

Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area Appraisal



Canterbury City Council

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Conservation Area Appraisal: The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area.

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1. Introduction.

This appraisal examines the key elements that contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area. The character of a settlement is determined by the topography of its site, the layout of its roads and open spaces and the age, material and style of its buildings. The combination of all these factors creates a special 'sense of place' that the conservation area aims to preserve and enhance.

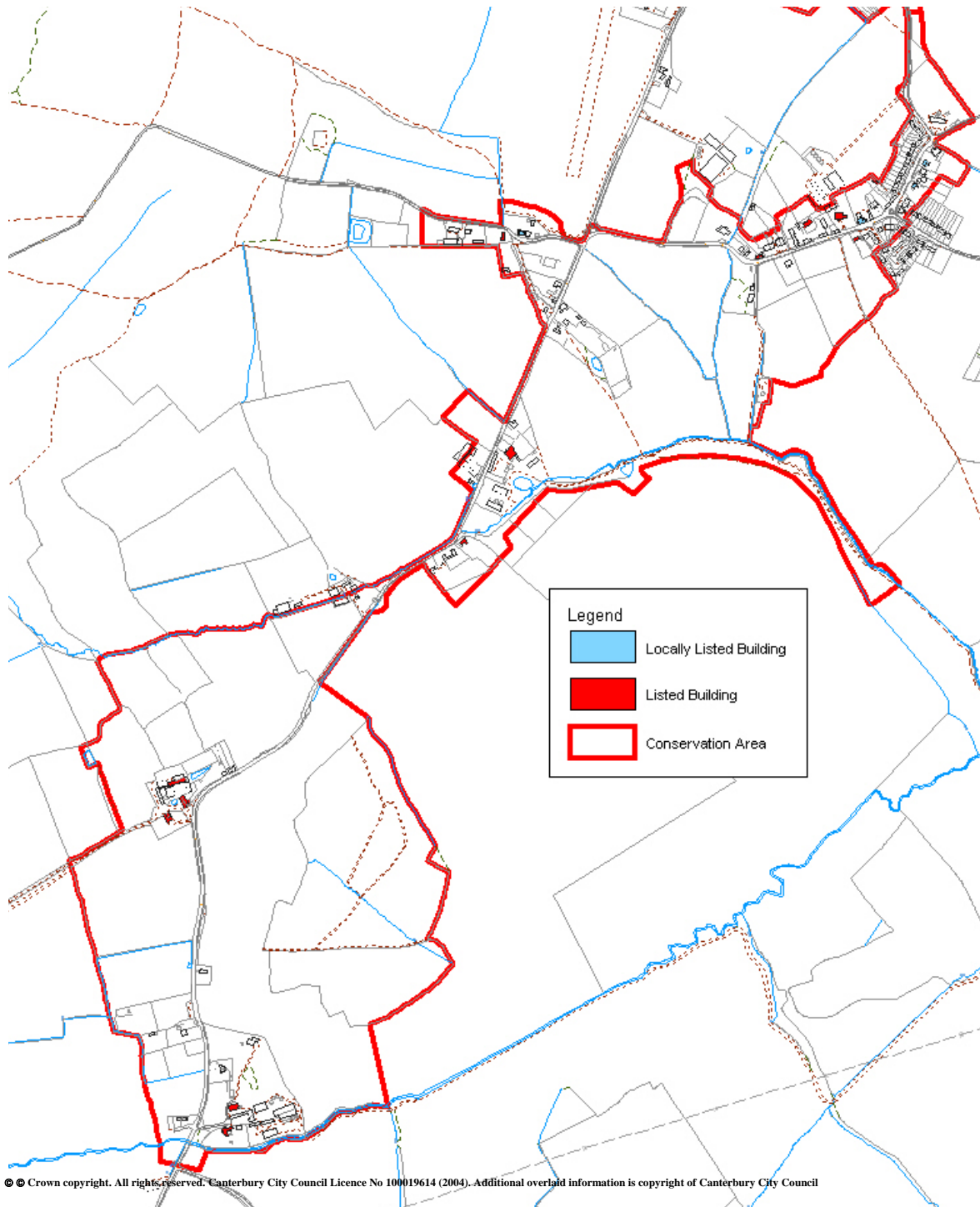
Conservation Areas were first introduced in 1967 and are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance", Section 69 (l) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation areas are diverse in size and character, and it is the quality and interest of the area that is of importance, rather than just the individual buildings within it. Such designation gives the authority greater control over demolition, minor development, works to trees and advertisements. However, it also brings certain responsibilities. Under the terms of the 1990 Act, local authorities have a duty to review the extent of designation from time to time, to designate further areas if appropriate, to bring forward proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers.

The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area was designated on 31.January.1995. The conservation area comprises very extensive, undulating, areas of farm and woodland within which are the small nucleated settlement of Hoath with its outlier, Knaves Ash, both much enlarged in the second half of the 20th century, and the separate farmstead sites of Rushbourne, Buckwell and Tile Lodge.

This is the first appraisal and review of the conservation area since its designation. The principal purpose of this appraisal is to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development within the conservation area can be assessed; through defining those key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character. It supplements and provides clarity to policies contained in the Local Plan and the Local Development Framework, primarily those relating to demolition and development within conservation areas. It will therefore be a key document in maintaining character and promoting appropriate, sensitive proposals in the conservation area. This document has the status of a background paper to the City Council's Local Development Framework.

Other purposes included undertaking a review of the boundary in accordance with section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local planning authorities – "*from time to time to determine whether any further parts of the area should be designated.*" The appraisal also highlights particular issues and some of the elements that detract from the appearance or character of the conservation area. These provide the basis for potential future actions for improvement.

The City Council considers that the special interest justifying designation of a conservation area should be defined and analysed in a written appraisal of its character and appearance. The process of review has changed significantly since the first areas were designated in England under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and the current appraisal approach is one set down as a guideline format by English Heritage in various practice notes.



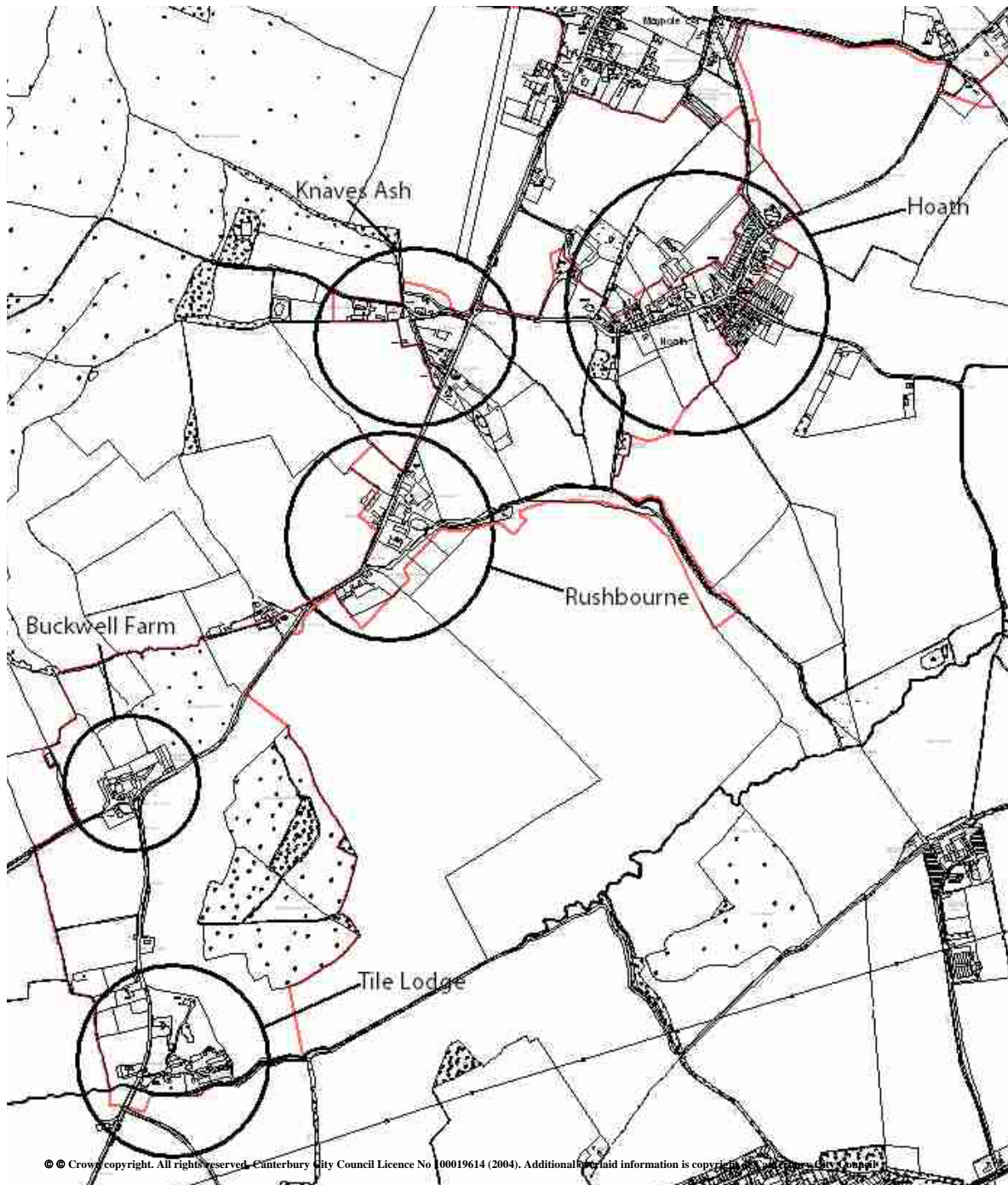
Map of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area

It is not just the local planning authority that has a role in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. The principal guardians are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area that are responsible for maintaining the individual properties, which together contribute to the character of the conservation area. Designation also raises awareness of an area's special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. Government planning guidance stresses that our built and natural heritage should be valued and protected for their own sake as a central part of our cultural heritage and that everyone shares the responsibility for environmental stewardship.

2. Location and population.

The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area is some 8.3 kilometres north east of Canterbury adjacent to what was the Roman Road from Canterbury to Reculver, on Kent's north coast.

At the last census, in 2001 the population of the ward of Marshside, within which the conservation area lies, was 2,685 people. Within the Hoath civil parish the population was 533, and it is estimated that 310 people live in the conservation area. The conservation area is approximately 92 hectares in area, of which some 25% is woodland.



Map showing location of the settlements within the conservation area

3. Landscape and topography.

Hoath village is sited towards the edge of a gravel terrace below which London Clay beds drop south into the little valley of the Rushbourne Stream. At the foot of the clay, alluvial deposits follow the course of the stream and beyond these an expanse of fertile brickearth, topped by more clay and then again gravel, rises up to Clangate Wood. South from the wood, from Buckwell down to Tile Lodge Farm in the next valley, the sequence of gravel, clay, brick earth and alluvium is reversed.

The main road through the conservation area, the Roman road, tends to avoid the heavy clay soils and seeks out 'stepping stones' of brickearth and gravel as it traverses the area. From this it is easy to understand the original, Old English, meaning of 'Clangate', as in 'Clangate Wood'. Where the road passed over the hilltop here it became (in a region of notoriously muddy roads) the 'gate' to a clean way through this end of the forest of Blean. (O.E. 'Claene' – clean, 'Geat' – a gate).



View north towards Hoath from Rushbourne, top of Oast roundel visible to left.

Hoath village stands on gravel but Hasted (the Kent historian) commented "the streets... though on high ground, are (both) very wet, from the land springs". He described the area as lonely unfrequented country, 'both unwholesome and unpleasant' and predominantly of 'stiff clay' 'The History and topographical survey of the county of Kent, Vol IX, Edward Hasted, 1800. Water continues to flow off the plateau behind the village in addition to welling up at points lower down the clay slopes. Springs and therefore ponds are also associated with the course of the Rushbourne itself as well as with its numerous smaller, tributaries.

The gravel and brick earth plateau behind the village is today a high, very large, flat and rather featureless field bisected by a ditch. Its appearance was similar 170 or so years ago, the ditch running across the middle to become a stream dropping down over the clay scarp at Keybridge, just west of the village centre. The conservation area boundary is drawn tight to the built up area here.

Immediately west of the village beyond Keybridge a smaller scale landscape character returns along the northern boundary of the conservation area where underlying formations change quickly from 'head' brickearth to London clay to gravel and then, beyond Knaves Ash, back to clay again. In this direction East Blean wood, ancient forest on the clay-land heights, closes the vista beyond the conservation area.

The farmland between Hoath Road (the old road to Reculver) and the eastern fringe of East Blean Woods, from Knaves Ash down to Buckwell Farm, is said to carry classic evidence of assarting – turning woodland into fields - in the form of a number of 'shaws' – small belts of forest woodland left alongside and between new fields when these were cut out of the forest. As with the slopes south of the village, small streams, hardly more than ditches, flow down through this area to the Rushbourne. These have their sources in the woods above.

Assarting went on into the 19th century in at least one part of the conservation area. This is shown by comparison between earlier and later maps of Buckwell and Clangate Woods. In terms of the immediate southerly setting of the village there is some contrast between local landscapes developed on the clay and those on alluvium and brickearth. A number of relatively small-hedged fields survive on the south facing clay slopes just south west of the settlement. 150 or so years ago similar small enclosures extended further towards the east round the south side of the village.

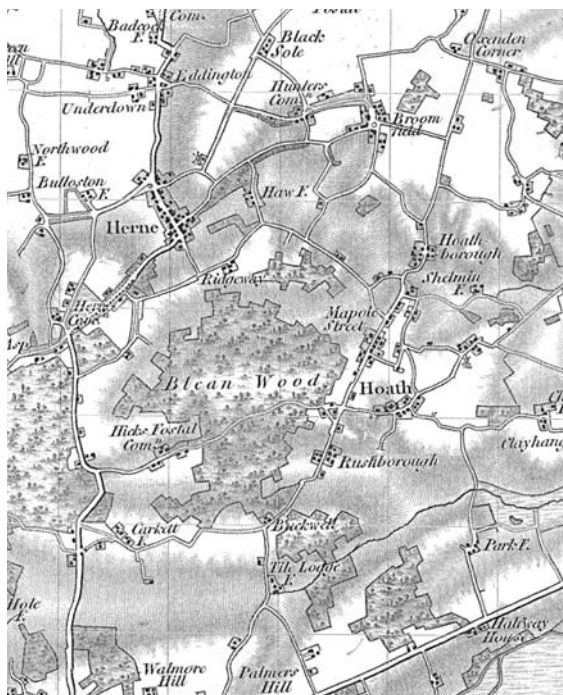


Tree and Shrub growth along Rushbourne Drive, vegetation in foreground indicates former left hand side of drove

Rushbourne Drove, an ancient feature 'originally the route by which sheep were taken to graze on parts of what are now Chislet Marshes', follows the valley bottom alongside the Rushbourne which here cuts deeply into the alluvium. Its original generous width, reflecting the movement of the flocks it carried, and narrowing as it approaches Rushbourne Manor, is eaten into by modern cultivation. Southwest of the section within the conservation area its character is greatly degraded.

The Drove forms a line of division between the zone of small fields on the London Clay around the village, described above, and a landscape further to the south formed on brickearth rising again to Clay and gravel. Here, immediately beyond the Drove, a large arable field extends away up the hill towards Clangate Wood and east along the Rushbourne Drove. This field, called the 'Great Field' on the Tithe map, may not be entirely the product of the combination of geology and modern agriculture; it has been suggested that it may be the great medieval common field of Rushbourne Manor.

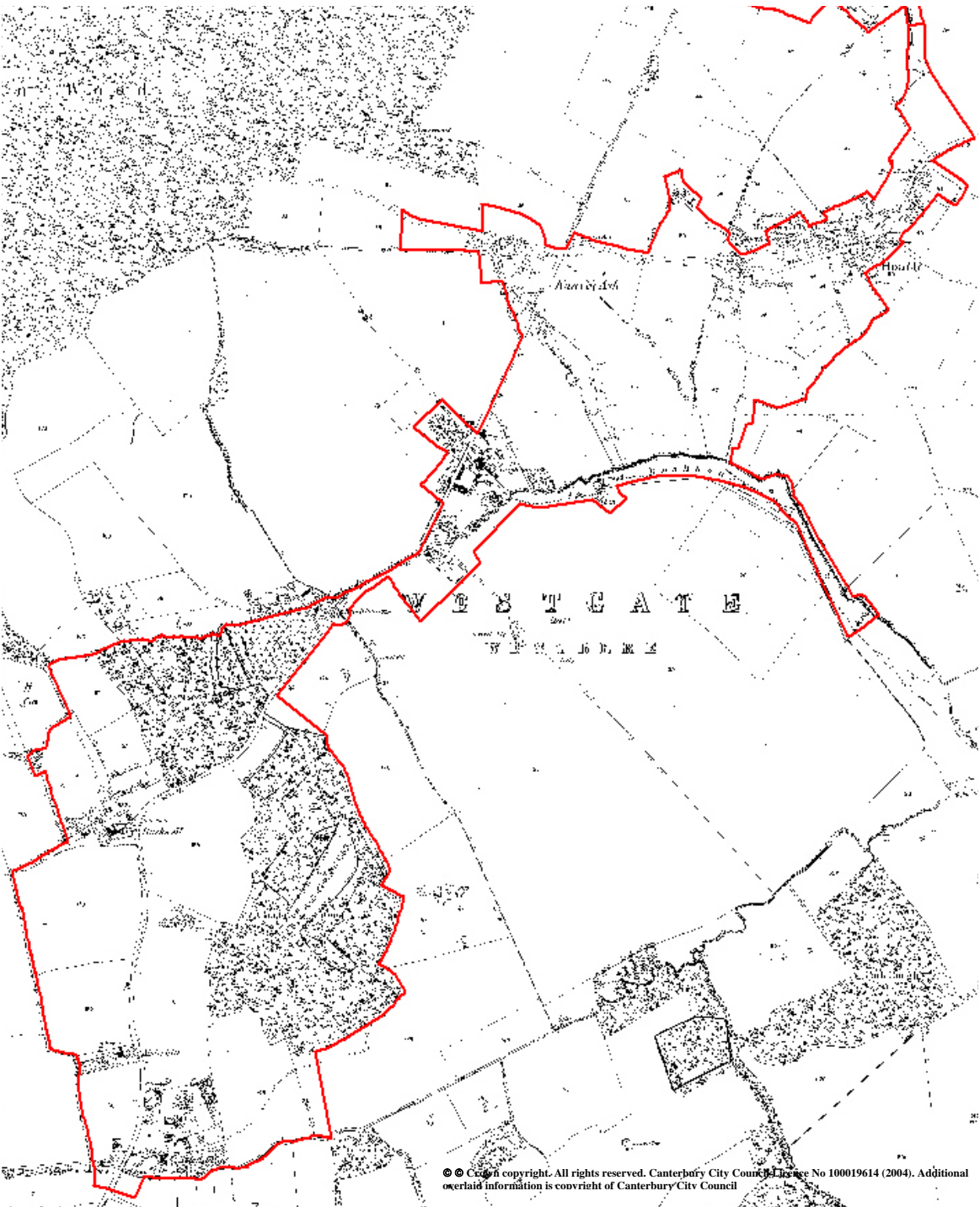
1819 OS Map



On the slope up to Clangate Wood a very approximate divide between Brickearth (and the 'Great Field') lower down, and Clay above, occurs at the line of the field boundary hedge running off southeast from the Hoath Road behind Little Rushbourne Farm. The boundaries to this field are well hedged and rising ground hides its very large actual extent as seen from the roadside. At its south west side it abuts Clangate Wood.

The 1872 O.S. map shows that Clangate Wood was then surrounded by a series of smaller fields, themselves greatly varying in size, an arrangement strongly suggestive of assarting. Indeed the 1819 O.S. Map confirms that this is the case, recording the process at an earlier stage in its development. All traces of the 1872 fields are now gone, leaving the wood further reduced and visually 'floating' within an entirely hedge-less space – with one

continuous field all the way round it. This loss of hedgerow and field is in sad contrast to the equivalent historic situation north-west across the Hoath Road, beyond Buckwell Wood. Here assarted field boundaries clearly still survive.



1872 OS Map

The great modern continuous field around Clangate Wood just referred to, spans the ridge between the valleys of the Rushbourne and the Nethergong Penn. Within it on its south side London Clay is succeeded by Brickearth and then Alluvium as the ground descends to the Nethergong Penn itself. At the foot of the hill, partly hidden within hedged and tree planted grounds, is Tile Lodge Farm. The visually enclosed character of this small settlement is in strong contrast to the modern field up the hill to north and east.

The rising land within the conservation area west of the Hoath Road, from Tile Lodge Farm Cottages as far north as Buckwell Farm, retains its underlying mid 19th century or earlier field layout of modest hedged enclosures on Clay and Gravel. This is further subdivided by the gentry garden of Moleshill House and a number of paddocks around, and probably related, to that property. Tile Lodge Farm Cottages stand out on a small open terrace above the Nethergong and are in intimate visual association with the road bridge close by.

4. Historic development

The estate lands of the Abbey of Reculver, which included the settlement of Hoath, were handed over to the Archbishops of Canterbury in 949 AD. The Domesday Book entry for Reculver describes the estate parishes, which are now Reculver, Herne and Hoath. By 1285 and it is said for many years before that there were four estate chapels, Herne, Hoath, St Nicholas at Wade and All Saints (north-east of St Nicholas) in addition to the great church at Reculver. Settlements of varying sizes will have grown up over time around all these foundations. From an ecclesiastical point of view the estate was divided in 1310 when three 'perpetual vicarages' were formed, one for Herne, one for St Nicholas at Wade and its chapel of ease of All Saints and one for Reculver with the chapel of ease at Hoath.

The medieval settlement of Hoath, with its chapel, is at the south west corner of the old Reculver estate where it abuts the tiny, independent, estate of Rushbourne Manor. The latter first comes to notice in the documents in 1087 but is thought to have been 'assarted' from Blean forest in the late Saxon period.

4.1 Hoath

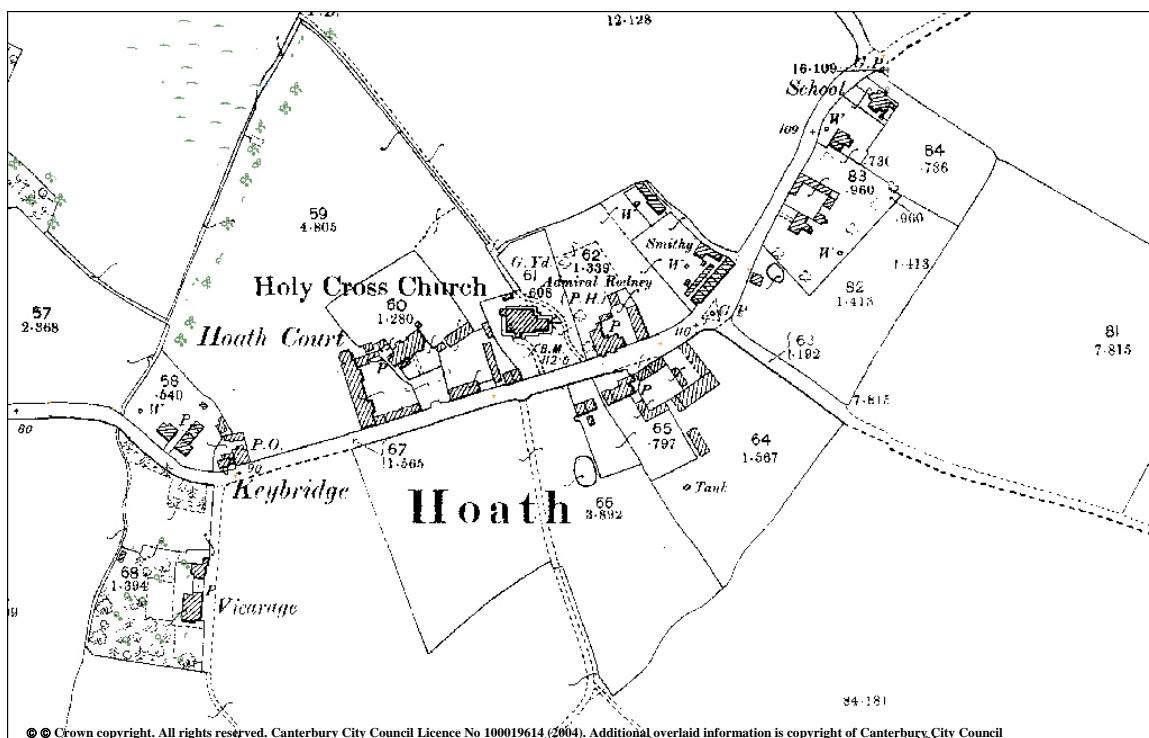
The word Hoath is derived from the Old English word 'hap' which means heath. Thus the Saxons knew Hoath as a heathy place, a settlement on the poor land or the 'Blean'. The oldest fabric in the village survives, as usual, in the church, but even this is only fragmentary since unfortunately the building was radically restored in 1842. According to Pevsner the remains consist of the head of a doorway of c.1300, brasses of c.1430 and 1532 and some 16th century church plate. 'Hoath Court', close to the church, a medieval timber framed house extended and altered in the 16th and 17th centuries, is the village's only other building of any significant age.



1839 Tithe Map showing field boundaries (blue) and buildings (yellow)

The Tithe Map shows that in 1839 Hoath remained little more than a hamlet centred on the church. The buildings stood on the edge of the plateau with ground falling away to the southeast and flat fields to the north. In addition to the church it comprised at most three farmsteads with their farmhouses, a pub, a few cottages and houses, a terraced row of workers houses and, perhaps, a smithy. A small separate enclave of 18th/early 19th century development lay just to the southwest where the road from the village dropped down across a gully on its way to join the main Hoath Road. On the other side of the road here was a further property set in its own grounds, on the site of the later Rectory. In 1801 the Parish population was 271. By 1851, 12 years on from the date of the Tithe map, it had risen to 359.

The O.S. Map of 1872 offers a little more detail and highlights a few changes since 1839. A great Kent barn, in all likelihood timber framed and thatched, closing the west side of 'Hoath Court' farmyard in 1839, has been replaced by the present brick version with two oast roundels (now lost) attached at its north end. A new road frontage agricultural building fills the 1839 gap at the south east corner of the farmyard. Close by this is the small house in the corner of the churchyard, found also on the Tithe map, and still extant. The timber framed house known as 'Rotherfield', across the road opposite the churchyard, is revealed as having stood next to a second village farmyard and possibly farmhouse; there is no trace of these today. Further east along the road is a third farmstead site, an adjunct to the surviving 'Rosary Farm House'. Now almost entirely swept away, a last fragment of the former farmyard and buildings, an early c 19 black weatherboarded shed, still stands today along the road frontage of the modern 'Barn Lodge' house next door.



1872 OS Map of Hoath

Back in the village centre immediately east of the churchyard, the then Admiral Rodney pub, its stables and outbuildings to the rear are shown, as are also the ground plans of two now vanished bay windows on the front of the main building. East from the pub around the bend in the road is the terrace of workers houses with either earth closets or pig-sties shown in line at the rear. Just beyond, hidden at the end of an alleyway off the main road, is the small, probably 'Regency', Garden House still surviving today. Facing onto the alley and quite close to the end of the workers terrace was the village smithy. At

Today's village plan clearly reveals the overpowering effect of 'infilling' and, at Barn Close, plot development around a new cul-de-sac, in which individual building siting is heavily influenced by car parking, garaging and vehicle access requirements. An exception is the early row of good semi-detached former council houses ranged along the northeastern side of Marley Lane. The repetitive layout and design of these may perhaps be put down to the economic exigencies of post war Britain.

In terms of its former character as a living agricultural community, the last 40 years have seen Hoath transformed through residential expansion and re-development. Examples of this process are the barn conversion at Hoath Court in 1999, the pub converted to a private house in 1994, and the village Post Office closing in 1998 and reverting to a house. As with so many other small Kent settlements Hoath is now essentially a dormitory from which for the most part the population drive elsewhere to work, to shop and to be entertained, with only church and school remaining as points of social focus.

4.2 Knaves Ash

Knaves Ash was said to be close to the 'common'. Within and around it are scattered a small number of individual houses, a few of them of pre-20th century date. Its centre is a triangular area bounded on two sides by roads and on the third by a former tree lined track, now becoming impassable to pedestrians, which is said to be a remnant of a 'shaw' - a narrow piece of woodland along the side of a field left over after assarting. The 1872 map suggests that this triangular area was partly derelict; perhaps this was a last small piece of common land.

The only significant difference between development shown on the 1839 Tithe Map and the 1872 O.S. Map is the appearance of a house and enclosed rear yard plus a wide strip of newly enclosed field behind, on the east side of the Hoath Road, well south of the Hoath junction. Since then the property boundaries of a number of new dwellings have greatly extended domestic land use at the expense of agriculture in this area but fortunately planting screens a good deal of these later intrusions.

4.3 Rushbourne Manor

As has already been mentioned Rushbourne Manor has been identified as a small, early, free standing estate, founded in the late Saxon period. The centre of the Manor is still occupied by the listed Manor House. This stands in the valley south west of Hoath and beside the Roman road at the head of Rushbourne Drove, alongside which flows the Rushbourne stream. The previous manor house was pulled down by the owner Henry Twyman and rebuilt in brick with Dutch gables in 1659. Its front entrance originally faced away from the road and down the Drove.

The 1819 O.S. map shows the farmstead site with a collection of buildings opposite, across the road. Today these are reduced to a crumbling red brick wall along the roadside. In 1872 the main farmstead complex comprised the house and its forecourt and adjoining walled garden, an oast with a single roundel, a series of other agricultural storage buildings which will have included the usual stables, cart sheds, beast sheds and probably granary, as well as a large barn and associated yard and cattle shelters. One of the latter buildings survives, abutting the roadside, but the barn is recently gone, its site cleared and still easily identified. South from this are new low pitched roof agricultural buildings and grain silos. There is a similar, even larger scale, new agricultural shed in the field across the road on the site the lost earlier buildings referred to above. The farmyard pond remains however and the oast survives too, but today it is a dwelling.

Little Rushbourne Farm is on the south side of the main road just south of the Manor farm where the Rushbourne Stream passes under the highway. As a farmstead it seems to have come into existence post 1872 since at that time it was simply an isolated house with a large garden. Subsequently the low range of weatherboarded single storey buildings

next door were built. These are now converted to offices. It is a good mid 18th century house originally built as a pair of red brick cottages with rear extensions. Continuing south along the main road Little Rushbourne Cottage is on its west side and a short distance up the hill from Little Rushbourne Farm. It is a narrow fronted, tile hung, late 19th century house more appropriate to town than country, appearing to stand alone, set back, and down, from the road. Around it are in fact various modern relatively small scale nondescript agricultural-related structures.

4.4 Buckwell Farm and Cottages

Continuing this survey southward along the main road, the next settlement within the conservation area is developed around Buckwell farm house and farmstead. Taken at face value, the name means the well from which deer came to drink but in fact the farm must be named from the manor of Sturry, which was also known as the borough of Buckwell. Buckwell farmhouse itself is good early 19th century red brick 'polite' architecture set back a little from, but still facing towards, the public highway. The house is well forward of a large farmyard which in 1872 was dominated by its large Kent barn, still surviving today. The yard then had open sided cattle sheds to each side. In front, and complementing the house across the entrance drive stood a brick oast house with a single roundel. This too is still there and though not in use for its original purpose it remains 'unconverted', an increasing rarity.

Buckwell Farm cottages, a group comprising a single house and a semi-detached pair, are a few hundred yards north of the farm, on the roadside and set into the edge of Buckwell Wood. The single house, of red brick with rear wing and stacks and hipped roof may be early 18th century in date. The pair is stuccoed gabled and slated, indicating perhaps a post 1840 building date.

4.5 Clangate and Tile Lodge Farm.

Travelling southward along Reculver Road one comes first to 'Clangate', on the east side of the road set behind hedgerows a little and hidden below the hillcrest. This is a simple detached house of the late 19th/early 20th century. Further on and this time to the west of the road is 'Moleshill', a rather larger, and more pretentious, Victorian house, again set down and hidden off the road somewhat. The core of this building may pre-date 1819 since it appears to be shown on the O.S. of that date. Past Moleshill, to the east of the road is a small pair of workers cottages of late 19th/early 20th century date, this time with a garden onto the road.

Finally in the bottom of the valley next to the stream and east of the road is Tile Lodge Farm. The two buildings of significance here, both listed, are the house itself and an adjacent oast. Other buildings appear to be modernised versions of traditional structures while others again are entirely modern. Over the road to the west is a good pair of workers cottages, Tile Lodge Cottages, though with modern alterations, and probably dating from the earlier part of the 19th century.

The main road crosses the stream here on a good brick bridge possibly of early 19th century date. Close to this is a modern well or spring head with control gear, managed by the Water Authority; this may be an older feature than is suggested at first sight.

5. Conservation area character analysis

For an analysis of the character of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area can be divided into five character zones, each with its own distinct characteristics. These can be defined by: the form of development (plot layout, roads and boundaries); the relationship of buildings to spaces (the contribution of landscape, trees and hedges) building types and materials, and the overall landscape setting.

5.1 Hoath

Travelling towards Hoath from the Hoath Road there is a bend in the road combined with heavy hedge and tree growth to both sides that entirely blots out any sign of the village. So when the road drops down and a final corner is turned still further east, the village's first roadside houses at Keybridge come as a visual 'surprise'. This is the point at which Hoath's western 'landscape setting' becomes internal 'townscape'.



Entering Hoath from the east – looking towards Keybridge

Turning now to the village setting when seen from other angles, working from northwest to northeast around Hoath, there are no views to be had of it from the public roads until the far northeast corner of the conservation area is reached. From here the view west over the flat and rather featureless fields north of the village is dominated in the middle distance by low pitched roofed large span modern farm buildings and silos. Far beyond is East Blean Wood, dark on the horizon. The church spire rising on the left and the ragged edged backs of development further left beyond this, signal the village centre. The whole picture is very much one of workaday modern development. An equivalent view is had looking back from within the field, from the footpath running out northwest from the rear of the churchyard.



View of Hoath from northwest

Two lanes converge and merge to form the end of the village street around the school at the northeast corner of Hoath. Here too the land is relatively flat and views towards the village, and out from it, are largely confined. The conservation area boundary is again drawn tight around gardens, buildings and road with the exception that the open school playing field is brought within the area.

The remainder of the main southeast boundary of the conservation area runs irregularly through the village and down hill from the plateau, along field edges to the sewage works site and then to Rushbourne Drove. The Drove is included in the conservation area as a special landscape feature due to its antiquity and its historic interest. It comprises three main elements; the Rushbourne stream itself; the Drove, which was as has been shown much more than a field path, and the belt of Elders, immature Elms and other smaller trees growing along the divide between the two and on the other bank of the stream as well. The 19th or early 20th century iron park fencing extant on the Drove-side stream bank confirms that much of this growth is recent but this natural vegetation is now established and makes a key contribution to local landscape character today.



Rushbourne Drove looking west

From footpaths within the valley of the Rushbourne and along the Drove however all trace of Hoath village above is concealed by the lie of the land. From certain viewpoints within the trapezoid the same can be said of the Rushbourne Manor site and Knaves Ash. From the south the Rectory is the most prominent structure in the village due to its siting, isolated and well forward of the road. As one comes up the slope from the Drove along the public footpath towards Hoath and past the sewage works the next most prominent building before the village street is finally reached is a freestanding, large modern bungalow.

Hoath is largely developed along a single main street which divides around the school site at its north east end and off which there is one 'T' junction some two thirds of the way along its length on the south side. The street within the conservation area is the main focus of the village. There are no back lanes or serious cross a route though there is a short alleyway running off at right angles on the north side. The character analysis of the village can be divided into western and eastern sub-areas to allow for a more detailed discussion.



Hoath village – looking east. Rotherfield on the right, church lych gate to left

From the west, the road's visually closed entry to the village drops down to Keybridge round a double bend hedged in by trees and bushes etc. Here are the first houses, tight to the bend. The corner is turned with modern out of character development to left and right and the street climbs again gradually northeast up past the Hoath Court complex, largely walled against the roadside, to eventually level off just before reaching the churchyard. Almost the whole of the roadside frontage opposite Hoath Court is un-built on and remains as open fields. As it climbs towards the church the road-bed is sunk down below the level of these fields with the difference in level between fields and street greatest in the west towards the Rectory grounds. This arrangement helps to partly conceal the out of character modern bungalow and large garage in the corner of the field south of the street, adjacent to the Rectory.

Clangate wood

Hoath Court Barn



View south –from opposite church showing extent of open fields in the village centre

From the top of the hill the heavy tree growth in the Vicarage grounds closes the view westward. When looking south from the road here, over the three open fields, there are wide views over the Rushbourne valley to Clangate and Buckwell Woods and further. The boundary between street and fields here is formed as a wide, varying height, grass bank along is a row of young trees. A key feature looking east along the street is the very large mature tree in the corner of the churchyard. East beyond this the street curves away and is closed in somewhat by buildings on both sides.

Two 'breakthroughs' occur in the pattern of historic enclosure along the north side of the street here. One is the view through the gate in the boundary wall into the former farmyard of Hoath Court, with the fine old house 'on display' across the former yard and its flanking barns. The other is the church, hidden entirely from east and west in its churchyard where a strong historic character survives. In neither of these cases do wider views north open beyond the enclosing buildings, walls and hedges. The setting of the north side of the churchyard is poor, but this is hardly visible from the street.



Hoath Court House and barn conversion

In summary the essential character of the western area of Hoath arises from the sequence of:

- the enclosed western entry to the village followed by
- the 'surprise' of turning the corner there, climbing a gentle gradient with buildings – having varying qualities of 'enclosure'- on one side and an open grass bank on the other and then emerging at the top to realise that a great expanse of landscape view can be had over the fields on the open side.
- informal, originally farmstead use related, village street, varying in width.
- simple rural effect resulting from absence of pavements in many places and from varying width.
- A modern layby in front of two modern dwellings on the north side of the street immediately beyond the Old Post Office disrupts and damages the simple rural effect as does the new wide drive entry in the steep roadside bank opposite.

Important to local character is:

- good small historic houses at Keybridge in their bucolic setting with the mature tree and shrub growth in the Rectory grounds opposite, followed after a gap by
- the converted barn's red brick gables, slated roofs and high brick roadside boundary wall of Hoath Manor with the street widened out informally in front followed again by
- the little house in the roadside corner of the churchyard, the churchyard wall and Lych Gate and
- the great tree, overhanging the road and lastly
- the two enclosed 'sub-spaces' off the north side of the street, related to Hoath Manor and the churchyard, the first formed of farm buildings and an historic house around a space, the other formed of space around the quite humble and well hidden village church.

There are two buildings at the link point between the west and the east character areas. These are Rotherfield, a good historic house opposite the churchyard, and the former public house east of the churchyard.

- Rotherfield, a low timber framed house set well back from the street, is important as a survivor of former and now generally lost built-character within the village and as marking the extent of historic settlement westward on this side of the street.
- The tall former pub and its former yard to the east are important as a fulcrum group between the two character areas.

The eastern character area is again focussed along the village street. Most of it lies more acutely north of east than the western character area. Modern low rise development occupies the site of the former farmstead beyond Rotherfield. These properties are within the conservation area but have a neutral effect on the character of the village.

The corner begins to be turned towards the more acute road angle just east from the former Rodney's Head pub. Here a pair of modern houses stand on formerly open land between the former pub's stables and the west end of the tall workers terrace known as 'The Row' and dated 1827.



Hoath village looking south from the new school towards the village centre – to the left houses of varying dates behind a discontinuous tree and fence screen. More open plan modern development to the right

The Row, built directly onto the highway edge, faces a 'T' junction, which is surrounded on the south by modern development set back from the road. It closes the view out of the village envelope to the northwest here in the classic townscape way. The modern

development opposite, on the other hand, fails to visually 'contain' public space on its side of the tiny road island. Space 'leaks away' down Marley Lane and all hint of enclosure goes with it.

At the east gable of The Row a short lane runs off north west to end at Garden Cottage, a good, historic house on the edge of the conservation area. This lane has remnants of other historic structures along its west side. The smithy once stood here. It still retains some historic character and interest in spite of modernisation and extension.

Beyond 'The Row' and continuing out of the village along the northwest side of the street are a con-joined row of 16 modern dwellings set back from the footway. At their northeast end these turn the corner opposite the school. Some front garden hedges offer a little visual continuity at the back of pavement and the general design and layout has a neutral effect on the character of the area.

The south east side of the street here has some historic and townscape interest. Unfortunately this is diluted by the intrusion of modern development at intervals. The 'S' curve of the street offers some small opportunities for the townscape element of surprise, if not enclosure. However quality varies according to whether there is an historic house and perhaps garden, or a modern house and garden, behind openings in the screen hedges and fences on this side of the road.

In summary, the essential character of the east end of Hoath is:

- the key element of the more or less level, 'S' curved, highway with a pavement to one side and a variety of front garden treatments on the other. Buildings are set back on both sides. 'Closed' interior views looking from both ends of the street. School and hedges closing the view to the north east. Looking south west along the street The Row prominent with an intrusive lay by in front and then spatially poor development at the 'T' junction.
- development partly concealed behind tree hedge and fence screening (this forming a perforated enclosing element) along the south east side of the street from the 'T' junction to the fork at the school.
- surviving historic townscape and north road-side enclosure extending from the former pub to The Row and then up the alleyway to the 'surprise' of Garden Cottage. Quality is compromised a little by the modern development within this sequence

5.2 Knave's Ash

Knave's Ash is a small outlier of Hoath and stands mostly to the west of the Hoath road, towards the top of the hill. The conservation area boundary here closely follows the garden boundaries of the properties making up the settlement, which is largely hidden by heavy tree growth within and immediately around it. Views up the road from Rushbourne Manor confirm the few buildings to be seen from there as 'incidents' in a rural, treed landscape. From the opposite direction, looking southward, downhill from above the Hoath cross roads on the Reculver Road, Knave's Ash is revealed as on the brow of the hill. Viewed from this side trees and hedges again enclose the few buildings and dominate the scene visually. The spire of Hoath church and various roofs on the west side of the village can be seen from the Hicks Forstal Road well beyond the west end of the conservation area boundary.

The dense tree and hedge screening provides an immediate setting for the scattering of buildings in this area. A few houses cluster along the main road approaching the crest of the hill but elsewhere they are dispersed. This is a place with a pleasant landscape character but with only one or two individual buildings of special historic or architectural interest.



The Homestead, Knaves Ash - dated 1721 but probably with an earlier core

5.3 Rushbourne Manor.

Rushbourne Manor's site is concealed from the southern approaches and to a degree also from the north. It is on both sides of the main road, the section to the west completely hidden from public view by hedges and trees. The Manor House's setting to the south is the modern farmyard and beyond that the tree belt along the Rushbourne closes the view. On the north east a rather arbitrary modern fence line defines the extent of domestication there. Westward the house and front garden face across the road up the large arable field beyond. Views north east towards Hoath from the roadside north of Rushbourne Manor are entirely closed by the hedgerows and mature trees lining the road into Hoath and growing within the former Rectory garden.

The Manor house and other associated buildings and the garden walls are relegated to visual 'incidents' along the road, within a dominant landscape setting. To this extent the site still plays an important role as a visual marker, a man-made counterpoint set within landscape, where it can be viewed from some way off, as for instance from the footpath running south from along the side of the former Hoath Rectory garden.



Rushbourne Manor

The whole farmstead site has suffered considerable loss of historic farm buildings and related yard spaces in the recent past. So much has gone that only the area immediately around and abutting the house itself, and extending north over the walled garden to include the converted oast-house, retains coherent spatial and architectural character. The house and garden walls are of particular interest because of their high architectural quality. The long single storey brick shed along the roadside south from the house and a brick two-storey agricultural building at the other side of the yard are now the major surviving relics of the former traditional farmyard. Across the road the site of further farm

buildings was also included in the conservation area; the traditional buildings there at the time of designation in 1995 are now almost completely replaced by modern structures. There is now nothing of left of architectural interest west of the road here but a damaged section of red brick wall at the highway's edge.



Site of former barn at Rushbourne Manor, house on left.

The architectural and historic character of Little Rushbourne Cottage and its surrounding development is very limited. The setting of Little Rushbourne Farm, briefly glimpsed further on at the bend in the road among trees and hedges, is drawn quite tightly and this is appropriate. It is only briefly glimpsed, if at all, from the highway and is essentially an 'incident' along the road, visually separated from Rushbourne Manor by planting and trees. It comprises a house and, now next door and separate, a converted 19th c. agricultural building. Both are of reasonable architectural quality, the house more so than the conversion, and both contribute to the character of their local setting. From here the conservation area boundary splits with one arm running up the Reculver Road past Rushbourne Manor and the other turning east along Rushbourne Drive.

5.4 Buckwell.

Driving up the hill towards Buckwell in a northerly direction, the road curves and is hedged to both sides with forward and side vision much confined. From the wide crest of the hill, looking north, Clangate Wood is prominent across the field on the right and the tops of buildings at Buckwell Farm show against the dark backdrop of Buckwell Wood. The setting of Buckwell Farm comprises the backdrop of its wood to the northeast and the series of small enclosures to its west.

The farmhouse, oast and garden, and small open green to the road combined with the listed barn behind and the various ponds and small enclosures to the east and north of Buckwell Farm are its key architectural and spatial character elements. The roadside part of the complex is related visually, via the roadside hedge edge of Buckwell Wood, to Buckwell Cottages further north along the main road.



Buckwell farm and oast

The first view of the church spire of Hoath from the south, rising on the plateau across the Rushbourne valley, is through the gap between the two woods at Buckwell Farm. These woods – Buckwell and Clangate - can in turn be seen on the horizon from the centre of the village and their northern edges can thus be argued to be the southerly limit of its setting. There are further views of Hoath village, in the distance still, as the road descends the hill from Buckwell northward past Little Rushbourne Cottage and Farm to the farmstead of Rushbourne Manor.

5.5 Tile Lodge Farm.

Entering the conservation area from the south one first passes Tile Lodge Farm that in this direction is initially hidden behind mature trees and hedges growing along the boundary formed by the Nethergong stream. The road crosses the stream over the low brick bridge, passing the end of the tree screen belt on the right, and the frontage of Tile Lodge Farm is disclosed, set back on the right. To the left on open ground close to the bridge stand Tile Lodge Cottages.



View north, car just crossing Nethergong. Tile Lodge Farm to right

The complex of buildings at Tile Lodge is partly surrounded by tree screening and hedges on two sides and is hidden by hedges and falling ground on a third, making it a visual 'surprise' element from whichever direction it is approached. This limited area including the screen planting can thus be said to be its landscape setting. The set back cottage on the right, a little up the hill from Tile Lodge Farm itself, forms part of the group. Tile Lodge Cottages over the road on the left have a wider visual backdrop that extends beyond the conservation area boundary and forms a good group with the bridge, the open space between, and the stream.



View east into Tile Lodge Farm

Tile Lodge Farm's farmhouse and oast-house with the open planted and landscaped space between them and the road, and the adjacent garden areas and trees and hedges, are the site's character elements. Beyond these are modern farm buildings that make no

contribution to the conservation area's character. The grouping is balanced to the west by Tile Lodge Cottages, neat late vernacular design but somewhat damaged by modern alterations. The wide tarmac of the modern main road cuts between the two sites ensuring that the architectural relationship between them is weak. This whole site, low in the valley of the Nethergong, is concealed from Hoath village to the north by rising ground crowned by Clangate Wood.



View north from entrance to tile lodge farm

5.6 Key issues

- Development growth within the conservation area of Hoath village may have reached its limit.
- Any further development in the fields opposite Hoath Court would severely damage conservation area character and should be resisted.
- A key part of village character is the tree and hedge screening at the western end, including that in the Rectory grounds, and loss here would be detrimental to local character.
- Further loss of hedgerows and trees and groups of trees within the landscape settings of the village, Rushbourne Manor and Knaves Ash will be detrimental to the character of the conservation area (hedgerows are not protected by conservation area legislation).
- The key feature of Knaves Ash is the development-enclosing and concealing character of its hedges, trees and tree groups. Should opportunities further development be sought here, any proposal must perpetuate this characteristic.

6. Built form.

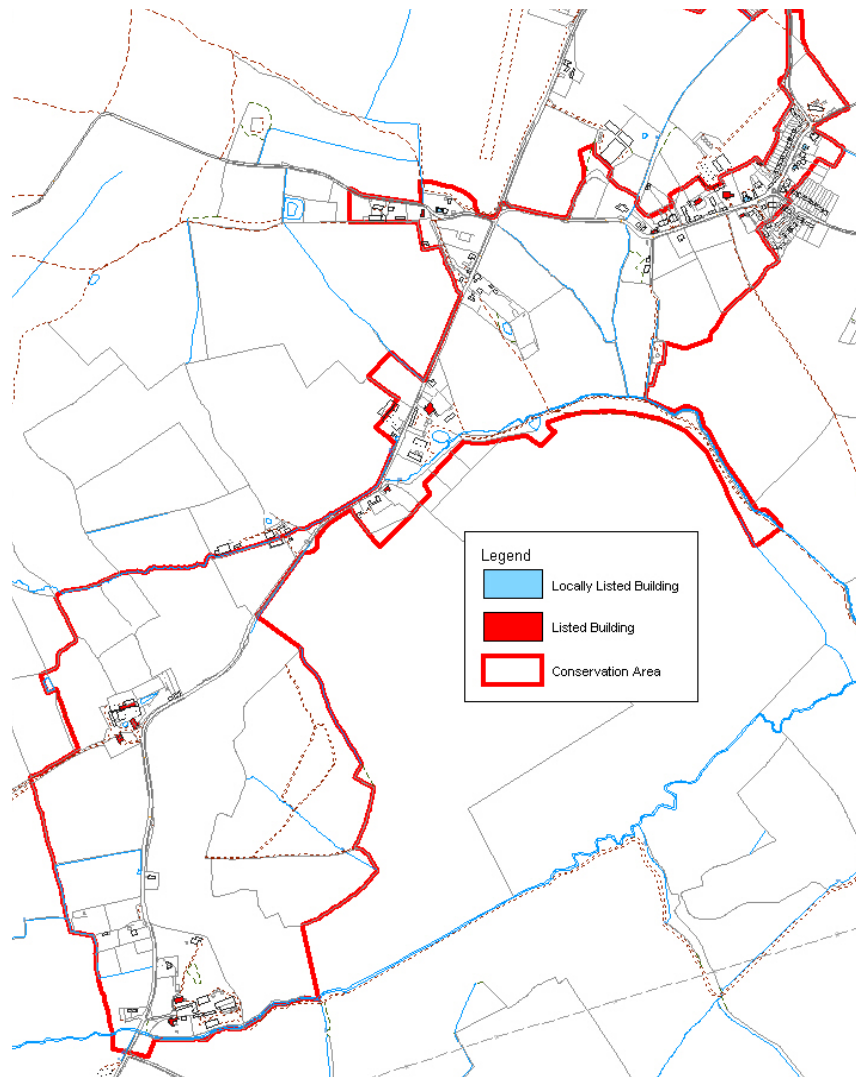
The listed buildings within the conservation are shown below (all are grade II listed and unless otherwise stated the buildings were listed on 14 March 1980).

<i>Church Road</i>	<i>Hoath Road</i>
Old Post Office	Tile Lodge Farmhouse
Hoath Court (listed 30/01/67)	Oasthouse and Granary at Tile Lodge Farmhouse
Church of the Holy Cross (listed 30/01/67)	Buckwell Farmhouse
Rotherfield	Barn at Buckwell Farm
	Oasthouse at Buckwell Farm
<i>Knaves Ash; Hicks Forstal Road</i>	Rushbourne Manor
The Homestead	Little Rushbourne farmhouse

The locally listed buildings were identified by listed building inspectors in the 1970's as part of the preparation of the statutory list. Although not considered as being of statutory interest the inspectors considered that these buildings were of local interest.

Church Road	Knaves Ash; Hicks Forstal Road
The former Admiral Rodney public house	Building to the east of the Homestead (now known as the Bungalow)
Rosary farmhouse	
Greenacre	

There is only one possible further candidate for local listing, the village hall. This interesting building was the former village school building, the 1860 Parochial Church School, at the north east end of the village.



Map showing listed buildings

7. Conservation area management

Conservation area designation is not intended to imply that development is prohibited and change not possible. Conservation area management is therefore concerned with how change and development can take place and positively respond to the area's character.

7.1 **National Policy Guidance**

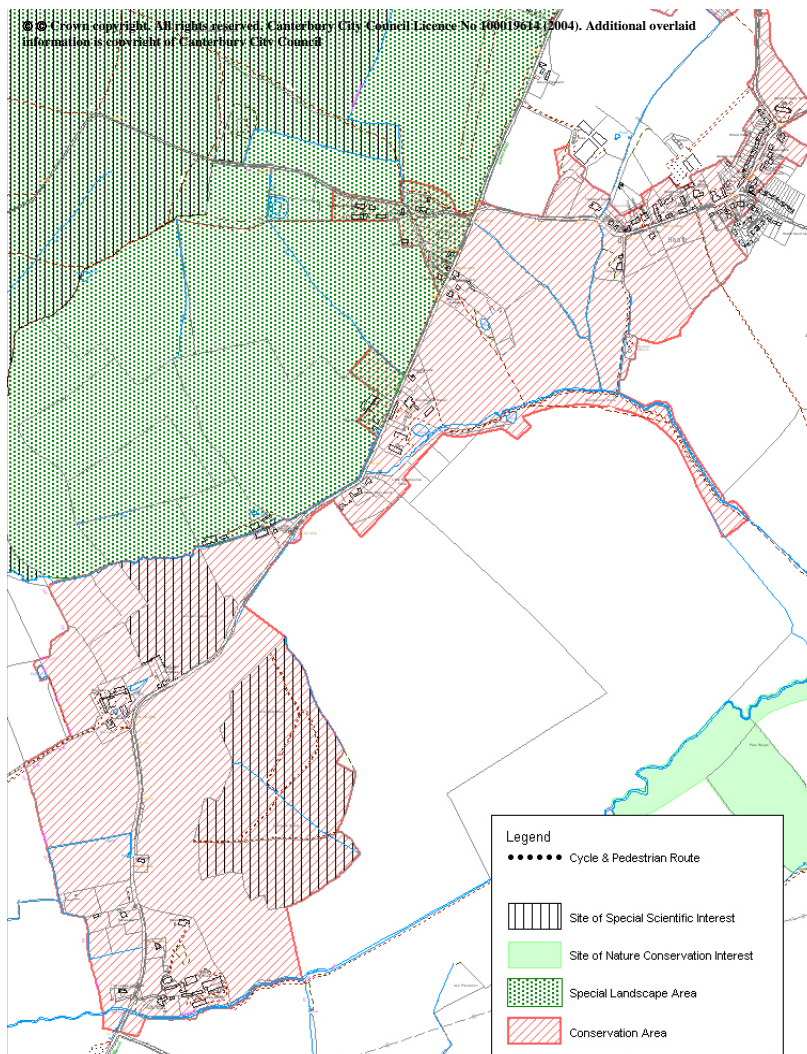
Government advice on the control of conservation areas and historic buildings is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 12, the draft South East Plan (March 2006), Regional Spatial Strategy, Kent and Medway Structure Plan policies and Kent Design Guide provide the general strategic policy context under which the policies in the local plan function.

The new draft South East plan places importance on the protection of the historic environment and acknowledges the role that the historic environment plays in contributing towards sustainable development, regeneration, tourism and social inclusion. Policy BE7 requires local authorities to adopt policies and proposals, which support conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

The Kent & Medway Structure Plan policies also provide the general strategic policy context. Policy QL6: Conservation Areas, sets out specific policy with respect to conservation areas.

The Kent Design Guide provides a starting point for good design that is well considered and contextually sympathetic amongst other things. It emphasises the need for the layout and appearance of new development to be based on an appraisal of the existing character.



**Extract from the
Proposal Maps of
Canterbury District
Local Plan**

7.2 Local policy guidance

Paragraphs 6.83-6.93 of the Local Plan deal with conservation areas and include policies BE7, BE8, BE9 and NE5. Policy BE7 provides the primary guidance to developers about conservation areas.

The planning system has recently changed and ultimately the Local Plan will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF consists of a collection of Local Development Documents will address a wide range of land use and planning issues.

The primary means by which the City Council ensures the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area is through the development control process and by applying the policies of the Canterbury District Local Plan (2001 – 2011).

The 'Blean Woods Special Landscape Area' was originally designated in the Kent Countryside Plan 1986 in recognition of its strategic landscape importance. It includes East Blean Wood and all open land to its east as far as the main road to Reculver (the Roman Road) which runs alongside and through the conservation area. Knaves Ash is thus within the S.L.A. as is the great field east of, and opposite to, Rushbourne Manor farmstead.

East Blean Wood and the Blean outliers of Buckwell and Clangate Woods, the latter two falling within the conservation area, are classified as 'Ancient Woodland'. In addition a part of East Blean Woods is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and has recently also been designated a National Nature Reserve.

The 2001 'Blean Woods and the Great and Little Stour Valley Landscape Appraisal' was commissioned by Canterbury City Council as a landscape appraisal of the Great and Little Stour valleys and a review of part of the Blean Woods Special Landscape Area. This was intended to inform the Review of the Canterbury District Local Plan and to complement existing landscape appraisals. It aimed to provide logical, robust and defensible justifications for managing pressures for change in the area, without diminishing the value of the landscape. The Landscape Character Area of the study in which Hoath is situated was given the name 'Hoath Farmlands'.

There are no tree preservation orders within the conservation area. The cutting down of any specimen of (certain species of tree) with a trunk diameter of more than 75mms at 1.5m above ground level within a conservation area without the permission of the local authority is an offence.

7.3 Biodiversity

Canterbury City Council's Nature Conservation Strategy promotes a Biodiversity Action Plan which sets out targets, indicators and action points for the District. The biodiversity assessment of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area is discussed below:

The conservation area is immediately to the east of the Blean Woods complex, and the landscape of woodland, hedgerows farmland and gardens has significant biodiversity interest. Specific features of interest include:

- Clangate and Buckwell Woods are semi-natural ancient woods and form part of Blean Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. (The SSSI citation is appended to this report). Currently both woodlands are categorised as being in unfavourable condition and would benefit from the resumption of coppice management.

- There are records of great crested newts from some ponds within the conservation area. Great crested Newts have declined significantly throughout Europe and consequently have been listed on Annex 4 of the habitats and Species Directive.
- The large gardens often with many trees provide important habitat for many species including the following species on the red list of species of conservation concern, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Starling, House Sparrow, Linnet, amber listed species Barn Owl and Mistle Thrush.
- Farmland hedges and trees are important both as habitats on their own as corridors linking habitats.
- The stream, which flows through the conservation area, is likely to be an important feature for biodiversity.
- Farm buildings and houses within the conservation area are likely to be used by bats and nesting birds such as swallows.

Threats & opportunities for biodiversity enhancement

The ancient woodlands are the most important biodiversity features and their management is regulated by Natural England. Main threats and opportunities come from changes in farming practices and development of agricultural buildings.

Any development of redundant farm buildings should require a bat survey before the planning application is submitted. Opportunities should be considered for providing nest boxes for swallows.

Enhancement: The main opportunities for enhancement are:

- The improvement of quality and connectivity of hedgerows,
- The introduction of wildlife friendly farming schemes
- The promotion of native tree planting
- Provision of nest boxes on redevelopment of any farm buildings

7.4 Boundary Assessment

The Hoath Conservation Area is unusual in that the landscape setting includes far more open country than is normally the case. The character of the conservation area is one of historic settlements being set in a relatively open, historic landscape. Although the boundary of the conservation area is widely drawn it is not proposed to amend it at the present time.

7.5 Article 4 direction

Conservation area controls cover demolition, minor development, the protection of trees and, through the planning process, quality of new design. They cannot control certain minor changes to the built environment outside general planning control such as the 'permitted development' right to alter the appearance and material of windows and doors in unlisted houses (though Article 4 Directions can be made to deal with these in appropriate circumstances). However the designation of an article 4 direction in Hoath is not being considered at this time.

7.6 Opportunities for enhancement.

The general appearance of Hoath's good townscape-quality areas is low key and unselfconscious and does not call for significant 'improvement'. It is as much a question of making sure that any future public works in the village, inevitably connected with highway matters, do not upset the present low key, unpretentious and un-municipal quality of the settlement's western half. The introduction of further footways here for instance, though

perhaps helpful for safety reasons, could be damaging if not designed with care and an understanding of the very delicate visual context.

Lack of kerbed footways is always appropriate visually in such rural locations, as are varying road widths. The latter are subtly expressed in the roadway outside Hoath Court where gradual widening allows safe parking parallel to the Court's boundary wall. This contrasts with mechanistic, crudely unattractive, 20th century parking bays in front of 'Heath House' and further along the road beyond 'The Row'. These might benefit from visual improvement in the future. There is little in the way of street furniture although there is an amusing signpost on the little road island at the 'T' junction opposite 'The Row'.

The tall brick roadside wall to Hoath Court, the tall brick east boundary wall to the Rectory, the low stone and fenced churchyard wall with its Lychgate and the varying height tree planted grassed bank to the open fields across the road opposite Hoath Court are important elements giving special local character to the village.

There is much variety in the buildings but little consistency. Localised study of these matters should form part of the analysis undertaken when any future development within the conservation area is proposed. Because of the particular nature of Hoath conservation area the overall character of the built environment of the village and the associated local landscapes largely depends for support and perpetuation on private householders, landlords and the local farming community. The preparation by the community of a Village Design Statement to include study of the surrounding setting as well as of the townscape might be appropriate in these circumstances.

The built and natural fabric appears generally in reasonable condition though roadside boundary treatments vary in quality and condition. This is noticeable within the landscape setting areas where unfilled gaps in hedges, presumably the result of die off, can be found filled with fencing rather than re-planted, leading to a gradual decline in visual quality.

8. Community involvement

The scope of the conservation area appraisal was discussed at the Hoath Parish Council meeting in September 2006. Following this meeting a draft conservation appraisal was prepared. A summary of the draft was circulated to the parish Council, all residents, interest groups and local councillors within the conservation area in July 2007. The formal period for consultation was extended due to the holiday period from 30th July 2007 to 28th September 2007. The Canterbury City Council Rural Area Members Panel considered the appraisal on 19 November 2007.

The comments received were summarised and reported to the Development Control Committee who formally adopted the document as a 'material consideration' on 11 December 2007.

All persons who respond to the consultation were contacted and informed of their right to attend and speak at the committee meetings.