

Worth Conservation Area Statement

August 2003

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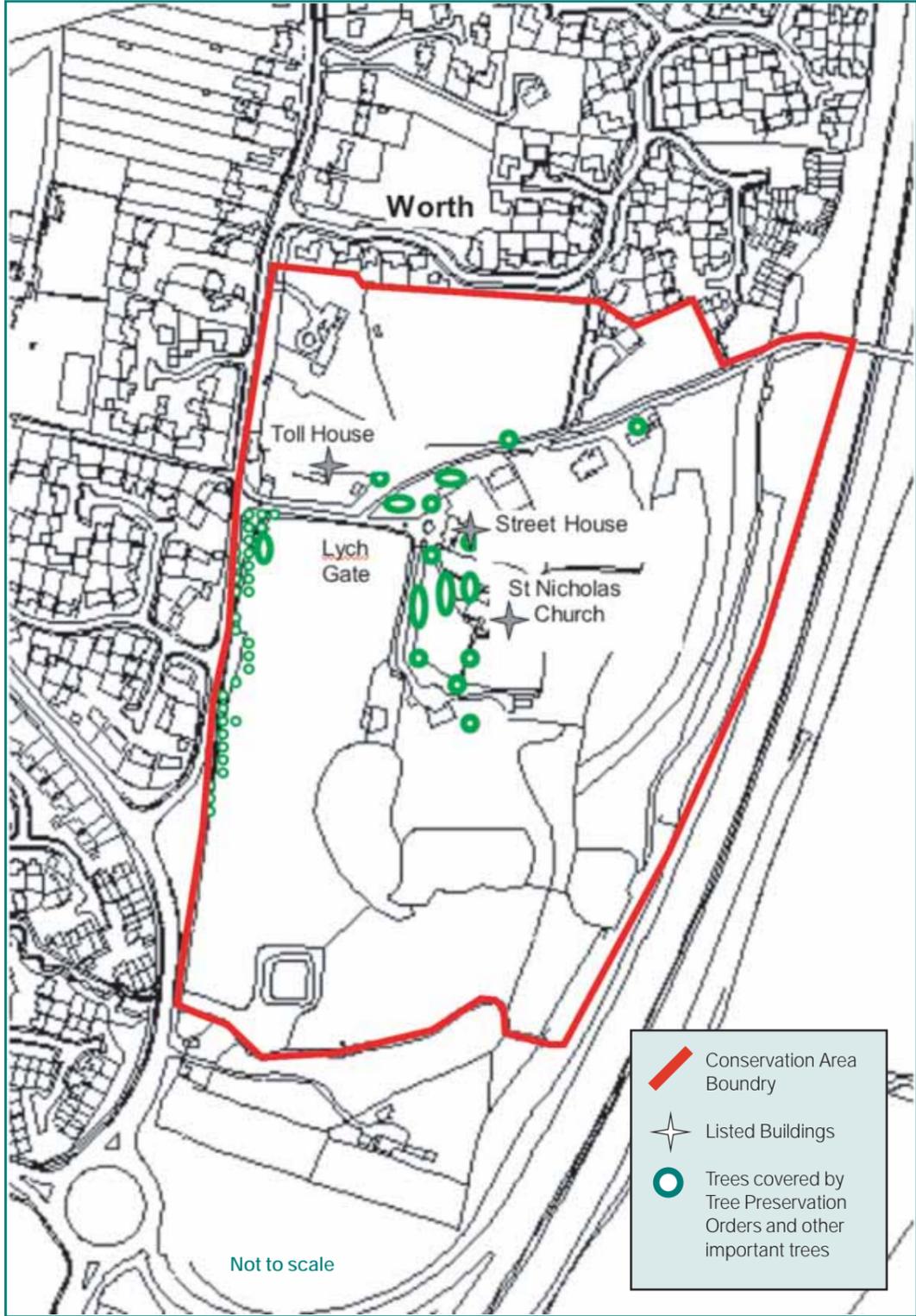
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Printed and published by Crawley Borough Council on environmentally friendly paper. November 2003.



Conservation Area Map 1



Introduction

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Section 91 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990, defines Conservation Areas as:

“areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Worth Conservation Area is situated just within the south eastern boundary of Crawley. Its boundary runs along the northern boundaries of Fieldgate and Beaufort Cottage, down the motorway, across to Balcombe Road, just south of the moat and northwards up Balcombe Road, Street Hill. It was designated by the Borough Council in March 1987 when it was recognised that it was important to preserve and enhance the character of the setting of St. Nicholas' Church, which has been described as one of the most perfect specimen of a Saxon building in England.

This statement sets out the Council's proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Worth Conservation Area. It is the second Conservation statement. It updates the previous statement approved in June 1990 and takes into account changes made in the approved Local Plan and other changes that have occurred within the area. The Area designated as a Conservation Area is shown on Map 1 and the official schedule in Appendix 1.

A number of factors may contribute to an area being designated as a Conservation Area including features such as listed buildings, historic street patterns and open spaces.



Appendix 4

Development in Conservation Areas

Policy BN2

The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation areas. Proposals for new development, including alterations, extensions or changes of use within or adjacent to conservation areas will only be permitted if:

- (i) the development respects the character of the locality and existing buildings in scale, grouping and materials;
- (ii) the development or change of use and the activity generated is compatible with the character of the conservation area;
- (iii) the development would not result in an expansion of a use which is incompatible with the character of the conservation area;
- (iv) views into and out of the conservation area will not be adversely affected.

Planning permission will not be granted in outline for development in conservation areas.

Policy BN3

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will not be granted unless the building is inappropriate in structure or design for the conservation area, or is wholly beyond repair. Any proposals for demolition must be accompanied by details of the proposals for the future development or use of the site which must meet the criteria in Policy BN2.

Policy BN4

Proposals for advertisements and signs in conservation areas will only be permitted if their size, design and siting respect the building and land on which they are displayed and do not detract from the character and appearance of the area. Free-standing signs should complement adjacent buildings.

Policy BN5

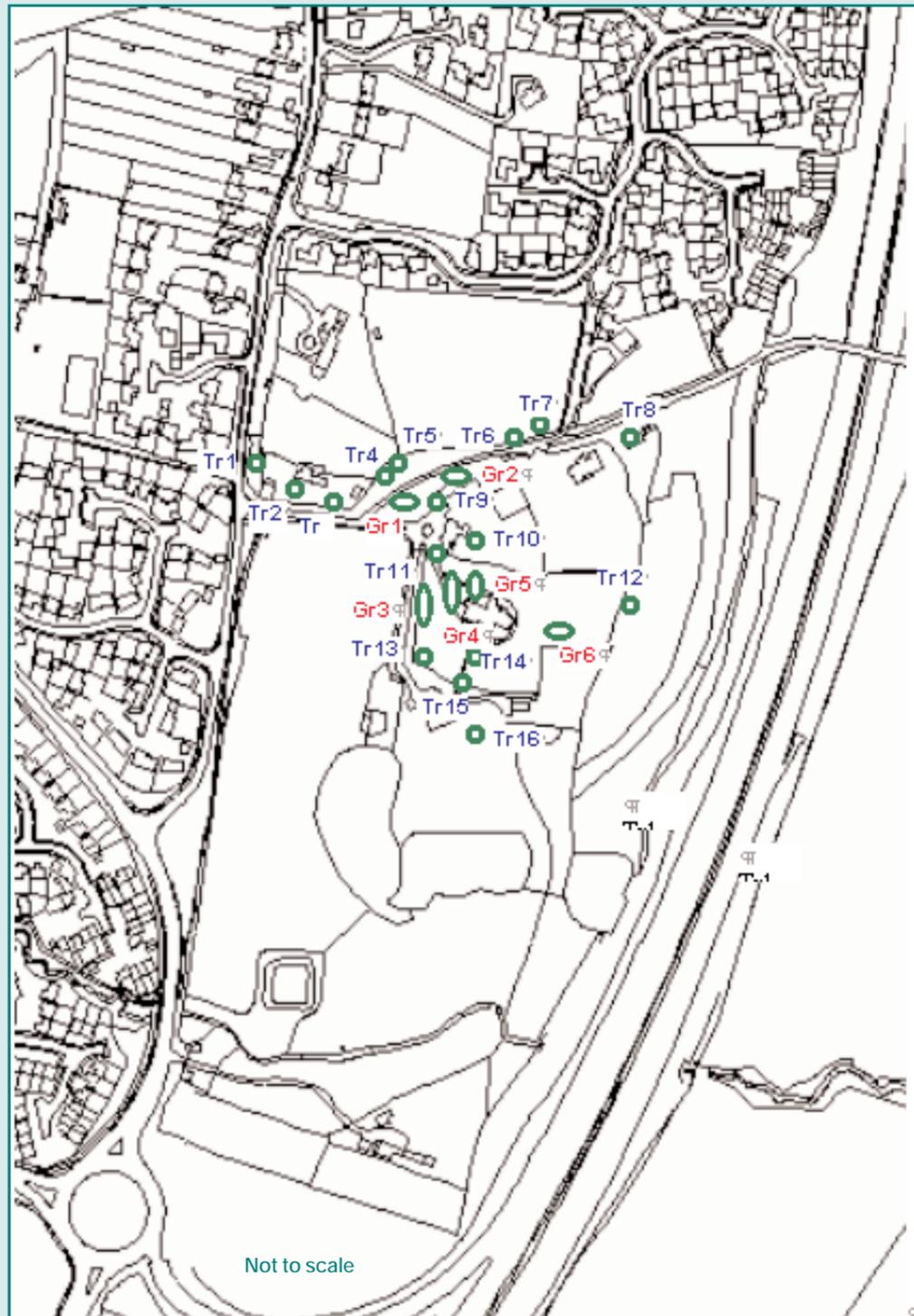
The Borough Council will seek to prevent the occurrence of, or will require the removal of, unsympathetic features or minor developments which have, or would have, and adverse impact on the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Policy BN6

The Borough Council will encourage statutory undertakers and the highway authority to have respect for the character and appearance of conservation areas when carrying out works within them.

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Appendix 3 (b)
Other Important Trees



Schedule of other Important Trees in the Conservation Area

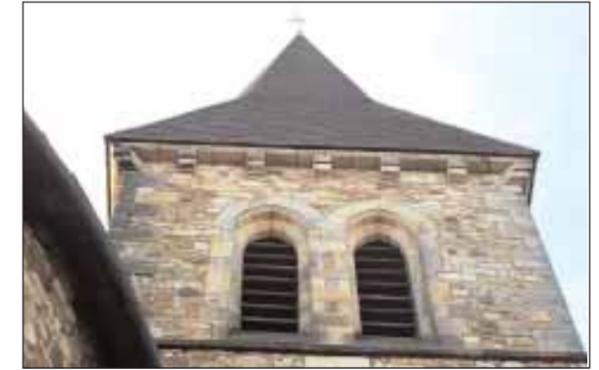
- Tr 1 Horse Chestnut
- Tr 2 Sycamore
- Tr 3 Scots Pine
- Tr 4 Lime
- Tr 5 Oak
- Tr 6 Sycamore
- Tr 7 Lime
- Tr 8 Oak
- Tr 9 Turkey Oak
- Tr 10 Yew
- Tr 11 Horse Chestnut
- Tr 12 Cedar
- Tr 13 Beech
- Tr 14 Yew
- Tr 15 Yew
- Tr 16 Copper Beech

Groups of trees

- Gr 1 4 Lime
- Gr 2 3 Beech
- Gr 3 4 Lime, 1 Oak
- Gr 4 2 Lime, 1 Oak and 1 Elm
- Gr 5 1 Lucum Oak, 1 Copper Beech and 1 Beech
- Gr 6 4 Sycamore



The church



A Brief History of the Conservation Area

Worth Church is a Church believed to be of Saxon origins. It was originally established to serve an extensive afforested area of the High Weald in which there were many scattered and often temporary settlements. It was positioned at a convenient meeting point of tracks through the forest and existed for many hundreds of years in almost total rural isolation, only a few other buildings being built nearby until recent years. Even with the growth of Crawley and the construction of the M23 in recent decades, the largely rural situation of Worth Church has remained, and it is this, which gives rise to the designation of the area as a Conservation Area. A more detailed history is given at Appendix 2.

Existing Buildings

The Victorian History of Sussex describes St. Nicholas' Church as remarkable example of a pre- Conquest building of a cruciform plan, dating practically from one period. Of course, there have been alterations made, including a new roof in 1986. It is a Grade I Listed Building.

During the nineteenth century, the church apse had six buttresses but these were removed when the church was restored in 1871. Before the restoration, the walls were thickly plastered inside and out. The tower dates from this time and the south timber porch is also modern (1886).

The church is notable in that it is very different from other Sussex Churches. It is more substantially built and more finely finished than most, which suggests that the masons may have come from further north.

The chancel is very long in proportion to the nave rendering the church a rare shape. It has a half-round apsidal end with 3 modern, single lights of 12th century character. The chancel arch is the tallest Saxon arch of its kind in Britain.

The Worth and Three Bridges Sussex Official Guide describes the massive stone arches from the nave to the transepts and the chancel arch as "probably the earliest and finest stone arches in existence today." They still show signs of original Saxon tool-marks. The pilasters are also said to be exceptional. These are vertical stone strips, connecting the string course with the plinth and are seen only in pre-Conquest construction.

As with most ancient churches, there is a 'devils door' in the north wall which, although blocked up, can still be seen from the inside. Evil spirits were "driven out" through this door which was left open during baptisms.

Outside the church there is a narrow avenue of lime trees known as the twelve apostles, leading to a timber lychgate which is a Grade II listed structure in its own right. The lychgate dates from the 16th/17th century and was restored in 1956.

Many of the interior features of the Church are of great historical interest. The pulpit, dated 1577, said to have come from the cathedral of Worth, Bavaria, was found in a London curiosity shop. The font dates from the late 12th century although its history is unknown. At the western end of the nave is a gallery in which there is an inscription:

"This gallerie is the gift of Anthony Lynton, late rector of this Parish who deceased XV day of IVNE ANNO DOMINI 1610"

The interior of the Church is essentially undecorated although there is some medieval painting on the rear-arch of the small 14th century window, east of the south transept archway. The painting is a design of red flowers and foliage.

4 Other Listed Buildings

In addition to St. Nicholas Church and the lychgate, there are two other Listed Buildings within the Worth Conservation Area, namely Street House and Toll House which are both listed Grade II.



Street House

Street House was built in the 1700's and was originally an Inn. It is a timber-framed building with red-brick infilling. The exterior has been refaced and weather-boarded. The roof is of Horsham slab, a common local roofing material.

Toll House

Toll House was an early nineteenth century Toll house on one of the London to Brighton routes. It has been altered in recent times. One of the most notable features is the crest of an animal's head on the gable end of the south wing.

Non-Listed Buildings

There are several unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area, which although, not of significant historical or architectural interest, add to the Area's character. These buildings comprise the Rectory, the Bishops Lodge Fieldgate, Beaumont Cottage, Bushend and several other dwellings along the Worth Way.

Appendix 3 (a) Tree Preservation Order Plan



Appendix 3 (a)

12 Tree Preservation Orders within the Worth Conservation Area

– Street Hill No. 1 Tree Preservation Order (Part)

Schedule: Trees Specified Invidually (*encircled in black on the map*)

No. on Plan	Description	Situation	No. on Plan	Description	Situation
T1	Lime	Land on East side of Street	T22	Oak	
T2	Ash	Hill and Balcombe Road,	T23	Ash	
T3	Oak	Crawley, West Sussex, as shown on Plan No. P16.15.3	T24	Ash	
T5	Oak		T25	Sycamore	
T6	Horse Chestnut		T26	Sycamore	
T7	Oak		*T27	Sycamore	
T8	Horse Chestnut		T28	Sycamore	
T9	Oak		T29	Sycamore	
T10	Beech		T30	Sycamore	
T11	Yew		T31	Double-Stemmed Sycamore	
T12	Oak		T32	Holly	
T13	Oak		T33	Wych Elm	
T14	Cherry		T34	Wych Elm	
T15	Sycamore		T35	Lime	
T16	Hawthorn		T36	Oak	
T17	Holly		T37	Oak	
T18	Hawthorn		T38	Multi-Stemmed Beech	
T19	Holly		T39	Oak	
T20	Yew		T40	Oak	
T21	Oak		T41	Oak	

Schedule: Groups of Trees (*within a broken line on the plan*)

No. on Plan	Description	Situation
G1	Group consisting of 4 Oaks and 2 Beech	Land on East Side of Street Hill and Balcombe Road, Crawley, West Sussex as shown on Plan No. P16.15.3

Objectives of the Conservation Area

The aim of the Conservation Area is to seek to preserve and enhance the rural character and appearance of the open setting of St Nicholas Church within the Worth Conservation Area.

The area includes several open fields, some designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and large houses which surround the church. It also has good tree cover and a large number of the trees are covered by TPOs. The Worth Way footpath and Crawley's Greenway also pass through the area.

The general improvements that will be sought within the Conservation Area include:

- opportunities for improving local parking facilities and other visitor facilities
- the repair and improvement of road surfaces and footways with appropriate materials
- the repair of boundary walls, fences, hedges and verges and
- additional informal planting

Control, Policies and Proposals

This section of the statement provides guidance on the implications of Conservation Area designation and the Borough Council's policy on the Worth Conservation Area. It seeks to give advice to householders/owners and other interested parties in order to ensure any further proposals for existing or new buildings are consistent with the overall objectives of the Conservation Area. It is recommended that residents should always seek advice from planning officers.

Conservation Area designation does not prohibit all future development.

However, there are a number of planning implications which result from designation.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in exercising planning functions special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Conservation Area designation also affects the permitted development rights of householders.

In addition policies of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000 are

relevant to the Conservation Area.

Local Plan Policies

Local Plan policy for conservation areas is currently outlined in the adopted Crawley Borough Plan 2000. (The policies BN 2- 6 are reproduced in full in Appendix 4).

The acceptability of a proposal in a conservation area often depends upon the details of its siting, design, appearance, access and landscaping. It is also important that the potential effect of development adjacent to a conservation area is

6 assessed as it can also affect the character of the area.

Policy BN 9 specifically relates to the Worth Conservation Area. This policy seeks to preserve and enhance the rural character and appearance of the open setting of St Nicholas Church within the Worth Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area lies outside the built up area and therefore is defined as countryside. The purpose of the countryside designation is to retain the generally open character of the area which is an important natural resource and provides the setting for the urban area. There are a number of countryside policies which therefore apply to the Conservation Area and as a result there is a strong presumption against development unless it is related to the needs of agriculture or forestry.

Policy C8 is concerned with proposals for the extension of existing residential buildings outside the built up area. Other policies include Policy C7 on proposals for the change of use or conversion of existing agricultural dwellings and C9 on the replacement of residential

dwellings.

Guidance for Existing Buildings

The 1988 Town and Country Planning General Development Order provides for permitted development. This means that planning permission is not required for certain forms of development such as small house extensions.

However, in a conservation area permitted development rights are more restrictive and planning permission is required for certain types of development which elsewhere are classified as permitted development. These include cladding, dormer windows in roof slopes, erection of satellite dishes, installation of radio masts, and extensions exceeding 50 cubic metres or 10 percent of cubic capacity.

These controls are necessary to ensure that any changes respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Even if planning permission is not required, the Borough Council will expect that development is carried out with

sensitivity and respect for the setting.

A summary of the Borough Councils policy on proposals for existing buildings in the Conservation Area are as follows :

- many of the non listed buildings are recognised as being important to the Conservation Area.
- the demolition of most of the buildings in the Conservation Area would be resisted.
- proposals for extensions to non-listed buildings in the Conservation Area will be considered in the context of their overall effect on the Conservation Area.
- the present use of the building should be maintained.

Guidance for Listed Buildings

There is additional legislation which applies to Listed Buildings. Listed Building Consent is required for all alterations and extensions which materially affect the character of the building (internal or external). Control also includes objects and structures within the curtilage of Listed Buildings.

The Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area are not only

Appendix 2

Brief History of the Conservation Area

In Saxon times, the Church was closely surrounded by trees. The Parish of Worth was mainly forest with scattered ironworks. The workings of iron in the area is of great antiquity. The Roman coins of Nero, Vespasian and Tetrius have found in the local cinder beds.

The poet Evelyn describes the surroundings of St. Nicholas' Church in these early times thus:

"All was wild one wild, inhospitable waste uncouth and horrid, desert and untraced; hid by rough thickets from the face of day, the solitary realm of beasts of prey."

The smelting of iron in the forest was important until relatively recent times. It is recorded that cannons were made there as late as 1788.

The parish of Worth, then called Orde, was mentioned in the Domesday Book. It lay within the Hundred of Cherfelle. The settlement was described as comprising "1 villein with half a plough". This probably meant that there was a clearing in the forest with enough land to take one man half a day to

plough. Indeed, the Worth Parish Guide says that Worth means "clearing". The nearest village at this time was Ifield, centred around St. Margaret's Church.

The pattern of agriculture which has emerged in the area stems from the Middle Ages when the forest was cleared of its mighty Oaks, to keep the smelting furnaces fuelled.

There has been little change since then. The present Rectory replaced an older sandstone cottage, known as Street Cottage, which was purchased in 1967 for use as a rectory. The Old Rectory was a large house, demolished in the 1930's. It has been rebuilt and is now the residence of the Bishop of Horsham.

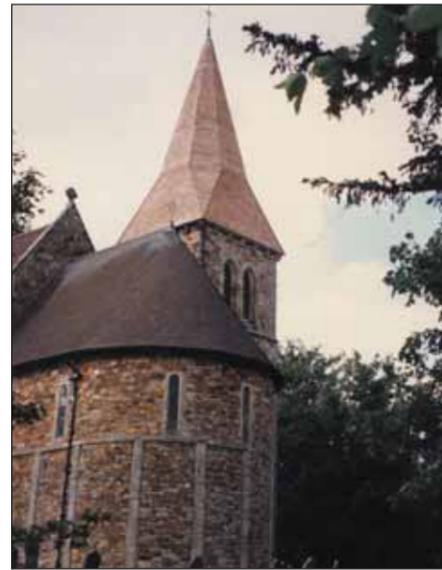
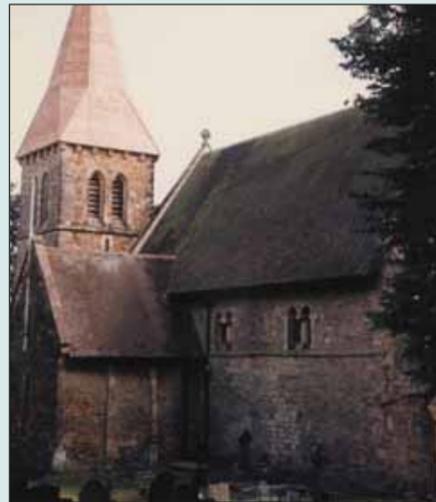
Something of a mystery surrounds the history of the Church.

It is not mentioned in the Domesday Book although this does not necessarily mean it did not exist. It has several architectural features that date it to the Saxon period so that it could be 1000 years old. Nobody knows for certain who built it although the rich abbey of Chertsey have been suggested as a likely patron. Thomas Horsefield, in the

"History and Antiquities of the County of Sussex" (1835) has also speculated that the Church may have been built by one of the Warren (or de Warenes) family who were the earliest owners.

The manor of Worth was attached to the Barony of Lewes, held by the Wareness, about 1089. The Advowson of the Church went with the manor until 1698 when John, son of Sir John Smith of Crabbet, sold the manor but kept the patronage of the Church. From 1786-1858, the patronage belonged to the Bethunes of Rowfant (hence the naming of the south transept, the Rowfant Chapel). The patronage subsequently belonged to the family of the Banks, Goddard and Waller Bridge, before Mrs. Waller Bridge eventually sold it to the Chichester Diocesan Patronage Board.

Appendix 1



10 Schedule for Worth Conservation Area

The northern boundary of the Conservation Area extends from Church Road at the boundary between Fieldgate and Noddy's Farm (grid reference TQ 3006 3641) along the northern boundary of field parcel number 1836, along the northern and eastern boundaries of Beaumont Cottage, then east along the northern edge of the Worth Lodge Farm track, to the M23 motorway embankment (grid reference TQ 3041 3636).

The eastern boundary extends from the point where Worth Lodge Farm track enters the M23 embankment (grid reference TQ 3041 3636) to the point where the culverted Gatwick Stream enters the motorway embankment (grid reference TQ 3025 3593), following the top of the embankment between the two points.

The southern boundary extends from the M23 motorway (grid reference TQ 3025 3593), following the Gatwick Stream to grid reference TQ 3004 3593 and then the southern boundary of the group of trees to the

north-west corner of The Jungle on Balcombe Road (grid reference TQ 3000 3593).

The western boundary extends from grid reference TQ 3000 3593 initially along the eastern side of Balcombe Road and then, after the junction, the eastern side of Street Hill and subsequently Church Road, as far as the boundary between Fieldgate and Noddy's Farm (grid reference TQ 3006 3641).

important as individual buildings as they also make a particularly important contribution to the area as a whole. Stricter controls therefore apply to changes to Listed Buildings to ensure that their character and appearance is maintained.

The following summarises the Borough Council's policies relating to Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area :

- applications for extensions to Listed Buildings will be considered on their merits of the proposal and taking into account the likely effects on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- the retention of all Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area is important to its character and appearance and the loss of any buildings will be resisted.
- present uses for all Listed Buildings are encouraged to be maintained but new uses would be permitted where this would ensure the buildings retention.

Guidance for New Buildings

Proposals for new buildings in the Conservation Area will be considered against the policies in the adopted Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000.

It is important that any new buildings are in a style which is in keeping with

the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Proposals for new buildings within the Conservation will normally be resisted.
- Proposals for extensions to existing buildings or new outbuildings may be acceptable providing that they respect the character of the area by having regard to the building styles, typical features and materials used in the Conservation Area.

Advertisements

Guidelines for the control of advertisements are in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement Regulations)1992.

Where it is expedient in the interests of amenity or public safety a local authority can designate "Areas of Special Advertisement Control." Areas are normally sensitive locations such as conservation areas and Worth Conservation Area has therefore been designated as an Area of Special Advertisement Control.

In such areas many advertisements and signs which would normally benefit from deemed consent, require express consent. In addition local planning authorities can set special design objectives for

7 advertisements and signs and exercise especially stringent control.

The following summarises the Policy of the Borough Council towards advertisements in the Conservation area.

- Advertisements should respect the character of the Conservation Area and should be of a small scale in a traditional style.

Policies on Trees

Trees make a valuable contribution to the character of the Worth Conservation Area. It is therefore important that wherever possible trees are retained. There are two areas of control over work relating to trees in the Conservation Area. All trees in Conservation Areas are subject to control under the (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In addition a large number of the trees within the Worth Conservation Area are covered by Tree Preservation Orders to which separate controls apply. The map and schedule contained in Appendix 3(a) outline the trees that are covered by Tree Preservation Orders and the map and schedule contained in Appendix 3(b) indicate those that are not, but are considered important to

8 the character of the Conservation Area.

The summary of the policies relating to trees has been divided into those relating to all trees in the Conservation Area and those relating to trees covered by TPOs.

- The Borough Council must be given 6 weeks notice of the intention to carry out work on any tree (other than a fruit tree) in a Conservation Area.
- It is an offence to cut down, uproot, top, or lop a tree in a Conservation Area without prior notification to the Local Planning

Authority.

- An owner can be required to replace a tree or a group of trees.
- Where trees are threatened with works which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding environment, the Borough Council will consider serving TPOs to give them further protection.

Where a tree is covered by a TPO:

- A planning application needs to be submitted to carry out any work including felling, shaping and pruning etc.



Environmental Improvements

The main purpose of the Worth Conservation Area is to protect and enhance the setting of St Nicholas Church. All proposals for new development must therefore be seen in this context and be consistent with generally protecting the character and appearance of the area.

It is the visitors to the Church that continue to cause the most problems to the area and are threatening to further erode Church Road which will in turn detract from its existing character as a rural lane within the Conservation Area. The Borough Council does not own any land itself

within the Conservation Area and cannot easily undertake improvement works but will encourage and support proposals where possible that will alleviate these problems.

The Borough Council itself may include a small sum of money in the annual budget for minor works which would enhance the Conservation Area. The Development Control Committee in consultation with the Worth Conservation Area Advisory Committee can then decide how to allocate the funds. However it is

likely that top-up funding for joint projects would be favoured.

Improvements that have been made so far

Since the designation of the Conservation Area in 1987 a number of improvements have been made.

- notice board and bench were erected
- traditional street signs have been provided
- a Conservation Area designation board has been erected

- new toilet facilities have been provided for the Church at the Rectory
- improvements have been undertaken to the Worth Way where it runs through the Conservation Area and measures taken so as it now forms part of the National Cycleway Network
- traffic calming and parking bays have been provided in Church Road to alleviate parking problems within the Conservation Area
- the Crawley Greenway has been designated which passes through this area.
- some tree planting as been undertaken
- bench set back and steps provided to make it more accessible

Further Improvements

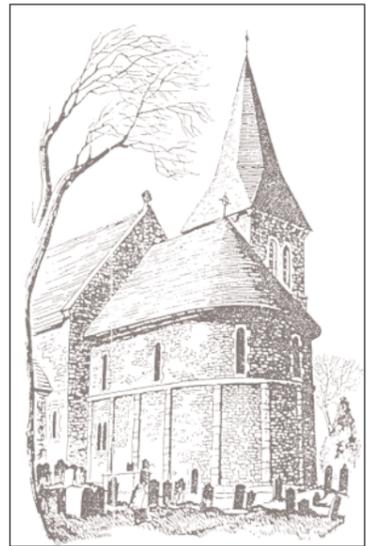
There are a number of other improvements that could be carried out that would further enhance the Conservation Area. These will be implemented as resources permit and subject to the co-operation of the relevant land owner.

The Road

The approach road to the church is of critical importance to the character of the Conservation area, particularly where it fans out in front of Street House and the Church Lychgate. The surface of the road is ordinary tarmac and is breaking up in places. It could be repaired and improved in a manner which is compatible with the rural character of the Conservation area. In particular attention should be given to minimising vehicle damage to verges and corners and to ensuring that the road is treated as a rural lane.

Parking

Parking continues to be a problem along the road leading to the Church. This is due to the large number of special events that are held at the Church, particularly weddings and christenings, which attract significant numbers of people. This is resulting in an erosion of the bank on the north side of Church Road and the hedgerow on the south side. The Borough Council would consider favourably proposals for a car park for the church providing that it was carefully designed and integrated into the landscape. The success of such a



proposal would almost certainly require the County Council and the co-operation of an appropriate landowner because neither the Borough Council nor the Church own land in the area which could be used for this purpose.

Street Furniture

The Borough Council has recently improved the public seating within the Conservation Area and made it more accessible. This involved the provision of steps up to the existing bench in Church Road which is a popular vantage point within the Conservation Area. Other improvements of this nature would also be considered where they would enhance the Conservation Area and be of benefit to the general public.

Landscaping

The motorway detracts from the Conservation Area's semi-rural environment and this could be reduced by further strategic tree planting on the east side of the Church. It would also appropriate to consider planting along the northern boundary of the site to screen the new development that has been carried out.