

Gosport Borough Council

# Stoke Road Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2007



Places

*Delivering  
for Gosport*

**GOSPORT**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# Stoke Road Conservation Area Appraisal

**March 2007**

## Contents

Background	2
Scope and Structure of the Appraisal	2
Character Statement	2-5
An Appraisal of the Built Form of the Area	5-7
Some notable historic characteristics of the buildings	7-11
Enhancement opportunities	11-13
Grants	13
Archaeology	13
Planning Policy and Development Control	13-14
Further Information or Advice	14

# Stoke Road Conservation Area



Crown Copyright All rights reserved Gosport Borough Council 100019624 2007

## **Stoke Road Conservation Area Appraisal.**

### **Background**

Stoke Road Conservation Area was designated in 1992 to ensure that all future development would 'preserve or enhance' the historic and architectural character of the area. The area retains many buildings of historic interest spanning the last 200 years, including some Listed Grade II and therefore considered to be of national importance.

### **Scope and Structure of the appraisal**

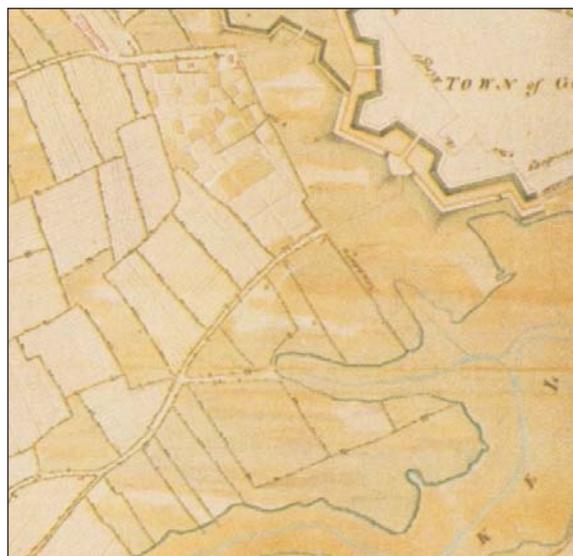
This document is intended to act as a guide to the buildings and features that make a special contribution to the character of the area. It assesses the areas historic development, its character, the scale and form of development and opportunities for continuing enhancement.

The need to designate conservation areas is often illustrated by the way in which poor quality design or inappropriate extensions, or the demolition of notable historic buildings can have a major impact on the distinctive character of an area. The special character of the Stoke Road Conservation Area is therefore highlighted throughout this document.

### **Character Statement: The Historic Development of the Stoke Road area**

Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the area west of Gosport centre comprised open fields with a very few buildings in the modern area of Stoke Road. The historic ramparts marked the boundary of the town. The area to the west of the ramparts, to the line of

Spring Garden Lane, was kept open to provide a clear field of fire for the garrison in case of attack.

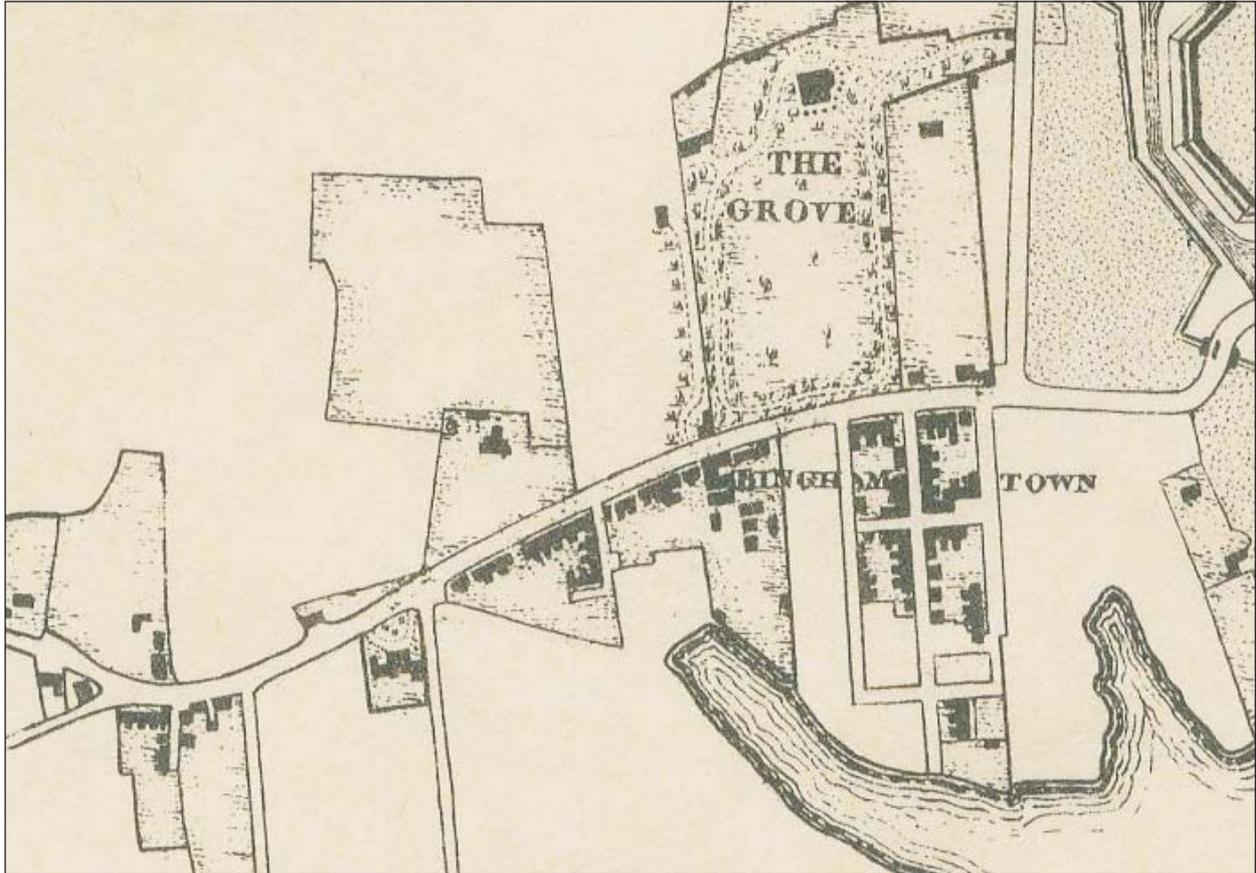


1774 Plan of Gosport by Archer

Stoke Road did exist as a lane that meandered towards Alverstoke and can be identified on plans of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it only started to develop when much of the area was purchased by Richard Bingham (c.1765 to 1858) in 1807.

Richard Bingham, Parson of Holy Trinity church and Alehouse Keeper, was a notorious local character whose alehouse was said to be a front for smuggling. He was frequently in trouble with local people, often being in debt to local creditors, and spent more than one occasion in gaol. Yet in the midst of his colourful life he was instrumental in developing a new settlement from the Stoke Road frontage between Willis Road and Joseph Street, and Haslar Creek.

Bingham's settlement largely developed between 1807 and 1810 and quickly became known as 'Bingham Town'



Lewis Plan of Gosport 1832

## Bingham Town

With Gosport's gates being locked each evening Bingham Town provided an opportunity to develop an area that could exploit its geographical position immediately beyond the protected open space west of the 'Gosport Lines' (the earthwork defences of the town). A densely populated town, constrained by the ramparts, Bingham's new development provided an opportunity to market a mixture of house types from villas suitable for Naval Officers, to small terraced properties. There is evidence on site to show that the Stoke Road frontage included some of the best properties within his development.

Either through Bingham's auspices, or independently, a number of shops developed around the same time further west along the southern side of Stoke Road. Within the



General view of 'Bingham Town' eastern end of Stoke Road

development Richard Bingham had roads named after his sons (for example Joseph Street and Henry Street).

The result was a thriving independent community with a mixture of shops and houses and today a remarkable survival within Gosport from the Georgian era.

The north side provided far fewer opportunities to develop as much of the land was taken up by two large estates: The Grove (later demolished) and Bourton House (now numbers 2 Elmhurst Road, and 19 and 21 Queen's Road).

### Some interesting minor historic details

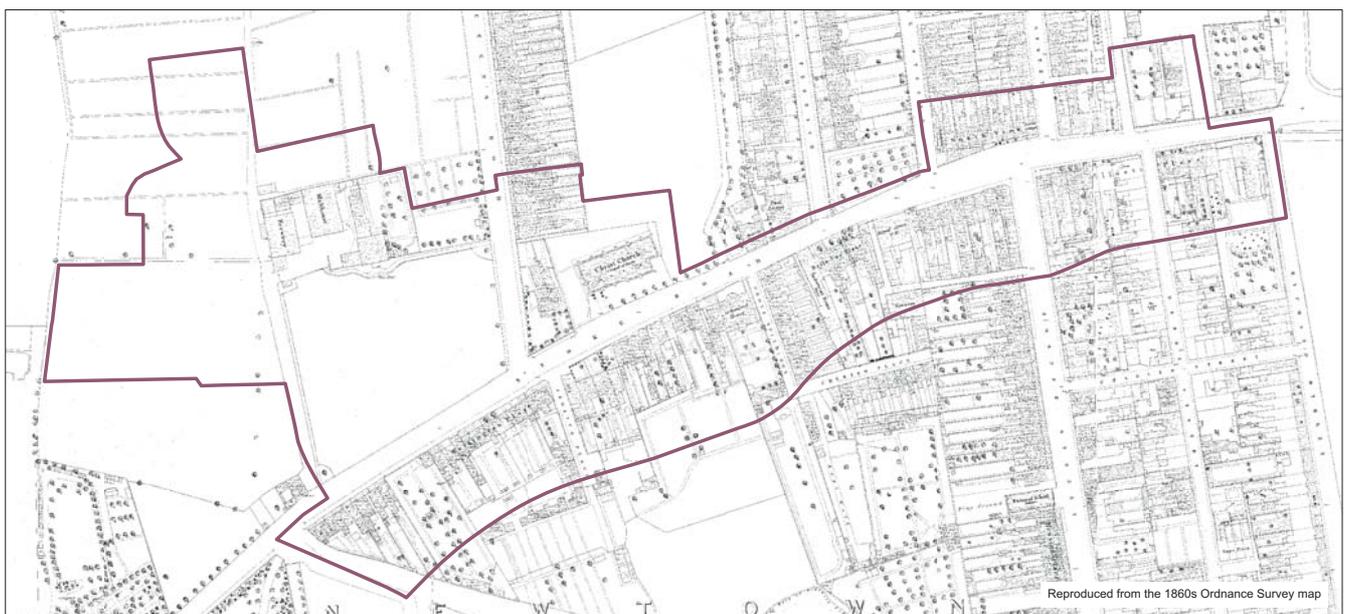


On a modern building behind No. 39 Stoke Road a small stone plaque has been inserted with the words 'JN 1809'. Similar date stones were known to exist to the rear of No. 11: 'TBB 1808' and No's 19-21 (odd):

'TBB 1809'. These boundary markers clearly refer to the dates of construction and confirm the origins of Bingham Town. The local historian Philip Eley has identified 'TBB' as Thomas Blake Brown.

### **Stoke Road: The mid 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century terraced development began to appear north of Stoke Road and gaps in Bingham Town were being infilled to the south. The style of new terrace in Stoke Road was characterised by long rows of 2 storey buildings with pitched roofs. Examples being No's 22 38 (even) and No's 19-35 (odd). Notable buildings from this era include the Grade II Listed Royal Arms Public House with its fine glazed porch, and Christ Church, dating to 1865. The c1867 OS Plan shows in detail how the area had changed. The name of the settlement was also changed to Newtown.



OS plan of 1860s

This pattern continues into the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with more roads leading north from Stoke Road and further infill development. Some of the buildings from the original settlement were replaced in similar scale. Elmhurst Road, developed around the turn of the century, had a completely different character formed by single or pairs of larger properties.

### 1920s and 1930s

The final gaps along Stoke Road were developed at this time. Whilst initially buildings were of a style and form

from older buildings to form the current Stoke Road frontage.

### Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The original settlement begins to be adversely affected by some of the replacement development. This was often of a relatively plain or utilitarian nature that failed to respect the scale of adjacent properties. The Conservation Area status is intended to reverse this process and draw out the best qualities of the area whilst encouraging sympathetic innovative design.



OS plan of 1930s

Crown Copyright All rights reserved Gosport Borough Council 100019624 2007

## An Appraisal of the Built Form of the Area

more characteristic of the late Victorian era, between the wars new styles were appearing and notable buildings such as the Art Deco No. 3 and the impressive row of single storey shops known as Portland Buildings (No's 1 to 8 Stoke Road) added to the varied character of the area. A number of new shop fronts also appeared: some of quite high quality, and many extending out

### 1. General Built form: scale and mass.

A Conservation Area is an area of historic or architectural interest that it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Stoke Road Conservation Area is a good example of an area of historic interest with an interesting and unusual mix of buildings mostly spanning the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



In general terms the character of the south side differs from that of the north. To the south buildings are between 2 and 3 storeys high and comprise short blocks east of Grove Road, and longer blocks between Grove Road and Shaftesbury Road. On the north side of Stoke Road whilst still retaining blocks of buildings dissected by roads running north at right angles, the form of development is much more broken up west of Oak Street.



West end of Conservation Area showing scale of early 19th C buildings

East of Oak Street the character is more reminiscent of the south side, to its west four building blocks dominate the area: The Methodist Church (in the adjacent Peel Road Conservation area), Cray House, Christ Church, and Portland Buildings. Elmhurst Road has a distinct character of its own.

The focus of the area distinctly relates to the linear character of Stoke Road itself. Only in the case of Queen's Road and more particularly Elmhurst Road, does that focus slightly change.

## 2. Some notable historic characteristics of the buildings

### Surviving buildings from Bingham Town.



No. 65 Georgian Building

The earliest buildings within the area (see plan) are often the most simple and modest in scale and design yet their historic contribution to the character of the area is significant. Close inspection of the buildings has revealed that there is a limited range of styles from the Georgian era as follows: The majority of the buildings have plain rendered facades with simple parapet walls concealing hipped clay tiled roofs. Modest classical details are also evident. There are a few examples of red brick facades, and some, such as No. 65, are of particular importance to the area. The two groups of buildings east of Joseph Street are clearly of a higher quality and seem to have represented the better class of housing forming the north end of Bingham Town. This quality is reflected in the individual design of several of the buildings with a mixture of red brick and rendered facades: one with a bowed façade (No. 11).

## Victorian and Edwardian Buildings



The Royal Arms (PH)

The scale remains sympathetic to the Georgian town, although some shops (such as No's 41 to 43 (odd) and 85-89 (odd)) are more dominant at high 3 storeys. The landmark churches also appear in this era. In design proportionately more pitched roofs without parapets appear and some slate roofs are evident. One particularly interesting building is No. 1 Queen's Road built to an ornate Italianate style in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This forms part of a larger semi-detached building half of which has subsequently been painted white and can be seen behind No. 42 Stoke Road. Opportunities to enhance this property would be encouraged. One of the more important elements from this era is the fine shopfronts (see next section).



No 1 Queens Rd

## 1920s and 30s

The only significant buildings from this era, No. 3 Stoke Road and Portland Buildings, both fit neatly into their context.

### Design Principles

- **Historic Buildings:** these should be retained & enhanced.
- **Scale:** With the exception of the landmark churches, and Nos 107 to 111 (odd), all buildings in the Conservation Area are between 1 and 3 storeys in height: with the great majority being up to 2 storeys in height.
- **Form and Mass:** The form and mass of buildings, as noted above, varies in differing parts of the Conservation Area. Excepting the churches, a few rows of terraced buildings and Elmhurst Road's larger plots, there are generally a wide variety of individually designed buildings. It is notable that there are narrow building plots for many of the older buildings.
- **External appearance:** In general terms there is no obvious dominance of one facing material over another: with a variety of brick, rendered or painted facades. Some key groups are notable for their uniformity in external appearance (for example Portland Buildings or Elmhurst Road), and some groups of buildings would be enhanced by restoring their facades to the correct historic design (for example No's 19 to 35 should be red brick).



- **Shopfronts:** The following properties have shopfronts of historic interest, have been reconstructed in an appropriate historic style, or retain part of their historic fabric: South Side: No 1a, 5 and 7 (odd), 19-25 (odd), 39 - 43 (odd), 47a and 47b, 53, 65, 73-77 (odd), 85-89 (odd), 103, 115-119 (odd), 125 - 127 (odd). North Side: 8, 14, and Portland Buildings. The protection and enhancement of such shopfronts is key to retaining the historic character of the area and they assist in guiding the general proportions of future shopfronts on other properties. The Council offers clear guidance on shopfront enhancement through leaflets and policies within the Local Plan.



Detail of an original shopfront

### **Individual Landmark buildings**

Whilst it should be stressed that much of the character of the area is defined by distinct blocks of buildings some of which, like No's 1 to 5 (odd) and 7a to 13 (odd) are of notable distinction as groups, there are a few buildings that merit special attention due to their historic interest or visible prominence.

**Christ Church.** Built in 1865 when the rapidly growing population of the area required a new large church of its own, Christ Church is individually the most prominent building within the Conservation Area. The church

makes an important contribution to the area both historically and architecturally.



Christ Church

**Portland Buildings.** Perhaps the other most distinct building is this row of 1930s shops that form a prominent introduction to the Conservation Area from the west. The building has a strong horizontal form with the shop units divided by a strong rhythm of pilasters. An ornate stone parapet conceals its flat roof.



Portland Buildings

### **No's 2 Elmhurst Road and 19 and 21 Queen's Road.**

Known as 'the Elms' in the 1870s and 'Bourton House' in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century this property was originally built as one house sometime in the first couple of decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. There used to be a row of mature elm trees to its south (hence the earlier name and the name of the adjacent 'Elmhurst Road').

This Regency house is set in mature grounds that include a number of protected trees that make a significant contribution to the character of the area. Important sections of the boundary wall to the site also survive.



Tree adjacent to grounds of former 'Bourton House'

The buildings history is a little unclear although for many years it served as a private residence with an adjacent Brewery called 'Stoke Brewery': noted on a plan when the estate was sold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Hidden discreetly within its mature grounds this complex of buildings is of particular historic and architectural importance being the oldest structure on the north side of Stoke Road and a reminder of the larger estates that once dominated the area.

### **Landmark Buildings adjacent to the Conservation Area**

There are two buildings adjacent to the north side of the Conservation Area that also have a significant bearing on the character of the area: The Methodist Church and Cray House.

The spire of the Methodist church is an attractive brick built Edwardian structure and the church begins the rhythm of large building plots that run west from this site along the north side of Stoke Road. The church makes a valuable contribution to the setting of the area.

Cray House, by comparison was, until its recent conversion, a dominant building that detracted from the area. Whilst still having a strong presence the mixture of rendered elevations and brick treatment have to some extent lessened the impact of its dominant mass. Opportunities to carry out further enhancement of this area would be encouraged.

### **Enhancement opportunities**

Significant improvements were undertaken in recent years through the Regeneration of Older Urban Areas Programme resulting in improvements to the paving, and general streetscape. Individually some properties have made significant improvements to their shopfronts, which have made a distinct contribution to the character of the area. Key enhancements would fall within the following categories:

1. Improvements to the original Bingham Town and Victorian and Edwardian properties by restoring their external form or appearance where opportunities arise.
2. Improvements to the design and material construction of shopfronts making sure proposed frontages respect the historic form and scale of the building and neighbouring properties. The scale and form of adverts can have a particularly significant impact and particular care should be taken to follow the historic proportions of traditional fascia-boards or hanging signs (where appropriate). On the plan shopfronts that retain elements of original features are identified. The retention or enhancement of these shopfronts will be a priority.



An excellent example of a replica period shopfront

3. Restoration of the original external appearance of buildings (for example by removing render or painted brick, where it is inappropriate) using appropriate historic clay tiles or natural slates, and retaining or re-inserting, timber windows or doors. Simple improvements such as repairing decaying render and repainting facades in historically appropriate colours can have a dramatic impact.
4. Retention of boundary walls in Elmhurst Road and Queen's Road: Boundary walls, particularly in Elmhurst Road, clearly demarcate the property boundaries as they face the road frontage. The erosion of these features for car parking spaces would noticeably harm the character of the area.



Some properties on Elmhurst Road

5. Enhancement of the individual short stretches of road leading south from Stoke Road to Jamaica Place. There is clear evidence of former short terraces on some of the roads running south from Stoke Road

(for example Grove Buildings, Joseph Street and Henry Street). Subject to other planning issues there may be scope to put some of these short blocks back.

6. Any new development must preserve or enhance the character of the area and especially its setting. With the scale of buildings being 2 to 3 storeys in height in most areas, this scale would need to be respected where new development is proposed. The landmark churches should not be used to guide the scale of future development in the area.
7. There are some notable buildings that in their design or form harm the character of the area. Shown on the plan these buildings are generally of a very plain utilitarian form and interrupt the Georgian and Victorian character of much of the area. Opportunities to enhance buildings at key corners of the area would be encouraged, notably: the east side of Joseph Street (Nos 15 - 17 odd), the west side of Grove Buildings (nos 49 - 51a (odd)) and the west side of Jamaica Place (Nos 79 to 81 (odd)).

### **Back-land development off Jamaica Place**

One area of particular concern in the Conservation Area is the view towards the rear of the Stoke Road properties when looking from Jamaica Place, between Shaftesbury Road and Willis Road.

Jamaica Place is a relatively modern road that cut across rear gardens, yards, and through terraces of buildings running south from Stoke Road. This resulted in opening up an area that was never intended for public view with a random variety of

walls, gates and outbuildings now visible. The views towards the rear of the properties facing Stoke Road are therefore marred by the nature of these rear yards and the following design guidance would help to enhance the area:

- A unified scheme in height and design for future rear boundary walls in red brick with a simple design of brick piers marking access points. Where gates are proposed these should be in a traditional timber ledged and braced style.
- The priority would be to ensure sufficient access to the properties on Stoke Road, but some sections of Jamaica Place have in recent years experienced modest residential redevelopment. There is limited scope for such future development (For example there may be scope between Jamaica Place and Grove Buildings as this has largely been developed for modest scale residential development).
- Rationalisation of roof forms and outbuildings to draw attention to the historic hipped and pitched roofs, removal of clutter and poorly built structures, and avoidance of flat roofs in future development.
- Ensure means of escape stairs are discreetly designed.
- Any new development must aim to enhance views to the rear, be only one or two storeys in height, with any new build remaining subservient in scale to the affected Stoke Road properties.

### **Archaeology**

Development affecting buildings of historic interest in the area will need to have regard to the archaeological implications of their proposals. In appropriate cases further research,

or below ground archaeology, may be required to assist in our understanding of the historic development of a building and may need to be submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement.

### **Grants**

Repair and restoration works to historic buildings in the area may be eligible for an Historic Buildings Grant from the Borough Council. Information on grants can be obtained from the Conservation and Design Section.

Works eligible for grant aid include the repair and restoration of the exterior of a property. Works regarded as minor routine maintenance or that do not relate to the historic fabric will not be eligible for assistance.

The Economic Prosperity unit will be able to advise as to the availability of other sources of financial assistance relevant to commercial properties.

### **Planning Policy and Development Control**

The designation of a Conservation Area places certain requirements on any applicant to submit detailed information to the Local Planning Authority in support of planning applications in, or in appropriate cases near to, the area. In most cases there will therefore be the requirement to submit full proposals rather than just outline details for development schemes.



A pair of Victorian properties with an early 18th century building to the left

Additionally applications within a Conservation Area will require a supporting Design and Access Statement. This short report would need to explain how the layout, scale and appearance of a proposal preserves or enhances the character of the area. Internal and external access to a proposed development would need to have special regard to highway concerns, access for the emergency services and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. An access statement addressing these, and related issues, would therefore be required. Further information can be found regarding Design and Access Statements on the Gosport Borough Council website : [www.gosport.gov.uk](http://www.gosport.gov.uk).

Conservation Area Consent will be required where it is proposed to demolish a building. An application for demolition should be accompanied by detailed proposals for a replacement building.

Six weeks written notice of the intention to carry out any works to a tree, not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, is also a planning requirement.

The Adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan Review May 2006 (from here referred to as the GBLP) provides clear policy guidance on the issues that need to be considered when submitting an application in a Conservation Area.

Before making an application you are advised to check that your proposal conforms to the relevant planning policies contained within the GBLP. Copies of this document are available from the Planning Policy Section or can be viewed at the Development Services Reception at Gosport Town Hall, in public libraries, or on the Gosport Borough Council website.

The Borough Council has also provided guidance on the implications of owning a Listed Building, living in a Conservation Area, and designing or repairing shopfronts. Further advice is available from English Heritage and through Government Planning Policy guidance: in particular Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and 16 (Archaeology and Planning).

### **Further information or advice**

The Conservation and Design section of Gosport Borough Council can provide further information or advice regarding the built heritage of the Borough, in particular with regard to the following:

- Listed Buildings.
- Conservation Areas.
- Historic Buildings Grant.
- Buildings of Local Interest (The Local List).
- Conservation Planning Policy.
- Design issues affecting heritage sites.

Issues of planning policy and relating to planning applications can be discussed with the Planning Policy Unit or Development Control respectively.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals at an early stage, prior to the submission of an application.

### **Acknowledgements**

The advice and assistance of the Gosport Society, and local historian Philip Eley, is gratefully acknowledged in the preparation of the historic background to the area.