

PETWORTH CONSERVATION AREA
Character Appraisal and Management Plan



SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Petworth is a hill town located on the Wealden sandstone ridge.

There was a minster site here before the Norman Conquest.

The town originated as a Medieval, probably planned, settlement around a large market place. The fortified manor was the southern seat of the powerful Percy family.

The town developed a strong textile industry in the Sixteenth Century.

Petworth House was developed as one of the great houses of the South between 1688 and 1696. The development of the Park from the early Eighteenth Century impinged upon the original street pattern of the town and impeded its development to the west.

Growth of the town to the east has been restrained by the steep slope of the Shimmings valley.

In the Eighteenth Century, carriage folk built comfortable homes in the town to be close to the social activities of the great house.

The Leconfield estate has had a profound influence on the development of the town since that time.

Today, the town has developed a specialism in the antiques trade. The primary challenge to its character is heavy traffic brought in by the A272

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Petworth has always had an umbilical link with the great house at its flanks. There is a sense in which the town seems to huddle against the wall of the Park, as if in deference, or for defence. Many English towns cluster around an Abbey, Cathedral or Minster, but few have such an intimate relationship with a big house.
- 1.2 Petworth is a hill town standing on a sandstone ridge at the southern edge of the Low Weald. It has been constrained from growing to the west by the commanding presence of the House and Park. To the east, the ridge falls steeply away into the Shimmings valley. To the north a spur of high ground carries the old road to London. Only to the south has the town been able to grow in the conventional, Twentieth Century southern English way, with a muddle of housing estates scattered to either side of the Chichester Road.
- 1.3 In the Sussex volume of the Buildings of England series, the late Ian Nairn, writing in the early 1960s introduced the town thus:

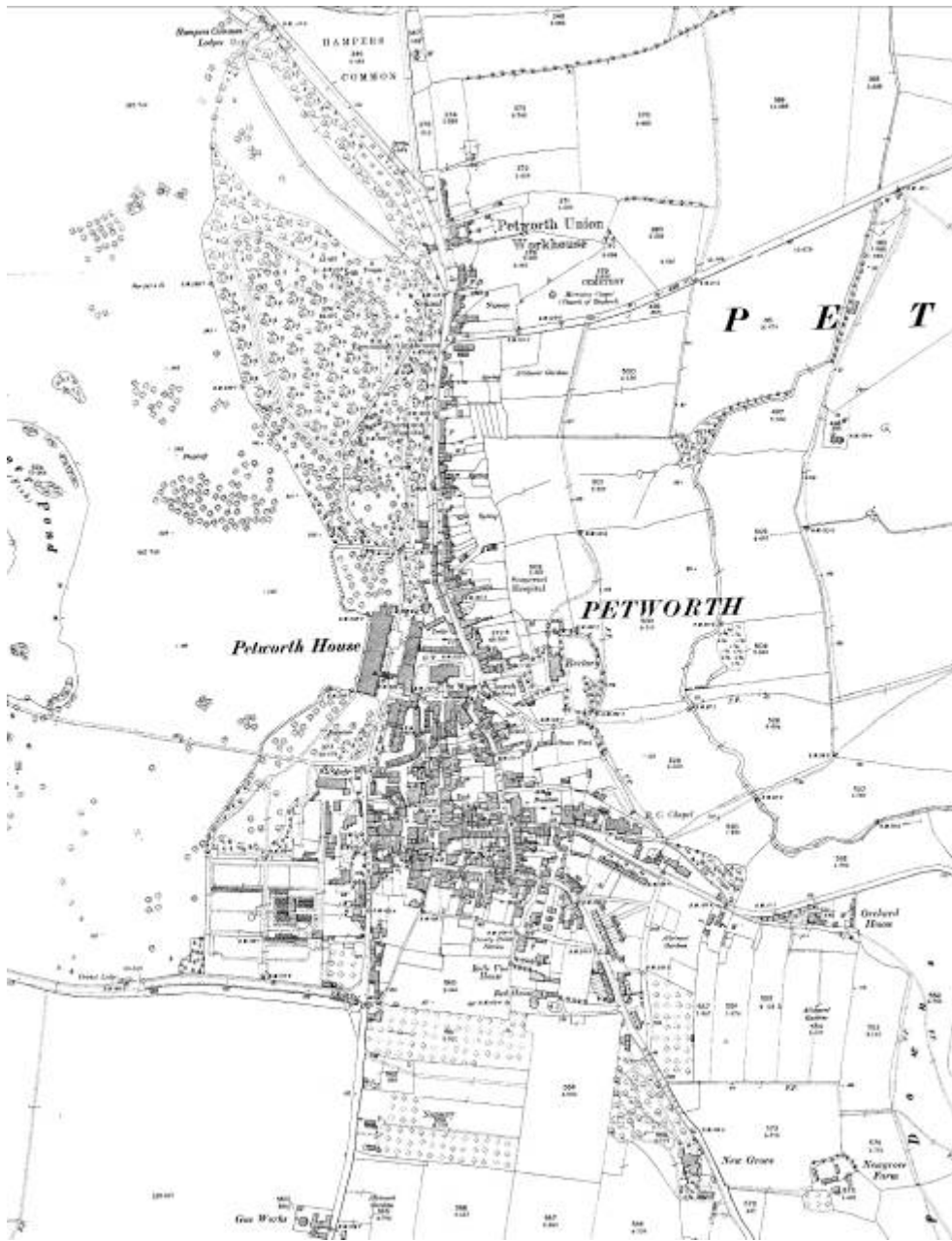
“Few English towns can catch the heart now from outside: too much has been added around them too recently and without enough love. But Petworth still can, though it can only be seen from a distance, from the South Downs...Around it, green fields on both sides, the big house on the left, the rose red church tower in the middle – an image of urbanity without poverty.”

Even with the passage of a further fifty years, his words are difficult to better. Happily, they also remain pertinent.



LOCATION & TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 Petworth is located in West Sussex, within Chichester District at approximately the midway point west to east of the South Downs National Park.
- 2.2 Petworth is a hill town, mostly standing above the fifty metre contour. The Wealden Sandstone ridge on which the town stands is located about four miles north of the chalk escarpment of the South Downs and runs roughly parallel with it. The broad valley of the River Rother, flowing eastward from Hampshire, towards its confluence with the River Arun near Pulborough, lies between these high ridges.
- 2.3 The Low Weald lies almost immediately north of the town. To the east of the town a north-south tributary of the River Rother flows through the Shimmings valley.
- 2.4 Historically, the road network in the Weald was notoriously poor, particularly in winter. To help counter the adverse consequences of this, the River Rother was canalised in sections at the end of the Eighteenth Century to create the Western Rother Navigation. In the mid Nineteenth Century the London Brighton and South Coast Railway constructed a line from Horsham to Midhurst, with a station serving Petworth about two miles to the south of the town. This closed to passenger traffic in 1955.
- 2.5 Today, the town lies on the A272, though the almost continuous single carriageway and the presence of a number of settlements without by-pass arrangements, including Petworth, probably has the effect of suppressing traffic to some degree along this route. Some west-east traffic takes a small detour south to join the A283 near Fittleworth, thereby avoiding Petworth town centre. However, of all the towns along the A272, the traffic problems of Petworth seem the most intractable, as the presence of the house and park make any form of by-pass impracticable.



OS Map of Petworth, as it was just prior to the First World War

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The name of Petworth is derived from the Old English *Pytta's wyrth* or *Pytta's* plot or enclosure. It is first recorded in Domesday Book of 1086 as *Peteorde*, when it was held by Robert Fitz Tetbald, Sherriff of Arundel. Although a minster church originated here before the Conquest, at the time of Domesday the town did not exist, though a feudal settlement began to develop alongside the manor in the early Medieval period. A weekly market is first recorded in 1279, when it was held by Eleanor de Percy, along with an annual Fair on the Feast of St Edmund.
- 3.2 In 1296 there were 62 taxpayers in the *Villat de Pettewerthe* which suggests a population of around 250. The town appears to have been significant throughout the later Medieval period and the 176 taxpayers within the tithing of Petworth in 1524 suggest a total population of around 860 at that time.
- 3.3 Petworth was a southern outpost of the extensive Percy family landholdings which were concentrated in the north of England. With the death of Robert Fitz Tetbald the manor had passed to Henry I and then his widow, Adeliza of Louvain. She granted Petworth to her brother, Joscelin who married Agnes, co-heir of William de Percy sometime before 1166. The manor was always a subsidiary part of their landholdings but the Percy family must have spent at least some time in Petworth as Henry Percy, first Lord Percy, was born there in 1273. The house was of some size and a licence to crenellate was granted in 1309. Elements of this building still survive within the present Petworth House. A park was attached to the manor house by the early Thirteenth Century and this was extended in 1499.
- 3.4 The population of Petworth expanded quite significantly in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, reaching around 1,570 by 1676. A flourishing cloth trade manufacturing Kersey, a coarse fabric mostly destined for export to the Low Countries fuelled much of this growth, especially in the Sixteenth Century. The nearby development of the Wealden iron industry in the Seventeenth Century will also have had some impact. The town was also a

centre for coaching and related hospitality in this period, being on a principal route to London, though this role seems to have declined somewhat in the Eighteenth Century.

- 3.5 The fluctuating fortunes of the Percy family will have had some effect on the town. Between the 1570s and 1632 and again from 1649 until the extinction of the Percy male line, Petworth House became their principal residence, resulting in a new water supply for both house and town provided in 1574-6, new formal gardens and extensions to the house and estate buildings.
- 3.6 Petworth saw some excitement in the English Civil War when the stables of the great house were raided by Royalist forces under Lord Hopton in late 1643. Following a brief period in December, during which they were garrisoned in the town, the Royalists were driven out by Parliamentarians on their way to lay siege to Arundel Castle.
- 3.7 The Percy male line ended with Joceyline, 11th Earl of Northumberland. His daughter, Lady Elizabeth married the 6th Duke of Somerset, known as 'The Proud Duke' who almost completely rebuilt Petworth House between 1688-96. This must have entailed a major economic stimulus for the town, as accounts indicate that around 100 local men were employed during these years in building the house and on other estate work.
- 3.8 The Proud Duke turned Petworth into one of the great houses of the south, which certainly encouraged lesser carriage folk to build or improve houses in the town in a desire to be as close to the grand house and its social activities as possible. This explains the rich legacy of high quality Eighteenth Century houses to be found throughout the centre.
- 3.9 The simple domestic architecture of Petworth also owes much to the Egremont and then Leconfield estate. The whole of New Street as well as many other terraces and houses were built to house estate employees throughout the Nineteenth Century and into the Twentieth. These buildings often display a wealth of architectural detail which marks each terrace and building as a distinctive entity.

- 3.10 A free school was endowed by the Duke of Somerset in 1691 for up to 30 scholars from the parish. This was followed by a free school for ten poor boys and ten poor girls by the will of the Reverend John Taylor in 1753.
- 3.11 In 1791-4, The Third Earl of Egremont financed a series of locks and canalised sections along the River Rother which made it navigable for commercial traffic from the River Arun to Midhurst, with a branch to a wharf at Coultershaw to serve Petworth, about a mile south of the town on the turnpike road. This greatly eased the transport of coal and building materials to Petworth and facilitated wider markets for agricultural and other products. Commercial traffic continued on this navigation until 1888 and it was only formally abandoned in 1936.
- 3.12 The present Town Hall was built on the site of an earlier Market Hall by the Third Earl in 1793. This provided accommodation for civic administration and functions, but also public entertainment in the form of plays or travelling shows.
- 3.13 The London Brighton and South Coast Railway built a branch line from Horsham on the London main line in 1859, with a terminus almost two miles south of Petworth on the Chichester road. The single track line was extended to Midhurst in 1866 where passengers could connect with the London South Western line to Petersfield. The distance from the town to the railway station probably reduced the attraction of the line, once buses and cars began to appear in the Twentieth Century and it was closed to passenger traffic as early as 1955, even before the Beeching cuts. The station building survives, as a bed and breakfast establishment, using Pullman cars.
- 3.14 Population growth in the first half of the Nineteenth Century peaked at 3,439 in 1851, a figure still unsurpassed today. For the rest of the century rural depopulation around Petworth actually resulted in census declines, though these were probably not manifest in the town itself, where further houses were built along Angel Street and Grove Street.



The Third Earl of Egremont.

He lived from 1751 to 1837 but his influence on the town may still be felt today.

STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 4.1 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), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.
- 4.2 The South Downs National Park Authority has a duty to determine those parts of the Park that have special architectural or historic interest, to designate those parts as Conservation Areas and subsequently keep them under review.
- 4.3 Petworth was first designated as a Conservation Area by West Sussex County Council on 6th September, 1971. It was reviewed by Chichester District Council in 1999 and a Character Appraisal and Management Proposals were adopted in November 2000. With the creation of the South Downs National Park in April 2011, the National Park Authority became Local Planning Authority for the settlement.
- 4.4 This appraisal seeks to set out what the National Park Authority considers the most significant elements defining the character of the Conservation Area; it has an important role in making informed and sustainable decisions about the future of the area. While comprehensiveness may be sought, the omission of any particular feature should not be taken to mean that it has no significance.
- 4.5 This document sits within a wider policy context, including:
 - The South Downs National Park Local Plan, when adopted. Until that time, the Chichester District Local Plan, 1999.
 - The National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012.
- 4.6 In looking at the area, issues which pose a threat to the character and appearance of the area and any potential for enhancement have also been identified.

- 4.7 The consultation draft of this document was published for public comment between May 17th and June 28th 2013.
- 4.8 The subsequently amended document was adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority on 10th October, 2013.



Avenings, Golden Square

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- 5.1 The historic core of Petworth has a tight urban grain. Central streets have a strong sense of enclosure, formed by the creation of building lines hard against the back edge of pavement and by the high stone walls, some retaining, which line streets and spaces. With the exception of New Street, streets are gently serpentine in character which means that new views constantly unfold along their length. There is a marked contrast between the everyday bustle of the central streets and more intimate and tranquil courts and back lands behind.
- 5.2 Front gardens are only a significant feature of the more peripheral streets, such as Pound Street and Angel Street. In the central core, most gardens or courtyards are private and located to the rear of properties, accessible only through the building, side alleyways or covered access ways.
- 5.3 The vast majority of individual buildings within the conservation area, whether grand or modest, contribute to the character and appearance of the streetscape. A high proportion of buildings are listed. Unlisted buildings of townscape significance are identified as such on the analytical map.
- 5.4 One and a half to two and a half storey buildings predominate in the narrow streets. However, these terraces and groups are sometimes interspersed with three storey buildings of Georgian date or appearance. Clay, plain-tile roofs of steep pitch predominate, given added interest by a diversity of roof forms, gables, hips and half hips.

Entrance and Boundaries

- 5.5 The western side of Petworth has a particularly hard edge; the stone wall of Petworth House. The town here seems somewhat subsidiary to the dominating house and its grounds. The road pattern, in particular, seems to have been laid out to conform to the house, rather than vice versa. We shall soon discover that this impression is real, not imagined and has its roots in the development and progressive growth of the Park.

- 5.6 The eastern edge of the town is almost as sharply defined as the west, by the Shimmings valley. This 'edge' is marked by clearly defined residential boundary features, both soft and 'hard', imposing mature trees and a few prominent buildings. Its character is considerable and most unusual for the edge of a southern English town. This makes it more than usually sensitive to change.
- 5.7 Petworth is approached from the south on a straight, former turnpike road. Only to this side of the town may be found the housing estates which typically characterised Twentieth Century residential development. The westward stone wall of the Park at the roundabout with the Midhurst Road announces the close proximity of the town centre, while the urban grain of Pound Street quickly intensifies to the right hand side as the hill ascends.

The approach from the north is also clearly defined. Again, the stone wall of the Park on the right-hand side is the dominant and most consistent feature, faced by a ribbon of predominantly historic houses and cottages stretching down from the town, to the left. The Victorian cemetery is located at the north end of Petworth, beside the Horsham Road and was brought into the Conservation Area in 2000.

Settlement Form

- 5.8 The historic development of the town centre is quite complicated and intertwined with the development of Petworth House, its gardens and its Park. In its earliest form, the settlement – including the churchyard – appears to have covered a fairly narrow area to east and west of the original minster. At that time the road to Tillington and Midhurst ran roughly due west from the current Church Street.

As the town developed in the early medieval period, three blocks of burgage plots and a Market Place appear to have been laid out on land to the south of the Church. This phase of development looks to have displayed many of the grid characteristics of planned settlements of this period but has been made progressively less legible by successive encroachment of the Market Place – now only a fraction of its original size – and later changes to

the street pattern of the centre. One such change involved the northern truncation of Pound Street, which originally ended at a junction with the old western road, about 90 metres north and well within the grounds of the great house today. The other major change involves the later imposition of New Street, which cut across the original north-south grid from the Market Place to Angel Street, around 1802.

- 5.9 Petworth House gradually grew in status and formality in the later Medieval period and gardens and a park were well established by 1499. The house was all but rebuilt between 1688-96, followed by new formal gardens laid out from 1702-10. At this time a ribbon of houses on the west side of North Street was demolished, to be replaced by the park wall. This is also when the historic, but constraining, road west was expunged, replaced by a new western route further south at the current dog-leg of Pound Street into Park Road. This road, in turn, was shortly driven further south again by the Capability Brown parkland improvements of 1755-65, to the line of the current Midhurst Road we know today.

Buildings and Structures

- 5.10 Dating from Medieval through to modern times, the buildings of Petworth provide a fascinating reflection on the rich variety of architectural forms which have developed over six or more centuries. This variety lends a richness and interest to the streetscape and forms a vital element in the character of the conservation area.
- 5.11 Despite this diversity of style and period, the continuous use of traditional and mostly local materials has contributed a unifying element. These materials have been drawn directly from Wealden woods, quarries and clays, all found nearby. Until improvements to river navigation in the late Eighteenth Century and the arrival of the railway in 1859, it was very difficult to transport building materials any great distance and only the very richest individuals could afford to do so.
- 5.12 Petworth can boast many good survivals of timber-framed buildings, some exposed in their original form, many others masked behind later facades or

cladding. Late Medieval and Tudor buildings are readily recognised where timber frames and wattle-and-daub infill panels are exposed. (See *Woodcock Antiques*, Saddler's Row and *Fairfield Cottage*, High Street). From the mid-Sixteenth Century, these original panels were often replaced with brick nogging or stone infill, probably intended to minimise the regular upkeep of wattle-and-daub panels, but often rather heavy for the good of the frames. (See *The Old Cottage* Pound Street and *Tudor Rose Antiques*, East Street).

5.13 Only the Church, Petworth House and the grander residences and public buildings of the town made substantial use of stone during this period and brick makes its first appearance with *Somerset Hospital* in the early Seventeenth Century. However, brick would come to be dominant in the Eighteenth Century and into the Nineteenth.

5.14 Roofs were usually covered with clay plain tile, which dictates a reasonably steep pitch, which itself implies plan forms which are relatively shallow in depth. Buildings usually presented a gable to the street, though some rooflines run along the street, parallel to it. Such buildings often adopt a jettied upper floor to achieve greater room space than the ground footprint would otherwise allow, an important consideration for congested town plots.

5.15 Vertical tile-hanging was used from the late Seventeenth Century as a cladding to improve the weather resistance of the upper elevations of timber-framed buildings. Early cladding tiles, always handmade, were the same as those used for roofs. In Petworth, this is most often seen on jettied first floors as at *Old Walls Cottage*, Angel Street. During the Eighteenth Century, tile hanging gathered momentum, fuelled by the Georgian distaste for exposed timber-framing. A cheaper alternative than wholesale re-fronting in brick, tile cladding offered a cost-effective choice for budget modernisation.

5.16 Another cheap weather-proofing option was to render timber-framed facades in lime plaster. These historic alterations now have validity in their own right. They help tell a story of the development of the building over a long period of time and they should never be reversed thoughtlessly.

5.17 During the Eighteenth Century, it became fashionable to rebuild front elevations in brick, often incorporating a parapet to increase height, improve architectural proportion and more fully disguise the humble origins of the structure behind. As can be seen below, some of these aggrandisements were quite ambitious in conception. Where the junction shows, as at corners, the game is often given away.



5.18 As the Eighteenth Century progressed, brick became not only more fashionable, but also progressively cheaper. To meet local demand, many small brickworks operated along a band of good quality Wealden clay between Plaistow and Ebernoe. Excellent bricks, red-brown to medium red in tone, may be found facing the fine Georgian town houses which characterise Petworth, such as *Newlands*, Pound Street or *Daintry House*, East Street.

5.19 Quality brickwork was usually laid in Flemish Bond from the Georgian period, well into the Nineteenth Century. An attractive method of laying it, commonly found in Petworth, was to alternate red stretcher bricks with grey headers, produced by the action of wood smoke on raw clay bricks in

the hottest part of the kiln. This creates a highly attractive colour effect, best seen on the façade of *Daintry House* in East Street, but also elsewhere.

5.20 Towards the close of the Georgian period the vane of fashion swung once again, this time against the fiery colours of red brick. Stone came increasingly into favour, though the quality of the local Lower Greensand is rarely sufficient to allow the more elegant facing finishes, smooth ashlar work or elaborate carving. It is relatively soft and friable and normally used laid as coursed rubble. Often, building edges, such as corners and window reveals, as well as exposed work such as chimney stacks, must still be handled in brick.

5.21 Again, deception came into play when lesser buildings were given facelifts. Some buildings of timber-framed construction were rendered and lightly scored with horizontal and vertical lines to simulate the fine joints of ashlar stone blocks. On Angel Street, *Ryde House* is a good example.

5.22 New buildings in the early-to-mid Nineteenth Century were also often faced in a cream or buff coloured brick to avoid any semblance of a 'fiery' appearance. Examples of these, now weathered to a toned yellow, may be found in the Market Place.



- 5.23 The vernacular revival of the Victorian period influenced the later Nineteenth Century buildings of Petworth. New buildings of this period often re-worked techniques and motifs of the Medieval age, sometimes with great reverence and imagination, though more often in a tokenistic or mechanistic way. In Petworth, Victorian buildings often revive the gabled frontages and jetties of earlier times, though their propensity to use machine-made roof and cladding tiles usually make them easy to distinguish from the originals.
- 5.24 Many Leconfield Estate buildings were constructed in this period and while the quality of accommodation rather depended on the status of those workers intended to occupy them, they were generally built to high standards of material and design. Many estate buildings contribute greatly to the character of the Conservation Area.

CHARACTER AREAS

- 6.1 For the purposes of this Character Appraisal, four separate character areas have been identified. One of these is very obvious. Inter-related though they are, the dominant presence of Petworth House and its park wall defines a very clear character divide between the park and the town. This forms a particularly emphatic and hard barrier across the settlement and the conservation area.
- 6.2 Beside the great house stands the Church and churchyard, the oldest element of the settlement and one of the largest open spaces within the town. The rectory complex on the other side of North Street is also thought to have developed early and extends this character area eastward.
- 6.3 Within the town itself, a further division may be discerned, between the densely developed core – formed of burgage plots together with the long-encroached market place – and the three roads, North Street, Angel Street and Grove Street which radiate north and east and are characterised by more loosely developed historic buildings on irregular historic plots.

- 6.4 These character areas are shown on the character analysis map at the end of this document.

Petworth House and Park

- 6.5 While elements of the Percy fortified manor survive within and under the current Petworth House, most of the building we see today is the creation of the 6th Duke of Somerset and dates from the end of the Seventeenth Century. French in allusion, it has one supremely impressive façade, facing the park, not especially tall, but long, measured and emphatic. It has two principal floors plus an attic floor and parapet. Originally, a dome or ‘circular roof’ was intended as a central feature, but this was damaged in a fire in 1714 and had probably gone entirely by the end of the Eighteenth Century. Because of the proximity of the Parish Church, its brick tower peeps above the parapet of the house in some longer views today, a slightly disconcerting juxtaposition.
- 6.6 Much of the walling stone for the house is the local greensand, but white Portland stone is widely used for dressings and to emphasise the central bays and end pavilions.
- 6.7 The famous North Gallery was added to the end of the house by the 3rd Earl of Egremont, begun in the 1750s and passing through three separate phases before eventual completion in the 1820s. It is particularly notable for being more than a sculpture gallery, which were relatively common, in its designed inclusion of paintings also – a much rarer thing. Various outbuildings, the stone-built servants wing and the stables date to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.
- 6.8 The parkland we know today is largely the creation of Lancelot Capability Brown, dating from 1755 – 65, one of his very finest landscapes, informal, yet sublime.

The Parish Church and Rectory

- 6.9 The parish church, which is dedicated to St Mary, is thought to retain sufficient disparate elements dating to the Thirteenth Century to affirm that it was a substantial cruciform building by that time. Documentary evidence suggests that the church originated as a pre-Conquest minster and a church here was mentioned in Domesday. The names of 39 rectors since Thomas de Falconburg in 1239 are recorded within the building.
- 6.10 The building was heavily restored by Sir Charles Barry in 1827. He added a new top stage to the Fourteenth Century tower, built in brick, but originally stuccoed and finished with a spire. This feature is recorded on a painting by Claude Muncaster to be found within the north aisle of the building. The spire was removed in 1947, along with the stucco, to reveal the mellow brick and stone tower we have come to admire today. The parapet and pyramidal cap dates to 1953 and is by Seely & Paget.
- 6.11 In 1851, Barry also designed the famous Gothic lamp standard which stands in Church Street, opposite the church.
- 6.12 The churchyard has an excellent collection of predominantly Eighteenth Century headstones, though not many remain legible.
- 6.13 Although the churchyard is one of the most important open spaces in the town, the area immediately in front of the church was lined with historic houses and shops until they were demolished to open the view in 1896.
- 6.14 Immediately to the east, all the buildings readily visible from the junction with Barton Lane are of value and a particularly interesting group lines the corner between North Street and the access to *The Old Rectory*. Though of different periods and styles these buildings have grown together in a charming and coherent manner, enhanced by old stone boundary walls. An overflow cemetery, with high quality headstones and table tombs is located at the end of the lane. An extensive viewpoint over the Shimmings valley is also notable, here.

The Medieval Core and Market Place

- 6.15 To the south of Church Street lie the medieval streets which make up the core of the historic settlement. These streets run predominantly north-south and are bounded by East Street to the east and Pound Street to the west. The original north end of Pound Street was replaced by Park Road in the early Eighteenth Century and is now absorbed within the curtilage of Petworth house.
- 6.16 The Market Place was originally a large open space but appears to have been progressively encroached from the Sixteenth Century onward. This process may have begun much earlier, with the gradual consolidation of market stalls.
- 6.17 Nine buildings in or around the space date from the Medieval period through to the Seventeenth Century, a high survival rate for the commercial core of a town. *Wisteria House* fronting Market Place and *Avenings*, Golden Square are good quality Eighteenth Century houses.
- 6.18 The *Town Hall*, free-standing within the Market Place and faced in ashlar, dates from 1793 and was constructed for the town by the 3rd Earl of Egremont. On the north wall is a lively bust of William III, earlier than the building, though the existing feature is a replica.
- 6.19 The most prominent building on the north side of Market Place is the handsome *NatWest Bank*, a confident essay in Edwardian Baroque by Frederick Wheeler.
- 6.20 High Street, running from the southern end of the original Market Place is the only original gridded street to be aligned east-west. It contains no less than 18 listed buildings, some of which have early origins. The four-bay Wealden house currently known as *Fairfield Cottage* and *John Bird Antiques* is obviously Medieval, with the jettied western end still clearly visible and a screen passage wall now exposed as the side of a later wagon way.



An early screens passage exposed by a later passageway in High Street

- 6.21 Another three-bay Wealden house was built on the High Street frontage at the corner with Middle Street around 1450-75. A bay was then added along Middle Street at the end of the Fifteenth Century.
- 6.22 High Street was once a commercial street but is now predominantly residential. Historically, a range of trades and activities would have taken place in the plots to the rear of the street frontage properties and surviving names such as *Brewhouse Cottage* or *Windmill House* can sometimes hint at these former uses. Passages and ginnels which allowed access to these yards and courts also survive in many cases.
- 6.23 New Street is the other street with an east-west alignment, but is quite different to High Street in that it is an urban intervention of 1802, cut through to link Market Place with Angel Street. It is lined with simple, early Nineteenth Century cottages on the south side, built for the accommodation of estate workers. Numbers 3-9 are faced with local stone and retain their original design unity. These terraces culminate with the 'high point' of the former *Red Lion Inn*, marked by elaborate dentilated eaves.
- 6.24 The north side of New Street was more commercial in character and remains varied in both massing and detail.
- 6.25 Lombard Street runs north from the Market Place, linking it with the Church. A narrow, gently twisting thoroughfare, laid with stone setts, it lies at the heart of the Medieval town and remains predominantly commercial in character at its southern end. The church tower is gradually revealed as one ascends from the south. Ian Nairn described the street as "one of the best picturesque streets in a county that is full of them."
- 6.26 In the early Seventeenth Century this street was lined with larger houses and *Pettifers*, near the corner with Church Street, is the last obvious survivor of these. Burgage plots to the rear of these houses were originally large, but those to the west side of the street were truncated when Park Road was imposed early in the Eighteenth Century.

6.27 East Street runs south from Church Street. Historically, it had a residential character. *Boxall House* conceals remains of a five bay Wealden house of the later Fifteenth Century. Although *Daintry House* presents an imposing mid-Eighteenth Century façade to the street, complete with attic storey and pediment, this hides a substantial timber-framed house of the late Sixteenth Century. The front range was once jettied, with oriel windows.

Possibly the best thing about *Daintry House*, however, are the quite remarkable railings, probably dating to around 1800, impeccably crafted but of exceptionally elegant design.

6.28 *Stringers Hall* also contains timber-framing of Sixteenth Century date. It too was fronted in brick in the Eighteenth Century and the side elevation displays the only known use of mathematical tiles in Petworth, sadly in poor condition at the time of writing. These were vertically-hung tiles designed to simulate bricks, when pointed up. Common in East Sussex and to a lesser extent in Hampshire and southern Wiltshire, they are not often found in West Sussex.

6.29 The former Congregational Chapel dates to 1819. Of painted brick, it presents a pedimented façade to the street. It became a National School for girls later in the Nineteenth Century.

6.30 The west side of East Street has more variation than the east and the scale of the buildings is generally smaller. This side of the street also has a more permeable aspect, with multiple entrances to rear courtyards and alleys. The most significant of these offshoots is Trumpers Lane, which once extended past private gardens and out on to Market Place. Though largely residential now, this small cobbled enclave has a workaday character.

6.31 The Post Office, an essay in wholehearted Vernacular Revival timber-framing over a greensand, coursed rubble plinth, is a decent building of the Edwardian period, which asserts a strong presence along the central section of the street. A K6 telephone kiosk, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott in 1935, stands alongside.

- 6.32 Beyond the New Street junction, Middle Street continues the line of East Street south to High Street. The domestic buildings to both sides of the street are small. The long range at the southern end of the street is a good jettied timber frame, the upper, oversailing floor later tile-hung.
- 6.33 The eye is strongly drawn along Middle Street to the prominent gable of *John Bird Antiques*, on High Street. This building, with its highly distinctive fenestration, terminates the view south along the street.
- 6.34 Pound Street formed the westernmost street of the medieval grid. Today, the street channels trunk road traffic through the town. This, combined with the lack of a footpath on the western side of the street, creates a mildly hostile environment for the pedestrian. The street is predominantly residential, with some business uses. At the northern end, it gives access to important estate buildings 'behind the wall'. There is also a public car park to the east.
- 6.35 Although it is not particularly friendly to the pedestrian, Pound Street contains a number of good buildings. *1 Pound Place* is a Sixteenth Century coursed rubble house with a four-centred front doorway and a chamfered square-headed window above. *Newlands* is an impressive, three-storey, brick fronted house, with parapet, dating from around 1790. It has a large, contemporary stable block to the south.



The western side of Pound Street

- 6.36 On the west side of Pound Street, *Culvercroft* is a stuccoed villa of the early Nineteenth Century. Cottages and houses on this side of the road tend to be significantly elevated from street level, behind rubble stone retaining walls.
- 6.37 Sadler's Row offers a short link east to the Market Place. It is strongly commercial in character. The prominent south-facing corner plot at the junction with Pound Street is occupied by *Garden House*, the former *Bacon & Co*, a four-bay timber frame of around 1600. It displays a number of characteristic Sussex vernacular features; vertical tile-hanging above a greensand coursed rubble plinth storey, full hipped and half-hipped roof forms and an impressive, central chimney stack. Chimney stacks were often elaborated as status symbols at this time.
- 6.38 To the south side of Sadler's Row, smaller timber-frame buildings present an assortment of gables to the street. Old photographs show that this group has not changed very greatly over the past hundred years.

The Ribbon Suburbs – North Street

- 6.39 North Street is the only road leading north out of the medieval town, with the park to the west and the Shimmings valley to the east. It is uncertain whether the ribbon development of this road was medieval in origin, or began to develop in the Sixteenth Century, but it was certainly present by the time of the 1610 map, when houses were shown on both sides. Those on the west side were taken down for the construction of the park wall in the early Eighteenth Century.
- 6.40 The park wall remains a massive and highly assertive feature. It allows no view into the park beyond, other than the high tops of trees. Blackened with age and a century of motor pollution, it offers a forbidding face to the road.
- 6.41 This is alleviated by the more varied aspect of the east side. Historic buildings form a nearly continuous ribbon, but this is interspersed by gaps

and openings between the buildings, allowing intermittent views across the Shimmings valley.

- 6.42 The road descends as it proceeds north. An odd aspect of the buildings to the east is that some stand above the level of the road, while others are set below it. *Monk House* and 2 *Preyste Cottages* are approached by steps up from the road and are possibly the oldest buildings in the ribbon. They show the remains of a single bay open hall of around 1400 with a crown-post roof and a three-bay cross wing. The timber-framed buildings further along North Street are thought to be Seventeenth Century in origin.
- 6.43 *Somerset Lodge* is a sophisticated example of Seventeenth Century ashlar stonework with a projecting entrance bay, mullioned windows under label mouldings and miniature Dutch gables. It dates to 1653. Next door, *Somerset Hospital* demonstrates the earliest extensive use of brick in Petworth. A substantial Seventeenth Century house, it too displays a projecting entrance bay, but with further projecting fenestration bays to each side. It was converted into an almshouse in 1746.
- 6.44 All of the unlisted houses beyond *Wheatsheaf Cottage* possess townscape merit, as recorded on the analysis maps. *Glebe Villas* are Edwardian semi-detached houses in a speculative Vernacular Revival style, set behind shallow front gardens. They are well-preserved examples of their type, but unlisted and vulnerable to incremental change.
- 6.45 Further down, *Dove Cottage* and *Prospect Cottage* appear single storey from the roadside. Appearances are deceptive, however. To the rear, these buildings are actually of two storey height, so steeply does the land fall away from the road.
- 6.46 *Thompson Hospital* is a seven-gabled row of almshouses in stone rubble with brick dressings dating from 1618. They have been heavily restored and the fenestration to the road side is not elegant.
- 6.47 A garden gap between 296-299 and 301-302 offers another expansive view across the Shimmings valley. The enclosed, channel-like aspect of North

Street finally lifts near the junctions of Northmead and Northend Close, where the park wall sweeps back and away from the road edge, leaving a wide green verge between wall and kerb

- 6.48 The conservation area was extended along the A272 following the appraisal of 2000 to bring in the Town Cemetery. Alongside, behind an impressive stone boundary wall, *Laundry Cottage* is a much extended Twentieth Century dwelling built adjacent to the former Estate Laundry and the boundary of the early Boys School. The cemetery contains many monuments of evidential historic value as well as a diminutive Gothic chapel of the early 1860s, sadly in perilous condition. Schoolboys and two teachers killed by a Luftwaffe bomb dropped on the nearby school in late September 1942 are buried here.

Angel Street

- 6.49 Angel Street lies on the eastern fringe of the town, an early suburb which developed from the Sixteenth Century onwards. The area is beyond the commercial core and was always residential in character.
- 6.50 Of the listed buildings, five date from the Seventeenth Century and three from the Eighteenth. *Ryde House* is a substantial early Nineteenth Century villa, faced in stucco.
- 6.51 The most imposing building on Angel Street is the Catholic church of the Sacred Heart, an exuberant Gothic Revival building of 1896 by F.A. Walters, mostly in greensand, but enlivened by stone and flint chequer panels. The apsidal end is particularly fine, though the tower might be thought a perfunctory gesture. The attached *Presbytery* is contemporary and of high quality.
- 6.52 *Egremont Row* (351-356) is a good example of Victorian estate workers housing. Each house double-fronted but with a shallow plan, the terrace is elevated from the road, behind coursed rubble retaining walls, a characteristic quality of the fringes of Petworth.

- 6.53 At the end of Angel Street, expansive views of the Shimmings valley open up. From here, ancient field systems and the sharply defined eastern edge of Petworth may be readily appreciated.

Grove Street and Grove Lane

- 6.54 High Street curves sharply at the eastern end, merging into Grove Street. Whereas High Street had developed as Medieval burgage plots, Grove Street appears to have developed as a linear suburb from the Seventeenth Century onward.
- 6.55 This change is reflected in a looser urban grain, with the tightly packed buildings of High Street giving way to houses and terraces set back from the road behind front or side gardens. Their plots are sometimes slightly elevated from road level behind rubble stone retaining walls and access is gained by way of steps from the roadside.
- 6.56 For around a century from 1788, the House of Correction stood to the west of Grove Street, off Rosemary Lane. It was a substantial building closed around 1880 and eventually demolished. The present late Victorian Police Station occupies part of the site. High brick walls adjacent to the Police Station are surviving remnants of the old gaol.
- 6.57 An adjacent Victorian house, *Lund House*, originally *Belle Vue*, was also constructed within the curtilage of the gaol and inclusion within the conservation area would be justifiable.
- 6.58 A prominent feature of Grove Street is *Percy Row*, an imposing terrace of well-built Victorian estate cottages. Porches and monumental chimney stacks are features of notable quality. The terrace stands behind a battered, coursed rubble retaining wall.
- 6.59 From the highest point of Cherry Orchard Lane, behind *Percy Row*, a view over *Egremont Row* and the Catholic church toward the distant hills beyond may be appreciated.

6.60 As it leads south east, Grove Street becomes progressively more diffuse in form, with a substantial classical house, *New Grove* to the right and allotments, slightly elevated, to the left. Although this stretch forms a transition from the historic ribbon of development toward rural fringe, continuous stone boundary walls and a backdrop of trees create a highly cohesive streetscape. For this reason, a conservation area extension to bring in the generous curtilage of *New Grove* and the allotments on the opposite side of the road could be justified.



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- 7.1 The impact of traffic is the most profound problem with which Petworth must contend. The town's position on the A272, the principal inland route between Winchester and East Sussex (and the only east-west alternative to the A27 and M25) as well as the A285, a primary route northward from Chichester, means that the town can never be a tranquil backwater. While the idea of a by-pass tunnel under Petworth Park has been mooted from time to time, the likelihood of funding for such an ambitious and expensive infrastructure project seems less than ever likely in the current climate of financial austerity. Directional signage already attempts to offer alternatives for HGV traffic to the constricted route through the town centre and further thought along these lines may be the only realistic path by which to reduce the problem.
- 7.2 Otherwise, options for managing the traffic may be worth evaluating, in conjunction with the Highways Authority. For example:
- Is there any way in which unavoidable through traffic might be confined to Pound Street, Park Road, Church Street and North Street, thereby removing it from the commercial core?
 - Is the pedestrian experience within the town centre as good as it can be? How might it be improved?
 - Would any part of the town centre benefit from the adoption of modern 'shared space' traffic management techniques?
 - Could any street or space within the town centre benefit from the exclusion of traffic altogether?
 - Are traffic speeds too high? If so, what measures might moderate them?
 - Are visitors to Petworth House actively discouraged from exploring the town on foot by excessive traffic on Park Road and Church Street?
- 7.3 Carriageway and paving materials can be an important determinant of character within the conservation area. Historic street surfaces should always be retained, where ever they survive. This particularly applies to

locally derived historic materials, such as sandstone cobbles and setts, but also to Victorian and later materials, such as Staffordshire Blue paving bricks, which have been used widely within the town and now contribute to local distinctiveness. These materials are identified on the analysis map.



7.4 Open spaces and historic gaps between buildings, where they exist, are an important component in the character of the conservation area.

Wherever they make a positive contribution to character, their retention should be a primary objective of the planning process, but effective management goes hand in hand with this goal. Neglected spaces can gradually become perceived as a problem, rather than an asset.

7.5 Patches of land which do not enjoy obvious or active ownership and corners of the public realm which seem to be of limited use often become neglected. This is a problem which is likely to become more severe as the public purse shrinks over the coming years, unless new forms of funding or innovative ways of dealing with the problem can be found.

- 7.6 On the 'town' side of the park wall, trees are relatively rare, particularly within the Medieval core. This tends to give the few examples prominent from the public realm considerable importance. Even those behind buildings, but visible from the public realm are likely to have some amenity value. Many more trees are evident in the historic ribbon suburbs, where they often frame views out of the town and make a major contribution to views back in, from the Shimmings valley.
- 7.7 Old boundary walls have considerable importance in defining the historic development pattern of Petworth. While the park wall is by far the most significant of these, most will have evidential value and many have strong intrinsic character. They frequently survive long after their original function has disappeared. They should normally be retained.
- 7.8 On the fringes of the historic core, retaining walls form an important aspect of settlement character. Some are only low walls to front gardens but there are substantial retaining walls along Angel Street and along the eastern edge of the town above the Shimmings valley. They are usually constructed in the local sandstone.
- 7.9 When assessing design quality in the context of Petworth, local distinctiveness and the importance of conserving the cultural heritage of the town should be special considerations.



The Police Station is one attempt to introduce modern design to the town

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY



MARKET PLACE - *Commercial heart of Petworth*







Timber-frame, masked by vertical tile hanging, over a greensand plinth

VARIETY OF LOCAL MATERIALS

Exposed timber-framing, with jetty, under a clay tile roof





A timber-framed building, with continuous jetty, clad with vertically hung tiles

New Street – an estate intervention of 1802





Suburban Villas - above, the genteel façade masks an older frame





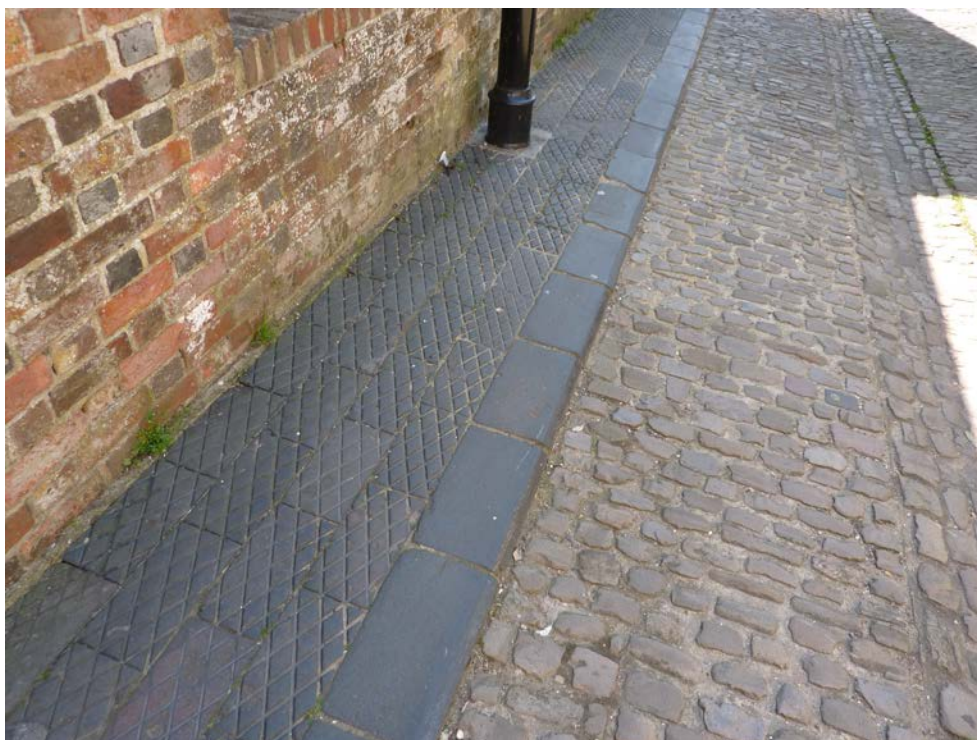
More humble vernacular housing – still displaying a rich variety of facing materials





Raised banks, retaining walls and steps up to cottages are a feature of Petworth





Though not a historic material, Staffordshire Blue paviors have become a characteristic surfacing material in Petworth

Isolated fragments of historic paving material can still make a local contribution to character and should be retained where possible





In courts and ginnels very early paving survivals may still be found in Petworth. This not only contributes to character but often has an intrinsic historic value in its own right.

Some Winklestone Cobbles (Petworth Marble) survive in Lombard Street.





Ironwork in Petworth





Views of the rural Shimmings valley from the edge of town are of great significance

MANAGEMENT PLAN

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Principles

- 8.1 The following paragraphs set out fundamental principles which should be observed whenever works of repair, alteration or innovation, large or small, are considered within the conservation area.
- 8.2 The necessity to make changes should be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis, not automatically assumed. Change can be good where it clearly enhances character or amends past harm, but alterations undertaken simply for their own sake or to fall in line with an arbitrary standard, such as a corporate identity, will not always be appropriate.
- 8.3 All works should be conceived with specific regard to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any intervention should echo and reinforce those characteristics of the buildings, townscape and public realm of Petworth which make a positive contribution to the town and its local distinctiveness.
- 8.4 All works, whether of alteration, repair or maintenance, should be executed to a high standard, with the aim of preserving or enhancing the special characteristics of the town. If the immediate context displays no special characteristics, the works should be devised to enhance the location, or at least leave a neutral impact.
- 8.5 New works, repair and maintenance should utilize the traditional materials used in the town. If they are now unavailable, materials should be used which match them in character and appearance. Preference should be given to materials sourced locally or regionally over alternatives transported great distances.
- 8.6 Where opportunities occur to achieve positive improvements to a building or townscape, they should be integrated into future development proposals.

- 8.7 Green spaces within the town should normally be retained and tree care and vegetation management should respect local amenity and reflect ecological best practice.
- 8.8 When planning the maintenance of buildings or spaces, opportunities should be taken to remove redundant items of infrastructure. Whenever infrastructure is due to be supplemented or replaced the continued need for existing items should be questioned. Potential for the undergrounding of overhead lines should not be overlooked.
- 8.9 Maintenance and repair work must respect historic fabric, features and street surfaces. The central aim should always be to maximise retention of historic fabric and minimise necessary intervention.
- 8.10 Whenever new or altered maintenance regimes with the potential to affect the character and appearance of the public realm are to be introduced by public authorities, councils or agencies, an appropriate level of consultation should be undertaken with other organisations, before decisions are made.



Objectives

Policy and Implementation

- 8.11 The National Park Authority will undertake full consultation on the forthcoming Local Plan and will provide effective planning policies for the protection of heritage assets and conservation areas.
- 8.12 Chichester District Council determines most planning applications in Petworth on behalf of the National Park Authority. Up to date appraisal guidance should assist this work.
- 8.13 Particular care should be taken with the determination of signage proposals under the Advertisement Regulations and planning applications for minor alterations to shopfronts or business premises. Proposals which focus on corporate identity and which do not show regard to the established characteristics of the conservation area should not be supported.
- 8.14 Applications for externally applied security shutters for shopfronts should not be supported as they are almost invariably unsightly in their own right and, cumulatively, are prone to create a desolate and threatening atmosphere in a commercial centre at night.

Monitoring Change

- 8.15 A high proportion of the historic buildings within Petworth Conservation Area are listed. However, the owners of dwelling houses which are not enjoy 'permitted development' rights; a range of alterations which may be undertaken without the need for planning permission. Periodically, the National Park Authority will monitor incremental change to unlisted residential properties within the conservation area. Where such changes threaten to undermine the character of the area, or particular streets within it, the National Park Authority will consider the use of Article 4 Directions to bring future alterations under planning control.

- 8.16 The National Park Authority will undertake a photo survey of every building frontage in the commercial core of the town, including side elevations visible from public vantage points. This survey should be completed during the course of a single week. Efforts should be made to repeat this survey at four-yearly intervals, to create a rolling record, over time.

Value of Maintenance

- 8.17 Poorly maintained buildings depress the character and appearance of any conservation area. Damp and the ingress of moisture is the great enemy of any historic structure. Regular maintenance and prompt repairs to buildings to keep them wind and watertight (particularly related to roofs and flashings and the clearance of gutters, downpipes and drainage channels) will pay dividends, avoiding much greater expenditure on major repairs at a later date.
- 8.18 It is usually better and cheaper to do a little repair and maintenance work regularly, than save up problems for major work later. If water is penetrating the structure, it will be causing damage, whether obvious or not. Most agents of building decay depend upon an elevated moisture content within the fabric to thrive. In such conditions, dry rot and beetle attack will eat away at the building, unseen. Once the decay becomes obvious, major repairs will be required and these equate to major cost, disruption and the avoidable loss of historic fabric. The old proverb, ‘a stitch in time saves nine’ is as applicable to buildings as it is to clothes – perhaps more so.
- 8.19 It is incumbent on building owners to be aware of the threat of incipient decay and to act promptly to head off problems. Education undoubtedly has a part to play in raising awareness of building maintenance issues. However, in the small minority of cases where owners are unwilling or unable to act, the National Park Authority should be prepared to use statutory powers to enforce repairs as a last resort.

8.20 There are currently two listed buildings within the town which exhibit a clear requirement for early repair, *Stringers Hall*, East Street and *Springfield House* in North Street. In addition, the chapel in the Victorian cemetery is derelict and at risk of total loss.

Boundary Review

8.21 The boundaries of the conservation area were reviewed as part of the character appraisal process. At the northern tip of the town, *Laundry Cottage* is a Twentieth Century house, of vernacular appearance, much extended. It is located behind an imposing stone boundary wall and trees on Horsham Road, between the Town Cemetery and the site of the former school. A little to the north stands an attractive terrace of four vernacular revival estate cottages of the earlier Twentieth Century.

8.22 Two properties on Cherry Orchard Lane are also semi-detached estate cottages of the earlier Twentieth Century, again built in a vernacular revival style. They are of high design quality and it is not obvious why they have previously been excluded from the conservation area.

8.23 At the southern edge of the conservation area, *Lund House* is a solid Victorian building, originally named *Belle Vue*. Like the Police Station, immediately to the north, it was built within the former curtilage of the *Georgian House of Correction*, demolished in the later Nineteenth Century. The conservation area boundary should probably reflect these origins, but it does not at present.

8.24 Small extensions may be appropriate at the junction of Station Road with Midhurst Road. The current boundary runs across the curtilage of *Augustus Brandt Antiques*, excluding the southern-most building on the site, which possesses some historic value. Despite a lack of defining boundary treatments, this site does form a gateway of sorts, marking the approach to the historic town core.

8.25 The only substantial extension proposed is in Grove Lane. This lane has an 'edge of town' character along most of its length, more diffuse than the

historic ribbon suburb along Grove Street. However, the northern end of the lane, around *New Grove*, is marked by good trees and continuous, walled boundary treatments and this strongly unifying feature is felt to justify a localised extension in this vicinity.

Green Spaces

- 8.26 A baseline survey of green spaces within the town should be undertaken, noting general ambience, quality of landscaping or planting and whether that has an historic significance, presence of tree cover and amenity value. If the space is in public ownership the degree of use should also be noted. There may be potential to undertake this work with volunteer effort.
- 8.27 The maintenance of green or other open spaces in public ownership should be reviewed on a case by case basis following the baseline survey. Where shortcomings are perceived, the National Park Authority will raise the matter with the relevant public landowner and will seek to devise appropriate enhancements or sustainable management arrangements.

Highways Maintenance

- 8.28 Every sign installed under the provisions of the highways legislation or relevant by-laws should be surveyed and its need reviewed. Any signage found to be redundant or duplicated unnecessarily should be removed. If opportunities are found to rationalise or combine essential signage locations, these should be exploited.
- 8.29 When any repair or street maintenance work is being carried out care should be taken to replace original surface materials like for like. Opportunities should be seized to replace modern concrete flag surfaces with traditional materials, where ever appropriate. Each street surface should be considered in the context of its immediate surroundings, as well as traditional historic practice in the town as a whole.



The Barry lamp standard of 1851

FURTHER READING

In producing this document, the Historic Buildings Officers of the South Downs National Park Authority drew upon material contained in the original Conservation Area Appraisal adopted by Chichester District Council in 2000 and some paragraphs have been carried forward, unaltered.

Other Source Documents:

Buildings of England – Sussex – Ian Nairn and Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, 1965

The Chichester District Local Plan. 1999

Petworth Historic Character Assessment Report – Sussex Extended Urban Survey – Roland B Harris, 2010

A Walk round St Mary's Petworth - St Mary's Parochial Church Council

National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

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MAPS

I. ANALYSIS MAP

On the analysis map, Buildings of Townscape Merit are defined as buildings which display:

- Architectural or Historic Character – *with particular regard to vernacular survivals and post-1840 buildings of special merit*
 - An Historic Association of *regional significance or local importance*
- Evidence of Local Distinctiveness – *with particular regard to the use of local materials or techniques*
 - Group Value – *with other adjacent buildings of merit*

So long as: those buildings or structures are largely intact and their interest and significance has not been unduly diluted by later alteration or extension.

2. HISTORIC MAP

Petworth as it was just before the First World War