



## Gillingham Historic Urban Character Area 4 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This area comprises an historic rural settlement east of Bay Bridge across the Shreen Water on the road to Bowridge Hill and East and West Knoyle, on the eastern side of Gillingham. It is the only character area not to contain modern housing estates or modern infill, although there is a small area of modern detached houses on the edge of the settlement.

### **Topography and Geology**

Bay lies on the western slope, at the southern end of a N-S aligned ridge, known as Bowridge Hill, between the Shreen Water and the River Lodden. The geology of the area comprises Kimmeridge Clay.

### **Urban Structure**

Bay remains essentially a rural settlement appended to the edge of the urban area of Gillingham and linked to it by Bay Bridge. The limits of this settlement correspond closely with the original extent of the roadside common along Bay Road. It comprises an L-shaped settlement with one through road (Bay Road) and a smaller road (Bay Lane) running southwards at the west end. There are farms along both roads and large relatively shallow irregular rectilinear plots along both sides of Bay Lane and the north side of Bay Road.

### **Present Character**

Figure 73 shows the present day historic urban character types. The character area is dominated by Historic Rural Settlement along Bay Road and Bay Lane, with small areas of Other Modern Housing at the periphery of the settlement. There are two Farms and a Maltings (now converted to a nursing home). The eastern part of the character area comprises Remnant Fields and Paddocks on both side of the Shreen Water around Bay Bridge.



Figure 76: Bay Farm House, Bay Lane.

### **Time Depth**

The original rural settlement lay along the west side of Bay Lane on the fringe of a wide roadside common in similar fashion to Ham Common. Bay Lane was the northern extension of Hardings Lane in Newbury during the medieval period. Boundaries along the back of plots fronting on to Bay Road run along the boundaries of the medieval roadside common. These were enclosed following the deforestation of Gillingham Forest in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The maltings were active from at least the 1840s, though part of the malthouse building dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Modern development has generally been limited to plots subdivided from earlier ones within the former roadside common.

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The settlement pattern essentially comprises detached cottages, farmhouses and houses set centrally within large plots along Bay Road and Bay Lane. Some of these plots have become subdivided during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but still contain detached houses.



Figure 77: The Malthouse, Bay Road.

## Gillingham Historic Urban Character Area 4 Built Character

### **Building types**

Buildings in Bay include vernacular farmhouses and cottages, including typical Dorset long houses with steeply pitched gable ended roofs. Bay Farm, Baldrick's End (Figure 78) and Cherry End Cottage are good examples of this type. The Malthouse is a symmetrically designed Georgian style house with later additions including stables and the maltings themselves. There are a few 19<sup>th</sup> century suburban villas including Bay House (Figure 79) and Tresillian (Figure 80); symmetrical houses with hipped roofs. Modern housing in Bay tends to be in the form of detached bungalows and houses with a mixture of hipped and gabled roofs.

### **Building Materials**

The 18<sup>th</sup> and earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings tend to be built in coursed and/or squared Greensand or Corallian limestone rubble. Earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century suburban villas are built in coursed rubble with brick dressings and slate roof. Later 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached houses are built entirely from brick. In general the area displays a mixture of slate and tiled roofs. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century houses use a wider mixture of materials, including more of a non-local origin.

### **Key Buildings**

*17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular farmhouses and cottages:* Bay Farm, Cherry End Cottage, Baldrick's End, Riverside Cottage

*19<sup>th</sup> century villas:* Bay House, Tresillian

*19<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings:* The Malthouse, The Old Stables



Figure 78: Baldrick's End, Bay Lane.



Figure 79: Bay House, Bay Road.



Figure 80: Tresillian, Bay Lane.

## Gillingham Historic Urban Character Area 5 Archaeology

### Archaeological Investigations

Two archaeological investigations have been undertaken, both of them in the river floodplain on the western edge of this character area (Figure 81; Appendix 3, Nos. 18-19). The evaluation in advance of housing development at Barnaby Mead revealed some evidence for late Saxon and medieval settlement and for a possible Roman trackway (Valentin 2001). Some evidence for Neolithic activity was recorded during the construction of a swimming pool for Gillingham Grammar School in 1912.

### Archaeological Character

The archaeological interventions that have taken place within this area suggest that the archaeological character is closely bound with the road, river crossing and medieval settlement history of the place. The evidence indicates that the eastern part of the current Bay Road is on the course of an earlier route, possibly dating from the prehistoric period, but probably from the Romano-British period. The line of Bay Road, prior to its diversion west to Bay Bridge seems to have continued further south, crossing the Shreen at a ford, now the site of a sluice north of Town Mill. From there the road may have continued through the centre of Gillingham

either in an easterly direction towards Cold Harbour and Wyke and/or a south westerly direction to common Mead Lane. Both routes pass through potential Romano-British settlement sites. The Late Saxon pottery from behind Bay Farm suggests that the settlement of Bay dates from before the conquest and it may be that evidence of Romano-British settlement also awaits discovery here.

A small number of historic boundaries are marked on Figure 81. These are the remnants of the edge of the roadside Common and later subdivisions within it following enclosure and recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map.

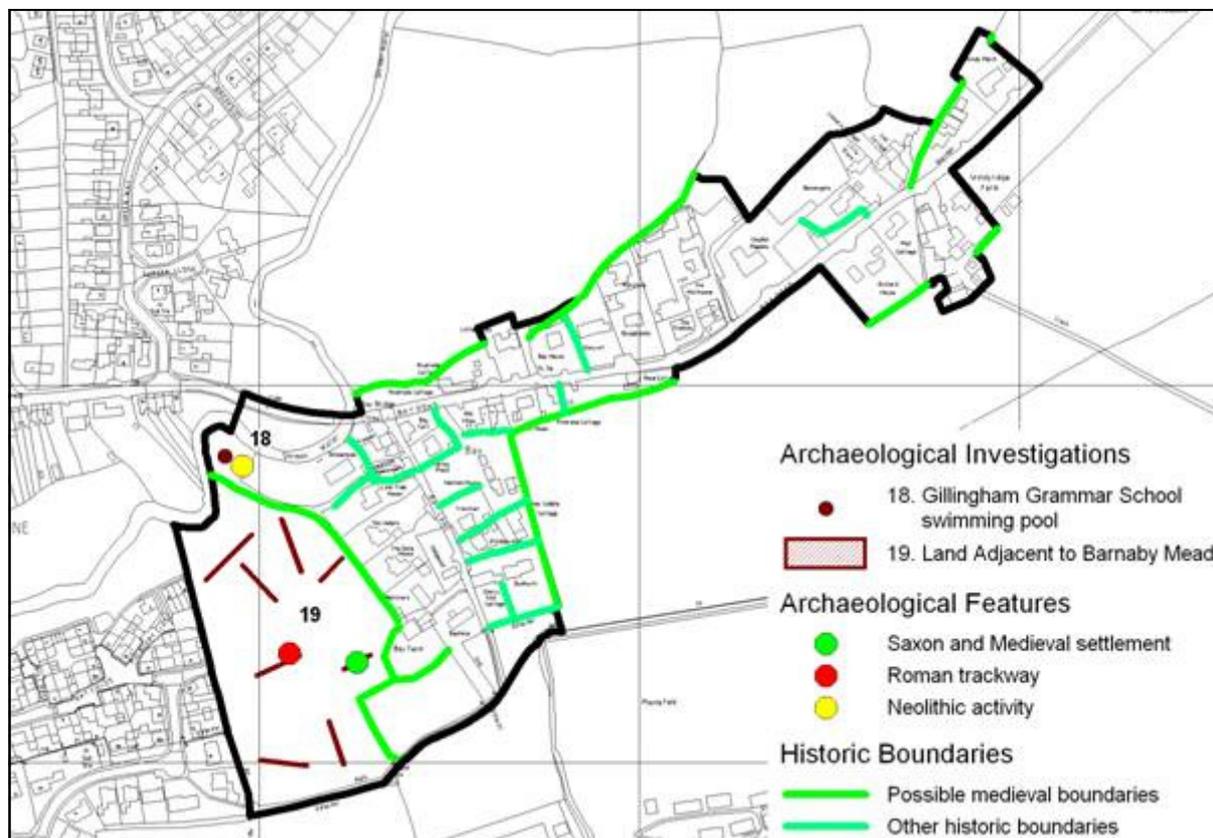


Figure 81: Archaeological investigations in Historic Urban Character Area 5.

**Gillingham Historic Urban Character Area 5  
Designations**

***Listed Buildings***

There are no Listed Buildings in the Character Area.

***Conservation Areas***

The entire character area lies outside the Gillingham Conservation Area (Figure 39).

***Registered Historic Parks and Gardens***

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Character Area.

***Scheduled Monuments***

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area.

### Gillingham Historic Urban Character Area 5 Evaluation

#### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. The structure and layout strongly reflects its origin as a historic rural settlement. There are a number of well preserved historic buildings, including farm buildings and cottages and a former malthouse. Although there are a significant number of modern houses within the area, they are of a similar scale to the historic buildings and are set within plots subdivided from and preserving the boundaries of the pre-existing Bay Common.

#### ***Sensitivity to Large Scale Development***

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The character of the area is one of single detached houses and cottages set within individual plots along the roads, reflecting the enclosure from the common. Any large scale development is likely to destroy historic plot boundaries.

#### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. The archaeological

interventions that have taken place have demonstrated the potential for remains relating to the Neolithic, Roman, Saxon and medieval periods. In particular, there is significant potential for remains of settlement dating from the Roman to medieval periods surviving in the area. This provides the potential for answering questions not only on the origins of the settlement at Bay, but also on the development of Gillingham town from its pre-urban landscape setting. In particular there is the potential for understanding further the relationship of Gillingham town to a pre-urban track way and pre-existing dispersed settlement sites at Bay and Common Mead.

Archaeological investigations have also demonstrated the potential for the survival of prehistoric deposits in the area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 4, 11 and 19-25 (Part 7).

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Historic rural settlement of Bay
- Good survival of detached historic buildings
- Surviving boundaries of Bay Common
- Post-medieval maltings