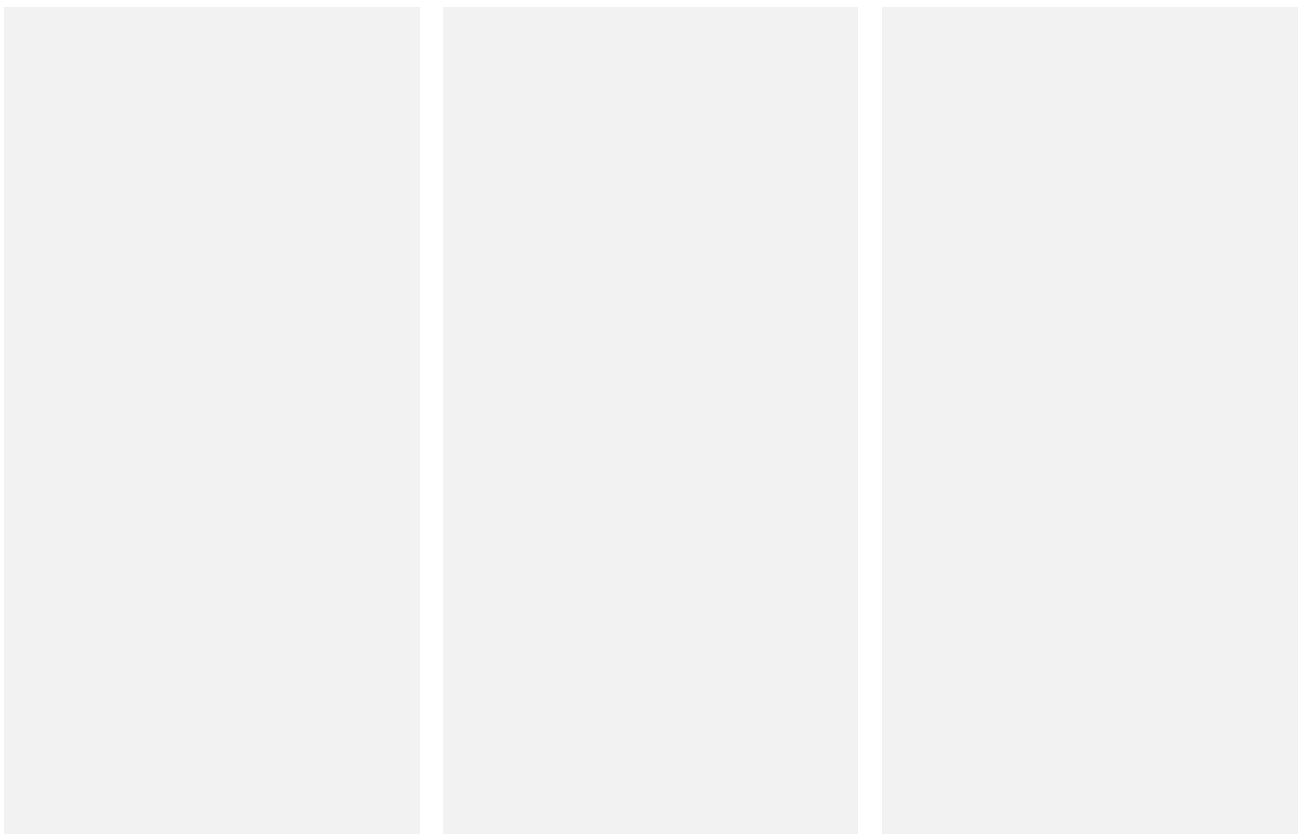




Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Poynings

July 2020



Summary of Significance

The special character of Poynings Conservation Area derives from:

- The linear form of the village core, closely built to the roadside at the western end, while more dispersed in the vicinity of the Church and conforming to long-established land ownership patterns.
- A spring line location with expansive views to open country to the rear of many properties and the dominant landform of Devils Dyke to the South and North Hill to the East.
- At the junction with the road to Saddlescombe, the prominent focal point of Holy Trinity Church, a fine Fourteenth Century building largely rebuilt by the de Poynings family and one of the most imposing rural churches in Sussex.
- Other substantial dwellings, Poynings Place, Poynings House, the former rectory and Dyke Farmhouse, dating to 1694 and extended in the Eighteenth Century.
- The non-conformist Zion Chapel, a building of the 1840s and The Royal Oak public house, also Nineteenth Century, both buildings providing their individual community focus within the settlement.



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Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).

1.2 The South Downs National Park Authority has a duty to determine which parts of the Park have that special architectural or historic interest, to designate those parts as Conservation Areas and to keep those Conservation Areas under review.

1.3 The Poynings Conservation Area was first designated by Mid-Sussex District Council in April, 1984. With the creation of the South Downs National Park in April, 2011, the National Park Authority became the Local Planning Authority for Poynings.

1.4 This Appraisal seeks to set out what the National Park Authority considers the most significant elements defining the character of the Conservation Area; it has an important role in making informed and sustainable decisions about the future of the settlement. While comprehensiveness may be sought, the omission of any particular feature should not be taken as meaning that it has no significance.

1.5 This document sits within a wider policy context, including:

- The South Downs Local Plan, 2 July, 2019.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018.

1.6 In looking at the area, issues which pose a threat to its character and appearance, as well as any potential for improvement and enhancement have also been identified.

1.7 The consultation draft of this document was published for public comment between 14th August and 23rd September, 2020.

1.8 The amended document was adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority for the purposes of development management and to inform its other activities and those of its partners on , 2020.



The **Poyning's Village Sign** at Cora's Corner celebrates a highlight of Sussex folklore. Following the conversion of Sussex to Christianity, it is said that Satan began to dig a ditch through the Downs one night, so that the sea would flood the new Wealden churches. His diabolic plan was thwarted by an alert Nun who quickly woke her Cockerel. His loud crowing convinced the Devil that the sun was about to rise and he fled, never to return, leaving Devil's Dyke the only evidence of his work.

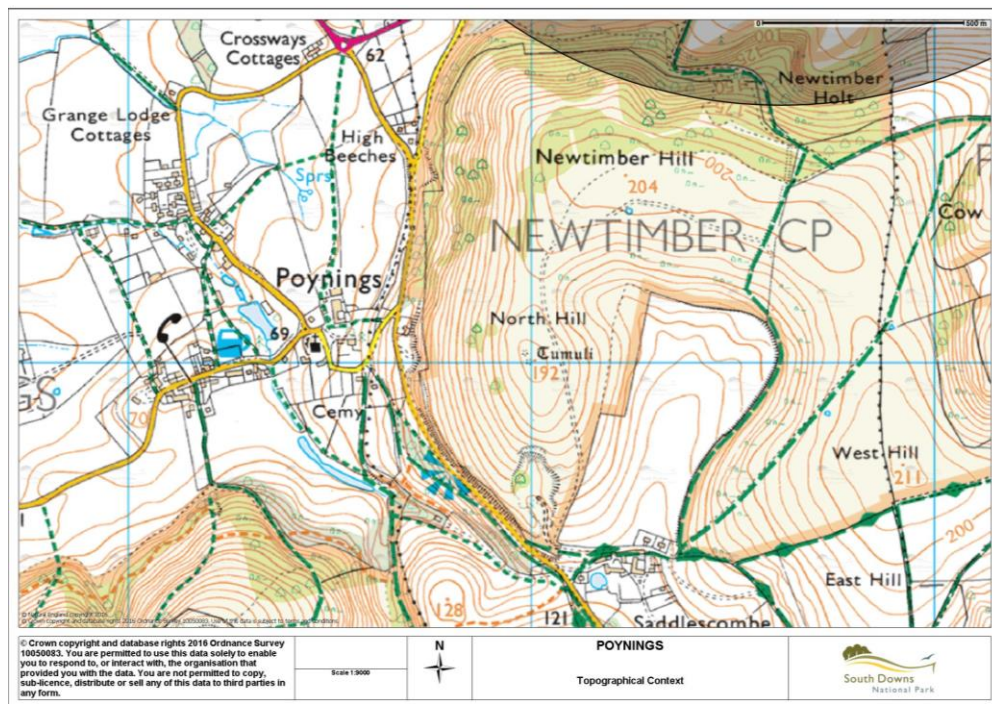
Location & Topography

2.1 Poynings is a small, compact spring-line settlement tucked beneath Devil's Dyke, part of the escarpment of the South Downs within the South Downs National Park. Separated from Brighton, Hove and Shoreham by the barrier of the Downs, for centuries it was more closely related to Wealden settlements to the immediate north, Hurstpierpoint, Henfield and Hassocks.

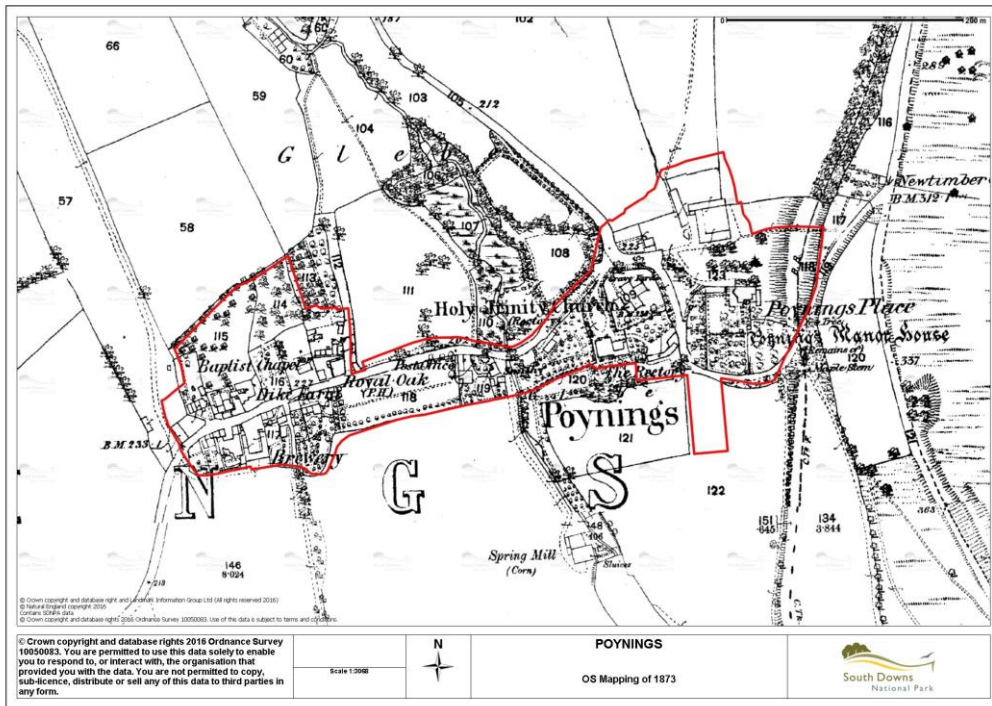
2.2 The landscape is wholly dominated by the Chalk escarpment with Devils Dyke to the South, the highest point in the parish, at 217 metres above sea level. North Hill and Newtimber Hill, only slightly lower, lie immediately to the East. The downland beyond is open in character and was traditionally used as grazing for sheep.

2.3 The footslopes of the Downs comprise rolling clay vales draining westward towards the Adur valley. This has created the undulating, wooded, mixed arable and pastoral landscape of the Low Weald to the north of the village.

2.4 The Lower Chalk base of the escarpment is narrow and flattened in this location. Most unusually, there is relatively little Upper Green Sand here to form a bench between the chalk and the heavy Gault Clay, as is common elsewhere along the scarp footslopes. This geology has resulted in Poynings being wedged hard-up against the base of the Chalk to take advantage of a degree of elevation over the Wealden countryside to the north.



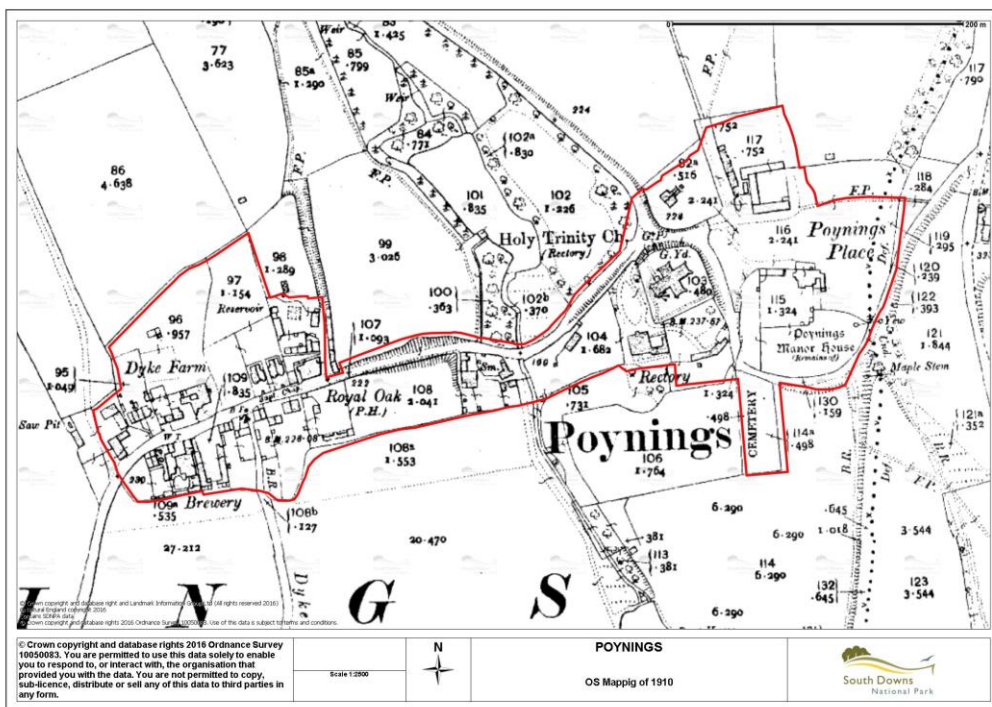
Topographical Setting of Poynings



Created by David Boyson on 28 November 2016

The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1873 shows a settlement dominated by the Church and the gardens of larger houses, with ‘workaday’ uses mostly confined to the western edge of the village.

By 1910, little has changed at the eastern end, other than wetland reverting to pond in the valley floor. However, west of the Royal Oak, several houses and smaller villas have been built along The Street.



Created by David Boyson on 28 November 2016

Historical Development

3.1 There has been human activity in the vicinity of Poynings for thousands of years. Mesolithic hunters will have been attracted by observation points at Devil's Dyke and Newtimber Hill and the easy availability of water along the springline. Traces of early field patterns are evident on the Downs and the most significant prehistoric site in the area is at Devil's Dyke, which was a large Iron Age hillfort.

3.2 A late Romano-British cremation grave group and a possible villa or Romanised farmstead – indicated by roof and flute tiles – were discovered at the top of the Downs about two miles to the south west. Complete vessels forming the cremation group date to the late third to fourth century, though earlier pottery has also been found in the area.

3.3 The woods and forests of the Weald began to be settled by Anglo-Saxon farmers who built a small church at Poynings on the site of the present one. The name 'Puningas' is recorded from the mid-Tenth Century, perhaps derived from 'the people of Puna' a local leader, or possibly 'the people of the pond'. Access to water was critical to any settlement in this period. Two mills were recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086.

3.4 Following the Norman Conquest, the De Poynings family took possession, living in a manor house close to the present Poynings Place. The original house burned down in 1737 and little survives of this above ground, though the related barn and stables remain at Manor Farm. In turn, the De Poynings family line died out towards the end of the Eighteenth Century.

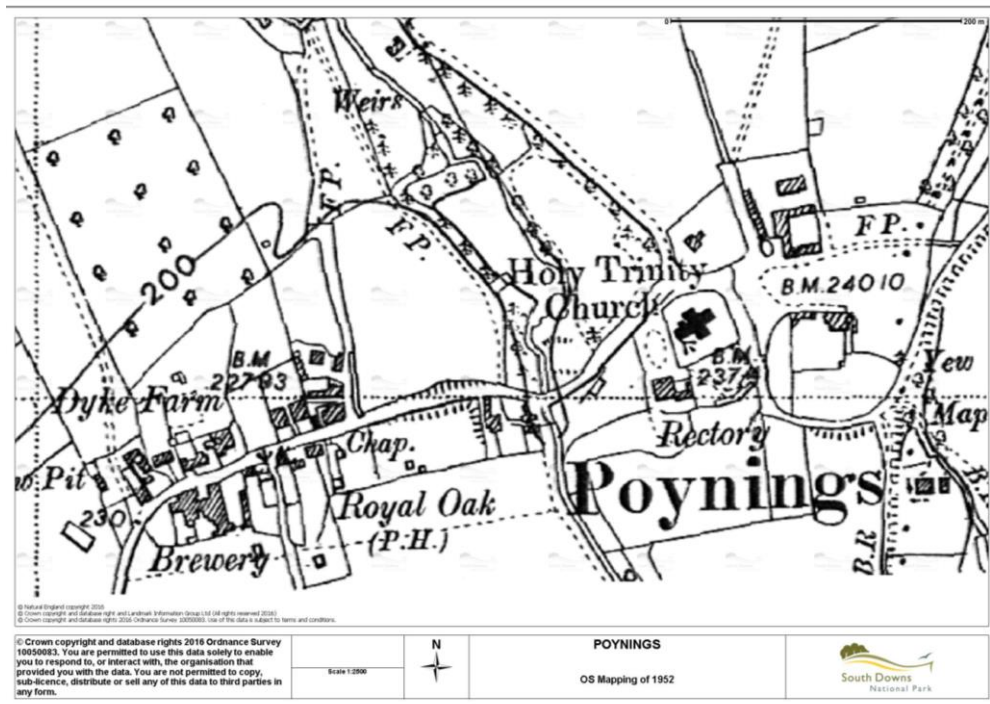
3.5 The true memorial to the family is the cruciform Church of the Holy Trinity, almost entirely reconstructed by Thomas De Poynings and his brother in the later Fourteenth Century. It is a striking building, one of the finest in Sussex, mostly unspoiled by light-touch restorations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

3.6 Life in Poynings in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century would have been quiet indeed, but the tourist development of nearby Brighton, begun under the patronage of the Prince Regent and greatly accelerated by the construction of the London to Brighton Railway from 1840, would eventually impinge.

3.7 Devil's Dyke had already been described by the famous painter John Constable as 'one of the greatest landscapes in the World'. In his time, the only visitor facility was a wooden hut on wheels, but a small inn was soon constructed for the refreshment of genteel tourists, rebuilt and enlarged in 1835.

3.8 The tipping point into mass tourism came with construction of a standard gauge railway across the Downs as far as Dyke Farm, in 1885. Although still terminating a good 200 feet beneath the summit, this line proved immensely popular and led to the construction of a huge funfair and pleasure park by the turn of the century, a development which would probably have horrified Constable, had he lived to see it.

3.9 In 1889 construction of a novel funicular railway down the scarp slope to Poynings brought this annual party to the village and will have transformed its character. At least four tea shops were opened in existing cottages and houses. The Royal Oak had already been constructed to a scale which would not have been warranted for a small, rural settlement. A small brewery was also established in a yard on the site of the current Aviation House. Although this annual tourist boom may have subsided a little following closure of the funicular railway in 1909 and further still with the start of the First World War in 1914 when the Downs were much used for military training and firing ranges, Poynings would now rest more firmly within the orbit of Brighton, with permanent implications for its built character.



By the time of the 1952 map, Poynings had divided into two broad character areas, the traditional land ownerships of the properties surrounding Holy Trinity Church and an intensely nucleated core of smaller dwellings and businesses at the western end of the village.

3.10 The village found itself on the front line in the Second World War, with the Battle of Britain played out over the Downs and Weald in the summer of 1940. Some surrounding Downland was requisitioned for military training and the Canadian Army occupied local properties before its deployment to the Normandy beaches on D-day in June, 1944.

3.11 Following the war, old family links with the traditional agrarian economy were mostly broken. Arable cultivation had replaced sheep on the Downs during the conflict and wider ownership of motor cars opened access to employment in nearby towns, rather than the land.

Character Analysis

Entrance & Boundaries

4.1 Entering Poynings from the northern side, a cluster of later Nineteenth and Twentieth Century dwellings grouped around the junction with Mill Lane, followed by the flint and brick Victorian school to the left, announce the settlement. Immediately to the right-hand side, the distinctive late Arts and Crafts gatehouse of *Downmere* provides a strong focal point and gateway feature. The current Conservation Area boundary is drawn a little further on, just short of the road junction dominated by the *Church of Holy Trinity*, with the entrance to *Manor Farm* on the left.

4.2 The eastern end of the Conservation Area includes *Poynings Place* and the wider site of the ancient Manor House, stopping just short of the road junction with the Saddlescombe Road. Retracing our steps to *Cora's Corner*, the Conservation Area is strongly focussed on the linear nature of The Street with the northern and the southern boundaries drawn quite tightly where the back gardens of houses border the surrounding farmland.

4.3 The western entrance to the village is rather different in character. The road from Fulking is dominated by the escarpment of the chalk Downs to the south. Approaching Poynings, the road climbs gently, twisting gently to the left, with the banks and vegetation to each side quite high, providing an intimate sense of enclosure. Entering the village, adjacent to *West End Cottage* the road then swings over to the right into the western stretch of The Street and the core of the Conservation Area.

Settlement Form

4.4 Whilst the settlement of Poynings is relatively compact, the village is essentially linear in nature. Consequently, most properties benefit from large gardens and magnificent views, either of the South Downs to the south, or over open Wealden countryside to the north.

4.5 There are two primary focal points within Poynings. The first of these is the splendid, cruciform Church of Holy Trinity, a building little changed since the late Fourteenth Century and the undoubted treasure of the village. The other focal centre of the settlement is The Street, lined with several historic dwellings and other more recent ones. The Street is a thoroughfare of ancient origin and Dyke Farmhouse, running back from it, is Seventeenth Century in origin.

4.6 The Manor site to the eastern edge of the settlement is also of very early origin, though the current house on the site dates only to the Nineteenth Century.

Use & Activities

4.7 From the early Ordnance Survey editions, it is clear that the original economic base of the settlement rested on two traditional farmsteads, *Manor Farm* to the east and *Dyke Farm* toward the western end of The Street. As the Nineteenth Century drew on, the *Royal Oak* opened to cater for increasing tourism and a brewery was established in the courtyard currently occupied by *Aviation House*. A smithy and a neighbouring Post Office were shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1873; the Post Office had relocated to purpose built premises at the western end of the village by 1887 and was extended in 1895. During the inter-war period, the former smithy appears to have moved with the times and became a motor garage, which has survived to the present day.

4.8 While still important to the wider economy, agricultural functions migrated from the west end of the settlement during the Twentieth Century, to be replaced by residential development. This process appears to have begun late in the Nineteenth Century, when day tourism began to banish the historic isolation of the village and offer wholly new sources of income.

4.9 Today, the village is overwhelmingly residential in character, those residents who are economically active often commuting to urban centres for employment. However, the *Royal Oak* is a popular local business as well as a community hub. The Church also performs an important community function.

Buildings & Structures



4.10 Working inward from the east, the dominant building to feature within the current Conservation Area is the imposing profile of *Holy Trinity Church*, set on its

raised churchyard. It is a fine Fourteenth Century building in flint, cruciform in plan under a steeply pitched Horsham Stone roof, largely rebuilt around 1370 in a single phase by Thomas de Poynings and his brother Richard. Unsurprisingly, it is Listed at Grade I. The tall flint boundary walls of the Churchyard also signpost the start of the village centre and act as the precursor of a highly characteristic feature of the Conservation Area. The Churchyard contains many funerary monuments of high evidential, artistic and historic value.

4.12 *Poynings Place*, site of the ancient manor complex stands opposite, on the eastern side of the road, in the ley of the hill. The original house burned down in the Eighteenth Century. Still an active working farmstead, what remains of the historic site is a barn and stable block, both of which are Listed at Grade II. The current house is predominantly of Nineteenth Century flint-work, but has lost its original fenestration.

4.13 Returning to *Cora's Corner*, we find a formally laid out paved area, apsidal shelter and seats commemorating the extended residence within the village of a famous theatrical couple of the earlier Twentieth Century, Emile and Cora Littler. Emile was a gifted and successful impresario, one of the most influential operating in the United Kingdom in the years between the wars, and after. Cora, his wife, took countless starring roles in plays and pantomimes and survived him to a grand old age at their home, *Downmere*, close by.

4.14 Just opposite, is located the formal entrance to *Poynings House*, the former Rectory. It was built in 1848 by the Holland family, successive Rectors of Poynings for much of the Nineteenth Century. It is a fine Classical design in white stucco, with rather less formal elevations to the rear and is Grade II listed.

4.15 The Street drops gently toward the west between steep vegetated banks. *Glebe Cottage* is the first building along, on the left. Probably Seventeenth Century at core, it is listed at Grade II and faced in beach or river cobble under a slate roof, hipped at one end, with a little vertical tile-hanging and a lean-to addition. The cottage is a good example of the local vernacular and is set back behind a rustic picket fence, which suits it well.

4.16 *Forge Garage*, as the name suggests, occupies the former site of the village forge. It runs back from the road along the stream valley and retains much of the character of an early-to-mid Twentieth Century motor garage with a shallowly domed workshop roof, all clad in painted corrugated iron. It is a relatively unusual survival and is of some heritage interest in its own right.

4.17 Located next to the garage, but at a significantly raised level is a complex group of far older properties, *Forge House*, *Oak Cottage* and *Stream Cottage*, all listed at Grade II. The group is broadly L-shape in plan, but varied in date and status. *Forge House* is probably oldest, the others likely to be Eighteenth Century. They retain a number of original windows, including some Yorkshire horizontally-sliding sashes, which despite their name are quite characteristic of this part of Sussex as well as substantial chimney stacks. An unlisted attached neighbour, *Shepherd's Hey* presents a Victorian gable to the roadside, completing the group. It is built in Flemish-bond brickwork under a plain-tiled roof and a corresponding

footprint appears on the 1873 edition of the Ordnance Survey. It may have accommodated the first manifestation of the village Post Office. A folksy, mid-Twentieth Century boundary wall, incorporating multiple material effects and textures faces The Street at this point.



4.18 The Street begins to climb out of the stream valley again. The modern properties immediately to the west are architecturally insignificant but do not harm the street scene, largely because they are set well above road level and concealed behind mature trees and other established planting.

4.19 A possible exception to this observation is *Summerdown*, a modern infill house with a tile-hung gable facing the road. Although reasonably set-back, this rather bland house design is dominated by a wide and prominent garage opening and a featureless parking forecourt. The overall effect is assertively suburban and does little to protect, let alone enhance, the character of the Conservation Area.

4.20 *Morville* and *Dyke View* are a pleasant pair of semi-detached Victorian villas faced in stucco under a shallowly pitched slate roof. They are well preserved, retaining their original sash windows, which add greatly to their character. They were constructed sometime between the Ordnance Surveys of 1873 and 1898.

4.21 Across the road stands the rather elaborate, mid-Victorian, stucco facade of the *Royal Oak* public house. This is quite a substantial building for the size of the settlement and an important focal point in the wider life of the community. Adjacent to it, immediately west, is the earlier *Zion Chapel*, dated 1842, an austere but attractive classical building in white stucco, which housed the Sunday School and which has served as gathering point for many community functions and

outings over the years. The Chapel is not listed, but officers consider that it should be considered for inclusion on a future Local Heritage List.

4.22 The twinned pair of brick built, semi-detached villas next door, *Hilva* and *Dawlish*, then *Sunnyside* and *South Down View*, represent a classic but fairly common late Victorian and Edwardian suburban house type. The group was built by 1911. Though not representative of local vernacular traditions, they are a reasonably attractive feature of the street scene, much the better for retaining most of their sash windows.

4.23 Roughly opposite, occupying the corner of Dyke Lane, stands *Dyke Lane House*. This is a difficult building to date from its external appearance. It has a brick plinth in Flemish-bond, but is rendered above, with applied faux timber framing. It presents a miscellany of different window styles in timber, including a small bay to the Street, but none are probably original. The least altered elevation is the side facing east, double-pile gables surmounted by chimney stacks. To the rear, a narrow, brick and flint outbuilding under a tiled roof runs back along Dyke Lane, with further garages and parking beyond. *Orchard Cottage*, further still, is an infill house, modern but inconspicuous and inoffensive.

4.24 The western corner to Dyke Lane is occupied by a cottage with an historic core, rather obscured by a relatively modern tile-hung, gabled extension facing the Street, incorporating a garage. The roof is plain-tiled and the central core is clearly old. The frontage features a flint boundary wall with piers of brick. A long, extended elevation, partly in flint, runs back along Dyke Lane. A small memorial stands at the corner of the lane, commemorating George Stephen Cave Cuttress, erected by his widow in 1907. A member of a long-resident local family, he established the Poynings Brewery, which thrived for many years from premises located close by.

4.25 *Dyke Farmhouse*, opposite, is probably the oldest surviving house in the settlement and is listed at Grade II. It is an imposing house, dating back to the Seventeenth Century, as an inscription, WO 1694, attests. 'WO' is believed to relate to William Osborne. He extended the house in 1729, in a rather old fashioned manner for the Eighteenth Century, and it was extended further in the Nineteenth. The fenestration is modern, but attractive and unobtrusive.

4.26 *Dyke Farmhouse* is also notable for being one of the very few buildings in the village to be effectively three-storey, with rooms in the roof and the prominent feature gables. Survival of a dovecote and stables beyond are reminders of the former agricultural use.

4.27 On the south side of The Street stand *1, 2 and 3 Brewery Cottages*, a uniform terrace of Victorian workers houses built in red English Garden Wall brickwork under a Welsh slate roof. Unfortunately, all three properties have lost their original sash windows and their replacements are particularly crude and clumsy in appearance.

4.28 Beyond, stand *Upper and Lower Brewery Flats*, the first block quite plain, in red brick of the 1950s, the second, *1 and 2 Brewery Yard*, probably built around a

decade later. This second block incorporates plain tile hanging over the ground floor in brick, which continues round to the prominent side gable, facing west.

4.29 *Brewery Yard* is a courtyard, set back but visible to the street and was the site of the Poynings Brewery. This operated from 1862 well into the Twentieth Century. The original buildings were converted for munitions production during the Second World War and turned to metal fabrication in the years after, before final demolition in the 1960s.

4.30 *Brewery Yard* is currently occupied by a single storey industrial and office unit of the 1970s, *Aviation House*. A brick and flint facing to The Street displays an attempt to reflect the traditional architecture of the locality, but the overall profile of the building is clearly industrial and it makes no real contribution to the wider character of the Conservation Area. The site probably represents an opportunity for redevelopment, though scale of replacement buildings should remain relatively modest.

4.31 Next door is the former *Post Office and Shop* now converted to a dwelling. The frontage consists of a pair of gables, one two-bay, dated 1887, the other a single bay extension dated 1895. The building is constructed in Flemish Bond red brick, with the gables decorated with pebbledash and faux-frames. The position and outer frame of the shopfront is still discernible, but the shopfront itself was lost on conversion. However, the property retains sash windows and the overall visual effect is still pleasant.

4.32 Facing *Post Office House*, is a terrace faced in brick and flint, *1, 2 and 3 Dyke Cottages*. They all appear on the 1873 Ordnance Survey and were very probably agricultural worker's dwellings related to Dyke Farm. Only one of these cottages retains a high degree of originality, however; the other two have been re-roofed in a shiny synthetic slate, with over-sized dormer windows added to the front and finally spoiled with crude new fenestration. Two of the three front gardens have also been lost to car parking.

4.33 This run of buildings related to the former farm on the north side of The Street concludes with the former stable block of Dyke Farmhouse, an attractive framed building under a plain tile roof, with infill panels of brick nogging and some flint facings. This building would be worthy of inclusion on any future Local List.



4.34 Returning to the other side of the road, *West End Cottage* acts as the gateway feature to this end of The Street. Prominent on the corner, it has a tile-hung upper floor over render. The original fenestration has been lost.

4.35 The remaining houses on the opposite side of The Street are set back within their gardens, appear to be of the Twentieth Century and are of no special heritage value. They are relatively recessive in the wider street scene.

Open Spaces & Greenery

4.36 The public realm of Poynings is most obviously represented by the ancient thoroughfare of The Street itself, which runs most of the length of the village and connects the two broad character areas, the residential core at the west with the Church and Manor further east. Clearly linear, The Street is mostly narrow, creating a succession of clear focal points defined by the succession of buildings which line much of its length. It becomes progressively 'greener' east of the Royal Oak public house.

4.37 The churchyard, behind fine flint walls raised significantly above the adjacent lane junction, is the most historic public space within the settlement, containing many funerary monuments of widely differing design, age and appearance. These represent a precious record of the people and families who have made Poynings their home over the centuries and should be protected as such into the future.

4.38 Beyond the present-day Rectory, which appears to be a residential conversion of the original Rectory Coach House, is a detached, modern extension to the churchyard, laid out in the early years of the Twentieth Century but maturing quite nicely. It lies behind a panelled red brick wall facing the lane, incorporating a Staffordshire Blue brick coping and plinth, a widely encountered brickwork detail characteristic of that period.

4.39 The other, smaller area of public space is *Cora's Corner*, with its attractive bench and shelter and a delightful public art feature post, celebrating the traditional folklore which attempted to explain the distinctive and unusual landform of Devil's Dyke.

Views & Vistas

4.40 Some of the most important views of Poynings are, of course, enjoyed from above, from a number of dramatic vantage points on the Downs. Conversely, Devil's Dyke and especially North Hill create a visually powerful setting seen from within the settlement, particularly when proceeding from west to east along The Street. Especially fine views are also available from the historic Churchyard.



View east along The Street, from the west end of Poynings beside the former Post Office

4.41 Although intermittent and partially screened by hedgerow and boundary trees, the views north of the open stream valley from the raised path to both west and east sides of the Forge 'dip' are highly significant to the landscape setting of this part of the Conservation Area. Though in private ownership, these green and expansive spaces do much to help define the bounds of the historic settlement.

Issues & Opportunities

5.1 This Conservation Area Appraisal includes an assessment of the character of Poynings and offers recommendations for enhancement. It supports the policies of the South Downs Local Plan by clearly identifying aspects of character and appearance which should be preserved and enhanced and will be a material consideration when determining applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent.

5.2 One of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area is the narrow nature of The Street – in certain sections less than five metres across. This helps to create an intimate atmosphere but has resulted in problematic issues since the 1950s, when ownership of the motor car exploded and road use increased.

5.3 Consequently, there is considerable competition for the limited on-street parking in Poynings. Some residents have no off-street parking space and little or no opportunity to provide it and everyone receives visitors from time to time. At times the available parking is insufficient to satisfy demand, particularly at weekends when the Royal Oak becomes a popular destination for day-trippers.

5.4 At the western end of the village, where dwellings have developed at quite high density alongside the road, residents of set-back properties have frequently sacrificed front garden space for parking or even garaging provision. While entirely understandable, this process has steadily eroded the character of the street scene within the Conservation Area.

5.5 Another problem revolves around the gradual loss of original building features during refurbishment works. Poynings owes much of its character to local Sussex building materials, flint in its variety of worked manifestations, brick (usually necessary to dress corners, edges and plinths of flint masonry), lime from the Chalk and handmade clay tiles from the Weald. These materials were easily accessible and often chosen for local construction well into the railway age.

5.6 Maintenance of these once cheap materials has become an issue in an age when building materials are as likely to be sourced from Continental Europe or Asia as anywhere in Britain and craft building skills have become increasingly rare.

There has been a tendency to cut corners when repairs to historic structures are required, using materials that approximate to the originals rather than replicate them. In addition, declining skill sets frequently result in poor additions to buildings; concrete roofing tiles and uPVC window replacements seem to be a special problem in Poynings. If this trend is not challenged it will further erode the essential character of the Conservation Area.

5.7 In keeping with the rural nature of the settlement and inclusion in the South Downs Dark Skies Reserve, street lighting within the Conservation Area is sparse. A number of residents have installed private lighting and while this aspiration is understandable, it carries a suburban connotation and the variety of different styles may be seen to detract from the overall character of the Conservation Area. It is particularly important to the maintenance of dark skies that lamps avoid the upward throw of light and excessive spread.

Conservation Area Boundary Review

5.8 The assessment of Poynings Conservation Area did not identify any part within the existing boundary unworthy of continued inclusion.

5.9 Some consideration was given to that detached part of the village grouped around Mill Lane, to the north of the current Conservation Area boundaries. The *Mill House* itself is, of course, a listed building at Grade II.

5.10 *The Village School* is an attractive building of late Victorian date, faced in flint and brick. Gothic arched windows under gables on the frontage elevation make a distinctive feature.

5.11 Opposite, and much closer to the road, stand *1 and 2 School Cottages*. This was originally a semi-detached pair of matching, two-bay cottages with a central shared chimney stack, designed in a neo-Georgian idiom. Their use of stretcher bond brickwork suggests an early to mid-Twentieth Century date. Both cottages have now been extended to each end by a further two bays, reasonably well. Both retain flush, sash window frames.

5.12 The only other significant building in this scattered group is an estate cottage with flint gables under a slate roof, dated VR 1882.

5.13 While these individual buildings have some degree of interest, when viewed together in the wider context of unremarkable modern neighbours they cannot

really be said to cohere as a townscape group. Therefore, it is not proposed to include them within an extended Conservation Area boundary.

5.14 The one building which may merit inclusion is the *Gatehouse to Downmere*, once the home of Emile and Cora Littler, who are mentioned in 4.13 and elsewhere in this document.

5.15 *Downmere* itself has been effectively redeveloped in recent years and is of no particular merit, but the *Gatehouse* remains a distinctive building in a key roadside location. It appears to have been built during the 1920s, in a late Arts-and-Crafts style. The plan form takes the form of an extended 'V', with an internal courtyard and the composition is surmounted by an attractive turret with clock. Once, the building housed a small private theatre but this has long gone.

5.16 The building was under refurbishment at the time of survey, but the resultant slightly raw appearance can be expected to weather and settle in a few years.



Photographic Survey



The cruciform **Holy Trinity Church** was built around 1370, replacing an earlier, smaller building.

The churchyard displays many monuments of rich evidential value.





View through the Crossing of Holy Trinity Church towards the Chancel



View of Holy Trinity Church from the entrance of the current Rectory

The former **Rectory** is Grade II listed, dates from 1848 and is now named **Poynings House**





*The Churchyard offers an elevated vantage point from which to view adjacent estate cottages and the **Manor Farm**. The barn and stable block in the farmstead are both Grade II listed.*





***Cora's Corner** commemorates two former residents of Poynings, Emile and Cora Littler who lived at Downmere, close by. Emile was a gifted impresario of the inter-war years. Cora, his wife, was a celebrated star of stage and pantomime.*

***Grange Cottage** is a vernacular cottage of the Seventeenth Century faced in flint and listed at Grade II*





The **Grange Garage** is a characteristic example of a little altered inter-war garage, complete with a framed, corrugated-iron service shed and a vintage petrol pump. Such survivals from the heyday of motoring are becoming increasingly rare.

Set in an elevated location above the garage are listed dwellings, **Oak and Stream Cottages** and the slightly later **Forge House**, both Grade II.





*A pair of stucco semi-detached villas, **Morville** and **Dyke View** built by 1898 arguably demonstrate the increasing influence of Brighton and Hove on Poynings as the Nineteenth Century progressed.*

***The Royal Oak** eventually supplanted the Village alehouse after its construction in 1861. The primary purpose of this imposing building was probably to offer hospitality to an increasing influx of tourists.*





The side elevation of the **Royal Oak** is prominent from its car park.

The **Zion Chapel** was a non-conformist place of worship with a Sunday School and is dated 1845. The neighbouring houses, **Hilva**, **Dawlish**, **Sunnyside** and **South Down View** were constructed by the time of the 1910 map.





*The south side of **The Street** has a slightly disjointed appearance due to a markedly varied building line. Some Twentieth Century inserts were set back to provide parking spaces or garaging, to the detriment of the street scene.*

A similar blight can affect traditional houses on the north side where front gardens have been sacrificed for off-street parking.





1, 2 and 3 Brewery Cottages and neighbouring mid-Twentieth Century flats adopt a more appropriate relationship with The Street.

Dyke Farm House dates from the end of the Seventeenth Century and is Grade II listed.





The current **Aviation House** dates from the 1960s but occupies the site of the Victorian Poynings Brewery. The original buildings were then used for munitions production during the Second World War.

The escarpment of the South Downs dominates the western exit from the settlement.





***Dyke Lane** is a significant entry point to Poynings for walkers coming down off Devil's Dyke and the South Downs Way.*

Management Plan

6.1 At the beginning of this document the legal definition of a Conservation Area as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” was highlighted.

6.2 Taking this definition as a starting point, it follows that the proper management of a Conservation Area will have as its objective both the protection of its existing qualities and its enhancement in ways that build upon its special interest. Four broad aims can be defined:

- To ensure that the Heritage Assets (the Conservation Area and its constituent buildings and other historic features) are properly and effectively designated;
- To ensure that the Heritage Assets are in good condition;
- To secure the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage assets;
- To secure the enhancement of the spaces within and around the Heritage assets.

Proper Designation of the Conservation Asset

6.3 In addressing this objective, it is necessary to consider whether:

- There are any areas outside the Conservation Area boundary which should be brought into it
- There are any areas within the current Conservation Area boundary that have seen inappropriate changes erode their quality to the extent that they should be removed from the Conservation Area
- There are any buildings which should be added to the Statutory List of Buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- There are any buildings which should be added to a Local List of Historic Buildings.

6.4 In undertaking this review of the Conservation Area, a possible amendment to the existing boundary has been identified, at the northern approach to the village core. This area of interest is an extension, shown hatched in blue on the second map on page 39.

6.5 An extension here could be argued to contribute to the special qualities of the extended Conservation Area, primarily by protection of its landscape setting:

- Land and properties just to the north of the current boundary, including *Downmere* and the former *Gatehouse to Downmere*.

6.6 No areas within the Conservation Area to be removed from the Conservation Area were identified during the appraisal.

ACTION 1 – that, subject to local observations during public consultation, consideration is given to extend the boundaries of Poynings Conservation Area to incorporate the area described above and hatched in blue on Page 39.

6.7 In reviewing the existing unlisted buildings, none were identified as potential candidates for statutory listing, at least from a superficial external inspection. However, three were considered to be eligible for addition to the emerging Local List. These are;

- The Royal Oak public house
- The Zion Chapel
- Stables at Dyke Farm

ACTION 2 – that the three buildings identified above be added to any Local Heritage List of historic buildings that might ultimately be prepared by SDNPA.

Condition of the Heritage Asset

6.15 To meet this objective it is necessary to identify those buildings or other features of the Conservation Area that are currently in poor condition and to identify a strategy to secure their renovation.

6.16 A 'Buildings at Risk' survey is, as its name suggests, a systematic inspection of buildings, looking at their overall condition and specific areas of decay as well as their status in terms of use or vacancy. It would normally include a simple photographic record of each building, though not usually comprising more than one photograph per building.

6.17 Buildings at Risk surveys are frequently restricted to listed buildings but one commissioned by the National Park Authority in 2012-13 also looked at unlisted buildings within the rural Conservation Areas, allowing some overview for each one.

6.18 Condition monitoring is an on-going process. This is best achieved at a local level, perhaps led by the Parish Council, which is likely to have better means of informal access to buildings within the village.

6.19 However, as reported in paragraph 5.5, the historic building stock in Poynings is generally in a good state of repair.

ACTION 3 – that the existing Buildings at Risk survey for the village commissioned by the National Park Authority be enhanced with new photographs to form a reasonably comprehensive overview of the condition of the historic environment within Poynings.

Conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset

6.20 Protection of existing quality will be achieved through careful application of the planning system in general and the Development Management process in particular. One way in which this can be facilitated is by the provision of pre-application advice to householders, architects and developers to achieve a high quality of design. The National Park Authority has a system for the provision of such advice, which is explained on its website.¹

6.21 The National Park Authority's archaeological advisor for Poynings is currently Hampshire County Council. However, 'Archaeological Notification Alerts' have previously been identified surrounding the historic village by West Sussex County Council. Impacts of development upon these areas should always be considered during pre-application discussions.

ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which affects Poynings Conservation Area or its setting should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority before submitting an application and ideally, before starting any design work

ADVICE – that anyone considering development of any form which falls within the Areas of Archaeological Potential should seek pre-application advice from the National Park Authority's archaeological advisor, Hampshire County Council, before submitting an application and, ideally, before starting any design work

6.22 Once an application has been received, it will be assessed against a range of national and local planning policies. At present these include the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, the Purposes and Duty of the National Park, the South Downs Local Plan 2014-33 and conservation best practice (including this document).

6.23 Whilst discussing proposals with applicants, both at pre-application stage and in the course of determination, opportunities may arise to achieve improvements both to the proposal itself and its contribution to the wider character of the Conservation Area. These may not originally form part of the

proposal. The Local Planning Authority will seek to maximise these opportunities as far as possible.

ACTION 5 – that Planning and Listed Building Consent applications be determined in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance, with any opportunities to secure improvements during that process being secured as far as possible

6.24 The special character of any Conservation Area can be degraded through the loss of architectural features and traditional materials, particularly original windows and roofing materials. Individually, these changes may be relatively minor but taken collectively they can represent a real and progressive threat to the special character.

6.25 This problem can be addressed in two ways. One would be to bring those minor works within the ambit of the planning system using a measure called an Article 4 Direction, which removes ‘permitted development rights’ from specific domestic properties. The other, complementary, way would be to encourage the reinstatement of architectural features and traditional materials with a grant scheme targeted at such works.

6.26 The photographic survey illustrates a significant problem of this nature in Poynings. It must also be acknowledged that the provision of a grant budget is unlikely in the current circumstances and for the foreseeable future. This combination of factors informs Action 6 below. It is important that the historic building stock should be monitored, so that any exacerbation of this emerging problem is identified at an early stage. In reality, this means everyone, National Park officers and members, Parish Councillors and the community keeping an eye on what is happening within the Conservation Area.

ACTION 6 – that the loss of architectural features and traditional materials is sufficient for the National Park Authority to consider making an Article 4 Direction, in consultation with the community, as gradual erosion of traditional features and materials is a problem adversely affecting the special character of Poynings Conservation Area.

Enhancement of the spaces within the Heritage Asset

6.27 Conservation Area designation is a response to the qualities of the settlement as a whole and it is important to recognise that the spaces between the buildings are a significant component in this.

6.28 Nevertheless, significant improvements to that quality can be achieved by pro-active work in the public realm. Although it remains difficult to secure finance for such projects, it is sometimes possible to put together a funding package from

a number of sources.

ACTION 7 – that the National Park Authority supports, in principle and in association with other partners, the undertaking of a public realm audit to inform any future scheme of public realm enhancement in Poynings.

6.30 Other less significant but still worthwhile identified improvements might include the undergrounding of overhead cables through the village and the replacement of modern street nameplates with something of higher quality or greater local distinctiveness, attached to walls wherever possible.

ACTION 8 – that the National Park Authority supports, in principle and in association with other partners, the undergrounding of overhead wires and the replacement of modern street name plates with signs of a more traditional appearance, attached to walls wherever possible.

Responsible Conservation is a Partnership!

6.31 This document has been prepared by the National Park Authority as the Local Planning Authority for Poynings. However, it is very important to stress, and for other parties to understand, that effective management of any Conservation Area is the responsibility of all organisations and all parties who do things which affect the character of the area.

6.32 Section 11A (2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 sets out a wide range of bodies to which the National Park duties apply.

6.33 At a local level, this includes the residents of the village and the Parish Council. Slightly more removed, it means West Sussex County Council as the Local Highway Authority and in its other activities, and all those Statutory Undertakers executing works in the public realm.

Annex: Listed Buildings

THE STREET The Parish Church of the Holy Trinity I
28.10.57

Cruciform buildings of chancel, north and south transepts, nave and north porch with central tower. Built about 1370 by the brothers Thomas and Richard de Poynings under the will of Michael de Poynings, who died in 1369. One of the finest village medieval churches in Sussex.

THE STREET The Rectory II

Built in 1848 by the Rev Thomas Holland (1803-1888) who was Rector of Poynings from 1846-1838 in succession to his father, the Rev Dr Samuel Holland, who had been Rector from 1807-1845. L-shaped building. Two storeys. Three windows. Faced with Roman cement. Stringcourse. Long and short quoins. Wide eaves cornice. Hipped slate roof. Windows in moulded architrave surrounds with glazing bars intact, those on ground floor with pediments over. Stone porch with Doric columns.

POYNINGS ROAD Barn to the north-west of Poynings Manor Farmhouse and north of the stables to the west of Poynings Manor Farmhouse. II 28.10.57

Long C18 building faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins, the east half of the first floor faced with tarred weather-boarding. Half-hipped tiled roof.

POYNINGS ROAD The Stables to the west of Poynings Manor Farmhouse II

The farmhouse is mid C19 and faced with flints. The Stables are C18 or earlier. Two storeys. Three windows. Stuccoed. Tiled roof. Casement windows.

THE STREET Glebe Cottage II

Probably C17. Two storeys. Two windows. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins. Slate roof. Casement windows. Extensions to east and west with pentice roofs. East gable end slate-hung.

THE STREET Oak Cottage II

L-shaped building attached to and behind Forge House on the north-west.

C17. Two-storeys. Two windows. Painted brick. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Gabled porch.

THE STREET **Forge House** II

C18. Two storeys. Two windows. Painted brick. Tiled roof. One bay on both floors. Glazing bars intact.

THE STREET **Numbers 1 and 2 Oak Cottages** II

Formerly a public house, now 2 cottages. No 1 was a purpose built public house of early to mid C19 date, no 2 a C17 or earlier timber-framed cottage. No 1 is stuccoed with incised lines to imitate masonry. Old tiled roof hipped to south with one external rendered chimneystack to north and large stack to south. 2 storeys and basement. First floor has one 6-pane sash with horns, ground floor has 2 canted bays with horned sashes and 4-panelled door approached up 4 cemented steps. No 2 is timber-framed, clad in red brick to ground floor and tile-hung above, with south wing of header bond brickwork. - Steeply-pitched hipped tiled roof. 2 storeys; 2 windows. Mainly C20 windows but one early C19 sliding casement to west front and 2 on north front. Plank doors to east and west. Interior has exposed frame with midrail and exposed floor joists, several plank doors including one 3-plank door of C17 date, early C19 basket grate and open fireplace with wooden bressumer and brackets.

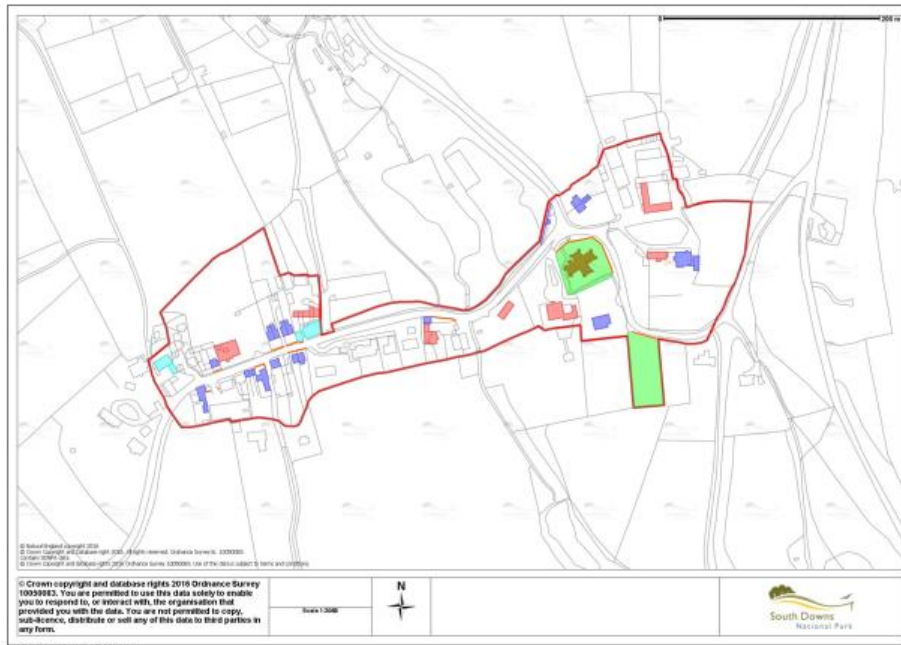
THE STREET **Dyke Farmhouse** II

C17 or earlier building with red brick infilling, south side refaced with roughcast, the east side with brick. Tiled roof. Modern casement windows. Two gables. Two storeyed modern projecting porch. Three storeys. Four windows.

Beyond the Conservation Area boundaries:

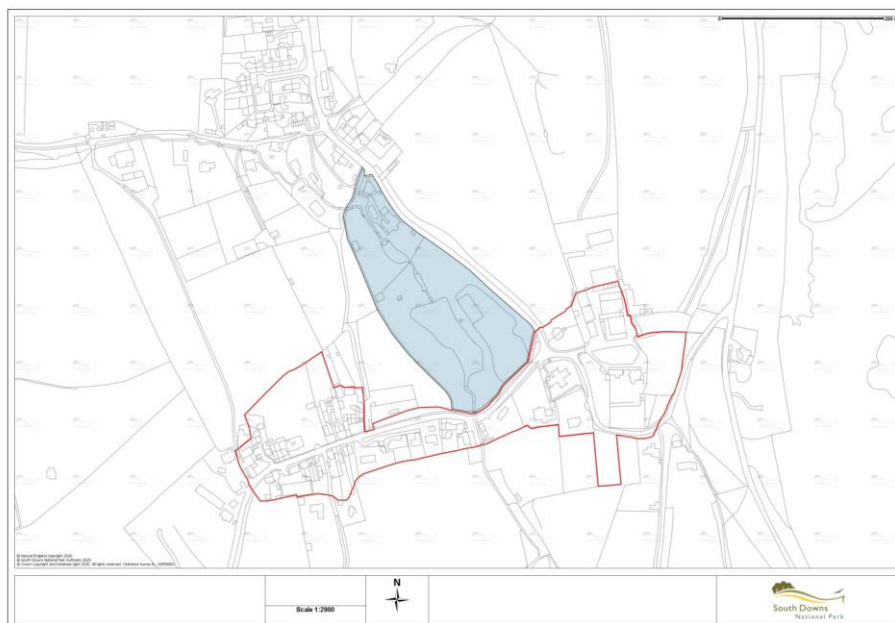
MILL LANE **Mill House** II

The date 1626 is written over the doorway. Two storeys. Two windows. Faced with flints with brick dressings and quoins, the whole now painted. Half-hipped tiled roof. Casement windows.



Proposals Map: Current Boundary
 Red – Listed Building; Blue – Building of Townscape Merit;
 Pale Blue – Potential Local Heritage List Entry; Green – Open Space

Proposals Map: Potential Boundary Extension
 Shown hatched in Blue



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