

Gosport Borough Council

# Rowner Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2007



Places

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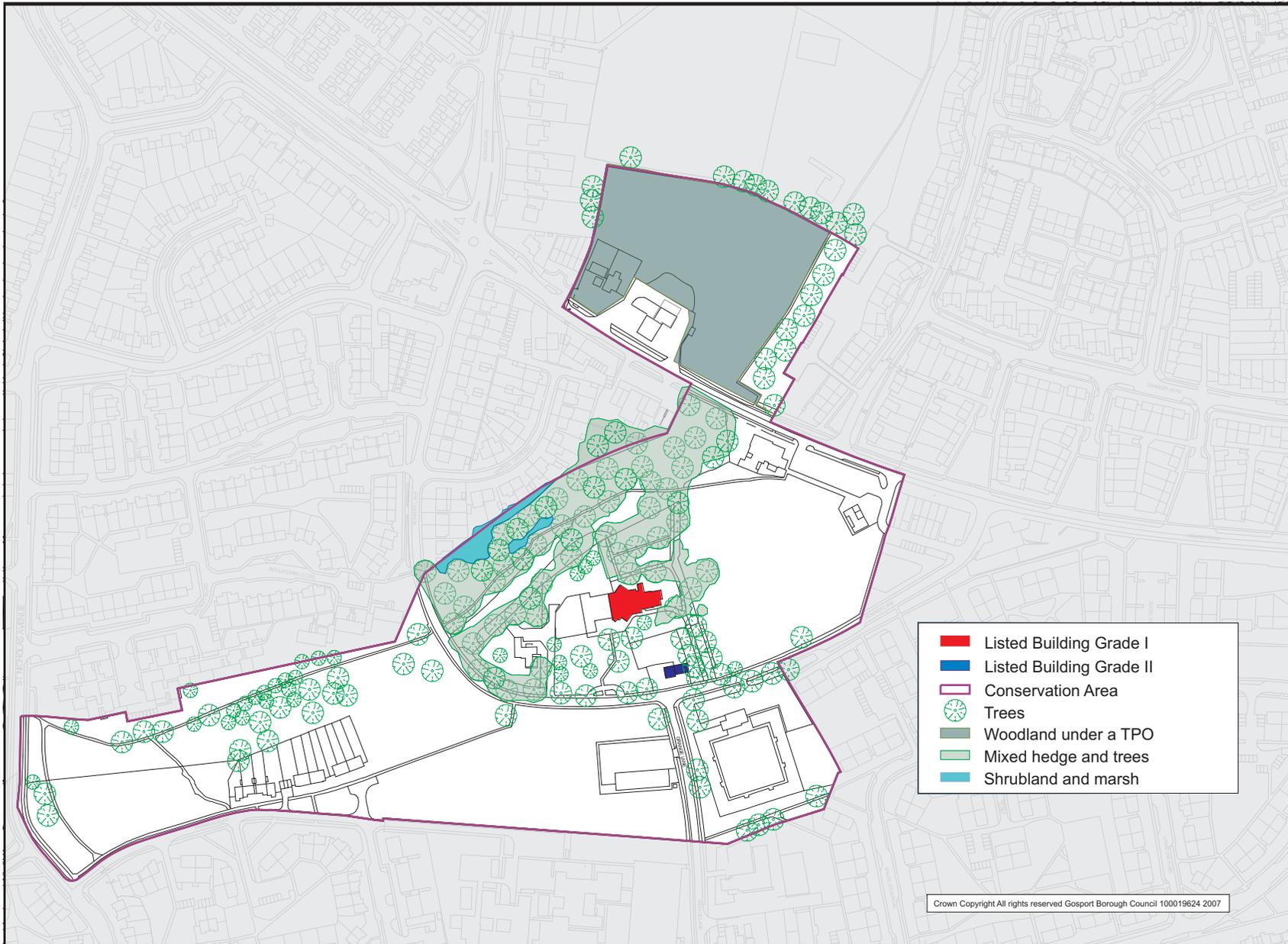


# **Rowner Conservation Area Appraisal**

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## Rowner Conservation Area Appraisal

### Background

The Rowner Conservation Area was designated in 1988 to ensure that all future developments would 'preserve or enhance' the historic and architectural character of the area. The Rowner Conservation Area retains buildings of significant architectural and historic interest including the Church of St Mary (Listed at Grade I) and 176-178 Rowner Lane (Listed at Grade II and from here referred to as Church Cottages). The area is also of significant archaeological interest and merits further investigation into its development as one of the oldest parishes within the Gosport Borough Boundary.

### Scope and Structure of Appraisal

This document is intended to act as a guide to the buildings and features of interest that make an important contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. It also assesses the development of Rowner, its special historic and architectural character and any areas that may benefit from enhancement.

The need to designate Conservation Areas is often illustrated by the ways in which new buildings or inappropriate modern improvements have a major impact on the local character. The distinctive character of both the buildings and, importantly in this instance, the open spaces and mature woodland within the Rowner Conservation Area is therefore highlighted in this document.

### Character Statement: the Area's Historic Development

The Rowner Conservation Area is situated close to the western boundary of Gosport Borough. Its focus is St Mary's Church (dating from the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century) and 176-178 Rowner

Lane (formerly known as Church Cottages), which are situated in the centre of the Conservation Area. The historic core of the former parish of Rowner is a unique example of the rural settlements that characterised much of the Gosport peninsula until the early twentieth century. Rowner is mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. However, medieval references do not provide any detailed evidence other than recording the ownership of the manor of Rowner by the Brune family.

In 1277 the manor of Rowner was granted by King Edward I to Sir William le Brun who was one of his constant attendants at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298. Some histories of the parish mention an ecclesiastical connection between Quarr and Rowner and that the latter was a dependency of the Abbey. The ownership of the Manor of Rowner continued within the Brune family until 1769 when it passed through the family to the Prideaux-Brunes who held the manor until the sale of the property in 1925. Edward Shapland Prideaux-Brune was Rector of Rowner Church from 1884 to 1919.



Figure 1: Extract from Norden's 1607 map of Hampshire

The historic core of the parish changed little until the twentieth century and the church remained its focus. From map evidence it can be seen that a pattern of small settlements were dispersed across the former parish of Rowner. Many of these were linked to the church by tracks. A number of modern roads follow these historic routes of which Rowner Lane is the most notable as it was formerly the principal route through the settlement. It has been superseded by Rowner Road. Amongst the farmsteads linked to the centre of the former parish was Grange Farm where part of the historic route survives as Grange Lane.

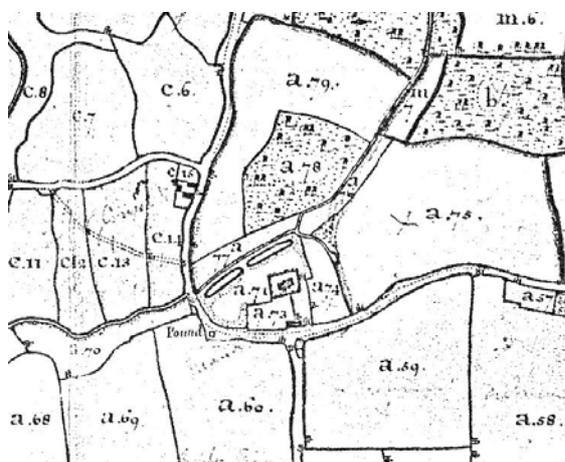


Figure 2: Extract from 'Map of the Lands in Rowner & Alverstoke' dated 1802

Church Cottages lie to the south of the church. These thatched cottages date from the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and are Listed at Grade II. It is probable that other isolated cottages of a similar date were dispersed around the historic parish.

Whilst the immediate setting of the historic core of the parish of Rowner has changed little since at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area around it was transformed by the development of the Bridgemary and Rowner estates during the 1960s. The latter was developed on what was formerly Grange Airfield. To the north of the church, a significant part of the historic Rowner Copse remains. 'Rowner Walk', a pleasant wooded route to the west of the church, follows the former route of a

tributary of the River Alver and forms an important link through the Conservation Area.

## Archaeology

There is much still to learn about the origins and early development of the parish of Rowner. The investigation of both below-ground and standing archaeology offers the potential to discover more about the evolution of the area. A recent archaeological survey of the area around the church has concluded that the site holds significant archaeological potential and that this is likely to be focused on the area around the church and Church Cottages. In 1996 a series of trenches were dug to the west of the church prior to the construction of a new extension. These trenches revealed evidence to suggest a medieval settlement on the site and the Hampshire Sites and Monuments Record lists a number of find spots in the area.

The limited archaeological investigations undertaken to date, strongly suggest that there is significant potential for encountering further evidence of the area's historic development during the medieval period in particular. Much of the land within the Conservation Area remains undeveloped and there is a high probability of discovering remains associated with a medieval settlement and also with a moated manor house belonging to the Brune family. It has been suggested that the moat associated with the manor house also encompassed the cottages and the church. The status of the archaeological resource should be reviewed as new discoveries are made.

The archaeological resource is finite and non-renewable, therefore a number of measures are in place to ensure that it is properly recorded and protected. These are embodied at a national level in Planning Policy

Guidance notes 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* and, specifically, *PPG16: Archaeology and Planning* and at a local level in the Adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan. These policies aim to protect important archaeological remains in situ where possible, and to ensure that an appropriate investigation and record is made of any remains which will be unavoidably damaged or destroyed by development. In all cases where archaeologically important remains are believed to be present, sufficient information will be needed to enable the impact of any development to be fully assessed before a planning application can be determined. On occasion, important remains are revealed during the course of development. In such cases, Gosport Borough Council will seek to negotiate a programme of investigation, preservation or excavation as appropriate in consultation with the County Archaeologist.

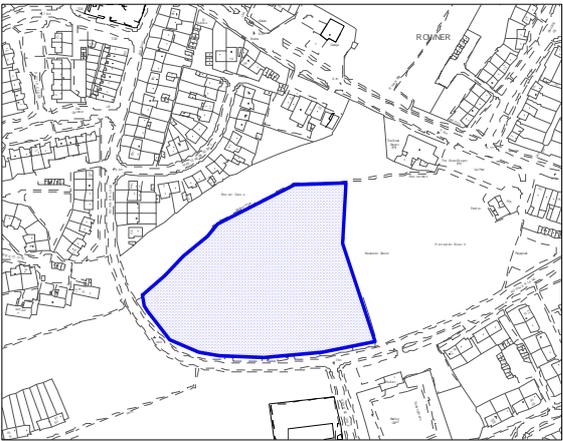


Figure 3: Area of High Archaeological Importance

In addition, the study entitled ‘*An Extensive Survey of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight’s Historic Towns; Historic Gosport Archaeological Assessment Document*’ (English Heritage and Hampshire County Council 1999) will be used to evaluate proposals affecting the Rowner Conservation Area. This will inform the management of the archaeological resource, and provides the controls

and guidance to be considered when assessing planning applications relating to the area. Of the four broad levels of Archaeological Importance outlined in the study, an Area of ‘High Archaeological Importance’ has been identified within the Rowner Conservation Area (figure 3).

**Detailed Area Appraisals**

The contrast between the Rowner Conservation Area with its wooded spaces and the surrounding modern developments of Rowner and Bridgemary serves to strengthen the area’s historic character. This character is formed by the historic core of the Conservation Area and, importantly in this instance, the presence of strong landscape features.

The Conservation Area is split into two character areas. It is intended that the understanding of each of these areas will provide the basis for a positive approach to planning future change, which will maintain the character of the Conservation Area. These focus on St. Mary’s Church, Church Cottages and Rowner Copse, and the setting around the historic core. Historic maps relating to the Conservation Area are contained in the Appendix.

**Area 1 Focused on the historic core and Rowner Copse**



Figure 4: Rowner Church & Copse marked on the Archer & Pitts map of 1774

Centred on the Church of St Mary and Church Cottages, the historic core is best defined by its mature woodland and distinctive historic buildings. The modest scale of these buildings and the way in which they are enveloped by mature trees creates a sense of seclusion in an area that is otherwise dominated by open space.

Part of Rowner Copse is now separated from the historic core of the Conservation Area by Rowner Road. The trees along the eastern boundary are not covered by the blanket Tree Preservation Order that covers the rest of the copse. However, these are very important in terms of the Conservation Area and serve to enhance the rest of the planting within Rowner Copse and to separate it from modern developments. A restricted amount of development has taken place in the area fronting Rowner Road, but does not isolate the copse from the historic core as 'Rowner Walk' provides an important pedestrian route through the Conservation Area. The earliest map evidence for Rowner Copse dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, but it is likely to be significantly older and associated with the historic parish.



Figure 5: Tombstones in Rowner churchyard. Some date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century

The Grade I Listed Church of St Mary (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century) was the focus of the historic parish and lies at the centre of the Conservation Area. It was substantially altered during the late nineteenth century and again in the twentieth century when an extension was added to the west end. However, the church has remained central to the historic parish and is set within a picturesque churchyard containing some important tombstones in terms of their age and historic association. To the south of the church are some early tombstones, some of which commemorate the Stares family who have been associated with the area through many generations. The churchyard also contains good examples of cast iron and wooden monuments. Alongside these examples is a tombstone to the northeast of the church which commemorates Sir Frederick Thesiger, who was a friend of Lord Nelson and was agent for prisoners of war in 1801.



Figure 6: Church Cottages

Church Cottages are situated south of the church and within the loop of Rowner Lane, which follows the historic line of the main route through the settlement. The cottages are set within modest sized gardens to the front and rear. Other than temporary garden buildings, there is no other development within the grounds of the cottages. The cottages and the new rectory are set at the top of a rise in the land, which is clearly visible when viewed from the west of the Conservation Area. This may represent the formation of a moated settlement and any opportunity to

investigate this further should be encouraged. The wooded area to the west of the modern rectory sweeps down towards the marshy ground that was once a tributary of the River Alver. This area also includes the section of woodland and open space to the north of the church where historic maps show the presence of ponds. The earliest of these may have been fishponds associated with the Brune's manor house. The 1841 tithe map details that the plot around Church Cottages was described as 'manor house and garden'. The area contains a number of mature oak trees many of which appear to have been planted around open spaces which roughly correlate with the site of ponds shown on both the 1802 map (figure 2) and the 1841 tithe map.

The Victoria County History of 1908 states that 'The church is in the centre of the parish, and near it on the south-west are the very scanty ruins of a building supposed to have been the old manor house of the Brune family'. Later surveys confirm the presence of a raised rectangular platform, possibly the site of the manor house, and finds of Tudor brick in a ditch near the church. Later maps no longer show the rectangular platform and it may have been lost during landscaping works to the church grounds. It is possible that some of the timbers from the manor house or its outbuildings may have been used in the building of Church Cottages. Evidence for this assertion comes in the form of an unusually long timber forming part of a roof truss used in the construction of 176 Rowner Lane.

### **Area 2: Focused on the setting**

The surrounding open setting to the south of the historic core of the Conservation Area provides both a visual contrast and a link through to the Wildgrounds and the Alver Valley, which are themselves reminders of Gosport Borough's rural past. Early maps show a pound (an early

enclosure for housing stray animals) situated to the southwest of the new Rectory (figure 2).

Long views into the Conservation Area across this area of open space to the south have largely been preserved despite modern housing developments. Modern housing within the Conservation Area boundary is limited to numbers 41-63 Franklin Road.



*Figure 7: View north towards the historic core of the Conservation Area*

The cricket pitch to the east of the church similarly provides long views into the Conservation Area which are interrupted only by the large trees outside the boundary to the churchyard. These trees are important to the setting of the Church and Church Cottages and create a visual break between the enclosed core of the Conservation Area and the open space to the east. A small number of modern buildings occupy sites on the easternmost boundary of the Conservation Area and, although they do not detract significantly from the appearance of the Conservation Area, opportunities to enhance their appearance should be encouraged.

Any future development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area Boundary should maintain the open setting of the Conservation Area and preserve views into its historic core. There are a number of mature trees that add to the character of the Conservation Area and consideration should be given to the designation of further Tree Preservation Orders.

## 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 Officers who are able to advise on the merits of proposals and on the application procedure.

Works eligible for grant aid include the repair and restoration of the exterior of the property such as re-pointing, roof repairs, shop front restoration, damp proofing, timber treatment and large-scale structural repairs. Works

regarded as routine maintenance and not relating to the historic fabric will not be eligible for assistance.

The Economic Prosperity Unit of the Borough Council 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. The principal effects are that applicants will be required to submit full proposals in support of planning applications within the area so that the implications of these proposals can be considered in detail.

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 Conservation 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 requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act. An access statement addressing these, and related issues, would therefore be required. Further information relating to Design and Access Statements can be found 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. For an application to be determined, detailed proposals of the replacement building will be required and this information will be considered alongside other planning issues.

Six weeks written notice of the intention to carry out any works to a tree that is in the Conservation Area and is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order is required by the Local Planning Authority.

The Adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan (from here referred to as the GBLP) provides clear policy guidance on what issues need to be considered when submitting an application in a Conservation Area. This appraisal stresses the importance of relating new proposals to their setting and any impact they may have; drawing from the guidance in the GBLP and any supplementary policy guidance.

Before making an application in the Conservation Area, 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 Forward Planning Section or can be viewed at the Third Floor Regulatory Services Reception at Gosport Town Hall, in local public libraries or on the Gosport Borough Council website at [www.gosport.gov.uk](http://www.gosport.gov.uk)

The Borough Council has also produced guidance on the implications of owning a Listed Building, living in a Conservation Area, and designing or

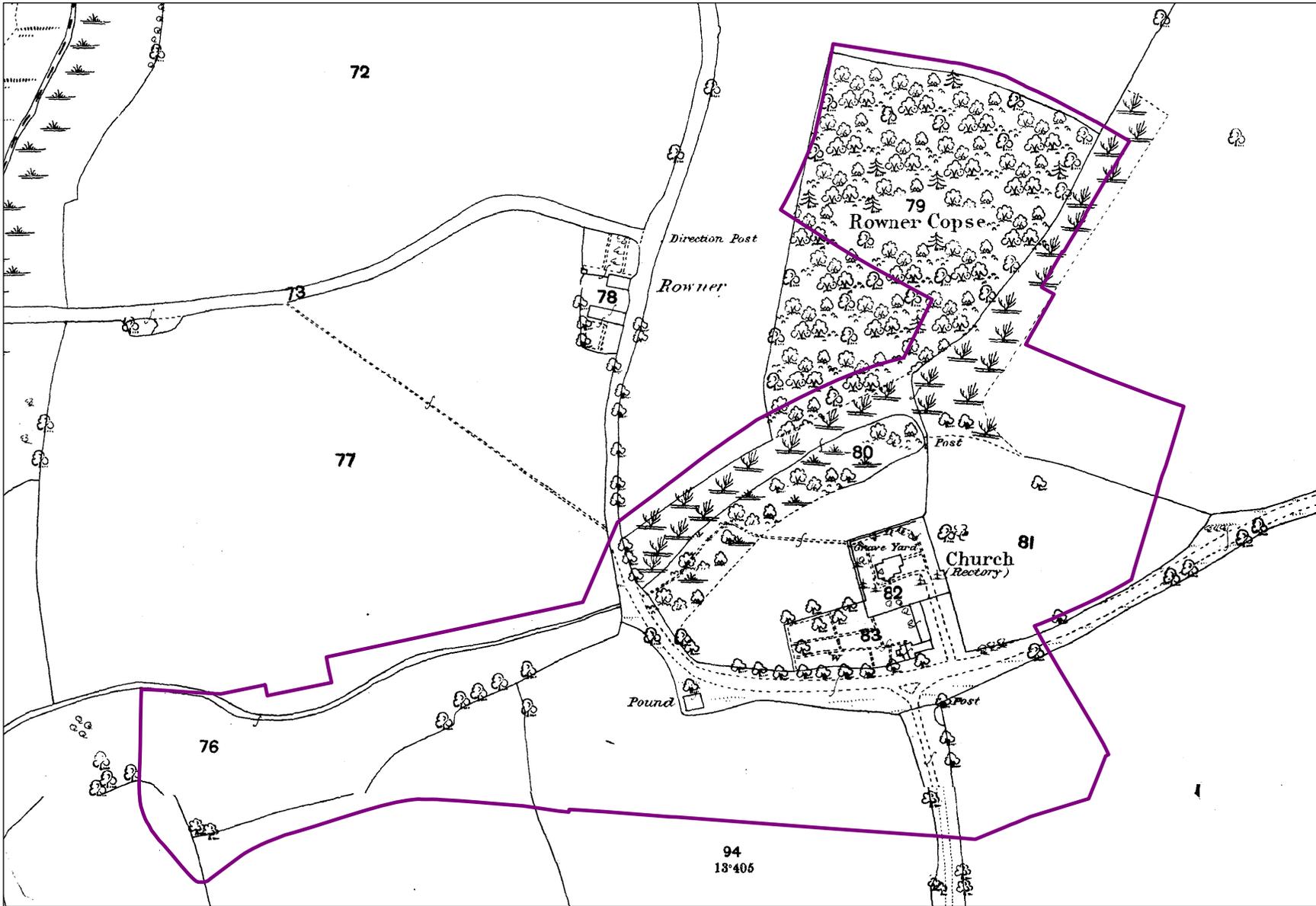
repairing shop fronts. Further advice is available from English Heritage and through Government policy guidance on heritage related issues; in particular, Planning Policy Guidance notes *15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, and *PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning*.

### **Further Information or Advice**

The Borough Council's Conservation Officers 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
- Information on heritage organisations and sources of grant aid

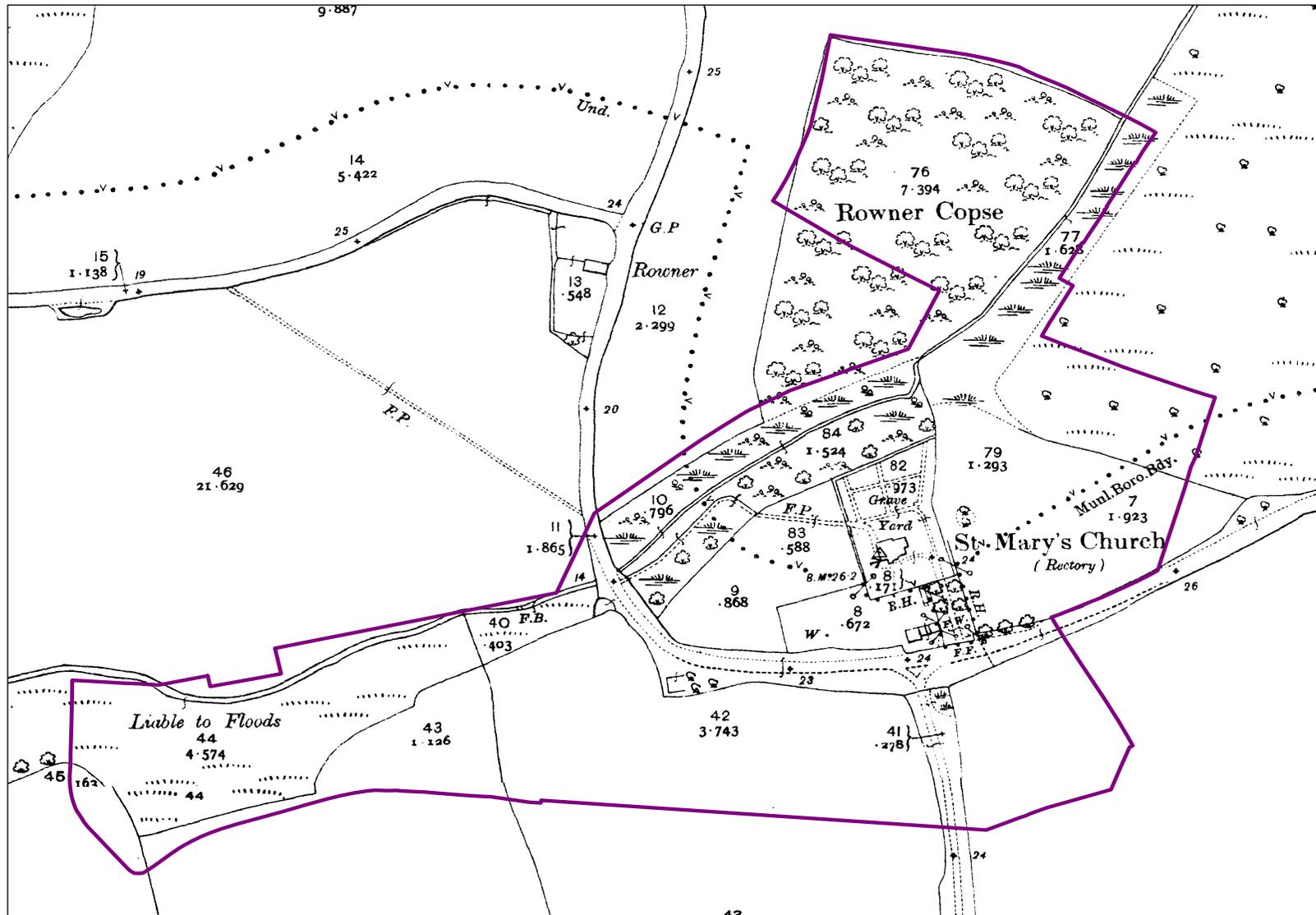
Issues relating to planning policy and planning applications can be discussed with Forward Planning and Development Control respectively. Applicants are encouraged to discuss any proposals at an early stage, prior to the submission of an application



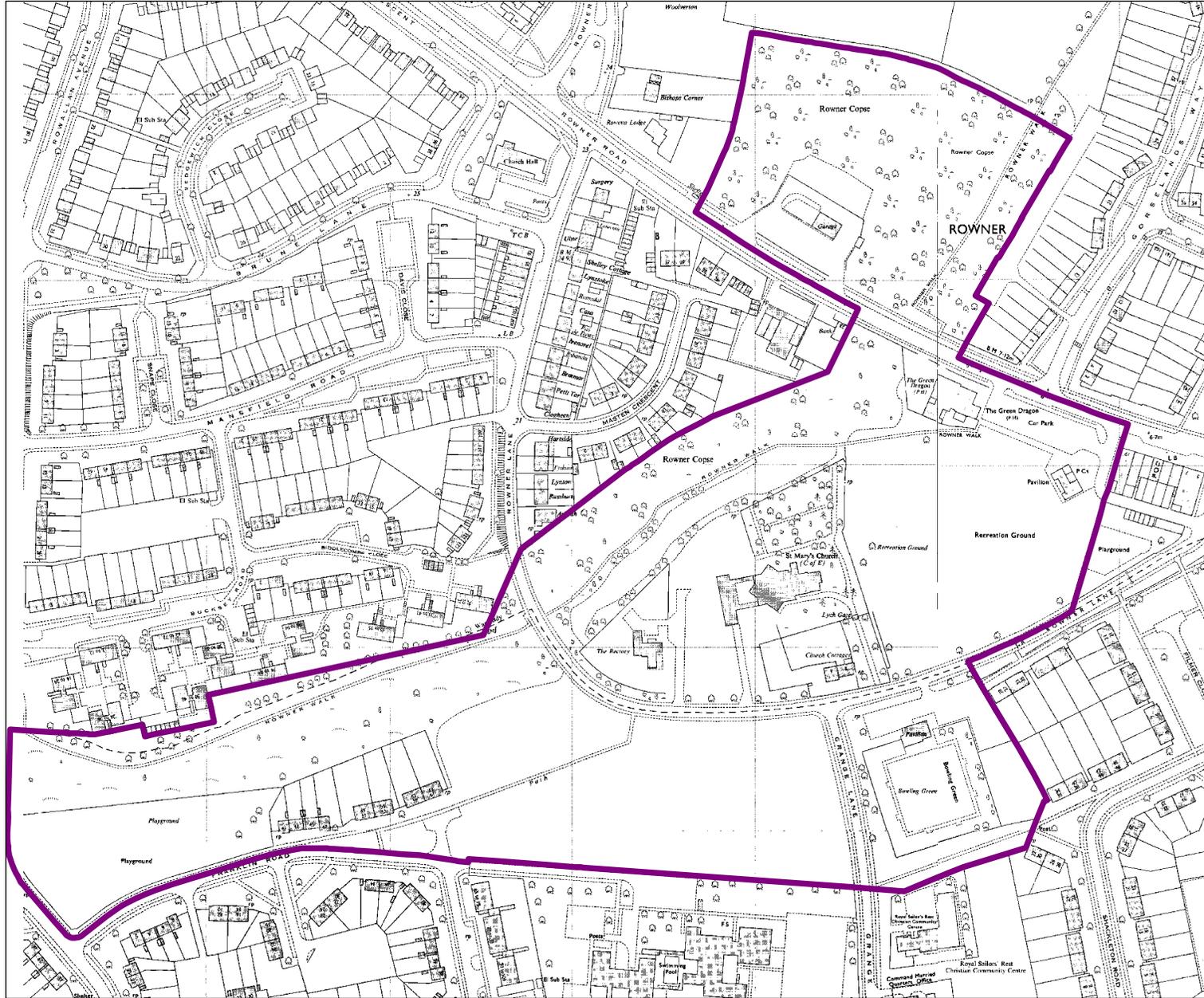
OS Plan of 1867-1881

Appendix

Reproduced from the 1881 Ordnance Survey map



Reproduced from the 1933 Ordnance Survey map



OS Plan of 1953-1991