



STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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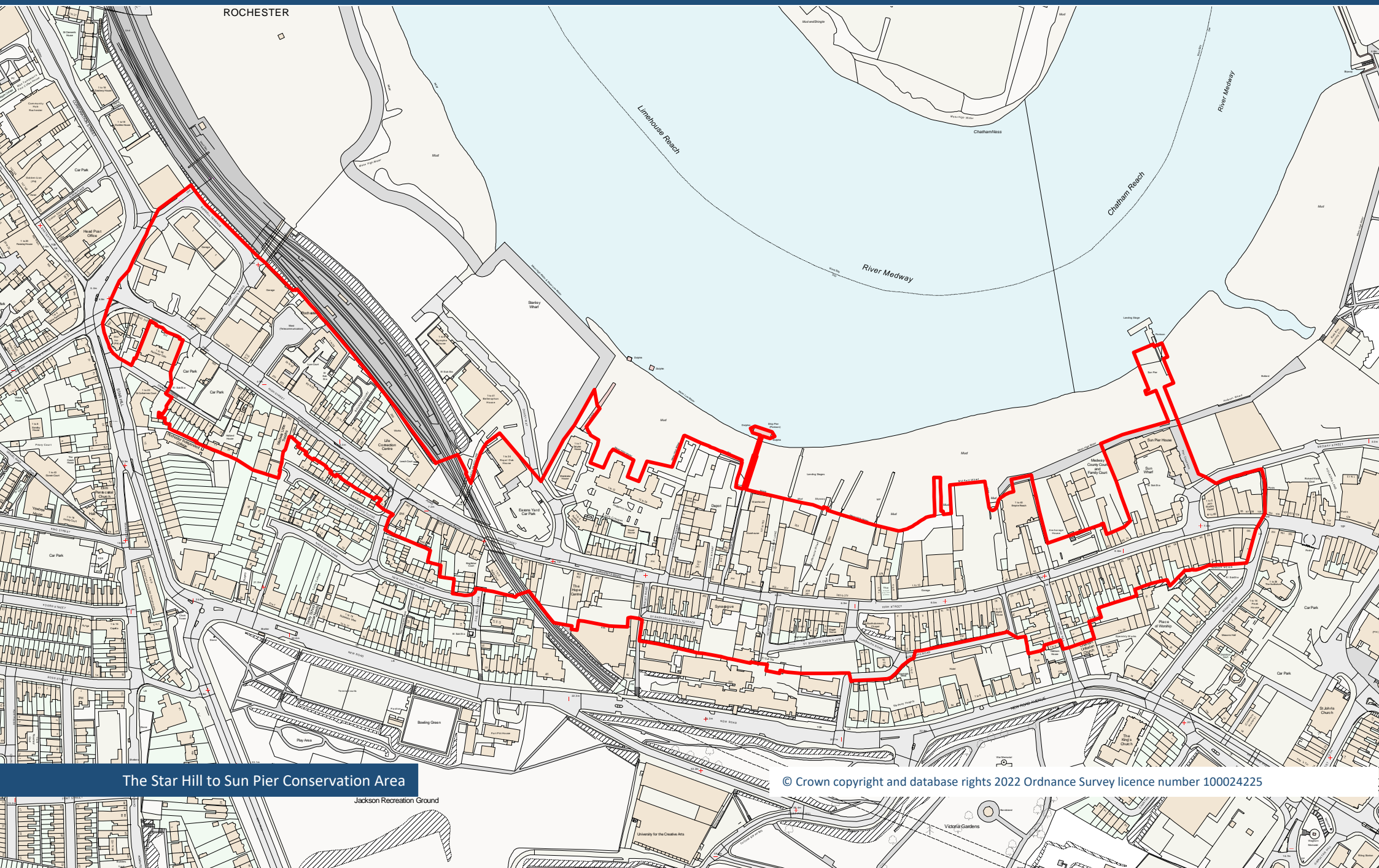
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The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area

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Legislative Review

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as *“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”*. Conservation Area Appraisals help the council meet their legal duty under Section 71 of the Act for the formulation, publication, and public consultation on proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

Government policy in relation to Conservation Areas is contained primarily within Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that can be downloaded from the [.GOV website](#).

Local policy for Conservation Areas is contained in the Medway Local Plan 2003, available to download from the [Medway Council website](#).

The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area was designated a Conservation Area by the City Council of Rochester Upon Medway in 1995. To help protect the character of the Conservation Area an Article 4 Direction was applied in 2001. By detailing what is important about the area, this appraisal aims to:

1) Assist the Council and others in judging whether development proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area;

and

2) Ensure that the heritage significance of the area is fully taken into account when considering development proposals.

A Management Plan accompanies the appraisal which sets out a strategy for preserving and enhancing the special character of the Conservation Area.

Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area exists as a unique combination of former maritime industrial hinterland, leisure and community uses, commercial High Street, and residential area, that retains much of its historic 18th to early 20th century fabric, character, and charm.

Located on the historic riverside route between Chatham and Rochester, development within the area was spurred on by the economic stimulus created by the establishment of the Royal Navy Dockyard and associated military garrison from the 16th century. Throughout this period the area thrived, and became home to a range of industries and activities such as the Navy victualling yard, chandleries, shipbuilding and repair, brewing, importation, retail; as well as a range of leisure activities such as theatres, music halls, and pubs.

An important series of small lanes lead down from the High Street towards the river where a range of functional buildings were often built as and when they were required, giving the area a rather jumbled and ad hoc character. This characterful space was historically used as wharfage from as early as the 17th century, containing a range of storage areas, warehouses, breweries, sawmills, and various ship-related industries, including the Royal Navy Victualling Yard. Several important historic buildings remain, and the area retains much of its maritime character today. This riverside area is presented by the more formal character of a mixed commercial and residential nature to the High Street frontage. The overall character is split between the now calm and often tranquil open riverside area; in contrast to the busy, often noisy, and enclosed High Street – but historically being co-existent and co-dependent.

To the east, the High Street frontage mainly consists of three-storey shops often with extravagant 19th and early 20th century decoration. Historically, the western part of the High Street and St Margaret's Banks included a range of uses, but is now predominantly residential, comprising a range of small-scale historic buildings of various types, many of which date from the 18th and 19th century.

Of particular importance to the character of the Conservation Area is the prevailing small-scale nature of development; its layout, form, fine grain, built fabric, and legible palimpsest that displays centuries of life, use, and culture.

Views into, out of, and across the Conservation Area are also especially relevant, providing a wider context to its significance. Some of the principal views include the repeated glimpses of the river and beyond from the High Street, views of the High Street and out to the higher ground beyond from the lanes to the south, and the views into and across the area from along the river and the surrounding high ground.

The intangible heritage is of notable importance too, with a long and established connection between the area and a range of diverse small independent businesses, creatives, leisure activities, and a diverse community passionate about protecting its unique sense of place.

Summary of Significance

- A historic and characterful development pattern of narrow lanes, paths, and High Street built along the historic route between Chatham and Rochester.
- A townscape that readily reflects its historic maritime, leisure, community, commercial and residential uses - clearly definable into separate character areas.
- A range of small-scale historic buildings of varying ages and styles, creating an eclectic and jumbled character.
- Its important military and civilian supporting role to the Royal Navy dockyard at Chatham.
- Dramatic views into, out of, and across the Conservation Area that provide a wider context of its significance.
- Its intangible heritage of being home to a diverse community, small businesses, creatives, and leisure uses.

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Historical Overview

In 2022 Historic England published a desk-based assessment covering the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area under reference 59/2021. The report is available to download on the [Historic England website](#) and provides an excellent overview of the historic development of the area.

The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area is also sometimes (all or in part) locally referred to as *Chatham Intra*. The name Chatham Intra likely derives from the administrative complexity of the area, historically encompassing three parishes and two local authorities. An early reference is provided in the 1855 Post Office directory which appears to identify it as a series of addresses between the former Victualling Yard (approximately where Doust Way is now) and Sir John Hawkins Hospital. The name 'Intra' possibly originates from its Latin translation as being 'within, or inside' as Chatham Intra originally existed within the administrative boundary of Rochester – so 'Chatham within Rochester'.



A section of the Roman city wall near The Common in Rochester

Early Settlement

The area between Chatham and Rochester in which the Conservation Area is located was historically part of neither settlement and remained largely undeveloped until the 17th century. Due to its accessible riverside location, it was probably used by prehistoric and later communities, but limited evidence currently exists to support this. Some evidence of prehistoric activity was identified in a recent archaeological survey at the western end of the High Street, indicating that the wider area may have been subject to some early use or occupation.

Roman Conquest to the Norman Conquest (AD 43 - 1066)

Rochester was recognised by the Romans for its strategic importance as a location by which to cross the river Medway on the road between Dover, Canterbury, and London. The Romans constructed a bridge in Rochester soon after their arrival in AD 43, followed by a walled settlement to protect it known as *Durobrivae*, often translated as 'the stronghold by the bridge'. Whilst most Romano-British occupation likely occurred within the main walled town; evidence of other smaller-scale settlement has been identified across the wider area. The alignment of this section of the Roman road through Rochester and Chatham is not entirely certain, but it is probable that it runs through the Conservation Area from Eastgate in Rochester towards Chatham Hill. Within the Conservation Area itself Romano-British burials were uncovered in Doust Way. Often burials occurred on main routes from settlements, so this may not indicate settlement with the Conservation Area but also could provide an indication of the route of this section of the Roman road.

Limited evidence exists of Anglo-Saxon occupation in the Conservation Area currently, other than in the form of around twenty Early Medieval or Anglo-Saxon graves discovered at Orange Terrace in 1852. The early 7th century saw the founding of Rochester Cathedral, originally a small stone building, but it established Rochester's status as a bishopric; but there is little evidence currently to suggest that any substantial settlement extended into the Conservation Area.

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Norman Conquest to the arrival of the Royal Navy (1067 to 1547)

1066 saw the Norman Conquest of Britain and soon after the construction of the first royal castle in Rochester, originally of timber and earthworks. In 1077 Gundulph was made the first Norman Bishop of Rochester. Prior to the reconstruction of the Cathedral and the castle walls, Bishop Gundulph founded St Bartholomew's Hospital in the Conservation Area in 1078. Part of the hospital still exists in the form of the eastern end the Grade II* Listed St Bartholomew's chapel located on the corner of Gundulph Road and the High Street. The hospital was intended for lepers, with the material used in its construction likely arriving by boat from further upriver, indicating the likelihood of an early wharf or landing place nearby.

A second and slightly later leper hospital existed at a site of the present-day junction of the High Street with Star Hill. Known as St Catherine's Hospital (sometimes St Katherine's), it was founded in 1315 by Simon Pontyn. By the 18th century it had been converted to an almshouses and soon after relocated to its current location at the top of Star Hill.

The arrival of the Royal Navy

Limited information is available to indicate any significant development in the Conservation Area until the mid-16th century, following the arrival of the Royal Navy to the area in 1547 when Naval accounts show a payment for the hiring of storehouses in Gillingham.

A few years later the first dockyard was established around the Old Gun Wharf near to St Mary's Church on Dock Road in Chatham. Late 16th century mapping shows ships in the river and linear development in the Conservation Area, with the area labelled *Laing Port*. No buildings can be clearly identified within the 16th century map; however, Sir John Hawkins hospital on the High Street was established in 1582, albeit the current buildings date from the late 18th century.

In the 17th century, the Royal Navy established a Victualling Yard in the Conservation Area, near to the current Doust Way, and was relocated from an earlier storehouse located on Rochester Common.

The Victualling Yard operated through to around 1826, but no above-ground evidence remains today.

Other notable 17th century buildings include parts of the former North Foreland PH at 325 High Street, Featherstone House at 373-375 High Street, 296 St Margaret's Banks, Rochester, and Camden House at 4 Hamond Hill, Chatham. These buildings are all Grade II Listed.



The Grade II* Listed St Bartholomew's chapel

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The 18th Century

Edward Hasted provides an intriguing insight of the Conservation Area in the 18th century in the 1798 publication *'The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent'*, as follows:

"It is situated close to the bank of the Medway for about half a mile, after which the river leaving the town flows north-north east. It is like most sea ports, a long, narrow, disagreeable, ill-built town, the houses in general occupied by those trades adapted to the commerce of the shipping and seafaring persons, the Victualling-office, and the two breweries, and one or two more houses, being the only tolerable built houses in it.

...At the entrance of Chatham from Rochester, on the north side of the High-street, is the Victualling Office, for the use of the royal navy lying here, at Sheerness, and the Nore. In it there is a cooperage, pickling, baking, cutting, slaughter, and store-houses. A new wharf has been lately made to it, and additional buildings erected for the further convenience and service of the victualling."

It is apparent from Hasted's description that through the 18th century the Conservation Area began to develop a supporting role to the Royal Navy and increasing military garrison in the area. This role coincided with the enlargement of Chatham Dockyard, the development of the Chatham Lines from 1756, the establishment of the Chatham Infantry Barracks in 1757, and the Royal Marine Barracks soon after.

The development of the Lines and Barracks resulted in the compulsory acquisition by the government of what was the 'historic' settlement of Chatham around St Mary's Church on Dock Road, which was subsequently cleared, and the residents displaced into the valley below. This was coupled with the purchase of the higher ground above the Conservation Area for the development of Fort Pitt and its associated defences which in-turn directed civilian development along the course of the Bourne river (now Chatham town centre) and along the rivers' edge and rising ground of the Conservation Area.

This approach directly influenced the character and topography of the area for the following centuries, with the military occupying the higher ground around the dockyard, and the civilian population left to develop in the spaces between. Hasted's words also describe an area that performs a functional role, rather than being praised for its form or fine architecture, with few buildings being of a 'tolerable' standard.

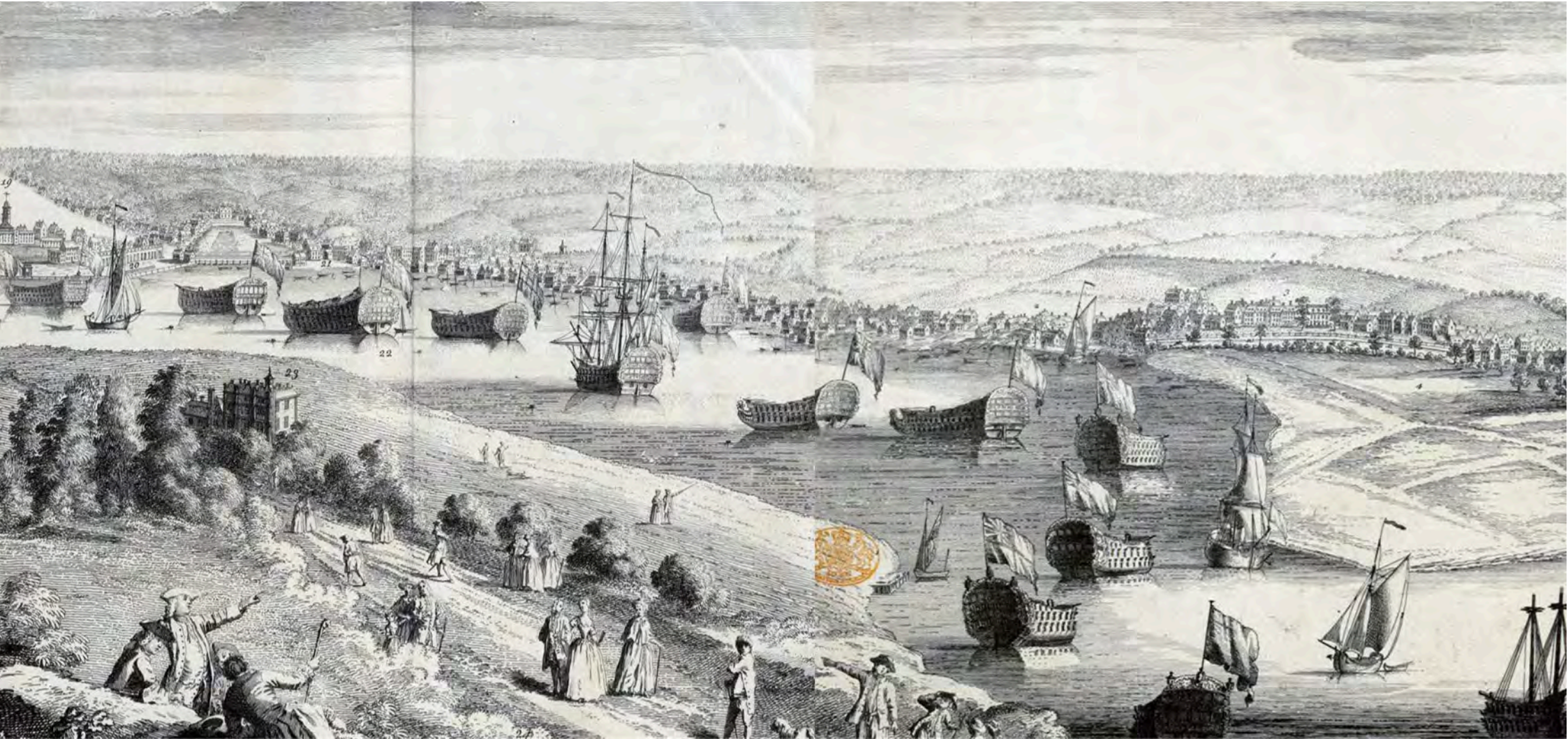
Hasted's description supports the slightly earlier imagery of the area produced at the time, such as that of Nathaniel and Samuel Buck published in 1738 (depicted on the following page) which shows a jumbled character comprising densely packed unplanned development along the High Street and rivers' edge. Other interesting features include the raised footpath of St Margaret's Banks, wharves, and the Victualling Yard. What is also clear from the Buck engraving is that most travel between Rochester and Chatham occurred through the High Street as this was prior to the creation of the 'New Road' on the hillside between the High Street and Fort Pitt in 1772.

The New Road was a result of the congested and poorly maintained High Street resulting from the increased development in the area. The development also included the land reclamation for wharves, which in-turn made the rivers' edge unusable by traffic, other than by boat, increasing the pressure on the use of the High Street and other small back-lanes and alleyways between the buildings. Concern was raised that the New Road would direct passing trade away from the businesses on the High Street and so in 1772 improvements were commenced to the High Street and St Margaret's Banks too. These road improvements likely lead to increased development on intermediate roads and lanes, such as Hamond Hill (previously known as Heavysides Lane), Nags Head Lane, and Five Bells Lane.

Numerous buildings remain from the 18th century within the Conservation Area, many of which are now Listed Buildings, and with others probably in existence, but hidden behind later facades.

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A composition of the 1738 Nathaniel and Samuel Buck engravings *'The West Prospect of His Majesty's Dockyard at Chatham'*, and *'The North West Prospect of the City of Rochester'* (below) readily shows a number of features of the present-day Conservation Area such as St Margaret's Banks, Star Hill, and the densely packed development along the High Street and riverfront. The original images are provided courtesy of the British Library and are available on their website [here](#) and [here](#).



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The 19th Century

The fortunes and development within the Conservation Area throughout the 19th century remained largely influenced and intertwined with the military presence in the area through supporting trades and industries, but also as a leisure economy (such as pubs and theatres) to support the numerous military personnel using the towns in their free time.

Additional and larger wharves began to dominate the riverfront as the Conservation Area became part of the importation and distribution centre to towns further afield in Kent and to London. The area's importance was recognised by the introduction of the railways in the mid-19th century. The first railway operator in the area was the East Kent Railway who built a line between Strood and Faversham, with Rochester Station, in its original location opposite St Margaret's Banks, being constructed in 1892. South East Railway were in competition with East Kent Railway, and as a response constructed Chatham Central Station in the same year, located in the vicinity of the present-day Doust Way. The station was short-lived however and following a merger of the two competing railway operators, Chatham Central closed in 1911 and was eventually demolished.

Prior to the 19th century many of the buildings were timber-framed and clad, with a few of the more substantial properties constructed in brick. Unfortunately, much of the remaining 17th and 18th century townscape towards the eastern end of the High Street was destroyed by large fires in 1800 and 1820. Whilst this came at a great loss, it provided the opportunity for redevelopment and road-widening which helped consolidate the High Street as the commercial and retail centre of the Chatham. Construction of Hamond Place (40 - 72 High Street, Chatham) started in 1801 is an early example of a shopping parade and was a direct redevelopment response resulting from the destruction of the first fire.

The uniform nature of the architecture of Hamond Place was probably somewhat at odds to the earlier (and previous) jumbled and unplanned development from before but demonstrates the change in fortunes of the area at that time.

Incremental redevelopment and road-widening carried on through the 19th century with the construction of further fine terraces of retail/commercial premises at ground floor and residential above mixed-use development, such as Victoria Buildings, (380 - 384 High Street, Rochester) constructed in 1889; and 348 – 364 High Street, Rochester in 1887.

Commercial and industrial development also increased, with existing premises being refurbished or extended, such as existing examples at the Lion Brewery on Hulkes Lane, Media House (the former offices for the Chatham News) on the corner of Gundulph Road, and various warehouses along the riverfront. Similarly, large-scale residential redevelopment also occurred with Medway Terrace (237 – 257 High Street, Rochester) being constructed in the mid-19th century, Mid-Kent Terrace (305 – 321 High Street, Rochester) in 1883, and St Bartholomew's Terrace, Rochester in 1887.



The eastern end of the High Street looking west

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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To support the spiritual needs of the community, places of worship began to appear in the area of various denominations indicating the diversity of the population at that time. Existing buildings include St Bartholomew's chapel (constructed in the 11th century but remodelled and restored in the 19th century), the Chatham Memorial Synagogue constructed in 1868 – 1870 but replacing an earlier 18th century synagogue on the same site, and the Unitarian Church on Hamond Hill. Parts of a Wesleyan chapel, known as the Bethel chapel, constructed in 1810, also exist on St Margaret's Banks which was damaged by fire in the late 20th century and has since been incorporated as part of the existing commercial buildings.

An abundance of leisure and entertainment premises also established themselves in the area through the 19th century including theatres, music halls and pubs.



Sun Pier at the Festival of Chatham Reach in 2021

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

The river also played an important role for the community in the 19th century despite the industrialised nature of the riverfront. This included bathing in the river, and public piers for relaxation and travel. The only remaining public pier is Sun Pier (although Ship Pier also still exists but is in private ownership) and is believed to have constructed in around 1843 - 1845, with its name derived from the adjacent Sun Tavern. Sun Pier was rebuilt in 1886, and a shelter added for ferry passengers which was later destroyed by fire in 1972. Ferry services operated from both Sun Pier and Ship Pier throughout the 19th and 20th centuries to destinations such as Sheerness, London and Southend. Sun Pier is still successfully used today for short excursions in and around the Medway, and as an important focal point for events and festivals.

The 20th Century

The association between the area and the military continued well into the first half of the 20th century, with its fortunes changing for the worse in the second half. Limited change to the character of the area occurred in the first half of the 20th century other than small areas of redevelopment, including existing notable examples at 86 - 100 High Street, Chatham which was constructed in 1902, the Mission to Seamen's Institute on the corner of Furrell's Lane, Rochester (1908), and Pier Chambers in Chatham (1904), and the partial reconstruction of 337 - 341 High Street, Rochester, including the addition of a new façade. Slightly later came the rather interesting modern architecture of Grays of Chatham garage in the mid-20th century, which occupies 9-19 High Street, Chatham, but is currently vacant. Whilst relatively functional in design, the building represents the social change in the area, where a shift towards car ownership contributed to the decline of the High Street in the later 20th century.

The second half of the 20th century saw a gradual reduction in the military presence in the area, and due to the considerable reliance of the local economy on the military Chatham suffered as a result. Following the Royal Marines leaving Chatham in 1950, the Royal Navy Dockyard closed in 1984, ending a 400-year relationship between the Royal Navy and Chatham.

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The knock-on effect was particularly felt in the Conservation Area both through loss of jobs in associated industries and also through reduced economic activity more generally. Societal changes also impacted the Conservation Area, such as television drawing audiences away from the theatres and cinemas, and the introduction of shopping centres, such as the Pentagon in Chatham opening in 1975 which led to trade being drawn away from this part of the High Street.

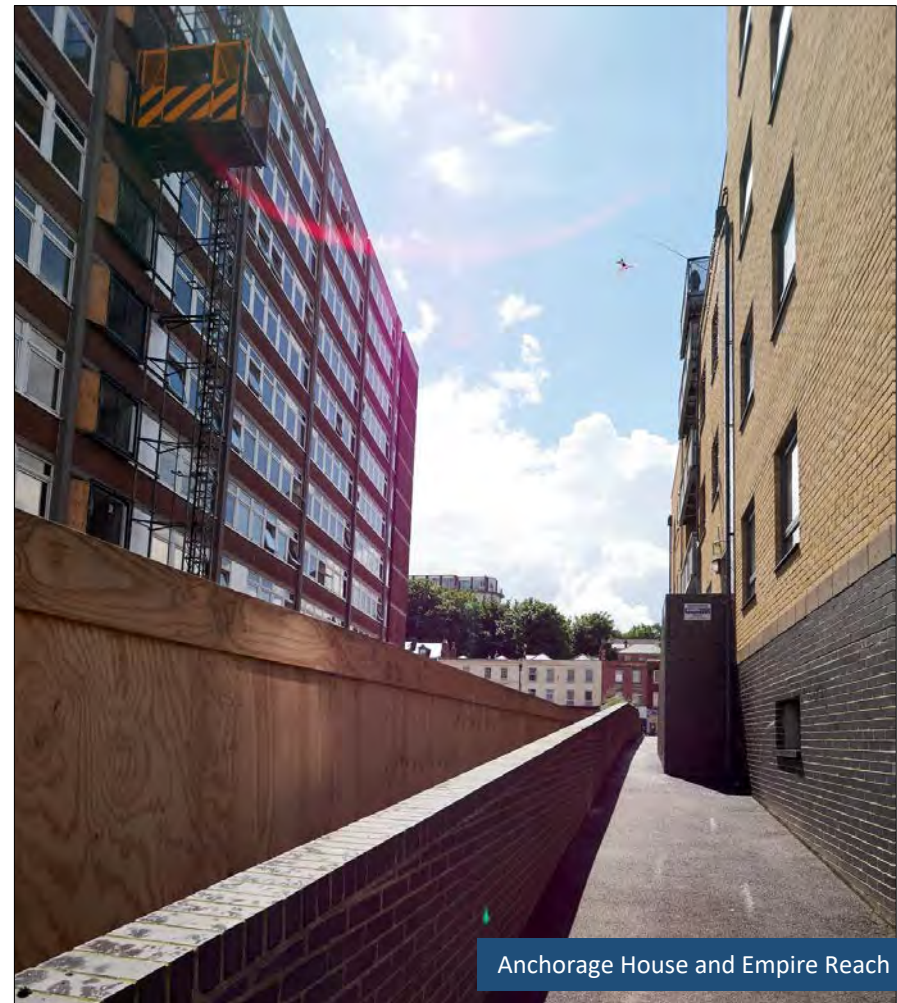
Throughout the 1960s and 70s the area also suffered from planning blight and preliminary clearance associated with abortive comprehensive redevelopment programmes.

As a result particular areas of the Conservation Area were redeveloped in an effort to stimulate the local economy, but often to the detriment of its character. This included the redevelopment of the former Majestic Cinema near to the junction of Star Hill to a large residential block known as Rochester Gate. Slightly earlier came Anchorage House, the large slab-like office block which replaced the Empire Theatre and Cinema. Anchorage House lies outside of the Conservation Area, but its physical and visual dominance is a significant detractor when compared the relatively small-scale, fine grain historic character of the surrounding townscape of the Conservation Area. To compound the impact of Anchorage House further, the residential block of Empire Reach was developed immediately adjacent in the early 21st century which whilst of a slightly smaller scale, is at odds in terms of its scale and appearance to the surrounding historic townscape of the Conservation Area.

The impact of the late 20th century reliance on the car can also be noted through the redevelopment of areas of valuable townscape for both car parking and car sales yards, such as those in the western end towards Star Hill, on St Margaret's Banks, and at 25 - 35 High Street, Chatham.

The importance of this part of Chatham and Rochester was first recognised in the 'Lower High Street Informal District Plan', issued in 1976 by Medway Borough Council. This proposed that part of the St Margaret's Banks area be designated a Conservation Area, although this was not

carried forward. In 1994 however the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area was designated. Concerns regarding its condition were addressed almost immediately with support from English Heritage as part of a Conservation Area Partnership between 1996 and 2002, followed by a Townscape Heritage Initiative between 2004 and 2014, and more recently in 2020 designated a High Street Heritage Action Zone.



Anchorage House and Empire Reach

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Notable Themes and People

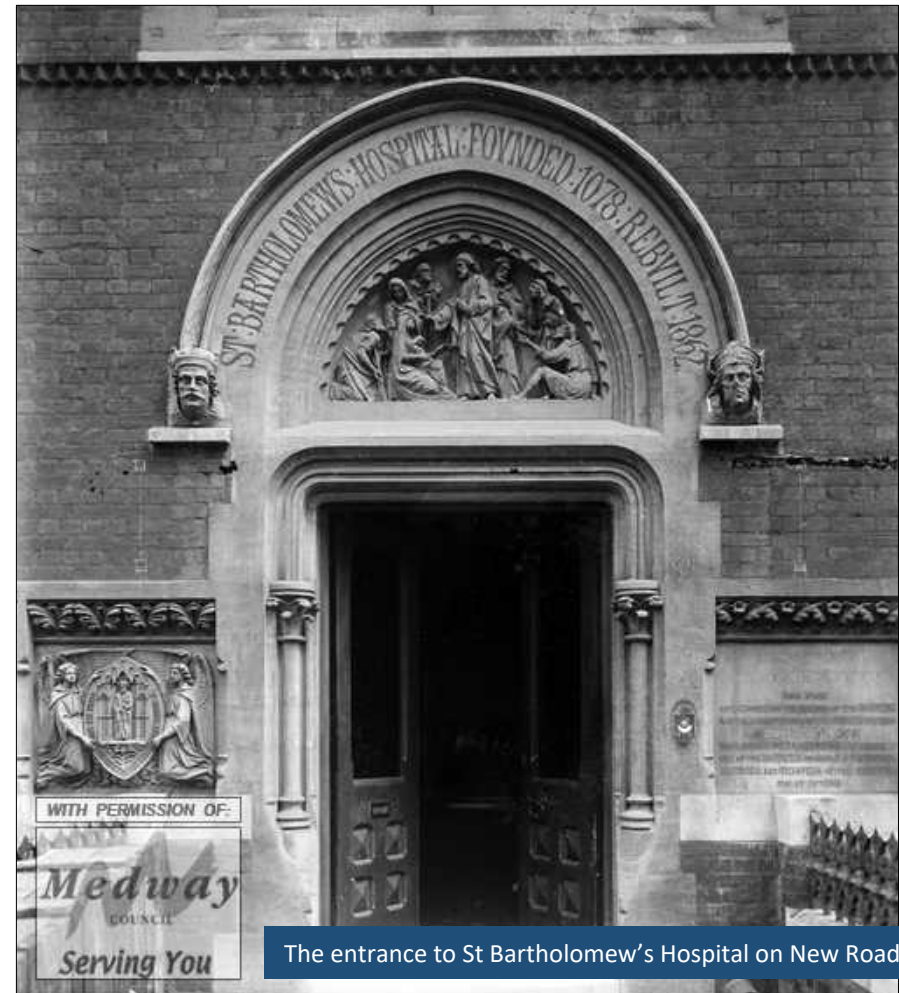
The character of the Conservation Area has been influenced by a broad spectrum of people, activities, occurrences, and themes since the first known built development in the area, around 1,000 years ago.

St Bartholomew's Hospital

Founded in 1078, St Bartholomew's Hospital was originally constructed as part of a leper hospital by the Bishop of Rochester, Gundulph. However, construction of the hospital wasn't completed until 1124, 16 years after Gundulph's death. Its position is almost equidistant between the historic settlements of Chatham and Rochester, lying adjacent to the boundary between the two, and was likely located here in open land, away from the main centres of population, and on a main road – quite possibly the old Roman road between Rochester and Chatham Hill. The surrounding land was gifted to the hospital to support its cause, which over time became more valuable as pressure for development in the area increased over the centuries following its inception.

Only part of the original hospital still exists above ground, forming the apse to the existing St Bartholomew's chapel, and it is not clear what the original form and layout of the hospital was. It is possible that there were also supporting service buildings, a gatehouse, and possibly a landing place or wharf, likely to be in the location of the town quay which was in the vicinity of Sun Pier. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, the chapel was converted to a dwelling. The residential use remained so until the early 18th century when it was converted back into religious use. Repairs and remodelling works were undertaken in the 19th century, along with its restoration by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1896. The chapel became redundant in the late 20th century but has recently been put into use as a gymnasium. A later St Bartholomew's Hospital was constructed facing New Road, opening in 1863.

Much of the site falls within the adjacent New Road Rochester Conservation Area, but the northern areas including the former mortuary (originally part of the Hulkes Brewery complex) lie within the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area. The hospital finally closed in 2016, and at the time of writing is being converted for residential use.



The entrance to St Bartholomew's Hospital on New Road

Image courtesy of Medway Archives.

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Sir John Hawkins Hospital

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Sir John Hawkins

Sir John Hawkins has an especially significant relationship with Chatham as Treasurer to the Royal Navy. As Treasurer he invested heavily in Chatham as a fleet anchorage, establishing store houses and ship-building facilities as well as developing a new breed of ships. Sir John Hawkins' change to naval strategy served the Royal Navy well overcoming the Spanish Armada in 1588 alongside his cousin Sir Francis Drake, and Lord Howard of Effingham.

Sir John Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake, and Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham established the Chatham Chest in 1590 recognising the plight of sailors who had been put ashore directly after the Armada. The Chest was established as the first pension scheme for the Royal Navy.

An iron bound chest believed to date from around 1625 was used to store the contributions and is now on display at the Historic Dockyard Chatham.

Further concerned about the lack of welfare for sailors, Sir John Hawkins petitioned his friend Lord Howard of Effingham to gain a Royal Charter for a Hospital (Alms-house) to be established from his properties in Chatham. A Royal Charter was granted by Queen Elizabeth I in 1594.

The alms-house was endowed from the income of Hawkins' properties and has continued to deliver its charitable objectives for over 430 years on the original High Street site that once formed part of Sir John Hawkins' Chatham home. It remains one of the longest established residential building in the Conservation Area.

The alms-house is located on the northern side of the High Street, on the boundary between Chatham and Rochester, and opposite St Bartholomew's chapel. Sir John Hawkins' home was located on the site of Featherstone House (369 – 377 High Street, Rochester), with fabric of the mansion incorporated, but still visible, within the existing building.



Featherstone House

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Religion

The Conservation Area has been home to various faiths and their places of worship, demonstrating the diversity of the community over the centuries. In early 19th century Chatham, alongside the Church of England churches of St Mary's and St John, there were the non-conformist denominations in the form of a Unitarian chapel, Ebenezer chapel, Zion chapel, Providence chapel, Bible Christian chapel, and a synagogue. Several of these places of worship were located in what is now the Conservation Area, many of which still exist and remain in use today.



The Unitarian Church on Hamond Hill

Whilst located just outside of the Conservation Area, the Unitarian Church on Hamond Hill has noteworthy links to the Conservation Area in which its congregation originally worshipped at a meeting house on Heavysides Lane (now Hamond Hill). Unitarian belief sprung from the Reformation in the 16th century as part of the anti-Trinitarian movement in Europe, and in Chatham the Unitarian Church started under the General Baptist belief, with a congregation forming after hearing the preaching of Henry Denne between 1643 and 1646. The General Baptist congregation in Chatham gradually aligned to a Unitarian belief by the 19th century.

The current church was constructed in 1889, however there is evidence of previous buildings on the site, with an earlier chapel dating from 1802 replacing the meeting house from 1703.

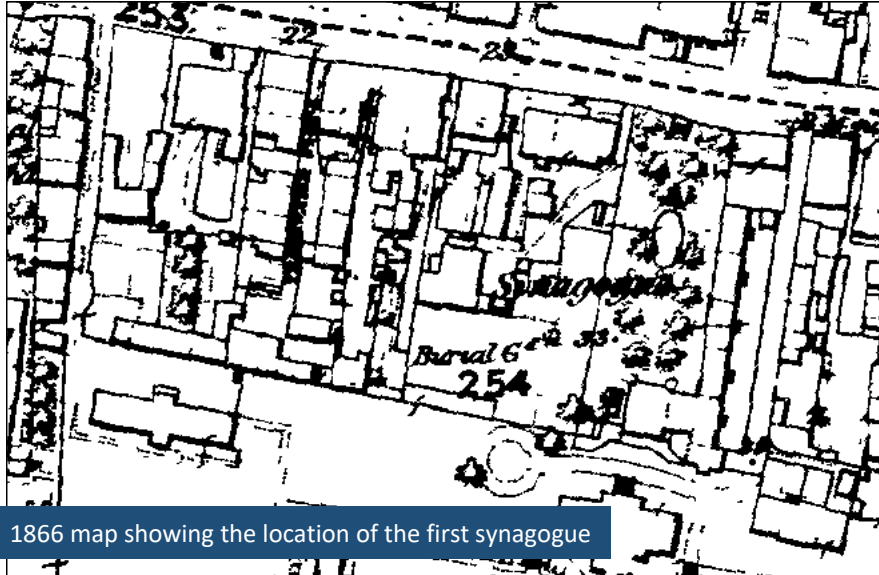
Other than St Bartholomew's chapel, the other known historic places of worship have since fallen out of use or have been demolished. In the late 18th century, a Wesleyan chapel existed on the north side of the High Street, Chatham, almost opposite Hamond Hill. Mid-19th century mapping identifies it with an Enon Baptist chapel to its northern edge. However, it is understood that another Wesleyan chapel, known as the Bethel chapel, was opened in 1810 on the western end of St Margaret's Banks. The land to the north of the chapel was used as a burial ground with over 500 graves recorded. Whilst both chapels on the High Street were replaced in the late 19th century, the Bethel chapel and its attached Sunday school remained into the 20th century and was later put into a new use as Kent Art Printers, until it was damaged by fire and its remaining fabric incorporated into the late 20th century buildings that now occupy the site.



The site of the Bethel Chapel on St Margaret's Banks

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The Jewish community in the Conservation Area is of notable importance due to their contribution to the development of the area, and Medway more widely. Irina Fridman provides an excellent account in the 2020 publication *'Foreigners, Aliens, Citizens: Medway and its Jewish Community 1066 - 1939'*.



1866 map showing the location of the first synagogue

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It is likely that Jewish people resided in Rochester since at least the Norman Conquest in 1066, before being expelled from England in 1290 by Edward I. The mid-17th century saw the resettlement of Jewish communities in England, and this is likely around the time that their first settlement occurred in the area. This date ties with the establishment of the Royal Navy Dockyard at Chatham in the mid-16th century, and the resulting economic stimulus that the dockyard provided to the area. At this time Chatham was seen to be somewhat a pioneer town, with a relatively diverse community. Several baptisms of Jewish children are recorded in the late-17th century at St Mary's Church in Chatham as there was no synagogue and this provided the means to record the births.

The first recorded premises for Jewish worship was in a tenement on Bulls Head Alley in the mid-18th century. Bulls Head Alley was located on the site of the present Chatham Memorial Synagogue and burial ground. The first synagogue was located slightly further south than the existing (as depicted in the 1866 map extract opposite) and is believed to have been established around 1760. The presence of a synagogue demonstrates that there was a considerable Jewish community in the area at the time, and by 1847 it was the fourth largest community outside of London, comprising 189 people.

The Jewish community were employed in various jobs, with many of the businesses located in the Conservation Area. Typical employment included Navy agents (who provided wares to sailors – often clothing), shopkeepers, jewellers, tailors, but also as surgeons, drapers, cooks, artists, musicians, and performers. Some became very successful through their ventures and went on to hold positions of office, such as Charles Isaacs, who in 1854 is understood to be the first Jewish man to hold a position in principle office, when he was appointed High Constable for Chatham. He was followed shortly after by other local Jewish men – John Montague Marks who became High Constable for Chatham in 1856, and Daniel Barnard in 1862.

In between times, Rochester elected its first Jewish mayor in 1860 Alderman John Lewis Levy, who had earlier been appointed a magistrate to the city in 1850. Charles Isaacs, John Montague Marks, and Daniel Barnard were all buried at the Chatham Memorial Synagogue burial ground, however only graves for Marks and Barnard survive.

The influence of Daniel Barnard and John Lewis Levy is still of relevance in the Conservation Area today. Daniel Barnard contributed to the existing and historic entertainment industry in the area through his music hall and later the 'Palace of Varieties' that stood opposite the Theatre Royal, just outside of the eastern edge of the Conservation Area.

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John Lewis Levy gained his success through being a merchant, where he owned a warehouse on the High Street at the junction of Star Hill. One of the goods that he traded were oranges, and it is believed that this is how Orange Terrace gained its name. Levy was hugely influential in making improvements in the area through becoming an active member of numerous public bodies.

Joseph Pyke is also worthy of note for his influence on the area, establishing the Chatham and Rochester Mechanics Institute on the High Street in the early 1850s, opposite the junction with Hamond Hill. Joseph Pyke invited Charles Dickens to become president of the Institute to which he accepted and is believed to give his first public reading of 'A Christmas Carol' in 1857 as part of a fundraising event for the Institute.

The existing Chatham Memorial synagogue was designed by Hyman Henry Collins and opened in 1870 with funds raised by Simon Magnus. The synagogue was later extended in the 1970s to provide additional communal space through the demolition of the minister's house which was built with the synagogue in 1870. Immediately to the south of the synagogue is the Jewish burial ground, which is particularly unique as Jewish religious law usually requires a physical separation of four *amot* (just under two metres) between the two. An important monument within the burial ground is that of Simon Magnus' son, Captain Lazarus Simon Magnus who died in 1865, and to which the synagogue was rebuilt as a memorial in 1869.

Captain Lazarus Simon Magnus gained success through a series of business ventures, and became friends with Isambard Kingdom Brunel, coming to his aid in the construction of the Great Eastern when the project faced bankruptcy. He also acted as the mayor of Queenborough and founded the 4th Kent Artillery Corps, recruiting from the local congregation. Similarly, Charles Isaacs raised the 9th Kent Volunteer Rifle Corps in 1860 and became their Lieutenant.

The synagogue remains in use today with an active congregation. It was designated a Grade II* Listed Building in 1985; with the tomb of Lazarus Magnus being Grade II Listed in 2022 along with the burial ground as a Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

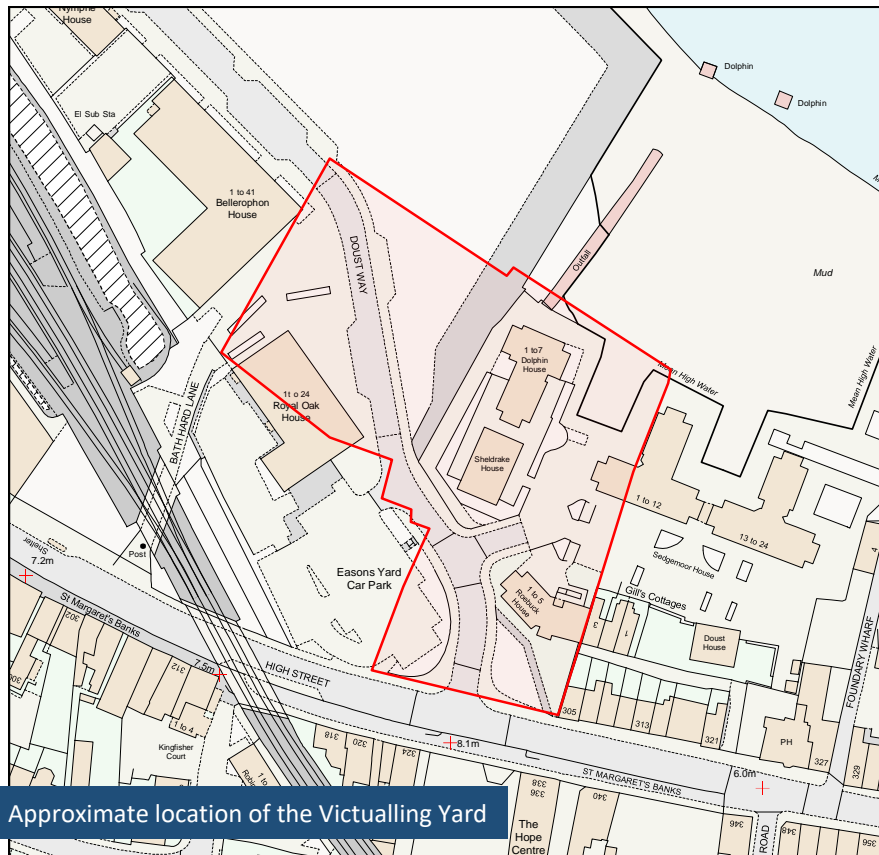


Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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The Royal Navy Victualling Yard

At some point in the latter half of the 17th century a victualling yard was established for the Royal Navy around the area of the current Doust Way. The purpose of the yard was to supply the Navy with food, drink, and other consumables; but unlike other larger victualling yards it did not produce its own goods, rather it functioned as a storage yard with the goods being produced elsewhere, possibly within the Conservation Area. The yard included a coopers' shop, pickle house, slaughterhouse, cutting house, beer store with bread loft over and a butter and cheese room.



Approximate location of the Victualling Yard

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Sheldrake House on Doust Way

Operations at the victualling yard finally came to an end in 1826 when the site was put up for auction. A series of commercial uses (including a timber yard, beer storage, sail making, the sale of Roman Cement, a coal depot, and power generation) occupied the site until the South Eastern Railway Company purchased much of the site in around 1890 as the location for Chatham Central station. The station was short-lived, and the site returned to commercial use and wharfage with the river frontage extended at around this time. Further change occurred in the late 20th century it was redeveloped for residential uses and all the historic buildings removed apart from one late-19th century warehouse, now known as Sheldrake House. Soon after, the early 21st century saw the commencement of the Rochester Riverside development which now occupies the remaining western portion of the site.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Wharves, Shipbuilding, and Associated Industries

The earliest known shipyard in the Conservation Area dates to around the mid-18th century, however it is possible that small-scale shipbuilding occurred in the area before this. The location for this shipyard was just east of the victualling yard and is represented today by a pair of inlets on the rivers' edge which was the location of the shipbuilding slips. Private ships were constructed at the yard, however in the mid-18th century contracts were issued and completed for the construction of smaller-scale warships for the Royal Navy, including HMS Panther in 1758 (a 60-gun fourth-rate ship of the line), and HMS Exeter in 1763 (a 64-gun third rate ship of the line).

Shipbuilding and brokerage continued through to the 19th century under the Nicholson family when ownership passed to George William Gill in 1853. A notable ship to be constructed by Gill was the passenger steamer *City of Rochester*, launched in 1849. In 1883 the site was partially redeveloped, and new houses were constructed fronting the High Street to the west of the North Foreland PH, known as Gill's Cottages, or Mid-Kent Terrace.



Mid Kent Terrace

The final shipbuilder to occupy the site was Doust and Co. from 1933 and ceasing operations the Conservation Area in 1990. The site was subsequently redeveloped, the slips partially infilled and the large late 19th century house (now Grade II Listed and known as Doust House, but probably constructed by the Nicholson family) was brought back into use.



The Grade II Listed Doust House

Another notable riverside industry was the Medway Ironworks located on Foundry Wharf. The works appeared to have opened prior to 1800 and operated under various owners through to at least the late 19th century.

Timber and coal wharves also formed an important part of the riverside character through the 18th to the 20th century; however, coal appears to have been shipped into the area since at least the 17th century. The last coal wharf to have operated in the area was at Sun Wharf (now the site of Sun Pier House) into the second half of the 20th century.

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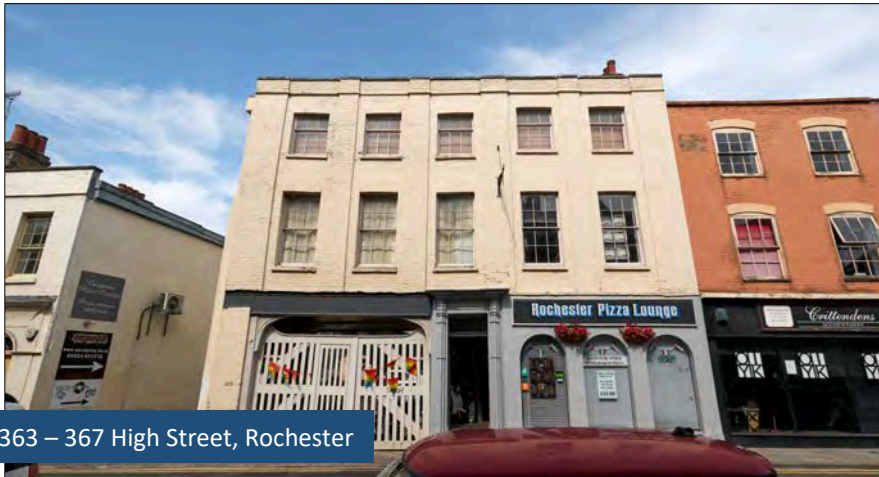


Historic photograph possibly from the early 20th century looking east along the riverfront from Rochester Riverside

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Public use of the Riverfront

Whilst the predominant use of the riverfront was for commercial wharves and other activities, small areas of public access also existed. This included both for bathing, such as the floating public baths that gave Bath Hard Lane its name, but also for travel along the river. This included from the piers at Ship Pier and Sun Pier, from which steamer services operated through 19th and early 20th century. One such operator was the New Medway Steam Packet, that operated between Chatham and Sheerness and who's offices were located at 363 – 367 High Street, Rochester.



363 – 367 High Street, Rochester

Breweries

As noted in Hasted's 1798 account of the area, two breweries existed at that time. The breweries were likely to be that of the Hulkes/Arckoll/Lion Brewery on Hulkes Lane, and Best Brewery on the High Street where Manor Road now connects with New Road. Somewhat confusingly, both breweries had attached mansions called Chatham House that fronted the High Street. There was also a smaller brewery on the north side of the High Street on the river's edge, called the Hamond Place Brewery.

Both Hamond Place and Best breweries have since been lost, although some vaults, possibly originating from within the Best Brewery, exist on Manor Mews with the eastern part of the site being redeveloped to create Manor Road in 1902.



The Best Brewery mansion known as Chatham House

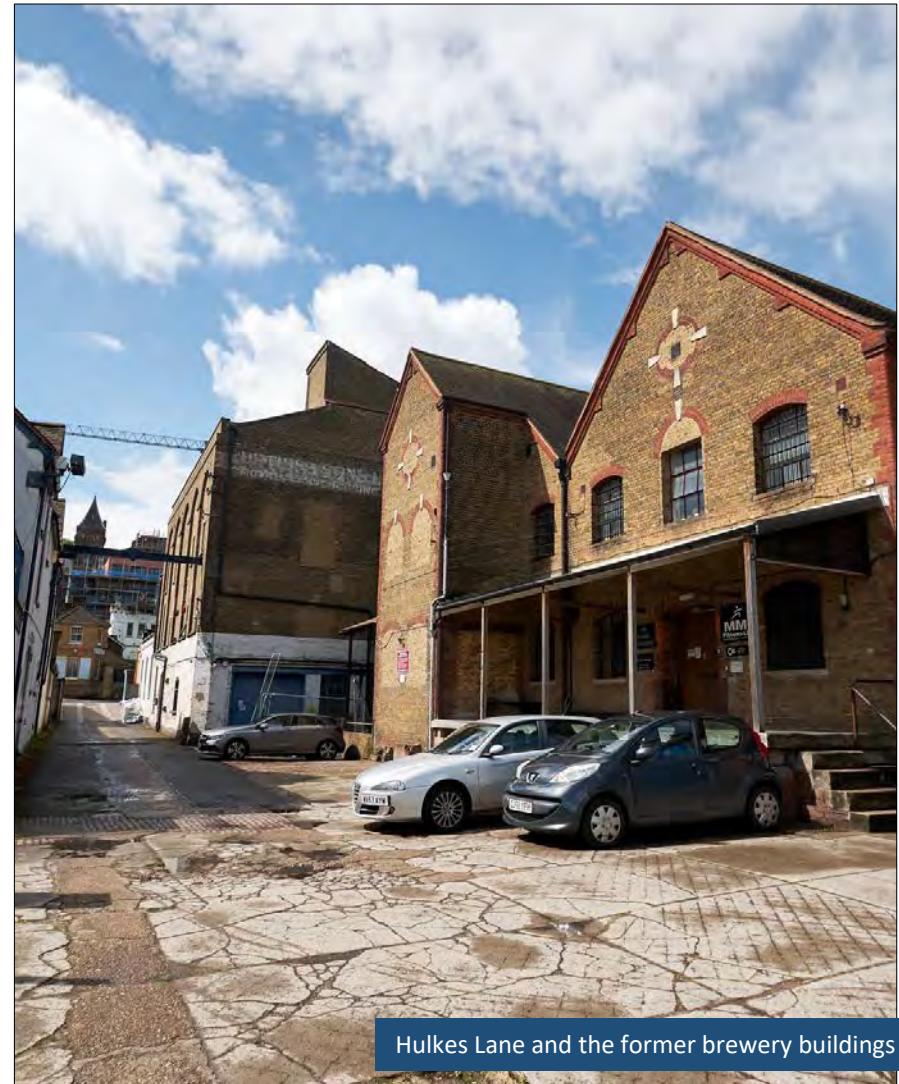
Image courtesy of Medway Archives.

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Much of the Hulkes/Arckoll/Lion Brewery complex still exists in a relatively intact form, much of which are now designated as Listed Buildings. The complex comprises two main plots either side of the High Street, with the northern portion comprising a brewery, stables, the brewer's mansion, a public house, and a wharf. And the southern site comprising the spring that supplied water to the brewery via the castellated Gothick-style pumphouse within the garden to the brewer's mansion, and a terrace of cottages. The brewery complex and its associated mansion house is perhaps the most evocative collection of buildings relating to the industrial history of the Conservation Area.

The use of the site as brewery can be dated back to at least the late 18th century, however there is evidence to support the likelihood that this use could date back even further with parts of the building dating back to at least the 17th century. The Tihurst's (or Ticehurst, or Tyhurst) appear to be the earliest recorded brewers occupying the site through the 18th century with Rebecca Tihurst marrying another brewer, Isaac Wildash, in the mid-18th century. In 1786 John Wildash (the son of Isaac) went into partnership with Thomas Hulkes, but the partnership was dissolved in 1795, and sole ownership of the brewery passed to Hulkes. Ownership subsequently passed to his heirs, last of which was James Hulkes who ran the brewery until 1877. The brewery was then sold to Charles Arkcoll and Co. who renamed it the Lion Brewery. Arkcoll died in 1912 and the brewery was again sold, this time ending the use of the site as a brewery. The site passed through a series of commercial ventures, including Style and Winch brewery (although the site was not used for this purpose), and Curtiss and Sons, a furniture removal business, and whose painted signage still exists on the northern elevation of the brewery building. By the 1930s, following on from being initially sub-let, the site on the northern side of the High Street was purchased by the Featherstones', a local department store, who used the complex as a retail premises and storage until the early 21st century.

A more detailed account of the history and significance of the brewery complex is provided in the Statement of Heritage Significance, prepared by Michael Copeman in 2021.



Hulkes Lane and the former brewery buildings



The former Prince of Orange public House

Public Houses and Entertainment

In the late 19th to early 20th century there were at least 36 pubs and bars on the High Street section of the Conservation Area – averaging out as a pub every 30m, around 11 of which were clustered on the northern edge of the High Street between Sir John Hawkins Hospital and Sun Pier. Some of the pubs have particularly early origins, dating back to at least the 18th century, including the Nag's Head (still operating), The Ship Inn (also still operating), and the North Foreland (currently vacant). Other pubs have since been converted to other uses, but often retain much of their ornate architectural detailing that readily identifies them as a pub, such as the Prince of Orange, design by local architect George Edward Bond.

Alongside the pubs, another key part of the entertainment industry were theatres, music halls, and slightly later, cinemas. Many of these venues were established through the 19th and into the 20th century and were of considerable size including the 2,000 seat Barnard's Place of Varieties (rebuilt in 1886), the 3,000 seat Theatre Royal (constructed 1899), and the 1,500 seat Gaiety Theatre (constructed 1890), which was later enlarged in 1912 to form the Empire Theatre. A cinema was subsequently added next door to the Empire Theatre in 1917, but subsequently closed in the 1960s. This was not the first cinema however, with 74 High Street, Chatham being adapted to a cinema in 1910 – possibly the first cinema in Medway. Known as the Cinema du Luxe it was later modified as The Bohemia in 1920. Another cinema was opened 1935 at the western end of the Conservation Area, originally known as the Majestic.

Other than the Theatre Royal, very little evidence of these once grand entertainment facilities remains due to mid/late 20th century redevelopment; however, the area retains its reputation for live entertainment with small venues playing live music and theatre performances, such as at the Nags Head public house, and the Medway Little Theatre on St Margaret's Banks.

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The former Edward Bates shop

Image courtesy of Medway Archives.

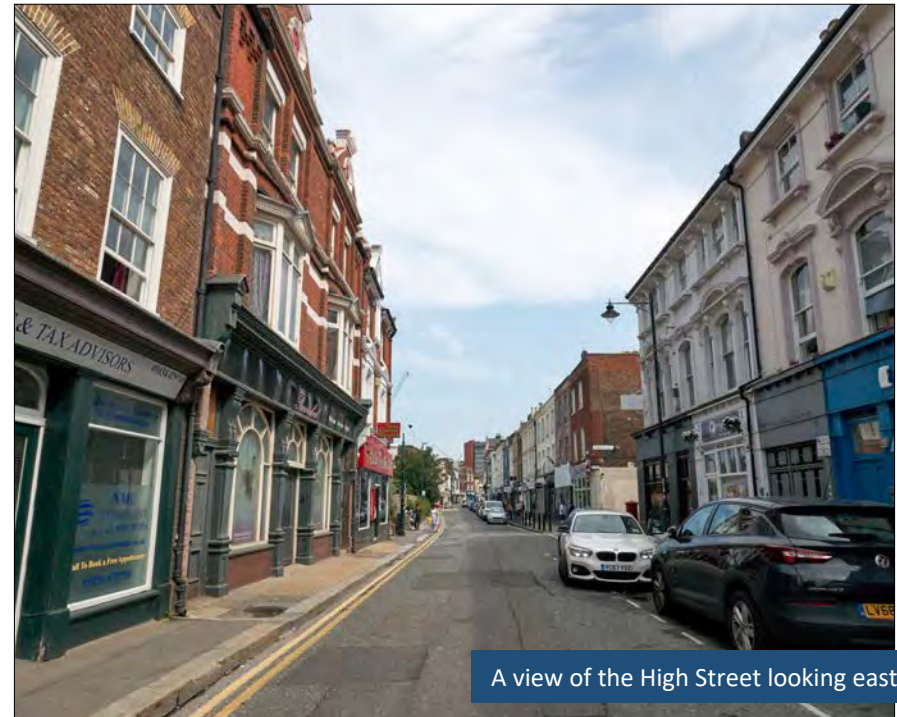
Retail and Commercial Development

Existing as a key arterial route between Rochester and Chatham, the High Street in the 19th century began to take on the character of many other High Streets, becoming lined with retail premises. Following the fire in 1800 which led to the loss of a great portion of the eastern end of the High Street, a reconstruction programme commenced in 1802 for purpose-built retail development with residential premises above, known as Hamond Place, now numbers 40 – 72 High Street, Chatham. This is a particularly early example of such a shopping parade and is therefore of notable importance. Much of the parade exists today, albeit with some alterations, however its form can be readily interpreted.

The fire of 1800 also provided the opportunity for widening and realignment of the High Street and kick-started a series of similar mixed-used redevelopment programmes along the High Street. Two late 19th century examples include Victoria Buildings at 380 – 384 High Street,

Rochester (built 1889, and designed by George Edward Bond), and 348 – 364 High Street, Rochester, along with St Bartholomew's Terrace immediately behind (built 1887). A similar but slightly later and larger development was 86 – 100 High Street, Chatham, also designed by George Edward Bond, and built after 1902 following the demolition of the Best Brewery complex.

Many other examples of such 19th and 20th century buildings exist throughout the High Street and now characterise the eastern end of the Conservation Area to St Margaret's Banks. Many of these buildings still display many of their original decorative and ornamental detailing, reflecting the buoyant nature of the retail and commercial aspects of High Street at the time.



A view of the High Street looking east

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Featherstone House in the mid-20th century

Photograph © Featherstones. With thanks to Sheila Featherstone-Clark for kindly providing the image.

The types of operators occupying the commercial premises varied considerably and provided for the needs and wants of the time. One such notable local operator was Featherstones'. Established in the late 19th century in Strood, John Featherstone purchased their first premises in the Conservation Area at 375 High Street, Rochester in 1901 and opening it as a department store. Following this was 351 - 357 High Street which became their furniture showroom and storage, 337 – 341 High Street, which was redeveloped to their gentleman's outfitters and manufacturing above, and 331 High Street became their cycle shop.

The nature of Featherstones' offer was a form of interest free credit, originally targeted at supporting local working-class families by allowing them purchase uniforms and workwear which was paid for over an agreed period. This approach was particularly popular, and the business went from strength to strength in the first half of the 20th century, opening several department stores across Kent, and even one in Rosyth, Scotland.

The contribution Featherstones' made to the character of the Conservation Area has been of great value, and their careful re-use of historic buildings throughout the 20th century is of great benefit to the Conservation Area today.

To support the workers' educational needs, a Mechanics' Institute was established opposite the junction with Hamond Hill in the mid-19th century, later moving to Fair Row in Chatham. The Mechanics' Institute movement was conceived at the end of the 18th century as a means of improving the literacy and numeracy of working people and providing them with some basic technical education. Charles Dickens was an advocate of the Mechanics' Institute movement and went on to become the president of the Rochester and Chatham Mechanics' Institute from 1860 until his death in 1870.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Arts

Historically the Conservation Area has continually contributed to the local, and often national arts and culture. Richard Dadd is one of the area's earliest notable local artists; born in Chatham in 1817 and noted for the level of detail of his work. One of his Dadd's most famous pieces is *'The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke'* (1855-64) depicted opposite.

Evelyn Dunbar is another, who lived on St Margaret's Banks from 1913. Dunbar is noted for recording women's contributions to the World War II home front, particularly that of the Women's Land Army. Dunbar studied at Rochester School of Art, now the University for the Creative Arts (UCA), until recently located adjacent to the Conservation Area at Fort Pitt. One of Dunbar's works is *'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull'* (1945), as depicted below. Many other notable creatives have studied at UCA, or worked, lived and socialised in the Conservation Area. The area remains at the heart of Medway's creative culture, boasting several established galleries, workshops, and studios that produce some of the country's most celebrated art and fashion.



A Land Girl and the Bail Bull by Evelyn Dunbar, 1945. © Tate. Reproduced under CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported). Available from: www.tate.org.uk



The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke by Richard Dadd, 1855-64. © Tate. Reproduced under CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported). Available from: www.tate.org.uk

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LGBTQIA+

The Conservation Area has been a focus for the LGBTQIA+ community since at least the 1950s, and largely centres around The Ship Inn public house - reputed to be one of the oldest LGBTQIA+ venues in the country. The Ship has a vibrant history, and through the mid-20th century became known as a space for sex workers, sailors, and gay men. The existence of such a venue in a port or garrison town is not especially out of the ordinary, and the presence of The Ship acts as a focal point that historically allowed people within the local community and further afield to express themselves freely without fear of persecution, and today contributes to the vibrancy and diversity of the Conservation Area.

One of the recent key figures in establishing the LGBTQIA+ community in the area was Don Rose, the landlord of The Ship from 1970 through to his death in October 1985. Rose was an active figure in the community and campaigned on local matters, such as saving the Theatre Royal in Chatham, and returning the paddle steam ship the Medway Queen to the area. Prior to being the landlord of The Ship, Rose also owned his own paddle steam ship, the Queen of the South (previously named the Jeanie Deans), which was the sister ship to The Waverley. During the 1980's he also operated pleasure cruises from Ship Pier aboard the Queen of Kent.

The success of The Ship as an LGBTQIA+ social and recreational venue saw the Conservation Area become the centre for the LGBTQIA+ community in Medway and the surrounding areas in the decades following, with several other public houses declaring themselves LGBTQIA+ friendly venues and holding regular events. This included the Von Alton, Royal Exchange, Rose and Crown, Ordnance Arms (later the Britannia), and the Horse and Groom. Notably, events at the Horse and Groom were organised by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, the Gay Liberation Front, and the Medway Area Gay Independent Community.

Today, the Conservation Area remains a hub for LGBTQIA+ resources, events, and social spaces. The Ship continues to go from strength to strength with the current landlord continuing the pubs tradition as a vibrant and valued community resource. The well-established ME1 Sauna and Steam on Foundry Wharf, and 331 High Street in Rochester being home to the Medway Gender Sexual Diversity Centre which hosts a range of independent LGBTQIA+ organisations including the South-East Gender Initiative, Medway Pride Radio and organisational hub, and Medway Gay Men's Health and Wellbeing Forum. National recognition of the importance of the contribution of these services was made recently with Medway Pride Radio being nominated for the Community Organisation award for LGBT at the National Diversity Awards in 2022.



The Grade II Listed Ship Inn public house

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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George Edward Bond

Several of Medway's most valued Victorian and Edwardian buildings can be credited to the local architect George Edward Bond. Whilst a few of his buildings have unfortunately been lost, many remain, and some are now recognised and celebrated for the national importance as Listed Buildings.

From the late 19th century, Bond situated his offices in the Conservation Area, working from Victoria Buildings at 380 – 384 High Street, Rochester, which he designed himself. Bond also worked on several other buildings in and around the Conservation Area, including nurse's accommodation at St Bartholomew's Hospital, Pier Chambers, the Prince of Orange public house, the Theatre Royal, the Nurses Institute and Masonic Hall on Manor Road, Chatham, along with 337 – 341, and 375 High Street, Rochester.



337 – 341 High Street, Rochester in the 1920s

Photograph of 337 – 341 High Street, Rochester with its original façade in the 1920s. Photograph © Featherstones. With thanks to Sheila Featherstone-Clark for kindly providing the image.



The Grade II Listed former Theatre Royal

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Spatial Analysis

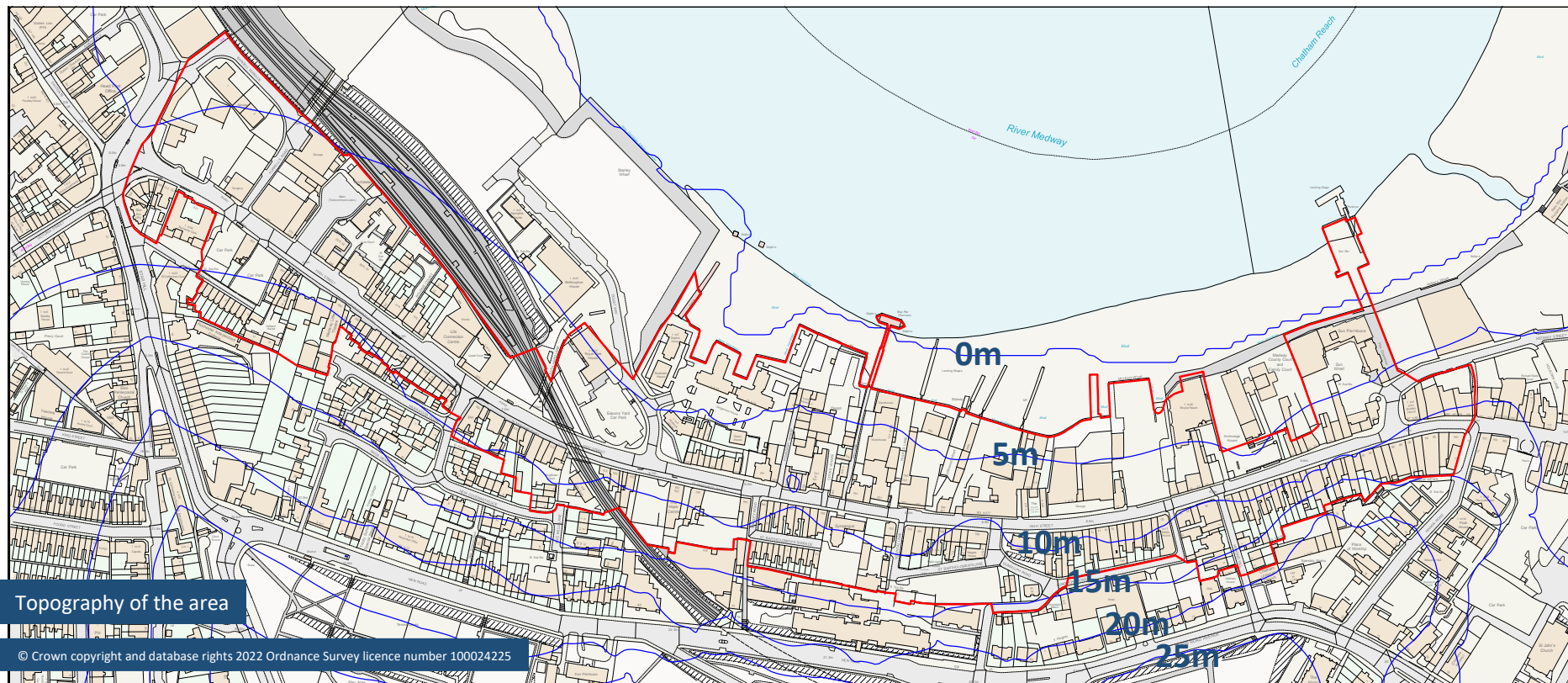
The spatial characteristics of the area provide insight of the influences that helped shape the historic townscape, and in-turn provide a greater understanding of the character and significance of the Conservation Area.

Topography and Geology

The Conservation Area is located along an outside bend on the south bank of the river Medway, and at the foot of a scarp to the south that rises to New Road.

The ground levels within the Conservation Area range from 0 - 5m at the rivers' edge, to 15m - 20m AOD in the south. Due to its low-lying nature, the area is prone to flooding along the river's edge.

According to British Geological Society data, the bedrock geology is the 'Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation – Chalk' - a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 86 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period, when the local environment previously dominated by warm chalk seas. In terms of superficial geology alluvium can be found along the rivers' edge, comprising clay, silt, sand, and peat.

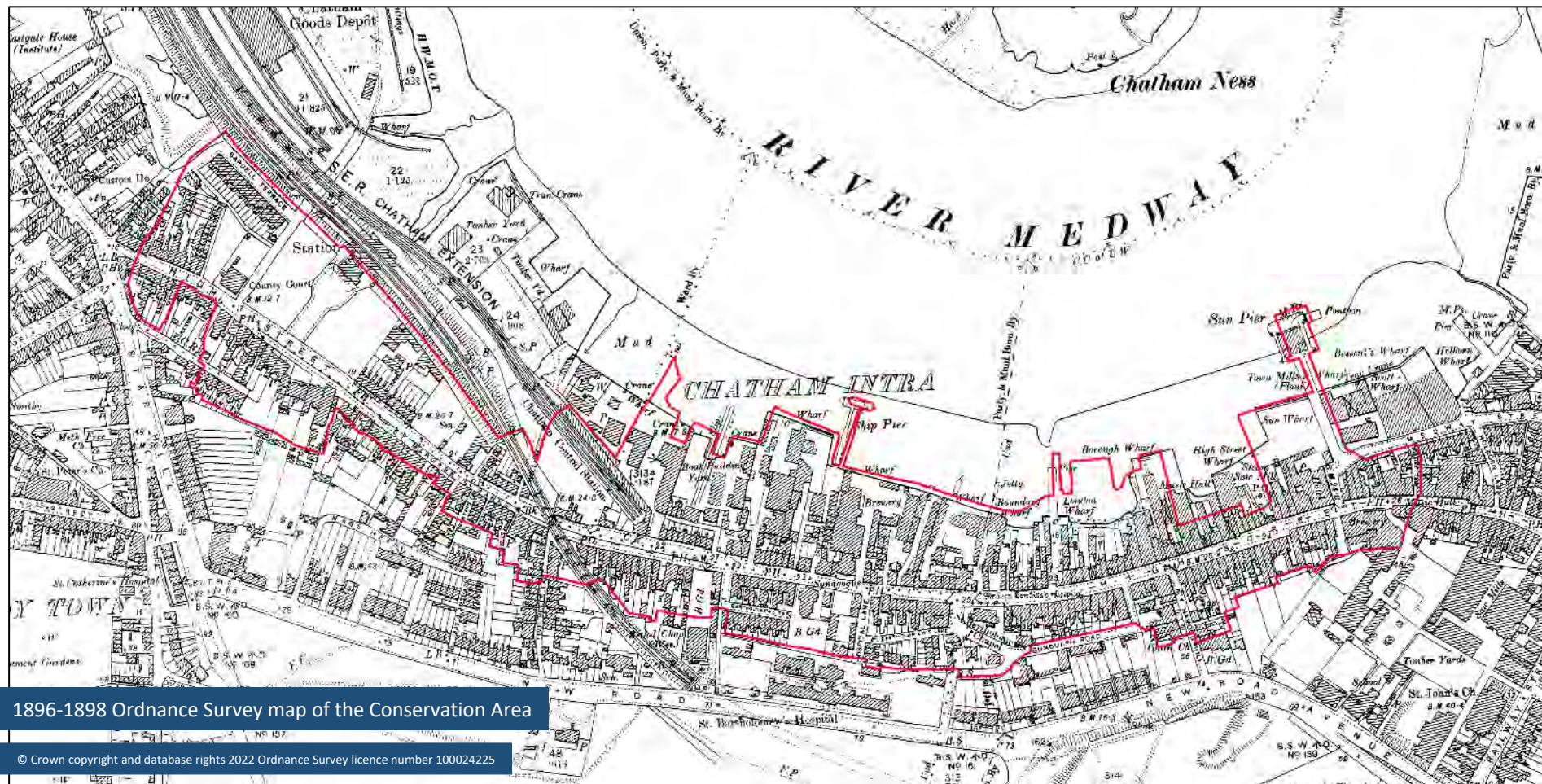


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Access and Movement

One of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area are the narrow lanes, paths and alleyways that run from the High Street both north to the river, and south up to New Road on the higher ground above. The age of these routes vary, but some are likely to be particularly historic.

Some probably originate through the development of the riverside areas from the 17th century, and others due to the opening of New Road in the late 18th century. Many of the routes are now pedestrian access only, and/or are in private ownership and so may not be publicly accessible. The late-19th century map below highlights the fine grain townscape and the narrow lanes and alleyways running perpendicular to the High Street.



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Green Spaces

The predominant historic commercial and industrial nature of much of the Conservation Area has resulted in publicly accessible green space being sparse, currently limited to small spaces such as amenity land at the edges of modern developments, or private space available for public use, such as that on the High Street at St Bartholomew's Hospital. Historically, additional green space existed at the Bethel chapel on St Margaret's Banks, and the Unitarian church just outside the Conservation Area, on New Road Avenue. The Bethel chapel churchyard has since been covered over but remains as an open area, and the Unitarian church provides an important green break softening the north side of New Road Avenue.

Many of the historic houses, notably those on St Margaret's Banks, also would have had large private rear gardens. Many of these gardens were truncated in the late 20th century with the development of Nag's Head Lane and Hawkwood Close. One such garden remains to the rear of 252 High Street and includes a plaque on the boundary wall: *'Erected by T Tomlyn 1790'*.

The final green area of note is that of the cutting of the railway line that bisects the Conservation Area. Whilst being inaccessible, the trees provide a valuable backdrop to the townscape and are of ecological value.

Historically there was slightly more green space, but much of this came in the form of private gardens (many of which remain today), those attached to other buildings such as churches and chapels, or the large gardens located near to the former Victualling Yard. The deficiency in open space was tackled in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the laying out of the nearby Victoria Gardens, Fort Pitt Gardens, and Jackson's Recreation Ground for public enjoyment, following being considered surplus for military use. These greenspaces continued to be well-used today and offer picturesque panoramic views above the Conservation Area of the river and surrounding towns.

Trees

Most trees within the Conservation Area are contained within private spaces and gardens. Noteworthy trees can be found in Gundulph Road, the former Rochester Railway Station car park, Doust Way, in areas such as the railway cutting, and in rear gardens most often on the south side of the High Street.

Trees are of value to the character of the Conservation Area as they enhance the setting of many historic buildings and be relevant to the locations of historic green spaces. The ecosystem service and social benefits of trees can include tackling climate change, reducing the urban heat island effect, contributing to sustainable urban drainage, providing habitats for wildlife and enhancing air quality in certain circumstances. Trees also improve human health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for people to connect with and enjoy nature.

Trees in the Conservation Area are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions usually require people to notify the council, using a 'section 211 notice', 6 weeks before carrying out certain work on such trees. This notice period gives the council an opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the tree.

Some trees within the Conservation Aea are protected by TPO for which consent is usually required to undertake works to them, such as pruning or felling. Trees protected by TPOs are under constant review. The authority's main consideration when making a new TPO should be the amenity value of the tree. In addition, councils must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Further information is available in the [Planning Practice Guidance](#), and applications for works can be made through the [Planning Portal](#).

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Green space and trees at Doust Way

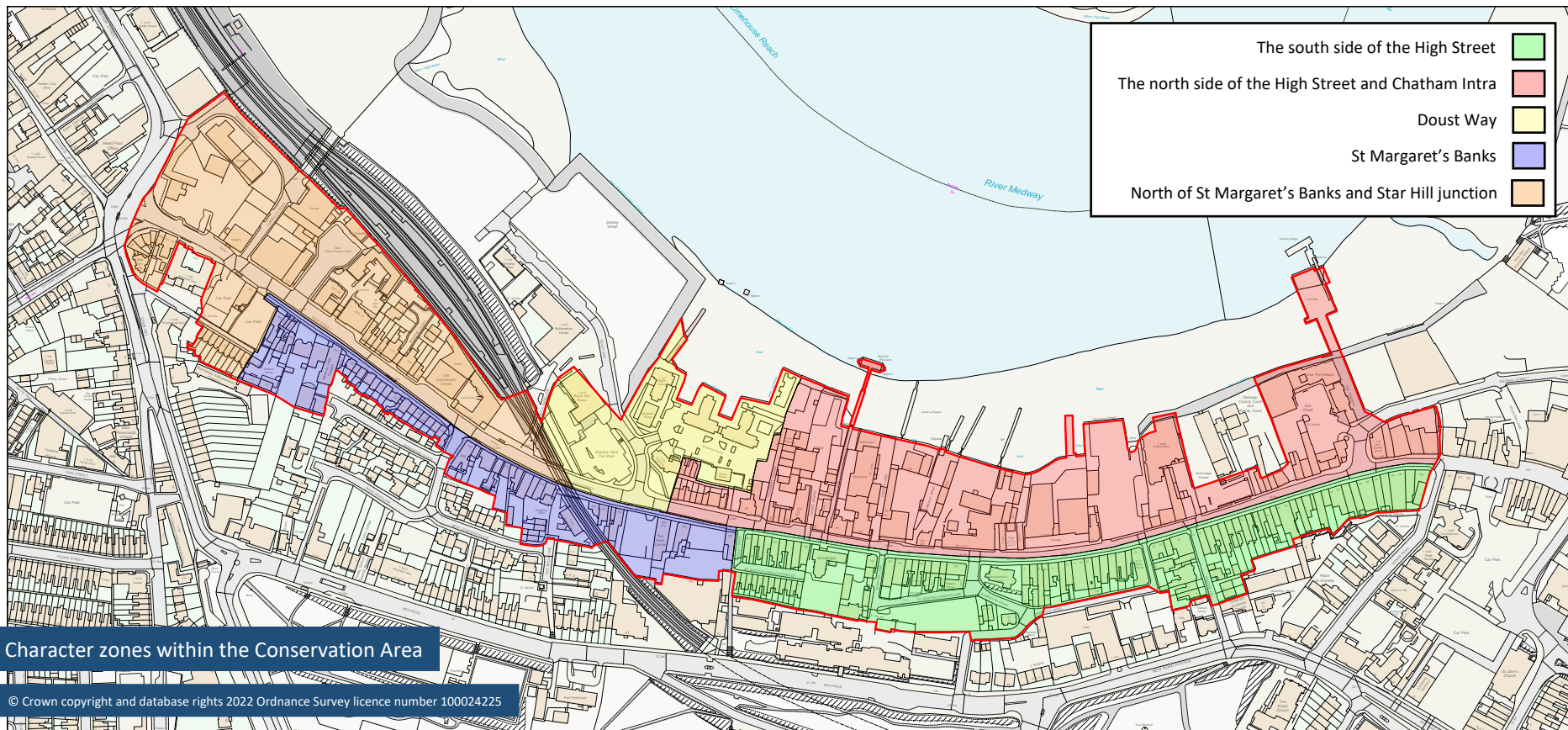
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Character Zones

Five zones of discernibly different character based on their spatial characteristics, architectural qualities, materials, use and historical context have been identified through the Conservation Area Appraisal. An assessment and summary of the key features and characteristics of each zone that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are made over the following pages.

The five separate character zones within the Conservation Area are as follows and as illustrated in the map below:

- The south side of the High Street
- The north side of the High Street and Chatham Intra
- Doust Way
- St Margaret's Banks
- North of St Margaret's Banks and the Star Hill junction.



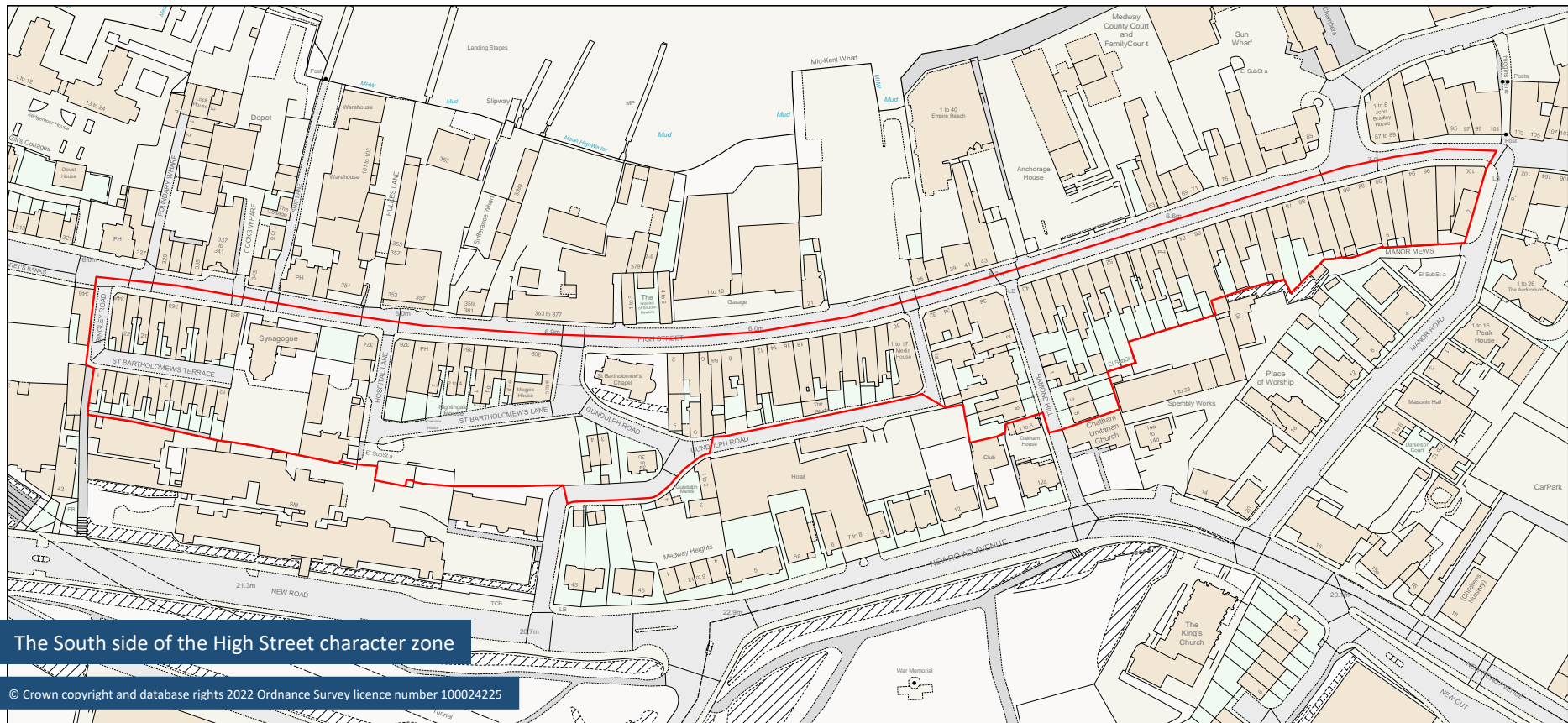
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The South Side of the High Street

Much of the south side of the High Street was rebuilt in the 19th century following the fires of 1800 and 1820, and through realignment and widening the street. However, examples of older buildings remain, such as Camden House on Hamond Hill, and St Bartholomew's chapel. The character is predominantly defined by 3-storey buildings, sometimes constructed as part of terraces or pairs. Between the odd former public house or other individually constructed building can be identified, but

often it is not entirely obvious due to consistent building lines, eaves heights and window positions. Throughout, most are constructed on narrow individual plots, usually around 6m wide and 30m deep that run perpendicular to the road and have no front gardens, but with front access immediately onto the highway.

Many of the buildings forming part of the south side of the High Street were constructed with commercial premises on the ground floor with accommodation above, and mainly continue in this configuration today.



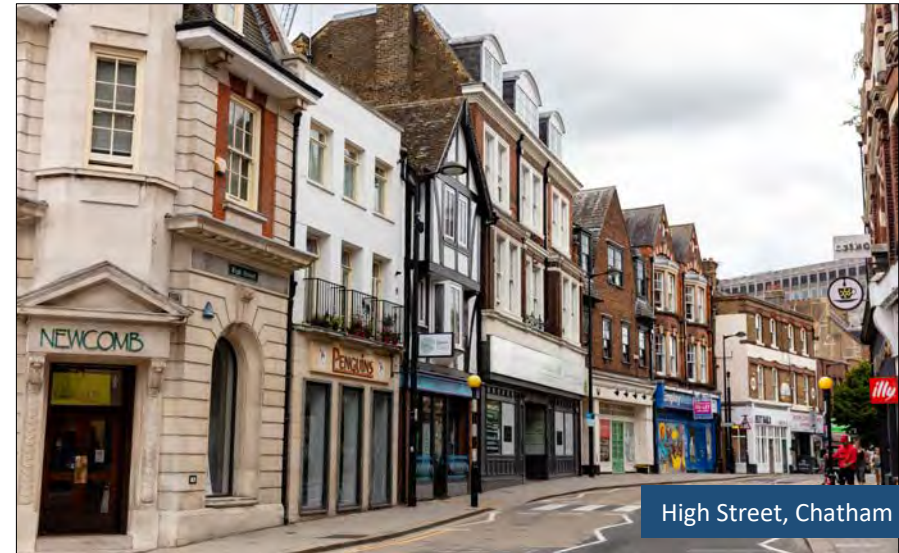
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Typical of some architectural styles of the 19th and early 20th century, many of the buildings in this character zone are often highly flamboyant, displaying a range of architectural details, with some later Victorian and Edwardian-era buildings having decorative gables, pediments, and dormers. In some instances, these details are beginning to show signs of decay, it is therefore important that steps are taken to prevent their loss.



Victoria Buildings

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.



High Street, Chatham

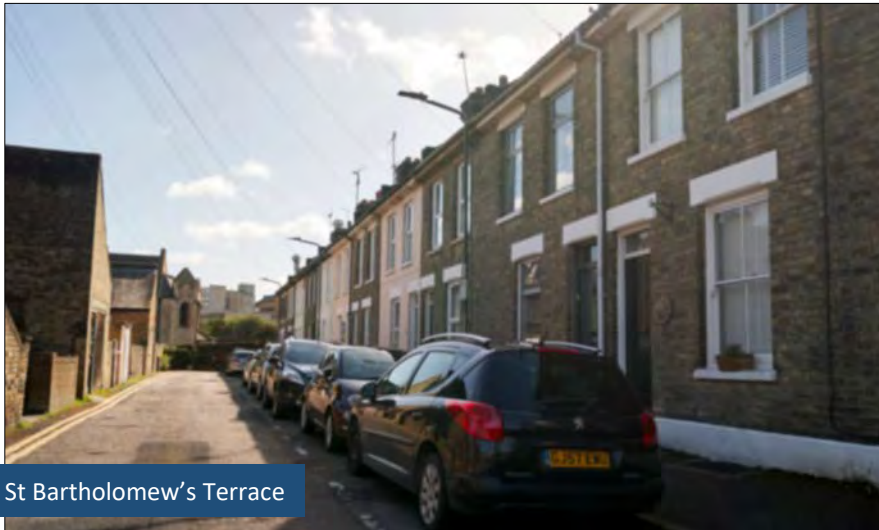
Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Some original shopfronts can still be found, but many have been replaced with modern aluminium framed and plate glass shopfronts. A key part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the more recent High Street Heritage Action Zone was to replace many of these poorly designed modern shopfronts with more traditional timber types. Many shop signs are the modern plastic type, and some are illuminated; these are usually considered to detract from the character of the Conservation Area, and so where appropriate the council supports the replacement of these with more traditional signage, such as hand-painted timber fascia boards.

The common facing material is brick of varying shades with stone dressings, and slate or red clay tile roof coverings that have sometimes been replaced with inferior concrete tiles. Some original brick facades have been painted or covered with a render finish, but where bare brick still exists, it is often of a highly decorative nature and contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area. Most windows above ground floor are timber sliding sash in varying configurations.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Off the High Street are small-scale residential streets, such as those of Hamond Hill, Gundulph Road, and St Bartholomew's Terrace. Apart from Camden House, most of the buildings are of 19th and 20th century origins, with new housing planned along the southern edge of St Bartholomew's Lane as part of the redevelopment of the former St Bartholomew's hospital.



St Bartholomew's Terrace

Some late 20th century infill development also exists in the character zone, such as 12 – 16, 24 and 72 High Street, Chatham. Whilst these examples reflect the scale, narrow plot width, vertical emphasis, and in instances take on some influences of the local architectural detailing; generally, they do not contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area due to lacking in the finer aspects of their design when compared to more historic counterparts.

Three key interjections occur in the frontage to the south side of the High Street: The Grade II* Listed St Bartholomew's chapel, the Garden of Reflection with its Grade II Listed railings, walls and steps, and the Grade II* Listed Chatham Memorial Synagogue.



High Street, Chatham

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Set in a small churchyard, the small-scale nature of St Bartholomew's chapel provides a welcome opening and moment of green vegetation in the enclosed High Street, and then giving way to Gundulph Road which weaves its way around the chapel and up the hillside to New Road behind. In the late 20th century, the chapel fell out of use, but has more recently been taken over by a gymnasium.

The Conservation Area includes part of Gundulph Road and St Bartholomew's Lane to the south of the High Street. These roads formed the rear access to the buildings fronting the High Street; however, they have since been subject to small-scale mews-style residential development.



The south side of the High Street is also home to perhaps the only current public green space in the Conservation Area, known as the Garden of Reflection and located adjacent to the Chatham Memorial Synagogue. The green space was originally the garden to 351 High Street (Chatham House) opposite with its 'eye-catcher' Grade II Listed former pumphouse beyond. Both the garden and pumphouse now form part of the redevelopment of St Bartholomew's Hospital and are to be brought into community use as part of the development.

Immediately west of the Garden of Reflection is Chatham Memorial Synagogue which forms another opening in the distinctive terraces fronting the High Street. Much like St Bartholomew's chapel, the synagogue is small-scale and set slightly back from the High Street within its grounds, but due to its distinctive design it draws the eye and acts as an important landmark and focal point within the Conservation Area.

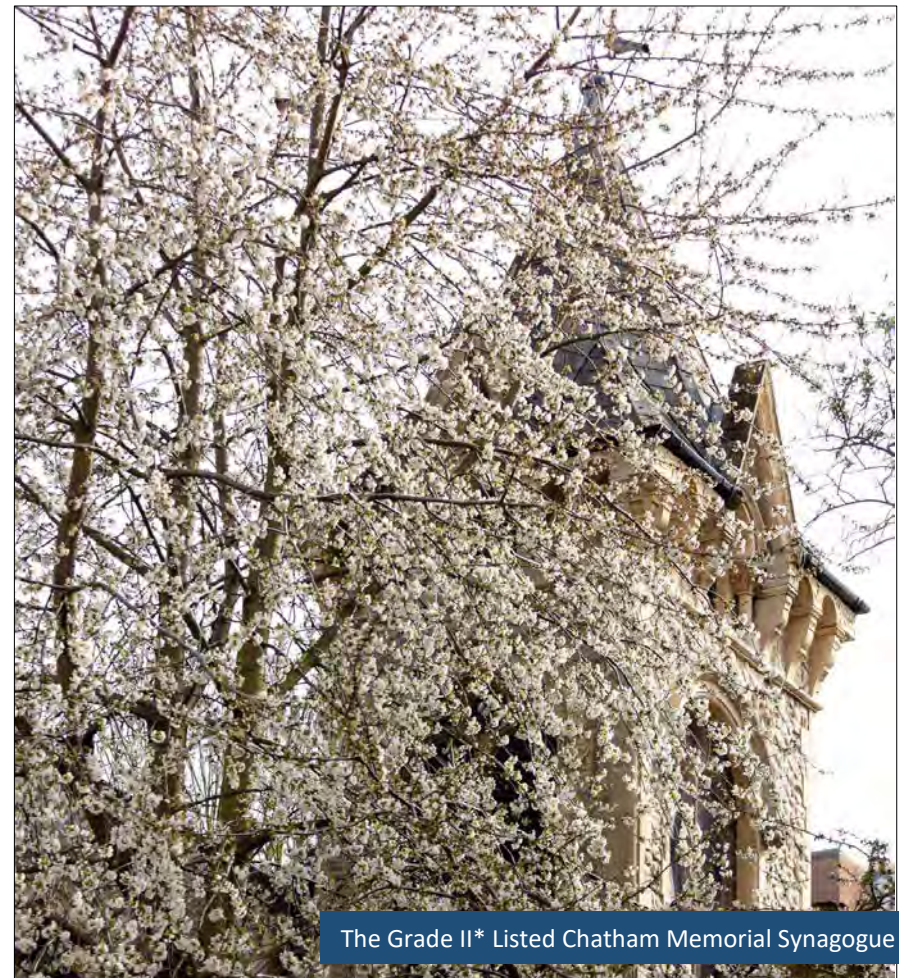


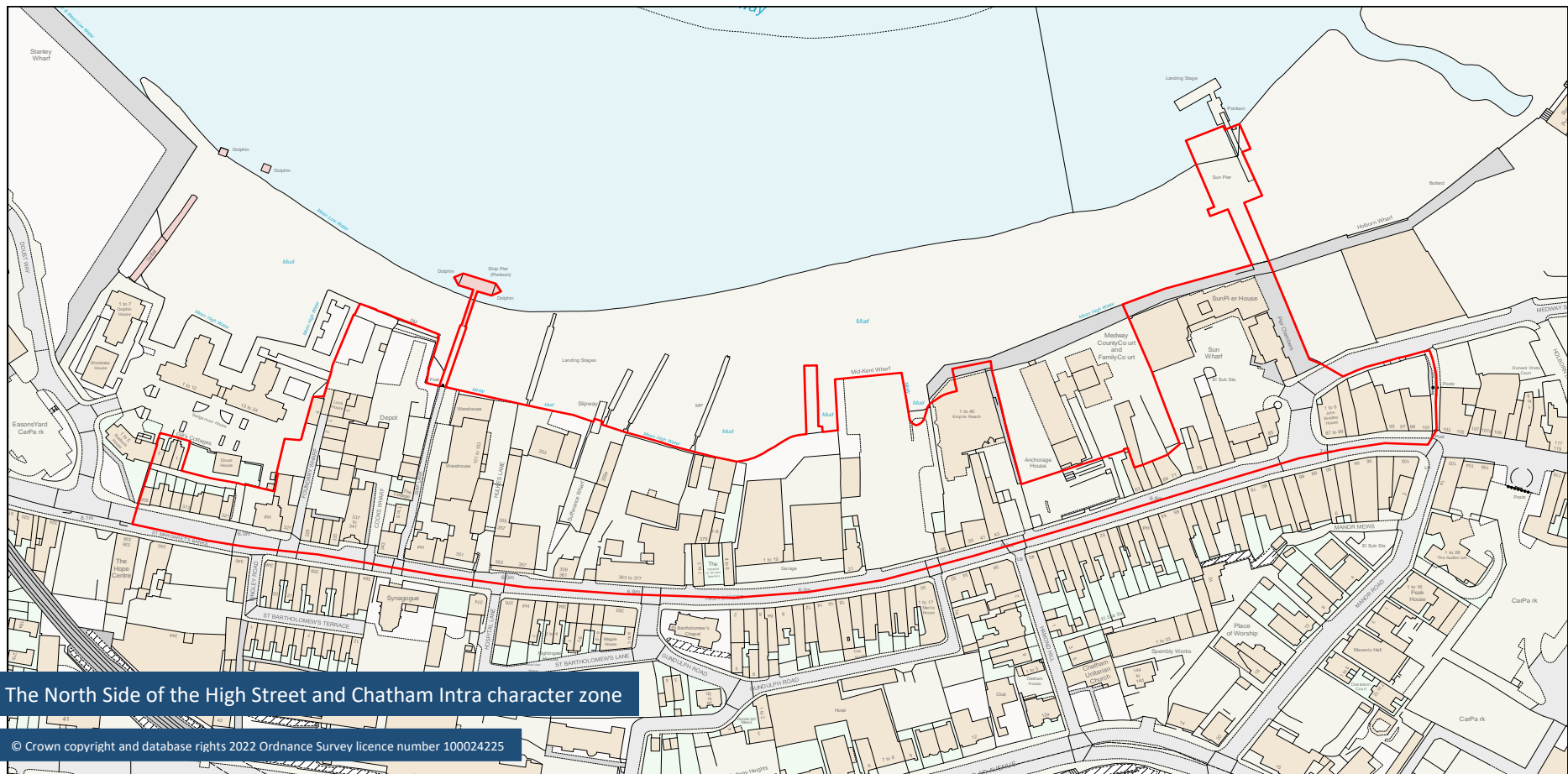
Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The North Side of the High Street and Chatham Intra

The north side of the High Street and Chatham Intra comprises three main components: (i) The High Street frontage, (ii) the river's edge with its wharves and piers, and (iii) the lanes, buildings and spaces that lie between the two. The character zone extends from the eastern extremity of the Conservation Area at Higgins Lane just beyond Sun Pier to the east, through to Foundry Wharf in the west.

This character zone includes many historic buildings ranging from those of the 16th century to those rebuilt after the large fires that occurred periodically through the 19th century. Later redevelopment in the mid to late-20th century removed a considerable amount of valuable historic fabric, and in some instances replaced with what are now considered to be major detractors to the character of the Conservation Area, such as Anchorage House (outside of the Conservation Area) and Empire Reach.



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The High Street frontage portion of this character zone varies in its age and quality, however in terms of scale it rarely rises above 3 storeys. Like the south side of the High Street, most buildings are constructed within narrow plots that run perpendicular to the High Street, but some vary in width; however, terraces such as those of 305 – 321 and 329 – 335 High Street, Rochester; and 35 – 43, 63 – 79 High Street, Chatham are more uniform. At the other end of the scale are much wider plots, such as the former Grays Garage at 1 – 19 High Street, its associated sales yard between 21 and 35 High Street, and the combined frontage of Empire Reach and Anchorage House on High Street, Chatham. These are where the older terraces have been redeveloped in the mid to late 20th century, removing the more regular narrow plots that can be observed on late 19th century mapping.



Historic photograph of the High Street looking west

Image courtesy of Medway Archives.



Late 19th century map of the High Street

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Many of the earliest 18th and 19th century buildings fronting the High Street and earlier were often originally in residential use, possibly with small commercial uses attached. Through the 19th and early 20th centuries many of these were gradually converted to commercial uses on the ground floor, and often had shopfronts added as popularity of the High Street increased. However, from the mid-19th century, many of the buildings began to be purpose built with commercial use at ground floor, usually with residential accommodation above and incorporating a range of decorative architectural detailing and design, adding to the flamboyant character of the bustling 19th and 20th century High Street. These vertical mix of uses within buildings of commercial at ground floor with residential above, and attractive shopfronts and frontages make an important contribution to the overall character of the High Street frontage to the Conservation Area today.

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Hulkes Lane, Rochester

The most common building material on the High Street frontage is brick of varying shades, sometimes with stone dressings. Slate roof coverings would have probably existed on most of the buildings, but some may have used Kent Peg clay tiles on the more historic buildings. In some instances, the roofs have been recovered with modern and less sympathetic clay or concrete tiles. Some original brick facades have been painted or covered with a render finish, but where bare brick still exists, it is often of a highly decorative nature and contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area. Aside from some exceptions most windows above ground floor are timber sliding sash in varying configurations, some inferior aluminium and UPVC frames are present and are usually considered to be a detracting feature.

Since at least the 17th century functional links have existed between the High Street frontages and the buildings behind; either through deep purpose-built buildings projecting back from the High Street, or those that have been gradually added to or altered over time depending on the use and needs of the occupier. This is reflected in the jumbled and unplanned nature of buildings within this character zone, such as at the former Lion brewery complex on Hulkes Lane and the area to the rear of Featherstone House. Between the narrow plots, historic alleyways and lanes exist that run from the High Street toward the river, originally providing access to the wharves and piers. These lanes are an important characteristic of the interface between the High Street and the river and provide a strong visual link, allowing for both glimpsed views of the river; and along with the enclosing buildings either side they can provide framed views of landmarks. Often historic surfacing such as granite setts and slabs remains in place, sometimes overlayed with modern materials.






The gradual development of the north side of the High Street occurred in tandem with the reclamation of land from the river to provide larger areas of wharfage, which can be seen through map regression on the following page.

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The series of land reclamation along the river edge

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	1866
	1898
	1908
	1954
	1975
	21 st century

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Buildings behind the High Street and down to the river edge are largely functional in nature and range in age, but some contain some attractive architectural detailing. Several historic warehouses and sheds remain and, in most instances, have been put to new uses.



View from the river looking towards Mid-Kent Wharf

Much of the use of the riverfront has changed over the last century, but industries that are related to or make use of the river still exist, such as Letley's boatyard located on Central Wharf. Many of the historic piers and jetties have since been lost too, but the largest piers, Ship Pier and Sun Pier remain. The form of the historic wharves can be readily interpreted, including the ends of the slips of the shipyard at Doust Way.

Facing materials on the riverfront vary, including various shades of brick (sometimes painted), weatherboarding, corrugated steel, and render. Generally, historic buildings are of a similar scale to those on the High Street, but their massing is sometimes larger, such as the former brewery buildings on Hulkes Lane. Roof coverings vary throughout.



Central Wharf

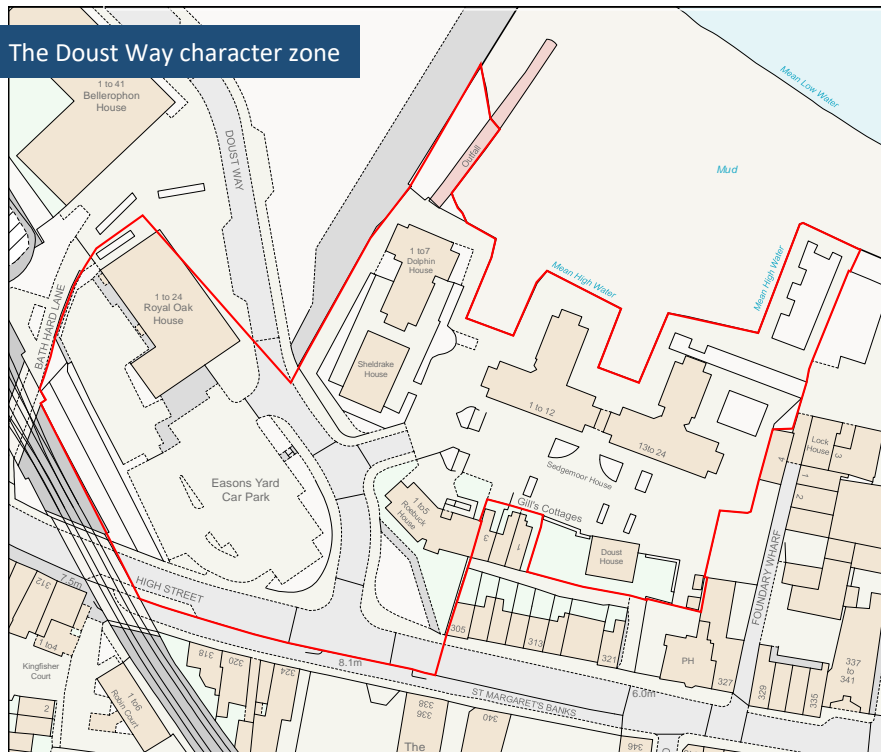
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Doust Way

All but two buildings within the Doust Way character zone are of a recent construction, either as part of the redevelopment of the Doust Shipyard in the late 20th century, or as part of the Rochester Riverside development in the early 21st century. The two remaining historic buildings lie within the Doust Shipyard redevelopment area - the late-19th century Sheldrake House, and the late-18th century Doust House. The original specific function of Sheldrake House is not fully known, but it was likely in a warehouse use; whereas Doust House was constructed as a dwellinghouse by the Nicholson family of shipbuilders who owned the shipyard until around 1813 and is now Grade II Listed. Both buildings are now in residential use.

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The Doust Way character zone



The rest of the character zone comprises relatively large-scale modern residential buildings, albeit with a small commercial use on the ground floor of Royal Oak House. While the scale, mass, and grain of these new blocks is generally not representative of the prevailing character of the Conservation Area, historically this character zone contained some of the more substantial buildings. While some effort has been made to reflect materials and details used on Sheldrake House, these modern buildings are larger than those they replaced, and along with Royal Oak House do not contribute to the character of the wider Conservation Area.

Between the buildings, car parks have been laid out with modern urban greenspace fringing. This helps present a sense of openness between the High Street and river, providing a counter to the enclosure of the narrow High Street further east. Along the river edge a poorly maintained public footpath and area of amenity space exists but abruptly terminates at Cooks Wharf with the change in land ownership.

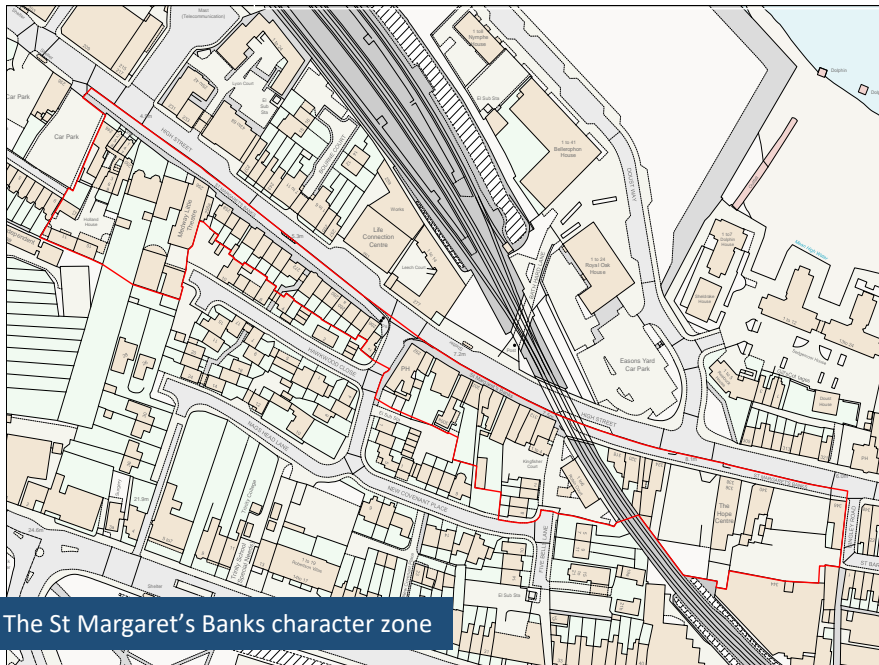
Facing materials vary due to the composition of building ages and types in this character zone, as do details such as fenestration and architectural detailing.

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St Margaret's Banks

St Margaret's Banks is located on an elevated position to the south of the High Street, stretching between Bingley Road in the east to the junction of Furrell's Lane in the west, and bisected by the railway. Development appears to have started by as early as the 17th century as an extension to Rochester and was constructed on the foot of the scarp due to the marshy foreshore opposite being liable to flooding. By the time of the construction of New Road to the south in 1772, the Banks were almost fully developed and had two connecting roads between – Nags Head Lane and Five Bells Lane.

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The St Margaret's Banks character zone

Many of the buildings on St Margaret's Banks are now in residential use, however a range of other uses emerged through the 19th century and into the 20th century, such as public houses, offices, and shops.

To the eastern end of the Banks a Wesleyan chapel was constructed in the 18th century, subsequently replaced by the 'Bethel Chapel' in 1810 with a cemetery fronting the Banks. The chapel was largely destroyed by fire in the late 20th century, however the ground floor of both the chapel and the Sunday school still exists within one of the 20th century industrial buildings, just outside of the Conservation Area.

Some of the adjoining buildings on this part of the Banks were demolished in the late-20th century to make room for the existing uses, but several historic buildings remain - most of which date from the 19th or early 20th century and contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

One particularly notable building is the former Hare and Hounds pub and Railway Hotel at number 340, believed to have been designed by the prominent local architect George Bond. Other historic buildings in this section of the Banks include numbers 320, 322, 324, and 346 St Margaret's Banks, all of which are of a mass and small-scale that do not exceed 3-storeys in height, representative of the character of the wider Conservation Area.

The predominant facing material in this part of the character zone is brick of varying shades, often with stone dressings. Roof coverings would have typically been in slate, but many have since been replaced with clay or concrete tiles. Most windows above ground floor are timber sliding sash in varying configurations.

Immediately to the west of the railway line is a late 20th century infill residential development constructed around the historic Five Bells Lane, comprising Kingfisher Court and Robin Court. The development goes some way to sympathetically reflect the character of the Conservation Area, presenting a modern take on historic warehousing, and of a scale and mass that respects the surrounding townscape.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Beyond the modern development on Five Bells Lane, a series of 17th and 18th century buildings face onto the Banks along to its junction with Nags Head Lane, all of which are Grade II Listed. All but two of the buildings were originally constructed as houses, later being converted into commercial uses, and then often more recently back to residential use. The two historic commercial buildings are 308 St Margaret's Banks which was built as a bank but is now in residential use, and the Nags Head pub at 292 High Street, which remains operating as a pub. These buildings create an attractive and interesting ensemble of varying ages, styles, materials, and sizes – but with not exceeding 3-storeys in height. Access to the rear of the buildings can be made from New Covenant Place, and some of the buildings have cellar-level access onto the High Street.

Aside from the modern development of Kingfisher Court and Robin Court on Five Bells Lane, facing materials on this section of the St Margaret's Banks character zone vary from building to building due to the nature of their varying age, character, and design. These include various shades of brick, render or stucco, and weatherboarding of varying finishes. Roof coverings vary according to the age of the building, including slate and clay Kent Peg tiles, however some have been replaced with clay or concrete tiles.

Windows are typically timber sliding sash of various configurations, along with shopfronts in situ at numbers 294, 304, 306, 310 and 312 St Margaret's Banks. 296 and 298 were re-fronted at ground floor in the early 21st century with brick facades.



St Margaret's Banks

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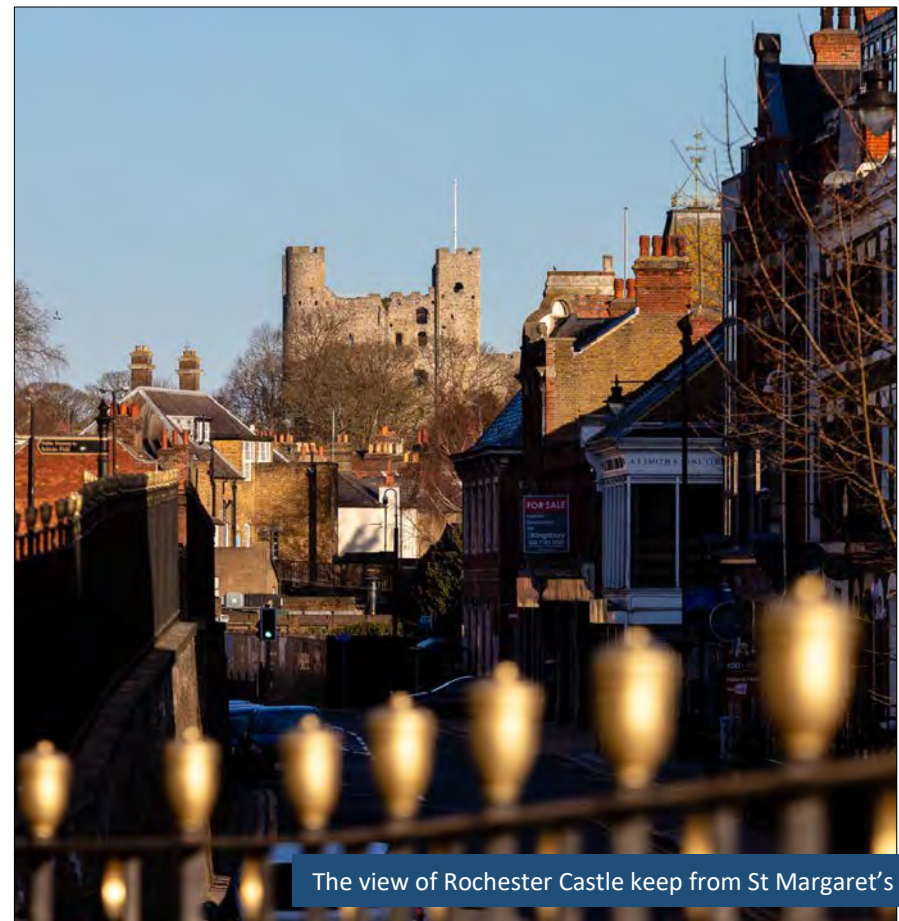
The most westerly section of St Margaret's Banks runs from Nags Head Lane to the junction of Furrell's Lane on the opposite side of the High Street. This section is split between a series of terraces of three storey townhouses to the east of Medway Little Theatre at 256 St Margaret's Banks, and then a less formal cluster of buildings along to number 246, to the west of and including the theatre. The section of townhouses is split in age, with two 19th century Grade II Listed buildings at 276 (Anchor House) and 286 St Margaret's Banks; the others being developed between in the late 20th century. Currently all the buildings are in residential use, however up until the late 20th century redevelopment, many of the historic buildings that were lost at this time were in commercial uses as shops and offices.



St Margaret's Banks

This section of St Margaret's Banks provides a particularly notable framed view of Rochester Castle keep rising above the townscape in the distance.

Facing materials here are predominantly yellow brick, but with a red brick detailing on the more recent buildings. Windows are typically timber sliding sash of varying configurations, timber front doors and door cases, and cast-iron railings and guttering. The new buildings are respectful in scale to their historic counterparts, not exceeding three storeys in height.



The view of Rochester Castle keep from St Margaret's Banks

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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From Medway Little Theatre the character alters, with a series of less-formally arranged buildings, four of which are Grade II Listed – 246, 250, 252 and 254 St Margaret's Banks. Here the buildings are set back from the highway by large front gardens, except for the two non-Listed Buildings of the theatre and the late 20th century development of Holland House (number 248). Medway Little Theatre opened in 1958 and is now the only remaining theatre within the Conservation Area, and therefore contributes to its significance of what was historically an exciting area for entertainment.

The styles, construction and facing materials used in the buildings in this section of the character zone varies considerably, however number 246 is the only timber-framed and weatherboarded building, with the others of a brick construction and external finish, albeit in varying shades.

Most windows are in varying configurations of timber sliding sash, and panelled timber front doors. Roof coverings vary. The scale of the buildings is typical of the prevailing character of the Conservation Area at 3-storeys in height.



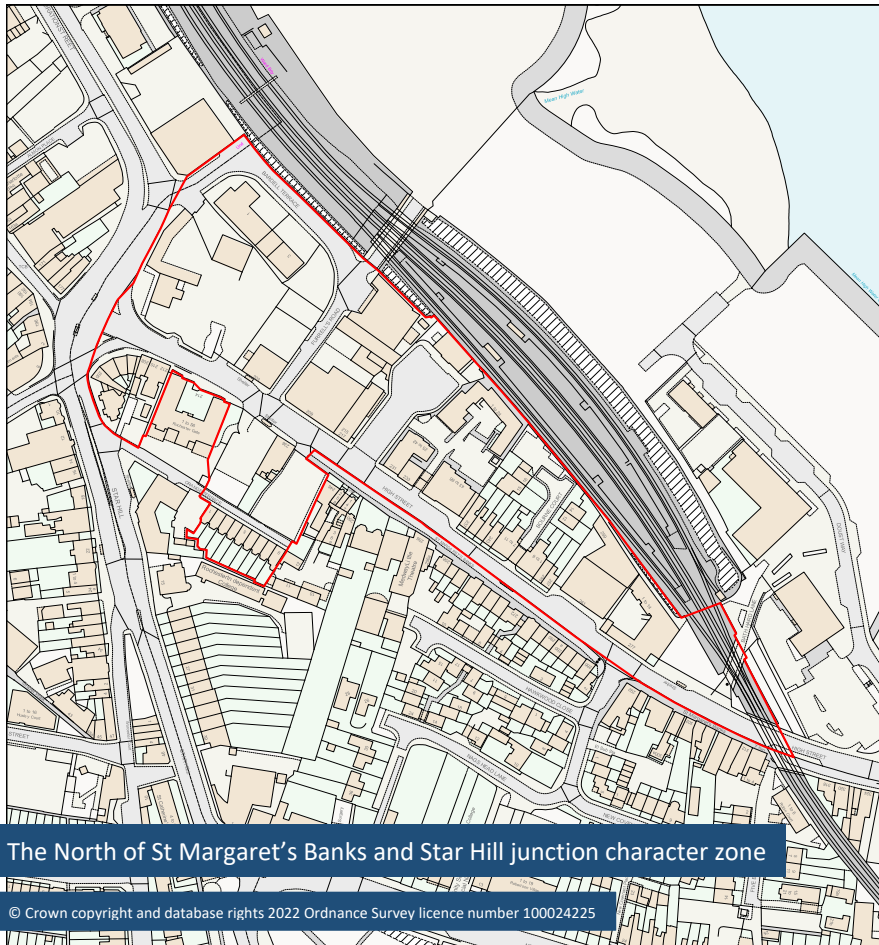
The western end of St Margaret's Banks

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

North of St Margaret's Banks and the Star Hill junction

This part of the Conservation Area is perhaps the most fragmented in terms of presenting a cohesive architectural style, use, or age of building. It begins at the railway line, which forms its eastern and northern extents, and continues to the edge of the Conservation Area to the Star Hill junction. The area incorporates the High Street (but only the northern part opposite St Margaret's Banks), part of Star Hill, and Orange Terrace.



To the north side of the High Street the character zone begins with a series of railway arches and associated land supporting the railway line above. The arches are currently vacant but have in the past been used for small-scale commercial and industrial uses and include a narrow lane through to the Rochester Riverside development, known as Bath Hard Lane, but historically William Street. The arches and the space around them are currently a particular detractor to the wider character of the wider Conservation Area and a creative solution for its future use needs to be established.

Immediately adjoining the western edge of the railway arches is Leech Court; a late 20th century development that in-part reused the former commercial premises of Leech and Co. who occupied the building in the mid-20th century, but its original function was as a mineral water factory for Dove, Phillips & Pett from the 1890s. As part of the redevelopment the distinctive black and white hand-painted Leech signage was carefully restored, creating a landmark within this part of the Conservation Area.



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Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Leech Court



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A terrace of late 19th century townhouses fronts the High Street (numbers 237-257 High Street, Rochester) toward the former Rochester railway station, known as Medway Terrace. The terrace is 3-storeys in height, of yellow brick with stone dressings, and have a small garden and access to the lower ground floor to the front. The middle of the terrace has been carefully redeveloped in the late 20th century into block of flats with undercroft access to a small mews style development to the rear – recreating a feature of the original terrace.



Bourne Court and Medway Terrace

Beyond Medway Terrace is a 4 to 5-storey early 21st century development that incorporates an early 20th century building at 233 High Street, known as Lyon Court. Similar to the modern section of Medway Terrace, further development is included to the rear, accessed via an undercroft. The development is a modern take on the adjoining historic buildings, which is in some respects successful. However, there are some issues, such as their bulk and height which dominates the smaller historic buildings, detracting from contributors to the character of the Conservation Area.

The former Rochester railway station lies at the end of a short forecourt entrance. The station opened in 1892 as part of the East Kent Railway and was relocated nearby to Corporation Street in 2015. Since its closure it both the building and the forecourt area has been put to use as a railway contractors depot and a fence erected across the High Street entrance.

Beyond and opposite the station a cluster of valued historic buildings are located, including the former A.E Smith retail builders' merchants and the former Mission to Seamen Institute adjacent to the station, both of which are currently being converted to use as student accommodation.

Furrell's Road separates the former Mission to Seamen Institute and the Grade II Listed former County Court, now in use as a dental practice. The court opened in 1862 after being relocated from the Guildhall. The land around the former County Court (bounded by Furrell's Lane, Bardell Terrace, and Corporation Street) is currently cleared of buildings subject to planning permission for a mixed-use development.



Lyon Court enclosing 233 High Street, Rochester

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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The former Mission to Seaman's Institute on the corner of Furrell's Lane

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

The opposite side of the High Street is more fragmented in character and form with numbers 228 – 244 High Street being demolished in the late-20th century, leaving just 236 and 238 standing between two public car parks. Immediately to the south of this is Orange Terrace, a late 20th century 3-storey terrace overlooking the High Street below and access from Star Hill.

The Conservation Area excludes the existing Rochester Gate residential development, which replaced a cinema in the late 20th century, and terminates at the junction with Star Hill. The junction was largely redeveloped in the early 20th century as part of highway alterations and realignment to create Corporation Street along the route of what was Ironmonger Lane, bypassing the High Street. The late 19th century buildings of 208-212 High Street were the sole survivors the highway alterations, with the rest of the terrace to the west, including the earlier Star Inn on the corner, being redeveloped into the current form.

External materials used on the buildings in this character zone vary, however there is a predominant use of brick in varying shades, often with decorative stone dressings and other details. Most windows are in varying configurations of timber sliding sash, however steel-framed casement windows exist on the early-20th century buildings at the Star Hill junction. The scale of the buildings is typical of the character of the Conservation Area at three to four storeys in height, except for the more recent developments of Lyon Court and Rochester Gate.



Roof of the Grade II Listed former County Court

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Architectural Character

The Conservation Area displays a rich architectural heritage due in-part to the range of building ages, but also a result of the function and use of buildings through time, as well as any subsequent changes that have been made since their construction. However, there are areas where a consistency in design and materials is retained, and this uniformity contributes to the wider character of the Conservation Area. This is discussed in more detail in the section of this document relating to Character Zones.

The following sections describe the primary architectural aspects that contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. This includes traditional materials, finishes, details, and within which character zones they are usually found. These are given as a guide only; we encourage early engagement with the council Conservation officers regarding any development proposals.

Wall Materials and Finishes

Yellow brick: Typical throughout all character zones, and usually complimented with lime mortar pointing. The prevalent brick bonding patterns are either Flemish or English bond, but variations occur.



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Red brick: Typical throughout all character zones, and usually complimented with flush lime mortar pointing. The prevalent brick bonding patterns are either Flemish or English bond, but variations occur.



Other brick colours: Mostly found in the character zones in the western half of the Conservation Area, variations include browns, reds, and paler yellows. Flemish or English bond is typical, and with lime mortar pointing.



Images above courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Decorative brick details: Found in all character zones, decorative brick detailing includes examples of diapering, brick bands, specially shaped bricks to form corbels, and gauged bricks to form arches and openings.

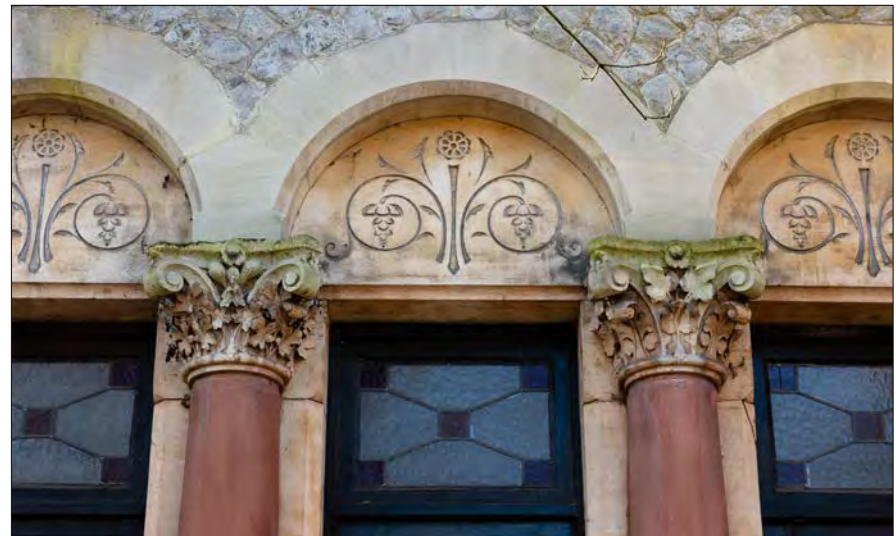


Images above courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Stone: As a facing material it is primarily found in the south side of the High Street, most notably at St Bartholomew's chapel, Chatham Memorial Synagogue, and 87 High Street, Chatham.



Stone is also used in architectural detailing in all character zones, often as elaborate decoration around windows and doors alongside plaster mouldings, but also as steps, and plinths and piers for gates and railings.



Images above courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Stucco and render: Found primarily in the north and south of the High Street character zones, stucco and render finish is used sporadically, often with an ashlar detail finish to replicate stone.



Weatherboarding: Only found to the north of the High Street/Chatham Intra and St Margaret's Banks, weatherboarding is used occasionally, and most often on buildings from the 18th to mid-19th century.



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Other materials: Primarily to the north of the High Street and Chatham Intra character zone some functional materials are used on sheds and warehouses, such as metal, shuttered concrete, and timber.



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Roofs

Roof forms: Most roofs throughout the Conservation Area feature hips rather than gables but are generally evenly split on their orientation (parallel or perpendicular) to the street. Roof pitches are usually relatively steep, and roof space often provide habitable accommodation.



Roof coverings: Typically, most roof coverings on buildings dating earlier than the early to mid-19th century would have used local clay Kent Peg tiles. Later buildings would usually have used Welsh slate due to the introduction of means of transport that allowed materials to be sourced from further afield. The slate roofs within the Conservation Area often have ridges that run parallel to the street.

In some instances, later inferior concrete tiles have been used to replace earlier traditional roof coverings. Their appearance is often clumsy for the roof to which they relate, and on the whole detract from the character of the Conservation Area.



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Roof level details: Decorative architectural detailing includes pediments, corncicing, brackets, and cupolas; as well as interesting and functional features such as parapets, dormers, chimney stacks and pots.



STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Doors and windows

Doors: Throughout the Conservation Area the style of door generally depends on the age and type of building to which it forms part of. Most commonly for residential properties, they are 4 or 6 panel timber doors.



On shopfronts the main entrance doors are typically partially glazed to their upper section and usually recessed within the shopfront. Often the shopfronts include an attractive decorative entrance step too.



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Windows: Similar to door types, window design varies according to the building age and use. Most common window types are timber sliding sash windows of various configurations and styles, and usually positioned recessed within the reveals.



Less common window types include steel framed 'Crittall' type windows, and casement windows.



Images above courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Other features and Details

Enclosure: Due to the nature of the Conservation Area, most boundary treatments typically comprise railings to the primary elevation (often fronting the High Street), and brick walls to secondary elevations.



Historic remains: Throughout the Conservation Area various historic remains can be readily located that help identify and interpret former uses, such as industrial fixtures, date stones, and decorative features.



Images above courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Shop fronts: The Conservation Area retains several attractive historic shopfronts, and have recently been complemented by reinstated, well-designed modern timber shopfronts. More information on good shopfront design is available in the adopted [Guide to Good Practice in Shopfront Design](#).



Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

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Signage: Hand-painted signage is a feature found throughout the Conservation Area, both applied directly to walls of buildings and fascia boards above shops. More information on what is considered acceptable in terms of signage is available in the adopted [Shopfront Advertising Guide](#).

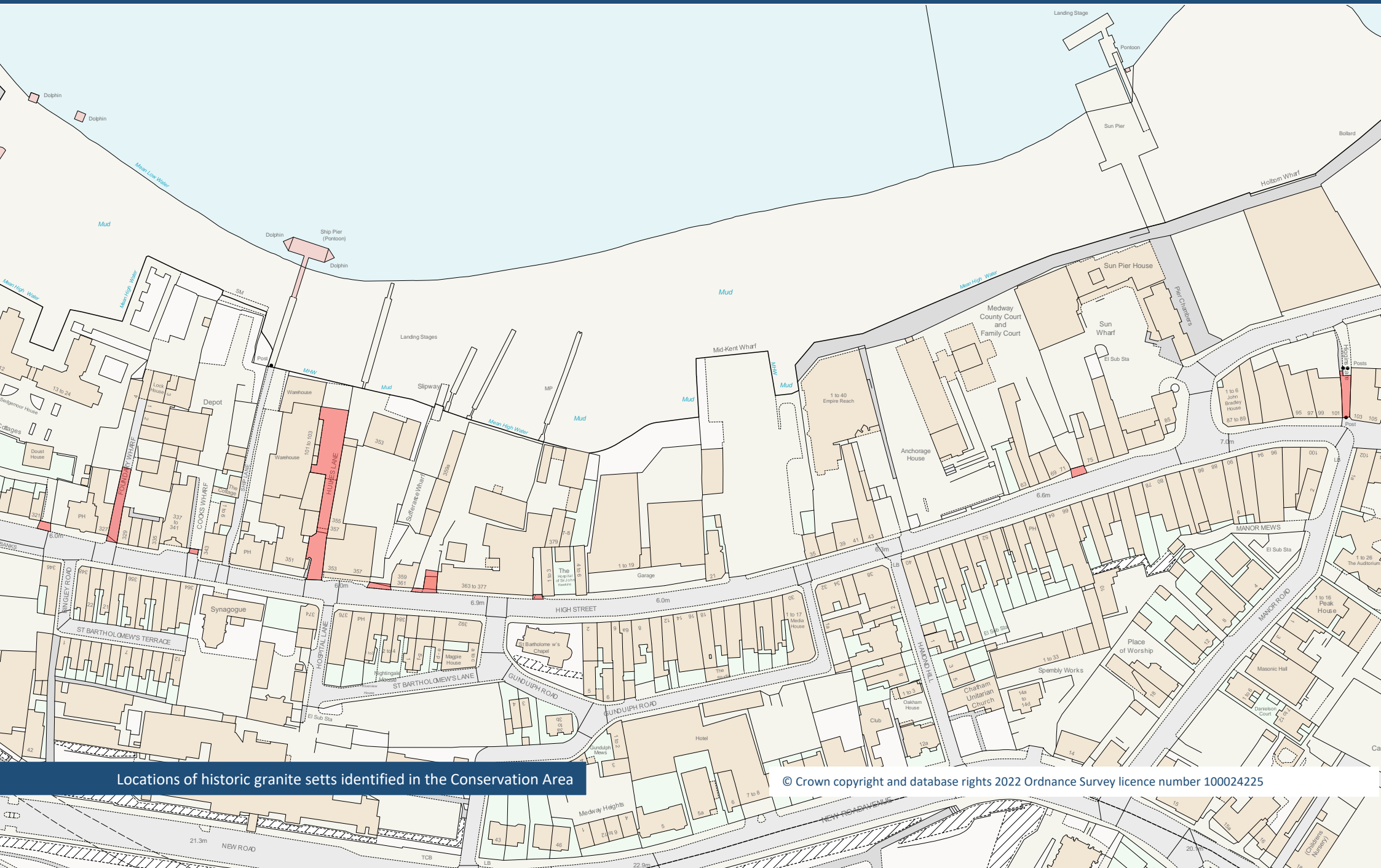


Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.

Surfacing: Many of the historic lanes and other spaces contain historic surfacing, such as granite setts, kerb stones and cart tracks which form an important characteristic of the Conservation Area. The map on the following page indicated the areas of historic granite sett surfacing identified in the Conservation Area so far, however other areas may still exist below modern surfaces.



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Locations of historic granite setts identified in the Conservation Area

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Views and Setting

Views make an important contribution to our ability to appreciate the significance of the Conservation Area, allowing for an interpretation of how the area established over time and the factors that influenced its development.

The topography of the Conservation Area and the surrounding area lends itself to wide and long views across Medway. The military made use of this topography in its design for the defence of the Royal Navy dockyard in Chatham by siting an extensive network of fortifications on the surrounding high ground, forcing civilian development to occur in the valleys below and along the parts of the rivers' edge that wasn't already occupied by the dockyard or its supporting facilities.

When the military vacated these fortifications through the 20th century, most were turned over to other uses, and in the most part retained free of encroaching development, such as at Fort Amherst and Fort Pitt. Parts of their surrounding open former fields of fire have also become public parks, such as Jackson's Recreation Ground, Victoria Gardens, and the Great Lines Heritage Park. These areas now offer excellent vantage points for views across the Conservation Area. There is also an important visual connection that exists between the fortifications themselves, but also to the river, and the former Royal Navy dockyard for which they were designed to protect.

Views through, into, and out of the Conservation Area are also of importance, helping provide visual connections between aspects of the Conservation Area and context to its significance. The views can be divided into three main categories: Townscape, Contextual and Scenic views.

Some viewpoints may also display combined characteristics, such as both contextual and townscape views.

Contextual views are those that look out from within the Conservation Area to the surrounding area, such as views of the river from the High Street.

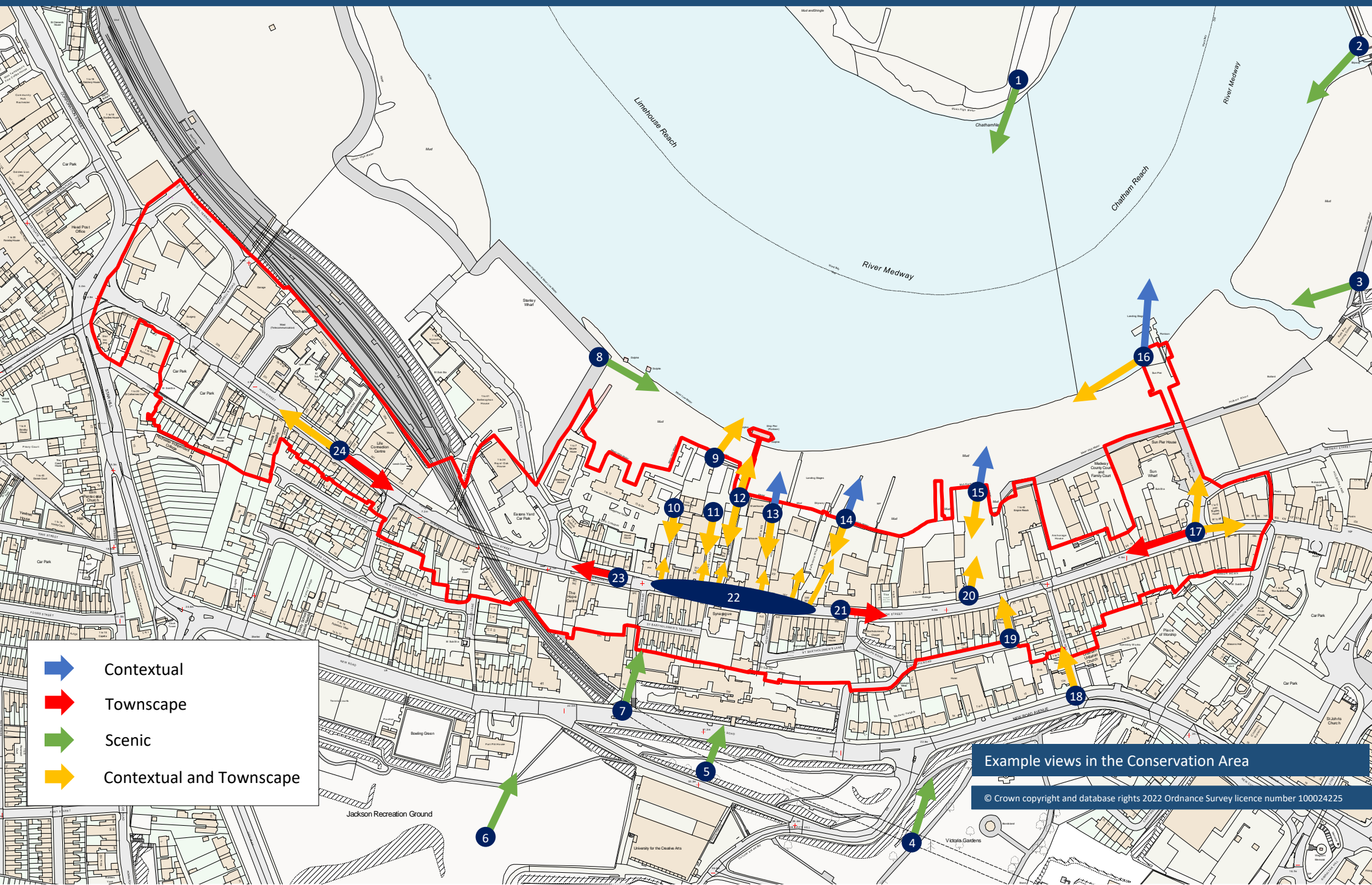
Townscape views are those which allow for the appreciation of the mix of building types, designs and materials within the Conservation Area or the surrounding townscape.

Scenic views are those appreciated from outside of the Conservation Area, allowing for an appreciation of the wider townscape, landscape and setting, or where the Conservation Area forms part of the view.

A series of example important views have been identified on the map on the next page, followed by visualisations. The list of views provided is not exhaustive and views and the exact locations of viewpoints should be explored and considered as part of development proposals in and around the Conservation Area. Further guidance can be sought from the council Design and Conservation team as part of the planning pre-application advice service.

Additionally, among other adopted planning policy documents and guidance, the Chatham Dockyard and its Defences Planning Policy Document (December 2014) and A Building Height Policy for Medway (May 2006) may also need to be consulted for some development proposals in the Conservation Area and its environs due to the sensitive nature of the area, and the historic relationship and inter-visibility between the surrounding area, the river, and the dockyard. These documents are available to download on the [Medway Council website](#).

STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



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Viewpoint 1 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Medway City Estate highlighting the riverside context of the Conservation Area, its topography, and dramatic green backdrop provided by Victoria Gardens, Fort Pitt Gardens, and Jackson's Recreation Ground.



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Viewpoint 2 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Gun Wharf highlighting the riverside context of the Conservation Area, its topography, and dramatic green backdrop provided by Victoria Gardens, Fort Pitt Gardens, and Jackson's Recreation Ground.



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Viewpoint 3 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Fort Amherst highlighting the riverside context of the Conservation Area, its topography, its dramatic green backdrop, and allowing for an understanding of the interrelationship between Fort Amherst, Fort Pitt and Fort Clarence.



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Viewpoint 4 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic views from various locations across Victoria Gardens highlighting the riverside context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and allowing for an understanding of the interrelationship between the Dockyard, river, and the surrounding fortifications. A similar view from Fort Pitt is depicted by in the engraving by Shepherd and Roffe, 1828 on the next page.



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The 1828 depiction of the view from Fort Pitt to the dockyard by Shepherd and Roffe, but other depictions of this view were also produced including those by William Tombleson in 1834, Kershaw and Son in 1850, and William Harvey in 1856.



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Viewpoint 5 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic views from various locations across Fort Pitt Gardens highlighting the townscape context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and in wider views landmarks such as Fort Amherst, Chatham Naval War Memorial, and Rochester castle and cathedral can be appreciated.



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Viewpoint 6 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic views from various locations across Jackson's Recreation Ground highlighting the townscape context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and views of landmarks such as Fort Amherst, the Dockyard, the river, and Rochester castle and cathedral.



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Viewpoint 7 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the view from New Road highlighting the townscape context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and views of landmarks such as Fort Amherst, the river, and the Dockyard.



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Viewpoint 8 (Scenic) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Rochester Riverside towards the Conservation Area, and the topography with the green backdrop of Fort Amherst and the Great Lines Heritage Park beyond. The view also demonstrates the riverside context of the Conservation Area.



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Viewpoint 9 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Foundry Wharf highlighting the riverside context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and views of landmarks such as Fort Amherst, the river, and the Dockyard.



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Viewpoint 10 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Foundry Wharf towards the High Street. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 11 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Cooks Wharf towards the High Street. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 12 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Ship Lane, along Ship Pier, towards the river, and with the backdrop of Medway City Estate, the Dockyard and Fort Amherst beyond. The view highlights the important relationship between the Conservation Area and its riverside context.



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Viewpoint 12a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Ship Lane towards the High Street and New Road beyond. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, as well as the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 13 (Contextual) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Hulkes Lane towards the river, with the backdrop of Medway City Estate, the Dockyard and Fort Amherst. The view highlights the important relationship between the Conservation Area and its riverside context.



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Viewpoint 13a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Hulkes Lane towards the High Street and St Bartholomew's Hospital beyond. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 14 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Sufferance and Central Wharves Lane towards the river, with the backdrop of Medway City Estate, the Dockyard and Fort Amherst. The view highlights the important relationship between the Conservation Area and its riverside context.



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Viewpoint 14a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Sufferance and Central Wharves towards the High Street and St Bartholomew's Hospital beyond. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 15 (Contextual) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Mid-Kent Wharf towards the river, with the backdrop of Medway City Estate, the dockyard and Fort Amherst. The view highlights the important relationship between the Conservation Area and its riverside context.



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Viewpoint 15a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Mid-Kent Wharf towards the High Street and the higher ground of New Road beyond. The view highlights the topography and change in character between the riverside space and that of the High Street, however it is noted that this view is afforded through the current open nature of the site due to redevelopment in the late-20th century.



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Viewpoint 16 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Sun Pier towards the riverside areas of the Conservation Area, the High Street, with the green backdrop of the scarp above. The view highlights the topography, the historic townscape, and the association of the Conservation Area to the river.



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Viewpoint 16a (Contextual) allows for the appreciation of the panoramic view from Sun Pier towards the river, with the backdrop of Medway City Estate, Upnor, the Dockyard, and Fort Amherst. The view highlights the important relationship between the Conservation Area and its riverside context.



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Viewpoint 17 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from the junction of the High Street and Medway Street down towards the river, with the other banks of the river beyond. The view highlights the relationship between the Conservation Area and the river.



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Viewpoint 17a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from the junction of the High Street and Medway Street towards the continuation of the High Street into Chatham town centre. The view highlights the both the change in character and the similarities of the Conservation Area to the rest of the High Street.



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Viewpoint 17b (Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from the junction of the High Street and Medway Street towards the continuation of the High Street through the Conservation Area. The view highlights the abundance of historic buildings, their quality and small-scale nature, and the variety of ages and architectural styles.



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Viewpoint 18 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from New Road down Hamond Hill towards the High Street and river. The view highlights the townscape context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and how views of the river can be obscured by development of an inappropriate form or scale.



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Viewpoint 19 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from Gundulph Road towards the High Street and river. The view highlights the townscape context of the Conservation Area, the topography, and the relationship between the Conservation Area and the river; however, it is noted that this view is afforded through the current open nature of the site due to redevelopment in the late-20th century.



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Viewpoint 20 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from High Street across Mid-Kent Wharf towards the river, with the other banks of the river beyond. The view highlights the relationship between the High Street, riverside areas, and the river; however, it is noted that this view is afforded through the current open nature of the site due to redevelopment in the late-20th century.



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Viewpoint 21 (Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from several locations along the High Street highlighting the abundance of historic buildings, their quality and small-scale nature, and the variety of ages and architectural styles.



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Viewpoint 22 (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from various locations along the High Street down the historic lanes towards the river and Dockyard beyond. The view highlights the riverside context of the Conservation Area, the change in character between the High Street and riverside spaces, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 22a and 22b (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from various locations along the High Street down the historic lanes towards the river and Dockyard beyond. These views highlight the riverside context of the Conservation Area too, the change in character between the High Street and riverside spaces, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 22c (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from various locations along the High Street down the historic lanes towards the river. The view highlights the riverside context of the Conservation Area, the change in character between the High Street and riverside spaces, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 22d and 22e (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from various locations along the High Street down the historic lanes towards the river. These views highlight the riverside context of the Conservation Area too, the change in character between the High Street and riverside spaces, and the importance of the lanes that connect the two.



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Viewpoint 23 (Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from several locations along the High Street highlighting the abundance of historic buildings, their quality and small-scale nature, and the variety of ages and architectural styles.



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Viewpoint 24 (Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from several locations along the High Street highlighting the abundance of historic buildings, their quality, small-scale nature, and the variety of ages and architectural styles.



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Viewpoint 24a (Contextual and Townscape) allows for the appreciation of the view from several locations along the High Street towards Rochester, often framing views of the castle and cathedral. The view highlights the abundance of historic buildings, their quality, small-scale nature, and the variety of ages and architectural styles.



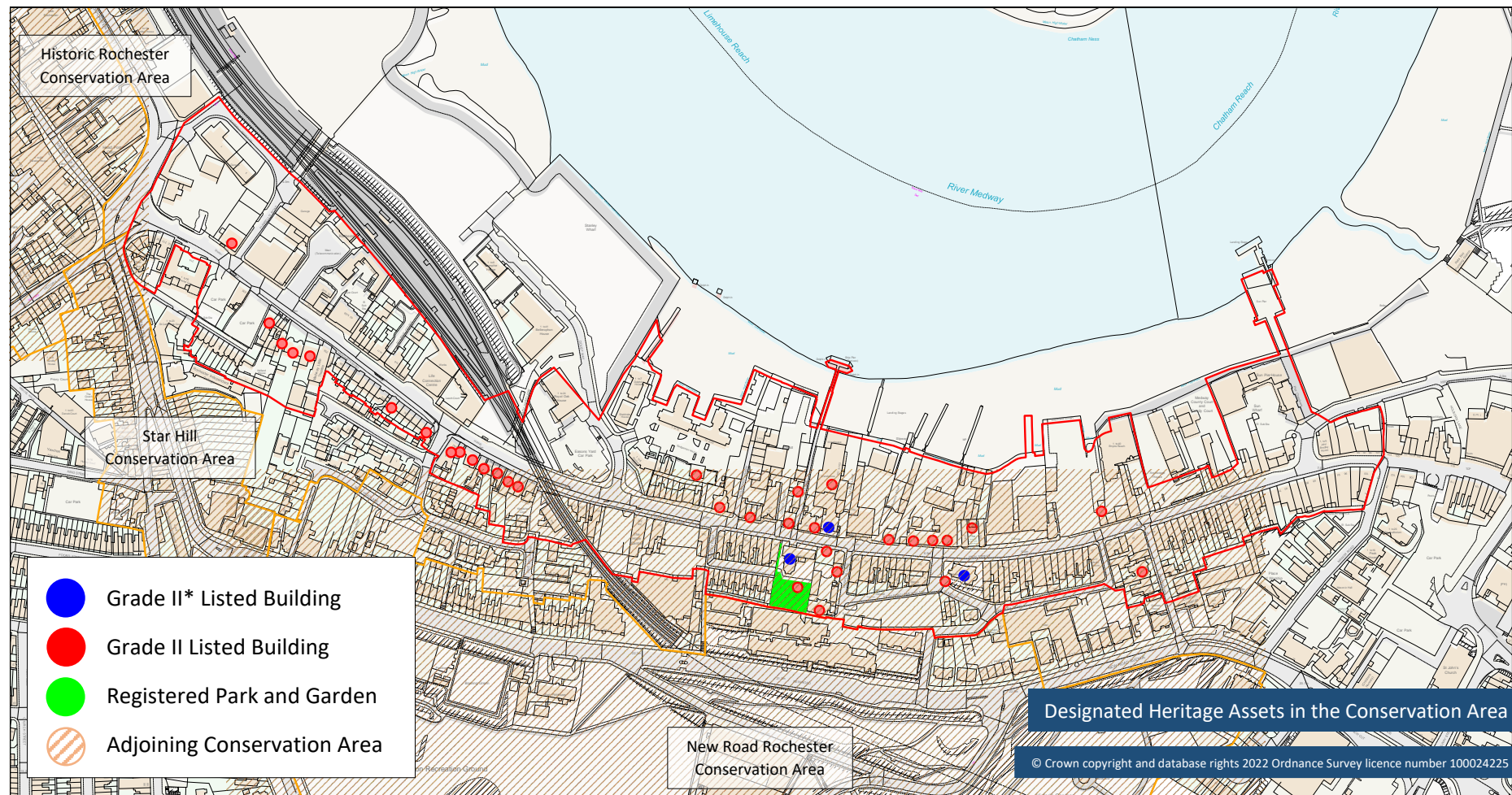
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Heritage Assets

The Conservation Area contains an abundance of heritage assets, some of which are recognised for their national importance and recorded on the [National Heritage List for England](#), and others recognised for their local importance and are identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Designated heritage assets

Within the Conservation Area there are currently 33 Grade II Listed Buildings, 3 Grade II* Listed Buildings, and 1 Grade II Registered Park and Garden. Immediately adjoining are the New Road Rochester and Star Hill Conservation Areas to the south and south-west, with Historic Rochester Conservation Area nearby separated by the Star Hill junction.

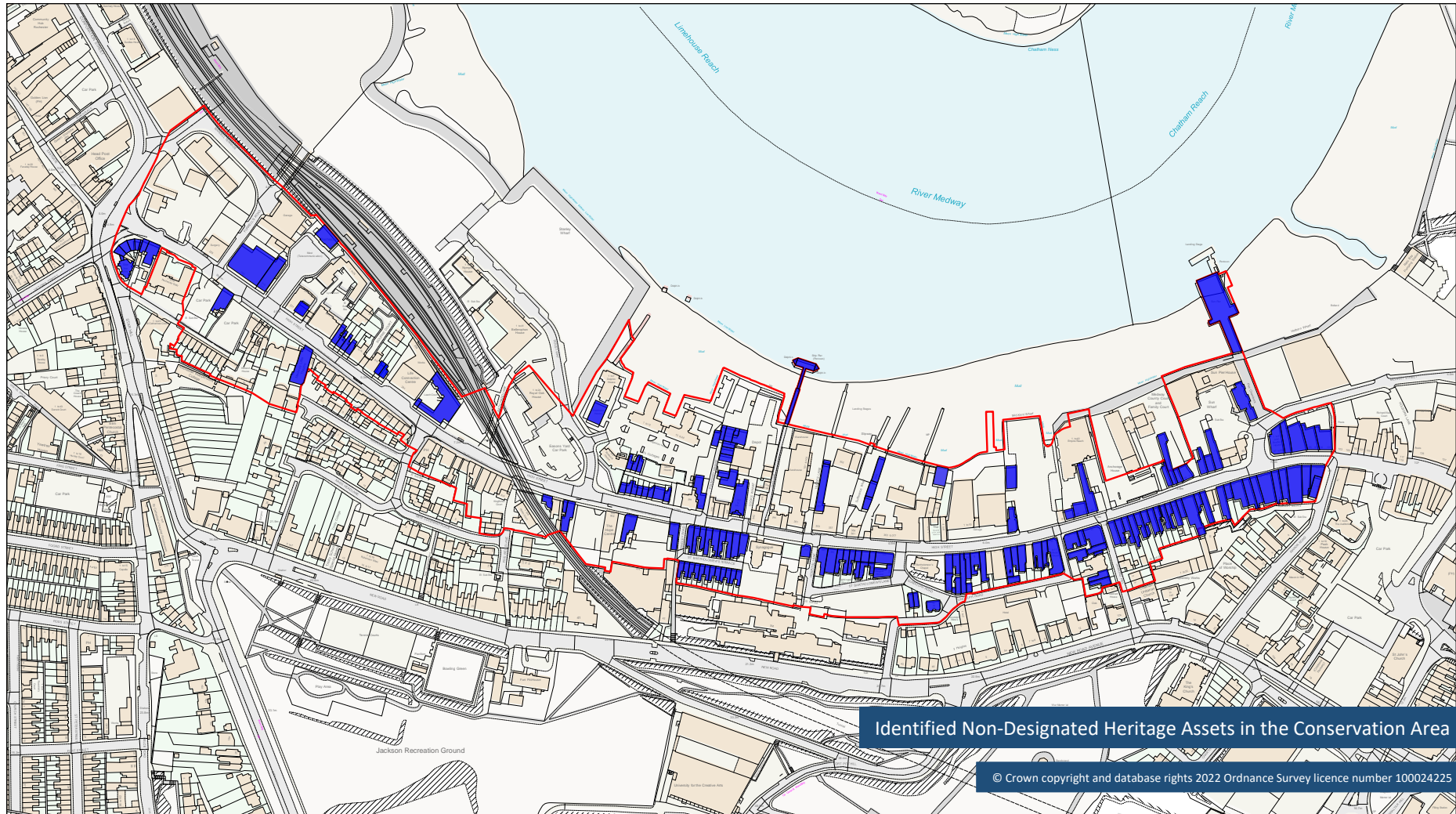


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Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Alongside designated heritage assets there are a range of Non-Designated Heritage Assets that are considered to be locally important too.

The map below shows the Non-Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area that have been identified to date, however it may be the case that others are identified at a later time, such as through the Development Management process.



STAR HILL TO SUN PIER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Intangible Assets

Through sensory responses, the environment helps evoke memories and frame feelings that are sometimes not a direct response of an individual physical attribute or aspect within the Conservation Area. As part of the preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan the local community were asked to consider such aspects to help identify what intangibles contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and help establish its local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Interesting intangible features that were identified include:

- The sense of enclosure on the High Street compared to the sense of openness on the riverfront.
- The noise and activity on the High Street compared to the sense of calm at the riverfront.
- The smell of the river mud at the riverfront.
- The sound of the water and wildlife at the riverfront.
- The sense that the area itself is neither 'Rochester' or 'Chatham'.



Sun Pier

Image courtesy of Rikard Osterlund.



An archaeological survey being undertaken at Doust Way

Photograph © Archaeology South-East/UCL

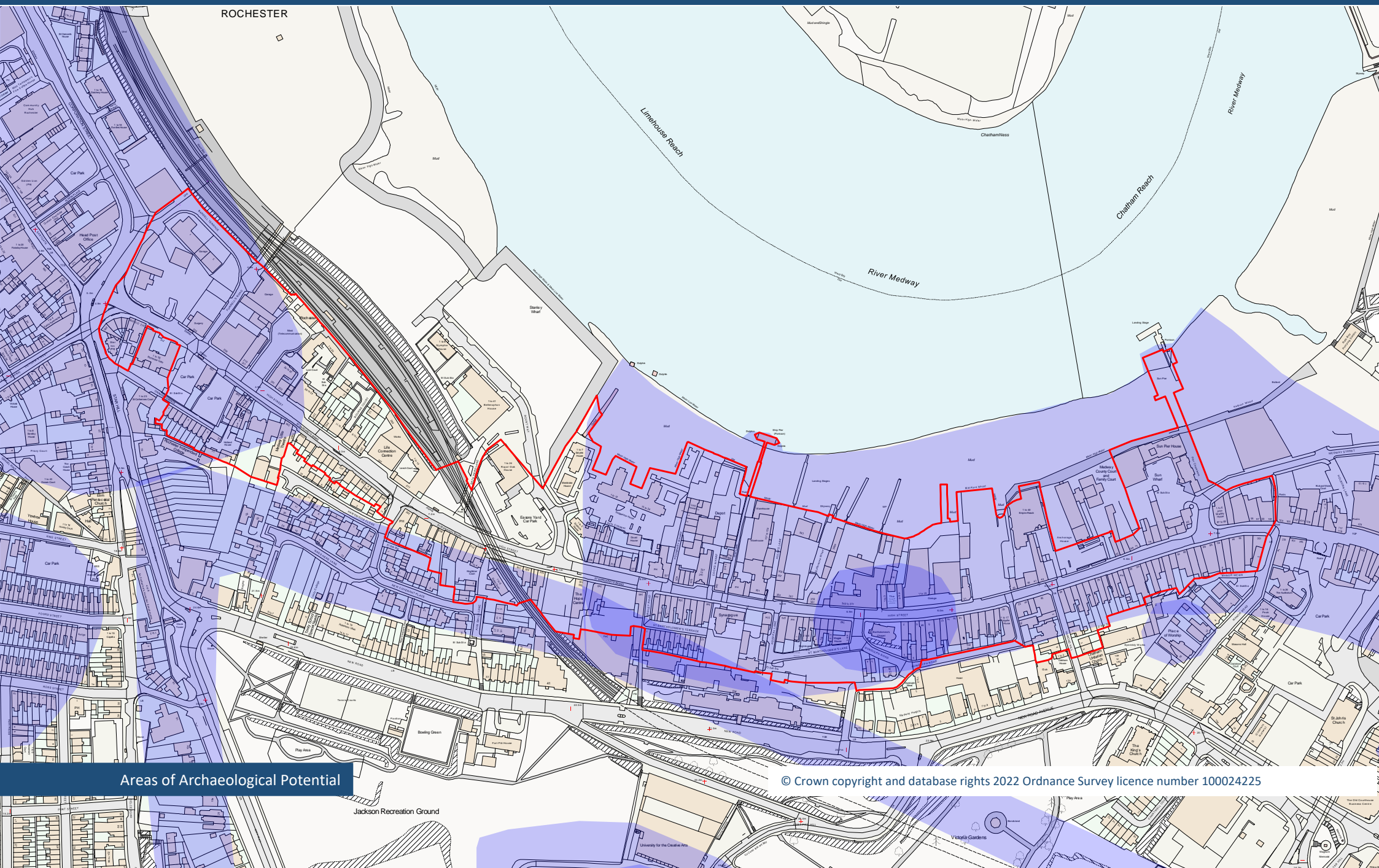
Archaeology

Medway comprises a series of long-established urban settlements and villages, which means that there is potential for below-ground archaeology that could provide insights into previous occupation and use of the area. The Conservation Area is likely to hold a rich abundance of archaeology, however limited archaeological investigation has taken place within the Conservation Area, and so there is a degree of unknown as to what evidence of previous use and occupation remains to be found. Due to the extensive land reclamation, it is likely that evidence of former wharves will likely be found along the rivers' edge, along with cellars, footings and other evidence of past buildings along the High Street where redevelopment and realignment has occurred. There is also potential for the original Roman road that led from Rochester to Chatham Hill, although its course is not entirely known.

In archaeological surveys undertaken in the area, evidence of prehistoric activity was identified at the western end of the High Street, indicating that the wider area may have been subject to some early use or occupation; around twenty Early Medieval or Anglo-Saxon graves discovered at Orange Terrace in 1852; and Romano-British burials were uncovered in Doust Way.

The Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area currently has several Areas of Archaeological Potential as depicted on the map on the following page. Any development within the Areas of Archaeological Potential is likely to require an archaeological evaluation and possible mitigation work, we would therefore recommend contacting the Kent County Council Archaeologist for further advice. More information is available on the [Kent County Council website](#).

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Areas of Archaeological Potential

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