

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

East Chiltington

June 2017



Summary of Significance

The special character of East Chilton Conservation Area derives from its survival, without any significant alterations since the early 20th century, as a good example of a form of small medieval settlement found on the north side of the Downs, with a church accompanied by a manor farm, its associated agricultural buildings and a few cottages at most.

Although few in number the buildings are of high quality and include two Grade II* listed buildings. Together with the Church and churchyard, the Lychgate and the fine War Memorial in a grassed area outside the churchyard form a very attractive focus to the settlement

Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

1.2 The South Down National Park Authority has a duty to determine which parts of the Park have that special architectural or historic interest, to designate those parts as Conservation Areas, and to keep the Conservation Area under review.

1.3 East Chilmington Conservation Area was first designated by Lewes District Council on 20 January 1993. With the creation of the South Downs National Park in April 2011, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) became the Local Planning Authority for the village.

1.4 This Appraisal seeks to set out what the Local Planning Authority considers are the most significant elements which define the character of the Conservation Area; it has an important role in making informed and sustainable decisions about the future of the area. Whilst comprehensiveness may be sought, however, the omission of any particular feature should not be taken as meaning that it is of no significance.

1.5 It sits within a wider policy context comprising:

- The Purposes and Duty of the South Downs National Park
- The National Planning Policy Framework
- The Lewes District Council Local Plan 2003 (until replaced by the Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy and ultimately the South Downs National Park Local Plan)
- English National Parks and the Broads. UK Government Vision and Circular 2010

1.6 In looking at the area, issues which pose a threat to the quality of the area and any possibilities for improvement and enhancement have also been identified.

1.7 The initial draft of this document was produced by Lewes District Council following a meeting in May 2010 with the area’s District & Parish Councillors, and a walkabout with a representative of the Parish Council. However, that document was never formally adopted and this document represents a redrafting and updating of the original draft into the SDNPA’s format.

1.8 A consultation period of two months from 6 February to 20 March 2017 was undertaken, with the document posted on the South Downs National Park Authority's website and letters sent to all residents of the Conservation Area. Separate consultations were sent to the Parish Council, Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council and Historic England

1.9 The draft document was amended in response to comments received and adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority for the purposes of Development Management and to inform other activities of the National Park Authority and its partners on 15 June 2017.

Location & Topography

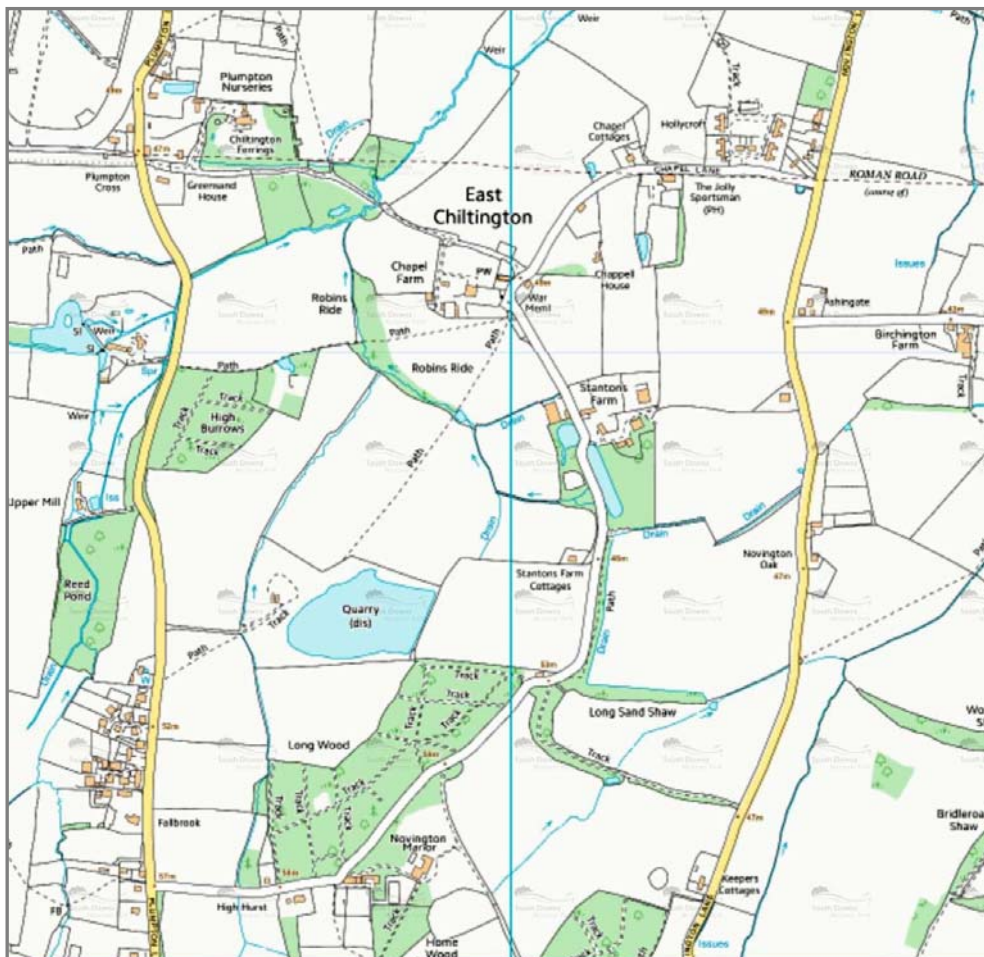
2.1 The Conservation Area lies about six miles north west of Lewes, north of the Downs in the Weald. It is roughly central to East Chiltington parish, a long narrow parish which runs north-south. The Conservation Area is situated at the end of Chapel Lane, a quiet country lane which branches off to the west from Novington Lane, a busier lane which runs the length of the parish.

2.2 The Conservation Area covers the older part of the settlement. More recent development is situated a short distance to the east, along Chapel Lane.



Location of East Chilmington within the wider landscape

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Historical Development

3.1 The name Chiltington – *Cilta's Farm* – indicates an Anglo-Saxon origin for the settlement.

3.2 The Domesday survey mentions *Childetune*, which, with 20 households, was a medium sized settlement but one which was quite large in its tax assessment.

3.3 However, this reference presumably relates to a larger area than the current hamlet, which never seems to have been that large. There were two manors in *Childetune* at the time of the Conquest and it seems likely that it was the smaller of the two which developed into the Manor of East Chiltington.

3.4 What is now the Parish Church was established in the 12th century as a Chapel of Ease to Westmeston. It has been suggested that East Chiltington was originally 'Ease Chiltington'.

3.4 Yeakell & Gardners's map of 1778 – 1783 (Figure 1) shows a small cluster of buildings, one of which is clearly the Parish Church and another likely to represent the 16th century Chapel Farm and its outbuildings.

3.5 The Tithe Map (Figure 2) shows Chapel Farm with outbuildings, some of which have now gone, and what appears to be a formal garden to its east. Chapel Cottage is also shown but not Stantons Bungalow.

3.5 Early Ordnance Survey maps show the development of the area in the late 19th century. The 1873-1875 map (Figure 3 top) shows that Chapel Cottage and the barns immediately west and south of Chapel Farm were in existence by that time and, by 1897 (figure 3 middle), the barn at the westernmost limit of the conservation area. Stantons Bungalow is not present on the 1897 map but is shown in 1910 (Figure 3 bottom).

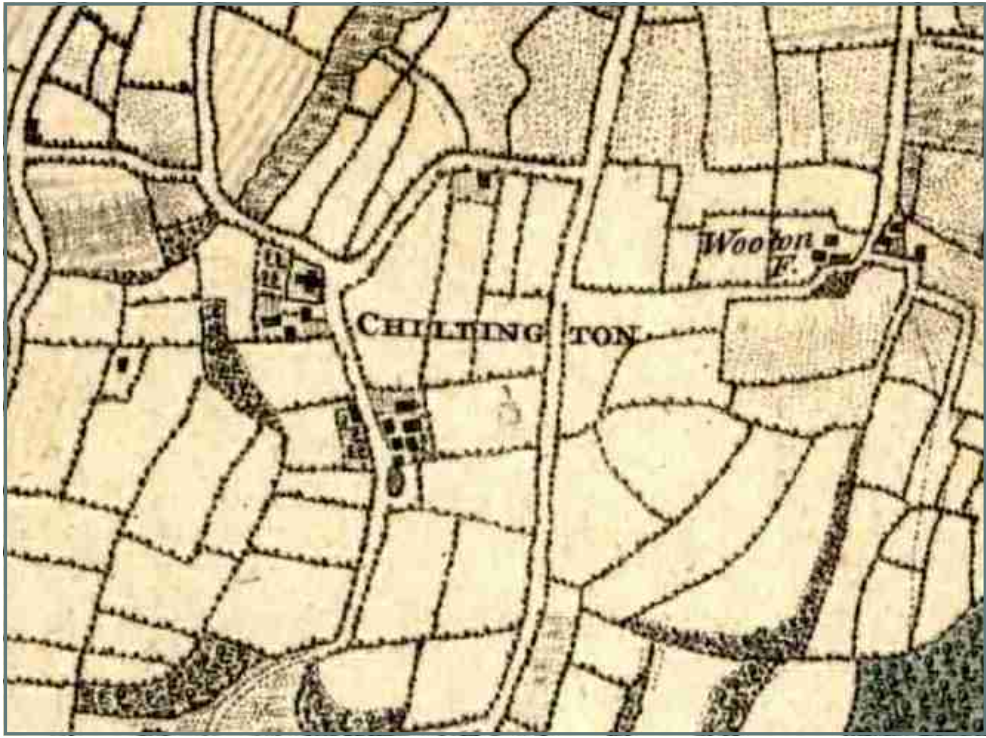


Figure 1: Yeakell & Gardners's map of 1778 – 1783

Figure 2: Tithe Map



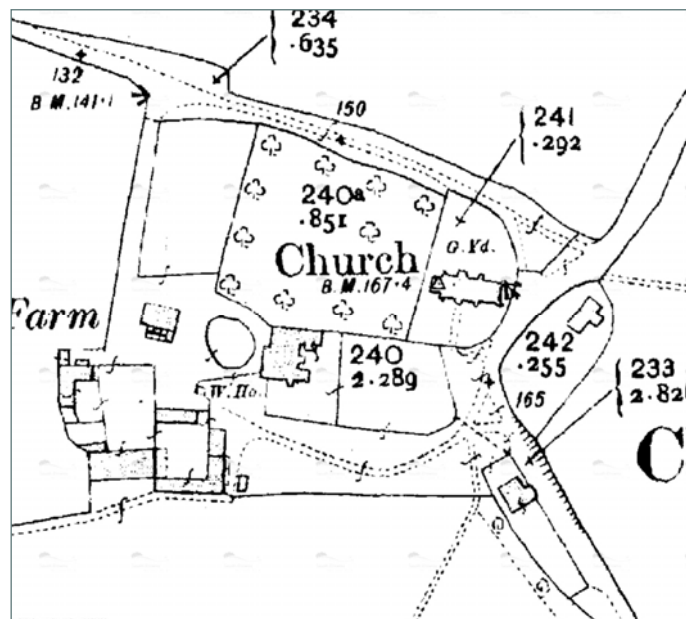
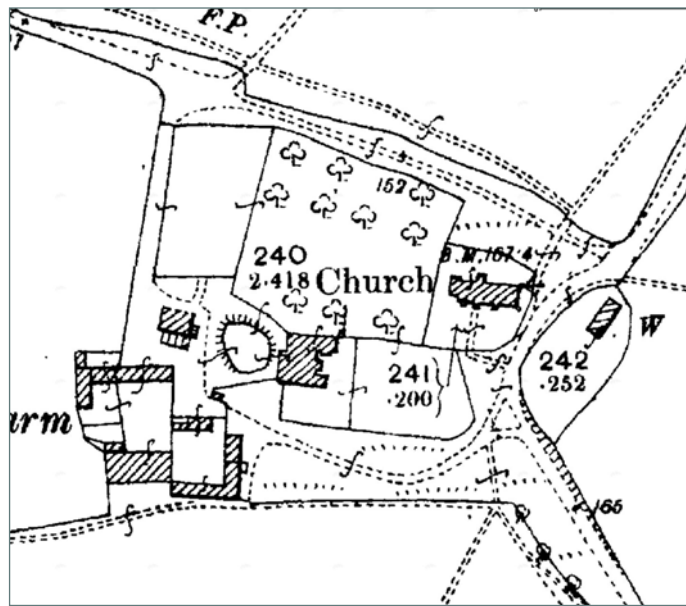
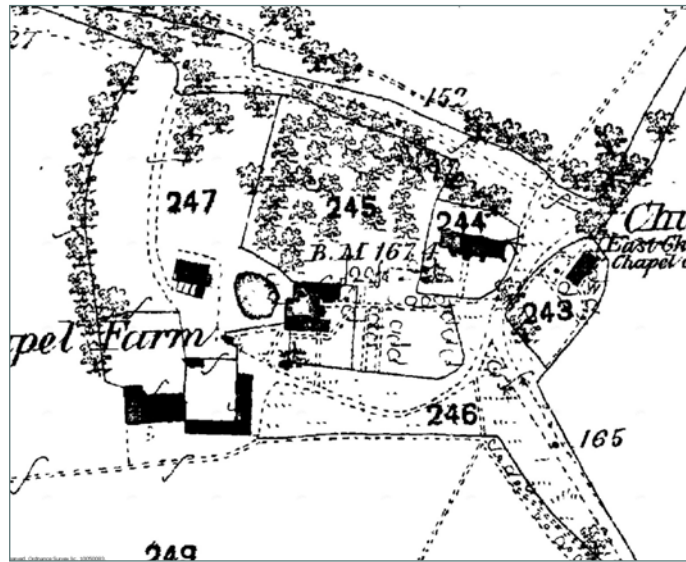


Figure 3: OS Mapping of 1873, 1897 and 1910 (top to bottom)

Character Analysis

4.1 The boundaries of the Conservation Area and the individual elements which make a positive contribution to its special character are shown on a map on the back page of this document.

Entrance and Boundaries:

4.2 The Conservation Area is approached by a narrow country lane, Chapel Lane, which leads to Novington Lane and thence to the B2116. The very modest nature of these lanes emphasises the rural location of the Conservation Area.

Settlement Form

4.3 The Conservation Area represents one example of a form of medieval settlement found elsewhere on the north side of the Downs, with a church accompanied by a manor farm and its associated agricultural buildings. It is a fairly loose agglomeration of buildings with no particular form or structure in its layout. The informal, unmade, nature of the lanes, including sunken lanes, makes an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The only traditional paving that survives is a path of red brick paviors approaching the lych gate and church.

4.4 The church and the small green immediately to its south form a focal point. This roughly-triangular grassy area is bounded by the church wall and lychgate to the north, the lane to the east, and the hedged boundary of the garden of Chapel Farm to the west. It is a pleasant open public space, with seating and a post box, which provides an attractive setting to the War Memorial.

4.5 Around the church, the churchyard contains a number of grave stones and memorials, mostly of a modest nature.

4.6 The rest of the space within the Conservation Area comprises private space in the form of gardens to Chapel Farm, Chapel Cottage, and Stantons Bungalow. Chapel Farm sits in a very secluded setting, screened by high hedges, and there are only glimpsed views of the buildings and garden. Chapel Cottage and Stantons Bungalow have a mix of fencing and well-kept hedges on their boundaries and are also largely screened from view

4.7 Within the Conservation Area, views are fairly enclosed. The church is prominent from many viewpoints and there is a significant glimpsed view of Chapel Farm over the small gate in the hedge immediately south of the lych gate. The modern cemetery provides one of the few longer range views out of the Conservation Area to the surrounding countryside.

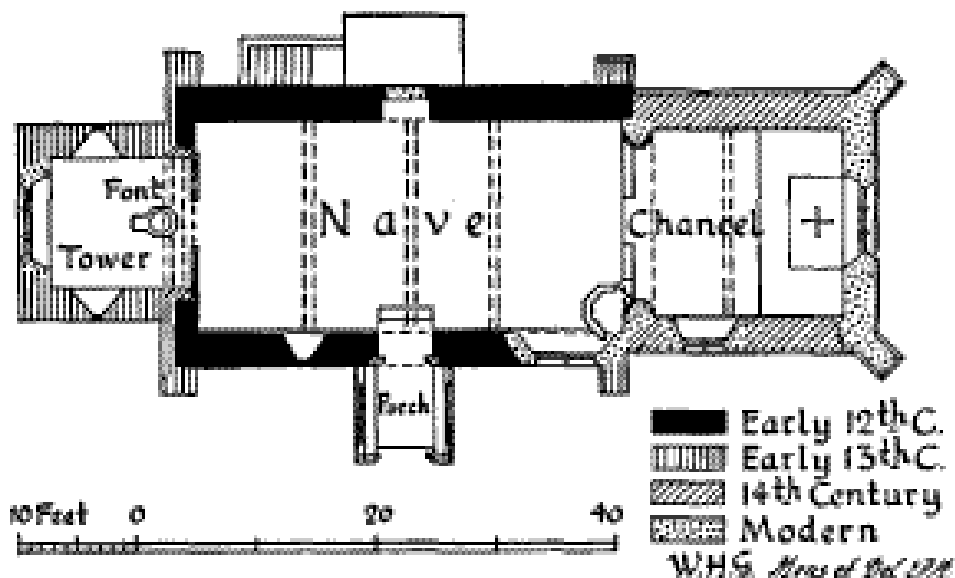
Use & activities.

4.8 Given its small size and largely residential nature, the Conservation Area is often very quiet and tranquil.

Buildings and Structures:

4.9 The two most significant historic buildings within the Conservation Area are the Parish Church and Chapel Farmhouse, both of which are listed Grade II*.

4.10 The Parish Church forms a focal point within the conservation area (Figure 4). It is built of sandstone rubble stone, with a tiled roof. The earliest part is the nave, which dates to the early 12th century. Its small tower with pyramidal roof and the chancel date to the early 13th and 14th centuries respectively. Restoration occurred in 1889-90.



4.11 The church remained a chapel of ease to Westmeston until 1909, when it was annexed to Plumpton. It was later raised to the dignity of Parish church.

4.12 The church lies within a churchyard surrounded by a flint and Sussex marble wall, capped with half-round coping bricks, and with a lychgate to the south dating to 1913. The latter comprises a timber frame sitting on a stone plinth beneath a tiled roof and with attractive timber panelling. When re-roofed in 2000 local people were invited to sponsor a tile and the names of those who donated money can be seen on the underside of the tiles.

4.13 Chapel Farmhouse is an attractive 16th century timber-framed building (Figure 9). While parts of the building still consist of exposed timber frame with render infill panels, it has been refaced in part with red brick and has a slate roof. A large house, it lies at the centre of the conservation area but is largely hidden from view.

4.14 Within the curtilage of Chapel farmhouse, and therefore covered by its listing, are several attractive and historic barns and outbuildings (Figure 9). These are vernacular buildings constructed using traditional local materials and, as such, make a positive contribution to the character and interest of the Conservation Area.

4.15 The two other buildings are more modest in their scale and design but, nevertheless, do make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

4.16 Chapel Cottage lies toward the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area (Figure 8). It is a small and simple building which nestles into its plot behind a well tended hedge. It is built of traditional materials including brick, tile-hanging, clay roof tiles and timber casement windows.

4.17 Stantons Bungalow is situated close to the southern boundary of the Conservation Area (Figure 7). It too is a single-storey building. Early 20th century in date (between 1897 and 1910) it has a simple porch and polygonal bay window to its front elevation, pebble-dashed walls, a clay tile roof and two tall and prominent chimneys.

4.18 The War Memorial (Figure 6) is a key feature of the conservation area, being prominently sited within the small village green and just south of the churchyard.

4.19 Boundary walls are an important feature, notably that bounding the churchyard.

4.20 In terms of materials, the buildings of the conservation area display a range of traditional local materials. Hand-made clay tiles, in a warm red-brown colour, are the prevalent roofing materials, and there are also examples of slate at Chapel Farm and its barn to the south.

4.21 There is a variety of cladding materials; weatherboarding, both painted (Chapel Cottage) and natural (Chapel Farmhouse barns); pebbledash (Stantons Bungalow); hand-made clay tile hanging (Chapel Cottage, Chapel Farm); and local stock brick, in a muted red-brown colour (Chapel farmhouse and its barns).

4.22 Stone is found in the form of flintwork, on the barns to Chapel Farmhouse, where it is used in conjunction with red brick quoins and window-

surrounds, the Parish Church and the churchyard wall.

4.23 The predominant stone used on the church is 'Sussex Marble', a limestone which includes the calcified remains of freshwater snails, *Viviparus winkles* (Figure 11). It can take a polish, hence 'marble', but in this instance has been left in its natural finish. Weathering exposes the shells, giving a distinctive texture and appearance and a local name of 'Winklestone'. Dressed sandstone is used for quoins and window surrounds.

Open Spaces and Greenery.

4.24 Trees make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, giving a sense of enclosure. This is particularly true for the area around the churchyard.

Views and Vistas

4.25 Within the Conservation Area the trees and other greenery produce a strong sense of enclosure and the only significant view out to the surrounding countryside is provided by the modern cemetery.

Issues & Opportunities

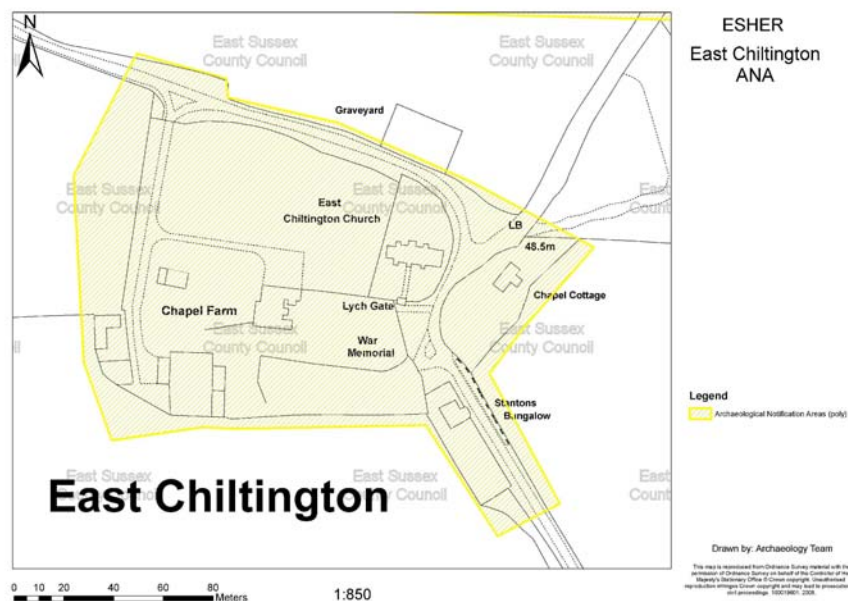
5.1 East Chilmington Conservation Area is clearly a desirable place in which to live and generally the buildings and their surroundings are in a good state of repair. No buildings were identified as being 'at risk' in the National Park Authority's Buildings at Risk of 2012-13.

5.2 Loss of original features and materials to unlisted buildings, the replacement of traditional timber joinery with uPVC windows for example, is not currently an issue. Nevertheless, additional controls in the form of an Article 4 directions, would offer increased protection against undesirable minor alterations eroding the area's special interest.

5.3 In undertaking the appraisal, the existing boundaries of the conservation area were examined and two suggested amendments emerged:-

- Trees and the graveyard immediately north east of the Conservation Area.
- The remainder of the garden of Stantons Bungalow, which contains trees which would contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area.
- A small area on the south-western corner of the existing boundary to bring the whole of the site of a lost farm building into the Conservation Area

5.4 All of the Conservation Area has the potential for survival of archaeological deposits and is identified as an Archaeological Notification Area on the East Sussex HER (below)



Photographic Survey



Figure 4: Parish Church, War Memorial and Lychgate





Figure 5: War Memorial

Figure 6: Lychgate





Figure 7: Stantons Bungalow (above)

Figure 8: Chapel Cottage (below)





Figure 9: Chapel Farm, a Grade II* listed building with 16th century origins, and associated farm buildings





Figures 10: informal, un-made and sunken lanes are a significant component in the rural character of the Conservation Area.

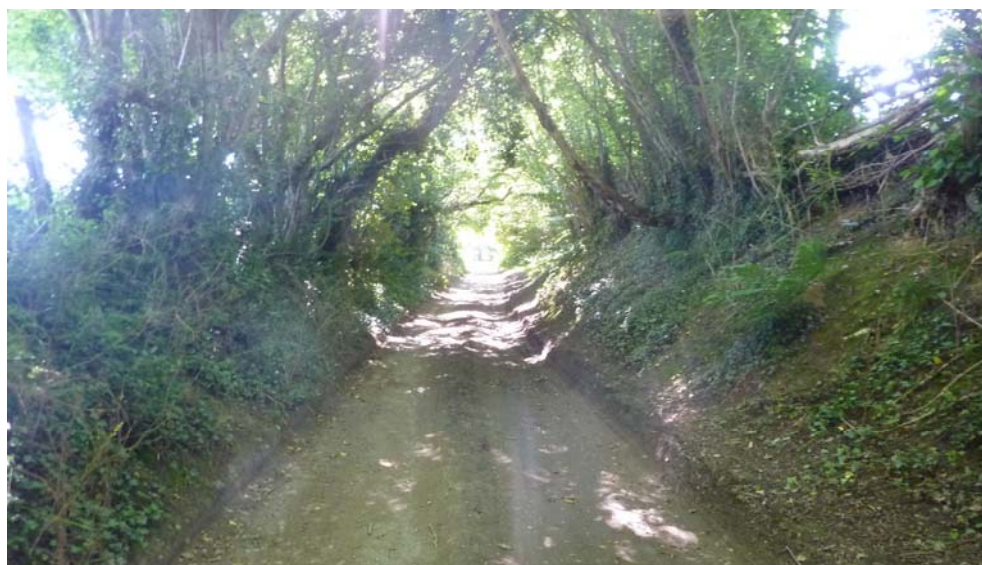




Figure 11: “Winklestone” used in the construction of the church



Figure 12: stone laid in a distinctive and unusual way in the church



Figure 13: View out from the Conservation Area across the modern graveyard

Management Plan

6.1 At the beginning of this document the legal definition of a Conservation Area as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” was acknowledged.

6.2 Taking this definition as a starting point, it follows that the proper management of a Conservation Area will have as its objective both the protection of its existing qualities and its enhancement in ways that build upon its special interest. Four broad aims can be defined:

- To ensure that the Heritage Assets (the Conservation Area and its constituent buildings and other historic features) are properly and effectively designated
- To ensure that the Heritage Assets are in good condition
- To secure the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage assets
- To secure the enhancement of the spaces within and around the Heritage assets

Proper Designation of the Conservation Asset

6.3 In addressing this objective, it is necessary to consider whether:

- There are any areas outside the Conservation Area boundary which should be brought into it
- There are any areas within the current Conservation Area boundary that have seen inappropriate changes erode their quality to the extent that they should be removed from the Conservation Area
- There are any buildings which should be added to the Statutory List of Buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- There are any buildings which should be added to a Local List of Historic Buildings.

6.4 In undertaking this review of the Conservation Area, three small amendments to the existing boundary have been identified. These are shown hatched in black on Figure 14.

6.5 No areas were identified as being necessary to remove from the Conservation Area.

ACTION 1 – that the boundaries of East Chilton Conservation Area be amended to incorporate the three areas shown hatched in black on Figure 14.

6.6 In reviewing the existing unlisted buildings, none were identified as worthy of statutory listing from a superficial external inspection. However, two were considered to be eligible for addition to the Local List.

- The War Memorial (Figure 5)
- The Lychgate (Figure 6)

ACTION 2 – that the War Memorial and Lychgate be added to the emerging Local List of Historic Buildings.

Condition of the Heritage Asset

6.7 To meet this objective it is necessary to identify those building and other components of the Conservation Area that are in poor condition and to identify a strategy to secure the renovation of each.

6.8 A 'Buildings at Risk' (BaR) survey is, as its name suggests, a systematic inspection of buildings looking at their overall condition and specific areas of decay as well as their status in terms of use or vacancy. It would normally include a photographic record of each building, although this would not usually comprise more than one photograph per building.

6.9 BaR surveys are often restricted to listed buildings but that commissioned by the National Park Authority in 2012-13 also looked at unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas, allowing a good overview for each Conservation Area.

6.10 As reported in paragraph 5.1, the historic building stock in East Chilton is in good condition, with none being identified as at risk or even vulnerable. However, condition monitoring is an on-going process. This is best achieved at a local level, perhaps led by the Parish Council, which may have better access to buildings within the village.

ACTION 3 – that the existing Buildings at Risk survey for the village commissioned by the National Park Authority be enhanced with more photographs to form as comprehensive as possible an overview of the condition of the historic environment within East Chilton Conservation Area.

Conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset

6.11 Protection of the existing quality will be achieved largely through careful application of the planning system in general and the Development Management process in particular. One way in which this can be achieved is by the provision of pre-application advice to householders, architects and developers to achieve a high quality of design. The National Park Authority does have a system for the provision of such advice, which is explained on its website.¹

6.12 As a historic settlement, East Chiltington Conservation Area has archaeological interest and the potential for below ground archaeological remains as well as historic buildings and structures. Archaeological remains, whether above ground structures, earthworks, or buried deposits, often contribute directly to the sense of place evident in the present day-area. They also represent a potentially rich resource for future research, interpretation and education. For further information on archaeological interest contact county.archaeology@eastsussex.gov.uk or county.HER@eastsussex.gov.uk.

ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which affects East Chiltington Conservation Area and/or its setting should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority before submitting an application and, ideally, before starting any design work.

ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which falls within the Areas of Archaeological Potential should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority's archaeological advisor, East Sussex County Council, before submitting an application and, ideally, before starting any design work.

6.13 Once an application has been received, it will be assessed against a range of national and local planning policies. At present these include the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Purposes and Duty of the National Park, the relevant Local Plan, and conservation best practice (including this document).

6.14 Whilst negotiating with applicants, both at pre-application stage and in the course of determination, opportunities may arise to achieve improvements both to the proposal itself and its contribution to the wider character of the Conservation Area that are not originally part of the proposal. The Local Planning Authority should maximise these opportunities as far as possible.

ACTION 4 – that Planning and Listed Building Consent applications be determined in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance, with any opportunities to secure improvements during that process being secured as far as

¹ In practice, the development management service for East Chiltington is currently (2017) delivered by Lewes District Council, acting as agents for the South Downs National Park Authority, and any requests for pre-application advice should be directed in the first instance to the planning team at that Council.

possible.

6.15 The special character of any Conservation Area can be degraded through the loss of architectural features and traditional materials, particularly roofing materials. Individually, these changes may be relatively minor but taken collectively can represent a real threat to the special character.

6.16 This problem can be addressed in two ways. One is to bring those minor works within the ambit of the planning system using a device called an Article 4 Direction, which removes permitted development rights from specific properties. The other, complementary, way is to encourage the reinstatement of architectural features and traditional materials with a grant scheme targeted at such works.

6.17 At present there does not appear to be a significant problem of this sort in East Chiltington. It must also be acknowledged that the provision of a grant budget is unlikely in the current circumstances and for the foreseeable future. Both factors inform the Action. Nevertheless, it is important that the historic building stock should be monitored so that an appearance of the problem is identified at an early stage. In reality, this mean everyone, National Park Authority officers and members, Parish Councillors, and the community, keeping an eye open on what is happening

ACTION 5 – that the situation relating to the loss of architectural features and traditional materials be monitored by all parties and for the National Park Authority to consider making an Article 4 Direction, in consultation with the community, should it emerge as a problem adversely affecting the special character of East Chiltington Conservation Area.

Enhancement of the spaces within the Heritage Asset

6.18 Conservation Area designation is a recognition of the qualities of the settlement as a whole and it is important to recognise that the spaces between the buildings are a significant component in this.

6.19 East Chiltington Conservation Area is such a small area – essentially a fairly loose agglomeration of a few buildings – that there is no obvious potential for enhancement of the public realm. The very rural nature of the lanes, with no kerbing or pavements, is an important characteristic which should be retained. However, in some places the road surfacing has broken down and the low key resurfacing of these parts would represent an environmental enhancement.

ACTION 6 – that the National Park Authority supports, in principle and in association with other partners, the low key resurfacing of those lanes which are potholed and in poor condition.

Responsible Conservation is a Partnership!

6.20 This document has been prepared by the National Park Authority as the Local Planning Authority for East Chiltington. However, it is very important to stress, and for other parties to understand, that effective management of any Conservation Area is the responsibility of everyone who does things which affect the character of the area.

6.21 Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 sets out a wide range of bodies to which the National Park duties apply.

6.22 At a local level, this means the residents of the village and the Parish Council. Slightly more removed, it means Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council as the Local Highway Authority and in its other activities, and those Statutory Undertakers which undertake works in the public realm.

Annex: Listed Buildings

CHAPEL LANE
20.8.65.
II*

The Parish Church

Church of England. Dedication unknown. Originally a chapel of ease to Westmeston. Chancel, nave and small west tower with pyramidal tiled roof. Nave early C12, tower early C13, chancel C14, restored in 1889-90.

CHAPEL LANE
17.3.52.
II*

Chapel Farmhouse

2. This is all that remains of a larger building which was occupied by the Challoner family. C16 timber-framed building, the main portion mostly refaced with red brick, the south front tile hung above the ground floor. Slate roof. In the centre of the east front is a tall gabled projection containing the staircase with blocked windows. To the north of this is a projecting L-wing, of which the first floor on the east face oversails on the protruding ends of the floor joists and is cemented. Its south face is tile hung on the first floor. In the angle is a chimney breast of stone rubble with ashlar quoins and a brick stack. At the south-east corner is a similar wing projecting less far and without a chimney breast, Mostly casement windows but 2 sash windows with glazing bars intact. Two storeys. Five windows. C16 panelling, fireplaces and staircase.

Villagescape Appraisal Map



Figure 14: Elements which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, including listed buildings (red), unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (blue), open space (green), trees and shrubs (green hatching). The proposed extensions to the Conservation Area are hatched in black.

POSTSCRIPT

The extensions to the Conservation Area boundary were approved by the National Park's Planning Committee on 15 June 2017 and the revised map below shows the new boundary.

