

Kent Historic Towns Survey

NORTHFLEET

Archaeological Assessment Document

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KENT HISTORIC TOWNS' SURVEY

**NORTHFLEET - KENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
DOCUMENT**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Northfleet is a small market town based on a settlement of probable Saxon origin, situated in the Gravesham district of Kent. The town stands on the south bank of the river Thames, immediately east of the river Ebbsfleet. It lies on the Dartford to Rochester road, 2.25km west of Gravesend, 9km east of Dartford and 27.5km north of Tonbridge.

This study aims to provide an evaluation of the archaeological and historical remains of the settlement as a basis for informing decision-making in the planning process where archaeological deposits may be affected by development proposals. The Kent County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was checked for information relating to the study area (see below) and this provided 15 entries: 10 standing buildings, 4 records of prehistoric date and 1 of Saxon date. Northfleet is fairly typical of many small towns in England in that there has, as yet, been no significant archaeological research within the settlement and only a limited amount within the wider area of study. Very extensive work has, however, been undertaken in connection with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and other development in the Ebbsfleet valley. Thus, much of this study is based on documentary evidence, secondary published sources and analysis of the settlement's topography.

Most of the few remaining visible features are seventeenth and eighteenth century, although there are a few structures of both earlier and later date.

1.2 Situation

Northfleet lies south of the river Thames and east of the Ebbsfleet valley at TQ 62357415, on land which rises from 5m OD by the Thames foreshore to 25m OD to the south of the settlement (Figure 1). It stands on a bed of upper chalk with a band of Boyn Hill gravel and Thanet beds to the west, and Thanet beds to the east (Figure 2).

1.3 Study area

The general area selected for study lies between TQ 617738 and TQ 630750. More in-depth study, focusing on the evolution of the settlement and its historical components, is centred on the historic core of the settlement between TQ 620740 and TQ 630750.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Very few archaeological data exist for Northfleet town itself and most are poorly recorded chance discoveries from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. There has been very little in the way of modern archaeological investigations in the town itself. The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for the area of study records the following evidence, which is also shown on Figure 3:

2.1 Palaeolithic

TQ 67 SW 60 - The butt of a worn palaeolithic implement was found in river gravels at *c.* TQ 620743, at 100 feet OD. There were also several worn flakes and bones from elephant, rhinoceros, horse, cattle and deer (Spurrell 1883, 102).

TQ 67 SW 58 - A palaeolithic flint-chipping floor at Northfleet on the river beach, at *c.* TQ 6274, with immense quantities of flakes of very variable sizes, including a hammer-stone and knapper's flakes, and other signs of human occupation (Spurrell 1884, 109-118).

2.2 Mesolithic and Neolithic

TQ 67 SW 105 - Mesolithic tranchet axes have been recovered from the Thames at Northfleet, at TQ 625750 (Wymer 1977, 154).

2.3 Bronze Age

TQ 67 SW 40 - A fragment of a bronze age rapier was found at Northfleet, *c.* TQ 6274. Now in the British Museum (Jessup 1930, 102, 260).

TQ 67 SW 46 - A bronze age winged and looped axe head was found at Northfleet, *c.* TQ 6274, in 1889. Now in the Evan's Collection, Ashmolean Museum (Jessup 1930, 260).

2.4 Iron Age

TQ 67 SW 28 - Iron Age cinerary urns of the Aylesford type (from late La Tène cremations) were found in Bevan's Pit, Northfleet, *c.* TQ 6724. A funnel-shaped hole dug into the chalk, 6 ft deep and with burnt clay at the bottom, was found at the same spot (Whimster 1981, 383).

TQ 67 SW 31 - An uninscribed iron age gold stater (Evan's type A.4, Allen's Gallo late iron age AB.1. (Bellvaci), [Mack No. 3]), was found at Northfleet, at *c.* TQ 6274 (OS Record Card).

2.5 Romano-British

TQ 67 SW 26 – Romano-British coarse-ware, Samian potsherds, iron tools and bones were discovered after being washed out of the saltings near Hope Point, Northfleet in 1894-95, *c.* TQ 620749. They are now believed to be in the Chantry Museum, Gravesend (VCH III, 162).

TQ 67 SW 44 - A few Romano-British bronze objects were found on the foreshore near the Half Moon Inn, Northfleet, *c.* TQ 621749. They are now believed to be in the Chantry Museum, Gravesend (VCH III, 162).

TQ 67 SW 73 - A bronze *sestertius* coin of Trajan (AD 98-117) and a bronze *as* coin of Domitian (AD 81-96), were found on the Thames foreshore at TQ 62577466 in 1950. A bronze *as* coin of Faustina was found at the same spot in 1959 (OS Record Card).

2.6 Saxon

TQ 67 SW 42 - In 1847 the railway cutting through Church Field, Northfleet, *c.* TQ 623740, revealed a number early fifth, sixth and seventh century inhumation and cremation burials. Grave goods included iron spearheads, shield bosses and handles, a seax, part of a bucket, and saucer brooches. A further twenty graves were cut through in 1899-1900 when the field was being quarried. Outlying graves have also been found at TQ 62207413 and TQ 62267381 (Meaney 1964, 130-131; VCH I, 386).

2.7 Post-medieval

TQ 67 SW 77 - Aspdin's kiln, a circular bee-hive shaped, brick-built structure on a base *c.* 7m square, at TQ 61757489, built *c.* 1845 (Bogue 1947).

TQ 67 SW 1005 – A wharf associated with Blue Circle cement is located at Becan's Wharf, Northfleet at TQ 624747.

TQ 67 NW 1000 – Tower Wharf, located at TQ 617752, is one of the many wharves located to the north of Northfleet.

TQ 67 NW 1006 – Grove House Cement Mill Wharf, located at TQ 618749, was identified on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1865.

TQ 67 SW 1017 – A wharf is marked on Hope Terrace on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896-1899.

TQ 67 SW 1018 – Northfleet Hope Lighthouse is marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map at TQ 622748.

TQ 67 SW 1020 – A wharf is indicated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1865 at TQ 626747.

TQ 67 SW 1021 – A wharf serving Rosherville chalk quarry is located on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1865 at TQ 632745.

3 HISTORICAL RECORDS

3.1 Early charters

Northfleet, once part of a Saxon royal estate, was held by a nunnery at Cookham, Berkshire, before AD 798 when its lands and some 60 families came into the hands of Aethelheard, Archbishop of Canterbury.

3.2 Domesday Book

The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded that the Archbishop of Canterbury held *Norfluet* (Northfleet). It consisted of 6 sulungs (1,200 to 1,500 acres), with land for 14 ploughs (*c.* 420 acres of arable). The demesne, the part of the manor usually kept by the lord for himself, had *c.* 60 acres of arable. The 36 villagers had 10 ploughs (*c.* 300 acres of arable), and there were 7 slaves, a church, a mill worth 10*s*, a fishery, 20 acres of meadow, and woodland to render 20 swine. The manor's value before the Norman Conquest was £10 and at the time of the Survey it was £27; and yet it paid £37 10*s*. Richard of Tonbridge also held land worth 30*s*.

3.3 Origin of place name

The first occurrence of the place name is in Domesday Book, where it is *Norfluet*. This is derived from the Old English *nord* (north) and *fleot* (fleet, water or stream) meaning the north creek or inlet. It is thus distinguished from the creek at Southfleet. It can be traced to its present form thus:

Old English	<i>nord fleot</i>	...	<i>c.</i> 975	<i>Flyote</i>
1086	<i>Norfluet</i>	...	1176	<i>Northfliete</i>
1201	<i>Norflet</i>	...	1214	<i>Northflet</i>
1610	<i>Northfleet</i>			

4 HISTORICAL DATA BY PERIOD

4.1 Pre-urban evidence

4.1.1 The prehistoric period

The lower Thames valley is the richest and most well-known area in the country for palaeolithic archaeology and Quaternary geology (Wymer 1999). Flint artefacts from the

lower palaeolithic period are found in abundance in deposits in the Dartford to Northfleet area. Fragments of an early human skull, associated with hand-axes and dating to around 400,000 years ago, were found at Barnfield Pit, Swanscombe and are amongst the earliest human remains known in Europe. Baker's Hole, c. 600m to the south west of Northfleet, in the Ebbsfleet Valley is the richest Levallois site in Britain.

The Ebbsfleet Valley to the south west of Northfleet is also important for mesolithic and neolithic remains, including a type of early neolithic pottery, known as Ebbsfleet Ware. By the late iron age an important religious centre and settlement seems to have been established at the source of the river Ebbsfleet at Springhead, about 1.8km south of Northfleet.

4.1.2 The Romano-British period

A substantial villa complex, the Northfleet villa, was discovered in 1911 c. 700m west of St Botolph's parish church, on the west bank of the Ebbsfleet, and extensively excavated in advance of construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The earliest stone-built villa was constructed in the early second century. The villa complex expanded, probably in the mid-late second century, with construction of two large aisled buildings, a bath house and a substantial river-side wharf.

The main Roman road from London to Canterbury and the channel ports ran about 2km south of Northfleet, through the Romano-British religious centre *Vagniacae* (Springhead), formerly a late iron age religious site. *Vagniacae*, a small roadside settlement inhabited for nearly four centuries, had at least seven temples and may have been a posting station on the Roman Watling Street. Situated at the source of the river Ebbsfleet at a point where the Roman road (Margary route 1 a-c) changed its alignment, it greatly influenced the settlement and agricultural use of the surrounding area. The river Ebbsfleet may have been navigable for most of its length. Both the Northfleet villa and *Vagniacae* have been extensively excavated in connection with the CTRL development.

4.1.3 The Saxon period

The presence of an early Saxon settlement in the area is suggested by a fifth to seventh century cremation and inhumation cemetery discovered to the south and west of St Botolph's church, on the hillside overlooking the Ebbsfleet (TQ 67 SW 42). Fifth century urns were also discovered at Perry Street, c. 1.2km to the east of Northfleet (see Archaeological Assessment Document for Gravesend), and a seventh century inhumation cemetery was excavated, about 1.3km to the south of Northfleet, in advance of construction of the CTRL.

From AD 798 the estate of Northfleet, with lands for grazing and pannage in Aylesford Common, was a possession of the archbishops of Canterbury. By the mid-tenth century there was a stone church on the same hilltop site where the parish church of St Botolph still stands. It consisted of a rectangular nave and a small square chancel. The surviving south-west corner of the nave is built of long-and-short quoining, a feature of mid-tenth century Saxon architecture.

A rare Saxon timber-built water mill, probably constructed between AD 684 and 720 (on the basis of dendrochronology), was discovered in the river Ebbsfleet close to the Northfleet villa, during excavations in advance of construction of the CTRL. In addition, eight Saxon sunken feature buildings were found in and around the Northfleet villa complex, and a further four in

the adjacent area. A Saxon sunken feature building was also discovered in the Roman town of Vagniacae to the south of Northfleet.

4.2 Urban evidence

4.2.1 *The medieval period*

By 1066, Northfleet was a settlement of reasonable size, with a parish church, a mill and a population of 180-220 people, all under the control of the archbishop of Canterbury, lord of the estate.

4.2.1.1 Markets and fairs

No market charter is known for Northfleet, but there may have been an unofficial prescriptive market near the parish church from before the Conquest. It was probably held in the triangular area (later known as the Village Green) east of the churchyard, where the roads from Dartford, Rochester, Gravesend and the Thames foreshore converged, a typical position site for an early market. A market held 'every Tuesday after Easter Tuesday till Whittuesday' is mentioned by Hasted in 1797, but he says nothing about a market hall. Maps from 1769, 1797 and c. 1800-1805 (Figures 4-6) show a structure in the area of the market place which may have been a late medieval or early post-medieval market hall, perhaps surrounding the well on the Village Green, an arrangement also known from Lenham.

In 1201, King John granted Archbishop Hubert the right to hold a yearly fair over ten days at Whitsuntide in exchange for the gift of four palfreys. Fairs were also held on Easter Tuesday and on St Botolph's Day (17th June). They were probably held on the Village Green.

4.2.1.2 The manor

The manor of Northfleet was held by the see of Canterbury from AD 798 until 1538 when it and the advowson of the vicarage was conveyed to Henry VIII in exchange for other properties.

The manor house, home farm and tithe barn occupied a site immediately to the north-west of the church and market place. The many letters and documents written, dated and sent from the manor house during the medieval period show that it was used as an occasional residence by the archbishops when on their travels.

4.2.1.3 The church

The parish church of Northfleet, dedicated to the Saxon saint Botolph, lay in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the diocese of Rochester and was a 'peculiar' of the Archbishop. It is recorded as the church of *Norfluet* in Domesday Book, as *Northfleotes* in Textus Roffensis of c. 1089, and *Nordflicite* in the Domesday Monachorum of similar date.

In c. 1100 the monks of the priory of St Andrew's, Rochester acquired the church and its tithes, reputedly to prevent them from falling into royal hands during a vacancy in the see of Canterbury. The first recorded incumbent was Letard, chaplain for St Andrew's Rochester, who was succeeded in 1199 by the first rector, Samuel Riddel. The church was valued at £66 13s. 4d. in 1291 (*Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas IV) After various legal battles, the church reverted to the see of Canterbury, in whose hands it remained until 1538.

During the twelfth century a south aisle was added to the earlier stone church (see above), and a massive, squat west tower was built in 1180. Soon after 1200, everything except the tower

was demolished and rebuilt in early English style. The church acquired its present form as one of the largest parish churches in Kent in the fourteenth century, when a new nave (1330) and chancel (c.1370) were built, a north aisle added and the south aisle rebuilt. In 1532 40s. was given to cast a bell, and in 1538 Edward Horden bequeathed 2s. 8d for eight men to ring the bells at his funeral.

4.2.1.4 Industry and trade

Watermill

In 1086 there was a watermill worth 10s. In 1438 the mill appears to have been in the care of John Darrell, who rented it to the Rochester Bridge Wardens at an annual rental of £1 6s. 8d. payable to the archbishop as lord of the manor, but the rental was relinquished in 1452. The mill went to Henry VIII in 1538.

Shipbuilding

Ships from Northfleet are mentioned in thirteenth and fourteenth century documents, but shipbuilding is not recorded. Had there been a boatyard, it would probably have been at the mouth of the Ebbsfleet creek where there was a public landing stage and an area of level foreshore; beyond that, as far as Gravesend, the chalk cliffs rose gradually up to about 100 ft. It was not until the post-medieval period that most of this area was reduced to riverside levels by large-scale chalk quarrying, although quarrying had already begun by the thirteenth century.

Chalk quarrying

Chalk was quarried at Northfleet during the medieval period, being exported for agricultural and building purposes and gradually becoming an important enterprise. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, 'keels' (sailing ships of 16-20 tons) brought coal to Northfleet where they loaded up with chalk, and this lasted into Victorian times when it was known as 'carrying down white, bringing back black'.

Inns

There are no records of medieval inns at Northfleet, but at least four of the later inns (the Leather Bottel at the junction of Dover Road and Springhead Road, the Plough Inn opposite the church on The Hill, the Dove by the lych gate of the church, and The King's Head in Lawn Road) may have originated in the Middle Ages. There were probably also some alehouses at the waterside. Only the Leather Bottel survives as an inn.

4.2.2 *The post-medieval period*

4.2.2.1 Markets and fairs

The medieval weekly market is not mentioned in Kilburne's survey of Kent in 1657, but *Index Villaris* by Adams records a market in 1680. The three annual fairs were still held, on 24th March, the Tuesday after Easter and for seven days at Whitsun. A market is recorded in 1680, but it may not have been active then. By the end of the eighteenth century there was no market and the fairs were of little significance, finally closing in the 1820s.

The market and the fairs were probably held on the Village Green. It is not known when or why the market failed, nor what subsequently happened to the possible market hall, last shown on the c. 1800-1805 map.

4.2.2.2 The manor

After the Dissolution, the manor remained with the Crown until 1567, when Elizabeth I granted it to James Guildford. After that it passed between private hands and the Crown until the 1760s when it was acquired by John Calcraft, in whose family it remained until the middle of the nineteenth century.

4.2.2.3 The church

After the Reformation the advowson of the church remained in the possession of the Crown, being valued in the King's Books at £21. In 1846 the living at Northfleet ceased to be a peculiar of Canterbury, and was placed under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Rochester, and the rural deans of Gravesend.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the fabric of the church was neglected. The rubble of the Norman tower was left where it fell after the tower collapsed in 1628, and there was much destruction during the Civil War. In 1718 a smaller tower was built within the walls of the old tower using much of the original material, and restoration and repairs of the rest of the church began. A gallery was added in 1740 and a new altar in 1794, but by 1800 the church had become dirty and neglected, and repairs were carried out in 1813. There was further major restoration in 1862.

4.2.2.4 Other religious organisations

The Independent Baptists established a chapel in Dover Road in 1850 and shortly afterwards the Wesleyan Methodists, who were holding services in a room by the foreshore, built a chapel in Portland Road. In 1855 St Mark's Church, Rosherville was built, and in 1914-1915 the Roman Catholics built a church dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption in Springhead Road.

4.2.2.5 Industry and trade

Watermill

Creek Mill, the medieval watermill continued to operate into the post-medieval period. It no longer existed by the 1870s when large-scale industrial complexes were being constructed along the foreshore.

Mills

Maps dated 1819-1843 show four windmills in Northfleet and another at Perry Street to the south-east, but little is known about them apart from their sites. One mill stood *c.* 500m west-north-west of the church near The Hive and a pair stood *c.* 1km north-west of the church near Stone Bridge. In Rosherville, The Northfleet Wind and Steam Flour Mill (or Boorman's Mill) was built in 1840 for grinding wheat and barley; it was demolished *c.* 1916. Fiveash Mill, on the north side of the Dover Road at Perry Street, was built *c.* 1800, worked until *c.* 1890 and was pulled down *c.* 1900.

Chalk quarrying

Lime was one of Kent's main exports during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in the chalk hills around Northfleet and Gravesend chalk quarrying and exporting became an important industry, boosting the local economy. The industry, of great importance until recently, provided employment for much of the local population but completely altered the landscape, leaving deep open pits around the historic core of the town and removing the

former cliffs on the Thames side of the settlement. Other industrial enterprises now occupy the space.

Shipbuilding

In 1788, Thomas Pitcher, a shipbuilder from Blackwall, built a dockyard by the river at Northfleet, on a flat site resulting from chalk quarrying. Shipbuilding, particularly merchantmen for the East India and West India trade and warships for British and foreign fleets, prospered there and in 1813 the Russian fleet was refitted in the yard. The large workforce consisted of local skilled and semi-skilled labourers and men who had moved from other shipyards, bringing their families with them. After closing in 1825, it was re-opened by Pitcher's son in 1839 and soon became the largest yard on the Thames, reaching its peak during the Crimean War. Business declined after the end of the war, and the yard finally closed in 1860. During the first half of the nineteenth century there was also a shipyard at Rosherville, at the eastern end of the foreshore. Twentieth century factories have now replaced the dockyards and the workers' dwellings in Dock Row.

Cement manufacturing

In 1796 James Parker patented a process for making 'Roman cement', and after 1818 Northfleet became the centre of its production. Portland cement began to be made in 1846, the factory quickly expanding to nine bottle kilns, which were taken over in 1853 to become one of the country's leading cement manufactories. One bottle kiln survives; it is known as Aspdin's kiln, and is protected as a Scheduled Monument. Barges were built at Northfleet to transport the cement, and barrels to hold the cement were made in the neighbouring cooperage and a stave yard. Between 1840 and 1880 new streets of terrace houses (Lawn Road, Factory Road, Hive Lane, Portland Road and College Road) were built near the factories to accommodate the growing workforce. Numerous other cement companies soon followed, and in 1900 they were amalgamated into APCM (Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers).

Roads and bridge

By the medieval period the stretch of Watling Street between Dartford and Rochester had fallen out of use as the main thoroughfare, and was replaced by a new route from Dartford to Northfleet, Strood and Rochester (now the A226). This was mainly used by local traffic; travellers from London to Dover usually went by river to Gravesend on the 'Long Ferry', and thence by road. The Northfleet to Rochester section of the road was turnpiked as early as 1711, and by 1790 it was part of the main London to Dover post route.

To the west of Northfleet a bridge, first mentioned in 1451, crossed the Ebbsfleet river and valley. A stone bridge was built in 1634, being replaced by a brick bridge *c.* 1790. The turnpike began there (Stonebridge Road, formerly Fisherman's Hill) and ran up the hill into the High Street and The Hill, the heart of the town for many centuries. At the top of The Hill, the main through route (Dover Road) was met by the road to Gravesend (London Road) and the road to Wrotham (Springhead Road, formerly Leather Bottel Lane). The parish pound, the parish lock-up, the stocks and The Leather Bottel Inn stood at the junction, but the pound and stocks were moved further down Springhead Road to the toll-gate when it was built *c.* 1860; the gate was moved in 1871.

In 1922, the main arterial road (the A2) was built on much the same line as Roman Watling Street, thereby passing south of Northfleet and Gravesend and relieving the towns of the increasing volume of through traffic. The Northfleet South Bypass was constructed in 1988.

Inns

By the sixteenth century the waterfront at Northfleet was notorious for its alehouses, and when the town became a busy shipping centre and shipyard in the eighteenth century, a number of inns were established on the foreshore; for instance, The Blue Anchor Inn, The Shipwrights Arms, The Royal Charlotte and The India Arms. The Half Moon, The Red Lion, The Sun and The Ship were built near the foreshore by the early nineteenth century, but most of them were swallowed up by nineteenth century industrial expansion. On the higher ground closer to the town centre and church there were other inns, including the still surviving Old Leather Bottel at the top of the Dover Road, which had stables by the eighteenth century. The Plough Inn, opposite the church and market place, was originally a fifteenth century hall-house but was probably an inn by the sixteenth century; it is now an office with accommodation above (31 The Hill). The seventeenth century Coach and Horses, to the north-east of the church and market place, is now used for other purposes. Several others have disappeared; for example, The Old Queen's Head, was destroyed by fire *c.* 1830 and the The Dove Inn and The King's Head no longer exist. Bagshaw's Directory of 1847 lists 21 inns and 8 beer-houses, including all of the above.

Stage coach services

During the first half of the nineteenth century the road from Dartford to Strood via Northfleet was an important post and coaching route. By 1836, seventeen stage coaches and royal mail coaches passed through Northfleet on their journey between London and Gravesend, with many continuing to the Medway towns, Canterbury and Dover, and returning daily. The coaching services declined seriously with the arrival of the railways, and had more or less ceased by the 1860s.

4.2.2.6 Rosherville Gardens

In 1837 the Rosherville Pier Company converted the old chalk quarry at the eastern end of the foreshore at Rosherville into the Rosherville Botanical Gardens. The gardens covered *c.* 50 hectares and contained many choice trees, shrubs, plants and an Italian garden in classical style; there were also a banqueting hall, a Bijou Theatre, a maze, a small zoo, and an archery ground. On gala days the gardens, which were very popular and attracted many London visitors, were illuminated, and there was dancing followed by fireworks. A commodious hotel was built, and in 1838 a pier with its own restaurant was added. Twenty thousand visitors attended the gardens in a single week in 1857, arriving from London by steamer or railway. By 1880 the gardens had reached their peak of prosperity and thereafter began to decline. They closed in 1911 and became an industrial site in 1926.

4.2.2.7 The railway

In 1849 the South Eastern Railway Company built a line linking Northfleet and Gravesend to London, via Dartford and Woolwich. Northfleet station was built at the lower end of the High Street, and there were fifteen trains in each direction each day. A branch line to Gravesend from the Swanley to Strood route was constructed in 1883, with a station at Rosherville to cater for the garden traffic, then at its peak. This line was closed in 1933.

4.2.3 The modern town

The modern town of Northfleet has changed considerably over the past two centuries. At the end of the seventeenth century Celia Fiennes wrote that it was ‘a little place called Northfleet ... much in the woods’ but a century later it had expanded and acquired its chalk pits.

Until the nineteenth century it was a predominantly rural parish centred on its church and with some small-scale riverside settlement. The establishment of shipbuilding yards in the disused chalk quarries started a trend of industrialisation along the foreshore, so that by the mid-twentieth century the whole of the northern area between the town and the foreshore had become a massive industrial complex with cement works, cable factories, paper mills, steelworks, cargo storage installations, other factories, warehouses and a large power station. The historic core around the church also changed completely during the twentieth century, with most of the earlier shops, inns and houses being demolished and the sites rebuilt, leaving very few surviving historic buildings.

Housing began to spread into areas between the deep and disused chalk quarries: to the east along London Road and to the west around the railway station. The second half of the twentieth century saw the greatest growth in housing: on green-field sites to the south-east around Perry Street and also to the south and east where large housing estates now stretch as far as the A2 and Gravesend.

Northfleet Urban District Council became part of Gravesham Borough Council in 1974. Today, Northfleet is an industrial centre with a small local community in what remains of the historic core, but with most of its residents living in the recent growth areas to the south. The large industrial complex provides much local employment, but since the 1970s there has been a growing tendency to commute to London and other local employment centres. The changes and growth of Northfleet can be seen by comparing early maps (Figures 4 to 6) with a modern OS map.

4.2.4 Population

The population of the manor of Northfleet was recorded as 43 in 1086, probably representing between 180 and 220 inhabitants. There were 446 communicants in the Compton Census of 1676, probably representing a population of about 700. In 1758 there were 162 houses in the parish, a population of a perhaps 890. At the first census of 1801 this figure had increased to 1,910, and by 1831 it had increased to 2,124, three times that of 1676. Thereafter there was rapid growth, with the population more than doubling between 1851 (5,038) and 1901 (12,906). The population had reached *c.* 27,000 by 1971 (for census returns 1801-1921 see VCH II, 362).

5 URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

The following summary of Northfleet’s urban characteristics has been divided into those of the medieval and post-medieval periods (ie. Pre- and post-dating *c.* 1540). The list is not comprehensive, with only the principal post-medieval features being shown. Figure 7 shows the historic buildings in the town, some of which also appear in the urban features section below.

5.1 Medieval plan components and urban features (Figures 8 and 9):

Northfleet appears to have grown up during the Saxon period on an area of high ground, to the east of the Ebbsfleet river valley, along the Dartford to Strood section of the London to Dover

road (PC1), at a point where two other early roads/trackways from Gravesend (PC2) and Wrotham (PC3) met the main route.

The junction of the roads formed the focus for the early settlement, around which the church and churchyard (PC4), the manor house (PC5), the early market place/village green (PC6), The Hill (PC7), the High Street (PC8) and at least four groups of tenement plots (PC9-12) became established. There may have been more tenement plots, but they have not survived post-medieval quarrying and subsequent industrial development.

The early plan-form of Northfleet seems relatively simple, comprising the principal elements of church, market, manor house, tenement plots, The Hill and the High Street. The chronological framework for its development is, however, less clear.

PC1. The early London to Dover road.

PC2. The early road to Gravesend.

PC3. The early road to Wrotham.

PC4. The Parish Church of St Botolph and its surrounding churchyard.

- a) (MUF1) The parish church of St Botolph and its churchyard. Originally built in the twelfth century, its medieval fabric has been almost totally obliterated through restoration (DoE 1983, 40).

PC5. The site of the medieval Manor House and grounds.

PC6. The early medieval Market Place/Village Green.

PC7. The Hill (part of the London to Dover road).

PC8. The High Street (part of the London to Dover road).

PC9. Group of tenement plots fronting the west side of The Hill and the south side of the Market Place.

PC10. Group of tenement plots fronting the west side of The Hill.

PC11. Group of tenement plots fronting the east side of The Hill.

- a) (MUF2) The Heritage, 31 The Hill. The probable remains of a late fifteenth century open hall-house. Once the Plough Inn, it is now an office with accommodation above (DoE 1983, 41).

PC12 Group of tenement plots between Dover Road and Springhead Road

PC13 Post-medieval building plot

PC14 Post-medieval building plot

PC15 Post-medieval building plot

5.2 Post-medieval plan components and urban features (Figures 10)

From the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, the essential plan-form of Northfleet (Figure 8) was largely retained and so no post-medieval plan components map has been produced, but a number of new buildings were constructed along the line of the High Street, The Hill and Springhead Road, some replacing earlier structures and others filling open spaces. The southern area of the medieval market place was encroached upon, there was extensive industrial development between the north side of the High Street and The Hill as far as the Thames foreshore, and a number of housing estates were built to the south of the High Street and south of London Road. During the second half of the twentieth century large-scale housing development took place over extensive areas of former agricultural land between the railway line and the A2 trunk road well to the south of the historic core.

PC1. The former London to Dover road now the A226 and B261 roads.

PC2. The road to Gravesend, now London Road (part of the A226).

PC3. The road to Wrotham, now Springhead Road (the B2175 and A2260).

PC4. The Parish Church of St Botolph and its surrounding churchyard.

a) (PMUF1) The parish church of St Botolph and churchyard (DoE 1983, 40).

PC5. The site of the medieval Manor House and grounds.

PC6. The former Market Place and Village Green.

a) (PMUF2) 7 The Hill. An eighteenth century, two-storey house, built in red brick with dark headers, and weatherboarding on the east side. The north-west corner has canopied nineteenth century shop-fronts and door (DoE 1983, 36).

PC7. The Hill.

PC8. The High Street

PC9. Group of tenement plots fronting the west side of High Street and the south side of the medieval Market Place/Village Green.

a) (PMUF3) The Church of Our Lady of the Assumption. A Roman Catholic church built in 1914 to a design by Sir Giles Scott (DoE 1983, 40).

PC10. Group of tenement plots fronting the west side of The Hill.

a) (PMUF4) 24-25 The Hill, The Coach and Horses Public House. A timber-framed two-storey building, probably seventeenth century, with nineteenth century alterations and additions. No. 24 has modern shop windows (DoE 1983, 41).

- a) (PMUF5) Granby Place, 2-3 High Street. A pair of semi-detached, two-storey houses built c. 1830 (DoE 1983, 37).

PC11. Group of tenement plots fronting the east side of The Hill.

PC12. A tenement plot at the junction of the Dover Road and Springhead Road.

- a) (PMUF6) Ye Olde Leather Bottel. An eighteenth century inn of two storeys plus attic, rendered on ground floor and weatherboarding to first floor, with some late nineteenth century alterations (DoE 1983, 36).

Not located in a plan component

(PMUF7) The Factory Club, High Street. Built in 1878 for Bevan's Cement to designs by Parr and Strong. A brick-built basement, a double-height ground floor, an attic with classical decoration, and a slate roof (DoE 1983, 38).

6. THE POTENTIAL OF NORTHFLEET

6.1 Archaeological resource overview

No archaeological investigations have so far been undertaken within the town and very few in the immediate surroundings. Extensive investigations have, however, taken place within the wider area, particularly in the Ebbsfleet valley. Little is known about the extent of surviving archaeological sub-surface deposits within the town. There is a good possibility that some sub-surface archaeological deposits may have survived in those areas that have not been cellared, although the medieval and earlier stratigraphy may be comparatively thin and not far below the present ground surface. If surviving areas of intact medieval and earlier stratigraphy can be located they could help to establish the evolution and development of the town.

6.2 Research questions

The purpose of this document is to develop policy for Northfleet's urban archaeological deposits, particularly the historic core. None of the medieval and post-medieval components of the town has been archaeologically investigated and there is virtually no archaeological evidence for the economic base of the medieval town.

6.3 Key areas for research

The following need to be investigated:

6.3.1 *The origins of Northfleet*

The nature, chronology and extent of the earliest settlement at Northfleet

The nature, chronology and extent of any Anglo-Saxon settlement

The origins and development of the church

The origins, location and development of the market

The development of the High Street

The origins and development of the Manor House and its impact on Northfleet's development

The origins, development and influence of early roads and trackways

6.3.2 Northfleet in the medieval period

The pattern of settlement and the relationship of individual plots to the settlement framework

The nature, extent and chronology of occupation within the urban core

The form, character and dating of individual properties

The development and location of the market

The economy of the town and its trading and commercial contacts with its hinterland, London and elsewhere

The nature and location of any medieval shipbuilding yard

6.3.3 Northfleet in the post-medieval period

The pattern of settlement and the relationship of individual plots to the settlement framework

The form, character and chronology of individual properties

The economy of the town and its trading and commercial contacts with its hinterland, London and elsewhere

The origins and development of the post-medieval shipbuilding yards

The origins and development of the cement industry

The influence of the cement industry on the development of the town, including the nature, date and extent of the settlement pattern, urban character, and the origin of public buildings.

The origins and development of the paper-making industry

The origins and development of other industries and their influence on the development of the town

6.3.4 General questions

The evidence of artefactual remains in interpreting the town's history

The nature of the environment of the area prior to the development of the town and throughout its history.

The discovery and study of structures, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence would illuminate these topics. Small-scale archaeological sampling in individual properties in Northfleet could provide answers to specific questions. Consideration should be given, however, to large-scale excavation over a number of adjacent properties, which would provide a wider picture, if desk-top assessment and field evaluation demonstrate the case. The position and importance of Northfleet in the hierarchy of Kent towns can be solved only through excavation, field survey and consultation of historical documentation.

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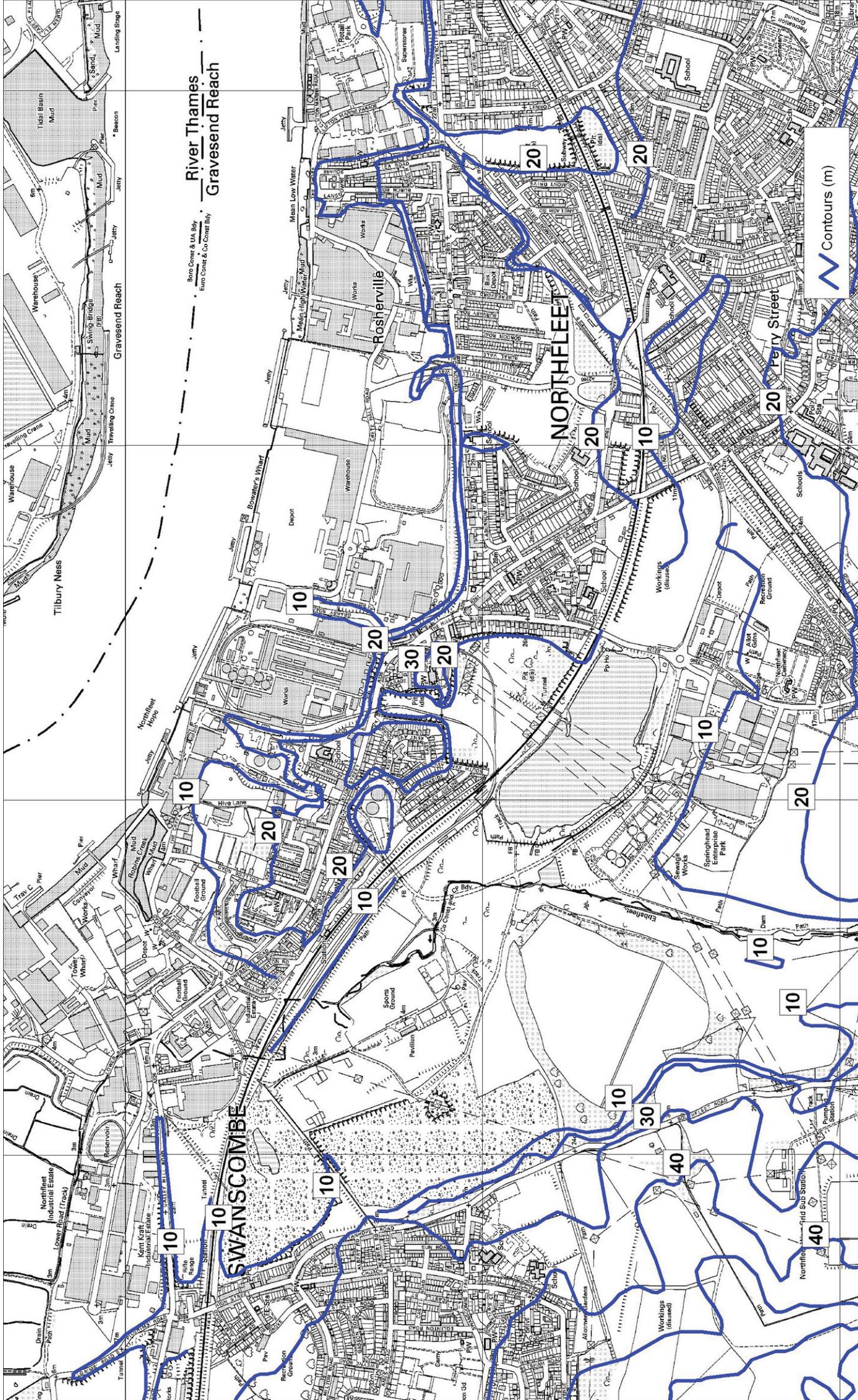
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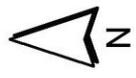
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Figure 1. Map of Northfleet showing contours

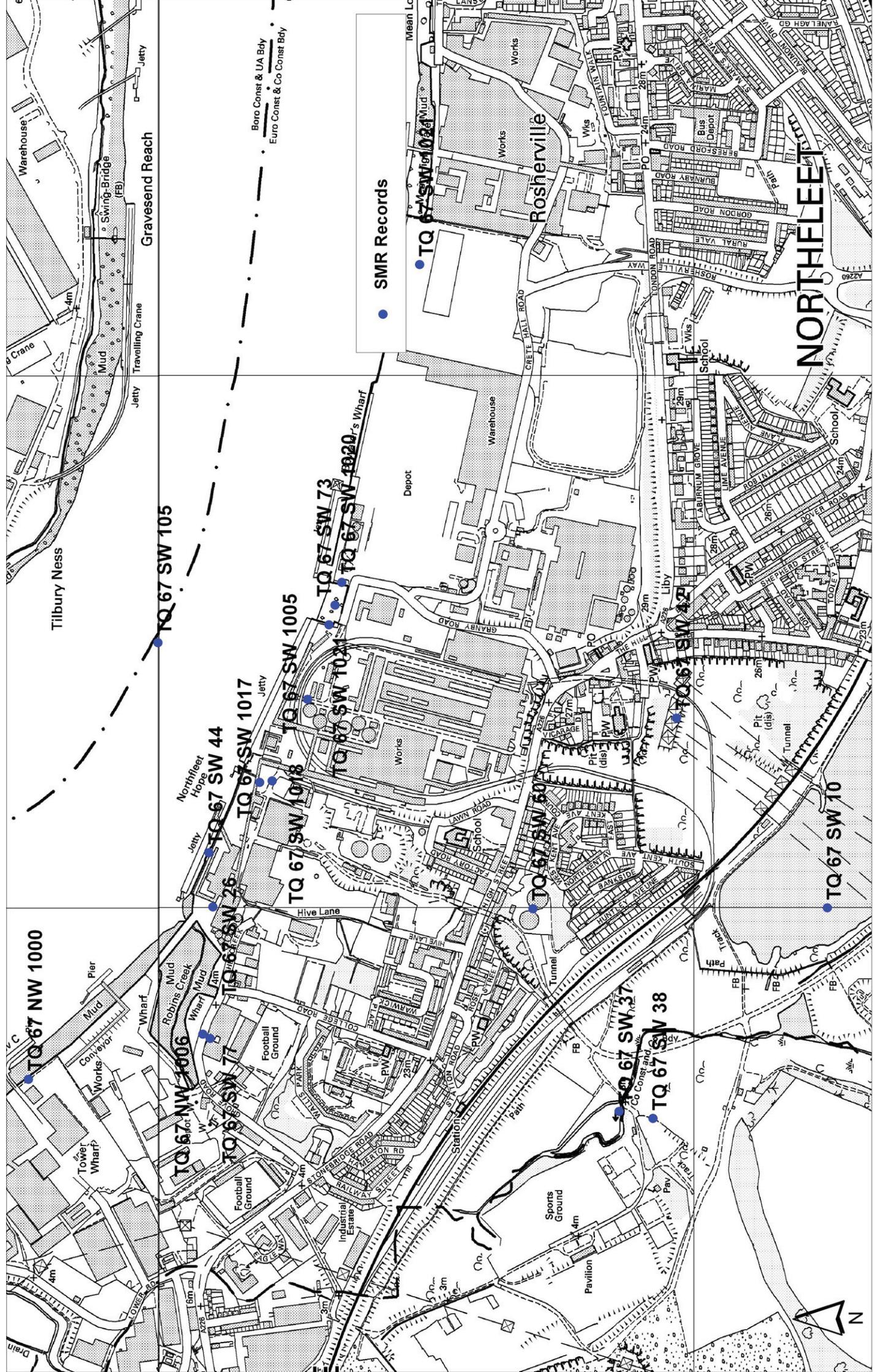


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Scale 1:1500 Figure 2 Map of Northfleet showing geology

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1:7565

Figure 3. Map of Northfleet showing archaeological remains

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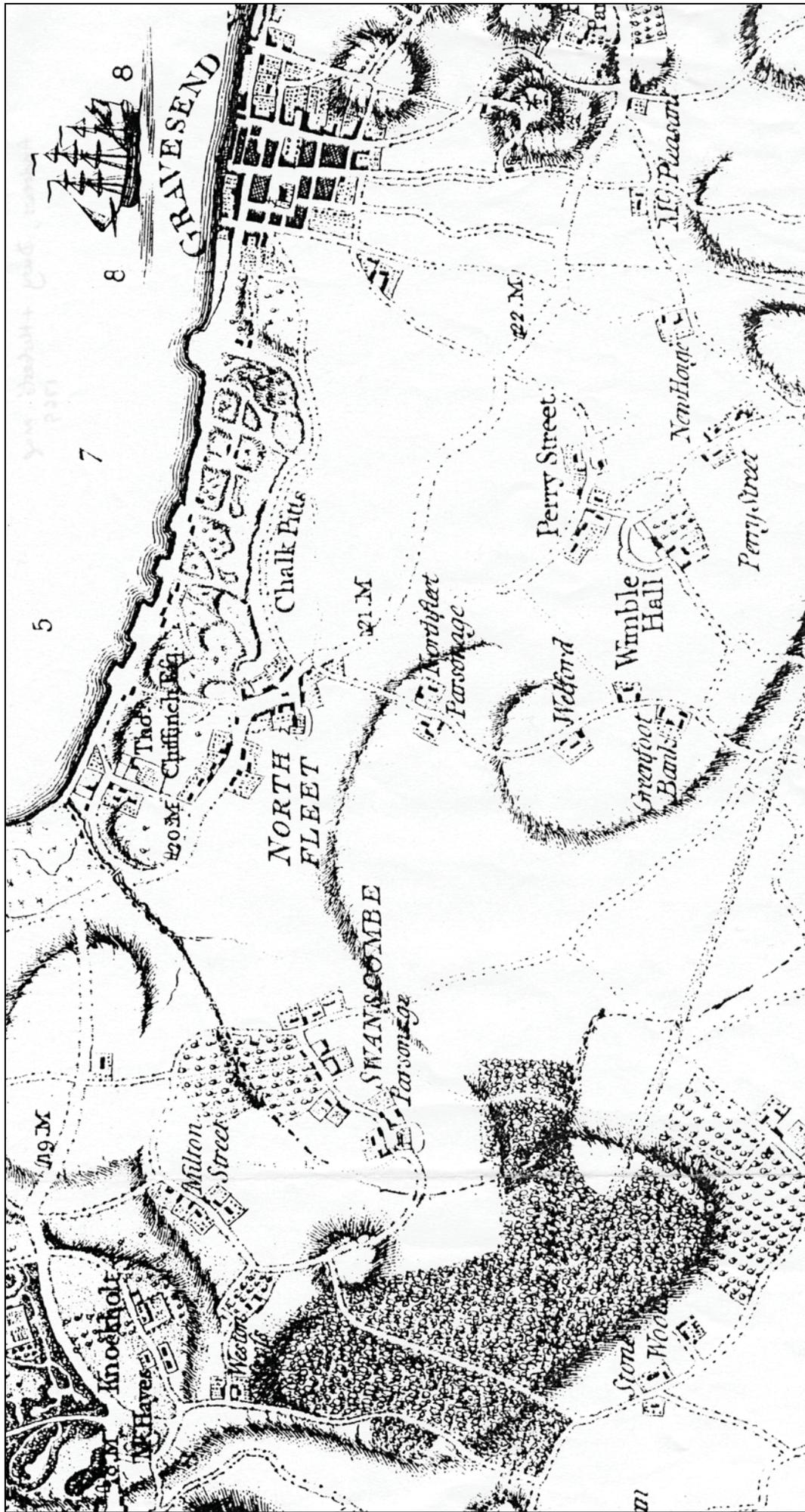


Figure 4. Andrews, Dury and Herbert's map of Northfleet, c.1769

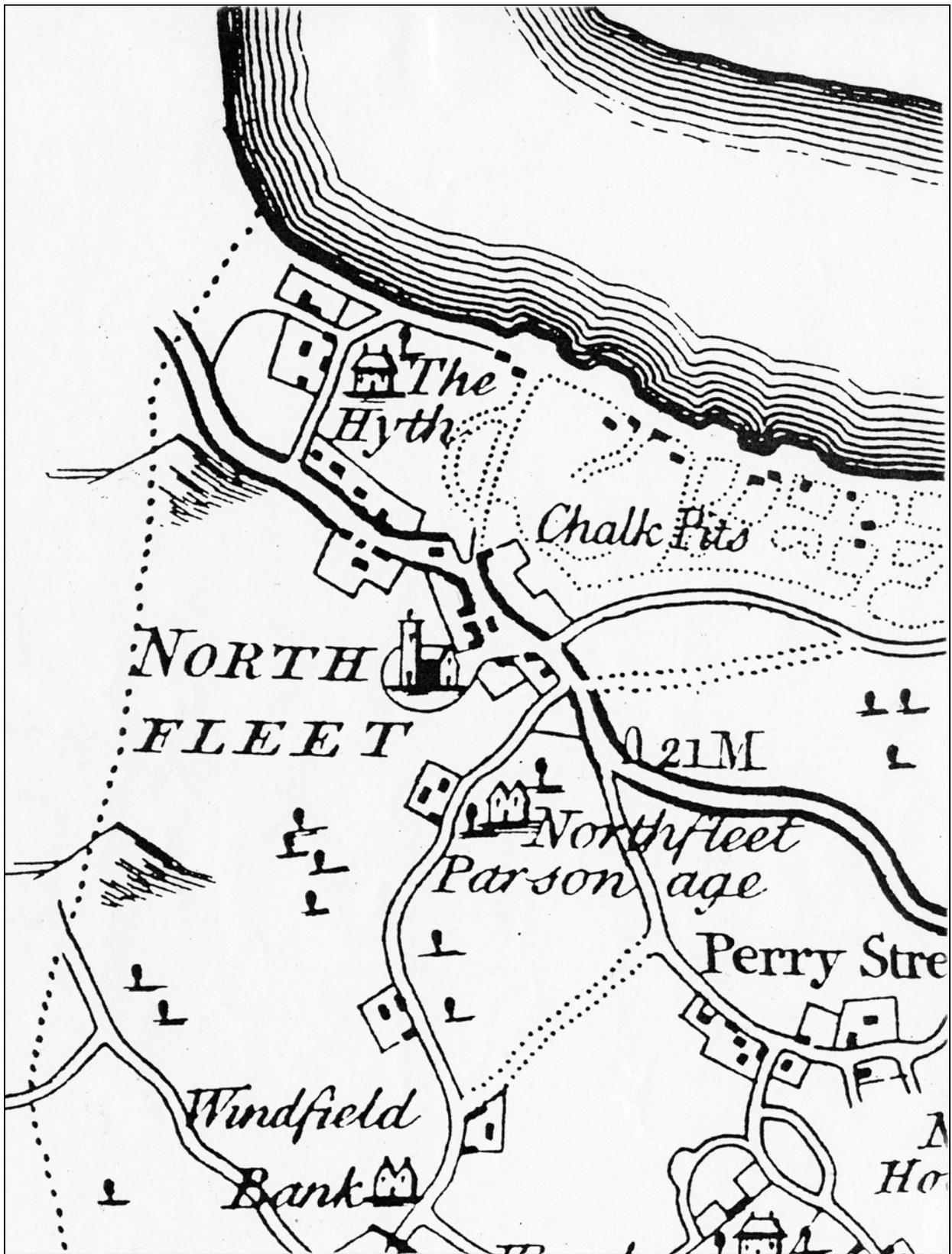


Figure 5. Hasted's map of Northfleet, c.1797

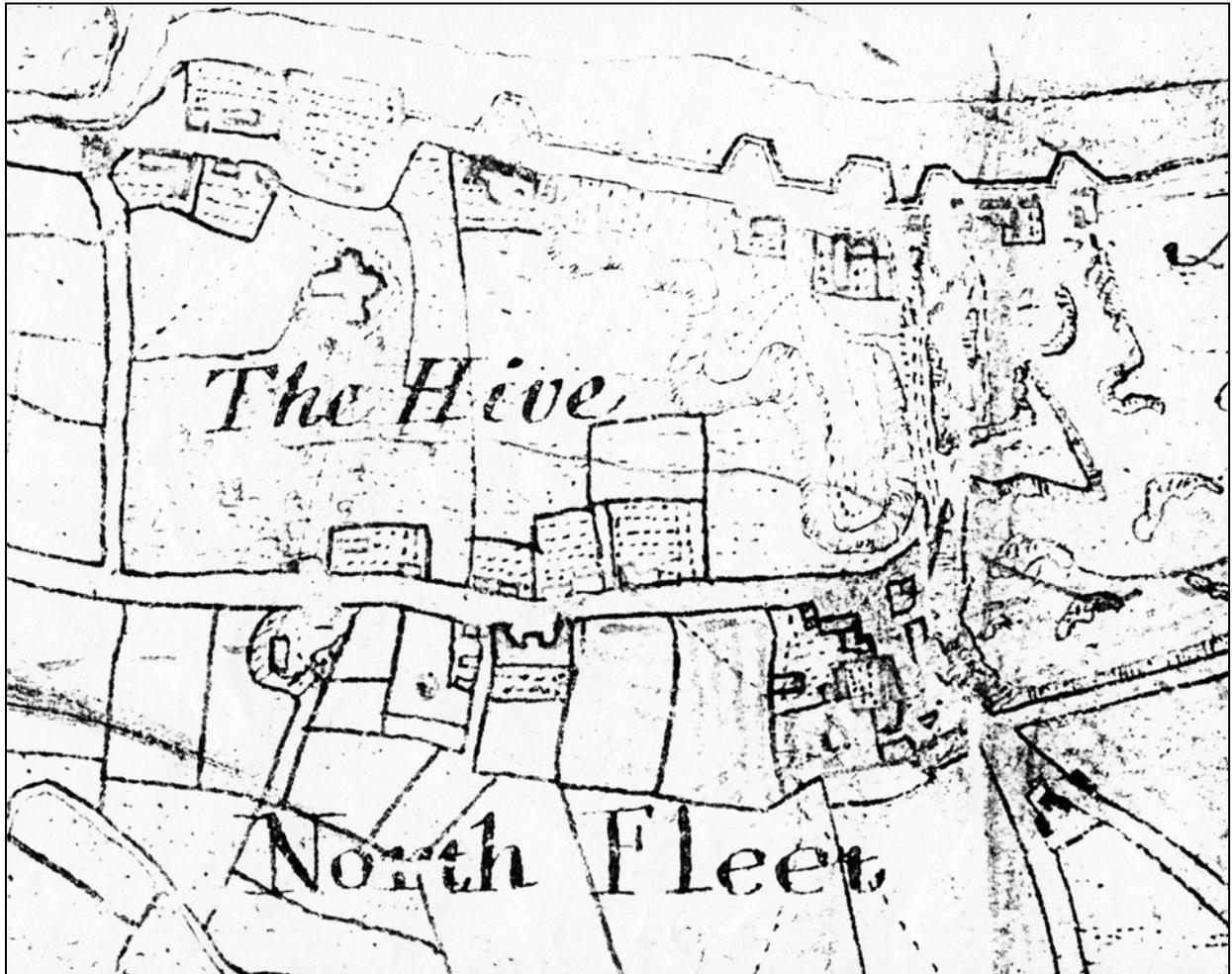
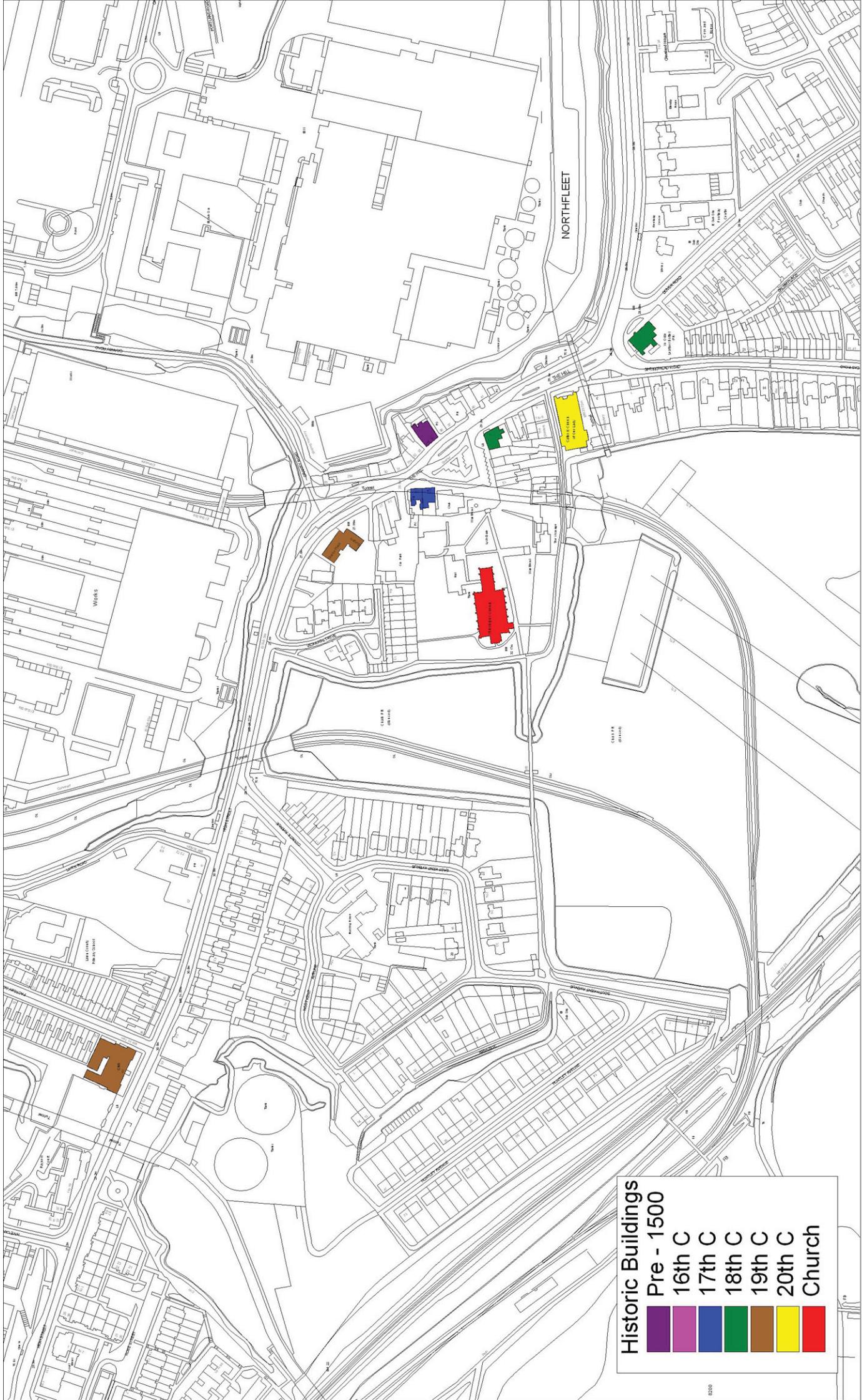
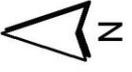


Figure 6. Ordnance Surveyor's field drawing for the 1st Edition OS map,
c.1800-1805



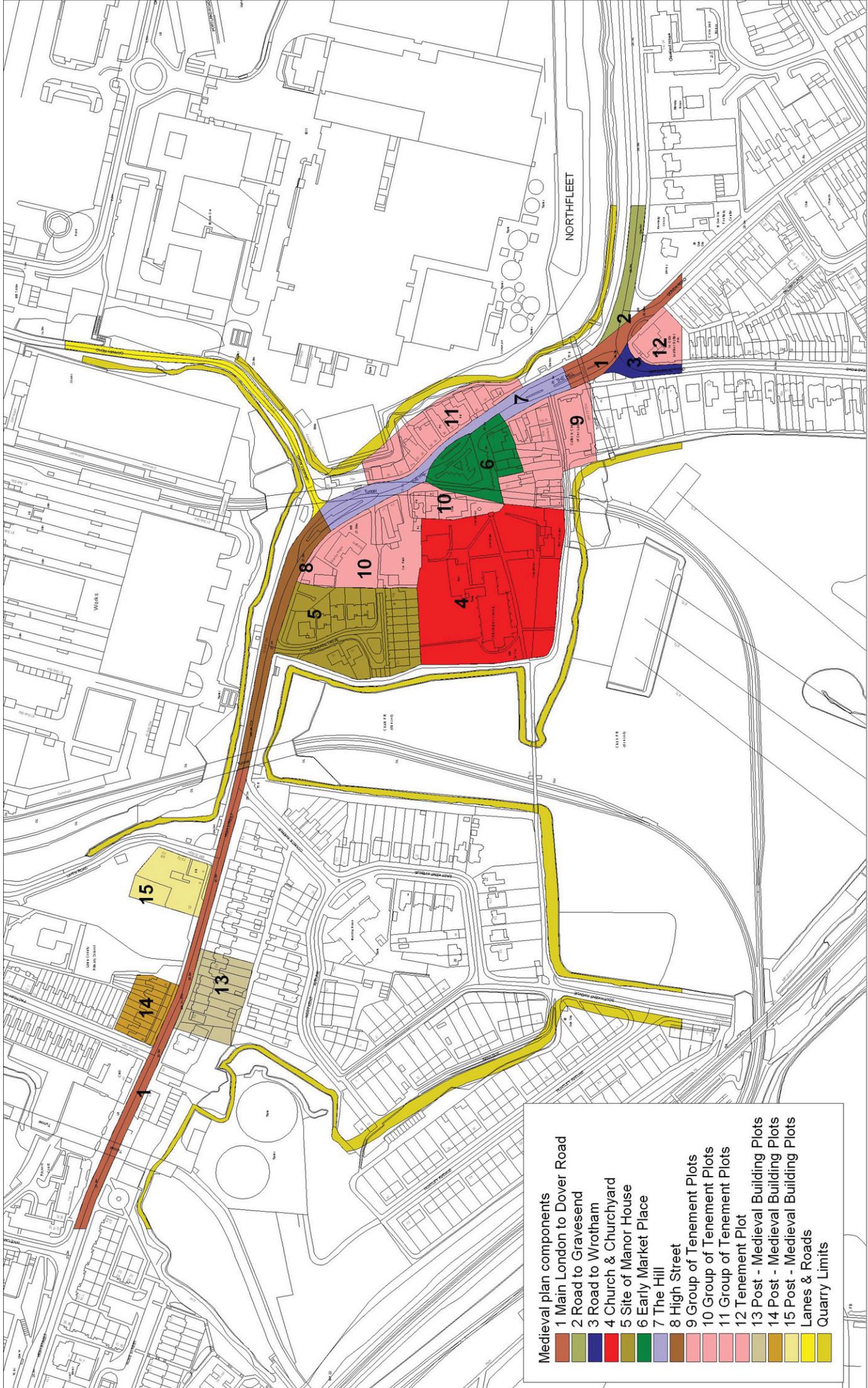
Historic Buildings

	Pre - 1500
	16th C
	17th C
	18th C
	19th C
	20th C
	Church

Figure 7. Map of Northfleet showing historic buildings

1:2579

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- Medieval plan components**
- 1 Main London to Dover Road
 - 2 Road to Gravesend
 - 3 Road to Wrotham
 - 4 Church & Churchyard
 - 5 Site of Manor House
 - 6 Early Market Place
 - 7 The Hill
 - 8 High Street
 - 9 Group of Tenement Plots
 - 10 Group of Tenement Plots
 - 11 Group of Tenement Plots
 - 12 Tenement Plot
 - 13 Post - Medieval Building Plots
 - 14 Post - Medieval Building Plots
 - 15 Post - Medieval Building Plots
 - Lanes & Roads
 - Quarry Limits

Figure 8. Map of Northfleet showing medieval plan components

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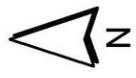
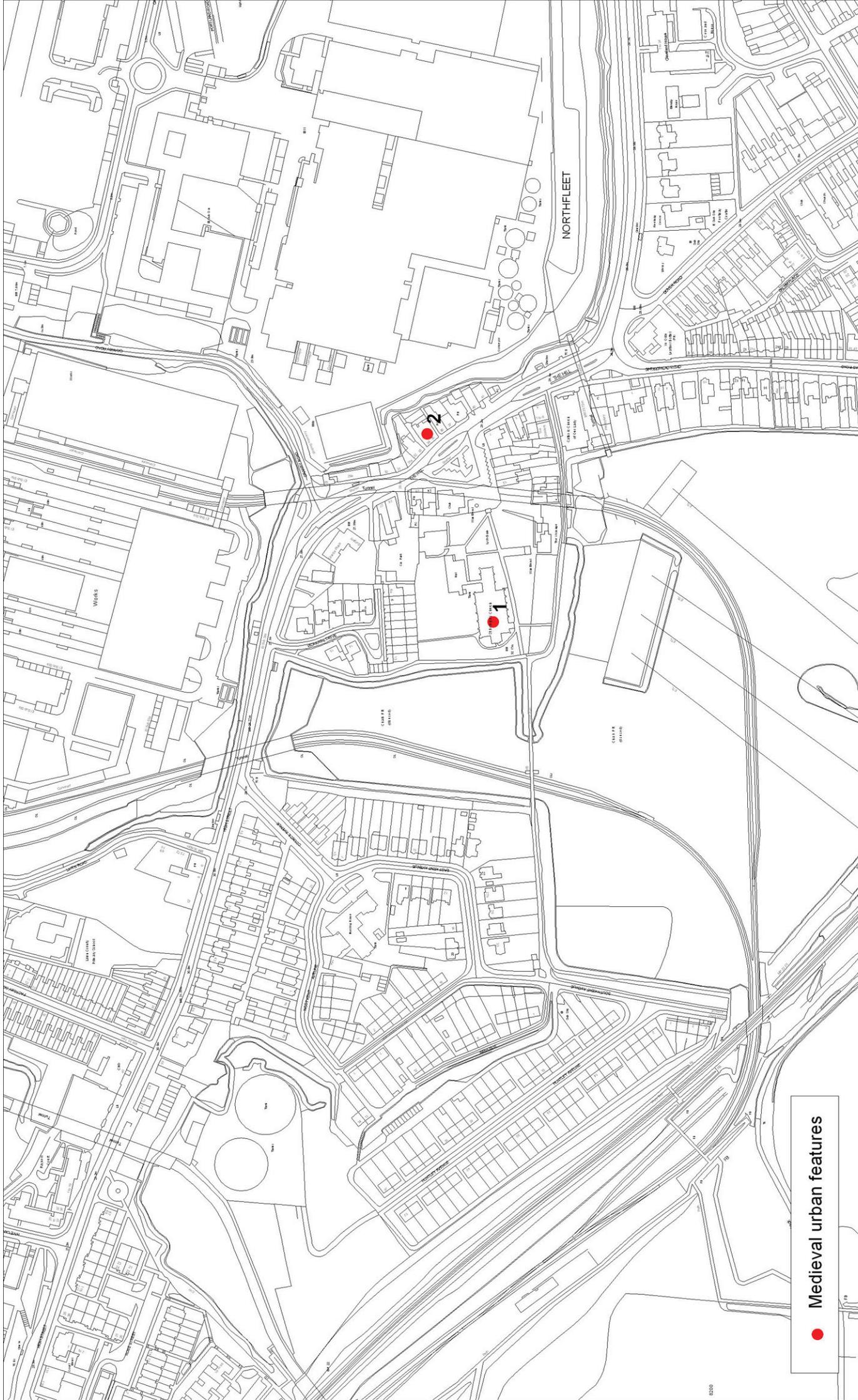


Figure 9. Map of Northfleet showing medieval urban features

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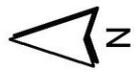


Figure 10. Map of Northfleet showing post-medieval urban features

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APPENDIX I: KENT AND MEDWAY STRUCTURE PLAN – MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE: *DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG 3) ON ARCHAEOLOGY IN HISTORIC TOWNS*

1. Introduction

1.1 The Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey, undertaken by Kent County Council, assesses the archaeological potential of the historic towns in Kent and Medway, particularly in relation to potential impacts from development. It constitutes draft supplementary planning guidance (as revised following consultation). Following adoption of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (KMSP) (anticipated in late 2005) this draft guidance will be taken forward as Supplementary Planning Guidance to KMSP Policy QL8 [Archaeological Sites] which sets out the requirements for the conservation and management of archaeological sites and finds. The draft KMSP and the draft supplementary guidance on archaeology (SPG3) were subject to full public consultation in late 2003. The draft supplementary planning guidance has been revised in the light of the responses received to that consultation. Policy QL8 is also the subject of a Proposed Change put forward in 2004 prior to the Structure Plan Examination in Public.

Policy QL8: Archaeological Sites

The archaeological and historic integrity of scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development which would adversely affect them will not normally be permitted.

Where important or potentially important archaeological remains may exist, developers will be required to arrange for archaeological assessment and/or field evaluation to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications.

Where the case for development affecting an archaeological site is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ. Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required.

Source : Kent and Medway Structure Plan:Deposit Plan September 2003 as amended by Proposed Pre – Examination in Public Changes: June 2004

1.2 Precisely defining what is a town is not straightforward; for the purposes of this study, places that can be seen historically to have fulfilled roles as central places socially and economically, and perhaps with a market, have been included. Inevitably the distinction between village and town is not always clear. The Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey includes some medieval towns that are no longer of urban character and extends to towns which developed in the eighteenth century. Roman towns that now only survive as buried remains in a rural context are not included. The Guidance is concerned with the impact of development on archaeological remains within towns rather than sites in the surrounding countryside. In particular it seeks to raise awareness of areas of archaeological importance

within a town, provide more accurate information on the extent of these areas and establish a consistent approach towards dealing with the impact of development proposals across Kent and Medway¹. Canterbury and Dover have not been included in the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey, as a more detailed Urban Archaeological Database is being developed for Canterbury and one is proposed for Dover.

1.3 The Guidance is aimed at local planning authorities, developers and their advisers. It may also be of interest to landowners, householders and local historical groups. Pending adoption of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, this Guidance amplifies Policy ENV18 of the adopted Kent Structure Plan 1996. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to take the guidance into account in the preparation of their Local Plans/ Development Plan Documents and site specific Supplementary Planning Documents. The Guidance does not apply outside the identified urban areas and should be read alongside existing Local Plan policies on archaeology. The Guidance has been issued both as a Kent and Medway edition containing maps for all the settlements to which it applies and a district edition containing maps only for those settlements falling in the respective district area. There is no difference in the wording or application of the Guidance in either edition.

2. SPG Background

2.1 Kent's historic towns, some of which have been occupied since Roman times or even earlier, contain a wealth of evidence of past ways of life. This may take the form of buried archaeological deposits, standing buildings or structures, such as castles or town walls, or the present street patterns which may reflect past urban forms. At the same time, our towns need to develop as thriving communities. The Guidance aims to reduce conflict between the need for development and the need to preserve important archaeological remains, through the preparation of an ongoing and integrated strategy for conserving the urban archaeological resource.

2.2 The Government's policy on archaeological remains is set out in PPG16: Archaeology and Planning. It states (para. 6) that:

'Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore essential to ensure they survive in good condition. In particular, care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed. They can contain irreplaceable information about our past and the potential for an increase in future knowledge. They are part of our sense of national identity and are valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism.'

2.3 Archaeological remains are not always buried below ground and in many cases historic buildings within a town will contain important archaeological information, irrespective of whether they are Listed Buildings or not. Indeed, as noted in PPG15 (para. 2.15):

'Some historic buildings are scheduled ancient monuments, and many which are not scheduled are of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains' archaeological remains.'

¹ Please note that Kent County Council provides an archaeological service for the Medway area on behalf of Medway Council.

2.4 The means by which provision for archaeological preservation or recording is secured is also discussed in PPG16. In the event that archaeological work may be required prior to a planning decision being taken (para 21):

'it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.'

If the planning authority is willing to grant planning permission but requires that preservation in-situ or archaeological recording take place (para 30):

'it is open to them to do so by the use of a negative condition i.e. a condition prohibiting the carrying out of development until such time as works or other action, e.g. an excavation, have been carried out by a third party.'

3. Urban Archaeological Zones and Guidance

3.1 The Guidance relates to 46 towns in Kent and Medway as listed in Section 9. A plan has been produced for each town (for Northfleet here Figure 11) providing archaeological response zones based on the known importance of archaeological deposits in that town, which again derives from the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey. The boundaries of these zones are related to the possible extent of archaeological deposits rather than modern boundaries. Key documents in assessing the archaeological potential of Kent's towns are the Ordnance Surveyors' Field Drawings of c. 1800 (held by the British Library). These provide consistent, fairly detailed cartography of the various towns before the population explosion of the 19th century. While they do not map the extent and layout of the towns in the medieval period, they nonetheless provide a useful baseline for assessing the extent and layout of the towns in the Middle Ages. In the case of applications for Listed Building Consent or where the building is historic in character, and where the proposal impacts on the historic fabric, then the Local Planning Authority will need to consider whether or not to consult the County Archaeologist in respect of considerations of archaeology or industrial archaeology. Similarly, developers considering proposals in these areas are encouraged to consult the County Archaeologist at an early stage in the design process. Four types of Urban Archaeological Zone have been identified although they will not necessarily be present in all the towns. The zones indicate:

Zone 1 – Areas of known national importance;

Zone 2 – Areas of known archaeological potential where clarification of the nature of this potential is required;

Zone 3 – Areas where archaeological potential is thought to be lower; and

Zone 4 – Areas in which archaeological remains have been completely removed.

Further information detailing the state of knowledge of the archaeology of each of these towns including analysis of their topography and historical development is available in the form of an Assessment Report. These reports can be purchased from the County Archaeologist (see section 7 for contact details).

3.2 **Zone 1** identifies, as suggested in PPG16 (para 16), archaeological remains of known national importance, and comprises both Scheduled Monuments and unscheduled remains. PPG16 (para 8) states that:

'Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.'

3.3 Scheduled Monuments (formerly known as Scheduled Ancient Monuments) are protected under Part 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, and prior consent from the Secretary of State is required for all works affecting such monuments, whether or not those works require planning permission. Local planning authorities should secure, through the development control process, the protection of nationally important remains that are not scheduled.

3.4 Development proposals within Zone 1 that are likely to affect nationally important archaeological remains whether scheduled or not, should include a detailed archaeological assessment of the remains and a mitigation strategy setting out how the remains will be protected. Buildings and foundations may need to be designed and/or located to allow preservation of archaeological remains. Such considerations should be addressed at an early stage in the design process, if possible before a planning application is actually submitted, in order to avoid unnecessary costs.

3.5 The archaeological and historic integrity of sites within Zone 1, together with their settings, should be protected and where possible enhanced. Where development would adversely affect them permission will normally be refused.

3.6 Where permission is granted, conditions will normally be applied, or agreements entered into, to ensure that any necessary mitigation strategy is implemented. Applications for planning permission and other consents that affect the fabric of historic buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that disturb the ground, should be accompanied by the following:

- i.) a detailed report on the character and extent of any archaeological remains likely to be affected; and
- ii.) a mitigation strategy detailing how any possible archaeological impacts would be avoided.

3.7 **Zone 2** contains archaeological remains, some of which may be of national importance but whose precise extent, quality or level of importance is currently not clear, and where clarification of potential is required. Early consultation with the local planning authority, preferably prior to the submission of a planning application, will enable the implications of the proposals to be assessed, the appropriate course of action identified, and expensive redesign costs avoided.

3.8 The archaeological and historic integrity of sites within Zone 2, together with their settings, should be protected and where possible enhanced. Further information will be needed in this respect before informed decisions can be made. Therefore development proposals

within Zone 2 that affect the historic fabric of buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that disturb the ground, should be accompanied by a detailed report on the character and extent of any archaeological remains likely to be affected. Field evaluation may need to be carried out and the results made available prior to the determination of a planning application.

3.9 If significant archaeological remains are found to be affected by the proposals, preservation *in situ* of the remains will normally be sought. In some cases the need to preserve important archaeological remains may result in planning permission having to be refused. If permission is granted, a mitigation strategy detailing how preservation *in situ* is to be achieved should be submitted to and agreed with the local planning authority. Where preservation *in situ* is not justified appropriate provision for archaeological investigation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving will be required, in accordance with a written specification and timetable to be agreed with the local planning authority. Conditions will normally be applied to permissions or agreements sought to implement the mitigation strategy or programme of archaeological work.

3.10 **Zone 3** contains archaeological remains which on current evidence are of lesser importance. Development proposals within Zone 3 that affect the historic fabric of buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that will disturb the ground should include provision for archaeological investigation, generally in the form of monitoring and/or borehole investigation, and the recording of finds and information of archaeological interest. If extensive or particularly important archaeological remains are unexpectedly encountered during the development process, there may be a need to arrange for their physical preservation and/or a more detailed programme of archaeological investigation and recording. Where permission is granted, conditions will normally be applied or agreements sought to implement the archaeological work.

3.11 **Zone 4** comprises areas where archaeological remains are known already to have been entirely removed by previous development, or other activity, including archaeological excavation. This Zone is only defined on the plan where it lies within the study area.

4. Outside the Urban Archaeological Zoned Area

4.1 Archaeological remains may be known or thought likely to exist outside the areas covered by the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey and the Urban Archaeological Zones. Developers considering proposals in these areas are encouraged to consult the County Archaeologist at an early stage in the design process.

5. Updating of the Urban Archaeological Zones

5.1 As new archaeological and historical information concerning the historic towns becomes available, it may be necessary for the County Archaeologist in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority to revise the boundaries of the Urban Archaeological Zones.

6. Glossary of Terms

Scheduled Monument

Under the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments, such monuments having statutory protection. Monuments on the schedule are by definition of national importance and the

appropriateness of addition to the list is assessed against a set of criteria as set out in PPG16 Annex 4.

PPG15

Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (Department of the Environment and the Department of National Heritage 1994)

PPG16

Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990)

NB PPG15 and PPG16 are currently being revised and consolidated into a new Planning Policy Statement for the Historic Environment – PPS15

Assessment

This is normally a desk based activity bringing together all known evidence relating to the importance or potential of a given site or area.

Evaluation

This is normally supplementary work undertaken in the field (either non-intrusive such as fieldwalking or geophysical survey, or intrusive such as boreholing or trial trenching) to obtain further information on the character, extent, date and potential of a given site or area.

Mitigation

Archaeological mitigation aims to minimise the effects of proposed development and normally consists of either preservation *in situ* of the archaeological remains, and/or archaeological investigation, recording, publication and archiving, where preservation is not justified or possible.

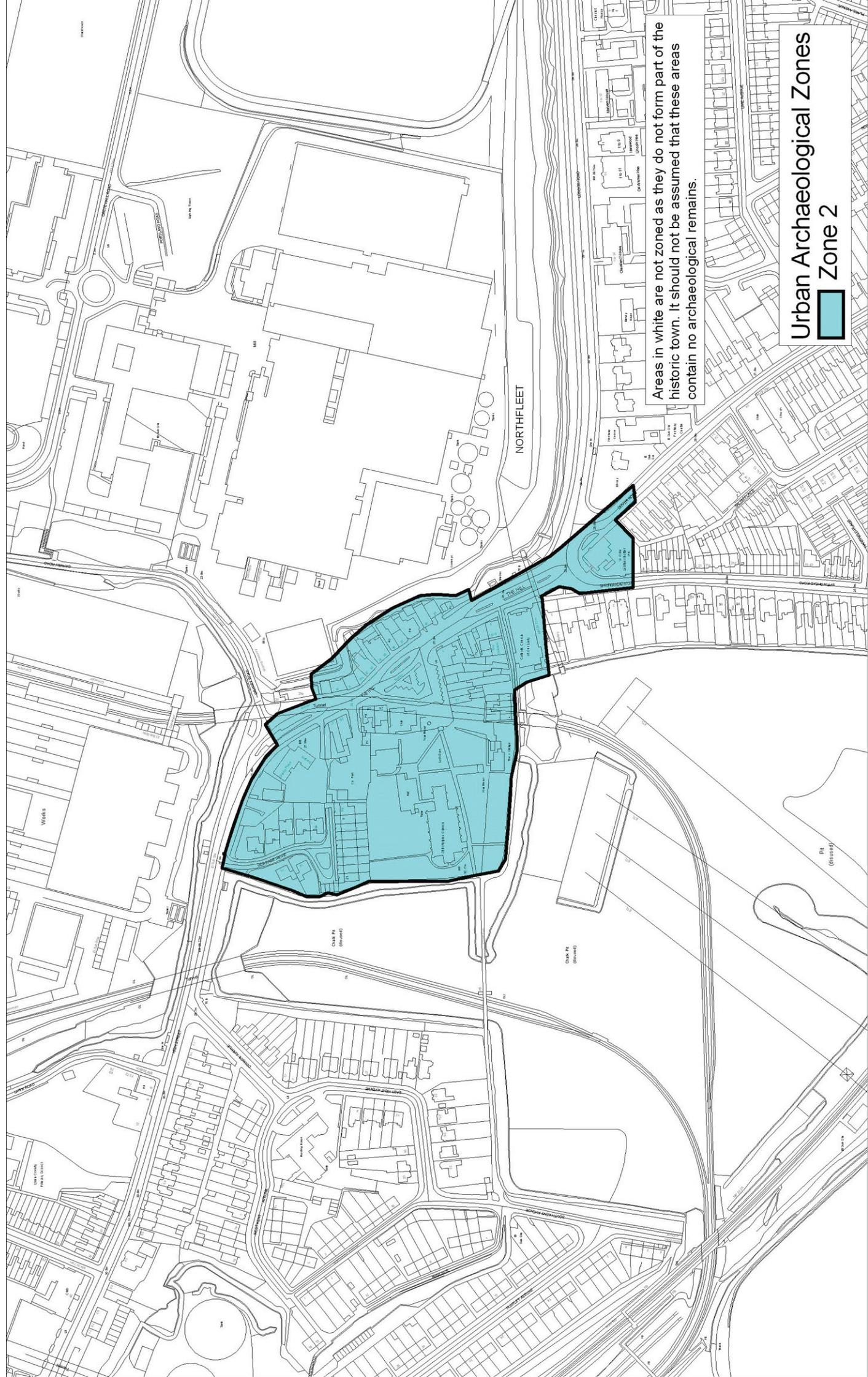
7. Useful Addresses and Contacts

County Archaeologist
Heritage Conservation Group
Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XX
Tel: 01622-221541

English Heritage
Eastgate Court
195-205 High Street
Guildford
GU1 3EH
Tel: 01483 252038

8. List of Settlements to which draft SPG3 Applies

Appledore
Ashford
Charing
Chatham
Chilham
Cranbrook
Dartford
Deal
Edenbridge
Elham
Faversham
Folkestone
Fordwich
Gillingham
Goudhurst
Gravesend
Headcorn
Hythe
Ightham
Lenham
Lydd
Maidstone
Marden
Margate
Milton Regis
Minster in Thanet
New Romney
Northfleet
Queenborough
Ramsgate
Rochester
Sandwich
Sevenoaks
Sheerness
Sittingbourne
Smeden
Tenterden
Tonbridge
Tunbridge Wells
West Malling
Westerham
Whitstable
Wingham
Wrotham
Wye
Yalding



Areas in white are not zoned as they do not form part of the historic town. It should not be assumed that these areas contain no archaeological remains.

Urban Archaeological Zones
 Zone 2

Figure 11. Map of Northfleet showing Urban Archaeological Zones

1:2596

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