

Discussion points on impact of Blue Route on Rokeby Park

Historic England statement on Rokeby Park

Our remit is to champion and protect the historic environment, particularly where change can have a detrimental impact on highly designated heritage assets. At Rokeby there is a particular confluence of nationally important heritage assets. HE's position is very much one of protecting, conserving and enhancing the setting and significance of the highly designated heritage assets in this area, namely:

- *Gr. II* Church of St Mary (on the Heritage at Risk register primarily due to issues related to its proximity to A66)*
- *Gr. II* Registered Park and Garden of Rokeby*
- *Gr. I Rokeby Hall*
- *other Gr. II structures in and around the Park and,*
- *ancillary, non-designated, vicarage associated with the Church.*

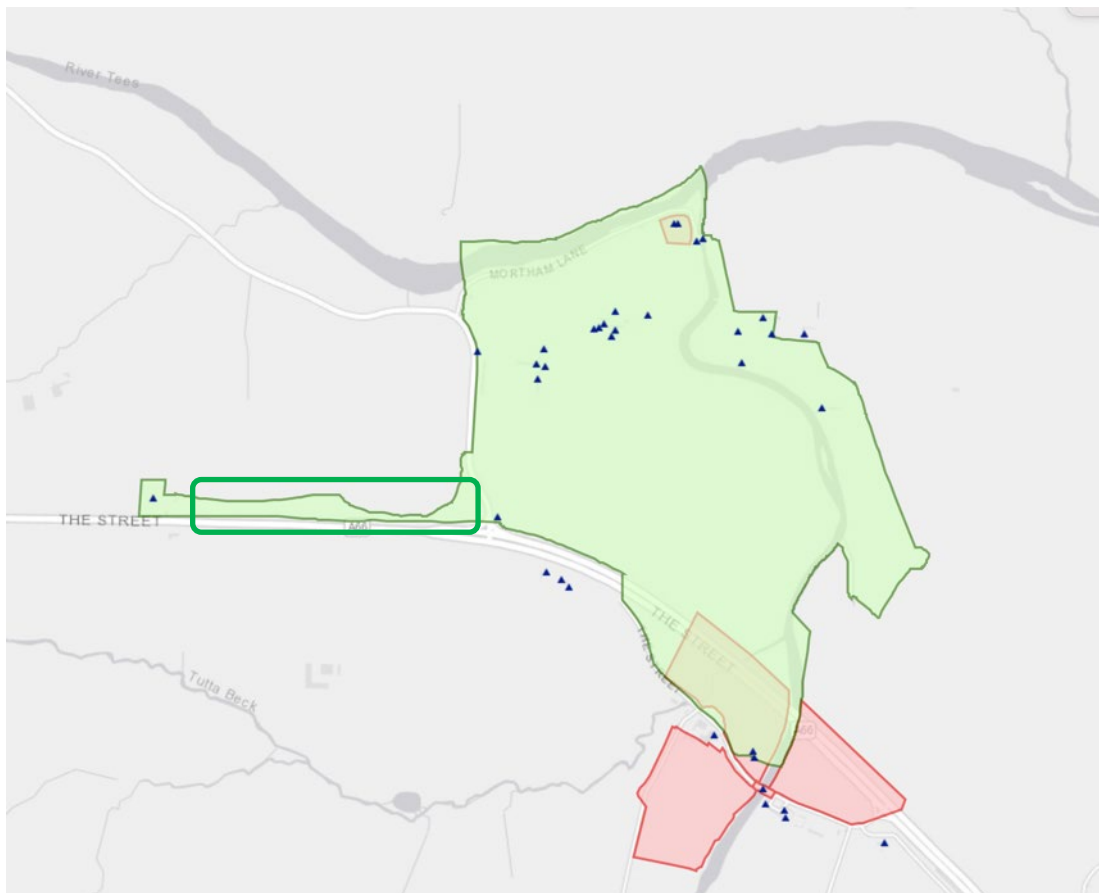
Overall the proposed dualling at Rokeby with either option will:

1. Move the majority of traffic further away from St Mary's Church
2. Have no effect on Rokeby Hall
3. Will have no effect on any of the 35 historic listed buildings or structures within 2Km of the proposed works
4. Move the A66 to the South of Rokeby Rectory and dual it, increasing traffic speed.

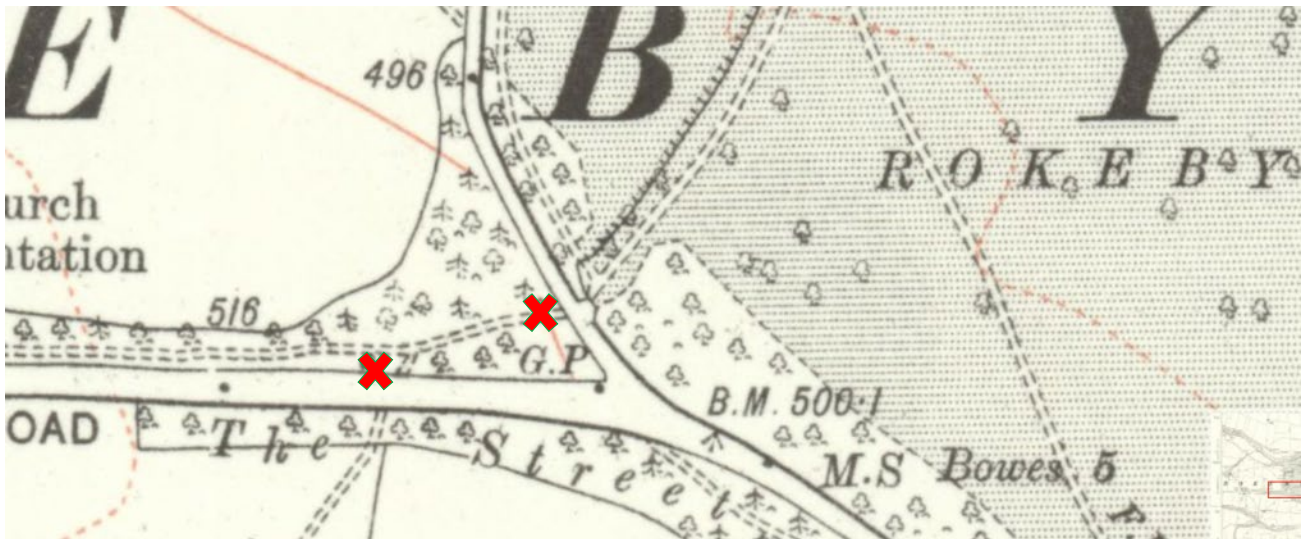
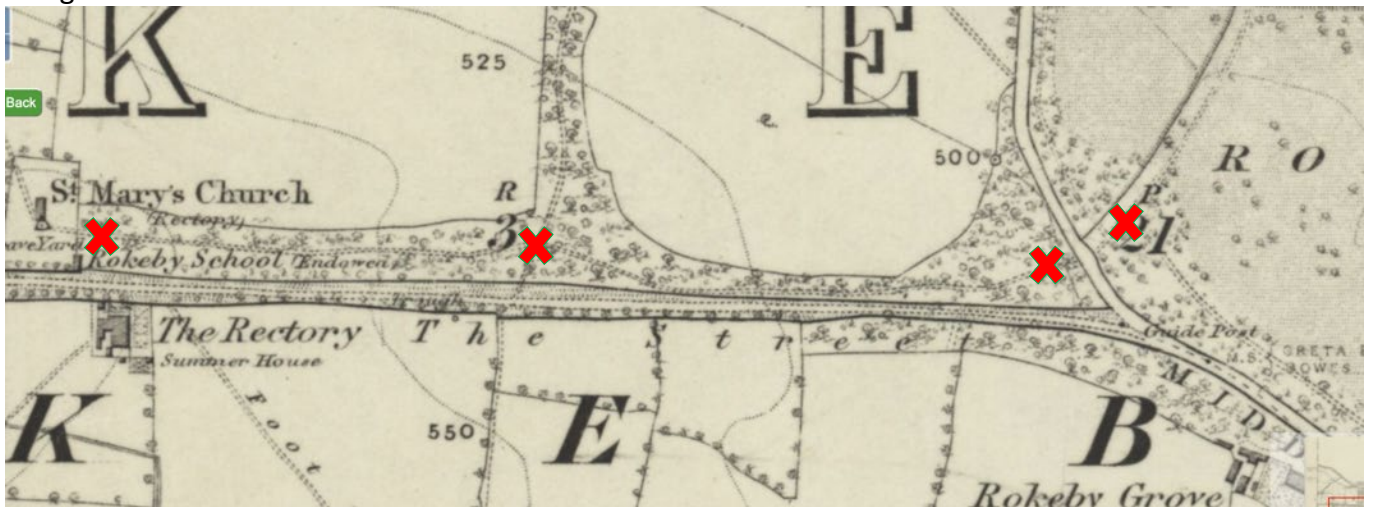
The Black option will however lead to more traffic passing to the South and North of St Mary's and The Rectory on the Old section of de-trunked A66

The remaining historic asset is the **Gr. II* Registered Park and Garden of Rokeby**

The area under discussion regarding a Blue or Black route junction is the Western Park fringe called Church Plantation, circled in Green on the map. Note also the black triangles which identify the individual listed structures.



The Church Plantation is a bridge between St Mary's Church and the Walled Park and Gardens but there has always been a road from Rokeby to Barnard Castle that breaks a continuous link (see below 1857 & 1919) which has been further reduced by the changes from the late 1970's and the loss of the path through Church Plantation



There are some errors of fact in the Historic England listing that are of significance for Church plantation which has also recently been clear felled from the A66 leaving a single row of trees to the North with a remaining undisturbed fraction to the East (see satellite photo below)



Listing

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Rokeby lies c 3km south-east of Barnard Castle, immediately north of the hamlet of Greta Bridge. The site is in an angle formed by the River Greta

running along the east side and the River Tees on the north side. The precincts of Mortham Tower and a band of woodland on the east side of the Greta is included within the boundary. A by-road from Barnard Castle to Greta Bridge forms the northern part of the west boundary, and the old course of the A66 the south-west and south boundary. **Included in the boundary is a path leading west through a band of woodland called Church Plantation from the junction of the Barnard Castle road and the A66 to St Mary's church.** The A66 was diverted to bypass Greta Bridge during the late C20 and now cuts across the park north of the village.

The path mentioned in the yellow highlighted statement above exists on old OS maps but no longer exists. The track apparent on the satellite photo above is the result of the logging operation in 2018 and no longer exists.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES **An entrance with stone gate piers (formerly dated 1725, listed grade II) and a railed screen, probably of early C19 date, lies immediately north of the junction of the Barnard Castle road and the A66.**

The entrance mentioned no longer exists, it was destroyed in the dualling of the A66 in the late 1970's. The connection between the walled part of the estate and the Church Plantation was significantly reduced at that time.



The view Westwards from this gate is in the views below. Note the lack of path behind the gate.



The proposed underbridge on the Blue Route will cause a degree of harm to the Church Pllantation. This will predominantly be simply by its presence, it is however below ground level, at the narrowest part of the Plantation so the degree of harm will be the least possible. Mitigations to further reduce the amount of land required by for instance using gabioned rather than sloping walls are possible.

For any harm to the listed Park to be accepted there has to be a reason that justifies adoption of the Blue route rather than Black. This is that there are other harms consequent upon adopting the Black route.

The negative impact of the Black route is the significant change in traffic use from the Rokeby to Barnard Castle road (C165) onto Cross Lanes to Startforth road (B6277).

The consequences of that increase in traffic will impact on pedestrian safety in Startforth, on the County Bridge and congestion on The Bank in Barnard Castle. Those harms will be discussed elsewhere.