

# Downside Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan



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Front Cover: View across Downside Common  
Back Cover: 1868 Ordnance Survey map

## **Downside Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan**

This document has been commissioned by Planning Services, Elmbridge Borough Council, as part of its rolling programme of undertaking conservation area appraisals and preparing management plans.

The document has been produced through collaborative working by the Downside Village Conservation Area Working Group. The group included residents, members of the local Conservation Area Advisory Committee, representatives from a variety of historical, amenity and conservation societies, local Councillors, and officers from Elmbridge Borough Council. Forum Heritage Services were appointed as heritage consultants to facilitate the project, organise training workshops and co-ordinate and produce the Appraisal and Management Plan.

The designation, review, protection and management of conservation areas are part of the statutory duties of Elmbridge Borough Council as the local planning authority. However, community involvement is essential in understanding the special nature and different issues for each individual conservation area. The Working Group identified many aspects and issues and these were incorporated into the document at its initial draft stages. This document has been the subject of wider public consultation for a six-week period commencing on 6 January 2014 and comments received have informed the final document.

This guidance document will be a material consideration with regards to the implementation of the Elmbridge Local Plan as a basis for understanding the area, informing decision making, monitoring and management. It will be the subject of future review providing the opportunity to take account of new planning policy as it arises. The document was considered and endorsed by the Elmbridge Borough Council Planning Committee on 25 March 2014. The Council also confirmed an extension to the Downside Village Conservation Area to include the areas to the north of the rear gardens of The Old School House, Rose Cottage and Appleyard Cottage, Cobbett's, the area to the east of Cobbett's, Woodpecker Nurseries and the car park and area to the north of The Cricketers public house.

The document is available in PDF format on the Council's website [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/heritage](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/heritage) and to purchase in printed form from Elmbridge Borough Council.

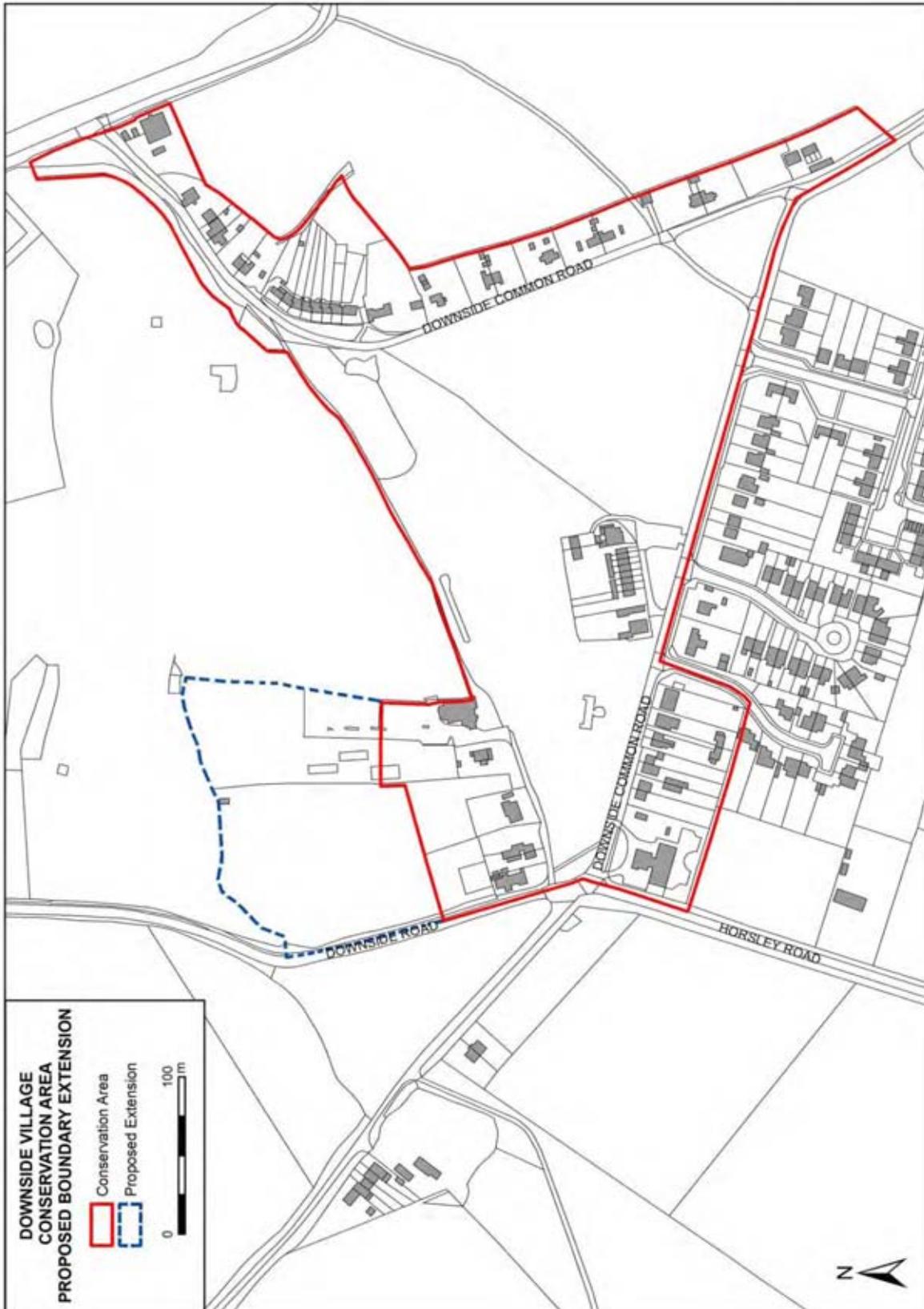
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Location Plan and Proposed Boundary Changes

# Part 1 Conservation Area Character Appraisal

## 1 Introduction

Downside is an attractive village, centred upon a large rough triangular common and surrounded mainly by groups of 19th Century cottages. The whole village is set against a pleasant well-wooded rural landscape, much of which is owned and managed by the Cobham Park Estate, and is located entirely within the Green belt.

The Common itself contains a small island of picturesque cottages. The eastern side of the village is particularly attractive, with cottages fronting the Common and set against a rural background. Many of the cottages serve as accommodation for estate workers and are good examples of 19th Century cottage architecture, containing several decorative features. As a result of single ownership by the Cobham Park Estate throughout their life, these cottages have largely retained their architectural uniformity and the red brick facades appear completely unspoilt.

Downside Village is unique in being the only remaining rural village in Elmbridge. Despite much recent development to the south, the village has managed to retain a pleasant rural atmosphere rarely found so close to an urban area, and for these reasons, it is considered that the village merits Conservation Area status.

Elmbridge Borough Council designated the Downside Conservation Area on 31st July 1979.

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation areas and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with English Heritage guidance as set out in Understanding Place, Conservation Designation, Appraisal and Management (March 2011).

This document seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the “Appraisal”);
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of a “Management Plan”).

This document therefore provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Downside Conservation Areas can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with NPPF policies and English Heritage Guidance. In addition it should be read in conjunction with the Elmbridge Local Plan. Currently this includes the

Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011) of which policies CS3, CS12, CS14 and CS17 are particularly relevant, saved policies in the Replacement Elmbridge Borough Local Plan (2000) particularly Chapters 7,8 and 10 and the Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (2012). Saved policies will be superseded by the forthcoming Development Management Plan due to be formally adopted in 2014.

## **2 Location and Setting**

### **(a) Location**

Downside Village is a small rural village two miles south of the centre of Cobham. The village is largely self-contained and comprises a chapel, two schools, a public house, a village hall and a recreation ground. To the north lies Cobham Lodge in its grounds and Cobham Park. To the east is Downside Mill, an important former mill site on the River Mole.

### **(b) Boundaries**

Downside Village Conservation Area centres on a triangular area of common land strongly defined by straight enclosure roads to two sides. The boundary of the conservation area takes in most of the buildings and their gardens which front this green space with the exception of relatively recent (mid to late 20th century) development to much of the south-east edge. A section of Downside Common Road is included which links the Common to Cobham Park Road.

### **(c) Topography and landscape setting**

The Common is generally perceived as relatively flat although the Common ranges between 29-33m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Immediately north of this the River Mole begins to cut a valley.

There is the general sense of an open rural landscape interspersed with planted hedgerows and field boundaries surrounding the conservation area despite some very significant 20th century landscape interventions to the south which include the M25 motorway corridor and the recent completion of the Cobham services to the south of the motorway but with access roads immediately to the south of a tree belt between them and the village.

### **(d) Geology**

The underlying geology of Downside Village is Cretaceous, a mix of Hastings Beds, Weald Clay, then Pleistocene Folkestone and then covered by a layer of Claygate Beds and Gault Clay mixed in with some eroded limestone from the north downs. The soil stretching from Cobham and Downside as far as Effingham and for a more considerable distance east and south-west is what is known as a slowly permeable loamy/clayey slightly acid but base-rich soil. This gives rise to flora of trees, grasses and crops which can be cultivated easily.



Aerial view of Downside Village Conservation Area

Aerial photography – Cartographic Engineering 2013

### 3 The Historical Development of the Village

#### (a) Historic Background

Downside takes its name from the large whale-backed area of high land, or Dun, within what is now Cobham Park. [See *The Landscape of Place-Names*, Gelling & Cole, (2000) pp 166-7.] It is likely that there was settlement on this high land above the flood plain of the river at a very early date although evidence for this has yet to be found.

The settlement of Downside was formerly in the ancient parish of Cobham and later formed one of the three tithings of the manor, the others being Street Cobham and Church Cobham. Downside may once have been a separate manor and a Deodatus de Dunes probably held land here in the early part of the 13th century. The centre of this reputed manor was at Downe Place which stood on the site of the present Downside Farm. Part of what is likely to have been a medieval moat (probably constructed for ornamental rather than defensive purposes) still survives here and an excavation within the present largely 18th century house suggested occupation of the site since at least the Anglo Saxon period. [See *Trial Trenching on a probably moated site at Downside Farm, Cobham, Graham, Graham & Taylor, Surrey Archaeological Society Collections, Vol 92, (2006) pp 217-229*]. Nearby is Downside Mill, a largely 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structure which probably occupies the site of the manorial mill. The site became the home of the Dune family and, in the reign of Edward I, a William de la Dune held the office of Keeper of the Hanaper, a wicker basket made to hold the Great Seal. Ancillary evidence seems to indicate royal visits to Downe Place between 1292 and 1306.

Downe Place stood on the edge of a very large area of common which stretched into the adjoining parishes of Bookham and the Horsleys. This appears to have once been known as Morels Park (possibly the marshy park) which the Abbot of Chertsey was allowed by Henry I (1100 to 1135) to enclose when he wanted to hunt foxes, hares, pheasants and wild cats. A small, now lost, settlement grew up around Downe Place and small farms and dwellings are known from written records to have occupied the land between Downside and the properties on the east side of the present Downside Common. Additionally, a large open common field, known as Downe Field lay between Downside and Cobham. This was enclosed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and taken into the newly created Cobham Park.

The original common was some 380 acres, and was mainly used for the grazing of horses, prior to being enclosed in 1793. The present Downside Common is a small surviving part of the original common which was left for those with common rights to graze cattle and poultry and this now forms the centre of the present conservation area. Following the enclosure of the common, changes which occurred included the building of cottages around the surviving 20 acres of common land. These plots were allocated to those with manorial rights. Some of these plots were subsequently sold and merged together into larger areas for development. From 1820 onwards the Combe family acquired land to build cottages for their estate workers.

The development of Downside is inextricably linked first to the original manorial centre and then, after its creation in the 1740s, Cobham Park. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Downside Mill was owned by Alexander Raby and used for the production of iron goods. In 1331 a corn mill was recorded on this site. It later became a paper mill before being acquired by Raby. The mill and its surroundings have recently been the subject of an excavation and work currently in progress seems to be indicating that the methods being used by Raby were ground breaking and, that being so, the site is

of both national and, probably, international, importance. [See Alexander Raby, Ironmaster. Surrey Industrial History Group (2000)]

Raby was a local industrialist who already ran a bronze casting and iron cannon business in the Weald inherited from his father. He converted the paper mill for metalworking and expanded the site. Cartographic evidence from 1798 shows a complex site with a number of interlinked buildings and processes. However, the site was sold in 1806 when the mill was no longer found to be profitable. Alexander Raby relocated his metalworking business to South Wales. A process that took place at Downside was tin plating. The process of applying molten tin to sheet iron to stop corrosion of the iron was introduced to England in the early 18th century. New workers housing built 1803-4 - 'Tinman's Row' to the north-eastern edge of the Common are a valuable survival and reminder of the important industrial archaeology surviving in the adjacent site.

In 1806 Harvey Christian Combe purchased Cobham Park. He had been Lord Mayor of London in 1799 and was a Member of Parliament for the City in 1802. Combe became one of the most successful brewers of his time. He used his wealth for improvement and enlargement of Cobham Park and created the Cobham Park Estate. It was largely down to the work and philanthropy of Harvey Combe and his son, also Harvey, (to which the water pump in the village is inscribed) that defined the Downside Common seen today. The Combes, for example, instigated the construction of a number of the Estate cottages which line the eastern side of the Common. It is largely down to the Combe family that still preside over parts of the Estate that Downside Common survives in its semi-rural form seen today. [See An Estate For All Seasons. A History of Cobham Park, Surrey and its owners and occupiers. Taylor. Phillimore & Co. (2006)].

Around the end of the 1870s Downside saw the construction of a school, described at the time thus:

‘a commodious infant school with governess residence attached built on ground given for the purpose by the Rev. J. F. Mount owner of Poynters it having recently been enlarged and hot water pipes introduced and sundry other improvements it being largely indebted to the benefices of W.S Deacon Esq and his lady (present occupiers of Poynters) who take a great interest in it.’

This was joined in 1901 by a Girls' school designed by local architect Leonard Martin in a distinctive Art Nouveau style.

Towards the end of the last century, the former Esher Urban District Council developed Middleton Road and subsequent plots to the south side of the Common have been developed separately with detached bungalows and houses. Some of these have recently been redeveloped. South of the settlement saw the construction of the M25 in the 1970s and associated motorway service station in 2012.

## **(b) Archaeology**

Downside Village Conservation Area does not fall within an area of High Archaeological Potential. However, the conservation area and its setting forms part of a once much larger area of common land which has been progressively encroached

upon over a considerable period of time possibly extending as far as the late medieval period.

To the north of the present common is Cobham Lodge, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century property, which probably occupies the site of a property known in the medieval period as Bottells. The south west corner of the ground attached to Cobham Lodge shows evidence of an early failed attempt to develop the north side of the common in medieval times. Medieval plot boundaries have survived here between Downside Road and the Cricketers PH. This may have been a speculative attempt at development by a former owner of Bottells. (See Cobham Lodge, Cobham: the house and the early history of the site. Taylor. Surrey Archaeological Society Collections. Vol 94 (2008) pp91-103).

There is a characteristic presence of a series of farmsteads (Pondtail, Chilbrook, Chasemore and possibly Cossins Farm) to what was probably the former edge of the common with the subsequent encroachment to the south of Cossins Farm with infill of field boundaries between. Further encroachment to both the centre of the common (the area occupied by the Woolgar family) and to the south and east along the lines of the Enclosure roads has left a well-defined and ordered pattern of gradual and progressive encroachment of a once very large common land.

There is the potential for the survival of former cottages, isolated farmsteads and associated buildings and processes within and to the edges of the conservation area, although much of the built form is likely to be underneath present buildings. There is a high probability for potential for archaeology in undeveloped sites to the north of the area now known as Downside Common particularly in the vicinity of the characteristic funnel gateway to the Common to the north-east corner, north of Tinman's Row and in undeveloped spaces to the south side of this part of Downside Common Road.

## **4 Surviving Historical Features within the Conservation Area**

### **(a) Summary of Historic Development**

- Formed part of a 12th century hunting ground for the Abbot of Chertsey
- Important survival of a once extensive common area stretching to some 380 acres
- Retains a series of important buildings (protected through statutory listing) from the 17th, 19th and early 20th centuries, perhaps most notably The Cricketers Public House
- Enclosure Acts (through the enclosure of the former Open Fields and Commons) have helped defined what is now the present village. Evidence for this can be found in the long straight stretches of "enclosure roads" such as Bookham Common Road, Horsley Road and the road running to the south of the surviving common
- Strong historic link with Downe Place (Downside Farm) and Downside Mill to the east – both being important archaeologically significant sites.
- Tinman's Row - a rare example of industrial workers cottages (with Yorkshire sliding sash windows) built for workers at Downside Mill
- Survival of the large Cobham Park Estate and its linkage with the village
- The control of single landowners, the Combe family and their construction of Estate cottages built with common features and use of materials to the edge of the Common

- A presence of schools from the late 19th century (Downside School now Old School House) and turn of the last century St Matthew's Church of England Primary School (1901) built in an Arts and Crafts style by local architect Leonard Martin (he lived at Overbye in Church Street, Cobham)
- Construction of Downsview Close and Middleton Road in the mid to late 20th century

### **(b) Street pattern and building plots**

The pattern of built form and plot division comprises a series of layers over what was a much larger expanse of common land.

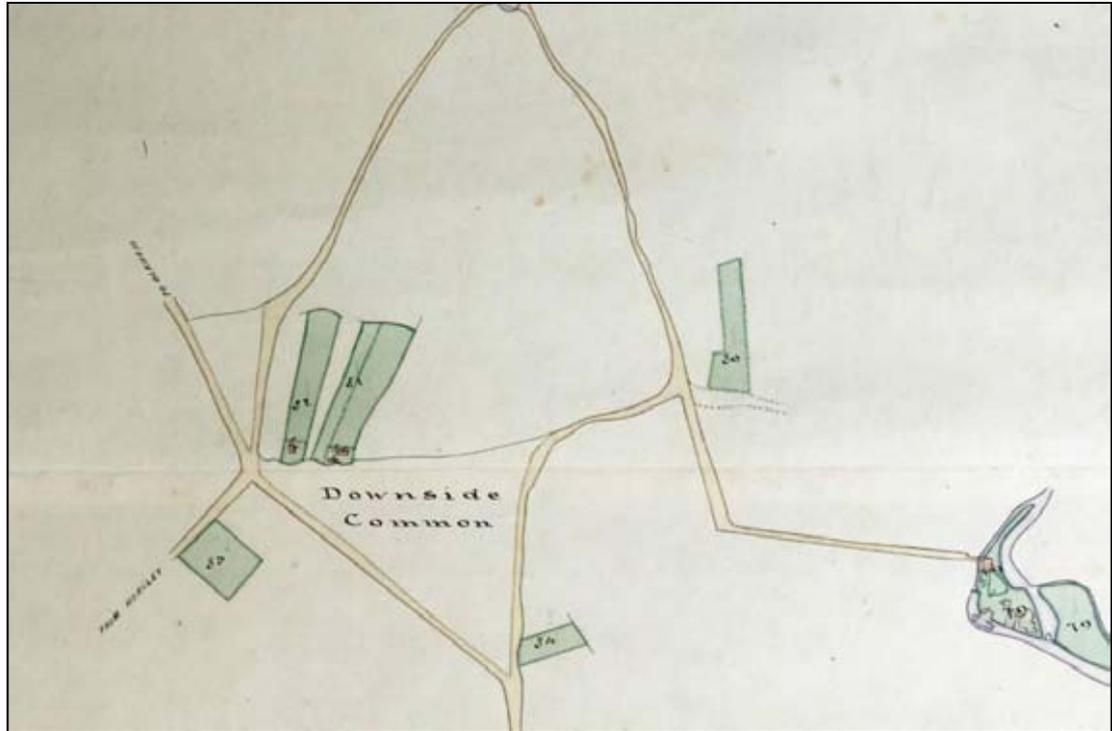
The significant sub-division which has largely defined the development seen today came with the laying out of the enclosure roads (1793) to the south and east of the Green. However, to the north of the common, there is a much earlier boundary evidenced by earlier buildings. The Cricketers has timber framing dating from the 17th century and a plot division more characteristic of medieval manorial allocation. These plots stretch back some distance from the Common and have a planned character to their sub-division. These presently extend north beyond the conservation area boundary but terminate at a consistent and probably medieval field boundary.

Elsewhere throughout the conservation area there is much evidence for planned and systematic plot subdivision. This varies from the long narrow deep plots seen to Tinman's Row (1803-4) and those immediately to the east of St Matthew's Primary School, probably laid out in the early part of the 19th century to the generous plots to the east side of Downside Common, paid out around the late 19th century and early 20th century for cottages designed to provide a plot of land for cultivation and self sufficiency as well as a tied house for Cobham Park Estate workers.

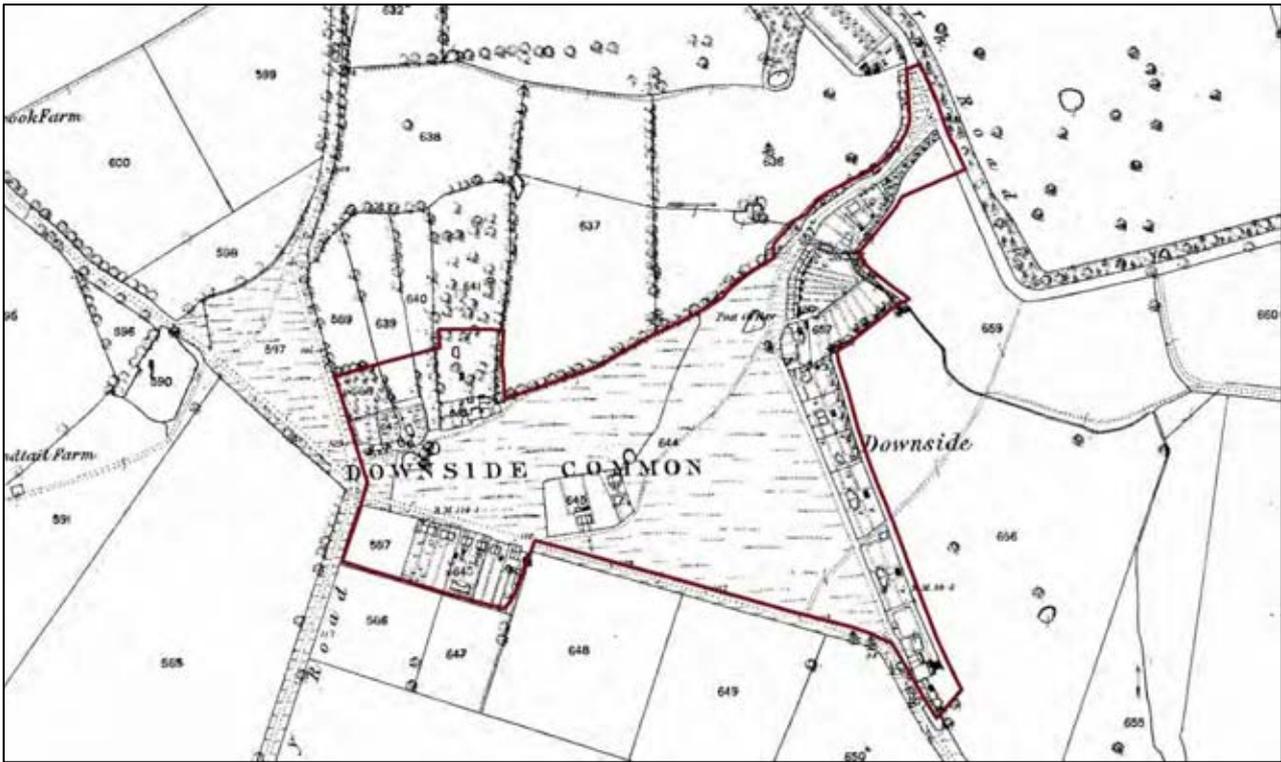
The combination of the definition of Downside Common with straight enclosure roads and the sub-division into plots along the edges, with some much earlier already established plots, with a subsequent consistent development of the plots in groups over fixed periods, has provided the very well-defined and highly distinctive development pattern seen today. This development pattern, particularly within the various defined groups (such as Tinman's Row and Island Cottages) forms a very important part of the character and appearance of the Downside Village Conservation Area.



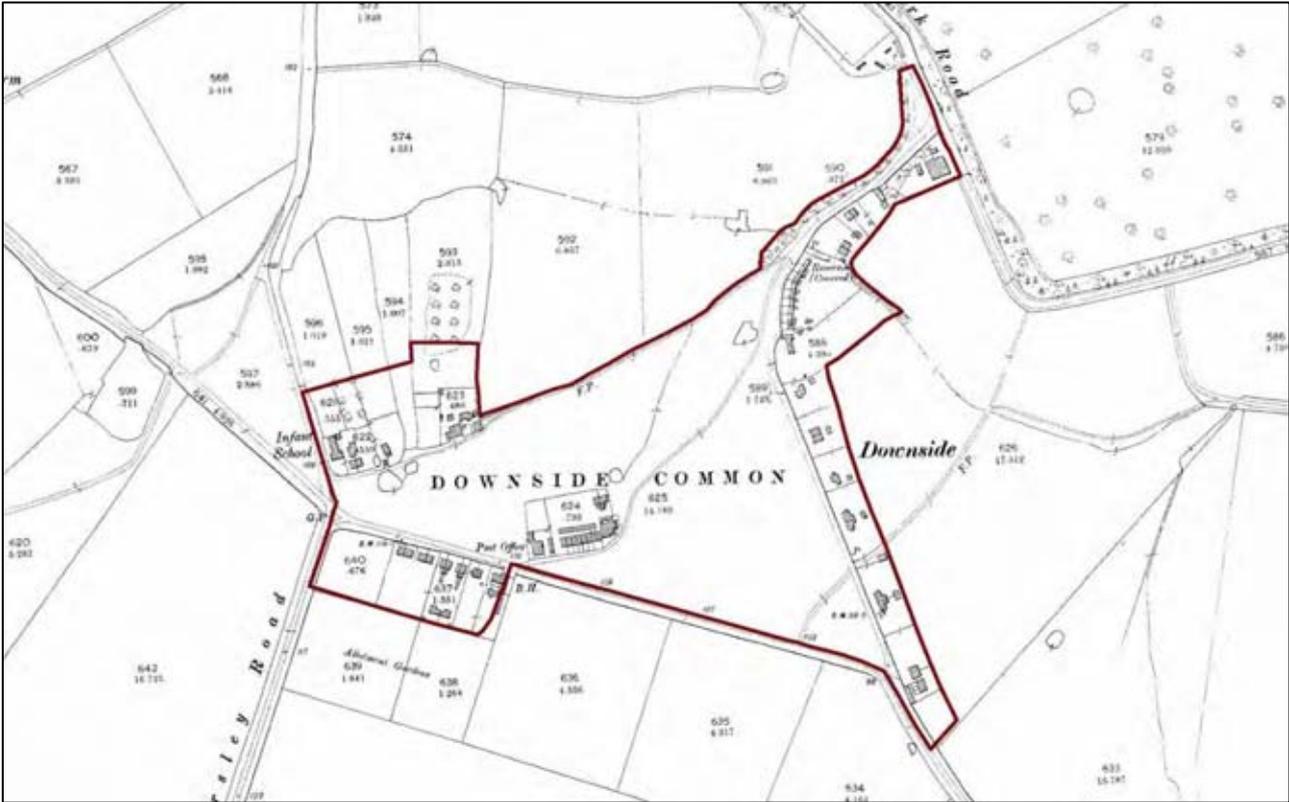
John Rocques Map of 1768



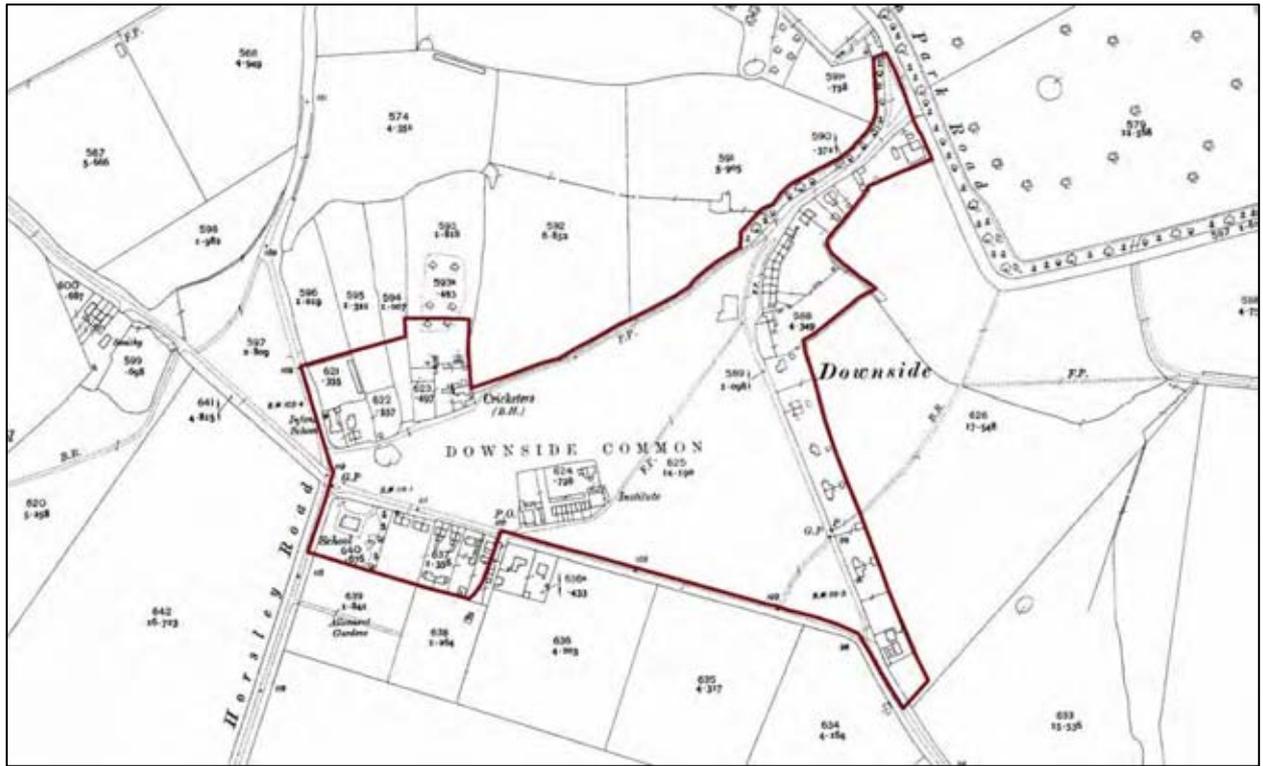
Extract from Cobham tithe map 1845



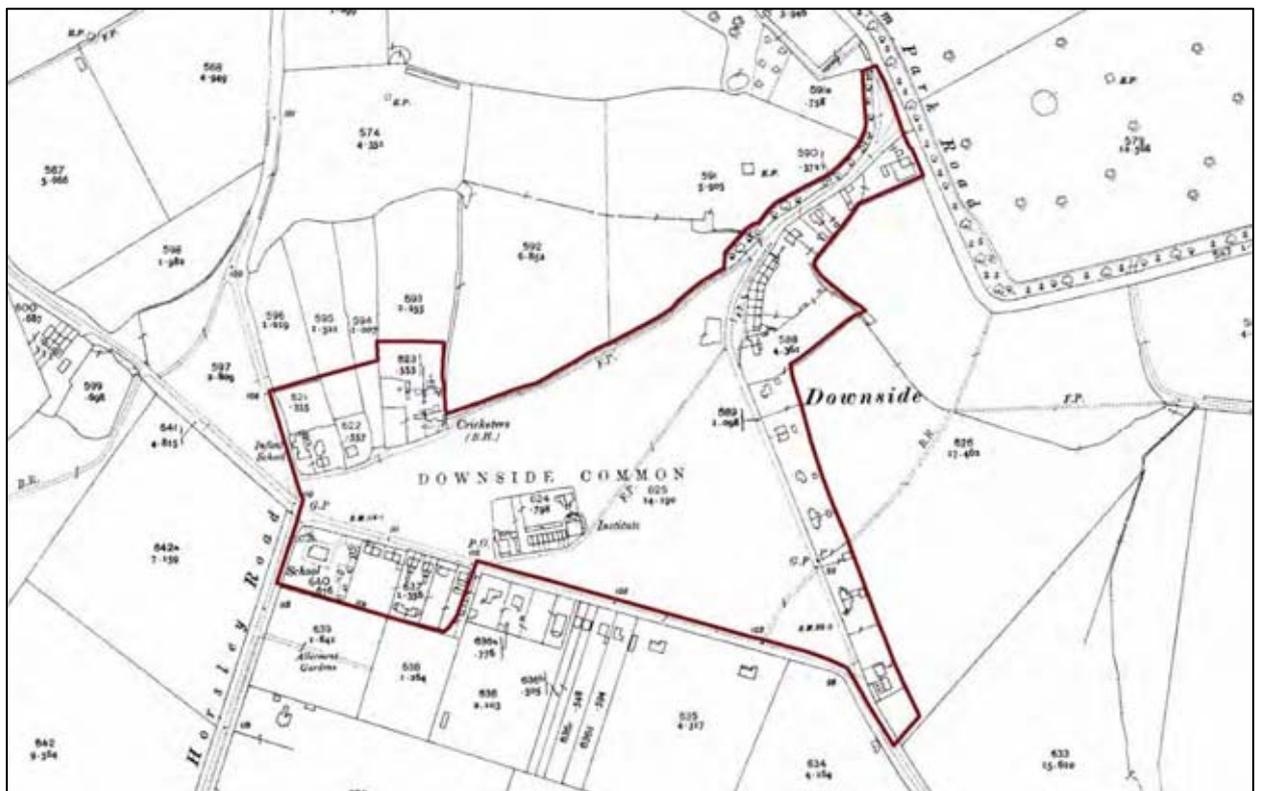
Ordnance Survey 1868



Ordnance Survey 1895



Ordnance Survey 1914



Ordnance Survey 1939



Aerial photograph 1945



Aerial photograph 1971

## 5 The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

### (a) Summary of townscape features

- Much of the settlement around the Common seen today is a 19<sup>th</sup> century construct, largely unchanged throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- A well-defined plot sub-division within various groups of buildings lining the Common
- A characteristic funnelling of the Common to the north-east corner - a feature possibly originating from the medieval period
- Key local landmarks such as St Matthew's Primary School and the Village Club
- A consistent scale to development almost throughout - modest two storey built form with no retro-fitting of roofspaces (Figure 1)
- A consistent building line with buildings set back from the edge of the Common in small gardens
- Open views across the green space characterised by individual mature trees both in and to the edges of the Common although vegetation is now encroaching on its openness. (Figure 2)
- A sub-division of the Common with built form (The Island) creating two visually separate spaces of slightly different but complementary character
- Non-residential uses which provide interest, activity and constant movement throughout the day
- Consistency to materials especially within well-defined groups of houses
- Landscape features such as tree belts and ponds to the edge of the Common
- Important sense of entry and arrival to the Common from the corners of the triangular space
- Attractive rhythm of repeated architectural features to building groups to include window details, roof profiles and chimneys
- Views and glimpsed views out to open countryside (particularly to the east) and from the east looking across to the rear of houses to the east side of the Common from Cobham Park Road (although this is a private access road) (Figure 3)



Figure 1: Unbroken roofs (no dormers or rooflights) and a consistent scale to much of the townscape



Figure 2: Open views across the green space characterised by individual mature trees both in and to the edges of the Common



Figure 3: Views and glimpsed views from the east looking across to the rear of houses to the east side of the Common from Cobham Park Road

### **(b) Current activities and uses**

Whilst much of the conservation area is private residential accommodation, Downside also includes a primary school, village hall, public house, a village club building (Figure 4), a small chapel and the public amenity spaces of the Common area including two children's play areas.

It is this surprising and complimentary grouping of uses which gives Downside a real sense of an active community and rural village feel despite its relatively close proximity to areas of medium to high density settlement.

The Cricketers (Figure 5) is a popular public house for local people and visitors further afield because of its location on the edge of the Common. This can lead to significant numbers of visitors on weekends, particularly in summer months.

Parking for private houses and other uses is mostly contained within the plots of individual houses, with houses having driveways and/or garages. The notable exception to this is the eight houses which make up Tinman's Row. Here, parking is confined to the roadside. Intermittent users of the Common also park along the length of Downside Common Road. This can, at busy periods have an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The grasscreted Common car park edged by timber posts is well used.



Figure 4: The Village Club



Figure 5: The Cricketers

### **(c) Focal points, views and vistas**

The open views across Downside Common are one of the most attractive and memorable features of the conservation area (Figure 6). From the roadside edges, the observer can get a sense of the scale and extent of the Common and the distinct lack of intensive development leads to a dominance of the open space throughout.

From the west looking east, particularly on passing The Island, there are some far reaching views to open countryside, characterised by rolling fields and substantial tree belts. The latter are seen as a backdrop to houses to the east side of the Common.

The Island comprises of Woolgar's Cottage, which is one of the older houses in Downside, and 19<sup>th</sup> century development on its former plot which includes a row of eight houses (Nos 1-8 The Island), the Village Club and Island House, formerly the post office and general stores. The Island divides the Common into two distinct areas and Island House also acts as a partial termination to views east along this part of Downside Common Road (Figure 7). Here, one passes through a pinch-point in the townscape through to the second and larger area of Common.

Given the large expanse of open Common ground which makes up much of the conservation area, there are multiple views across this space. Views focus on the key local landmarks within the conservation area; the cupola or fleche of St Matthew's Primary School, the white painted render of The Cricketers and the distinctive faux framing and veranda of the Village Club (Figure 8).

General views are characterised by a consistency to the townscape, a repetition of forms and scale to houses in groups, the modest boundary treatments to private houses which in most cases maintain views of the houses in their plots and the interspersal of mature trees of various species on and to the edge of the Common (Figure 9).



Figure 6: Open views across Downside Common



Figure 7: The former general stores and post office building partially terminating the view east along Downside Common Road



Figure 8: Distinctive use of materials on the building known as The Village Club



Figure 9: General views characterised by a consistent townscape

#### (d) Open spaces, landscape and trees

Downside Common is divided into two distinct spaces by The Island, a group of houses and other buildings which although it does not extend right across the Common has the effect of dividing the space visually. The area to the west of The Island is more intimate in character and is dominated by The Cricketers Public House and the school to the prominent corner and entrance to the Common (and conservation area). The area to the east of The Island is physically up to twice as large as the western section and as such feels more open and expansive. Individual, isolated mature trees are more of a feature of this part of the conservation area.

Open spaces are equally important surrounding the conservation area giving Downside the sense of splendid rural isolation visually. This is important in terms of views west and south and glimpsed views east between houses to open, farmed countryside. Views to the north are more restricted by mature trees and hedgerows (some of which have grown to obscure former views of Cobham Lodge to the north).

The open countryside landscape setting to Downside is very important. The sense of travelling through a rural part of the Borough is very real and apparent before entering the edge of the conservation area as Downside Road becomes Horsley Road. The importance of the landscape setting is perhaps best appreciated from this approach but is also understood when the conservation area is viewed from the east from Cobham Park Road. Here, rolling fields form part of the important setting to Estate workers houses to the east side of the Common (Figure 10).

Parts of the common are managed to encourage wildlife and biodiversity including the pond near Tinman's Row and seasonal pond near The Island. Growth of new trees and encroachment of existing vegetation is beginning to compromise the traditional openness of the area. However, recent tree works have reinstated original views.



Figure 10: Open field setting to Estate workers housing and chapel to the east side of Downside Common

### **(e) Public realm: Floorscape, street lighting and street furniture**

The public realm within the Downside Village Conservation Area is generally understated and responds positively to its rural setting. There are no pavements to the Common side of Downside Common Road and there are few street lights which add to the rural character of the streetscene. The Council has ensured that recent replacement lighting by the County Council used a green swan necked heritage style which fits into the area. The roads are not used intensively which means that the pedestrian can walk relatively safely along the edges of sections of road. Some care is needed but the way in which the roads work as shared surfaces for cars, cyclists and pedestrians is generally accepted and respected.

There has been relatively recent introduction of additional benches to the open spaces and play areas to two sections of the Common. These amenity areas have been carefully designed to minimise intrusion onto these open space although the area adjacent to The Cricketers has been intensified with a number of larger scale apparatus which have had an impact on the character and appearance of parts of the conservation area.

Grasscrete and timber bollards have been used in the Common Car Park by the The Island (Figure 11). Elsewhere parking on the edges of the Common has led to some erosion of the grass edges (Figure 12) and damage to kerbs, although kerbs are only seen to some sections of the Common edge. The roads are generally finished in tarmac. Varying degrees of repair have been undertaken to the road surface but it is generally well-maintained and free from significant pot holing or undulation.



Figure 11: Grasscrete has been used in places to form parking spaces on the Common



Figure 12: The absence of kerbs adds to the rural character of the area but has led to erosion of the Common edge in places



Figure 13: Good group of traditional cottages to the south side of the Common (Area 1)

Conservation Areas are designated for their special character, but within the area there will be zones which are varied but contribute to the whole. It is important to define these 'sub areas' and provide a clear understanding of the defining elements making up the character of a particular part of the conservation area. This leads to a more useful and comprehensive document in development control terms.

When using this document it is important to note that in all cases the transitional areas between defined character areas is also important and is exactly this – an area which does not easily fit into the defined character areas but can often be important to both though not necessarily sharing the same characteristics as one or the other. It should be noted that whilst three sub-areas have been identified, it is also important to appreciate the cohesion to the whole conservation area, which should always be considered when addressing the character of the Downside Village Conservation Area.

For identification of character areas see Townscape Analysis Map (page 42).

### **Area 1: Downside Common 1, The Cricketers, St Matthew's C of E Primary School and The Island**

This part of Downside has one of the significant gateways to the conservation area. The point where Downside Road meets Horsley Road reveals the extent of this section of the Common but it is truncated by the presence of the development and tree line of The Island. This forms the smaller of the two green spaces and feels more intimate and enclosed than the space beyond The Island (Area 2).

The development to this part of the conservation area is dominated by two of the three local landmarks to Downside; the school cupola to the south-west corner and the distinctive rendered façade of The Cricketers Public House to the north. The remaining buildings are consistent in scale (a modest two storey throughout) and building line, set back from the Common in small front gardens.

All of the buildings within this character area form a significant and cohesive group sharing as they do common features such as materials and scale (with the exception of The Cricketers, the rendered façade of which is notable for its variation from red brick seen elsewhere). Of particular note are the unlisted houses to the south side of this part of the Common. They form a very pleasing group of modest cottage scale houses which for the most part have retained a number of architectural features of significance and importantly retained their modest scale to the Common facing elevations (Figure 13).

Most buildings within this part of the conservation area are red brick with either natural slate or clay tile roofs. Brick chimneys form an important part of the skyline and are seen to most buildings fronting the Common. The Cricketers public house is notable for its use of painted render. The building contains elements of a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber frame but has been remodelled a number of times most notably with a 19<sup>th</sup> century gabled range facing the Common which now forms a significant element in the Downside streetscene (Figure 14). The faux framing of the twin gables of St Matthew's Primary School is prominent in views into the conservation area from Downside Road. Similarly the tile hung gables (and former Bellcote) of the Old School House to the north-west corner Downside Common form a defining element of this significant gateway to the conservation area.

Important views can be had from Downside Road into the conservation area although these are partially closed by Island House (with its distinctive polychrome brickwork forming string courses and window surrounds) (Figure 15) and restricted in places by new tree planting. The cupola/bellcote to St Matthew's Primary School is a prominent local landmark and signals the presence of a non-domestic building on this important corner to the conservation area.

The presence of the former and present schools to this part of the conservation area and The Cricketers public house provide a mix of uses which generate movement and activity throughout the day and evening not seen to the rest of the conservation area. These are notable local landmarks and active elements of the community which contribute to the character and appearance of the Downside Village Conservation Area.

### Negative features

- The play area is a popular asset but its extent and equipment could be considered to impact on the open character of this part of the conservation area
- Regular management of the Common's vegetation is needed. In particular there are some non-native willows which may need to be removed to prevent blocking of views across the Common in the long term, and others that need crown lifting
- One of the open plots to the north side of the Common is being used informally as an allotment space and as with most allotments has a slightly untidy appearance



Figure 14: North side of Common – The Cricketers group



Figure 15: Island House with its distinctive polychrome brickwork forming string courses and window surrounds

## Area 2: Downside Common 2, Estate Cottages and Chapel

This part of the conservation area is the second of two areas of open Common land with Area 1 defining the smaller section to the west. Between these is the development known as The Island. This area is characterised by a larger and more expansive sense of open space and has less definition by built form. To the south of the Common, the conservation area excludes the relatively modern development (mostly mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses). This is generally at a modest scale with a number of single storey bungalows forming part of the enclosure to the Common. This, combined with a deeper setback to the building line, gives less of an impression of enclosure to this part of the conservation area.

To the east side, this sense of openness is also felt as the houses to this edge, whilst forming a cohesive and attractive group of Estate workers cottages sit within wide plots with large gaps between built form (Figure 16). This differs from the intimacy and enclosure seen to Area 1 and contributes to the general sense of a much more open rural character to this part of the Downside Village Conservation Area.

All buildings within this character area are either single or two storey. There is notably no use of roofspaces for accommodation which has maintained the scale and traditional character of the enclosure to the conservation area, even to those houses outside the conservation area but form an important part of its setting.

The dominant materials used almost consistently to this part of the conservation area are red brick with mostly natural slate roofs and red brick chimneys. An exception is Keepers Cottage which has a prominent half-hipped clay tile roof with red/orange clay pantiles seen to the outbuilding running parallel to the roadside. There is a notable use of bricks to form a hood mould to windows (Figure 17) and there are also some valuable survivals of cast iron casement windows with diamond pattern glazing bars (Figure 18).

The views within this part of the conservation area are expansive and open which means that elements of the view such as buildings, trees and the landscape beyond are very sensitive to change. Of particular note are the views between houses to the eastern edge to open countryside beyond and the views across the Common which are enclosed by trees to the north (although some are relatively recent additions) and to the east by tree belts which form the backdrop to the houses along this edge. To the south, trees which form an important screening of the M25 are seen as the backdrop to mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, although none of this housing is inappropriate or detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Figure 16: Important gaps between houses to the east side of the Common



Figure 17: The notable use of bricks to form a hood mould to windows (to Estate cottages)



Figure 18: Cast iron casement windows with diamond pattern glazing bars

The Village Club is a prominent and distinctive building in the townscape. Its open veranda and use of faux timber framing give this building a local landmark quality and the building is seen for some distance across the open areas of this part of Downside Common (see Figure 4). To the north-east corner of the Common, the funnel shape to this corner with the presence of a pond is an historic feature of a grazed area and could be medieval in origin. The distinctive materials palette and detailing of the Estate cottages to this part of the conservation area makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This includes the cast iron railings which enclose these plots.

The Chapel of St Michael and All Angels is an important locally listed building. It has recently (October 2013) been refurbished and sympathetically extended and is an important community asset. The Chapel and Grade II listed cast iron water pump form an attractive and important group of considerable local significance. The inscription on the pump reads: 'This pump was erected & the water brought from a distance for the supply and comfort of the cottagers of Downside Common Cobham by Harvey Combe ESQr 1858'

### Negative features

- The pond is very overgrown and appears unkempt
- Some of the edges of the Common are in a poor condition as a result of car parking
- Some of the trees to this part of the Common require crown lifting
- The play area to the western edge of the character area, particularly the zip line, intrudes on the open character of this part of the conservation area

### Area 3: Tinman's Row environs

This part of the conservation area differs from Areas 1 and 2 significantly in terms of spatial qualities. This part of Downside Common Road has a rural lane quality which also forms an important historic gateway to the Common from the north-east. This lane also formed an important routeway to the medieval manorial site which had such an important influence on the wider landscape setting and built form of this part of the conservation area.

The lane has development to its south side of a consistent scale and form. Buildings are no higher than a modest two storey and are set back from the roadside in small gardens with a consistent building line which follows the gentle curve of the roadside.

All of the buildings to the south side of the road form a group but they are not seen in their entirety due to the curve and level change of the lane. This means that in townscape terms the lane, which is enclosed to the north by a mature tree and hedge lined boundary, is experienced as series of progressive views of traditionally built houses. Some have gables to the roadside and others are in pairs with the distinctive and historically significant eight cottages forming Tinman's Row to its western extent and Park View to the east to the corner of Downside Common Road and Cobham Park Road. The modest, unassuming scale and survival of architectural detailing to this building group are important characteristics of this part of the conservation area (Figure 19).

There is far more painted brickwork and render seen to this part of the conservation area and the brickwork to Tinman's Row is a distinctive dark red with dark grey

headers in an irregular bond where exposed. Roofs are a mix of natural slate (to Tinman's Row) and clay tile to the later development along this part of Downside Common Road. There is significant survival of early joinery to windows and doors to Tinman's Row and other buildings in this group. This provides a distinctive historic quality to the Tinman's Row group which is recognized by its Grade II listing. What is also distinctive about the group is its very modest workers cottage scale seen to either end of the group with the retention of the one room depth of the plan to these houses. The use of polychrome brickwork to the string courses and window surrounds to Park View gives this building a clear architectural language and contributes to the Estate type character of the buildings to the east side of the conservation area adjacent to Cobham Park. This also has links with the similar treatment of Island House (formerly the general stores and post office) to the western part of the Common (Area 1).



Figure 19: The modest, unassuming scale and survival of architectural detailing to Tinman's Row are important characteristics of this part of the conservation area

There is a well-framed glimpsed view west down into and along Downside Common Road from the junction with Cobham Park Road. The mature trees either side almost enclose the road forming a natural gateway to this part of the conservation area. An extension to Ivy Cottage forms a distinct punctuation in the streetscene (Figure 20). Views to the Common tend to be partially obscured by tree cover or the level change which is notable as one drops down and round into this part of Downside Common Road. Where views are available into the Common they are characterised by a lack of development giving a more rural character to this gateway to the Common.

The small cottage gardens and picket fence boundaries to Tinman's Row and the unusual use of horizontal sliding sashes to the cottages are both local features of some significance and contribute to the outstanding historic and architectural quality of this surviving group.

#### Negative features

- Parking to the roadside, given the lack of driveways or side gardens has an impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Tinman's Row.



Figure 20: Character Area 3 - An extension to Ivy Cottage forms a distinct punctuation in the streetscene

## 7 The Buildings of the Conservation Area

### (a) Architectural styles and detailing

Whilst some boundary and plot divisions of the Common edge date from the medieval period, the earliest known building within the conservation area is The Cricketers. The building contains elements of timber framing which date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century although it has been extensively remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of a gabled range fronting the Common. In about 1830 the property was licensed as a Beerhouse. The building is notable for its use of painted render which is distinctive within the part of the conservation area within which it sits and gives the building (along with its use) a local landmark quality. Its painted platband, cambered arch windows and timber casements are notable architectural features of the earlier ranges of the building. Some of these qualities are shared by a building which may also have 17<sup>th</sup> century origins namely Elm Tree Cottage to the east side of the Common to the south of Tinman's Row (Figure 21). Both buildings make very valuable architectural and historic contributions to the character and appearance of the Downside Village Conservation Area.

The remaining architectural periods of development within the conservation area largely fall into the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are good examples from distinct periods of growth and development of the Common edges.



Figure 21: Elm Tree Cottage to the east side of the Common

The earliest examples date from 1803-4 and were built by Alexander Raby who owned Downside Mill during this period. They are known as Tinman's Row and the eight modest cottages were thought to have been built to house the workers of the iron works, which were in-part powered by Downside Mill. These cottages are architecturally and historically significant due to their remarkable survival, given their very modest scale and form and their known association with an historically important industrial site linked to the development of this part of Downside Common. The survival of windows, doors, chimneys and possibly in some cases plan form of these houses make a very valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Downside Conservation Area.

The most historically and architecturally significant period in the development of the present Downside Village Conservation Area is the construction of a series of houses and other buildings at the instigation of Harvey Combe, who also erected a cast iron water pump (Grade II listed) for the use of the cottagers of Downside Common. His development of a series of architecturally distinctive Estate cottages, particularly to the east side of the Common, in addition to a Village Club and general stores, have greatly influenced the resulting architectural quality of parts of the conservation area as well as provided a shared language for architectural detailing to some of the groups of houses. This can be seen in the use of brick hood moulds to window surrounds, cast iron casements with diamond pattern glazing bars and the use of polychrome patterning to brickwork for string courses and window surrounds (see Figures 15, 17 and 18). These architectural features singly and collectively make a valuable contribution to a period of development within the conservation area which is still readable and easily understood in the present day.

Two further buildings of architectural significance are the two schools which flank the western 'entrance' to this part of Downside Common. The Old School House to the north, originally the residence of the head teacher to the old school, was constructed c1880s and has distinct elements of the domestic revival with its steep tile hung gables, bellcote and arched openings in brick (Figure 22).



Figure 22: The Old School House to the north was constructed c1880s and has distinct elements of the domestic revival with its steep tile hung gables, bellcote and arched openings in brick

The later school building built in 1901 was designed by local architect Leonard Martin. This building is finished in an Art Nouveau style and has many attributes of an Arts and Crafts inspired building such as the battered base to the walls, the English bond brickwork, to mimic that of early brick bonds rather than the dominant Flemish bond seen to most of the rest of the buildings of Downside. It also has timber framing with plaster infill to the prominent gables and a slender tapering bellcote to mimic that of the earlier school building to the north (Figure 23). The interior is equally impressive and ornate with decorative features such as panelling, Art Nouveau inspired fireplace designs and a queen post roof to the hall. This building is Grade II listed and makes a very significant positive contribution to the architectural and historic character of this part of the Downside Conservation Area.

Two further buildings deserve description in terms of their architectural and/or historic qualities, the first is the tiny Chapel of St Michael and All Angels set back from the east edge of the Common (Figure 24). This building has recently been sympathetically extended and plays an important role as a valuable community space within the village. There is an excellent view out of the conservation area from the altar window of this chapel looking east over the rolling farmed hills forming the all important setting to this edge of the conservation area. The second building is also strongly linked to the community, that of the Village Club. This is present on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1895 and was probably built around the late 1870s early 1880s. The building is distinctive for its open veranda with decorative timber posts and use of faux timber framing and pebbledash. The building is designed in such a way that a large building has been divided into a number of different elements giving a cottage scale to the overall composition. Its open veranda in particular is a prominent and locally distinctive feature which is seen for some distance in views across the Common (see Figure 4). This is a significant unlisted building within the conservation area and defining local landmark to sections of the Downside Village Conservation Area.



Figure 23: St Matthew's Primary School has timber framing with plaster infill to the prominent gables and a slender tapering bellcote to mimic that of the earlier school building to the north



Figure 24: Chapel of St Michael and All Angels set back from the east edge of the Common



Figure 25: Cast iron railings to boundaries to the east side of the Common

## **(b) Boundaries**

Boundary treatments vary throughout the conservation area but tend to be low key and unobtrusive. There is no dominant boundary feature but groups of houses share common features. Houses to the western section of the Common have low hedges and brick walls although historically these were probably open to the Common or had small picket fences. A mix of brick boundary walls and hedges continue along the south side of the Common outside (just to the south) of the conservation area boundary. None dominate, but there is a tendency to get more defensive and higher (with a combination of brick wall and railings) outside the conservation area. Some have a detrimental impact when compared to the low and simple form of boundary treatment seen within the conservation area.

To the eastern edge of the Common, there is a consistent use of a low cast iron railing with plain spear finials. This is partially obscured in places by hedges and trees but survives in sufficient runs to be a key part of the character of the boundaries of the Estate cottages to this edge (Figure 25).

The use of picket fences is seen throughout the conservation area, notably to some of the houses making up the terraced Island group and perhaps most successfully used (in combination with hedges) on the eight Tinman's Row houses. Here, the cottage gardens and their enclosures fronted by a wide grass verge form an important part of the very attractive setting of this historic group (Figure 26).

It should be noted that the rear boundaries to some plots are also important to the character and appearance of the Downside Village Conservation Area. This is particularly the case to the eastern edge of the conservation area when viewed across open fields from Cobham Park Road. These are characterised by soft relatively low hedges with some tree cover and the notable and welcome absence of modern close boarded fencing (Figure 27).

## **(c) Listed buildings**

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from Elmbridge Borough Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. The listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. These are:

1 to 8 Tinman's Row, Downside Common Road  
The Cricketers Inn, Downside Common, Downside  
St Matthew's Church of England First School, Downside Common Road  
Village Pump, Downside Common Road

All are Grade II listed.



Figure 26: Attractive wide grass verges provide an important setting to the Grade II listed Tinman's Row



Figure 27: Natural rear boundaries to properties to the east side of the Common - very important in views from the east into the conservation area

#### **(d) Locally Listed Buildings**

Locally Listed Buildings have been identified by Elmbridge Borough Council as being individually of special architectural or historic interest but falling just 'beneath the line' for inclusion within the statutory list or simply inexplicably omitted. These are:

Old School House, Downside Road

Chapel of St Michael and All Angels, Downside Common Road

#### **(e) Significant Unlisted Buildings**

A large number of unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being "Significant Unlisted Buildings" with townscape merit. Buildings identified as having "townscape merit" will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

The National Planning Policy Framework and English Heritage advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area (Para 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework). The guidance note states that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

Significant groups are as follows:

- Those houses immediately to the east of St Matthew's Primary School, to include Norfolk Cottage, Hereford Cottage, Dorset Cottage, Gloster Cottage, 1 & 2 Wood Cottages, Nos 1 & 2 Home Cottages, Nos 1 & 2 Florence Cottages and Bookers Cottage – these form a wider group with the Grade II listed Cricketers Public House, The Old School House (locally listed) and Appleyard Cottage and Rose Cottage
- Houses to the east side of the Common, namely Elm Tree Cottage, Fir Tree Cottage, Alma Cottages, Helena Cottage, Pump Cottages, Pear Tree Cottage and Keepers Cottage (and its outbuildings). This group also includes the locally listed Chapel of St Michael and All Angels.

## **8 Negative Features and Issues**

### **(a) Overgrown appearance of the pond to the north-east corner of Common**

The area surrounding the pond opposite Tinman's Row has become overgrown and this stretches westwards into the Common along the line of the footpath. In particular, a large overhanging crack willow is in need of pollarding to protect the biodiversity of the pond.

### **(b) Trees to Downside Common**

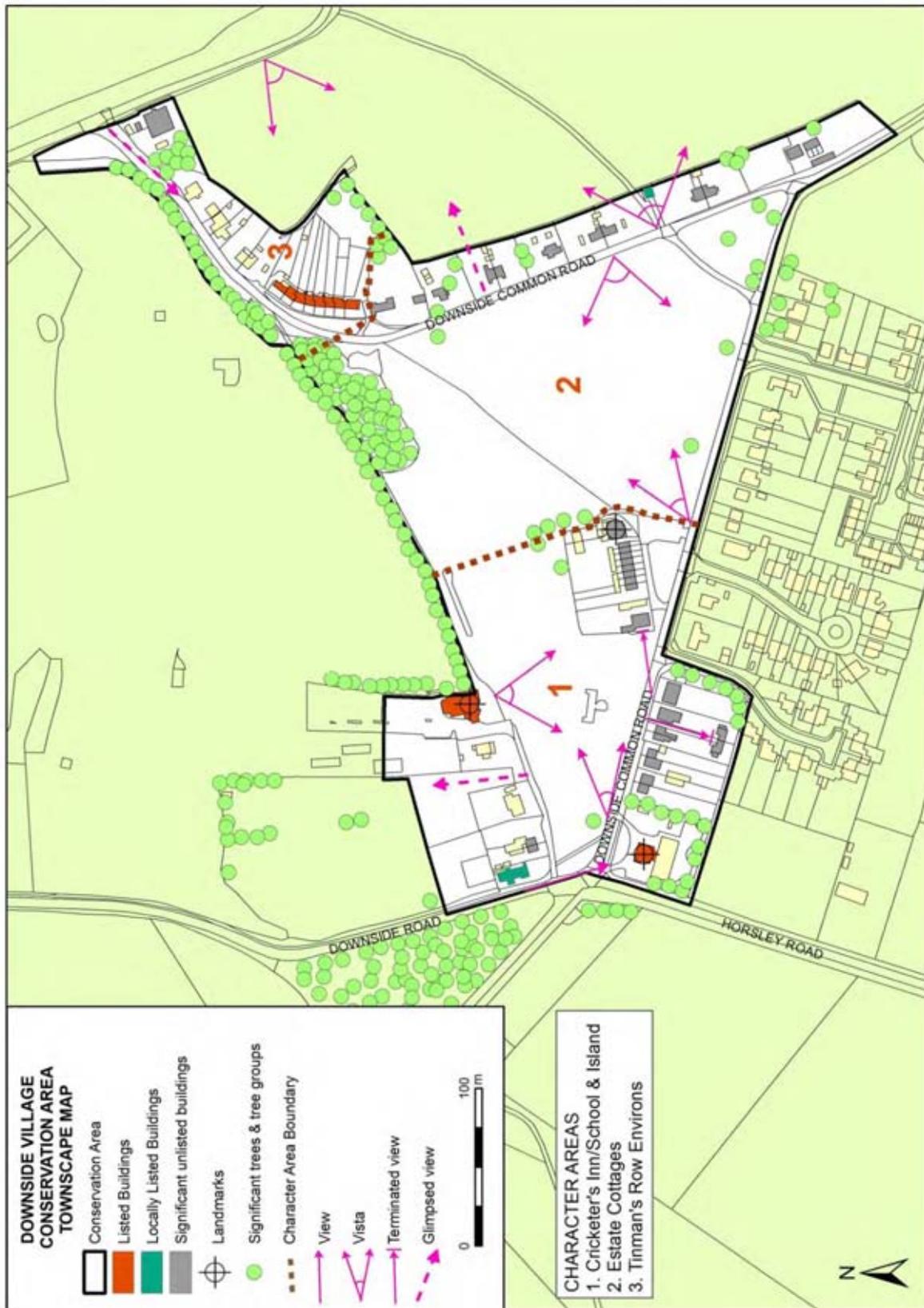
The previous introduction of trees to the northern edge of the Common has in places obscured attractive views north towards Cobham Lodge. These views were noted in the original Statement of Designation. Also, new trees have been introduced to the Common which it is considered should be largely open and free from tree cover. This is a sensitive issue where these are memorial trees. There is a lack of management of trees to the Common with some requiring crown lifting and the clearance of brambles and bushes from below the canopies. However, there needs to be a balance between management for wildlife and amenity.

### **(c) Parking to Common**

Parking levels can become significant in the summer months given the popularity of The Cricketers public house and also during key times of the day notably dropping-off and picking-up time from the primary school. This appears to be contributing to damage to the grassed and, in places, unkerbed edges of the Common.

### **(d) Location and proliferation of play equipment to Common**

Some of the recently installed larger components of play equipment are having a negative impact on the open character of the Common due to the size and extent of the play areas.



Townscape Analysis Map

## Part 2 Conservation Area Management Plan

### 1 Management Plan

#### 1.1 Legislative background

The designation and appraisal of any conservation area is not an end in itself. The purpose of this document is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas' special character, informed by the appraisal, and to consult the local community about these proposals. The special qualities of the conservation area has been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first section of this document and both will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis. This guidance draws upon the themes identified in Section 8 of the conservation area appraisal 'Negative features and issues'. The document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely: "It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas." Section 69(2) states: "It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions....and determine whether any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas"

This document reflects Government policy currently set out in the NPPF, PPS5 guidance, English Heritage guidance as set out in "Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management" (2011), policies and supplementary guidance that form part of the Elmbridge Local Plan, together with the leaflet "Conservation Areas" published by Elmbridge Borough Council. It is important that the development management process ensures the preservation of special character and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements.

#### 1.2 Boundary amendments

The appraisal has highlighted one area for potential inclusion within the Downside Village Conservation Area.

Inclusion: The areas to the north of the rear gardens of The Old School House, Rose Cottage and Appleyard Cottage, Cobbett's, the area to the east of Cobbett's, Woodpecker Nurseries and the car park and area to the north of The Cricketers.

It is considered that these areas currently to the north of the present boundary are integral and historically linked to the present houses and their plot definition is probably medieval in origin. The boundaries can be traced back in cartographic evidence to at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They may not be in the same ownership as the houses fronting the Common but this should not affect the extension of the boundary to include these important areas.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to amend the existing Downside Village Conservation Area to include the area identified above (this is also shown on the Downside Village Conservation Area Location Map).**

### 1.3 Statutory controls

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area. These controls include requiring Planning Permission for the demolition of any unlisted building, fewer permitted development rights for alterations and extensions, restrictions on advertisements and requiring notice for proposed tree works. These are outlined in the Council’s guidance note “Conservation Areas”.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that any development within the conservation area requiring planning permission preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area in accordance with REBLP 2000 saved polices and replacement policies in the forthcoming Development Management DPD.**

### 1.4 Listed buildings

Listed buildings are protected by law as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing covers both the inside and outside of the building, and any structure or building within its curtilage which was built before 1947. “Listed Building Consent” is required from the Council for any work which affects the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. There are presently four Listed Buildings within the Downside Conservation Area.

Extensions and alterations to listed buildings should conform with policies contained within the NPPF and Elmbridge Local Plan and in accordance with the more detailed design advice in Part 2 of this document, and should generally:

- take into account the prevailing forms of development;
- complement the form and character of the original building;
- be secondary in bulk and form to the principal building;
- use high quality materials and detailing;
- pay particular attention to roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and chimneys.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that all works to listed buildings and their settings preserve the special architectural and historic interest of these buildings and conform with national policy and legislation, Local Plan policies and other guidance.**

### 1.5 Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic interest and Significant Unlisted Buildings

In addition to the listed buildings, there are a number of individual and groups of buildings and associated features which are of considerable local interest. These are included on a Local List and the Council will seek to retain these buildings and ensure that new development does not harm the character, appearance or setting of the building. There is a presumption that all such buildings will be retained. Saved Policy HEN8 of the REBLP 2000 currently provides the criteria against which all such proposals for alterations will be assessed but is scheduled to be replaced by policies within the emerging Development Management Plan. There are presently 2 Locally Listed buildings within the Downside Village Conservation Area.

The townscape appraisal also identified a number of additional unlisted buildings which it is considered make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. There are presently 34 Significant Unlisted Buildings within the Downside Village Conservation Area. The Council will encourage all applications for extensions and alterations to these buildings to be particularly carefully considered and assessed against saved Policy HEN11 of the REBLP 2000 and future replacement policies.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that all Locally Listed and Significant Unlisted Buildings are protected from inappropriate forms of development, or unjustified demolition.**

### 1.6 Buildings at Risk

The Council will monitor the condition of statutory listed buildings in the conservation area and, where a listed building is threatened by a lack of maintenance or repair, the Council will use the available statutory powers to force the owner to take action.

The Council also has powers to secure the preservation of unlisted buildings in the conservation area by using Urgent Works Notices in a similar way to listed buildings (Section 54), although in this case, the Secretary of State's permission is required. This is of particularly relevance where a building is important for maintaining the character and appearance of the area. The Council may carry out such works as are necessary and recover the costs incurred from the owners.

In some cases it may be appropriate to direct grant assistance towards buildings at risk within the conservation area. Listed buildings would take priority and thereafter Locally Listed Buildings and finally Significant Unlisted Buildings (see Townscape Analysis map). These funds are limited and subject to change on a year by year basis.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to monitor the condition of all listed buildings and advise action as necessary. Where the condition of a building gives cause for concern, appropriate steps will be taken to secure the future of the building, including the use of statutory powers. The Council will monitor the condition of unlisted buildings as resources permit.**

### 1.7 Additional Planning Controls

The character appraisal has identified that there is a potential threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area from inappropriate alterations to buildings. This is principally due to the loss of original architectural details but it is also due to the inappropriate extension and, in some cases, replacement of buildings outside the conservation area but forming an integral part of its setting. These would be a material consideration when determining a planning application.

The design of extensions and new buildings can normally be controlled through existing planning powers, unless, in the case of extensions they are considered permitted development and these are more limited in conservation areas. In order to ensure a high quality of new development, it is important that the design guidance given in Appendix 1 and general guidance on development in conservation areas is followed.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that planning applications are assessed in accordance with published design guidance.**

## 1.8 Trees

Trees play a major part in the character and appearance of all of the conservation area, either as individual trees on the common, those in private property visible from the public realm or those forming part of the wider landscape context which is so important to the Downside Village Conservation Area. The attention of householders is drawn to the fact that works to trees including felling or lopping should only be undertaken with permission, if they are covered by a Tree Preservation Order, or after a period of notice, if they are within the Conservation Area. Trees that have reached the end of their life should be replaced by a species appropriate to the area and which will achieve a mature height appropriate to their location.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders to further protect trees in appropriate circumstances, where a tree, or group of trees has significant amenity value and is considered to be potentially under threat. This will include trees both within the conservation area and those outside the conservation area which are considered to contribute to its setting, or to views identified in the appraisal.**

## 1.9 Setting and Views

The setting of the conservation area is very important and development which impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views into and from the conservation area will be resisted. The important views are identified on the townscape analysis map in the character appraisal. Particular note should be made of the views from Downside Road on skirting the western edge of the conservation area at this point and also from Cobham Park Road to the east where the views across the fields to the Common are very important to its landscape setting. Similarly views from the eastern edge of the conservation area out over farmed fields are an important part of the character and appearance of the Downside Village Conservation Area. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important sensitive views.

The Townscape Analysis Map gives a general overview of important views into, within and out of the conservation area. There are multiple views across the Common and these are often defined by a built form to the edge, some with gaps between to open countryside and often with a backdrop of dense tree belts which also form such an important part of the setting of the conservation area.

In these views, there are three key local landmarks which tend to dominate those parts of the conservation area within which they are located (please also refer to the Character Area descriptions). Key local landmarks are as follows:

- The Cricketers public house
- St Matthew's Primary School (Figure 28)
- The Village Club (to the eastern end of The Island group)

There are two terminated views within the conservation area, one looking east along Downside Common Road towards the former general stores and post office to The Island group and the other to the distinctive weatherboarded Wood Cottages, between Home Cottage and Florence Cottage.

**Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the conservation area, as identified in the appraisal. The Council will seek to ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development.**



Figure 28: View south along Downside Road towards St Matthew's Primary School

#### 1.10 New development

There are no opportunities for large scale redevelopment within the Downside Village Conservation Area, which is located entirely within the Green Belt, although some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to very rigorous controls. The Council will encourage good quality schemes that respond positively to their historic setting. Further guidance is found in Appendix 1.

**Recommended Action: The Council will determine applications in accordance with local planning policy together with design guidance contained within the Council's Character and Design Supplementary Planning Document adopted in 2012.**

### 1.11 Boundary treatments

In some instances inappropriate boundaries or missing front boundaries to residential properties can detract from the character and appearance of the area. Particular types of boundary treatment are characteristic of different parts of the conservation area and this adds to their distinctiveness. Whilst none of these boundaries are unique or uniform to their areas, they are nevertheless sufficiently in evidence to establish a discernible pattern.

Low wooden painted and unpainted picket fences are found in all parts of the conservation area but most notably to Tinman's Row. Cast iron railings are seen to the Estate cottage group to the east side of the Common. Elsewhere low box hedges are in evidence. The important characteristic of all front and rear boundary treatments is simplicity and this should be continued in any proposals for change or replacement of existing boundary treatments. Combinations of materials such as walls and railings should be avoided as should the use of piers. High hedging would also have detrimental impact on the cohesiveness of some house groups and should be avoided and/or carefully managed. This is important both within and to the edge of the conservation area boundary.

**Recommended Action: The Council will resist proposals to remove or significantly alter traditional boundary walls or for new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of traditional boundary treatments within the distinct character areas of the Downside Village Conservation Area.**

### 1.12 Enhancement Opportunities

Generally the conservation area is well managed. However, a number of issues, particularly relating to management of the Common were identified.

The areas for potential enhancement, in partnership with Leisure Services, are:

- Pond area near Tinman's Row. The area around the pond is currently overgrown but is being purposely managed for wildlife protection. Nevertheless, the pond would benefit from the re-pollarding of a large overhanging crack willow tree to reduce leaf drop and improve the water quality of the pond.
- Woodland area to the north of Tinman's Row. Management of trees to the north is needed to prevent further encroachment onto the common and open up views
- The Common as a whole has been identified as a general enhancement area. Generally trees are valued by residents but they are not an historic feature of the common. The management of trees or possibly removal of a small number of these (avoiding memorial trees) would open up views and help in maintaining the openness of the Common. Recent tree work to a large oak has improved its form and views across the Common. Other opportunities include changing the mowing regime to encourage wildflowers.
- Grass verges – car parking appears to be contributing to damage to grassed edges of the common which are being gradually eroded. However, any management to address this problem would need to consider the need to respect the open and rural character of the conservation area.

**Recommended Action: That the Planning Services and Leisure Services teams work closely with the local community in relation to the positive management of the Common area.**

## 2 Monitoring and Review

The following actions are recommended to ensure that the character appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community.

### 2.1 Public Consultation

The draft Downside Village Conservation Area character appraisal and management proposals have been created by collaborative working through the Downside Village Conservation Area Working Group. This has been a partnership between Elmbridge Borough Council and the local community (including the Conservation Area Advisory Committee). The programme was managed by Forum Heritage Services. An initial workshop identified the key issues important to the area, which were incorporated into the document. Drafts were circulated among the working group prior to a second meeting and then amended in the light of comments received.

The appraisal and management proposals were then subject to a six week period of wider consultation.

### 2.2 Conservation Area Advisory Committee

The Council has an established Downside Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC), which comprises a cross section of local residents, including representatives of amenity associations and professional people. The Council consults the CAAC on applications affecting the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Committee also plays an important role in the general care and monitoring of the conservation area and makes proposals for its improvement.

**Recommended Action: The Council will continue to support and consult the CAAC, and the community in general where appropriate, on applications within the Downside Village Conservation Area. The Council and the CAAC will work together on recording and monitoring projects and identifying and, where appropriate, implementing enhancement opportunities.**

### 2.3 Boundary review

The appraisal has highlighted one area for potential inclusion; The extended boundaries of buildings to the north side of Downside Common to the west of and including The Cricketers public house.

There is archaeological and cartographical evidence for the existence of these boundaries which could be as early as the medieval period in origin and relate to the subdivision of areas of the common for those with manorial rights over tracts of land. These plots often take the form of a long narrow strip with the main building set at one end perpendicular to depth of the plot and usually fronting a lane or road (or in the case of a town a market space). Their survival is significant and readable and their inclusion would be a sensible historic boundary even where there may be separate ownership between these areas and the present buildings fronting the plots. Their survival and in particular their boundary demarkation are important reminders of earlier patterns of land use and the archaeological importance of these surviving plots should be recognised by conservation area designation.

**Recommended Action: The Council will continue to review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.**

## 2.4 Document review

This document should be reviewed periodically in the light of the Local Plan and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area and boundaries
- A 'Heritage Count' comprising of a photographic record of the conservation area
- An assessment of whether the management plan detailed in this document has been acted upon, including proposed enhancements
- A Buildings At Risk survey
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the review to reflect any changes to the character or appearance of the area that have occurred since the current document was prepared and setting out any proposed actions and amendments
- Public consultation on the review findings, any proposed changes and input into the final review

## Appendix 1: Guidelines for New Development

### Introduction

Much of the conservation area is either well established development or important open space which means that opportunities for new buildings within it are limited. However, there are some sites which may come forward for development and there is considerable pressure for the extension of existing dwellings. The aim of these guidance notes is to indicate how the Council will view subsequent applications for change within, or adjacent to, the conservation area.

### Contextual Design

All development, but especially that in conservation areas, must respond to its immediate environment, its 'context', in terms of scale, form, materials and detailing. Applicants for planning permission must therefore provide with their proposals a 'Heritage Statement', to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme developed and how it relates to its context. Most of the development opportunities within the conservation area will be on small, enclosed sites, where the 'context' – the surrounding buildings and the historic grain of the immediate area - may be obvious, but still needs to be acknowledged and respected in new design.

The emphasis in any new development or alterations must be on the need to provide a high quality of design. This could be modern design, providing a contemporary statement, or, more generally in historic areas, a traditional design solution. Positive change in the historic townscape can provide vitality and interest to the streetscape and designation as a conservation area should not stifle well thought-out contemporary design of a quality in material and detailing terms as its neighbours.

The basic form of new buildings or extensions should be governed by the urban grain, scale, height and massing of existing development. These elements should be used to set out the basic form of the building or addition, including roof shape and pitch, height, depth of plan and the rhythm and composition of the façade.

### Urban grain

The "urban grain", or form, of historic development has been described in Part 1 of this document. It varies according to location but is also consistent to groups of houses, for example to the south-west of the Common edge, The Island and the north-east corner the tight grain of the historic development with long narrow deep plots and relatively small or no gaps between houses varies considerably to the far wider gaps between houses to the east and north side of the Common.

The degree of coverage of built form to the plot width is an important part of the character of the various groups found around the Common. This ratio of plot to open space should be very carefully considered and responded to when considering development which might change in real terms and/or the perception of these gaps and plot sizes in the streetscape.

This "urban grain" is an important part of the character and appearance of the Downside Conservation Area and should be protected. Proposals for new development must include a detailed analysis of the immediate locality and demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local townscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios. This is particularly important on sites which front the Common and on sites which have a

dual aspect and can be seen in distant views such as those houses to the east side of the Common. It is also very relevant to development to the edge of the conservation areas most notably to the south-east edge and sections of Middleton Road.

## **Scale**

Scale is the combination of a building's height and bulk when related to its surroundings. The scale of traditional buildings within the conservation area is rarely more than a modest two storeys. This is the case throughout the conservation area and there is a notable welcome absence of the retro-fitting of roofspaces for accommodation. There are no dormer windows, roof extensions or rooflights which maintain the modest cottage scale of most buildings and make the continuous uninterrupted roof planes all the more important and sensitive to change.

Almost all of the residential buildings in the conservation area have a modest cottage scale and it will be important to maintain this scale in future changes to these buildings. Extensions which change the scale of buildings from a cottage scale to something larger should be resisted as this would erode the special character of the conservation area.

Care must also be taken with changes to buildings to the edge of the conservation area as whilst there is some scope for changes to the scale of some buildings, these should not become large houses as this would be completely alien to the established scale of built form which presently encloses the Common.

It is important that the character areas identified in the appraisal are respected by new development. In practice, it is the combination of scale with layout, landscaping and other factors which determines the quality and "feel" of new developments. Developments which have a detrimental effect on the character of the conservation area will be resisted. Part 1 of the document explains the historic development of the area and new development must recognize the often subtle differences in building pattern and form which can be attributed to different periods of development in Downside.

## **Height and massing**

Within the conservation area, some buildings are already more prominent because of their height and massing. Generally, the height of any new development should match the adjoining buildings. This is particularly the case in Downside. This should not be the height of the highest buildings but the height of the majority of buildings which make up a group (see character area descriptions for the definition of groups).

Massing is the combination of the scale of the development, its layout and its site coverage. The majority of redevelopment in the conservation area will be extensions to existing buildings. Given existing constraints, there is very limited scope for new buildings within the conservation area.

## Appearance, materials and detailing

Both traditional and modern approaches to design are appropriate in a conservation area, provided these are both well executed.

High quality materials are very important for any new development. Existing buildings in the conservation area makes use of a wide variety of materials, including red stock-brick, red handmade rubbed bricks and painted weatherboarding and handmade red clay tiles (and some examples of pantiles) and natural Welsh slate for roofs. This palette remains appropriate for both traditional and modern designs. Presumption will be in favour of the use of best quality building materials including handmade brick and clay tiles and natural slates.

Traditional roofs particularly of handmade clay tiles are becoming increasingly rare and their retention is important within the conservation area. There are some good examples of the combination of materials such as the polychrome brickwork to the Estate buildings, the use of local red brick with clay tiles and natural slate elsewhere to house groups and the imaginative and thoughtful use of vernacular materials to the arts and crafts inspired buildings such as The Old School House (Locally Listed), St Matthew's Primary School (Statutory Listed Grade II) and the Village Club (Significant Unlisted Building). Painted weatherboarding may also be appropriate (seen to Wood Cottages) as can the use of pantiles – these often work well on outbuildings or small extensions.

The composition of facades should harmonise with adjacent buildings in terms of storey, height, rhythm and proportions. This need not imply a slavish copy of the existing buildings, but an informed response to them.

Where a more traditional approach is appropriate, the Council will expect new buildings which are designed in a traditional form within the conservation area, to be detailed in a manner appropriate to the historic setting. Roofs should be pitched and covered in plain clay tiles or natural slate.

Where a traditional design is adopted, windows should be painted, not stained, sashes or side hung casements. Glazing bars should be narrow, in keeping with most of the buildings in the conservation area. Casements should sit flush with the surrounding frame and avoid the use of trickle vents or storm seals. If windows are to be double glazed, then they must be carefully designed. Avoidance of glazing bars (where these aren't a distinctive feature of an area) which can otherwise appear to be over-dominant, can assist in achieving a satisfactory solution. Consideration should be given to alternative ways of complying with Building Regulations if traditional windows are to be used.

In all cases, modern top-hung lights and non-traditional materials, such as plastic or aluminium, are generally unacceptable for windows in the conservation area, particularly where a new building abuts a listed building or faces a principal street. Doors should also be of painted timber. In all cases, joinery details must be submitted with the planning or listed building consent applications.

## Design check list

All new development in the area should seek to:

- Where relevant and appropriate, achieve continuity in street frontage building lines, either set on the back edge of the pavement (in the case of shops), or behind shallow front gardens or forecourt enclosures;
- Maintain the historic pattern of development by respecting the historic grain associated with historic plots and the historic morphology of the immediate area, including retained spaces between buildings which contribute to the local character;
- Complement the human scale, height and massing of historic development in the immediate streetscape and the wider conservation area;
- Reflect the proportion of solid to void found in the elevation of traditional buildings and employ robust detailing, avoiding fussy or gimmicky use of applied features or detailing;
- Respect the historic hierarchy of development and detailing between principal and secondary street frontages, and within plots between frontage and rear elevations;
- Conceal any parking or servicing areas behind built frontages of appropriate scale, or by the sensitive use of hard and soft landscaping to provide screening;
- Reinforce local identity by the use of the traditional materials used in the conservation area;
- Re-use traditional buildings which contribute to townscape quality.

## Appendix 2: Sources and further reading

Nairn, I, & Pevsner, N, 1971 The Buildings of England Surrey, Penguin

Ravenhill, W, 1974 Two hundred and fifty years of map-making in the County of Surrey: A collection of reproductions of printed maps published between the years 1579-1823

SCC 1976 Antiquities and Conservations Areas of Surrey, Surrey County Council Town & Country Planning Committee

Parkinson A 1980 Cobham A Short History and Guide to the Conservation Areas Cobham Conservation Group

Taylor D 2000 Downside - Another Look, Appleton Publications

Taylor D 2003 Cobham A History Phillimore and Co Ltd

Taylor D 2006 An Estate for All Seasons Phillimore and Co Ltd

VCH The Victoria history of the county of Surrey, ed H E Malden, 1902-12, 4 vols

Phelps M, Paynter S, and Dungworth D 2011 Downside Mill, Cobham, Surrey Analysis of the Metalworking Remains Research Department Report Series 43-2011 English Heritage

### **For further information regarding planning and conservation related matters**

Planning Services  
Elmbridge Borough Council  
Civic Centre, High Street,  
Esher, Surrey  
Tel: 01372 474474  
KT10 9SD  
[www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning)

### **Further information regarding local history**

Elmbridge Museum  
Church Street, Weybridge  
Tel: 01932 843573  
Surrey, KT13 8DE  
[www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk](http://www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk)

Surrey History Centre  
130 Goldsworth Road  
Tel: 01483 518737  
Woking, Surrey  
GU21 6ND  
[www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre)

## **General information related to listed buildings and conservation areas**

English Heritage  
General enquiries:  
Tel: 0870 333 1181  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### **For technical guidance**

The Georgian Group  
6 Fitzroy Square  
Tel: 087 1750 2936  
London W1T 5DX  
[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

The Victorian Society  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
Tel: 020 8994 1019  
London W4 1TT  
[www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)  
37 Spital Square  
Tel: 020 7377 1644  
London E1 6DY  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)





Cobham Lodge

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