

Speldhurst

Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted
June 2006

Speldhurst
Conservation Area Appraisal
Supplementary Planning Document

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
in partnership with Speldhurst Parish Council,
Speldhurst Village Society and other
local representatives.

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Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| | Summary | 1 |
| | Key Characteristics | 1 |
| | Key Issues | 1 |
| 1 | Introduction | 3 |
| | The Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas | 3 |
| | The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal | 3 |
| 2 | The Planning Policy Context | 5 |
| | National and Regional Guidance | 5 |
| | Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan | 5 |
| | Other Local Plan Policies | 6 |
| | Other Designations | 7 |
| 3 | Location and Landscape Setting | 8 |
| | Location | 8 |
| | Topography | 8 |
| | Geology | 8 |
| | Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings | 8 |
| | Biodiversity | 8 |
| 4 | Historic Development and Archaeology | 9 |
| | Historic Development | 9 |
| | Archaeology | 13 |
| 5 | Spatial Analysis | 14 |
| | Townscape | 14 |
| | Approaches | 15 |
| | Spaces and Views | 15 |
| | Landmarks and Focal Points | 16 |
| 6 | Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area | 17 |
| | Activities and Uses | 17 |
| | Plan Form, Building Types and Boundaries | 17 |
| | Listed Buildings | 18 |
| | Key Unlisted Buildings | 19 |
| | Buildings Materials, Colours and Textures | 19 |
| | Local Details | 20 |
| | Public Realm | 20 |
| | Green Spaces, Trees, and Hedges | 21 |
| 7 | Conservation Area Boundary Review | 22 |
| 8 | Issues | 24 |
| | Sub-division of existing plots, and over-extension of existing buildings | 24 |
| | Boundaries | 24 |
| | Traffic and pedestrian movement | 24 |
| | Speldhurst Primary School | 25 |
| | The Manor | 25 |
| | Signage | 25 |
| | Sustainable design | 25 |
| | Crime | 25 |

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Promotion of the cultural heritage | 25 |
| 9 | Consultations | 26 |
| | Introduction | 26 |
| | Consultation Process | 26 |
| | Response to Consultation | 26 |
| | Notices | 27 |
| 10 | Sustainability | 28 |
| 11 | Contact Details | 29 |

Summary

This document has been produced for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in collaboration with Speldhurst Parish Council and local amenity groups. Local authorities are required by law to preserve or enhance their conservation areas and part of that process is the production of a "Conservation Area Appraisal" to explain what is important about the area, and what improvements are needed.

This Appraisal follows the format recently (August 2005) suggested by English Heritage in their document "Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals".



Speldhurst Hill

Key Characteristics

This Appraisal concludes that the most significant features of the Speldhurst Conservation Area are:

- The unspoilt rural setting in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The undulating topography and outcrops of sandstone;
- The Saxon origins of the settlement, and the early street pattern around St Mary's Church;
- The survival of the historic plots with a lack of any noticeable modern development;
- The 12 listed buildings in the conservation area, three of which are listed grade II*, including The George and Dragon Inn, a late 15th century hall house;
- The 34 listed monuments in the churchyard;
- The informal layout of the historic buildings;
- The use of timber-framing, sandstone and clay bricks and tiles for the buildings and boundary walls; and
- The soft hedging, sandstone walling, and mature trees which create the boundaries.



George and Dragon Inn



Sandstone Walls in Langton Road

Key Issues

This Appraisal concludes that the most important issues which threaten the special architectural and historic interest of the Speldhurst Conservation Area are:

- The sub-division of existing plots, and the over-extension of existing buildings;
- The loss of traditional boundaries such as sandstone walls and hedging made up from native species;
- Busy traffic and narrow pavements;
- The condition of Speldhurst Primary School and the poor quality of some of the surrounding modern buildings;
- The inappropriate metal garage doors in The Manor, Speldhurst Hill;
- Poorly maintained public highway signage.

Conservation Area Boundary Review

A number of additions are suggested to the Conservation Area:

1. Add the field to the east of Langton Road, and St Chad's Cottages;
2. Add the school playing field, Bryanston, The Ridge, and Hurst House on the west side of Langton Road;
3. Add the rest of the garden to Lower Church Farm;
4. Add properties on either side of Penshurst Road as far as Northfields including Little Court Nursing Home and the pocket park.

Introduction

The Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

- 1.1 The first conservation areas were designated in England under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and more than 9,500 now exist. Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’.
- 1.2 Conservation areas are diverse in size and character, but in general it is the quality and interest of the area that is of importance, rather than the individual buildings within it. Such designation gives the authority greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements in the conservation area. However, it also brings certain responsibilities. Under the terms of the 1990 Act, local authorities have a duty to review the extent of designation from time to time, to designate further areas if appropriate, to bring forward proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas (with public consultation) and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.
- 1.3 It is not just the local planning authority that has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area who are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, which together contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- 1.4 Designation also raises awareness of an area’s special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. Government planning guidance stresses that our built and natural heritage should be valued and protected for their own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that the responsibility for environmental stewardship is shared by everyone.
- 1.5 New development and change can take place in conservation areas, but designation should ensure that such proposals will not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area.



The Old Rectory, Langton Road



Entrance to St. Mary's Church

The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal

- 1.6 The principal purpose of this Appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the Speldhurst Conservation Area can be assessed, through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character and which should be preserved. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Local Plan, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the Conservation Area.
- 1.7 Other purposes included undertaking a review of the boundary in accordance with section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local planning authorities “*from time to time to determine whether any further parts of the area should be designated.*” The Appraisal also highlights

particular issues and some of the elements that detract from the appearance or character of the Conservation Area. These provide the basis for potential future actions for improvement.

1.8 In turn, the purpose established the key objectives as follows, which were then tested through a Sustainability Appraisal:

- To review the boundaries of the Conservation Area;
- To define the key characteristics and features which contribute to its special character or appearance which should be preserved or enhanced, providing a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through planning decisions;
- To record those principal elements that detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and to identify opportunities for enhancement, potentially to be delivered through management plans or other initiatives;
- To inform key agencies, residents etc, whose activities impact on the conservation area, and to maximise the investment by all such stakeholders in the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area to the benefit of their social and economic quality of life;
- To promote the public's understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment; and
- To protect and maintain biodiversity.

1.9 The Borough Council is also required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as part of the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is to ensure conformity with other higher-level strategies and policies, to identify any sustainability issues and to ensure that the Supplementary Planning Document is as sustainable as possible. This is set out more fully in Section 10 of this document.

Sustainability Appraisal
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

1.10 This Supplementary Planning Document forms part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework, which is set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. In terms of the consultation process, this document followed the draft Statement of Community Involvement and its preparation has been subject to the involvement of key stakeholders as well as a public consultation. This is set out more fully in Section 9 of this document.

Statement of Community
Involvement
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

1.11 This document has been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for development control purposes and will help guide the Council when making decisions about applications for development within, or on the edges of, the Speldhurst Conservation Area. The Appraisal will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the Speldhurst Conservation Area, such as the County and Borough Councils and local businesses and householders.

2.0 The Planning Policy Context

National and Regional Guidance

- 2.1 Government advice on the control of conservation areas and historic buildings are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment. Further advice about conservation area control, including the production of management proposals, has recently (August 2005) been produced by English Heritage.
- 2.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy and Kent & Medway Structure Plan policies also provide the general strategic policy context.

PPG 15: Planning and
the Historic Environment
www.communities.gov.uk

South East Plan
www.southeast.ra.gov.uk

Kent and Medway Structure
Plan
www.kmsp.gov.uk

Tunbridge Wells
Borough Local Plan 2006
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan

- 2.3 There are two policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006, which relate to conservation areas in general – Policies EN4 and EN5. Further policies about the control of development within Speldhurst can also be found in the adopted Local Plan, principally Policy EN1.
- 2.4 Policy EN4 seeks to control the demolition of buildings within conservation areas.

POLICY EN4

Development involving proposals for the total or partial demolition of unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character of a conservation area will not be permitted unless an overriding case can be made out against all of the following criteria:

1. **The condition of the building, and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use;**
2. **The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, including efforts to find compatible alternative uses;**
3. **The merits of alternative proposals for the site, and whether there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment; and**
4. **Whether redevelopment will produce substantial planning benefits for the community, including economic regeneration or environmental enhancement.**

- 2.5 Policy EN5 sets out criteria for determining whether a development is appropriate within a conservation area.

POLICY EN5

Proposals for development within, or affecting the character of, a conservation area will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces and vegetation which combine to form the character and appearance of the area;
2. The siting of the development would be similar to adjoining building frontage lines where this is important to the character of the conservation area;
3. The layout and arrangement of the building(s) would follow the pattern of existing development and spacing of adjoining plot widths where this is important to the character of the conservation area;
4. The scale, massing, use of materials, detailing, boundary treatment and landscaping would preserve or enhance the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;
5. The use, or intensity of use, would be in sympathy with the character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated;
6. The proposal would not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; and
7. In meeting the parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.

- 2.6 The detailed character appraisal contained in this document will assist in the interpretation of these policies.

Other Local Plan Policies

- 2.7 There are a number of other general and specific policies in the Local Plan, which are relevant to the Speldhurst Conservation Area. Specific policy designations are set out in detail in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and the Proposals Map. They can be accessed via the Local Plan link on the Borough Council's website. They can be summarised as follows:

MGB1 Metropolitan Green Belt**EN1 Design and other Development Control Criteria****EN8 Outdoor Lighting****EN10 Sites of Archaeological Interest****EN15 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest****EN21 Areas of Important Open Space****EN22 Areas of Landscape Importance****EN23 Important Landscape Approaches****EN25 Rural Landscape Protection****EN26 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty****H11 Extensions outside Limits to Built Development**

Tunbridge Wells Borough
Local Plan 2006 & Proposals
Maps
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Other Designations

- 2.8 Finally, there are designations that are made through other legislation. These include listed buildings and tree preservation orders. It is advisable to check with the Borough Council on detailed enquiries, as these designations are subject to changes. They are also subject to Local Plan policies and other legislation. These are shown on the accompanying Heritage Designation maps.

Heritage Designation maps -
Speldhurst Conservation
Area

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

3.0 Location and Landscape Setting

Location

- 3.1 Speldhurst is located on the edge of west Kent some eight kilometres to the north-west of Tunbridge Wells. It lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



View eastwards from Langton Road

Topography

- 3.2 Speldhurst developed as a nucleated ridge-top settlement within the distinctive landscape, which extends westwards from Tunbridge Wells, characterised by a number of high ridges intersected by a complex network of valleys. The village itself lies on the top of a steeply sloping east-facing slope, which drops down to the valley of a stream which eventually feeds into the River Medway. This part of the Borough has been designated as “Wooded Farmland” within the Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment.

Geology

- 3.3 The village is located on a sandstone ridge, which has been cut through by streams and valleys, creating dramatic rocky outcrops, most notably along Speldhurst Hill, an ancient “sunken” lane. Here, massive sandstone banks, bounded by the gnarled roots of beech trees, are an especially attractive feature. Above, these trees form an arched-shaped cover of foliage.
- 3.4 Streams emerge from the junction of the hard sandstone and the softer Wadhurst Clays, which have incrementally cut away the sandstone to form valleys and ghylls. The area is well known for its chalybeate springs, which emerge from the sandstone and which have a high iron content and a distinctive rust colour.



Speldhurst Hill

Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

- 3.5 Speldhurst is an inward looking village despite being relatively high (100 metres). There are attractive views to the east over the valley, but these can only be glimpsed in places.
- 3.6 The tower of St Mary’s Church is an important local landmark, but within the Conservation Area the preponderance of high hedges and other high boundaries tend to constrain immediate views.
- 3.7 A popular public footpath leads down the private lane to the south and east of Shadwell in Langton Road, towards Shadwell Wood. Another footpath, part of the High Weald Walk, leads westwards off Penshurst Road on the edge of the pocket park, currently just outside the Conservation Area boundary.



The Tower of St Mary’s Church is an important local landmark

Biodiversity

- 3.8 The village is surrounded by a pastoral, farmed landscape, where open fields provide improved pasture or land for arable crops. Beech and holly hedges are common, although some of these have been adversely affected by field enlargement. To the east, broad swathes of permanent and semi-improved pasture on the hill slope represents an internationally important reserve of acidic and neutral grassland. The boundary walls, gravestones and steps of Speldhurst Churchyard provide a habitat for a rich assemblage of ferns, lichen, liverworts and moss.



St Mary’s Churchyard

4.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

Historic Development

Pre-Conquest

- 4.1 Speldhurst is of Anglo-Saxon origin and is named after the Old English *speld* meaning “*splinter*” and *hurst* meaning “*a wooded hill*”. It is situated in the former Saxon hundreds of Somerden and Washlingstone, on the northern fringe of what was once the vast forest of Andred (now Ashdown). The forest was incrementally cleared from the Roman period onwards to allow drove roads and ironways. The village lies on the route of an old packhorse road from London to Newhaven, entering from the north along Bidborough ridge.

Conquest-1500

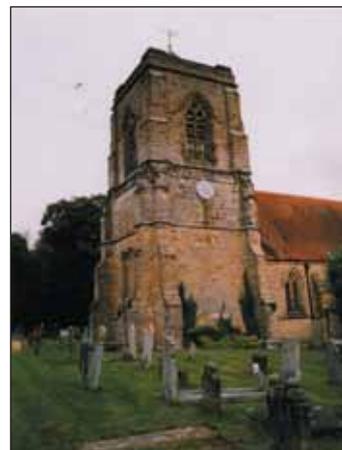
- 4.2 Speldhurst Church is mentioned in the *Textus Roffensis* of 1115, which almost certainly indicates a pre-Conquest foundation. In the 14th century, the Church and Manor of Speldhurst were held by Sir John de Pulteney, who, in 1346, settled both on his College of St Lawrence Poultney in the City of London. Other significant local families include the Hollands, who lived in a large house to the west of the village, of which no trace now remains. Sir Thomas Holland was married to Joan, daughter of Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent, the “Fair Maid of Kent”. The Hollands sold their land to the Thomas Waller family in 1360, who also purchased the Manor of Groombridge from the de Cobhams, giving them ownership of a large tract of land which stretched from Rustall to Ashurst and southwards to Groombridge.
- 4.3 In 1412, young Richard Waller, Thomas’ descendant, was given charge of the nine-year-old Count of Angoulême. The boy, of royal blood, had been handed over by the French as surety for a debt of war. He remained a hostage for 30 years, at least part of the time in Groombridge Manor House (since rebuilt as Groombridge Place). During his captivity he is reputed to have lavished money on the restoration of Speldhurst Church.
- 4.4 Throughout this period the parish included Old Groombridge and land since developed as Langton, Rusthall and the western quarter of Tunbridge Wells. The principal activities were agriculture and iron making, using iron ore from the local sandstone and wood (for the bloomeries or furnaces) from Ashdown Forest. At some stage in the late 15th century, a rectory and the building now known as the George and Dragon Inn were both built opposite the church at Speldhurst.

1500-1800

- 4.5 In 1540 the College leased the Manor of Speldhurst to Sir William Waller, but both church patronage and manor passed to Henry Polsted at the Dissolution in 1548. In 1604, Groombridge Place was sold to Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, ending a long connection with the Waller family. Both Thomas and his son died soon afterwards and the property was passed on to John Packer, Clerk of the Privy Council to Charles I. In celebration of Charles’ safe return from Spain in 1623, he built a new church dedicated to St John the Evangelist next to Groombridge Green, providing a more convenient place of worship for local residents. At about this time, the area became known for its chalybeate springs, from which issued iron-tainted water much renowned for its health-giving properties. Although the village of Speldhurst has kept its rural character, its history since the late 17th century has been dominated by the presence of the spa town nearby.

1800-2000

- 4.6 In 1791, lightning during a violent storm set Speldhurst Church alight, and within a few hours almost nothing remained apart from part of the north wall of the tower, some fragments in the vestry and the font. A second church, of c.1797, was entirely replaced in 1870-1 by a third, to the designs of J Oldrid Scott. He designed a big, strong, straightforward building with rich, mainly 13th century details. By this time the Manor of Speldhurst was in the hands of the Powell family, and in c.1840 Charles Powell rebuilt the old manor house on Speldhurst Hill, providing himself with a prestigious stone mansion. His relative, Baden-Powell, wrote Scouting for Boys while staying at the Manor and established a group of scouts in the parish. A new church was built in Rusthall in 1850, becoming an independent parish in 1864. In 1863 All Saints' Church in Langton Green was consecrated, ending the need for the residents of Langton Green to walk to Speldhurst Church every Sunday.
- 4.7 A Sunday School had been opened by a Mr Cuthbert, who ran a school in Rusthall, in 1809, and in 1810 he opened a Day School for the children of the village. The two schools were combined and for many years were accommodated in a succession of rented houses, which did not include The Old School House. In 1859 a new school was built on land on Langton Road donated by a Miss Woodward and paid for by grants from the Privy Council and organisations such as the National Schools Society and the Diocesan Board of Education.

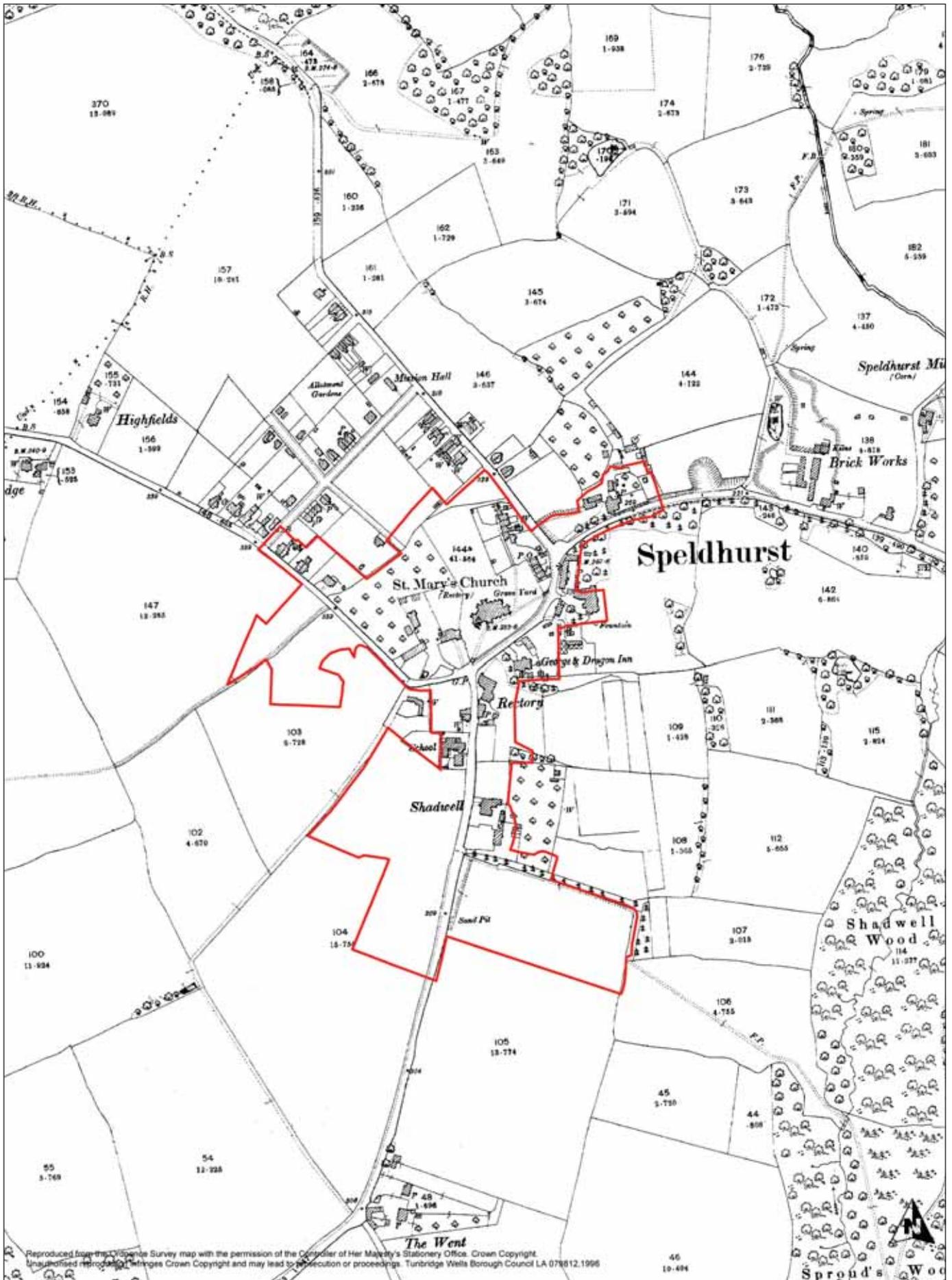


St Mary's Church was built in 1871

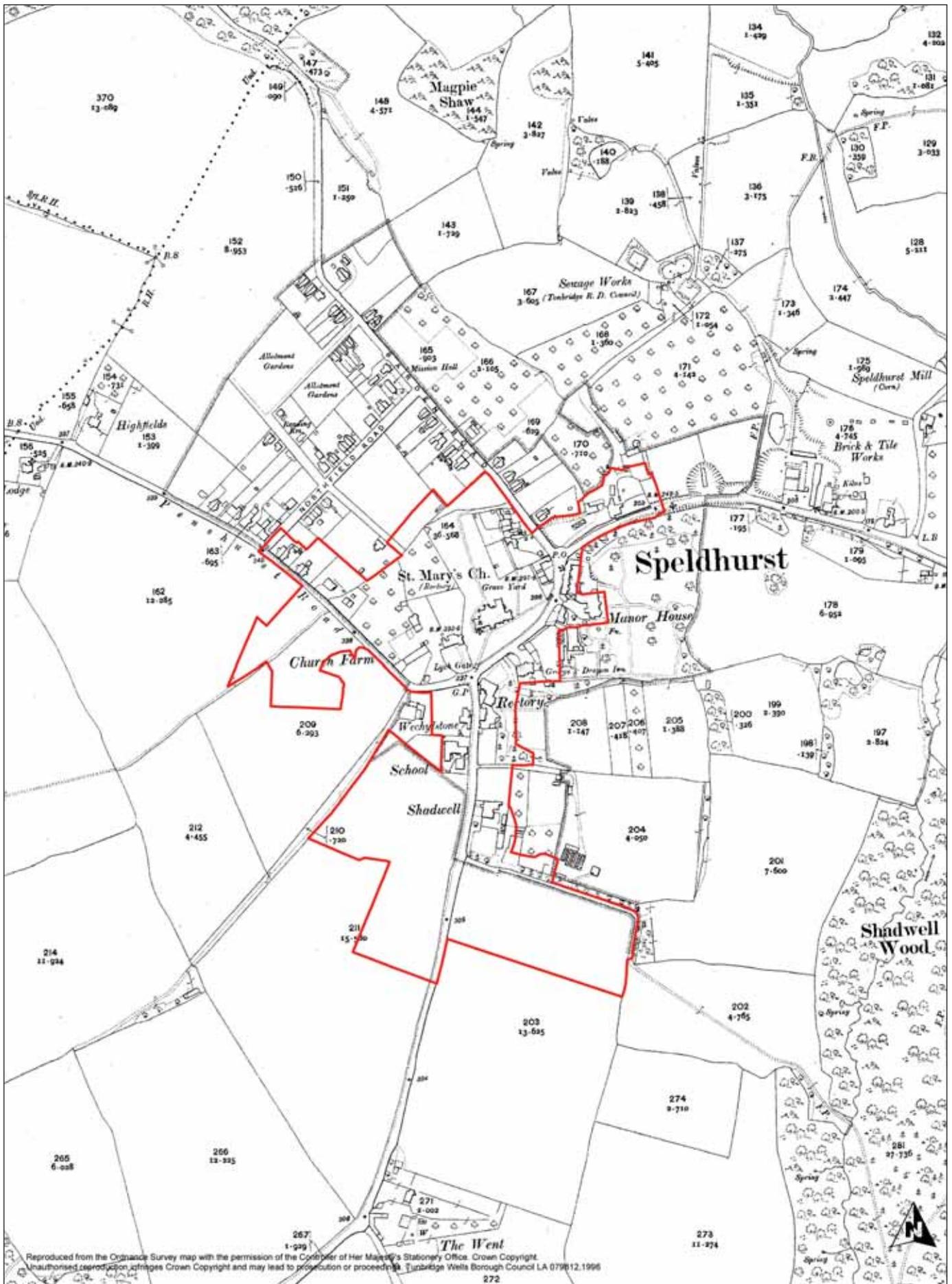


1834 map

- 4.8 An 1834 map shows Speldhurst as a very small village with just a scattering of buildings around the church. By 1870 a few houses have been added along Penshurst Road, and by 1898 Northfield Road had been constructed and various small houses added, arranged mainly in pairs or small terraces. A Mission Hall and the provision of allotments are notable additions since 1870. To the east, a brick and tile works provided local work and building materials.



1898 Ordnance Survey map



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1909 Ordnance Survey map

- 4.9 In 1924, the land which is now the recreation ground was given to the Rector and Churchwardens of St Mary's Church for the use of the villagers. It is now owned and administered by a local charity. An adjoining piece of land, which was probably already in use as allotments in the 1920s, has similarly been transferred into the ownership of a separate charity, thus protecting it from development of any kind.
- 4.10 Today, the village has grown to encompass much new housing on the western boundaries, although the eastern boundary remains relatively unaltered, constrained by the drop in level to Shadwell Woods. The George and Dragon Inn remains a centre for village social life and has recently been refurbished. St Mary's Church continues to provide spiritual support to many local residents, many of whom work in neighbouring Tunbridge Wells or further afield. The continued provision of a village primary school (now a listed building) has ensured that young families still want to live in the area. The village hall, allotments and recreation ground provide further local facilities.



The George and Dragon Inn



Old Place, Peshurst Road

Archaeology

- 4.11 The local sites and monuments record (SMR) is held by Kent County Council and includes a record of finds and past archaeological investigations. For Speldhurst this includes entries for: The George and Dragon Public House; Old Place; and St Mary's Church.
- 4.12 The whole of the village centre of Speldhurst, mostly but not exclusively within the conservation area boundary, is an Area of Archaeological Potential. It stretches from Speldhurst Hill in the east, to Glebe House in the south, to the Old Oast in the west, and to the edge of the graveyard in the north. However, this designation is somewhat out of date and it may be that an extension of the area, to encompass Lower Church Farm off Speldhurst Hill, and Shadwell, further south along Langton Road, would be appropriate.

PPG 15: Planning & the
Historic Environment
PPG 16: Archaeology &
Planning
www.communities.gov.uk

5.0 Spatial Analysis

Townscape

- 5.1 There are three roads in the Speldhurst Conservation Area, each with its own distinct character. This is defined by the historic form of development (road layout and plot boundaries), the relationship of the buildings to the street, the types of buildings and their use of materials, the uses and activities within each area, and the contribution made by the landscape details such as trees and hedges.
- 5.2 The three roads are Speldhurst Hill, Langton Road, and to a lesser extent, Penshurst Road.

Speldhurst Hill - key characteristics:

- Narrow winding medieval lane deeply incised into sandstone ridge;
- Informal layout of buildings of varying sizes, mainly residential uses;
- Spacious plots with mature gardens;
- Buildings can lie immediately on road side or well set back;
- Many important listed buildings: St Mary's Church, with its associated churchyard and listed monuments; the George and Dragon Inn; Old Place; and The Manor;
- Use of sandstone, timber framing, clay tile and red or blue brick for walling;
- Handmade clay tiles the principal roofing material;
- Sandstone boundary walls are a particular feature, especially around the churchyard;
- Mature trees and hedging hide many of the buildings;
- Strong sense of enclosure due to the changes in levels; and
- Views constrained by high walls and mature planting.

Langton Road – key characteristics

- Long straight road terminating dramatically in a pinch point opposite St Mary's Church;
- Dispersed detached buildings with some low key modern development;
- Close to the village centre, the road is very enclosed by the Old Rectory and Wechylstone, which lie on the back of the road or the pavement;
- Further south, where the road becomes more rural, the buildings (eg Shadwell) are set back with spacious gardens;
- The Old Rectory is the earliest and most prominent building, notable for its tile hanging and porch;
- Speldhurst Primary School is a mid-19th century building with its original master's house, set back slightly from the road;
- The school makes an important contribution to the character of the area in terms of use and activity;
- High evergreen hedging, mature trees and sandstone walls form the boundaries;
- Remnant of historic brick paving outside Wechylstone; and
- Views across the field to the south of Shadwell.

Townscape Analysis map -
Speldhurst Conservation
Area

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk



Speldhurst Hill



The Cottage, Speldhurst Hill



The Old Rectory, Langton Road



Shadwell, Langton Road

Penshurst Road – key characteristics

- Notable bend on edge of the conservation area;
- Modern residential development to south and west is concealed by high evergreen hedging and mature trees;
- To the north and east, only two residential buildings, both set back from the road in large gardens and largely hidden;
- Barn House is a modern bungalow concealed by a new boarded timber fence, hopefully soon to be more concealed by a newly planted native species hedge;
- The Old Oast is notable for its surviving conical oast roof; and
- Views over these two towards the tower of St Mary's Church.



Penshurst Road



The Oast, Penshurst Road



Lower Church Farm sits above Speldhurst Road



Langton Road



Penshurst Road



Lych gate to St Mary's Church

Approaches

- 5.3 Speldhurst is approached from three directions. The principal entrance from the east is via Speldhurst Hill, a curved medieval sunken lane that cuts through the sandstone ridge. Mature trees create an arch overhead and, at high level, can be seen the end elevation of Lower Church Farm, which sits on top of the high bank. Dense shrubbery adds to the sylvan character. As it approaches the centre, it is joined by Barden Road from the north, a narrow road clinging to the edge of the valley.
- 5.4 From the south, Langton Road is straight and terminates in views of the church tower. On the outskirts of the conservation area, high hedges of mixed species hide the fields from views. Towards the village centre, the close proximity of the various, mainly listed buildings, with their high sandstone walls, creates a pinch point just before the junction with Speldhurst Hill.
- 5.5 From the north west, Penshurst Road passes through some dispersed 20th century development before reaching the village centre, where the tall hedges and other boundaries enclose the street and prevent views outwards. A new pair of houses is being built on a site just on the edge of the existing conservation area boundary, fortunately set well back from the road and hidden by shrubs and trees. The new timber boarded fence to Barn House is a detrimental feature.

Spaces and Views

- 5.6 There are no formal public open spaces, such as a village green, in Speldhurst. The only open space is the historic churchyard surrounding St Mary's Church, although this is largely invisible from the road, as it is elevated from Speldhurst Hill and surrounded by high sandstone walls, mature trees, hedging, or buildings. The churchyard is notable for its mature yew trees and historic tombs and gravestones.
- 5.7 To the south-west, the side elevation of Old Place, a grade II listed building, forms an interesting boundary to the churchyard with its exposed timber framing and brick infill. To the north east, a row of cottages with back gardens creates a break between the churchyard and Barden Road. The churchyard is accessed at three points. The most important is the lych gate entrance from Speldhurst Hill, with secondary entrances from Barden Road via a simple timber gate, and another entrance is from a narrow road leading off Northfields.
- 5.8 St Mary's Church is positioned on the highest point of the ridge and therefore provides an important focal point for the area with its tower topped by a partially concealed tiled roof. However, the many trees,

high hedges and enclosed private gardens limit views across the conservation area. The most notable views are:

- Along Langton Road to St Mary's Church;
- From the churchyard eastwards across Barden Road to the valley and wooded hill beyond;
- Up Speldhurst Hill to The Old Post Office;
- From Langton Road across the fields on the edge of the conservation area; and
- From Penshurst Road across the conical roofs of The Old Oast to the church tower.

Landmarks and Focal Points

5.9 The most important landmarks and focal points are:

- St Mary's Church with its sandstone tower, terminating the vista along Langton Road but also visible from the surrounding countryside to the south and south-east;
- The Old Rectory, strategically located on the junction of Speldhurst Hill and Langton Road;
- Old Place, an important timber-framed building close to the church;
- The George and Dragon Inn, an important grade II* building;
- Shadwell, another listed building which sits on the edge of the more built-up part of the village, with a large spacious garden around it; and
- The Village Primary school, particularly important in views along Langton Road.



St Mary's Church and the Old Rectory

6.0 Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

Activities and Uses

- 6.1 Speldhurst is primarily a residential village with most of the occupants working in Tunbridge Wells or further away. There is no railway connection in the village. Outside the Conservation Area there is a thriving shop and Post Office in Barden Road, and opposite the shop is a chapel which holds a service every Sunday. A well-used village hall (rebuilt and improved after a recent fire), recreation ground and village allotments are located in the St Mary's Lane/Northfields area, where there is also a doctors' surgery.
- 6.2 Within the Conservation Area, The George and Dragon Inn is an important local facility, which is very popular in the summer when the garden is in full use. St Mary's Church is the only religious building. Speldhurst Church of England Primary School, in Langton Road, is extremely important to the life of the village and helps to make Speldhurst attractive as a location for young families.
- 6.3 Some buildings in the Conservation Area provide a reminder that there were once three farms in Speldhurst. These can be seen at Lower Church Farm off Speldhurst Hill, which has a converted oast and barn nearby; Old Place and the adjoining Old Oast, another converted building, set well back from Penshurst Road; and Shadwell, another former farmhouse, facing Langton Road.
- 6.4 During term time, the arrival and dispersal of pupils during term time is a pleasantly noisy interruption in what is otherwise a very quiet village. At break time, the children can also be heard from Langton Road. The clock on St Mary's Church strikes every 15 minutes and on the hour.

Plan Form, Building Types and Boundaries

- 6.5 The most notable feature of the plan form of the Conservation Area is the curve of Speldhurst Hill as it encloses the churchyard of St Mary's Church. This may well point to a Saxon origin as circular churchyards are a feature of early religious sites. Other roads – Penshurst Road, Barden Road, and Langton Road are almost entirely straight. Speldhurst Hill is an old "sunken" lane with a dramatic entrance to the village from the east as the road cuts through the underlying sandstone.
- 6.6 The historic maps for Speldhurst confirm that the various buildings appear to have been added in an almost random fashion without any attempt to create a "village" street. The earliest houses, dating to the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, are therefore sometimes close to the road, such as Glebe House and The Old Rectory in Langton Road, or set well back, notably the George and Dragon Inn and Old Place in Speldhurst Hill. Later, mainly 18th or 19th century development, is more uniform, such as the row of cottages to the east of the churchyard, lying parallel to Barden Road. Wechylstone, a substantial late 19th century house in Langton Road forms an important "pinch point" in the road with Glebe House and the Old Rectory, just as it meets Speldhurst Hill. Overall the historic village centre, now defined by the conservation area boundary, is very small and concentrated around St Mary's Church and the George and Dragon Inn.



The Garden of the George and Dragon Inn looks over towards St Mary's Church



Converted Oast House at Lower Church Farm



Speldhurst Hill curves around St Mary's Churchyard



Wechylstone creates a pinch point in Langton Road

- 6.7 Overall there is a surprising variety of plot sizes in the Conservation Area with each plot being a different shape – there is no uniformity. Equally there is a mix of small cottages and more prestigious, large buildings, again providing great variety. Most of the buildings, apart from the church and school, were built as houses or for agricultural purposes using details and materials, which are common to the Kent vernacular. They are therefore modestly sized, usually two or sometimes three storeys high, and sometimes have later dormers. Roofs are steeply pitched and apart from The Manor, there are no examples of “polite” architecture, as the buildings were not built for prestige or show. Gables sometimes face the street (Old Place, the Old Rectory or Shadwell) but usually the buildings are only unified by their use of sandstone and clay tiles or bricks – their general form is very varied.
- 6.8 Overall, this results in a pleasing informality of layout, with attractive front gardens to some of the properties, particularly The Cottage in Speldhurst Hill. Perhaps because of the busy traffic through the village, owners have allowed hedges and trees to grow up so many of the gardens are hidden from the public viewpoint. Otherwise, a variety of sandstone walls make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Timber fences of varying kinds, such as the low palisade fence in front of Shadwell, or the new close-boarded fence to Barn House, are slightly discordant.



Old Place from St Mary's Churchyard

Listed Buildings

- 6.9 Despite being a relatively small Conservation Area, Speldhurst is notable for the quality and variety of its historic buildings. There are 12 listed buildings in the Conservation Area, three of which are listed grade II*. There are also 34 listed monuments in the churchyard.
- 6.10 The earliest example is The George and Dragon Inn, dating to the late 15th century and listed grade II*. This timber-framed building once contained a double height hall and the crown post roof can still be seen in the upper bar area. Other examples are listed grade II including Old Place, a former farmhouse located next to the church, which has been altered and added to over the centuries. However, it retains a timber-framed wing, which was probably erected at about the same time as the George and Dragon Inn, in the late 15th century. The Old Rectory, located opposite the church, is another early building which may have a 15th century origin, although the more obvious features date to the 17th century and a 19th century restoration. The Cottage, almost next door, also contains 17th century features. Lower Church Farm, in Speldhurst Hill, retains some late 16th century features but was altered in the 18th and 19th centuries. Shadwell, in Langton Road, is another former farmhouse, this time dating to the 17th century with much work from the mid-19th century.
- 6.11 Old Post Office Cottage is an interesting 18th century cottage which is listed grade II* because it is such a rare and complete survival of the period. It was apparently built for a retiring vicar on the edge of the churchyard. It is virtually unchanged since its construction between 1720 and 1730 and retains both external and internal features of the period.
- 6.12 St Mary's Church was rebuilt in the late 18th century following a fire and then substantially rebuilt again by John Oldrid Scott in 1871. Of the original building, only the base of the 14th century tower remains. It is also listed grade II*. The lych gate is separately listed grade II.



Lower Church Farm



Old Post Office Cottage

- 6.13 There are also a number of 19th century listed buildings in the conservation area: the Manor House, a substantial stone mansion built by the Powell family in c.1840; Speldhurst School, another fine stone building of 1859 and Glebe House, only part of which (the old coachhouse to the Old Rectory) is listed. All are listed grade II.

Key Unlisted Buildings

- 6.14 There are a number of key unlisted buildings within Speldhurst, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are mainly 19th century and some relate to the three former farmhouses within the village.
- 6.15 The best group of unlisted historic buildings lies on the eastern side of the churchyard, facing Barden Road. Churchyard Cottages are shown on the 1834 map and another house, Yew Tree Cottage, has been added to the front, possibly in the 1920s. These buildings sit on a high bank and are relatively concealed by planting and large trees. Close by, the Old Post Office and the former coachhouse to the Manor are both built from the local stone and are hardly altered. There are two former oast houses, both now converted to residential use, next to Old Place and Lower Church Farm.
- 6.16 In Langton Road, Wechylstone is a very large late 19th century house on the corner facing the Rectory, and next to the Rectory, a similarly aged extension to the listed building is now in separate ownership.



The Old Post Office



Former stables to The Manor

Buildings Materials, Colours and Textures

- 6.17 Building materials in Speldhurst are typical of the west part of Kent, using locally sourced sandstone, clay and timber. The sandstone, which is the predominant material, is a light brown colour, which merges well with the rich reds and browns of the clay tiles. A brick and tile works is noted on the historic maps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the east of the village, and no doubt this supplied the reddish-brown clay tiles and bricks found throughout the village. A small indent off Speldhurst Hill on the same maps may indicate the site of a sandstone quarry, used for walls and boundaries. Certainly there are the remains of substantial quarries a little to the south in Langton Green. Timber would have been cut from the surrounding forests, of which Shadwell Wood to the east of Speldhurst is the last local remnant.
- 6.18 Historic roofs in the Conservation Area are usually covered in handmade clay tiles, providing a naturally undulating and warmly coloured roof. Welsh slate is used occasionally, but is far more common on the late 19th or early 20th century cottages just outside the conservation area.
- 6.19 Stone walls can be made from finely coursed smooth faced ashlar blocks (The Manor or Speldhurst School) or tooled sandstone, laid in rectangular blocks (Glebe House). Clay tiles are also used for walls, as can be seen on the Old Rectory or Wechylstone. Brick can be red, brown or blue and some of the best examples can be seen on the infilling of the timber-framing on Old Place where patterned brickwork was added, probably in the 1920s. Feather-edged timber boarding is another local material, usually painted white or black. It can be seen at Post Office Cottage, Churchyard Cottages or on the gable end of The Oast House next to Lower Church Farmhouse.



Handmade clay tiles and sandstone blocks are local characteristics

- 6.20 Timber-framing with either wattle and daub (or a modern equivalent) or brick infill is evident at the George and Dragon Inn and Old Place, both dating to the late 15th century. The curved wind braces on the inn are of special interest. The Cottage in Speldhurst Hill has a timber-framed first floor, which is underdrawn in 19th century brick, when it was common to replace the bottom half of a timber frame in the more fashionable (and more durable) brick. Shadwell retains some external timber framing but this appears to be relatively modern.



Curved wind braces on The George and Dragon Inn

Local Details

- 6.21 Speldhurst is notable for its steeply sloping pitched roofs, covered with handmade clay tiles. Substantial chimney stacks play a very important part in defining the character of the conservation area. These can be placed in the centre, side or back of the roof slope, depending on age. The best and most notable examples are on Shadwell, The Old Rectory, Wechylstone, the George and Dragon Inn, Old Place and Lower Church Farmhouse. Eaves are often open with rafters showing. Verges are finished with lime mortar fillets. Cast iron rainwater goods, usually painted black, are common.
- 6.22 The village has a variety of windows, mainly timber or metal casements of the 18th century or later. Shadwell has some particularly pretty cast iron casements facing Langton Road, with patterned decorative glazing bars. The unlisted part of Glebe House has similar cast iron casements, but with a diamond pattern. The inn and adjoining property, The Cottage, both have cast iron casements with small squares. The Old Rectory has timber casements, fitted flush with the frame and painted white. Speldhurst School has similar timber casements with very fine glazing bars. Post Office Cottage provides a rare example of the use of sash windows in the conservation area, this time with the thick glazing bars, which are typical of the early 18th century. The Manor also has more elegant mid-19th century sashed windows with slim glazing bars and margin lights.
- 6.23 All of the doors in the historic buildings in the conservation area are made from timber, but surprisingly, they are modest in their contribution to the streetscape as many are partially shaded by porches or are actually hidden from the public viewpoint. The ones that can be seen are mostly boarded, rather than panelled, as is more usual with vernacular buildings. The Old Rectory has a fine example of a vertically boarded painted timber door, with studding. Post Office Cottage is the only obvious example of a panelled door with six fielded panels below a pedimented door hood, all dating to the early 18th century.
- 6.24 Peg tiled porches, with substantial timber supports, can be seen on The Old Rectory, the adjoining Glebe House, and Wechylstone.
- 6.25 Two conical oast roofs with their cowls remain on The Old Oast, next to Old Place, where the slope is covered in peg tiles. At The Oast House, next to Lower Church Farm, the roof is rendered and painted grey, but fortunately retains its cowl.

Public Realm

- 6.26 There are just two examples of historic paving in the conservation area. The first is outside Wechylstone in Penshurst Road and Langton Road, where 19th century red brick paving follows the local tradition. These are standard brick sized (225mm by 100mm) and made from a fairly consistent red clay, with little changes in colour or texture. Similar brick paving, although with more blue bricks, can be found in the churchyard.



Clay paving outside Wechylstone

Both are laid in stretcher bond, the first example across the width of the pavement, and the second, parallel to the edges. Large pieces of York stone paving mark the steps down from the churchyard to Speldhurst Hill.

- 6.27 Otherwise the pavements are covered in black tarmac, not noticeably unsuitable for a rural village, with granite or concrete kerbing. Outside the lych gate, modern wire cut brick paviors have been used, which do not replicate the exact characteristics of the 19th century originals although they do meet modern engineering requirements.
- 6.28 There is no street lighting in Speldhurst, and little overhead cabling of any sort apart from the occasional timber telegraph pole – a very positive feature.
- 6.29 Traditional natural timber finger posts mark the line of the public footpath close to Shadwell in Langton Road, and a similar post marks the public footpath off Penshurst Road.
- 6.30 There is a public bench outside the church, by the lych gate, and further seats inside the churchyard. Also by the lych gate, a timber finger post, a bus timetable, and various other signs including a parish notice board, are all relatively discreet. A plain black plastic litter bin has the Council's logo. Further along Speldhurst Hill, a new, very modern, sign for the George and Dragon Inn has raised a few adverse comments locally. At the junction with Barden Road, a finger post and other signage is in poor condition.



Traditional finger post near Shadwell

Green Spaces, Trees, and Hedges

- 6.31 Speldhurst is a rural village surrounded by fields and areas of woodland. The churchyard is the only open green space, but not strictly speaking, a public place. The gravestones, which have not been moved, are surrounded by mown grass at the front and long grass at the back, which is cut annually. The 35 listed monuments, including the War Memorial, are a special feature of the churchyard. Towards the rear section of the churchyard, a modern graveyard contains rows of more recent graves, arranged in rather formal lines. It is hoped to extend this part of the graveyard by acquiring the back gardens of the two nearest cottages facing Barden Road. On the western side of the churchyard, between it and Saxons, a small former orchard is a very attractive feature of the conservation area and should be preserved as a garden.
- 6.32 The trees within the conservation area mainly lie within private gardens, sometimes forming the boundary. The most significant tree groups are:
- In St Mary's Churchyard, particularly the ancient yews;
 - Within the churchyard overhanging Speldhurst Hill;
 - Between the churchyard and Saxons;
 - On either side of Speldhurst Hill, below Lower Church Farm; and
 - On the west side of Langton Green by the entrance to Bryanston, just within the conservation area boundary.
- 6.33 Hedges are extremely important, particularly in Langton Road on entering the conservation area. They tend to be holly, hawthorn and other native species. The high laurel hedge around Wechylstone is a rather dominant feature in views along both Penshurst Road and Langton Road.



Modern graves in St Mary's Churchyard



The former orchard next to Saxons



Ancient Yews, St Mary's Churchyard

7.0 Conservation Area Boundary Review

7.1 As part of this Appraisal, the boundaries of the Conservation Area have been critically reviewed and now include additional areas, which contribute to the special character:

(i) *Add the field to the east of Langton Road, and St Chad's Cottages:*

7.2 This large field is separated from Langton Road by a hedge, but is very visible from the footpath which passes along its northern boundary. Views across it from the footpath are particularly important. A dominant line of trees creates its eastern and southern boundaries. The field is important in providing part of the rural setting of the village. St Chad's is a pair of cottages dating to the 1920s, built of brown brick decorated with red brick details, with red tile hanging to the first floor and a pitched tiled roof with a shared central brick chimney stack. The windows are modern but not obtrusive.

7.3 It is considered that the field and St Chad's make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and that they should be included in the Speldhurst Conservation Area.

(ii) *Add the school playing field, Bryanston, The Ridge, and Hurst House on the west side of Langton Road:*

7.4 The school playing field and the garden to Bryanston (a relatively modern building) is surrounded by tall trees, which are very important in maintaining the rural character of the area. The Ridge and Hurst House date to the early 20th century and are examples of substantial family houses with Arts and Crafts details, set in mature and spacious gardens with many attractive trees. The Ridge is two storeys high with attic bedrooms in the tiled roof, with a wide gabled wing to the front with oriel windows with leaded lights. Hurst House is also rendered but has been painted white, with twin gables facing the road and a steeply pitched tiled roof. These houses sit up a slight bank, defined by stone walls, mature shrubbery and trees, all of which are extremely important in views along Langton Road as the village is approached from Langton Green.

7.5 It is considered that the many mature trees and the open space associated with the playing field to the back of the school, the garden to Bryanston, and the two Arts and Crafts houses (The Ridge and Hurst House) make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and that they should be included in the Speldhurst Conservation Area.

(iii) *Add the rest of the garden to Lower Church Farm:*

7.6 The existing boundary to the conservation area cuts across the middle of the back garden of Lower Church Farm. It is suggested that a new boundary is drawn, to encompass the whole garden.

(iv) *Add properties on either side of Penshurst Road as far as Northfields including Little Court Nursing Home and the pocket park:*

7.7 The original conservation area boundary was drawn tightly around the core of the historic settlement, excluding 19th century development along Penshurst Road. Between the existing boundary and Northfields are several houses which largely retain their original details and building plots and it is considered that these make a positive contribution to the character of the area.



Field to east of Langton Road



St Chad's Cottages



The Ridge



Bank in Langton Road

7.8 On the east side of the road, the two closest to Northfields date to c.1850 and are rendered, painted white, with slated roofs and sashed windows. Red House is slightly later, two storeys high, and built from red brick, and the adjoining semi-detached pair is c.1920, built from brown brick with rendered first floor, casement windows and a steeply pitched tiled roof.



Houses in Penshurst Road close to Northfields

7.9 On the west side of Penshurst Road, most of the garden to the Little Court Nursing Home was developed in the 1970s but the original house remains, and is a good example of a substantial Arts and Crafts house of c.1900. The building is constructed from red brick, with tile hanging to the first floor, gables, several prominent chimney stacks and a large mullioned and transomed first floor window, presumably lighting a staircase hall. Wych Elm is a detached house of the 1920s, well detailed with a mixture of brick, white painted render and tile hanging. Leaded casements and large brick chimneys provide some decoration. Some of the garden has become a "pocket park", a small grassed space with mature trees and a bench seat.



Little Court Nursing Home

7.10 It is considered that the varied 19th and early 20th century houses along Penshurst Road, and the many mature trees, make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and that they should be included in the Speldhurst Conservation Area.



The "pocket park" off Penshurst Road

8.0 Issues

- 8.1 Speldhurst is a well-preserved village with few obvious threats to its character. The buildings are generally in good condition and it is clearly a desirable location with the village school providing a very important local facility. However, there are a number of threats to the character of the conservation area:

Sub-division of existing plots, and over-extension of existing buildings

- 8.2 There is a perception that houses with generous gardens are suitable for further development, including the provision of new buildings, or substantial extensions to existing buildings. Over-large garages, often with additional residential accommodation, are a particular threat. Most of the listed buildings retain their historic plot sizes and ancient boundaries, as shown on the early maps, and changes to these could be detrimental to the heritage value of the properties. Additionally new development within historic curtilages could adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings, which currently are mainly surrounded by mature landscaped gardens which are appropriate in a small rural village.
- 8.3 This threat is very real - on the edge of the conservation area in Penshurst Road, redevelopment is currently (Summer 2005) taking place to replace The Lantern House with two new dwellings. All new development should conform to the Borough Council's policies especially as set out in "Alterations and extensions SPD".
- 8.4 Within the conservation area, Saxons, in particular, is a modern building dating to the 1960s where redevelopment to a similar footprint and bulk might be advantageous, but its replacement with a much larger building, or even several buildings, would not be acceptable.

Boundaries

- 8.5 Speldhurst is notable for its sandstone boundary walls, and for the soft natural boundaries created by mature hedging, high trees and planting generally. This links the centre of the village to the surrounding countryside. For any new hedging, it is important that native local species are specified.
- 8.6 Some of the boundaries have been replaced by inappropriate alternatives, such as the close boarded fencing in front of Barn House in Penshurst Road, where the recently planted traditional mixed hedge has yet to mature.
- 8.7 Trees within the conservation area form an important part of its special character. Whilst designation brings some protection, the Borough Council could consider additional protection by covering more of the trees by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Traffic and pedestrian movement

- 8.8 Speldhurst is unfortunately noted for the busy traffic which passes through the village, often at speed despite the 30 mph limit. In parts of the conservation area, such as along the east side of Langton Road, pavements are either non-existent or very narrow. This results in a dangerous environment for pedestrians. Opportunities could be sought to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety.



The garden to Saxons should be preserved



Trees are very important in the conservation area (St Mary's Churchyard)



Pavements tend to be very narrow in the centre of the conservation area (Langton Road)

Speldhurst Primary School

- 8.9 The windows on the listed buildings urgently require repainting and are beginning to rot. The portacabins, providing temporary accommodation, are an unattractive feature. The blue gate to the school entrance would be less obtrusive if it were painted black. However, redecoration of the windows is scheduled to start very soon and planning permission has been given for further new buildings which will involve the removal of the portacabins.



Speldhurst School

The Manor

- 8.10 Though not very visible from the highway, the modern metal garage doors in the front elevation of the coach house to The Manor are a discordant feature on a listed building.



The Manor, Speldhurst Hill

Signage

- 8.11 The modern finger post at the junction of Barden Road and Speldhurst Hill is dirty and other signs for the local footpaths are similarly almost illegible.

Sustainable design

- 8.12 To encourage sustainable development, all new buildings should use products with a low environmental impact including the use of locally sourced materials from sustainable resources. Where appropriate in a conservation area, new buildings should also include provisions for waste reduction, the re-use of materials and should be energy efficient including the use of renewal energy systems.
- 8.13 Energy efficiency for the existing buildings within the conservation area could be improved by such measures as loft insulation and the provision of secondary double glazing, subject to the views of the Council's conservation officer and the Council's Building Control department.
- 8.14 The Council should seek to ensure that the existing local facilities are retained and their viability maintained by providing further improvements for access.



Public highway signage on Speldhurst Hill

Crime

- 8.15 All new development should be carefully designed to provide a safe and secure environment.

Promotion of the cultural heritage

- 8.16 To increase the public's awareness and to encourage economic growth and tourism, the Council should actively seek to promote the conservation area and its cultural heritage features. One such action would be to publicise this document and to arrange for it to be distributed to local residents and other interested parties.

9.0 Consultations

Introduction

- 9.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in PPS12 regarding preparation and consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 9.2 The most relevant Local Plan Policies are set out in this document at Section 2. The Supplementary Planning Document is intended to support these policies.

PPS12: Local Development Frameworks
www.communities.gov.uk

Statement of Community Involvement
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Consultation Process

- 9.3 The initial preparation of the document was through a working group made up of consultants from The Conservation Studio, Borough Council officers, representatives from the Speldhurst Parish Council, Speldhurst Village Society, Langton Rural Society and other individuals.
- 9.4 From September 2005, the process included walkabouts by the working group of each of the three Conservation Areas in the parish. These were followed by a joint workshop session. The resultant informal initial draft Appraisal was then subject to scrutiny and input from members of the working group, together with other key council officers.
- 9.5 The draft document was reported to the Borough Council's Local Development Framework Members Working Party on 19 December 2005. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning received the report and approved the draft Appraisal on 18 January 2006 as the basis for public consultation. (Item 060120/070).
- 9.6 The document was subject to public consultation for a period of four weeks between 30 January and 27 February 2006.
- 9.7 Documents available comprised: draft Speldhurst Conservation Area Appraisal SPD; Executive Summary; Sustainability Appraisal; Statement of SPD Matters; Statement of Consultation; and map of the Conservation Area. There was also a questionnaire. These were available on the Borough Council's website, at the Council offices and local libraries.
- 9.8 Some 728 organisations were notified by letter of the consultation and where the documents could be viewed or obtained. Copies of the draft Appraisal and associated documents were sent to 15 key organisations, including the four Regulation 17 bodies.
- 9.9 A staffed exhibition based, in Langton Green, was held on 3 and 4 February 2006.
- 9.10 The consultation draft was also reported to the Borough Council's Western Area Planning Committee for comment on 9 March 2006, and was made available to all Borough Councillors.

Response to Consultation

- 9.11 The responses to the consultation were reported to the Local Development Framework Members Working Party on 18 May 2006 and to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning on 28 June 2006, (Item 06/0630/014).

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- 9.12 The report details the responses received and outlines the proposed changes to the document, where appropriate. The report and minutes of the meeting are available from the Council's Committee Section on request, or can be viewed on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.
- 9.13 The Appraisal was ratified at Full Council on 10 July 2006 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Document, together with the revised Conservation Area boundary.

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Notices

- 9.14 A notice of public participation was placed in a local paper advertising the formal consultation period and where the documents were available.
- 9.15 On adoption, relevant notices were placed in the London Gazette on 31 August 2006, and a local newspaper, in accordance with S.70 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

London Gazette
www.gazettes-online.co.uk

10.0 Sustainability

- 10.1 The Borough Council is required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) as part of the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is to ensure conformity with other higher-level strategies and policies, to identify any sustainability issues and to ensure that the Supplementary Planning Document is as sustainable as possible.
- 10.2 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Speldhurst Conservation Area Appraisal was independently undertaken by Waterman Environmental on behalf of the Borough Council in order to integrate sustainability considerations into the preparation of the SPD. Sustainability encompasses environmental, social and economic components. The report developed the previous work done on the overall Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the LDF.
- 10.3 Consultation with the four key national agencies was undertaken and any comments incorporated in the final SA/SEA. The SA/SEA was also consulted on alongside the SPD.

Sustainability Appraisal
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

11.0 Contact Details

11.1 For queries on planning matters or general conservation advice.

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