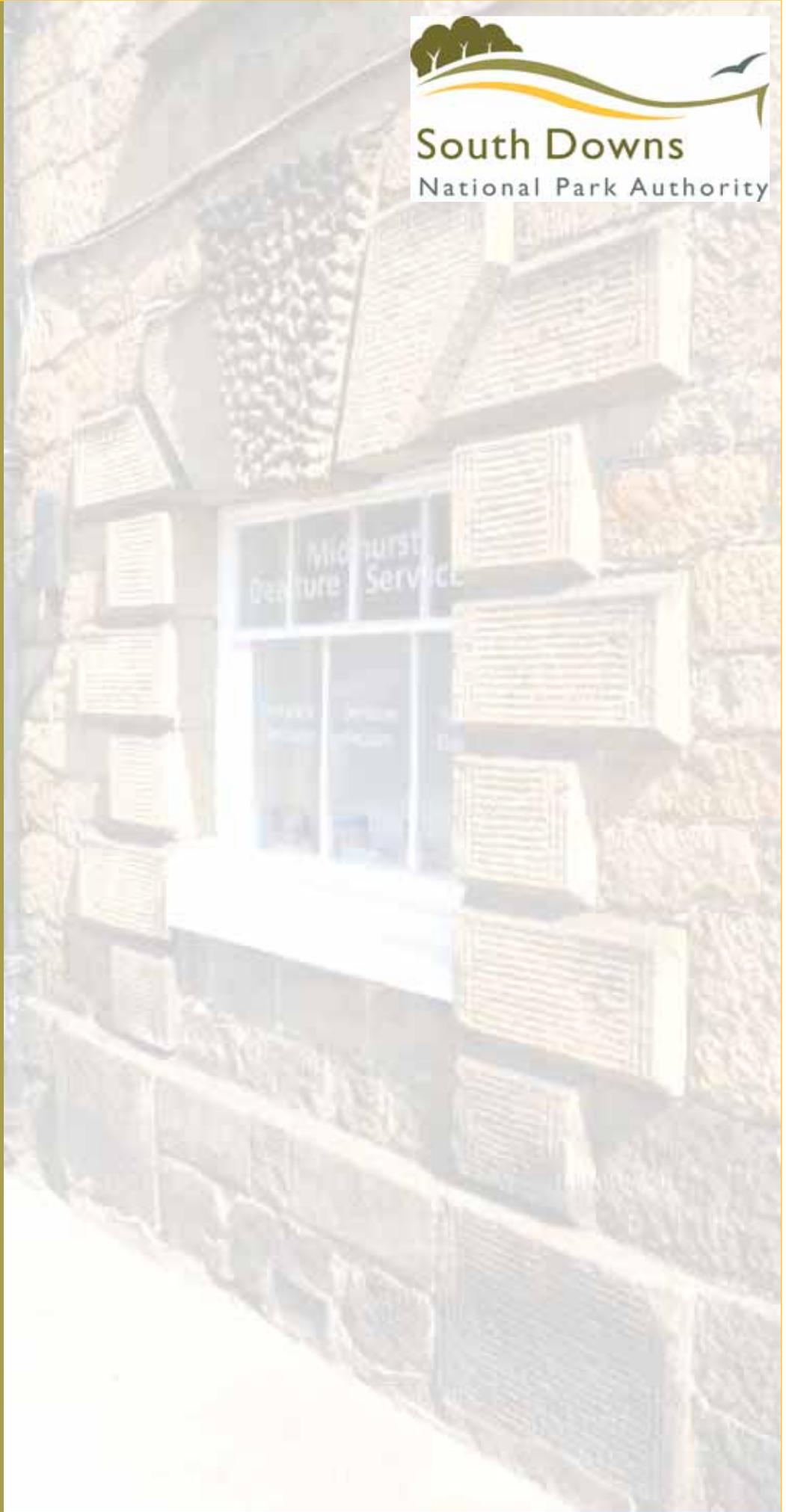
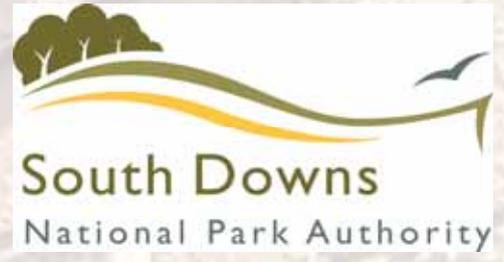


**MIDHURST CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Appraisal and Management Plan**





# MIDHURST CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 MIDHURST CONSERVATION AREA

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal with its attendant Management Proposals was drafted by Chichester District Council and is based upon a previous version, adopted in November 2000. It differs from its predecessor in order to take account of the 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' published by English Heritage in 2006.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011, South Downs National Park Authority assumed its duties as Local Planning Authority. It adopted this appraisal on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2012.

This appraisal identifies the character and qualities of the Midhurst Conservation Area, highlights key issues and puts forward proposals for its management. The Management Proposals address the list of identified negative features and propose measures that will enhance the quality and significance of the conservation area.

Seven distinct sub-sections of the conservation area have been identified, to draw out their contrasting characters. As part of the appraisal process, the existing conservation area boundary was reviewed. The enlarged area has been included in the analysis.

Following the drafting of the appraisal a public consultation was carried out from 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 for six weeks. After this, South Downs National Park Authority made amendments as appropriate.

## 1.2 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Midhurst is remarkable for the quality and preservation of its historic environment. Its historic plan form and its relationship to topographic features are readily discernible. It takes only a small effort to imagine its early form: the castle on St Ann's Hill, the small town surrounded by a defensive ditch and the large, un-encroached marketplace surrounded by timber-framed houses.

In its gradual development, this plan form has been maintained but the buildings occupying it

have been modified and replaced as tastes and budgets allowed. Midhurst never experienced a major economic boom but developed slowly and gently. It gradually grew from an estimated population of 180 in 1295 to around 1,880 in 1961. After 1961 the population expanded suddenly with the construction of large suburbs. These were, however, built entirely outside the historic core and had no significant impact on its historic structure and character.

The essential features of the early, planned settlement still define the town's historic centre and are fundamental to its significance:

- St Ann's Hill
- The marketplace
- Buildings to east and west of the original open marketplace
- The church at the centre of the marketplace
- The line of the town ditch
- Routes into the historic town via West Street, South Street and Knockhundred Row
- The ancient north-south route of North Street and its continuation as Wool Lane
- The River Rother and its tributary
- The largely complete survival of the early medieval town plan

Midhurst's historic core exhibits an unusual degree of autonomy and separation from later phases of expansion due to the topographic and ownership characteristics of the surrounding landscape. Cowdray placed restrictions on development to the east and Midhurst Common to the west. The areas of South Pond and the Liberty of St John (the land held by the Knights Hospitallers) also created a separation from subsequent development to the south.

The physical proximity and influence of the Cowdray estate is one of Midhurst's special features. The spacious, managed natural environment confers stately qualities upon the settlement.

### 1.3 THE CONTROL OF CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation Areas are defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Local planning authorities are required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. In making a decision on a planning application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory duties, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Midhurst Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. Government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is currently set out within *The National Planning Policy Framework*.

In April 2011 the South Downs National Park Authority assumed its duties as Local Planning Authority. Day to day management of Midhurst Conservation Area is delegated to Chichester District.

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Midhurst conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the "Character Appraisal");
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of the "Management Proposals").

### 1.4 THE LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

These documents provide a firm basis on which applications for development within the Midhurst Conservation Area can be assessed. The omission of any feature in either the appraisal or the management proposals does

not imply that it is of no interest and because both will be subject to regular review, it will be possible to amend any future documents accordingly.

It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework, set out in the West Sussex County Structure Plan 2001-2016 and the Chichester District Council Local Plan, adopted in April 1999.

In the Local Plan, Inset Map No. 4 confirms that the following policies apply to Midhurst:

- There is a Settlement Boundary which is drawn fairly tightly around the built-up area - this is covered by Policy BE1;
- The conservation area lies within the Settlement Boundary except at the north and east of the town where the conservation area includes the ruins of Cowdray and associated land - this is covered by Policy BE6;
- The water meadows to the west of the ruins of Cowdray is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance - this is covered by Policy RE8

### 1.5 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This document was redrafted and updated following a review of the conservation area boundary undertaken by officers of Chichester District Council. Copies were distributed to Midhurst Town Council, Midhurst Town Trust and the Midhurst Society. After the completion of public consultation, the final draft was amended by conservation officers of the South Downs National Park Authority.

## 2. LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

### 2.1. LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES

Midhurst has a population of 5,000 and is situated in West Sussex at the junction of two ancient routes, now defined by the A286 and A272. Haslemere is 10km to the north, Petworth 9.5km to the East, Chichester 16.5km to the south and Petersfield 13km to the west.

Of the 2206 people of working age, most (16.95%) are engaged in the wholesale & retail trade, which reflects Midhurst's market town character. The second main employment activity is health and social work (14.28%). Other major employment activities include real estate; renting and business activities (12.69%), manufacturing (12.06%), construction (8.66%), education (7.75%) and hotels and catering (6.84%).

### 2.2. TOPOGRAPHY

Midhurst lies at the base of the wide, east-west valley of the River Rother, which is dominated to the south by the scarp slope of the chalk Downs and to the north by the gentler ridge of the upper Greensand. The Rother flows east south-east to join the River Arun near Pulborough. The town is sited close to the end of spur of land (St Ann's Hill) bounded by the Rother and a small, south-west running tributary. Locally the land rises westwards from about 21m above Ordnance Datum at the river to over 70m on Midhurst Common.

### 2.3 GEOLOGY

The historic core of the town lies almost entirely on the Sandgate beds of the lower Greensand Group of sandstones. From north-east to southwest these comprise the Lower Fittleworth Member (extending as far as Ognell's Almshouses), the Selham Ironshot Sands Member, the Upper Fittleworth Member (a c.20m wide band, extending round the east side of St Ann's Hill), the Pulborough Sandrock Member (upon which most of the historic town is built), and the Marehill Clay Member (which crosses Bepton Road in the vicinity of the Roman Catholic church). Beyond this the southern suburbs are built on the sandstones of the Folkestone Formation.

The geology is significant in having defined the range of building materials used in Midhurst:

- Clay to produce tiles, bricks, paviers and decoration
- Ironstone, found as deposits associated with the clay, used principally for galetting
- Lower Greensand stone for walling and paving
- Chalk to produce lime for plaster and mortar
- Timber as a fuel and building material

Clay and Greensand geology, in contrast to the Downs, supports the development of forests. Timber has therefore been a characteristic building material of the town. The presence of the river is also significant in having moulded the landscape and providing an essential resource for living and industry. The availability of surface water has affected the location of settlement and industrial activity.

### 2.4 THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

Midhurst lies within the South Downs National Park. In 2003 West Sussex County Council produced a West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment which divided the county into 43 areas of distinct character. Midhurst lies between WG1: Western Scarp Footslopes, WG2: Rother Farmlands and WG5: Rother Woods and Heaths. WSCC Land Management Guidelines and relevant publications can be viewed online at [www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk).

### 2.5 NATURE CONSERVATION

Within the conservation area there are a number of features of nature conservation interest.

#### 2.5.1 RIVER ROTHER AND ROTHER VALLEY SITE OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST (SNCI)

The River Rother and Rother Valley Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) cross the

northern end of the conservation area. This includes a stretch of the River Rother and part of Cowdray Park. The SNCI has been designated for its nature conservation value.

#### **(i) River Rother**

Alder and willow trees dominate the banks of this section of the Rother. The rich fauna includes breeding grey wagtail and kingfisher, fish such as brown trout, grayling, perch, stone loach and minnow, and both Banded and Beautiful Demoiselle damselflies.

#### **(ii) Cowdray Park**

Cowdray Park contains some important ancient and mature trees including oak, lime, beech, sweet chestnut and horse chestnut. It is one of the only two places in West Sussex where the plant Shepherd's Cress (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*) has been recorded. The presence of Britain's most endangered mammal, the European Protected Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) has also been recorded within the park.

The ruins of Cowdray are important for bats, with the Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Pipistrelle Bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) recorded there.

The Cowdray water meadows consist of two wet meadows that border the River Rother, separated by a raised bank. Coarse grasses and clumps of rushes (*Juncus*) dominate the grazed meadows.

Twenty-two Biodiversity Action Plan species (national priority species) were recorded in or close to this section of the SNCI. The following were recorded in the last ten years: European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*); Poplar Leaf Roller (*Byctiscus populis*); Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*); a lichen (*Bacidia incompta*); Basil Thyme (*Clinopodium acinos*); Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citronella*); Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*); Wood Lark (*Lullula arborea*); Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*); Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*); Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*); Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) and Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*).

### **2.5.2 SOUTH POND AND STREAM AREA**

Within the southern end of the conservation area is South Pond with its surrounding alder and willow woodland and wetland. The pond is

almost exclusively used by Mallard ducks but is visited by swans and herons. Woodpeckers, siskins, goldfinches, redpolls, as well as a number of tit species use the surrounding woodland.

The section of woodland South West of South Pond is designated as Ancient Woodland, which means it is a site that has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600. Alder and willow predominate but other tree and shrub species found along the banks include, beech, field maple, ash, cherry, hazel and sycamore.

## **3 HISTORY**

### **3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Midhurst's exact historic origins are not known but it was probably founded to promote trade at a strategically expedient but undeveloped (or underdeveloped) location.<sup>1</sup> Previous to the establishment of a settlement, routes through the Weald converged at a convenient crossing over the River Rother. The principal north-south route connected the Saxon settlement of Easebourne with Chichester via Cocking. This followed the line of what later became North Street, Wool Lane and the eastern boundary of the land subsequently called the 'Liberty of St John', crossing the stream where South Pond now exists. Diverging from it was a minor route serving Bepton and the villages below the scarp slope of the Downs.

Late in 1067 or early 1068, King William I entrusted Roger of Montgomery with a large part of western Sussex which became known as the Rape of Arundel. The site of the town was part of this landholding but it is not known if there was any settlement already in existence at this time.

Roger of Montgomery erected earthwork castles at strategic points within his estates, both within towns (e.g. Chichester) and at places where, for economic and military reasons, he wished to plant towns (e.g. Arundel). It is thought likely that when he arrived in Sussex, Roger established a motte

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<sup>1</sup> There is some debate as to whether Midhurst has Saxon or Norman origins. The thesis presented in *Midhurst*, (Chichester District Archaeology 1, 2001) that Midhurst is a town of Norman foundation is followed here.

and bailey castle on a natural outcrop at Midhurst to command the crossing of the River Rother.

As the military requirement lessened in the region, Roger may have established a planned trading settlement (borough) to exploit the economic potential of his Sussex lands. He is known to have done similarly elsewhere. The area enclosed by the historic line of the town ditch has characteristics of a Norman planned town.

The Rape of Arundel remained in the hands of the Montgomery family until 1102 when Roger's eldest son, Robert of Bellême, rebelled against King Henry I and was banished from England. In 1108 Henry I granted Midhurst and various other Sussex properties to Savaric fitz Cana. Savaric married Muriel, whose family lands were concentrated at Saint-Georges-de-Bohun. Savaric was succeeded by Ralph, who began a family connection with the new crusading order of Hospitallers that was later introduced to Midhurst.

Ralph died without heir in the 1150s and Midhurst passed to his brother Gelduin. From the late twelfth century the descendants of Savaric fitz Cana adopted de Bohun as their family name. By the mid 1180s Gelduin's son, Franco de Bohun, had inherited his English lands. Either Gelduin or Franco may have initiated the rebuilding of Midhurst Castle in stone.

Franco's son, Engelgar was active in support of King John and is recorded as having given the proceeds of a mill at Midhurst to Waverley Abbey in Surrey. It is thought that the likeliest position for this mill was to the north of the town, by the present site of North Mill. There was a second mill in Midhurst and it is thought that this was probably located next to South Pond to the immediate east of the causeway. Sir John de Bohun owned both mills on his death in 1284 and the Knights Hospitallers had their tithes.

It is known that by the 1220s the market at Midhurst was well established and it held a market charter. In countering litigation brought against him in 1223 by the bishop of London, Savaric declared that his ancestors had always been accustomed to take tolls in their market at Midhurst.

Midhurst was represented in Parliament as a borough in 1248 and in 1278 it was claimed that Midhurst had been a free borough from 'time immemorial' (which in English Law is usually meant to mean 'before 1189'). Borough status implies that Midhurst was a town by this time at the latest.

The early settlement consisted of the castle – or fortified manor house – with a planned town within a defensive circuit to its west, between it and the main north-south route. The town comprised a large open marketplace flanked by building plots (i.e. equating to the plots on the west side of Church Hill and the east side of Sheep Lane). The parish church was located at the centre of the marketplace. Behind the plots on the west side was a street (now the longer stretch of Duck Lane), common in many new towns and known as the 'back lane', which probably originally extended all the way round the inside of the rampart. It would have given access to the back of the ramparts and would also have acted as a service road behind properties.

The traveller from Easebourne would probably have entered through the north gate, part way along Knockhundred Row. The Row is a link-road from the old route, represented by North Street, to the planned town. Road diversions, sometimes necessitating sharp bends that encouraged the traveller to pass through a new market place or market town are attested elsewhere. On the west side were two further gates. The more northerly lay at the east end of the shorter stretch of Duck Lane, which seems originally to have led from the market place and continued beyond Rumbold's Hill as June Lane. The other lay just west of the junction of the southern end of Duck Lane and West Street. A fourth gate lay at the lower end of South Street across a newly constructed causeway over the dam forming South Pond, replacing the old route to Chichester, and a fifth gate gave access to the castle or fortified manor on St Ann's Hill.

The extensive original marketplace contracted through encroachment. Some of this would have been planned as open spaces were often 'closed' at one or both ends to form a built up square surrounding the green. Other 'islands' of development may have been opportunistic, as temporary market stalls gradually became more permanent, or deliberately permitted by the Lord of the Manor to raise greater rent. The

1632 map illustrates that there were previously two rows in the middle of Church Hill (now much reduced).

With time, the capacity for infilling and plot subdivision was met and the town expanded over and beyond the line of the town ditch. The east end of West Street and Knockhundred Row would have been developed first.

Ten acres of land were granted to the Knights Hospitallers in the thirteenth century and were owned by them until 1540 when they were absorbed by the Cowdray estates. These holdings, the common to the west, South Pond to the south and St Ann's Hill and meadows to the east restricted Midhurst's potential for expansion. It could therefore expand only northwards, towards the causeway linking Cowdray (established c1280 to replace the fortified manor house on St Ann's Hill and another ancestral home near Arundel) to North Street. It is thought that North Street may have been developed in the thirteenth or fourteenth century at its present width.

There was little change to this medieval street pattern between 1500 and 1840, with most of the buildings of this period built within the existing street plan. Comparison between a map of the current town with an estate map of 1632 and the 1841 Tithe Map shows that little had changed in the medieval core. Expansion in the nineteenth century followed the existing Petersfield, Bepton and Chichester Roads. Post-1918 development within the conservation area has been minimal.

It is thought that the River Rother was diverted from its historic position (preserved as the parish boundary) to the base of St Ann's Hill by Capability Brown in the 1770s.

The 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows modest suburbs having been constructed (since 1875) on Chichester, Bepton and Petersfield Roads. The map of 1912 shows that those off Petersfield and Bepton Roads continued to be developed and Ashfield Road created as a linking suburban street between.

The inter-war years saw the building of the substantial brick post office in Grange Road. Midhurst suffered some bomb damage in 1942, the most significant loss being the Congregational Church (or 'Temple') built on the corner of Petersfield and Bepton Roads.

Historic buildings on the north side of Bepton Road were lost, creating an unfortunate opening for some of Midhurst's weakest architecture.

Midhurst's suburbs expanded to the south and west between 1971 and 2001, reflected in a doubling of the population in the same period. Despite the continued existence of local shops and businesses, commuting became the new economic basis for the town. The provision of new housing and the retention of the historic core have also made the town attractive as a location for retirement.

## 3.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

There are two Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. These are the castle remains on St Ann's Hill and the ruins of Cowdray.

Apart from investigations of the site of the castle on St Ann's Hill in 1913 and 1994, archaeological excavation has been limited by the lack of major modern redevelopment within the historic core. The results of a small number of modest trial trenches and watching briefs that have been undertaken since the mid-1990s have tended to support the proposed development of the medieval town. Systematic archaeological investigations of standing historic buildings have been rare although there is much documentary evidence. Further investigation should be pursued wherever opportunities arise and their results should be properly disseminated. Midhurst preserves a rich mosaic of heritage that demonstrates the evolution of the component parts of the townscape over nearly 1000 years. It is vital that these are properly understood.

## 4. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 4.1 LAYOUT AND STREET PATTERN

Much of Midhurst's historic significance derives from the early medieval plan form which remains largely intact. The street pattern visible today is the result of deliberate early planning and continuous evolution. The street pattern is unusual in that the shops of the historic core are quite disconnected from the other commercial centre at North Street.

Midhurst's historic core is approached via four principal roads, North Street from the north, Petersfield Road from the west and two from the south: Bepton Road and South Street. Of these, only South Street leads directly into the town's historic centre at Church Hill and Market Square. Church Hill continues the line of South Street until it turns abruptly west, as Knockhundred Row, to join the southern end of North Street. The town fabric between Church Hill and Rumbold's Hill is divided into three by Wool Lane and Duck Lane, which both run in a north-south direction.

Midhurst's historic streets are not of even width but vary from narrow lanes like Sheep Lane to wide thoroughfares like North Street. This variation creates a townscape with a wide range of visual qualities. The compositional balance between openness and enclosure is an important feature to be maintained and serves as a good example for civic space design elsewhere.

Lanes that are defined by their narrowness and sense of enclosure are:

- Knockhundred Row
- Sheep Lane
- Red Lion Street
- Duck Lane (and Pintails)

West Street and Rumbold's Hill have a strong sense of enclosure but their greater breadth and views to open spaces beyond give them a more typical commercial street character. Spaces whose character and function exceed that of a street and serve as public open spaces include:

- The broad North Street
- The triangular space at the junction of Rumbold's Hill and Wool Lane
- Church Hill
- The Market Square
- Edinburgh Square

The urban grain within the conservation area is relatively dense. With the exception of several grander dwellings and public buildings there are few detached properties. The buildings, mostly of two or two and a half storeys are contiguous and generally form a hard building line to the back edge of pavement. Any permeability to rear areas and gardens is mainly by covered passageways through the sides of properties, although some wider access ways exist between buildings. The divisions between private and public areas are generally clearly defined. Private open space is mostly hidden from view by high walls or is located to the rear of properties. The scarcity of open green areas within the core contrasts with abundant openness and greenery around the periphery of the town centre.

The majority of individual buildings within the conservation area, whether grand or modest, contribute to the character and appearance of the streetscape. Each character area has been analysed and positive buildings have been identified. This served as the basis for a listing programme and, potentially, a local list.

## 4.2 OPEN SPACES

Open Spaces that contribute to the Character of Midhurst's conservation area include:

- North Mill Pond and surroundings
- Cowdray Park
- The Curfew Garden
- St Ann's Hill
- The churchyard and cemetery of the parish church

### *(i) North Mill Pond*

North Mill Pond and its surroundings, including Rother Pond, provide an attractive natural environment for species conservation and recreation within a short walk of the town centre. Located on the course of the River Rother, it also has the potential to be included in a riverside walk, which could add to the tourism value of Midhurst. The overgrown area to the northwest of North Mill should be considered in the context of the mill and its

associated waterworks. Appropriate interpretation and land management could aid its understanding.

### ***(ii) Cowdray Park***

Cowdray Park has acted as buffer against the spread of development to the east. Views to and from the park play an important role in Midhurst's character. The water meadow and the River Rother is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Viewed along the Causeway from North Street, the ruins of Cowdray form perhaps the most distinctive landmark in Midhurst. The ruins are listed Grade I and are classified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

### ***(iii) Curfew Garden***

The Curfew Garden is a plot of land of about a quarter of an acre by the corner in Knockhundred Row, owned by Midhurst Town Trust. It is said that a lost traveller who was guided to Midhurst by the tolling of the curfew bell on the parish church bell gave it to the church so that the income could pay for the ringing of curfew every evening. The garden is leased so is sadly not accessible to the general public. It would have potential to serve as a welcome public garden.

### ***(iv) St Ann's Hill***

St Ann's Hill, which includes a Scheduled Monument, is thickly wooded on three sides with fine mature trees located around its highest part. It rises above and to the east of the historic core and can be seen from many vantage points, making it a green landmark and an essential contributor to the town's character. Several footpaths cross the wooded slopes and could form part of a 'Heritage Walk' for the town. There are excellent views over the town's varied roofscape and the surrounding country.

### ***(v) Churchyard and cemetery of the parish church***

The churchyard and cemetery of the parish church provide attractive, contemplative spaces at the core of the town. The churchyard around the south and east of the church is markedly different in character to the cemetery annexed on the east side of Sheep Lane. The cemetery has a central path leading through overgrown bushes and trees. The path ends with a wall but

there is a blocked gateway and there may be potential to reopen this to provide an attractive path to St Ann's Hill. The cemetery is owned by Chichester District Council and could be enhanced through a regular maintenance regime.



*The Causeway toward Cowdray Ruins.*



*St Ann's Hill, with remains of the fortified manor.*



*Churchyard of St Mary & St Denys.*

### **(vi) South Pond**

The area of South Pond functions as a town park, providing an accessible green breathing space close to the historic core. It forms an important buffer between the older parts of Midhurst and the suburban development to the south. Like North Mill Pond, it would benefit from enhanced interpretation to aid an understanding of its significance to the historic town as millpond and fishpond. The river valley to the northeast and southwest also provides an important recreational resource and wildlife habitat.

### **4.3 FOCAL BUILDINGS**

Midhurst's principal historic focal point is the parish church of St Mary Magdalene and St Denys in the Market Square. This marks the centre of the town, asserting its primacy over the Market Square, Church Hill and neighbouring streets.

By terminating vistas or providing a focus to a street, buildings assert their character on spaces. These are listed below:

1. The ruins of Cowdray
2. Church of St Mary Magdalene and St Denys, Church Hill
3. Town Hall, Market Square
4. St Ann's Hall, St Ann's Hill
5. Spread Eagle Annexe (Old Market House), South Street
6. Gate House & Bierton House, Edinburgh Square
7. Swan Inn & Harvey's Wine Shop, Red Lion Street
8. The Fernery, Granville House and Johnson & Clarence, Market Square
9. Eagle House, Market Square
10. Spread Eagle Hotel, South Street
11. Church Terrace on east side of Church Hill

12. Lyndale/Birdcage House, Church Hill
13. St Ann's House, Sheep Lane
14. Midhurst Library, Knockhundred Row
15. Burgage House, Knockhundred Row
16. Global Flowers, North Street
17. Midhurst Post Office, Grange Road
18. Blackiston House, West Street
19. The Bricklayer's Arms, West Street
20. Midhurst Stationers, corner of West Street & Rumbold's Hill
21. Midhurst Convent villa, Petersfield Road
22. St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Bepton Road
23. Bennetts Terrace and Masonic Hall, Bepton Road
24. The Wheatsheaf, Wool Lane
25. 413/416 Rumbold's Hill
26. The Old Surgery, Rumbold's Hill
27. The Angel Hotel, North Street
28. The Clockhouse, North Street
29. Capron House/ Grammar School, North Street
30. Midhurst Methodist Church, North Street
31. North Mill, North Street
32. Vanzell Cottages, Dodsley Lane

Although North Mill and *Vanzell Cottages* are in Easebourne, they assert a strong influence over the north end of the conservation area and the entrance to Midhurst, so are included.

The ruins of Cowdray and the associated estate buildings are important focal buildings although their parkland setting separates them from Midhurst's urban grain. They form a positive counterpoint with the town, rather than being part of its intrinsic structure.

#### 4.4 KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS

The historic core of Midhurst is characterised by a high degree of enclosure. Spaces tend to be closed and views controlled by the articulation of surrounding buildings. Where the topography or street layout facilitates longer views, they usually end with trees. In this way, there are regular reminders of Midhurst's rural and parkland setting. Significant views and vistas are listed below:

1. Glimpsed views of ruins of Cowdray from St Ann's Hill (views more open in winter)
2. Across old town roofscape from St Ann's Hill (winter only)
3. From St Ann's Hill towards wooded hills in the west
4. Picturesque views up and down St Ann's Hill (lane)
5. Various views towards Parish Church
6. Towards Town Hall
7. Towards 346/347 St Ann's Hill (the Arts and Crafts building)
8. Church Hill, both directions
9. From Edinburgh Square north towards Sheep Lane
10. From Church Hill east up Sheep Lane, terminated by St Ann's House

11. Down South Street to trees and up to the Spread Eagle Hotel Annexe
12. From South Street to South Pond and the historic core
13. From Red Lion Street towards houses on east side of South Street
14. From South Street/South Pond to towards the Old Town, St Ann's Hill and distant trees
15. St Ann's Hill from The Wharf
16. The River Rother from The Warf and walk around base of St Ann's Hill
17. Glimpsed views of Cowdray from base of St Ann's Hill
18. Across Cowdray water meadow, unspoilt landscape and countryside beyond
19. Towards Cowdray and associated structures
20. Up causeway towards town
21. Over Rotherfield Pond
22. From North Mill Bridge to weirs and Mill
23. From North Street towards North Mill and Vanzell Cottages
24. Up North Street towards Methodist Church
25. Glimpsed views of Cowdray from North Street
26. Up the commercial part of North Street
27. Distant trees beyond both ends of North Street
28. Glimpses into paved yards off North Street

29. Up Knockhundred Row to Library
30. Rural view up June Lane
31. Picturesque views into Wool Lane from both ends
32. View from North Street towards the Wheatsheaf Public House
33. Up Petersfield Road, terminating with trees
34. Up and down West Street
35. Up Bepton Road, with trees terminating view

5. Trees to the rear of 'Lane End' on Sheep Lane

Other trees that contribute to the character of the conservation area are listed below. Note that trees outside the conservation area and in the distant countryside also have a bearing on its character.

#### 4.5 TREES

Trees are important to the character of Midhurst's conservation area. Trees are often visible in the distance, recalling the town's name, which means 'middle wood'. They also terminate views in the middle distance along the roads that radiate from the town centre. These express the edge of the town centre and contribute to a sense of enclosure. Although suburbs extend beyond, they communicate a boundary between centre and periphery.

Midhurst's built environment is not full of trees but a few groups and individual specimens help to animate streets and provide focal points. The majority of visible foliage comes from trees located in private gardens.

The following trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders:

1. Sweet Chestnuts and Oaks on St Ann's Hill
2. Beech tree in car park of Nat West Bank, Rumbold's Hill
3. Trees on eastern boundary of the land adjoining the Catholic Church on Bepton Road
4. The large cedar tree at St Mary Magdalene and St Denys Church

1. Tree (*Wellingtonia*) at corner of North Street with Lamberts Lane (north end)
2. Tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) at eastern end of Grange Road (in forecourt area to north-east of Post Office building) adjacent to cafe
3. Four (2 Beech, 2 Oak) trees in the grounds of St Ann's House, Sheep Lane
4. Tree (Black Poplar) on Cowdray land along south side of North Street to the south of North Mill
5. Large magnolia in garden of Trinity Cottage, Church Hill
6. In churchyard of St Mary Magdalene and St Denys Church (in addition to protected cedar)
7. In cemetery of St Mary Magdalene and St Denys Church
8. In Market Square
9. Visible in views from South Street, to the east, south and west
10. Surrounding South Pond
11. On east side of Chichester Road
12. Following the course of the River Rother
13. Around St Ann's Hill
14. Various locations on Cowdray land

15. Around North Mill pond
16. Around Rotherfield Pond
17. Between North Street and Cowdray watermeadows
18. In front gardens of houses to east of Methodist Church
19. Around North Street car park
20. Specimen trees on North Street
21. Along June Lane
22. Seen in distance in long views to north and south from South Street
23. Those closing the view up Petersfield Road
24. Those closing the view up Bepton Road
25. Around St Mary's Church
26. Those ending the view from Edinburgh Square towards Sheep Lane
27. Ending views down both ends of Lamberts Lane and the belt of trees visible on the hill to the west.
28. To southern edge of Grange car park

The South Pond area is a civic park and serves to separate the old town from more modern expansion. The trees on its northern side also help to screen less attractive, modern development and so contribute to an appreciation of Midhurst's historic coherence. The recent removal of shrubbery and hedging has exposed the Grange car park, to the detriment of the area's historic character.

Cowdray land has also served as a barrier and has prevented development to the east. The line of trees to the east side of North Street (lower) help to divide the urban and parkland environments. The park is on the statutory list of historic parks and gardens and is a

repository for numerous important veteran trees.

St Ann's Hill is thickly wooded on three sides with fine mature trees around its highest part. The removal of saplings and a few mature trees from the northeast slope would permit views of the ruins of Cowdray currently visible only in winter.

#### 4.6 ROOFSCAPE

The topography means that roofs can be prominent in many parts of the conservation area. From high ground such as St Ann's Hill the limited, characteristic range of roof shapes, heights and pitches can be appreciated.

The predominant roof form is of eaves running parallel to the street. Pitches of about 40 degrees predominate for buildings with plain tile roofs and lower pitches for slate. The Victorians and Edwardians had a fondness for gables to the road; their sparse distribution adds variety without detracting from the dominant pattern. No attempt has been apparent to align the eaves of neighbouring properties and a varied eaves line can be regarded as a local characteristic.

Most roofs are covered with clay tiles, as would be expected in the Weald. Some replacement in Welsh slate is evident, but concrete tiles and pantiles are not characteristic and relatively scarce.

#### 4.7 BOUNDARIES

Old walls have considerable importance in defining the historic pattern of development in Midhurst. They often survive long after their original function has disappeared and can provide valuable evidence of previous patterns of settlement, boundaries of long since demolished buildings and stages in the outward expansion of the town. High walls often define rear boundaries. They are also valuable in their own right from an aesthetic point of view, usually being constructed of local sandstone and mellowed by age.

One of the most attractive examples is the Listed wall which lines the northern side of the lane leading to St Ann's Hill, where the skill and care of the builders can be appreciated in the diminishing size of stones in the coursing.



*Boundary walls, such as this one at St Ann's Hill make an important townscape contribution to the Conservation Area*



*There can be a subtle interplay of urbanity and open space, even in the heart of the town*

Many of the older walls within the conservation area are considered to be important to its character and appearance and should be preserved.

#### 4.8 PUBLIC REALM

A survey of street furniture, signage and public realm features has been undertaken by the sense of place group and results may be found at an Appendix to this document.

#### 4.9 PAVING SURFACES

Midhurst's historic paving is concentrated in the historic core, the streets surrounding the Market Square and in North Street, and dates from the mid-eighteenth century. The predominant vernacular paving material is local Lower Greensand . The one remaining quarry on the Cowdray Estate, operated by Shropshire Stone, has advised that its current stone is not sufficiently hard for paving. Whether the historic paving does not meet modern specifications or the stone quarried previously was harder has not been conclusively determined. The Lower Greensand beds did have a capping of harder stone that might have been utilised for paving, but it is not certain whether softer stone was also used.

Some of the best preserved Lower Greensand paving is in back courts and private lanes where it has been under less pressure from traffic and statutory undertakers.

The Lower Greensand paving was laid in small, irregular setts or rubblestone in courses of differing widths. A typical sett might be around 150-250mm long and 80-150mm wide. Courses were laid perpendicular to the line of the road and edged in larger stones that provided a kerb.

Boundaries between the pavement and building frontages vary, with edging stones similar to the kerb stones often defining the edge of the pavement. Buildings of higher status might be edged in waterstruck paviers from Lamb's Pitsham brickworks or with Purbeck limestone flags.

Particular local details articulate the relationships between the pavement surfaces and other 'events' such as lanes or paths

crossing from side properties. These communicate hierarchy and add to the legibility of the environment.

Where Purbeck limestone is used in the public realm it is usually in relation to properties of status. The stone is also used in the private alleys and courts of some buildings of more moderate status.

Local Lower Greensand, Purbeck Limestone and local waterstruck paviers are the only vernacular paving materials in Midhurst and their use is controlled by craft conventions. For example, even though red brick paviers were readily available, they were never regarded as appropriate for paving surfaces, only in defining their edges.

The problems and expense associated with sourcing local stone of the right qualities for paving has meant that the characteristic paving patterns have been under pressure from industrially produced products.

Staffordshire blue pavers have been used for areas of lesser status such as back alleyways and courts. Their presence is not as obvious as in neighbouring Petworth, where they have asserted their presence on the public realm. They are a relatively inexpensive paving material for back alleys and drives but they should not be used to replace stone paving or where their appearance would dominate the scene.

Horsham Stone is an appropriate compromise material, as it comes from a similar Lower Greensand bed and is hard enough for paving. Where repairs need to be made to existing historic paving, the reclaimed local stone or Horsham Stone should be employed using the correct, traditional craft methods. North Street in particular has suffered from extensive areas of repairs executed in inappropriate materials like granite.

The areas of granite paving in North Street and Market Square are not in keeping with the character of Midhurst's conservation area. A scheme is currently under development to repave the Market Square and surrounding streets in Horsham Stone. It is hoped that a similar improvement scheme can be extended to West Street and North Street, while retaining all areas of historic paving.

## 5 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 5.1 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES

An attempt has been made to categorise buildings according to their character types. This may address issues of age, use and architectural form and materials. The intention is not to identify strict functional, historic or architectural qualities but to define a range of categories that effectively differentiate between buildings of contrasting character. The intention is to identify the character buildings exert on the public realm now, rather than analyse their historic origins. The categories are:

1. Medieval/timber framed, with or without shop
2. Georgian style with shop
3. Georgian style residential
4. Victorian/Edwardian/early C20 focal building/church
5. Victorian/ Edwardian gabled with shop
6. Victorian/ Edwardian house
7. Cottage terrace
8. Industrial/service/ancillary
9. Modern, neo-traditional
10. Modern, negative impact

Character types are illustrated and discussed in the character area sections.

### 5.2 LISTED BUILDINGS

The majority of Listed buildings are located within the historic core and along North Street and its southern extension to Rumbold's Hill. Within this central area, most buildings are listed. Listed buildings form almost continuous frontages to North Street, Rumbold's Hill, Knockhundred Row, Church Hill, Sheep Lane, Edinburgh Square, South Street, West Street, Duck Lane and Wool Lane. Combined with the Scheduled Monuments on St Ann's Hill and the ruins of Cowdray, Midhurst has a largely unspoilt historic environment of exceptional quality and value.

There are 108 statutory list entries in the conservation area (one Grade I, two Grade II\*, and 105 Grade II). Of these, three visibly predate 1500; seven are sixteenth century; 32 are seventeenth century; 38 are eighteenth century; 25 are early nineteenth century; one is from 1841-1880; one Edwardian, one (a telephone box) is from the mid-twentieth century and one is of post-war date. There will be many more buildings in the conservation area that are of greater historic significance than is currently realised. It must also be assumed that a number of the timber-framed buildings conservatively dated to the seventeenth century may be sixteenth century or earlier. Many Tudor buildings were refronted in the eighteenth century and have significance as examples of both periods.

### 5.3 POSITIVE BUILDINGS

Although not suitable for inclusion on the Statutory List, many buildings have been identified as positive in townscape contribution and are illustrated on the relevant character area maps.

### 5.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

Midhurst has a varied palette of traditional building materials. Proposals for alterations and new build will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate use of these materials in the different character areas.

#### *Timber Framing*

Timber framing is the main building technique for thirty five buildings, mostly dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, many of these were re-fronted in the Georgian and Victorian periods and fewer buildings outwardly express an original, authentic timber framed character.

Timber framed buildings would originally have been infilled with wattle and daub panels but most of these have been replaced with more modern equivalents, including brick. Subsequent re-fronting could be executed in render, tile hanging, or solid brick or stone.

There are a significant number of mainly Edwardian buildings that employ mock or semi-

structural half timbering as an aesthetic device. These buildings are partly responsible for any perception there might be that Midhurst is a town characterised by black-and-white, half-timbered buildings. Many of Midhurst's genuine timber framed buildings are now clad or lime plastered and so impart a more subtle character than their more brash Edwardian counterparts.

### **Local Stone**

The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene and St Denys dates from the early thirteenth century (although largely rebuilt by Lacy William Ridge in 1882) and is entirely of stone. Ashlar is used in places and rubblestone infill between ashlar quoins in others.

The eighteenth century marked a change in the preferred method of construction, with stone and brick replacing timber frame. In addition to the buildings wholly belonging to this period, many of the earlier timber framed buildings were re-fronted in the eighteenth century.

Midhurst's local Lower Greensand stone does not easily offer large, even blocks of ashlar and is generally used in quite small, irregular pieces with corners and other details in brick. Although attractive to us today, this rustic appearance would not have been desirable to Georgian builders, who sought to achieve regularity and order, at least on front elevations. Much of the local stone, therefore, is seen exposed on the sides and backs of buildings of status (the front elevations usually being lime plastered or brick) or employed on buildings and structures of more lowly standing, including service buildings and boundary walls. The attractive terrace of stone houses on the east side of the Market Square (*The Fernery* and *Granville House*) forms a good example. Although of local stone with ironstone galletting and attractive red brick details, historic photos show that these elevations were previously lime plastered and were probably built with this intention.

A lime wash was often applied to rubblework. This improved the appearance, acted as a sacrificial coat and enabled the building to breathe. Modern paint is not a viable alternative as it seals the stone and traps in moisture, which can cause the front of the stone to blow. Only front elevations in fine ashlar stone were intended to be left exposed. In the late Georgian period, good quality buildings of

stone, rubble or timber framing were often lime rendered with score lines marked vertically and horizontally to give the appearance of fine ashlar stone blocks (e.g. *Sussex House*, West Street; *Tudor View*, North Street; *Apsley House*, Church Hill and *Burgage House*, Knockhundred Row).

There are several examples of buildings that express their status through their prominent use of stone. Examples include the collection of buildings flanking Capron House, including the neoclassical Grammar School and the building to the south now known as 1 Cowdray Court.

There are several stone buildings that have been painted so often as to superficially appear lime plastered.

The way in which materials such as stone are used in a narrative of status needs to be understood and appropriately reflected in new developments.

Much of Midhurst's stone came from quarries within the Cowdray estate, such as St James's and Stone Pit at Easebourne, both now closed. Winters Pit quarry to the north of Easebourne has recently reopened and should be used for building repair and construction. It is operated by Shropshire Stone & Granite Ltd, Station Yard, Shrewsbury.

Lower Greensand can vary considerably in tone and texture from one quarry to the next and even within the same quarry. It is therefore important that in repair work a good match is sought in both these aspects and that (apart from some projecting features) stone is laid in its natural bedding plane.

Ironstone was used infrequently due to the small amounts quarried and difficulty in working it into blocks of sufficient size for building. A unique example of its constructional use in Midhurst can be seen at *Lassiters Cottage* in Lamberts Lane. From the eighteenth century the decorative technique known as galletting involved the insertion of small pieces of iron stone into the mortar joints between sandstone blocks - for example, at *Iron Gates Cottage*, North Street (a re-fronted sixteenth century property). Although flint is more common, the use of iron stone is quite distinctive to this part of Sussex and, when present, re-pointing work

should ensure galetting is reinstated and matches the appearance of the original.

### **Brick**

Brick became fashionable in high status architecture from the end of the sixteenth century and this helped to popularise the material in vernacular building. As well as encouraging new construction in brickwork, fashion led to the use of bricks as false fronts or in the total encasement of timber framed buildings. Brick is increasingly popular from the eighteenth century and is the dominant building material from around 1800 onwards.

A further advantage of brickwork over other forms of wall construction was the way decorative effects could be obtained relatively cheaply. These included surface patterns, by the use of differently coloured bricks and surface modelling, as in the imitation of classical details and stringcourses in brickwork. Moulded bricks and terracotta came into use during the eighteenth century, when skilled craftsmen cut, carved and rubbed bricks to produce delicately moulded forms.

The Wealden clays were used to produce the bricks and tiles used on most buildings in Midhurst that date from before the start of the twentieth century. Although several brickworks operated in the Midhurst area, a large proportion of the bricks came from the still operating Pitsham Brickworks (Lamb's). These bricks were clamp fired and have a rustic, mottled appearance with small pieces of burnt charcoal usually visible. For finer work, bricks were fired in a kiln and generally have a more even tone and texture. The Wealden clays have a high level of iron, giving bricks a basic red colour. However, the tones of bricks have changed through time and even bricks from the same brickyard can vary from light orange to dark red depending upon the clay beds worked and the firing temperature. Bricks produced in the past at different brickworks varied slightly in size. Replacement and repair work should use bricks of the same dimensions. These can still be obtained by order from the Pitsham works.

Burnt headers, which are grey, blue or black, were produced by the reaction of wood smoke with the clay in parts of the Kiln where oxygen was excluded. Laid in Flemish bond (sometimes English bond) they create a pattern over the elevation that was popular in the

Georgian period. *Gate House* and *Bierton House* in Edinburgh Square and *Goldrings* on West Street are noteworthy for having elevations principally of burnt blue headers, with details picked out in red brick. Their modern equivalents are usually produced by the use of dyes and do not result in the same appearance.

There are a few buildings in Midhurst built principally of brick but with stone used for the dressings to quoins, window and door openings.

Between the 1930s and 1985, S Pearson & Son, based at Midhurst Common, produced white sand-lime bricks. They are not attractive, but an example can be seen in an ancillary range to the rear of Midhurst Granaries. Bricks of a greater range of colours than the traditional palette have been employed since the early twentieth century, sometimes in misguided attempts to mimic the colour of the local stone. This has detracted from Midhurst's strong vernacular tradition and should be resisted in any future developments.

There are also several brick buildings that have been painted so regularly as to superficially appear to be lime plastered. Some buildings that have been constructed from bricks that conflict with the local tradition might be improved by being lime rendered or painted.

### **Lime Plaster**

Lime plaster is the commonest cladding material for front elevations in the most historic parts of the conservation area. Brick is more common only in the nineteenth and twentieth century suburbs.

Lime plaster was used as an unbroken weather protective covering over timber framed buildings and had several advantages over wattle and daub and tile claddings. From the middle of the eighteenth century, plain plaster cladding became popular both in refurbishing timber framed buildings and in new construction. It provided the regularity and order so important to the Georgians and could be scored to mimic expensive ashlar. Smooth stucco renderings were applied to rubble walls and, except for the general flatness that comes from the shallow window reveals of a timber-framed building, it can be difficult to tell one form of construction from another.

Timber framed buildings such as *Tudor View* in North Street were given new façades, in this case clearly an applied device, to give 'polite' Georgian regularity. The façade appears to be of rubblestone that has been rendered and scored to give the required effect.

Plaster also enables architectural details usually executed in stone, such as quoins, cornices and rustication, to be achieved more cheaply. The Angel Hotel in North Street is a timber-framed building dating from the seventeenth century, but has an eighteenth-century eight-bay façade of three storeys, with a carriage arch and rusticated ground floor.

Midhurst has two examples of buildings clad in Roman Cement, which was a material developed in the 1780s and is, in fact, nothing like the cement used by the Romans. These buildings are the early nineteenth century villa of Midhurst Convent and Bevis Rowntree solicitors, Sheep Lane. Its similarity to the now ubiquitous Portland Cement render has meant that Roman Cement is less valued now. Indeed, when a World War II bomb fell in Sheep Lane and damaged St Ann's Hill House, adjacent to the solicitor's, it was decided to strip the remaining structure back to its underlying stone with brick details. The building had previously had the same decorative gothic mouldings as the adjacent office.

### **Clay Tiles**

Plain clay tiles gave better weather protection than wattle and daub infill panels and were adopted as a cladding material hung on timber framed walls when they became cheap and easily available. Fifteen examples may be found on pre-1800 buildings.

The plain roofing tiles were hung on laths nailed to the wall timbers and other special tiles were moulded to cover the corners and jambs, or wooden cover moulds and architraves were used. Although the ordinary 10½ in. by 6½ in. roofing tile was most commonly used, other tiles with a shaped bottom edge were used to give decorative effects. Hand-made tiles usually had a camber in both directions, which helped to cover irregularities in a wooden wall and give a more textured appearance than modern, flat tiles. Various shaped tiles have been used in Midhurst, often combined together for decorative effect.

There are numerous examples of buildings which have first floors or gables hung with plain clay tiles. On the most historic medieval examples, tiles have been used to clad the jettied upper floor of timber framed buildings. *Mida Cottage* and *Wool Cottage* in Wool Lane are examples. Tiles of several shapes are employed for decorative effect and for weathering details: plain, club, fishtail, vertically angled and other specials.

On a single building the clay tiles can vary from light orange to deep red although the combined effect is deep orange. The Bricklayers Arms on West Street has a tile-hung first floor that was unfortunately painted in the twentieth century. The majority of medieval buildings with tile-hung first floors have stone or lime plastered ground floors.

The Victorians used tile hanging for decorative effect, attached to brick or timber framed elevations.

Tile cladding has been employed on a number of twentieth century buildings but invariably the tiles used are a poor approximation of their historic precedents. Modern tiles are often too flat and regular, of too even and locally incorrect colours or without the decorative effect that comes from combining tiles of different shapes. *Russell House*, on the corner of Petersfield and Bepton Road is an example of modern tile hanging that detracts from local distinctiveness.

Hand-made clay tiles are by far the most popular roofing material in the conservation area. Roofs are usually steeply pitched at about 40°, a few degrees steeper if the building is older and previously thatched. Hipped roofs are common in Midhurst and hip tiles give a jagged edge to the roof profile. Roofs of more shallow pitches only appeared with the use of slate from the early nineteenth century. Later, Victorian and Edwardian builders returned to a fashion for steeply pitched roofs, often with gables facing the street.

### **Slate**

Welsh slate was brought to Sussex from the early nineteenth century. As it sheds water more efficiently than tile it could be laid at a lower pitch and shallow roofs became a characteristic feature of Regency architecture.

To a lesser extent, slate was also used in replacing roofs of thatch or tile.

### ***Weatherboarding***

Weatherboarding is commonly used as a cladding material for side and rear elevations and for service buildings. Its use on front elevations is rare on historic buildings in the conservation area, a reflection of its relatively low status. Most buildings employing weatherboarding for front elevations are modern and introduce a rustic effect that detracts from Midhurst's refined character.

### ***Mathematical Tile***

There are two examples of mathematical tile in Midhurst, *The Clock House* in North Street and the side of the *Gate House* in Edinburgh Square. Although these are important buildings, mathematical tile is not a characteristic building material in Midhurst.

### ***Material Combinations***

The characteristic ways in which Midhurst's palette of materials are combined within individual buildings requires careful attention when designing new buildings. Too many modern buildings employ materials in ways that are not characteristic or in combinations that have no historic precedent. When seeking to fit in with the historic environment, modern designers commonly make the mistake of using too many materials. Vernacular buildings are often characterised by an elegant simplicity that comes from the efficient use of a limited materials palette.

### ***Cowdray Colours***

The Cowdray Estate has had a major influence on buildings and development in Midhurst. The yellow colour applied to the wooden door and window surrounds of buildings in their ownership has become a feature contributing to the character of Midhurst. This colour has only been used since the early twentieth century. The Estate distinguishes its 'let' houses by doors in off white and green, and buildings within the park itself by off-white and black.

Housing built specifically by the Estate dates mainly from the mid Victorian to Edwardian period, under the auspices of the Earl of

Egmont and is of high quality. Specific mention should be made of the buildings on the corner of Edinburgh Square and St Ann's Hill (No.317), built in an Arts and Crafts style reminiscent of Philip Webb by E C Lee in 1878.

## **6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **6.1 DEFINITION OF CHARACTER AREAS**

Seven character areas have been identified within and adjacent to Midhurst's conservation area based on historical development, uses, building types and spatial qualities:

1. St Ann's Hill
2. Historic Town Centre
3. Early Town Expansion
4. North Street – upper
5. North Street – lower
6. River corridor
7. Suburbs

These character areas are defined below with a summary of their key characteristics and principal negative features. These have been used to compile the list of Issues that form the proposed Actions in the Management Proposals.

### **6.2 CHARACTER AREA 1 ST ANN'S HILL AND COWDRAY**

Character Area 1 is on the eastern edge of the medieval and modern settlement. Today, the area contains the mound and ruinous remains of the castle, a Scheduled Monument. Part is quite heavily wooded and there are few standing buildings. Cowdray Ruins stand in an open, expansive parkland setting to the north.

#### **6.2.1 KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

Surrounded by large trees, the castle mound at the top of St Ann's Hill has a protected,

enclosed character. In summer, the foliage largely hides views to Cowdray and over the surrounding town and country. Despite the elevated position, its enclosed character makes the space feel secluded and hidden from view.

### 6.2.2 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- Through being hidden from view and not subject to passive surveillance, information boards and benches have suffered from vandalism. There is also evidence that fires have been started and trees damaged by vandals.

## 6.3 CHARACTER AREA 2 HISTORIC TOWN CORE

Character Area 2 largely comprises the extent of the early planned town, contained within the line of the defensive town ditch. This consisted of a market place with the parish church, flanked by regular building plots. Expansion of the town from the thirteenth century onwards has seen building over the line of the ditch and partial infill of the market place. Today, the area lies east of the main commercial centre of Midhurst and accommodates a mix of uses: residential, shops, pubs, hotels, and other businesses, together with the parish church and its old cemetery.

### 6.3.1 SPATIAL TYPES

#### **Market Square**

Since its foundation, Midhurst's market square has contracted to the extent that the space is 29 metres wide (north/south direction) and 53 metres long (east/west). It is defined on its north side by the perimeter wall of the parish church, its east by the terrace with *Granville House* at its centre, its south by the terrace that includes *Eagle House* and its west by the eastern elevation of the Swan Inn. Within this space the Town Hall is located to the southeast of centre. The parish church dominates the Market Square. This is particularly apparent in views from the southwest corner of the space.

All sides of the square are perpendicular except for the east. The buildings flanking either side of the lane running east, St Ann's Hill, are not

aligned. 346/347 St Ann's Hill, to its south side, stands forward and is angled to the southwest. This device is significant in views into the space from West Street and from Sheep Lane to the north.

#### **Broad Street**

Church Hill has the character of a broad street used for markets. The space is 89 metres long (north/south direction) and its width tapers from 20 metres at its southern end to only 7 metres at its northern. It is largely enclosed on both east and west sides. The southern section of its east side is bounded by the west front of the church and the perimeter wall to the churchyard. Its southern end is terminated by two buildings (*Swan Inn* and *Elizabeth House*), which stand in the middle of the space and allow traffic to pass either side. This island structure is important in terminating views into Church Hill from the north. Its northern end narrows before connecting with a small triangular public space at the top of Knockhundred Row.

#### **Commercial Street**

The eastern end of West Street has the character of a town retail street. It is quite consistently enclosed on north and south sides. There are three breaks in the southern elevation to provide access to service yards at the rear of properties. Building frontages on north and south sides of the street are not parallel or of consistent width but are angled to vary the width of the public space and to provide varied views along the street. The maximum width of this section of West Street is around 10 metres, the minimum about 6.5 metres.

#### **Commercial Lanes**

Knockhundred Row and Red Lion Street both have high qualities of enclosure relative to their width, giving them more the character of a lane than a street. Knockhundred Row is orientated roughly east-west. For most of its length it is of relatively consistent width, around 8 metres. At its eastern end it broadens into a triangular open space as it turns southwards through 90 degrees. This small 'square' has a maximum width of around 16 metres.

Red Lion Street was created by early encroachment into the original market square.

The Swan Inn and *Elizabeth House* (Harvey's Wine Shop) now provide enclosure on the east side where originally there was open space. This enclosed lane area is only 20 metres long and has a width of 5 metres. It serves as a counterpoint to the adjacent open spaces of Church Hill and the Market Square.

### **Residential Square**

Edinburgh Square is also a remnant of the original market square. The infill block makes up the west elevation of the square, the east and south sides representing the southeast corner of the original market. The north side of the square is left open but the west elevation narrows the space to create more enclosure and a trapezoid shape. This narrowing at the north end of the square, where it meets the current market square, conveys a greater quality of privacy. The square is connected with South Street via a narrow residential lane, discussed separately.

### **Residential Street**

Within Character Area 2, only South Street has a predominantly residential street character. Its width tapers from north to south, being around 20 metres at its northern end and 10 metres at its southern. Enclosure is only provided by properties on the east side of the road. The west side is made up of the Spread Eagle Hotel and buildings and spaces ancillary to it, set behind a boundary wall.

### **Residential Lanes**

Duck Lane, Sheep Lane, St Ann's Hill and the lane connecting Edinburgh Square with South Street are all residential town lanes.

With buildings and boundary walls built to the back of pavements, these lanes mostly have a high degree of enclosure, although back yards and unenclosed areas provide moments of openness and relief. Building frontages follow the lines of lanes of irregular width and no priority is given to ensuring that buildings on opposite sides of lanes, streets or open spaces are parallel. Individual building frontages also step forwards and back relative to one another. This organic arrangement adds to the liveliness, interest and attractiveness of the streetscape and contributes to its legibility.

- Lanes within the character area have markedly different characters; Sheep Lane accommodates several high status buildings, whereas Duck Lane has more of a back lane character.
- A few specimen trees in public areas are complemented by vegetation visible in private gardens.
- Pavements of historic Lower Greensand contribute substantially to the character of the area.

## **6.3.2 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES**

There are significant numbers of buildings that are outwardly of medieval character (not including buildings wholly re-fronted in the Georgian period). These are concentrated at the eastern end of Knockhundred Row, where it widens to form a small triangular public space, at the southern end of Church Hill and on the south side of that part of West Street within this character area. There are also three medieval buildings on the island of development to the west side of Edinburgh Square.

Apart from these prominent medieval buildings, the area's character is largely formed by post-medieval and Georgian buildings. These are split fairly evenly between those with shop windows and those without. Most of those without shop windows are domestic or in hotel use.

There is a scattering of Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Two of these are shops, one being on West Street and the other on Church Hill. The group including 346/347 St Ann's Hill is a prominent design in the Arts and Crafts style. They have been identified as focal buildings. The remainder are domestic houses or villas and their impact on the character of the area is somewhat moderated through their relatively peripheral locations. *Hill Crest/Pytchley House* is a robust Edwardian building on South Street that contributes to local character through careful architectural detailing and use of locally distinctive materials such as plaster and decorative tile hanging.

The row of low cottages on Duck Lane is an important survival and is fundamental to conveying its character as a secondary, back lane. Although architecturally humble, their historic significance and importance to the character of the area is great.

There are few buildings of other character types and fortunately few modern buildings of no merit.

### 6.3.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

Character Area 2 includes the following building materials:

- Lime plaster
- Red brick
- Blue brick (headers)
- Stone (Lower Greensand)
- Painted brick or stone
- Half timbered
- Tile hanging

Half-timbered buildings are concentrated on the south side of West Street (the east part within this character area), the top end of Church Hill and Red Lion Street.

Lime plastered elevations are clearly the most numerous in the character area and predominate on the west side of Church Hill and on South Street. There is also a smaller grouping on the west side of Edinburgh Square. Painted brick and masonry buildings give the impression that there are even more plastered elevations than there are. Buildings with lime plastered fronts may have rubblestone or brick side and rear elevations. Lime plaster was, therefore, considered more presentable than rubble stone.

Stone with brick detailing is the predominant material on Sheep Lane but is scarce (for front elevations) elsewhere in the character area. The annotated plan gives something of a distorted impression of the use of stone: the stone elevations of the Town Hall are secondary to the main, lime plastered elevation; the stone elevations of the terrace facing west onto Market Square would originally have been lime plastered, the building to the immediate south of St Ann's House on Sheep Lane had Roman Cement elevations before it was damaged by a Luftwaffe bomb; the garages

adjacent to the church and the building on the northeast corner of Sheep Lane are modern. The parish church is, therefore, the only building in the character area that may, without reservation, be considered to be principally stone in its historic appearance.

Red brick buildings have a significant impact on the character of the area. Numerous polite Georgian buildings employ brick as their principal material, some with burnt blue headers. *Gate House* and *Bierton House* reverse the usual relationship of red brick and burnt headers by being principally of blue headers with red used for decorative effect. This expensive approach expresses their pretension to the highest level of architectural status. A shop, *Goldrings*, on West Street has also taken this approach on its first floor (its ground floor is unfortunately painted) and it seems likely that there is a design connection with the similarly detailed houses in Edinburgh Square. *Goldrings* was once a farmhouse, its central entrance and corridor are still used with shops either side using internal doors. There are relatively few other post-Georgian buildings of brick, the red brick Victorian building at the northern end of Church Hill being the most prominent. 346/347 St Ann's Hill employs red brick in a balanced composition that also includes stone and tile hanging.

### 6.3.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

Most buildings in this character area are of two storeys. A number have inhabited roof spaces so have been shown as 2½-storeys on the annotated map. These are concentrated on Sheep Lane, the east side of the north end of Church Hill, the northern and southern ends of South Street and the south side of West Street. There is a notable absence of 2½-storey buildings on the west side of Church Hill or in Edinburgh Square.

The distribution of three-storey buildings is interesting in that there is one on each of the four sides side of the rectangle that would originally have been the open market place.

Buildings of one storey tend to be service buildings and garages. An exception to this rule is the terrace of 1½-storey cottages on Duck Lane. These low status dwellings have a significant impact on the character of the lane and its importance relative to the more public areas of the character area.

Street types in the early town



*Knockhundred Row – commercial lane*



*Sheep Lane – residential lane*



*South Street – residential street*

### 6.3.6 LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS

The majority of trees within the character area are located in the Market Square and adjacent churchyard and cemetery. The large cedar in the parish churchyard has a strong positive influence on the character of the town centre. The cemetery, located in a plot to the east of the church, is overgrown with a line of yew trees and shrubs. It is a valuable space with potential to be enhanced through maintenance and care. The majority of other trees and shrubbery in this character area are located in private spaces but are visible and have a positive impact on the streetscape. For example, the large magnolia in the garden of Trinity Cottage in Church Hill provides a charming spectacle when in flower. Views from the character area to surrounding trees and countryside also contribute to the area's attractiveness and setting.

### 6.3.7 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

This character area is particularly remarkable for the quantity of listed and positive buildings and the consistency of historic street elevations. Most buildings are listed.

There are 43 listed buildings, or groups of buildings, (two Grade II\*; and 41 Grade II) of which one is thirteenth century, four are sixteenth century, 11 are seventeenth century, 20 are eighteenth century and seven date from 1800-40. Of these, several are especially noteworthy. The church (Grade II\*) dates from the thirteenth century. Good examples of mid-sixteenth-century exposed timber framing are found at the Spread Eagle Hotel (Grade II\*) and at its detached annexe. Examples of exposed timber framing of seventeenth century date survive at 3 and 4 Knockhundred Row; Jefferson's and *Blackiston House*, West Street; and *Elizabeth House*, Market Square (all Grade II). There are several examples of substantial eighteenth-century townhouses (all Grade II) at

*Gate House*, Edinburgh Square; the southern building of the Spread Eagle Hotel, South Street; *St Ann's House*, *Russet House*, and *St Ann's*, Sheep Lane; *Birdcage House/ Lyndale House* (previously one house) and *Church Hill House*, Church Hill.

Of the few that are not listed most are regarded as positive contributors to the character of the conservation area.

There are four buildings which either moderately detract from the character of the area or which may be enhanced to be neutral or positive. Two garage blocks are considered to substantially detract from the area's character, those adjacent to the Church on Sheep Lane and the ones associated with Castle Gardens flats on Duck Lane.

### 6.3.8 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- Present shops and business premises are vulnerable to change of use, with potential for further erosion of the commercial character of the Market Square area.
- There are numerous inappropriate repairs and reinstatements to historic paving surfaces, gradually eroding the historic character of the area.
- Street furniture lacks consistency, some is of poor quality and line painting on roads is excessive and obtrusive. The surface to Market Square is in a poor state.
- Car parking dominates the Market Square and the middle of Church Hill
- Large dustbins for the Swan Inn detract from appearance.
- Garages on west side of Sheep Lane, adjacent to the Church.

- Castle Gardens flats on Duck Lane and their associated garages have a poor relationship to the characteristic building patterns of the area and so have a negative influence.
- Behind Stone House on Wool Lane, the absence of a boundary wall and the tarmac parking area to Duck Lane has a negative influence and provides inadequate enclosure to the lane.
- Duck Lane's enclosure is also compromised by the large open parking courtyard at its northeast corner.
- The use of uPVC for some windows and doors
- The modern infill building on West Street, occupied by a greengrocer's (Top Crop), is at odds with most of the street and visually disrupts views along it.

## 6.4 CHARACTER AREA 3 EARLY TOWN EXPANSION

Character Area 3 lies west and southwest of Character Area 2. It includes parts of the early expansion of the original town. Today the area combines shops and houses, forming the southern part of the commercial centre of the modern town. The character area also contains the site of the former grange of the Knights Hospitallers, located south of West Street, and historically known as the Liberty of St John. The former grange is now largely occupied by a leisure centre and car park but was also the location for the civic facilities of the Post Office (disused), Court House (disused) and the telephone exchange.

### 6.4.1 SPATIAL TYPES

The following spatial types are present in the character area:

#### **Commercial street**

The part of West Street that lies between Duck Lane in the east and the roundabout in the west within Character Area 3 is oriented roughly east-west. There is a deflection northwards corresponding to the position of *Blackiston House* (Kiss Chase and Jefferson's Butcher's) on the south side. The frontage on the north side between Wool Lane and Duck Lane also stands forward of the blocks to east and west. When viewed from the west end of West Street, this gives prominence to the Bricklayers Arms on the left and *Blackiston House* on the right, which together largely foreclose the view up the street towards the Market Square. This not only adds to the prominence of these buildings but also contributes to the picturesque quality of the street. Similarly, when West Street is approached from the east, the building on the corner of Duck Lane (Prezzo) obtains prominence. The kink at the middle section of the road brings the shops on the south side of the street into view. Such variation in the positioning of building frontages and in street line may be interpreted as devices to raise the exposure of commercial premises.

The width of the street varies from a minimum of 6 metres (between Prezzo and Jeffersons) to a maximum of 11 metres at its western end.

Rumbold's Hill (between June Lane and the mini-roundabout, Hamlyn's Corner) lies within this character area and constitutes a commercial street. Its character, however, is markedly different to that of West Street. It is oriented in a roughly north-south direction. Its northern part, between the Wheatsheaf Public House and Knockhundred Row is essentially a narrower projection of North Street and feels like a precursor to that wider commercial space. However, at the junction with Wool Lane, Rumbold's Hill widens from 11 metres to 19 metres and adopts the character of a public open space, like a small town square. The Wheatsheaf encloses the space to its north side, NatWest Bank on its west and terraced commercial properties to its east.

Rumbold's Hill narrows to 5.5 metres between the Wheatsheaf and NatWest Bank, widening to around 8 metres for the rest of its length. It is difficult to consider the character of this portion of the street independently of the traffic that dominates it. With moderate traffic levels it would be a typical retail street but it is quite oppressive when subjected to the burden of the

A272. The narrow section creates a bottleneck that compounds the problem.

The junction of Rumbold's Hill, West Street, Bepton Road and Petersfield Road marks a principal boundary to the historic core. The core is accessed via Rumbold's Hill and West Street, with Bepton Road and Petersfield Road leading to residential suburbs of later date.

On the northeast corner (Bepton Road/West Street) stands a relatively imposing Victorian structure (two storeys plus attic) with strong corner emphasis. This achieves some success in communicating the higher status of the two roads it addresses. Its potential to act as a gateway, announcing the entrance to the town centre is, however, diminished by its singularity; neither the building on the northwest corner (Petersfield Road/Rumbold's Hill) nor the southeast corner (West Street/Bepton Road) have sufficient scale or massing to balance it.

The character of the building on the northwest corner of the junction is reminiscent of a mid-twentieth century suburban house; it was previously a public house. A pair of gables faces the junction with a recessed central section containing a pair of entrance doors. This building type somewhat confuses the hierarchy of the junction, which would benefit from a structure which more clearly communicates the entrance to the historic core.

*Russell House*, at the corner of Petersfield Road and Bepton Road, is wholly inappropriate to this site in its massing and architectural detail and has a significant negative impact on the quality of the space and the character of the conservation area. Its chamfered side weakens the corner and gives precedence to the mini-roundabout. The building replaced a filling station, which itself replaced the bombed Congregational Temple (built in 1907), which made a strong statement on this prominent site and presented a formal elevation when viewed from West Street. When an opportunity eventually emerges to redevelop Russell House, the massing of the Temple might serve as a useful precedent in terms of providing a formal elevation to terminate the view up West Street.

Of the buildings surrounding the junction, that on the southeast corner is the lowest, being of two modest storeys with a steeply pitched tiled roof. Its scale and historic character creates a

link with the adjacent 1½ storey residential buildings on Bepton Road and the more commercial ones on West Street. Its character is diminished by elements of modernisation, such as the insertion of large showroom windows. The character of the conservation area and appearance of this intersection would be enhanced if this building could be ultimately restored to something closer to its historic appearance.

### ***Residential street***

Grange Road is the only part of Character Area 3 with characteristics of a residential street. It is an unusual hybrid with suburban villa-type properties on its north side and civic buildings on its south. Viewed from its west end, Grange Road is an attractive public space. The distance between buildings on its north and south sides is large at around 19 metres and the space to the north of the Post Office and Court buildings has something of the character of a town square. *St John's Cottage* and a tree on its south side close the east end of the space.

Two pairs of handsome Edwardian villas dominate the north side of the space. They are identifiably Cowdray houses with dark green and cream paintwork. Apart from their architecture, they make a valuable contribution to the street through their boundary treatments and well-kept front gardens. The building fronts are set back from their front boundaries and the garden space introduces some welcome greenery into the streetscape. Viewed from the west end, these villas relate to the contemporary detached house, *St John's Cottage*, at the east end of the street.

The quality and attractiveness of the north side of Grange Road compensates for its rather austere municipal south side. The Post Office building makes a positive contribution to the space and presents a formal elevation when viewed from the intersection of Grange Road and West Street. It is unfortunate that a brown brick, rather than local red, was used in its construction but its appearance could easily be improved by painting the window and door joinery in a light colour.

The Old Courthouse is located at the middle of the south side of Grange Road and is separated from the Post Office and the building to its west by access lanes to the Grange

Centre and car park. It is a good example of its type but the utilitarian appearance of its modern extension detracts from the original building and its setting.

### ***Residential town lanes***

Duck Lane and Wool Lane are similar to one another in one respect, being oriented roughly north-south for their main part. Wool Lane widens from 5.5 metres at its northern end to 9 metres at its southern. The jettied upper floors of buildings on the east side of the north end of the lane and a slight rise in level create a deceptive impression that the lane narrows considerably. Duck Lane is less regular and varies from a minimum of 3 metres (at the Pintails section at its northern end) to a maximum of 9 metres by the Castle Gardens flats.

Wool Lane is characterised by a high degree of enclosure with buildings built at the back of pavements and few breaks in the street elevations. Of only three breaks in the building line, two are closed, by a high wall and hedge to maintain the high degree of enclosure. Only at the rear of the Wheatsheaf Public House is there a real break in the street elevation.

Duck Lane, a back lane, much less enclosed, has been addressed under Character Area 2 with the exception of Pintails at its northern end. This part of the lane is so narrow that it has the character of an alleyway rather than a lane. There is no room for pavements and the sides of buildings facing Rumbold's Hill and their boundary walls dominate the space.

At the corner of Duck Lane and Pintails, the east elevation of the street opens up as a parking forecourt. Although useful, it is unfortunate that the buildings originally occupying this site were removed, as there is a loss of the street's strong and characteristic sense of enclosure. Qualities of enclosure have also been eroded with the removal of boundary features to the rear of buildings on Wool Lane that are accessed from Duck Lane.

### ***Park side***

Although open, rather than an area of streetscape, the historic significance, proximity to the town centre and relationship to the South

Pond area give Character Area 3, to the south of Grange Road, significant qualities which should be appreciated and protected. Of fundamental importance are views from the north towards the green space of South Pond in the middle distance and longer views to the wooded countryside to the south. From the south side of the space, key views towards the historic town and its setting amidst trees are of importance. The belt of trees to the north side of South Pond is of value in enclosing the public space and serving as a partial filter to the development beyond.

## **6.4.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Despite being blighted by poor modern buildings, the Grange area has retained its original open character (from when it was farmed by the Knights Hospitallers) and views to South Pond and the greenery around the stream.
- The dominant characteristic of the area is of a dense, medieval urban environment largely occupied by commercial premises, typified by West Street and Rumbold's Hill
- Wool Lane retains its medieval residential character, with small building plots and a high degree of enclosure.
- Duck Lane has maintained a service industrial character. In serving the backs of properties in the original planned town to the east and then the backs of plots facing to the west it probably always had a 'backland' character. Removal of boundary features and inappropriate modern development (e.g. Castle Gardens flats) has weakened this character but it still can be discerned.
- Grange Road has the character of an early twentieth century extension outside the historic core, with villas and municipal buildings.

### 6.4.3 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES

The character area has a mix of building types although together Georgian or Regency domestic and commercial buildings are most numerous. There are concentrations of these two types on the north side of West Street, at the middle of the narrow part of Rumbold's Hill and to the north end of the character area (on Rumbold's Hill). The latter frame the east and west sides of a small triangular public space; the Victorian or Edwardian fronts of the Wheatsheaf pub and NatWest Bank close the south side of this small public space.

There are significant groups of medieval buildings on the north side of the eastern part and on the south side of the west end of West Street. There is also a group at the northern end and middle of Wool Lane, which has a valuable mix of largely residential medieval and Georgian building types. Most buildings on the lane are relatively small and of humble status, a large double-fronted Victorian house being the exception.

The north side of West Street is significant for its mix of medieval and Georgian buildings. Together, the group of buildings is of great importance in representing Midhurst's local building characteristics and heritage.

Duck Lane has characteristics of a back lane, providing access to the backs of properties, and has an inconsistent, broken, street elevation. It accommodates workshops that give it a residual industrial character. This 'back lane' character is important but, with changing access requirements, needs careful handling so as to maintain the quality and enclosure of the public realm.

There are two rows of cottages, one on Bepton Road and the other on Duck Lane. Although relatively low status buildings, they are important in conveying the historic character of parts of the area, indicating that these were relatively low value and peripheral to the main town activity.

There are three main groups of Victorian or Edwardian buildings. Those identified as key buildings at the northern end of Rumbold's Hill have an important influence on the character of the small triangular open space. There is also a concentration at the southern end of Rumbold's Hill, north of the crossroads, with a modern

neo-traditional building between. These Edwardian buildings have a half-timbered appearance and are built with gables facing the streets, perhaps a reference to medieval buildings such as the Spread Eagle Hotel. This building form is not characteristic of Midhurst, which mainly has buildings with eaves facing the principal streets. Gable elements are rarely so strongly emphasised. These half-timbered buildings create an unfortunate impression of pastiche at the entrance to the town. The Victorian buildings are of better architectural quality and enhance the character of the area.

The final group of Victorian/Edwardian buildings is at the middle section of West Street and south to Grange Road. Like those discussed above, the ones on West Street, to the west side of the junction with Grange Road, are an interpretation of medieval, timber framed buildings. The Edwardian and Victorian buildings to the east side of the junction are of better quality. They break with Midhurst's dominant building patterns but add to the variety and interest of the streetscape and relate well to the more typical Georgian shop to their east. Grange Road has the characteristics of an Edwardian town extension, incorporating only villa properties and civic buildings. The buildings are of sufficiently good quality to contribute positively to the character area.

Most of the modern buildings within the character area lack the architectural quality or local distinctiveness to make a positive contribution. The modern building at the southwest corner of the crossroads junction, *Russell House*, is the worst by virtue of its poor design and prominent location. The building to its north has a domestic character that does not suit this setting. The pair of neo-traditional houses on the west side of Rumbold's Hill almost achieves local distinctiveness but they are let down by poor detailing and an uncharacteristic set-back from the road. The large Grange leisure centre building is very poor but destined for demolition. It is hoped that its replacement will have a more positive influence on the conservation area. The telephone exchange and extension to the courthouse also have negative impacts but these are reduced through their relatively peripheral location.

## 6.4.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

Building materials within Character Area 3 conform to the following palette:

- Red brick
- Lime plaster
- Blue brick (headers)
- Stone (Lower Greensand)
- Painted brick, stone or hanging tiles
- Half timbered
- Timber weatherboarding
- Tile hanging

Lime plaster is the predominant facing material, closely followed by red brick. Lime plaster is used on buildings of every status and type, from workshops on Duck Lane to the formal (former) Egmont Public House on Rumbold's Hill, now known as Rumbold's Mews. Buildings faced in this material are quite evenly distributed. It is common for two or more buildings in a row to be similarly faced. Three buildings have lime plastered ground floors with half-timbered first floors with lime plastered infill panels. The Wool Lane elevation of the Wheatsheaf is medieval, the other examples are Edwardian. The latter constitute pastiche.

There are a significant number of buildings that are of painted brick, stone or painted hanging tile. When viewed in the street scene, the brick and stone facings superficially appear to be lime plastered. Buildings with lime plastered elevations or which are of painted brick, stone or hanging tile are often painted in 'brilliant white', which is a stark modern paint and clashes with the historic architecture and character of the conservation area.

The longest stretch of brick buildings is on the west side of the northern part of Rumbold's Hill. Two-thirds of the brick buildings are decorated with blue headers in Flemish bond. Significant numbers of the brick buildings are in pairs and flanked by buildings of contrasting materials. Within this character area, only the west side of Duck Lane is without any brick houses. This perhaps relates to its service/industrial character. There are several instances of red brick being used to detail predominantly stone buildings. There are two instances of stone used to detail predominantly brick buildings.

A significant proportion of buildings have brick ground floors with contrasting materials for upper storeys, either half-timbered or lime plastered. These are all Edwardian properties and this is not considered a truly local feature although the villas on Grange Road are of good quality and contribute positively to character.

The strongest concentration of brick buildings is found on the Grange site, in relation to buildings which detract from the character of the area (the leisure centre, telephone exchange and extension to the court building) The post office building is built of brown bricks with limestone dressings.

The majority of half-timbered medieval buildings and mock half-timbered Edwardian buildings are painted with jet-black timbers and brilliant white infill panels. This 'magpie' colour scheme was not characteristic of Sussex but is more a Midlands tradition. It has also spread to buildings that have no half-timbering. The overall effect is a little harsh and detracts from the interest and authenticity of the conservation area.

There is a pair of medieval buildings at the northern end of Wool Lane with tile hanging to their first floor and another at the middle of Wool Lane. These buildings are very important to the significance of the character area. The tile hanging to the Grange leisure centre and modern building at the southwest corner of the crossroads, *Russell House*, bears no comparison to these historic precedents and has a negative impact on the conservation area.

A number of buildings are built of local stone, some of which are painted. Undressed rubble stone was not a material of status (until the twentieth century) and was used to construct boundary walls, ancillary buildings and cottages. There is a concentration at the middle of Wool Lane; otherwise stone buildings are quite evenly distributed. The most significant stone building is the nineteenth century, former Roman Catholic church on the east side of Rumbold's Hill.

There are two buildings with timber weatherboarding, both modern and on Duck Lane. They appear appropriate to the service character of this lane.

#### 6.4.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

By far the most common building height is two storeys. However, this does not imply that buildings are of regular heights or that eaves or roof heights are consistent. On West Street, for example, the eaves height of adjacent two storey buildings differs by 26 courses, approximately 2 metres. Variety in building heights is an important characteristic of the character area. The varied roofscape and appearance of end walls is important in views down streets.

Most buildings are positioned with eaves parallel with the street line. Some buildings, mainly Victorian and Edwardian, have eaves perpendicular to this and present their gables to the street. This emphasises the vertical dimension and creates the impression of a much taller building, which can feel overbearing. This is especially the case in relation to the Edwardian buildings at the southern end of Rumbold's Hill.

Most of the single storey buildings in the character area are of ancillary or service character. The main exception is the single storey court building on Grange Road.

The terrace of post-medieval cottages on the north end of Bepton Road is one storey tall with an attic. This conveys a strong historic character at this prominent location.

The only significant three-storey building in this area is the Edwardian structure at the eastern corner of West Street and Grange Road. Its third floor is expressed as an attic storey to reduce its effect of dominating the space. Although the multiple gable detail is not a characteristic building form, the character area has an identity and consistency strong enough to assimilate such one-off exceptions.

Within this character area, building height is only seldom used to give expression to key buildings. The Post Office and the Edwardian building at the northeast corner of the main crossroads (mini-roundabout) are exceptions to this rule but both are relative newcomers. The Wheatsheaf Public House is noteworthy for being a fairly low building for a prominent location, only using an end gable and chimneystack to command attention.

#### 6.4.6 LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS

Character Area 3 has a dense urban grain with few opportunities for trees and shrubbery. The more open environment of the Grange, however, provides valuable views to the belt of trees and greenery to the south, by South Pond and along the course of the stream.

#### 6.4.7 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

At the time of preparing this appraisal, there were nineteen listed buildings, or groups of buildings (all Grade II). Of seven buildings or building groups then identified as being of potentially Listable quality, six have subsequently been listed. There are a further nineteen buildings which are not of Listable quality but which make a positive contribution to the character area. Only four buildings have been identified which are substantially neutral in terms of the area's character. Nine buildings are considered to have a mild negative influence. These are concentrated at the southern end of Rumbold's Hill and the west end of West Street and are mainly half-timbered Edwardian buildings. Repainting in Edwardian colour schemes, rather than the clichéd black and white, could easily enhance them. Five buildings have been identified as having a significantly negative influence on the area's character, located at the main crossroads and the Grange site. The redevelopment of the Grange leisure centre has the potential to enhance the area if carefully handled. Opportunities to improve *Russell House*, the Court building and the telephone exchange should be taken when development opportunities arise.

#### 6.4.8 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- The Grange leisure centre and telephone exchange have a negative impact on the character of the area, as has the associated unbroken expanse of car parking.
- Midhurst Barber's Shop is a negative building, being a poorly conceived extension to 7 Rumbold's Hill.

- The medieval building at the corner of Bepton Road and West Street has large showroom windows that detract from its historic appearance and weaken the building's ability to provide sufficient emphasis at the corner.
- The Post Office building has window frames stained a dark colour.
- In general, window frames painted in dark colours or stained timber, such as Violet Designs and Mane Street, have a negative impact.
- The Court Building has an extensive single storey utilitarian extension to its sides and rear.
- The west side of Duck Lane has suffered through the loss of boundary elements. Its character is informed by its function of providing access and garaging to the backs of properties and this 'back lane' quality should be preserved. However, the areas of hard standing used for parking are unattractive and detract from the street's appearance.
- The range of garages to Castle Gardens flats is unattractive and provides little enclosure to the street.
- Some half-timbered Edwardian buildings make only superficial reference to Midhurst's historic building traditions and give an impression of pastiche, exacerbated by the cliché of being painted in black and white.

- There is some surviving traditional paving in Wool Lane and in front of the Wheatsheaf Public House but this is being eroded through insensitive repairs.
- Municipal street furniture, excessive street painting, signage, concrete paving slabs and kerbs, damage to pavements and kerbs all detract from the area's historic character.
- Rumbold's Hill is dominated by vehicular traffic, which makes it an unpleasant environment for pedestrians and reduces its commercial vibrancy.
- Russell House at the southwest corner of the main crossroads has a particularly negative impact on views westwards from within West Street.
- The brick shop front to 'Graham Standing Domestic Appliances' on Rumbold's Hill is inappropriate to a painted stone building.
- The former Roman Catholic Church on Rumbold's Hill has been damaged through the removal of original windows and insertion of horizontally aligned window openings.
- Neo-traditional semi-detached houses (1 & 2 Egmont Mews) on Rumbold's Hill do not follow the traditional building pattern in their set back or architectural detail.
- The Carpet Shop at the southern end of Rumbold's Hill is not in keeping with the local building tradition. Its attic storey is particularly jarring.

## 6.5 CHARACTER AREA 4 NORTH STREET – UPPER

Character Area 4 comprises that part of North Street south of the car park and Capron House, together with the adjacent parts of Knockhundred Row and Lamberts Lane. The area developed piecemeal as a linear extension of the town, probably from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Today the area comprises the main shopping area of Midhurst. The spatial quality of North Street is of a broad, market street. This quality is more apparent in historic photographs taken before the dominance of vehicular traffic. Lamberts Lane was an early industrial area where noxious trades such as dyeing and tanning were kept away from residents in the Old Town. Knockhundred Row was known as Wildes Hill until about 1640 and retains its character as a link between the main north-south route and the original settlement.

### 6.5.1 SPATIAL TYPES

The character area contains the following spatial types:

#### **Broad Street**

The part of North Street that corresponds to a broad street type is 200 metres long and around 18 metres wide. When viewed from the north, it has the character of an enclosed urban space, closed on its east by *The Old Surgery* on the corner of Knockhundred Row and terminated towards the top of the hill by the more distant view of the Wheatsheaf Public House. Superficially, *The Old Surgery* looks like another half-timbered Edwardian building with its gables facing northwards to North Street but it is a re-fronted post-medieval structure.

Seen from its elevated southern end, the north end of the street is closed by a view of trees and more distant wooded countryside of the greensand ridge.

The broad street is reminiscent of places like Marlborough High Street but lacks strong architectural expressions to terminate either end of the space. Consequently, North Street lacks some degree of enclosure and orientation. The imposing eighteenth century Angel Hotel dominates the east side and *The Clock House* and *Rosemary's Parlour* the west.

Apart from the supermarket, the commercial part of North Street has remained free from modern infill development. New housing development is restricted to Cowdray Court, Angel Yard, Northgate Mews and Rosemary's Courtyard.

Between Capron House and the old Grammar School is the Victorian extension to the original school. Giving continuity to the frontage, it is a striking building erected in 1882 to replace an earlier building destroyed by fire. It has a wealth of detail in fine stone and brickwork which contributes greatly to the character and appearance of this part of North Street. The forecourt is unusual in being paved in limestone cobbles.

#### **Service/Residential Lane**

The side elevation of *The Clock House* on the north side of Lambert's Lane and the service yard of *Whithorne House* on its southern side give this end of the lane a service/industrial character. The road bends to the north and views are foreclosed by a group of trees. The low boundary wall between the lane and yard diminishes the enclosure of the space on its southern side. A higher boundary wall may help. Beyond the backs of buildings fronting North Street, Lambert's Lane opens up into a residential street. It has an edge-of-town quality with open countryside at close quarters to the west. Countryside views and the town edge character have been diminished by new housing on the west side of the lane. The east side of the lane is clearly defined by a high stone boundary wall that divides the public space of the street from the backs and sides of residential properties.

#### **Commercial Lane**

Knockhundred Row is accessed via the southwest corner of North Street. It contrasts with North Street through the considerable height of enclosing buildings relative to its narrow width. It is 7.5 metres wide at its western end, narrowing to 6 metres before widening again into a small triangular public space outside the library. The lane gives little indication that it leads directly into the historic core of the town, as it turns through 90 degrees before entering Church Hill.

#### **Commercial Street**

At the southern end of North Street, the space narrows to the width of a more typical commercial street and feels like an annexe to the principal space. Here, it is around 9 metres wide and is spatially indivisible from the part of Rumbold's Hill that is terminated by the Wheatsheaf Public House. The angled buildings at the corner with June Lane suggest a minor public square but the scale and form of these buildings is insufficient to command the space.

### **Rural Lane**

The east end of June Lane falls within Character Area 4. The listed 413/416 Rumbold's Hill present a formally composed, but secondary side elevation to June Lane. The transition between the urban environment at the building's front to the rural character of the lane is reflected by this building's transition from a formal front to a lean-to extension and stone boundary wall at the rear. Beyond this, properties addressing the lane are sufficiently widely spaced and set back from the road to enable trees and greenery to dominate and its rural character is expressed. The transition from urban front to rural lane is expressed less eloquently on the road's north side. The neo-traditional building facing the small triangular open space on Rumbold's Hill leaves a triangular space between its side and the enclosing boundary wall. The remaining space is laid to gravel and gives an impression of an unresolved gap. The rural character of the street and the appearance of the buildings on its north side could be improved by planting shrubbery or trees in this area. Incisions into the hollow way bank to the north side of the road to provide parking are unfortunate and detract from its considerable historic significance and character.

### **6.5.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- The trading street of North Street is the dominant spatial type.
- Routes branching off North Street to the west have rural lane characteristics. Knockhundred Row, to the east, is urban with high enclosure.

### **6.5.3 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES**

North Street retains at least six medieval (some may be post-medieval) buildings, two of which are currently unlisted. Four of these are on the east side and are quite evenly distributed. Café Verdi, 72 North Street has been identified as a medieval building although it was re-fronted in the early twentieth century. On the west side, the medieval buildings are separated at either end of the street, perhaps indicating more intense development pressure within the street's central section.

Character Area 4 is, however, predominantly Georgian in its building types and character. This character has been enhanced by the re-fronting of earlier buildings such as Nos. 65 and 65A, *Iron Gates Cottages* and *Tudor View*. The grouping of three large Georgian buildings at the middle of North Street assert a strong influence on its character, commanding the space and emphasising importance. These key buildings are the Angel Hotel on the east side and *The Clockhouse* and *Rosemary's Parlour* on the west. The part of Knockhundred Row that lies within this character area is also predominantly Georgian in character.

Victorian and Edwardian buildings and building fronts also assert some influence on the character area, particularly due to older buildings remodelled during this period.

*The Old Surgery*, which terminates the south end of North Street, and *Castle View* (10 North Street) both look like early twentieth century mock-timber framed buildings painted in the clichéd black and white colour scheme. *The Old Surgery* is, however, genuinely post-medieval and would benefit from sympathetic restoration. Both black and white colour schemes conflict with local building characteristics and detract from the area. Both could be enhanced through repainting in colours that reflect their authentic architectural heritage.

There are three significant modern buildings in the area, all of which have substantial negative impacts. The group of single storey buildings at the southern end of North Street fortunately have substantial redevelopment potential and could be replaced by buildings of 2½ storeys, like those adjacent. However, 7 North Street, which accommodates Tesco Metro, is more problematic as it already assumes its maximum storey height. A more appropriate building

might be built as a condition of redeveloping the single storey area at its rear to a greater height.

Most modern neo-traditional buildings are located in backland areas where their impact on the character of the area is reduced. The exception to this is at the area's southern boundary, where modern buildings stand on either side of Rumbold's Hill. *MG House* is particularly poor. Its negative impact could be somewhat reduced if its walls were entirely painted in a light colour (not brilliant white) and if its windows could be fitted with 6-over-6 pane sliding sashes.

#### 6.5.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

The following materials palette exists in Character Area 4:

- Red brick
- Lime plaster
- Blue brick (headers)
- Stone (Lower Greensand, Ironstone)
- Painted brick or stone
- Half timbered
- Timber weatherboarding
- Tile hanging

The main material for building fronts on the east side of North Street is lime plaster; these are concentrated towards the middle of the street. The main exceptions to this rule are the listed medieval building to the immediate north of the Angel Hotel and Café Verdi, 72 North Street, which both have early twentieth century fronts. Barclays Bank applied stone ground floor and window surrounds when it acquired the building around 1909. Historic photos show a less decorated lime plastered elevation.

The predominant material at the north end North Street is local stone with brick detailing. The mock half-timbered 10 North Street (Stockley Trading) is the exception. On the west side of the street there is a stone fronted medieval building that has been painted white.

Brick is the predominant material used for buildings fronting the west side of North Street. A notable exception is *Whithorne House*, which has a painted ground floor and half-timbered first floor with terracotta decorative panels. Historic photos show that this building previously had a continuous brick ground floor

so it would have been more in keeping with the character of the rest of the street.

The two large Victorian buildings to the south of the west side of North Street are brick but have tile hanging to their gable ends.

Compared with North Street, the part of Rumbold's Hill within this character area is more mixed, largely due to quite modern interventions.

Knockhundred Row has two stone buildings on its south side that assert a strong character over the lane. They have a residential character, enhanced by the stone perimeter wall between them and the planting behind. At first glance, the north side of Knockhundred Row appears to be wholly lime plastered but on closer inspection includes painted stone and painted brick at its middle.

The predominant material for buildings on Lambert's Lane is stone with brick details. Uniquely, *Lassiter's Cottage* is built of ironstone with red brick and blue headers for details.

As a general rule, buildings that employ a diversity of materials, particularly using different materials for different floors, create a less formal architectural quality than those that adhere to a stricter palette.

Building elevations that express a timber-framed aesthetic on their front elevation largely date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, here. Genuine medieval timber frame buildings have invariably been re-fronted.

#### 6.5.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

The majority of buildings in the character area are of two storeys. The main concentrations of two storey buildings are at the north end of North Street and Knockhundred Row.

There are a significant number of 2½ storey buildings on North Street and Rumbold's Hill. The concentration at the south end of North Street and north end of Rumbold's Hill are mainly of Victorian or more recent construction.

There is a concentration of 2½ and 3 storey buildings towards the middle of North Street, largely of Georgian date. This represents the part of the street of highest status. There is also a concentration of taller buildings at the junction

of North Street with Knockhundred Row, representing a secondary focal point.

There are a number of single storey buildings, with a cluster at the north end of Rumbold's Hill. These are incongruous and represent a development opportunity. Some single storey buildings also exist that are ancillary to a principal building. Those to *Iron Gates Cottage* and 141 Lambert's Lane are examples that contribute to the character of their principal building and their settings.

The single storey structure to the rear of Tesco (7 North Street) may represent a development opportunity, to enable the creation of a more appropriate front elevation onto North Street.

There are relatively more tall buildings on the west side of North Street with more 2-storey buildings on the east. Combined with contrasting building materials, this gives the two sides of the street distinct characters. The west side appears more emphatically urban, with large Georgian and Victorian buildings, whereas the east side is more rustic in scale with a greater survival of medieval buildings.

#### 6.5.6 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

There are twenty-three listed buildings, or groups of buildings, (all Grade II) of which two are sixteenth century, ten are seventeenth century, six are eighteenth century, and five date from 1800-40. The building immediately north of the Angel Hotel on the east side of North Street, Ye Olde Tea Shoppe and the Tuck Shop, is a two storey timber-framed building of probable mid to late sixteenth-century date. It is of three bays, with a continuous jetty, and has historic wall paintings. To the south of the Angel Hotel, the house known as *Tudor View* also dates from the second half of the sixteenth century, and has exposed close-studded timber framing along its northern elevation. The Angel Hotel itself is a timber-framed building dating from the seventeenth century, but has an eighteenth-century eight-bay façade of three storeys, with a carriage arch and rusticated ground floor. *The Clock House*, North Street, is a substantial late eighteenth-century house, with a brick façade with two first-floor Venetian windows and a two-storey five-sided canted bay window faced in mathematical tiles. *Knockhundred House*,

Knockhundred Row, is a good example of a stucco-fronted building from the eighteenth century.

Listed buildings are distributed quite evenly over the character area. However, there is a conspicuous gap on the west side of the south end of North Street. This appears unfounded and a terrace of four large buildings, some of which appear to be Victorian remodellings of Georgian properties, are considered of Listable quality. The north elevation of 15 North Street shows it to be a timber-framed building, probably of seventeenth century date. On Lambert's Lane, two residential properties are considered of notable quality, a good example of a Victorian villa in Cowdray colours and the unusual *Lassiter's Cottage*. There are a number of historic shopfronts in this area that are important to its historic character; Boots and Between the Lines being good examples.

A few buildings have been identified as strongly positive but perhaps are not of sufficient age or quality to be Listed. *Thomond House* and *Packham's* (Liphook Valet Services and Fraser's) on the east side of North Street are of high townscape quality. Lintott & Son on Rumbold's Hill is a rare example of a Victorian building that responds to the local building tradition through its use of coursed local stone.

Some neutral buildings have been identified. These are confined to neo-traditional buildings that fall short of achieving full integration with local building patterns. Three buildings moderately detract from the character of this area (on June Lane, Rumbold's Hill and Lambert's Lane). These are modern, neo-traditional buildings that fail to properly reflect local characteristics. Five buildings substantially detract from character, by far the worst being that occupied by Tesco.



## 6.5.7 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- The neo-traditional building facing the small triangular open space on Rumbold's Hill leaves an open triangular space between its side and the enclosing boundary wall. The remaining space is laid to gravel and gives an impression of a gap.
- There are several buildings with late nineteenth or early twentieth century fronts of limited architectural quality, some of which conceal historic fabric behind.
- Castle View (10 North Street) is an unremarkable Edwardian building that is out of place in a historically sensitive part of North Street.
- MG House is a modern building on Rumbold's Hill that is confused in its architectural form and use of materials. It has sought to make reference to local building traditions and materials but with little success.
- Several modern buildings employ a diversity of materials in striving to achieve contextual sensitivity but exercise too little restraint.
- Whithorne House, next to Tesco, has been damaged through the removal of the original ground floor elevation and insertion of a large glazed shopfront.
- The appearance of York House, the three-storey building on the north side of Knockhundred Row, has been diminished through the replacement of original windows with uPVC bays which have a substantially negative impact on the building and the street scene.

- Single storey buildings by the junction of North Street and Knockhundred Row are of poor quality.
- The volume of traffic and parked cars on North Street has a negative impact on appearance and amenity for pedestrians.
- North Street suffers from damage to historic paving surfaces and their repair with inappropriate materials.
- The building occupied by Tesco at 7 North Street has a strong negative impact on the historic character of this area; it replaced a Victorian Public Hall, which became Midhurst's cinema until closure in 1961.
- Rico's Café, The Tuck Shop and Ye Olde Tea Shoppe all have Dutch style shop canopies which are incompatible with the historic environment.
- Valet Dry Cleaners has an ugly, dated shopfront that conflicts with the character of the area.
- A number of shops have acetate fascias which detract from the appearance of the street.

- Knockhundred Market occupies the shell of timber framed buildings with an uncomfortable mix of original and new fabric. Its entrance does not reflect local building characteristics.

## 6.6 CHARACTER AREA 5 NORTH STREET - LOWER

Character Area 5 comprises that part of North Street extending northwards from the car park and Capron House. This area continues the linear progression northwards into farmland that had Whiphill to the west and fields rented from the Cowdray estate on the east. An isolated grouping of cottages on either side of the north end of North Street, near the mill, has been demolished. Lambert's Lane (south) retains much of its agricultural character but the grand ceremonial entrance to Cowdray that dominated this area from the 1530s to the 1960s has been lost, transferred to the far end of the causeway.

Today the area combines public uses (the car park, the grammar school building, and the Methodist church) and residential use.

### 6.6.1 SPATIAL TYPES

The following spatial types have been identified in Character Area 5:

#### ***Town fringe street***

This part of North Street is strongly influenced by the presence of Cowdray ruins to the east, views of the estate itself and the presence of trees and shrubbery on the east side of the street. There is only one building on the east side of North Street within the southern part of this character area, the modern Chichester District Council office. This building is poorly sited and its corner tower, in particular, detracts substantially from a part of Midhurst of great townscape and heritage value. It mars the entrance to the town and also detracts from the causeway approach to Cowdray. Similarly, the location of the bus stands at one of Midhurst's most sensitive locations is damaging.

To the rear of the Council office is North Street Car Park, accessed from a mini-roundabout on North Street and passing behind the bus stand by way of a heavily engineered service road. The car park occupies a roughly triangular site that truncates the former plots on North Street to its south. This is a historic feature and appears on the Tithe Map of 1846. Views of the backs of properties on North Street from the car

park are important to the character of the area. The spire of the Parish Church is also visible above roofs. The negative impact of the car park on North Street and the Cowdray water meadows is only partially mitigated by a screen of trees to its north and east sides. The appearance and environmental quality of the car park might be improved by the planting of trees within the space, if ground conditions permit this.

Capron House asserts a strong influence over the character of this area. It serves to mark the end of the main commercial street and prominently defines the entrance to the town centre. Its formal elevation faces Cowdray and helps to link the town with the distant ruined house. In being set back from the road and with a Purbeck stone forecourt, the northward extension to Capron House provides a degree of openness that is unfortunately diminished by passing traffic on the busy road.

Beyond Capron House and the Grammar School buildings, North Street adopts a quite different character. North of Capron House stands a building group with something of a village feel. Three listed buildings address the street. The southernmost of these, 134 - 135 North Street, was formerly a pair of cottages and stands directly at back of pavement. Those to the north, *Ognells Almshouses* and *Borough House* have larger set-backs of around 4 metres and so convey a less sophisticated character. Between these two groups of buildings is Midhurst Methodist Church, an Edwardian building of imposing character, and a collection of three modern houses. Two of these are sufficiently set back from the road as to have no significant impact on the area's character. The one prominent modern building maintains the character of this area of the street through its position in its spacious plot and villa style.

Between this building group and North Mill there are no other buildings. A boundary wall and line of small trees previously maintained the rural, enclosed quality of the street. This was recently destroyed through the construction of a new entrance serving Midhurst Academy. Its predecessor was visible in glimpses but was largely screened by the shrubbery. The new school will be far more prominent and have a marked impact on the character of this part of the conservation area.

Cowdray water meadows and ruins can be seen to the southeast but trees and other vegetation are of greater importance in defining this part of the area's character. A substantial gap in the tree line allows for distant views of the ruins. The open water meadows are important to the setting of the Cowdray House ruins and the Causeway that leads to them.

The northern limit of the conservation area is marked by North Mill and 111, *Vanzell Cottage*, which address the road junction between Easebourne Lane/North Street (the A272) and Dodsley Lane (the A286). Local stone boundary walls define the space around the junction. An inset stone on the (Listed grade II) bridge at North Mill showing clasped hands marks the boundary line between Midhurst and Easebourne. North Mill expresses a historic industrial character within a rural setting. Cowdray Ruins are accessed via an unassuming lane off the junction. The Tudor ceremonial route to Cowdray took the form of the Causeway on North Street.

On the opposite side, by the entrance to Mill House, is an ancient milestone with badly worn lettering. The area around the River Rother and its associated weir forms an attractive setting for the old bridge and mill buildings and is thickly planted with trees, shrubs and bamboo, giving it a rather wild and overgrown character.

### **Rural Lane**

The lower part of Lambert's Lane is accessed between the north boundary of the old Grammar School and 134/135 North Street. Tall boundary walls dominate this eastern end of the lane; a stone and brick wall on the south side and the side elevations of 134/135 North Street and *Carpenter's* on the north. There is no building set back and no pavement so this lane has an alley character for its eastern 40 metres, before it widens by *Rother House*.

*Rother House*, built in the 1960s, detracts from the character of Lambert's Lane. It imposes an aesthetic and spatial condition that is completely alien to the lane and has a substantial negative influence. Replacement structures should address the lane in ways that are locally distinctive; possibly built at the edge of the carriageway like that part of the lane to the east, or (if an institutional building is proposed) set back to provide a public space like that at the front of *Capron House*.

*Carpenter's, Whiphill Farm House, Hannam House* and its associated single storey stable block have importance as a building group that together convey Lambert Lane's original rural character. Their architectural and historic value should be protected as well as the integrity of their rural setting and countryside views towards the west and north. The setting and context of *Whiphill Farm House* is expected to be damaged by the works associated with the new Academy.

The buildings to the rear of the old Grammar School on Lambert's Lane do not address the lane in ways that are locally characteristic but, through being low in profile and of good quality, they have a mildly positive impact on the conservation area.

## **6.6.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- This part of North Street is strongly influenced by the presence of the Cowdray lands to the east and south. *Capron House* addresses the water meadows and ruins successfully.
- Character is marred by the presence of the Council office and the dominance of the bus stands.
- North Mill and *Vanzell Cottage* address the junction of the A272 and A286.
- Lamberts Lane is enclosed at its east end but opens up as it moves away from North Street towards the countryside. Its spatial character is currently damaged by *Rother House*.

## **6.6.3 BUILDING TYPES**

The area is built out at a relatively low density with a concentration at its southern end and a small group at North Mill. Buildings addressing North Street are predominantly Georgian types or key buildings, mainly of nineteenth century date. Key buildings include a school, church, almshouse and mill. Modern buildings have, until recently, had relatively little impact on the character of North Street. The tourist information office forms the exception. The part

of Lambert's Lane within the character area is dominated by agricultural buildings and the side and rear elevations of the Grammar School.

#### 6.6.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

The building materials of Character Area 5 comprise the following palette:

- Red brick
- Blue brick (headers)
- Lime plaster
- Stone (Lower Greensand, Ironstone)
- Flint with brick and stone dressing
- Tile hanging

The predominant historic building material in the character area is local sandstone.

North Mill, the almshouses, the Grammar School and Capron House all have dressed stone details rather than brick, which is more common in other parts of the conservation area. Stone detailing is rare in other character areas and its concentration within this character area is significant.

The two lime plastered buildings both have stone plinths and textured lime plaster above.

Wholly brick buildings are restricted to modern buildings and the nineteenth century rear elements of the Grammar school.

Rural buildings on Lambert's Lane are of stone with brick dressing. The nineteenth century additions to the Grammar School and North Mill are also built of these materials.

Unique within Midhurst's conservation area, the church on North Street is built of knapped flint with brick and stone details. This building is of good architectural quality, even though it relates to a brick and flint building tradition that is more characteristic of chalk Downland.

#### 6.6.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

There is some variety in building storey heights within this character area. However, the buildings of 1½ and 2½ storeys do not differ substantially in their height to buildings of 2 storeys. The predominant building height is

therefore more regular than the analysis suggests.

North Street has four buildings of three storeys or more. These consist of elements of Capron House, the church and part of North Mill.

Building height often equates to building status. However, the Neoclassical Grammar school building expresses its high status through being a tall single storey in height.

There is a concentration of single storey buildings on Lambert's Lane, which contributes to its relatively rural character.

#### 6.6.6 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

There are seven listed buildings (all Grade II) of which one is seventeenth century, three are eighteenth century, and three date from 1800-40. Capron House is the most noteworthy, and has a seventeenth-century core built of brick with a Dutch gable, and a stone mullioned attic window. The porch, as well as the flanking range to the north, all of stone, are good nineteenth and twentieth-century additions. The ashlar-faced neoclassical grammar school, dated 1821, has four widely spaced pilasters. The Tudor-styled *Ognells Almshouses* date from 1840.

There are several buildings of potentially listable quality, the flint and red brick Methodist Church by Josiah Gunton, 1904, perhaps the most obvious. *Whiphill Farmhouse*, *Hannan House* with associated stable building and *Carpenter's* are all present on the 1846 Tithe Map and possess positive group value.

Three of the buildings identified as being positive are ancillary to listed or listable buildings so are deserving of being protected as curtilage structures.

The more modern buildings to the rear of the old Grammar School are considered to be neutral, through either their moderate architectural quality or by being hidden from public view. Similarly, the modern residential buildings on North Street are considered to have a neutral impact.

The Chichester District Council office is thought to have a negative influence as a result of its

poor placement in relation to the entrance to the Cowdray causeway and its architecturally weak corner tower. The single storey extension to *Hannan House* is also classed as having a moderately negative impact as it detracts from the appearance and setting of the house.

*Rother House* in Lambert's Lane is the building that most substantially detracts from the character of the area but is to be redeveloped as part of the site of the new Midhurst Academy. Any replacement should seek to contribute to the rural/school character of Lambert's Lane.

### 6.6.7 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- North Street Car Park is screened by trees on its north and east sides so its negative impact on the conservation area is somewhat moderated. The large expanse of tarmac and parked cars still have an adverse effect.
- The Council Offices are poorly sited and the corner tower is unattractive and uncharacteristic of Midhurst. In combination with the entrance to the car park and the bus interchange, this area detracts from the setting of Capron House and the principal pedestrian route to Cowdray.
- The entrance to the new Midhurst Academy has a significant negative impact on the conservation area. The impact of the school itself is yet to be seen.
- Rother House on Lambert's Lane is unsuited to its location and detracts substantially from the character area.
- The extension to Hannan House detracts from the historic and architectural character of the principal building.

## 6.7 CHARACTER AREA 6: RIVER SYSTEM

Character Area 6 comprises the environment of the River Rother and its tributary, which includes the area of South Pond. The natural

environment predominantly informs the character of this area, although the areas associated with Midhurst's two mills and the largely industrial development at The Wharf are places where natural and human systems have combined. The Wharf was developed from the eighteenth century, following improvements to navigability of the River Rother in 1791-4, and now comprises modern suburbs and works.

At South Pond, the millpond, which previously also functioned as a fish hatchery for Cowdray, survives in an informal public park. The eighteenth-century former mill house (*South Pond Cottage*) is the only listed building (Grade II).

### 6.7.1 SPATIAL TYPES

The following spatial types have been identified in Character Area 6:

#### ***Town Park***

Approaching Midhurst via the Chichester Road, South Pond marks the entrance to the historic centre of the town. Seen from the bridge, the view of historic Midhurst is wholly unspoiled. To the left (west) the pond occupies the foreground, enclosed by its perimeter of mature trees. In summer at least, the unattractive Grange Leisure Centre and car park are hidden.

From the bridge, the road ascends to the centre, where a number of important historic sites are visible (Spread Eagle Hotel, its annexe, the Parish Church and St Ann's Hill). The view is framed on the left by mature trees and on the right by the elegant South Pond House and its neighbours.

To the east of the bridge, South Pond Cottage and South Cottage have a rural character that is important in expressing that the area is beyond the limits of the historic core. The area by the weir to the east of the bridge forms a picturesque gorge that contrasts with the genteel town environment.

Being so central and accessible, South Pond forms an important green amenity area. With its westward continuation accessed by Jubilee Path, it is a green separator between the historic town and the newer development to the south. The area provides valuable amenity space and wildlife habitat.

## **Industrial Wharf**

The Wharf is a lane of approximately 250 metres that terminates in a dead end (for traffic). It occupies a sensitive location between St Ann's Hill and the historic town core to the north and a tributary to the River Rother to the south. The character of the lane is dominated by large trees to either side, which separate it from the surrounding town environment and give it a feeling of isolation and protection. It has relatively little architectural quality but is included in the conservation area for its sensitivity and high potential for enhancement.

Between the lane and the river tributary are a series of industrial sheds. To the sides of the lane, industrial sites have been redeveloped with poorly designed low-cost housing. The secluded waterside setting might have supported a mix of high quality housing, the market housing complementing and perhaps subsidising the design of the affordable.

To the north side of the eastern end of the lane is an industrial site with some surviving late nineteenth or early twentieth century structures. The remainder of the north side of the lane has been developed with further affordable housing that lacks local distinctiveness. The buildings present their backs to The Wharf, with high boundary walls and palisade fencing. They have been set back from the street in blocks to provide space for car parking. These houses and car parking areas significantly detract from an area with great historic and landscape value. If opportunities for redevelopment emerge, the distinctive qualities of Midhurst's characteristic historic streets should provide useful examples.

At the eastern end of The Wharf is an open space with a small sewage pumping station at its centre. Its placement is unfortunate as the open area of lawn could provide valuable amenity space. To the south side of the lane end is a listed stone bridge over the river tributary. A pair of positive Cowdray Estate semi-detached cottages is located on the opposite bank.

## **River Course**

From the east end of The Wharf, a footpath traces the base of St Ann's Hill and follows the course of the River Rother to the north. The historic centre of Midhurst is just 200 metres

away to the west but the outlook from the footpath is entirely rural and undeveloped. The path follows the river to the front of Cowdray, at the eastern end of the Causeway from North Street. This walk is a great asset to Midhurst and requires care to retain its unspoiled character whilst managing trees and maintaining a path that is accessible to all. It is currently in a condition that is considered dangerous by some users. The path that leads from the river to the top of St Ann's Hill has been closed, due to subsidence.

At the west front of Cowdray the path joins the estate road. The character area follows the course of the river to North Mill and Rotherfield Pond, in Easebourne. This pond was created in 1968 by an angling club and is not a historic feature.

## **Rural Park**

The area to the north of North Mill includes weirs and sluices associated with the mill and the substantial Rotherfield Pond, which, as stated above, is not a millpond. The area has substantial amenity and wildlife value. A vegetable garden opposite North Mill, to the south side of Dodsley Lane, adds to the character and appearance of the area.

*A few reminders of the industrial past of The Wharf still survive.*



## 6.7.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- South Pond is prominent and has a strong influence on the character of Midhurst
- Most of the character area is occupied by the environment associated with the River Rother and its tributary
- There is relatively little development except for the industrial area of The Wharf, which also has significant numbers of affordable houses.
- Areas associated with two historic mills lie within this area and have an impact on its character.
- Buildings of historic value are dispersed, although there is a concentration to the east side of South Pond.
- The river and its tributary are valuable corridors for nature and the topography and trees make it an attractive area, despite clear potential for enhancement.

## 6.7.3 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES

The predominant building types in The Wharf part of the character area are industrial sheds and modern housing, both of generally low design quality. In the eighteenth century the area developed as an industrial area and it is appropriate that it has retained something of this function and character. Although there are substantial quantities of modern housing, the quality of the environment, enclosed topography and presence of industrial premises enables the historic character to be readily discerned.

There are three domestic buildings of nineteenth century date or earlier. Two are located adjacent to South Street and relate more to that residential environment than the Wharf area. The third is a pair of semi-detached Cowdray Estate cottages located to the east of the Wharf. Again, this building is separate and

does not participate significantly in the area's character.

The only other buildings of note (other than ancillary structures associated with North Mill) are located at the western extremity of the character area. A Victorian domestic building at Taylor's Field only has a limited influence due to it having been subsumed by later development and being hidden from view by boundary planting. A nearby range of garages is notable for its negative impact on the natural character of its surroundings.

## 6.7.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

Character Area 6 contains the following palette:

- Red brick
- Painted brick
- Lime plaster
- Weatherboarding
- Stone (Lower Greensand, Ironstone)

Brick is the predominant building material within the character area. However, this does not reflect its historic character. No buildings that make a positive contribution to the character area are wholly brick-built.

Of those which contribute to the area's character:

- Industrial buildings are rendered or have elevations with a stone base with lime plaster above.
- Two Victorian domestic buildings have brick ground floors with tile hanging above
- One domestic building is lime plastered
- One domestic building is of stone with brick detailing

Some domestic buildings have weatherboarded first floors; this is not a locally distinctive feature and detracts from the character of the area.

## 6.7.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

Building heights within this character area are generally low with no buildings over two storeys

and around half being one or one and a half storeys.

The industrial buildings that contribute to, or at least do not detract from the character of, the area are of one storey only.

Due to the change in levels between South Street and The Wharf, the two houses which present 1½ storey elevations to South Street have taller rear elevations.

The cul-de-sac to the north of the main Wharf lane has a number of 1 and 1½ storey buildings, a response to the sloping ground and need not to obstruct views to and from St Ann's Hill. Those on the south side of the cul-de-sac present two-storey elevations to The Wharf.

### 6.7.6 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

There are only six buildings that have been identified as positive within this character area. One of these, South Pond Cottage, is listed. Two industrial buildings have been identified as exerting a positive influence, that to the east end of the Wharf for its age and architectural quality, the other for its simple, modest industrial character.

When opportunities emerge to redevelop the housing to either side of The Wharf, good quality, locally distinctive buildings that enhance the character area should take their place.

#### *Sylvan corner at The Wharf.*



### 6.7.7 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- Trees on the eastern slopes of St Ann's Hill have fallen and have only been partially cleared.
- There is an absence of directional signage to direct visitors to this attractive walk.
- The loss of trees and shrubs between the Grange car park and South Pond, which exposes parked cars and detracts from the scene.
- The degraded paving and random variety of benches around South Pond.
- The presence of the garage range at the western end of the character area
- The proliferation of blandly designed housing along The Wharf, car parking areas and their poor relationships with the public realm.
- Boundary features, such as brick walls and palisade fencing that do not relate to local boundary wall characteristics.
- The presence of refuse bins at the perimeters of the lane.
- Planting of a municipal character and use of non-indigenous species.
- Areas have a neglected and untended appearance.
- The use of building materials such as weatherboarding in ways that are not locally distinctive.
- The presence of a sewage pumping station at the centre of a potentially valuable amenity space.
- The surfacing of the pathway to Cowdray is irregular and unsuited to disabled users.
- The use of generic street furniture along the pathway detracts from its rural character

## 6.8 CHARACTER AREA 7: SUBURBS

Character Area 7 lies to the west and south of the medieval town and reaches outwards to late nineteenth and twentieth-century suburbs. Today the area remains largely residential although the area closest to the town centre combines residential use with business uses, including a petrol station.

The corner of Petersfield and Bepton Roads has seen significant change in the late twentieth century, precipitated by the bombing in 1942 and subsequent demolition in 1946 of the Congregational Church. Bepton Road has seen modest change since 1945, with the most significant change being the replacement of the Oxford Arms public house and early nineteenth-century houses by the flats of Oxford Court.

Victorian and Edwardian suburban houses predominantly inform the character of the area. These principally consist of short terraces but with semi detached and detached properties interspersed. Development is concentrated along the western and southern routes that radiate from the centre of Midhurst: Petersfield, Bepton and Chichester Roads.

There may have been an intention to link Petersfield Road and Bepton Road with north-south orientated streets. Ashfield Road is the only complete link. Cobden Road terminates with a dead end; its continuation was perhaps frustrated by the Great War. The triangle of land between Ashfield, Petersfield and Bepton Roads has undergone successive phases of redevelopment, from 'backlands' and fields, to the interwar "White City" estate – so named because it was constructed in Midhurst white bricks – to its current occupation by a supermarket and neo-traditional housing development. Being largely enclosed by the principal street elevations, the variegated nature of this area has only a minor impact on the character of the conservation area.

There are shorter stretches of late Victorian or Edwardian suburban housing on June Lane and Carron Lane.

### 6.8.1 SPATIAL TYPES

The following spatial types have been identified in Character Area 7:

#### **Suburban Streets**

Petersfield Road, Bepton Road, Chichester Road and Ashfield Road all fall into the Suburban Street typology. Street widths are about 11-12 metres between opposing property boundaries, including pavements and verges of up to 2-3 metres. The length of each section of street that falls within the conservation area varies from 190 metres (Chichester Road) to 460 metres (Bepton Road). Although these are direct routes, none is entirely straight. Some degree of sinuosity adds to the interest and picturesque quality of views down the streets.

Apart from Ashfield Road, none of the suburban streets are consistently enclosed by housing frontages. Petersfield Road has a consistency of enclosure on its south side but is characterised by openness on its northern side, largely as a result of the spacious grounds of St Margaret's Convent, which was acquired by the Sisters of Mercy in the late nineteenth century. However, it is now subject to a planning consent for housing. Bepton Road is similar except its relative open and enclosed sides alternate. At its eastern section, close to the town centre, the southern side is enclosed and the northern open. This swaps at its middle section, with St Mary's Roman Catholic Church occupying a large open site on the south side with terraced housing opposite. Westward of the church, terraces resume on the south side but face the open space of Midhurst Primary School. The trees on the southern boundary of the school playing fields provide enclosure to the street. This contrast between a relatively open and a relatively enclosed street elevation contributes to the area's distinctive character and should be preserved.

Typically, suburban housing on these streets is set back from the pavement by between 3-4 metres. Nearer to the town centre, where there is a more urban character, buildings are positioned at the backs of pavements with no set backs. Two groups of buildings on Bepton Road stand out for their relatively large setbacks: *Rose and Granville Cottages* (14.4 metres) and *Bennett's Terrace* (12 metres).

#### **Suburban Lane**

June Lane and Carron Lane are classified as suburban lanes as they are built at a lower density to the above streets and are more

peripheral to the principal routes. The parts of these lanes that lie within the conservation area are relatively short, 130 metres (June Lane) and 215 metres (Carron Lane).

June Lane is about 6 metres wide and largely without pavements. Carron Lane is of a similar width and also without pavements for most of its length within the conservation area. The lack of pavements is clearly a characteristic of Midhurst's suburban lanes.

Like most of the suburban streets, the opposite sides of two lanes have asymmetric qualities of enclosure.

### 6.8.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- The area is dominated by streets of suburban housing.
- Although principally divided into series of terraced houses there are a minority of semi-detached and detached properties.
- At the townward ends of Petersfield and Bepton Roads and on Cobden Road houses are built with no set-backs. Otherwise front gardens of around 3m are usual.
- Parking is on-road
- Only Ashfield Road is consistently enclosed on both sides. Otherwise it is characteristic for consistent elevations of housing to face more open areas on the other side of their streets

### 6.8.3 BUILDING CHARACTER TYPES

Victorian and Edwardian suburban housing dominates this character area although there are significant clusters of earlier, mostly Georgian buildings.

There are groups of earlier buildings both at the town ends of Petersfield and Bepton Roads and in more isolated groups on Petersfield, Bepton and Chichester Roads.

The north side of Bepton Road and the area enclosed by Petersfield, Bepton and Ashfield Roads has undergone substantial rebuilding in the later twentieth century to the overall detriment of its historic character.

The Roman Catholic Church and the almshouse strongly influence the character of Bepton Road.

### 6.8.4 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOURS

The building materials of Character Area 7 comprise the following palette:

- Red brick
- Blue headers
- Lime plaster
- Stone (Lower Greensand)
- Painted brick or stone
- Timber weatherboarding
- Tile hanging
- Plastic (petrol station)
- Blue/grey – slate

Brick is the predominant building material in the character area although a number of modern buildings detract from local distinctiveness through their use of shades of brown and buff, rather than the distinctive red.

Red brick is clearly the preferred material for Edwardian and Victorian suburban housing. A number of these on Chichester Road have stone details that add to their architectural refinement. Unfortunately, a few brick houses, mostly on Petersfield Road, have been painted or clad, which has had a localised negative impact. Existing brick elevations should be preserved.

June Lane is the exception to this general rule, where lime plaster is the predominant material. Two Edwardian buildings have lime plastered ground floors with tile hanging above.

Also, the few buildings that predate the Victorian and Edwardian houses tend to use a different palette of materials. Lime plaster is the most common facing although a few on Petersfield Road are of stone. Only one of these older buildings is of brick.

There are a number of interwar houses that have brick ground floors with lime plaster or pebbledash above.

Two medieval buildings have been identified on the Buildings Type map. One is outwardly of stone whilst the other has a stone ground floor with tile hanging above.

Two large early twentieth century houses on Bepton Road have stone ground floors with tile hanging above. A neighbouring modern building that is a poor imitation with stone coloured brickwork and unrefined tile hanging has compromised their appearance.

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church is built of a stone that sits well in relation to Midhurst's historic buildings. The more recent presbytery that stands next to it, however, appears to be built of an artificial stone in narrow, regular courses. This material and its design and detailing detract from the character of the conservation area and the church.

There are two buildings in the character area with timber weatherboarding. One, in Carron Lane, is painted and of a quality that does not detract from local character. That in June Lane is a poor quality building which may be a candidate for redevelopment.

An industrial building on Bepton Road has a rendered base with slate hanging above. This is highly uncharacteristic of the area. Its negative impact is, however, diluted by the very poor quality of buildings between it and the crossroads to the north.

The worst building in the character area in terms of its use of materials is the petrol station. Its main visible material is its synthetic fascia.

### 6.8.5 BUILDING STOREY HEIGHTS

The vast majority of the buildings in this Character Area are two storey and modest in scale. A few, mostly on the fringe of the town centre, are three storied.

### 6.8.6 ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING QUALITY

There are five listed buildings or building groups in the character area. The building group comprises *Cussies Row* (4-7 Petersfield Road), which is a late Georgian range of stuccoed cottages. On the other side of the road, almost facing, stands *Donkhams*, one of Midhurst's few examples of an early nineteenth century detached villa. This was the former St Margaret's Convent school between 1888 and 2009 and was recently spot-listed at Grade II. The third listed building is a nineteenth century almshouse, while the fourth is a stone sheepfold on Bepton Road.

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church built in 1957 by Guy Morgan & Partners was spot-listed in 2011. A wide, vertical crack has unfortunately been filled in a mortar of much darker colour than the original.

There are a large number of buildings that have been identified as being of near-listable quality. Two or more buildings are thought to be of medieval origin. The unlisted Baptist chapels (closed) survive, as does Bennett's Terrace (a rare Midhurst survival of early nineteenth-century terraced housing), albeit somewhat altered. Other buildings considered to be of listable quality are mainly nineteenth century houses.

*Rose Cottage* and *Granville Cottage* are set back from Bepton Road. They seem to be of early nineteenth century date and appear on the 1846 Tithe Map. Internally they are timber framed and appear of late medieval date. Separated by early twentieth century semi-detached houses, *The Chapel* (1840) and *Dean House* (Lavant Workwear shop to ground floor) to the east of the cottages are outwardly of a similar date and style.

To the immediate north of Midhurst Granaries on Bepton Road is a building of medieval origin. This and the early nineteenth century buildings between it and the listed almshouse may be of sufficient quality to be Listed.

To the west of the listed 4-7 Petersfield Road is a terrace of four stone cottages with brick detailing, two of which are painted. These appear of similar date and quality to the listed *Irongates Cottage* on North Street and warrant protection.

An unusual pair of stone cottages with curved plinth brick details (50 & 52 Petersfield Road, built as a pair of farm cottages for *Guillards Oak Farm*) may be of late eighteenth or nineteenth century date. They are considered of strongly positive character.

There are a large number of later positive buildings within the character area, mainly consisting of rows of Victorian and Edwardian houses. These establish the character of large parts of the conservation area and this should be respected in any proposals for change or adaptation.

A relatively small number of buildings are regarded as having a neutral impact on the character area. These are generally located in positions where their impact on the historic environment is minimised. Three houses on Petersfield Road have painted elevations, one of which has also been clad in stone. Although these do not detract from the character of the area, the distinctive quality of Midhurst's Victorian suburb could be eroded if such practices continue.

There are a significant number of buildings which either moderately detract from the character of the area or which may be enhanced to be neutral or positive. The largest of these is the supermarket, which is located in the triangle of land between Petersfield, Bepton and Ashfield Roads. Its design is excessively bland but any negative impact on the area is limited by its concealed position.

The designer of the Presbytery to St Mary's Church has sought to establish a relationship with the church through the selection of a similarly coloured masonry. The design and particularly the fenestration pattern are, however, poor and detract from the setting of the church and the character of the conservation area. The building could be improved through the remodelling of the front elevation and the concealment of the poor masonry behind a lime plaster.

To the northeast of the Presbytery is *The Gables*, which is an addition to the adjacent Edwardian *Hatton House*. The design of this building is a modern interpretation of its neighbour. The decision to mimic the neighbouring building is odd and unsuccessful.

The Police Station on Bepton Road is architecturally undistinguished but the simple, modest approach does not offend. The principal issue is its placement, set back from the road with a lawn but with no boundary feature separating it from the pavement. This is not characteristic of this part of Midhurst and detracts from the distinctive qualities of the conservation area.

On Petersfield Road, the modern Sisters of Mercy convent accommodation presents an elevation to the road that alludes to a suburban house but conflicts with the established pattern

of Victorian and Edwardian suburban houses on the opposite side of the street. The building appears alien and out of keeping in terms of both its building form and materials.

Other buildings that have been identified as moderate detractors from the character of the area are poorly detailed modern buildings on Ashfield Road and adjacent Heathfield Gardens. They appear to have been designed with no consideration of the qualities of their context.

The area includes significant numbers of buildings that substantially detract from the character of the area. Those on Petersfield Road relate to the closed convent school and should shortly be subject to redevelopment. Approved replacement structures will hopefully correspond with the distinct qualities of this part of the character area. Towards the eastern end of Petersfield Road, buildings will be positioned at the back of the pavement and should present a formal public elevation to the street.

The north side of Bepton Road between the slate hung industrial building and Russell House at the crossroads is of consistently poor quality and is the most negative and detrimental part of the conservation area. Future redevelopment may provide opportunities to re-establish more locally distinctive building patterns. The decision to redevelop the 'Old Dairy' site with a modern residential building that alludes architecturally to an industrial predecessor is unfortunate, particularly as the dairy was only of single storey height.

The veterinary centre adjacent to the Old Courthouse is of poor architectural quality but its negative impact is lessened though its relatively concealed location.



*The air raid in 1942 created a vacuum which was filled by some of Midhurst's weakest buildings.*



*Rumbold's Hill is lined with good buildings but the environment is dominated by traffic.*



*Good Victorian houses in Character Area 7.*

## 6.8.7 KEY NEGATIVE FEATURES

- The Police Station on Bepton Road is architecturally undistinguished and has a large setback that is laid to lawn.
- Inconsistent and inappropriate boundary treatments.
- Modern buildings constructed in the grounds of Midhurst Convent.
- The triangular area enclosed by Petersfield, Bepton and Ashfield Roads has phases of rebuilding in the late twentieth century to the detriment of its historic character. This has included the introduction of gated forms of development.
- A few brick built Victorian and Edwardian buildings have been painted or clad.
- A number of modern buildings have been constructed in bricks that do not match local brick characteristics in terms of their colour and texture.
- A modern building on Bepton Road has sought to imitate the architecture of its Edwardian neighbour in a modern idiom, to the detriment of both buildings.
- The presbytery of St Mary's Church is architecturally poor and detracts from the appearance and setting of the church.
- Cracks to the north and south sides of St Mary's Church have been conspicuously repaired in mortar of a much darker colour than the original, accentuating the apparent structural problem.
- The 1960s weatherboarded building on June Lane is architecturally poor and detracts from the conservation area.

- An industrial building on Bepton Road has a rendered base with slate hanging above, its design is incompatible with the qualities of the conservation area. The petrol station on Bepton Road makes no concessions to the sensitivity of its setting.

## 7 ISSUES

### 7.1 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

The existing conservation area boundary was drawn up some time ago and in the intervening ten years it has become common practice to expand existing conservation areas to include areas beyond the core of historic buildings, perhaps to include more dispersed historic development, landscape or archaeological features. Boundary reviews also now tend to include recommendations that the designated area is defined by physical boundaries that follow established legal boundaries, rather than cutting across gardens or through buildings. The following changes are therefore proposed for the Midhurst conservation area boundary:

#### Rotherfield Pond and adjacent area to north side of North Street

This area is significant for its natural appearance and value to wildlife, rather than historic importance.

#### The recreational and educational environment at the northern corner of Lambert's Lane

This area is significant in retaining Lambert Lane's original rural appearance and character, which is in danger of being wholly lost to redevelopment. The areas associated with Midhurst Grammar School/Rother College are also of importance in maintaining the lane's long association with education. There is an interrelationship between the lane and the school that should be protected.

#### Suburbs to the west and south, including June Lane, Petersfield Road, Bepton Road, Ashfield Road and Chichester Road

Midhurst's late Victorian and Edwardian suburbs built prior to the phase of rapid expansion in the second half of the twentieth century exhibit an architectural and townscape quality worthy of protection.

#### Wildlife corridor to southwest of South Pond

The area is important in providing a wildlife corridor along the River Rother and its tributary.

#### The Wharf to south of St Ann's Hill

The Wharf is of importance for its position between the vegetated river channel and St Ann's Hill. It is also of historic significance but its main interest is in its proximity to important areas and its potential to enhance or detract from them.

#### The three houses to the north of Vanzell Cottages

The three houses to the north of Vanzell Cottages by North Mill are not of architectural or historic interest so it is proposed that this area is removed from the conservation area.

### 7.2 THE CONTROL OF UNLISTED DWELLINGS

It has been noted that some of the unlisted 'positive' buildings in the existing and proposed conservation area have been adversely affected by the insertion of uPVC windows or doors. These changes are 'permitted development' which can be controlled by the Planning Authority through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction. This can also be used to control changes to roofs, front elevations, porches, front boundaries and front gardens that would also be normally considered 'permitted development'.

### 7.3 THE CONTROL OF SATELLITE DISHES

Although planning permission is required for all satellite dishes in any conservation area which have been fixed to a roof or wall of a building which faces the highway and is visible from it, several have been erected which do not have permission. This trend will gradually erode the high quality of the environment in the conservation area.

## 7.4 THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF TREES AND THE LANDSCAPE IN GENERAL

Various areas of woodland, both within and on the edges of the existing conservation area, are potentially vulnerable to neglect. This should be addressed by the various landowners concerned.

## 7.5 TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN MANAGEMENT

Busy and fast moving traffic through the historic core and through Rumbold's Hill and North Street is detrimental to the enjoyment of the area by pedestrians.

## 7.6 HGVs

HGVs and high-sided vehicles are damaging buildings at the east end of West Street and Red Lion Street. Action must be taken to limit the passage of HGV through-traffic entering the historic core.

## 7.7 LOCAL AND STATUTORY LIST

Midhurst's statutory list was drawn up from the 1950s and a partial review was undertaken in parallel with this document, resulting in a number of spot-listings. There is currently no Local List for the town, or indeed any agreed criteria for drawing up such a list, but this study identifies many buildings and structures within the conservation area for potential local listing.

## 7.8 ROOFS AND DORMERS

Midhurst is particularly notable for its consistency of roof forms and for the use of hand made clay tiles. Several buildings have modern roof lights or dormers that are over-dominant. The specific protection of these features, particularly on the unlisted buildings where the Council has less control, is important. An Article 4 Direction is one way of ensuring that minor changes to roofs and chimneys to unlisted buildings are brought under planning control.



*Shopfront design and signage is a critical component in the character of North Street.*



*Unlisted Victorian houses can be vulnerable to incremental change unless protected by an Article 4 Direction.*



*Even in the very centre of town, surrounding country is often visible on the skyline.*

## PART 2

# MIDHURST CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 FORMAT OF THE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Part 1 of this document, the *Character Appraisal*, has identified the special positive qualities of the Midhurst Conservation Area that make it unique and the negative aspects of the town which diminish that special quality. Part 2, the *Management Proposals*, builds upon these positive features and addresses the negative aspects and issues that have been identified. It provides a series of issues and recommendations for improvement and change.

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2005). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a five yearly basis, as set out in Part 2: Section 5.

### 1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

These Management Proposals have been drawn up following the production of a detailed Character Appraisal for the Midhurst Conservation Area. It provides a framework for future actions that are primarily an aspiration of the South Downs National Park Authority, although their successful implementation will also depend on the co-operation and support of the District Council, the Town Council, West Sussex County Council, and local people.

Government policy, set out over many years has made it clear that conservation areas are not ‘preservation’ areas. Change is an inevitable consequence of life and the challenge is to manage it in a manner that does not diminish the special qualities of a place. These Management Proposals seek to provide a framework for managed change that will ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the Midhurst Conservation Area is

both preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Local Planning Authorities are required by law to periodically review their conservation areas and prepare Character Appraisals and Management Proposals as part of this obligation. A five year review cycle has been considered to be best practice.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and should help ensure that the various actions identified in the Management Proposals will have greater impact and longevity. For the current Midhurst review, this has been achieved by early consultation with the Town Council.

Additionally, the documents were subject to four weeks of full public consultation, commencing with a public exhibition at Capron House in Midhurst from July 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. Following this, the text was amended, and the documents illustrated and adopted.

The proactive management of conservation areas gives clarity and robustness to decision making, which means that issues may be more defensible in, for instance, planning appeals. The Character Appraisal and these Management Proposals will therefore be of use to the Local Planning Authority and its agents when determining applications for change within or on the edges of the conservation area, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for refurbishment, alteration or new development. The documents will also be of interest to Midhurst’s residents and business community.

## 2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

### 2.1 THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the preservation and enhancement of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a statutory duty to review designations from time to time. There is a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals, grant schemes or enhancement proposals) to that end;
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts in a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area;
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas – usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is currently required for the total demolition of any unlisted building in a conservation area, subject to minor exceptions, and the local authority may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained;
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area, subject to minor exceptions;
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than elsewhere;
- The energy conservation provisions of the Building Regulations (Part L) may be relaxed for buildings within a conservation area;
- Planning authorities, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund can provide financial grant schemes to assist with the upkeep of buildings in conservation areas, although funds are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation.

## 2.2 THE CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

The requirements for planning permission:

Certain works to dwellings within a conservation area, normally considered to be 'permitted development,' will require planning

approval from the Local Planning Authority. The amount of building work which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without a planning application is somewhat less within a conservation area than elsewhere. These are:

- Larger extensions to buildings in conservation areas will usually require planning permission.
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to dwellings in conservation areas, for instance using artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a dwelling resulting in a material alteration to its shape - most notably the addition of dormer windows;
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a dwelling in a conservation area if the cubic capacity exceeds 10 cubic metres. This is especially important for sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens.

Periodic changes to the GPDO may amend the constraints mentioned above, so it is always wise to check with the Council first before commencing any work.

Where a building is statutorily listed, different legislation applies, as all internal and external alterations that affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building require Listed Building Consent. Furthermore, commercial properties (such as shops and public houses), and houses which have been converted into flats or bed-sits have fewer permitted development rights. Therefore, planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

## 2.3 NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Central government policy on conservation areas, historic buildings and archaeology is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012. Additional guidance is provided in the

accompanying *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, prepared by English Heritage. This covers the designation of areas and the responsibilities that stem from designation, including the appraisal of the special interest of conservation areas and the control of development affecting them.

These expectations are further developed in separate English Heritage guidance on the appraisal and management of conservation areas.

Further government advice encouraging good design is set out in the NPPF. Whilst not specifically concerned with conservation areas, this does provide broad support for improving standards of design and sustainability.

## 2.4 THE LOCAL PLAN AND THE EMERGING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

At the time of writing, the Chichester District Local Plan 1999, the Chichester District Local Plan *Supplementary Information 2000*, and the Regional Spatial Strategy, as set out in the *South East Plan* adopted May 2009, form the Development Plan for Chichester District. The South East Plan is proposed to be revoked by the Secretary of State sometime in 2012 and the South Downs National Park Core Strategy will replace the Local Plan on its adoption by the National Park Authority, scheduled for 2015.

The 1999 Local Plan contains several relevant policies. Chapter 2 *Environmental Strategy* contains a description of the Council's aims and objectives relating to historic buildings and conservation areas. The policies relating to these specialist topics are set out in a separate section under *Built Environment: Policies BE4 and BE5 (historic buildings) and BE6 conservation areas*. Archaeology is dealt with under Policy BE3.

Some of the policies from the 1999 Local Plan have been 'saved' and are still relevant, pending the production of the Core Strategy for the National Park which will seek to ensure that locally distinctive policies, not already covered by Planning Policy Statements and the Regional Spatial Strategy, are in place.

The Midhurst Conservation Area was designated on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1974 and first extended on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The Local Plan insert map,

which is still relevant, is Map 4. This confirms the following designations:

- Policy BE6 applies to the Conservation Area.
- Policy BE1 applies to the area within the Settlement Boundary
- Policy RE4 applies as the area is within the South Downs National Park, formerly the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## 3 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### 3.1 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

Section 7.1 in the Character Appraisal provides details of the proposed amendments to the conservation area. These are:

- Rother Pond and adjacent area to north side of North Street.
- The agricultural and educational environment of Lambert's Lane.
- Suburbs to the west and south, including June Lane, Petersfield Road, Bepton Road, Ashfield Road and Chichester Road.
- Wildlife corridor to southwest of South Pond and The Wharf to south of St Ann's Hill
- Removal of the three houses to the north of Vanzell Cottages and North Mill.

#### **Recommended Action 1:**

Designate the above parts of Midhurst as extensions to the conservation area and de-designate the area to the north of Vanzell Cottages.

### 3.2 THE CONTROL OF UNLISTED HOUSES AND COTTAGES

It has been noted that some of the unlisted 'positive' buildings in the existing and proposed conservation area have been adversely affected by the insertion of uPVC windows or

doors. These changes are 'permitted development' which can only be controlled by the Council through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction. This is usually used to control minor changes to unlisted family dwellings in conservation areas. It does not mean that development, such as changes to windows or doors, will necessarily be refused. It does, however, mean that planning permission has to be sought and this allows for the merits of a proposal to be considered against the conservation interests.

Article 4 Directions are made under the General Permitted Development Order 2008, and may be served by a Local Planning Authority to remove permitted development rights where there is a real threat to a particular residential building or area due to unsuitable alterations or additions. An Article 4 Direction is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to dwellings which will now require planning permission. Usually, such Directions are used in conservation areas to protect unlisted houses in use as a family unit, rather than flats or bedsits, where permitted development rights are already less extensive.

Under an Article 4 Direction, planning permission can be required for the following, depending on the permitted development right removed:

**HOUSE EXTENSIONS** – Planning permission can be required for the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house including entrance porches, any part of which fronts a highway, private road or open space (this reduces the limit of 'permitted development' already imposed by conservation area designation).

**PAINTING OF DWELLING HOUSES** – Planning permission can be required for the painting of a dwelling house.

**ROOFS** – A planning application can be required for alterations to a roof slope which fronts a highway, private road or open space, including a change in the roof materials and the insertion of roof lights. Dormer windows already require planning permission under the GDPO.

**CHIMNEYS** – The removal of a chimney can require planning permission.

**REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS** – The replacement of existing windows and doors which front a highway, private road or open space can require planning consent.

**CREATION OF CAR PARKING IN FRONT GARDENS AND REMOVAL OR REPLACEMENT OF FRONT BOUNDARIES** – The creation of a hardstanding to provide a parking space in a front garden can require planning permission. The removal of a front boundary wall may already require Conservation Area Consent, depending on its height.

There are some unlisted dwellings in the Midhurst Conservation Area that may benefit from these additional constraints. Whilst an Article 4 Direction cannot be retrospective, the serving of one is likely to incrementally improve the character and appearance of the conservation area over time. An Article 4 Direction should be focused on groups of buildings, rather than the whole conservation area, such as locally listed buildings or buildings of positive townscape merit. Any Direction would require a photographic survey to record the present condition of the buildings concerned, and written guidance would be provided to householders. The provision of grants to help with the additional costs associated with traditional materials or the reinstatement of lost architectural features (such as the replacement of uPVC windows with windows to a traditional design) would be helpful.

***Recommended Action 2:***

The Local Planning Authority will consider serving an Article 4 Direction on the Midhurst Conservation Area, to cover appropriate unlisted dwelling houses.

### **3.3 THE CONTROL OF SATELLITE DISHES**

During the survey work for the Midhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal, it was noted that a number of satellite dishes were visible. The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas and were revised in 2008 by the new General Permitted Development Order. This states that for all unlisted buildings in a conservation area, in whatever use and of whatever size, planning permission is required for all 'antennas' (which includes satellite dishes and any other equipment used to deliver

electronic communications) which are located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which face onto and are visible from a road. In such cases, planning permission may often be refused. The rules governing other locations on the building are extremely complex so it is always best to ask the District Council if planning permission is required before carrying out the work.

For listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is almost always required for the installation of 'antennas' and if it is considered that the installation will have an adverse effect on the special architectural or historic interest of the building, consent will usually be refused.

Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be 'development' and therefore planning permission is not required. (See also the DCLG pamphlet, *A Householders' Planning Guide to the Installation of Antennas* available on the DLG website).

#### **Recommended Action 3:**

The Local Planning Authority will consider taking Enforcement Action against the owners of properties where satellite dishes have been erected without planning permission and negotiation has failed to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

### **3.4 THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF TREES AND THE LANDSCAPE IN GENERAL**

Within all conservation areas, anyone intending to carry out works to a tree greater than 75 mm diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. 'Work' is defined as lopping, topping, or felling. This provision provides the District Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur.

There are many trees in the Midhurst Conservation Area. Some of these, such as the trees on St Ann's Hill, are the responsibility of the Town Council, but the vast majority will be in private ownership. Owners are encouraged to look after their trees, to remove any which are dangerous or diseased, and to plant

replacement trees where the removal of an existing significant tree has become necessary. The Tree Officer of Chichester District Council can provide free advice and guidance on trees which need any management. Planting within the public realm should use indigenous species in ways that are sensitive to the character and quality of spaces

Owners of the land around and within the conservation area, mostly used as fields, should also be encouraged to maintain the land in good condition and to encourage bio-diversity whenever possible by sympathetic methods of planting and cropping.

#### **Recommended Action 4:**

The District Council will prepare guidelines for the owners of trees and land in and around the Midhurst Conservation Area to maintain and improve their trees and land, including the creation of biodiverse habitats for wildlife.

### **3.5 TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN MANAGEMENT**

Because it lies at the crossroads of two busy roads, the A272 and A286, heavy traffic in the town centre has a significantly detrimental effect on the character of the conservation area. Early twentieth century photographs give an indication of how vehicles have had a profound effect on the character and appearance of the town. Many streets, virtually car free at the beginning of the twentieth century, have become dominated by an almost continuous flow of traffic.

The current arrangements for traffic movement and parking within the conservation area have benefits for residents and visitors but they are also increasingly spoiling the amenity of the town and undermining its attractiveness to visitors and shoppers. As with other parts of the conservation area, parked cars in Church Hill and Market Square detract from an outstanding streetscape. The appearance of this and other areas could be greatly improved if many of the parking spaces could be removed. The setting of the War Memorial would also be improved. Efforts should be made to reduce the speed of through traffic passing through the town centre and increasing priority for pedestrians.

Traffic signage and road markings also detract from the character of the conservation area. The design, location and number of signs

should be analysed with a view to seeking rationalisation, improvements and removals.

The Town Council, District Council and County Council highway engineers have already discussed methods of 'traffic calming' to reduce traffic speed and HGV movements within the historic core. Additional measures, such as the creation of shared space schemes, could be welcome. All traffic measures must, however, be carefully designed, using traditional materials and low-key details with the minimum of signage, so that the character of the conservation area is not adversely affected.

**Recommended Action 5:**

As opportunities arise, the Town Council, District Council and County Council will continue to seek ways of improving pedestrian safety, reducing traffic speeds and HGV movements in Midhurst, whilst protecting the special character of the conservation area.

### 3.6 LOCAL AND STATUTORY LISTS

The statutory list for Midhurst was drawn up in 1959 and has not been comprehensively reviewed since. A number of buildings or structures in the conservation area have been assessed by English Heritage for statutory listing and seven additions to the list have recently resulted.

In the past there were proposals to extend a Local List to areas of Chichester District beyond Chichester City, starting with Midhurst and Petworth. 'Locally listed' buildings are buildings or other features of local importance that, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless significant to the history, appearance, character, and cultural value of the District.

There is an increasing interest in local listing nationally. It is therefore recommended that the SDNPA should consider preparation of a Local List in order to give better recognition and, where necessary, control, of the historic environment in the planning process. The first step would be to agree criteria for the selection of buildings and structures for a Local List. Buildings might then be added to the list as circumstances allow, most obviously through the conservation area appraisal process, rather than by a systematic survey of the entire National Park. Community involvement in the selection process would add weight to the list as a planning tool. It will also be necessary to

acknowledge the Local List in planning policy and state the circumstances in which it will affect planning decisions.

**Recommended Action 6:**

The Local Planning Authority, in association with the Town Council, will consider drawing up a Local List for Midhurst Conservation Area.

### 3.7 ROOFS AND DORMERS

The clay tiled or slate roofs of the many historic buildings in the Midhurst Conservation Area make a very important contribution to the special character of the area. Many of these have substantial brick chimneys, often topped by clay chimney pots. These roofs must be protected from unsuitable changes such as the insertion of oversized dormers or roof lights, or the loss of chimney stacks.

Where the building is statutorily listed, any changes to the roof would normally require Listed Building Consent, and permission is unlikely to be given if the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposals would be detrimental to character. In the case of unlisted residential buildings, such changes can be controlled through conservation area designation (which controls dormers) as well as through the serving of an Article 4 Direction (which can control roof materials, roof lights and chimneys). It is vital that these additional powers are used to ensure that these significant features within the conservation area are protected from unsuitable alteration or loss.

Because unlisted commercial properties have fewer 'permitted development' rights than unlisted residential properties, the Local Planning Authority can already require business owners to apply for planning permission for changes such as the replacement of a clay tile roof with artificial slate.

**Recommended Action 7:**

SDNPA through its Development Management agency with Chichester District will continue to protect the roofscape of the Midhurst Conservation Area by the rigorous application of its existing powers and by publishing guidelines for householders, and will also consider serving an Article 4 Direction to protect unlisted houses in the conservation area.

### 3.8 HERITAGE WALK

The ruins of Cowdray have tremendous potential to contribute more fully towards the historical interpretation and visitor interest of Midhurst. A heritage walk would help to link the ruins more fully to the heritage of the town as a whole, both in a physical way and in its historic interpretation.

The walk would help to define the relationship between the ruins and the origins and later story of the town as well as leading visitors through the most attractive and interesting parts of the historic area. There are clearly several important issues to be resolved, not least of which is car parking.

#### **Recommended Action 8:**

Work with partner organisations to develop the Heritage Walk project.

### 3.9 WORKS AFFECTING THE PUBLIC REALM

Whilst national legislation has protected the buildings that define the edge of the public realm, it has done little to protect the heritage, design and material qualities of the public environment itself. This is largely made up of paving materials and finishes, street furniture and occasionally boundary walls.

Statutory undertakers and utility companies show little regard for the heritage or quality of the historic paving they dig up when executing street works. Although they have a legal responsibility to reinstate paving to its original appearance, this is frequently done to an inadequate standard. The quantity and quality of historic paving is gradually diminishing. It should be protected and used to influence the design of new paving to replace poor quality and concrete slab paving within the most sensitive parts of the conservation area. Historic surfaces should also be protected in any schemes to renew private yard and access areas.

There also needs to be an agreed strategy for street lighting in terms of the lighting qualities appropriate to the historic environment as well as the appearance of the lighting units.

Historic boundary wall features are often private elements of the public streetscape but should

be maintained, repaired, reinstated and used to influence the design of new boundary elements within the conservation area. The breaching of historic walls should be avoided. A lime-based mortar should be used in repair work and pointing should be slightly recessed and match the original. Original coursing patterns and brick bonds should be followed when repairing.

#### **Recommended Action 9:**

Midhurst would benefit from a Design Manual which defines how public realm elements should be treated, including paving materials and designs, street furniture, lighting, signage, lime painting, traffic control etc. Statutory undertakers and utility companies should agree to abide by the recommendations of the manual.

### 3.10 NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Where new development is proposed within the conservation area, or in locations that would have an impact on the setting of the conservation area, this character appraisal should assist with the development of proposals that accord with building patterns and characteristics.

New development should relate to its context in terms of the relationship between the building and the street, its position and relationship to its plot, scale, massing, form, roof type and pitch, fenestration pattern, traditional detailing and use of local materials.

The use of non-traditional materials such as uVPC windows and doors, plastic gutters and downpipes, concrete roof tiles, artificial slates and reconstituted stone are not suitable for buildings within the conservation area. A strict palette with a maximum of two facing materials is recommended for any new buildings in the conservation area.

The Planning Authority will continue to ensure that any planning applications for new garages in the Midhurst Conservation Area are of the highest possible standard using traditional materials and roof details. Flat roofed garages will generally not be accepted.

### **Recommended Action 10:**

The agents responsible for preparing proposals for new development in the conservation area should be alerted to this character appraisal and required to demonstrate how their proposals address the distinctive architectural and townscape qualities and patterns described in relation to the relevant character areas. It is also suggested that every property in the Conservation Area is provided with a guide that describes a best practice approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

### **3.11 ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA**

Alterations to existing buildings within the conservation area which require Planning Consent should conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic and architectural value of the area. A short list of key considerations is included here:

*An inappropriate display of satellite dishes.*



- Many of Midhurst's buildings conceal earlier fabric than is apparent from their exteriors so even small internal alterations should be very carefully considered in relation to the possible effect on original historic fabric. The District Council will require (by condition) the recording of earlier timber framing which will be affected by development where this has been hidden by later alteration or additions.
- Retain original timber doors and fan lights, timber sash windows, original casement windows and leaded lights. Repair whenever possible and only replace with 'like for like' when absolutely necessary. The use of replacements in modern materials such as UPVC is inappropriate.
- Opportunities should be taken to replace non-traditional materials or designs with ones that accord with the character and appearance of the building and/or conservation area
- Encourage retention and (where possible) reinstatement of traditional lime plastered finishes (e.g. roughcast, score lined lime plaster)
- Encourage the use of traditional lime wash on appropriate surfaces (e.g. stone rubble, exposed timber framing, existing lime plaster) rather than paint
- Encourage the retention and repair of original awning boxes to shop fronts
- Special consideration will be given to extensions and alterations at the rear of properties. Rear elevations are often highly visible in historic towns and retain much original fabric. Inappropriate development can be particularly detrimental to character and appearance. Particular attention is needed to preserving important edge of town views

### **Recommended Action 11:**

Opportunities should be taken to conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic and architectural value of buildings in the conservation area. The provision of grant funding would help realise this aspiration.

## **4 RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE CHARACTER AREAS**

### **4.1 CHARACTER AREA 1**

- Establish circular heritage trails that lead through the area to provide more passive surveillance
- Manage surrounding trees, clear felled trees and clear scrub. Raising canopies may provide more openness and provide better views to surrounding countryside and the town.

### **4.2 CHARACTER AREA 2**

- If buildings change from commercial to domestic use, ensure that the historic commercial appearance of the building is maintained through the retention of shop windows and sympathetic commercial elements.
- Proposals have been developed for resurfacing Market Square in high quality materials that are suited to this sensitive location. It is hoped that funding will be forthcoming to implement these plans.
- Proposals have been developed to reduce parking in Market Square and Church Hill although the personal interest of residents in using the spaces for car parking has frustrated progress. The exclusion of parked cars from the area would improve the character and appearance of the historic core.
- The Swan Inn should store rubbish internally and put it out on collection days as there is nowhere rubbish can be stored externally without compromise to the appearance of the area.
- Proposals are being developed to limit access into the historic core by high sided and wide vehicles.
- The garages and forecourt on the west side of Sheep Lane detract from the setting of the Church. The street scene and setting of the Church could be improved if these were demolished and low cottages built directly at the back edge of the pavement. The 1846 Tithe Map shows that there were previously service buildings in this position.
- The appearance of 'Castle Gardens' flats could be enhanced with stronger boundary planting between it and Duck Lane.
- The rear boundary of Stone House (on Wool Lane) would benefit from the reinstatement of a high boundary wall to re-establish the enclosure of Duck Lane. Vehicular access could be provided by means of gates.
- Similarly, a high boundary wall and gates would provide better enclosure at the northeast corner of the lane.
- The row of six garages on the east side of Duck Lane and the dilapidated garage with corrugated metal roof may be regarded as a development opportunity to provide mews housing of appropriate scale. The stable with hayloft behind Robert & Sheron, West Street, could set an example although a building with eaves parallel to the street would be more fitting.
- The modern building on the north side of Sheep Lane with brick ground floor and tile hung first floor might be improved by being painted. Ideally, the following works would help: remove tile hanging and insert windows in wall in pattern similar to the building to the left. Remove half-dormer. If required, insert dormer of traditional form and scale wholly within the roof, not breaking the eaves line. Lime render whole elevation.
- The appearance of the greengrocer 'Top Crop', on West Street could be improved if the dormers were removed, the roof made whole and the windows given glazing bars. Painting or lime plastering the elevation would also enable it to fit in more comfortably with the historic environment.

### 4.3 CHARACTER AREA 3

- Opportunities should be taken to reduce vehicular dominance at the main crossroads (Petersfield Road, Rumbold's Hill, West Street and Bepton Road) and along Rumbold's Hill. It may be beneficial to consider reconfiguring the junction as a shared space scheme giving equal priority to pedestrian and vehicular users.
- The brick shop front to 'Graham Standing Domestic Appliances' on Rumbold's Hill would be better painted the same colour as the rest of the elevation.
- The former Roman Catholic church on Rumbold's Hill would benefit from sympathetic restoration.
- New buildings in the conservation area should accord with historic exemplars in terms of their set backs, architectural design and detailing or achieve a complementary architectural design.
- Opportunities should be taken to reconfigure the façade of Midhurst Barber's Shop. This might be achieved through a more orthodox placement of windows and the painting over of the mock half-timbered black and white colour scheme.
- The historic value of the medieval building at the corner of Bepton Road and West Street would be more apparent and the conservation area enhanced if it were restored to its historic appearance. Failing this, shopfront surrounds would provide definition or visual support.
- The appearance of the Post Office building, Violet Designs and Mane Street might be enhanced if window and door joinery were painted in light colours.
- The Court Building and its setting would be enhanced if its single storey extensions could be demolished.
- Ways of improving the appearance of the telephone exchange should be discussed with British Telecom at a local level to secure improvements. The potential for visual improvements should be explored

and encouraged, especially in relation to the redevelopment of the Grange.

- Consideration could be given to how Duck Lane's sense of enclosure could be restored, perhaps by building high boundary walls with gates to parking areas. A large copper beech was quite recently removed from the garden of Clover Cottage at the northern end of Duck Lane. The view up the lane and the sense of enclosure at the northeast corner of the lane could be enhanced if a similar tree were planted at the entrance of the parking forecourt.
- The range of garages to Castle Gardens flats could potentially be redeveloped as 2 storey mews houses or FROGs (*Finished Room Over Garage*).
- Wool Lane's strong sense of enclosure would be restored if the garden to the Wheatsheaf Public House could be enclosed by a tall boundary wall with doorway through.
- The problem of buildings being painted black and white might be addressed by providing guidance to shopkeepers and house owners. Colours appropriate to buildings of different ages could be defined. Historically accurate colours could help to improve their appearance and aid a correct interpretation of their heritage. Buildings like the terrace of three to the west side of the junction of Grange Road and West Street could be enhanced if they were painted in popular Edwardian colours.
- There is a project in hand to redevelop the site of the Grange leisure centre. This should be done in ways that complement Midhurst's characteristic building patterns and employs materials in ways that are locally distinctive.
- Any future development should consist primarily of buildings with eaves parallel to the street. Gables should be used sparingly.

### 4.4 CHARACTER AREA 4

- Consideration could be given to how North Street's open character might be enhanced to emphasise its pedestrian public space character.

- Any redevelopment of the Tesco building would provide an opportunity for a quality contribution to the streetscape. The scale, form and materials of historic buildings in the character area should serve as appropriate precedents. The rebuilding of the single storey building at its rear as 2 or 2½ storey apartments may assist viability.
- The removal or replacement of Dutch style shop canopies with straight canopies is encouraged.
- The appearance of Valet Dry Cleaners could be much improved if its shopfront and signage were to be restored to its historic appearance.
- All signage should be hand painted. Historic photos show how previous shopfronts were well matched to the architectural composition of their building frontages. The reinstatement of original or historic designs will be supported.
- The townscape environment could be improved if single-storey buildings by the junction of North Street and Knockhundred Row were redeveloped on condition that that this is done in a way that is sensitive to the materials and massing of this part of the character area.
- The rural character of June Lane and the appearance of the buildings on its north side could be improved by planting shrubbery or trees in the area adjacent to the building facing the small triangular open space on Rumbold's Hill.
- The Old Surgery would be improved through the removal of mock half-timbering
- Castle View (10 North Street) would be enhanced if it were redecorated in an Edwardian colour scheme that more clearly expressed its age.
- The negative impact of MG House could be somewhat reduced if its walls were lime plastered or entirely painted in a light colour - not brilliant white - and if its windows could be fitted with 6-over-6 pane sashes.
- Whithorne House could be enhanced if the original elevation were restored, enabling it to function as two shop units or offices.

- The windows of the three-storey building on the north side of Knockhundred row would be better restored to their original appearance.
- The building accommodating Knockhundred Market would benefit from being restored to its historic appearance, with a correctly detailed carriageway and doorway entrance.

#### 4.5 CHARACTER AREA 5

- North Street Car Park could be improved through partial resurfacing in a buff, natural colour and planting carefully selected trees, should ground conditions allow, within the space to improve its appearance.
- Rother House will be demolished as part of the redevelopment of the school site. Any new building should address the lane in ways that are suited to its rural and educational character as well as its distinctive architectural qualities.
- Any extension should accord with the architectural quality and tradition of the principal structure.

#### 4.6 CHARACTER AREA 6

- If the garage block at the western end of the character area (by Jubilee Path) is underused it could be considered for demolition. The space may have potential as a community garden.
- If opportunities emerge to redevelop the poor quality housing along The Wharf, the distinctive qualities of Midhurst's characteristic historic streets should provide useful examples. The area could support a mix of high quality housing with market housing complementing and subsidising the affordable.
- Refuse and recycling bins should be stored out of sight within property boundaries.
- All new building should employ materials and utilise them in ways that are distinctive to the character area and conservation area.

- Domestic buildings should normally express a domestic character and industrial buildings an industrial character. Building use should be reflected in building form and not adopt characteristics of a contrasting typology.
- It would be beneficial for the sewage pumping station to be relocated and the area allocated to public space. It would make a good picnic or play area.
- The pathway from The Wharf to Cowdray could be surfaced with a regular, rustic material such as compacted gravel so as to be accessible to wheelchair users.
- The suite of street furniture, such as benches, should respond to the more rural setting of the riverside walk.
- A management regime is required to maintain the trees on the slopes of St Ann's Hill.
- Directional signage should be provided to direct visitors to the attractive riverside walk.

#### 4.7 CHARACTER AREA 7

- Any redevelopment should respect and enhance existing street patterns to create a connected, rational environment. Development should always relate to other parts of the settlement, creating a network of connected streets and public spaces. If a rational plan is inherent in the settlement form, this pattern should be continued in new development.
- Most of the site of Midhurst Convent has consent for redevelopment. Any future proposals for change should respect Midhurst's characteristic building patterns and the setting of the listed Convent building, which should retain its villa character by being preserved in an appropriate setting.
- The character of Victorian and Edwardian suburban houses should be retained through the preservation of their original features such as unpainted brickwork and their timber door and window joinery.
- New buildings built of brick should source bricks that match the colour, size and textural qualities of Midhurst's locally produced bricks.
- In seeking to achieve local distinctiveness and appropriateness to context, designers should understand local building patterns and material qualities without crass imitation or simplification of existing forms.
- The presbytery of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church could be improved through the remodelling of the front elevation and the concealment of poor masonry facings behind a lime plaster.
- The cracks to the north and south sides of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church should be repaired in mortar that matches the original.
- Any replacement of the 1960s weatherboarded building on June Lane should be appropriate to its context by employing a suitable building form and facing materials.
- The stretch of Bepton Road between the slate hung industrial building and the junction with Petersfield Road would benefit from redevelopment and the re-establishment of a street elevation that respects Midhurst's building character and quality.
- Petrol stations should not be exempt from requirements to achieve sensitivity to context through the use of locally appropriate building forms and materials. This site would benefit from redevelopment.
- Owners of buildings identified as having potential for enhancement to neutral or positive townscape quality would benefit from advice. The possibility of an incentive scheme to encourage work to be undertaken might be explored.
- A number of the buildings identified as negative have redevelopment potential that is currently being explored. Areas which are not subject to redevelopment plans may benefit from development briefs which demonstrate how the sites could be enhanced.
- The Police Station could be easily

enhanced through boundary planting and a more domestic front garden. This would make it relate to properties with larger setbacks such as Rose and Granville Cottages.

#### **4.8 NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS (RELATING LARGELY TO CA6)**

##### ***River Rother and Rother Valley Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)***

Sussex Biodiversity Partnership has identified this section of the Site of Nature Conservation Interest as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents an important area of opportunity for the restoration of a nationally important habitat (Biodiversity Action Plan habitat). Opportunities identified include:

- The restoration and management of the wetland or water meadow habitats;
- Establishing an ecological network, which links areas for wildlife allowing species to adapt to changing conditions and improving their chances of survival.

Other management options include:

- Planting and extension of the belts of trees to create screening;
- Maintaining water quality and depth of the River Rother, retaining good bank-side cover and avoiding dredging or disturbance of the river.

##### ***South pond and stream area***

To improve the biodiversity at south pond, The South Pond Active Community Endeavour (SPACE) has been set up. This is a joint effort involving Chichester District Council, South Downs Joint Committee, Midhurst Town Council, and local volunteer/charity groups, each involved in the effort to improve the biodiversity of the pond and its surroundings.

## **5 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The efficient delivery of a conservation service requires regular monitoring of change and the agents of change. The Local Planning Authority is expected to:

- Periodically review the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change;
- Update the baseline photographic survey of the Midhurst Conservation Area on a four yearly basis;
- Review the Midhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal on a five-year basis;
- Annually review and update the Midhurst Conservation Area Management Proposals.

## **6 ACTION PLAN**

The actions below, most of which are the responsibility of the District Council, are based on the Recommended Actions in Section 2 of the Management Proposals, and include further actions that are considered necessary to ensure that the Midhurst Conservation Area continues to be preserved and enhanced by the relevant authorities.

### **6.1 IMMEDIATE PROJECTS (6-18 MONTHS)**

These are generally those that can be adopted without reference to other programmes, including resource planning. There will be an aspiration to complete them within the next year:

- Formal adoption of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as a material consideration in determining planning applications and to inform future historic environment policies;
- Formal adoption of the Management Proposals as a supporting document to a potential future Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- Designate amendments to the Midhurst Conservation Area boundary as proposed in the boundary review (Recommended Action 1);
- Establish a policy and updated criteria for Local Listing (Recommended Action 6);
- Use community involvement to select buildings and structures for the Local List in Midhurst (Recommended Action 6);

### **6.2 MEDIUM-TERM PROJECTS (18 MONTHS – 3 YEARS)**

These require preparation but should be completed within three years:

- Serve an Article 4 Direction on the Midhurst Conservation Area (Recommended Action 2);
- The Town Council, District Council and County Council will consider ways of improving pedestrian safety, reducing the speed of through traffic and HGV movements in the Midhurst Conservation Area (Recommended Action 5).

### 6.3 CONTINUOUS TASKS

These require revisiting on a regular basis:

- Preserve 'positive' buildings in the Midhurst Conservation Area from unsuitable alterations, extensions or demolition through the usual development control procedures.
- Similarly, protect trees and the surrounding landscape in and around Midhurst Conservation Area - (Recommended Action 4);
- Ensure that development control practice:
  - Requires planning applications for 'material' changes such as new windows or roof materials on unlisted commercial properties;
  - Ensures that all new development in the Midhurst Conservation Area is of the highest quality, with particular reference to rooflines, height, bulk, materials and details (Recommended Action 7);
  - Protects and enhances trees and the surrounding landscape in the Midhurst Conservation Area in partnership with local groups (Recommended Action 4);
  - Uses its full powers of enforcement including achieving the removal of unauthorised satellite dishes (Recommended Action 3);
- Monitor changes in Midhurst Conservation Area, including producing and the regularly updating of a photographic baseline for the conservation area, which should never be more than four years old;
- Review of the Midhurst Conservation Area Appraisal on a five-year basis;

- Carry out a review of these Management Proposals on an annual basis.

*Poor modern shopfronts and signage can let down the overall character of a building.*



*Maintenance of small open spaces can be vital.*



*Proliferation of PVC-u windows on unlisted buildings could erode the character of Midhurst.*



## APPENDICES AND INFORMATION RELATING TO CHARACTER AREA MAPS

### Keys for CA Maps

Buildings which are predominantly of one category but incorporate details of another, such as stone with brick details around openings and for edge details, are illustrated according to the dominant material but with the secondary material shown as dots. Buildings that have different predominant materials for ground and first floors are shown with a border illustrating the ground floor material and upper storey material on the inside.

The following types building have been identified:

1. Medieval dark brown
2. Post-medieval/Georgian/Regency with shop light blue
3. Georgian/Regency 5 bays, 1 & 2 bay houses & semi-detached dark blue
4. Victorian/Edwardian/early C20 focal building/church yellow
5. Victorian/ Edwardian gabled with shop orange
6. Victorian/ Edwardian villa burgundy
7. Cottage terrace light green
8. Industrial/service/ancillary grey
9. Neo-traditional mauve
10. Modern, negative impact pink