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# Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan

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## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SECTION

with an audio introduction by Robin Turner, a member of this Parish

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## 2021 - 2031

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Luppitt Parish Council

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**Final Draft**  
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# 6. The Built and Historic Environment

## 6.1 Introduction

The built form contributes significantly to the character of Luppitt, its sense of place, and the parish's identity. The village and hamlets possess a history which has shaped the look and feel of the parish as it is today. An understanding of how the built form developed over the years will provide an important contextual background for any further evolution of the parish's built environment and an appreciation that some of the older non-designated (i.e. non-Listed) buildings may be worth retaining and protecting as valuable 'heritage assets'<sup>52</sup>.

## 6.2 Aims and Objectives

The conservation and protection of Luppitt's heritage assets<sup>53</sup> are vitally important as they form a key part of the built fabric and lend historic depth to this ancient parish. The preservation of St Mary's Church is particularly important given its age and setting in the centre of Luppitt village and the ancient artifacts that it contains.

| Aims  | Objectives   |
|---|--|
| 1. To protect the parish's 'heritage assets' <sup>54</sup>                                | 1.1 Support the local authority in the protection and enhancement of Listed buildings and other 'designated heritage assets' through the Listed building, planning and enforcement processes.  |
|   | 1.2 Encourage owners of 'non-designated heritage assets' <sup>55</sup> to keep them well-maintained where they contribute to the character of the parish through their age, architectural style and historical merit using traditional materials wherever possible, and to identify and maintain a record of those assets. |
|   | 1.3 Support the conversion of 'non-designated heritage assets' <sup>56</sup> for certain alternative uses where they contribute to the character of the parish through their age, architectural style and historical merit.  |
| 2. To support the preservation and maintenance of the ancient parish church of St Mary's. | 2.1 Support efforts to keep the fabric of the church and its setting well-maintained and protected and to keep it open for use.  |

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<sup>52</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

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### 6.3 Luppitt's Vernacular Style<sup>57</sup>

Since the earliest times, the most dominant physical feature has been the myriad of small farm fields punctuating an undulating rural landscape. The parish tithe map of 1842<sup>58</sup> shows the irregular outline of hundreds of small ancient field enclosures, and in the Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales (1870) it was noted that the property of Luppitt '*is much divided*'. The siting of farm and domestic buildings generally followed the location of farmsteads and were, therefore, spread thinly across the parish, as remains the case today. The only exceptions are Luppitt village and the hamlets of Beacon, Wick, and Shaugh, where buildings are informally grouped together in linear settlements. Expansion has been unhurried; the census of 1870 identified 153 dwellings across the parish, whereas today the resident population occupies only 172 dwellings (2011 Census) in addition to 30 that are either holiday cottages or weekend homes. This represents an increase in resident housing stock of only 12% in 150 years!

The unique geology of the Blackdown Hills is the key to the area's vegetation, farming and settlement patterns and provides its traditional building materials. It is also one of the reasons it has protected AONB status. The hills are formed by a hard sedimentary rock known as 'upper greensand' which contains nodules of chert (a creamy coloured quartz stone similar to flint). A deposit of clay-with-flint on top of the greensand forms the plateau, and below greensand are marl mudstones. Water percolates through the greensand creating the many springs and streams found in the Blackdowns and this in turn determined the location of the early settlements. A water supply was essential, as was the more fertile soil found in valleys, and a degree of protection from the weather. Hence few dwellings are found on the hilltops.

Traditional houses were built of locally available materials<sup>59</sup>. Chert, flint, greensand and marl are all commonly used in Luppitt buildings. Beerstone, and occasionally Hamstone, from nearby quarries were used to define features such as open fireplaces, window mullions and door jambs. Chert gathered from the fields was a cheap resource and used as uncut rubble stone laid randomly in walls. Higher status houses may have used cut stone, laid in neat courses. Many houses are built of cob which were lime rendered and washed in pigmented cream or pink lime. Roofs were originally thatched (later sometimes covered or replaced in corrugated tin) and clay pantiles and slates were used in later periods.

The location of these vernacular buildings was determined largely by the weather. Providing a water supply was available, they would be located in sheltered positions away from the south westerly winds and orientated south to face the sun. Floor plan was often determined by the availability of materials, especially the length of timber which would control the depth of buildings. The most common layout of local vernacular buildings was a long narrow plan with a cross passage with front and back doors opposite each other under hipped or half hipped roofs. From 1700 to the Victorian period, a wider range of materials became available and houses tended to have symmetrical front elevations, although were still often built of local chert but sometimes with brick detailing and slate roofs. The Victorians

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<sup>57</sup> See *Luppitt Landscape Character Assessment* available at [www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk)

<sup>58</sup> Appendix 11 - Parish Tithe Map

<sup>59</sup> Appendix 5 - Local Building Materials

generally built in brick, which became widely used across the parish, under slate or clay pantiled roofs.

The AONB Management Plan notes the area's distinctive local style of architecture:

*'Local materials such as chert, cob, thatch and clay tiles are used extensively, as well as limestone and Beer stone. The large number of surviving late medieval houses is exceptional. Many are Grade II\* Listed Buildings and contain particularly fine woodwork screens, ceilings and jetties'. Historic farmsteads are a key part of the AONB's architectural, agricultural and social heritage, and they too still survive intact and with unchanged associated farm buildings in exceptional numbers. Most farmsteads and hamlets are in sheltered valleys, often terraced into the hills. Villages are often at river crossings and crossroads in the valley floors, generally clustered around the parish church. Small stone houses often directly front or butt gable-end on to the narrow lanes. Topography often influences settlement patterns'.*

Many of these architectural characteristics apply to the ancient buildings and settlements in Luppitt.

## **6.4 Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings)<sup>60</sup>**

Many buildings in Luppitt are Listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest<sup>61</sup>. There are 49 listed buildings and other features, including Ford Bridge, (several of which are Grade II\* Listed) plus the War Memorial and two ancient monuments - Dumpdon Camp and Bowl Barrow on Hartridge. Ancient St Mary's Church with its sixty-foot tower is Listed as Grade I. It is a cruciform shaped building built in the 14th century with a 'cradle roof' and a sculptured 10th century font. Several ancient features within it are separately listed. Three properties, Mohuns Ottery, Greenway Manor and Shapcombe Farm were mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. No part of the parish is designated a Conservation Area.

## **6.5 Non-Designated Heritage Assets<sup>62</sup>**

Certain older traditional buildings and structures (e.g. bridges and old stone walls) in Luppitt may be worthy of protection as valuable heritage assets that contribute to the character of the parish and landscape even though they are not designated as Listed buildings as such. Some of these are in use as agricultural or domestic buildings and others have fallen into disrepair. EDDC has set out a strategy for the retention and protection of such buildings in *'Heritage Strategy 2019-2031'* which is supported by the Parish Council. Wherever possible, the Parish Council will generally support the retention and protection of non-designated heritage assets and their particular setting when affected by development proposals. Owners of such assets will be encouraged to protect and keep them in good repair where it is possible and appropriate to do so. Buildings and structures worthy of retention will be determined by their age and condition, architectural style and historic merit and contribution to the character of the parish<sup>63</sup> and identified and recorded by the Parish Council.

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<sup>60</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

<sup>61</sup> Appendix 4 - Listed Buildings and Monuments

<sup>62</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

<sup>63</sup> See *Luppitt Landscape Character Assessment* available at [www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk)

The Parish Council will encourage the use of traditional materials<sup>64</sup> in the maintenance and refurbishment of heritage assets wherever it is possible and appropriate to do so.

## 6.6 Policies - The Built and Historic Environment

### Policy BHE1 Protecting the Built and Historic Environment

**1. Protecting Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings)** Development and change of land use proposals that affect a Listed building (or other designated heritage asset<sup>65</sup>) or its setting will only be supported where the proposals properly protect or enhance both the fabric and setting of the Listed building or asset.

**2. Protecting Non-Designated Heritage Assets<sup>66</sup>** Development and change of land use proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets, identified by the Parish Council as contributing to the character of the parish<sup>67</sup> through their age, architectural style or historical merit, will only be supported where those heritage assets are retained and protected.

## 6.7 Community Actions - The Built and Historic Environment

**CA9 Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings)** The Parish Council will encourage residents to maintain and preserve the fabric of designated heritage assets (Listed buildings).

**CA10 Non-Designated Heritage Assets<sup>68</sup> Identified** The Parish Council will identify and record non-designated heritage assets that contribute to the character of the parish through their age, architectural style or historical merit.

**CA11 Non-Designated Heritage Assets<sup>69</sup> Maintained** The Parish Council will encourage residents to maintain and preserve the fabric of non-designated heritage assets where it is possible and appropriate to do so, to prevent dilapidation that would detract from the parish environment and rural setting.

**CA12 St Mary's Church** The Parish Council will support efforts to keep the fabric of St Mary's Church and its setting well-maintained and to keep it open for use.

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix 5 - Traditional Local Building Materials

<sup>65</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

<sup>66</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

<sup>67</sup> *Luppitt Landscape Character Assessment* available at [www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.luppittparishcouncil.co.uk)

<sup>68</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

<sup>69</sup> Appendix 1 - Definitions

## 6.8 Policy Justification

The National Planning Policy Framework puts great weight upon the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. It requires Local Authorities to recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and to conserve them in a manner that is appropriate to their significance. In determining planning applications, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of the following:

*'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan recognises that historic buildings are an intrinsic part of the landscape of the Blackdown Hills, which need to be '*conserved enhanced and enjoyed*'. EDDC through its Local Plan 'Strategy 49' seeks to *conserve and enhance* the cultural heritage of the district.

