

Milton Place

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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This document was prepared on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council based on an extensive survey dated 2007 by:

The Conservation Studio
1 Querns Lane
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1RL

Tel 01285 642428
Email: info@theconservationstudio.co.uk
www.theconservationstudio.co.uk

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1. STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The Milton Place Conservation Area lies to the east of the historic centre of Gravesend in Kent, off the main trunk road to Rochester. Milton Place itself leads north from the junction of Milton Road and Ordnance Road towards Milton Chantry and the New Tavern Fort, major surviving pieces of Gravesend's historic defence heritage by the Thames riverside. The designation includes some of the shopping parades on the busy Milton Road.

Milton Place was laid out in the early 19th century across early footpaths and farmland tracks that surrounded the Gravesend fortifications. It connects with The Terrace, which formed the first eastern expansion of Gravesend in the 1790s and led the way to the creation of the New Town. From the 1820s the Milton Place properties were built as desirable residences with extensive views across the Kent countryside towards Cobham and Gravesend Reach. Some of the houses were initially occupied by pilots who could view their ships at anchor and have easy access to the riverside piers. Milton Place retains many of these fine early and mid 19th century houses with interesting Italianate and classical architectural features and proportions.

East Terrace follows a winding path from Milton Place to the north-west to The Terrace, which connects the New Tavern Fort and central Gravesend. East Terrace features an interesting mix of historic buildings with some modern development inserted between and generally has a tighter built form than Milton Place. Opposite the tall unadorned grade II listed buildings at nos. 1 to 8 stands the

Arts and Crafts style Pilot Public House, a flamboyant corner building. Smaller houses sit further along East Terrace and in Gordon Place, while Cox House (no.47 The Terrace), a former custom house, creates another focal point to the north. At The Terrace the streetscape opens up as the Conservation Area interfaces with its spacious Thames riverside setting.

The combination of tall prestigious buildings and modest terraced houses on varying building lines, and of wide open spaces close to tightly packed urban areas is indicative of the Conservation Area's history as 19th century development at the former rural edge of Gravesend. The mixture of styles and forms creates an exciting architectural juxtaposition that in a few places is let down by buildings that have been heavily altered or less successful 20th century additions to the street scene.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Milton Place Conservation Area

The Milton Place Conservation Area was designated on 1st February 1990 by Gravesham Borough Council. It was extended on 14th February 2001. The Conservation Area's boundary contains the historic residential streets of Milton Place, East Terrace, Cox House (no.47) The Terrace, and part of Milton Road and Wellington Street.

2.2 Purpose of the appraisal

This conservation area appraisal has been written by The Conservation Studio on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council. It was prepared in September 2007 and was followed by a process of community engagement, which informed the content of this document. This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Milton Place Conservation Area merits designation. It identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Borough Council in considering proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments. It will also help property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the Conservation Area.

This conservation area character appraisal, and those for seven other conservation areas in Gravesend, will lead to a Management Plan, setting out policies and actions to conserve and enhance their special architectural and historic interest and to mitigate the effects of negative features. The appraisals and Management Plans

are to be included as background papers in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and, as such, will be a due consideration in the planning process. In due course the appraisals and management plans may also be adopted as separate Supplementary Planning Documents within the LDF.

Preparation of the appraisal involved an extensive survey of the conservation area undertaken in July 2007. The omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2.3 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). Local Planning Authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Local authorities must submit proposals for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration at a public meeting within the relevant area. They must also have regard to any views expressed by people attending the meeting.

Broadly, the effects of designation are:

- Conservation Area Consent must be obtained from the local planning authority or Secretary of State prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions;
- The local planning authority must

consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area when assessing applications for change in conservation areas

- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas;
- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or lop a tree over a certain size.

Further, more detailed information is provided in the Management Plan.

As well as receiving statutory protection, conservation areas are protected by regional, county and local planning policies. Relevant policies include:

- Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) (published March 2001), Key Development Principle No.9; Policy Q2; Policy Q5; Policy Q7; Policy E1.
- Regional Planning Guidance 9a: The Thames Gateway Planning Framework (1995), Paras. 5.4.7 & 5.4.8: Built Heritage, Annex 1: Planning Framework Principles No.13.
- Draft South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) (submitted to Government on 31st March 2006), Section D8 Management of the Built and Historic Environment: Policy BE1; Policy BE2; Policy BE7; Section E4 (Kent Thames Gateway).
- The Kent and Medway Structure Plan (adopted 6th July 2006), Policy QL1: Quality of Development and Design; Policy QL6: Conservation Areas; Policy QL7: Archaeological Sites; Policy QL8: Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance; Policy QL9: Historic Landscape Features; Policy

QL10: Heritage Assets – Enabling Development.

- Gravesham Local Plan First Review (adopted November 1994), Policy TC0, TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6, TC7, TC8, TC9, TC10, TC11, TC12, Policy R3, Proposal PM13, Policy AP3.

Thames Gateway

In addition to the various conservation areas in the town, Gravesend is recognised as being in a Growth Area within the Kent Thames Gateway Sub-region by the Draft South East Plan of the South East Regional Assembly. The various policy documents outlined above have, since RPG9 (1994), recognised Gravesham and Gravesend's important place in the Thames Gateway (incorporating the former East Thames Corridor). RPG9a emphasizes the importance of Gravesham in achieving the Thames Gateway's overall vision (para. 6.8.1) and that future development of industrial sites should "avoid adverse impacts on the historic townscape of Gravesend town centre and its relationship with the River Thames" (para. 6.8.14).

The Thames Gateway is an overarching term for the regeneration of large parts of East London and parts of Essex and Kent, including Gravesend. It was first embarked on as a major planning concept in the 1980s and has developed at various stages since then. The Thames Gateway London Partnership estimates that the expected investment in the whole region will provide 150,000 jobs and 200,000 homes over the next 10 years. The large scale of this scheme will see a great deal of change across the area, including the introduction of new large scale transport infrastructure such as the Channel Tunnel Rail link (with a proposed connection to Gravesend) and major road building schemes

such as the widening of the A2 south of the town.

The policies included in the local and regional guidance as outlined above seek to guide this period of change and the specified policies all recognise the importance of retaining the built as well as natural heritage of Gravesend. This document identifies the special character of Gravesend's built heritage and the accompanying Management Plan will propose how that special character can best be preserved and enhanced in the light of the large scale changes that are currently taking place in the area.

and The Conservation Studio. Subsequently, a four week period of full public consultation was held after which revisions were made to arrive at this final agreed document. A Public Consultation Report is attached to this document as Appendix 3 for information.

2.4 Community involvement

The survey of the Conservation Area has included a process of public consultation to identify the following:

- The special characteristics of Milton Place Conservation Area;
- The key negative features and issues;
- A range of possible actions that would mitigate or offset these detractors.

The consultation began with the notification of key stakeholders in Gravesend at the beginning of the appraisal process. It was followed by the distribution to every property in the conservation areas of an invitation to a public meeting held on 5th September 2007. Leaflets were also displayed in public places. The meeting included a description of the principal and desired outcomes of appraisals and management plans and led into a general discussion. The meeting was attended by various representatives of the Borough Council and local interest groups.

Following the meeting, the outcomes were discussed by Gravesend Borough Council

3. LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

3.1 Location

Gravesend is the administrative capital of the Borough of Gravesham, which contains 25,000 acres of countryside and is generally rural in appearance, containing a number of attractive historic villages. The town lies in north-west Kent, 40 kilometres to the east of central London. Canterbury is approximately 65 kilometres further along the Thames estuary coastline to the southeast and the major A2 and M2 trunk roads link the settlements. Due to the major transport infrastructure in the area, including the M25, M20 and the rail link to the Channel Tunnel, Gravesend is very well connected to other parts of the country and beyond.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit's Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001), commissioned by Kent County Council and English Heritage, and notes that: "The process of 19th and 20th century urbanisation is particularly marked in the northern areas of Kent". The Dartford and Gravesham Conurbation is characterised as "a well defined urban conurbation with some limited marshland and horticulture along its edges".

The Milton Place Conservation Area lies on the edge of the "New Town" of Gravesend: an area to the east of the historic town that was developed in the early 19th century in the neighbouring Parish of Milton. The Conservation Area overlooks the Thames riverside to the north and includes part of Milton Road to the south.

3.2 Activities and uses

Gravesend is a large residential settlement with a substantial commercial centre. Industrial areas border the commercial centre, particularly in the west towards Northfleet. There are also other activities in the town relating to its riverside setting, including those linked to the headquarters of the Port of London Authority and the coastguard station.

The Milton Place Conservation Area is mainly residential, although a business does operate from the former Custom House at no.47 The Terrace and the shops along Milton Road are all in retail or restaurant use. The different uses have a marked effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The residential buildings are largely unaltered since their construction and do not feature any signage. The commercial buildings, however, tend to be considerably modified and feature modern shopfronts and signage. While the residential properties often have cars parked outside or on hardstandings, the commercial frontages along Milton Road are clear due to the traffic restrictions imposed on this major thoroughfare.

3.3 Topography

Gravesend lies on the relatively shallow slopes of the south bank of the River Thames, close to where it widens into the estuary. The land rises steadily from the riverside to The Terrace and there are far reaching views over the Port of London Authority buildings and the broad river to Essex. Milton Place rises more gently from the riverside past Milton Chantry and almost levels off at the southern end of the road.

3.4 Geology and Biodiversity

Gravesend lies on the thick belt of chalk that is the most famous geological trademark of this part of Kent. Otherwise, the geology of Kent is varied and lies on a “crumpled dome” of sedimentary rock which also lies under Sussex and Surrey. The dome’s peak has eroded exposing the rocks below, while the chalk along the edge has been more resilient to erosion and formed the North Downs in Kent and South Downs in Sussex. The area between the two is the Weald, notable for its heavy clays and sandstone outcrops.

Gravesend also lies close to areas of Thanet beds which contain clay and together with the London Clay found on the nearby Hoo Peninsula to the east produced the raw materials for brick making. Therefore, this area supplied the London stock bricks that were used for the intensive building programmes in London and Gravesend in the 19th and 20th centuries.

While chalk is also found locally it is too soft to be used for building large structures, although it supplied the raw materials for lime and, later, cement. Flints, found with chalk, are also evident in parts of Gravesend, and are sometimes used as a walling material. Kentish Ragstone, quarried from neighbouring areas, is also found in the architecture of the town.

There are no formal designations of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Conservation Area or, indeed, in the immediate vicinity of Gravesend, although there is the large South Thames Estuary & Marshes SSSI, which extends to the area a short distance to the east of the town.

Farmland around Gravesend is largely permanent arable and pasture, with some hedgerows that support an abundance of wild

plants and attendant wildlife.

3.5 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings

The immediate surroundings of the Conservation Area are urban townscape, historic fortifications and formal public gardens, and these are largely designated as separate conservation areas.

The following features form the immediate setting of the Conservation Area:

- To the south: Across Milton Road are residential roads laid out in a grid pattern in the 19th century as part of the New Town development;
- To the west: Modern commercial buildings in Bentley Street and the rear of the Harmer Street properties;
- To the north: Some 19th century residential development, the Custom House and the riverside beyond;
- To the east: Surface car park and the New Tavern Fort.

4. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Archaeology

Evidence of prehistoric activity in and around Gravesend is limited to individual finds of items such as Neolithic axe heads and Iron Age coins, although there are indications from recent excavations at Gravesend Hospital that this site was close to an area of prehistoric occupation.

A number of excavations, including those at Gravesend Hospital, have revealed evidence of Roman and Saxon occupation in the area. It is likely that Gravesend has sustained habitation since the early part of the Roman occupation of Britain. The most important and extensive excavation in recent years, at nearby Springhead on the path of the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link, has uncovered the Roman town of Vagniacae, an Iron Age settlement that the Romans occupied in 43 AD. Hoards of Saxon coins and early Saxon pottery have also been found at various locations around the town.

Most of the Milton Place Conservation Area lies within Kent County Council's designated Area of Archaeological Potential in Gravesend, although the southern end of Milton Place is outside of it. No recorded finds have been made here.

4.2 Historical development

The name "Gravesend" is derived from Gravesham, possibly meaning "graaf-ham", the home of the reeve or bailiff of the Lord of the Manor. The Milton Place Conservation Area is located in the parish of Milton, a name of unknown origin but called "Meletune" in The Domesday Book of 1086. Milton was always the smaller neighbour of Gravesham and

with the development of the New Town in the 19th century, the area known as Milton-next-Gravesend changed from being an essentially rural settlement to being part of a greater urban area. The historical development of Gravesend and Milton has been covered in detail in a variety of publications, details of which are included in the Bibliography at the end of this document. A summary of the development of the town is included in Appendix 2.

The principal features of the historical development of the Milton Conservation Area are as follows:

ANGLO-SAXON AND NORMAN (450 – 1200):

- 798AD - Archbishop of Canterbury acquired a large landholding in Northfleet
- Small community established next to Thames centred on a landing place ("hithe").
- 1086 - Reference to the Manors of Gravesham and Meletune (Milton).

MEDIEVAL (1200 – 1485):

- 1189 – Hospital founded on the future site of Milton Chantry.
- 1258 - Richard de Gravesende made Bishop of Lincoln. The change of name from Gravesham was established for the town.
- 1300 - Gravesend had grown into a small market town via its trade on the river and easy supply of supplies from neighbouring agricultural land.
- 1322 - Milton Chantry founded by Aymer de Valence. The chapel still stands a Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area within the New Tavern Fort. It was a religious institution that owned

considerable land in the area, on the outskirts of the fledgling town.

- The town grew under various lordships including the crown, nobility and the Cistercian Abbey of the St Mary Graces in London.
- 1380 - French and Spanish warships attacked Gravesend. Most of the town was destroyed. In recompense Richard II granted the people of Gravesend sole rights to ferry passengers to London giving rise to Gravesend's growth as a maritime centre and trading port.
- Gravesend Watermen operated open barges, the Long Ferry, and transported passengers to and from the Pool of London. Larger, ocean-going vessels continued out along the estuary to the international destinations beyond.
- River related occupations, including, ferrying, victualling, rope and sail making and boat building and repairing, occupied the majority of the town's inhabitants.

TUDOR AND JACOBAN (1485 – 1714):

- 1539/ 40 - Blockhouses erected at Gravesend, Tilbury, Milton and Higham to defend London from attack.
- 1562 - Charter of Incorporation united the two parishes of Milton and Gravesend – the site of Milton Place lies inside Milton Parish.
- 1650 - All landing stages except for the common bridge (Town Pier) removed.
- 1709 - Gravesend to Rochester Road (in part Milton Road) created.
- 1711 - Turnpike Act led to stagecoach route along Milton Road at the top of Milton Place.

GEORGIAN & REGENCY (1714 – 1837):

- Throughout this period Gravesend grew to

the east, but was often destroyed by fires.

- 1726 - 160 houses at Milton.
- 1782 - New Tavern Fort constructed. Custom House constructed. Later to become Whitehall Place and, after partial demolition, is no.47 The Terrace (Cox House).
- 1797 - Gravesend population was 4,000, with 700 houses in nine streets, including The Terrace.
- 1791 – 32 houses called the Terrace built between New Tavern village and the town of Gravesend by James Leigh Joynes.
- 1815 – New house erected on south side of The Terrace on the site of the Old Fountain Public House. Later to be occupied by customs and excise.
- 1815 - First regular service of pleasure steamers from London to Gravesend.
- 1825 – Customs and Excise merged and moved into the former Old Fountain Public House.
- 1828 - Gravesend and Milton Steamboat Company formed.
- 1834 - Blockhouse Fort site sold and developed as Terrace Gardens.
- 1836 - Gravesend Freehold Investment Company formed to create Milton Park Estate, including Harmer Street.
- 1800- 1830 – Houses built along west side of Milton Place.

VICTORIAN (1837-1901):

- 1840 - Harmer Street completed.
- 1842 - Royal Terrace Pier opened. A promenade established along the riverfront along with more piers.
- 1845 - Gravesend and Rochester railway opened.
- 1848 – Holy Trinity Church built at the junction of Milton Place and Ordnance Road.
- 1849 – Level crossing built at Milton Road.

- 1851 - Population of Gravesend and Milton had risen to 16,633.
- 1856 - Metropolitan Board of Works scheme to discharge London sewage onto the Thames at Crossness led to end of Gravesend's status as a resort.
- 1857 – Omnibuses operated between Milton Place and Rosherville Gardens in Northfleet.
- 1850s to 70s – Terrace Pier used as embarkation point for Royal voyages.
- 1865 – General Gordon comes to Gravesend to take charge of the New Tavern Fort.
- 1865 – Holy Trinity School opened.
- 1883- Horse drawn tramway opened between Northfleet and Wellington Street.
- 1884 - The Literary Institution in Harmer Street became a music hall.
- 1893 - Royal Terrace Pier restored.
- 1895 – Customs pier built.

20th / 21st CENTURY:

- The industrialisation of the north shore of the Thames continued into the 20th century.
- In the 20th century Gravesend continued to grow as a small market town with areas of light industry. Much of the industry was occupied with producing building materials for houses.
- 1902 - Electricity installed by Gravesend Town Council and electric trams replace horse drawn trams.
- 1904 - Houses built on Terrace Gardens. Automatic trams run along Milton Road.
- 1914 - Parishes of Gravesend and Milton combined to form the Borough of Gravesend. Double decker buses run along Milton Road.
- 1950s - A large power station constructed at Tilbury.
- As transport links to the city improved,

Gravesend became a commuter settlement.

- 1933 - Grand Theatre at Harmer Street demolished following a fire.
- 1958 - Creation of Inner Ring Road created increased traffic along The Terrace and through Harmer Street.
- 1969 - Town Pier closed. Car ferry discontinued and passenger service moved to West Street Pier. The river lost its relevance to life in the town. The commercial centre shifted from High Street to New Road and King Street. Large shopping malls built in New Road. Businesses and shops continued to operate in Harmer Street and Berkley Crescent.
- 1970s to present - Declining commercial viability of the east end of town.
- 1976 - New pilot station opened on Royal Terrace Pier.
- 1990s – 2000s – Some restoration of properties, notably no.8 Milton Place.

5. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Layout and spaces

Milton Place was not established until the early 19th century, before which it had been part of the open fields of the Milton Manor Estate. It was developed as part of a speculative venture to build a New Town next to the medieval core of Gravesend, and the location benefited from the extensive views across to Gravesend Reach and Milton Church in the east. Milton Place is a link between Milton Road and the New Tavern Fort and is a straight, wide street. Early footpaths that crossed from Milton Place to the neighbouring Bentley Street have mostly been infilled, however, Library Place remains.

The curving path of East Terrace indicates its early origins as a footpath. Buildings have been constructed on it in a piecemeal fashion since the 1820s, and the street provided a route between Milton Place and the piers to the north.

Cox House stands on The Terrace, which was developed earlier than Milton Place (in 1790) on a ledge overlooking the riverside. This broad, straight road connects the fort to the town centre.

Milton Road was laid out at the beginning of the 18th century as a stage coach route on the path of an existing east-west road. It is a wide shopping street that is fairly straight and has no significant open spaces, except at the openings of connecting roads. Behind Milton Road, next to no.2 Milton Place is a gap site that was the location of no.1 Milton Place until the latter half of the 20th century.

5.2 Relationship of Buildings to Spaces

In the Conservation Area the buildings are set out in rows with some gaps between them. The houses are set along a varying building line that includes some front gardens of varying depth. Despite the considerable three storey height of the buildings, Milton Place still has a very spacious appearance created by the width of the street and the presence of deep front gardens. This spaciousness is also created by the lack of any buildings on the eastern side of Milton Place.

By contrast, East Terrace is continuously developed on both sides, with the exception of the openings to Gordon Place and Pilot's Place either side. This built form creates a much more enclosed appearance that is accentuated by the building line which is set at the back of the pavement. The Pilot Public House occupies a key site on the corner of Gordon Place that creates an interesting focal point next to the bend in the road. The terrace that follows on the eastern side of the road, nos. 29 to 43, is set back behind small gardens with iron railings.

Gordon Place is more spaciouly laid out in a cul-de-sac and the opening to the road appears to be very wide due to the hardstandings that have been created at the rear of nos. 15 to 19 Milton Place.

At the northern end of East Terrace, the spaciousness of Milton Place is restored by the breaking up of the dense streetscape with Cox House, the former Custom House, standing detached and with some obscured views across the open land leading down to the river. It sits in a slight depression set back from the road and is surrounded to the rear and sides by a large tarmac area for surface car parking.

5.3 Landmarks, focal points and views

The principal landmarks in the Milton Place Conservation Area are:

- No.47 The Terrace (Cox House);
- The Pilot Public House, East Terrace;
- The Globe (former tavern), Milton Road;

The Conservation Area includes a range of landmark buildings, as identified above. Landmark buildings all make an impression on the streetscape, either through their position as corner buildings (e.g. The Pilot Public House and the former Globe Tavern at the corner of Milton Road/Milton Place) or their different building form to their neighbours (e.g. Cox House).

There are a number of good quality 19th century terraces in the Conservation Area lining the roads that form key features because of their cohesiveness. These include nos. 2 to 8, nos. 9,10 & 10a (known as Milton House) and nos. 15 to 19 Milton Place, as well as nos. 1 to 8 East Terrace and nos. 29 to 41 East Terrace.

The principal positive views are:

- Along Milton Place in both directions;
- Along the north/east side of East Terrace in both directions;
- The Pilot Public House from the south;
- Into New Tavern Fort;
- North from East Terrace to Custom House and the River Thames;
- North from Gordon Place across the river to Tilbury.

There are also extensive views the across the public car park to the New Tavern Fort gardens and Gordon Recreation Ground.

5.4 Trees, boundaries and planting

There are a number of mature trees at the southern end of Milton Place. They help give a sense of enclosure to the eastern side of the entrance to the road, which was lost when the Holy Trinity Church (built in 1848) and School buildings that once stood there were demolished in the 1960s. There are no other significant trees in the Conservation Area, although the abundant tree cover in the New Tavern Fort, around the neighbouring car park and along Khartoum Place, provides a leafy backdrop to Milton Place. Also, a number of trees stand outside the Conservation Area beside Custom House on The Terrace and to the east of Cox House.

Many of the houses along Milton Place have front gardens bordered by dwarf walls and railings. Front gardens are generally given over to hardstandings for the parking of vehicles and this has resulted in the loss of potentially attractive planting, as well as some walling and railings. The plot size of the front gardens generally diminishes as Milton Place progresses north. Nos.29 to 41 are the only properties that have front gardens in East Terrace and these are very narrow and lined with iron railings. Cox House has a well stocked frontage with iron railings and low walling while the Milton Road shops sit directly on the pavement edge.

6. STREETScape

6.1 Public realm

Pavements

The pavements in the Milton Place Conservation Area contain a mixture of traditional and modern urban treatments and the traditional relationship of raised pavement to road surface has been maintained in terms of levels.

While Milton Road has standard modern concrete pavements and kerbing, the southern end of Milton Place has been refurbished with new buff coloured concrete slabs and narrow (200mm) concrete “conservation” kerbs. The pavement has been widened alongside no.4 Milton Place to create a narrow section of roadway that has a speed table. Here, the pavement is covered in yellow tactile paving and slopes down to road level to create a pedestrian crossover. On the west side of the road the refurbishment ends here and the continuing pavement is grey concrete pavements with concrete kerbing. On the eastern side the buff paving continues to the corner of Khartoum Place, although a large section next to the surface car park is tarmac.

East Terrace, Gordon Place and The Terrace have tarmac or concrete pavements with concrete kerbing. The pavements in the Conservation Area are generally well maintained.

Street furniture, signage and other features
There is no street furniture (waste bins, benches, etcetera) in the Conservation Area except for some steel railings and concrete bollards around the pedestrian crossing at Milton Road. There is also very little highway signage. The most prominent signs are the

large round “no entry” signs fixed to blue painted freestanding poles at Milton Place close to the junction with East Terrace. There are also some directional signs for pedestrians at this location.

Street lighting

The street lamps in the Conservation Area vary in design, but are all from the late 20th century. These include tall standards with “hockey stick” style lamps in Milton Place and Milton Road, with smaller examples in East Terrace. All are set in the pavement rather than being wall mounted.

Pedestrian movement and footpaths
Access along the pavements is good in the Conservation Area. There are also additional footpaths at Library Place, Khartoum Place and through the New Tavern Fort. Pedestrian movement across Milton Place is facilitated by a traffic calming measure outside no.4.

Traffic and parking

Milton Place is only open to one-way traffic entering from the south and due to the majority of traffic being routed along the Inner Ring Road to the west, the traffic is not frequent. Parking is restricted by double yellow lines along Milton Place, and cars are parked in front gardens or in the spaces provided outside the gates to the New Tavern Fort. A large public car park is also located next to Milton Place.

While two-way traffic is permitted along East Terrace, it is a narrow road and parking is only allowed on the north-eastern side. The cars belonging to residents in Gordon Place are housed in modern garages built in the northern corner of the road. Milton Road is a busy through route, contrasting greatly with

the northern parts of the Conservation Area.
Parking is also restricted here.

7. THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

7.1 Building types

The historic buildings in the Conservation Area mainly have their origins in the early 19th century. They were built to different designs over a number of years as part of the mainly residential Milton New Town Development, although there are rows of commercial buildings along Milton Road. The houses along Milton Road were originally built as dwellings and it was only in the latter part of the 19th century that the ground floors were converted into shops and shopfronts inserted.

The residential development along Milton Place and the southern end of East Terrace are architecturally more prestigious buildings aimed at the aspirational middle classes. They are adjoined by modest, mostly two-up-two down terraces along East Terrace, Bentley Street and Gordon Place. Nos. 10 and 10a Milton Place were originally one house that was used in its early days as Library and Reading Rooms, but by the second half of the 19th century it was adapted to become two dwellings.

The oldest building in the area, Cox House (no. 47 The Terrace), dates from 1782 and was originally a customs house. Its age and function account for the difference in building form compared with the residential development adjoining to the south - unlike the other buildings in the Conservation Area it is detached and has a bulky scale with large canted bays. After having previously served civic functions related to Gravesend's maritime role, Cox House is now in commercial use. It ceased to be a Custom house when the service combined with the Excise service and moved to their large

building across the road.

No.1 Wellington Street is a surviving small service or industrial building that is now in commercial use. The dainty cast iron windows, cornice and fanlight above its first floor door are intriguing additions to this modestly sized building which could have served as a stables or workshop servicing the stagecoach route than ran close by.

The Conservation Area also features two public houses, both constructed on corner sites and are three storey buildings. The Globe Tavern has been converted to commercial use and lost much of its individual tavern appearance through the insertion of a ground floor shopfront and the loss of traditional signage. The Pilot, on the other hand, is still full of its late 19th century pomp, retaining its timber windows, vibrant decoration and pub signage.

7.2 Building form

The buildings of Milton Place are grouped in short rows set on different building alignments, although they are all three storeys. Most houses are set behind front gardens, some of which are very deep, and these elegant buildings have a simple and regular arrangement of window openings and doors. Their front elevations occasionally have architectural features such as stucco rustication and window surrounds or simple wrought iron balconies.

In East Terrace the terraced houses follow a common building line and are a mixture of two and three storeys in height. Only the smaller houses at nos. 29 to 41 have front gardens and these are very narrow.

To the north, the part of The Terrace within the Conservation Area boundary only contains the three storey detached 18th century Cox House.

Milton Road contains shopping parades on a continual building line at the back of the pavement. They are in blocks of two and three storey buildings (occasionally with attic floors) and have mostly modern shopfronts on the ground floor. In Wellington Street, no.1 rises to a low two storey with a wide single storey attached structure on its northern elevation.

7.3 Listed buildings

Many of the buildings in the Milton Place Conservation Area are grade II listed, although some of the terraces are included on the statutory list as a single entry only.

Nos. 10 and 10a, known as Milton House, were built in the early 19th century. No. 9 was added around 1826 when a Library and Reading Room, the so-called Penny's Library, named after its owner William Penny, was established in the house. The buildings have since been altered and subdivided to form three separate residential dwellings. The building retains much of its early 19th century elegance with regularly placed sash windows over three floors and a wooden eaves cornice. Round headed windows, a common feature of Gravesend New Town, also survive and complement the doorcase and rendered porches that project into the front gardens.

Nos. 15 to 19 are of similar proportions and appearance and also feature wrought iron balconies and mansard roofs. They form a cohesive group with intact front gardens and boundary treatments of iron railings and low walling. The only interruption to the row's flat façade is the canted ground floor bay that has

been inserted into no. 18.

No.14 Milton Place adjoins nos. 1 to 8 East Terrace and has details, such as cement fluted pilasters and ground floor render, that set it apart from the neighbouring buildings in Milton Place. It is also set on the back of the pavement in alignment with the East Terrace properties. Nos. 1 to 8 East Terrace are built of the same brown brick, although no.4 has a pebbledash coat. The terrace has a steady rhythm with front doors opening directly onto the pavement followed by sash windows over three storeys. They feature very few details except red brick round arches over the doors and red brick flat arches over the windows.

The oldest house within the Conservation Area, the original late 18th century Customs House, later to become Whitehall Place and today known as Cox House (47 The Terrace) is a Grade II listed building. It is listed under the name of Uralite House at Whitehall Place.

7.4 Locally listed buildings

Government advice is that the preparation of a List of Locally Significant Buildings is a useful planning tool. "Locally Listed" buildings are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for their local historic associations, but are not considered to be of national importance, so they are usually not eligible for statutory listing. Policies to control them can be included in the Local Development Framework.

Gravesham Council does not currently maintain a formal list of locally significant buildings (usually called the 'Local List') either in Gravesend or elsewhere, although all buildings that were identified in the 1974 Listed Buildings Survey for their architectural or historic interest, but were not awarded

a listing status, have been treated as 'Buildings of Local Interest' ever since when considering planning applications. Following the importance the Government places in its Heritage White Paper on the compilation of Lists of Buildings of Local Interest, Gravesham Borough Council's list will be reviewed in due course.

The Management Proposals for the Gravesend conservation areas contain a list of buildings which might be considered for inclusion in a Local List, once the Council have approved the criteria to be used for selection. All of them are considered to be key unlisted buildings.

7.5 Key unlisted buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified as being buildings of townscape merit. Buildings identified as having 'townscape merit' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded. Key unlisted buildings include:

- Nos. 29 to 41 East Terrace;
- Nos. 2 to 9 Milton Place;
- Nos. 11 to 13 Milton Place;
- No.28 to 31 Milton Road;
- The former Globe Public House, Milton Road;
- Nos. 130 to 132 Milton Road;
- Nos. 1a and 1b Wellington Street.

Government guidance in PPG15 'Planning and the historic environment' advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area (paragraph 4.27). The guidance note states that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

7.6 Building Materials

The historic buildings of Milton Place, East Terrace and Milton Road have been built using mainly local materials, particularly red and yellow stock brick. Some key buildings close by, however, have used other materials such as stone and flint (Milton Chantry). The most common roofing material is Welsh slate and all the buildings have retained this roof treatment along Milton Place.

Gravesend was at the centre of some innovation in construction techniques in the 19th century, including the claimed invention of Portland cement. Many cement works and chalk pits were established in the area and therefore there was no shortage of supplies at this time. Many buildings along Milton Place feature an external render coat or architectural details that use this material.

7.7 Local details

Some of the details on buildings in the Conservation Area are particularly distinctive. These include:

- The use of yellow stock brick;
- Unadorned frontages of most of the terraces;
- Classical proportions of the more prestigious buildings;

- Italianate and classical architectural features of the buildings along Milton Place;
- Deep front gardens on Milton Place;
- Wrought iron balconies and railings;
- Sash windows, including sashes with round heads on the ground floor;
- Architectural features executed in cement render (e.g. no. 14 Milton Place);
- Gauged red brick window arches;
- Stucco architraves with keystones;
- Cast iron windows (1 Wellington Street).

8. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Milton Place Conservation Area has a great deal of historic and architectural character and is a symbol of the growing prosperity of the town as it expanded at the end of the 18th century. The combination of many different architectural features and subtle differences in the building form creates a unique character that gives the impression that it has grown in a very organic manner. Although the New Town was a planned development, Milton Place and East Terrace have a rich diversity and individuality that are essential to the Conservation Area's character.

The variations in architecture are accompanied by the loss of certain key buildings in the area. No.1 Milton Place is now an overgrown gap site that is not an attractive gateway to the Conservation Area and the side elevation of no.2 is untidy. Opposite, the site of the former Trinity Church is undeveloped, and this gap weakens the entrance to Milton Place further. As the rows of houses progress north, they increasingly impose themselves on the street, as the front gardens become smaller until no.14 towers directly over the corner of East Terrace.

The open character of Milton Place is replaced with a relatively enclosed one in East Terrace as the tall buildings wind northwards. The entrance from Milton Place has the appearance of a heavily built up town centre street, whereas the approach from the north is quite different. The open space around former Custom House (Cox House) and the modest size of the dainty row of terraced houses at nos. 29 to 41 East Terrace give the north of the Conservation Area a sense of spaciousness similar to the one of the south of Milton Place. East Terrace has a range of three storey 19th century buildings on the

south-west side, but these have been much more altered than those in Milton Place and are generally less attractive than the terrace opposite them. The modern block of flats on the corner of Pilot's Place/ East Terrace and Chantry Court have a resolutely modern appearance and are a reminder of 20th century town development that saw many of the dwellings of the smaller residential streets in Gravesend replaced with higher density housing. While the Pilot's Place block respects the building line at the edge of the pavement, its building form including an overbearing mansard roof and a bland front elevation is at odds with the appearance of the rest of the street.

Milton Road in the south has a modern urban character although there are some early 19th century buildings remaining there. The busy road has for the most part modern shopfronts and signage on the ground floor of buildings, as well as modern infill buildings.

Milton Place Conservation Area has a very mixed appearance and this, combined with a rich and varied historic fabric creates an unusual and special 19th century character.

The principal features of the built form are:

- Urban and suburban character;
- Cohesive qualities of three storey terraced Georgian buildings, dating from 1800 – 40, with later 19th century and early 20th century infill;
- Landmark 18th century Custom House (Cox House) to the north;
- Groups of two-up-two-down terraced houses (East Terrace, Bentley Street), dating from the early 19th century;
- Mainly a "domestic" scale of building on narrow plots;
- Shallow pitched roofs covered in slate;

- Primary use of yellow stock brick, which is sometimes rendered or painted;
- Simple rectangular shapes, with modern shopfronts along Milton Road;
- Sash windows, retaining their original glazing pattern and divided into small panes, giving a predominantly vertical emphasis.

Negative features/issues:

- Poor design and modern materials of many shopfronts and shop signs; cluttered shop frontages and garish window displays (Milton Road);
- Poorly maintained shopfronts and frontages of nos. 130-132 Milton Road ;
- Loss of architectural features, notably some cast iron balconettes on first floor of buildings;
- Unsympathetic replacement of timber windows with uPVC, notably at Cox House, 29a Bentley Street and others
- Alterations to window openings (nos.16 to 20 East Terrace);
- Speed and volume of traffic along Milton Road.
- Impact of overlarge residential developments on the edge of the Conservation Area (i.e. Chantry Court);
- Large tarmac area for car parking surrounding the former Custom House (Cox House);
- Large car park next to Milton Place, lack of sense of enclosure at the southern end of Milton Place;
- Some unsympathetic 20th century development: nos. 22 and 27 Milton Road, extension no.13 Milton Place.

9. ISSUES

9.1 Definition of Issues

The following 'Issues' have been identified by the appraisal process (via extensive survey work) and have been modified to include the views of the local community as part of the public consultation exercise, including a public meeting and four week period of consultation. They provide the basis for the Site Specific Actions in the management proposals for the eight Gravesend town centre Conservation Areas (see Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas: Management Plan, February 2008). These issues will be subject to regular review by the Council and new ones may be added in the future.

9.2 Conservation area boundary review

It is suggested that there is little scope for extension of the boundary of the Milton Place Conservation Area as the designation already covers most of the special architectural or historic interest related to this early 19th century development.

9.3 Education and information

Active measures for promoting better understanding of Gravesend and its place in history underpin the regeneration of the town by drawing in external interest and resources.

Gravesham Borough Council has recently published a number of guides in order to help promote this understanding and to encourage an improvement in standards in the borough's conservation areas. These include guidance on the design of shopfronts.

9.4 Alterations to buildings and shopfronts

There is a strong case for the continued maintenance of the comprehensive scheme that has regenerated the public realm, buildings and shopfronts of Gravesend and to extending it further. Milton Place has already benefited from regeneration efforts from the Borough Council and future maintenance and enhancement needs to be considered carefully.

It is evident that well-intentioned, but unsympathetic changes, especially to doors, windows and roofs, have begun to have a cumulative effect that is damaging to the character of the conservation area. In the Milton Place Conservation Area there is an Article 4 Direction in place which has brought many of those small incremental changes under the remit of the planning system. It enables the authority to give proper care and thought to any proposed alteration and to suggest less damaging ways where appropriate.

Most of the buildings along Milton Road are in commercial use and the greatest threat to their character is the introduction of unsuitable shopfronts and shop signage. These changes are already controlled by the existing requirements for planning permission, but it seems that, unfortunately, many unsuitable shopfronts have been inserted before designation took place.

9.5 Uses/ vitality

Milton Place is a quiet residential area that benefits from not being on the Inner Ring Road. Due to its proximity to the town centre it is well served by shops, although none of the major stores operate at this end of the town. The units along Milton Road are a variety of

shops including small food outlets; however, there were at least two units vacant at the time of survey.

A major part of the vitality of the Conservation Area is provided by its proximity to the New Tavern Fort to the north. This large open space is an important amenity for the area and provides a green backdrop. The river is also close by, although the activity around Custom House and piers is carried out at a sedate pace.

9.6 Enforcement

During the survey work for the Character Appraisal, a number of sites or buildings were identified where works have taken place that may not have been authorised. These include visible satellite dishes and modern windows or doors and they include alterations to listed buildings.

9.7 Locally Listed buildings

There is no adopted comprehensive Local List for Gravesend (nor indeed, for Gravesham Borough generally) and the identification of buildings or structures for a Local List is considered to be a priority, once the criteria have been agreed. Any Local List should be drawn up with the full consultation of the local community.

9.8 Highways and traffic

The traffic regulation through the Conservation Area and elsewhere, and the strict parking controls, has had beneficial effects on the character of the area. However, the parking restrictions have led to many front and rear gardens being converted to hardstandings. This has had a considerable impact on the character of the Milton Place

Conservation Area through the loss of the shrubs and flower beds in front gardens and the loss of garden walls and railings.

9.9 Enhancement potential

Milton Place is a good example of how the injection of funding into an area can greatly improve its appearance and character. While many improvements have been made to Milton Place, particularly by private owners and sometimes with the help of local authority grant aids, there is still the potential for further enhancement to the appearance of the area. Details are discussed in the Management Plan.

Features whose improvement would strengthen the character of the area are:

- The former Globe Public House;
- Gap site next to no.2 Milton Place;
- The car park on the east side of Milton Place;
- The junction of Milton Place and Milton Road.

9.10 Trees

Trees make an important contribution to the character of Milton Place, but are less significant elsewhere. A tree strategy that considered issues of amenity, practicality and, importantly, succession planning would reduce the need to take ad hoc decisions on a case-by-case basis.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 History of Gravesend

Appendix 2 Townscape Appraisal Map
Age of Buildings Map
Designations Map
Designated Boundary Map 09.02.09

The earliest written recording of a settlement here is a reference to Gravesham in The Domesday Book of 1086. The name most likely means “graaf-ham”, the home of the reeve or bailiff of the Lord of the Manor. The Book refers to Gravesham being in the ownership of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (the brother of William I) although it notes that the Manor had been split into three under the ownership of three Saxon thanes (or lords) before 1066. The Saxon settlement had grown around the Old Dover Road where the Saxon Parish Church of St Mary was built. There was also a small community to the north centred on a landing place (“hithe”) close to the location of the Town Pier, at the head of what was to become High Street.

In the 11th century Gravesham was an agricultural estate but by the 14th century it had grown into a small market town. By the end of the 13th century it had adopted the name Gravesend and the Bishop of London was Richard de Gravesende at this time.

The oldest building in Gravesend, Milton Chantry, dates from the 14th century and stands in the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area next to the fort. It was a religious institution that owned considerable land in the area, on the outskirts of the fledgling town.

The course of High Street had been established by the middle of the 14th century. It stood at the centre of a network of streets and created a direct route from the river landing stage southwards out of the town towards the old Parish Church. It seems that at the time of the town’s first market charter, in 1356, the town re-established itself in a new position closer to the river and it is likely that the market itself was sited on the corner of High Street and West Street next to the

landing stage. This development led to the redundancy of the church and a chapel was built behind High Street on the present day site of the Parish Church of St George.

The town grew under various lordships including the crown, nobility and the Cistercian Abbey of the St Mary Graces in London. Although the location of the manor house has never been discovered, it would have been close to the church and possibly within or adjacent to the boundary of the Conservation Area.

In the medieval period most of the buildings were constructed of timber and therefore susceptible to fire damage. Although the houses and shops that lined the rising gradient of High Street would not have been as densely packed or as tall as they are today, the threat from the spread of fire was still great. Towards the end of the 14th century the town was almost completely destroyed by a combined French and Spanish force that sailed as far as Gravesend before retreating from an attack aimed at London. The resultant destruction led to the first rebuilding of the town.

In recompense for the attack, Richard II granted the people of Gravesend sole rights to ferry passengers to London and this gave rise to Gravesend’s growth as a maritime centre and trading port. The suitability of Gravesend in this regard was supported by its location as the first settlement after the estuary, the deep anchorage in the area and the relatively short crossing to the north bank at this location. Open barges transported passengers to and from the Pool of London and larger, ocean-going vessels continued out along the estuary to the international destinations beyond.

By the end of the medieval period Gravesend was a sizeable town centred on High Street, with a variety of wharves and quays established around the landing stage. River related occupations, including, ferrying, victualling, rope and sail making and boat building and repairing, occupied the majority of the town's inhabitants. Many inns, stables and shops were established in the town, although none of these remain due to the regular outbreak of fires, which continued into the 18th and 19th centuries. Gravesend was surrounded by agricultural land, the produce of which continued to sustain those within the town, as it had done for many centuries before.

The important strategic position of Gravesend at the entry point to the river from the estuary led to Henry VIII constructing defences in the area. Five blockhouses were built between 1539 and 1540: two on the north bank near Tilbury and three on the south bank at Gravesend, Milton and Higham. The remains of the Gravesend Blockhouse stand on the eastern perimeter of the Conservation Area.

In 1562 a Charter of Incorporation united the two parishes of Milton and Gravesend, although the parish boundary runs down the centre of High Street, dividing it in terms of religious jurisdiction. Early maps therefore tend to show one side of High Street or the other, depending on which parish they relate to. The inhabitants of the newly unified areas were required to meet to transact municipal business and the first Town Hall was built in 1573. The Charter also required a Common Market to be held once a week and this was established behind the Town Hall next to Queen Street (at one time known as Milton Backside) and this arrangement still exists in the 21st century. The market and fairs were confirmed in various Royal Charters

by subsequent reigning monarchs and the commercial life of the town grew.

National and international trade also grew and Gravesend became a busy port. The Long Ferry was established by the 17th century, which took passengers who had disembarked from ocean voyages from Gravesend to Billingsgate. It also brought outward bound passengers including colonial settlers, twice a day. Pocahontas, the famous daughter of a Native American chief, died at Gravesend, and was buried in the crypt of the Church of St Mary.

The Great Fire of 1727 destroyed most of the High Street, surrounding streets and the 15th century parish church. The town was rebuilt and a new church (St George's) was erected by the Corporation. Gravesend was prosperous enough to recover from this and many other subsequent fires. Later in the century the town's standing was further boosted when the Duke of York, later King James II, built a Lord High Admiral's residence here. The house was on the site of the current Clarendon Royal Hotel, next to Gravesend Blockhouse, in the eastern corner of the Conservation Area.

Although the river remained the easiest route to trade and ferry passengers to and from London, the roads in England improved in the 18th century with the advent of the turnpikes. At the southern end of High Street, New Road and King Street were part of the stagecoach route from London to Rochester. The staging point at the New Inn would have encouraged further trade and activity at this southern end of High Street.

The 18th century saw the town grow into a bustling centre that mixed commercial and residential uses, and the adjoining streets catered for the varying needs of residents. A

Congregational chapel opened in Princes Street in 1717.

In response to increased international tension at the end of the 18th century, the defences at Gravesend were strengthened with the construction of the New Town Fort to the east of Gravesend Blockhouse, and new taller stone walls were built, connecting the two fortifications. The fort remained in use and was substantially rebuilt in the 19th century by Gravesend resident General Charles Gordon, whose famous deeds in China and Africa epitomise the image of the heroic Victorian military commander. His connection with Gravesend reinforces the town's link with the maritime military, and the riverside area even retains the Mission House in which Gordon once taught.

The 19th century also saw the development of the town in other ways. Gravesend became a destination for day trippers from London and visitors would arrive by steam boat and would then walk up Windmill Hill to take in the views and enjoy the entertainment. In the 1840s Rosherville Gardens were also opened. These pleasure grounds were created to the east of the town, ran up to the river's edge and wound up the cliffside to give impressive views across the river to Tilbury. In its heyday 20,000 visitors came to Gravesend every year, many of whom would have to pass from the newly built Town Pier through the Town Quay (now Town Pier Square). Engravings from the time show visitors on the promenade along the riverfront, and many would have continued to walk up High Street to Windmill Hill.

By the end of the 19th century, fashions had changed and the improved railway network took day trippers to further afield resorts such as Margate and Ramsgate. Gravesend

became more industrial as chalk pits and brickworks were opened in the surrounding areas, particularly Northfleet. Eventually Rosherville Gardens was closed and transformed into a cement works (utilising the local chalk). The marine industries, such as fishing and shrimping, which had supported the community in earlier centuries, came back to the fore, although modern advancements in shipbuilding meant that many ancillary trades were no longer required.

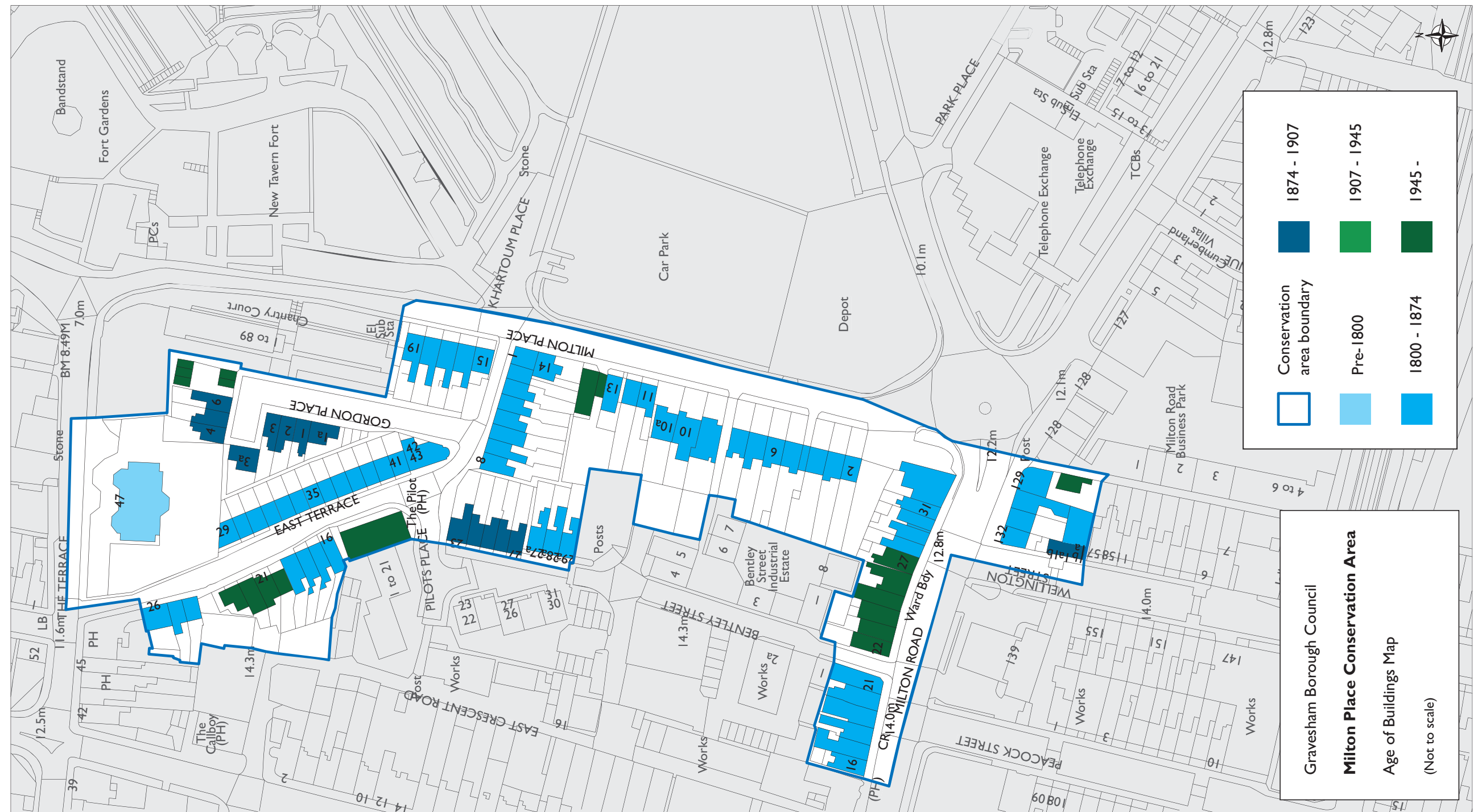
The opening of the Tilbury docks in 1886 provided some alternative means of employment. Travel to work was made possible by the ferry service between the two ports, which was converted to steam power in 1855. The industrialisation of the north shore of the Thames continued into the 20th century and in the 1950s a large power station was constructed at Tilbury. This giant structure and its smoking towers has dominated the view out of Gravesend ever since.

In the 20th century Gravesend continued to grow as a small market town with areas of light industry. Much of the industry was occupied with producing building materials which were often used to build houses in nearby London. As transport links to the city improved, Gravesend became a commuter settlement and with the addition of large retail parks close by, commercial trade has waned in the town. However, there has also been much development in the town, mostly residential. The majority of construction has been beyond the boundary of the Queen Street Conservation Area, although some historic buildings have been lost and replaced within the Conservation Area in the late 20th century. The Town Pier closed in 1969 when the car ferry was discontinued and the passenger service was moved to West Street Pier. Many of the wharves and houses,

especially those between the river and St Andrew's Chapel were cleared when the inner ring road was created. Other residential roads were also removed to make way for the St George's Shopping Centre.

In the 21st century the town is the focus of large residential building projects to meet the needs of the people in the area, although the historic commercial centre of High Street has been retained and seeks to attract shoppers that have more specialist, individual requirements.







Designated Boundary Map 09.02.09

