

Rodmersham Church Street Conservation Area Assessment

A presentation to the Western Area Committee by:

Simon Algar - Conservation & Design Manager
(Planning Services)

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Presentation Format

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2. Legislative & policy/guidance framework
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- 5(b) Proposed Rodmersham Church Street C.A:
Proposed boundary alignment
- 5(c) Proposed Rodmersham Church Street C.A:
Proposed Management Plan
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1. Background to assessment

- There is a formal requirement under Section 69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for every local planning authority to '*(a)...from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*', and (b) '*...to designate those areas as conservation areas*'.
- Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to publish appraisals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, which would apply to proposed new conservation area as well as in relation to the review of existing conservation areas. There is a requirement that such appraisals are subject to public consultation
- The Swale Heritage Strategy, adopted in March 2020, has resulted in a stronger commitment by the Council to ensure its conservation areas are reviewed more regularly and possible new conservation areas also given consideration, as is the case here..
- The review of Milstead, Rodmersham Green and Tunstall conservation areas was not included in the work programme of the initial 3-year action plan forming part of the adopted Swale Heritage Strategy 2020 - 2032
- The review of Milstead, Rodmersham Green and Tunstall conservation areas has been brought forward and prioritised however in order to assist the Council in developing a more informed view on the impacts of the Highsted Park major development scheme which it is anticipated would impact to some degree on the setting of all three.
- The assessment of the area around Rodmersham parish church logically took place in relation to the review of the Rodmersham Green Conservation Area and consideration of its wider setting and boundary. It was clear from this assessment work that the area of land and buildings around the parish church possessed the degree of special interest to warrant consideration for conservation area status but that it would not be appropriate to try and take this forward as an extension to the existing conservation area

2. Legislative & Policy Framework for Conservation Areas and their review

Legislation & National Planning Policies

- Conservation Areas first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act, 1967
- Note: early Conservation Areas in England designated by County Councils or predecessor local authorities prior to local government re-organisation in 1974 originally designated between 1970 and 1976.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (the Act).
- Formal requirement under Section 69 of the 1990 Act for local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate those areas as conservation areas.
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 (chapter 16 re the Historic Environment)
- National Planning Policy Guidance, 2014 onwards

National Guidance & Local Policy/Guidance

Historic England Guidance (including)

- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Historic England Advice Note 1 – 2nd Ed.), 2019
- The Setting of Heritage Assets (Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – 2nd Ed.), 2017

Local Level Policies & Guidance (including)

- Adopted Swale Local Plan, 2017 (Bearing Fruits)
- Emerging Replacement Local Plan (Reg. 19 stage)
- Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

3. Purpose, Status and Benefits of Appraisal Documents

Purpose of Appraisals

- To identify the heritage significance of Conservation Areas to this and future generations – the significance may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic (or a combination).
- To increase public awareness and involvement in preservation and enhancement of the area.
- To provide a framework for planning decisions, to guide positive change and regeneration.
- To provide the necessary background to, and framework for an assessment of a proposed new conservation area in accordance with Sections 69(1) and 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- To highlight particular issues and features which detract from the character or appearance of existing or proposed Conservation Areas which offer potential for enhancement or improvement through positive management.

Status and Benefits of Appraisals

Status

- Forms part of a suite of local planning guidance that has been subject to and agreed following a formal public consultation process.
- Provides a material planning consideration of significant weight in the development management process and this is backed up by linked, adopted and replacement Local Plan policies.

Benefits

- Stronger position for managing development proposals (applications and appeals).
- Sound basis for partnership working between stakeholders to tackle identified issues threatening/impacting on the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

4. Consultation Process

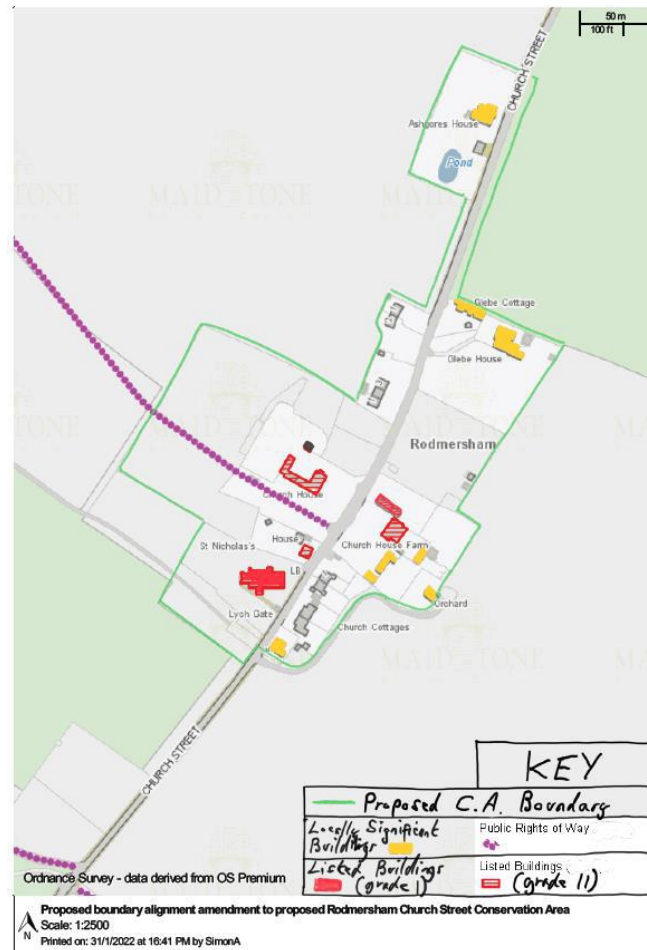
- The public consultation took place between November 2021 and January 2022 in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- A 7-week public consultation period was provided to comment on the consultation document
(1 extra week was provided to allow for the Christmas break)
- Documents were available to view on SBC website + hard copies at Sittingbourne Library and for Rodmersham residents, a hard copy was available on request from the parish clerk.
- Notification letters were sent to those directly or indirectly affected by proposed boundary changes and posters advertising the public consultation were posted on parish notice boards, at Swale House and at Sittingbourne Library
- Historic England and Kent County Council were formally consulted.
- The feedback received has been carefully considered, reported on and is likely to result in some changes being made to the appraisal document

5(a) Proposed Rodmersham Church Street Conservation Area: Summary of Heritage Significance

- A small settlement which originated as a farming community in the medieval period
- The ancient Parish Church and graveyard which provides a visual focus to the village and contrasts vividly with the domestic buildings roundabout.
- The architectural contribution made by several listed buildings as well as some noteworthy non-designated buildings.
- The eclectic mix of traditional local building styles, forms and building materials.
- The contribution which boundary walls, railings and fences make is a defining feature.
- The strong historic, visual and functional link between the settlement and its surrounding landscape, in particular the views which connect Rodmersham with its surrounding landscape and vice versa.
- The contribution which mature trees make to the character and appearance of the hamlet.



5(b) Proposed Rodmersham Church Conservation Area: Proposed Boundary Alignment *(as amended following public consultation)*



5(c) Proposed Rodmersham Church Street Conservation Area: Proposed Management Plan

Public realm + landscape & ecology enhancement opportunities:

- An audit of public signage (including highway signage) to establish whether there is scope to remove any overhead cables or poles, or to underground services.
- The removal of concrete road kerbs and their replacement with grassy verges or more appropriate kerbs.
- An audit of trees, hedgerows, green spaces and orchards may be undertaken to establish whether there is any scope for better management or for further planting
- Positive management may occasionally involve the removal of trees to restore, preserve or open up significant views

6. Next Steps

1. Comments on the appraisal document received within the consultation period have been documented, considered and referred to in any changes made to the documents as a result.
2. The Council's Local Plan Panel has recently considered and provided feedback on the appraisal document at its meeting in February 2022, as part of the consultation process. Officer recommendations were unanimously supported.
3. Following the recent consideration by the Local Plan Panel, no further changes are to be made to the assessment document, and a report has been produced recommending designation of the proposed new conservation area and adoption of the supporting document for development management purposes by the Council's Cabinet, at its meeting in March.
5. It's anticipated that the proposed new conservation area and appraisal & management plan document will be designated/adopted no later than the end of April 2022.
6. Following the designation of the new conservation area and adoption of the supporting document, meetings can take place between the Borough Council, the Parish Council, and any other relevant parties to initially discuss and then scope the nature and extent of work required to take forward the management plan guidelines and other possible actions. This will be subject to sufficient officer resource being available to do so.

Thank You For Listening

Any Questions?

