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Chatham Intra, Medway, Kent A Desk-Based Assessment

Peter Kendall

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment



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**CHATHAM INTRA,
MEDWAY,
KENT**

A DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Peter Kendall

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SUMMARY

Chatham Intra is the name commonly given to an area of development adjoining the river Medway that links the historic settlements of Chatham and Rochester. Administratively divided between the two until the creation of Medway Borough Council in 1974, it is traversed by a continuous highway that forms part of the High Streets of the respective towns. Largely undeveloped until the early 17th century, the area was subsequently built up with a mixture of commercial, industrial and residential properties and evolved its own distinctive historic character. Much of the area now falls within the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area. In 2019 Chatham Intra was chosen to be a High Street Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ), a Historic England programme intended to revitalize selected historic high streets in partnership with local authorities and others. This report was undertaken to support the work of the HSHAZ by providing an overview of the area's historic development and the key elements that have contributed to its present-day character. This was done as a desk-based exercise due to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions and has been supplemented with a limited amount of archive research.

CONTRIBUTORS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT	3
Rochester and Chatham before 1500	3
Late-16 th and 17 th century development at Chatham Intra	5
Visual depictions of Chatham Intra	7
The early High Street	11
The buildings	12
Chatham Intra in the 18 th century	14
The military influence	16
The character of development	19
The New Road	20
The buildings	20
Chatham Intra in the 19 th century	22
The continuing military influence	23
Governance	24
Development	26
Industry	28
Hammond Place and retail architecture	29
Commercial development in the late-19 th century and George Edward Bond	31
Chatham Intra in the 20 th Century	32
Post-war change	34
PART TWO: ASPECTS OF CHATHAM INTRA	36
1 The Charitable landowners	36
St Bartholomew's Hospital, Chapel and Estate	36
St Bartholomew's Chapel	36
Sir John Hawkins's estate	40
The Hospital buildings	41
The Chatham Chest	43
The Watts Charity	44
2 Individual sites and buildings	44
Nos 365 – 377 Rochester High Street (including Featherstone House) and	

Central Wharf	44
No. 373-5 High Street: the mansion of Sir John Hawkins & the painted room	46
Nos 363-365 and Nos 367-371 High Street Rochester	51
Central Wharf	53
No 377-9 High Street Rochester and Boundary Wharf	53
The Lion Brewery: Nos 347- 351 High Street Rochester (north side) and No. 374 High Street Rochester (south side)	56
No. 351 High Street (formerly Chatham House)	58
The brewery buildings	62
The Ship Inn and No. 349 High Street	66
No. 374 High Street and the former pump house	68
3 The west end of Chatham Intra	69
St Margaret's Banks, Nos 209-277 High Street Rochester	70
The character of development	72
Furrells Lane to No. 277 High Street Rochester	76
The Victualling Yard	77
The impact of the railway	80
4 Riverside wharfs and river-related uses	81
Ship building and repair: Doust's Yard and Nos 305-327 High Street Rochester	83
Other industries	85
The Medway Ironworks, Foundry Wharf and Nos 329-377 High Street Rochester	85
Coal wharves and timber yards	87
Public use of the river and passenger traffic	88
5 Fires in Chatham Intra	91
The 1800 fire	92
The 1820 fire	93
Later fires	93
6 Entertainment in Chatham Intra	94
Drinking establishments	94
Prostitution	97
Theatres and Cinemas	98

7 The Jewish community of Chatham Intra	100
The Chatham Memorial Synagogue, No. 366 High Street Rochester	101
The cemetery	104
Leading families: Magnus and Isaacs	105
ENDNOTES	106
APPENDIX	119
Suggestions for further research	119
Archaeological issues	119
Research	120
Mapping change	121
Building Investigation and listing enhancement	122
Other topics	123

INTRODUCTION

‘...this town of Chatham. I call it this town, because if anybody present knows to a nicety where Rochester ends and Chatham begins, it is more than I do.’¹

Crossing the river Medway there was, and largely still is, a continuous High Street running through three settlements; Strood, Rochester and Chatham. Of the two towns Rochester is the more ancient while Chatham grew in the last five hundred years from a subsidiary village to become the commercial and administrative heart of Medway. This report concerns the middle ground between them and the historic thoroughfare that traverses it which has come to be unevenly divided between High Street Rochester and High Street Chatham. The boundaries of the study area are those of the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area, which encompasses the heart of the intermediate zone (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Location map with the Sun Pier to Star Hill Conservation Area highlighted [© Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.]

The area was historically divided between three parishes - St Margaret, Rochester, St Nicholas, Rochester and Chatham parish – and was bisected by the administrative boundary between the two towns. Because the administrative and parochial boundaries did not fully align part of Chatham parish lay within the City of Rochester. This outlying ground, which lay on the north side of the High Street between the edge of Sir John Hawkins' Hospital to the east and the vicinity of modern-day Doust Way to the west, came to be referred to as Chatham Intra (Chatham Within). But the name was also applied to the wider area and is used in this way in this document.

The production of this overview stems from the inclusion of Chatham Intra in the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme. Launched in 2019, the programme is intended to be a tool for improving the social, cultural and economic outcomes of selected High Streets. The project at Chatham Intra is being undertaken in partnership with Medway Council. The original intention was for Historic England to carry out targeted research and building investigation in the area in 2020-1 but this was affected by the COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of public archives and restrictions on fieldwork. This desk-based assessment was commissioned as an interim measure to provide an understanding of the historic character of the area and its most distinctive elements. As such, the information and conclusions of the report should be treated as provisional and liable to refinement by subsequent work.

The author has a long-time interest in the history of Medway and the report is drawn from online resources, published and secondary sources and information collated by the author and others. There has not been a systematic study of Chatham Intra but James Presnail's *Chatham -The Story of a Dockyard Town and the Birthplace of the British Navy*, published in 1952, includes a historical narrative of the town. Philip MacDougall's several publications on Chatham are another source of information. A number of useful documents have been produced for planning purposes. For example, John Willson and Peter Seary's 2005 report covers the central core of the study area and contains a general history of the place. Similarly, a report by MOLA in 2018 concerning the development site at Bardell Wharf contains information about the western end of Chatham Intra. In addition, Medway Council has produced a draft appraisal of the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area.² There has also been a limited amount of research and recording by Historic England and its predecessor organisations, English Heritage and the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments of England, available for consultation in the Historic England Archives. And several recent films by Robert Flood provide an informative overview of the history of the area.³

This report is divided into two parts. The first of these provides an overview of the area's development from the earliest settlement to the present day. The second section contains more detailed accounts of significant buildings and sites and discusses various aspects of the area's character such as the major landowners, fire damage, entertainment provision and the legacy of the Jewish community. The report also contains an appendix with suggestions for further research.

PART ONE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Rochester and Chatham before 1500

The archaeological background to Chatham and Rochester is given in two reports produced in 2004 as part of the Kent Historic Towns Survey project.¹ Subsequent research has not significantly altered our understanding of either urban centre.

Rochester was the more ancient settlement, with Iron Age origins, while Chatham developed as a separate but subordinate village. The location of Rochester at the lowest bridging point on the river Medway led to its development as a walled Roman town. This evolved in the early medieval period into a city centred around the great monumental sites of the castle and cathedral and traversed by the road that ran between London and Canterbury and onwards to Dover. Roman in origin, if not older, this routeway was used by travellers to and from the Continent and medieval pilgrims. The highway, which became Rochester High Street, exited the walled area of the town at Eastgate, beyond which an extra-mural suburb developed.

The section of the river Medway at Rochester and Chatham would have been suitable for exploitation by prehistoric and later communities although this is at present poorly evidenced in Chatham. Within Chatham Intra an archaeological evaluation in 2018 confirmed some prehistoric and Romano-British occupation at its eastern end along with evidence of buildings dating from the 12th century.² In this early period the road to Canterbury and Dover may have followed a slightly different alignment as it passed through Chatham Intra to avoid the low-lying land adjacent to the river which would have been prone to flooding. But the precise character and alignment of the Medieval highway has yet to be archaeologically determined. During these centuries it was common for burials to occur in the vicinity of roads leading out from urban settlements and there is evidence for this at the western end of Chatham Intra with Romano-British burials at Doust Way and Saxon graves at Orange Terrace.

Little is known of how the area was used in early times. However, the construction of Fort Pitt on higher ground to the south of Chatham Intra in c.1805 revealed evidence of Romano-British buildings that were perhaps indicative of a villa site. Elsewhere in the town the construction of the Chatham Lines in the 1750s and 1780s revealed both a Roman villa (on the site of Fort Amherst) and numerous Anglo-Saxon burials in barrows.³

The topography of the area has played a significant role in the development of Chatham. From the riverside the land rose quite steeply, with the higher ground later used for the fortifications of the naval dockyard, interrupted by a valley with a watercourse in its base (later known as The Brook) that flowed into the river Medway. It was in this vicinity that the first known settlement emerged, with the site of the parish church marking its likely early focus.⁴ By 1086 Chatham was a middle-sized village. According to the Domesday Book the land was owned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux and supported 33 villagers, 4 smallholders and 15 slaves, providing a living based on agriculture and fishing. The description notes ploughlands (16 in

total), 20 acres of meadow, woodland, pannage for swine, a mill, a church and six fisheries.⁵ The site of the mill is very probably that of the post-medieval tide mill and mill pond at the north end of The Brook. During the reign of Edward I (1239-1307) two merchants engaged in the export of wool were active in Chatham, suggesting that seafaring was also a part of the settlement's economy.⁶ But until the 16th century the focus of settlement at Chatham lay outside of the study area, including the location of its manor house.

At present little is known about the early buildings in Chatham Intra apart from the Hospital of St Bartholomew. Founded in 1078 by Bishop Gundulph of Rochester as a leper hospital, the only part of the site to survive above ground is a section of St Bartholomew's Chapel (Fig. 2). The nature of such institutions usually meant they were built away from the main centres of population and this was the case at Rochester, where the hospital was sited at the city's boundary on open land that was gifted to it to help support its community. Leper hospitals were also frequently positioned beside major roads to enable patients to beg for alms from passers-by.⁷ St Bartholomew's Hospital may therefore have been built adjacent to the old Roman road although the surviving chapel is located near to the present-day High Street. The building materials for the hospital were shipped from Maidstone which suggests the existence of a nearby landing place or wharf on the Medway.⁸



Fig. 2 St Bartholomew's Chapel with Sir John Hawkins' Hospital and part of Nos 375-7 High Street Rochester [Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive, DP289257]

By the 16th century the buildings of St Bartholomew's Hospital were in a poor condition. But it seems to have been at this point that the brethren of the hospital began to exploit its land holdings by leasing plots of ground for various uses including new buildings (see pages 38-9). Following the decision to establish the Medway as a major anchorage for the Navy and then to develop a dockyard at Chatham (see below), the hospital lands became increasingly more valuable and sought after. This led to various legal attempts to take away control, some backed by the Crown, but the hospital emerged in the early 17th century with its estate intact. It was then able to generate income through leases for the building of houses along the main highway through Chatham Intra.

Late-16th and 17th century development at Chatham Intra

The establishment of a naval presence on the Medway drove the transition of Chatham from a village. The rapid development that ensued affected the entire settlement, including Chatham Intra, and the latter still retains some evidence of the form that this early development took.

An account of naval involvement in Chatham is given in James Crawshaw's *The History of Chatham Dockyard*. The first known reference in naval accounts was for a payment in 1547 for the hire of storehouses in Gillingham. Thereafter, further payments were made for ship keeping on the river Medway which became the favoured winter anchorage for repairing and servicing the English fleet. This encouraged shipbuilding in the area and the first dockyard at Chatham was established on land below the parish church on a site that went on to become the Gunwharf. Naval shipbuilding also occurred on the river Thames at Deptford and Woolwich in the Tudor period but the availability of space to expand and the depth of water in these locations ultimately proved to be limiting factors in their development. Initially the dockyard workforce at Chatham would have been drawn from elsewhere. At this time naval shipwrights led a peripatetic existence moving to where their labour was required and paid lodging money for their accommodation needs. In 1575 the presence of 120 individuals associated with the dockyard was noted in Chatham. This would have represented a significant increase to the existing population, which is estimated to have been around 300.⁹

The first ground selected for the dockyard at Chatham proved too constrained for the growing needs of the fleet and in 1618 a new site was selected down river that became the core of the subsequent dockyard. The need to accommodate and service the growing dockyard labour force created development opportunities in the surrounding area. Amongst those to take advantage were St Bartholomew's Hospital and senior naval figures associated with Chatham. For example, Thomas Rabenett was the Master Attendant of the Navy at Chatham and in 1654-55 a lease was drawn up between Rabenett and Stephen Alcock of Rochester for a 'piece of ground in St. Margaret's Rochester, and 4 messuages lately built on the north end thereof adjoining the highway leading from Rochester to Chatham'.¹⁰ In Rabenett's will, dated 1654 and proved 1658, he left his messuage at Chatham to his wife, Elizabeth.

The document also records other messuages in St Margaret's parish which he had leased to named occupiers.¹¹

From c.1650 the land close to Chatham parish church was built up with densely packed houses (often little more than one-room dwellings) for the dockyard workers. A 1708 plan shows the nature of this new housing before it was swept away in the mid-18th century for new fortifications (Fig. 3).¹² Inevitably such rapid growth and poor-quality housing contributed to public health issues and the presence of plague was noted many times in the 17th century.¹³ It also established the character of Chatham as an unplanned, unhygienic and overcrowded place; associations which it struggled to fully overcome in later centuries.

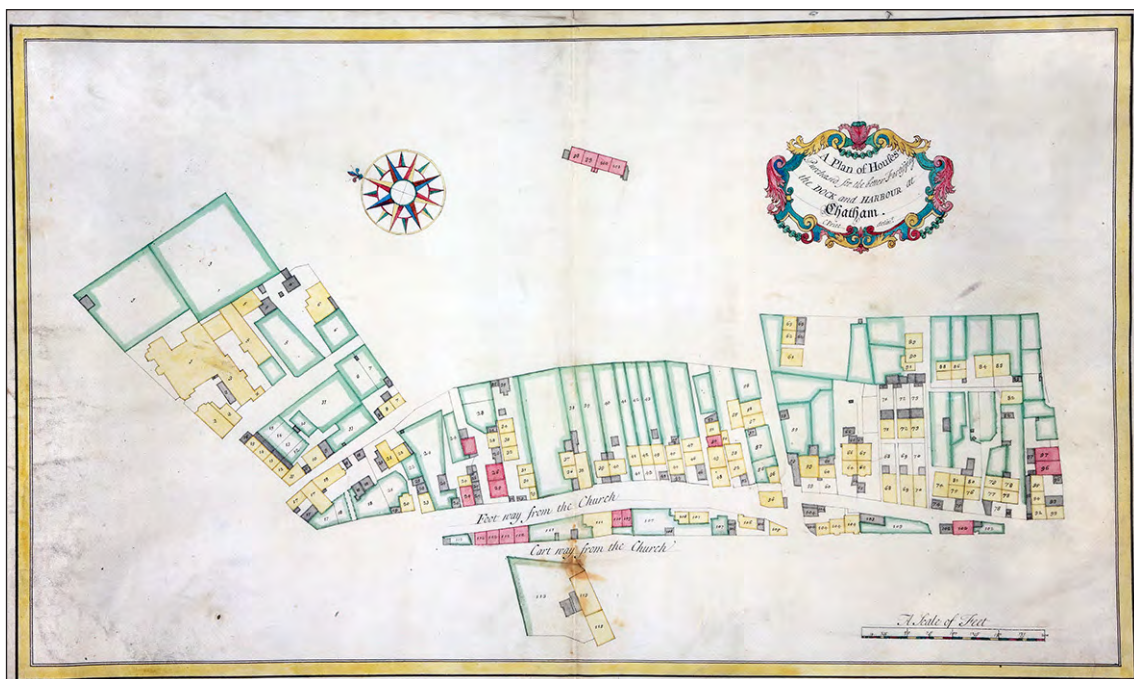


Fig. 3 Housing in Chatham town in the 17th century [The National Archives, MFC 1/85]

As the town expanded it spread along the south-west side of the valley formed by The Brook and westwards into Chatham Intra. However, development in the study area encompassed not only growth towards Rochester from Chatham but also eastward suburban growth from Rochester, including an area known as St Margaret's Banks. The Rochester end was likely the preferred location for people of higher social standing to make their homes even if employed in dockyard business. One notable example of this trend was Eastgate House, just to the east of the study area, built in the 1590s for Peter Buck, Mayor of Rochester and Clerk to the Cheque at Chatham dockyard. But wealthy individuals, such as Sir John Hawkins, also built substantial houses of a similar type within Chatham Intra.

In 1664 Hearth Tax returns for the main settlements in the area give the rateable hearths for Chatham as 1,800 compared to 2,400 for Rochester and 750 for Strood.¹⁴ This suggests that Rochester was still the larger of the Medway towns (or that more

of its houses were of a higher quality). But Chatham's growth during the 17th century was significant. One historian has estimated that in 1670 it had a population of 3,000 (occupying perhaps 400 houses); a figure that had reached 5,000 by 1700.¹⁵

Visual depictions of Chatham Intra

The earliest known map of Medway to show the general area in any real detail is dated 1575-1610.¹⁶ This indicates three settlement foci in Chatham – around the church, along the side of The Brook and at Chatham Intra (Fig. 4). The next useful map dates from 1633 and is in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland. This includes an accurate portrayal of the newly constructed dockyard after its relocation in 1618 and shows a level of development in Chatham Intra that accords well with archive information about land ownership (Fig. 5). The depiction of a near-vertical edge to the river bank rather than mudflats on the developed plots could indicate the presence of wharves, including the site of the later Victualling Yard (see page 77). The map also shows a number of houses or tenements along the highway but it is not easy to identify the major buildings, St Bartholomew's Hospital or Sir John Hawkins's Hospital. The general impression is of a narrow street lined with buildings set within their own plots with little back plot development beyond a few service buildings and riverside areas used as gardens, yards or orchards.



Fig 4 Detail from a map of the river Medway dating from between 1575 and 1610 [© The British Library Board Cotton MS. Augustus I.i.52.]

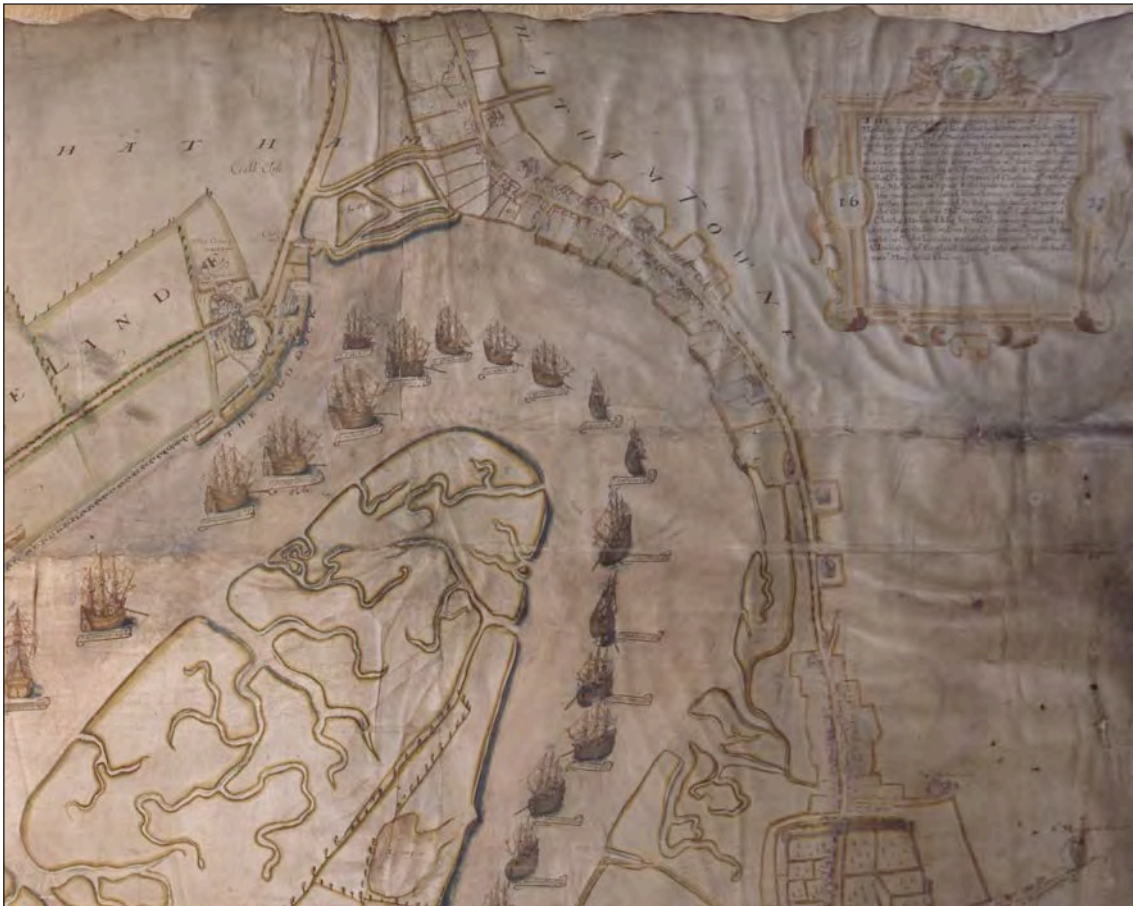


Fig. 5 Detail from a map of the Medway dated 1633 [Collection of the Duke of Northumberland. Sy:B. XVII.1]

An undated painting of Chatham, now held in the National Maritime Museum, is thought on stylistic grounds to have been produced around 1675 (Fig. 6).¹⁷ This is neither detailed nor entirely accurate (note the improbably tall church tower) but the representation of houses focussed around the church broadly accords with other evidence. A few large buildings are shown in Chatham Intra but the overall impression is one of intermittent development and some open areas of wharf. The anonymous artist is thought to be from the Dutch School of painting and the architecture of the buildings may reflect these stylistic influences.

After the infamous Dutch raid on Chatham Dockyard in 1667 several plans and drawings were made of the area. These include a plan of 1669 by the military engineer Sir Bernard de Gomme, who had been engaged to strengthen the Medway fortifications, which showed near continuous development along the road between Rochester and Chatham.¹⁸ The attack also drew notable visitors including Cosmo III, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. An account of his travels was translated into English and published in 1821 including a drawing of Chatham dating from 1669.¹⁹ This depicted a relatively dense development at the eastern end of Chatham Intra and an area of open land at its western edge, just before Rochester's suburbs began.



Fig. 6 Painting entitled 'Ships laid up in the Medway' c.1675 [© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. BHC0832]

A group of images from the first decade of the 18th century show Chatham Intra as it would also have appeared at the end of the preceding century. One is an engraving of the Royal Navy at its mooring at Chatham, dated to c.1710 because of the depiction of various buildings on Gunwharf (Fig. 7). This shows the riverside as being closely built up to the edge of the wharves and what appears to be steps and a crane. The most prominent wharf is that of the Victualling Yard, beyond which is marshland with the raised development of St Margaret's Banks above. A comparable engraving by James Collins from the early 18th century shows some larger houses standing out among the other buildings (Fig. 8).²⁰ These are represented as two-storey buildings with dormer windows for attic rooms, orientated end on to the street and river. But while it is known that some houses faced east or west, such as Sir John Hawkins's mansion, other evidence suggests that many fronted onto the highway. At the west end of Chatham Intra the raised and tree-lined development on St Margaret's Banks is also visible. A third early 18th century engraving confirms this character. Done by Thomas Badeslade for John Harris's *History of Kent*, published in 1719, the image has a north-westerly perspective that foregrounds Rochester and the area of surviving marshland at the western end of the study area.

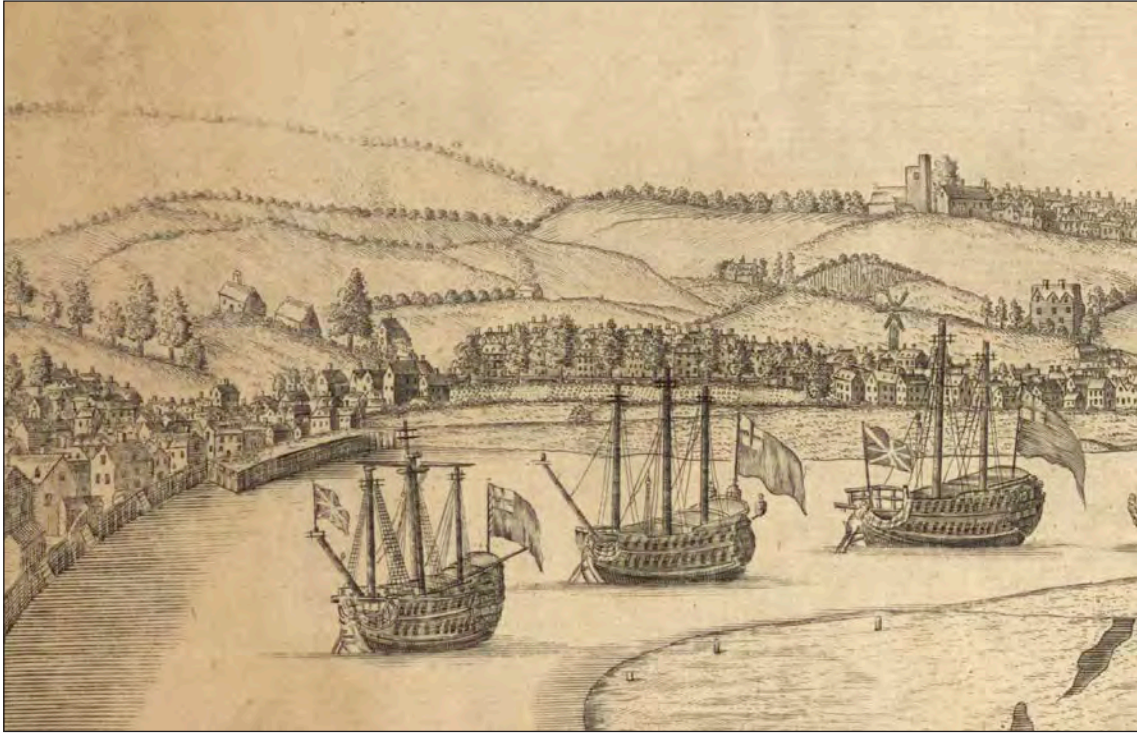


Fig 7 The Royal Navy at its moorings at Chatham as depicted in an engraving c.1710 [© The British Library Board Maps.K.Top.16.42.a.]

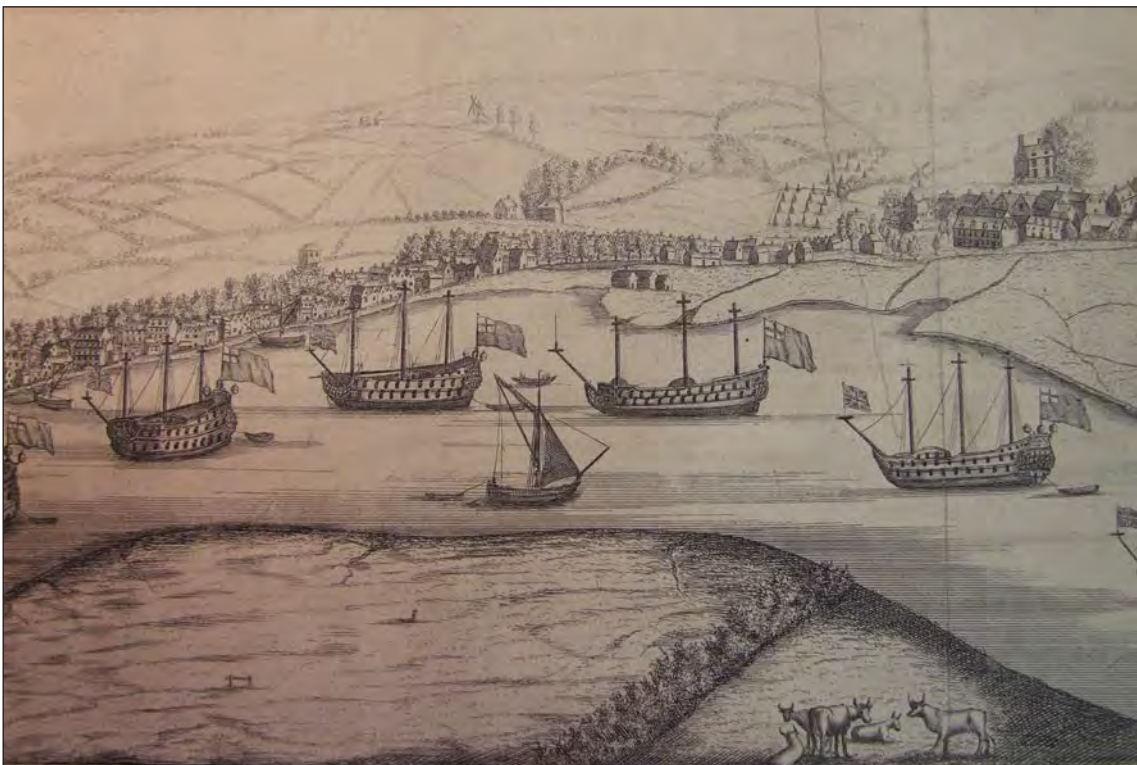


Fig. 8 Detail of Chatham Intra in the early 18th century from an engraving by James Collins [Medway Guildhall Museum, A4936]

The early High Street

Before the 19th century the highway between Rochester and Chatham that is now known as High Street Rochester and High Street Chatham went by several other names. On the map of 1575-1610 the roadway is identified as Longport (Fig. 9). The name also appears in medieval documents such as a feoffment dated 1326 that refers to marshland called Eastmers at Longport, a quitclaim dated 1338 and a 13th century gift of a candle to Chatham church by a weaver residing in Longport.²¹ The derivation of the name fits with a long street but the 'port' element has several possible sources. It may have come from the Latin *porta* meaning a gateway and hence refer to a road leading to or from a gate in a city wall, as happened in Canterbury. Or it could have been taken from *portus* meaning harbour. Either meaning is a possibility for Chatham Intra although the association with a place used for boats would be the more intriguing. Longport was occasionally used in documents as late as the 19th century but it is also clear from other archive sources that the roadway went by other names in the 17th century, such as the King or Queen's Highway or Chatham Street. The use of the latter continued into the following century.



Fig. 9 Detail from a map of the river Medway dating from between 1575 and 1610 [© The British Library Board Cotton MS. Augustus I.i.52.]

The buildings

Chatham Intra possessed several substantial properties by the late-16th century. Amongst the most substantial were the almshouses founded by Sir John Hawkins (see page 40). Other buildings thought to have 17th century origins are the North Foreland Public House, No. 325 High Street Rochester, Nos 373-5 High Street and No. 4 Hamond Hill and it is possible that other examples may be discovered through investigation and research.

The North Foreland Public House (Fig. 10) is a grade II listed building of multiple phases that appears to have originated as a dwelling.²² In a 1772 publication entitled *The history and antiquities of Rochester and its environs* a reference is made to ‘an ancient mansion’ owned by the Pett family that stood near to the Victualling Yard on the north side of the street. This could plausibly refer to the site of the later public house. The property retains elaborate 17th century carved overmantels and fireplaces which include strapwork panels and carved male and female terms (Fig. 11). In the second edition of *The history ...*, published in 1817, a description was given of a similar chimney piece in the principal room of the Pett mansion in the following terms:

..as of wood curiously carved, the upper part being divided into compartments by caryatydes: the central compartment contains the family arms, viz a fesse, a lion passant guardant, between three pellets.²³



Fig. 10 The North Foreland public house in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289302]



Fig. 11 Chimney piece, ground floor, North Foreland public house [Posy Metz © Historic England, HSLSE09/P1]

The Pett dynasty were master shipwrights at Deptford, Woolwich and Chatham. Phineas Pett senior was the first resident commissioner at Chatham Dockyard and his memoirs state that he came to Chatham in 1600 and took the lease of the medieval manor house.²⁴ His son Peter was the Master Shipwright at Chatham. As a senior naval official he was also a trustee of the Sir John Hawkins' Hospital and of the Chatham Chest, the two great naval charities in the area (see pages 41-4). Pett was in charge at the time of the 1667 Dutch raid and was scapegoated for the loss of so many warships. The manor house was located outside the study area but the Pett family were leasing land 'by ye highway' in 1627 from St Bartholomew's Hospital.²⁵ It is entirely plausible that they, like other senior naval officials, may have built high-quality houses here for either their own occupation or as a property speculation.

Nos 373-5 High Street Rochester occupies the site of John Hawkins's mansion and could potentially retain some older fabric (see pages 46-51).²⁶ No. 4 Hamond Hill, listed grade II, (Fig. 12) is thought to be an early 17th century east-facing dwelling that was refronted in the mid-19th century.²⁷ The listing entry describes this as one of the earliest surviving houses in Chatham. Built not on the High Street but to on higher ground to the south, it seems likely that an owner of higher social status may have sought relative detachment from the main road by building up the slope. When the property was leased to William Goddard in 1799 it was noted that the property had been 'divided into two habitations' but thereafter it became a single dwelling.²⁸ Hamond



Fig. 12 Camden House, No. 4 Hamond Hill in 1870 [Medway Archives, CO50689934]

Hill (previously Heavysides Lane and sometimes spelt Hammond Hill) remained a relatively high-status location into the 19th century.

Other evidence exists in documentary form. A map dated c.1688 showing land on the south side of Chatham Street (approximately equivalent to Nos 40-100 Chatham High Street), represents several large houses that would have been occupied by wealthier citizens (Fig. 13). The mapmaker, James Almond, showed continuous development on both sides of the street extending westwards, which he depicted on a diminutive scale.



Fig. 13 Detail of map showing part of the Chatham Chest estate c.1688 [Medway Archives, U1193/P1]

Chatham Intra in the 18th century

Literary descriptions of Chatham from the 18th century and depictions such as the pair of 1738 engravings by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck give some indication of the areas character at the time. In his *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* of 1724-27 Daniel Defoe stated that:

Rochester, Strood and Chatham are three distinct places but contiguous except for the interval of the river between the two first, and a very small marsh or vacancy between Rochester and Chatham.²⁹

Defoe's 'vacancy' is presumably the undeveloped marsh in front of St Margaret's Banks.

The Buck engravings of Rochester and Chatham in 1738 provide a visual equivalent of Defoe's description. The two images can be joined to provide a continuous panorama from Rochester bridge to the Dockyard although the flattening of the sinuous curves of the river produces some distortion in the perspective of the

buildings (Fig. 14). The landmark structures in the two towns appear to be quite accurately depicted although the generality of the lesser buildings is probably more indicative in nature. In the Rochester engraving the elevated character of St Margaret's Banks is particularly emphasised.

In his work on the history and topography of Kent published in 1798 Edward Hasted gave the following account of Chatham:

It is like most sea ports, a long, narrow, disagreeable, ill-built town, the houses in general occupied by those trades adapted to the commerce of the shipping and seafaring persons, the Victualling-office, and the two breweries, and one or two more houses, being the only tolerable built houses in it...

...It is exceeding populous, owing to its numerous connections with the several departments of government, and the shipping business carried on at it. It has a large and well supplied market for meat, poultry, garden stuff, &c. on a Saturday weekly, not only sufficient for its own use, but for the city of Rochester likewise, which is mostly supplied from it.....

...At the entrance of Chatham from Rochester, on the north side of the High-street, is the Victualling Office, for the use of the royal navy lying here, at Sheerness, and the Nore. In it there is a cooperage, pickling, baking, cutting, slaughter, and store-houses. A new wharf has been lately made to it, and additional buildings erected for the further convenience and service of the victualling.³⁰

Hasted describes a linear settlement that had grown up to support both the navy and army in largely unplanned ways and which was densely occupied. In fact, by the end of the 18th century Chatham had become the most populous town in Kent, outstripping its neighbour, Rochester (see Fig. 21).

But although Chatham apparently had a bad reputation in some quarters it did not perhaps deserve the criticism made in an anonymous poem of 1796, attributed to a visiting tourist.³¹

Old Chatham's a place
That's the nation's disgrace
Where the club and the fist prove the law, sir
And presumption is seen to direct the marine
Who knows not a spike from a hawser
Here the dolts show with pride
How the men of war ride
Who France's proud first rates can shiver



Figs 14 Engravings of Chatham and Rochester by Nathaniel and Samuel Buck published in 1738 [© Historic England Archive, bb86/03833 & bb86/0351]

And a fortified hill all the Frenchmen to kill
 That land on the banks of the river
 Such a town and such men we shall ne'er see again
 Where smuggling's a laudable function
 In some high windy day may the devil fly away
 With the whole of the dirty conjunction.

At the other extreme was a characterisation of the Medway towns given in a 1794 advert for the sale of a printing business in Rochester, presumably inflected by an auctioneer's hyperbole:

The neighbourhood of Rochester, Chatham and Strood and its vicinity is genteel and very prosperous and as proof of its flourishing state there have been more new houses built on the spot within these twelve years than all the towns in the county besides.³²

The military influence

As Hasted noted the main impetus for the town's growth in the 18th century lay with the Government establishments. These began with the dockyard which, by the end of the 17th century, had become the principal base of the Royal Navy, well situated for naval operations in the Channel and North Sea, mostly against the Dutch. This pre-eminence continued during the first quarter of the 18th century and major investments in the dockyard led to its expansion and the provision of a wide range of new buildings. However, by the mid-18th century the status of Chatham was being challenged by Portsmouth and Plymouth as these south-coast dockyards were better situated for British naval operations that were increasingly focussed on an expanding world empire and the Atlantic. In addition, the difficulties of navigating

along the Medway and into the Thames had encouraged the establishment of a small naval dockyard at Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey. Nonetheless, Chatham remained a highly important facility and from the 1770s took on an increasing role in the construction and major repair of the fleet and became less of a base for naval operations. Inevitably, the economic fortunes of the town fluctuated with the dockyard. Government expenditure was highest in time of war and in the second half of the 18th century and the early 19th century three long periods of global conflict contributed to the growth of Chatham, both in terms of its population and its extent.

During the 18th century the dockyard was the major local employer. By 1688 there was a dockyard labour force of 800; this had grown to 1,600 by 1792 and 2,700 in 1814.³³ However, this expansion may not have been even because in time of peace warships were decommissioned and placed in 'ordinary' by mooring them in the river Medway (see Figs 7, 8 & 14) and the dockyard workforce would have decreased.³⁴ The administration of the dockyard and associated facilities was complex. Responsibility for the ships in the dockyard lay with the Navy Board, while the Admiralty oversaw their operational use, but other branches of Government were involved in supplying the navy from establishments in Chatham. For example, the Ordnance Board provided cannon, powder and weapons from its base at the Gunwharf and the Victualling Board provisioned the fleet at Chatham, Sheerness and the Nore anchorage. But of all of these only the Victualling Yard was located in Chatham Intra although the scale and range of establishments around the town, which included a barracks for the Royal Marines from 1777, no doubt provided employment and business opportunities for those who lived and worked in the area.

The naval presence at Chatham was also responsible for the establishment of a major army garrison in the town that went on to shape the character and economic fortunes of the town. In the aftermath of the 1667 Dutch raid the river was fortified against a repeat attack. The danger of a landward assault also led to the passing of several Acts of Parliament from 1714 onwards to facilitate the construction of major bastioned fortifications that were known as the Chatham Lines (Fig. 15).³⁵ Work on them commenced in 1756 and over the next 60 years they were elaborated into ever stronger defences, garrisoned by a large barracks (the Infantry or Kitchener Barracks) begun in 1757. As a result, the population of Chatham was swollen by large numbers of soldiers.

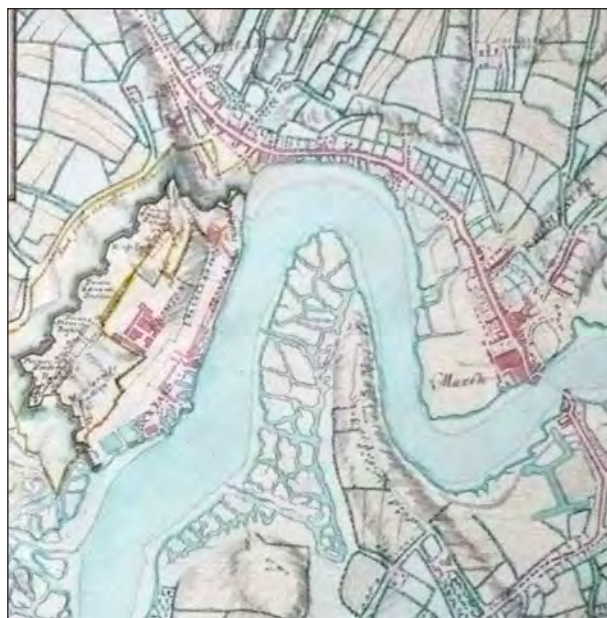


Fig. 15 Detail from a plan of the river Medway from Rochester to Sheerness should the new defensive line at Chatham and adjacent fortifications c.1756 [The National Archives, MPH 1/54]

The compulsory acquisition of land for the defensive fortifications also had a significant impact on Chatham's growth. In 1756 the intensively developed area close to the parish church was purchased by the Government and cleared. This displaced many families, primarily dockyard workers, some of whom moved to the north-eastern margins and the expanding settlement of Brompton. Others had to take up residence along The Brook and in the valley bottom in areas that had not previously been thought suitable for building on. And some relocated to Chatham Intra, encouraging more intensive development there. The pressure on land for building in Chatham Intra was then exacerbated by the reservation in 1779 of the higher ground to the south by the Government for the construction of Fort Pitt (Fig. 16). Thus, the topography of Chatham influenced both the ways in which it could be defended and the ways it could grow, as the best land was increasingly reserved for military or dockyard use and the civilian town was obliged to develop where it could.



Fig. 16 Detail from a plan of Ordnance land and buildings at Chatham, 1806 [The National Archives MR 1/815 (6)]

Because Chatham had evolved as an early 'industrial-military complex' its population contained a high number of young males. But its working population was not entirely reliant on Government establishments for employment. As the town grew it began to dominate other commercial functions in the region. The Medway towns were well placed to be centres of business and distribution, about a day's ride by horse from London and served by coaches running between the two locations. The movement of heavy or bulky goods was usually done by water, which in the 18th century meant a long journey down the river Medway and passing around the Hoo Peninsula to enter the Thames. Hoys and sailing barges undertook much of the trade but larger cargoes were carried on coastal traders, including coal from the north east of England. From Chatham the goods were transported up the river Medway to supply other parts of Kent. After the construction of locks on the non-tidal stretches of the river in 1747 it

became possible to reach as far as Tonbridge. In the other direction came the produce of the Weald of Kent, as well as bulkier goods such as timber for use in shipbuilding and Kentish ragstone from quarries around Maidstone. The Medway also had a long-established fishery for both oysters and finned fish that continued to operate during the 18th century and beyond, largely based at Strood.

The character of development

During the 18th century the increasingly built-up frontage on the High Street encouraged the construction of smaller houses or cottages on back lanes and alleyways. Some of these led to the rivers where commercial and industrial activities intensified. However, drainage and sewerage remained rudimentary, made worse by flooding from the tidal river. Maps prepared by the military for the fortifications in the mid-18th century show this expansion, albeit in a rather stylised fashion.³⁶ The extent of growth during the century can be seen in a map of 1806 which includes a significant part of Chatham Intra (Fig. 17). This indicates how the river frontage had been pushed outwards to create more useable land. By this date the pattern of land division, evident in the north-south boundaries running between the High Street and the river had become well established. This level of development made movement along the river edge impossible, except by boat, and funnelled access to the riverside down the lanes and alleys.



Fig 17 Detail from a plan of the City of Rochester surveyed by F. Baker 1772 [Medway Archives]

The New Road

By the mid-18th century passage along the highway had become a congested and unpleasant experience. In 1769 the corporate body in Rochester decided to do something about this by paving, lighting and watching the entire length of the road from Strood to the Chatham Turnpike.³⁷ But the inhabitants of Chatham were unwilling to participate in the improvements for their section of the High Street. So instead a new turnpike was proposed that would run from the Star Inn at Eastgate uphill and over the fields to Chatham Hill, effectively by-passing Chatham Intra. In 1771 letters were published in the local newspaper, the *Kentish Gazette*, arguing for and against the proposals. The following year Rochester went ahead with obtaining an Act of Parliament and the cutting of the turnpike commenced.

Once built the prosaically named New Road became a select part of Chatham, attractive to genteel residents by virtue of its elevation. However, development was largely restricted to the north side because of the government land acquired for fortifications. The New Road likely encouraged development along the side roads extending uphill from the High Street, including Heavysides Lane (later Hamond Hill), Nags Head Lane and Five Bells Lane. But the residents of Chatham were fearful that New Road would diminish the vitality of the town and leave the older, unimproved High Street to bear the burden of heavy traffic unwilling to pay the tolls of the turnpike. In response they obtained their own Act of Parliament to improve their section of the High Street and by July 1772 the roadworks were described as proceeding 'with great spirit'.³⁸ One clear beneficiary within Chatham Intra was St Margaret's Bank, which was provided with a raised pavement. The cost of the work was born by an additional 9d rate paid by local property owners and a fund to which the gentlemen of the town and officers of the Ordnance and dockyard contributed.

The disputes over road improvements are indicative of the uneasy relations that sometimes existed between the leading residents of Chatham and Rochester, with Chatham Intra perhaps forming the debateable ground. Ultimately the full length of the High Street was improved but not as a single project.

The buildings

Hasted's account had singled out two breweries and one or two more 'tolerable built' houses in Chatham for mention (see above). Possible candidates for these include the Best family brewery at the eastern edge of the study area, fronted by a mansion called Chatham House. This was apparently built in 1742 to designs by Charles Sloane and stood until the early years of the 20th century (Fig. 18).³⁹ Another likely candidate is No. 351 High Street and its associated brewery, which are still extant. The substantial dwelling was also confusingly known as Chatham House (see page 58).

Historic photographs of now demolished buildings in Chatham town give some idea of the character of houses in Chatham Intra in this period (Fig. 19). The generality were probably two-storey buildings with attics occupying narrow plots, often of timber construction but intermixed with more substantial properties in brick. A

number of buildings dating partly or wholly from the 18th century have been identified in the study area and it is possible that others may exist behind later façades. In three locations the degree of survival is such that it gives a significantly Georgian flavour to the streetscape. The first of these is the group formed by the Ship Inn, Nos 347-9 High Street and No. 351 High Street. The second is the sequence of buildings, Nos 359-361, Nos 367-373 and No. 377 High Street Rochester and the Sir John Hawkins's Hospital. The third is the stretch of St Margaret's Banks running from the No. 292, the Nags Head public house, to No. 312 with eastern outliers at No. 376 and No. 386 High Street Rochester.



Fig. 18 The front elevation of Chatham House, Chatham High Street in c.1899 [Medway Archives, C050961009]

In addition, there are solitary survivals. Nos 359 and 361 High Street are a pair of late-18th or early 19th century houses, now in use as shops.⁴⁰ No. 35 High Street Chatham has been provisionally dated to the early 18th century.⁴¹ A late-18th century dwelling known as Doust House stands to the rear of No. 321 High Street, probably built for the owner of the shipbuilding yard within which it once stood (Fig. 20).⁴² This represents a relatively grand back-plot house but a few more modest examples remain. One is the cottage (perhaps built as a pair) on Cooks Wharf, which has an 18th century appearance. Another is the grade II listed dwelling to the rear of No. 374 High Street, the only survival of a row once known as Hulkes Cottages.⁴³



Fig. 19 The British Queen public house, Chatham High Street in c.1890 [Medway Archives, C050960204]



Fig. 20 Doust House and the remnants of the ship yard to the rear of No. 321 High Street Rochester photographed in 1995 [© Crown copyright. Historic England Archive, AA95/06585]

Chatham Intra in the 19th century

The 19th century was a period of great change for Chatham, shaped by national trends - social, economic, technological, industrial and political. But the character of development was more akin to the rapidly expanding industrial towns of the Midlands or North than longer established towns such as Rochester. Over the century Chatham evolved from a somewhat dirty, haphazardly planned place that had grown up to service its dockyard into a mid-sized town with widened streets, public buildings and a new sense of civic independence and confidence in its future.

One factor driving change was the inexorable increase in Chatham's population, including military personnel (Fig. 21). Much of the urban growth took place in new suburbs such as New Brompton (Gillingham) but further densification occurred in areas like Chatham Intra. The rise in population came partly from improvements in living conditions and health care that led to decreased mortality. But much of the increase came from migration, as industrial and commercial opportunities drew people from the countryside to the towns. In Chatham the town's economic fortunes remained closely intertwined with the dockyard and garrison. But the growth of the Medway towns was also facilitated by the arrival of the railways in 1845. This initially terminated at Strood and the crossing of the Medway and construction of stations at Chatham and Rochester involved two different railway companies (see page 80).

Chatham's rapid population growth, which until c. 1850 included prisoners of war and convicts in hulks moored on the river, and the accelerating pace of industrialisation inevitably created serious issues of sanitation and public health. Like many towns, Chatham lacked adequate clean water supplies and proper sewers for much of the 19th century and in 1849 suffered a serious epidemic of cholera. A report on the outbreak by William Ranger identified the most unhealthy areas as being around The Brook.⁴⁴ In a letter written at the time by Thomas Stratton MD

to Sir William Burnett, Medical Director of the Navy, Stratton emphasised the difference between Chatham and Rochester, noting that in the latter the houses ‘have a better appearance, and the proportion of inhabitants in comfortable circumstances and with habits of attention to cleanliness, is evidently much greater than it is in the former town’.⁴⁵ These kind of unfavourable comparisons continued to be made during the 19th century. For example, an 1876 county handbook for Kent described Chatham as ‘a very different style of place to Rochester, a dirty unpleasant town devoted to the interests of soldiers, sailors and marines’.⁴⁶

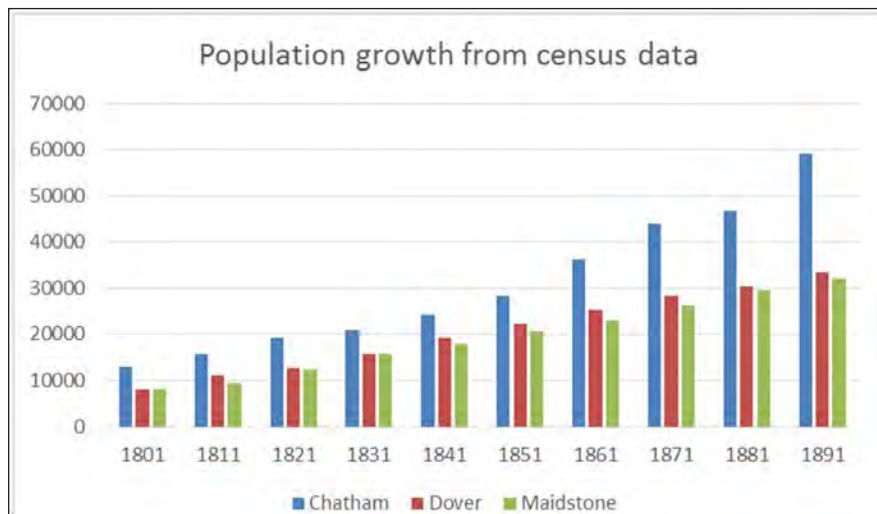


Fig. 21 Population growth in Chatham, Dover and Maidstone in the 19th century from census data

The continuing military influence

The Napoleonic Wars had been a time of opportunity for Chatham but when the conflict ended in 1815 there was a period of retrenchment as the wartime navy and dockyard labour force was reduced in size. However, Great Britain emerged from the wars with a secure and expanded empire and the status of a world power and the chief instrument for protecting trade and projecting authority was the Royal Navy. The so-called *Pax Britannica* relied on supremacy at sea and a constant investment in the navy, as sail-powered timber-hulled warships were superseded by iron-built steam-powered vessels with ever more powerful guns. This led to enhanced and expanded facilities in the naval dockyards, including Chatham.

In the ‘can-do’ spirit of the age the engineer John Rennie made an ambitious proposal to transform Chatham Dockyard by diverting the river Medway into a new cut across the Frindsbury peninsula and turning the redundant section of river into a giant wet dock with gates at either end. This project never happened but from 1861 a vast extension to the dockyard took place, including the construction of three great basins and the reclaiming of marshland behind a new sea wall. This provided the space for the facilities to build iron warships and ensured that Chatham remained one of the primary naval dockyards. Crawshaw gives a figure of 2,672 men working in Chatham dockyard in 1814, rising to 3,335 in 1866 and 4,475 in 1886.⁴⁷ There were also significant additions to the naval presence in the form of the Melville

Hospital, built in 1828, and the expansion of the Royal Marines barracks in 1857. Part of the workforce for the dockyard extension had been convict labour, for whom a prison had been constructed. At the end of the 19th century this was replaced by the massive naval barracks known as HMS Pembroke and Chatham became a manning port once again.

During the 19th century the army presence in Chatham also increased. The major fortifications were used for teaching siege warfare and what later became the Royal School of Military Engineering was established at Brompton Barracks in 1812. Chatham also became the base for soldiers at the beginning and end of their military careers. The Infantry barracks functioned as a recruiting and training centre for much of the British army and the home depot for regiments serving abroad, mainly in India. Men at the end of their service, including those with severe health issues, were sent to Chatham for assessment and discharge, with Fort Pitt serving as a military hospital and St Mary's Barracks as an Invalid Depot.

The tenor of the place in this era was captured by Charles Dickens. In *Pickwick Papers*, published in 1836, he wrote:

The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military. It is truly delightful to a philanthropic mind, to see these gallant men staggering along under the influence of an overflow, both of animal and ardent spirits....⁴⁸

And in 1851, in *Household Words*:

Coming into Chatham it appeared to me as if the feeble absurdity of an individual were made more and more manifest at every step I took. Men were only noticeable here by scores, by hundreds, by thousands, rank and file companies, regiments, detachments, vessels full for exportation. They walked about the streets in rows or bodies carrying their heads in exactly the same way and doing exactly the same thing with their limbs. Nothing in the shape of clothing was made for an individual; everything was contracted for by the million. The children of Israel were established in Chatham, as salesmen, outfitters, tailors, old clothesmen, army and navy accoutrement makers, bill discounters and general despoilers of the Christian world in tribes rather than families. The cannon and pyramidal piles of cannon balls renounced the insignificance of individuality and combined by the score.⁴⁹

Setting aside, but not ignoring, the anti-Semitic views expressed, what Dickens highlights was the consequences for Chatham of being a military town.

Governance

Until the mid-19th century the administration of Chatham came under Rochester although it had some means of local self-governance through the Court Leet, which was feudal in origin and linked to the Lord of the Manor of Chatham. The free

citizenry of Chatham annually elected 24 local men to act as jurors, led by a High Constable. They controlled the choice of public officials: the borseholder (a form of local policeman); the ale-conner (similar to an inspector of weights and measures); the reeve (similar to a chief magistrate); the beadle (town crier); and the pound keeper. In 1826 the legal functions of the Court were transferred to the county-based magistracy. Almost a decade later, in 1835, the Court considered but declined to seek the incorporation of Chatham as a borough.⁵⁰

In 1832 Chatham was given its own Member of Parliament as a consequence of the Reform Act of the same year. Initially the proposal had been for a single MP for both Rochester and Chatham but the electors of the former objected because they feared their opinions would be drowned out by the more populous voters of Chatham, many of whom relied on the Government for their employment or livelihoods. So both towns were allocated MPs with constituency boundaries that split Chatham Intra between the two elected representatives.

In 1849 the town finally acquired a modern administrative body when the Chatham Local Board of Health was formed, enabled by the Public Health Act 1848. The Board was given compulsory duties relating to sewers, drains, wells, water and gas works, refuse disposal, provision of privies, regulation of slaughterhouses and some industries, the prevention of 'nuisances', the tackling of pollution, the paving of streets, control of new buildings, oversight of lodging houses and the establishment of cemeteries and recreation grounds. However, the Board did not have responsibility for law and order and Chatham retained a reputation for lawlessness and drunken behaviour, exacerbated by an inadequate county-based police force. An early action by the Board was to order a detailed survey of the town in 1852-3 from the Westminster-based surveyor Edward Gotto to inform new schemes to improve its drainage (Fig. 22). The supervision of the works was then given to Gotto in 1854.⁵¹ From 1860 the pace of change accelerated as the Board of Health worked with major landowners such as St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Watts Charity to effect improvements. These included the creation of a new district around Medway Street, just to the east of the study area, on land created by the realignment of the river edge. In 1861-3 a new St Bartholomew's Hospital was built on the north side of New Road. At this time the condition of Chatham was described as 'improving' although one letter in a local newspaper claimed that 'much remains to be done in terms of cleansing and scrubbing, not to speak of ornament' in order for it to attain 'a position more in accordance with the dignity of a residence of 30,000 inhabitants'.⁵²

In 1890 Chatham secured incorporation as a municipal borough and thus full autonomy from Rochester. The new body combined the duties of the Board of Health and the Court Leet and in 1898-9 provided itself with a handsome town hall on Dock Road designed by a local architect, George Edward Bond.⁵³ The independent status of Chatham was further reinforced by the provision of other public institutions such as a library, although these tended not to be located in Chatham Intra.



Fig. 22 First Class Survey for Chatham General Board of Health, 1853 [Medway Archives]

Development

In Chatham Intra some of the early 19th century town improvements were the consequence of major fires in 1800 and 1820, which caused significant destruction to sections of the High Street. The first conflagration was in the vicinity of Chatham High Street and Heavysides Lane (see Fig. 106).⁵⁴ The rebuilding that followed allowed for the street to be widened and for the construction of a uniform row, Nos 40-72 Chatham High Street, initially named Hammonds Place (see below). Another major fire occurred in a similar location, at the eastern end of the area, in 1820. This led to the rebuilding of the Sun Tavern and the York Hotel.

In 1849 Thomas Stratton had noted that Chatham was 'the lowest situated of this cluster of towns: some parts of the High Street and some lanes and courts off it are only a few feet above the high-water level'.⁵⁵ He also observed the continuing presence of 'some ground set apart for market gardens, lying between the street and the Medway' in area in front of St Margaret's Bank (Fig. 23). This remained the case until the arrival of the railway in Chatham in 1855. After the line from London via Strood was taken across the Medway it facilitated development at the western end of Chatham Intra and in the Eastgate suburb of Rochester (see pages 80-1).

At the same time the consolidation of Chatham High Street as the commercial and retail centre of the town encouraged improvements and redevelopment to spread westwards into Chatham Intra. In the late-19th century Heavysides Lane was renamed Hamond Hill and acquired a Baptist Chapel and burial ground at its southern end. In the middle section of Chatham Intra change was driven by the most significant land owner, the governors of St Bartholomew's Hospital. On the southern side of the High Street the focus was on the building of shops with

living accommodation above but on north side there was a considerable expansion of industrial premises and wharfage and rather less attention was given to the buildings fronting the road. It is possible that the noise, dirt and smells from the riverside activities encouraged this difference in commercial and residential investment. There was also a sustained effort to widen the High Street by setting back the building line, particularly on its southern side (Fig. 24). In 1873 the governors of the Hospital tackled the stretch of road in front of St Bartholomew's Chapel (from Chapel Lane to the Royal Oak Public House), widening it and clearing the buildings to give a view of the building as well as permitting the erection of 'a number of large and commodious shops in lieu of the miserable shops and premises that now occupy the site' (Fig. 25).⁵⁶

In 1883 further improvements were initiated at the west end of the High Street, including the clearance of 'objectionable premises' and the brick wall of the former Victualling Yard.⁵⁷ Part of the site was redeveloped on a new building line as a row of houses, Medway Terrace, Nos 237-257 High Street Rochester. One of the displaced businesses, the wholesale grocer Banham & Pope, briefly opened a new warehouse at No. 354 High Street. The trustees of the Hospital then undertook development on the south side of the High Street in 1886 between the 'Bethel Chapel and the Jew's Synagogue'.⁵⁸ This allowed for new properties fronting the road, Nos 348-64 High Street Rochester, while the back plots were used for a row of 12 houses, St Bartholomew's Terrace, which bears a datestone of 1887 (Fig. 26).



Fig. 23 Map of the City of Rochester by R. Sale dated 1816 [Medway Archives]



Fig. 24 Projecting premises on High Street Chatham in c.1925 indicating the previous building line [Medway Archives, DE402-15-41(L)]



Fig. 25 Map of improvements around St Bartholomew's Chapel dated 1873 [Medway Archives, CH 2/36]

The nature of the development taking place in Chatham Intra in the 19th century was charted in the increasingly accurate mapping of the area from the 1840s. These commenced with tithe maps of the three parishes in which the area fell (St Nicholas, Rochester 1841, Chatham Parish 1842, and St Margaret Rochester 1844). Followed by the 1853 Board of Health map, although this conflates the Sir John Hawkins' Hospital with the medieval leper hospital. In 1861-3 the Ordnance Survey mapped the area at various scales, revised in 1895-6 and again in 1906-7 and 1932.



Fig. 26 St Bartholomew's Terrace in 2021 [Joanna Smith ©Historic England HSLSE09/P2]

In the first half of the 19th century some idea of the character and appearance of the area can be obtained from artistic depictions. These include a view by J.M.W. Turner that shows the view from Fort Amherst to Fort Pitt with the town of Chatham sitting in the low ground between these two fortifications.⁵⁹ Such representations, which include an undated painting in the collection of Fort Amherst and engravings for Kershaw & Son dated c.1850, make clear how intensive development along the river side had become and the high volume of ships using the river. From the end of the century these kinds of scenic illustrations were amplified by photographic views.

Industry

Some indication of the nature and extent of industry and commerce in Chatham Intra in the 19th century can be obtained from trade directories, such as those published in 1824, 1838, 1840 and 1858. The enlarged riverside was the focus of industrial activity. Amongst the businesses operating here was the Medway Ironworks, which manufactured machinery for the cement industry (based on chalk digging) and the brickmaking industry (based on clay extraction). During the 19th century these activities became major elements of the Medway valley economy. Coal distribution remained an important trade for Chatham Intra, supplying the domestic market but also used to power steam engines, to make coal gas and, towards the end of the century, to generate electricity.

During this period the breweries of Chatham Intra increased their production and improved their facilities. Other industrial premises in the area included the newspaper offices of *The Chatham News* at the corner of Gundulph Road and the High Street, which bears an inscription of 1859 (Fig. 27). The printworks, located to the south of the offices, were seriously damaged in a fire in 1897 that destroyed the machinery and type.⁶⁰ Other premises with likely industrial origins include a pair of buildings, now combined as No. 2 Hamond Hill, which retain taking-in doors and

a wall crane. Another group of former industrial or commercial premises survive at the junction of St Bartholomew's Lane with Gundulph Road. Now converted to residential use, Magpie House, retains the openings for taking-in doors, a block carriageway and iron-framed windows.



Fig. 27 The former offices of The Chatham News, No. 28 Chatham High Street/Gundulph Road [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289242]

Hammond Place and retail architecture

One key trend of the 19th century was the development of the section of the High Street within Chatham Intra as an important commercial artery. One early scheme was prompted by the post-fire rebuilding from 1802, overseen by one of affected landowners, the Chatham Chest. In September 1800, just three months after the fire, ground for building leases was being offered 'situated in the very best part of Chatham High Street for trade' which 'in consequence of the improvements intended will be the most desirable situation in the town'.⁶¹ The following April the Governors of the Chest attended the laying of a foundation stone for the first two properties of an intended row of '17 houses on a very extensive scale a magnificent pile of buildings on the ruins'.⁶² The first of these was ready to let by February 1802,

advertised as being ‘well calculated for shops of show and trade, being built with every convenience for this purpose’.⁶³ What this all amounted to was a uniform development combining shops with accommodation, of brick construction, on a new building line set back from the pre-fire frontage thereby allowing for a widening of the High Street (Fig. 28). This prestigious new development was named in honour of Sir Andrew Snape Hammond (1738-1828), Baronet and Comptroller of the Navy, and supervisor of the Chest estates.

On the 1842 tithe map and the 1852-3 Board of Health map Hammond Place is shown as a row of 16 properties with rear gardens stretching up the hill (Fig. 28). The difference in the number of properties from that given in the 1801 advertisement is probably explained by Nos 44-46 being counted as a single property in the mid-19th century. The original form of the development was as three-storey, two-bay properties with red-brick facades and, presumably, ground-floor shops. Census data from 1851 gives the occupations of residents (Fig. 29), indicative of the kind of people who living and working in Chatham Intra at the time. Today the row has undergone a considerable degree of alteration, including the rendering and painting of elevations, replacement windows and shop fronts (Fig. 30). Nos 50-6 were damaged by fire in 1871 and presumably rebuilt soon after and other late-19th redevelopments included Nos 66-68 and No. 72. But the row seems to have maintained some of its commercial success, as indicated by the upgrading of shopfronts in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period (Fig. 31).

As a development Hammond Place falls in to the category of a ‘proto shopping parade’, as defined in Historic England’s ‘Introduction to



Fig. 28 Detail of Hammond Place from the Board of Health Map of 1853 [Medway Archives]

Original house no.	Nature of Business	Comments
1	Retired R.N. surgeon	
2	Grocer, with assistants (4)	
3	Slopseller and Navy Agent	
4	Grocer	
5	Outfitter	
5	Upholsterer	Double unit
6	Oil and Colour Merchant	Possible seat of 1871 fire
7	Woollens Draper	
8	Stationer	
9	Milliner	
10	Hairdresser	
11	Linen and Woollens Draper	
12	No one living there on night of census	
13	Wine Merchant	
14	Chemist	
16	Timber Merchant	

Fig. 29 Table listing the occupants of Hammond Place in 1851 taken from the census

Heritage Assets' on purpose-built shopping parades.⁶⁴ These kinds of uniform developments combining shops and accommodation emerged in the mid- to late-18th century in London's fashionable shopping districts and in leading spa towns and seaside resorts. Less architecturally grand terraces of shops and houses were also built in places such as Boston, Lincolnshire in 1820. The date of Hammond Place makes it a relatively early example of this new trend in retail architecture, which would have been in marked contrast to the more haphazard character of the existing developments along the High Street.



Fig. 30 Nos 48-68 High Street Chatham (part of Hammond Place) [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289235]



Fig 31 Postcard showing the shopfronts at Nos 40-68 Chatham High Street (formerly Hammond Place) c.1900 [Medway Archives, DE402/15/21 (L)]

Commercial development in the late-19th century and George Edward Bond

In the late-19th and early 20th century the level of rebuilding along the High Street was considerable. This included groups of shops, such as Victoria Buildings, Nos 380-4 High Street Rochester, which has a date stone of 1889 and an eclectic architectural treatment (Fig. 32). There were also larger developments such as Nos 86-100 Chatham High Street, built after 1902 on the site of the Best Brewery. Interspersed between the shops were theatres, public houses and hotels. At the western end of Chatham High Street this created an impressive streetscape, as it merged into the commercial heartland of the town. But such was the level of demand that entire length of the High Street in Chatham Intra became part of a near

continuous run of entertainment and retail premises from Chatham Hill to Rochester Bridge

One of the leading architects of Chatham and Rochester was George Edward Bond (1853-1914), responsible for numerous public buildings, including Chatham Town Hall (1898-90), the Medway Conservancy Board office in Rochester High Street (1909) and the Theatre Royal, Chatham High Street (1899), as well as houses, churches and shop fronts.⁶⁵ He is known to have had an office in Chatham Intra at Victoria Buildings before moving to the Sun Pier Chambers, when he was in partnership with another architect, Frank T. Goring. Several buildings in Chatham Intra have been attributed to Bond including Sun Pier Chambers (Fig. 33) and The Prince of Orange Public House, No. 24 Chatham High Street (see Fig. 107). Quite how large a role Bond played in reshaping the character and appearance of Chatham Intra in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period remains to be uncovered.

Chatham Intra in the 20th Century

In Phillip MacDougall's account *A Century of Chatham* he characterised the fortunes of the town in the 20th century as falling into two distinct halves; a period of continuity up to the mid-century followed by one of decline and challenge.

One aspect that remained initially unchanged was the town's dependence on the military. In 1914 the Medical Officer of Chatham Borough Council characterised the town in the following way:



Fig. 32 Victoria Buildings, Nos 354-358 High Street Rochester [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289270]



Fig 33 Exterior of Sun Pier Chambers in 1968 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb68/02397]

It is essentially a naval and military centre, and has no large industries except the dockyard on which its prosperity depends, and where the bulk of its male population is employed.... There are considerable numbers of soldiers and sailors on active service, retired naval, military and civil servants and others employed in various subsidiary industries and businesses necessitated by the ordinary wants of the population. A few clothing factories give employment both as factory hands and outworkers to a number of females.⁶⁶

In 1901 the dockyard employed 10,000 people and it is estimated that more than 15,000 families derived their income from supporting the navy in some way. To which could be added those supporting the army and the Royal Marines.⁶⁷ After a significant increase in the size of the fleet during World War One the navy contracted in the inter-war years. This led to some unemployment although the dockyard remained an important facility.

As Chatham Intra was already heavily developed by this period there was little scope for new building. Some industrial premises on the riverside were enlarged or replaced and a few High Street plots were rebuilt, such as Nos 337-341 High Street. Despite the 19th century efforts at road widening the High Street was too narrow for trams, introduced in Chatham in 1902, so the New Road was used instead. Chatham Intra suffered little or no damage from wartime bombing and in the mid-century it remained a vibrant place for retail, industry and commerce (Fig. 34).



Fig. 34 Aerial view of Chatham Intra in 1920 [© Historic England. Aerofilms Collection, EPW000453]

Post-war change

The largest factor in the fading fortunes of Chatham, and hence Chatham Intra, in the second half of the 20th century was the decline in the country's armed forces. The first to leave were the Royal Marines, who departed in 1950. The dockyard continued after World War Two but in a post-imperial world a much smaller Royal Navy did not require the same amount of shore-based support. The facilities were reworked to enable the re-fitting of nuclear submarines but in 1981 the decision to close the dockyard was announced and the site ceased to be an active naval base three years later. Although not unexpected, this event had a profound impact on the town.

But wider societal changes also played a role in the changing character of Chatham Intra. For example, the arrival of television contributed to a steep reduction in live theatre audiences and cinema-going leading to the closure or repurposing of many entertainment venues. Rising car ownership had an impact, reflected in the construction of a purpose-built car show room with workshops for Grays of Chatham in the 1950s on the site of Nos 1-19 Chatham High Street but also in the utilisation of cleared sites on the High Street for car parks. And retail habits altered, facilitated by the construction of shopping centres and supermarkets, leading to a decline in traditional high street usage. In Chatham the town centre underwent a major redevelopment of this kind when The Pentagon was opened in the early 1970s. This drew business away from Chatham Intra, which also struggled in the economic recessions of the late-20th century, resulting in it acquiring the character of an in-between place linking the commercial centres of Chatham and Rochester.

The rapid industrial decline affecting the United Kingdom from the 1960s was also keenly felt in Chatham Intra. Many of the riverside industries went out of business and levels of activity on the wharves greatly diminished. This period of changing fortunes was captured on film, in programmes such as *Softly Softly* a 1970s BBC police drama, partly filmed in Medway. The area was also affected by redevelopment, including a road scheme at the west end of Medway Street that required the demolition of the Sun Hotel, which had long served as a visual gateway to Chatham Intra (see Figs 108-109). The site of the Empire Theatre and Cinema was cleared for an 11-storey slab block, Anchorage House, designed by Oscar Garry & Partners for MEPC plc (Fig. 35).⁶⁸ The office building, completed in 1974, was mainly occupied by Government agencies and the cleared area around its base permitted views to the Medway. But its scale and height were in marked contrast to the general character of the surrounding development. Elsewhere on the High Street areas were cleared and fell into intermediate uses, included the site of Nos 21-35 Chatham High Street, used for car sales, and two sites on the south side of Rochester High Street which became car parks. Nonetheless a limited amount of development has occurred, such as a block of 40 flats on the riverside, Empire Reach, whose construction was approved in 2013 (Fig. 35).⁶⁹

This picture of economic decline and low development pressures may have contributed to the survival of some of the historic buildings in Chatham Intra. In 1994 the special architectural and historic interest of the areas was recognized by the designation of the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area. Between 2004 and 2014

it was the subject of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a partnership between Medway Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund that was intended to reverse economic and physical decline. Much of the grant money was focussed on the repair or reinstatement of historically appropriate shop fronts (Fig. 36). As a result of the THI and other regeneration initiatives Chatham Intra has begun to experience positive change in recent decades, attracting new businesses and uses associated with the creative arts. The HSHAZ represents the latest effort to maintain this upward trajectory.



Fig. 35 Anchorage House and Empire Reach in 2021 [Damian Grady ©Historic England Archive, 33969_057]



Fig. 36 No. 35 Chatham High Street after a shopfront restoration [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289368]

PART TWO: ASPECTS OF CHATHAM INTRA

1 The Charitable landowners

St Bartholomew's Hospital, Chapel and Estate

The hospital for lepers 'near unto the Citie of Rochester' established in 1078 by Bishop Gundulph remained unfinished at the time of his death and the chapel was eventually completed under Hugh de Trottiscliffe, a monk at Rochester, in c.1124.⁷⁰ In 1245 Henry III granted it a charter and in 1348 Edward III gave it relief from all taxation, confirmed by Richard II (in 1379) and Henry VI (in 1448). But the hospital always had close ties to the Priory of Rochester, on which it relied heavily.

Various historical accounts of the hospital exist, notably those published in 1772, 1874, c.1896 and 1962.⁷¹ But much remains unclear about its plan and appearance. It would appear, that it did not follow the common medieval model with a long nave containing the beds from where the patients could observe services at the east end of the building. Rather, an alternative arrangement has been suggested in which the hall was located to the south of the chapel.⁷² References also exist to a gatehouse and the hospital would presumably have needed service buildings and a cemetery.⁷³ An 1873 report describes the finding of burials but otherwise the location and extent of a burial ground is unknown.⁷⁴ There may also have been a wharf serving the facility.⁷⁵

The land granted for the support of the hospital does not appear to have been adequate for its needs and the poverty of the establishment may account for it not being conveyed to the Crown during the Dissolution, the fate suffered by most other religious hospitals. The loss of allowances from the Priory of Rochester precipitated its decline and in 1559 the Chapel was referred to as 'old and ruinous and like to come to utter decaie' and so its conversion to a 'honest and seemlie' dwelling house was approved.⁷⁶ Eleven years later the antiquarian William Lambarde described it as 'a poor shew of a decayed hospital'.⁷⁷

As Chatham Intra began to develop in the late-16th century the value of the hospital estate began to increase. By 1837 the income generated by the hospital lands was no longer being used to support the care of the sick and was being treated as general income by the Dean at Rochester. Following a case in Chancery it was determined that the charity should contribute funds towards the construction of a new facility and St Bartholomew's Hospital was opened on the north side of the New Road in 1863. This was built on land that had formed part of the original 11th century foundation, thus redirecting the charity to its original purpose, providing medical care for the local population.⁷⁸ This second establishment, which dominates views of Chatham Intra, remained in use until 2016.

St Bartholomew's Chapel

The only surviving part of the medieval hospital (above ground) is the chapel, which is a grade II* listed building.⁷⁹ Located beside the administrative boundary

of Chatham and Rochester, the complex just fell within the latter. Constructed from flint and rubble with a tile roof the building stands slightly set back from road (see Fig. 2, Fig. 37). After a long period in residential occupation it was returned to religious use in the early 18th century. Dean Prat of Rochester (in office 1706-23) took credit for this. In a letter he claimed that the ‘very scandalous condition in which a sacred chapple belonging to ye said hospital had long been in’ led him to buy out the leases ‘at an extravagant rate’.⁸⁰ He ordered the partitions within the building to be removed, repaired its fabric, put in a new floor and furnished it with a pulpit, desk and font. But he gave no indication of how the chapel would be provided with a chaplain without imposing an unbearable cost on the two remaining brethren. In 1743 William Walter (a Justice of the Peace at Chatham) bought out the leases of two tenements adjoining the building, and used these to provide the land for an extension to the west end of the chapel, including a low tower or steeple. He also pewed the building, which facilitated its use for worship, and it became a chapel of ease for Chatham church and St Margaret’s Rochester. Walter also used the rent of a lease to provide an income for the building.



Fig. 37 South side of St Bartholomew’s Chapel photographed by W. J. Fullerton between 1940 and 1955 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb56/00507]

The building was subsequently repaired in 1820 and 1846 and remodelled in 1858 and in 1896 a major restoration and rebuilding took place, overseen by Sir George Gilbert Scott (Fig. 38).⁸¹ No detailed records of the work appear to have survived but it has been suggested that the work was based on the chapel of St Bartholomew at Sandwich, Kent, which was superficially similar to the Chatham building and which Scott had also restored.⁸²



Fig 38 Two views of the Chapel St Bartholomew drawn in 1780 [© The British Library Board Maps K.Top.16.42.k.]

A pre-restoration image of the chapel in John Thorpe's *Custumale Roffense* of 1788 suggests that the most ancient part of the present building is the apsidal east end.⁸³ This is also shown in a watercolour sketch dating from between 1770 and 1790, which captures how the chapel had become pressed in by other buildings (Fig. 39).⁸⁴ Around 1873 these were largely cleared and Chapel Hill was widened, opening up the building to view (Fig. 40). The work also exposed arched recesses in the south wall of the building through which, it was speculated, the patients might have once observed services in the chapel. The painted plaster finishes found on the wall were thought to confirm a date for an adjoining building that was close to the foundation of the hospital.⁸⁵

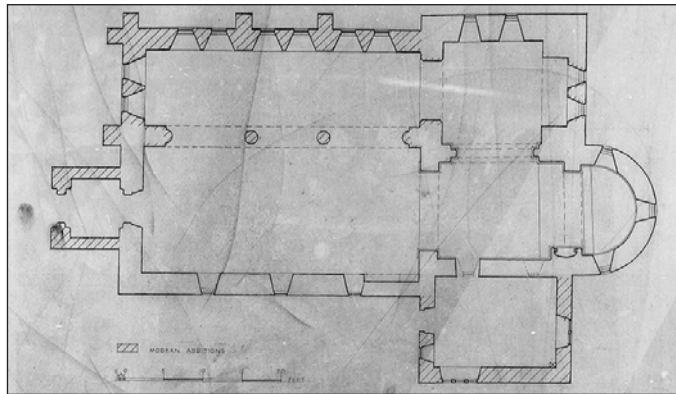


Fig 39 Plan of St Bartholomew's Chapel showing the later additions, 1953 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, MD53/00023]



Fig 40 The environs of St Bartholomew's Chapel before clearance in 1873 taken from the 1853 Board of Health map [Medway Archives]

In the late-20th century the chapel became redundant. After a period of disrepair the building was restored and passed into various uses, most recently that of a gym.

The Hospital lands

An inquisition in 1342 into the funding of the hospital stated that its lands included 3 acres near the burial ground and 1½ acres of salt meadow at Chatham near La Teghe (a name that recurs in later documents as the Tye or Tigh).⁸⁶ A survey of 1534 described the house or mansion of the hospital as having 3 rods of land attached to it, yielding 13s 4d and another piece of adjoining land of 9 acres worth 9s.⁸⁷

During the 16th century the value of this land increased, as Denne and Shrubsole explained in 1772:

But as soon as there was a prospect of a part of the estate belonging to it being improvable, it attracted the notice of some avaricious persons. The lands lying contiguous to the hospital, and those

chiefly on the banks of the river, were what they aimed to secure; and the alteration in the value of this ground was entirely owing to the establishing of a royal dockyard in the neighbourhood, which occasioned in a few years such a conflux of people to Chatham, that it became necessary to erect houses for their accommodation.⁸⁸

In 1579 a lawsuit had been launched by the Exchequer to wrest lands from the hospital but had been halted by the Lord Treasurer probably at the request of the Bishop of Rochester. Attempts to obtain the hospital land were renewed in the early 17th century until the Court of Chancery decided in favour of the hospital in 1627. The settlement of the case required compensation to be paid to Lady Agrippina Bingley, the widow of Sir Richard Bingley, Surveyor of the Navy, who had had a tenancy on part of the estate and had sought to obtain control of it.⁸⁹ This was paid by the Dean of Rochester, which reinforced the control of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester over the governors, brethren and land of the hospital.

As Denne and Shrubsole suggested the growing naval presence at Chatham seems to have been a significant factor in encouraging development on the Hospital lands in the 16th and 17th centuries. The most notable example is Sir John Hawkins (see below) but other individuals with a naval or dockyard association leasing hospital land included Gervase Mund and Richard Godden. Mund's will of 1631 records him living at a property he held 'by vertue of a lease made by the Deane of the Cathedrall church of Rochester and the bretheren of the hospital of St. Bartholomew in Chatham'.⁹⁰ This document mentions two other houses, one occupied by his son, Richard Mund and the other by Robert Ambrose, boatswain of his majesty's ship Coventrie. The location of these properties are broadly indicated on a plan of the Sir John Hawkins Hospital land, probably dating from the mid-18th century but taken from an older document, which marks the land 'whereupon Gervas Mund formerly built' fronting the High Street to the west of the land leased by Hawkins (Fig. 41).⁹¹ A will by the shipwright Richard Godden, dated 1669, also mentions land held on lease from the Brethren of St Bartholomew. This seems to have encompassed a wharf and four properties with gardens and orchards. He bequeathed one property to his son, Edward Godden, a messuage or tenement occupied by a mariner, John Andrews and a second property to another son, Joseph Godden, which also contained a passageway to the riverside. His own house 'lately built by him' was left to a son of the same name along with a fourth property which Richard Godden had bought from his son Edward, occupied by a shipwright, John Bull.⁹²

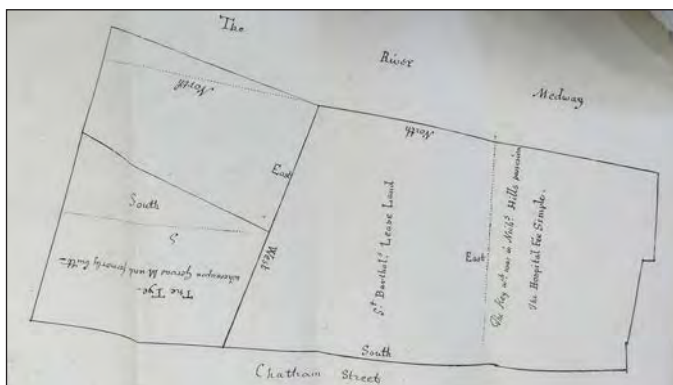


Fig. 41 Outline plan of land in the vicinity of Hawkins' Hospital dating from c.1740 (the text identifying Mund's lease is upside down) [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH108/544]

Sir John Hawkins's estate

Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595) has been traditionally described as a 'many-talented man ...one of the greatest of his age: seaman, navigator, strategist, administrator, businessman, Member of Parliament, innovator and patriot'. He has also been, and continues to be, seen as a deeply controversial figure because of his pivotal role in the transatlantic slave trade, extending the system that operated between England, Guinea and Brazil to the Spanish colonies in the West Indies.⁹³

Between 1578 and 1588 Hawkins was Treasurer of the Navy, a role that frequently brought him to the newly established dockyard at Chatham. He obtained two adjoining parcels of land in Chatham Intra, part freehold and part held under lease from St Bartholomew's Hospital. This formed part of an older enclosure known as 'the Key' (sometime spelt Quay) which had been subsequently subdivided and partially sold off by the hospital.⁹⁴ The freehold portion of the land, which formed the eastern half of the site, was already relatively developed and had passed through various owners before Hawkins acquired it. In 1499 it had contained a messuage, a garden and appurtenances to which two yards and a storehouse had been added by 1577.⁹⁵ The presence of the latter suggests a landing place. The western leasehold parcel appears to have been less developed, still perhaps an open field in 1545, when it was held along with a separate plot of marshland by Walter Hayte.⁹⁶ Around 1576-7 the two holdings passed into the hands of William Barnes, who would have been known to Hawkins as he was one of two 'chief masters' appointed by Elizabeth I to a commission that was looking into the state of the navy. It was from Barnes that Hawkins obtained the freehold and leasehold premises in 1582. The involvement of two senior naval figures with the site in Chatham is noteworthy. The site then contained a house, storehouse, two yards, an adjoining garden, a section of 'The Quay' and the marshland, altogether procured by Hawkins for £100.⁹⁷ Thereafter the freehold land was used for the almshouses and the leasehold portion contained the Hawkins mansion. The dividing line between the two ran slightly to the west of the administrative boundary between Rochester and Chatham.

A plan, dated c. 1729 but evidently showing the 17th century arrangement, depicts both the outline layout and elevations of the buildings fronting onto the highway (here named the King's High Road) that stood on the combined holding (Fig. 42). On the east side are the hospital buildings adjoined by a dwelling house and several buildings to the north (presumably including the storehouse) on land that was leased out by the hospital and subsequently evolved into Boundary Wharf (see below). On the west side are a sequence of houses, the largest of which was presumably Hawkins's mansion and a large building adjoining the riverside on the site of what later became Central Wharf.⁹⁸ Hawkins's house appears to have been orientated toward the east, facing the almshouses, and both were accessed via a main gateway on the High Street.

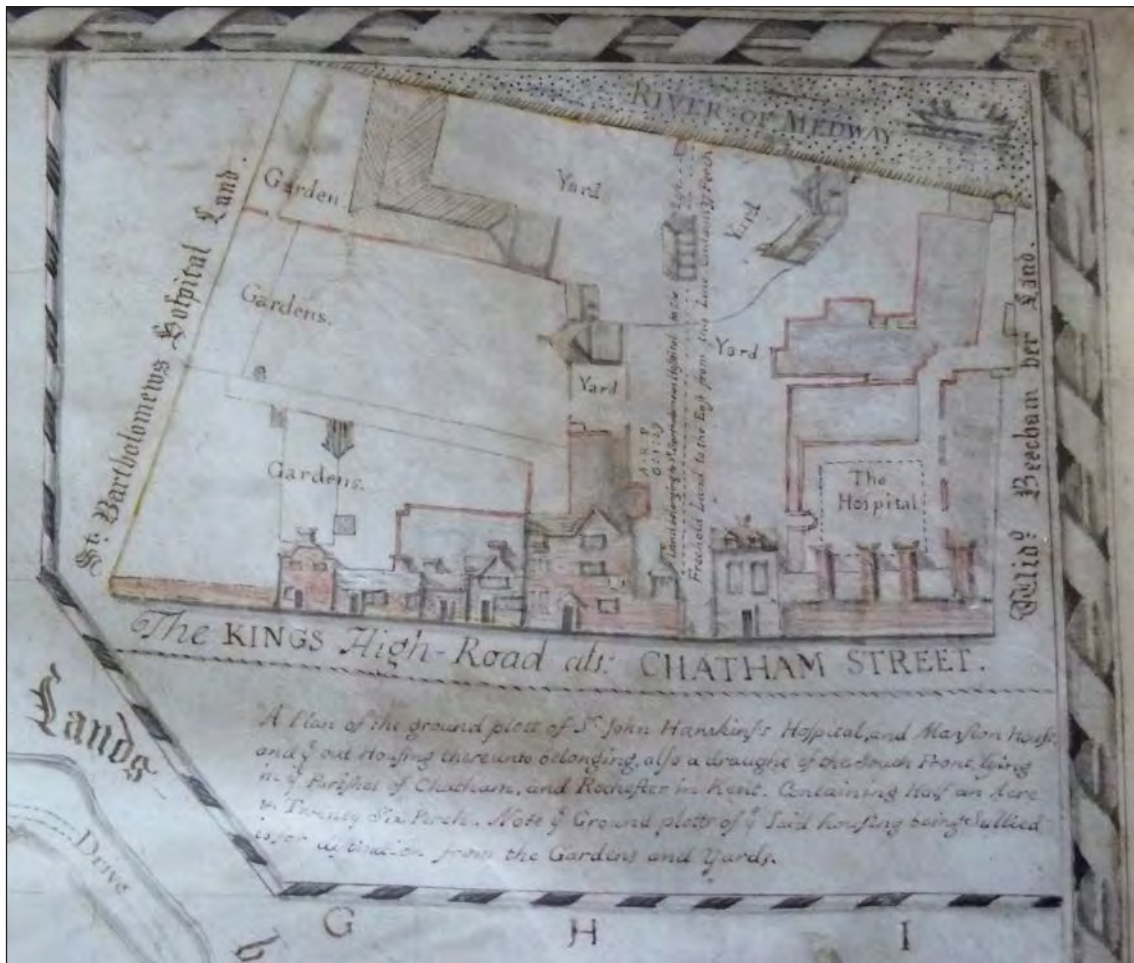


Fig. 42 Part of a plan of the estates of Hawkins's Hospital in c.1720 showing the sites on High Street Rochester [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH108/276a]

The Hospital buildings

The context for the foundation of the Hospital was the lack of specific onshore provision for sick or wounded sailors. After the naval victory of 1588 over the Spanish Armada large numbers of sailors were paid off and forced to seek parish relief, often becoming a burden on maritime towns such as Chatham. This seems to have been a spur to action by Hawkins and others, resulting in the formation of the Chatham Chest and the establishment of a hospital for seamen or shipwrights in need at Chatham Intra. This significantly predated the establishment of the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich in 1692. Hawkins's was a private charity to which deserving men and their wives were admitted after a selection process. A fuller account of the Hospital is given in a 1916 publication and in a thesis completed in 1983.⁹⁹

The almshouses, built around 1582, were situated opposite the ancient leper hospital and were thus the second alms-giving establishment to be established in Chatham Intra. The hospital was comprised of ten dwellings arranged around three sides of a courtyard, orientated towards the west, with a washhouse and chapel in the north-east corner (Fig. 43-4). The yard was entered via a gate which bore a biblical

inscription. This was in addition to an outer gate on the High Street, that also served the mansion and which also bore a quotation from the bible.¹⁰⁰ After falling into disrepair the almshouses were rebuilt in 1789 in the current arrangement (Fig. 45), with two parallel ranges extending northwards from the High Street and a central Council House building (also referred to as the Board, Committee or Trustees Room). An additional pair of houses and new washhouses were added at the rear of the Council House in 1812, which brought the number of dwellings to 12.¹⁰¹ The layout of the dwellings, each of which had a one-room plan with a tight winder stair on two floors and a cellar, required modernisation in the 20th century. This was proposed in 1955-6 but seemingly not carried out until 1983-4 (Fig. 46).¹⁰² The hospital is grade II listed.¹⁰³



Fig. 43 Plan of Hospital's estate c.1750 showing the original arrangement of the almshouses [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH 108/344]



Fig. 44 A mid-20th century view of the courtyard of the Sir John Hawkins' Hospital [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb42/00171]



Fig. 45 The front elevation of the Sir John Hawkins' Hospital in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289356]

The Chatham Chest

Before Sir John Hawkins founded his hospital he was involved in the creation of a fund to support sailors in need, which came to be known as The Chatham Chest, along with his cousin, Sir Francis Drake, and Lord Howard of Effingham. This allowed serving sailors to make contributions from their pay into the fund, which was then used to provide relief for injured or disabled colleagues. An iron-bound chest, thought to date from around 1625, was used to store the money (now on display at Chatham dockyard).¹⁰⁴ The financial assistance was administered by the Navy and survived as a distinct entity until 1803 when it was transferred from Chatham Dockyard and merged with a pension scheme operated by Greenwich Hospital.¹⁰⁵

The fund did not rely solely on sailors' contributions and invested in land as an additional source of income. Between 1617 and 1647 property was acquired in various parishes in Kent, including Chatham but also Chislet, St. Mary's in the Hundred of Hoo, Minster-in-Sheppey, Rainham, Upchurch, and Boxley. The Chest became a significant property owner in Chatham (Fig. 46) and their holdings, at the eastern end of Chatham Intra, included three pieces of land acquired from Lady Agrippina Bingley that encompassed Godsight Farm, several messuages and a wharf.¹⁰⁶

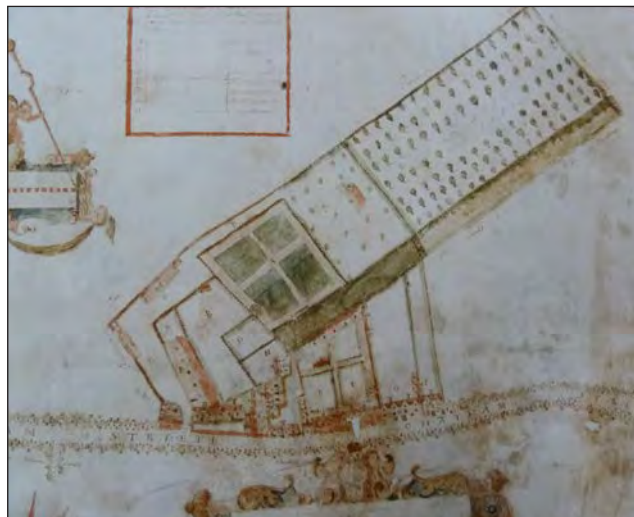


Fig. 46 Map of part of the Chatham Chest estate, 1688 [Medway Archives, U1193/P1]

Part of this acquisition was apparently used for the Best Brewery, as an inscription referencing 'godsite' was discovered during the demolition of the mansion house in 1902.¹⁰⁷ The Chest also held land on Heavysides Lane (now Hamond Hill) including the substantial property at No.4 (Camden House).¹⁰⁸ In the early 19th century the charity began to dispose of parts of their Chatham estate, including seven leasehold houses in Heavysides Lane and five leasehold houses in Hammond Place that were advertised for sale in 1807.¹⁰⁹

The Watts Charity

Another charity to own land at the extreme eastern end of Chatham Intra was that founded by Richard Wattes (1513-1579). Wattes was the Deputy Victualler of the Navy in 1554 and 1559, a Rochester Bridge Warden and MP for the city. Under the terms of his will a charity was established that undertook the construction of almshouses in Rochester High Street in c. 1586, followed by a further group of buildings on Maidstone Road, Rochester in 1858. Part of the charity's income was derived from various lands acquired by Wattes in Chatham that included land adjoining 'the Key' and the site of what later became Holborn Wharf.¹¹⁰ In the 1860s the charity began a significant programme of improvements to their estate that transformed the area to the east of Sun Wharf and Pier. It remains an active presence in the area today.¹¹¹

2 Individual sites and buildings

Nos 365 – 377 Rochester High Street (including Featherstone House) and Central Wharf

Nos 365-379 occupy a site with important historical associations and possess a high degree of architectural interest, thereby making an important contribution to the character of Chatham Intra (Figs 47-48). The row of buildings fronting the High Street form part of a larger site that extends to the riverside, encompassing Central Wharf. In the 1580s this formed the leasehold portion of Sir John Hawkins's estate. Today the site contains a mixture of structures of various dates and functions including former houses, purpose-built retail buildings and wharf-related premises (Fig. 49).



Fig 47 Nos 371-377 High Street Rochester viewed from Gundulph Road in 2004 [Jonathan Clarke ©Historic England HSLSE09/P3]



Fig. 48 Rear elevations of Nos 365-371 High Street Rochester [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289342]



Fig. 49 Detail showing Nos 363-377 High Street Rochester from the OS town map of 1866 [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

The oldest of the buildings would appear to be No. 373 High Street, which occupies the site of the Hawkins mansion and may incorporate some of its fabric. Nos 367-373 were seemingly built in 1745 as a short row of four dwellings, the easternmost of which, Nos 365, was rebuilt in 1815 when it was linked to an adjoining property of a similar date, No. 363, that was cleared in the late-20th century.¹¹² No. 377 was constructed as a dwelling house around 1789 and originally stood apart from the rest of the group.¹¹³ It was subsequently linked to the No. 373 in the inter-war years by an infill building, No. 375.¹¹⁴

Between 1901 and 1981 the Featherstone family ran a local department store from multiple premises on the High Street, including No. 351 (see below) and Nos 331-7, but centred upon the group of buildings at Nos 365-377 High Street. The business carried out various alterations and adaptations to the buildings to facilitate their use as retail premises and Nos 373-5 became their main office. The firm also built a large extension at the rear of Nos 373-7. After the store closed the premises passed into other commercial uses although they have remained in the family's ownership and partial use. Nos 365-377 High Street Rochester are listed grade II but the brevity of the descriptions, which are almost entirely external, fails to convey their full architectural or historic special interest.¹¹⁵

No. 373-5 High Street: the mansion of Sir John Hawkins and the painted room

Development on the site appears to have been initiated by Sir John Hawkins when he used part of the land to build a house in the 1580s. This was at the south east corner of the site and faced eastwards, with a projecting entrance bay or porch that was accessed via a gateway on the High Street and a return elevation or wing facing the road that contained a doorway (see Fig. 42).¹¹⁶

After Hawkins's death in 1595 the hospital he had founded took over the lease and let the property to tenants, beginning with Christopher Chapman in 1597, who added a new stable and outhouse.¹¹⁷ In 1619 an inventory was made of the furniture and fittings during the tenancy of John Wrythesley.¹¹⁸ By 1699 the mansion seems to have been subdivided into two dwellings that were separately let. However, parts of the building seem to have been retained by the hospital for the use of the Deputy Governor and other governors for meetings and to store their records and funds, which were held in a large chest whose presence was noted in 1619.¹¹⁹ In 1750 the parlour of the building, said to be next to the porch, contained tables and chairs which were used for the meetings along with a portrait of Hawkins and other paintings while the chest was stored in a garret or upper room.¹²⁰ That same year a lease was issued to William Chambers and his nephew John Roberts (house builders) for the mansion and adjoining properties (Fig. 50). In the document Chambers was described as having undertaken 'substantial' repairs to the house, which he co-occupied with John Major.¹²¹ After his uncle's death in 1774 Roberts took over the lease and house, sharing the property with Mrs Broocks. In 1790 the main lease to the Hawkins' Hospital fell in but the trustees declined to renew it because they found the new terms unacceptable and the land and buildings reverted to St Bartholomew's Hospital. The latter then issued a new lease to Roberts. Presumably the items belonging to Hawkins's Hospital were removed to the rebuilt almshouses at this time. In 1818 it was noted in a survey of the Hospital property by Mr Sidden that part of the mansion had been 'taken down, enlarged and rebuilt into two dwellings', at which time it was lived in by Thomas Morson and Lyon Benjamin.¹²²

In the early 20th century No. 373-5 was taken over by the Featherstone family and was subsequently adapted for retail and office use. In the 1920s or early 1930s Featherstone's built over the open ground that separated No. 373 from No. 377, a

space that had originally functioned as a yard for the mansion, in order to create a continuous frontage to the row of buildings.¹²³ A large extension to the rear was built in the mid-20th century in two phases, to provide additional space for the business.

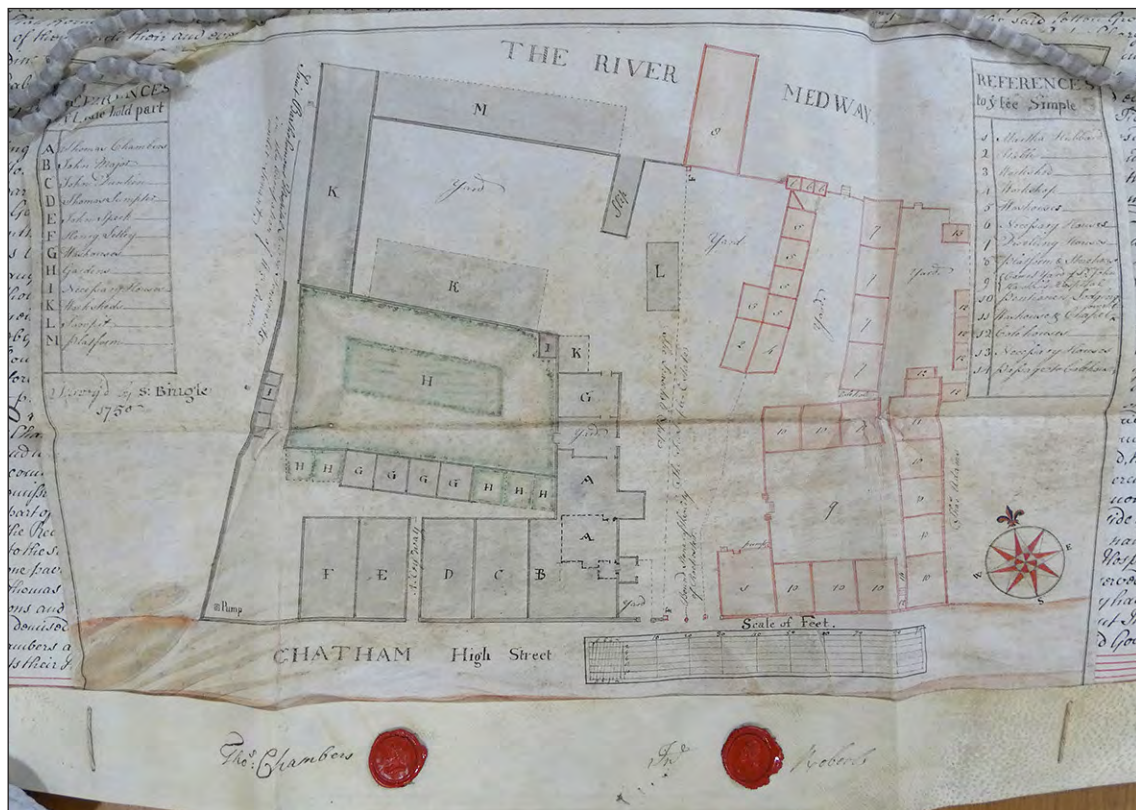


Fig. 50 Detail of the lease issued by the Hospital in 1750 signed by Thomas Chambers and John Roberts [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH108/540]

Access to the back addition was provided by a sloping ramp abutting the west wall of the almshouses, occupying what had previously been the entrance to Boundary Wharf. A recessed shop entrance was inserted into the ground floor of Nos 373-5 in the post-war years.

It would appear that some remnants of the late-16th century mansion have survived the reworking and modifications that the building has undergone over the last two centuries. No. 375 has one very notable interior (although given as No. 375 the space is situated within the envelope of the older building). This is a fully panelled room on the first floor, decorated with paintings of scenic views on the upper panels that would appear to date from the late-17th century or 18th century. The scenes are set within the panelling, which is painted to simulate wood grain, and are spread across all four walls. They are unsigned and are currently unattributed and await further specialised study.¹²⁴ The subjects are a mixture of recognisable places (depicted with varying degrees of accuracy), mostly of locations around the river Medway, and what appear to be generic subjects.

The sequence of main panels (clockwise starting with the panel above the fireplace) is as follows:

A bird's eye view of an unknown house and formal garden (Fig. 51). This is similar to the depictions of early 18th century country houses of notable gentlemen painted by Badeslade and engraved by Kip for a history of Kent published in 1719.¹²⁵ It has been suggested that an overmantel painting at The Old House, 20 Dogpole, Shrewsbury dated c.1680 might be a comparable image of a 16th century house and its 17th century formal garden, albeit in an urban situation.¹²⁶



Fig. 51 Detail of the panel over the fireplace in the painted room, first floor, No. 375 Rochester High Street [Paul Pattison]

A painting of the river Medway as it bends around the Frindsbury peninsula with its windmill on the skyline and the dockyard in the background.

A scene very likely to be of Medway, showing a road past a chalk cliff with a major river in the middle ground and what might be Rochester castle and cathedral in the background. If so, this might be the road to Strood viewed from Cuxton.

A genre scene of a mountain valley with a ruinous castle on the skyline and a bridge or aqueduct crossing the valley.

An unidentified scene although the round tower may be a representation of the gatehouse to Cooling castle.

A scene of Rochester castle showing the old bridge over the Medway including its drawbridge section (Fig. 52). The height of the keep and the verticality of the cliffs have been accentuated.

An unidentified scene of travellers on a road with a major river in the background that may be the Medway.

A narrow panel that might be a painting of Strood and its church.

A genre scene of a hill top village in a mountainous landscape.

A scene showing the crossing from Strood to Rochester, with the castle and cathedral given prominence. (Fig. 53)

A view of the Medway that shows Chatham Intra in the background but not in sufficient detail to pick out individual buildings.

A scene of what appears to be St Margaret's Church on the approach to Rochester.

A scene spread over two panels depicting Windsor Castle and the river Thames (Figs 54-5). The castle is naively rendered and perhaps done from memory or derived from secondary sources such as illustrations. The riverside town would appear to be Eton with its famous college.

A scene on the door that shows a round tower with a superficial resemblance to Cooling castle (Fig. 56).

A pair of panels that appear to be of the river Thames at Gravesend with Tilbury Fort over the water.



Fig. 52 Detail of the painted panel of Rochester Castle [Paul Pattison]



Fig. 53 Detail of the painted panel showing the crossing from Strood to Rochester [Paul Pattison]



Fig. 54 General view of the north wall of the painted room [Paul Pattison]



Fig 55 General view of the east wall of the painted room [Paul Pattison]



Fig 56 Detail of the painted panel showing Windsor Castle and the river Thames [Paul Pattison]

The room may have been created for an officer of the Hawkins Hospital or one of the tenants, perhaps as private dining room. It is possible that the person responsible may have had an association with both Chatham and Windsor (and perhaps Gravesend). It is interesting to note that after 1725 impoverished naval officers in need of support could apply to the Alms or Poor Knights of Windsor, a charitable body established in the 14th century for military veterans, who were provided with accommodation in Windsor Castle.

At least one other property is known to have containing painted panels with Medway subjects; Burgess Hall, Leeds, Kent. This was a Tudor house with later alterations that had a collection of overmantel paintings that included views of Chatham and Rochester apparently dating from c.1700 (Fig. 57).¹²⁷ Although stylistically different from the panels in the Chatham Intra building their existence suggests that images of the river Medway may have been an acceptable subject for decorative schemes in higher-status houses in this period. Burgess Hall was demolished in the late-20th century and the fate of the paintings is unclear.¹²⁸



Fig. 57 Detail of the overmantel panel in the entrance hall of Burgess Hall, Leeds, Kent photographed in 1968 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb69/00067]

Nos 363-365 and Nos 367-371 High Street Rochester

Nos 367-371 (Fig. 58) appear to have replaced the one- or two-storey tenements that abutted the west wall of the mansion house (see Fig. 42).¹²⁹ They were probably built around 1745 by William Chambers and John Roberts as a row of four dwellings incorporating a central passageway that led to a narrow yard lined with washhouses and small garden plots.¹³⁰ By 1790 it would appear that these buildings were already in mixed use, with some containing shops as well as dwellings.¹³¹ No. 365 High Street was rebuilt, and slightly enlarged at the rear, in 1815, seemingly after the construction of No. 363 (demolished).¹³² The latter was a narrow property that abutted the western edge of the site and may have been the new house built by William Ashenden around 1804 that was referred to in a St Bartholomew's Estate

Book.¹³³ Ashenden, a builder based in Chatham Intra, was also the occupant of No. 365. The two properties were linked about a carriageway giving access to Central Wharf at first- and second-floor level and had a unified front elevation (Fig. 59; see also Fig. 104). No. 365 was given an impressive Gothick-style doorway and, on the rear elevation above the carriageway, a delicate Chinoiserie-style timber balcony. Following the demolition of No. 363 in the mid-20th century the bridging section was provided with a supporting wall clad in weatherboarding.



Fig. 58 Nos 367-371
Rochester High
Street in 2021
[Chris Redgrave
©Historic England
Archive, DP289349]



Fig. 59 No. 365
Rochester High
Street in 2021
[Chris Redgrave
©Historic England
Archive, DP289347]

Central Wharf

The origins of Central Wharf appear to lie with the governors of the Sir John Hawkins Hospital, who while they held the land under lease from St Bartholomew's Hospital seem to have sub-let it for river-related uses. The land may initially have formed part of the garden of Hawkins's mansion but during the 18th century it acquired workshops, a yard, a saw pit, steps or a slip leading down to the river and a riverside platform.¹³⁴ Following the reversion of the wharf to St Bartholomew's Hospital it was leased to William Ashenden and his son from 1804.¹³⁵ Over the following century the wharf buildings were replaced by new ranges adjoining the eastern and western edges of the site, a riverside crane was installed, and the premises began to encroach into the former gardens of No. 373 (see Fig. 49). The use of Central Wharf by the coal trade is well attested by the mid-19th century and its occupiers included Vincent Hills, a mayor of Rochester.¹³⁶ At present the site is occupied by a large, two-storey building that dates from the mid-20th century.

No 377-9 High Street Rochester and Boundary Wharf

The riverside section of the freehold site was already in commercial use before Hawkins acquired the land; occupied by two yards and a storehouse in 1577.¹³⁷ After Hawkins's death the Hospital administrators continued to lease out the land to provide income for the institution and its pensioners. By the 18th century this area also included four small dwelling houses and their washhouses (see Figs 43 and 50).¹³⁸ In 1790 the house carpenters George and Richard Pemble agreed to undertake various works on the western edge of the freehold site including the construction of a house fronting the street (No. 377) and new buildings on the wharf. This investment was rewarded in 1798 by a lease.¹³⁹ The site of No. 377 straddled the administrative boundary between Rochester and Chatham which had previously been indicated by a 'stone mark put down in ye Gateway' to the almshouses.¹⁴⁰ It may well have been intended as a replacement for a dwelling that had stood at the west end of the original Hospital buildings, which presumably provided an additional source of income to the institution which had been cleared during the rebuilding. Around 1934 the rear of No. 377 was extended for Featherstones (Fig. 60).¹⁴¹



Fig. 60 Exterior of No. 373-377 (with 379 at the rear) [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289350]

In 1827 the property previously held by Pemble was leased to William Ashenden on condition that he would extend the wharf and erect a new warehouse (Fig. 61).¹⁴² Ashenden also took on two dwellings - No. 377 and a cottage to the north - as well as yards, warehouse, buildings and a wharf. The four tenements that had stood on the northern part of the site were described as having been 'recently taken down' but were subsequently rebuilt.¹⁴³ The height and dimensions of the proposed new storehouse were specified in the lease to correspond with the Hospital's Committee Room, which it abutted. These stated that it was to be built in brick and roofed in slate on either good oak or Memel or Riga fir. The former warehouse still survives, much altered, and is now numbered No. 379 High Street Rochester.

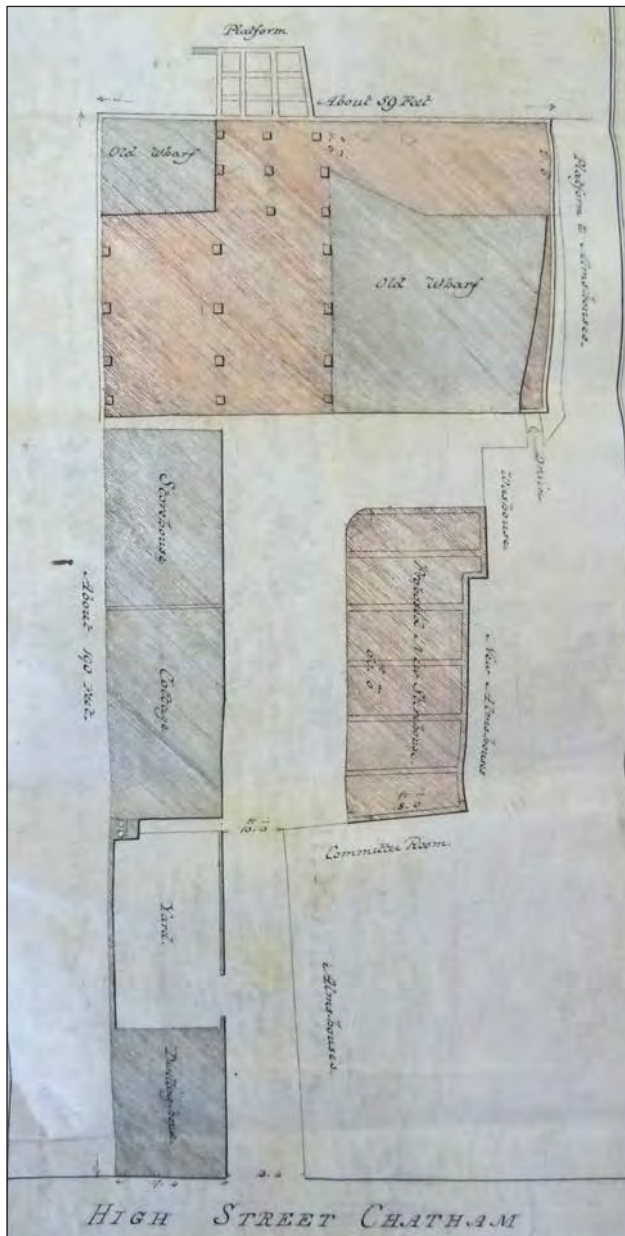


Fig. 61 Plan of Boundary Wharf from a lease issued to William Ashenden in 1827 [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH108/298]

By the mid-19th century the riverside facility had acquired its present name, Boundary Wharf, derived presumably from the administrative division near its western edge. By this date the wharf was being used by coal traders and this remained the case well into the twentieth century.¹⁴⁴ The northern edge of the wharf underwent some further modification, including the enlargement of the platform that extended into river, although the major extension approved by the Corporation of Rochester in 1881 does not appear to have been fully executed (Figs. 62-3).¹⁴⁵ The range of buildings adjoining the western edge of the site seem to have survived into the twentieth century, in a mixture of commercial, industrial and domestic uses, but were cleared in the inter-war decades. The 1930s extension to Featherstone's department store partially encroached into the area of Boundary Wharf and during the 1960s the business attempted to acquire the freehold to the property.¹⁴⁶ The present structures, two industrial buildings at the northern edge of the wharf, would appear to date from the late-19th and late-20th century.

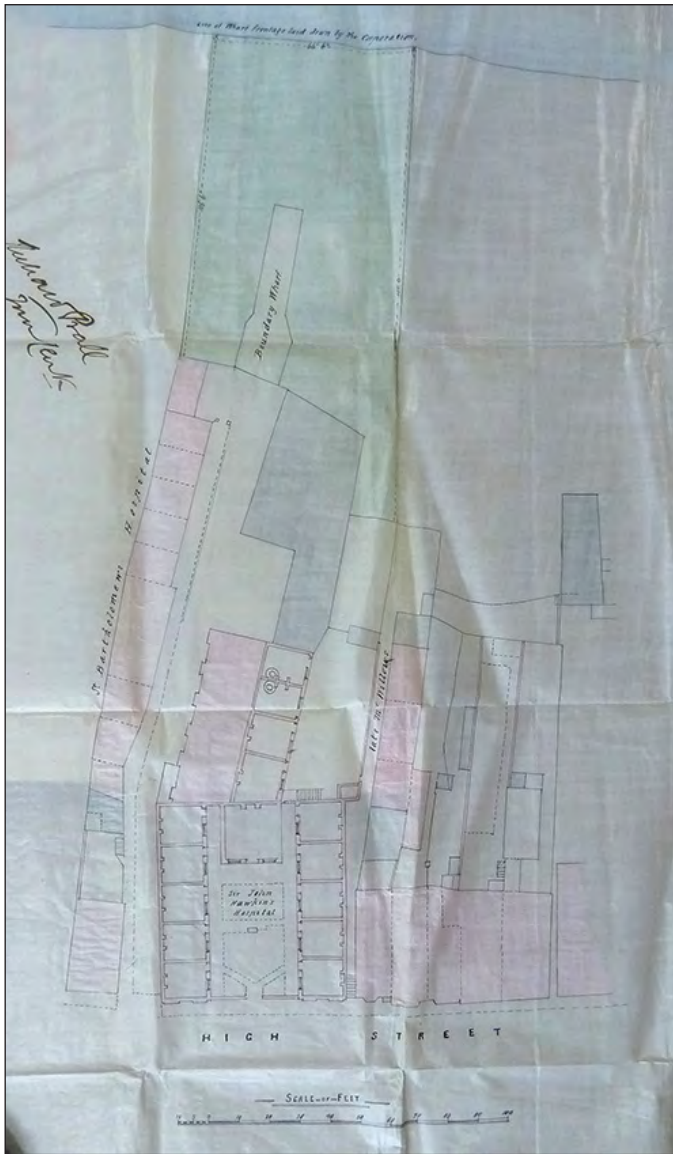


Fig. 62 Licence for an embankment or wharf issued in 1881 [Sir John Hawkins' Hospital on loan to Medway Archives, CH108/302]



Fig. 63 Detail of Central Wharf and Boundary Wharf from the tithe map of Chatham Parish, 1843 [Kent Archives and Local History Service]

The Lion Brewery: Nos 347- 351 High Street Rochester (north side) and No. 374 High Street Rochester (south side)

These two plots to either side of the High Street were in joint occupation by the 18th century and associated with the brewing trade. The block of land on the north side of the street, lying between Hulkes Lane and Ship Lane, contained a brewery, brewer's mansion, a public house and a wharf. And the southern site, edged by Hospital Lane to the east and the Chatham Memorial Synagogue to the west, was meadow land that contained a spring. During the 19th century this became a detached garden for the mansion and housed a pumphouse that supplied water to the brewery (Fig. 64). Today a considerable amount of historic fabric survives in both locations and the former brewery complex constitutes one of the most 'evocative and intelligible' groupings in Chatham Intra (Fig. 65).¹⁴⁷

It has yet to be established when brewing began in this location although the activity was certainly occurring elsewhere in Chatham Intra by the 17th century, including 'a storehouse lately used as a brewhouse' mentioned in a lease of 1629 for the Hawkins's Hospital estate.¹⁴⁸ All that is presently known is that development on the riverside portion of the land was probably underway by the 1630s and the existence of a nearby spring would have made it a good location for a brewery.

The plots on either side of the High Street were both owned by St Bartholomew's Hospital; that to the north having historically been referred to as the 'East Tigh'.¹⁴⁹ By the early 18th century the site was leased by John Tihurst (or Tyhurst), brewer, and following his death seems

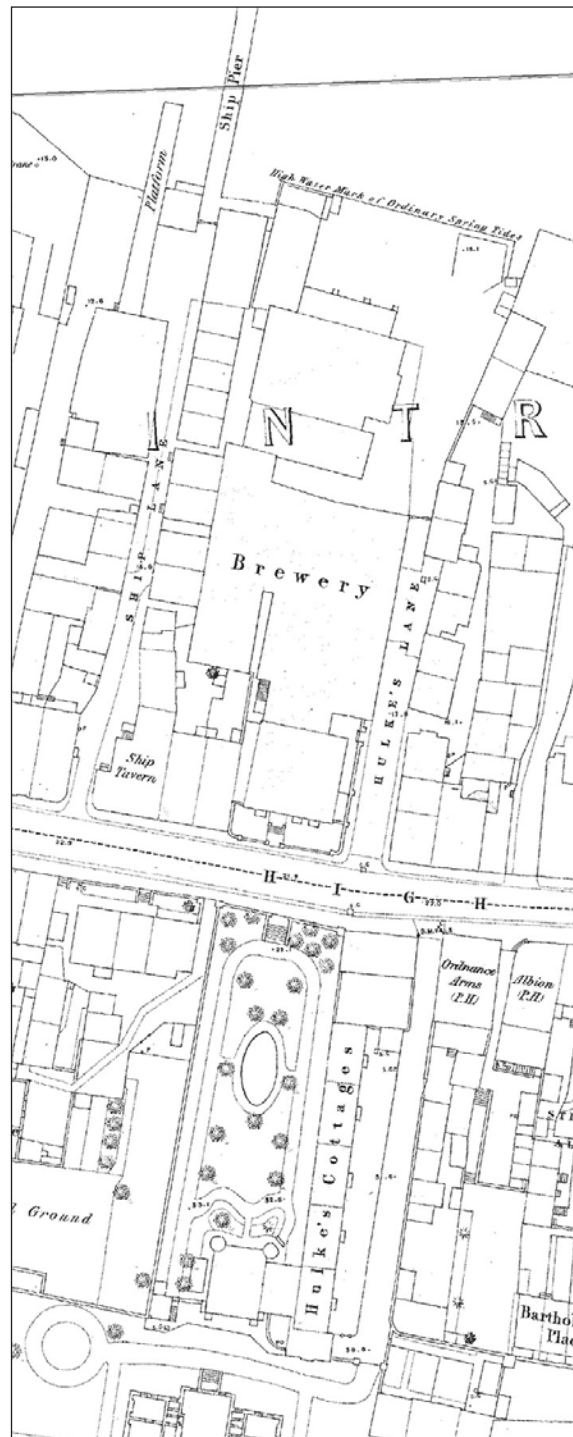


Fig. 64 Extract of the OS town map of 1866 showing No. 351, the brewery and the detached garden and pump house [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

to have been occupied by his widow, Rebecca Tihurst.¹⁵⁰ In 1758 the Tihurst's daughter, also called Rebecca, married Isaac Wildash, a brewer, and the couple may have taken over the premises by 1764. In 1778 Wildash was granted a lease for the 'mansion house and garden in his own occupation', along with a 'commodious wharf' and 'large brewhouse... supplied by a spring rising in the meadow land ... of inestimable value for which he must always be glad to renew with the Brethren of St Bartholomews'.¹⁵¹ Another lease of 1778 gives Wildash as the tenant of two public houses, the Ordnance Arms (No. 376 High Street Rochester) and The Ship Inn, previously known as The Roebuck (Fig. 66).¹⁵²



Fig. 65 No. 351 High Street Rochester viewed from its former garden in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289323]



Fig. 66 The Ship Inn and the railings and gate piers of No. 351, a late-19th century view [Medway Archives]

In 1786 John Wildash (son of Isaac) went into partnership with Thomas Hulkes, who was part of a long-established family of bakers from Strood, requiring the compilation of an inventory of Wildash's various premises.¹⁵³ The partnership was relatively short lived and was dissolved in 1795. In the final settlement the house, brewery and public houses became the sole property of Hulkes. In 1804 he offered to purchase the Chest Arms Public House in Chatham Intra, presumably put up for sale with other property in the area when the Chatham Chest was moved to Greenwich Hospital.¹⁵⁴ After his death in 1805 his executors signed a new lease the following year with the trustees of St Bartholomew's Hospital for the mansion house, brewhouse, stables, wharf and a small tenement. Mention was also made of a new vat store that had been built in 1796.¹⁵⁵ The profits of the brewing business passed to his son James Hulkes, who was a significant local figure and MP for Rochester from 1802-1806, and were administered by Francis Burrows, a surgeon from Strood, who had been bequeathed the 'brewhouse in Chatham' and associated properties in Thomas's will.¹⁵⁶ At James's death in 1821 the brewery passed to his sons (both of whom were dead by 1836) and the business was then held in trust by Penelope Hulkes until the next heir, also James, reached his majority in 1847.¹⁵⁷ He ran the business until 1877 with Henry Coulter as his long-term manager, and in the 1850s the premises were occasionally referred to as the Coulter and Hulkes brewery.

In 1877 the brewery, mansion and wharf were sold to Charles Arkcoll & Co., who renamed it the Lion Brewery.¹⁵⁸ Charles Arkcoll came from a family of Kentish grocers in Maidstone who expanded the business into brewing following an apprenticeship in Norwich.¹⁵⁹ The 1881 and 1891 censuses have Charles Arkcoll living at No. 351 (by then known as Chatham House), along with his domestic staff. In 1903 he had amassed sufficient wealth to commission a steam yacht and perhaps as a consequence of his friendship with Thomas Aveling, the founder of a traction engine business at Strood, Arkcoll began using Foden steam lorries at the brewery in lieu of horses.¹⁶⁰ Arkcoll died in 1912 and the Lion Brewery and 46 public houses were put up for auction.¹⁶¹ They were acquired by a Mr Browne who then immediately sold the estate onto Messrs Style & Winch, a well-established brewery based in Maidstone.¹⁶² Their interest was in acquiring the tied houses and they did not require the brewing capacity of the Lion Brewery, which then ceased. Winch had also previously purchased and closed the Best brewery in Chatham Intra and the Medway Brewery at Maidstone remained their main production centre. After a period of various commercial and residential uses the house and brewery was leased by the furniture removal business Curtiss and Sons, which had started in Portsmouth in the 1860s and whose painted signage survives on the north elevation of the Brewery building. By the inter-war years the mansion and part of the brewery complex had been sub-let to Featherstones, who eventually acquired possession of the buildings.¹⁶³

No. 351 High Street (formerly Chatham House)

This is presumably one of the two 'tolerably built' houses referred to by Hasted in 1798.¹⁶⁴ The three-storey red-brick building dates from the early-to-mid 18th century and was constructed as a substantial and prestigious dwelling for the owner of the adjoining brewery (a similar arrangement served the Best Brewery). The

house, which is listed grade II*, was re-fronted in Roman cement in the early 19th century and remained in residential use until the early 20th century. In the inter-war years it was converted into the furniture department of Featherstone's multi-sited department store and given a front-shop extension in 1936 that was demolished in 2003 (Fig. 67).¹⁶⁵ The building remained in retail use until the mid-1990s.



Fig. 67 No. 351 with the shopfront extension in 1962 [© Historic England Archive, Kwg01_bf476]

The mansion was built on a site that was already developed and its north (rear) wall incorporated part of an older timber-framed building. This three-storey structure with a cellar served as a back wing to the house and was sometimes referred to as the Counting House. The earlier building appears to date from the 17th century although the cellar may contain earlier fabric. On stylistic grounds the squarish four-bay mansion can be dated to the first half of the 18th century. The reference in the 1786 inventory to 'Mr Wildish's new house' which has an 'old house behind it' has led some to suggest a late-18th century date for its construction but this is not consistent with internal features such as the staircases (see Figs 70-2).¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the more likely candidate for the construction of the mansion is the Tihurst family. In the late 18th or early 19th century the property was enlarged by the addition of a two-storey rear block abutting the Counting House. The upper room has long been thought to have been a private chapel, presumably because of the Gothick detailing to its windows, fireplace and ceiling (Fig. 68). However, this architectural style was used for many different kinds of buildings, including the pump house associated with the brewery, so the room may never have had a religious use and may have been intended as a private office or retiring space. The exterior of the house also underwent significant embellishment in the early 19th century, during the Hulkes period of ownership.¹⁶⁷ This included the resurfacing of the front elevation in Roman cement, complete with neo-Classical detailing, and the painting of the other elevations to match (Fig. 69). A Doric-style front porch and two flanking screen walls at ground floor level were presumably added at this time. The porch encased the stone steps that had formed the original approach to the off-centre front door and was removed, along with the forecourt walls, railings and gatepiers (just visible in Fig. 66), for the inter-war shop front extension.



Fig. 68 The 'chapel', first floor, north-east wing view from the south [Posy Metz ©Historic England HSLSE09/P4]



Fig. 69 Exterior of No. 351 Rochester High Street in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289319]

The interior retains many of its historic fixtures and fitting. These include a principal and back stair that can be dated on stylistic grounds to the early 18th century (Figs 70-2). The kitchens in the basement are well-preserved, including cast iron-ranges, a stone sink and evidence of a spit turned by a water wheel (Fig. 73). There are also copper tanks in the front window recesses which appear to be for the collection of rain water. A brick-vaulted basement extends under the paved front area. Many rooms retain panelling and fireplaces, of various dates, and on the ground floor a closet contains a 19th century flushing toilet. The level of preservation within the building is notable, with only a modest amount of late-19th and 20th century alterations and additions, perhaps a consequence of its long period of retail use.



(Above left) Fig 70 The main staircase, ground floor, view from the north-east [Posy Metz ©Historic England HSLSE09/P5]

(Left) Fig. 71 The back stair from the landing between the ground and first floor [Joanna Smith ©Historic England HSLSE09/P7]

(Above right) Fig. 72 The main staircase, first floor, view from the south east [Posy Metz ©Historic England HSLSE09/P6]



Fig. 73 The range in the north-east basement kitchen [Posy Metz ©Historic England HSLSE09/P8]

Water-powered kitchen spits were a feature of higher-status houses and the wheel that powered it was said to have still been in-situ when Featherstones acquired No. 351. At some date it was removed to the grounds of the museum at Eastgate House where it remains on display. How the wheel functioned has yet to be established but it would presumably have required a reservoir or tank to supply the necessary head of water to make it turn. The brewery would also initially have made use of water power and the brew house was said to have been equipped with a full-scale water mill driving two millstones.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, a newspaper account of a winter storm in 1837 noted that a water mill at Hulkes brewery had been blown down.¹⁶⁹ But the full extent of how water was used within the site remains unclear.

The brewery buildings

The present complex of buildings is an amalgam; the product of piecemeal alteration, rebuilding and extension from the 18th century onwards. An outline plan of the site done for the tithe map in 1842 can be compared to a deed plan of 1877 that gives an indication of the functional areas at the time (Fig. 74).¹⁷⁰ This would suggest that the core of the Tihurst/Wildash brewery has survived although much enlarged. During the period of ownership by the Hulkes family a vat store was added around 1796, the wharf was extended and the structure referred to as the Brewery was built around 1837.¹⁷¹ After the premises were acquired by Arckoll a major phase of work appears to have taken place around 1880. This included a new large building at the north end, later known as the Bonded Warehouse, an office and shop range built to the south of the Brewery and a stable block on the east side of the access way to the brewery and wharf, now known as Hulkes Lane.

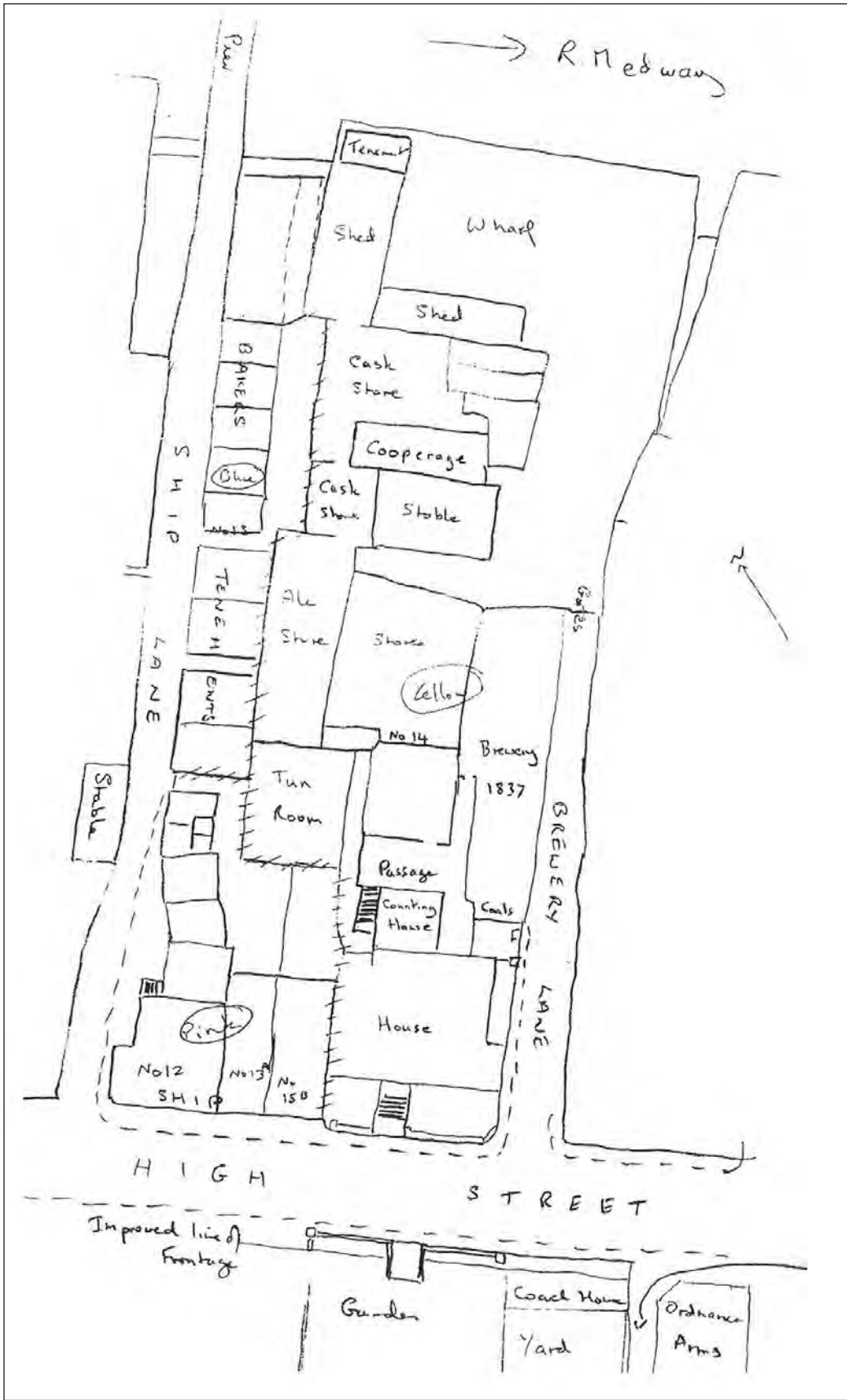


Fig 74 Sketch copy of plan accompanying a deed of 1877 [source: Canterbury Archaeological Trust]

However, much remains unclear about the dating and functions of the various elements of the complex, which was cleared of its machinery in the early 20th century. The earliest part of the site is an originally freestanding timber-framed structure, described as a store in 1877 but previously referred to as the Malt Room, which appears to date to the 18th century (Fig. 75).¹⁷² This is flanked to the west by two brick ranges (given as the Tun Room and Ale Store in 1877) which are of late-18th or early 19th century date although extensively altered. On the east side is a tall yellow stock brick range facing onto Hulkes Lane known as the Brewery, given a date of 1837 on the 1877 plan, that has been extensively reworked in the mid-to-late 20th century (Fig. 76). Under Arkcoll the ‘manufacturing and fermenting’ areas were rebuilt under the supervision of Arthur Kinder, an architect who specialised in brewery design.¹⁷³ This may refer to some of the other ranges surrounding the Malt Store. The one-storey office which abuts the southern end of the Brewery is a brick building surfaced in render (Fig. 77). Above the canted corner entrance there is a panel inscribed ‘Lion Brewery’. Hulkes Lane retains a surface of robust granite setts.

The northern half of the complex appears to date from the late-19th century and replaced the section of the brewery that, in 1877, contained the stables, cooperage, cask stores. This block is made up of several ranges, all built of yellow brick with red-brick dressings (Fig. 78). The northern part, known as the Bonded Warehouse, has brick-and-iron jack-arched floors. The southernmost range was built over what had previously been an open yard and contains an internal sack hoist. In the later part of the 20th century a large shed was constructed between the Bonded Warehouse and the edge of the wharf.



Fig. 75 The ‘Brewery’ building from the north [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289328]



Fig. 76 Interior of the store
(formerly the malt store)
[Posy Metz ©Historic
England, HSLSE09/P9]



Fig. 77 Detail of office
building from the south
[Chris Redgrave ©Historic
England Archive, DP289326]



Fig. 78 The bonded warehouse range from the south east [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289327]

The Ship Inn and No. 349 High Street

The archives indicate that throughout the working life of the brewery it relied upon its tied public houses to retail its products in Chatham and other Medway towns. One of these was the Ship Inn but other pubs held by Wildash included the Ordnance Arms and the North Foreland, both in Chatham Intra.¹⁷⁴ Wildash's lease of 1786 also makes reference to a tenement 'at the west end of his dwelling house' that was formerly an alehouse but was now a dwelling for his brewer.¹⁷⁵

The block of buildings between Ship Lane and No. 351 High Street is now formed of two properties, the public house to the west and a dwelling occupied by the publican to the east (Fig. 79). These have a different architectural character, although both have been dated to the 18th century date and are jointly listed grade II. The pub is a two-storey building with a rendered front and weatherboarding to the side and rear and has an angled entrance in a one-storey side bay. It is thought to have been built in c.1700 but may have earlier origins. No. 349 is a three-storey wide-fronted house with regular fenestration, plausibly built as a pair, that likely dates from the later years of the 18th century. This building now shares a fascia with the Ship Inn.

The pub appears to have acquired its present name by the end of the 18th century.¹⁷⁶ For example, it is referred to as the Ship Inn in 1780 in a newspaper account of the death of some seamen.¹⁷⁷ In 1834 the pub was advertised for sale in the following terms:

'That old established and well-known house, the SHIP INN, with the house adjoining and used therewith, situate in the High Street of Chatham with the wharf and platform behind projecting into the river and long used as the landing place for the Sheerness packets – together with a cottage in two dwellings, at the back of The Ship and a coach house and shed (which may be converted into a stable) at the back of the premises'.¹⁷⁸

This description fits well with the 1840s tithe map.



Fig. 79 The Ship Inn and No. 349 Rochester High Street in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289317]

Beyond the outbuildings of the pub the alley, now Ship Lane, was lined by small houses along its eastern side, some abutting the brewery (Fig. 80). These buildings were cleared in the mid-20th century. Such small mariners' cottages were present in several of the alleys running north from the High Street but the brick house with a gambrel roof standing on the west side of Ship Lane (but orientated towards Cooks Wharf) would appear to be one of the few surviving examples.

Ship Lane led to a landing stage that extended into the river, used by mariners and later called at by the steam packets. In the late-19th century there was considerable public agitation to improve the approach to the river along the lane but it remained a dark and narrow route. The landing stage was subsequently replaced by a free pier, provided by Rochester Corporation, that has been superseded by the present pontoon arrangement (see Fig. 105).¹⁷⁹



Fig. 80 The north end of Ship Lane looking north in c.1900 [Medway Archives, Rochester Streets - S001]

No. 374 High Street and the former pump house

The plot of land opposite No. 351 was described as a meadow in the late-18th century. As part of the transformation of the site in the following decades a pump house was constructed above the spring, intended as an eye catcher or terminal building for the detached garden of the brewery mansion and designed in a castellated Gothick style (Fig. 81).¹⁸⁰ The pump house continued to serve the brewery during the 19th century and in 1881 housed a gas-powered engine to raise the water.¹⁸¹ But in the following century it was taken over by the rebuilt St Bartholomew's Hospital and was converted into a mortuary and enlarged.¹⁸²



Fig 81 Aerial view of the former garden and pump house (later mortuary) with the rebuilt St Bartholomew's Hospital [Damian Grady ©Historic England Archive, 33968_042]

The garden would appear to have been laid out in the early decades of the 19th century, presumably as part of the same phase of work as the pumphouse. By the 1840s it had a looping pathway, entered from the north and exiting to the south, and a central pond (see Fig. 64). The original front steps, walls and railings, dated to c.1800, picked up the Gothick theme in the metal work.¹⁸³ These were resited when the road was widened in 1876.¹⁸⁴ The antiquarian Charles Roach Smith, who was friends with the brewery manager Henry Coulter, left an account of the garden written in the 1880s but recalling an earlier period.¹⁸⁵ This describes the 'extensive garden grounds' opposite the brewery from which 'Mr Coulter... supplied us yearly with the choicest annuals; and with manure'. There is mention of a garden-house with 'a long bench covered with annuals just potted, and others in preparation' and a 'walled garden was a large fountain: and in it might be seen disporting varieties of wildfowl'.

Along side the eastern side of the garden tenements or cottages were built facing onto a side road, now Hospital Lane. A lease of 1798 refers to two messuages with yards and gardens to the west of the Ordnance Arms (No. 376 High Street) and a cherry orchard to the south.¹⁸⁶ By 1815 a row of five properties were present, some

described as recently rebuilt. These were known as Hulkes Cottages, to which a 'substantial double coach house' and yard had been added at the north end by 1833 (now occupied by No. 374 High Street).¹⁸⁷ One of these cottages survives at the rear of No. 374 and is listed grade II.¹⁸⁸

3 The west end of Chatham Intra

The western reaches of Chatham Intra have a somewhat different character from the eastern section having initially developed as an outgrowth of Rochester and then been significantly affected by railway construction in the 19th century (Fig. 82). It was in this area that the three parishes met. On the north side of the High Street Chatham parish extended approximately as far west as the railway bridge, where it met St Nicholas Rochester, while the southern section lay within the parish of St Margaret Rochester. The earliest area of settlement was on the higher ground to the south side of the road, on what became St Margaret's Banks, with intermittent building taking place from the early 17th century. The principal land owner was St Bartholomew's Hospital and it was they who began leasing plots for residential purposes, outliers of the extra-mural suburban growth that was occurring at Eastgate. The area to the north of the road was marshland containing a major inlet or creek that ran eastwards as far as a plot of developed land, apparently with a wharf, whose site accords with the Victualling Yard (see below).



Fig. 82 The west end of Chatham Intra from the raised pavement of St Margaret's Banks in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289300]

By the 1770s there appears to have been almost continuous development along St Margaret's Banks with two side roads (Nags Head Lane and Five Bell Lane) extending up the slope towards the recently constructed New Road (Fig. 83). Around this time the two sections of raised pavements serving the houses were established

in their present form as part of road improvements, separating the houses from the dirty and busy High Street. The elevated position of these properties commanded 'a very beautiful prospect of the river Medway, the shipping lying in the harbour, and the adjacent country' and this salubrity was reflected in the status of the buildings'.¹⁸⁹ At this time the land to the north of the High Street was divided between an area in cultivation, either detached gardens for the houses or market gardens, and riverside marshland and had few buildings on it. This open aspect lasted until the last third of the 19th century, when development was facilitated by the railway viaduct that had been built across the area.



Fig. 83 Detail of the Map of the City of Rochester by R. Sale dated 1816 [Medway Archives]

Until the 20th century the western end of the High Street ran continuously into Rochester until road building began the process of its separation it from the city centre in the inter-war years, followed by the widening of Corporation Street after the Second World War. The north side of the High Street has experienced considerable change in recent decades and further development is planned in the area.

St Margaret's Banks, Nos 209-277 High Street Rochester

Evidence for the character of the dwellings on St Margaret's Banks in the late-18th and early 19th century comes from various sources such as the Buck engraving of 1738 and contemporary newspaper advertisements. These give an overall impression

of substantial properties. In 1787 six houses were offered at auction in what was described as a 'most desirable situation...with an extensive view of the adjacent country'.¹⁹⁰ Other amenities included 'plenty of water and good garden ground', presumably either at the rear of the properties or across the road. In 1804 a single property was advertised for sale, 'a substantial well-built modern brick dwelling house' of three storeys with six bedrooms, a 'large commodious kitchen, wash-house, good cellaring' and a coach house and stabling for six horses 'well adapted for the residence of a large genteel family'.¹⁹¹ The advert also makes reference to a vault and two warehouses that had been used for many years by a Wine and Spirit Merchant and it seems clear that the properties on St Margaret's Bank already contained a mixture of residential and commercial uses. In 1804 a 'large shop' and dwelling was mentioned in the press and 19th century directories list well-heeled residents, professional occupants, grocers and public houses.¹⁹² One property, described in a 1807 advert, was comprised of a three-bedroom house used for a broker and cabinet makers shop with a rear store house and workshop and 'good stowage' suitable 'for a manufactory'.¹⁹³ Behind these premises were five freehold messuages or tenements; an indication that a denser level of development was underway. Nonetheless, St Margaret's Banks remained a good address favoured by the leading citizens of Rochester, including several mayors. Its residents likely thought of themselves as living in Rochester although they may have looked to Chatham Intra to supply some of their daily needs.

By 1772 a building on the north side of the High Street was apparently being used as a Wesleyan Chapel.¹⁹⁴ This was superseded by new premises, opened in 1810 at the east end of St Margaret's Banks, known as the Bethel Chapel (Fig. 84). This substantial brick building was situated at the rear of the plot and the land in front was used as a burial ground. It stood until c.1990 and its site is presently used as a car park.



Fig. 84 The former Bethel Chapel in 1962 [©Historic England Archive, kwg01_bc794]

Like other parts of Chatham Intra, St Margaret's Banks was prone to fire. In 1836 a major incident destroyed six houses.¹⁹⁵ Four of these were lost to the flames but two were pulled down to check the spread of the blaze by the Sappers and Miners sent to the scene. The affected householders included a surgeon, linen draper and a basket maker. In the 1850s the cutting of the railway line through the west end of Chatham Intra severed St Margaret's Bank into two sections. The western section retains much of its historic character, with numerous listed buildings. But the eastern stretch has experienced major change, partially redeveloped in the late-19th century with a terrace of shops and dwellings and then, in the mid-to-late-20th century, extensively cleared leaving two substantial gap sites along its length (Fig. 85). At some date the properties along St Margaret's Banks were incorporated into the street numbering of High Street Rochester but the historic name continues to be used.



Fig. 85 The east end of St Margaret's Banks in 1943 showing two buildings, Nos 342-344 High Street Rochester, that were subsequently cleared [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb43/02571]

The character of development

The western end of St Margaret's Banks contains two notable groupings of historic properties. No. 246 High Street Rochester is a mid-18th century weatherboarded and timber-framed house, with 19th century and later alterations (Fig. 86).¹⁹⁶ It is very probably the family home of the war artist, Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960). Nearby three listed properties, Nos 250-254 High Street Rochester form part of the small group of building that follow a different alignment from the rest of street, broadly

facing north (Fig. 87). No. 250 High Street Rochester is an early 19th century brick-built house but No. 252 is earlier, given as c. 1700 in the list description, while No. 254 is thought to date from the mid-18th century.¹⁹⁷ No. 252, which now forms part of Rochester Independent College, may have been the property of Thomas Tomlyn in the 18th century. Tomlyn was a prominent Rochester attorney who left two properties on St Margaret's Bank to pay for the relocation of St Catherine's Hospital Almshouses to Star Hill.¹⁹⁸

Fig. 86 Nos 246-8 High Street Rochester and the raised pavement at the west end of St Margaret's Banks in 1962 [© Historic England Archive, kwg01_bl953]



Fig. 87 Detail of the west end of St Margaret's Banks from an OS town map of 1867 [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

The section of the High Street running east from Nos 258 to Nags Head Lane is comprised of buildings of various dates, some of recent construction, but also includes two older properties. No. 276 (Anchor House) is described in the listing entry as dating from the early 18th but incorporating an earlier (perhaps 17th century) structure.¹⁹⁹ No. 286 dates from the late-18th century and has been much renewed.²⁰⁰

The second cluster of historic buildings commences with the Nags Head public house, whose return elevation faces onto a lane of the same name (Fig. 88). The weatherboarded building dates from the 18th century, but may have older origins.²⁰¹ Historically, St Margaret's Banks contained several pubs but The Five Bells was cleared for the railway and others, such as The Hare and Hounds and The Bear and Ragged Staff have long since disappeared.



Fig. 88 The Nags Head, No. 294 Rochester High Street in 1962 [© Historic England Archive, kwg01_bf502]

No. 294 High Street Rochester is an example of a more modest timber-framed and weatherboarded mid-18th century house and is attached to the Nag's Head.²⁰² Nos 296-298 were similarly modest dwellings that have been converted to offices and date in part to the 17th century.²⁰³ Adjoining these buildings are two pairs of 18th century houses. Nos 300-302 are of three storeys with brick elevations and full-height bays windows while Nos 304-6 are lower two-storey weatherboarded premises with ground-floor shops and access doors in the raised pavement giving access to a cellar (Fig. 89).²⁰⁴ Next to this is a shop that was originally built as a bank, probably constructed around 1800 (Fig. 90), and a pair of late-18th century houses with shop fronts of c. 1900.²⁰⁵



(Above) Fig. 89 Nos 296-308 High Street Rochester in 1962 [© Historic England Archive, kwg01_bf495]

(Left) Fig. 90 No. 308 High Street Rochester in 1943 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb43/02570]

Furrells Lane to No. 277 High Street Rochester

An outline of the early development of the western end of the conservation area is given in a recent archaeological assessment of the Bardell's Wharf site by MOLA. This notes the post-medieval consolidation of the ground.²⁰⁶ A building was standing near to the riverside by the late-18th century, marked on a map of 1772 and identified as a steel manufactory. This remained an isolated site and in the 1840s the marsh land was referred to as Wellers Garden and Wells Garden, suggesting that it may have been used for market gardens. In the 1850s the riverside was separated from the High Street by the railway line with only two points of access, Furrell's Road and Bath Hard Lane; the former provided access to the wharf used by Mr Furrell, a coal factor.²⁰⁷ From this time the previously undeveloped riverside began to be built up and out with industrial wharves.

The construction of the railway embankment also facilitated development along the High Street. Among the first schemes was Medway Terrace, Nos 237-257 High Street Rochester. On the west side of Furrell's Road a new County Court was built in 1862 and hearings were moved to here from the Guildhall in Rochester (Fig. 91).²⁰⁸ During its construction workmen found a French gold coin of Charles IX dated 1574.²⁰⁹ In 1858 the London, Chatham and Dover Railway opened a railway station on the High Street set back from the road by a forecourt. Other buildings followed, including one labelled as a laundry on an Ordnance Survey map published in 1909 that was subsequently occupied by Leech and Co., optical instrument makers. The premises at No. 277 still retain their painted signage (Fig. 92).



Fig. 91 The former County Court from the south west in 1995 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb95/04550]



Fig. 92 Nos 273-5
Rochester High Street
from the south west
in 2021 [Joanna Smith
©Historic England,
HSLSE09/P10]

The Victualling Yard

This was located on a substantial riverside site that straddled the boundary between the parishes of Chatham and St Nicholas. The purpose of the facility was to supply the navy with the food, drink and other consumables required by the fleet. Because of the proximity of London the yard at Chatham was never a major victualling station, unlike Deptford, Portsmouth or Plymouth, and it lacked the facilities for the large-scale manufacture of foodstuffs. Instead it served as a storage facility and distribution depot and its contracts for the supply of goods would have supported a range of private businesses in and around Chatham. The yard continued to operate until 1826 and thereafter the site passed into a mixture of commercial uses. In the 1890s part of the area was used for the construction of the short-lived Central Chatham Station, replaced in the inter-war years by industrial premises. The buildings that made up the Victualling Yard have left no standing traces and when the site was redeveloped in the late-20th century the opportunity to undertake an archaeological assessment of any below ground remains was not pursued.²¹⁰

The date of the yard's establishment has yet to be firmly established. By 1619 naval supplies were being distributed from a storehouse on Rochester Common but by the end of the 17th century this function has shifted to the site at Chatham Intra, when the Victualling Commissioners took on the leases for the site from St Bartholomew's Hospital.²¹¹ The extent of development is unclear but in 1691 the wharf was described as fallen in and in need of rebuilding.²¹² A plan of 1717 gives a picture of the facility, which was entered from the High Street and had a house, yard and garden on the east side for the resident agent.²¹³ The site had an L-shaped layout, partly dictated by the location of a marsh sluice, and its premises included a coopers' shop, pickle house, slaughterhouse, cutting house, beer store with bread loft over and a butter and cheese room. The wharf was served by three cranes and the main yard contained a fresh water spout for washing casks.

The history of the yard during the 18th century is not fully understood but the number of employees was relatively modest, some 59 in 1761.²¹⁴ In 1767 the wharf was once again described as being in need of repair but, as the lease was close to expiring, it was thought better to make use of old timber from the dockyard.²¹⁵ In 1773 a new storehouse was constructed.²¹⁶

The role of the Victualling Agent not only encompassed procuring foodstuffs but also the disposal of unused or unwanted stores by public sale.²¹⁷ The purchase of beer to supply the ships (and possibly the men who worked in the dockyard smitheries) would have likely boosted the brewing trade in Chatham. But as a satellite to a larger London-based operation the Chatham yard would come under scrutiny in the years of retrenchment that followed the peace of 1815. In 1822 the posts of Clerk of the Cheque and Storekeeper were done away with, leaving a labour force comprised of the Agent Victualler, a clerk and four labourers.²¹⁸ After the axe fell in 1826, the Victualling Yard was put up for auction when it was described in the following terms: ‘...a capital messuage or dwelling house with the gardens and appurtenances thereuntoseveral Storehouses, Outbuildings, Offices and Sheds ... with the use of the Wharf and Landing Place extending for upwards of 300 feet along the River Medway’.²¹⁹

Ownership of the site remained with St Bartholomew’s Hospital and the yard, with its valuable wharf, passed into various uses. Nonetheless it continued to be known as the Victualling Office or Victualling Office Wharf and a public house with the same name existed in the vicinity, perhaps opposite its entrance. In 1827 timber was being advertised for sale at the site and in 1838 Robert George was selling Roman Cement (a significant Medway industry). When a fire occurred in 1883 it destroyed premises used for sail making and damaged a beer stores used by Meaux and Co and an engineering works owned by Rowland Taylor.²²⁰ An Ordnance Survey map of 1875 labels one building as a ‘Customs House’.

The cutting of the railway line in the 1850s had avoided the site but in c.1890 the South Eastern Railway Company took the bulk of Victualling Office Wharf for railway tracks and a new station, Chatham Central (Fig. 93). The legal process involved in the compulsory purchase of the land reveals that the firm of Woodham & Levy was using the wharf for coal deliveries and had an extensive yard.²²¹ The other main occupant was Truman, Hanbury & Buxton, who had large premises used for the distribution of their brewery products. The other business that was forced to relocate was the Chatham, Rochester & District Electric Light Company, who had been engaged in power generation in this location since at least 1888.²²² The former Agent’s house and garden was also cleared at this time but some of the older structures appear to have survived this. By the inter-war years, the site housed several large commercial or industrial buildings. At the end of the 20th century the former yard was transformed once again, redeveloped with a large residential block and car park and traversed by a new access road to the Rochester Riverside development, Doust Way. The line of the riverside was also advanced. Only one late-19th century warehouse was retained, converted to residential use and renamed Sheldrake House (Fig. 94).



Fig. 93 Plan of the Victualling Office and King Arms Wharf in the late 19th century [Medway Archives, CH2/35]



Fig. 94 Sheldrake House before restoration, photographed in 1995 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, AA 95/06590]

The impact of the railway

Two railway companies were bitter rivals in seeking to connect the Medway area to London and southwards towards Dover. These were the South Eastern Railway (SER), founded in 1836, and the East Kent Railway (later the London, Chatham and Dover Railway), which started in the 1850s. The SER managed to extend their line from Gravesend to Strood in 1845 utilising the route of the unsuccessful Thames and Medway Canal, which had been constructed in 1824. In 1853 the East Kent Railway received parliamentary approval to lay out a new route between Strood and Faversham. This took the railway over the Medway on a bridge and across the riverside on an embankment, with a new station for Rochester, before crossing the High Street and entering a tunnel excavated under Fort Pitt hill. The SER responded by building its own railway bridge adjoining that of its competitors and opening Chatham Central Station. Two companies operating separate infrastructure in such close proximity was both expensive and used up more land than was necessary and by 1899 the two railway companies had begun to collaborate and to share track operation. Both companies were then subsumed into Southern Railway in 1923, created in the wake of Government control of railways during the First World War. Of the two railway stations in Chatham Intra, Chatham Central Station had only a brief existence and was demolished in 1911 but Rochester Station remained in use until 2015, when a replacement building was opened to the north of Corporation Street. The redundant station now awaits probable demolition (Fig. 95).



Fig. 95 The former Rochester Railway Station set back behind its forecourt [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289294]

All of this railway activity had a major impact on the western part of Chatham Intra in the second half of the 19th century. The raised embankment running parallel to the river seems to have acted as a flood wall, preventing the inundation of the land and facilitated wider development in the area. The route of the railway as it crossed the High Street was chosen to avoid the larger (and more valuable) houses on St Margaret's Banks. A newspaper account of 1855 describes it as cutting through Bath Hard to the rear of the Customs House across the High Street (Fig. 96) and through The Five Bells public house, the gardens of Mr Pope, a butcher, and Mr Chandler,

an ironmonger, the Victoria tea gardens and the parsonage of the Bethel Chapel before finally entering the tunnel.²²³ The railway connections offered significant opportunities for economic and social advancement. For the first time commuting to London was practicable and there was now a viable alternative to moving goods by water. But the railway also had some negative impacts and it took away the unobstructed vista to the river from St Margaret's Banks and impeded views along the High Street between Chatham and Rochester (see Fig. 82).



Fig. 96 No. 314 Rochester High Street (demolished) and the railway bridge in 1962 [© Historic England Archive, kwg01_bc785]

4 Riverside wharfs and river-related uses

It was the river Medway that brought the Navy to Chatham and set the growth of the town in motion, shaping its topography and facilitating a great deal of its commercial and industrial activity. However, human use of the river would have been occurring from much earlier times. Today the vogue for riverside living drives the direction of much of the new development in Rochester and Chatham but much about the relationship between Chatham Intra, its residents and the river remains poorly understood.

Human settlement beside a river has often led to land reclamation and the making of landing places and river walls to increase the utility and value of the ground.

What might begin as a place where boats could be stranded on tidal mud flats would then acquire wharves that allowed larger ships to berth at more stages of the tide and for greater amounts of cargo to be handled. It might then become a location for the building or repair of ships. And so it proved in Chatham Intra. There are hints of river use in the medieval period with the transport of materials to St Bartholomew's Hospital, but from the mid-16th century there is stronger evidence for an arrangement of houses fronting the High Street, with rear gardens or yards culminating in wharfs. This established a pattern of encroachment into the river that reached its peak in the early 20th century (Fig. 97). Until more recent times the wharf walls and piers were built from wood, sometimes using ships timber from old vessels in their repair or construction, and the process of enlargement may well have left these earlier structures intact. Accurate mapping of the riverside exists from the early 19th century and so it ought to be possible to chart the position of Chatham Intra's historic water front and its subsequent development.



Fig. 97 Chatham Intra riverside in 1946 [Source Historic England Archive (RAF Photography), raf_cpe_uk_1789_rs_4174]

The river gave access to trade routes; inland, coastal and overseas. Ships sailed down the river Medway to London via the Thames and up river towards Maidstone to serve the Weald of Kent. Many of activities present in Chatham Intra were wholly reliant on proximity to the water. These included the import and export of goods, ship building or repairing and the movement of people by water. But some businesses were developed close to the river because it was expedient to do so. For example, the owner of a brewery or engineering works in the 18th and early 19th century might find it much easier to move materials and products by water rather than by road. In the first half of the 19th century the products being carried by

barge to Maidstone and Tonbridge included linseed, wheat, rags, soap, tallow, paper, candles, beer, cider, brandy, slate, cement, vinegar, glass, barley, cheese, sugar, butter, nails and brimstone.²²⁴ One of the products moving in the opposite direction was gun powder from the Tonbridge mills at Leigh. And even after the arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century the trade in shipped goods and commodities continued to flourish.

Inevitably not all movement of goods was legal and opportunities for smuggling were augmented by the theft of material from the dockyard. The riverside could be a lawless place and in 1805 a warehouse was raided behind the Prince of Orange public house, No. 21 High Street Chatham. The newspaper account of the raid notes that because the warehouse projected over the river it was possible to unload boats unobserved via a trap door in the floor and for the goods to be 'distributed into various apartments, the doors of which are so nicely fitted, as almost to elude a very vigilant search'.²²⁵

Ship building and repair: Doust's Yard and Nos 305-327 High Street Rochester

The earliest known naval ship built at Chatham is currently thought to be the *Marlyne*, completed in 1579.²²⁶ Some of the shipwrights employed in the dockyard also engaged in private ship building or repair so this may also have been taking place in Chatham Intra from a relatively early date. Another source of work might have been the long-established fishing fleet on the Medway.

The first known private ship yard occupied a site to the east of the Victualling Yard, presumably held on a lease from St Bartholomew's Hospital. In the mid-18th century this was owned by John Henniker and William Martin, its existence confirmed by a contract to build smaller-sized warships for the Royal Navy.²²⁷ In 1758 HMS Panther, 'a most completely finished ship', was launched from the yard followed by HMS Exeter in 1763.²²⁸ The shipyard also built ships for private owners. By the late-18th century ownership had passed to the Nicholson family and in 1778 Joseph Nicholson advertised the hull of a 32-ton sloop standing in the yard for sale. This was described as being suitable for the oyster or coasting trade.²²⁹

In 1813 the leasehold of a substantial estate that included the ship yard was offered for auction.²³⁰ The advert for the sale mentions a spacious yard for ship building, a counting house, nail store, mould loft and two roadways to the High Street. Reference was also made to a substantial dwelling house, garden and outbuildings in the shipyard and an underlet tenement, a public house (The North Foreland) and five substantial tenements, some fronting the High Street and in use as shops. The dwelling was presumably the late-18th century building now known as Doust House.²³¹ The possible connection between in the North Foreland public house and the family of naval shipbuilders, the Petts, has already been noted (see pages 12-3). The estate also included 13 tenements and a small wharf close to the Victualling Yard, along with seven tenements, some fronting the High Street, one suitable for use as a bakery. At the time of this disposal the operator of the boat yard was Samuel Nicholson and he seems to have continued to occupy the dwelling house, perhaps until his death.

A surprising aspect of Nicholson's ship building operation was the construction of floating baths.²³² These were boat-type structures, open at the base, with three separate rooms for subscribing clients to use. One was moored off the Victualling Yard, perhaps intended for the genteel residents of St Margaret's Bank.²³³ This yard also undertook ship brokerage and advertised entire ships, salvaged parts and cargoes for sale in local newspapers. These included foreign merchant vessels taken as prizes during the Napoleonic Wars.

After Nicholson the shipyard appears to have passed to George William Gill who ran an operation building and repairing barges and smaller craft between 1853 and 1910. He also constructed passenger steamers and in 1849 completed the *City of Rochester*, said to be the first steamer to be built in a merchant's yard on the Medway. This joined the fleet of the Medway Steam Packet Company that operated between Chatham and Sheerness. The proprietors were Giles and Boucher and their premises adjoined Gill's Yard.²³⁴ In 1856 Gill improved the facilities at his yard with a 'Patent Slip' capable of moving a ship of 400 tons.²³⁵ That same year he prevented a fire spreading from Giles and Boucher premises to a steamer on the slip for repair.²³⁶ In the late-19th century the old tenements were replaced when two rows of houses were built, one fronting the High Street (Nos 305-331) and the other a short row of three tucked into behind, known as Gills Cottages (Fig. 98).

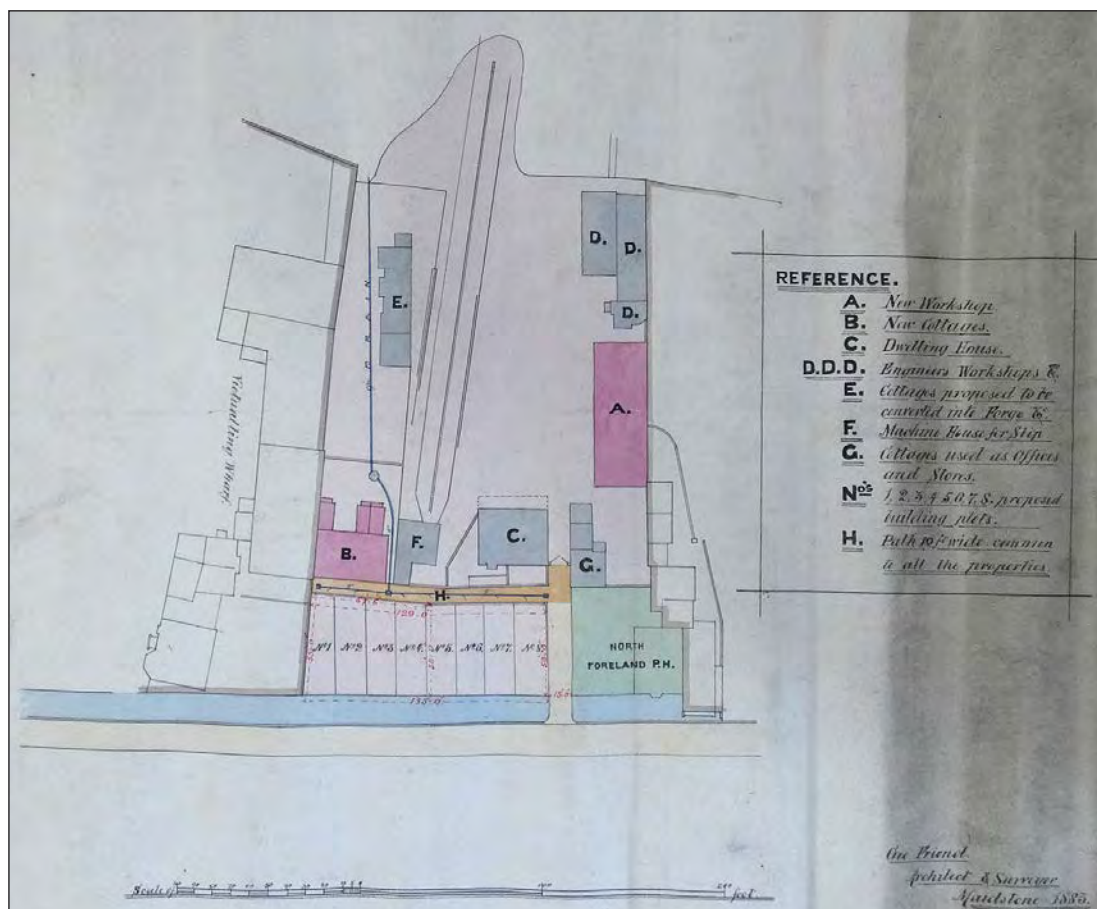


Fig.98 Plan of ship yard in 1883 when leased to McGill and showing the proposed new buildings [Medway Archives, CH2/34]

The last firm to use the boat yard was the ship repairers, Doust and Company, active between 1933 and 1990 (Fig. 99). When their business ceased it marked the end of private ship building in Chatham Intra. The site was redeveloped in the late-20th century apart from the former dwelling house which was restored (see Fig. 20).



Fig. 99 Slipway to north of Gills Cottages photographed in 1995 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, AA95/06588]

Other industries

From the late-18th century evidence of other kinds of manufacturing near to the riverside. In 1787 a property close to The North Foreland public house was offered for auction following the bankruptcy of Jonas Langman. This was described as extensive warehouse ‘with every convenience for a large manufactory’, a wharf for the shipping and landing of goods, a good crane and a dwelling house fit for ‘genteel family’ along with 8 tenements.²³⁷ It would seem that the tenements had previously been in use in c.1776 as a snuff and tobacco manufactory run by James Doves.

The Medway Ironworks, Foundry Wharf and Nos 329-377 High Street Rochester

Situated to the east of the Nicholson/Gill/Doust boat yard the foundry appears to have been in existence by 1800 when it was owned by Mr Philpot and suffered a fire. In 1810 a ‘capital ironworks and wharf’ named the Chatham Iron Foundry (sic) and Rolling Mills, was offered for auction. The site then consisted of a wharf and dwelling house, a mill house with a 22 horse-power steam engine, a crane and ‘erections and utensils’ for manufacturing casings, bar and bolt iron, hoops and rods, anchors and iron in general.²³⁸ The site was subsequently used by W. and H. Spencelayh who operated as engineers, millwrights, boiler makers and contractors. The Spencelayhs may be related to a company of ironmongers based at No. 159 High Street, Chatham who manufactured beer engines, a prerequisite for the many public houses of Medway, and who had a manufactory in Chatham Intra from at least 1848.²³⁹

In 1858 an expansion of the foundry was proposed to accommodate 80 horse-power steam engines able to drive machinery that could manipulate and shear metal (Fig. 100). At this time its products included iron roofing, balconies, palisading, furnace bars, iron girders and columns and the foundry offered a casting service at 10% below London prices.²⁴⁰ One notable contracting project was for an iron shed erected in Sheerness dockyard in 1862. In 1871 the firm, then known as Spencelayh and Archer, supplied 500 torpedoes (the term then referred to a sea mine) to the government.²⁴¹ Such commissions are indicative of how public orders supported private-sector contractors in Chatham Intra. In 1873 a serious incident occurred when molten iron in the foundry splashed onto the floor badly burning four workmen and setting fire to the roof of the building.²⁴² By 1879 the firm was in financial difficulties and it appears to have gone out of business around this date. The successor on the site, the firm of Taylor and Neate, also undertook work for the government, including the supply of 4,000 water tanks to be fitted to the back of camels for army use in the Sudan.²⁴³ Their main line of work was as engineering contractors and suppliers of brick-making machinery.²⁴⁴ The foundry has given its name to the wharf and an access lane but it is not known if any physical remains exist within the complex of buildings that currently occupy the land.



Fig. 100 Detail from an OS town map of 1867 showing Foundry Wharf [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

By the early 19th century the High Street frontage of the ironworks was occupied by a row of shops with accommodation above, of which four remain, Nos 329-335 High Street Rochester.²⁴⁵ The group of buildings also included the Tartar Frigate Public House, which was replaced by a shop with an Art Deco frontage that formed part of Featherstone department store.

Coal wharves and timber yards

The eastern reaches of the riverside at Chatham Intra were characterised less by larger-scale manufacturing and more by import and export wharfs with warehouses and workshops. And the dominant trades were coal and timber (Fig. 101).



Fig. 101 Extract from OS town map of 1866 showing the coal wharves and timber yards at the east end of Chatham Intra [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

The precise date when coal was first transported to Chatham isn't known but its use grew steadily from the 17th century, initially supplying a domestic market and then an expanding industrial one. The coal was shipped by coastal colliers from the North East. In 1698-9 some 2,741 chaldrons (a chaldron was a coal tax measure equivalent to 5,880 lbs or 2,667 kilograms) were imported to Rochester and Chatham.²⁴⁶ As well as supplying the two towns coals was also a major cargo for onward transit up the Medway navigation and into central Kent by barge.

This trade continued into the post-war years, including a coal wharf at Sun Wharf, to the rear of the Sun Hotel, No. 88 High Street Chatham. This was photographed in 1968 along with its travelling crane (Fig. 102), which appears to have been installed on the wharf in the late-19th century and is first shown on an Ordnance Survey map of 1898.



Fig 102 Sun Wharf in 1968 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb68/2402]

Timber was another product moving in bulk over the wharves at Chatham Intra. In the 18th century this would have been mainly softwoods such as pine coming from the Baltic. Government concerns that an overdependence on Baltic timber might make the supply vulnerable to blockade in time of war led to the imposition of a heavy duty on imports in 1807. One consequence was to make the importation of Canadian timber cost effective. But the free trade policies pursued by the government after 1820 led to the Baltic timber resuming its dominance.

At Chatham Intra there are frequent references to timber yards adjacent to the river, such as the timber stacks that were nearly burnt in a fire of 1839.²⁴⁷ By the 1860s a timber yard was in existence to the west of Sun Wharf with a steam-powered saw mill. This technology had been initially developed by the Navy at Chatham dockyard in 1812, before being taken up by commercial operators.

Public use of the river and passenger traffic

The river served many different purposes for the population of Chatham Intra. For some, bathing in the river was the only way to keep clean and Bath Hard derives its name from this use. By the 1870s concern was being expressed about the lack of public baths and the indecency of people bathing naked in the river and the mixing of sexes. The Watts Charity resolved to help fund new facilities and public floating baths were first placed at Bath Hard around 1872.²⁴⁸

For people moving back and forth along the river Chatham Intra would have presented a complex frontage of wharves and landing sites, mostly private but some recognised as public landings or piers (Fig. 103). One such was the pier at the end of Ship Lane. The most affluent residents could have afforded their own boats and it is probable that in the 17th century dockyard officials living in Chatham Intra would have travelled to and from work by these means.²⁴⁹ Alternatively watermen would take passengers by boat for a fee. From the 19th century most people relied on an organised system of ferries and steamers (Fig. 104).



Fig 103 The river Medway at Chatham Intra in the inter-war years [Medway Archives, C050966442]



Fig. 104 Nos 365-371 Rochester High Street photographed in 1943 with signage for the New Medway Steam Packet Company Ltd [source Historic England Archive, bb43/02553]

The steamer trade was essential to the economic vitality of Medway, including daily sailings to London (passing round the Hoo Peninsula). The 1858 *Melvilles Directory* mentions two daily steamer sailings to Sheerness at 8 am and 3 pm. By this date there was also a weekly service for boats (known as hoys) taking goods to London, probably from Josylins Wharf. And until the railway crossed the river passengers living in Rochester and Chatham would have taken a ferry from Sun Pier to connect with the trains at Strood.

Sun Pier is now the most significant river facility in Chatham Intra and an important feature of the area. It appears to have started out as a privately owned structure and may have been associated with the Best family, who would have needed river access to move raw materials and finished products to and from their brewery nearby. It takes its name from the Sun Tavern and York Hotel (usually known as the Sun Tavern) and it would appear that some public use was always permitted. In 1843 the

Admiralty gave permission for a pier providing that public access was guaranteed at all times. This was standing by 1845, paid for by Lt Col James Best.²⁵⁰ The following year he funded the installation of gas lights.²⁵¹

Around 1863 Chatham Board of Health set about purchasing the pier as a public asset, requiring an Act of Parliament.²⁵² The legislation also set the toll rates for the use of the pier from both passengers and goods. In 1885 a shelter was built for waiting passengers, designed by Joseph Bazalgette and funded by the Rochester Bridge Wardens. This was destroyed by fire in 1972 but a platform that had been added in 1904 remains in use.²⁵³

The riverside also serves as graveyard for vessels and former landing stages, visible at low tide, and provides moorings for a range of craft including houseboats (Fig. 105). The importance of the riverside to the development of Chatham Intra is beyond question but the present usage gives little idea of how busy the water was in previous eras. This is captured by the respected maritime artist William Lionel Wyllie (1853-1931), who wrote in 1905:

Now we come to the busiest reach on the river. Steam hoys and timber vessels are discharging alongside the wharfs. Skiffs are rowing in all directions with the youth and beauty of Chatham keeping a wonderful zigzag course and looking for all the world like struggling flies in milk. These, I need hardly say, are not the members of the Chatham Rowing Club. On both sides of the river moorings have been screwed down and great tiers of barges and lighters swing at them, leaving but a narrow channel up the middle of the stream. The first three tiers are mostly sailing craft, barks and brigs and schooners; then come the screw-colliers, each surrounded by fleets of lighters and tugs, the coal-whippers working out the cargo with noisy chat and restless energy, running up a sort of small ladder and springing with a bound off the top rung, hauling at the same time at the rope which whips the coal buckets out of the hold with a jerk. Screens are rigged out, the lighters alongside being two deep. As the coal comes rattling down the shoot the dust all drops through the screen into the inner craft while the lumps go bounding on into the outer one. Black figures are tipping baskets or raking coal. A great cloud of dust is in the air and serpentine tracks of dust go drifting up the stream. All round is boisterous merriment. The noise is deafening. Along the shore are barge-builders, slipways and engineers; and there is a forest of cement chimneys on the north bank. We catch glimpses of grinding wheels and furnaces. Grey men are loading barges with grey bags. The throb of machinery is everywhere.²⁵⁴

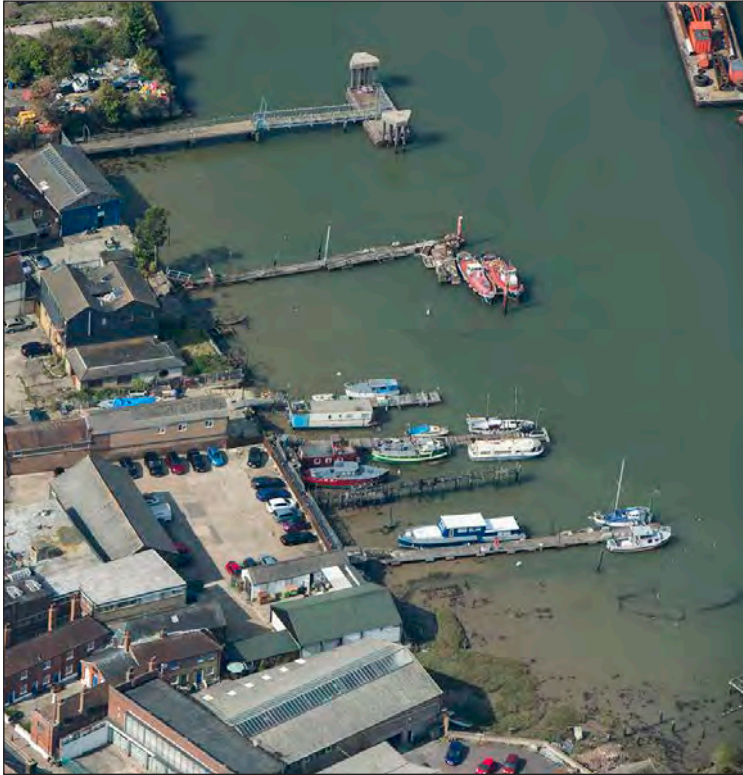


Fig. 105 The riverside from Ship Lane to the Sir John Hawkins' Hospital in 2021 [Damian Grady ©Historic England Archive, 33969_038]

5 Fires in Chatham Intra

In common with many historic towns fire was an ever-present danger at Chatham. This was partly due to a prevalence of timber buildings, the lack of adequate separation between properties and the intermixing of residential, commercial and industrial premises. However, the area benefited from the military and naval presence, which provided a source of men and equipment that could be used in fighting blazes. Conflagrations occurred across Chatham Intra but the eastern end of the area seems to have been particularly afflicted.²⁵⁵ For example, there is mention of a fire happening here in 1778 or 1779 that destroyed up to 90 houses but worse was to follow in 1800 and 1820 (see below).²⁵⁶

Such incidents caused great destruction and human suffering but also created an opportunity for civic improvements, including moving the building line back to enable road widening to take place and the replacement of timber buildings with brick. However, the relationship between fire and improvements could be complex. In 1870 the *Chatham News* carried an editorial discussing fire-fighting provision in the Medway towns. This reported that a recent fire had prompted suggestions that it might have been better to have let it spread so that enhancements could have been made at the expense of the insurance companies. But in response to those who wanted to get rid of 'antiquated, often inconvenient timber-built houses' the editorial posed the question 'how many brick fronted houses- some in quite the modern style - have wooden sides and backs...or have wooden ranges contiguous to them in the rear' and expressed the opinion that '[I]n Chatham we can only improve by degrees – we cannot afford to have old buildings, patched buildings if you will, swept away by fire'.²⁵⁷

The 1800 fire

In June 1800 there was a serious fire at the iron foundry near to the Victualling Yard. This destroyed the premises but was prevented from spreading further by the availability of water engines (pumps).²⁵⁸ But in the same month an even more disastrous fire occurred at the east end of Chatham Intra. This broke out in a shed or storehouse on the quayside (near to the site now occupied by Anchorage House). Men and equipment were sent from the dockyard, the barracks and Victualling Yard to fight the flames and salvage goods; water was supplied by the nearby breweries as the tide was low and river water was difficult to access. But they were unable to check the spread of the fire, which crossed the High Street and destroyed and damaged many buildings, killed four people and left around 100 others destitute. The overall losses were calculated at £30,000.

A local committee was quickly formed to take up a collection for those whose had been affected.²⁵⁹ The results of their efforts were recorded in a publication which included a map showing the extent of the damage and listed the subscribers to, and recipients of, the relief fund (Fig. 106). The account gives some idea of the extent of the properties owned by the Chatham Chest in this part of the town. It also identifies six public houses - The Three Tuns, The Trumpet, The Britannia, The Cross Keys, The Union Flag and The Prince of Orange – four of which were owned by the Best family and two were leased by James Hulkes. Although the majority of the losses were dwelling houses, some subdivided into tenements, there was also a range of commercial premises affected including workshops, storehouses, a forge and a warehouse and auction rooms. Amongst the subscribers to the relief fund were the Best family and Thomas Hulkes, John Nicholson (owner of the shipyard) and Joseph Mathews (the resident Agent Victualler). Collections were also taken up in local churches and chapels and by the officers, serving men and workforce of the dockyard, Royal Marines and the army barracks.

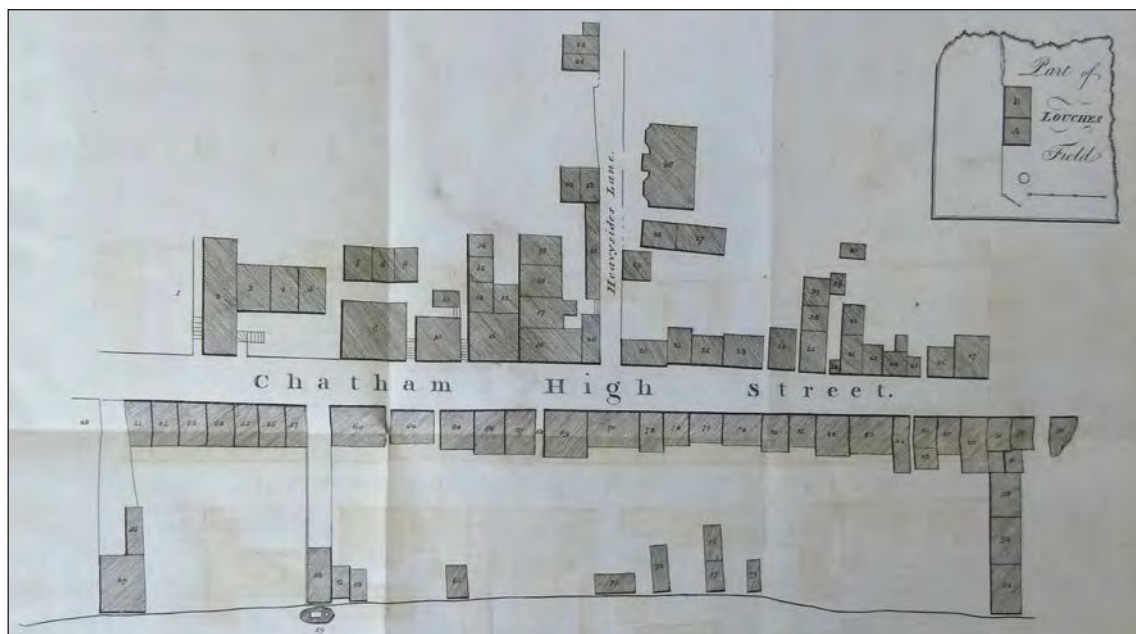


Fig 106 Map of the area affected by fire from the account published in 1801 [Medway Archives, DE414/1]

The publication provides rare detail about the names, professions, circumstances and homes of the people living in one area of Chatham Intra. A total of 251 individuals claimed relief. Of these 18 men stated that they worked in the dockyard although the figure is probably higher as some only gave their trade. There were 22 sailors, 14 soldiers and 23 Royal Marines - at this date, life in barracks was so uncomfortable that married men often sought rented accommodation elsewhere for their families. And 15 men were identified as working for the 'Ordinary', so were presumably looking after ships moored on the river. Three watermen and six fishermen were also listed. Women's occupations, when given, tended to be service roles.

The 1820 fire

Two decades later another major blaze occurred slightly to the east of the previous fire. This broke out in the morning of the 3rd March 1820 in an outbuilding and spread rapidly, destroying or damaging 50 houses and 12 or 13 warehouses. Two more properties were pulled down to prevent the spread of the flames. The fire-fighting effort included men from the various military establishments and fire engines from the dockyard, barracks and Victualling Yard. One property to suffer major damage was the 'elegant and substantial mansion' belonging to the Best family, Chatham House, which was reduced to its outer walls.²⁶⁰ The flames also spread to the adjoining brewhouse and destroyed a steam engine used for raising water. In total the damage was estimated at £100,000. Although the fire was judged less destructive than the previous incident it was thought more calamitous because the victims were generally less able to withstand their losses.

Once again, a committee was established which in turn published an account of the fire, the subscribers and sufferers and successful applicants for the relief.²⁶¹ The landowners of the majority of the damaged or destroyed properties were the Watts Charity and the Best family. Once again, numerous alehouses were affected – The Hit or Miss, The King's Head, The Crown and Anchor and The Sun Tavern (including offices, outhouses and assembly rooms plus The Sun Tap). The last of these was burnt out and other losses included the contents of warehouses and dwellings and the goods 'deposited with Mr. Thomas Frid and Mr. Asher Cohen, two pawnbrokers, whose houses were totally consumed'.²⁶²

Later fires

In April 1839 a blaze started in the brewery premises of Godfrey & Wall. This was located near to the riverside, only accessible from the High Street through a narrow gate, apparently in the same vicinity as the 1800 fire as The Trumpet public house was once again damaged.²⁶³ Because the tide was low while the fire raged it was difficult to get an adequate supply of river water but the Best brewery was able to provide assistance in this regard. The flames reached the premises of a coal merchants, Crockfords, but was halted before it spread to the timber yard of Mr Wells and was put out by fire engines from the insurance companies and Government establishments and troops from the garrison. An initial estimate of the damage was £6,000.

Other incidents followed. In January 1841 the premises of a linen draper caught fire. This was located on the south side of the High Street just to the west of the junction with Hamond Hill. Due to a frost water was difficult to obtain so it was brought in barrels from Hulkes brewery.²⁶⁴ In 1871 a more serious fire occurred on Hammond Place, still being described as ‘the best part of the business portion of the town.’²⁶⁵ It started in the premises of an oil and colour supplier, Mr Naylor, and spread to Messrs Hopkins and Ashby, army and navy outfitters, the London and Provincial bank and Messrs Pocock, boot makers, as well as damaging a drapers, solicitor’s office, grocer and stationers. By this date piped pressured water was available in the street but a floating engine from the dockyard was also required to get the flames under control. Although the affected properties were substantial buildings the fire was thought to have spread so easily because they did not have party walls that extended into the roof space (of the kind that were mandatory in London and elsewhere at this time).

6 Entertainment in Chatham Intra

Naval or garrison towns tended to encourage an associated vibrant night-time economy. In the case of ports this often coalesced into a district known as ‘sailortown’, characterized by ‘public houses, brothels and low entertainment’ that employed large numbers of people.²⁶⁶ Chatham had not only an abundance of military facilities but a significant population of largely working-class residents employed in the dockyard and in other industries so it is perhaps unsurprising that the town supported a profusion of drinking establishments and entertainment venues well into the 20th century. Some of these were located in Chatham Intra.

Newspaper accounts from the 19th century make it clear that Chatham was a lively place. People flocked to the town for major public events such as the Chatham races, the launch of ships and the spectacle of the Royal Engineers and their siege warfare training. These occasions sometimes required additional steamers and trains to be laid on to cope with passenger demand. But for much of the century the district lacked a fully established police force and law and order was sometimes difficult to maintain. There are reports of affrays and robberies as well as occasional stabbings and murders in the High Street. Publicans were prosecuted for selling alcohol outside the terms of their licences and for allowing prostitutes to frequent their establishments. And inter-service rivalry between the army and navy or between regiments as well as antagonism between the civilian and military populations might occasionally erupt into rioting.

Drinking establishments

Between Star Hill and Sun Pier around 35 public houses were in existence in the 19th century; nine alone between the Sun Hotel and the Sir John Hawkins’ Hospital in 1852. Many were tied houses, owned or leased by the brewers who made the beer they sold, but some were privately owned or run. The major local concerns were the Best and Hulkes/Arckoll breweries but there was also the Hammond Place Brewery, whose more modest premises were located on the north side of the High Street and, by the 1890s, a distribution warehouse for what became Truman’s brewery at

the former Victualling Yard. Most of the pubs were on the north side of the street, allowing for easy access from the river side, probably through rear doors that connected directly to the wharves and water. And the Sun Hotel and Ship Inn were both located near to public landing places and likely used by passengers or crews passing time while waiting for sailings.

Some of the surviving pubs in Chatham Intra can be traced back to the 18th century or earlier, notably the Nags Head, the Ship Inn and The North Foreland. The exteriors of the Ship Inn and Nags Head indicate their historic origins but the appearance of The North Foreland now belies its age because of a neo-Tudor façade that was added in the early 20th century (see Fig. 10). This has stone mullion windows with square leaded lights, stone hood moulds and a carved shield over the entrance that references the brewery (Woodhams and Co). The Prince of Orange, however, was entirely rebuilt in the late-19th century as an architecturally impressive and richly detailed building that has been attributed to local architect Edward George Bond (Fig. 107).



Fig. 107 The Prince of Orange public house, No. 21 Chatham High Street in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289359]

But the majority of Chatham Intra's public houses have gone, including The Sun Hotel (also known as The Sun Tavern and York Hotel). This occupied a prominent position opposite the Best brewery, who owned the building. After sustaining damage in the 1820 fire it was rebuilt as a substantial neo-Classical structure, although some of the interiors had Gothic detailing (Figs 108-109). The building was demolished in late 1960s.²⁶⁷



Fig. 108 The Sun Hotel in 1968, photographed from the south east [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb68/02396]



Fig. 109 The Sun Hotel in 1968, photographed from the south west [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, bb68/02395]

Some idea of the character of Chatham's public houses at their peak of popularity can be gleaned from a photograph taken in 1909 of The Long Bar pub (situated outside the study area) (Fig. 110). This shows a high ratio of sailors to civilians and many of the pubs in the area catered primarily to serving men, providing warm, comfortable surroundings with food and drink, entertainments and the company of women. But the rise of the temperance movement in the late-19th century also had an impact and by 1891 Chatham Intra had acquired its own 'temperance brewer'.²⁶⁸



Fig. 110 Interior of the main bar of the United Services (formerly Crown and Thistle) public house, No. 188 High Street Chatham [Medway Archives, DE402/16/14 (U)]

Prostitution

Prostitution was an inevitable aspect of life in Chatham given the large numbers of male dockyard workers, sailors and soldiers.²⁶⁹ From the mid-19th century the sex trade was increasingly seen as a social evil that required combatting. For the Government one major consideration was the impact that venereal disease was having on the armed forces. This led to the encouragement of purpose-built Soldier and Sailors Institutes within barracks to try to keep men away from bars and brothels. The institute at Chatham's Infantry Barracks of 1862 was the first purpose-built example in the United Kingdom.²⁷⁰ In 1864 Government passed The Contagious Diseases Act which gave police in named dockyard and garrison towns (including Chatham) the powers to stop women suspected of prostitution, to force them to undergo medical examination and, if they were found to be infected, to detain them in a Lock Hospital until they were judged cured. When St Bartholomew's Hospital opened on New Road in 1863 it included a lock ward and a dedicated facility was subsequently built elsewhere in Chatham. Dr Berkeley Hill wrote about the impact of prostitution in the area in 1867 stating that in addition to the 200 'notorious prostitutes' kept under surveillance by the police, there were many more female factory workers, servant girls or married women who were engaged in 'clandestine' prostitution.²⁷¹ According to Dr Hill the 'lowest' type were the street girls found at the barrack gates but he reserved his greatest criticism for 'low and loathsome' beer shop owners who allowed prostitutes to operate from rooms at the rear of their premises, which they rented from the landlords. Brothels also existed in private houses and police returns about operation of the 1864 Act list the numbers of these and the percentage of public houses and beer houses associated with vice. But the government legislation divided public opinion and the Act was partially suspended in 1883 and repealed in 1886. After which time both the police and clergy at Chatham reported an increase in prostitution and disease within the town. For Dr Hill what made Chatham so susceptible to the problems of drink and vice was the lack of a 'fixed class of gentry' to provide the moral high tone. But there is also evidence that in the late-19th century the town was seeking to acquire the public institutions and organisations that were expected of a respectable place and to throw off its dirty and lawless reputation.

Theatres and Cinemas

Other key elements of the hospitality industry in Chatham were music and theatre, which took place in a range of venues. Some of these were associated with vice and criminality, as a description of 1882 makes clear:

Chatham is a half-military, half-maritime town, with a superabundance of slop-sellers and of public houses... there are cheap concert rooms for the recreation of “Jack Ashore” and tawdry sirens leering at him from the first-floor windows of low lodging house in obscure lanes and alleys. The footpaths are bright with scarlet uniforms and the windows of the barber shops are radiant with many coloured bills setting forth the marvellous attractions of this or that place of public resort, and of the wonderful performances of this or that “great” comic singer, character actor, mimic or female dance, all of which are intended to be auxiliary to the sale of rum by the publican who provides the entertainment.²⁷²

But by the end of the 19th century there were also higher-class establishments to be found in Chatham, which probably boasted more theatres (and later cinemas) than the average. This level of provision was sustained in part by the size of the military audience but also because older towns like Rochester struggled to accommodate large entertainment venues and so Chatham was able to establish itself as an entertainment centre serving the Medway towns.

Chatham’s ‘theatreland’ was located principally on the High Street. In the town centre the facilities included the 2,000 seat Barnard’s Place of Varieties (rebuilt in 1886 after a fire) and the 3,000 seat Theatre Royal, constructed in 1899 (Fig. 111). But there was one large venue in Chatham Intra - the Gaiety Theatre - which opened in 1890. Its origins lie with a public house called The Chest Arms (named for the Chatham Chest charity) which, by the late 19th century, had become the Gaiety Music Hall. The 1890 building was described in *The Era* in the year of its opening; the article noted that the architectural style was ‘Italian, freely treated’ and the seating capacity of the hall was 1,500 (Fig. 112).²⁷³



Fig. 111 Post card showing the Theatre Royal, Chatham High Street in the early 20th century [Medway Archives, DE402-15-56(L)]

In 1912 this was greatly enlarged to form the Empire Theatre, designed for Oswald Stoll by the renowned theatre architect, Frank Matcham (Fig. 113).²⁷⁴ The variety theatre had a nautical theme to its external and internal decoration style and was fitted with a projection box to allow short films to be shown as part of the programme of entertainment. In its early decades many famous stars appeared on its stage. In 1917 Stoll added a purpose-built cinema next door, known as the Chatham Picture House (later Empire Cinema) designed by a Rochester-based architect, H. H. Dunstall.²⁷⁵ Both theatre and cinema continued to operate after the Second World War but, in the face of declining audiences, were closed in 1960 and 1961 respectively. An attempt to use the theatre as a cabaret-style night club was unsuccessful and both buildings were cleared to provide the site for Anchorage House.



Fig 112 View of The Gaiety Theatre, No. 49 Chatham High Street in the early 20th century [Medway Archives, DE402/15/18]

At the western end of Chatham Intra another large cinema was opened in 1935, built by an associate of the Gaumont British Theatres chain at the corner of the High Street and Star Hill.²⁷⁶ Originally known as the Majestic this was renamed the Gaumont in 1950 (Fig. 114), becoming an Odeon cinema in 1962. The building was closed in 1981 and was eventually demolished and replaced by a complex of flats.



Fig. 113 The Empire Theatre, Chatham High Street [Medway Archives, DE402-15-20]

Despite these losses Chatham Intra has maintained a reputation as a place of public entertainment, including performances of live music and sexual-minority friendly venues. This aspect of the area's history and character is covered in a film by a local historian Robert Flood.²⁷⁷ Today a small venue exists on St Margaret's Bank, known as The Little Theatre, and is used for amateur performances.

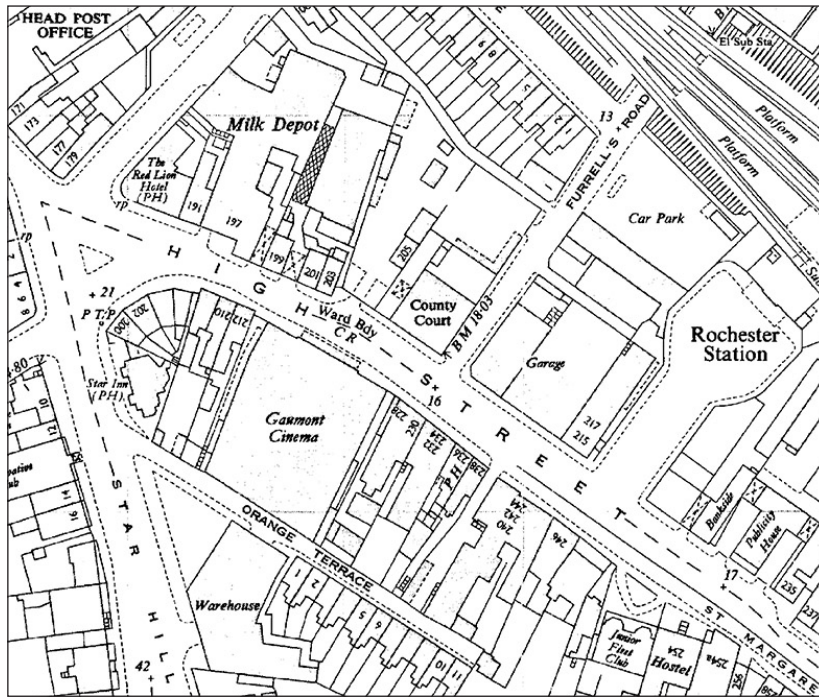


Fig. 114 Detail from an OS map published in 1961 showing the showing Majestic (later Gaumont) cinema [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]

7 The Jewish community of Chatham Intra

Medway's Jewish population was one of the largest in provincial England in the Victorian era and this included a significant presence in Chatham Intra.²⁷⁸ The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* records Jews at Rochester in 1087 and in 1231 but such references cease after the Jews were expelled from England in 1290.²⁷⁹ After the readmission of the Jews in the mid-17th century the British population was largely drawn from two main groups; the Sephardim who had originated in Iberia (chiefly Portugal) and the Ashkenazim who came from northern Europe including Russia and Poland. By the mid-18th century Chatham had an established community, no doubt attracted by its naval, military and mercantile opportunities and strong trading connections to northern European ports. The kind of occupations in which they were engaged were import and export and acting as naval agents, pawnbrokers and clothing merchants (known as slop sellers).

The Jewish presence in the area was acknowledged in the writings of Charles Dickens and in the military novels of James Grant; often in antisemitic terms that were representative of prevailing attitudes at the time. R. G. Hobbes, who was a senior administrator at both Sheerness and Chatham dockyards in the 19th century, also commented on the Jewish presence in the area:

‘...they have resorted to it in greater numbers ever since it became a dockyard town. With that enterprise and industry which everywhere characterize the race, they would eagerly seize the opportunities afforded them; the humbler sort to deal in the civil habiliments shed by recruits when they assume the military or naval uniform; and the richer to purchase the furniture, etc., of officers leaving the garrison to sell to officers joining; as well as to lend money to the impecunious, etc.’²⁸⁰

But as the contribution made by the community increased through the 19th century overt discrimination appears to have diminished. Some Jews were able to take on prominent civic roles, such as J. L. Levy who was elected mayor of Rochester in 1860 and 1865 and his relative L. Levy, who was mayor in 1874, 1885, and 1886.²⁸¹ One notable legacy of the Jewish community is the synagogue and cemetery in Chatham Intra.

The Chatham Memorial Synagogue, No. 366 High Street Rochester

There is some suggestion of an attempt to establish a synagogue in Chatham in 1750 but the origins of the Chatham Memorial Synagogue can be more confidently dated to the 1770s.²⁸² Prior to this worship would have probably taken place in private houses.²⁸³ The first evidence occurs in the records of St Bartholomew's hospital, when a lease was granted to John Roberts in 1770 for two tenements, one of which was sub-let for use as a synagogue.²⁸⁴ Roberts was a house carpenter who occupied part of the former Hawkins mansion at No. 373 High Street Rochester in the late 18th century.²⁸⁵ When the lease for the two tenements was renewed in 1780 the records note that one was in use as a synagogue let to 'Levi Israel and others' (Fig. 115).²⁸⁶ This was referred to as 'lately new built' in 1787 perhaps reflecting its adaptation to serve as a place of worship and Levi Israel was again named as the tenant along with others.²⁸⁷ At this date the second tenement seems to have been taken over for use by the minister. In 1794 the same group obtained the lease in their own right and when this was renewed in 1808 one of the named individuals was Lazarus Magnus.²⁸⁸ It was Magnus's son Simon who raised the funds for the synagogue to be rebuilt in 1868-70.

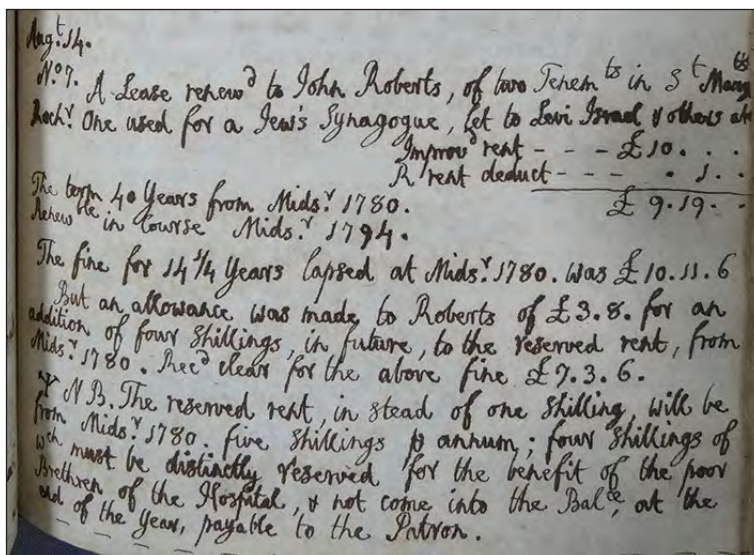


Fig. 115 Extract from St Bartholomew's Estate book showing the entry for the synagogue [Medway Archives, CH2/18]

Little is known about the first premises but in the 1840s it was shown as a detached building set back from the High Street and accessed from Bulls Head Alley (Fig. 116). In 1847 a street directory described this as 'a small building of brick and wood, about one hundred years old, with a clock, visible from the High Street, noteworthy

for having a face with Hebrew characters'.²⁸⁹ The timber structure is thought to have been inspired by Polish examples. To its south was a Jewish burial ground, thought to have been in use from the mid-18th century although the earliest decipherable gravestones appear to date to the 1790s.²⁹⁰

The present synagogue is a prominent building (Fig. 117) whose importance is recognised in its grade II* listing.²⁹¹ The money for its construction was raised by Simon Magnus in memory of his son Lazarus Simon Magnus (see below) and it was built in the same vicinity as the previous building, which Magnus purchased along with the burial ground and houses fronting the High Street in order to provide an adequate site. The foundation stone was laid in 1865 and the building was opened in 1870. Designed by the architect Hyman Henry Collins in a Byzantine manner, a full account of the building was published in *The Builder* along with a plan (Fig. 118) and an engraving of the interior (Fig. 119). The layout of the site was designed to allow for a clear line of sight to the funerary monument of Lazarus Magnus (a requirement specified in the foundation deed). A residence for the rabbi was also provided to the east of the synagogue, in the same broad style and materials. When the congregation required additional communal space the site of the rabbi's house was used for an extension, built in the 1970s. The addition did not attempt to replicate the architecture of the Victorian building and required the amending of the foundation deed because it blocked the view to the tomb.

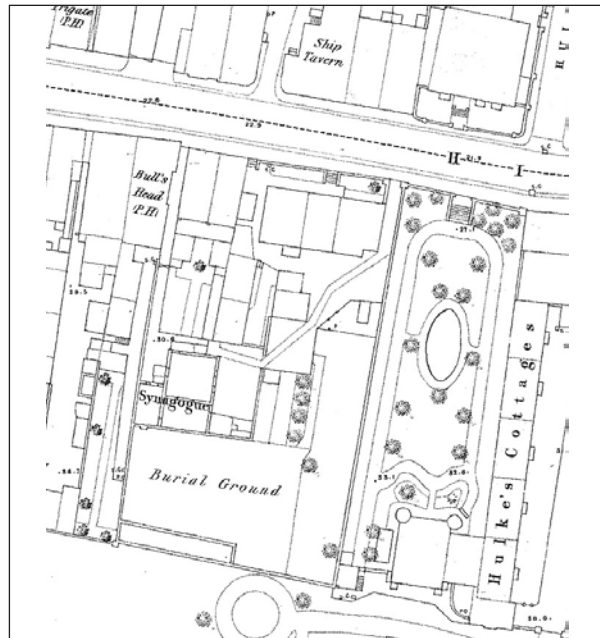
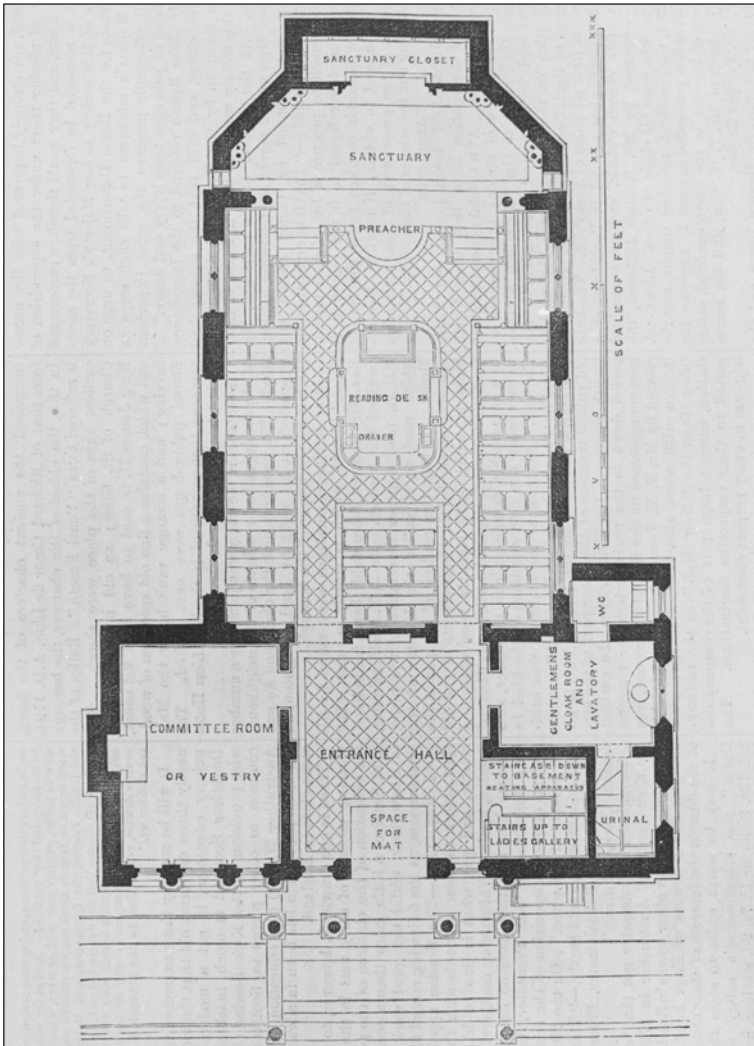


Fig. 116 Detail of OS town map of 1866 showing the first synagogue [Historic OS Mapping: Copyright and database right 2021. Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) License numbers 000394 and TP0024]



Fig. 117 Front elevation of Chatham Memorial Synagogue in 2021 [Chris Redgrave ©Historic England Archive, DP289272]



(Left) Fig. 118 Plan of the synagogue published in The Builder 10 Sept 1870 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, AA028586]

(Below) Fig. 119 Illustration of the interior of the synagogue published in The Builder, 10 Sept 1870 [© Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive, AA028587]



CHATHAM MEMORIAL SYNAGOGUE.—MR. H. H. COLLINS, ARCHITECT.

The cemetery

It is thought that the cemetery at Chatham may be unique in England because Jewish religious law requires a minimal separation (of around a hundred paces) between a synagogue and a burial ground (Fig. 120).²⁹² It is probable that the earlier synagogue observed the convention but it was not possible to maintain it for its larger replacement. The cemetery is also notable for a narrow, raised brick terrace adjoining its back wall for part of its length. This has been identified as an example of an “upper ground”, a feature that existed in several Anglo-Jewish cemeteries and was used by the privileged members of the community to obtain a more select grave site. However, it was not used for the most prominent memorial in the cemetery, that of Lazarus Simon Magnus, who died aged 39 in 1869. This grave dominates the foreground of the cemetery and takes the form of a veiled urn on an ornate stepped pedestal and base. It bears the conventional Victorian iconography of a lightning strike riving a tree in half in order to represent a life cut short and an inscription in Hebrew and English that bears witness to Magnus’s admirable character and includes details of his career. A pair of white obelisks directly in line with the monument commemorate Simon Magnus, who died in 1875, and his wife.

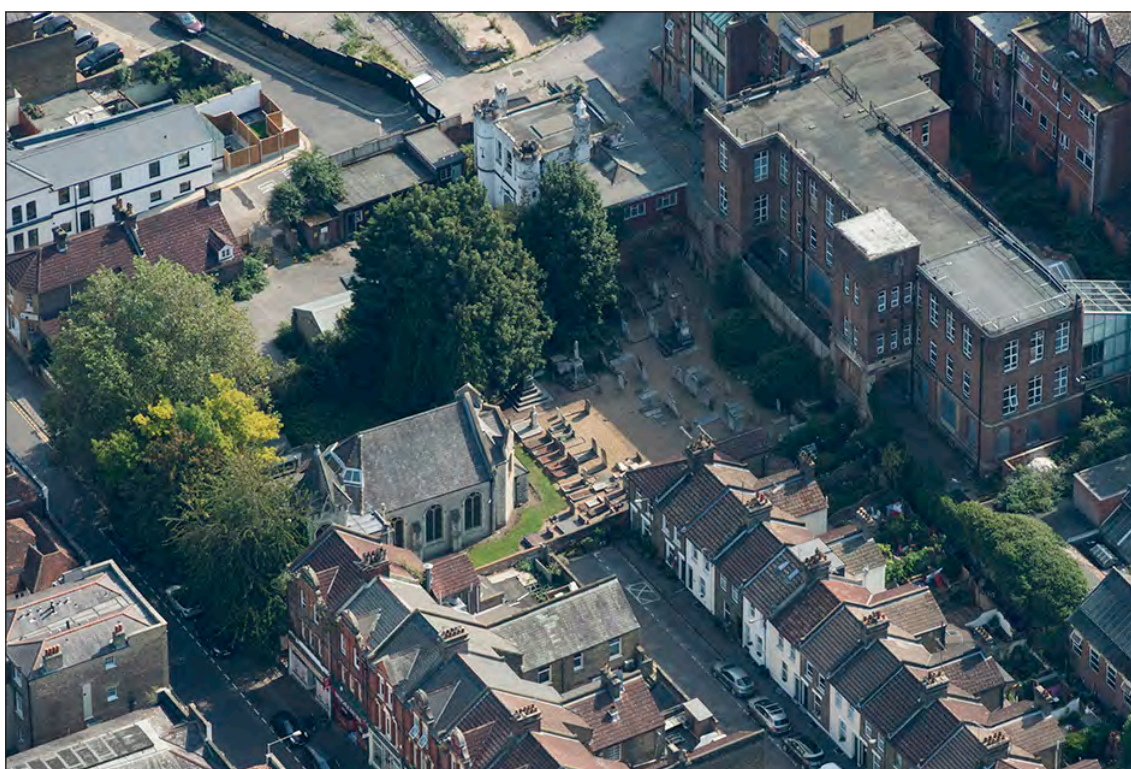


Fig 120 Aerial photograph showing the synagogue and burial ground in 2021 [Damian Grady ©Historic England Archive, 33967_019]

Other gravestones include that of Nathaniel Isaac who fled Chatham after accusations of forgery and committed suicide at Dover in 1840.²⁹³ The Isaac family suffered further tragedy in 1844 when Lewis (son of Isaac Isaac) was found drowned in the Medway. His headstone is near that of Ellah Barnard who also died in the

same year of drowning.²⁹⁴ Ellah was sister of Daniel Barnard who owned a theatre in Chatham and was involved with the fire brigade, both recorded on his headstone.²⁹⁵ The cemetery also contains a headstone for Abraham Abrahams who was executed at Maidstone gaol in 1819 for his part in planning a burglary at Sheerness.

Leading families: Magnus and Isaacs

In 1808 Lazarus Magnus had a shop on the High Street, opposite the Royal Oak public house, and was operating as a slop seller.²⁹⁶ He and his son, Simon, became naval agents, silversmiths and pawnbrokers. But Simon's son Lazurus was able to break through into the upper strata of the middle-classes by pursuing a range of commercial and trade interests.²⁹⁷ He was often described as a coal factor but he was also part of the North Atlantic Telegraph project and a friend of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, coming to the aid of the Great Eastern shipping project when it faced bankruptcy. Lazarus also promoted the Sittingbourne and Sheerness Railway Company. This breathed new life into the medieval port of Queenborough, for which Magnus was rewarded by being made a freeman of the borough and then its mayor. This was seen as a significant achievement by a Jew at this date. In 1860, when fears of a renewed war with France were high, Magnus founded the Kent 9th Volunteer Rifle Corp and recruited from the Chatham congregation. But his death in 1865 was described as an absurd tragedy, the result of a self-administered overdose of chloroform taken for a toothache.

Another important family were the Isaacs.²⁹⁸ In the early 19th century Samuel Isaac was operating as a furniture broker in Chatham, his brother Isaac Isaac was a slop seller and another brother John was a silversmith and jeweller before becoming a naval agent. In 1845 Samuel Isaacs is listed in a directory as an 'army contractor, military tailor, general East Indian passage agent, tobacconist, trunk merchant, china and glass dealer, general warehouseman, agent to the Church of England Insurance trust and annuity Institution and a dealer in civet cat musk'. His entrepreneurial activities later extended to acting as a blockade runner to the Confederate states during the American Civil War and as a promoter and builder of the Mersey Tunnel.

ENDNOTES

- 1 See Kent County Council 2004 'Kent Historic Towns Chatham: Archaeological Assessment Document' and Kent County Council 2004 'Kent Historic Towns Chatham: Archaeological Assessment Document' unpublished reports by Kent County Council and Historic England.
- 2 Canterbury Archaeological Trust 2019 'Bardell Terrace, Corporation Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1NG' unpublished interim archaeological evaluation report for Medway Council planning application MC/19/0038
- 3 See Kent Historic Environment Records: TQ 76 NE 7, TQ 76 NE 8
- 4 There is 12th Century Romanesque fabric surviving within the much-altered and rebuilt parish church.
- 5 See webpage 'Chatham' at <https://opendomesday.org> (accessed March 2021)
- 6 MacDougall 1999, 4
- 7 Willson & Seary 2005, 14.
- 8 Ibid
- 9 MacDougall 1999, 17
- 10 Kent County Archives, U1115/T66/2
- 11 National Archives, PROB-11-273-707
- 12 National Archives, MFC 1/85
- 13 MacDougall points out the increase in burial numbers in such plague years.
- 14 Crawshaw 1999, 10
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- 111 Webpage on Richard Watts at <https://www.richardwatts.org.uk/richard-watts> (accessed May 2021)
- 112 Medway Archives, CH2/22 (survey by James Saunders); Ch2/23/1
- 113 Medway Archives, CH108/297
- 114 Historic England, Historians File OUT 686
- 115 NHLE list entries 1116062, 1336148, 1086454
- 116 Harris 1930 quoted in Willson and Seary 2004, 47
- 117 Medway Archives, CH108/524-5
- 118 Medway Archives, CH108/256
- 119 Medway Archives, CH108/256
- 120 Medway Archives, CH108/540
- 121 Medway Archives, CH108/540; CH 108/538
- 122 Medway Archives, CH 2/23/1
- 123 Historic England, Historians File OUT 686
- 124 The Rochester Bridge Trust now owns a painting attributed to the 17th century maritime artist, Isaac Sailmaker (1633 -1721). Part of this shows Chatham Intra. The detail of this work does not closely match the style of the No 377 painted panels making him (or his circle) an unlikely candidate as the artist.
- 125 Harris, J 1719 *The History of Kent in five parts...* London
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- 127 This dating is partly based on the depiction of the buildings at Gunwharf.
- 128 Historic England Archive, photographic job 05/00593 taken 1968
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- 130 Medway Archives, CH108/540
- 131 Medway Archives, CH 108/270
- 132 Medway Archives, CH2/22 (survey by James Saunders); Ch2/23/1
- 133 Medway Archives, CH2/12, 87
- 134 Medway Archives, CH2/31
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- 136 *Rochester, Chatham & Gillingham Journal*, 19 Feb 1887
- 137 Medway Archives, CH108/293
- 138 Medway Archives, Ch108/540
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- 140 Survey by Richard Williams 1780, Medway Archives CH2/22
- 141 Medway Archives, CH108/307

- 142 Medway Archives, CH 108/298
- 143 Medway Archives CH108/298
- 144 Willson and Seary 2004, 52
- 145 Medway Archives, CH108/302
- 146 Medway Archives, CH108/329
- 147 Willson and Seary 2004, 73
- 148 Medway Archives, CH108/527
- 149 The latter name, as Tye, is used in 17th century documents and is suggested to be an area of marshland owned by the hospital which they leased out for development e.g. to Gervase Mund. If so, the Tye or Tigh was clearly large if it included No 351 in its eastern part.
- 150 Medway Archives, CH2/14
- 151 Medway Archives, Ch2/18
- 152 Medway Archives, Ch2/14
- 153 Medway Archives, DE505/10
- 154 Medway Archives, DE505/11
- 155 Medway Archives, CH2/18
- 156 Will of Thomas Hulkes available at <https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/assets/> (accessed February 2021)
- 157 Medway Archives, DE1210/T24
- 158 *South Eastern Gazette*, 19 March 1877.
- 159 See 'History of Stephanotis: Owner Charles Arckoll' at <https://www.benjidog.co.uk/Stephanotis/Arckoll.html> (accessed February 2021)
- 160 See image at <https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im1911111CVJ-Foden.jpg> accessed May 2021
- 161 *Dover Express*, 3 January 1913.
- 162 *East Kent Gazette*, 23 November 1912.
- 163 Leases in the possession of the Featherstone family
- 164 Hasted, 191
- 165 NHLE list entry 1320136
- 166 Quoted in Willson and Seary 2004, 75 (no reference given).
- 167 There was said to be a plaque set into the wall with the initials F.P.J.H. and the date 1809. If the P was in fact B the initials could refer to Francis Burrows and James Hulkes. Harris 1930, 11
- 168 Willson and Seary 2004, 74
- 169 *Maidstone Journal & Kentish Advertiser*, 3 January 1837.
- 170 See sketch copy reproduced as Fig. 37 in Willson & Seary, 2005. The original source of the plan has yet to be identified.

- 171 Medway Archives, CH2/18
- 172 Willson and Seary 2004, 74-5
- 173 *Brewers Guardian*, 1 Feb 1881, 31-2
- 174 Medway Archives, DE505/4, U608/T2
- 175 Medway Archives, CH2/18
- 176 Medway Archives, U608/T2
- 177 *Norfolk Chronicle*, 22 April 1780.
- 178 *Kentish Gazette*, 6 May 1834.
- 179 Willson and Seary 2004, 95
- 180 NHLE list entry 1336149 This incorrectly states that building was designed to work alongside No 257.
- 181 *Brewers Guardian*, 1 Feb 1881, 31-2
- 182 NHLE, list entry 1336149
- 183 NHLE list entry 1299352.
- 184 *Rochester, Chatham & Gillingham Chronicle*, 30 September 1876
- 185 Smith, C R 1883 *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological* vol 1 London
- 186 Medway Archives, DE1210/T22
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- 188 NHLE list entry 1116041
- 189 Denne & Shrubsole 1772, 304
- 190 *Kentish Gazette*, 15 June 1787.
- 191 *Kentish Gazette*, 21 August 1804.
- 192 “a very handsome large shop, a neat parlour, a handsome dining room, three bed rooms, a kitchen, wash-house, paved yard, garden a good pump, with excellent water, four cellars and a passage to go to the back premises’ *Kentish Gazette*, 26 June 1804.
- 193 *Kentish Gazette*, 6 March 1807.
- 194 Marked as such on Baker’s map for Denne & Shrubsole 1772
- 195 *Kentish Gazette*, 9 August 1836
- 196 NHLE list entry 1186026
- 197 NHLE list entries 10865202; 1186038; 1336098
- 198 A plaque in the garden wall to No. 252 that reads ‘Erected by Thomas Tomlyn 1790’ was in existence in 2021.
- 199 NHLE list entry 1086462
- 200 NHLE list entry 1336154
- 201 NHLE list entry 1086463
- 202 NHLE list entry 1336155
- 203 NHLE list entry 1086464

- 204 NHLE list entries 1086465, 1336118
- 205 NHLE list entries 1086466, 1336119
- 206 MOLA 2018, 1
- 207 MOLA 2018, 4
- 208 NHLE list entry 1086451; HE Archives building file BF097450 (containing photographs BB95/04548-55); The National Archives, WORK 30/747 (design drawings).
- 209 *South Eastern Gazette*, 9 April 1861.
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- 217 *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal*, **6 December 1805**
- 218 *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal*, **23 August 1822**.
- 219 A water tank was excluded from the sale intended to be reserved for public service. *The Star*, 9 August 1826.
- 220 *Sevenoaks Chronical & Kentish Advertiser*, 18 May 1883.
- 221 *Maidstone Journal & Kentish Advertiser* 9 Dec 1890; 17 Nov 1891
- 222 *The Electrical Engineer*, 24 April 1891, 409
- 223 *West Kent Guardian*, 1 September 1855
- 224 See '1740: The Medway Navigation' webpage posted by the Tonbridge Historical Society available at <http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/events/medway-navigation.htm> (accessed May 2021)
- 225 *Hampshire Chronicle*, 21 October 1805.
- 226 For many years the Sunne of 1586 was held to be the first Chatham built ship but research by the author suggests otherwise.
- 227 This was a common practice, including on the Medway, with the Government run dockyards concentrated on building the largest warships, such as HMS Victory the first rate launched from Chatham in 1765.
- 228 With 'a figure head elegantly carved and painted representing Britannia standing on a globe supported by two figures of fame blowing their trumpets. Her stern, quarters etc are also neatly painted and ornamented' *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 June 1768.
- 229 *Kentish Gazette*, 3 June 1778

- 230 *Kentish Gazette*, 21 September 1813.
- 231 NHLE list entry 1116093
- 232 British Museum, object no 1032262001.
- 233 Denne & Shrubsole 1817, 304
- 234 *Kentish Independent*, 5 May 1849.
- 235 *Maidstone Journal & Kentish Advertiser*, 29 January 1856. This included a patent slip using a cradle to hold the boat which ran on rails and was moved by a capstan. It could be used at more states of the tide.
- 236 *South Eastern Gazette*, 1 April 1856.
- 237 *Kentish Gazette*, 15 June 1787.
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- 292 See webpage by Marcus Roberts at <http://www.cemeteryscribes.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=2893> (accessed May 2021)
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APPENDIX

Suggestions for further research

By necessity this report has been primarily a desk-based exercise but there remain many aspects of the area's historical development and present character that merit further research and investigation. It is suggested that priority should be given to addressing the most pressing gaps in our current understanding so that the changes to Chatham Intra, some of which are already underway, will serve to enhance and preserve its character and its individual heritage assets. And that the research should help deliver the social, economic and cultural regeneration that is at the heart of the HSHAZ project.

Archaeological issues

This report was not intended as a full archaeological assessment but it has confirmed the need to co-ordinate archaeological activity in what is a little-studied area. Furthermore, there are a number of major projects already underway or under discussion, including Bardell Wharf, St Bartholomew's Hospital (New Road) and the Grays of Chatham garage site, and others are likely to follow. The size of these and other potential development sites allows for a much greater understanding to be achieved than would be possible from smaller keyhole investigations.

Therefore, it is appropriate to pose some basic but important research questions.

- What was the nature of any prehistoric activity?
- What was the route of the Roman road eastwards out of Rochester – did it follow that of the current High Street or an alternative alignment?
- What was the nature of any Roman exploitation of the study area?
- What was the nature of any early post-Roman exploitation?
- What form did the medieval hospital estate of St Bartholomew's take and can anything be understood about its wider landscape?
- When did the current High Street come into existence and what was the nature of the early post-medieval development along it?
- When might linear development along the High Street have given rise to the currently observed pattern of houses at the front with industrial premises behind and lanes leading down to wharfage?
- When did the creation of wharfs begin and how might land reclamation to create riverfront land have progressed?

Sites adjacent to a major river are likely to contain deep alluvial deposits from which geo-archaeological and palaeoenvironmental data might be obtained allowing for the distant development of the place to be explored. One approach is that of a digital deposit modelling. At present Chatham lacks sufficient data to apply this approach

but a start could be made. The data from individual development projects would need to be carefully created and monitored to ensure consistency and compatibility thereby allowing the information to be combined in order to create a broader picture.

Borehole sampling, analysis, scientific dating and 3D mapping of digital data could provide the means of studying the long-term development of the Medway valley. Chatham Intra makes up only a small part of this wider locale but any information gathered here could make a contribution to a larger riverine study area. This would require sampling for archaeological purposes as a part of future geo-technical site investigations as well as examining existing and available site investigation logs (including from completed developments) and past geological investigations for archaeologically useful data.

Although a few archaeological investigations have taken place here there is a general paucity of information about the buried archaeology of Chatham Intra. But the current absence of evidence should not be taken as indication of its archaeological potential. A digital deposit model would over time enable this to be more fully sketched out and thus allow developed-funded resources to be better targeted. It could also assist developers in understanding the risk that the presence of archaeological remains might pose for their projects.

Two types of location within Chatham Intra present opportunities for future archaeological study: its wharfs and river walls and the High Street frontages. For the first of these archaeological dating methods may be able to make a contribution where historic archive information is lacking. The identification of timbers suitable for tree-ring dating could help refine our understanding of the chronology of riverside change as well as allowing for the study of construction techniques at different periods. If the river-side structures include re-used ships timbers this would further enhance their research potential. The archaeological potential of the High Street frontages is derived from its widening in the 19th century as part of a programme of street improvements, most particularly on its southern side. It is therefore possible that buried remains of earlier properties may survive within the width of what is now the pavement and carriageway. However, this may also be heavily compromised by the multiple services that will have been buried below the road and pavement surface.

Research

This study was carried out with very limited access to any major archives. Therefore, there is considerable scope for a greatly enhanced understanding of Chatham Intra's historical development and architectural character from the study of archive records. Ideally this should be done in parallel with the investigation of buildings so that each line of enquiry might inform the other. The Medway Archives is likely to contain the greatest amount of relevant documents but it is likely that Kent Archives will also have some useful documents, including the 1664 Hearth Tax. Another source of information is the tithe maps of the three parishes within which Chatham Intra lay although the apportionments appear to have been lost.

Amongst the documents of particular relevance will be those created by the organisations and individuals engaging in the development in the area. These are:

St Bartholomew's Hospital

The medieval hospital is worthy of study in its own right and much remains to be learnt about its original form from both the analysis of its existing fabric and perhaps from archaeological investigation. But in the early post-medieval period the hospital estate was extensive and the leases issued by the institution have, in many places, established the plot boundaries that still shape the area's urban grain. The lessees illuminate the character of those engaged in development and, potentially, the role played by naval and dockyard personnel in the growth of Chatham Intra.

Sir John Hawkins's Hospital, the Chatham Chest and Watts Charity

The records of Hawkins' Hospital might illuminate the role it played in the development of Chatham Intra, notably the group of buildings at Nos 365-377 High Street Rochester and the associated wharf. The two other two charities named above had significant land holdings at the eastern end of Chatham Intra (although the Watts Charity landholdings extended beyond the study areas) during an important period of its development.

The Tihurst, Wildash and Hulkes families

The records relating to these families might be able to illuminate the early development of the mansion and brewery complex at No. 351 High Street Rochester. Any surviving records from the occupants/owners Charles Arkcoll, Style and Winch and Featherstones would enhance our understanding of the sites later history. Brewing was a significant presence in Chatham Intra in the 18th and 19th centuries and the site at No. 351 could be put into this wider context, including alongside other important local breweries such as that run by the Best family.

Chatham Board of Health, Chatham Borough Council and Rochester Borough Council, Medway Council

After a Local Board of Health for Chatham was founded in 1848 it commissioned an important series of maps of Chatham in 1852-3. The board (and its successor bodies) was also responsible for licensing new buildings and administering the building by-laws. A study of their records at Medway Archives would allow for a much better understanding of development in Chatham Intra in the last century and a half (refs CBA/BPR and CBA/BP 1857-1974).

Mapping change

The existence of detailed historic mapping from the mid-19th century would potentially allow for a GIS system, in which the available maps are rectified to the OS grid base, allowing changes within the area to be charted. Medway Archives contain many maps and site plans that could potentially be digitised to illustrate land tenure

and historic property boundaries. This might, for example, allow for the full extent of St Bartholomew's estate to be established. And they might also allow for more accurate predictions about where buried archaeological remains might survive or indicate buildings that might contain older fabric.

Another area in which map regression could be helpful is in charting the process by which the riverside was reinforced and reclaimed. As well as sequence of Ordnance Survey maps older maps such as those created by the military could also be useful. These are mostly held by the National Archives, including MR 1/815 and MPHH 1/585. Historic aerial photography might also provide a means for plotting the 20th century development of the river side and supplementing the information available from the mapping.

Building Investigation and listing enhancement

The HSHAZ has a number of key sites for which an enhanced understanding of the building's significance through research and/or investigation has been identified as a priority by Historic England. These include: No. 351 High Street and the associated brewery complex; the former pumphouse and later mortuary; the burial ground of the Chatham Memorial Synagogue; and Nos 365-377 High Street. The last of these may retain evidence of the 17th century mansion associated with Sir John Hawkins and contains the painted and panelled room which merits further expert assessment and explanation.

The opportunity to research and record other historic buildings that make a significant contribution to the conservation area could also be pursued where possible. And it is likely that further research on Chatham Intra will in turn highlight previously overlooked sites and premises. For example, the early date and planned character of the proto-shopping parade Hammond Place suggest that it may have a higher level of heritage significance than has previously been realised. And the buildings on Foundry Wharf could be examined to establish whether they contain any remnants of the Medway Ironworks.

Any enhanced understanding of the buildings and structures, whether unlisted or already designated, is of potential value for the statutory designations that are used to help protect and manage the historic built environment of Chatham Intra. A fuller understanding of the area's development could be helpful to a revision of the Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area Appraisal. At present no single archaeological heritage asset has been identified that would justify consideration as a scheduled monument. But if the medieval form of St Bartholomew's Hospital could be better understood and the survival of significant buried archaeological remains confirmed then it might be possible to assess it for potential scheduling. Other heritage assets may be of sufficient architectural interest to merit consideration for listing while those already listed may need to have their individual entries enhanced.

Other topics

The two publications about the major fires in Chatham Intra in 1800 and 1820 provide a rare level of detail about the affected population. We are told names, ages, size of family and mode of employment, and sometimes income, of those who applied for relief. A more detailed study of this information, cross-referenced where possible with other sources such as the census, might tell us more about who lived in this area of Chatham at the time of the fires and how the character of the local population changed during the 19th century. Such a study might be suitable for a public participation project seeking to engage the local community with the history and heritage of Chatham Intra.



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