

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

VI HEENE

Location

The designated area lies a quarter of a mile inland and half a mile west of Worthing town centre. Winchester Road Conservation Area is directly adjacent to the east, and Shakespeare Road Conservation Area adjacent to the north.

Topography

The ground undulates gently throughout the area, sloping downwards towards the sea. Within the sweeping curve of Manor Road, the streets run roughly north-south and east-west, but they are seldom straight or parallel and junctions are mostly staggered. Richmond Road and Mill Road are especially sinuous.

Origins and Development of Settlement

The irregular street plan derives from Heene's origins as a farming community. Until the 1880s, settlement was of an agrarian character, largely confined to the vicinity of St. Botolph's Church and a strip along the east side of Heene Road. In 1884, the West Worthing Investment Companies began a programme of development which continued into the twentieth century. Substantial detached and semi-detached houses were built, along with social facilities, notably Heene C. of E. School and the Church Rooms. Early growth focused on the area along Belsize Road and immediately south of Lansdowne Road.

Building Materials

There is a marked difference in the architectural style and materials of the buildings in the north western part of the conservation area and those to the east. The former are stuccoed and slate-roofed, the latter are of red brick with tile-hanging and flint-work.

Although they are mostly built of large, irregularly-shaped field-flints (100-200mm across) in vermiculated panels, the Victorian flint boundary walls vary in type. In the north west, they have rounded mortar copings, to the east, the footings and copings are of red-brown brick. Most are about 0.5m high. Earlier walls, surviving from the agrarian past, are built of smaller flints (pebbles - generally about 50mm across) evenly coursed, often with red-brown brick string-courses; some are over two metres high. These are found throughout the area.

Architectural and Landscape Qualities

Roofs

The earlier, stuccoed houses have shallow-pitched, hipped slate roofs, whereas the later buildings have steeper roofs which are gabled and slated or clay-tiles. Twentieth century infill tends to be flat-roofed or gabled with red/brown artificial or clay tile.

Massing and Roofscape

The historic buildings are generally two or three storeys high and there are many mature trees of equal height which screen the houses and add variety to the skyline. The spire of St. Botolph's soars above the surrounding roof-line and is visible from a considerable distance.

Westbury Court is a pair of 6-storey, flat-roofed, modern blocks of flats, disconcertingly out of scale with the surrounding Victorian villas on Belsize Road. The sight of them, behind No.55 also disrupts the roofscape of Manor Road.

Bay windows, usually rectangular or canted, are a common feature of the Victorian and Edwardian houses. More striking, is the occasional appearance of a corner turret (e.g., No.16 St. Michael's Road), adding interest to the roofscape.

Building Line

The sinuous street pattern and staggered junctions enliven the streetscene by producing a great range of vistas and by requiring the building line to shift correspondingly. A few buildings on the east side of Heene Road (the older buildings - Nos.114-6 and the Church Rooms) stand close to the pavement, but the majority of the conservation area's building stock is well set back from the road. Since the southern part of Heene Road is fairly straight, this change of building line adds interest to the townscape and has the fortunate effect of minimising the impact of West View Court on the streetscene.

Fenestration

There is much variation in window design, the Victorian and Edwardian buildings generally have regularly-positioned, white[painted, vertical-sliding, timber sashes (one- or two-paned). Some Victorian examples are round-headed and there is a tendency for the later windows to be narrower. In addition, there are often smaller timber-framed casements.

Winchester Court (1935), a well-maintained block of flats on a corner plot between Heene Road and St. Michael's Road, derives much of its special interest from the retention of a uniform set of Crittall windows.

The window design in the residential development of the last three decades is seldom in keeping with that of the Victorian buildings; the windows tend to be wide rather than tall and are often divided asymmetrically. The replacement of timber window frames with unpainted aluminium or uPVC has greatly detracted from the character of some buildings, particularly where leaded lights have been used to replace plain sashes.

Doors

Where original external doors survive, these contribute to the special interest of the area. Unfortunately, many of the original timber panelled doors (often with glass upper panels) have been replaced or are hidden behind undistinguished modern porches.

Roads and Surfaces

The roads are tarmacadamed throughout the area and the busier sections are quite heavily painted with parking restrictions and give-way markings. Some streets retain their red brick pavements and these are especially pleasing, others have been resurfaced with tarmac or pinkish-grey paving slabs. Attractive granite kerb-stones survive in many parts of the area. Grass and weeds are growing in the interstices of nearly all the pavements.

Greenery and Open Spaces

Trees make a vital contribution to the area's special character. The mature trees in gardens and at the roadside give the skyline much of its interest and the general presence of greenery softens the hard lines of the buildings. Flowering trees add extra colour. Spaces between buildings and roadways are mostly walled in, so there is no marked effect of openness. The largest open area is the grave-yard, but it is hidden behind high walls. The roads themselves are fairly wide with pavement on both sides and the front gardens are moderately spacious and frequently have trees or large shrubs growing near the road, so the overall effect is of a sylvan, spacious area.

Enhancement Opportunities

- Clear listed ruin of saplings and other damaging vegetation and consolidate structure. More should be made of this relic of medieval Heene, perhaps by placing a sign and explanatory display at the entrance to the churchyard. Screen planing in front of the adjacent air raid shelter would greatly increase visual amenity.
- Permit demolition and appropriate redevelopment of Westbury Court on Belsize Road.
- Apply weedkiller and rake over the gravel at the churchyard entrance, adding extra gravel where necessary.
- Replace the tarmac to south of church with grass and shrubs.

- Remove the dead branches from the tree by the churchyard entrance.
- Denser planting along the front of No.1 Belsize Road (Linton House) would lessen the deleterious effect of the tarmacadamed forecourt.
- Repair and repaint Linton House and repaint No.3 (including the garden walls.)
- Changes in the style of the flint and brick front garden walls between different localities within the conservation area are an interesting characteristic. Therefore, the original copings, piers, rendering, flintwork etc, should be maintained wherever possible. Reinstatement of flint walling should accord with the style prevalent in the particular locality, rather than introduce designs from other parts of the conservation area. Where walls have been lowered (eg., Cheverel Manor) it is desirable to reinstate their upper courses. Where the original flint surface has been concealed, removal of the render and restoration of the flintwork would be an enhancement (eg., the render of the pebble wall of Bradley House, Heene Road, which is flaking off).
- Maintain the grass verge outside the graveyard.
- Retain original roofing materials. Replace concrete interlocking tiles, or other inappropriate materials, with reinstatement of appropriate clay-tile or slate.
- Retain original architectural detailing, fenestration and doors. Any replacements should be of appropriate design and materials.
- Retain the cast iron post boxes (eg, St. Michael's Road/Manor Road) and road signs. Belsize Road postal pillar box is of note as having no Royal cipher.
- Replace the modern road name signs with ones that better match the originals.
- Plant additional trees in the pavement, particularly around the church.
- Replace the pooper-bin outside the graveyard with one of more elegant design.
- Remove the overhead wires and the telegraph poles.
- Replace the uPVC windows of Chappell Croft with painted wood or metal of appropriate design.
- Secrete television aerials and satellite dishes from view.
- Retain the brick paving. Replace tarmacadamed sections with matching brick pavements. Weed regularly. Retain granite kerbstones.
- Rationalise and reduce parking signage, especially on Beccles Road.
- Replace the telephone booth on Heene Road/Richmond Road with a K6.

Some of the modern street lamps have a particularly strong negative impact, (eg, the lamp near the post box on Cowper Road). Replace with cast-iron lamp standards of a design similar to the original examples surviving in nearby streets.

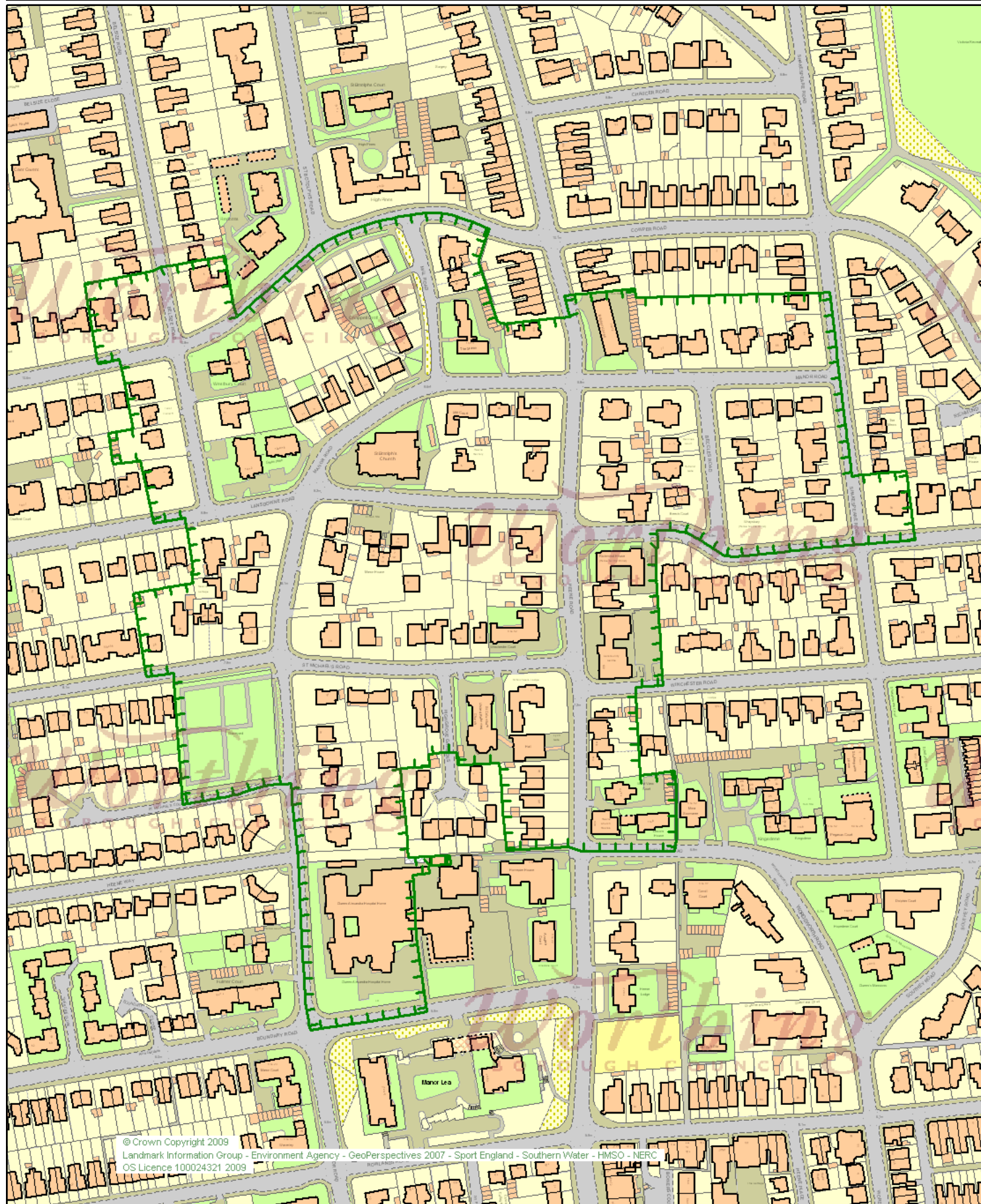
Clean the graffiti from signs and junction boxes.

Ensure that signing of rest homes etc., is of suitable materials and design. Replace the Cheverel Manor sign.

Encourage frontage planting in front gardens instead of car parking (especially on Belsize Road). Organise parking so that any vehicles parked in front gardens are screened from the street by trees or existing walls.

Repair and reinstate the missing sections of the flint front garden wall of No.41 Manor Road (recently demolished - to accommodate a garage?).

Tidy the graveyard.



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