

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Conversion, Refurbishment and Extensions to

Custom House, The Terrace, Gravesend, DA12 2DE

May 2021

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Design Approach

This Design and Access Statement supports a full planning and listed building application for the conversion, refurbishment and extension to Custom House, The Terrace, Gravesend and is generally structured as per the CABE guidelines as set out in 'Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them'.

1.2 Existing Site

The application site is located within a sustainable location, 400m from Gravesend town centre and lies within Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area. The site is situated between the banks of the River Thames to the north and The Terrace to the south. The main Custom House building is a Georgian three storey, Grade II listed and designated Landmark building.

1.3 Proposal

Turner Jackson Day Associates have been instructed to prepare a planning application for the development of the site to provide 27 residential units and associated landscaping, parking and vehicular access. The development will seek to fully respect the character and appearance of the Grade II listed buildings and to fully address the sites heritage and historic value to Gravesend.



Aerial photo indicating the development site with a red boundary.

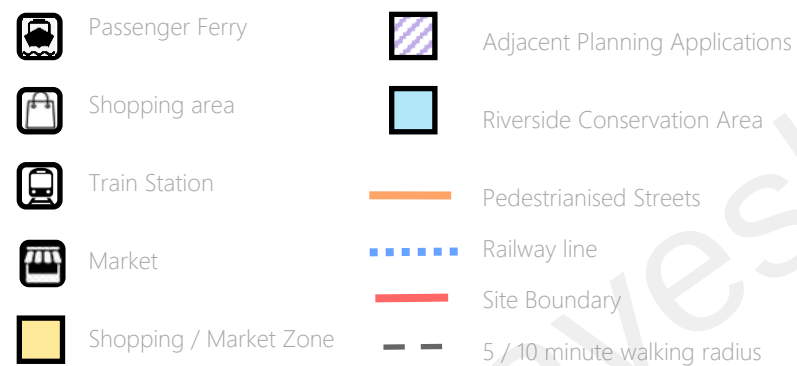


2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.1 Local Context

The maritime town of Gravesend, in the Borough of Gravesham, is situated on the south bank of the River Thames, 21 miles east of London. The geographical location of Gravesend, being a gateway to London by river, has given the town strategic importance throughout the maritime history of South East England. This maritime history is reflected in the architectural character and heritage assets within the town, including those located within the applicant site.

The application site represents a 0.44 ha, largely rectangular plot of land, 400m east of Gravesend town centre. The site is located in a sustainable location within a 10 minute walk to Gravesend Train Station with high speed rail links to St Pancras, Stratford and Ashford International. The site is in Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area and is in close proximity to the scheduled monuments, New Tavern Fort and Milton Chantry, that sit within the adjacent historic park.



Aerial photo illustrating key adjacent facilities and areas.

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.1 Local Context

There are a diverse mix of building typologies, ages and scales many of which reflect the maritime history of the area. To the east of the applicant site is the three and a half storey white, weatherboarded Heritage Quay which is situated close to the sites eastern boundary. Beyond this to the east is the Riverside Leisure Area which contains a range of buildings from the 14 century, listed Milton Chantry & Listed New Tavern Fort to the recent Gravesend Rowing Club.

To the south of the development site, on the opposite side of The Terrace sits Listed Cox House, which has recent approval for a residential extension and refurbishment. Adjacent to Cox House is the modern, 9-storey tower block, Chantry Court. To the immediate west of the site is a car park in the curtilage of the Port of London Authorities, the offices which are positioned further to the west on the banks of the Thames.



Port of London Authority



Royal Terrace Pier - Est. 1844



Clarendon Rd - Approx. 1900



The Terrace Tavern - Est. 1837



Cox House - Est. mid 1800s



Chantry Court



Milton Chantry Est. 1322



Heritage Quay Built 1998



Gravesend Rowing Club - Built 1990



Riverside Promenade



Riverside Leisure Area & New Tavern Fort

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.1 Local Context



View looking north down Commercial Place with Custom House on the left, and Riverside Leisure Area to the right. The two storey dwelling abutting the boundary is visible (red tile roof) and Heritage Quay in white.



View from the Riverside Promenade, with Gravesend Rowing club and Heritage Quay in the foreground. The development site is situated behind Heritage Quay.



View along the sites southern boundary, with the front elevation of Custom House and the access from The Terrace visible.



View of Cox House

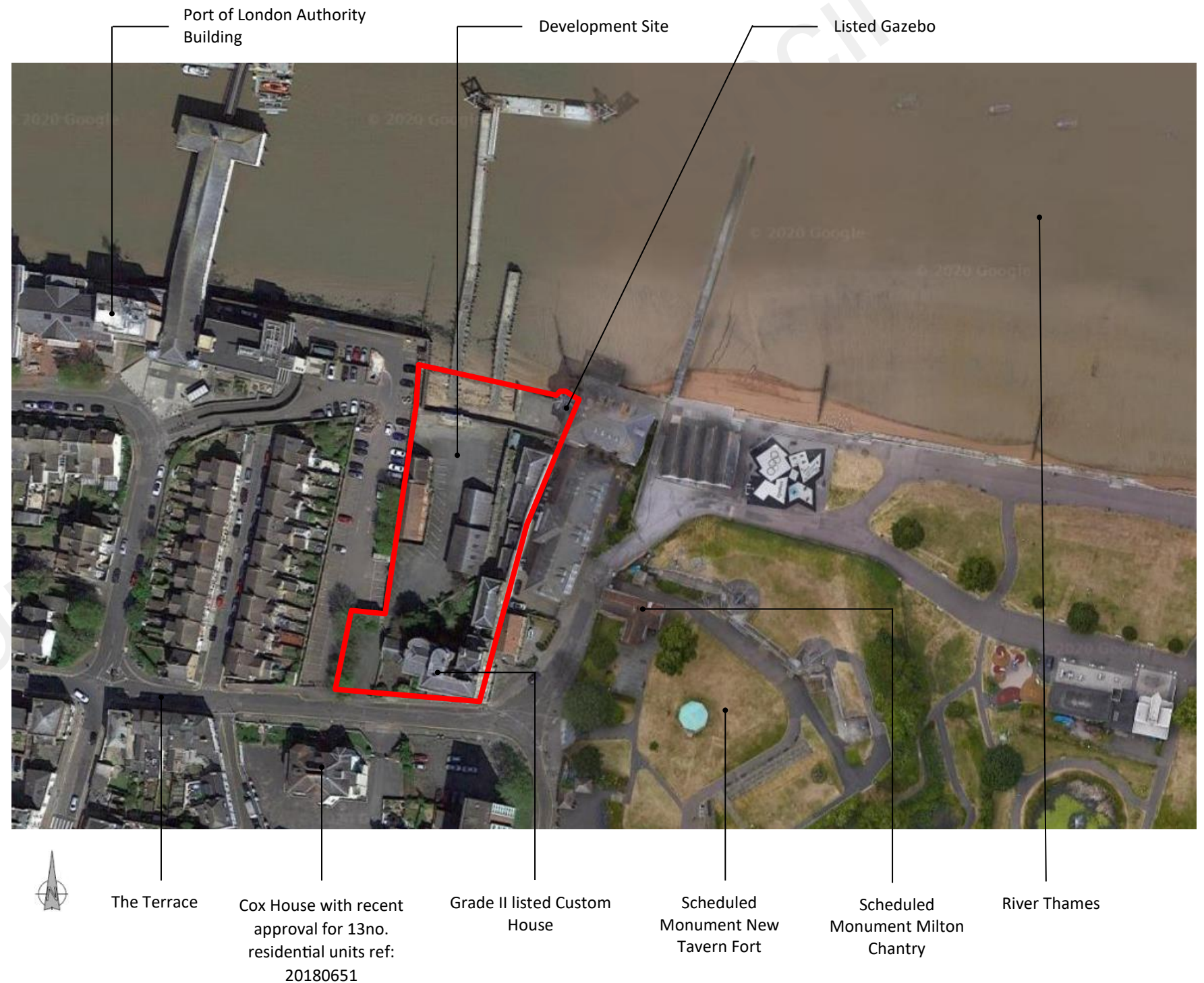
2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.2 The Application Site

The sites southern boundary is approximately 45m in width and fronts The Terrace, with listed Cox house and Chantry Court flats opposite. The front elevation of 3-storey Custom House, set just off the pavement, dominates the eastern side of the southern boundary. Further to the west sits a brickwork wall with a historic addition of Custom House behind and further west still is the gated vehicular access to the site.

The eastern boundary is over 100m in length, and is bordered by the main Custom House building to the south with further ancillary buildings running almost the full length of the boundary. The main Custom House is sited on the SW corner with its side elevation addressing Commercial Place. A little further along the eastern boundary the Outbuildings are partially obscured by a two-storey dwelling that is positioned tight to the site boundary, the remaining eastern boundary is bordered by a mostly blank flank wall. Heritage Quay, comprising of two no. 3.5 storey residential buildings are sited parallel to this eastern edge of the site. At the NE corner a Grade II listed Gazebo building is sited, just beyond the sea defence wall.

The development site is located in the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area with the front elevation of 3-storey Custom House addressing The Terrace. The single storey Coach House is attached to the left flank elevation and is set further back from the road behind a walled courtyard. A series of outbuildings of varying heights and heritage value run along the sites eastern boundary, forming part of the external spine wall with the Gazebo building in the NE corner. The single storey Workshop building is located in the middle of the site and the two-storey Boathouse to the west. A historic, internal spine wall runs almost the full length of the site dividing the outbuildings from the courtyard.

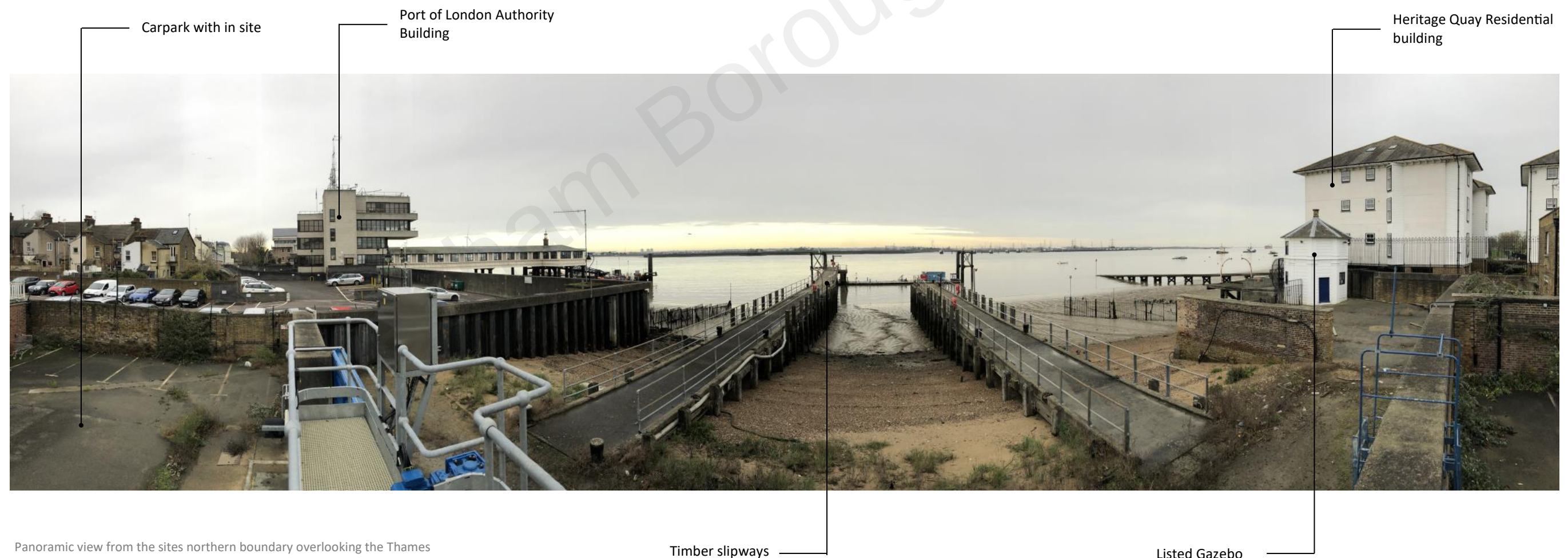


Aerial photo indicating the development site with a red boundary.

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.2 The Application Site

North of the development site sits the banks of the River Thames, this boundary is formed by a 2.75m high flood defence wall that is punctured by a 5m wide flood gate with associated operating machinery and an access stair. The western boundary is marked by a brick wall which separates the site from an adjacent carpark used by the Port of London Authority. Beyond the carpark further to the west is the rear gardens of the terrace housing that fronts Clarendon Road.



2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.2 The Application Site



Panoramic view looking south from the sites northern boundary.

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.2 The Application Site

The site, though functioning as one, comprises of two separate parts that are divided by a historic flank wall. The first part being the Grade II Custom House and its associated outbuildings

along the eastern boundary. The second part, referred to as the 'courtyard', is the adjacent and parallel car park with its own outbuildings.

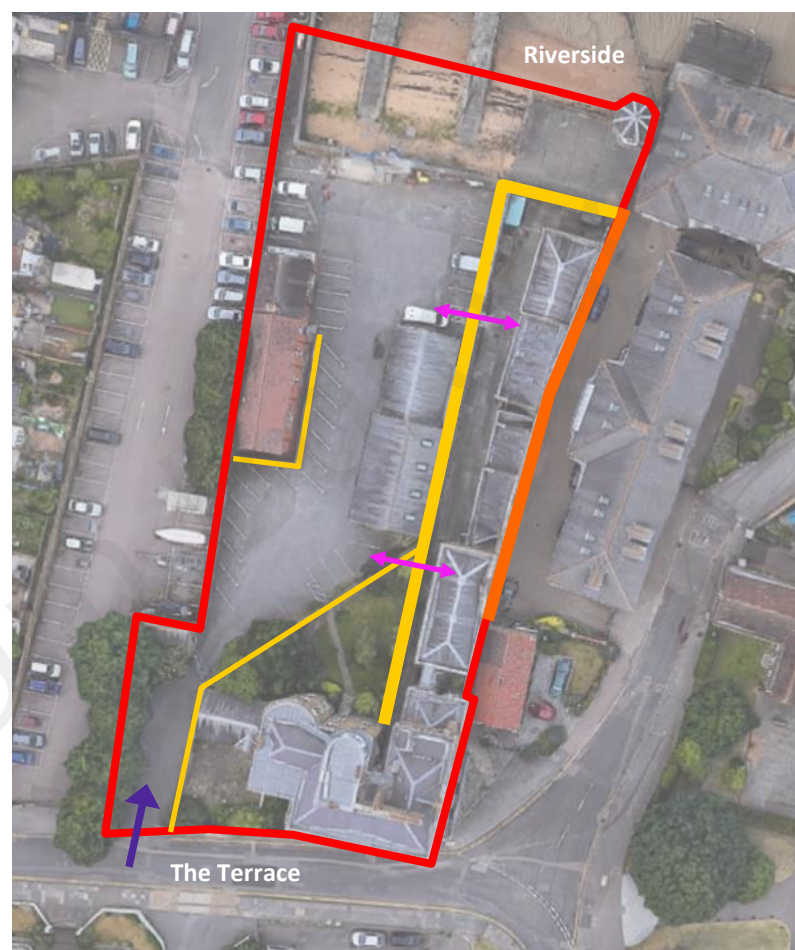


Buildings

- Listed
- Original - not mentioned in listing
- 20th century - not mentioned in listing

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Custom House | 4. Workshop (and Old Boathouse) |
| 2. Coach House | 5. Boat House |
| 3. Outbuildings | 6. Pavilion |

Custom House, Gravesend



Spine Wall & Access

- Internal Spine Wall
- Eastern Flank Wall
- ↔ Pedestrian connection
- Vehicular access



Site Connections

- Courtyard
- Custom House and walled gardens
- Potential pedestrian connection
- Sea defence wall (dashed indicates gate)

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.3 Existing Buildings

The application site accommodates a variety of existing buildings on site, all of which vary in terms of their architectural style, age and heritage value. The front elevation of the key heritage asset, Custom House addresses The Terrace with the single storey Coach House attached to its left flank elevation, set further back from the road behind a walled courtyard. A series of outbuildings of varying heights run along the sites eastern boundary, forming part of the external spine wall with the Gazebo building in the NE corner. The single storey Workshop building is located in the middle of the site and the two-storey Boathouse to the west. A historic, internal spine wall runs almost the full length of the site dividing the outbuildings from the courtyard. To the rear of Custom House is a historic, triangular walled garden.

Custom House

A Georgian three-storey, Grade II listed and designated Landmark Building fronting The Terrace. Heritage features include brown/yellow stock brick, timber sash windows, unsupported central staircase and a 5 light bow window in roof forming a lookout.

Custom House Coach House

Single storey building to the west of the main house in matching materials.

Custom House Outbuildings

A series of three, two and single-storey outbuildings in brown/yellow stock brick built along the eastern boundary, with natural slate roof tiles and sash windows.



Aerial photograph, annotated to highlight the different elements of the application site.

The Gazebo

A listed 2-storey octagonal, weatherboard outbuilding with sash windows and slate roof.

External Spine Wall

A blank flank wall that forms the eastern boundary in brown/yellow facing brick and white render. There is evidence that the single storey buildings that abut this boundary were once three stories in height with windows along the east faced.

Walled Garden

The historic brick walled, triangular garden containing trees protected by conservation area status.

Internal Spine Wall

4m high brown/yellow brick wall separating Custom House from the courtyard that historically provided a public passage.

Workshop (and Old Boathouse)

A modest single-storey original boathouse with larger mid 20th century workshop extension (the newer element to be demolished) in yellow brick with natural slate roof tiles and crissal windows. For the duration of this document and in all drawings this building, the newer workshop and old boathouse buildings will be referred to collectively as the 'Workshop'.

Boathouse

A modest 2-storey early 20th Century original with higher, mid 20th century extension, both red brick with clay wall tiles, clay roof tiles and casement windows.

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.3 Existing Buildings

Custom House

Custom House is the key heritage asset on the application site and is a Georgian, three-storey, Grade II listed and designated Landmark Building. Custom House was built on the site of the 'Fountain Tavern' in 1816 as a purpose built home for Custom Officials. The listing describes it as HM Customs and Immigration Office and the list description states:

1815-16. 3 storeys and 5 windows facing south, 3 windows facing east. Brown stock brick. Stone stringcourse above ground floor. Stone cornice and parapet. Glazing bars intact. Round-headed windows on the 2nd floor of the east front. Doorway on south front with pilasters, projecting cornice with royal Cartouche in stone over and semi-circular fanlight. On the north front facing the river there is a large 5-light bow window on the roof forming a lookout. Facing west there is a 2 bay extension in matching style with blank windows and Tuscan portico. Stone flagged forecourt bounded by spear railing.

The Gazebo

The 2-storey octagonal, weatherboard Gazebo addressing the Thames is also Grade II listed. The list description states:

Early C19. A 2 storeyed octagonal weatherboarded gazebo with wooden pilasters, 3 sash windows with glazing bars intact and a simple doorcase. Brick chimney.



Main heritage building Custom House



Adjacent dwelling



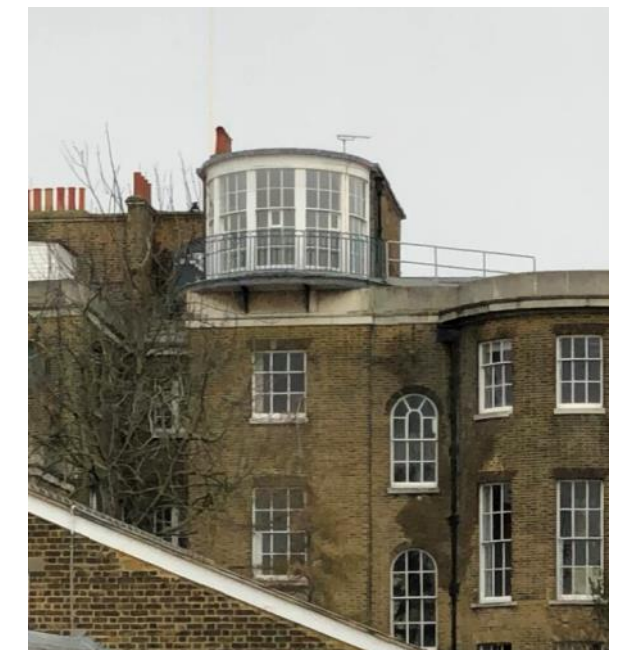
Rear of Custom House



Listed Gazebo building



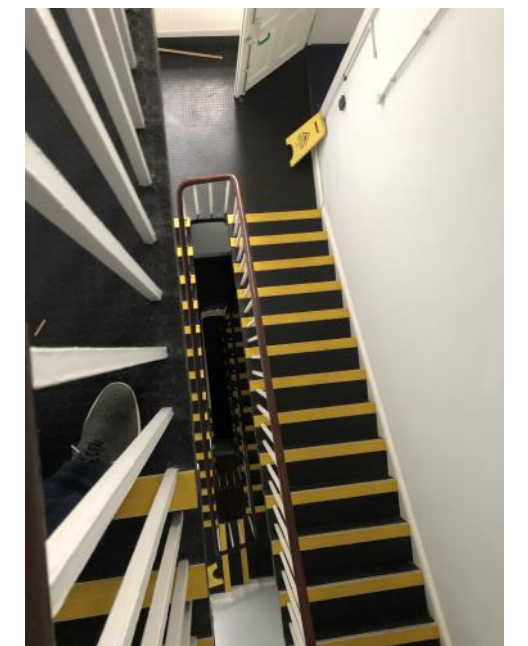
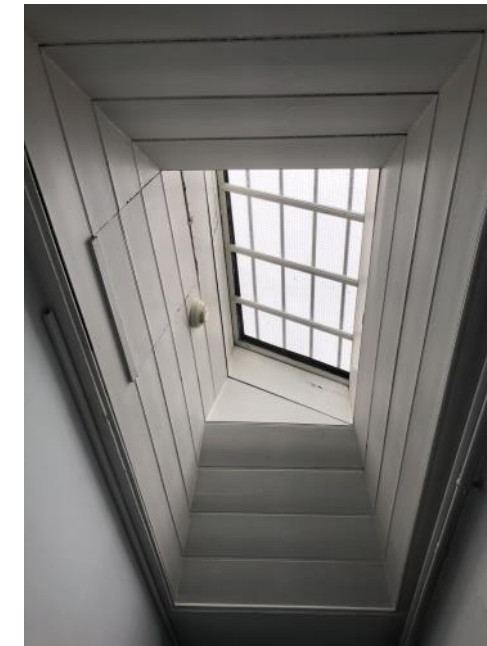
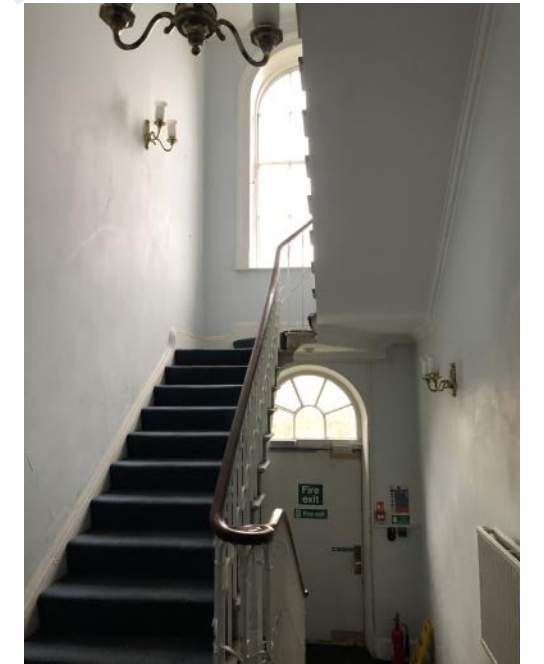
Outbuildings



Lookout

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.3 Existing Buildings



Internal photographs

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.3 Existing Buildings



The Old Boathouse element of The Workshop



The Boathouse



Internal Spine Wall to right



The modern Workshop



The rear Boathouse elevation.



The Gazebo

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context

In order to fully understand the value of each heritage asset and to determine how the site has changed physically over time it is essential to understand Custom House's past role in the shipping industry and to explore its links with the historical context of the wider area. Thus a brief timeline listing key events that have influenced Gravesend's development are listed below:

1356 - John Page appointed by Edward III as first customs 'Searcher' It was the job of the searcher to stop, search and assess duties payable on cargo.

1559 - An Act of Parliament permitted the landing of cargo only at 'legal quays' on the north bank, ships were also required to stop at Gravesend for a health check. Following the health check a customs official known as a 'Tide Waiter' would board the ship at Gravesend to ensure obedience with the law.

1649 - A Custom House was proposed for Gravesend to accommodate Tide Waiters for the first time.

1780-2 - Custom House in Whitehall Place established

1791 James Leigh Joynes built 32 houses called the Terrace, joining the village of New Tavern with Gravesend.

1812 - A change in law meant that ships no longer had to stop at Gravesend to pick up a custom official and consequently the number of officials was reduced.

1816 - Custom House was built with observation window, Customs sharing the building with the Excise Service (1825).

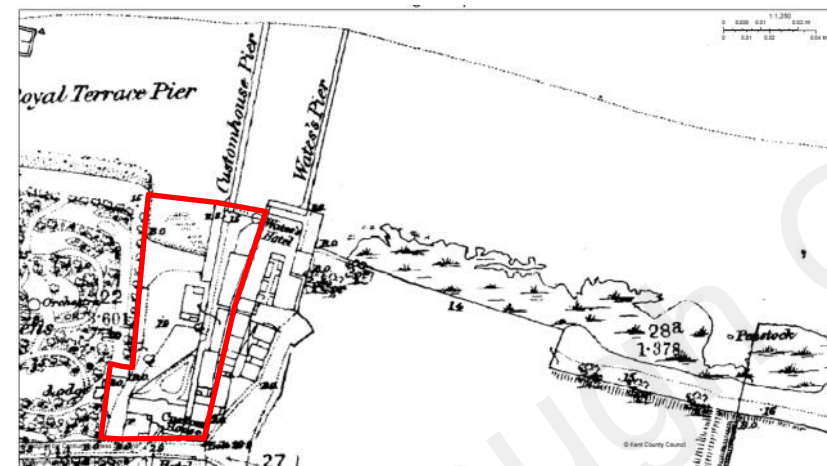
1825 - The office of 'Seachers' of Gravesend abolished

1828 - Gravesend and Milton Steamboat Company formed

1834 - Town Pier Opened (despite opposition from watermen)

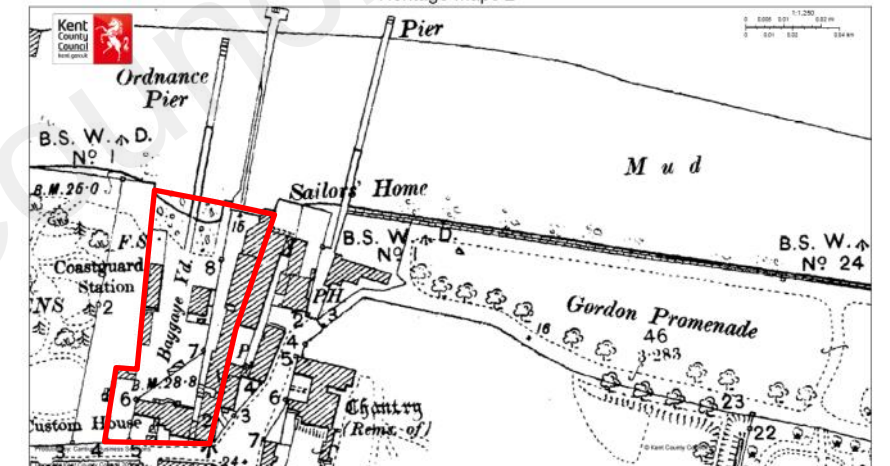
1844 - The (Royal) Terrace Pier opened

1849 - Railway Opened



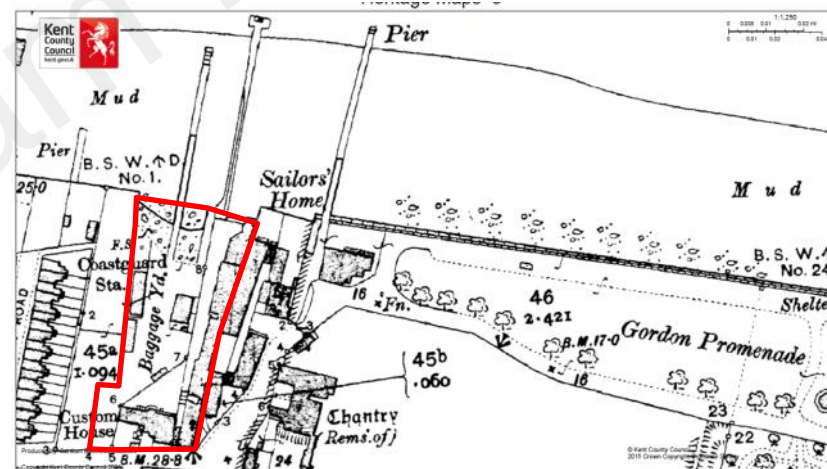
Heritage map 1843-1893

Customhouse, outbuildings, the triangular walled gardens and Customhouse Pier area all present with Wates Hotel adjacent to the east.



Heritage map 1891-1912

Ordnance Pier has been constructed to the centre of the site and the outbuilding to the west had been extended/rebuilt. Gordon Promenade and the Sailor's Home are now present to the east of the site.



Heritage map 1904-1939

Clarendon Road Terraces have been built on the former gardens to the west of the site.



Heritage map 1919-1943

The Sea School and Rowing Club House are shown.

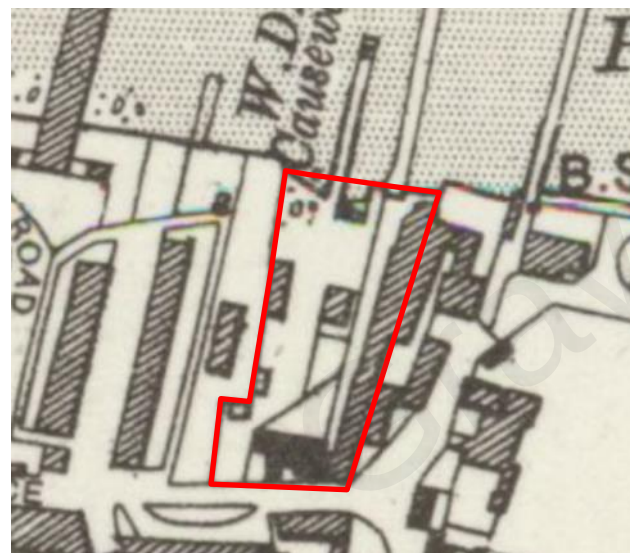
2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context

The site appears to change very little between 1923 and 1951, the older half of the Boathouse building and the original element of the Workshop are present throughout this period. The outbuildings along the eastern flank wall can be seen to continue up to the Gazebo building at this time. Historic photographs (seen on the following page) indicate that these were a series of bonded warehouses which were much taller in height and larger in scale than the outbuildings present today. The Gazebo building, the walled garden and the internal spine wall have all been present from the early 19th century and are considered to be key historical features. The addition of the modern workshop in the second half of the 20th century is the most noticeable change on site since the 1920s.



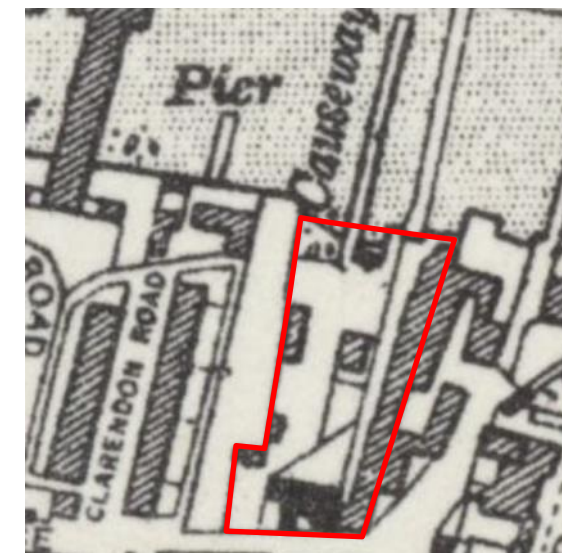
Existing Figure Ground Plan



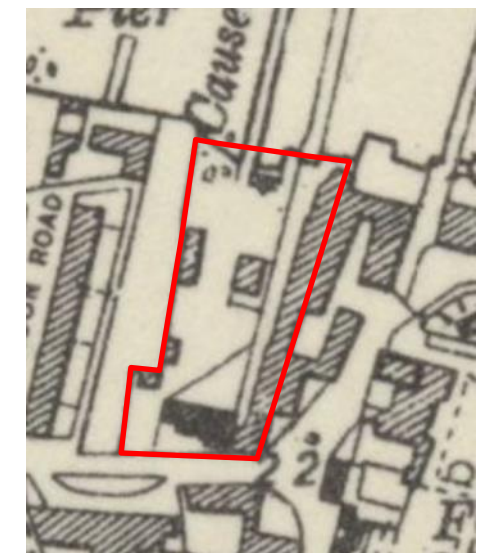
Heritage map 1923



Heritage map 1934



Heritage map 1946



Heritage map 1951

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context



1920 Photographs showing the larger scale bonded warehouses along the sites eastern boundary wall.

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context

Whilst many historic buildings remain and reflect Gravesend rich maritime history, many more have been lost and replaced. The history, value and heritage of some of these buildings has been detailed on the following page in order to explore the application sites links with the historical context of the wider area.



Royal Terrace Pier Est. 1844



The Terrace Tavern Est. 1837



Wates Hotel Est. 1819



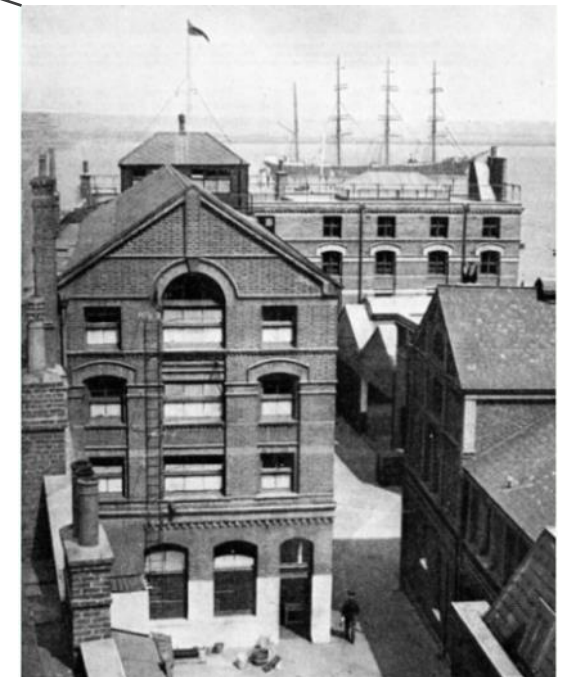
Commercial Hotel Est. 1886



Riverside Promenade



Gravesend Sea School Est. 1918



2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context

Royal Terrace Pier

The Grade II listed Royal Terrace Pier, designed by Architect John Baldry Redman was built in 1844 for use by the steamers of London. The pier was given its Royal title in 1865 following a visit from Princess Alexander. Beyond the original T-platform is a floating pontoon for embarkation approached by steps. It is now used by the Port of London Authority, whose offices straddle the entrance. The offices, built in the 19th Century when the pier became a base for pilots, are also still in use today.



The Terrace Tavern

The Grade II listed tavern was established in 1837 and was a popular Rivermen's venue. It closed as a pub in 2010 and now operates as a corner shop.

Whitehall Place / Cox House

Built early to mid 19th century to provide offices for Customs and Excise operations, Gravesend's original Custom House. The Grade II listed building is 3-storey in height with a double bay. The building has approval for a change of use for 13no. residential units under planning reference 20180651.

New Tavern Fort

Built in 1779/80 for defence purposes. And rebuilt in 1871 by General Gordon to counter a possible invasion by the French.

Heritage Quay / Commercial Site

The area adjacent to the eastern boundary wall of the site which now accommodates 30 residential units, known as Heritage Quay, has perhaps experienced the most significant transformation. The site has an impressive history connected to the importance of the shipping industry with its previous uses detailed below;

- 1819 a large weather boarded structure was erected which was known as the Wates Hotel from 1839 onwards.
- From 1886 (perhaps 1832) onwards the eastern part of this building was known as the Commercial Hotel, closed 1925.
- 1878 Gravesend Rowing Club founded and rented rooms from Commercial Hotel
- 1896 the main building became the Sailors Home
- 1908 First clubhouse built for Rowing Club to east.
- 1918 Sea School built new premises on site.
- 1967 Sea School moved to new premises
- 1975 the building was demolished.



Historic Photo with the Gazebo in the foreground

Milton Chantry Est. 1322

A late 14th century building on the site of a former leper hospital. It was converted to a dwelling at the Reformation, a public house called the New Tavern in the 18th Century and as a barracks and hospital in the 19th Century. It is now Gravesend's heritage centre.

General Gordon and Gordon Promenade

General Gordon came to Gravesham in 1865 at the age of 32, having already being awarded the CB for his contribution in ending the Civil War in China. Gordon was dedicated to helping the local poor and after he lost his life in Khartoum in 1885 he was commemorated with a statue in Gordon's Gardens. In 1910 the Gordon Promenade and Recreation Grounds (now Riverside Leisure Area).

Clarendon Road

The terraced housing was built around the turn of the 20th century and remain today, located to the west of the site.



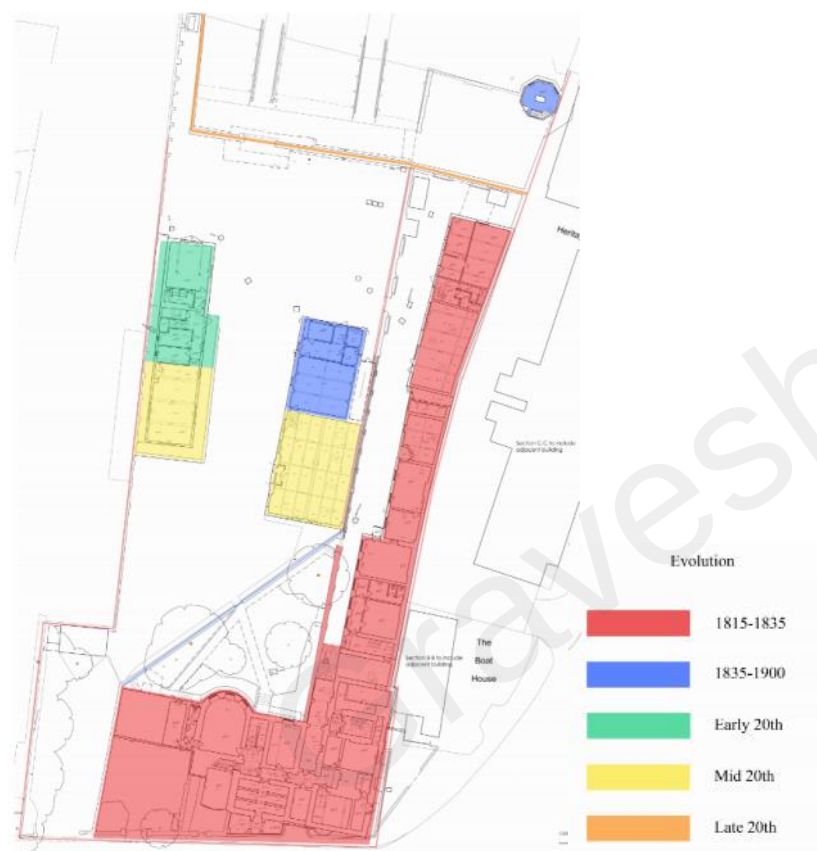
Current Photo with the Gazebo in the foreground

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

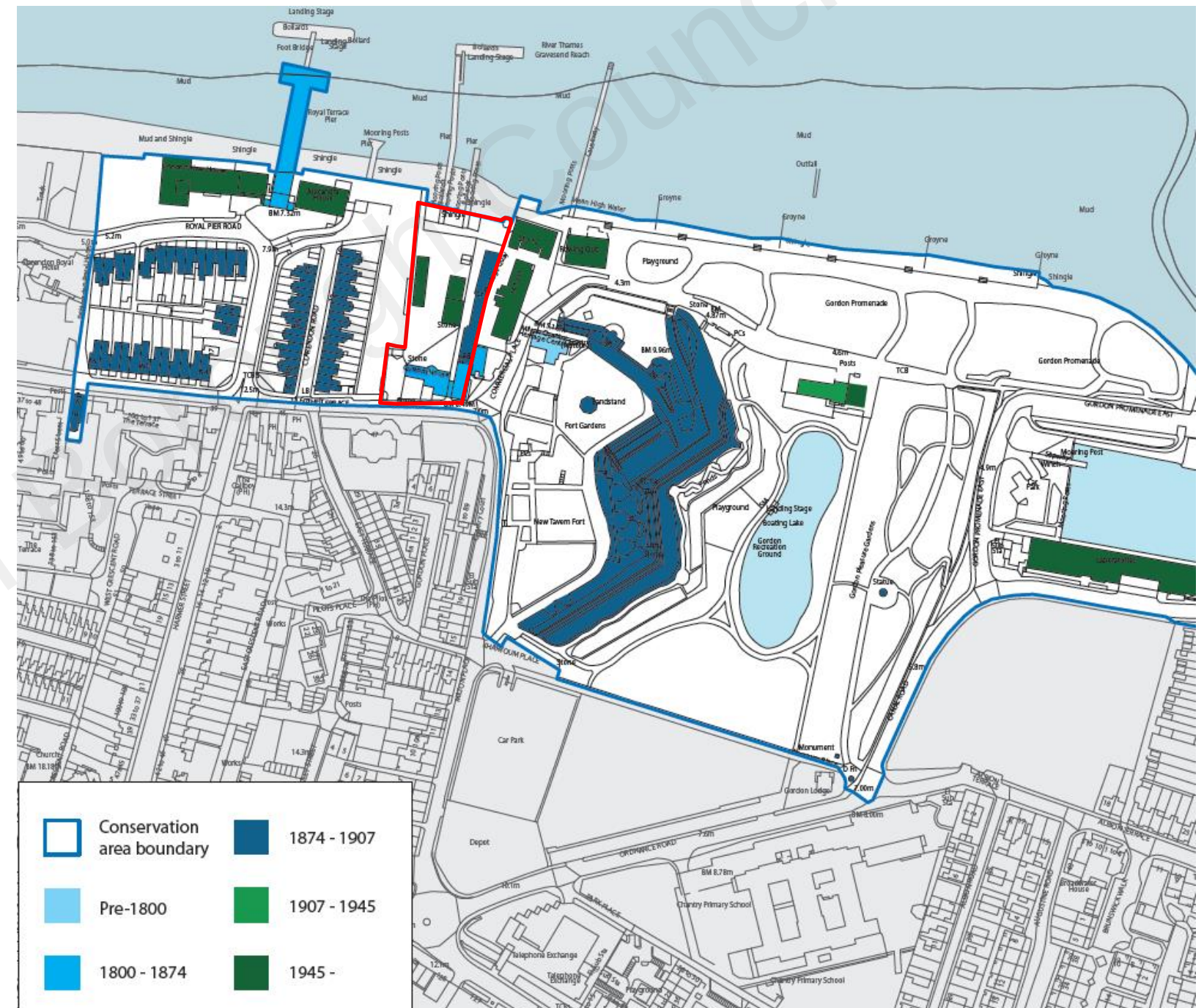
2.4 Historical Context

The Heritage Consultant, Charles Wagner, has produced a series of Evolution and Significance Plans based on information held at the National Archives. This information has formed the basis of the Heritage Strategy and is detailed in full in the Heritage Documents.

It should be noted that the Evolution Plan shown below differs slightly with that produced by GBC, and presented within the Riverside Conservation Document.



Site Evolution Plan



Extract from GBC Gravesend Riverside Document

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context

Significance legend:

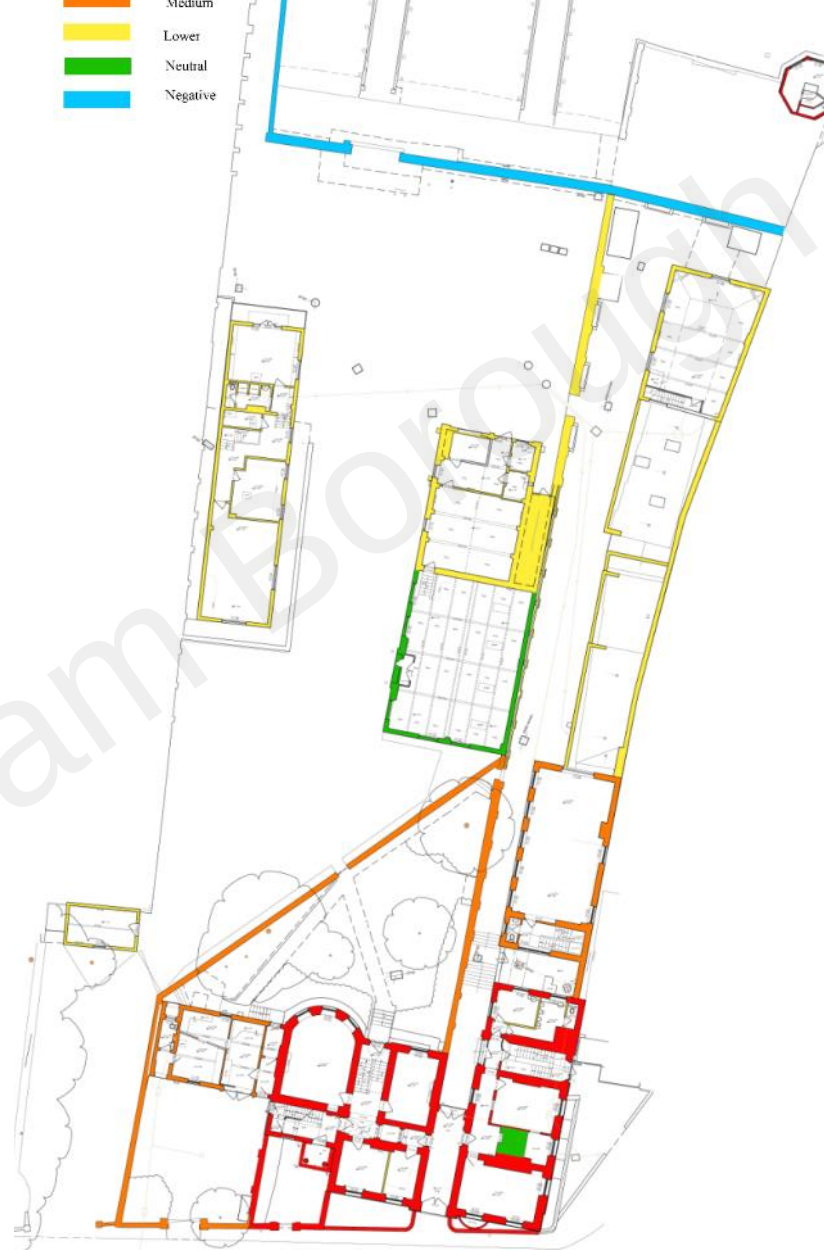
- Higher
- Medium
- Lower
- Neutral
- Negative



Site Significance Plan - Lower Ground Floor

Significance legend:

- Higher
- Medium
- Lower
- Neutral
- Negative



Site Significance Plan - Upper Ground Floor

Significance legend:

- Higher
- Medium
- Lower
- Neutral
- Negative



Site Significance Plan - First Floor

Ex-

2.0 Site Context and Analysis

2.4 Historical Context



Upper Ground Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Significance
Legend:

- Higher
- Medium
- Lower
- Neutral



Lower Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Roof Plan

Custom House Significance Plans

Custom House, Gravesend

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Date: May 21
Revision: -
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