

Star Hill to Sun Pier Public Realm Design Guide

Pre-consultation draft September 2016



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Purpose of the Public Realm Design Guide

The Star Hill to Sun Pier Area is a key riverside conservation area of immense character and historic importance. Despite this it is rather run down and is in need of sympathetic conservation-led regeneration. The Council issued planning guidance (The Star Hill-Sun Pier Planning and Design Strategy) on this in 2004. This guidance is still relevant and is especially so given that the development industry is once more, post recession, taking an interest in the area.

Improving public access to the river and achieving a high quality public realm that is coordinated with flood defences and the regeneration schemes are key parts of the strategy. Given the fragmented ownership patterns in the area and the proximity of the area to the river, the responsibility for the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of the public realm rests with several stakeholders – especially Medway Council, landowners and developers. In addition, the Environment Agency has supervisory powers with regard to the river and flood defences.

This guide has been produced to ensure a coordinated approach to the public realm by these agencies.

Status of the Guide

The guide is supplementary to the Council's Star Hill- Sun Pier Planning and Design Strategy. The guide has been produced in consultation with English Heritage and the Environment Agency.

Background: Star Hill - Sun Pier Planning & Design strategy

Medway Council adopted the Planning and Design strategy for the Star Hill-Sun Pier conservation area in May 2004. The vision set out in the Strategy states:

“Star Hill – Sun Pier as a place of variety and choice, characterised by a high quality streetscape, an accessible riverfront and appropriately scaled and designed buildings. New uses will bring vitality and complement the existing range of activities making the area attractive and safe, both during the day and the night. The historic fabric will be restored and enhanced by the best in contemporary design. It will become an integrated part of the wider urban, economic and cultural fabric of Rochester and Chatham that is easy to get to and move through.”

The strategy sets out 5 objectives to guide development:

- Reinforce the area’s unique identity and historic character
- Produce a vibrant, mixed use place
- Celebrate the public realm
- Create a connected place
- Promote the waterfront

Since 2004, the area has had significant investment in the form of a joint Medway Council/ Heritage Lottery Fund £1.6 million historic buildings grant scheme which has seen over 35 buildings restored. This has made a difference to the character of the area. A small restaurant / pub quarter has been established, along with creative and cultural industries in some of the riverside buildings. It is becoming popular with students and artists. Schemes are beginning to come forward for the regeneration of the riverfront area and it is beginning to fulfill its potential as an interesting ‘alternative quarter’- although more needs to be done. The quality of the public realm will be key in aiding the area’s continuing regeneration.



Vision

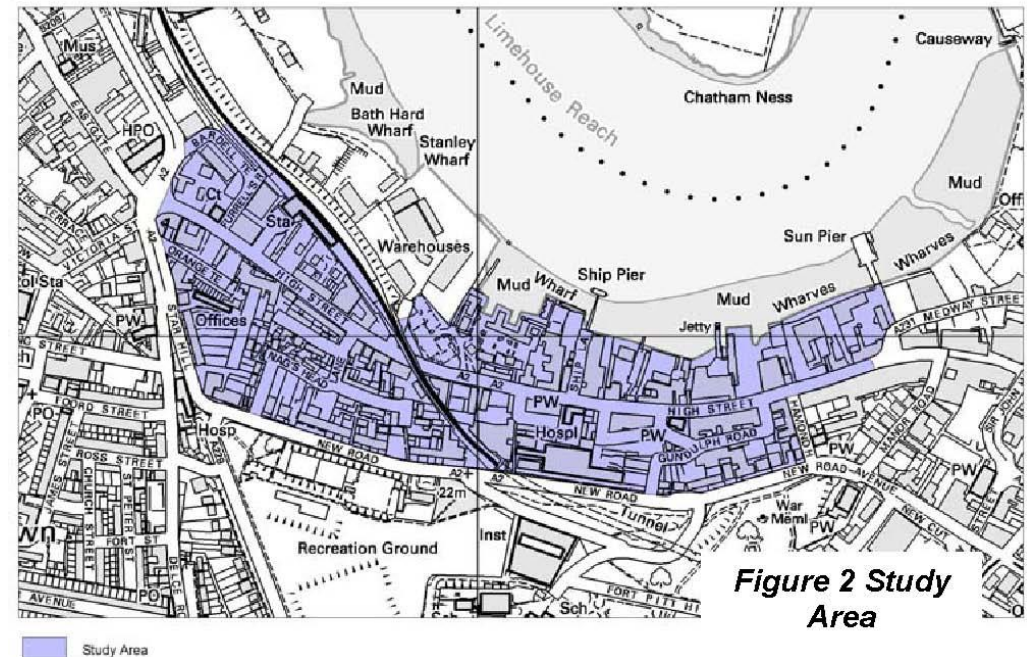
- To create a safe, attractive and coordinated public realm based on the area's historic character and its riverside location.
- A restrained, high-quality environment in keeping with the historic character of the area, that uses a palette of carefully chosen materials and retains and re-uses historic surface materials.

Objectives:

- Establish a riverside walk
- Provide greater accessibility to the riverside, through improved links between the High Street and the river, including restoration of historic alleyways
- Connect the new development areas of Rochester Riverside with Chatham Centre and Waterfront
- Use local and/or traditionally-used materials and details to reinforce character and enhance local distinctiveness, locally sourced or re-cycled wherever appropriate
- Vandal-resistant, high-quality, low-maintenance materials with high standards of construction
- Comfortable surfaces that allow full and unhindered access for the mobility impaired and maximise opportunities for walking, jogging, and cycling
- Integration with flood defence works

This guide deals with all publicly accessible space within the Star Hill – Sun Pier area. It covers the specification of the following elements, together with their implementation and maintenance:

- Surfacing
- Railings
- Street furniture such as seats, bins and bollards
- Lighting
- River walls and embankments
- Drainage



Existing Townscape Character

Site Context

Star Hill to Sun Pier is located between Chatham Town Centre to the east and Historic Rochester to the west and forms the principal connection between the major regeneration initiatives of Chatham Centre and Waterfront and Rochester Riverside.

Existing Character

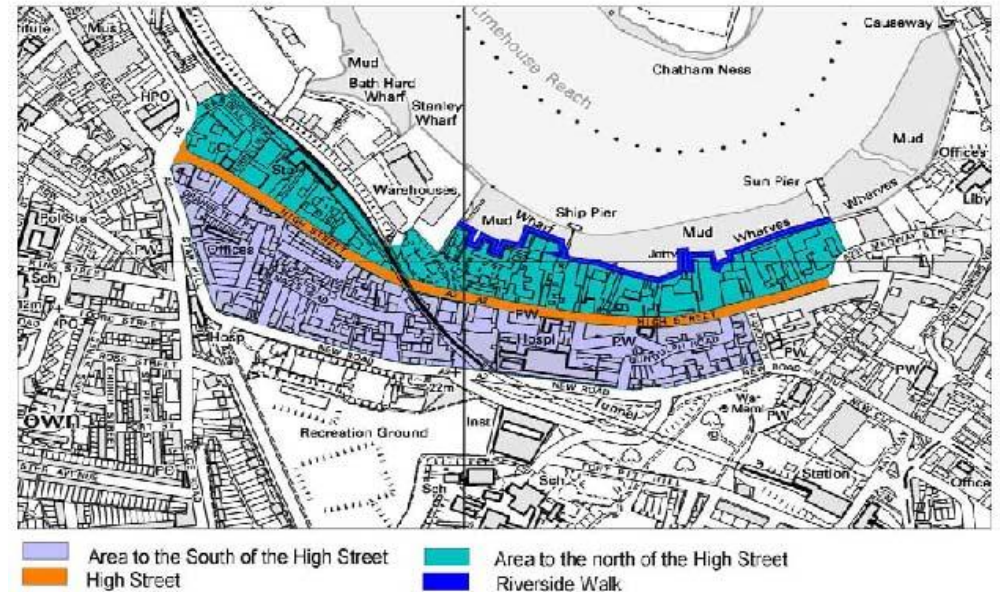
One of Medway's key conservation areas, Star Hill to Sun Pier is characterised by mixed-use linear development focused on the historic Rochester/ Chatham High Street, and tightly packed on a small area of flood plain between the escarpment to the south and the river to the north.

The High Street is bounded by examples of late Georgian and early Victorian terraced buildings, intersected by lanes and alleys which connect it to the river. The High Street is no longer a primary through route.

The riverside consists of jumble of underused space, former workshops, houses, and wharfs. It is the last remaining fragment of traditional riverside industry which would have typified much of the waterfront of the Medway towns.

To the south, a steep densely developed hillside rises to New Road- originally built as a bypass to the congested High Street below.

There is considerable scope for sympathetic riverside development at an appropriate scale. This will open up hitherto inaccessible areas of riverside and allow new connections between Rochester and Chatham.



The townscape character is described in more detail within each of the four character zones:

- South of the High Street
- High Street
- North of the High Street
- Riverside

South of the High Street

The Existing Situation

Existing alleyways and roads to the south of the High Street provide access up the hill from the High Street to Fort Pitt Hill and Jackson's Recreation Ground. These footways are surfaced with a mixture of concrete, tarmac and concrete flags with mostly concrete kerbs, but original granite kerbs remain in many places and are important features.

Future Strategy:

The streets are very much secondary to the High Street and have, in addition, very narrow pavements where the laying of paving slabs could be difficult. Given the above tarmac paving will be acceptable.

Existing granite kerbs should be retained and concrete kerbs replaced with granite as the opportunity arises.

Where additional bollards or other furniture are required it is essential they should match the existing style. They should also be carefully located to avoid visual clutter and unnecessary obstacles.



The High Street

The existing situation:

Pavement covering consists of an uncoordinated mix of various types of concrete paving, together with areas of tarmac. Substantial granite kerbs still feature though out most of the area and are a distinctive and attractive historic feature.

The Council has reinstated areas of historic paving along parts of the High Street as part of the Conservation Area Partnership grant scheme, which finished in 2001. The replacement of tarmac and concrete paving with yorkstone flags and granite kerbs has made a significant improvement to the streetscape, but adjacent areas now suffer by comparison.

The raised section of footway at St. Margaret's Banks is surfaced with red clay blocks and cube granite setts. These are quite modern improvements but have an acceptable appearance.

A number of granite sett cross-overs remain at the entrance to sites and alleys to the north of the High Street. These should be retained and are dealt with in more detail in the 'North of the High St.' section.

Street furniture consists mainly of bollards and lampposts.

There is a history of minor accidents on Rochester and Chatham High Streets, caused mainly by poor visibility at junctions and careless parking. The narrow width of the road, coupled with the on-street parking provision and volume of traffic mean that speed levels are kept low, but poor visibility when exiting the lanes is a major concern. The development of riverside sites will offer an opportunity to address the inadequate visibility at junctions.



Reinstated yorkstone paving



St. Margaret's Banks

The High Street: Future Strategy

Surfacing- historic materials

Existing granite kerbs should be retained and concrete kerbs replaced with granite as the opportunity arises.

In general, all historic paving materials (yorkstone and brick) should be retained or if their replacement becomes necessary, replaced like for like.

The ideal would be for all footways to be repaved in Yorkstone. This provides a very high quality and traditional finish befitting the area's status as a conservation area and its importance as a regeneration area. However, the Council does not have funds for this and will not do so for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, there is a need to rationalize the disparate paving and materials when the opportunity arises through general maintenance.

Modern, carefully laid, plain concrete paving is an acceptable and practical material that looks reasonably attractive if detailed with care and if laid in traditional paving slab dimensions and bonding patterns (particularly when laid adjacent to the large granite kerbs). When existing non- yorkstone or brick paving on adopted highways require replacement, the Council will therefore lay concrete paving of traditional rectangular dimensions (600 by 750mm) in accordance with the details set out in the Chatham Public Realm Manual. Although this work will be of necessity incremental, over time uniformity and cohesion will be achieved.

Via S106, CIL (once in place) and S278 agreements, the Council will expect the developers of major new schemes which front onto the High Street to reinstate frontage paving with traditional materials (granite kerbs where required and diamond sawn yorkstone) in accordance with a specification to be agreed with the Council. This will be in lieu of the S106 contributions that would otherwise be expected for public realm schemes elsewhere.



*Diamond sawn
yorkstone paving*



concrete paving

Bollards and street furniture

Where additional bollards or other furniture are required it is essential that they match the existing style. They should also be carefully located to avoid visual clutter and unnecessary obstacles.

Drainage and inspection covers

In circumstances where surface water is discharged into a public sewer, historic cast iron covers and grids should be retained and reused wherever possible. Modern covers should be recessed and the paving surface set into an inset frame and cover

Traffic management

Traffic safety improvements may be required at the junction of the entrances to major sites with the High Street. It will not be acceptable to remove buildings to widen junctions. The use of build-outs to protect emerging vehicles and improve the visibility splays is likely to be a suitable alternative measure. Such measures could also provide space for pedestrians. Developers will be expected to fund such works, should they prove necessary.



*Build out,
Rochester
High Street.*



Existing on-street parking retained



Relocated on-street parking with build-outs



Adjusted traffic flow

North of the High Street

The existing situation

A strong part of the character of the Star Hill – Sun Pier area is its alleys and lanes which provide physical and visual links between the river and the High Street. These routes are key to ensuring that the wider area benefits from access to the river.

These routes are predominantly surfaced in tarmac or concrete, but with significant areas of granite setts. It is likely that further areas of traditional paving remain in-situ under modern surfacing.

Key linkages from the High Street to the river are, from east to west, Sun Pier, Sufferance Wharf, Hulkes Lane, Ship Lane, Cooks Wharf and Foundry Wharf. There is a long gap between Medway Street/Sun Pier and Sufferance Wharf where there is no linkage through from the High Street to the river.

Sufferance Wharf

There is a short section of granite wheel tracks, while the rest of the wharf is surfaced in concrete. This should be restored to the Hulkes Lane paving pattern.

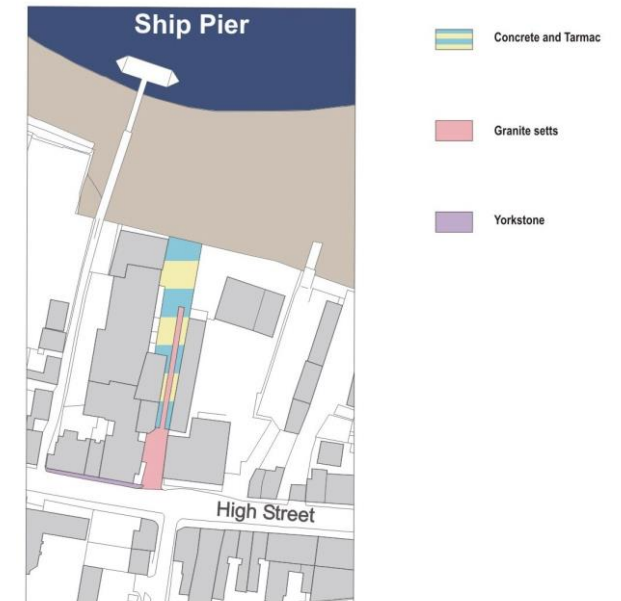
Hulkes Lane

The southern part of lane retains its traditional stone paved carriageway with granite wheel tracks for vehicles. This pattern should be extended with matching materials along the length of the lane. The outer strips of granite setts should be taken up, cleaned and re-laid to create as smooth a surface as possible to improve access for the mobility impaired. The central area can remain unchanged.

Sufferance Wharf



Hulkes Lane



Ship Lane

This is the only lane between the High Street and the river that is adopted highway, it is currently surfaced with tarmac, with aggregate parking area to the side.

Cooks Wharf

This wharf is currently surfaced entirely with tarmac and concrete. It is wide enough to restore the wheel track pattern present in Hulkes Lane.

Foundry Wharf

Half surfaced in granite setts, half in tarmac and concrete, with aggregate surfaced parking areas to the sides. Existing granite setts will need to be re-laid to create a smoother surface. Matching granite setts should be extended the length of the wharf.

Ship Lane



- Gravel
- Yorkstone
- Tarmac

Foundry Wharf



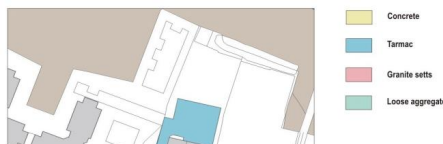
- Concrete
- Tarmac
- Granite setts
- Loose aggregate



Cooks Wharf



- Granite setts
- Concrete and Tarmac



- Concrete
- Tarmac
- Granite setts
- Loose aggregate

North of the High Street: Future Strategy

There is still an extensive amount of historic paving in this area. Historic paving materials should be retained. Elsewhere, the Council will require developers of major sites to reinstate historic materials along the High street frontage of their sites as a part of their development schemes.

Existing alleys and lanes are to be retained and enhanced as shared surfaces for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Historic widths should be retained. New developments should, where possible, seek to create new links between the High Street and the river, and between alleys and lanes. Parking, servicing and emergency vehicle access should be taken into account where required.

Before making decisions on the layout and materials for surfacing the lanes, modern surfacing should be carefully removed. Any historic paving that remains should inform the design, and materials should be retained or reused wherever possible. Setts in some areas will need to be taken up, cleaned and re-laid to create as smooth a surface as possible.

Parking areas should be clearly defined and surfaced either with appropriate granite paving or with resin-bound gravel.

Entrances to lanes and alleys should provide a smooth surface that is flush with adjacent footways for pedestrians and mobility-impaired users of the High Street. This may require the taking up and relaying of historic paving materials

The alleyways (where adopted) should be well lit with way-leaves taken to fit lamps to existing and new buildings in order to avoid undue clutter.

Riverside

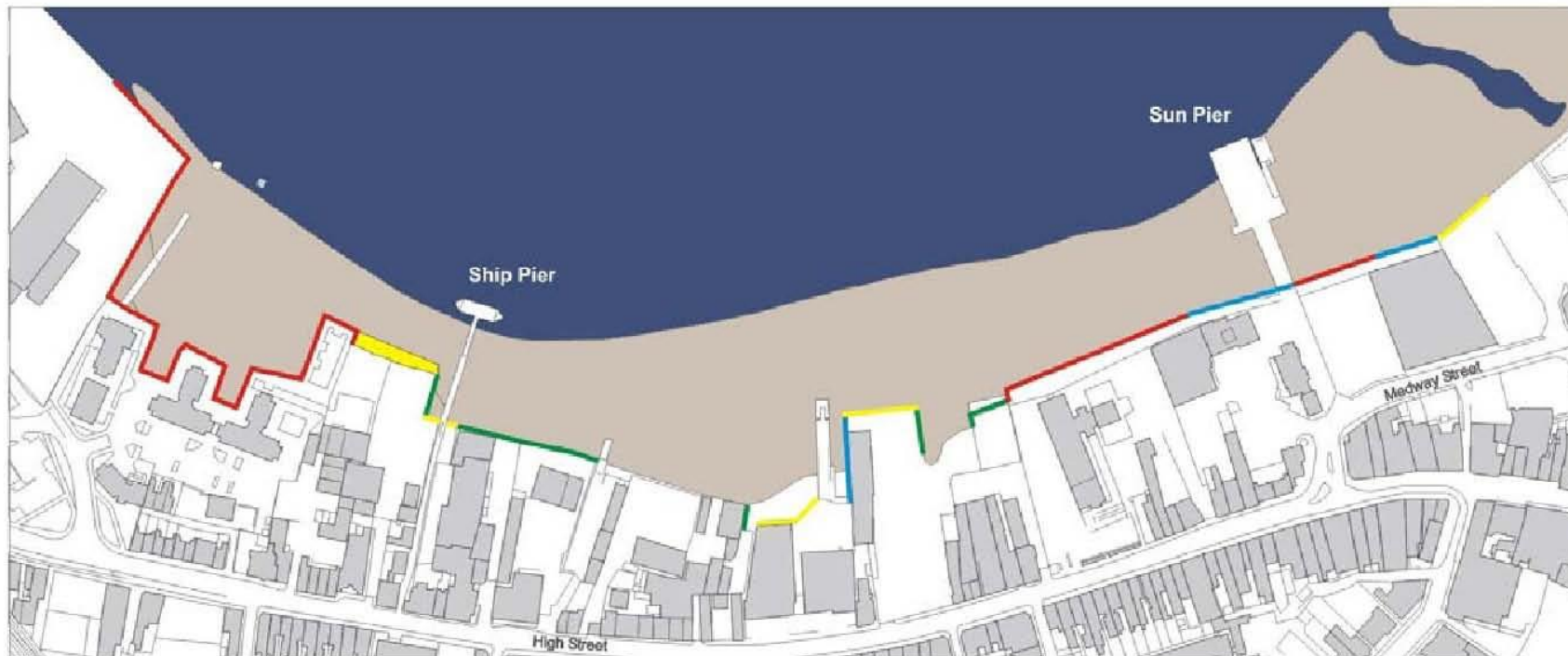
The existing situation

Private landholdings frequently extend from the High Street right down to the river. Public access is therefore very limited at present.

The river walls and embankments are faced with a mix of steel sheet piling, concrete or timber. This ad-hoc character is typical of the way the area would have developed to meet a variety of industrial and maritime uses. Whilst land raising and/ or other works to provide flood defenses may be required it is desirable to retain this character as far as possible.



Historic workshops and slipway.



- Concrete
- Timber
- Steel sh
- Concrete

Riverside: Future Strategy

The Council's objectives are to achieve:

- 1) a riverside walkway between Rochester Riverside and Sun Pier at Chatham;
- 2) adequate flood defenses that are properly integrated and sympathetic to the historic character of the area.

The river wall and flood defences will be implemented on a piecemeal basis by developers as riverside sites come up for development. This document therefore lays down key design principles for developers to follow to ensure a coordinated approach.

River walls and embankments

The river walls on most sites will require rebuilding to provide a structurally sound edge and to provide some element of flood defence. In designing these it is important to maintain and introduce amenity, variety and interest to the area. The existing irregular line of the riverfront is a part of its character and should be retained where possible.

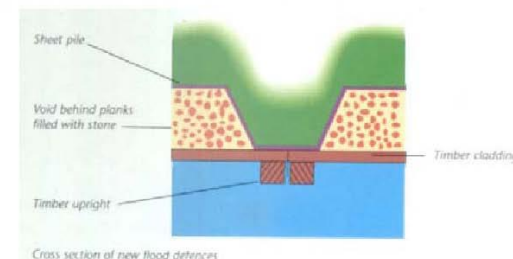
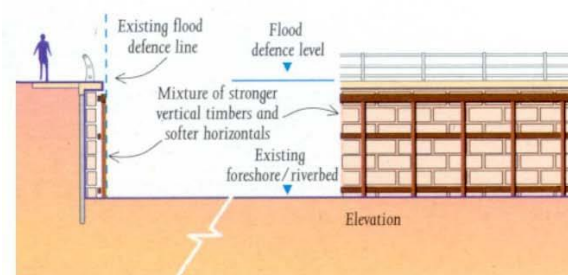
Sheet-piling and concrete can create very uniform, dull river walls. Developers will be expected to demonstrate a more considered approach to the treatment of the river wall/embankment.

If the existing sheet piling or concrete river wall is in a sound condition, timber facing should be fixed to the structure. New sheet piling should be faced with timber, ragstone or brick.

Two short lengths of sloping bank remain. These should be retained and restored to create ragstone embankments.

All walls and embankments should be well detailed and constructed to create a safe and solid river edge.

All works or buildings within 15m of the riverfront will require a license from the Environment Agency. This is to ensure that flood defenses and river walls are constructed properly and that they can be repaired.



Proposed river wall details and cross section

Timber clad river wall

Flood defences and changes in level

It is likely that flood defenses will be provided on a piecemeal basis as sites come forward for development. Land raising and /or raising of river walls may be required on many of the sites.

However,

- 1) the piecemeal nature of development, differing land levels of each site, and the desirability of maintaining the visual connections between the river, alleyways and the wider area, and
- 2) the need to preserve historic buildings and features along the riverfront

will mean that the design of flood defences and the river walk will vary according to specific site circumstances. In designing flood defenses imaginative designs will be required – for example integrating flood walls with those of buildings, or setting higher flood walls back from the immediate riverfront in order to preserve historic frontages.

Habitable rooms in new development will require to be above the 200-year flood level plus an allowance for climate change and overtopping by waves- currently 6.2mAOD. This can be achieved by land raising, undercroft parking backed by a floodwall behind the river walk (similar to that agreed for the rear of 37-41 High Street), or the provision of non-habitable rooms on the ground floor.

The design of the flood defences should be integrated with the design of river walks. It is noted that the river walk is established adjacent Anchorage House and will continue at the same level across the new development at the rear of 37-41 High Street. It is recommended that, where possible, the river walk is continued at this level or lower in order to avoid difficult level changes and to avoid a very high and assertive primary river wall.

It may not be possible to provide a continuous river walk – for example where the riverside is occupied by buildings or historic features such as slipways. In these circumstances, it will be acceptable for the river walk to connect instead to existing or new alleyways. The variety

provided by such ad hoc and practical arrangements will be an important part of maintaining the character of this area.

It may be necessary to provide floodwalls at the river-edge across alleyways. Where this is required, gates should be provided to maintain visual connections and access to the river.

Archaeology:

There is potential for archaeology along the riverside at Chatham Intra. The riverside in that location has been realigned in many phases with each phase pushing further out into the river. As a result older wharves dating back to medieval times are likely to be preserved inland of younger examples. Waterlogged conditions may have allowed for exceptional preservation.

There will be a requirement to investigate and possibly preserve the archaeological remains of historic riverfronts. This will dictate the design of river walks and flood defences, and that of development behind.

River walk dimensions

A variety of widths are encouraged in order to reflect the original ad hoc pattern of buildings. However, the riverside walk must be of a sufficient width and suitable construction to allow access for maintenance and to provide sufficient room for cyclists and pedestrians. As a guide 6m is sufficient. Subject to agreement with Environment Agency, narrower widths will be strongly encouraged in places to create pinch points and variety.

River walk surfacing

The river walk should be surfaced with random length concrete setts-Kilsaron Mellifont (natural). These have a similar appearance to the granite cobbles in some of the alleyways in the area and are suitable for cycles, prams and the mobility impaired. They should be edged by concrete capping beams (where piles are provided) flush with paving materials at the river edge to provide a fixing for railings.



A double row of setts should be used to provide a neat finish to the edge of sections of the walk as they are completed and where the river walk abuts historic alleyways.

Railings

The river edge of the walk should be well defined and stable, with an adequate safety barrier.



Railings should be 'Broxap Quayside' curved 5 bar railing with a powder coated 'Mouse Grey' RAL 7005 finish. This type of railing is safe and robust yet attractive. It matches that specified elsewhere in Chatham. It will not obscure views (including those in wheelchairs or seated) and co-ordinates with the wider palette of street furniture for the area. Railing should be set into river edge concrete coping.

Broxap Quayside 5-bar railing

Lifebuoy units will be required on the walkway at a maximum spacing of 100 metres. They should be sensitively located to avoid unnecessary visual clutter, and wall or railing mounted wherever possible.

Lighting

Lanterns should be DW Windsor 'Milano' with LED's, mounted on 86mm aluminum columns, 4m high. This type of lamp is contemporary but suitable for historic areas, and has been chosen for other riverside areas of Chatham.



DW Windsor lantern

Signage

Hazard warning notices will be required along the riverside walk. "Danger deep water" and "No swimming" signs should be in accordance with BS 5378: 1980 Safety Signs and Colours Signs should be customised to fit in with other signage.

Signs should be erected where alleys and lanes meet the riverside, and sensitively located to allow clear visibility, but avoiding unnecessary visual clutter. Signs should be wall or railing mounted wherever possible, rather than on separate posts.

Service channels

A service channel with ducts and draw cords should be formed along the riverside walkway and along every alley or lane where appropriate to take current and future street lighting, CCTV, cable and drainage requirements.

Street furniture

Seating and bins should be located at suitable positions along the riverside walk. They should be concentrated at the most visible locations (key nodes/focal points/public spaces) to provide attractive, comfortable places to stop and rest. Positioning should respect pedestrian flows and the needs of the disabled, creating coherent groups with a clear pavement zone to allow for unimpeded access and circulation along footways.

Street furniture (seating, bollards, litter bins, railings, lighting and signage) from the Furnitubes Zenith range should be used. This is simple, bold and functional but elegant. It matches that recently installed at Sun Pier. It should also be strong, highly durable and as vandal-resistant and low maintenance as possible.

Bollards

Bollards may be used to provide suitable boundary definition at the junction of public/private spaces.



Furnitubes Zenith range

Common Themes

New Equipment

Where new services are required to be installed in lanes and alleys, access points and control boxes will be an important factor. In order to avoid visual clutter and respect the historic character of the area they should be sensitively designed and located.

Historic furniture

Retain and repair any historic street furniture, consider recasting local designs.

Signage

Alley and lane name signs will be required, together with directional signs for the riverside walk/National Cycle Route, Rochester and Chatham town centres and Fort Pitt Hill/Jackson's Recreation Ground from the High Street.

These should compliment the street furniture, be simple, elegant and contemporary, not compete visually with built form, and be coordinated by a common design style, materials, typography and graphics.

National Cycle Route signs will only be erected on the completion of a significant length of uninterrupted riverside walk. They should be sensitively sited to avoid clutter and confusion, taking advantage of wall mounting wherever possible.

Each alley will require two nameplates and two directional signs for the riverside walk at the High Street entrance. Directional signs will also be required at each of the roads leading south to the open spaces.

Lighting

Lighting for the area should provide safe levels of light for vehicular and pedestrian movement, crime prevention and detection. Lighting will also be expected to enliven spaces, bringing interest and drama, and strengthen the unique character of the area. It should also take account of the hierarchy of spaces – roads, lanes, riverside walk, entrances and focal points.

The alleys, lanes and riverside walk in particular will be priority areas, where the design of new lighting will be vital to improving safety and security. They should be well lit to adoptable standards. Lighting within the alleyways should usually be fixed to buildings in order to reduce visual clutter.

CCTV

The Council's CCTV network will need to be extended by developers to cover new sections of riverwalk.. This should be agreed on a case by case basis with the Council. Developers should grant way leaves to the Council for access to CCTV equipment.

Implementation and maintenance

The construction of the new riverside walk and the upgrading of the alleyways between Chatham High Street and the river will be undertaken through developer contributions and planning conditions. These works will therefore be completed in phases over an extended period as the area is redeveloped

Riverside walk

Developers of riverside sites will be required to construct a section of river walk for the full extent of the river frontage to the standard set out in this document. This will include works to the river wall where necessary. In addition to the river wall, all construction works within 15 metres of the river wall also requires the approval of the Environment Agency.

Alleys / Lanes

The upgrading of alleyways (surfacing, street furniture, lighting) will also be carried out by developers via Section 106, CIL, 38 and/or 278 agreements. Contributions will also be expected towards the cost of extending the CCTV coverage.

Ships Lane is the only alleyway that is currently adopted highway within the study area. All other alleyways such as Foundry Wharf and Hulkes Lane should be designated as 'Definitive Rights of Way' (ROW) over private land. The public are allowed to 'pass and re-pass' and although Definitive ROW have no set surface standards, they should be no less than 1.5 metres in width and take into account the requirements of access for all. The developer should retain responsibility for maintenance of these alleyways.

High Street

Developers of sites with High Street frontage will be required (via section CIL, 38 and/or 278 agreements) to upgrade the paving for the full extent of the High Street frontage to the standard set out in this document and in accordance with a detailed specification to be agreed with the Highways Authority.

Public spaces

Public spaces created in the area will generally be small-scale, incidental spaces mainly serving the immediate development. Medway Council will not adopt these spaces. Developers will need to arrange for the long-term management of these spaces, through either a local residents management trust or by utilising one of the national land management trusts.

Street works and Utility companies:

All adopted highways in the area are within the Star Hill- Sun Pier Conservation Area. The majority of the area is also registered by the Authority under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 as a 'High Duty and High Amenity Area'. Utility companies are therefore required to reinstate footways with matching materials

Any areas planned for large scale reconstruction/resurfacing should be notified to Medway Council Traffic Management, for inclusion on quarterly lists (giving 3 months notice of the scheme starting) to utility companies, so they have the option to upgrade/replace plant ahead of the planned street works.