

## **Patcham Conservation Area Character Statement**

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Designated: 1970  
 Extended: 1972 and 1992  
 Area: 8.41 Hectares 20.78 Acres  
 Article 4 Direction: Proposed

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### **Introduction**

#### **Location and Setting**

The historic village of Patcham is located 5.5 km north of Brighton's seafront. It comprises a historic downland village, set beside the A23 and now on the northern edge of the city. The conservation area stretches along Old London Road between Ladies Mile Road to the south and the Black Lion Hotel to the northwest, to Patcham Place to the west, and along Church Hill to the junction with Vale Avenue to the north.

Patcham is located in a wide north-south aligned valley. This topography enabled easy passage inland from Brighton, leading in due course to the formation of the London to Brighton road. This strategic location had a major impact on the development of the village, both in terms of its original formation as a hub for the local agricultural economy, and later in catering for trade along the route. The village originally developed around one of several springs that form the source of the Wellsbourne stream. The stream now runs underground. However prolonged heavy rain can cause the stream to surface and flood the area. This occurred most recently in 2000.

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Amongst its heritage assets, the area contains 33 listed buildings, 1 locally listed building, a scheduled ancient monument and an archaeological notification area (Existing Designations Graphic). It was designated as a conservation area in September 1970, and extended in September 1972 and September 1992. Coney Wood, Patcham Place and the surrounding green space and recreation ground were designated as part of the South Downs National Park in 2010.

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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'. This document seeks to define and assess the 'special interest' of Patcham Conservation Area, and make recommendations for its future management.

### **Assessment of Special Interest**

#### **General Character and Landscape Setting**

Patcham conservation area comprises a small downland village, forming a distinct settlement to the north of Brighton. It developed around the church and Patcham Court Farm, with a further large house – Patcham Place – later built on the valley floor. Based primarily on an agricultural economy, landownership was split between the two major centres of Patcham Court Farm and Patcham Place. The settlement

also later benefitted from its strategic location on the road from London to Brighton.

The village preserves its early medieval street pattern, which is essentially linear in form. The major architectural pieces include Patcham Place, the buildings of Patcham Court Farm (including the barn, dovecote and farmhouse) and All Saints Church. The majority of buildings comprise small vernacular cottages, and a strong visual coherence is generated by the use of traditional materials and common features.

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The landscape setting of Patcham is particularly important to its character. The area is located on the northernmost urban fringe of Brighton and Hove, with suburban development to the south and east. Substantial tracts of green space and mature trees surround much of the village, such that it still appears distinct from the surrounding suburbs. Of particular significance, Coney Hill forms the backdrop to numerous views within the village. To the immediate north lies the site of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion to Patcham Court Farm, which is now vacant. Beyond this, although divided from the village by the A27, the village is seen in the context of open downland, emphasising the originally rural location and agricultural economy of the area.

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The main through route from London into Brighton - now diverted from the village and comprising the modern A23 – runs through the area. It forms a pleasant route into Brighton, but segregates Patcham Place from the village nucleus.

### Historic Background and Archaeology

#### *The origins and historic development of the area*

The name 'Patcham' derives from 'Paecca's ham', or the people of Paecca. Patcham was recorded in the Domesday survey, as 'Piceham'. The survey records that in Saxon times it was held by Earl Harold (who lost the battle of Hastings), but after the Norman invasion it was given to William de Warenne. Patcham (with Withdean and Moulsecomb) had 240 villeins, borders and slaves. This is more than any other part of the City and it thus comprised a substantial settlement for this time.

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Throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods Patcham formed a small agricultural settlement. The established route from Brighton to London at this time was via Saddlescombe and Dyke Road, with the main road through Patcham running up Old London Road, Church Hill and onto the downland ridge to the north. The major constituents of the original village comprised the Church, farm and mill. The village pond, located to the immediate west of the church and south of Court Farm, was fed by one of several springs forming the source of the Wellsbourne stream.

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The Church, dedicated to All Saints, was built in the 12th century, from which period the nave still dates. The tower was added in the 13th century and the chancel was rebuilt in the 14th century.

Neighbouring the Church, Patcham Court Farm was in the ownership of the Abergavenny family by 1439. It formed a central part in village life, both in terms of

the agricultural economy, and as the seat of local justice. In the medieval period most of the land was cultivated as open fields, but by the late 16<sup>th</sup> century much of this had been enclosed. This process of enclosure continued throughout the post-mediaeval period.

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Patcham Place was probably built by Richard Shelley between 1524 and his death in 1552. The estate was sold to Anthony Stapley (one of the signatories of Charles I's death warrant) between 1615-1620. By 1662, the house is recorded as having 16 hearths, which suggests that it was already a substantial residence at this time.

Patcham Place was purchased by John Paine in 1764, and by 1782 he had altered and extended the property northwards to take on much of its present form. There is some debate as to when the property was refronted in black mathematical tiles: It is most likely these were added between 1783 and 1803. From 1803 to 1814 Grace Paine, widow of John Paine II, occupied the property and it is unlikely work was undertaken during this time.

The Paine family earned their wealth from Brighton's rapid growth as a seaside resort. This shows that by the late 18th century, Brighton's development was beginning to affect social mobility and land ownership. Furthermore, Patcham was becoming a popular destination for day trips from Brighton, and enterprises were set up to cater for this tourist trade. The village also supplied the town with essential goods and market garden produce.

Traditional agriculture of sheep, wool and grain, however, remained central to the economy. Generally sheep grazing was practiced on the higher surrounding Downland and corn was grown in the lowland areas. Land was largely split between the two estates of Patcham Court and Patcham Place.

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A number of developments occurred in the 18th century: A group of small cottages were built in The Square, to the rear of numbers 137 and 138 Old London Road. Wootton House was also built in the late 18th century, to the south of the village. Ballard's Mill was constructed at the end of 18th century, probably on the site of a former mill. It is shown on the draft Ordnance Survey plan of 1769-1805 (ESRO AMS 6004 2/1/3b) to the south of the village, but was removed around 1900, although the Mill House remains. The Cuckfield Turnpike (now the A23) was formed in 1770, and soon became established as the main route to London.

Despite being the centre of a large parish, the settlement remained small, as is shown in the draft Ordnance Survey plan (1769-1805) and William Figg's 1811 plan of the Patcham Place estate for Grace Paine (ESRO AMS 3434). It is possible that the owners of the two estates restricted residence in the village to those who had employment on the land, thus limiting its growth.

The 1811 plan shows the Patcham Place estate at this time. The house is depicted with ancillary buildings to the rear (south). A formal garden and driveway are shown to the north, with the more informal paths of the wooded wilderness garden stretching over the slopes of Coney Hill. With the exception of the formal garden, much of this arrangement still survives.

By 1841 employment still depended primarily on agriculture. The building of the railway line close to the village also meant rail workers lodged in the village at this time. The then owner of Patcham Place, Major Paine, refused to allow the railway to be constructed in a cutting on his land, and therefore a tunnel was built. The tunnel collapsed during construction, but luckily without fatality.

The tithe map of 1842 shows that the current settlement was already largely established by this time. The following decades saw suburban development occurring to the south of the parish, in association with the growth of Brighton, but this had little impact on the village itself.

In c.1875 a bakery, and later a Postal Telegram Service and corn merchants, was established by Joseph Harris on Old London Road. He also built an associated windmill above the village at Waterhall in 1880. The mill, now known as Patcham Mill, ceased grinding in 1924 and is now in residential use.

In the 19th century, the church was restored four times; in 1824-5, 1856, 1883 and 1898. The remains of a painted 'Doom' were discovered during the 1883 restorations. The last restoration was the most extensive, with the north aisle and vestry added at this time. Further alterations were made in 1989.

With the parallel growth of Brighton and decline of farming, the population became increasingly reliant on the town for employment. Patcham made use of its location astride the busy London-Brighton road, catering for the needs of travellers with such services as tea gardens, a garage and roadhouse. Increasing traffic led to the re-routing of the A23 around the village in 1926, which diverted traffic from what is now the Old London Road, and therefore away from the village centre. The Black Lion Hotel was built to capitalise on the new road, incorporating the remains of a former villa. This replaced the original Black Lion Hotel, which was located at number 110 Old London Road.

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Due to pressures for private housing, Brighton city boundary was revised in 1928 to include Patcham. At this time, farming was at an all time low. This led to the sale of the two estates, with Court Farm and Patcham Place acquired by Brighton Corporation in 1925 and 1926 respectively. Much of the land was sold separately to developers. Vast expansion followed in the 1930s, creating suburbs of Brighton and annexing Patcham into the city's urban conurbation. The Drove – comprising a lane between Patcham and Stanmer for the driving of cattle – was developed into Ladies Mile Road. This road marked the boundary between the two large estates, such that the style and process of development to either side of the road differed. The estates provided low-cost homes for first time buyers as well as a small amount of council housing.

The developing suburbs led to an increased population and Patcham Place was used to accommodate classes from Patcham Junior School in the 1930s. It was let to the Youth Hostel Association in 1939, although requisitioned by the army during the war. Patcham Court Farm expanded to the north of Vale Avenue in the 1950s. The construction of the A27 led to the segregation of the farm from its land. The farm ceased operation at this point, with the farmland leased out. The barn was

converted to residential accommodation and community space, whilst the 1950s Vale Avenue farm site remains vacant.

### *Archaeological Significance*

Evidence for prehistoric activity has been discovered to the north east of the area, where a resistivity survey ahead of development revealed half of a possible Bronze Age round barrow, with a ring-ditch and two internal pits possibly representing graves. This area is now designated as an archaeological notification area.

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The conservation area itself contains one archaeological notification area and a scheduled ancient monument. The archaeological notification area is based around the Church and Patcham Court Farm. The Dovecote at Patcham Court Farm is a scheduled ancient monument. It is a circular flint structure with tiled conical roof, constructed in around the 17th century, and retaining 550 nesting boxes and its potence.

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### Spatial Analysis (Spatial Analysis Graphic)

A clear sense of boundary pervades the conservation area; with small cottages set directly on to the street front, often without pavements. The linear medieval street plan survives in Old London Road and Church Hill. Later development off these, such as the 18<sup>th</sup> century The Square, reinforces the fine urban grain and small-scale housing of the area.

A more spacious character is provided at Patcham Place and to a lesser extent Patcham Court Farm, where the buildings are arranged further from the road, with mature trees, vegetation and grass banks providing a more sylvan and spacious quality.

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Open spaces towards the outer edges of the conservation area and immediately beyond it are important in retaining a physical and visual 'green buffer' between the historic village and the surrounding suburbs. This emphasises the area's historic development as a separate settlement to Brighton and preserves the green and rural qualities of its original setting. For these reasons, long views to Coney Hill and the South Downs form particularly important backdrops. In contrast, closer views within the area are foreshortened by the narrow width and curvature of the roads, creating an intimate atmosphere.

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Important views in, and of, the conservation area include (Figure 1):

- VI. Views to woodland and farmland on Coney Hill
- V2. Views to open downland from, for example, (a) the A23 and (b) Vale Avenue, and views from downland to village including views of church (c)
- V3. Gradually unfolding views along Old London Road; terminating in mature vegetation
- V4. Gradually unfolding views along Church Hill
- V5. View of Patcham Place from across the recreation ground, with Coney Wood as its backdrop

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Important spaces and permeation routes in and around the conservation area include:

- S1. The junction of Old London Road and Church Hill, beside Black Lion Hotel
- S2. The Churchyard
- S3. Coney Wood, Patcham Recreation Ground, the walled gardens and the area surrounding Patcham Place
- S4. 'Green Buffer' surrounding the conservation area which acts to distinguish the village from the surrounding suburban development and as a reminder of its once rural setting (show as a green hatching on the associated plan)

Local landmarks in the conservation area include:

- L1. Black Lion Hotel
- L2. All Saints Church
- L3. Patcham Place and its parkland setting
- L4. Patcham Court Farm [barn and](#) dovecote

### **Character Analysis**

The area can be divided into three distinct character areas (Character Area Graphic): The Village Nucleus comprises the fine urban grain of cottages along Church Hill and Old London Road. Further east are the buildings of All Saints Church and the former Patcham Court Farm, set in a more spacious setting. To the west of the A23 are Patcham Place, its associated stable complex and green space.

These three character areas together make up the historic village of Patcham.

### **Character Area I: Village Nucleus (Graphic)**

The Village Nucleus comprises the central part of the historic village. It is set on the floor and east slope of the valley; the principal streets being Old London Road and Church Hill. The area retains a fine urban grain, with small cottages fronting directly on to the road, and further housing set around courtyards and cul-de-sacs behind. Mature, overhanging vegetation and the narrow, curved character of the roads restrict and foreshorten views, creating a strong sense of enclosure.

### **Streetscapes**

#### *Black Lion Hotel junction*

The junction between Old London Road, Church Hill and the A23 is a central space in the area (Figure 2). The junction is fronted by the Black Lion Hotel to the north, small flint-fronted cottages to the east and the A23 to the immediate west. The space thus forms the meeting point of the main roads in the area and acts as both a central focus and gateway into the area. The listed drinking fountain is a modest gateway feature for the old village. Recent improvements have been undertaken to the Black Lion Hotel junction and A23 to better manage traffic at the junction and to provide a cycle path. These are of benefit to the area, however modern highway

paraphernalia now dominate over the listed drinking fountain, and the high levels of traffic have a negative impact on the area.

The fountain and the flint cottages to the east promote a rural-scale village character. This character is emphasised by the openness of the junction, in contrast to the rest of the area, and complemented by the neighbouring grass verge along Old London Road. It is, however, a weak space and forms an ill-defined boundary with the A23.

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The Black Lion Hotel has a major presence; its size and scale contrast with the neighbouring more rural scale cottages. The building in its current form dates to 1928, and was built as a replacement for the old Black Lion Hotel on Old London Road when the A23 was built. It comprises a major remodelling of an earlier residence. It is the only building in the area that orientates towards the A23, emphasising its reliance on this route for trade. It is of a typical early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban style. Modern signs and paraphernalia erode its character. It sits, however, in quite substantial grounds, which act as part of the 'green buffer' around the village.

### *Old London Road*

Old London Road comprises a traditional village street. The buildings along its length are predominantly 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century; however varied architectural styles are present, which reflect its piecemeal development over time. The character of the street is defined through the use of traditional materials (flint, brick, clay tile and slate), two storey buildings, pitched roofs and buildings or tall walls forming a hard edge to the road. Many of the properties are listed, and the majority are of interest both individually and as part of the streetscape, including:

- Dating to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Southdown House displays a fine dressed flint façade with decorative brick parapet and dressings (Figure 3).
- The old Black Lion Hotel at 110 Old London Road retains a well-proportioned façade of grey headers and contrasting red brick dressings. Although now painted over, the former public house sign survives to the side elevation.
- Wootton House is a late 18<sup>th</sup> century property with black mathematical tile façade, set back behind a tall wall at the corner of Old London Road and Ladies Mile Road.

The 'polite architecture' of Southdown House, the old Black Lion Hotel and Wootton House comprises formal facades made up of regularly spaced vertically hung sash windows and classical features. Such buildings are particularly vulnerable to change that alters the formality of their facades.

In contrast to these, the majority of buildings along the road are vernacular, comprising low cottages with steep pitched roofs covered in slate or clay tile, which contribute collectively to the street scene. They are of interest for their use of traditional materials and vernacular details such as horizontal sliding sash windows,

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and in how they have changed and developed in response to changing pressures and fashions over time.

A number of the cottages have been altered to form commercial properties, including the inclusion of a number of bow fronts. The presence of commercial properties, especially the post office and bakery is important in retaining the character and function of the village in serving the local community.

Numbers 96-104 (even) comprise a Neo-Georgian crescent constructed in the 1960s. The slightly bowed shape of the crescent erodes the hard edge to the road, and the design is inappropriate for the area. (Figure 4).

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Views along the street terminate in the mature trees framing Patcham Place to the north. Until recently, views to the south terminated in two mature Elm trees. The loss of these trees to Dutch Elm disease is highly regrettable, as these trees formed an important visual barrier between the old village and surrounding suburbia, therefore promoting a sense of the original rural setting. They are however to be replaced.

Pavements along Old London Road are inconsistent – with no pavement provided in some areas. This promotes the rural village character of the area and emphasises the strong building line. The dense built form of Old London Road is further compounded by the presence of further housing to the rear. The Square is an 18<sup>th</sup> century development of small terraced cottages with weatherboarded or flint and brick elevations (Figure 5). It is particularly picturesque – enhanced by its ‘hidden’ location, the presence of verdant front gardens and informal surface treatments that are in keeping with its rural character. The buildings retain many original features, including horizontally sliding sash and vertically hung sash windows, clay tile and slate roofs and traditional outbuildings, which contribute to the character of The Square.

Old Patcham Mews is a further development to the rear of Old London Road which was constructed in the 1980s. Although opinions are divided as to its success, and its proportions and detailing are poor, it is constructed in traditional materials and preserves the urban morphology of the area, which lessen its impact on the character of the village.

Falling outside the conservation area, the buildings fronting the junction of Ladies Mile Road and Old London Road are of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban character (Figure 6). The junction forms an important open space at the entrance to the conservation area. The public realm is generic and somewhat tired.

Old London Road comprises a main route from the A23 to the northern suburbs of Brighton. Despite the re-routing of the original London to Brighton route, the road remains subject to high levels of traffic.

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### *Church Hill*

Church Hill comprises a narrow, gently curved street that rises steeply to the north. In comparison to Old London Road, the streetscene and building line is much more homogenous along this road. On the west side of the street, two-storey traditional



flint-walled cottages with gabled or hipped tiled roofs front directly onto the road (Figure 7). The lack of pavement along this side of the street – similar to parts of Old London Road – is distinctive, promoting a rural village character and emphasising the hard edge to the street. Eyebrow dormers to several cottages and the timber framed studwork on number 23 Church Hill add to the vernacular character. Of particular historic interest, number 5 Church Hill dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and forms part of a probable former hall house. The northernmost terrace, Pond Cottages, dates to the 1840s (Figure 8). The terrace is particularly uniform, with rendered, classically proportioned facades and a single dormer window to each property. It forms a later development of a more formal character to the rest of Church Hill. Gradually unfolding views of both the vernacular and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages stepping down the hill are particularly picturesque and form a distinctive view in the area.

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A number of larger detached houses, displaying various architectural styles and dates are located to the east. Set back from the road in private gardens, they display a more spacious built form than the cottages to the west. This side of the road has historically always been less developed: The 1811 Plan of the Patcham Place estate reveals that the area comprised two fields at this time, between which were situated the parsonage and a further small house plot. The area was slowly developed, so that by the 1870s the whole street front was divided into house plots. At this point a further vicarage had been constructed to the immediate south of the church; replacing the original parsonage. The building plots preserve the former field boundaries in this area.

Mature vegetation and flint walls form a more prominent feature in the streetscape than the buildings themselves, and promote a clear sense of boundary and privacy. Glimpsed views are apparent to the large green 'field' to the rear of these properties (also known as Dukes Meadow), emphasising that this area was once open and rural. This field is also clearly visible in longer views of the village from Patcham Place, where its function as part of the 'green buffer' is clearly apparent. The importance of this space as an open space has been supported through the refusal of previous proposals for residential development, which were most recently dismissed at appeal in 1990 and 1997.

Ashley Close is a modern cul-de-sac development and set to the east of Church Hill. Dating to the early 1970s, its construction predates designation of the area. It is located on the site of the Victorian Vicarage and preserves the boundaries to this (which are also former field boundaries). The road itself follows the line of the original driveway to the Vicarage. It however creates an opening along Church Hill which erodes the linear form of the street, and the large detached houses are of little architectural or historic merit in themselves. The flint walls at its entrance and the high levels of foliage are nevertheless in keeping with the character of the area and minimise the impact of the development.

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#### *Public realm*

The narrow, curved streets in this area follow the medieval street layout, which is in principal that of a linear village. Most roads retain generic modern surfacing; however there are some surviving traditional surfaces which enhance the historic

character of the area, such as the red brick paving with granite kerbs along Old London Road, and red brick kerbs along Church Hill. Further, the unmade gravel surface, brick gutters and grassed path in The Square form an intrinsic part of its rural and picturesque character.

Most lighting columns in the area are of the traditional swan-necked variety. Those along the A23 and at Black Lion Hotel junction are modern.

### Conclusion

The Village Nucleus comprises the commercial and residential centre of the village. It is characterised by:

- small vernacular cottages of two storeys
- gabled or hipped roofs of slate or clay tile
- elevations of flint and brick, with some render
- a clear sense of boundary
- high levels of mature vegetation

However a number of intrusive features are present in the character area which are damaging to its special historic and architectural interest:

- Some shop fronts and signage along Old London Road are not in keeping with the character of the area.
- Signs, paraphernalia and hard landscaping associated with the Black Lion Hotel erode its historic character. The building has been irregularly extended over time, such that there is now little coherence to its plan form.
- Highway paraphernalia and generic paving materials at Black Lion Hotel junction erode its historic character.
- Despite the construction of the A23, heavy traffic levels and parked cars erode the character of the area. This is particularly apparent at the Black Lion Hotel junction, and along Old London Road, which remains an important access route to the Patcham suburbs.
- Incremental change, including unsympathetic alterations to windows, doors and roof coverings, have occurred to some of the cottages and shops.
- Numbers 96-104 (even) Old London Road erode the hard edge to the road and are of an inappropriate design.

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### Character Area 2: All Saints Church and the former Patcham Court Farm

All Saints Church and the buildings of the former Patcham Court Farm comprise a particularly important group of buildings in the area. The importance of the church and of the farm is reflected in the scale and architectural quality of the individual buildings. The length of the barn in particular – being one of the longest in Sussex – reveals much about the scale of farming at this time and also the prestige of the Abergavenny family, as dominant landowners in the area.

The close proximity of the church and farm reveals much about relationships between the landowner, church and community. The church and farm complex would have formed the heart of the village on many levels – economically, spiritually, judicially and socially. The function of this area as the heart of the village would have originally been further emphasised by the presence of the village pond outside the Church, which has now dried up and been infilled and landscaped to form a pleasant green space.

Grass verges along the road, open spaces around the former farm and church and private gardens to the west create a rural quality to this area. Surface treatment, including the use of red pavers set on edge, complement this rural character.

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### Important Buildings and Groups of Buildings

#### *All Saints Church*

A church in Patcham is mentioned in the Domesday entry, but the current Church appears to date to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and later. The tower was added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the chancel rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 9). The building was heavily restored over the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which time the north aisle and vestry were added and a painted Doom discovered. The Church is built in flint with stone dressings and render to the majority of the exterior. It is located on the east flank of the valley, set within its own churchyard and bounded by a flint wall.

The Church is not visible from much of the conservation area. It becomes visible on progressing up Church Hill into the Church and Farm character area. This lessens its impact on the conservation area as a whole; however it is a major focal point of the character area and historically important to the development of the village. The church is also a clear landmark when viewed from downland to the north of the area.

#### *Patcham Court Farm*

The surviving farm complex comprises the farmhouse, dovecote and barn, which date to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The farmhouse is a two storey flint, brick and tile-hung building with hipped slate roof. It is now split into two dwellings, which are both accessed from Vale Avenue. The Vale Avenue elevation has a large wing extending forwards and set at right angles to the main building. Its appearance suggests that the main elevation may originally have faced south, towards the dovecote and rest of the farm complex.

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Sizeable gardens bounded by tall flint walls are set to the south of the farmhouse. Within these is set the dovecote, whose significance is reflected in its designation as a grade II listed building and a scheduled ancient monument. Built in flint, the dovecote is circular in plan with a conical tiled roof. It is an unusual survival and adds considerable interest and character to the area (Figure 10).

The barn is set to the immediate north of the Church (Figure 11). Of originally one tall storey, it has weatherboarded and flint elevations and a prominent slate roof. In agricultural use until the 1980s, it was then converted to residential and community

use. The insertion of a high number of openings in the elevation and roof as part of the conversion is regrettable, and erodes the character of the building. A new flint, brick and hung-slate building was constructed to the north within the former farm yard. The conversion to residential use has altered the character of this space from that of a historic farm yard. The flint wall around the site and the barn itself are nevertheless important survivals.

Numbers 120-124 (even) Vale Avenue forms a two storey building with attic and symmetrical façade built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as farm worker's housing (Figure 12). Incorporating the date 1909 and monogram 'A' for Abergavenny, this is relatively rare as it was built at a time of agricultural decline when few such buildings were being constructed. Outside of the conservation area, and physically separated from it, it merits inclusion on the list of buildings of local interest.

The farm expanded to a location on Vale Avenue in the 1950s. Although now vacant, the paddock on the 1950s site and surrounding trees form part of the green buffer surrounding the village.

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### Open Space

The character area retains a more spacious character than that of the Village Nucleus. Public green spaces include the former village pond (now infilled and comprising a grassed landscaped area in front of the church), the church yard and grass verges along Church Hill and Vale Avenue. These are complemented by the large gardens present along the west side of Church Hill, which contain high levels of mature vegetation and enhance the rural character of the area.

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The open, green character continues beyond the boundary of the conservation area to the north onto the 1950s Patcham Court Farm site, and to the east where there is a large Churchyard extension and allotments. These form part of the green buffer that distinguishes the village from the surrounding suburbs. The currently vacant buildings on the Patcham Court Farm site are of poor quality and have a negative impact on the conservation area. Any future development on the site should preserve its function as part of the green buffer around the conservation area.

### Conclusion

All Saints Church and Patcham Court Farm area retains a spacious green character with individual buildings of varied design and function. The power and prestige of the Abergavenny family is reflected in the architectural quality and scale of the farm buildings, and their close relationship with the Church.

However, a number of poor quality features are present in the area that detract from the special interest of the area:

- The A27 to the north of the area forms a physical barrier between the village (especially Patcham Court Farm) and its former agricultural land on the South Downs.
- The redevelopment of the Village Barn has affected the historic character of this building and the former farm yard.

- The derelict state of the 1950s Patcham Court Farm site detracts from the character area.

### **Character Area 3: Patcham Place (Graphic)**

The Patcham Place area is characterised by high levels of mature vegetation. It contains the large residence of Patcham Place itself, the associated stables and lodge, and the surrounding driveways, walled gardens and mature vegetation that comprise its immediate parkland setting. The wider landscape of Coney Wood and Patcham Recreation Ground – although outside the conservation area – have a direct bearing on the character area.

#### **Built Form**

##### *Patcham Place*

Patcham Place comprises a large residence, dating in its current form to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 13). There has been, however, a house in this location since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, parts of which survive within its present form. The building is of two storeys with a black mathematical tile frontage and stone dressings. The main elevation faces north. It is of seven bays and symmetrical design, with a central doorway with Tuscan columns. The three central bays are housed under a small pediment with oculus window. The numerous phases of the building are reflected in its complex plan form and roofline. Its interest is emphasised by its designation as a grade II\* listed building. Used as a youth hostel for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is now vacant.

To the streetfront, the house displays a six bay symmetrical façade with a canted bay window to each side. This is set back from the A23 behind a belt of mature beech trees, which continue along the side of the recreation ground. These form a strong boundary between the A23 and the Patcham Place estate. Although important in views from the Black Lion Hotel junction and from the A23, its orientation away from the road and the belt of mature trees mean Patcham Place does not form a major part of the streetscape. Instead, its primary setting is the recreation ground with Coney Wood forming its backdrop.

The arrangement of driveways forming the immediate surrounding to Patcham Place is already evident on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874. Parked cars, however, now line the drives and detract from the primary setting of the house.

##### *Patcham Place Stables*

The stables associated with Patcham Place are arranged around three sides of a yard and date at least in part to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The central portion is cobble-faced with yellow brick dressings, pediment and tiled roof. A mounting block is situated between the stables and the House.

Situated to the rear (south) of Patcham Place, the stables do not form part of principal views of the house; instead forming part of an ancillary area. However, they are placed in close proximity to the house, and front directly on to the drive.

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As such they would have been visible to visitors arriving or departing from the house. This is reflected in the quality and level of architectural embellishment on the building.

An engraving by Grimm dating to the 1780s shows ancillary buildings to the rear of the house. These include a very large half-hipped barn – rising to the same height as the house itself. The size of the barn – and its inclusion in the engraving – suggests it was a prestigious structure. It is no longer apparent on the 1811 estate map, by which time parts of the current stable complex are in place.

The stable complex is currently in very poor condition and in need of repair and maintenance.

#### *Patcham Lodge*

Patcham Lodge is a two storey rendered building to the southeast of Patcham Place. A building is first evident in this location on the [1874](#) 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map. [The A23 was re-routed to its current location immediately adjacent to the Lodge in 1926.](#)

The main elevation faces north; overlooking the drive to Patcham Place. It has a small front garden with a much larger walled garden to the rear. [The east elevation fronts directly on to the A23.](#) It is highly visible along this roadway and also forms an important part of views down Church Hill. It is therefore a prominent building which adds to the character of the area. However it is not listed, and is therefore currently unprotected from incremental change to its windows and roof coverings, which could have a major impact on its character.

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#### Open Space

##### *Walled gardens*

A series of tall flint walls bound and divide land to the south of Patcham Lodge. Although part of this area forms the private garden to Patcham Lodge, the remainder forms part of publicly accessible land on Coney Hill. The area combines a mixture of woodland, grassed areas and specimen trees and shrubs, and feels removed from its more urban surroundings (Figure 14).

The area presents a tall flint wall to the roadside, which is a prominent feature along the A23.

##### *Recreation Ground and Coney Wood*

Although currently outside the boundary of the conservation area, Patcham recreation ground and Coney Wood form a major part of the setting to Patcham Place and the village as a whole.

The recreation ground forms a large area of level open ground, which provides long views to the front façade of Patcham Place. It contains one structure – a cricket pavilion – along its western edge. Although this is of little historic or architectural

merit, the use of this space for cricket matches – with the backdrop of Patcham Place behind – is a quintessentially English scene. Parked cars line the A23 alongside Patcham Recreation Ground. This is evident particularly when sporting events are taking place but the area also appears to be used informally for park and ride.

Located on the steep flanks of Coney Hill, Coney Wood originally formed the wilderness garden to Patcham Place; comprising serpentine paths winding through woodland. Despite severe damage during the 1987 storm, the wood retains much of its historic character. It forms the backdrop to Patcham Place, the recreation ground and to views from the village. The London to Brighton railway line, constructed in 1841, runs beneath the wood within a tunnel. The entrance to the tunnel lies at the northern end of the wood.

Both Coney Wood and Patcham recreation ground are important reminders of the village's once rural setting and significant survivals of the Patcham Place estate.

### Conclusion

Patcham Place Character Area comprises a large 18<sup>th</sup> century residence, its associated stable and lodge, and its immediate parkland setting. Located adjacent to the A23, the house and its parkland setting form a landmark feature on entering Brighton from the north. The area is predominantly green in character, with high levels of mature trees. This is complemented by the adjoining Patcham Recreation Ground and Coney Wood, which form the wider parkland setting to the house. A number of tall flint walls are located to the south of the area, and are prominent from the A23.

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A number of intrusive features are however evident, which are damaging to the special historic and architectural interest of the area:

- Whilst some necessary repairs have now been secured, Patcham Place is currently vacant and in need of further repair.
- The stables are in a poor condition.
- High levels of vegetation and views of Patcham Place and the village contribute to making the A23 a pleasing route into the city. The route, however, forms a barrier between Patcham Place and the remainder of the conservation area, and modern highway paraphernalia impact on the historic character of the route.
- Parked cars outside Patcham Place impact on the setting of this listed building.

### Special Interest of Patcham Conservation Area

Patcham Conservation Area comprises a historic downland village, which, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, occupied a strategic position on the route from Brighton to London. The area contains a large concentration of historic buildings, many of which are listed. Patcham Place, Patcham Court Farm and All Saints Church are the main prestigious buildings in the area, whilst the majority of the building stock comprise more modest vernacular cottages, which are also of architectural and historic

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interest. The varying architectural styles evident in the village reflect its piecemeal development, yet cohesion is provided through the use of traditional materials; predominantly flint. Roofs are generally tiled, although some are covered in slate. Buildings and walls form a hard edge to the streetscape, creating a strong sense of boundary. Despite some alteration and development, and the encroachment of Brighton's suburbs to the south, the historic village survives largely in tact.

Areas of green, open space in and around the conservation area help distinguish the area from the surrounding suburban development and preserve a rural setting. Across the physical barrier of the A27, views to the open downland to the north remain, emphasising the village's agricultural antecedents.

In summary, Patcham Conservation Area forms a characteristic historic downland village.

### **Boundary Review**

The current boundary to Patcham Conservation Area largely reflects the extent of the historic village settlement, following the boundary between the village and surrounding suburban development.

Coney Wood and Patcham Recreation Ground, however, form a major part of the setting of the village and of Patcham Place. They are present in key views in the village, particularly those along Church Hill. The area also forms part of the 'green buffer' that draws a clear distinction between the downland village and the surrounding suburban development, and promotes a sense of its originally rural character.

The recreation ground and Coney Wood comprise part of the historic estate and parkland setting to the house, as shown on the 1811 Estate Plan. Coney Wood originally formed the wilderness garden to the house, with serpentine paths winding through woodland and specimen trees. Much of this character survives. Orientated towards the recreation ground, this green and level area, flanked by the woodland to its west, forms the primary setting to Patcham Place. Key views of the house are evident across the Recreation Ground to the north, from where the woodland forms its backdrop. It is therefore recommended that both the Recreation Ground and Coney Wood are included within the conservation area. The proposed boundary reflects boundaries shown on the 1811 Estate Plan.

The existing boundary to the rear of the Black Lion Hotel includes half of an area of vegetation and trees to the rear of the hotel's car park, and also a small triangle of the garden of number 11 Court Close. In order to regularise the boundary, it is recommended that the whole area of vegetation is included within the conservation area, and that the garden to number 11 Court Close is removed. The vegetation forms part of the 'green buffer' that distinguishes the area from its surroundings and contributes to the sylvan quality of the area itself. The garden is not related to the historic development or character of the area, and remains visually distinct.

### **Policy and Proposals**

An Article 4(I) Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 is recommended to remove permitted development rights for the area. This will help to prevent harmful incremental change and the degradation of the special interest of the area as a whole, through managing change to properties such as Patcham Lodge, 1 and 2 Church Hill and individual houses along the west side of Church Hill. Although some permitted development rights were removed from the Village Barn and Old Patcham Mews as part of their planning permissions, the Article 4(I) Direction would provide further control over, for example, the erection of solar panels, which could be especially damaging to character if not installed sensitively. Reinstatement of historic features should be encouraged when opportunities arise.

Suitable long term uses will be investigated for Patcham Place in order to ensure the continued maintenance, repair and survival of this important building. Any long term use should investigate options for reducing parking along the entrance drive.

The stables at Patcham Place are in poor condition. Repairs and regular maintenance should be secured for these buildings.

Flint walls make a major contribution to the special character of the conservation area and merit a programme of maintenance, repair and reinstatement, in accordance with best 'traditional' practice.

Traditional paving materials, including red brick pavers, loose gravel surfaces and granite setts, as evident along Old London Road, Church Hill and The Square, should be preserved, with repairs carefully matched to the original. More traditional surfaces such as red brick pavers and gravelled finishes should be used when opportunities arise.

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Numbers 120-124 (even) Vale Avenue, Mile End Cottages on Ladies Mile Road and the railway tunnel entrance and ventilation stack are located outside the conservation area, and segregated from it. They are, however, of sufficient special architectural and historic interest to be considered for inclusion on the list of buildings of local interest.

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The A23 forms a barrier between Patcham Place and the rest of the conservation area. The character of this route, and the relationship between each side of the road, should be considered when undertaking any further improvements and developments along this highway.

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Signs and other modern paraphernalia should be minimised in the area and a consistent approach adopted. New interventions should be sited and designed sympathetically. Opportunities should continue to be sought to de-clutter streetscapes during any forthcoming improvement works in the area.

Existing tree cover contributes positively to the character of the area. A review of tree preservation orders is recommended, to ensure adequate control. Vegetation at the junction of Old London Road and Ladies Mile Road could be strengthened to screen views between the conservation area and suburban surroundings. Planting around the Black Lion Hotel boundary could also effectively screen the car park and

poor quality extensions visible in this area, whilst also reinforcing the strong boundary to the road. Soft landscaping in these areas would be encouraged.

The open spaces around the village that form part of the 'green buffer' are **extremely** important in distinguishing the village from the surrounding suburban development and highlighting its originally rural setting. These areas should remain open and green.

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**Further Reading**

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