

Local Development Framework  
Evidence Base

Canewdon Church Conservation  
Area Appraisal and Management  
Plan



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Canewdon is a large parish, which extends for several miles along the southern side of the Crouch estuary. The area has important historical associations, with old entrenchments that once existed between the village and the river believed to mark the site of Canute's camp before his victorious battle over Edmund Ironside in 1016<sup>1</sup>. The church lies at the western end of the village. Set high on a hill its massive tower is a conspicuous local landmark, and is widely thought to be the site of Canute's Minster.
- 1.2 There are two conservation areas in Canewdon village, one taking in most of the High Street, the other centred on the church. Canewdon Church conservation area (*Fig. 1*) comprises St Nicholas church and churchyard and The Vicarage and grounds, and covers the western end of the High Street where it meets the churchyard, taking in the village lock-up and stocks and Vicarage Cottage.
- 1.3 Conservation areas are 'Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Government Planning Policy Guidance 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, emphasises that our experience of historic areas depends on more than the quality of individual buildings. Other significant elements might include the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares, characteristic materials, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces or vistas along streets and between buildings.
- 1.4 Designation of a conservation area extends planning controls over certain types of development, including extensions, boundary treatments, the demolition of unlisted buildings and works to trees. However it does not prevent any change and the area may be subject to pressures (good and bad) that will affect its character and appearance. Although Canewdon is a relatively remote village, it still faces pressure for change including housing development, and in recent years the churchyard and its environs have become the focus of antisocial behaviour which threatens its special character.
- 1.5 Rochford District Council commissioned Essex County Council to prepare this conservation area appraisal and the research and fieldwork were carried out in July 2006.
- 1.6 The appraisal provides a brief development history of the current settlement, followed by a description and assessment of character. The contribution of different elements to the character is identified. Any issues which may affect the protection of character will be highlighted and opportunities for enhancement identified.

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<sup>1</sup> The Victoria County History (Vol. 1 1903) records a large oblong enclosure to the north of the church at Canewdon, which is identified on early OS maps as the supposed site of Canute's Camp. No above ground evidence of this survives.





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Fig. 1 Canewdon showing the two designated conservation areas and listed buildings (dotted)

## 2. CHARACTER STATEMENT

2.1 The conservation area encompasses the surviving elements of the historic church/hall settlement complex that historically remained separate from the more linear village settlement further east along the High Street. The east gate of the churchyard marks the transition from the intimate enclosure of the High Street to the open rural setting of the churchyard with its broad views across the landscape. From its elevated position the massive ancient tower of Canewdon Church is an important local landmark and sacred site, steeped in folklore and tradition. The conservation area has a rich architectural heritage, embracing four dramatically different buildings varying in scale from the church with its mighty tower to the diminutive parish lock-up, and displays a varied palette of materials including stone, flintwork, brick, weatherboard, render and clay tiles. Through these visually disparate buildings the conservation area carries a strong sense of place and of history, each one having contributed in its own way to the development of the village. The conservation area retains historical integrity both in its layout and in its architecture with few modern intrusions, in contrast to the High Street where significant modern development has occurred. The contributions of green open space, trees and hedgerows, and the informality of the spaces emphasise the essentially rural character of the area.

### **3. STATUTORY PROTECTION WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA (Fig. 2)**

- 3.1 Canewdon Church conservation area was designated in March 1986.
- 3.2 There are 6 listed structures in the conservation area, including the church, The Vicarage, Vicarage Cottage, a headstone and a table tomb, and the village lock-up and stocks. The church is designated Grade II\*, the remainder are all Grade II.
- 3.3 There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the conservation area.
- 3.4 There are no public rights of way indicated on the Definitive Map of footpaths in Essex.
- 3.5 The conservation area lies within Green Belt.
- 3.6 One large horse chestnut tree on the southern boundary of the churchyard is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Another horse chestnut adjacent to the village lock-up is also protected by a TPO, and is one of a group of eight horse chestnuts protected by TPOs, the remainder of which are outside the conservation area. Other trees within the conservation area enjoy protection in as much as anyone within a conservation area carrying out works to a tree must give written notification to the local planning department at least six weeks beforehand.

# Canewdon Church Conservation Area

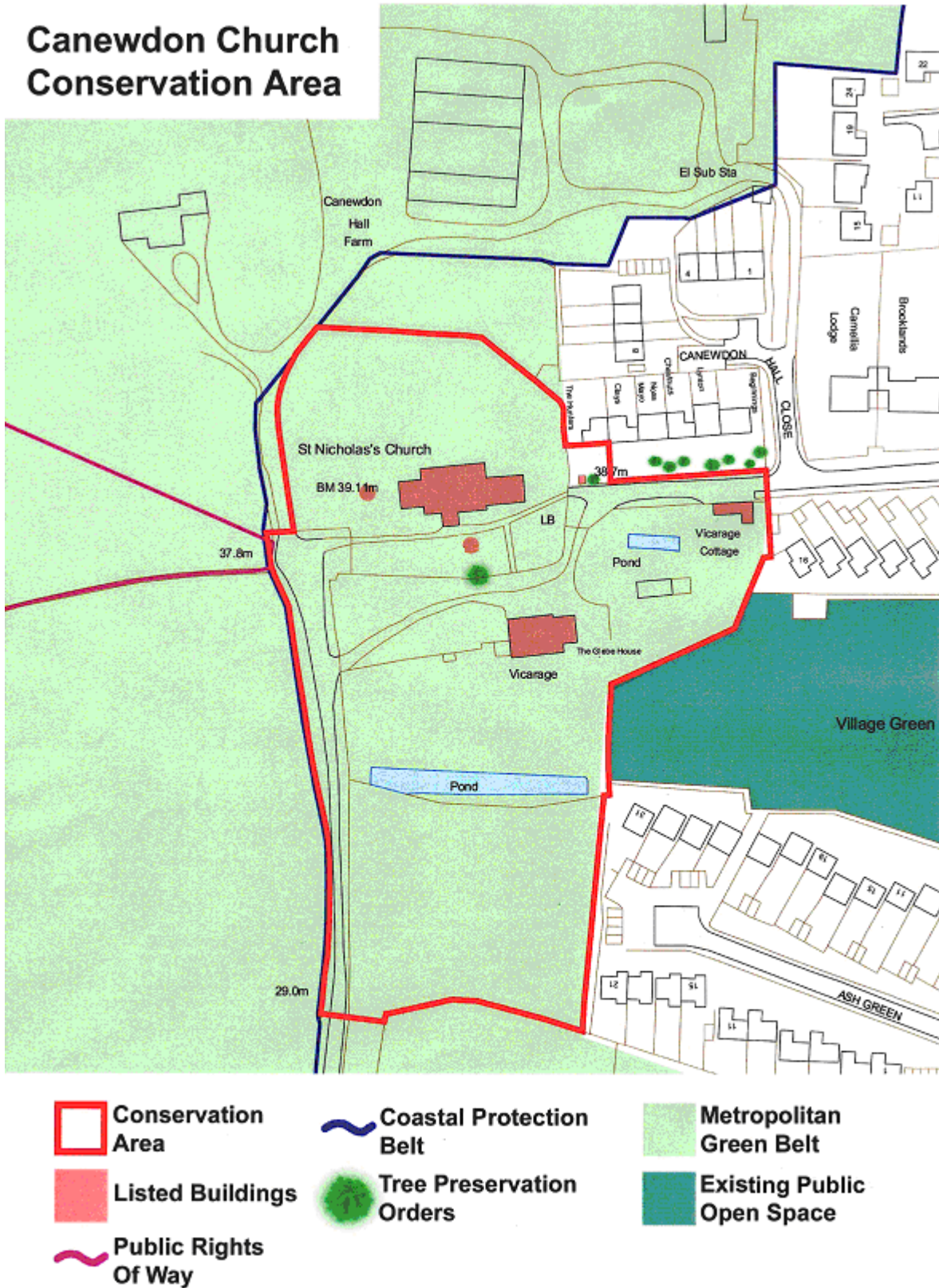


Fig. 2 Canewdon Church conservation area showing statutory designations.

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## **4. PLANNING POLICIES**

- 4.1 Rochford District Replacement Local Plan was adopted in June 2006. Its objectives include the maintenance and enhancement of local heritage.
- 4.2 The Replacement Local Plan includes specific planning objectives to protect and enhance the historic character of settlements, particularly within conservation areas, and to formulate and publish a detailed assessment of each conservation area, indicating townscape features, buildings and spaces that distinguish the character of each conservation area, to be taken into consideration when new development is being proposed.
- 4.3 The Replacement Local Plan contains policies (BC1-2) formulated to ensure the preservation of the special character of the conservation areas and to promote good design within them. Further guidance for the assessment of proposals for development in conservation areas is provided in Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 6.
- 4.4 The Replacement Local Plan also includes a range of policies dealing with development in Green Belt (policies R1-R10), and there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The preservation of the character of historic towns and villages including Canewdon is included in the Council's objectives in applying Green Belt policies.

## **5. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Location and landscape setting**

- 5.1 Canewdon lies in the north of Rochford District, south of the Crouch estuary. The town of Rochford is approximately four miles to the south west.
- 5.2 The main village settlement is surrounded by Green Belt, and is bounded to the west and north by Coastal Protection Belt which follows the western boundary of the Canewdon Church conservation area.
- 5.3 The geology of the wider area comprises brickearth deposits overlying patches of head and gravel. The village occupies a low hill of London Clay about 30m above sea level, south of the marshes. The hill is one of the highest on the Essex coastline, and the church commands a dominant position on the western edge of the village with wide views across the Crouch estuary. The hilltop location is reflected in the settlement name which has the Saxon meaning 'hill of Cana's people' (Reaney 1935).
- 5.4 The coastal landscape of the Crouch Estuary has changed considerably over time. Until the post-medieval period the tidal marshes bordering the Crouch estuary came much closer to the village. Between the edge of the London Clay on which the village now sits and the river was a broad sweep of coastal marsh which would have been bisected by numerous small creeks and tidal channels. Much of it may have been submerged with each high tide. Piecemeal embankment and drainage of the marshes took place throughout the medieval

and early post-medieval period until final enclosure in 1774. The coastal marshes are under renewed threat from rising sea-levels (Medlycott 2003).

- 5.5 The surrounding landscape is predominantly composed of arable fields. Boundary loss has resulted in large prairie fields in places, but there is a rectilinear pattern of fields along the axis of the main east-west roads through the village representing a more historic field structure, perhaps pre-medieval in date.
- 5.6 The village stands on a quiet country road leading from Hullbridge eastwards to the reclaimed land between the Crouch and the Roach estuaries, terminating at Wallasea Island. The church and churchyard close the High Street at its western end, and can also be reached via a lane that climbs the hill off Lark Hill Road. This lane also provides access to The Vicarage and Canewdon Hall Farm.

## Historical development<sup>2</sup>

- 5.7 Despite a lack of formal archaeological excavations a range of sites and deposits are known at Canewdon reflecting multi-period occupation from at least the Neolithic (4,000-2,000 BC). The elevated position of the site made it an attractive choice for early settlers, and its proximity to the coast was valuable for sea trading and salt production. Prehistoric and Roman settlement in the area comprised farmsteads and cemeteries on the higher ground, and salterns and other coastal sites fringing the edges of the marshes. Gravel extraction in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the north of the church revealed a cremation cemetery of unknown date. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gravel extraction revealed an important range of prehistoric remains including a Neolithic axe hoard and Iron Age burials. One of the most significant finds from the area is the Bronze Age Canewdon paddle, now in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, which demonstrates the close links with the coastal environment. The area to the north of the present settlement is characterised by a line of Iron Age or Roman Red Hills (salt production sites) marking the edge of the coastal marsh at that date.
- 5.8 The earliest documentary reference to the place-name of Canewdon is in the Domesday Book of 1086, although the place name indicates earlier Saxon origins (Reaney, 1935). The area between Canewdon and Ashingdon is widely believed to have been the site of the important battle of *Assandune* between the Saxons under Edmund Ironside and the armies of the Danish King Canute. Canewdon is identified in local folklore as the site of King Canute's camp, and Canewdon church is a possible candidate for the site of the Minster built by Canute in 1020 to commemorate the war-dead. However the location of both the battle site and the Minster are matters of academic dispute.
- 5.9 The Domesday Book records Canewdon at the very end of the Saxon period in 1066, at which time there were a total of 28 households. The lands belonged to Swein of Essex, the principal land-holder of the Rochford area, who would have had a hall there. Although the location of the hall is not proven, Canewdon Hall

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<sup>2</sup> For the history of Canewdon from an archaeological perspective, see Medlycott 2003, and for Canewdon and the wider historic environment of Rochford District see the Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project report of 2005. General village history can be found in publications by Ken Smith.

which lay to the north of the church (outside the present conservation area and now occupied by Canewdon Hall Close) is the most logical site. The parish church of St Nicholas is known to have been in existence in 1100, when the advowson was acquired by Prittlewell Priory, and it is probable that a church existed on the site prior to the Norman Conquest. The location of the late Saxon settlement is unproven, but comparison with other sites would suggest that a number of households would have been clustered close to the church and hall. The remainder would have been scattered throughout the parish in individual farms and cottages.

- 5.10 By the beginning of the medieval period the area was divided into five manorial holdings, Canewdon Hall, Pudsey Hall, Apton Hall, Scotts Hall and Lambourne Hall. The principal manor of Canewdon comprised 26 households in 1086, whilst the four smaller manors had 19 households between them. The medieval settlement is thought to have consisted of a mix of village settlement close to the church and Canewdon Hall, individual manorial holdings, and scattered farms and cottages.
- 5.11 Canewdon Hall which, together with the church, formed the focus for early settlement in Canewdon, was at one time a fortified or moated mansion. Morant (1768) recorded that Canewdon Hall “hath been a strong fortified place, in the manner of a castle, doubly trenched and fenced after the oldest fashion. The remains of the moates are still visible”. The Hall was rebuilt around 1807. Parts of the medieval moated complex were still visible in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when local historian Philip Benton reported on the site (Benton 1867), and moated earthworks are indicated on the First Edition OS map of 1873. The buildings were demolished in 1966 and the moat levelled. Canewdon Hall Close was built on the site.
- 5.12 The church, dedicated to St Nicholas, is unusually large for a rural parish church. The majority of the church as it stands today, including the nave, chancel and north aisle, is of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century date, and we have no information on whether the great size of this building reflects an earlier church on the site. On the north side of the chancel was the de Chanceaux Chantry or chapel, now demolished. The tower is early 15<sup>th</sup> century and is exceptionally tall and substantial. Its height meant that it served as a navigation landmark for shipping within the Crouch during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. In local folklore, Canewdon and the surrounding area has strong associations with witchcraft, and local tradition has it that whilst the church tower stands there will always be six witches in the village. From the top of the church tower there are extensive views of the surrounding countryside.
- 5.13 A vicarage was ordained in Canewdon in about 1231 by Roger Niger, bishop of London. The vicarage house and grounds were located to the south of the church. A purpose built vicarage of red brick construction, was built by George Walker in 1758 on the presumed site of the medieval vicarage. A map of 1788 shows that The Vicarage once had a formal arrangement of south-facing gardens leading down the hill, with outbuildings arranged around a courtyard (Fig. 3). The Vicarage is now in private ownership. It is Grade II listed.



Fig. 3. Map of Vicarage Lands, 1788 (ERO D/DU 743).



Fig. 4 Chapman and André map, 1777.

- 5.14. A degree of nucleation took place in the later medieval and post-medieval period with the development of the village along the High Street to the east of the church and hall, as well as more dispersed settlement around the four smaller manorial halls and scattered isolated farms and cottages. The extent and location of the later medieval village settlement can be assessed from the 1777 Essex map of Chapman and André, which shows the church/hall complex and a line of dwellings along the southern edge of the High Street (Fig. 4).
- 5.15. The village lock-up or cage, used by the parish constable for the temporary imprisonment of felons, is believed to have been constructed in 1775. It was originally located along with the stocks now housed within it close to the village pond. About 1913 the cage and stocks were moved to Anchor Lane, with a charge of one penny made to view the interior, and the building underwent large-scale restoration at the time. It was moved to its present position outside the east gate of the churchyard in 1938.
- 5.16. Recent excavations in the south-west corner of the churchyard to install a new septic tank uncovered human remains in a grave likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century date. This was a relatively wealthy individual, buried in a decorated coffin with good quality iron fittings. The excavations also revealed part of a brick wall with a window opening housing an iron grille that appeared to be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date, and was most probably the cellar of a now removed building. This may be the remains of Churchyard House, which is shown on the Tithe Award map of 1840 (Fig. 5), although it does not appear on the Chapman and André map of 1777. A building is marked in this location subdivided into two dwellings by the time of the First OS map of 1873, and had disappeared by the time of the 1974 edition (Hillman-Crouch 2006). A second small weatherboarded building existed to the west of the tower at about the same time, the purpose of which is not known.

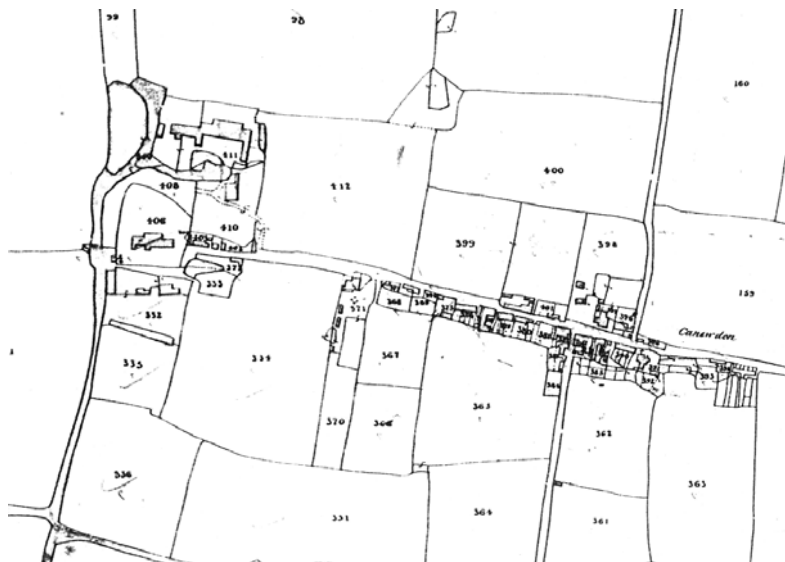


Fig. 5 Tithe map, 1840.

- 5.17. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a number of new buildings were erected which were to play a key role in community life. These included a school and schoolmaster's house, built in 1799 on the south side of the High Street using parishioners' money on Poors' Land. The schoolhouse was used until at least the 1850s, when a new school was erected further along the High Street, at which point the old building became the residence of the schoolmaster. The old school is now known as Vicarage Cottage and is a private residence.
- 5.18. By 1801 the population was 569, rising to 723 in 1841, and declining once more to 495 in 1901. The local economy was based on coastal industries, agriculture and the brick industry, but economic prosperity declined during the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century. Writing in 1867, Philip Benton recorded that the area already exhibited a degree of neglect, with some houses unfit for human habitation, and 'few recreations ... except those enjoyments afforded by the public houses'.

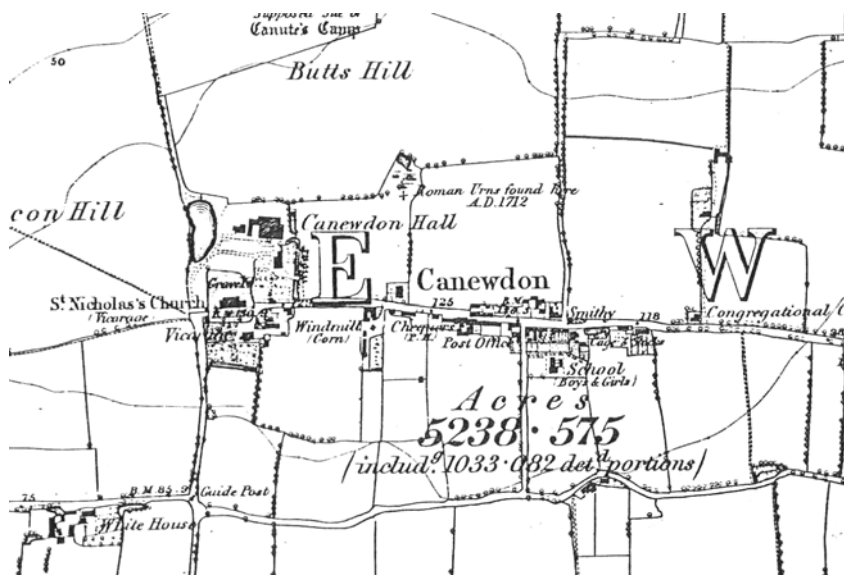


Fig. 6 Canewdon from the 1st edition OS map, 1873. Further development has occurred to the north of the High Street, but the west end towards the church is undeveloped



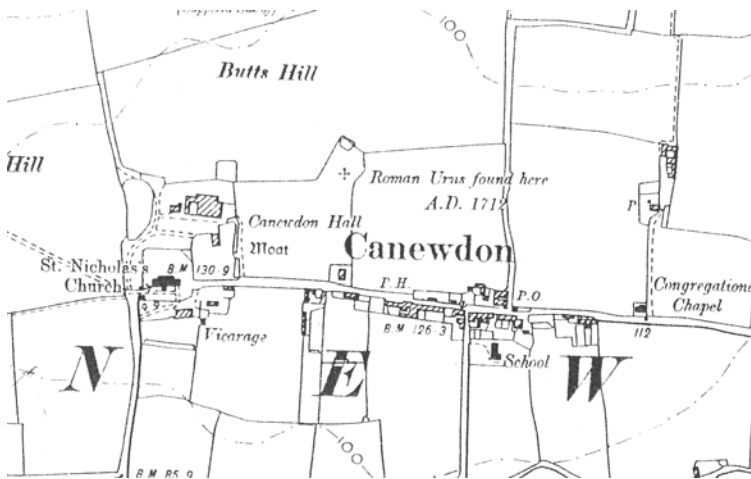


Fig. 7 Canewdon from the 2nd edition OS map, 1897. This map shows the continuing separation between the church/hall complex and the village settlement along the High Street.

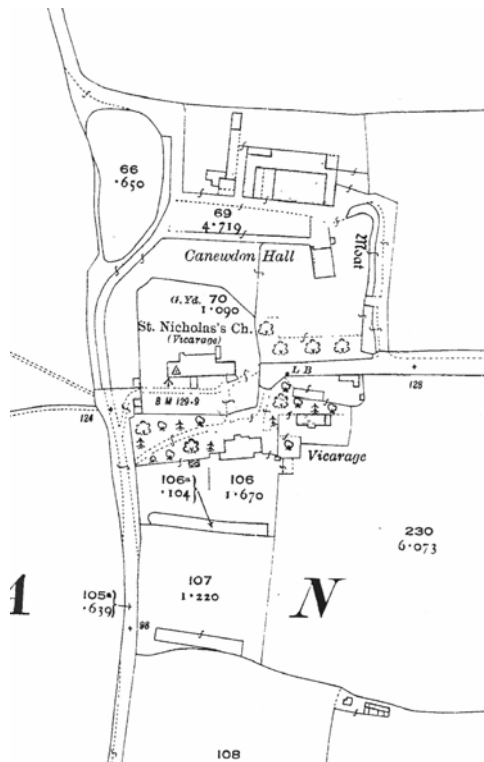


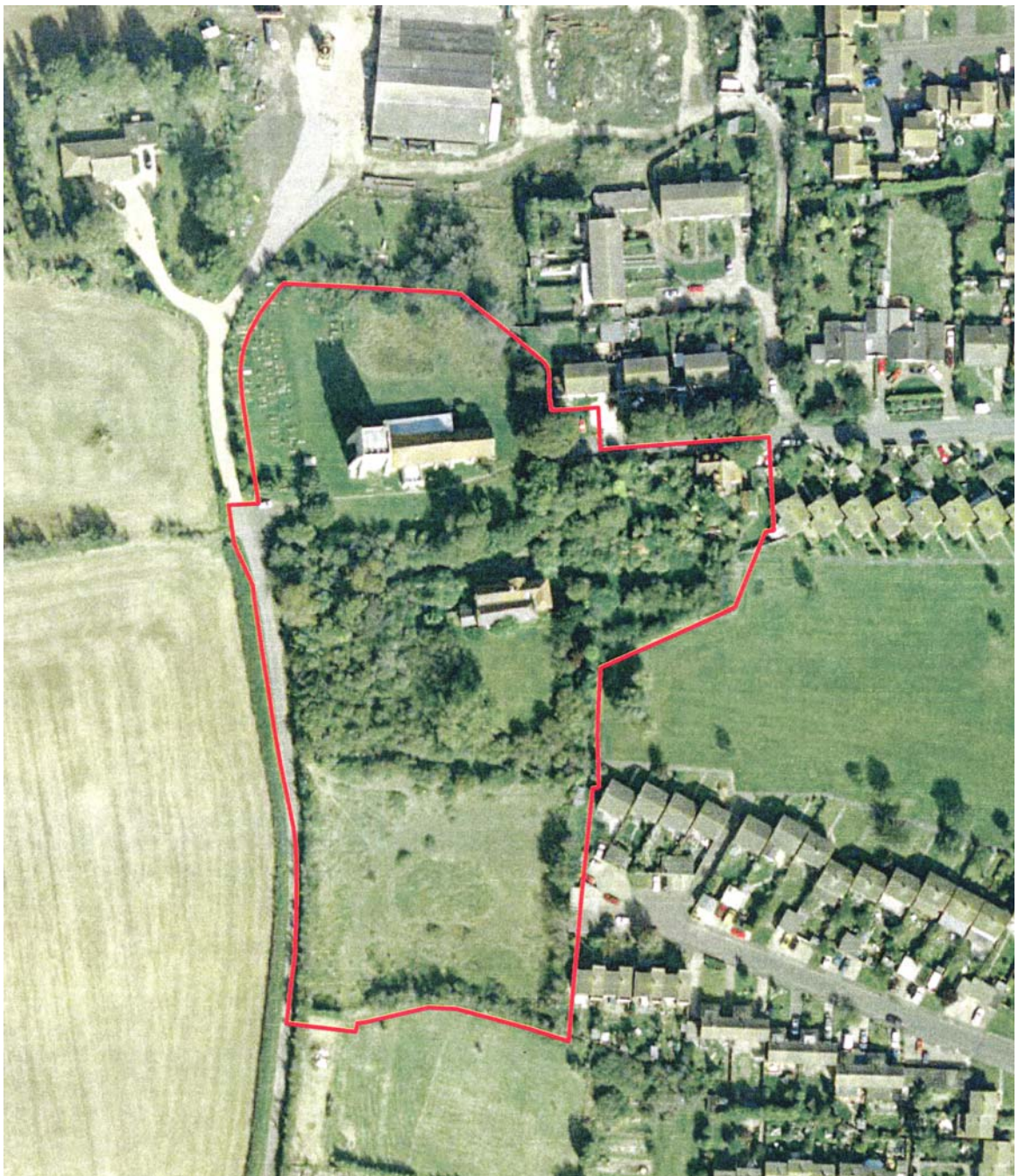
Fig. 8 Canewdon Hall, church and vicarage from the 3<sup>rd</sup> OS map, 1924. At this time remains of the moat from the earlier hall are still visible north east of the church. The map shows that trees made an important contribution to the grounds north of The Vicarage. A line of trees is also shown to the north of the High Street.

5.19. Canewdon village was significantly extended by residential development in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the building of the model village to the south west in the 1960s. Today the village offers a wide range of local services including village stores, pubs and a school, and it is a close knit community. The 2001 census revealed the population of the parish to be 1477 with 558 households. The area includes Wallsea Island, a popular centre for sailing and fishing, and the site of an ambitious project to create new wetland habitat by breaching the old sea walls.

## 6. CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### Spatial Analysis

- 6.1 The Canewdon Church conservation area focuses on the parish church and churchyard and the vicarage and grounds, including the lane to the west as far as the boundary of the vicarage grounds. It also encompasses the western end of the High Street, taking in Vicarage Cottage and the village lock-up.
- 6.2 The conservation area can be approached either from the east along the High Street or from the south via a small lane off Lark Hill Road.



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*Fig. 9 Aerial photograph of conservation area.*

- 6.3 From the village green there are views into the conservation area, which has a hedge boundary with trees and scrub. The church tower rises above the trees with glimpses of the red brick vicarage through gaps in the hedge. Vicarage Cottage and its gardens are also visible from the green. Despite the modern housing around the green, the rural quality of the adjoining conservation area creates an impression of a traditional village setting overlooked by the parish church (*Fig. 10*).



*Fig. 10 The church viewed from the village green.*

- 6.4 Approached from the High Street the conservation area lies beyond the transitional zone of modern housing development that separates it from the High Street conservation area. This is a quiet stretch of the High Street that carries no through traffic. The view towards the conservation area narrows towards the end of the street with mature trees obscuring the view of the church and churchyard beyond (*Fig. 11*). An old iron side gate with a heart-shaped detail and adjacent wooden gate terminate the street, inviting further investigation and progression to the end (*Fig. 12*).



*Fig. 11 High Street.*



*Fig. 12 High Street.*

6.5 Vicarage Cottage, a white rendered cottage, marks the start of the conservation area, at which point the kerbed pavement ends and the High Street becomes less formal. Opposite the cottage, a row of mature horse chestnut trees in the open front gardens of modern houses set well back from the road enclose the northern edge of the street.

6.6 Just before reaching the gate into the churchyard, a driveway branches round to the left, and here the view opens out across a field gate to the red brick vicarage, a two storey building with a crow-stepped gable and off-centre porch (Fig. 13).



*Fig. 13 View from the High Street to The Vicarage.*

6.7 From within the churchyard, the view opens out, and the elevated position of the site is immediately apparent with exceptional views to the distant landscape beyond the boundaries (Fig. 14). If it is possible to climb the church tower, yet more expansive views can be obtained. From the east gate of the churchyard, a path passes south of the church, drawing the visitor through to another gate on the west side (Fig. 15). From this path the wide front elevation of the vicarage is clearly visible over the boundary wall with views across its grounds emphasising the open rural setting. The boundary between the churchyard and the vicarage grounds is defined partly by an old red brick wall that has collapsed in places, and by a newly planted laurel hedge planted within the vicarage boundary.



*Fig. 14 Churchyard looking south-west.*



*Fig. 15 Churchyard, east side.*

6.8 The space is generally more open and sparse on the north side, except in the north-west corner where the majority of the graves are clustered (Fig. 16).

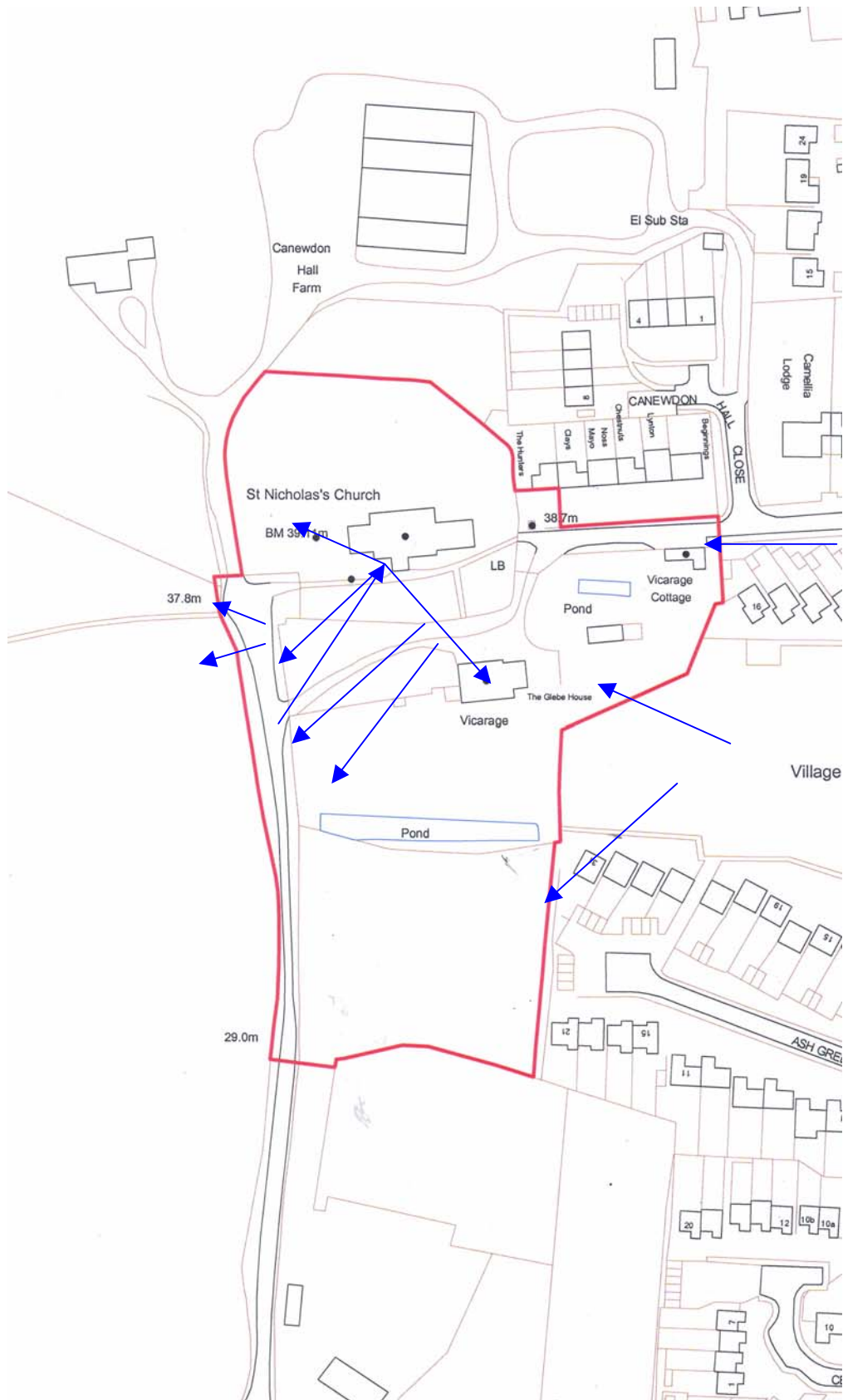


*Fig. 16 North side of the churchyard looking north-west.*

- 6.9 The boundary around the northern edge of the churchyard is defined by a low wooden post and rail fence with a thin hedgerow and occasional mature trees that allow frequent views out. The buildings of Canewdon Hall Farm are visible to the north through gaps in the hedge. Modern housing adjoins the churchyard to the north east.
- 6.10 The lane running off Lark Hill Road is a historic route leading to Canewdon Hall. It climbs the hill to the church tower in a gentle curve that draws the eye upwards, providing visual drama as the massive tower reveals itself above the surrounding trees and hedgerow (*Fig. 17*). The lane is edged with hedgerow contributing to the rural character, and the modern housing developments of Canewdon village are visible across paddocks to the east. Field gates provide access to the vicarage grounds from the lane. At the top of the hill the lane opens up to provide a parking area by the west gate to the churchyard, and a field gate leads through to Canewdon Hall Farm. Gaps in the hedge at the top of the lane allow expansive views north towards the Crouch estuary and west across arable fields towards Ashingdon.



*Fig. 17 Lane leading up to the church.*



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Fig. 18 Important views in, out and through the conservation area.

## Character Analysis

- 6.11 The main focus of the conservation area is provided by the churchyard and vicarage grounds, which are characterised by their open and rural setting. However the western end of the High Street is also included which is of a more enclosed and intimate in character, and has been treated as a sub-area of the main conservation area.

### Churchyard and Vicarage Grounds

- 6.12 The churchyard and vicarage grounds follow the historic layout as they appear in the 1788 map of Vicarage Lands at Canewdon (*Fig. 3*). The churchyard is dominated by the grey Ragstone church which is unusually large for a rural parish church and separates the more enclosed and varied south side of the churchyard from the extensive and open north side. The south side of the churchyard is overlooked by the red brick façade of The Vicarage, and views of the vicarage grounds fall away over the churchyard wall.
- 6.13 The large parish church provides the focus for the conservation area (*Fig. 19*). It is mainly constructed of Kentish Ragstone with some septaria and flint and limestone dressings. The building is about 38.5 metres in length, and 14 metres wide (excluding the south porch). The roof is mainly red plain tile, with lead over the north aisle. The dominant feature of the church is the early 15<sup>th</sup> century tower, which is an important local landmark clearly visible on the skyline, and provides an exceptional viewing point to the surrounding landscape. It is about 23 metres in height, and is constructed of ashlar Ragstone, and is heavily buttressed with crenellations with flint chequerwork. The tower was restored in 1998. Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining new Kentish Ragstone to match the original. New stone from the Nicholls quarries at Folkestone was used which although geologically similar to the original proved to be an unsatisfactory match. It is not now considered suitable for repairing historical Ragstone buildings. In view of the prominence of the tower, it is important that any future repairs use matching Ragstone. This can be obtained provided there is sufficient early planning and allowance is made for long delivery times. Although the building is generally in good condition, at the time of visiting the door to the west tower had been removed for repair following damage during an attempted break-in, and some windows were broken as a result of vandalism. Some windows are protected by grilles and more are to be installed in the future. Building work is underway to introduce new facilities into the church including toilets, with the intention that the building will be used for a wider range of community activities. The church is Grade II\* listed.



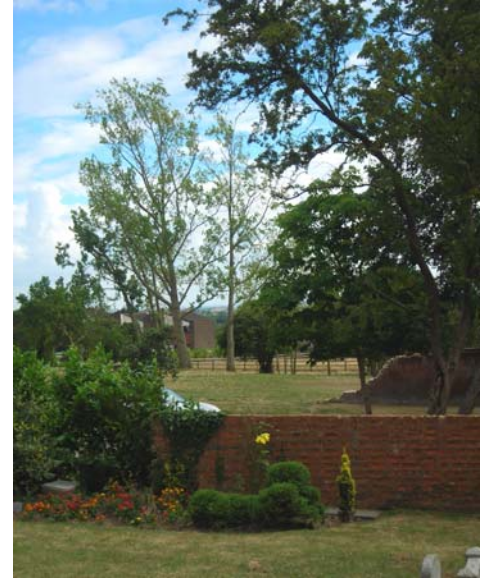
*Fig. 19 The north side of the church.*

- 6.14 The vicarage stands close to the churchyard boundary on the south east and is a fine brick building with an elegant façade that is clearly visible over the low boundary wall, providing architectural contrast with the church (*Fig. 20*). A memorial in the church records that the vicarage was built by George Walker M.A. in 1758. There have been extensive 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations since this date. It is constructed of warm red brick laid in Flemish bond with some burnt black headers, with a plain clay tile roof to the front range and vertical sliding sash windows. The off-centre 19<sup>th</sup> century crow stepped gable and gabled porch add interest to the elevation. Other elevational details include a brick string course running at first floor level across the east end and the gable and an eaves cornice. The Vicarage and its grounds are currently undergoing extensive sympathetic repairs and restoration. The grounds had become overgrown but are being tidied and a red brick garden wall which is a significant feature visible from the churchyard is being repaired. A new laurel hedge has been planted along the boundary with the churchyard, where perhaps a more mixed hedge of native species would have been more appropriate to the rural character of the area.





*Fig. 20 The Vicarage viewed over the churchyard boundary wall.*



*Fig. 21 The vicarage grounds.*

- 6.15 In the churchyard the low red brick boundary wall around the southern perimeter is an important feature. Although there have been recent repairs to the wall, much of it is in a very poor state of repair, collapsed in places, or exhibiting serious structural cracks. Cement pointing in some sections has resulted in decay of the soft brick and further deterioration. Hedgerow around the perimeter contributes to the rural character of the area, and allows frequent views out to take in broad vistas of the surrounding countryside. There is evidence that encroaching scrub has been cleared from the boundary recently, but there is still a degree of encroachment which if left unchecked will alter the form of the churchyard.
- 6.16 The churchyard south of the church is of different character to the north, and is more enclosed with much visual interest, texture and detail. It is overlooked by The Vicarage, emphasising the important historic relationship with the church. There are tombstones of varying design in an irregular arrangement, including upright headstones and flat body tombs. A small Garden of Remembrance is defined by a low rope barrier. The brick boundary wall adds colour and texture, with planting, shrubs and scrub around the boundary. A tarmac path passes round the south side of the church, past the attractive south porch with its flint chequerwork crenellations (*Fig. 23*). Another path, now grassed over but visible as a shallow ditch, leads from a blocked 14<sup>th</sup> century door in the south wall of the church to a small gate in the boundary wall heading towards The Vicarage, reinforcing the historic link between the two. There is one Grade II listed headstone adjacent to the path, dated 1691, next to which is a table tomb with a red brick plinth (*Fig. 22*). With the exception of the boundary wall which is in urgent need of repair, this part of the churchyard is generally well maintained, and there has been some recent clearance of scrub. A few gravestones however have become rather overgrown or have suffered collapse.



*Fig. 22 Listed headstone adjacent to a table tomb.*



*Fig. 23 The south porch.*

- 6.16 The north side of the churchyard is more open, with the majority of the graves clustered in the north-west corner, including the most recent. The churchyard is clearly in active use with well tended graves and colourful plantings of flowers. The graves are of varying design, and mostly arranged in neat rows. There are few grand monuments in the churchyard, but there is a fine Grade II listed table tomb west of the church tower dated 1795, with a moulded top slab, bulbous corner pilasters with moulded capitals and bases (*Fig. 24*). This tomb has undergone repairs in recent years following vandalism, and the iron railings around it have been reinstated. There are a high number of post-war wooden crosses, probably reflecting a past decline in economic prosperity. Some are now 40 years old or more, and they have become a characteristic feature of the churchyard (*Fig. 25*). Several memorial trees have been planted in the open area to the north of the church, adding visual interest particularly in the otherwise sparse open area. The buildings of Canewdon Hall Farm are visible through gaps in the hedge, and these do not unduly detract from the character and setting of the churchyard. To the north and north east the churchyard is generally of less visual interest, with fewer views out to the surrounding countryside and modern housing in close proximity. There is a heap of cleared scrub and flowers tidied from graves, together with a water trough and some containers evidently for use by families tending graves. This heap includes discarded plastic bottles, polystyrene and other rubbish, and is unsightly in the otherwise well maintained churchyard.



*Fig. 24 Listed table tomb.*



*Fig. 25 Wooden cross.*

- 6.17 The west entrance of the churchyard has a metal gate with a wooden post and rail fence, and leads to a small parking area (*Fig. 26*). There is an iron side gate with a heart detail matching that at the east end which has been incorporated into the fence. At the time of visiting this presented a rather unattractive entrance to the churchyard, but as building work was underway at the time this is likely to improve. A new cess pit has recently been dug in the south west corner adjacent to the gate to provide toilet facilities in the church. The northern end of the lane leading to the church with rough grass edging and hedgerow on each side contributes to the attractive rural character and low level management of this lane is important to retaining this quality.



*Fig. 26 The west gate.*

## High Street

- 6.18 The High Street east of the churchyard is quiet and informal, contrasting with the rest of the High Street. This part of the street carries no through traffic, although it is used for car parking. The detached rural quality follows the historic settlement pattern, providing a degree of separation from the more developed stretch of the High Street. The enclosed, intimate scale of the street provides an experience in marked contrast to the grandeur of the church and the sweeping views from within the churchyard.
- 6.19 Vicarage Cottage stands on the street edge on the south side, and was built in 1799 on charitable property known as Poors Land to serve as the village school and schoolmaster's house<sup>3</sup> (*Fig. 27*). It is a white rendered timber framed cottage with black and white painted joinery and a plain clay tile roof. It is one storey with two gabled dormers and 19<sup>th</sup> century small paned casement windows. The off-centre door has a small clay tiled gabled hood. An early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the cottage shows that it was once fully weatherboarded, a material that was historically more prevalent in the vernacular architecture of the village than it is now. The cottage is Grade II listed.



*Fig. 27 Vicarage Cottage*

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<sup>3</sup> More information on the charities of Canewdon can be found in Crowe (2002).

- 6.20 The village lock-up sits just outside the east gate of the churchyard, and is a curious shed-like building, timber framed with black weatherboard and a clay tiled roof, positioned gable-end to the road (*Fig.28*). It has a vertically boarded door with two strap hinges and crossed metal straps. The door is sometimes left open to reveal the village stocks on the floor inside. The structure is in good condition, having undergone significant restoration in 1983. However until recently a board hung over the door identifying the building, along with a round plaque presented to the village for the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Domesday Book. Both these were recently stolen. This little structure is a good survival of a building type that has been lost from many villages, and is a fascinating nugget of social history<sup>4</sup>. The stocks and cage are Grade II listed.



*Fig. 28 The village lock-up.*

- 6.21 The northern edge of the street opposite Vicarage Cottage is bordered by a row of mature horse chestnuts trees. A row of trees is shown here in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition OS map of 1924 (*Fig. 8*). These trees are protected by TPOs but are outside the conservation area boundary, although they are essential to the green and rural character of this part of the High Street. They provide screening from modern housing that might otherwise detract from the undeveloped quality of this part of the street, and help to soften the negative effect of hard landscaping of front gardens that might otherwise intrude on the street scene.

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<sup>4</sup> More information on village lock ups is available from the Village Lock-Up Association which is carrying out a national survey of surviving structures. Further information and contact details are available through the Historic Environment Information Resources Portal (Heirport) on the Archaeology Data Service website at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>.

## **Problems and pressures**

- 6.22 Canewdon Churchyard has in recent years become the focus for anti-social behaviour which has resulted in some damage to the historic fabric and undermines attempts to make repairs and improvements. A recent attempted break-in at the church caused damage to the ancient west door, and church windows have been broken by stones. Gravestones have also been damaged. Rails from a new wooden fence that is being built by the west gate have been stolen. The sign and plaque over the door of the Grade II listed village lock-up have been forcibly removed. The threat of vandalism has necessitated the introduction of protective measures, including grilles over church windows and cages around the church floodlights (previously the floodlights were stolen). These essentially urban interventions undermine the tranquil rural character of the conservation area.
- 6.23 The churchyard boundary wall is in a serious state of disrepair, despite some repairs having been made. This has partly been caused by previous cementitious repairs, but structural problems have also resulted due to the instability of the ground, the site being located on slumping London clay, and from damage caused by encroaching scrub. Localised rebuilding and repairs are planned, including building a new gate pier by the vicarage gate leading to the now blocked south door, and some stitching in of brickwork with stainless steel ties. Sections of the wall have been lost, and a new laurel hedge has been planted within the vicarage grounds to provide a continuous boundary. The wall has undergone extensive repair and replacement of original fabric in the past, but it is an important historic boundary and a valuable feature of the churchyard.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Extensions to Conservation Area**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the existing conservation area is extended on the north side of the High Street to encompass the row of horse chestnut trees and the private gardens in which they stand at the front of The Hunters, Clays, Noss Mayo, Chestnuts, Lynton and Beginnings. These trees make a vital contribution to the conservation area, creating a green frame to the churchyard gates from the long view down the High Street, enclosing the north side of the street and emphasising its informal and rural character. They also reinforce the historic separation of the church/hall complex from the main village settlement and provide screening from modern development to the north of the High Street. Further hard landscaping of the gardens here should also be avoided in order to preserve the essentially rural quality of the conservation area.

### **Management proposals**

- 7.2 The creeping use of protective measures to limit damage from vandalism will increasingly undermine the character of the conservation area, as will damage caused by nuisance behaviour. The community will need support to help them address the causes of this behaviour and reduce the number of nuisance incidents in order to avoid further degradation of the environment. Specific community strategies and aims with regard to reducing anti-social behaviour are

contained in the Rochford and District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008.

- 7.3 Boundary treatments are important to the character of the conservation area and should be appropriate to the rural context. Appropriate materials include soft red brick, timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerow planting. The boundary between the vicarage and churchyard should be kept low to maintain the important visual relationship between the two. The structural instability of the existing wall means that further loss of this important feature is likely without intervention, and repair, consolidation and ongoing condition monitoring should be undertaken. Views through the vicarage grounds should be preserved to protect the open and rural character of the churchyard.
- 7.4 Encroaching scrub in the churchyard has caused damage both to the boundary wall and to gravestones in the past. Much has been cleared recently, but an appropriate management scheme should be in place for trees and planting to maintain the historic form of the churchyard and prevent further encroachment. It is equally important that the hedgeline allows views to the surrounding landscape to the south, west and east. The planting of memorial trees should also be part of this management scheme, avoiding the introduction of unsuitable species. Guidance notes on trees in churchyards, including advice on appropriate species, have been produced by the Chelmsford Diocesan Advisory Committee (1995)<sup>5</sup>.
- 7.5 The churchyard would benefit from some improvements. At present there is one simple timber bench in the north-west corner for visitors, but given the size of the churchyard and the splendid views and peaceful setting a few more benches would enhance the amenity value of the space. The provision of facilities for those tending graves, including a composting area, and a discrete area for rubbish and discarded flowers would improve the appearance of the north side and help to keep the area tidy. The cremated remains area near the east entrance could be improved as the wooden posts are sagging. As the tarmac paths reach the end of their life a more appropriate surface treatment should be considered, such as bound gravel or pea shingle. The west entrance could be improved, although efforts to install a new timber fence have been thwarted by theft.

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<sup>5</sup> *Practical Notes on Trees in Churchyards, Diocese of Chelmsford*, Chelmsford Diocesan Advisory Committee 1995

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## APPENDIX

### LISTED BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREA

TQ 89 SE

CANEWDON

HIGH STREET

6/71

27.7.59

GV

Church of St. Nicholas

II\*

Parish Church. C14 nave, chancel and north aisle. Early C15 west tower, south porch and the south wall of the nave rebuilt. Later C20 alterations, restorations and rebuilding. The north vestry was demolished C18. Ragstone rubble with some septaria and flint, limestone dressings, mainly red plain tile roofs, lead to north aisle. Chancel, east wall buttressed at angles. C19 window of 3 cinquefoiled lights, low transom, moulded segmental head and label. Ornate brackets to gable. North wall, C19/C20 window of 2 cinquefoiled lights, 2-centred arch, moulded label, to east of this window is part of a blocked doorway and adjacent to the buttress the toothing of the former vestry is visible. South wall, centre buttress, eastern restored window of 2 cinquefoiled lights, moulded segmental head, western window similar but with lights below a transom, between the windows is a blocked C14 doorway, moulded 2-centred arch, remains of a stopped label. Nave:- South wall:- Angle and eastern buttresses. 3 restored C15 windows of three 2-centred lights, vertical tracery over under moulded 2 centre heads with labels and head stops, tracery to western window more elaborate. Early C15 south porch, crenellations with flint chequerwork and crosses to merlons, moulded band under. Angle buttresses, band below windows, plinth. South and east walls each with a window of 2 cinquefoiled lights, square heads, moulded labels. Outer archway, moulded and shafted jambs, 2-centred arch under a square head, defaced label, quatrefoils and daggers to spandrels. Nave, south doorway, early C16, moulded jambs, 2-centred arch under a square head, moulded label, traceried spandrels enclosing blank shields. C15 door of overlapping battens with trellis framing and strap hinges. North aisle has angle and 2 inner buttresses. 4 windows, the western of 2 cinquefoiled lights under a square head with label. The 2 central windows of 3 cinquefoiled lights, vertical tracery over, 2-centred heads and labels, the eastern of 3 cinquefoiled pointed lights under a 2-centred head. C15 north doorway, moulded jambs and 2-centred arch. The west tower is a good example of its period, buttressed almost to crenellations. Plinth and 3 bands. Of 4 stages, crenellations with flint chequerwork and crosses to merlons. A window to each face of bell chamber of 2 cinquefoiled lights, vertical tracery, square heads and labels. Third stage with a small trefoiled window and worn labels to north, south and east faces, west face window of 2 cinquefoil lights with tracery, 2-centred head. Second stage west window of 3 cinquefoiled lights, vertical tracery over, 2-centred head. Below the window are 3 worn panels containing shields of arms. West doorway, moulded jambs and 2-centred arch under a square head, moulded label, traceried spandrels, C15 nailed board and muntin door. Flanking the door are niches with moulded jambs, cinquefoiled heads and moulded square labels. In the north and south west buttresses are 2 niches with trefoiled ogee heads. Interior. Chancel. C19 roof of 4 bays, arched braces to collars rest on corbels. King posts and uprights are supported by the collars. Moulded wall plates. C19 stained glass to east window. Red tiled Sanctuary floor. Wrought and cast iron altar rail posts with wooden top rail. Partly blocked low cill to south east window. Piscina. Cinquefoiled and moulded 2-centred arch, moulded square head. Sedilia. C19 ogee head and moulded label, hollow chamfered jambs. C15 wall monument between south eastern windows, 3 vertical panelled shafts and a plaque, original red, green and gold paint. South wall, wall memorials, Jeremiah Kirsteman 1822 and Elizabeth Kirsteman 1855. Also Jeremian Kirsteman 1789 and an oval plaque to Mary Kirsteman 1801. 4 plaques to north wall. Mr. George Walker M.A. who built the Vicarage House, Canewdon 1738. Rev. William Atkinson 1847. Thos. Atkinson 1867. North doorway, blocked 2-centred arch. Chancel arch C19 chamfered 2-centred arch resting on semi-octagonal shafts. Moulded capitals and bases. Nave:- Pulpit C17/C18, hexagonal, wooden carved and panelled sides and carved and moulded

cornice, cherub heads, swags of fruit and foliage, pendant foliage at angles. Roof 7 cants of 4 and a half bays, crenellated wall plate. 4 armed cross quadrate crown posts, base of one carved RHTD 1698 the date of some repair. Hatchment above south doorway. C17 panelled chest. Octagonal font, chamfered round headed arches to each face of bowl and stem, moulded base. South wall memorial to Mary Dearsley aged 17, 11 January 1773. The west tower was used as a look-out post during the 1914-18 War and the flag of the R.F.C. who were stationed here is displayed on the south wall with a second World War Royal Artillery flag. North arcade of 4 bays, chamfered 2-centred arches, moulded capitals and bases to octagonal columns, above the arches are carved gargoyle and defaced angels holding shields of arms. South aisle. Square red brick floor. C19 pews, shields of arms to ends of the pair adjacent to south door. North aisle:- Red brick floor. 7 bay lean-to roof, stop chamfered principal rafters. Square font formerly at Shopland Church, interlocking round headed arches with moulded capitals and bases to columns to east face, 3 trefoiled arches with moulded capitals and bases, roses above columns to south face, 2 and 3 incised fleur-de-lis to the other faces respectively, stem of central and angle columns with moulded capitals and bases, moulded base. Hatchments to north and west walls. Original altar slab with a cross at each corner and part of a centre cross now supporting an altar table second World War memorial. English Chamber Organ, its case C19 but many C18 pipes. Niches in east wall, (1) cinquefoiled round head, painted St. Nicholas, (2) cinquefoiled head, painted stars. Piscina, moulded jambs, trefoiled head, quatrefoil drain. Small niche to south wall of chapel. 2-centred West Tower arch of 4 orders, the 3 inner chamfered, the inner 2 rest on attached shafts with moulded capitals and bases. Stop chamfered 2-centred arch to stair turret doorway, vertically boarded door. C15 ceiling to first stage, heavy chamfered arched braces rest on stone corbels and cross in the centre, boss at intersection now missing, moulded wall posts, wall and ceiling struts to each brace. Said to be 5 bells, (1) 1678 by John and Christopher Hodson, (3) 1634 by Miles Graye, (5) by John Waylett 1707. C15 bell chamber door of overlapping battens. RCHM 2.

TQ 89 SE

CANEWDON

HIGH STREET

6/72

Headstone approx. 9 metres south of south east buttress of south wall of nave, Church of St. Nicholas

GV

II

Headstone. Date 1691. Top with 3 arches, the centre taller, carved skull and crossbones. Inscription reads "Here lieth the body of John Allen who died 2 October 1691.





L45 A11 538

HK 10370

**SCHEDULE**

The entry for:

TQ 89 SE  
6/73

CANEWDEN

HIGH STREET  
Table tomb approx 10 metres  
west of west tower of Church  
of St Nicholas

GV

II

Shall be replaced by:

TQ 89 SE  
6/73  
13/1/88

CANEWDEN

HIGH STREET  
Table tomb approx 10 metres  
west of west tower of Church  
of St Nicholas

GV

II

Table tomb dated 1795. Robert Tabrum. Stone. Moulded top slab, moulded capitals and bases to bulbous corner pilasters which continue to side panels, roundels to frieze, ovals and corner roundels to central panels. 2 base slabs, the outer with iron rails cut away. Inscription to top slab.

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Signed by authority of the  
Secretary of State

*Diane Whatley*

Dated: 2 March 1999

**Diane Whatley**  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport





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