



# Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal





# **Status of Town Centre Conservation Character Appraisal and Controls Applying**

## **Status**

Guildford Borough Council formally adopted this document on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006. The appraisal forms part of the evidence base supporting implementation of policies in the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003) and policies of the emerging Guildford Development Framework. In this respect the document has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its defence of its decisions at appeal.

## **Statement of Public Consultation**

In accordance with Best Practice the compilation of this document has been the subject of wide public consultation. Following the production of a draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal, a public exhibition was held in the Council Offices and Guildford Library between 7<sup>th</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Copies of the document were also deposited for view by the public at the Guildhall, High Street and the Tourist Information Office in Tunsgate. Comment sheets were readily available at all venues. The document was also made available on the Council's web site. Copies of the Draft Character Appraisal were sent to statutory consultees and local amenity groups. All households and businesses within the area were individually informed of the exhibitions and consultation by postcards advertising the location of exhibitions and information.

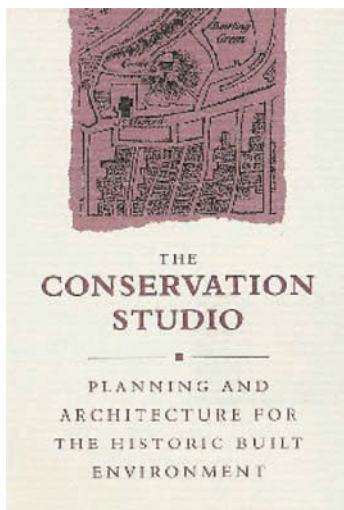
After careful consideration of the representations made, the document was amended to address valid points of concern. A summary of the comments received and the amended text was considered by the Council's Executive and formally adopted on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006.

## **Conservation Area Boundary & Controls Applying**

The adopted appraisal contains a number of recommendations. These shall be further considered and acted upon in due course and if necessary further public consultation shall take place prior to undertaking such actions including changes to the conservation area boundary and selected changes to the transport and pedestrian movement

## **Ordnance Survey Statement**

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Conservation Areas

The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 provided the original legislation allowing the designation of “areas of special architectural or historic interest” as conservation areas, whose character should be preserved or enhanced. It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a potential conservation area. This concept has developed and is now enshrined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of the Act provides a local planning authority with powers to designate conservation areas, and to periodically review existing and proposed conservation areas. Section 71 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement for their conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.



High Street



Quarry Street

### 1.2 Purpose and Objectives of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Government policy on conservation areas and historic buildings generally is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15). This defines why Character Appraisals are necessary. It states that the purpose of a Character Appraisal is to “clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, and to set out the means by which that objective is to be pursued”, and it is hoped that the “clear assessment and definition of an area’s special interest and the action needed to protect it will help to generate awareness and encourage local property owners to take the right sort of action for themselves “ (Para. 4.9)

The aim of this Character Appraisal is to:

- Improve the understanding of the history and historical context of this area of Guildford
- Generate awareness of exactly what it is about the conservation area that makes it of “special interest”
- Provide residents and owners with a clear idea of what should be cared for and preserved
- Provide residents and owners with a clear idea of what enhancements could be made to the conservation area
- Provide Guildford Borough Council with a valuable tool with which to inform its planning practice and policies for the area
- Provide a heritage framework for the emerging Town Centre Area Action Plan

### 1.3 Guildford Town Centre – location and boundary

Guildford is located on a ford over the River Wey, a tributary to the Thames, at the point where the river breaks through the hard chalk ridge of the North Downs. On either side to the east and west are the North Downs, providing a narrow and prominent ridge some 150 metres in height but just 150



metres wide. The A31 Hog's Back, possibly a pre-historic trackway, runs along part of the ridge, connecting Guildford to Farnham and ultimately to Winchester.



Castle Street

The designated conservation area covers the historic town centre, encompassing Guildford Castle, the High Street, a residential suburb, and a very mixed commercial, residential and civic area which stretches up to London Road Station. It is bounded by the modern shopping area and the River Wey to the west; medieval chalk quarries and early 20th century suburbs to the south; and late 19th century residential suburbs to the east and north.

#### 1.4 Planning Designations

Guildford is surrounded by land designated as Green Belt, part of which lies immediately adjacent to the conservation area boundary off Quarry Street. The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) lie to the south along the North Downs.

Rack's Close park, Castle Cliffe Gardens, the Castle and Castle Grounds, Allen House



Racks Close

Grounds (including the tennis courts, bowling green, and putting green), Foxenden Quarry playground, and land to the east and south of the Civic Hall, are designated as "Protected Open Space".

The surface car park in Sydenham Road at the bottom of Bright Hill is designated as potential housing land, and some of the land between Quarry Street and the River Wey forms part of the River Wey floodplain.

#### 1.5 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

The conservation area is notable for its many listed buildings, including a large number which are listed grade I or II\*. These are all shown on the Townscape Appraisal maps. The Scheduled Monuments are:

- Guildford Castle, the surrounding gardens, and Castle Cliffe Gardens
- Nos. 72/74 High Street (also listed grade II\*)



Castle Grounds

An *Area of High Archaeological Potential* covers part of Chertsey Street, North Street, most of the High Street, Sydenham Road, the castle area, and Quarry Street down to the River Wey. This broadly covers the extent of the Saxon settlement.

#### 1.6 Locally Listed Buildings

There are also a number of locally listed buildings in the conservation area. These are buildings which do not meet the national listing criteria but do have important local significance and are worthy of protection. Appendix 4 contains a summary of the criteria applied in their selection.

### 1.7 Buildings of Townscape Merit

As well as listed and locally listed buildings, there are many other buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. These date mainly to the 19th or early 20th centuries and include a variety of residential properties, such as the Bargate stone paired houses in Jenner Road and the brick terrace with flint panels facing Oxford Terrace. Buildings in other uses, such as some of the shops facing North Street, are also represented.

These Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTMs) have been identified during the survey process and as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the Townscape Appraisal Character Area maps. As with listed and locally listed buildings, there is a general presumption in favour of their retention. Any application for the demolition of a Building of Townscape Merit will therefore need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification as to why the building cannot be retained, similar to that required for a listed building.



A Building of Townscape Merit in South Hill

## 2 Historical development

### 2.1 Early development

Guildford developed on a natural ford over the River Wey at the point where it cuts through the chalk ridge of the North Downs. A major, probably prehistoric, road run along the crest of this ridge: to the west, the A31 'Hog's Back', originally called *Guildow*, linking Guildford to Farnham: and, to the east, the A246 to Dorking.

The Mount, on the western bank of the River Wey, follows the line that travellers have long used to descend from the Hog's Back to ford the river. Given the antiquity of this route and its ford, it is surprising that there is no archaeological evidence for settlement in the area by the Romans. A pagan Saxon cremation cemetery containing 35 burials was found in 1929 alongside The Mount but it is debatable whether these remains are any earlier than about AD 500.

Any new settlement soon lost its independence to become part of the Kingdom of Wessex around 600 AD. From an early age it must have been a royal possession, as the first documentary reference to Guildford occurs in King Alfred's will of AD 880 in which he bequeathed the town of *Guldeford* to his nephew, Athelwald, with the proviso that it should revert to the king's ownership at Athelwald's death, which it did in AD 905.

There is general agreement that Guildford's name derives from the Old English elements *gilden* and *ford*. The latter is self-explanatory, but *gilden* (golden) has been interpreted in various ways. The *Oxford Dictionary of Placenames* suggests (romantically) that it refers to an abundance of golden flowers (celandines, marsh marigolds, buttercups and yellow flags) growing along the banks of the Wey around the ford. Another suggestion is that the bed of the ford was golden because it had a gravelly or sandy bottom, an unlikely explanation given that this is a chalk river.

The street layout of modern Guildford owes its underlying pattern to changes in the 10th



The River Wey (Outside the Town Centre CA)

century when the existing settlement, possibly originally located on the western bank of the Wey, was replaced on the eastern bank by a typical Saxon planned town. Today's High Street formed the main axis rising then, as now, from the site of the ford over the Wey up the hill to the east. Lesser streets (called *gates* from Old English *geat* meaning 'a way through') were laid out on both sides of the High Street at right angles to the main axis. Today's Friary Street, White Lion Walk, Swan Lane, Angel Gate, Market Street, Jeffries Passage, Tunsgate, Chapel Street and the Shambles are the remains of these lanes, and the long thin plots, stretching back on either side of the High Street, reflect the division of the land into individual plots or *burgages*.



Narrow alleys connect North Street to the High Street

A defensive bank and ditch surrounded the whole town. This is clearly traceable on the north side of the High Street along the line of today's North Street (originally North Ditch). The corresponding South Ditch is harder to trace because of later quarrying and castle

building activity, but has been found during archaeological excavations in the area. The town's three churches – St Mary's, Holy Trinity and St Nicholas – were all founded at this time, though St Mary's is the only one with surviving Saxon fabric.

Guildford gained a much bigger and more imposing castle in 1066, when William the Conqueror chose Guildford as the site of a royal castle. The castle never saw active military service, but the fabric was maintained continuously throughout the Norman and Angevin periods by successive monarchs. This is not surprising, as it lay midway along the route from London to Winchester, the new and old capitals of England, and made a convenient stopover point. Furthermore, it was then the administrative centre not only of Surrey but also of Sussex. The area to the north and west was emparked by Henry II who used the castle as a hunting lodge. The huge surviving motte, with its keep of Bargate stone, took its present form in 1170s when Henry II ordered the original timber structure to be rebuilt.



Guildford Castle

In the Domesday Book (compiled 1086), Guildford is the only town in Surrey. The entry says that 'in Gildeford King William has 75 tenements in which are resident 175 tenants', suggesting a population of around 700 people. This is not a large number of people or dwellings given the ambitious scale of the tenth-century layout, and it is possible that the encircling bank and ditch enclosed an area much larger than was actually needed for the population of the town: even in the 18th century (see Richardson's map of 1739), the town contained large areas of undeveloped

garden, orchard, pasture and open land.

From the twelfth century, Guildford was known for producing a coarse kersey-style woollen cloth known as *Guildford Blue*, coloured using a woad-based dye, which was sold all over western Europe. Guildford had one of England's first fulling mills (in 1250), using fuller's earth from the Weald to remove grease from the natural wool. The name of Racks Close, in the southern extremity of the conservation area, is a reminder that wool and cloth were hung to dry on timber racks in this area of the town. Just east of Racks Close, the public park between Quarry Street and Warwick's Bench is full of the humps and bumps of discarded quarry waste from medieval tunnels opened up to the north of Quarry Street and south of the Castle to extract hard chalk (clunch) for use as a building material. The use of clunch for medieval building can be seen in the 13th-century undercrofts that survive complete beneath nos. 72-74 High Street and the Angel Hotel, with their round piers and chamfered rib vaults. There are traces of similar undercrofts to several other properties along the High Street.

Beneath Waterstone's bookshop, at nos. 50–54 High Street, there is an even more unusual survival in the form of a subterranean room, possibly used as a hidden synagogue, dating from around 1180 and rediscovered only in 1995. Most of Guildford's Jews left the town in 1275 when the dowager Queen Eleanor of Provence, widow of Henry III, expelled Jewish people from all of her lands. However, in the same year, she gave land at the western end of the High Street (just outside the north town ditch) to the



The Grammar School, High Street

Dominicans Friars. They founded a friary on the site in memory of her son Prince Henry, who had died at Guildford Castle in 1274. Henry II's charter of 1257 confirmed Guildford as the county town of Surrey and by the Tudor period the town managed its own affairs, being run by a Corporation of mayor and 'twelve approved men'. The town's Free School was founded in 1521, and refounded as the Grammar School in 1551. The Friary was dissolved in 1538 and pulled down in 1606, when it was replaced by Friary House.

Between 1619 and 1622, George Abbot (1562–1633), Vice Chancellor of Oxford University (from 1600), translator of the King James Bible (from 1604) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1611–33) was able to build the splendid Trinity Hospital (now Abbot's Hospital) on a large plot in the north-eastern corner of the old town. This accommodated twenty of the town's elderly residents in a prestigious brick building as substantial as any Oxford college.



Abbot's Hospital

During the 17th century, a large number of the timber buildings lining the High Street and

Quarry Street were given new brick facades in fashionable baroque, rococo or classical styles. Outstanding examples are nos. 25, 103, 117, and 155 (Guildford House). The exterior of Guildford's most iconic building, the Guildhall, also dates from this period. Pevsner describes it as 'superb, the epitome of Restoration panache, refronted in 1683' (the date on the magnificent clock projecting from the pediment) 'exactly placed so that it defines the skyline of the views uphill and nets the background of the Hog's Back in the downhill views'.



Guildford House



The Guildhall

No doubt the wealth that was lavished on these and other buildings in Guildford owed something to the wealth generated by the improvements to the Wey Navigation, opening to barge traffic in 1653. This 25 km waterway linked Guildford to Weybridge on the Thames, and then to London. The Godalming Navigation, opened in 1764, enabled barges to Matthew an additional 6 km upriver.

Richardson's map of 1739 shows how even by the mid-18th century, development was restricted to the High Street and its immediate back lanes with much of the land still used as orchards, fields and gardens.

London's influence is clearly seen in Holy Trinity Church, opposite Abbot's Hospital at the eastern end of the High Street, where the collapse of the medieval tower necessitated the rebuilding of the nave and chancel in 1749–63. The handsome new brick church is the work of James Horne: Pevsner calls the result 'similar to his now demolished St. Catherine Coleman in the City of London'. This was also a period when no less than five coaching inns were newly built or refurbished within the old town, of which the Angel Inn is the only one that survives.

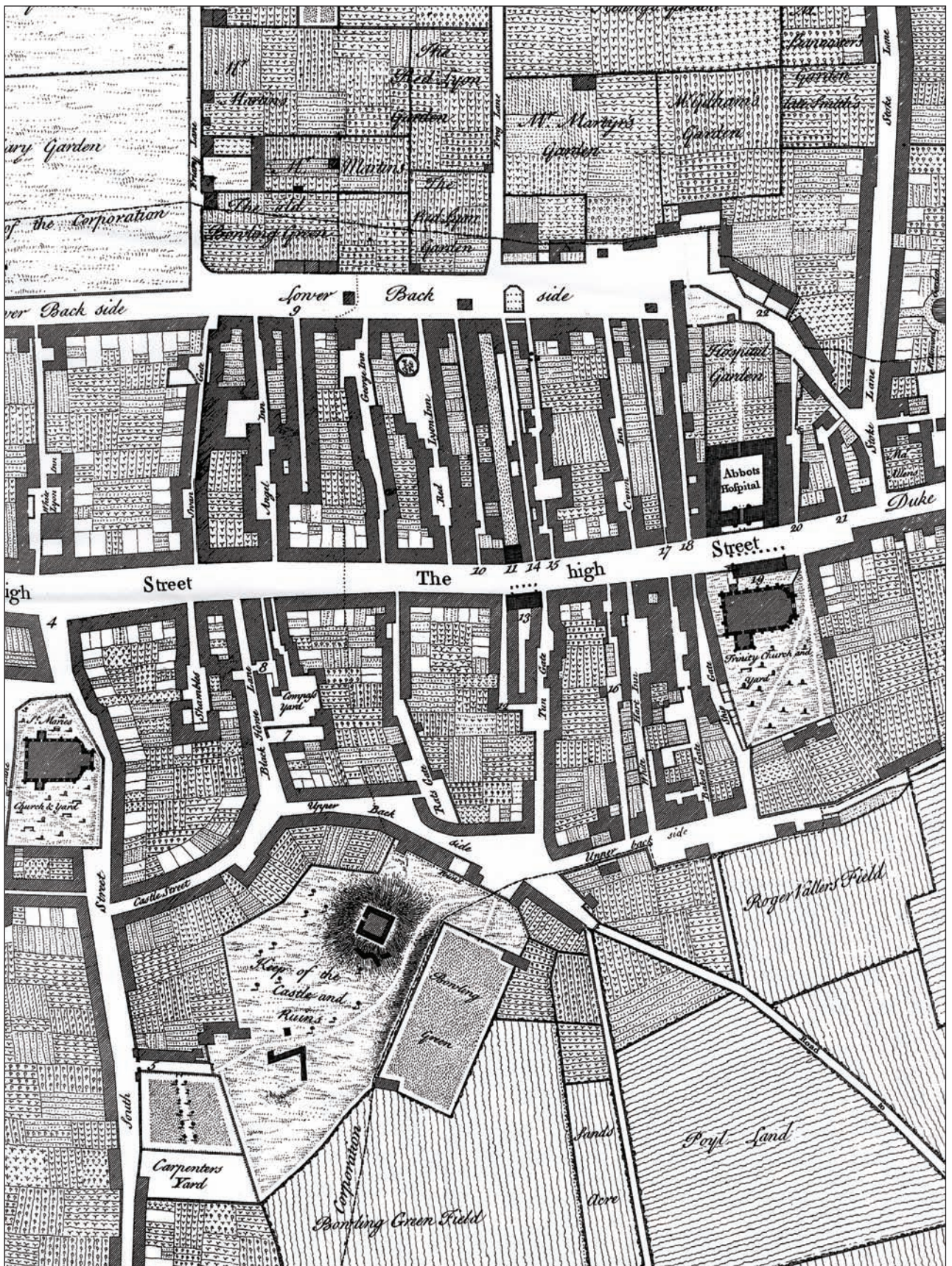


Fig 1. Matthew Richardson's map of Guildford 1739



Holy Trinity Church

### 19th century and later development.

In the early 19th century there was only limited growth within the town. Friary House was used as a barracks during the Napoleonic Wars and was demolished in 1818, after which the site was used for a brewery and wharf. However, the coming of the railway to Guildford in 1845 began a huge transformation, affecting means of transport and stimulating population growth. The last horse-drawn coach ran between Guildford and London in 1849, and the cheapness of the railway meant that barging goods along

the River Wey Navigation became unviable. From having been an under-populated county throughout much of its history, Surrey grew rapidly to become the eighth most populous county in England, thanks to the age of the commuter. Between 1845 and 1901 Guildford's population quadrupled from 4,000 to 16,000 and speeded up again in the 1920s and 1930s.

On the 1872 Ordnance Survey map it is possible to see the consequences for Guildford of this growth in population. Within the conservation area, new housing plots have been laid out on green fields to the south of Sydenham Road, and a few semi-detached houses have already been constructed. Two new schools have been built: the one on the corner of South Hill and Pewley Hill stands opposite a covered reservoir, again newly built; the one on the opposite side of the town, on York Road (Sandfield Primary School), stands in isolation in 1870, but is surrounded by the terraces of Haydon Place, College Road, Sandfield Terrace and Martyr Road by 1895. Also by 1895, the Charlotteville Board School had been built on Sydenham Road (opened in 1886 and enlarged in 1890 to accommodate 1,000 pupils), and all the



Fig 2. Witherby's map of Guildford C 1835



Fig 3. 1872 Ordnance Survey map of Guildford

building plots shown as vacant on the 1872 map had semi-detached houses on them.

Larger detached villas also appear for the first time on the 1895 map on the southern side of the conservation area. Some of the finest and grandest of these late Victorian houses encroach upon the castle's outer bailey and a few more have been built along both sides of South Hill by 1912. These houses represent the western extremity of the Charlotteville suburb, developed by the architect and mayor of Guildford, Henry Peake, and the physician, Dr Thomas Sells, after whose wife the estate is named. With streets named after eminent physicians the estate is centred around Addison and Harvey Road, all of which lies just outside the Town Centre Conservation Area. It includes Mount Alvernia Hospital, built by Peake and Sells on the site of the town's former workhouse. Most of the Charlotteville suburb is included within the Charlotteville Conservation Area.

Apart from a small area of semi-detached houses along the southern side of the Sydenham Road, this part of Guildford continued to develop as an area of large and handsome houses set in ample gardens over the next two decades. By contrast,

the northern part of the conservation area filled up during the period 1895 to 1912 with smaller, semi-detached or terraced houses. The stimulus for the development of this part of the town was the opening of a second railway station (London Road) in 1885, creating a new route to London via Surbiton.



London Road Station

One part of the Town Centre Conservation Area to the south of York Road and to the north of the High Street owes its character almost entirely to changes in the twentieth century. Eastgate Gardens was developed in the 1920s with cottage-style houses set in small gardens, but the surrounding land





Fig 4.1912 Ordnance Survey map of Guildford

remained largely untouched until the Post-War period, surviving as an area of fields and orchards until the 1960s and 1970s, when the new shops were built along the upper High Street, a new Civic Hall was provided off London Road, and the York Road multi-storey car park was constructed in a worked-out chalk quarry. As the car park is set within the chalk quarry its nine storeys are almost completely hidden below ground level. In the late 1970s Allen House, an historic building facing upper High Street, was demolished and new buildings built for the Grammar School. The gardens became sports fields for the school.

Just outside the western edge of the conservation area, another more visible modern building, the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, was built between 1963 and 1965 on the banks of the River Wey, and from 1966 Surrey University was established on a site even further west on the edges of Guildford.

From the 1980s onwards Guildford developed as an important sub-regional shopping centre helped by the construction of the



Civic Hall



House of Fraser store

Friary Centre in the mid-1970s. In 1996 Guildford won the British Council of Shopping Centres Town Centre Environmental Award, confirming its status as one of the country's favourite shopping destinations.

The more recent remodelling of the House of Fraser store in the High Street, and the incremental addition over the last ten years of most of the "nationals" (particularly clothes shops, restaurants and bars) has provided Guildford with a vibrant and attractive town centre. Arguably the loss of the small independent traders is regretted, but the historic North Street Market continues to thrive and contributes to the vitality of the town. Guildford has also become a popular visitor attraction, centred on the Guildford Castle area with its attractive public gardens, famous for their displays of colourful planting every year.



Floral displays in Castle Grounds

### 3 Character Appraisal

The character of the Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area is the product of a combination of the following:

- Topography, views and vistas
- Use and activity
- Character areas
- Materials, textures, colours and detailing
- Open spaces, trees and footpaths
- Public realm
- Special Features

#### 3.1 Topography, views and vistas

Guildford's location on a dip in the North Downs where the River Wey breaks through provides the town with a varied topography, with the southern and eastern parts of the conservation area being generally higher than the west and north. Steep hills are therefore present in the High Street, Castle Hill, Pewley Hill, and South Hill. Undulating topography, much of it man-made, is also evident in Racks Close and the gardens surrounding the castle, where the castle keep is a very important local landmark. North of the High Street, the land is relatively flat with a noticeable change in level along the eastern end of North Street, where it drops down slightly from the junction with the High Street. The only exception is found in Foxenden Playground and the adjoining former quarry pit, where excavation for chalk in the past has artificially lowered the ground level and provided dramatic changes in level, visible from York Road and Dene Road.



View from Guildford Castle

The topography of the conservation area is therefore a key characteristic having been instrumental in shaping how the settlement developed and how the various streets were laid out. The most important feature is the steeply sloping High Street, rising from the ford over the River Wey, which provided the basis for the Saxon "new town" laid out in the 10th century above the floodplain of the river. This hilly topography results in a variety of dramatic views and vistas, both within the town and also out into the surrounding landscape, much of which is designated as the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



View across Racks Close

The most notable views and vistas are:

- Down the High Street, across the river crossing, to The Mount with its fields and trees to the west of the town centre
- From the Old Town Bridge along the River Wey in both directions
- From Quarry Street over the River Wey and its water meadows
- From Racks Close park across to the wooded hills in the west
- Into and out of the castle grounds, focusing on the Norman keep
- From the residential suburbs off Sydenham Road and Bright Hill northwards over the town
- Along the narrow streets and alleys leading off the High Street
- Along the railway line from the London Road railway bridge to the cathedral (west) and trees (east)



View down the High Street towards the river

It is important for the preservation of the character of the Town Centre Conservation Area that the most important views and vistas are maintained and enhanced. Proposals for new development on prominent sites or elevated land must contain sufficient information to enable the impact on longer distance views and the setting of the conservation area to be assessed as well as the immediate impact on the street scene. Additionally, far reaching views to the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty need to be protected.

### 3.2 Use and activity

The Town Centre Conservation Area is the commercial centre of the town, with a variety of uses in the High Street and North Street of which shopping is by far the most important, with a large number of 'national' shops being represented. Restaurants, bars and cafes now make a significant contribution to the vitality of this area, with other uses including educational (The Grammar School), religious (Holy Trinity Church) and civic (Guildford House), being present. There are some residential uses (Abbot's Hospital) and a very limited amount of the commercial property facing the High Street contain upper floors which have been converted to flats.

Long stay car parking is provided in multi-storey car parks in York Road and next to the station, with the main shoppers' parking in Bedford Road (serving the Friary Centre) and Sydenham Road.

Quarry Street contains a number of imposing listed buildings, most of which have been converted into offices. Many of these



Guildford Museum

buildings on the south side of the road had gardens which once stretched down to the River Wey, that are incrementally being filled in with new commercial buildings. Guildford Museum is also located in the street.

Leisure and tourism play a significant part in the local economy with many visitors coming to Guildford to shop and to visit the castle and the river. Of note is the large amount of public open space within the conservation area, varying from the manicured municipal planting in the Castle Grounds to the wilder, more rural character of Racks Close park. Other open spaces include Castle Cliffe Gardens (with its bowling green), Allen House Grounds (including the tennis courts, bowling green, and putting green), and the Foxenden Quarry Park and children's playground.



Castle Grounds bowling green

Residential suburbs lie to the south of Sydenham Road, with more mixed uses of which residential and commercial predominate, north of North Street.

The area is well served by public transport with the mainline railway station for London

and Portsmouth just to the west of Old Town Bridge and the other more secondary station at London Road, on the northern edges of the conservation area. A bus and coach station operates next to the Friary Centre.

### 3.3 Character Areas

Guildford divides into four character areas due to variations in topography, the date of development, building types and uses, materials, and landscape features. These four character areas are:

- Guildford Castle and the quarries
- The High Street.
- 19th century housing to the south of Sydenham Road
- 19th century and later development to the north of the High Street

#### Area 1: Guildford Castle and the quarries.

- Hilly, west facing slope dropping down to the River Wey
- Guildford Castle is the earliest feature (1066), as the line of the earlier Saxon south ditch has been lost by subsequent development
- Area is notable for its parkland and green spaces, centred on Guildford Castle, and for the listed buildings in Quarry Street
- Castle Street curves around Guildford
- Castle, at the back of the plots facing the High Street
- Quarry Street is early route out of the town, running gently downwards towards the river, and may date to the building of the tower of St • Mary's Church by the Saxons in 1040



St Mary's Church, Quarry Street

- Quarry Street contains terraces of mainly listed houses, set on the back of the pavements, with gardens which once dropped down to the River Wey
- Examples of 16th and 17th century timber-framed houses in Quarry Street, many refronted in the 18th or 19th centuries in a variety of styles
- Roofscape very important – mainly hand-made clay tiles, pitched, with brick chimneys
- Key buildings: Guildford Castle (Scheduled Monument) and St Mary's Church (grade I)
- No. 13 Quarry Street appears to be a late 13th or early 14th century building with an 18th century refronting, and as such is one of the three oldest buildings in the conservation area (with St Mary's Church and Guildford Castle)
- Mixed uses, but mainly offices, tourism and leisure with some residential
- Use of very varied materials: Bargate stone, clunch, flint, painted render and brick
- Clunch, flint and Bargate stone walls a special feature



Use of clunch, flint and Bargate stone on Guildford Castle

- Worked out chalk quarries now pleasant, informal parkland (Racks Close park)
- Guildford Castle and its surrounding gardens are important focal point for visitors and locals
- War Memorial in Castle Grounds
- Quieter public parks contrast with the busy traffic along Millbrook/Shalford Road below

- Trees very important in Racks Close and Castle Grounds

## Area 2: The High Street.

### High Street:

- High Street rises steeply in a straight line from the River Wey crossing
- Narrow alleys and side streets at right angles to the main frontages, providing links from the High Street to North Street and Castle Street particularly
- The lower High Street is lined with almost continuous listed buildings on long thin plots which reflect the Saxon burgages



North side of High Street

- No front gardens or areas – buildings lie on the back of the pavement
- High Street is a wide road, reflecting its previous use as a market place
- Varied rooflines and architectural details, many with ground floor shopfronts
- The buildings in the High Street are taller than the more domestic buildings in neighbouring Quarry Street – 3 or 4 storeys are common
- Variations in roof details – eaves, parapets, cornicing – also varied roof materials, though mainly handmade clay or natural slate
- Mixture of modern and historic shopfronts, generally well detailed
- Recent development of the House of Fraser



South side of High Street

- store – very tall, bulky extensions which seem out of character
- Mixture of materials and building periods, but overall character is 18th or 19th century
- Key buildings: Guildhall (grade I c.1550, 1589 and 1683); Abbot's Hospital (grade I 1622); Church of Holy Trinity (grade I c.1540 and 1763); Guildford House, no. 155 (grade I c.1660)
- Other significant buildings: Angel Hotel (grade II\* - 13th century undercroft with 16th and 17th century timber-framing); Lloyds TSB bank, nos. 145 and 147 (grade II\* 1765);



Angel Hotel

- Jeffrey Jellicoe garden on roof of House of Fraser store is on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens – dates to the 1950s
- Good quality hard landscaping to pavements and road surface in lower High Street, which is pedestrianised for a major part of the day
- Farmers' market once a month adds vitality

### Upper High Street:

- Upper High Street contains 20th century development along the northern side, with a



Good quality paving enhances the conservation area

- mixture of historic buildings along the south, again mainly shops
- The most important building is the Grammar School (grade I 1557-1586)
- North side has varied modern frontages, including a large open green space with a significant tree in front of the 1960s and 1980s school buildings
- Modern street surfaces and furniture of no special merit
- Very busy traffic
- School uses generate activity



South side of Upper High Street

*North Street:*

- Line of Saxon ditch along North Street
- North Street contains fewer listed buildings with some large modern blocks
- Regular street market (Friday and Saturday) adds vitality
- Busy traffic with poor pedestrian links
- Important connections to the High Street via alleys and narrow streets



North Street Market

**Area 3: 19th century housing: south of Sydenham Road.**

- Late 19th century residential suburb along south side of Sydenham Road with smaller pairs of cottages facing Chiselden Road and Brodie Road
- Streets run parallel to contours or at right angles to them (e.g. Chiseldon Road and Brodie Road, both of which have paired or terraced houses stepping down the hill)
- Properties tend to be set back from road with small front gardens, defined by walls or hedges
- Use of red brick, knapped flint panels, and Bargate stone for walls
- Welsh slate for roofs
- Sydenham Road and Harvey Road both have busy traffic
- Chiselden Road and Brodie Road are relatively peaceful
- Good views across north Guildford down Chiselden Road and Brodie Road, and from the top of Bright Hill above the car park



Chiselden Road



View across Bright Hill

**Area 4: 19th century and later development: north of the High Street.**

- Flattish topography apart from the deep dip around the York Street multi-storey car park, located in a former chalk pit
- Much of the area developed in the late 19th



Chertsey Street

century following the opening of the London Road Station in 1885

- Principal streets are Chertsey Street and York Road, both of which are main traffic routes
- Mixed uses along Chertsey Street – commercial, residential and a school
- York Road is mainly flats, converted from tall Edwardian houses
- Most of the listed buildings are close to the High Street
- Rows of late 19th century terraced two storey cottages in Sandfield Terrace, Haydon Place, and Martyr Road
- Better quality mid to late 19th century detached villas, some of them listed or locally listed, set back with more spacious gardens, in Chertsey Street
- Eastgate Gardens: Attractively detailed, brown brick 1920s detached cottages in small gardens - an unlikely form of development just to the north of the upper High Street
- Large blocks of modern development in Chertsey Street
- Large vacant site between Martyr Road and



York Road

The Bars, awaiting redevelopment

- Development of Grammar School with new buildings on the north side of the High Street in the 1970s resulted in the demolition of Allen House and the provision of school buildings, playing fields etc in the town centre
- Allen House Grounds (tennis, bowls) and Foxenden Playground important open spaces, with trees and seating
- World War II tunnels (shelter) beneath Allen House Gardens



Eastgate Gardens



Allen House Grounds



Quarry Street



### 3.4 Materials, textures, colours and detailing

The Town Centre Conservation Area contains a complex variety of materials and architectural styles developed informally over the centuries which help to give the area its distinctive character. The principal architectural styles and materials are:

- Norman castle keep, and ruins of the castle
- Flint churches – St Mary's (Saxon tower and 12th century and later); Holy Trinity High Street elevation (mainly 18th century)
- Narrow fronted late medieval gabled houses, mainly two storeys high, built using timber-framing, with steeply pitched peg tiled roofs (e.g's in Quarry Street) – often refronted in brick or painted render
- Prestigious three storied buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries (e.g. Abbot's

Hospital, The Grammar School, Guildford House, and the Guildhall)

- Tall 18th or 19th century town houses, with parapet roofs, classical features (sash windows, panelled front doors), two or three windows wide, faced in brick or painted render (e.g's in High Street and Quarry Street)
- 19th century schools using Bargate stone or brick, with slate roofs (e.g. Castle Nursery, Castle Hill and the Harvey Road Adult Education Centre)
- 19th century houses and cottages, using brick, Bargate stone, and flint (e.g's in Sydenham Road area, and north of North Street)



Castle Nursery

The list below contains the principal examples of materials, textures and detailing within the area but the omission of any others does not mean that they are of no importance.

#### Roofs:

- Handmade clay tiles: Roofs on the timber-framed buildings of the late medieval period through to the 17th century are invariably pitched at about 45 degrees and covered in handmade clay tiles. Traditionally they were fixed using two small oak pegs (hence 'peg tiles') but more recently the tiles have been manufactured with a lip providing greater stability. The soft, undulating shape of the many peg tiled roofs in the town centre is an important feature of parts of the conservation area. Many of these timber framed buildings have narrow frontages facing Quarry Street or the High Street with



Handmade clay tiles add interest to buildings

prominent gables sometimes marked by ornate fascia boards. Eaves details are invariably vernacular with exposed rafter ends. Fascia boards and cast iron gutters tend to be a later addition. Refronting of these buildings in the 18th or 19th centuries resulted in the addition of brick parapets behind which the tiled roofs and thick brick chimney stacks of the earlier building can sometimes be glimpsed.

- Welsh slate: Welsh slate became the preferred roofing material after 1845 when the railways provided cheaper transportation costs. Most of the buildings in the conservation area which post-date the mid-19th century are therefore covered in Welsh slate. This meant that the roofs could have a much shallower pitch (about 22 degrees) than required for clay tiles (about 45 degrees). From the mid-19th century when Welsh slate became fashionable, roofs therefore became shallower with more ornate eaves details. Hips were defined with lead rolls and chimneys became more delicate, with corbelled brickwork and



Gables in Quarry Street



decorative clay pots. These are more obvious in the outer residential areas where the roofs are more visible. An interesting example is no. 20 Stoke Road, an unlisted three bay mid-19th century detached villa with a hipped slate roof terminating in four brick stacks with heavy oversailing courses and tall pots. Sadly, the original lead rolls have been replaced with concrete ridge tiles.



Slate roofs in Brodie Road

- Machine made clay tiles: Late 19th and early 20th century roofs continued to be slated, but the fashion for the Vernacular Revival in the late 19th century brought back (machine made) clay roofing tiles, as seen in Quarry Gate at the bottom of Great Quarry (currently just outside the conservation area), or in Oxford Terrace.
- Concrete tiles: More recently, many of the roofs of the unlisted houses, especially in the residential areas, such as Brodie Road and Chiseldon Road, have been recovered using concrete tiles. Apart from their clumsy and unattractive appearance, these can cause structural problems due to the great increase in weight.
- Thatch: There are no examples of straw thatch in the conservation area but old photographs show it was once used in Quarry Street.

*Walling materials:*

- Bargate stone: Bargate stone is a hard, course grained, calcareous sandstone, coloured by iron oxide, which was quarried near Guildford and Godalming until the 19th century. It can be seen on a wide range

of buildings dating from the 12th century (Guildford Castle keep) to the 19th century (houses and cottages in York Road, Jenner Road, and Chiseldon Road). It is also used for walling (Quarry Street). The quarries are now closed.



Use of Bargate Stone and red brick: Dene Road Jenner Road

- Clunch: Clunch is a form of hard chalk block, which was quarried from the North Downs below Guildford from the 12th century onwards. It was used for lining medieval cellars (nos. 72-74 High Street) and for parts of Guildford Castle keep. Clunch also makes up a substantial amount of the ruins of Guildford Castle, including the Castle Gate, and can be seen in boundary walls in Quarry Street. The rear elevation to no. 20 Quarry Street has recently exposed clunch blocks, visible from Millmead.



Clunch is used on the rear elevation of this building facing Millmead

- Flint. Flint nodules (like large pebbles) are found between the layers of chalk below Guildford. It is a very hard material and can be split to form a smooth-faced material suitable for walling of all kinds. Chips of flint are also used for strengthening or decorating lime mortar joints in walling, a process termed 'galletting' (e.g. St Mary's Church, built principally from flint; and Oxford Terrace, where panels of knapped flint decorate the front elevations).



Oxford Terrace

- **Carstone:** Carstone is a very hard ferruginous sandstone from the Lower Greensand deposits near Chilworth which weathers to a very dark brown/black. Small squares of this material can be found in paving (St Mary's Churchyard) or as galletting in Bargate stone walls (Castle Hill).
- **Sandstone:** Sandstone roof tiles, often called Horsham slates, were quarried to the south-east of Guildford. The Grammar School roof is the only example in the conservation area.



St Mary's Churchyard

- **Timber.** Surrey was well endowed with large forests in the medieval period so there was a plentiful local supply of timber, mainly oak, elm and chestnut, for building. Most of the



Timber framed buildings in Quarry Street



Timber framed buildings in Holy Trinity Churchyard

medieval buildings in Guildford were therefore built using timber-frame construction, with the infill panels being faced in daub (a kind of rough plaster made from lime, straw and cow manure) set on wattle (usually willow twigs) or split chestnut or oak lathes. The size of these buildings was constrained by the maximum length of a tree trunk (usually about 4-5 metres), giving the narrow frontages and bay widths which are characteristic of many of the buildings fronting the High Street and Quarry Street. More prestigious buildings, like the Guildhall or Guildford House, used longer, more expensive timbers to give larger rooms sizes. Many of these were refronted in the 18th or 19th centuries using clay tiles, render-faced rubble, or brick. Examples of another timber-frame feature, jettied first floors, can also be seen in High Street and Quarry Street.



Red and brown brick houses in Quarry Street

- **Red brick and tiles:** Hand made bricks and tiles were made locally from Wealden clay. The most notable example of the early use of brick in the conservation area is at Abbot's Hospital, dating to 1622, where small, plum coloured bricks were used, with chalk dressings (now replaced in stone) for the main elevations. After brick making methods improved in the 18th century, brick became cheaper and more fashionable, resulting in a variety of colours being produced – glazed white, a yellowy/white, and various shades of red or brown. Good examples can be seen in Jenner Road and Chiseldon Road, where brick, flint and Bargate stone are combined in some of the 19th century houses.

- **Vertical tile hanging:** Locally manufactured clay tiles, both hand-made and after c.1900, machine-made, feature on many of the buildings in the conservation area. The older, undulating hand-made tiles can be seen in Mill Lane, and the 20th century, cheaper machine-made tiles can be seen in Oxford Road.



Tile hanging on house in Harvey Road

- **Render:** Lime-based renders were used to face rough rubble walls from the 18th century onwards, and were often lined out to replicate stone. Sometimes earlier timber-framed buildings were refaced using these materials to give a fashionable Georgian front. These lime renders are soft and pliable, as opposed to modern cement-based renders which tend to crack. Frequently these buildings are now painted white or a pastel colour.



Rendered house facing Holy Trinity Churchyard

- **Timber boarding.** Traditional timber boarding, of the feather-edged type, was used to face timber-framed buildings where insulation and draught proofing was not important, for instance on buildings in agricultural uses or on storehouses or

stables. Small areas of weatherboarding can be seen from Millbrook on the backs of buildings facing Quarry Street, but there are almost certainly other examples on the back elevations of some of the older houses in the conservation area, hidden from public view.



No. 20 Chapel Street



Vertically sliding timber sashes are an important characteristic of the conservation area

#### *Windows:*

There are many examples of window design in the conservation area, according to the age and style of the building. The earliest are the simple iron casements that once contained small panes of handmade glass in lead cames (glazing bars) which were used for timber-framed buildings (e.g. no. 20 Chapel Street – first floor). These were also, in the more prestigious houses, arranged in mullioned and transomed window frames. Examples survive at Guildford House, no. 155 High Street, dating to the 17th century, and the Guildhall. No. 46 High Street, which was restored in the early 20th century, has more modern versions of these details.

However, the predominant window type in the conservation area is the double timber vertically sliding sash, usually divided into six or eight panes. These reflect the 18th and 19th century taste for classical architecture and occur in the majority of the listed buildings in the conservation area. The proportion of these windows gives an elegant vertical emphasis to the buildings, as opposed to the more horizontal lines of the earlier buildings, with their low eaves heights, casement windows, and simple unadorned facades.

*Front doors:*

Early doors are constructed using simple planks of hardwood, usually oak, which were left to weather naturally. Most of the doors in the conservation area however date to the 18th or 19th centuries and are made from softwood and painted. Traditionally, such doors had four or six panels, the lower two sometimes raised and fielded to add importance. The heavily decorated door to Quarry Hill House in Quarry Street is an unusual 19th century piece of whimsy.



Quarry Hill House

*Texture and colours:*

The variety of the local building materials and

details provides the conservation area with a wide range of textures and colours, of which the warm red of the clay brick and roofing tiles is the most prevalent, mixed with grey flint, brown/red Bargate stone, grey/white clunch, and grey Welsh slate. White or pastel painted render is another common material, often contrasting with red brick.



Warwick Rise, No. 10 Jenner Road

- Boundary walls made from a mixture of Bargate stone (reddish brown), clunch (grey/white), flint (grey/black) and brick (red/brown)
- Reddish brown Bargate stone used for 19th century buildings (e.g. Warwick Rise, no. 10 Jenner Road, where the stone is cut to look like brick, and York Road)
- Flint and stone walling (grey/brown) on St Mary's Church
- Brick walling, made from smooth red bricks of the 18th and 19th centuries, sometimes mixed with blue brick headers to form a chequer pattern (e.g. listed houses in the High Street and Quarry Street)
- More textured dark red/plum brick (e.g. Abbot's Hospital)
- White, yellow and brown bricks used from the mid-19th century onwards (e.g. Jenner Road, Brodie Road, Oxford Road)



Sydenham Road

- Decorative brickwork on houses in Sydenham Road (e.g. nos. 2-8 even), in cream, black and red)
- Red and brown plain and fishscale hanging clay tiles used on the front and sides of no. 44 Harvey Road (c.1870)
- White painted render/stucco (19th century examples in the High Street) or white painted roughcast over timber-framing (e.g. no. 4 Quarry Street)
- Clunch provides white walling for boundaries and buildings (e.g. Guildford Castle and Castle Gate)
- Timber-framing provides black and white in contrast to each other (e.g. no. 16 Quarry Street – rear range)



Castle Arch

### 3.5 Open spaces, green areas and trees

The Town Centre Conservation Area provides a wide variety of spaces, sometimes urban and “hard” (High Street and its environs) and sometimes green and “soft” (Castle Grounds, Racks Close park, Allen House Grounds). These together form an essential part of the character of the conservation area. Just as important are the boundary walls which define these areas, built with a variety of materials - Bargate stone, clunch, flint or brick – and by the “green” boundaries created by informal hedging or trees. The loss of these boundaries, particularly to create car parking areas in front of buildings, is one of the most

detrimental features of the conservation area, especially noticeable along Chertsey Street and Sydenham Road.

#### *Open spaces and green areas:*

The High Street is a quite open and wide public space, enhanced by the partial pedestrianisation scheme, which forbids traffic for most of the day. Off the High Street are a number of smaller, enclosed spaces such as Holy Trinity Churchyard, St Mary’s Churchyard, and at the bottom of the hill, just outside the conservation area, the River Wey and parkland and green spaces associated with it. These spaces are usually available for the use of the public. The more constrained narrow alleys and streets leading off the High Street, which reflect the boundaries and general form of the Saxon burgage plots, are extremely important. These include Market Street, Swan Lane, Jeffries Passage, Chapel Street, and Bakers Yard. Quarry Street is also significant as the view along it is immediately constrained by St Mary’s Church with its yew trees, on a bend in the road.



Upper High Street

In the upper High Street there is an open green space (not open to the public) in front of the modern Grammar School buildings with some trees which are important in views along the street. However, the constant traffic adversely affects the quality of this part of the High Street.

Other open spaces include:

- Racks Close park. This is the site of some former chalk pits and now provides an informal, grassy park for locals to walk through and relax in. Parts of the old chalk face are still exposed. The many mature



Racks Close

trees and peaceful atmosphere create a delightful ambiance, and there are good views westwards beyond the river valley towards wooded hills. It is surprisingly underused.

- Guildford Castle Grounds. The Grounds are a delightful area around the Castle keep which are used for flower displays and relaxation. The bowling green, which dates to at least 1739, is a popular facility and in the summer there is an outside theatre. The Castle Grounds were bought by Guildford Corporation from local landowner Lord Grantley in 1885 and laid out as Victorian Pleasure Grounds by Henry Peaked the Borough Surveyor to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1888



A curving pathway winds through the Castle Grounds

- Castle Cliffe Gardens. These lie just within the former castle bailey, with chalk block ruins of the former castle buildings still remaining. The area is grassed and popular with office workers in the summer as a place to sit and have a picnic. There are good views across Quarry Street (which lies slightly below) to the River Wey and beyond



Quakers Acre

- "Quakers Acre" - Society of Friends Garden, North Street. This was given to the town in 1927 and contains hard landscaping, some flower beds, a mature tree, and a modern statue
- Quaker Meeting House garden with original railings and brick gate piers in Ward Street

*Trees:*

Trees make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and they are also significant in long



Trees in Millbrook

views westwards down the High Street across to The Mount. The most notable trees or tree groups within the conservation area are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map, of which the following have perhaps the greatest impact:

South of the High Street:

- Along the River Wey (outside the Town Centre Conservation Area boundary but very important in views from the town)
- At the entrance to the conservation area from the south along Shalford Road
- In the gardens in Quarry Street/Millbrook
- In Racks Close parkland
- To the south and east of Guildford Castle in Castle Grounds and Castle Street
- In St Mary's Churchyard
- Around and in the surface car park in Sydenham Road below Bright Hill
- Around the reservoir in Oxford Terrace
- Decorative hedge outside no. 44 Harvey Road



Foxenden Quarry Playground

North of the High Street:

- In the grounds of the Grammar School
- Around York Road multi-storey car park/ Foxenden Playground
- In Allen House grounds along the boundaries
- In grounds of the Civic Centre (especially the yew)
- To the west of London Road railway station, where they partially conceal the World War II tank defences
- Some trees along Chertsey Street

High Street:

The High Street has few relatively new street

trees, such as the one outside Holy Trinity Church. The only mature trees can be found in the Upper High Street outside the Grammar School new build, in front of the church (a silver birch) and in the churchyard, not easily visible from the High Street.

### 3.6 Public realm

The “public realm” covers a variety of features found in the space between the buildings rather than the buildings themselves. It therefore includes street paving, lighting, signage, and street furniture such as litter bins and bus shelters. The quality of these components makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and where they are badly designed, or neglected, they can adversely affect the special interest of the whole area.

Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area is fortunate in that there are still many remains of good quality, mainly 19th century details to be found, of which the granite sett paving in the High Street, laid down by order of the then mayor, Henry Peake, in 1868, is the most significant visually. Other remnants of historic paving, boundary treatments, and other features, have been noted as part of survey work for this appraisal and are listed below. These features must be preserved by careful maintenance and thoughtful repair, using traditional materials and workmanship.

In more recent years, the town centre has been subject to a variety of well designed “environmental improvements”, carried out by Guildford Borough Council. Usually, these schemes have specified high quality, traditional materials in keeping with the urban character of the town centre, such as large (usually 900 mm x 600 mm) York stone slabs, Staffordshire blue “stable” paviors (with a criss-cross pattern), granite kerbing, and chunky cast iron bollards.

*The most notable of these schemes are:*

- High Street - repaving pavements using flame textured York stone (to prevent slipping), now worn down almost flat
- Rosemary Alley - repaving using York stone slabs
- Chapel Street – repaving using granite setts



Mill Lane

and York stone paving as part of the recently completed pedestrianisation scheme

- Mill Lane – repaving using granite setts (200 x 100 mm) laid in a pattern; granite kerbs and York stone slabs; and traditional cast iron bollards and railings
- Baker's Yard off upper High Street - Staffordshire blue paviers and red brick paviers



Staffordshire Blue paviers in Holy Trinity Churchyard

- Castle Street and Holy Trinity Churchyard - Staffordshire blue paviers
- Harvey Road improvements and traffic calming – a recent scheme has provided new street trees with parking bays protected by black, chunky bollards and blue/black stone kerbing



Alley between Nos. 162 / 164 High Street

*Examples of surviving historic paving:*

- High Street and elsewhere - granite setts and granite kerbing
- Castle Hill - Bargate stone paving and granite setts
- Alley between nos. 162/164 High Street – rare survival of varied materials - brick paviers, old Staffordshire blue paviers, and carstone setts
- St Mary's Churchyard – best example in the conservation area of the use of carstone cobbles, with former gravestones cut to form edging
- Oxford Terrace - five rows of carstone setts
- Holy Trinity Churchyard – York stone paving with some more modern brick paving; modern • Staffordshire blue paviers both



Quaker Meeting House



criss-cross and square pattern; traditional street light; some sandstone paving

- Quaker Meeting House, Ward Street - red and blue brick paving, sandstone setts and sandstone flags in the garden in front of the building

*Other paving:*

Elsewhere, the quality of the street paving tends to be poor with many pavements covered in tarmac or modern concrete flags. However, the simple black tarmac is reasonably appropriate in some locations, such as the 19th century suburbs around Brodie Road and Chiselden Road, although trenching for below-ground services has left unfortunate scars. Tarmac is also used in the Castle Grounds, although a “softer” surface, such as a resin-bonded gravel, might be more appropriate.

Other streets, such as Quarry Street and North Street, would all benefit from improved paving to replace the concrete slabs now in place. Upper High Street is mainly paved with large concrete slabs, most of which are in very poor condition. Modern grey/blue concrete paviors have been used for lay-bys



Former gaslight at entrance to Holy Trinity Churchyard

and for the intersection with Alexandra Terrace. Market Street has narrow York stone pavements with modern wire-cut clay paviors for the roadway and granite kerbing. Around the Civic Hall, and presumably dating to the late 1960s, are areas of cobbles with concrete flags.

*Street lighting:*

There is a variety of street lights, all modern, throughout the conservation area, as follows:

- High Street - medium height, relatively elegant, black steel tapering standards with curved head and large light
- North Street - tall white steel standards with modern glass lights
- South Hill - medium height tapering steel standards with a modern glass light
- Pewley Hill - medium height steel standards, again quite elegant, with swan neck top and globe light, painted green
- Mill Lane and outside Holy Trinity Church – reproduction “traditional” cast iron street lights with electric light rather than gas

An attractive former gas light remains over the side entrance to Holy Trinity Churchyard.

*Street furniture:*



Traditional park benches in Castle Grounds

There is a variety of traditional street benches throughout the conservation area, such as:

- Castle Grounds - traditional curved wooden bench seats painted green
- Bowling Green - natural wood park seats for 2/3 people
- Castle Hill – timber bench with traditional cast iron ends with lion heads and “Guildford Borough Council”

- Quarry Street Gardens - wooden park bench of the 1960s



K6 telephone kiosk outside Holy Trinity Church

There are three grade II listed K6 telephone kiosks in the conservation area – two at the back of Tunsgate Arch and one outside Holy Trinity Church. Otherwise the remainder are modern, utilising black aluminium framing with red BT lettering. Millbrook has a glass and black steel bus shelter. Litter bins tend to be cast aluminium, cylindrical, 1.2 metres high, and coloured black with gold lettering. Modern street furniture in the High Street is united by the use of dark blue.

Other features include:



Black bollards in Mill Lane

- Castle Hill - cast iron gutters and wooden bollards
- In various locations - plain black steel bollards (thin or chunky) copying traditional cast iron designs
- Blue cast iron bollards with GBC crest such as those in Quarry Street and High Street



Castle Hill street sign

*Street signs:*

Signage within the conservation area has clearly been carefully chosen to reduce unnecessary street clutter and to provide a simple, harmonious series of designs in keeping with the historic environment. Most of the streets are marked using modern white cast aluminium signs, with blue lettering and the town crest in the centre. Signage is provided by modern finger posts, coloured black with white lettering.



Adult Education Centre, Sydenham Road



*Railings:*

There are many examples of good quality cast or wrought iron railings throughout the conservation area. The most notable are:

- Castle Grounds- boundary walls made from Bargate stone, topped with engineering brick curved coping and spiked cast iron railings painted black

- Quarry Street - black cast iron railings with triangular, pointed top
- Top of Rosemary Alley - curvaceous newel supporting handrail in wrought iron
- Boundary between Allen House Gardens and The Grammar School - cast iron railings on cast iron base with spear heads
- Cast iron railings with decorative spear heads in front of the Quaker Meeting House, Ward Street
- Art Nouveau railings outside Adult Education Centre dated 1885 Sydenham Road



Tunsgate Arch



Alice statue in the Castle Grounds

### 3.7 Special features

There are a number of special features in the conservation area, of which the following are perhaps the most significant:

- Guildford Museum, next to the Castle Arch, was opened in 1898
- Tunsgate Arch, High Street, was built in 1818 as the portico for the town's Corn Exchange
- Statue of Alice Through the Looking Glass, Castle Grounds. This was created in memory of Lewis Carroll (the Rev. Charles Dodgson) who lived with his seven sisters at "The Chestnuts" (on the adjoining site) between 1868 and 1898.
- High Street – statue of the "Surrey Scholar", given to the town by Guildford University in 2000 to mark the Millennium
- Castle Grounds, War Memorial next to the Bowling Green
- High Street - statue to Archbishop George Abbot at the top of the High Street
- Concrete anti-tank defences between London Road and the station

And finally, but making a huge impression on the character of the conservation area, a plethora of hanging baskets everywhere!



Hanging baskets in the Upper High Street

## 4 ISSUES AND THREATS

This list has been drawn up following consultation with local amenity groups and the District Council. It considers a range of problems, not all necessarily within the control of the local planning authority. The list is indicative and will be subject to regular review as part of the Borough Council's commitment to the proper management of the Town Centre Conservation Area. For clarity, it is divided into four geographical areas - North of the High Street; High Street; upper High Street; and South of the High Street – and includes a final General section.



Busy traffic in North Street

### 4.1 Issues and threats: North of the High Street

- North Street has lost most of its historic buildings and is particularly blighted by busy traffic with poor pedestrian movement across the street
- Dolphin House, with its rooftop car parking, is particularly inappropriate
- Empty shops off North Street
- Busy traffic also along Chertsey Street and York Road
- Traffic isolates Sandfield Primary school, with railings along York Road to protect the children
- Loss of front gardens for parking in many roads, particularly Chertsey Street, Sydenham Road and Eastgate Gardens
- Views of rear service areas from Eastgate Gardens unattractive
- Civic Hall is locked up
- Foxenden Playground area is not very welcoming for children
- Allen House Gardens are popular for tennis and bowling but at other times are also not welcoming



Loss of front gardens for car parking, Sydenham Road

- London Road Station is only staffed for part of the day
- New development now occupies 50% of street frontage in Sandfield Terrace
- Many of the houses in Sandfield Terrace and Haydon Place have lost their original windows and doors
- Major redevelopment of land in The Bars awaited
- Bayfield House is a very large office block in Chertsey Street, traditionally occupied by 19th century detached houses



Sandfield Terrace

### 4.2 Issues and threats: High Street

- Granite setts are in a poor state of repair in some areas
- Pedestrianisation scheme is only part time – 11am to 4 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am to 6 pm on Saturdays
- Speeding traffic
- Uses such as cafes and bars generate late night noise
- Residential owners feel threatened at times
- Few public seats
- A few badly detailed shopfronts



Deep fascias in the High Street

- Use of garish signage/colours
- Some buildings have been over-extended e.g. House of Fraser

#### 4.3 Issues and threats: Upper High Street

- Loss of historic buildings along north side of upper High Street, with poor quality development of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s
- Eastgate Court is far too dominant
- Grammar School generates additional traffic at peak times
- New very large building on corner with Jenner Road
- Busy traffic with only one pedestrian crossing by the school
- Few street trees
- Poor quality street paving and street furniture

#### 4.4 Issues and threats: South of the High Street

- Castle Street is difficult to cross
- 1970s Tunsgate development is a negative



1960's development in the upper High Street



Tunsgate

- feature with views from Castle Street of unattractive rear service yards
- Castle Hill is a rat run, using the old castle arch entrance into Quarry Street, which could cause structural damage
- Harvey Gallery and Adult Education Centre is locally listed but the buildings are not in good repair and improved maintenance is required
- New buildings are being constructed in the rear garden of the Grammar School, facing Sydenham Road, resulting in the loss of open space
- The multi-storey Castle car park in Sydenham Road generates constant day-time traffic
- Sydenham Road is one-way, with speeding cars and few safe points for pedestrians to cross



Car park in Sydenham Road

- Loss of front gardens to car parking e.g. nos. 2-8 Sydenham Road
- Former factory at bottom of Bright Hill is currently a negative feature but there is local support for the sensitive re-use of the building as one of the few examples of an industrial building in the conservation area
- Parts of the Castle Grounds require better quality paving, planting, and boundary



Quarry Street public gardens

- treatments
- AC units on front of listed building in Quarry Street (nos. 54 and 55 – grade II\*)
- Quarry Street Public Gardens are uninviting with poor planting, seats, signage etc.
- Poor quality 20th century development along Millbrook, at the bottom of the gardens from the Quarry Street houses
- Threat of further unsuitable development in these gardens

#### 4.5 Issues: General

- Modern development particularly along the north side of the High Street, and in North Street, is out of scale with the smaller, more domestic character of the historic buildings in the town centre
- Loss of historic features on some buildings
- Constant pressure for new development throughout the town centre
- Builder's enclosures are unsightly and create barriers to pedestrian movement particularly in the High Street area
- Loss of important views due to bulky and poorly sited new development
- A few Town Centre properties are on the "Historic Buildings at Risk" Register (e.g. Pewley Hill Reservoir)
- Listed buildings threatened by over-enthusiastic "restoration" and alterations
- Impending redevelopment of Friary Centre may generate even more traffic
- Existing Park and Ride facilities are already over-stretched
- Most of the town centre car parks are often full
- Constant stream of cars circling town centre looking for parking
- Illegal and dangerous parking
- Speeding cars or traffic jams with frequent town centre gridlock



Illegal parking off Castle Street

- Poor pedestrian movement across parts of the town – e.g. from Castle Grounds across Castle Street to Town Centre; from Quarry Street down to the River Wey; from the residential suburbs across Sydenham Road into the town; across North Street; and across the upper High Street
- Some poor quality paving in some areas, with few street trees
- Poor maintenance of the High Street pavements and street surfaces
- Large number of cafes, bars and restaurants mean there is a lot of late night noise which disturbs residents
- Threat to the future of residential uses in the town centre due to economic pressures and an increasing amount of anti-social behaviour at night time
- Need to protect the setting of the River Wey by ensuring that only development which is visually and historically appropriate to the area is allowed



Safe pedestrian movement across the conservation area is a real issue

## 5 OPPORTUNITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS

Drawing on the “Issues and Threats” in the preceding chapter, this section provides a series of recommendations for future action, many of which are in the control of the Borough Council and the County Council as highways authority.



Traffic calming in North Street would be welcome

### 5.1 Opportunities.

#### *Traffic and pedestrian movement*

- Provide comprehensive traffic management plan for town centre aimed at decreasing traffic flows, and improving the environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Traffic calm North Street, Sydenham Road, Castle Hill and Chertsey Street, using similar methods to Harvey Road scheme
- Improve pedestrian crossings in North Street and upper High Street particularly
- Impose 20 mph limit on whole town centre
- Consider improved directional and information signage for visitors to the conservation area

#### *High Street*

- Improve the maintenance of the existing historic paving by Surrey County Council Highways Department and apply to English Heritage to get the floorscape listed

- Provide more public seating
- Encourage further outdoor café culture opportunities
- Complete shopfront guidance leaflet (in draft)
- Extend the pedestrian-only zone from 11 am to 4 pm to 10 am to 6 pm Monday-Saturday
- Consider designating “Zones of Tranquillity” in parts of the conservation area to discourage uses which might generate noisy behaviour and to provide a safer, more pleasant environment
- Control speeding traffic up the High Street through better enforcement
- Where possible, encourage better diversity of shops in the High Street, particularly small specialist food shopping
- Encourage residential uses of the empty space above the shops, and ensure that the buildings are repaired and redecorated regularly



The 19<sup>th</sup> century paving in the High Street should be listed



Trees are important around the former Civic Hall

*Civic Hall*

- The redevelopment scheme should retain as many of the existing mature trees and as much of the existing open space as possible
- A modern design should be encouraged, rather than historic pastiche



Brodie Road



Quarry Gate

*Conservation Area Boundary review*

- Consider placing Chiselden Road, Brodie Road and Harvey Road into the adjoining Waterden Road Conservation Area
- Add the house (Quarry Gate) at the bottom of Great Quarry into the conservation area. This is a well detailed 1890s house on a prominent site



More trees would be welcome in Upper High Street

**5.2 Enhancements**

Proposed enhancements could include:

- Review Town Centre signage generally
- Repave upper High Street using traditional materials such as York stone, granite setts, etc
- Plant more street trees in upper High Street
- Enhance the Quarry Street gardens – new planting, paving, and seating
- Castle Grounds require some improvements especially around the open air theatre
- Improve the Foxenden Playground area



London Road station car park

- Improve the London Road Station car park
- Improve maintenance of Holy Trinity Churchyard and encourage the continued use and future repair of the existing parish hall on the north-east side
- Open St Mary's Churchyard for longer, provide improved seating and paving, and encourage more residents and visitors to use the area and to visit the church
- Continue the annual flower displays in Castle Grounds as they make a major contribution to the attractions of the area; consider reinstating the former pond and



The floral gardens are a popular attraction



- possibly the water garden
- Consider introducing specialist garden areas in the Castle Grounds and Castle Cliffe Gardens, such as gardens for the blind, disabled, scented gardens etc.
  - Encourage more visitors into Castle Cliffe Gardens and improve links into Racks Close park to bring the park into greater use
  - To improve security and encourage greater use, clear some trees and shrubbery in Racks Close park to provide natural surveillance from adjoining properties, and also to improve views across the Wey
  - Consider linking Racks Close park to Abbot Road via new pathway
  - Consider a “Green Trail” through the town centre, linking the principal open spaces, and encouraging greater use of Racks Close park. Signpost with traditional finger posts
  - Improve links with Debenhams and enhance the area around the building and the main road crossing



Improve links between the river and the High Street

## **Appendix 1      Mapping**



## Appendix 2 Bibliography and references

Manning O and Bray W, *The History and Antiquities of Surrey*, 3 vols, 1804–14

Brayley, EW, *A Topographical History of Surrey*, 5 vols, 1841

GW and J Russell, *Guildford: a descriptive and historical view*, 1845

'The Borough of Guildford' in *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England: A History of Surrey*, Volume III, edited William Page, 1967, pp 547–70

Ian Nairn and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Surrey*, 2nd edition 1971, revised by Bridget Cherry

Russell Chamberlin, *Guildford: a biography*, 1982

Matthew Alexander, *Guildford: a short history*, Ammonite Books, 1986

Shirley Corke, *Guildford: a pictorial history*, 1990

Russell Chamberlin, *Guildford: a history and celebration*, 2004

## Appendix 3 Sources of further information

The Guildford Borough Council *Local Plan* contains relevant information and policies on development within the borough.

For further advice, please contact:

**The Projects and Conservation Team,**  
Environmental Policy and Design Services,  
Guildford Borough Council,  
Millmead House,  
Millmead,  
Guildford,  
Surrey GU1 4BB  
Telephone: 01483 444676

Other useful contacts:

**The Holy Trinity Amenity Group**  
Website: [www.htag-guildford.org.uk](http://www.htag-guildford.org.uk)

**The Building Conservation Directory**  
Telephone: 01747 871717  
Website: [www.buildingconservation.co.uk](http://www.buildingconservation.co.uk)

**The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings,**  
37 Spital Square,  
London E1 6DY  
Telephone: 020 7377 1644

**English Heritage,**  
Customer Services Department,  
PO Box 569,  
Swindon SN2 2YP  
Telephone: 0870 333 1181  
Website: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**Royal Institute of British Architects**  
Telephone: 020 7580 5533  
Website: [www.riba.org.uk](http://www.riba.org.uk)  
[www.architecture.co.uk](http://www.architecture.co.uk)

## Appendix 4 Criteria for local listing

It is the policy of the Council to identify and protect those buildings that are important to the local character of the area but which may not be suitable for statutory listing (Policy 29BE of the Guildford Borough Local Plan, 1993). The Local List is a schedule of those buildings and structures that the Council considers to be of such interest.

The criteria is based on that used by English Heritage for the Statutory List, but the significance of a building's architectural quality or historic associations is assessed with regard to the character and development of the local area. The work of local architects, local historic associations, local building traditions and building materials, will be relevant considerations.

The Local List will usually include:

- (i) Buildings or structures which date from before 1840 and which survive in anything like their original condition;
- (ii) Buildings which date from between 1840 and 1914 which are of a definite quality and character. Within this category careful selection will be necessary to ensure that poor examples are not included. The use of local styles will be particularly relevant when determining the value of such a building;
- (iii) Buildings which date from between 1914 and 1939 only if they have a particular quality and character. Buildings from this period should only be included if they are fine examples of a contemporary style, or the work of any notable local architects;
- (iv) After 1939, only outstanding buildings that represent a particular architectural style.



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