

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

# Southease

June 2017



# Summary of Significance

The designation of Southease as a Conservation Area was a formal recognition that the village has a special architectural or historic interest, which should be retained and improved.

That significance is derived from its survival as a small rural settlement occupying a particular ecological niche within a very attractive landscape setting. It forms part of a group of similar villages located on the lower slopes of the Downs and just above the flood plain of the Ouse; a location which gave the villagers access to a range of ecological resources.

There are not many buildings but those which do survive are typical of an East Sussex village and include a very special and ancient church and a range of other traditional buildings of varying types and forms. Modern development is infrequent and well hidden.

Flint boundary walls are a particularly important feature defining the character of the village.

Within the village, the village green forms the focus of the settlement and a wonderful group with the surrounding buildings. The unpretentious roads and tracks through the village, with rough grass verges and the absolute absence of street lighting, road markings, bollards or any such urban paraphernalia reinforces the rural character of the village.

The village sits within an attractive and quite dramatic landscape context and there are important views across the Ouse Valley to the Downs beyond from the village.

# 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 Southease was first designated as a Conservation Area by Lewes District Council in 1973. 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
- Lewes District Local Plan: Part I Joint Core Strategy (until replaced by 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 A consultation period of six weeks ran from 6 February to 20 March 2017, with the document posted on the National Park Authority’s website. Consultations were also sent directly to residents of the village, the Parish Meeting, East Sussex County Council, and Lewes District Councils

1.8 All comments received were considered and this revised document adopted for the purposes of development management and to inform the other activities of the SDNPA and its partners on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017.



# Location & Topography

2.1 Southease Conservation Area is located approximately 8 km (5 miles) south of Lewes, to the east of the C7 road.



2.2 The lane through the village (the C667) continues from the C7 out across the floodplain and the River Ouse as far as Southease Station, where the rail crossing is private. The South Downs Way long distance footpath follows this route through the settlement from the Green. From the church, an unclassified

lane connects the C667 road back to the main road at a point some 300 metres to south of the main junction. The vehicular traffic through the village is almost exclusively limited to local residents, visitors and farm vehicles, although the South Downs Way does bring increasing numbers of walkers and cyclists through the village.

2.3 Topographically, the settlement is set on sloping ground between the downland ridge and the River Ouse flood plain, occupying a particular ecological niche which has affected its evolution through time.



# Historical Development

3.1 Anyone with an interest in the history of Southease has the benefit of Brigid Chapman's excellent little history *Southease through the centuries AD 966 – 2009*, published by CGB Books in 2010. This section of the appraisal has drawn heavily on this work and this is acknowledged with thanks.

3.2 The name of the village indicates an Anglo-Saxon origin, being a compound of the Old English words *sūð* (south, southern) and *hæse* (land overgrown with brushwood) so giving 'South land overgrown with brushwood'. Some archaeological evidence for this was provided by the discovery in 1851 of an early Anglo-Saxon burial close to the church and vestiges of the existing Church are thought to date from the pre-Norman era.

3.3 The village first appears in the historical record in 966, when a charter of King Edgar records his gift of the Church and Manor of Southease to Hyde Abbey at Winchester.

3.4 The Abbot retained control of the village at the time of the Domesday survey, when a total of 60 households are recorded, making Southease a very large settlement. The absence of a landlord in situ may explain the lack of a Manor House.

3.5 The village supplied the Abbot with 38,500 herrings every year at a time when Brighton was only landing 4000, making it a very substantial fishery.

3.6 The development of Southease is closely linked with the river Ouse and drainage of the Lewes Levels. From the 11<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the drainage of the river was sufficiently effective for the grassland adjacent to the river to be grazed and for crops to be grown on the higher fields.

3.7 In subsequent centuries, changes in the climate and local hydrology adversely affected the drainage of the Levels, resulting in much more flooding. As a consequence, fishing became a more significant activity for the villagers. A Commission of Sewers was set up in 1422 to rebuild the river banks and improve the drainage but it wasn't until the "cutting the haven right to the sea, now called New Haven" in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the Levels were once more drained effectively, leaving the villages of the Ouse Valley with rich pasture once more.

3.8 A Survey of Southease made by John Rowe in 1623 lists every customary tenant, the acreage he or she occupied, how much was meadows and brook lands, how much arable and so on. The total, including the plots of land around the houses was 135 acres plus a few roods and perches. The "Capital messuage" referred to, including one granary, two barns, stalls, stables and closes occupied over three acres, was presumably the rectory.

3.9 The settlement was significantly larger in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Parish Register for that time showing numerous births, deaths and marriages taking place. Some dwellings have disappeared since then as the population dwindled, and many have been converted from several small cottages into single dwellings.



**Figure 2: Southease as it appears on Yeakell and Gardner's map of Sussex 1778-1783**

3.10 The rise of Newhaven had an impact on the village. The Newhaven Harbour Commissioners were created by Act of Parliament, with the aim of improving navigation of the river and draining of the Levels, and the Lower Ouse Improvement Act of 1791 required them to replace the existing ferry with a bridge substantial enough to allow cattle and vehicles as well as people to cross over whilst also opening to allow ships to pass.

3.11 The first bridge was a wooden cantilever structure erected near Itford Farm, a little to the north of the present crossing. This was demolished in 1879



when it was replaced by the surviving cast iron swing bridge. In 2009 the Environment Agency proposed replacing the bridge with a modern single span steel structure. However, the bridge was recognised to be an important industrial heritage structure in a unique rural setting and, as a result, was listed at Grade II. Following the listing, the bridge was refurbished the following year at a cost of £1.5 million.

3.12 The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, running along the east bank of Ouse and linking Lewes to Newhaven, was opened in 1847 and extended to Seaford in 1864.

3.13 The Tithe Map (Figure 3) and Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 4) show the form and extent of the village in the nineteenth century. It survives in much the same form today.



**Figure 3: Southease Tithe Map**  
(courtesy of East Sussex Historic Environment Record)

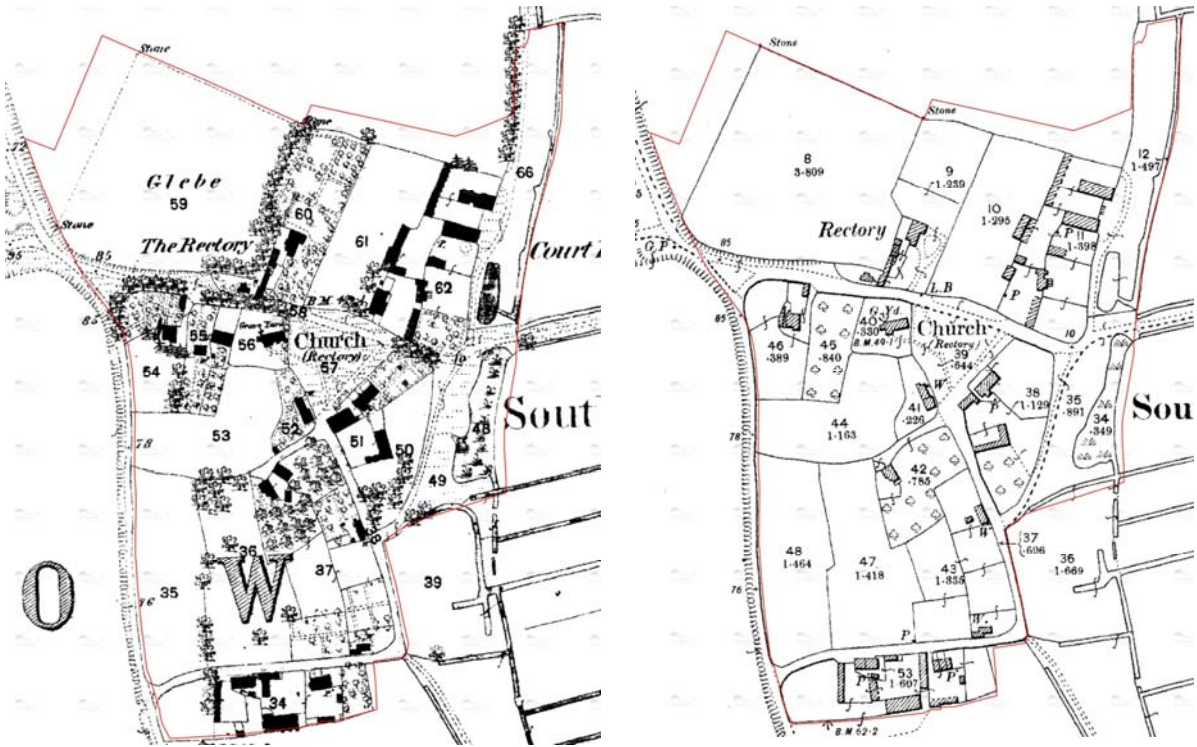
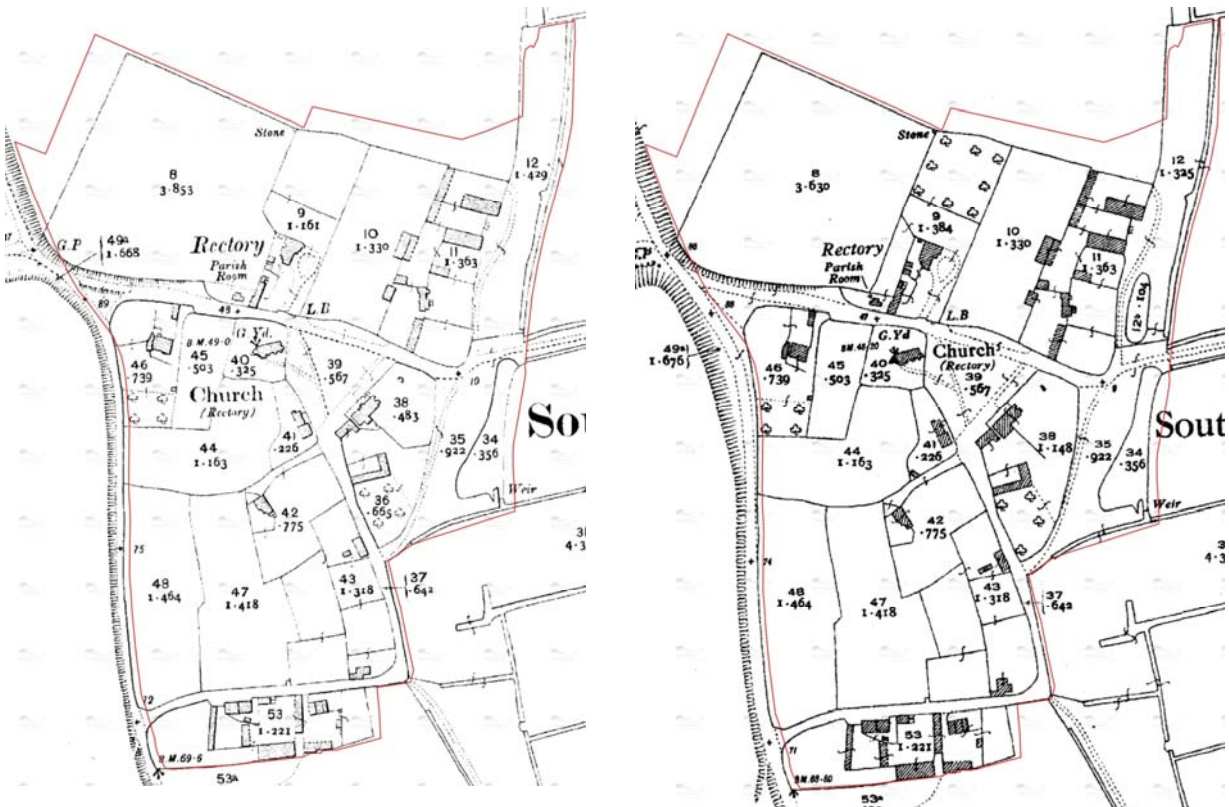


Figure 4: Ordnance Survey Mapping of Southease

Top left 1873; Top Right 1899; Bottom Left 1910; Bottom Right 1930.



# Character Analysis

4.1 The elements that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area are mapped on Figure 24 and which can be found at the end of this document on page 42.

## Entrance & Boundaries

4.2 Southease is, in effect, by-passed by the C7 and only local traffic need enter the village itself. The main way in is the sunken lane which drops from the C7, past the church, to the village green. The banks and greenery flanking this lane give a strong sense of enclosure and arrival. The lane carries on through the village and leads out across the valley (Figure 18 - top).

4.3 From the bridge looking back, most of the village is screened by trees, with only a few buildings visible (Figure 18 – middle & bottom).

4.4 The existing boundaries of the Conservation Area encompass the whole historic settlement and do not require any significant extensions. Only two small extensions are proposed, both to incorporate a pill box within the boundary.

## Settlement Form

4.5 The Conservation Area is generally comprised of a loosely knit group of large houses, cottages and farm buildings dotted around the church. Buildings are mostly set within generous plots of land and surrounded by green spaces confined by historic field boundaries, with informal roads and tracks providing a route through.

4.6 The village is centred around the open space of the Village Green which provides the immediate setting for the Parish Church (Figures 5 & 6), Southease Place, and Thatched Cottage. From this central point several roads and tracks lead off to other residences and farm yard areas. This public space is the most significant in a village that is generally characterised by private land and dwellings screened by flint walls and trees.

4.7 The central part of the village, around the Church and Green, has an intimate, inward looking and enclosed character created by buildings facing onto the Green, with boundaries of flint walls and trees. The outer edges of the hamlet particularly to the East, are rather more open in character and tend to relate to

the surrounding farmland and countryside although there is still a verge of enclosure created by the lines of willow trees and field boundaries

4.8 The small, well-kept churchyard provides a tranquil and intimate space. It is framed on three sides by mature lime trees and enclosed within flint boundary walls. The attractively laid out garden of the Black Lamb is a more formal space and makes a significant contribution to the setting of the listed building and the overall character of the Conservation Area.

4.9 Undeveloped meadowland below Southease Farmhouse provides a pastoral setting for the village viewed from the south. The southern part of the village has an open character due to a more informal grouping of buildings and less tree cover.

4.10 A small paddock at the south western corner of the village and the large field on the northern edge of the hamlet are other significant open spaces in the conservation area.

## Use & Activities

4.11 It is thought that in early medieval times the river meander passed closer to the village, providing plentiful pickings for fishermen in the village. Nowadays the river has receded and the land is agricultural, with the majority of the buildings reflecting this.

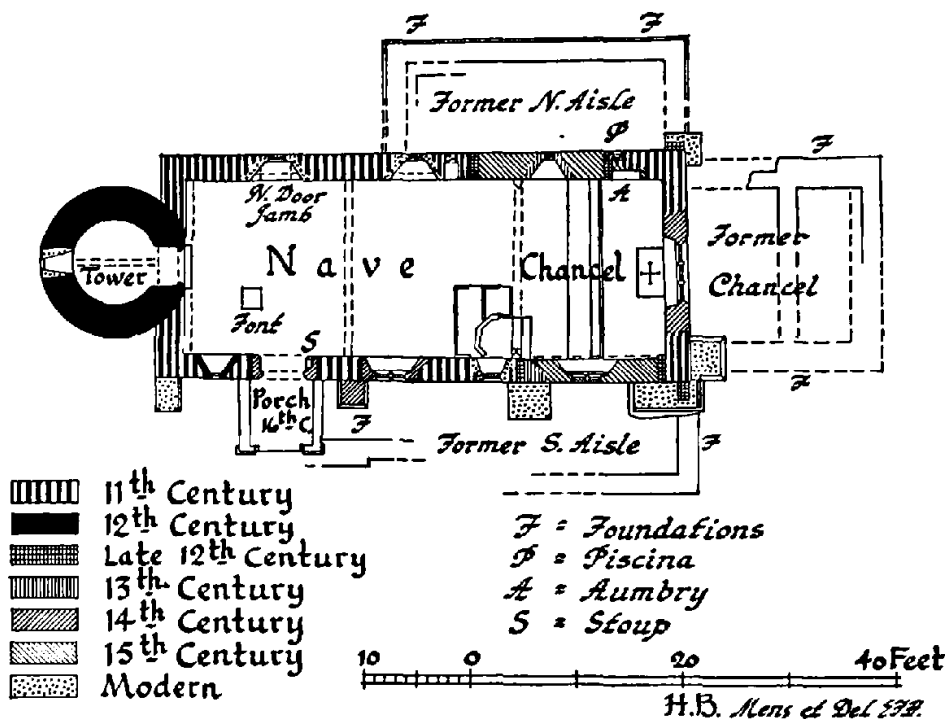
4.12 One working farm survives within the village but the village is otherwise a residential community with few of the residents earning their living from the land.

## Buildings & Structures

4.13 The character of the village depends significantly on the form and setting of the traditional buildings of which the village largely consists. Most of the existing buildings date from at least the 19th century or considerably earlier, with only two dwellings built in the early 20th century. The relative paucity of post-war development is fairly unusual and helps contribute to the historic and rather timeless quality of the area.

4.14 Collectively, the buildings are fairly typical of villages in East Sussex in terms of building forms and display the usual palette of materials, including field flint, brick (sometimes in combination with flint), clay tiles (both hanging on walls and laid on roofs), and some slate. Rectory Cottage is the one example of the weather-boarding, found elsewhere in East Sussex, in the village, whilst Thatched Cottage is the last example of what was once the dominant roofing material.

4.15 The Grade I listed Parish Church, of Saxon or early Norman origin, is one of only three churches in Sussex with a circular tower (Figures 7 & 8). The church tower was probably built in this way due to the abundance of flint and the relative scarcity of ashlar stone, which would have been needed for quoins and dressings. This is the most important building in the Conservation Area, both historically and architecturally, and is suitably situated on a prominence in the centre of the village.



4.16 The 'Thatched Cottage' fronts onto the Green to the south of the Church (Figure 9). Probably built in the eighteenth century or earlier, it was formerly two cottages. It is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, all now painted, has a thatched hipped roof and horizontal sliding sash windows. It is one of the first buildings to be seen on entry to the village and the only surviving thatched building. It is, therefore, an important surviving example of this once common roof covering.

4.17 Southease Place fronts onto the south eastern side of the Green (Figure 10). Built in the seventeenth century, it has been refaced on the ground floor with flints, and above with stucco. The hipped roof has traditional handmade clay tiles. This building is seen immediately on entry to the village, indicating its high status. Its generous grounds are bounded by fine flint walls and incorporate the village pond, a wonderful surviving feature hidden away behind the house at the very edge of the Conservation Area (Figure 20 - bottom).

4.18 The Old Rectory and its large, landscaped garden is found within a wooded area to the north of the green (Figure 11). The south wing of this L-shaped building is a sixteenth century timber framed structure which has been

refaced with stucco. A gable facing west at its north end has the date 1604 and the monogram of John Rivers. The east-west wing is a nineteenth century addition, also stuccoed.

4.19 The Black Lamb is an eighteenth century building comprising two parallel ranges, the south range slightly smaller than the north (Figure 12). It is faced with red brick dressings and quoins and has a slate roof. There is a red brick chimney breast on the east wall of the south range. The house was significantly but sensitively enlarged in 2005. It is an imposing house set in spacious grounds in a prominent corner location at the entry to the village.

4.20 Rock Cottage and Barn Cottage are located within a group of farm buildings at the southern edge of the Conservation Area (Figure 14). Barn Cottage is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, Rock Cottage with red brick and tile hanging. The roof is tiled. These cottages front directly onto the unclassified "loop" road.

4.21 The Cottages originally formed the farm house to one of the two original farmsteads in the village. It stands next to its steading, which includes all the traditional buildings of an 18<sup>th</sup> century farm group, largely redundant, an important and characterful survival (Figure 15), although one at risk from under-use and poor condition. The barn, on the southern boundary of the Conservation Area is the dominant feature in views of the Conservation Area from the south and remains in use for farm storage.

4.22 The other farmstead within the village, and the one that remains in use, lies to the east of the Rectory (Figure 13). This is formed of a rectangular courtyard with multiple yards dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Over half of the original buildings have been lost and some of those which survive are in poor condition. The site also has a number of large, modern agricultural buildings which do not make a positive contribution, but which must be expected in the context of a working farm.

4.23 There are several unlisted buildings, notably Rectory Cottage, Sunnymead and Corner Cottage and many of the traditional flint and brick agricultural buildings, which also contribute to the character of the area, both individually and as groups (Figure 16).

4.24 A particularly important element in defining the character of Southease as a downland the village is the use of flint in boundary and field walls. These walls would have been even more visually prominent in the past, as appears in the old postcard opposite, but are currently beginning to disappear under vegetation of various kinds.

4.25 Physical remains of more recent history survive in the village in the form of four World War II Type 24 pill boxes (Figure 17 top), located broadly at each

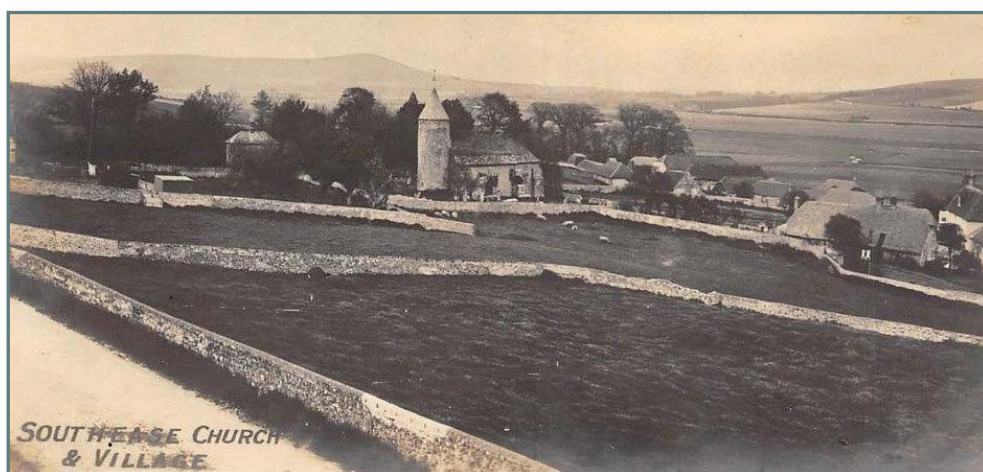
corner of the settlement, and a Type 28 box just to the north. The Type 24s were to house rifles and light machine-guns whilst the Type 28 was designed to hold a 2-pounder anti-tank gun or a 6-pounder Hotchkiss gun. They formed part of the Ouse Divisional Stop Line.

4.26 Other evidence of wartime activity include the platforms and concrete bases of 16 Nissen huts, used as a PoW camp adjacent to the northern farmstead and the grave of Sgt. Arthur James Vaughan of the RAF, with its typical War Graves Commission headstone, in the churchyard (Figure 17 – bottom). The precise location of an anti-aircraft gun remains unknown.

## Open Spaces & Greenery

4.27 Open green spaces and vegetation are fundamental to the rural character of the area. The particular significance of the village green in this regard has already been noted

4.28 In the past, Southease would have had a much more open, downland character, with much of the tree coverage dating back no further than the last war. This is clearly shown in the old postcard view, where the flint walls in particular are very apparent.



4.29 There are several tree groups, as well as individual mature trees, which are of particular importance to the character of the Conservation Area.

4.30 A thick belt of Sycamore trees runs along the edge of the C7 on either side of the main access to the settlement. This belt is important in screening the northern part of the village from this busy road. These tree belts continue along either side of the access lane down into the hamlet, providing an overhanging green canopy, which creates a distinctive natural portal at the entry to the Conservation Area. This is an important experience in the progression of spaces through the area. A continuous row of Willow trees, planted in 1978 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, also provides a prominent natural boundary along the length of the eastern edge of the village. Several attractive

Weeping Willows surround the pond and contribute to the secluded nature of this feature.

4.31 There is a thick belt of trees along the northern curtilage of the Old Rectory which is an important natural boundary to built development in the northern part of the settlement. An area of woodland contains the northern side of the green and contributes to the generally wooded nature of the northern part of the Conservation Area. This area of woodland is protected by a Tree Preservation Order signifying its particular importance.

4.32 The fine Lime trees around three edges of the churchyard enclose the churchyard space and contribute to the setting of the church building.

4.33 High hedges, often in conjunction with flint walls, provide screening and emphasise the property boundaries in the village.

## Views & Vistas

4.34 The hamlet is sheltered to the north behind the shoulder of a low hill between Southease and Rodmell. As a result the natural orientation of the settlement is to the east and south. The landform falls from west to east, which allows panoramic views across the Conservation Area and the wide valley floodplain to the surrounding downland (Figure 19). This connects the settlement to the surrounding countryside with views including local reference points such as Mount Caburn and Itford Hill.

4.35 A permissive footpath connecting the village to Rodmell gives extensive panoramic views to Rodmell village, Lewes town and castle, and Mount Caburn. The route of the path follows the road line, as shown by the pecked brown line on the map



4.36 There are also views down the valley towards Newhaven, where the spire of Piddinghoe Church can be seen.



# Issues & Opportunities

5.1 The Conservation Area is generally in good condition and well maintained by its residents. This is not to say, however, that there are no opportunities for achieving some improvements.

5.2 Possibly the most significant issue which is threatening the qualities of the village is the lack of maintenance to the boundary flint walls throughout the settlement. Old photographs demonstrate how prominent these walls once were in the village and their significance in defining the character of the settlement as a downland village.

5.3 In recent decades, the walls have been allowed to largely disappear beneath various forms of greenery. This has both much reduced the visual impact of the walls and their contribution to the character of the village, whilst also contributing to their long-term decay. If the process is allowed to continue unchecked, this vital element in the villagescape could completely disappear. The one example in which a collapsed wall has been rebuilt by the owner, in this instance the Glyndebourne Estate, serves to demonstrate the impact that repair of the flint walls can achieve.



5.4 Unlike many rural villages in the South Downs, Southease does retain a working farm and this is a significant factor in maintain the rural character of the settlement. However, it does inevitably mean the presence of some modern agricultural buildings which are rather alien to the traditional aspect of the village. Their removal would undoubtedly enhance the Conservation Area but it has to be acknowledged that it is not possible to have the working farm without the modern buildings and Southease is relatively fortunate that most of them are not too prominent.

5.5 The exception, however is the large, sheet metal grain-dryer at the southern end of the village standing immediately alongside the southern farmstead. This is still in use but if it became redundant or could be relocated in a less sensitive location, its removal would be a significant improvement, both to the setting of the immediate group of historic farm buildings and the wider conservation area.

5.6 The other issue associated with the farmsteads is the underuse and poor condition of the traditional farm buildings.

5.7 Some other issues include:-

- Like the flint walls, the wartime pill boxes are also disappearing and decaying amid overgrowth.
- There are some inappropriate structures, including
  - the large garage which is the first structure visible as one enters the Conservation Area (Figure 22)
  - The open garage/car port (Figure 21)
  - The large shed in the front garden of Sunnymede (Figure 21)
  - The wide modern garage door inserted into the annexe to Southease Place (Figure 22)
- The presence of telegraph poles and various wires, both within the village and in views out from it across the valley. (Figure 18)
- The condition of some of the road surfaces. (Figure 23)

# Photographic Survey



Figure 5: The village green lies at the heart of Southease.





Figure 6: Views across The Green. The daffodils make a pretty sight and were planted in honour of Non Humphryes, a nationally famous daffodil grower and breeder who lived in The Thatched Cottage.





Figure 7: The Parish Church.

This is one of the 3 churches in Sussex with a circular C12 tower (the others being in Lewes and Piddinghoe). Chancel, nave and west tower with shingled spire. The chancel and nave C11. Together they form the nave of the original building, of which the chancel and the transepts were demolished in the C14, and have only been divided by the insertion of a modern pointed wooden chancel arch. Remains of mural paintings of 1280 circa on north and west walls.



Figure 8: The south elevation of the Church, as it appears now and in the past.

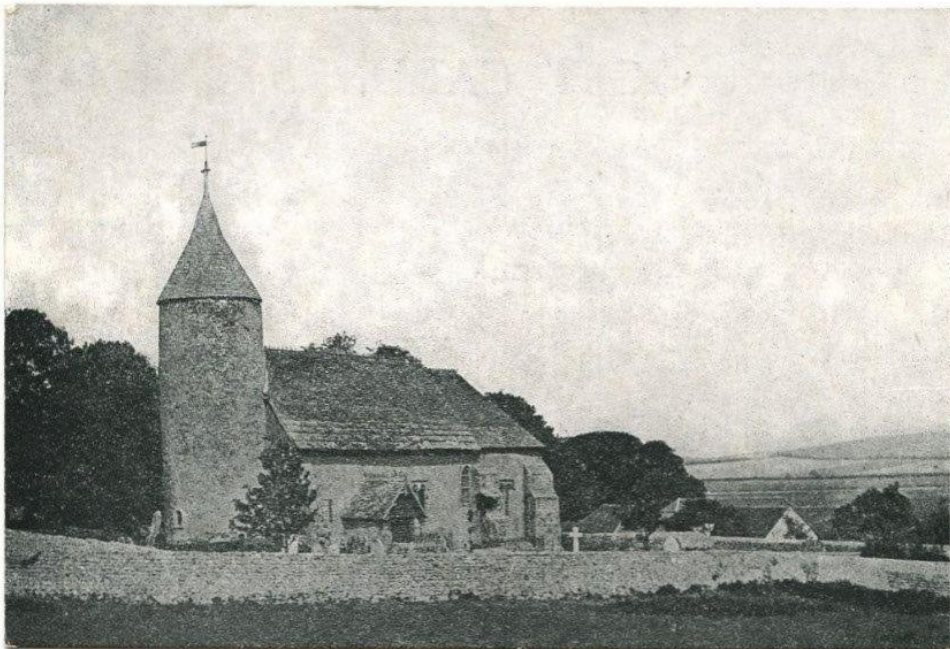




Figure 9: Thatched Cottage:

A Grade II listed buildings with 18<sup>th</sup> century. Once 2 cottages. C18 or earlier. Two storeys. Four windows. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, all now painted. Hipped thatched roof. Horizontally-sliding sash windows. Ground floor portion with pentice roof built out at south end.



Figure 10: Southease Place:

A Grade II listed building with origins in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, refaced on ground floor with flints, above with stucco. Hipped tiled roof. Casement windows. Modern porch. Two storeys. Three windows. Brick chimney breast with offsets on north wall. Until sold by the Glyndebourne Estate in the 1930s, the house was known as 'Southease Farm house'.



Figure 11: The Rectory: The south wing is a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building refaced with stucco and bearing the date 1604. The east-west wing at its northern end is a 19<sup>th</sup> century addition.



Figure 12: The Black Lamb (listed as “The Rest”). A Grade II listed building dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.





Figure 13: The northern farmstead.



Figure 14: Rock Cottage & Barn Cottage.

Once a farmhouse, later converted into 2 dwellings. Probably C18, though the west end (Rock Cottage) may be a later addition or refronted at a later date. Two storeys. Five windows. Barn Cottage is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, Rock Cottage with red brick and tile-hanging. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Flint and brick chimney breast on east wall of Barn Cottage.



Figure 15: The Southern Farmstead: An 18<sup>th</sup> century farmstead which survives intact, along with its farm house (Rock Cottage/Barn Cottage), at the southern end of the settlement.

The group of buildings makes a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and their poor condition is both detrimental and an opportunity.





Figure 16: Rectory Cottage (above ) and Corner Cottage (below): Buildings which makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.





Figure 17: Relics of the Second World War in the village

Wartime Pill boxes (above), of which there five within the village forming part of the Ouse Divisional Stop Line.

Grave of Sergeant A J Vaughan, with its War Grave Commission grave stone, in the churchyard (below).





Figure 18: Views from the village looking westwards over the Ouse Valley towards Mount Caburn (above), from the bridge back to the village (middle) and showing a traditional barn largely obscured by a modern grain drier (Bottom).

The electricity poles and wirescape detract from the Conservation Area and its setting and their removal would represent a significant enhancement.





Figure 19: Long range views across the wider landscape from within the Conservation Area (top and middle) and towards the Conservation Area from the south (bottom).





Figure 20: More Views within the village, including the village pond (bottom).





Figure 21: Structures of inappropriate form and materials which detract from the character of the Conservation Area.







Figure 22: Cars cannot be wished out of existence but care needs to be taken when making changes to accommodate them. The garage above, which stands in a prominent position at the entrance to the village is much larger than it needs to be, whilst the modern wide up-and-over garage door jars visually with the period building in which it sits (below).





Figure 23: Poor road surfaces on the South Downs Way

# 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, the boundaries were found to be substantially sound. Only two small extensions are proposed one at the northern end of the village and the other at the southern. Both are shaded pink on Figure 24. In both cases the extensions are drawn to incorporate a pill box.

6.5 No areas to be removed from the Conservation Area were identified during the appraisal.

**ACTION 1 – that the boundaries of Southease Conservation Area be amended to incorporate the two small areas described above and mapped on Figure 24.**

6.6 The traditional farm buildings and layout of the southern farmstead are an important survival and may warrant the protection of statutory listing.

6.7 In considering potential additions to a Local List, an increasing understanding and appreciation of the significance of wartime heritage suggests that the five pillboxes should be included on such a list. Should a request for statutory listing for the southern farmstead be unsuccessful, it might also be included on the Local List

**ACTION 2 – that a request for listing be submitted for the buildings forming the southern farmstead and that the five pill boxes be added to the emerging Local List of Historic Buildings**

### Condition of the Heritage Asset

6.8 To meet this objective it is necessary to identify those buildings or other features of the Conservation Area that are currently in poor condition and to identify a strategy to secure their renovation.

6.9 For the most part, the historic building stock within the Conservation Area is in good order. The notable exceptions are the traditional farm buildings in both the northern and southern farmstead.

6.10 A rather more significant issue, and quite possibly the main threat to the conservation area, is the disappearance of the flint boundary walls under greenery of various sorts due to lack of maintenance and decay that follows.

6.11 Likewise, some of the pill boxes are largely hidden by greenery which makes it difficult to appreciate them. The tidying up of these structures and, perhaps some interpretation, could form a community project.

**ACTION 3 – that the National Park Authority seeks to secure repair of the traditional farmsteads, flint walls, and pill boxes by working in co-operation with the owner and wider community.**

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

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

6.13 All of the Conservation Area falls within an Archaeological Notification Area, which means that assessment of any applications will consider the impact of the proposals on the archaeological record.

6.14 It is important to understand that this does not just mean sub-surface archaeology but also includes historic and period buildings. The National Park Authority's archaeological advisor for Southease is East Sussex County Council, which can be contacted at:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her>

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

**ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which affects Southease Conservation Area should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority's archaeological advisor, East Sussex County Council, before submitting an application and before starting any design work**

6.15 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).

6.16 Whilst discussing proposals 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. These may not originally form part of the

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<sup>1</sup> In practice, the development management service for Southease 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.

proposal. The Local Planning Authority will seek to 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 possible**

6.17 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 they can represent a real threat to the special character.

6.18 This problem can be addressed in two ways. “Permitted development rights” are already restricted to some degree within Conservation Areas but those which remain can be brought within the ambit of the planning system using a measure called an Article 4 Direction. The other, complementary, way would be to encourage the reinstatement of architectural features and traditional materials with a grant scheme targeted at such works.

6.19 At present there does not appear to be a significant problem of this nature in Southease. 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 below. Nevertheless, it is important that the historic building stock should be monitored so that an appearance of an emerging problem is identified at an early stage. In reality, this means everyone, National Park and District Authority officers and members, Parish Councillors and the community, keeping an eye on what is happening.

**ACTION 5 – that 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 Southease Conservation Area.**

6.20 Although not, of course, heritage assets themselves (at least not in the sense that the term is used in this document), trees often make a very important contribution to the character of a Conservation Area. In some cases, the trees will be protected by a specific Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and there are currently two such orders within Southease.

6.21 Trees within Conservation Areas that are not covered by specific TPOs still have a degree of protection. Anyone who is planning to do works to such a tree is required to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks of their intention to do those works. That is to allow the Local Planning Authority to make a TPO on the tree if deemed appropriate.

**ACTION 6** – that a proper assessment be made of the amenity value of any tree(s) within the Conservation Area within the six week notification period and to make a Tree Preservation Order for those trees where appropriate.

### Enhancement of the spaces within the Heritage Asset

6.22 Conservation Area designation is a response to 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.

6.23 In some cases, significant improvements to that quality can be achieved by pro-active work in the public realm. However, the nature of Southease as a rural hamlet and the existing quality of the main public space, the green, mean that this is not really the case. In fact, some heavy-handed ‘enhancements’ could actually degrade the existing quality.

6.24 One possible improvement could be to the road surfaces. Again care is needed to ensure that these minor lanes are not over-engineered or suburbanised but in some cases, notably that part of the lane leading eastwards from the green across the valley, are breaking up and becoming potentially dangerous. This is well used as part of the South Downs Way.

**ACTION 7** – that the National Park Authority encourages the Highway Authority to address maintenance and repair of the road surfaces in a manner that is sympathetic to their nature and, more specifically, repairs the section of lane identified above in the same manner.

### Responsible Conservation is a Partnership!

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

6.26 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.

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



# Annex: Listed Buildings

## SOUTHEASE [The Parish Church](#)

20.8.65. Grade I

Church of England. Dedication unknown. This is one of the 3 churches in the Ouse valley with a circular C12 tower (see also Piddinghoe). Chancel, nave and west tower with shingled spire. The chancel and nave C11. Together they form the nave of the original building, of which the chancel and the transepts were demolished in the C14, and have only been divided by the insertion of a modern pointed wooden chancel arch. Remains of mural paintings of 1280 circa on north and west walls.

## SOUTHEASE [Southeast Place](#)

17.3.52. Grade II

C17, refaced on ground floor with flints, above with stucco. Hipped tiled roof. Casement windows. Modern porch. Two storeys. Three windows. Brick chimney breast with offsets on north wall.

## SOUTHEASE [Rock Cottage and Barn Cottage](#)

(formerly listed as Rock Cottage [No 1] and Lilac Cottage [No 2])

20.8.65. Grade II

Once a farmhouse, later converted into 2 dwellings. Probably C18, though the west end (Rock Cottage) may be a later addition or refronted at a later date. Two storeys. Five windows. Barn Cottage is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, Rock Cottage with red brick and tile-hanging. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Flint and brick chimney breast on east wall of Barn Cottage.

## SOUTHEASE [Thatched Cottage](#)

Grade II

Once 2 cottages. C18 or earlier. Two storeys. Four windows. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, all now painted. Hipped thatched roof. Horizontally-sliding sash windows. Ground floor portion with pentice roof built out at south end.

## SOUTHEASE [The Rectory](#)

Grade II

L-shaped building. South wing is a C16 timber-framed building refaced with stucco. A gable facing west at its north end has the date 1604 and the monogram of John Rivers. The east-west wing at its north end is a C19 addition, also stuccoed. Casement windows. Two storeys. Three windows.

## SOUTHEASE [The Rest \(now called Black Lamb House\)](#)

Grade II

C18. Two parallel ranges, the south range slightly smaller than the north.

Two storeys, and attic in gable end. Three windows. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins. Slate roof. Casement windows. Red brick chimney breast on east wall of south range.



Figure 24: Elements which make a Positive Contribution to the Character of Southease Conservation Area, including listed buildings (red), other buildings which make a positive contribution (dark blue), potential additions to the Local List (light blue), important open green areas (green), important boundaries (olive green), and significant views (red and grey arrows). Potential extensions to the Conservation Area are indicated in pink and enhancement opportunities in yellow.

[NB: The map does not attempt to distinguish curtilage listed buildings and some of those marked in blue may fall into this category]

# 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 from that date.

