

Gosport Borough Council

# Forton Road Conservation Area Appraisal

November 2008



Places

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for Gosport*

**GOSPORT**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



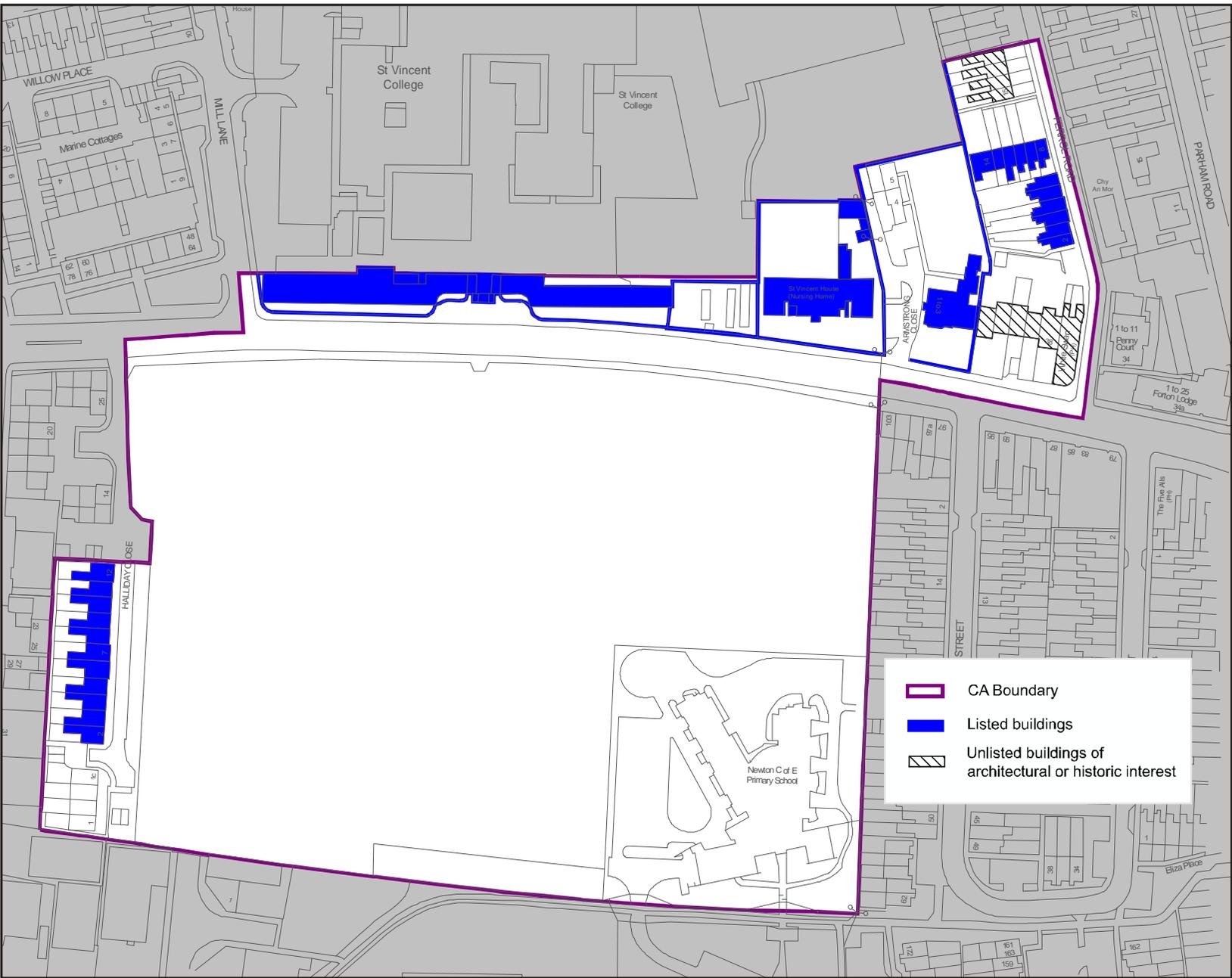
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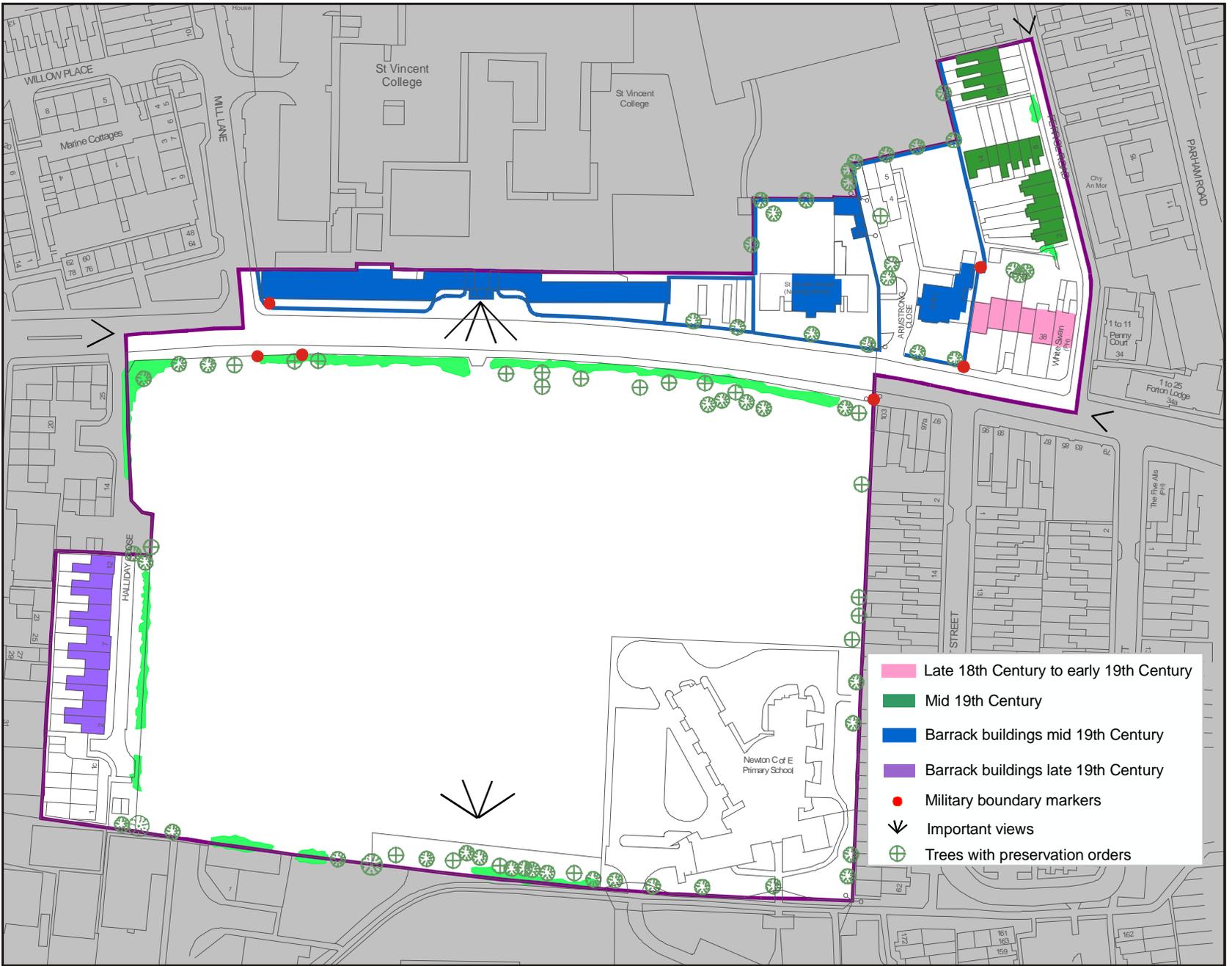
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Forton Conservation Area  
Designations



**Forton Conservation Area  
Building Phases**



- Late 18th Century to early 19th Century
- Mid 19th Century
- Barrack buildings mid 19th Century
- Barrack buildings late 19th Century
- Military boundary markers
- Important views
- Trees with preservation orders

## **Forton Conservation Area Appraisal**

### **Background**

The Forton Conservation Area was designated in 1983 to ensure that all future developments would 'preserve or enhance' its historic and architectural character. The Conservation Area contains buildings of architectural and historic interest, many of which are Listed Buildings.

### **Scope and Structure of the Appraisal**

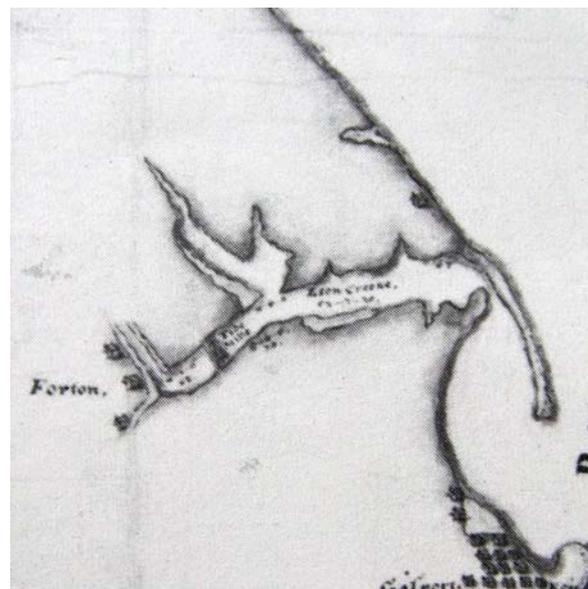
This document is intended to act as a guide to the buildings and features of interest that make an important contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. It also assesses the development of Forton, its special historic and architectural character, and any areas that may benefit from enhancement.

The need to designate Conservation Areas is often illustrated by the ways in which new buildings or inappropriate modern improvements have a major impact on the local character. The distinctive character of both the buildings and spaces within the Forton Conservation Area are therefore highlighted in this document.

### **Character Statement: The Area's Historic Development**

Forton has contributed greatly to the development of Gosport. In the town's early development the village farmers and millers provided much of its fresh produce. Forton Mill occupied land which extended down both sides of Forton Creek and across the Fareham Road to Ann's Hill. The earliest record of a Mill on the site dates back as far as 1284. When Priddy's Hard Armaments Depot expanded the owner of the Mill, Matthew

Carter, who also owned much of the land around the creek, sold a parcel of land to the Board of Ordnance for the construction of a new military hospital. However, by 1800 the new Royal Hospital at Haslar adequately met the needs of the area's military sick and it was decided that Forton would be better used as a barracks. As a result the design of the proposed hospital buildings had to be altered and an elegant complex was completed in 1807 along with a parade ground, which at one time was believed to be the largest in the country. At the time the site was described as having 'four very lofty pavilions, connected by arcades of great extent with a parade ground of some acres. On the opposite square is the entrance gate with the apartments for officers.'



*De La Fabvollière map showing Forton c.1665*

During the early 1800's the Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI) were expanding rapidly into their base at Clarence Barracks (Portsmouth) and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1848 they moved to Forton Barracks. With the influx of military personnel and their families the once isolated village of Forton began to expand and develop the character which we see today. In addition to the main complex of barrack buildings a Commandants residence (St. Vincent House) was constructed and the neighbouring

residence (formerly named Cedar Cottage, now No.1 Armstrong Close) was requisitioned for use by the Barracks' Second Commanding Officer.

Forton Barracks continued to grow steadily and contribute to the improvement of the village. By the mid to late-nineteenth century, many terraces of houses had been constructed around the barracks, which sat at the core of the expanding settlement. The mill and millpond were purchased by the Admiralty in 1858. The millpond was filled in as it was believed, probably correctly, that the high incidence of fatal diseases amongst the Marines was due to the poor state of the foreshore at low tide.

Whenever money was available it was used to improve and extend facilities for the Marines and not for the necessary everyday maintenance of the buildings and the surrounding land. These facilities included the building of a theatre, concert room and gymnasium as well as the playing fields known as Forton Field opposite the Main Gate. A small school opened for the children of married Marines. This became so popular that it outgrew its first premises and, during the mid 1890s, was moved further down the Mill Lane side of the Barracks to a new building with better facilities. Married Quarters for Officers were constructed during the 1890s and now form No's 2-12 Halliday Close. The construction of the tramway in the early 1880s would have improved links to the settlement and is likely to have resulted in further growth.



*RMLI Canteen at Forton Barracks c.1914*

In 1923, when the Royal Military Light Infantry and the Royal Marine Artillery amalgamated, the whole Barracks were in desperate need of basic repair costing approximately £60,000. This was too large a sum for the Admiralty to find so the Portsmouth Division of the Royal Marines moved back to Eastney on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1923. Forton Barracks remained empty for four years until 1927, when it was commissioned as a training establishment for Naval cadets and renamed HMS St Vincent.

During 1939 the cadets were evacuated to the Isle of Man and St Vincent was used as a training centre for the Fleet Air Arm until it was re-commissioned as the Boys' Training Establishment in 1946. However, following reorganisation in 1968 the establishment was moved to HMS Raleigh at Torpoint (Cornwall) and by 1969 the military had vacated the site. Following the demolition of much of the site during the early 1970s, the remaining buildings were used as a secondary school and then as St Vincent Sixth Form College.



*Aerial photograph c.1960, before demolition*

## **Detailed Area Appraisals**

The Conservation Area is split into two sections by the A32, which is the main route into Gosport. This separates Forton Field and Halliday Close from the entrance to the former Barracks. Ferrol Road provides a further area with its own distinctive character. There is a wide range of architectural styles present in the Conservation Area and a large number of the buildings are Listed. Unlisted, pre-twentieth century buildings are also of historic or architectural importance and make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The mature landscape makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and there are a number of Tree Preservation Orders in place.

### ***Former Forton Barracks (front range)***



The main visual focus along this section of Forton Road is the front range of the former Barracks, which now houses part of St. Vincent Sixth Form College. Dating from the late 1840s, this spectacular range of buildings consists of the main entrance and front range of buildings. Its architect was Captain H. James (RE) and, along with the boundary walls and railings, it is Listed at Grade II. The central arched gateway and clock tower are prominent features within the street scene and provide an important focal point when viewed across Forton Field.

This gateway originally led into the parade ground and a range of buildings, which were demolished in the early 1970s. The frontage is enclosed by an important low wall with modern period-style railings. A notable feature of interest is the boundary stone set into the wall at the junction of Mill Lane and Forton Road.



*Boundary marker at junction of Mill Lane and Forton Road*

### ***No. 1 Armstrong Close and St Vincent House***

No. 1 Armstrong Close (formerly Cedar Cottage) and St. Vincent House were also associated with Forton Barracks. St. Vincent House was built as the Commandant's residence by Captain H. James (RE) in 1847 and forms a group with the entrance range. Cedar Cottage was requisitioned by the Board of Ordnance soon after its construction in 1849 for use by the Barracks' Second Commanding Officer. Both buildings are set back from the road within large plots of land.

Boundary treatments along this stretch of Forton Road consist of high boundary walls and railings. The front wall of 1 Armstrong Close contains an Admiralty boundary marker. The strongly defined boundaries channel views through the Conservation Area westward towards St. Johns Church and eastward towards a nineteenth century parade of shops and

the modern developments at the corners of Parham Road. A number of large trees also make an important contribution to the character and appearance of this area.



View west along Forton Road

### 36-46 Forton Road

Marked on OS maps of the late nineteenth century as 'Belle View Terrace', the form and appearance of the buildings in this terrace strongly suggest a late-eighteenth century construction date, making them the oldest buildings within the Conservation Area.



Extract from 1891 OS map.

It is possible that the terrace was constructed by the White family, who owned White's shipyard in nearby Ferrol Road (see page 7). An advertisement dating from 1812 mentions 'four new houses near the ropewalk: 4 bed gardens etc in occupation Adml Burton, Miss Gibson, Capt Katon, Mr Ralfs'. Further

adverts suggest that Belle Vue Terrace was also known as Navy Row.

All of the buildings have been periodically modernised resulting in some loss of character. Notably, the original timber windows have been replaced with uPVC. No.36 has been more significantly altered than its neighbours having been used for many years as a Public House (The White Swan). The pub has since fallen out of use. Mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps also show extensions, since demolished, to the front of No's 38-40 and it is likely that these were used as shops. An extension to the front of No. 46 was used firstly as a beerhouse, then as an Independent Chapel and latterly as a shop. The high boundary walls with gatepiers are in keeping with historic boundary treatments.

Opportunities to enhance the historic character of this terrace will be encouraged. The former White Swan PH occupies a prominent corner site and any proposals for its reuse must be mindful of its Conservation Area location.

### Halliday Close and Forton Field



2-12 Halliday Close

No's 2-12 Halliday Close form an important focal point on the western edge of Forton Field. The terrace was originally built as Officers Quarters for the Barracks during the late nineteenth century and is now Listed at Grade II. The Queen Anne style of the terrace is architecturally

distinctive and makes a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. During the Second World War No.1 Halliday Close was destroyed by a bomb, which killed the ten members of the Barrage Balloon 'B' flight crew and two civilians. A memorial plaque was placed in the south-western corner of Forton Field to commemorate those who died. The memorial has since been moved to Ann's Hill Cemetery.

The landscaping of the area around the terrace was part of a Hampshire County Council scheme undertaken during the 1990s. Importantly, this included the reinstatement of street lighting and paving of an historic style and these elements should be retained or enhanced as part of any future schemes in the area.

The modern houses to the south of Halliday Close mirror the general form and scale of the Listed terrace. The boundary between Halliday Close and Forton Field could be improved by replacing the wire fencing with something more in keeping with the historic character of the area.

Forton Field provides a generous open setting for Halliday Close and also allows clear views of the entrance to the former Barracks. The boundary is marked by iron railings to the Forton Road frontage and a number of historic boundary markers identifying the edges of the former Admiralty land remain. These are reflected on the opposite side of the A32 where they mark the extent of the barracks. A high red brick, historic boundary wall marks the eastern edge of the field. Newtown School occupies the south eastern corner of Forton Road and due to its location, scale and design has a neutral impact on the historic character of the Conservation Area.

## ***Ferrol Road***

The weather-boarded houses in Ferrol Road are a unique survival in this area and have a distinctive character. They may originally have housed the boat builders who worked on Forton Lake. The buildings were in the ownership of the White family until Thomas White's bankruptcy in 1857. The Whites owned a boatyard at the end of the road and while the houses may have originally been constructed to house boat builders, the 1851 Census shows that they were all lived in by Royal Marines. Numbers 15-18 may be the 'four unfurnished houses' up for auction in 1857 along with Ferrol Buildings and the shipyard.

Occupying small narrow plots No's 2-7 (consecutive) and No's 8-14 (consecutive) are set at right angles to Ferrol Road and have small front gardens. Both terraces are Listed at Grade II. This road has a character which is different from that in the rest of the Conservation Area as the buildings are of a much smaller scale and views are restricted to those along Ferrol Road itself.



*2-7 Ferrol Road*

No's 15-18 Ferrol Road are built of vitrified bricks with red brick dressings. This terrace is of a similar scale as the Listed cottages and is in keeping with the domestic character of this section of the Conservation Area. The appearance of the terrace could be improved by substituting the uPVC windows with timber replacements and improving the front boundary walls.

## **Enhancement Opportunities**

The following enhancement opportunities will maintain the special character of the Forton Road Conservation Area. The Borough Council will endeavour to:

- Encourage the appropriate repair and restoration of buildings of historic interest within the Conservation Area, and particularly No's 36 to 46 Forton Road which have significant potential to positively enhance the area.
- Encourage the use of appropriate materials in the repair or renewal of boundary walls in the Conservation Area.
- Liaise with Hampshire County Council to encourage improvements to the footpaths and the installation of street lighting that does not detract from the character of the area.
- Seek to limit the amount of street signage, and ensure its location does not detract from key views within the Conservation Area.

## **Archaeology**

The area is likely to be of archaeological interest and merits further investigation into its development. The location of now demolished buildings can be seen on historic maps (see Appendix). With the exception of these sites, archaeological interest is likely to be focused on surviving elements of existing historic buildings.

Further information on the internal and external details of existing buildings may be required in support of potential planning applications. Planning conditions requiring preservation in situ or by record may be considered appropriate in some cases.

## **Grants**

Repair and restoration works to historic buildings in the area may be eligible for an Historic Buildings Grant from the Borough Council. Information on grants can be obtained from the Conservation and Design Section who are able to advise on the merits of proposals and on the application procedure.

Works eligible for grant aid include the repair and restoration of the exterior of the property such as re-pointing, roof repairs, shop front restoration, damp proofing, timber treatment and large-scale structural repairs. Works regarded as routine maintenance and not relating to the historic fabric will not be eligible for assistance.

The Economic Prosperity Section of the Borough Council will be able to advise as to the availability of other sources of financial assistance relevant to commercial properties.

## **Planning Policy and Development Control**

The designation of a Conservation Area places certain requirements on any applicant to submit detailed information to the Local Planning Authority in support of planning applications in or, in appropriate cases, near to the area. The principal effects are that applicants will be required to submit full proposals in support of planning applications within the area so that the implications of these proposals can be considered in detail.

Additionally, applications within a Conservation Area will require a supporting Design and Access Statement. This report would need to explain how the layout, scale and appearance of a proposal preserves or enhances the character of the Conservation Area. Internal and external access to a proposed development would need to have special regard to highway

concerns, access for the emergency services and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. An access statement addressing these, and related issues, would therefore be required. Further information relating to Design and Access Statements can be found on the Gosport Borough Council website: [www.gosport.gov.uk](http://www.gosport.gov.uk)

Conservation Area Consent will be required where it is proposed to demolish a building. For an application to be determined, detailed proposals of the replacement building will be required and this information will be considered alongside other planning issues.

Six weeks written notice of the intention to carry out any works to a tree that is in the Conservation Area and is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order is required by the Local Planning Authority. The Adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan Review (from here referred to as the GBLPR) provides clear policy guidance on what issues need to be considered when submitting an application in a Conservation Area. This appraisal stresses the importance of relating new proposals to their setting and any impact they may have; drawing from the guidance in the GBLPR and any supplementary policy guidance.

Before making an application in the Conservation Area, you are advised to check that your proposal conforms to the relevant planning policies contained within the GBLP. Copies of this document are available from the Planning Policy Section or can be viewed at the Third Floor Development Services Reception at Gosport Town Hall, in local public libraries or on the Gosport Borough Council website at [www.gosport.gov.uk](http://www.gosport.gov.uk)

The Borough Council has also produced guidance on the implications of owning a Listed Building, living in a Conservation Area, and designing or repairing shop fronts. Further advice is available from

English Heritage and through Government policy guidance on heritage related issues: in particular, Planning Policy Guidance notes *PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, and *PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning*.

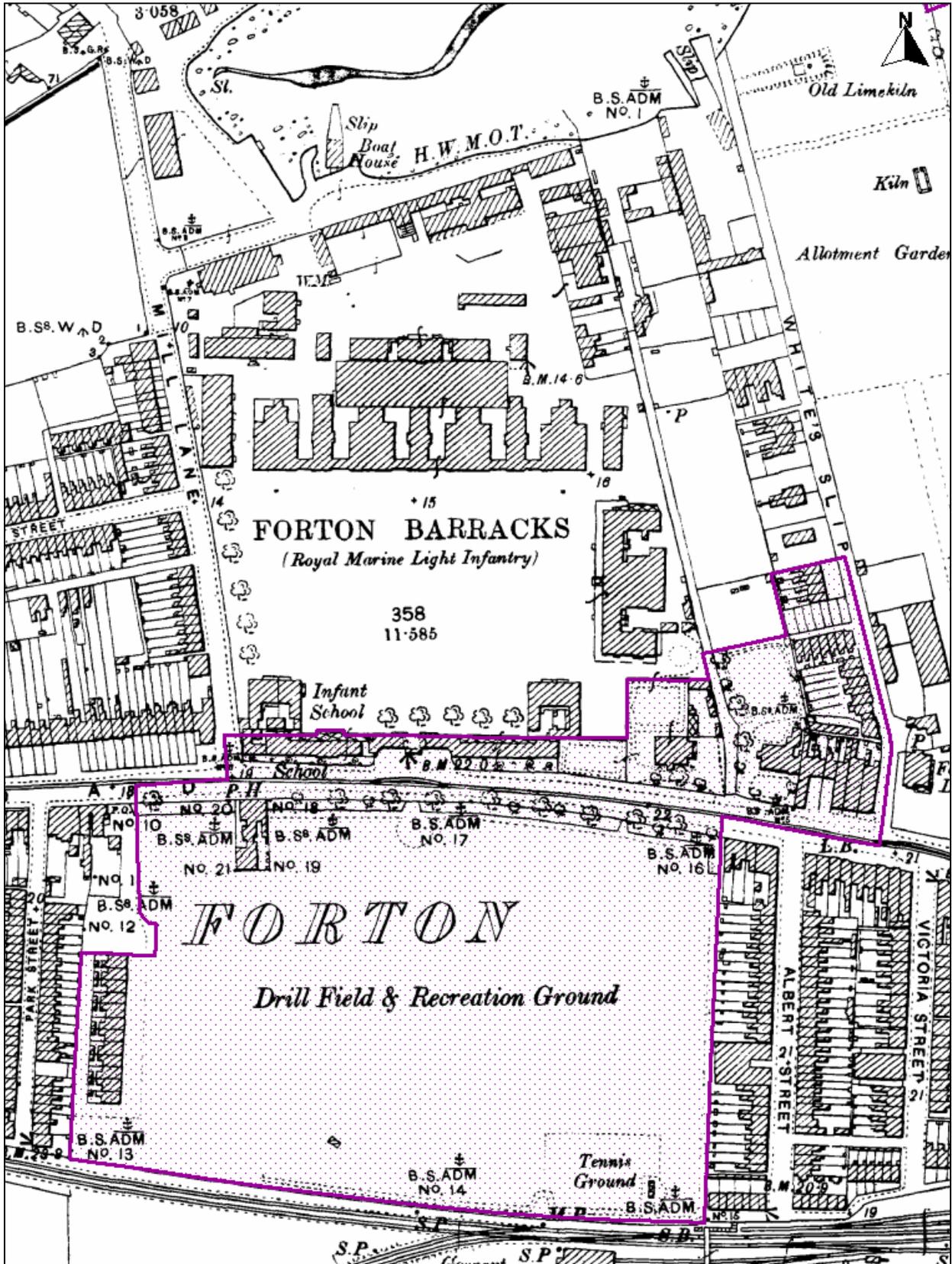
### **Further Information or Advice**

The Borough Council's Conservation and Design Section can provide further information or advice regarding the built heritage of the Borough; in particular with regard to the following;

- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Historic Buildings Grant
- Buildings of Local Interest (The Local List)
- Conservation Planning Policy
- Information on heritage organisations and sources of grant aid

Issues relating to planning policy and planning applications can be discussed with Planning Policy and Development Control respectively. Applicants are encouraged to discuss any proposals at an early stage, prior to the submission of an application.





OS 1897-98