

Gosport Borough Council

# Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2009



Places

*Delivering  
for Gosport*

**GOSPORT**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



## Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2009

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Plan of the Conservation Area                        | 1     |
| Background   | 2     |
| Scope and Structure of the Appraisal                 | 2     |
| Character Statement: The Area's Historic Development | 3-4   |
| Appraisal of the Area's Built Form                   | 5-10  |
| Enhancement Opportunities                            | 10    |
| Archaeology  | 10    |
| Grants   | 10    |
| Planning Policy and Development Control              | 10-11 |
| Further Information or Advice                        | 12    |
| Appendix A   | 13-16 |
| Appendix B   | 17    |



## Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area Appraisal

### Background

The Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area was originally designated in 1990 to ensure that all future developments would 'preserve or enhance' the historic and architectural character of the area. The boundaries were revised in 2009 to include a larger section of High Street. The area contains a variety of buildings of architectural and historic interest including the Grade II Listed Le Breton Farmhouse, which dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### Scope and Structure of the Appraisal

This document is intended to act as a guide to the buildings and features of interest, which make an important contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. It also assesses the historical development of the Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area, the character of the area, the building form and type, materials used in the construction of the buildings and areas that would benefit from enhancement.

The need to designate Conservation Areas is often illustrated by the way in which poorly designed new buildings or inappropriate modern improvements or extensions have a major impact on the local character. The distinctive character of both the buildings and spaces within the Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area are therefore highlighted in this document.



*Map of 1810 showing the extent of Lee*

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

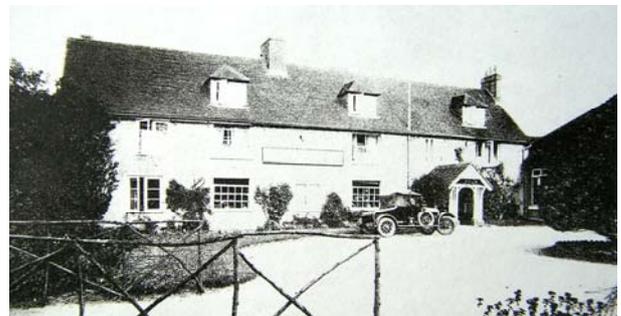
#### *Pre- 19<sup>th</sup> Century Development*

Until the mid-1880s, Lee-on-the-Solent was a small scattered settlement of properties that had changed little over many centuries. The focus of the settlement was a medieval track leading from Titchfield, the route of which is largely followed by the present Manor Way and Pier Street. Le Breton farmhouse is one of Gosport's oldest buildings and is a good example of a late medieval manorial farmhouse. As such it is a Grade II Listed Building.



*Le Breton Farmhouse*

The Bun Penny PH began life as a farmhouse probably in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the spacious accommodation was adapted for use as the 'Victoria Hotel'.



*The Victoria Hotel (early 20<sup>th</sup> century photo)*

Historic plans of the Conservation Area are contained in Appendix A of this document.

## Character Statement: The Area's Historic Development

### *Victorian/Edwardian Development*

In 1884, Mr C. E. Newton Robinson was cruising in the Solent and was struck by the area's potential for a resort development. He persuaded his father, a wealthy Dorset landowner, to purchase much of the land and spent the next 25 years investing in Lee-on-the-Solent in order to promote and develop the settlement into a watering spa. Early steps consisted of laying out a grid pattern of streets along which numerous plots were marked out. Parcels of land were sold off to wealthy Victorians on which to build their seaside residences. Lee was marketed as a health resort under the title of 'Seaside Watering Place'.



*Aerial photo dated c. 1920*

Central to the development was the seafront itself and Marine Parade was laid out as the focus of the resort. Marine Parade East and West were over a mile in length and consisted of parkland, promenades and the Pier (completed by 1888). The influx of new residents and visitors prompted the development of shops along Pier Street and High Street, the construction of Pier Hotel and the opening of a branch railway line.



*Pier House & Flower Buildings (photo dated early 20<sup>th</sup> century)*

The construction of Lee Pier (completed in 1888) was another important stage in the resort's development. Unfortunately, its pavilion was destroyed by fire in 1932. With the outbreak of war the Military Authorities breached the pier, as it was thought it could provide a good landing point for enemy troops. The pier was never rebuilt.



*View along Lee Pier in 1926*

The Lee-on-the-Solent Light Railway Line, opened in 1894, ran to the former Fort Brockhurst Station where it linked up to the Gosport-Fareham line. The line, however, was unprofitable and closed to passengers in 1930, although it remained open for goods traffic until 1935. The Flower Buildings followed the construction of the railway line, in an attempt to develop the tourist industry of Lee-on-the-Solent. Today, the buildings still provide shops and a restaurant, while the booking hall, redundant after the closure of the railway, has been converted to an amusement arcade.

Numerous large buildings were constructed during the late Victorian period, a number of which are situated within the Conservation Area. These include the premises of the former Edinburgh House School at 2-18 Manor Way, which were converted to private residences when the school was evacuated to Somerset in 1940. Number 20 Manor Way and 7-9 Grove Road are also notable survivals from this period. However, the speculative development of Lee was not a great success and most of the limited development which pre-dated the First World War was on a more modest scale. During the First World War the area around Lee was identified as being an excellent location for the development of a naval aviation base and HMS Daedalus was subsequently constructed.

### ***Inter-War Development***

The inter-war years saw a further wave of development in Lee. This was primarily focused on the Marine Parade, Pier Street and High Street areas where a number of buildings in the Art Deco style were constructed in contrast to the earlier buildings.



*1-9 Marine Parade West c. 1960*  
© Francis Frith Collection

1935 saw the construction of the Lee Tower complex including a dance hall, restaurant, lounge bar and roof terrace. The 120 feet high white tower had a platform to enjoy views out across the Solent. Unfortunately, this development

could not be sustained and one by one the attractions disappeared. In 1969 the Tower was finally demolished. The shops and apartments of numbers 1-9 Marine Parade West were built at the same time as Lee Tower, and have continued to provide for the needs of visitors to Lee.

### ***Trevor J. Tatham***

In 1915 Trevor J. Tatham, already trained as an architect, moved to Lee to teach at the Edinburgh House School on Manor Way. In 1921 he moved to 20 Manor Way with his family and pursued careers as both a teacher and architect. Between 1921 and 1939 he designed many houses and commercial premises, becoming the most prolific architect in Lee. Of all the local architects working during the inter-war period, Tatham's buildings survive in the largest numbers within the Conservation Area and make an important contribution to its special character. A plan showing the location of the buildings attributed to him is contained in Appendix B.



*Tatham plan for 8-14 Pier Street, 1934*

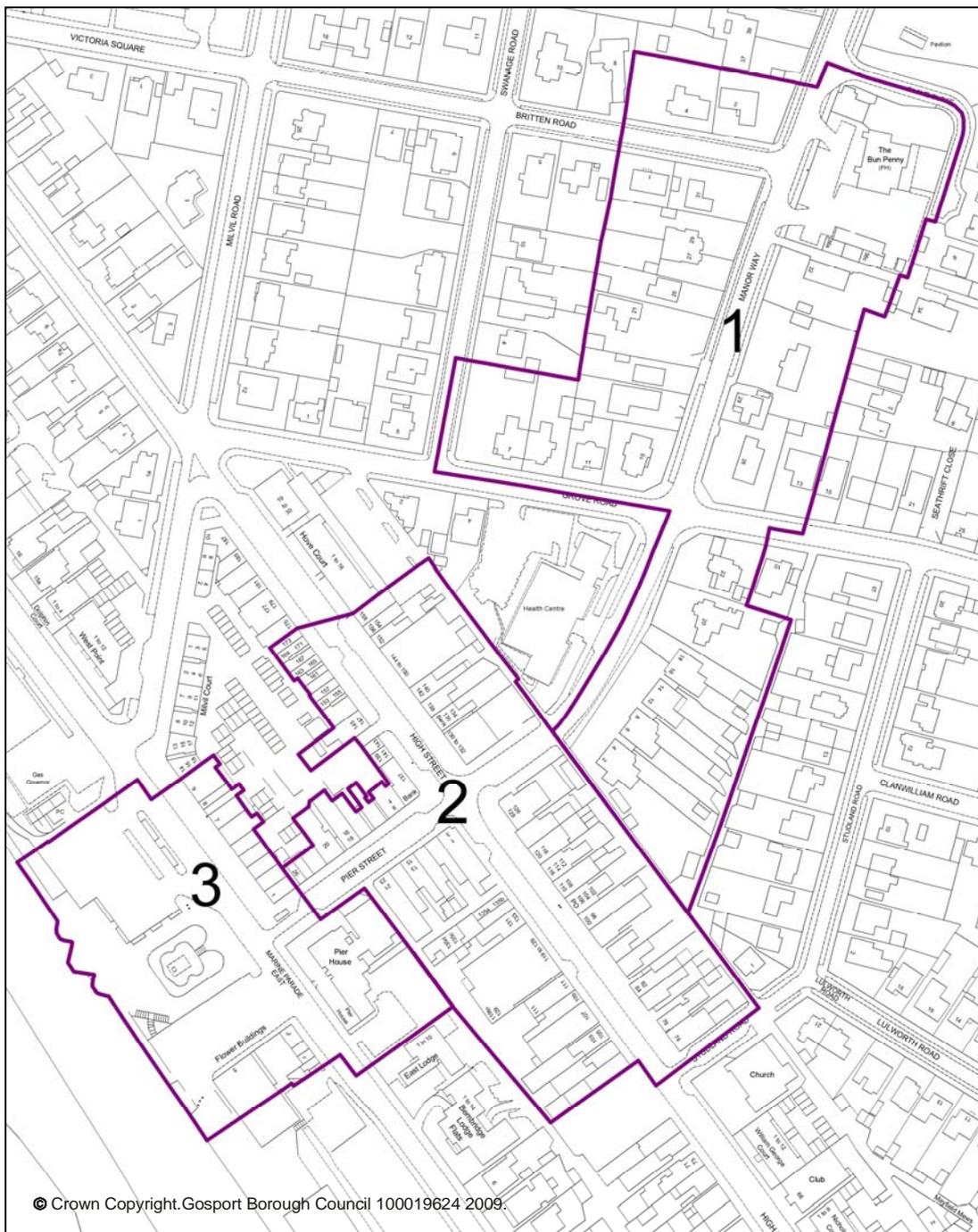


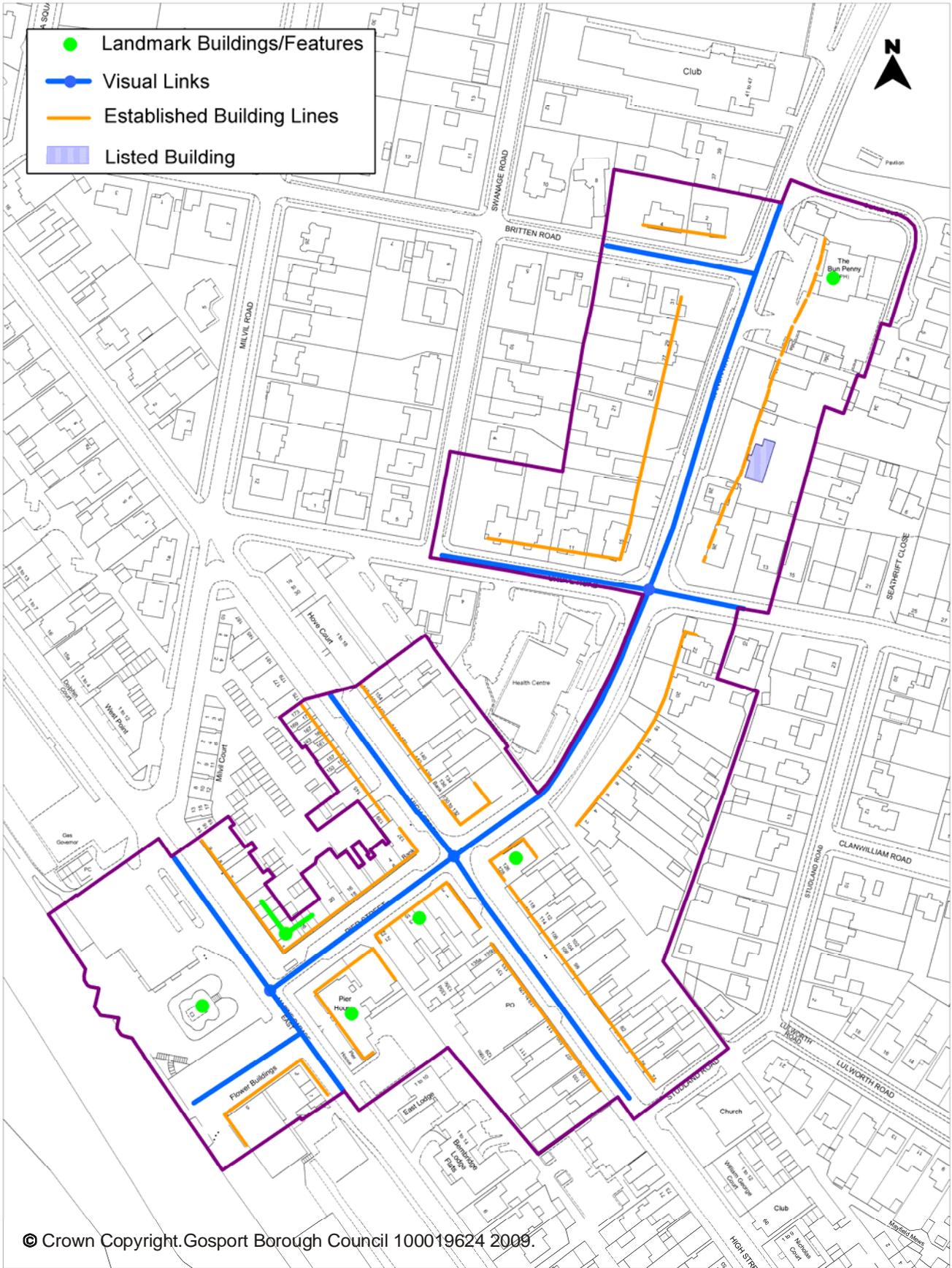
*Tatham plan for 137 High Street, 1933*

## Appraisal of the Area's Built Form

Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area encompasses the Victorian core of Lee-on-the-Solent together with gradual infill development up to the present day. The roughly north-south route of Pier Street and Manor Way forms the backbone of the Conservation Area and, in doing so, reveals successive phases of the town's development from its medieval origins to the inter-war

seafront buildings. The Conservation Area is therefore a combination of different building patterns and styles and contrasting public spaces that help to define its special character. Three distinctive areas of common characteristics are apparent. Manor Way (Area 1) consists mainly of residential properties. Pier Street/High Street (Area 2) and Marine Parade (Area 3) are characterised by retail and leisure facilities. The character of each of these areas is defined below.





© Crown Copyright. Gosport Borough Council 100019624 2009.

## Area 1

### *Focused on Manor Way*

Manor Way follows the original medieval track that joined Lee's agricultural settlements with the villages of Titchfield and Stubbington. Le Breton Farmhouse and the Bun Penny PH are notable survivals of Lee's pre-resort years. The Bun Penny is a landmark building within the Conservation Area, while Le Breton Farmhouse is one of Gosport's most historically and architecturally important buildings.



*The Bun Penny PH*

The low density development of residential properties along Manor Way has resulted in a pleasant, informal suburban character that owes a great deal to the mature landscape. The gardens and boundaries of most buildings are well-planted with trees and shrubs, which provide a pleasant setting for the variety of buildings behind. The lines of trees along the road verge also help to fill the relatively wide space between buildings on either side of the road.



*View south along Manor Way*

Of the mix of building types present, the large two-storey villas and semi-detached houses make a significant contribution to the area's overall character. There is a clear building line from numbers 2-22 past Le Breton Farmhouse to the Bun Penny, which follows the curve of Manor Way. This characteristic is mirrored on the west side in this area and along Grove Road and Britten Road. There are only two deviations from this pattern, namely 28 and 21 Manor Way.

Apart from number 28, many of the residential buildings in this area are separated from the main road by sizeable front gardens. Low boundary walls are also important features. This arrangement should be retained wherever possible. Clay tile or slate hipped roofs, dormers, small gables, and chimneys are characteristic details of the area.



*Junction of Grove Road & Manor Way*

The former Edinburgh House School at number's 2-18 (even) Manor Way along with number 20 Manor Way form an important group within this section of the Conservation Area and share a similar scale and building line. Until the Second World War, Edinburgh House was a preparatory school for young Naval Officers. Number 22 Manor Way is a more modern building, but its scale and design does not detract from the character or setting of its neighbours. Numbers 2-18 (even) are of particular significance in this area and they are characterised by the strong architectural unity in their design and materials i.e. red bricks, clay tiles,

vertical sliding sashes and stone dressed windows. Trees within the front gardens of properties in this area are an important landscape feature. Sections of the historic boundary wall to the School remain in this area.



12-14 Manor Way



Edinburgh House School, early 20<sup>th</sup> century

## Area 2

### *Focused on Pier Street*

Number 126-128 High Street contributes to both Area 1 and Area 2 due to its corner position at the junction of Manor Way and High Street. As such, and given its architectural quality and the extent of survival of timber sash windows and shopfront, it is a landmark building within the area. The former outbuilding to the rear has been used as a shop and as residential accommodation. An attractive building itself, it helps draw the eye towards the junction of High Street and Pier Street and to the seafront.



*View from Manor Way into High St /Pier St*

Pier Street, and its junction with High Street, is at the centre of the town's primary shopping area and illustrates a very urban character in contrast to Area 1. Given the long, straight views along High Street (which extend along Monserrat Road and Cambridge Road) and from the promenade along Pier Street, this cross-roads along with the corner buildings which define it is the main focus of the Conservation Area.

While there is a marked contrast in building styles in Pier Street (late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1930s), which is typical of this part of Lee, the character of the area is defined by similarities in the height of the buildings and their terraced arrangement. There are many Tatham-designed buildings within this area.

Numbers 1-23 Pier Street are of fine architectural detailing, notably in the timber balustrade balcony, their high pitched roof and full dormers. Many elements of the original design remain. The presence of residential accommodation above the ground floor shops also contributes to the character of Pier Street.

A number of timber shopfronts remain and these should be retained and/or enhanced as part of any future applications. With the exception of number 137, which has been extended, the rear elevations of these buildings remain largely unaltered and are visible from High Street.



*Pier Street c. 1910*



*View along Pier Street*

The character of the High Street reflects the scale and form of development in Pier Street. It includes an interesting mix of buildings, which are characteristic of Lee's development from c.1900 to the 1930s (refer to the Plan of the Conservation Area on page 1 of this document).



*View along High Street*

### Area 3

#### *Focused on Marine Parade*

Since the development of Lee as a seaside resort during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this section of Marine Parade has provided a focus for leisure activities. During the 1930s the area was further developed with the construction of Lee Tower and its associated buildings and the regeneration of the pier. Despite the loss of the tower and the pier, important survivals of both eras remain to define the character of this area.

Pier House, formerly Pier Hotel, is a landmark building and occupies a prominent position within the Conservation Area. Dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it is an important reminder of the development of Lee as a resort during this period. Despite modern alterations, its architectural character remains intact. Flanked by Pier Street to one side and a car park to the other, it is set apart from other buildings in this area both in its form and its architectural quality and detailing.

Dating from the inter-war phase of development the Art Deco buildings at numbers 1-9 Marine Parade West are survivals of an important phase of Lee's development. Associated with the construction of Lee Tower they are notable survivals from this phase. Compared with Pier House, they have a strong horizontal emphasis and this is reinforced by their architectural detailing. Most of the original windows have been replaced and the balconies to numbers 6-9 have been removed. These buildings, along with those which continue into Pier Street, are an important focus within the Conservation Area.

Development to the seaward side of Marine Parade is confined to the Flower Buildings and these also date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century phase of development. Numbers 1-3 in particular

are of architectural interest, retaining attractive timber shopfronts. Although smaller in scale and height, the Flower Buildings make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The gardens around the war memorial create an attractive seating area and the undeveloped space provided by car parks retains important views towards the Solent.



*The Flower Buildings*

### **Enhancement Opportunities**

- Ensure regular repainting of rendered 1930s buildings to avoid sense of dilapidation.
- Replace missing balustrade to 1-3 Pier Street.
- Reinststate boundary walls in an historic style where appropriate.
- Enhance the appearance of traditional shopfronts.

### **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 may be required to assist in our understanding of the historic development of buildings in the area 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 Officer 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 requirements 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)

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*.

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 before demolition takes place, 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 a 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 Planning Policy 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

## **Further Information or Advice**

The Borough Council's Conservation Officer 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

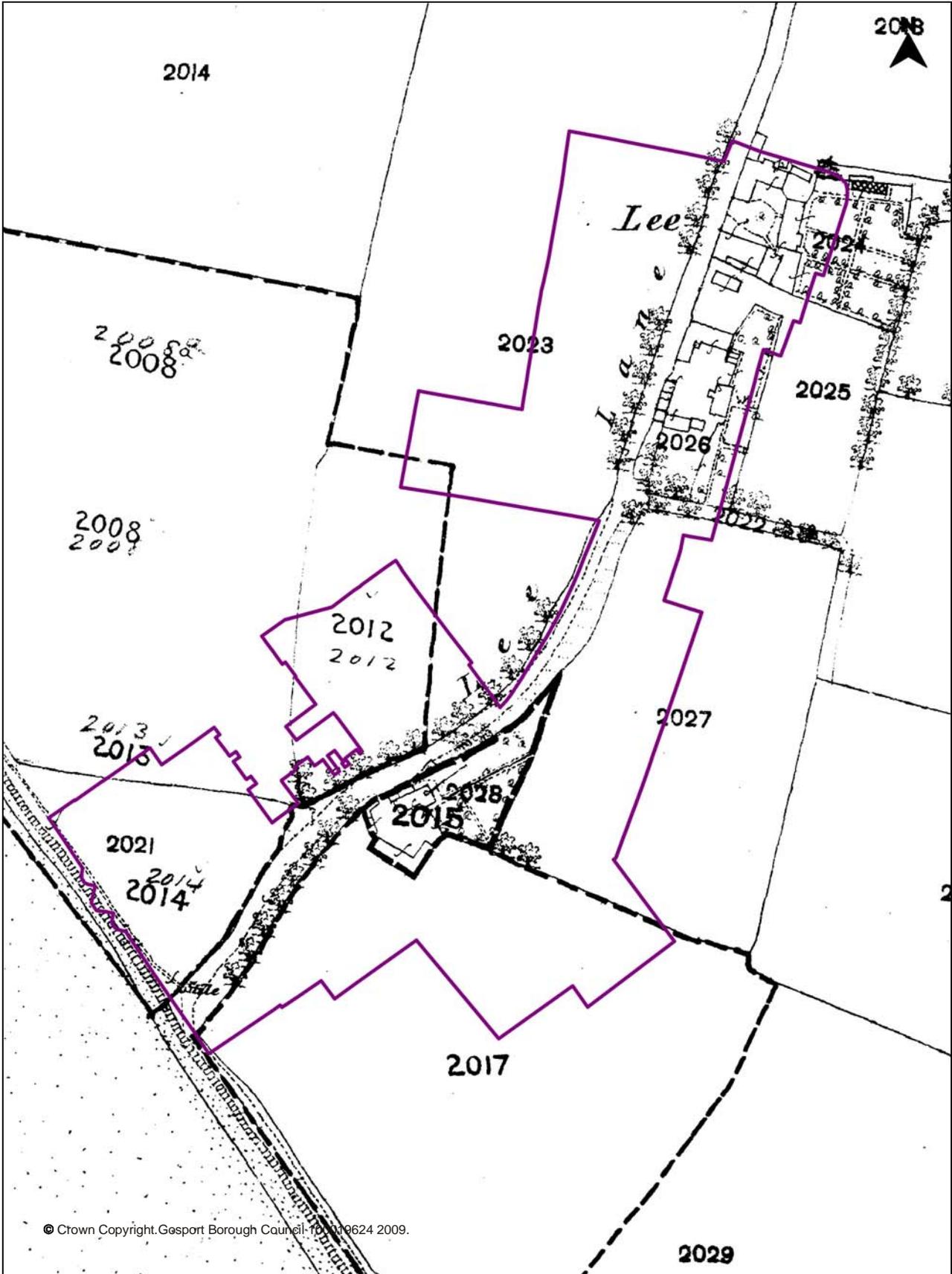
Issues relating to planning policy and planning applications can be discussed with Planning Policy and Development Control respectively.

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

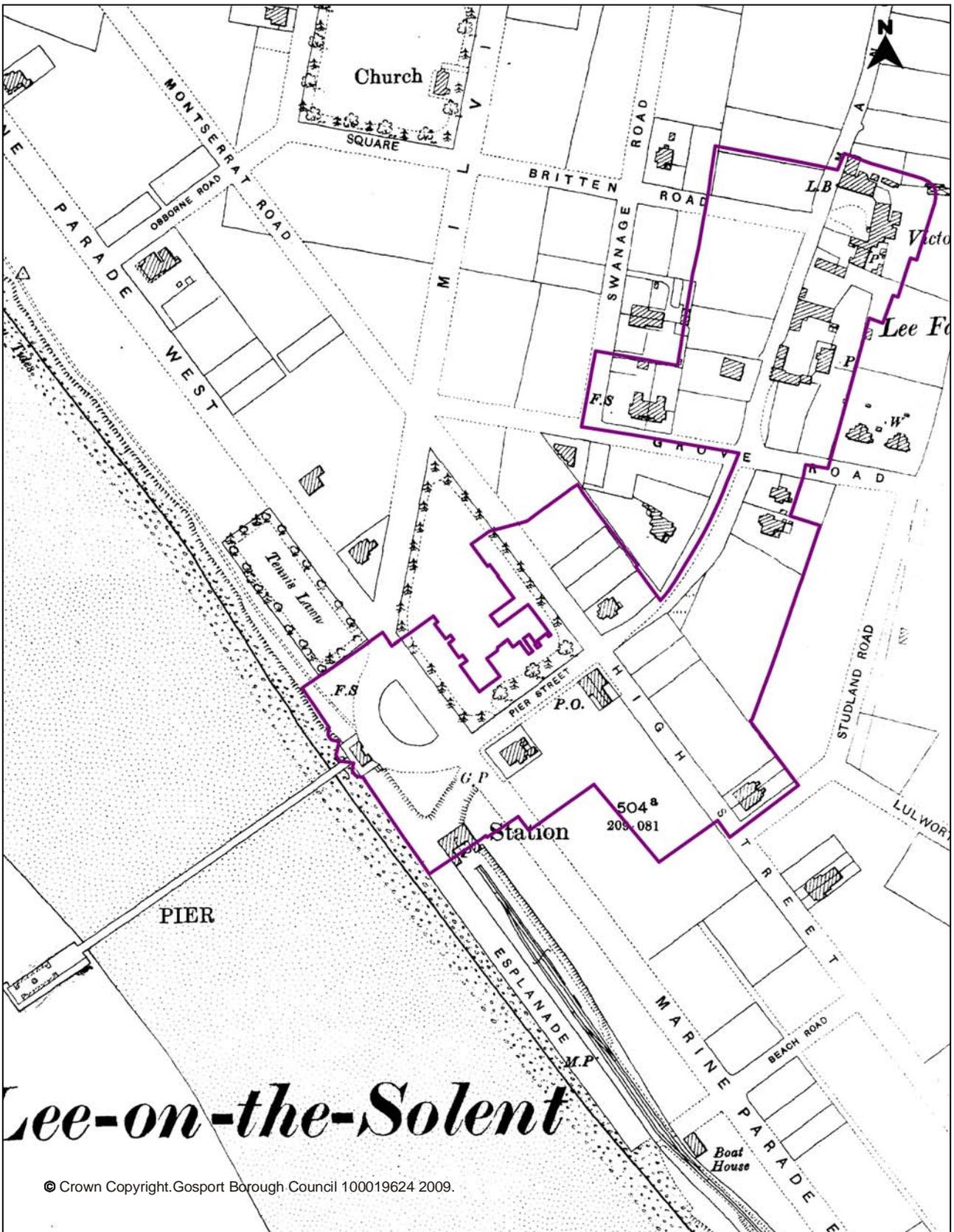
## **Acknowledgement**

With thanks to Philip Eley, local historian, for information on the architect Trevor J Tatham.

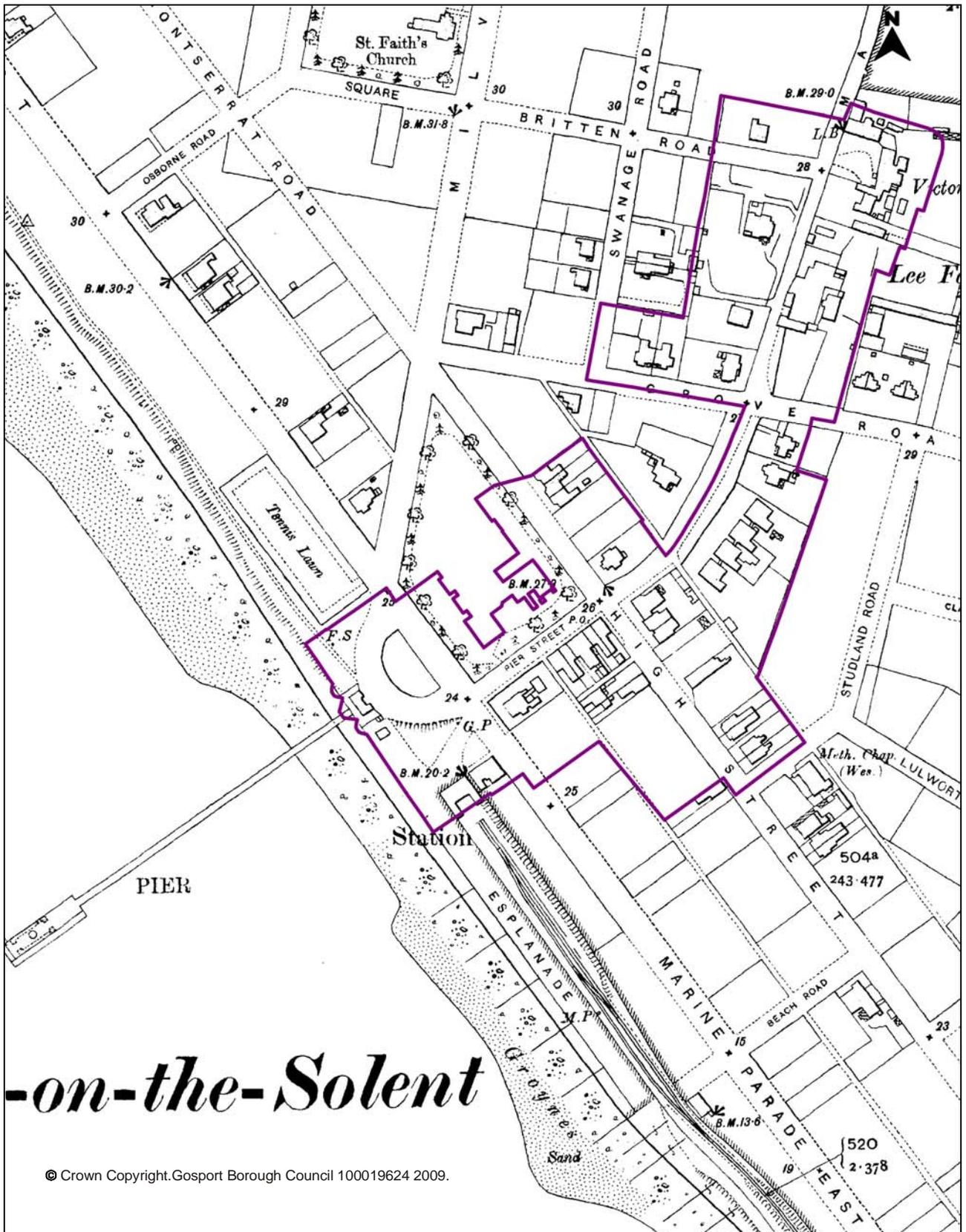
Appendix A



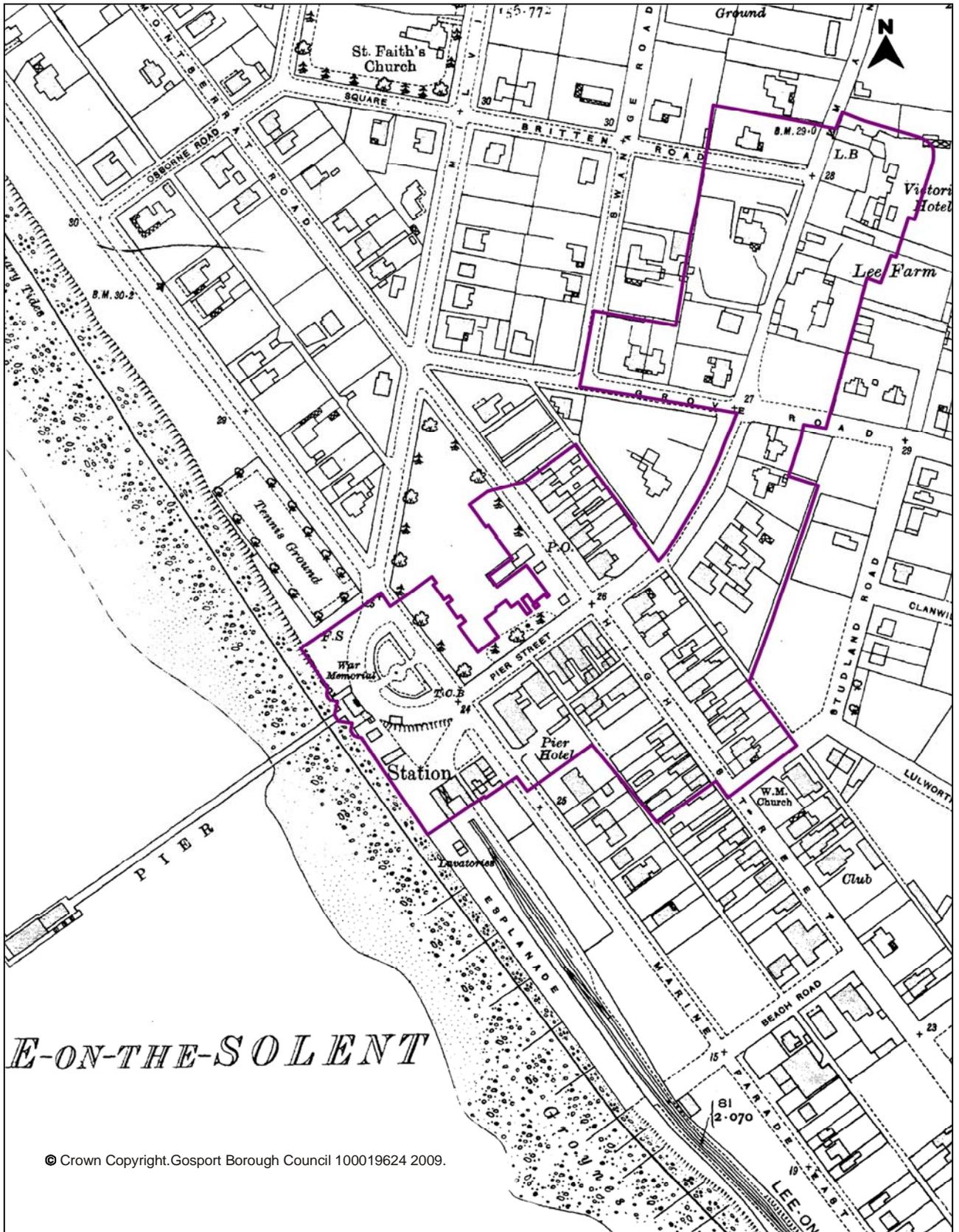
OS 1867



OS 1897



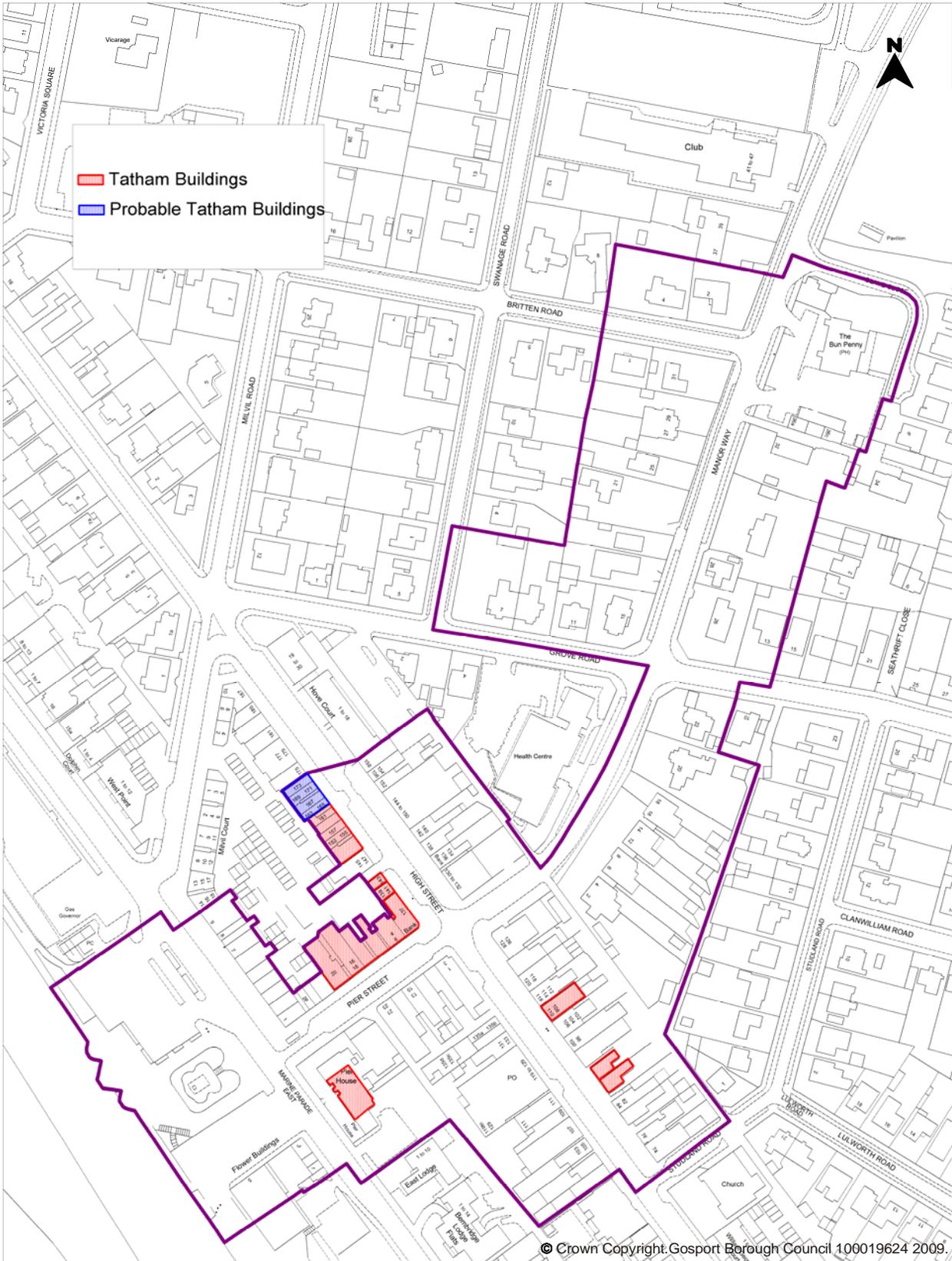
OS 1909



© Crown Copyright. Gosport Borough Council 100019624 2009.

OS 1932

# APPENDIX B



Plan Showing Buildings Designed by Trevor J. Tatham. Detail provided by Philip Eley