

Heritage Statement

Port of London Authority Port Control Centre Redevelopment

November 2022

1.0: Introduction.

1.1: This statement has been prepared to identify the heritage value and significance of the buildings to be altered, specifically the enhancement to the existing link between the Port Control Centre (PCC) and the Grade II listed Royal Terrace Pier to assess the impact of the proposed works as well as other features of the development and how it interacts with this important heritage asset.

1.2: This document has been prepared following an investigation of the relevant records including Historic England records, together with other local sources of information and following an inspection of all affected structures.

2.0: Assessment of Significance.

2.1: The Royal Terrace Pier, including the pavilions flanking and entrance is a Grade II listed structure described as follows:

Now the headquarters of the Pilotage Service. Built in 1844 by the Gravesend Freehold Investment Company at the cost of £9,200. Designed by John Baldry Redman C E. T-shaped construction of cast iron. It is built on 3 rows of 3 columns at the shore end and 3 rows of 5 columns under the T-portion, with triglyph frieze above. The shore end is flanked by small pavilions of coursed stone with quoins, cornice and base of dressed ashlar. Above each is a little turret of which the west one has been enlarged. The remainder of the pier has been roofed over at a later date. In the angle of the T is a light turret. Beyond the T-platform is a floating pontoon for embarkation approached by steps. Princess (later Queen) Alexandra landed here on the 7th March 1865 on her arrival to marry the Prince of Wales.

Listing NGR: TQ6511974475

2.2: The Royal Terrace Pier is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

2.3: The Map attached to this Statement within Appendix A, shows the location of the Pier and has been sourced from Historic England for the purpose of this application.

2.4: Grade II listed buildings are considered to be of special interest. The Pier itself was Listed Grade II in May 1971.

2.5: The construction of Royal Terrace Pier dates back to April 1844 and was opened to the public in 1846. The proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers included a paper in April 1845 describing the construction of the pier and details of the costs. A copy of this is included within Appendix B of this statement.

2.6: Alexandra Towage commissioned the refurbishment of the Pier in 1977 with the assistance of Engineer R.J. Crocket and Architect David A. Croydon (who also designed Alexandra House in 1973). This work included the removal of the cast iron cladding panels and the replacement of the structure supporting the roof. The Pier was re-clad with glass fibre panels with steel framed windows.

2.7: Following the 1989 Marchioness disaster a lifeboat station was established at Gravesend and a mooring provided on Royal Terrace Pier in 2002.

2.8: The Port of London Authority (PLA) purchased Royal Terrace Pier in July 2004 as part of a joint reorganisation of PLA and Adsteam Towage operations, with the tugs moving to their current base at Denton Wharf.

2.9: The old pontoons at Royal Terrace Pier were removed and a new pontoon (Barge 559) installed on new tubular piles in October 2004. Access took the form of a refurbished brow (originally fabricated in 1928) that had previously serviced the old Tower Pier prior to its replacement in 2000.

2.10: The downriver accommodation was refurbished in 2004 for use by PLA crews.

2.11: The internal surfaces of the pier approach were repainted, and the lanterns replaced in 2005.

2.12: The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) moved from their portacabin type accommodation in Alex House car park into the refurbished upriver accommodation on Royal Terrace Pier in June 2007.

2.13: The entrance and lodge roofs were refurbished in 2008.

2.14: The internal surfaces of the pier approach were redecorated again in 2010.

2.15: The substructure of the pier comprising cast iron and steel beams on cast iron cylinders was repainted in 2011.

2.16: As of November 2022, a separate Listed Building Consent application (ref: 20221192) has been submitted with regard to a series of enhancements and maintenance works to the pier, specifically for the repairs and redecoration of the existing cast iron lighthouse turret, installation of below-deck protection and installation of a fall arrest system.

2.17: It is considered that the pier and associated structures remain important in respect of its grading (this is evident from the listing description) and makes an invaluable contribution to the street scene on this part of Royal Pier Road and the wider Conservation Area.

3.0: Impact of the Proposal on the Significance of this Heritage Asset.

3.1: The proposals subject of this Listed Building Application are set out in detail in the separate Planning Statement and Design & Access Statement. It is considered that the proposed development will not result in negatively affecting the sites listed status designation or any of the original features of the building.

3.2: The aim of these proposals is to refurbish and enhance the adjacent PCC building and surrounding external landscaping areas, in such a way to ensure that the listed status of the pier, and the setting of the pier within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area is protected for the long term. The proposals will ensure that the PLA can continue to operate from this location, including use of the pier as a landing point for various PLA vessels and staff, as well as the RNLI whilst ensuring that the structure continues to add to the high quality character and heritage of the area. The proposals will also and continue to ensure that the local character of this stretch of the River Thames is of the highest quality and a strong positive feature of the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area and the borough as a whole.

3.3: To confirm there are no internal works proposed within the pier itself, and no specific external works other than the addition of a new façade onto the existing link between the PCC and pier.

4.0: Summary

4.1: The proposed development for the refurbishment of the Port of London Authority's (PLA) Port Control Centre (PCC) and associated landscaping works is located wholly within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area. (See map below of the 2009 Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal.)

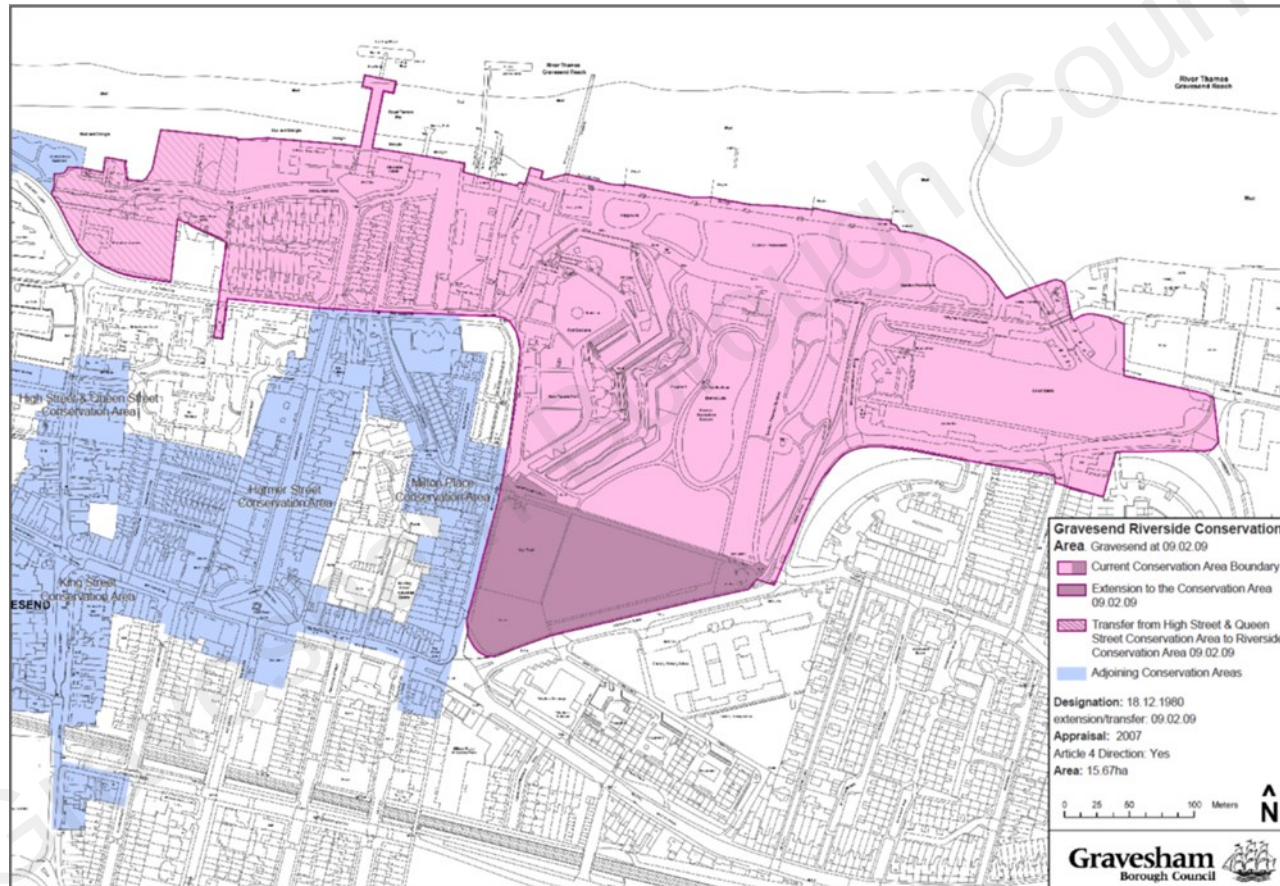


Figure 1: Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal area (2009)

4.2: In addition, the proposed development is directly adjacent to the Grade II Listed Royal Terrace Pier, including the pavilions flanking and entrance, as described in paragraph 2.1 above.

4.3: As part of the proposed development the following works are proposed which form the principal reason why a joint planning and Listed Building Consent application has been submitted.

- The existing link between the PCC and Royal Terrace Pier is proposed to be retained and enhanced;
- Repaving works are proposed within the forecourt area of the pier; and
- Decorative external lighting are proposed in front of the pier pavilions as part of the external landscaping proposals.

4.4: Whilst not directly affecting the structure of the pier itself the refurbishment and enhancement of the PCC, including the façade has also been considered within this statement.

4.5: Within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal the PCC itself is identified as a Neutral Building, and it is also included within one of the 'positive views' of the Conservation Area, looking north from Royal Pier Road towards the Tidal Thames. Royal Terrace Pier is identified as a positive building and is one of the main contributors to the historic character of the area given it is one of its kind and has distinctive architectural features.



Figure 2: Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal area (2009) Key features.

4.6: The following sections provide more detail on development proposals and how the Conservation Area, the Listed building and the setting of the Listed Building have been taken into account.

5.0 Proposed works:

PCC Façade and external works including existing link to Royal Terrace Pier

5.1: As noted in the associated Design and Access Statement, the proposed materials and colour of the proposed new façade of the PCC seek to unify the retained part of the PCC building through simple openings and solid textured surfaces, to ensure that the development fits in with the surrounding Conservation Area character and sits comfortably within the current ensemble of adjacent buildings including the listed pier.

5.2: The proposed render and colour (the final colour and textures of which will be subject to conditional approval) of the PCC façade and extension have been chosen partially to ensure these are more forgiving to weathering issues given the buildings riverside location, and also to ensure that the building will not be overbearing or cause harm to the Conservation Area context or the setting of the listed pier, both from the landside and from the river.

5.3: As part of the proposed development there will be some demolition and consolidation work which will include the removal of the eastern staircase situated directly adjacent to the listed pier. It is considered that this will help to create more separation between the Pier and the PCC, which will serve to enhance the setting of the pier and views of it by better 'framing' the pier from Royal Pier Road, thereby improving the positive view identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

5.4: On the eastern façade of the PCC, there is an existing link between the PCC and the listed pier and it is proposed that this will be retained and enhanced. It is currently of brick construction of little architectural merit and it is not clear when this was originally installed. As existing the accessway links from the ground floor of the PCC into the forecourt area of the pier and is used as a direct exit and entry route by PLA Pilots who travel from the office onto the pier and then onto a pilot vessel on the Thames, and return this way as well. This can take place at any time over a 24 hour period and for safety and security reasons it is considered essential that this link is retained.

5.5: The existing connection currently leading to Pilot Ready and upper levels via a secondary staircase. In the proposed design the connection between the PCC and the Pier will lead directly to the Pilot Ready area where they can rest and wait for upcoming calls. The Pilot ready is also connected to the rest of the PCC and can be accessed via the main entrance in the link building during day time.



Figure 3: Views of the existing link, Image of left is looking south. Image on right looking north with RTP on the left.

5.6: Due to the proposed removal of the eastern staircase which includes part of the link and the façade works to the PCC the following works are required:

- The section of the existing link which also forms part of the eastern staircase will be demolished and rebuilt, whilst the existing part of the link between the eastern staircase and the listed pier is retained. There will be no demolition works connected to the pier structure itself. For further detail and drawings see pages 93 to 99 of the Design and Access Statement.
- It is proposed that the link will be insulated and clad to match the proposed PCC building to ensure that the link does not stand out as part of the completed development. The Render will finish 100mm short of the Pier structure, leaving a shadow gap between the PCC and the Listed structure. Walls and roof will be extended above the new landing and new internal steps will be built over the existing stair to mitigate increase in finish floor

levels. The external structure of the pier itself will be untouched. It is therefore not considered that these works will form a negative impact to the setting of the Grade II listed structure.

- Within the pier itself there will be no changes and the existing doorway and door to the link will remain in place.

5.7: Overall it is considered that the proposals will have a neutral effect on the character of the wider Conservation Area or the setting of the listed pier, particularly as the link cannot be viewed from Royal Pier Road itself as it is located behind the western pavilion.



Figure 4: View of western pavilion of RTP with the link behind

External landscaping proposals: repaving

5.8: As part of the external landscaping proposals, the existing paving within the PLA complex in front of the PCC, Royal Terrace Pier and Alex house will be re-paved, in order to create a more consistent, level and unified approach across this area. As part of this there is a small area in front of the pier entrance and between the two pavilions that will also be repaved. The paving proposed is Kentish ragstone (see page 56 of the Design and Access Statement) which is considered to be an enhancement on the existing paving. This will serve to enhance the setting of the listed pier and will have a positive impact on the Conservation Area as a whole.

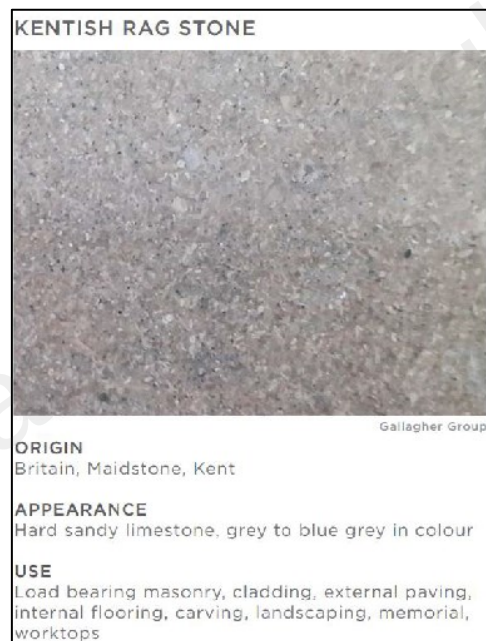


Figure 5: Kentish ragstone colour and description.

External landscaping proposals: External lighting:

5.9: As part of the external landscaping proposals some decorative external lighting is proposed, including decorative lighting fittings to illuminate the frontage of the listed pier pavilions, with the aim to emphasise and celebrate the piers importance in this area. Lighting is also proposed on the PCC itself both from ground level and through a concealed lighting detail in the ridge of the new extension to the PCC, to 'wash' light over the surface of the new façade to give it more visibility at night without causing harm to neighbouring properties.

5.10: Additional lighting, recessed on either side of stairs and ramps within the PLA complex is also proposed, in order to illuminate circulation route and the entrance area. For the times that these are on/off and exact colours it is proposed that these details can be agreed and conditioned as part of the overall development. Further details on the proposed lighting including visuals can be found on pages 59 to 63 of the Design and Access Statement.

5.11: Overall it is considered that the external lighting proposals will have a positive effect on the Conservation Area and the setting of listed pier, by enhancing the external appearance across the frontage of the PLA's London River House complex, whilst also re-establishing the hierarchy and importance of the listed pier and the function of the PCC building in relation to the tidal Thames.

External landscaping proposals: Street Furniture

5.12: As part of the proposed external works a number of enhancements are proposed, which includes the removal of existing fencing and street furniture and addition of new paving, planters and bollards which will be in keeping with existing street furniture located in the conservation area. This will help to achieve the aim of these proposals to enhance the overall entrance to the PLA, particularly for pedestrians while also being in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and in line with Local Plan policy CS19: Development and Design Principles to ensure the development is visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive.

5.13: Specifically within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal section 6 (Streetscape) reference is included to concrete bollards lining the forecourt of the PLA buildings. As part of the development these will be replaced with black bollards which are more in keeping with the wider Conservation Area.



Figure 6: Existing black bollards outside London River House and white fencing proposed to be removed

5.14: With regard to the removal of existing street furniture this will include the removal the existing white fencing on the ramp providing disabled access to the main reception. This is out of keeping with other fencing and street furniture in the Conservation Area and adds to the current cluttered appearance in front of the PLA's office buildings. The proposed development will consolidate the provision of existing street furniture and provide a cleaner, more consistent approach that will be more in keeping with the surrounding local area and the Conservation Area as a whole.

5.15: Within the existing landscaping there is an information board in need of some refurbishment and two plaques which provide heritage information on the local area. Through the proposed development the PLA will update and replace the current information board, which forms part of the Gravesend Riverside Heritage trail and relocate this as shown on page 51 of the Design and Access Statement. Adjacent to this is a plaque which provides further historical information on Royal Terrace Pier and the Terrace gardens which will also be retained and relocated within the development area.



Figure 8 - Existing Information Board and Plaque & existing plaque on London River House

5.16: In addition on the frontage of London River House is a plaque commemorating the construction of the building. This will be covered up by the proposed landscaping so will also be relocated to ensure this can still be viewed from the street.

Other matters: Comms tower relocation

5.17: The Conservation Area Appraisal on page 21 under character areas gives reference to “*large steel structures projecting from the roof*” at the PLA buildings which likely refers to the existing comms tower on the roof of the PCC. As noted in the associated design and access statement as part of this proposal this essential infrastructure will be consolidated onto the roof of Alexandra (“Alex”) house. This will serve to enhance the positive view identified in the Conservation Area appraisal from Royal Pier road towards the River, which will assist in enhancing the overall character in this area and will have a positive effect on the setting of the listed pier.

Other matters: Relocation of bin store

5.18: As noted in the associated Transport Statement, it is proposed that the existing bin store currently situated in front of the PCC will be relocated to the south west corner of the PLA's London River House Car park. A number of alternative locations have been considered as shown in table 1 of the Transport Statement which concludes that this is the preferred location for the new store. The proposed location is partially screened by the existing tree to the south which will be unaffected by the proposals. The storage area will therefore be appropriately screened with timber fencing with appropriate planting to ensure there are no negative amenity impacts on residential properties on Royal Pier Road, or to the adjacent car park utilised by users of the nearby Grade II Listed Clarendon Hotel. The existing yellow salt bin here will also be moved and incorporated into the screened area. It is therefore considered that the proposed location will have an overall positive effect on the character of the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area, through the enhancement of the external landscaping in front of the main entrance, and concentrating vehicular uses including waste collection areas to the periphery of the site. This is in line with Local Plan policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles.) which states that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive, and will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards.

6.0: Policy Consideration

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

6.1: The NPPF makes reference to the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including heritage assets at risk of neglect, decay or other threats. Specifically paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises that consideration should be given to the impact of the proposed development on the significance of a designated asset and that great weight should be given to its conservation. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional.

National Planning Policy Guidance on the Historic Environment

6.2: With regard to protecting and enhancing the historic environment in the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. Where changes are proposed, the NPPF sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development.

Gravesham Local Plan Strategy (Adopted) 2014

6.3: Gravesham has a distinct and diverse character, with unique heritage as a historic riverside town. The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this joint full planning and Listed Building Application and seeks to ensure the character of the town remains enhanced and protected.

- Policy CS19: Development Design Principles. New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive.
- Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment. The Council will accord a high priority towards preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment. This includes the preservation of, amongst other matters, surviving built features.

The proposed development is also located within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area where within the associated area appraisal (2009) the pier is identified as a 'positive building'.

7.0: Analysis of the proposed works against planning policy

7.1: Planning policy requires high design, which respects the area within which it is located and contributes positively to its surroundings. The proposed external works, particularly the proposed landscaping works, repaving works and the refurbishment of the PCC will have a positive impact the character of the Conservation Area and on the visual appearance of the Listed Pier, including enhancing views of the pier entrance, and will ensure that the facility can retain its listed status both now and over the long term.

7.2: Therefore the proposed works will ensure that the high quality character and heritage of this area of the borough will be maintained and the Grade II listed structure will continue to make a positive contribution to the local historic environment, ensuring that the local character of this stretch of the River Thames continues to be of the highest quality and a strong positive feature of the borough.

8.0: Conclusion:

8.1: In summary, it can be seen from the submitted drawings and information above that the impact of the proposed development on the character of the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II Listed Royal Terrace Pier would, overall, be an improvement to the existing.

8.2: Due to the nature of the proposals directly affecting the pier it is considered that the setting of the listed building would not be adversely affected and that the proposed development will continue to conserve this important heritage asset for the long term.

Gravesend Borough Council