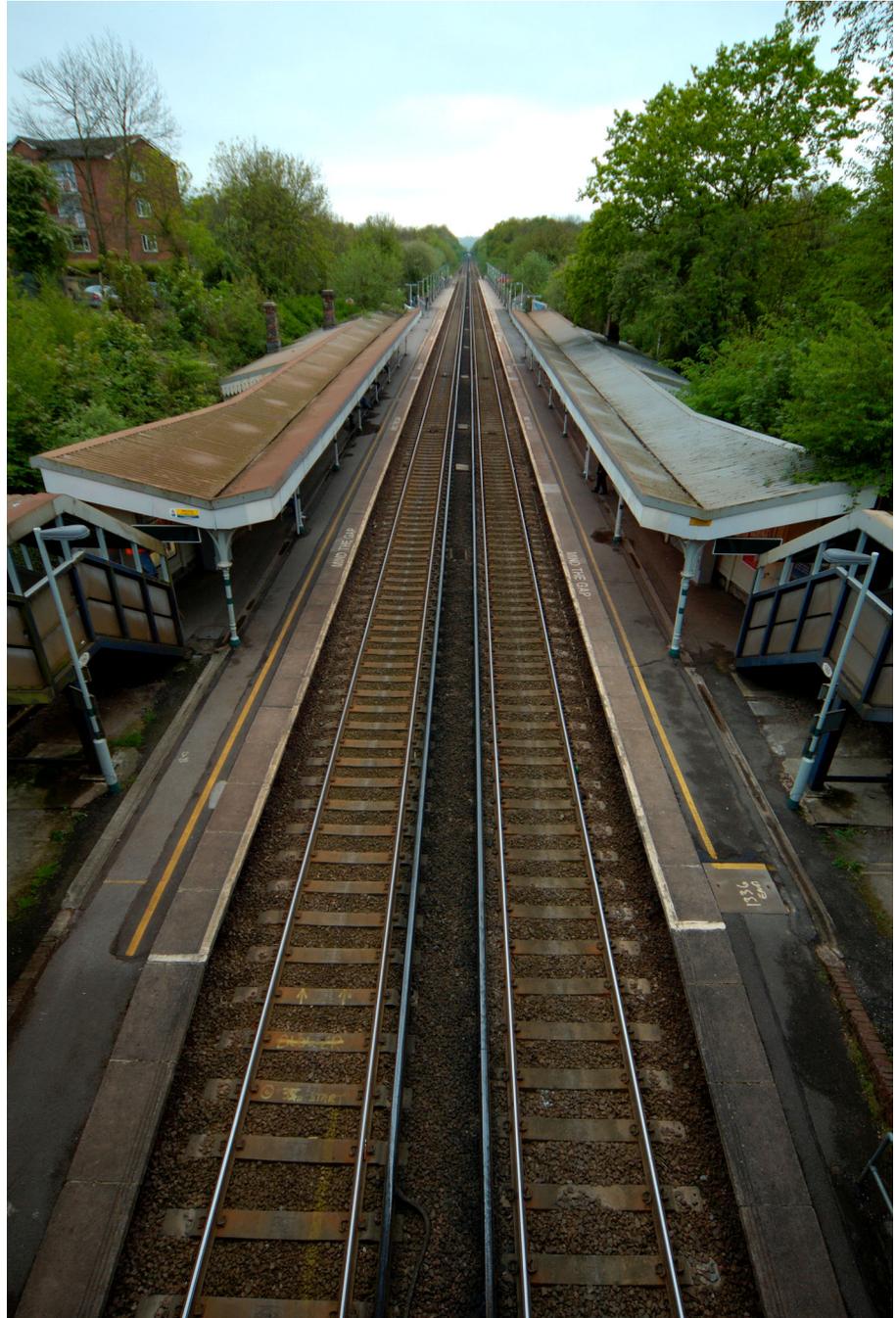


Burgess Hill

Historic Character Assessment Report

November 2005



Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS)

Roland B Harris

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in association with Mid Sussex District Council and the Character of West Sussex
Partnership Programme



Sussex EUS – Burgess Hill

The Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (Sussex EUS) is a study of 41 towns undertaken between 2004 and 2008 by an independent consultant (Dr Roland B Harris, BA DPhil MIFA) for East Sussex County Council (ESCC), West Sussex County Council (WSCC), and Brighton and Hove City Council; and was funded by English Heritage.

Guidance and web-sites derived from the historic town studies will be, or have been, developed by the local authorities.

All photographs and illustrations are by the author.

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Cover photo: Burgess Hill railway station looking southwards.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the project

This report is an archaeological, historical, and historic urban character assessment of Burgess Hill. It is part of the Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (henceforth Sussex EUS) that examines 41 towns across the ancient county.¹

The Sussex EUS forms part of a national programme of such surveys initiated by English Heritage in 1992. The national programme is already well underway, with roughly half the English counties having been completed or currently undergoing study.

As the surveys have progressed, the approach has developed. In line with recent surveys, the Sussex EUS includes more modern towns, such as Burgess Hill, the main significance of which stems from the 19th and 20th centuries. Another recent innovation is the introduction of the characterization concept, comparable with the map-based techniques adopted by historic landscape characterization. This approach was developed in Lancashire (2000-4), and is further refined in Sussex.

The Sussex EUS has been funded by English Heritage, and supported in kind by the commissioning authorities: East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton and Hove City Council. A wide range of stakeholders (including district and borough councils, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) has supported the project.

In West Sussex the Sussex EUS forms part of the *Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme*,² aiming to provide guidance and advice on the protection and enhancement of all aspects of character in the county. Other historic environment projects come under this umbrella:

- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of Sussex
- Intensive Urban Survey of Chichester and Fishbourne
- Local Distinctiveness Study of West Sussex.

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 Aims

The aim of the Sussex EUS is to deliver a unique and flexible tool to aid the understanding, exploration and management of the historic

qualities of 41 of the most significant towns in Sussex with a view to:

- archaeological and historic environment research and management.
- informing strategic and local policy.
- underpinning urban historic land and buildings management and interpretation.
- encouraging the integration of urban historic characterization into the wider process of protecting and enhancing urban character.

1.2.2 Objectives

Key objectives of the project include the:

- synthesis of previous archaeological and historical work.
- creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) that maps and allows the analysis of archaeological events, monuments and urban plan components using information obtained from a variety of sources.
- analysis of the origins and development of each town by establishing and examining its principal plan components and existing standing structures.
- identification of county-wide Historic Character Types and attribution of the types to different areas within each town.
- preparation of a Statement of Historic Urban Character for each town, to include assessment of archaeological potential and Historic Environment Value.
- identification of gaps in the understanding of the past occupation and historical development of character of each town through the development of a Research Framework.
- advice to local authorities on the development of guidance derived from the town studies.

1.3 Outputs

The principal outputs of the project comprise:

- Historic character assessment reports. Documents (of which this is one) that, separately for each town, summarize the setting and pre-urban activity; synthesize current archaeological and historical research; describe the development from origins to the present day; assess the surviving historic character and historic environment value; and set out a framework for future research on the historic environment of the towns.

- Geographical Information System (GIS) for the historic environment of each town. The GIS underpins the analysis and mapping of the town reports, and is available to local authorities as a unique tool to support their decision making. The EUS-generated GIS data includes historic buildings and archaeological data, and mapping of areas for which Historic Character Type, historic land use, and Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined. The GIS data will be maintained and updated by the West Sussex County Council *Sites & Monuments Record* (SMR) and the East Sussex County Council *Historic Environment Record* (HER).
- Informing historic environment management guidance specific to each local planning authority, for the 41 EUS towns and Winchelsea, produced under the new Local Development Frameworks, and subject to formal consultation procedures.
- Background papers for the Sussex EUS project. Documents that include the project design, a summary of the methodology and an overall bibliography.

1.4 The structure of this report

1.4.1 The Setting

This introductory section describes the topography, geology, communications, and pre-urban archaeology of the town.

1.4.2 History

The history of Burgess Hill in this report can be a brief summary only. It aims to synthesize published research, and to provide a chronological overview of the development of the town as seen from documentary sources. The focus is placed on those matters – such as origins, economy, trade and institutions – that are most closely related to the urban historic environment today.

1.4.3 Archaeology

The archaeology section of this report draws on published and unpublished reports of excavations, archaeological assessments, and records of finds. This section also includes analysis of historic buildings (listed and non-listed) and the topography, the latter drawing on maps of the town, or the area later occupied by the town, from 1843 onwards. Again, this section follows a chronological structure, and focuses on aspects of the material evidence of the town's past that relate most closely to the historic environment today.

1.4.4 Statement of Historic Urban Character

Whereas sections on history and archaeology (above) explore the development of Burgess Hill over time, this part of the report considers and defines the physical evidence of the past in today's townscape. It does this by means of a character-based approach, operating at three different scales: areas of common Historic Character Type; larger and topographically familiar Historic Urban Character Areas; and the whole town. Assessment is made of the Historic Environment Value of each of the Historic Urban Character Areas, taking account of the archaeological potential.

1.5 Principal sources

Burgess Hill has been the subject of little archaeological and historical interest. The principal sources drawn on during the writing of this report are listed below. Many other sources have been used too, and full references have been given by use of endnotes.

1.5.1 History

Despite its relatively recent origins and omission from the authoritative historical studies in the *Victoria County History*,³ Burgess Hill is fortunate in that it has been the subject of a thorough local historical study for the key period of 1840-1914, led by **Brian Short**.⁴ The pre-urban history and topography of the area has been summarized by **Heather Warne**.⁵

1.5.2 Archaeology

There has only been one archaeological investigation – a published watching brief on the line of the Roman Road – within the EUS study area for Burgess Hill:

113 Church Road – 1996.⁶

The **West Sussex Sites & Monuments Record** (SMR) database has been invaluable for identifying unpublished sites near to the EUS study area, and for providing the pre-urban archaeological context.

1.5.3 Historic buildings

Burgess Hill's scatter of pre-town historic buildings (all outside the EUS study area) and its post-railway architecture have not been the subject of study. English Heritage's statutory list of historic buildings is of use, though many of the descriptions date from the 1950s and were necessarily produced without internal inspection.

Very limited fieldwork only was possible during this assessment and focused on correcting dating derived from such sources, identifying hitherto ignored buildings of historic interest.

1.5.4 Geology and topography

The contextual discussion of the solid and drift geology has principally derived from 1:50,000 British Geological Survey digital data. Ordnance Survey Historic 25" maps for Epochs 1-4 (1874 onwards) have proved invaluable, especially as these have been used in digital form, allowing overlaying with each other and with other data. The 1838 Keymer and 1845 Clayton Tithe maps (*West Sussex Record Office*) capture the area of what later became Burgess Hill at a large scale around the time of the building of the London-Brighton railway (1841), but before the town began. These maps has been digitized and rectified to fit the National Grid to allow

comparison with other maps and data. RAF vertical air photo coverage of 1947 provides a useful snapshot in time, as does the modern equivalent flown for West Sussex County Council in 2001. All analysis and maps utilize the most recent large-scale Ordnance Survey mapping (digital MasterMap data).

1.6 Area covered by the report

The Sussex EUS assessment of Burgess Hill covers the extent of the town c.1900.

Burgess Hill is one of five towns in Mid Sussex District that have assessments such as this. The others are Cuckfield, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, and Lindfield. Although Lindfield adjoins Haywards Heath, the two settlements remain quite distinct and, thus, each has its own report.

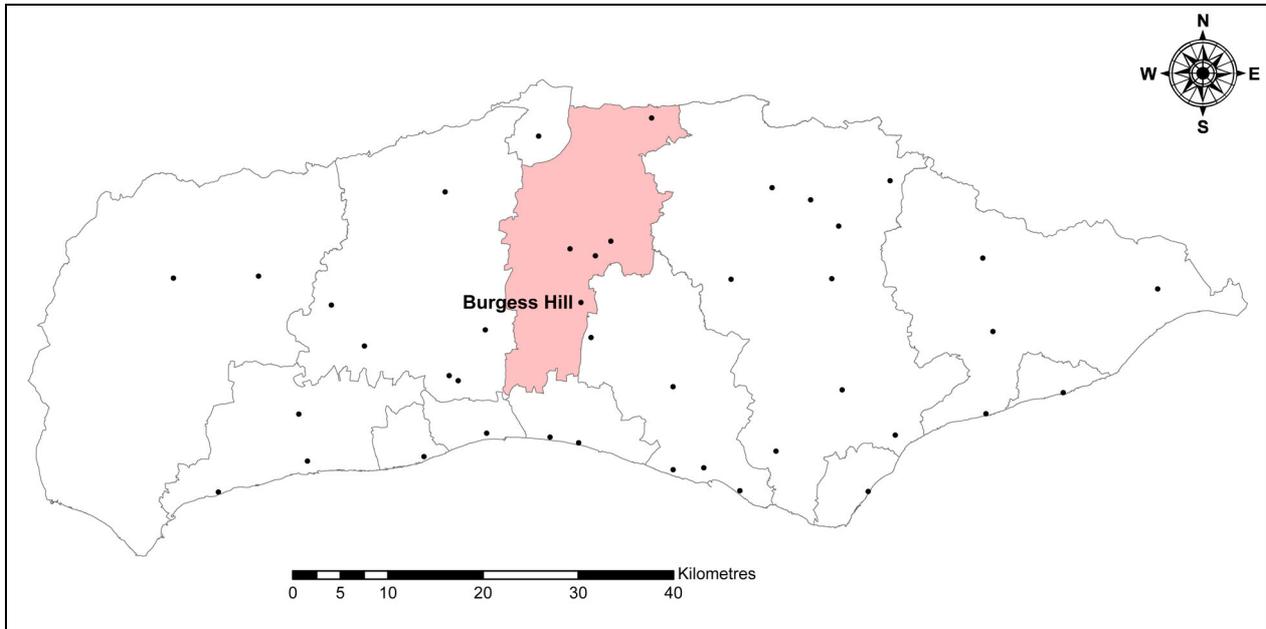


Fig. 1. Location of Burgess Hill within Sussex. Mid Sussex District is highlighted and points locate the 41 Sussex EUS towns.

2 THE SETTING



Fig. 2. View east across the recreation ground off Fairfield Road and Downs Road.

2.1 Topography (Map 2)

Burgess Hill is located within the Low Weald. The historic hill of Burgess Hill (the northern end of Keymer Road) marks the northern end of a minor ridge extending from Ditchling, while the area historically forming St John's Common (still partly marked by open ground – the recreation grounds of St John's Park and St John's Common) forms a plateau to the north-west. To the north of this, and outside the EUS study area, the land falls, forming the valley of the upper reaches of the River Adur: the London Road descending from 43m OD at the junction with Fairfield Road to 21m OD at Fairplace Bridge. To the south of St John's Common, the land descends to a minor tributary of the Adur, the Pook Bourne, at 32m OD at Hammonds Place. The River Adur flows west then, from Henfield, south to reach the sea at Shoreham, 17km to the south-west of Burgess Hill.

Burgess Hill has an unusually widespread centre. Its principal shopping area is concentrated on Church Road and, to a lesser degree, Station Road, with more commercial businesses on London Road. With the church and the recreation ground of St John's Park between, there is no obvious focal point in the

town. Suburbs extend from the c.1900 limit of the town in all directions.

2.2 Geology (Map 2)

2.2.1 Solid Geology

Along with the whole of Sussex, the rocks of the Burgess Hill area are sedimentary. Descending the higher land of the High Weald towards the Low Weald, and then rising at the South Downs, the rocks become more recent. Burgess Hill lies at the centre of the Low Weald, and sits predominantly on mudstone (commonly clay) interspersed with narrow bands of sandstone, clayband ironstone, and, most rarely, limestone that together are the Weald Clay Formation (Lower Cretaceous).

Weald Clay has been the main source for brickmaking in Sussex, and the quality of the raw material on the site of later Burgess Hill for both bricks and tiles was recognized from at least the 16th century (see below, section 3.2.1).

2.2.2 Drift Geology

The drift geology of the Burgess Hill area is limited. None is noted within the EUS study area itself, but alluvium 400m to the north marks the upper reaches of the River Adur, which is crossed by the London road at Fairplace Bridge. Smaller and discontinuous areas of alluvium, river terrace deposits and undifferentiated Head deposits immediately to the south-west of the town mark the channel of the minor Pook Bourne.

2.3 Communications

2.3.1 Water

The River Adur appears to have been little used for navigation above Mock Bridge, over 12km downstream of Burgess Hill, and 19th-century revival of the river was limited to canalization between Shoreham and Baybridge (West Grinstead), from 1807.⁷ Moreover, the origins of Burgess Hill post-date the arrival of the turnpike road and, especially, the railway (see below), and, thus, water-borne communications have not been relevant in the life of the town.

2.3.2 Road

The principal through-route at Burgess Hill is the north-south A273, from Haywards Heath to Brighton. This route was identified as the London road on a 1638 manorial map of the Haywards Heath area,⁸ and was turnpiked in 1807.⁹ Just

north of the EUS study area, at Fairplace Bridge, this road is joined by the B2036 to Ansty: this provided the more important route to London, via Cuckfield, in the 17th and 18th centuries, even before it was turnpiked – to serve the fast-growing Brighton-London traffic – in 1770.¹⁰ Another ancient north-south through route links Keymer to Haywards Heath, passing through Burgess Hill along Keymer Road and Junction Road. Minor east-west routes link the town to Wivelsfield (via Janes Lane), South Chailey (via Folders Lane, the B2113), and Goddards Green and Hickstead (via West Street). Recently, the A273 has been diverted around the western edge of the town along the new bypass.

2.3.3 Railway

The London and Brighton Railway (from 1846 the London Brighton and South Coast Railway – LBSCR) was authorized to build a line from London to Brighton in 1837, and this opened in 1841, with a small station at Burgess Hill. A line from the burgeoning channel port at Newhaven opened in 1847, joining the London line at Keymer Junction (750m north of Burgess Hill station). Both these lines remain in service. The main line was electrified in 1933 and the line to Lewes in 1935.¹¹

2.4 Evidence for pre-urban activity

2.4.1 Prehistoric

Three recent archaeological investigations outside the EUS study area are relevant as they represent rare instances of controlled archaeology in the area, and have provided evidence of prehistoric activity.

- Charles Avenue (Maltings Farm), 900m south-west of the EUS study area – watching brief in 1996 produced 135 worked flints, mostly hard hammer-struck debitage, with blades and flakes typical of the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (3000 BC to 1501 BC). There were a smaller number of soft hammer-struck flakes, blades and bladelets of probable Mesolithic date (10000 BC to 4001 BC). Three sherds of Early Bronze Age Pottery were recovered, and a radiocarbon date (at 95% confidence, to 2290-1940 cal BC) and possibly associated hollows from burnt tree roots suggest land clearance was taking place at this date.¹²

- Innovation Drive, 800m west of the EUS study area – watching brief and excavation in 1996 produced 152 pieces of worked flint, mostly hammer-struck debitage, but with some

implements such as scrapers. A large blade/burin is probably of Upper Palaeolithic date (150000 BC to 10001 BC), several blades/bladelets are Mesolithic, and the remainder are Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.¹³

- West End Farm – watching brief in 1998 produced worked flints that included an unfinished arrowhead, indicating limited activity in the Mesolithic and later Neolithic/Bronze Age [SMR reference: 6644 – WS6705].

A more extensive area of Mesolithic activity on the Lower Greensand ridge at Hassocks may be the centre of the hunter-gather activity indicated by these sites.¹⁴

Within or near to the EUS study area, there have been prehistoric single find spots:

- St John's Common – fragment of Neolithic (4000 BC to 2351 BC) polished stone axe found during clay digging for brickworks, c.1870 [SMR reference: 4127 – WS736].

- St John's Common – Bronze Age (2350 BC to 701 BC) axe found pre-1912 [SMR reference: 4117 – WS729].

2.4.2 Romano-British

The north-south London-Hassocks Roman road was first discovered by Stephen Vine in 1779, where it crossed St John's Common – now the centre of Burgess Hill. Margary confirmed the route in 1936 – excavating a section in the (former) brickworks south of Norman Road – and it was seen again in section in 1996 during an archaeological watching brief adjacent to 113 Church Road.¹⁵

The excavation and watching brief at Innovation Drive in 1996, 800m west of the study area, is significant as it comprises the only other evidence for Romano-British activity in the immediate vicinity of the town. Features excavated included a possible corn-drying oven, two ditches, six hearths, and two pits. Finds included pottery and iron-forging slag (at a low density, indicating small-scale work). Remarkably, the evidence indicated permanent or semi-permanent occupation of the site from the 1st to 4th century AD.¹⁶

2.4.3 Medieval and post-medieval to c.1840

The 19th-century town of Burgess Hill was built over Wealden commons and woodlands belonging to scarp-foot Downland settlements (Clayton, Ditchling and Keymer), and the medieval and post-medieval archaeology and topography reflect this.

Key pre-Conquest features are the north-south roads in the town (London Road, and Keymer Road/Junction Road) and the former commons, both deriving from the elongated holdings of the scarpfoot manors of Keymer, Ditchling and Clayton, and from Downland-Wealden transhumance (seasonal moving of livestock – predominantly pigs – from the Downs to the Wealden woodland pastures).

The earliest documentary reference to the midsummer fair held on Fairplace Hill, St John's Common (or Stottesford as the common was then known), dates from 1342, and there are further references from 1400, 1465-6, and 1481. The location of the site, straddling the medieval parish boundaries of Keymer and Clayton, could suggest pre-parish (c.1100 or earlier) origins.¹⁷

There has been no excavation of a medieval or post-medieval site, or recorded find spot, within in the EUS study area, but nearby investigations have produced some limited evidence:

- Charles Avenue (Maltings Farm), 900m south-west of the EUS study area – watching brief in 1996 produced five Saxon pottery sherds, as well as 27 of medieval date and 14 of post-medieval date. A radiocarbon date (at 95% confidence, to 1040-1280 cal AD) for a hollow from a burnt tree root suggests land clearance was taking place at this date, as it had in the Bronze Age (see above).¹⁸
- Innovation Drive, 800m west of the EUS study area – watching brief and excavation in 1996 produced one Early Saxon and one Middle Saxon pottery sherds. The latter was in a post-hole, possibly suggesting occupation¹⁹
- West End Farm – watching brief in 1998 produced a few sherds of medieval pottery indicating some activity during this period, although most material was post-medieval [SMR reference: 6644 – WS6705].

More substantial archaeological evidence for the post-medieval period is provided by survivors of the scattered buildings that preceded the town, although none of these are within the EUS study area:

- The Woolpack, Westend Road – previously Westend Farmhouse dating from the early 17th century, with major additions in the 18th century.²⁰
- Hammonds Place, London Road – timber-framed house dating from the mid-16th century.²¹
- Little Hammonds Farmhouse, London Road – a late 16th- or early 17th-century timber-framed house refaced in brick and weatherboarding.

The adjacent timber-framed and weatherboarded (former) barn is probably 18th century.²²

- Chapel Farmhouse, Fairplace Hill – 16th-century or earlier timber-framed house.²³
- High Chimneys, Keymer Road – an 18th-century red brick house.²⁴

2.4.4 Implications of pre-urban archaeology

There have been additional finds from the Burgess Hill area (such as a Bronze Age bronze palstave, SMR reference 4130 – WS738), for which the find spots are unknown, but the implications from all the pre-urban finds are clear: despite the relatively recent origins of Burgess Hill, evidence for Romano-British and prehistoric occupation or use of the area has been found and should be anticipated in any future archaeological excavations. Moreover, the surviving pre-town houses confirm the normal medieval and post-medieval pattern of Wealden settlement of a high density of dispersed farmsteads. Since such settlement of the Weald has origins in Downland-Wealden Anglo-Saxon transhumance, medieval features and finds should be anticipated adjacent to these surviving historic buildings, on the site of lost or replaced pre-urban buildings, and scattered elsewhere.

3 HISTORY

3.1 Origins: 1800-50

3.1.1 Place-name



Fig. 3. Burgess Hill railway station, built adjacent to, and taking its name from, medieval Burgesshill Farm.

The name *Burgess Hill* has described the hill just east of the railway station since at least 1468. The name *Burgess* is recorded in 1440 in the farm to the west as *Burgeyseslond* (later, *Burgesshilland*), linking with John Burgeys who was taxed in the Clayton and Keymer lay subsidies in 1296, 1327 and 1332. This suggests that the personal name (meaning ‘burgess’) may be the source rather than a topographic feature such as the *beorg* (hill) or a putative *burh* (defended place).²⁵

At the arrival of the railway – which precipitated the emergence of the town – the name Burgess Hill was still attached to the hill and the farm, but the adjacent St John’s Common was a more conspicuous settlement, being the location of both brickworks and newly-built substantial villas. The exact location of the station, the purely residential development of the hill area, and snobbery (against the element ‘common’) are all likely to have contributed to the adoption of Burgess Hill as the name for the station and, ultimately, the town in preference to St John’s Common.²⁶

3.1.2 18th-century settlement background

Although enclosure and the coming of the railway were essential to the development of the modern town of Burgess Hill, the 18th century saw earlier signs of economic activity. Amongst the records of scattered tradesmen typical of a rural parish, early 18th-century evidence of four shops in the vicinity of the later town stands out: there were a butcher (St John’s Common, The Gattons), two drapers and haberdashers (one in Mill Road, one at 44-6 London Road), and a fellmonger with a leather goods shop (London Road). Another shop, at Fayre Place (the Post Office and stores opposite the King’s Head, London Road) was probably in existence in the late 18th century and certainly by 1803.²⁷

These businesses and provision for non-commercial activities (such as St John’s Congregational chapel, opened by 1829²⁸) reflect occupation surrounding the largely intact common, but there is no evidence to support the suggestion that has been made that they were part of an embryonic town.²⁹ Rather their concentration on or near London Road appears to reflect the stimulation offered by the direct London-Brighton road following the turnpiking of the route via St John’s Common in 1770.

3.1.3 Enclosure of the common

Illegal enclosures of the commons in the area occurred more frequently, more substantially, and more permanently from the mid 17th century.³⁰ These were small-scale and piecemeal, however, and multiple and absentee lordship appears to have determined escape from early enclosure (as seen at Westmeston, Streat and Plumpton).³¹ Enclosure of the part of the commons within the manor and parish of Keymer came about by an Act of Parliament of April 1828. This involved enclosure of the 450 acres of Valebridge Common (mostly north of the modern town), Broad Street Green (south of the town) and, most substantially and relevantly here, St John’s Common (underlying the later town). Progress was swift, with the process completed in October 1829. As a result over 200 acres were put up for sale, targeted (doubtless due to the proximity to Brighton and the presence of the turnpike road) at those intending to build residences.³² There was no immediate flurry of building, however, and this did not occur until the opening of the railway (see below) and the enclosure of the remaining common in the area – c.100 acres of St John’s Common to the west of London Road lying within Clayton parish. This was not enclosed until an Act was passed

in 1852, with the Award finalized in 1857. Here too land sold off was specifically identified as required for building work, although there is no evidence for high demand or, even, sale of plots of this part of the former common as building sites until 1862.³³

3.1.4 Railway

A London-Brighton railway was proposed as early as the 1820s, but the eventual scheme was passed by Parliament in 1837. Haywards Heath station marked the southern end of a section of the line that opened on 12 July 1841: the section from Haywards Heath to Brighton, via Burgess Hill, opened on 21 September 1841.³⁴

Although the first and insubstantial railway station at Burgess Hill was closed on 1st October 1843, allegedly due to lack of business, it was quickly replaced by another that opened on 1st May the following year. That this was successful is evident from expansion of the station: in 1846 a booking office and cottage were built; a waiting room was added on the down side in 1848; and, in 1851, the platforms were extended by 300ft, and a warehouse, shed, and waiting rooms were built.³⁵

3.2 The emerging town 1850-1914

3.2.1 Economic history



Fig. 4. Edwardian purpose-built shop at 133 London Road.

Brickmaking had been a feature of St John's Common from as early as the 16th century.³⁶ This had expanded in the 17th and 18th centuries: in 1726, for example, a brickworks on St John's Common had proved sufficiently important to be a major supplier of bricks and tiles needed for the construction of Stanmer House in Brighton.³⁷ Enclosure and consequent land sale favoured the survival and expansion of the industry in the 19th century, notwithstanding the emergence of large villas on other plots of former common land. William Norman was a key figure in this industry, expanding his brickyard (which had opened in 1671), quickly purchasing land north of what later became Station Road, after Enclosure of the Keymer part of St John's Common in 1828.³⁸ While brickmaking was evidently long-established and substantially expanding earlier in the 19th century, the arrival of the railway had two main impacts on the industry: it facilitated growth of the new town (thereby creating a large local market) and opened up more distant markets than the turnpike road had offered. The growth of the industry is seen, for example, in the expansion of the Norman family brickyards after the death of William in 1849. This expansion included purchase of land for brickyards on the former Clayton part of the common in 1854, in advance of the formal approval of the enclosure. By way of another example, in 1875 former London merchant Sampson Copstake purchased Cant's Farm and Inholmes Farm on the east side of the town (outside the EUS study area), turning these into large-scale brickworks with its own railway sidings.³⁹ This survives as the Keymer Tile Company. Between 1851 and 1881 the numbers employed in brickmaking rose from 68 to 214.⁴⁰ In 1909 one of the long-running brickyards – Gravetts brickyard, begun by Willam Shaw on the corner of London Road and Station Road in 1828 – closed, marking the onset of the decline of the industry in the 20th century.⁴¹

Another survival of the pre-railway age – though one with less economic impact – was the medieval annual sheep fair (see section 2.4.3). A second annual fair in September is recorded in 1696, and certainly such a fair existed in the mid 19th century, before dying out c.1880. The summer fair, meanwhile, continued until 1912. The fairs used the Fairfield from the early 19th century, though it appears that previously the summer fair had used the open common. The Fairfield itself was abandoned after 1898 as it became the site for development, and the fair relocated to a meadow near the Victoria Pleasure Gardens (now the industrial estate), moving once more to a field off Station Road for its final year.⁴²



Fig. 5. The Railway inn, Station Road.

Although population growth in the nascent town is obscured by the lack of administrative status, it has been calculated by subtracting the relevant addresses (within the later urban district) from the census enumerators' schedules for the ancient parishes of Clayton and Keymer. In 1841 the population had been c.800, once the influx of railway workers is subtracted, and had risen slightly to c.900 by 1851. Thereafter, the rise in population was more rapid, reaching c.1,630 in 1861; c.2,460 in 1871; c.3,140 in 1881; c.4,420 in 1891; c.4,790 in 1901; and c.5,105 in 1911.⁴³ Thus, the 1850s saw most relative growth (80%), though the following twenty years saw similar increases in actual population. The 1880s saw the largest total population increase (1,280), with the period up to the First World War seeing a sharp decline in both relative and actual growth.

Analysis of the occupations of the workforce between 1851 and 1881 shows changes consistent with the development of an urban economy. Those involved in agriculture fell from 37.1% of the workforce in 1851 to 7.6% in 1881 (representing an actual fall in numbers from 123 to 92). Conversely, building flourished, with the workforce rising from 24 in 1851 to 154 in 1881; domestic service expanded from 48 in 1851 to 286 in 1881; and 'industrial service' rose from 14 in 1851 to 137 in 1881, with the rise of banking, insurance and related occupations.⁴⁴

The most numerous class of employment in 1881 – domestic service – is symptomatic of a key element in the economy of the emerging town: the development of the area was highly reliant on commuters, or those of independent means, living in detached and semi-detached villas. Thus, although almost literally obscured by the smokescreen of the burgeoning brickmaking industry, the primary function of the emerging town was as a residential suburban area, with its local economic activity geared to serving this function.

Inevitably, the number of types (or functions) of businesses increased alongside the population: analysis of trade directories shows 49 functions in 1852, compared to 315 in 1905. Many functions directly related to the residential character of the town, as in the case of the 17 laundry businesses listed in 1905. However, the considerable business diversity in categories such as manufacturing (including dressmakers, furniture makers, and shoemakers) and dealing (including shopkeepers) meant that by the late 19th century the town attracted external trade and had become a central place, albeit bereft of more traditional indicators such as a market and a judicial or administrative role.⁴⁵

The development of what was unquestionably a town by the late 19th century was reflected in its developing administrative status. The Urban District was created in 1879 – chiefly to administer sanitary provision – and this was succeeded by an Urban District Council in 1894.⁴⁶

3.2.2 Church

Early Anglican worship utilized the first school (opened 1835-41) and then the first purpose-built school from 1850 (see below), before a site on the former common was donated for a permanent church. Construction of the church of St John the Evangelist began in 1861 and it was consecrated in 1863.⁴⁷ This was followed by the creation of a new ecclesiastical parish of St John's Common in 1865. In 1902 St Andrew's ecclesiastical parish was formed from portions of St John's Common and Ditchling, and the new church on the site of Cants Farm, Junction Road, was consecrated in 1908.⁴⁸

Protestant nonconformism saw early provision too, with St John's Congregational chapel, Leylands Road, built in 1828-9.⁴⁹ Congregational gatherings also took place from 1838 in the Union chapel in Grove Road. This was replaced by a purpose-built iron chapel in Prospect Place (Junction Road) in 1872, and then the present church in 1881-2 (now styled the United

Reformed Church).⁵⁰ The Providence Strict Baptist chapel, Park Road, was built in 1875, and was followed by a Baptist church in Church Road in 1894 (demolished 1970), and the Wesleyan Methodists, Gloucester Road, in 1900. The Salvation Army Citadel in Cyprus Road was built in 1906.⁵¹ The St Alban's Mission Room, Fairfield Road, was built 1885 and enlarged in 1907.⁵²



Fig. 6. The former Providence Strict Baptist chapel, Park Road.

3.2.3 Urban institutions

During the late 19th century Burgess Hill saw the development of a wide range of social and public functions that did not exist previously. The detail of these is beyond the scope of this brief account, but the salient institutions are included.

The first school had been established before 1841, at which date it was located in cottages on the west side of London Road, opposite the entrance to Station Road. A new, purpose-built, National School, known as St John's Common School, opened in 1850 on the opposite side of the road: like its predecessor this also functioned as a church on Sundays. The formation of the Clayton and Keymer School Board in 1873 was followed by the building in 1874 of a new infants' school and, in 1883, a new girls' school. A school was built at Hassocks Gate in 1878, and new schools at Junction Road in 1890.⁵³

Sporting, cultural and entertainment facilities were a feature of the burgeoning town, and only a sample can be mentioned here. Organized

football, in the form of the Burgess Hillians, began in 1882.⁵⁴ There was a Burgess Hill cricket team from at least 1863, a swimming club from 1895, and an athletics club from 1897.⁵⁵

3.3 The town c.1914-2004

3.3.1 Economic history

The late 19th-century economic basis of Burgess Hill continued in the 20th century. That is, a combination of service industries and retail outlets serving the town and its newly established mid Sussex hinterland, and a commuting population. In many regards the, ultimately overwhelming, competition offered to the railway by the bus and, especially, the private motor car did not change this economic basis. The servicing industries have changed form those such as laundry to banking and finance sectors, and the town has a concentration of high technology industry and commerce.

The development of such new industries followed earlier decline of the traditional brick, tile and pottery industry in Burgess Hill. This decline was part of a national trend, with small brickworks closing as a result of the introduction of more automated production and the required greater capital investment; the direct result of the Depression; and the difficulty of restarting after compulsory closure during the war years (to meet blackout regulations). An additional local factor was doubtless the proximity of most of these brickworks to expanding residential areas. The brickfield on the west side of Freek's Lane closed c.1915; Norman's brickworks on the east side of London Road closed in the early 1930s; and St John's Original Brickyard (also known as Burgess Hill Pottery Works, and William Meeds and Son) closed in 1940. The Keymer Brick and Tile Company was the only Burgess Hill brickworks to survive after 1945, and now (as Keymer Tiles Ltd.) exclusively produces hand-made tiles.⁵⁶

The creation of the Martlets shopping centre and the pedestrianisation of part of Church Road (in 1972) and the creation of the Market Place shopping centre in 1991 (involving the loss of Clifton Road) has helped establish a retail focus to the town, and maintained the role of Burgess Hill as a centre for shopping for a substantial hinterland. As with Mid Sussex District in general,⁵⁷ however, the resident workforce of Burgess Hill in the late 20th century has exceeded the number of jobs: in addition to traditional (railway-based) commuting destinations of London and Brighton, the

growing dominance of the Crawley and Gatwick area has become a magnet to residents of the town.



Fig. 7. Church Road – redeveloped and pedestrianised as the new retail focus for the town.

The population continued to grow, initially modestly from c.5,105 in 1911 to 5,974 in 1931, sharply accelerating in the post-war years to 8,524 in 1951, 13,997 in 1961, 19,390 in 1971, 23,587 in 1981, 25,500 in 1991, and to 28,803 in 2001.⁵⁸ In rather overdue recognition of the town's growth, it was made a civil parish in 1933.⁵⁹ The rapid expansion of housing in the 1960s and 1970s focused on the developments off Leylands Road and Folders Lane; in the 1980s at Sheddingdean and West End Farm; and in the 1990s towards the A273 bypass at Hammonds Farm.

3.3.2 Church and religion

Protestant nonconformism experienced mixed, though generally good, fortune in the 20th century. The Baptist church in Church Road was replaced by a new church in Station Road in 1965; the Methodist church in Gloucester Road was expanded by the building of new brick church adjacent in 1957; and the Congregational church in Leylands Road was let to a

Pentecostal congregation in 1978, before becoming the Mid-Sussex Christian Centre. In contrast, the Providence Strict Baptist Chapel, Park Road, was converted to flats in 1999.⁶⁰ The St Alban's Mission Room, Fairfield Road, has become a day centre.

The Roman Catholic community had grown sufficiently by the mid 20th century for St Wilfrid, Station Road, to be built (1940).⁶¹

3.3.3 Urban institutions

Despite the fact that its substantial population makes Burgess Hill the largest town in Mid Sussex District (the population now exceeding that for East Grinstead and Haywards Heath), it has failed to become an administrative or judicial centre for the district (created in 1974). The town therefore lacks many of the institutions of nearby Haywards Heath.

In the absence of a reliable 20th-century history of the town, its complex educational development is unclear. St Paul's Roman Catholic Secondary Modern School opened in 1963 on Oathall Road, Haywards Heath, becoming a comprehensive in 1973, and moving to Burgess Hill in 2004, on a site near West End Farm: it is now known as St Paul's Catholic College.⁶² Other state schools today comprise Abbotsford Community Special School, Birchwood Grove Community Primary School, Gattons Infant School, London Meed Community Primary School (the successor to the National School of 1850, relocated away from London Road and renamed in 1987), Manor Field Primary School, Newick House School, Oakmeeds Community College, Sheddingdean Community Primary School (built in 1986 as an infant school, but adding juniors in 1993), Southway Junior, and St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School.

The development of sporting, cultural and entertainment facilities was still more prolific during this period and, due to their poor documentation, only sample developments can be mentioned here. The present Orion cinema opened in 1929. Sports clubs continued to flourish in the 20th century, with perhaps the biggest development being the opening of the Triangle Leisure Centre in 1999.⁶³

4 ARCHAEOLOGY

4.1 Origins: 1800-50

4.1.1 Architectural evidence



Fig. 8. St John's Congregational chapel, Leylands Road.

Of the pre-railway buildings within the boundaries of later Burgess Hill very little survives within the EUS study area. An obvious exception is the former Congregational chapel in Leylands Road, built at the time of the enclosure of St John's Common (now the Mid-Sussex Christian Centre: 1828-9).

Although Burgess Hill preserves early railway buildings, none of these includes the original and insubstantial building of 1841. This was sold off when Burgess Hill temporarily lost its station in the winter of 1843-4. The immediate replacements have also long gone, presumably during rebuilding in the 1850s (see below).

4.1.2 Topography

Much of the street pattern of the future town of Burgess Hill was inherited from the pre-railway routes leading to and across the open commons, and also from routes and field boundaries set out

at the point of enclosure of St John's Common (1828-9) and Clayton Common (1852-7). The main routes inherited from the pre-enclosure period comprise the north-south routes of Keymer Road/Junction Road and London Road, both doubtless with early origins as Anglo-Saxon Downland-Wealden transhumance routes, or droveways. Also in existence well before the enclosures were Folders Lane, Birchwood Grove Road, Janes Lane and Leylands Lane.

Some modern roads also derive from routes that led to the common and, thereafter, followed tracks broadly on the line of their post-enclosure formalised routes. Thus, Station Road is on an identifiably pre-enclosure route from Keymer Road to Church Road, and then approximately follows the line of a track across the common to London Road. Likewise, Gatehouse Lane and Malthouse Lane follow a pre-enclosure route as far as modern Sussex Way, with West Street simply a formalization of an earlier, less regular track across the common to London Road. Freek's Lane/Mill Road has similar origins. Enclosure did more than regularize earlier tracks across the common: it also dispensed with several of these and, importantly for the future of the town, created regular field or plot boundaries that later became roads. This is especially noticeable in the road layout that emerged between the early 1840s and c.1870 in the area bounded by London Road, Leylands Road, Mill Road, and Station Road.

The arrival of the railway had far less impact on the street pattern of the future than did the enclosures, beyond the immediate severance cause by the construction of the cutting for the line and station. Some modification of Junction Road (formerly Cant's Lane) may be implied by its atypically straight section parallel to the railway, although this appears to be shown identically on the 2nd Ordnance Survey 1st Edition surveyors' draft of c.1810.⁶⁴ The choice of the position of the railway station, however, appears to have had a significant impact on the exact location of the new town, as it doubtless contributed to the preference for building on nearby former St John's and Clayton Commons rather than at Valebridge Common to the north of what became the town of Burgess Hill (and with no nearby station). This is despite the Valebridge Common sale particulars describing the land as suitable for the building of villas.⁶⁵

4.2 The emerging town 1850-1914 (Maps 3, 5 and 6)

4.2.1 Buildings and topography



Fig. 9. St John's church from the south-east.

Most obviously from this period is the polychrome brick-built St John's church of 1861-3 (Grade II), designed by Thomas Talbot Bury, pupil of A. C. Pugin.⁶⁶ The donation of the site on the former common appears to have determined its location, in the scattered development that marked the emergent town.⁶⁷ Other surviving early ecclesiastical buildings include the Providence Strict Baptist Chapel, Park Road (1875; now flats); the Congregational church in Junction Road (1881-2: now styled the United Reformed Church); and the Methodist church, Gloucester Road (1900).



Fig. 10. Mid 19th-century station building on the up platform.

The rebuilding and expansion of the railway station from c.1850 is recorded in the surviving buildings. The wooden building on the up side dates from 1853, and the building on the down side – with its Italianate touches – dates from c.1851. The present brick main station building was built on the widened road bridge in 1877-8.⁶⁸ The Railway Hotel nearby was in existence by 1862.⁶⁹

Terraced housing first appeared on a modest scale for workers, such as at Prospect Cottages, 51-77 West Street recorded as adjacent to a brickfield on the 1874 Ordnance Survey map. Those backing onto the railway on the west side of Junction Road (nos. 65-85 and 103-25) are small, but more numerous.



Fig. 11. Cambrian House, Upper St John's Road.

A much more distinctive feature of the early building and topography of Burgess Hill, however, is the villa. By 1874, clusters were evident at St John's Common (concentrated in the area adjacent to St John's Park and along West Street), and south east of the railway station (the area historically known as Burgess Hill). At the latter, the large detached form dominated, although these have suffered badly from 20th-century redevelopment. Birchwood, on Birchwood Grove Road, is a rare survival, although even here has been subdivided and the once extensive grounds infilled with smaller housing. On St John's Common, grander houses such as Wyberlye have been lost to residential

redevelopment, but Upper St John's Road preserves adjacent examples in Sussex Lodge, Applewalk, and Cambrian House. Semi-detached villas too were a feature of this early development, mostly in the St John's Common area, and are better preserved, for example, at the east end of Lower Church Road and on West Street.



Fig. 12. Edwardian semis, 11 and 13 Cromwell Road.

Given the dominance of substantial villas in the scattered early development of what soon coalesced into Burgess Hill, it is surprising to find an absence of separation between these houses and the brickfields (and associated housing for workers). Admittedly, to the south-east of the railway station the area consisted of more substantial houses, but on St John's Common large villas overlooked the tile and brick works. With prevailing south-westerly winds, the impact must have been more than visual, though, to some extent, adjacent construction sites and, usually short-lived, brickfields were a feature of the massive national expansion of housing in the 19th century.

4.3 The town 1914-2004 (Map 1)

4.3.1 Buildings and topography

By the late 19th century Burgess Hill was identifiably a town, and steady growth continued in the inter-war years of the 20th century, before accelerating sharply. Coupled with redevelopment, sometimes repeated, of earlier (but still recent) parts of the town, this means

that the majority of the buildings in the town today date from this period. Moreover, while the late 19th-century town was able to utilize largely pre-existing road layout, the 20th century saw creation of new roads en masse: mostly this was confined to the creation of housing and industrial estates in its expanding suburbs, but it also included the creation of a western bypass for the A273 (Jane Murray Way), a western inner relief road (Sussex Way, linking to the mid 19th-century Royal George Road), the roads necessary for the pedestrianisation of Church Road (Queen Elizabeth Avenue and Civic Way), and, most recently, the A2300 link to the A23.

As the town expanded the mixture of housing, retail and industrial properties that marked the scattered development of the earlier years was succeeded by more obvious economic zoning. The retail centre of the town along Church Road (in what was earlier the gap between the early nuclei of settlement near the station and on St John's Common) began to emerge in the late 19th century, with shops near the station, but even as late as the mid-20th century there remained houses and open land along the street: it took the late 20th century (including the building of the Martlets shopping centre in 1972) to develop the continuous commercial street frontage of today. St John's church and the adjacent park – a remnant of the common – provide a buffer between this commercial centre and the shops and business of London Road.



Fig. 13. Inter-war council housing at Norman Road.



Fig. 14. Late 20th-century office, Queen Elizabeth Avenue, on the site of former brick and tile works.

The expansion of housing has been considerable since the First World War. Whilst most of this building, and rebuilding, has occurred outside the EUS study area, the main developments can be usefully summarized here. By 1947 development had expanded to include housing built on the west side of the town along Royal George Road, Victoria Road; within the EUS study area along newly created Norman Road; and on the east side of the town along Inholmes Park Road, Crescent Road, Leyland's Road, St Wilfred's Road, Mill Road and, even, east of the railway at World's End.

Development since 1947 has extended the town in all directions. The development to the south-west and west has been most substantial, taking the town beyond Royal George Road to Jane Murray Way (the A273 bypass). Overlying and extending west of the former Victoria Pleasure Gardens is a substantial business park and industrial estate (together with a superstore), but otherwise housing estates predominate. On the east side of the town, the Keymer Brick and Tileworks has become surrounded by residential

development with the building of Kings Way linking the developments off Folders Lane and at World's End.

The post-1945 redevelopment within the EUS study area (largely defined by the c.1900 extent of the town) has been in part due to rebuilding and infilling for business use, such as that in the partly open, though previously industrialized, area of the brickfields between Norman Road and Station Road. In key commercial areas – such as the pedestrianised part of Church Road – rebuilding in the 1970s and onwards has been part of the creation of larger-scale retail outlets. Residential infill has also occurred, again taking advantage of the relatively open areas deriving from the large-scale and scattered villa development of the former common in the 19th century: this is especially evident north and east of St John's Park, through the creation of St John's Avenue and the loss of the substantial house and grounds of Wyberlye.



Fig. 15. Post-war bungalow redevelopment at Wyberlye Road, overlying the grounds of a 19th-century villa.

5 STATEMENT OF HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER

5.1 Town summary

5.1.1 Historic environment overview

Although the historic interest of Burgess Hill lies almost solely in its origins as a new town of the railway age, surprisingly little survives from the two decades after the arrival of the railway (1841): the original insubstantial railway station has gone and its replacement has been rebuilt, and many associated buildings have been demolished. However, considerable numbers of later (i.e. post-c.1860) 19th-century buildings do survive, so that the two foci for the early town (St John’s Common and Burgess Hill) remain discernible in the standing buildings. Pre-urban houses formerly scattered around the heath have survived the coming of the town, although there are very few of these within the EUS study area. With such late origins it is of little surprise that there has been almost no archaeological investigation and that what has been done provides little evidence of the development of the town.

5.1.2 Historic environment designations (Map 4)

There are three listed buildings and monuments in the EUS study area (all Grade II). All three are of the period 1841-80.⁷⁰

Non-listed buildings of significant local interest include St John’s Congregational Chapel, Leylands Road (now the Mid-Sussex Christian Centre), of 1828-9, and the Post Office and stores opposite the King’s Head, London Road. The mid-19th century elements of the railway station and its warehouse are also of historic interest given the importance of the railway to the development of Burgess Hill.

Burgess Hill has three Conservation Areas, largely within the EUS study area. There are no Scheduled Monuments in the town.

5.1.3 Historic building materials

With the late origins of the town there is little in the way of vernacular architecture. However, with numerous local brick and tile works in the 19th and 20th centuries it is important to recognize that many of the post-railway brick buildings utilize these locally-produced materials.

5.2 Historic Character Types

5.2.1 Historic Character Types and chronology (Maps 5-8)

Historic Character Types (HCTs) for Sussex EUS
Lane/road [includes all historic routes]
Major road scheme [modern ring roads, motorways etc.]
Bridge/causeway
Regular burgage plots
Irregular historic plots [i.e. pre-1800]
Proto-urban
Vacant [reverted from built-up to fields etc.]
Market place
Church/churchyard [i.e. parish]
Cemetery
Religious house [abbey, priory, convent etc.]
Great house
Castle
Town defences
Other fortification
Barracks
School/college
Public
Farmstead/barn
Mill
Suburb [estates and individual houses]
Retail and commercial [i.e. post-1800]
Extractive industry [e.g. sand pit, brickfield]
Heavy industry [e.g. steel or automotive industry]
Light industry [e.g. industrial estates]
Utility
Quay/wharf [inc. boatyards]
Harbour/marina/dock
Station, sidings and track
Inland water
Orchard
Market garden [inc. nursery]
Allotments
Race course
Sports field [inc. stadia, courts, centres etc.]
Park
Informal parkland [e.g. small civic areas, large grounds]
Seafront [piers, promenades etc.]
Beach/cliffs

Table 1. Sussex EUS Historic Character Types.

Historic Character Types have been developed in the Sussex EUS to describe areas of common character by reference to generic types found across all 41 towns. Historic function is often the key determinant of character type, hence the term ‘Historic Character Types’ and the time-depth implicit in many of the types in Table 1 (e.g. *regular burgage plots*). The types also

reflect the character of these towns, and, thus, they are different from those that would be applied nationally or to another county.

The Historic Character Types have been mapped to areas within the towns (polygons in the Geographical Information System that underpins the Sussex EUS). Whilst character type can prove consistent throughout a large area (for example, across a late 20th-century housing estate), different historic use of part of that area has been used as a basis for subdivision. This is to allow the application of the types in Table 1 to the mapped polygons throughout the 15 periods of the **EUS chronology** (Table 2). This means that for any area within the town, or mapped polygon on the Geographical Information System, both the present Historic Character Type and the past land use(s) are defined.

This approach gives time-depth to the map-based character component of the Sussex EUS, and is structured to take account of both upstanding and buried physical evidence of the past. It enables the generation of maps (e.g. Maps 5 and 6) showing the changing land use of the urban area throughout the history of each town, and, through use of the Geographical Information System developed as part of this assessment, for simple interrogation of any area in the town to show all its known past land uses.

Period	Date
Period 1	500,000BC-AD42
Period 2	43-409
Period 3	410-949
Period 4	950-1065
Period 5	1066-1149
Period 6	1150-1349
Period 7	1350-1499
Period 8	1500-1599
Period 9	1600-1699
Period 10	1700-1799
Period 11	1800-1840
Period 12	1841-1880
Period 13	1881-1913
Period 14	1914-1945
Period 15	1946-present

Table 2. Sussex EUS chronology.

5.2.2 Historic Character Types in Burgess Hill (Maps 5-7)

Although Historic Character Types represent county-wide types, modern Burgess Hill is characterized by its particular concentration of some types and the comparative rarity, or

absence, of others. For example, the identification of large areas of *suburbs* reflects the late and largely residential nature of the town.

5.3 Historic Urban Character Areas (Maps 9 and 10)

5.3.1 Defining Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs)

Whereas Historic Character Types have been applied to areas of the Sussex towns with consistent visible character and historical development – and are mapped across the whole history for each town – **Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs)** represent meaningful areas of the modern town. Although similar areas are found in many towns, HUCAs are unique, can include components of different history and antiquity, and usually represent amalgamation of several Historic Character Types.

Thus, HUCA 1 in Burgess Hill combines three Historic Character Types that represent *retail and commercial* activity dating from Period 12 (1841-80) and Period 15 (1946-present), *suburb* from Period 12 onwards, and *station, sidings and track* from Period 12. Combining this complexity into a single HUCA called *Railway* reflects the largely coherent character of the area today. This coherence renders HUCAs suitable spatial units for describing the historic environment of the EUS towns, for assessing their **archaeological potential, Historic Environment Value** and for linking to **research questions**.

Some components of the towns are not included as HUCAs: roads (other than those that were built as part of a particular development) and waterways are kept separate as they frequently antedate surviving buildings or the known urban activity.

5.3.2 Archaeological potential

Whilst the nature and extent of areas to which Historic Character Types have been applied is closely related to the survival of buried archaeology, this assessment considers the archaeological potential at the larger scale of the HUCAs. The reasons are twofold: first, the typically smaller scale of areas of common Historic Character Type could misleadingly imply that high, or even low, archaeological potential is precisely confined, or that archaeological value is exactly coterminous with the edge of specific features (standing or buried); and, second, most

Sussex towns have had insufficient archaeological investigation to support this precision. For this reason, too, there is no grading or ranking of archaeological potential. Rather, the summary of archaeological potential is used to inform the overall (graded) assessment of **Historic Environment Value** of each HUCA (see below).

When considering the archaeological potential of the towns, it is important to recognize that archaeology often survives 19th and 20th-century development and that it is misleading to assume complete destruction. Also, whilst pre-urban archaeology (such as prehistoric and Romano-British features and finds located in the Burgess Hill area) tells us little about the towns themselves, it contributes to wider archaeological research.

In assessing the likelihood of buried archaeology within areas in the towns there has been consideration of the potential for archaeology 'buried', or hidden, within later buildings and structures, as well as that for below-ground features.

5.3.3 **Historic Environment Value (Map 10)**

The **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of each HUCA is assessed here, and expressed as a value from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Such values are iniquitous to some and always subjective, but here provide a necessary means of consistently and intelligently differentiating (for the purposes of conservation) the upstanding fabric, boundaries and archaeology that form the historic urban environment. The Historic Environment Value (HEV) of each HUCA is based on assessment of:

- Townscape rarity
- Time-depth or antiquity
- Completeness.

Lesser additional considerations in the assessment comprise:

- Visibility
- Historic association.

The full methodology for assessing Historic Environment Value forms part of the annexe to the historic environment management guidance for Mid Sussex District.

5.3.4 **Vulnerability**

The vulnerability of each HUCA is also considered, although many future threats cannot

be anticipated. These brief analyses mean that this Statement of Historic Urban Character can be used to focus conservation guidance.

5.3.5 **Research questions**

Where relevant, reference is made to questions in the **Research Framework** for Burgess Hill (below, section 6). Where possible, this referencing links these key questions to specific HUCAs, helping ensure that any investigation of the historic environment (such as that as a condition of development, under PPG15 or PPG16) is properly focused.

5.3.6 **Burgess Hill's Historic Urban Character Areas (Maps 9 and 10)**

HUCA 1 Railway (HEV 2)

HUCA 1 lies either side of the railway line, near Burgess Hill station, and was one of the two early foci of development after enclosure and the coming of the railway. The HUCA is immediately east of the ancient St John's Common, with the section of Station Road east of the Railway Tavern surviving from the pre-urban period as the route to the south-east corner of the common. Junction Road also has early origins, probably as an Anglo-Saxon droveway linking Downland settlement to Wealden wood-pasture. Today, the area lies east of the centre of the town and is characterized by the railway cutting and station buildings. Other buildings also directly reflect the building of the railway: the Railway Tavern (formerly Railway Hotel) was built in quick response to the opening of the line and station, and was followed before the mid-1870s by villas on Grove Road (surviving examples include 15, 14-16 and 20-2), partly commercial development on Station Road, and terrace housing on Junction Road (65-85 and 103-25). There are no listed buildings.

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology suggests low **archaeological potential**.

The survival of several 19th-century villas, terrace houses and railway buildings, the quality of the 20th-century development, the absence of earlier historic buildings or many historic boundaries, and limited archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 2.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is medium to low. The greatest threats are to the unlisted 19th-century buildings – especially those of the railway station.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

HUCA 2 Birchwood Grove (HEV 1)

HUCA 2 lies to the south-east of the centre of the modern town and of the former common and of the pre-urban area known as Burgess Hill (i.e. in the vicinity of the later station) farm. Keymer Road and its continuation Junction Road have early origins, probably as an Anglo-Saxon droveway linking Downland settlement to Wealden wood-pasture. Today the HUCA remains dominated by late 19th-century and early 20th-century housing, with substantial detached and semi-detached villas. This is despite loss of some of the larger of these to redevelopment. For example, the expansive pre-1875 villas of Tower House (later The Croft) and Hillside (later White House) have been replaced by modern Burgess Hill School. More common has been the infill of large grounds of villas with other houses during the late 20th century, such as at Wykeham, in Birchwood Grove Road. There are no listed buildings.

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology suggests low **archaeological potential**.

The survival of numerous 19th-century villas, the quality of the 20th-century development, the absence of earlier historic buildings or many historic boundaries, and low archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 1.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is low. The greatest threat is to the remaining unlisted 19th-century villas.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

HUCA 3 Church Road (HEV 1)

HUCA 3 only saw sporadic occupation after c.1875, with denser building occurring initially at the junction of Church Road and Station Road (next to which lay pre-urban Burgesshill Farm – now wholly redeveloped). Even as late as 1939, the north-western end of Church Road was not continuously built-up. Today, the area is fully built-up, with Church Road the retail centre of the modern town. Ironically, the last part to develop – the north-western end of Church Road – is now the centre of this retail area: this has occurred as the result of the creation of the Martlets shopping centre and the pedestrianisation of this part of Church Road in 1972. South-east of this, some 19th-century and

early 20th-century buildings survive. The most notable example is the late 19th-century mock timber-framed Vernacular Revival group of shops at 10-20 Station Road. There are no listed buildings.

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology and the high density of 19th and, especially, 20th-century development (and redevelopment) suggest low **archaeological potential**.

The quality of the late 19th and predominant 20th-century architecture, the absence of many historic buildings and boundaries, and the low archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 1.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is low, with the main threat being the loss of this group of unlisted 19th and early 20th-century commercial buildings.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

HUCA 4 St John's Common (HEV 2)

HUCA 4 is centred on ancient London Road and the medieval commons – St John's Common and Clayton Common. Although the enclosed commons have been used for housing and industrial development from the 19th century (and, on a small scale, prior to final enclosure), open areas do survive in the form of the public recreational areas of St John's Park and the recreation ground of Downs Road and Fairfield Road. The historic (and ecological) interest in these pieces of former common, however, is only moderate following urban planting and landscaping. Although many of the largest pre-1875 villas have been replaced by smaller late 20th-century houses (e.g. St John's House and Wyberlye, off Leylands Road), many mid- to late 19th-century houses survive. These include substantial detached villas (e.g. in Upper St John's Road), but more typically comprises semi-detached houses (e.g. 117-135 Lower Church Road, and on the north side of Cromwell Road) and terraced housing (e.g. 88-118 Royal George Road). There are three listed buildings or structures: brick-built St John's church of 1861-3 (Grade II), designed by Thomas Talbot Bury, together with its boundary wall (Grade II, partly contemporary with the church and partly rebuilt), and the simple Neoclassical building built as the Providence Strict Baptist Chapel, Park Road (1875, now flats).

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology and the density of 19th and 20th-

century development (outside the park and recreation ground) and extent of landscaping and replanting (within the park and recreation ground) suggest low **archaeological potential**, although the open areas may offer some potential for pre-urban (and especially prehistoric/Roman) archaeology.

The quality of the late 19th and 20th-century architecture, the absence of many historic buildings and boundaries, the landscaping and urbanization of the former common and the low archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 2.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is low, with the main threat being to any surviving pre-urban archaeology in the park.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

HUCA 5 Fairfield (HEV 2)

HUCA 5 centres on the former Fairfield, used for the annual summer fair from the early 19th century (earlier fairs probably using the common in the vicinity). The area developed permanent settlement before enclosure, especially through stimulation of the London-Brighton route along London Road in the 18th and early 19th centuries (turnpiked 1770). Today the area has been substantially redeveloped, the Fairfield built over after 1898, and the key survivor of the coaching period (the King's Head) completely rebuilt. There are no listed buildings, but two buildings of local historic significance survive: the former Congregational chapel in Leylands Road, built at the time of the enclosure of St John's Common (now the Mid-Sussex Christian Centre, 1828-9); and the Post Office and stores opposite the King's Head (London Road), which was probably in existence in the late 18th century and certainly by 1803.

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology, and the density of late 19th and 20th-century development (and redevelopment) suggest limited **archaeological potential**.

The quality of the late 19th and 20th-century architecture, the surviving pre-enclosure buildings, the absence of many historic boundaries, and the low archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 2.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is low, with the main

threat being the loss or alteration of the unlisted historic buildings.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

HUCA 6 Queen Elizabeth Avenue (HEV 1)

HUCA 6 overlies medieval St John's Common, already partly enclosed and used for brick and tile making before final enclosure in 1828-9 (and the later arrival of the railway) led to large-scale expansion of the industry across most of the HUCA. The potteries and brick/tileworks have been completely redeveloped, so that almost nothing pre-1875 survives, except for a few houses (e.g. the small and rather hidden terrace at 235-45 London Road). Later housing, such as that on (pre-World War Two) Norman Road is better preserved, but the area today is largely characterized by the late 20th-century redevelopment of the former industrial zone. This has given the HUCA a new street pattern (with Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Civic Way, The Brow, and School Close created); new retail, market and civic buildings (including the library) to the rear of the post-1972 retail heart of the town (Church Road); car parks; the Roman Catholic school; the fire station; and commercial offices. A residential component has been added at the west end of Queen Elizabeth Avenue by the creation of Gravett Court and Albion Court. There are no listed buildings.

The absence of any known non-urban archaeology, the earlier presence of extractive industry, and the density of 20th-century development suggest low **archaeological potential**.

The quality of the late 19th and predominant 20th-century architecture, the absence of many historic buildings and boundaries, and the low archaeological potential combine to give this HUCA a **Historic Environment Value (HEV)** of 1.

The Historic Environment Value of the area means that its **vulnerability** is low, with the main threat being to the few surviving 19th-century houses.

Broad, or Burgess Hill-wide, **research questions** only apply to this area.

5.3.7 Summary table of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) for Burgess Hill

Table 3 summarizes the assessments made in the individual Historic Urban Character Area descriptions (above). It provides a simplified comparison of the assessments across different parts of the town, and helps to draw out key points. As such it supports the preparation of guidance for the town (see section 1.3).

The table shows how Historic Character Types combine into more recognizable Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs). It summarizes the archaeological potential that, along with historic buildings and boundaries, contributes towards the assessment of the Historic Environment Value of each HUCA. The assessment of vulnerability of each HUCA is important for developing guidance.

Summary of assessment of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) for Burgess Hill				
<i>Historic Character Types (HCTs)</i>	<i>Historic Urban Character Area (HUCA)</i>	<i>Archaeological potential</i>	<i>Historic Environment Value (HEV)</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>
Station, sidings and track Retail and commercial Suburb	1. Railway	Low	2	Medium to low
Suburb School/college	2. Birchwood Grove	Low	1	Low
Retail and commercial Suburb Public Station, sidings and track Informal parkland	3. Church Road	Low	1	Low
Suburb Retail and commercial Church/churchyard Farmstead/barn Sports field	4. St John's Common	Low	1	Low
Irregular historic plots Suburb	5. Fairfield	Limited	2	Medium to Low
Retail and commercial Suburb Farmstead/barn	6. Queen Elizabeth Avenue	Low	1	Low

Table 3. Summary of assessment of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) for Burgess Hill.

6 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

6.1 Pre-urban activity

Development pressure and opportunities for developer funding mean that archaeological excavations in the town, or prior to expansion of the town, are more likely to occur than in the surrounding area. Thus, archaeological excavations in Burgess Hill should address:

RQ1: What was the nature of the palaeo-environment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and medieval human activity in the area?

6.2 Origins and development

There has been little analysis of the historic environment of the town. Key questions include:

RQ2: What was the socio-economic make-up of the early occupants of the town, how did this change over time, and is this reflected in the architecture of the town?

RQ3: What was nature of the economy of the area immediately before the railway arrived, how did this influence the development of the town, and how did this change as a result of the success of the town?

RQ4: What were the factors that determined the scattered or polyfocal plan of the town?

RQ5: What has been the influence of the pre-urban houses and farms (and their owners and occupants), and brick, tile and pottery works on the development of the town?

RQ6: What determined – and limited – the socio-economic change of different areas of the town in the late 19th and 20th centuries?

RQ7: To what degree has the development of Burgess Hill been influenced by urban and distinctly non-urban (or suburban) aspirations?

7 Notes

¹ The 41 towns of the Sussex EUS are: Alfriston, Arundel, Battle, Bexhill, Bognor Regis, Bramber, Brighton, Burgess Hill, Crawley, Crowborough, Cuckfield, Ditchling, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Hailsham, Hastings, Haywards Heath, Heathfield, Henfield, Horsham, Hove, Lewes, Lindfield, Littlehampton, Mayfield, Midhurst, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Petworth, Pevensey, Pulborough, Robertsbridge, Rotherfield, Rye, Seaford, Shoreham, Steyning, Storrington, Uckfield, Wadhurst and Worthing. Chichester and Winchelsea are omitted as they are the subjects of more intensive studies.

² The *Character of West Sussex Partnership Programme* is led by West Sussex County Council in conjunction with the borough and district councils, AONB agencies and stakeholders. The main aims of the partnership are to produce a range of interlocking characterization studies; to produce planning and land management guidance; and to raise public and community awareness of character as a vital and attractive ingredient of the environment of the county. The full range of characterization studies comprise:

Landscape Character Assessments and Landscape Strategy for West Sussex (2005).

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of Sussex (2003-8).

Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) (2004-8).

Intensive Urban Survey of Chichester/Fishbourne (2005-6) (Chichester District Council).

Local Distinctiveness Study of West Sussex (2004-6).

³ Although the parish of Keymer, chiefly from which Burgess Hill has been carved, is the subject of a Victoria County History study, Burgess Hill itself is largely ignored: Salzman, L. F., *Victoria County History* 7 (1940), 179.

⁴ Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984).

⁵ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 127-43.

⁶ Butler, C., 'The Roman Road at Burgess Hill', SAC 135 (1997), 301.

⁷ SMR 1928 - WS5531; *Victoria County History* 6 (1), 234.

⁸ West Sussex Record Office (WSRO), Add Ms 28784.

⁹ Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 27.

¹⁰ Johnston, G. D., *Abstract of Turnpike Acts relating to Sussex* (transcript at SAS, c.1948), 6.

¹¹ Griffiths, I. L., 'Road and rail in Sussex', in Geography Editorial Committee (eds.), *Sussex: Environment, Landscape and Society* (1983), 239.

¹² Butler, C., 'Early Bronze Age and later activity at Maltings Farm, Burgess Hill', SAC 136 (1998), 193-7.

¹³ Sawyer, J., 'The excavation of a Romano-British site at Burgess Hill, West Sussex', SAC 137 (1999), 49-58.

¹⁴ Butler, C., 'Early Bronze Age and later activity at Maltings Farm, Burgess Hill', SAC 136 (1998), 195.

¹⁵ Butler, C., 'The Roman Road at Burgess Hill', SAC 135 (1997), 301; Shields, G., 'The course of the London to

Brighton Roman road south of Burgess Hill', SAC 137 (1999), 81-90.

¹⁶ Sawyer, J., 'The excavation of a Romano-British site at Burgess Hill, West Sussex', SAC 137 (1999), 49-58.

¹⁷ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 129-31, 134.

¹⁸ Butler, C., 'Early Bronze Age and later activity at Maltings Farm, Burgess Hill', SAC 136 (1998), 193-7.

¹⁹ Butler, C., 'Early Bronze Age and later activity at Maltings Farm, Burgess Hill', SAC 136 (1998), 195.

²⁰ Listed building ref. 302104.

²¹ Listed building ref. 302100.

²² Listed building refs. 302101, 302105.

²³ Listed building ref. 302106.

²⁴ Listed building ref. 302099.

²⁵ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 138-40; Mawer, A., & Stenton, F.M., *The Place-names of Sussex* (1929-30; reprinted 2001), 260.

²⁶ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 138-40.

²⁷ Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 56-9.

²⁸ Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 5.

²⁹ Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 56-9.

³⁰ Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 15-19.

³¹ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 129.

³² Brandon, P. F., 'The Enclosure of Keymer Commons', SNQ 15 (1960), 181-6.

³³ Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 117-25.

³⁴ Howard Turner, J. T., *The London, Brighton & South Coast Railway: 1. Origins & Formation* (1977), 114, 142.

³⁵ Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 32.

³⁶ Beswick, M., *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer* (2nd edtn. 2001), 205.

³⁷ Warne, H., 'The Place Names and Early Topography of Burgess Hill', SAC 123 (1985), 129-31, 134.

³⁸ Beswick, M., *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer* (2nd edtn. 2001), 205.

³⁹ Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 7-8, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴¹ Beswick, M., *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer* (2nd edtn. 2001), 205-6.

⁴² Short, B., (ed.), *'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 9-10; Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 151-5.

⁴³ Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 5-15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37-9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 41-5.

⁴⁶ Salzman, L. F., *Victoria County History* 7 (1940), 179; Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 15.

⁴⁷ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 41.

⁴⁸ Salzman, L. F., *Victoria County History* 7 (1940), 179; Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 81-2.

⁴⁹ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 46.

⁵⁰ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 44-5.

⁵¹ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 46; Elleray, D. R., *Sussex Places of Worship: A Gazetteer of Buildings erected between c1760 and c1960* (2004), 14.

⁵² Salzman, L. F., *Victoria County History* 7 (1940), 179.

⁵³ Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 21, 73-8.

⁵⁴ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 53.

⁵⁵ Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 160.

⁵⁶ Beswick, M., *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer* (2nd edtn. 2001), 87-107, 205-7.

⁵⁷ Beard, J., 'Journeys to Work 1951-1991', in Leslie, K. and Short, B. (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Sussex* (1999), 128-9.

⁵⁸ Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 5-15; Matthews, H., *Burgess Hill* (1989), 157.

⁵⁹ Salzman, L. F., *Victoria County History* 7 (1940), 179.

⁶⁰ Elleray, D. R., *Sussex Places of Worship: A Gazetteer of Buildings erected between c1760 and c1960* (2004), 14.

⁶¹ Elleray, D. R., *Sussex Places of Worship: A Gazetteer of Buildings erected between c1760 and c1960* (2004), 14.

⁶² Source: school website - <http://www.st-pauls.w-sussex.sch.uk>.

⁶³ Source: town website - http://www.burgesshill.gov.uk/ourtown/ot_history.htm.

⁶⁴ British Library: C2717-05 (supplied scan).

⁶⁵ Brandon, P. F., 'The Enclosure of Keymer Commons', *SNQ* 15 (1960), 182.

⁶⁶ T. T. Bury (1811-77) was also the architect for St Paul's, Chipperfield, Herts.; St Gregory's, Welford, Berks.; and St Mary's, East Molesey, Surrey: Dixon, R., and Muthesius, S., *Victorian Architecture* (1978), 255.

⁶⁷ Gregory, A. H., *The Story of Burgess Hill* (1933), 41.

⁶⁸ Short, B., (ed.), 'A Very Improving Neighbourhood': *Burgess Hill 1840-1914* (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper No. 23, 1984), 32-3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁰ Listed building data is drawn from the statutory lists produced by English Heritage, but has been amended – especially in regard to the dating – during the Sussex EUS. The GIS data prepared during the Sussex EUS contains the full references to the sources for revised dates: in many cases these come from fieldwork undertaken by the author.