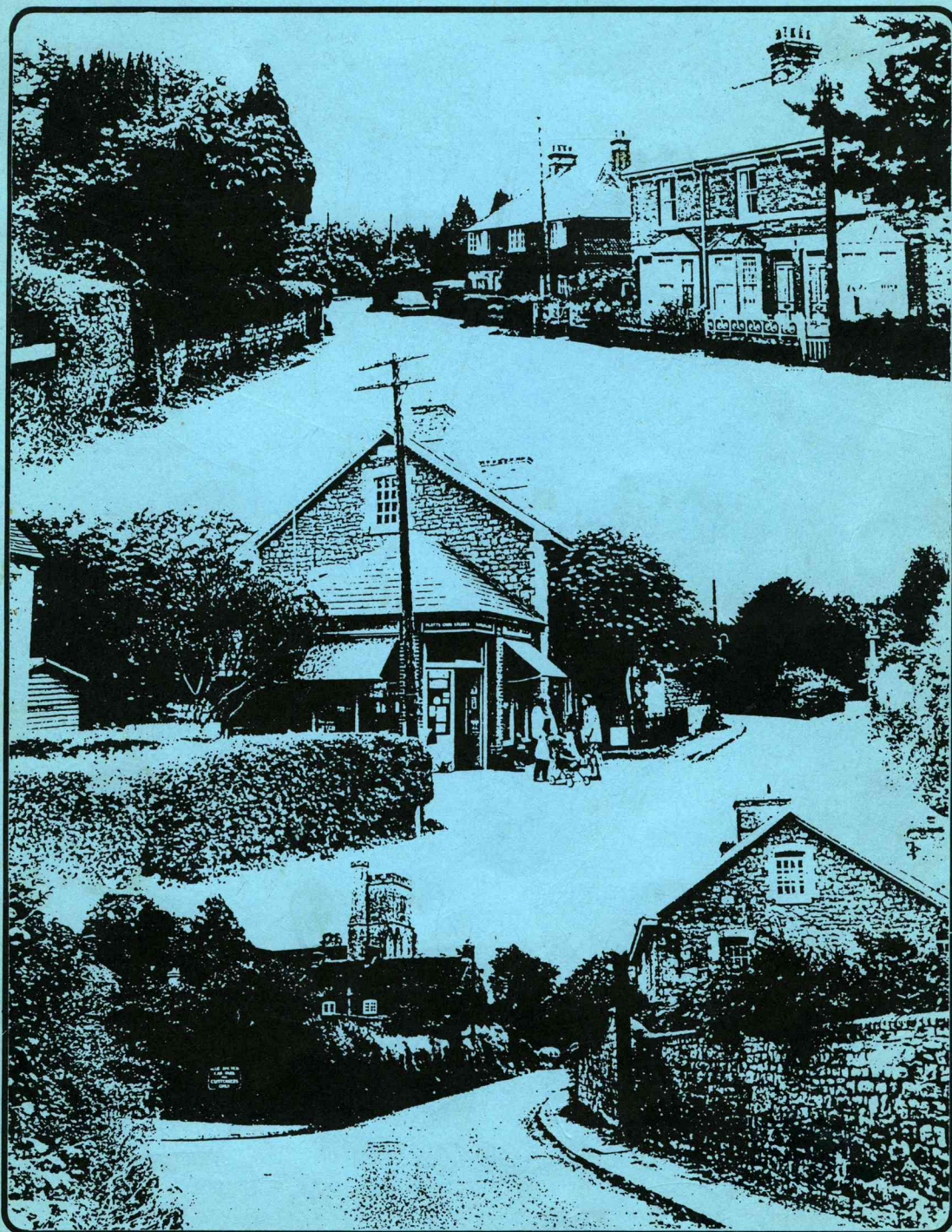


# PLATT

## CONSERVATION STUDY



**TONBRIDGE AND MALLING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**E.P. MILLER, PLANNING DIRECTOR**



# PLATT CONSERVATION AREA

## A CONSERVATION STUDY

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*The Parish Church of St. Mary's Platt*



## PLATT CONSERVATION AREA

### A CONSERVATION STUDY

#### LOCATION

The centre of Platt village is situated to the east of Borough Green, about a half mile or so to the south of the A25 main road serving Borough Green, Sevenoaks and south London to the west, and Wrotham Heath (with link via the A20 to Maidstone) to the east.

The Conservation Area is centred upon the older part of the village at the junction of Long Mill Lane and Grange Road, both of which lead southward into the village from the A25.

#### HISTORY

Once part of the Parish of Wrotham, Platt was officially declared a Parish in its own right on 3rd February 1846, being formed from the hamlets of Platt, Crouch, Great Comp, Little Comp, Wrotham Heath and Nepicar, formerly all in the Parish of Wrotham.

Most of the development in the village centre, now the heart of the Conservation Area, took place during the 19th century, particularly the period 1840 to 1850. In 1841 the Almshouses were opened, and the Parish Church of St. Mary's was built in 1843. The School was opened in 1846, being enlarged in 1882 when schooling became compulsory.

Platt has developed primarily as one of many centres of Kent's agricultural industry, supplying produce to London as far back as the 15th century. For a time it shared in Wrotham's now defunct pottery industry. It is now principally a residential area, closely related to adjacent Borough Green and serving as a "commuter dormitory" to a large extent, but still retaining close connections with agriculture and the country way of life.

Much of the older part of the village was identified as a place of special character and quality by the Tonbridge and Malling District Council, who on 13th May 1975, designated a Conservation comprising Platt village centre, Pigeons Green and properties about Platt Farm.



## SETTING

The Conservation Area is seen as the southern, and generally older part of the built environment of Platt. To the north and west, this built environment consists mostly of modern and "inter wars" housing development. There is a somewhat blurred boundary between this part of Platt and the much larger neighbour, Borough Green, to the west. However, the Conservation Area projects southwards from the more recent development with open farmland beyond its boundaries to the south-west and south, while to the east, wooded rising ground makes an effective backdrop to the Conservation Area when seen across country from the west.

Views in a generally westward direction, across the village, from this higher ground are pleasing, with tiled roofs among trees and greenery in the foreground, being complimentary to the vista of farming country beyond.


There is a fall across the Conservation Area from north-east to south-west, but this is not immediately apparent from within the village, although the changes in level obviously affect the "street-scape" within the Area, and add interest to the appearance overall of the village centre.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

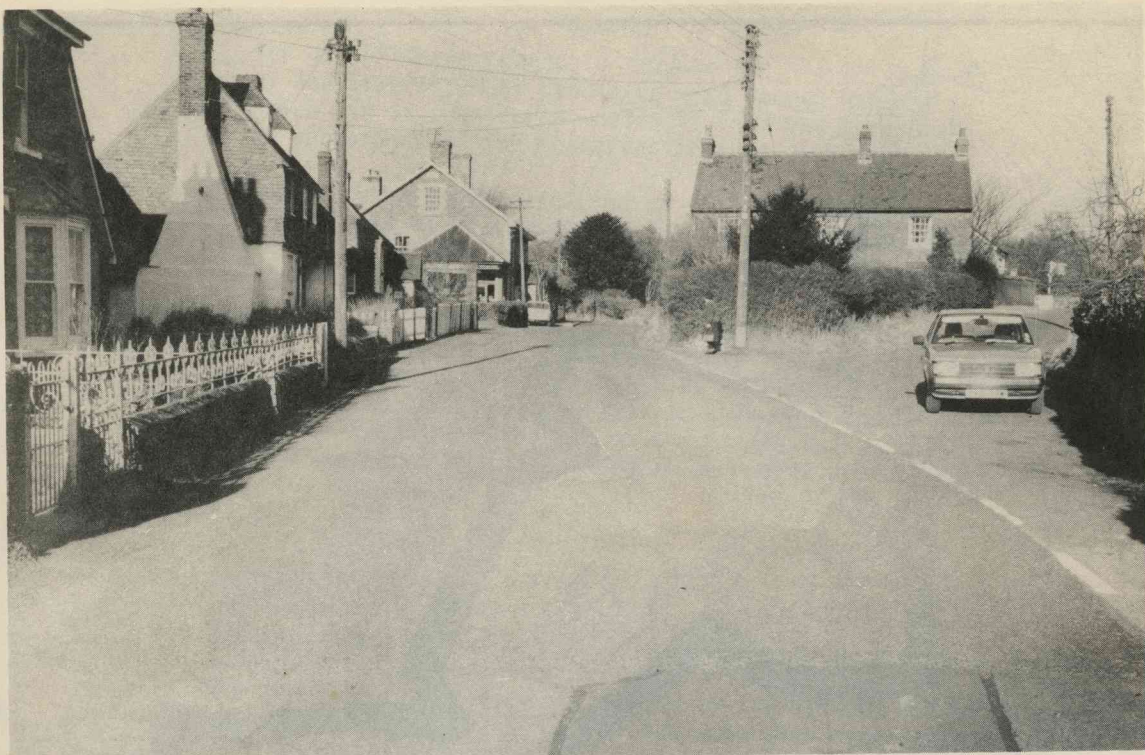
Platt Conservation Area has as its basic framework an "X" shaped road layout, the four arms of the "X" being Long Mill Lane to the north-west, Grange Road to the north, Comp Road to the south-east and the continuation of Long Mill Lane to the south. The heart of both the village and Conservation Area is the group of buildings about the centre of the "X" of the road pattern.

The southern and south-eastern extremities of the village form what might be termed two "sub-areas" to the main Conservation Area, each having its own individual character different from that of the village centre. These sub-areas are Platt Farm to the south and Pigeons Green to the south-east, the latter being linked to the village centre by a part of the Conservation Area lying along Comp Road, and comprising a number of large properties in a wooded setting. Platt Farm, however, stands alone at the southern edge of the village, the space between it and the village centre containing modern housing development of relatively conventional type, making its designation as part of the Conservation Area impossible to justify. Even so, Platt Farm and the village centre can be seen, one from the other, so that there is a visual link between these two otherwise separate parts of the Conservation Area.



Locally Listed ..... 

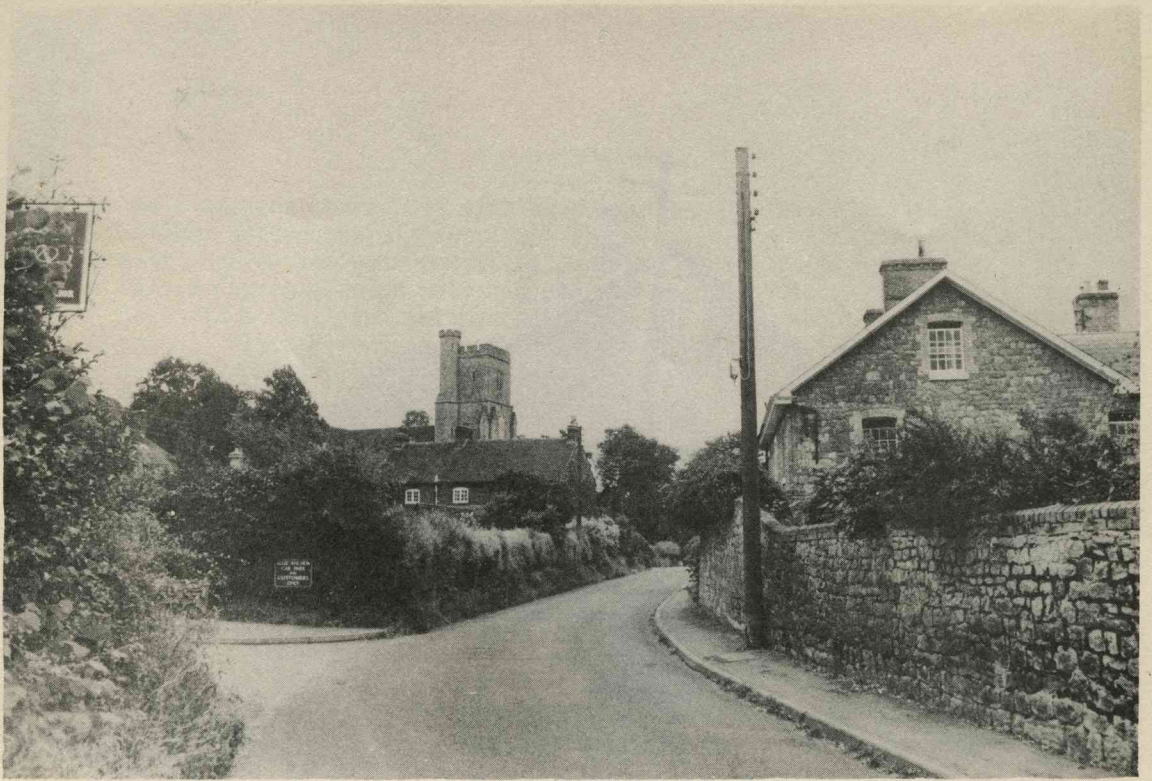




Above: *Platt village centre; different in character from Pigeons Green, below. (see text on page 3)*





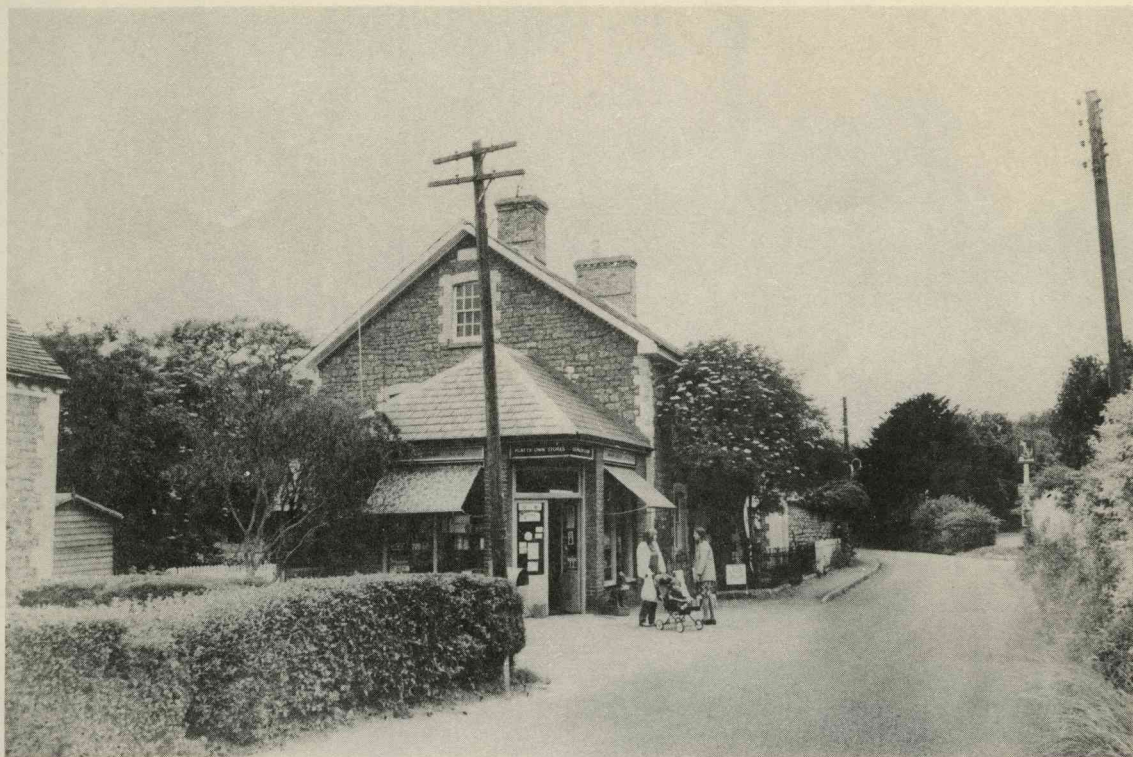


*Above: Entry to the village centre from the north-west;  
Long Mill Lane.*

*Below: Entry from the north; Grange Road. (see text on page 3)*







*Above: The village Post Office and Stores.*

*Below: The southern entry to the village. (see text on page 3)*





The different characters displayed by the "sub-areas" and the village centre are distinctive: the village centre is just that; the social and commercial centre of Platt, with shop, Parish Church, Parish Hall and Pub, and a few houses. Pigeons Green is a small and intimate grouping of houses about a village green. Platt Farm is to some degree similar in that it is residential, but in this case the homes are sited along a lane (Long Mill Lane) and there is something of the feel of a village street about the place.

## ANALYSIS

### *(i) Entrances and Exits*

The entrance/exit points of a Conservation Area are material in establishing its character. Ideally there should be a clear cut entrance to, or exit from a Conservation Area with the special character and quality of the environment within the conservation boundary being easily defined in comparison with the less special characteristics of the area outside.

In the case of Platt Conservation Area, entry from the north along Grange Road finds the existence of the Conservation Area clearly stated as the modern housing development gives way to much older buildings; the Parish Church, and the Almshouses being particularly noticed in this respect. Indeed, the Church tower is a prominent feature of the view into the village centre as seen from this approach. Entry from the north-west along Long Mill Lane is similarly effective, with undeveloped spaces to either side of the road forming a buffer between the modern development and the older houses of the Conservation Area. The Post Office and village store is a satisfactory indicator of the existence of the area of special quality to the south, and a useful "bookend" to the row of older properties that extend along the western side of Long Mill Lane as it passes through the village centre. The southern entry to Platt expresses strongly the change of environment from open country and farmland, with hedge-bordered narrow lanes, to a closely integrated development of very old houses, former farm buildings and oasts, all grouped close to the edges of Long Mill Lane where it serves this extremity of the village.

Access to the village at Pigeons Green, from the south-east along Comp Road, and from further towards the south, along Bunish Lane,



is particularly effective in both cases, with houses firstly concealed by greenery and then seen more clearly as the small Green comes into view. There is a very pleasing change at the boundary of the Conservation Area, from open, undeveloped countryside, to an intimate development of country dwellings.

Pigeons Green has a south-western entry/exit which is equal to the Bunish Lane and Comp Road entry/exit points, but is perhaps more open in character; Potash Lane serves Pigeons Green at this point, passing through a "gateway" between two properties, "Patchways" on the north and "The Barn" on the south, sited on the Conservation boundary. Entry to the Conservation Area from this direction is particularly effective, a strong sense of place being established by the buildings set about the small Green beyond the "gateway" on the boundary.

#### *(ii) Buildings*

In the village centre buildings are largely of the 19th century; terraces of houses in brick and ragstone, the Parish Church and Almshouses in ragstone set on high ground to be dominant features of the centre. The Church Hall though is at lower level beside the road, but also in stone and clearly part of the "Church" group of buildings. Victorian Gothic detailing is evident throughout the village centre but is not intrusive.

Pigeons Green is altogether different in its architecture. Houses and farm buildings of the 18th century and earlier, in brick, stone and Kent Peg tiles and exposed timber framing. A mixture of small portions of many Kent vernacular styles. There is a strong domestic quality here, and a softness about the reds, browns and greys of the buildings, enhanced by the informal siting of the various elements, and the wealth of greenery which contrasts so effectively with the openness of the small green.

The architecture of the Platt Farm area is similar to that of Pigeons Green but there are more timber framed houses, probably dating from the 16th century but now much restored. This is an area of linear development with most of the buildings close to, and following the line of the road (Long Mill Lane) as it passes through the area.

Walls are important features of the street scene in the village centre, particularly the long churchyard wall in ragstone. This serves to link the elements of Almshouses, Church and Church Hall, and is also seen as a "podium" supporting the structures of the

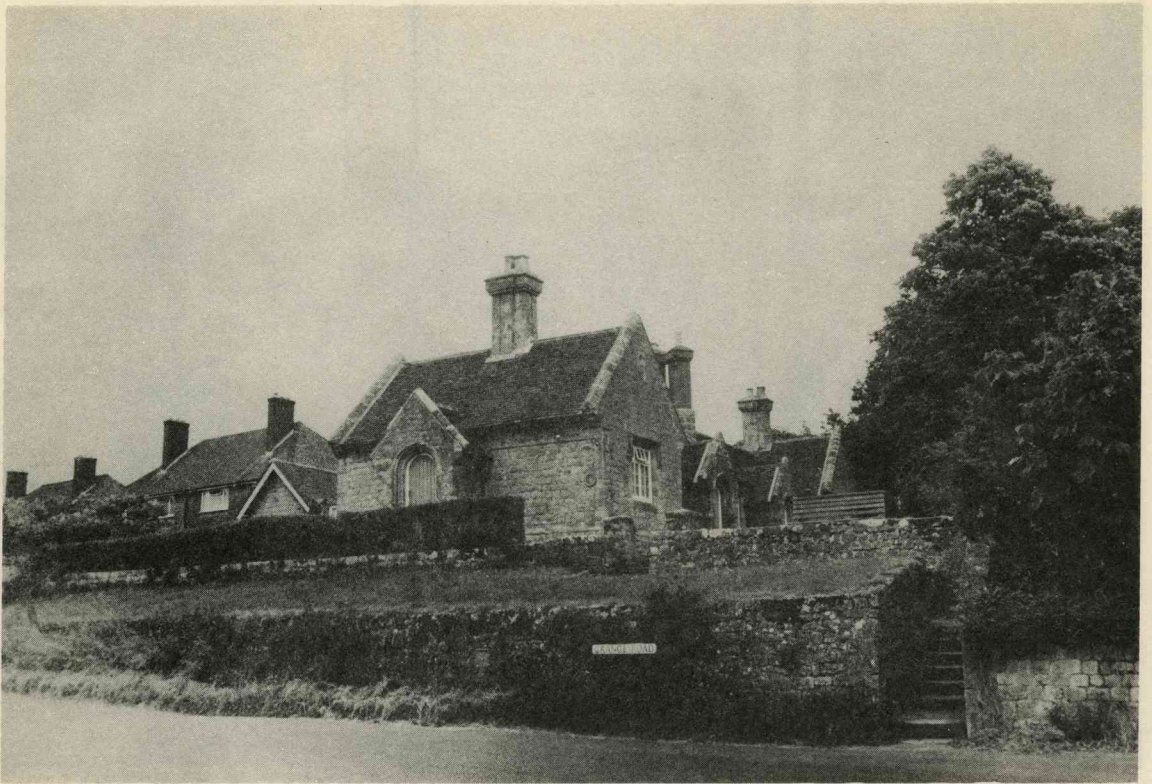




Above: *Potash Lane entry to Pigeons Green. (see text on page 4).  
The constriction at this entry is in contrast to the open  
space of The Green beyond. (see illustration below)*







Above: The Almshouses, opened in 1841.

Below: St. Mary's Lodge and the Church Hall, both formerly the Village School of 1846. (see text on page 4)







*Vernacular architecture: Pigeons Green. (see text on page 4)*

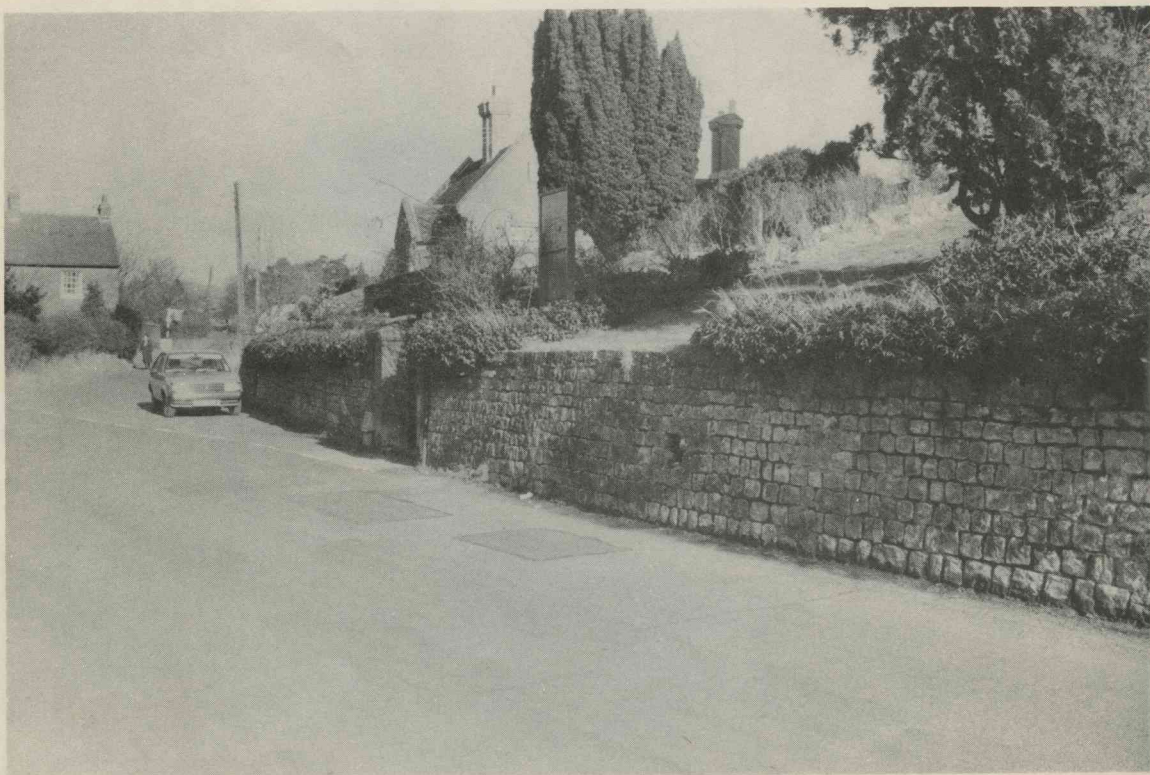






Above: Platt Farmhouse on Long Mill Lane

Below: The ragstone wall to the Churchyard. (see text on pages 4 and 5)





Church and Almshouses. It does in fact serve as a retaining wall at the foot of the sloping churchyard. There are brick and stone walls at Pigeons Green; these blend effectively with the buildings and the greenery of the area to become an integral and attractive part of the overall picture.

### *(iii) Natural Features*

Trees and hedges are in this category; Platt is blessed with a wealth of foliage; there are woods to the east on rising ground beside Comp Lane, which itself is bordered by trees and tall bushy hedges. Long Mill Lane is similarly bordered by hedges, but mostly lower in height, so that gardens can be seen from the lane. At Pigeons Green the Green is the primary "natural" feature, contrasting effectively with the trees, bushes and hedges set about the buildings. Of particular note is the small orchard which extends northward from the Green towards Comp Lane.

Contours always add interest to the overall appearance and character of a place. The rising ground to the east of Comp Lane, with its wooded slopes concealing large properties of considerable importance to the Platt Conservation Area in this way, while relatively small changes in level enhance Long Mill Lane and Pigeons Green, and facilitate views out of the area across gardens towards the countryside beyond the village to the south-west.

### *(iv) The Townscape*

It is interesting that a sense of enclosure is evident in the village centre, even though it is formed about the junction of four roads. All four exits are closed, visually, by slight curves in the roads and lanes as they lead away from the centre of the village. The close spacing and terracing of the houses to the west, and the rising ground surmounted by the Church and almshouses, and the stone wall beside the churchyard to the east, all add to this sense of enclosure. The buildings to the north have a robust quality, but to the south there is a softer feeling about the Conservation Area, in the style and construction of the buildings and the hedges and trees which play an important part in forming the setting and character of Platt Farm, Comp Road and Pigeons Green.

When approached from the village centre, both Comp Road and Long Mill Lane are intriguing, because of the lack of information they offer as to their direction and destinations. Long Mill Lane is relatively open in character, bordered by hedges and modern houses at its northern end, but offering a view to the south of much older



and more picturesque development at Platt Farm. Trees and hedges partially conceal, and give glimpses of properties set back from the lane, but seem also to accentuate the nearness of some of the buildings to the edge of the carriageway. The approach to Pigeons Green along Comp Road from the north is dark and narrow, between walls of greenery. Dwellings and former farm buildings are revealed gradually. The open space of the Green is a bright and airy contrast to the road leading to it. From the south-west, along Potash Lane, the approach is more open, but there is an effective sense of enclosure within the group of buildings, the Green being the centre-piece of this colourful and interesting part of Platt.

Platt Conservation Area although somewhat straggling, its elements separated by modern development, is nevertheless appreciated as having the special qualities of architecture and general environment that make it a pleasant place in which to be.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

Platt Conservation Area is an attractive and well maintained place. Consisting as it does of private houses beside country roads with hedged gardens and trees, there is no scope for the usual improvements associated with conservation areas in urban environments, or where there is a more densely developed centre as might be found in a large village. Platt has a rural atmosphere which should be maintained through the normal planning controls on development. One critical feature that might be given some attention in the future, however, is the undesirable prominence of numerous overhead wires, the multiplicity of which spoil the appearance of the village. The County Council have, in conjunction with the electricity and telephone undertakings, worked out a programme of "undergrounding" such services as and when financially and practicably possible. This is a long term programme, and the present economic difficulties have virtually halted progress. Even so, it is to be hoped that an undergrounding scheme will be possible at some time in the probably distant future.





*Above: Enclosure of the village on its southern side. (see text on page 5)*

*Below: A sense of enclosure established by the arrangement of the exit from the southern side of Pigeons Green. (see text on page 6)*





## BOROUGH GREEN AND PLATT LOCAL PLAN

Platt Conservation Area lies within the area covered by the Borough Green and Platt Local Plan, which has been prepared within the framework of the strategic policies contained in the Kent Structure Plan. The Borough Green and Platt Local Plan is a statutory local plan covering the period until 1991 and provides the context within which the local planning authorities will make their day-to-day decisions on individual planning applications during that time. The plan attempts to deal comprehensively with all the local problems insofar as realistic solutions and resources are available, and insofar as they can be influenced under the Planning Acts.

For Platt Conservation Area, the Local Plan states that it is a prime objective that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area should be preserved and enhanced. In furtherance of this the following policies will apply within the two separate parts of the Conservation Area as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map:

*POLICY 7.8. Within the Conservation Area, consideration of the principle of development proposals in isolation from details of design and external appearance will rarely be acceptable, and in all cases it will be expected that the proposed development should raise the general standard of the visual environment and not have an adverse effect on the architectural and historic character of the area.*

*POLICY 7.9. All development within the Conservation Area should be sympathetic in scale and character with adjacent buildings and the area generally, particularly in terms of site coverage, distance from neighbouring property, height, fenestration and materials.*

*Policy 7.10. Existing trees, hedges and walls within the Conservation Area should be preserved and supplemented wherever practical to do so.*

*Policy 7.11. New buildings or alterations to existing buildings in the Conservation Area will be required to use materials sympathetic to those traditionally employed in the area.*



STATUTORILY LISTED BUILDINGS AND FORMER GRADE III BUILDINGS (NOW  
LOCALLY LISTED) IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Village centre

The Parish Church  
of St. Mary

Parish Church built in 1843.  
Early English architectural style.  
Cruciform plan. Most striking feature  
is the tall battlemented western tower  
with corner buttressing, triple lancet  
windows and staircase turret. Other-  
wise of no particular architectural  
interest.

"Kelvin" and  
"Laurelcot",  
Long Mill Lane

Formerly Grade III, pair of 18th  
century cottages, with painted brick  
external walls, and tile hanging.  
"Kelvin" has a moulded boarded  
fascia between the brickwork on  
ground floor level and the projecting  
tile hanging above. Two odd doors in  
centre of elevation with sash window  
to the right. Three casements above  
and two hipped dormers. "Laurelcot"  
has one lattice casement on both  
floors and a boarded door.

Long Mill Lane

"Dales"  
(Listed Grade II)

Restored 16th century farmhouse.  
Gable to right with first floor over-  
hang and ridge tile roof to left.  
Painted random stone walling to ground  
floor, exposed framing above with red  
brick herringbone infilling. The gable  
has plaster infilling and an unusual  
feature is the moulded bressummer form-  
ing the cill of the window. Supporting  
the gabled overhang is an 18th century  
splayed bay with sash windows. Other  
windows are lattice casements.

"Oakbeams"

Formerly Grade III. A restored 16th  
century farmhouse, framing exposed on  
the ground floor elevation with red  
brick infilling. Widely spaced vertical  
framing above with plaster infilling.  
Modern casements on both floors and  
hipped tiled roof with dormers.  
Centre projecting gabled porch.



Barn at  
"Oakbeams"

Formerly listed Grade III. A small weatherboard barn with thatched roof.

Platt Farmhouse  
(Grade II listed)

Restored 16th century farmhouse. The gable to the left has exposed framing and an overhang supported on joists and corner brackets. The painted random stone wing to the right is single storey with tiled roof and modern gabled half dormer. Modern additions to the side and rear.

Platt Oast

Formerly a Grade III building. This cottage has been formed out of three oast houses and includes the adjoining farm building which has exposed framing on the first floor with ornamental incised plasterwork.

The Tudor Barn

Formerly a Grade III building. An old barn converted into a cottage. Exposed framing with brick infilling. Tiled roof.

"Rose Cottage"

Formerly a Grade III listed building. A restored 16th century cottage. 'L' shaped in plan, modern wing at side. Elevations mostly 18th century, red brick and coursed stone except at one end where an overhang has been blocked up and the framing exposed above.

Pigeons Green

Yew Tree House,  
now called "Holmes"  
(Grade II listed  
building)

Restored 16th century farmhouse. Random stone and tile hanging. 'L' shape in plan with exposed framing and plaster infilling on first floor at side. Modern lattice casements.

"The Homestead",  
"Cobblestones",  
"The Red Cottage"  
(Grade II listed  
buildings)

Picturesque group originally row of seven cottages. Restored some fifty years ago, now three separate houses. "Red Cottage" probably 15th century Hall House. Brick



"The Homestead",  
"Cobblestones",  
"The Red Cottage"  
(Grade II listed  
buildings)

(cont'd)

"Patchways"  
(Formerly a  
Grade III building)

"Pigeons Green"  
(Formerly Grade III  
listed)

Farmbuilding at  
"Pigeons Green"  
(Formerly Grade III)

Barn at "Pigeons  
Green"  
(Formerly Grade III)

with tile hanging. Exposed framing  
in places. Odd small wooden case-  
ments, projecting brick porch, steep  
hipped tiled roof.

"Cobblestones" dated 1784. Brown  
random stone, stepped ridge roof.  
"The Homestead" consists of project-  
ing wing at one end built in similar  
stone, incorporating earlier framed  
structure. Group of buildings slightly  
splayed in plan to follow line of road.  
Stone garden wall to "Cobblestones".  
Paved terrace to "The Red Cottage".

Restored cottage, dated 1637, incor-  
porating much earlier Mediaeval framed  
structure. 18th century facade towards  
road of random stone, red brick quoins  
and dressings. Two casements on both  
floors. Central half glazed door,  
modern tiled hood. 'L' shape in plan  
with projecting wing to rear. Ridge  
tile roof with part pentice to rear.

Restored 16th century farmhouse.  
Bomb damaged during the war and most  
of exterior is modern. Wide gable  
to right, exposed framing and plaster  
infilling. Red brick patched with  
stone to left. Ridge tile roof.  
Rendered porch addition in centre.  
Modern wooden casements. Exposed  
beams and ceiling joists in interior.

North-east of house, 18th century  
farmbuilding now a garage. Brown  
random stone, long ridge tile roof.

To north-west of house. Weather-  
boarded barn with covered projecting  
hipped wagon entrance, now converted  
into a cottage.



## GENERAL CONSERVATION POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. DEFINITION

1.1. A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and which has been designated by the Local Planning Authority under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts 1971-1974.

### 2. STATUTORY CONSEQUENCES OF DESIGNATION

2.1. Special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, in the exercise, with respect to any land or buildings in the Area, of any powers under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, Part 1, of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act, 1953, and the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act, 1962.

2.2. *Control of Demolition.* It is an offence to demolish a listed building (see footnote to paragraph 5.3) or any other building within the Conservation Areas (with minor exceptions), without the written consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment or the District Planning Authority. Planning permission for the redevelopment of a site does not automatically convey consent to the demolition of any existing buildings on the site: consent to demolition must be specifically stated in the permission, or given separately in writing.

2.3. *Trees.* Subject to the provisions of any Regulations made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, the cutting down, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of any tree in a Conservation Area (other than as may be permitted by or under a Tree Preservation Order or by the written consent of the District Planning Authority) is an offence.

2.4. *Publicity.* If the District Planning Authority considers that any proposed development would affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, (whether or not that development is within the Area), it must advertise the application for planning permission and, when determining the application, take into account any representations received.

### 3. GENERAL POLICY

3.1. The general policy for Conservation Areas is laid down in the County Council's Conservation Policy Statement. It is to maintain the character of each Conservation Area and to ensure the highest possible environmental standards, consistent with the reasonable social, economic and functional requirements of the Area. In particular, the Local Planning Authority wishes to see (a) the protection and enhancement of all those elements which contribute to the Area's special character (principally buildings, related spaces, topography and vegetation), (b) the abatement or removal of all those elements which detract from the Area's special character (for example, eyesores, inappropriate land uses, or excessive traffic flows) and (c) the economic well-being of the Area.



3.2. Any plan for an area in which a Conservation Area is situated, whether such a plan is a Structure Plan or a Local Plan (statutory or informal) must pay full regard to the need to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### 4. DETAILED POLICY

4.1. Any Local Plan for an area in which a Conservation Area is situated must set out detailed policies and proposals for conserving and enhancing the Area's special character.

4.2. If practicable, the Local Plan may provide for the reduction of traffic in and around the Conservation Area, for example by the provision of relief roads, the introduction of environmental management schemes, the improvement of existing roads, the provision of off-street parking and the creation of pedestrian streets.

4.3. The Local Plan should also prescribe the uses of land and buildings within the Conservation Area and beyond, and it should provide for the diversion elsewhere of harmful pressures for redevelopment within the Conservation Area.

4.4. Where appropriate, more positive measures for conserving and enhancing the Area's special character should be incorporated in the Local Plan. These additional measures may include policies for the allocation of funds under the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act, 1972, for Conservation Schemes, or under the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act, 1962, to assist in the repair and maintenance of buildings of architectural or historic interest, or under the Housing Act, 1974 for the improvement of dwellings and the general improvement of residential areas, or otherwise. The additional measures may also include Town Schemes (in association with the Historic Buildings Council), comprehensive street improvement schemes, tree preservation and tree planting schemes and schemes for the removal of unwanted directional signs, unsightly advertisements, overhead lines or other miscellaneous clutter, and for the provision of street furniture designed in sympathy with the Area.

#### 5. CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1. *NEW DEVELOPMENT.* The District Planning Authority may not consider an application for new building development in or adjoining a Conservation Area if it is in "outline" form. Detailed plans and drawings will usually be required, including elevations and perspectives showing the proposed building in its setting and any proposed means of vehicular access. Such plans and drawings must include details of the existing site conditions, including existing buildings, boundary walls, topography, trees and other vegetation. Details should also be given of any building materials to be used.

5.2. In considering applications for new development or redevelopment in or adjoining a Conservation Area, the following are important:

- (i) the siting of the building in relation to the adjoining buildings and spaces and to existing building frontage lines;



- (ii) the use of appropriate building materials which respect local building traditions and which are in sympathy with neighbouring properties;
- (iii) the form and size of the building, having regard to the character of adjacent properties and others in the Conservation Area, which should not generally be exceeded in height;
- (iv) the scale and proportions, bay widths and floor to ceiling heights, fenestration and shopfronts being related to those of adjacent buildings and in the Conservation Area generally;
- (v) the form of the roofs and their materials and other roof details, especially in cases where the roofspace is visible from high vantage points;
- (vi) landscaping and the treatment of paved surfaces, boundary walls, street furniture and signs, associated with the proposals, which should, in terms of design and the use of materials, fit in with and enhance the character of the Area; and
- (vii) the imitation of historic styles of architecture will not normally be appropriate, as this tends to devalue the merits of the existing genuine buildings, but the extension of a period building in similar style or, for example, the replacement of a building in a terrace in the same idiom could well be desirable.

5.3. *Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings.\** Any alteration or addition to a listed building (whether or not within a Conservation Area) which would affect the architectural or historic character of that building needs to be authorised by the District Planning Authority (by way of a planning permission and/or a listed building consent). The District Planning Authority is of the opinion that examples of operations which would affect the character of a listed building are as follows, and would be unlikely to receive favourable consideration:

- (i) the replacement of windows having glazing bars by sheet glass;
- (ii) repairs or alterations, other than in matching materials and to the original design;
- (iii) the removal of mouldings, balustrades, balconies, chimneys or other architectural features;
- (iv) the fixing to facades of any adornment (including shutters) or, where it involves structural work to the building, advertisement; and

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\* A listed building is one listed by the Secretary of State for the Environment under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act. Copies of the lists, including maps, may be inspected at the offices of the District Council.



- (v) major internal alterations, such as the reshaping of rooms, the removal of a staircase, the destruction or removal of panelling or stained glass or alterations to roof trusses of interest.

Additionally, any proposals involving the blocking up of windows or external doorways (or conversely the making of new openings) would be subjected to close scrutiny by the District Planning Authority.

5.4. Where it is considered that an owner of a listed building, whether or not within a Conservation Area, is not taking adequate steps to keep the building in good repair, the Local Planning Authority will consider serving a Repairs Notice on the owner. Additionally, the Local Planning Authority may consider the compulsory acquisition of the building, or under the Town and Country Planning Acts 1971-74, may carry out emergency repairs on unoccupied buildings and charge the cost of the work to the building owner.

5.5. Owners or occupiers of listed buildings are advised to consult the District Planning Authority before undertaking any alteration or addition to the building and any application must be accompanied by full details showing the building as existing and as it is proposed to be altered.

5.6. *Alterations and Additions to other buildings within a Conservation Area.* Certain classes of development enjoy a general permission deemed to be granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment (e.g. minor development within the curtilage of a dwelling house). The Local Planning Authority, however, is empowered to require that its express permission should be obtained for any of these classes of "permitted" development, but the Authority considers that it should not normally be necessary for it to use these powers, in relation to minor alterations and additions to buildings within a Conservation Area, provided there is a proper awareness of the character of the Conservation Area and expert advice is sought in cases of doubt. (See paragraph 5.14).

5.7. *Development by Local Highway Authorities and Statutory Undertakers.* Many works can be carried out by the Local Highway Authority and by statutory undertakers (Water, Electricity, Gas, Drainage and Lighting Authorities) under a general permission deemed to be granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment, although in these cases also the Local Planning Authority is empowered to require that its express permission should be obtained. However, the Local Planning Authority does not normally propose to seek these powers, but it requests that all other Authorities carrying out works within a Conservation Area under their statutory powers should pay special regard to the character and appearance of the Area and consult the Local Planning Authority in any appropriate case.

5.8. All Authorities are also requested to consider the possibility of modifying their standards wherever reasonable, if this would be in the interests of conserving the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.



5.9. *Building Preservation.* Listed buildings may not be demolished without the express consent of the District Planning Authority and the Secretary of State for the Environment. Under the Town and Country Planning Acts 1971-74, the demolition of most other buildings or parts of buildings within a Conservation Area requires the consent of the District Planning Authority. To protect buildings outside Conservation Areas, the Authority has powers to serve a Building Preservation Notice.

5.10. In the case of listed buildings, whether or not within a Conservation Area, the presumption is in favour of preservation unless an exceptionally strong case can be made out for demolition. In the case of other buildings within a Conservation Area requiring express permission for demolition, the presumption is in favour of preservation unless there is a strong case for demolition or unless there are redevelopment proposals which the Local Planning Authority considers would make an equal or greater contribution to the character or appearance of the Area, than the building to be demolished.

5.11. *Land Use.* Although, in general, land uses within a Conservation Area will be expected to conform with the provisions of any relevant Structure Plan or Local Plan, the Local Planning Authority will not be rigid in its attitude and will give very careful consideration to any "non-conforming" land use which would not detract from the character or appearance of the Area, if it would enhance the economic well-being of the Area and facilitate the preservation of a building of architectural or historic interest.

5.12. Any application for a change of land use, or for a new or improved vehicular access would not normally be considered favourably, if it resulted in the setting of the building being spoiled by obtrusive car parking.

5.13. The District Planning Authority may require the discontinuance of any use or the alteration or removal of any buildings or works within a Conservation Area, in the interests of proper planning (including the interests of amenity). Where it considers it necessary and desirable in the wider interests of the County and County planning policies, the County Council may also use this power of discontinuance.

5.14. *Expert Advice.* The District Planning Authority strongly advocates that expert advice should be sought from architects, landscape architects or other sensitive designers, in considering any development proposals within a Conservation Area, whether or not the development is "permitted" development.

5.15. *Control of Advertisements.* In general, the District Planning Authority does not consider that a Conservation Area should automatically be regarded as an area for special control, although the law now provides for such special control to be established where a case can be made. In exercising control over advertisement display it will also consider the following action:

- (i) the encouragement of a local traders organisation to adopt its own code of conduct regulating the display of advertisements, the depth and design of fascias and the size and type of lettering on all commercial premises;



- (ii) the use of their powers to require the discontinuance of any advertisement displayed with deemed consent which, it is considered, detracts from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- (iii) the adoption and publication of standards governing the display of illuminated signs and fascias.

5.16. *Tree Preservation.* Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts 1971-74, no trees in a Conservation Area may be felled or lopped without the approval of the District Planning Authority unless the tree is a danger to life or property. In this case the owner must inform the District Planning Authority of the necessity to fell or lop the tree. Trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders are not affected by this Act.

## 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1. The District Planning Authority fully recognises the part that must be played by owners and occupiers of land and buildings, by local amenity societies and other representative bodies and by the various Authorities exercising their statutory powers, if the character and appearance of a Conservation Area is to be successfully conserved and enhanced.

6.2. The District Planning Authority is willing to offer guidance on any particular problem that is referred to it and may issue, from time to time, pamphlets setting out general advice on particular aspects of conservation.

6.3. The District Planning Authority welcomes the views of individuals and bodies on any planning application or application for listed building consent which it advertises or on any conservation policies or proposals included in a draft plan.

6.4. The District Planning Authority also welcomes any initiative taken by Amenity Societies or other local organisations with a view to conserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. It draws the attention of Local Authorities, voluntary bodies and private individuals to the fact that the Government may make grants or loans towards Conservation Schemes and it intends to promote such schemes itself, with Government support. (See Department of the Environment Circular 86/72).