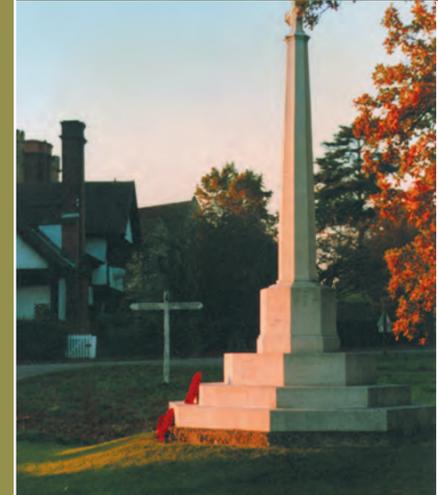
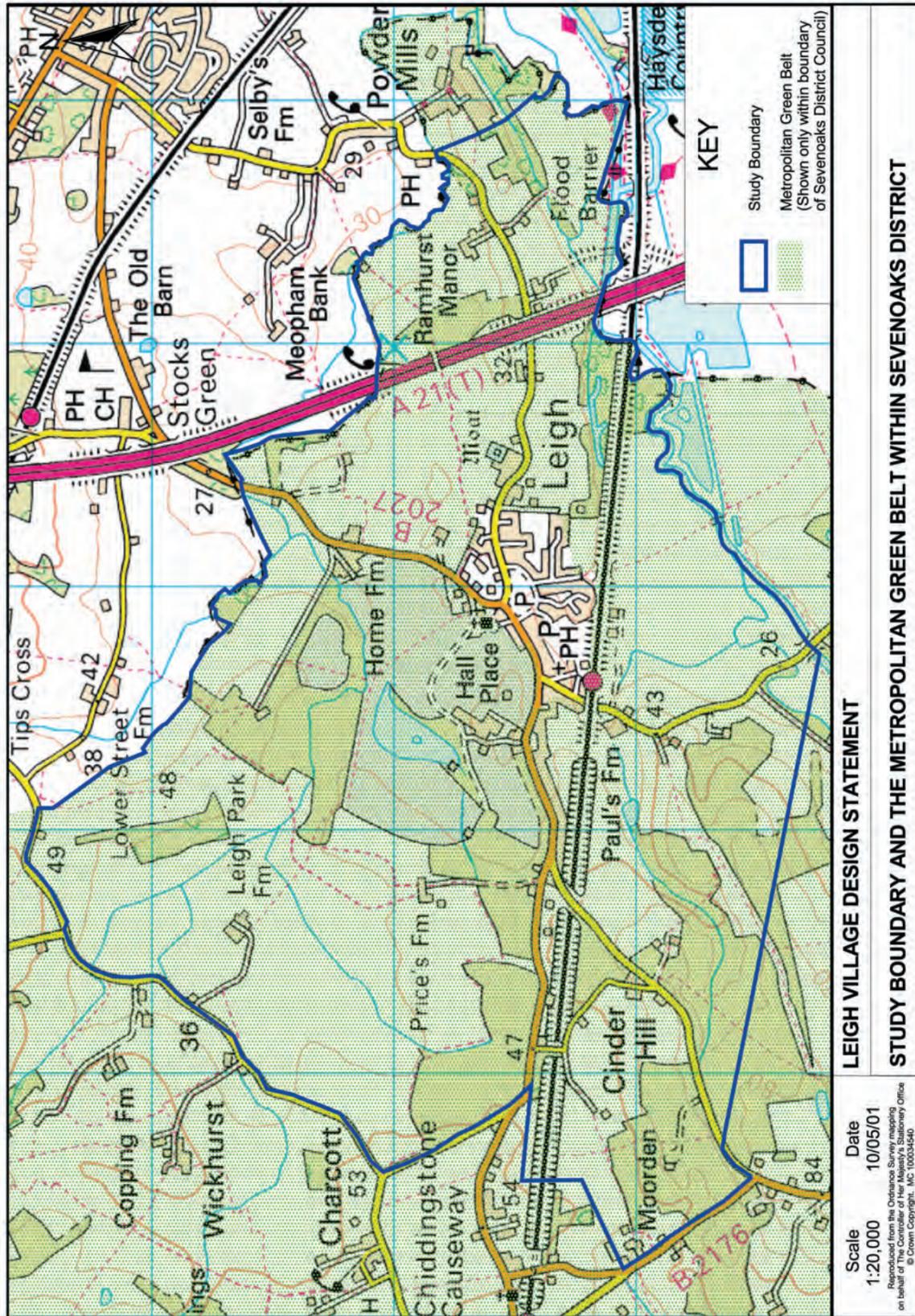


# Leigh

VILLAGE  
DESIGN  
STATEMENT





**THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE**

The committee comprised:

- David Forster (Chairman)
- Linda Boyd
- Chris Rowley
- Be'l Swallow
- Bernard De Saulles
- Morgen Witzel

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- Sevenoaks District Council
- Kent Rural Community Council

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- Kent Design
- Leigh Conservation Area Appraisal
- Kent County Council Strategic Planning Department
- Sevenoaks District Local Plan

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Footpaths	Chris Rowley
Ponds, Streams and Rivers	Peter Penn
Wildlife	Michael Robinson
Recreation and Open Spaces	David Sellicks
Village History	James Cook
Road Traffic	Morgen Witzel
Public Transport	John Knock
Tourism	Angela Weston

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Anna Rowley

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- Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Conservation Group
- The Countryside Commission
- Alison Cook, District Councillor

**For typing**

Shelley Phillips

*Front cover - top to bottom*

- Spring: cherry tree in blossom in front of Large Village Hall
- Summer: cricket on the Green with famous hollow oak tree and Oak Cottage in the background
- Autumn: the Village War Memorial on the Green
- Winter: St Marys Church and lychgate in the snow

*Back cover - top to bottom*

- Drawings for The Square, Leigh in 1889 by the original architects Ernest George & Peto.
- Hall Place in 1870, before its replacement by the current building.
- St Marys Church, an 1831 drawing by E.I. Carlos.

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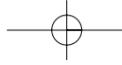
Design: Amanda Hawkes

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LEIGH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Old Lodge or  
The Pepperpot

## **1 THE PURPOSE OF A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

**1(1)** This Design Statement has been prepared to describe Leigh as it exists today, to draw attention to its particular design and other qualities which give the village its character and to give guidance on how future development, whether new build or alteration or extension to existing buildings, can best complement, enhance and harmonise with those characteristics. It is based on the views of the village residents, as expressed at three public meetings and in response to a questionnaire, together with information provided by nine groups of volunteers and drawn together by the Steering Group. Further details are given in the Appendix.

### **1(2) Who will use the Design Statement?**

The Statement is primarily for the use of:

- (a) Residents and owners of existing buildings in the village who want to alter, extend or change the use of their buildings.
- (b) The Parish Council, particularly when asked for their comments and recommendations on planning applications within the Statement Area.
- (c) The Local Planning Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.
- (d) Kent County Council as County Planning and Highway Authority.
- (e) Builders and developers and their designers wanting to carry out building works in the village and prospective residents interested in the future of the village.

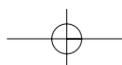
### **1(3) Using the Design Statement**

The Statement should be consulted whenever a new building in the village is being designed or any existing building is to be renovated, altered or extended. Its purpose is to assist and stimulate the design process by encouraging a survey of the relationship between the site and its surroundings and how the new building work may be made to fit comfortably with neighbouring buildings, in terms of design, the use of materials and landscaping.

### **1(4) What area is covered by the Design Statement**

The Parish of Leigh includes the hamlets of Charcott and Powder Mills, but for the purpose of this Statement they have been excluded as they are physically separate from the village of Leigh and have different needs and priorities. A map outlining the area covered is shown inside the front cover.

*left column (main pic) - East Lodge and entrance gate*  
*right column (top to bottom)*  
St Marys Church and Lychgate  
The School Masters House  
Forge Square  
The Square





# Introducing the Village

## 2 ITS HISTORY

- 2(1) Leigh (at various times spelt Lye or Lyghe and meaning a forest clearing) lies in the Weald of Kent to the south of the Sevenoaks Ridge and north of the River Medway.
- 2(2) Leigh is a small village in a rural environment close to a major London commuter railway and to the built up areas comprising Sevenoaks, Hildenborough and Tonbridge. It is however, still physically separated from all of these towns by open farmland and woods and retains a strong sense of its own separate identity.
- 2(3) Although its origins are difficult to determine, a hamlet existed by the latter part of the 11th century being part of the Lordship of Tonbridge and by the end of the 12th century it clearly had a significant population as three moated farmhouses date from this period.
- 2(4) In the 14th century the Parish Church was built and large areas of land surrounding the village were acquired by the owner of Penshurst Place, Sir John Pulteney. The estate passed from him to the Sidney family (originally the Earls of Leicester and later Viscounts de Lisle and Dudley) in 1533 and they retained ownership of the land around Leigh until the early 20th century when much of it was sold. Several houses in the village built by the family in the 19th century have plaques bearing the family crest of the Bear and Ragged Staff.
- 2(5) Three events in the 19th century changed the nature of the village, the first being the acquisition of Hall Place by the Baily family in 1820 and the second its purchase by the Morley family in 1870. Both families undertook substantial building works in the village employing talented architects, Charles Baily, George Devey, Ernest George and George Bodley, each of whom, by the use of local materials and distinctive vernacular design, gave the village many of its most distinguished buildings and design characteristics, including Hall Place, East and Old Lodges, The Square, Forge Square and the School Master's House.





- 2(6) The third significant event was the construction of the Tonbridge to Redhill railway in 1842 along the southern edge of the village. This not only brought an influx of new residents, but its embankment created a natural physical boundary effectively preventing any expansion of the village further south.
- 2(7) The original core of the village is designated as a Conservation Area which, in broad terms, extends from Park House and Kennards in the north east to the entrance lodge to Hall Place in the west and includes the area surrounding the Green, the Church and the area immediately to the south of it, the High Street and the land to the east of Kiln Lane. Within the Conservation Area are 49 Listed Buildings or structures.

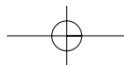
### 3 THE VILLAGE ECONOMY

- 3(1) Until the mid 20th century the predominant source of local employment was agriculture although the village also had a brickworks along with a number of shops and a forge. A large number of villagers were employed at the nearby cricket ball factories and gunpowder works and others at Hall Place.
- 3(2) Increased mechanisation resulted in a drastic reduction of agricultural jobs, and the closure of the other small industries has meant that traditional jobs have virtually disappeared. Most residents now commute to jobs in West Kent or London, but there is still some local employment in small light industrial estates outside the village, and an increasing number of self-employed people work from home.
- 3(3) The advent of large stores in nearby towns, and increased mobility due to car ownership, has resulted in the loss of most, but fortunately not all, of the village shops. Leigh still has a hairdressing salon, and its Post Office/General Stores provides a range of vital goods and services, and is highly valued by the residents. It also has two public houses, a garage and two small light industrial businesses.
- 3(4) Tourism plays a small but increasing part in the village economy, but there are relatively few self-catering and bed and breakfast facilities to meet the growing demand from tourists, particularly those using the Channel Tunnel.



Southdown House, formerly The Butcher's Shop

right · The Post Office and General Stores  
far right · The Old Bakery

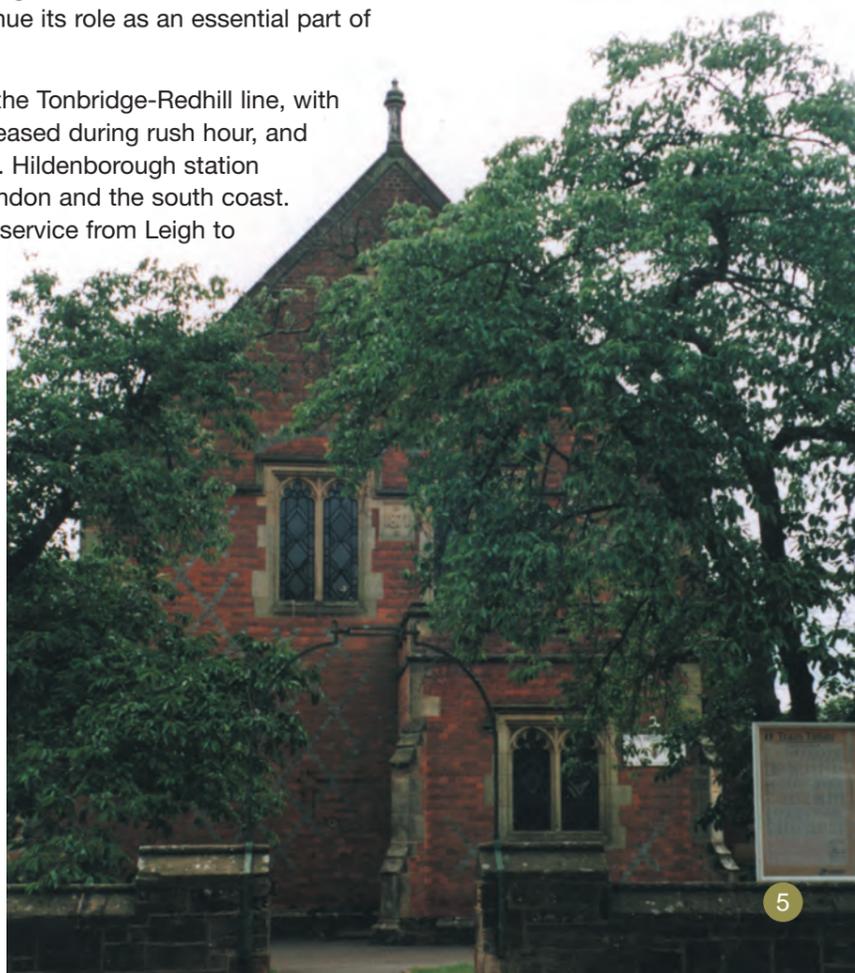


## 4 THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

- 4(1) One of the features most valued by residents and frequently referred to in their replies to the questionnaire is the feeling of community, derived not only from Leigh's physical separation from neighbouring towns and villages, but from a sense of history, tradition and continuity of the village's institutions.
- 4(2) In 1801 the village population was 739, rising to 1329 by 1901. This had further increased to about 1700 by 1999 and while in terms of numbers the increase is not dramatic, the modern family unit is much smaller than its Victorian counterpart and more than double the number of houses are now required to house the equivalent population. More than half the present stock of 669 houses has been built since 1945.
- 4(3) The village has a large variety of sporting, social, cultural and leisure groups and associations, including the Cricket Club which can trace its origins for over 300 years, the Produce Association, the Royal British Legion, and the Historical Society to name but a few. All these are well supported and contribute greatly to the sense of community. The playing of cricket on the Green is cited by many residents as an essential feature of Leigh.
- 4(4) The main venues for outdoor activities are the village Green and the Tennis Club off Lealands Avenue, while the Large and Small Village Halls accommodate most of the indoor activities. The Large Hall, originally built as a Congregational Church in 1872, is not particularly well suited to its modern role and is costly to maintain.
- 4(5) The village Primary School was built in 1870 to cater for a far smaller population than exists today. It is in urgent need of additional accommodation to enable it to continue its role as an essential part of the community.
- 4(6) Leigh has its own railway station on the Tonbridge-Redhill line, with an hourly daytime service, since increased during rush hour, and occasional direct services to London. Hildenborough station provides frequent fast services to London and the south coast. There is a regular but infrequent bus service from Leigh to Tonbridge, with a commuter service between Hildenborough station and Penshurst, but there is no direct access for the general public by bus to any of the local hospitals or to Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells.



Cricket on the Green



Northern aspect of the Large Village Hall

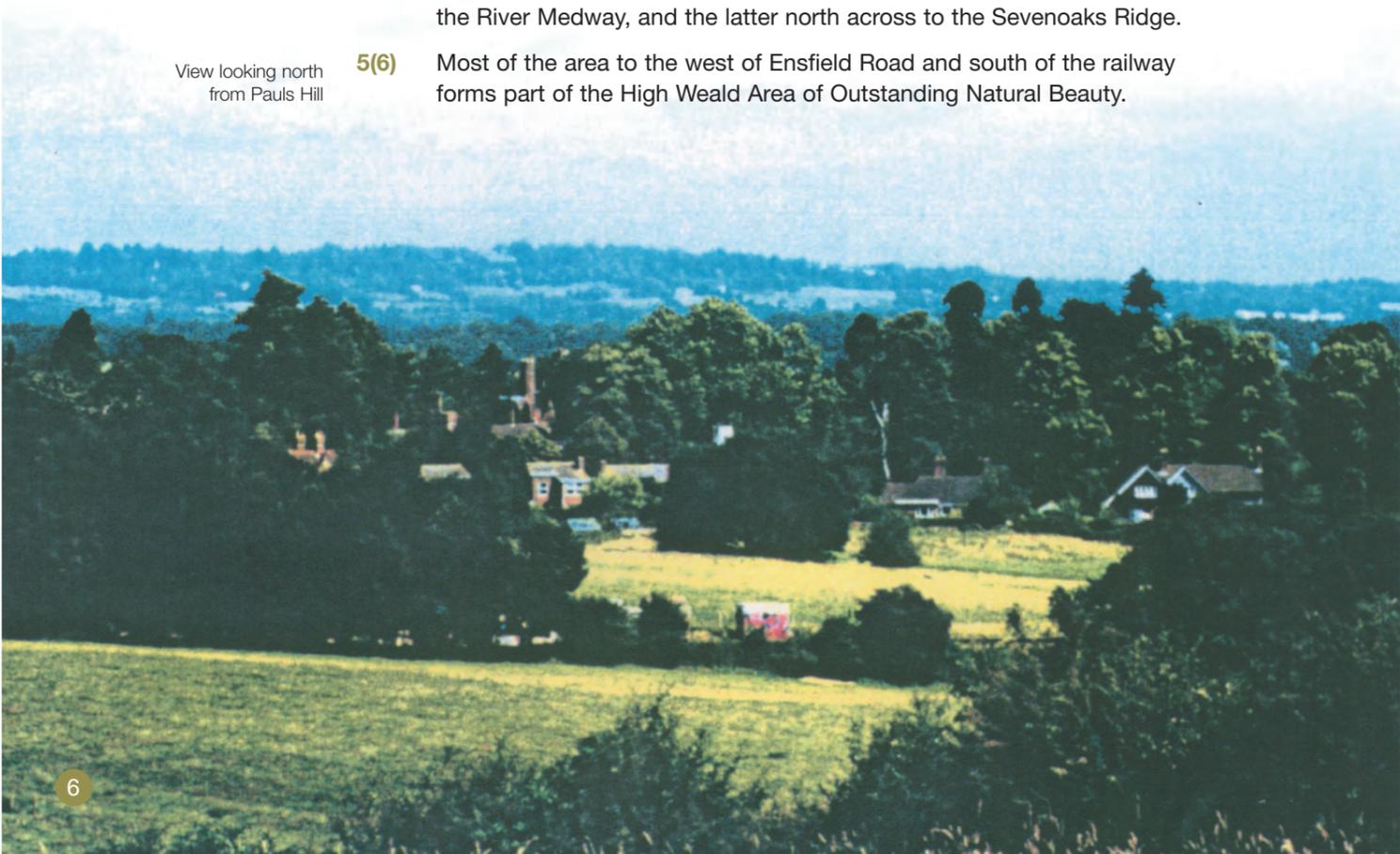


View looking south from Leigh Station

## 5 THE VILLAGE SETTING

- 5(1)** The River Medway and the railway form natural boundaries to the south of the village, while Hall Place and its Park have prevented any expansion to the north. The village has therefore extended along an east/west axis, principally on the south side of the B 2027, part of which is the village High Street, and to a lesser extent along Powder Mill Lane to the east of the Green. There has also been considerable residential development of the land lying between the Green and the railway embankment in the last 70 years.
- 5(2)** Open farmland lies to the north and east of Hall Place, while water meadows lie between the railway and the river. Since the building of the Tonbridge Flood Barrier in 1981 these are deliberately flooded in times of heavy rainfall, which also involves the closure of Ensfield Road ( to the south).
- 5(3)** At its western end, the village is enclosed by a number of separate woods most of which form part of the Hall Place, Redleaf and Penshurst Estates.
- 5(4)** The predominant subsoil is clay with an outcrop of ironstone in the area of Cinder Hill which, from Roman to Medieval times, was the subject of open cast mining, giving rise to the many small ponds which now feature in this area.
- 5(5)** The main focus of the village is the Green, which is in turn overlooked by St. Mary's Parish Church which stands on high ground to the north of it. The views from the Churchyard across the Green and from the Green across Forge Square towards the Church are most important to the village ambience. While the village centre is on fairly level ground, there are ridges of high ground running westwards from Paul's Hill and Cinder Hill, the former giving panoramic views across the valley towards the River Medway, and the latter north across to the Sevenoaks Ridge.
- 5(6)** Most of the area to the west of Ensfield Road and south of the railway forms part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

View looking north from Pauls Hill





## 6 HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

- 6(1) The High Street forms part of the B2027 which is the main east/west road from Tonbridge to Crockham Hill. In the village centre, Lower Green and Ensfield Road lead south to Tonbridge and Speldhurst, while at the eastern end of the Green, Powder Mill Lane leads to Hildenborough and at the western end of the village, Penshurst Road forks to the south west off the B2027 and leads to Penshurst.
- 6(2) All of these roads are subject to high and increasing volumes of traffic, particularly during rush hours, when vehicles travelling to and from Hildenborough Station pass through Leigh, often at high speed. A recent traffic survey showed more than two million traffic movements a year through the High Street.
- 6(3) Increasing use is being made of B2027 and Powder Mill Lane by heavy lorries causing excessive noise, exhaust pollution and vibration.
- 6(4) The only sections of road which have footways are the High Street, Lower Green, the eastern part of Penshurst Road, and the first part of Powdermill Lane. For the most part the remaining roads have neither footways nor suitable verges for pedestrian use, although it is necessary for pedestrians to use these roads as a means of access to some footpaths and to the village centre, particularly the residents of Home Farm Close.
- 6(5) The County Council forecast for traffic growth in this area is 20% by 2010 and 50% by 2025. In 1991 43% of households had two or more cars and this is predicted to increase significantly.
- 6(6) A row of parked cars usually lines the south side of the High Street. These perform an essential traffic calming function (as well as ensuring the viability of the Post Office/general store) and this practice should be allowed to continue.
- 6(7) The traffic issue is a matter of great concern to the residents, as it affects not only safety, but quality of life in the village. Equally corrosive to this quality of life is the noise from the increasing number of aircraft using Gatwick Airport.
- 6(8) The majority of respondents to the questionnaire were strongly opposed to the introduction of any form of street lighting.



Parked cars on south side of High Street

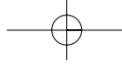
## 7 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS

- 7(1) Within the Statement area there are nine footpaths extending to some eight miles in length, all of which are well used, although none provide a direct connection to other villages, save that leading from Paul's Hill through Penshurst Park. It is necessary for pedestrians using some of these paths to walk along busy roads without footways in order to reach them.
- 7(2) There are no bridleways or cycleways within the area, although there are many horses stabled locally, and many cyclists, all of whom are forced to use the busy roads at considerable risk.



Heavy traffic in the High Street





Oak in Hall Place Park

## 8 TREES AND OPEN SPACES

**8(1)** Leigh is fortunate in having many varied and long established species of trees and two large and several small publicly used open spaces, which form an essential part of its setting as a village.

**8(2)** The Green, although used by the village from time immemorial, was never common land, being in the ownership of Hall Place whose owners donated it to the village in 1948 subject to several conditions, the most important being that no permanent structure may be erected on it. It is the home ground to the village cricket, football and stoolball teams, is used by the village School and is a centre for the village's celebration of national events. There are three open spaces adjoining the Green, including the relatively new entrance to Crandalls, and the grassed areas outside the Vicarage and adjoining East Lodge.

**8(3)** The Green's attraction is greatly enhanced by the oaks and horse chestnuts which surround it and in particular the ancient oak, probably some 300 years old, which stands in front of Barden Cottages. Set back from the Green, but still very much part of its setting, are the chestnuts around Southview and Forge Square, the pines adjoining the Church and to the west of the Green, and the hornbeams lining the eastern approach to the Church.

**8(4)** In the High Street, the two flowering cherries outside the Large Village Hall provide a magnificent blossom display in spring, while the row of lime trees on the south side of Penshurst Road leading towards Old Lodge provides an attractive feature on entering the village from the west. Hall Place Park contains many fine trees, some of which form a backdrop to the village High Street and the Church.

**8(5)** The second large open space in public use is the playing field at the end of Lealands Avenue, part of which is leased to the Tennis Club, with the remainder being a sports field for the Primary School. Its use is, however, much restricted by poor drainage which often leaves it waterlogged. This field is the village's only viable option for additional recreational space and, unlike the Green, can be enclosed. Its preservation as an open space is therefore very important.



Cherry trees in blossom outside Village Halls

*right* · View across The Green to the north

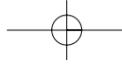
*below* · Avenue of limes in High Street



**8(6)** There are several smaller open spaces away from the Green which not only enhance the village setting but provide additional 'green lungs' in the village centre, including the Forstall, the central area at Garden Cottages, the allotments to the west of Lower Green and behind Garden Cottages, and the former burial ground at the rear of the village halls.

*right* · The lake at Hall Place



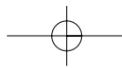


## 9 PONDS, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLAND

- 9(1) There are only three surviving ponds in the village centre, two of which are in the area of Well Close and the third at Grandalls, and none of them are well maintained. Many other ponds have over the years been filled in or have silted up.
- 9(2) Other notable ponds in the village are those at Old Kennards, Leigh Park Farm and Moat Farm, all of which are remnants of medieval moats.
- 9(3) Ponds provide important habitat for many small creatures and their preservation is important to the ecology of the area as well as enhancing the landscape.
- 9(4) There are still a considerable number of ancient hedgerows flanking the roads or dividing fields, although many are lacking regular maintenance. With increasing mechanisation of farming methods many other old hedgerows have been lost and it is important that those that remain are preserved to provide important wildlife habitat and variety to the landscape.
- 9(5) As well as a number of small coppices and shaws, two dense areas of woodland partly enclose the village. The first consists of four woods to the north and west of Hall Place and the second comprises five woods in or abutting Penshurst Park. All these woodlands contain a rich variety of conifer, hardwood and coppice trees and all are bluebell woods. They contribute to a varied and interesting skyline and provide important wildlife habitat. Many of the residents have commented on their particular enjoyment of the bluebell woods.

## 10 WILDLIFE

- 10(1) The area is notable for a rich variety of wildlife which survives despite increasing loss of habitat, dangers from road traffic and pollution.
- 10(2) Particularly important are Hall Place lake and the wet land between the railway embankment and Hollowtrees Drive, which provide habitat to a variety of aquatic birds and mammals, both in summer and winter.
- 10(3) Several herds of fallow deer range the area round Penshurst Park, Redleaf and Blackhoath woods, and otters are being reintroduced to the River Medway. Among smaller mammals, foxes, mink and rabbits are numerous and there are several badger setts.





## 11 THE VILLAGE BUILDINGS

11 (1) Most of the village buildings belong to one of three main groups. The timber framed buildings dating back to the 16th century or earlier, the brick built and decorated buildings of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and those buildings built in the remainder of the 20th century.

### 11(2) The timber framed buildings

A fair number of these buildings still survive in Leigh, mostly grouped around the Green or in the High Street, but there are also some fine examples among the old farmhouses on the outer fringes of the village, notably Paul's Farm, Great Barnetts, Old Kennards and Ramhurst.



11(3) These buildings are of traditional design with oak framing, infilled with wattle and daub or lath and plaster and mostly painted white. The outer walls have in some cases been encased in local red brick at a later date either up to roof level or at ground floor only with either tile hung or weatherboarded upper floors. Window shapes are mostly horizontal although in some of the larger houses sash windows with more vertical proportions have been introduced. The roofs generally have a steep pitch and some have half hipped gable ends. The roof covering is normally hand-made clay peg tiles.



### 11(4) Buildings of the 19th and early 20th Centuries

Belonging to this period are those buildings which give Leigh its distinctive architectural character, and most were designed by one of the four eminent Victorian architects employed by the Baily and Morley families. Although each has its own particular merits, they share one or more of a number of design features. The walls are of mellow red local brick with elaborate diaper designs incorporated by the use of blue headers. The chimneys are tall with the brickwork often repeating the patterns of the walls and having several corbelled brick courses at the top to give an enlarged platform topped by a number of chimney pots.

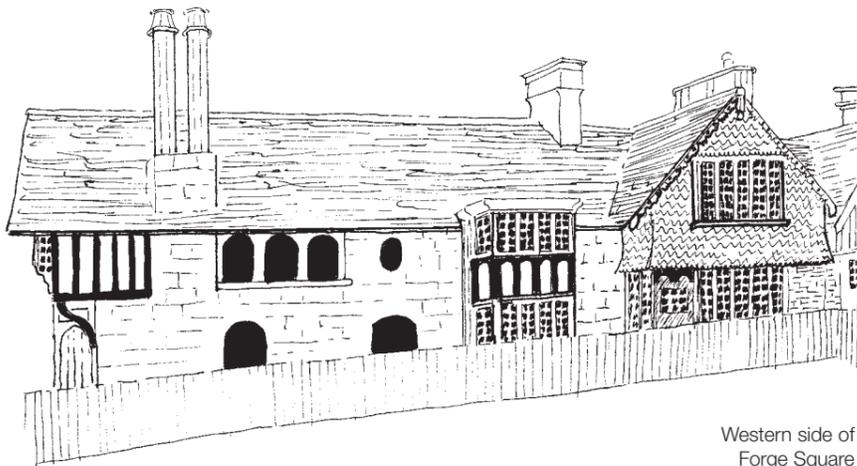
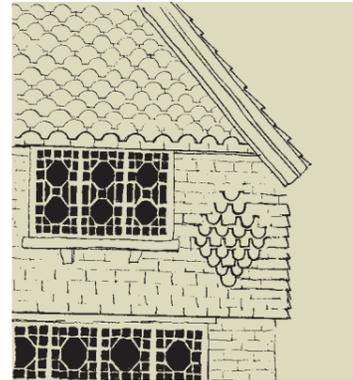


top to bottom  
Old Chimneys  
Pauls Farm  
Elizabeth Cottage  
Orchard House  
Porcupine House

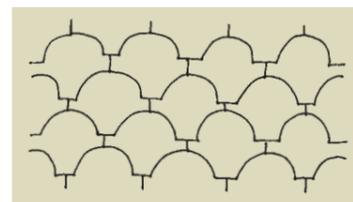
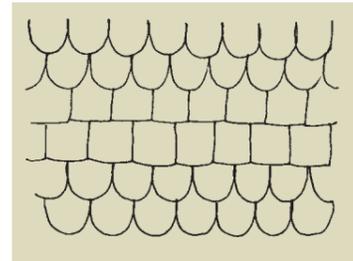




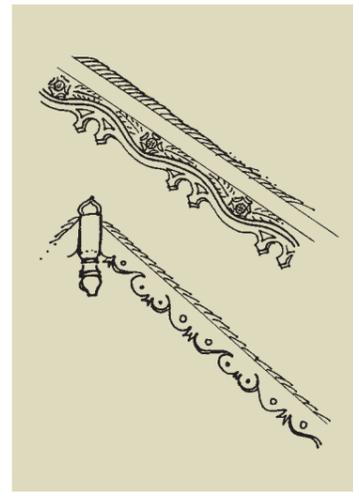
**11(5)** Frequently the upper floor is tile hung using clay tiles and, again, elaborate designs are often included by the use of fish scale and diamond-shaped tiles or darker tiles to pick out the design. Some of the buildings have base courses or quoins in local stone. Others have dentilling, with projecting alternative headers at the base of the first floor, particularly where the first floor is tile hung or weatherboarded. Some are built entirely of stone and others have half-timbered upper floors with patterned timbering and colour-washed infill. Several have elaborately carved and decorated bargeboards and timbered bay windows, some have jetted first floors and others are hung with wooden shingles. The roofs are covered in clay tiles, occasionally with patterning or, less frequently, with grey slates.



Western side of Forge Square

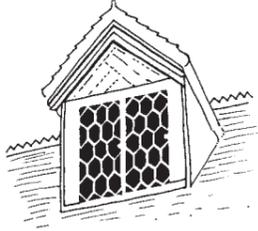


Door in Hall Place park wall

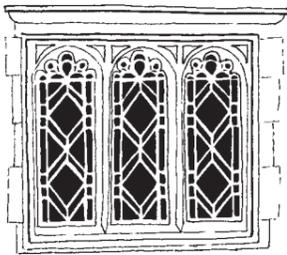


below  
Panorama of High Street

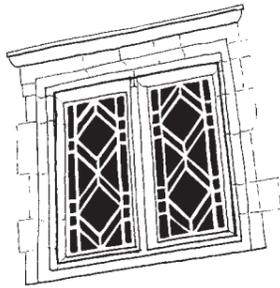
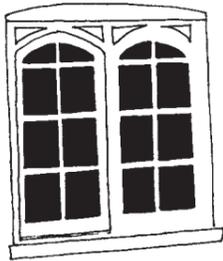




**11(6)** The windows show a wide variety of design and shape. Some are gothic with stone mullion frames, others are horizontal in shape, but it is the glazing patterns that show most variation and give the buildings particular distinction.



**11(7)** Also dating from this period are the Oasthouses which, with their roundels, conical roofs and distinctive white cowls, epitomise for many the Kentish landscape. There are six oasts within the Statement area and four of these (at Ramhurst, Moat Farm, Paul's Farm and Cinder Hill) are now converted to residential use, whilst the unconverted oasts at Leigh Park Farm and Moorden Farm are in urgent need of repair. The oasts, brick built in a variety of bricklaying bonds, usually consist of a rectangular barn of two floors with one or two roundels attached. The roundels have a dentilling course below the eaves and are roofed in special tapering clay tiles, sometimes with banding in darker shades and topped with a revolving white cowl. These are particularly attractive buildings which add much to the character of the local landscape.



**11(8)** There are several other buildings or groups of buildings within the village which, while not typical of other types of building in the period, nonetheless add much to the character of the village by their own individuality. These include two of the lodges to Hall Place, East Lodge and Old Lodge, which both pre-date the present Hall Place, and are remarkable both for their highly individual designs (Old Lodge is known locally as The Pepperpot) and for their heavy blue brick diaper patterning which is also repeated in the Park wall which runs along the north side of the High Street and adds greatly to its character. Equally unusual are the two octagonal buildings behind the Village Halls designed by George Devey to house the pump and filtration system for the Hall Place water supply, both of which are now converted to residential use. Adjoining Pump Cottage in the High Street is the old village pump house, now with its pump and trough reinstated. Finally, belonging to the Edwardian period, is the close development known as Garden Cottages which is a good example of the Arts and Crafts Movement vernacular design, comprising a number of semi-detached cottages grouped around a small central green.





**11(9) The later 20th century buildings**

The houses of this period do not conform to any overall design pattern and are generally of more simple lines with little or no brick decoration. They are for the most part built of varying shades of red or brown brick with clay or concrete tile roofs. Some have their upper floors either tile hung or rendered with a colour wash, mainly in cream or white, and window sizes are generally bigger with larger window panes. The houses built along the south side of Penshurst Road are generally set well back from the road with front gardens and have sufficient diversity of design and roofline to avoid the appearance of ribbon development.

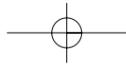
**11(10)** To the east of the Green, along Powdermill Lane, and to the south of the Green, a number of closes or cul-de-sac developments have taken place since the last War which, because of the use of repetitive pattern-book designs, insufficient variation in roof height and pitch, or being built at too great a density and with poor landscaping, do not blend harmoniously with their surroundings.

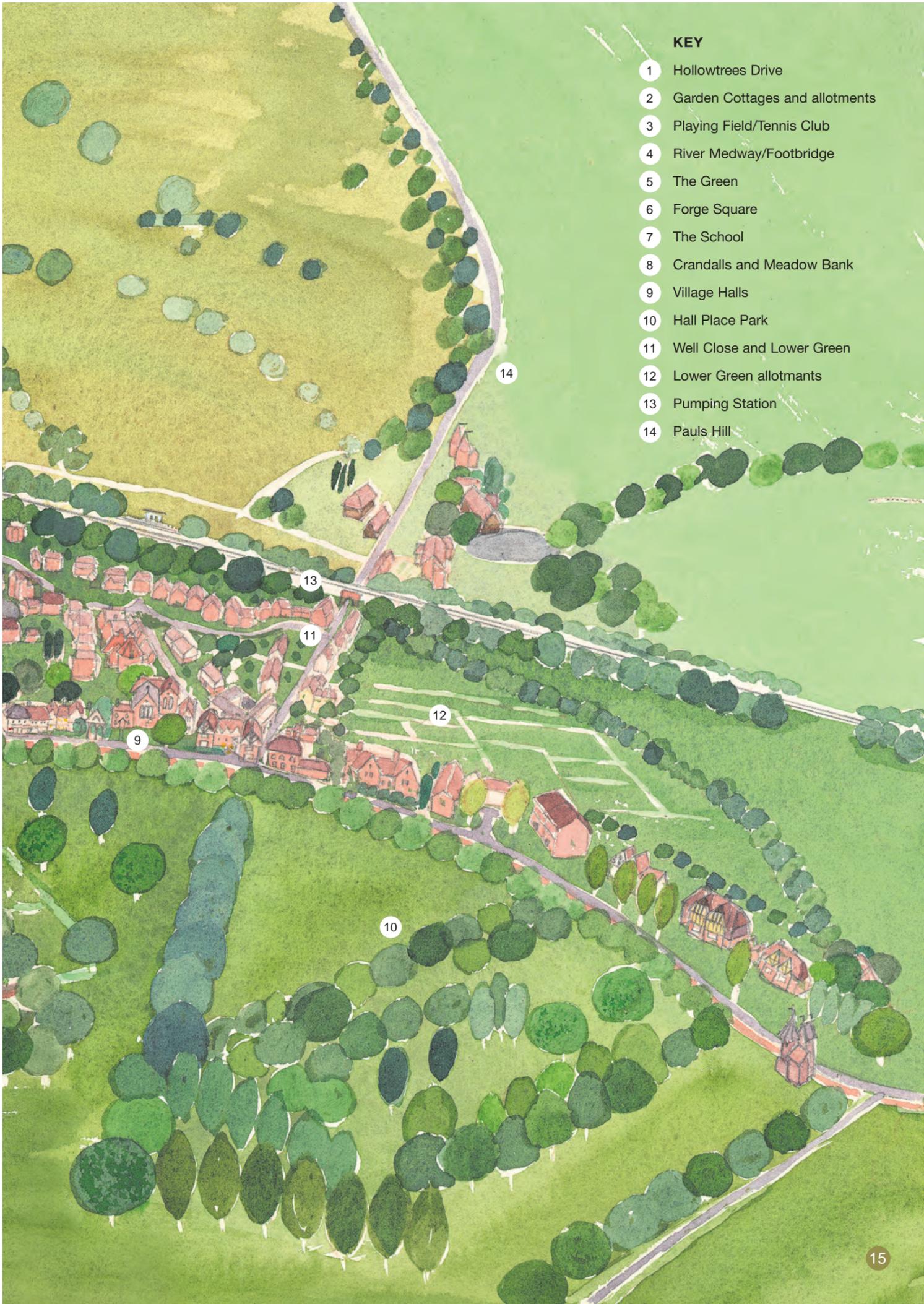
**11(11) Farm building conversions**

Three groups of redundant farm buildings at Great Barnetts, Moorden and Home Farm have been the subject of successful courtyard conversions to multiple residential use. By retaining the original structure and respecting the character of these old farm buildings, coupled with landscaping, the change of use has had only minimal impact on the surrounding buildings and countryside.



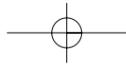
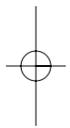
*top left* · Garden Cottages  
*top right* · The Pump House  
*right* · An example of repetitive design

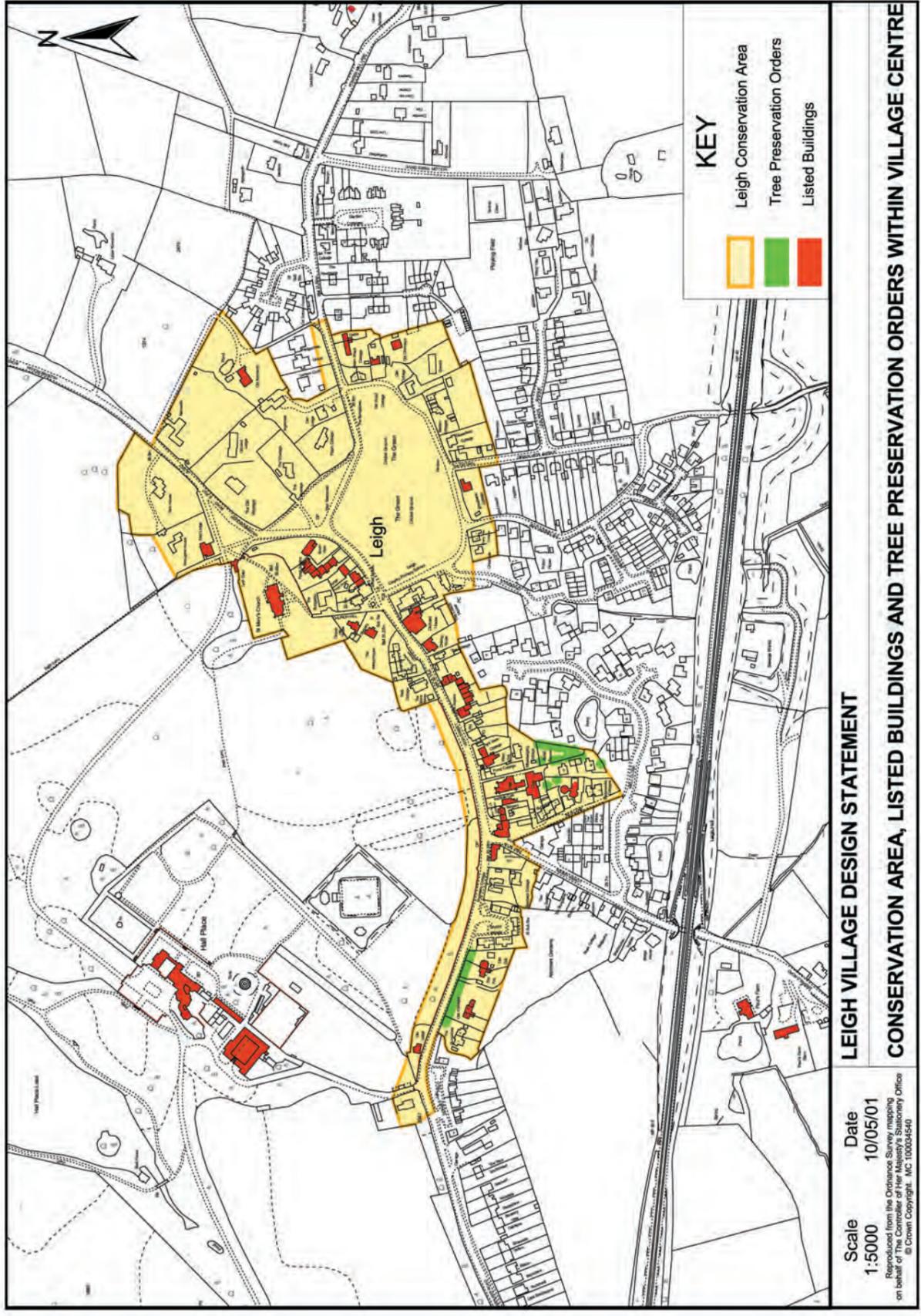
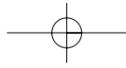
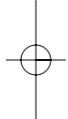




**KEY**

- 1 Hollowtrees Drive
- 2 Garden Cottages and allotments
- 3 Playing Field/Tennis Club
- 4 River Medway/Footbridge
- 5 The Green
- 6 Forge Square
- 7 The School
- 8 Crandalls and Meadow Bank
- 9 Village Halls
- 10 Hall Place Park
- 11 Well Close and Lower Green
- 12 Lower Green allotments
- 13 Pumping Station
- 14 Pauls Hill





# The Village in the Future

This Design Statement is intended to help manage future development in the village and, to that end, the following recommendations and guidelines are made.

## Recommendations

### **12 THE CONSERVATION AREA**

- 12(1)** The Conservation Area should be extended to include the whole of Hall Place and its Park, the remaining area to the west of the footpath leading to Old Kennards, the remaining buildings on the west side of Lower Green down to Budgens, the garden area to the rear of Chilling House and the grassed area and recycling bin area at the entrance to Crandalls which form part of the setting to the Green. Most of these have been recommended in Sevenoaks District Council's recent Conservation Area Appraisal. The Appraisal also identifies four buildings on or near the Green, including the Iron Room, as detracting from its appearance, an opinion supported by the majority of residents.

### **13 NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- 13(1)** Leigh is within the 'Actual Flood Plain' as shown in the District Council's Local Plan 2000. This means that any further development within or around the village might well be considered inadvisable by the Environment Agency. Additionally, it is understood that the local Southern Water pumping station below Leigh Halt is already at or near capacity.
- 13(2)** Leigh is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and existing Green Belt policies will continue to apply, ensuring that any future development is either contained within the existing village envelope or complies with the strict restraints imposed by this designation. This is particularly relevant in the case of the land immediately to the east of Hollowtrees Drive and the grass verge within Hollowtrees Drive itself which, although within the Green Belt, has already come under pressure for development. The playing field referred to in para 8(5) is also vulnerable to development pressures having been excluded from the Green Belt when it was earmarked as the site for a new Village School. Now it is no longer required for that purpose it should be returned to the Green Belt to ensure its long term protection as a valuable open space.

LEIGH VILLAGE SETTLEMENT

- 13(3)** Pursuant to the Rural Settlement Policies of the Kent Structure Plan, Leigh is defined in Policy H10A of the Sevenoaks Local Plan as a Category A Settlement, and it should remain as such. These policies provide the framework for future development in Leigh, and their effect is to limit residential development to minor development (usually no more than four dwellings on a site) or redevelopment such as infilling, and to require the best use of land without harming the existing character, with high standards of design and external detail. Any further development within the village envelope should be achieved whenever possible by infilling (at a density which reflects the spatial elements of surrounding buildings), by conversion of larger buildings to smaller units and by conversion of redundant farm buildings. Off-street parking should be provided whenever practicable.
- 13(4)** Leigh is unsuitable for any further large scale development as, apart from the shortage of suitable sites, its infrastructure is already under pressure. Of the total housing stock built since the last War, half has been added since 1985. The resulting population growth is putting great pressure on amenities, running contrary to Objective (iii) of the Local Plan (Population and Housing) policy.
- 13(5)** Minor development or infilling proposals offering well-designed affordable or low-cost housing for local residents should be regarded favourably, as there is a need for such accommodation for both young people and the elderly, to ensure that the village retains a good age and social mix.

#### **14 LOCAL BUSINESS**

- 14(1)** The establishment of new small businesses within or close to the village should be encouraged where they will either create local employment or serve the community, without materially adding to local traffic or noise pollution. In particular, the conversions of redundant farm buildings or the subdivision of existing commercial premises into small business units should be considered favourably, subject to the provision of adequate off-street parking and landscaping.
- 14(2)** Any proposed development which offers more retail space would be welcome, particularly for businesses which would not compete with the surviving retail businesses in the village. Equally, any proposal the main purpose of which is to enhance the viability of any existing retail business should be considered sympathetically.
- 14(3)** There is a need for additional holiday accommodation, and appropriate supporting amenities, to cater for the increasing tourist demand, and again, proposals for change of use of existing buildings for these purposes should be considered sympathetically.

#### **15 TRAFFIC**

- 15(1)** In the light of the predictions for traffic growth referred to in para. 6(5); when considering any application for additional building, account needs to be taken of the likely increase in traffic movement which would be generated and whether sufficient off-street parking is being provided.

- 15(2)** Traffic calming measures are required in the village centre, but only if these can be achieved without the use of unsightly sodium lighting or street furniture. Whilst, for this reason, parking on the south side of the High Street between the School and Lower Green should not be restricted, measures are required to restrict parking on the north side of the High Street, adjacent to the junction with Powdermill Lane and in Powdermill Lane itself adjacent to this junction, as this creates significant traffic hazards.
- 15(3)** Care should be taken to ensure that there is no proliferation of unnecessary road signs and street furniture, and that those that are erected are of a design and in materials appropriate to their setting in the village.
- 15(4)** The impact of such things as new public seating, new noticeboards and in particular, new paving on their immediate surrounding needs careful consideration.

## **16 PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

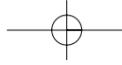
- 16(1)** Existing Bus services should be maintained and developed so as to provide transport to Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells from the village.
- 16(2)** Any proposal which might result in the loss or reduction of the existing rail service to Leigh should be strongly opposed. In particular the proposed 24 hour rail freight service would not only seriously reduce the existing service but would also create serious noise pollution and loss of amenity, affecting a large part of the village.

## **17 HALL PLACE**

- 17** Hall Place has for centuries provided an essential bulwark protecting the north side of the village. It is recognised that at some future date it may become impractical for it to continue as a single private residence and application may be made for change of its use to flats or a commercial use. In that event, it would be important to protect the character of this listed building, and enhance the amenities of the village, by ensuring that:-
  - (a) The exterior of the main building and stable yard are preserved and that changes to the interior do not result in the loss of any important period feature.
  - (b) No separate permanent or temporary buildings are erected in the grounds other than well-designed and harmonious extensions to the existing buildings.
  - (c) The Park, the Lake and their flora and fauna are protected by an appropriate planning designation supported by Tree Preservation Orders on all visually significant trees, to ensure that the landscape and design of the Park will be preserved and maintained.
  - (d) New footpaths and bridleways are created to allow public access through the Park.



right · Hall Place



top · The school playing field requiring drainage

above · Allotments in Lower Green

right · The unsightly recycling bins in Crandalls

## 18 **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- 18(1)** It is important that community facilities are maintained and extended to keep pace with population increase. The Village Primary School requires additional accommodation to a design which will complement and harmonise with the existing buildings and the Green. Any proposal to resite the School away from the village centre should be resisted.
- 18(2)** The Primary School playing field in Lealands Avenue requires the provision of field drainage to enable it to be used at all times, not only by the School, but for a wide variety of other activities. Local opinion is strongly opposed to any use of this field for any purpose other than sport and recreation. A reasonably central site is required for an enclosed children's playground, and as this cannot be provided on the Green, this field might provide a suitable site for this. Alternatively, or additionally, it may be possible to provide smaller safe-play areas in some or all of the larger housing concentrations.
- 18(3)** The setting of the Green would be greatly improved by appropriate screening for or resiting of the recycling bins at the Crandalls entrance.
- 18(4)** No street lighting should be installed in the village centre and the use of floodlighting restricted as far as possible to minimise light pollution.
- 18(5)** The allotments at Lower Green and Garden Cottages should be preserved as such as they play an important role as recreational space and green lungs.



## 19 **LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

**19** Conservation policies should include the preservation and maintenance of:

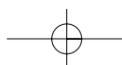
- (1) The trees in the centre of the village, particularly those of significant visual importance, including those referred to on the opposite page.
- (2) The remaining hedgerows and boundary trees both in fields and on road verges.
- (3) The existing woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitats, particularly, but not exclusively, the two areas referred to in para. 10(2).

The existing open spaces referred to in para. 8.

The ponds referred to in para. 9 and all existing ditches and culverts.

The views referred to in the box on page 21.

Objective 10 of Kent Design stresses the need to create and preserve open space and wildlife habitats, and Principle 3.5 recommends the involvement of the local community in the long term maintenance of areas such as woodlands, nature reserves and ponds. In Leigh there are a number of areas where existing trees are of particular importance both to the community and as part of the village setting and any change must be considered with the utmost care.





above · Water meadows looking south from Leigh Station

**Views and Trees which need to be preserved**

- the view from the south and east of the Green towards the Church and War Memorial
- the view of Oak Cottage and Old Chimneys with the old oak tree from the north side of the Green
- the view of the Church and East Lodge, particularly with the spring flowers from adjoining Porcupine House
- the view from Porcupine House looking south
- the view of Hall Place park and lake, beautiful in all seasons and from all angles
- the many lone oak trees in the fields
- the stand of Wellingtonias in the woods southwest of the village, a major local landmark from both north and south of the village
- the avenue of plane trees along the footpath west of Paul's Hill
- the view from Paul's Hill or railway over the Medway and its water meadows
- the view from Price's Farm towards Wickhurst and the Sevenoaks Ridge
- the row of lime trees in Penshurst Road from Old Lodge
- view from Leigh station looking south east

below · St Marys Church showing the well-designed Genner Room extension

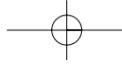


left · Pauls Cottage and Pauls Hill Oast



below · The well-known oak on The Green





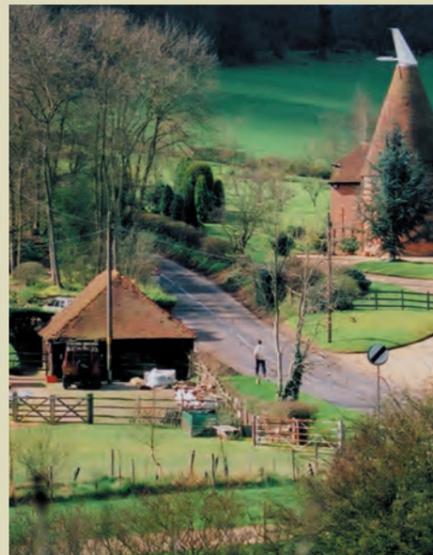
Splay stile on walk to Penshurst

## 20 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS

- 20(1)** Additional footpaths are required both as extensions to link existing paths, and as roadside paths to enable pedestrians to use roadways in safety. An example of the former is the need for additional sections of path to link up the existing northern riverbank paths beside the Medway in order to complete the riverside walk. Most urgent of the latter is to create a new surfaced path to link Home Farm Close to the village centre. Principle 7.10 of Kent Design stresses the importance of providing pedestrian and cycle links between new developments and existing local facilities. A map showing some suggested extensions and additions is included at the back.
- 20(2)** There is a need to designate new bridleways and cycleways in the Statement area, as none exist at present, and the many riders and cyclists are forced to use the busy roads.
- 20(3)** Any proposals to close existing rights of way should be resisted and diversion orders only made where strong grounds exist to justify them.

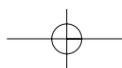


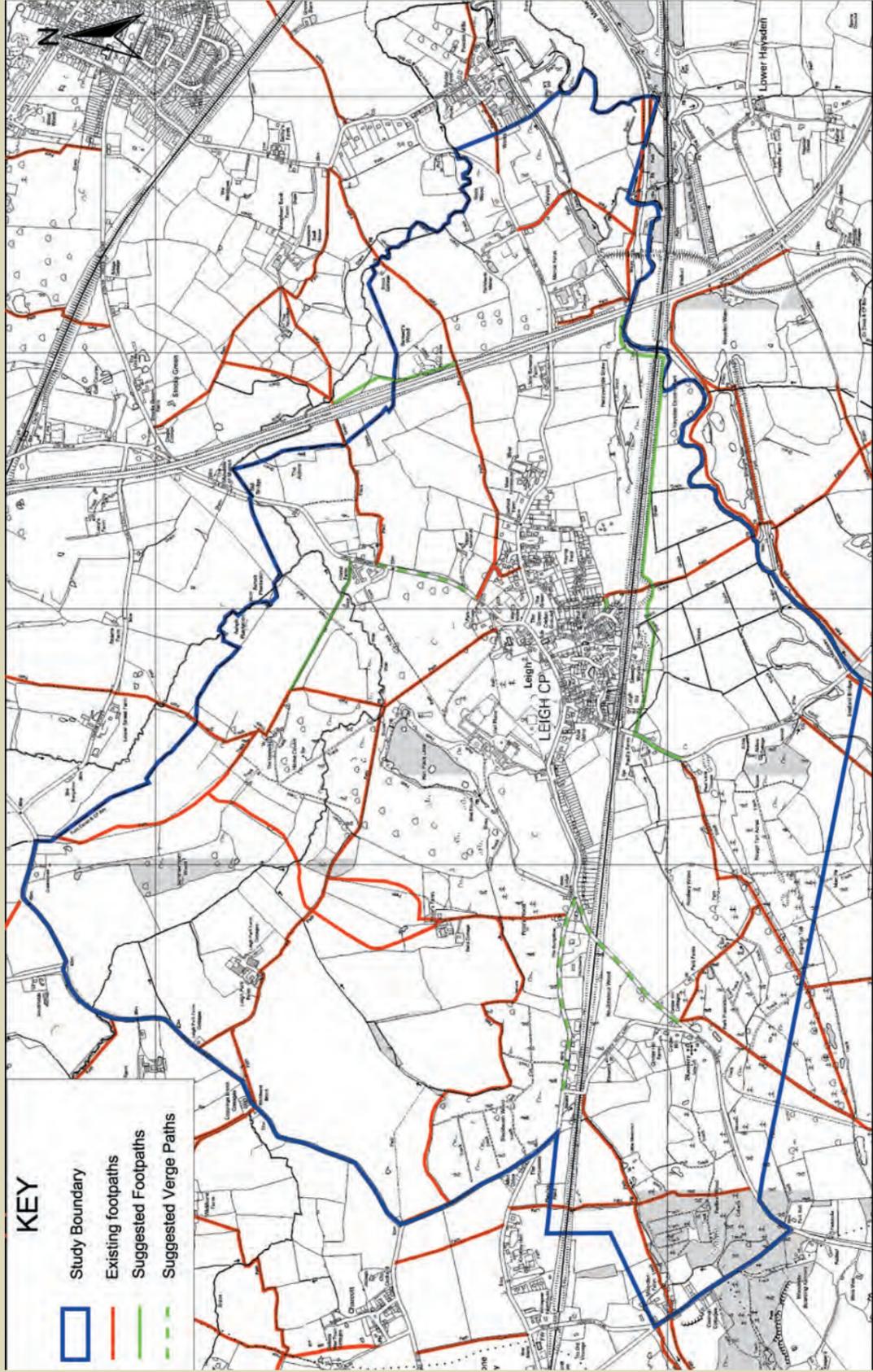
*right* · Connecting footpaths along the Medway would be useful



*far right* · Pauls Hill where a new footpath is needed

*below* · The Medway valley where new footpaths are recommended

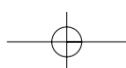
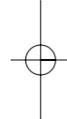




**LEIGH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND FOOTPATHS**

Scale 1:20,000 Date 10/05/01  
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## Guidelines for buildings

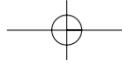
Whilst the following guidelines are of general application, they are of particular importance when dealing with a site within the Conservation Area or with any Listed Building. They mirror, in large part, Principles 9 and 10 in Kent Design.

### **21 NEW BUILDINGS**

- 21(1)** These should be designed in a style which harmonises with their immediate neighbours, in form, size and materials. (Principle 9 of Kent Design)
- 21(2)** When a group of buildings is proposed, standard 'estate' designs should be avoided, and a mixture of designs adopted to provide a range of house sizes with adequate off-street parking.
- 21(3)** Careful consideration must be given to the siting of each new building to ensure that it has adequate space, does not appear cramped when viewed in conjunction with its neighbours, and does not breach any existing building line, or impede any of the listed views.
- 21(4)** New garages should, whenever possible, be sited behind the front wall of the house. Blocks of garages should be avoided.
- 21(5)** Designs should embody similar brick colouring and sufficient features from neighbouring properties to give the effect of continuity.
- 21(6)** The use of local red brick with blue brick patterning is traditional in the village both for house and boundary walls. White painted, wooden clapboarding, clay tile hanging and unpainted wood shingle cladding are also traditional. These materials/treatments should therefore be used wherever possible.

### **22 EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS**

- 22(1)** Local Plan policy H6B – raising required standards of design and external appearance for extensions in or adjacent to Conservation Areas – must be observed.
- 22(2)** Existing period buildings of whatever size need to be preserved, whether or not they are listed, and their demolition in whole or part should not be permitted without strong justification. Preservation of period features both internally and externally is equally important.
- 22(3)** Chimneys should be kept in repair, and not shortened or demolished as this can spoil the symmetry of a group of buildings, and also distort the appearance of a single building. For the same reason it is important that the revolving cowls on converted oast houses are preserved and maintained.



- 22(4)** Extensions should be in matching materials and design to the main building and also be kept in proportion to it.
- 22(5)** Roofs should similarly be in matching materials to those on the main roof and have a similar pitch.
- 22(6)** Windows and doors should match the style, proportions, positioning and detail of those in the main building and be constructed of the same materials with similar glazing patterns. Double glazing should be installed in as sympathetic a style as possible.
- 22(7)** Original external decorative features on the main building should be repeated in the extension.

## **23 ROOFS**

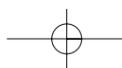
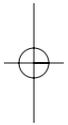
The majority of roofs in the village are covered in clay tiles or grey slates. When use of roof space requires roof windows, these should where possible be sited in the gable walls. Otherwise dormer windows in scale with the remaining windows and of similar pattern are preferable to rooflights, which should only be used on rear roof slopes. Roof pitches should match those of neighbouring properties.

## **24 GARDENS AND LANDSCAPING**

New buildings should whenever possible have sufficient space to provide a garden area. Landscaping should respect that of neighbouring properties. Front gardens in the village are generally enclosed. Avoid large areas of tarmacadam. Use of shingle or paving setts is preferable.

## **25 BOUNDARY WALLS, FENCES AND HEDGES**

Where possible, have regard to the type of front boundary enclosure used by adjoining properties and select a similar type of enclosure. Low walls, iron railings, picket fences and hedges are all used in Leigh. Hedges should be of indigenous hedging plants such as hawthorn, beech, holly or yew.



## **26 FEATURES TO AVOID**

The following building designs and features are not considered to be suitable for use in either new buildings or altered or extended buildings in Leigh:-

- a) Flat roofs
- b) Garages in front of building line
- c) Buildings which significantly exceed the height and scale of neighbouring properties, or (in the case of extensions) the original building
- d) Large buildings on small sites, without adequate garden or landscaping
- e) Use of yellow, bright red or multicoloured bricks, synthetic stone or brick finishes
- f) Use of concrete, multicoloured, or composition roof and wall tiles
- g) Use of cement or pebbledash rendering, except on extensions to an existing building so treated
- h) Badly designed, overlarge or otherwise incongruous windows. Window design is most important and should, where possible, reflect one of the wide variety of window shapes and glazing patterns found in the village
- i) Planting of coniferous hedges on front boundaries. Cupressus Leylandii are considered particularly unsuitable, as is wooden woven panel fencing
- j) The use of raised or coloured pointing on house or boundary walls
- k) The use of solar panels or satellite dishes on front elevations.

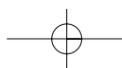
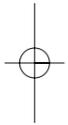


## **27 MAKING USE OF THIS STATEMENT**

If you are proposing to extend or alter the exterior of your property or build a new property in Leigh, the following points may assist you to make sure that your proposed design takes account of the points made in this Statement:

1. Look at the front of the property from some distance and from any other angle from which the new building work will be seen by others.
2. Check whether the new work will obstruct or interfere with a well-regarded view, including those on page 21.
3. Make a note of those features which make the property distinctive or help it to blend with its neighbours. Does the new work reflect these features?
4. Look at the roof line of the proposed new building. Does it have the same pitch as the original building? Do the new tiles match the old?
5. Look at the windows. Are they the same size as those in the original building with matching glazing patterns?
6. Are the bricks to be used of the same colour as the original and is any brick decoration in the original repeated in the new?
7. Will there still be adequate space between your property when extended and its neighbours? Will it block light to your neighbours' windows?
8. Is any proposed extension in proportion to the original both in height and size?
9. If there is to be a new front boundary, will it blend with those of your neighbours? If it is to be a hedge, will it be of indigenous hedgerow plants only?
10. Will the new building project beyond the front walls of your neighbours' houses?
11. Will there be sufficient off-street parking?

Check your answers with your architect or designer and if the design breaches any of the guidelines in this Statement, ask him to consider how this may be overcome.



# Appendix

## **THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS FOR THE DESIGN STATEMENT**

The Leigh Village Design Statement Group was established in 1997 at the instigation of the District Councillor, Alison Cook, and consisted of six members who were chosen not only for their individual skills and knowledge of the village, but also as a representative group, with residence in the village ranging from ten to forty years.

After informal consultations with Sevenoaks District Council, a large number of other Design Statement groups and Kent Rural Community Council, a questionnaire was sent out to all households, business and social organisations within the village to gather opinions, views and information on the village from the whole spectrum of the community. 175 households (containing some 450 people) and 21 business and social organisations responded with a wealth of background information.

Next a public meeting was held to explain the purpose of a Village Design Statement, give an analysis of the replies received and to invite public comments on these. Again, the response was excellent with some 60 people attending and more than 40 of these offered to join the nine working parties which were formed to assist the Group in obtaining detailed information on a variety of key subjects. The working party reports totalled more than 100 pages of text and illustrations.

Based on the questionnaire response and working party reports, the Steering Group prepared a working draft of the Design Statement which was submitted to the Parish Council and a number of independent advisors with specialist knowledge of subjects covered by the draft. After revision to reflect their comments the draft was then displayed at a second well attended public meeting before being submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for their informal comments. The document was then substantially redrafted in the light of the Council's criticisms, again submitted to the Parish Council and then put on public display for two days. It was resubmitted to Sevenoaks District Council for their further comments. Having received their provisional approval it was also submitted to Kent County Council for their approval as Highway Authority. The final version was then submitted to Sevenoaks District Council for formal approval and following a period of public consultation has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Plan.