

Portslade Old Village

Character Statement

Designated: 1974

Area: 13.8453 hectares / 34.2117 acres

Article 4 Direction: None

Character Statement adopted:

16 September 2010



Introduction

Location and Setting

Portslade Old Village lies 6km to the west of Brighton and Hove city centre, and 1.5km inland from the sea. It comprises the remaining nucleus of a historic downland village, which now forms the heart of the Portslade and Mileoak suburb. The conservation area is bounded by Easthill Park to the southeast, Drove Road to the north, and Valley Road, High Street, South Street and Locks Hill to the southwest.

The village nestles in a hollow of a north-south aligned valley. The topography of the area is reflected in the placename, with 'slade' probably derived from 'slaed', meaning 'shallow valley' or 'low marshy ground'. This provides a sheltered location.

Amongst its heritage assets, the area contains 28 listed buildings, 7 locally listed buildings, a scheduled ancient monument and an archaeologically sensitive area (*see graphic on next page*). It was designated as a conservation area in 1974, at which point an appraisal was produced. A brief character statement was produced in 1997.

A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. This document seeks to define and assess the 'special interest' of Portslade Old Village Conservation Area, and make recommendations for its future management.

Assessment of Special Interest

General Character and Landscape Setting

The conservation area comprises the historic Portslade village; a small downland village that developed around the Norman church and old Manor. Much of the street pattern is medieval in origin. The village grew incrementally during the 17th and 18th centuries with small terraced cottages of this period remaining. Significant change and expansion in the late 18th and 19th century led to the development of the tall characterful 'italianate' brewery (now factory and offices), the large detached grand villas and walled gardens and the open landscaped park, to create the varied distinctive built forms, streets, open spaces, walls, tree belts and landmark features that make up the area's character. With the brewery came workers' housing. The village retains a strong visual coherence through the use of traditional materials.

A modern heavily trafficked road winds through the village, which together with its modern housing frontages, provides a sense of the later spread of housing to the north. Nonetheless the topography, street alignment, high flint walls, and woodland within the village together help frame views and preserve the village's separate identity and sense of visual containment.

Historic Background and Archaeology

The origins and historic development of the area

The first documentary evidence for Portslade is the Domesday Book, where it is recorded as 'Porteslamhe'. St Nicolas' Church was founded in around 1170, consisting at this time of a nave and south aisle. The tower was added in around 1250, and its crenellated top added in the late 14th century. Portslade Old Manor was built in the Norman period to the immediate north of the Church, with a further wing added in the early 17th century.

In 1312, John de Warenne, Lord of the Manor, was granted a charter by King Edward II to hold an annual Fair at Portslade on the 6th December. The village developed around the Church and Manor House throughout the medieval period and 16th century. Its economy was based on traditional downland sheep-corn husbandry.

At the beginning of the 19th century the population of Portslade was 284. The draft Ordnance Survey (OS) map and an inventory compiled by the English Government in 1803 highlights that much of the current street pattern was already established (*Map 1 - Draft Ordnance Survey Map, c.1803*).



Map 1

The morphology of the settlement is shown more clearly on the 1840 tithe map (*Map 2 - 1840 Tithe Map*). A number of wide drove roads radiate from the village to the surrounding fields, emphasising the continued importance of agriculture. The settlement itself contains a number of agricultural complexes interspersed between the dwellings, as well as providing a focus for farmsteads in the surrounding countryside. The complex to the south west of the area is identified on later maps as Portslade Farm. This appears to be the main complex in the village, and retains a large barn and pond, whilst an associated farmhouse was built by 1875. Other complexes are set at the junction of High Street and Drove Road to the north, and the Locks Hill and Manor Road junction to the south east (likely associated with Manor Lodge). The High Street is the only road to display a predominantly built form; the remainder of the settlement is more loosely developed, with large areas of open land containing both market gardens - providing produce for the rapidly expanding Brighton nearby - and the gardens of private villas.



Map 2

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The dwellings comprise a mix of large residences and smaller terraces and cottages of a much more humble form. Robin's Row (built c.1740) comprises the only surviving example of a once characteristic form of dwelling. Further similar courtyard housing is evident on the tithe map along the High Street and Drove Road. Census returns reveal how cramped and overcrowded these dwellings were, with 38 people recorded as living in the 5 cottages of Robin's Row in 1851. Most occupants were labourers on the nearby farms or brickfields.

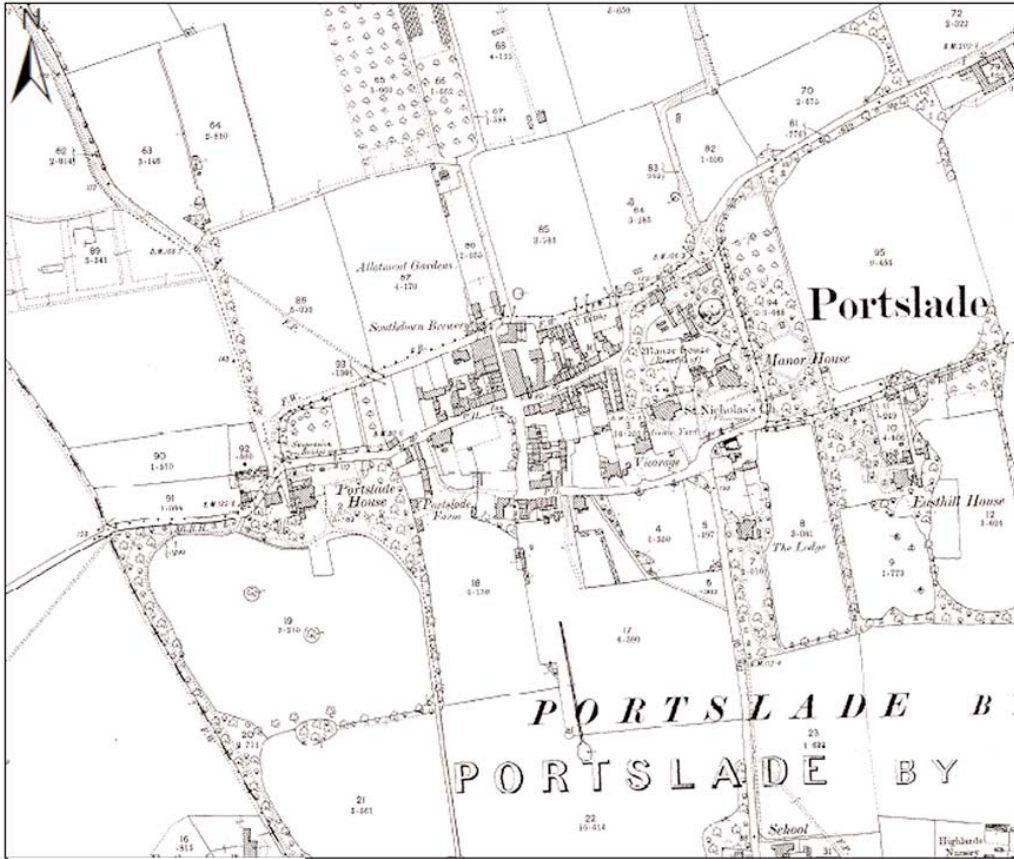
The large residences were built mostly in the late 18th and 19th centuries, alongside the farmhouses and labourers cottages. They suggest that the village became an increasingly desirable place to live at this time. These included:

- Portslade Lodge (1785), which is now known as Manor Lodge and has been converted to flats
- Portslade House, which was built in 1790 for Nathaniel Hall, located beyond the conservation area to the west, and is now demolished. Its grounds were located to both the north and south of the High Street, with a suspension bridge providing access between the two. This, and the surviving flint walls along the High Street, formed a characterful feature in the area.
- A new Portslade Manor (1807 for the Borrer family), which replaced the Norman Old Manor.
- Easthill House (1848 for Edward Blaker), which comprised the enlargement of an older building.
- 15 South Street and 21a Windlesham Close, which are first evident on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1875) and comprise the farmhouse to Portslade Farm. The building was later used briefly as a school.
- Whychote (1895), which was built for Herbert Mews on the site of an earlier building. It was purchased by Andrew Melville, owner of Brighton's Grand Theatre, in 1928.
- Loxdale, which lies beyond the conservation area to the south, was built in 1899 for Walter Mews, by local architect Samuel Denman.

In c.1850, John Dudney established a brewery in the village. This was situated at the corner of Drove Road and South Street, on land formerly comprising a house and yards. Following the repeal of the Malt Tax in 1880, Dudney set about building an expansive new purpose-built brewery. This caused major change to the character of the village, with a striking new classical building constructed at its heart. The brewery replaced a stable, barn and cottage, with a spring also identified on this land on the 1840 tithe map. The existence of a spring is probably a key reason for siting the brewery in this location. By 1882 the brewery was producing 1000 barrels of Southdown Ale per week. Dudney sold the brewery to brothers Walter and Herbert Mews in 1884, who were probably responsible for the construction of workers housing on the present North Road and Southdown Road soon after. This group of buildings represents the first significant housing development outside the historic village core and is of interest both to the history of the brewery and the development of the village as a whole. By 1890, brewery production had increased to 1500 barrels of Southdown Ale per week. In 1919 the building was sold to Kemp Town Brewery, who sold it on to Smithers & Sons Ltd of Brighton. Smithers extended the building by a further storey, allowing them to close their North Street Brewery in Brighton, move all production to Portslade and enable redevelopment of the Brighton brewery site. In the mid to late 20th century, expansion of the site to the east required the demolition of cottages fronting the High Street. The brewery had been converted to manufacturing by the start of World War II, and the engineering company Le Carbone took over the premises in 1947.

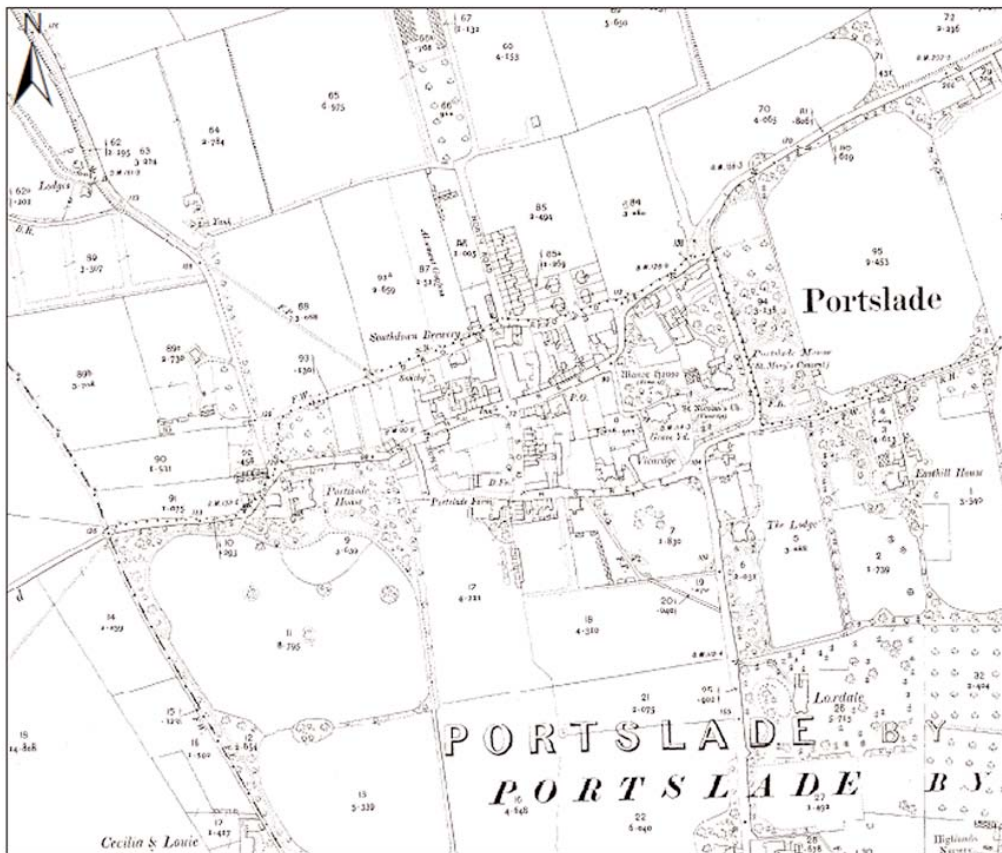
Properties fronting the south side of High Street were demolished between c.1895 and 1915 (*Maps 3 and 4 - c.1895 and c.1915 Ordnance Survey Maps*). It is likely that this area became part of the grounds of Whychote. The field opposite Whychote also formed part of its grounds, but was acquired by compulsory order in the 1930s to provide a village green.

The interwar years saw the suburban development of the wider area, which continued throughout the remainder of the 20th century. Infill developments were constructed on the open spaces within the village, and on the sites of Portslade Manor and Portslade Farm to the west of the conservation area. The vicarage - already evident on the 1840 tithe map - was replaced, with the church hall constructed on the location of the original building. Although Portslade village is now wholly subsumed within the city, it retains its distinct historic village character.



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Map 3



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Map 4

Archaeological significance

Portslade is located on the prehistoric thoroughfare which passes through the downs at Saddlescombe to the coast at Southwick via Hangleton. In Portslade, the route follows Drove Road, where it forms a hollow way; evident as steep banks to either side of the road.

The ruins of the Old Manor house are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with an archaeologically sensitive area (ASA) covering the surrounding area. The original Norman Manor house would have been formed of two wings, of which only one survives above ground. Evidence for a further cross-wing or detached chamber is likely to survive below ground to the east of the extant remains. A wall was excavated within the Emmaus grounds in 2006, to the north of the Old Manor. It is likely to be contemporary with the ruins, as it follows the same alignment.

Spatial Analysis (see graphic on page 9)

The area retains clearly defined plot boundaries through high walls, mature vegetation lining roads, and cottages fronting directly on to the street. The curvature and narrow width of many roads foreshortens views. These factors combine to create a strong sense of enclosure and place throughout the area, and restrict permeation to certain key routes.

The area provides large areas of public and private green space. The private space comprises gardens to the large residences with dense mature vegetation, which contribute to the green character of the area. Significant public green spaces exist (including The Green, Easthill Park, the churchyard and the green banks along Drove Road and at key junctions). Their open aspect contrasts with the clear overarching sense of enclosure throughout the remaining area.

Views in to and out of the conservation area enable an appreciation of the village form and setting. Internal views, spaces, landmarks and permeation routes are important in defining the area's character. Alterations to these would have a significant impact on the 'special interest' of the conservation area.

Important views in, and of, the conservation area include (Figure 1):



V1. Views east across the village from the higher ground to the west, including views along High Street and of the Church, Manor and former brewery



V2. Views along the east portion of High Street



V3. View from South Street across the backgardens of the houses of High Street to the Church



V4. View to Old Manor and Church from within the grounds of Emmaus, with glimpsed views of the sea beyond



V5. Views south across (a) the paddock and (b) Easthill Park, with glimpsed views to the sea and Portslade-by-Sea



V6. View of the brewery along South Street



V7. View from the churchyard westward across the valley; a view dominated by the former brewery

Important spaces and permeation routes in the conservation area include:

- S1. Church Twitten, connecting the top of High Street and the churchyard, which together form a pedestrian route through the heart of the conservation area, with a series of characteristic views unfolding along its length
- S2. Easthill Park forms a large public open space in a suburban setting, focussed around the historic Easthill House. High levels of mature vegetation contribute to the character of this space, and to its surroundings.
- S3. The Paddock, combined with Easthill Park, forms a visual break in the built up area, and serves as a reminder of the village's originally open rural setting

Local landmarks in the conservation area include:

- L1. Former Brewery
- L2. Church
- L3. Portslade Manor

Character Analysis (see graphic on page 11)

The area can be divided into three distinct character areas: The Church and Villas; Easthill Park; and The Brewery and Village Nucleus. The Church and Villas comprises an area of one-off architectural pieces set within large grounds, of which the Church and Manor form the centrepiece. The Easthill Park area includes the green open spaces of the public park surrounding Easthill House and the neighbouring paddock. The Brewery and Village Nucleus consists largely of small cottages and terraces set close to one another and to the streetfront; yet dominated by the large former brewery. This area serves as the local centre.

These three character areas together makeup the historic village of Portslade.

Character Area 1: Church and Villas (see graphic on page 12)

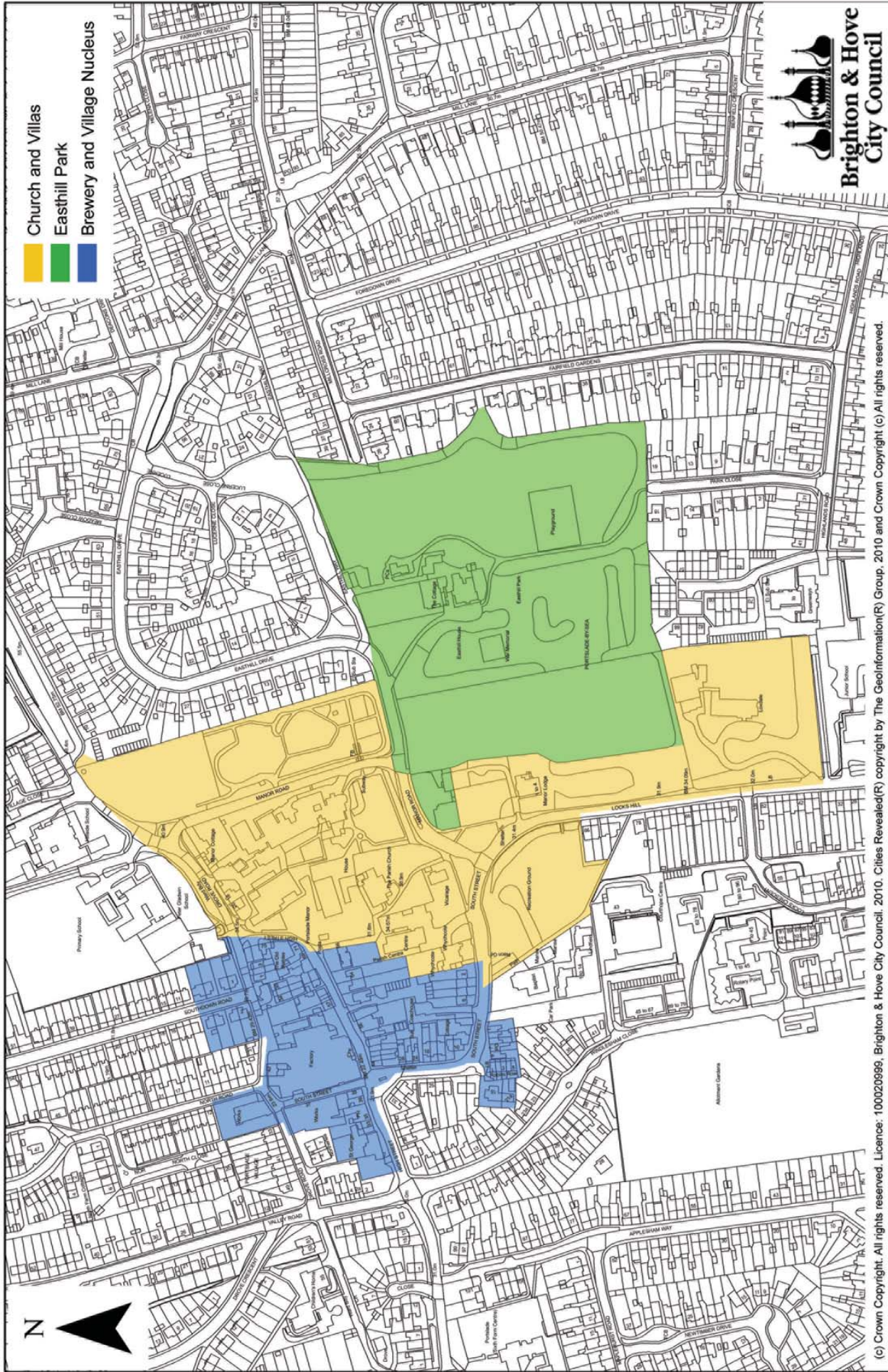
The area is characterised by large, grand buildings, set within spacious grounds. The oldest and most significant building complex is the Norman church and Old Manor, which form the historic core of Portslade. Most of the remaining buildings date to the 18th and 19th century, when the village became a particularly desirable place to live, and the brewery became an important local employer. They display a variety of architectural styles and building materials, but rendered elevations and slate roofs predominate. The buildings are generally set back from the road, within large gardens containing mature vegetation, and bounded by historic walls of a variety of styles and materials. The area retains a high sense of privacy and enclosure, due to the boundary treatment and narrow, curved roads.

Important Buildings and Groups of Buildings

The Church of St Nicolas and Old Manor

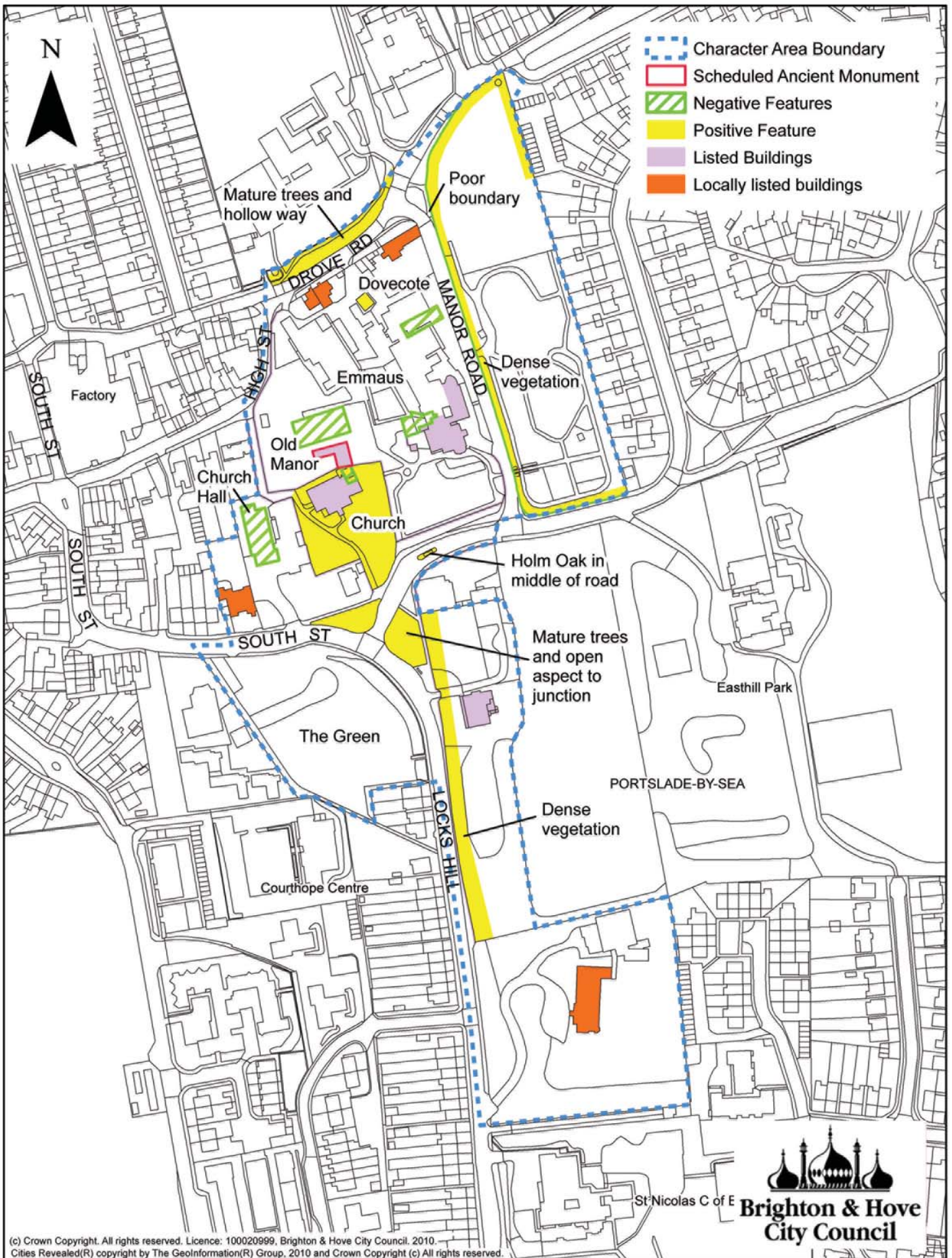
The Church of St Nicolas and the adjacent Old Manor form the historic core of the village. Dating to the 12th century onwards, the Church (*Figure 2*) is set back from the road, and reached via paths from Manor Road and High Street (via Church Twitten). It is set upon the east valley slope, and is prominent in views from the west. Built in flint, it has pitched Horsham stone slab and clay tile roofs, and a three-stage crenellated tower. The Church is set within a small graveyard, containing some interesting historic gravestones, and bounded by flint walls. Its elevated position allows views across the valley to the former brewery, village streets and surrounding modern development. A doorway in the wall formerly gave direct access from the church to Portslade Manor (*Figure 3*). The Church Hall, to the west, is of an unsympathetic, modern design, but is enclosed by flint walls, of only one storey and set at a low level, such that it is largely hidden from views.

Character Areas



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Church and Villas Character Area



To the immediate north of the Church, and partly incorporated within the churchyard wall, lies the Old Manor. Dating to the Norman period, the Old Manor was extended in the 17th century. It was replaced in 1807 by the new Portslade Manor, and was then used as an almshouse. Now only ruinous flint walls remain, having been stripped for materials in the 1840s (re-used in the adjacent folly in the Portslade Manor grounds). Secular buildings of Norman date are particularly rare, and the national significance of the Old Manor is reflected in its designation as both a grade II* listed building and a scheduled ancient monument.

The ruins are not easily visible from adjoining public spaces; they can be glimpsed from the churchyard and the northeast terminus of the High Street, and are accessed but not immediately visible from an archway in Church Twitten. The relationship between the Church and Old Manor as viewed from the churchyard is unfortunately obscured by a poor modern storage building (*Figure 4*).



Fig. 2 - St Nicholas Church



Fig. 3 - Doorway formerly giving access between church and Portslade Manor

The ruins are most visible from within the grounds of Portslade Manor, from where they can be viewed from higher ground. Here, the pair makes a coherent visual group. The intimate relationship between the Church and Old Manor is clearly apparent, and reveals much about medieval relationships of power and prestige between the Lord of the Manor, the ecclesiastical body and the villagers. The view is, however, eroded by the modern fencing surrounding the Old Manor. The site requires ongoing maintenance and management to preserve the fabric and deter trespassers.



Fig. 4 - View of old Manor from churchyard, with modern building



Fig. 5 - Portslade Manor

Portslade Manor

Portslade Manor (*Figure 5*) was built in 1807 by the Borrer family, to replace the Old Manor. It was used between 1904 and 1996 as St Marye's Convent, at which time it was heavily extended to provide dormitories and a commercial laundry. These extensions dominate the site, due to their scale and massing. However they are set to the north and west of the Manor House itself. The House preserves its original relationship to the front lawn and Manor Road to the south, which comprise its primary setting. The site is now an Emmaus Community for homeless people, including accommodation, offices, a second hand shop and café. This has involved further modest alterations and additions. These are mainly of a temporary nature, and lack a holistic planning approach. A folly and grotto survive in the gardens. These are listed, and were built partially from fabric pillaged from the Old Manor. The folly and the relationship between the Manor, its predecessor and the Church provide important clues to early 19th century concepts of fashion and prestige through appropriation of the past.

The land on the east side of Manor Road comprises part of the gardens to Portslade Manor, including the nuns' burial ground and a wildlife garden, and is accessed via a passageway beneath the road. Already largely evident on the 1840 tithe map, the garden and its layout are of historic interest. However the area is in need of maintenance in order to preserve this interest and to improve its appearance. The high timber boarding which encloses the garden in particular is uncharacteristic of the area and period and thus has a negative visual impact.

Manor Lodge and Whychote

Although of contrasting materials and styles, both Whychote and Manor Lodge comprise attractive, imposing residences of architectural and historic merit. Listed at grade II, Manor Lodge is located to the east, and was built in around 1810. Of two storeys and rendered, it is of the Regency style and set within a large garden that extends to the south behind a tall flint wall.

Whychote (*Figure 6*), built in 1895 for brewer Herbert Mews, is set to the north of The Green, behind a tall brick and flint wall. In comparison to the other large houses in this area, Whychote is set closer to the road, with a smaller building plot and more formal vegetation to the garden, such that the building has greater presence in the street scene. Its numerous Mock Tudor gables are of particular interest. Whychote is included on the Council's list of buildings of local architectural and/or historic interest.

Loxdale

Loxdale, Locks Hill, was built by local architect Samuel Denman for brewery co-owner Walter Mews in 1899, and now operates as an English language school. Comprising a high status property, of architectural merit in itself, Loxdale is locally listed. It is associated directly with the history of the village, and particularly the developments that occurred following the establishment of the brewery. The house is not visible from the public highway. Instead, the property presents a tall red brick wall to Locks Hill, above which is a screen of mature vegetation (*Figure 7*).



Fig. 6 - Whychote



Fig. 7 - Loxdale frontage of Locks Hill

Spatial Features

Church Twitten

Church Twitten is bounded to either side by high flint walls, and is dog-legged, such that views to the church are obscured and the route is sheltered and secluded. Views to the north terminate in 'Kemps', which provides a pleasant foreshortened aspect (*Figure 8*). The area retains good traditionally-styled modern lighting, but the ground surface is generic.

The twitten forms an important permeation route, linking the Church to the historic village High Street. Pedestrian access continues through the churchyard to emerge by the Green, providing direct pedestrian access through the heart of the area.



Fig. 8 - Church Twitten

Public Realm

To the north of the area, Drove Road follows the line of an historic hollow way. This is evident as steep banks to the side of the road; with that to the north bounded by a flint revetment wall. A number of mature trees line the road, adding to the pleasant green quality of the streetscape. Three properties front the road to the south; Manor Cottage and numbers 18 and 20 Drove Road. These buildings are shown on the 1840 tithe map, and form part of the historic Portslade Manor estate. Wide grass verges at the junction of Drove Road and Manor Road provide a more open aspect, which is further enhanced by views of open downland beyond the neighbouring Peter Gladwin school site.

A similarly open aspect is achieved at the junction of Manor Road, South Street and Locks Hill, which is enhanced by the presence of mature Holm Oak specimens. A further mature and heavily-pollarded Holm Oak bounded by a flint wall and set in the centre of Manor Road adds particular novelty and interest to the area.

The narrow, curved streets in this area follow the medieval street layout. This, coupled with the presence of high walls and overhanging mature vegetation, creates a high sense of privacy and containment. Most of the roads retain generic modern surfacing, with a mixture of modern and more traditionally-styled street lighting.

The Green

The Green comprises a levelled recreation area, with a steep bank rising to meet the road level, and is of a contrasting, more urban recreational character to much of the conservation area. Formerly a private field associated with Whychote, public access as a village green was established in the 1930s. Its location, somewhat removed from the village centre, beside a busy junction, and the presence of the more amenity-rich Easthill Park nearby, mean the space does not fully perform the function of a village green. The street furniture is generic. To the west The Green is bounded by a high brick wall, over which the modern developments of the Manse, Lindfield and the Baptist Church are visible, which detract from its open green character. It nevertheless provides a pleasant green open space which has a positive impact on the conservation area.

Conclusion

The character of the Church and Villas area is defined by prestigious individual buildings displaying a range of architectural styles and ages. The oldest of these comprise the Norman church and manor house, whilst the majority are 18th and 19th century high status residences. The area retains a strong sense of boundary and enclosure, with a sylvan quality and high level of privacy. It is characterised by:

- Norman Church and Manor complex
- Individual architect-designed, high status and high quality detached villas
- Varied architectural style
- Rendered walls and slate roofs
- Pitched or concealed rooflines
- High flint and brick walls
- Mature vegetation

A number of intrusive factors are however evident, which are damaging to the special historic and architectural interest of the area:

- The boundary to the land to the east side of Manor Road is uncharacteristic of the area and visually poor.
- Fencing around the Old Manor obscures the setting of the monument
- Emmaus has a major presence in the area. Housed in an important historic building, later additions and alterations across the site are of varying quality.
- The single storey building between the Church and Old Manor is of no historic or architectural merit, and is particularly harmful to the relationship of these buildings.

Easthill Park Character Area (see graphic on next page)

Easthill House was constructed as a detached mansion set in spacious grounds. As such, it is historically associated with the character of the Church and Villas area. Similar to that area, its character is one of green space, with mature planting and flint walls creating a clear sense of boundary and screening views with the surrounding area. It offers, however, a more 'public' experience.

The grounds of the House were opened as a public park in 1948, and now contain a variety of amenities. The management regimes required to maintain the park mean the area has an urban recreational character. Long views are apparent to the sea and industry at Portslade-by-Sea to the south.

To the west of the Park, an open paddock forms a continuation of the green character of the park and promotes a rural quality. As such, open green space dominates this character area, with any significant built form limited to the House itself.

Important Buildings

Easthill House

Easthill House sits centrally within the park (*Figure 9*). Built in 1848 for Edward Blaker, it was later home to Harry Blaker, surgeon to Queen Victoria, and brewer John Dudney. The gardens became a Public Park in July 1948, whilst the house was converted to flats and a toy library in the 1960s. It now comprises flats and accommodation for PRESENS (Pre-School Special Educational Needs Service).

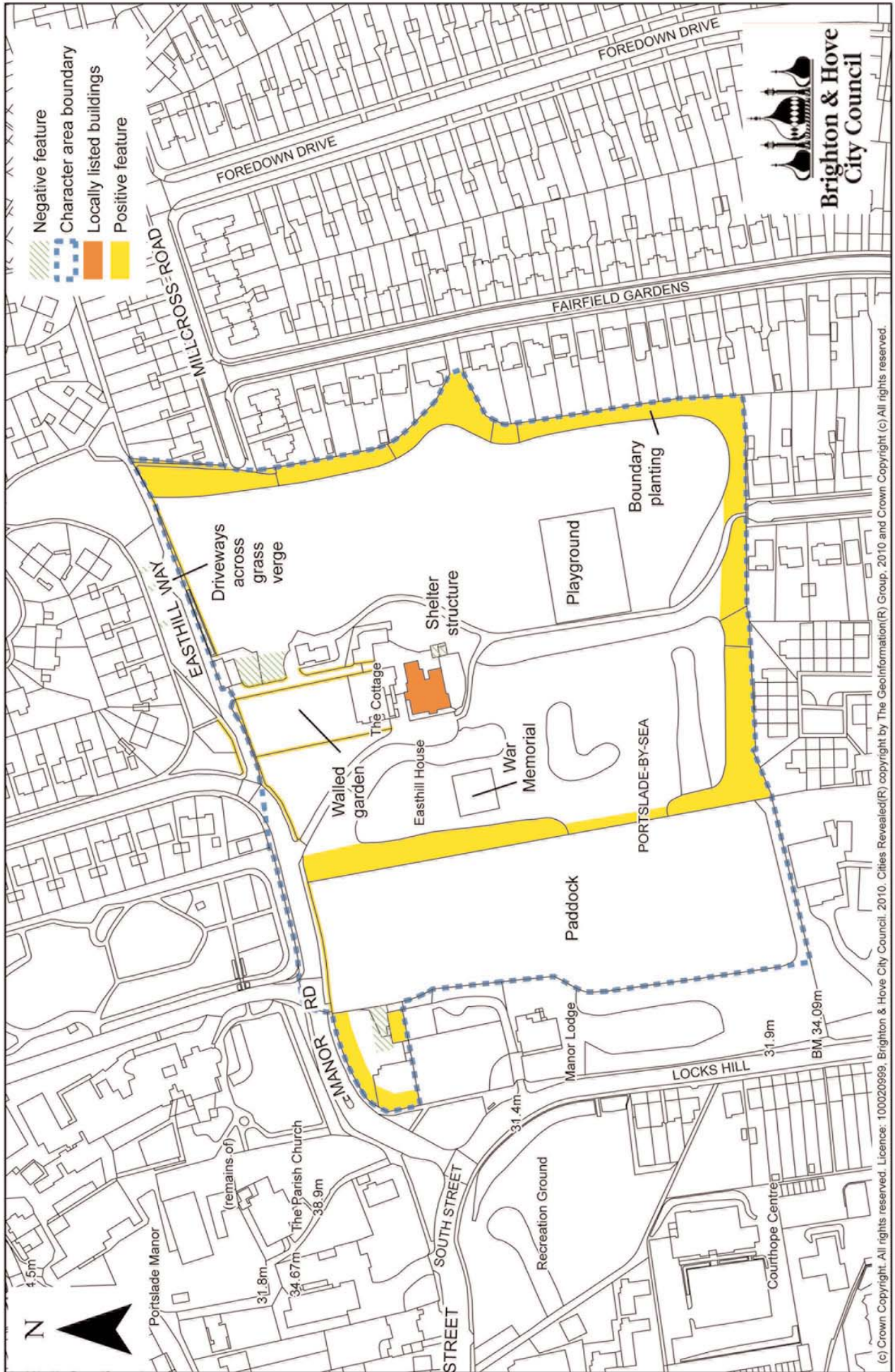
It is of two storeys with rendered walls and a hipped slate roof. The main (west) elevation is of five bays, of which the central bay projects. This elevation has been much altered, resulting in a loss of symmetry.

A small car park is set in front of the house. This, and other small-scale alterations and additions, impacts on the relationship between the House and the surrounding park. The House still provides a focus in the park however. This is emphasised by its location on raised ground when viewed from the west.



Fig. 9 - Easthill House, west elevation

Easthill Park Character Area



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Fig. 10 - Blocked entrance

A number of associated buildings are set to the north and east, including a flint-walled building with decorative bargeboards and a small shelter probably associated with the football pitch, which are of mixed age and quality. The buildings are lower in height than Easthill House, and barely visible from the park.

To the north of the House is a walled garden, formed by high flint pebble walls and containing perimeter planting, a circulation path and a central grassed area. The walls afford a high level of shelter and seclusion. A number of blocked features in the walls enhance the historic dimension of the area (Figure 10).

Open Spaces

Easthill Park

The majority of the park constitutes amenity grass. Areas of vegetation are set mostly to the perimeter of the park. The boundary planting creates a strong sense of enclosure and shields views of the surrounding housing. It also screens views in to the park from the surroundings, such that the area largely appears in isolation. Long views are apparent above the treeline to Portslade-by-Sea and of the sea to the south.

The main entrance to the Park is from the northwest, and marked by a large modern decorative archway. Tarmac paths provide access from here to Easthill House, and from Easthill House to the south. This arrangement of paths or driveways is already evident on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875. The surfaces and furnishings along the route are now entirely modern, and in generally good condition. Numerous entrances provide access into the park from the surrounding housing, facilitating use and integrating the park into the suburban landscape.

To the west of the house is the war memorial and remembrance garden. This forms a secluded spot, sheltered by mostly evergreen vegetation, to provide a quiet and peaceful area in which to reflect.

A modern fenced children's play area is set to the southeast. This is of no historic character or precedent, but is well-used and of high amenity value. It occupies a visually-prominent location within the park.

A football pitch is set to the northeast, and is flanked by a generic modern brick-built changing and toilet block and small car park. The wall beside the entrance to the parking area has been unsympathetically rebuilt in brick and the area as a whole retains little historic character.

A flint-walled store shed is set at the junction of the park access road and Easthill Way, with a small yard to its rear. The form of the building and use of flint enhances the historic character of the area. However, the corrugated iron roof is not in-keeping, and the building requires some maintenance.

Paddock

A private linear paddock is set to the west of the park. This area provides continuity in terms of the open green aspect of the area. It provides a visual break in the built form, and thus acts as an important reminder of the village's originally rural setting. Bounded by a flint wall to the north (Manor Road), the area can be viewed from here in relation to the park, and also distant views to the sea to the south. This view and the open aspect of the paddock particularly enhance the area.

An associated two-storey agricultural building with external steps is set to the northwest of the paddock. Located behind a tall flint wall with extensive vegetative cover, it is set back substantially from the road. It is built in flint with brick dressings and a hipped slate roof. There are already buildings evident in this location on the early 19th century draft Ordnance Survey map, with further buildings and a pond shown on the tithe map. The present building, however, can only be identified clearly on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map, at which point a further agricultural building and pond are still evident.

It is now one of very few agricultural buildings to survive in the conservation area; which were once a common sight and central to the village's economic base. The building and particularly its setting requires some maintenance.

Conclusion

The Easthill Park area presents an urban recreational parkland character. The historic Easthill House is prominent from the entrance to the park and the west especially. Boundary treatment, including mature vegetation, visually dislocates the area from its surroundings, creating a sense of seclusion. The area is characterised by:

- Open green space and mature vegetation
- High number of amenities
- Flint boundary walls
- Easthill House as an isolated and elevated landmark building
- Sense of self-containment
- Long views to Portslade-by-Sea and the sea to the south
- Paddock acts as reminder of the village's originally rural setting

These contribute to the special historic interest of the area; however, a number of intrusive elements are damaging to its character and appearance:

- The boundary walls are of mixed quality. The more prominent walls are of flint, other parts are of poor quality materials and/or design
- Structures and the area associated with the football pitch do not preserve the historic landscape character of the area.

The Brewery and Village Nucleus Character Area *(see graphic on next page)*

In contrast to the other character areas, the Brewery and Village Nucleus displays a much finer and denser urban grain, with varied semi-detached and terraced houses set close to one another. The character of the area derives from the contrast between the large industrial scale of the brewery building, and the surrounding small-scale cottages and shops. This juxtaposition reflects the radical change in character that the construction of the brewery would have brought to the village in the late 19th century - physically, visually, and also in terms of the secondary impacts on the village's economy and subsequent development. The steep east portion of the High Street preserves the image of a quintessential rural village street. The area retains a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial property.

Streetscapes

High Street

The steep and narrow east part of the High Street is particularly characterful; lined with small vernacular cottages, and with pleasant unfolding views along its length (*Figure 11*). The street preserves the intimate character of the medieval street layout. The cottages display a variety of architectural styles, but are primarily of two storeys with pitched clay-tile roofs.

The earlier buildings are generally either faced in flint or rendered. The rendered buildings along the south side of the High Street, opposite the former brewery, are more altered and variable in architectural quality, yet still contribute to the character of the streetscape.



fig. 11 - View along High Street

A few features add particular interest to the streetscene: Number 67 retains evidence of timber framing, and unusually lacks brick quoins to the southeast corner; the corner is instead curved to enable construction in flint. A crooked chimney to the rear of number 57 provides visual interest. The historic writing on the gable to number 56 High Street is important to the character of the area, providing clues to the former use of this building, and to its location at the heart of village life.

The traditional properties front directly on to the street, or have small forecourted gardens. A number of late 20th century properties of generic design are located behind a tall flint wall. The wall largely screens these properties, so that they have a negligible impact on the streetscene. However a clear view of number 60 is evident between the end of the cottages to the south and the beginning of the flint wall. The cottage frontages and flint wall form a clearly defined street edge.

The former brewery building forms a terminus to the west. Later additions to the industrial complex however, including a late 20th century service yard, erode the street's character. Parked cars line the High Street, and are prominent in views along its length. The impact of traffic on the streetscene has however been reduced following the introduction of restricted vehicular access.

Through Route

Parts of the High Street and South Street form a busy arterial route. Despite medieval origins, the route has been widened and modern highway paraphernalia, including bus shelters, signs and road markings, now form a major part of the streetscape, obscuring its historic character.

Views along the street terminate in the brewery building and the flint gable end of Robin's Row, which form prominent features in the streetscene. Good views also exist of the Church tower, across the backgardens of houses on the High Street.

The route forms the boundary to the conservation area and an interface between the historic village and mid to late 20th century suburban housing to the south and west.

The buildings along the arterial route are of varied age, style and quality; the majority date to the 19th and 20th century, having replaced formerly open land and farm buildings. The housing comprises semi-detached and short terraces of houses, set back from the road with low boundary walls to forecourted gardens. They are of brick or render with gabled or hipped roofs.

In general, the buildings are of modest architectural quality. Some now contain unsympathetic modern commercial frontages (numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 28 and 35 South Street, number 39 High Street), and substantial incremental change has occurred over time, including non-traditional roof and window replacements, eroding their historic character. Buildings of particular aesthetic, historic and architectural quality are the Stag's Head Public House, the former Brewery and Robin's Row. These act as reminders of the former historic character of this route.

To the west, and beyond the conservation area, the through route continues along High Street, where it is bounded to both sides by the remains of flint walls. These were the boundary walls to Portslade House, and a suspension bridge used to bridge the road, connecting the two halves of the gardens. The flint walls continue along Mile Oak Road almost as far as the city boundary; marking the route of one of the historic drove roads as shown on the 1840 tithe road. Despite the suburban character of the surroundings, the flint walls are in-keeping with the character of the conservation area and form an important part of its setting and approach from the west. This is reflected in their inclusion on the council's list of buildings of local interest.

Public Realm

Following the designation of the conservation area in 1974, a number of improvements have been made to the public realm, including the laying of red brick clay pavers and traditionally-styled light standards. The brick paving and street furniture requires maintenance in some areas. The bollards in the High Street unfortunately appear to remain necessary to control parking.

Buildings and Groups of Buildings

Brewery and Malthouse



Fig 12. - Brewery Building

These include a classically-detailed building and fragments of a tall yellow brick boundary wall (Figure 13). However, the continued use of this area for light industry, and the further developments that this has required over time, have eroded the historic character of the rear area, which now comprises a hotch-potch of buildings of varying date, design and architectural quality. The character of Drove Road in this area is defined largely by these rear buildings and accretions, resulting in an incoherent and degraded streetscape. Similarly, the modern service yard structure on the High Street detracts from the area, and merits redevelopment.



Fig. 13 - Tall boundary wall

The Malthouse fronting Drove Road forms a significant part of the industrial history of Portslade. It is suggested that the Malthouse predates the 1880 brewery; forming part of the earlier mid 19th century brewery. However, no building is identified in this location on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map. The Malthouse has a particularly distinctive roofline, which adds to the character of the area. It adjoins a small industrial yard, set behind a wall matching that to the brewery opposite. This wall and the arrangement of buildings maintain the clear sense of boundary that pervades the conservation area, and the industrial character of the brewery complex. It is in need of some maintenance.

1 to 8 Southdown Road

Numbers 1 to 8 (consecutive) Southdown Road and numbers 1 to 23 (odd) North Road comprise late 19th and early 20th century housing, constructed for brewery workers. They represent the first development outside the medieval village core, and are of historic importance due to their association with the brewery and historic development of the village. The housing on North Road comprises two terraces forming 23 houses in total, whilst that on Southdown Road comprises four semi-detached properties. All the properties are of two storeys with pitched roofs, and set back from the road behind a front boundary wall. Original features common to all properties include brown brick elevations with red brick detailing, clay tile roofs, hung sash windows and decorative chimney pots.

The properties on Southdown Road are designated as locally listed buildings, and are larger and more prestigious in design than those on North Road. They remain largely unaltered, and are of sufficient architectural and historic interest to merit inclusion in the area. The housing on North Road, however, has been subject to a higher level of alteration such that they retain little architectural interest. They are therefore not included within the conservation area, but form an important part of its historic development.

Robin's Row, South Street

Built in the 1740s, Robin's Row represents the last surviving example in the area of a formerly characteristic arrangement of dwellings. Set perpendicularly to the road, the terrace of five houses is built in coursed field flint with a steeply-pitched gabled roof. The properties are well maintained and enhance the streetscape.

Alma Cottage, South Street



Alma Cottage comprises a two storey rendered property with hung vertical sliding sash windows and a hipped slate roof (Figure 14). The building fronts directly onto the street, and projects further forward than the surrounding buildings, such that it is an important feature in the streetscape. It is present on the 1840 tithe map, and likely dates to the late 18th or early 19th century.

A series of rendered buildings with pitched roofs are set to its rear, comprising the late 19th century 'Coach House', which is now in light industrial use. Although not a prominent part of the streetscene, this complex compliments the historic character of the area.

Fig. 14 Alma Cottage

Portslade Farmhouse (15 South Street and 21a Windlesham Close)

Portslade Farmhouse comprises a stuccoed two-storey villa with slate roof. It is first depicted on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map; the area to the immediate north having been shown as a large pond on an earlier tithe map, and the farm's operational buildings set to the west. This was the main agricultural complex in the village. However the farmhouse is the only building to survive; the operational buildings having been replaced by modern housing.

Stepped back from the street, the farmhouse no longer forms a prominent part of the streetscape. Its high status scale, proportions and design reflect the importance of agriculture to Portslade's development, and its once rural atmosphere.

Buildings including the St George and Stag's Head Public Houses, High Street

Properties along the west portion of the High Street form a pleasingly varied group in terms of their use, architectural style and age, reflecting changing fashions and commercial requirements through the preceding centuries (*Figure 15*). The group includes two public houses (St George and Stag's Head) as well as commercial and domestic properties, which front directly on to the pavement. The two public houses form striking parts of the streetscape: The Stag's Head is of particular historic and architectural merit. Constructed in coursed flint pebbles with black rendered dressings and quoins, it dates to the late 17th century. In contrast, the St George is striking due to its larger massing and bold Neo-classical style.



Fig. 15 West portion of the High Street

Cottages and Kemps, High Street

The cottages and terraced houses along the east portion of the High Street are of special historic and architectural interest, with many designated as listed buildings. They also contribute to the character of the area and the streetscene, and, as such, have been discussed above under the heading 'High Street'. Of particular note, however, 'Kemps' comprises a larger 16th century farmhouse, built for the Blaker family. Of two storeys, it is constructed in flint and part-rendered. It was refenestrated in the mid 19th century. It is located prominently at the bend in the High Street and is now divided into two dwellings. It is also prominent in views along the High Street and Church Twitten.

Conclusion

The Brewery and Village Area is characterised by contrast; between the small-scale, fine grain and vernacular architecture of the village nucleus and the large-scale, large massing and classical detailing of the brewery; and between the quiet, narrow east portion of the High Street and the busy arterial route along High Street and South Street. The area comprises:

- Flint, render and later brick buildings
- Gabled clay tile roofs, with some full-hipped and half-hipped examples
- Dominant classical brewery building and chimney
- Steep, narrow High Street, lined by small-scale vernacular cottages
- Building line and tall flint walls promoting a clear sense of enclosure

It retains a particularly pleasant traditional rural-industrial character, which merits its designation as a conservation area. A number of intrusive elements are however present, which erode the historic character of the area:

- Highway alterations along the arterial route erode its historic character. Other areas also retain excessive street clutter, such as the bollards along the High Street.
- Some of the later structures and additions associated with the brewery complex are of poor architectural quality and little aesthetic merit. These degrade both the Drove Road streetscape and the High Street.
- Surviving historic features and traditional construction materials are particularly important to the character of the area. Some insensitive alterations, including the insertion of poor quality commercial frontages have occurred, particularly along the arterial route, eroding the character.

Special Interest of Portslade Old Village Conservation Area

Portslade Old Village comprises a traditional rural agricultural village, whose character was majorly altered in the 19th century by the construction of a brewery and a number of large, prestigious residences. At its centre lie the Church of St Nicolas and adjacent Old Manor, which date to the 12th century, and comprise the historic core of the village. The close relationship between the Church, Old Manor and replacement Portslade Manor is particularly important, and reveals much about historic relations of power and prestige.

The medieval street layout survives, and distinguishes the old village from the more orderly surrounding suburban estate morphology. The varied building stock reflects the area's incremental development, but is unified by the use of traditional materials (flint, brick and render) to elevations and boundary walls, and steep gabled or hipped clay-tiled roofs to the cottages. The more prestigious villas have mainly slate roofs. Tall flint walls and dense vegetation promote a clear sense of boundary and privacy. Similarly along the High Street the buildings and a tall wall define a hard edge to the road. Church Twitten allows pedestrian permeation through the heart of the area, and forms a significant spatial feature. Public open space is provided in Easthill Park, which is visually self-contained. The paddock forms a visual break in the built form which acts as a reminder of the village's originally rural setting, and sets it apart from the surrounding suburban development.

The Brewery, Church and Portslade Manor form major landmarks in the area; of these the Brewery is especially prominent. The village's location in a shallow valley provides good views across the area to the brewery, church and High Street from the west, but limits views out to the suburban landscape, such that the area appears distinct from its surroundings.

Overall, Portslade Old Village Conservation Area retains a traditional rural-industrial village character.

Policy and Proposals

An Article 4(1) Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 is recommended to remove permitted development rights for unlisted single dwelling houses in the area. This will help to prevent incremental change and the degradation of the special interest of the area as a whole. Reinstatement of historic features should be encouraged when opportunities arise.

The proposed direction would affect the following properties in the conservation area:

- Drove Road; Manor Cottage, 18, 20, 30-34 (even), 1-3 The Old Riding Stables
- Southdown Road; 1-8 (if extension of the area is approved)
- High Street; 31-33 (odd) 52-66 (even), 75
- South Street; 2-8, 12-26 (even), 9 and 15 (odd), Alma Cottage, Whychote, Vicarage
- Windlesham Close; 21a

Flint walls make a major contribution to the special character of the conservation area and merit a programme of maintenance, repair and reinstatement, in accordance with best 'traditional' practice. The wall round the Portslade Manor gardens, to the east of Manor Road in particular merits reinstatement. *Figure 16* shows some of the different types of flintwork visible in the conservation area. This subtle variety is important to the character of the area, and should be carefully matched in repairs. Possibilities for introducing a grant scheme for historic building repair work including or exclusively for flint wall repair should be explored.

A review of the Old Manor's condition and management strategy is recommended to enhance its setting and to facilitate greater public access and interpretation.

Le Carbone and Emmaus form major centres in the area. Both are housed in prominent historic buildings of architectural interest; but later additions and alterations are of varying quality. An holistic conservation management approach is recommended for each site in order to preserve and enhance their character whilst facilitating and managing change.

Traditional paving materials should be preserved, with repairs carefully matched to the original. Signs and other modern paraphernalia should be minimised and a consistent approach adopted. An audit of these features and a programme of improvements are recommended.

Existing tree cover contributes positively to the character of the area. A number of pollarded Holm Oaks - such as those at the junction of Manor Road and Locks Hill - are particularly important features in the area. A review of tree preservation orders is recommended, including the grassed area on Easthill Way, to ensure adequate control. Further vegetation could be planted along the perimeter of The Green, in order to lessen the visual impact of the adjacent modern development.

Future changes to Easthill Park - particularly the area around the House and the football pitch - should be sympathetic to the area and look to use traditional materials. Methods of minimising the impact of the play area on the historic landscape would be beneficial.

The building between the Church and Old Manor is particularly harmful to the relationship of these buildings. Opportunities to enhance the setting of the Church and its relationship to the Old Manor, in particular the removal of this building, should be encouraged.

Large houses set within spacious grounds are a major characteristic of the conservation area. The relative size of plots is important in understanding the status of the dwellings and to maintaining the green and spacious character. In order to maintain this, there should be a presumption against subdividing garden plots in the conservation area.

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