Amherst Hill, Brompton Design Brief

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This document was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at Medway Council's cabinet meeting of 19th October 2010. It has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. It is therefore a material consideration when the Council considers planning applications for the Amherst Hill site.

Prior to adoption, a draft of this development framework was subject to public consultation during July and August 2010.

Copies of the Consultation Statement which accompanied the production of this document are available upon request.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site and its setting



The site lies within the area enclosed by the Chatham Lines, a linear fortification first constructed in the mid-eighteenth century to defend the Dockyards at Chatham from landward attack. Although small, it has an elevated position and forms the backdrop to Fort Amherst at the southern end of the Lines.

The sensitivity of this setting relates both to its visual prominence and proximity to the Fort Amherst Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site also lies adjacent to the Grade II listed Garrison church and falls within the Brompton-Lines Conservation Area and proposed Chatham Dockyard and its Defences World Heritage Site.

The 'Old Brompton Village' area to the north of the site is dominated by residential land use but this site has remained largely undeveloped throughout its long military history.

1.2 Planning Policy Context

The site is currently unused by the land owner, Defence Estates, and is allocated for residential use by Policy H1: GL150 of the Medway Local Plan (Adopted May 2003) as follows:

Mature trees to be retained; scale and character appropriate to its Conservation Area location required. Development will be subject to an agreement to secure a contribution towards a comprehensive restoration of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, and the provision, improvement and maintenance of public open space in the vicinity of the site. A detailed design brief to be drawn up to guide the development, with a view to minimising the visual impact on Fort Amherst and the local area. The brief should address dwelling size and height; appearance; orientation; the definition of detailed development boundaries by reference to the landform and existing trees; vehicular and pedestrian access; layout; the provision and disposition of open space; and landscaping (including the retention of trees where appropriate).

The site to be disposed of has an area of 1.66 hectares of which Policy H1: GL150 allocates approximately 1.31 hectares for residential development up to a capacity of 34 dwellings.



Protected landscape designations within proposed World Heritage Site. The site is outlined in black and includes an area of protected open space.

English Heritage (EH) objected to the allocation of the site as part of the Local Plan process and require that the setting of the Scheduled Monument is protected by leaving a proportion of the site un-built. The setting of a scheduled monument is defined in DCMS policy as: the area surrounding a heritage asset which affects its significance, or appreciation of that significance.

(Scheduled Monuments - Identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Nov 2009, DCMS)

The site features prominently in view 5 of the Strategic Views and Landmarks (Appendix A, Part 2 of the Building Heights Policy for Medway Adopted May 2006). The management strategy for this view is to protect views to Fort Amherst and the green ridgeline that it creates.

The Great Lines Heritage Park Masterplan and World Heritage Site Management Plan have also been produced since the Local Plan allocation of this site. The Masterplan includes a set of historic environment policies to guide development and ensure the protection and enhancement of the park. These include the return of land to the Great Lines and proposals to maintain the integrity of the Field of Fire through restricting additional encroachment. Conserving the open landscape character of the Great Lines also requires the removal of tree and hedge planting and fencing of a minimally visually intrusive design. These are not formally adopted policies but are voluntarily supported by major stakeholders.

The Masterplan also proposes the restoration of the 18th and19th century landscapes associated with the Garrison Commanders House of the barracks (whether in part or in entirety) on the southern portion of the disposal site and adjacent Officer's Park, and Cornwallis Battery. The plan below is an extract from 1864 Survey Plan (National Archives MPHH 1/356) showing the kitchen gardens and pleasure grounds – landscapes that express the military lives lived within the site.



1.3 Purpose of this document

Defence Estates propose to dispose of their Amherst Hill site for housing development. This document clearly sets out the parameters to ensure that this development is sensitive to its surroundings and appropriate in scale and design. It satisfies the Local Plan requirement that a detailed design brief should guide the development of this site with a view to minimising the visual impact on Fort Amherst and the local area. Adoption of the Design Brief as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide the Council with a clear policy framework to guide the development of the site by:

 providing information to developers on site capacity and the quality of development expected;

• providing guidance on the limits of tolerable encroachment on Fort Amherst;

 ensuring the protection and enhancement of Brompton Lines Conservation Area;

 conforming to policies in the Great Lines Heritage Park Masterplan (GLHP); and

 serving to underline that the site's context and character is a considerable asset and provides a unique development opportunity for housing of the highest design quality.

In achieving a suitable development proposal, close collaboration between the developer and their design team, Medway Council and English Heritage will be essential. Pre-application design discussions are important in this process and a formal Design Review procedure will also be considered.

The brief was produced in three stages:

(1) The key features of the site that define its developable area are considered. These are its history and archaeology, open space and landscape requirements, ecology, access and movement. Together these features establish access to the site, the layout and orientation of its houses and the location and amount of open space provided.

(2) Illustrative layouts were used to test the capacity of the framework set in section one. These are not intended to be prescriptive but to provide guidance on the amount, mix and nature of development that the site can support.

The layouts are accompanied by illustrative sections to suggest how the development should work with the distinctive topography of the site. The sections are used to establish the limits to the height of development in order to minimise the visual impact of development.

The layouts inform a development framework that is the result of the investigative analysis into the site constraints and opportunities. It divides the developable area of the site into zones for which guidance on the maximum permissable height of development is provided. It also defines movement routes, access points and areas to be set aside as

public and private open space.

(3) The final section makes reference to precedent schemes that have informed the development of the illustrative layouts. These examples have been selected specifically because of their success in downplaying architectural style so that they are neither historical nor modern but are discrete, contemporary, low impact designs that demonstrate an integrated design philosophy appropriate to their surroundings.

The case study projects also provide indicative information on the architectural quality that will be expected in this development. This section also sets out more detailed requirements in the specific areas of external lighting and boundary treatments.





Images

Top View of Amherst Hill from Jacksons Recreation, Rochester. Bottom View of Amherst Hill from Fort Pitt Hill

2.0 DEFINING THE DEVELOPABLE AREA

2.1 Existing Landform and Archaeology

Historic characterisation establishes a framework that takes sensible and proportional account of the inherited landscape, offering the opportunity to build upon a sense of place. It informs the design and planning process by providing a strategic overview of archaeological remains and the historic setting and function of Fort Amherst.

The site has a strong human topography created through substantial landscape modification. The present day landform reflects past patterns of use. This is important in understanding the character of the site and should inform and influence the proposed development.

A 2006 archaeological survey confirmed a range of military features and human remains of probable Anglo Saxon date. Twenty evaluation trenches were excavated representing a 4% sample of the site. As well as confirming a range of features, the survey also indicates the type of further archaeological remains that are likely to be present.

The plan on page 17 is colour-coded to differentiate buried archaeological and existing historic features. It provides the framework for more fine-tuned analysis and decision-making. The location of these features is approximate and further archaeological evaluation in response to a specific development proposal is likely to be necessary.

It is acceptable to develop on the area of some of the buried

archaeology although the remains may require preservation in situ. Recording through excavation is also a probable condition of any planning permission. The WWII air raid bunkers are not highlighted on the plan but may be removed as part of the enabling works for the development, subject to an agreed methodology.

Other archaeological features can not be developed upon and therefore provide one set of limits to the extent of the developable area. The protected area containing remains of the glacis, inhumation burial and formal gardens of the commanding officers house also provides a buffer zone between the Fort and the development.

These features provide a context within which the historic legacy of the site and its meaning can be used in the design of the development. A more detailed explanation of each feature follows on page 16.

SUMMARY CHRONOLOGY OF THE SITE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NAVAL DOCKYARD AND MILITARY DEFENCES AT CHATHAM

	The Tudor Period		The Victorian Period
to 12th C	Roman and Saxon remains of Chatham as a place and	1852-4	Garrison Church constructed (now St Barnabas Church).
	medieval settlement around St Mary's Church, Chatham.	1860	Following a series of French invasion scares a report from
1547	Rental of two storehouses on 'Jyllingham Water' to facilitate		the Royal Commission recommends the creation of a ring
	Navy fleet being moored 'in ordinary' on the Medway - first		of fortified land forts to replace the Chatham Lines, now
	record of a ship yard at Chatham. Fleet readied at Chatham		largely obsolete on account of recent artillery developments.
1588	in anticipation of the Spanish Armada.		Amherst Hill quickly given over to garden use.
		1885	Extension of Dockyard to north.
	Stuart Period	1889-94	Naval Defence Act passed and 229 orders are placed for
1667	Unmanned naval fleet laid up at Chatham attacked by Dutch		warships.
1007	Navy.		
1669	Cockham Wood Fort and Gillingham Fort built to protect		The Twentieth Century
1000	moored ships. Hoo Ness Fort built around the same time.	1908	Chatham launches first submarine to be built in a royal
1703	New Commissioner's House constructed (now Britain's		Dockyard.
	oldest surviving naval building) on site of its predecessor.	1914-9	During the course of World War I, Chatham builds three
	Extended c.1790.		cruisers and 12 submarines, whilst carrying out large
			numbers of refits.
		1933	Economic depression leads to 4,000 job losses.
	The Georgian Period	1939-45	Despite being under regular air attack several vessels
1755	Start of the military occupation of Amherst Hill.		constructed or refitted at Chatham during the course of
1756-63	Seven Years War. Bastioned earthworks created around		WWII. Amherst Hill used for the provision of air raid shelters
	all the naval Dockyards including the construction of Fort		with a number of bunkers being located to the northern end
	Amherst.		of the site. There is also evidence that southern and eastern
1757	Start of construction of Chatham Infantry Barracks built to		areas of the site were used as allotments.
	house the troops needed to man the Chatham Lines.	1984	Chatham Dockyard closes after more than 430 years of
1779-82	Chatham Lines are improved with the revetting of the earth		service to the Royal Navy.
	ramparts in brick.	1999	Chatham Dockyard and its Defences included on the UK's
1793	Outbreak of war with revolutionary France		Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.
1794	Chatham Lines extended at north and south ends.	2007	Chatham World Heritage Partnership launched.
1803	Chatham Lines rebuilt. Lower Lines and Fort Amherst	2009	Chatham Dockyard and its Defences Management Plan
	citadel created and additional detached forts built to south of		published.
	Chatham.		
1819	Fort Pitt completed.		

Extracts from 'An archaeological evaluation at Amherst Hill, Chatham, Kent - Canterbury Archaeological Trust Ltd. Feb 2006.

- The far north-west corner of the site would have fallen inside the boundaries of the 1757 barracks. The barracks wall and remains relating to the officers coach house and stables, grooms quarters survive at a shallow depth below the ground.
- 2. Access road relating to 1.
- 3. After the mid nineteenth century the lines ceased to be the first line of defence for Chatham Dockyard and the 1864 Survey of Chatham infantry barracks shows that the area was quickly given over to garden use. The north-eastern area of the site remained open ground whilst formal gardens were established in the south-east of the site to the rear of the house of the commanding officer of the barracks. The house was enclosed by a brick wall on its south and east sides and was well screened by shrubbery. To the east of this wall was a large kitchen garden with pleasure grounds to the south (refer to extract from 1864 Survey Plan, page 7). The 2006 survey encountered well-preserved remains of formal garden's and a pre-military inhumation burial in the south-western part of site.
- 4. Following construction of the lines in the mid-eighteenth century, the area was maintained as an area of open ground acting as a 'field of fire' for Amherst Redoubt should the rest of the Lines defensive system be breached. Military plans of the

area (especially the 1804 map) and the archaeological survey show clear evidence that a glacis (an artificial mound of earth outside of the ditch designed to raise the attacking troops up to provide defensive advantage to the defending troops) formed part of the plans for the fortification and falls within the south-east corner of the development site.

- 5. Remains of the house of the commanding officer of the barracks.
- The survey did not undertake any excavation in this area of the site but it is probable that further evaluation would reveal foundations of the officers quarters from the 1757 barracks.
- A grave for an inhumation burial was located in this area of the site and it is likely that there are others in the vicinity.
- 8. Existing wall of the formal walled gardens of the house of the commanding officer.
- 9. At the northern end of the site a substantial terrace was cut into the natural chalk with dumps of redeposited clay seen upslope of this cut. This activity may relate to the construction of an unused terrace formed for the building of the Barracks or relates to extraction of materials used in its construction.
- An artificial mound of earth of unknown origin. A vent shaft for the tunnel complex of Fort Amherst is thought to emerge within the site boundary and must be located and carefully avoided.



KEY TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

- Buried archaeological remains:

- 1 Stables, coach house and Groom's quarters and barracks wall
- 2 Access road (1757 map)
- 3 Wall of Commandant's house garden
- 4 Approximate line of glacis
- 5 Mid C18th Commandant's house
- 6 Office quarters (1757 barracks)
- 7 Inhumation burial

Surviving historic features:

- 8 Wall to walled garden of Commandant's house
- 9 Bank created by cutting of terraces
- 10 Earth mound

Non-developable area

2.2 Open space and Landscape

The framework set by historic characterisation guides the extent of tolerable encroachment by new development on the scheduled monument of Fort Amherst. This buffer zone is also the major determinant of the provision and disposition of open space within the development and is considered part of the Great Lines Heritage Park (GLHP). The provision for the glacis represents the appropriate balance between public and private space in the context of the aspirations of the GLHP masterplan.

Discussions with the adjacent landowner, the Fort Amherst Heritage Trust (FAHT), and English Heritage, have established a number of key principles relating to the design and management of the open space on the southern portion of the disposal site. It is not intended that the public open space be transferred to the Council. Instead, as an archaeologically protected piece of ground, it is envisaged that it will be endowed to a Trust who would assume responsibility for its management and maintenance on the basis of a capital endowment sufficient to cover future maintenance costs. This endowment would form part of the s106 Agreement. In order to minimise cost, and as is appropriate to reinstatement of the glacis, the open space should be designed as low maintenance grassland, and there should be no vehicular access to it other than that required for maintenance.

The historical interpretation of the site should be supported by the

design of the public open space - the GLHP provides a model for interpretive panels. The GLHP Masterplan policies also require that fencing should be of a minimally visually intrusive design to conserve the open landscape character. Between the Cornwallis Battery and the site, the robust, open five wire fence used elsewhere in the GLHP would be the preferred design solution.

The new housing development should provide some natural surveillance onto the open space. The boundary treatment to rear gardens where visible from the Fort should be high quality brick walls and permitted development rights should be removed in the granting of planning permission to ensure that these design aspirations endure.

Opposite - 1896 Survey plan showing the 19th century garden superimposed onto the present day plan and defined archaeologically protected open space.



2.3 Ecology

A site walkover was undertaken in October 2009 with a Medway Council tree officer to provide an initial assessment of the importance of tree groups and individual trees. The plan opposite proposes the retention where possible and re-planting of the trees on the northern and eastern site boundary although this must be subject to a detailed assessment of their condition. A minimum 20m buffer is recommended beyond the eastern site boundary to ensure the protection of these trees.

The existing trees on the southern site boundary adjacent to Cornwallis Battery should be removed as part of the development. They are not considered to be of high quality and do not contribute to the appreciation of the historic function of the Fort. The Great Lines Heritage Park masterplan policies require the removal of tree and hedge planting to conserve the open landscape character.

Where trees are not located on the site boundary, a balanced decision needs to be taken on their contribution to the character of the proposed development relative to the constraint that their retention places on the site layout. A competent arboriculturalist should be engaged to take full account of the recommendations in the current British Standard 5387:2005 - 'Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations'. Full guidance on the survey information, constraints plan, protection plan and method statement that should be provided with an application is set out in this document.



Above View of trees on eastern site boundary. The site is on the right hand side of Maxwell Road.



2.4 Access and movement

As previously noted, the present day landform of the site reflects past patterns of use. The pattern of access and movement should follow the existing site topography. The layout of north-south aligned access lanes is characteristic of Brompton and permits a degree of openness to sight lines to and from the Fort.

The developable area of the site is broadly divided into three parts; a sloping upper and lower terrace running approximately northsouth separated by a more steeply sloping bank. The two proposed principal vehicular routes follow the line of each terrace. Due to the steep gradients, detailed design work will be required to establish the feasibility of an east-west connection between these routes.

Three vehicular access points to the site are proposed - one on Khartoum Road and another on Amherst Hill are at either end of the route that traces the access road used in the 18th century barracks. Another access point higher up Amherst Hill uses an existing break in the fence line on the northern boundary and leads to a proposed route following the line of the upper terrace. Marked changes of level on the eastern and western boundaries inhibit vehicular access.

The proposed public open space has the potential to provide new pedestrian and cycle links from Dock Road up to the Inner Lines. Fort Amherst will be the major gateway to the Great Lines Heritage

Park and potential World Heritage Site. The long term aspiration of the Great Lines Heritage Park Masterplan is to allow complete public access to much of the Fort at all times. The future Kitchener Barracks redevelopment will be of a scale likely to substantially alter existing patterns of pedestrian access and movement in the area.

General access to Maxwell Road should be maintained at all times following site disposal by Defence Estates. The exception to this is the occasional closure of the road for military use for parades and funerals.



3.0 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT 1

Schedule

No. of beds	Units
4	13
3	8
2	13
Total	34

This layout proposes a complex of part one and part two storey buildings nestling in the landscape. Retaining walls act structurally and as an organizing element running through each terrace. Interlocking monopitch roofs abut these walls and the buildings are arranged to create small courtyard spaces in front of the buildings enclosed by curved brick walls. Shared parking is provided adjacent to the blocks of houses but does not intrude into the courtyard spaces. There is also some potential for parking on streets bordering the site.











3.2 ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT 2

Schedule

No. of beds	Units
4	21
2	4
Apartments	9
Total	34

The 4 bed units are large detached/ semi-detached villas with integral garages. Although 2 storey, these houses are considerably larger than those proposed in layout 1 and follow a more regular arrangement. The bulk and visual impact of the buildings would be minimized by setting them into the landscape and the low, mono-pitch roofs could be intensive green roofs. Parking provision is 2:1 for the large dwellings (garage plus one space within plot) and 1:1 for the mews houses and apartments.



SECTION A











3.3 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The yellow shading of the composite development framework plan indicates the developable area of the site. The numbers within each zone indicate the maximum height of development in metres above ordnance datum. The blue dotted line indicates the principle movement axes across the site.

This framework points to a layout formed of four rows of houses stepping down the main site, three on the eastern part and one on the slim development plot on the western edge. The development in this slimmer plot could follow the layout of the 19th century stables, coach house and Groom's quarters.

The plot on the west side of Khartoum Road is the lowest zone within the developable area. It is also screened by existing mature trees in views from Fort Amherst and beyond. It is therefore the only part of the site suitable for three storey houses or an apartment block.

The hatched area marked "future development potential" is the corner of the original 1757 barracks enclosure and latterly part of the Commanding Officers house. This land is considered a development opportunity that will come forward as part of the future redevelopment of Kitchener Barracks and should not be considered part of the Amherst Hill site.





SECTION B

Sections indicating the maximum permissable height of development in metres above ordnance datum the developable zone of the site.



3.4 DESIGN GUIDANCE

Case Study projects

These case study projects helped to inform the development of the illustrative layouts on pages 26-29 and are indicative of the architectural quality that will be expected in this development.

Aspects of the following case study projects are considered to provide design guidance on the type of development that would be appropriate to the character and appearance of the site. These case study examples respond positively to their setting but are neither historical nor stylistically modern. Rather they are discrete low impact designs that demonstrate an integrated design philosophy appropriate to their surroundings.



Prospect Row, Brompton. The Georgian architecture of Brompton is characterised by the use of red brick terraces that contribute to a distinctive local morphology.





Lyde End, Bledlow, Buckinghamshire: housing by Aldington and Craig Architects, 1977.

Now grade II listed, this modernist scheme illustrates a good example of the contemporary use of brick to relate to a village context of modern brick buildings. All of the buildings combine two sharply defined monopitch roof forms of different height. This is a model that has wide application: contemporary but in touch with tradition.



New Ash Green, Kent. 1960s housing designed by Eric Lyons for the Span Development Company.

In the Span 'formula' the careful and sensitive design of the buildings and landscape are equally important.

Cliveden Village 2008

A masterplan that responds to the sensitive setting and context of a Grade I Listed landscape within the Cliveden estate. The layout uses passive design principles, orientation, solar water heating and thermal mass to allow the properties optimum natural light and heat.

The relationship between building and landscape is enhanced by the selection of a palette of naturalistic materials including copper, stone and indigenous timbers.



Materials

The detailed design of the development should consider the visual impact of the chosen construction materials in long views of the site. A suitable materials palette would comprise subdued colours such as the brown brick characteristic of the Fort, clay tiles or timber boarding that weather to muted tones complementary to a natural landscape setting. Conditions will be applied to influence the selection of suitable construction materials.

The granting of planning permission will also include the removal of permitted development rights for boundary treatments and extensions and adaptations that change the external appearance of the dwellings. A design concept which supports the use of brick boundary treatments to residential gardens will be encouraged as this choice of material relates strongly to the character of the Fort and to Brompton more widely.

Images: Below left and Far right, brick retaining walls at Fort Amherst; Below right, brick wall boundary treatments at Lyde End.





External Lighting

The intrusiveness of lighting is a major detailed design consideration in the development of a visually prominent site with a sensitive setting. External lighting design must meet the objective of providing a secure night time environment for residents and visitors to the site whilst also respecting the setting of the Fort. Professional advice, whether



from the lighting manufacturer or from a qualified lighting engineer, is recommended. The selection of luminaires should allow for directional lighting that is visually contained and does not compete with the illumination of Fort Amherst. This will be assessed as part of a detailed planning application. Conditions applied to influence the design of the lighting installation and mitigate its impact may include: specification for lamps and luminaires; the need for full horizontal cut-off; erection of demonstration luminaires; and review of lighting impacts after installation.

Images: Top left, unobtrsuive external lighting fo the home; Top right, Fort Amherst illumination; Bottom; war memorial illumination.





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