

# Ruscombe Conservation Area



Ruscombe Conservation Area was designated on 10 June 1971. This leaflet shows the extent of the area and explains the responsibilities of Wokingham District Council and property owners within the Conservation Area.

## Conservation in Wokingham District

Wokingham District Council wishes to preserve and enhance those parts of the District that are of special architectural or historic interest; certain areas are worthy of special protection and are therefore designated as conservation areas.

### What is a conservation area?

The character of conservation areas can vary considerably, but they are normally historic areas centred on a concentration of listed buildings. All the elements of the area are important in creating the character including street patterns, open spaces, trees, local materials and groups of buildings. They should have a strong sense of place, normally visually pleasing, representing a familiar and cherished local scene.



## What does designation of a conservation area mean?

### ❖ Control of demolition

Buildings within the conservation area cannot be demolished without the consent of the planning authority.

### ❖ Control of works to trees

Apart from those trees already protected by Tree Preservation Orders, no works can be carried out on trees within the conservation area without giving notice to the planning authority six weeks prior to the work being carried out.

### ❖ Advertisements

A high standard of control on the display of adverts is in force. New advertising must be in keeping with the character of the area.

### ❖ Local Plan Policies and Development Control

Control is also applied through the local plan policies. These state that all the features making up the character of the conservation area will be preserved and enhanced. There is a need to carefully consider the impact of new development proposals on the special character of the area. The design of new development within the area must be sympathetic, and in keeping with the existing character, giving special regard to the setting of listed buildings.

### ❖ Listed Buildings

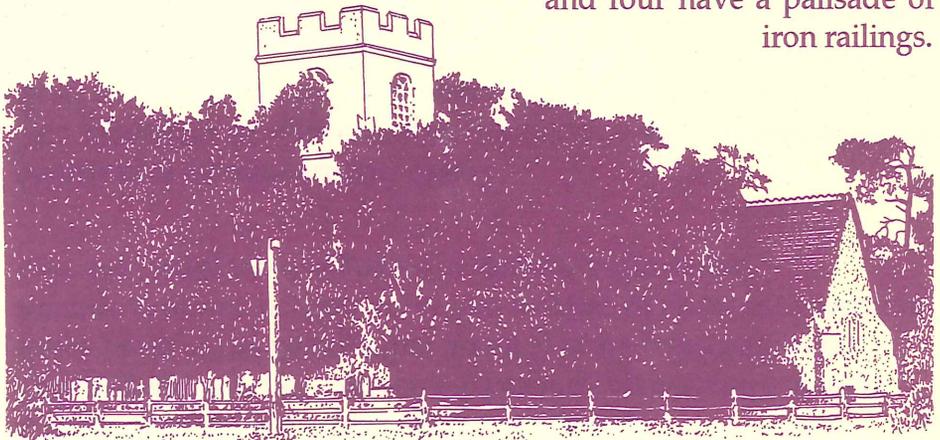
Conservation areas usually contain a number of listed buildings. These are buildings that because of their architectural or historical importance are placed on a nationally recognised list. Listed Building Consent is required to alter, including inside, extend or demolish a listed building.

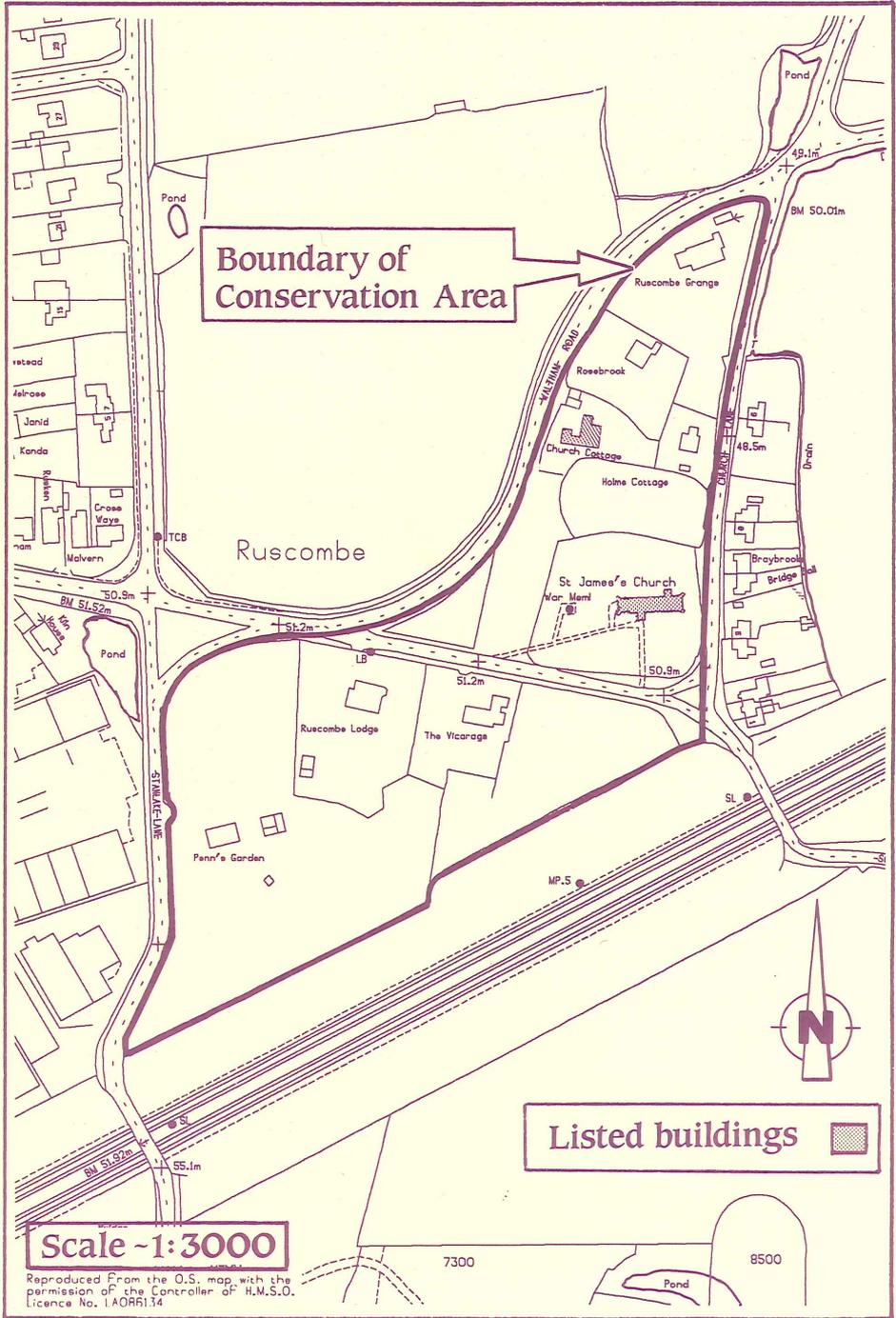
## The special character of Ruscombe

Ruscombe conservation area contains the core of the historic village settlement, with the impressive church of St. James at its centre. The open space adjacent to the church is all that remains of the former village green. In addition the tightly knit cottages which cluster around the church are built in the traditional soft orange/ red bricks and plain clay tiles.

The estate of Ruscombe had belonged to the cathedral of old Sarum in 1091, in 1535 the estate was divided into Ruscombe Northbury and Ruscombe Southbury. Northbury farmhouse, just north of the conservation area, had been the former manor house and is of sixteenth century origin. There had also been a manor house at Southbury, but this was demolished in the nineteenth century. The name Southbury has been retained at Southbury Farm.

The church of St. James is a fine example originating from the twelfth century, with late gothic additions and is listed grade one. The oldest part of the church is the chancel which is partly built in flint. The nave and the tower were rebuilt almost entirely of brick in 1638. Between 1870-80 the north organ chamber was added. A number of important monuments and interior features are worthy of note. There are also five listed tombs within the churchyard from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The tombs are stone topped, and four have a palisade of iron railings.





**Boundary of Conservation Area**

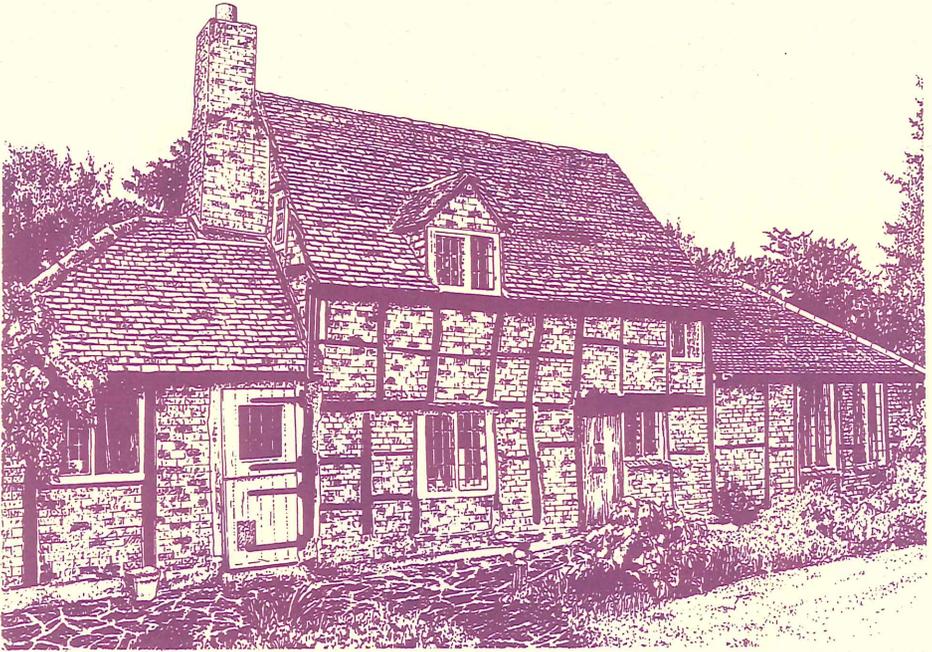
**Listed buildings**

**Scale ~ 1:3000**

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7300

8500



Church cottage (shown above), a listed building within the conservation area, is reputed to have been the original chaplains house but is no longer church property.

## Improvements to the Conservation Area

**What can owners/occupiers of buildings within the conservation area do, to help preserve and enhance it?**

- ❖ Seek advice on any changes proposed to buildings/ front boundaries from the Planning Department.
- ❖ Keep gardens tidy and shrubs trimmed.
- ❖ Retain existing front walls and repair sensitively. Removal of walls may require conservation area consent, check first with the Planning Department.

- ❖ Maintain buildings in good repair. Regular painting of exterior woodwork and rendering will help.
- ❖ Keep out-buildings in good repair.
- ❖ Seek advice from the Planning Department on the erection of new out-buildings; these include sheds, garages, greenhouses, conservatories; these may require planning consent or listed building consent.

In addition to works that individuals can carry out, the Planning Authority from time to time will carry out proposals for enhancement of the conservation area.



## Works to Listed Buildings

It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building. This would include alterations or extensions, full or partial demolition of the building.

To authorise works to listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is required, this is obtained from Wokingham District Council's Planning Department.

## Local Plan Policies

Just as conservation areas are protected by policies in the local plan, so are listed buildings. These seek to control the appropriate use of listed buildings, if a change of use is being considered.

## Specialist Advice

Expert conservation advice from Wokingham District Council is available free of charge to owners of listed buildings and residents of conservation areas. This includes advice on appropriate maintenance, repairs, alterations, and the need for Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent.

For more information please contact the Urban Design & Conservation Officer for WBC.  
Email: [development.control@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk) or  
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Produced by  
Wokingham District  
Council, Planning  
Department Dec. 1994

