

Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan

Village Character Assessment & Heritage



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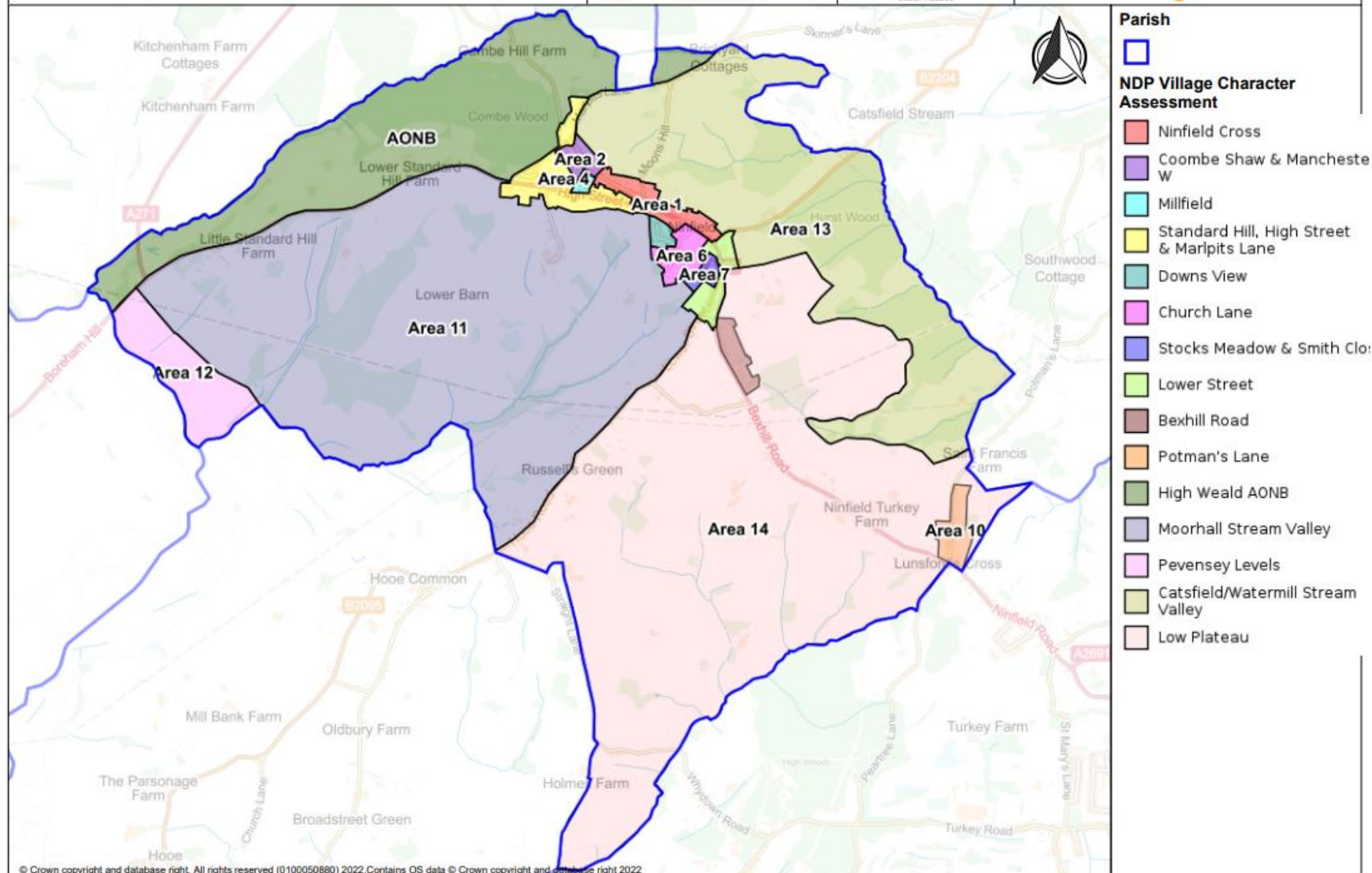
Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan

Local Character Areas

Ninfield

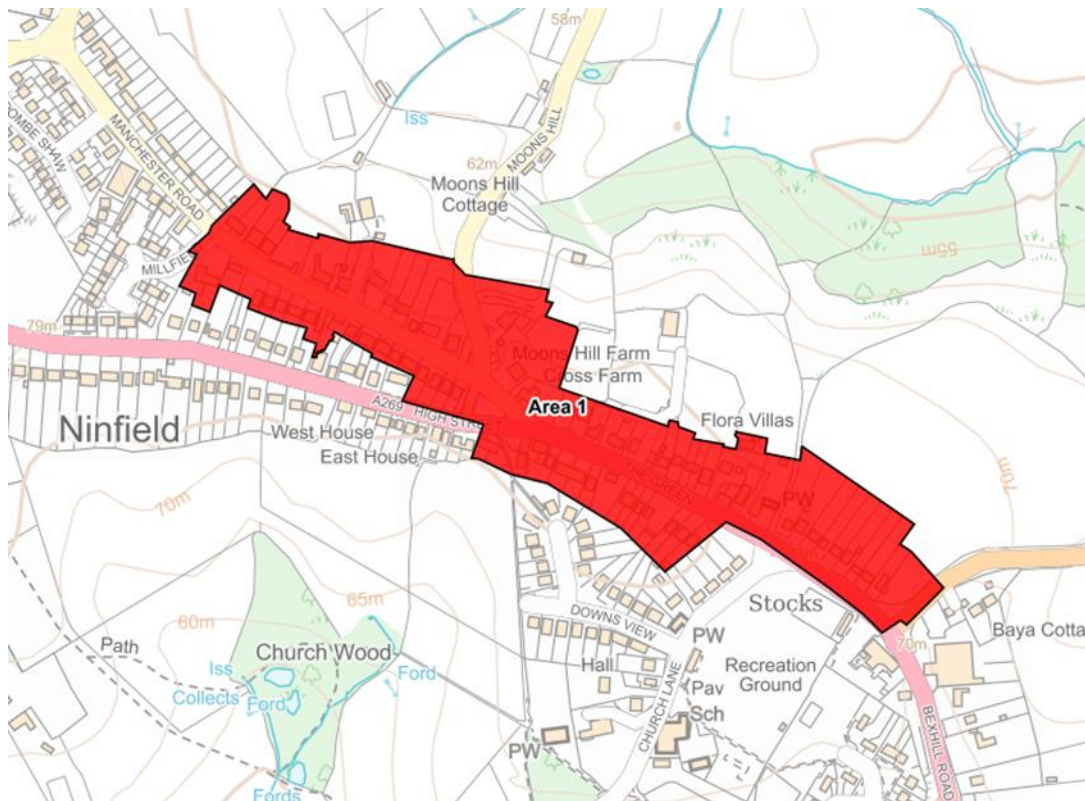
Author:

Date: 17/08/2022



Area 1 - (Ninfield Cross)

Assessors JC & DS 28th November 2020



Layout: The area is comprised of The Green and the eastern part of Manchester Road. Plots are generous and most are screened by established hedges, walls or fences, however at the eastern end of The Green, houses occupy a more elevated position looking out across the Recreation Ground and have less screening. With very few exceptions, plots face onto the road i.e. the A269 and Manchester Road. Most have substantial front gardens, off street parking for at least one vehicle and large back gardens. Housing on the south side of The Green and Manchester Road back onto other housing whereas those on the north side back on to open countryside affording fine views towards Catsfield and Battle.

Topography: this area is on the ridge plateau where most of the built area of the village is situated. There is a very gentle gradient downwards heading east. To the north the land slopes gently away except at Moons Hill and Catsfield Road where the slope is steep.

Land Use: this area is almost entirely residential. The exception is The Blacksmith's Inn public house.

Roads, Streets, routes: the main A269 (High Street & The Green) carries most of the traffic through the village and has a speed limit of 30mph. The road has defined pavement on both sides. Manchester Road runs north east from the junction at the Blacksmiths (junction formerly known as Ninfield Cross). This lane has no pavement and vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and horses use it. There are sections which are

very narrow. Moons Hill also runs from the same junction and drops steeply downhill to the north. There is a footpath or Twitten (PROW) beside Jubilee Cottage that connects the High Street with Manchester Road. The historically important north/south route of Church Path runs from this area towards St Mary's Parish Church.

Buildings and Details: the majority of buildings in area 1 are detached and constructed of traditional materials i.e. clay tile or slate roofing, red brick with some weather boarding and some tile hung walls. Roofs are generally pitched and barn hip roofs are a common feature on both modern and historic houses, adding a rural feel to the area. The majority of buildings are two storey but there are some bungalows interspersed, especially on the south side of Manchester Road. Many of Ninfield's listed buildings are located in this area. Church Farm and Lime Tree Cottage (formerly Woodland Farm) together with the Oast and Granary are circa 1800 and are all grade 2 listed. Rose Tree House and Rose Tree Cottage are pre 1858 formerly associated with the windmill. Lemmon Cottage and Lynwood also date from this period. Myrtle Cottage is dated around 1910. Further east by the "cross" is High Knoll a fine 17th century grade 2 listed house. A number of other buildings of historic interest dating from 1850 or earlier are clustered in this area some are grade 2 listed (Cross Farm, Fir Tree Cottages) others such as Strawberry Cottage (formerly a public house), Cross Cottage, Rose Cottages (1, 2 & 3) and Church Path Cottages (1&2) are all pre 1844 and are potentially listable. Travelling eastwards there are a number of other buildings dating to the Victorian and Edwardian periods, Prospect House dates to 17th Century and has the former Nazarene Chapel attached.

Streetscape: There is a cluster of 4 street lights around the crossroads by the Blacksmiths Inn. There are many telegraph poles with their associated wires to each dwelling between them along all the roads. There is a small seating area on the triangle at the Blacksmith's junction with a fingerpost.

Landmarks: The Blacksmith's Inn and the crossroads are the main landmark in this area. In addition to this there is a row of pollarded lime trees outside Lime Tree Cottage.

Green and Natural Features: the well-established hedges, sizeable front gardens with mature trees give a rural village feel to the area. There are no greenspaces in this area other than grass verges bordering the road at the eastern end of The Green. However, housing at the eastern end of The Green look out across The Recreation Ground (LG1) and The Stocks & Whipping Post (LG5) giving an open and green aspect to the area.

Spaces: no significant spaces in this area.

Views & Dark Skies: Residents with plots facing outwards and to the north enjoy pleasant countryside views across farmland towards Catsfield and Battle. The land around the village is still actively farmed and contains significant pockets of ancient woodland. Many heritage buildings are situated here and add to the amenity. Ninfield

has dark skies due to an elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky meter readings show 21.054 (average of 5 readings).

Summary: an area of relatively low-density housing on generally large plots, houses being mainly detached. Heritage buildings, hedging, mature trees and some verges make this a characterful and pleasant area to live in. The A 269 carries heavy traffic.

Views and Pictures of Area 1



View East along The Green



View out across Recreation



Ninfield Cross with
Strawberry Cottage (L) and



View out to The High Street



Myrtle Cottage in Manchester Road

Views and Pictures of Area 1



The Green, South Side



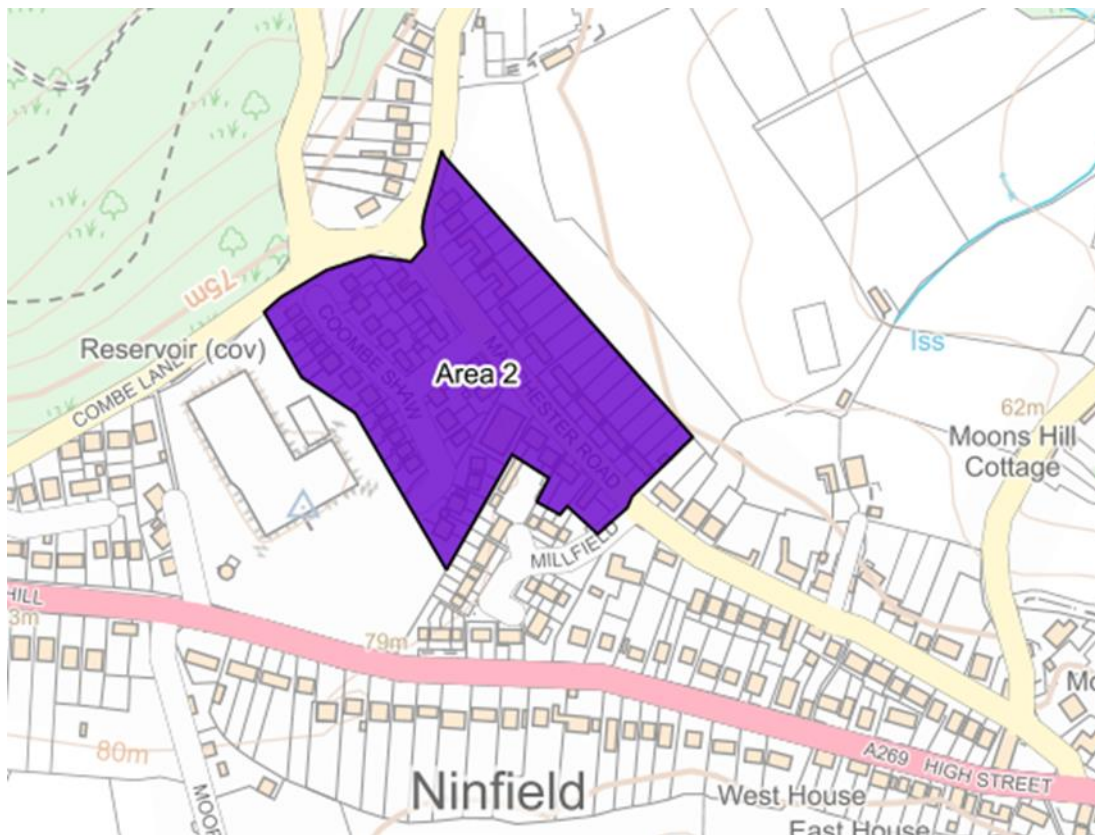
Glimpsed View from Manchester Road across open countryside to the north



Church Farm Barn, Manchester Road

Area 2 – (Coombe Shaw & Manchester Road West)

Assessor PW & KS 2nd December 2020



Layout: this area is comprised of the north west end of Manchester Road and the Coombe Shaw development. To the north east there are a row of 12 semi-detached pre-war former council houses (Sparke Gardens) backing on to open countryside. These have medium sized front gardens and large rear gardens. At the northern end there are a number of later link-detached and detached bungalows, all have front and back gardens. The western side of Manchester Road has a mix of semi-detached and detached houses and bungalows. Some have garages. The density varies with the date of the construction, the more modern housing is more tightly packed. There is a BT Openreach depot here. Coombe Shaw, most of which is within a cul-de-sac lies on the west of this area. It is comprised of detached and semi-detached 2 storey houses. This is a medium density development and front and rear gardens are relatively small for the Parish. Most houses here have off-street parking, some have garages.

Topography: this area is on the ridge plateau where most of the built area of the village is situated. There is a very gentle gradient downwards heading east. To the north the land slopes gently away.

Land Use: residential except for one commercial unit (the BT depot). There is a large wildflower verge at the western end of Manchester Road (see LG8 in the Local Green Space report).

Roads, Streets, Routes: Manchester Road is a through route and is a historic lane (previously known as The Back Road) there are only two short stretches of footpath around the entrance to Coombe Shaw. The speed limit is 30mph. Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders all use the road along with cars and lorries. Coombe Shaw is a cul-de-sac and has paving all around the roadside. There is a footpath Connecting Manchester Road with Millfield, through to the High Street (A269).

Buildings and Details: Houses are of mixed ages from the 1930s through to 1980s. Most are two story but there are a number of bungalows, these are generally on larger plots. All are built of traditional materials (red brick with tiled roofs). Most have uPVC windows. Some houses have had small extensions and/or roof conversions added. Most housing has some off-street parking and/or a garage. The BT building (incorporating the telephone exchange) is brick built 1960s with some timber cladding and a parking area for commercial vehicles.

Streetscape: Manchester Road has some grass verges but much of this has been used for extra parking and is in a poor state. Many vehicles park in the road. There are no street lights anywhere in this area. Along Manchester Road is a post box, a concrete litter bin, a Ninfield Parish Council notice board and many telegraph poles and associated cables. There are street signs at the entrance points to Manchester Road and Coombe Shaw. The wide grass verge at the north west end of Manchester Road has a large metal "wildflower verge" sign. Coombe Shaw has paving and a narrow grass verge on every side of the roadway. To the boundary with the reservoir site is a tall wire mesh fence.

Landmarks: There are no listed buildings here and no landmarks as such.

Green and Natural Features: in Manchester Road, many gardens are well stocked with mature planting. Sparke Gardens has mature hedging in front of most of the housing and their rear gardens look out across farmland with ancient hedgerows and trees. There is a green area bordered by an ancient hedgerow immediately east of this area that will form a buffer zone between existing housing and the proposed new estate. This is designated as LG12 and will be an important green area for the new residents to use for recreation and to appreciate the rich variety of wildlife in the farmland setting. The wild flower verge (LG8) at the north west end of the area is probably the remnant of a meadow and contains interesting flora (orchids, yellow rattle etc) and fungi (Fly Agaric) in addition to a row of small silver birch trees. Coombe Shaw has narrow grass verges along the pavements. Gardens here are more open so established shrubs are more visible.

Spaces: no significant spaces in this area other than the wildflower verge.

Views and Dark Skies: There are limited views from the roads (there are glimpsed views between some housing towards the north). Housing on the north east border enjoy magnificent views across open countryside towards Catsfield and Battle. The skies are generally dark as there is no public lighting and housing security lighting tends to be motion activated. Meter readings show an average of 19.908 for dark skies.

Summary: an area of mixed 20th century housing of medium density with some areas of Local Green Space.

Views and Pictures of Area 2



View into Area 2 from Combe Lane



View out of Area 2 towards Marl pits



Western part of Coombe Shaw



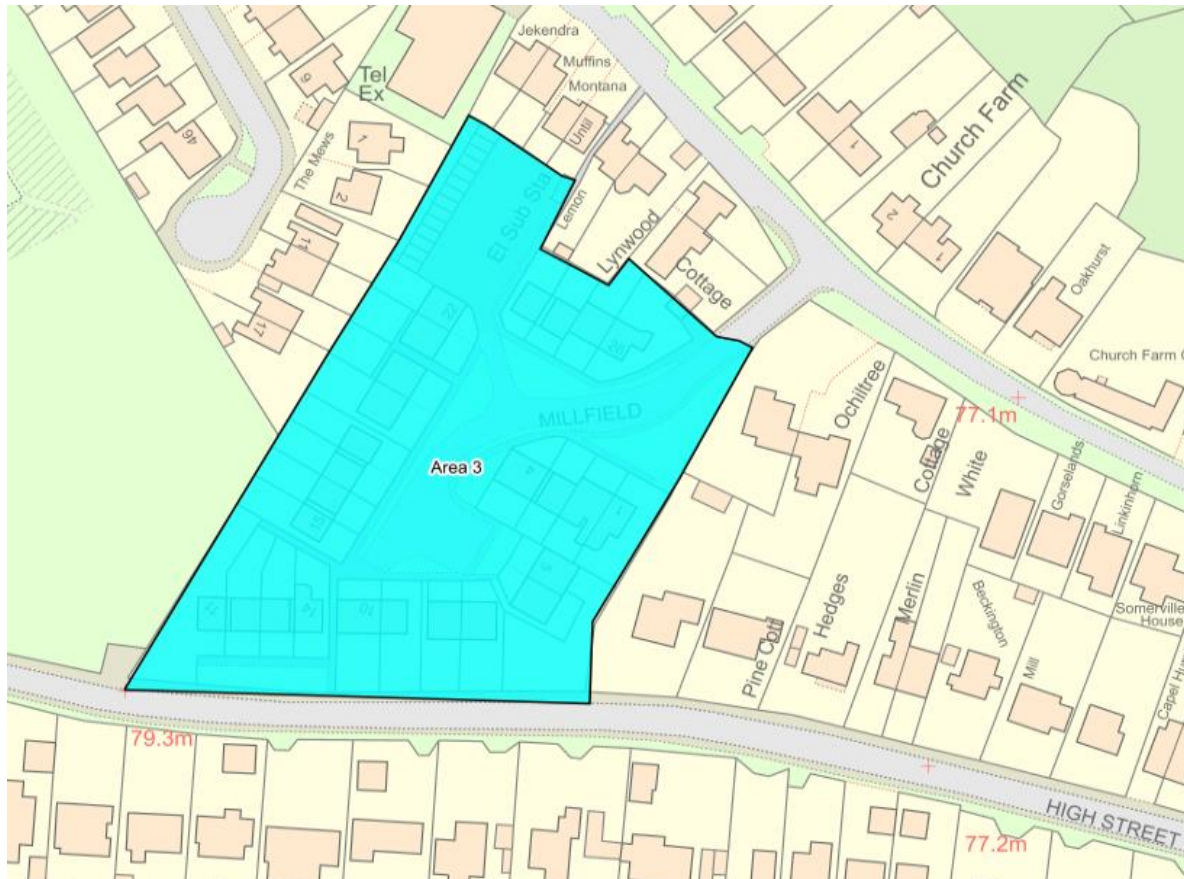
Eastern part of Coombe shaw



View out of Coombe Shaw to Manchester Road

Area 3 – (Millfield)

Assessors JC & DS 30th November 2020



Layout: This area is the Millfield development, a 1960s high density Local Authority built cul-de-sac is arranged into low rise 2 storey blocks of flats, terraced and semi-detached houses which have small front and rear gardens. Dwellings face out onto a grassy area with some small mature trees. Only one property has its own garage and off-street parking. There is a communal parking area in the central part and a separate block of garages adjacent to a communal parking area in the northern sector. All properties face the communal areas of the development except for a row of 8 houses that front the High Street. The properties on the south western perimeter have rear views over the reservoir site. Views from the remaining properties are limited.

Topography: This area is on the ridge plateau situated between the High Street (A269) and Manchester Road.

Land Use: Millfield is entirely residential with the exception of a small electricity sub-station in the corner of the garage block/communal parking area.

Roads, Streets, routes: Vehicle access to Millfield is off Manchester Road which has a speed limit of 30mph. There are separate pedestrian access points from the

communal garage/parking area into Manchester Road also from Millfield into the High Street (A269).

Buildings and Details: The dwellings are arranged in two storey terraces and semi-detached houses and flats. All buildings are constructed of concrete tile roofing, red brick and all roofs are pitched. The front facades in Millfield have tile-hanging at first floor level reflecting character elsewhere in the village. The garage block is of concrete with metal up and over doors. The estate is fairly high density.

Streetscape: There is no street lighting in this area. There is a street sign and further signs warning people not to park on the grass area (there are insufficient parking spaces for the number of vehicles in the area) and not to play ball games in the communal garage/parking areas. Parking on the grass verges is common. There is one, ugly concrete bin without a lid and a single park bench.

Landmarks: There are no landmarks in this area.

Green and Natural Features: All properties (even the flats) have small front and rear garden areas contained by picket fencing or low hedges. In addition, the area has five communal green spaces where a few trees have been planted. A mature oak tree has survived on the corner of the green space facing on to the High Street.

Spaces: The central area could be considered to be a space for residents.

Views & Dark Skies: Views from this area are limited. Ninfield has dark skies due to its elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark Sky meter readings show 19.908 (average of 5 readings).

Summary: An area of high-density housing with limited space especially for vehicles. Green spaces may be threatened by the installation of additional parking facilities.

Views and Pictures of Area 3



View into Millfield from Manchester Road



Millfield properties facing the High Street



View from the High Street Entrance



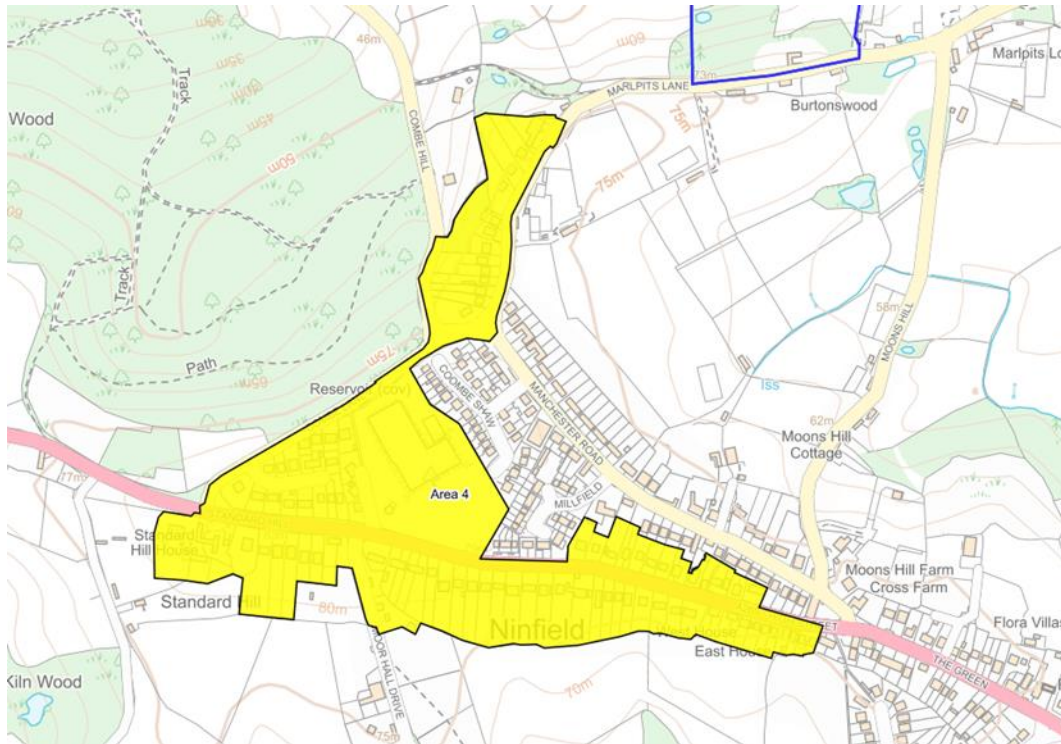
View of Footpath from Manchester Road into Millfield



The Communal Parking Area

Area 4 – (Standard Hill, High Street & Marl pits Lane)

Assessors JC & DS 28th November 2020



Layout: This area is comprised of the High Street, Standard Hill, Combe Lane and part of Marl pits Lane. Plots are generally wide and long with substantial screening by established hedges or fences. With very few exceptions, plots face onto the road i.e. the A269, Combe Lane and Marl pits Lane. Most have large front gardens, off street parking for at least one vehicle and very large back gardens. Standard Hill Close is a contained area contiguous with Combe Lane, here the plots are somewhat smaller both front and rear. Cookstown Close is a small development (3 bungalows) with a narrow access track.

Topography: this area is on the ridge plateau where most of the built area of the village is situated. Beyond the gardens of Standard Hill the land slopes away with outstanding views over the Pevensey Levels to the sea and the SDNP. The western edge of the area is comprised of Combe Woods and the AONB, Marl pits plots are situated high above these features and command outstanding views into woodland or open countryside. Heading north down Combe Lane and Marl pits Lane there is a gentle gradient downhill.

Land Use: this area is almost entirely residential. Exceptions include the large green space containing the reservoir and water tower, the substantial green verges and the GP Surgery.

Roads, Streets, routes: the main A269 carries most of the traffic through the village and has a speed limit of 30mph. This road is Standard Hill and becomes the High Street within area 4. This road has defined pavement on both sides of the road. The

only other roadway in area 4 is Combe Lane leading into Marlpits Lane. These lanes are National speed limit and have no footpath at any point along the route. They are narrow (in some places single track) and are used by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and horses. Standard Hill Close is a small cul-de-sac and the road is privately maintained. Cookstown is also a cul de sac with a privately maintained access track. There is a footpath or twitten (PROW) beside Jubilee Cottage that connects the High Street with Manchester Road and a second footpath connecting Standard Hill and Combe Lane, running alongside the western edge of the reservoir site.

Buildings and Details: a large majority of buildings in area 4 are detached and many are bungalows (with or without extensions into the roof space). There are a small number of semi-detached bungalows and houses. A number of larger detached houses from the Victorian and Edwardian eras are found along the High Street. All buildings are constructed of traditional materials i.e. clay tile or slate roofing, red brick (much of it locally made) with weather boarding and tile to some walls. A small number have been rendered and painted. Roofs are pitched, generally quite steeply apart from on single storey extensions. At the western boundary of the area is Standard Hill House a 17th century Grade 2* listed building. This is 3 storey with steeply pitched roof areas, the building appears to be of brick but is in fact hung with Mathematical Tiles. Millers Mews is comprised of the farm buildings dating from the 1800s previously associated with Standard Hill House which were converted into dwellings in the 1970s. Other buildings of note include 1 & 2 Standard Hill Cottages c1910, on the north side of the High Street Mill Meadow, The Briars, Capelhurst, Walden Lodge, The Old Bakery and Low Moor are all 1890 to 1910 late Victorian/Edwardian villa style houses, of value as a group. Jubilee Cottage and Green Cottage are older (pre-1858). On the south side of the High Street are 1,2,3 & 4 South View, two pairs of Arts & Crafts influenced design, unaltered since around 1910. In Marlpits Lane, Box Bush is a large 2 storey Victorian dwelling of note. The remainder of the housing throughout the area spans the decades from 1920s to 1970s. Many bungalows have undergone large expansions into the roof and laterally in more recent times. The reservoir site contains a redundant 1960s water tower, an underground Cold War bunker and a brick built Royal observer Corps watch tower.

Streetscape: There is no street lighting anywhere in this area. Signage is mainly simple street names on horizontal boards however at junctions on the lanes there are triangles of grass with traditional fingerpost direction indicators. There is a pleasant and well used, grassy seating area at the junction of Standard Hill and Combe Lane with well-formed oak and birch above and planters for seasonal flowers by the bench. There is a small post box located here. Most non-residential boundaries are hedges or woodland. All plots have off street parking so there are only small numbers of vehicles on the road side. There is a bus stop where Moor Hall Drive meets Standard Hill with a further bench and planters. Near the eastern edge of this area on the High Street is a badly sited Zebra Crossing being situated too near to a bend in the road. Drivers have little time to see and react to pedestrians crossing the road. There are many telegraph poles and associated overhead wires throughout the village. There are particularly ugly litter bins (concrete or metal/wood) which look dilapidated and stand at odd angles having subsided over time.

Landmarks: the water tower (largely hidden by tall conifer trees) also a Royal Observer Corps tower (also hidden by trees) and Standard Hill House are the main landmarks in this area.

Green and Natural Features: the well-established hedges, sizeable front gardens with mature trees and the woodland bordering the area give a pleasant green ambience (somewhat detracted from by the density and speed of the traffic on the A269. The hedge bordering Combe Lane is probably of some age and contains some mature oak, sweet chestnut etc. There are wildflower verges where Combe Lane meets Manchester Road (LG8) and these together with the adjacent Combe Wood (LG4) impart a very rural character to the area. The green triangles with fingerposts are also noted for their wildflowers, adding to the rural feel of the lanes. The verges on Standard Hill (LG9) form a green gateway at the western approach to the village. The large green area of the reservoir is designated as a Local Wildlife Site and its boundary hedge along the A269 is a distinctive feature.

Spaces: the only large open space is the reservoir site and this is private land.

Views & Dark Skies: Residents with plots facing outwards enjoy exceptional views in most directions because of the village location on a ridge between the Pevensy Levels and the AONB. The land around the village is still actively farmed and contains significant pockets of ancient woodland. Glimpses of these views can be enjoyed at various points from the roads and lanes. Ninfield has dark skies due to its elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky meter readings show a reading of 20.1 (average of 5 readings). The Herstmonceux Observatory is set a short distance away from the village and the telescope domes are visible from the western borders of area 4.

Summary: an area with a rural quality comprised of relatively low-density housing on generally large plots, houses being mainly detached. Hedging, mature trees and verges make this a pleasant area to live in. Housing on the boundary tends to have far reaching views. The A 269 carries heavy traffic.

Views and Pictures of Area 4



Looking East along Standard Hill



View west along Standard Hill from
Cookstown Close



The Junction of Coombe Lane and Standard Hill



Southview Cottages on the High Street



Cookstown Close



Jubilee Cottage & The Old Bakery on the High

Views and Pictures of Area 4



Coombe Lane



View to the east along the High Street



Coombe Cottage in Coombe Lane



Standard Hill House



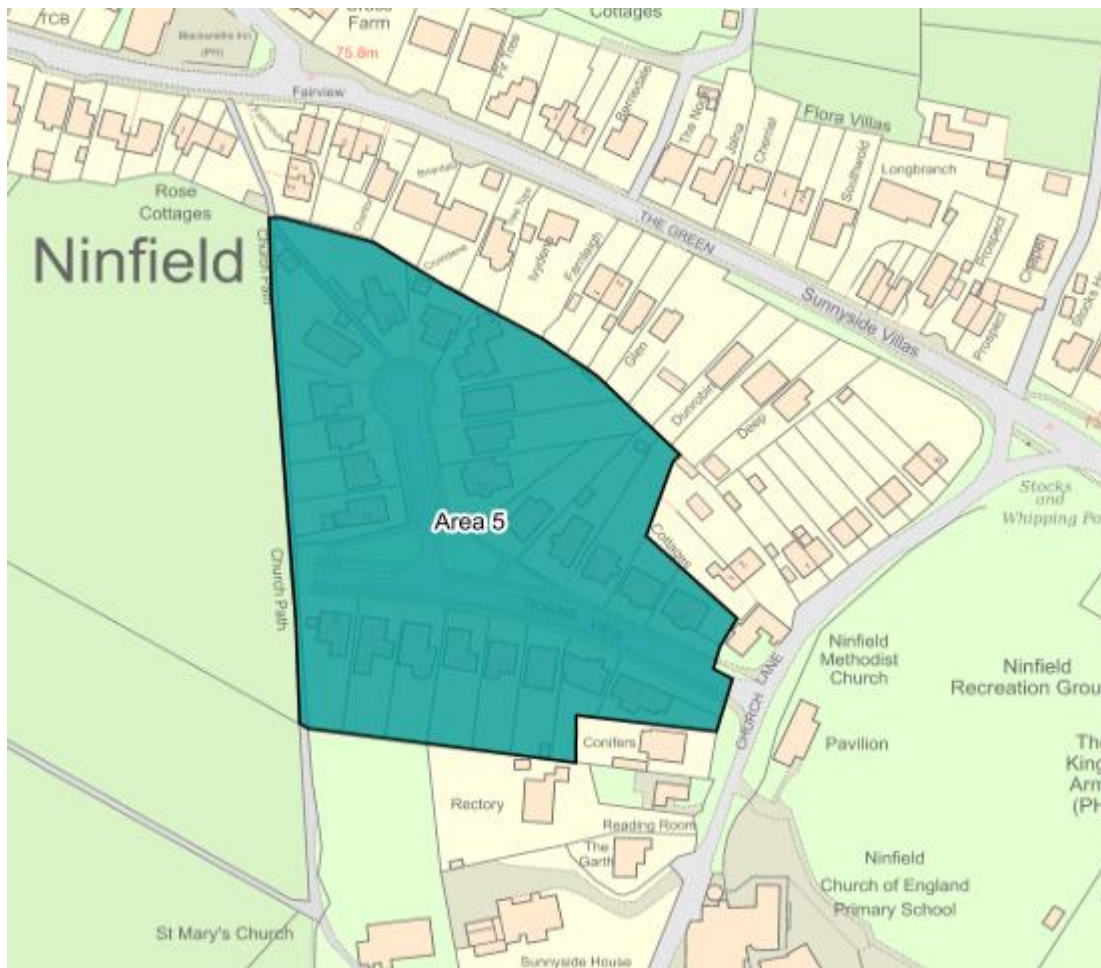
Ninfield Surgery



View out of Coombe Lane

Area 5 – (Downs View)

Assessor JC 16th December 2020



Layout: The area is comprised of Downs View, a cul-de-sac of detached bungalows in an open plan layout. Some are single storey but many are 2 storey (upper level contained in the roof area). Some have had dormers installed/roof conversions added later. Plots are wide but depths vary considerably. Front gardens are mainly grassed and have off street parking. Front gardens are without boundary fencing/hedging giving an open feel to the area. There are wide grass verges bordering the road with a tarmac pathway for pedestrian movement.

Topography: this area is on the ridge plateau where most of the built area of the village is situated. There is a very gentle gradient to the south. To the west, beyond Church Path, open farmland slopes away steeply.

Land Use: this area is entirely residential.

Roads, Streets, routes: The historically important north/south route of Church Path forms the western edge of this area and runs from St Mary's Parish Church towards Ninfield Cross, The Blacksmith's Inn (north). The path also runs south towards Lower Street and the Village Stores. Church Path is accessed either via a wide gap in the

hedge or along the tarmac on the northern edge of the development between number 22 and number 24 Downs View. Vehicular access into the cul-de-sac is from Church Lane and the road forks west and north inside the development.

Buildings and Details: all the houses in area 5 are detached and built in a similar style (the development was built as a small estate in the 1970s). Constructed of brown brick, with modern tiled roofs, some have partial white weatherboarding, others have partial tile hung walls. Some are single-storey bungalows, others are two-storey, with the upper floor contained within the roof profile. Others have been extended and dormers have been added. The density of housing is medium. All have off street parking and many have a garage.

Streetscape: There is no street lighting and no telegraph poles in this area. The wide grass verges and a lack of demarcation by hedges/fences are a feature. Despite the off-street parking for residents, the road is heavily used for parking by visitors to the nearby School, Recreation Ground, Churches (St Mary's and Methodist Chapel) and the two halls (Reading Room and Methodist Hall).

Landmarks: None

Green and Natural Features: wide grass verges border the roadside, there are some mature shrubs in gardens and a short section of hedgerow at the access point to Church Path. The important Local Green Space of Church Path/Church Fields (LG3) runs adjacent to the area on its western boundary and the Churchyard (LG7) forms part of the southern boundary.

Spaces: no significant spaces in this area.

Views & Dark Skies: Residents with plots facing outwards to the west enjoy magnificent countryside views across farmland and woodland towards the Pevensey Levels, the sea and the South Downs. These key views are also enjoyed by users of Church Path and can be seen through the gap in the hedge. The land around the village is still actively farmed and contains significant pockets of ancient woodland, Church Wood is very close to this area. Ninfield has dark skies due to an elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky meter readings show an average of 20.99 (5 readings).

Summary: an area of medium density housing on reasonably generous plots, houses being detached. The cul-de-sac has a spacious feel because of the wide verges and open gardens. A quiet residential area due to the proximity of 2 LGS areas but there are parking problems for residents here due to the large number of vehicles belonging to visitors attending the nearby village facilities.

Views and Pictures of Area 5



Eastern part of Downs View



View from northern entrance to
Downs View at Church Path



View to northern edge of Downs View



View from Downs View across Church Path
to the south west



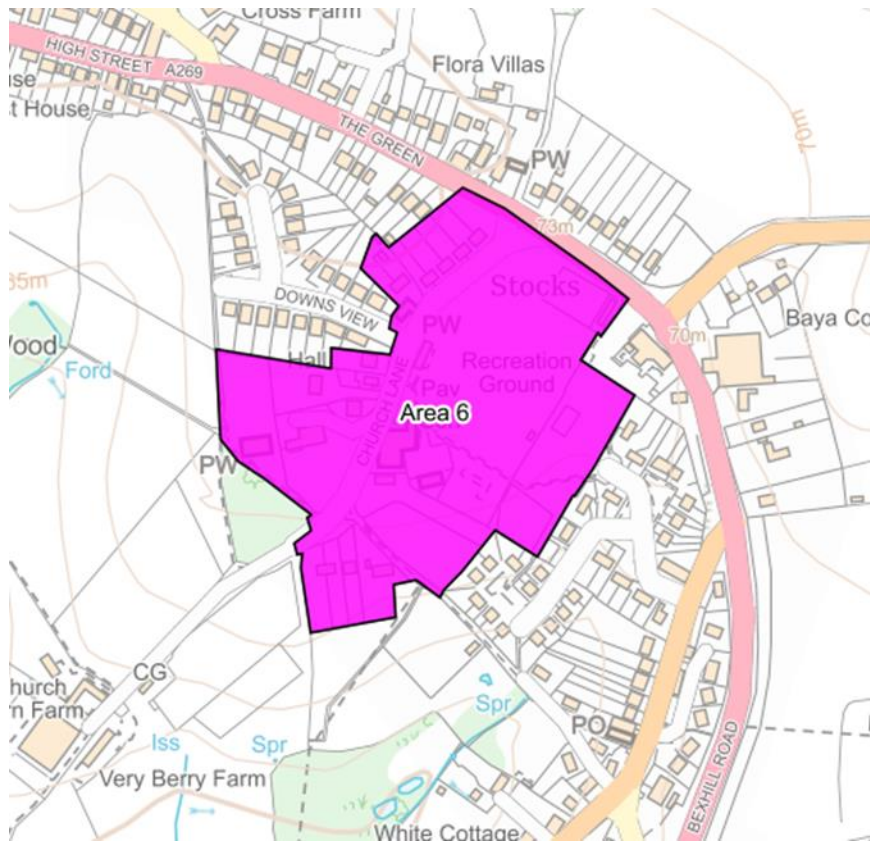
View out of Downs View
towards Church Lane



Western Edge of Downs View

Area 6 – (Church Lane)

Assessor: A. Gibbons January 2021



Layout: Church Lane, which runs north-east to south-west, is the only road in this area. It runs from The Green alongside the western boundary of the Recreation Ground and leads to the village school, the 2 churches, the Sparke Pavilion and the 2 meeting rooms. The access road for Downs View leads off Church Lane. Beyond the School on the left at the south-west corner of the

Recreation Ground, the lane turns slightly to the right, at the entrance to the churchyard. From here the lane starts to slope away to the south-west and from here one has a clear view of the Pevensey Levels and Beachy Head (a key view point looking out of the village). The lane continues down for about 180 metres past a fruit farm to Church Barn Farm, where it ends.

The Recreation Ground borders Church Lane. It comprises the two-storey Sparkes Pavilion, re-built in 2016. The Pavilion provides excellent facilities for football and cricket teams from the surrounding area. The Recreation Ground also has a thriving flat green Bowls Club, a multi-sport court (MUGA), skate area, zip wire and children's playground. It is regularly used by the adjacent Primary School (cf. Buildings) for games and Sports Days.

Topography: this area is on the plateau area of the ridge but slopes very gently away to the south east.

Land Use: much of the area is community use (churches, meeting rooms, Recreation Ground and school). The area contains 4 of our Local Green Spaces (LG1 The Recreation Ground, LG 5 Stocks & Whipping Post, LG6 the Allotments and LG7 the Churchyard). The remainder is residential. The saved 1998 Wealden Local Plan specifically excludes the bulk of this area from the village development boundary *“because of its distinct open character which links the village to the countryside south of Church Path. The Parish Church, primary school and adjoining properties have also been excluded to resist intensification of development which would adversely affect the loose-knit character of this area”*.

Roads, Streets & Routes: Church Lane is a no-through road running for about half a mile from north-east to south-west, ending at Church Barn Farm. There are no street lights and no foot paths along the road, except for a very short distance either side of the junction with Downsview. The section of Church Lane from The Green to Downsview – approximately 90 metres – is just over 4 metres wide. The houses here have no off-street parking so vehicles parked on the lane create a bottleneck which effectively

reduces the carriageway to 'single-track'. Church Lane widens a little as it approaches the Primary School until it reaches the gates of the church. Thereafter, it becomes a single track down to Church Barn Farm where it ends.

Church Path is an ancient footpath (PROW) linking Lower Street with the High Street, via St. Mary's Church, crossing Church Lane at right angles by the churchyard gates. There is another footpath (PROW) crossing the Recreation Ground which connects Church Lane with Stocks Meadow and Smith Close leading through to Lower Street.

Buildings and Details: Numbers 1 to 8 Church Lane are a row of semi-detached half-tiled, local red brick cottages built in the classic East Sussex style. They remain substantially un-changed since their construction in 1928. Of the remaining houses, several were built in the mid or late 19th century and were originally associated with the Church and the Primary School. Others date from the 1930 through to the 1970s and are all constructed using traditional materials. Almost all of the twenty domestic dwellings in this section are on the west side of Church Lane. With three exceptions, the plots are of medium size with small front gardens and larger ones to the rear. All houses are two-storey except for three modern bungalows.

The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin – Listed Grade 1 stands on the edge of the Ninfield Ridge with the land sloping away to the west towards Waller's Haven and the Pevensey Levels, affording outstanding, key views over unspoilt countryside as far as Beachy Head and the SDNP. It is believed that there has been a place of worship on this site since the 8th century. However, the first mention of a church on this site is in the Domesday Book, 1086. Little remains of the original church as there have been several restorations since – the most recent in 1885. The 'Martinus' church bell was cast in 1395 and still hangs in the unusual weather boarded bell turret. The Henry James pipe organ is deemed 'exceptional for a village church' which also contains an original 'Minstrels' Gallery'.

The Churchyard, which is a designated War Graves Cemetery, contains several yew trees, one of which is estimated to be over 1000 years old.

The Methodist Church was Established as a Christian Mission Hall in the mid 19th century this church was dedicated by William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. Early in the 20th century a United Methodist Chapel was established here. Quite recently, the building was extended to include a meeting room which is a popular venue for church and village activities.

The Reading Room was opened in 1910 by Lady Idena Brassey of Normanhurst and was built as an educational facility for the young people of the village. Now owned by the Diocese of Chichester, it is used extensively for community groups, projects and activities - notably the Muddy Boots Pre-School Nursery.

The Ninfield Church of England Primary School was built in 1853. It has since had several additions, the most recent being 2 new classrooms added in 2019.

The School House is adjacent to the School and was built at the same time to provide accommodation for the headmaster and his family, it is now a private dwelling.

The original Rectory (now called Sunnyside House) was built in the late 19th century and stands opposite the school on the other side of Church Lane.

Streetscape: At the entrance to Church Lane on the grass triangle (LG5) at the junction with The Green stand the grade 2 listed Stocks and Whipping Post. Church Lane (slightly lower than the ground on either side) has a very high number of parked vehicles on the road side. There are telegraph poles with associated wiring.

Green & Natural Features: due to the large area devoted to the Recreation Ground (LG1) this area has an open and green feel to it. There are a large number of mature trees, many are Scots Pine both along Church Lane and around the perimeter of the Recreation field. Most of the dwellings have mature trees and shrubs in front gardens and rear gardens, hedges predominate. The Churchyard (LG7) is an important green space with ancient yew trees and wild areas supporting a wide variety of fauna and flora. The small grassy triangle where the Stocks are located (LG5) has 5 mature pine trees and 2 younger specimens underplanted with daffodils. The Allotments (LG6) are also located in this area.

Spaces: the large Recreation Ground (LG1) is the largest green space in the Parish. There is also a well-used allotment garden area (LG6). The Churchyard (LG7) is a valued tranquil space.

Views & Dark Skies: many dwellings enjoy a view across the green area of the Recreation Ground. A small number of houses at the south western edge have spectacular views across open countryside and the Pevensy Levels towards the SDNP and Beachy Head. These views can also be appreciated by pedestrians using Church Path and visitors to the Churchyard. The heritage buildings here add to the amenity. Ninfield has dark skies due to an elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky meter readings show 20.99 (average of 5 readings).

Summary: Approximately two-thirds of this area remains undeveloped – being green open space, over half of which is the Recreation Ground, the remainder being twelve allotment gardens and the churchyard of St. Mary's Church. Church Lane is the only vehicular thoroughfare - bisecting this section with the majority of its twenty residences on the north west side. This area contains several important community facilities used by most of the Parish residents.

Views and Pictures of Area 6



Northern end of Church Lane



Recreation Ground



Church Lane looking south
towards the School



View out of Area 6 to the south west



View out of Area 6 to the Green



Church Lane looking
north

Area 7 – (Stocks Meadow & Smith Close)

Assessor JS January 2021



Layout: Stocks Meadow and Smith Close are contained and relatively modern developments on land between Lower Street and the Recreation Ground. This Y shaped area was built up during the 1960s /80s respectively. Plots are small but all have front and rear gardens. Many front gardens are open without fencing or hedging. Housing is high density. There are a small number of houses with off-street parking or garaging.

Topography: the area slopes quite markedly downwards to the south east from the Recreation Ground on the ridge plateau to the low-lying Lower Street area. Dwellings on the right-hand side of the road as you enter are raised well above the road, where as those on the left are below the level of the road. Smiths Close slopes down from Stocks Meadow into a Cul-de-Sac.

Land Use: this area is almost entirely residential with the exception of 2 small triangles of grass. The majority of the green space was removed in the last 5 years to create parking spaces.

Roads, Streets, routes: Stocks Meadow is accessed off the B2095 which joins the main A269 (which carries most of the traffic through the village) and has a speed limit of 30mph. Stocks Meadow leads into Smiths Close, both of which are cul-de-Sacs. Stocks Meadow is bordered by Ninfield Recreation ground. There is a footpath connecting Stocks Meadow with the Recreation Ground and Church Lane beyond. A second footpath connects Smith Close with the lower section of Church Path, an ancient and historic north/south route through the village.

Buildings and Details: buildings are terraced or semidetached 2 storey houses. At the entrance to Stocks Meadow there is a low-rise block of purpose-built flats. All buildings are constructed of traditional materials i.e. tile roofing, red brick with weather boarding and tiling to some walls. Clay tile hanging is a feature on most of the houses in this area. These houses were built sometime in the late 1960/early 1970 and do not have notable historic features.

Streetscape: Signage is mainly simple street names on horizontal boards. There is a small grassy area with a bench which overlooks the houses and the parking spaces that were put in 3 or 4 years ago. Many cars can be found parking on the remaining flat green areas due to the general lack of off-street parking and insufficient provision of parking bays.

Landmarks: none

Green and Natural Features: there are front gardens which are generally open and grassy rather than well stocked, most have the boundaries delineated with very low planting. The western edge of the area is bordered by the Recreation Ground (LG10 and the Allotment Gardens (LG6).

Spaces: there are no spaces in this area

Views & Dark Skies: Only houses on the edge of the recreation ground, which face into the recreation ground have a green view. There are no other views of note. Ninfield has dark skies due to its elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky readings averaging above 20 were achieved in both cul-de-sacs during January 2021.

Summary: an area of high-density housing with generally smaller than average plots.

Views and Pictures of Area 7



Stocks Meadow



View of entrance to Smith Close



Central area of Stock Meadow where parking is an issue



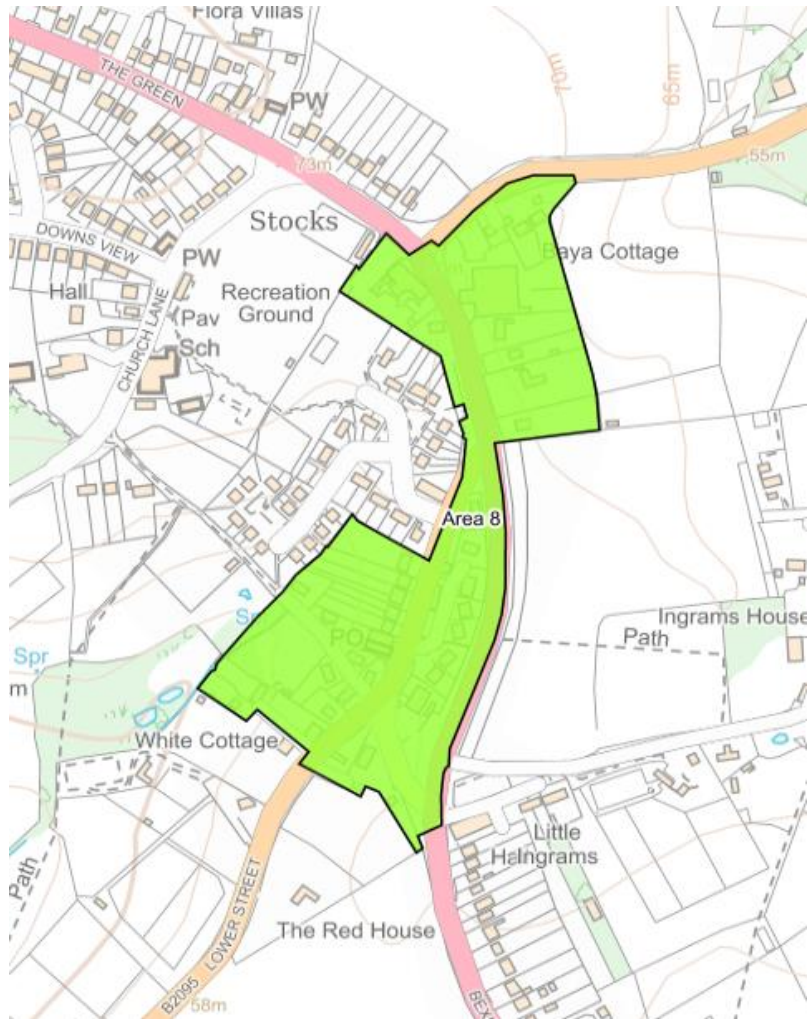
View into Stocks Meadow from Lower Street



Meadow View Flats

Area 8 – (Lower Street)

Assessors KC & DC January 2021



Layout: Lower Street was once a separate settlement and is a ribbon development with a mix of housing stock of a variety of age and style. On the western side from Stocks Meadow to Church Path, houses are mainly of red brick and built between 1890 and 1900 to house local agricultural workers. Grade 2 listed Apple Tree Cottage lies at the southern end of this row. Near the Stock Meadow junction are a few 1950s/60s houses. Plots are mixed, with terraced and semi-detached on narrow plots whilst detached have wide rear gardens. All were built as 2 storey cottages. Rear gardens are approximately 50 metres in depth. Further down, past Church Path there is a mix of much older houses, including weatherboard and tile hung 2 storey buildings with infill of 1960/70 style bungalows. Primarily gardens are small and laid to tarmac for off street parking

Roofs are a mix of slate or clay tile and predominantly sash windows (mix of wood and PVC)

Church Path (part of LG3) is a PROW linking Lower Street, via Church Lane, with Church Wood (LG2) and the centre of the village. It's also a natural demarcation line between the village and countryside.

Eastern side of Lower Street has fewer dwellings, but a greater mix of styles. Eight modern houses (Morland Close) sit in a small development running parallel with Lower Street.

There is a twitten running between Lower Street and A269. In addition, Molly's Corner, which was the 'old' road before A269 was built connects the B2095 (Hooe Road), the A269 and Lower Street.

Bexhill Road (A269) was built around 1930's. Houses are large and detached, set back from the road with long steep frontages and built on large plots. Houses are brick built, dating from 1930's to 1960's.

Over the past 20 years and especially since the opening of the Hastings/Bexhill link road, there has been a noticeable increase in traffic on both Lower Street and A269 and residents have raised concerns over both volume and speed.

There are good pavements on both side of Lower Street, but nothing on Molly's Corner slip road. Bexhill Road has limited paving on the eastern side, only a short footpath from the Memorial Hall leading to a crossing island and the twitten. On the western side there is a narrow tarmac footpath from Molly's Corner to the junction of B2095 and then leading into the centre of the village.

Topography

Lower Street is built at the head of a minor valley. Gardens of houses on the western side slope down to a small stream, partially in evidence in Church Path. It is set at the edge of the village and beyond Church Path (leading towards Hooe) becomes semi-agricultural with Very Berry Fruit Farm and grazing land. Bexhill road backs on to open fields and Hurst Wood

Bexhill Road is the top of the valley and flat, backing onto open fields and Hurst Wood.

Land use

Mainly residential but Lower Street includes the local store and post office -a vital facility for the village and community. The northern part of Bexhill Road is dominated by the petrol station, tyre dealership, workshops and the Kings Arms pub located at by the junction with Catsfield Road. The Memorial Hall and carpark are located opposite the Molly's Corner junction. Outline planning permission has been given for 55 houses at Ingrams Green site, bordering the A269.

One resident in Lower Street (Wyoming) has attempted to make the land behind his house into a wildlife sanctuary, with ponds and woodland areas. This piece of land also contains one of the last remaining market garden green houses, once common in Ninfield. His land abuts Church Barn woodland area.

There are wild flowers (including orchids and cowslips) in the verges at Bexhill Road/Molly's Corner and the verge to the north of the Memorial Hall (LG10). Daffodils have been planted both below the finger post in Lower Street and along the verge of Bexhill Road.

Streetscape

There are wooden fingerposts at the junctions of Molly's Corner and A269 and Molly's Corner and Lower Street. Wooden seats are sited outside of the Village Store in Lower Street and on land at the Catsfield Road roundabout. All are in good condition and maintained by the Parish Council.

The only streetlights will be found around the Catsfield road junction roundabout.

There are brick-built bus shelters, both containing benches, in Lower Street (near the shop) and on Bexhill Road (opposite Ingrams Farm development).

Next to the Lower Street bus shelter is an electrical sub-station

There are issues with the drainage which results in flooding problems for some houses in Lower Street. The drain between B2095 junction and Catsfield Hill roundabout is especially problematic and the overflow in wet weather is directed down the footpath at the top of Lower Street, bringing detritus which then blocks drains in Lower Street resulting in water flowing into houses on the western side. Poor drainage outside of Wisteria Cottage, which includes the overflow of water from A269 results in Wisteria Cottage being flooded in bad weather.

Landmarks: The Kings Arms (a historic coaching inn dating from 1759, although a more modern façade has been added), the Village Store/Post Office, listed buildings include Appletree Cottage, Fig tree Cottage, Morhouse and Moor Cottage. Potentially listable and historic buildings include Wisteria Cottage and Hollybank House.

Green & Natural Features (including views and dark night skies)

Bexhill Road has a wide strip of mature trees (comprising part of LG10) on the Eastern side from Maybank through to the entrance to the Memorial Hall. This feature will form an important screen when the new estate of 55 houses is built behind it (the line of trees and undergrowth has been substantially thinned and breached by the developer to enable access, but much of this will grow back in time). There are also trees and mature hedgerows at the back of gardens on the western side of the road. Houses to the north of the Ingrams Estate (Maybank, Four Winds etc) enjoy rear views over the AONB and both Hurst and Court Wood.

With no street lights, dark night skies were recorded at an average of 20.10 (5 readings). As yet we do not know the impact that the development of 55 new dwellings at Ingrams Green will have on dark night skies.

Although a number of dwellings in Lower Street have frontages with hard standing, those that do have gardens are generally well maintained with mature planting. There are mature trees in several locations across the area.

Some houses on the western side of Lower Street adjacent to Church Path enjoy views across to the trees on the ridge of Church Lane (their gardens are very long and slope down towards the valley bottom).

In Lower Street from junction of Stocks Meadow to Church Path, residents enjoy views across to the allotments, Church and Recreation Ground to the west. Towards the South, views take in the ridge above Very Berry Farm. Although also backing onto Stocks Meadow and Smiths Close, back gardens in these Lower Street record a dark skies measure of (21.05 average).

Beyond Church Path, houses on the eastern side back onto open fields and mature hedgerows full of wildlife. On the Western side there are clear views looking down the valley to the South Downs and across to the ridge leading from Church Lane.

Wild orchids can be found at Molly's Corner (part of LG10) and the verge to the north of the Memorial Hall

There are spectacular sunsets.

Summary: There are a number of historical buildings in Lower Street, some with potential to become listed, reflecting the gradual development of the settlement over 300 years. From weatherboard and tile hung cottages (Wisteria Cottage, Mor House) to the red brick of the mixed detached, semi-detached and terraced houses built for local workers in 1880-1890 to one of the last remaining market garden green houses.

Views and Pictures of Area 8



View south east along Lower Street
from Stocks Meadow



Lower Street



Twitten connecting
Lower Street and
Bexhill Road



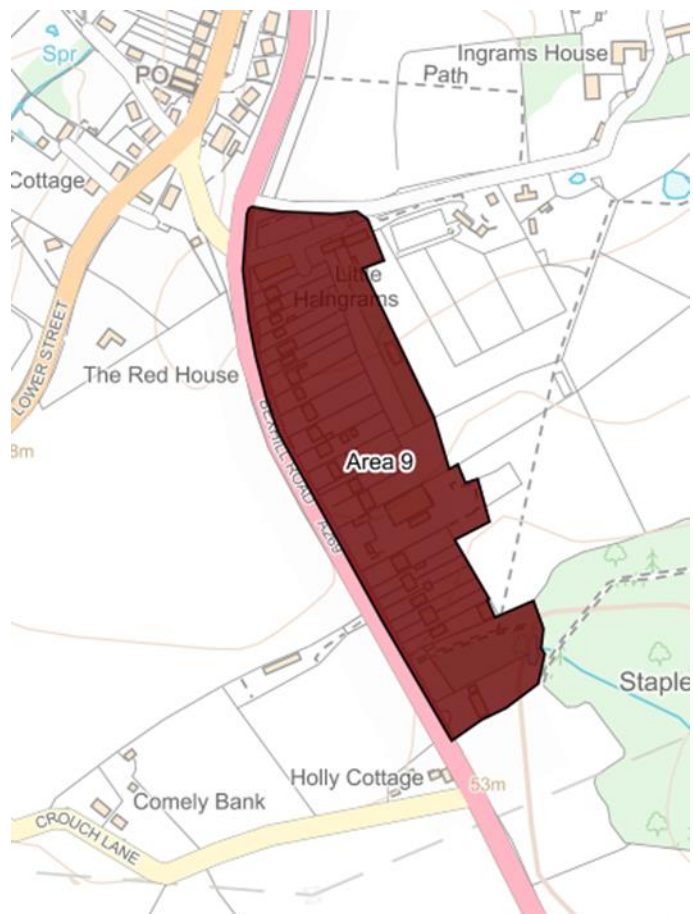
View to the north with Village Stores



View out of Lower Street towards
Hooe Road at Molly's Corner

Area 9 – (Bexhill Road)

Assessors JC 16th December 2020



Layout: The area is comprised of a linear development of housing on the north east side of the Bexhill Road A269 facing on to productive farmland. The houses, which date between the Victorian/Edwardian era through to the 1960s, occupy an elevated

position on a bank looking out across the road to open farm land. Almost all plots face onto the road (i.e. the A269) and have substantial front gardens, off street parking for at least one vehicle and large back gardens. Three dwellings are situated next to the Memorial Hall face north over a small service road and have very long rear gardens.

Topography: this area is on a very gentle slope beyond the ridge plateau of the central part of Ninfield. The plateau continues a gradual slope down towards Bexhill.

Land Use: this area is almost entirely residential. The two exceptions are The Memorial Hall (community use, plus a Pre-School) and a range of ex-garage buildings and forecourt currently used as a car wash, the Five Oaks Country Store equestrian shop and various storage buildings.

Roads, Streets, routes: the main A269 Bexhill Road (continuing from the High Street & The Green) carries most of the traffic through the village and has a speed limit of 40mph at this point. The road has defined pavement on the North East side adjoining the carriageway. There is a small service road adjacent to the Memorial Hall which is not a through route. A track runs through a green space between Eyton and an electricity substation, leading to Staplehurst Wood. The field opposite the housing (20 acre field) has an informal circular footpath connecting to the Working Men's Club and Crouch Lane.

Buildings and Details: The buildings are generally one-off design, built during different periods and the majority of buildings are detached and constructed of traditional materials i.e. clay tile or slate roofing, red brick (much of this is locally made) with some weather boarding and some tile hung walls. There are a small number of pairs of semi-detached houses constructed of similar materials, a few have been rendered and painted. There are bungalows both with and without dormers and two storey houses. Roofs are generally barn hipped. Some dwellings have had later extensions/additions and roof conversions with Velux windows. The Memorial Hall dates to the early 20th century and is an ex-Drill Hall, the design is very different to any of the housing nearby. The Car Wash is on a wide plot and the associated buildings date from the 1960s.

Streetscape: No street lighting is present and there are many telegraph poles with their associated wires running between them. There is a traffic island in the middle of the A269 to enable pedestrian access to the Memorial Hall.

Landmarks: The Memorial Hall.

Green and Natural Features: the well-established hedges, sizeable front gardens with mature trees enhance the green feel to the area. The housing looks out across the 20 Acre field (LG11) on the opposite side of the road, providing excellent countryside views and spectacular sunsets. The area also contains the southern part of LG10, Bexhill Road verges). Other greenspaces in this area

are limited other than grass verges between the pathway and the garden boundaries. There is another green space by the electricity substation between Eyton and Staplehurst where a track leads into the woodland behind.

Spaces: there are no significant spaces inside this area but the 20 Acre field (LG11) opposite is regularly used as a green space for recreational walking and wildlife appreciation.

Views & Dark Skies: Residents enjoy pleasant countryside views across open farmland towards the Pevensey Levels, with the sea, Beachy Head and the SDNP beyond. The land around the village is still actively farmed and contains significant pockets of ancient woodland. Ninfield has dark skies due to an elevated position, lack of street lighting and distance from larger settlements. Dark sky meter readings recorded 21.01 at this location (average of 5 readings).

Summary: an area of relatively low-density housing on generally large plots, houses being mainly detached. Hedging, mature trees and some verges make this a pleasant area to live apart from fast, heavy traffic on the A269. The Memorial Hall is situated here, a key Parish community facility.

Views and Pictures of Area 9



Memorial Hall



Glimpsed views towards the south west (SDNP in the distance)



Examples of 1960s



Housing is all on the north east side of Bexhill Road



Car wash



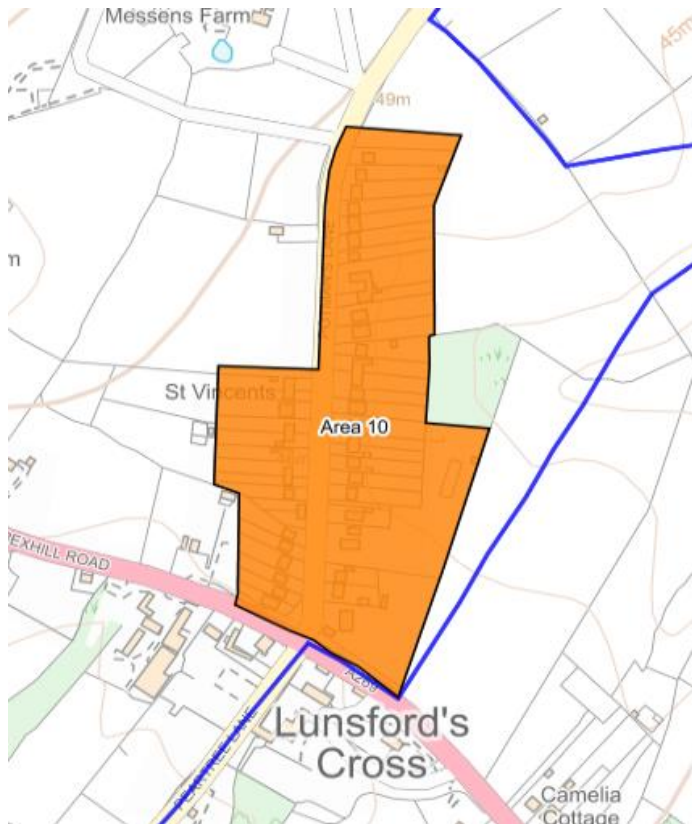
View out of Area 9 to the north west



View into Area 9 looking southeast

Area 10 – (Potman's Lane)

Assessors JL and RF 12 January 2021



Layout: This area is comprised of Potman's Lane which joins the A269. Beyond the assessment area the lane enters Catsfield Parish and immediately south of the junction with the A269 is the Bexhill (Rother) area. The layout of this low density ribbon development consists of a mixture of houses and bungalows. On the East side of the lane, plots tend to be bigger, with more frontage and very long back gardens. On the West side frontages are smaller, but the gardens are still quite large. The buildings on both sides face the road with fields at the rear. All plots have off street parking for at least one car, many for several cars.

Topography: The average elevation of the lane is roughly 45 metres. The road is level for most of the Ninfield stretch of the lane, but slopes quite steeply downhill before becoming Catsfield. The gardens on the East side slope gently down to level fields before rising again in the distance. There are open country views across to Hastings from houses on the East side.

Land Use: The lane is residential apart from two farms on the West side of the lane mainly used for stabling horses. On the East side, just into Catsfield, there is a farm which formally operates as a livery stables and also contains a solar farm. Its fields are behind the gardens of the Ninfield properties, provide grazing for horses, and give the open views already mentioned. The lane is used a great deal by horse riders.

Roads, Streets, routes: This area is a ribbon development on the north of the A269. It is in Lunsford Cross, often described as a Hamlet, but in reality it only consists of Potman's Lane and a few properties at the end of the lane (A269) where there is a cross roads with its opposite lane, Peartree Lane, leading to Bexhill. Potman's Lane is on the outskirts of Ninfield village, some 1.8 miles from the village centre and it eventually joins Church Road, Catsfield. When joining the A269 it is 2 miles from Sidley to the East. Where the lane joins Catsfield at the bottom of the hill there is an Electricity Sub-station.

Buildings and Details: There are 50 dwellings in this area situated on both sides of the lane. There isn't any particular style of property, with a mixture of mainly detached houses and bungalows, some rendered, some brick faced. Many of the latter have been extended outwards and upwards. There is a minority of semi-detached properties. It is believed that most of the properties on the east side of the lane were built in the late nineteen twenties and early thirties. There are a few infill properties which were built 30 or so years later. There are several significantly larger detached properties on the east side of the lane. On the west side the properties were built, we believe, in the nineteen fifties or sixties, and tend to be smaller than those of the east side, with the exception of the eight bedded farm house at Messens farm which was built in the mid eighteen hundreds, described as a non-designated heritage asset by Wealden's Heritage Officer. It is the only nineteenth century building in the Lane. On the east side of the lane there is a footpath which stops with the last house.

On the west side there is also a footpath which stops at the last house, a shorter run than on the east side. Planning permission has been granted for up to thirteen houses, on a current green field site on the west side. This would mean that the rows of houses on both sides would end at the same point. The density for the proposed new houses is much greater than that for the rest of the lane.

Streetscape: There is no street lighting anywhere in the area. There is a finger post at the end of the lane. All properties have off-street parking for at least one car, avoiding any permanent parking on the road. There is a Victorian letter box at the A269 end of the lane, also a defunct but traditional phone box. There are many telegraph poles all the way along the lane.

Landmarks: There are no particular landmarks in the lane.

Green and Natural Features: Front gardens are mainly well tended and offer pleasant flower borders and neat hedges as well as hard standing. After the housing ends on both sides of the lane there is traditional mixed hedging bordering the fields. There is also row of large mature oaks on the west side edging the field destined for new development.

Spaces: There are no public open spaces.

Views and Dark Skies: Most residents enjoy open views to fields, although a minority on the east side at the A269 end of the lane have views of a woodland copse of tall trees. The fields are in the main used for grazing horses and occasionally sheep. Kiln wood is ancient woodland adjoining the farms on the west

side and there are glimpses of this towards the end of the Ninfield part of the lane. As has been said there is no street lighting and so the lane benefits from dark skies. Meter readings recorded 20.95 (average of 5 readings).

Summary: Although part of Ninfield, Potman's Lane is geographically distant and divorced from the village. There is no footpath on the A269 between the lane and Ninfield and the cross-country footpaths to the village are inaccessible to all but the most intrepid walkers. It is a pleasant lane of low-density housing with mature gardens giving it a quiet and rural feel and residents tend to stay for a long time. Some properties are occupied by the extended families of the original residents. However, it can be busy and can sometimes be used as a 'rat run' from the busy A269 to Catsfield.

Views and Pictures of Area 10



Bungalows on eastern side of lane



Mixed housing on western side of Potman's Lane



Housing mix on western side of Potman's Lane



View out of Area 10 towards A269

Terrace at
northern end
of area



View out of
Area 10
towards
Catsfield

Conclusion

The 10 Character Areas listed above represent the Ridge Top built environment of the Parish plus Potman's Lane. Other parts of the Parish where sparsely distributed houses and farms are situated in the countryside are dealt with in a separate Landscape Study. These areas have been described as the Low Plateau to the east and south, the Moorhall Stream Valley to the southwest, the Catsfield/Watermill Stream Valley to the north and east, the Ninfield Stream Valley (AONB) to the north and west and the Pevensey Levels on the extreme western edge.

The End