



33-36 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness,  
Kent  
Heritage Statement

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Kent

## Heritage Statement

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## **33-36 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness, Kent;**

### **Heritage Statement**

#### **Summary**

*SWAT Archaeology has been commissioned by S. Graham Architects Ltd to prepare a Heritage Statement relating to the proposed development area of Land at 33-36 High Street, Sheerness in Kent.*

*There is a requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the client to explain the significance of any particular designated heritage assets that have been identified in the vicinity of the study site and demonstrate any potential impacts that a proposal will have upon their significance.*

*The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is located between 32 and 37 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness in Kent and includes No. 10 Charles Street. The PDA is bounded by a brick wall to the north abutting the High Street and by a wall and gate to the south leading to Charles Street. To the west is 32 High Street and to the east 37 High Street and 10 Charles Street.*

*The proposed development is for 11 No. one and two bedroom apartments and four commercial units, together with associated recycling store, cycle store, parking and landscaping. The design style and sensitivity takes into account the local vernacular and complements the adjacent older listed properties.*

*The adjacent Grade II listed houses have a medium level of significance. This Heritage Assessment has shown that for the designated heritage buildings the magnitude of impact is considered to be 'no change' to their fabric or setting. Consequently, the significance of effect by the proposed development is considered to be 'neutral' given the set-back nature of the design from the road, the impact on the street scene is considered to be negligible.*

*The Heritage Statement has found that the adjacent heritage assets will remain unaffected by the proposed development, which retain their historical and aesthetic qualities with the proposed development producing 'no harm' on their settings or significance of these assets in accordance with NPPF paragraph 202.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Planning Background**

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by S. Graham Architects Ltd (the 'Client'), to carry out a Heritage Statement relating to a proposed development area at land at 33-36 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness, Kent centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 591308 175032 (Figure 1).

1.1.2 There is a requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the client to explain the significance of any particular designated heritage assets that have been identified in the vicinity of the study site and demonstrate any potential impacts that a proposal will have upon their significance. The vast majority of the heritage assets, designated and un-designated within the assessment area primarily relate to the Post Medieval dockyard and associated defences of Sheerness and The Medway, some of which are Scheduled and nationally listed most of which have little by way of intervisibility with that of the PDA. This report has demonstrated that the Site lies close to a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets of Regency and Naval Terrace, Dockyard Wall No. 15, No, 28 and Nos. 27a and 27b. In acknowledgement of the Site being located and close to a number of designated assets this document has been prepared to support the planning application to Swale Borough Council to assess the impact of the proposed development. This document comprises the baseline for this Heritage Statement.

### **1.2 Site Description**

The PDA (Proposed Development Area) is located on the southern side of the High Street in Blue Town. Blue Town is located to the west of Sheerness on the north western corner of the Isle of Sheppey situated in the Thames estuary at the eastern side of the entrance to the River Medway. The PDA is a vacant plot with some industrial storage bays on a concrete surface and located in between 32 and 37 High Street and the PDA does include a three storey domestic building - No. 10 High Street. The PDA is bounded by Charles Street to the south with a wall and gate (AP 5). To the north by a brick wall. The PDA is on broadly level ground at 2m aOD with the total area about 0.072ha (Figure 1).

## *Geology*

The British Geological Society (BGS 1995) shows that the local geology at the PDA consists of bedrock comprising of London Clay Formation – Clay and silt. It was formed during the Ypresian period (early Eocene Epoch, c. 56–49 Ma). The London Clay is a stiff bluish clay which becomes brown when weathered. On the northern edge of the Island on the higher ground, the clay is being eroded away. There is superficial geology of alluvium - Clay, Silt, Sand and Peat. Associated with the formation of the River Medway and the Thames, the coastline was eroded infilling the drowned valley between the Isle of Sheppey and the Isle of Grain with sediment creating the Swale marshes, which extends across much of the southern area of the island.

### 1.2.1 Scope of Document

1.2.2 This assessment was requested by the Client in order to determine, as far as is possible, the nature, extent and significance of the development affecting the significance of designated and undesignated heritage assets. The assessment forms part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement and is intended to inform and assist with decisions regarding heritage assets and is to be used in the support of planning applications associated with the proposed development.

1.2.3 The assessment was carried out in accordance with the current guidelines as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). The purpose of an assessment is to establish the known or potential cultural heritage resource in a local, regional, national or international context. This specifically includes:

- the identification of site specific statutory and non-statutory cultural heritage constraints (including planning constraints)
- the examination of available cartographic and documentary sources
- a walkover survey (30<sup>th</sup> January 2023)
- to assess the surviving cultural heritage resource
- an assessment of potential impacts upon the setting of nearby heritage assets

## **2 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 National legislation and guidance relating to the protection of, and proposed development on or near, important archaeological sites or historical buildings within planning regulations is defined under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). In addition, local authorities are responsible for the protection of the historic environment within the planning system.

2.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in July 2018 and is the principal document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework in which Local Planning Authorities can produce their own distinctive Local Plans to reflect the needs of their communities.

### **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

2.2.1 The Historic Environment, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021): Annex 2, comprises:

*'all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.'*

2.2.2 NPPF Annex 2 defines a Heritage Asset as:

*'a building monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*

2.2.3 NPPF Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment sets out the principal national guidance on the importance, management and safeguarding of heritage assets within the planning process. The aim of NPPF Section 16 is to ensure that Local Planning Authorities, developers and owners of heritage assets adopt a

consistent approach to their conservation and to reduce complexity in planning policy relating to proposals that affect them.

## **2.3 Designated Heritage Assets**

2.3.1 Designated heritage assets are defined in NPPF Annex 2 as:

*‘World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.’*

2.3.2 Designation is a formal acknowledgement of a building, monument or site’s significance, intended to make sure that the character of the asset in question is protected through the planning system and to enable it to be passed on to future generations.

2.3.3 Statutory protection is provided to certain classes of designated heritage assets under the following legislation:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990);
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979); and
- Protection of Wrecks Act (1973).

2.3.4 There are a number of criteria to address, and they include the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the Heritage Assets.

### *Heritage Assets*

2.3.5 Any Heritage Asset that includes a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Wreck, Registered Park or Garden, conservation area or Landscape can be identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage Assets are the valued components of the historic environment and will include designated Heritage Assets as well as assets identified by the Local Planning Authority during the process of decision making or through the plan making process.



### *Setting*

2.3.6 The surroundings in which a Heritage Asset is experienced is of importance. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make take several guises; a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, the ability to appreciate that significance or it may have a neutral effect with no changes observed.

### *Significance*

2.3.7 The value of a Heritage Asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance may be informed by a number of factors which may include; assessment of the significance of the site, setting and building, where relevant, under a number of headings:

- Historic significance – the age and history of the asset, its development over time, the strength of its tie to a particular architectural period, the layout of a site, the plan form of a building and internal features of special character including chimneystacks and fireplaces.
- Cultural significance – the role a site plays in an historic setting, village, town or landscape context, the use of a building perhaps tied to a local industry or agriculture and social connections of an original architect or owner.
- Aesthetic/architectural significance – the visual qualities and characteristics of the asset (settlement site or building), long views, legibility of building form, character of elevations, roofscape, materials and fabric special features of interest.
- Archaeological significance – evolution of the asset, phases of development over different periods, important features, evidence in building fabric and potential for below ground remains.

## **2.4 Planning Policy Guidance**

Planning Policy Guidance that help to preserve the built and archaeological heritage are:

*Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance (Historic England, 2008)*

2.4.1 Historic England sets out in this document a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of England's historic environment. The Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance are primarily intended to help ensure consistency of approach in carrying out the role as the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment in England. Specifically, they make a contribution to addressing the challenges of modernising heritage protection by proposing an integrated approach to making decisions, based on a common process.

## **2.5 Sources**

2.5.1 A number of publicly accessible sources were consulted prior to the preparation of this document.

*Archaeological databases*

2.5.2 Although it is recognised that national databases are an appropriate resource for this particular type of assessment, the local Historic Environmental Record held at Kent County Council (KHER) contains sufficient data to provide an accurate insight into catalogued sites and finds within both the proposed development area and the surrounding landscape.

2.5.3 The National Heritage List for England (NHLE), which is the only official and up to date database of all nationally designated heritage assets is the preferred archive for a comprehensive HER search.

*Cartographic and Pictorial Documents*

2.5.4 A full map regression exercise has been incorporated within this assessment. Research was carried out using resources offered by the Kent County Council, the internet, Ordnance Survey and the Kent Archaeological Society. A full listing of bibliographic and cartographic documents used in this study is provided in Section 9.

### *Aerial photographs*

2.5.5 The study of the collection of aerial photographs held by Google Earth was undertaken (A 4-8).

### *Secondary and Statutory Resources*

2.5.6 Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological studies, archaeological reports associated with development control, landscape studies, dissertations and research frameworks are considered appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment.

### *Walkover Survey*

2.5.7 The purpose of the walkover survey was to;

- Identifying any historic landscape features not shown on maps.
- Conduct a survey for Heritage Assets.
- Understanding the setting of the Heritage Assets and the wider landscape.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE**

### **2.6 Introduction**

A search has been made of historic archive material pertaining to this site in County museums and the results are below-

### **2.7 Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KHER)**

2.7.1 A search of the KCC HER was carried out on the 1st February 2023, centred on the proposed site with a search radius of 500m. The search provided a relatively low number of records of Listed Buildings. There are no Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields or registered parks and gardens. About 180m to the south-east is the site of St Pauls Church (TQ 97 SW 1202) and about 125m to the south-west the Sheerness Lines (TQ 97 NW 109) and at about 40m to the south the probable site of a synagogue (TQ 97 SW 101).

2.7.2 The PDA (Proposed Development Area) is located on the southern side of the High Street in Blue Town. Blue Town is located to the west of Sheerness on the north western corner of the Isle of Sheppey situated in the Thames estuary at the eastern side of the entrance to the River Medway. The PDA is a vacant plot with some industrial storage bays on a concrete surface and located in between 32 and 37 High Street and the PDA does include a three-storey domestic building - No. 10 High Street. The PDA is bounded by Charles Street to the south with a wall and gate (AP 5). To the north by a brick wall.

## **2.8 Historical Map Progression**

*Historic Ordnance Survey map 1869*

2.8.1 This map shows the area of the proposed development (red line) built up and to the south the 'Jewish Synagogue' (MAP 1).

*Historic Ordnance Survey Map, 1896*

2.8.2 The map shows additional development to the south including a school (MAP 2).

*Historic Ordnance Survey map, 1906*

2.8.3 There is little change at the PDA (MAP 3).

*Historic Ordnance Survey maps, 1931, 1938*

2.8.4 There has been no change to the PDA which is still built up (MAP 4, 5).

2.8.5 KCCHER map showing the known archaeology and Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the PDA (MAP 6).

## **2.9 Aerial Photographs**

These aerial photographs from Google Earth show the site in 1960 with buildings (AP 1) but by 2003 the buildings have been demolished and replaced by industrial storage pallets (AP 2) which in turn have been cleared away leaving the concrete apron (AP 3).

## **2.10 Introduction**

There are a number of designated heritage assets that are in the vicinity of the Proposed Development Area (PDA) including about 180m to the south-east is the site of St Pauls Church (TQ 97 SW 1202) and about 125m to the south-west the Sheerness Lines (TQ 97 NW 109) and at about 40m to the south the probable site of a synagogue (TQ 97 SW 101). However, on the PDA itself none of the buildings have survived and therefore the PDA does not qualify as a Heritage Asset.

## **3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

### **3.1 Development Proposals -update**

3.1.1 The proposals include the construction of 4no. new high quality semi-detached dwellings and two new large barn-type properties one of which is a detached commercial unit.

3.1.2 The broad design principles, which has informed the development are:

- Create a high-quality designed development that adds character and respects its location and surroundings using different styles, frontage, roof lines to reduce any potential massing particularly in respect of adjacent properties.
- Ensure that the number of units is appropriate for the plot size.
- Minimize the impact from the road by utilising a single entrance point and retaining/strengthening roadside vegetation.
- Retaining and strengthening the vegetation boundaries and additional landscaping.
- Seek to utilise materials appropriate to the local vernacular with certain features adding interest such as chimneys, eaves detailing, windows and doors.

- Avoiding a uniform look with staggered positioning and individual designs.
- Use of post and rail boundaries.

### **3.2 Assessment of Physical Impact on Setting**

3.2.1 Step 1 of the methodology recommended by the Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* is 'to identify which designated heritage assets might be affected by a proposed development. Development proposals may adversely impact heritage assets where they remove a feature which contributes to the significance of a designated heritage asset or where they interfere with an element of a heritage asset's setting which contributes to its significance, such as interrupting a key relationship or a designed view'. Consideration was made as to whether any of the designated heritage assets present within or beyond the 500m study area include the site as part of their setting, and therefore may potentially be affected by the proposed development. No Heritage Assets will be affected by the proposed development.

## **4 CONCLUSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The purpose of this Heritage Impact Statement was to assist the Local Authority to understand the impact of the proposed development as required by the NPPF on the significance of any Heritage Assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by SWAT Archaeology for S. Graham Architects Ltd in support of the application for proposed developments of land at 33-36 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness, Kent.

4.1.2 The Heritage Statement has found that the heritage assets will remain unaffected by the proposed development, which retain their historical and aesthetic qualities with the proposed development producing 'no harm' on their settings or significance of these assets in accordance with NPPF paragraph 202.

## **5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **5.1 Archive**

5.1.1 Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this Heritage Impact Assessment will be submitted to the LPA and Kent County Council (Heritage) within 6 months of completion.

### **5.2 Reliability/Limitations of Sources**

5.2.1 The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held at Kent County Council, and therefore considered as being reliable.

### **5.3 Copyright**

5.3.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company and the author shall retain full copyright on the commissioned report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights are reserved, excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to Offset Architects (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

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