



Wartime scrapyard showing remains of German aircraft

- 25 With growing dependence upon (and ownership of) the private car, housing estates of an increasingly suburban kind began to spring up around the village: The Orchards, developed around 1945, clings defiantly to a version of the rural vernacular, but Hog Green (1963) and Fairfield (1967) are very much of the 'bungalow' type. What had once been to some extent a self-subsistent community became more and more a dormitory for the larger towns nearby – a process intensified by the construction of the M20 motorway between 1960 and 1981. Many shops and pubs have closed, including the bakery in the Square, Clark's butchers on High Street, and, recently, the New Inn. In 1988 Water Farm, the last remnant of agriculture in the village, was developed for housing. Elham has, however, coped far better with this process than have many rural settlements, retaining its post office, general store and primary school (rebuilt in the 1960s), and gaining a doctor's surgery and two restaurants – these last an indication that tourism is now the area's main source of income.

Map regression

- 26 It is striking that the c.1840 Tithe Map (Appendix 1) refers to the settlement very emphatically as the 'Town of Elham': the spelling may have already settled into its modern form, but the trappings of medieval status linger on. Notwithstanding the honorific title, the map shows a fairly small settlement, with only the formal layout of plots along the High Street and round the Square to testify to its urbane pretensions. The New Road is notable for its absence: the High Street stops dead at the bottom of the hill, forming something like a second market square between what is now the Abbot's Fireside (shown divided into four tenements) and the Rose and Crown, whose inn yard with its big barns is clearly distinguishable.
- 27 Many of the older buildings on the High Street can also be made out, although several properties have since been subdivided, and others unified. The Methodist Church is already in evidence, although it must have been very new when the map was made; opposite are two rows of buildings – the predecessors of Lime Villas – of which the Old House is the only survivor. It will be seen that the Square still has four sides, with the old market buildings, demolished in the 1940s, still in place in front of the church.



Old postcard showing cottages, once market booths, in front of church

- 28 The Row, being at this time the main road through the village, is already quite built up, although the old Manor House still marks the limit of development to the north-west. The church sits not in the centre of the settlement but on its southern fringe, and there is a marked contrast between the densely built-up area to the north and east of the church and the scattered properties to the south. Prominent among the latter are the buildings of Water Farm grouped loosely around their farmyard and pond, and the denser cluster around Church Cottage. The square structure at the end of Pound Lane, opposite what is now St Katherine's Cottage, is probably the village pound, a holding-pen for stray livestock.



Duck Street c.1912, showing the thatched outbuildings of Water Farm (right)

- 29 The Ordnance Survey Map of 1898 (Appendix 1) shows a minor transport revolution, with the railway line cutting a great swathe through the valley just to the east, and the New Road bringing traffic right into the centre of the village. With the former have come the station, the goods yard and the brickworks, the edge of which can be seen on the extreme right of the map. The New Road has opened up the southern end of the village to development, with the surrounding land turned over to allotments, and a number of villas going up along the main road.
- 30 New institutions have also appeared: the old charity school in the Square has been superseded by the new church schools on Pound Lane (the pound itself has gone), a police station has been built on Old Road, and a second Nonconformist chapel has sprung up on the Row. The map also shows the windmill on the hillside behind Prospect Terrace, and the kennels of the East Kent Hunt.

- 31 Apart from the closure of the brickworks and the foundation of the Church Institute, little has changed by the time of the 1907 map (Appendix 1). The same might be said of the 1938 edition, although the first signs of more portentous changes can now be seen. The ribbon of villas along the Old Road have spread as far as the corner of Vicarage Lane, where a sports club has been established. Several old buildings, one of them Baker's Forge, have been demolished at the bottom of the High Street to make way for the garage. Further north, Lime Villas have taken the place of yet more older buildings, and work has begun on the first suburban cul-de-sac, Cherry Gardens.



1930s view of High Street showing the newly-built garage

- 32 The most recent map shows the rapid housing expansion that has more than doubled the size of the village since the Second World War. The railway line, goods yard and station have vanished to make way for *cul-de-sacs* such as Hog Green, the Orchards and the Halt. Water Farm has all but disappeared, its pond filled in and its yard developed for housing. The old market booths were demolished in the 1940s, and the Square is now open on the side facing the church. Large bungalows have been built along Cock Lane and as infilling on High Street and the Row, while at the northern end of the village new development has spread over the top of the hill and down into the valley beyond. A block of flats called Church Walk has appeared on Pound Lane, taking the place of the old school which has now been rebuilt on a much larger site. A new vicarage has been built in the grounds of the old, which is now a private house. The Methodist Church, remarkably, has survived, as have two of the village's pubs – although a third, the New Inn, has recently closed.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

- 33 Thanks to its history as a 'failed' market town, Elham has inherited a more formal layout than is common in English villages. The two key spaces are the old marketplaces: the Square, and the lower part of the High Street. The former, fronted on three sides by brick houses of similar appearance and identical two-storey height with front doors opening directly onto the street, and on the fourth by the big bulk of the church, is surprisingly urbane in its strict quadrangular layout – although the effect is diminished by its present use as a car park.



The Square, looking south-east

- 34 The sense of enclosure here is strong; but the pressure is released at each of the corners where narrow streets depart from the Square towards other parts of the village: Duck Street and Cock Lane (the latter made particularly enticing by its constricted entrance and mysterious curve) leading downhill towards the stream, with glimpses of the hillside beyond, and St Mary's Road running uphill into the lower end of the High Street.



Left: Cock Lane from the Square. Right: St Mary's Road looking towards Cullings Hill

- 35 Here we find the second major space, less formal than the Square but nevertheless with a strong character of its own, a sort of 'bell-bottom' to the High Street, which flares out at its southern end, the buildings losing their front gardens and arranging themselves into neatly into continuous terraces. The Abbot's Fireside imposes its personality by virtue of its dominant scale and arresting black-and-white frontage, but the Rose and Crown opposite and the grocer's shop, which steps out to close off the space to the south, are spatially just as important.