



The Covert Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Adopted 25 June 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Petts Wood is a garden suburb laid out in the late 1920s and 1930s by Basil Scruby, inspired by the garden suburb movement, in particular Hampstead Garden Suburb. With his architect Leonard Culliford, he created a masterplan which defined the roads, amenities and plot sizes which remain largely unchanged to this day. With covenants on the plots he was able to control the building lines, roof heights and materials so that the area preserves a highly ordered and regular appearance despite the variety of architectural design and detail. Of note within the suburb are:
- The prevailing neo-vernacular architectural style evoking a rural and historic idyll.
 - Multiple neo-Tudor houses, many by Noel Rees with a restricted black and white palette.
 - The Cecil Pamphilon Houses on Chislehurst Road.
 - Individually designed highly idiosyncratic neo-Tudor houses on Great Thrift.
 - Large high status neo-Tudor houses on Birchwood Road.
 - The modernist semi-detached houses of the Closes off Tudor Way.
 - The limited palette of materials, encompassing black timber, white render and red bricks and tiles contrasting with the green setting.
 - Lush verdant garden suburb character developed through lawns, shrubs, low hedges and trees in generous gardens to the front and rear of the houses.
 - Regular plot sizes creating a sense order and control.
 - Open aspect to many of the plots due to their width, low boundaries and long gardens.
 - Remaining historic tree specimens within gardens and sometimes in the street.
 - The historic woodland setting backdrop of Petts Wood to the north.
- 1.2 A large part of Petts Wood is designated as an Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC) in the Bromley Local Plan; these are areas where there is a well-established, distinctive, coherent, and readily identifiable architectural character. However, there are also a number of notable areas within Petts Wood that are of “special architectural or historic interest” which have been designated as Conservation Areas; this includes the Covert.
- 1.3 The Covert Conservation Area lies to the south of Petts Wood, accessed from Crofton Lane or the Close. The Conservation Area has special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. This is derived from the consistent pattern of detached Noel Rees neo-Tudor houses and semi-detached houses with prominent front gables. These are set around a fine topography, with the road running through the area gently curving to follow this topography and adding good quality views. In addition, the area features some high-quality specimen trees which predate the housing in the area and have influenced the layout of the Covert.

Legislative and policy framework

- 1.4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the primary legislation which protects the historic environment. Section 69 of the Act states that:

“Every local planning authority... shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and... shall designate those areas as conservation areas.”

- 1.5 Section 71 places a duty on local planning authorities, requiring them to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.
- 1.6 Section 72 of the Act imposes a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals on conservation areas. requiring that “special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”
- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) sets out national planning policy relevant to the historic environment, with further guidance set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defines economic, social and environmental objectives which together will help to achieve sustainable development; the environmental objective includes the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment.
- 1.8 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out how the historic environment should be conserved and enhanced. This section contains policy relevant to decision-making and plan-making, as well as policy concerning the designation of conservation areas. Paragraph 204 states:

“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”
- 1.9 Paragraph 212 concerns decision-taking in relation to heritage assets (which includes conservation areas). It states:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”
- 1.10 The “significance” of a heritage asset means the value of a heritage asset (both designated and non-designated) to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also importantly from its setting. Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that applicants should set out the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 1.11 Paragraph 213 states that “any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification”. Paragraphs 214 to 215 set out the tests which must be met where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset; or less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset.
- 1.12 The London Plan (2021) provides a strategic framework for development in London. This includes key policies related to the safeguarding of London’s heritage assets and their settings, including policy HC1. Part C states:

“Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.”

- 1.13 The 2019 Bromley Local Plan has several policies directly relating to the historic environment in Chapter 5. This includes Policy 41: Conservation Areas. The Conservation Area is covered by an Archaeological Priority Area (APA)¹, Tier 4 grade, which is defined as a low level of archaeological sensitivity.
- 1.14 The Urban Design Guide SPD (July 2023) provides detailed guidance notes on the importance of reinforcing local character and identity (DG1) and preserving and enhancing heritage assets (DG2). The SPD highlights the importance of understanding and responding to the historic environment with heritage being central to good placemaking.
- 1.15 In addition to national regional and local policy and guidance, there are various guidance notes issued by Historic England which may be relevant to specific proposals in the conservation area.

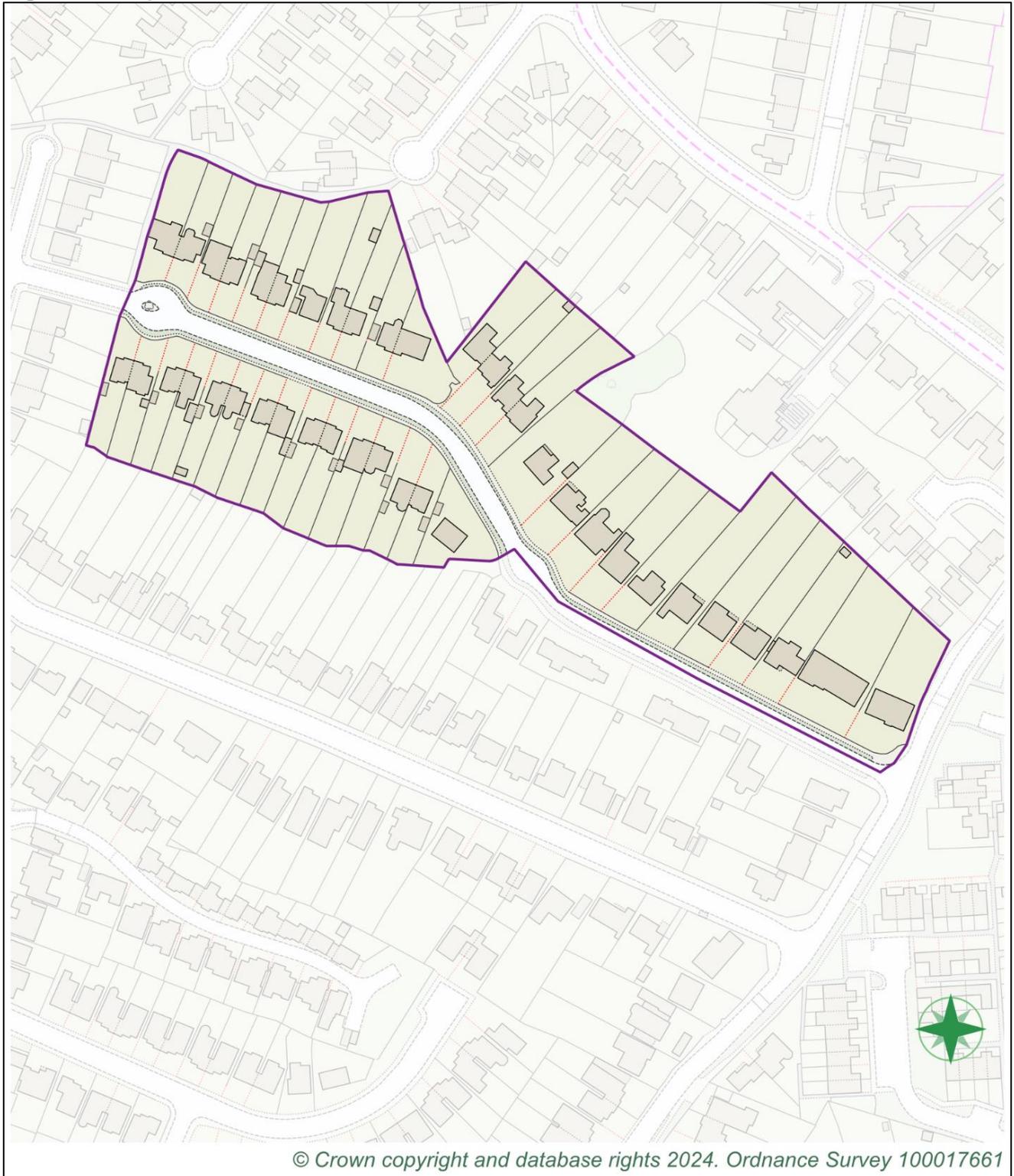
Role of Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- 1.16 This document provides a detailed statement of character and appearance for the Covert Conservation Area, setting out the reasons for designation as required by Section 69 of the Act; along with a management plan for its conservation as required by Section 71 of the Act. The document is relevant to development proposals and enhancement works in the area.
- 1.17 Understanding how the planning process works in a Conservation Area can be complicated, including what actually constitutes ‘development’, and what Permitted Development rights are applicable (as some Permitted Development rights are restricted). Common development proposals that might be restricted include alterations to doors, windows and roofs, and construction of boundary treatments such as fences and gates. The Council recommends that anyone intending to undertake development in a Conservation Area (from small-scale development proposals right up to major development) seeks pre-application advice at the earliest opportunity².
- 1.18 The Council will ensure that Development Management in conservation areas is undertaken with care and sensitivity to the character and appearance of the area. This is achieved by referring relevant applications to the Council's Conservation Officer, as well as seeking input from other parties (internal and external to the Council) where necessary, for example the Council's tree officers.

¹ Information on Archaeology in Bromley available from: <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/local-history-heritage/archaeology-bromley>

² Details of the Council's pre-application service are available here: <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/planning-applications/pre-application-planning-advice>

Figure 1: Map of the Covert Conservation Area³



³ This map can also be viewed on the Council website at:
<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/conservation/conservation-areas-2>

2 Historical development

Early History

- 2.1 Evidence of early occupation of the Petts Wood area has been found in the form of flints and bronze axes. The Romans settled in many Kent valleys and there are also several sites of settlements within the wider area of Petts Wood, including a villa in Crofton Road. However, the earliest evidence of human settlement directly within the Petts Wood area is the manor of Town Court dating from the thirteenth century, known later as Town Court Farm.
- 2.2 Petts Wood derives its name from the Pett family who were heavily involved in shipbuilding during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at Deptford, Woolwich and later Chatham. The Petts held the title of Master Shipwright under Edward VI and Elizabeth I. The only documentary connection of the family to the area is the 1577 will of William Pett which refers to "*my landes lyeing within the parishe of Chislehurst in the County of Kent and the tenements appurteyning to the same, also the lease of a cobby wood called Hawkeswoode, with the three hundred oaks growing upon the same, in the parishe of Chislehurst*". The woodland was acquired in order to provide timber for shipbuilding.
- 2.3 Despite William Petts' will, it is thought that the Petts held the wood on a long lease and the actual owners were the Wootton family, who are recorded as the owners in 1687. The wood passed by descent to the Earls of Chesterfield, when the line died out in the eighteenth century it was sold to Thomas Borret who subsequently sold it in 1790 to Hermen Berens a London merchant of Dutch origin. It remained in the Berens family until the 1920s.

Nineteenth Century

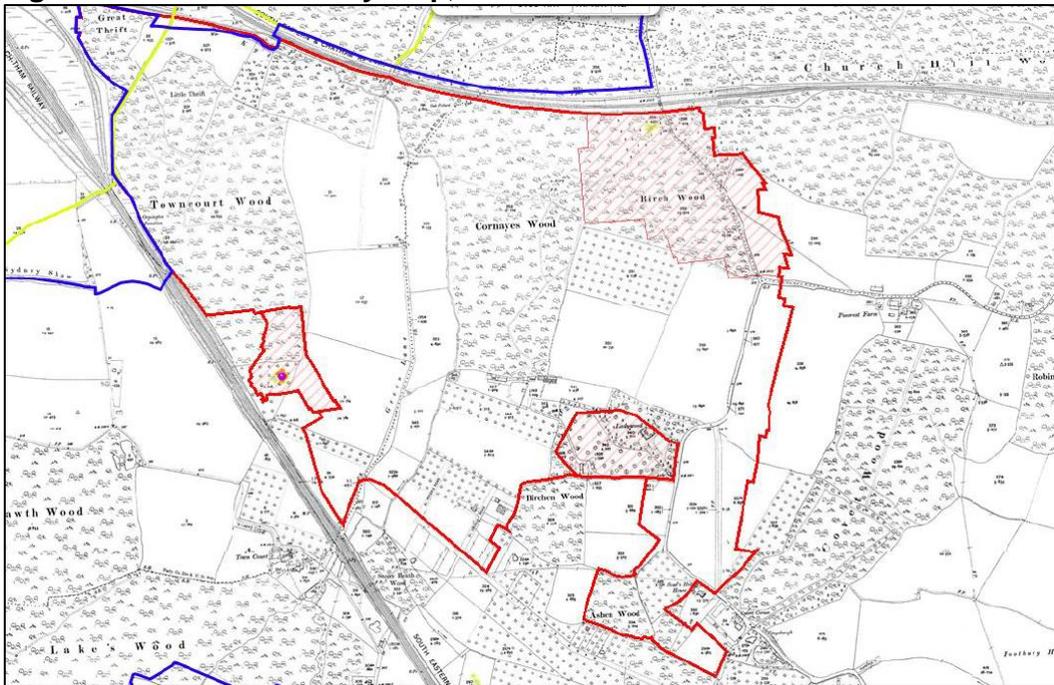
- 2.4 With the exception of the arrival of the two railway lines in the 1860s, very little changed during the nineteenth century. The area remained a rural landscape of woodlands, meadows, lakes and small streams interspersed with old farms, cottages and country houses. The London Chatham to Dover line had cut off the northern section of Petts Wood; however Ordnance Survey maps for 1871 and 1896 show large areas of woodland remained south of the line and are variously named Great Thrift, Little Thrift, Town Court Wood, Cornayes Wood and Birch Wood.
- 2.5 The ancient Town Court Farm and estate was cut off to the west of the Southern Railway. Green Lane runs from the farm parallel to the stream known as Kyd Brook and was the main artery across the Petts Wood area. Further east another winding lane (now the Chislehurst Road) linked Orpington to Chislehurst with a spur-road leading eastwards to St Mary Cray. The 1896 map also shows Ladywell, a large Victorian villa approximately on the site of The Chenies that was built in 1872 and was the centrepiece of the Ladywell Estate. Further to the south in the 1896 map is Scads Hill House, built in 1890 on a six-acre plot, now an area between Chislehurst Road and The Covert.

Twentieth Century

- 2.6 The only part of the area developed for housing, prior to the development of the 1920s and 1930s, was the area to the north of Crofton Lane. The 1910 Ordnance Survey map shows the planned St John's Road with St George's Road and St Peters Road (now Priory Avenue)

(shown at Figure 2). These side roads were shorter than they are now and ended at the boundary of the Ladywell Estate. Many of the houses on these roads were occupied by railway workers who worked out of Orpington station to the south.

Figure 2: Ordnance Survey map, 1910

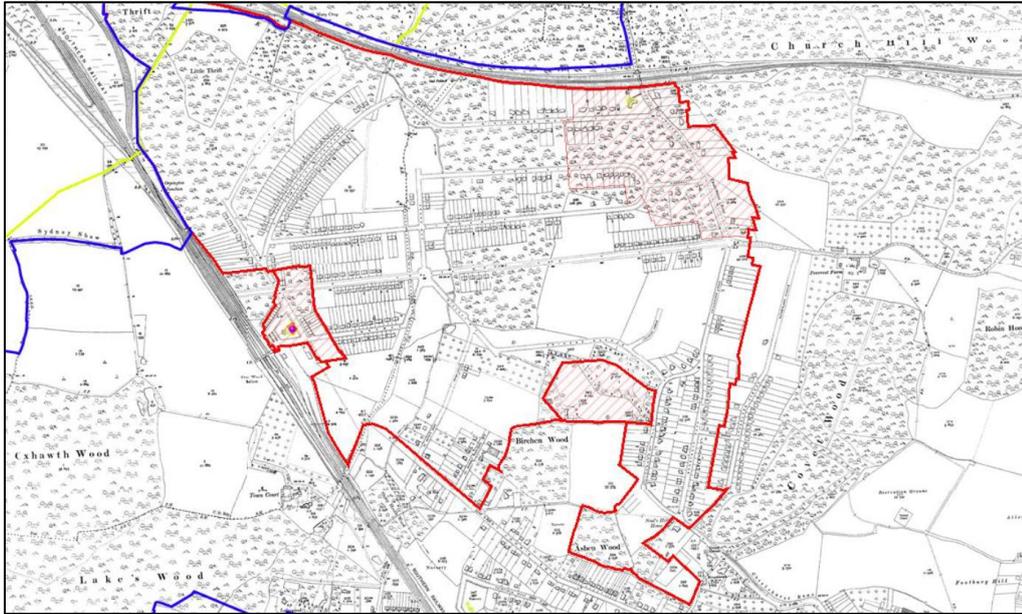


- 2.7 The outer reaches of London were coming under increasing pressure for development in the 1920s. In response to this and fearful for the future of the area, a campaign began to save Petts Wood to the north of the railway and acquire it in memory of William Willett, a local resident who had campaigned for daylight saving and who had ridden his horse in Petts Wood every morning. The wood was finally acquired in full in 1928 and is now administered by the National Trust.
- 2.8 The catalyst to the development of the area was the marriage of Adolphus Chudleigh's daughter, to a Cornish farmer, James Langdon. Chudleigh and Langdon bought the Town Court Farm and estate for £7474.00 in 1920 so that the young couple could be close to the widowed accountant. However, the land was poor and the railway bisected the estate, and soon Chudleigh began to consider development. He hoped to sell the Town Court estate to Jack Kent, a developer who in 1923 had bought the Ladywell Estate and the Cornayes estate from the Berens family. When Kent died unexpectedly in 1925, Chudleigh and Langdon bought the two estates from his widow for £11,475. They now had four hundred acres of land for development and began to look for a developer.
- 2.9 That developer was to be Basil Scruby, who had worked on many estates in the Essex area having grown up in Harlow, but none were as ambitious or high status. At Petts Wood, he hoped to build an upmarket rural retreat for London commuters inspired by the garden suburb movement, in particular the example of Hampstead Garden suburb by Henrietta Barnet. The new community would be only half an hour from the centre of London yet retain the calm and character of the English countryside with architecture to complement its rural character.
- 2.10 The success of the venture would depend on being able to open a station at Petts Wood to take the commuters into London. In 1928, Scruby agreed with Southern Rail that a station would be built to service the new suburb, to which he would make significant contributions of both land and money. The station opened on 9 July 1928 and was long enough for an eight car train; by 1932 the demand had grown and a second platform was built. The line was

electric and fast, and the trains terminated in a number of different London termini; Petts Wood would become one of the best served stations on the network.

- 2.11 Scruby worked with the architect Leonard Culliford to develop a masterplan, which they produced in 1928, and work began soon after in Petts Wood Road. Scruby bought the estate in sections on which he built the roads, divided up the plots and then sold to builders with covenants controlling and regulating the use and appearance of future buildings. In the masterplan, Scruby ensured that the infrastructure for drainage, gas, water and electricity was in place to service the area. He also planned a shopping area around the square outside the station. Work began on the north-east side of the square in 1928 and the shopping area was completed by 1930. In the centre of the square, opposite the station, was the estate office from which prospective clients would be picked up for visits to potential plots. As sales were completed, Scruby was able to buy more land and the builders more plots. The chain was often precarious, and many builders went bankrupt.
- 2.12 Culliford was responsible for the design of the road layout working with the existing landscape. He also designed “model houses” as guidance for the builders who he then went on to supervise, to ensure that their buildings met Scruby’s demands. Scruby’s covenants ensured that building lines, minimum cubic capacities and frontages were laid down. The walls were to be brick, stone or roughcast of an appropriate type, while roofs had to be English tiles from natural clay or stone laid to a pitch of not less than 45 degrees. There were as many as forty-five different builders involved in the building of Petts Wood East; some built entire roads, others just one or two houses. The most notable were Leslie Carter Clout, Cecil Pamphilon and Noel Rees.
- 2.13 The marketing for the area emphasised the fast journey into London and the rural setting. “A sylvan town with birds, trees, flowers – a real country home that thanks to the boundary of Petts Wood will always remain country”. As far as possible trees were preserved and built around and new trees were planted. The area typified the idea of “rus in urbe” with its country style cottages and back drop of woodlands. The style of most houses is neo-Tudor, evoking elements of country cottages to emphasise the rustic setting. There are dark oak beams on white walls barge boarded gables, leaded lights in windows, elaborate porches and oak front doors with iron hinges and knockers. Internally many houses have wood panelling and inglenook fireplaces.
- 2.14 The Ordnance Survey map of 1930 (shown at Figure 3) gives a snapshot of the area at that time. The most complete road is Towncourt Road, while Manor Road is only marked by a dashed line and no other roads are shown further west. Fairway, Westway, the west section of Petts Wood Road and Kingsway are mostly complete. The north-east area of Petts Wood is laid out but only partially built, Birchwood Road is the most complete road which includes Tudor House on the corner with the Chislehurst Road. In contrast the layout of the south-east corner has barely begun with only small sections of Willett Way marked up to Princes Avenue, with a small section of Ladywell Avenue; no houses have been built. The area around the south end of Tudor Way is entirely undeveloped.

Figure 3: Ordnance Survey map, 1930

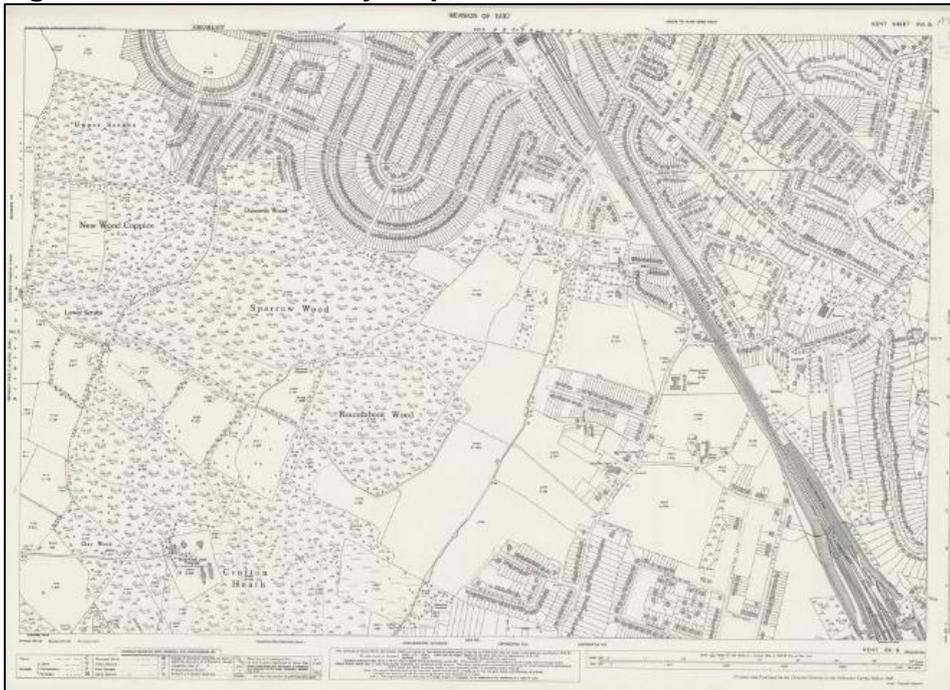


- 2.15 In 1929, discussions began regarding the building of a church for the new community. Scruby donated a plot of land at the bottom of Greencourt Road and initially a temporary wooden structure served the community. The foundation stone of St Francis' Church was laid in 1933 and it was consecrated in January 1935. Soon afterwards in July 1935, Petts Wood became a parish in its own right. The church is austere and barn like set in wooded glade and is the only building in Petts Wood mentioned in Pevsner.
- 2.16 Scruby began negotiations with Charrington Brewery to build a public house in front of the station. When an application for licensing was submitted in 1933, locals opposed it. However, when the brewery promised that it would be built in a Tudor style by their architect, Sidney Charles Clark, to harmonise with the rest of the suburb, the opposition was dropped. The public house and hotel opened in December 1935 and was named the Daylight Inn after William Willett (promoter of British Summer Time). It had four bars and a ballroom with a stage and became a focus for community events as well as a public house.
- 2.17 By 1933, Scruby's involvement in the area had come to an end, having sold off most of the plots on the east side, and the area having been largely completed. Although he had planned to develop the west side of the railway as well, interest charges were mounting up and he was forced to sell the land to the Morrell Brothers building firm who went on to develop this area. Without Scruby's covenants and vision, the area was more densely developed with less architectural detail.
- 2.18 The 1938 Ordnance Survey map (shown at Figure 4) shows the road layout as it is now with north-west and south-east corners completed. It builds on the 1930 map showing the same plots and building, but instead of showing similarly detailed development it shows blocks of buildings which makes it clear that by 1938 the suburb was largely complete, including the Covert, built by Noel Rees on land which previously formed part of the extensive gardens of Scad's Hill House and neighbouring Ashen Wood. Rees was the most renowned builder in Petts Wood East; he was particularly associated with the 'Tudorbethan' style. In addition to the Covert, Rees built properties in several Petts Wood roads including the Chenies, Princes Avenue, Kingsway, Wood Ride, Willett Way, St Georges Road as well as buildings in the wider London area. His name features in estate agents' property information to this day.
- 2.19 The development of the Covert included a mix of detached and semi-detached properties. Remnants of vacant land remained which were built on at a later date. The properties are set

back behind generously sized, well-landscaped front gardens, many of which contain mature trees which were, it is thought, once part of Ashen Wood. Many of the construction details were derived from the Kent vernacular, including the use of Kent Peg roof tiles and timber framing. Other houses of a simpler appearance are less directly neo-Tudor, paying reference to the work of C. F. A. Voysey, a notable architect of the pre-war era. The vernacular evident at the Covert is similar to other Conservation Areas in Bromley, particularly the Chenies, Chislehurst Road and the Thrifts (all in Petts Wood); and Manor Way and Park Langley (in Beckenham).

2.20 The 1938 Ordnance Survey map also shows that Willett Way remained undeveloped as well as the road frontage along Tudor Way, although the Closes had been built by this date. A section of Cross Way north of the Petts Wood junction is also undeveloped.

Figure 4: Ordnance Survey map, 1938



2.21 By the beginning of the second world war, both sides of the railway had been completed. New building was restricted to bomb sites or infill development. In 1939, permission had been granted for the building of Christ Church (United Reformed) church at the junction of Tudor Way and Willett Way; however, the foundation stone was not laid until after the war in 1953 and it opened the following year.

2.22 In the 1970s, following an appeal, permission was granted for the redevelopment of the south side of Station Square in an uncompromisingly contemporary style. There was much local opposition to the proposal, although it was not until 1995 that the Station Square Conservation Area was created following a local campaign. A new Tudor style office building was built in 1997 at the bottom of the station steps, responding to the Conservation Area status of the square. The lych gate that had previously stood there was moved to the Memorial Gardens site. In 1998, the old estate office that had stood empty became a restaurant. Two other Conservation Areas were created in the 1980s, in response to the pressures that the area was under and in recognition of the special character of these areas of Petts Wood; the Chenies in 1982 and Chislehurst Road in 1989.

3 Spatial form

Location and topography

- 3.1 The Covert is located to the east of the Borough, to the south of the Petts Wood area and approximately three quarters of a mile north-west of Orpington Town Centre.
- 3.2 The topography of the Petts Wood area is shaped by gently rolling hills with high points at Great Thrift and along the Chislehurst Road, with the valley of the Kyd Brook in the centre of the suburb. The east side of the Covert lies at the low point of Crofton Lane, but the Covert slopes gently upwards towards its west side. The geology of the area predominantly consists of gravel known as the Blackheath Pebble beds.

Urban layout

- 3.3 The road layout of Petts Wood works in harmony with the existing topography and responds in-part to original existing roads. The Chislehurst Road is an ancient road running between Chislehurst and Orpington. Tudor Way and Crossway appears to be built along the lines of what was Green Lane, a lane that ran along the valley of the Kyd Brook, crossing the area from north to south. Petts Wood Road runs from near the station up to the Chislehurst Road and where this cuts across Tudor Way, Willett Way runs to the south-east to connect to the Chislehurst Road further south. Fairway runs parallel to the train track and leads into Station Square and onto Woodland Way. These are the key roads from which the heart of the suburb is laid out.
- 3.4 To the east of Crossway and Willett Way the roads run on an east/west axis with the exception of Ladywood Avenue and Grosvenor Road. Between Tudor Way and Willett Way they run on a north/south axis most probably limited by the existing early twentieth century development in this area off St John's Road. St George's Road and Priory Avenue are extensions of early twentieth century roads. The only exception are the four cul de sacs of Maple, Acacia, Hawthorn and Ash Close which are perpendicular to Tudor Way. The Covert runs off Crofton Lane and is set slightly apart from the main body of the suburb.
- 3.5 The Petts Wood area is characterised by the width and regularity of its building plots, which along with the road layout remains largely intact. The wide plots allow for significant gaps between the buildings which gives the area its distinctive open feel. The generosity of the plots allows the garden suburb character to come to the fore, with picturesque front gardens and views through to gardens and trees behind the houses. Where boundaries are kept low and front gardens are long; this enhances the airy spacious feel of the suburb.
- 3.6 This character is evident at the Covert, as well as other areas within Petts Wood including the Chenies and parts of Princes Avenue. In particular, the Covert's layout, the spacing between the houses and their relationship with their landscape setting are integral to the area's character.

Open space, gardens and trees

- 3.7 Petts Wood streetscapes have an open and verdant character, with good sized front gardens and deep rear ones, with plenty of trees in evidence which add to the verdant character; these

features all contribute to the garden suburb character of the area. This is particularly evident in the Covert Conservation Area. Many gardens lack formal boundary treatments which adds to the open feel of the area.

- 3.8 The roads are all of a generous width. The main road into the centre is Petts Wood Road, a very long and straight road; it is significantly wider than the others with verges to either side planted with trees at intervals, creating an avenue. There are a number of other tree-lined streets and avenues, these include: Princes Avenue, Ladywood Avenue, Towncourt Crescent and the lower stretch of Kingsway.
- 3.9 Trees are an important visual and historical element of Petts Wood, including within the Covert Conservation Area. Small swathes of trees as well as many individual trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), reflecting the level of their importance to the area. In The Covert, existing trees were used within the streetscape itself, informing its layout. These trees are substantial in size and affect the natural light in the street, providing a distinctive woodland ambiance. There are several TPOs on the Covert, on the street itself and to the rear of properties on both sides of the road.

Gaps and views

- 3.10 Views of trees and the woodland beyond, seen through building gaps and over roofscapes, are key in connecting Petts Wood to its woodland history and wider setting. The majority of the trees in the area are situated in or behind the long rear gardens which are a feature within this designed landscape. They can be seen through the gaps between the houses, framed by the predominantly hipped roofscapes within the area. These visual gaps are generous throughout the eastern part of Petts Wood, including at the Covert Conversation Area, and care should be taken to preserve them for the role they play in the designed landscape, both visually and contextually in connecting with the historical trees and woods.
- 3.11 The planned layout of these streets was designed to respond to the topography of the area, which has some gentle hills. The Covert curves to follow the topography, which adds variety to streetscape views.

4 Architectural interest

- 4.1 The Covert has a cohesive character derived from common design themes (based on the work of C. F. A. Voysey) and from the limited range of materials used in the development, particularly common use of Red Kent Peg roof tiles, rendered white painted elevations, prominent front gables, protruding bay windows and open porches supported by oak beams.
- 4.2 The Covert is distinguished by its green and verdant setting with deep front gardens, grass verges and particularly as the road climbs to its highest point, woodland character due to the mature trees in front of the houses which predate the housing development, and which are presumably survivors from Ashen Wood.
- 4.3 The eastern end of the road is mainly detached houses on the north side. Number 4 is individually designed on a wide plot; it has a rendered ground floor with low eaves and a tile hung gable (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: 4 The Covert, south-east elevation



- 4.4 The other detached houses on the north side are in a more conventional Noel Rees style neo-Tudor (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: 16 The Covert, south-east elevation



- 4.5 The western end of the road, where it flattens out, is composed of two types of semi-detached houses; both types have prominent front gables, although one is half-timbered the other is austere and unadorned (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: 42-44; and 46-48 The Covert, south-west elevation



- 4.6 In general, the houses on the Covert are in an excellent state of preservation, and many retain their original doors, windows and roof coverings.
- 4.7 The Conservation Area includes more modern housing at 24-26b The Covert. These houses are of an appropriate scale and maintain the deep front gardens which are a notable characteristic of the area. While the houses themselves do not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, they are not considered to detract from the overall character and appearance of the area.

5 Management Plan

Demolition

- 5.1 Proposals for the demolition of structures within the Conservation Area will normally be assessed against the contribution of the structure in question. This contribution could be on an individual basis or as part of a group of buildings. This will normally be assessed on a case-by-case basis in the context of specific circumstances.
- 5.2 A Heritage Statement should be provided with any application for demolition in the Conservation Area. The Heritage Statement should outline the contribution that a building or buildings makes to the Conservation Area.
- 5.3 To avoid vacant or derelict sites and consequent uncertainty about the future of a site, demolition will not normally be permitted prior to securing a binding commitment to a specific form of redevelopment, for example through a legal agreement.

Siting of New Development

- 5.4 New buildings in a Conservation Area will normally only be considered:
 - on a site created through demolition of an existing building;
 - on a currently vacant plot; or
 - as an additional building on a plot presently accommodating a building (where appropriate opportunities can be identified).
- 5.5 A Heritage Statement should be provided describing the significance of any heritage assets impacted by development proposals, including the contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance in order for an informed assessment to be made.
- 5.6 The characteristics of the area, as described in sections 3 and 4 of this document, should be a starting point for the conception of the design for any new development in the Conservation Area.
- 5.7 The established density and layout in the area will provide a guide to the appropriate scale and positioning of any new development. Insertion of new structures within already developed plots will generally require constraint in scale and careful positioning to ensure that they do not detract from the established character and appearance.

Layout

- 5.8 The siting and layout of new structures must be respectful of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This requires recognising and responding to the predominant scale, form and detailing of contributory buildings, reflecting the bulk and spatial composition of structures and intervening spaces and maintaining the spacious feel of front gardens and long rear gardens which are prevalent in the area.

- 5.9 Spaces around and between buildings are often an important part of the character and appearance of an area, and the setting of principal contributory buildings. Established trees and gardens play an important contributory role to the character of the Conservation Area; this landscape setting is of great importance to the character of the area. The Council will encourage the retention and, where necessary, replacement of street and garden trees. The loss of significant trees will be resisted.

Design of New Development

- 5.10 Where new buildings are deemed to be appropriate, attention is required to ensure their compatibility with the Conservation Area, which should result in a positive contribution to the area both in its own right, and as an element in the urban form. As well as buildings, this relates to the spaces and relationships between buildings, and the treatment of the site and surroundings.
- 5.11 In particular, new buildings should not become dominant elements or overwhelm existing structures and spaces. For example, it is good practice for new buildings to keep within the typical height of existing buildings, ideally remaining slightly lower than adjacent buildings. Building frontages and bulk should be addressed similarly. Attention should also be paid to the articulation, fenestration and break up of existing buildings, and the scale at which this occurs, avoiding visual massing out of scale with established and contributory elements.
- 5.12 The adoption of scale, forms and materials characteristic of the Conservation Area is appropriate; the underlying principles are similar to those relevant to alterations and additions, which are detailed below. However, design which attempts "mock" historic replication of buildings from earlier eras (pastiche) is discouraged, as this lacks authenticity, dilutes the Area's significance, and can confuse interpretation of the Area's historical development. An exception may be justified where reinstatement of an important missing element of the built form will repair a jarring gap and can be based on detailed historical records. In these cases, clues to the building's more recent origins may be provided by restrained detailing and a date stone where appropriate.
- 5.13 Further detailed design guidance in relation to layout, scale and massing, and architectural design is set out in Section 5 of the Urban Design Guide SPD.

Extensions and Alterations

- 5.14 Extensions and alterations to existing buildings within the Conservation Area should reflect the forms, materials, textures and finishes of the host building, along with the design philosophies underlying its style. These vary between individual buildings in this Conservation Area, and therefore the design will need to respond to the specific building. Care should be taken with details such as the matching of brick bonds and continuation of stringcourses or lintels.
- 5.15 The spacious and informal layout of the estate does provide scope for the addition of sensitively designed extensions. A new extension should not dominate the existing host building or significantly alter the spatial characteristics of the road by taking up large amounts of side or front space. For this reason, the rear elevation will be the preferred location for extensions, but this by no means precludes the possibility of alterations elsewhere. As long as they retain stylistic integrity, it is appropriate for neo-vernacular buildings to grow, evolve and change, as their vernacular precursors did.

- 5.16 It will usually be appropriate to mark the new development by making it subservient in scale to the host: for example, by reducing the height of the roof ridge and marking the original exterior wall of the host building with a short return. Such devices will help to preserve the village-like informality of the area that was a hallmark of its original design intention.
- 5.17 The houses have largely rendered elevations. On neo-Tudor houses, the render is applied in the panels between timbers. On other houses the complete elevations are rendered. Generally, the render has been applied with a trowelled finish that aims to give a rustic effect. In most cases the render is finished in white paint, after the manner of the influential architect C. F. A. Voysey. When well maintained, render is highly durable. If left unpainted or unpatched, it can weather and decay, damaging the appearance of the property and leading to the need for extensive repairs. If repairs or repainting are required, care should be taken to use materials that allow the render to move and breath. The total elimination of damp and movement is impossible: repair methods and products that claim to achieve this can result in the accelerated failure of the render. When repair, alteration or new construction is undertaken, a render matching the existing should be employed.
- 5.18 Some houses, most notably the neo-Tudor ones, have plinths (the lowest section of an elevation) constructed in a brown to red brick. If a plinth is present, it should be maintained and extended if necessary, using a matching brick and bond.
- 5.19 The most common exterior detail is the use of timber framing. This has considerable decorative effect, particularly when employed on a principal gable, facing the street. Two types of timber frame are employed. The first type is purely decorative: applied to the front of the house, it has no structural function. Others are constructed with a structural timber frame.
- 5.20 In both cases, the frames are generally made of British hardwoods such as Oak or Elm, secured at the joints with wooden pegs or trenails. Where a timber requires repair or replacement, the new work should be made to match the dimensions of the old and fitted into the original joint. Softwoods or tropical hardwoods tend to be less durable and substantially different in appearance to the original timbers. Their use in repairs should be avoided if at all possible.
- 5.21 The proportions, positioning and integration of an extension to the host building should be designed to safeguard not only the building's contribution to the wider Conservation Area, but also its enduring value to the heritage asset itself. It should not be so large as to dominate or compete in visual terms with the host building.
- 5.22 Details characteristic of the building type and era should be retained wherever possible. Alterations to the exterior form and detailing of a contributory building should respond sensitively to the significant elements of the building. In particular attention should be paid to protecting and reflecting element of the original design detailing, such as chimneystacks, ridge tiles, lintels, and stringcourses. Every effort should be made to retain and repair such original details. Regular and timely maintenance is preferable to the difficulty and expense incurred by belated repair or, ultimately, replacement.

Porches

- 5.23 Open porches are a feature of the house designs on the Covert and should be retained where possible. Replacement porches should seek to utilise sympathetic materials and detailing.
- 5.24 Every attempt should be made to retain existing porches in-situ. If this is not possible, the application of equivalent design detail in new work should be considered. Replacement porches should seek to utilise sympathetic materials and detailing. The construction or

enclosure of a porch with standardised contemporary materials (such as UPVC or aluminium window frames) is discouraged.

Windows and Doors

- 5.25 Original window and door proportions, materials and detailing should be retained. As Historic England advise in their guidance on historic windows⁴, repair of original joinery is desirable where practical, with any necessary new work matching in materials and detailing. Unsympathetic replacement doors and windows can significantly detract from the character of a building and, in turn, the Conservation Area.
- 5.26 In keeping with the neo-Tudor and neo vernacular style of the houses, most windows are simple casements with square or diamond set leaded lights. The casements themselves are typically metal, enclosed in a timber frame. The frame and casements are often painted black, an excellent method of highlighting the windows against white elevations. Doors are characteristically of solid unpainted British hardwood, such as oak or elm. Based on simple ledge and brace (plank) doors, they may have been elaborated with a small, glazed section, nailing or strap hinges, again making reference to vernacular practice.
- 5.27 Mass produced standard components (particularly those made in UPVC) can rarely reflect the carefully considered proportions and detailed mouldings of original doors and windows, and their use is discouraged. Whilst their installation may be cheaper, they are visibly inappropriate to a period building, and can significantly detract from the heritage value of a property.

Roofs

- 5.28 The largest number of roofs in the area are covered in red clay roof tiles, modelled on the red Kent Peg tiles that were widely used prior to the mid nineteenth century. These are a chief element of the return to vernacular design and materials that was common in the Garden Suburbs and contribute significantly to the semi-rural atmosphere of the area. Wherever possible they should be retained. Most roofs are hipped, the hips being covered in bonnet tiles. Several houses present a principal gable to the street that may have a timber bargeboard and finial.
- 5.29 Where repairs to roofs are undertaken, matching materials should be used and details such as bonnet tiles or bargeboards retained. This will ensure that the area retains its current pleasing visual harmony.

Dormers and Roof Lights

- 5.30 The desire to increase useable areas in a dwelling often leads to the conversion of attic and roof spaces into rooms. This results in the requirement for natural lighting where none, or insufficient, is available at present. The most common responses are to insert dormer windows into the roofline, or to install roof lights. The appropriateness of either approach will be dependent upon the character and design of individual buildings and should not begin with a presumption that either approach will necessarily be compatible.

⁴ Historic England, Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading, available from: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/>

- 5.31 Dormer windows are a component part of some architectural styles. However, in other cases the introduction of dormers will be inappropriate, particularly on prominent front or side rooflines. Close attention to the style of the host building can indicate whether appropriate opportunities exist. Where an opportunity is identified, the scale of a dormer should respond to traditional styles, usually requiring some restraint of the urge to maximise internal spaces to avoid adversely impacting upon the appearance of the building and Conservation Area. If installation of dormers is appropriate, they should be set below the ridgeline of the host building.
- 5.32 Roof lights must be sited sensitively to avoid detracting from important views of the building. Where roof lights are considered appropriate, they should be designed to sit flush within the roof with low-profile glazing in order to appear less prominent.
- 5.33 An Article 4 Direction is in place which removes PD rights for alterations to the roof of a dwellinghouse (which would ordinarily have been permitted under Part 1, Class C of the General Permitted Development Order).

Satellite Dishes, Domestic Microgeneration Equipment and Other Plant

- 5.34 Permitted Development (PD) rights allow for the installation of satellite dishes, domestic microgeneration equipment and other plant equipment, but these PD rights have specific restrictions and conditions.
- 5.35 The location and appearance of plant, extraction fans and other equipment such as satellite dishes on properties, should be carefully considered, so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building. All plant should generally be placed out of view from the public realm.
- 5.36 Satellite dishes should not be placed on a chimney, roof or wall that is visible from a highway.
- 5.37 The Urban Design Guide SPD includes guidance on the siting of solar panels, and identifies solar tiles as an alternative option for Conservation Areas which may be more sensitive to visual impact.
- 5.38 Solar panels and solar thermal equipment are not permitted in a Conservation Area if they are to be installed on a wall which fronts a highway. Any such equipment proposed to be installed on a flat roof in a Conservation Area may require prior approval with respect to the impact of its appearance on the Conservation Area.

Hardstanding and Driveways

- 5.39 Frequently, proposals for hardstanding and driveways are generated by the desire to accommodate motor vehicles on the plot, or to increase the capacity for this use.
- 5.40 PD rights allow the creation of hardstanding. Where that hardstanding would exceed 5sqm, planning permission is required unless porous materials are used, or provision is made to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
- 5.41 Where opportunities do exist, minimising the width of the opening in a front wall will reduce the impact upon the streetscene whilst retaining some screening of the front garden. Paving may be addressed as a component part of a comprehensive design treatment, so it visually

remains part of the garden, rather than appearing as an area distinct from it. Retention of border planting can avoid starkness caused by paving to wall or building edges.

Fences, Hedges and Walls

- 5.42 The properties on the Covert are set back behind generously sized, well-landscaped front gardens, and have an open character, often without formal division between neighbouring properties. An Article 4 Direction is in place which removes PD rights for the erection or construction of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure (which would ordinarily have been permitted under Part 2, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order).
- 5.43 Maintaining the open character of the area will be a key consideration when assessing proposals for new front boundary fences or walls. Any impacts may be mitigated through limiting the height of the proposed boundary treatment.

Garages

- 5.44 Many houses have detached garages that are contemporary with the development of the estate. Commonly, these are recessed behind the general building line, in turn preserving the sense of separation between the detached houses.
- 5.45 The introduction of garages needs to be sensitive to the building forms of the area. In some situations, a single level wing at the side of a larger dwelling may fit the general form of development, whilst in others it may detrimentally alter the built form, such as by blocking openings between buildings, which may be characteristic of the area. Traditional garages may be too small to accommodate modern vehicles. If enlargement or replacement can be sensitively achieved, it may be possible to borrow design elements and employ materials from the original, and from the house itself, to retain compatibility.
- 5.46 Where new garages are proposed, a recessed location should be employed; rarely will enclosed parking forward of the primary frontage of the main building be appropriate.

Trees and Gardens

- 5.47 Established trees and gardens play an important contributory role to the character of most Conservation Areas. Within the Covert Conservation Area, trees and gardens are vitally important to retaining the open and verdant character of the “Garden Suburb” character.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sources

Books

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- A.J. Jackson, Semi-Detached London, London, Allen & Unwin, 1973.
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Maps

- Ordnance Survey map, 1910, 1st edition, 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey map, 1930, 1st edition, 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey map, 1938, provisional edition, 1:2500

Other

- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition), February 2019
- Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments (second edition), Historic England, April 2017
- Built Environment Advisory and Management Service (BEAMS), Petts Wood Historic Area Assessment, November 2019