
Cobham Conservation Area

Character Appraisal and Management Plan



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Cobham Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan

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

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

The designation, review, protection and management of conservation areas are part of the statutory duties of Elmbridge Borough Council as the local planning authority. However, community involvement is essential in understanding the special nature and different issues for each individual conservation area. The Working Group identified many aspects and issues and these were incorporated into the document at its initial draft stages. This document has been the subject of wider public consultation for a six-week period commencing on 19th November 2018 and comments received have informed the final document.

This guidance document will be a material consideration with regards to the implementation of the Elmbridge Local Plan as a basis for understanding the area, informing decision making, monitoring and management. It will be the subject of future review providing the opportunity to take account of new planning policy as it arises. The document was considered and endorsed by the Elmbridge Borough Council Planning Committee on 11th June 2019.

The document is available in PDF format on the Council's website www.elmbridge.gov.uk

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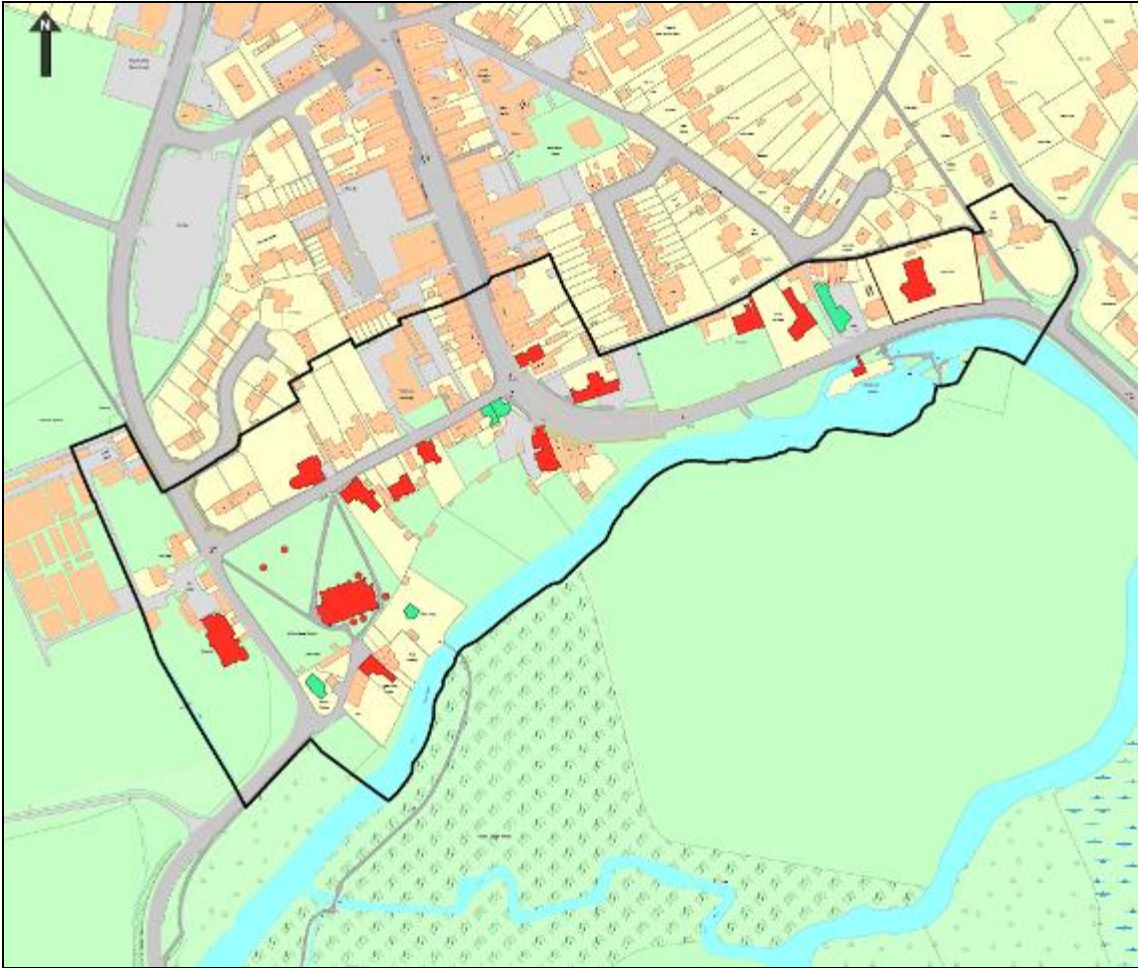
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Location Map

The present Conservation Area boundary is outlined in black.

Part 1 Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1 Introduction

Cobham comprises two settlements; Street Cobham (to the north) and Church Cobham (to the south) which have been amalgamated by largely 20th century purpose built commercial property with accommodation above. The Cobham Conservation Area covers the area historically known as Church Cobham to the southern end of the settlement known collectively as Cobham.

The conservation area can be divided into three key areas of distinct character;

- Pyports to the west of the church of St Andrew, a large farmhouse with its associated farm buildings forming an attractive group and demarking the edge of the settlement to the west;
- Church Street, an attractive and cohesive group of relatively modest historic buildings set to the east and south of the church and Mill Road; and
- River Hill, an area characterised by the sweep of the river, the surviving elements of Cobham Mill and the grand houses which face the river to the north side of the road.

There is a diverse range of periods and styles of architecture throughout the conservation area and good survival of vernacular traditions, such as the use of local brick and tile and timber-framing. There is a relatively high proportion of statutory listed buildings throughout the conservation area, a notable number at the higher grade of II*.

The River Mole and its tree lined banks are a prominent and boundary feature to the conservation area. The best open views are out to the river and beyond to the south to open fields.

Surrey County Council designated Cobham Conservation Area on 31st July 1973.

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

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation areas and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with Historic England’s guidance as set out in Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016).

This document seeks to:

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

This document therefore provides a firm basis on which applications for development within Cobham Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with NPPF policies and Historic England advice notes. In addition, it should be read in conjunction with the Elmbridge Local Plan. Currently this includes the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011) of which policies CS10, CS12, CS14 and CS17 are particularly relevant, the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (2015) and the Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (2012).

2 Location and Setting

(a) Location

Cobham is located approximately 4 miles to the south-west of Esher and 0.5 miles to the south of the A3. Painshill Park lies to the west of the settlement. The conservation area comprises an area known as Church Cobham which sits to the southern end of the settlement of Cobham. An area known as The Tilt (a separate conservation area but not linked) lies to the south with Stoke D’Abernon (and train station) beyond.

(b) Boundaries

Starting from the western boundary, the Conservation Area takes in the Grade II listed Pyports and its immediate farm group to the north and runs down to Downside Bridge Road. It continues east and then turns south to the River Mole and runs along the southern bank of the river. The boundary continues to the north-east until the river bends south-east. The boundary crosses the river and runs along the north-west edge of Leigh Place and includes Leylands and Little Leylands. The conservation area runs around the garden boundary and meets the high brick boundary wall of the former grounds of Leigh Hill House (also known as Leigh Place Hotel). From here it turns west along Major’s Walk and Crown Alley which form the rear boundaries of houses fronting Mill Road, notably Ham Manor and Cedar House. It turns north to the rear of Nos.53, 55 and 57 High Street and includes the lower section of the High Street, Nos 39 to 57 odd to the east side and Nos.30 to 42 even to the west side. The boundary continues south-west along the rear boundary line of houses and buildings to the north side of Church Street and meets the western boundary which continues north to include Pyports Cottage, Downside Bridge Road.

(c) Topography and landscape setting

To Church Street and High Street, there is a sense of being on the edge of the historic settlement, set up from the banks of the River Mole and the open countryside to the south of the river and to the west of the grounds of Pyports. Dense tree cover for much of the southern boundary reveals only glimpses of the open fields beyond. The conservation area sections of the settlement lie around 20 metres above Ordnance Datum (but dropping towards the riverside) and are perceived as relatively flat once up from the riverside. There is little variation in this except on travelling south-east from the settlement where there is a drop to the road level at River Hill which continues along Mill Road past the mill and on to The Tilt.

(d) Geology

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



Aerial view of Cobham Conservation Area

Aerial photography – Cartographic Engineering 2013

3 The Historical Development of the Settlement

(a) Historic Background¹

Cobham was once Cove(n)ham. This probably derives from Coffa's Hamm - "hamm" is "land hemmed in by water or marsh" - and Coffa is likely to have been a personal name. Coffa's Hamm, the Anglo-Saxon settlement, was probably in the large bend of the river which is now represented by Cobham Court Farm. Cobham Court itself is the ancient manor house and probably stands on the site of the grange or bailiff's house belonging to Chertsey Abbey who held the manor until the Dissolution. An earlier name for Cobham was Getinges, or the people of Get. This probably covered a much wider area than present day Cobham.

Prehistoric and Roman finds are recorded from the Cobham area, but developments in these periods are not considered to have had a discernible effect on the origins or character of the town. It is likely that there was some settlement around the parish church in the early medieval period, but archaeological work in this area is needed to confirm its date and character. There is little archaeological evidence relating to the early origins of the town itself.

The original Anglo-Saxon settlement of Coffa's Hamm was probably the location of Cobham Court seen presently. This has been altered over time first to Cove(n)ham and then Cobham. Historically, the parish of Cobham was divided, for administrative purposes, into three areas known as tithings. These were Street Cobham, Downside and Church Cobham. Cobham Conservation Area includes most of the medieval core and environs of Church Cobham, stretching from Downside Bridge to Cobham Mill and Cedar House. Within it are most of Cobham's better-known historic properties.

The early medieval history of Church Cobham would appear to point to the laying out of plots by Chertsey Abbey (the Manor was owned by the Abbey until the dissolution in 1537). However, recent research has suggested that the original road ran closer to the river passing to the south of the church suggesting a re-orientation of plots and buildings some time later. This would suggest that Church Street started out as a back lane between the plots to the suggested road to the south and Church Field to the north.

There appears to have been little expansion of the settlement of Church Cobham from the medieval period until the 20th century, when it merged with Street Cobham to the north, with development to the south restricted by the presence of the River Mole. A few large properties were built in Church Street and Mill Road in the 17th and 18th centuries. Street Cobham developed along the Portsmouth Road, a major communication route adjacent to an important crossing of the River Mole.

The emergence of development at Church Cobham may have become established soon after the construction of the first bridge in c1100, but there is no archaeological evidence to confirm this. The community benefited from the passing trade which aided its development. When the railway came to Cobham in the late 19th century, despite the fact that Cobham station was constructed at Stoke D'Abernon c1.9km to the south-east,

¹ The Historic Background is an abridged version of David Taylor's *Church Cobham: A Guide and History* (unpublished) for which EBC are very grateful.

Cobham saw a population increase which resulted in the merger of Church Cobham, Street Cobham and The Tilt. Cobham may have seen even greater change had the station been located within the town centre itself. Despite surrounding redevelopment, the historic centre of Church Cobham in the vicinity of the parish church has maintained its historic character.

Church Street represents the remaining visible historic core of Church Cobham. In the Victorian period this was Cobham's main street where most of the local tradesmen lived and had their businesses. Today Church Street, despite recent additions, is still an interesting place which has retained much of its character and in which buildings of all dates and styles can be found.

At the heart of Church Street, is the ancient parish church of St Andrew which dates from the middle of the twelfth century. It stands away from the manorial centre and close to a crossing of the river Mole. The first record of bridge here is in 1415. In earlier times the river was crossed by a ford and it is possible that before the church was built, there was a preaching cross or shrine where travellers could stop and pray before continuing their journey across the river which could be hazardous in times of flood. [A maid of Queen Matilda's is said to have been drowned crossing the river at Painshill].

It was once thought that Church Street was laid out in the early Middle Ages as part of a planned settlement by the monks of Chertsey Abbey who then owned the manor of Cobham. Cobham had been given to the great Abbey Church of St Peter at Chertsey as part of its foundation grant by Frithuwald and the manor remained in the Abbey's possession until the Dissolution in 1537. However recent research now seems to indicate that the original road probably ran much closer to the river bank passing south of the parish church.

Until relatively recent times there were only three separate property holdings fronting Church Street. A 1598 survey of the manor of Cobham by Ralph Agas names these as Somers, Christmas and the building now known as Church Stile House. Somers and Christmas probably took their names from families who lived here in earlier times.

The site of Christmas, is now occupied by Lime House, Mole Cottage and Somers. If the old road ran behind what is now the rear gardens of these properties and the river, what is now Church Street was probably a back-lane which separated the properties from Church Field, a large open common field which for many centuries helped to separate the two communities of Church Cobham and Street Cobham. The manorial tenants held strips of land in the various common fields within the manor.

The Conservation Area includes River Hill, once a narrow street with old houses on either side. It is possible that there was once a small market at the junction of Church Street and River Hill. The 1598 survey records a property between Crown Alley and The Bear known as "shoppes" which might indicate commercial buildings here that had developed from temporary market stalls. Crown Alley is an ancient right of way that would have been used to access Church Field and also provide a way through to the Tilt in times of flood.

There were several inns around this area. The Crown (demolished 1904) stood opposite the end of Church Street. Opposite was the White Hart. The Old Bear (which started life

as a farm house facing the large open field called “Church Field”) still stands and opposite this was once a small ale house called The Cock.

The Domesday Book (1086) records the existence of three Mills in the Cobham area, these being at Downside, Ash Ford and Cobham itself. Following road widening in the 1950s the major part of the Cobham Mill complex was demolished, leaving the small Mill building which exists today. This was constructed around 1820 and is Grade II listed. By the 1980s this had fallen into disrepair and was in danger of slipping into the River Mole. At around this time the Cobham Mill Preservation Trust was established to restore it to full working order. This was completed during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since that time the Trust has operated a regular programme of maintenance, public openings and demonstrations of flour production. For this conservation work the Trust was awarded Elmbridge Borough Council’s “Conservation Award” (1996) and the Surrey Industrial Group’s “Conservation Plaque” (1997). The mill is a unique example in Surrey of a fully working watermill, demonstrating how technology served the community in the 19th Century²

Cedar House is the most prominent building here. The recent restoration of this property has led to fresh discoveries and a re-assessment of its development over many centuries. The Old Mill House is a mediaeval building of high status with seven crown posts in the roof and is probably Cobham’s oldest house. Ham Manor dates from the eighteenth century and was once Spencer House.

Leigh Place, a housing estate developed in the 1930s, was the site of Leigh Hill House an important estate whose history can be traced back many centuries. The original oval shape of the estate might indicate that it represents a very early enclosure of land from the surrounding woodland. The raised footpath here is called Major’s Walk after an eighteenth-century occupant of Leigh Hill House and leads to the Tilt Conservation Area.

(b) Archaeology

Almost the entire Cobham Conservation Area lies within an area of High Archaeological Potential. There is a limited body of archaeological and historical information for the local area. Archaeological work in the area of Cobham has produced a variety of archaeological finds (although not within the town centre itself) in addition to a number of stray finds. The results of early excavations carried out in 1907-08 were published by the Surrey Archaeological Society. Later excavations were carried out in the area in the 1940s and from the 1970s to the 1990s. The sites that were identified and the artefacts recovered are mainly of Iron-Age/Romano-British date, but include earlier prehistoric material and artefacts of Roman, Saxon and medieval date.

² For a more complete explanation of the Cobham Mill Preservation Trust’s activities, please refer to the Cobham Mill website at www.cobhammill.org.uk

4. Surviving Historical Features within the Conservation Area

(a) Summary of Historic Development

- Inextricably linked to the past and present extent of the River Mole
- Plot and boundary divisions and proportions probably dating from the 12th onwards
- A fine Grade I listed church dating from the 12th century (with 19th century restoration)
- Continued evidence of commercial activity and centre for trade since the 12th century
- A survival of inns (public houses), shops and mixed use buildings from the 18th century onwards
- Remnant survivals of late medieval and 17th century houses within later remodellings and extensions
- Fine 18th century grand houses with historic prospects across the river
- A fragment survival of one of three mills mentioned in the Domesday survey
- The links with adjacent settlements and the wider landscape, most notably the Tilt, Cobham Park Estate to the south and Downside, which has extensive common land beyond and is (along with The Tilt) also designated as a conservation area
- The urban expansion of adjacent areas with planned and structured Victorian and Edwardian development some of which was probably speculative
- The later infilling of plots with 20th century development

(b) Street pattern and building plots

The present street pattern has been dictated by the survival of historic plot sub-division and a degree of settlement planning probably dating from the medieval period. The proximity and location of the river over time has had a defining effect on the present street pattern as well as significant 20th century intervention, notably highway widening and remodelling particularly in the River Hill and Mill Road areas.

There are two distinct patterns within the conservation area which also define the sub-areas (see Section 6). The plots to Church Street, although much altered in places are the result of some form of historic planned settlement. This was originally considered to be around Church Street as the main focus but has since been suggested that the building plots once fronted a now lost road which passed to the south of the main street and along past the south side of the church (a continuation of the lane running to the north of Church Gate House). The re-directing of the river and potential regular flooding may have caused the re-orientation of plots to 'front' Church Street. But the physical evidence now points to houses from at least the 17th century fronting Church Street combined with the subdivision of what were large plots into the much finer grain of development seen presently.

Despite a degree of planning to this part of the town the plots are varied with a mix of narrow deep plots and wider deep and some truncated plots. This variation to the plot pattern has contributed positively to the character and appearance of the Church Street

part of the conservation area. Far more regular division is seen to High Street but this is largely of a 20th century construct although its scale is respectful of an older representation of scale and grain.

The plot sizes and form are markedly different to River Hill and Mill Road where large houses and buildings are set in large generous, often heavily landscaped plots. There is some speculation that the plots to Mill Road historically ran down to the riverside and that the main road ran to the north of the houses (now represented by Crown Alley). Certainly, historic photographs (see Figure 1) of the former mill complex to the riverside would have rendered this road much more a lane winding between the mill complex (hard to, and in some cases projecting into the roadside) and gardens of houses to the north side of the road.

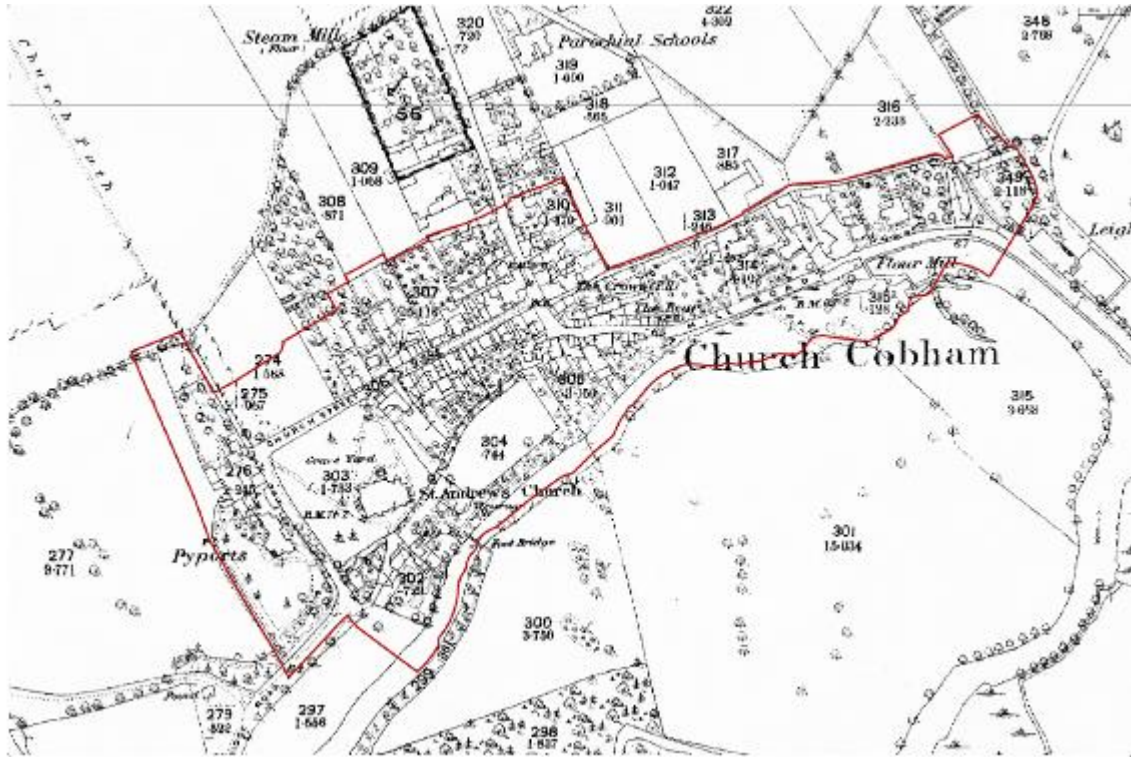
The Grade II listed Pyports to the west of the church sits in splendid isolation from the main settlement in a very large plot to its south and west. It is a plot that reflects the status and historic standing of the house but is not reflective of the majority of plots seen to the conservation area.



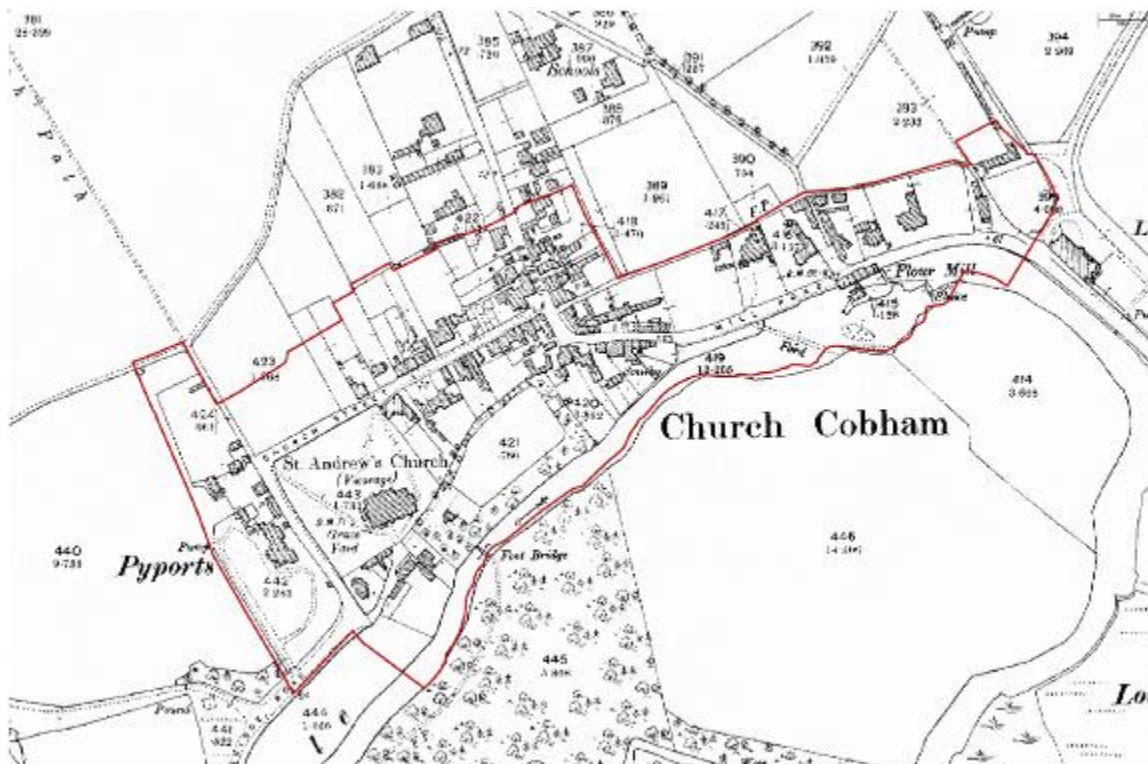
Figure 1: View of Cobham Mill and Skilton's Yard c1930s



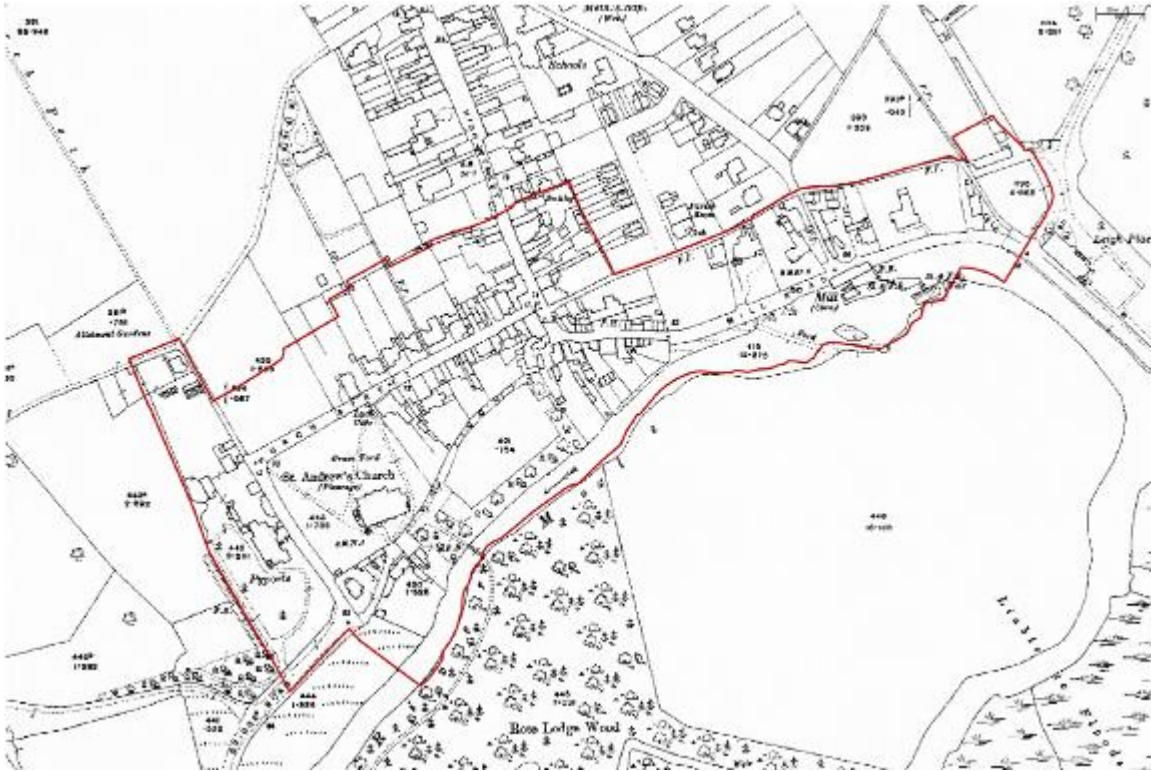
John Roque's Map of 1768



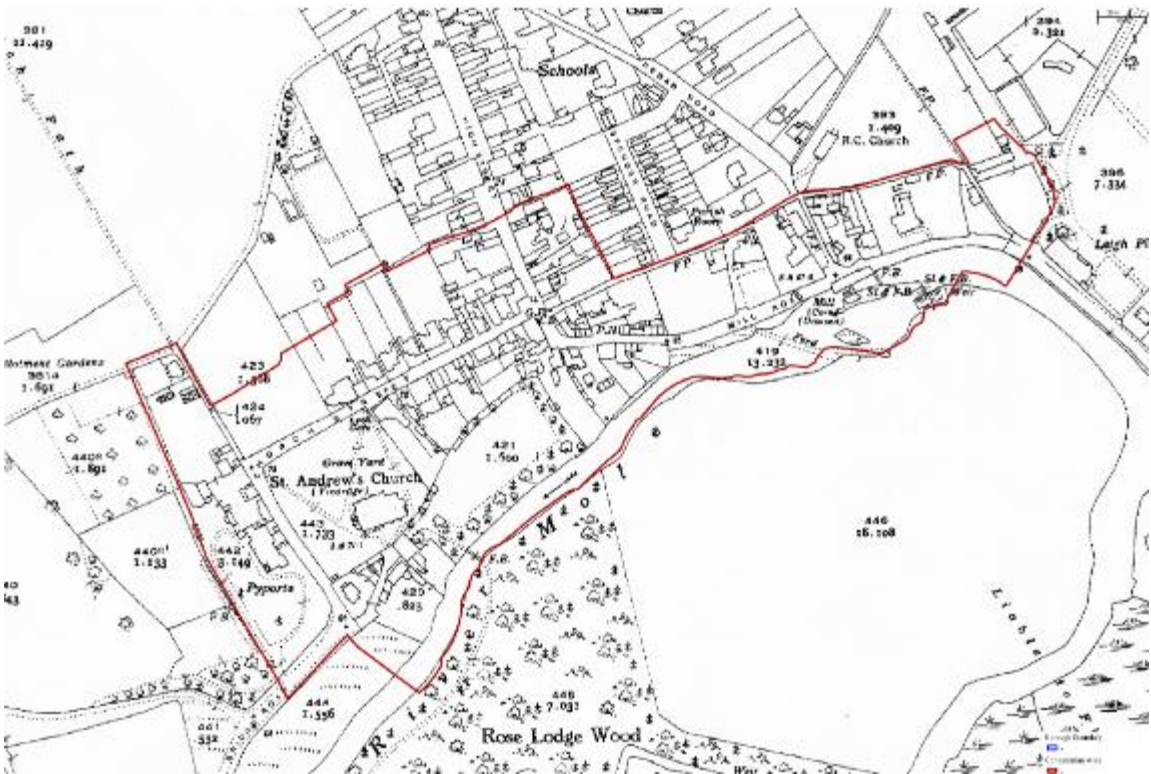
Ordnance Survey 1868



Ordnance Survey 1895



Ordnance Survey 1914



Ordnance Survey 1939

5. The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

(a) Summary of townscape features

- Good positive enclosure to the street with built form to both Church Street and High Street
- Street enclosure is often continued by brick boundary walls or railings or mature hedges where buildings are set back from the roadside
- Mature individual trees and groups of trees often have a key defining role in general views, vistas and terminated views.
- The river plays an important soft landscape role on entry to the conservation area to the south
- There is a strong sense of place to Church Street reinforced by the relative lack of fast moving traffic and the mixed use nature of part of the street
- Views to the tower of the church are important but relatively short and often glimpsed due to townscape enclosure to streets and the presence of mature trees
- Views to open countryside to the south of the river are glimpsed due to the presence of mature trees along both sides of the River Mole
- The mixed use activity and intensification of density to High Street is in marked contrast to that of Church Street making the transition between these two spaces important and sensitive to change
- The views out of the conservation area taking in the northern sections of the High Street display a relatively consistent scale and street enclosure which is important to this part of the conservation area
- Views from Crown Alley and the alley itself form an important part of the setting of the conservation area and provide a sense of the evolution of the settlement through the 19th and 20th century (with good examples of house and other buildings from these periods)
- The survival of locally distinctive materials (such as red clay pantiles) adds to a diverse but complementary building materials palette which is in scale with the generally modest buildings to most parts of the conservation area
- Mature trees form part of the framing, foreground or background of most views of historic buildings throughout the conservation area

(b) Current activities and uses

The pattern of uses broadly follows the distinctive character areas within the conservation area. The west end of Church Street has the Church of St Andrew and buildings and spaces associated with this use, such as the memorial Lych Gate and churchyard and Church Gate House which is now parish and meeting rooms for the church. The churchyard in particular is notable for its mausoleum to Harvey Combe and family (1818) a structure in a Soanian manner and a distinct local landmark in the churchyard.

The central section to Church Street is residential and this transitions to a mixed use, shops and services to ground floors on moving towards the junction with High Street and River Hill. Here there is a strong mix of commercial uses; restaurants, cafes and retail shops focused to the core of the High Street but also seen to the sections within the

conservation area. There appears to be a mix of office and residential uses above these purpose-built mixed use blocks.

To Mill Road. On the north side there are large private residential houses. These include Ham Manor, The Old Mill House, Cedar House and a smaller later house, Millwater Cottage. On the south side is what remains of Cobham Mill dating back to around 1820. This is maintained in full working order by the Cobham Mill Preservation Trust and is regularly open to the public during the summer months. Skilton's Yard retains the footprint of some of the former industrial buildings on the site which, along with the previously extended Mill, would have given this area a distinctly industrial character if only on a modest scale (see Figure 1)

Adjacent to the Mill is the riverside walk and access to the south bank of the River Mole, weirs and associated 'recreational' land. This area has views looking back towards the fine houses on the north side of Mill Road and views from the recreation area south to the open countryside.

Pyports to the west end of Church Street is a mix of office and residential serving a larger agricultural operation to the north. This comprises of a series of sheds, green houses and polytunnels (not within the conservation area) which make up the semi-agricultural character of this large house and its estate.

(c) Focal points, views and vistas

The combination of relatively narrow roads (Church Street in particular), enclosed townscape to those roads, much mature tree cover and a relatively modest change in levels throughout the conservation area does not lend itself to townscape which produces many memorable views or vistas. Notwithstanding these visual constraints, there are good views to be had of the 'landmark' shingled spire of St Andrew (Figure 2). This is the case on travelling along Downside Bridge Road in both directions but particularly from the junction of this road and Church Street.

On entering the churchyard from the Memorial Lych Gate the vista is playfully closed by the ogee windows of the Gothick lodge (Rose Lodge) to the south-east of the church (Figure 3).



Figure 2: The spire of the church of St Andrew is glimpsed and framed between trees from the junction of Church Street and Downside Bridge Road.



Figure 3: The vista on entering the churchyard is closed by the ogee windows of Rose Lodge

Views along Church Street are funneled by the enclosure from townscape in the form of buildings or robust boundary treatments. On travelling along Church Street views to the west are closed by the barn forming part of the group of outbuildings to the Pyports group. On travelling east, the view is dominated and partially closed by the horse chestnut tree to the grass verge to the front of the telephone exchange (Figure 4).



Figure 4: The view east along Church Street is partially closed by the horse chestnut outside the Telephone Exchange.

The riverside walk, Cobham Mill and its access to the weirs and associated islands to the north-east provide the opportunity for good views back toward the fine houses lining the north side of Mill Road (which becomes Stoke Road at Leigh Place). They also provide the best opportunity for semi-public views from the conservation area south to the open countryside and (particularly from the recently constructed viewing platform) east along the river to Cobham Mill and the weirs. (Figure 5).



Figure 5: View looking east from the southern boundary of the conservation area across to Stoke Road and The Tilt

There is a glimpsed view west from Church Street between the outbuildings group relating to Pyports to the open countryside to the west. This gives a strong sense of Pyports being at the western edge of the settlement with planned landscape (Painshill) and open countryside forming part of the character of these important views.

(d) Open spaces, landscape and trees

Much of the conservation area is open space but this is private garden space or plots with no public access. This is particularly the case to the riverside between Rose Lodge and The Ivy Restaurant. These spaces are important as open areas containing a considerable number of mature trees which make a valuable contribution to the setting of buildings to Church Street and River Hill (Figure 6) and form the backdrop to extended views on approaching from the east along Mill Road.



Figure 6: Views along Mill Road are closed by trees to the riverside and private gardens (to the west of the Ivy restaurant)

Semi-public and public open spaces include the churchyard which has a fine collection of specimen trees (see Figure 2) including a mature Catalpa (Indian Bean Tree). This space has very high evidential and historic value and forms an important and meaningful part of the setting of the church of St Andrew and its fine grouping of monuments, mausoleum and chest tombs (a number of chest tombs are individually Grade II listed).

The generous private garden spaces to the houses fronting the river, notably Ham Manor, the Old Mill House and Cedar House form an important part of the historic setting of these grand houses. Their scale and spatial qualities are reflective of the status and quality of these individual houses. These spaces are planted up to varying degrees, with Ham Manor and Old Mill House largely obscured from view given the mature vegetation within their grounds. In contrast Cedar House has almost no soft landscaping to the grounds leaving much of the house open to developing and varied views along Mill Road and from the weirs and islands associated with Cobham Mill (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Views to Cedar House, notable for its open frontage with very limited soft landscaping

There is a very attractive sequence of semi-open spaces associated with Cobham Mill and its setting (Figure 8). These are reached by a series of mostly modern weirs and bridges and provide tranquil naturally landscaped grassed spaces with varied views to historic buildings to the north (Cedar House and the mill) and open countryside to the south (see Figure 5).



Figure 8: Cobham Mill (Grade II) is glimpsed from islands, bridges and weirs to its east

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

The public realm is generally functional and in a reasonable condition. There are no examples of traditional surface finishes within the conservation area. The pavements to Church Street are notably narrow and this adds to the sense of enclosure to this street and the need for pedestrians, cyclists and cars to share space and surfaces. However, the pavements are uneven and badly maintained which distracts from the attractiveness of the area.

The footpath to the south side of Mill Road was a project undertaken by the Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust in 2014 and is an attractive route to and from the village along the riverside. Materials and finishes to railings and enclosures have been carefully considered and maintained.

The Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust have also initiated, with funding from Elmbridge Borough Council, the construction of a timber viewing platform to the south side of Mill Road which provides attractive views along the riverside and forms part of a well-considered area of public realm relating to the waterside and Cobham Mill.

Elmbridge Borough Council have ensured the installation of heritage style lamp posts to Mill Road and the High Street which are a significant improvement to the standard design installed elsewhere in the Borough.

The general narrow nature of the footway to Church Street and restrictions created by the proximity to the River Mole along Mill Road have limited the degree to which street furniture, notably benches, can be integrated into the street pattern successfully. There is generally a pleasing lack of overprovision or overconcentration of street furniture and footpaths are generally free of unnecessary clutter.

There has been a public realm improvement scheme at the junction of Church Street and High Street which has incorporated public art, raised planters and benches. This area was created by the Cobham Conservation Group and marks the site of the former Fox & Hounds Public House. There is a blue plaque erected to record the former Public House, one of a number of plaques recording the historic sites and associations of buildings and spaces with historic people and events in Cobham.

Signage is generally restrained and minimal and is not seen to have a significant detrimental impact on the conservation area.

6. Character Areas

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

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

For identification of character areas see Townscape Analysis Map.

For the Cobham Conservation Area the character areas are defined by use patterns, previous and present, and a variation in scale of built form and corresponding plot sizes.

Area 1: Riverside and River Hill

This part of the conservation area is defined and complemented by the presence of the River Mole. The buildings within this part of the conservation area generally take advantage of their waterside setting with principal facades facing south and looking over the river and open countryside beyond. This area has seen perhaps the most change over the relatively recent past with the loss of Leigh Place (replaced with Leyland and Little Leylands), the loss of a considerable section of Cobham Mill which projected into the road and the loss of a significant number of buildings which defined the southern 'entrance' to Church Cobham. Their replacements to the south side of River Hill/High Street (Nos 50 to 62 even) are not of a comparable architectural or historic quality although they do play some positive role in enclosing the townscape on arrival into the core of the settlement. However, this change was prior to the designation of the conservation area.

Despite the large scale of the plots, houses and buildings are generally at two storey with Cedar House, for example, having an attic storey set behind a parapet. The larger houses (and buildings in non-residential uses) tend to be of a rambling character with a number of extensions from various periods making up the whole composition. This is also the case for Skilton's Yard, a series of converted workshops and stores which is also on a larger scale but broken up into a series of buildings. Buildings are generally set back from their front boundaries and face south towards the riverside (with which it is thought they had a stronger relationship historically).

Given the way in which the individual houses sit in large often landscaped plots there is limited grouping of buildings to this part of the conservation area. The strong and traditional roof lines of both The Ivy and Wildwood restaurants (Wildwood was formerly The Bear PH) form a good group at the 'entrance' to the High Street (Figure 9). There is a notable group of 19th century infill to the rear of Skilton's Yard and The Old Millhouse.

These are of a modest cottage scale and form an attractive edge to the conservation area from Cedar Road (Figure 10).



Figure 9: The Ivy restaurant and Wildwood frame the 'entrance' to the High Street



Figure 10: Attractive group closing the view from Cedar Road into the conservation area

The historic buildings to this part of the conservation area are a mix of red brick and painted render over brick (and possibly remnant timber-framing). There is a varied choice of roofing material with a marginal dominance of plain red handmade clay tiles but red pantiles, early 19th century Victorian interlocking tiles and natural slate are also seen. Former outbuildings and the converted Skilton's Yard buildings have stained feather-edged weatherboarding. These buildings have had both red pantiles and natural slate as roof finishes historically. Cobham Mill and Cedar House (and its boundary walls) are notable for their use of red brick with handmade clay tiles. There are a series of long, high boundary walls in red brick to the boundaries between houses and also fronting the roadside (although these tend to be lower and sometimes accompanied by railings – Cedar House).

The views of houses set in their generous grounds and views to Cobham Mill can be had from the weirs, bridges and islands to the east of the mill building and to the mill building from the viewing platform to the west of the mill. These views are often complemented by the presence of mature trees which partially obscure and frame buildings in their waterside setting. This is despite the presence of a busy road between houses and river. There are attractive and open views to countryside to the south of the River Mole from the islands and bridges relating to the weirs. The riverside and its mature trees and open spaces form an important part of the setting of the historic buildings to the north side of the road.

The views from Crown Alley as it travels past the ends of Cedar Road and Spencer Road form an important element of the setting of this part of the conservation area. The views take in a series of important buildings of some local significance such as the former Parish Rooms (designed by local architect Leonard Martin), and paired cottages of late 19th/Early 20th century date and to Cedar Road a number of Edwardian Villas which retain a remarkably high degree of original materials, form and scale. These views give a sense of the historic development of the settlement beyond the conservation area and whilst altered make an important contribution to the setting of the Cobham Conservation Area.

The ability to enjoy both the waterside and high status historic buildings on this approach to the village core combined with the valuable survival of the mill with working wheel and associated water courses make this a memorable and high quality historic environment forming a key approach to the village centre.

Negative features

- Tree growth along the river bank now partially obscure views out to open countryside although recent clearance work has been undertaken.
- The road can be very busy and is a natural slowing point for traffic which can cause congestion

Area 2: Church Street and High Street

The character area comprises the commercial/mixed use heart of the conservation area and the historic core of Cobham. There is a very strongly defined townscape to this part of the conservation area centred around the junction of High Street and Church Street.

In terms of scale and form, buildings to High Street are at a higher density due to their uniform plot width and single build design within groups and at two, two and half (dormers in roof spaces) and three storey. This is in marked contrast to buildings in Church Street which are generally two storey with the exception of Lime House and Church Stile House (both with attic storeys in roof spaces for the third storey). It is notable that to the High Street section of the conservation area and the eastern end of Church Street to both sides of the street there is strong positive enclosure to the street with building lines to the back of pavement. This varies on travelling west along Church Street and is notably broken by the setting back of the Telephone Exchange to the north side of the street although the mature horse chestnut tree helps maintain a strong visual line to the frontage.

There are some important cohesive groupings of buildings to this part of the conservation area. Nos.49 and 51 High Street form a small but significant high quality group as the last semblance of a lost section of historic, traditionally-scaled townscape to the southern end of the High Street. No.2 to the north side of Church Street and No.4 (in townscape terms) and the south side of Church Street comprising Nos.3 to 17 (odd) inclusive, which includes Grade II listed buildings and locally listed buildings all form a group of some considerable townscape and historic quality (Figure 11). Their mixed use and evidence of former mixed uses (former shopfronts for example) contribute to the special interest of this group and hint at present and former commercial enterprises which once formed the commercial core of the village.



Figure 11: South side of Church St. – part of a very attractive group of historic buildings

To the north side of Church Street to the west of the Telephone Exchange there is a well-considered and finely detailed group of Arts and Crafts inspired infill development c1904. These three houses (Nos. 12, 14 and 16) (Figure 12) designed (or remodelled in the case of No.16) by Leonard Martin, a notable local architect form an attractive group of architectural and historic significance. There is a further significant group of houses of high architectural and historic significance to the south of Church Street and forming a wider group with the Lych Gate, boundary wall and churchyard. This comprises the Grade II listed Lime House (set back from the road but with a strong boundary treatment) and Overbye (to the north side) and the Grade II* listed Church Stile House. Overbye and Church Stile House in particular are important for their role in closing the townscape and funneling views east along Church Street.

There is a further modest but attractive group of houses to the south side of the Church centred on the Grade II listed Church Gate House and including the locally listed Church Cottage. The houses set to the back of pavement and the enclosure from boundary walls make an attractive, tight and cohesive group of historic buildings forming a 'gateway' to the southern entrance to the churchyard.



Figure 12: Nos 12, 14 and 16 Church Street designed (or remodeled) by local architect Leonard Martin

Most of the buildings in this character area could be considered as deriving from the local vernacular or in the case of Nos. 12, 14 and 16 Church Street, in a Vernacular Revival style. That is to say they are of traditional build and form and often functional constructed in local materials. The exceptions to this would be the 18th century Lime

House and Church Gate House which display a degree of politeness particularly in their use of tuck pointing for brickwork, a notable 18th century technique designed to give emphasis and a refinement and higher status to facing brickwork. The remaining buildings display a pleasing, varied and extensive use of local materials; red brick, rendered brick, timber-framing (faux and real), weatherboarding and handmade clay tile, pantiles and some natural slate. In the case of Church Stile House, its attractive and extensive array of extensions and alterations display almost all of the above-mentioned materials.

There are good views of the church spire to be had from the western end of Church Street and Rose Cottage closes the view south on entering the churchyard via the Lych Gate. The views west along Church Street is terminated by the barn, an outbuilding to Pyports which forms an attractive group with the house and has some important historic association with the ownership pattern and use of Pyports in the 19th century.

The view east along Church Street beyond the mature tree fronting the Telephone Exchange is terminated (but not particularly successfully) by Nos.53-57 (odd), an indifferent block of the mid to late 20th century.

This part of the conservation area is successful as a series of linked distinctive groups of buildings which subtly change the character of the street and spaces around the church on moving through the conservation area. However, there are elements which maintain a consistency such as building line and the maintaining of a strong building line with boundary walls, hedges or trees where buildings are set-back.

Negative features

- Vehicles can dominate views along the street especially given its narrow width
- Signage is generally of a good quality and not intrusive but the use of projecting lettering (rather than painted signage) is intrusive in the historic street scene

Area 3: Pyports

This area comprises the Grade II listed house known Pyports and its gardens (to the north and south) and outbuildings group.

Pyports is a grand two storey house in scale with remaining buildings between one and two storey but none competing with the main house. The house has a garden front to the west and working front and entrance to the roadside where it forms a group with a series of outbuildings to its north. A notable and linking feature to the whole character area is the almost continuous boundary wall to Downside Bridge Road (Figure 13)



Figure 13: Pyports and its outbuildings and boundary wall to Downside Bridge Road

The Grade II listed house (Pyports) and its outbuildings to the north and the boundary wall form a group of considerable special architectural and historic interest. The backdrop of mature trees adds to the quality of the group and their setting on viewing the group from the road. There is an attractive courtyard quality to the informal layout of the outbuildings. They are individually and collectively of special interest when seen from the public realm to the east and from Church Street.

The predominant use of red brick and plain clay tiles helps to unify this group of historic buildings, particularly when seen almost uninterrupted to the tall boundary wall to the roadside. The integration of buildings into the boundary wall is an attractive and positive characteristic of the buildings and the form of enclosure to the informal grouping.

There is a terminated view into the character area from Church Street which is closed by the small weatherboarded barn forming part of the outbuildings group. The barn has some historic significance as a meeting place for Christian worshippers brought together by the evangelical tenant Mr Samuel Wesley Bradnack who ran Pyports (then The Cedars) from 1857 as a boarding school for the sons of Methodist ministers and lay preachers³.

The garden elevation of Pyports has uninterrupted views from its principal rooms across open countryside to the west of the conservation area plus extended views between the buildings to the wider countryside beyond.

³ Taylor D. *Church Cobham A Guide and History* (unpublished)

Pyports is an important house in the history of Cobham. The house has had a number of notable owners and tenants, for example Henry Skrine, a popular topographical writer of the 18th century and William Hoste who went to sea with Lord Nelson⁴ and Vernon Lushington patron and friend to a number of pre-raphaellite painters. Its prominence in the street scene and complementing of the setting of the church and notable boundary wall along with its historic significance and association make this an important part of the conservation area which sits in its own entity as a set piece of small country house with associated buildings to the edge of the historic settlement.

Negative features

- The impact in views of some of the larger modern agricultural buildings to the north-west of the house
- Some erosion to brickwork to the boundary wall adjacent to the roadside

⁴ Taylor D. *Church Cobham A Guide and History* (unpublished)

7. The Buildings of the Conservation Area

(a) Architectural styles and detailing

The oldest and most architecturally and historically significant building within the conservation area is the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew. The church is flint with puddingstone and carstone dressings and some rendering of earlier fabric. There are remnants of 12th century fabric in the tower and nave including a fine Norman door with jamb shafts, three scallop capitals and a main zig-zag order with inner roll moulding and outer hood moulding of billets. The church was originally aisleless with aisles and south chapel added in the mid through late 19th century and early 20th century. Some late medieval windows and stained glass survive despite much restoration during the 19th century. The church is a fine example of a multi-phase building which has retained a degree of authenticity and architectural integrity despite much restoration. The spire in particular with its wood shingle finish has managed to provide a fitting landmark to the building without being over-bearing or intrusive on the essentially village scale of this historic building⁵.

The church setting is complemented by an excellent group of chest tombs and the Mausoleum to the Combe family (all separately Grade II listed). The tomb to Harvey Christian Combe M.P. died 1828 comprises a stone canopied sarcophagus on earth mound in the style of John Soane (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Church of St Andrew and Combe tomb

⁵ The church has recently published (2018) the History and Guide to the Parish Church

There are a series of much altered buildings with medieval or post-medieval cores. This is not unusual in a settlement of this historic significance. Much of the fabric (usually timber framing and possible early chimney stacks and fire surrounds) of the medieval period and later is hidden behind later brickwork facades. A notable exception to this is the 15th century stone traceried window to the return elevation of Cedar House (Figure 15). Whilst it is thought that this window has come from elsewhere, the provenance of parts of the house appear to be very early (c1500) as is the case for its near neighbour Old Mill House. These houses are characterized by multiple changes to the elevations and extensions to the sides and rear, often from multiple periods. Their facades can often be formal and polite (with sash windows instead of casements) in a similar fashion to that seen to later houses such as Lime House or Ham Manor but can often mask or hide earlier fenestration patterns, some of which is retained to side or rear elevations.

Wildwood, formerly The Old Bear Public House is an exception to this as it is a building which originated in the 17th century (and has a survival of timber-framing from this period internally) but has had a wholesale 19th century remodelling particularly in relation to doors and windows. It keeps its all-important wide red brick chimney stack clearly indicating the earlier date of this building.



Figure 15: The late medieval stone traceried window to Cedar House

At the more modest scale but nonetheless important are the vernacular buildings which have evolved and altered over time so that they too often give over the appearance of a 19th century building but have an earlier core which often dictates and defines their scale. Good examples of this are Mole Cottage, the Ivy Restaurant and 49-51 High Street. Their relatively modest scale despite extensions is an important part of the significance.

A building which clearly expresses its vernacular origins although it has been 'restored' over time is the Grade II* listed Church Stile House, Church Street. An unusual (for Surrey) double jettied timber-framed building from the 17th century with possibly earlier origins, this building stands out for its vernacular honesty – expressing its framing to the street where others have been refronted with brick in an attempt to bring them up to date (in the Georgian period). The rear elevations of this house are clearly seen from the churchyard and they are an essay in the local vernacular materials of this part of Surrey

6



Figure 16: The multi-layering of the historic fabric of Church Stile House reflected in its extensions to the rear

The 18th century sees a number of very fine houses built in Church Cobham. Lime House, Ham Manor, Church Gate House and Overbye are excellent examples of polite Georgian architecture, with Cedar House despite its earlier origins having a convincing Georgian remodelling to its principal façade facing the river. This style is characterised by well-proportioned windows (timber sashes) and doors, parapets, decorative door

frames and mansard roofs with dormers set behind parapets. Pyports is thought to be an adaptation of an earlier building but from the public realm at least is seen as completely 18th century in character and design. There is a notable presence of good quality red brick to the Georgian period of building in the conservation area and some remnant survival of tuck-pointing (a highly specialized application of a thin line of white lime putty to accentuate and refine the joints giving the impression of very high quality brickwork).

Note should be made of the industrial heritage of Cobham, most notably expressed in the survival of Cobham Mill, Mill Road fed by the River Mole. The mill formerly comprised two buildings with undershot wheels between and joined by a covered footbridge. One of the buildings was demolished in 1953 to enable road widening, but the brick and tile building which remains retains cast iron wheels and other features. The last occupier of the mill was the firm Henry Moore & Son. The mill stopped working in the 1920s. The mill was restored by the Cobham Conservation Group and opened to the public in 1993.

There are relatively few examples of 19th century buildings such is the history of adaptation and re-use of older buildings. Four locally listed buildings which warrant mention are Nos. 3 and 5 Church Street, Church Cottage and Rose Cottage. Nos. 3 and 5 Church are probably re-frontings of earlier buildings but they are 19th century in character and are notable for their painted brickwork, mix of casements and large sash windows with central glazing bars and in the case of No.5 dentil eaves detailing. Church Cottage is a further example of a building possibly with an earlier core but having a very attractive and resolved early 19th century façade again with the dentil eaves detail and in this case multi-paned sashes (Figure 17). Rose Cottage is unique to the conservation area and is probably an architectural response to its sensitive ecclesiastical setting. Its ogee windows are spectacular (Figure 18) and have clearly been designed to show this façade off to a wider audience. They are a welcome architectural interlude and complement the church and its setting.



Figure 17: Church Cottage – early 19th century façade with possible earlier origins



Figure 17: Rose Cottage, architecturally unique to the conservation area and a welcome addition to the church setting

In common with much of Surrey, Cobham Conservation Area has a rich seam of Arts and Crafts inspired houses and most notably extensions and remodellings to houses. These were, in the case of the conservation area, undertaken in almost all cases by the Arts and Crafts architect Leonard Martin (1868-1936), F.R.I.B.A. Mr Martin lived at 'Overbye' in Church Street, Cobham from 1897 to 1917. He was the designer or oversaw the construction or remodelling of a number of houses in the conservation area. He carried out a comprehensive restoration of Church Stile House and was responsible for extensive additions to Pyports and his own house, Overbye. He purchased the neighbouring property St Bridgets which he partly rebuilt and built two further properties in Church Street, Nos. 12 and 14 (Figure 18). Leonard Martin is a notable architect of the period and along with his business partner Henry John Treadwell (1861–1910) they were responsible for the design of Scott's restaurant in Coventry Street (1892–94), The Old Shades, a Grade II listed public house at 37–39 Whitehall, 80 Fetter Lane, built for Buchanan's Distillery, and the Rising Sun Public House on Tottenham Court Road. Treadwell & Martin's design for the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum was shortlisted but unsuccessful.



Figure 19: Nos. 12 and 14 Church Street designed by local architect Leonard Martin

(b) Boundaries

Red brick boundary walls form an important part of the character and appearance of the Cobham Conservation Area. They are seen throughout at varying scales. From the low walls surrounding the churchyard to the low boundary walls to houses along Church Street with hedges behind or with railings as seen to Lime House and Cedar House. To the extensive boundary walls of Pyports and the rear boundary walls of Cedar House, Old Mill House and Ham Manor (Figure 20). The former walls to Leigh Place are also imposing structures which define the footpaths which link the conservation area to surrounding roads and spaces.

Boundary walls in townscape terms often maintain enclosure and a building line where buildings are set back from the roadside, a good example being Lime House.

The boundary walls where they are found adjacent to roadside are in places showing signs of wear and erosion from water being thrown from the road surface by passing vehicles. This is particularly noticeable to sections of Pyports boundary wall and the boundary wall to Cedar House, Mill Road.



Figure 20: Strong enclosure to footpaths from the walls of former Leigh Place

(c) Listed buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the National Heritage List for England. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from Elmbridge Borough Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. The listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Analysis map. These are:

Grade I

Church of St Andrew

Grade II*

No.21 Church Stile House, Church Street

Ham Manor, Mill Road

Cedar House, Mill Road

Grade II

Chest tombs, Church of St Andrew

No.15 Mole Cottage, Church Street

No.19 Lime House, Church Street

No.18 Oberbye, Church Street

Church Gate House, Downside Bridge Road

Pyports, Downside Bridge Road

No.48 High Street

No.51 High Street

Gate Piers and Railings to Cedar House

The Old Mill House, Mill Road

Cobham Mill, Mill Road

The Old Bear (now Wildwood) River Hill

(d) Locally Listed Buildings

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

No.3 Church Street

No.5 Church Street

Church Cottage, Downside Bridge Road

Rose Cottage, Downside Bridge Road

Skilton's Yard, Mill Road (now Mill View)

(e) Significant Unlisted Buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being "Significant Unlisted Buildings" with townscape merit. Buildings identified as having "townscape merit" will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive

contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

The National Planning Policy Framework and English Heritage advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area (Paras 184 and 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

Significant groups are as follows:

- Nos 1 to 4 Millwater Cottages and adjacent barn
- Nos 2 and 7-15(odd) Church Street
- Nos.12, 14 and 16 Church Street
- The outbuildings to Pypoorts
- Rose Cottages (Nos 1 and 2) and Lime Cottage

8. Negative Features and Issues

(a) Parking to Church Street

The narrow section of Church Street is an attractive feature, but combined with the ever-increasing width of cars using and parking along its length is having a detrimental effect on the amenity of the users and setting of a number of important historic buildings fronting this street.

(b) Tree cover to the south bank of the River Mole

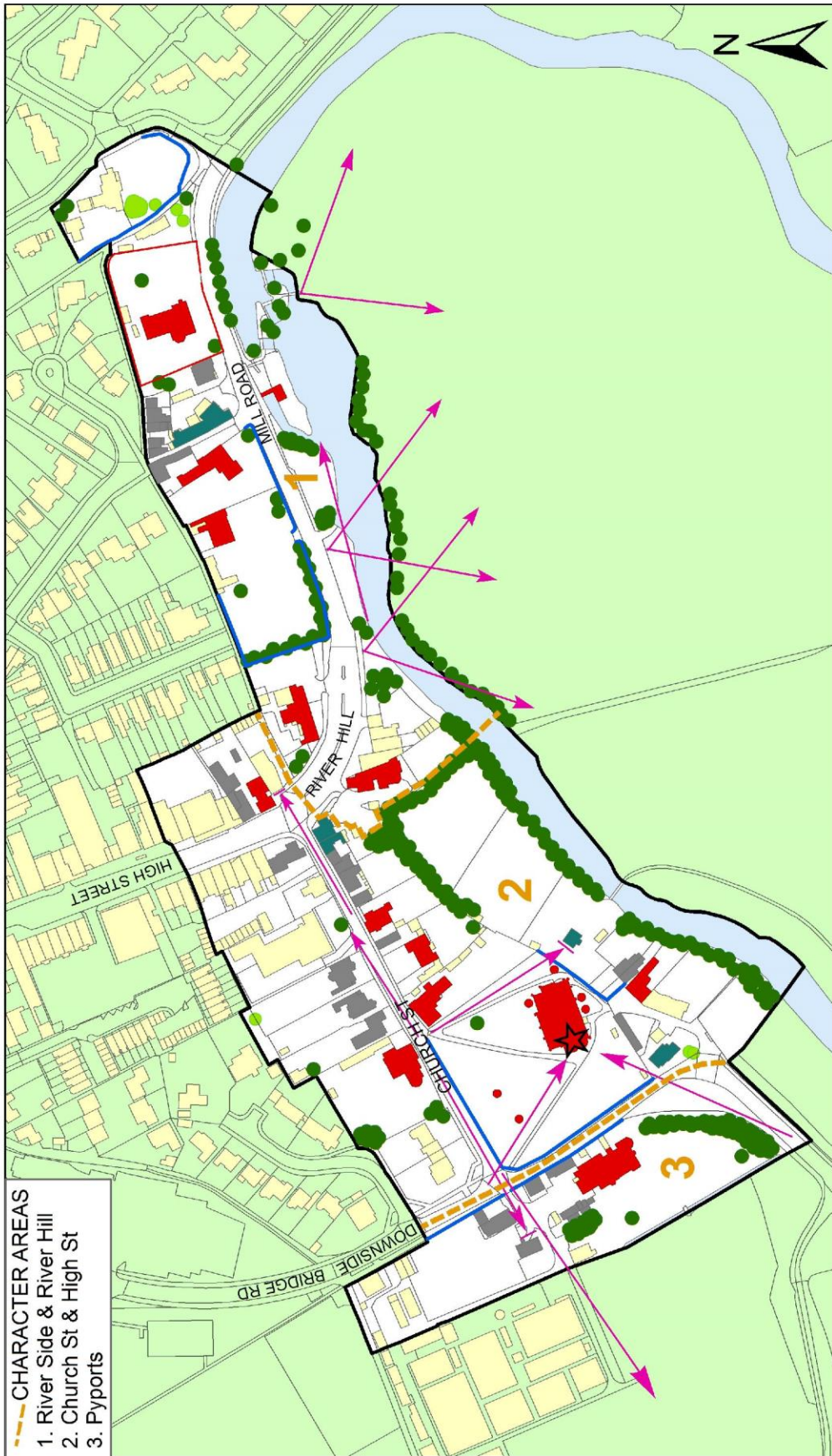
The tree cover, particularly to the south bank of the River Mole adjacent to Mill Road, is impeding open views (or any views) to the fields to the south.

(c) Tree and vegetation management to churchyard

Excessive tree and vegetation is beginning to restrict views across the churchyard towards the church particularly from Downside Bridge Road where perhaps some of the finest views are to be appreciated.

(d) Condition of brick walls adjacent to roadsides

The close proximity of some walls (particularly those to Pyports and Cedar House) is having a detrimental effect on the condition of the walls with washed out, open joints and eroded brickwork common to these lower areas of the boundaries.



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- Conservation Area Boundary
- Statutory Listed Building
- Locally Listed Building
- Significant Unlisted Buildings
- Important walls
- Focal Building/Structure
- Tree Preservation Order
- Other Significant Trees
- View
- Terminated view (closed by landscape feature)
- Vista

0 20 40 60 80 100
Scale in Metres

Cobham Conservation Area Townscape

Part 2 Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Management Plan

1.1 Legislative background

The designation and appraisal of any conservation area is not an end in itself. The purpose of this document is to present proposals to or assist in/aid the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character, informed by the appraisal, and to consult the local community about these proposals. The special qualities of the conservation area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first section of this document and will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis. This guidance draws upon the themes identified in Section 8 of the conservation area appraisal 'Negative features and issues'. The document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely:

"It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."

Section 69(2) states:

"It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions....and determine whether any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas"

This document reflects Government policy currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England guidance in their Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management" (February 2016). Also policies and supplementary guidance that form part of the Elmbridge Local Plan, and the leaflet "Conservation Areas" published by Elmbridge Borough Council.

It is important that the development management process ensures the preservation of special character and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements wherever possible.

1.2 Boundary amendments

The appraisal looked carefully at the existing boundaries and potential areas for extension and removal in the conservation area. One area was considered worthy for inclusion and potential amendment to the boundary of Cobham Conservation Area.

Inclusion: Land to the east of Cobham Mill to the south side of the River Mole

There is a small parcel of land which has been fenced and grassed for the enjoyment of views to the river and Cobham Mill and the open countryside to the south. It is distinct from the open fields to the south and plays an important role in the setting of the river in relation to a number of historic buildings to include Cobham Mill (Grade II) Cedar House (Grade II*) and Skilton's Yard, now Mill View (locally listed buildings).

The weirs and bridges which allow access to this area all form part of the enjoyment of this part of the riverside and allow new views of heritage assets from the proposed extension.

Recommended Action: The Council will seek to amend the existing boundary for Cobham Conservation Area to include the area identified above (these are shown on the Proposed Boundary Changes and Potential Enhancement Area map)

1.3 Statutory controls

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

Recommended Action: The Council will seek to ensure that any development within the conservation area requiring planning permission preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area in accordance with policies in the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (2015).

1.4 Listed buildings

Listed buildings are protected by law as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing covers both the inside and outside of the building, and any structure or building within its curtilage which was built before 1947. “Listed Building Consent” is required from the Council for any work which affects the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. There are presently 21 Listed Buildings (including 6 chest tombs) within the Cobham Conservation Area.

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

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

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

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

In addition to the listed buildings, there are a large number of individual and groups of buildings and associated features which are of considerable local interest. These are included on a Local List and the Council will seek to retain these buildings and ensure that new development does not harm the character, appearance or setting of the buildings. There is a presumption under Policy DM12 of the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (2015) that all such buildings will be retained. There are presently five Locally Listed buildings within Cobham Conservation Area.

The townscape appraisal also identified a number of additional unlisted buildings which it is considered make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. There are presently 26 Significant Unlisted Buildings within Cobham Conservation Area. The Council will encourage all applications for extensions and alterations to these buildings to be particularly carefully considered and assessed against Policy DM12 of the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (2015).

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

1.6 Buildings at Risk

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

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

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

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

1.7 Trees

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

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

1.8 Setting and Views

The setting of the conservation area is very important and development which impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views into and from the conservation area will be resisted. The important views are identified on the townscape analysis map in the character appraisal. Particular note should be made of the views from Downside Bridge Road towards the Church of St Andrew and the open views from Cobham Mill and elsewhere to open countryside to the south.

The Townscape Analysis Map gives a general overview of important views into, within and out of the conservation area. There are multiple views across the river from Mill Road and from the south bank towards buildings on Mill Road. These form an important part of the setting of the conservation area and the setting of high status individual historic buildings.

The key local landmark for Church Cobham is the spire of the church of St Andrew. Given the extensive tree cover to the churchyard the spire is only glimpsed but is nonetheless an important part of the sense of arrival in the historic core of the village particularly on travelling along Downside Bridge Road.

There are two terminated views within the conservation area, one looking west along Church Street which is closed by a barn within the attractive group of outbuildings to Pyports and the other is looking south across the churchyard to the striking north façade of Rose Cottage to the east of the church with its grouping of ogee arched windows to first floor.

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

1.9 New development

There is little potential opportunity for large scale redevelopment within Cobham Conservation Area, although some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to very rigorous controls. The Council will encourage good quality schemes that respond positively to their historic setting. Further guidance is found in **Appendix 1**.

Recommended Action: The Council will determine applications in accordance with national and local planning policy, including the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (2015), together with design guidance contained within the Council's Character and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2012).

1.10 Boundary treatments

Red brick boundary walls make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the Cobham Conservation Area. These walls are substantial in places and define lanes, footpaths as well as maintaining the building line of a street (particularly Church Street) where buildings are set back from the roadside, maintaining comfortable enclosure. Brick walls also form an important part of the setting of the Grade I listed church of St Andrew.

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

1.11 Enhancement Opportunities

Generally, the conservation area is very well managed and the work of the Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust has had a valuable and positive contribution. There are a number of minor issues which should be addressed as part of the ongoing management of the conservation area.

The areas for potential enhancement are:

- The trees to the south side of the River Mole adjacent to Mill Road could be positively managed to reinstate views out to open countryside to the south
- Trees around the weir and bridges to the east of Cobham Mill and the bank adjacent to Mill Road continue to be managed to reveal and maintain attractive views to the Mill and the field beyond, and other important historic buildings to this part of the conservation area.

Recommended Action: That the Council and the Cobham Conservation & Heritage Trust continues to encourage positive management of the trees along the banks of the River Mole.

2 Monitoring and Review

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

2.1 Public Consultation

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

The appraisal and management proposals formed the Consultation document which was then subject to a six week period of wider public consultation.

2.2 Conservation Area Advisory Committee

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

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

2.3 Boundary review

The appraisal has highlighted one area for potential change to the present boundary.

For inclusion: Land to the east of Cobham Mill to the south side of the River Mole

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

2.4 Document review

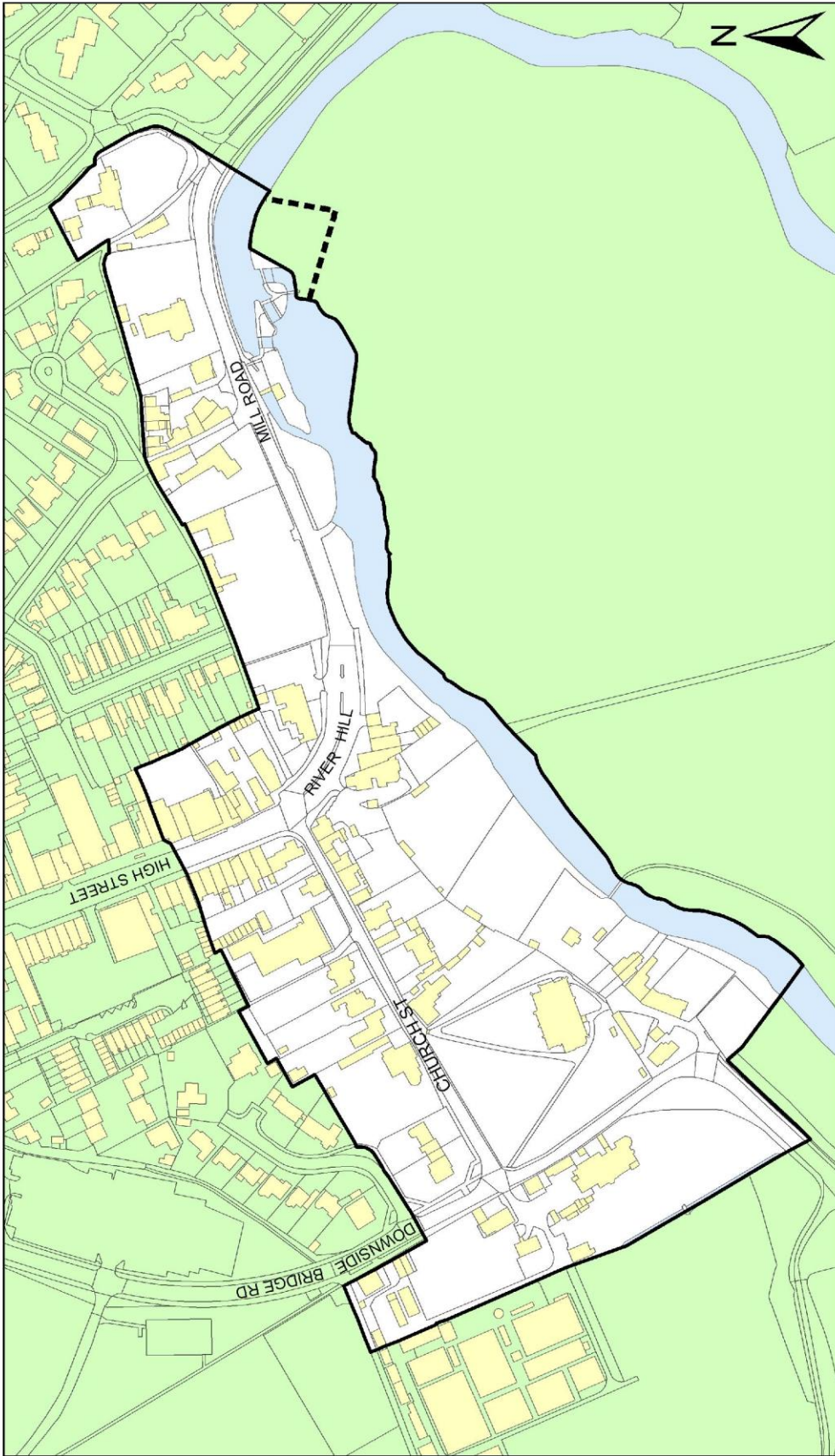
This document should be reviewed periodically in the light of the Local Plan and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 Guidelines for new development

Appendix 2 Further reading and information



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-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

Cobham Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Change

Appendix 1: Guidelines for New Development

Introduction

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

Contextual Design

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

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

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

Urban grain

The "urban grain", or form, of historic development has been described in Part 1 of this document. It varies according to location but is also consistent to groups of houses for example whether development is within the Church Street environs or Mill Road (please see character areas).

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

This "urban grain" is an important part of the character and appearance of Cobham Conservation Area and should be protected. Proposals for new development must include a detailed analysis of the immediate locality and demonstrate that there is a full

appreciation of the local townscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

Scale

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

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

Height and massing

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

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

Appearance, materials and detailing

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

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

Traditional roofs particularly of handmade clay tiles (and pantiles) are becoming increasingly rare and their retention is important within the conservation area.

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

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

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

Design check list

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

Appendix 2: Sources and further reading

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

Ravenhill, W, 1974 Two hundred and fifty years of map-making in the County of Surrey: A collection of reproductions of printed maps published between the years 1579-1823
SCC 1976 Antiquities and Conservations Areas of Surrey, Surrey County Council Town & Country Planning Committee

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

Taylor D 1999 Cobham Houses and their Occupants Appleton

Taylor D 2003 Cobham A History Phillimore and Co Ltd

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

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

For further information regarding planning and conservation related matters

Planning Services, Elmbridge Borough Council

Civic Centre, High Street,
Esher, Surrey
KT10 9SD

Tel: 01372 474474
www.elmbridge.gov.uk

Further information regarding local history

Elmbridge Museum

Tel: 01372 474568
www.elmbridgemuseum.org.uk

Surrey History Centre

130 Goldsworth Road
Woking, Surrey
GU21 6ND

Tel: 01483 518737
Fax: 01483 518738
www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre

General information related to listed buildings and conservation areas

Historic England

General enquiries:

Tel: 0870 333 1181
<https://historicengland.org.uk/>

For technical guidance

The Georgian Group

6 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 5DX

Tel: 087 1750 2936
www.georgiangroup.org.uk

The Victorian Society

1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London W4 1TT

Tel: 020 8994 1019
www.victorian-society.org.uk

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644
www.spab.org.uk