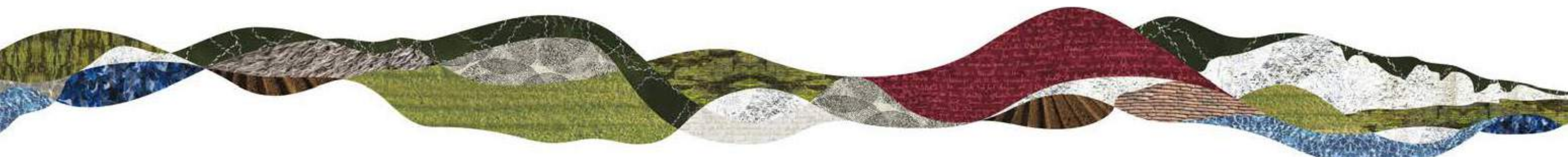




## Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

# LEWES

South Downs National Park Authority – October 2023





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Cover images (left to right): View east down the School Hill section of Lewes High Street; the early 14th century Barbican of Lewes Castle, and Harvey’s Brewery in Cliffe

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**Issue 01**  
February 2023  
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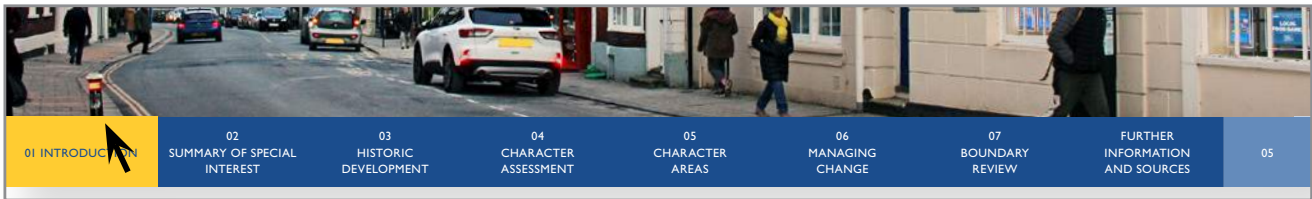
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# 01 Introduction



What is a Conservation Area?

Lewes Conservation Area

Consultation and Engagement

What does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal  
and Management Plan

Lewes High Street looking east







- 1.1 This section provides information about what Conservation Area designation means and its implications for development. It also gives an overview of the Lewes Conservation Area, sets out the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and outlines the consultation process that has been undertaken to prepare it.

What is a Conservation Area?

- 1.2 A Conservation Area is defined as an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”<sup>01</sup>
- 1.3 Designation of a Conservation Area recognises the unique quality of the heritage of that area as a whole. This quality comes not only from individual buildings but also other features, including (but not limited to) topography, materials, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping. These all contribute to the historic character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive local identity and sense of place.
- 1.4 The extent to which a building, or group of buildings or structures, positively shape the character of a Conservation Area is derived from their exteriors, principally those elevations which are street-facing but also side and rear elevations, the integrity of their historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Open spaces can be public or private, green or hard-landscaped and still contribute to the special interest of an area. Furthermore, the spaces between buildings, such as twittens, alleys, streets and paths all contribute to appearance and character.

What does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

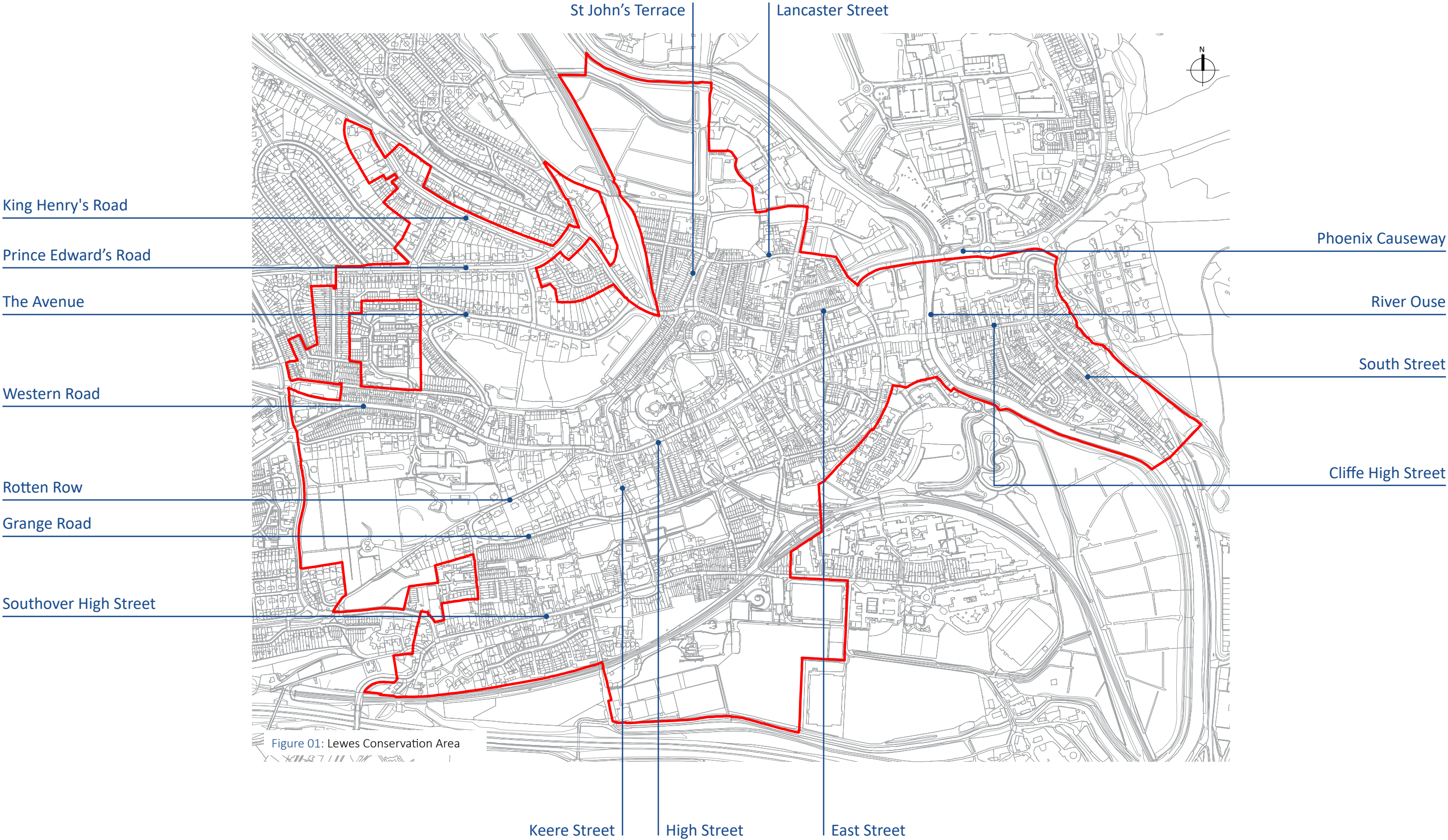
- 1.5 Conservation Area designation aims to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of an area which is of special architectural or historic interest. Therefore, changes to the external appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority as certain permitted development rights are curtailed. For example, demolition or substantial demolition of a building will require planning permission and planned work to a tree must be notified to the Local Planning Authority six weeks in advance. There are often further restrictions in place in Conservation Areas through Article 4 directions, which remove certain permitted development rights.
- 1.6 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets and their conservation is to be given great weight when determining planning applications. Further details can be found in [Section 06](#).

Lewes Conservation Area

- 1.7 Lewes was first designated as a Conservation Area by East Sussex County Council in 1970, following a campaign orchestrated by the local amenity society, The Friends of Lewes. The Conservation Area was extended in 2012 to include the site of the East Sussex County Council offices, the adjacent cemetery and part of Rotten Row.
- 1.8 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the Local Planning Authority for Lewes with Lewes District Council having delegated powers. Further information is provided in [Section 06](#).
- 1.9 Lewes is the attractive and historic county town of East Sussex, set on the southern face of the South Downs, where the valley of the River Ouse cuts through the Downs. The town’s origins can be traced with certainty as far back as the early 10th century, but settlement in Lewes may predate this. The Conservation Area covers much of the town, stretching from the Pells and the bank of the River Ouse in the north, to the side of the A27 near the ruins of Lewes Priory in the south. At the centre of the Conservation Area is the historic settlement of Lewes, focused on the High Street and the grid of twittens and streets that have grown off and around it since the Anglo-Saxon period. From here, the Conservation Area extends into Wallands Park to the north-west and to the west along Rotten Row and Western Road. To the south, the Conservation Area includes much of Southover, a settlement which emerged historically following the creation of Lewes Priory in the 1070s. To the east, on the far side of the River Ouse, the Conservation Area covers the vast majority of Cliffe, developed from the 12th century by the Archbishops of Canterbury.

01 Section 69 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990









Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- 1.10 Understanding the character and significance of Conservation Areas is essential for managing change within them. It is therefore a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that all Local Planning Authorities “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement” of conservations areas within their jurisdiction, and Conservation Areas are periodically reviewed.
- 1.11 The proposals are normally presented in the form of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP), which defines and records the special interest of a Conservation Area, (see [Section 2.0](#)), analyses the characteristics that make it special (see [Sections 4.0](#) and [5.0](#)), as well as setting out a plan for managing change to ensure its ongoing protection and enhancement (see [Section 06](#)).
- 1.12 This CAAMP has been prepared in line with current best practice guidance published by Historic England, the government’s heritage advisor and the public body which manages the care and protection of the historic environment.
- 1.13 The document is intended to be comprehensive, but the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that the element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the Conservation Area. The protocols and guidance provided in [Section 06](#) are applicable in every instance.
- 1.14 The assessments which provide the baseline information for this CAAMP have been carried out using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the Conservation Area.

Consultation and Engagement

- 1.15 It is a statutory requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 for Conservation Area guidance produced by or on behalf of the Local Planning Authority to be subject to public consultation and for the local authority to have regard of the views expressed by consultees.
- 1.16 A six-week long consultation period began on the 30 May 2023 and was scheduled to end on the 11 July 2023. During the course of the consultation period it was extended for another month, ending on the 8 August 2023. Hard copies of the CAAMP and an exhibition informing stakeholders about the review of the Conservation Area were accessible to stakeholders for the duration of the consultation period at Lewes Library. Two public drop-in sessions were also advertised and run from Lewes Library on Thursday 15 June, 14:00-18:00 and Saturday 17 June, 10:00-14:00. Both of these sessions were attended by members of the SDNPA’s Planning Team, with external consultants from Purcell attending the Thursday session.
- 1.17 The consultation on the draft CAAMP was advertised by the SDNPA in the local press, on a range of social media platforms, and on the SDNPA’s website. Notices were also put up in a number of venues in Lewes including the Town Council offices. Direct notices of the consultation were sent to key stakeholders including; Historic England, Lewes District Council, Lewes Town Council, the Lewes Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the Friends of Lewes, the South Downs Society, Sussex Archaeological Society and East Sussex County Council.
- 1.18 These notices directed stakeholders to the exhibition in Lewes Library and the SDNPA’s website where a digital copy of the draft CAAMP could be downloaded and the online consultation form could be accessed.
- 1.19 This engagement was intended to raise awareness of the Conservation Area review, utilise local knowledge of the area’s special interest and gather feedback on the opportunities for enhancing this special interest and changes proposed to the Conservation Area boundary. The results of this consultation have informed the preparation of this document.
- 1.20 Feedback from local residents, amenity groups, and societies, including the Lewes Conservation Area Advisory Group and the Friends of Lewes, provided valuable input. Similarly, Lewes District Council, Lewes Town Council and Historic England have submitted feedback on the draft CAAMP. Comments from the above stakeholders have been reviewed and informed amendments to the updated CAAMP.
- 1.21 Following a review of consultation responses, the proposed boundary review to remove two areas from the Conservation Area (Cluny Street, Monk’s Lane, Verrall’s Walk, Anne’s Path and Morley Close in Southover, and Wallands Park Rise in the Wallands) will not be taken forward, with both areas to be retained within the Conservation Area.





105, High Street, a striking early 18th century feature in Lewes's townscape thanks to its curving corner







- 2.1

This section provides a summary of Lewes’ special interest, justifying why it merits designation as a Conservation Area.
- 2.2

Lewes draws substantial interest from its early origins and long history, established as an Anglo-Saxon defended settlement, or burh, around 900 AD. It became affluent as a Saxon trading centre within the South Downs thanks to its position at a gap in the Downs, and at a ford across the River Ouse.
- 2.3

Significant buildings associated with the medieval period survive, including the late 11th century Castle and Priory. The latter was the first Cluniac priory in Britain. Other important medieval buildings in the Conservation Area include the surviving churches, such as St Michael’s and St Anne’s, both of which are built from flint. Medieval timber-framed houses like the Anne of Cleves House also survive. They illustrate the town’s long history and evolution. A great number of medieval, timber-framed buildings survive behind 18th and 19th century façades, whilst medieval basements and foundations have been retained and reused beneath later buildings.
- 2.4

Many Georgian and Victorian townhouses, villas and terraces survive. A wide range of architectural treatments have been applied to these buildings, with intricate door cases and fanlights, historic ironwork, fine sash windows set in oriels or bows, and shopfronts surviving and contributing greatly to the interest of the area.
- 2.5

There is characterful eclecticism in the materials used throughout the Conservation Area, ranging from stucco and flint to Portland Stone, mathematical tiles, and brick, the latter often laid in distinctive polychromatic arrangements.
- 2.6

The variety in materials, architectural styles and roof forms means the High Street, Cliffe High Street and Southover High Street are all interesting and distinctive streets, each with their own character, whilst being surrounded by streets that are more homogenous.
- 2.7

The narrow twittens and back streets bounded by tall, historic flint walls contrast with broader principal streets.
- 2.8

Much of the Conservation Area is composed of 19th century terraces which have a uniform form and roofscape, as well as continuity in their materials, largely being built from grey and red brick. Many of these houses were built for Lewes-based industrial workers, employed in the town’s foundries, breweries and shipwrights.
- 2.9

Buildings such as as breweries, maltings, and riverside warehouses are reminders of the town’s commercial and industrial history.
- 2.10

Well-preserved Victorian and Edwardian suburbs, where semi-detached houses and villas predominate, are extant in the Wallands to the north of the Conservation Area and along Rotten Row. These houses were often built in a picturesque Arts and Crafts style, with exposed timber framing and a mix of tile hanging, roughcast render and brickwork.
- 2.11

Open spaces such as the Pells Pool, Southover Grange Gardens, Lewes Priory Park, and the Paddock provide important amenity spaces, contribute significantly to Lewes’ townscape and facilitate an appreciation of the town’s historical development.
- 2.12

The special interest of the Conservation Area is underscored by its topography and setting within the South Downs, with views into and out of the Conservation Area emphasising its location within a National Park and outstanding downland landscape. The undulating topography of the Conservation Area also creates striking streetscapes and views within the town.
- 2.13

Lewes has long been, and continues to be, favoured by artists, writers and philosophers, counting Virginia Woolf and Thomas Paine among its former residents.
- 2.14

Lewes has significant community spirit thanks to an active and engaged group of residents and the strong tradition of the Lewes Bonfire Night celebrations.



Figure 02: View of Lewes looking west from the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area on Chapel Hill





Figure 03: View along North and Market Streets



Figure 05: Classical doorcase on the High Street



Figure 04: Lewes Priory ruins



Figure 06: Villas on King Henry's Road



Figure 07: Lewes Castle



Figure 08: Semi-detached villas on Southover High Street



# 03 Historic Overview of Lewes



Summary Historic Development Timeline  
Summary Historic Development and Present Form

Early 20th century photograph of the Barbican from the north, ESBHRO, AMS 5890/2/2







## Summary Historic Development Timeline

- c.900 AD**  
Lewes made a fortified burh.
  - 961**  
First written reference to Lewes, then known as Læwe.
  - Late 11th Century**  
William de Warenne erects Lewes Castle and founds Lewes Priory.
  - 1159**  
First record of a bridge over the Ouse between Lewes and Cliffe.
  - 1264**  
Battle of Lewes fought between Simon de Montfort and Henry III to the west of Lewes.
  - 1347**  
Lewes passes from the de Warenne to the Fitzalan Earls of Arundel.
  - 1381**  
Unrest in Lewes during the Peasants' Revolt.
  - 1537-38**  
Lewes Priory and the Franciscan Friary dissolved.
  - 1555-57**  
Seventeen Protestants burned at the stake in Lewes during the reign of Mary I.
  - 1564-65**  
First town and market halls built.
  - 1679**  
Seemingly first record of the burning of Catholic images on Bonfire Night.
  - 1715**  
Lewes said to be home to c.670 Non-Conformist Christians.
  - 1727**  
Stone bridge built over the Ouse connecting Cliffe and Lewes.
- 1792**  
Plans made for new market and town halls.
  - 1835**  
Phoenix Foundry opens on the River Ouse.
  - 1840**  
Area to the north-east of the Castle largely developed.
  - 1846**  
Railway line arrives in Lewes.
  - 1862**  
Fitzroy Memorial Library designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott.
  - Late 19th Century**  
Significant number of terraces laid out across the town.
  - 1890s**  
Detached and semi-detached villas at The Wallands built.
  - 1928**  
Reginald Blomfield extends the 19th century former County Offices, now the Crown Court.
  - 1952**  
Friends of Lewes established.
  - 1960s**  
Phoenix Causeway opens.
  - 1968**  
East Sussex County Council Offices by St Anne's Church opened.
  - 1970**  
Lewes Conservation Area designated.
  - 1992**  
Conservation Area extended northwards to include the Wallands
  - 2006**  
Lewes Library completed.

- 2011**  
Lewes incorporated in the newly designated South Downs National Park.
- 2012**  
Lewes Conservation Area extended.




Figure 09: Tower of St Thomas à Becket, Cliffe





Summary Historic Development and Present Form

- 3.1 This section provides a brief summary of the history as it relates to the town’s development and present form. Further information relating to the town’s history is included at [Appendix A](#).
- 3.2 Castle and Brack Mount, two prominent features to the north of Lewes High Street, may be all that remains above ground of an extensive series of Iron Age or Roman barrows, the remainder of which were razed to the ground in the 18th century.
- 3.3 The River Ouse may have been forded at Lewes as early as the Roman period; bridges were built over the centuries and the section of river within the Conservation Area is crossed by two bridges today.
- 3.4 A 6th century burial ground was discovered off Juggs Road. It straddles the south-west boundary of the Conservation Area.
- 3.5 Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, established Lewes as a burh (fortified settlement) by 900 AD. The street pattern at the top of School Hill dates back to this point when ownership of land in the town was split into narrow but deep strips of land, referred to as burgage plots. A series of narrow lanes and twittens, such as St Andrew’s Lane and Paine’s Twitten, ran between the burgage plots to the south of the High Street, down to the water meadows at the base of the ridge occupied by the town centre. The burgage plots and twittens remain legible at the centre of the town.
- 3.6 The Church of St John-sub-Castro, to the north-east of the burh and to the north of the Conservation Area, may have originally been established as a minster church in the Saxon period.
- 3.7 The Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 had a considerable impact on the present form of Lewes. Around the year 1100 the timber palisade, rapidly erected by William de Warenne on Brack Mount following the Norman Conquest, was replaced by the flint and stone keeps on Castle and Brack Mounts, although only the former survives. It remains the principal landmark on Lewes’ skyline.
- 3.8 The foundation of the now-ruined Lewes Priory by William and Gundrada de Warenne between 1078 and 1081 precipitated the development of Southover. The Priory was a wealthy institution that drew pilgrims and visitors to the area, with development focused along Southover High Street, to the north of the Priory precinct.
- 3.9 The 12th century brings the first mention of a bridge over the Ouse, which connected Lewes and Cliffe High Streets. Cliffe was owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury.
- 3.10 By the early 12th century development had spread along the High Street beyond the confines of the Anglo-Saxon burh, which was encircled by the town walls, along Castle Lane, Westgate Street and Southover Road To the east, the system of long, thin burgage plots was extended down School Hill, towards the Ouse and Eastgate Street. To the west, it extended as far as St Anne’s Church, which was built by 1121 and was the focus on the early suburb of Westout.
- 3.11 The medieval divisions in the ownership and administration between the borough of Lewes and separate parishes of St Thomas à Becket in Cliffe and St John the Baptist in Southover would play an important role in guiding the development of each area until their incorporation into one authority in 1881. Over the medieval period ownership was split between the Archbishops of Canterbury at Cliffe, Lewes Priory at Southover, and the de Warenne family and their descendants in the borough of Lewes.
- 3.12 In the medieval period a series of ditches were dug perpendicular to Cliffe High Street in order to drain the land, which formed part of the natural floodplain to the Ouse.
- 3.13 In 1264 Lewes was the site of one of the most important battles in English constitutional history, the Battle of Lewes, where Simon de Montfort defeated Henry III; the victory helped to establish parliamentary government in England.
- 3.14 Medieval, timber-framed buildings survive along Lewes, Cliffe and Southover High Streets. The earliest examples, dating to the 14th and 15th centuries, are concentrated at the top of School Hill, on Lewes High Street, such as the former Steward’s Inn at Nos.74-5 and Bull House at No.92. The 15th Century Bookshop, also on Lewes High Street, and the Anne of Cleves House on Southover High Street are other prominent examples.
- 3.15 After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, some of the Caen stone used to construct Lewes Priory was salvaged and reused to build Southover Grange for William Newton in 1572. The Priory Precinct was partially landscaped into a formal garden in the 16th or 17th century, with the Mount and Dripping Pan forming surviving parts of this scheme.
- 3.16 Many buildings in Lewes are multiphase, with medieval fabric retained behind later frontages, as is the case at Pelham House, Barbican House, and the White Hart Hotel, which are all 16th century buildings with Georgian façades. This is especially common on Lewes and Southover High Streets where medieval interiors, roof forms and side and rear elevations are distinctive features in the streetscape.
- 3.17 The rise in popularity of Non-Conformist worship in Lewes from the 18th century onwards meant that the medieval, Church of England parish churches were supplemented by new chapels used by other denominations, such as the Jireh Chapel in Cliffe and Quaker Meeting House on Friars’ Walk, both of which remain today.
- 3.18 A series of prominent townhouses were built in the 18th and 19th centuries for wealthy townspeople, like No.191 (formerly the Crown Hotel) at the junction of the High Street and Market Street, and the collection of grand houses clustered to the west of the Bottleneck.



# 03 Historic Development



- 3.19 Lewes' importance as a centre of industry and manufacturing grew in the 19th century. Wharf buildings along the Ouse, and the former Broad's Candle Factory on Market Lane are important survivals. Breweries were also important employers in Lewes. Harvey's Brewery still operates from Cliffe, whilst buildings used by the Beard's and Verrall's breweries, in central Lewes and Southover respectively, have been converted to new uses.
- 3.20 A significant quantity of terraced housing for factory workers and artisans was erected in the 19th century, much of this focused in the area between Lewes Castle and the Pells Pond, Western Road and surrounding streets, and Priory Street in Southover. Larger, more genteel terraced housing was erected along Lansdowne Place, Friars' Walk and St John's Terrace.
- 3.21 In 1881, the medieval borough of Lewes and the administratively-independent parishes of Cliffe and Southover were finally united, following the formation of the new Lewes Borough Council.
- 3.22 The late Victorian and Edwardian prosperity of Lewes is reflected in the development of the Wallands to the north of the town centre, with Arts and Crafts-inspired houses set in large gardens, lining broad streets, well-removed from the industrialised Ouse Valley. Smaller terraced houses were built in a similar style along Morris Road and St Swithun's Terrace at the same time.
- 3.23 Post-war development was predominantly focused on green-field and former industrial sites, such as the Baxter's Printworks redevelopment on St Nicholas Lane, Southover Manor Estate on Cluny Street, East Sussex County Council Offices off St Anne's Crescent and the Waitrose store by Eastgate Wharf.



Figure 10: Ruins of Lewes Priory, founded in late 11th century. Its foundation stimulated the development of Southover



Figure 11: The Norman, or earlier Brack Mound rising behind a row of lower status 19th century terraces on Mount Place



Figure 12: View up St Martin's Lane, an Anglo-Saxon twitten to the south of the High Street.



Figure 13: View along the High Street, illustrating changing architectural tastes, the jettied timber framed Fifteenth Century Bookshop adjacent to Georgian buildings. No.103 to the right of the picture is one of many medieval, timber-framed buildings in Lewes which has been retained behind a later, Georgian façade.





Figure 14: William Figg's 1824 Town Map of Lewes (ESBHO, AMS 4789/170)



Figure 16: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1878 (National Library of Scotland)



Figure 15: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1899 (National Library of Scotland)

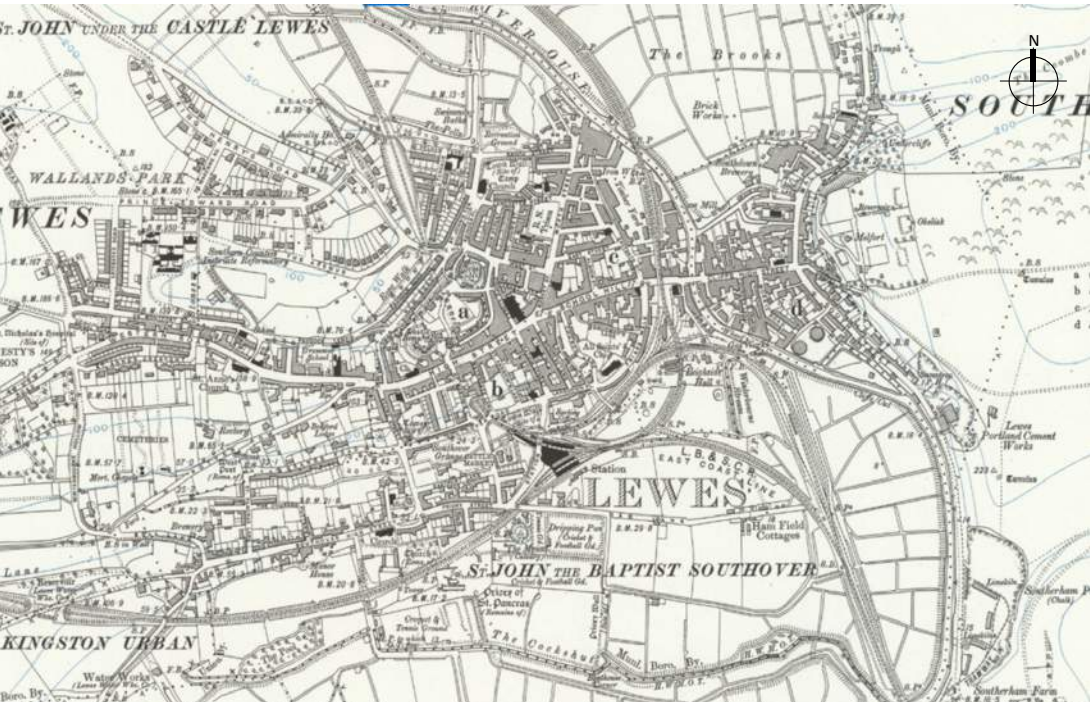


Figure 17: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1911 (National Library of Scotland)



# 04 Character Assessment



Introduction

Location, Topography and Geology

Archaeology

Building Types and Uses

Materials and Architectural Features

Street Pattern

Scale and Massing

Trees and Open Spaces

Public Realm and Street Furniture

Important Views

Landmark Buildings

Setting of the Conservation Area

Photograph of the Late Victorian High Street façade to Lewes Town Hall. The building retains a medieval vaulted undercroft







## Introduction

4.1 This section examines and evaluates the key elements which contribute to the character and appearance of the Lewes Conservation Area as a whole, including spatial analysis, building function, architectural features and public realm. It provides a high-level description of the whole Conservation Area, and is complemented by the more focused character area descriptions in [Section 5.0](#).

## Location, Topography and Geology

4.2 Lewes is approximately 9 kilometres or 5.5 miles inland from the English Channel and is 12 kilometres or 7 miles north-west of the closest city, Brighton. It is located in the eastern part of the South Downs National Park, an area which covers a series of long chalk ridges, hills and valleys extending from Winchester to Eastbourne. The town is located at the point where the River Ouse, running south to the sea at Newhaven, cuts through the South Downs.



Figure 18: Aerial map of Lewes showing the location of Lewes within its surrounding context, showing Brighton, Newhaven and the Channel. © GoogleEarth 2023



Figure 19: Aerial map of Lewes showing local placenames and landmarks





- 4.3 Topography and setting form significant contributors to the town’s character. Large chalk hills encircle the town, with Mount Caburn and Malling Hill to the east and Black Cap and Mount Harry to the north-west. The historic borough of Lewes was established on a spur of elevated chalk which extended down from the latter hills, stretching towards the Ouse in the east. With the exception of the area to the north-west – Wallands Park – much of the Conservation Area is lower lying than the historic town centre.
- 4.4 The settlement of Cliffe to the east of the Ouse is concentrated on a narrow plain next to the river at the base of Mount Caburn and Malling Hill. Additionally, Southover to the south of Lewes High Street, is on considerably lower lying land than central Lewes, the ground falling away towards the watercourse of the Cockshut to the south and former water meadows of the Winterbourne Stream to the north. The presence of further lower-lying land to the north of the historic centre, around the Pells, the Paddock and Baxter’s Field, further highlights the prominent position enjoyed by the town centre.
- 4.5 The topography of the town has had a significant impact on its historic development and form, with earlier settlement focused on less flood prone areas, such as School Hill, or the low ridge Southover High Street occupies. As a result, into the 19th century, permanent domestic settlement was relatively limited in the water meadows, which separated Southover and Lewes, and along the banks of the Ouse.
- 4.6 As a result of Lewes’ varied topography, the roofscape and rear elevations of a significant number of buildings are highly visible. This means that unsympathetic changes to these features will have a more significant impact on the special interest of the Conservation Area than in other settlements with less hilly terrain.

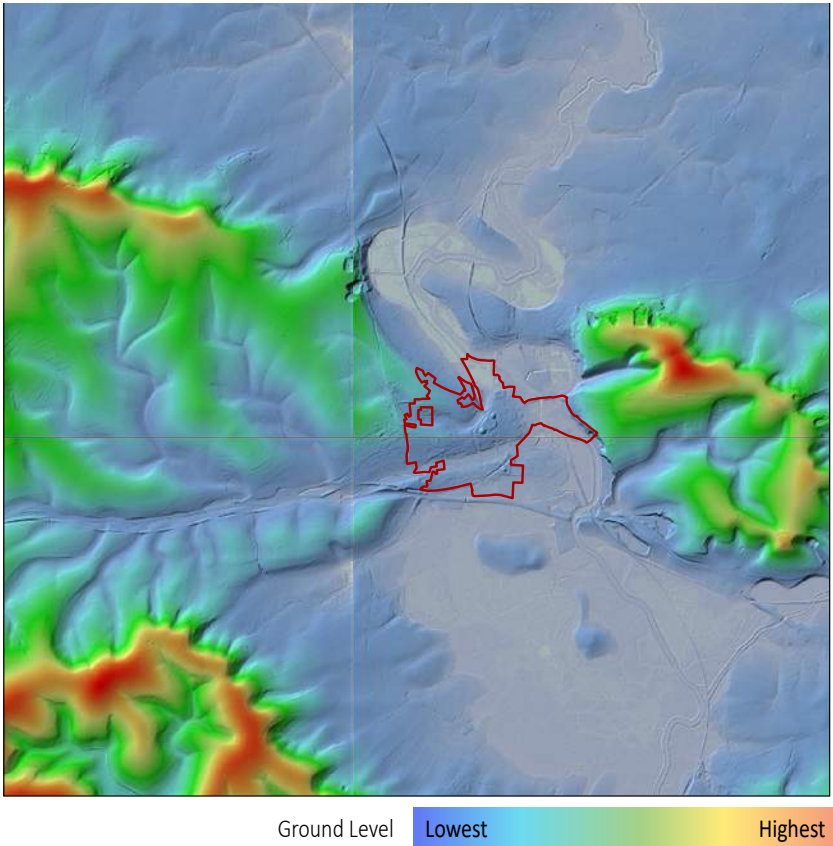


Figure 20: LiDAR Digital Terrain Model map showing the topography of Lewes Conservation Area within its surrounding context

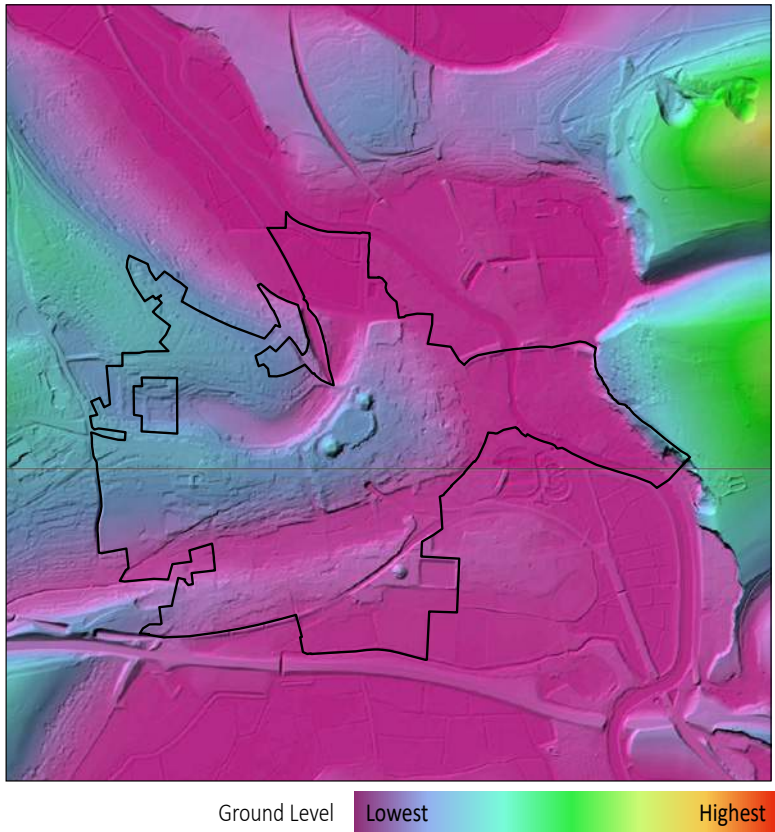


Figure 21: LiDAR Digital Terrain Model map showing the topography of Lewes Conservation Area





- 4.7 The town’s strategic position on an area of readily defended land with good access to the South Downs and the River Ouse was central to its fortification in both the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods. The navigability of the river and the agricultural productivity of the surrounding downland allowed the town to take on an important role in local trade from the medieval period, encouraging development. The Ouse retained its importance in early modern and modern Lewes, carrying goods and being used by the breweries, foundries and other industries that were developed alongside it. The river forms a vital part of the town’s character and is an invaluable natural asset, which presently provides space for recreation and leisure.
- 4.8 Owing to Lewes’ location in the South Downs, the Conservation Area is underlain by sedimentary rocks, specifically, white chalk which predominantly dates to the Upper Cretaceous Period. Along the banks of the Ouse and in the lower lying parts of the Conservation Area, such as Southover and in the area around the Pells, there are superficial sedimentary deposits overlaying the chalk bedrock, with a mix of alluvium and head deposits evident.
- 4.9 The geology of the area has played an important role in the built form of the Conservation Area. The flint found among the chalk is a characteristic building material in Lewes, and has been used in construction from as early as 1100, when Lewes Castle was built, to the present day. Chalk, although less durable, has also informed the character of Lewes. Often it was used to fill the core of walls (as in the tower of St John the Baptist in Southover) or burnt then slaked in order to create lime mortar, then used to set bricks or flints in place.



Figure 22: View from Lewes Castle looking north (Paul Farmer, 2012, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0)





Archaeology

- 4.10 Although not always a visible part of the Conservation Area, archaeological remains can contribute considerably to our understanding of how the area has developed and, where visible, add to the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.11 Due to Lewes’ long history, which potentially stretches back to the Romano-British period, and the rich evidence of its historic settlement and evolution gathered by prior archaeological investigation, there remains significant potential for further discoveries. Additional archaeological finds may provide further knowledge relating to the town’s evolution and development. This would contribute positively to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 4.12 There are six Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation Area. These are: Lewes Castle; the Priory of St Pancras (Lewes Priory); The Mount (referred to as The Calvary by Historic England); Saxonbury Anglo-Saxon cemetery; the Chapel of St James’s Hospital; and the Green Wall section of the Lewes Town Wall. They are considered designated heritage assets of the highest significance, and the impact that a proposed development may have on a Scheduled Monument and its setting is a material consideration in the planning process. Works physically affecting a Scheduled Monument require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport via Historic England.
- 4.13 The Scheduled Monuments in Lewes all relate to important phases of the town’s pre-modern development. The Saxonbury Anglo-Saxon Cemetery dates back to the 6th century, whilst the Green Wall is a surviving vestige of Lewes’ Anglo-Saxon or medieval town defences, the alignment and survival of which has influenced later development in the area. The survival of Lewes Castle and Priory, and the Chapel of St James’s Hospital all illustrate the importance of the De Warenne lords and the Cluniac Priors within medieval Lewes. The Mount, meanwhile, survives as a striking remnant of a 16th or 17th century formal garden.
- 4.14 Whilst there are no Registered Battlefields within the Conservation Area, the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Lewes 1264 lies immediately to the west and north-west of its boundary. Any impact that a proposed development may have on a Registered Battlefield is a material consideration in the planning process; their status as designated heritage assets of the highest significance means Historic England must be consulted. The Battle of Lewes was fought in May 1264 and saw Simon de Montfort win an important victory over Henry III in the Second Barons’ War, securing his pre-eminent position as the leader of England until his defeat at the Battle of Evesham the following year. The Battle played an important role in laying the groundwork for parliamentary government.
- 4.15 Lewes Conservation Area includes four Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs), with much of the area covered by the Southover : historic suburb and medieval priory and the Lewes: historic town ANAs. The other two ANAs – Wallands Park and Spital Road, Lewes : medieval hospital and cemetery – are much smaller. ANAs are areas where it is considered highly likely that archaeological remains will be found. Planning applications that fall within the ANAs will trigger consultation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeology Team, who will advise on how to further investigate the potential impact on the archaeological record. The designation of these ANAs demonstrates the wealth of archaeology that likely survives in Lewes thanks to its long history, with the vast majority of the historic settlements in Lewes, Cliffe, and Southover all falling within the Lewes and Southover ANAs.
- 4.16 Ground-intrusive investigation or development in areas of archaeological potential has the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological remains. As specified in local planning policy, development which would involve ground disturbance in areas of known archaeological potential should be sensitively designed and located. A desk-based archaeological assessment, and in certain circumstances a field evaluation, will be required. Where appropriate, archaeological remains should be preserved in situ with development being sensitively designed and located to allow their retention or to minimise harm to them. Where this is not possible or feasible the local authority will require a programme of archaeological investigation, excavation and recording prior to commencement.
- 4.17 Further information about known archaeological remains within the town can be found by consulting the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER).



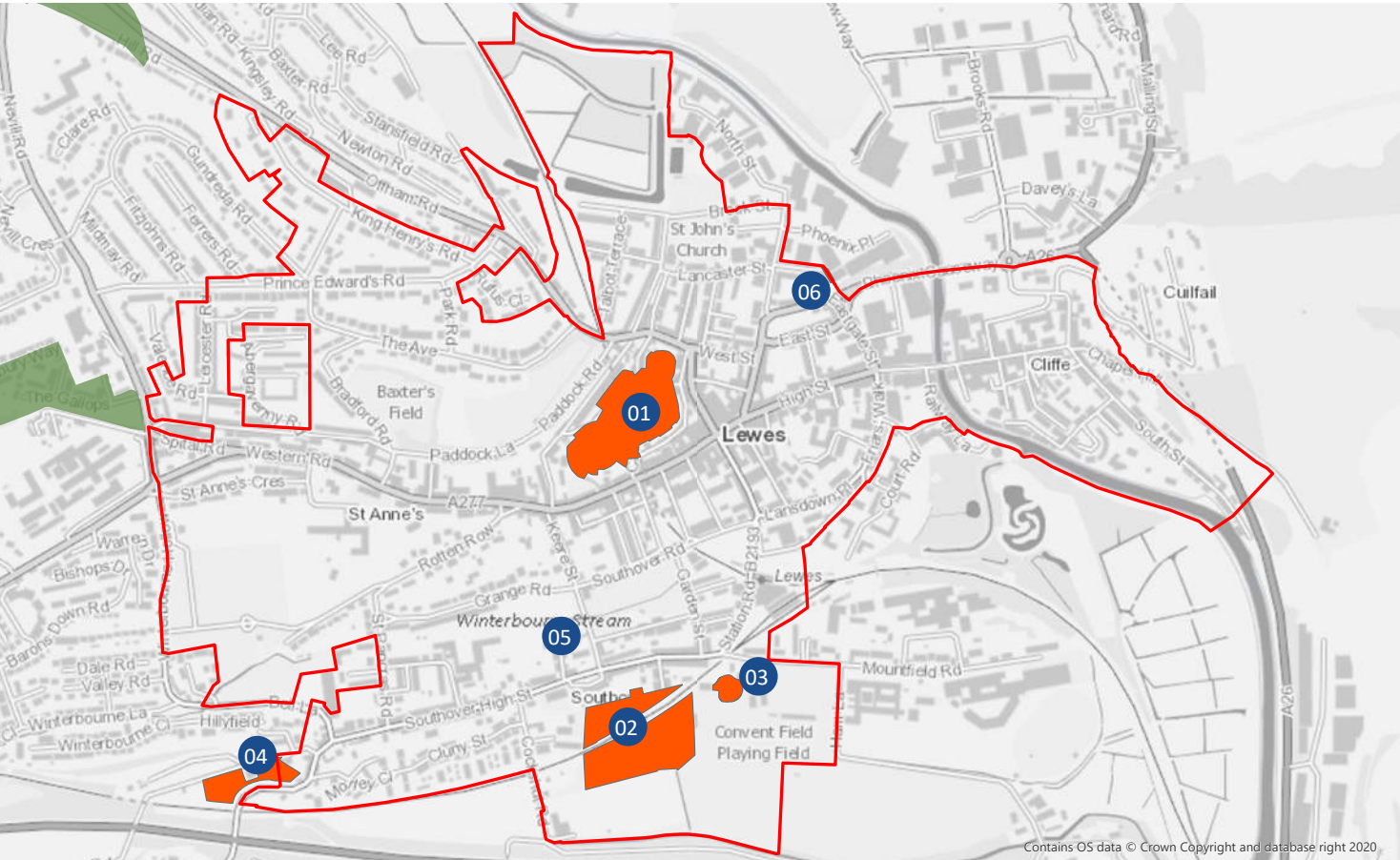


Figure 23: Map showing the distribution of Scheduled Monuments and Registered Battlefields in Lewes

Scheduled Monuments

Battle of Lewes 1264  
Registered Battlefield

01

Lewes Castle

02

Lewes Priory

03

Mount (referred to as the  
Calvary by Historic England)

04

Saxonbury Anglo-Saxon  
Cemetery

05

Chapel of St James's Hospital

06

The Green Wall

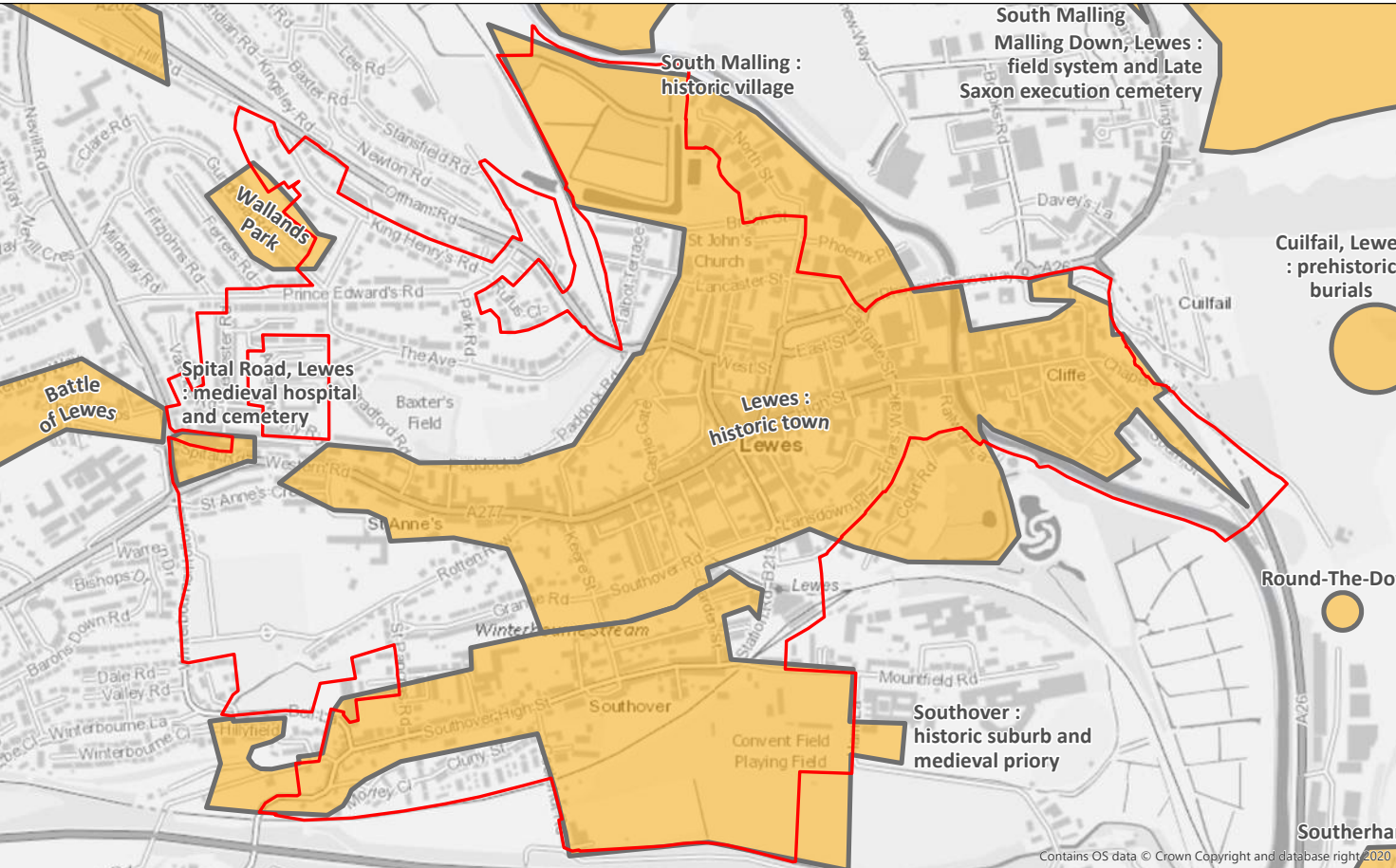


Figure 24: Map showing the distribution of Archaeological Notification Areas in Lewes





## Building Types and Uses

4.18 The range of different building types and uses is representative of the historic development and varied character of the Conservation Area. By far the most common building use within the Conservation Area is residential, with commercial and retail uses concentrated largely on Lewes and Cliffe High Streets, with some residential units. The centre of the town is largely in mixed use; retail and commercial units predominate, comprising cafés, restaurants, local business and retail units. Residential premises are interspersed amongst these buildings and occupy the upper floors along the High Street. Throughout the wider Conservation Area there is considerably more homogeneity of building uses with single dwelling residential use dominating.

## Residential Buildings

- 4.19 Residential buildings in Lewes vary in size, decoration, location and appearance, owing to changing tastes, lifestyles, accessibility to materials, and economic conditions.
- 4.20 A number of historically residential properties in Lewes have been converted to other uses, with grand townhouses in the centre of the town particularly prone to such changes. Often, they have been converted into offices and leisure facilities, as has occurred at Lewes House and Pelham House, whilst other institutional uses are common. Lewes Old Grammar School occupies a number of historic houses on the High Street and Claydon House on Wallands Crescent is now used as a care home.
- 4.21 **Terraced houses.** There is a considerable degree of variety within Lewes’ terraced houses. Many of these form part of architecturally-unified runs of houses, with this approach common in Lewes from the 19th century onwards. These uniform terraces occur most commonly away from the principal historic routes through Lewes, where architecturally varied terraces, developed in a piecemeal fashion, are considerably more common. This varied type is most typically found along Lewes, Cliffe and Southover High Streets, as well as Sun Street, Fisher Street, and Station Street. Meanwhile, uniform terraces can be found across the town, concentrated in the west along Western, Leicester, Valence, and Bradford Roads; Morris Road and Timber Yard Cottages in Cliffe; and in the area between Southover and Lewes High Streets, for example, Lansdowne Place, Priory Street, Grange Road and St Swithun’s Terrace. The Pells and streets to the north of Lewes Castle have the highest quantity of uniform terraced housing.

- 4.22 **Semi-detached and detached houses.** Semi-detached and detached houses are most concentrated in the Wallands to the north of the Conservation Area, with the area north of Leicester and Bradford Roads almost entirely consisting of semi-detached and detached houses. Rotten Row and the north side of Grange Road, to the west of the Conservation Area, also have a high concentration of this building type. Although less common than terraces, semi-detached and detached houses are also a feature along Southover and Lewes High Street.
- 4.23 **Flats.** Certain historic buildings, originally in single dwelling use, have been divided into flats. Residential flats can also be found above commercial premises on the High Street and Cliffe High Street. More typically, flats are found in post-war purpose-built complexes such as Priory Place Flats on Southover High Street, Grange Court on Grange Road and St Thomas’ Court in Cliffe.



Figure 25: View up St Nicholas Lane, a twitten lined with small residential properties





## Retail and Commercial Leisure Premises

- 4.24 Retail and commercial leisure uses are heavily focused on Lewes and Cliffe High Streets, the historic commercial centres of the town, with a range of shops, pubs, restaurants and hotels lining the streets. The pedestrianised sections of both High Streets adjacent to the Ouse are particularly vibrant. Many of the shops along the High Street retain finely detailed Victorian and early 20th century shopfronts.
- 4.25 Shelley’s Hotel, although currently empty, and the White Hart Hotel are important reminders of Lewes’ historic prominence as a transport hub in the Downs, whilst many of the pubs in Lewes have connections to the numerous different breweries that thrived in Lewes but have now closed. The Harvey’s Brewery in Cliffe is the major exception to this, remaining in active use.
- 4.26 Waitrose to the north of the pedestrianised precinct of Lewes High Street is the only large supermarket in the Conservation Area, with Tesco and Aldi located to the north-east of the boundary, off Brooks Road.
- 4.27 Streets to the north and south of the School Hill section of the High Street also retain commercial uses, especially along Station Street, Fisher Street, Market Street, and Eastgate Street. Small clusters of similar uses survive on Lansdown Place, Station Road and Western Road, whilst pubs and corner shops are otherwise spread across the Conservation Area.
- 4.28 Lewes Little Theatre on Lancaster Road and the Depot Cinema adjacent to the station are two important cultural centres within the town.

## Municipal Buildings

- 4.29 A number of municipal bodies have offices in Lewes. East Sussex County Council have their head office in the Conservation Area, which is located in a post-war, purpose-built complex of slab blocks off St Anne’s Terrace. They also occupy the 16th century Southover Grange, which is used as a Register Office.
- 4.30 Lewes and Eastbourne District Council occupy an 18th century townhouse on the High Street, Lewes House, and have recently vacated their purpose-built inter-war office, Southover House on Southover Road. It is to be used temporarily as an arts centre.
- 4.31 Meanwhile, Lewes Town Council has occupied the former Star Inn on the High Street as their town hall since the 1890s, following the unification of previously divided administrations of Lewes, Cliffe and Southover in the 1880s.
- 4.32 Lewes Crown Court, which is the highest court in East Sussex, occupies the former Sussex County Hall on the High Street, which was built in the early 19th century, and has been solely used by the Crown Court and East Sussex County Court since the mid-20th century.
- 4.33 The former Market Tower is located to the southern end of Market Street. It was built by the town council in 1792 and is presently the headquarters of LOS (Lewes Operatic Society) Musical Theatre.
- 4.34 Lewes Police Station occupies a modern building on North Street, with the Victorian building on West Street converted into flats. The Ambulance Station is located to the north-west of the Police Station, facing into a car park off Lancaster Street.



Figure 28: The pedestrianised section of Cliffe High Street



Figure 29: Southover House, formerly offices of Lewes and Eastbourne District Council





## Offices and Professional Chambers

- 4.35 Lewes was not subject to as much post-war redevelopment to provide purpose-built office premises as other towns of the same size, although these do still feature. Along the High Street, Temple House and Albion House are the two largest purpose-built office buildings, whilst the National Health Service occupied another late 20th century office development on Friars' Walk.
- 4.36 More commonly, offices are located within historic buildings converted from other uses, such as Fox and Sons Estate Agents, who are based in a 19th century house on the High Street, and St Anne's Dental Practice, which is based in a mid-19th century terraced house.
- 4.37 Although the number of banks in Lewes has rapidly decreased in recent years, bank buildings are prominent features along the High Street, including the former HSBC at No.63, Rowland Gorrings office at No.64, and former Lewes Building Society at the junction of the High Street and Friars' Walk.



Figure 30: Offices are let out on the upper floors of Temple House office on the High Street



Figure 31: Nos.63 and 64 Lewes High Street – the former HSBC and Rowland Gorrings office

## Education Buildings

- 4.38 Schools and nurseries are dispersed across the Conservation Area. The former parochial division of schools has broken down in Lewes. The two largest educational complexes in the town sit outside the Conservation Area on Mountfield Road: the Priory School and East Sussex College. Within the Conservation Area, Western Road School has relocated to Southover and now occupies a site adjacent to Southover Church of England School.
- 4.39 The Victorian school houses on De Montfort Road and St John's Street, have both been converted to use as nurseries, whilst a Health Centre now occupies the old school at the junction of Southover Road and Station Road.
- 4.40 Lewes Old Grammar School has a junior school on King Henry's Road and uses a number of historic buildings on the High Street, including Mead House and No.141.



Figure 32: Victorian former school house on de Montfort Road





## Industrial Buildings

4.41 Harvey’s Brewery in Cliffe is the most prominent survival of the town’s industrial heritage and retains its original use. However, many of the other industrial uses now take place outside of the Conservation Area in modern units along North Street and Brooks Road. Many of the other historic industrial buildings or wharves associated with manufacture or the river trade along the Ouse have either been converted to housing or demolished, with the exception of Eastgate Wharf. Elsewhere in the Conservation Area, the former candle-making factory on Market Lane is now a retail centre; the Beard’s Brewery buildings have been variously converted into a costumiers, arts centre and gallery, and residences; and the Verrall’s malthouse off Cluny Street has been converted into housing.



Figure 33: Eastgate Wharf viewed across the Ouse, from Cliffe.

## Places of Worship

4.42 Lewes is home to a significant number of places of worship, with a range of different denominations represented within the Conservation Area. These include the Friends’ Meeting House on Friars Walk, Eastgate Baptist Church, Lewes Free Presbyterian Jireh Chapel in Cliffe, the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses on Station Street, and the Roman Catholic Church of St Pancras on the High Street. Five Church of England churches still function as places of worship; St Anne’s and St Michael’s on the High Street, St John-sub-Castro Church on St John’s Hill, St John the Baptist Church on Southover High Street, and St Thomas à Becket on Cliffe High Street.



Figure 34: Eastgate Baptist Church on Eastgate Street





## Materials

4.43 Materials make a pivotal contribution to the local distinctiveness of Lewes. Walking through the town almost 1000 years’ worth of buildings and architectural developments can be appreciated from the changing palette of materials. Walking through the town, glimmering knapped flints and vitrified bricks, broad, patinated timbers and soft red and grey tiles and bricks imbue Lewes’ built environment with a very high level of aesthetic interest and a strong sense of its history.

## Timber-Framing

- 4.44 Secular buildings (aside from Lewes Castle) in the medieval settlements of Lewes, Southover and Cliffe were constructed using timber framing. Timber felled in the surrounding woodlands in the Downs was brought to Lewes and used to construct the structural frame of the building, with the gaps between the timber posts and beams infilled with wattle and daub.
- 4.45 Although a number of timber-framed buildings survive within Lewes Conservation Area, relatively few have exposed timber-framed frontages. Where medieval, timber-framed front elevations are still visible they form very striking features in the streetscape, as is evidenced by the visual prominence of the Anne of Cleves House and Nos.49-50 on Southover High Street, the Fifteenth Century Bookshop on the High Street, and the restored medieval hall on English’s Passage in Cliffe.
- 4.46 Jettying is an important feature of medieval timber framed building in the Conservation Area, with upper floors projecting beyond the recessed lower floors on beams. Jetties are a distinctive feature to the side and front elevations of buildings in Lewes, such as the 15th century Bull House. In cases where buildings have been overclad, refronted, or rendered, such as Fairhall on Southover High Street, or No.73 on Lewes High Street, jettied side returns demonstrate that they are historic, timber-framed buildings. Side returns may also include exposed timber-framing, such as the close studded frame of No.34, High Street visible to Walwers Lane, or the wall-bracing and trio of now-blocked medieval tracery windows to the St Martin’s Lane return of Nos.74-5, High Street.
- 4.47 More timber framed buildings survive in Lewes than is apparent at first glance, with many buildings, especially along Lewes and Southover High Streets, being subject to refronting, overcladding with mathematical tiles, or rendering. Many of these changes were made in the Georgian period, with some of the most notable classical façades in Lewes added to medieval, timber framed building, such as the White Hart Hotel and Barbican House.
- 4.48 The late Victorian period and early 20th century saw a revival of interest in timber-framing. Arts and Crafts inspired architects and designers using the material in a variety of contexts, most notably pubs, like the Brewers Arms on the High Street, or Fruiterers Arms on Sun Street, and houses. The gables of houses on King Henry’s Road in the Wallands and some of the terraces on Grange Road in Southover are both ornamented by exposed timber framing.



Figure 35: Jettied side return to Fairhall in Southover. The building dates to the 16th century, with a later brick front elevation



Figure 36: Relatively ornate timber framing to the gable end of the Arts and Crafts former Fruiterers Arms Pub on Sun Street.



Figure 37: Relatively ornate timber framing to the gable end of the Arts and Crafts former Fruiterers Arms Pub on Sun Street.

## Chalk

- 4.49 Chalk is not a particularly durable material, and as such does not feature prominently in the streetscape of Lewes, despite its abundance in the hills around the town. Its most common use as a building material was in less exposed parts of buildings, where it was hewn into blocks. It is in this form that chalk was used to form the artificial mound that Lewes Castle was erected upon, whilst squared chalk blocks also survive in the basements of some medieval timber framed buildings like No.35 on Lewes High Street. Roughly squared chalk block were also used, between stabilising courses of brick and flint, to construct Nos.51 and 53 on South Street in Cliffe. When burnt and then slaked (added to water), chalk can be made into lime mortar. This hardens as it dries and was (and continues to be) used to bed stones, flints and bricks.





## Flint

- 4.50 Flint was the building material used most commonly for higher status medieval buildings, as its use in all the surviving medieval churches in Lewes, keep of Lewes Castle, and core of Lewes Priory's walls demonstrates. Around Lewes there is relatively little good quality building stone, and so flint, which could be found in huge quantities among the surrounding chalk downlands, proved a suitable alternative.
- 4.51 The use of flint extended beyond ecclesiastical buildings and the Castle. It was used to build Sir Henry Goring's late 16th century house, now the Westgate Chapel, and the grand Castle Lodge, built in the 18th century. In addition to these grand dwellings, flint was also used commonly in vernacular buildings, such as 17, Keere Street, an 18th century cottage, an 18th century stableblock on Walwers Lane, and the 19th century Verrall's Malthouse in Southover.
- 4.52 Flint is largely found in the Conservation Area either as field stones or when roughly knapped. The most striking use of flint in Lewes is when it has been squared and laid with very thin bands of mortar, as is the case with St Michael's and St Anne's churches, and Mead House and Nos.140-1 High Street, which sit to the west of the Bottleneck. Meanwhile, No.23 Sun Street is a rare example of whole flint beach cobbles being used. The Depot Cinema by the railway station demonstrates successful contemporary use of flint.
- 4.53 It is also commonplace in boundary walls, interspersed with courses of brickwork to improve their structural integrity. The tall flint walls to the narrow twittens which radiate off the High Street and Steward's Inn Lane, to the south of the buildings on Southover High Street, and in many other locations in Lewes are especially important uses of the material on a large scale. They represent highly significant historic features within Lewes' townscape by virtue of their age and aesthetic interest.
- 4.54 The appearance of the flint walls varies greatly depending on the way in which the flint is knapped and shaped, and the profile of the mortar it is set in. The type of pointing may vary depending on the building or wall's type and age, with flush and incised line pointing both common in walls with knapped flints. Flint is largely laid in regular courses on higher status historic buildings, with a more random arrangement common in historic outbuildings and cottages in Lewes. Brick or stone quoins and lintels are commonly required to bond wall surfaces and span openings in flint walls.



Figure 38: The flint Lewes Castle Barbican, with Castle Lodge, also flint, to the left



Figure 39: The tower of the church of St Thomas à Becket in Cliffe demonstrates how flint is not used at edges of wall surfaces, with stone introduced at the edges of the buttresses or joins where the buttresses meet the tower



Figure 40: The use of flint in the Priory's walls is shown where the facing stone has been removed



Figure 41: Flint boundary wall to Pelham House. The repair to the centre of the picture demonstrates the importance of consistency in pointing, the repair covering more of the flints in mortar



Figure 42: View along Paine's twitten. The flints protrude slightly beyond the surface of the pointing, creating a strong sense of texture



## Stone

- 4.55 Due to the limited availability of good quality building stones in the vicinity of Lewes there are relatively few stone buildings within the Conservation Area, with a number of very notable exceptions. Lewes Priory was built in the late 11th century using Caen stone, which was imported all the way from Normandy; however the remaining ruins of the building have largely been stripped of the stone, back to the flint and rubblestone core. The Caen stone was salvaged and can be seen reused at Southover Grange, built in 1572 for William Newton. Caen Stone was seemingly also used to face Dial House (Nos.221-2) at the east of Lewes High Street, which was built in 18th century. In both cases the stone is finely dressed.
- 4.56 Ashlar Portland Stone was used to great effect by John Johnson and Reginald Blomfield in the early 19th and 20th centuries respectively to create the grand Crown Court buildings which occupy a dominant position at the top of School Hill.
- 4.57 Otherwise stone was largely used for dressings and structural stability, the latter function especially important in flint buildings, as flint is ill-suited to forming strong corners and lintels over openings. As such, Greensand Stone was dug from the bedrock in the vicinity of Lewes to form the gate surrounds and quoins in the 14th century Castle Barbican. The medieval churches in the Conservation Area all have very finely detailed tracery windows carved from stone, meanwhile Anne of Cleves House has a finely detailed stone door surround with a Tudor arch, which is carved with the date 1599, whilst that to the front door of Shelley's Hotel dates to 1577.
- 4.58 Stone was also used in later brick building to add visual interest, with the stone plinth and keystones to the front elevation of the late Victorian façade of Lewes Town Hall, and in door and window surrounds to a number of buildings from the same period, such as the Old Police Station on East Street and No.18 opposite.



Figure 43: Caen Stone from Lewes Priory was reused at Southover Grange in the 16th century



Figure 44: Ashlar Portland Stone used at Lewes Crown Court (former the County Hall)



Figure 45: Stone door surround to No.18 East Street, with the stone window lintels to the Old Police Station visible to the right



Figure 46: Close up of the Caen Stone to the façade of Dial House





## Brick

- 4.59 Brick is the most common material within the Conservation Area. Red and grey bricks dominate, with contrasting, coloured bricks frequently used to add patterning and polychromy for details. Normally the brick colour is changed to demarcate the division between two terraced buildings, or to form quoins, whilst window and door openings are also picked out in different coloured bricks, articulating these openings. Different colours of brick are also used to create diapered patterns, as is evident as No.16 Sun Street, or a studded effect, with red and grey bricks interspersed at intervals.
- 4.60 Flemish bond (alternating headers and stretchers in the same course) and English bond (alternating courses of headers and stretchers) are very common brick bonds, with very little building in stretcher bond. Header bond is particularly characteristic of Lewes, as it allowed bricklayers to expose the grey or vitrified headers of the bricks to the street. It was only possible to achieve this grey or vitrified finish evenly on the headers of the bricks, hence why such bricks are not found laid in stretcher bond.

- 4.61 The historic process of firing bricks gives them a soft, more textured appearance and greater variety in colour than modern bricks. This is a key element of their visual interest.
- 4.62 Bricks were frequently gauged or cut to form a variety of different lintels and archways, with the rectangular form of traditional bricks ill-suited to the purpose. To form either a flat lintel or semi-circular arch the bricks were cut into at an angle into a flared shape, with the bottom of the brick narrower than the top. They could then be laid next to one another and secured in place by a key at the centre of the arches.
- 4.63 Flush lime mortar is most commonly used in the Conservation Area, with very thin mortar beds evident to particularly finely finished buildings. There are a number of buildings using buff or vitrified bricks. Whilst, for many buildings the brick is left untreated, in some cases it has been painted over, largely in white or off-white, or the buildings have been stuccoed or rendered upon completion.



Figure 47: No.16 Sun Street, a terraced house enlivened by a diaper pattern

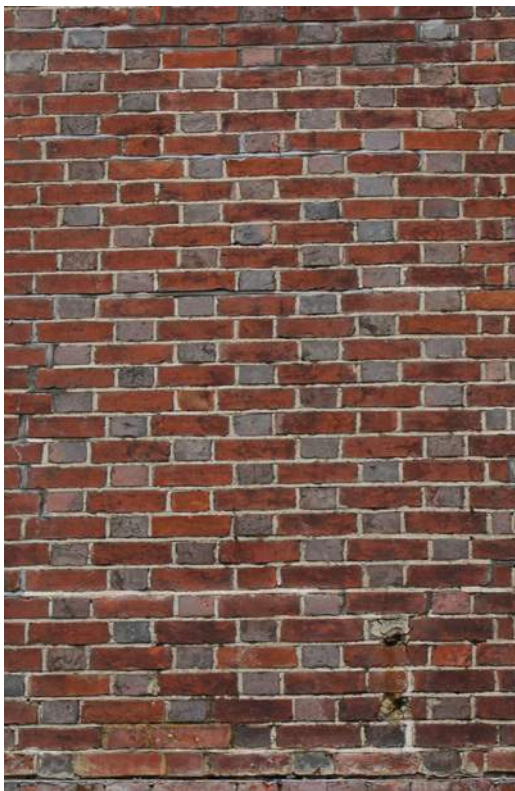


Figure 48: Grey headers and red stretchers laid in Flemish bond



Figure 49: Glossy, black vitrified brick to No.120 High Street



Figure 50: Grey brick headers. On close inspection the red undertones of the brick can be seen beneath the grey finish





## Mathematical and Clay Tile

- 4.64 Lewes has a particularly high concentration of mathematical tile fronted buildings, like many towns of south-eastern England. Mathematical tiles are essentially clay tiles which appear to be the headers of bricks, with mortar added between the individual tiles. Mathematical tiles were used to overclad timber framed buildings and were used in both new and existing buildings. For example, Trinity House (No.213, High Street), is medieval timber-framed building with a mathematical tile front elevation, whilst Bartholomew House on Castle Gate was built in the early 19th century with a mathematical tile cladding affixed to the timber frame, and is one of a number of buildings in the Conservation Area which is clad in vitrified tiles.
- 4.65 Both buildings demonstrate three features which make mathematical tile-clad buildings readily distinguishable from brick buildings. Firstly, they lack defined brick lintels over and around doors and windows, with the non-structural nature of the cladding meaning that the bricks do not need to be gauged. Secondly, timber or plaster strips or quoins are used to conceal the junctions where each mathematical tile-clad surface meets another surface, hiding the often messy junction between the two. Finally, mathematical tiles imitate brick headers, and so cannot be used to give the appearance of different brick bonds.
- 4.66 Clay tiles are another important part of Lewes' character, with their varied texture and colours adding interest to front elevations and side returns of many buildings. Although many of the tiles used in Lewes are square in form, more ornate tiles are also commonplace. These are largely scalloped (rounded at the base) or fishtail (taper towards to the base) and are most common in the Wallands.



Figure 51: Vitrified mathematical tile to the façade of Bartholomew House. Note the lack of lintels over the openings



Figure 52: Mathematical tiles to Westgate House on the High Street. The large quoins have been added to obscure the end of the tiles and have no structural function. The junction between the bows and flat wall surface shows the join between the different sections of tile



Figure 53: Handmade clay tiles cladding a wall surface . Clear variety in shape, colour and texture





## Render and Roughcast

- 4.67 Render has been applied to a number of medieval timber framed buildings within the Conservation Area, but its most consistent and distinctive use is in the Pells, where runs of Italianate houses to St John’s Terrace, St John’s Hill, Toronto Terrace, and Talbot Terrace have been stuccoed.
- 4.68 Roughcast render is mixed with brick and timber-framing in Arts and Crafts buildings to create a greater variation in surface texture. St Swithun’s Terrace and the terrace to the bottom of St John’s Hill are two notable examples outside of the Wallands, where the use of roughcast render is particularly evident.



Figure 54: Roughcast render side returns of the former Pells School and end of the terrace to St John’s Hill



Figure 55: Roughcast render façades to St Swithun’s Terrace



Figure 56: Stuccoed terrace on St Anne’s Crescent





## Roofing

- 4.69 The thatch that would have historically roofed many of the medieval buildings within the Conservation Area has been removed and largely replaced with handmade clay tiles, which vary pleasingly in shape and colour. Horsham Stone slate roofs are also an important, but relatively rare feature within the Conservation Area, surviving in a particularly high concentration in Southover, where they are seen in the roofs of the Anne of Cleves House, Southover Grange, and Nos.43, 55 and 56 Southover High Street. They can also be observed on the roof of St Thomas à Becket Church, Shelley's Hotel and No.139 High Street.
- 4.70 Clay roof tiles predominate in the areas that were subject to development earlier, with slate roofs more commonly found to the roofs of buildings developed from the end of 18th century. The coming of the railway to Lewes in the early 19th century and growth of the Welsh slate mining industry was the cause of rapidly intensifying the use of slate within this period. Slates were also commonly used as a cladding material, largely used on rear and side elevation, rather than front elevations. Clay tile roofing made a return in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, owing to a revival of interest in historic vernacular materials. As such, the villas in the Wallands are almost all roofed in clay tile.
- 4.71 Clay tile roofs tend to have a steeper pitch than slate roofs, for both stylistic and historic reasons, as medieval roof covering required steeper pitches to remain water tight than slate ones. The revival of interest in medieval and Tudor architecture brought with it a reintroduction of steeper, more visually prominent roof forms in Arts and Crafts buildings.
- 4.72 Chimneys are an important feature within the town's skyline, often corbelling out and being terminated by tall, clay pots. The town's topography draws a great deal of attention to its roofscape, of which chimneys are an important part. Similarly, ridge tiles and finials are attractive and important small details that add richness and beauty to Lewes' townscape.



Figure 57: The clay tile roof to The Pelham Arms by St Anne's Church displays the pleasingly varied shape and colour of handmade clay tiles which makes them such an important part of the Conservation Area's roofscape



Figure 58: Shallower pitched slate roof to a terrace in Southover



Figure 59: Horsham Stone slate roofs to Nos.55 and 56 Southover High Street. A steeper pitch is required than for slate





## Architectural Features

4.73 The Conservation Area is characterised by a range of architectural styles, demonstrating a vivid sense of the historic and piecemeal development of Lewes. The diversity of architectural features contributes to the character of the place by articulating façades, energising rooflines and enlivening terraces, whilst the varying details indicate buildings’ different construction dates, functions and status.

## Medieval Timber-Framed Buildings

- 4.74 Casements are more common in medieval timber-framed buildings than other building types in the Conservation Area, which is otherwise dominated by sash windows. The Fifteenth Century Bookshop on the High Street, Anne of Cleves House, Fairhall and neighbouring Nos.49-50 Southover High Street all having leaded casements.
- 4.75 The addition of Georgian façades to many of the timber framed buildings in Lewes was commonplace in Lewes, providing striking evidence of the impact of changing architectural tastes over time. Surviving medieval features, plan forms and fabric adds to a sense of the layering of history in the evolution of these buildings.
- 4.76 The timber-framed buildings in Lewes retain idiosyncratic features which further enhance their interest, such as the milestone affixed to the façade of the Fifteenth Century Bookshop on the High Street, the carved timber satyrs under the jetty of Bull House, and the infilled medieval window to the side return of No.74-5 High Street.



Figure 60: Classical façade to the White Hart Hotel, a mid 19th century refronting of a medieval building



Figure 61: Timber-framed Nos.49-50 on Southover High Street, which dates to the 16th century. The building jetties to both the front and side return and has leaded casement windows.





## Terraced Houses

- 4.77 There is a very significant quantity of brick terraced housing in Lewes and it is spread relatively evenly across the Conservation Area. Much of this housing was built in the 19th century on newly laid out streets or previously undeveloped roadside plots. Although there is some variety within this building type there are also some consistent architectural features which make these ubiquitous buildings such an important part of Lewes’ distinctive character.
- 4.78 Brick terraced houses are defined by their pared back architectural detailing. Key features include polychromy in their brickwork, with red and grey bricks frequently interspersed to create a sense of texture and variety. In some cases this is achieved by studding grey and red bricks together and the introduction of diapered patterns. Most commonly it is achieved by alternating between grey bricks laid in header bond to the majority of the wall surface and contrasting red brick door and window surrounds and quoins.
- 4.79 Bricks are gauged to the heads of the doors and windows, however the form of the arch varies from terrace to terrace. Flat and segmental (slightly curved) arches are most common to windows, whilst doors are also articulated by semi-circular arches. This allowed for the introduction of a semi-circular glazed overlight above the door, often divided in three or more parts by slender glazing bars.
- 4.80 Terraces were almost all built with timber sash windows originally. The most common window design was to have the top and bottom sashes divided into six panes each, with number and layout of panes changing depending on the proportions of the opening. Some properties have sashes with margin panes, as at the eastern end of Priory Street, whilst mullions divide sashes within the same opening at Leicester Road.
- 4.81 The terraces have slate roofs, which, due to the lighter weight of the slates compared to clay tiles, are laid on less steeply pitched roofs.
- 4.82 Iron boot scrapers are frequently set into the wall surface adjacent to doorways.



Figure 62: Polychromatic brick terrace on Western Road, with segmental arches, rather than flat ones.



Figure 63: Highly articulated openings to a pairs of houses in Cliffe, thanks to the red brick window surround and moulded door surround



Figure 64: Architecturally restrained terraces on Leicester Road



Figure 65: Polychromatic terrace to Priory Street



## Villas, Townhouses and Classical Terraced Houses

- 4.83 Classical detailing is evident to a range of different houses in Lewes, ranging from grand Georgian townhouses to late 19th century terraced houses and villas.
- 4.84 Door treatments vary, with large porches more common on the grander villas. High status town houses often have pedimented porches carried on columns or pilasters. More modest buildings have corbelled projections above their doorways or moulded, arched surrounds with keystones. Doors are traditionally solid and often have six panels, with ornate, semi-circular overlights, divided by thin glazing bars commonplace.
- 4.85 Sash windows of various different configurations are observed in this group of buildings, with the older, Georgian terraces often featuring six-over-six or eight-over-eight pane windows, whilst the later houses to St Anne's Crescent and the Pells have two-over-two pane sash windows. Round headed-windows are a relatively rare but aesthetically-pleasing feature. Bow windows are a common feature in Georgian buildings along the High Street near Westgate Street.
- 4.86 The rendered façades of Italianate terraces and villas to the Pells, St Anne's Crescent, and Grange Road are given further interest by the treatment of window openings. Often small corbels are introduced beneath the cills of the bay windows. The different windows making up the bay are typically differentiated by mouldings which are abstracted versions of classical columns, with capitals implied near the heads of windows.
- 4.87 Broad, moulded surrounds are more common to high status buildings, which means that relatively less buildings in this group have visible gauged brick arches. Large keystones are another common feature above doors and windows, sometimes with faces carved into them.
- 4.88 The grandest terraces in the Conservation Area are Priory Crescent on Southover High Street and Albion Terrace on Albion Street. Albion Terrace is fully rendered with stucco to its front elevation, the stucco to the ground floor being channelled, as at Priory Crescent, to make it read as though it were a stone plinth. Both buildings are ornamented by finely detailed ironwork balconies which are otherwise not a feature in the Conservation Area.
- 4.89 Commonly the junction between the wall and roof is highlighted by a cornice or corbels, whilst the edge of each building is frequently picked out by quoins.



Figure 66: High-quality detailing to a terraced house in the Pells, including rusticated keystones, a corbelled door surround, and moulding to the cill of the first floor windows



Figure 67: Stuccoed villas to St Anne's Crescent, with shallow, arched porches, corbelled eaves, and quoins



Figure 68: Regency terrace on Albion Street featuring decorative ironwork balconies



Figure 69: Regency door surround and fanlight in Southover



Figure 70: Westgate House on the High Street with its classical dentilled portico



## Arts and Crafts Buildings

- 4.90 A variety of materials, texture and ornament is a key feature of Arts and Crafts buildings in Lewes. Timber beams, posts and braces are common features in the small gables which top the canted bays stepping forwards to the street. Roughcast render is often applied to the upper half of the building and with the brick left exposed at ground floor level. Shaped clay hung tiles are sometimes used as an alternative to render.
- 4.91 Window types vary, although thin glazing bars set in large bays or openings are most common, with some casements with thick mullions also evident.
- 4.92 Overlights painted with house names survive in limited numbers, but are features of particular interest. Along De Montfort Road historic doorways survive with glazing to the top third, divided from the panelled lower section of the door by a moulded rail. Original doors, where they survive are an important feature in the streetscape.
- 4.93 Large, open porches are a key feature of Arts and Crafts buildings, with highly articulated timber structures carrying steep, tiled roofs ornamented by ridge tiles and finials. Ridge tiles and finials are small but very important features, which neatly detail the gable ends and ridges of the sloping and visually prominent clay tile roofs of these buildings. They add texture and variety to the roofscape of the town; the paler red clay used in many instances contrasts with the darker roof tiles. Fretted bargeboards are also a feature of the Arts and Crafts buildings in Lewes, adding additional ornamentation.



Figure 71: Finely detailed finial to the Kings Head in Southover. The building has a dynamic roofline thanks to small overhanging canopies



Figure 72: Highly articulated porch to a house on King Henry's Road in the Wallands. Note the change between brick at ground floor level and hung-tile to the upper floors, and small infill panel rubblestone to the bay window.



Figure 73: Late 19th century houses to Dorset Road



Figure 74: Houses to Prince Edward's Road



## Municipal, Religious and Bank Buildings

- 4.94 Municipal buildings and places of worship are among the most visually striking buildings in Lewes thanks to their grand scale, striking materiality (whether it be squared flint, Portland Stone ashlar, or brick enriched with stone dressing). Two of the most grandiose buildings are Lewes Town Hall and the Crown Court. The former combines brick and stone, with heavy channelling, broad pilasters and arched and pedimented windows and doors. The latter is designed in a more austere classical manner, including a large loggia and allegorical sculpture of Wisdom, Justice and Mercy.
- 4.95 Medieval Gothic churches are a prominent feature of the streetscape, with later places of worship, like the Eastgate Chapel, and rebuilt churches, St John sub Castro and the new sanctuary at All Saints adopted a Victorian Gothic Revival style. The same is true of late Victorian school buildings and libraries, like the former Fitzroy Library. Classicism is also used to great effect in the design of other places of worship, especially the Jireh Chapel and the more vernacular Quaker Meeting House.
- 4.96 Whilst many banks have shut in Lewes, bank buildings are an important feature in the streetscape, with different firms commissioning architects to produce arresting buildings to draw business. The banks sought to communicate their reliability, security and stability to customers through the prominence of their grand buildings on the High Street. A wide range of approaches were adopted, ranging from the small but generously lit and classically detailed former HSBC on the High Street, to the more sedate and very convincing 1930s Neo-Georgian former National Provincial bank at No.173.



Figure 75: Classical detailing to the Crown Court façade, designed by John Johnson and completed in 1812



Figure 76: The restrained, classically designed Jireh Chapel in Cliffe

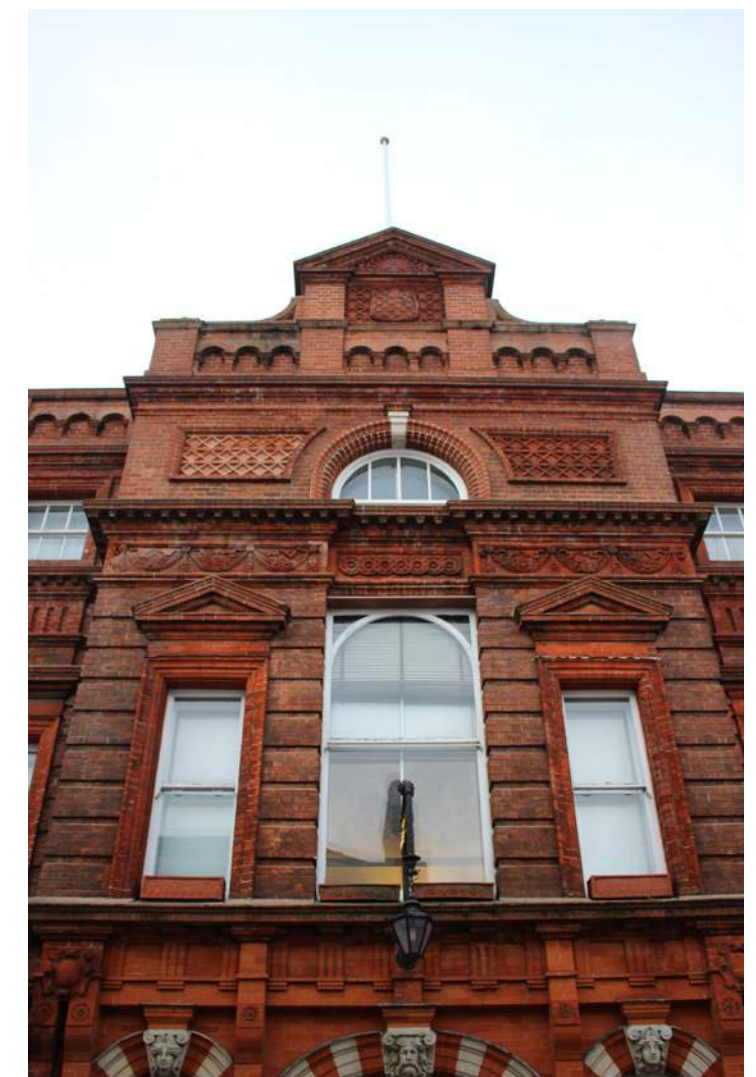


Figure 77: Upper levels of Lewes Town Hall



Figure 78: The great Sir George Gilbert Scott designed the Fitzroy Memorial Library with a spiring cupola and High Victorian Gothic windows





## Shopfronts

- 4.97 Shopfronts form an important part of the streetscene, dominating pedestrian views around the town centre. The extent of shopfront survival in Lewes greatly contributes to the town’s distinctive identity.
- 4.98 Key architectural features concerned with shopfronts in Lewes are panelled or tiled stallrisers, which form solid plinths beneath the shopfronts. The glazing in a number of windows is original or has been replaced with glass that fits into the dimensions of the historic transoms. In the most striking Victorian shopfronts, transoms are very slender and enriched with small capitals.

- 4.99 To the top of the shopfront the survival of timber fascia boards, carved pilasters and decorative consoles or corbels is common in Lewes, with some shopfronts even retaining their canopy boxes and associated ironwork. Recessed, sometimes decoratively tiled, entrances are also a feature, as are historic stained glass overlights.



Figure 79: Marston Barrett’s particularly well preserved, late Victorian shopfront, which consists of a tiled stall-riser and retained stained glass, pilasters, consoles and fascia



Figure 80: Edward Reeves’s 19th century shopfront, which retains a stall-riser, recessed entrance, fascia and canopy ironwork



Figure 81: Detail of the shopfront of No.205 Lewes High Street, formerly a creamery, showing the stained glass overlight, canopy brackets and slender transoms



Figure 82: 20th century mosaic recessed pavement on Cliffe High Street



Figure 83: High Street shop front with slender transoms, a stained glass overlight and Late Victorian or Edwardian green glazed tiles to the edge of the shopfront





Industrial Buildings

4.100 Industrial buildings make an important contribution to the character of Lewes and are spread across the Conservation Area. There is considerable variation in the architectural features and materiality of these buildings, despite their predominantly vernacular character. Even if these buildings have been converted to new uses they largely retain features illuminating their historic function, such as hoists, chimneys and roof cowls (used to draw air into maltings to keep the hopkilns burning). A range of walling materials are used in Lewes’ historic industrial buildings, but the most common are rubblestone, flint and brick, with timber weatherboarding and slate tile-hanging also used with a considerable frequency. In contrast to the majority of striking, industrial buildings in Lewes, which were built in the functionalist tradition, the Harvey’s Brewery in Cliffe is significantly more grandiose, having been remodelled in the late 19th century by William Bradford, who designed ornamental, Arts and Crafts-inspired breweries across the country.



Figure 84: The former Verrall’s malthouse in Southover, built in the mid 19th century. The roof cowl for drawing air into the kiln is visible to the right-hand hipped end.



Figure 85: The former Broad’s Candle Factory of the mid 19th century (now Old Needlemakers) viewed along Market Lane. The chimney is a prominent feature

Street Pattern

- 4.101 The street pattern at the centre of the Conservation Area dates back to the Saxon foundation of Lewes as a burh, with the High Street established as the main thoroughfare, and a series of tight-knit twittens leading off the street to provide access to the side and rear of the narrow burgage plots. The lines of the historic city walls to the north and south of the burh are perpetuated by Westgate Street, Eastgate Street, Friars’ Walk and Southover Road. The High Street continues across the Ouse into Cliffe in the east where it turns south along the accordingly named South Street. Western Road continues the High Street to the west, whilst Rotten Row diverges to the the south-west.
- 4.102 The street pattern north of the High Street is heavily influenced by the shape of Lewes Castle’s precinct, with streets in the area such as Castle Ditch Lane and Castle Banks tracing the line of the walls. Elsewhere the town is more often broken up by streets largely aligned north–south and east–west, bisecting one another at right angles. The medieval street network has been overlain and new routes between streets created as a result of historic speculative housing developments, with new streets laid out in particularly high concentrations to the Wallands and Pells in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Scale and Massing

- 4.103 A range of building heights are present within the Conservation Area, ranging between one and seven-storeys, although the majority are two to four-storeys tall. The tallest building in Lewes is the East Sussex County Council office off St Anne’s Crescent, which detracts from the Conservation Area due to its alien scale. There is a hierarchy of scales across Lewes, with the tallest buildings, aside from church towers and Harvey’s Brewery, located along the High Street, which is predominantly lined with three- or four-storey buildings. Elsewhere the building height is predominantly two- to three-storeys high. Lower ground floor spaces lit by lightwells are also a feature owing to Lewes’ undulating topography.
- 4.104 There is a relatively fine urban grain throughout the Conservation Area, although there are a number of large historic buildings that break with this, such as Lewes Castle and the numerous parish churches. Such buildings provide a pleasing contrast with their narrower and smaller neighbours. Modern buildings are typically characterised by a larger scale than historic buildings, including the late 20th century developments to the pedestrianised section of the High Street and office buildings to the north end of Friars’ Walk. These buildings often have considerably longer frontages to the street and occupy deeper footprints than historic buildings, breaking up the fine urban grain.
- 4.105 Along Rotten Row and in the Wallands, the residential buildings are considerably larger in scale than those found elsewhere. In these areas large detached villas are commonplace, which offer a contrast to the more modestly-scaled terraces extant elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Their wider frontages and larger footprints, relative to historic buildings in the town centre, reflect their suburban location where space was at less of a premium.





## Trees and Open Space

4.106 Although the town centre and surrounding streets are densely developed, there are a number of open green spaces within the Conservation Area, beyond the town’s historic core. There are six main areas of open space within the Conservation Area:

- 01 The Pells to the north-east
- 02 Lewes Priory Park and Convent Field to the south
- 03 Southover Grange Gardens
- 04 The cemetery and park to Bell Lane
- 05 The Paddock and Baxter’s Field due north of the Castle
- 06 The bowling green within the Castle precincts.

4.107 Key Local Green Spaces and Community Spaces in Lewes are identified as Designated Open Spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan and protected under Policy SS3 Protection & Enhancement of Green Spaces. These Designated Open Spaces are shown on the map adjacent.

4.108 Within these green spaces there is a significant number of high-quality mature trees, largely to their boundaries. There are relatively few street trees within the Conservation Area, with tree-lined roads like Prince Edward’s Road, largely confined to the Wallands. Trees in front gardens and back gardens make significant contributions to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.109 The River Ouse also provides an important and characterful open space within the Conservation Area, with long views along and across the river appreciated from crossing points and the river banks. There are presently few areas of public realm providing spaces for people to enjoy the town’s riverside location. However, new public footpaths are gradually being introduced along the banks of the river as redevelopment schemes are brought forward.

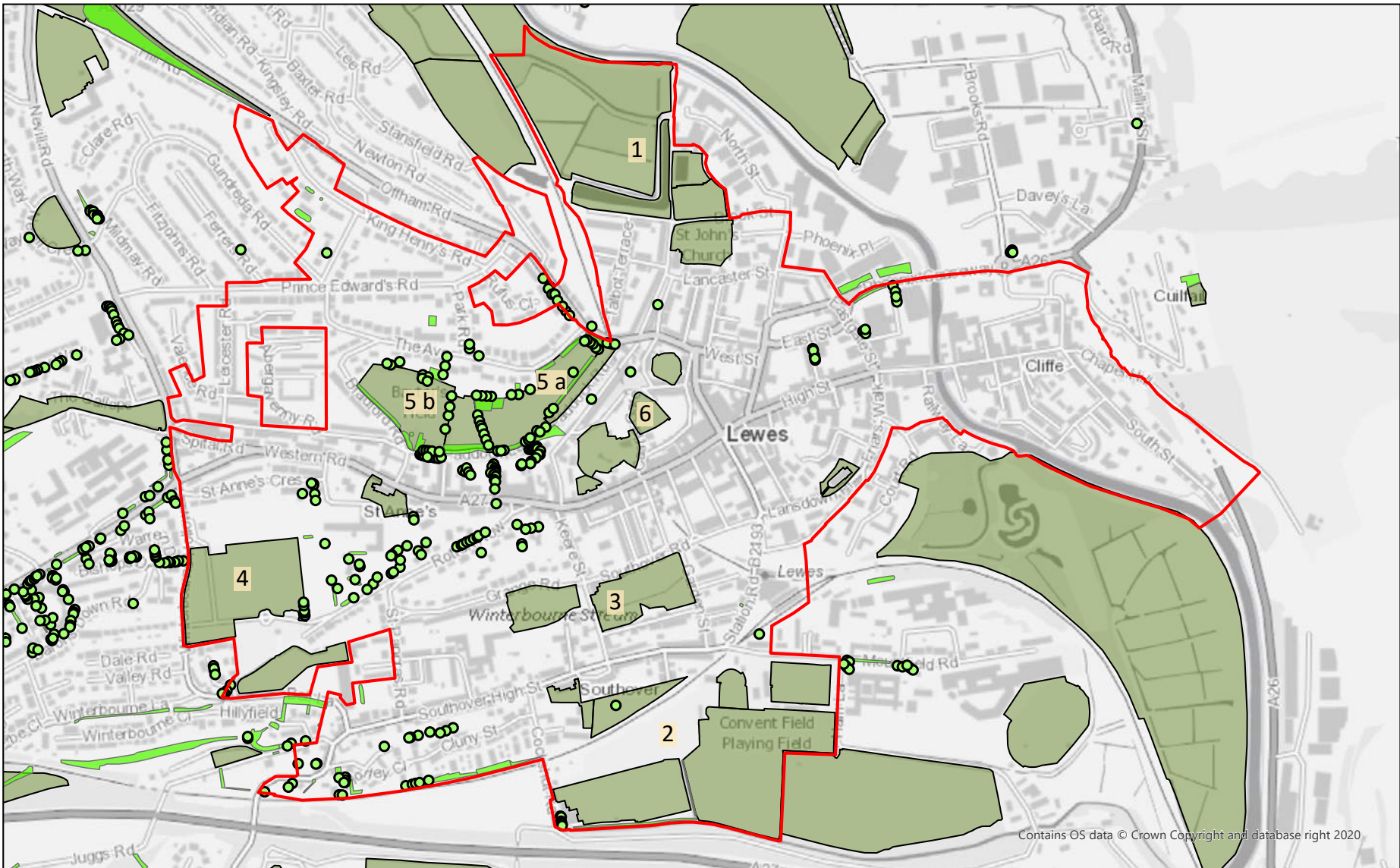


Figure 86: Map of Lewes showing the trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and the areas designated as Local Green and Community Spaces in the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan

- Lewes Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Orders (Single Trees)
- Tree Preservation Orders (Areas)
- Local Green and Community Spaces designated in Lewes Neighbourhood Plan





Figure 87: The Pells (1)



Figure 90: Lewes Priory Park and Convent Field Playing Grounds (2)



Figure 92: Southover Grange Gardens (3)



Figure 88: Lewes Cemetery (4)



Figure 91: The Paddock (5 a)



Figure 93: Baxter's Field (5 b)



Figure 89: The bowling green within the Castle Precincts (6)





Public Realm and Street Furniture

Street Surfaces

4.110 The street surfaces in Lewes are varied, with historic finishes surviving in various locations, as detailed in the headings below, alongside unsympathetic modern materials including poorly maintained tarmac roads, concrete kerbs and concrete setts. Poorly-considered or detailed interventions to the pavement and road surfaces, kerbs, and guttering have detrimentally impacted the public realm, with repairs or temporary surface finishes in tarmac not respecting the historic character of Lewes. Historic surface finishes should be repaired, reinstated and replicated.

Brick Setts

- 4.111 Lewes’ historic street surfaces can be traced back as far as the 19th century, when paving commissions were established in Lewes and Cliffe (which were separately administered until 1881). The work of these commissions saw the streets widened and paved, with red brick setts used most commonly for surface finishes. The patina, varied colour and texture of these historic brick setts in an invaluable part of Lewes’ streetscape, complementing the brick and clay tiles that feature in many of the town’s buildings.
- 4.112 Long runs of this historic brick paving survive on two principal streets through the Conservation Area, with the pavement between St Anne’s Church and the junction with Keere Street on High Street paved with clay setts. The same goes for almost the entire length of Southover High Street. Away from the principal streets, brick paving also survives in smaller streets, such as Talbot Terrace in Pells, School Hill in Cliffe, and St Andrew’s Lane, a twitten to the south of the High Street. Shorter runs of brick paving also survive at the entrances to properties, with a high concentration of this found on Rotten Row, where thin brick pavers are frequently coupled with larger stone setts.
- 4.113 Modern brick paving has been introduced in a number of locations, with Cliffe High Street and the eastern section of Lewes High Street both repaved with brick following pedestrianisation works. Although this modern brick lacks the texture and variety of the historic, handmade setts, it is a marked improvement on the tarmac and concrete pavers it replaced.

Cobbles and Stone Setts

- 4.114 Keere Street is one of the most picturesque streets in Lewes. Although its intimate scale, well preserved historic buildings and dynamic topography contribute to this quality, the cobblestone set into the centre of the street are also an important constituent of its visual interest. The cobbles are laid between sandstone flags and brick pavers. Keere Street’s street surface is especially striking as smaller flint cobbles were used, giving the street surface a highly textured appearance. Fragments of cobble paving also survive at Priory Crescent in Southover.
- 4.115 This contrasts to a degree with the visual effect of the broader, flatter granite cobbles that were laid between large stone flags on Foundry Lane in Cliffe. This surfacing was installed in connection with the operation of the Morris Foundry at the end of the street, where the heavy loads brought to and from the business required a hard wearing street surface.
- 4.116 Stone setts are a prominent feature of the streetscape at the junction of the High Street and Rotten Row, with the setts laid in differing directions to either street, serving to differentiate the two road ways.
- 4.117 Modern cobbles to the pedestrianised section of Lewes High Street and Castle Gate have enhanced both areas, adding a greater sense of variety and history to the townscape in both cases. The addition of strips of cobbled stone setts to the road surface along Southover High Street as traffic calming measures illustrates the beneficial visual impact of such a surfacing treatment in contrast to the surrounding tarmac, with the small unit size and texture of the stone setts key in this respect.

Kerbs and Gutters

- 4.118 The most common type of kerb is granite, which has been used since the 19th century and weathers well, taking on a pleasing texture, much like the surrounding historic buildings, as it ages. This contrasts with the modern concrete kerbs that are also relatively common, and which lack the same pleasing texture when damaged. Historic limestone and sandstone kerbs are less common than granite or concrete. Lengths of limestone kerb survive to the base of Chapel Hill, giving way to sandstone setts, which form the kerb higher up the hill.
- 4.119 Historic gutters, formed along the side of roads remain visible even where historic road surfaces have been tarmacked over. A range of different materials form these gutters, with thin bricks, granite cobbles, and stone setts used interchangeably and occasionally together. These gutters are important reminders of the historic street surface in Lewes and should not be infilled.





Figure 94: Cobbles and clay brick pavers to Keere Street



Figure 96: Modern sympathetic surface finishes to the High Street



Figure 95: Brick pavements and granite kerbs to the High Street



Figure 97: Unsympathetic tarmac pavements and concrete kerbs



Figure 98: Modern stone setts have been reinstated adjacent to historic brick and York Stone pavers on Castle Gate. The now removed tarmac finish was an alien intrusion in a sensitive historic context



## Street Furniture

- 4.120 Items of street furniture help to illustrate the town’s history and evolution, the changing ways people have lived and worked, and contribute to the variety and special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 4.121 The importance of John Every’s Phoenix Ironworks (formerly located off North Street, just outside the Conservation Area) to Lewes is partly demonstrated by the significant amount of surviving street furniture produced by the foundry. The firm’s kerb plates, drain covers and bollards remain important, functional parts of the streetscape, bearing the foundry’s name prominently. The firm’s finely detailed coal holes, which survive in particularly high density along St John’s Terrace are a reminder of when coal was the ubiquitous fuel in Lewes.

- 4.122 Bootscrapers are another small historic feature in the streetscape, largely dating to the Victorian period, that add to the charm of Lewes where they survive. These are generally arched in form and grouted into external walls, adjacent to doorways.
- 4.123 Another important feature within the town’s streetscape are the public and livestock fountains. The trough on Watergate Lane was erected by the philanthropic, London-based Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association to provide clean water to animals driven into the town’s market, whilst Friars’ Walk is home to a grand Gothic fountain, erected by public subscription in 1874. These features further demonstrate how the town’s history and evolution can be readily grasped thanks to its its well-preserved historic street furniture.



Figure 99: Victorian water fountain to Friars’ Walk



Figure 100: Coal hole cover from John Every’s Phoenix Ironworks in Lewes



Figure 101: Former cattle trough to the south end of Watergate Lane



Figure 102: A pair of bootscrapers surviving in two 19th century terraces on Abinger Place





4.124 There is significant variation in streetlighting throughout the Conservation Area. Aside from a handful of historic refitted gas lamps the majority of the lighting is modern. In prominent streets the modern lighting takes the form of traditional-style lampposts, designed to replicate the form of historic gas lamps, but a number of key streets feature more utilitarian modern lamps. In narrow streets, streetlights are often fixed to building elevations to economise on space and avoid visual clutter. The use of softer, yellow LED lighting balances heritage and energy efficiency concerns and should be encouraged.

4.125 The most prominent surviving historic lamppost is the Grade II listed cast iron lamppost at the base of Keere Street. Erected by 1870, it has been subsequently converted to electricity. Sympathetic Victorian-imitation lights have been installed along the length of Lewes and Cliffe High Streets, as well as other sensitive areas in the Conservation Area, like the Castle Precincts, Grange Road, and Rotten Row.

4.126 Unfortunately, Southover High Street, the Pells Pond, and many of the residential streets in the town, are lit by utilitarian lampposts that are less sympathetic to their context due to their lack of ornamentation.



Figure 103: Traditional-style modern streetlight, mounted to the wall of the former Beard's Brewery maltings in the Castle Precincts



Figure 104: Utilitarian modern streetlight on South Street in Cliffe



Figure 105: The modern streetlights by the Pells Pond presently detract from the area, contrasting unfavourably with the traditional-style lights installed elsewhere in Lewes, which contribute to the historic character of the town's streetscape





## Important Views

- 4.127 As Lewes is a town rooted in over a thousand years of history, its views have developed organically over the centuries. These fortuitous, organic views exist alongside more formally laid out views, such as those towards the Lewes War Memorial. The Conservation Area is therefore experienced through incidental, kinetic (experienced when moving) and designed views, constantly changing as one moves along the street and through the town. These include views along historic streets which often take in Lewes Castle and other landmark buildings, as well as the Downs and surrounding farmland.
- 4.128 Views into the Conservation Area from its setting are also important, providing an appreciation of the town’s varied character and streetscape. The topography of Lewes and its surrounding landscape is central to this. The higher vantage points, in the downland to the north and east of

the town, and low-lying positions along the Ouse and Lewes Brooks accentuate the town centre’s striking position atop a chalk ridge, its eclectic roofscape and the variation in built form and streetscape across the different parts of the Conservation Area. Views along and across the Ouse highlight the town’s industrial heritage and importance as a regional centre of trade and commerce.

- 4.129 All views which take in heritage assets, whether designated or not, are important and contribute to the understanding and experience of the Conservation Area. As a consequence, the views considered in this section are only an indicative selection of the important views across the Conservation Area and not intended to be a comprehensive set. Local views are identified on the character area maps in [Section 5.0](#). The views identified in this document supplement those selected in Appendix 5 of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan (2019). When proposals for change are being considered, a detailed study of the views important for any given site and the contribution they make to the Conservation Area will be required.



Figure 106: Glimpsed view of the landmark Harvey’s Brewery in Cliffe



Figure 107: View looking east from Lewes Castle (Arild Vågen, Wikimedia, (CC BY-SA 4.0))





## Street Views

- 4.130 Street views provide the best means of experiencing and understanding the special interest of the Conservation Area. Such views allow an appreciation of the broad range of features which collectively make Lewes such a striking historic town.
- 4.131 Views along and across streets allow the viewer to appreciate the materiality, massing and detailing of the buildings which characterise the streetscene, as well as their relationship to surrounding buildings. Built form alone, however, does not wholly account for the importance of such views, which also take in plot sizes, plot patterns and street layout, which all bring character to street views. Other important facets of Lewes’ special interest are represented in street views, including the roofscape of the area (whether it is consistent or varied), and the presence of historic boundary treatments, surface treatments and street furniture. The generous green open spaces present, as well as street trees, planted front gardens and the River Ouse, also contribute to and colour street views.

4.132 As the character of Lewes’ streetscape is varied, the street views that are experienced within the Conservation Area are defined by a range of features, including:

- The medieval timber-framed buildings to Lewes and Southover High Streets, many of which have been refronted, which sit amongst later Georgian or Victorian buildings.
- The fine-grained terraced streets evident throughout the Conservation Area, such as South Street, Sun Street, Leicester Road, and Priory Street.
- The buildings associated with industry and trade located on the banks of the River Ouse.
- Large Italianate and Arts and Craft villas set in large plots with well-planted front gardens.



Figure 108: View up Potter’s Lane towards Southover High Street, the timber frame of No.51 contrasting with the Italianate styling of Southover Manor House



Figure 109: View along the tree-lined Prince Edward’s Road, showing large Arts and Crafts villas on either side



Figure 110: View along South Street showing the fine-grained terraces along the street and the chalk cliff rearing behind the Cliffe character area





## Views of the Downs

4.133 The varied topography of Lewes and the surrounding area means that the rural setting of the town within the South Downs is apparent from numerous locations within the Conservation Area. The east–west orientation of many streets permits open views towards the Lewes Downs in the east; such views are evident from the High Street and open spaces like the Pells and the Station Road bridge. Meanwhile, the low-lying Lewes Brooks and Ouse Valley to the south are visible from a number of locations around Western Road, such as Lewes Cemetery, and in distant views along Keere Street and a number of other streets. High points including the Mount and Castle Mound provide panoramic views of the town’s rural setting.



Figure 111: Chalk cliff to the east of the Conservation Area

- 4.134 Views of the Downs make a strong, positive contribution to the character and setting of the Conservation Area, with features like the Coombe (the dry valley which runs between Malling and Cliffe Hills), the expansive chalk cliff above the Cliffe Industrial Estate, and Mount Caburn all terminating long views through and out of the Conservation Area. Any new development should preserve these views.
- 4.135 In turn, the Downs provide an important vantage point to enjoy views back into the Conservation Area, highlighting the town’s dynamic topography, and allowing an appreciation of its organic development and landmark buildings, like Harvey’s Brewery and Lewes Castle. These views also make a strong positive contribution to the interest of the Conservation Area and should be preserved.



Figure 112: View to the south of Lewes from the Mount





## Views of the Castle

4.136 Lewes Castle is one of the most important and visible buildings in the Conservation Area. It sits at the centre of the Conservation Area on an artificial mound, giving it prominence in many designed and incidental views within the historic centre, as well as from the wider setting of the Conservation Area. The Castle battlements form a particularly distinctive silhouette and are visible from all directions. The Castle’s historic importance is reflected by its visual prominence, with the site originally selected owing to its strategic elevated position. It illustrates the long and rich history of the town, the medieval masonry and massing of the keep providing a pleasing contrast with the smaller scale residential development in the town centre. New development should not impinge on its visibility as a landmark on Lewes’ skyline in views within the Conservation Area and from beyond the Conservation Area boundary.



Figure 113: Lewes Castle from the west (The Antiquary, Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0))



Figure 114: View of the Castle from the Mount in Southover



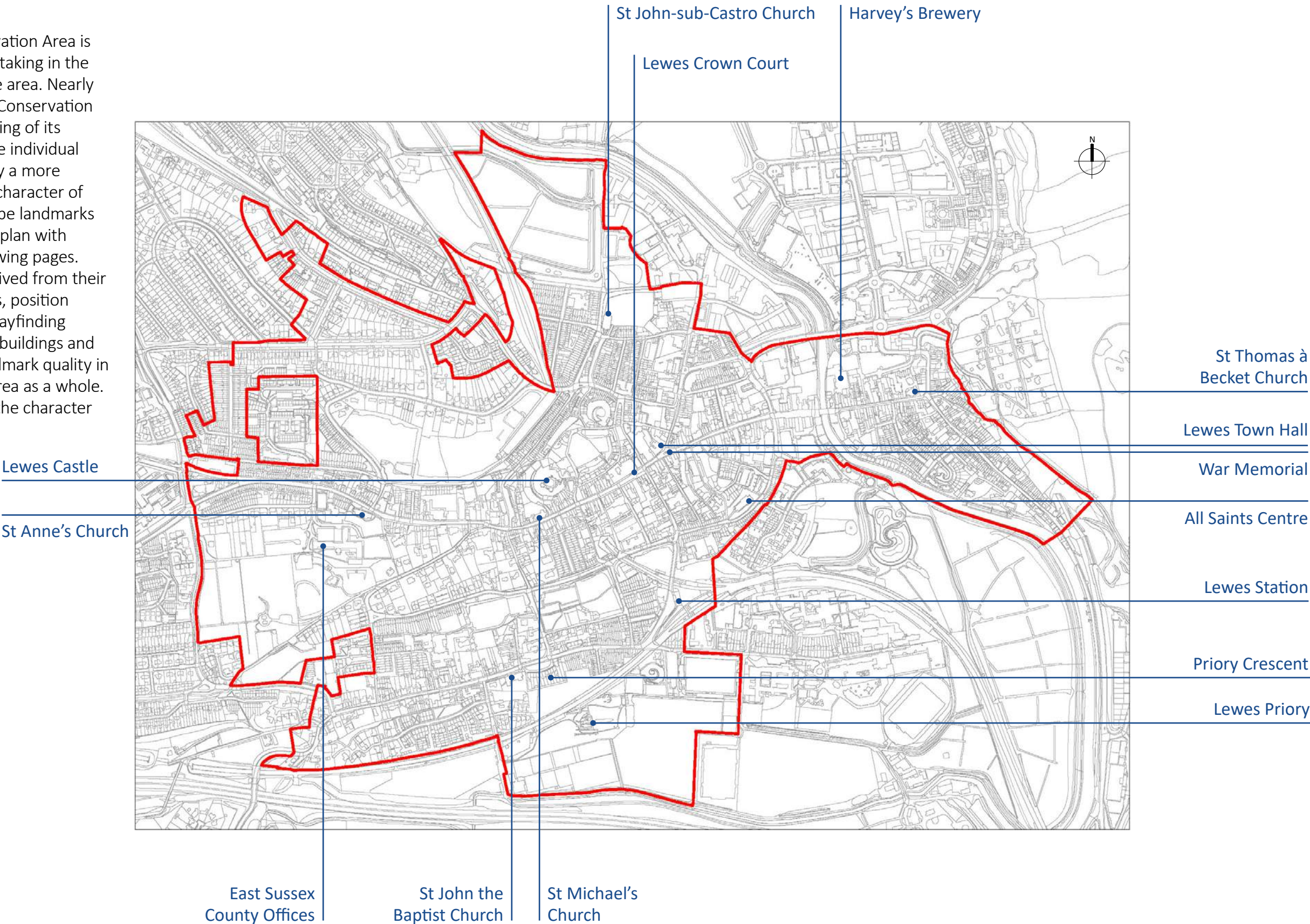
Figure 115: View of the Castle from The Avenue





Landmark Buildings

4.137 The special interest of the Conservation Area is often best experienced visually by taking in the historic buildings and spaces of the area. Nearly all the buildings and spaces in the Conservation Area contribute to the understanding of its special interest. However, there are individual buildings and structures which play a more important role in establishing the character of the area. These are considered to be landmarks and are identified on the adjacent plan with descriptions provided on the following pages. Their landmark quality may be derived from their relative height, prominent features, position within the streetscene or role in wayfinding and creating a sense of place. The buildings and structures in this section have landmark quality in the context of the Conservation Area as a whole. Local landmarks are identified on the character area maps in [Section 5.0](#).







## Lewes Castle

4.138 Lewes Castle is the most prominent historic building in Lewes. It is visible from many locations within the Conservation Area and from the wider area. The Castle’s position at the highest point in the historic town core, alongside its significant role within the history of Lewes, gives the building its landmark status.



## Lewes War Memorial, High Street

4.139 Lewes War Memorial, designed by Vernon March, was first unveiled in 1922. It is very prominently sited at the top of School Hill at the intersection of the High Street and Market Street, where the street widens, making it a terminating feature in views. The structure has considerable communal value commemorating those who died in both World Wars and contributing to wayfinding within the town.







## Lewes Crown Court, High Street

4.140 Lewes Crown Court is a grand two-phase classical building of the early 19th and 20th centuries, its prominent position on the High Street, architectural grandeur, stone facing and large scale all distinguish it as a landmark building.



## Lewes Town Hall, High Street

4.141 The Town Hall is a distinctive civic building with a long history of evolution and alteration from the 14th century onwards. The building occupies an important location within the streetscape at the top of School Hill at the east end of the High Street and just to the west of the intersection of the High Street and Market Street, where the street widens. The building is clearly distinguishable owing to its significant scale and massing, red brick materiality and eclectic detailing, and crowning pediment.







## St Michael’s Church, High Street

4.142 St Michael’s Church is the last surviving medieval church within the historic town walls, with the nave and aisle dating to 13th and 14th centuries. Its squared, knapped flint walls and medieval lancet and quatrefoil windows, form a long frontage to the High Street and contrast with the brick and stucco which characterises the surrounding buildings. A tall, shingled spire terminates the round west tower, which dates to the 12th or 13th centuries. The slender spire protrudes above the street’s roofscape along the High Street to the east and west of the church, contrasting with the lower hipped and gabled roofs.



## St John-Sub-Castro, Lancaster Street

4.143 The largely Victorian church occupies a prominent position to the north-east of the character area, its flint walls and tall tower contrasting with the terraces in its vicinity, creating a sense of place within the area. The tower is visible over the roofs of the considerably smaller two or three-storey houses, whilst the building also has a high level of communal value as a place of worship and music centre.







## Lewes Station, Station Road

4.144 Lewes Station’s position on the low and open ground between Southover and the historic centre of Lewes affords it landmark status, being visible in long views from all directions due to the surrounding topography. The booking hall on the southern end of the Station Road bridge is especially prominent, thanks to its rich Renaissance detailing and the tall, glazed lantern above the main hall.



## St Thomas À Becket, Cliffe High Street

4.145 Although the church is largely screened in Conservation Area wide views, owing to its relatively discrete location set back from Cliffe High Street, the building’s prominent corner position and squat tower make it visible in many views within the Cliffe character area.







## Harvey’s Brewery, Cliffe High Street

4.146 Harvey’s Brewery is a particularly large and intact 19th century complex of industrial buildings, one of only a handful of industrial buildings remaining near the town centre. The building therefore makes a particular contribution to understanding the evolution of the town and creating its sense of place, heightened further by its continued use as a brewery. Its tall chimneys, turret and distinctive lettering, as well as its relatively open position of the east bank of the River Ouse make it visible from many parts of the Conservation Area and contribute to its landmark status.



## St Anne’s Church, Western Road

4.147 St Anne’s Church is a large medieval church set within a graveyard elevated above street level. Its raised position, combined with the church’s tall spire and flint construction, contrasts with the surrounding streetscape, the spire especially playing an important role within the streetscene.







## East Sussex County Offices, St Anne’s Crescent

4.148 The post-war County Offices are relatively utilitarian concrete panelled buildings, their significant height and massing make them visible across the Conservation Area and from beyond its boundary. The scale and massing of the Offices result in the buildings towering above other historic landmarks, detracting from their prominence and detrimentally impacting the special interest of the Conservation Area.



## Priory Crescent, Southover High Street

4.149 The unified, curving Regency terrace occupies a position of prominence within the streetscape due to its scale and architectural treatment, despite being set back from Southover High Street. The Crescent is also visible in glimpsed views from higher ground to the north within the Conservation Area.







## St John The Baptist, Southover High Street

4.150 The church, parts of which date back to c.1100, is located prominently on a kink in Southover High Street. The tower of the church, terminated by a small cupola, extends higher than the surrounding domestic scaled development and contributes especially positively to the streetscape as a landmark structure. Its status as a landmark local building is further reinforced by its key role within the community as a religious building.



## Lewes Priory

4.151 The ruins of the Priory are particularly visible to the south of Lewes within the open spaces in this part of the Conservation Area, having a strong historic association with Southover to the north, which was first developed following the Priory's foundation in the 11th century. It was the first Cluniac priory in Britain. Lewes Priory's significance could soon be recognised by UNESCO World Heritage Site status, if the European Federation of Cluniac Sites is successful in its bid to have a group of 50 Cluniac sites, including the priory, inscribed on the World Heritage List.







## All Saints Centre, Friars' Walk

4.152 Although the former church's 14th or 15th century tower is relatively squat and largely screened from view by the trees in the surrounding churchyard, the length of the early 19th century classical nave and later 19th century chancel and expansive churchyard make it an important building to the south of the High Street.



## Setting of the Conservation Area

### Introduction

- 4.153 Setting is the surroundings in which the Conservation Area is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. The setting of a Conservation Area often makes a contribution to the special interest of the area. Elements of a setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Whilst a Conservation Area's setting does not form part of the statutory designation, setting is still a material consideration at planning.
- 4.154 Views are often used to define the extent and importance of setting. However, whilst views of the area's surroundings play an important role in our appreciation of the Conservation Area's setting, there are other factors which contribute. These include but are not limited to, the pattern and appearance of the surrounding townscape and landscape, the noise, ambience and use of the surrounding area and the historic relationships between the Conservation Area and its surroundings.
- 4.155 The following analysis of the setting of Lewes Conservation Area is not exhaustive, but highlights some of the important components of the area's setting, which assist in the understanding what is special about the Conservation Area. When proposals are being developed within the setting of the Conservation Area, specific analysis should be undertaken to understand the contribution a specific site or building makes to the special interest of the Conservation Area and how the proposals may impact upon this contribution and the special interest of the Conservation Area as a whole.





## Rural Setting

- 4.156 As noted significant element of Lewes’ special interest arises from its picturesque rural setting. Lewes’ position on the south-western slope of the Downs means that the rural surroundings of the town are most apparent in views to the east of the town along east–west orientated routes. Many of these vistas are terminated by the rolling grassland slopes of Mount Caburn and the Lewes Downs. The flat open agricultural land to the south of the town, largely included in the Lewes Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), further emphasises the town’s rural setting. Locations around the Lewes Brooks and on the Downs also allow an appreciation of this setting. These distant views of the town showcase the characterful setting of the place within its local topography and allow views of landmark buildings such as Lewes Castle, elevated on its motte.
- 4.157 The historic settlement pattern around Lewes is also of significance, with small, dispersed villages within relatively close proximity to the town. This serves to illustrate that Lewes developed due to its advantageous position on the River Ouse, acting as both a trading and market town, serving the agricultural settlements in the vicinity. As such, Lewes’ rural setting provides an understanding how and why the town grew and prospered, which can be appreciated from a significant number of locations within the Conservation Area.
- 4.158 Malling Deanery (designated as a Conservation Area in 1974) is located to the north of Lewes, on the north side of the Ouse and also contributes positively to the setting of Lewes Conservation Area, thanks to its mature trees, and the survival of important historic buildings, namely the church of St Michael the Archangel, the Old Vicarage, and the former Malling Deanery. There is also interest arising from Malling being historically owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury, similarly to Cliffe.



Figure 116: View towards Malling Hill in the east from the Pells



Figure 117: View looking west from The Mount, showing the distant downland beyond the Conservation Area boundary





## Riverside Setting

4.159 The River Ouse is a highly important feature, contributing greatly to the significance of the settlement. The historic wharves and former industrial buildings constructed along it illustrate the establishment and evolution of the town. The river is relatively broad at Lewes, marking the historic boundary between Cliffe and the borough of Lewes, with the best views of the river being gained from Cliffe Bridge and the Phoenix Causeway. Beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area, the open space along the banks of the Ouse provides a location for longer views back towards the town and an appreciation of both its topography and landmark buildings.



Figure 118: View along the Ouse looking north towards Harvey's Brewery and the Phoenix Causeway



Figure 119: View south from Cliffe bridge, showing the characterful riverside buildings

## Suburban Setting

4.160 Whilst the vast majority of Georgian and Victorian Lewes is included within the Conservation Area, the town was extended beyond its core particularly within the 20th century, with modern suburbs established to the north-east, north-west and west. These suburbs are often less compact and less densely gridded than the development within the Conservation Area owing to lower pressure on space. The suburbs demonstrate the continued growth of the town and represent another stage in its development, providing some low level contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area.



Figure 120: View of Lewes from the north-west, showing its suburban setting



# 05 Character Areas



- Character Area 01: Cliffe
- Character Area 02: Lower High Street
- Character Area 03: Lewes Castle and Middle High Street

- Character Area 04: Upper High Street and Western Road
- Character Area 05: The Pells and West Street
- Character Area 06: The Wallands

Character Area 07: Southover

The Red House, 67, Southover High Street







- 5.1 The Lewes Conservation Area includes the Cliffe, Lower High Street, Lewes Castle and Middle High Street, Upper High Street and Western Road, The Pells and West Street, The Wallands, and Southover character areas. Despite the fact that architectural features and materials recur across the Conservation Area, each character area has its own distinct set of characteristics. As such, this section identifies and provides analysis of the different character areas within the Conservation Area. The contribution made by specific buildings or sites is described in the legends associated with each of the character areas. A description of the legend categories is given below:
- 5.2 Positive Buildings: are buildings that are not statutorily listed or locally listed, but nevertheless make a positive contribution to historic townscape. They may merit consideration in planning applications that affect them directly or indirectly.
- 5.3 Detracting Areas: are areas that presently have a detrimental impact on the special interest of the Conservation Area. Their sensitive redevelopment or alteration would represent an enhancement to the Conservation Area's townscape.

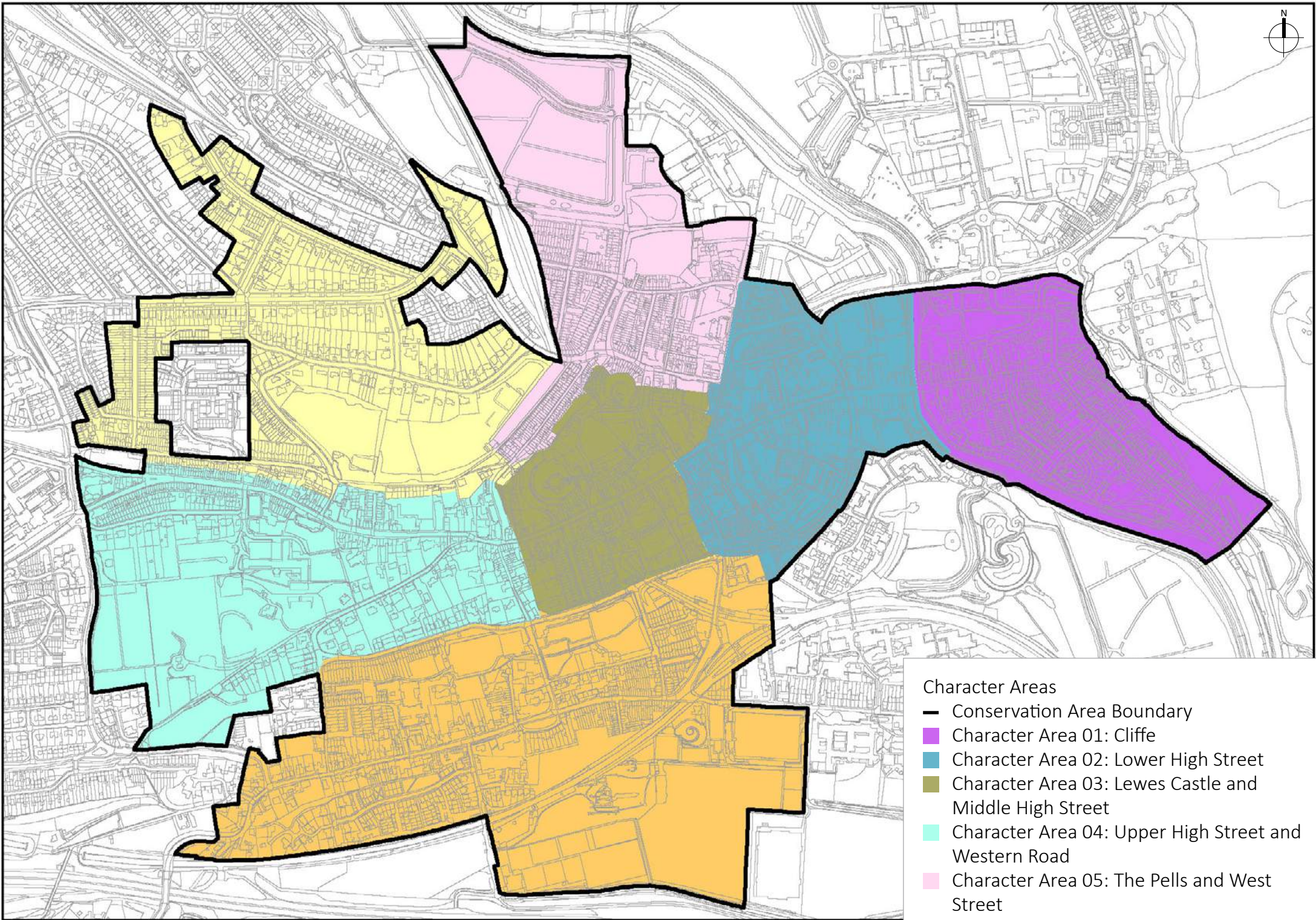
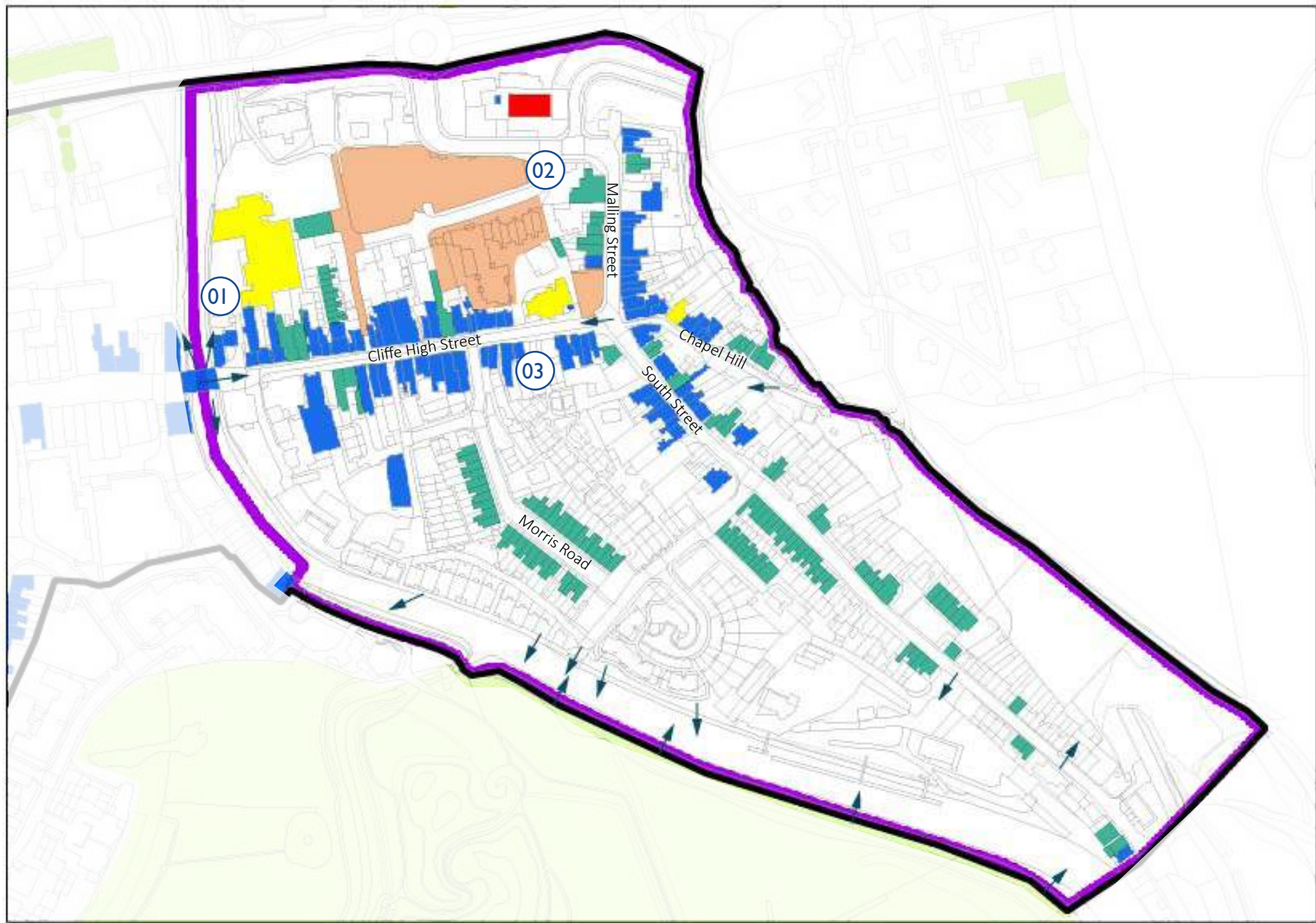


Figure 121: Map showing the seven character areas in Lewes

- Character Areas
- Conservation Area Boundary
  - Character Area 01: Cliffe
  - Character Area 02: Lower High Street
  - Character Area 03: Lewes Castle and Middle High Street
  - Character Area 04: Upper High Street and Western Road
  - Character Area 05: The Pells and West Street
  - Character Area 06: The Wallands
  - Character Area 07: Southover

This plan is not to scale





— Conservation Area Boundary

— Character Area Boundary

■ Grade I

■ Grade II\*

■ Grade II

▨ Scheduled Monument

● TPOs

■ Positive Buildings

■ Areas for Enhancement

■ Public Open Spaces

➔ Key Views

**Focal buildings**

01 Harvey's Brewery

02 Jireh Chapel

03 Church of St Thomas à Becket

This plan is not to scale

## Summary History of Cliffe

- 5.1 The River Ouse has likely been forded at Cliffe since the Roman period, with Cliffe Bridge built by 1159.
- 5.2 The Church of St Thomas à Becket was built in the late 12th century by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 5.3 Cliffe High Street was developed as a medieval linear settlement, continuing the line of Lewes High Street, with Malling and South Streets developed to the east from the 16th century.
- 5.4 Markets were held on Cliffe High Street in the medieval period, with the earliest charter for the market dating to 1331. Sewers were dug across the area to drain it of water, as the area formed part of the Ouse's natural floodplain.
- 5.5 Cliffe had an important role in early modern and 19th century trade along the River Ouse, with two cuttings providing moorings for boats in Cliffe. A number of wharves and industrial buildings were built on the river's east bank, including the now demolished Morris and Etna foundries and surviving Harvey's Brewery.
- 5.6 An Act was passed in Parliament in 1828, which empowered the 'Cliffe Commissioners' to pave, clean and light the streets within the settlement. The following year Cliffe High Street was widened and paved. This involved the demolition of the frontages of buildings to the south of the street and their reconstruction, set back from their original position.
- 5.7 The industrial sites along the river have been gradually redeveloped, with the site of the Morris Foundry redeveloped as the terraced Morris Road in the late 19th century. This process has continued into the 21st century with the Chandler's Wharf development.
- 5.8 The Phoenix Causeway to the north of the character area was opened in the 1960s, diverting traffic from Cliffe High Street, which was partially pedestrianised in 2010.
- 5.9 Cliffe was badly flooded in 2000, with new flood defences erected in 2009.





### Summary of Special Interest

- 5.10 Cliffe High Street is a thriving commercial street, lined by an eclectic and engaging collection of historic buildings.
- 5.11 The area has a strong sense of connection to the neighbouring South Downs and the chalk cliff.
- 5.12 Striking views along and across the Ouse bring particular interest to the area.
- 5.13 The historic Harvey’s Brewery enjoys prominence on the riverside and remains in use.
- 5.14 The area features places of worship such as the church of St Thomas à Becket and Jireh Chapel.
- 5.15 Varied, historic terraced housing colours the streetscene.

### Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.16 Cliffe is situated on the flat former water meadows to the east of the River Ouse, overlooked to the north by the modern Phoenix Causeway.
- 5.17 Three principal streets converge to form a ‘T’; the historic Cliffe High Street from Cliffe Bridge, met to the east by Mallig Street and South Street, with narrow side streets and passages to the north and south. These are limited to the north of Cliffe High Street by an expanse of car parking (Phoenix Causeway Car Park).
- 5.18 The piecemeal 18th and 19th century development has created terraced plots of varying widths along all principal streets, with stretches of narrower, uniform terraced plots to the character area’s south along South Street and Morris Road.
- 5.19 The plot pattern is fine grained with closely-knit development, relieved by side streets and the openness of the river to the south-west. Narrow gaps where the former sewers ran can be seen in several places, most apparent between Nos.38 and 39 on Cliffe High Street.
- 5.20 The plot pattern becomes looser towards the river, with modern developments occupying more spacious plots including the crescent of buildings at Hillman Close.
- 5.21 Buildings are predominantly positioned close to the road with only a limited set back from the street. They have yards of varying sizes to the rear. These long back plots are curtailed by modern infill to the north side of Farncombe Road and to the south side of Harvey’s Way.
- 5.22 Beyond the High Street, a couple of buildings or terraces are set back behind the principal building line behind leafy gardens including Willie Cottages on South Street and 21 Mallig Street.



Figure 122: View of Cliffe High Street, looking east



Figure 123: View of buildings along South Street, with a view to the Downs





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.23 The character area is predominantly residential, with the notable exception of the commercial Cliffe High Street, which retains its primary retail function, with some residential flats above shops.
- 5.24 A few exceptions include Harvey’s Brewery, a reminder of the area’s industrial past, on Cliffe High Street, St Thomas à Becket Church and the former coaching Inn, Pastoral Antiques, on Mallong Street and The Dorset Public House also on Mallong Street. There is also a rowing club and associated outbuildings situated to the south of the character area, adjacent to the River Ouse.
- 5.25 There are three large car parks: the largest set behind buildings to the north of Cliffe High Street (Phoenix Causeway Car Park); another at the junction of Cliffe High Street and Mallong Street (Cliffe High Street Car Park); and the third on South Street (South Street (North) Car Park).

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.26 The buildings in this character area are typically two to three-storeys, with a greater proportion of three-storey buildings along Cliffe High Street and Mallong Street. The more diminutive, two-storey buildings are found on South Street, Chapel Hill and Morris Road.
- 5.27 The church tower to St Thomas à Becket Church is relatively squat but taller than the other buildings within the character area, making it a prominent feature.
- 5.28 There are several 20th and 21st century infill developments behind the main historic core including the modern developments at Hillman Close and Timberyard Lane, which adopt a larger scale and massing than the historic terraces.



Figure 124: St Thomas à Becket Church on Cliffe High Street



Figure 125: View of South Street showing the dominant two-storey building height





## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.29 There is a variety of materials used across the historic buildings, including timber-framing and weatherboarding, sandstone, hung tiles of slate and clay.
- 5.30 Brick, both painted and unpainted is common, often being laid in polychromatic arrangements, whilst flint is also a characterful material. A number of buildings have been rendered.
- 5.31 Where visible, the rear of dwellings is simpler in detailing with further modern amendments, of tiles, slate and brick.
- 5.32 Roofs are predominantly ridge-tiled, with handmade clay tiles, natural slate or modern equivalents.

- 5.33 Cliffe High Street retains a high proportion of historic shopfrontages, with 16th century street-facing gables at Nos.9-11 and a stretch of 19th century uniform frontages with parapeted roofs along the south side of the street (due to road widening in 1829).
- 5.34 South Street features a greater proportion of rendered 18th century buildings with Georgian detailing, and several groups of late 19th century buildings. Some of these feature Gothic detailing and colourful polychromatic brickwork.
- 5.35 Malling Street buildings include a mixture of terraced late 18th and early 19th century houses, and the restored 18th century former coaching inn, Pastorate Antiques.
- 5.36 Modern buildings typically employ a more limited and less characterful palette of materials including the buildings at Hillman Close.



Figure 126: High-quality surviving shopfronts at Harvey's Brewery



Figure 127: Characterful houses to South Street with brick polychromy reflecting pointed Gothic arches





## Boundary Treatments

- 5.37 Most buildings sit with no setback from the street and therefore lack boundary treatments.
- 5.38 Where boundaries exist, brick is the most common boundary material often mixed with unknapped flint.
- 5.39 There are low brick walls with piers to Morris Road, with no retained historic ironwork.
- 5.40 Nos.21 and 23 Malling Street showcase notable historic iron railings.

## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.41 Open, public realm spaces are limited. The River Ouse at the character area’s boundary features a riverside walk, with key activities linked to the river found along its banks, including the rowing club.
- 5.42 There is a corner of public realm at the junction of Cliffe High Street and Malling Street featuring a single street tree, although the street furniture is tired and the surface treatments in poor condition.
- 5.43 There is isolated historic brick and stone paving on Chapel Hill, English’s Passage and Foundry Lane, otherwise concrete paving predominates, often with traditional granite kerbs.
- 5.44 Street furniture is limited to a few benches on the corner of Cliffe High Street and a playground for children at Hillman Close.
- 5.45 Traditional style streetlamps are fixed to building elevations on Cliffe High Street, to minimise street clutter. The other streets generally feature utilitarian modern streetlights including South Street.
- 5.46 Pedestrian movement dominates on Cliffe High Street, with limited car movement into town along this road.
- 5.47 A number of cast iron bollards line pedestrian areas, including at Harvey’s Brewery and on Chapel Hill.



Figure 128: Overhead wires to Morris Road



Figure 129: Traditional style lamppost on Chapel Hill





Key Views

- 5.48 There are dominant views towards the open spaces of the South Downs to the south, the eponymous chalk cliff that resulted from extensive quarrying especially prominent in that respect.
- 5.49 Views along the River Ouse and across it to the wharf buildings to the far side highlight Cliffe and Lewes’ close relationship with the Ouse.
- 5.50 Kinetic views along Cliffe High Street and to and from Cliffe Bridge, distinguish Cliffe from the rest of the Conservation Area.
- 5.51 There are broad views of Thomas à Becket Church, which occupies a corner site on Cliffe High Street and Malling Street.

Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.52 There are 45 Listed Buildings in the character area. They include: the Grade II listed Cliffe Bridge; the Grade II\* listed St Thomas à Becket Church; the Grade II\* listed Harvey’s Brewery; and the Grade I listed Jireh Chapel.
- 5.53 There are a series of buildings of local townscape merit set along both principal streets, such as South Street and Malling Street, and side streets, including Morris Road. Many of these buildings are uniform terraced houses.
- 5.54 A plaque on 45 Cliffe High Street records the street widening of 1829.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.55 There has been a loss of the historic urban grain due to oversized modern developments to the north of the character area.
- 5.56 There has been a loss of architectural detail to some unlisted properties.
- 5.57 Riverside developments should introduce more public access to the river banks.
- 5.58 The large Phoenix Causeway Car Park and oversized St Thomas’ Court development to the north of the church detract from the townscape of the area and dilute the historic urban grain. Parking along the banks of the Ouse in Bear Yard also detracts from the interest of the Conservation Area; areas such as this could form part of future public realm strategies to enhance public riverside access.
- 5.59 The two car parks near the junction of Cliffe High Street and South Street (Cliffe High Street Car Park and South Street (North) Car Park) are similarly detrimental.

- 5.60 There is an opportunity to reduce street clutter and A-boards, particularly at the High Street junction.
- 5.61 There is an opportunity to introduce new, high-quality street furniture, such as benches and seats, to the character area.
- 5.62 Pigeon spikes are limited, but where these are present removal would be beneficial.
- 5.63 There is visible, localised disrepair in the form of algae, vegetative growth and blocked gutters.
- 5.64 Whilst the area is relatively pedestrian friendly, there are opportunities to reduce traffic flow further, particularly on Chapel Hill.
- 5.65 There is an opportunity to replace modern lampposts on South Street and Malling Street with traditional style lampposts used on Cliffe High Street.
- 5.66 If opportunities arise, cables could be relocated below ground where they clutter the streetscene, for example on Morris Road.
- 5.67 The more sympathetic surface finishes installed when Cliffe High Street was partly pedestrianised in 2009 should be used more widely in the character area, with the introduction of stone cobbles, brick pavers and granite setts all improving the appearance of the area. York Stone paving may also be appropriate.
- 5.68 Opportunities should be sought to reintroduce sympathetic iron railings to buildings along Morris Road, replicating historic forms.

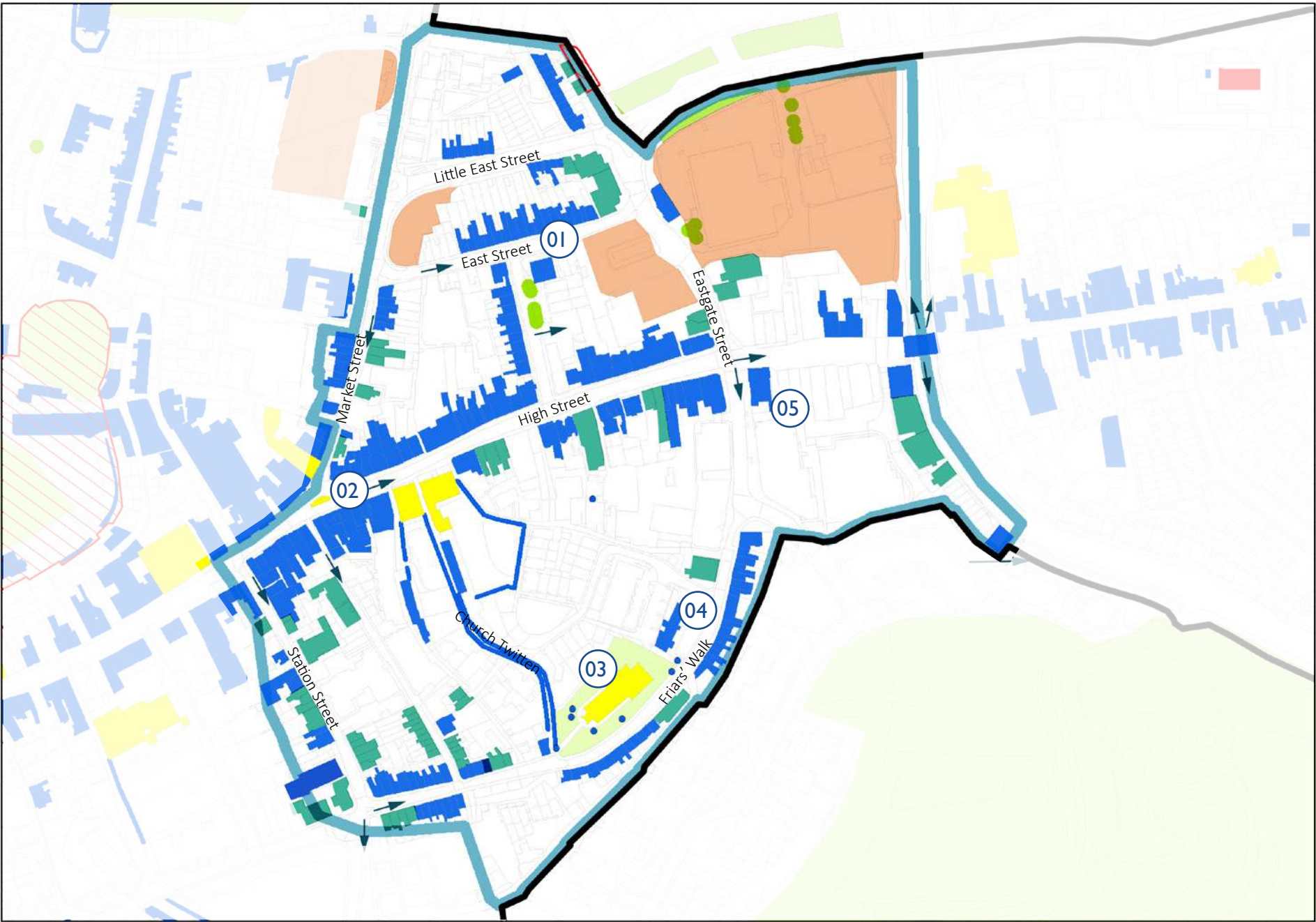


Figure 130: View looking north along the Ouse



Figure 131: The Phoenix Causeway Car Park to the north of St Thomas’ Court





- Conservation Area Boundary
- Character Area Boundary
- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II
- ▨ Scheduled Monument

- TPOs
- Positive Buildings
- Areas for Enhancement
- Public Open Spaces
- ➔ Key Views

- Focal buildings**
- 01 Former Lewes Public Library
  - 02 War Memorial
  - 03 All Saints Centre
  - 04 Quaker Meeting House
  - 05 Fitzroy Memorial Library

This plan is not to scale

## Summary History of the Lower High Street

- 5.69 The Lower High Street sits to the east of the centre of the historic Saxon settlement of Lewes.
- 5.70 As Lewes grew in the late Saxon period, the Lower High Street was increasingly developed and the town walls were extended outwards, aligned with the present day Eastgate Street and Friars' Walk.
- 5.71 Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, a church was built on the site of the All Saints Centre on Friars' Walk. A Franciscan Friary, to the eastern side of Friars' Walk and beyond the confines of the town walls, was established in the 13th century.
- 5.72 Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s, the Friary was converted into a grand townhouse for John Kyme. The High Street was rebuilt with a series of high status townhouses throughout the medieval and early modern periods, such as Trinity House at No.213, which is a refronted 16th century building.
- 5.73 Fisher Street was likely the site of a medieval fish market, whilst the bank of the River Ouse to the east of the street was lined with wharves and industrial buildings. These survive in greatest concentration on Railway Lane.
- 5.74 A significant proportion of regular, brick terraced housing was laid out to the north and south of the High Street in the early 19th century. Such housing can be seen on Lansdown Place and East Street.
- 5.75 Lewes Station opened in the 1840s, its terminus located just to the east of Friars' Walk before a new station was opened at its present location a decade later. The former station served as a goods yard until it was redeveloped and replaced by a magistrates court in the 1980s, which has itself been replaced by a commercial unit.
- 5.76 The eastern part of the High Street was pedestrianised in the late 20th century and is dominated by post-war retail units.





### Summary of Special Interest

- 5.77 The High Street retains its historic, vibrant commercial and retail character.
- 5.78 Prominent re-fronted timber framed buildings along School Hill such as the White Hart Hotel, and grand Georgian houses.
- 5.79 The character area features refined, architecturally unified terraces, such as those along Friars’ Walk, East Street, Albion Street and Waterloo Place.
- 5.80 Surviving twittens south of the High Street and the curve of Friars’ Walk, which follows the course of the former town walls, make the historic plan of the town legible.
- 5.81 Important religious and municipal buildings are distinctive features in the streetscene, including two former and one present library, the All Saints Centre, Lewes Quaker Meeting House, the Eastgate Baptist Church.
- 5.82 Surviving wharves and industrial buildings along the Ouse reflect the historic prominence of the river and Lewes’ industrial past.
- 5.83 The varied topography adds interest, with a clear contrast between the steep slopes of School Hill and low-lying land adjacent to the River Ouse.
- 5.84 The character area affords long views towards the Downs to the east and south.

### Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.85 The street pattern in this area is significantly informed by the planned settlement of Lewes as a medieval burh. Friars’ Walk and Eastgate Street perpetuate the line of medieval town walls, whilst the east end of the High Street follows the line of the historic main street, its former pre-eminence reflected by its breadth.
- 5.86 A number of surviving narrow passageways or twittens, such as Brooman’s Lane and Church Twitten, probably date to the medieval period. These twittens run between the long, thin burgage plots created when the medieval town was laid out.
- 5.87 The historic burgage plot pattern is not extant throughout the character area, with areas removed from the High Street laid out in terraces which have shorter and narrower plots. Modern developments, such as the Waitrose store, and car parking, namely the Lewes Eastgate and Friars’ Walk Car Parks, have also served to obfuscate this historic street pattern to the rear of the High Street plots.



Figure 132: Church Twitten enclosed by flint and brick walls, which are a distinctive feature of the town, reinforcing the street pattern established in the Anglo-Saxon period



Figure 133: Terrace to Friars’ Walk





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.88 The predominant building type throughout the character area is the terraced residential house.
- 5.89 Large 18th and 19th century Listed Buildings are concentrated along the High Street, many taking the form of grand townhouses, such as the Waterstones at 220-221 High Street and Sussex House at No.208.
- 5.90 Along the west bank of the River Ouse there are a number of historic wharf and light industrial buildings.
- 5.91 The School Hill part of the High Street, at the west end of the character area, and the pedestrianised section to the east are lined with shops, with some professional chambers and offices to the former, including the Town Hall, Lewes House and Albion House.
- 5.92 Whilst residential uses dominate to the south of the High Street, there are a number of non-residential properties to the eastern end of Friars' Walk, including: the All Saints Centre; Friends' Meeting House; the recent Lewes Library; and a large NHS office building, as well as a number of areas of car parking.
- 5.93 There is a mix of retail and residential uses to Station Street and Lansdown Place.
- 5.94 In 2023 bus stands were installed on the High Street, to the west of the junction with Friars' Walk.



Figure 134: All Saints Centre on Friars' Walk

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.95 A fine urban grain predominates within the character area with narrow terraced houses evident along East Street, Market Street, Albion Street, Lansdown Place, Friars' Walk, Station Street, and the southern end of St Nicholas Lane.
- 5.96 There are a number of larger scale modern buildings to the eastern end of the character area, departing from the fine urban grain evident in the surrounding historic buildings.
- 5.97 This departure is especially prominent on the pedestrianised part of the High Street, where multi-unit retail developments were realised in the late 20th century including 215-218 High Street and 14 Eastgate Street, and the office developments at the east end of Friars' Walk. The Waitrose building on the fringes of the Conservation Area is relatively low in height but of considerable scale and massing.
- 5.98 The scale of the buildings along the River Ouse to the north and south of the High Street is larger as a result of its historic relationship with light industrial production and trade, featuring a number of characterful wharves and warehouses surviving to Railway Lane. Certain new developments have been designed to loosely draw on this industrial style.
- 5.99 Along the High Street scale and massing varies in a characterful manner, highlighting the area's piecemeal development. Although the majority of buildings are three or four-storeys, the topography of the street resulting from the incline of School Hill and the variety in building heights means the roofscape plays a very significant role within the character of the area.



Figure 135: Pedestrianised east end of the High Street by Lewes Bridge.





## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.100 There are a number of timber-framed buildings on the High Street and School Hill, although many of these have been refronted. Among the most prominent examples are Trinity House (213 High Street) which is hung in mathematical tiles and 34 High Street, the side return of which to Walwer's Lane reveals a close studded timber-frame.
- 5.101 There are a number of prominent classical buildings within the character area, with decorative detailing to the doorways, doorcases and window surrounds, with 17 High Street and the Town Hall being particularly grand examples.
- 5.102 There are prominent Gothic Revival buildings, including the Eastgate Baptist Church, former Wesleyan Station Street Chapel, former town library on Albion Street and former Fitzroy Memorial Library on the High Street, featuring pointed gables and windows, and brick polychromy. The Fitzroy Memorial Library features a distinctive and visually prominent Gothic-style cupola.
- 5.103 Brick is the most common building material within the character area with grey, red, or yellow brick used, largely deployed in a polychromatic manner. Many buildings feature grey brick contrasted with red brick surrounds to door and window openings, including: on North Street; Waterloo Place; Lansdown Place; Friars' Walk; and Little East Street.
- 5.104 Modern buildings tend to use red brick, laid in a plain stretcher bond, with less or no polychromy. Certain modern buildings reference their context within the Conservation Area through the use of flint or hung tiles including the development at Baxter's Printworks.
- 5.105 On the north side of East Street there is a series of red brick terraces with classical doorcases and wide tripartite sash windows beneath first floor canted oriel windows.
- 5.106 Clustered closely on Market and North Streets there are a number of buildings faced in vitrified brick.
- 5.107 On the west side of Albion Street there is a characterful row of Regency stuccoed terraces with simple radial fanlights and channelling to the ground floor.
- 5.108 Intricate ironwork balconies are extant in a number of places within the character area, most notably Albion Street. There is a single example of a balcony on the High Street at No.35.
- 5.109 Historic signage and surface painting are all characterful details that contribute to the interest of the character area, as demonstrated by the signs and painting related to W.E. Baxter's evident on 34 and 35 High Street.
- 5.110 Historic shopfronts are commonplace throughout the character area, particularly on the High Street, and provide a significant degree of interest, a number retaining decorative stained glass glazing within leaded lights.



Figure 136: Stained glass overlay to 207 High Street



Figure 137: Trefoil windows to the Fitzroy Memorial Library





## Boundary Treatments

- 5.111 The majority of buildings within the character area lack front boundary treatments, reflecting the urban character of the area.
- 5.112 Most of the buildings along the High Street are positioned hard up against the pavement. Where iron railings exist, these are largely concentrated outside prominent, largely 18th and 19th century townhouses, which have minimal setbacks from the street. Lewes House (32 High Street) forms the only exception, featuring a generous set back from the predominant building line, over a raised forecourt.
- 5.113 The Regency terrace to the west side of Albion Street features uniform iron railings around basement lightwells, giving the buildings some breathing space from the public realm.
- 5.114 There are tall brick and flint retaining walls to the All Saints Centre and Friends’ Meeting House, the same materials also evident in the long walls that stretch along the historic twittens to the south of the High Street: Walwers Lane; Broomans Lane; and Church Twitten.

## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.115 Owing to its location at the heart of Lewes’ historic centre, there is limited open space in this character area, although the pedestrianisation of the High Street to the east of Eastgate Street has provided a more generous area of public realm with street furniture including bollards, benches and bins.

- 5.116 The River Ouse offers breathing space to the east of the character area. Whilst there are occasional views of the river from the character area, this waterway can be best appreciated from Cliffe Bridge.
- 5.117 Due to its central location and the high density of development there are relatively few street trees, except along the north-eastern boundary of the Conservation Area and those planted on the pedestrianised stretch of the High Street. There are also mature trees to the All Saints Centre churchyard, Friends’ Meeting House and the area between Broomans Lane and Church Twitten.
- 5.118 There is an elaborate Gothic Revival water fountain to Friars’ Walk, a rare example of historic street furniture within the character area.
- 5.119 Throughout the character area there are a number of areas of clay brick paving, including: Waterloo Place; Lansdown Place; Friars’ Walk; Market Street; and the pedestrianised part of the High Street, although the latter two have been resurfaced using modern bricks without the same characterful variety which is evident in the historic examples. There is a good proportion of traditional granite kerbs.
- 5.120 The character area also features plenty of less sensitive tarmac road surfacing and concrete pavers.



Figure 138: Historic flint cobble boundary wall



Figure 139: Modern concrete pavers to the High Street with traditional granite kerbs





## Key Views

- 5.121 Kinetic views along the High Street are significant, particularly those to the east looking down School Hill towards Cliffe and the Downs below. The War Memorial terminates views to the west.
- 5.122 Cliffe Bridge provides a vantage point from which open views along the River Ouse and towards Harvey’s Brewery can be enjoyed, with its steaming chimneys and the smell of hops adding to the character of the area.
- 5.123 There are characterful kinetic views along Friars’ Walk and Lansdown Place, the Meeting House and former All Saints Church combining with the long uniform terraces and curve of the road to create views of interest.
- 5.124 There are important views towards Firle Beacon looking south along the twittens and streets to the south of the High Street.



Figure 140: View from the Phoenix Causeway

## Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.125 There are a significant number of designated heritage assets within the character area, with 138 Grade II Listed Buildings and four Grade II\* Listed Buildings extant.
- 5.126 Thanks to the high proportion of designated heritage assets there are only a few undesigned positive buildings, such as the Eastgate Baptist Church and short run of terraces to the south of St Nicholas Lane.

## Issues and Opportunities

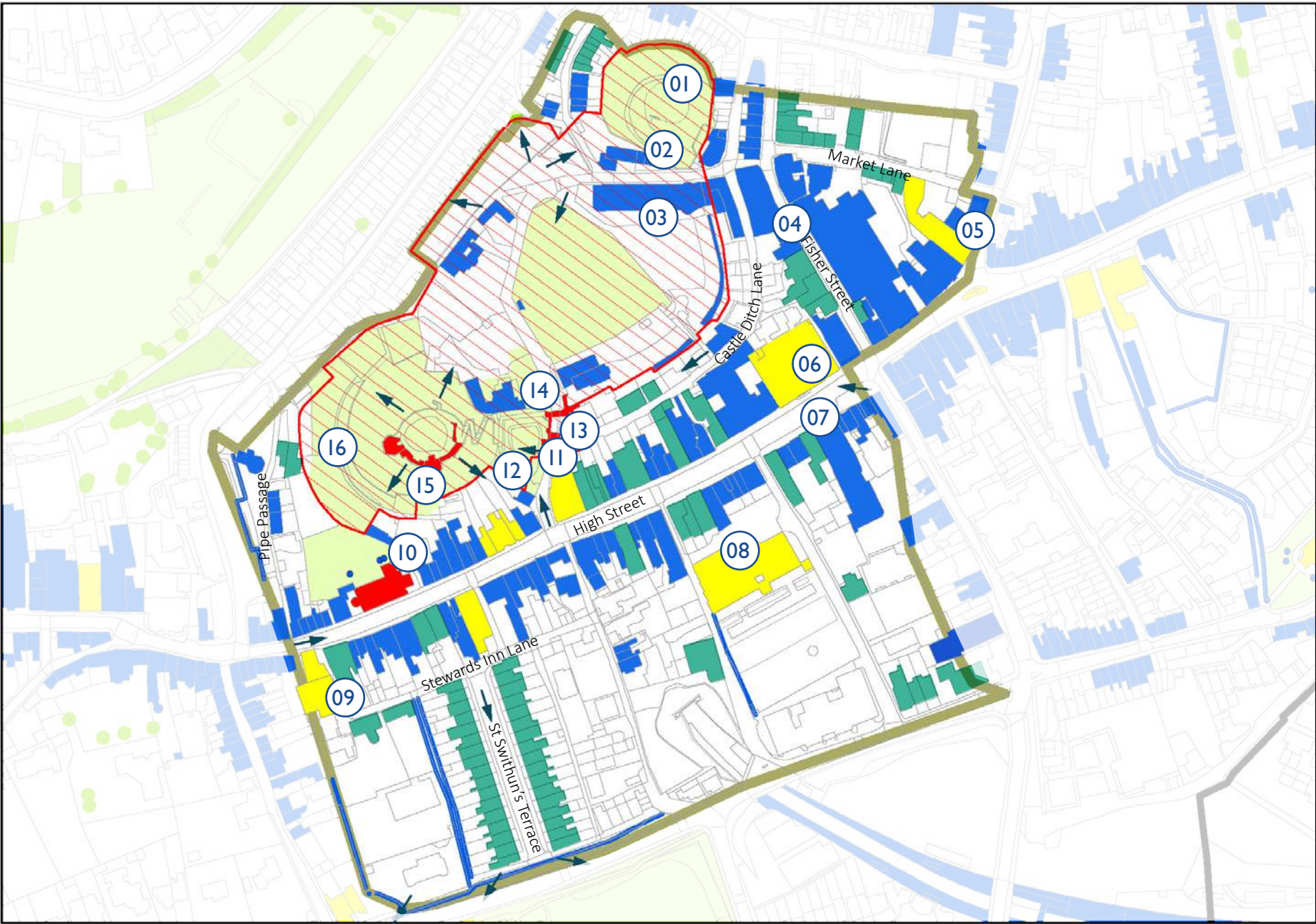
- 5.127 There has been a relatively low incidence of traditional timber sash and casement window replacement with unsympathetic uPVC units. However, the character area would be enhanced by the reinstatement of traditional style sash windows where these have been lost.

- 5.128 There is an opportunity to reinstate consistent, high-quality, traditional surface treatments throughout much of the character area, especially where poor maintenance and unsympathetic repairs are evident. The introduction of brick setts and granite kerbs across the character area (with particular focus on the High Street) is encouraged. Cobbles or stone setts may be appropriate in other locations.
- 5.129 There are substantial areas of car parking within this character area, which at present have a detrimental impact on its character and appearance. A degree of mitigation could be achieved by resurfacing works and the introduction of soft landscaping and screening boundary treatments. New areas of public realm could also be introduced along the banks of the Ouse.
- 5.130 The introduction of new, temporary bus stops on School Hill has increased congestion and added visual clutter to an important part of the High Street. The current form and materiality of the bus shelters, and use of tarmac surfaces and concrete kerbs around the shelters detracts from the special character of the area.
- 5.131 Bins to businesses and residences should not be stored on the pavement.
- 5.132 Pigeon spikes are limited, but where they exist, removal would be beneficial.
- 5.133 Modern infill development in certain areas obscures the historic urban grain.
- 5.134 Station Street and Eastgate Street are relatively congested roads, with the former featuring narrow pavements.
- 5.135 The public realm in the pedestrianised precinct could be improved with further street trees, and high-quality street furniture. Spaces to the rear of buildings along the High Street would also be enhanced by more active frontages, better street furniture, and improved surface finishes.



Figure 141: NCP car park and rear of the post-war shopping precinct





<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conservation Area Boundary</li><li>Character Area Boundary</li><li>Grade I</li><li>Grade II*</li><li>Grade II</li><li>Scheduled Monument</li><li>TPOs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Positive Buildings</li><li>Areas for Enhancement</li><li>Public Open Spaces</li><li>Key Views</li></ul> <p><b>Focal buildings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>01 Brack Mound</li><li>02 Brack Mound House</li><li>03 The Maltings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>04 Beard's Brewery</li><li>05 Market Tower</li><li>06 Crown Court</li><li>07 White Hart Hotel</li><li>08 Pelham House</li><li>09 Westgate Chapel</li><li>10 St Michael's Church</li><li>11 Barbican House</li><li>12 Bartholomew House</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>13 Barbican</li><li>14 Inner Gatehouse</li><li>15 South Tower of Lewes Castle</li><li>16 West Tower of Lewes Castle</li></ul>
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This plan is not to scale

Summary History of Lewes Castle and Middle High Street

- 5.136 This area was at the centre of the historic town of Lewes from its foundation in the 9th century as a defended Saxon settlement (burh). The area was broken up into long thin burgage plots which ran perpendicular to the High Street, with narrow alleys, or twittens, running between these plots.
- 5.137 Lewes Castle was built across two mottes, or artificial mounds, following the Norman Conquest. The extant masonry keep on Castle Mound was constructed c.1100 by William de Warenne, 1st Earl of Surrey, who established Lewes as the most important settlement within his extensive holdings in East Sussex.
- 5.138 Lewes' administrative prominence was reinforced by its position as a leading market town in the medieval period, with the broad High Street serving as the site of daily markets.
- 5.139 St Michael's Church on the High Street was first built in the 13th century and merged with the lost church of St Andrew's (for which St Andrew's Lane is named) following the Reformation.
- 5.140 Some medieval timber-framed buildings survive, such as 74 High Street. Timber-framed buildings of both the medieval and early modern period have largely been refronted with brick or mathematical tile throughout the character area. This was commonly carried out to high status townhouses, such as the 16th century Pelham House, off Watergate Lane, refronted three centuries later.
- 5.141 The area has historically been the site of important institutional buildings, with the Victorian town hall and its Georgian predecessor, now Lewes Crown Court, both located on the High Street.





### Summary of Special Interest

- 5.142 The character area has ancient origins covering the majority of the Anglo-Saxon burh.
- 5.143 The 11th century Lewes Castle and gatehouse, 14th century Barbican and the Castle and Brack Mounds are visually prominent historic features.
- 5.144 The historic layout of the town is highly legible, with twittens surviving to the south of High Street, streets such as Castle Ditch Lane following the line of the castle walls, and the town walls surviving along Southover Road.
- 5.145 The historic town, castle and twittens walls are an important feature of the character area.
- 5.146 Grand municipal buildings including the Crown Court, Market Tower and Town Hall are focused along the High Street.
- 5.147 The High Street retains a substantial quantity of medieval buildings, including St Michael's Church and the timber-framed and jettied No.74-5.
- 5.148 Medieval buildings have been retained beneath or behind later buildings and façades, with 14th century vaults surviving under the town hall, and a Georgian façade added to the 16th century structure of the White Hart Hotel.
- 5.149 Medieval buildings survive alongside a range of Georgian, Victorian and early 20th century buildings executed in a range of materials and styles.
- 5.150 High-status, historic town houses survive throughout the character area, such as Barbican House and Westgate House on the High Street, Castle Gate House and Castle Lodge on Castle Gate, Pelham House on St Andrew's Lane, and Brack Mount House.
- 5.151 The area has a varied topography, with Brack and Castle Mound enjoying positions of prominence, and the ground falling away to the south of the High Street.
- 5.152 The character area has a strong sense of connection with the downland to the east of the town.

### Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.153 The broad central section of the High Street, which runs east–west through the centre of the character area, is the principal route through the area.
- 5.154 Narrow streets and twittens run perpendicular to the south side of the High Street, as survivals of the planned medieval settlement of Lewes. These routes leading off the street provide welcome punctuations in what is otherwise continuous development, as well as offering glimpsed views of the Castle to the north and of Lewes' landscape setting down the hill to the south. The tall flint

walls enclosing the twittens are arresting, positive features in the conservation area, due to their age, aesthetic value and ability to make the historic street pattern of the medieval borough legible.

- 5.155 Aside from Pipe Passage, twittens are not a prominent feature to the north of the High Street, with the large Castle Precinct disrupting the pattern of twittens to the south of the street.
- 5.156 The plot pattern is relatively irregular, comprising plots of varying size and depth, demonstrating organic growth over the centuries, with the exception of the more formal, single phase St Swithun's Terrace.
- 5.157 The curved line of Castle Ditch Lane relates to the early 12th century layout of the Castle and its bailey. The steepness of Brack and Castle Mounds restricts the depth of plots to the base of each, evidenced along Castle Banks and Castle Ditch Lane respectively.
- 5.158 The western end of this section of the High Street features a relatively fine urban grain, whilst the narrow frontages of the central and eastern portions of the street are interspersed with larger commercial or institutional buildings including the Law Courts and the White Hart Hotel.
- 5.159 The buildings to the north of the High Street around the Castle occupy more generous plots surrounded by open space. The tight plot pattern of the High Street becomes looser in the streets to the south; these streets feature a number of sizable buildings within larger plots, both historic and modern, including Pelham House and Caburn Court.



Figure 142: View looking west along the High Street





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.160 Along the High Street, the buildings are predominantly in retail or commercial use featuring shop units, banks, restaurants, cafés, public houses, and estate agents. The upper floors often have a residential function, with some office use at this level.
- 5.161 A number of grandly-proportioned properties within the character area were originally designed for residential use but have been reused for different purposes subsequently – Pelham House is now a bar and wedding venue, whilst the Museum of Sussex Archaeology occupies Barbican House.
- 5.162 Residential use is typical elsewhere, especially in the area to the north of the Castle Ditch Lane and to the south of the High Street where there is a high proportion of solely residential properties, in contrast to the mixed, retail or commercial uses to the High Street.
- 5.163 St Swithun’s Terrace is a planned early 20th century residential development.
- 5.164 Institutional or administrative uses are also evident, with Lewes District Council’s inter-war office building located on Southover Road and the Law Courts on a prominent High Street site.
- 5.165 The former Beard’s Brewery now hosts an arts centre, whilst the neighbouring maltings is now a costumier’s and outfitter’s studio.
- 5.166 The High Street features religious buildings including St Michael’s Church and Westgate Chapel.



Figure 144: Former maltings, now an outfitter’s studio

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.167 The buildings along the High Street are of a larger scale and massing than elsewhere in the character area, being overwhelmingly three or four-storeys tall, yet their scale and massing is diverse, which contributes to the character of the area. The buildings’ varied roof types, comprising a mix of parapets, pitched roofs and gables, also add to the eclectic character of the streetscene.
- 5.168 There are a few particularly grand frontages facing the High Street, including the Law Courts.
- 5.169 The buildings beyond the High Street to the south are of a smaller scale.
- 5.170 The castle buildings are characterised by a large bulky massing and their prominence is further accentuated by their positioning on an artificial mound.



Figure 143: Lewes Castle appearing behind buildings fronting the High Street





## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.171 Flint was the main building material used to construct Lewes Castle and Barbican, the latter also incorporating sandstone detailing.
- 5.172 Timber-framing is evident to the exterior of buildings within the character area, such as 67 High Street and the St Martin’s Lane return of No.74. The character area contains a substantial quantity of medieval buildings, which retain original timber framing internally, but were refronted in the early modern period. In some instances such refronting works took the form of overcladding with mathematical tiles, or involved the construction of new front facades, as was the case at Barbican House and Pelham House.
- 5.173 Both stone dressings and stone facings are considerably more common within this character area, particularly on the High Street, reflecting its historic prosperity and commercial pre-eminence. There are also buildings that are stuccoed, historically intended to create the impression of stone but at lower cost, and more economical red and grey brick construction. Historic header and Flemish bond brickwork is common.
- 5.174 A number of buildings within the area were designed in a classical style, such as the Law Courts, the HSBC building (No.63) and its neighbour, 64 High Street, which exhibit combinations of the following features: rustication; sculptural relief; porticos; dentilled eaves; round arched windows; and balustrades.



Figure 145: Bow windows to the High Street

- 5.175 Classical detailing is also evident in a number of Georgian townhouses, most commonly in doorcases and fanlights, for example 61 High Street.
- 5.176 There is good survival of historic shopfronts on the High Street, which retain tiled or panelled stallrisers, dividing mullions, fascias, pilasters and consoles. There are examples of surviving historic tiles to entrances and some ironwork associated with former canopies remains.
- 5.177 Georgian buildings typically feature shallow bow windows, pedimented doorcases and quoining. Pelham House (an 18th century remodelling of an Elizabethan house), on St Andrew’s Lane, is the largest of a number of impressive Georgian buildings in the character area.
- 5.178 The character area features Arts and Crafts style buildings with scalloping to hung tiles and bargeboards, jetties, bay windows, sham timbers, roughcast render and ornate ridge tiles, all characteristic of this approach.
- 5.179 Interpretative and historic signage and surface painting add characterful details that contribute to the interest of the character area.



Figure 146: Jettied timber frame buildings to the north end of St Martin’s Lane



Figure 147: Interpretative sign commemorating the site where Thomas Paine forged his revolutionary politics, at the White Hart Hotel





## Boundary Treatments

- 5.180 The high boundary walls of flint or brick located along the routes between the High Street and Southover Road, such as St Andrew’s and St Martin’s Lanes, are characterful and funnel views down the hill over Lewes’ landscape setting to the south. The similar flint and brick boundary walls framing the narrower twittens, such as Paine’s Twitten and Green Lane, create an enclosed, intimate quality and are particularly characterful.
- 5.181 Sections of the medieval Castle wall survive around the base of the Castle Mound to the north, east and west. The surviving parts of the Castle wall are a reminder of the area’s historic development and Lewes Castle’s importance as the seat of a powerful medieval magnate.
- 5.182 The buildings on the High Street are positioned hard up against the pavement leaving no room for boundary treatments. Those found on Castle Mound and enclosing the bowling green and base of Brack Mound are executed in flint and brick.
- 5.183 Low brick walls with gate piers survive well to St Swithun’s Terrace.



Figure 148: Flint boundary walls to the Castle Precinct

## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.184 The only concentrations of street furniture, namely bike racks, bins and benches, are found to the east end of the High Street and to the north of the bowling green.
- 5.185 There are very few trees within the character area. Those that are visible from the street are largely located in gardens to the south of the High Street, around the railway tunnel or within the footprint of the Castle.
- 5.186 The former cattle trough at the southern end of Watergate Lane forms an interesting, decorative feature in the streetscene.
- 5.187 The streetlighting is typically of a traditional-style, sympathetic to the character of the area. Where space is restricted, lamps are fixed to the elevations of buildings. Traditional style finger post signage can be found on the High Street.



Figure 149: Traditional style finger post signage on the High Street





## Key Views

- 5.188 Designed, kinetic and open views to and from Lewes Castle are the most important views within the Lewes Conservation Area. This reflects the motivations of those responsible for the Castle’s construction in c.1100. Its present visual dominance in the character area and Conservation Area at large, evident in both close and more distant views, arises from its original strategic and defensive purpose as a viewing point and means of projecting lordly power. There are important glimpsed views of the Barbican from the High Street and Castle Mound.
- 5.189 Open views from the Castle Precincts and Castle Lane across the Paddock look towards the Wallands and toward Brack Mound in the east.
- 5.190 Kinetic views along the High Street both east and west, capture the varied quality of the street, those to the west imbued with additional interest by the towers to St Michael’s Tower and Church Hall, those to the east by the distant Downs. The round, flint tower to St Michael’s Church is particularly distinctive, as it is only one of three in East Sussex.
- 5.191 Funneled views looking south down the streets, lanes and twittens to the south of the High Street take in the stepped rooflines of buildings on the hill and the landscape setting beyond Lewes.

## Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.192 There are 79 Grade II Listed Buildings within the character area, a further eight Grade II\* Listed Buildings, including Barbican House and the Westgate Chapel, and four Grade I Listed Buildings. These are Lewes Castle Keep, the Barbican and south Castle walls, the remains of the inner gatehouse and its adjacent east and west walls, and the Church of St Michael.
- 5.193 The Lewes Castle site, which includes Lewes Castle Mount, the Castle Precincts and Brack Mound is a Scheduled Monument.
- 5.194 Many of the unlisted buildings on the High Street are positive buildings. Similarly, runs of buildings to St Swithun’s Terrace and Market Lane are recognised as positive buildings.



Figure 150: Striking view of the prominent towers to St Michael’s Church and Church Hall





## Issues and Opportunities

- 5.195 There is a significant opportunity to improve the tired public realm and landscaping to the north of the bowling green where there are benches and a plaque providing information about the Battle of Lewes.
- 5.196 At present a cluster of poorly sited broadband cabinets occupy an important space within the character area at the junction of Station Street and the High Street; their relocation to a more discreet position would enhance the character and appearance of this part of the character area.
- 5.197 The reinstatement of more traditional surface treatments would enhance the character area, as less sympathetic tarmac and concrete pavers currently predominate. Additionally, brick setts and granite kerbs are the most important historic surface finishes within the character area and should be retained and repaired where they survive, as should the York Stone paving and stone cobbles along Castle Gate.

- 5.198 The use of uPVC units instead of traditional timber sash and casement windows has a negative impact on the character area due to their unsympathetic materiality and profiles. As such the further installation of uPVC units should be opposed and the reinstatement of timber windows supported.
- 5.199 There are a number of vacant units that would be better preserved by reinstating their original retail use. Opportunities should also be sought for the conversion of historic retail units back to their original retail function (where these have been converted to residential uses) to re-activate elevations and enhance their contribution to the character area.
- 5.200 There is localised disrepair within the character area; any opportunity should be taken to inform local shop and business owners of the importance of appropriate building maintenance and repair.
- 5.201 Pigeon spikes are limited, but where they exist they are detrimental and their removal would be beneficial.
- 5.202 The High Street and Fisher Street suffer traffic congestion particularly during rush hour.

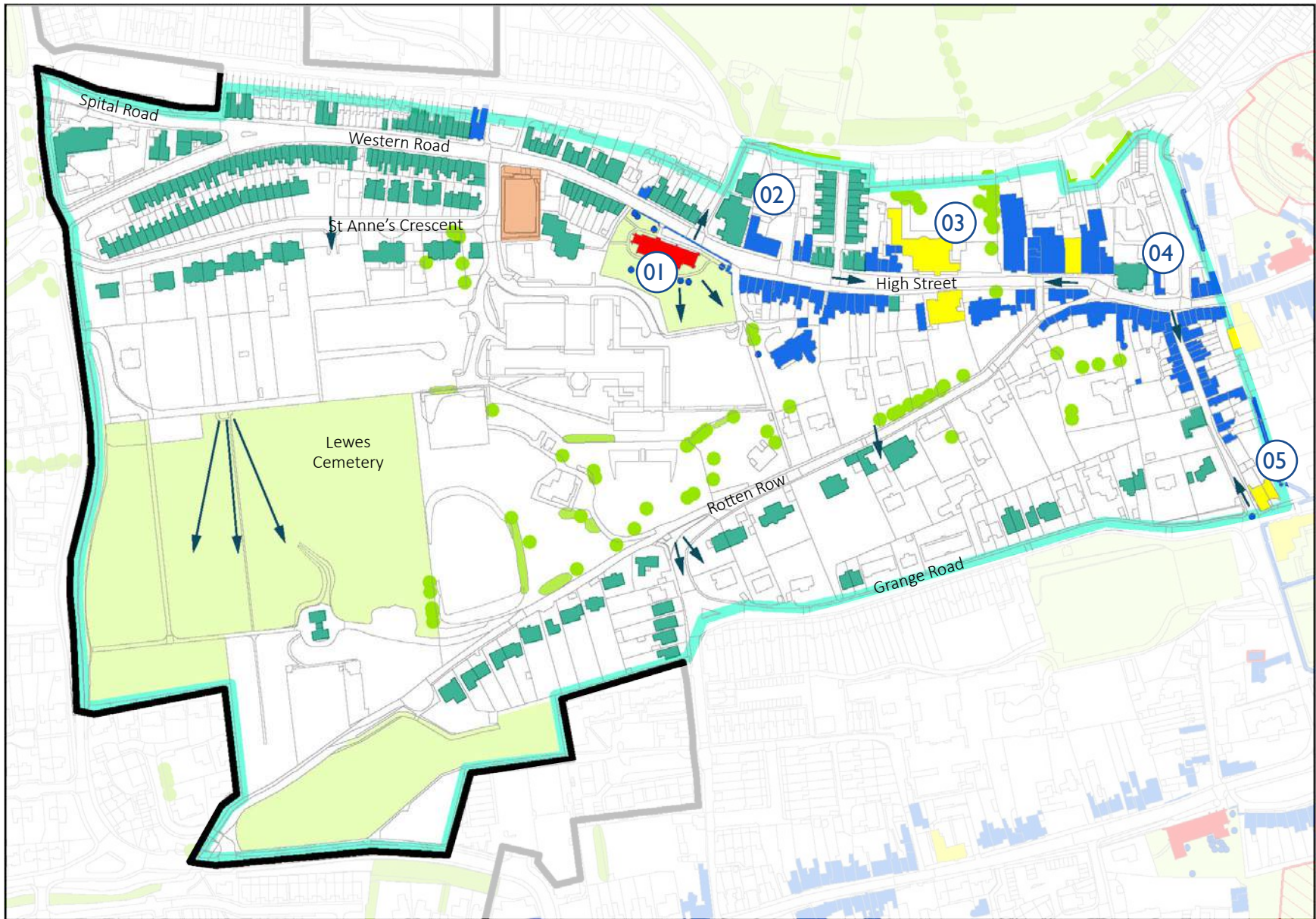


Figure 151: Non-original timber windows in disrepair



Figure 152: Neglected public realm to the north of the bowling green





— Conservation Area Boundary

— Character Area Boundary

■ Grade I

■ Grade II\*

■ Grade II

▨ Scheduled Monument

● TPOs

■ Positive Buildings

■ Areas for Enhancement

■ Public Open Spaces

➡ Key Views

**Focal buildings**

01 St Anne's Church

02 St Pancras's Church

03 The Shelley's Hotel

04 143 High Street

05 The Capron

This plan is not to scale

## Summary History of the Upper High Street and Western Road

- 5.203 Rotten Row likely follows a historic Roman route.
- 5.204 St Anne's Church and St Peter's Church (which was demolished after the Reformation) were built by 1121. The early date of their construction indicates that there was a substantial western suburb beyond the walls of Lewes by this point in time. St Anne's retains a Norman tower, nave, south transept, south aisle and font, ornamented by a basket weave motif. Broad Norman pillars with stiff-leaf capitals help support the 16th century roof.
- 5.205 A leper house dedicated to St Nicholas was established off Spital Road in the late 11th century.
- 5.206 A number of medieval, 16th and 17th century buildings survive within the character area, although the Fifteenth Century Bookshop at 99–100 High Street is the only building to feature a timber-frame visible externally. Other buildings of a similar date, like The Shelley's Hotel, were refronted in the 18th century.
- 5.207 Lewes Cemetery was formed in the 1850s to the north of Rotten Row, with burial plots provided for the parishes of St Michael's and All Saints in Lewes, and St Thomas à Becket, Cliffe.
- 5.208 Terraces were laid out along Western Road in the 19th century, with the speed of development intensifying after Lewes Prison opened in 1853.
- 5.209 Villas were built along St Anne's Crescent and Rotten Row from the mid-19th century, with semis and terraces predominating on the Crescent, and detached houses common along Rotten Row.
- 5.210 East Sussex County Council Offices opened in 1968, off St Anne's Crescent.





### Summary of Special Interest

- 5.211 There are prominent Georgian townhouses around the Bottleneck and to the western end of the High Street, whilst large Italianate villas are common on St Anne’s Crescent, Rotten Row and Grange Road.
- 5.212 Terraced housing in uniform runs is present along Western Road and St Peter’s Place, with earlier terraced housing along Keere Street and the High Street having a more varied character, as these streets were developed in a piecemeal fashion.
- 5.213 Medieval buildings, including the Norman St Anne’s Church, 15th Century Bookshop at 99-100 High Street, and the Shelley’s Hotel (a 16th century building altered in the 18th century) make an important contribution to the character area.
- 5.214 The Downs form the backdrop to picturesque views along the High Street, whilst the location of the character area on the southern slope of a chalk ridge gives expansive views of Firle Beacon and the Lewes Brooks to the south.
- 5.215 The cemetery is the key open space in the character area, supplemented by St Anne’s churchyard.

### Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.216 The street pattern within the character area is largely defined by the diverging historic routes of Rotten Row and the High Street (which becomes Western Road to the west of the area). The High Street follows a gently curving east–west course, whilst Rotten Row extends south-west.
- 5.217 The main side streets in the character area: Keere Street; St Anne’s Crescent; St Peter’s Place; and Irelands Lane; connect to the High Street rather than Rotten Row, which is significantly less developed.
- 5.218 There is a relatively fine urban grain to the High Street, Western Road, Keere Street and St Peter’s Place where terraced houses with narrow frontages predominate.
- 5.219 The fine urban grain along the High Street and Western Road is regularly interrupted by larger buildings with more generous plots, such as the historic high status dwellings which predominate to the east of the High Street, including 110 and 111 High Street, and The Shelley’s Hotel opposite. The churches of St Anne and St Pancras, also on the High Street, occupy larger plots, particularly St Anne’s.

- 5.220 At St Anne’s Crescent a generous bank of planting in front, breaks with the character established along the High Street, with much broader plots to the south side of the street.
- 5.221 The development along Rotten Row is much less densely developed, featuring detached villas sitting well back from the road within spacious, irregular plots.
- 5.222 The plot pattern in the land between the High Street/Western Road and Rotten Row is much looser, featuring plots of varying scales interspersed with open spaces, such as the cemetery. The modern East Sussex County Council Offices occupies a particularly large plot.



Figure 153: View looking east along the curving High Street





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.223 The predominant building types within the character area are terraced houses and detached and semi-detached villas, which largely remain in residential use.
- 5.224 There are some retail or commercial buildings scattered along the High Street and Western Road including public houses, a hotel, grocers, and pharmacies.
- 5.225 There are a number of office buildings within the area, the largest and most visually prominent being the post-war East Sussex County Council Offices.
- 5.226 The former St Anne’s School is off Rotten Row, whilst Lewes Old Grammar School occupies several buildings on the north side of the High Street near the junction with Rotten Row.
- 5.227 Within the character area there are several places of worship such as the churches of St Anne’s and St Pancras and the chapel in Lewes Cemetery.



Figure 154: The modern East Sussex County Council Offices which towers above the historic buildings within the character area

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.228 Buildings are overwhelmingly two or three-storeys throughout the character area, the third-storey often expressed externally by a dormer window or attic storey.
- 5.229 The tower of St Anne’s Church, which features a pyramidal roof and spire, rises higher than the domestic buildings within its setting, making it a prominent feature in the character area.
- 5.230 Different roof types, including gables, pitched roofs and parapets, as well as prominent chimneys, add interest and character to the roofline of the High Street, Western Road and Keere Street. A cluster of larger buildings – Trevor House, St Anne’s House and the Shelley’s Hotel – break with the narrower frontages which are common to the east and west of these building on the High Street.
- 5.231 There is a considerable degree of uniformity in massing along St Anne’s Crescent, where there are smaller three-storey terraces and semis to the north side and larger scale semi-detached villas to the south side, as well as the more imposing Southdown House at the east end.
- 5.232 The buildings comprising the East Sussex County Council Offices, are the largest in the character area both in scale and massing, towering over many of the historic buildings in the character area and wider Conservation Area.



Figure 155: A more domestic scale at St Anne’s Terrace



## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.233 Brick is the predominant building material within this character area. Red and grey bricks are most common, both often used together, with the resulting polychromy adding interest to the area. Header and Flemish bond brickwork is commonplace.
- 5.234 Intricate bricklaying is common within the character area, with diaper patterns, brick modillions and well-detailed window surrounds enhancing the appearance of the area.
- 5.235 Many of the terraced houses which predominate throughout the character area are painted or stuccoed.
- 5.236 Flint is used on a number of important buildings within the area, such as St Anne's Church and St Michael's Court, Keere Street. A particularly striking use of the material is evident in the near continuous run of buildings from Mead House of Lewes Old Grammar School to 141 High Street.
- 5.237 A characterful heterogeneity arises from the use of different materials, such as weatherboarding, vitrified brick and tile hanging. The visible jettied timber frame of 99-100 High Street is particularly significant in this respect; the building contrasts in materials and appearance to its surrounding stuccoed 18th and 19th century buildings and frontages, which are contrastingly governed by symmetry and regularity.
- 5.238 Porches and door surrounds are important features. Higher status properties in the character area often have classical columns or pilasters articulating their doorways. This is evident to the villas on the south side of St Anne's Crescent, the grand houses to the eastern end of the High Street, and the Pelham Arms. The Shelley's Hotel retains a striking Tudor stone door surround.
- 5.239 The character area features good survival of historic timber sash windows. Bay windows and dormer windows are prevalent on St Anne's Crescent.
- 5.240 Roofs are either clad in clay tiles or slate. To the east of the character area, along Keere Street and the High Street, clay tiled roofs are substantially more common than slate roofs, reflecting the area's earlier development. However, slate is almost ubiquitous in the later, 19th century terraces and villas along Western Road, St Anne's Crescent, and St Peter's Place. The Shelley's Hotel is roofed with stone slate.



Figure 156: Significant variety to the streetscape along the High Street showing the timber-framing of 99-100 High Street next to late 18th and 19th century stuccoed frontages

## Boundary Treatments

- 5.241 The long brick and flint wall to the north side of Rotten Row and St Anne's churchyard, as well as the walls of Lewes Cemetery are all historic boundary treatments which survive on a large scale and contribute significantly to the character area's interest.
- 5.242 The remains of the medieval town wall visible to Westgate Street are an important feature at the eastern edge of the character area.
- 5.243 A lack of set backs to the High Street, Western Road and the streets to the north of both means that there are relatively few boundary treatments. Where there are set backs they are often shallow, with cast iron railings used, among the most interesting found on St Anne's Terrace, which are capped with fleur-de-lis finials. Low brick boundary walls are also used.
- 5.244 There are some high brick walls to yards along the High Street, but they are most prevalent along Rotten Row where their scale and decorative treatment emphasises the elevated status of the villas along the road.
- 5.245 Although some boundary treatments have been lost on St Anne's Crescent, the retention of piers and iron railings to the street contributes to the character of the area.



Figure 157: Tall flint wall to Keere Street





## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.246 The character area is well-served by green space, including Lewes Cemetery, St Anne’s Churchyard, and the park and children’s playground by the Winterbourne Stream. These spaces are shown on the character area map.
- 5.247 To the south of the High Street and St Anne’s Crescent there is a substantial quantity of open space presently in use for surface car parking, largely associated with the East Sussex County Council Offices.
- 5.248 There are relatively few street trees to the High Street and Western Road, although the remainder of the character area has a green and leafy character due to the well-established planting in front gardens and the provision of open green spaces.
- 5.249 The character area features a good proportion of granite kerbs and some traditional brick pavers but otherwise the surface treatments comprise modern pavers or tarmac finishes. Keere Street features characterful cobbles.

## Key Views

- 5.250 Key long-distance views toward the surrounding countryside to the south are commonplace, whether glimpsed through gaps between buildings on St Anne’s Crescent, or enjoyed from open spaces like Lewes Cemetery or the Churchyard of St Anne’s.



Figure 158: View to the south of Lewes from the cemetery

- 5.251 The view down Keere Street with its characterful early 19th century terraces, distant views of the countryside to the south as well as glimpses of Priory Crescent and the roofscape of Southover, is a key view within the eastern part of the character area.
- 5.252 The termination of views into the character area from the east by the snub-nosed Old Toll House is of interest.
- 5.253 Important views along the High Street from St Anne’s Church and the Pelham Arms are terminated by the curvature of the road and the Lewes Downs in the distance to the east.
- 5.254 There are pleasing views of the green space at Baxter’s Field along Irelands Lane.

## Audit Of Heritage Assets

- 5.255 There are many Listed Buildings within the Upper High Street and Western Road Character Area. Sixty-eight of these are Grade II listed, whilst four, including the Caprons and Shelleys, are Grade II\* listed, St Anne’s Church is the only Grade I Listed Building. The Listed Buildings largely date to the 18th and early 19th centuries and are of a domestic character, along with grander buildings now largely converted to institutional uses.
- 5.256 There are many buildings deemed of townscape merit, representing a large number of characterful villas and terraced houses along Western Road, St Anne’s Crescent, Rotten Row and St Peter’s Place.



Figure 159: Characterful brick paving to the High Street with poor quality concrete kerbs





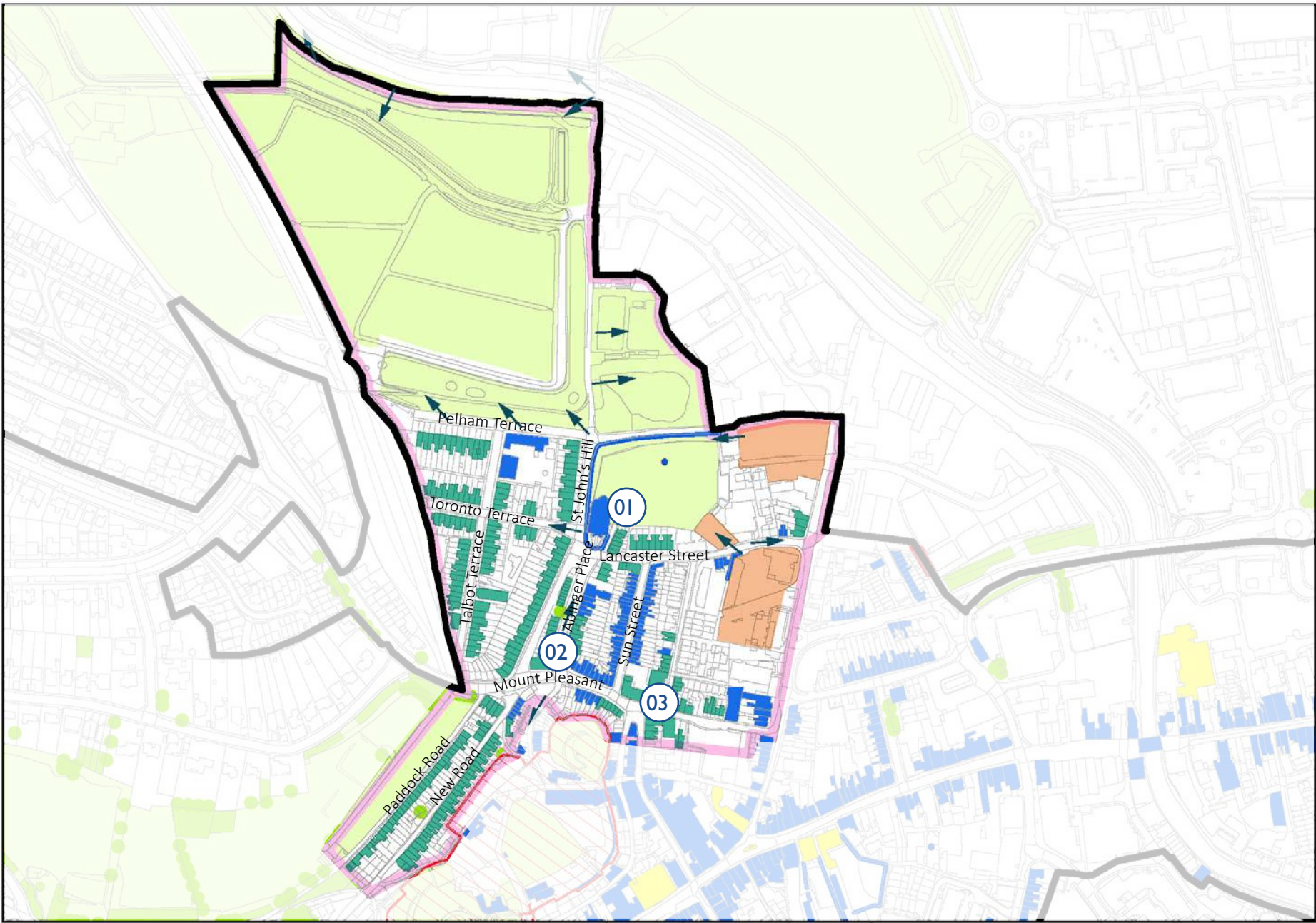
## Issues and Opportunities

- 5.257 There is an opportunity to retain a greater degree of uniformity in the roofscape of the buildings by ensuring that dormer windows are not overbearing and do not disrupt established roof patterns. This is especially important along streets lined with terraces, which predominate in this area.
- 5.258 Action should be taken to ensure that the vacant Shelley’s Hotel is repaired and brought back into use.
- 5.259 Bulky modern skylights disrupting historic rooflines are not appropriate to the historic character of the area. Conservation rooflights would be more sensitive.
- 5.260 Where uPVC window units have been installed, they detract from the character of the area owing to their unsympathetic materiality and profiles. As such the further installation of uPVC units should be opposed and the reinstatement of timber windows supported.
- 5.261 The walled-off and covered over Southern Water reservoir at the intersection of the High Street and St Anne’s Crescent, sits incongruously within the established streetscape. Measures should be taken to improve and soften its screening.
- 5.262 Heavy traffic detracts from the interest of the eastern portion of the character area. Significant congestion is connected to the traffic lights installed to manage traffic flow through the narrow portion of the High Street by Westgate and Keere Streets.
- 5.263 Congestion and damage to the historic pavement finishes is associated with vehicles picking up and dropping off children at Lewes Old Grammar School towards the eastern end of the High Street in the character area.
- 5.264 There is an opportunity to introduce more consistent, sympathetic surfacing treatments.
- 5.265 Opportunities should be sought for the conversion of historic retail units back to their original retail function (where these have been converted to residential uses) to re-activate elevations and enhance their contribution to the character area.



Figure 160: Covered reservoir to Western Road which features insufficient screening





— Conservation Area Boundary

— Character Area Boundary

■ Grade I

■ Grade II\*

■ Grade II

▨ Scheduled Monument

● TPOs

■ Positive Buildings

■ Areas for Enhancement

■ Public Open Spaces

➡ Key Views

**Focal buildings**

01 St John-sub-Castro

02 Elephant and Castle

03 The Old Police Station

This plan is not to scale

Summary History of The Pells and West Street

- 5.266 Although this character area sits to the north of the historic Saxon settlement, St John-sub-Castro was perhaps the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster church. The church of St John-sub-Castro was seemingly rebuilt and extended from the 11th century, before being completely rebuilt in the 1830s. Antiquarian research suggests a pre-Saxon ritual and burial site occupied the present churchyard.
- 5.267 The discovery of Roman coins in the churchyard, and the survival of a historic ditch (actually of 12th century date) along Lancaster Road, were seen evidence that a Roman camp was established on the site of the church.
- 5.268 The character area was largely open land until the early 19th century, when streets were laid out for the development of terraced housing to the south of the character area, around Sun Street, Abinger Place and West Street. The terrace on Church Row dates to the 18th century.
- 5.269 Many of the houses in the area were built for artisans and industrial workers, who found employment in the shipyards, breweries, tanneries and foundries in Lewes.
- 5.270 The town stocks and gallows were historically located on Abinger Place.
- 5.271 A prison was opened on North Street in 1793, before being used as a naval prison from the 1850s. Redeveloped post-war, it is now the site of car parking and an ambulance station.
- 5.272 A papermill opened to the north of the Pells in 1802, with Papermill Cut and Pells Lake both surviving as parts of the former leat. After a brief stint as a flour mill, it was demolished in 1868.
- 5.273 The Pells Pool was opened in 1861, making it the oldest public, freshwater swimming pool in the country. Funds for the pool's construction were drawn from a public subscription campaign. The surrounding Pells parkland was established as a pleasure ground in the 19th century, growing in piecemeal fashion as new land was gifted or bought for public use. A walled recreation area was established to the south of the pool in 1891, whilst a new recreation area was opened in 1897 in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.





## Summary History of The Pells and West Street (cont'd)

- 5.274 The former police station, now flats, on West Street, was opened in 1884 on the site of Lewes Mechanics Institute.
- 5.275 A number of buildings were erected in the late 19th and early 20th century, taking inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement, such as Lewes New School and Pelham Terrace. Italianate housing of a similar date was built on Talbot Terrace and St John's Hill. The Arts and Crafts houses at 1-7, The Fosse on Lancaster Street were designed in 1902 for John Every, proprietor of the Phoenix Ironworks. They were likely built as workers' housing.
- 5.276 The Lewes Little Theatre was founded in 1938. Its premises on Lancaster Street seemingly incorporates an early 19th century non-conformist chapel.
- 5.277 North Street was subject to intensive redevelopment post-war. A Telephone Exchange was built in a Scandanvian Modernist style in 1959, with a post-war NHS office to the north. Between the two is a police station, which opened in 2011.

## Summary of Special Interest

- 5.278 The area reflects the suburban expansion of Lewes, which largely dates to the 19th century, with some 18th and early 20th century housing.
- 5.279 The tranquil open spaces to the north of the character around the Pells Pond provide a valued and pleasant amenity space, the walks along the pond accompanied by a recreation ground and the historic Pells swimming pool.
- 5.280 The character area has a particularly high concentration of Italianate terraced houses to the west of Talbot Terrace and along St John's Terrace and St John's Hill. They are stuccoed and finely detailing, with corbelled door surrounds and eaves, and vermiculated keystones.
- 5.281 Earlier terraces were largely built with a mix of red and grey bricks, although a more eclectic range of materials is evident on Sun Street.
- 5.282 Arts and Crafts buildings on Pelham Terrace, St John's Hill and Lancaster Street are distinctive features.
- 5.283 The grand, late Victorian church of St John-sub-Castro occupies a prominent hilltop site and terminates axial views along Toronto Terrace and Abinger Place.
- 5.284 The undulating topography of the areas results in engaging views along streets and out to the surrounding countryside.

## Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.285 The character area was laid out in a series of terraced developments from the 18th to late 19th centuries and is characterised by a regular street and plot pattern.
- 5.286 The streets adopt an approximate gridiron structure, which overlays the more historic routes through the area including Abinger Place and Lancaster Street.
- 5.287 There is a fine grain of development with narrow frontages and gardens of varying depths (Abinger Place and St John's Terrace feature small yards, Sun Street and Pelham Terrace have generous gardens).
- 5.288 The grain of development becomes looser and more fragmented to the east of the character area between St John Street and North Street where there are large modern buildings in spacious plots and areas of surface car parking.
- 5.289 Certain larger, institutional buildings break the fine grain, including the former East Sussex Police Station on West Street and the former prison site on North Street (now parking for the modern Police and Ambulance Stations). The Church of St John-sub-Castro sits within a large churchyard.
- 5.290 The streets are generally narrow and intimate but feature wider spaces at the intersection of streets including Commercial Square and the junction of Abinger Place, St John's Terrace, St John's Hill and Lancaster Street.
- 5.291 The tight-knit grain of the southern part of the character area gives way to a more open northern area, with few building plots and plenty of green space.



Figure 161: View along Abinger Place towards St John-sub-Castro





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.292 Buildings in this character area were developed in the 19th century as a series of speculative terrace developments. The residential function remains and the properties are predominantly in single occupancy.
- 5.293 Along North and West Streets, the residential character is less apparent with two auctioneers, an ambulance station, two police stations (the historic station to West Street is now flats), the telephone exchange, and a handful of shops breaking with the residential character elsewhere in the character area.

- 5.294 Other non-residential buildings include Lewes Little Theatre on Lancaster Street, St John’s Church and Church Hall, the lido buildings on the Pells, and the Elephant and Castle Pub on White Hill.
- 5.295 The northern portion of the character area covers a large area of open green space, The Pells, with the only buildings in this area associated with the public lido, the Pells Pool.



Figure 163: The Pells Pool (Wikimedia, PellsPool)



Figure 162: Ancillary buildings at the Pells Pool





## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.296 The residential buildings which dominate this area are typically of a diminutive scale of two to three-storeys, although owing to the topography to the west end of St John’s Terrace, buildings which appear two-storeys to the front extend down four-storeys to the rear.
- 5.297 The modern buildings at the north end of St John Street are of a large, bulky scale and massing, which contrasts with the two-storey terraces at the south end of the street.
- 5.298 Many buildings were originally constructed with rooms to the roof structure lit by dormers; more recent loft conversions using skylights and dormers have eroded historic rooflines due to poor materiality or overly prominent massing.
- 5.299 There is a strong sense of homogeneity throughout the character area as a whole due to the domestic scale and massing of the vast majority of buildings.
- 5.300 Buildings with a larger scale and massing, such as St John-sub-Castro and the historic police station on West Street, contrast pleasingly with the smaller terraced houses and stand out as landmarks.
- 5.301 Large 20th century buildings to North Street similarly contrast with the surrounding townscape, but in a considerably less picturesque manner due to their unsympathetic materiality and massing.

## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.302 The building materials evident in the area are varied. Many of the buildings are rendered or stuccoed. This surface treatment is often coupled with Italianate decorative touches like keystones, imposts and decorative cornices. Such buildings are evident on Pelham and Talbot Terraces, St John’s Hill and St John’s Terrace.
- 5.303 There are also brick terraces which are less ornate than their Italianate stucco analogues, but still have characterful decorative treatments. Openings are articulated by simple gauged brick arches, whilst polychromy is very common, with red bricks often paired with buff or grey bricks to provide further articulation to front and side elevations.
- 5.304 Some of these brick terraces reflect an Arts and Crafts style, with tile hung bay windows, porches or gables, areas of roughcast render, and sham timberwork, evident on Lancaster Street and the western portion of Toronto Terrace.
- 5.305 Sun Street reflects an attractive range of cladding materials, including some houses using red and grey brick, mixed with others clad in timber weatherboarding, walled in field flint, built from glossy, vitrified black brick, or decorated with sham timbers.



Figure 164: A variety of materials deployed on Sun Street



Figure 165: Historic boot scraper





Boundary Treatments

- 5.306 Historic boundary treatments survive well in this character area. Often low front boundary walls have been erected in brick, flint (laid both knapped and as field stones) or a mixture of the two.
- 5.307 There is some variety in boundary treatments, with historic iron railings to the front of the buildings on St John’s Terrace, whilst Toronto Terrace has low stone walls to demarcate front boundaries.
- 5.308 The long flint wall which surrounds St John-sub-Castro on Brook Street, St John’s Hill, Lancaster Street and Church Row is particularly characterful for both its sheer scale and materiality, whilst the smaller flint walls to Abinger Place and Paddock Road are also of significance.
- 5.309 Rear and side boundaries are less visible throughout the Conservation Area, but where they are prominently located they have often survived relatively well, although the addition of modern timber panelled fences does detract from the streetscape.



Figure 166: Historic railings to St John’s Terrace

Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.310 The extensive publicly accessible open space within this character area brings considerable special interest. These spaces are shown on the character area map.
- 5.311 Much of this open space is found in the Pells to the north of the area, where there is a Lido first established in 1860, a walled recreation area established in 1891, and a large area of floodplain drained by the Pellbrook Cut and Pells Stream. Public Realm in this area includes a children’s play park and a number of benches.
- 5.312 The Churchyard of St John-sub-Castro is an open green space of considerable size, as well as an important amenity space within the dense residential development to the south of the character area.
- 5.313 Although there are relatively few street trees, the mature trees to the Pells, Churchyard of St John-sub-Castro, and those next to the trainline, all contribute to the green character of the area.
- 5.314 Planted front and rear gardens add further greenery to the character area.
- 5.315 Aside from the Pells in the north of the character area, the remaining open spaces are covered in hardstanding and are used for car parking.
- 5.316 Sympathetic streetlighting predominates across the character area, with the exception of West Street and Mount Pleasant, where more utilitarian lighting is present.
- 5.317 Overhead cables are a prominent feature within the streetscape in various areas.
- 5.318 The character area features a mix of traditional granite kerbs, alongside concrete and tarmac pavers/finishes.



Figure 167: Park to the south of the Pells Lido





## Key Views

- 5.319 Key kinetic views towards the Church of St John-Sub-Castro along Toronto Terrace and Abinger Place and glimpsed views from a range of more distant locations.
- 5.320 Kinetic views into, around and across the Pells.
- 5.321 Views along and across the River Ouse.
- 5.322 Views from the Pells to Malling Down in the east.
- 5.323 Kinetic views along Mount Pleasant towards the Elephant and Castle public house.

## Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.324 There are 43 Listed buildings within the character area and all of these are Grade II Listed.
- 5.325 At present the Conservation Area boundary bisects one Scheduled Monument, the remains of the town wall, otherwise known as ‘The Green Wall’.
- 5.326 There are a number of buildings judged to be of townscape merit, many of which are characterful terraced houses of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with examples including the Elephant and Castle Public House and the former Police Station on White Hill and West Street respectively.



Figure 168: Silhouette of St John-sub-Castro behind Lewes New School





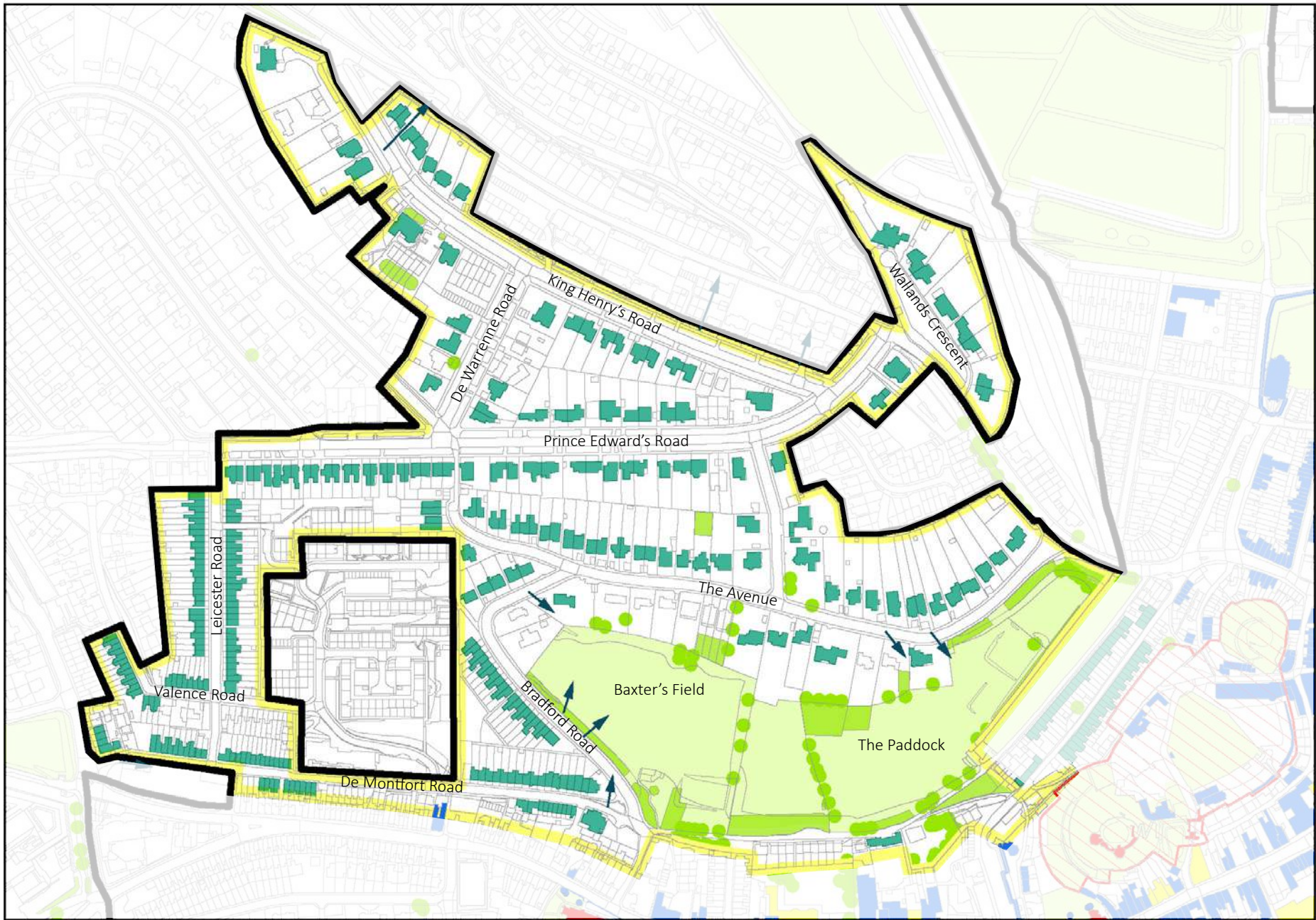
## Issues and Opportunities

- 5.327 There is an opportunity to reinstate consistent, high-quality, traditional surface treatments throughout the character area.
- 5.328 There is an opportunity for the cluttered appearance of modern accretions to the front elevations of buildings, such as satellite dishes and antennae, to be reduced by locating these features more discreetly on rear roof pitches.
- 5.329 Although timber windows are evident across the character area, where they have been replaced with uPVC units there is an opportunity to enhance the character area through the reinstatement of timber casements or sashes.
- 5.330 Certain loft extensions and associated, unsympathetic dormer windows detract from the unity of the streetscene. Any extension should consider the character and appearance of the character area and should employ conservation rooflights over bulkier non-conservation models.
- 5.331 There is an opportunity to enhance the character area through the redevelopment or alteration of several gap sites of varying sizes. The two large car parks and modern buildings to North Street are especially detrimental at present and in need of enhancement, interspersed soft landscaping and sensitive screening.
- 5.332 There is the potential for a considered, cohesive public realm strategy and the introduction of more pockets of green space into the southern portion of the character area.
- 5.333 Reducing the prominence of overhead wiring would serve to enhance the character of the area; if opportunities arise, cables could be buried below ground.
- 5.334 Repainting peeling windows and walls, repairing decayed timberwork, removing vegetation from building fabric, and clearing downpipes would all help to enhance the condition of buildings and appearance of the character area.
- 5.335 There is potential to enhance the character of the south side of White Hill, where there is unsympathetic advertising hoarding and detracting telecommunications and energy infrastructure.
- 5.336 There is development pressure in the setting of this part of the Conservation Area, focused on the industrial estate along North Street, which has the potential to disrupt views out from the Pells towards the Downs.



Figure 169: Large area of detracting car parking to the north-east corner of the character area





- Conservation Area Boundary
- Character Area Boundary
- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II
- ▨ Scheduled Monument
- TPOs
- Positive Buildings
- Areas for Enhancement
- Public Open Spaces
- ➔ Key Views

This plan is not to scale

### Summary History of the Wallands

- 5.337 The Wallands was undeveloped farmland until the early 18th century.
- 5.338 One of the earliest developments in the area was the Union Warehouse, subsequently redeveloped as a housing estate, which is not included in the Conservation Area.
- 5.339 A series of grand villas were developed along Wallands Crescent in the mid-18th century.
- 5.340 Plans to extensively develop the area to the north of the Paddock were in place by the 1870s, with Prince Edward's Road, De Warrenne Road and King Henry's Road all laid out by the time the first edition Ordnance Survey map was surveyed in 1875. The large detached and semi-detached houses along these roads were built piecemeal over the following three decades.
- 5.341 Terraces were built along Valence Road in the 1870s and 1880s, with those to Leicester Road following at the turn of the century.
- 5.342 The Avenue was laid out to the south of Prince Edward's Road and developed with detached houses in the first decade of the 20th century.





Summary of Special Interest

- 5.343 The Wallands is a good survival of a late 19th and early 20th century suburb.
- 5.344 Long, uniform runs of terraced housing are concentrated to the south of the character area, along De Montfort, Bradford, Valence and Leicester Roads.
- 5.345 Semi-detached and detached Arts and Crafts villas occupy larger plots along broad, treelined streets to the north of the Conservation Area.
- 5.346 The Paddock and Baxter’s Field are large, open spaces in the centre of the character area, occupying a lower-lying area of land between Paddock Lane and the Avenue.
- 5.347 Lewes Castle provides a dramatic backdrop to views across the Paddock and Baxter’s Field.

Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.348 The character area is dominated by the Paddock and Baxter’s Field, significant green spaces to the area’s south.
- 5.349 The largely 19th century residential development comprises a fine grain of narrow-fronted, terraced buildings to the west of the Paddock, including Leicester Road and the west end of Prince Edward’s Road. Broader plots featuring detached or semi-detached villas to the north and north-west, include The Avenue and De Warenne Road. The properties have front and back gardens of varying sizes, reflecting the suburban character of the area.



Figure 170: Terraces to Leicester Road



Figure 171: Villa to Park Road





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.350 The buildings in this area are predominantly residential, with few exceptions beyond the St Pancras Catholic Primary School on De Montfort Road, Morley House nursery school on King Henry’s Road, and an art studio on Paddock Lane.
- 5.351 A series of more substantial detached villas have been converted into residential care homes, such as Claydon House off Wallands Crescent and North Corner on Prince Edward’s Road.



Figure 172: Semi-detached villas to Prince Edward’s Road

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.352 Densely packed terraced houses to the character area’s south are modest in scale, narrow-fronted and two-storeys with occasional attic use. These include terraced cottages on Leicester Road and on sections of De Montfort Road and Valence Road.
- 5.353 Substantial semi-detached residential properties with broad frontages are found to the north of the area, along The Avenue, Prince Edward’s Road, De Warenne Road and King Henry’s Road. These larger houses were erected in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods to house the increasingly affluent population of the town, who looked for large houses sets in expansive plots with generous gardens.



Figure 173: Large semi-detached villa to King Henry’s Road





Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.354 There are various cladding materials used across the character area, including red brick with paler brick detailing, render and hung tiles. Brick is often laid in stretcher or Flemish bond.
- 5.355 Terraced buildings along New, Paddock, Valence and Leicester Roads are characterised by a restrained architectural style with simple brick detailing, sash windows, pitched slate roofs and panelled doors.
- 5.356 Larger dwellings and villas along King Henry’s Road and De Warenne Road are characterised by a vibrant mix of double-height canted or square bay windows, gables with hung tiles or timber motifs, timber or tile-clad verandas and porches. These decorative features reflect an eclectic Arts and Crafts style and contribute positively to the appearance of the character area. The roofs of these buildings are laid with clay tiles, with ornamental ridge tiles and finials a common decorative feature.
- 5.357 Along Prince Edward’s Road clay tiles predominate, but historic slate roofs are also evident. Some buildings retain ornamental roof tiles. The ornate Arts and Crafts style evident to De Warenne Road and King Henry’s Road is also dominant on Prince Edward’s Road. Large bay windows, timber framed gable ends, deep and finely detailed porches, gable finials, and a mix of red brick, roughcast, hung tiles, and flint all contribute greatly to the street’s interest.



Figure 174: Verandah with intricate joinery

Boundary Treatments

- 5.358 The Paddock’s boundary is predominantly marked by mature trees.
- 5.359 As a suburban character area where most dwellings feature front gardens, there is a high proportion of boundary treatments both historic and modern.
- 5.360 Historic brick and unknapped flint boundary walls dominate on Prince Edward’s Road, King Henry’s Road and Leicester Road, with brick walls along to De Montfort Road.
- 5.361 The original brick and flint boundaries to The Avenue remain, but have been eroded in places to accommodate car parking and feature lower quality timber fences or sections of modern brick walling.



Figure 175: Typical brick and flint front boundary treatment





## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.362 The generous open area and tree-planting in the Paddock and Baxter’s Field forms a significant green space, bounded by mature trees. The amenity space, which is shown on the character area map, is the result of a long history of community-supported protection.
- 5.363 Well-tended allotments to the south-east of the Paddock add to the communal value of the open space.
- 5.364 There is a high number of street trees and well planted gardens, creating a particularly leafy and tranquil character area, which together with its broad streets and generous plot sizes, marks a contrast to other character areas. It should be noted that the area historically had an even greater quantity of street trees, however these have been removed in a number of locations. Further removals should be discouraged and reinstatements encouraged.



Figure 176: View of Baxter’s Field from the south





## Key Views

- 5.365 Open views across the Paddock are a significant contributor to the quality of the character area, particularly those from Bradford Road and between developments along The Avenue, as are the long views along uniform terraced residential roads like Leicester Road.
- 5.366 There are also key views to the north-east towards the Downs and the River Ouse, and good glimpsed views of the Castle.

## Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.367 There are no Listed Buildings in the character area.
- 5.368 There is a significant number of positive buildings within the Wallands Character Area.
- 5.369 There are two notable stone plaques in a flint wall by 20 Bradford Road, recording ‘the Paddock Syndicate, 1913’ and in the wall of the allotments recording ‘Hangman’s Acre’.

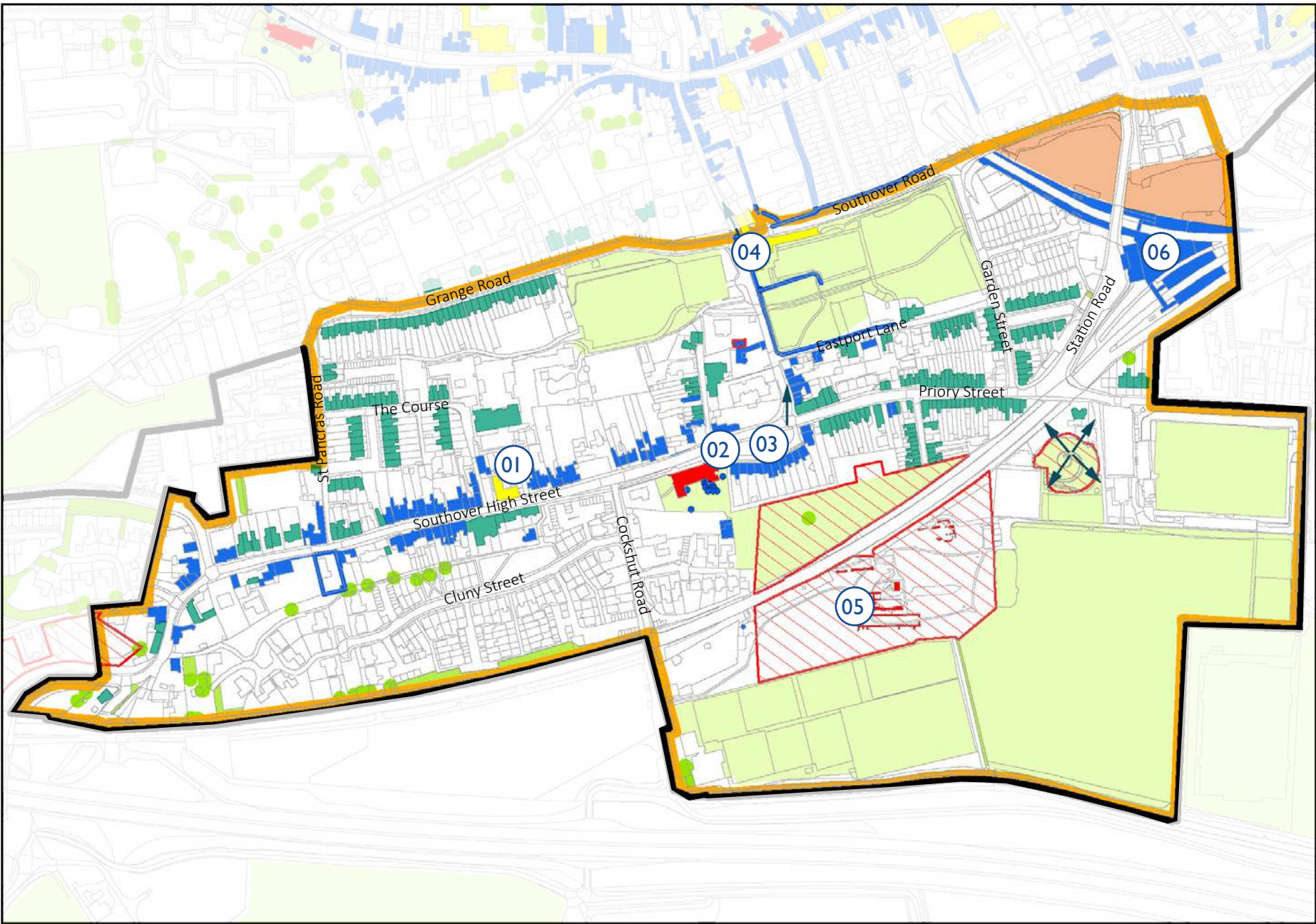
## Issues and Opportunities

- 5.370 Some large 20th century developments are poorly integrated into the streetscape, such as the modern housing at 20 King Henry’s Road. These sites may offer future opportunity areas for sensitive redevelopment, drawing on the historic context and vernacular of the character area.
- 5.371 Although historic timber windows have been retained to most buildings, some windows have been replaced from unsympathetic uPVC or metal windows. The modern windows detract from the special interest of the area due to their bulkier profiles, unsuitable materiality and lack of traditional glazing bars. Opportunities for the reinstatement of traditional timber windows where they have been removed should be pursued.
- 5.372 There is an opportunity for the prevalence of modern accretions to the front elevations of buildings such as satellite dishes and antennae to be reduced or removed to more discreet locations such as rear roof pitches.
- 5.373 As a suburban residential area, there has been some loss of historic front gardens for car parking. Further losses should not be supported.
- 5.374 Bulky modern rooflights disrupt historic rooflines and are not appropriate to the historic character of the area. Conservation rooflights, which are more discreet sitting flush with the level of the roof cladding material, would be more sensitive.
- 5.375 Overhead wiring and prominent antennae cause visual clutter on certain streets, including Leicester Road.
- 5.376 Street trees are a key part of the character of the Wallands and their protection and reinstatement where lost should be encouraged. However, historic views over the open space from Bradford Road are currently restricted by the overgrown quality of trees, which would benefit from a tree management strategy.



Figure 177: Visually intrusive, non-conservation skylights and detracting uPVC windows





— Conservation Area Boundary

— Character Area Boundary

■ Grade I

■ Grade II\*

■ Grade II

▨ Scheduled Monument

● TPOs

■ Positive Buildings

■ Areas for Enhancement

■ Public Open Spaces

➡ Key Views

**Focal buildings**

01 Anne of Cleves House

02 St John the Baptist

03 Priory Crescent

04 Southover Grange

05 Lewes Priory

06 Lewes Station

This plan is not to scale

Summary History of Southover

- 5.377 At the western end of Southover High Street there is evidence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery.
- 5.378 Southover first developed as a settlement owing to the foundation of the Cluniac Lewes Priory in the 11th century.
- 5.379 St John the Baptist, Southover was initially established in the 13th century as a hospitium associated with the Priory. The hospitium provided accomodation for pilgrims and visitors to the Cluniacs, with Lewes sitting on pilgrimage routes to Canterbury and France. It became a parish church in the 13th or 14th century.
- 5.380 St James’s Hospital was founded in Southover in the 11th century. The only remnant of the hospital is the chancel of its 14th century chapel, which is now a house.
- 5.381 A number of grand timber-frame buildings, such as the Anne of Cleves House and Priory Lodge on Southover High Street, date to the medieval period. The former is a high status building, largely of the 15th and 16th centuries, which was formerly owned by the Priory and highlights its historic prominence in the development of Southover.
- 5.382 Lewes Priory was turned into a residence by Thomas Cromwell’s son after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The house was demolished by 1700. Caen stone from the Priory was used to build the grand Southover Grange for William Newton in 1572.
- 5.383 Southover extended eastwards with the development of Priory Crescent and Priory Street in the first half of the 19th century.
- 5.384 The Verralls, a prominent family of brewers, owned a substantial quantity of property in the area and built both Southover Manor House on Southover High Street and the Maltings off Cluny Street in the mid-19th century. The main brewery complex at the western end of Southover High Street was demolished at the start of the 20th century.
- 5.385 Italianate and Arts and Crafts-inspired terraces were laid out along Grange Road in the second half of the 19th century.
- 5.386 In the 1980s the developers, Barratt Homes, laid out the neo-Georgian Southover Manor Estate on greenfield land to the south of Southover High Street.





Summary of special interest

- 5.387 The now-ruined Lewes Priory is associated with three other key historic buildings in Southover, with St John’s church formerly a hostel for visitors to the Priory, and the hospital of St James, which was controlled by the Priory. Only the hospital’s chapel survives. The third building associated with the Priory is Southover Grange, which was built from Caen stone salvaged from the Priory.
- 5.388 Timber-framed buildings, including both medieval houses and converted barns, are a key contributor to the area’s character. Whilst some have been refronted, such as Fair Hall, or had their frames overclad, others retain their exposed timber-frames, such as the Anne of Cleves House, Priory Lodge and Elm Trees House.
- 5.389 A range of large detached, semi-detached and detached historic houses line Southover High Street.
- 5.390 Architecturally unified terraces built in the 19th and early 20th century are a common feature, including classically influenced terraces like Priory Crescent and Priory Street, and Arts and Crafts-inspired terraces such as Dorset Road and Cleve Terrace.
- 5.391 The topography of the character area is relatively flat, with the ground gradually sloping away to the north and south of Southover High Street.
- 5.392 The character area is particularly well-served by open green space. Much of this is found to the south of the area, where Priory Park and a number of sports fields are located, with Southover Grange Gardens another important open space to the north.

Street and Plot Pattern

- 5.393 The L-shaped Southover High Street forms the principal street in the character area, largely running on an east–west alignment. Grange Road runs parallel to the north, with a number of streets running north–south linking the two.
- 5.394 The railway line forms the character area’s southern boundary with the modern Cluny Street sitting between it and Southover High Street.
- 5.395 The plot pattern within the character area is varied and comprises a mix of buildings and open spaces. Southover Grange notably retains its expansive gardens.

- 5.396 Southover High Street features plots of different sizes and frontages of different breadths reflecting its piecemeal development. There are sections of fine-grained terraces with houses positioned hard-up against the line of the pavement, next to villas with front gardens, as well as larger buildings in spacious plots including St John the Baptist Church. There is some modern infill merging historic plots and sitting well back from the historic building line, for example, Priory Flats.
- 5.397 Fine-grained residential housing is common in Southover, with short terraces with narrow plots evident to Garden Street, Dorset Road, the Course, Cleve Terrace, and Priory Terrace. Much longer, but similarly fine-grained residential terraces are evident to the south side of Grange Road and along Priory Street.
- 5.398 The modern Cluny Street development has a more organic, curving alignment and features short terraces within broad, squat plots. Detached houses in largely square plots are evident on Morley Close, to the west of Cluny Street.



Figure 178: West end of Southover High Street





## Building Types and Uses

- 5.399 The character area is largely residential, with very few other uses. Terraced houses are the most common building type within the character area, although there are also many semi-detached and detached houses of varied sizes, largely located on Southover High Street and Eastport Lane.
- 5.400 Although Southover High Street historically had retail uses along it, these are no longer evident, with retailers instead focused along Station Road, opposite the station booking hall.
- 5.401 Other uses within the character area include a church (St John the Baptist Trinity Church, Southover), and the Southdown Sports Club. Southover Church of England Primary School and Western Road Primary School are adjacent to one another, located off Potter’s Lane, whilst two nurseries are located on St James Street.
- 5.402 Anne of Cleves House is run as a museum by the Sussex Archaeological Society, whilst Southover Grange houses Lewes Register Office and the Sussex Guild Shop.
- 5.403 Two pubs, The Swan Inn and The King’s Head, are located at either end of Southover High Street.
- 5.404 The area was less industrialised historically than much of Lewes and Cliffe. This sense is heightened by the demolition of the Verrall’s brewery in the early 20th century, although the Old Brewery House at No.32 Southover High Street and former Malthouse on Cluny Street survive as residences.



Figure 179: Terraces to Dorset Road

## Building Scale and Massing

- 5.405 The buildings throughout the character area are largely two to three-storeys tall.
- 5.406 There are few large buildings within the character area, aside from Lewes Station, which is relatively low in height but broad in footprint, and Southover Church of England Primary School, which is characterised by a sprawling footprint on Potter’s Lane. The church is another larger building with a church tower, which is visible from different points in the character area.
- 5.407 The predominance of modest terraced housing in the character area contrasts with the unified treatment given to the Regency mansion block of Priory Crescent, which features a scale and massing considerably larger than that of surrounding buildings.



Figure 180: Priory Crescent





## Building Materials and Architectural Details

- 5.408 There are good examples of historic timber framing along Southover High Street, including: the rebuilt Priory Lodge; the Anne of Cleves House; and the adjacent 49-50 Southover High Street.
- 5.409 Further timber-framed buildings survive along Southover High Street, behind later frontages, which were largely added in the 18th or 19th centuries. Such buildings are a valued part of the Conservation Area’s interest and history, illustrating the changing tastes and construction techniques used in Lewes. As such, the 16th century Fair Hall has a jettied side elevation to St Pancras Road and a Georgian façade to Southover High Street, whilst the Palladian frontage of 43, Southover High Street, was added to a 16th century timber-framed building.
- 5.410 The Anne of Cleves House (a 15th century Wealden House) and Southover Grange (built in 1572) are highly significant high status buildings from the medieval and early modern periods. Notably, both buildings have areas of Horsham stone slate roofing.
- 5.411 A number of the late 19th and early 20th century buildings incorporate timber framing due to their Arts and Crafts influence, with timber-frame gable ends and front door canopies. This is often coupled with enriched ridge tiles, roughcast render and areas of scalloped tile hanging.
- 5.412 A range of other materials are used, including flint or polychromatic red and grey brick, and many buildings feature stuccoed or rendered finishes, or painted brick.
- 5.413 Intricate Italianate and classical detailing is commonplace within the character area. Priory Crescent on Southover High Street is a particularly good example, with its giant stuccoed pilasters and channelled stuccoed ground floor. The stuccoed villas on Grange Road also combine classical features including channelling, quoining, vermiculation and doorcases reflecting classical porticos. Southover High Street has some classical doorcases and ground floor channelling.
- 5.414 Simpler brick terraces with more pared back detailing are also of interest, such as the uniform grey or buff brick terraces enlivened by red brick detailing to door and window surrounds on Priory Street and Eastport Lane.
- 5.415 The late 20th century development of the greenfield land south of Southover High Street is comprised of Arts and Crafts inspired houses, which mix hung tile and red brick, to Morley Close, and the neo-Georgian Southover Manor Estate to Cluny Street, Monk’s Lane, Verrall’s Walk and Anne’s Path. The latter development is characterised by polychromatic brickwork and slate roofs, reflecting the town’s historic terraces.
- 5.416 Clay roof tiles predominate in the more historic parts of the character area, with the western end of Southover High Street particularly notable in this respect. The Arts and Crafts developments along Cleve Terrace and Potter’s Lane to the north also have clay tiled roofs. Elsewhere 19th century terraced developments dominate. The terraces largely have slate roofs, as is evident on the Course, Grange Road, Priory Street, Dorset Road, and the Priory Crescent.

- 5.417 Slate roofs are most concentrated along Priory Street, Garden Street, Priory Street, and Tanners Brook, where smaller terraced housing predominates. The same is also true of the modern buildings to the south of Southover High Street and the terrace on The Course.
- 5.418 Along Southover High Street there are some slate roofs, but handmade clay tiles predominate, especially to the western end of the road. Slate roofs are more common on the 19th century buildings on the High Street. Nos.43, 55 and 56 have Horsham stone slate roofs, giving their roofs a rougher texture and thicker build up.
- 5.419 Slate and clay tiles are interspersed along the Grange, the former common to the roofs of Italianate terraces, whilst Arts and Crafts terraced houses largely have clay tile roofs.



Figure 181: Finely carved door surround at the Anne of Cleves House, bearing the date 1599



Figure 182: Historic timber-framing at 49-50 Southover High Street



Figure 183: Detailed door surround to Southover High Street





## Boundary Treatments

- 5.420 Boundary treatments vary throughout the character area.
- 5.421 Decorative iron railings and piers are commonplace along Southover High Street, the south side of Grange Road and to Priory Terrace and Priory Crescent.
- 5.422 High flint walls make a strong contribution to the streetscape along Southover High Street, with low flint front boundary walls found on this street and on Eastport Lane.
- 5.423 The tall brick and flint walls of properties to Southover High Street are an important feature along Cluny Street. Some of the wall features curving pediment-like shapes, whilst an ornamental gazebo of the 18th century is built into the wall and appreciable at the western end of Cluny Street.
- 5.424 Southover Grange Gardens is surrounded by a range of boundary treatments from modern iron railings, to stone, flint and brick.
- 5.425 The terraces on the north side of Dorset Road feature intricate iron railings in front of basement areas, whilst the south side has simple retaining brick walls and piers.

## Public Realm, Open Spaces and Trees

- 5.426 This character area has a significant proportion of open green space, the southern part covered by the site of the long-ruined Lewes Priory, and the Mount, (both of which are Scheduled Monuments). There are number of playing fields and sports pitches to the southern part of Southover, including those at the Southdowns Sports Club and Convent Field. Lewes FC's ground, which occupies the Dripping Pan to the north of Convent Field, also contributes to area's open character.
- 5.427 Southover Grange Gardens to the north of the character area provide another important amenity space, which contrasts with the southern open spaces due to its formal planting. These spaces are shown on the character area map.
- 5.428 Both the Priory Park and Southover Grange Gardens are well served with street furniture, including bins and benches, with public art also evident in both, such as the sculpture modelled on a medieval helmet, installed in the Priory Park to commemorate 700 years since the Battle of Lewes. This was designed by the sculptor Enzo Plazzotta.
- 5.429 There are relatively few street trees throughout the character area, with the exception of a cluster outside St John the Baptist Trinity Church and a generous bank of grass lawn and shrubbery in front of Priory Crescent. The trees and greenery associated with the open spaces and visible gardens, to the front and side, bring a verdant, leafy character and peaceful suburban quality to this character area.

- 5.430 Surface treatments are varied across the character area including a range of traditional granite kerbs and brick pavers, as well as less appropriate tarmac and concrete finishes.
- 5.431 The surface treatments along Southover High Street are largely sympathetic, with clay brick pavers and granite kerbs to the pavement. There are also sections of cobbling and modern traffic-calming measures in the form of areas of granite pavers along the largely tarmacked road.



Figure 184: Iron railings to Grange Road



Figure 185: Lewes Priory Park looking east





Key Views

- 5.432 The Mount to the south of Priory Street provides panoramic views which take in Lewes and its rural setting.
- 5.433 Views into and across Southover Grange Gardens are characterful and contribute to the verdant nature of the Conservation Area.
- 5.434 Open views across Lewes Priory Park highlight the generous open space in the character area and the rural setting of the Conservation Area, the large open space allowing distant views to the Downs to the east.
- 5.435 Kinetic views experienced when moving along Southover High Street are of interest, given the characterful townscape. This includes Priory Crescent, Anne of Cleves House, and St John the Baptist Trinity Church which are all key landmarks.



Figure 186: Anne of Cleves House

Audit of Heritage Assets

- 5.436 The surviving chancel of the former Chapel of St James’s Hospital (now a house), Saxonbury Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, The Mount and Lewes Priory are the four Scheduled Monuments within the character area.
- 5.437 There are 79 Grade II Listed Buildings within Southover, with a further two Grade II\* Listed Buildings, Southover Grange and the Anne of Cleves House. The two Grade I Listed Buildings are the remains of Lewes Priory and the Church of St John the Baptist.
- 5.438 There are many positive buildings within Southover, which are predominantly characterful terraced houses.

Issues and Opportunities

- 5.439 Bulky non-conservation skylights and poorly proportioned new dormers disrupt the historic roofscape within the character area in certain locations.
- 5.440 Although historic timber windows have largely been retained, where unsympathetic modern metal or uPVC windows have been installed they detract from the streetscape and the reinstatement of traditional timber windows should be encouraged.
- 5.441 Excess overhead wiring and prominent antennae interrupt the streetscape, especially along side streets.
- 5.442 Ensuring that buildings are kept in good repair would help to enhance the character area, with windows and walls repainted if they are peeling, decayed timberwork replaced, vegetation removed from building fabric and downpipes frequently cleared.
- 5.443 There is an opportunity to introduce more cohesive and sympathetic surface treatments.
- 5.444 The public toilets by the Depot presently detract from the area and would benefit from refurbishment.
- 5.445 There has been some loss of historic railings on Grange Road, where the opportunity arises, these should be reinstated.
- 5.446 There is heavy traffic along Southover High Street, particularly the west end, which is currently impacting the area through collisions with historic buildings, damage to surface treatments and noise and air pollution. Discussions with East Sussex County Council Highways are recommended to consider traffic control and management, potentially reducing HGV use of the roundabout at the western end of Southover High Street to access the C7.
- 5.447 New entrances to Southover Grange Gardens could be added to improve access to the garden from Eastport Lane and Garden Street.



# 06 Managing Change



General Management of Conservation Areas (Legislation and Control Measures)

Action Plan for Managing Change in Lewes

Theme 1: Maintenance, Repair and Alteration of Buildings

Theme 2: Detracting Buildings and Areas

Theme 3: New Development

Theme 4: Shopfronts and Advertising

Theme 5: Open Spaces, Public Realm and Interpretation

Theme 6: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Theme 7: Traffic, Parking and Connectivity

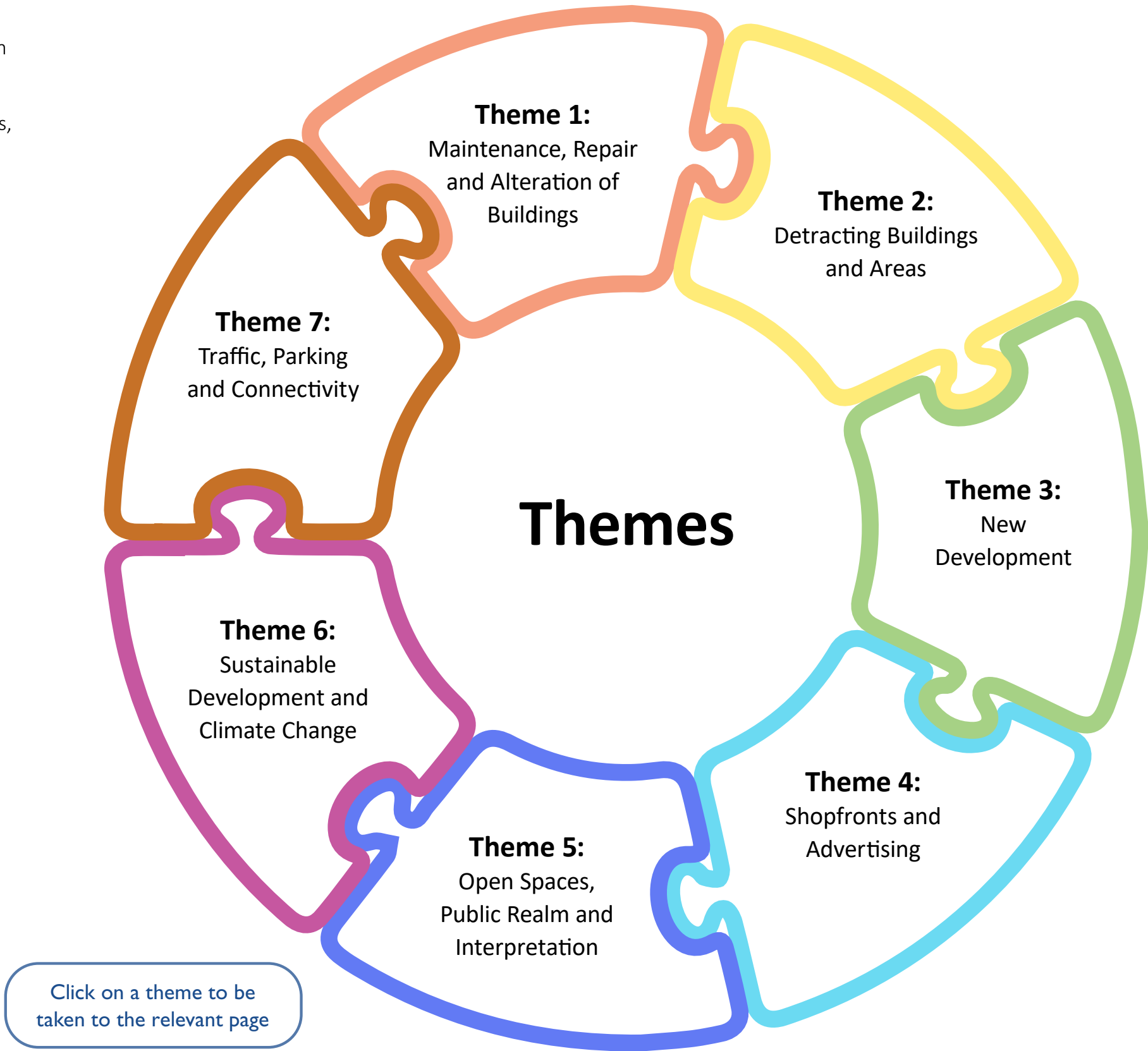
Well-maintained Edwards & Todd shopfront, 154 High Street







6.1 This part of the CAAMP, on Managing Change, begins with an introductory section establishing general information relating to national and local legislation and guidance, and control measures in Conservation Areas, before setting out a bespoke action plan for managing change in Lewes. Seven key themes have been identified relating to the principal areas for improvement in Lewes. Each theme comprises an assessment of the issues and challenges faced, alongside opportunities for enhancement and key recommendations arising from the issues and opportunities as well as information on best practice guidance.







General Management of Conservation Areas (Legislation, Guidance and Control Measures)

Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 6.2
- The Local Planning Authority (LPA) for Lewes is the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) which is responsible for preparing and adopting the planning policies for the Park. Most applications are determined by Lewes District Council under powers delegated to them by the Local Planning Authority and a few considered significant are called-in by the SDNPA for determination. Larger or more complex cases are dealt with by the SDNPA. The Lewes Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Lewes.
- 6.3
- Planning legislation, policy and guidance are utilised when considering development or other changes within the Conservation Area. This is to ensure that proposals seek to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area’s special architectural or historic interest including the contribution made by its setting. The primary legislation governing Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This is the key tool for the LPA to fulfil its duty to manage its Conservation Areas and ensure that proposals for change preserve or enhance their special interest. Below this national-level legislation lies national and local planning policy which supports this legislation in the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas. The SDNPA’s Local Plan includes Development Management Policy SD15: Conservation Areas, which sets out that development proposals within a Conservation Area, or within its setting, will only be permitted where they preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.4
- The SDNPA offers a pre-application service, which can be useful for any application. The feedback received can enhance the design quality of a scheme and reduce the likelihood of refusal at planning through early stage identification of issues. <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-applications/advice/>
- 6.5
- In addition to legislative and policy requirements there is the wealth of best practice guidance and advice available from Historic England and other heritage organisations. When changes are being considered to buildings in the Conservation Area, or perhaps where new development is proposed, it is often helpful to use the LPA’s Pre- Application Advice service to gain early guidance on proposals and highlight any issues and opportunities; details can be found on the LPA’s website.
- 6.6
- Links and details of all the relevant policy, guidance and advice can be found in [Further Information and Sources](#).

Control Measures Brought About By Conservation Area Designation

Restrictions On Permitted Development

- 6.7
- In order to protect and enhance Lewes Conservation Area, any changes that take place must conserve, respect or contribute to the character and appearance which make the Conservation Area of special interest. Permitted Development Rights, as defined by The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, are works which can be undertaken without the need to gain planning permission. Some Permitted Development Rights are constrained in Conservation Areas meaning that planning permission is needed for certain works which materially affect the external appearance of buildings.
- 6.8
- This includes, but is not restricted to:
  - the total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures (including walls of over 1m in height, gate piers and chimneys);
  - other partial demolition including new openings in external elevations;
  - works to trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater, measured at 1.5m from soil level;
  - changes to the external finish of a building (including rendering, pebble dash or other cladding);
  - changes to the roof shape including installation of new dormer windows and chimneys;
  - any extension other than a single-storey rear extension of 4m or less (3m or less if the house is detached or semi-detached);
  - extensions to the side of buildings;
  - any two-storey extensions;
  - erection of an outbuilding to the side of a property;
  - aerials and satellite dishes on chimneys or elevations visible from the street;
  - putting up advertisements and other commercial signage (Advertising Consent may also be required);
  - changing the use of a building (e.g. from residential to commercial); and
  - installing solar panels that are wall-mounted on a wall or roof facing the highway.
- 6.9
- For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a Conservation Area, see the guidance on the Government’s Planning Portal <https://www.gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales> or contact the LPA’s Planning Department.





Article 4 Directions

- 6.10 The LPA can develop bespoke controls to ensure that specific elements of a Conservation Area are protected from harmful change. This is done through the application of an Article 4 Direction. These provide additional control by specifically revoking certain permitted development rights meaning that Planning Permission needs to be sought before work can be undertaken.
- 6.11 An initial public consultation on the review of the Lewes Article 4 Direction was completed at the same time as the Lewes CAAMP review. The Article 4 Direction will be formally reviewed in due course, at which time a statutory consultation will be undertaken.

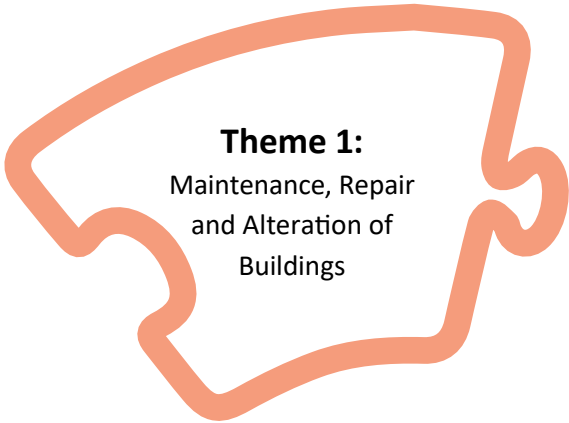
Action Plan for Managing Change in Lewes

- 6.12 This part of the document opens with overarching management recommendations for Lewes Conservation Area and then provides detailed analysis of the current issues and challenges faced within the Conservation Area, alongside opportunities for enhancement. These opportunities are informed by onsite analysis, best practice Historic England guidance and local guidance namely the SDNPA’s Design Guide, which forms a Supplementary Planning Document, and the Neighbourhood Plan, which forms part of the Development Plan for Lewes. Each section concludes with the relevant overarching management recommendations for that theme. The Action Plan aims to provide home and business owners with practical guidance to inform, sensitive repairs and alterations.
- 6.13 The overarching ambition for the Conservation Area is to preserve and enhance what is special and it is the statutory duty of the LPA to ensure this happens. Preserving and enhancing the special interest of the Conservation Area is achieved by ensuring that change and development take place in a considered and sympathetic way, raising awareness and promoting shared responsibility for looking after the Conservation Area.
- 6.14 The long-term objectives are to phase out low quality alterations and ensure that new development is of high-quality in response to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. This applies from very small changes, such as reinstating lost historic features, to proposals for new buildings within the Conservation Area or its setting. In addition, regular maintenance of buildings is a vital part of both preserving the physical fabric of individual buildings and ensuring the special interest of the Conservation Area is preserved. Repairs can often be necessary. Ensuring that these are done in the most sensitive and least impactful ways possible is an important part of looking after historic buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole.

Management Recommendations for Lewes Conservation Area

- 6.15 The following principles have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities identified and the guidance on managing change provided over the previous pages. They are intended to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special interest of Lewes Conservation Area.
  - 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.
  - 02 Proposals for extension, alteration and new development should preserve or enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area.
  - 03 The design, construction and materials of any new development, extension, alteration or repair should be of the highest quality and respect their local context.
  - 04 Development within the setting of the Conservation Area (the surroundings in which the Conservation Area is experienced) should be sympathetic to its special interest in terms of its scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing.
  - 05 Development within the setting of the Conservation Area (the surroundings in which the Conservation Area is experienced) should ensure the green and rural nature of the setting, which contributes to its special interest, is maintained.
  - 06 Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.
  - 07 Changes to buildings and areas in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
  - 08 Removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings and the streetscene is encouraged.
  - 09 Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as timber sash windows or corbels on traditional shopfronts, is encouraged.
  - 10 The replacement of inappropriate modern alterations to shopfronts with suitably designed traditional or sympathetically designed alternatives is encouraged.
  - 11 The Article 4 Direction should be reviewed and revised periodically.





Theme 1: Maintenance, Repair and Alteration of Buildings  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.16 Although the majority of buildings within the Conservation Area are in good repair, there is localised evidence of limited maintenance and disrepair which detracts from the special interest of the Conservation Area. The most common problems in this respect are: the growth of foliage and shrubbery on building frontages or roofs; slipped tiles; guano build-up; blocked drainage goods; the discolouration of render and stonework; peeling paintwork; and rotting timberwork.
- 6.17 Timber doors and windows are particularly prone to disrepair in the Conservation Area, with evidence of rotting timber and peeling paintwork. The poor condition of historic timber doors and windows often leads to their replacement with modern unsympathetic uPVC units. These are inappropriate owing to their design, detailing and operation making them look different to traditional windows. This has a negative impact on both the appearance and aesthetic value of the individual buildings and the wider Conservation Area, as well as involving the loss of historic fabric. The use of plastic windows and doors also reduces the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings, by preventing moisture from egressing the building and will cause on-going degradation and problems to the fabric of traditional buildings. Plastic replacements also have a shorter service life than traditional windows and doors, are difficult to recycle and are carbon intensive to manufacture.
- 6.18 Other historic features that have been replaced or lost in areas include boundary treatments, decorative ridge tiles or finials and historic roof tiles or slates.
- 6.19 There is also a number of modern accretions visible throughout the Conservation Area which are alien in a historic streetscene; these add visual clutter and detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area. These include: satellite dishes and television aerials; electricity, gas and broadband boxes; security alarm boxes and security cameras; exposed wiring; and pigeon spikes and netting.

- 6.20 Pigeon spikes are visually obtrusive and often poorly maintained meaning that guano and nesting debris commonly collects between or behind the spikes and attracts more pigeons. Other measures for controlling birds should be considered such as the less visually intrusive anti-perching wire, as well as control of litter, encouraging people not to feed pigeons and removing old nests (outside of nesting season), as part of an integrated management strategy.
- 6.21 Dormer windows or skylights have been installed in the front elevations and front roof slopes of many residential buildings in the Conservation Area. They detract from the historic appearance and character of the buildings and streets in which they are present, often appearing bulky and visually intrusive.
- 6.22 Whilst not a wholesale problem across the Conservation Area, there are incidents of the loss of boundary treatments within the more suburban character areas in favour of off-street parking. This removes greenery in front gardens and dilutes the sense of enclosure around buildings, altering the character of the streetscene.



Figure 187: Cluttered roofscape to the rear of buildings along Church Row



Figure 188: Unsympathetic uPVC windows to St John Street





Figure 189: Vegetation growing in a blocked gutter on Cliffe High Street



Figure 190: Cluttered drainage goods and TV antennae



Figure 191: Bulky roof lights to Valence Road



Figure 192: Building fabric in poor repair showing damp and algae due to continued water exposure



Figure 193: Pigeon spikes to the cill of a timber window in poor repair

## Detracting Alterations

6.23 The following include the most common examples of poorly considered or designed alterations, which are at odds with historic features within the streetscene and detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. These alterations are flagged here as errors not to repeat for anyone wishing to make changes to their building.

- Loss of vertical/ horizontal subdivision of windows
- Loss of original glazing patterns
- Introduction of uPVC windows and doors
- Introduction of bulky window frames and false glazing bars
- Top and bottom-hung windows
- Large or shed dormers
- Poorly positioned dormers
- Large, bulky or non-conservation rooflights
- Infilled porches
- Cementitious pointing





## General Advice on Maintenance and Repair of Buildings

- 6.24 All buildings require maintenance and repair regardless of their age, designation (or lack thereof) or significance. In Conservation Areas, it is important that such works are carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of buildings and respect and preserve the established character of the wider area. The following sections provide a summary of best practice advice on maintenance and repair.
- 6.25 Historic England, and other heritage bodies such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building (SPAB), provide a wide range of advice and guidance on how to care for and protect historic places, including advice on the maintenance and repair.
- Historic England provides digestible guides to maintaining and repairing an older home. These include maintenance checklists, the use of the right materials, and repairs to windows, walls and roofs. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/maintain-repair/tips/>
  - SPAB Technical Advice Notes. This suite of advice notes provide practical guidance on repair of wood windows and control of dampness, amongst other elements relating to the care and repair of historic buildings. <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/technical-advice-notes>
  - The articles page on the Building Conservation website includes a range of articles on conservation and repair of historic buildings. <https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/articles.htm>
- 6.26 Appropriate and regular building maintenance would improve the general appearance of the Conservation Area and the condition of individual buildings, ensuring that they function effectively and will survive for future generations to enjoy.
- 6.27 Regular painting and maintenance are needed to ensure windows remain in good condition. This will also encourage against their replacement in favour of modern unsympathetic uPVC or aluminium windows. See Historic England’s advice on [Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading](#) for more information.
- 6.28 There are opportunities to improve the appearance and condition of the built fabric of the Conservation Area by returning uPVC windows and doors back to traditional timber units. Future change of traditional timber windows to uPVC should be resisted.
- 6.29 Removal of modern accretions such as satellite dishes and tv aerials would enhance the character of the streetscene, especially where such fittings are redundant. Otherwise, more discreet or concealed siting for future installations would be appropriate, as would more sensitively designed equipment so as to be less visually intrusive.

- 6.30 New roof windows could be acceptable on rear roof pitches where not visible from the public realm. However, the topography of Lewes does mean that rear pitches can often be seen and modern rear roof alterations are therefore highly visible. As such it is recommended the LPA should be contacted for clarification at early stages.
- 6.31 There is an opportunity to update the existing Article 4 Direction to give the LPA more power to influence decisions in ways that maintains or enhances the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

## Maintenance

- 6.32 Maintenance is defined as routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order. It differs from repair in that it is a pre-planned, regular activity intended to reduce the instances where remedial or unforeseen work is needed. Regular maintenance ensures that small problems do not escalate into larger issues, lessening the need for repairs and is therefore cost effective in the long-term. In general, maintenance work does not require planning permission from the LPA, although some maintenance works may require consent.
- 6.33 Regular inspection of building fabric and services will help identify specific maintained tasks relevant to each building. These could include but are not limited to:
- regularly clearing gutters and drain grilles of debris, particularly leaves;
  - clearing any blockages in downpipes;
  - sweeping of chimneys;
  - removal of vegetation growth on or abutting a building; and
  - repainting or treating timber windows and other external timberwork.



Figure 194: Neighbouring poorly-maintained and well-maintained houses, showing the impact of a lack of regular painting and maintenance on timberwork





## Repair

- 6.34 Repair is defined as work that is beyond the scope of maintenance, to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use, including minor adaptation to achieve a sustainable outcome, but not involving alteration or restoration. Identification of repairs may arise during regular inspection of buildings or following extreme weather events and could include repairing damage to roof coverings, repointing of brickwork or repairs to windows. It is important to understand the cause of the damage or defect both to ensure that the repair is successful and to limit the work that is required. It is also important to understand the significance of the built fabric affected in order to minimise harm when enacting a repair. As with maintenance, consent may be required for some types of repair work, it is advisable to discuss with the LPA before any work is undertaken.
- 6.35 If buildings are being neglected by owners, the LPA can get involved with their repair. If works are considered urgently necessary to the preservation of a Listed Building, the LPA can carry out works as part of an Urgent Works Notice under Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The LPA can also serve a Repairs Notice to the owner of a Listed Building, specifying those works it considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building, under Section 48 of the same Act. Finally, the LPA can serve a Section 215 notice if they judge the condition of land or buildings to be harmful to the area, under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 6.36 Under Section 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Secretary of State, following consultation with Historic England, can have works carried out on unlisted buildings that are important for maintaining the character or appearance of a Conservation Area thanks to Urgent Works Notices.
- 6.37 The following should be considered when planning repair works:
- Repairs should always be considered on a case-by-case basis. A method of repair which is suitable for one building may not be suitable for another.
  - Use materials and construction techniques to match the existing to maintain the appearance and character of the building. The exception to this is when existing materials or techniques are detrimental to the built fabric, e.g. cement pointing on a historic brick building.
  - Repair is always preferable over the wholesale replacement of a historic feature.
  - If replacement of a historic feature is required, as it has degraded beyond repair, the replacement should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using the same materials and construction techniques. The replaced element should be the same as the original in terms of material, dimensions, method of construction and finish (condition notwithstanding) in order to be classed as like-for-like.

- Like-for-like replacement should not be applied in cases where a historic feature has previously been repaired using inappropriate materials or techniques. Where seeking to improve failing modern features or past unsuitable repairs, a traditionally-designed alternative using appropriate materials is preferable such as breathable, lime-based renders and paints. In such cases planning permission and, if a Listed Building, Listed Building Consent, may be required.
- Only undertaking the minimum intervention required for any given repair.
- Repairs, should, where possible, be reversible as better alternatives may become available in the future.
- Repointing should always be carried out using a lime-based mortar. Within historic and traditionally constructed buildings, cement-based pointing is damaging to brickwork and stonework as it is an impermeable material. Periodic renewal of pointing will extend the lifetime of building fabric.



Figure 195: House in the Wallands during repair works, including the sympathetic reroofing of the corner turret





## Demolition and Extension

- 6.38 The appropriateness of demolition or extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as what is appropriate in one location will not necessarily be acceptable in another. In all cases it is vital to consider the impact of the proposed change on the special interest of the Conservation Area ensuring that this is preserved or enhanced.
- 6.39 Demolition of buildings that detract from the Conservation Area may be beneficial. However, gap sites can also detract from the character of the Conservation Area and therefore demolition of whole buildings will only be permitted where rebuilding is guaranteed, or the site was historically open and this remains appropriate. Planning permission would need to be requested for any demolition proposals in the Conservation Area.
- 6.40 Extensions should be subordinate to the existing buildings in their scale, massing and design. Extension to the side and front of buildings is unlikely to be appropriate as this may infill historic gaps between buildings and change the visual appearance of the streetscape, whereas extension to the rear is likely to be more acceptable. All extensions should be of high-quality design and construction. Whilst the design may use materials and finishes which are characteristic of the Conservation Area, including local brick, there may be scope for use of a wider, less traditional material palette where these are part of a high-quality, sensitively-designed extension that complements or enhances the appearance of the original building. Planning permission would be needed for all extensions other than single-storey rear extensions of 4m or less (3m less if the house is detached or semi-detached).

## Alterations

- 6.41 Alterations should preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. This means that changes should be respectful of the prevailing architectural and visual character of the Conservation Area and the specific character area in which the site is located. There are a number of inappropriate modern alterations found across the Conservation Area, which detract from the aesthetic quality of individual buildings and cumulatively erode the historic character of the streetscene. To avoid this, alterations must use appropriate materials for their context, often those that are typically found within the Conservation Area. This may include timber for windows and doors and brickwork for structural elements. New materials may be appropriate as long as they are complementary to the appearance of the area. Planning permission would be needed for most alterations to buildings in the Conservation Area.

## Unsympathetic Modern Additions

- 6.42 Addition of modern features to buildings should be carefully considered to ensure they are both necessary and appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Traditional roof coverings should be retained and repaired and should not be replaced with modern concrete tiles or artificial roof coverings, which adopt a different colour, shape and profile. Similarly decorative ridge tiles and finials add interest to the streetscene and should be retained and restored if necessary.
- 6.43 Removal of unsympathetic features such as pigeon deterrents and redundant wiring, satellite dishes and television aerials should be encouraged as this will enhance the Conservation Area. The installation of new television aerials and satellite dishes on front elevations results in highly visible accretions that detract from the character of the Conservation Area. Where new television aerials and satellite dishes are proposed on a wall, chimney or roof slope that faces onto, and is visible from, the public realm of the Conservation Area (principally front and side elevations), this requires planning permission and is discouraged. Care should be taken to locate these items discreetly, ideally to the rear of buildings and not visible from the street where planning permission is not needed.



Figure 196: Car park in Cliffe, the redevelopment of which would contribute positively to the character of the area



Figure 197: Visually prominent antennae located to the front pitch of roofs on tall poles



Figure 198: Pigeon spikes detracting visually from a characterful ogee door surround





## Windows, Doors and Drainage Goods

- 6.44 Whilst many buildings in the Conservation Area contain traditional timber sash or casement windows, there have been instances of replacement with uPVC units. Plastic features within historic buildings are not in-keeping with their historic appearance and detract from the special interest of the Conservation Area. Therefore, replacement of historic or traditional timber windows and doors is strongly discouraged unless they are damaged beyond repair. Where such replacement is necessary this should be in traditional and appropriate materials and styles. Where inappropriate replacement has already been undertaken, returning these features back to their traditional appearance is encouraged. The proportions and type of window will be dependent on the age and style of individual buildings. Planning permission must be sought for all alterations to windows and doors within the Conservation Area.
- 6.45 Timber doors and windows should be painted in appropriate colours. Changes in colour beyond a shade lighter or darker of the existing colours are likely to need consent with decisions based on the surrounding context and appropriate historic precedent.
- 6.46 There are a range of uPVC doors and plastic gutters and drainpipes within historic buildings in the Conservation Area, which detract from the character and quality of the streetscene. Replacement with cast iron or lead drainage goods should be encouraged. Other metals may be appropriate subject to their detailed design.



Figure 200: Bulky uPVC windows



Figure 201: Historic door on St Swithun's Terrace with stained glass panels and modern replacement fanlight



Figure 199: Finely detailed and proportioned historic doorway and windows





Boundary Treatments

- 6.47 Although within the historic core of the town centre, many buildings are hard against the pavement edge, elsewhere many are set back behind front gardens or areas. This is prevalent in suburban areas such as The Wallands but also in more central areas such as Upper High Street and Western Road. Loss, alteration and replacement of historic boundary treatments, in particular those demarcating front gardens, for example those in the Wallands, has been identified in certain areas and this has caused harm to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. Any alteration or loss of boundary treatments within the Conservation Area would need planning permission.
- 6.48 Where historic boundary treatments have been lost or altered, their reintroduction will be encouraged where the proposed materials and design are appropriate to the character of the Conservation Area. Historically, front boundaries would have comprised brick or stuccoed boundary walls or metal railings on low plinths depending on the period of the property. These would typically have featured brick gate piers, sometimes stuccoed, and pedestrian gates. In more suburban areas, these hard boundaries are sometimes accompanied by hedges or other soft landscaping.
- 6.49 Timber fencing is not considered an appropriate boundary treatment and will be discouraged. Such existing boundary treatments should be replaced when opportunities arise. Further detrimental alteration to or loss of historic and traditional boundary treatments will be discouraged.



Figure 202: Garage eroding the historic plot pattern on The Avenue



Figure 203: Unsympathetic timber fencing



Figure 204: Retained stuccoed boundary wall and gate piers, contributing positively to the streetscape and interest of the house behind





Recommendations	
01	The following principles have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities identified and the guidance on managing change provided over the previous pages. They are intended to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special interest of Lewes Conservation Area.
02	Proposals for extension, alteration and new development should preserve or enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area.
03	The design, construction and materials of any new development, extension, alteration or repair should be of the highest quality and respect their local context.
08	Removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings and the streetscene is encouraged.
09	Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as timber sash windows or corbels on traditional shopfronts, is encouraged.
11	The Article 4 Direction should be reviewed and revised periodically.





Theme 2: Detracting Buildings and Areas  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.50 Detracting buildings are typically characterised as such owing to poor quality design, inappropriate scale and massing, limited articulation, no or low quality detailing and a general failure to reference or integrate with the surrounding streetscene.
- 6.51 Detracting buildings and areas offer great potential for enhancement of the Conservation Area. This can be achieved through their refurbishment, upgrading, demolition or replacement as part of future proposals with a carefully considered, sensitive design. Such buildings or areas have been identified within the individual character areas.
- 6.52 Car parks represent the most frequent detracting areas within the Conservation Area, with large areas of poorly landscaped hardstanding, which do not integrate into the Conservation Area’s characterful historic streetscape.
- 6.53 Monolithic, later twentieth century buildings, such as the NHS offices at 36-38 Friars’ Walk and St Thomas’s Court in Cliffe, break with the smaller scale of historic development within the Conservation Area.



Figure 206: Car parking and a vacant former NHS building at 8 North Street



Figure 205: St Thomas’s Court and the surrounding car park



Figure 207: Eastgate Car Park and Eastgate Wharf





## Opportunities

- 6.54 Whilst it is recognised that car parking is necessary, improvements could be made to enhance such areas, for example by appropriate vegetative screening, the addition of soft landscaping or, if the opportunity arises, sensitive redevelopment.
- 6.55 If plans are proposed for the redevelopment of detracting sites, proposals should exhibit high-quality design and use appropriate materials. These should also respect the historic street network, urban grain and building typologies within the Conservation Area. Sensitive redevelopments of detracting sites will enhance the special significance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.56 The SDNPA’s Parking guidance in the Design Guide (C.8.1) sets out that car parking design should:
  - a Be well-integrated with good landscape treatment and should avoid a public realm dominated by cars, hardstanding, too many materials and associated clutter.
  - b Car parking design should accommodate EV charging points.
- 6.57 More specific opportunities relating to the introduction of new sensitively designed buildings in the place of detracting buildings and areas are included within the next section, Theme 3: New Development.

## Recommendations

- 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.
- 06 Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.
- 08 Removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings and the streetscene is encouraged.





Theme 3: New Development  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.58 As Lewes is an attractive market town set within a National Park, there is an inevitable desire for new development in the town, both within the Conservation Area and within its setting. In addition, there is a nationwide housing shortage with local authorities under pressure to permit new residential developments. Sensitive new development should be encouraged; however, development can present a challenge in historic towns like Lewes and should be closely considered and well designed. Whilst Lewes is not a static settlement and its architecture should not stagnate, emerging proposals should first and foremost engage with the high-quality historic environment characterising the place.
- 6.59 The dense character of the Conservation Area means there are few vacant sites and therefore limited development opportunity. However, there are a handful of remaining opportunities for infill and back-land development. Such developments should only occur where historic burgage plot and street patterns can be protected, to allow the town’s historic urban form and special interest to remain legible. Such developments should also make use of the historic building typologies and orientations within their immediate surroundings.
- 6.60 The setting of the Conservation Area contributes considerably to its special interest. The rural setting to the south to Lewes Brooks and Ouse Valley and to the east towards the Lewes Downs is particularly important in interpreting its special interest and historic character.
- 6.61 The green landscape setting of the Conservation Area makes a significant contribution to understanding and appreciation of the special interest of Lewes and therefore any development within its setting should respect this characterful quality. This is also true of a number of potential and sizeable development sites within, abutting or adjacent to the Conservation Area, such as the industrial estate and bus station along North Street and Eastgate Wharf. Any redevelopment of these sites needs to recognise and respond to the special interest of the Conservation Area and provide designs of the highest quality. Sensitive new developments should be informed by and protect key views set out in this document.
- 6.62 Astley House, which sits between Spital Road and De Montfort Road, occupies a narrow site which is almost entirely encircled by the Conservation Area. The high degree of intervisibility between the site and surrounding Conservation Area means that any proposals for its redevelopment need to preserve and enhance the special interest of the surrounding Conservation Area and recognise the site’s prominent role in the streetscape of De Montfort Road and Spital/ Western Roads.
- 6.63 The land around the river forms part of the flood plain, which is still susceptible to flooding (and was inundated in 2000). Any new development should manage flood risks from the river, ground water and flash flooding.



Figure 208: Warehouses on North Street in the immediate setting of the Conservation Area



Figure 209: NHS building to Friars' Walk



Figure 210: A refurbished wharf building with recent housing developments over the Ouse in Cliffe in the background





## Opportunities

- 6.64 There are relatively few opportunities for new development within the Conservation Area. There are very few empty sites, but there are certain detracting buildings, the sensitive replacement or redevelopment of which would enhance the Conservation Area. Any new and replacement development needs to take account of, and be sensitive to, the following:
- a the significance of any building proposed to be removed;
  - b the significance of any relationship between any building to be removed and any adjacent structures and spaces;
  - c the potential to draw inspiration from the historic use and character of a site;
  - d the significance or contribution of any gap site (i.e. is it a historic gap within the street frontage or does it detract);
  - e the potential impact of the new design on the setting of any neighbouring Listed Buildings;
  - f the materials and architectural detailing characteristic of the area; the general Character Assessment ([Section 04](#)) and individual Character Area assessments ([Section 05](#)) should be used as a reference to inform the choice of materials and detailing for new design;
  - g the texture, articulation and weathered patina that gives the surrounding historic fabric visual complexity.
  - h the scale and grain of the surrounding area, including historic plot boundaries;
  - i its height in relation to its neighbours and surrounding context;
  - j the potential impact on local views and prominence of landmark buildings; and
  - k the potential impact of the new design on known or potential archaeological remains.
  - l the potential impact of the new development on views of the River Ouse.
  - m any impact on the unprotected flood plain.



Figure 211: Surface car park by St Thomas à Becket, Cliffe, which disrupts and detracts from the historic streetscape





- 6.65 New development within the setting of the Conservation Area should take account of and be sensitive to:
  - a Its location within the setting of the designated heritage asset and enhance rather than harm its special interest.
  - b Be of the highest quality design and execution, regardless of scale, in order to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and, where relevant, help phase out ill-considered and unsympathetic interventions from the past
- 6.66 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of good design. Following the government’s Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission in 2021 and the resulting report ‘Living with beauty’, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated to provide a stronger focus on beauty and design quality in planning policy to ensure the planning system can both encourage beauty and prevent ugliness.<sup>01</sup>
  - a In Section 12: Achieving well-designed places paragraph 126 sets out the importance of creating high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. It promotes the role of good design in achieving sustainable development, which creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

- 6.67 Proposed developments within the Conservation Area or its setting should be designed in line with the policies established in the SDNPA’s Local Plan. Of particular relevance is Policy SD15: Conservation Areas, which states that:
  - 01 Development proposals within a conservation area, or within its setting, will only be permitted where they preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest, character or appearance of the conservation area. Sufficient information to support an informed assessment should be provided on the following matters:
    - a The relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan;
    - b Overall settlement layout and relationship to established landscape setting;
    - c Historic pattern of thoroughfares, roads, paths and open spaces, where these provide evidence of the historic evolution of the settlement, and the historic street scene;
    - d Distinctive character zones within the settlement;
    - e Mix of building types and uses, if significant to the historic evolution of the settlement;
    - f Use of locally distinctive building materials, styles or techniques;
    - g Historic elevation features including fenestration, or shop fronts, where applicable;
    - h Significant trees, landscape features, boundary treatments, open space, and focal points; and
    - i Existing views and vistas through the settlement, views of the skyline and views into and out of the conservation area.
  - 02 Within a conservation area, development proposals which involve the total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures will only be permitted where it is sufficiently demonstrated that:
    - a The current buildings or structures make no positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest, character or appearance of the conservation area; and
    - b The replacement would make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area

01 The ‘Living with Beauty’ report defines beauty as ‘everything that promotes a happy and healthy life, everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place, everything that turns anywhere into somewhere, and nowhere into home.’





6.68 Design should be informed by the principles and advice set out in the SDNPA’s Development in Conservation Areas guidance in the Design Guide (C.3), which requires development proposals to:

- a preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- b avoid massing or building height which is overly dominating for the site and its context;
- c relate or respond positively to the built heritage predominating in the Conservation Area, so that the new development can properly be seen as preserving or enhancing the character and appearance which led to the area’s designation;
- d respond to key views into, through and out of the Conservation Area;
- e reference the building traditions of the settlement and, where appropriate, fit sympathetically into the existing streetscape;
- f avoid the use of uPVC windows, fascia cladding or other assertively synthetic materials, even if attempts are made to emulate traditional details;
- g if traditional materials are proposed, observe local craft traditions and avoid short cuts, such as flint-block construction;
- h where possible, remove buildings or structures whose aesthetic appearance are harmful to the overall character and appearance for whose protection the area was designated; and
- i minimise the negative impacts on heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, historic parks or gardens or Scheduled Monuments and their setting.



Figure 212: The Depot Cinema, which successfully engages with the Conservation Area’s building traditions and materials, and integrates well into the streetscape, owing to its considered scale and massing





- 6.69 Other, more general sections of the SDNPA’s Design Guide should be referred to when considering new development, including:

  - a C.12 Materials – provides guidance on appropriate building materials and surface materials.
  - b C.13 Architectural Detail – provides guidance on various architectural features including roofs, windows, doors and chimneys.
- 6.70 New development should be informed by planning policies within the Neighbourhood Plan, namely the Policies included below, which are of particular relevance for the Conservation Area:

  - a Policy HC3 A: Heritage Protection of Landscape and Townscape- development proposals should not obscure significant views and should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.
  - b Policy HC3 B: Planning Application Requirements and Heritage Issues- proposals for development should employ design that respects the significance of the Conservation Area.
  - c Policy PL2: Architecture & Design- new development should employ a high standard of design, balance environmental considerations with respect for traditional scale and materials, and employ an imaginative sense of context.
  - d Policy PL3: Flood Resilience- new development should increase flood resilience and should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
  - e Policy PL4: Renewable Energy and the Resource and Energy Efficiency of New Buildings- new development should prioritise reuse of materials and use of local sustainably sourced materials and increasing energy efficiency.
  - f Policy SS1: Historic Streets- new development should protect the network of historic streets and twittens.
  - g Policy SS3: Protection & Enhancement of Green Spaces- new development should not impact local green and community spaces and respect key views from the town to the countryside.
  - h Policy SSE: River Corridor Strategy- development proposals for riverside sites should incorporate/ safeguard land for the construction of publicly accessible river pathways and where possible should open new views to the river.
- 6.71 Architects, developers or anyone intending to develop projects in the Conservation Area should prepare a proportionate heritage statement, which should describe the significance of the heritage asset and the impact of their proposal on that significance.

  - a The SDNPA’s Guidance Note on Heritage Statements should inform the preparation of these documents: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/landscape-design-conservation/heritage-statements/>
- 6.72 Planning applications must also be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement, which sets out how a proposed development is a suitable design response to the site and its setting, whilst providing adequate access to prospective users.
- 6.73 Applicants are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussion with the LPA before starting any detailed design work to reduce the risk of refusal at planning.

Recommendations

- 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.

02 Proposals for extension, alteration and new development should preserve or enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area.

03 The design, construction and materials of any new development, extension, alteration or repair should be of the highest quality and respect their local context.

04 Development within the setting of the Conservation Area (the surroundings in which the Conservation Area is experienced) should be sympathetic to its special interest in terms of its scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing.

05 Development within the setting of the Conservation Area (the surroundings in which the Conservation Area is experienced) should ensure the green and rural nature of the setting, which contributes to its special interest, is maintained.

06 Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.





Theme 4: Shopfronts and Advertising  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.74 Retail is an important part of the Conservation Area, particularly in the historic core of the town centre focusing on the High Street as well as at Cliffe High Street. The design and appearance of shopfronts is therefore important to preserving and enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst there are a considerable number of historic shopfronts surviving, some have been unsympathetically altered or replaced over the years. These are largely found on the High Street, where development pressures are most intense.
- 6.75 Whilst Lewes has fortunately not been significantly impacted by insensitive internally lit signage and many of its historic shopfronts remain intact, the main issue in Lewes is associated with the design and materiality of modern fascia boards. Oversized, poorly positioned fascia signs are inappropriate.
- 6.76 Where plastic or metal are used, instead of timber, and garish colours are selected, such fascia boards do not respect the character of either the building in which they are located or the character of the historic streetscene as a whole.
- 6.77 In places, shopfronts have also had their traditional glazing and stall riser arrangements replaced with larger windows which have no subdivision or traditional stallrisers removed or downsized.
- 6.78 Whilst vacancy is not prevalent in Lewes, there are a few vacant retail units on the High Street as well as historic retail units which have unfortunately been converted to residential use, for example in [Character Area 3](#) (Lewes Castle and Middle High Street) and [Character Area 4](#) (Upper High Street and Western Road).



Figure 213: Unsympathetic modern shopfront and fascia signage to the High Street



Figure 215: Shopfronts on North Street retained despite being converted to residential use



Figure 214: Poorly proportioned low-quality plastic signage



Figure 216: Well-detailed shopfront on the High Street with historic canopy ironwork





Opportunities

- 6.79 Where historic shopfronts survive or existing shopfronts contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, these should be retained and enhanced where possible. Similarly historic shopfront features should be retained and repaired as necessary and incorporated into new schemes rather than being replaced.
- 6.80 Where historic features, such as corbels and pilasters, have been lost and vestiges of their original design remain, opportunities should be sought for their reinstatement.
- 6.81 Whenever opportunities arise, altered shopfronts and shop signage should be returned to a more traditional appearance, employing features or patterns that are in keeping with historic shopfront design and materiality.
- 6.82 Where it is appropriate to replace all or parts of a shopfront, traditional styles (or designs that retain the same proportions and materiality) are likely to be most appropriate in historic buildings, but non-traditional, sympathetically designed shopfronts would be appropriate in modern and new buildings. The replacement of inappropriate modern alterations to shopfronts with suitably designed traditional alternatives is encouraged.
- 6.83 The design of shopfronts needs to reflect the style, proportions, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailing of the rest of the building, particularly the principal elevation, rather than reading as a separate entity.
- 6.84 A shopfront needs to sit within the original building framework set by structural and decorative features within the elevation; columns for example should be carried down to the ground level. This is the case for both buildings which historically contained retail at ground floor and where a shopfront has been inserted in a building designed for residential use.
- 6.85 Where historic retail units have undergone domestic conversions, opportunities should be sought to return these to their original function to re-activate frontages and enhance their contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 6.86 Historic photographs should be used as a point of reference where shopfront alteration or restoration is proposed for historic retail units.
- 6.87 Changes to shopfronts will require planning permission, and, if part of a Listed Building, Listed Building Consent. Changes to signage and advertising will require Advertisement Consent.
- 6.88 The SDNPA’s Design Guide, C5.5 Shopfronts should be referred to for further information on understanding good shopfront design, alongside Lewes District Council’s Planning Advice Note Shopfronts and Advertisements in Lewes although the latter has not been adopted by the SDNPA and is in need of updating.

Guidance on Specific Shopfront Features and Signage

- 6.89 Pilasters, corbels, cornices, fascias, signage and stallrisers are all important elements in traditional shopfronts, creating the visual proportions of the shopfront.
- 6.90 Fascias
  - a Should be in proportion to the rest of the shopfront and not overly large.
  - b They should not extend above cornice level (or, where there is no such feature, should be well below the cill of the window above), or beyond the corbels on either side.
- 6.91 Glazing
  - c Full height glazing is a modern feature and does not reflect the character of historic buildings.
  - d Smaller windows with stallrisers, transoms and mullions are typical traditional features and more appropriate in historic contexts. Some of the earliest shopfront windows in Lewes feature multi-paned bow windows.
  - e Historic shop doors typically feature fanlights above.



Figure 217: Historic shopfront on the High Street featuring paired bow windows



## 6.92 Stallrisers

- a Where historic tiled stallrisers remain, for example on the High Street, these should be retained and repaired where necessary.
- b New shopfronts should ensure to incorporate a stallriser which provides a solid base for the shopfront, giving it balanced proportions, and provides protection from kicks and knocks.

## 6.93 Signage

- a The design and detailing of advertising and signage content, both on fascias, hanging signs and any freestanding signage, are important in the Conservation Area. The signage should complement the design of the shopfront and building, conveying a sense of permanence and quality.
- b Proposals to alter signage and shopfrontages should use traditional and characteristic materials, specifically painted timber and glazing, which best enhance the historic character of the buildings. The use of plastic and metal is not considered to be appropriate in historic contexts.
- c Colour palettes, lettering style and illumination need to be considered in the design of a complementary shopfront.
- d Internally lit signage is not prevalent in Lewes, however, it should continue to be avoided as it is not appropriate within a Conservation Area. Where nighttime uses require lighting, subtle external lighting is more impactful and more appropriate.
- e Careful consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of freestanding signage such as A-boards as these can cause visual clutter and physical impediment to pedestrian movement. Fortunately this is not a big issue in Lewes at present. To display an A-board, advertising consent must be sought.

## 6.94 Canopies

- a Historic photos show some of the shopfront properties on the High Street featured fabric canopies. Onsite analysis also reveals the remains of associated canopy ironwork mechanisms. These have been lost over time and such features can add interest to the streetscene if of an appropriate design suitable for use in the Conservation Area.
- b Canopies should avoid obscuring historic features, should be retractable and made of canvas. Dutch-style canopies, which are visible when retracted are not appropriate.
- c Canopies would have traditionally been positioned above fascia signage and this is therefore the most appropriate position for replacement or new canopies; projecting hanging signage will allow the shop name and advertising to remain visible when the canopy is down.

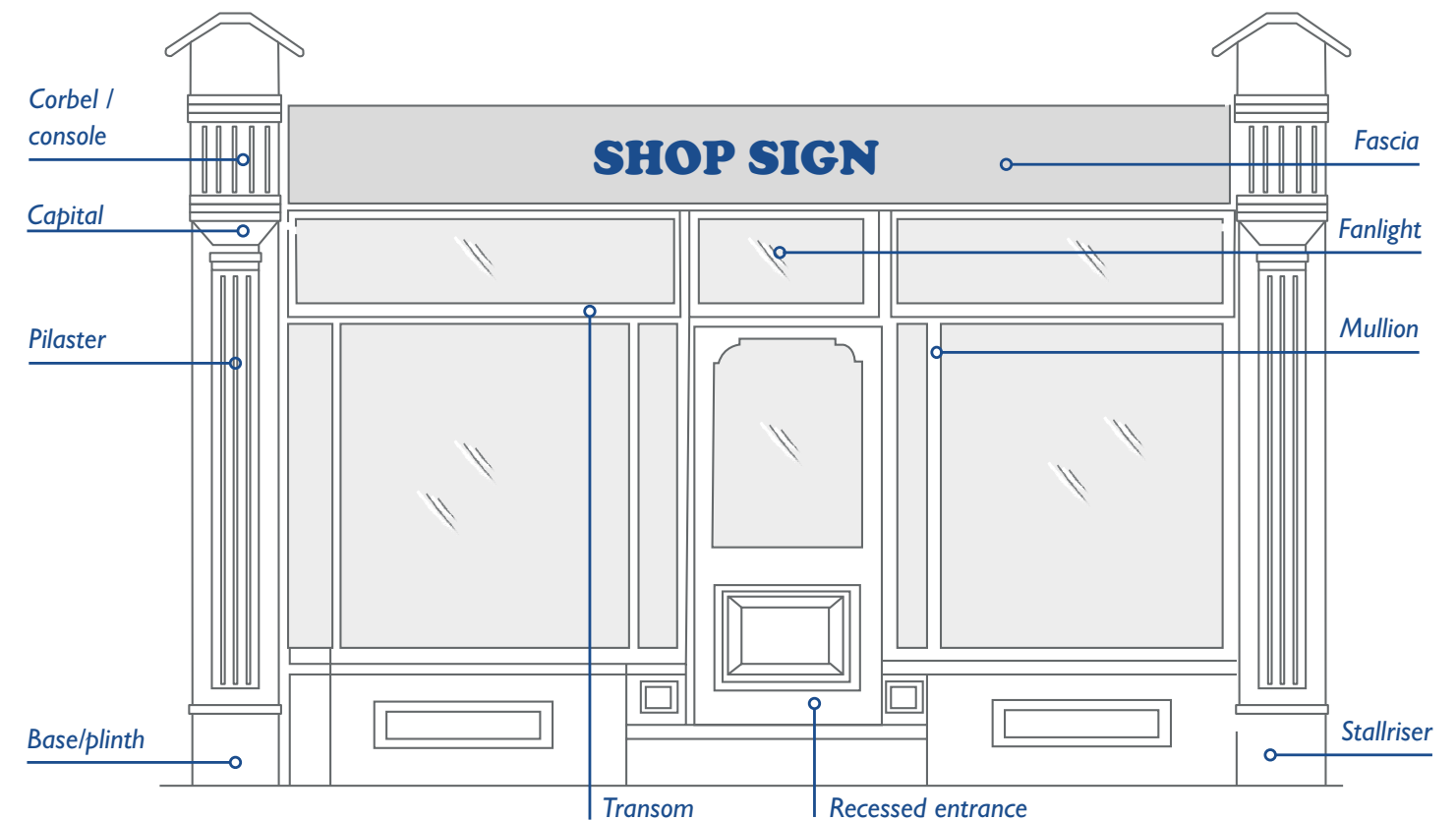


Figure 218: Historic ironwork intended to support a canopy on Cliffe High Street



Figure 219: Historic ironwork canopy mechanism on Lewes High Street

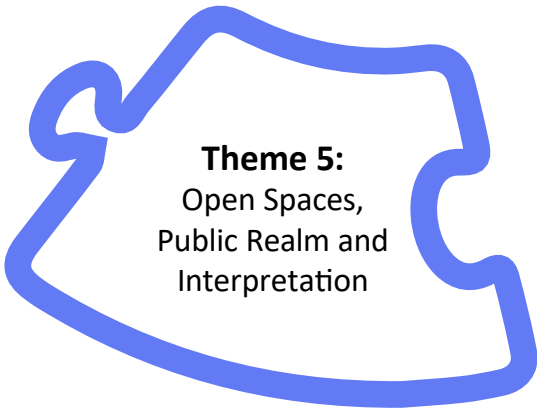




Recommendations

- 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.
- 09 Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as timber sash windows or corbels on traditional shopfronts, is encouraged.
- 10 The replacement of inappropriate modern alterations to shopfronts with suitably designed traditional or sympathetically designed alternatives is encouraged.





Theme 5: Open Spaces, Public Realm and Interpretation  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.95 The public realm, namely publicly accessible streets and open spaces, is the area from which the majority of people will experience the Conservation Area; preserving and enhancing its character and appearance is therefore of considerable importance for maintaining the special interest of the area. The public realm consists not only of surface treatments but also street furniture, street signs and interpretation.
- 6.96 There is good provision of open space and tree planting in Lewes. However, there are relatively few street trees and a number of streets have lost their street trees (shown on historic OS maps), particularly in the Wallands.
- 6.97 There is little public access to the riverside within the Conservation Area.
- 6.98 Historic views from Bradford Street across Baxter’s Field and the Paddock towards the castle have been screened owing to poor tree management within the public space; historic imagery from the mid-20th century shows more open views across the green space.
- 6.99 The town features a good proportion of traditional-style lampposts. However, there remain modern utilitarian streetlights on certain streets, including South Street in Cliffe, The Avenue in Wallands and Southover High Street, which are not appropriate to the historic character of the Conservation Area. Where streets are narrow, streetlights fixed to building elevations are particularly successful in reducing visual clutter, for example on Chapel Hill.
- 6.100 Whilst benches are well provided in some character areas, in certain areas they are lacking and where they exist are often inconsistent in materiality and design. Bins are typically of a sensitive, traditional style, although the poor quality and often graffitied plastic bins in the Priory Park in Southover would benefit from replacement. The same applies for bollards, which are present in a range of forms. Whilst traditional finger posts are present on the High Street, they are lacking in other parts of the Conservation Area or, where they feature, adopt a more modern, utilitarian form. The public realm to the north of the Castle Precinct, overlooking the Paddock, is in particular need of enhancement owing to eroded landscaping and low-quality benches.
- 6.101 In addition to street furniture, road signage, freestanding shop-signage, broadband cabinets and items such as inappropriately located café seating, can collectively cause excessive clutter within the public realm and detract physically and visually from the pedestrian experience of the Conservation Area. There is considerable variation in street signage across the Conservation Area.
- 6.102 Applications associated with features within the public realm will be carefully considered to ensure that the public streets remain pleasant and attractive places to be whilst ensuring that commercial activities can continue successfully.

- 6.103 Installation of e-charging points are likely to become a feature of the streetscene in the coming years. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be integrated with existing street furniture and considered alongside other reductions in street furniture.
- 6.104 Overhead wires are highly visible in some streets, particularly residential streets such as Morris Road and Dorset Road. These modern accretions distract from views of the historic streetscene.



Figure 220: Tired public realm north of the Castle Precincts



Figure 221: Late Victorian plaque commemorating Thomas Paine on the Bull Inn

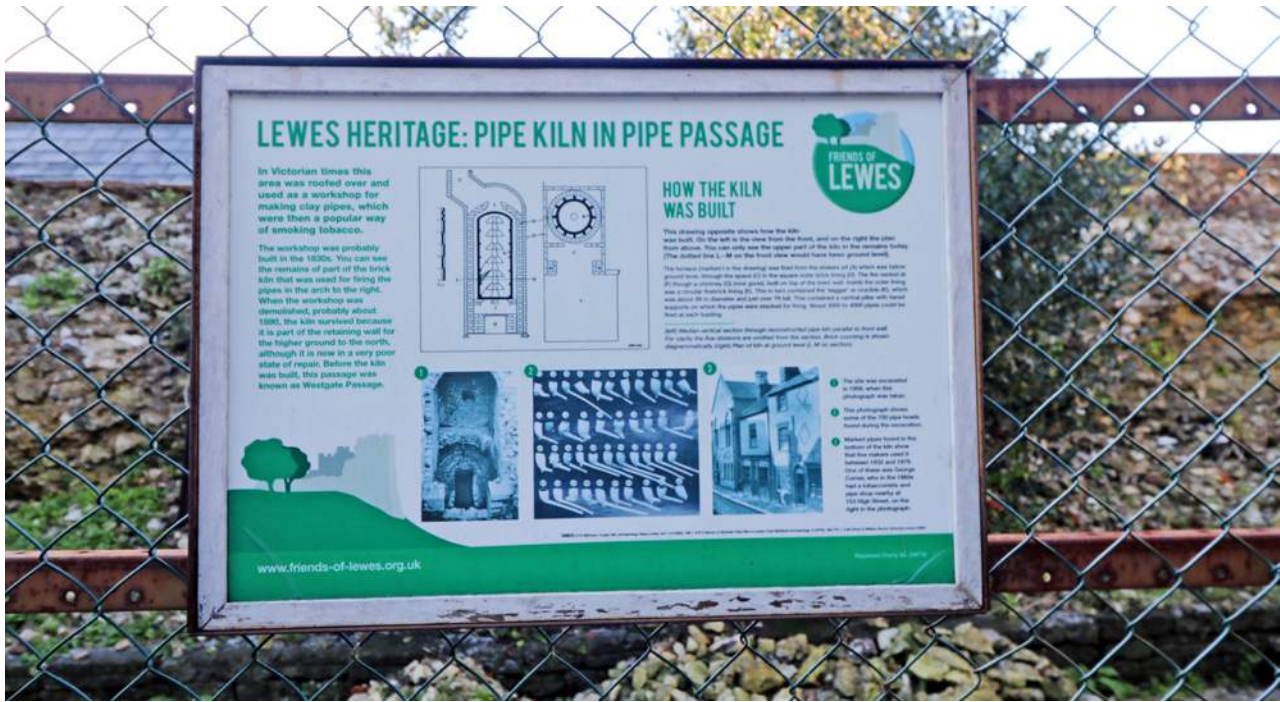


Figure 222: Sign to Pipe Passage discussing the eponymous pipe kiln





- 6.105 Whilst certain historic pavers and cobbles survive, and there is a good proportion of traditional granite kerbs, the surface treatments within the Conservation Area are varied with plenty of modern, tarmac or concrete finishes. There are areas where surface finishes are in a poor condition and others which could benefit from replacement with more sympathetic and durable surface treatments.
- 6.106 It is recognised that there is already a good proportion of interpretative signage within the Conservation Area which is largely well designed and much of which has a shared design identity. Such signage raises awareness about the history of Lewes and the special interest of the Conservation Area. There are small metal plaques affixed to a number of buildings highlighting their associations with significant historical figures, like the political theorist Thomas Paine and paleontologist Gideon Mantell and commemorating significant events, whilst larger interpretation boards relate to the Battle of Lewes to the north of the Castle Precinct and Lewes Priory to the south of the Conservation Area.



Figure 223: Public art in Southover Grange Gardens



Figure 224: One of a number of good quality interpretation boards relating to the remains of Lewes Priory



Figure 225: Modern streetlight





Opportunities

- 6.107 A sensitive and holistic approach needs to be taken to changes and improvements to the public realm within an overarching, cohesive strategy. Any additions or amendments to the public realm will also need to take account of highways and will need to work with East Sussex County Council.
- 6.108 Where street trees have been lost, particularly in Wallands, these should be reinstated where possible, potentially as part of public realm schemes or upgrades, to reflect the historic leafy character of the streets and to enhance biodiversity.
- 6.109 Tree management, potentially involving pruning and thinning, should be carried out along the south-west side of Baxter’s Field to reinstate historic views from the houses along Bradford Road across Baxter’s Field and the Paddock.
- 6.110 The provision of more footpaths along the riverside would be a particularly desirable goal for improving the amenity of the local residents. This would enhance the Conservation Area’s special interest by drawing on the historic connection between town and river.
- 6.111 Where historic items of street furniture and surface finishes do survive, these should be retained and repaired in situ.
- 6.112 Care should be taken to ensure future public realm works are considered for the long-term and materials both for the street furniture and surface treatments are durable and high-quality.
- 6.113 If opportunities arise to relocate cables below ground, where this would not be harmful to historic surface treatments, this would be beneficial to the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.114 Broadband cabinets should be better positioned to avoid cluttering the public realm, obstructing pedestrian movement, and visually impacting the streetscene.
- 6.115 Further use of streetlights fixed to building elevations in narrow streets should be encouraged, where the necessary wayleaves can be sought from building owners.
- 6.116 There is an opportunity for further consistency to be sought for interpretation boards going forward and to supplement the existing offering with additional interpretation, including potential digital interpretation, to enhance the legibility of the history and special interest of the place. There is a similar opportunity associated with the introduction of more cohesive street signage as opportunities for replacement arise. When new interpretation is considered, it should be designed with an awareness of the style, materiality and character of existing signage.
- 6.117 There is similarly an opportunity to introduce more cohesive street signage as signs are replaced iteratively.

- 6.118 Proposals for new public realm should be informed by the design guidance on public realm in the SDNPA’s Public Realm guidance in the Design Guide (C.7), which includes key design principles for streets, public open space, and play spaces.
- 6.119 Works to the public realm should be considered alongside the Public Realm Strategies set out in Lewes Neighbourhood Plan, which focus on the following with key concepts outlined for each:
  - a Arrival streets
  - b Countryside gateways
  - c Green links
  - d Traffic-calmed streets
  - e Improved cycle network
  - f Improved pedestrian routes
  - g Animated river corridor
  - h Proposed heritage trail
  - i Conservation Areas



Figure 226: Visual clutter caused by power cables

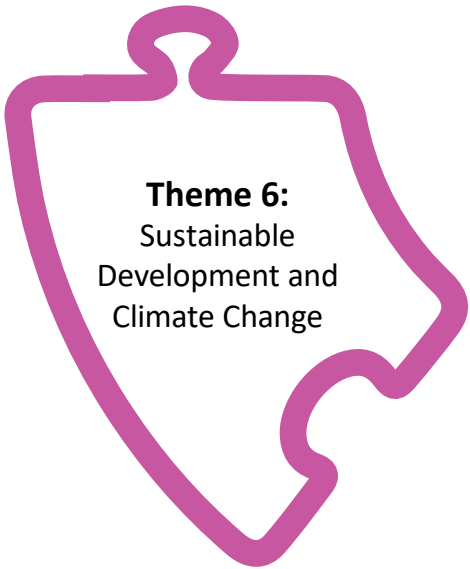


Figure 227: High-quality public realm in Southover Grange Gardens

Recommendations

- 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.
- 06 Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.





Theme 6: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- 6.120 Both the SDNPA and Lewes District Council declared climate emergencies in 2019 and set up strategies or actions plans to address tackling this important issue.
- 6.121 The SDNPA’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2020) demonstrates a commitment to work with constituent Local Authorities and other partners to respond effectively to climate and nature emergency. The Plan includes a Climate Change Action Plan (Annex 3), which includes a section on the Built Environment and sets out actions around discouraging development on floodplains, promoting the role of green infrastructure (GI) and Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS), and developing design codes that result in more sustainable building schemes.
- 6.122 Lewes District Council’s Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy (2019) contains key actions which, through collaborative working, will help reach a net zero target. The Strategy includes a section on Energy and the Built Environment which encompasses three technical advice notes for developers to place greater emphasis on issues of sustainability.

Issues and Challenges

- 6.123 Maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable. However, there are growing pressures to improve the energy efficiency of the country’s historic building stock in order to reduce carbon emissions, particularly from heating which uses fossil fuel sources. Historic buildings in Conservation Areas such as Lewes can play a significant role in reducing carbon emissions. This section of the report intends to provide building and homeowners with practical advice on reducing carbon emissions and retrofitting their buildings without compromising the characteristics that contribute to give the Conservation Area special interest. Every case will be treated individually on its own merits, having consideration for the significance of the building, its contribution to the Conservation Area and any impact upon these heritage assets.
- 6.124 Historic and traditionally constructed buildings were designed to be breathable, allowing moisture to naturally exit building fabric. Care needs to be taken to make sure historic buildings remain breathable, rather than air-tight, through choosing appropriate materials that avoid water retention.
- 6.125 Care also needs to be taken if external changes are proposed to ensure these are sensitive to their historic context. This could include the addition of solar photovoltaic or solar thermal panels on south or east–west facing roofs as additional energy sources for heating. However, these must not detract from the historic character of the building and are likely to be only acceptable when positioned on rear roof slopes and not readily visible from the public realm. Well-integrated solar slates or tiles may in some circumstances be more visually acceptable, where solar panels are not appropriate.



Figure 228: Pedestrianised section of the lower High Street



Figure 229: The often congested Fisher Street



Figure 230: Keyhole bike racks on the High Street, alongside cluttered broadband cabinets





- 6.126 Physical changes to buildings in this context need to be carefully considered so as to mitigate against harm to the significance of both individual buildings and the Conservation Area. This might include improvements to thermal efficiency and changing sources of heating.
- 6.127 Reducing petrol and diesel car use is critical to reducing carbon emissions and there is government commitment to phasing out their sale over the next decade. Petrol and diesel car use will be replaced by a combination of electric (or other carbon free) vehicles and non-motorised travel modes. Both will require infrastructure changes that will need to be considered in the context of the Conservation Area designation to ensure they are implemented appropriately.
- 6.128 Electric vehicles require e-charging points which can be installed within existing car parks and adjacent to street parking bays. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree. Charging electric vehicles in resident parking areas, on the street outside of dwellings, presents a greater challenge with the current technology as personal charging points are expensive and could add considerable additional clutter to the Conservation Area. However, lamppost charging points and wireless charging may become viable in the future and are likely to be more compatible with a Conservation Area environment.
- 6.129 Other, non-motorised methods of travel should be encouraged. There is relatively little provision for bikes and cyclists in the Conservation Area although there are some keyhole racks on the High Street. Sheffield hoops are more appropriate in character.

Opportunities

- 6.130 There are many opportunities to make changes to historic buildings in the Conservation Area which will assist in tackling climate change. Many of these will have no impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area including improving the thermal performance of the building stock through insulating lofts and suspended ground floors, draught exclusion and the considered introduction of secondary glazing.
- 6.131 For Unlisted Buildings, internal works will not require planning permission, however for any works which affect the exterior of a building it will be required. Any works to Listed Buildings, both internal and external, will require Listed Building Consent, and those to the exterior will also require planning permission.
- 6.132 Internal works to improve energy efficiency
  - a Adding insulation to lofts and below suspended ground floors will improve thermal efficiency.
  - b Draft exclusion around windows, doors and vents will also be beneficial.
  - c Installing secondary glazing, thick curtains and internal shutters (if appropriate to the period of the property) will improve thermal performance.
  - d Care should be taken to ensure that traditionally constructed buildings remain sufficiently breathable so as to not cause harm to the fabric of the building.
- 6.133 Windows
  - a There are opportunities to replace windows with slimline double-glazed units to improve a building’s thermal efficiency where the existing are insensitive, modern or beyond repair. This will need planning permission. For Listed Buildings, where existing windows are insensitive, modern or beyond repair, proposed replacements should reflect historic joinery and glazing types.
  - b However, the conservation of historic windows, even where these are not original, is encouraged wherever possible and a significance-led approach should inform any alterations. The SDNPA’s Windows guidance in the Design Guide (C13.3) sets out that double or triple glazing will only be appropriate in traditional buildings where it is well-designed and does not have an adverse impact on the appearance or fabric of the building or any features of architectural or historic interest.



Figure 231: Fisher Street – a busy road at rush hour – where the pavement is narrow and disappears to one side, making it an unpleasant pedestrian route





- c When making decisions about windows, owners are first encouraged to consider low-cost solutions that can improve thermal performance whilst having less impact on the significance of a building than replacement. These include repairs, draught proofing and secondary glazing, which will not need planning permission but may need Listed Building Consent if the building is listed. Closing curtains, blinds and shutters can also produce the same heat savings as double glazing.
- d All window improvements or upgrades should be considered in the context of the “whole building approach” to ensure that works are effective and sustainable in the long term.
- e The visual character of uPVC windows (design, materiality, detailing) makes them unsuitable for older buildings and Conservation Areas. The service life of these windows is short (25 years) compared to well-maintained traditional windows (often 100+ years) and they can be difficult to repair. These windows are not widely recycled and often end up in landfill sites; the carbon cost of a uPVC replacement window will therefore be higher than an appropriately upgraded traditional window.

6.134 Solar panels and renewables

- a Applications for solar panels are encouraged in rear roof slopes which are not readily visible from the public realm, however, the topography of Lewes needs to be taken into account as many rear roof slopes are visible.
- b Well-integrated solar slates or tiles may in some circumstances be more acceptable where solar panels are inappropriate and where these do not impact the character of the Conservation Area.
- c Listed Building Consent is required in order to install solar panels on any roof slope of a Listed Building. Planning permission is required for the installation of solar panels to front and side roof slopes.
- d Other renewable energy sources could be considered, such as ground, air or water sourced heat pumps as long as they are not installed on a wall or roof which fronts a highway and do not detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area. Consents are required for any heat pumps in Listed Buildings or buildings in Conservation Areas.

6.135 Changes to public realm

- a Installation of e-charging points are likely to become a more common feature in the streetscene in the coming years. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be incorporated within existing street furniture and considered alongside other reductions in street furniture. Planning permission may be required on changes to boundary treatments associated with private charging points.

- b Prioritise the selection of traditional materials from sustainable, low-carbon sources.
- c Introduce Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in line with the SDNPA Sustainable Drainage guidance in the Design Guide (C.9.3), which can reduce the risk of flooding and pollution, in a manner that does not impact the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- d Select native plant species for planting in public spaces which are resilient to changing weather conditions, encourage biodiversity of flora and fauna and appropriate to the character of historic open spaces.

6.136 Traffic reduction and active travel

- a Measures should be taken to reduce or calm vehicle movement in the Conservation Area to improve air quality and make active travel more pleasant and safer.
- b There is an opportunity to create more road infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling such as pedestrian routes and cycle paths, as well as appropriate signposting. There is also potential to introduce discrete, well-integrated bike storage. These measures should take care not to add to visual clutter. This would help to reduce carbon emissions and enhance visitor experience to the area.
- c Where new cycle stands are introduced these should be simple Sheffield hoops as these are most sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area.

Retrofitting Historic Buildings

- 6.137 Escalating energy prices, coupled with the increasing effects of human induced climate change, is rightly drawing focus to the energy efficiency of our existing buildings. The urgency of the climate crisis means that retrofitting our historic, fossil fuel reliant building stock is important if we are to cut carbon emissions, reduce energy bills, and build energy security.
- 6.138 The word retrofit means to add something that did not originally belong when something was first built or manufactured. In recent times, retrofit has been used to describe the introduction of new materials, products, or equipment into an existing building, with the aim of reducing its energy use. However, a rush to retrofit carries many risks, particularly when it comes to Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas. The consequences of getting it wrong could cause lasting damage and unnecessary expenditure.
- 6.139 There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to retrofitting older buildings and what works on one property, may not work on its neighbour. The Sustainability Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA) published a report in September 2012 titled “The Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings”. The report identified significant challenges in traditional building retrofit because of the uncertainty of data and research; the complexity of interactions; and possible conflicting priorities and values. It instead champions a “whole building approach”, one which considers the building as a system of interconnected materials, functions and users, and understands the effect of external and contextual influences.





6.140 The Hierarchy of Responsible Retrofit, included here, is based on this “whole building approach” and founded on the principle that the greenest (and cheapest) energy is the energy we do not use. Reducing carbon emissions is more than simply insulating and adding solar panels: much can be achieved by changing behaviour, avoiding waste, using efficient controls and equipment and managing the building to its optimum performance.





6.141 This hierarchy of responsible retrofit is broken down below:

Knowledge

6.142 The first and most important step is knowledge.

6.143 Understand the context of your building: its surroundings and situation; its history, construction, and condition; its energy use and impact; its occupation and patterns of use. Understand the financial context of the project, what is the budget, are there grants or funding opportunities available?

6.144 Allowing time to properly understand the building, how it is used, and where energy is being wasted will save time and money later.

Eliminate

6.145 Next, seek to eliminate unnecessary energy use.

6.146 Addressing issues like damp, draughts and other defects can be a cost-effective way of saving energy. Look at how a building is used: is a space constantly heated but only occupied once a week for example?

Mitigate

6.147 Your plan should then mitigate the impact of things that are unavoidable.

6.148 For example, lighting and electrical appliances are essential items, these should be as efficient as possible (LEDs etc). What is the most efficient way of using the spaces?

Improve

6.149 Next, improve the existing buildings fabric to reduce energy use further through passive means.

6.150 For example, upgrading windows, insulating the roof, walls, and floors, looking at air tightness and cold bridges. Traditional buildings were constructed to be ‘breathable’ using vapour-permeable materials. Incorporating materials that enable this permeability is crucial to avoiding unintended consequences like moisture buildup and damp. A risk-based approach will help effectively manage this. Consider occupant comfort, effective ventilation and minimise risks of overheating.

Active

6.151 And last but not least, introduce appropriate ‘active’ energy technologies that are zero carbon and renewable.

6.152 This could include solar panels, heat pumps, district heat networks etc. This final measure is an essential part of addressing the climate emergency but jumping to this step too early could risk implementing the wrong solution. If you don’t take steps to reduce energy demand first, the new energy source will need to be larger and work harder, and ultimately cost more to install and to run.

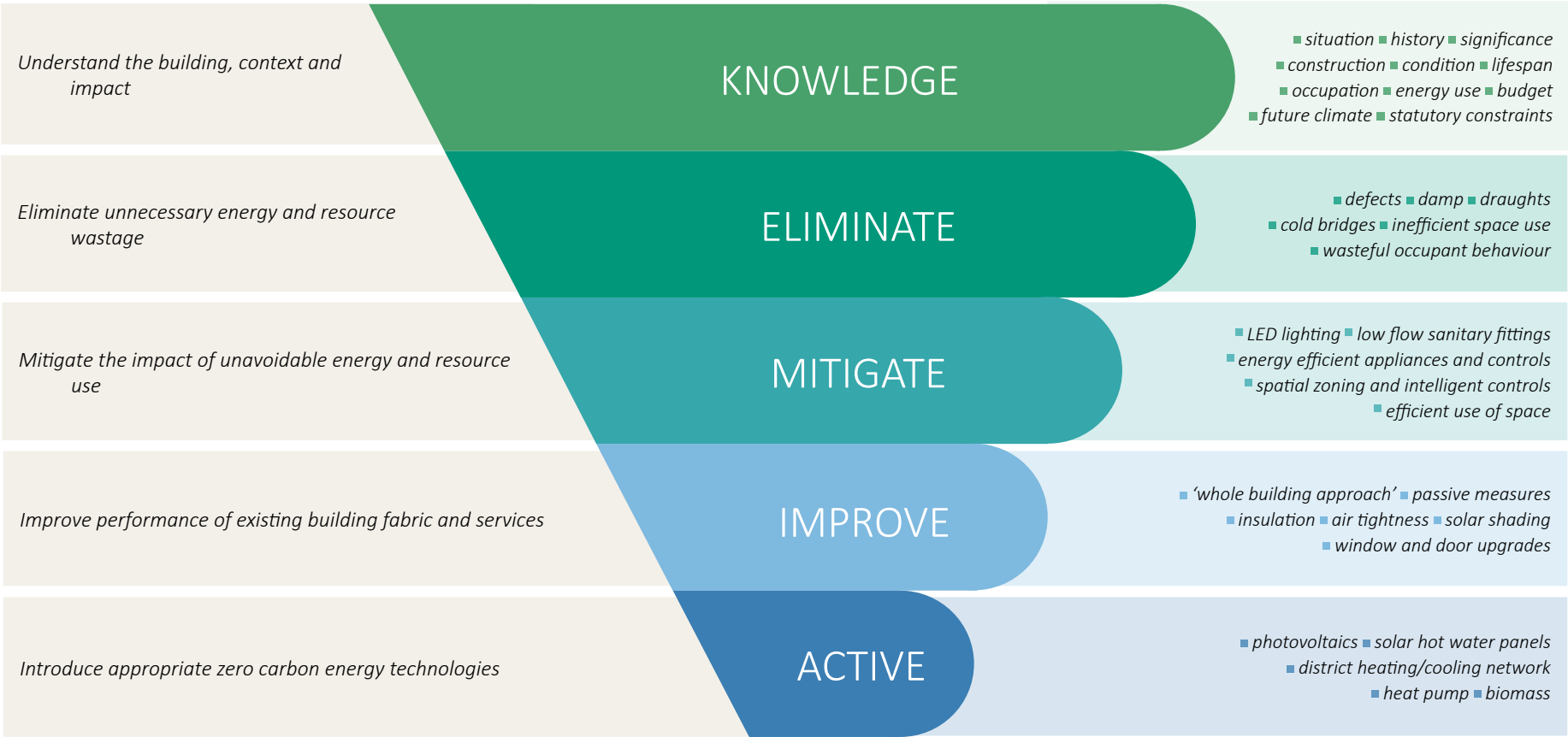


Figure 232: Hierarchy of Responsible Retrofit





## Best Practice Guidance on Historic Buildings and Energy Efficiency

6.153 Physical changes to buildings should be guided by Historic England’s extensive advice regarding historic buildings and energy efficiency, including advice on cutting carbon emissions, upgrading windows and introducing renewable energy technologies:

- **Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes, Advice Note 14.** This advice note considers energy efficiency improvements to traditional homes that are heritage assets. The importance of the “whole building approach” lies at the heart of the advice note, which seeks the best balance between saving energy, maintaining a healthy indoor environment and sustaining heritage significance, all by understanding the building in its context. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/energy-efficiency-and-traditional-homes-advice-note-14/heag295-energy-efficiency-traditional-homes/>
- **Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency.** This guidance is for anyone who wishes to improve energy efficiency in an historic building. It is underpinned by the “whole building approach” and provides guidance on ensuring energy-efficiency measures are suitable, robust, well-intergrated, properly coordinated and sustainable. Section 3 is particularly useful in summarising practical energy efficiency improvements and considers their respective benefits, costs and technical risks. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/heag094-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/>
- **Traditional Window: their care, repair and upgrading.** This useful guidance is aimed at building professionals and property owners and provides detailed technical advice on the maintenance, repair and thermal upgrading of windows as well as on their replacement. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/heag039-traditional-windows-revfeb17/>
- **Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures.** This advice sets out Historic England’s position and advice on the care and repair of old windows and improving their thermal performance both within Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic England encourage owners to conserve significant historic windows wherever possible; repair, maintenance and adaption are often more sustainable than replacement. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/modifying-historic-windows-as-part-of-retrofitting-energy-saving-measures/>

- **Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric (Photovoltaics).** This guidance describes different solar panels available and provides advice on minimising the potential damage to fabric and the visual impact of a renewable installation. It sets out that steps should be carried out to cut energy consumption prior to consideration of installation of renewables in line with a ‘whole building approach’. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-solar-electric/heag173-eehb-solar-electric-photovoltaics/>
- **How to Save Energy in an Older Home.** This provides information on saving on energy bills or cutting carbon emissions for people living in older buildings, listing options and considering their benefits, costs and risks. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/energy-efficiency/making-changes-to-save-energy/>
- Other useful guidance is provided by:
  - » The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), which carries out periodical research relating to energy efficiency in old buildings and prepares briefings, research reports and advice on the subject, encouraging the holistic understanding of a building, how it performs, how it is uses and how it is inhabited prior to making interventions. <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/energy-efficiency-old-buildings>
  - » The Building Conservation website, which features a useful article, Retrofit in Heritage Buildings. The article stresses the importance of the ‘whole building approach’, when improving the energy performance of buildings, to enable informed decisions to be taken. <https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/retrofit-heritage-buildings/retrofit-heritage-buildings.htm>
- All proposals relating to alterations associated with climate change should accord with relevant policies in:
  - » The SDNPA’s Local Plan including Policy SD14: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation of Historic Buildings and SD48: Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources.
  - » The SDNPA’s Supplementary Planning Documents including The Design Guide, including C.14.4 Environmentally Sustainable Design, and Sustainable Construction.
  - » Lewes Town Council’s Neighbourhood Plan, which forms part of the Development Plan of Lewes, in particular Policy LE1 Natural Capital.





Recommendations

01

The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.

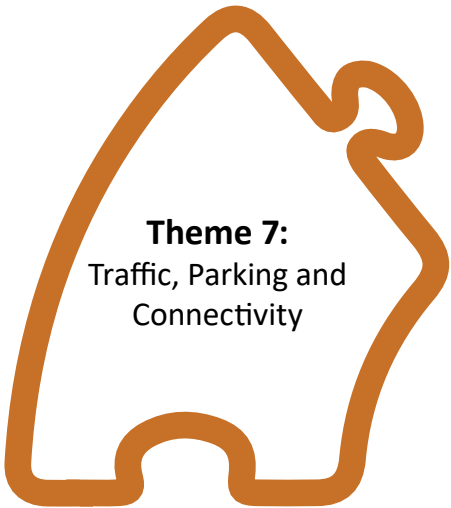
06

Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.

07

Changes to buildings and areas in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.





Theme 7: Traffic, Parking and Connectivity  
Issues and Challenges

- 6.154 Closely associated with the climate emergency issue is the amount and flow of parked and moving traffic in Lewes. The traffic and congestion in Lewes causes a negative impact on the experience of the Conservation Area.

6.155 There are limited pedestrianised areas within the Conservation Area, namely the section of High Street at the foot of School Hill, whilst Cliffe High Street to the east is partially pedestrianised. Priority is given to vehicles throughout the Conservation Area with few established pedestrian crossing points, something which is particularly noticeable on the High Street and Fisher Street, the latter especially problematic due to a lack of pavement to part of the west side of the street.

6.156 In some areas, such as the Avenue and Rotten Row, boundary treatments have been unsympathetically altered to create garages and areas of hardstanding for car parking, which has a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.157 There are many car parks within the Conservation Area which detract from its appearance and special interest owing to their prominence within the streetscene as gap sites. Brook Street Car Park on North Street and Cliffe High Street Car Park are particularly intrusive owing to their lack of boundary screening and poor surface treatments. Those which occupy corner sites, such as the Cliffe High Street Car Park, are particularly visible.

6.158 Other large car parks, such as the Friars’ Walk, Station, Phoenix Causeway and NCP Eastgate car parks represent large and unsympathetic expanses of hardstanding that detract from the character of the Conservation Area. Street parking can also detract from the appearance of a historic area, especially when it occurs on both sides of a narrow street, as seen in residential areas and in the town centre.

6.159 Certain areas of the Conservation Area are suffering from high volumes of heavy traffic and associated noise and air pollution. HGVs accessing the C7 from the west end of Southover High Street are causing damage to kerb and pavement treatments as well as to Listed Buildings.



Figure 233: High concentration of on-street parking along the High Street



Figure 234: Prominent parking and poor quality road surfacing to Westgate Street



Figure 235: Garage eroding the historic plot pattern on The Avenue





Opportunities

- 6.160 Improving general movement to reduce congestion and enhancing the pedestrian experience would improve the experience of the Conservation Area’s special interest.
- 6.161 Traffic calming measures, such as new surface treatments, should be considered to slow traffic and would also allow the reintroduction of traditional surfaces such as stone setts or cobbles. Examples of stone setts providing traffic calming can be seen in Southover High Street.
- 6.162 Encouraging non-motorised travel has some potential to reduce the pressure on car parking.
- 6.163 Improving cycle routes by providing space for segregated cycle lanes and advanced stop boxes at junctions could help alleviate congestion.
- 6.164 Where car parks are found in prominent locations and are detracting features, opportunities should be sought to provide better screening, landscape buffers and soft landscaping to break up extensive tarmac.
- 6.165 There are opportunities to introduce a park and ride facility and ensure that public transport options are adequate to assist in resolving this issue.
- 6.166 Discussions with East Sussex County Council Highways would be beneficial to consider traffic control and management in the Conservation Area, particularly concerning the heavy traffic causing damage to historic buildings on Southover High Street.
- 6.167 The SDNPA’s Parking guidance in the Design Guide (C.8.1) sets out that car parking design should:
  - a Be well-integrated with good landscape treatment and should avoid a public realm dominated by cars, hardstanding, too many materials and associated clutter.
  - b Car parking design should accommodate EV charging points.
- 6.168 The Neighbourhood Plan Policy AM1 Active Travel Networks places emphasis on:
  - a Moving towards cyclist and pedestrian priority.
  - b Enhancing public footpaths, street crossings and cycle routes and infrastructure.

Recommendations

- 01 The historic environment of Lewes, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, should be maintained to ensure the town remains a desirable place in which to live and work, and visit.
- 06 Trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained and opportunities for new tree planting and green landscaping should be taken.
- 07 Changes to buildings and areas in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Figure 236: The popular, pedestrianised section of Cliffe High Street



Figure 237: Stone setts used for traffic calming on Southover High Street



# Further Information and Sources



- Bibliography
- Legislation, Policy and Guidance
- Contact Details

The picturesque Harvey’s Brewery shop on Cliffe High Street, which is located in a series of 16th or 17th century houses







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Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation, Planning Policy and Best Practice Guidance

The following legislation, policy documents and guidance have been utilised in undertaking the review and preparing this report.

- a Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- b Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (specifically Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)
- c South Downs National Park, South Downs Local Plan (adopted July 2019)
- d South Downs National Park, Adopted Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (July 2022)
- e Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance
- f Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019)
- g Historic England, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008)
- h Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest. Designation gives Conservation Areas protection as alterations, additions or demolitions are controlled by the need for Planning Permission, which is required by local planning authorities when change is proposed. Section 69 of the Act details the protection of Conservation Areas and is reproduced below, of specific reference is section (1):

“Section 69 Designation of Conservation Areas

(1) Every local planning authority:

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as Conservation Areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a Conservation Area.

(4) The designation of any area as a Conservation Area shall be a local land charge.”

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government’s planning policies for new development within England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF ‘is a presumption in favour of sustainable development’. The most recent version of the NPPF was published in 2023 and of relevance to the current review is Section 16 – ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’, in particular paragraph 191:

“When considering the designation of Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

Also of relevance are paragraphs 206 and 207:

“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.”





## Planning Practice Guidance

In 2014 the government launched the Planning Practice Guidance website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>). The guidance is a live document intended to provide further detailed information with regard to the implementation of the NPPF. It includes the section ‘Historic environment’, which advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment.

## Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition)

This Historic England advice note, published in 2019, supports the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas through Conservation Area appraisal, designation and management. Of great relevance to the review of Lewes Conservation Area is the following paragraphs:

“10 Conservation area designation is undertaken to recognise the historic character of an area and/or in answer to the impact of development, neglect and other threats, on areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest. The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area and the effect of those impacts bearing negatively on its significance. It will form part of the local planning authority’s Historic Environment Record and will be part of the evidence base for the local plan and a material consideration in planning decisions.”

“77 Under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in their districts from time to time. Regularly reviewed appraisals, or shorter condition surveys, identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into a management plan that is specific to the area’s needs. In turn, this can channel development to conserve the Conservation Area’s special qualities. Both areas in relative economic decline and those under pressure for development can benefit from management proposals that promote positive change.”

## Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

Conservation Principles was published by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2008. It provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment, wherein ‘Conservation is defined as the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations’. The guidance also provides a set of four heritage values, which are used to assess significance. The values are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

## Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition)

The significance of a heritage asset is not only derived from its physical presence but also from its setting and the surroundings in which it is experienced. The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) published in 2017 by Historic England provides guidance on managing change within the setting of a heritage asset. It recommends a staged approach to assessment of proposals during design evolution, of relevance to the current review are the is step 2, understanding the setting of the study area.

- Step 1:** identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.
- Step 2:** the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
- Step 3:** assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Step 4:** explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Step 5:** make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.





## Contact Details

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### Lewes District Council

[https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/contact-us/visit-our-offices/.](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/contact-us/visit-our-offices/)

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# Appendix A: Historic Development



Early History (Pre-History - Mid-11th Century)

Early Modern Lewes (17th and 18th Centuries)

Modern Lewes (19th and Early 20th Centuries)

Medieval Lewes (Mid-11th Century - 15th Century)

The Lewes Bonfire Night Celebrations

Post-War and Present Day Lewes (Late 20th - 21st Centuries)

Lewes and the Reformation (15th and 16th Centuries)

Early 20th century photo looking down School Hill (ESBHRO, AMS 5890/2/2)







## Early History (Pre-History – Mid-11th Century)

- A.1 As the writer E.V. Lucas wrote in 1903, ‘Lewes is the museum of Sussex; for she has managed to compress into small compass more objects of antiquarian interest than any town I know.’<sup>01</sup> Lewes has a long history, first appearing in the documentary record in the ‘Burghal Hidage’. This set of c.918 AD documents listed the fortified burhs, or settlements, which were organised by Alfred, King of Wessex in the late 870s, to provide defence from Viking attack.<sup>02</sup>
- A.2 Archaeological evidence gathered in the 19th and early 20th centuries suggests that Lewes was perhaps settled earlier, as there was a series of barrows or mounds of an uncertain date (perhaps Anglo-Saxon, Roman, or earlier) clustered in the area between Brack Mound and St John-sub-Castro Church. All but two of these – Brack Mound and Castle Mound – were levelled by the mid-19th century.<sup>03</sup> The discovery of Pagan Saxon cemeteries at Malling to the north of the town centre and Juggs Road in Southover, suggests that even if Lewes itself was not settled then there must have been settlement in a close proximity prior to the establishment of the burh in c.900 AD.<sup>04</sup> Mount Caburn to the south-east of the Conservation Area boundary retains evidence of settlement from the 6th century BC to the mid-1st century AD.
- A.3 The town’s present name seemingly derives from Old English. Its exact derivation has been the subject of much debate. The 16th century scholar Laurence Nowell suggested hlæw, meaning a hill or barrow, as the root and this attribution has largely stuck. Meanwhile, the philologist Rune Forsberg proposed an alternative derivation, the word læw, meaning a wound or injury. Forsberg thought the term was used topographically to refer to Lewes’ site at the end of a key pass through the South Downs, whilst Richard Coates alternatively suggested lexowia from the Celtic word for a slope.<sup>05</sup>
- A.4 The church of St John-sub-Castro, in the north of the Conservation Area, was perhaps established as a minster church as early as the 9th century, although only an 11th century former doorway has survived subsequent 17th and 19th century rebuilding campaigns. The church likely predated the establishment of the burh, as archaeological evidence suggests it sat beyond the boundaries of the original Anglo-Saxon defences, concentrated to the south of this area. The original defended settlement was concentrated between Keere and Westgate Streets to the west, with the original east gate likely sited at the top of School Hill. The Ouse protected the settlement to the east, whilst a steep ridge and the Winterbourne Stream complicated the approach to Lewes from the north and south respectively. The 10th century settlement of Lewes extended as far as Brack Mound, whilst the southern boundary was midway between Southover Road and the High Street, the nucleus of the existing street network evident by this point in time, with closely spaced twittens

or passageways running perpendicular to the High Street.<sup>06</sup> Archaeological investigations on the Baxter’s Printworks site completed in 2008 discovered the remains of the Saxon defensive ditch in the land to the east of St Nicholas’s Lane for the first time.<sup>07</sup>

- A.5 During the reign of King Alfred’s grandson, Æthelstan, Lewes rapidly rose to a position of prominence within Sussex. The settlement flourished due to its strategic importance and role as a commercial centre, signalled by Æthelstan allowing two moneyers in Lewes (by the names of Wilebald and Eadric) to mint new coins in the burh in the 930s. In contrast, Hastings and Chichester were allowed only one apiece. Lewes was, therefore, a major commercial centre within Sussex, a conclusion further supported by the fact that the coins minted in Lewes during Æthelstan’s reign referred to it as ‘LAE URB’, making it one of four mint towns to have urban status conferred on it.<sup>08</sup> By 1065 Lewes was estimated to be worth £26, twice as much as Chichester, with ownership split between Edward the Confessor and Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex. Their holdings passed to King William I and William de Warenne respectively after the Norman Conquest of 1066.<sup>09</sup>



Figure 238: An engraving of 1776 showing St John-sub-Castro (Abinger Place) prior to its Victorian rebuilding, the 11th century doorway visible to the left. (East Sussex Brighton and Hove Record Office (ESBHRO), PDA/L 33 b)

01 Quoted in Helen Poole, *Lewes Past* (2000), p. 1

02 Colin Brent, *Pre-Georgian Lewes* (2001), p. 17

03 John Bleach, ‘A Romano-British (?) barrow cemetery and the origins of Lewes’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 135 (1997), pp. 131-4

04 David Rudling, ‘Archaeological Survey of Lewes’, *Aspects of Archaeology in the Lewes Area* (1987), p. 3

05 For a concise summary see John Insley, ‘Review – Rune Forsberg, “The Place-Name Lewes. A Study of its Early Spellings and Etymology”’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 71:1 (1999), pp. 118-121

06 Roland Harris, *Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report* (2005), pp. 16-7

07 Simon Stevens, ‘Baxter’s Printworks Site’, *Sussex Past and Present* (2008), p. 5

08 Colin Brent, *Pre-Georgian Lewes* (2001), p. 21

09 Malcolm Lyne and Freda Anderson, ‘Introduction’, *Lewes Priory: Excavations by Richard Lewis 1969-82* (1997), p.1





Medieval Lewes (Mid-11th Century – 15th Century)

A.6 William de Warenne, Lord of Varennes, a small town in north-eastern France, was given a swathe of land in Sussex by William the Conqueror. This subdivision of the county of Sussex was known as the rape of Lewes and stretched from Newhaven in the south to the border with Surrey in the north. He was created Earl of Surrey in the late 1080s, by which time he had already brought about dramatic change in Lewes, established as the administrative centre of his holdings in Sussex. De Warrene made the decision to build a castle there and host his court in the town every three weeks. Although the precise date and sequencing of the castle’s construction is poorly documented, it seems probable that the extant masonry remains of the Castle date to c.1100 and represent a rebuilding of defensive timber palisades. The Castle consisted of two flint shell keeps, one constructed to the top of Castle Mound, the other to the top of Brack Mound, with only the former surviving to the present day. This makes Lewes Castle one of only two Anglo-Norman castles constructed across two mottes, the other being Lincoln Castle. An ovoid bailey connected the two mottes, whilst walls and ditches defended it on all but the north side.<sup>10</sup>

- A.7 An unsuccessful trip to Rome, made by William de Warenne and Gundreda, his wife, in the mid-1070s also left its mark on Lewes. The outbreak of war between Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII meant that the husband and wife could not continue on to Rome, instead visiting the great Benedictine monastery at Cluny. Whilst there, William and Gundreda persuaded the abbot, Hugh, to allow them to found a priory at Lewes, with Cluny as its mother house.<sup>11</sup> This meant Lewes was home to the first and most significant Cluniac religious house in medieval England. The historian William of Malmesbury proclaimed that ‘no other monastery can outdo it in either the piety of its monks or its hospitality to guests or its charity towards all men.’<sup>12</sup> The Priory was built to the south of the burh, the settlement of Southover developing to the north of its precinct. Meanwhile, a hospital dedicated to St Nicholas was founded on the westward road from Lewes, perhaps as a leper house, by William de Warenne in 1088, whilst the Priory controlled another hospital in Southover. This was initially dedicated to St John in the 12th century before its rebuilding and rededication to St James in the 13th or 14th century. The hospital’s chapel still stands just off Southover High Street.<sup>13</sup> A Franciscan Friary was established in the town in 1241, the mendicants taking up residence on the western bank of the Ouse, off Friars’ Walk.
- A.8 By 1121 Lewes had ten parish churches, excluding the Saxon church of St Pancras which had been rebuilt as the priory church. There was a degree of extramural settlement in the 11th century, signalled by the construction of parish churches outside of the Saxon burh, such as St Pancras at Southover and St Anne’s (formerly known as St Mary Westout, due to its location outside the town’s Westgate). Urban settlement was also extended to the east around this time, the system of long thin burgage plots established in the Anglo-Saxon burh replicated as far as Eastgate Street. As a result, Lewes extended down School Hill towards the banks of the River Ouse. This growth was driven by the town’s continued commercial and administrative importance, with the minting of coins still allowed into the late 12th century, whilst a daily market every day bar Sunday from the late 11th century drew farmers and artisans from the surrounding area into the town to sell their goods.<sup>14</sup> By 1086 there were at the very least 900 people living in Lewes.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 239: 1785 engraving of Lewes Castle by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (Wikimedia, British Library)

<sup>10</sup> N. Pevsner and I. Nairn, *The Buildings of England: Sussex* (2003), pp. 554-5

<sup>11</sup> Brian Golding, ‘The Coming of the Cluniacs’, in *Anglo-Norman Studies III* (1981), p. 65  
<sup>12</sup> William of Malmesbury, *The Deeds of the Bishops of England*, D. Preest (trans.) (2002), p. 138  
<sup>13</sup> Roland Harris, *Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report* (2005), p. 21  
<sup>14</sup> L. F. Salzmann (ed.), *Victoria County History: A History of the County of Sussex, Vol. 7, The Rape of Lewes* (1940) (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol7>)  
<sup>15</sup> Roland Harris, *Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report* (2005), p. 17





- A.9 A minster church was re-established at Malling to the north of Lewes in 1190 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Malling is separately designated as a Conservation Area. Another chapel associated with the Archbishop was built at a similar time at Cliffe to the east of Lewes. Both Malling and Cliffe sat within the Manor of Stoneham, owned by the Archbishops for many centuries. The bridge which connected Lewes and Cliffe first appears in the documentary record in 1159, although it must predate this as it was being repaired at the time.<sup>16</sup> The growth and character of different areas in Lewes has, to some extent, resulted from the division of the area into three distinct parcels of ownership, de Warenne and his successors owning the borough, the Archbishops of Canterbury holding Cliffe and Malling, and the Cluniacs at Lewes Priory dominating Southover. The tripartite division of Cliffe, Southover and Lewes into three distinct legal entities with their own administrations was only overcome when all three were incorporated into a single borough in 1881.
- A.10 In 1264 the Battle of Lewes was fought between Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester and the forces of King Henry III, assisted by his sons, Prince Edward (later Edward I) and Richard, Earl of Cornwall. The battle was waged to the west of Lewes, with the Earl of Leicester’s forces coming from the Downs to meet their Royalist opponents beyond the Westgate to the town. The battle was a defeat for the Royalists, who were scattered by de Montfort’s army. Whilst Lewes Castle held out in the face of the latter’s attack, Henry III and Prince Edward surrendered to de Montfort from their refuge in Lewes Priory. Much of the town was said to be damaged by fire following the attack on the Castle, whilst the priory church was partially burnt.<sup>17</sup> The victory at Lewes, and the terms imposed on the Crown by a treaty called the ‘Mise of Lewes’, saw the composition of Parliament extended in 1265. The regular cast of barons and bishops were joined for the first time by two knights for each shire and two burgesses from each borough, meaning Lewes itself also received direct representation for the first time in the proto-House of Commons.<sup>18</sup> The names of the key figures involved in the Battle of Lewes are commemorated in street names to the north-west of the Conservation Area, including King Henry’s Road, Prince Edward’s Road and de Montfort Road.
- A.11 Following the Battle of Lewes, the town’s walls were repaired, with funding for the works extending until 1269. The threat of French raids during the Hundred Years War likely explains multiple further phases of work carried out to extend and reinforce the walls in the early 14th century.
- A.12 The unrest of the 14th century saw the prosperity of Lewes decline. As with many other parts of the country, a coalescence of bad weather and pestilence saw an agrarian collapse; crop yields fell due to climatic instability; whilst labour costs rose thanks to the widescale loss of life caused by the Black Death, the plague affecting the town particularly badly in 1349. This diminished prosperity was reflected in Lewes’ built environment, with tenements constructed to the south of the High Street, and the gardens to the rear of the historic burgage plots abandoned and amalgamated due to the economic pressures brought by the crises.

<sup>16</sup> Roland Harris, Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report (2005), p. 19  
<sup>17</sup> D. Carpenter and C. Whittick, ‘The Battle of Lewes’, Sussex Archaeological Collections, 152 (2014), pp. 39-65  
<sup>18</sup> Barbara Fleming, Lewes: Two Thousand Years of History (1994), p. 32

- A.13 In conjunction with this, Lewes lost a degree of its administrative importance in East Sussex in the mid-14th century following the death of John de Warenne, 7th Earl of Surrey. As he had no direct heir, on his death in 1347, de Warenne’s lands passed to his nephew, Richard Fitzalan, 3rd Earl of Arundel. As Fitzalan already had extensive holdings in West Sussex and held the great castle at Arundel, he was an absentee in Lewes. The town’s prominence decreased as a result of the infrequency of lordly occupation in the town. This had dramatic consequences in 1381 when the Fitzalan’s largely abandoned castle was ransacked by the local population during the Peasants’ Revolt, with a number of buildings, gates, windows and documents destroyed by the townspeople. This came only four years after the town had been imperilled by a group of French raiders who had sailed up the Ouse to the town. It was only the extensive casualties they sustained in their skirmish with forces led by the Prior of Lewes, John of Charlieu, that stopped them from ransacking the town.<sup>19</sup> The Castle’s residential usage diminished with time, until it was seemingly abandoned for such use entirely in the early 15th century, when it became increasingly dominated by its function as a gaol.



Figure 240: Remains of the town walls along Westgate Street, dating to the 13th or 14th centuries, with potential pre-Conquest foundations

<sup>19</sup> W. Page (ed.), The Victoria History of the County of Sussex, Vol. I (1905), pp. 510-1





## Lewes and the Reformation (15th and 16th Centuries)

- A.14 After the lean years of the 14th century, the town recovered rapidly, despite the Castle’s lack of residential use by the Earls of Arundel. Lewes’ increasing prosperity is reflected in its demography – according to one estimate its population in 1379 was less than 300 people, yet it had dramatically increased over the course of the next century, reaching 1,330 people by 1525. Lewes was, therefore, one of the biggest towns in Sussex, alongside Chichester and Rye.<sup>20</sup> Half the time the manorial court sat at Lewes, half the time at Chichester, which in turn drew lawyers, merchants and the gentry to the town. In line with its judicial function, Lewes was also the location where 17 Protestant Martyrs were executed for resisting the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the 1550s.

A.15 In 1537 the great Cluniac Priory in Southover was surrendered and entered the possession of Thomas Cromwell, who was then orchestrating the Dissolution of the Monasteries. He, in turn, handed it over to his son, Gregory, who razed much of the Priory and converted part into a manor house called Lord’s Place. The manor reverted to the crown on Thomas Cromwell’s execution in 1540 and was given to Anne of Cleves as part of her divorce settlement with Henry VIII. It eventually ended up in the hands of the Sackville family (created earls of Dorset in 1604) whose landscaping works created the so-called Mount and Dripping Plan, south of Mountfield Road. The house was destroyed by fire by the end of the 17th century.
- A.16 Three parish churches were closed following the Reformation: St Mary-in-Foro; St Peter Westout; and St Andrew’s Churches; which were all seemingly located on Lewes High Street. This left All Saints Church on Friars’ Walk, St Michael’s Church on the High Street, and St John Sub Castro on St John’s Hill as the three churches serving the borough of Lewes. St Anne’s Church (formerly founded as St Mary Without in the 11th century) was retained and served the area immediately to the west of the borough’s boundary. The churches of St Thomas à Becket, and St John the Baptist were also spared closure and respectively served the separate settlements of Cliffe to the east of Lewes, and Southover to the south.

A.17 The Franciscan friary was dissolved in 1538. John Kyme converted part of it into a large house and stable, which was one of a number of impressive houses erected in the town around this time, including the White Hart Hotel on the High Street, and the Anne of Cleves House and Southover Grange, both in Southover. The latter was built in 1572 with material salvaged from the Priory, whilst the White Hart Hotel was initially built as a mansion for the Pelham family, before they purchased Pelham House on St Andrew’s Lane in the late 16th century. This was a particularly active time for building in Lewes, with more buildings surviving in the town from the 16th century than the 17th century. The vast majority were constructed using timber framing.<sup>21</sup> In the space of two years, 1564 and 1565, Lewes gained both a Market Hall and a combined Sessions House and Town Hall, the former building constructed on the High Street by the White Hart, the latter located by the gateway to the Castle. A gaol was built in Cliffe, which was little changed from its medieval form as a linear settlement stretching along Cliffe High Street.



Figure 241: Historic photograph of the Anne of Cleves house in Southover (ESBHRO, AMS 5890/2/2)



Figure 242: White Hart Hotel, a 16th century building refronted in a classical style in the 19th century



Figure 243: Southover Grange, built in the late 16th century with dressed Caen stone salvaged from the Priory (The Antiquary, Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 4.0))

<sup>20</sup> M. E. Mate, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows After the Black Death: Women in Sussex, 1350-1535* (1998), p. 42

<sup>21</sup> Roland Harris, *Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report* (2005), p. 42





## Early Modern Lewes (17th and 18th Centuries)

- A.18 The 17th century was more tumultuous for Lewes than the prosperous 16th century. The town’s population halved following the return of the Bubonic Plague, before slowly rebounding to over 2,000 people by the 1720s. After this point the speed of population growth rapidly accelerated, more than doubling by 1801 when it was recorded at 5,200 people. This increase was partly due to the creation of a large garrison off Brighton Road, erected in response to the threat of French invasion during the Napoleonic Wars. This site, which lies just to the west of the Conservation Area boundary, is now occupied by HMP Lewes.
- A.19 The economic vitality of Lewes was flourishing at the turn of the 17th century as a result of its role in the trade of ironmongery and ordnance being produced in the Weald. One local ironmonger, Benjamin Court, was wealthy enough to buy Newcastle House, a genteel house on the High Street later rebuilt by Reginald Blomfield in 1928, from Thomas Pelham, 1st Baron Pelham. The Pelhams, who held the manor of Southover, were incredibly wealthy and prominent, both of Thomas Pelham’s sons serving as Prime Minister.
- A.20 At the same time industrial premises were emerging in Lewes and its surroundings. Tanneries were established in the early 17th century to the north-east of the town near St John-sub-Castro, whilst maltings, brewers and tanners were all located in Southover by 1654. This went some way to redress the depopulation of Southover which had resulted from the closure of the Priory during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The author of the expanded 1769 edition of Daniel Defoe’s *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, still saw fit to claim that Lewes had ‘no Manufactory, though it stands very convenient for Trade’ via the River Ouse.<sup>22</sup> By 1784, a foundry had been established on the side of Ouse in Cliffe by Nathaniel Polhill.
- A.21 Lewes became increasingly important as a transport hub in the 17th and 18th centuries, with a number of inns and stables built, making it one of the towns best provided with guest accommodation in and around the Weald, only surpassed by Horsham and East Grinstead in this respect.<sup>23</sup> The rise in carriage-based transit also saw Cliffe Bridge rebuilt in 1727. This job was entrusted to the stone mason Arthur Morris and the French born architect and engineer, Nicholas Dubois, also responsible for the design of the Pelham family’s house at Stanmer Park, near Brighton.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 244: View towards Cliffe Bridge with the rear of Harvey’s Brewery visible to the left

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Defoe et al., *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1769), p. 199  
<sup>23</sup> Roland Harris, *Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report* (2005), p. 22  
<sup>24</sup> Colin Brent, *Pre-Georgian Lewes* (2004), pp. 396-7





- A.22 Road improvements paid for by tolls, a practice known as turnpiking, helped further establish the town’s importance in trade and overland travel. The two routes northwards, which connected with the road to London at Wych Cross, were turnpiked and improved in 1752, whilst works to the Brighton road were carried out from 1770.<sup>25</sup> In the 1790s the River Ouse was made navigable further inland, all the way to Lindfield in the north, whilst canalisation works were undertaken along the stretch of the Ouse between Lewes and the coastal port of Newhaven, where a harbour was established and improved from the 17th century. The connections to Lewes overland and by river supported its commercial development, drawing people to the town to live and trade.<sup>26</sup>
- A.23 Lewes retained a significant role within the local economy, representing the most important market for the produce of the farmers and artisans in the South Downs and Weald. The presence of a number of powerful aristocratic estates in the vicinity (such as the Pelhams at Stanmer Park and the Gages at Firle Place) was also said to fuel trade.<sup>27</sup> In 1792 plans were made for the rebuilding and relocation of both the Sessions House and market. A new site was chosen to host markets every day except Sunday, and a building subsequently constructed in the form of a tower. A livestock market was also established in 1792, which was to be held every other week. The market had become increasingly splintered since the Middle Ages, a fish market established in the 16th century (likely held on Fisher Street), and a separate corn market set up by 1630.<sup>28</sup> The 1790s also saw the local gaol relocated from Cliffe to the vicinity of St John-sub-Castro.



Figure 245: Market Tower, built in 1792

<sup>25</sup> Roland Harris, Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report (2005), p. 22

<sup>26</sup> Helen Poole, Lewes Past (2000), p. 34

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Defoe et al., A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain (1769), p. 199

<sup>28</sup> Roland Harris, Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report (2005), p. 22





## The Lewes Bonfire Night Celebrations<sup>29</sup>

- A.24 The famed Lewes Bonfire Night celebrations can be traced back to the thanksgiving bonfires lit in celebration of the thwarting of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, in which Catholic conspirators led by Robert Catesby sought to blow up the House of Lords in an attempt on the life of James I. The first record of celebrations taking place in Lewes dates to only 1679, when religious tensions were inflamed by fresh (albeit false) reports of another Catholic plot against the English State. The townspeople of Lewes were said to have processed through the town bearing weapons and pictures of a Jesuit priest, Guy Fawkes and the Pope, before tossing the three images into a bonfire.
- A.25 The practice of lighting bonfires and setting off explosive squibs continued into the 18th and 19th centuries, with the first blazing tar barrels rolled through the town centre in 1832. Antagonism between the ‘Bonfire Boys’ and the local constabulary and concerned citizens broke out at a number of points, with the assault on Mr Blackman, a local magistrate, in 1846 leading to attempts to wholly suppress the practice. These were unsuccessful, with the celebrations taking on a form very similar to the present-day by 1853, when two of the present-day Bonfire Societies formed (the Town (now Lewes) Bonfire Society and the Cliffe Bonfire Society). The Commercial Square and Southover Bonfire Societies followed in 1857 and 1886 respectively. The assignment of mock military ranks and uniforms to the members of the societies gave the whole affair a further injection of pomp, whilst satirical speeches delivered by invented Catholic prelates and the burning of tableaux provided a means to communicate anti-Catholic feeling. The celebrations were increasingly secularised from the 1920s onward and continue to draw people to the town every year to watch the spectacle.

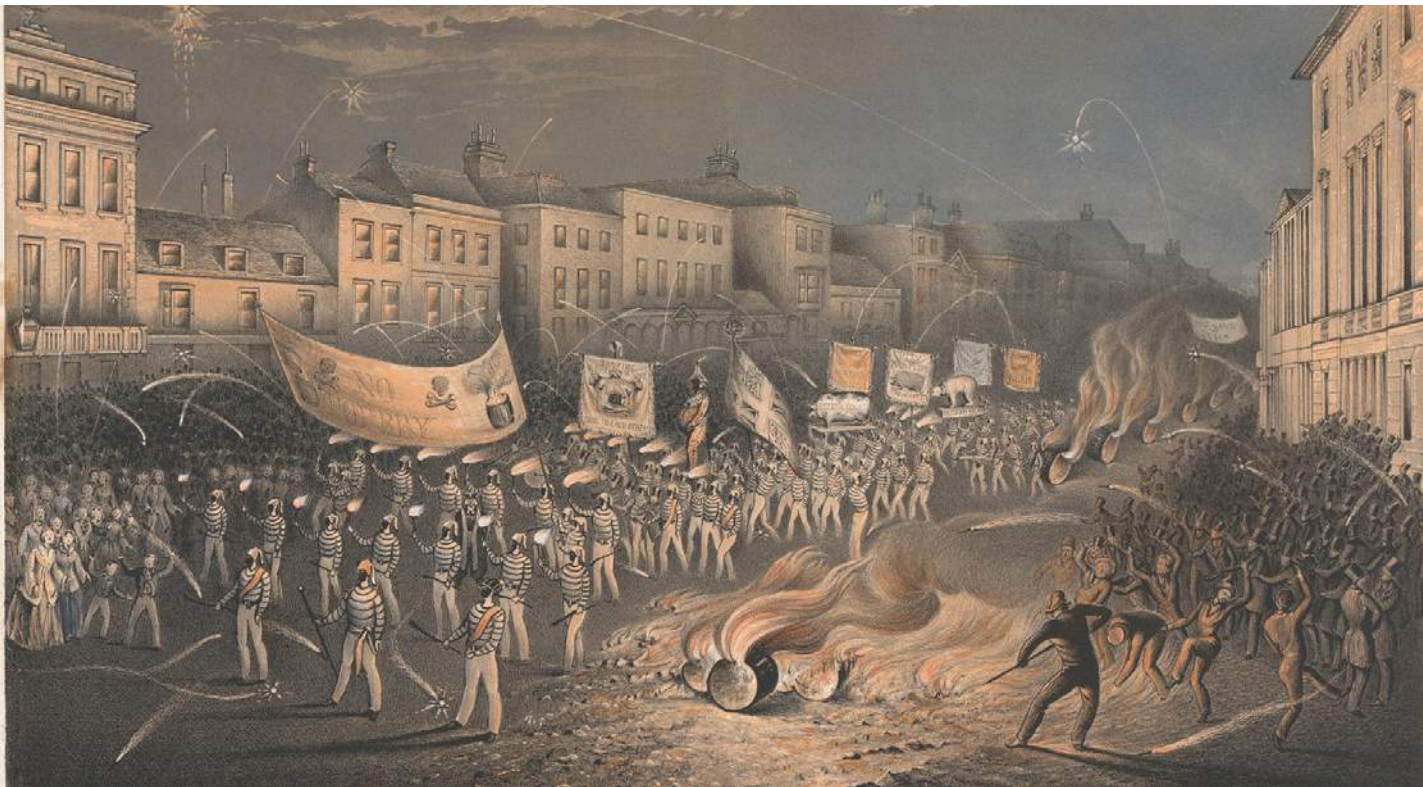


Figure 246: 1852 Thomas Henwood Engraving of ‘The Procession of the Lewes Bonfire Boys’ (Wikimedia, Yale Centre for British Art)



Figure 247: Present-day bonfire night celebrations at Lewes

<sup>29</sup> Jim Etherington, Lewes Bonfire Night: A Short History of the Guy Fawkes Celebrations (1993)





- A.26 In the 18th century the popularity of timber-framing diminished, with many people in Lewes modernising surviving medieval, timber-framed buildings by refacing them with new brick façades to the street. Another common alternative to this in Lewes was the use of mathematical tiles. Using these tiles, which made the building appear as if it were constructed from brick laid in header bond, was easier to achieve than building an entirely new façade, as the tiles could be affixed to the existing structure. This technique is evident at Pelham House off St Martin’s Lane and Bartholomew House to the south of the Castle. Its use can be identified in buildings where window and door openings have no clearly defined lintel above them, or articulation around them. Furthermore, corners of such buildings are often covered with timber strips or quoins to disguise the discontinuities between front and side elevation treatments. This means that a very significant number of buildings in Lewes that may appear to be Georgian, as suggested by their façades, in fact retain significantly earlier timber framed buildings internally.
- A.27 Many other houses were constructed anew, School Hill and St Anne’s Hill particularly intensively rebuilt with typical Georgian townhouses in this period. In the late 17th century, terraces were also built along the streets around the Castle, whilst Mallong and South Streets in Cliffe and the area around Cliffe Bridge were all developed.



Figure 248: Bartholomew House’s vitrified mathematical tiles





- A.28 In the 18th century, developments were undertaken along Western and De Montfort Roads to the west of the town centre and along Castle Ditch Lane and Market Street, just off the High Street. By this point in time the Castle, abandoned many years prior, was partially rehabilitated by its then owner, John Kemp, who supposedly made some habitable rooms within it. Meanwhile, the medieval town walls were not actively cared for and left to largely collapse.
- A.29 By 1715 Lewes was said to be home to as many as 670 Presbyterians, Baptists and Independents, the high number a testament to the strength of the Non-Conformist tradition in the town.<sup>30</sup> This brought with it the creation of a number of new places of worship. Although a Quaker Meeting had been established in Lewes since 1655, when the founder of Quakerism George Fox had preached at Lewes, the first purpose-built meeting house was constructed in 1784 on Friars' Walk. The Unitarian Chapel on the High Street and Westgate Independent Chapel were both built c.1700.<sup>31</sup> The British-American revolutionary and political theorist Thomas Paine called Lewes home for six years (from 1768 to 1774), leaving the town after he lost his job as an excise officer when agitating for higher wages.<sup>32</sup>
- A.30 Lewes also became somewhat of a cultural centre, a theatre opening in 1789, and a bowling green was established in the bailey of the Norman castle in the 17th century.<sup>33</sup> Horse racing began to the west of Lewes as early as 1714 and grew in prominence throughout the century. The stables built to the western end of the town, including the Barn Stables on Spital Road, and Nunnery Stables on Irelands Lane, were perhaps associated with the race course.



Figure 249: School Hill photographed in the early 20th century looking east, (ESBHRO, AMS 5890/2/2)



Figure 250: Friends' Meeting House on Friars' Walk (Public domain)



Figure 251: School Hill in 2023, which retains the massing and historic character evident in the historic photograph

<sup>30</sup> Colin Brent, Pre-Georgian Lewes (2004), p. 396  
<sup>31</sup> Ian Nairn and Niklaus Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Sussex (2001), p. 554  
<sup>32</sup> Barbara Fleming, Lewes: Two Thousand Years of History (1994), p. 74  
<sup>33</sup> Roland Harris, Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report (2005), p. 24





## Modern Lewes (19th and Early 20th Centuries)

- A.31 In 1806 a Town Improvement Commission was created and empowered to repave the streets and introduce new public lighting, as well as widen and clean the roadways. The surviving clay brick pavements across Lewes and cobbles found on Keere Street are a result of their activities, as are the curved frontages to a number of buildings, such as the Lewes Arms at the corner of Mount Place and the Castle Precinct, which resulted from road widening schemes. Two decades later Cliffe had its own commission, the open sewers that ran along the High Street were covered over and the road was widened, whilst road and lighting improvements were carried out in Southover around the same time.
- A.32 The agrarian depression of 1815–1830 led to a downturn in the town’s economic fortunes, given that much of its wealth derived from the sale of agricultural produce grown and livestock reared in the surrounding area. In 1811, as the balance swung in the favour of the British in the Napoleonic Wars, the barracks at Lewes were demolished. Yet, neither the economic difficulties nor departure of the soldiers saw the growth of the town slow, in fact the population nearly doubled in 30 years, rising from 5,200 people at the start of the century to 8,900 by 1831.



Figure 252: Historic clay brick paving to St Andrew’s Lane

- A.33 More foundries and ironworks were created at Lewes in the 19th century. Nathaniel Polihill’s foundry in Cliffe was taken over and expanded by Ebenezer Morris. A former employee of Morris’s, John Every, established the Phoenix Foundry in North Street to the west of the Ouse in 1835, the works thriving and growing under the aegis of Every’s son and grandson. The Etna Foundry of Charles Wells also rapidly expanded, the warehouse and foundry located on opposite sides of the Ouse, linked by a high-level footbridge. The Phoenix Foundry was particularly significant, with various items of Victorian street furniture surviving in the town, such as drain and coal hole covers, bearing its name.



Figure 253: 1874 Lewes Town Plan showing the Phoenix Iron Works site located near the present-day North Street (National Library of Scotland)





- A.34 Breweries were also an important light industrial employer in Lewes, the four main breweries dispersed across the town, Verrall’s in Southover, Beard’s on Fisher Street, near the Castle, and both Harvey’s and the South Down Breweries located in Cliffe, next to the Ouse. They had numerous wharves and warehouses for company along the banks of the Ouse, as well as a shipwright, who in 1839, launched its first sea faring vessel, the Lewes Castle, to much fanfare. In the 1880s a new cattle market was opened in Southover, replacing the tannery that had previously occupied the site.
- A.35 Brick was the ubiquitous construction material from the 17th century onwards, with masonry walling displacing timber framing as the most common constructional approach. So intensive was the rebuilding and expansion in Lewes in the late 18th century that one contemporary complained that the builders of the town’s new market tower at the southern end of Market Street could not find enough bricks to build it, as ‘so great is the rage for building in this town and neighbourhood, that among all the brick kilns within two miles round there cannot be got a quantity of bricks sufficient for the job’.<sup>34</sup> Plentiful supplies of lime-rich chalk, long dug from Malling Hill and Cliffe, could be used to make mortar with more intensive production in place at Offham, to the west.
- A.36 Among the most striking brick buildings in the town are the Fitzroy Memorial Library, designed by the prolific office of Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1862 and Samuel Denman’s Town Hall of 1893. Many other buildings in the town were constructed using other materials, such as the Portland Stone prominently used for the Law Courts (the eastern section designed as the town hall by John Johnson from 1808–1812, the western portion by Sir Reginald Blomfield in 1928).<sup>35</sup>



Figure 254: Fitzroy Memorial Library by Sir George Gilbert Scott, 1862



Figure 255: Lewes Town Hall by Samuel Denham, 1893



Figure 256: Lewes Crown Court by John Johnson, 1808-1812, and Sir Reginald Blomfield, 1928

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in C.T. Phillips, ‘Lewes A Hundred Years Ago’, Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. 40 (1896), p. 259

<sup>35</sup> Marcus Taylor, The Building Materials of Lewes (February 2021) (<https://thefriendsoflewes.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/building-materials-of-lewes-by-marcus-taylor.pdf>)





A.37 In the 1840s the railway came to Lewes, connecting the town to Brighton, with London, Eastbourne, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells following shortly thereafter as direct destinations. During the construction of the railway in 1846 a cutting was made across the site of Lewes Priory, which meant the ruins of its chapter house were uncovered, along with the remains of the founders of the Priory, William and Gundreda de Warenne. They were removed to a new chapel added to St John’s church in Southover, designed by the local mason John Latter Parsons. As an upshot of the discovery, interested local antiquarians decided to found Sussex Archaeological Society, their concern with preserving the remains of the area’s medieval past extending to Lewes Castle, which they began to lease from its private owners from 1850, taking ownership eventually in 1922.<sup>36</sup>

A.38 Ten years after it was first built the station was relocated further westwards to its current location. The old terminus was demolished in the 1960s after many years use as a goods yard. The present station building dates to 1889 and was built on the site of the second terminus, established in 1857. The coming of the station was seen by some to undercut Lewes’ economic position, providing easier access to the larger markets at Brighton and reducing trade along the Ouse, yet the merchants that dominated wealth in the town at this time welcomed and funded the railway’s construction, retaining their economic importance despite the supposed disruption.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 257: Lewes Station – the building, in its present form, dates to 1889

<sup>36</sup> C. Leeson Prince, ‘The Remains of William de Warenne’, Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. 40 (1896), pp. 170-2 ; <https://sussexpast.co.uk/a-short-history-of-lewes-castle/>

<sup>37</sup> Colin Brent and William Rector, ‘Commerce’, in Victorian Lewes (1980), unpaginated





A.39 In the 19th century Lewes was awash with new residential development. To the north-east of the Castle the Pells were being developed with streets of terraced housing. Sun Street was developed by the time Figg’s map of 1824 ([see page 16](#)) was produced, whilst Abinger Place to its west was developed by the 1840s. The development of this area continued throughout the century, with Toronto Terrace and St John’s Hill laid out with Italianate terraced houses between 1880 and 1900. The early 19th century was also a time of growth for Southover, which was extended to the east with the development of Priory Crescent and Priory Street and north by Grange Road. The terraced housing in both these areas was erected between 1824, when Figg’s map was produced, and the publication of the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1878.



Figure 258: Terraced villas along Toronto Terrace

- A.40 The Wallands, to the north, represented the largest suburban extension to the historic town of Lewes within the late 19th century. The roads that made up the Wallands Park Estate were laid out but not developed by 1878, with grand Arts and Crafts villas gradually built in the following decades. The Lewes-based architect Roland Hawke Halls further refined the Arts and Craft style in Lewes in the inter-war period through his domestic projects along the Avenue and the former Council offices on Fisher Street.
- A.41 Relatively little inter-war housing was built in central Lewes and when it was built it was largely as infill. In Cliffe, terraces were laid out along Morris Road, but significantly more energy and money was expended on the development of the extensive Landport Estate to the north of the town, beyond the Wallands Park area and the Nevill Estate to the west. Both of these estates were developed in the 1920s and 1930s by Lewes Borough Council.



Figure 259: Detached house in an Arts and Crafts style at Wallands Park





## Post-War and Present-Day Lewes (Late 20th – 21st Centuries)

- A.42 Post-war the major developments in the town were largely associated with transport routes, the Uckfield line from the station closed in the 1960s, whilst a new road across the Ouse, called the Phoenix Causeway, was built to the north of Cliffe Bridge. This allowed traffic to avoid the narrow 18th century bridge, but precipitated the demolition of the Phoenix Foundry and its replacement with a business park, now proposed for redevelopment. The creation of the Phoenix Causeway halted plans to build an inner relief road across the Paddock to the north of the Castle. In the mid-1970s a bypass was constructed to draw the traffic from the A27, a major east–west route, away from the town centre, leading to the Cuilfail tunnel’s construction to the east of Cliffe, connecting with the Phoenix Causeway to north-east of the town.
- A.43 In 1968 the new offices of East Sussex County Council were opened by the Duchess of Kent. The office complex was built on a greenfield site to the south of St Anne’s Church to the designs of county architect Jack Catchpole. The sculptor William Mitchell designed a large relief mural for the exterior of the main atrium.



Figure 260: View of the Phoenix Causeway crossing the River Ouse

- A.44 In 1970 East Sussex County Council designated Lewes as a Conservation Area, following the passage of the 1968 Civic Amenities Act, which made such designations possible. The Conservation Area was subsequently extended to its present footprint in 2012, incorporating the East Sussex County Council Offices, western end of Rotten Row, and Lewes Cemetery into it.
- A.45 In more recent history, Lewes Library was completed in 2006 to the designs of McMorran and Gatehouse Architects just off Friars’ Walk, whilst the Baxter’s Printworks site off St Nicholas’s Lane saw nearly 50 new residential units completed in 2010. Part of the Harvey’s Brewery site near the station was redeveloped in 2017, the old sorting office repurposed as a community cinema. The redevelopment of Lewes North Street Quarter will likely be the next chapter in the town’s evolution.



Figure 261: East Sussex County Council Offices, with William Mitchell’s mural above the main entrance



