

Heritage Conservation Commentary

Chapter 5: The Neighbourhoods

5.2 Chattenden

Although the Chattenden village centre as indicated on the map in the document is some distance from the main Chattenden military site, there are nonetheless several heritage assets that could be affected by the proposals. On the Kitchener Road roundabout, part of one of the former 1961 guardhouses survives alongside the main access road into the barracks. At Copse Farm, three concrete Second World War barrack huts also survive. At the junction of Kitchener Road and Chattenden Lane the former Garrison Church still survives, as a civilian church. All three of these sites are located in the area identified as the '*proposed neighbourhood centre*'. In the event of major development in this area, it will be important to ensure that those structures which are retained keep some of their context in terms of setting and interpretation so the military origins of the area remain in the local memory.

In the angle between Broad Street and the Ratcliffe Highway, aerial photographs have suggested former field systems of unknown date. Also running through this area from the main Chattenden village site was a small-gauge railway from Chattenden to Hoo.

In the area south and west of the proposed village centre, there are numerous remains of the area's military past. These include a former 19th and 20th century Naval military railway that connected munitions and military depots around Hoo, a 1950's wireless transmitter Station at Beacon Hill, the remains of a Second World War Naval Signal Station, the scheduled Second World War blockhouse and beacon, a Cold War air-raid shelter, a Second World War pillbox and a First World War anti-aircraft battery. There are also areas of First or Second World War practice trenches on Beacon Hill. This complex of sites would suit being brought together in a trail or other form of interpretation both to help maintain the green space between settlement areas and to retain memory of the military origins of the Chattenden area.

The County Council would also note that recent archaeological investigations at Chattenden in response to housing development have revealed important, but previously unknown, archaeological sites including evidence for Mesolithic activity and Anglo-Saxon settlement. These discoveries highlight the potential for further important, but unknown, archaeological sites to exist within the proposed growth area. Any future masterplan for the area is therefore recommended to have sufficient flexibility to take account of important archaeological discoveries. This will likely require a comprehensive programme of desk-based, non-intrusive and intrusive assessment and evaluation prior to any detailed masterplanning.

5.3 Deangate Ridge

Deangate is located in a highly significant military landscape dating originally to the late 19th century use of the area as a major magazine establishment. Although much of the site has been demolished, numerous magazines and protecting earthworks as well as later defences

still survive. During the Second World War, the entire site was defended by an arm of the General Headquarters Stop Line that ran from Hoo St Werburgh to Higham Marshes. A 2014 survey by Historic England has mapped the route of the Stop Line and its accompanying pillboxes, earthworks and defences which essentially follow the route of Dux Court Road as far as Wyborne's Wood before turning west. Four of the pillboxes in this area of the General Headquarters Line have been designated as listed buildings and several features relating to the Lodge Hill Magazine. Between Hoo St Werburgh and the magazine also formerly stood the Deangate Second World War radar station which included gun emplacements and ancillary structures.

5.4 West Of Hoo St Werburgh / 5.5 East of Hoo St Werburgh

Past archaeological investigations in the area have discovered extensive prehistoric and Romano-British remains in the vicinity of Hoo. The alignment of a Roman road linking the Hoo Peninsula to Roman Watling Street is projected to run to the south of the former Chattenden Barracks close to the development area. To the north-west of the area, within the Lodge Hill enclosure, a Romano-British cemetery has previously been identified and a further occupation site has been found south of Hoo between the village and the shoreline. The village itself contains built heritage assets such as the church and it is important to protect the long views towards them. There are also Saxon and Medieval remains, although the site of the 7th century nunnery has yet to be identified. The landscape also contains numerous survivals of the Second World War associated with the General Headquarters Stop Line that runs from the foreshore south-east of Hoo to the north of Lodge Hill where it turns west.

5.4 West of Hoo St Werburgh.

KCC notes that both east and west of Hoo there is a strong maritime character with many coastal features that also contribute to the historic character of the area. The Cockham Farm area has an extensive heritage as both north and south of Stoke Road, cropmark complexes and field boundaries have been observed in aerial photographs although the dates of the complexes is unknown.

Along the route of the Saxon Shore Way, a number of well-dated archaeological discoveries have been made and palaeolithic artefacts have been recovered from a brickearth pit to the south-west of St Werburgh's Church in Hoo in the 1930s. Furthermore, a late bronze age occupation site was discovered during a watching brief in 1999, an iron age coin and torc were found close to Hoo village and a Romano-British cemetery and occupation site was found in 1894 near Cockham Cottages. The lost 7th century nunnery may exist either within the village or within the Cockham Farm area, and other middle Saxon features are known from the area south of the village.

Along the coast can be seen numerous examples of more recent heritage assets. Although Roman remains have been found at Hoo Marina Park, most of the remains relate to the maritime use of the coastline. The most significant site is the scheduled 17th century Cockham Wood Fort built by Sir Bernard de Gomme as a response to the Dutch Raid. Despite its scheduled status, the fort is included in the national Heritage at Risk register where it is described as at risk of immediate further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric if no

solution for its conservation and management is agreed. There are also numerous wharves, jetties and quays, as well as several examples of wrecked barges dating from the 18th to 20th centuries.

In addition to the maritime activity, there are several important 20th century military assets along the coast. The General Headquarters Stop Line meets the coast at this point and the junction was defended by at least 8 pillboxes and anti-landing sites.

5.5 East of Hoo St Werburgh

Prehistoric cropmarks enclosures and features have been seen in aerial photography between Sharnal Street and Tunbridge Hill and also around Tile Barn Farm. A number of prehistoric to Saxon discoveries were made during Isle of Grain gas pipeline works most notably, a Late Bronze Age settlement or probable possible funerary site and a possible Late Bronze Age small scale industrial site. A Romano-British industrial site with a probable pottery kiln was also found.

The Second World War General Headquarters Line runs south-east to north-west through the western end of the area and contains many surviving heritage assets of importance. The indicative illustration appears to show extensive new development, including the location of a proposed neighbourhood centre between Ropers Lane and Bells Lane. The area is crossed by part of the General Headquarters stop-line between Hoo St Werburgh and Higham Marshes; a notable surviving example of anti-invasion defence. It is an important remnant of the Second World War defended landscape of Hoo Peninsula and is a well-preserved example of this type of defence, which is part of a major chapter in the national story. A group of pillboxes are located along the edge of the existing development along Bells Lane, two of which are Grade II listed. The stop-line comprised an anti-tank ditch, pillboxes, both anti-tank and infantry, barbed wire entanglements, road-blocks and other features. The surviving remains form a coherent pattern of defence linked to the local topography. KCC advises that extensive development here would result in the loss of part of the stop-line and would be harmful to the setting of the listed pillboxes.

5.6 High Halstow

The area is centred on High Halstow village which retains its medieval core and includes a medieval church and tithe barn and several medieval buildings. Within the village, however, older remains have been discovered including Bronze Age and prehistoric features. Outside the village several enclosures and cropmarks have been seen in aerial photographs. Metal detectorists working around the village have discovered numerous examples of artefacts, particularly from the iron age to the medieval period.

Immediately to the east of the area is the Fenn Street Second World War air defence post with associated radar station. The area also forms the northern extremity of the General Headquarters line in Kent and Medway and there are several surviving pillboxes and other features.

The area is also crossed by several industrial and military tramways such as the Port Victoria Railway, the Chattenden Naval Tramway and the Kingsnorth Light Railway.

The indicative illustration shows development between the existing village and Sharnal Street on a ridge of higher ground that forms part of the 'spine' of the Hoo Peninsula, with views towards the Thames to the north and the Medway to the south. The site may have been a favourable location for past occupation, having access to a range of natural resources. A number of Late Iron Age gold coins have been found to the north of High Halstow, whilst remains of Bronze Age date have previously been recorded south of the village. Within the illustrated development area itself, various crop and soil marks have been observed indicating the presence of buried archaeological remains and landscapes. These crop and soil marks include a ring ditch, possibly representing the ploughed out remains of a prehistoric burial mound, along with enclosures and other features. The area also has some potential to contain remains of Pleistocene or Palaeolithic interest.