

Milton Place

Gravesend, Kent

Design & Access Statement
February 2025



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REVISIONS

REVISION: P1 DATE: 21.02.25

UPDATES:

The Team

The Applicant



Gravesham Community Investment Partnership (GCIP) is a 50:50 partnership between Gravesham Borough Council and Hill. GCIP's overriding objective is to deliver high quality new homes and reduce the Council's housing register, which is currently at 1,000 households. GCIP seeks to deliver more than just housing through proposed development and is committed to local investment in employment, skills and education, all of which underpin GCIP's ambitions to deliver meaningful social value across the Borough.



The Council is proactively responding to the housing crisis and recently adopted a new Housing Development Strategy that commits to delivering around 1,000 new council-owned homes by 2028/29. The strategy was developed in response to the ever-growing demand for housing in our Borough, and to ensure that the housing needs of residents with a demonstrable connection to the Borough can be met, helping to reduce the number of households on our Housing Register and those that are in temporary accommodation.

The Hill Group is a family-owned, award-winning housebuilder with a strong track record of delivering high-quality homes across London and the South East. Winner of Housebuilder of the Year 2023, the company prides itself on placing the community at the forefront of every project, striving to positively impact the lives of those who live and work around its developments.

“ We have long-held ambitions to build hundreds of new council homes in order to provide real social housing for those with demonstrable roots in Gravesham, thus reducing the number of people on our Housing Register. Working with Hill will greatly accelerate the progress we want to achieve. ”

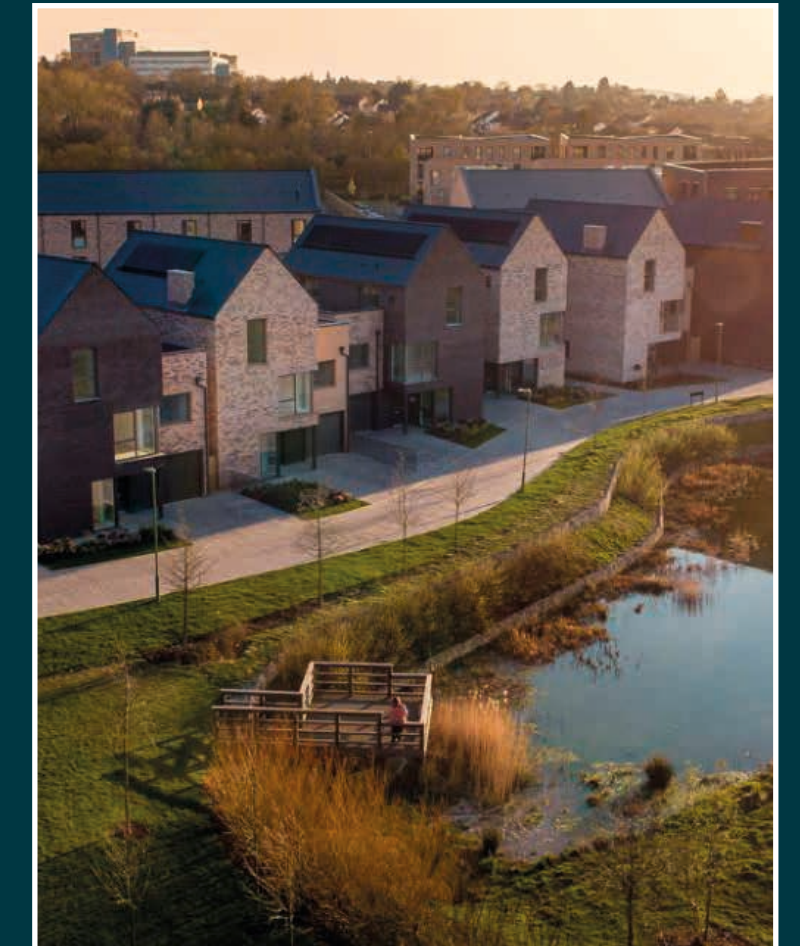
Cllr John Burden
Leader of Gravesham Borough Council

“ We are working closely together to expand the delivery of affordable homes for local communities in the area. ”

Andy Hill
Group Chief Executive of The Hill Group



The Charter, Gravesend - CGI by Leslie Jones Architecture



Mosaics, Cambridge - Hill



Timber Works, Cromwell Road, Cambridge - Hill



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction



Aerial View - The Site & Wider Context

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Purpose of this Document

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by JTP on behalf of Gravesham Community Investment Partnership in support of a detailed planning application. It is submitted to Gravesham Borough Council for the redevelopment of the Milton Place Car Park site. The description of the development is as follows:

Submission of full planning application for the erection of up to 76 new homes, reconfigured parking, associated infrastructure and improved quality of open space.

This Design & Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and other submitted documents, as outlined in the planning statement.

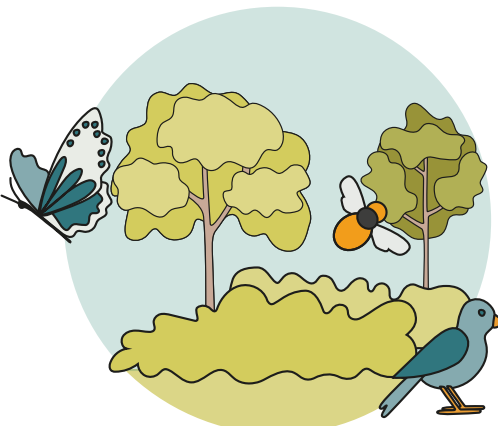
The proposal brings forward several benefits, which are summarised below:



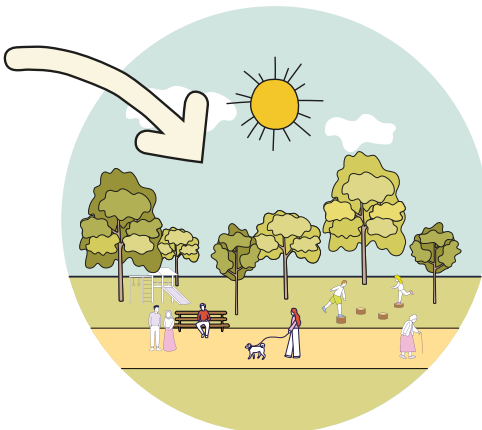
Providing 76 new, high quality homes in a sustainable location.



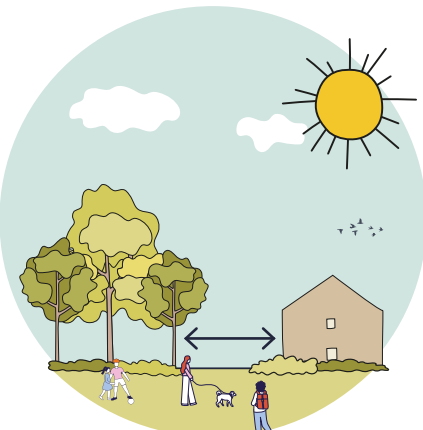
Unlocking unused, inaccessible hard-surfaced land.



Improved landscape and increasing biodiversity.



Enhancing open space through investing in Green Infrastructure.



Parkside living.



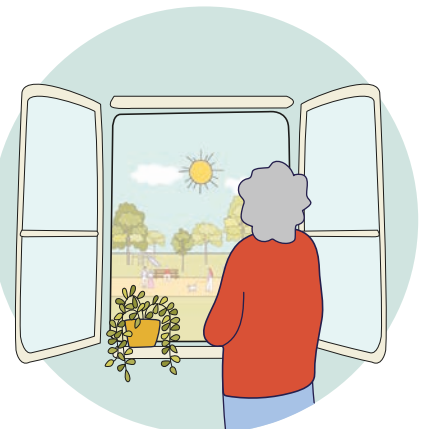
Creation of a community.



Enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes connecting Ordnance Road, Gordon Gardens, Milton Place, and the town centre.



80% Affordable Housing Development



Providing 61 new, high quality Later Living homes.

The Site

THE SITE

Site Location

Town Context

The site is located in Gravesend, a historic market town in Kent, England, near the south bank of the River Thames and approximately 20 miles east of central London. While just outside the defined town centre boundary, the site is situated on its edge, benefiting from its central location and close proximity to the town's amenities and services.

The site is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and public amenities and is within walking distance of Gravesend's town centre, which features a variety of shops, restaurants, and services. The area is well-served by parks and open spaces, such as the Riverside Leisure Area and Windmill Hill Gardens, offering leisure and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Gravesend is renowned for its rich history of maritime trade and its heritage as a key market town, with several areas of historical and architectural significance nearby the site, including designated Conservation Areas. The site is within the Riverside Conservation Area, which includes the Scheduled Monument of New Tavern Fort. It borders the Milton Place Conservation Area and is a short walk from the town centre and High Street, both rich in historical and architectural significance.

To the north of the site and Milton Place Conservation Area lies Chantry Court, a 9-storey mid-20th-century apartment block. Adjacent to the New Tavern Fort, it contrasts notably in scale and architectural style with the surrounding historic fabric.



Aerial View - The Site & Wider Context

THE SITE

Site Location



View West from Gordon Promenade



New Tavern Fort



Gordon Gardens



Chantry Court



9-10 Milton Place



View North along Milton Place



View South along High Street



High Street - North



View North along High Street



High Street Entrance



View North along Windmill Street



Gravesend Clock Tower



THE SITE

The Existing Site

The Site Today

The site features an existing surface level car park to the west, operated by GBC. A former BT depot lies to the southwest comprising mostly of unused concrete paving that is bordered by a number of mature trees that contribute to the green character of the surrounding streets. To the east, the site includes a grassed area, Gravesend Skatepark, and a layby offering additional parking spaces.

To the north lies Gordon Gardens, a public green space providing recreational opportunities for residents and riverside promenade with play space and cafe. This is boarder by a number of mature trees. Nearby facilities include Gravesend High Tower School and Chantry Community Academy. Ordnance Road intersects with Milton Road and serves as a key thoroughfare for the area.



View North-East from Ordnance Road Crossing



View North along Milton Place



View South across Car Park & Site



View of Historic Cannons



View South towards Ordnance Road



View North from Ordnance Road



View of Gravesend Skatepark

Analysis

Gravesend is a town of rich history and culture. With its Thameside location and numerous parks and gardens, it offers a vibrant and dynamic environment, making it an attractive place to live, work, and explore. Gravesend's key characteristics, defining features and assets are summarised below.



The town received a market charter in 1268, establishing it as an important trading and administrative centre. It has historically defended the Thames from invaders, and was destroyed and rebuilt multiple times.



The town's location on the River Thames has been crucial for its development, providing opportunities for trade and transport.



Gravesend is well-connected with transport links, offering services to London and the South Eastern coast of England.



Landmarks include St. George's Church (Pocahontas burial site), Gravesend Clock Tower (for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee) and The Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara (an impressive Sikh Gurdwara).



Gravesend has a diverse community, with a mix of cultures contributing to its vibrant social fabric.



Gravesend has several parks and green spaces, including the Promenade and Windmill Hill Gardens



The riverfront provides scenic views and recreational opportunities, such as boating and riverside walks.



Gravesend's markets and shopping areas reflect its historical role as a trading hub.

Wider Context

Uber Boat Connection to London



The site is well-served by multiple bus routes, with nearby stops on Milton Road connecting it to various parts of Gravesend and surrounding areas. Pedestrian access is strong, with pavements along Ordnance Road and connecting routes providing easy access to the nearby town centre and Water Boat services to London. The site's excellent connectivity enhances its redevelopment potential.

- Key**
- Key Vehicular Routes
 - Bus Stop
 - Pedestrianised Town Centre
 - Gravesend Station & Railway
 - Uber Boat Stop & Connection to London
 - Application Site Boundary

ANALYSIS

Wider Context

Green & Blue Assets



The Site benefits from excellent access to green spaces, including direct adjacency to Gordon Gardens and close proximity to the Riverside Leisure Area and Windmill Hill Gardens. These nearby green spaces add significant value to the site, providing ample opportunities for recreation and enhancing its overall appeal for redevelopment.

- Key
- Accessible Green Space
 - Key Paths
 - Lake/River
 - Application Site Boundary

ANALYSIS

Wider Context

Land Use



The surrounding area encompasses a diverse mix of residential, recreational, educational, and transportation uses. To the west and southwest, the neighbourhood is predominantly residential, characterized by houses and small residential streets. Nearby, key educational and commercial facilities include Gravesend High Tower School to the south, Chantry Community Academy to the southeast, and the Gravesend Telephone Exchange, also to the southeast. The site's strategic location, combined with its proximity to both residential and recreational amenities, underscores its strong potential for redevelopment into a more vibrant and multifaceted urban space.

- Key
- Accessible Green Space
 - Town 'Centre'
 - Residential Area
 - Industrial Area
 - Commercial Area
 - Public/Community Buildings
 - School Site
 - Application Site Boundary

ANALYSIS

Wider Context

Heritage & Conservation Areas



The site lies within the Riverside Conservation Area, which includes New Tavern Fort, a Scheduled Monument. The layout and massing have been carefully designed to ensure minimal harm to these heritage assets.

The proposals have also taken into account the character of the Milton Place area, reflected in the architectural response, with further details provided later in the document.

Key

Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area

Milton Place Conservation Area

Application Site Boundary

ANALYSIS

Heritage

There are eight designated heritage assets within the wider search area that are potentially sensitive to development proposals.

- New Tavern Fort Gravesend Including Milton Chantry Scheduled Monument (1013658);
- New Tavern Fort Grade II* (1261173)
- Gordon House and Milton House Grade II (1089021)
- 14 Milton Place Grade II (1341482)
- Statue of General Gordon Grade II (1367047)
- Riverside, Gravesend Conservation Area
- Milton Place Conservation Area
- Non-designated Heritage Assets: Nos. 2 to 9 Milton Place AND Nos. 11 to 13 Milton Place

Key design constraints to be addressed:

- It is advised that a suitable buffer of open space around New Tavern Fort is maintained;
- As far as possible, key sightlines from existing guns should be preserved;
- Proposed development should avoid intrusion into key aspects of the fort's setting;
- The massing and scale of development should reflect the scale of surrounding development;
- Proposals should be sensitive to and respectful of two the historic townscape and buildings that border the study site.



Key

Study site

New Tavern Scheduled Monument

Gun emplacement sightlines

Adjacent Conservation Areas:

Milton Place

Riverside

Positive View

Neutral View

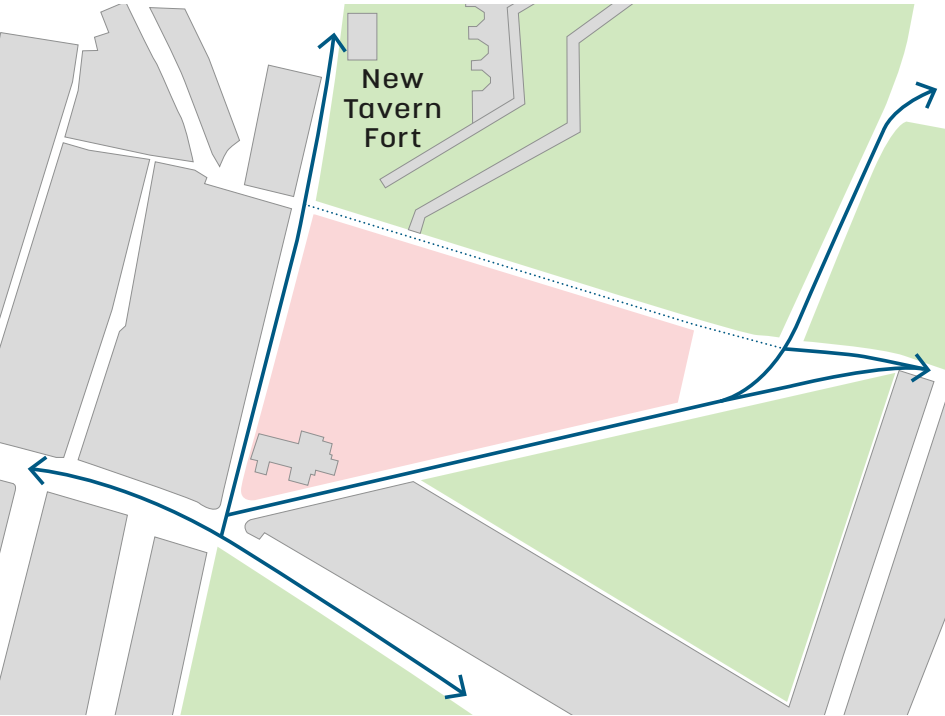


ANALYSIS

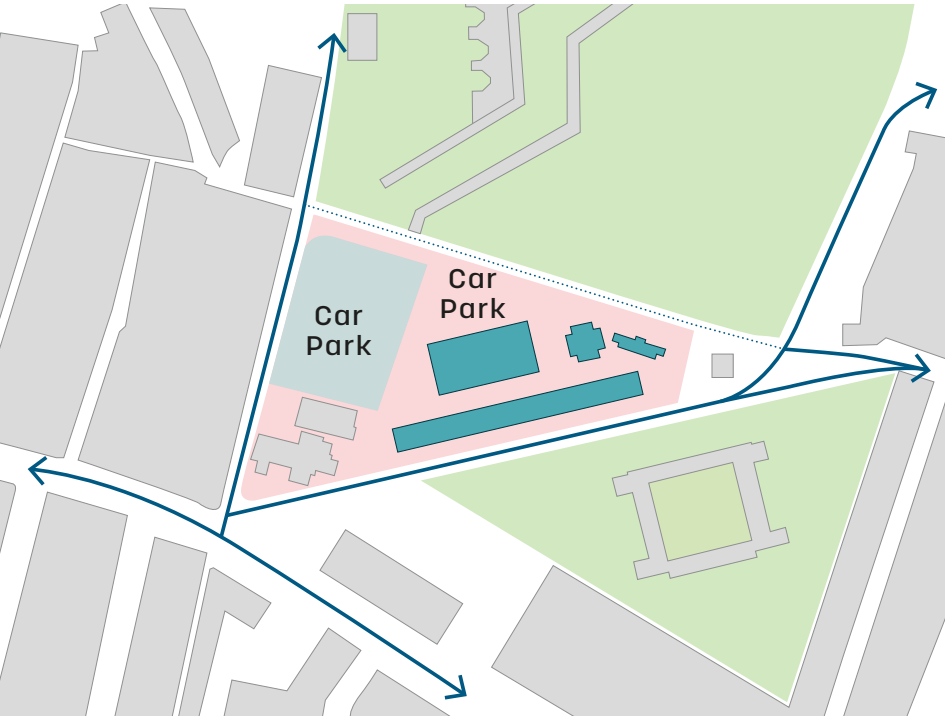
Site History

Site Development

The Site has a history closely tied to the development and evolution of Gravesend. Once part of a bustling area with mixed uses, the site and its surroundings have undergone significant changes over the years:



1870's
Holy Trinity Church was built in 1848 at the junction of Ordnance Road and Milton Road. To the north of the site lies the new Tavern Fort. It is the remains of an 18th century fort situated within the Fort Gardens. It was built in the 1780's to defend the Thames against the threat of a naval attack from France. The fort was extensively rebuilt by General Gordon between 1865 and 1879.



1930's
The Gravesend open-air swimming pool (and associated facilities) was opened with a dedicated parking and access road created off Ordnance Road. In 1962 the Holy Trinity Church of England School burnt down in a fire, and subsequently the Holy Trinity Church was demolished in 1963. These events altered the urban fabric of the site and created opportunities for redevelopment.

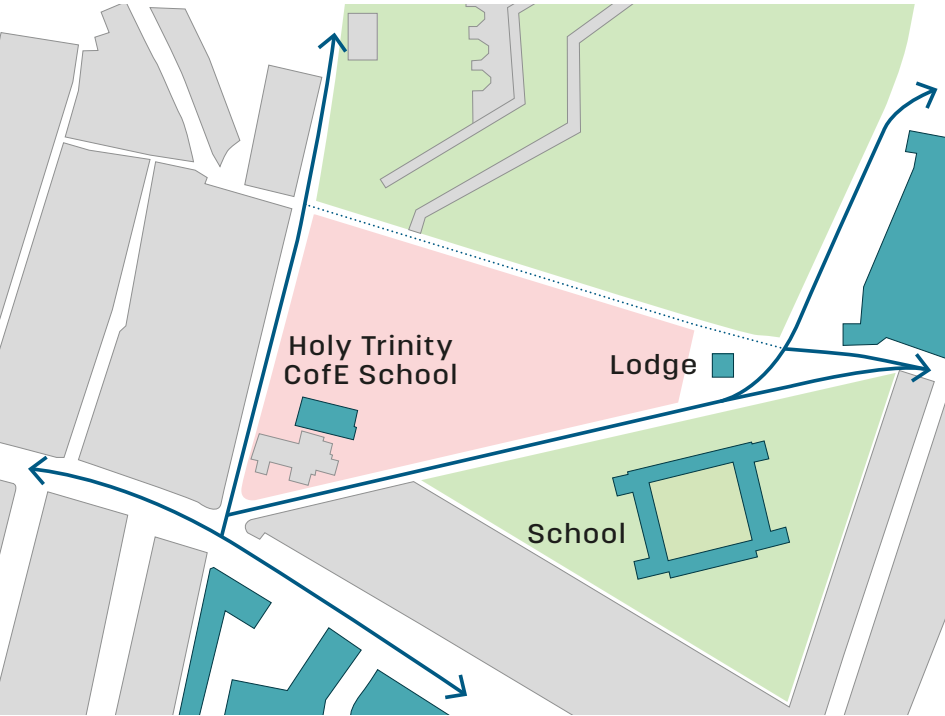
Key

'New' Structure

Existing Structure

Key Local Route

Application Site



1900's
Holy Trinity Church of England School is built just north of Holy Trinity Church. The rest of the site is used as a cricket and football ground. A Lodge house, assumed to be the once residence of General Gordon, was built to the east of the site.



1975-90
The open-air swimming pool on Ordnance Road was eventually closed and later demolished. Following its closure, the site was earmarked for redevelopment, reflecting changing community needs and urban planning priorities.

ANALYSIS

The Site Today

Mapping Historic Buildings on Site

The diagram below identifies the location of former uses on the site. The outdoor swimming pool and associated structures once occupied a significant area, which is now open green space. The church was historically located at the corner, serving as a prominent landmark at the junction of Ordnance Road and Milton Place.

The proposal seeks to restore this focal point at the junction whilst introducing a new active frontage along Ordnance Road, echoing the community presence once provided by the swimming pool.

Key

1 Holy Trinity Church

2 Municipal Bathing Pools & Facilities

3 Gordon Lodge

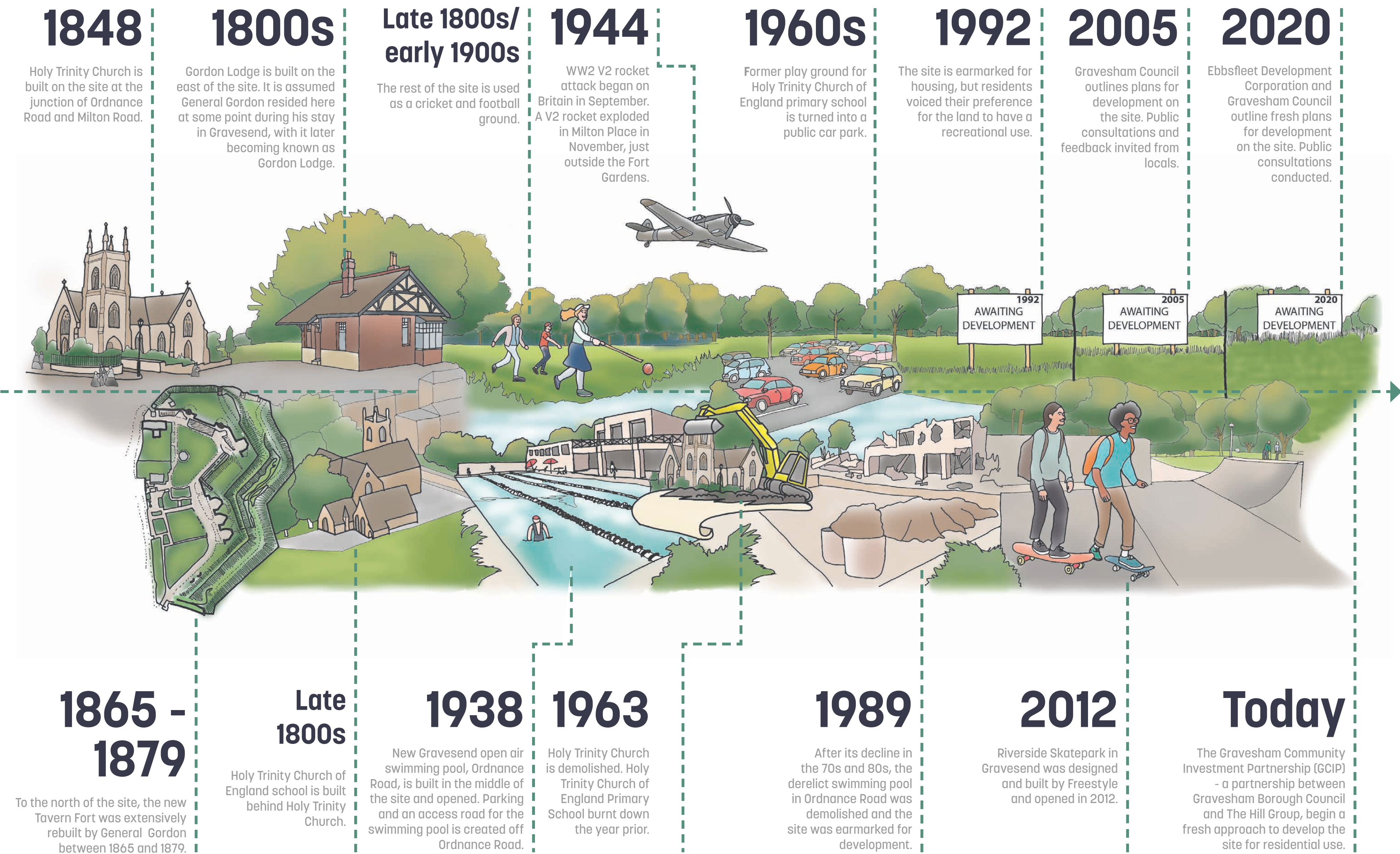
Application Site Boundary



Aerial View - Mapping of Historic Buildings on Site

ANALYSIS

Site Timeline Summary



ANALYSIS

Planning Context

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 2014)

The Site is not directly allocated for any specific use within the Local Plan Core Strategy. It is located within the defined Town Centre and within the urban area of Gravesend. The Site is located within the Riverside Conservation Area and adjacent to the Milton Place Conservation Area. The following policies are of particular note in relation to the development of the Site:

The Site is located within the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area as set out in Policy CS05. The Town Centre is split into sub areas, the Site is within sub area 3.4- East of Town Centre and Riverside Area. The pre-ambles to the Policy includes the following:

- Some areas would benefit from public realm improvements and environmental enhancements for example Milton Road as an eastern gateway to the town
- Sub area 3.4 is largely residential with pockets of land in employment and ground floor retail uses
- Milton Road consists of a number of retail and restaurant uses at ground floor which form a local centre function.
- The area has significant historic interest
- The Riverside Leisure Area is a large open space forming an important part of the Gravesham Green Infrastructure network serving the local area and wider Borough. The area has benefitted from some improvements but there may be further opportunities.

CS05: Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area

Policy CS05 promotes a number of objectives for the Opportunity Area, as follows:

- Seek to improve pedestrian access between the town centre, the River Thames and surrounding areas and reduce the physical barriers created by the one-way system;
- Manage traffic accessing and passing through the area through its approach towards the provision and distribution of public car parks;
- Support improved public transport access, including the provision of an integrated transport interchange at Garrick Street/Barrack Row;
- Support and enhance retail, leisure, entertainment, cultural and tourism provision in accordance with the sequential approach;
- Support the provision of new offices in accordance with the sequential approach, in particular where they have good access to the proposed integrated transport interchange;
- Support the provision of new residential development where a satisfactory living environment can be achieved;
- Support the redevelopment of under-used sites where this makes more efficient use of the sites and improves townscape character; and
- Support existing retail, commercial and service functions on the ground floors and the provision of offices and residential uses on upper floors subject to achieving a satisfactory living environment.

CS12: Green Infrastructure

The Council has previously identified the eastern part of the Site as open space. Policy CS12 seeks the provision of a multifunctional linked network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones to be created, protected, enhanced and maintained. The network is to improve access within the urban area.

CS15: Green Space, Sport and Recreation

States the Council will seek to make adequate provision for and to protect and enhance the quality and accessibility of green space. Provision of open space should be made on site; however, if this is not possible, alternative provision or enhancement of existing facilities will be required off-site.

CS19: Development and Design Principles

Sets out that New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It 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. The design and construction of new development will incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles, and be resilient to the effects of climate change. The Policy establishes a number of criteria which development is required to achieve including:

Using the collaborative approach advocated in Building for Life 12 and in line with the guidance set out in Kent Design, the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account will also be taken of the wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place;

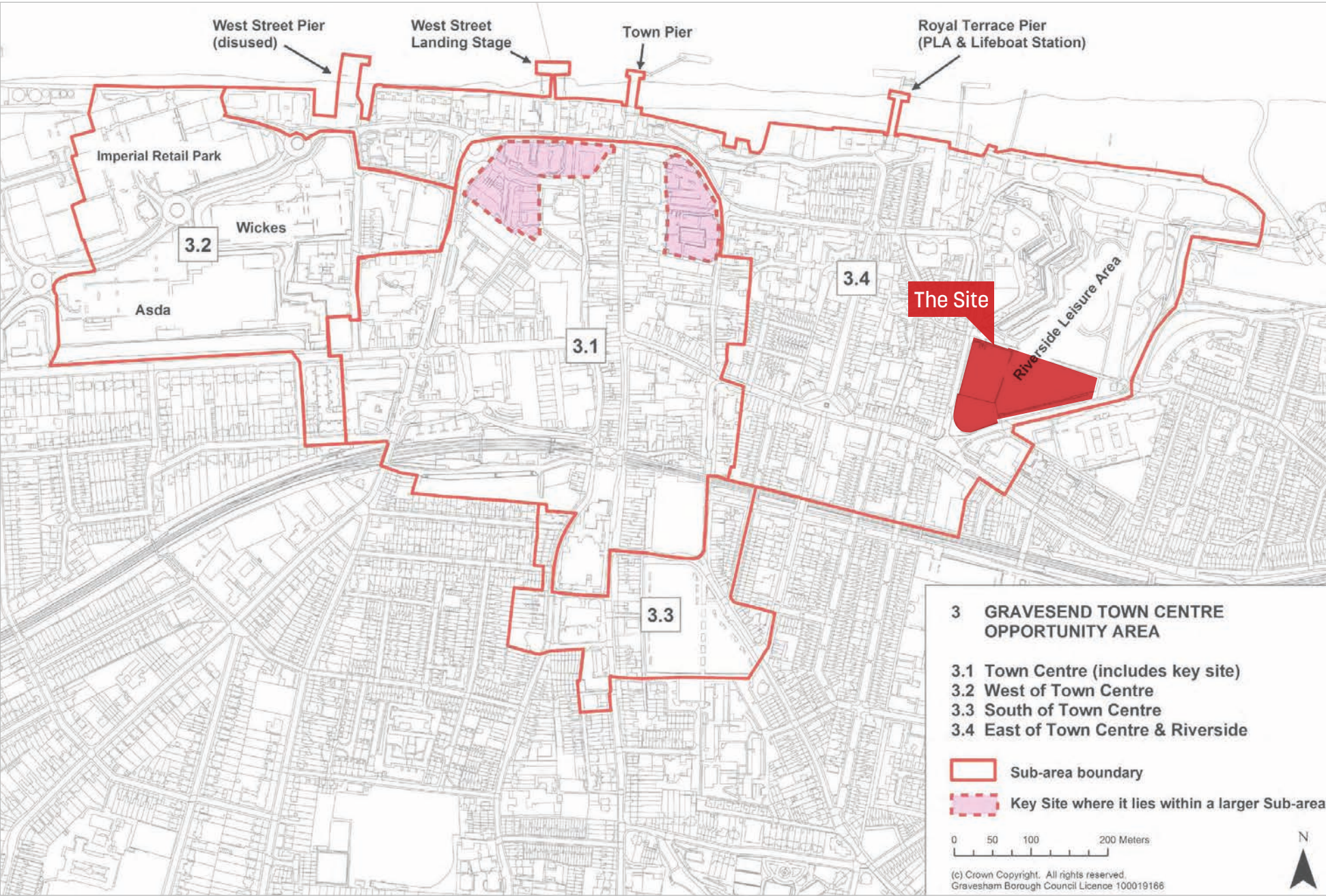
CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment

The Site is located in a historically sensitive area, being within and adjacent to a Conservation Area, in close proximity to Listed Buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Policy CS20 states that the Council will accord high priority to the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

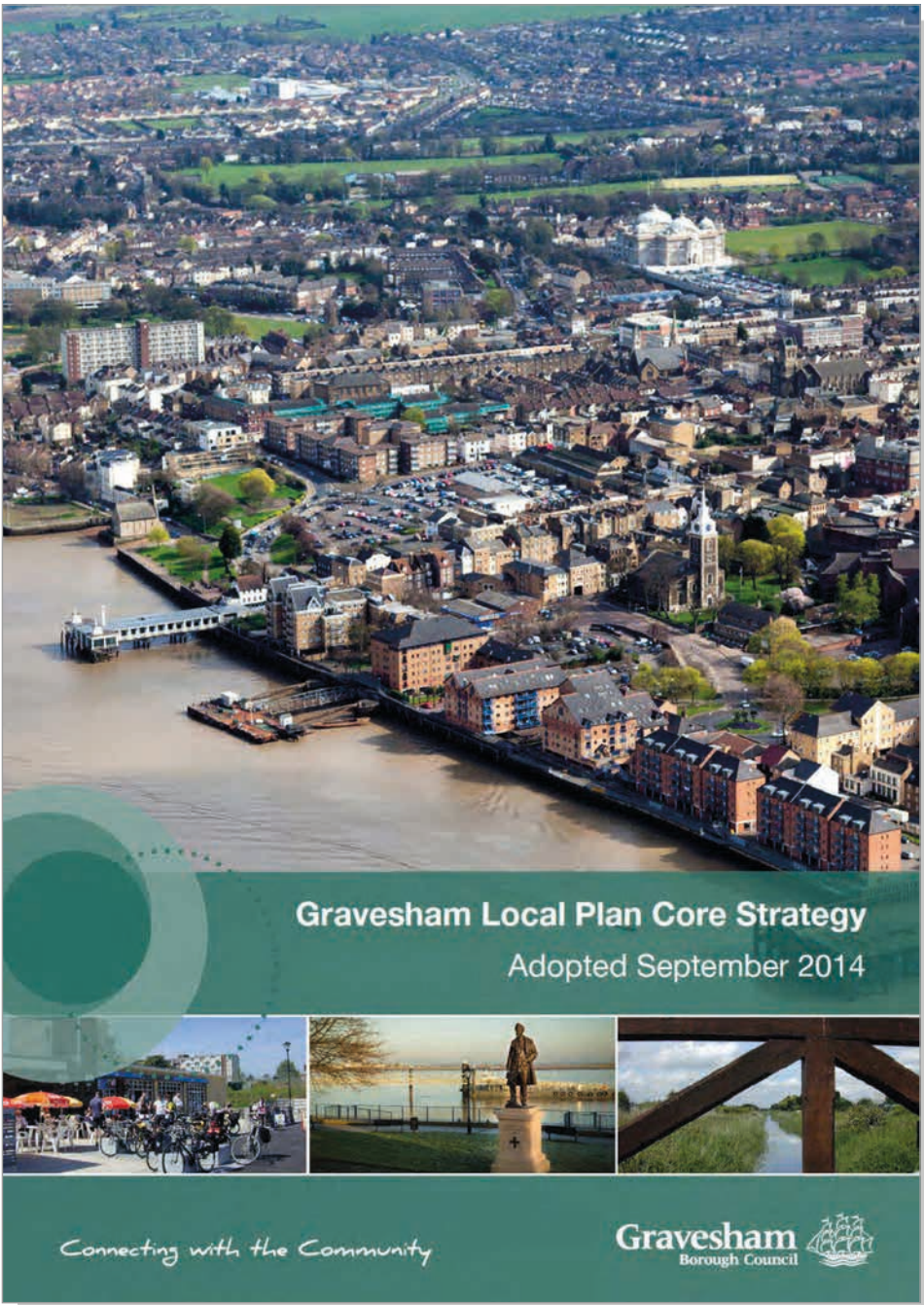
These include:

Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting; The Borough's urban and rural conservation areas; and Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough's maritime, military, industrial and transport history.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset.

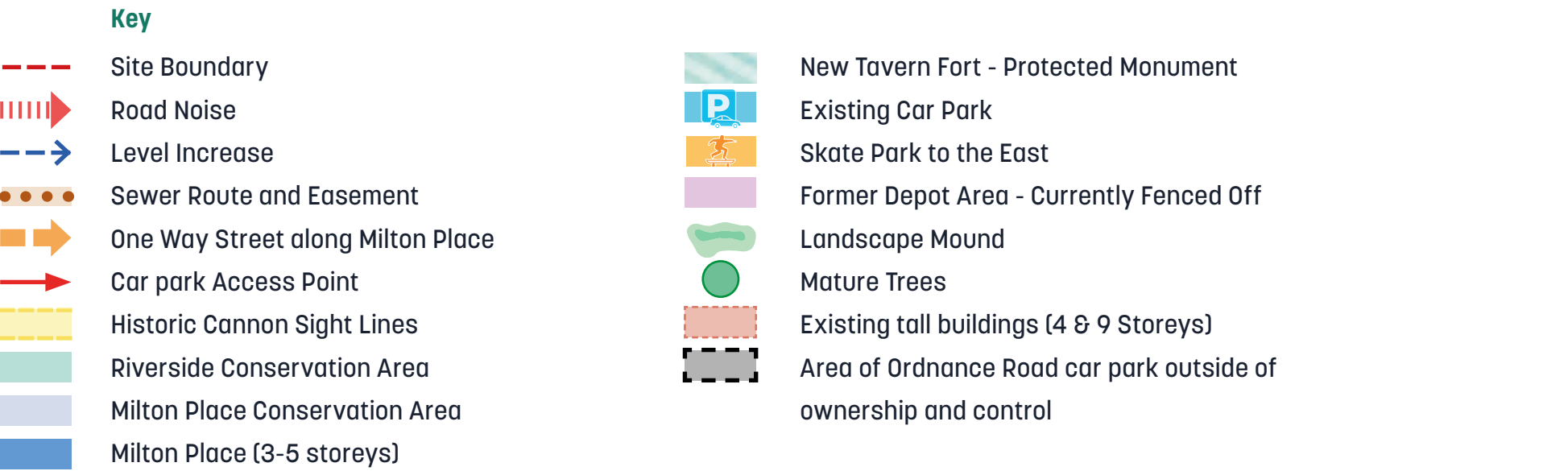


Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area - Extract from Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy



ANALYSIS

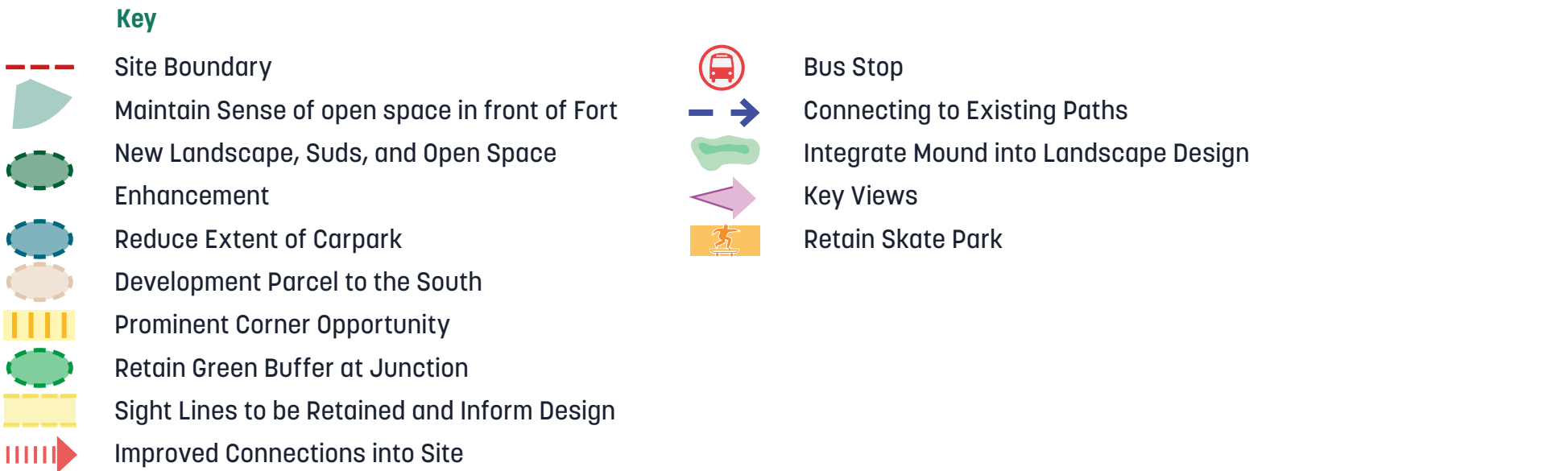
Constraints



Constraints Diagram

SITE ANALYSIS

Opportunities



Opportunities Diagram