

# *PADDLESWORTH CONSERVATION AREA*



## *Introduction*

The objective of the Paddlesworth Conservation Area Appraisal is to analyse and record the special character of the Conservation Area which was designated in June 1993. This will assist with the interpretation and use of planning policies. It will help guide the Council in making planning decisions and to this end has been adopted for development control purposes.

It is intended that the appraisal will inform the activities of the Council and other bodies (eg. Town Council, Kent County Council and other statutory agencies), where these impact on the Conservation Area. In addition, it is hoped that the appraisal will prove to be of help to residents, tenants and landowners. For anyone proposing new development or changes within the Conservation Area, the appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Borough Council's Conservation Area Advice Note. This includes guidance with regard to the broad issues to be considered and the special controls that apply in Conservation Areas.



*As the purpose of this appraisal is to describe the **character** of the area, it does not include a detailed description of every feature or building. Omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken, therefore, to imply that it is not of interest or similarly that there are no opportunities to improve the character of the area.*



## *Location and Physical Setting*

Paddlesworth is a small hamlet set below the scarp slope of the North Downs, just south of the Pilgrims Way. The Conservation Area covers the historic part of the settlement, which has expanded very little and therefore only the modern agricultural sheds are excluded. It is located approximately 1 mile west of Snodland town centre and is linked to the town by a single track lane. A farm track runs along the eastern boundary of the settlement to the Pilgrims Way and a footpath runs to the south. In the past, these tracks formed a route that linked Upper Halling to Birling. Paddlesworth is also a short distance from the junction with the existing road which links Upper Halling, the Pilgrims Way and Birling below the scarp of the Downs.

Plan 1 shows the extent of the Conservation Area and the footpaths and tracks which meet here.



## *Origins and Development of the Settlement*

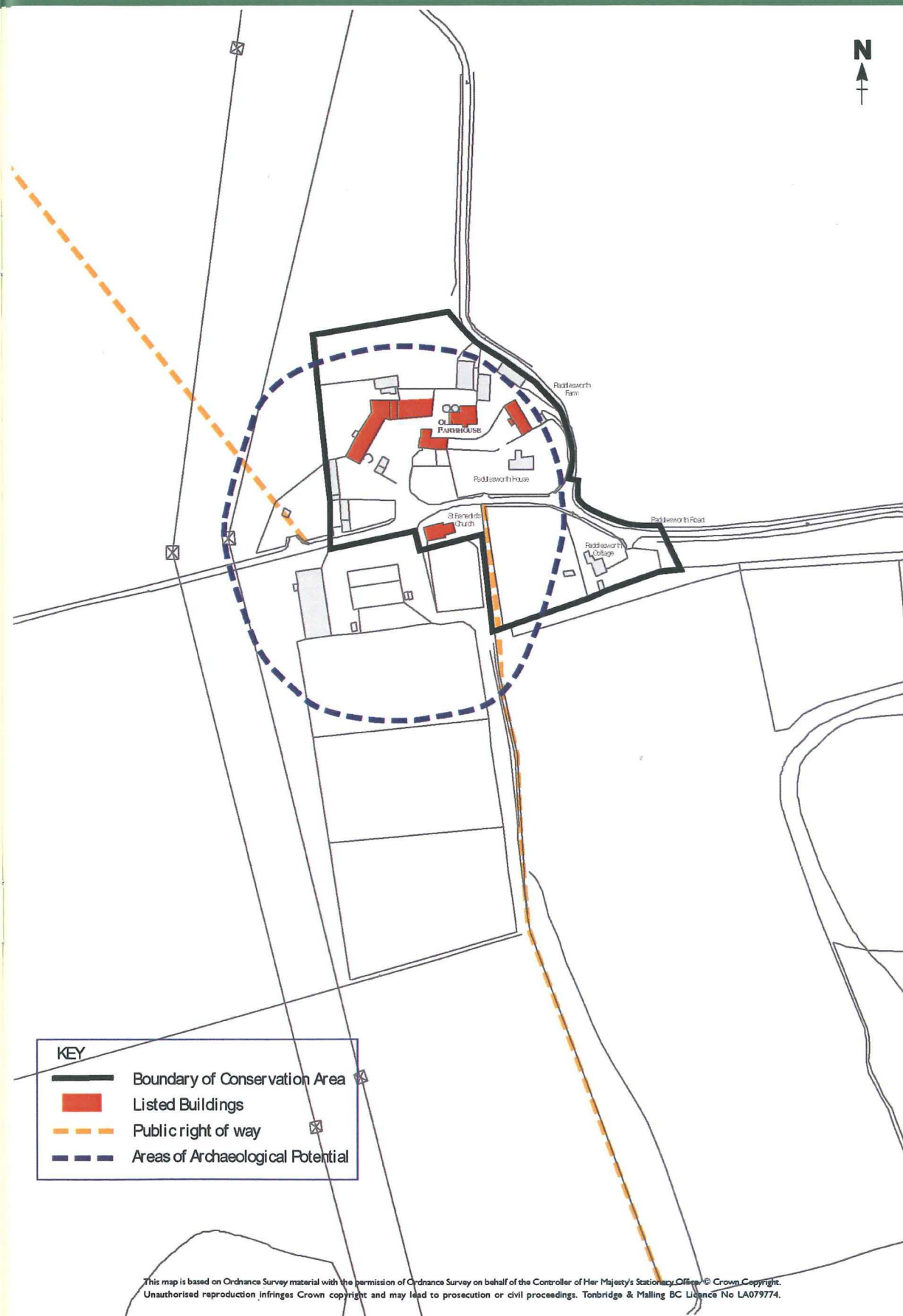
Paddlesworth was originally a Parish in its own right and therefore had its own church. It also had its own rector, until the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In 1366 Paddlesworth was united with the Parish of Dode and both were joined to Snodland Parish towards the end of the 19th century. St Benedicts Church in Paddlesworth is Norman in origin and was a Diocese boundary church that would have been built to serve the Parish. However the settlement never expanded beyond the farm and its ancillary buildings. Paddlesworth is situated just below the spring line of the North Downs and this is likely to have influenced its location here.

Just a short distance from the Pilgrims Way, the church and settlement is likely to have served the pilgrims that travelled along it. The track through Paddlesworth is likely to have been the route used by travellers if they sought to cross the River Medway at Snodland.

Paddlesworth is a rare example of a farm and landscape which has changed very little since medieval times. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book and there is a good record of owners and tenants. A detailed survey of the area was carried out in 1570 for the then owner, and shows that many of the field patterns, boundaries and names still remain today.

# PADDESWORTH

## CONSERVATION INFORMATION





## *Special Character*

The Conservation Area is a small cluster of buildings set in a hollow at the foot of the scarp slope of the North Downs. The land slopes away to the south and to the east. Plan 2 shows the key features of the Conservation Area and forms part of the townscape appraisal. It should be considered in conjunction with the text.

### *Townscape/Landscape Analysis*

The informal cluster of buildings which makes up the hamlet has an intimate relationship which contrasts with the open countryside around it. The loss of field boundaries in the area makes the openness of the countryside more marked.

Although being set in a slight hollow, the hamlet is visible from all directions. The design of the buildings, the materials used and the remaining trees ensure that it blends in and forms part of the landscape itself. However, more recent additions, such as the agricultural sheds and the two electricity pylons, are very intrusive on views to the Conservation Area and detract from the setting of the hamlet.

Views out of the area emphasise the setting of the hamlet in the wider landscape with distant views to the east bank of the River Medway and the land to the south. The roofscape of the settlement is set against the backdrop of the Downs.

The majority of the buildings are located on the north side of the lane clustered around the Old Farmhouse, the only exception being the Church and the more recent addition of Paddlesworth Cottage which sits on its own on the south eastern edge of the Conservation Area. The buildings are clustered around the Old Farmhouse because they are agricultural buildings which would historically have been ancillary and subservient to the main house. The newer farmhouse (Paddlesworth House), although set slightly apart, still forms part of the group and the Old Farmhouse is now used for agricultural-related storage.

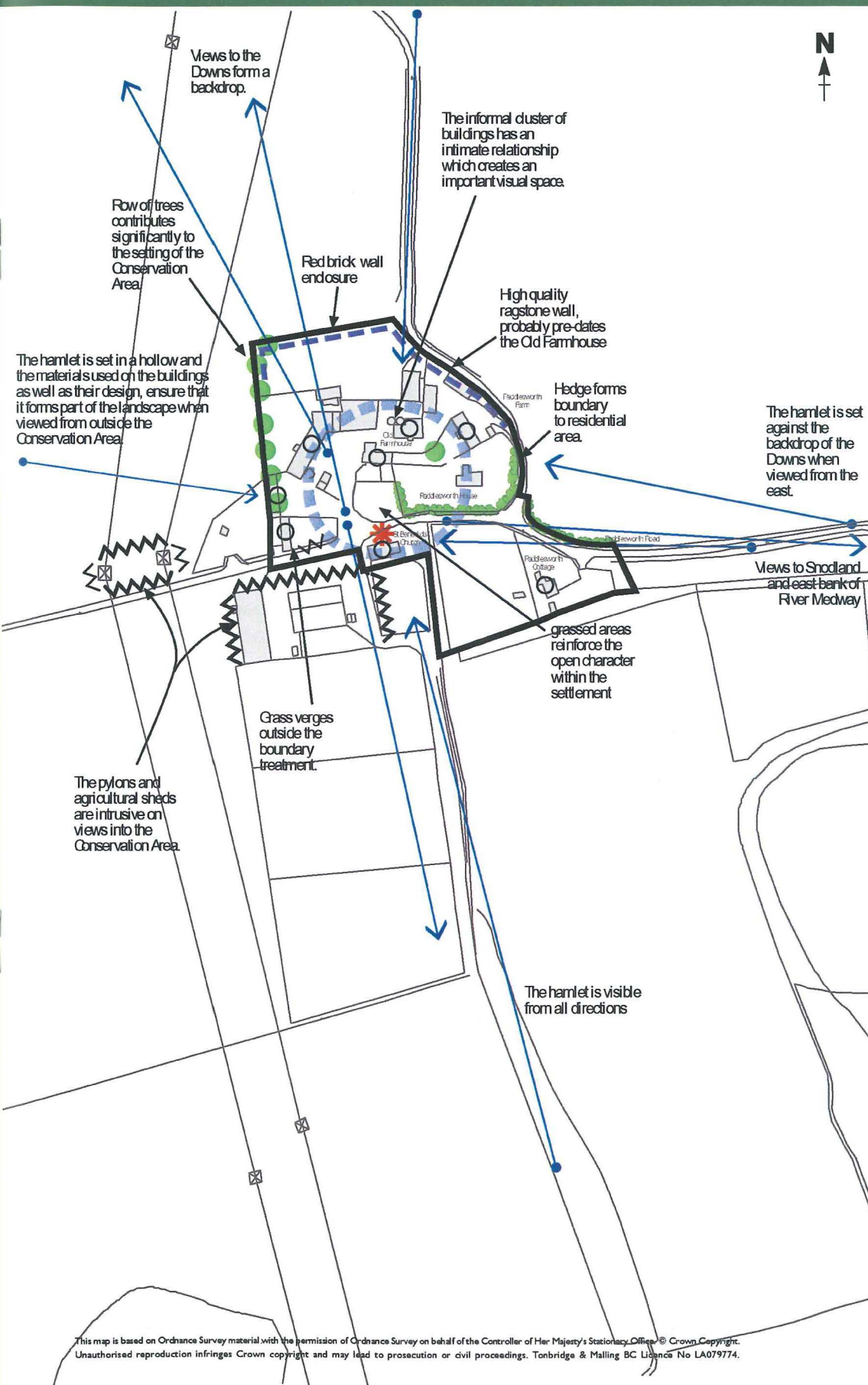
The lane running east-west through the area is narrow and turns slightly through the hamlet, running close to the Church. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century photos show gates across the lane to prevent sheep escaping, forming an enclosed space. It has no kerbing and is characterised by grass verges. Grassed areas outside the church and the barn reinforce the open character and distinguish the settlement from the cultivated fields which surround it. It is likely that the main route through the hamlet would previously have been the north-south track, which is more defined on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century maps of the area.









There is a single mature sycamore tree to the front of the old farmhouse and a well-maintained mature hedge which bounds part of the area. A row of trees line the western boundary of the settlement providing a clear demarcation between the open agricultural land and the farmyard. They serve as an important setting for the Conservation Area and in summer screen views from the west. Historic photographs show that there were previously several more mature trees in and around the settlement, which contributed to its character.

Spaces within the hamlet are informal, created by the buildings themselves. There is little demarcation between the properties – all sharing a curtilage, the only clearly defined boundaries being to the lanes and tracks themselves. There was previously a pond in the farmyard, close to the lane. This was filled in in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



# PADDLESWORTH TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



-  Focal point
-  Views/vista
-  Important visual space
-  Visual intrusion
-  Buildings/structures which make a positive contribution
-  Important trees - acting as focal points etc.
-  Important hedges
-  Boundary treatment contributing to special character



## *Physical Character*

The buildings vary in age, showing the development of a farmyard over time. The Church is the oldest building dating from the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Century. It has had, over the years, a number of additions and extensions forming residential accommodation and latterly was used as a farm building. It is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust.

The Listed barn to the north-east is thought to be a former hall house and dates from the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Century whilst the two other historic barns to the north-west, also listed, date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The old Farmhouse, itself, is thought to date from approximately 1690, but is only a shell now having been partly dismantled in the 1930s.

The Church is built from Ragstone but other buildings are generally constructed from red brick with some timber cladding on the barns. The later dwellings are white painted render/brick. Roofs are predominantly hipped with only the Church and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paddlesworth Cottage being



gable-ended. Two of the barns have plain clay tiled roofs whilst the Old and New farmhouses have concrete tile roofs. All properties are two storeys or less. Considerable repair work has been carried out to the listed barns but the other buildings are still in need of repair and restoration.

The boundary treatment around the farmyard itself is a red brick wall. Part of a high quality dressed ragstone block wall remains along the north eastern boundary to the Conservation Area. It is thought that this might be connected to the earlier stone farmhouse, evidence of which can be found within the Old Farmhouse. A hedge has been planted around the curtilage of Paddlesworth House. Boundary treatment elsewhere is post and rail fencing.

The streetscape still retains its rural character, being unspoilt by kerbstones or pavements. The lanes and tracks leading to the settlement are narrow and sometimes sunken. However, the forecourt to the modern agricultural buildings is expanding due to the gradual erosion of adjoining land. This is having a detrimental effect on the intimate rural character of the area and the setting of the Conservation Area where it abuts the Lane.

### *Unifying features*

- Red brick
- Hipped roof structures
- The intimate inter-relationship of the buildings and the absence of fixed curtilage divisions
- The grass verges and grassed areas adjacent to the lane.



## *Features Affecting the Character of the Conservation Area*

In understanding what is special about a Conservation Area and what serves to unify it, it is useful to note those features which are out of character with the area. This not only emphasises the importance of the remaining special features of the area but also allows for potential improvements to be identified.

- The modern agricultural sheds are intrusive on the landscape and on views to the settlement but do not affect the integrity of the group of buildings in the Conservation Area. Any further new development should be sited carefully in order to ensure that the settlement does not lose this integrity or change its direct relationship to the countryside.
- The electricity pylons in close proximity to the settlement intrude significantly on views towards the hamlet and dominate the skyline. If the opportunity arises, these should ideally be located underground.
- Poor repair of boundary walls and fences contributes to a feeling of neglect. It is important that these are maintained and any replacements should utilise materials appropriate to the Conservation Area.
- The setting of the Church is affected by the modern agricultural buildings, which form a backdrop to it when viewed from the east. This intrusive impact could potentially be reduced by tree planting in key locations.

## *Opportunities for Preservation and Enhancement*

It is intended that this appraisal will be used as a tool where change is proposed in the Conservation Area, although such change is likely to be limited in Paddlesworth. It is hoped that as well as the preservation of the character of the Area, opportunities will be taken for enhancement. The following are therefore suggestions for preservation and enhancement, to be considered when appropriate opportunities arise.

- The appropriate repair and restoration of the historic buildings is important in order to maintain the character and historic integrity of the group.
- Use of inappropriate materials can detract from the special character of the Conservation Area. Replacement of existing inappropriate materials would considerably enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area. For instance the replacement of concrete roof tiles with plain clay tiles.
- The number of trees in and around the settlement has declined, this has considerably altered the appearance and setting of the Conservation Area. A programme of replacement tree planting would reinstate the sylvan setting of the Conservation Area and provide successors for the existing mature trees.



## *Planning Policy*

### *Local Plan Policy*

This appraisal will help in the interpretation of Policies P4/4 and P4/5 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998. Policy P4/4 requires proposals for development to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of each Conservation Area. Policy P4/5 seeks to retain buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Paddlesworth is situated within the Green Belt and there is, therefore, a presumption against development that is deemed 'inappropriate' in the context of Planning Policy Guidance note 2: Green Belts (unless the Council is satisfied that very special circumstances apply). The Conservation Area is also set within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where planning policy gives priority to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.



### *Further Information*

If you would like more advice on the Conservation Area, historic building repair and restoration, please telephone 01732 876218.

For advice on new development, including works to Listed Buildings, alterations to properties, the need for planning permission and works to or affecting trees, please telephone 01732 876234.

If you would like to discuss alleged unauthorised development, please telephone 01732 876302.

Alternatively you can write to:

**Planning and Engineering Services  
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ**

Or email:

**[planning.services@tmbs.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@tmbs.gov.uk)**