

WARBLINGTON CONSERVATION AREA

1 INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Area is centred on the Ancient Church of St Thomas-a-Becket and the adjoining remains of Warblington Castle. It is one of the four Conservation Areas that have been designated which abut Langstone and Chichester Harbours. Two of the Conservation Areas embody the spirit of retaining and consolidating the open and non-developed landscape adjacent to the Langstone and Chichester Harbours (Mill Lane and Warblington) while the designations of Emsworth and Langstone lay great emphasis on the townscape quality adjacent to the waterfront.

Warblington Conservation Area is defined by Pook Lane to the west, which, before the construction of the Havant Bypass, led directly from Emsworth Road to Lymbourn Manor Quay and gave access to the Old Rectory. To the south the boundary follows the coastline and then returns northwards following the course of a natural spring. Field boundaries define the northern boundary.

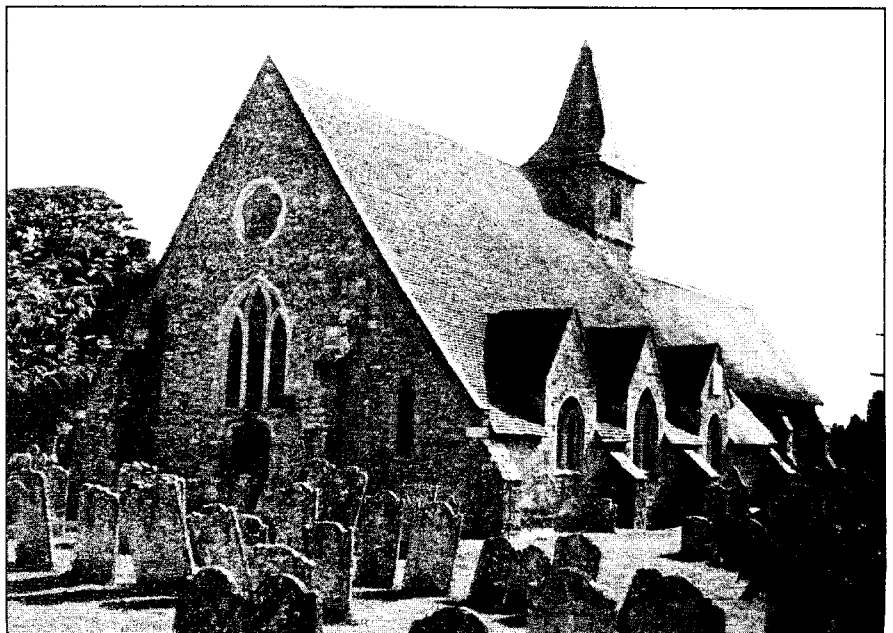
St Thomas-a-Becket Church

2 HISTORY

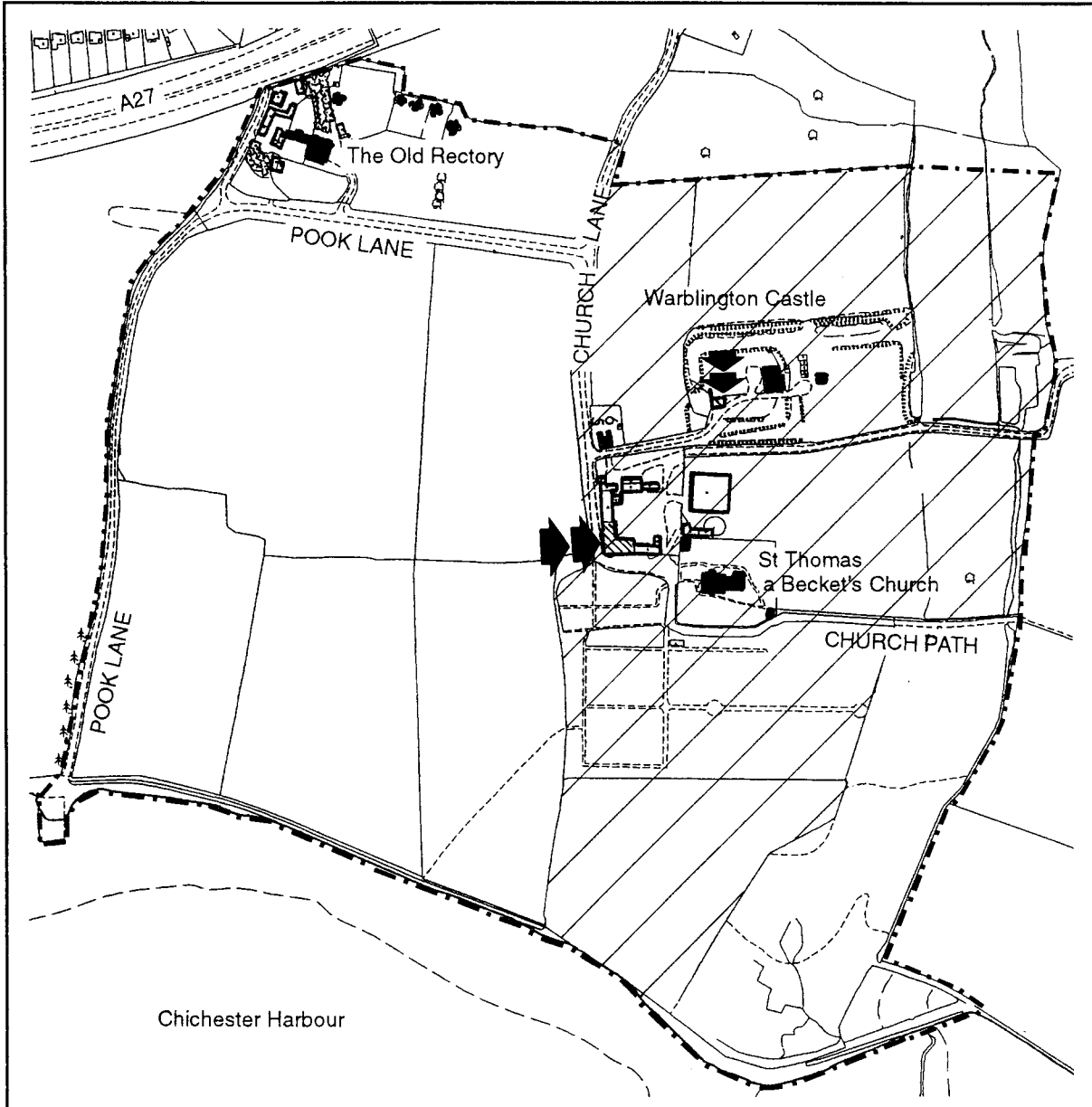
The Conservation Area has a long history of human occupation. To the north is the site of a Roman Villa built to the south of the Roman Road which ran from Chichester to Wickham, in fields now forming part of Warblington Castle Farm. A Saxon settlement was established in the vicinity of the present Church during the 6th Century and is mentioned in the Domesday Survey. However, in the 12th Century a reduction in sea level caused the creek at Warblington to become too shallow at most stages of the tide for local fishermen. There then began a gradual demise of the village

of Warblington with a corresponding rise in importance of the neighbouring settlement at Emsworth. The establishment of a market and fair in Emsworth in the 13th Century and the subsequent ravages of the Black Death contributed to this decline which culminated when a deer park was established in the middle of the 15th Century. This resulted in the remaining population of Warblington being moved to a site at the foot of Southleigh Road.


Between 1514 and 1526 Margaret Pole, The Countess of Salisbury, had built a large courtyard house at Warblington which became the chief residence of the Lords of the Manor. The house was



Warblington Conservation Area



KEY

Conservation Area Boundary 

Listed Buildings 

Ancient Monuments 

Tree Preservation Orders  

Area of Archaeological Importance 

Scale  Not to Scale



demolished in 1643 at the end of the Civil War, although one of the four gateway towers was retained as a dovecote and remains a prominent and distinctive feature along this part of the Hampshire coastline.

Since that time development has been sporadic, with scattered houses being built to meet the agricultural needs of the area.

3 THE RURAL CHARACTER

The Conservation Area is part of the open area of countryside bordering this stretch of Hampshire coastline separating the built-up areas of Havant and Emsworth. The hedged fields associated with the hinterland of many harbourside villages that were used for grazing working animals, are characteristic of the Conservation Area.

The Church of St Thomas-a-Becket has a number of significant yews within the churchyard while Warblington Castle Farmhouse and the Old Rectory have substantial tree planting within their grounds. Trees are also a significant feature in hedgerows along Pook Lane, although they are notably lacking in the field hedgerows to the west of the area. While they are a feature of the hedgerows to the east, here the hedgerows themselves are weak in places and need reinforcing. Besides their intrinsic merit these trees provide a backdrop to most internal views within the Conservation Area. To the south-west the land slopes gently down to the water with no sea wall hedgerow or woodland fringe separating the meadows from the foreshore. This open boundary is highly visible when viewed from Hayling Island and the harbour itself, although the hedgerow trees and tree groups further inland give an impression of woodland.

Warblington cemetery is sited centrally within the Conservation Area. It is surrounded by a strong hedge and tree

line of indigenous species which minimises the impact of the cemetery and its ornamental planting in the local scene.

4 THE BUILDINGS OF WARBLINGTON

Within the rural landscape are scattered a number of buildings which sit comfortably within the surrounding farmland, with the exception of Warblington Castle which is a prominent feature when viewed from all the surrounding points of public access. The majority of buildings within the Conservation Area are included in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and represent a diverse range of building types with a variety of materials used in their construction.

At the heart of the Conservation Area is the Church of St Thomas-a-Becket dating from the late 12th Century with alterations during the 13th, 15th and 19th Centuries. Externally the building is of flint and stone rubble with stone dressings and a tile roof. Two late 18th Century gravewatchers' huts, constructed in flint with slate roofs, stand at opposite corners of the Churchyard.

To the west of the Churchyard stands the Black Barn, a timber framed structure, while to the north is Warblington Castle, the surviving fragment of a large Tudor courtyard house in brick with stone dressings built for Margaret Pole, The Countess of Salisbury, between 1514 and 1526. Both these buildings are Ancient Monuments.

Stone is not a natural material to southern Hampshire and is not often found on domestic buildings in the area. The stone found in the construction of Warblington Castle Farmhouse and Warblington Castle Cottages (5 and 6 Church Lane) was

probably taken from the ruins of Warblington Castle.

In the north-west corner of the Conservation Area stands the Old Rectory, a Listed Building in the more traditional materials of the area, brick and tile.

5 VIEWS

A public footpath runs along the coast for approximately 250 metres to the east of Pook Lane before turning inland and running diagonally across a meadow to Warblington Cemetery. There are significant views across Chichester Harbour from the footpath and from the whole of the foreshore bordering the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, which is accessible at low states of the tide. There are also long views across the western meadows where distant hedgerow trees and tree groups provide a woodland backdrop.

6 ARCHAEOLOGY

The two ancient monuments within the Conservation Area are of course of great archaeological importance and the County Archaeologist must be consulted on any form of development which affects them. In addition the history of Warblington means that the area in general has an obvious archaeological significance and potential. The County Archaeologist has therefore identified the eastern half of the Conservation Area as being of archaeological importance and is consulted on any development which will cause ground disturbance.



Gravewatcher's Hut