

# Conservation Area Appraisal

Chyngton Lane  
Seaford



# Conservation Area Appraisal

**Name of Conservation Area :** Chyngton Lane

**Date of Designation :** 28.03.90

## What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Such areas therefore represent a key part of the district’s cultural heritage.

## The Purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal

Conservation Area Appraisals are considered by English Heritage to be vital to the conservation of these special areas. The content of this statement is based on the preferred approach set out in English Heritage’s publication Conservation Area Appraisals – Defining the Special Architecture or Historic Interest of Conservation Areas, English Heritage 1997.

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in exercising its planning powers. This statement will therefore provide a consistent and sound basis upon which to determine planning applications. It will also help in defending appeals against refusals of planning applications, which could have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area. This statement also identifies what contributes towards the character of the area and any negative features. This provides a useful base upon which to develop proposals for preservation and enhancement if the opportunity should arise through the planning system.

The preparation of the statement also enables local residents to participate in the identification of features, which are important to the special character of the area in which they live.

Visitors to the area also may find this statement provides interesting information about special and interesting local features.

## Objectives in Conservation Areas

There are tighter controls over cutting back or felling trees, demolition and alterations or building works in Conservation Areas. These are outlined in more detail in the leaflet “*Planning Controls in Conservation Areas*”. In Conservation Areas the District Council has various objectives such as seeking to preserve buildings that are historically important, securing design and use of materials that are sympathetic to the area and protecting important vegetation and spaces.

# Introduction

The Chyngton Lane Conservation Area is located on the eastern edge of the town of Seaford. Chyngton Lane bisects the Conservation Area on a north south axis and the land to the east of the lane is open countryside within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which in this area is also designated as ‘Heritage Coast’.

The main built feature in the Conservation Area is the manor house and its group of outbuildings. These are set in relatively spacious and maturely treed grounds. The lane itself retains an informal and peaceful rural character and appearance, by virtue of its narrow width, un-made surface and, in particular, the tree belts on either side. There is a complex of farm buildings on the eastern side of Chyngton Lane, which contributes to the rural, agricultural character of the area.

The Conservation Area retains the character of a downland hamlet notwithstanding that modern residential development abuts its western and northern boundaries. The north of the conservation area features trees lining the lane, some of which are protected by tree preservation orders and this gives the narrow lane a leafy rural feel.



*Chyngton Lane (looking south towards conservation area)*

## Origins and Patterns of development

The hamlet originally comprised Chyngton House and its grounds. Chyngton House is of medieval origin, and was given to the Priory of Michelham in the reign of Henry III by Gilbert De Aquila and became a grange when a small chapel was built. Chyngton House is surrounded by a collection of outbuildings including a dovecote, a cowshed and barns, several of which have been converted into houses. The Manor House and surrounding buildings formed a small outlying rural hamlet, although over time the curtilage of Chyngton House itself has constricted. With the spread of Seaford the group of buildings has been absorbed into the fringes of the town, with modern housing adjoining the north and west sides.

## Archaeological Interest

The area is designated by the County Council as an archaeologically sensitive and important site. This is because the site appears to have been settled since the Bronze Age as pottery from that era and bronze lumps have been uncovered, along with a Neolithic scraper and evidence of a deserted mediaeval village.

## Buildings

There are eight statutorily listed buildings in the Conservation Area. The following buildings (listed and unlisted) are considered to contribute significantly to the Conservation Area by their character and appearance and/or their location.



*Chyngton House*

### Chyngton House

Chyngton House is a grade II listed building and its immediate outbuildings form the focal point of the Conservation Area. Chyngton House itself has an eighteenth century appearance, which belies its medieval origin. The house has two storeys and an attic with dormers in a steeply-pitched, clay tile roof. The front (western) wall is stuccoed, whilst the rear wall remains exposed flint with stone quoins and red brick window dressings. There is a flint wing at the rear with a half-hipped roof, and a modern enclosed porch on the front elevation. There are a

group of trees protected by tree preservation orders within the grounds of the house, 16 in total, which gives the grounds a leafy park feel.

### Ancillary Farm buildings

To the North East of the main house is a long flint barn with brick dressings, dating from 1836. This has a gabled, slate-covered roof, and has been converted into a number of dwellings.

Adjoining the barn is a single storey terrace of dwellings, which front Chyngton Lane. This predominantly flint and brick long, low building was originally cowsheds and a barn associated with Chyngton House.

Next to the converted cowsheds, also fronting onto the lane, is a building which is now a dwelling, but which was originally stables with a loft above. This has a clay tiled half hipped roof, and walls of flint and brick, however the character of this building has been altered significantly by a lean-to addition on the eastern elevation.



*Outbuildings of Chyngton House (formally a long barn)*



*Outbuilding (east of Dovecote, visible to the rear of the property)*

To the rear of this building is a dovecote, originally associated with Chyngton House. This is of seventeenth/eighteenth century origin, and is built of flint with stone quoins, some of which have been replaced with brick. The building is square with dove escapes under its eaves. Dovecotes were a common feature at the time of the Manor as they provided a ready source of fresh meat during winter.

To the rear of this building is an eighteenth or nineteenth century stable and coach house building, of similar materials to the dovecote, which has been converted to a residence.

This complex of buildings is grade II listed for its value as a homogeneous group.



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## Chyngton Lane Conservation Area



4 Mark Close



Numbers 155 & 156



### Other Listed Buildings

Other listed buildings in the Conservation Area are a pair of nineteenth century semi detached cottages. These are nos 155 and 156 and front Chyngton Lane, forming a good entrance feature to the Conservation Area from the south.

To the rear of this pair is 4 Mark Close an outbuilding dating from the eighteenth/nineteenth century, of flint, brick and tile construction, which has been converted to a dwelling. Access to the dwelling is through Mark Close and the building feels cut off from the rest of the conservation area.

### Unlisted Buildings

There are a number of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area which are nevertheless of some age or character, including a small group of flint, brick and slate farm buildings to the east of Chyngton Lane. These have recently undergone conversion to residential properties, which has



Farm Buildings

inevitably altered their character, but they remain as evidence of the agricultural heritage of the area.

At the south eastern corner of the Conservation Area there is a small flint and tile outbuilding. This is a modest and unlisted building, but it forms a good entrance feature to the Conservation Area, particularly given the utilitarian nature of the surrounding agricultural sheds.

The primary space within the Conservation Area is Chyngton Lane itself. This is the only public route through the area. The space has a linear nature and its secluded rural character is derived from its narrow width, informal surface, lack of kerb edging and drainage, grass verges and overhanging trees along its route. The track is closed off to prevent through traffic using it. Only farm traffic and residential traffic associated with the small number of houses in the Conservation Area use the lane.

Chyngton House and its immediate outbuildings are located within a walled private garden area, which was part of the original curtilage of the manor.

The remaining garden area is enclosed by buildings and walls and as such is more secluded and screened from public view. These spaces make a significant contribution to the setting of the group of listed buildings and the spacious and tranquil character of the area.

### Important Spaces

The grounds of Chyngton House form an important space in the conservation area and are the main focus of the listed buildings, all of which were once associated with the house itself. This private open space make an important contribution in terms of providing an open setting for this primary group of buildings, and maintaining a distinct separation between the listed group and the modern residential development to the north and west.

## Building Materials

Due to their proximity to the coast and the downs, Chyngton House and its immediate outbuildings are predominantly built of flint, incorporating stone or brick dressings and quoins, and clay tile roofs. This palette of materials is also used in the other two listed buildings with the addition of slate in the farm buildings.

## Natural elements

The Chyngton Lane Conservation Area is located on the transition of the built-up fringes of the Seaford and the Downs, and has a good degree of tree cover. There are a number of tree belts and individual trees that are protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs). Other important belts are also afforded a degree of protection by virtue of their location within the Conservation Area. The most important belt is along the eastern edge of Chyngton Lane, which creates the character of a rural lane and serves as a buffer to the open fields beyond.

There are also belts of trees around the large agricultural sheds, which are important in minimising the sheds visual impact on the surroundings.

Other tree groups are those close to either entrance to Chyngton House, which enhance the setting of the group of buildings, and the belt at the head of Mark Close which helps to demarcate the Conservation Area. There is also a group within the garden walls, which in conjunction with the walls themselves, serve to reduce the impact of the modern development on the historic fabric of the area.

## Relationship between built form and natural environment

The Conservation Area is located on the very edge of Seaford, on the boundary of the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and the boundary of the proposed National Park).

Panoramic views of the Downs are evident south from Chyngton Lane and east beyond the farm buildings. Looking north along Chyngton Lane, the appearance is that of a tree-lined country lane. There are attractive views into the Conservation Area from the north and south along Chyngton Lane.

## Potential Enhancements

There are a number of modern buildings in the Conservation Area which detract from its historic character and appearance to some degree.

The large steel-framed agricultural sheds on the east side of Chyngton Lane are of utilitarian design, and their appearance and vast size, whilst functional, is in stark contrast with the predominantly listed buildings on the other side of the lane. The barns are constructed of blockwork, fibre-cement sheeting and timber. Although the buildings are in contrast with the listed buildings they do not significantly detract from the overall conservation area, but they do create a working rural feel to the area.



*Cow sheds adjacent to the conservation area*

The only building on the west side of Chyngton Lane which is not listed is a residential infill development. This is a modern brick and tile bungalow and garage, and its style, form and materials are out of keeping with the eighteenth and nineteenth century flint buildings around it.

To serve the residential conversion of Chyngton House's adjoining barn and cowsheds, a terrace of flat-roofed garages has been built along the Conservation Area boundary. These are of a very standard and suburban appearance, and their location within the curtilage of Grade II Listed Buildings detracts from the setting of the historic group.

The main detraction from the conservation area is the more modern housing development built up to the conservation area, and surrounding the north and east sides. The suburban development has reduced the previous rural character of the area.

Wherever opportunities arise through the planning process to lessen the impact on the Conservation Area of the above features, these will be taken.



*Garages in the grounds of Chyngton House*

## Planning Policies

The **Adopted East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan** [1991] contains broad policies which require the impact of proposed development on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings to be given due consideration. This plan can be viewed at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes.

Switchboard number: (01273) 481000.

Website : [www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk)

These policies are reflected in more specific detail in the **Adopted Lewes District Local Plan** [2003]. Chapter Eight of the plan specifically covers 'The Historic Environment' and these planning policies clearly outline the criteria that will be applied to development in, or affecting, a conservation area and the approval or refusal of any planning or conservation area application will be determined against them.

Anyone thinking of applying for consent within a conservation area is therefore strongly advised to consider these policies first. The Local Plan can be viewed at the offices at the below address or on the website at : [www.lewes.gov.uk/coun/planning/index.html](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/coun/planning/index.html)

Pre-application advice can also be obtained, free of charge, from Development Control Officers or the Conservation Officer.

### Further Information

For further information on this leaflet, please contact:

#### Policy and Projects Team

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This is one of a series of leaflets about the 35 Conservation Areas in the Lewes District. A full list can be obtained by contacting the above officers, or by visiting the Council's web site ([www.lewes.gov.uk](http://www.lewes.gov.uk)), or from Lewes Tourist Information Centre (TIC) High Street, Lewes and Seaford Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Clinton Place, Seaford.

Visitors can find out about walks and facilities in the area from Lewes and Seaford TIC's.

#### Lindsay Frost

Director of Planning & Environmental Services

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