

# DOWNE VILLAGE

## CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT



Adopted by Development Control Committee  
8<sup>th</sup> September 2009



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# Conservation Area Appraisal

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Downe Village Conservation Area is one of the most attractive Kentish vernacular settlements within the Borough of Bromley and worth every effort to preserve its special character and appearance.
- 1.2 This document is prepared by the Council to assist with the management and enhancement of the Downe Village Conservation Area. It provides advice and guidance, both to the owners and occupiers of buildings in the conservation area and to the Council, about the way in which the area should best be managed to preserve and enhance its character. It contains an Appraisal (Part 1) of the features that contributes to the area's character and appearance; and a Conservation Area Management plan (Part 2).

## 2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The Downe Village Conservation Area was first designated in 1977 and has, over the subsequent years, been extended.
- 2.2 Conservation Areas are areas, which the Council considers to be of '*special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. [Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990]. Once a conservation area is designated the Council has a statutory obligation to -
  - *"from time to time, publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.*
  - *pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character of the area when considering planning proposals affecting the area."*
- 2.3 Conservation Area also brings with it some additional town planning controls to assist the Council to manage change effectively. Furthermore, the Council can use its planning powers to control normally permitted development should it feel necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area. Planning controls therefore vary from conservation area to area.
- 2.4 Planning Policy Guidance Note: 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment is the national policy document relating to the role of the planning system in relation to the protection of the historic environment and provides guidance for all users of the built environment on the operation of the planning system. The guidance must be taken into account when Local planning authorities prepare their development plans and it may also be a material consideration in the application and appeals process.

- 2.5 This Appraisal follows advice from English Heritage documents "Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas" and "Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals" both published in 2006.
- 2.5 Conservation is not about stopping all change, it is about making sure that any future change preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. To achieve this the council uses its planning powers to manage change in a careful and sensitive manner.
- 2.6 s38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Act 2004 states:  
*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*
- 2.7 In Greater London the "Development Plan" comprises the London Plan and the Bromley UDP and means that all development control decisions have to be made in accordance with the London Plan and the adopted UDP except where material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there is a conflict between any policies in the development plan s38(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:  
*"If to any extent a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published (as the case may be)."*
- 2.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the Bromley area is the London Plan: A Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London adopted in February 2004 with subsequent alterations since then. This sets out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework for the future development of London over a time span of 15-20 years. It recognises the importance of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and World Heritage Sites in contributing to the quality of life of local communities and to London's international status as a world class city.
- 2.9 In April 2008 the Government published a draft Heritage Protection Bill which at the time of writing is going through pre-legislative scrutiny and could be implemented in 2010. This is a draft Bill for England and Wales, which sets out the legislative framework for a unified and simpler heritage protection system that will be more open, accountable and transparent. The new system has been designed to provide more opportunities for public involvement and community engagement in understanding, preserving and managing our heritage. This document will have implications as to how we manage the historic environment and therefore this document may need to be updated after it is adopted.
- 2.10 The Bromley UDP adopted in July 2006 contains the Council's policies relating to development within the Borough and has specific policies relating to the Borough's conservation areas. These policies are:

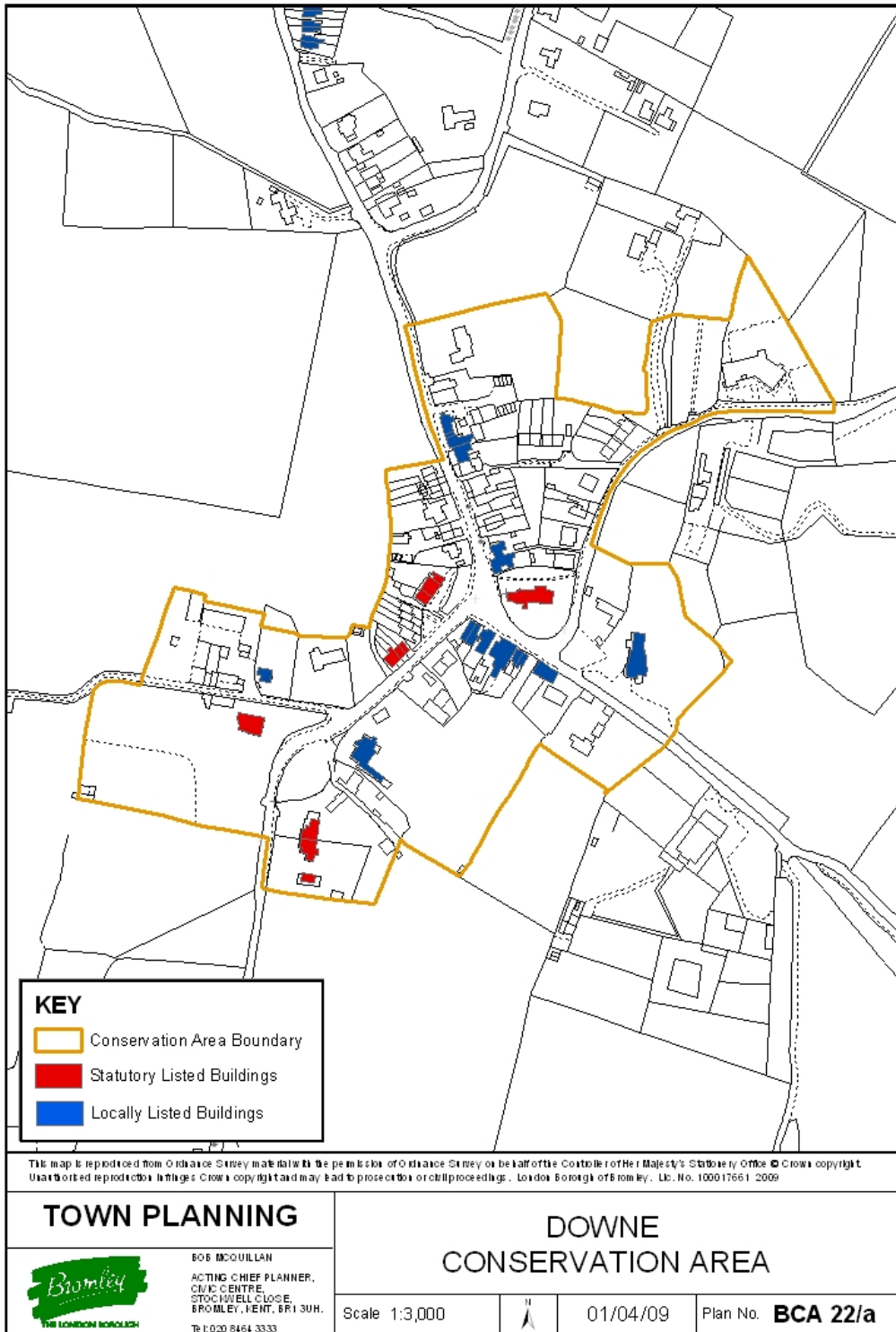
- BE1: governs the design and layout of new development (including extensions) in the Borough and establishes a set of criteria that need to be met in order to achieve a high standard of design and layout.
  - BE11: this provides the guidance for proposals within the Boroughs conservation areas in order to ensure that the character and appearance is preserved or enhanced.
  - BE12: outlines the Councils stance on demolition of buildings within conservation areas.
  - BE13: states that any development proposals adjacent to a conservation area will be expected to preserve or enhance its setting and not detract from views into and out of the conservation area.
- 2.10 The Conservation Area Management Plan (Section 7) within this document forms supplementary planning guidance to the adopted Bromley Unitary Development Plan and is a material consideration when planning proposals are being considered.

#### Additional Planning Controls

- 2.11 The Town and Country Planning (General permitted Development Order) 1995, and subsequent updates, details works that can be carried out without applying for planning permission. Extra controls exist in Conservation Areas (article 1(5) land).
- 2.12 If uncontrolled development is having an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, the Council can use additional planning powers in the form of an Article 4 Direction to better manage change. There are currently no Article 4 Directions in place for the Downe Village Conservation Area.

#### Consultation

- 2.13 A public consultation period was authorised by Development Control Committee on 20th April 2009 and the consultation process was undertaken during July 2009. No objections were received. This document has no significant change in direction to the previous Supplementary Planning Guidance but has been updated with regard to English Heritage Guidelines and also to provide some details on the proposed World Heritage Site, Darwin's Landscape Laboratory.



**FIG 1: Map of Downe Conservation Area**

The London Borough of Bromley provides the Ordnance Survey map (BCA 22A) under license from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function to publicise the boundary of the Downe Conservation Area. Persons viewing this map should contact Ordnance Survey Copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey map data for their own use.

## Listed Buildings

- 2.13 Statutory Listing means that the building is protected under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This protection extends to the inside; back, front, sides and roof of the building. It also extends to any object or structure fixed to the building as well as to any freestanding objects or structures, which lie within the curtilage of the building and which were erected before 1 July 1948.
- 2.14 The buildings are graded to show their relative architectural or historic interest:
- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest.
  - Grade II\* are particularly important buildings of more than special interest
  - Grade II are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them

The statutory listed buildings in the Conservation Area are –

Property Name	Number	Road	Grade
Church of St Mary the Virgin		High Street	II*
	18	High Street	II
Walnut Tree House		Luxted Road	II
Walnut Tree Cottage		Luxted Road	II
1-4 Snows Cottages		Luxted Road	II
Petleys		Luxted Road	II
Lilac Cottage		Luxted Road	II
The Lilacs		Luxted Road	II
Pondfield House		Luxted Road	II
Old Coach House		Luxted Road	II



**Walnut Tree House was constructed as a Wealden hall house, possibly in the 15th or 16th centuries and is Grade II listed.**



- 2.15 Local listing is a designation made by the Council. It is a list of buildings considered to be of local importance and special to the Borough. There is no sub-categorisation for locally listed buildings and listed building consent is not required to alter them. Normal planning regulations apply: this means that some alterations to houses and most alteration to flats and commercial premises will require Planning Permission. The Council's Conservation Officers should be informed of any proposed alterations to ensure that the materials and techniques used are not harmful to the building's historic fabric.

The locally listed buildings in the Conservation Area are –

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Road</b>
	7	<b>High Street</b>
	9	<b>High Street</b>
	11	<b>High Street</b>
	13	<b>High Street</b>
Queens Head PH	25	<b>High Street</b>
Dorset Villas	20	<b>High Street</b>
Dorset Villas	22	<b>High Street</b>
Downe Village Hall	24	<b>High Street</b>
George & Dragon PH	26	<b>High Street</b>
Yew Tree Cottages	28	<b>High Street</b>
Yew Tree Cottages	30	<b>High Street</b>
Downe Hall Farm Cottage		<b>Cudham Road</b>
Downe Hall		<b>Cudham Road</b>
Trowmers		<b>Luxted Road</b>
Petleys Farm House		<b>Luxted Road</b>

### **World Heritage Site**

- 2.15 The entire Conservation Area and its immediate environs are included within the proposed "Darwin's Landscape Laboratory" World Heritage Site. The proposed World Heritage Site is primarily one based on the scientific importance of the area, however many buildings of architectural merit within the Conservation Area have historical associations to Charles Darwin which adds a historic significance to these buildings. Whilst this designation does not impose any additional planning controls, it is a material consideration in the planning process. In accordance with national guidance the Council has prepared a policy for protecting the proposed World Heritage Site. When considering proposals within or adjoining the World Heritage Site the likely impact on the Site's cultural and natural heritage will be assessed.

### **3. Appraisal of the Area's Character and Appearance**

- 3.1 This section identifies what features give the Downe Village Conservation Area its special character and appearance. It has been prepared following a detailed study into the development and form of the area in May 2005. It is only by fully understanding an area can we plan for its future management.

#### **Location & Wider Context**

- 3.2 Downe is a historic vernacular Kentish village which lies about 5 miles from Orpington and 8 miles from Bromley. It is set within an established rural landscape of Kentish down land. The topography of the settlement is gently sloping southwards up to the High Street. The geology of the area is a mix of clay with flint.
- 3.3 The designation is drawn closely around the village core and includes very little open land which is subject to other designations. The built form of the area reflects its historical development – a small rural settlement around an important local road junction with the church in its churchyard taking a prominent central location and the other buildings fronting the roadways in informal groups.

#### **Origins & Historic Development**

- 3.4 Downe is an ancient village with the first definite proof of settlement originating in the Saxon period with a record relating to a land grant at Downe in 940AD. Unlike neighbouring village Cudham, Downe was not mentioned in the Domesday book. The origin of the word "Downe" is thought to come from the Celtic word "*Dún*" meaning "hill" or "fort". Another theory is that the name of the village is derived from "*Duna*", a name assigned to the area of land given to the Bishop of Rochester by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 3.5 The earliest available map of Downe is the Carol Map of 1716. This shows the village clustered at the junction of what are now the High Street, Luxted Road and Cudham Road; with buildings on both sides of the road. The church is shown at the centre of the village along with a lime tree in the central junction. Originally there was a walnut tree in the same place which was planted by Thomas Whitehead in 1714 but was unfortunately destroyed by a storm in 1860. The current lime tree is believed to date from the 1970s. The village pond is shown at the south-western end of the village.
- 3.6 The 1841 Tithe Map and Tithe Apportionment show that the village had not significantly changed since the 1716 Carol map. The two Public Houses in the village, the George & Dragon and Queen's Head, are captioned on the map.
- 3.7 The 1868-78 OS Map captions:- Trowmer's , Petley's, the Queen's Head, the George & Dragon, Downe Hall and St. Mary's Church as important buildings. Trowmers and Downe Hall are both shown with formal landscaped gardens.

There is still a tree shown at the central crossroads of the village. The village pond is also shown adjacent Trowmer's. There is also a track shown heading in the direction of Downe Court which still exists.

- 3.8 The 1909-16 OS Map shows little change in the form of the village. However, the cemetery and school are shown on the edge of the village on High Elms Road. The old village school is now captioned 'club'.

### **Archaeology**

- 3.9 Much of the village lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance due to the likelihood of significant archaeological remains surviving from the medieval and early post medieval period.

### **Spatial Analysis**

- 3.10 Downe is a historic village with a strongly nuclear form. Unlike other villages in the area, such as Chislehurst or Keston, distributed loosely around their commons, or Cudham, with houses located along its lanes, Downe is focused tightly on a small open area at a road junction, around which most of the main and indeed earliest buildings in the village are located.



**Downe is a historic village with a strongly nuclear form.**

- 3.11 The main nucleus of the village is the church and associated church yard which is closely surrounded by a group of houses and cottages. Traditional institutions of village life are to be found here within sight of one another e.g. the former village school and the public houses. Most of the cottages appear externally to date from the early to mid 19th century, although it should be noted that a later skin can often hide the remains of an earlier structure.
- 3.12 The organic evolution of the village has led to a variety of building and plot sizes and shapes with a mix of large detached gentry properties, semi-detached houses and terraced housing. The unifying characteristic of the area is the rural backdrop to the built environment with mature vegetation

appreciated not only in the views between buildings but also the open agricultural landscape surrounding the conservation area.

### **Key Views & Vistas**

- 3.13 The nature of the road routes into the village mean that there is little anticipation of the village before arriving in it. Although at some points the church spire can be glimpsed on the approach from the North before arriving in the village

### **Approaching from the North**

- 3.14 On arrival in the village from Rookery Road, the village starts on the left side only, and then the Church spire becomes visible as a landmark. With buildings on the right side too, the sense of enclosure increases to that of a settlement. The George & Dragon pub and the village hall terminate the street scene ahead along with the large Lime tree in the traffic island where Luxted Road meets the High Street.

### **Approaching from the South**

- 3.15 Again, the village is somewhat hidden from view in the approach up Luxted Road from the South. It is the gentry villas around the village pond that first introduce the edge of the settlement –Pondfield, with its Scots Pines, is first visible followed by Petley's on the other side of the road with its charming brick and flint garden wall that follows the road around the edge of the pond, allowing an impressive view of Trowmers. From this point the church spire is visible and village appears in view with the flint and brick cottages on either side of the road, the Queen's Head pub ahead and Dorset Villas at the junction with High Street.

### **Approaching from the East**

- 3.16 Cudham Road is narrow and lined with trees and hedgerows as it enters the village. As a result the outbuildings of Downe Hall Farm and Downe Hall Farm Cottage are first visible, as the junction with High Elms Road nears the churchyard and its mature Yews is visible.

### **Approaching from the North East**

- 3.17 Downe Primary School and the cemetery Lych gate announce the start of the village from High Elms Road. The trees and dense planting give a mature and verdant appearance to this area. Down Hall Farm Cottage terminates the view along with Yew Tree Cottages.

### **Street Scene**

- 3.18 This appraisal was undertaken in early summer when the trees were in full leaf. With many deciduous trees shedding their leaves in the winter, the character of the village is much more open – allowing greater views of many of the buildings.

### **High Street**

- 3.19 The High Street is in two parts, the first running N-S and the second running roughly W-E. The former has a semi-rural character derived from the informal arrangement of the buildings and the mature planting in their small front gardens and low fences or walls. The buildings here are typically two storeys in height and in residential use although there is a restaurant and the Queen's Head public house, a vernacular building with an attractive Queen Anne style frontage. The latter part of the High Street has the churchyard, with its mature trees, monuments and memorials, on the N side and an attractive assortment of village buildings on the S side. There are fewer front gardens here and the development is more densely packed – more reflective of the village heart. All are prominent but of particular note are the Village Hall, with its prominent gable and large windows, and the George & Dragon pub with its half timbered frontage. At the junction with Cudham Road and High Elms Road, partly screened by trees, is Downe Hall, an attractive Victorian house in stock brick.

### **High Elms Road**

- 3.20 Development here is less dense than on the High Street and the mature planting adds much to the character. The curving alignment of the road leads the eye, past the mostly two storey housing of varied date, to the churchyard. The character here in this central area is understated and pleasing. Of particular note is the fine memorial Lych gate to the cemetery.



### **Luxted Road**

- 3.21 A mixture of old and relatively new cottages marks the North end of Luxted Road where it joins the High Street. Two storeys, and predominantly in red brick, sometimes with flint, or weatherboarding with clay tiled roofs, the buildings, irrespective of their age, complement each other well. Of particular note is Walnut Tree House (15<sup>th</sup> Century), set back behind a small green. This medieval structure is weather-boarded and has a pleasing ancient appearance enhanced by the mature trees and adjoining green.
- 3.22 The southern part of Luxted Road, with its informal grouping of gentry houses and the old pond, has a different character. Petley's Farm up the 'landway' (as it is locally known) to the West adds to this more rural character, at its centre, behind the farmhouse, being various barns of both 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century origins. The modern bungalow, Parkside, however, contributes little to this character.

### **The Buildings – Architectural Interest**

- 3.23 The buildings in the village centre are of very mixed date reflecting the slow evolution of the settlement. There is no one dominant period of development and some buildings may be older than their facades might suggest; this is certainly the case with the two pubs – vernacular buildings with much later, but still very attractive, facades. The earliest building is believed to be the church which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. It is in flint with a plain tiled roof, tower and spire. Its charming churchyard wall is in flint and brick with attractive iron gates. Walnut Tree House and Walnut Tree Cottage are also of some age, being timber framed and weather-boarded under a plain tiled roof.
- 3.24 Many of the late 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century vernacular buildings are in red brick, often with flint, again with plain tiled roofs. Examples include –
- 2-8 High Street,  
Yew tree Cottages, High Street,  
3-13 High Street,  
Snows Cottages, Luxted Road,  
Lilacs, Luxted Road; and  
Village Hall, High Street.
- 3.25 Buildings from the modern period have, appropriately, been formed in the style and materials of these vernacular buildings. Successful examples include-
- 1 High Street; and  
1,2,3 & 4 Forgecroft, Luxted Road
- 3.26 The gentry houses, although formal and clearly 'designed' in comparison to the smaller vernacular buildings, often use traditional local materials such as red brick, flint and clay tiles too – this adds to the harmony of the village.

3.27 Some of the early-mid Victorian buildings are more 'urban' in their materials and detailing, with yellow brick walls and sometimes slate roofs. These buildings too contribute to the character of the conservation area but should not be used dictate to the appearance of any new buildings. Examples include –

20 & 22 High Street,  
19 High Street,  
21 & 23 High Street; and  
Petleys Farmhouse.

3.28 The vast majority of the buildings in the conservation area contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the features which make those buildings contribute should remain unaltered. However, some of 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings fail to reflect the traditional vernacular character of the conservation area and are therefore deemed to make a neutral contribution. These are –

Redlands, Cudham Road  
1& 2 Butcher's Yard  
10 High Street  
14 High Street  
Baptist Church complex, Luxted Road  
Parkside, Luxted Road  
Cherry Tree Cott., Green Gates, Laurel Cott., Weller Place, High Elms Road

## The Buildings – Historical Interest

- 3.29 Many of the oldest buildings have interesting histories that add colour to the story of the village. Undoubtedly, however, Downe's most celebrated resident was Charles Darwin who lived at Down House, just outside the conservation area on Luxted Road, from 1842 – 1882.
- 3.30 John Lewis, a builder, lived in **Walnut Tree House** during Darwin's time and indeed carried out work at Down House. In 1882 Lewis constructed a coffin upon Darwin's death although it is believed that he was ultimately buried in a more elaborate coffin at Westminster Abbey. In 1909 on the centenary of Darwin's birth a reporter from the *Evening News* visited Downe and interviewed Lewis about his work at Down House and he said "*I made that dark house for him, for experimenting on plants, but he died before he did anything in it. I was sorry, id have liked to see his performance*"
- 3.31 The **Village Hall** was originally built by the Lubbock family of the High Elms estate on the site of the poor house and was used as a school until the new school was built in 1906. In 1977 it was given to the village. Darwin and his wife Emma were often to be found in the hall where Emma gave piano recitals. The interior of the building today is much as it was in the 1860s when Darwin was a member of the school board. Both Lubbock and Darwin wanted to provide education for all the children of the village without religious exclusions and it is known that Darwin paid fees for a number of the children from poor families.
- 3.32 **Trowmers**, a substantial red brick house was built in 1717 and originally known as "Tower House" due to its much larger tower which was replaced by the current cupola. In 1868 Sarah Elizabeth Wedgwood, Emma Darwin's elder sister came to live here. Astronomer Sir William Christie also lived here from 1914-1921.
- 3.33 Altered in 1879 the **Church of St Mary** was a place of worship for Emma Darwin who is buried within the graveyard that surrounds the church. The church can trace its origins to 1291, when Prior Henry of Orpington paid £61. 0s 11d. One small lancet window still exists from the original structure. Other features of interest include a yew tree in the graveyard which is over 800 years old. Jacob Verzellini, a 16<sup>th</sup> century glass maker from Venice who owned a lot of property in the area is buried within the Church and his Family brasses can be seen on the north wall inside.
- 3.34 During Darwin's time **The Rookery** was occupied by race horse owner George Henry Turnbull, whose gardener John Horwood provided considerable help to Darwin in his research on exotic orchids and plant hybridisation. The sailor, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, lived here in the 1960s and sailed single handed around the world in 1969.
- 3.35 **Petleys** is a flint and brick house with its origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and was lived in during Darwin's time by his wife's aunt Sarah Wedgwood, daughter of Josiah Wedgewood.



- 3.36 **The George and Dragon**, which dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was used as the meeting place of the Downe Friendly Society which was formed in 1850. Darwin was the society's treasurer and an active member almost up to his death. The society carried out a lot of work to provide social improvement among the villages poor labourers.
- 3.37 Just outside the Conservation Area is **Gorringes**, which has a smaller flint and brick farmhouse adjacent. Gorringes was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century although substantially altered during the Victorian era. Darwin's grandson Bernard, who was 5 years old when Darwin died, lived here.

### **The Buildings - Contribution**

#### 3.38 Positive Contribution – buildings which contribute to the character of the area

Property Name	Number	Road
Downe Hall		Cudham Road
Downe Hall Farm		Cudham Road
Downe Hall Farm Cottage		Cudham Road
Cemetery Lych gate and railings		High Elms Road
Downe Primary School		High Elms Road
Elm Cottage		High Elms Road
Rowan Cottage		High Elms Road
	1, 3 & 5	High Street
	7, 9 & 11	High Street
	13 & 15	High Street
	17 & 19	High Street
	21 & 23	High Street
	2-8	High Street
	20 & 22	High Street
	28 & 30	High Street
George & Dragon Public House	26	High Street
Queen's Head Public House	25	High Street
St Mary's Church, church yard and walling		High Street
Village Hall	24	High Street
Walnut Tree Cottage		High Street
Walnut Tree House		High Street
Coach House		Luxted Road
Forgecroft		Luxted Road
The Lilacs		Luxted Road
Petleys and walling		Luxted Road
Petleys farmhouse and yard		Luxted Road
Pondfield		Luxted Road
1-4 Snows Cottages		Luxted Road
Trowmers & Trowmers Lodge		Luxted Road

3.39 Neutral Contribution – buildings that do not harm the character of the area

Property Name	Number	Road
Claire Cottages		Butchers Yard
Christmas Tree Farm		Cudham Road
Cherry Tree Cottage		High Elms Road
Laurel Cottage		High Elms Road
Green Gates		High Elms Road
Redlands		High Elms Road
St Mary Cottage		High Elms Road
Weller Place		High Elms Road
	10	High Street
	12	High Street
	14-16	High Street
	1-4	Luxted Road
Baptist Church & Manse		Luxted Road
Parkside		Luxted Road

3.40 Negative Contribution

No buildings make a negative contribution.

### **Public Realm**

- 3.41 The churchyard, with its old walls and gates provides a restful heart for the settlement and, along with the open junction of High Street with its Lime tree, and the small village green with its Walnut tree and village sign, give much of the character of the village's rural charm.
- 3.42 The surface treatment of the roads and footpaths is blacktop, the curbs are typically the traditional type in stone. Cast iron bollards and timber posts are prevalent on Luxted Road to prevent parking on the footpath and verges, whilst necessary, the iron bollards in particular are perhaps overly regimented in appearance for such a rural centre; similarly the guard rail around the edge of the pond.
- 3.43 Roads and lanes are a major part of the traveller's experience of the countryside. The character of the rural roadside environment is particularly sensitive to the impact of highway signs and other such elements. Removing inappropriate and unnecessary signs, structures and markings will help reduce visual clutter. Standard treatments more suited to urban areas and major highway routes are not appropriate. The least invasive option must be chosen for new schemes and reviews must ensure that treatments address best practice both for safety and preservation of visual character. Rural villages have significant built heritage and landscape value and it will be important that highway treatments acknowledge that interest with traffic treatments that are appropriate for their location.

### **Gardens & Trees**

- 3.44 Due to the historic development of the settlement there is a range of garden types, with the more historic properties generally lacking or having a small front garden and hugging the pavements edge, although there are some exceptions. Generally all the houses have a generous rear garden provision in proportion to the building and this relates to the surrounding rural character very well.
- 3.45 The mature vegetation within the village serves to soften the street scene and integrate the built development into the wider agricultural landscape. There are particular trees of streetscape importance, these are –

“Island” lime tree located at the centre of the village  
Willow tree in the village pond  
Yew tree in Church yard  
Walnut tree fronting junction of High Street & Luxted Road  
Trees fronting junction of High Street & High Elms Road

### **Garages**

- 3.46 Given the grain of the development within the village there are relatively few buildings with private garages - these are modest structures either located in space to the side of the host building or attached to the side of the host building. All are single storey – large garages with accommodation in the roof are not a feature of the area and there are few opportunities for construction of new garages to the other properties within the conservation area.

### **Negative Factors & Neutral Areas**

- 3.47 The vast majority of houses, gardens and spaces contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is the aim of the conservation area designation to protect these features. However, the following are worthy of note:-
- i) The greatest harm to the character of the area has been the removal and inappropriate replacement of traditional features – windows, doors, rainwater goods and soffits etc. Plastic, uPVC and other non-traditional materials have, incrementally and over many years, slowly eroded the special character and appearance of some houses in the area
  - ii) Modern concrete roof coverings have harmed the appearance of some buildings as both the texture and form is a poor match for plain clay tile and the colour finish often washes off leaving a patchy grey appearance.
  - iii) Some front gardens have lost too much greenery due to excessive areas of driveway or hardstanding.

### **Capacity for Change**

- 3.48 The houses in Downe Village all remain substantially intact and the vast majority are deemed to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Because of this important contribution there is little scope for alterations to the front or side of properties. Rear elevations normally present the best opportunity for extension. Alterations to roofs will be dependant on the form and character of the host buildings. The importance of soft landscaping and the spacious character of the street scene means there is little scope for structures such as garages in front of the established building line.

#### **4. Community Involvement and Consultation**

- 4.1 A draft copy of the document will be circulated to local residents, other interested parties, and a wide range of interest groups and agencies. A public meeting will be held at a date to be announced in order to engage with the local community, respond directly to their queries and encourage greater participation in the consultation process. Feedback responses to the draft will be encouraged and facilitated, and the views of the Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas will be obtained. A final statement will be issued in light of these comments and submissions.

#### **5. Boundary**

- 5.1 The conservation area boundary has been altered twice since designation in 1977, firstly in 1999 and most recently in 2003 to include properties along High Elms Road. The boundary of the conservation area has been considered in detail and is deemed to present a robust and coherent limit to the historic core of the village and contains within it the features, buildings and spaces that give the conservation area its special architectural and historic interest.

**6. Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas**

- 6.1 The Council will ensure that Development Control in Conservation Areas is undertaken with care and sensitivity to the character and appearance of the area. It is assisted by the Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas (APCA) which meets monthly to comment on planning applications affecting conservation areas.
- 6.2 The Panel has a core panel of independent representatives from relevant professions (such as architecture & town planning) and interest groups (such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England & The London Borough of Bromley Residents' Federation). The core panel is assisted by a representative for each Conservation Area who is usually nominated by the local residents' association. If no nominations are forthcoming from residents' associations, elected members or the chairman of APCA may nominate "area representatives".
- 6.3 The Panel's comments are passed to the Planning Officer dealing with the application and they are considered with all other consultation submissions.



## Conservation Area Management Plan

Together with general advice and guidance about conservation area law and policy that is available in separate pamphlets, this section forms supplementary planning guidance to the adopted Bromley Unitary Development Plan. That means that this guidance will be a 'material consideration' when the Council considers planning proposals. The Council will resist all changes that do not preserve or enhance the character of the area.

### 7. Alterations to Existing Properties

- 7.1 Construction details characteristic of the area should be retained and repaired wherever possible. It is only in this way that the special character and appearance of the area can be retained. It will be essential to replicate accurately traditional detailing in new work. Where possible, adjoining buildings, old photographs, prints or plans can inform accurate detailing. It should be noted that some works may require Building Control Approval as well as planning permission.

### 8. Brickwork

- 8.1 Brickwork should not be rendered, painted or clad. The Council will resist such proposals. Brickwork repairs should be undertaken with caution – matching Imperial sized brick of the same colour and texture will be required. Pointing mixes should be lime based, have a traditional light colour and a coarse aggregate. Where re-pointing is required a traditional flush or slightly recessed, not weather struck, finish will be sought.

### 9. Flint



9.1 Flint is in widespread use. Flint elevations are commonly stabilised by quoins on corners and around window and door openings. The church of St. Mary the Virgin has fine flint elevations with dressed stone quoins, window surrounds and tracery. Cottages constructed prior to the early 19th century, most notably Snows Cottages, Luxted Road, use soft red brick quoins and stringcourses to bond the flint. The red brick is likely to be of local manufacture.

Flint elevations are commonly stabilised by quoins on corners and around window and door openings. Repairs to flint work should be carried out by an experienced craftsman using appropriately knapped flint and lime based mortars.

- 9.2 Given the historic nature of the settlement proposals for the “harmonisation” in appearance of complex vernacular buildings which use a range of materials in their construction by the application of paints or renders to produce an artificially unified aspect will be resisted. This may therefore require the use of several different materials and construction methods when extending or repairing a building.

## **10. Windows, Doors, and Joinery**

- 10.1 Regular inspection and repainting prolongs the life of exterior joinery, windows and doors. Small repairs can be undertaken by experienced joiners to address localised rot or other failures. Where features are beyond repair and the replacement becomes necessary, the council will seek exact replicas of the traditional features or the replacement of inappropriate details with traditional detailing.
- 10.2 Changes to the size of window and door openings will be resisted. If traditional windows are in good condition the Council will resist their removal and replacement. If increased insulation is required the use of internal secondary glazing will be encouraged. Where replacement windows are deemed necessary exact painted timber replicas with a putty finish will be required and sections and details of the replacement windows will be required to match historic examples. Double glazing is acceptable if it accurately matches the appearance of traditional windows. However, on Listed Buildings the council may require single glazing. Stick-on glazing bars will also be resisted as they can, with time, become loose and drop off. Similarly, trickle vents and other modern detailing will not be deemed acceptable. Metal, unpainted hardwood or uPVC window units will be resisted as they fail to replicate the traditional construction details and delicate glazing bars of traditional single glazed windows.
- 10.3 Front doors, again, should be retained and repaired. Accurate replica doors, reflecting the date and style of the building will be required. The infilling of porches will be resisted. There is little scope for the construction of porches on existing properties as the majority of buildings have been carefully composed and alteration of their facades would harm their appearance. Where original porches remain the Council will resist their demolition and replacement.

## **11. Roofs**

- 11.1 The Council will resist the removal of original roof structures and their replacement with different designs. Small-scale roof repairs can often be accomplished using reclaimed materials. When considering replacement roof finishes, the Council will encourage the re-use of the original covering or good quality matching materials. Inappropriate modern roof coverings should be replaced with traditional ones. Plain clay tiles and natural slates are important to the character of the area. Artificial tiles or concrete slates

stacks will be resisted. Flush fittings in unobtrusive locations are preferred.

## **12. Dormer Windows and Roof Lights**

- 12.1 Dormer windows are a feature of some of the historic properties within the conservation area and where historic examples exist proposals for their removal and/or replacement will be resisted. The addition of new dormers to the roof slopes of buildings that make a positive contribution is likely to be resisted. Dormers, where appropriate, should be designed to match the host building and be detailed in the traditional manner. Large dormers, those with flat felt roofs or other poor modern treatments and those that break or protrude above the main roof ridge will be resisted.
- 12.2 Roof lights are not, generally, a feature of the area. They will be resisted on prominent roof slopes and where the group value of properties is important. When considered appropriate the Council will expect the roof light to be of the traditional cast-iron type, flush finished with a traditional slender frame and a vertical glazing bar. Large, modern or poorly located roof lights will be resisted.

## **13. Extensions**

- 13.1 There is little scope for extensions other than on rear elevations. Front extensions and side extensions will be resisted on buildings that make a positive contribution. New rear extensions should be subservient to the host building and reflect the forms and design of the host building along with its materials and construction details. Flat roofs will be resisted as they are not a feature of the area. Extensions should not be so large as to dominate or compete with the host building in visual terms.

#### **14. New Development**

- 14.1 Downe is located entirely within the Green Belt. This location is likely to mean that opportunities for new development on infill sites will be extremely restricted. Currently there are no vacant sites and all the buildings within the Conservation Area are deemed to make a positive or neutral contribution. Should sites within or adjoining the conservation area become available the Council will when considering any development proposals, pay special attention to plot widths, the scale and bulk of proposed extensions and their relationship with adjacent buildings and views between buildings. Increases in height or the development of additional houses between existing frontages could damage the character of the area and proposals of this nature will not normally be permitted.
- 14.2 Development of parcels of land created from rear gardens will be resisted as the gardens contribute to the character of the area, are an important amenity for residents, often provide wildlife habitats and help to integrate the built environment into its wider landscape context.

#### **15. Satellite dishes, Micro Renewables and other Plant**

- 15.1 The location and appearance of plant, extractors and other equipment such as satellite dishes on properties, should be carefully considered. Satellite dishes are ideally located on rear elevations and the council will normally resist proposals for dishes to be installed on prominent elevations. Where possible, wall vents should be finished externally in a traditional cast iron or brick air vent. The Council will resist any installations that will be visually obtrusive.
- 15.2 Government guidance in the Climate Change supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 encourages the use of micro renewable equipment. In light of this, Conservation Area designation does not preclude the use of any particular micro renewable equipment. However, as with all additions, any equipment to be installed should "preserve or enhance" the appearance of the Conservation Area. Therefore solar panels are usually best situated on the rear elevation of roofs so they can not be seen from public roads. Wind turbines should only be permitted where they would not dominate views within the Conservation Area or are injurious to the historic character of the area.

## **16. Trees**

- 16.1 Conservation area designation gives the Council special powers to protect important trees. Anyone proposing to do works to a tree must give written notice of their proposal to the Council. The works should not proceed until the Council has given its consent, or six weeks have expired. Where trees are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the Council's consent will still be required for works. The Council will seek the retention of all trees that contribute to the character and appearance of the area.

## **17. Hedgerows and Boundaries**

- 17.1 Some road boundaries in the area are formed by traditional agricultural hedgerows and their loss will be resisted. Hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple and holly are commonly found mingled in the hedges, together with a wide range of other native species. Removal of a hedge can result in the loss of a complex and valuable wildlife habitat, which new planting can never completely replace. The removal of some hedgerows is now subject to control under The Hedgerow Regulations (1997). The use of hedges is appropriate to maintain the privacy of rear gardens and along sections of road that are not a developed frontage. Mixed native species hedgerows make good and appropriate garden boundaries.
- 17.2 The Council will resist the loss of front hedges and low boundary treatments that contribute to the special character of the area. New boundary enclosures should reflect the traditional vernacular boundary enclosures that survive in the area in terms of height, materials and detailing. Where hedges remain in gardens every effort should be made to retain them as they provide valuable "green relief" although care should be taken to ensure that do not grow so high as to harm the amenity of neighbours. Metal railings, gates and front boundary treatments that exceed 1m high will be resisted in favour of the re-introduction of traditional timber picket or post & rail fencing or brick and flint walls. Given the rural, Green Belt context of the conservation area proprietary fences (such as Larch lap or various forms of netting) should be avoided: they tend to create a suburban atmosphere that is not at home in the true countryside.

## **18. Hardstandings and Garages**

- 18.1 The removal of front garden planting and its replacement with large, overly dominant hardstandings will be resisted as the loss of greenery, the resulting paved area and the obtrusively parked vehicles they encourage, harm the special interest of the area. The construction of most of the smaller cottages close to the front of their plots leaves little scope for the construction of hardstandings. A number of lanes are enclosed with high boundary walls of soft red brick and flint: again, the demolition of these to open up new areas of hard standing will normally be resisted. The Council will seek the retention of at least two thirds of garden areas dedicated to traditional soft landscaping. To reduce the adverse impact of new paving areas the council will seek bushy shrub planting and the retention of a planted border to the front elevation of the house and to the street boundary. Where crossovers are acceptable the Council will encourage the reuse of stone kerbs and the paving materials should be carefully considered. Proposals to restore areas of hardstanding to soft landscaping will be encouraged, other than where the hardstanding makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area in its own right.
- 18.2 There are relatively few garages built as such within the conservation area. Most of the smaller cottages are developed to the front of their plots and offer no scope for garage construction. Bulky or overly large garages, tandem garages and garages with accommodation in the roof will be resisted. Single garages in the established traditional manner will be preferred.

## **19. Advertisements**

- 19.1 Advertisements, which, in the Council's opinion, detract from the character of the area, will be resisted or made subject to discontinuance action where necessary. New signs should be designed in a way that minimises their adverse impact: they should be as small as possible and should not be displayed at first floor level or above, especially on exposed flank walls. Traditional forms of signage (painted boards or brass plates) are to be preferred over modern forms (such as Perspex or posters). The illumination of signs should be low-key. Internally illuminated signs and any form of illuminated advertisements are not appropriate to the character of the village. The village is within an area of special control for advertisements.

## 20. **Management Strategy**

- 20.1 The Council has provided sympathetic street finishes and street furniture in Downe Village and is committed to ensuring the public realm, its finishes and furniture, enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. In order to reduce street clutter signage and other furniture will be removed as and when they are no longer required. The Council will endeavour, when new works are required, to choose replacement products that will also enhance the character and appearance of the area in keeping with good practice guidance in the English Heritage '*Streets for All*' document.
- 20.2 The majority of the buildings in the conservation area are private property. As such, there is little scope for direct Council action to enhance them. However, having appraised the Conservation Area, the Council has identified works which, if implemented by property owners, would result in a significant enhancement to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Whilst it accepts that many of these works could take years to achieve, the Council hopes that owners will give them proper consideration:
- Removal of modern aluminium and uPVC windows and their replacement with windows which replicate the originals such as painted timber sliding sashes or timber casements.
  - The use of traditional materials for roofs, windows/doors, down pipes is encouraged. Also walls/fences along boundaries should match and be sympathetic to the design and construction of the original house.
- 20.3 The Council will carry out dated photographic surveys of the conservation area (including all properties where accessible), on a regular basis in order to gauge the rate and nature of change within the conservation and identify any breaches of planning control.
- 20.4 Where breaches of planning control are identified the homeowner/occupier may be invited to submit a retrospective application in order to regularise the works. Any such application will be judged on its own merits and against the adopted development plan, this document and any other relevant material land use considerations. Enforcement action will be undertaken will be pursued by the Council where expedient and based on the harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It should be noted that there is a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State (via the Planning Inspectorate) against enforcement notices.
- 20.5 At the current time it is felt that there was no requirement for the imposition of either an Article 4(1) or 4(2) direction within the conservation area. This direction may be invoked if the council believes that an excessive amount of harm is being caused by some element of Permitted Development which are works that can be carried out without the need for a planning application. However this situation will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis following the

photographic surveys. A public consultation will be carried out in relation to any proposals to impose an Article 4(1) or 4(2) Direction on the conservation area (or any part thereof) in order to take into account of public views before taking the decision whether to confirm the direction. If such a direction is imposed all affected residents/ homeowners will be notified by letter and a newspaper advert will be placed in a local newspaper.



## 21. Further Information

If you have a conservation area question or wish to make a development proposal in a conservation area, the Council will be happy to advise you on an individual basis. For further assistance, please contact:

Planning Division  
London Borough of Bromley  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley  
Kent BR1 3UH

For advice or information on repairs, contractors, restoration and listed buildings:  
**Conservation Officer** 020 8461 7532 or 020 8313 4664

For advice or information on planning applications and policy or the need for planning permission is required in this Conservation Area:  
**Development Control** 020 8461 7716

For advice on trees or landscape in this conservation area:  
**Tree Officer** 020 8313 4516

For advice on trees on the street or on Council property:  
**Street Trees** 020 8313 4471

For advice on environmental improvements and enhancement projects:  
**Urban Designer** 020 8313 4573

For advice on matters relating to building works and the need for approval:  
**Building Control** 020 8461 7860

For advice on matters relating to wildlife conservation:  
**Planning Manager (Biodiversity)** 020 84617808

## WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG!

If you have a wider planning or conservation problem or you need help or advice, let us know. We will try to resolve problems as quickly as possible.

There is further advice about what to do if you have a problem or a complaint in the leaflet "**Getting it Right**" which is available at the Planning and Engineering Reception in Bromley Civic Centre; Telephone 020 8313 4595.

### Useful Contact Details

#### **DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

(The Government Department with responsibility for planning)

Eland House  
Bressendon Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

Telephone 020 7944 4400

#### **DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**

(The Government Department with responsibility for the historic environment)

2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1Y 5DH

Telephone 020 7211 6200

#### **DOWNE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

Mr Derek Powell (Chairman)  
4 Captains Croft  
Luxted Road  
Downe  
Orpington  
BR6 7JZ  
Telephone 01959 573283

Email [powellbrendel@aol.com](mailto:powellbrendel@aol.com)

**DARWIN'S LANDSCAPE LABORATORY WORLD HERITAGE SITE TEAM**  
(Team at LB Bromley responsible for submission of proposed WHS)

Mr Alister Hayes  
Planning Strategy and Heritage  
London Borough of Bromley  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley  
BR1 3UH  
Telephone 020 8313 7646

Email [conservation@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@bromley.gov.uk)

**ENGLISH HERITAGE (LONDON REGION)**  
(The government's adviser on the historic environment)

1 Waterhouse Square  
138-142 Holborn  
London  
EC1N 2ST

Telephone                      020 7973 3000

**SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS**  
(A charity providing advice on the repair and restoration of old buildings)

37 Spital Square  
London  
E1 6DY

	Telephone	020 7377 1644
Repairs Advice Line	Mon, Tue & Wed	020 7456 0916
(9.30am-12.30pm)	Thu & Fri	01524 251293

E-mail                              [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)

### **THE GEORGIAN GROUP**

(A charity promoting Georgian architecture)

6 Fitzroy Square  
London  
E1 6DY

Telephone 020 7529 8920

E-mail [info@georgiangroup.org.uk](mailto:info@georgiangroup.org.uk)

### **THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY**

(A charity promoting Victorian architecture)

1 Priory gardens  
Bedford Park  
London  
W1T 5DX

Telephone 0870 774 3698

E-mail [admin@victorian-society.org.uk](mailto:admin@victorian-society.org.uk)

### **THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY**

(A charity promoting twentieth Century architecture)

70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6BP

Telephone 020 7250 3857

E-mail [coordinator@c20society.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@c20society.org.uk)

### **GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY**

(A charity promoting the conservation of historic parks and gardens)

77 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6BP

Telephone 020 7608 2049

E-mail [enquiries@gardenhistorysoc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gardenhistorysoc.org.uk)

**CIVIC TRUST**

(A charity promoting a better environment for all)

Essex Hall  
1-6 Essex Street  
London  
WC2R 3HU

Telephone 020 7539 7900  
E-mail [info@civictrust.org](mailto:info@civictrust.org)