

# Langton Green Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted  
June 2006

**Langton Green**  
**Conservation Area Appraisal**  
**Supplementary Planning Document**

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

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## Summary

This document has been produced for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in collaboration with Speldhurst Parish Council. 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 it 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”.

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals  
[www.englishheritage.org.uk](http://www.englishheritage.org.uk)

## Key characteristics

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

- The unspoilt rural setting in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The flattish topography on the top of an east-west ridge;
- The former sandstone quarries;
- The village green, its trees, and the grass verges on the eastern side;
- The strong sense of enclosure to the village green created by the buildings and the high hedges and mature trees;
- The soft hedging, sandstone walling, and mature trees which create the other boundaries;
- The 18 listed buildings in the conservation area, two of which are listed grade II\*;
- The survival of two late 15th century houses: Manor Cottage and Stonewall/Searles, both in Speldhurst Road;
- Langton House, the most prestigious “gentleman’s residence” in the conservation area, with its stables, lodge, and walled garden (parts of which are currently outside the conservation area);
- All Saints’ Church, its lych gate and war memorial; and
- The use of timber-framing, sandstone and clay bricks and tiles for the buildings and boundary walls.



The Old Forge, Langton Green

## Key Issues

The Appraisal concludes that the most important issues which threaten the special architectural and historic interest of the Langton Green Conservation Area are:

- The sub-division of plots, and the over-extension of existing buildings;
- Traditional boundaries – sandstone walls and hedging should be encouraged, and the use of timber boarded fencing discouraged;
- Busy traffic along the A264 and some narrow pavements;
- The poor condition of some of the buildings;
- The use of modern materials and inappropriate details;
- Threats to the grass verges around The Green;
- Poor quality public seating; and
- The possibility of removing or lopping some trees around the church to improve its setting.



View across Green to Langton House

### **Conservation Area Boundary Review**

A number of additions are suggested to the Conservation Area:

- (i) Add the former stables to Langton House, Oakwell House and its garden, and the former quarry, to the west of the All Saints' Church; and
- (ii) Add the field next to Hollands Farm, Langton Road.

## 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 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 Langton Green 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.

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Sustainability Appraisal  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

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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.

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 Langton Green Conservation Area. The Appraisal will also inform other agencies and individuals whose activities impact on the fabric of the Langton Green 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.

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PPG15; Planning and the  
Historic Environment  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

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South East Plan  
[www.southeast.ra.gov.uk](http://www.southeast.ra.gov.uk)

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Kent and Medway Structure  
Plan  
[www.kmsp.gov.uk](http://www.kmsp.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 Langton Green 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.

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Tunbridge Wells Borough  
Local Plan 2006  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

#### **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 uses 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 Langton Green 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****EN13 Ancient Woodland****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 AONB****R1 Recreation open Space****H11 Extensions outside Limits to Built Development**


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Tunbridge Wells Borough  
Local Plan 2006 & Proposals  
Maps  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://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 designations are shown on the accompanying Heritage Designation maps.

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Heritage Designation map -  
Langton Green Conservation  
Area  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

### 3.0 Location and Landscape Setting

#### Location

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

#### Topography

- 3.2 Langton Green developed as a nucleated ridgetop 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 flattish land along the top of an east-west ridge which drops steeply southwards towards the valley of the River Grom. A much gentler slope to the north towards Speldhurst is hardly visible from the conservation area although the ground falls more sharply on the north-eastern edge of the modern settlement. This part of the Borough has been designated as “Wooded Farmland” within the Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment.



Speldhurst Road

#### Geology

- 3.3 The village is located on a sandstone ridge which has periodically been quarried to provide building stone. The remains of these quarries can be found within, and on the edge, of the conservation area, now mainly hidden by vegetation and mature trees. Exposed outcrops of the sandstone can be seen, again outside the conservation area, on the steep valley sides leading down to the River Grom.
- 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.

#### Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

- 3.5 The Langton Green Conservation Area encompasses the historic village which is centred on the large village green and on the crossing of the two major routes, one north-south (Speldhurst Road and Broom Lane), and one east-west (the A264). The settlement lies on the western edge of Tunbridge Wells, to which it is connected by the A264, which runs along the top of the ridge in an east-west direction. Between Langton Green and Rusthall is an area of largely 20th century development around Dornden Drive, with Rusthall Common providing a “green” break in this development before reaching Tunbridge Wells.
- 3.6 To the south of Langton Green, the land falls steeply to the valley of the River Grom, with fields and woodland. Beyond lies Broadwater Forest, the Eridge Deer Park, Saxonbury Hill and Ashdown Forest.
- 3.7 To the west, open relatively flat fields with a few specimen trees recall that the land once formed the parkland to Ashurst Park. These fields are largely used for sheep grazing. These fields fall gently towards the valley of the River Medway, some four kilometres away. To the north, wooded countryside with small fields lie between Langton Green and Speldhurst.
- 3.8 The ridgetop location of Langton Green provides a succession of



View along Broom Lane Southwards

short views from the main road to the south over open fields, but otherwise the conservation area is inward looking, focussing on the large open green which forms its centre.

- 3.9 An important bridleway, the High Weald Walk, passes just to the west of the conservation area, close to Ashurst Place. A more minor footpath links the village to Ashurst Park, passing through the former quarry just to the west of the conservation area, and another footpath crosses The Green. On the northern edge of the conservation area, another footpath connects Ashurst Place with (eventually) Rusthall.

### Biodiversity

- 3.10 Langton Green 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 north-east, broad swathes of permanent and semi-improved pasture on the hill slopes closer to Speldhurst represents an internationally important reserve of acidic and neutral grassland. The former quarry sites in and around the conservation area provide an important haven for wildlife including foxes and badgers.



Fields to the west of Langton Green

## 4.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

### Historic development

#### Pre-Conquest

- 4.1 Langton Green derives its name from Letherington, the Saxon word for “*The clearing in the woods*”. It is situated 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 to the west of an old pack-horse road from London to the coast, which crosses the A264 at Gipps Cross and then runs along Barrow Lane, past Holmewood School to Adam’s Well and over the River Grom.

#### 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 Pultney, who in 1346 settled both on his College of St Lawrence Poultny 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 Thomas Waller in 1360, who also purchased the manor of Groombridge from the de Cobhams, giving him ownership of a large tract of land stretched from Rustall to Ashurst and southwards to Groombridge.
- 4.3 In 1412 young Richard Waller, Thomas’s descendant, was given charge of the nine-year old Count of Angouleme. 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, Rustall 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 mid to late 15th century, Manor Cottage was built on Speldhurst Road at the northern end of the Langton Green Conservation Area, and another farmhouse, now subdivided to form Searles and Stonewalls, was also constructed on an adjoining site.

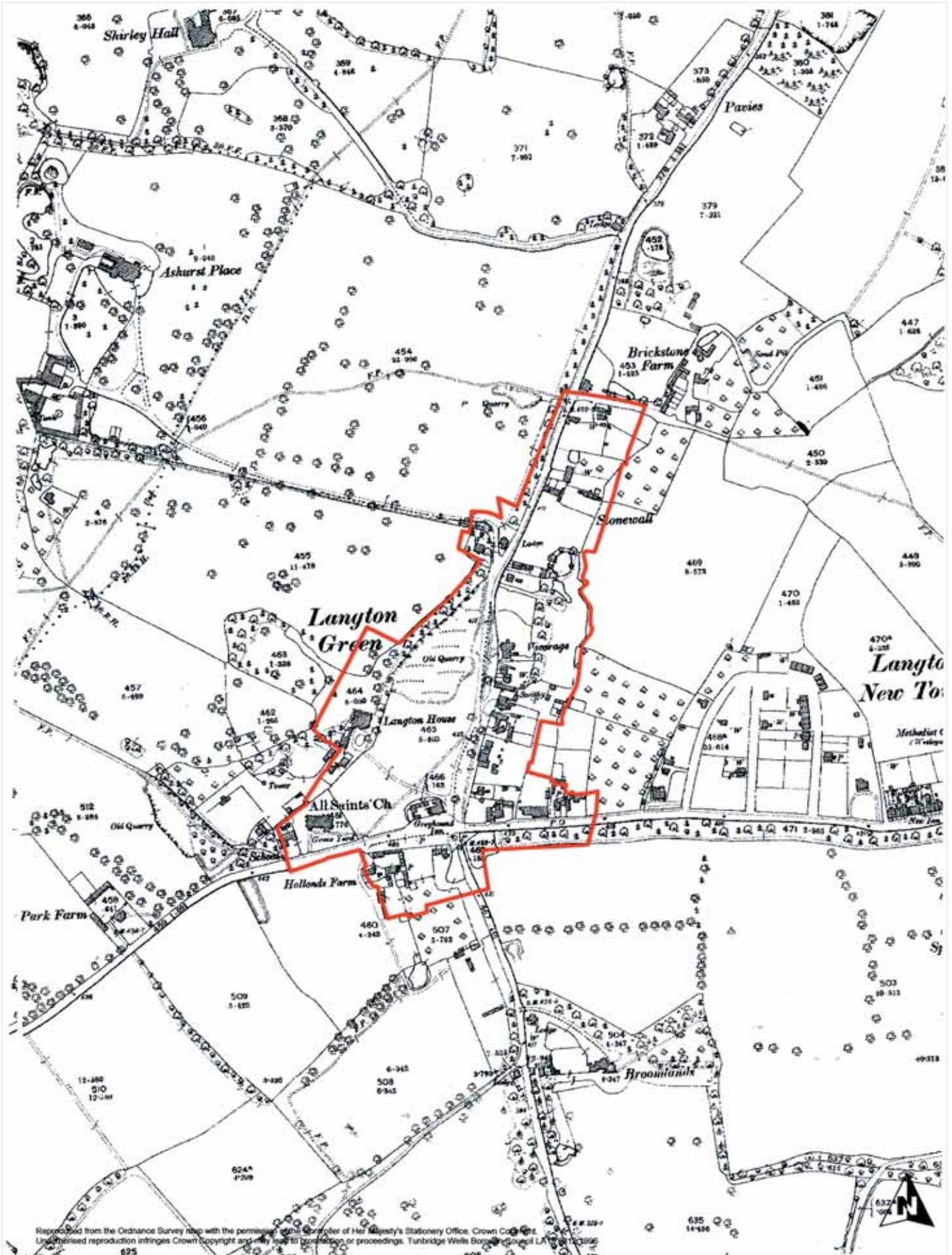
#### 1500-1800

- 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 Groombridge 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.

**1800-2000**

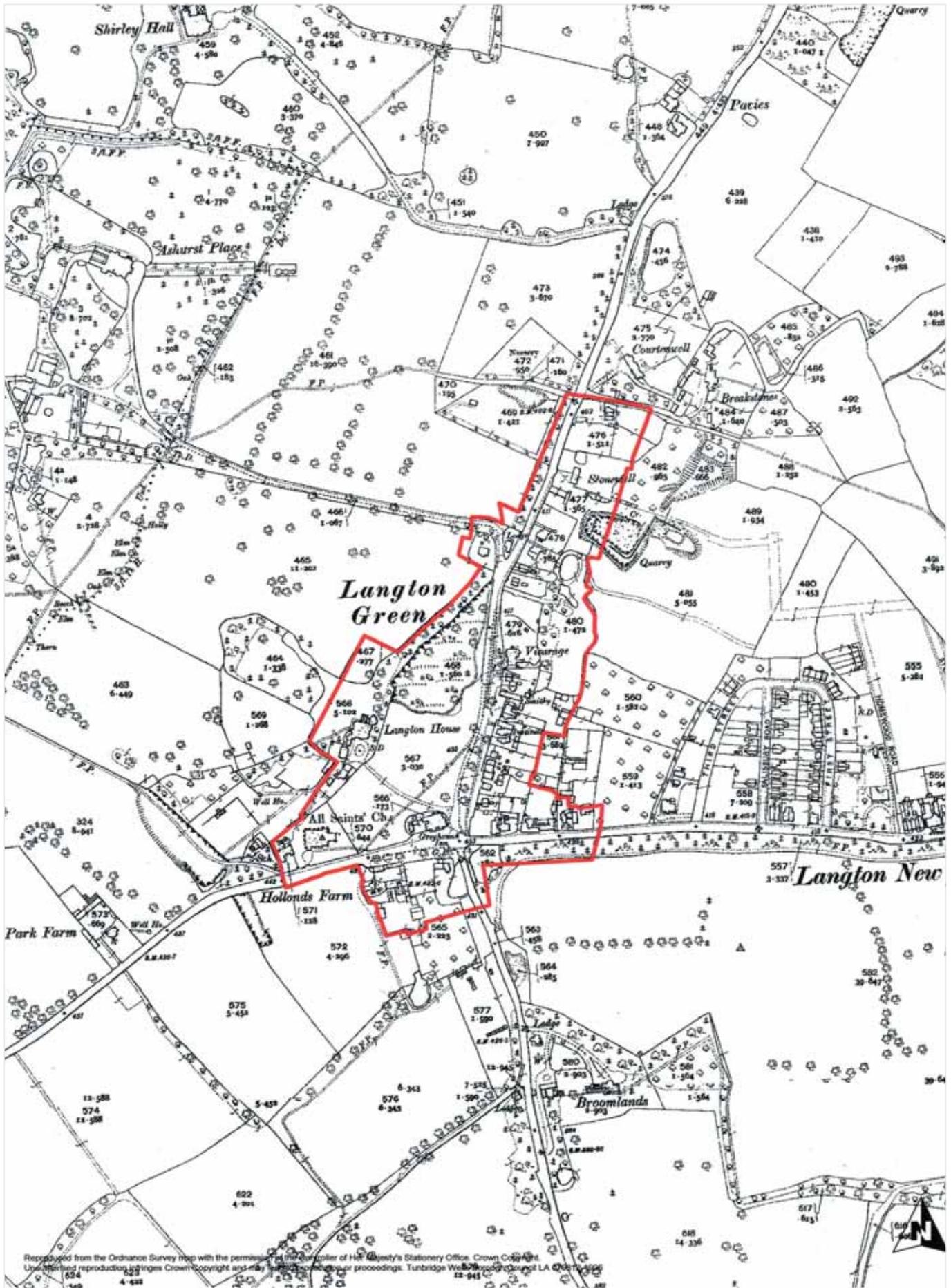
- 4.6 In 1791 lightning during a violent storm set Speldhurst Church alight and within a few hours almost nothing remained apart from part of the north wall of the tower, some fragments in the vestry, and the font. A second church, of c.1797, was entirely replaced in 1870-1 by a third, to the designs of John Oldrid Scott. 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.
- 4.7 In 1863 All Saints' Church in Langton Green was consecrated as a chapel-of-ease to Speldhurst Church, ending the need for the residents of Langton Green to undertake the long walk to Speldhurst every Sunday. It was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert-Scott. The neighbouring National School, now converted into residential accommodation, was built later in the same century. Langton Green finally became an independent parish in 1880.
- 4.8 The 1840 Tithe map shows Langton Green as a scattered rural settlement with a variety of buildings facing The Green, including Langton House. This had been built in 1810 as dower house by the Powell family, replacing Manor Cottage along Speldhurst Road. The map also shows how the road to Speldhurst was no more than a rough trackway. Of note is the village pond, then located to either side Broom Lane.
- 4.9 The 1870 First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows Langton Green as a more developed but still small nucleated village, clustered around the central green, with fields and woodland on all four sides. On the eastern edge of The Green, a collection of buildings are set back from the road. Small shops and a Post Office are noted along Langton Road. The river Grom, Hollands Farm and fields mark the southern boundary and All Saints' Church the west. Langton House is the principal building on the western side of The Green. Quarrying appears to have largely ceased by this time as the three local quarries are marked as rough ground or, as in the case of the quarry beyond the church, the land is crossed by a public footpath. Along Speldhurst Road the open countryside is peppered with farms – Stonewall Farm, Brickstone Farm and Paveys Farm all of which lie close to the village. A smithy is also noted on the eastern side of The Green, and almost opposite, the former lodge to Ashurst Place is located on a prominent bend in the road. Whilst a Greyhound Inn existed, it must have been an earlier building as the present public house (The Hare) dates to c.1903. To the south-east of Langton Green are several large houses: Holmewood, the house built and then rebuilt by Decimus Burton in 1837; Hollands, formerly in the ownership of Charles Powell, Lord of the manor of Hollands; and Broomlands, built in the 1840s and substantially altered in 1908.
- 4.10 Major changes occurred in the late 19th century when land was sold along Langton Road for development. "Langton New Town" is noted on the map of 1898 although only about 20 houses had been completed.





Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or proceedings. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council LA 100 100000 625

1898 Ordnance Survey map



1909 Ordnance Survey map

**2000 – present day**

- 4.11 In about 1903 the public house on the green was demolished and a new building (the present-day Hare) constructed. In the early 1900s the Powell family donated manorial land on the eastern side of Langton Green on which were built the Village Institute (1902) and later the Watson Hall (1937). The hall was named after a Miss Watson, a member of the Powell family who lived at Langton House for many years in the 19th century.
- 4.12 By 1909, the empty plots in Langton New Town had been developed in Third Street, Salisbury Road and First Street. Some quarrying apparently continued until the 1930s. Further residential development, linking Langton Green to Rustall and thence to Tunbridge Wells, occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, but the greatest changes occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when large gardens were subdivided to create more building plots – a threat to the historic character of the area which still exists today.
- 4.13 During this expansion, the basic form of the present conservation area changed very little. The Greyhound Inn was redeveloped in the early 1900s when the present neo-Tudor building (now called The Hare) was erected. A large recreation ground, with a small pavilion, was created on open land off Speldhurst Road, probably in the 1930s. The garden to the house on the corner of Broom Lane was developed with two further properties in the 1980s, but fortunately the original building, shown on the 1870 map, remains, although it has been divided into two (Hollands Gardens and Spindleberries). Along Langton Green, a few sites have been infilled with new houses, possibly in the 1980s, but these are generally discreetly located and sensitively detailed.
- 4.14 Today, Langton Green retains a large number of attractive listed buildings, mainly facing The Green. The Hare Public House is a very popular local hostelry, sometimes creating problems because of this popularity. A small number of local shops along Langton Road still provide important local facilities. The provision of a modern primary school, just outside the conservation area on the northern edge of the village, has ensured that young families still want to live in the area. A local charitable trust runs the Watson Memorial Hall, which is shortly to be redeveloped and a new hall provided next to the village Recreation Ground, off Speldhurst Road. All Saints' Church continues to provide for the spiritual needs of the community.

**Archaeology**

- 4.15 The local sites and monuments record (SMR) is held by Kent County Council and includes a record of finds and past archaeological investigations. For Langton Green this includes entries for All Saints' Church; Searles, Speldhurst Road; and Manor Cottage, Speldhurst Road.
- 4.16 The only designated archaeological site within the conservation area is an Area of Archaeological Potential which lies to the north of Langton House, encompassing part of its garden. It includes a major section of the former stone quarry and some of the field to the west. However, this designation is somewhat out of date and it is difficult to tie in the protected area with any known archaeological features. The area of potential could perhaps be extended to include The Green and all of the buildings which surround it, including the east side of Speldhurst Road as far as Manor Cottage.

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PPG 15: Planning & the  
Historic Environment  
PPG 16: Archaeology &  
Planning  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

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## 5.0 Spatial Analysis

### Townscape

- 5.1 The Langton Green Conservation Area contains two major roads, each with its own character, linked by the village green. Each of these three areas has its own distinctive characteristics, 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 areas are: Speldhurst Road (from Sherwood Place northwards); the village green; and Langton Road (east of Broom Lane).

#### Speldhurst Road from Sherwood Place northwards – key characteristics

##### General:

- Level, fairly straight road connecting Langton Green to Speldhurst;
- Character of a country lane with strong sense of enclosure with mature trees and hedging on the western side;
- Conservation area includes historic buildings on the eastern side; and
- West side is nearly all 20th century development and is largely excluded although their garden boundaries and planting help to contain the space.

##### East side of road:

- Building line is set back from road usually about 3 metres;
- Detached or paired houses set up a low bank;
- Reasonably spacious plots apart from the two pairs of cottages immediately north of Sherwood Place;
- Buildings are generally spaced equally giving a rhythm to the form of development;
- This rhythm, and the front gardens and boundaries, is one of the street's key characteristics;
- Boundaries are mainly brick with some metal railings or timber boarded fencing;
- Notable use of gables and large brick chimney stacks on the buildings;
- Two major historic buildings: Manor Cottage (listed grade II\*), a 15th century timber-framed house dating back to the late 15th century, and Searles and Stonewalls (listed grade II), once one farmhouse, also late 15th century;
- Stonewalls and Searles at lower level than the road;
- Former barns to Stonewalls Farmhouse now converted into house (Little Stonewalls) with converted oast behind;
- A number of 19th century cottages, unlisted, but making a positive contribution;
- Two late 19th century houses (Fairlawn and Pond Close) with converted oast behind, both unlisted but again positive;
- Very mixed walling materials – sandstone, timber framing, red

Townscape Analysis Map -  
Langton Green Conservation  
Area  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)



Speldhurst Road



Searles

or brown brick, white painted weather-boarding, white painted render; and

- Roofs are mainly handmade clay tiles or natural Welsh slate.

#### West side:

- Hedging, a low bank and mature trees largely hide the 20th century development;
- The Lodge is prominently located and dates to the end of the 19th century;
- The Lodge is notable for its red brickwork, enlivened with dark red string courses and modillion eaves cornice, and its hipped slated roof; and
- Original metal railings remain defining its boundaries.



The Lodge

### The Green – key characteristics

#### General:

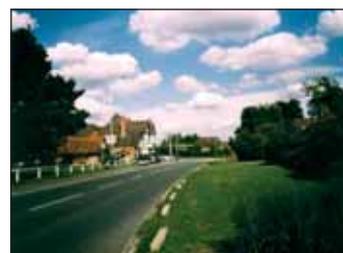
- “Traditional” village green character with church, public house, and pond;
- Notable open space in the centre which is laid to grass;
- Some mature trees including examples of more exotic species, which define the space and act as focal points;
- Avenue of young trees mark the drive to Langton House;
- East side is defined by mainly historic buildings facing Speldhurst Road and deep grass verges;
- West side is defined by much grander detached houses in larger plots and the church;
- The Hare Public House acts as a focal point; and
- South side is defined by the busy Langton Road and Hollands Farm beyond.



View across Green to Speldhurst Road

#### East side:

- Deep grass verges with soft edges and no kerbs, set up a low bank, are very important;
- Copper beech in front garden of The Vicarage, crucial in views along the street;
- Variety of houses and cottages set back from Speldhurst Road with front gardens and some mature trees;
- Mainly 19th century buildings, mostly listed;
- Fairly consistent building line apart from the Old Forge;
- Contrast between the more prestigious houses (Kingswood and Adam Cottage) and the more vernacular cottages, such as Lampington Cottage and Penn Cottage;
- Gables important facing The Green;
- Walling - sandstone, brown or red brick, or tile hanging;
- Roofs – mainly handmade clay tiles or natural slate;
- Mostly timber sash windows but nos. 1 and 2 The Green have cast iron windows, with Gothic details to the ground floor; and
- Boundaries include low white timber picket fencing, natural wood picket fencing (silvery grey in colour), and cast iron railings.



Langton Road



Copper beech in front of The Vicarage



Nos. 1 & 2 The Green

#### The Green:

- Large flat open space laid to grass with a few older trees and newer trees marking the driveway to Langton House;

- White painted timber fencing to driveway to Langton House and white timber railings to south side of green, both reasonably in keeping; and
- The Hare Public House is a substantial building of c.1900, which dominates the south side of The Green.

#### West side of The Green:

- Rural quality of area – mature trees, spacious plots, detached houses;
- All Saints' Church and the adjoining former school are both built from the local sandstone;
- Listed church is a focal point but rather hidden by trees from The Green;
- Lych gate and war memorial are significant features;
- 19th century "estate" metal railings around churchyard;
- Langton House, with its white painted stucco and slate roof, sits behind a high hedge but is important in views across The Green;
- Langton Lodge is notable for its use of red clay tile hanging, red brick, and clay roofing tiles; and
- Small paned windows or larger sashes predominate.

#### South side of the Green:

- Rural quality provided by Hollands Farm, its farmyard, and the adjoining field;
- Use of sandstone and timber framing on farmhouse;
- Peg tiled roofs of the single storey barns important;
- Traditional crossroads sign at end of Broom Lane;
- Survival of village pond in Broom Lane;
- Some unobtrusive 20th century development (Broomlea); and
- Views southwards from Langton Road over field.

#### Langton Road (east of Broom Lane) – key characteristics

- North side of road defined by well detailed mainly 19th century buildings set either on the back of the pavement or behind small front gardens;
- Variety of uses: shops, printing works, residential;
- Use of red brick, tile hanging and grey slate; and
- Good 19th century shopfront on Chaskit House.



The Hare Public House



Langton House is hidden by tall hedges and trees



Hollands Farm



Shopfront at Chaskit House

### Approaches

- 5.3 Langton Green is approached from four directions. The principal entrances are along the A264, from Groombridge and East Grinstead in the west, and from Tunbridge Wells in the east. A third entrance, from Speldhurst in the north, is less dramatic. From the south, Broom Lane, a narrow country road which largely lies outside the conservation area, winds down to the valley of the River Grom.
- 5.4 Along Langton Road from the west, just before entering the conservation area, are wide open fields, notable for their surviving specimen trees. Northern views over these fields, usually used for sheep grazing, terminate in the high conifer hedge which defines the edge of Langton House garden. The former sandstone quarry, just beyond these fields, is hidden by mature trees but can be accessed by the footpath which is signposted from the main road. On the

southern side of the road, the reservoir and tall water tower are not necessarily attractive features but do provide a reference point in the landscape, and the trees which surround them are significant. The open field which separates the water tower and Hollands Farm is of note because this is the only place within the conservation area where long views can be obtained.

- 5.5 Along Langton Road from the east, the road is hemmed in by the tall and thick band of trees which lie between Langton Road and Holmewood Ridge. These include some specimen trees such as Wellingtonias. On the north side of the road, the buildings outside the conservation area date to the 20th century and have no special merit, but on entering the conservation area, there is a well detailed group of 19th century houses, shops and a printing works which provide Langton Green with a genuine village centre.
- 5.6 From the north, Speldhurst Road is an attractive rural lane, notable for its mature trees, high hedges and enclosed character. The section within the conservation area might have been adversely affected by 20th century development, but the provision of hedging and mature trees along the western side of the road hides most of the new buildings, and reinforces the links to the surrounding countryside. On the eastern side, a mixture of listed and “positive” historic buildings creates a varied and interesting townscape.



Shops in Langton Road

### Spaces and Views

- 5.7 Langton Green is notable for the relatively flat village green which forms the core of the conservation area. Around it are a variety of well detailed listed buildings and many mature trees and hedges, creating a pleasant sense of enclosure. This is somewhat compromised by the busy traffic along Langton Road and by the pressure for car parking in the surrounding roads.
- 5.8 On the eastern side of The Green, the many listed buildings are mixed with other unlisted but historic buildings which all make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The deep grass verges are an attractive feature, reinforcing the rural qualities of the area. To the north, the former quarry is now hidden by mature trees but provides an attractive backdrop. To the west, Langton House and Langton Lodge are the principal buildings, again somewhat concealed by mature trees and hedging. All Saints’ Church is also somewhat concealed by trees and shrubbery from The Green although it is more visible from Langton Road. To the south, the busy main road is softened slightly by the survival of rural features such as the village pond, the buildings associated with Hollands Farm, and the large field which lies on the south-western edge of the conservation area.
- 5.9 There are a number of attractive views along the roads which lead into the centre of the conservation area but the most important views are undoubtedly the ones which can be seen across The Green, terminating on focal buildings such as The Hare Public House, Langton House, or All Saints’ Church. The most notable views are:
- Along Speldhurst Road, terminating on the sandstone elevations of the Old Forge;
  - Across The Green towards Langton House;
  - Across The Green towards the church; and
  - Across the field to the south of the conservation area.



The former village pond

## Landmarks and Focal Points

5.10 The most important landmarks and focal points are:

- The Hare Public House, a neo-Tudor building of c.1900 which sits on The Green adjacent to the crossroads;
- All Saints' Church, a neo-Gothic Victorian church with good sandstone details and a tall spire;
- Hollands Farm on Langton Road, particularly important for its timber-framed gable and the adjoining sandstone barns which face the main road;
- Langton House, the principal residence in the conservation area, especially important in views across The Green from the east;
- The Old Forge on the east side of The Green, which sits forward from the general building line and is built using large blocks of sandstone; and
- Ashurst Place Lodge in Speldhurst Road, a single storey red brick late 19th century lodge, with its original wrought iron railings.



All Saints' Church



Hollands Farm

## 6.0 Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

### Activities and Uses

- 6.1 Langton Green is primarily a residential village with most of the occupants working in Tunbridge Wells or further away. However, it still retains a village character as fortunately a number of facilities are still provided within the village.
- 6.2 Most importantly, there are a number of local shops in Langton Road – a general store and Post Office, a saddlers, and a butchers. The Hare Public House is a very popular pub drawing clients from a wide area. All Saints' Church is the only religious building, and is well supported by the local community. The Watson Hall and Village Institute are currently rather run down, but still in use, as the site is awaiting redevelopment. Planning permission has been given to replace these buildings with a pair of houses and to built new improved facilities at the Recreation Ground off Speldhurst Road. In the 1970s the former village school was converted to a house and a new primary school was built, also off Speldhurst Road. These varied uses and activities serve to reinforce the village identity and provide a focus for the community.
- 6.3 Several buildings within the conservation area provide a reminder that Langton Green was once an agricultural village. Hollands Farm, on Langton Road, retains its barns and outbuildings, although planning permission has been given for the site to be converted into housing. Searles and Stonewall, once a single farmhouse, retains a barn, now converted into a house and called Little Stonewall, and an oast, also converted and relatively hidden behind the other buildings. Beyond this group, and set back from the road, Manor Cottage is another former farm house, also dating to the mid or late 15th century. On the east side of The Green, Forge House is still used as a home but the adjoining Old Forge has been sensitively converted into architects' offices.
- 6.4 Around The Green are a number of disused quarries, confirming that Langton Green was once an important supplier of building stone which was used particularly in Tunbridge Wells. In the 19th century, when demand was greatest, these quarries must have provided an important source of local employment. The quarries are now abandoned and are very overgrown but they have taken on a new significance as habitats for a variety of wildlife.



Watson Hall

### Plan Form, Building Types and Boundaries

- 6.5 The most notable feature of the plan form of the conservation area is the village green and the crossroads which lie immediately to one side of it. The crossroads mark the meeting of two major routes – the medieval or even older east-west route which passes along the sandstone ridge, linking East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells, and a similarly ancient trackway which connects Groombridge to Langton Green and on to Speldhurst.
- 6.6 On the east side of The Green, most of the properties have a common boundary which runs roughly parallel to the lower part of Speldhurst Road. This suggests that the land was once part of the common and encroachments of the late medieval period (presumably with the permission of the Lord of Speldhurst Manor, who owned the land)



Crossroads

gradually occurred from the end of the 15th century onwards, when some of the existing buildings were built. Other buildings appear to have been added incrementally, although along Speldhurst Road and the east side of The Green there is a fairly consistent building line with only the occasional building jutting forward to the edge of the roadway. Overall, there was no planned development; rather, buildings were added in a rather ad hoc way as required. However, many of the buildings, particularly the church, school, Village Institute and Watson Hall, were built on land donated by the Lord of the Manor, Charles Powell.

- 6.7 Of note is the impact of the former quarries on the layout of the village as although they are now largely hidden by trees and planting, the three quarries (one on the south-west edge of the conservation, one on the east edge, and one immediately adjacent to The Green) do provide a “green lung” to the more intensive development further east.
- 6.8 Apart from the church, former school and public house, most of the historic buildings in the conservation area were built as farms, as accommodation for farm workers, or for a practical function, such as the forge. They are therefore modestly sized, apart from Langton House, a gentleman’s country residence with a large footprint due to the various additions over the years. Kingswood on the east side of The Green is a slightly larger than average 19th century villa, but apart from this the buildings are small detached houses or cottages, sometimes paired. These small artisan cottages, built for farm workers, help to maintain the rural character of the conservation area.
- 6.9 The earliest are generally two storeys high with steeply pitched peg tiled roofs, and tile hanging or brick for the walls. They sit back from the road (eg Manor Cottage, Stonewall/Searles) the latter retaining the vestigial remains of its farmyard, although the barn and oast have both been converted into houses. Further southwards, the buildings are mainly 19th century, built from brick, and have shallow pitched roofs (eg Kingswood) covered in slate. All of these buildings follow an approximate building line providing some uniformity in the size of their front gardens.
- 6.10 Overall, the buildings are generally detached, but sit close together. Some have small front gardens, with the gardens along Speldhurst Road being notable for the low bank which protects the land from the busy road. Further south, the wide grassy verges are very important and provide a rural quality to the streetscene which is reinforced by the low stone walls, hedging, and 19th century metal railings. Timber fences of varying kinds, such as the horizontally boarded fence in front of The Tunnery, are slightly discordant.



Langton House

### Listed Buildings

- 6.11 There are 18 listed buildings in the conservation area, of which two (All Saints’ Church and Manor Cottage) are listed grade II\*. The two earliest buildings are both farmhouses and are located off Speldhurst Road. Manor Cottage is an interesting and well preserved late 15th century hall house with good late 16th /early 17th century improvements. It is timber-framed and underbuilt in red brick and coursed sandstone. The grade II\* listing reflects the survival of much early fabric inside. Searles and Stonewall, close by, is another timber-framed building of a similar date, notable for its prominent tiled roofs.



Manor Cottage

The building, originally one house, was sub-divided in 1900 when large extensions were added.

- 6.12 There are two further timber framed buildings in the conservation area. Old Birchetts, on the east side of Langton Green, dates to the 17th century although the current appearance of the building is very much early 19th century. Further south, Greenholme and Wheelwrights Cottage, again previously one house, date to the late 17th or early 18th century, and is another timber-framed structure, underbuilt in the 19th century with brick.



Greenholme and Wheelwrights Cottage

- 6.13 Along the east side of The Green the remaining listed buildings mainly date to the 19th century. Adam Cottage is notable for its use of plum brick, shallow hipped slated roof and original six-over-six sash windows. With Kingswood, its immediate neighbour, it provides slightly higher status accommodation than the more vernacular cottages, such as Lampington and Penn Cottage, which lie immediately to the south. These both have 19th century features with casement windows, tile-hung first floors, brick ground floors, and steeply pitched peg tiled roofs. The ground floor of Lampington Cottage is faced in red brick with blue headers, suggesting a possibly late 18th century date.

- 6.14 The Old Forge is a long, low sandstone-built building, with a gable facing the street and a steeply pitched peg tiled roof. Modern joinery has been well designed to minimise the impact of the office conversion on the character of the building, although the insertion of two Velux rooflights is regrettable. Finally, close to the corner with Langton Road is a pair of brown brick two storey cottages, notable for their wrought iron casement windows with Gothick details to the ground floor only.

- 6.15 Facing The Green on the west side, Langton House is the most prestigious private house in the conservation area. It is dated 1810 and was built by the Powells, the Lords of Speldhurst Manor, but there may have been a building on the site before. The more public front facing The Green displays characteristic details of the Regency period, with multi-paned sashes, tripartite windows, and white painted stucco. The south (entrance) front retains an unusual flat roofed porch, probably of a later date. The west (garden) front is partly weather-boarded, hinting at a previous build. The house is surrounded by large gardens stretching back into the adjoining countryside, although the former stables and lodge, which lie immediately to the south, are now in separate ownership. The stables are well detailed and built from sandstone blocks. Langton Lodge is an L-shaped building, clearly somewhat extended, with a notable gable facing The Green decorated with red tile hanging.



Langton Lodge

- 6.16 To the south of Langton House, and occupying a corner plot on the edge of The Green, All Saints' Church is listed grade II\*. It was built in 1862-63 in the Early English style and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott with later additions by John Oldrid Scott. The walls are constructed from the local sandstone and the roof is covered with clay tiles. A listed war memorial lies between the church and The Green.



War memorial

- 6.17 Finally, the last listed building in the conservation area is Hollands Farm, on the south side of Langton Road. Modestly sized, the original farmhouse was built in the early 19th century and was extended later that century. The older part is sandstone with brick stacks and a peg tiled roof. Facing the road is a jettied gable over the front door with

visible timber framing. The adjoining farmyard is contained by long low barns of which only one (closest to the road) is listed. This is built from sandstone blocks with a hipped peg tiled roof.

### Key Unlisted Buildings

- 6.18 There are a number of key unlisted buildings within Langton Green which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are mainly 19th century and the majority are in residential uses. They can be small cottages, such as those which face the eastern end of Langton Road, built from red brick with shallow slated roofs, or weather-boarded, such as Holly Cottages in Speldhurst Road. Next door, another pair of cottages are built from brown brick but again, have multi-paned sash windows. In the same road, but further south, Kingswood is a gracious mid-19th century villa with a prominent canted bay window and a shallow pitched slated roof. Forge House, another key building, is important because of its relationship with the adjoining listed former forge and the retention of an historic shopfront.
- 6.19 The former oast and barn to Stonewall/Searles are both not listed but again are important in their contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. Finally, the former National School next to All Saints' Church is an important building in relation to the social development of Langton Green.

### Buildings Materials, Colours and Textures

- 6.20 Building materials in Langton Green 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. Sandstone quarries were located in Langton Green but appear to have gone out of production by the time of the First Edition OS map in 1870. The name "Brickstone Farm", to the north of Langton Green, and the notation on the same map of a sandpit nearby, suggests that both clay and sand were also available locally. Timber would have been cut from the surrounding forests, of which Shadwell Wood to the east of Speldhurst is the last local remnant.
- 6.21 This timber was therefore the most popular material until the 18th century, when brick-making techniques improved and brick therefore became cheaper and more fashionable. Manor Cottage, Stonewall/Searles and Greenholme/Wheelwrights Cottage are therefore timber-framed as they were all built before this date. Langton House provides an early 19th century example of the use of stucco, meant to replicate stone and considered very high status at the time. The local sandstone was used for both prestigious and the more utilitarian buildings, and in Langton Green it is notable for its use on All Saints' Church, the Old Forge, and Hollands Farm barns, all dating to the 19th century. Brown or red brick, as in the more modest late 19th century cottages facing Speldhurst Road and Langton Road, was considered suitable for the artisan dwellings of the farm workers.
- 6.22 Most of the listed buildings in the conservation area are covered in hand made clay tiles, providing a naturally undulating and warmly coloured roof. Welsh slate is used almost as frequently, mostly on the 19th century or later buildings. Of note are the much shallower roof pitches (e.g. Kingswood, Langton House) which slate allowed.
- 6.23 Stone walls can be made from finely coursed smooth faced ashlar



Barns adjoining Hollands Farmhouse



Forge House



Former school next to All Saints' Church



Brick cottages in Speldhurst Road

blocks, most notably used on the Old Forge, All Saints' Church, and the adjoining former school. Clay tiles are also used for walls, as can be seen on the Lampington Cottage and Penn Cottage. Brick can be red (cottages facing Langton Road), brown (nos. 1 and 2 Speldhurst Road) or blue (Lampington Cottage). Feather-edged timber boarding is another local material, usually painted white, and can be seen on Little Stonewall and on Holly Cottages.

- 6.24 Timber framing with plaster infilling is just evident on an upper gable at Searles although mostly the timber framing is covered by tile hanging, such as that at Manor Cottage. All of the timber framed properties are underdrawn in brick, dating to the 19th century when it was common to replace the bottom half of a timber frame in the more fashionable (and more durable) material.



Holly Cottages

### Local Details

- 6.25 Langton Green is notable for the variety of its historic buildings, and for the wide range of details according to age and material.
- 6.26 The older timber framed properties (Manor Cottage, Stonewall/Searles, Old Birchetts and Greenholme/Wheelwrights Cottage) all have steeply pitched peg tiled roofs with prominent brick stacks. 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 Stonewall/Searles, although some may be the result of early 20th century remodelling. Peg tiles are also used to roof the more vernacular buildings, like the single storey barns associated with Hollands Farm, and most importantly, for a wall covering, concealing earlier timber framing. Eaves are often open with rafters showing. Verges are finished with lime mortar fillets. Cast iron rainwater goods, usually painted black, are common.
- 6.27 For the later buildings, such as Langton House and Kingswood, shallow slate roofs with lead rolls, are typical. Chimney stacks are built from brick and in the case of Langton House, have modillion string courses and prominent castellated clay pots. An attractive weatherboarded clock tower sits on the apex of the roof and is a local focal point. Again, cast iron guttering is the norm.
- 6.28 The most important walling material in the conservation area is sandstone (Old Forge, former stables to Langton House, Hollands Farm), usually cut into large rectangular blocks. Smaller, less finely finished blockwork can also be seen on Hollands Farm and rubble sandstone is used throughout the conservation area for very informal boundary walls.
- 6.29 Brick is another local material which can be brown, red or blue. Most of the brick-built buildings in the conservation area are simple cottages with little decoration. Holly Cottages in Speldhurst Road has unusual pilasters marking the corners and the junction between the two properties.
- 6.30 The village has a variety of windows, mainly timber sashes and timber casements, usually painted white. Langton House has tripartite windows with multi-paned sash windows, as well as a central round-headed window on the principal (east) elevation. Kingswood and Adam Cottage retain good examples of mid-19th century sashes with single sheets of glass, and earlier, sub-divided panes in the late Georgian style. Nos. 1 and 2 The Green have unusual wrought iron casements, some with Gothic detailing. Other cottages have timber casements, although regrettably Greenholme and Wheelwrights



Handmade clay peg tiles on the former barns at Searles



Sash windows in Speldhurst Road

(listed grade II) have both replaced their windows using modern dark stained windows with modern leaded lights.

- 6.31 Most of the doors in the historic buildings in the conservation area are made from timber, but these are often hidden or partially concealed by porches, vegetation, or front boundaries. Traditionally, doors would have been ledged and braced and made from a hardwood such as oak which would have been left to weather naturally. A modern example, stained brown, can be seen on Searles. In the 19th century the fashion for classical architecture suggested that doors should be more decorative and four or six-panelled doors became more common. An example can be seen Old Birchetts, urgently in need of repair.
- 6.32 One oast remains, behind Searles, complete with its conical roof and a cowl which is just visible over the front boundary wall.

### Public Realm

- 6.33 There are no examples of any historic paving in the conservation area. Pavements are usually covered in black tarmac with narrow (150mm) concrete or granite kerbs. Street lighting is by tall white steel standards, a regrettable feature as they are out of scale with their historic surroundings and visually obtrusive, although in the churchyard are two traditional cast iron streetlights in use. Otherwise there is little overhead cabling apart from the odd telephone wire, a very positive feature.
- 6.34 Street furniture is modern and not particularly sympathetic. Litter bins are black plastic with the Council's logo. Public seating on The Green is in urgent need of improvement, being provided by a variety of concrete seats, many of them vandalised. The traditional white timber finger post at the junction of Broom Lane and Langton Road is a notable local feature.

### Green Spaces, Trees and Hedges

- 6.35 Langton Green is a rural village surrounded by fields and areas of woodland. The Green is the principal feature, around which the village nestles. It is owned by the owner of Langton House, who has recently erected a white fence to provide some definition to the driveway to the house. Some individual mature trees have been supplemented by new trees, particularly marking this driveway. On the eastern side of The Green, the deep grassed verges are a particular feature and should be protected from indiscriminate car parking and other damage.
- 6.36 The trees within the conservation area are many and very important in their impact and contribution to the rural character. Most of the specimen species lie within private gardens, particularly to Langton House, with the former quarry sites being covered in self-sown mature trees. All are significant in long distance views, and as part of the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.37 The most significant tree groups are:
- Lining Speldhurst Road on approaching the conservation area from the north;
  - On the site of the former quarry to the north of The Green;
  - In the grounds of Langton House;
  - Around All Saints' Church (with some exceptions);



Public seating on The Green



Green verges need to be protected

- Between Langton Road and Holmewood Ridge; and
- A single oak tree on the south side of The Green close to Langton Road that is very important in views along the street.

6.38 Hedges are also extremely important, particularly in Speldhurst Road on entering the conservation area. They tend to be holly, hawthorn and other native species, although there is also a regrettable tendency to use Leylandii, usually associated with the more modern sub-division of properties.



Hedges are important in the conservation area

## 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 three additional areas, which contribute to the special character:

(i) *The former stables to Langton House, Oakwell House and its garden, and the former quarry, to the west of the All Saints' Church:*

7.2 Most of this land was clearly once part of the Langton House estate. The former stables to Langton House are now in separate ownership but are listed. Further west, Oakwell House is an attractive house of the late 19th century, with a sandstone walled kitchen garden and a circular brick water tower and adjoining brick outbuilding. The house may have been built as a gardener's cottage to Langton House, but has been extended. Of note are the fretted barge boards and tile hanging to the first floor.

7.3 Beyond Oakwell House, a footpath accessed from Langton Road winds through the former quarry, with steep sides revealing the exposed sandstone. Mature trees are again very important, especially when viewed from the western entrance to the conservation area along Langton Road.

(ii) *The field next to Hollands Farm, Langton Road:*

7.4 This is a large, open field important in the setting of the conservation area and also to the setting of the listed Hollands Farm. As it rises slightly from Langton Road, it is suggested that only the half visible from the road is included.

(iii) *The former sandstone quarry, Beaufort House and Garden Cottage to the north-east of the Conservation Area:*

7.5 The quarry is not noted on the 1898 map, but is shown on the 1909 map, suggesting that this was the most recent quarry to be used in the village. It impinges on what was once the garden to Stonewall Farm when it was still in one ownership. To the north, an old footpath leads across the fields, still discernible in the line of the modern lane to the north of Manor Cottage.

7.6 The quarry is not accessible to the public, but the many mature trees within it are very important, especially as a backdrop to the buildings which face the east side of Speldhurst Road. It is also significant as part of the social history of the area and as a haven for wildlife. Whilst Beaufort House and Garden Cottage are 20th century buildings, they have large gardens, and their northern boundary follows the line of the historic footpath which crosses this northern section of the village, connecting it to Ashurst Place on the west of Speldhurst Road.



Add the watertower to the conservation area



Oakwell House

## 8.0 Issues

- 8.1 Langton Green is a well preserved village with few obvious threats to its character. With a few exceptions, the buildings are generally in good condition and it is clearly a desirable location with the shops, public house and village school providing important local facilities. However, there are a number of “Issues” within the conservation area, as follows:

### 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. In Langton Green two important listed buildings (Stonewall/Searles and Greenholme and Wheelwrights Cottage) have already been sub-divided, resulting in large extensions on the former which have rather swamped the original building. Sherwood Place is a modern (1990s) development behind the modern vicarage in Speldhurst Road which fortunately is not visible from the main road. Further loss of the large gardens which lie to the back of some of the properties in the conservation area should be resisted, and generally the Council should discourage the sub-division of existing building plots to retain the historic plot sizes and to protect the special character of the village centre.



Extension to Stonewall/Searles

### Boundaries

- 8.3 Langton Green is notable for its brick and 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. Some of these boundaries have been replaced by inappropriate materials, such as the close boarded fencing in front of The Tunnery, a regrettable intrusion in views along the street which sits behind simple 19th century wrought iron railings.



Fence in front of The Tunnery

#### The Council could consider the following:

- Encourage the use of mixed boundary hedges containing traditional mixed species such as hawthorn, beech, hazel, and holly;
- Discourage the use of non-traditional tree planting especially conifers; and
- Discourage the use of timber fencing for boundaries.

### Traffic and pedestrian movement

- 8.4 Langton Green is on the route of the A264, a busy road connecting Tunbridge Wells with Groombridge and East Grinstead. Traffic is constant and speeds often exceed the 40 mph limit despite the installation of a speed camera near the Post Office. The crossroads at the junction of Langton Road with Broom Lane is particularly dangerous, made even worse by the close proximity of the car park in front of The Hare Public House. Some of the pavements are very narrow.



A264 Groombridge Road

#### The Council could, with the cooperation of Kent Council, make the following improvements:

- Consider the introduction of a 30 mph limit along the village section of the A264 and along the southern end of Speldhurst Road; and
- Consider ways to protect the grass verges on the east side of The Green from unauthorised car parking.

### Poor condition of some of the buildings

8.5 The following buildings are considered to be at risk from neglect or the lack of proper repair:

- Old Birchetts, The Green (urgent repairs needed);
- The Village Hall and Watson Institute (admittedly awaiting redevelopment);
- Some of the buildings on Hollands Farm (again, awaiting redevelopment); and
- Cottage on Langton Road, next to Chaskit House (occupied but very neglected).

The Council should therefore take measures to ensure that the buildings at risk within the conservation area are repaired and their future assured. For the Watson Hall and the Village Institute, the Trustees could consider temporary improvements until the buildings are demolished.



Old Birchetts on left

### Use of modern materials and inappropriate details

8.6 A number of buildings within the conservation area have been subject to regrettable “improvements” using non-traditional materials or details. These include:

- Use of uPVC windows on Holly Cottages, Speldhurst Road;
- Use of horizontal timber boarding fencing outside The Tunnery, Speldhurst Road; and
- Painted brickwork and modern window on the butchers in Langton Road.

The Council consider serving an Article 4.2 Direction on the “positive” unlisted family houses in the conservation area to control permitted development rights affecting front doors, windows, and roof materials and possibly a further Article 4 Direction to control front boundaries on all properties



Butchers in Langton Road

### Verges to The Green

8.7 The east side of The Green is under constant pressure from both residents and visitors for more off-street car parking. This has resulted in the erosion of the grass verges and the creation of badly surfaced trackways. The popularity of the public house has added to this pressure, with cars frequently parking nose to tail along the eastern side of The Green, as well as in front of the public house facing Langton Road.

### Public Realm

8.8 Most of the seats on The Green are made from concrete and many have been vandalised. The Council and other interested parties could raise funding to pay for improved public seats on The Green.

### Setting of All Saints' Church

8.9 The Council could consider (with the agreement of the Council's Tree Officer) the removal of some trees between the church and The Green to open up the church to the village and to provide greater security.

### Sustainable design

8.10 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.

- 8.11 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.
- 8.12 The Council should seek to ensure that the existing local facilities are retained and their viability maintained by providing further improvements for access.

### **Crime**

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

### **Promotion of the cultural heritage**

- 8.14 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.

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**PPS 12: Local Development Frameworks**  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

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**Statement of Community Involvement**  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

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### 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 Langton Green 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 060630/014).

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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](http://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.

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[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

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### 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.

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London Gazette  
[www.gazettes-online.co.uk](http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk)

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## 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 Langton Green 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.

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Sustainability Appraisal  
[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

**11.0 Contact Details**

11.1 For queries on planning matters or general conservation advice.

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**Or write to:**

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**Town Hall**

**Royal Tunbridge Wells**

**Kent TN1 1RS**