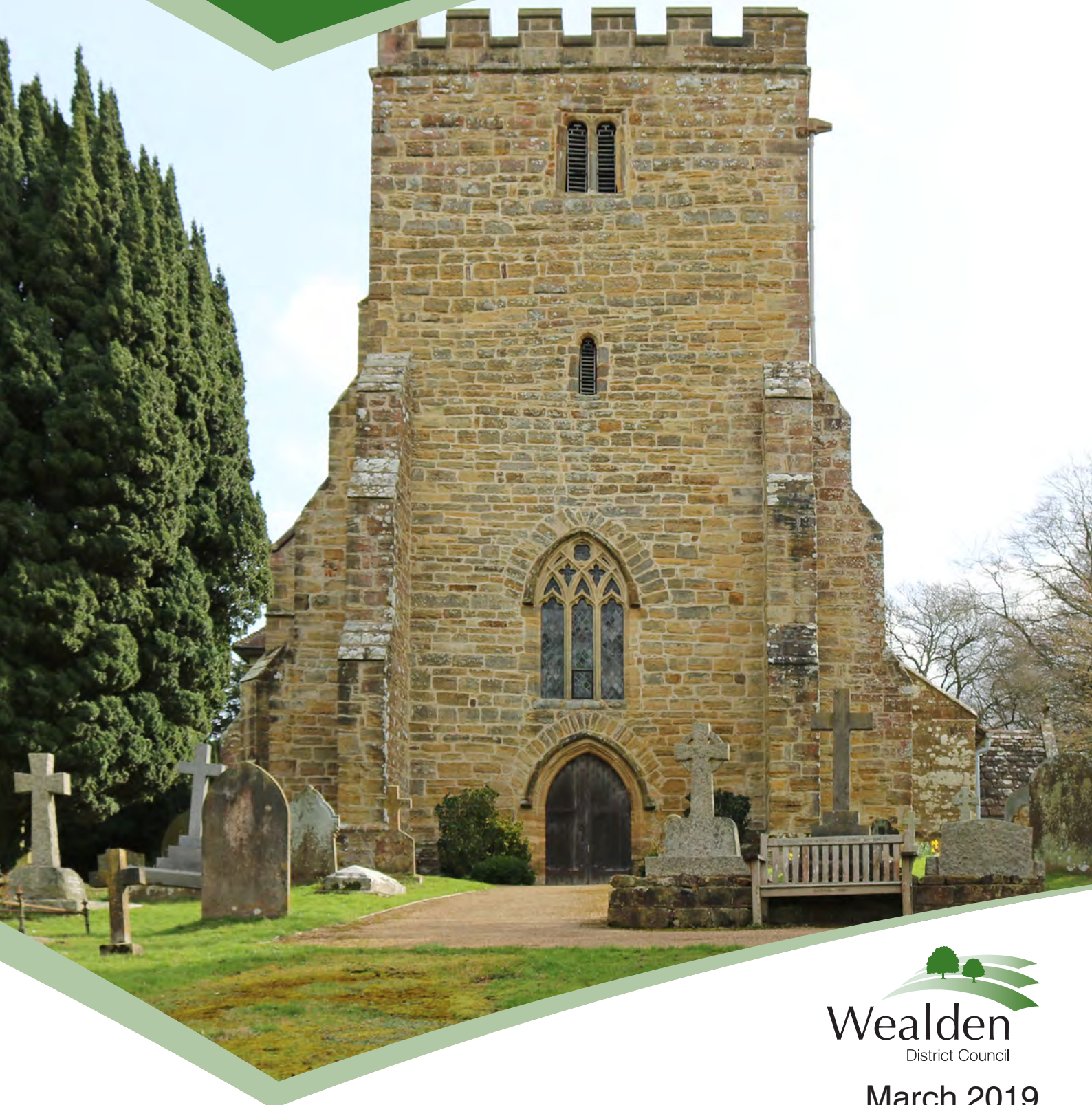


Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Withyham



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A copy of the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal can be downloaded from the Wealden website, http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Residents/Planning_and_Building_Control/Heritage/Conservation_Areas/Plan_Consevation_Areas.aspx or scan the QR code below with your smart phone.



If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, audio tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk.

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Overview

One of Wealden's principal assets is the high quality of its environment, including its historic environment and landscape. The District has a dispersed and varied settlement pattern within different landscape areas, with a number of small market towns, villages and hamlets. Each settlement has its own unique characteristics and functions, depending on its location and historical influences.

The Council also has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 to review existing conservation areas and determine whether any further parts of the District should be designated as conservation areas and, if appropriate, designate those parts accordingly.

In March 2017, the Council designated 33 conservation areas in the District. This was the result of reappraisal of existing conservation areas and the identification of new conservation areas as part of the Issues and Options Consultation on the Local Plan in Autumn 2015. The designated boundaries of the conservation areas are shown on the Proposals Maps of the Local Plan. Please see the Heritage pages on the Council's website for further details on the designation process.

Where areas of special historic and architectural interest have been designated as conservation areas, the Council has a duty to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, whilst understanding its significance, the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of the area, and ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. This takes the form of a character appraisal to identify and articulate the significance of each conservation area.

The Council will also formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This will include Local Plan policies, as well as a separate Management Plan for the conservation areas to set out how these areas should be managed and enhanced to guide new development within conservation areas and their setting.

Every conservation area has its own distinctive character and a strong sense of place. This character is made up from many elements, including the topography and setting, historic development, current uses and features, buildings and traditional materials, paths, lanes, hedges, trees, boundary treatments, place names and open spaces. Understanding this unique character, including the social and economic background, is the starting point for the future management of the conservation area, in order to conserve and enhance its significance in the future.

This character appraisal considers:

- The location and landscape setting of the area;
- Historic development;

- The character of the area in detail;
- Building materials and details;
- The contribution of the natural environment; and
- Issues having a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

This document is the draft conservation area character appraisal for Withyham conservation area, designated in March 2017.

The character appraisals have been prepared in conjunction with both national and local policies concerning the historic environment. The conservation area character appraisal documents will assist in planning decisions and will be used alongside the Council's 'Development Plan' (including any relevant adopted neighbourhood plan) and a future Conservation Area Management Plan (once published) when assessing planning applications.

This document is for:

- Anyone interested in commenting on the draft character appraisal for the Withyham conservation area;
- Anyone interested in finding out information about the area;
- Anyone proposing to carry out development within the area;
- Organisations responsible for any management within the area;
- Statutory providers and partnership authorities who may carry out work within the area; and
- Members and Officers of Wealden District Council.

1 Background

1.0.1 Withyham conservation area was originally designated in 1995. The conservation areas was re-designated with an enlarged boundary in March 2017. The reasons for amendment of the previously designated boundary of the conservation area are explained in the Background Paper accompanying the Autumn 2016 Consultation on the Wealden Local Plan. To view the document, along with further information on the process and how community involvement and public consultation was undertaken; how the input from the community was evaluated; and how it influenced the recommendations for designation of areas, please see the Conservation Area Background Paper 2018 and the Heritage pages on the Council's website.

1.0.2 The designated boundary of the conservation area, character areas map, detailed visual character appraisal map, and views map are at Appendix 1.

St. Michael's Church



Draft

2 Context

2.1 Introduction to the Conservation Area

2.1.1 Withyham is situated in the northwest of Wealden District, around four miles to the east of Forest Row, on the B2110. It is located in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the River Medway Valley and is located on the northern edge of Buckhurst Park. The village comprises two small cores of historic development - one around the Dorset Arms, and one to the southwest which includes the church.

2.1.2 The village sits within the wider Parish of Withyham which had an overall population of 2,854 in 2011. Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics. The economy of the village was formerly linked to the important iron industry in the area, with the Buckhurst Park Estate, and also with agriculture and associated service industries. However, the village today is primarily residential in character, but there has been relatively little development between the late medieval period and 20th century. There are few employment opportunities within the settlement, with the majority of working residents, around 78% Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, commuting to local service centres or further afield, outside of the District.

2.1.3 The village has community facilities comprising the church, village hall, and a public house. There is a cricket pitch within the boundary of Buckhurst Park to the southeast.

2.1.4 The village is notable for its links with the Sackville Family and latterly, the De La Warr Family who have owned Buckhurst Park to the south.

2.2 Setting

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that the setting of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, can contribute to its significance. In addition, Historic England have also confirmed that conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations ⁽¹⁾.

2.2.2 The setting of a heritage asset, including a conservation area, includes the surroundings in which it is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change seasonally, throughout the day and over time. It is not restricted to public views and one may not need to see a heritage asset to be within its setting. Setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the character, appearance and significance of a conservation area. A conservation area that includes listed buildings will also include and form part of their setting/s as well as the conservation area itself. In such positions, consideration should be given to the collective and overlapping settings and the role that they play in contributing to the significance of the heritage asset.

1 Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance, Historic England, April 2008, Principle 4.2

2.2.3 Historic England have published guidance on the setting of Heritage Assets, ⁽²⁾ which sets out an iterative approach to the assessment of setting. It is not the only approach that can be employed but it is a well-established approach that has stood up to examination at appeal including Public Inquiries. It is advised therefore that its advice and guidance should be referred to when considering development that may affect the setting of a conservation area, or any other designated heritage asset within or adjacent to its boundary.

2.2.4 This character appraisal considers the landscape setting of the conservation area, including important views into and out of the defined area; and the historical association between the conservation area and its setting, all of which contribute to the identified significance of this designated heritage asset. The broad approach to assessment of impact on setting of a heritage asset should be undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to complex or more straightforward cases, in line with guidance published by Historic England and based on local and national planning policy and the over-riding statutory legislation.

2.3 Topography and Landscape Setting

2.3.1 Withyham is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The settlement is situated approximately 6 miles by road to the north east of Crowborough, within the River Medway valley. It has historically developed in two small areas - one being focused on the present day Dorset Arms PH, and the other on St. Michael's Church. The village sits on the B2110 road corridor that links Groombridge with Hartfield and Forest Row. There are two access points off the B2110 into Buckhurst Park - one adjacent to the Dorset Arms PH, and the other adjacent to the Church and Rectory.

2.3.2 The High Weald, which encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald, is an area of countryside representing one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe.

2.3.3 The general appearance of the High Weald is one of a densely wooded landscape, which comprises a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along rolling ridges and within valleys. Along the ridge top roads briefly glimpsed extensive views open up, stretching away over rolling ridges, with church spires often present within the views between the ridges, and green valleys below. The mosaic of small hedged fields and sunken lanes, together with the wooded relief and comparative inaccessibility, provides a sense of remoteness which is rare within lowland English landscapes and creates a strong sense of place ⁽³⁾.

2.3.4 The character of this High Weald landscape is distinctive through the dispersed historic settlement pattern of farmsteads, hamlets and late medieval villages, largely sited on ridges or higher ground within the landscape as at Withyham. The church and adjacent Rectory at Withyham sit on a knoll or slight spur on the southern side of the Medway Valley, with tributaries of the river to the east and west.. Settlements were linked by a

2 The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning:3, Historic England, March 2015

3 Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, November 2014

network of largely intact ancient route ways (now often roads and rights of way) in the form of ridge top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These are often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees, hedgerows, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks ⁽⁴⁾.

2.3.5 The landscape of the Weald is characterised by thickly wooded areas, with some historic, often ancient, woodland used for coppicing, an essential rural industry that provided wythies for basket making, materials for wattle and daub construction, hurdles for animal enclosures and timber to create charcoal to serve the iron smelting and forging process.

2.3.6 The forested area was part of the 'Andreds weald', ⁽⁵⁾ and would have consisted of a mixture of heath, woodland and other habitats. Seasonal grazing may have taken place from early times, possibly the Iron Age, with the wooded area of the High Weald being used to seasonally fatten livestock, using the ancient droveways to move livestock (pigs and sheep) between grazing areas and to transport animals to markets and fairs.

2.3.7 Iron was the major industry in the High Weald, and first developed in the Iron Age and Roman periods, with evidence of 87 Romano-British iron production sites in Wealden District ⁽⁶⁾. The height of the iron industry in the area was predominantly in the 15th to 17th centuries when the Weald was the foundry of England and as many as one hundred forges and furnaces were in operation. This influence dominates the present landscape in the form of hammer ponds, furnace sites and evidence of charcoal-burning. There is evidence for possible hammer ponds and iron working in the landscape around Withyham, particularly in Buckhurst Park and at land at Duckings, a timber framed house to the north of the village and designated conservation area, built by the Iron Master, John Baker, in the mid 16th century.. It is understood that the first cannon was cast in East Sussex in 1543, at a furnace in Buxted. By 1574, there were at least 77 iron furnaces working in the Weald, but the ironmaking industry within the Weald had largely died out by the end of the 18th century.

2.3.8 Another local historic industry of note in the Weald is hop growing, which was introduced first by Flemish settlers in the 16th century, before becoming more prominent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Hops were brought back from Flanders in 1533, and had become a major industry by the 19th century. The most visible remains of the industry are the oast houses with their distinctive roundels and white cowls, which can be seen dotted around the High Weald.

4 Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, November 2014

5 derived from the Old English 'weald', meaning forest, and 'Andred' derived from Anderida, the Roman name for present-day Pevensey

6 East Sussex Historic Environment Record

High Weald Landscape

The history of the landscape is most evident in the:

- medieval pattern of fields, ridge top roads and radiating droveways;
- farmsteads, hamlets and late medieval villages on ridges or higher ground within the landscape;
- impact of the Wealden iron industry;
- Andreds weald forest used to seasonally fatten livestock, including the ownership and management of the Ashdown Forest;
- wealth of historic parks and gardens and historic buildings, including farmsteads;
- woodland industry, including coppicing and charcoal burning;
- formation of settlement linked to the practise of cultivating small parcels of land for rent or “assarting”;
- influence of agriculture, including hop production and associated oast houses; and
- influence of Weald trades in the area.

2.3.9 The historic settlement setting is created by:

- to the north, ancient fieldscapes to the north of the settlement, specifically regular piecemeal enclosure, and irregular piecemeal enclosure associated with the River Medway and its related watercourses;
- to the south west, an area of regular piecemeal enclosure;
- to the southeast, Buckhurst Park, a Grade II* listed 18th century landscape park with a large area of ancient woodland.

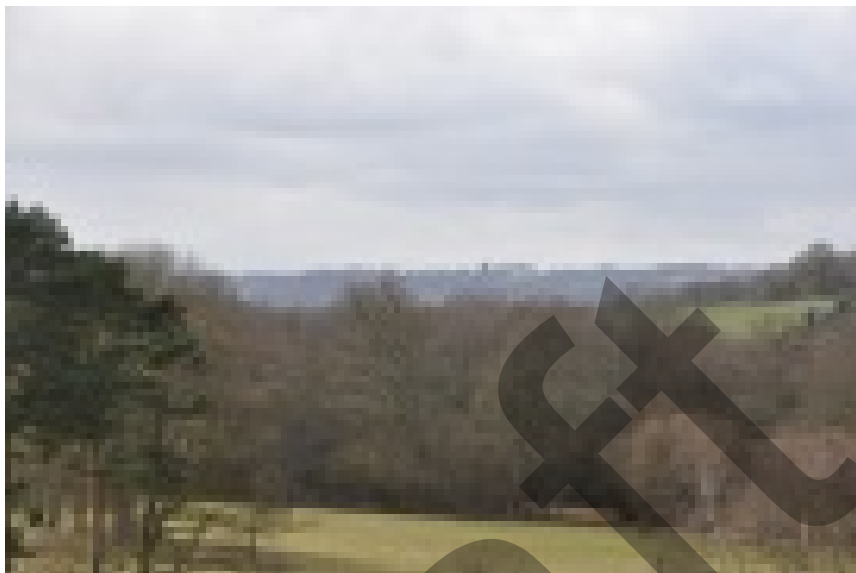
2.3.10 The village lies within the Upper Medway Valley County Landscape Character Area, which covers the Medway Valley from Weir Wood Reservoir to Groombridge in the east. The broad flat river valley is overlooked by gentle spurs emphasised by mature woods. The Key characteristics of this landscape character area are:

- Gentle spurs and slopes overlooking broad, open valley.

- Spectacular views from spurs.
- Small, relatively natural winding river with scattered alder and willow.
- Rich, varied pattern of woods, trees and hedges on slopes; over 15% woodland cover.
- Settlements tend to be in the valleys, which is unusual for the High Weald. Villages are often individually distinctive.
- Buildings typically of stone and white weatherboarding. Rich and varied traditional building materials and styles.
- Affluent, gentrified farms and country houses..⁽⁷⁾

2.3.11 The landscape around the conservation area still has a very rural character of fields, hedges and trees, which provides an important backdrop to the settlement. The land around the village remains predominantly agricultural in character, with a mosaic of tree cover and fields, within an undulating landscape with long distance views. Features still visible in the landscape and around the conservation area provide evidence of earlier development and activity, such as hedges demarking field systems, ponds from former iron working, mature trees, isolated farmsteads and historic boundary treatments, and evidence for the historic enclosure of Buckhurst Park.

2.3.12 The most significant feature within the surrounding landscape is the important backdrop to the village. To the north and east, this is the rolling landscape which descends to the river floodplain, and to the southwest, the rising landscape towards the plateau of Ashdown Forest. The open landscape setting to the west and northwest has a very strong sense of place, with significant long distance views and strong inter-visibility with the historic core of the village. Long distance views back towards the village, and particularly to the churchyard on The Knoll, are gained across the valley from the north and northwest. The location of the village on the western side of The Knoll and within the river floodplain, along with the treed boundaries within the landscape, conceals the settlement from Buckhurst Park to the southeast.

View across Medway valley to the north

2.3.13 The distinctive characteristics of this landscape setting is further identified below:

Withyham Landscape Setting Areas

To the north,, northeast and wrapping around to the west, and southwest, the landscape setting is identified as:

- Mature landscape structure of Ancient Woodlands, reservoirs and stream corridors within Buckhurst Park.

To the south and southeast, the landscape setting characterised as:

- Medium to large-scale fields, lined with mature hedgerows and interspersed with narrow stream corridors.
- Large areas of Ancient Woodland. ⁽⁸⁾.

2.3.14 Within the conservation area, the significant natural feature is the topography, with the village on either side of The Knoll, a projecting ridge into the valley of the River Medway, along with the treed routes of the tributaries of the River Medway to the east and west. This topography has influenced the development of the village, with the church located on a spur of land, called 'The Knoll' on the south side of the River Medway Valley at around 70mOD in height and the highest part, to the east of the church is at around 85m OD, dropping steeply away to the east, and down to the Dorset Arms and adjacent tributary of the Medway. To the west and north of the Church, the topography drops away to the other tributary of the Medway where the road crosses at Hewkins Bridge. Around

half a mile to the north of the village is the former railway line, constructed in the 19th century to link Tunbridge Wells with East Grinstead, and the track bed follows the bottom of the river valley.

2.3.15 The most noticeable man made feature in the landscape within the village is the church which is glimpsed in views from the north, northeast and southwest.

2.3.16 In views out of the village, there are three prominent man made features in the landscape. These are the remains of Old Buckhurst and the upper part of Hartfield Church spire, both of which are visible from the western part of the Churchyard and the associated access road; and the World War II pill box on the hillside to the west of the village, which is prominent in views when driving west along the B2110.

View across landscape to west towards Hartfield church spire



View southwest to Old Buckhurst from the Knoll**2.4 Geology and Building Materials**

2.4.1 Along with the whole of Sussex, the rocks of the Withyham area are sedimentary. Descending the higher land of the High Weald towards the Low Weald, the rocks become younger. The geology in the area is formed of Ashdown sand and sandstone, with Wadhurst Clay within the river valley. This mix of natural materials will have influenced the type of local building materials used to create the unique identity of settlements in the area around Withyham. The clay ironstone, or siderite mudstone, provided ore for the Wealden iron industry and sites of post medieval forges and blast furnaces are also located in the vicinity of the village.

2.4.2 The use of the local materials available to builders in the past throughout the District, including: brick, timber, stone, weather boarding, tile hanging, clay tiles and thatch, has a significant influence on the character of built form, including boundaries, and the overall visual nature of an area. The more historic buildings will display traditional building techniques based on the materials available in the locality. However, with improved transport in the 18th and 19th centuries, a wider choice of materials from around the country became available, often leading to more standardised building styles and forms.

2.4.3 Chapter 5 of this appraisal provides location specific information on traditional materials and building techniques within the Withyham conservation area.

2.5 History of the Settlement

Prehistoric

2.5.1 Withyham's history can be traced back about 6,000 years. A Neolithic axe found in the Withyham area in the 19th century is evidence of very early occupation and use of this landscape.

Roman and Saxon

2.5.2 Roman occupation of the area commenced in A.D.43 and there is evidence for a Roman Road between London and Lewes which runs on a north-south route through Gallypot Street and the landscape within the Hartfield Parish, around 1.5 miles to the west of the village. There has also been a Roman find to the west of Withyham Church, indicating use of this landscape in the Roman period.

Place name, Domesday and early manors

2.5.3 Withyham is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1085, but would have been part of the Hundred of Hertevell (Hartfield). The name Withyham is derived from the Old English meaning 'Withy water-meadow' or 'withy enclosure' and the first documentary reference is to 'Wideham' in 1095. This name had various documented alterations: 'Withiham' 1230; 'Wythyhamme' 1266; 'Wydiham' 1247; 'Wydeham' 1248; and 'Wydyham' 1326.

2.5.4 Robert Count of Mortain some time before 1086 gave the manor of Withyham and the nearby hamlet of Blackham to the priory of Mortain in France. A single monk appears to have been put in charge of the estate and is dignified with the title 'Prior of Withyham' at least as early as 1249. In the 14th century the the prior of Withyham is recorded as being an Englishman, with no fellow monk. In 1372 Edward III granted the alien (French) cell to John of Gaunt, his son, as part of what later became the Duchy of Lancaster and also included Ashdown Forest, but by 1413 the cell had been given first to the New Priory of Hastings and afterwards to Kings College, Cambridge. During the reign of Elizabeth I, the patronage of the church was given to Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset and this has remained with the Sackville (now De La Warr) family ever since.

2.5.5 There was certainly a settlement in the area by the 14th century, and the list of Rectors at the Church begins in 1328 with William Batchelor. It is likely that the village is shrunken in size from that in the early medieval period, and would have been concentrated in the vicinity of the church East Sussex HER, SMR Number MES18808.

Church

2.5.6 The first mention of a church at Withyham is in 1291 when a grant was made by Edward I to Pope Nicholas IV to help pay for a crusade. The church was valued at 45 marks (about £30). The present building dates predominantly from 1663 when it was rebuilt following a lightning strike, the original building having been largely destroyed. The entry in the Parish Register states *'June ye 16th 1663 was Wytheham Church burnt down*

by a tempest of thunder and lighting'. Extensive renovations and alterations were undertaken to the building in the 19th century.

2.5.7 Reverend Charles Nassau Sutton was appointed Rector of Withyham in 1892, having previously been the Curate in the Parish from 1882. In 1902, he published a book titled: 'Historical Notes of Withyham, Hartfield and Ashdown Forest, together with the History of the Sackville Family'.

Medieval markets and fairs

2.5.8 The field to the east and south of the Dorset Arms and Old School House was known as Batchelors Field and as 'Fair Field'⁽⁹⁾. The Buckhurst Terrier states that one fair is held yearly on the feast day of St. Micheal the Archangel within a piece of land called Batchelors Field and that there is a toll for every horse, ox, cow or steer sold to be paid to the Lord of the Manor.

View north across the medieval fair field



Medieval

2.5.9 Sir Thomas Sackville, made Lord Buckhurst by Elizabeth I, acquired the Manor of Withyham c.1569 and by the end of the 16th century he held seventeen manors in total in NE Sussex, including the Manor of Buckhurst, which was concentrated at Buckhurst Park to the south of the village. The size of his holding led to the survey of his lands and compilation of the Buckhurst Terrier and accompanying maps. The Buckhurst Terrier was compiled between November 1596 and November 1598 and gives a remarkably complete survey of a large area of north-east Sussex, comprising the greater part of the parishes of Hartfield and Withyham, together with land in East Grinstead and other parishes bordering on to Ashdown Forest. The survey includes a large number of maps, which include field boundaries, field names, and identifies prominent buildings. Along with the

maps is a record of land ownership and tenancy at that particular time and the rights of the Lord of the Manor. The original Buckhurst Terrier survives, and in 1933, Ernest Straker compiled a book about the terrier, published by the Sussex Record Society, to ensure that the information within the survey was available widely.

2.5.10 The Church stands adjacent to the eastern of the original two accesses to Old Buckhurst, the original great house at Buckhurst Park. The original house was constructed by 1528 and was the home of the Sackville Family prior to their move to Knole in Kent. The original building was substantially demolished in the early 17th century and part was used to construct Sackville College in East Grinstead. Today, the visible remnants consist of a house, a gate tower and barn, and remains of a moat. The gate tower is visible in the landscape from the west door of the church.

2.5.11 The presence of the Sackvilles at the adjacent Buckhurst Park, and their later ownership of the manor of Withyham, patronage of the church, and ownership of many of the buildings in the village, even to the present day, have had a strong influence on the way the village has developed. It is interesting to note that even in the 19th century, in the Census records, that many of the fields associated with properties in the village had retained the same names as those shown on the 16th century Buckhurst Terrier.

Church and Rectory 1918 (www.theweald.org)



Post medieval development and trade and industry

2.5.12 Towards the 16th century the area grew in importance as part of the Wealden iron industry, and became an important centre for the manufacture of cannon, using water and timber from the area to power the furnaces and forge hammer. Evidence of medieval and post-medieval industry is represented by remains in the landscape of iron working, along with place name and documentary evidence. There were furnaces and forges in Withyham parish in the 16th and early 17th centuries, with three ironworks recorded.

2.5.13 By the end of the 16th century, the Buckhurst Terrier shows that the settlement was very small and comprised only St. Michael's Church and the Rectory located at the access to the original Buckhurst House; and Sommers Farm (now the Dorset Arms) to the east, at the access to what is now the present Buckhurst House, but at that time provided access to an iron works in operation during the 17th century to the south east. Most evidence for this industry was lost during the early 19th century when the landscaped Buckhurst Park was created to serve the new house, but the pond bay survives as an earthwork.

2.5.14 Located to the east of the village at the time of the Buckhurst Terrier, on the valley side is Duckings, an isolated post medieval farmstead. Duckings was built by John Baker, and is a close studded timber frame building from the mid 16th century. John Baker was a rich ironmaster and the house is mentioned in his will dated 1555. It is likely to have been built as a private house, his business being carried out elsewhere, as a 1574 return to the Crown of all the furnaces and forges worked in Sussex does not include Duckings. The Baker family married into the Sackville family (related to Anne Boleyn and later Earls of Dorset) and a 1597 terrier shows the property in the ownership of the Sackville family, but leased out to a yeoman tenant. It was not until 1911 that the Sackvilles sold the property.

2.5.15 The Buckhurst Terrier also shows an access route from the southeast corner of the churchyard down into the adjacent valley where there was a large ironworks in the 16th century and the route is still evident in the landscape today.

2.5.16 The area suffered with the decline of the iron industry in the 18th century and economic depression and poor harvests following the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Buckhurst Park and the Sackville Family

2.5.17 Buckhurst Park and the Sackville family has had a long and continuous influence on the area.

2.5.18 The Sackville family first came to the area in 1068, and Herbrand de Sauqueville was a supporter of William the Conqueror. The Sackvilles were granted the manor at Buckhurst following a marriage to the heiress of Buckhurst and lived there until the time of Elizabeth I. The Queen was a cousin of Thomas Sackville through her mother's family, the Boleyns of Hever. Such a connection at court allowed Thomas to amass a considerable fortune, making him able to draw up plans for a new, far more elaborate mansion on the Buckhurst estate than the then existing house. The site that was chosen for the project was formerly used as a hunting box for the popular sport of deer coursing and despite being granted the vast palace at Knole by the Queen, Sir Thomas continued with his plans for Buckhurst. He also found himself being elevated to Lord Buckhurst and then to Earl of Dorset, although his descendants were to outrank him by becoming Dukes. Upon his death, Sir Thomas' son, the 2nd Earl reduced his father's original plans but still built a considerable mansion where the present house stands. He did not, however, include a formal garden. It was Arabella, Duchess of Dorset, who can be credited for the beginnings of the current gardens. She commissioned Repton to produce a "Red Book" containing designs for a formal park and gardens.

Buckhurst, 1910 (www.theweald.org)

2.5.19 The death of the last Duke whilst hunting in Ireland split the Sackville family between Buckhurst and Knole. An unclear will, written by the Duke's heiress sister (who was married to the Earl De La Warr) and a subsequent law suit directed Knole to the Duke's second son with Buckhurst, the older property, going to his older son and heir, as was proper. On this inheritance the last Duke's eldest son built an enormous Victorian wing (which was to be pulled down in 1953 by the 10th Earl) as well as commissioning James Pulham, known mainly for his work at Waddesdon Manor for the Rothschilds, to design a rockery and waterfall for the far end of the Repton Lake. But it was not until 1903 that the gardens that can be seen today were finished, with Lutyens being asked to design a formal garden, with help with the plantings by Gertrude Jekyll. This gives Buckhurst the unique feature of having gardens by Lutyens and Jekyll combined with a Repton Park.⁽¹⁰⁾

Religion and institutions

2.5.20 The first school in the village was started in 1763 by the Curate of the Parish, the Reverend Edward Boyce, and was run from one of the cottages on School House Hill to the east of the village. This was followed by a school run in a small thatched cottage in the vicinity of the Dorset Arms⁽¹¹⁾ This appears to have been replaced by a purpose built National School shown located in the field to the southeast of the Old School House on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1875, however, this was replaced in 1877 by the present school on Station Road in Balls Green. No above ground evidence remains for the National School in the field.

19th century trades

Although Withyham village has remained a small settlement in the post-medieval and modern period, the 1882 Kelly's Directory of Sussex shows that within the wider Parish

10 History courtesy of: www.buckhurstpark.co.uk

11 Historical notes of Withyham, Hartfield and Ashdown Forest, 1903, Sutton

there were a variety of commercial tradespeople, including: blacksmiths; wheelwrights; shoe and boot makers; shop keepers and drapers; wine and spirit merchants; millers; a coal merchant, farms, surgeon and saddler. Within the village itself the 1881 census lists the most common occupation was farm labourer, The other occupations listed were: smith; draper, grocer and post master; Rector; coachman; gardener; innkeeper; and school teacher.

Post Office, Withyham, 1914 - now Dorset House (www.theweald.org)



Transport

2.5.21 The 19th century saw improvements in first the road and later the rail network in the area, which opened up trade with London. The road through Withyham (now the B2110) was turnpiked in 1766 between Groombridge and Forest Row. This added to the roads serving the wider area that had been turnpiked since the 1750s. Local industries that were able to provide goods to London with the improvement in transport included the poultry industry, livestock and dairy production, hop growing and horticultural nurseries.

2.5.22 The Three Bridges to Tunbridge Wells West branchline opened in 1855 and a railway came to Withyham in 1866 and ran to the north of the village in the valley bottom. The line ran between Three Bridges and Tunbridge Wells and the railway station opened on 1st October 1866. The railway line was closed in 1967 and is now part of the Forest Way national cyclepath.

20th century

2.5.23 The present day village remains split between the two areas, around the church and around the Dorset Arms, with Duckings remaining isolated to the east. It is not until the 20th century that any further development that still survives today took place in the eastern part of the village. On the northern side of the road, this has been confined to the Village Hall, the garage building, and alterations to the smithy building in the early

20th century; and Knoll View in the late 20th century. On the southern side of the road, there has only been the edition of Nos 1-8 Dorset Cottages in the late 20th century, constructed at the rear of the Dorset Arms.

Population

2.5.24 The population of Withyham Parish in 1851 was 1,692, and rose to 2,150 in 1882. Today, the population for the entire Parish is around 2,854⁽¹²⁾

2.6 Historical Maps

2.6.1 Maps are useful for showing the development of areas and generally survive from the 18th century onward for the area.

2.6.2 The earlier maps are representative of settlement and tend to lack detail, although some of the early Estate maps do show individual buildings and features with some accuracy. The area is also covered by the maps produced by the Budgen family of cartographers, who lived in the District. The maps produced by different generations of the family include those of Sussex produced by Richard Budgen in 1723-4.

2.6.3 The Tithe maps, which date to approximately 1840, vary in quality and accuracy depending on the cartographer and state of preservation, but are a useful source of information, especially combined with the Tithe apportionment to identify owner, tenant and use. The tithe map of 1840 shows that little other development had occurred in the vicinity of the Church and Rectory subsequent to the survey within the Buckhurst Terrier. Sutton Historical notes of Withyham, Hartfield and Ashdown Forest, 1903, Sutton -describes that there were various outbuildings to the Rectory, including an ice house, and several smaller buildings are shown to the south of the main house on the tithe map.

To the east, by the time of the tithe map, the former Somers Farmhouse, now The Dorset Arms, had been joined by several other buildings in this part of the village. This included the house and smithy to the north of the road; and a separate house within a garden to the west (latterly the Post Office and Stores). South of the road, the Dorset Arms is shown, with a linear outbuilding to the rear (now demolished); a building to the northeast (now the Dorset Arms Coach House); and a house and garden to the south (now the Old School House).

INSERT COPY OF TITHE MAP

2.6.4 The most accurate and detailed maps available tend to be the 1:2,500 ordnance survey maps, starting with the first edition maps of the 1870s through to the present day.

2.6.5 By the 1875 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, the Gardner's Cottage to the Rectory had been constructed to the northwest of the church (now Rectory Cottage) along with an outbuilding to the east, which still survives in the form of a three bay cart shed with attached enclosed store. It was not until the late 19th century that the small building

to the south of the Rectory was extended to create a larger dwelling, today called The Monks House. By the end of the 20th century, a new dwelling called Hewkins had been constructed to the south.

INSERT COPY OF OS MAP

2.7 Areas of Archaeological Potential

2.7.1 Most settlements contain archaeological evidence which helps to explain their origins and the way of life of former inhabitants. The likelihood of the occurrence of archaeological material is related specifically to previous and present land usage.

2.7.2 An area of archaeological interest (ANA) extends over the entire conservation area.

2.7.3 The NPPF makes it clear that up-to-date evidence of the historic environment should be used to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be found in the future. Areas of archaeological interest are frequently updated and are not shown on the appraisal maps, but up-to-date information can be found at: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/planning/>

2.7.4 The Historic Environment Records for East Sussex is located at The Keep in Falmer, and information can be accessed online ⁽¹³⁾. This will also be helpful in assessing the likelihood of the presence of archaeological remains in the area and help with interpretation of a particular site and its setting.

2.7.5 There have been some recorded archaeological finds in Withyham village, ranging from the discovery of a Neolithic axe in the 19th century, to Roman, medieval and post medieval artifacts and remains. As there is the likelihood that the village had shrunk in size from that in the early medieval period, the area around the church is particularly important. The influence of the adjacent Buckhurst Park on the landscape around the village is also important, as well as the use of the land to the east and south of the Dorset Arms as the Fair Field in the medieval period. When considering the archaeological potential of settlements and the knowledge that the historic development of the settlement has evolved since at least the 11th century, with earlier use of the surrounding landscape, and it is important to recognise that archaeology often survives 19th and 20th century development.

2.7.6 It is misleading to assume complete destruction of buried or hidden features which could survive within later buildings and structures as well as in below ground features. Therefore, archaeological remains of any period, both above and below ground, could be found within the conservation area. Any proposals to carry out works which include ground disturbance or works to a historic building are likely to require an appropriate form of archaeological evaluation and assessment, to assess the potential for evidence of past

human activity and provide evidence for the substance and evolution of the place, and its people and culture ⁽¹⁴⁾.

2.7.7 In the case of works to a building within a conservation area, it may be appropriate to undertake a standing building archaeological survey and/or recording, where it is identified, via map regression exercises and/or historical research, that buildings have been located on the site for some period of time, or may have incorporated or replaced earlier buildings.

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3 Character Appraisal

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Withyham conservation area is formed of two character areas for the purposes of the appraisal and these are shown on the map in Appendix 1.

- A. The Church, Rectory and environs;
- B. The Dorset Arms and environs.

3.1.2 The two character areas relate to distinct areas of development that have specific characters and history. The character areas may relate to different periods in the historic settlements, but also take into account the impact of topography and landscape, and the impact of different uses.

3.1.3 This chapter of the appraisal describes each of these character areas separately and considers:

- The character of each area in detail;
- Buildings, materials and details;
- The contribution of the natural environment;
- The significance of the setting of the conservation area.

3.2 Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area

3.2.1 The Key Characteristics include buildings, structures and features within the conservation area.

Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area

- Two distinct areas to the village: one around the church; and one to the east around the Dorset Arms.
- It is likely that an earlier medieval village was located in the vicinity of the church.
- The building with the earliest origins is the church, but was rebuilt in the 1660s.
- The earliest domestic building is the Dorset Arms, which dates from 15th century with later alterations and additions.
- Other development within the village dates from between 17th century and late 20th century and is predominantly domestic in nature, with some ancillary buildings.
- Built form within the western part of the village is located predominantly to the south and northwest of the church on the side of The Knoll, accessed by a track running south from the B2110.
- Built form in the eastern part of the village is located to either side of the B2110 in the vicinity of the junction with the access to Buckhurst Park. There is some back land development to the rear of the Dorset Arms.
- Most buildings within the conservation area are in residential use.
- There are 8 listed buildings of which St. Michael's Church is listed Grade I. The remainder are listed Grade II and are in residential use, except for the Dorset Arms.
- Three buildings have been identified as being of local, vernacular or cultural interest.
- The older buildings within the core of the village are timber-framed, but have generally been refaced with brickwork, tile hanging or weatherboard, some of which is white painted.
- Later 19th century and early 20th century buildings are constructed in brick.
- Weather board to non-domestic buildings is either dark stained or left to weather naturally.
- Domestic buildings are predominantly two storey in height, with clay tile roofs in a mixture of hipped, half-hipped or gabled forms.
- One 19th century shop front survives.
- Boundaries to plots are generally formed by hedgerows or post and rail / post and wire fencing.
- Some prominent mature trees, particularly in the church yard and in front of the Dorset Arms.

- Key wider views to the : west, southwest, north and northwest from the western part of the village; more local views in the eastern part of the village.
- Key buildings: St Michael's Church; the Rectory; Dorset Arms; Dorset Arms Coach House; Old School House; Dorset House.
- Key open spaces: Churchyard; land to the west of the church and rectory; land on the eastern side of The Knoll; land to the east and south of Old School House comprising the former medieval Fair Field.

3.3 Character Area A - The Church, Rectory and environs

Introduction to the character area

3.3.1 This character area is formed by western element of the village and incorporates the Church and small group of buildings set on the hillside above the B2110 road and the access to Old Buckhurst.

3.3.2 The character area is surrounded by open countryside, with the B2110 forming the link with the eastern part of the village within Character Area B.

3.3.3 This part of Withyham probably represents the earliest development in the village and is the site of the Church of St. Michael. There is documentary evidence that a Church has stood in this location since at least 14th century and that it is likely that the original medieval village was in this area, on the higher ground . Immediately to the south of the Church is the former Rectory which dates from at least 16th century, now split into two dwellings, and beyond, The Monks House, part of which is likely to have a similar date to the Rectory. The small outbuildings north of the modern property, Hewkins are likely to have been associated with The Rectory in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. To the northeast of The Church is Rectory Cottage, constructed in the 19h century as the Gardners Cottage for The Rectory, and beyond to the northeast, a 19th century timber three bay cartshed with enclosed store at the eastern end. Early 18th century engravings of the Church and Rectory also show a barn to the southwest of the Church, but only small remnants of the walls of this building remain within the bank.

Landscape setting

3.3.4 The landscape setting of the character area contributes to the significance of the character area and the way in which it is appreciated. The topography of this area is dominated by The Knowle, a small ridge on the southern side of the River Medway Valley, with a tributary of the river running in the valley to either side. The church and buildings in this part of the village sit on the western side of The Knowle, towards the top of the slope. The land falls away relatively steeply down to the road in the north, down to character area B to the east, and down to the valley bottom with lake in the west. To the rear of the churchyard, there is a historic access route from the southeast corner, which is still a public footpath, that leads down into the valley to the southeast. To the northeast

of Rectory Cottage is the original route of the access into this part of the village from the B2110. This route can still be traced, but is no longer in use.

3.3.5 There is only one public open space within the character area and this is formed by the the Churchyard. However, there are several additional important open spaces that help to from the visual setting to the buildings on the higher ground. These include the triangular areas in front of Rectory Cottage and The Rectory, along with the important open landscape setting formed by the parkland to Old Buckhurst in the west.

View over open space to Rectory



3.3.6 There are some particularly important individual tree specimens in the churchyard which are prominent in long distance views, particularly from Balls Green to the northeast, partly due to the location of the Church on higher ground. Other important individual tree specimens dot the open landscape setting between the access road to Old Buckhurst and the buildings. There is also a significant mature tree belt on the northwestern boundary of the churchyard. The backdrop to the northern boundary of the character area is formed by a thick and mature tree belt on the southern edge of the road. Trees form an important backdrop to the eastern boundary of the domestic properties to the south of the church.

3.3.7 There are long distance views towards the character area from the North East, with the tower being the prominent feature. Other buildings in this part of the village are visually hidden when viewed from this direction by the treed boundaries on the eastern side of the character area. Glimpsed views of the church and adjacent buildings are gained when travelling east along the B2110 in the north when descending into the valley bottom. There are more open views into and out of the character area to the west, and it is significant that the church spire of St. Mary's in Hartfield is visible across the open countryside from the western boundary of St. Michael's churchyard, and from the higher parts of the access track to Old Buckhurst. From the rear of St. Michael's churchyard there are also views across the valley to the east, with the Dorset Arms and adjacent buildings nestled in the valley bottom.

Local built form

3.3.8 The church is the oldest building in the character area, with origins in the 14th century centuries. Most of the buildings in the character area, listed and unlisted, have not been the subject of archaeological survey and so dating of the buildings can be uncertain. Older buildings have often been re-fronted in the 18th-19th centuries, which has obscured earlier phases. Many of the buildings in the character area dated to the 17th-19th centuries or earlier, with some re-fronted in the 18th-19th centuries.

3.3.9 The buildings in the character area are located to the east of the access road to Old Buckhurst and are scattered to the north and south of the church. Plot sizes are quite variable and the buildings themselves vary from adjoining cottages to detached cottages and larger houses and are located in different positions within plots.

3.3.10 The mix of building periods can be identified, to some extent, by the uses of building materials, although some of the buildings in this part of the village thought to be of earlier timber framing have been refronted in brick and tile. The buildings are in a mixture of materials, including brickwork, some with Flemish bond grey brick header chequered decoration, tile-hanging, and stone (the church). Roofs are predominantly covered with clay plain tiles.

3.3.11 Traditional boundary treatments within the character area comprise trees, hedges, and post and rail fencing. This reflects the rural nature of the location of this part of the village, in this prominent position in the landscape. Particularly important hedges include those to the eastern boundary of the churchyard, and that on the western boundary of Hewkins. Post and rail fencing is used to demarcate the western boundary of the access road, and the smaller open spaces to the immediate east. There has been only minor erosion to traditional boundary treatments through the use of close boarded fencing, or similar, which is a less sympathetic modern feature, which, if unchecked, could have a detrimental impact on the character of the historic core of the village. Fortunately, this has generally only occurred in less prominent positions within the character area.

Listed buildings

3.3.12 There are three listed buildings in the character area, of which St Michael's Church is Grade I. The former rectory, now split into two dwellings, and Monks House, are both listed Grade II. Where there are outbuildings associated with the listed building, it is possible that these may be considered to be curtilage listed. The buildings are generally listed as ranging in date from the 17th century or earlier to the 19th century, apart from the church, however some of the buildings in the character area are likely to be older. Where there are outbuildings or physical structures associated with the listed building, such as ancillary buildings and boundary walls, these may be considered to be curtilage listed. Omission of description in this character appraisal text does not diminish their significance.

3.3.13 St. Michael's Church has origins in the 14th century, but was substantially rebuilt in the 17th century after damage caused by a lightning strike. Further alterations were undertaken in the late 19th century. The church is constructed of local stone with a squat

bell tower at the west end, chancel double nave and south aisle. A substantial chapel was attached to the north of the chancel for the Sackville family in the 17th century and contains a fine series of tombs. The church sits on the side of The Knoll, close to the apex of the hill and is surrounded by a churchyard containing mature individual tree specimens.

South elevation of the church



Church - Sackville Chapel



3.3.14 The former rectory is now split into two dwellings named 'The Rectory' and 'Rectory Wing', but for the purposes of this document will be referred together to be 'the rectory'. This is a substantial property, located to the south of the churchyard, with an 18th century brick facade dominated by regular vertical sliding sash windows and central unusual veranda to the ground floor of segmental shape with slender iron columns supporting a lead roof.

3.3.15 The Monk's House is located adjacent to the rectory. The original part of the building closest to the rectory is two storey and of timber frame construction, but predominantly refaced in brickwork, with only a couple of timbers remaining visually exposed. It is understood that the building was originally used as a small priory and had a cellar to the building which was originally connected to the church by a tunnel. The building dates from the 16th century with later 17th century additions, when the building went through various uses, from an apple store and laundry and servants quarters for the adjacent rectory.



Key unlisted buildings or structures

3.3.16 Key unlisted buildings or structures that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and historic integrity of the settlement are identified within this character appraisal and on the accompanying map. These buildings and structures form part of the designated heritage asset, in this case the Withyham conservation area, and contribute to its wider historical value⁽¹⁵⁾. These buildings and structures have been identified via consideration of their value to the heritage asset (conservation area), through their evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value, and in some instances for their contribution to the setting of designated heritage assets. Where ancillary buildings to listed buildings have been identified as key unlisted buildings on the visual appraisal map, and although these buildings may be considered to be curtilage listed, it is important to note that they also make a valuable contribution to the character of the conservation area in their own right.

3.3.17 Three key unlisted buildings or structures have been identified in the character area dating from the 19th century. These are Rectory Cottage, an outbuilding to the north west of Hewkins, and the three bay open cart shed and store to the northeast of Rectory Cottage. Whilst key unlisted buildings have been identified on the visual appraisal map in Appendix 1, this does not exclude other buildings being considered of significance should further information come to light. In addition, omission of description in this character

appraisal text does not diminish the significance of any buildings identified on the visual appraisal map.

3.3.18 Rectory Cottage is a 19th century dwelling, originally the gardener's cottage for The Rectory. The building is notable for its English bond brickwork, utilising grey headers to create a decorative pattern, and associated decorative tile hanging to the first floor of the front elevation. The gable ends have decorative bargeboards, and the building has a plain clay tile roof. Later rear extensions have been sympathetically constructed to be in keeping with the character of the building which is particularly important due to the fact that the rear of the property can be viewed from the higher ground in the adjacent church yard.

3.3.19 The outbuilding to northwest of Hewkins is a simple single storey traditional ancillary outbuilding which appears to exist on the 1840s Tithe Map. The building is constructed of brick in Flemish bond with decorative grey headers, has unstained weatherboard to the upper wall areas and a plain clay tile roof. The building lies parallel to the adjacent access road, and the northern gabled end has a simple double side hung timber garage door. This building is prominent in views to the south through the character area and provides an end-stop to the development.

3.3.20 To the north east of Rectory cottage is a three bay open cartshed and attached store. This building lies adjacent to the church car park and was constructed in the period between the 1840 Tithe Map and the 1874 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map. It is a survival of a traditional rural ancillary agricultural building, with a timber frame, three bay open cart shed, with an attached enclosed store to the eastern end. The original roofing material has been replaced by corrugated metal, which is a traditional method of repair for agricultural buildings of this age when the roof structure deteriorates and cannot take the weight of a tiles, or where the tiles have been reused elsewhere. The building is notable for its simple historic design, including unusual vertical boarded sides and for the reason that there are no other similar agricultural buildings surviving within the conservation area.

Cartshed and store**Other features of the character area**

3.3.21 There is a general lack of street furniture (historic and modern) in the village, which is characteristic of a rural location apart from simple timber bench seating provided in and around the churchyard.

3.3.22 Sounds, smells, general activity and detractors

3.3.23 Sounds, smells and general activity also contribute to the historic character of conservation areas. Apart from background noise of traffic using the B2110 to the north, this is a very quiet and rural location, with associated countryside activities. The church has a peal of six bells which when rung, add to the ambiance and character of the area.

3.3.24 There is no formal street lighting within the character area. This lack of formal street lighting is significant as it helps to maintain the rural character of this part of the village and is particularly important due to inter visibility with the surrounding countryside and the topography in this location.

3.3.25 No detractors other than traffic noise have been identified within the character area.

Summary

3.3.26 In conclusion, this character area comprises the eastern part of the village, concentrated around the church, and is located on the western side of The Knowle, a small ridge on the southern side of the Medway Valley. The area is characterised by its rural location, is peaceful, and the identified character also includes historic man made and natural features, which add to the historic significance of the area

3.4 Character Area B - The Dorset Arms and environs

Introduction to the character area

3.4.1 This character area is formed by the eastern part of the village, concentrated around the junction of the B2110 and the access to Buckhurst House to the southeast. The character area also includes the length of the B2110 between the two tributaries of the River Medway, from Hewkins Bridge in the west, through to the modern bridge to the east of Forge Cottage.

3.4.2 The character area is surrounded by open countryside, with the B2210 forming the link with character area A to the west. Built development on the northern side of the B2110 generally lies parallel to the road, but set back to varying degrees. Development on the southern side of the road incorporates some backland development behind the buildings facing onto the junction.

3.4.3 This part of the village has developed around the junction with the B2110 and the historic access route leading to the south east, and the former Sommers Farmhouse, now the Dorset Arms, as shown on the Buckhurst Terrier.⁽¹⁶⁾ The access running to the southeast formerly served a large 16th century ironworks and a house called Stonelands, and now serves the 19th century Buckhurst Park and House. To the southeast of the former Sommers Farmhouse was the site of the medieval fair on the Fair Field. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the small area of land between the Dorset Arms and the road was known as Withyham Green.

3.4.4 There has been very little development historically in this part of the village, with The Dorset Arms being the earliest building in the character area, followed by Forge Cottage (17th century), Dorset House the former Post Office and Stores (18th century) and Old School House (late 18th century) and The Dorset Arms Coach House, located to the northwest of the public house. In the mid 19th century a National School was constructed within the field to the south of Old School House, but this was replaced in 1877 by the new school on Station Road in Balls Green. No part of this building survives above ground.

3.4.5 In the early 20th century, the village hall was constructed in the 1920s, and later 20th century development is represented by Dorset Cottages to the rear of the Dorset Arms.

Landscape setting

3.4.6 The route of the B2110 within the character area runs between the two tributaries of the River Medway. Unfortunately, any historic bridge which may once have existed at

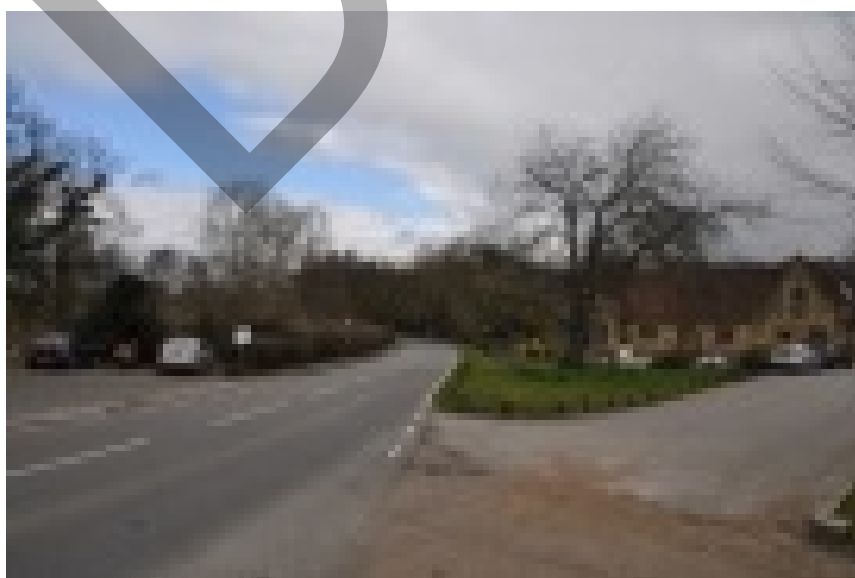
16 Compiled between November 1596 and November 1598 for Sir Thomas Sackville and gives a remarkably complete survey of a large area of north-east Sussex, comprising the greater part of the parishes of Hartfield and Withyham, together with land in East Grinstead and other parishes bordering on to Ashdown Forest. The survey includes a large number of maps, which include field boundaries, field names, and identifies prominent buildings. Along with the maps is a record of land ownership and tenancy at that particular time and the rights of the Lord of the Manor. The original Buckhurst Terrier survives, and in 1933, Ernest Straker compiled a book about the terrier, published by the Sussex Record Society, to ensure that the information within the survey was available widely.

the eastern end adjacent to Forge Cottage has disappeared, and has been replaced by a modern road bridge. However, at the western end, the 18th century stone Hawkins Bridge still survives. The bridge has a narrow width, with stone parapets to either side, allowing only one car to pass at a time, and forms the gateway into the western end of the village. However, it is interesting to note that, due to the treed and hedged boundaries and rising topography to the south of the road, there is little intervisibility with the church and buildings in character area A, with only Rectory Cottage being more prominent on the hillside. The route of the road is characterised by the hedged and treed boundaries, which create a visually enclosed space, with few views gained over the open countryside to the north. Trees form a particularly solid backdrop on a steep bank above the road to the south, at the base of The Knowle.

3.4.7 The former Fair Field, or Batchelors Field, to the south of the road, lying between the tributary of the River Medway and the access track to Buckhurst Park, is a particularly visually important open setting to this part of the village, affording long distance views, into and out of this part of the village, along the valley bottom between the eastern side of The Knowle and the mature treed river corridor. This field is also historically important socially to the village as the location of the annual Fair on the saints day for St. Michael the Archangel Buckhurst Terrier 1597-98.

3.4.8 There is only one public open space within this character area and this is represented by the triangular area of land to the front of Dorset Arms Coach House. This area is important as it forms the immediate setting to the public house, and the Dorset Arms Coach House, and creates a visually open space in contrast to the enclosed hedged and treed sides of the B2110 road to the immediate east and west.

Open space and mature tree in front of Dorset Arms

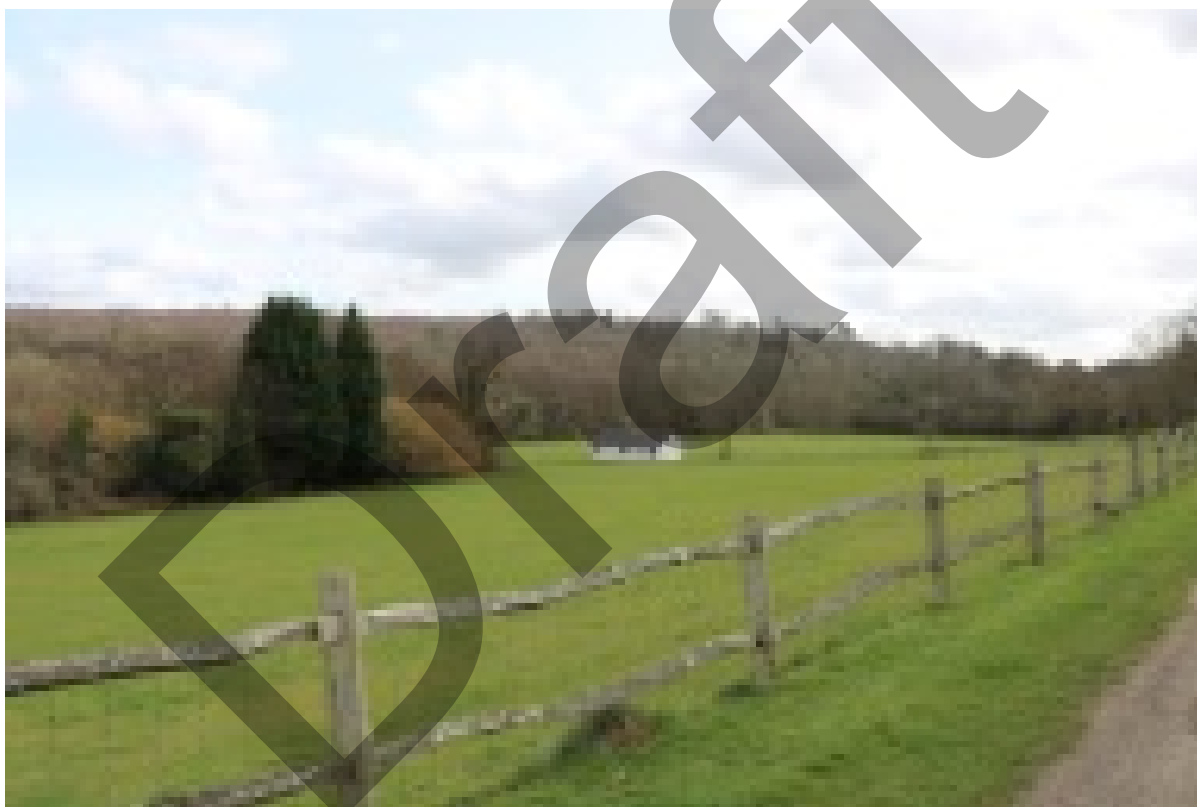


3.4.9 There are few individual mature tree specimens within the character area, with the most prominent being the cherry tree on the green space in front of Dorset Arms Coach House. However, trees form significant backdrops to the character area, whether

along the roadside, or along the river corridors to either end. Hedgerow is also a relatively prominent feature on the roadside.

3.4.10 Views along the B2110 are often truncated by the curving and undulating nature of the route between the two River Tributaries, and views out truncated by roadside trees and hedgerows. The most significant views within the character area are around the Dorset Arms public house, and through the Fair Field to the south of the road. Significant views into the character area are gained from the south, through the Fair Field, and from elevated ground within character area A to the west.

View across fair field to cricket ground



3.4.11 The relationship between the settlement and the historic landscape is still evident in the way in which trees and hedgerows continue to mark historic boundaries and, together with traditional fences, enhance the rural character of the area. The land to the north of the Dorset Arms; and land to the east and south of Old School House are important open spaces within and on the edge of the settlement. The rural open setting is significant, particularly to the southeast, west and along the eastern side of The Knoll.

3.4.12 Traditional boundary forms prevail within the character area and are predominantly formed by hedgerows. There is also a small element of post and rail fencing to enclose the front garden of the Dorset Arms Coach House. Use of this more transparent feature helps to reinforce the visual openness of this central important open space within the character area between the road and buildings.

Local built form

3.4.13 The buildings are from a mix of periods, with the oldest thought to date to the 17th century, and others dating to the 17th-19th centuries, including later refronting of earlier buildings. However, most of the buildings, have not been the subject of archaeological survey and so dating of the buildings can be uncertain. Older buildings have often been re-fronted in the 18th-19th centuries, which has obscured earlier phases.

3.4.14 The buildings are scattered throughout the character area, with several located to the north of the road, but set in different positions with their plots based on their uses. Dorset House, the former shop building, is located prominently towards the side of the road, but Forge Cottage is within a more isolated position. To the south of the road, The Dorset Arms and former coach house are set back at an angle to the road to address both the main route and that into Buckhurst Park.

3.4.15 Design of buildings are reflective of the age of development, but predominant building materials are brickwork, painted and unpainted and often laid in Flemish Bond with decorative headers; stonework to the former Coach House; clay tile roofs, some steeply gabled, and other examples of full hips; tile hanging, - with the front elevation painted white in the case of the Dorset Arms; some weatherboarding, painted white; and traditional timber and metal casement windows. Most buildings have survived remarkably intact, with little intrusion of less sympathetic modern materials such as PVCu windows.

Listed buildings

3.4.16 There are five listed buildings in the character area, all listed Grade II. Where there are outbuildings associated with the listed building, it is possible that these may be considered to be curtilage listed.. The buildings are generally listed as ranging in date from the 17th century or earlier to the 19th century, however some of the buildings in the character area are likely to be older. Where there are outbuildings or physical structures associated with the listed building, such as ancillary buildings and boundary walls, these may be considered to be curtilage listed. Omission of description in this character appraisal text does not diminish their significance.

3.4.17 The earliest identified building within the character area is the Dorset Arms This is a substantial 15th century timber-framed building, with earlier medieval origins, which has had later alterations. The roof is clay tile and the facade has been refaced with full height white painted tile hanging. No externally visible timber frame remains. Particularly prominent features are the tall, white painted, brick chimney stacks; the decorative barge boards to the gable ends; and the metal casement windows some of which have pointed gothic panes.

Dorset Arms

3.4.18 There appears to have been a building located on the site of the present Dorset Arms Coach House since the 17th century, however, the current single storey stone building dates from the mid 19th century and information provided by the statutory list description indicates that it may have been constructed as a private or national school. It is a particularly prominent building in the centre of the eastern part of the village, especially when travelling along the B2110 from the west. The building is ashlar stone, with a clay tiled roof and prominent gables to either end of the front elevation which overlooks the small central green area.

Dorset Arms Coach House

3.4.19 Dorset House on the northern side of the road was the former post office and stores. It is a two storey 18th century building faced with full height white painted timber

weather boarding and retains its small 19th century double shop window to the front elevation.



3.4.20 Forge Cottage dates from the 17th century and is in an isolated position in the eastern part of the village, set back on the northern side of the road. Externally, the ground floor is white painted brick with plain tile hanging above and a tiled roof. Attached to the northwest corner of the dwelling is a single storey white painted brick building with clay tile roof which may have been the former smithy. The windows to both the house and attached outbuilding are small paned metal casements which have a particularly distinctive character.

3.4.21 Old School House is located to the rear of the Dorset Arms, and its main elevation overlooks the former Fair Field with wraps around the east and south sides of the property. It is an early 19th century two storey building, with decorative Flemish bond brickwork with grey headers and projecting brick string course and eaves course. The roof is clay tiled and hipped. The particularly prominent feature of the building is the metal casement windows with pointed gothic lights with diamond shaped panes.

3.4.22 Both of these buildings enhance the particular part of the character area in which it is located, represents good local vernacular detailing and reflects the cultural history of the area.

Picture 1



Key unlisted buildings or structures

3.4.23 None identified

Other features of the character area

3.4.24 There are other notable features within the character area which add to the visual, historical and cultural interest, including red EIR post box and the pub sign to the Dorset Arms.

Sounds, smells, general activity and detractors

3.4.25 Sounds, smells and general activity also contribute to the historic character of conservation areas. There is a notable amount of vehicular traffic travelling through the village on the B2110 and this results in noise, disturbance and accompanying smells. These issues arise particularly at peak times during week days, and due to visitor traffic in the local area at weekends. The public house generates a certain amount of activity throughout the day, with vehicle and pedestrian movement.

3.4.26 Cars can dominate and detract from the character of conservation areas, whether as traffic using roads through historic areas, or through parking. Cars are the most dominant feature within those parts of the village adjacent to the B2110, leading to noise, smell and disturbance. The need for private transport in rural areas will continue in the future and the provision off-road parking when proposed will need careful consideration

to ensure that the significance of the character of conservation area is understood and not harmed, particularly in relation to traditional boundary treatments such as walls and hedgerows. The impact of the creation of off road parking would also need particularly careful consideration to ensure that the identified significance of the open setting to the conservation area is not adversely impacted upon. The parking of vehicles in the vicinity of the Dorset Arms can be quite dominant, but this is linked to usage of this building and the village hall, and is therefore, not a constant detractor, and is expected in relation to these community uses.

3.4.27 There is no formal street lighting within this character area. Ambient lighting at night is provided by internal light spillage from residential properties and the public house. This lack of tall, formal street lighting is significant as it helps to maintain the rural character of the village and is particularly important due to inter visibility with the surrounding countryside.

Summary

3.4.28 In conclusion, this character area comprises the eastern part of the village of Withyham, and the route of the B2110 between the two tributaries of the River Medway. Historic development is concentrated around the junction of the B2110 with the access through to Buckhurst House and Park. This part of the village retains a rural character, dominated by trees and hedgerows to boundaries, and also includes the important open setting to the south of the road, incorporating the former Fair Field. The identified character also includes other features, both man made and natural, which add to the historic significance of the area, including the remnants of Withyham Green to the front of the pub and Dorset Arms Coach House. Three options to extend the current conservation area have been identified and are included within the character area description.

Draft

4 Architectural Form, Detail, Materials, Textures and Colours

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The use of the local materials available to builders in the past throughout the District, including: brick, timber, stone, weather boarding, tile hanging, clay tiles and thatch, has a significant influence on the character of built form, including boundaries, and the overall visual nature of an area. The more historic buildings will display traditional building techniques based on the materials available in the locality. However, with improved transport in the 18th and 19th centuries, a wider choice of materials from around the country became available, often leading to more standardised building styles and forms.

4.1.2 The traditional use of materials, construction techniques, scale, form and pattern of development within a particular area is important to understand prior to considering work to existing buildings and construction of new buildings within a conservation area or development within its setting.

4.2 Key Characteristics

Key Characteristics

- The older buildings in the area are constructed of materials from local sources.
- The predominant wall construction material is brick, predominantly unpainted, sometimes accompanied by tile hanging first floor.
- Local stone has been used in the construction of two buildings.
- Older timber framed buildings have been refaced in brick, tile hanging or weather-boarding.
- Roofs are gabled, half-hipped or hipped and clay tiles are the main roofing material. Slate is not a common historic material in this village.
- The use of dormers as a feature is not prevalent.
- Windows and doors are generally traditionally designed.
- Window styles are predominantly simple side hung casements, either timber or metal, with small paning or leaded lights. Vertical sliding sash windows are not a common feature.
- The majority of the doors to domestic properties in the conservation area are either traditionally detailed plain planked or panel timber doors.

- Porches are generally of a simple flat roofed bracketed type.
- Hedges, post and rail and post and wire fencing are important enclosure features.

4.3 Architectural Form and Layout of Built Form

4.3.1 The village of Withyham has historically developed within two small areas - one around the church, and the other in the vicinity of the Dorset Arms, formerly Somers Farmhouse. It is likely that an earlier larger village may have been located in the vicinity of the church. Development is low density, predominantly within single plots, and scattered around the two distinct areas.

4.3.2 Within the western part of the village, surviving earlier development is focussed to the south of the church, towards the apex of the hill, facing west across the valley. The buildings are set to the front of the plots. Later 19th and early 20th century domestic development is represented by two properties, both set back from the access track and sat within their plots.

4.3.3 Within the eastern part of the village, there is a certain amount of irregular linear development, with earlier buildings generally with a facade facing towards the roadside, but not necessarily completely parallel to the street. Buildings are set back from the road to varying degrees. There is a small amount of historic and modern backland development to the rear of the Dorset Arms.

4.3.4 There is a variety of built form within this small settlement, representing the social status of the occupiers of the buildings. The Rectory, now split into two properties, and the Dorset Arms, formerly Somers Farmhouse, are both large higher status buildings. The historic lower status vernacular buildings are generally detached, two storey cottages, set within their own plots.

4.4 Walls

4.4.1 The mix of periods of building can be identified, to some extent, by the uses of building materials, although many of the buildings in the village thought to be of earlier timber framing have been refronted in brick and tile. The buildings are in a mixture of materials, including red brickwork, some with grey brick header chequered decoration, tile-hanging, render and stone. Roofs are predominantly covered with clay plain tiles, with some use of slate. There is some use of weatherboarding, but this is mostly limited to the rear of buildings and/or less prominent elevations, (apart from Dorset House) providing evidence that the buildings are timber framed with only a brick front facade.

Brick

4.4.2 Brickwork is perhaps the most common material and in some instances this is twinned with tile hanging. Up until the 19th century and the coming of the railways, bricks

would have been made locally from the abundant clay within the High Weald landscape. There are five brick and tile works recorded in Withyham Parish alone⁽¹⁷⁾.

4.4.3 Traditionally, brickwork would have been laid using lime mortars, using local aggregate, which would give the mortar its colour and texture. Lime mortar is distinctive for its paler creamier colour than modern cement mortars that can be grey. The traditional mortars are, in effect, sacrificial to the surrounding brickwork, and it was intended that it would weather and require repointing at intervals. Unfortunate use of modern cement mortars, often harder than surrounding brickwork, leads to the erosion of the softer clay bricks, damaging the structure of the building and significantly affecting its appearance. The character of a building can also be significantly damaged by inappropriate pointing technique, combined with modern mortars.

4.4.4 Although there are domestic buildings surviving from the 15th - 18th centuries within the village, which would originally have had externally visible timber frame, all these structures have undergone later re-facing with either brickwork, weather board or tile hanging in the 18th century to create a more 'modern' facade, with the original timber frame often exposed internally.

4.4.5 The 18th and 19th century brickwork construction is predominantly of Flemish bond, where bricks are laid in a chequered pattern and a particularly good example is the front elevation of The Rectory, and at the Old School House. Flemish bond often has darker decorative glazed or 'vitrified' headers, where the brick surface is heated to such an extent that the sand facing turns to glass, which highlights the unique pattern created by this bond.

4.4.6 This is also an example of English Bond where bricks are laid as a course of headers, with a course of stretchers above, followed by a course of headers, and so on. This is in evidence at the 19th century Rectory Cottage, and a large number of the header bricks are darker glazed, giving the brickwork a slightly 'stripy' appearance. It is only in the 20th century that the modern 'stretcher' bond has come into general use, as brickwork generally provides a face to an internal blockwork wall. Stretcher bond is also in evidence at Rectory Cottage on the later rear extensions, which contrasts with the earlier brickwork.

4.4.7 Bricks could be produced in different colours through a combination of firing techniques and temperatures and the clay used. Brickwork can also be used to create decorative patterns such as diaper patterns, polychrome work and header bond where the entire elevation is laid in headers. There are few examples of decorative brickwork in evidence in the village. The Old School House has a dentil course at the eaves formed by projecting bricks.

4.4.8 It is only in the 20th century that the modern 'stretcher' bond has come into general use, as brickwork generally provides a face to an internal blockwork wall.

17 As recorded by Molly Beswick : M. Beswick, (1993) "Brickmaking in Sussex : A history and gazetteer".

**English Bond****Painting and rendering of brickwork**

4.4.9 The majority of brickwork within the conservation area boundary has been left unpainted, as evidenced at The Rectory and the Old School House. However, there are a few instances where it has been white painted, as at Forge Cottage to the ground floor; the northwest corner of The Monk's House; and the chimneys at the Dorset Arms. The paint work appears to be modern, but historically would have been a limewash to provide a sacrificial coat to the brickwork.

4.4.10 The use of render on walls to buildings within the village is not in evidence and is not a local characteristic of the settlement.

Tile hanging

4.4.11 Similar to bricks, tiles would have been readily available locally due to the geology of the area. The tile hanging in the conservation area is predominantly plain, with only one use of more decorative tiles at Rectory Cottage. Full height white painted tile hanging at the Dorset Arms, perhaps painted white to mimic weather boarding.

Plain tile hanging and painted brickwork**Painted tile hanging****Weatherboarding**

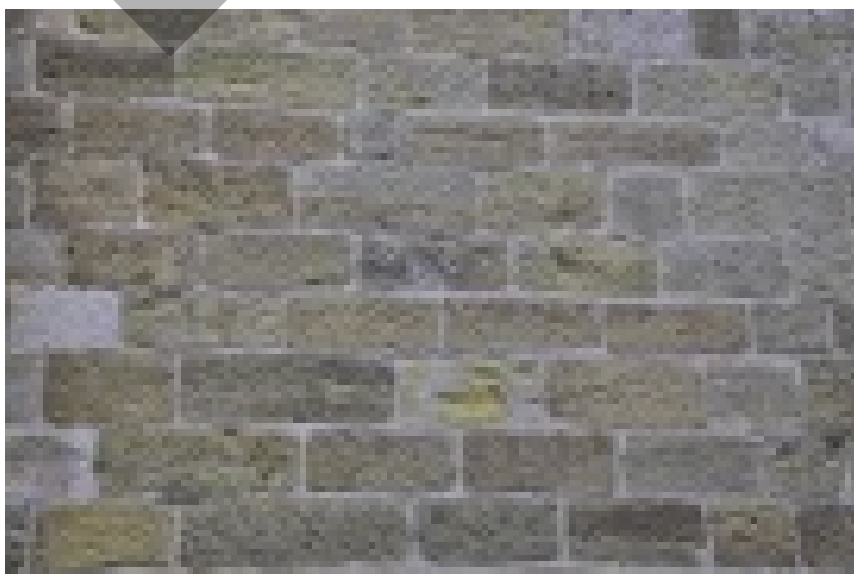
4.4.12 In addition to the use of brickwork to reface timber framed buildings in the 18th century, there is also an example of full height use of white painted weatherboarding to Dorset House (the former village stores) and full height white painted tile hanging at the Dorset Arms, perhaps painted white to mimic weather boarding.

4.4.13 Weather boarding has only been used on one domestic property, and this is white painted. It is interesting to note that the former lower status agricultural buildings and older outbuildings to residential properties have either unpainted or dark stained weather boarding, rather than a white painted finish. The three bay cart shed with attached store adjacent to the church has more unusual vertical planked boards to elevations and this is a significant survival.

Full height weatherboarding**Vertical boarding****Stone**

4.4.14 Withyham also has examples of use of local stone in the construction of older buildings within the village, as demonstrated by the Church and by Dorset Arms Coach House, both prominent buildings in the street scene within the two distinct areas of the village. Both buildings are constructed of 'ashlar' type stonework. Ashlar is where blocks have been more precisely cut and laid in courses. The stone has been rusticated, where the smooth face has been given a texture. There is one example of less precise rubble masonry to the south wall of the chancel of the church, which creates a far more random pattern to the stonework, and represents part of the original construction of the church, prior to its rebuilding in the mid 17th century. Decorative stonework elements have also been used on the church, including hood mouldings to doorways, and tracery within lancet windows.

4.4.15 It is interesting to note that stonework is not used historically used in combination with other walling materials in the village, such as brick, weather boarding or tile hanging.

Rusticated ashlar stonework

Timber framing

4.4.16 There are no examples of exposed timber framing to buildings within the conservation area.

4.5 Roofs

4.5.1 The traditional roof forms, materials, chimneys and detailing create an interesting and varied roofscape throughout the village that contributes to the historic character of the conservation area.

Clay Tile

4.5.2 The predominant roofing material throughout the conservation area is clay tile. Traditionally, the tiles would have been locally sourced and are a red/orange in colour, which has weathered.

Slate

4.5.3 There is no use of slate in the the village and use of this material in any future modern development within or on the edge of the conservation area should be avoided as it is not a traditional material in this location.

Alternative roofing materials

4.5.4 There is very little use of alternative roofing materials throughout the conservation area, even on later 19th and 20th century buildings. There are two examples of alternative roof materials. Horsham Stone slates have been used on the 19th century church porch roof, and these contrast with the clay tiles on the remainder of the church building. The other example is on the cartshed with attached store to the northwest of the church, where the original roof covering has been replaced by corrugated metal sheets, rusted a red/brown in colour. The replacement of traditional roof coverings on agricultural buildings with metal sheet is a traditional repair technique and is in keeping with the rural character of this area.

Corrugated metal roofing



Horsham stone slate to church porch roof



Roof forms

4.5.5 Roof forms throughout the conservation area are a mix of full hips, half hips and gables, which creates an interesting and varied roofscape throughout the village. Roofs of the historic buildings are generally parallel to the roads, with only a few gable ends fronting onto the highway, such as at the Dorset Arms and the Dorset Arms Coach House. There is use of a parapet wall to the front facade of The Rectory, demonstrating its higher status; and use of stone copings to the gables at the Dorset Arms Coach House.

Chimney Stacks and Pots

4.5.6 Substantial brick chimney stacks survive to many of the domestic buildings. The white painted chimney stacks to the Dorset Arms are a particularly dominant feature through this part of the village, and within views into the village from the southeast. Chimney pots are an important part of the roofscape and should be retained. Those on buildings in Withyham are generally plain orange/red pots of varying heights.

4.5.7 Chimney stacks and associated pots create articulation and interest to the buildings within the streetscene and are often part of the evolution and/or historic significance of a building. Loss of such features, where historic, can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area, through an erosion of traditional detailing of buildings, and should be discouraged.

Rainwater Goods

4.5.8 The retention of traditional cast metal rainwater goods throughout the conservation area is important to avoid erosion of this important detail with the use of modern, less robust PVCu guttering and downpipes.

Barge Boards

4.5.9 There is very little use of barge boards to roofs throughout the conservation area, due to the hipped and half-hipped nature of the roofs. Where there are gabled roofs to front elevations, however, there is use of decorative barge boards, as evidenced at the Dorset Arms and Rectory Cottage.

Other roof features and details

4.5.10 Roof lights are not a feature of this conservation area and this significantly has allowed the character of the roofscape to remain plain and uninterrupted by this modern feature on domestic properties.

4.5.11 There is some use of dormers, but they are not a prevalent feature on the historic buildings in the village, with the majority of roofs remaining uninterrupted. There is one prominent example to the front elevation of The Monks House, on the late 19th century southern extension, and these dormers are rather out of proportion within the roof slope, creating an over prominence. There are less prominent examples of dormers to the rear roof slope of the Dorset Arms Coach House, and these are traditionally detailed and

proportioned within the roof slope. Through eaves dormer type windows are not a traditional common feature.

4.6 Windows

4.6.1 Windows are a critical element of a building's design and even subtle changes can significantly alter the character. As distinct from their modern counterparts, windows found in older properties are designed with the sub-frame and opening or fixed light flush, as opposed to the cruder design found in modern storm proofed windows. The traditional detailing produces a more harmonised design. Likewise, the position of the window in the wall, whether flush or set in a reveal, and the form of the glazing affects the play of light and shade, significantly affecting the visual appearance.

4.6.2 There has been little intrusion of modern window detailing and materials within the conservation area. Therefore, the significance is the survival of historic detailing. This is predominantly through the use of traditional timber or metal casement windows. There is very little use of sliding sashes, either vertical or horizontal. There are examples within the conservation area of both earlier wrought iron, probably made locally, and cast iron, later Victorian, casement windows. These metal casements are identified by external hinges and decorative window furniture, such as the internal catch handles and stays. In the case of the later cast iron windows, these can be highly decorative, such as at the Old School House and the Dorset Arms. There is a significant use of leaded lights to casement windows within the conservation area.

Dorset Arms window



Old School House window



4.6.3 Within the historic domestic properties, where the first floor of earlier buildings has been tile hung or weather boarded, the main style of windows within this upper element is either side hung single glazed timber casements or metal casement windows with leaded lights. There is quite a prevalence of the use of square leaded lights in the village. These small window types fit within concealed timber framing behind the tile hanging on these earlier properties. The use of the simpler casement style windows is often replicated at ground floor within the refaced brick facade, unless there is evidence for the insertion of later 19th century shop windows, as at Dorset House, where the larger opening has been infilled with timber casements. This former shop frontage is an important

and significant survival within the village, prominent in the street scene and indicates the former mixed uses of the property.

4.6.4 It is interesting to note that there is little use of vertical sliding sash windows in the village. The symmetrical front elevation of The Rectory is dominated by 15 prominent sash windows, with two panes over two, probably representing a 19th century upgrading of earlier small paned vertical sliding sash windows, of which there remains two of this style at ground floor, to either side of the front door. The other example is Dorset House, the former stores, and it is likely that these were installed in the 18th century or early 19th century to create a higher status character.

8 over 8 vertical sliding sash windows



4.6.5 The use of stone mullion windows within the conservation area, is not common. The most obvious use of stonework for windows is at the church, and the examples range from early English style, to the later perpendicular style with decorative stone tracery. There are also examples of stone mullioned windows to the front elevation of the Dorset Arms Coach House. Other windows within this property are timber mullioned.

4.6.6 The use of non-traditional materials, such as PVCu has fortunately not encroached on historic buildings within the village. While aspirations to improve thermal insulation are understood, wholesale replacement of well-designed traditional windows can rarely be achieved satisfactorily using sealed double glazed units. A more appropriate solution is likely to be through proprietary draught stripping and secondary glazing. Existing windows can normally be retained, repaired or remade to a design appropriate to the period and design of the property.

4.7 Doors

4.7.1 Doors and associated architectural detailing are an important feature which often complete the character of the building. The significance of doors to the historic character of a building is often overlooked and doors are replaced with modern replicas of inappropriate detail. The associated architectural detailing of porches to lower status buildings, or ornate door cases to the higher status buildings reflect the styles and periods of buildings and the social standing of the buildings.

4.7.2 The majority of the doors to domestic properties in the conservation area are either traditionally detailed plain planked or panel timber doors.

4.7.3 Porches to front doors are not a particularly prevalent feature to traditional buildings in the village, however, there are a few isolated examples such as the enclosed gabled porch to the Dorset Arms; the small pitch roofed porch to Rectory Cottage; and the small leaded roof open porch to the Old School House. There is one significant porch type feature at The Rectory, comprising a segmental veranda which spans the width of the central portion of the original property, with slender iron columns supporting a lead roof.

4.7.4 Fortunately, the use of non-traditional materials, such as PVCu, has not yet begun to replace traditionally detailed timber doors within the conservation area. Modern door styles attempt to replicate traditional detailing, but normally without success, leading to chunky applied modern detailing, which together with inappropriately detailed door furniture, can be particularly visually incongruous in relation to the historic built environment within which it is viewed.

4.8 Shopfronts

4.8.1 Shop fronts are a surviving feature within many of the villages and towns in the District and often outlive a commercial use of a property, providing the evidence for past use. Shopfronts and their associated signage are an important feature in the street-scene of many of our towns and village and their design and detailing help to define the character of an area. Where historic shop fronts survive, every effort should be made to retain them and the different architectural elements of which they comprise.

4.8.2 Shop fronts were introduced in the 18th century and the majority dating from the 18th and 19th century are designed on an individual basis, utilising a variety of architectural detailing and styles, with small paned windows. Later 19th century shop fronts have larger areas of plate glass as this material became more widely available, changing the scale in the design of shop fronts. ⁽¹⁸⁾

4.8.3 There is only one remaining example of a, now altered, early shopfront within the village. Dorset House on the northern side of the road was the former post office and stores. and retains its small 19th century double shop window to the front elevation. and is a remnant of the former trade and retail function of the street and is prominent in the street scene.

18 For further information relating to historic shop front detailing, please refer to Chapter 13 of the Wealden Design Guide, 2008, or refer to any future equivalent Design Guide produced by the Council

Shop front at Dorset House



4.9 Garden Walls, Fences and Other Means of Enclosure

4.9.1 Garden walls, traditionally detailed fences and other means of enclosure such as hedges (discussed later) are important components and make a significant contribution to the character of the area. Many historic boundaries remain, defining the original plot sizes and are natural or man made.

4.9.2 Boundary treatments are a mixture of hedges, post and rail fencing and post and wire fencing, reflecting the rural character of the area. There is one example of the use of a low brick wall to the front of Dorset House which is prominent in views from the Dorset Arms.

4.9.3 The majority of properties, including the few modern dwellings within the conservation area, have retained an historic method of defining the boundary using hedgerows or traditional rural type fencing. There is only a small use of close boarded type fencing in evidence, which can be an alien feature, detracting from the historic character of the area, and further incursion of this feature should be discouraged.

5 Trees, Open Spaces and Views

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Trees, hedges, open spaces and other natural elements form a significant part of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5.1.2 The landscape around the conservation area still has a very rural character of fields, hedges and trees, which provides an important backdrop to the settlement. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

5.2 Key Characteristics

Key Characteristics

- The spur of higher land called The Knoll, which splits the village into two small areas of focus to the east and west.
- The position of the church on higher ground on The Knoll.
- Trees form an important backdrop to the entrances to the village at the east and west along the river corridors; along the southern side of the B2110; and to the southeast.
- There are prominent tree specimens within the village, particularly in the churchyard and in front of the Dorset Arms.
- The landscape around the village is characterised by its rolling nature, interspersed with woodland, mosaic of small fields, and treed boundaries to fields and water courses.
- Hedgerows are the predominant boundary feature in the village.
- Important open spaces include: the churchyard; the land to the west of The Rectory and Rectory Cottage; land to the north of Dorset Arms; and land to the south and east of Old School House. There are also wide verges to the edges of the roadside in areas.
- The important open landscape setting to the west of the church and rectory; on the eastern side of The Knoll; and to the south and east of Old School House.
- Long distance views across the landscape to the west, southwest, north, and northeast.

- Local views throughout the two areas of settlement within the village.
- Views to man made features in the surrounding landscape, including the Hartfield church spire; the buildings at Old Buckhurst; and the World War II pillbox.

5.3 Trees and Hedgerows

5.3.1 It would be unrealistic to identify all trees which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The most significant trees and groups of trees are shown on the character appraisal maps.

5.3.2 Important trees in the conservation area may have been identified and protected with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), but designation of a conservation area extends protection to the remaining trees within the boundary. TPOs are not shown on the appraisal maps, but can be viewed by carrying out a search at: <http://www.planning.wealden.gov.uk/advsearch.aspx>

5.3.3 Groups of trees form an important backdrop to the settlement, along the river corridors to the east and west; and along the southern side of the B2110 at the base of the Knoll. Particularly prominent mature specimen trees within the centre of the village are those within the churchyard, and to the front of the the Dorset Arms and Dorset Arms Coach House.

5.3.4 Several important trees in the conservation area have been previously identified and are protected with Tree Preservation Orders, but designation of a conservation area extends protection to the remaining trees within the boundary.

5.3.5 Hedgerows are the predominant boundary feature throughout the village and help to reinforce the rural location of this village within the High Weald. Hedgerows can often be fundamental in understanding the development of the landscape, being remnant boundary features which have remained after later development has taken place.

5.3.6 Hedgerows can be easily lost through disease or replacement by modern, less sympathetically designed boundary treatments, such as close boarded fencing. Hedgerows also form a very important habitat for birds and small mammals and often contain many species of plants.

5.4 Open Spaces

5.4.1 Open spaces within and on the edge of the conservation area are important as they help to define the built environment and create a sense of place. The important open areas are defined on the character appraisal map.

5.4.2 The open spaces within the currently designated conservation area include the churchyard and the smaller green spaces to the front of the Dorset Arms and Dorset Arms

Coach House. These are all publicly accessible and form an important social and cultural function within the village.

5.4.3 Other areas of important open space have also been identified and these include the grassed areas to the front of The Rectory and Rectory Cottage,, and land to the west of Forge Cottage; and land to the east and south of the Old School House, as far south as the boundary with the sports field.

5.4.4 The small area of land to the west of Forge Cottage is important as the immediate open setting of this listed building with its attached former forge and reinforces the isolation of this property from other built form on the northern side of the B2110. The land to the east and south of Old School House is the former Fair Field and this significant open space within the river flood plain preserves the traditional rural open setting of this part of the village and is also significant for its social history as the Fair Field in the medieval period.

5.4.5 The open landscape to the west of the church and rectory, along with the associated lake is also a particularly important traditional open setting to this part of the village.

5.5 Important views - within, into and out of the Conservation Area

5.5.1 The most important views looking into, out of and through the conservation area are shown on the views map in Appendix 1. These contribute to the character and setting of the conservation area and care needs to be taken to ensure that they are not lost or compromised by future development or poorly sited services.

5.5.2 Consideration should also be made to the seasonal changes in the landscape and that views may more easily be gained into, out of and through the conservation area during certain times of the year, and particularly in the winter and early spring when the trees are without full leaf.

5.5.3 Due to the location of the western part of the settlement, on the side of the Knoll, and the mature trees lining the roadside and river corridor, there are minimal views into this area from the B2110. However, views are gained into this area from the footpath on the hillside to the west in the vicinity of the pill box; and some intermittent long distance glimpsed views across the Medway valley from the north. Otherwise, views within this part of the village are modest and terminated by the small amount of built development.

5.5.4 Views out of this western part of the village, however, are particularly significant due to the raised topography. To the west, there are panoramic views over the rolling countryside towards Hartfield, with the church spire visible. To the southwest, there are long distance views to Ashdown Forest and Old Buckhurst. To the north, there are views across the valley of the River Medway to the rising land beyond; and to the northeast, from the rear of the churchyard, across the valley towards Balls Green. It is interesting to note that the eastern part of the village is relatively hidden in views due to the falling topography and treed boundaries to both the B2110 and access track to Buckhurst Park.

5.5.5 The eastern part of the village is not prominent within the surrounding landscape, due to its location on the valley floor; the treed river corridor to the west, north and south; and the steeply rising topography of The Knoll to the west. Long distance views out of this part of the village towards the north are gained from the access road to Buckhurst Park, due to its raised level on the side of The Knoll; and along the valley bottom to the southeast, across the former Fair Field and adjacent sports field. These views are truncated by the treed boundary of the meandering river corridor. Views to the west are truncated by the curving, rising nature of the road, with its treed and hedged boundaries, leaving this part of the village visually isolated from the eastern element around the church. Views to the east are gained along the route of the B2110, which rises out of the valley.

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6 Considerations for change in conservation areas

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Guidance clarifies that a good conservation area appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection. This conservation area character appraisal has been used to identify and articulate the significance of this particular conservation area.

6.1.2 The Council has a duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. The production of a Management Plan is particularly relevant where there is pressure for development and where cumulative minor changes may affect the character of the conservation area. Management of the conservation area to maintain and enhance its significance will be important and will form part of a future, separate overarching Management Plan document for all the designated conservation areas in Wealden, in conjunction with the individual conservation area appraisals and Local Plan policy. Management of the conservation areas in the District will include Article 4 Directions to limit permitted development rights; the positive use of National and Local historic environment policies; and Enforcement to support the reinstatement of lost detail and visual character.

6.1.3 Any future development within or on the edge of the conservation area, or within its setting, should respect the elements that form the significance of the heritage asset, including views, open space and boundary treatments and spaces between buildings. It is also important that the scale, massing, design, layout, siting and the use of materials within future development are carefully considered in relation to the historic character of the area, including the utilisation of locally distinctive traditional materials; architectural form and massing; spaces between buildings; and layout of existing development.

6.1.4 Where elements are to be removed and/or replaced that are considered detractors or that do not make a positive contribution to the conservation area, these opportunities should be taken for enhancement of the conservation area.

6.1.5 Research can help with the understanding of the significance of the architectural design and individual features of a building, perhaps as originally designed, or as altered at an early date, including fenestration, doors and shop fronts, and with respect to particular details to facades, roofs and chimneys. This would provide opportunities for positive change and alteration to take place to the visual character of existing buildings in the conservation area, and could also help to reinstate lost features that have been subject to past erosion of detail. Where infill development is proposed, historic research can help to inform the appropriateness of proposals, including siting, design, bulk, massing and detailing of any new building or structure and to understand the impact on the setting of any heritage asset. This would help to ensure that opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within their setting enhance or better reveal their significance as required by the NPPF.

6.2 Guiding principles for changes in conservation areas

Guiding principles for changes in conservation areas

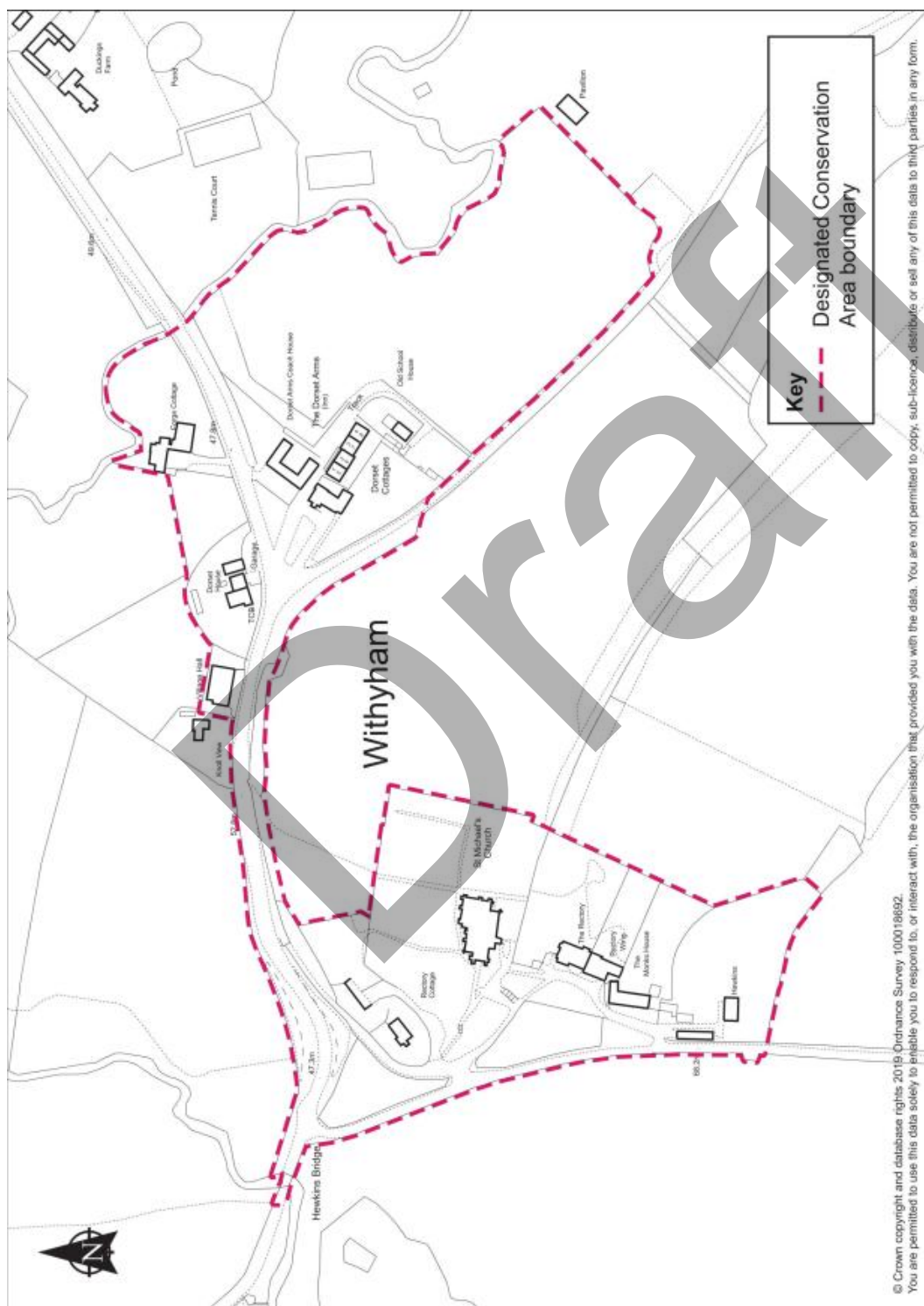
- Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Understand and respond to significance
- Respond to historic pattern of development
- Retain historic features that contribute to the character of the conservation area
- Retain architectural detailing
- Ensure consistency and quality in design, materials and finishes
- Retain landscape features, open spaces and boundary treatments that contribute to the character of the conservation area
- Avoid visual clutter
- Ensure the conservation area is not harmed by inappropriate change within its setting
- Preserve and enhance views into and out of the conservation area

6.3 Key issues impacting on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

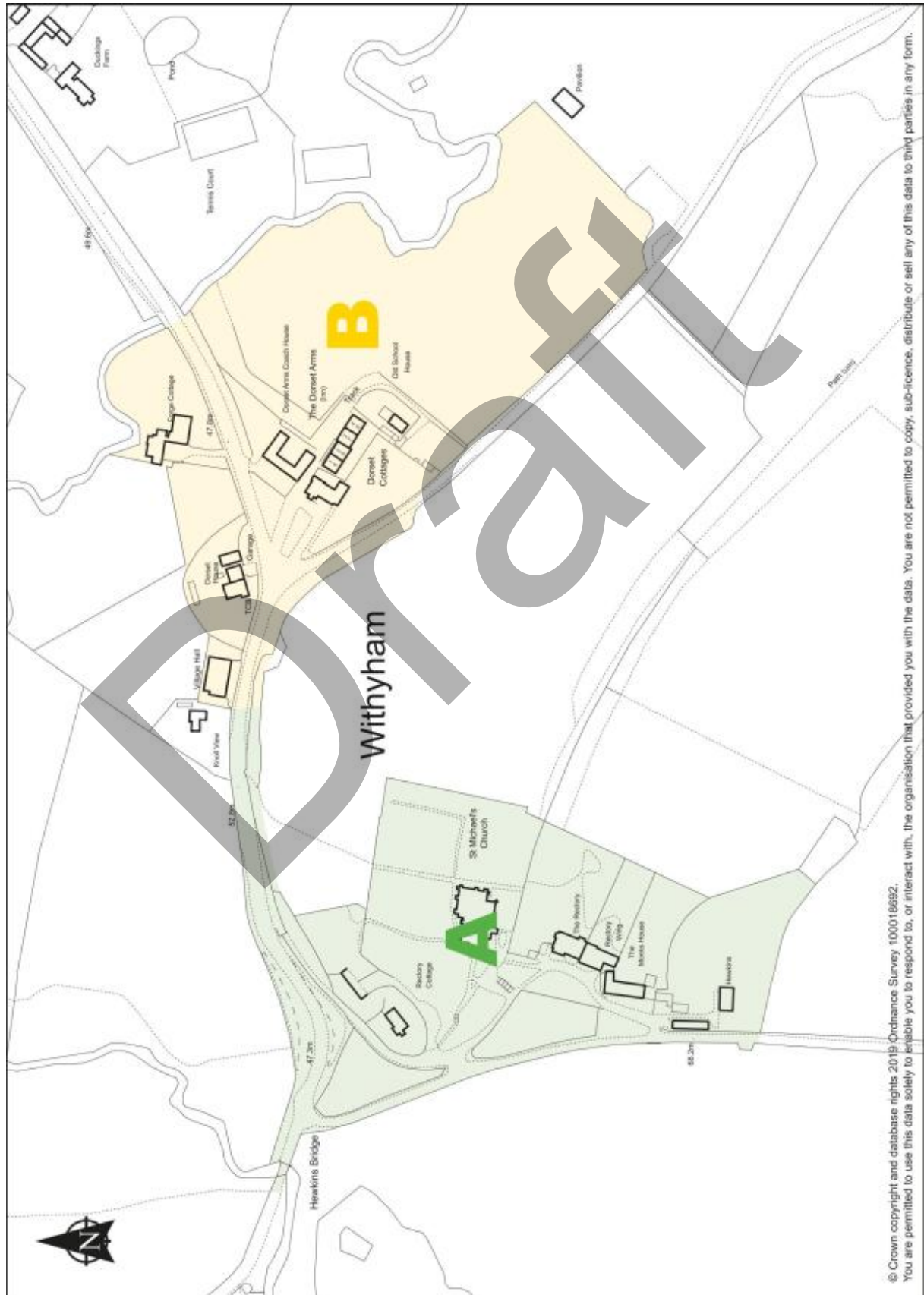
Key issues impacting on the character and appearance of the Withyham conservation area

- Erosion of architectural detail on existing buildings
- Inappropriately detailed window replacement
- Location of new development, including infill development and outbuildings, within or in the setting of the conservation area to ensure a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Cumulative impact of new development
- Design of new development, including architectural detailing, and combinations of materials to reflect the historic character of the village
- Loss of traditional shop fronts and design of business signage
- Loss of traditional boundary treatments and opportunity for reinstatement
- Impact of modern boundary treatments on character and appearance of the rural conservation area
- Volume of traffic on the B2110
- Impact of vehicular parking - domestic and business - on the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Highways works
- Road signage
- Design and siting of street furniture

1.1 Designated Conservation Area Boundary



1.2 Character Areas



1.3 Visual Appraisal

VISUAL APPRAISAL MAP TO FOLLOW

1.4 Views

VIEWS MAP TO FOLLOW

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Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Ancient Woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA): These have been identified by East Sussex County Council Archaeology Section based on data held within the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER). Any proposed development within an ANA will trigger consultation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeology Section. This helps to meet the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 128, which states: 'as a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Article 4 Direction: A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

Arts and Crafts style: The style of architecture prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and typified by the use of traditional local building materials and traditional craftsmanship championed by such people as William Morris.

Ashlar: Masonry comprising large blocks wrought to even facing and square edges. Also used to describe plaster scored to imitate blockwork.

Assarting: The practice of cultivating small parcels of land for rent.

Bargeboards: Projecting, sometimes decorative, boards placed against the eaves of the gable of a building and hiding the horizontal roof timbers.

Bay: Internal compartments of a building, each divided from the other, not necessarily by solid walls, and by divisions only marked in the side walls, or the ceiling. Also, external divisions of a building by fenestration.

Casement window: A window hinged on one side to open outwards or inwards.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Conservation Area: an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Curtilage: An area of land attached to a house, often within the same enclosure, which serves or historically served the purposes of the dwelling in some necessary or useful manner, but is not necessarily in the same ownership.

Curtilage listed building: Any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before July 1, 1948. The object or structure may not necessarily be included in the listed building description.

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under relevant legislation.

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Diaper Brickwork: A decorative pattern in brickwork, achieved by a diamond pattern of blue headers. Popular in 17th Century and revived during the Arts and Crafts movement.

Dressings: A brick or Stone that has been worked to a desired shape; the faces to be exposed are smooth, usually ready for installation. Dressed stone can project or be flush around an aperture such as a door or window, or at the corner of a building (quoins) and is often distinguished in texture or colour from the rest of the wall.

Fenestration: The arrangement of windows in a building.

Flemish Bond: The use of bricks laid in an alternating header and stretcher pattern to create a chequerboard pattern. The headers are often a heavier fired, darker brick, which are vitrified (glazed). **Galleting:** Slivers of stone or splinters of flint, spalls or small pebbles inserted into the mortar joints of a rubble or flint wall to fill the gaps between stones and leave less mortar exposed.

Georgianised: The modernisation of buildings in the 18th Century. Usually refers to modernisation of fenestration and walls of buildings.

Hand thrown brick: A brick which has been made by hand rather than machine.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic Environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic Environment Record (HER): Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Jetty: The overhanging upper floor or floors to a medieval building.

Kellys Directory: A directory of businesses and private households, written from the 1860s for many regions in the south east of England.

Knapped flints: Flints which have been shaped through the process of striking to produce a flat-face for building walls.

Lead comes: Pieces of moulded lead, H-shaped in section, separating small pieces of glass within a window.

Leaded light: Individual pieces of window glass separated by lead comes or by an ironwork frame.

Listed building: a building identified under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and included in a list as being of 'special architectural or historic interest' which is subject to the need for listed building consent for alterations.

Local Planning Authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

Manor: a unit of estate management usually with a principal house. The holder is known as Lord of the Manor, and as such, has various rights over land and tenants. A Parish could contain several manors or a manor could embrace more than one Parish. Usually a manor would also have certain rights associated with it, most importantly the right to hold certain courts: court leet and court baron.

Mullion: A vertical post or upright, dividing a window into two or more lights.

National Planning Policy Framework: Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied and provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Oriel window:

An angular or curved projection usually on an upper floor, containing a window.

Pebble-dash: Mortar with pebbles in, used as a coating (render) for external walls.

Promontory: An elevated geological outcrop.

Render: An external coat of mortar covering stone, brick or cob.

Registered Park and Garden: A park or garden included on a register compiled by English Heritage as being of special historic interest in England.

Rubbed or gauged brick arches: The use of soft bricks, sawn to shape, then rubbed to a smooth surface and precise dimensions, laid with very fine joints. Most frequently seen in arches to door and window openings.

Sash window: A window comprising sashes (a frame holding glazing) which slides vertically in grooves. A sash window which slides horizontally is known as a 'Yorkshire' sash.

Scheduled Monument: A 'nationally important' archaeological site or historic building, given protection against unauthorised change.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

String course: A moulding or narrow projecting course of stone or brick running horizontally along the face of a wall.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, but are not part of the development plan.

Tithe map and apportionment: Produced circa 1840 to assess tithe payments on land to the local church. Record land and buildings, owner and occupier, and land use.

Topography: The arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.

Transom: Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or the top of a door.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO): Provides control over works to trees which could damage or destroy the health or appearance of selected trees.

Vernacular: Domestic or functional, rather than monumental buildings, usually constructed of local materials

Window 'light':

The glazed part of a window

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Appendix 3: References

LEGISLATION

- www.legislation.gov.uk
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework 2018
- Further information is also available at: www.planningportal.gov.uk - The Planning Portal is government's on-line resource for services and guidance relating to the planning system.

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