

Area 8: Hindhead and Beacon Hill

History of Hindhead and Beacon Hill

Although some three miles from the town centre, Beacon Hill and Hindhead are an important part of the Haslemere community.

Hindhead developed around the Royal Huts Tavern, which once stood in isolation on wild open moorland on the old London to Portsmouth coach road. In spite of this, the eminent Victorian scientist John Tyndall fell in love with the place, declaring the air to be as pure as that in the Alps. After building Hindhead House in 1883, he



Original Royal Huts Tavern, Hindhead

encouraged the great and good of London society to live here. Soon they began building large country houses amid the pines and heather, many of which can still be seen today. Families moved from London to take advantage of the countryside and the benefits of the heathland air. Indeed Hindhead became known as 'Little Switzerland' as the quality of this air was likened to the mountain climate.

George Bernard Shaw, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and many others followed. Many of these, being of a progressive nature, did not build vast servants' quarters but rather housed their staff in specially-built homes, particularly in Shottermill and Beacon Hill. So gradually Hindhead began to take on the appearance of a village with shops, hotels and teashops, as the area became a popular destination for tourists, keen to visit the beautiful countryside around the Devil's Punchbowl. It was made possible with the arrival of the railway in 1859.

The Moorlands Hotel, just south west of the Hindhead crossroads (later in

altered form to become Expedier House and subsequently demolished to provide new housing in 2008/9) was an important springboard for many who came to access the scenery.

The man who saw the great potential afforded by these new arrivals was John Grover, a London builder who had retired to the area. He opened a clay pit at Clay Hill (now Wey Hill – the 'fairground' car-park) to provide the necessary bricks for the many new houses springing up in Hindhead and Beacon Hill.



St Alban's Church, Hindhead



Grover's Gardens today, restored by local volunteers



Heatherbank, home of Marie Stopes



Vine Cottage, the first cottage in Hindhead

Hindhead Centre

This area is characterised by:

- Central junction of the highest village in Surrey
- Properties along the spur road to the NT café
- Acres of NT wood and heathland surrounding the area, including Miss James’s Walk
- Some large houses particularly along Hindhead Road and Portsmouth Road
- Several listed buildings including:
 - Amesbury School (designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens)
 - St Edmund’s School (home of George Bernard Shaw),
 - Heather Bank (home of Dr Marie Stopes),
 - Hindhead House (home of Professor John Tyndall)
 - Undershaw (home of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle).
- The southern portal of the A3 tunnel
- The Royal Huts estate on the crossroads which has a density higher than the surrounding area



Derelict garage site at on old A3 spur to the north



Hindhead House (now Tyndalls)

- Devil’s Punchbowl Hotel along with several other businesses on London Road and a few more commercial premises in the Royal Parade on Tilford Road.



Devil's Punchbowl Hotel on old A3 spur



Flats on the site of the former Wilton Hotel



Northwood Cottages, Tilford Road



Royal Huts housing development at Hindhead

Residential areas of Hindhead / Beacon Hill

These areas are characterised by:

- Most of the houses on the local authority Tyndalls Estate are now privately owned; they were built in the grounds of Professor Tyndall's former home
- Recent developments at Hindhead:
 - Large number of two and three-storey terraced homes on the site of the former Royal Huts Hotel
 - Moorlands Lodge, a significant retirement complex on northern side of the Portsmouth Road on demolished site of old Expedier House
 - Moorlands Close, built on the former car park, less than 20 houses
 - More low-density dwellings in Rozeldene and The Moorings near the boundary with Grayshott, on the Headley Road
 - Cornerway Lodge, a development of 29 one and two-bedroom retirement apartments
 - Redevelopment of the old Drummonds site with 36 homes, offices and shops, including a playground and affordable housing
- Several new areas of large family homes between Beacon Hill and Hindhead
- Two former hotels: the Wilton on Wood Road and the Beacon (later the Lloyds Bank Training Centre) on Tilford Road demolished and



Newer housing development in Hindhead

redeveloped as flats

- Moorhouse is now a care home, as are Springkell House and Stoneycrest Hotels
- Local authority housing and self-build properties tucked behind the shops, in Glen Road / Glen Close area.
- Beacon Hill has a small parade of local independent shops and restaurants serving the local community. Includes a pharmacy, small convenience store and post office. Shops around the Hindhead junction are minimal.

The Hindhead Together Joint Advisory Committee has drawn up a Hindhead Concept Statement that has been adopted as material planning consideration for this area – see www.waverley.gov.uk



Beacon Hill Primary School



British Legion Club, Beacon Hill

Design guidelines for Hindhead and Beacon Hill

- *Generic Design Guidelines also apply in relation to any development in this area and these are stated in context in sections 4, 5 & 6 and Appendix 1. The complete set of guidelines can be found in Appendix 8.*
- Designs should respect and be sympathetic to the character and immediate architectural surroundings in terms of pattern, scale, materials and form.
- Any new development should be of a high standard and be complementary to the Victorian commercial property on the north side of the spur, formerly the A3.
- Larger developments should reflect the organic nature / evolution of the area by incorporating a variety of building types and materials
- The topography of the area should be considered when proposing new developments



Beacon Hill fingerpost



Beacon Hill "The Hub"



Glen Close, Beacon Hill



Woodcock Green, Beacon Hill, maintained by volunteers



South Portal of A3 Tunnel; © Newsprint