

FAVERSHAM CREEK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

UNDESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS AND VALUES

Planning context

The National Planning Policy Framework advises that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan or in any Neighbourhood Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In doing this, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
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Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by any proposals (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset). Where development proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use. The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The area of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan is within the Faversham Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings of grade II and grade II* as indicated on the map and these together with their settings benefit from Statutory protection.

This report addresses undesignated buildings and other assets in their context and areas of character within the area of the Creek Neighbourhood Plan. The character of the conservation area is assessed in the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal, published by Swale Borough Council in 2004. This is still relevant over much of the area but is becoming outdated due to more recent events but has been used where relevant in varying levels of detail. This report uses the Character Appraisal as one of the bases for identifying undesignated heritage.

Introduction

The creek area is a distinctive part of Faversham and contains important views and undesignated heritage which together make a substantial contribution to its character and appearance of the area as part of the setting of the substantial number of listed buildings present.

The over-riding heritage value of Faversham Creek is its significance in the origins of the town of Faversham. The creek comprises a tidal inlet of the Swale waterway penetrating some six kilometres inland on a winding course across the Nagden and Ham marshes of the north Kent coast. Over the centuries it has afforded sheltered access for vessels of modest size and navigation has always been restricted by its width and depth. The port of Faversham, which in mediaeval times, stretched from the Swale to the North Foreland, was

fundamental to the development and prosperity of the town. By the end of the 16th century the port of Faversham was a place of considerable importance handling much of the grain required to feed the population of London. By the end of the 17th century it was one of the country's largest wool exporting ports. In 1842-3 improvements to the creek were made by cutting new channels that eliminated two of the worst bends. The town's wharves and waterside activities were mostly concentrated along the south east bank although Pollock's shipyard opposite Standard Quay was a notable exception where tankers, tugs and lighters were built from 1917-1970. After the Second World War coasters up to 400 tons in size continued to bring in fertiliser, corn and cattle feed from Holland and Germany and timber from Scandinavia and tankers from the Isle of Grain refinery delivered petroleum for onward distribution. Commercial traffic had ceased by 2000. Historic boats moored on, lived in and being repaired on the Creek are an everyday reminder of that history. (This section is largely drawn from the introduction to the Faversham Creek chapter in the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

Distinctive views within, into, out of and across the creek

The creek area provides a landscape which is important to the character of Faversham, which visually unites different parts of the town and which contains memories of two of Faversham's most historically important industries – trade by water and gunpowder manufacture.

There are a number of important views from the public domain along the creek within the area of the Plan. These locations are all places where there is a long view of the creek taking in the character of both banks and in most cases offering a clear contrast between the more developed town side and the more open Brents side. The views from the bridge and from the south end of Standard Quay include listed buildings which epitomise the historic character of the creek. In several cases, the views are likely to be the subject of change, and any new development should make a positive contribution. Within some of the more detailed sections, other views across the waterway are identified where they are important to the character of these parts of the area.

View 1.

The view from the creekside walkway outside Morrison's along the frontage of Weston Works and towards the bridge including the Shepherd Neame bottling plant and storage site. This is one of the most open views of the basin as a whole. It is likely that the Weston Works car park will see some enhancements as a result of the Plan. There is evidence of much silting of the waterway including marsh grasses on the higher silted areas. The town side of the basin has a utilitarian character, including a concreted yard enclosed by security fencing containing pallets and lorries and the blank face of a tall, yellow brick building with plastic sheeting to the upper walls with a metal roof comprising the brewery bottling plant. In the background above the bridge, the taller buildings of mixed age and character along Belvedere Road can be seen.

View 2

The view from the creek bridge down the creek towards Waterside. This view has changed substantially over the last 15 years, but is still a view which is many people's first introduction to the creek because it is a vehicular and pedestrian crossing from the town bank to the Brents. The open character of the Brents bank with its elm and willow trees and the modest 19th century two storey set back houses and public house along the Front Brents contrast with the higher and generally more dense buildings on the town side along Belvedere Road including the listed Provender Mill and the modern housing at Provender Walk. Closer to the bridge is the town quay with the T.S.Hazard, a 15th century warehouse. Moored vessels at the jetty and on the wharves present an ever changing prospect. The view is likely to change with any new development at Swan Quay which may have a different orientation and scale, but is still one of the best places to see the creek.

View 3

The view from Crab Island towards the oil depot and to Oyster Bay House. This is an open view down the creek from a footpath. The Brents side includes the modern, three storey housing at Faversham Reach, partly set back to include a small marina and the terraces and feature houses of Waterside with the sea wall and marshes beyond. While the feature houses at the marsh end add visual interest, the main terrace of Waterside is bland, being all of one height with little variety of materials and turns its back on the creek behind the walkway and garden fences. Moorings alongside the former oil depot and at Standard Quay add visual interest. It is important that the heights and design of any new buildings make a positive contribution in terms of adding visual interest and use of appropriate materials.

View 4

The view from the Ham Marsh end of Waterside up the creek towards the town. In the foreground are the moorings at Standard Quay and along the former oil depot site. The recent developments of mixed brick, tiled and weatherboarded houses along Belvedere Road with older buildings in the town behind show how the area has changed. The modern houses of Provender Walk, although mixed in height on the main range, lack local character. The open character of the Front Brents where the buildings are set back behind trees and of Crab Island with the grassed area in front of the Upper Brents provide a natural contrast. Up on the bank above the green is the Brents Tavern, a former hat factory. Like the downstream view, this will change with any development on the former oil depot and coach depot sites and any new development should add to the visual interest.

View 5

The view from the Abbey Road end of Standard Quay from the quayside adjacent to the former coach depot along the quay and out to the sea wall. On the Brents side, there is a sharp transition from the tall group of modern feature housing at the end of Waterside to the open marshland character of Ham Marshes inside the sea wall and as far as Nagden. Boats moored along the quay add to the visual interest and the view includes the timber clad black sheds and white building on Standard Quay, distinctive for their gables, loft and loading doors and corrugated iron roofs, Standard House, a substantial white rendered building of around 1800 and Oyster Bay House, the mid 19th century former warehouse built as a secure store for goods in transit and now used for residential. This has top storey gantries to the front and rear and is an exceptional landmark because of its height and yellow brick bulk and its position at the edge of the marshes. These are all listed buildings of distinctive character.

The undesignated heritage assets in their context

1. Line of former railway from the entrance to Iron Wharf boatyard through Standard Quay and into as far as the former Stockwell Lane in Belvedere Road.

The trace of a railway route which connected the port and creek-side industry with the national rail network. The railway carriages at Iron Wharf which are still used as storage lock-ups are a reminder of the existence of this railway branch and are an intriguing survival from the creek's railway era. Also of note are the routes of the existing roadways through the boatyard which mostly follow the former railway lines which ran through the area from Abbey Fields in the direction of Standard Quay and on along Belvedere Road to Stockwell Lane. The best example of exposed rails in the ground is at the town end of Standard Quay along the outside of the boundary of a metal workshop which is on the coach depot site. It is important that the route remains legible in the pattern of any new development.

2. Albion Tavern

A distinctive two storey 19th century white painted weather-boarded building, important for its use as a public house on the north-west side of the creek which brings vitality to the area. The public house stands alone, with tables and benches associated with the pub to the front and car parking adjacent. This is as a result of some terraced housing being demolished to either side of the public house. The open space to the south which includes the car park and a green sward which is crossed by a footpath opens up views of the flint church of St. John the Evangelist dating from 1881 set on a high bank and built for brickyard workers. To the north, a smaller open space reveals views of the garden and rear of modern housing in the Upper Brents close to the weatherboarded former public house, the 19th century Willow Tap, now converted to a house.

The town green along the creek frontage, the willow and elm trees together with the 19th century modestly scaled two storey houses with coloured render set back along the Front Brents in two groups running from the bridge to Crab Island, make an important contribution to the character of the Brents bank of the creek and give the place an informal and relaxed character. There is also access to a jetty, built 1985 with moorings for 20 vessels. The first terrace of 19th century houses runs on from the early 19th century white stuccoed Bridge House, formerly a place of mercantile exchange.

Any additional development or alteration should maintain the modest character of the buildings and openness of the area. (This section draws on the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

3. The complex of buildings formerly the Frank and Whittome joinery works on the south side of Belvedere Road at the junction with Quay lane and Belvedere Road.

The building parallel with Quay Lane was formerly part of Rigden's brewery (later Fremilns bottling store) and presents two set back gable ends of three storey height to Belvedere Road, one extending further than the other. At the corner are lower buildings with pitched roofs with gable ends facing onto Quay Lane. The long wall of the shorter three storey range and of the attached lower section rise up the slope of Quay Lane. The shorter range presents two storey frontage on Abbey Street set in a small courtyard. This group has slate roofs and is built in yellow stock brickwork with brick dressings and brown metal rear doors. The rest of the group of buildings were used by Whittles timber firm and front only onto Belvedere Road. This whole group was more recently used as a joinery works by Frank and Whittome. The group which runs from Abbey Street to Belvedere Road is now used by Creek Creative as art studios and exhibition space.

The rest of the complex continues along Belvedere Road in yellow stocks with a slate roof, two storeys high with metal doors at ground floor level, and there is an attached two storey red brick building set at right angles also with a slate roof and traditionally sized window openings. The first sections of the complex including the three storey parts and the short ranges set across them and the two storey red brick building at right angles are of greatest interest, although some alteration may be acceptable.

Beyond the two storey red brick building, the range eventually changes to more modern brickwork but maintaining the same two storey height as far as the junction with Smack Alley. The scale of this group and its linearity characterises the former industrial nature of Belvedere Road.

4. Brick pavements at the corner of Belvedere Road and Quay Lane.

A distinctive area of blue brick scoria paving of a type not to be found elsewhere in the town worn smooth by years of use. This contrasts with the standard tarmac surfaces of

the main road pattern and with the buildings adjacent forms an entry feature into Belvedere Road. The street pattern is further defined here by the red brick former Two Brewers, now converted for housing and the rather less welcome gap in the frontage running around the corner into Conduit Street enclosed by a poor quality concrete wall affording views of open storage. This corner would benefit from a better quality boundary treatment and more appropriate paving to define the roadway and pavement as proposed in the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy.

5. The Boxing club

A brick building of strong 'Queen Anne' character dated 1911 formerly an ejection station and used as a boxing club. This is two storeys in height, set with its gable end to the street and of yellow stock brickwork and precise architectural detailing and with a slate roof and curved Dutch-style gables to the front and rear ends. It is of particular note in the view down Quay Lane from Abbey Street. The building is of similar scale and set in the same plane as the adjacent T.S.Hazard, a timber framed Kentish vernacular style warehouse which is listed grade II built by the Corporation of Faversham in 1475 to provide storage facilities for merchants lacking their own premises.

Other notable buildings at this location, here called Conduit Street, include the 18th century Swan and Harlequin and early 19th century red brick house on the north eastern edge which terminate the view from North Lane. (this section draws on the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

6. Stone setts in the vicinity of TS Hazard (noted in Streetscape Survey)

A significant remnant connected with the historic quayside. These form part of the access to town quay and comprise granite paving with setts and wheelers worn smooth by years of wear. It forms part of the setting of the T.S.Hazard which was an early warehouse building.

7. Air Raid Precautions Headquarters adjacent to TS Hazard

A rare survival of a WWII air-raid precautions headquarters which contributes both to an understanding of the history of the area and as part of the collective memory of the community. This is a low, white painted flat roofed single storey structure, set back from the road.

Together, these buildings and the TS Hazard itself, the mix of surface treatments and the gaps between the buildings offering views of the creek create a unique sense of place. Viewed from Quay Lane looking towards the creek and with glimpses of buildings on the Brents bank, this group of buildings is one of the most distinctive in the town. From across the creek, together with a modern red brick Southern Water building, they form the foreground to a view of the former Whitbread brewery (now Tesco) chimneys and the crown spire of St. Mary of Charity parish church which for many comprise the epitome of Faversham.

8. Shepherd Neame Brewery canteen building which was originally used as stables

A red brick, two storey building of distinctive modest local character which makes a positive contribution to the character of the area by adding substance to the corner with Bridge Road. The enclosure of its car park with a yellow stock brick wall separates the building from the group around the T.S.Hazard. Opposite are the only remaining former domestic building in Conduit Street, No. 5, a well maintained two storey red brick building with a slate roof and the peg-tiled cask store also used by Shepherd Neame.

The two storey building at the corner of Bridge Road forms the introduction to the larger red brick Shepherd Neame brewery buildings on the south side of North Lane which on this frontage are mainly of late 19th century date and have no pavement. This range

terminates with a 1936 building at the corner of Partridge Lane. Rising above this range is the distinctive louvered roof brewhouse built in 1864 and together with the modern steel chimney is a landmark from many vantage points in the town. On the north side of the road is the tall, modern yellow brick bottling building beyond Bridge Road extending as far as the entrance to the open yard.

These buildings dominate this part of North Lane on both sides and create a pedestrian and traffic canyon with their high walls and spanned by a high level walkway. This area would benefit from softening in character with better quality surfaces and a pedestrian crossing and slowing the fast traffic as proposed in the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy. (The detail of the North Lane sites draws heavily on the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

9. Brick walls of the basin mainly from the east boundary of Morrisons to Ordnance Wharf but also including some walls on the Shepherd Neame frontage

This section of brick faced wharf was formerly the moorings for the gas works and later the moorings for the Agrigano fertiliser factory. Two small trees have broken through the brickwork of the wharf. The modern red brick paved walkway which extends from the Purifier building to the wall of the Shepherd Neame storage yard offers good views of the basin. New moorings would add visual interest.

10. Basin walls of Ordnance Wharf including a section of ashlar stonework facing Brent Road and timber rubbing strakes in the same area.

The Victorian remains of a set of quays around this peninsula between the two creek channels which illustrate a significant aspect of the past use of the creek for the mooring of vessels, which is important to understanding the history of the basin.

11. The Purifier building.

This 19th century building, which is the only surviving remains of the former gas works, has a strong industrial character and is the only building which has a wall which forms part of the wall of the basin. This is a two storey structure comprising two distinct ranges set at right angles and located at the head of the creek. It is constructed in yellow stock brick with a new slate roof to the main range and new metal roof to the range facing up the creek. This end of the building has a distinctive gable. The building has fenestration of an industrial character with metal frames. It forms a feature at the end of the walkway around the basin along the frontage of Morrison's, a supermarket building from 1992 with pinkish yellow brickwork and slate roofs echoing the local materials of the area. The Purifier building is visible from West Street through openings in the wall across the car park thereby revealing the presence of the creek.

12. Flood Lane for its character as an unmade road.

The name of this street is a reminder of the tide mill which once stood in this area. Its tranquil character is a contrast with the tightly packed medieval buildings of West Street which back onto it. The lane is a reminder, as its name suggests, that rebuilding after slum clearance was thought unwise in this area. Instead, a short terrace of two storey cottages of two different designs running off West Street facing a narrow tarmac road terminates with a gable end as the lane widens out. Its unsurfaced roadway, open green areas with trees and views into the allotments and waterways of the Stonebridge Pond complex contrast with the surrounding townscape of West Street and create a rather special little backwater. After the gate into Morrison's car park, the lane continues unmade between the two storey brick wall of the Purifier building and a high brick blast wall enclosing the allotment area.

13. The ponds and waterways of Stonebridge Pond.

The site of the Home Works established by 1653. By 1759, it occupied a site over one kilometre long and an average of 400 metres wide extending along the Westbrook stream from just north of the London-Canterbury Road at Ospringe all the way through to the head of Faversham Creek. By 1774 the works contained eleven watermills and five horse-worked incorporating mills where the three ingredients of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal were blended as well as many other buildings where pressing, granulating and drying the powder took place. As demand increased in the late 18th century more process houses were built on the north side of Brent Hill. For safety reasons, the manufacturing processes were rather widely spaced so that even at the height of its output, the 'factory' site was often quite a thickly wooded place where many of the manufacturing processes proceeded in relative quiet.

The area now identified as Stonebridge Pond represents a major survival from the days of gunpowder making. The ponds were used as a reservoir to power the powder mills and the associated waterways provided the means of safely transporting powder by wooden punts between the various stages of its manufacture. There are two sluices within the area to control these waterways and their outflow into the creek. The allotments continue a tradition of vegetable growing which took place even when the gunpowder mills were in use. The allotments contain a few small sheds and grass walkways between and are punctuated with apple, cherry, plum and pear trees and there are channels of open water with flag irises and a small amenity area alongside Davington Hill which is popular as a place to feed the ducks.

This is a substantial open area within the town which separates the town visually from Davington. Views across the pond from Curtis Way in the direction of Davington Priory and Brent Hill and from Davington Hill towards the long range of mid-Victorian Almshouses with its two-spired chapel contribute to the character of this part of the town.

The pond complex provides an important wildlife habitat and is noticeable as an area of darker skies at night because of its extent. The pond and associated waterways comprise an important reminder of one of the town's most important historic industries. At the bottom of Davington Hill, the weatherboarding and colourful peg tile roofs of a 16th century house and a group of 18th century cottages are characteristically Kentish in appearance.

The blast walls dating from the 18th century on Brent Hill enclose the area from above and make it a distinctive contained enclave. They were intended to minimise damage to neighbouring properties from explosions in the gunpowder works. Various built from local red and yellow bricks and sometimes with sloping courses that follow the gradient of the road, these walls are an all-important and defining feature of the road. The site of the offices of BMM Weston contains mature horse chestnut, poplar and sycamore trees grouped around the entrance drive which tower impressively over the road and are an important feature of the street scene. Brent Hill is a special place for the survivals of buildings and structures of the town's gunpowder industry but also for its distinctive highway environment with its sharp gradient, enclosing walls and absence of footways, which is both visually striking and truly characterful. (The Stonebridge Pond and Brent Hill section is derived extensively from the Faversham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

14. The west end of West Street adjacent to Stonebridge Lodge

The site of the Stone bridge which replaced the ford over the Westbrook in 1773 and the earliest bridge over the Westbrook or Creek. Before the bridge was built and the sluices were installed in the ponds, Tanners Street would have been of greater importance and

contained the original town hall. The lower part of West Street leading to this location was also of greater importance in the 15th and 16th centuries.

This location has changed in character to become an open approach to the bridge, being formerly much more enclosed when Tanners Street curved round opposite the Bull Inn with buildings up to the corner. To the south is the horse pond, a wider part of the West Brook stream, with low metal railings along the back of the pavement and horse chestnut trees, a characteristic species of the planting in the gunpowder works running along the Westbrook stream. To the north side, a higher red brick wall limits views of the continuing water channel. The bridge is still a clear crossing point from the historic town to Davington and it now affords views of housing on the former St. Ann's Park which was within the Home Works and on the higher ground to the west.

15. The bridge from Brent Hill to Ordnance Wharf.

One of the bridges under which punts bringing gunpowder from the Home Works to Ordnance Wharf for onward shipment to military establishments would have had to pass, and under which imported raw materials would have been transported to the gunpowder works. Until 1790, the finished gunpowder was loaded onto boats moored at the adjoining quay at the head of the creek in this location. The bridge comprises a shallow brick arch under which the narrow channel disappears.

There is also a brick flat arched bridge of a later date between Ordnance Wharf and Flood Lane adjacent to the Purifier Building. These bridges now mark the head of the creek and both are crossed by Flood Lane on its way to West Street. The walls along the west side of Flood Lane separate the creek from the former gunpowder works area now used as allotments.

16. The siting of the bridge including its abutments and sluices

There has been a crossing on this site since 1798. First a timber drawbridge built together with the sluices by the Board of Ordnance, replaced by a more substantial iron bridge in 1843 and finally by a hydraulically operated wrought iron bridge in 1878. The significance of this location is the fact that it has always been the site of the crossing of the creek and since at least 1798 an opening bridge. The sluices within the lock gates under the bridge help to keep the channel navigable. It was formerly the division between Faversham town and the rural district within Preston parish.

17. Crab Island

The site of former houses abandoned and demolished after the flood of 1953. Crab Island was formed as result of straightening the creek in 1843, the only place where evidence of such straightening can be seen within the built up area of the town. It comprises a low, slightly overgrown area of grass, brambles and dog roses and some small trees and there is a footpath across which offers good views up and down the creek. The former channel curves around behind the island with reeds and mud. Together with the grassed slopes and trees below the houses on the Upper Brents, this area provides a substantial open space of both wildlife and townscape importance. It makes an important contribution to the appearance of the creekside in this part of the town in contrast with the town bank which is largely built up and always has been.

18. Upper Brents Shipyard gate piers and police kiosk

These white painted masonry structures were built in 1940 as a wartime security measure at the entrance to the yard. The shipyard was opened by James Pollock Sons & Co Ltd in 1917. The full area occupied by the shipyard covers the area now occupied by the houses comprising Waterside, the Brents Industrial Estate where a few of the original buildings single storey yellow stock brick buildings survive and Faversham Reach which was on the site of a yard laid out in the late 1930s to build lighters. The yard was used for building two ferro-concrete barges in 1917-1919 and subsequently steel vessels including tugs, lighters, tankers and coasters through WW2 when several

vessels were built for the Fleet Air Arm and on up till 1970, then the main yard only for steel shipbuilding in the mid 1970's and again briefly in 1979-1981.

Management

English Heritage (Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management. Revised June 2012) states that a management plan can be derived for a conservation area following an appraisal which analyses what is positive and negative and identifies opportunities for beneficial change or the need for additional protection and restraint. English Heritage encourages the preparation of a management plan. The following elements are appropriate components for the creekside part of the Faversham Conservation Area.

- Retain historic streetscape features such as pavings and railway tracks
- Ensure that the line of the former railway through Iron Wharf remains legible
- Retain the character of important views and ensure that any new development makes a positive contribution by adding visual interest and using good quality and appropriate materials.
- Additional moorings around the creek would add to its vitality and benefit residents and visitors
- Retain open space adjoining the Brents side of the creek and in the Stonebridge Pond and Flood Lane areas
- Conserve and enhance the historic buildings and structures identified in this report so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations
- Retain original creekside walls and moorings
- Enhancements to the bottling plant in the basin and in North Lane
- Enhancements to the boundary treatment of the brewery yard in Conduit Street
- Traffic calming in North Lane slowing the fast traffic and better definition of the corner of Conduit Street and Quay Lane with higher quality materials to the road and pavement.
- Improve signage into and through the area to facilitate permeability
- Improve the quality of surfaces of footpaths, improve alignment where necessary and replace the bridge at Crab Island