



Historic England

# London Borough of Bexley Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal

January 2020





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## Introduction

This document has been produced by the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS), part of the National Planning Group: London and South East office of Historic England. The London Borough of Bexley Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal is part of a long term commitment to review and update London's Archaeological Priority Areas (APA). The review uses evidence held in the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) to provide a sound evidence base for local plans that accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and its supporting Practice Guidance.

Historically, the defining of the borough APAs had been based upon 1980s information with reviews in 1992 and 1996. The borough commissioned Stabler Heritage to review the APAs in 2012 with the resultant report being adopted in 2014. The review represented the last borough assessment to be completed prior to a change to a Tier model whereby the whole borough is assigned to one of four levels that relate more closely to potential significance and definable triggers in the planning process. To date across London 12 boroughs have been revised using the new model. Historic England offered to undertake a review of the Stabler Heritage report with the aim of reworking the APAs to bring the borough in line with Historic England Archaeological Priority Area Review Programme: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-archaeological-priority-areas/> and as referenced in the London Mayor's draft London Plan, 2017, 7.1.10.

The appraisal assigns a Tier to each of the Stabler Heritage defined APAs, on occasion splitting an area into two Tier areas. Where a split is recommended, the character description has been split accordingly. There are only three instances where the boundary of an APA is proposed to change; an increased area for Thamesmead and Erith Marshes plus River Cray: Valley and Floodplain and a reduction of area for Roman Welling, so the boundaries reflect current information. An additional APA has been added of just 2 acres to define an area about the Bronze Age barrow within Lesnes Abbey Woods. Overall the APA coverage of the borough has increased from 27.4 to 38%. The aim of this review is to overlay the Tier model onto the adopted Stabler Report and only recommend change where considered necessary. A draft of this report was submitted to Bexley Borough Council for consideration. This revised version is forwarded for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of the Local Plan.



## Explanation of Archaeological Priority Areas

An Archaeological Priority Area (APA) is a defined area where, according to existing information, there is significant known archaeological interest or particular potential for new discoveries.

APAs exist in every London borough and were initially created in the 1970s and 1980s either by the boroughs or local museums. The present review of these areas is based on evidence held in the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER). Guidelines have been published to promote consistency in the recognition and definition of these areas across Greater London<sup>1</sup> and have been used in the preparation of this document. The GLAAS, Historic England APA Tier guidance document can be found at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/greater-london-archaeological-priority-area-guidelines/heag098-glaas-archaeological-priority-areas/>

In the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, archaeological interest means evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation (Annex 2). Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places and of the people and cultures that made them. However, heritage assets of archaeological interest can also hold other forms of heritage significance – artistic, architectural or historic interest. For many types of above ground heritage asset (e.g. historic buildings, landscapes and industrial heritage) these other interests may be more obvious or important. Sometimes heritage interests are intertwined, as is often the case with archaeological and historical interest. While the APA system does not seek to duplicate protection given by other heritage designations, such as Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas, it does aim to overlap and integrate with such approaches. Understanding archaeological significance can enhance appreciation of historical or architectural interest and vice versa.

APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. They help local planning authorities to manage archaeological remains that might be affected by development by providing an evidence base for Local Plans. This evidence base identifies areas of known heritage assets of historic and archaeological interest and wider zones where there is an expectation that currently unidentified heritage assets will be discovered in the future. APAs act as a trigger for consultation with the borough's archaeological advisor and are justified by a description of significance which will inform development management advice and decision making. The appraisal can also indicate how archaeology might contribute towards a positive strategy for conserving and enjoying the local historic environment, for example through recognising local distinctiveness or securing social or cultural benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> That is the boroughs advised by Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, Historic England: not the City of London and Southwark which have their own archaeological advisors.

However, archaeological research and discovery is a dynamic process so it is not possible to anticipate all eventualities, threats and opportunities. This appraisal should therefore be seen as providing a flexible framework for informed site specific decision making but not a straightjacket.



## Archaeological Priority Area Tiers

Previously, all parts of the borough were either inside or outside an Archaeological Priority Area. Under the new system all parts of the borough will fall into one of four different tiers of archaeological significance and potential. The tiers vary depending on the archaeological significance and potential of that particular area. This review of the boroughs' Archaeological Priority Areas (APAs) have been categorised into one of Tiers 1-3 while all remaining areas within the borough will be regarded as being in Tier 4. Tier levels indicate when there is a need to understand the potential impact of the proposed development on the heritage asset's significance. The type of planning application and the tier level with in which it is located, indicates the likelihood that archaeology will need to be a consideration in reaching a planning decision.

Consultation guidelines are set out in the GLAAS, Historic England Charter <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/charter-for-greater-london-archaeological-advisory-service/>. The guidelines link the tiers to specific thresholds for triggering archaeological advice and assessment. As a minimum all major applications<sup>2</sup> within Archaeological Priority Areas (Tiers 1-3) should require an archaeological desk based assessment, and if necessary a field evaluation, to accompany a planning application. In the more sensitive Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas this procedure would also apply to some smaller scale developments. Outside Archaeological Priority Areas (Tier 4) some major developments, such as those subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, may warrant similar treatment. Pre-application consultation with GLAAS is encouraged to ensure planning applications are supported by appropriate information.

**Tier 1** is a defined area which is known, or strongly suspected, to contain a heritage asset of national importance (a Scheduled Monument or equivalent); or is otherwise of very high archaeological sensitivity. Thus Tier 1 covers heritage assets to which policies for designated heritage assets would apply and a few other sites which are particularly sensitive to small scale disturbance<sup>3</sup>. They will be clearly focused on a

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<sup>2</sup> Major applications include development involving 10 or more dwellings or an application site of 0.5 hectares or more on outline applications. For other types of applications including commercial or industrial development a major application may be defined as being 1000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace or more or an application site of 1 hectare or more on an outline application.

<sup>3</sup> However, this does not mean that the policies for assets of national importance would apply to every development in a Tier 1 APA as that will depend upon the nature of the proposals and results of site-specific assessment and evaluation.

specific heritage asset and will normally be relatively small. Scheduled Monuments would normally be included within a Tier 1 APA<sup>4</sup>.

**Tier 2** is a local area within which the GLHER holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset. Tier 2 APAs will typically cover a larger area than a Tier 1 APA and may encompass a group of heritage assets.

**Tier 3** is a landscape scale zone within which the GLHER holds evidence indicating the potential for heritage assets of archaeological interest. The definition of Tier 3 APAs involves using the GLHER to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future. Tier 3 APAs will typically be defined by geological, topographical or land use considerations in relation to known patterns of heritage asset distribution.

**Tier 4** (outside APA) is any location that does not, on present evidence, merit inclusion within an Archaeological Priority Area. However, Tier 4 areas are not necessarily devoid of archaeological interest and may retain some potential unless they can be shown to have been heavily disturbed in modern times. Such potential is most likely to be identified on greenfield sites, in relation to large scale development or in association with Listed Buildings or other designated heritage assets.

New information may lead to areas moving between the four tiers set out above. For example, a positive archaeological evaluation could result in a Tier 2 area (or part of it) being upgraded to Tier 1 if the remains found were judged to be of national importance. It is important to understand that the new tiered system is intended to be dynamic and responsive to new information which either increases or decreases the significance of an area.

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<sup>4</sup> Tier 1 APAs around Scheduled Monuments will often extend beyond the boundary of the scheduled area to reflect the full extent of the asset, including the potential for associated remains. It will not usually be practicable for an APA to define the totality of Scheduled Monument's setting. Instead they will attempt to reflect areas close to the monument that would be especially sensitive. A few Scheduled Monuments which have been designated for their historical or other non-archaeological interest will not merit the definition of a Tier 1 APA.

This document comprises an appraisal of all the APAs in the borough which has been allocated to one of the Tiers 1-3. Each APA has an associated description which consists of several sections. A definition section provides a brief overview of the key features of the APA, the justification for its selection, how its boundaries were defined and give an explanation as to why it has been placed in a particular tier group. A description follows, providing more detail about the history and archaeology of the APA to describe its overall character. The potential significance section details the heritage significance of the APA with particular reference to its archaeological interest and related historical interest. Each APA entry concludes with a section considering potential research topics and recommendations of possible change to the currently adopted Archaeology Priority Area.

Each APA description is accompanied by a map extract to show the defined area of the APA and in a colour to denote the proposed Tier level.

In reference to the APA Tier Guidance as to which planning applications should be tripped for archaeological consultation with GLAAS, Historic England, based upon their location.

In reference to which planning applications should trigger an archaeological consultation with GLAAS, Historic England, there are certain applications that will require an archaeological consideration irrespective of location:

**Consult GLAAS on:**

- ❖ All major planning applications over 0.5 hectares whether in an APA or not
- ❖ All Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping requests and Environmental Statements
- ❖ Any application supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment
- ❖ Minor planning applications in any APA (tiers 1 to 3)
- ❖ Domestic basement applications in APA tiers 1 and 2 only. Note: For boroughs as yet without APA tiers consult GLAAS on any domestic basement in an APA.
- ❖ Householder and equivalent-scale very minor applications in APA tier 1 only. Note: For boroughs as yet without APA tiers do not consult GLAAS on householder or equivalent applications unless within 50m of a scheduled monument.
- ❖ Proposed substantial demolition or major alterations to historic buildings
- ❖ Submission of details in relation to archaeological conditions
- ❖ Appeals on applications for which an archaeological issue has previously been identified

To consult GLAAS please email: [glaas@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:glaas@historicengland.org.uk)



## **Bexley: Historical and Archaeological Interest**

The London Borough of Bexley was created in 1965 under the London Government Act 1963 having previously consisted of the Municipal Boroughs of Bexley and Erith with Crayford Urban District plus part of Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District. It is located to the south-east of central London and is bordered by Greenwich to the west and Bromley to the south while the River Thames forms its northern boundary.

The borough is associated with a number of rivers apart from the Thames: the River Darent and its tributary the River Cray with its tributary the River Shuttle and the River Stanham. A west-east ridge of higher ground frames the Thames floodplain to its north with at its eastern limit the riverside historic settlement of Erith. The River Darent may frame the eastern borough boundary as the Thames does for the north, but it is the River Cray and its valley that shapes the eastern area of the borough.

The main man-made feature that crosses the borough from east to west is Watling Street. This feature in addition to the main topographical aspects have given rise to a series of important settlements such as Belvedere, Foots Cray, Crayford, Welling, North End, Welling, Slade Green, Bexleyheath and of course Bexley.

Bexley Borough was a rural area until it was engulfed by the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of London prompted by the expansion of the commuter rail network. Unlike other areas of London, the Cray valley did not see significant industrial development from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, much development occurred during the inter war years and post WWII within the main river valleys including a significant number of quarries.

### **Prehistoric (500,000 BC to 42 AD)**

The Cray Valley is particularly associated with brickearth referred to as the Crayford Silt. The spread of this material as shown on drift geology maps should be seen as a guide. Sites that appear to be just outside such an area may in fact prove to include Crayford Silt. Researched by the British Museum, this deposit is identified as having a high association with Palaeolithic archaeology. This relationship is so prevalent that this material should be considered as an archaeological layer and not a natural deposit. (Scott, B. 2009, *The Crayford Brickearth Project*, Quaternary Newsletter 117, p.44-8) The last ice sheet did not extend this far south, having redefined the Thames to flow as it does today instead of across what is now East Anglia. The Crayford Silt is therefore a relic from an ancient landscape and so has the potential to reveal nationally important archaeology.

The Cray valley provided an attractive environment for people in prehistory in terms of its flora and fauna and potential shelter from adverse weather conditions. Mesolithic stone tools and knapping waste has historically been recorded as isolated finds particularly along the valley. Recent archaeological work has identified a rare in situ knapping floor for the transition period from Mesolithic to Neolithic.

An element of the work undertaken for Crossrail has resulted in a report looking at the Lower Thames Floodplain with a series of buried deposit models that includes the Erith and Thamesmead marsh area. (A Journey Through Time: Crossrail in the Lower Thames Floodplain, MOLA, Crossrail Archaeology Series 8, 2017) This work means that the archaeological record can now be better placed in context to enable a more focused understanding of areas of potential.

### **Roman (43 AD to 409 AD)**

The main activity is associated with the Watling Road corridor with intriguing evidence from Welling that suggests the settlement there may have had its origins in the Late Iron Age. An area of particular interest is where the road crossed the River Cray and the potential for organic material to survive.

In addition to this main focus of Roman archaeology potential, the area of relative high gravel against the open water of the Thames at Erith has produced occupation evidence. A pattern of settlement at such locations can be identified all the way up river to Putney and beyond.

### **Anglo-Saxon (410 AD to 1065 AD) & Medieval (1066 AD to 1539 AD)**

The Area of Kent and the London boroughs of Croydon, Bromley and Bexley have produced archaeological evidence to show that this area of the country was amongst the first to hire and use Germanic Saxons to protect the local population. In effect their appearance could be regarded as itinerant migrant workers. However, it was not long before they began to settle, bringing members of their family across and marrying locals. At this early period, their distinctiveness carried over to having discrete cemeteries away from the resident population. It can therefore be assumed that their settlements at this time were also distinct even if short lived before integration into the local community that itself began to take on the appearance of a Saxon population. Bexley borough has widespread evidence for burials of this period. The main focus is again the Cray Valley but also the higher ground to the east. It is perhaps to this area future study should focus if we are to find their settlements.

Watling Street continues to be a thoroughfare acting as a catalyst for wayside settlements that would have developed as the origin of many of the medieval

settlements. Such settlements would have had a network of farms and small hamlets to manage and tend the fields. Manorial moated sites are sparse in this area of London, but the Scheduled Monument of Howbury Moat near Slade Green is of classic form with the likely main access coming from the River Darrent and Thames.

On the high ground overlooking the extensive marsh in the Thames Valley became the chosen location for the foundation of Lesnes Abbey in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Despite its present day ruinous state, it remains an impressive monument and a significant Scheduled Ancient Monument for the borough.

### **Post medieval (1540 AD to 1900 AD) & Modern (1901 AD to present day)**

As often happened within the vicinity of a royal palace, those with the means would build a house to impress and to obtain or maintain a royal court status. Eltham was such an area with a number of grand estates about. Many of these grand estates have come and gone while the Palladian Danson House is the borough's prime example of this tradition. The survival of the grounds of Danson House serves as a reminder of this former landscape. In time these estates were often sold and with the coming of the railway, became prime sites of urban expansion. Blendon Hall did not fare well with house and grounds being cleared in the twentieth century.

During the Second World War the inner London 'Stop Line' was to the immediate west of the borough (lines of defences to slow/stop any land based Axis advance) while the borough itself saw much activity with sites in the marshes and Hall Place being used as an American listening station as well as key factories operating within the Cray Valley.

The coming of modern industry saw significant areas of the Cray valley being developed and post-war this is extended into the northern marshes. Such development is therefore often in areas of high potential for prehistoric archaeology.

Across London there are many areas undergoing regeneration of traditional urban areas and is reflected by the areas defined for accelerated growth by the London Mayor. Both the northern marshes and the Cray Valley have been identified for rapid change and so offer the potential to better understand the boroughs history and prehistory.





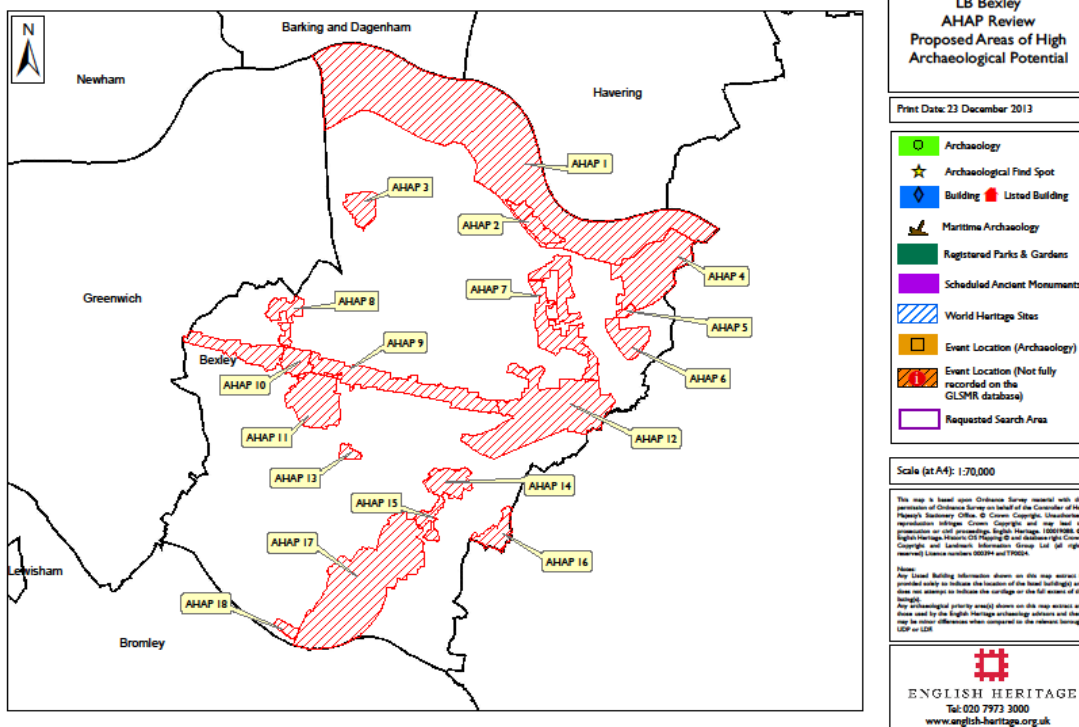
## Adopted Areas of High Archaeological Potential, 2014

The adopted report identified 18 areas within the borough:

Areas of High Archaeological Potential, as adopted 2014			
Area ID		Acres	Hectares
1	Thameside (landside only)	1142.76	462.46
2	Erith	<i>within</i> Thameside AHAP	
3	Lesnes Abbey	72.06	29.16
4	Crayford Marshes and River Darent	313.38	126.82
5	Howbury Moated Manor	13.08	5.30
6	Howbury Grange	87.92	35.58
7	Crayford Brickearths	261.89	105.98
8	East Wickham	71.01	28.74
9	Watling Street	460.00	186.15
10	Roman Welling	<i>within</i> Roman Watling Street AHAP	
11	Danson House	199.77	80.84
12	Crayford	550.26	222.67
13	Blendon Hall	20.44	3.27
14	Old Bexley	89.55	36.24
15	Mount Mascall and Vale Mascall	42.29	17.11
16	Faesten Dic and Cavey's Spring	66.90	27.07
17	River Cray Valley	687.22	278.11
18	Frognal House	21.23	8.61
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4099.76</b>	<b>1659.00</b>

(6056ha = borough\*)

The resultant distribution map showed the Areas of High Archaeological Potential to represent 27.4% of the borough\*.



## Proposed Archaeological Priority Areas, 2019

The proposed amended list identifies 24 areas within the borough as either Tier 1, 2 or 3:

Tiered Archaeological Priority Areas			
Area ID / TIER		Acres	Hectares
18	/ Tier 3	Thamesmead and Erith Marshes	2198.42
19	/ Tier 3	Erith Riverside + Crayford Marsh	706.15
7	/ Tier 2	Erith and Erith Dockyard	161.1
1	/ Tier 1	Erith Sunken Forest	94.39
2	/ Tier 1	Lesnes Abbey & pt of Lesnes & Abbey Woods	71.59
3	/ Tier 1	Abbey Wood Barrow	2.0
6	/ Tier 1	Hall Place	78.06
4	/ Tier 1	Howbury Moated Manor	13.07
8	/ Tier 2	Howbury Grange	87.75
20	/ Tier 3	Crayford Brickearth	252.25
9	/ Tier 2	East Wickham	70.85
10	/ Tier 2	Watling Street	396.13
11	/ Tier 2	Roman Welling	48.63
12	/ Tier 2	Danson House and Park	199.61
21	/ Tier 3	Crayford Valley	373.7
13	/ Tier 2	Crayford: Roman Road	121.85
14	/ Tier 2	Blendon Hall	20.53
15	/ Tier 2	Old Bexley	90
16	/ Tier 2	Mount Mascal & Vale Mascal	42.97
22	/ Tier 3	Cavey's Spring	62.17
5	/ Tier 1	Faesten Dic	5.12
17	/ Tier 2	River Cray Valley and Floodplain	584.43
23	/ Tier 3	Frogna House	21.28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5691.48</b>	<b>2303.26</b>

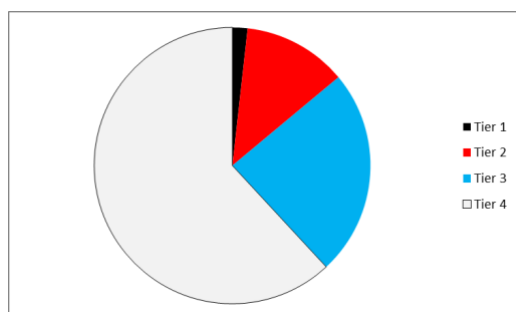
The above Table includes:

6 **Tier 1** areas (black) totalling 106.93 hectares = 2% of the borough

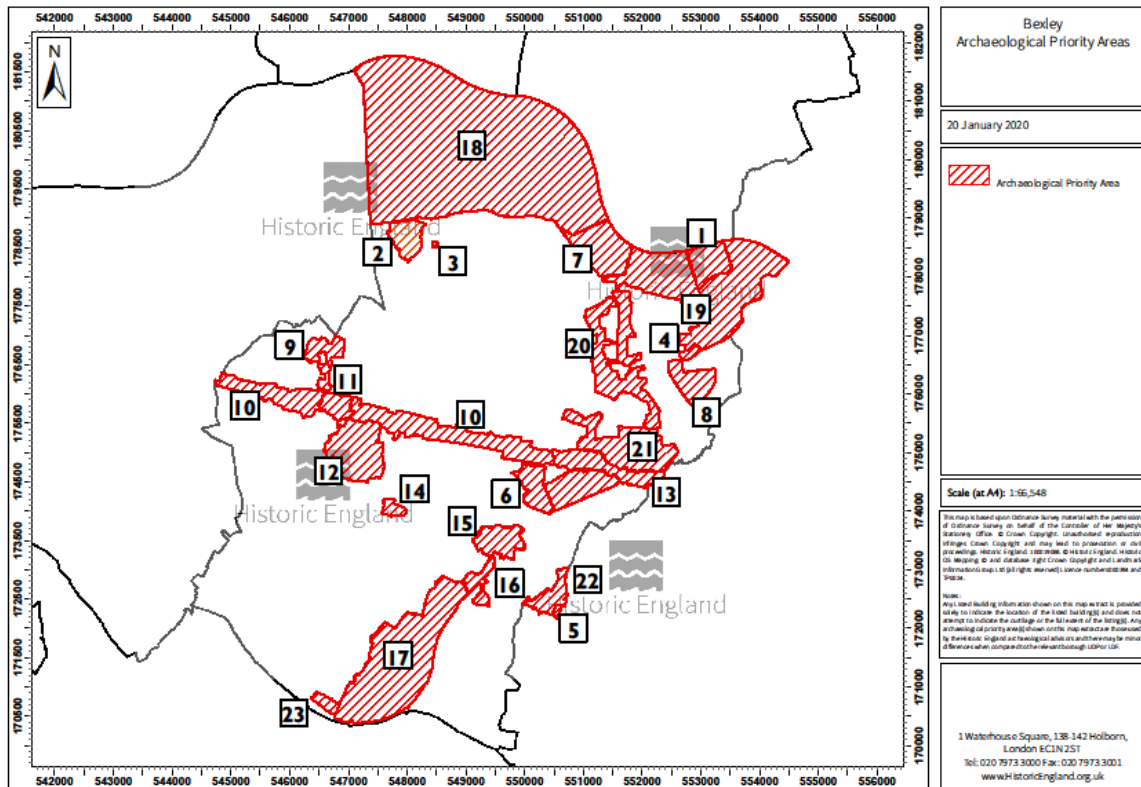
11 **Tier 2** areas (red) totalling 738.08 hectares = 12% of the borough

6 **Tier 3** areas (blue) totalling 1458.25 hectares = 24% of the borough

The remainder of the borough therefore assigned **Tier 4** status = 62% of the borough\*



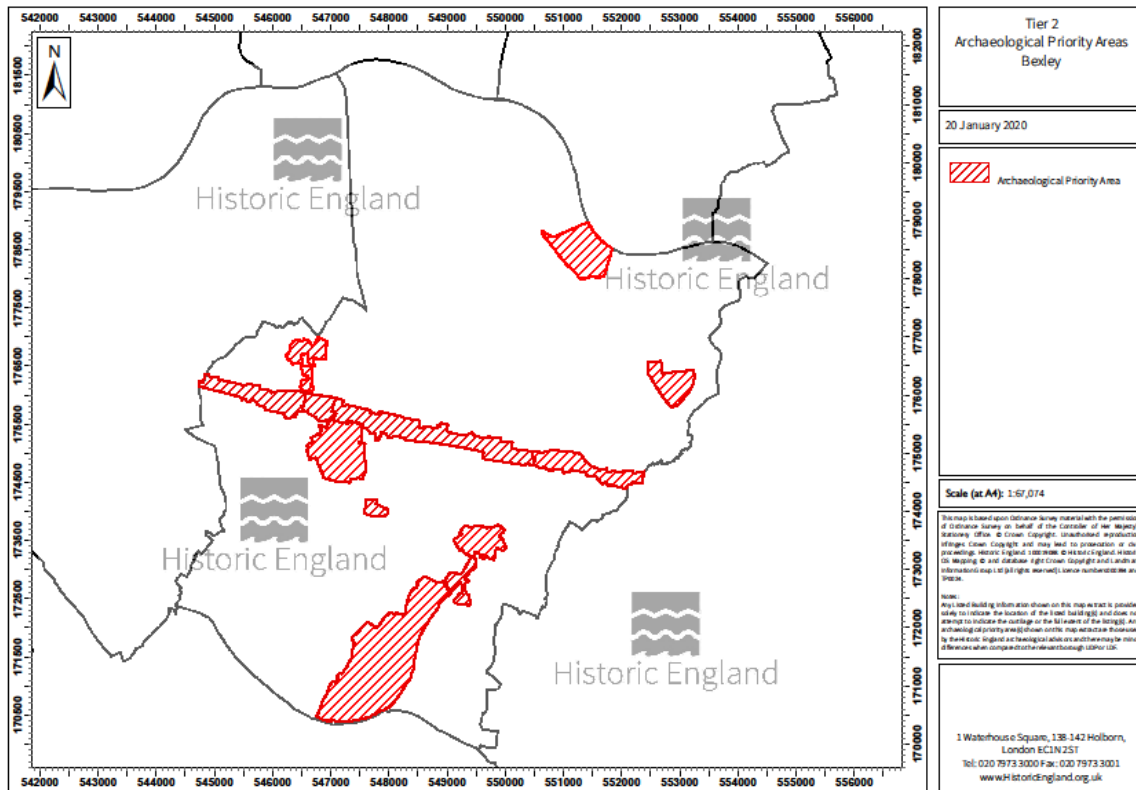
The resultant revised distribution map shows the **Tier 1-3 Archaeological Priority Areas** to represent **37.58%** of the borough\*.



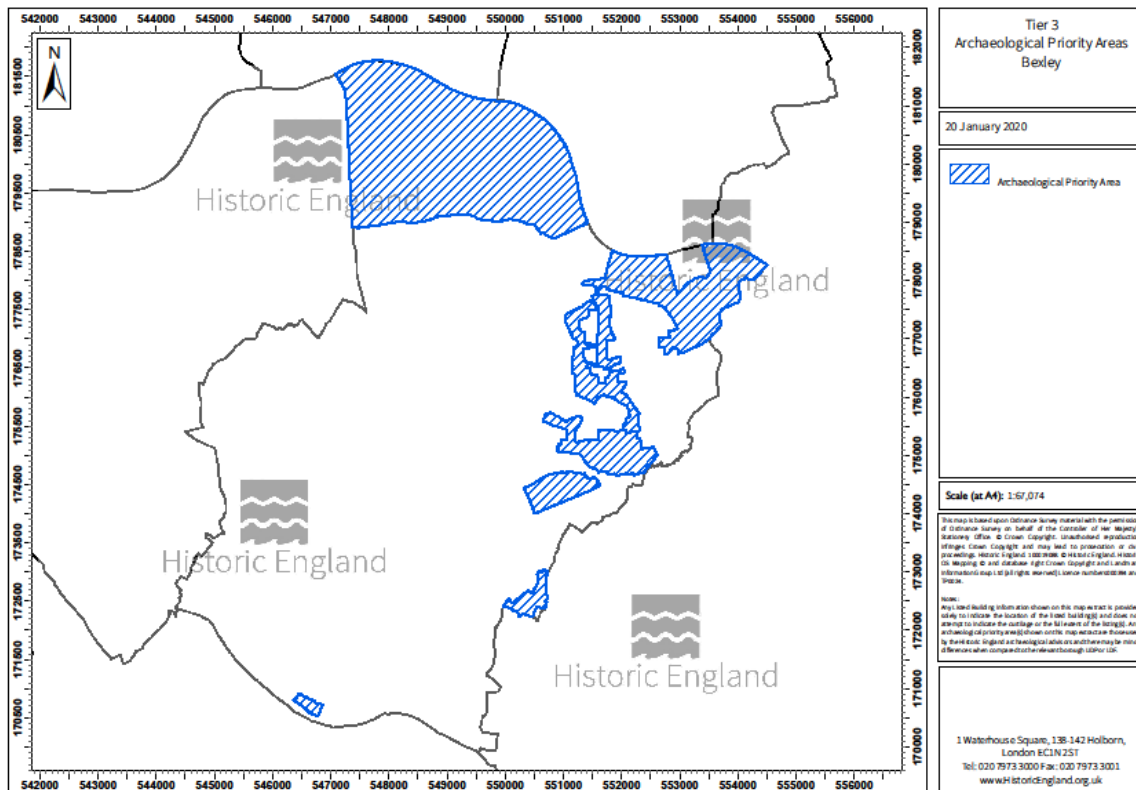
**Proposed Tier 1 Archaeological Priority Areas**



## Proposed Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Areas



## Proposed Tier 3 Archaeological Priority Areas



# Catalogue of Tiered Archaeological Priority Areas

## Area 1:

### Erith Sunken Forest (Tier 1)

1.1 Area 1 is east of historic Erith with prehistoric material, particularly flint tools, have been recovered throughout this area.

1.2 The area was exploited in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages and evidence of human occupation and settlement in these periods is well represented. To the east of the Erith Yacht Club survives a substantial prehistoric forest, with trackways, fishtraps, wattle structures and hurdles evident on the foreshore and eroding out of the peat. Exposed at low tide the former woodland is unique for London and rare nationally being visible at certain tides. Continual erosion means that visible evidence appears and then after a short time will be washed away.

1.3 The site comprises an exposure of two separate levels of peat with preserved trees within them. The upper peat – visible on a moderate low tide comprises mainly stumps of larger trees. The lower peat is only visible and accessible during particularly low tides and thus harder to visit and record. This comprises mainly horizontal trunks of yew trees which are noted for the very tall and straight shape, at odds with the current habit of yew in southern Britain.

1.4 The woodland was first drowned in the Neolithic period before receding water permitted regrowth that in turn also drowned by rising sea level in the Bronze Age. Elsewhere evidence of the latter event can also be seen at depth below modern made ground, land reclaimed for development in areas of the Thamesmead and Erith Marshes.

1.5 The extent of the surviving forest inland and south of the foreshore area under present day ground level is not known. As new evidence becomes available it may become necessary to review the boundary of this APA.

#### Potential significance and research topics

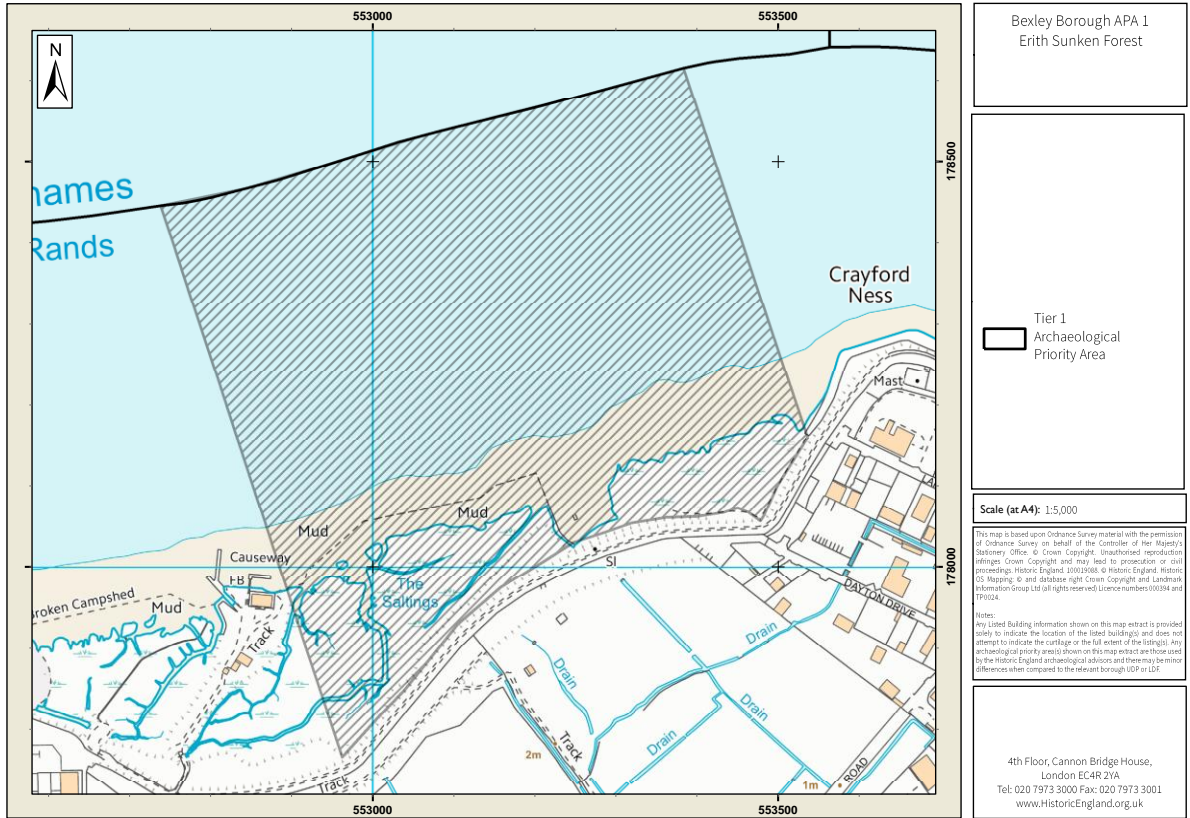
The significance of this area is particularly high for the prehistoric periods.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the nature of the prehistoric landscape and exploitation, including palaeoenvironmental evidence. Where was the prehistoric foreshore? Is there further evidence of working surfaces or occupation areas? How was the environment exploited for human benefit?

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Split area from Thamesmead Erith and Crayford Marsh APA.



## **Area 2:**

### **Lesnes Abbey and part of Lesnes and Abbey Woods (Tier 1)**

2.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is situated within Lesnes Abbey Woods, and extends to the south from Abbey Road. It is concentrated upon the ruins of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Lesnes Abbey and other associated features. Lesnes Abbey ruins are a Scheduled Ancient Monument [1002025], and are also Listed Grade II [1359415].

2.2 The Lesnes Abbey site is situated along what is now one of the most prominent landscape features in the borough, a marked east-west ridge that sharply drops to the low-level marsh land to the Thames. The underlying geology of the area is the Harwich Formation (sand and gravel), and within the woodlands, although outside of the APA, there is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest. This SSSI, known as the Abbey Wood SSSI, demarks a fossil bed from the Eocene epoch (5.5 million years ago), and is particularly known for its mammalian, shell and shark's teeth assemblages. The wider Lesnes Abbey Woods are ancient woodlands, and are designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

2.3 Lesnes Abbey, of St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr, was founded in 1271 by Richard de Luci, Chief Justicar, for the Augustinian canons. The Abbey was situated on land sloping towards the Thames, in a prime physical location with the marshes and water access to the north, grass and heathland for grazing and wooded areas behind. It is thought that river access to the Abbey was possible, as remains of a wharf were found to the south of the remains in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Clearly, there was a navigable channel from this point through the expanse of marsh to the open water of the Thames. The site was extensively excavated between 1909–1913 and then again in the 1950s. More recently, archaeological investigation was undertaken in response to the construction of a new visitor centre, 2014-6. The complex follows the general pattern of a 12<sup>th</sup> century monastery, except that the church is situated to the south of the cloister, rather than the more usual north. This may be due to the sloping geography of the site.

2.4 The remains, some of which stand over 2m tall, include a church, cloister, reredorter, dormitories, kitchens and a brewhouse, infirmary, refectory, chapter house, barns and agricultural buildings and separate Abbots lodging. The Abbey was always beset by financial difficulties, often ascribed to the costs associated with maintaining the river wall and draining the marshland to the north, and was finally dissolved by Cardinal Wolsey in 1524. The Abbots lodge was converted into a mansion house but the remainder of the Abbey was dug over for building material. In 1633 ownership passed to Christ's Hospital and in 1930 to the London County Council and in the guardianship of the Borough Council. The remains of further buildings associated with the Abbey may exist under the present formal gardens to the south.

2.5 Further south of the Abbey ruins, within the woods, are a number of linear banked earthworks which may represent coppicing or landscape management associated with the Abbey. Future study may add to this evidence and help interpret how the abbey utilised the wood.

2.6 Also within Lesnes Abbey Woods, a number of natural deneholes have also been identified.

Potential significance and research topics

This Archaeological Priority Area, containing the Scheduled ruins of a 12<sup>th</sup> century monastic establishment, is of national importance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the Lesnes Abbey complex, including land management such as coppicing, ensuring a constant water supply, fish ponds and works associated with draining the marsh land to the north and the river wall.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.





### Area 3:

#### Abbey Wood Barrow (Tier 1)

3.1 The underlying geology of the area is the Harwich Formation (sand and gravel), and within the woodlands, although outside of the APA, there is a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest. This SSSI, known as the Abbey Wood SSSI, demarks a fossil bed from the Eocene epoch (5.5 million years ago), and is particularly known for its mammalian, shell and shark's teeth assemblages. The wider Lesnes Abbey Woods are ancient woodlands, and are designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

3.2 A probable Bronze Age tumulus, surrounded by a ditch that was first excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be found in the wood and to the east of the main Lesnes & Abbey Wood APA within a localised area of relic gravel. The earthwork has been used as part of an unauthorised biking track. Being crossed repeatedly in two directions it has resulted in deep ruts cutting the earthwork into quarters and with a central dip.

#### Potential significance and research topics

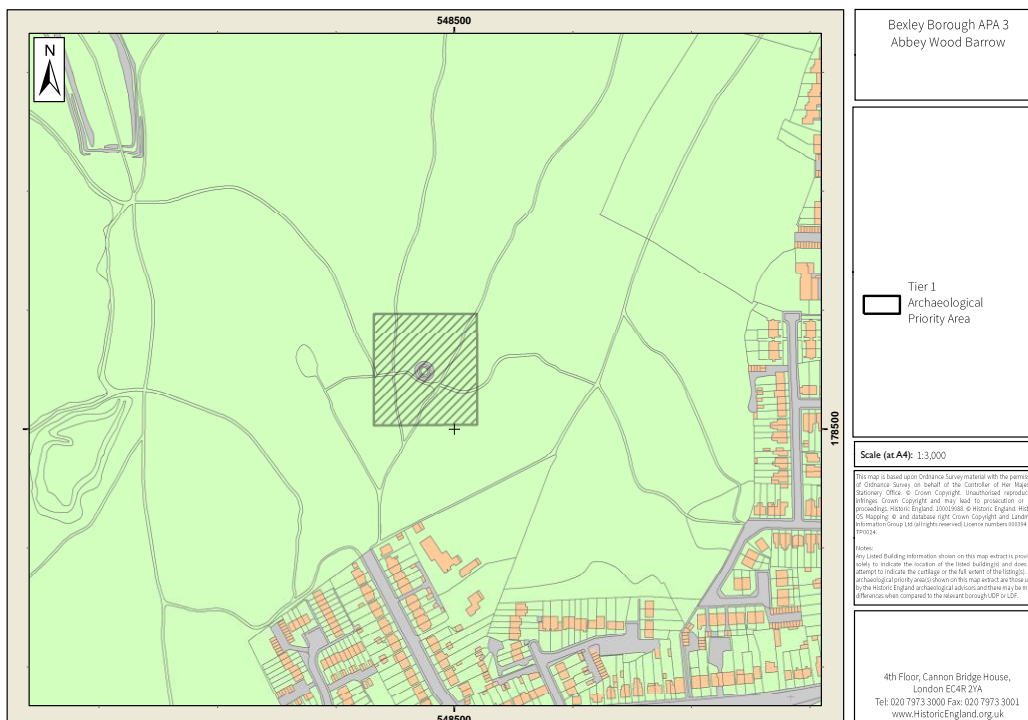
The barrow is a rare example of a prehistoric earthwork within the region. Lidar survey of woodland has potential to add identification of further monuments within this landscape.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the context and prehistoric activity in the area.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Add this as a new APA.



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## Proposed Area 4

### Howbury Moated Manor (Tier 1)

4.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is centred upon the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Howbury Moated Manor, and encompasses several associated and later buildings.

4.2 The APA is situated within the Crayford Marshes and is on low-lying ground, at c.2-3mOD. The drift geology is mixed alluvium and sand, silt and clay, with underlying chalk. Peat deposits indicated areas of water inundation. It is bounded by Moat Lane to the south.

4.3 Although the main archaeological point of interest within this APA is the medieval manor, the Crayford Marshes and River Darent valley have significant prehistoric potential, and remains from the Neolithic and in particular the Bronze Age, have been recorded from the north and south of the APA. A single Palaeolithic flint tool is recorded as being found within the study area. There is an antiquarian reference to a barrow to the north east of the site of the medieval manor which is present on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordnance Survey maps but absent from later editions. The attribution is uncertain.

4.4 The place name 'Hoobury' was first recorded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and derives from the Saxon 'hoo,' meaning a spur of land jutting into water, and 'bury,' which is a mound of earth or embankment surrounded by water.

4.5 The medieval manor dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and consists of a wet moat and ashlar walls surrounding a moat platform. The moat itself is c.7m wide, and the re-vetted walls survive to a similar height. Although the walls have been rebuilt, the lower courses appear to be 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century in construction. The bridge providing access to the platform has long been demolished. Within the walls are the ruins of a 16<sup>th</sup> century house, which remained in use until the 1930s. Adjacent to the manor site is a 17<sup>th</sup> century tithe barn, which is a Grade 2 listed building. The APA also includes a number of locally listed 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, outbuildings and an oast house. The eastern area of the APA includes a potentially modified landscape associated with the manor.

#### Potential significance and research topics

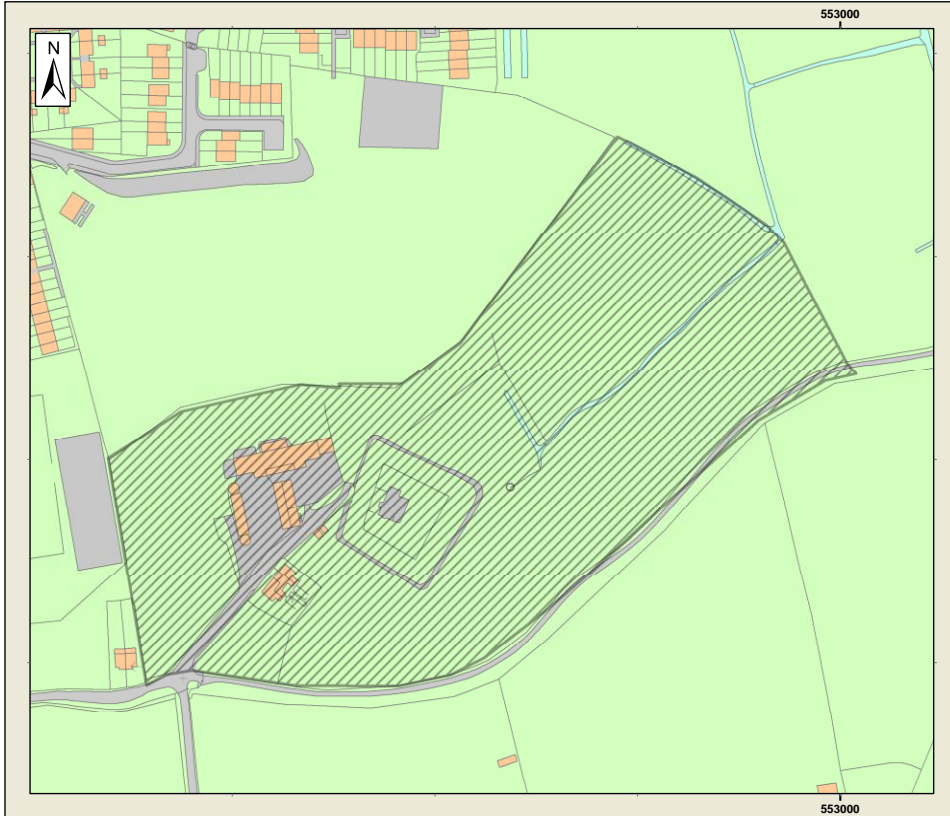
The APA contains the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Howbury Farm, which would be considered of national significance. The prehistoric and other activity is of local significance.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation of the prehistoric potential of the Crayford and Dartford Marshes.
2. Investigation and understanding of the medieval moated manor, including the development of the later farm and associated activities.

#### Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



Bexley Borough APA 4  
Howbury Moated Manor

Tier 1  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:2,000

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## Proposed Area 5

### Faesten Dic (Tier 1)

5.1 This Archaeological Priority Area captures the extreme northern end of a substantial earthwork known as Faesten Dic. This Scheduled Ancient Monument runs for c.1.7km through Kent, and survives as an impressive series of zig-zagged ditch and banks. The dyke dates to the Anglo-Saxon period, and is thought to have been constructed between the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when documentary evidence shows there was repeated tribal warfare in the area. It is mentioned in a survey of AD 814. Several other earthworks, which may be of a similar date, can be seen on the Kent boundary.

#### Potential significance and research topics

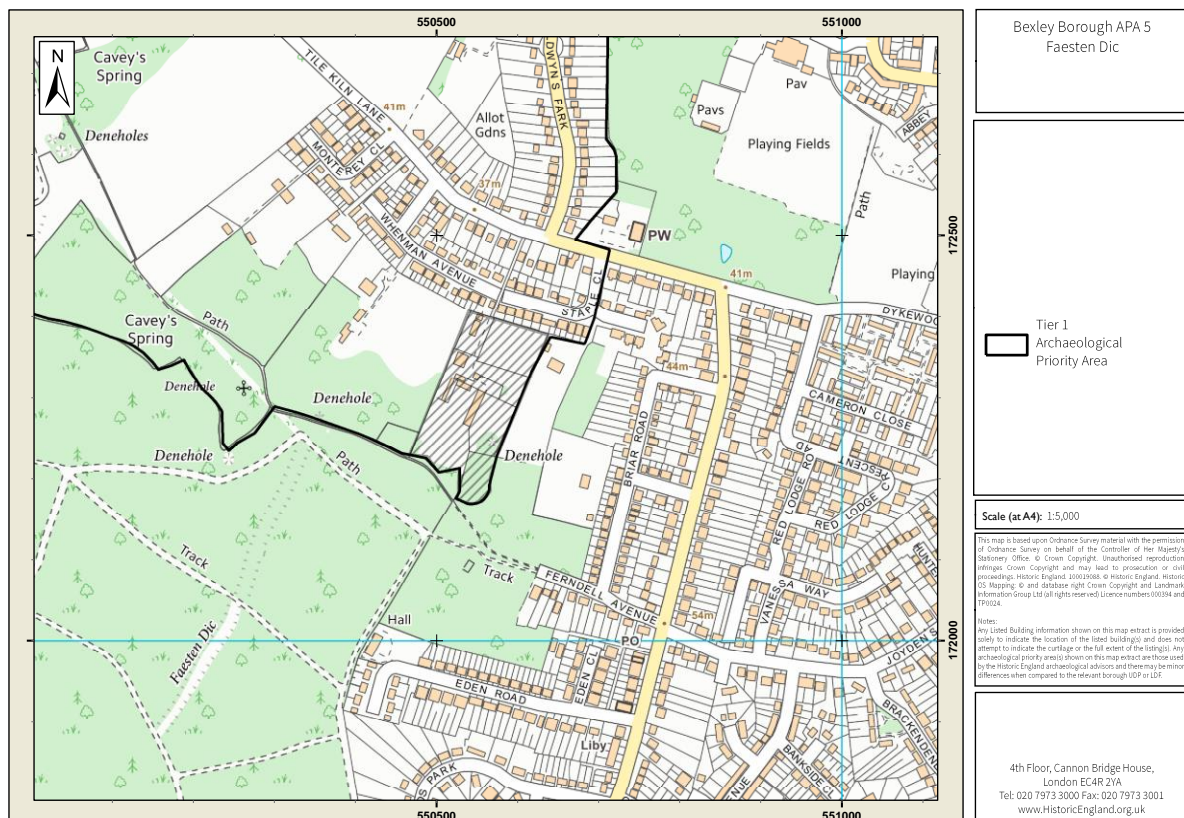
Any related discoveries have the potential to be of national importance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the nature of Faesten Dic and any other earthworks or landscape features. Are there any features associated with the Dic?

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Propose to create a distinct area from that of Cavey's Spring, covering the monument and its immediate setting.





## Proposed Area 6

### Hall Place (Tier 1)

6.1 There are a number of medieval manors in the Crayford area, including the 14<sup>th</sup> century Crayford Manor House to the northwest of St Paulinus'. Better known is Hall Place, which is first mentioned in the 13<sup>th</sup> century but the manor was established earlier. Walls of a late medieval date were observed during archaeological works in 2007-8, which probably relate to this building. Hall Place itself is a part-Tudor, part-Jacobean country manor house, with extensive gardens and landscaped grounds. Hall Place is Grade I Listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (L105) set within an estate of 65 ha that is Grade II Registered Park and Garden (1157).

6.2 The first reference to Hall Place is 13<sup>th</sup> century belonging to the At-Hall family. A new house was built by a Thomas Shelley that was later sold to John Champneys. This family were part of an emerging gentry class and closely aligned themselves with the monarchy. John, a wealthy merchant and four times Master of the Skinners Company, was knighted by Henry VIII.

6.3 Fresh development at Hall Place occurred under Sir John with the construction of a main hall with flanking wings. The east wing housed the buttery and kitchen with staff quarters above while the west wing contained the parlour and chapel with family accommodation above.

6.4 Sir John's son, Justinian, extended the wings by adding a bay window. It was Justinian's son, Richard, who sold the house to Sir Robert Austen in 1649, who became 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet Austen of Bexley in 1660 by Charles II. Under the new owner the house was again extended and with the use of brick. An internal staircase tower was added with a bell. The kitchen was moved to the southwest corner of the new build.

6.5 The earliest surviving map of the area shows the house plus stables, barn and mill in 1768.

6.6 By inheritance the estate passed to Sir Francis Dashwood in 1772. It was not until his grandson, Maitland Dashwood, that the property was 'modernised'.

6.7 American soldiers were stationed at Hall Place during WWII as part of code breaking Operation Ultra, with the code-name Santa Fe. Their reports would be passed onto Bletchley Park and so was an integral part of the events that has been said to have shortened the war by a year or more.

6.8 Major restoration work was undertaken when Bexley Libraries and Museum Service took on the house in 1968.

Potential significance and research topics

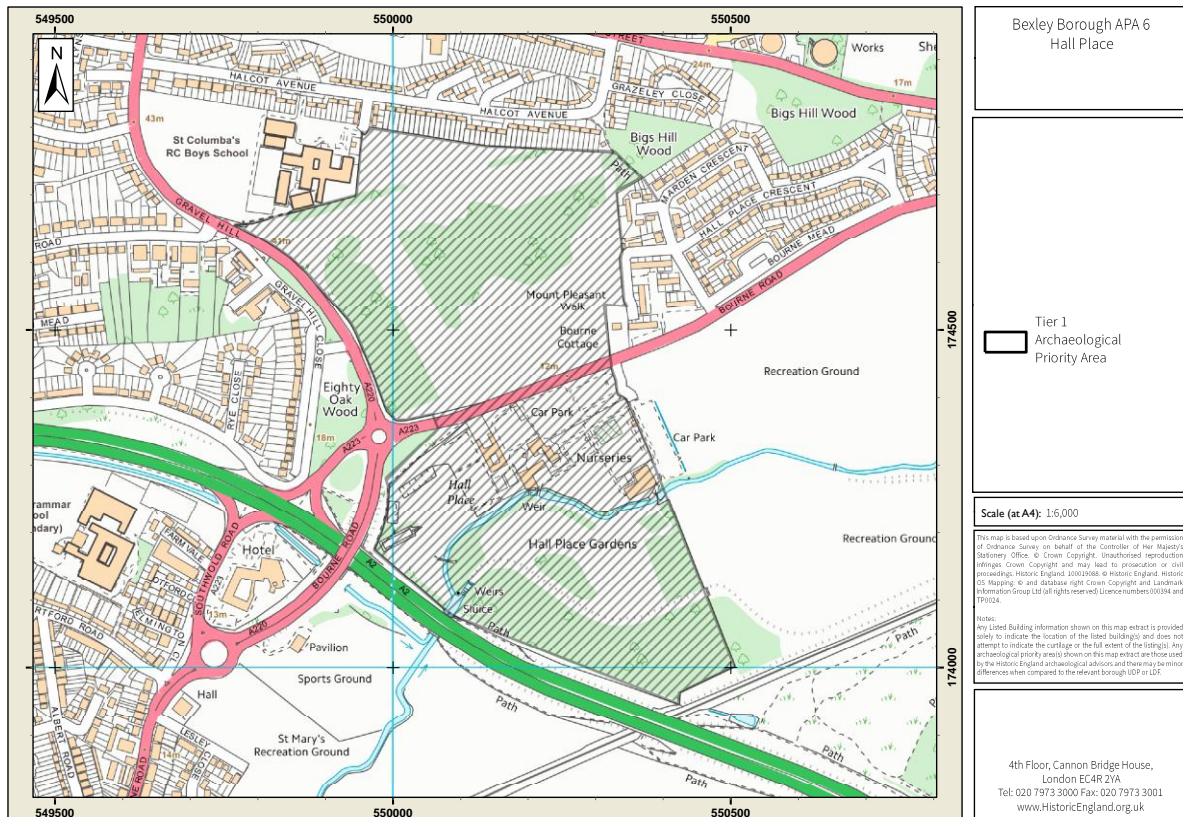
Any related discoveries have the potential to be of national importance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the history and origins of Hall Place and any other garden landscape features.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Propose to create a distinct area from that of Crayford Valley APA.





## **Area 7:**

### **Erith and Erith Dockyard (Tier 2)**

#### Erith

7.1 This Area is concentrated on the medieval and early post-medieval settlement at Erith, and includes land around St John the Baptist Church at the far north-west of the area through to Bexley Road and Wharfside Road in the east.

7.2 The topography of the Erith area is characterised by marshland, situated between the Thames and the Cray, and it sits at around 5mOD. The medieval settlement is situated at the very end of the high gravel ridge running from east to west across the area, connecting the settlement with Lesnes Abbey. The 1769 Andrews, Dury and Herbert map clearly shows Erith placed at the eastern end of this natural land form. Erith has always had a close relationship with the Thames, as a small waterside village through to royal dockyard and later anchorage.

7.3 Along the foreshore towards the west end of the APA have been recorded a number of prehistoric objects that indicate the potential of the foreshore and immediate area to produce Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age archaeology. There is increasing evidence for Roman occupation of the Erith area, although within the Erith APA this is presently restricted to stray finds or antiquarian observations rather than archaeological excavations. This includes reports of a quantity of Iron Age and Roman coins found on Erith High Street, and a number of other bronze and pottery objects from the immediate area. It has also been suggested that there may be Roman tile within the fabric or foundations of St John the Baptist church.

7.4 All along the Thames, wherever there is a gravel high against the open water, evidence of Roman occupation has been found. Erith is therefore no exception.

7.5 The place name 'Erith' is first recorded in a charter of AD 695, and it is mentioned again in the Domesday Book. In 1316, Erith was granted a weekly market.

7.6 The nave, chancel and west tower of the Grade 2\* listed church of St John the Baptist date to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although there may be some earlier elements. The church was altered and expanded throughout the medieval period, and heavily restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a 13<sup>th</sup> century occupation event and medieval oak buildings along West Street, and the predecessor of the Cross Keys public house, on the High Street, dates to the 1590s.

7.7 More recently, works in advance of the construction of Bronze Age Way, have revealed substantial medieval masonry remains, in the area now bounded by Bronze Age Way, Jessett Close and West Street. The remains, which may date to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, consist of a substantial and high status building of flint, chalk and dressed sandstone, in part underpinned with timber sleeper-plates providing foundation support in the marshy ground. A further wall was recorded to the north-west, which may be part of the same building or complex. These remains have been preserved in situ beneath the new road.

7.8 Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the river remained the focus of industry and growth, with numerous wharves, docks and yards along the Thames frontage.

Potential significance and research topics

Erith has a high potential for multi-period occupation (prehistoric finds are discussed in the character description for Area 1 – Thamesmead and Erith Marshes). Of particular significance is the medieval settlement.

Potential research topics include:

- 1 Further define the medieval or earlier settlement of Erith. How does this relate with Lesnes Abbey?
- 2 Trace the movement of the settlement from the area surrounding St John the Baptist church in the west to the eastern boundary of the APA.

### Dockyard

7.9 Situated at the eastern end of West Street, a Royal Dockyard was established in 1512, contemporary with those at Deptford and Woolwich. The most famous ship to have been fitted out in Erith was the warship the Henri Grace A Dieu, but the dockyards themselves did not continue past the Tudor period. A contemporary storehouse survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

7.10 The early closure of the dockyard has meant that there is not the same level of documentation available for study as there is for Woolwich or Deptford. The frustration is that there are no known maps, plans or sketches of the dockyard to enable an accurate location to be determined within the modern landscape. However, an area at the east end of West Street and north of Erith High Street is a likely location. Given that any evidence of the former Royal Dockyard would be highly significant, this area would therefore then merit consideration as being potentially of national importance and a discrete area being defined as a Tier 1 APA.

Potential significance and research topics

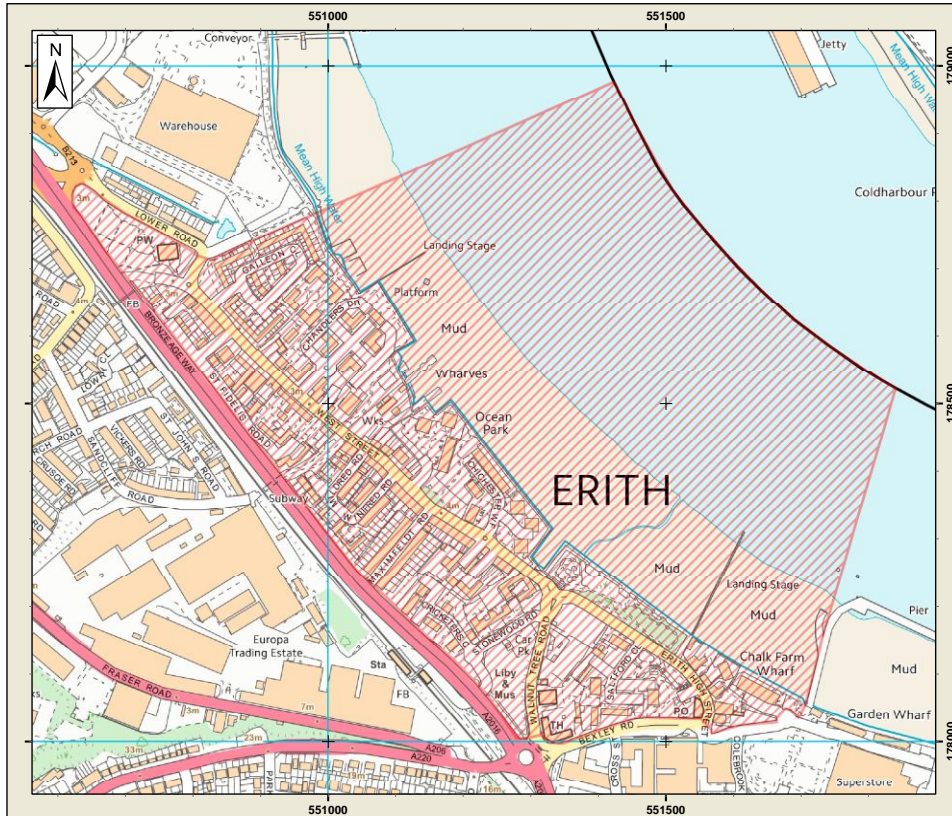
The Royal Dockyard.

Potential research topics include:

- 1 Investigate and understand the Royal Dockyards and associated activity.
- 2 Close study of the foreshore may help identify location of dockyard.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. If evidence becomes available to demonstrate the boundary to the former dockyard, then this area would need be split from the Erith APA and re-graded as Tier 1.



Bexley Borough APA 7  
Erith and Erith Dockyard

Tier 2  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:6,000

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## **Proposed Area 8**

### **Howbury Grange (Tier 2)**

8.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is situated within the Crayford Marsh, to the west of the River Darent. The underlying geology is chalk, overlain with gravel and alluvial deposits. Possible palaeochannels have been recorded from the area as well as discreet peat deposits, suggesting that this was a dynamic area that had times of flooding. The archaeological potential may be highest along the margins of the prehistoric marshes, where the higher ground enabled an easier exploitation of the marsh environment for food and building material. The APA lies at between c.3–12mOD, with the land immediately surrounding the Grange at a plateau of c.12mOD. The APA is mapped to avoid previous quarries and areas of clay and gravel extraction and subsequent landfill.

8.2 The area retains a high potential for archaeological remains from the prehistoric periods. To the immediate north of the APA, at Howbury Park, excavations in advance of the construction of a barrow pit in 1994 recovered a scatter of both heat-discoloured and crazed and possible worked flints, including an awl and a scrapper dated to the Mesolithic period. Evidence for activity in Neolithic and Bronze Ages is well attested to in the area surrounding the APA, and within the boundary a possible Bronze Age enclosure was recorded in 1885 to the south of Howbury Grange, although this is no longer visible. Iron Age activity is also well known, including a cremation cemetery c.700m to the south east, south of the A206 in Kent.

8.3 Some Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery and ceramic building material has been recovered from within the APA, but this may be associated with agricultural activity.

#### Potential significance and research topics

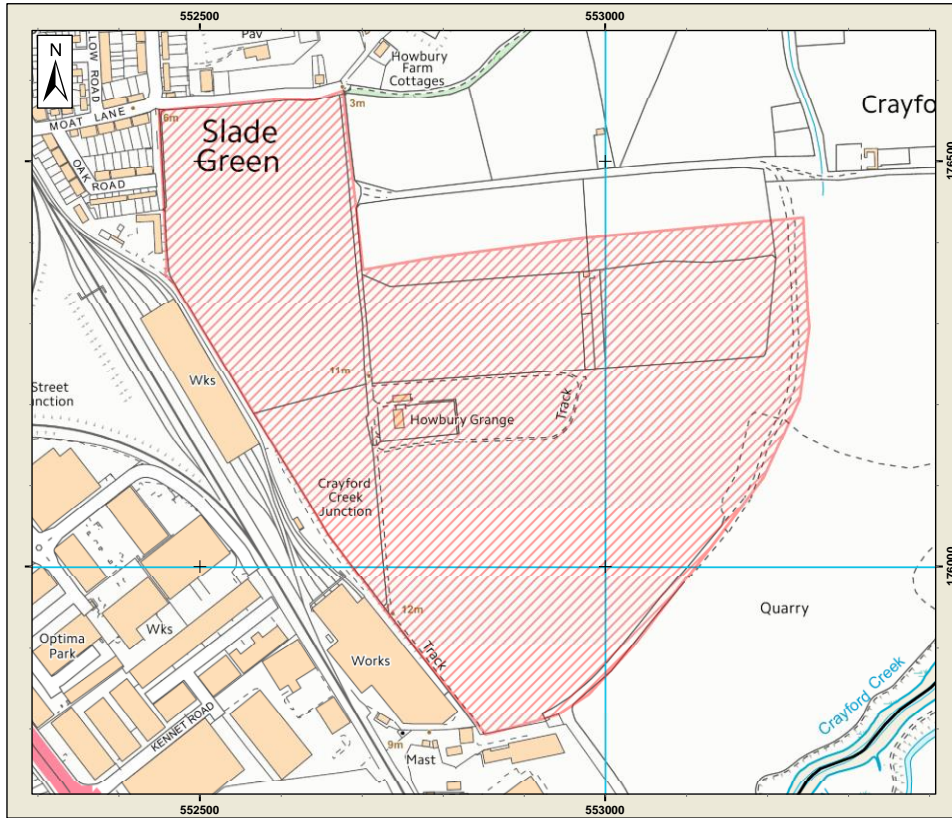
This APA retains the potential for multi-period archaeological sites, particularly of the prehistoric periods. Settlement sites and evidence of land exploitation and management would be of local to regional significance.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Investigation and understanding of the prehistoric activity in the area, including study of the palaeoenvironmental potential of any peat layers and also of the general alluvial and sedimentary deposits.
2. Identification of the possible Bronze Age enclosure south of Howbury Grange

#### Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



Bexley Borough APA 8  
Howbury Grange

Tier 2  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:5,000

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## **Proposed Area 9**

### **East Wickham (Tier 2)**

9.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is focussed around the medieval and later village of East Wickham, which was, until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, within the parish of Plumstead. The APA is concentrated along Upper Wickham Lane and Wickham Street, and includes at its north end the land surrounding St Michael's Old Church. The geology is of the Harwich Formation, and the area is c.50mOD.

9.2 There is limited evidence for settlement in the area prior to the medieval period. Neolithic axes have been recovered from Wickham Street and near Totnes Road to the north. There is also an antiquarian reference to mammoth bones being found in 'making excavations at East Wickham,' although the exact location and nature of these finds are unknown.

9.3 East Wickham is included in the Domesday Book as being part of the return for the manor of Plumstead, and is one of the earliest settlements in the area. St Michael's church, which is the earliest standing building in the area, dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was originally a chapel of ease associated with St Nicholas' Plumstead. The church is a small, single-cell building of flint, brick and rubble, with an associated graveyard, and is listed Grade II\*. It functioned as the parish church until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the new church, also dedicated to St Michael, was built to the southeast. The building became a Greek Orthodox church in the late 1960s. Alas the grave stones were moved in the 1970s. Some of the fixtures and fittings from the medieval church were relocated to the new building.

9.4 Documentary records suggest that the 15<sup>th</sup> century manor house was situated to the southeast of the old church. This can be seen in the 1769 Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of Kent. The manor house was pulled down in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it is thought that its foundations were in part uncovered when the new church was built in the 1930s. East Wickham Farmhouse (listed Grade 2), on Wickham Street, is likely of 15<sup>th</sup> century date and probably originated as a timber framed medieval hallhouse, although it has since been altered. East Wickham house, near the junction of Wickham Street and Darenth Road, was built by Thomas Jones Esq, comptroller of the laboratory at Woolwich, in the mid-1700s, and became the modern seat of the manor.

9.5 Mid-18<sup>th</sup> century maps of East Wickham show that the village was considerably larger than nearby Welling. A school was bequeathed in 1727, situated on Upper Wickham Lane.

#### Potential significance and research topics

The medieval settlement at East Wickham would be of certain local significance, and possibly regional. Little archaeological investigation has been carried out within the APA.

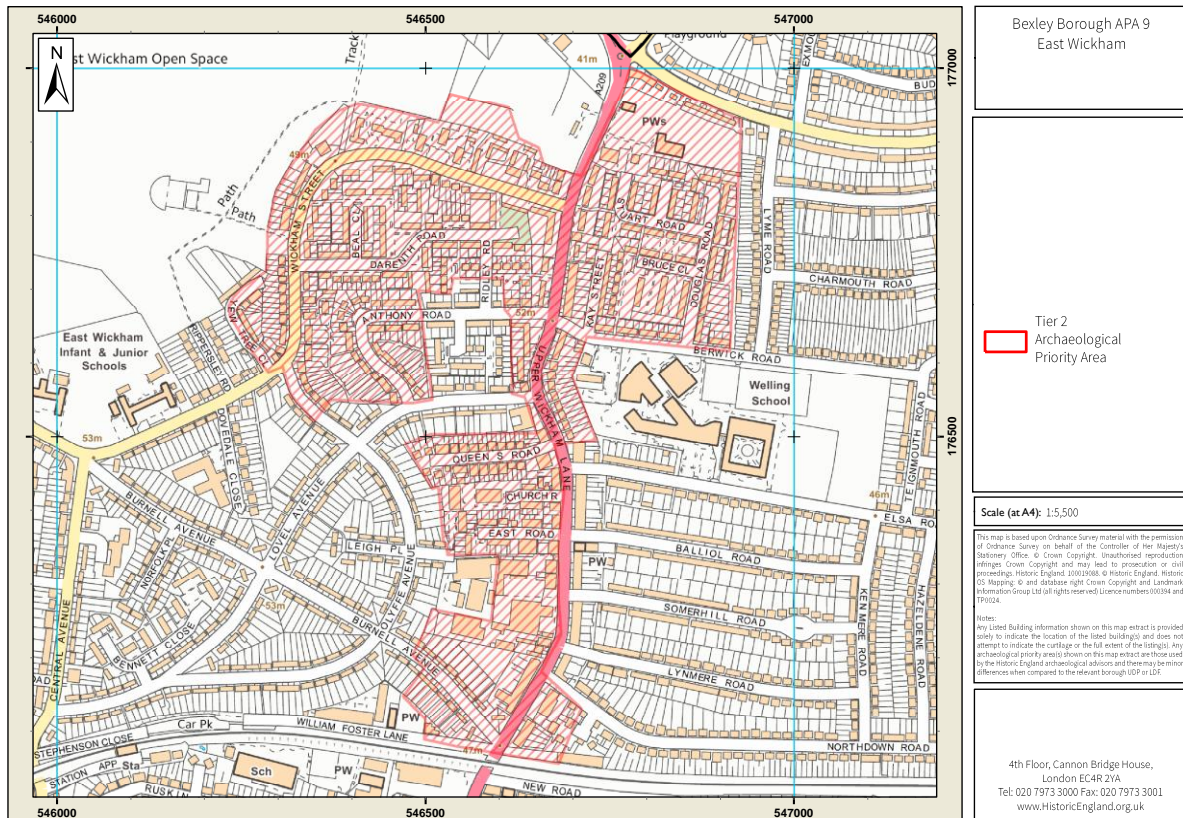
Possible research topics include:

1. Investigation and understanding of the prehistoric finds in the area. Are these associated with features or occupation areas, or are they stray finds?

2. Investigation and understanding of the medieval settlement of East Wickham, including the location of the early manor and associated buildings, the development of the village and the relationship with Welling and other nearby settlements.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.





## Proposed Area 10

### Watling Street (Tier 2)

10.1 This Archaeological Priority Area follows the route of the Roman Watling Street (now the A207) from Shooters Hill to Dover. It slopes from high ground in the west to Crayford and the Cray Valley in the east, from c. 65 to 25mOD. The road lies on a natural ridge and the underlying geology is the Harwich Formation, a mixture of varying silts, clay and gravel.

10.2 There is a small scattering of prehistoric material recovered from within the APA. This includes two pits of Late Bronze Age date containing domestic pottery found on Churchfield Road and a further two pits of a similar date on Welling High Street, east of Embassy Court. This may reflect the earlier date of the road, as a trackway or route, prior to its formalisation in the Roman period.

10.3 The route of Watling Street was formalised in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and was the main route from Dover to St Albans and further north. There are often settlements and other roadside activity associated with Roman roads. Welling is the focus of Roman settlement along Watling Street. This is fully described as APA 10.

10.4 Although Welling is first mentioned in 1362, the settlement remained very small. The Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of 1769 shows the village only consisting of a few buildings on either side of the Roman road, surrounded by farms, open heath land and fields. Welling appears to be a typical roadside settlement, with a few coaching inns servicing the passing trade, and some houses and cottages fronting the road with gardens behind. It was not until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that the area saw significant growth following the introduction of the railway and increased market gardening activity. Some of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century coaching inns still survive. To the east, the growth of Bexleyheath along the roadside was also of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. The southern extent of the Danson House estate reaches Watling Street, lying between Welling and Bexleyheath.

#### Potential significance and research topics

Watling Street is of certain regional, and perhaps national, importance. It was a major transport link in the Roman period, running from Dover to the north. Roman Welling is of regional importance, and is described in detail as APA 10. The growth of later settlements along the route of the road – which remained important as a thoroughfare for pilgrims en route to and from Canterbury – would be considered of local significance.

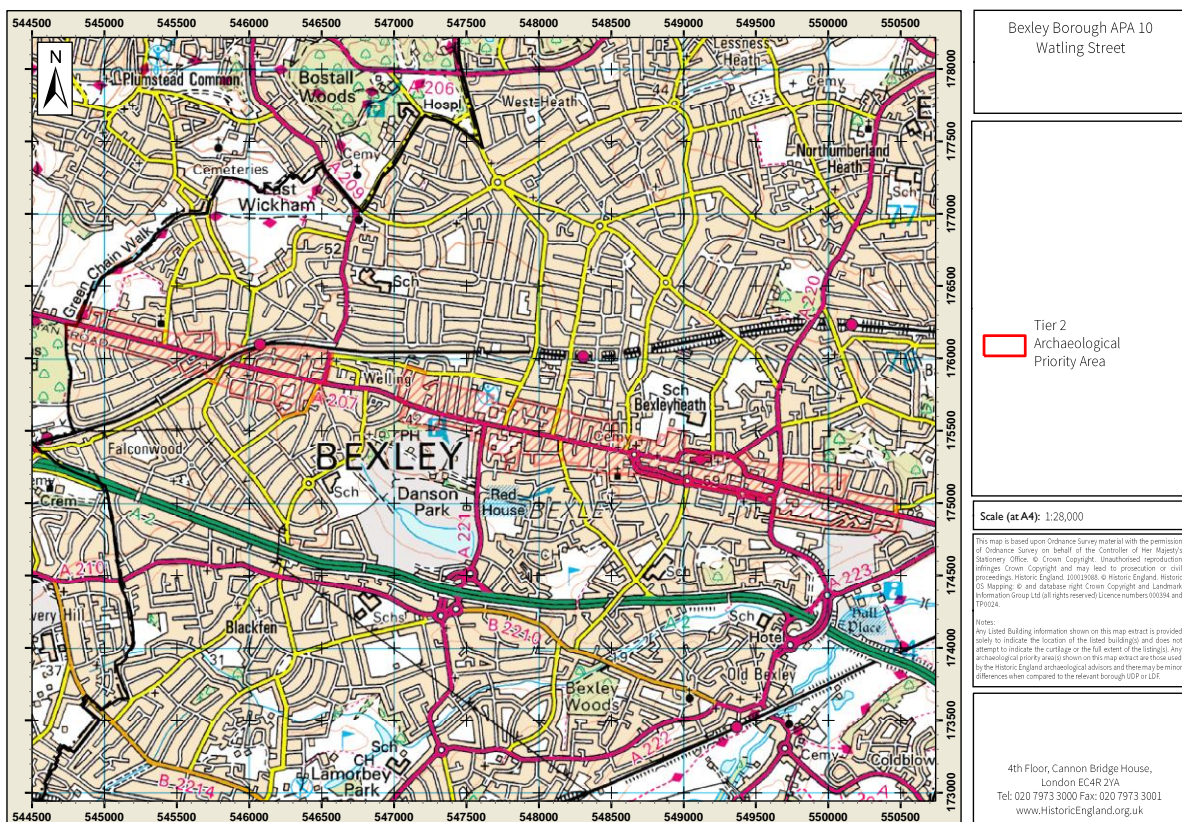
Possible research topics include:

1. Investigation and understanding of any pre-Roman activity associated with an earlier trackway or route. Can a definite antecedent to Watling Street be identified?
2. Further investigation and understanding of Roman Watling Street. Can the road or associated roadside ditches be identified in excavation, and if so, what is its nature – agricultural, industrial and/or settlement? Can the route of Roman Watling Street be better defined? Are there any deviations in the route, and if so, why?

3. Further investigation and understanding of later activity associated with the road, including roadside coaching inns catering to the passing trade, and the growth of the settlements of Welling and Bexleyheath.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- The existing APA to be divided into Watling Street and Roman Welling APAs.



## **Proposed Area 11**

### **Roman Welling (Tier 2)**

11.1 Watling Street, which dates to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, is the major archaeological feature in the borough, and there is now clear evidence of an associated roadside settlement in the Welling area.

11.2 The most intensive area of Roman activity appears to be situated between the junctions of Welling High Street and Upper Wickham Road in the east, down to the Welling Sports Ground, to the junctions of the High Street and Warwick Road in the west. This includes a number of small cremation burial groups that surround the occupation area, such as a group of three urned cremations found at 8 Welling High Street, and a cluster of five burials excavated by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Group, near to the of the high street and Roseacre Road.

11.3 Recent excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Embassy Court have revealed the most comprehensive evidence of the Roman settlement to date. Preliminary reports from the excavation suggest east-west running road side ditches, a possible well, and evidence for post and beam constructed road side buildings and associated pits, filled with domestic pottery. The site was bisected north-south by a substantial ditch, and to the east of this ditch were at least six cremation burials, including burial urns and other votive offerings. All of the Roman material in the area appears to date to early in the period, from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. The full extent and nature of the settlement is not as yet known.

Potential significance and research topics

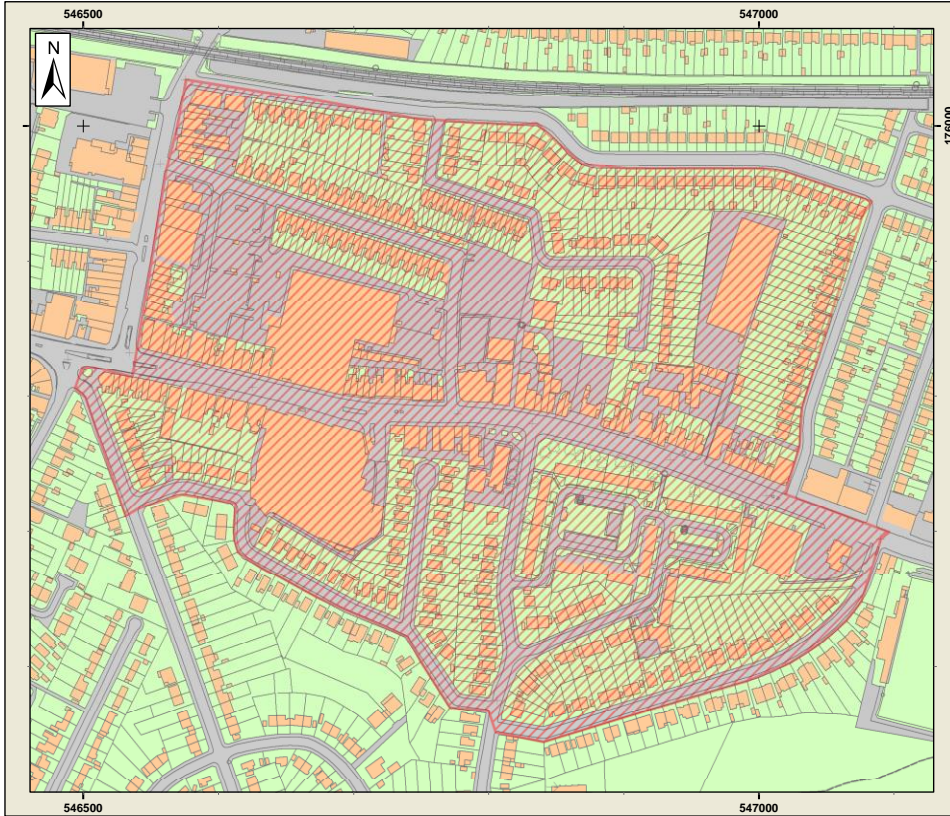
The Roman settlement at Welling is considered to be of regional significance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the Roman settlement, including its boundaries, period of use/disuse and nature. Is there any evidence for activities related directly to the Roman road? What is the relationship between the scattered cremation burials and the settlement?
2. Further investigation and understanding of the post-medieval development of the roadside settlement at Welling. How did trade and transport affect the growth of the area and settlement patterns?

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Propose reduction of the area by moving the southern boundary north. The proposed change takes into account that the higher ground along which the road and settlement are located, significantly drops away to the south.



Bexley Borough APA 11  
Roman Welling

Tier 2  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:3,000

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## Proposed Area 12

### Danson House and Park (Tier 2)

12.1 The focal point of this APA is the 18<sup>th</sup> century Danson House and associated gardens and parkland. The Palladian style house, designed by Sir Robert Taylor from 1763 – 1768, is listed Grade 1, the adjacent stables, possibly by Charles Dance the Younger are Grade 2, and the park, likely by Nathaniel Richmond, is a Registered Park and Garden [1000211].

12.2 There is little evidence from early use or activity within Danson Park. Two coins dating to the Roman period are allegedly from within the estate, but this attribution is uncertain.

12.3 The estate 'Densynton' is first mentioned in documents dating to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the estate was dramatically expanded, and an estate map of 1684 shows the house situated south of the present villa, at the eastern end of what is now the lake. There is a walled garden around the house, and already a long ornamental canal extending to the west. The early – mid 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a great deal of significant landscape changes, including ponds, springs and fishponds, ornamental buildings (such as an oriental style house, an ice house and temple), and the rerouting of the public road from Danson to Blendon further away from the house.

12.4 This manor was demolished in 1762 when the then owner, Sir John Boyd, built a new villa, called Danson Hill, slightly to the north. The reconfiguring of the grounds and parkland were begun in 1770, and consisted of a much idealised landscape, including naturalised water features such as interlocking serpentine lakes, within an open setting.

12.5 A number of alterations were made by numerous owners throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century; eventually the house and park was bought by Bexley Council in 1923 who adapted the house as a museum. In 1995 the site was taken over by English Heritage, who undertook a major restoration programme, and in 2005 ownership passed to the Bexley Heritage Trust.

#### Potential significance and research topics

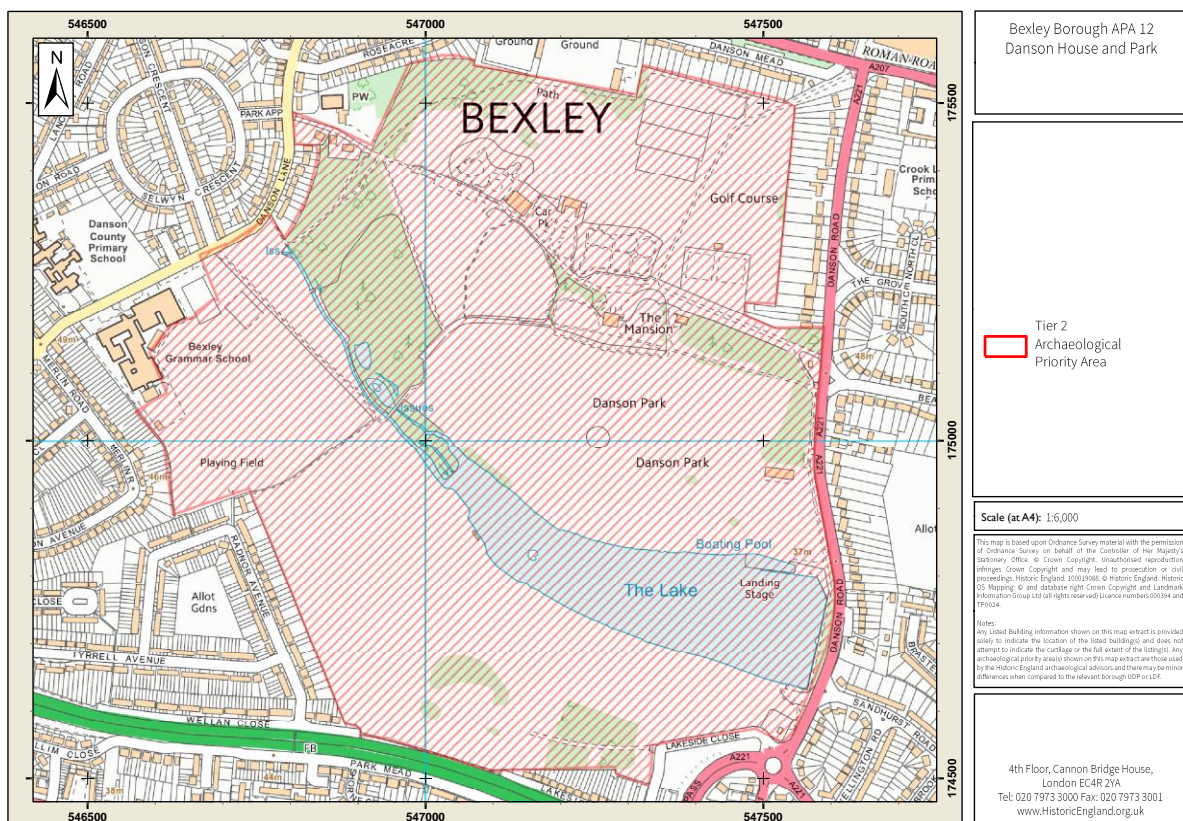
Danson House and park are of considerable historic importance, evidenced by inclusion in the statutory list and register of historic parks and gardens. The estate has the potential to inform on the nature of 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural and landscape trends and management. The house marks one of several 18<sup>th</sup> century estates in the Bexley area, although it is certainly the most grand of the surviving buildings.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the pre-18<sup>th</sup> century history and development of the Danson estate. Is there concrete evidence for occupation in the prehistoric or Roman periods? Is there any evidence for activity or buildings associated with the medieval and early post-medieval manor house?
2. Further investigation and understanding of the 1760s villa and estate.
3. Further investigation and understanding of the 1770s landscaped parkland.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



## **Proposed Area 13**

### **Crayford: Roman Road (Tier2)**

13.1 The Archaeological Priority Area crosses the Cray Valley, a corridor that defines the route of the former Roman road and a small settlement that formed where it crossed the river.

13.2 Watling Street runs straight through the area except for a slight bend where it alters course to ford the Cray. The settlement of Crayford has been mooted as the site of Roman Noviomagnus (new market), mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary as being on the road from London to Canterbury. A number of cremation burials and inhumations have been found in the area, and the foundations of buildings found at the Crayford Industrial Estate, with associated building material, pottery and other finds. To the west of the fording point, in the Crayford Recreation Grounds, a possible villa was excavated in the late 1950s. This included chalk building foundations, flue tiles, wall plaster, coins and other metalwork.

13.3 Crayford is first mentioned in historical sources in the 9th century with reference a conflict between the Britons and Jutes at the Battle of Creganford in AD457. The Domesday Survey records that the settlement had a church, and a number of villagers and smallholders. St Paulinus' Church was built in c.1100, but may have an earlier foundation.

Potential significance and research topics

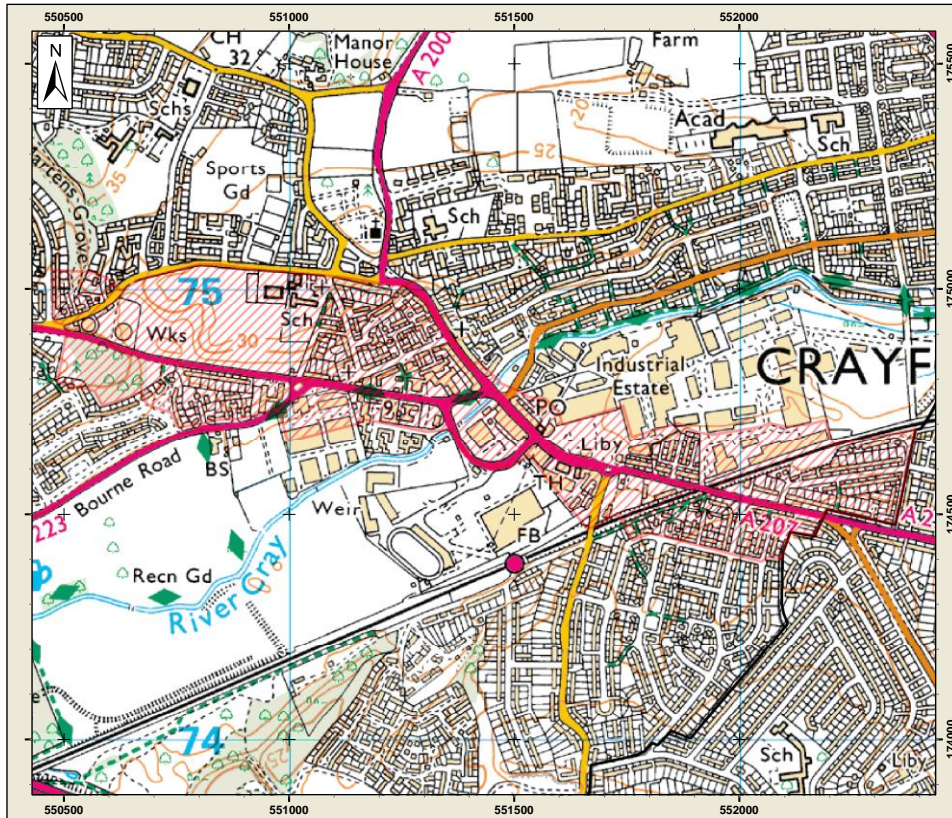
The Roman settlement and early medieval village are of local to local-regional significance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the Iron Age settlements in the area as well as the Roman road and associated activity, including investigation of possible villa sites.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Propose to split the former AHAP into this APA and Crayford Valley APA.



Bexley Borough APA 13  
Crayford: Roman Road

Tier 2  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:9,000

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## **Proposed Area 14**

### **Blendon Hall (Tier 2)**

14.1 This Area of Potential Archaeology is designated around the estate of Blendon Hall and its gardens and landscaped ground. The APA ranges from c.30–35mOD and is situated on the Harwich Formation.

14.2 The earliest archaeological remains recovered from within the APA are a small group of Roman cremation burials, found in the area of Beechway. These four urns were found in 1811 during works on the estate, and are recorded as being between 2–3 feet below the ground surface. The largest of the four urns contained cremated remains.

14.3 The medieval manor house of Blendon is first mentioned in 1301, and was likely a timber framed hall-house, probably situated to the south of Blendon Road. In 1662 it was assessed as having 13 hearths, which is a considerable size.

14.4 The new Blendon Hall was built for Lady Mary Scott in 1763; it is uncertain if this was on the same location of the medieval house. This was a three-storied building with a canted bay on either side of the ground floor. A map of the estate produced in 1783 shows a typical Georgian pitched roof, which, by 1815 had been replaced by a crenelated, Gothic style roof. Major alterations to the estate lands were also carried out in 1815/6, by the renowned landscape architect Humphrey Repton. The estate renovations included the creation or alteration of a number of formal and informal lawns, plantings, water features and banks in order to create idyllic grounds and vistas. The house was demolished in 1934, and the lakes later drained.

#### Potential significance and research topics

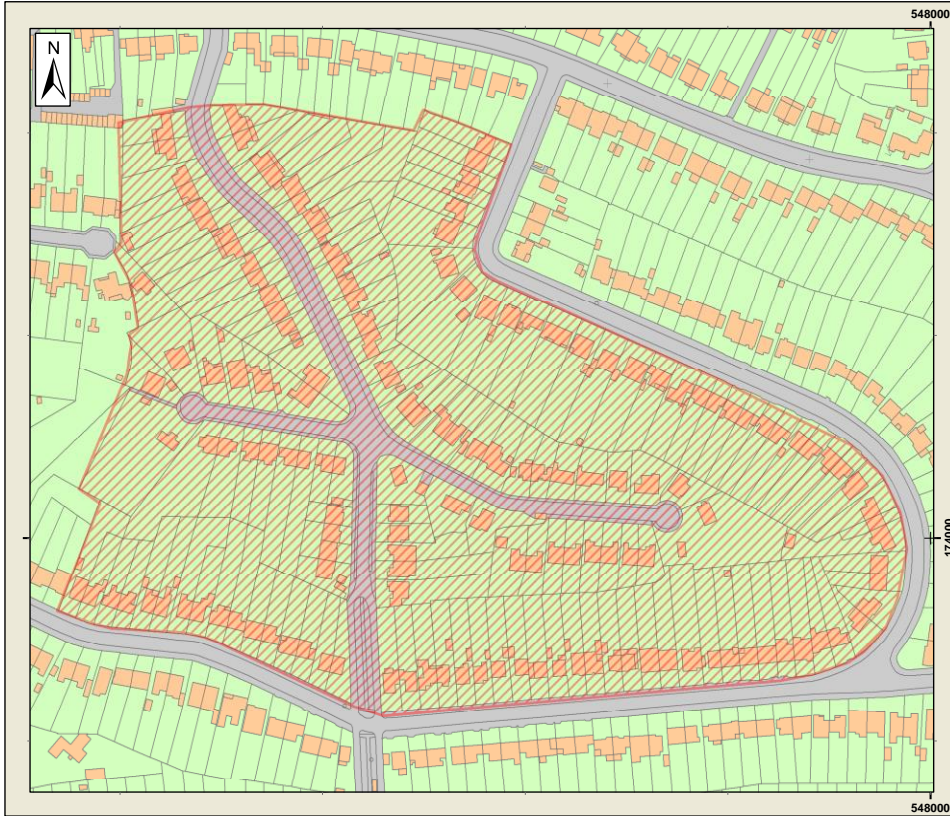
The medieval and post-medieval Blendon Hall and grounds would be considered of local significance, and represents one of several 18th century manors in the Bexley area. The Roman remains are also of local significance.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of Roman activity in the area. Are the cremation burials isolated, or associated with a larger cemetery or settlement area?
2. Further investigation and understanding of the medieval manor house. Where was it located, and are there any associated buildings or structures? What form did the manor take, and is it possible to trace any evolution in plan?
3. Further investigation and understanding of the 18th century house and landscaped grounds. How does Blendon Hall compare to other local examples of 18th century manors and estates?

#### Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



Bexley Borough APA 14  
Blendon Hall

Tier 2  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:2,000

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## **Proposed Area 15**

### **Old Bexley (Tier 2)**

15.1 This Area of Potential Archaeology is centred upon the medieval and later village of Bexley (Old Bexley). The village has grown from a ford or crossing of the River Cray, and is nestled in a low valley at between 13–17mOD. The geology is clay and alluvium over Taplow Gravel, which presents a good profile for farmland and agricultural use.

15.2 There is some evidence of prehistoric activity in the area, as throughout the Cray Valley. A few flint tools and flakes have been recovered from the village, including a scatter of Neolithic and Bronze Age flakes at the Bexley Baptist Chapel on Bourne Road, although these were found mixed in with later deposits. The most substantive evidence for settlement in the prehistoric periods comes from recent excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology adjacent to St John Fischer's Church on Thanet Road. The site, which includes a number of ditches and a possible hearth as well as a substantial flint assemblage, is thought to be a processing and occupation area dating from the late Mesolithic through to Early Bronze Age. Only a single Roman find – a cremation burial – has been found within the village.

15.3 Bexley is first mentioned in a charter of 814, and by the time of the Domesday Survey had a church, three mills, meadows, acres and woodlands. The only archaeological find of Saxon date is a spear head, recovered from a peat layer in Bexley High Street. The present village layout likely preserves the medieval street pattern, as archaeological excavations within Old Bexley have often found the remains of earlier buildings along the current High Street, including at least three chalk and flint buildings, hearths, and a well. Pottery recovered from the works generally date from the 12–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two tile-kiln ovens were found in the gardens of Cray House, also dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The parish church of St Mary retains elements dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, but there may have been an earlier church on the site.

15.4 There are several standing buildings in the village that date to the late medieval or early post-medieval period, including the Manor House on Manor Road, the Kings Head Public House and other timber framed buildings on the High Street. Mills and milling were clearly an important local industry, as three mills were mentioned in the Domesday Survey. When the present Old Mill was restored, remains of earlier chalk block foundations, thought to represent an earlier mill, were found. These date before 1650. The village expanded throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but has to a large extent retained an earlier character, particularly at the core.

#### Potential significance and research topics

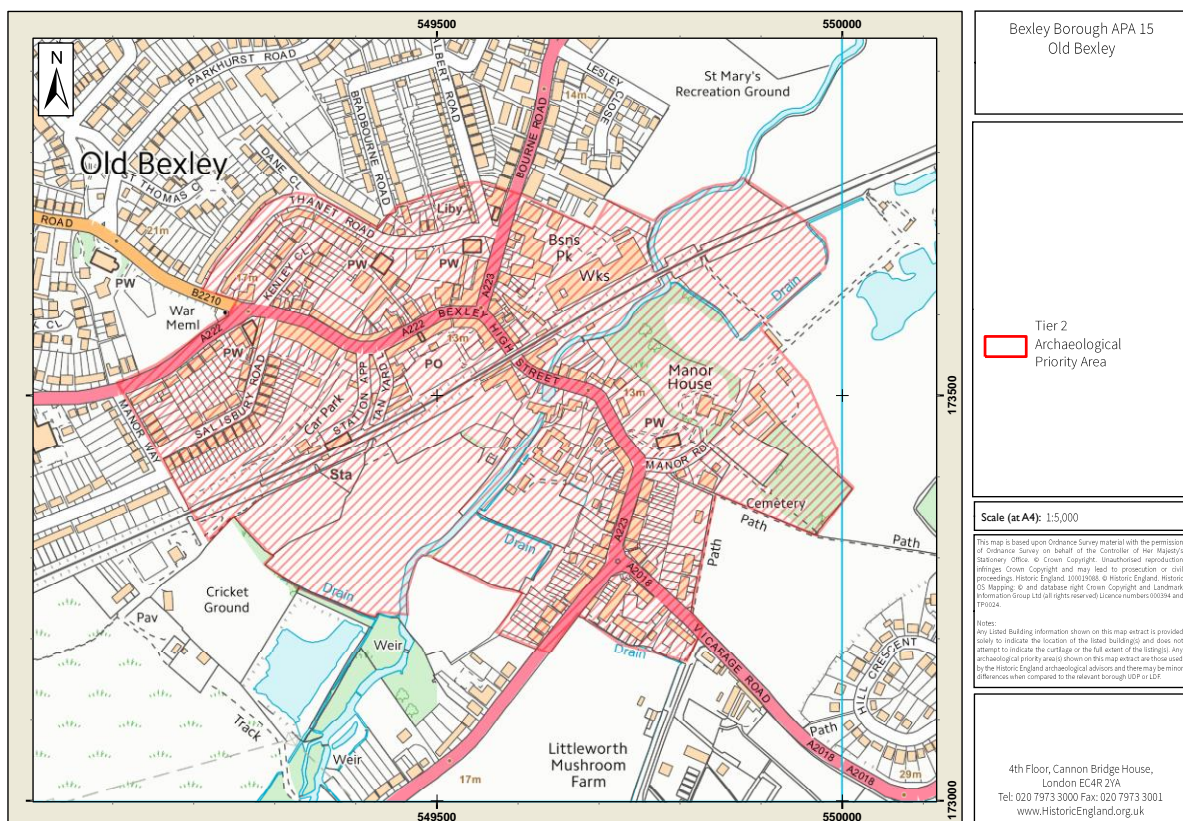
Old Bexley is a well preserved post-medieval village, with strong archaeological evidence for its medieval origins. There is also a notable prehistoric presence within the APA. The medieval development would be considered of local significance, and as further information on the Mesolithic and Neolithic settlement of the area emerges, this may be of regional significance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the prehistoric occupation of the area. What is the nature of any prehistoric settlement, what is the date range, and how does this relate to exploitation of the local environmental resources?
2. Further investigation and understanding of the Saxon origins and medieval development of Old Bexley. How does this relate to, and how has this shaped, the current village layout and industry?
3. Further investigation and understanding of medieval mills and uses of the River Cray.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



## Proposed Area 16

### Mount Mascal and Vale Mascal (Tier 2)

16.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is based upon two post-medieval estates, Mount Mascal and Vale Mascal, both situated to the north of North Cray Village. Mount Mascal is on the eastern side of the Cray Valley, at c.40mOD, while Vale Mascal is at the valley bottom, with the Cray running along the eastern boundary of the APA. The valley bottom is alluvium and clay, and the slopes gravel.

16.2 Mount Mascal was a Jacobean mansion, on the hillside overlooking North Cray. It is thought to have been built c. 1600, and was demolished in 1957. During demolition a number of reused wooden timbers were recovered, suggesting that there was an earlier medieval building on the site. Presently, the site is occupied by Mount Mascal Farm. The farmhouse is dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but may have earlier elements as it is thought to be developed from part of the eastern wing of the original mansion. To the south is Home Close Farm, which has numerous buildings that once would have been part of the Mount Mascal estate.

16.3 A tree lined avenue runs north from Mount Mascal Farm, and ends at Avenue Lodge (37 North Cray Road), built in the 1840s as the lodge to the Mount Mascal Estate.

16.4 Now on the southern side of North Cray Road is the villa of Vale Mascal. This was built in 1746 as the Dower House for Mount Mascal. The villa included c. 30 acres of gardens, which stretched from Wollett Hall to Old Bexley. The grounds were possibly laid out by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, or one of his disciples, Nathaniel Richmond Brown, as both were working in the North Cray area at the time (at North Cray Place and Danson House, respectively), and there are similarities in design between the three estates. The main element of the Vale Mascal grounds is the creative exploitation of the River Cray to create lakes, weirs, cascades and islands to give the river and channels an abraded appearance. A Bath House, housing a cold water plunge bath utilising sluice gates, was built in 1766. This is listed Grade 2, and was recently repaired. Fronting North Cray Road is a number of other buildings associated with the villa, including a coach house and stables.

#### Potential significance and research topics

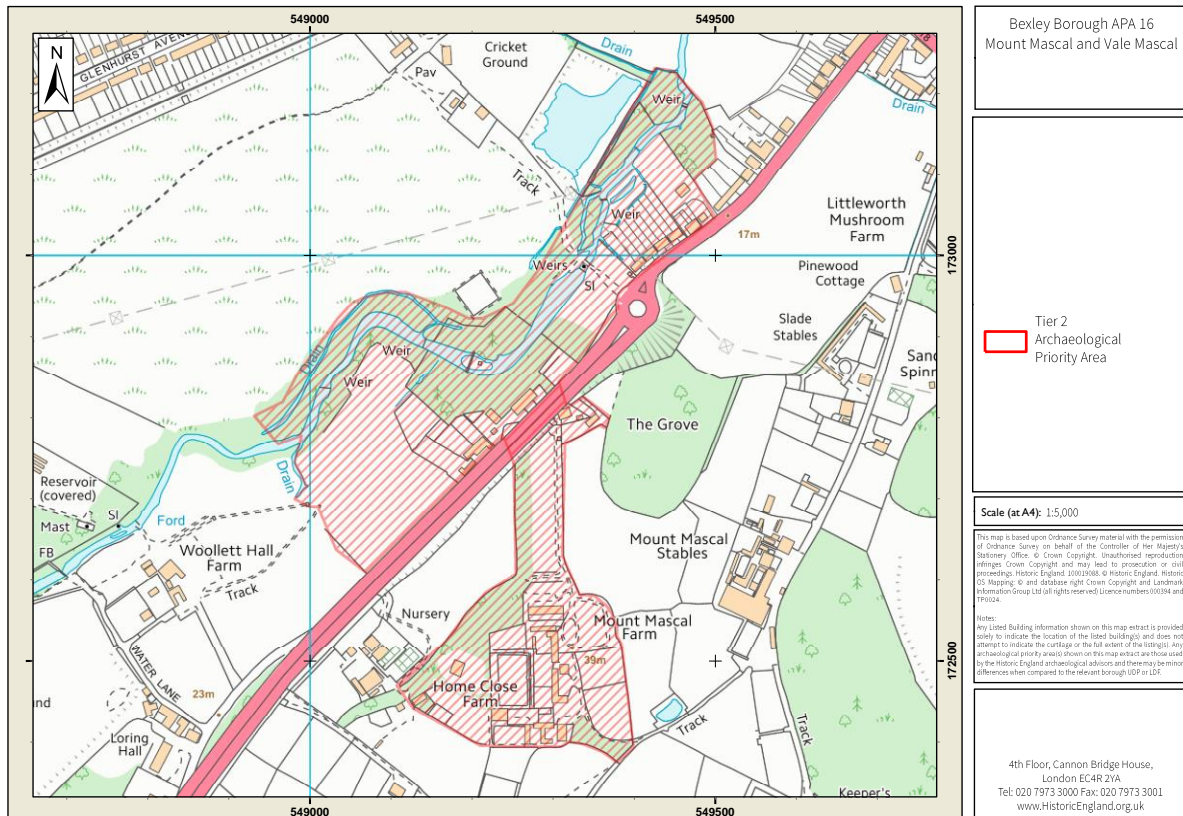
The site of Mount Mascal and Vale Mascal are of local significance, and are representative of the large number of 18<sup>th</sup> century manors and country retreats that were built in Bexley. The gardens at Vale Mascal are especially interesting, particularly if they can be ascribed to Capability Brown, and are a very good example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century idyllic landscape. To date there has been no archaeological fieldwork within the APA.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the origins and development of Mount Mascal. Is there evidence for a pre-1600's manor house? How do the various outbuildings relate to the manor?
2. Further investigation and understanding of Vale Mascal, in particular the landscaped grounds and gardens.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



## **Proposed Area 17**

### **River Cray: Valley and Floodplain (Tier 2)**

#### Valley

17.1 This large Archaeological Priority Area demarks the River Cray Valley, and includes the villages of North Cray, on the northeastern point of the valley, and Foots Cray, on the southeastern edge. Much of the central space is occupied by the Foots Cray Meadows recreation area, which has developed from the open estate and landscaped grounds of Foots Place and includes water features, bridges and historic woodlands.

17.2 As with the rest of the Cray Valley, there is a significant prehistoric presence, including the Palaeolithic within the APA, associated with the Crayford Silt deposit. Two sites in particular stand out in importance, in different areas of the APA. In Foots Cray, at the North Cray Gravel Pit on Baugh Road and Rectory Lane, adjacent to All Saints Church, a substantial material of Palaeolithic material has been recovered. This includes material from at least two separate working floors and a large assemblage of flakes, cores, blades and other tools and debitage. The assemblage generally dates from the Upper Palaeolithic, c.12,900–11,700BC), and is at c.1m below ground level. The second major site is that of a Mesolithic settlement at the Stable Meadow Allotments, where a number of blades, cores, micro-cores and scrapers were recovered and possible enclosure ditches observed.

17.3 There is a reasonable amount of Roman material recovered from within the valley, which can be seen as a continuation of the exploitation of the landscape seen to the north, in Crayford. This includes settlement areas, which may demonstrate some continuity from the Iron Age, as seen at St James Rectory in North Cray. An isolated bath house has been excavated at Palm Avenue, which dates to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and consists of an apsidal bath with lead waste water pipes and an adjacent 'kitchen hut.' On the same site was evidence of a substantial square enclosure that appears to be related to sheep and cattle husbandry, and a further four small buildings. Other Roman material is concentrated at the Stable Meadow Allotments and in Foots Cray Meadows.

17.4 Medieval activity in the area can be seen through the establishment of the two churches – St James Church in North Cray, and All Saints in Foots Cray. North Cray is listed as a small village in the Domesday Survey, with a total population of approximately 50. The church of St James is mentioned in Domesday, and the first reference to a vicar is from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The church may have functioned as a private chapel for the owners of the adjacent North Cray Place. The present building dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Foots Cray has a similar early history, and is thought to have Saxon foundations. There is speculation that there may be an earlier church, pre-dating the Norman invasion, in the same location of All Saints Church. The present church dates to c. 1330 and has an associated graveyard. Archaeological remains from the medieval period have best been seen along North Cray Road, and a number of standing timber framed buildings remain within the APA, such as nos. 152–154 North Cray Road, and Wealdon House and the Seven Stars Public House on Foots Cray High Street. A four-bayed medieval hall house, likely of 15<sup>th</sup> century date, has been moved from North Cray Road to the Weald and Downland Museum.

17.5 The strong tradition of wealthy country houses in the Bexley area is aptly demonstrated by Foots Cray Place and North Cray Place, both estates dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with significant rebuilding in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and both now demolished. Foots Cray Place was established in the Elizabethan period as an 'E'-shaped house, which was pulled down in 1754 and replaced by a grand Palladian style villa and landscaped parks and gardens. This burned down in the 1950s, and only the stable block survives, although the grounds and ornamental landscape features are preserved as Foots Cray Meadows. North Cray Place was certainly built by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although this may have replaced an earlier medieval house, and in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the grounds were laid out by Lawrence 'Capability' Brown, and the house was extensively remodelled in the 1820s. The house was demolished post-war, with the gardens also incorporated in Foots Cray Meadows.

Potential significance and research topics

The River Cray Valley is a multi-period landscape, with potential for archaeological remains of high significance. This is particularly true for the prehistoric periods, where in situ Palaeolithic and Mesolithic remains would be of local, regional and national significance.

Archaeological deposits from the Roman and medieval periods particularly those associated with the two parish churches and manors, and evidence of the post-medieval country estates and landscapes would be of local and local regional significance.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the prehistoric occupation and exploitation of the river valley and higher slopes. Is there further evidence of in situ working areas? Is there any evidence of permanent or seasonal occupation?
2. Further investigation and understanding of the Roman occupation in the river valley.
3. Further investigation and understanding of the medieval and post-medieval development of the area, including the development of the grand country estates and landscapes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Floodplain

17.6 While the importance of the valley in terms of the brickearth, has long been understood, the wider significance of this area within the Cray valley for prehistoric archaeology has only become apparent in recent years. The discovery of in situ flint working floors on the first terrace of the valley is important but more so given the fact that it represents the transition period between Mesolithic and Neolithic making this area extra special.

Potential significance and research topics

Potential for flintwork related archaeology.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further identification and investigation of in situ artefact scatters and associated faunal material. What tools and manufacturing techniques are

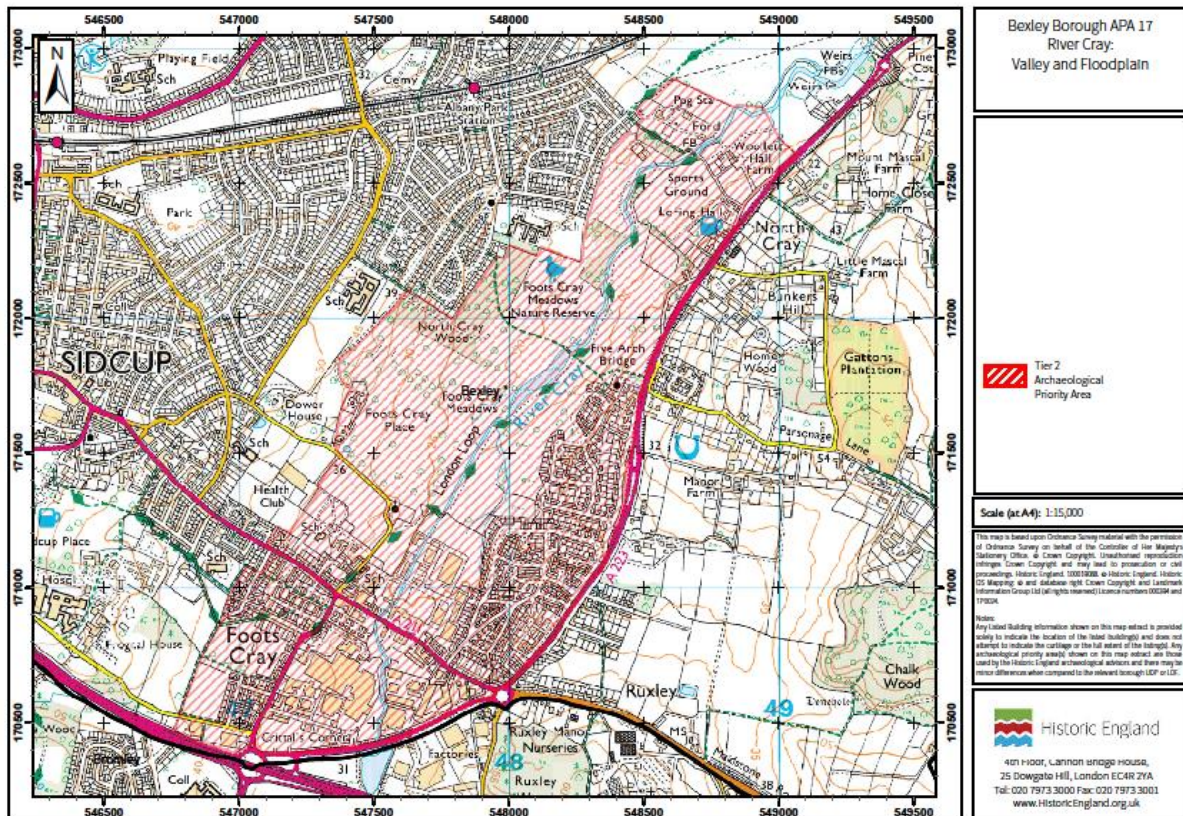


being used? Can different tools be linked to different functions or cultures?  
 What bearing does redeposited material have on the entire assemblage?

2. Study of tool forms and re-evaluation of contemporary types.
3. Study of environmental archaeology of the valley within which the prehistoric archaeology occurs.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.





## **Area 18:**

### **Thamesmead and Erith Marshes (Tier 3)**

18.1 This area considers the marshland that extends from the Thames foreshore to the southern base of the natural east-west ridge bisecting the borough.

18.2 This marshland is typified by localised areas of gravel highs interwoven by river channels and wetland environments. From the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age, the area was very dynamic, with many episodes of water inundation and seasonal flooding. Deep and rich peat deposits are found throughout the Thamesmead and marsh areas, which, along with soils and gravels, would have represented terrestrial or semi-terrestrial land surfaces. This marsh environment would have provided many opportunities for exploitation of natural resources in the prehistoric periods, such as waterfowl and fish, and wood, reeds and other resources. Occupation areas and evidence for human activity are often found on areas of higher ground or along the liminal edges of river channels.

18.3 Prehistoric material particularly in the form of flint tools, have been recovered throughout this area.

18.4 Mesolithic finds include a large and significant assemblage of flint axe heads, recovered throughout the antiquarian period. One of the most archaeologically significant sites in the borough, if not the region, was recorded in 1994–5 when Bronze Age Way, south of Erith town centre, was being constructed. Finds included an in situ flint scatter of over 3,000 artefacts, including cores, flakes, axes, scrappers and awls, along with a substantial quantity of heat discoloured and crazed flint and charcoal that is believed to be a hearth. It is likely that this scatter, found within a peat deposit, represents a tool production centre. Elsewhere, at the Crossness Sewage Treatment Works, a preserved prehistoric forest has been identified, which is the earliest known colonisation of yew woodland on the southbank of the Thames.

18.5 The area continued to be exploited in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages and evidence of human occupation and settlement in these periods is well represented.

18.6 Possible trackway structures have been recorded during archaeological work at Church Manorway, and a complete Neolithic carinated bowl was recovered from Bronze Age Way. A dugout canoe, dated to the Neolithic period, was found in 1885 in peat layers at the Erith Marshes.

18.7 During the Roman period, there is increasing evidence to suggest that occupation is centred upon areas of high ground. There are some finds from Erith and around the Belvedere area. The most substantial Roman site to date was excavated in 1997 at Summertown Way, Thamesmead, which shows multi-phased activity from the mid third – late fourth centuries AD. The site shows evidence for field systems and land divisions that suggests this area was used for farming; arable land use is indicated as evidence points to crop-processing on the site. The location of the contemporary settlement is unknown, but may be close to Crossness as there are antiquarian reports of a significant amount of Roman pottery and building material being uncovered when the southern outfall sewer was dug, in 1865.

18.8 The area remained as farm, heath and marsh land until the mid-19th century, when increasing industrialisation caused dramatic change. The relative isolation of Thamesmead allowed for some firing ranges associated with the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich to expand into the area, but it was the introduction of the North Kent Railway into the area in 1849, and especially the construction of the great Crossness Pumping Station in 1875 that accelerated the rate of change. Other Victorian factories and industrial activity along the Thameside included Vickers and Sons, for the manufacturing of firearms and Callender's factory for the production of electricity cables and refining bitumen. Gas works, coal wharves and quarrying can be seen across the area.

#### Potential significance and research topics

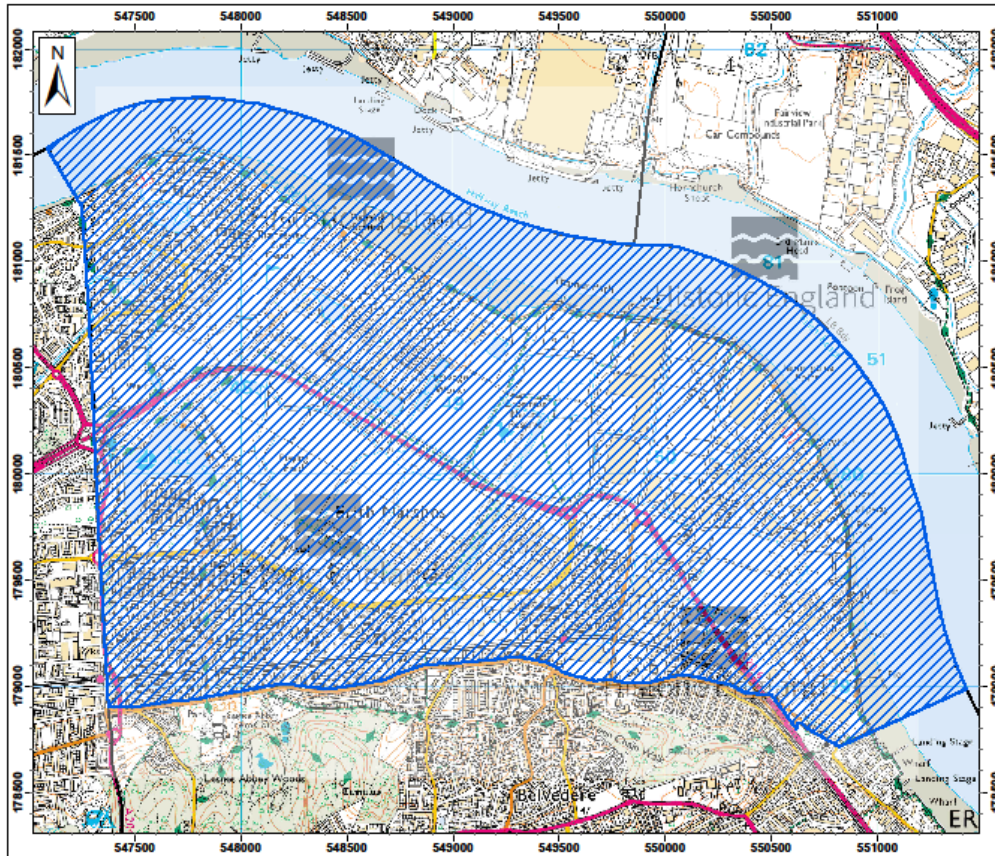
The significance of this area is particularly high for the prehistoric periods. The in situ Mesolithic flint scatter at Bronze Age Way is of certain regional importance, if not higher. The height of the archaeological deposits varies greatly across the area: at some places the peat deposits are buried at considerable depth, if not eroding out of the foreshore or very near surface.

#### Potential research topics include:

- 1 Further investigation and understanding of the nature of the prehistoric landscape and exploitation, including palaeoenvironmental evidence. Where was the prehistoric foreshore? Is there further evidence of working surfaces or occupation areas? How was the environment exploited for human benefit? Can any trackways be traced between areas of high ground?
- 2 Further define the areas of potential for evidence of Roman activity.
- 3 Identify and understand any historic land management activities, particularly in relation to the Thames and the marshlands.
- 4 Further investigation and understanding of the industrialisation of the area.

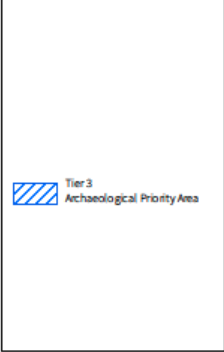
#### Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Geoarchaeological work undertaken for Crossrail resulted with a series of deposit models for the Lower Thames Valley (MOLA 2017). The buried landscape study has demonstrated that the archaeological potential extends south to a line commensurate to the railway line.



Bexley Borough APA 18  
Thamesmead and Erith  
Marshes

31 January 2020



Scale (at A4): 1:20,000

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## **Area 19:**

### **Erith Riverside and Crayford Marsh (Tier 3)**

#### Erith Riverside

19.1 The area is east of historic Erith and although prehistoric material, particularly flint tools, have been recovered throughout this area, the concentration of finds and archaeological features appears to be across an area from east of Jenningtree Point to Crayford Ness.

19.2 The area was exploited in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages and evidence of human occupation and settlement in these periods is well represented. Near the Erith Yacht Club survives a substantial prehistoric forest, with trackways, fishtraps, wattle structures and hurdles evident on the foreshore and eroding out of the peat. (see APA 01)

Potential significance and research topics

The significance of this area is particularly high for the prehistoric periods.

Potential research topics include:

2. Further investigation and understanding of the nature of the prehistoric landscape and exploitation, including palaeoenvironmental evidence. Where was the prehistoric foreshore? Is there further evidence of working surfaces or occupation areas? How was the environment exploited for human benefit? Can any trackways be traced between areas of high ground?
3. Identify and understand any historic land management activities, particularly in relation to the Thames and the marshlands.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Split area from Thamesmead Erith Marsh and Erith APA.

#### Crayford Marsh

19.3 This Archaeological Priority Area is centred upon the floodplains of the Crayford Marshes, at the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Darent. The marshes are low-lying and marginal land and generally sit at c. 1–2mOD. The drift geology is alluvium and sand, silt and clay, but the area has significant peat deposits that represent periods of water ingress and regress across the marsh.

19.4 The peat deposits, in particular, are rich in archaeo-environmental remains which provide evidence for past landscapes and uses. There is a high potential for the recovery of datable plant remains, including timber trackways. The trackways would have provided access across the marsh areas, which were exploited for food, waterfowl and fish, and provided reeds and willow saplings as building material.

19.5 The Neolithic and Bronze Age periods are well represented within as well as the adjacent APA. Timber structures noted along the Thames foreshore, particularly trackways, will continue into this area from the north. Excavations in 1994 along the Slade Green Relief Road uncovered a sand and gravel Palaeolithic land surface, from which over 670 struck

flints were found. These flints were in situ, and some could be re-fitted, suggesting that this was a working area. A possible Bronze Age barrow has been noted north east of Howbury Farm, which appears on the 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps. This has since disappeared, and the attribution is uncertain. Better documented are several Bronze Age hoards from the Kent side of the River Darent, including a weapon and implement hoard from Dartford Heath and a hoard of gold bracelets recovered from the same area during gravel extraction works in the 1900s.

19.6 A Roman cremation cemetery has been noted from Jenningsree Road, when 5 complete urns and a number of other vessels and associated artefacts were found in 1957 during sewer works. In the medieval period, the southwest area of the APA was within the manor of Howbury, and was likely agricultural land. A recent survey along the banks of the River Darent, which forms the eastern boundary of the APA, has identified a possible wharf, landing stage and jetty, which may have provided transport or access to and from the river.

19.7 There are a substantial number of WW2 defence systems and buildings in the eastern part of the APA, including anti-aircraft batteries, pill boxes, air raid shelters and gun emplacements. A number of these are statutorily and locally listed.

19.8 Potential significance and research topics This APA has a high archaeological potential for archaeological remains, particularly from the prehistoric periods. This includes palaeoenvironmental remains, showing how the landscape and natural environment changed and was exploited.

19.9 Relatively little modern development has taken place on the Marshes, so preservation can be anticipated to be good. The overall significance of the APA would be considered local.

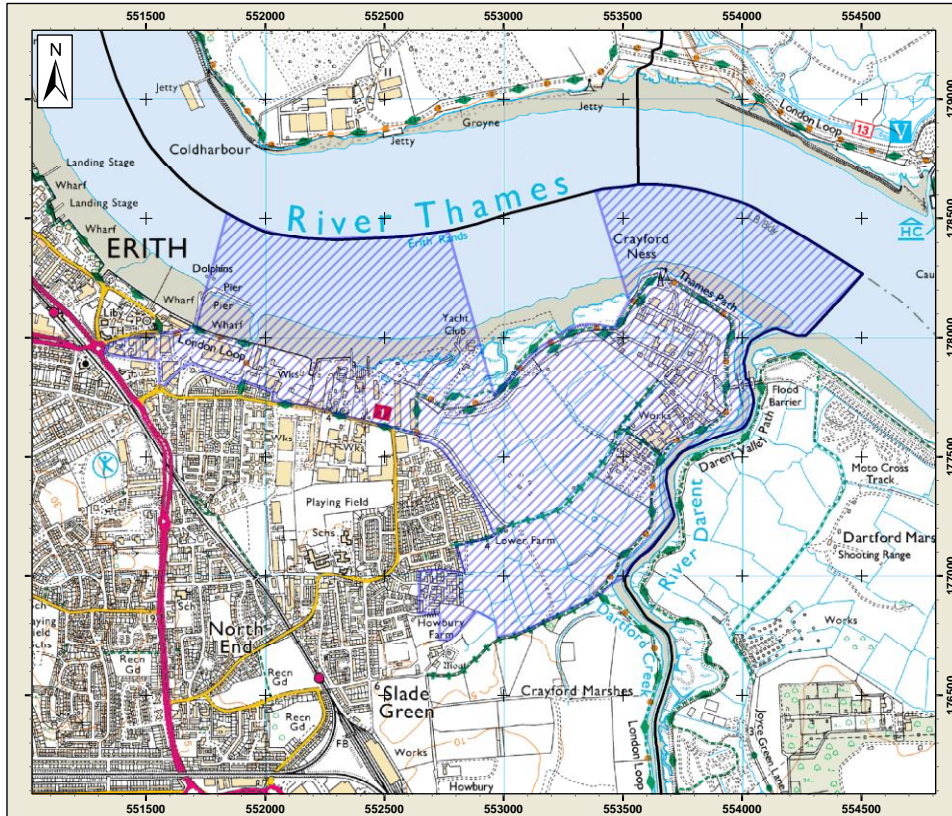
Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the prehistoric activity in the area, including study of the palaeoenvironmental potential of any peat layers and also of the general alluvial and sedimentary deposits.
2. Further investigation and understanding of the Roman cremation cemetery at Jenningsree Road, and if this is associated with any settlement.
3. Further investigation and understanding of medieval or post-medieval activity along the River Darent.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Split area from Tier 1: Erith Sunken Forest APA.





Bexley Borough APA 19  
Erith Riverside and  
Crayford Marsh

Tier 3  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:17,000

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## Proposed Area 20

### Crayford Brickearth (Tier 3)

20.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is focussed around the concentrations of highly significant Palaeolithic material recovered from brickearth and clay pits in the Crayford area, roughly between Barneshurst and Slade Green, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Palaeolithic landscape is thought to have consisted of chalk cliffs to the west and a sandy beach and river to the east, towards the Slade Green area. This created a focus for early activity, generally at the base of the cliff areas. Most of the flint remains in the Crayford area are derived from the Lower Brickearth. Focussing upon this potential associated with a specific deposit resulted with the erratic shape of this APA.

20.2 Extensive antiquarian observations, many made by the collector F C J Spurrell, took place during brickearth extraction from the many pits in the area. Archaeological deposits include both in situ flint tool manufacturing sites and kill sites. Stoneham's Pit, at Perry Street and Thames road, is perhaps the most prolific pit in the area and finds from here include a working floor surface, where Spurrell was able to re-fit various flakes to a single core. Also at this site, he found a worked flake resting on the jawbone of a woolly rhinoceros, demonstrating a clear relationship between the artefacts and mammalian remains. A large number of fossil faunal remains have also been recovered from the area, which is in itself rare.

20.3 The assemblage from Crayford is usually ascribed to the Levallois technique, whereby a predetermined flake is removed from a prepared core. This is generally thought to date to c. 250,000BC.

20.4 Also at Perry Street, near to the British Legion, an Iron Age – Romano-British site was excavated in the late 1970s. This settlement site included enclosures, post-built structures and a large number of pits containing significant quantities of domestic pottery and artefactual assemblages.

#### Potential significance and research topics

The Palaeolithic remains from this area are of local, regional and national significance, especially if further in situ working areas are found. The Lower Brickearth deposits, however, are likely to be at some depth (i.e. between 7 – 10m below present ground surface). Any proposed impact to these levels will have a potential effect on significant deposits. Anticipated survival outside of the previous quarries is thought to be good, as modern truncation is unlikely to have reached such depths. There may be limited potential within past quarries, where the lowest deposits may survive.

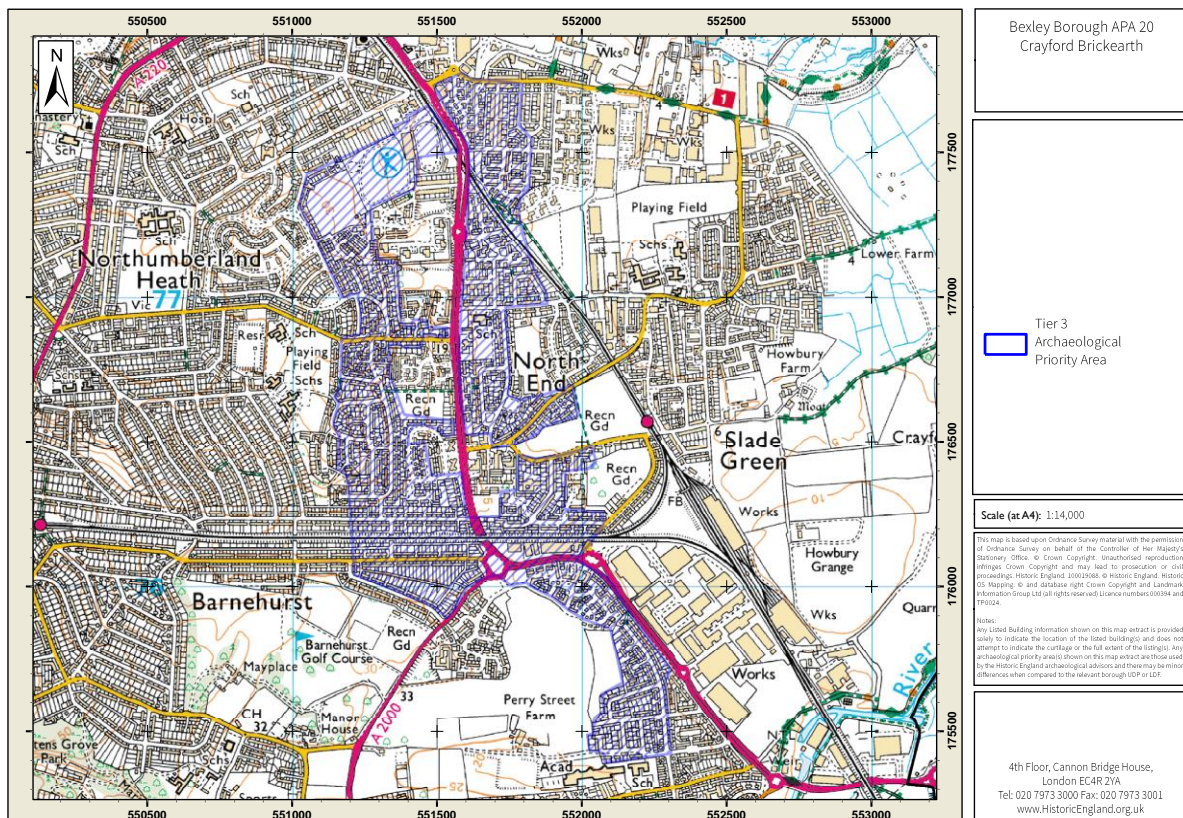
Despite such a high significance, the APA cannot be assigned a higher grade of Tier due to the defuse nature of the evidence associated with the brickearth layer. If evidence was to emerge of a cluster of sites consisting of in situ Palaeolithic material, that area would need to be assigned Tier 1.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the Palaeolithic environment. How was the natural environment used and understood by the Palaeolithic people, and what affects did they have upon the environment?
2. Further identification and investigation of in situ artefact scatters and associated faunal material. What tools and manufacturing techniques are being used? Can different tools be linked to different functions or cultures? What bearings does redeposited material have on the entire assemblage?
3. Further investigation and understanding of the geological and geomorphological sequences and formations.
4. Further investigation an understanding of later prehistoric and Roman occupation and activity in the area.

Recommend change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Reduce the area by the removal of the Floodplain APA.



## **Proposed Area 21**

### **Crayford Valley (Tier3)**

21.1 This Archaeological Priority Area is centred upon the multi-period settlement and occupation area at Crayford, where the Roman Watling Street crossed the Cray (see Crayford: Roman road APA). The APA surrounds the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed building of Hall Place (see APA Hall Place). Crayford is situated within the river valley, with the upper slopes at c.35mOD and the valley floor at c.6mOD. St Paulinus' Church, on the western side of Crayford, sits on a natural gravel outcrop.

21.2 It is clear that the river terraces in the Crayford area were extensively exploited in the prehistoric period. Significant sites from the Palaeolithic through to the Neolithic have been found in the wider vicinity, particularly around Bowmans area c 500m to the south. A nationally significant flint working area, where over 40 handaxes were recovered, was found at the Wasunt/Bowman's Lodge gravel pits. Numerous flint tools and flakes, however, have been found throughout the entire Crayford area.

21.3 The first signs of definite settlement date to the Iron Age, with two separate settlements identified. The first is at Iron Mill Lane, where remains of ditches, pits and post built structures were found during an archaeological evaluation in 1993, along with pottery, evidence for iron working, loomweights and animal remains. More recently, in a series of watching briefs at Hall Place in 2007 – 8 an Iron Age farmstead has been identified, with a series of roundhouses, enclosure ditches and square timber structures were revealed. This settlement is thought to have continued in use until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

21.4 The Domesday Survey records that the settlement had a church, and a number of villagers and smallholders. St Paulinus' Church situated north of the settlement on a ridge was built in c.1100, but may have an earlier foundation. Recent archaeological work has suggested stonework possibly dating to the Norman period and speculation it represents a bell tower. A reworked door and now blocked, visible from the interior of the church, may have been the point of access to this possible tower.

21.5 As the settlement expanded in the post-medieval period the area saw a rise in industry, generally associated with the River Cray. This includes a 16<sup>th</sup> century iron mill on Iron Mill Lane, flour and saw mills, tanning, linen bleaching, silk printing and other industries that require easy access to water power and transport. The Vickers armaments factory moved into the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, continuing a tradition of local industry.

#### Potential significance and research topics

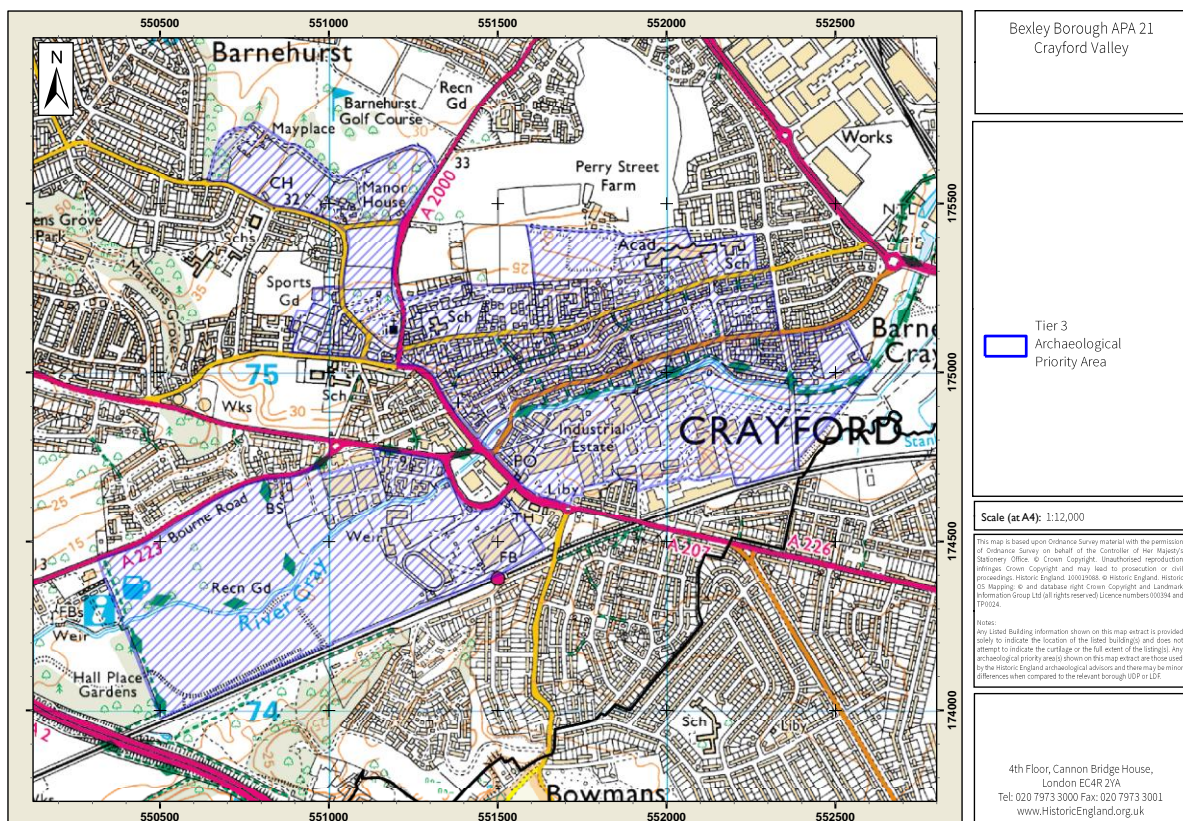
The Crayford APA contains evidence of multi-period activity and settlement, from the earliest times to the present day. The earlier prehistoric periods would be considered of local, regional and potential national significance should well preserved working areas or in situ material be recovered, and Hall Place, as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is nationally significant.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the prehistoric land use and exploitation of the Cray valley.
2. Further investigation and understanding of the early medieval settlement, including the medieval manor houses in the area. How do these develop from the earlier villas and occupation areas?
3. Further investigation and understanding of the post-medieval and industrial developments along the River Cray.

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Create the APA from the wider Crayford valley APA.



## **Proposed Area 22**

### **Cavey's Spring (Tier 3)**

22.1 This Archaeological Priority Area captures a large number of deneholes and a post-medieval tile kiln.

22.2 Although there have been a number of substantial prehistoric finds from the vicinity of the APA, particularly within Joyden's Wood, to the south, very little material has been recovered from within the Cavey Spring area. This is limited to a small assemblage of Mesolithic flints, consisting of six flakes, and a fragment of a Bronze Age sword or dagger, recovered by metal detecting on Tile Kiln Lane.

22.3 Also within the APA are a number of deneholes, with a cluster around Baldwin's Park and Dartford Road, and also at Cavey Spring. These are likely to have been created in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, and were used to extract chalk and other minerals mainly for building material. Although deneholes are arguably evidence of industrial activity, they tend to be discrete features and are not associated with settlement or other activity. Being deep mine shafts, most if not all identified deneholes are filled after discovery.

22.4 The last archaeological feature in the APA is a discrete tile kiln, on Tile Kiln Lane, which dates to the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, although the presence of a few medieval pottery fragments may indicate some earlier activity. The kiln was situated in a good place for the manufacture of roof tiles, as there are clay deposits nearby, a ready supply of wood and evidence for a dried up stream. The kiln was excavated in 1971 in advance of building and road works. Several pits for clay extraction, backfilled with wasters and cast-offs from the kiln's period of use, were also recorded. However, there is no evidence for any buildings or structures the kiln might have been making roof tiles for, nor of any other associated finds or features.

#### Potential significance and research topics

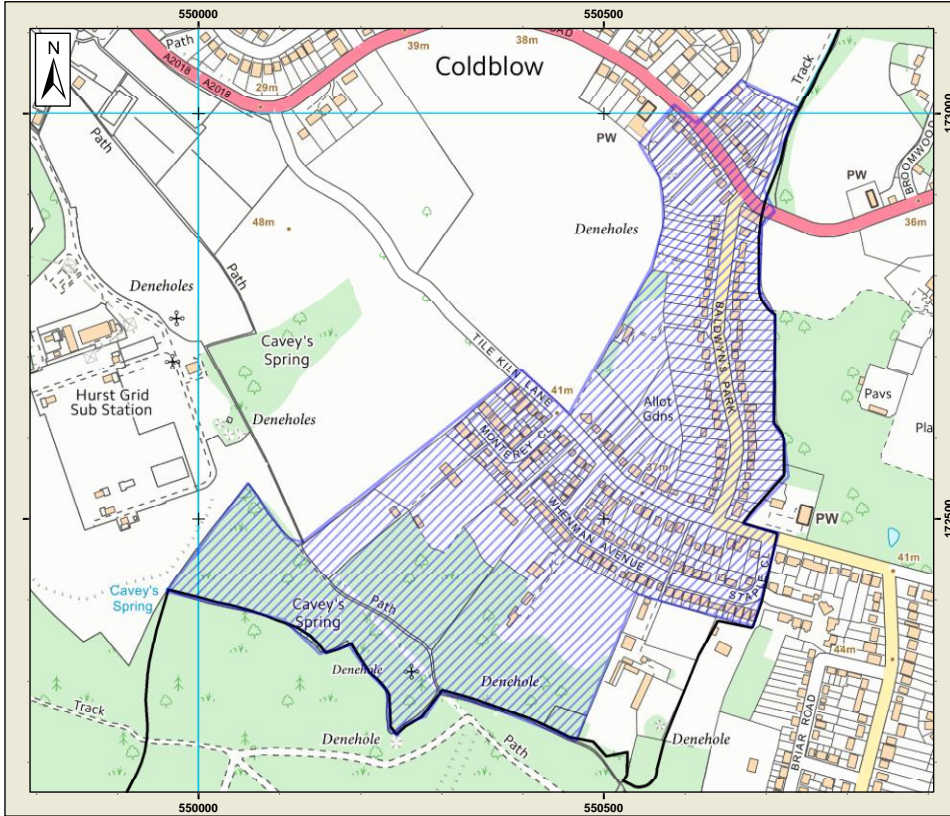
This APA captures archaeological activity from several periods. The significance is best seen across the wider landscape of finds.

Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the deneholes and their purposes. Are any of the deneholes of an earlier date? Are there secondary archaeological deposits within the deneholes themselves?

Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- Propose to reduce the area by removing the area of the Saxon earthwork to form a separate APA.



Bexley Borough APA 22  
Cavey's Spring

Tier 3  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:5,000

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## **Proposed Area 23**

### **Frognal House (Tier 3)**

23.1 This Archaeological Priority Area concentrates on the manor and gardens of Frognal House, likely in continuous occupation since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The APA is situated on a steep slope on the east facing bank of the Cray Valley, and drops from c.55mOD on the west, to c.40mOD on the eastern boundary. The underlying geology is of the Lambeth Group and Thanet sands.

23.2 Although the site was first mentioned in a charter of 1253, the standing Frognal House is a large country house, mainly of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century date, arranged around a central courtyard. The southern range has its origins as a 15<sup>th</sup> century timber framed hall house, but no physical elements earlier than c.1550 survive, when a phase of masonry building was begun. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the house was decidedly old fashioned in look and aspect, with a major rebuilding therefore taking place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This work redeveloped the house as an outward looking classical style country house, with a very fashionable parterre garden. There were further renovations and extensions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, removing some of the more formal elements of the house and landscaping design. The house was converted into a hospital in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In advance of renovations, a major programme of archaeological work was undertaken in 1998. This included extensive standing building surveys and archaeological investigation of the house and formal and kitchen gardens. A probable medieval well was found in the kitchen gardens, but no features or walls associated with the pre 1550s house were observed.

#### Potential significance and research topics

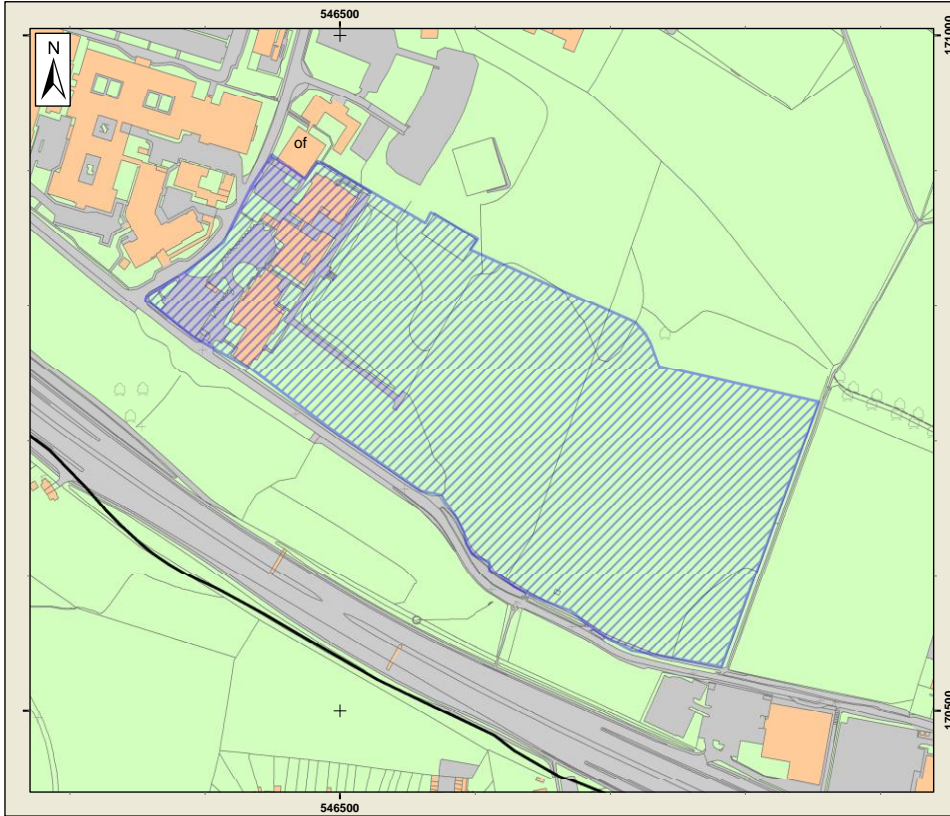
Frognal House is a good example of the continuity of place from the medieval period through to the modern day, and reflects changing fashion in architecture and landscape design. It is of certain local significance.

#### Potential research topics include:

1. Further investigation and understanding of the medieval manor and earliest phases of the present building.
2. Further investigation and understanding of the formal and informal landscape design.

#### Recommended change from existing Archaeological Priority Area:

- None. The boundary of the existing APA is to remain the same.



Bexley Borough APA 23  
Frognal House

Tier 3  
Archaeological  
Priority Area

Scale (at A4): 1:3,000

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## Glossary

### **Archaeological Priority Area:**

Generic term used for a defined area where, according to existing information, there is significant known archaeological interest or particular potential for new discoveries. They are sometimes called other names including Archaeological Priority Zones, Areas of Archaeological Significance/Importance/Interest or Areas of High Archaeological Potential.

### **Archaeological interest:**

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset as they are viewed as an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (184 NPPF 2019). There can be an archaeological interest in buildings and landscapes as well as earthworks and buried remains.

### **Conservation** (for heritage policy):

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance (200 NPPF 2019).

### **Designated heritage asset:**

Such an asset could be a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation (194b NPPF definition).

### **Heritage asset:**

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing) (184 NPPF 2019).

### **Historic environment:**

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

### **Historic environment record:**

Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use (187 PPF 2019). Historic England maintains the Historic Environment Record for Greater London.

**National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF:**

The 2012 version replaced by the July 2018 edition and now February 2019. The document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Consideration of the historic environment is addressed in Chapter 16.

**Potential:**

In some places, the nature of the archaeological interest cannot be specified precisely, but it may still be possible to document reasons for anticipating the existence and importance of such evidence. Circumstantial evidence such as geology, topography, landscape history, nearby major monuments and patterns of previous discoveries can be used to predict areas with a higher likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

**Research framework:**

A suite of documents which describe the current state of knowledge of a topic or geographical area (the 'resource assessment'), identifies major gaps in knowledge and key research questions (the 'agenda') and set out a strategy for addressing them. A resource assessment and agenda for London archaeology has been published.

**Setting of a heritage asset:**

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral (194b NPPF 2019).

**Sensitivity:**

The likelihood of typical development impacts causing significant harm to a heritage asset of archaeological interest. Sensitivity is closely allied to significance and potential but also takes account of an asset's vulnerability and fragility.

**Significance (for heritage policy):**

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting (189 NPPF 2019).



**Cover photographs** © Historic England

**Top left to bottom right:**

*Prehistoric sunken forest:* Erith, 2012

*Mesolithic/Neolithic:* Cray Road, Crayford, 2015

*Iron Age/Roman:* Crayford Road, 2017

*Medieval/post-Medieval:* Hall Place, Bourne End, 2008

*Medieval:* Lesnes Abbey, 2004

*Roman:* Embassy Court, Welling, 2009