

APPENDIX 3 – OTFORD ROADS GAZETTEER

CENTRAL OTFORD

This is the heart of the historic village, centred on the Parish Church and Green, with remains of the nationally important Manor House of the Archbishops of Canterbury (later Royal Palace) to the south.

Station Road (A225)

In the 19c this eastward extension of the High Street incorporated two farms, Hilldrop Farm and Moat Farm. In the early 20c a few large detached houses were built opposite the station, and a row of council houses was erected nearer the village.

Becket's Place

A speculative development of large houses erected in 2005 on the former coal yard adjacent to the Station Yard.

Colet's Orchard

The walled rear garden of Colet's Well, the principal house overlooking the Green, still abuts Station Road, but the grounds extended eastwards to include Friar's Pool, the weather-boarded house on the roadside, which was formerly the laundry. Colet's Orchard was developed on the adjoining land as a cul-de-sac of individually designed bungalows in the early 1960s, at which time the owners of Colet's Well ceded Otford Pond to the village.

Leonard Avenue

This cul-de-sac was originally built with terraced houses c1860. Several were destroyed by bombing in 1940, and semi-detached houses replaced them and also completed the development, with the surgery at its northern end dating from 1968.

The Green

With its famous pond, the Green has been Otford's focal point for more than a thousand years. The present fabric of the Parish Church, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, partly dates from c1050 but there was probably a place of worship here centuries before. The adjacent late 18c Colet's Well was built on the site of a Tudor mansion of similar name. By the church gate is the Chantry, formerly



▲ *The Village Green and War Memorial.*

Church Gate Cottages, originally built in the 15c as the village Court Hall. Other interesting buildings around the Green include Holmesdale and Pond House, an unusual pair of 18c semi-detached houses, and the Corner House - formerly Mount View, an 18c rebuild of an earlier timbered farm house, and having a substantial boundary wall from the earlier period.

To the south of the Green are the still impressive remains of Otford Palace, the Tudor north range being the only ruins still standing of an estate originally conveyed to the Church by a king of Kent in 821.

The north side includes commercial properties, formerly cottages, together with the Crown (16c) and Woodman public houses, the latter a farmhouse until the 1860s. The Green and High Street largely comprise the village Conservation Area.

The High Street

Still the only east-west route through the parish, this is the present-day guise of the prehistoric trackway linking Dover with central England. It is also part of the modern North Downs Way. The upper part is lined with a variety of smaller cottages, now mainly commercial. The Bull public house, formerly a Tudor dwelling, retains some original features as well as a fine weather-boarded barn.

The School and the adjoining Headmaster's House (now the Parish Office and Heritage Centre) were built in 1871. Opposite is the Church Hall (designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens), backed by the car park and Village Memorial Halls. The lower part of the High Street is filled with mainly 19c semi-detached and terraced houses. The Library (1980) and the Methodist Church (1935) are modern buildings in harmony with the street scene.

Pickmoss Lane

Formerly Worth Lane, this is a row of mainly 19c cottages. Pickmoss, a refurbished hall house with attached cottages in the High Street, faces the Horns public house, formerly three 16c cottages.

Mill Lane

This charming cul-de-sac, with its cottages and converted oast, leads to the site of the water mill (replaced after a disastrous fire in 1924), beyond which is Troutbeck, a much altered polygonal house dating from 1905. Opposite Mill Lane is The Grange (18c), a former vicarage on the site of a tannery.

At the bottom of the High Street is the modern Catholic Church of the Most Holy Trinity (1985), standing opposite the fine Broughton Manor, late medieval and later, and for many years the seat of the Polhill family, the local squirearchy. Next to School House is the imposing Old Parsonage, a 15c house once the home of the incumbents of Shoreham and Otford.

Park Lane, to the north, serves Park Farm and two dwellings originally a part of the farm.



▲ *The High Street*

Warham Road

This cul-de-sac contains mainly semi-detached houses erected in a variety of styles in the 1970s. Most have open-plan front gardens.

Footpaths

- **SR. 17:** Darent Valley Path to Shoreham from Mill Lane.
- **BR. 32:** a bridleway leading from Park Lane northwards to Shoreham.
- **SR. 729:** a new east-west path linking SR. 17 at Lower Barn with SR. 32.

EAST VILLAGE

This includes the northern and eastern entrances to the village. With only one or two exceptions, all the houses at this end of Otford resulted directly from the building of Otford Station in 1882, by which means commuting to London combined with a country lifestyle was made possible. All roads here with the exception of Row Dow are subject to a 30mph speed limit.

Shoreham Road (A225)

This forms part of the principal north-south road through the village. It was formerly the route of the Dartford-Sevenoaks Turnpike, with a toll-gate at its junction with Pilgrims Way East.

The earliest habitation along this road was the Warren Farm at its southern end, probably dating from Anglo-Saxon times. The Warren, broadly Otford Mount, was a possession of the Archbishops of Canterbury (and later the Crown), used for hunting. With the exception of the toll house and a pair of cottages all now demolished, the earliest houses were built c1905, with a scattering of individual houses and bungalows gradually lining the road during the 20c, and a brick-built telephone exchange constructed c1935. Since 2000, speculative builders have set their sights on demolishing properties with large gardens in order to build two or three 'pattern-book' houses on the site, with often disastrous visual consequences.

The Old Vicarage, a good Arts and Crafts house (Martin Shaw Briggs, 1923) was saved only after vigorous

campaigning by local people and others, though an additional house was erected in the garden. Opposite to it, the former oast storage has been rebuilt as flats, while the roundels remain as a separate dwelling.

Greenhill and Hillydeal Roads

This private horseshoe-shaped road system, entered from Shoreham Road, was laid down in the 1920s in the Coombe, a steep-sided re-entrant dry valley north-east of the station. It was originally bordered by 2-acre plots, developed largely between the wars. After World War II these plots began to be sub-divided, again for individual properties. This situation obtained until the 1970s when the first 'pattern-book' houses were introduced into Greenhill Road. Recent developments, some displaying architectural merit, are predominantly large houses replacing more modest dwellings

Station Road (A225)

East of the railway bridge, Station Road has two substantial semi-detached houses dating from c1895, and a building containing small business premises, originally a bank, dating from the 1920s. An access track immediately above the station gives access to the Chalk Pit, a public recreation ground, and to the brick-built Scout Hut (1963) and the Station Oasts (c1905), now sympathetically converted into substantial flats. The square Oasts have had their distinctive cowls replaced.

Coombe Road

This private cul-de-sac on a spur of the Downs overlooking the village incorporates part of the former farmyard of Warren Farm. As the mainly post-war properties were originally constructed to severe planning limitations, most have been extended. The most interesting houses are Warren House, originally Oxeneye, the former farmhouse of the Archbishop's game preserve, and rebuilt with ragstone in the 18c; and the Old Kennels House, originally built in 1874 as the whelping house for the former West Kent Hunt kennels then based here.

Pilgrims Way East

Leading eastward to Kemsing and beyond, this is a section of the traditional Pilgrims Road, an ancient east-west long distance trackway along the foot of the North Downs. Since World War I it has been subject to ribbon

development of mainly smaller properties, though standing on larger plots than in the other roads in the vicinity. At its junction with Shoreham Road (Kennels Corner) is the **Chalk Pit**, today a public recreation ground surrounded by woodland.

Row Dow

This minor but busy country lane leads up the scarp of the Downs to the scattered rural communities on the hills to the north-east. It has a handful of early 20c houses enjoying wide views, and gives access to St. Michael's (preparatory) School, set in extensive parkland and housed in the former Otford Court, a gothic brick and terracotta mansion built c1895 as a hunting lodge for the Beechy Lees sporting estate.

St. Michael's Drive

This former carriage drive to Otford Court, with a lodge at its entrance, is a private estate of individual houses and bungalows, mainly pre-war, and having a sylvan aspect.



▲ *A moment of calm on Pilgrims Way East.*

Tudor Drive

This cul-de-sac runs down from Pilgrims Way and backs on to the railway. The upper part was constructed as a distinctive 'mock Tudor' estate of detached villas of two main types in the later 1930s, with uniform black and white detailing, though most have been enlarged subsequently. Building further down was continued post-war, with less uniformity, and included semi-detached houses, two ranges of terraced houses and maisonettes with detached garage blocks where the road gives access to **Oxenhill Meadow and Shaw**, 62 acres of publicly owned access land.

Tudor Crescent

This was added at the lower end of Tudor Drive, constructed with a variety of houses and bungalows from the 1940s onwards.

Footpaths

Several public footpaths serve this part of the village:

- **SR. 14/15:** this section of the North Downs Way National Footpath ascends Otford Mount from the Pilgrims Way opposite the Chalk Pit. It dates from prehistoric times when it was a part of the long-distance North Downs Ridgeway linking the Channel coast with central England. Opposite is a pedestrian access to the Chalk Pit.
- **SR. 47/60:** this path starts at Park Lane north of the Recreation Ground, crosses the railway and joins Shoreham Road, ascending the Downs at Greenhill from the Telephone Exchange.
- **SR. 48:** this links the station with Tudor Drive and gives access to the Chalk Pit and Scout Hut.
- **SR. 49:** this section of the Greenway, another ancient long distance trackway, dating certainly to Roman times and probably prehistoric in origin, links the villages of Otford and Kemsing. It crosses the railway by means of a level crossing south of the station and is metalled throughout in recognition of its contemporary importance. From Tudor Drive to Kemsing it is a designated bridleway (BR.49). Network Rail failed to divert its route over the railway in 2007.
- **SR. 66:** this is the ancient track linking Otford with Greatness to the south, now crossing both the railway and the M26 motorway. It is accessible via several paths through Oxenhill Meadow and also from the bottom of Tudor Drive.

SOUTH VILLAGE

Castle House

This fine building was once the bailiffs' residence for the archiepiscopal manor, and later an important farm. It dates from Tudor and later periods with outbuildings and fields, woodland, lake and medieval stewponds fed from Becket's Well. It has a medieval stone-built subterranean conduit house, still fed by a spring, which supplied piped water to the moated manor.

Sevenoaks Road (A225)

On the east side of this main road leading south from the village is the Parade, a row of two-storey retail premises built just before WW II. It includes the Post Office, a bank and a convenience store. Further south is a row of individual, mainly post-war houses extending as far as Beadles car dealership (formerly Waite's Garage) beyond which is Palace Park Wood, a public open space, adjoining the new Otford Cemetery and Woodland Burial area.

To the west side of Sevenoaks Road are water meadows which are subject to flooding.

Long Lodge Lane

This leads to an ancient settlement originally in the middle of the Great Park of the Archbishops, and also to a poultry farm.

Old Otford Road

South of the M26 motorway bridge there is a small group of large houses on Ladds Hill. This was the course of the A225 before it was diverted for the M26 motorway.

Vestry Cottages

This row of Victorian cottages was originally associated with the former extensive brickworks. Nearby is Bartram Farm, which now houses a light industrial estate.

The Vestry Industrial Estate

The Estate is home to a wide variety of industrial companies both large and small. It was developed in the 1960s on the brickworks site, later the domestic landfill site operated by the Southwark Vestry.

Bubblestone Road

This is a road of detached houses commenced pre-war and occupying the site of the medieval manor, along with other houses and bungalows of the post-war period. It forms the sole entrance to the homogenous domestic estate comprising **Well Road**, **Evelyn Road**, **Sidney Gardens**, and **The Old Walk**, all of pleasing aspect with mature tree-lined roads mainly of bungalows but with some large two-storey houses. **The Butts** is an interesting Ministry of Defence (MOD)-designed estate of large semi-detached houses in a distinctive style. Most of the

properties have larger-than-average gardens, creating an atmosphere of spaciousness. A stream crosses the estate.

Footpaths

- **SR. 49:** this leads from Otford Pond and Sevenoaks Road to the station and anciently to Kemsing, Wrotham and beyond (the Greenway).
- **SR. 50/66:** this ancient track leads south from the Church to Greatness via the Old Walk and Long Lodge.
- **SR. 51:** Pickmoss (formerly Worth) Lane leads from the High Street to Sevenoaks Road.
- **SR. 56/66:** Long Lodge Lane leads from Sevenoaks Road to Long Lodge and thence to Oxenhill Meadow and Shaw.
- **SR. 59:** this runs from Well Road to the railway crossing south of Otford Station. It is a permissive footpath leading from SR. 66 south of the Old Walk to Palace Park Wood, and thence through the community woodland to Sevenoaks Road.

SOUTH WEST VILLAGE

Rye Lane

This ancient meandering lane which originally led to the medieval Rye House was central to a scheme to promote smallholdings c1900. Most of the original houses have been redeveloped, with some infilling, mostly in keeping with the area.

Shinecroft

This road comprises two distinctive opposing terraces of artisans' dwellings erected c1898.

Ryecroft Road

A small cul-de-sac of council-built houses dating from the 1900s and individual modern, detached houses.

Broughton Road

This is a private (unmade) road of pre-war semi-detached houses, linked by a footpath to the end of Rye Lane.

Willow Park

This speculative development of detached and semi-detached houses dating from c1960 was built on former



▲ *Broughton Road*

withy beds. It has achieved maturity, having well maintained gardens and a central grassed area planted with trees.

Flowerfield

This is a cul-de-sac off Willow Park, similar to and contemporary with it.

The Charne

This was a joint development between the Sevenoaks Rural District Council and MOD for Fort Halstead staff in the 1940s and '50s. It faces a substantial green and was completed by the addition of a group of bungalows on a part of the green in the 1960s.

Telston Lane

Originally a farm track, this road was developed between the wars as a mixture of local authority and private housing. Beyond Newbarns Farm it continued west of the railway as a footpath, developed on the south side with scattered houses built post-1945. **Telston Park** is a valued, partly wooded open space bequeathed to the village by a former resident and accessible from both Telston Lane and Willow Park.

Darnet's Field

This is a small cul-de-sac of semi-detached houses constructed in the 1970s.

Hale Lane

This cul-de-sac leads to the Hale Lane Recreation Ground. It was built by the local authority c1948, but most of the houses are now privately owned, leading to a greater diversity of exterior treatment.

Dane Road

This is a later small local authority development of semi-detached houses.

Saxon Close

This is a further local authority development which has attracted criticism due to the use of orange coloured (foreign made) bricks and roofing tiles unsympathetic to the village.



▲ *Twitton Meadows*

Knighton Road

This is a homogeneous private development built c1960 with semi-detached houses having open plan front gardens and bungalows built somewhat later at the top end of the road.

Orchard Road

This cul-de-sac dates from the 1970s and is reached from Knighton Road. Open plan front gardens are again a feature.

Footpaths

- **SR. 52/55:** this is a partial alternative to Rye Lane from Pilgrims Way West via The Charn.
- **SR. 58:** this is the North Downs Way & Darent Valley Path, leading from Telston Lane to Dunton Green.

NORTH WEST OTFORD AND TWITTON

Pilgrims Way West

The westward continuation of the High Street had a few habitations along it in medieval times, but the present

mixture of bungalows and two-storey houses on the south side dates mainly from the mid 20c. The Free Evangelical Church (c1980) replaced a temporary building.

Great Till Close

Built in 1996, this development was built as a speculative venture on the site of the former Fry's garage.

Ivy House Lane

At the western edge of Otford, the lane bounds Foxbury, today's Otford Boarding Kennels, an ancient site.

Wickham Field

This private road on the north side of Pilgrims Way West is the former local authority Isolation Hospital (1904), the main brick-built buildings, wards, etc., of which were converted into single-storey private dwellings and two-storey flats c1960.

Frog Farm

Formerly known as Wickham, this is one of Otford's ancient farms. The farmhouse was rebuilt in 2006, replacing the stark brick farmhouse of 1908.

Twitton Meadows

Built in 1991, this imaginatively designed social housing development was built by the North British Housing Association. It is grouped round a green and replaces a complex of prefabs dating from 1944.

Twitton Lane

The lane leads to the hamlet of Twitton, with Otford's parish boundary running along the middle of the road. Within Otford are, among others, Twitton House (a Victorian villa) and Twitton Farm with its prominent oasts and stowage, now a private house.

Footpaths

- **SR. 10:** from Twitton, this ancient route leads north to Filston Farm and Shoreham, and south to Dunton Green.
- **SR. 43:** this leads from Pilgrims Way West/Rye Lane to Sepham Farm and Halstead.
- **SR. 43/15:** this path leads from Pilgrims Way West/Rye Lane to Filston Farm and Shoreham.