London Borough of Bexley

Areas of High Archaeological Potential
Review Project

March 2014
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Introduction

This assessment has been commissioned by the London Borough of Bexley in order to review the borough’s existing Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAPs). The existing AHAPs, as shown on Map 4.9 of the Bexley Core Strategy (adopted February 2012), are based on archaeological finds and data compiled in the 1980s and summarily reviewed in 1992 and 1996.

Since then, a significant number of archaeological interventions have been undertaken throughout the borough, which have added greatly to the understanding of the history of the borough and the significance of its non-designated archaeological assets. It is now possible to re-visit the existing areas against this new data, and to prepare written descriptions of each AHAP, identifying their significance and suggesting research questions to be approached in future studies.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential are intended to act as flags within the planning system, identifying areas where existing information indicates a greater potential for the discovery of archaeological remains over and above that of the general background expectation. This then enables the local planning authority and other interested parties to make informed decisions on changes to the historic environment and to manage these changes appropriately. Archaeological remains may exist outside of the designated AHAPs, and should be considered on an individual basis where necessary. AHAPs support and should be used in conjunction with statutorily designated heritage assets and other non-designated assets, such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, registered parks and gardens and listed buildings, as well as the local list of historic buildings.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential will continue to be revised and altered as more discoveries come to light and the history of the borough continues to be better understood, and should therefore be periodically reviewed.
Section 1
Planning policy context

National Planning Policy
The Government adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) in March 2012, which sets out the overall objectives for planning strategy at a national level and how they are expected to be applied.

The NPPF integrates planning strategy for all heritage assets, both below and above ground, and provides guidance on managing change to the historic environment as a whole, including buildings and structures, landscapes, archaeological sites and wrecks. The document makes clear that the significance of heritage assets and their settings, whether designated or not, needs to be considered within the planning process. The NPPF advocates an integrated approach using evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values in order to ensure that planning decisions are based upon the nature, extent and significant of the heritage assets.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF, ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ is the key section regarding heritage assets, and the borough’s archaeological policies should be developed in accordance with the guidance therein. However, a few paragraphs are particularly relevant for non-designated assets.

12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

128 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

135 The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
Regional Planning Policy

The Mayor of London’s London Plan: spatial development strategy for Greater London (July, 2011) is a strategic planning document which describes an integrated economic, social, environmental and transport framework for the development of London. Local plans are meant to work within this structure.

Chapter 7, ‘London’s living spaces and places’ sets out a broad range of policy areas regarding how people live in and integrate with their environments. This includes heritage and the historic environment. Policy 7.8 is the key section when discussing Areas of High Archaeological Potential.

Policy 7.8: Heritage assets and archaeology

Strategic

A London’s heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilizing their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

B Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site’s archaeology.
Local planning policy

Local Planning Authorities are obliged by the government to articulate their future planning and policy objectives in a portfolio of strategic planning documents, the Local Development Framework (LDF). Within each LDF, the primary document is the Core Strategy, which sets out long-term visions for the planning authority and how these are to be achieved, in the form of policy guidance. The Core Strategy, in turn, is supported by a suite of supporting documents and evidence based reports, including detailed policies and sites local plans.

The Bexley Core Strategy was formally adopted on 22nd February 2012. The relevant policy is found within Chapter 4, 'Managing the built and natural environment.'
Policy CS19 Heritage and archaeology
The Council will manage its heritage and archaeological assets, whilst seeking opportunities to make the most of these assets, including adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. This will enhance the local sense of place and underpin the revitalization and development of the borough, including promoting the visitor economy. This will be achieved by:
a) Promoting the borough's heritage assets, such as Danson house, Hall Place and Gardens, Crossness Beam Engine House and Red House;
b) Reviewing the status of existing and identifying new heritage and archaeological assets;
c) Conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, their setting, and buildings of architectural or historic interest, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and archaeological sites;
d) Protecting heritage assets from development that is likely to adversely impact on the significance, integrity, character or appearance of an asset or its setting;
e) Support historic regeneration schemes through partnership working and seeking funding to enhance heritage and archaeological assets in an appropriate and sympathetic manner, and;
f) Retaining, in situ, archaeological evidence within sites, wherever possible. Where archaeological evidence cannot be retained, the appropriate levels of archaeological investigation and recording should be undertaken prior to the redevelopment of the site.
Current Areas of High Archaeological Potential

At present, eighteen Areas of High Archaeological Potential have been identified. These are shown in map 4.9 of the borough’s Core Strategy, and were drawn up in the 1980s with slight revisions in 1992 and 1996. These were based upon then current archaeological information, and largely concentrated on known sites and finds. The current list does not have any supporting statements or justifications.

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Table 1 - existing AHAPs
Proposed Areas of High Archaeological Potential

Methodology and rationale

Since the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning) in 1991, and subsequent national planning documents, there has been a significant increase in archaeological investigations in response to development.

This review has primarily sought to capture the archaeological information generated as a response to recent archaeological field work, the results of which are held in the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER). The GLHER houses the ‘grey literature’ reports from all archaeological investigations undertaken in the borough, in addition to mapped stray finds and other archaeological information. It also has full descriptions of all listed building and scheduled ancient monuments, as well as information on the locally listed buildings within the borough. In addition, cartographic and documentary sources were interrogated; especially holdings at the Bexley Local Studies Library, the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre and Kent County Council.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential are meant to act as planning flags, highlighting to members of the planning department, applicants and members of the public places where there is a greater potential for significant archaeological deposits to be present. These areas are often based upon historic town centres, Roman settlement areas or places where prehistoric activity is known to have taken occurred. Archaeological deposits in these areas are particularly susceptible to impact caused by development.

AHAPs can aid in understanding the potential significance of archaeological deposits, which is a requirement under paragraph 128 of the NPPF. They may also assist the local planning authority in establishing validation requirements and in assessing applications where harm to the historic environment may be a factor (NPPF, para. 135). Archaeological remains may exist outside of designated areas, and should be assessed individually when appropriate; however the AHAPs should capture the most significant sites and deposits.

Proposed Areas of High Archaeological Potential

The review proposes the adoption of eighteen Areas of High Archaeological Potential. In the main these are derived from the existing areas designations, but two present areas are proposed for deletion and several new areas introduced. The review also suggests combining several current AHAPs, where thematic approaches lead to a merging of existing areas. It also seeks to highlight specific character areas
within wider AHAPs – for example at Erith and Roman Welling – which sit inside wider designated areas.

Each proposed area has a written description, which is based upon historic and archaeological information. These descriptions are not intended to detail each and every investigation or find spot, but rather to encapsulate the overall character and significance of the historic landscape.

Each description includes a statement on the area’s significance and suggestions for research topics based upon present national and regional research agendas, including the Research Framework for London Archaeology (MoLAS, 2003) and the forthcoming Strategy for Researching the Historic Environment in London (MoLA, in draft). The suggested research topics may be useful in preparing method statements for programmes of archaeological work secured through the planning process, but should not be considered exclusive and specific research questions should be assessed on a site by site basis. The suggested research topics can also be used by academics, students and members of the public to steer and encourage thematic research and foster a wider understanding of the historic environment.

Further desk based research and archaeological field investigation will be able to improve overall understanding of the archaeological horizon, and inform future decision making particularly in regards to significance and preservation. The proposed Areas of High Archaeological Potential, therefore, should be seen as evolving and periodically be reviewed.
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*Table 2 - proposed AHAPs*
**Section 2**
The following are the detailed character assessments, with suggested significance and research topics, for each of the proposed new Areas of High Archaeological Potential.

**Proposed Area 1**
**Thamesmead and Erith Marshes**

This Area of High Archaeological Potential considers the extended marshland that extends from the Thames foreshore to the southern base of the natural east-west ridge bisecting the borough.

This marshland is typified by localised areas of gravel highs interwoven by river channels and wetland environments. From the Mesolithic through 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.

Although prehistoric material, particularly flint tools, have been recovered throughout the AHAP, the concentration of finds and archaeological features appears to be situated from east of Jenningtree Point to Crayford Ness.

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, scrapers and awls, along with a substantial quantity of burnt 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.

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. 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.
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.

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 Summerton 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.

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 AHAP 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, yet at places are eroding out of the foreshore or are very near to 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

This area expands upon the present Area 2 – Thameside (Existing Map AHAP 2 – Thameside). It extends to the north to the borough boundary in the centre of the Thames, and to the south to the A2016 to capture the most intensive areas of Mesolithic and Bronze Age activity.
Proposed Area 2
Erith

This Area of High Archaeological Potential 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.

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.

There is increasing evidence for Roman occupation of the Erith area, although within the Erith AHAP 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.

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.

The nave, chancel and west tower of the Grade 2* listed church of St John the Baptist date to the 12th century, although there may be some earlier elements. The church was altered and expanded throughout the medieval period, and heavily restored in the 19th century. Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a 13th 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.

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 13th 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.
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 19th century.

Throughout the 17th – 19th 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 and the Royal Dockyard.

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 AHAP.
3. Investigate and understand the Royal Dockyards and associated activity.

**Recommended change from existing Area of High Archaeological Potential**

This is a new AHAP which sits within the larger Thameside and Erith Mashes AHAP (Existing Map AHAP 2 - Thameside). It is mapped separately as it has a distinct character which can be directly associated with the medieval settlement at Erith.
Proposed Area 3
Lesnes Abbey

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is situated within Lesnes Abbey Woods, and extends to the south from Abbey Road. It is concentrated upon the ruins of the 12th century Lesnes Abbey and other associated features. Lesnes Abbey ruins are a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and are also listed Grade 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 running ridge that sharply drops to the low-level marsh land below. The underlying geology of the area is the Harwich Formation (sand and gravel), and within the woodlands, although outside of the AHAP, 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.

Lesnes Abbey, of St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr, was founded in 1271 by Richard de Luci, Chief Justiciar, 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 20th century. The site was extensively excavated between 1909 – 1913, and again in the 1950s. The complex follows the general pattern of a 12th 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.

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. The remains of further buildings associated with the Abbey may exist under the present formal gardens to the south.

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.
Also within Lesnes Abbey Woods, but outside of the Area of High Archaeological Priority, is a possible Bronze Age tumulus, surrounded by a ditch that was first excavated in the 19th century. A number of deneholes have also been identified in the woods.

**Potential significance and research topics**

This Area of High Archaeological Potential, containing the Scheduled ruins of a 12th century monastic establishment, is of national importance. Prehistoric activity within the AHAP and surrounding woods are of local significance.

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.
2. Further investigation and understanding of the prehistoric activity in the area.

**Recommend change from existing Area of High Archaeological Potential**

None. The boundaries of the existing AHAP 1 – Lesnes Abbey should remain the same (Existing Map AHAP 1 – Lesnes Abbey).
Proposed Area 4
Crayford Marshes and River Darent

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is centred upon the floodplains of the Crayford Marshes, at the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Darent. The marshes are low-lying and often marginal land, generally sitting 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.

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.

The Neolithic and Bronze Age periods are well represented within and adjacent the AHAP. Timber structures noted along the Thames foreshore, particularly any 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 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps. This has since disappeared, and the attribution is uncertain. Better documented are several Bronze Age hoards from 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.

A Roman cremation cemetery has been noted from Jenningsstree 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 AHAP 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 AHAP, has identified a possible wharf, landing stage and jetty, which may have provided transport or access to and from the river.

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

Potential significance and research topics

This AHAP 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.
Relatively little modern development has taken place on the Marshes, so truncation should be low. The overall significance of the AHAP 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 Jenningtree 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

This AHAP is derived from the existing AHAPs 2 – Thameside, 3 – River Darent and 18 – Thames Alluvium and Crayford Marshes (Existing Maps AHAP 2, 3 and 18). It has been modified to avoid areas of past extraction and present landfill.
Proposed Area 5
Howbury Moated Manor

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

The AHAP 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.

Although the main archaeological point of interest within this AHAP is the medieval manor, the Crayford Marshes and River Darent valley have significant prehistoric potential, and remains from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, in particular, have been recorded from the north and south of the AHAP. 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 1st and 2nd Ordnance Survey maps but absent from later editions. The attribution is uncertain.

The place name ‘Hoobury’ was first recorded in the 9th 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.

The medieval manor dates to the 11th century, and consists of a wet moat and ashlar walls surrounding a moat platform. The moat itself is c. 7m wide, and the revetted walls survive to a similar height. Although the walls have been rebuilt, the lower courses appear to be 12th or 13th century in construction. The bridge providing access to the platform has long been demolished. Within the walls are the ruins of a 16th century house, which remained in use until the 1930s.

Adjacent to the manor site is a 17th century tithe barn, which is a Grade 2 listed building. The AHAP also includes a number of locally listed 19th century cottages, outbuildings and an oast house.

Potential significance and research topics
The AHAP 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

The boundary of the existing AHAP (Existing Map AHAP 4 – Howbury Farm) should remain unchanged.
Proposed Area 6
Howbury Grange

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is situated within the Crayford Marshes, 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 AHAP lies at between c. 3 – 12mOD, with the land immediately surrounding the Grange at a plateau of c. 12mOD. The AHAP is mapped to avoid previous quarries and areas of clay and gravel extraction and subsequent landfill.

The area retains a high potential for archaeological remains from the prehistoric periods. To the immediate north of the AHAP, at Howbury Park, excavations in advance of the construction of a barrow pit in 1994 recovered a scatter of both burnt 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 AHAP, 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.

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

Potential significance and research topics
This APAH 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential
This AHAP is derived, in part, from the existing Area 3 – River Darent (Existing Map AHAP 3 – River Darent). It has been modified to avoid areas of past extraction and present landfill, and includes non-truncated land to the east of the railway line.
Proposed Area 7
Crayford Brickearths

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is focused 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 19th 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.

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.

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.

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 affect 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.

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 Area of High Archaeological Potential
None – this area is the same as existing AHAP 12 – Crayford Brickearths (Existing
Map AHAP 12 – Crayford Brickearths).
Proposed Area 8
East Wickham

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is focussed around the medieval and later village of East Wickham, which was, until the mid 19th century, within the parish of Plumstead. The AHAP is concentrated along Upper Wickham Lane and Wickham Street, and includes the land surrounding St Michael’s Old Church. The geology is of the Harwich Formation, and the area is c. 50mOD.

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.

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 12th 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 2*. It functioned as the parish church until the early 20th century when the new church, also dedicated to St Michael, was built to the southeast. Some of the fixtures and fittings from the medieval church were relocated to the new building.

Documentary records suggest that the 15th 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 18th 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 15th century date and probably originated as a timber framed medieval hall-house, 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.

Mid 18th century maps of East Wickham show that the village was considerably larger that 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 AHAP.

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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

This is a new AHAP. It combines two existing areas, St. Michael’s Church (Area 10) and East Wickham House (Area 13) into a coherent whole that encompasses the entire medieval village and that provides an appropriate context (Existing Maps AHAP 10 and 13).
Proposed Area 9
Watling Street

This Area of High Archaeological Potential 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 silts, clay and gravel.

There is a small scattering of prehistoric material recovered from within the AHAP. 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.

The route of Watling Street was formalised in the 1st century AD, and was the major 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 AHAP 10.

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 19th century that the area saw significant growth following the introduction of the railway and increased market gardening activity. Some of the 18th and 19th century coaching inns survive today.

To the east, the growth of Bexleyheath along the roadside was also of mid-19th 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 AHAP 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 indentified in excavation, and if so, what is its nature? 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

This AHAP should remain broadly the same as the existing AHAP Area 5 – Watling Street (Existing Map AHAP 5 – Watling Street). The only recommended change is a slight expansion of the area in the southeast to include the area up to Selwyn Crescent, reflecting the present understanding of the extent of the Roman settlement at Welling.
Proposed Area 10

Roman Welling

Watling Street, which dates to the 1st 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.

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 No. 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.

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 roadside ditches, a possible well, and evidence for post and beam roadside 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 1st and 2nd 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 of local and 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

This new AHAP sits within proposed AHAP Area 9 – Watling Street. It has been separated as it has a distinct character.
Proposed Area 11
Danson House

The focal point of this Area of High Archaeological Potential is the 18th 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 Nathanial Richmond, is a registered park and garden.

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.

The estate ‘Densynton’ is first mentioned in documents dating to the late 13th century. In the 16th and 17th 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 18th 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.

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.

A number of alterations were made by numerous owners throughout the 19th 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 are 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 18th century architectural and landscape trends and management. The house marks one of several 18th 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-18th 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential
This is a new AHAP. The boundaries are the same as Danson House registered park and garden.
Proposed Area 12
Crayford

This Area of High Archaeological Potential is centred upon the multi-period settlement and occupation area at Crayford, where the Roman Watling Street crossed the Cray. The AHAP also includes the Scheduled Ancient Monument of 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.

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.

The first signs of definite settlement date to the Iron Age, with two separate settlements identified. The first is at Iron Mill Lane, were 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 2nd century AD.

Crayford was built up around a crossing point of Watling Street and the River Cray, and unsurprising there is a significant Roman presence in the AHAP. Watling Street runs straight through the area except for a slight bend where it alters course to ford the Cray. The settlement has been mooted as the site of Roman Noviomagus (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.

Crayford is first mentioned in historical sources in the 9th century, and relates that the Britons founded the 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.
There are a number of medieval manors in the Crayford area, including the 14th century Crayford Manor House to the northwest of St Paulinus’. Better known is Hall Place, which is first mentioned in the 13th 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 a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

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 16th 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 19th century, continuing a tradition of local industry.

**Potential significance and research topics**

The Crayford AHAP 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. The Roman settlement and early medieval village are of local to local-regional significance, 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 Iron Age settlements in the area as well as the Roman road and associated activity, including investigation of possible villa sites.
3. 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?
4. Further investigation and understanding of the post-medieval and industrial developments along the River Cray.

**Recommended change from existing Area of High Archaeological Potential**

The existing AHAP (Existing Map AHAP 6 – Crayford) has been extended to the north and west to include the area surrounding Crayford Manor House and May Place.
Proposed Area 13
Blendon Hall

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

The earliest archaeological remains recovered from within the AHAP 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.

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.

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 crenellated, 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 this 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

The southeast corner of the existing AHAP (Existing Map AHAP 14 – Blendon Hall), should be extended to include the historic water features. This would extend the area up to and including 61 The Drive and 17 The Sanctuary.

1st edition OD map, showing the Blendon Hall estate with the proposed AHAP overlain in red
Proposed Area 14
Old Bexley

This Area of High Archaeological Potential 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.

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.

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 – 14th centuries. Two tile-kiln ovens were found in the gardens of Cray House, also dating to the 13th century. The parish church of St Mary retains elements dating to the 12th and 13th centuries, but there may have been an earlier church on the site.

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 18th and 19th 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 AHAP. 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential**

None. This Area of High Archaeological significance should remain the same as the existing, Area 7 – Old Bexley (Existing Map AHAP 7 – Old Bexley).
**Proposed Area 15**  
**Mount Mascal and Vale Mascal**

This Area of High Archaeological Potential 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 AHAP. The valley bottom is alluvium and clay, and the sides gravel.

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 19th 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.

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.

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, Nathanial 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 are 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 18th 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 18th century idyllic landscape. To date there has been no archaeological fieldwork within the AHAP.
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 Area of High Archaeological Potential

At present, AHAP Area 17 – Mount Mascal, includes only the area surrounding Mount Mascal and Home Close Farms (Existing MAP AHAP 17 – Mount Mascal). It should be extended to include the tree avenue and lodge associated with the estate, and also Vale Mascal and its gardens.

Mount Mascal and Vale Mascal, 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, showing proposed AHAP overlain in red
Proposed Area 16
Faesten Dic and Cavey’s Spring

This Area of High Archaeological Potential captures the extreme end of Faesten Dic, a large number of deneholes and a post-medieval tile kiln.

Although there have been a number of substantial prehistoric finds from the vicinity of the AHAP, 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.

In the extreme southeast corner of the AHAP is the end of the substantial earthwork known as Faesten Dic. This Scheduled Ancient Monument runs for c. 1.7km though 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 5th or 6th 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.

Also within the AHAP 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.

The last archaeological feature in the AHAP is a discrete tile kiln, on Tile Kiln Lane, which dates to the 17th – 18th 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. There is no evidence, however, 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 AHAP captures archaeological activity from several periods, particularly the prehistoric and Saxon. The significance is best seen across the wider landscape of
finds and earthworks that appear to be concentrated to the east, within Kent County Council.

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

**Recommended change from existing Area of High Archaeological Potential**

The proposed AHAP is considerably smaller that the existing AHAP Area 15 – Faesten Dic and Cavey’s Spring (Existing Map AHAP 15 – Faesten Dic and Cavey’s Spring). It is reduced from 150.70 acres to 66.90 acres. This change acknowledges the lack of archaeological material found in the western half of the existing AHAP, and concentrates the area along the Kent border, where past activity appears be focussed.
Proposed Area 17
River Cray Valley

This large Area of High Archaeological Potential 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.

As with the rest of the Cray Valley, there is a significant prehistoric presence within the AHAP. Two sites in particular stand out in importance, in different areas of the AHAP. In Foots Cray, at the North Cray Gravel Pit on Baugh Road and Rectory Lane, adjacent to All Saints Church, a substantial amount of Palaeolithic material has been recovered. This includes 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.

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 1st 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.

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 14th 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 19th 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 AHAP, 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 15th century date, has been moved from North Cray Road to the Weald and Downland Museum.

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 16th century with significant rebuilding in the 18th 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 16th century, although this may have replaced an earlier medieval house, and in the late 18th 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 18th century.

**Recommended change from existing Area of High Archaeological Potential**

None. This AHAP remains the same as existing Area 9 – River Cray (Existing Map AHAP 9 – River Cray).
Proposed Area 18
Frognal House

This Area of High Archaeological Potential concentrates on the manor and gardens of Frognal House, likely in continuous occupation since the 13th century. The AHAP 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.

Although the site was first mentioned in a charter of 1253, the standing Frognal House is a large country house, mainly of 17th and 18th century date, arranged around a central courtyard. The southern range has its origins as a 15th century timber framed hall house, but no physical elements earlier than c. 1550 survive, when a phase of masonry building was begun. By the 16th century the house was decidedly old fashioned in look and aspect, and a major rebuilding took place in the 17th century. This works programme 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 18th century, removing some of the more formal elements of the house and landscaping design. The house was converted into a hospital in the 20th century.

A major programme of archaeological work was undertaken on the site in 1998 by Pre-Construct Archaeology in advance of renovations. 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 Area of High Archaeological Potential
None. This AHAP is the same as existing Area 16 – Frognal House (Existing Map AHAP 16 – Frognal House).
Section 3

This Section describes two existing Areas of High Archaeological Potential proposed for deletion.

Existing Area 8
Churchfield Wood

This Area of High Archaeological Potential has been drawn in relation to a possible Iron Age ditched enclosure, discovered in 1957 during buildings works on Cold Blow Crescent (Existing Map AHAP 8 – Churchfield Wood).

The enclosure ditch is recorded as being of two ditches, the large c. 9ft wide at 4ft deep at points. There were no finds from the primary fill of the ditch, but a ‘mass’ of potsherds was recovered from the upper fill, including pot-boilers, some animal bones and possibly the fragment of a loomweight. No other associated finds or features can be definitively ascribed to the area.

It is recommended that this existing AHAP be deleted.
Existing Area 11
Wickham Lane

This Area of High Archaeological Potential appears to have been designated as it marks the extreme end of a valley base that is situated to the west, in Greenwich (Existing Map AHAP 11 – Wickham Lane).

There are no nearby archaeological find spots or features, and the inclusion of this as an AHAP is unusual. It should be deleted.
Bibliography and acknowledgements

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London Borough of Bexley
Areas of High Archaeological Potential Review Project
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Acknowledgements

Stabler Heritage would like to thank Gordon Fraser, LB Bexley, for initiating and commissioning this project and providing overall guidance, assistance and support. Martin Baker of the Bexley Archaeology Group provided welcome early comments and feedback. The staff of the Bexley Local Studies Library was always helpful, as was Melanie Millward and Stuart Cakebread of the Greater London Historic Environment Record. Thanks also to Mark Stevenson, Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, for guidance and in reading a draft of this report.