

CHAILEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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Introduction

In 2016, Chailey Parish Council made the momentous decision to pursue the development and adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan, under the corresponding Government Legislation.

By doing so, the Council hopes to influence the nature and future development of new properties within the Parish, because the policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan should be taken into consideration by the Planning Authority when determining the outcome of any planning applications in the district.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that Neighbourhood Plans ensure that development is based on an understanding and evaluation of an area's defining characteristics and should help to establish a strong sense of place. To that end, the following Appraisal of the Character of Chailey Parish has been developed.

What is a Character Appraisal?

A character assessment is a document that describes the distinct appearance and feel of a settlement or an area. It communicates the key physical features and characteristics that combine to give a particular settlement or an area its local distinctiveness and unique identity. In this instance, the following study will define the character of the different settlements of Chailey Parish as a series of character areas. To some extent, the division into the various character areas may be thought arbitrary, but is dictated by common use by residents and the geography of the Parish. The areas are as follows:

- Village Centre/Chailey Green Conservation Area
 - Located in the countryside 6.5 miles north of Lewes and in the centre of the Parish/Neighbourhood Area
 - The A275 runs through the area on a north-south axis and is widely lined with mature trees
 - Chailey Green lies to the west of the A275, providing some sparse historic nucleated development
 - There are a number of Listed Buildings in this area, such as St Peter's Church and Chailey Moat

- The existing buildings are largely historic buildings free from significant external alterations
 - Red handmade clay bricks are the defining building material
 - Buildings in the area are predominantly two storey dwelling houses
 - Within 500m buffer of Ancient Woodland

- North Common
 - Located in the north of the Parish/Neighbourhood Area
 - The main roads (A275 and A272) intersect in this area of Chailey. There are small clusters of development along them, especially the east-west axis (A272)
 - Contains significant areas of Common land
 - Has small active retail centre
 - Contains small industrial estate
 - The Bluebell Railway has its main station here
 - Contains Chailey Heritage
 - New Heritage is a new development on former Heritage land

- South Common
 - Located to the south of Chailey Green on main N-S axis
 - Includes large concentration of affordable housing
 - Includes several recent housing developments
 - Contains the main secondary school
 - Contains Chailey Brick works – an important local business
 - Includes the historic Balneath Manor
 - Adjacent Markstakes Common

- Cinder Hill/Oxbottom Lane
 - Located to the East of Chailey Green and South of the A-272
 - Contains many listed buildings
 - Contains Rowheath Recreation Area
 - Contains Roheath and Ades Mansion

- St George's Conservation Area and Windmill
 - Located North of A-272 on rising land
 - Includes the Chailey Windmill, the symbol of Chailey

- Residential development of architectural importance including St George's Chapel
- Formerly part of Chailey Heritage

Reference is made in this document to Listed Buildings and to Conservation Areas. In each case, we use the terms as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Under Section 1(1) of the latter Act:

Listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

- (1) For the purposes of this Act and with a view to the guidance of local planning authorities in the performance of their functions under this Act and the principal Act in relation to buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the Secretary of State shall compile lists of such buildings, or approve, with or without modifications, such lists compiled by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (in this Act referred to as "the Commission") or by other persons or bodies of persons, and may amend any list so compiled or approved.

In subsection (5):

In this Act "listed building" means a building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section.

And under Section 69:

Designation of conservation areas.

- (1) Every local planning authority—
 - (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and
 - (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.
- (2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine

whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

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

Policy Context

Section 7 of the NPPF highlights the importance of design in the planning process. It notes that:

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”. (Paragraph 56)

In addition, it states that:

“It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.” (Paragraph 57).

With specific reference to Neighbourhood Plans, the Framework states:

“Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.” (Paragraph 59).*

Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the importance of ensuring that planning policy has a vital role to play in the integration of development into existing communities, noting:

“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.” (Paragraph 61).

Due notice will also be taken of the Lewes Local Plan and the Joint Core Strategy, both of which may be found on the Lewes District Council’s website.

General Description of Chailey Parish and its History

Chailey is a dispersed settlement, typical of the Lower Weald and of East Sussex, an agricultural landscape of isolated farms and farm dwellings. The 19th century map below shows this area: the named villages of Plumpton, Lindfield, Fletching and Newick surround a large area, unnamed but which represents (Chailey) North Common and South Common. The Parish of Chailey (derivative Chag Ley) still lies around the Common, and it is significant that today's Ordnance Survey map marks so many farms, many of which have become private dwellings; however, at least five farms (the Hooke, Townings, Wapsbourne, Bush, Vixengrove, and Heasemans) still work the land; and the village includes three stud farms – Chailey, Bevernbridge, and River Farm.



It may be helpful at this point to record the facilities and characteristics of Chailey neighbourhood and where they are placed along the nine-mile North-South axis, which defines the village. Salient geographical features are:

- Chailey Common, a Local Nature Reserve and SSSI; (it has become commonplace to refer to North and South Chailey as if they were separate villages. However, these names derive from the division of that area known as Chailey into North Common and South Common, with the village standing around the central Green and St Peter's Church, now known as the Chailey Green Conservation Area).
- two major (A) roads which intersect at the King's Head crossroads (North Common) – being the A-272 (the former Pilgrims' track between Winchester and Canterbury) and the A-275 which runs from Lewes in the South to East Grinstead, crossing the Ouse valley and rising to the Ashdown Forest.
- Settlement lies along the two major roads with important industrial features: the Bluebell Business Park alongside Sheffield Park station, headquarters of the Heritage Bluebell Railway at the North; and Chailey Brickworks, the oldest working brickworks in the UK, to the South. Residential settlement has clustered around the crossroads and the brickworks and developed in a spinal pattern of closes and lanes leading from the main arteries.
- St. Peter's Church, established in 1256, is the oldest building in the village.
- Chailey Windmill, reputed, along with the age-old yew in St Peter's Churchyard, to be the geographical centre of Sussex.
- The Greenwich Meridian passes through the village.
- Chailey Heritage, an internationally famous specialist school for disabled children, lies in North Common.
- Dark Skies area – Chailey is known for its dark skies, relatively free of light pollution and other atmospheric pollution, which makes Chailey an ideal location for astronomy, including visual observation and astrophotography. Some residents of Chailey have taken advantage of this and have set up amateur observatories, producing images of the night sky, which have been published in specialist journals and shown on the BBC.

These features and the two roads define the specifics of Chailey Village which is the largest village by surface area in Sussex: parts of the village have long been known as North Common, Chailey Green, and South Common, but these designations do not take into account the farmland

and regions of the Common which spread to East and West. Chailey Green is the centre of this area and formerly housed small businesses: a butcher, a jeweller, a tailor, a smithy and others, but is now a Conservation area centred on St Peter's Church and the Parish Office and Reading Room. Larger houses and farmsteads (many being listed dwellings) from earlier centuries to the present, have developed along lanes to either side of these roads and more specifically in 'closes' - effectively lanes off the central spine of the A-275 and the A-272.



St.Peter's Churchyard, with the ancient yew, said to mark the centre of Sussex

Prior to the 1850s and the construction of the railways, the area of Sussex between Ashdown Forest and the South Downs (known as the Low Weald) was rural and sparsely populated, with small villages, isolated houses and small-scale, locally-based industry. Many of the larger houses originated in the medieval period and, together with some more modest cottages, survive today and form the core of our Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Typically, these were timber-framed, with local stock brick and clay tile roofs, but some more prestigious buildings used local sandstones and Horsham stone roofs. Flint is also used. The roofs were characteristically steep, compared to modern construction. Notwithstanding its rural character, Chailey was comparatively well served by highways, with the modern A-275 and A-272 corridors closely following earlier routes, many hundreds of years old.

With the coming of the railways, more particularly the construction of the Lewes – East Grinstead line in the early 1880s, development increased and new building techniques and materials were introduced. Initially, stock bricks still predominated, but were now mass-produced, and some natural slates took the place of clay tiles. However, traditions of brick, flint, tile and timber weatherboarding and varied roof patterns were still followed.

Significant changes in the style and construction of buildings came with availability of cheap road transport following WW2. Mass-produced and Fletton bricks came from the Midlands; concrete roof tiles became available in flat and pantile forms. Windows and doors were made in factories to standard patterns, rather than by local joiners; later, plastic and UPVC replaced timber and metal in doors, windows and pipes. With a few exceptions, new developments and infill in Chailey from this time (say 1960 – 1980) have no obvious design theme, or link to the traditional designs and materials of the Low Weald. Examples can be seen in infill and ribbon (along roads) developments from this period, a particularly illustrative example being in Lower Station Road where there is a marked contrast between the earlier fine Edwardian houses and the modern replacements on the former railway land. However, these tend to have the saving grace of being small-scale, with large gardens, mature landscaping and varied design, largely by local builders.

The original core of Chailey was centred on St Peter's Church, but two other areas have been created by some ribbon development straggling along roads in South Chailey and North Common. However, more recent developments have largely avoided the unpleasant appearance that this creates by setting housing back in separate Closes off the main routes.



Panorama of Chailey with St Peter's Church

The provision of housing since the 1980s has been dominated by estates, blocks of housing of uniform design carried out by a single developer and based on a design book which might cover the whole country; houses now familiar in Chailey might be just as familiar to residents of Truro or Doncaster, but have little connection to the houses which came before. These developments probably brought more affordable housing to more people than would have been achieved otherwise, but are also the source of most of the current criticism of the quality of our built environment.

Heritage and Conservation

Historic Buildings

A building may be regarded as historically significant for a variety of reasons. The designation is likely to be used where the original or past occupants were well-known in the community or made a notable contribution to the community, or where an event of historic importance occurred in the building, or where the building illustrates a historical issue such as local agriculture or community life. The architecture of the building also of course plays an important role.

There are many historically significant buildings in Chailey, some of which are protected from demolition and inappropriate alteration by their designation as Listed Buildings, because of their architectural and/or historical importance and are graded II or II*. The historically significant buildings, including listed buildings, are identified in Appendix 1.



Roeheath – Main Entrance

Balneath Manor, located in South Common, was once part of the estates of St Pancras' Priory, Lewes. The manor was granted to Thomas Cromwell at the Dissolution in 1537, and then passed to Anne of Cleves

and subsequently Sir William Goring, with whose descendants it remained until c.1900.

These buildings are central to the character of Chailey and should be protected. The regulation of Listed Buildings and the implementation of legislation is vested in Lewes District Council (LDC) and Historic England, but it might be considered appropriate that the NP should include a supportive policy:

Listed Buildings, and other buildings of historical and/or architectural interest, should be preserved and conserved and not affected by adverse alterations, including inappropriate additions in the curtilage or within their setting.



Balneath Manor – Entrance Gates

Conservation Areas

Since the late 1960s, Lewes District Council, as local planning authority (LPA), has been able to declare Conservation Areas to protect and enhance areas of particular character. The main purposes of such Areas is to prevent unauthorised demolition of significant non-listed buildings and to ensure that new development protects and enhances the area; less development can be carried out without planning permission and there are requirements to advertise planning applications. Conservation Areas are

usually, but not exclusively, centred on a core of Listed Buildings, as is the case in Chailey.

Chailey currently includes two such Conservation Areas: Chailey Green and St. George's.

Chailey Green Conservation Area is, understandably, centered on the historic core of Listed Buildings around St Peter's Church. Chailey Green was first designated as a Conservation Area in June 1976. Reference may also be made to the Conservation Area Appraisal document prepared by Lewes District Council in 2003. Appendix 2 is a map of Chailey Green Conservation Area.

St George's was first designated as a Conservation Area in June 1995. The development includes buildings around the windmill, the historic centre of Sussex, with the adjacent former buildings of Chailey Heritage. Whilst the latter have been converted to residential use, their character has been retained as attractive buildings in an historic setting. A map of the St George's Conservation area is presented as Appendix 3.

Village Centre/Chailey Green Conservation Area



Chailey Green with Reading Room and War Memorial

Spatial Analysis

Chailey Green is located within the countryside, 6.5 miles to the north of Lewes. Lewes Road, the A-275, runs through the conservation area on the eastern boundary of the Green. Several narrow lanes run around and off the Green and Chailey Green Road. The road which we now know as the A-275 was updated to become a turnpike in the late 18th century, and was re-routed to avoid passing through the grounds of Chailey Place.

The area has a distinct identity because it is one of the few nucleated historic settlements within Chailey. Despite being within the open countryside, the conservation area has a pervading sense of enclosure, almost separateness, provided by the concentration of buildings that surround The Green. Nevertheless, the rural setting is an integral part of the character of the conservation area, with views across open fields possible in several locations.

The conservation area lies along Chailey Green Road, which also includes "The Five Bells" public house, thought to be 16th Century. This building was historically one of a string of coaching inns along the route between London and Brighton. Chailey is shown on the London to Shoreham route in John Ogilby's 'Britannia', dating from 1672, which is considered one of the first road maps to be published in Europe.

Nature of Buildings

Buildings in Chailey Green are mostly various historic residential dwellings. There are a number of larger detached houses, including Chailey Moat, Beards and Chailey Place but it is the modest houses that are the most prevalent building type in Chailey Green. Other, less numerous building types in the conservation area include vernacular farm buildings, St. Peter's Church, the Five Bells public house, the Reading Room, the forge (now a house adjacent to Durrants) and the Chailey Church of England Primary School.

Several of the buildings in the conservation area are on the Council's local list or have been statutory listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Of the statutory listed buildings, all are grade II listed with the exception of The Parish Church of St. Peter which is designated grade II*.

In addition to the conservation area's statutory listed buildings, a number of unlisted buildings have been noted as being positive buildings, i.e. buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These buildings are various, but typically they represent examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the conservation area with architectural and/or historic interest. There is a presumption that positive buildings within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Council will only grant consent for applications for alterations or extensions to these buildings where they preserve or enhance their character and appearance.

Houses are typically two storeys high, with a variety of roof forms including hipped, pitched, half-hipped and cat-slide, with dormers a rare intrusion into the front roof slopes. Brick chimneys also feature prominently on residential properties. All the houses have a limited palate of materials and architectural detailing. There are also a number of farm buildings, which have a vernacular appearance and are constructed of local materials.

The buildings of Chailey Green feature locally available materials, but also more unusual materials imported into the village from further field. Red handmade clay bricks could be said to be the defining material in the conservation area as it is one of the commonest. It is the dominant elevational treatment in buildings such as Beards, The Lodge, Corner Cottage, Heasmans Cottages, Bosun (now painted), Durrants (although the front elevation is now mostly rendered), the Rectory (which is tile hung on the first floor) and a number of the farm buildings adjacent to Church Farm, to name a few.

A notable type of brick within the conservation area is the vitrified header. This form of glazed brick became fashionable in the Georgian period and has been used on several buildings, such as on the ground floor of Chailey Moat, Church Farm Cottage, Church House Cottage and The Lodge. While red brick is the dominant building material, there are also a number of other materials, which make a smaller but not insignificant contribution to the character of the conservation area.



Appearance of wall using Vitrified Headers



Chailey Green looking North

Topography

The conservation area is located on a slight ridge with the southern side raised and gently sloping down to the north. The immediate surrounding countryside is softly undulating. Geologically the conservation area is

comprised of clay, which has historically been used to make bricks, tiles and pottery. This accounts for the prevalence of brick and tiles used in the construction of many of the historic buildings in Chailey Green and the surrounding area.



St Peter's 13th Century Church

There are two landscape conservation designations within the Conservation Area. There is a Site of Conservation Importance located in St. Peter's churchyard and the whole settlement is within a 500 meter buffer of Ancient Woodland.

Views into and out of the conservation area are limited as a consequence of the enclosing effect of the surrounding properties. However, views of the wider countryside are possible along the northern part of Lewes Road between the Reading Room and Chailey Primary School, although these are limited by the mature trees located between the road and the fields. There is also a tree-lined vista into the conservation area from the south along Lewes Road, which also provides some views of the open countryside, the vista being terminated by Place Cottage and Beards.

Another tree-lined vista is found up and down the lane that leads to Chailey Moat, also either side of the lane there are fields which can be seen through a continual line of trees. Standing on The Green, looking at the properties that enclose it, also gives a number of interesting views and vistas. The conservation area has several public foot paths running through and around it, providing views and vistas of the village and the surrounding countryside.

History

The name Chailey is thought to derive from the Saxon word “chag” which referred to the gorse and broom which grew in the area. The area's name has evolved, during the late 11th Century and early 12th Century when it was known as Chagleigh, and prior to the 17th Century as Chagley. The oldest standing building in the conservation area is St. Peter's Church, part of which dates from the 13th Century.



Lychgate of St Peter's Church, with ancient yew, the centre of Sussex

Several buildings are thought to date from the 17th Century, including Durrants and the Corner Cottage. Chailey Moat, Bosun and Beards too are from this period although they were given a classical makeover in the

18th Century. There are also a number of attractive Victorian properties, but since the late 19th century, the settlement has changed little, with only a few modern infill houses and agricultural buildings having intruded.

The conservation area provides a number of significant historic buildings, which together form a cohesive whole. St. Peter's Church on the southern side of the Green is the main focal point, although all the buildings that enclose the Green are notable. Perhaps most notable is the house called Beards, to the southern side of the Green, next door to St. Peter's, because of its distinctive Georgian character and its slightly raised location due to the gentle north-south slope in the topography.

Notable also is the Reading Room, which, while a small single storey building, which appears to have been altered significantly in its history, is a focal point because it sits prominently on The Green.



Chailey Green looking East



Approach to Chailey Moat



Chailey Moat



Heaseman's Cottages

North Common

Spatial Analysis

The settled area of North Common is focussed on the junction of the A272 and A275, known after the pub as the King's Head crossroads. These major roads present a country landscape as they run into the junction and beyond – Chailey Common runs well beyond the fenced area on the West side of the A272 towards Scaynes Hill. Northwards the land to either side is not included within a defined settlement, and development is sporadic in character. There are substantial gaps between the dwellings and little development in depth. It has for the last forty

years been the policy to avoid an undesirable ribbon of housing which would erode the character of the countryside (viz. 2003 Lewes District Local Plan RES6). Eastwards development has focussed on the brownfield railway lands and on the minor lanes Hazeldene and Coldharbour, but Warren Cottages, for example, stand well back from the road, forming a small complex.

In this sense Wapsbourne Manor, to the north, portrays the traditional feel of a countryside where the farmhouses and buildings were situated in an agricultural landscape: many of these houses and the dependent cottages were situated well back from the road, the larger houses set in generous gardens and the whole giving a somewhat random but essentially 'green' appearance. These two major roads are interconnected by lanes, with the exception of Warrs Hill, which continues beyond Chailey.

In contrast to the Eastern side, the Common dominates the Western side which leads towards Wivelsfield, developing into significant agricultural holdings, specifically Townings Farm, whose animals still graze the Common as part of our regeneration scheme, and the broad areas which, in the Second World War, formed Chailey Airfield. As already noted, it is an area of isolated farmsteads including the Elizabethan Longridge Farmhouse, some of which have become principal residences and others which work the land.

The Northern area of Chailey typifies the description of the village as a 'dispersed settlement' stated in the introduction to this document. The earliest record of the Bounds being Beaten dates from 1691 and this custom was revived in the form of an Annual Race in 1976 until the turn of the century, but continues in the Annual Link Walk.

North Common is the traditional term for this Northern area, which, unlike South Common, has retained significant common land – Chailey Common. The Common comprises a series of four contiguous and individually named commons, with a fifth separated common to the North. Chailey Common was designated as a Local Nature Reserve by Lewes District Council and the greatest part is also an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

Nature of Buildings

The King's Head crossroads remains an active retail centre, with its pub, petrol station and cafe. An important development is currently under way at the King's Head, intended to maintain the pub but to use its land to accommodate some fourteen smaller dwellings: one-bed flats; two-three bed housing. This is the style of accommodation which emerged as desirable from discussion with, in particular, Chailey Heritage, the largest employer in Chailey. The scheme takes advantage of the easy access to limited shopping and to bus routes.

This junction also includes a set of houses, which begin to give the 'feel' of the village. Besides the small café opposite the petrol station with its shop, the area includes St Mary's Church, now a private house, and standing within the cemetery which contains the grave of cricketer John Langridge, alongside the Sports Ground. The various houses visible from the main road show a range of styles which reflect passing architectural fads, but behind which lie a quite considerable number of further dwellings, forming the nucleus of a settlement.

New Heritage, located north of the A272, is the largest and most recent of developments in Chailey. It comprises a mixture of modern constructions and older properties. Considerable effort was clearly made to make the design appropriate to its setting; thus we have a local stock brick and some plain tiles with some interesting groupings of houses and a "village green" effect on the main approach road. There is some tile hanging, varied roofline and painted elevations which give a different mix, but the smaller, plainer groups of buildings and terraces give a much stronger townscape. The development is located on former "brownfield" land and consequently is located at a remote location, some distance from facilities such as schools, shops and employment. As is often the case in rural areas, the residents therefore make use of cars for the majority of journeys. To accommodate this, on parts of the estate, parking areas are provided in addition to individual garaging.

North Common now also includes an important industrial/commercial area, now known as the Bluebell industrial estate, which lies where the A275 passes out of Chailey to the North. Together with the Bluebell Railway, it stands on land which was formerly occupied by Turner's Sawmill and, across the road, Woodgate Dairies. Although standing at a junction with Fletching and Newick parishes, the greatest effect of the activity within this area (and the adjoining National Trust property, Sheffield Park) is felt by Chailey. Each property attracts more than

150,000 visitors a year who appreciate the relatively unspoilt surrounding countryside, making North Common the gateway to a valuable tourist business.

The Bluebell Railway, Britain's leading heritage railway, employs significant numbers of engineers and customer service staff; it also offers apprenticeships. The Business Park accommodates several large businesses, which include distribution, repair, groundworks and timber together with smaller start-ups in refurbished industrial units, which lie alongside the heritage railway.

History

Chailey Common was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and was used over a long period of time for grazing livestock and cutting wood and bracken for fuel. The area belonged to the manor of Balneath, South Common, once part of the estates of St Pancras' Priory, Lewes. The manor was granted to Thomas Cromwell at the Dissolution in 1537, and then passed to Anne of Cleves and subsequently Sir William Goring, with whose descendants it remained until c.1900.

In the northern end of North Common may be found Wapsbourne Manor, one of our most distinguished farmhouses. Described by one author as *all rather grand* and built for an ironmaster in 1605, it not only boasts three storeys in the local brick but *has immense chimneybreasts from which rise two groups of three vertiginous diamond-plan stacks*.

A major feature of North Common is Chailey Heritage, a nationally-recognised disability charity. Chailey Heritage School was initially set up as a school for disabled children and has since steadily evolved into school for pupils with highly complex combination physical and cognitive issues.

The earliest of the buildings which today constitute the Heritage, were distinguished examples of the Arts and Crafts movement and St Martin's Chapel, whose spire dominates a northern view from the Common, was designed by Ninian Comper who also designed the interior. The School expanded to three sites within Chailey, mainly on land gifted by local farmers or families, but its reputation today is built on the 'thalidomide' disaster in the 1960s, when the School acquired an international reputation in the development and utilisation of prosthetics. The school is

for children and young adults, aged between 3 and 19, with complex physical disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, and associated learning difficulties.

In the 1980's the Foundation decided to focus its activities onto its original site and the other sites were sold off as 'brownfield'. The Nurses' home was demolished and has become a double-gated development of six very large houses (but still set back from Lane End Common). St George's, the distinguished residential block for Boys, by JBS Comper and standing on a magisterial site atop the Common and with a grand aspect of the Downs, was retained and converted into maisonettes. This is the second Conservation area within Chailey and is described elsewhere in this document.

The largest land area of the Heritage, the New Heritage, which accommodated the Girls, was eventually sold as a brownfield development site, described above.

Topography

North Common in many ways represents the traditional face of East Sussex: set in broad and generous stretches of agricultural and woodland hiding farmsteads and their associated buildings, many now converted into established homes or diversified into countryside activities, e.g. the WOWO camping business situate at Wapsbourne Manor.

These landscape views along the two main highways (A272 and A275) remind one that this area was also important horticulturally – soft fruit (currants and gooseberries) dominated the fields and pickers came down by the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway from London in the summer. The last such farm, Glendene, stood along Station Road (A272) and ceased growing at the turn of the century.



Entrance to Sheffield Park Station on the Bluebell Railway



Platform at Sheffield Park Station



Sheffield Park Business Estate



The A-275 near the King's Head Crossroads



Street Scene at New Heritage



Green at New Heritage

South Common

Spatial Analysis & Topography

The main route through South Chailey is the A275, originally linking London in the north to Lewes and the South Coast. Running uphill from south to north, it is characterised by a series of roads and closes running east to west off the main road, e.g. Mill Lane, Appledene, Hornbuckles and Whitegates Close. Mill Lane is the principal road running east to west and connects South Chailey with the Parish of East Chiltington.

There are two main settlements within the southern area of the Parish, one around the junction of Mill Lane and the A275 (known variously as South Chailey or South Common), and South Street at the corner of Markstakes Lane and the A275 (in the vicinity of the Horns Lodge Public House).

Located between South Chailey and South Street is Chailey Brickworks, the last in a long line of potteries and brickworks in South Chailey, dating back over 200 years and exploiting the heavy clay belt that runs through the village.

At the south the boundary of the Parish is formed by a stream at Bevernbridge. The area of open land originally known as South Common lies to the north west of Mill Lane, but is no longer a public Common. However Markstakes Common, to the east of South Street and south of Markstakes Lane, with Balneath Wood behind, still forms an important wildlife area.

Several of the new or relatively new developments, in closes off the main road, are described in more detail below.

History

As previously mentioned, the A275 was formerly a turnpike running between the south coast and London. As a consequence, a number of inns became established along the route. These include *The Five Bells* near Chailey Green, and *The Horns Lodge* and *The Swan* (Grade II Listed and now converted to a private residence) in South Chailey.

There are several Listed Buildings in South Chailey, which, with the exception of Ovenden, seem to be originally outlying farmsteads, such as Woodbrooks Farmhouse, Furzeley Farmhouse or larger residences such as The Hooke, Balneath and Bevernbridge House.

Also of interest on Mill Lane are the remains of a windmill (from where the road gets its name) and the adjoining house, which once formed the bakery to the mill. All that remains is the lower part of the mill building.

There was once a tin church, St John's, opened in 1895, but this was demolished in the 1970's and housing built on the site.

On the western edge of the village on Mill Lane is the Pouchlands development, formerly the Chailey Union Workhouse and later a psychiatric hospital.

In South Common may be found the historic manor of Balneath, once part of the estates of St Pancras' Priory, Lewes. The manor was granted to Thomas Cromwell at the Dissolution in 1537, and then passed to Anne of Cleves and subsequently Sir William Goring, with whose descendants it remained until c.1900.

Nature of Buildings

Along the main road (A275) in South Chailey, the houses are almost exclusively detached and semi-detached two storey houses, mostly built of local bricks with tiled roofs. A notable exception is Grantham Close which consists of several blocks of flats for elderly residents. There are some single storey bungalows mixed in, for example along Kilnwood Lane. There are also some older houses such as Peter House and Crockers. Overall, this leads to a very mixed housing area.

Mill Lane consists largely of semi-detached houses with occasional detached properties, an exception being St Johns Bank, which is comprised of bungalows. It is characterised by modern developments leading off on a north/south alignment. The roads leading off Mill Lane, such as Mill Brooks, again comprise almost exclusively two storey semi detached and detached properties with some tile hanging on the upper storeys. The only concentration of three storey dwellings can be found in the development to the east of the Secondary School, which lies at a much lower level than Mill Lane itself.

When approaching from the east, the view of Chailey School is dominated by the large sports hall, whilst the school buildings themselves are largely two storey. On the north side of Mill Lane, the one break in development is the field surrounding the remains of the windmill and the adjacent lane leading to farmland beyond.

There is further residential development beyond the Secondary School and at Gradwell End planning permission has been granted for a Care Home to be built. A small care home in the form of bungalows is already in place next to the Health Centre. The former workhouse, now converted into dwellings, lies outside the parish boundaries.

Around the Horns Lodge there is a mixture of housing with some older properties interspersed with modern infill. The village shop is also located here. To the north of South Street there is a row of semi-detached houses whose large gardens front onto the road. The development behind the Horns Lodge, accessed from Markstakes Lane, consists largely of two storey semi-detached houses, mostly tile hung on the first floor. However there are also bungalows and some flats with an occasional older house between.

Further down Markstakes Lane, the road leads out beyond Markstakes Common into countryside, characterised by large, detached, isolated dwellings, some having Listed status.

Overall, South Chailey provides the highest concentration of smaller 'affordable' units within the parish and the highest concentration of population in one area within the parish.

Whitegates Close, South Common

Dating from the 1980s, Whitegates Close is perhaps a development typical of its time. The elevations are relatively plain but local stock bricks appear not to have been used. The roof pitches are much shallower than traditional, achieved by the use of large, heavy concrete interlocking tiles. However, the elevations are relieved by porches and the use of slopes to step roofline and elevations and are nevertheless low maintenance. The use of terraces in a square of small dwellings and unobtrusive shared parking areas allows a high density of houses to be achieved, but nevertheless provides generous open landscape and play space, and without excessive hard surfacing. The provision of some larger detached houses varies the townscape. The development is close to the centre of South Common and on the 121 bus route.

In summary, this development offers a sustainable, safe and pleasant environment and is one of the main sources of affordable accommodation in the Parish.



Open Play Area at Whitegates

Swan Close, South Common

Close to Whitegates Close, but dating from a slightly later period, it has the same advantages of central location and access to public transport. These are larger, detached houses and some effort has been made to use what are seen as traditional building materials in stock bricks, plain clay tiles and variation in roof slopes.



Typical Houses at Swan Close

Grantham Close, South Common

Pre-dating the other examples, Grantham Close is a sheltered development for older residents of Chailey.

Local stock bricks, machine-made plain clay tile roofs with barn hips and “cat-slides”, articulated elevations with tile hanging, generous mature landscaping and group parking have produced a large number of flats in a varied manner. The dwellings are occupied by the more elderly, but active residents and the development provides affordable accommodation meeting the needs of local people in a sustainable and accessible location.



Illustrating variety of Roof Lines at Grantham Close

Cinder Hill/Oxbottom Lane

Spatial Analysis

Starting from the A-275 just south of The Five Bells public house, Cinder Hill passes in a generally north-easterly direction across the open recreation area known as Rowheath, then crossing the Longford stream at Coppard's Bridge and climbing steadily up towards Cornwall's Bank, before branching to the left along Oxbottom Lane and finally reaching the A-272, towards the Parish boundary with Newick.



Start of Cinder Hill at its Southern End

The lane is located on a slight ridge with the southern side raised and gently sloping down to the north. The immediate surrounding countryside is softly undulating.

History

Cinder Hill follows an ancient route and is shown in John Ogilby's 'Britannia', dating from 1672, which is considered one of the first road maps to be published in Europe.

Geologically the area is comprised of clay, which has historically been used to make bricks, tiles and pottery. This accounts for the prevalence of brick and tiles used in the construction of many of the historic buildings in Chailey Green and the surrounding area, including Cinder Hill and Oxbottom Lane.

Nature of Buildings

Although having the appearance of a quiet country lane, in fact Cinder Hill and its northern extension Oxbottom Lane accommodate a variety of residential properties, some of historic importance, being largely hidden from the Lane by hedging or being set back from the Lane and accessible via private driveways.



Rowheath Recreation Ground looking South



Part of Rowheath looking North

Two very significant properties are the historic Ades Mansion and Roheath, but other properties in the Lane, such as the cottages at Coppard's Bridge, Tompsett's Charity, White Lodge, Keepers, Hickwells and Cinder Farm are also historically important and attract listed status.



Properties adjoining Cinder Hill

Many of the houses in this area, including some relatively modest cottages, originated in the medieval period. Typically, these are timber-framed, with local stock brick and clay tile roofs, but some more prestigious buildings used local sandstones and Horsham stone roofs. Flint is also used. The roofs are characteristically steep, as compared to modern construction.

Houses are typically two storeys high, with a variety of roof forms including hipped, pitched, half-hipped and cat-slide, with dormers a rare intrusion into the front roof slopes. Brick chimneys also feature prominently on most properties.

St George's Conservation Area/Windmill

Spatial Analysis

St George's Conservation Area is located nine miles north of Lewes, to the north west of North Common. The site lies within Red House Common, which is part of Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve. Chailey Common, one of the largest heathland commons in southern England, is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due to its heathland plants and diverse insect and bird species.



St George's Building with Chapel

Approached via a long driveway, the conservation area has a rather formal character. Not a large area, it incorporates a small number of buildings within its boundary. It is set apart from the centre of North Common as a consequence of its position slightly outside the main settlement and this separation is further enhanced by the hedged boundary enclosing the conservation area. Public footpaths run around the outside of the site.

Topography

At the centre of the conservation area stands the St George's building. There is an open playing field area to the west of it, and garaging to the north. The other buildings lie in the south-east corner of the area.

St George's is sited on top of a ridge from which there are views across both the South and the North Downs. From within the conservation area itself, views out of the site are fairly restricted due to the hedges and trees of its boundary, which adds to the sense of it being a formalised area within an otherwise more open rural landscape. The St George's building and the nearby windmill dominate the conservation area. The windmill in particular is a highly visible landmark, which can be easily seen from immediately outside the conservation area and from points further away such as Ditchling Beacon.



Parking Area with Windmill

History

The landscape of the conservation area was for many years open heathland and it is only in the past hundred years that the area has become enclosed in its current form. Chailey Common was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and was used over a long period of time for grazing livestock and cutting wood and bracken for fuel. The area belonged to the manor of Balneath, once part of the estates of St Pancras'

Priory, Lewes. The manor was granted to Thomas Cromwell at the Dissolution in 1537, and then passed to Anne of Cleves and subsequently Sir William Goring, with whose descendants it remained until c.1900. A windmill has stood at or near the present site for several hundred years. An early reference to a windmill is in a court roll for the Manor of Balneath dated 1590. It refers to a 'ventimolum voc[at] a wynde myll' held by Richard Houlden. A house associated with the windmill is referred to in documents as early as c.1670 in a List of Tenants of Balneath Manor: "*Tennants of the said mannor who pay unto the Lord of the said mannor uppon death the best beast as a herriott for every tenement copyhold Widdow Comber for a cottage and windmill in Chayley*". Early Ordnance Survey maps show little more than a windmill and its associated Mill House and outbuildings.

The area retained this open heath land feel until the site was occupied by the Chailey Heritage Crafts School in the early 20th century. This organisation grew out of the Guild of the Brave Poor Things, which was founded in London in 1894, and organised meetings for people with physical disabilities of all ages. The Heritage Crafts School was founded in 1903 at Chailey Old Workhouse and the first pupils were seven boys who were members of the Guild.

Nature of Buildings

In 1917 the Kitchener Huts, built by boys at the school to allow their residential accommodation to be given over to soldiers wounded in the First World War, were constructed at the St George's site. In time, the Huts were felt to be in poor state of repair and of a temporary character, irregular in plan due to their piecemeal construction, and not particularly practical. Following the raising of funding by the "Golden Apple Appeal", the Huts were finally replaced with the building of a new residential block at St George's, which was opened in 1932 – this is the main St George's building we see today. The area was also enclosed by its boundary at this time. The building remained in use by the Heritage Crafts School until the 1990s when it was sold and converted into residential properties. At this time the sunken garaging to the north of St George's was constructed to provide parking for residents.

Conclusion

Most English villages have developed over time compactly and concentrically outward from the parish church and the adjacent village green. Most comprise a housing core surrounded by an outer belt of farm land or woodland. Chailey, by contrast, despite possessing a medieval church and village green, developed very differently over the centuries. Settlements were created distant from each other, centred upon grand houses and their satellite groups of servants' cottages. Each settlement was surrounded by large areas of green space – whether fields, forests or common. All were created within the arc of the South Downs to the south and the Weald to the north. The overall impression is still of green space and masses of trees rather than buildings, even though some recent house building has occurred along much of the two modern A roads which cross the village.

The buildings of Chailey are not characterised by one type, style, size or age of construction. However residential property (rather than commercial/retail) makes up the principal building type in the village, with the predominant building materials being red brick with red brown tiled roofs. There is a broad range of property types: bungalows, detached, semi-detached and some terraced properties; there are few three storey houses. There is variety in the appearance of streets with some streets having properties with mature front gardens and others having no front gardens. The centre of the village, the heart of the conservation area, is the oldest part of Chailey through which runs the road that carries the most traffic. Most of the roads in the village serve the housing areas and do not lead out of the village. Some properties on the outskirts of the village have views across open fields and some have views towards the South Downs running to the south of the village.

Appendix 1

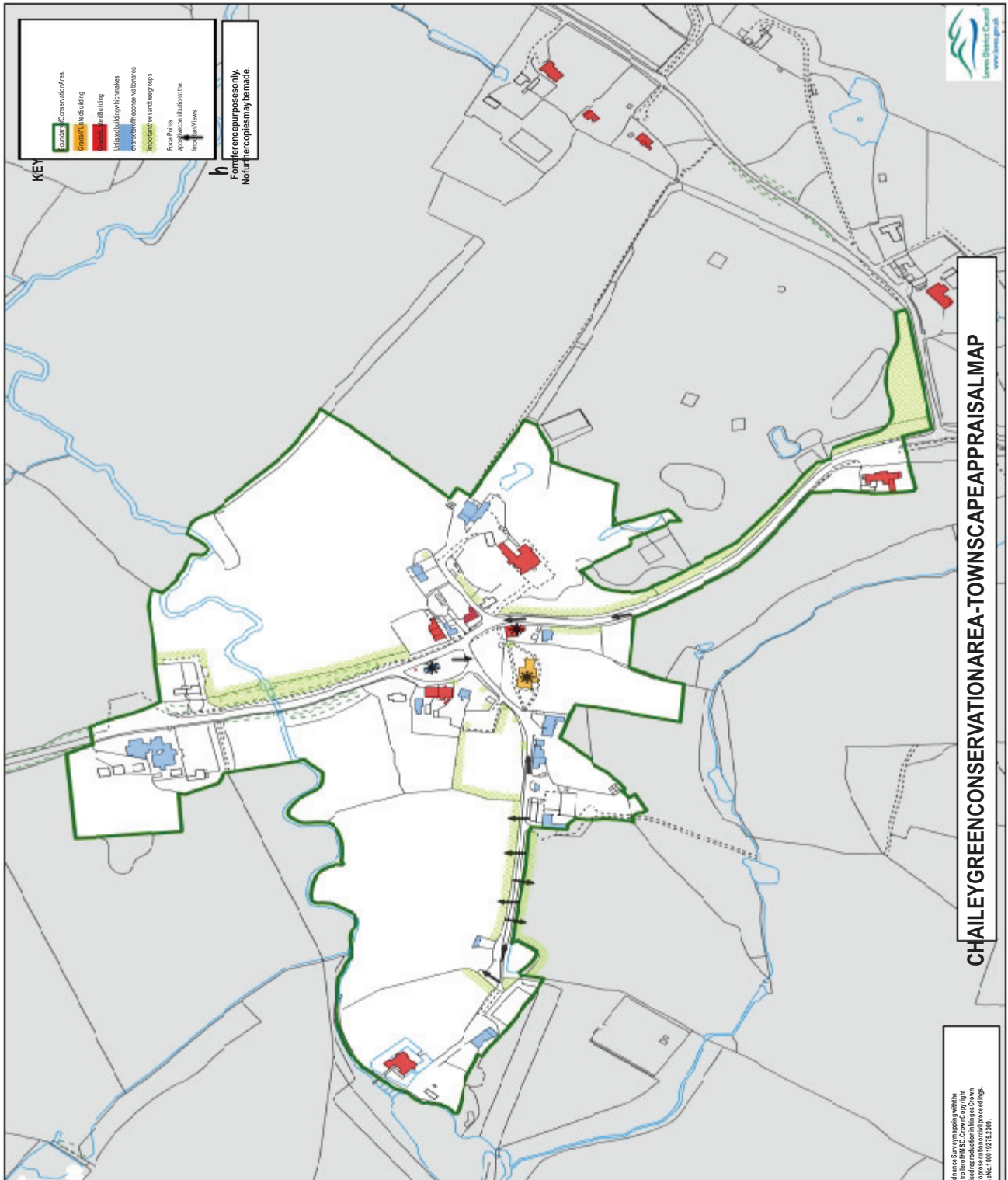
Listed Buildings in Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex

1. II* **1 Coppard's Bridge**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
2. II **Ades**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
3. II **Balneath Manor**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
4. II **Barn to South West of Teagues Farmhouse**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, RH17
5. II **Beards**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
6. II **Bevernbridge House**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
7. II **Bineham Farmhouse**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
8. II **Bosun**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
9. II **Broadstone Farmhouse**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 10.II **Bush Farmhouse**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 11.II **Chailey Moat**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 12.II **Chailey Place**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 13.II **Chailey Windmill, New Heritage, Heritage Crafts School**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 14.II **Church of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 15.II **Cinder Farmhouse**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 16.II **Coppard's Bridge**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 17.II **Corner Cottage shirley Cottage**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 18.II **Durrants**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 19.II **Fir Tree Cottage**
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8

- 20.II [Former Workhouse Building at Old Heritage, Heritage Crafts School](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 21.II [Furze Grove](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 22.II [Furzeley Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 23.II [Granary to South West of Wapsbourne](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, TN22
- 24.II [Hickwells](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 25.II [High House Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 26.II [Holly Grove](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 27.II [K6 Kiosk, Outside Reading Room](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 28.II [Keepers](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 29.II [Leylands Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 30.II [Little Lodge](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 31.II [Longridge](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 32.II [Markstakes Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 33.II [Newhouse Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 34.II [Ovenden](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 35.II [Pouchlands Cottages](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 36.II [Shelley's](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 37.II [Southam](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 38.II [St Helens Church](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 39.II [St Martins Chapel, Old Heritage, Heritage Crafts School](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 40.II [Swan Public House](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8

- 41.II [Teagues Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, RH17
- 42.II [The Five Bells Inn](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 43.II [The Hooke](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 44.II* [The Parish Church of St Peter](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 45.II [Tompsett's Charity](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 46.II [Towning's Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 47.II [Tutt's Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 48.II* [Wapsbourne](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, TN22
- 49.II [Warr's Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 50.II [Warren Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 51.II [White Lodge](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 52.II [Wildfields](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 53.II [Woodbrooks Farmhouse](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8
- 54.II [Woodside](#)
Chailey, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

