

# Gosport Borough Council

# Stokes Bay Conservation Area Appraisal

## July 2023



## Stokes Bay Conservation Area Appraisal

Produced on behalf of Gosport Borough Council  
by Donald Insall Associates.

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## Executive Summary

Stokes Bay is a unique and special place, rich in historic buildings, landscapes and habitats which are valued by the community.

It is a gently sweeping bay with a crescent-shaped shoreline, characterised by large areas of undeveloped, open coastal landscape interspersed with a series of historic defence structures and archaeological remains. The overall character and appearance of the area is dominated by its proximity to the sea, with impressive views to and from the surrounding coastline and the Solent, which form a picturesque backdrop against which buildings, landscapes and features of the Bay are experienced. Despite clearance and landscaping in the 1960s the large fortifications and extensive archaeological remains of earlier military structures and campaigns have shaped and still define the character and appearance of the area today. The area is relatively sparsely populated, but with a diverse range of structures and buildings; unique military buildings are interspersed with later, small-scale recreational buildings and shelters, as well as picturesque seaside mansions set within former gardens and parkland; reflecting the Bay's dual historic use as both a line of defence and seaside destination.

This report sets out the findings of a series of site investigations, research and consultation activities undertaken in order to understand and articulate the special interest, character and appearance of the area, as well as the issues and opportunities it faces.

The conclusion and recommendations of this report are that the area of Stokes Bay has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' and that it is desirable for the area's character and appearance to be preserved and enhanced. We therefore advise that the area meets the statutory definition of a Conservation Area, and merits designation as such.





## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Report

Donald Insall Associates and BSG Ecology Ltd were appointed by Gosport Borough Council in conjunction with Historic England, to undertake a review of the Stokes Bay area to consider whether it merits designation as a conservation area.

- The aim of the report is to establish:
- What is the historic and architectural interest of the area?
- How is this interest experienced through the character and appearance of the area?
- What elements need to be protected and preserved?
- Where are the opportunities for enhancement or improvement?
- What are the issues which threaten the area's special interest? and,
- Whether the area meets the statutory definition of a conservation area, and merits designation as such.

This Conservation Area Appraisal would help to guide future maintenance and development of the area.

### 1.2 Defining Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the British planning system, conservation areas are considered as '*designated heritage assets*' which

means that any proposals for change or development must assess the effect that the development might have on the significance of the area.

### 1.3 Summary of Related Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The provisions for conservation area designation and management are set out in the following legislation, government planning policy and guidance.

#### 1.3.1 Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires:

- Local planning authorities to determine areas where it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and designate them as conservation areas (section 69 [1])
- Local planning authorities to review their past activities in this area, including existing conservation areas, and to add more conservation areas (section 69 [2])
- Local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed (section 71 [1 and 2])
- In the exercise by local planning authorities of planning functions within the conservation area 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (section 72 [1])

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<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69.

## Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- Offence of failing to obtain planning permission for demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas (section 196D).

## 1.3.2 Government Policy & Guidance

### National Planning Policy Framework

- ‘When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.’ (paragraph 186)
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (paragraph 193)
- Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 194)
- Local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas ‘to enhance or better reveal their significance’ (paragraph 200)
- ‘Not all elements of a [...] Conservation Area [...] will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area [...] should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than

substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the Conservation Area [...] as a whole’ (paragraph 201).

### Planning Policy Guidance

- How can the possibility of harm to conservation areas be assessed? Paragraph 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework is the starting point. An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building. If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its proposed demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area, engaging the tests in paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Loss of a building within a conservation area may alternatively amount to less than substantial harm under paragraph 196. However, the justification for a building’s proposed demolition will still need to be proportionate to its relative significance and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole. The same principles apply in respect of other elements which make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area, such as open spaces.
- What do local planning authorities need to consider before designating new conservation areas? Local planning authorities need to ensure that the area has sufficient special architectural or historic interest to justify its designation as a conservation area. Undertaking a conservation area appraisal may help a local planning authority to make this judgment.
- Do local planning authorities need to review conservation areas? Local planning authorities must review their conservation areas from time to time (section 69(2) of the



Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). A conservation area appraisal can be used to help local planning authorities develop a management plan and plan-making bodies to develop appropriate policies for local and neighbourhood plans. A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

- Is an application for planning permission required to carry out works to an unlisted building in a conservation area? Planning permission is required for the demolition of certain unlisted buildings in conservation areas (known as ‘relevant demolition’). Generally the requirement for planning permission for other works to unlisted buildings in a conservation area is the same as it is for any building outside a conservation area, although some permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation areas. Demolishing an unlisted building in a conservation area, without first obtaining planning permission where it is needed, is an offence under section 196D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

#### 1.4 Method Statement

The following has been undertaken:

##### 1. Review of existing information

A large body of research was already in existence with respect to the historic and architectural interest of Stokes Bay including a programme of archaeological and architectural research by Historic England, the findings of which are presented in *Stokes Bay, Gosport: Five Centuries of Coastal Defence and Gosport* (2019) and *Historic Urban Characterisation Study* (2014). A 2004 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been reviewed in

addition to information provided on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). A number of papers and publications produced by the Friends of Stokes Bay and written by David Moore have also been reviewed.

The ecological desk-based study searched for information on designated sites and habitats and species within the study area. The desk study included a data request to Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and review of readily available information using the sources listed below:

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)
- Gosport Local Plan Proposals Map, Gosport Borough Council website
- Gilkicker Weevil Hampshire Wildlife Trust website
- Friends of Stokes Bay website
- Historical Ecology reports in support of planning applications for development of Gilkicker Fort, Gosport Borough Council

##### 2. Information Gathering: Site survey and research

Site visits were made by Donald Insall Associates on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to undertake fabric and spatial analysis. Buildings and sites were viewed from the public realm and were not inspected internally. A site visit was undertaken by BSG Ecology Ltd on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to undertake a walkover survey of the site to confirm desk study information and to assess particular parts of the study area such as the woodland between Bay House and Alverbank House.



### 3. Community Engagement

A key aim of the project is to understand and clearly articulate what the local community value about the area. We have engaged with relevant community stakeholders to access existing information and understand local views on the value of townscape features, issues and opportunities. We would like to thank all of those who have responded and shared information and knowledge with us. Engagement activities have included individual workshops, meetings, email correspondence and phone calls held with the local community groups, landowners and council officers including:

- Friends of Stokes Bay
- Bay House School
- The Gosport Society
- The Anglesey Conservation Group
- David Moore, local historian and writer
- Chris Daniell, Ministry of Defence, Historic Buildings Advisor

Donald Insall Associates, BSG Ecology and Historic England produced online questionnaires which were advertised on posters in the local area, the Council's social media platforms, on a separate Stokes Bay Conservation Area Designation Facebook page, and within the local school community. The online questionnaires have received 293 public responses and 524 responses from school children.

### 4. Assessment of Special Interest

The assessment of special interest has been undertaken in accordance with the legislative and national planning policy requirements, and based on Historic England's guidance, in

particular, Historic England's *Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) – Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* which provides guidance on conservation area appraisal, designation and management.

### 5. Stakeholder Review

The first draft of this report was shared with Gosport Borough Council, Historic England, Hampshire County Council and the Gosport Society Planning Sub-Committee. Feedback received was discussed in a meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and where appropriate, has been incorporated.

## 2.0 Stokes Bay in Context

### 2.1 Location

Stokes Bay is located in the southernmost point of Gosport and extends from Browdown Point to Gilkicker Point; the Solent lies to the south, with the Isle of Wight beyond.

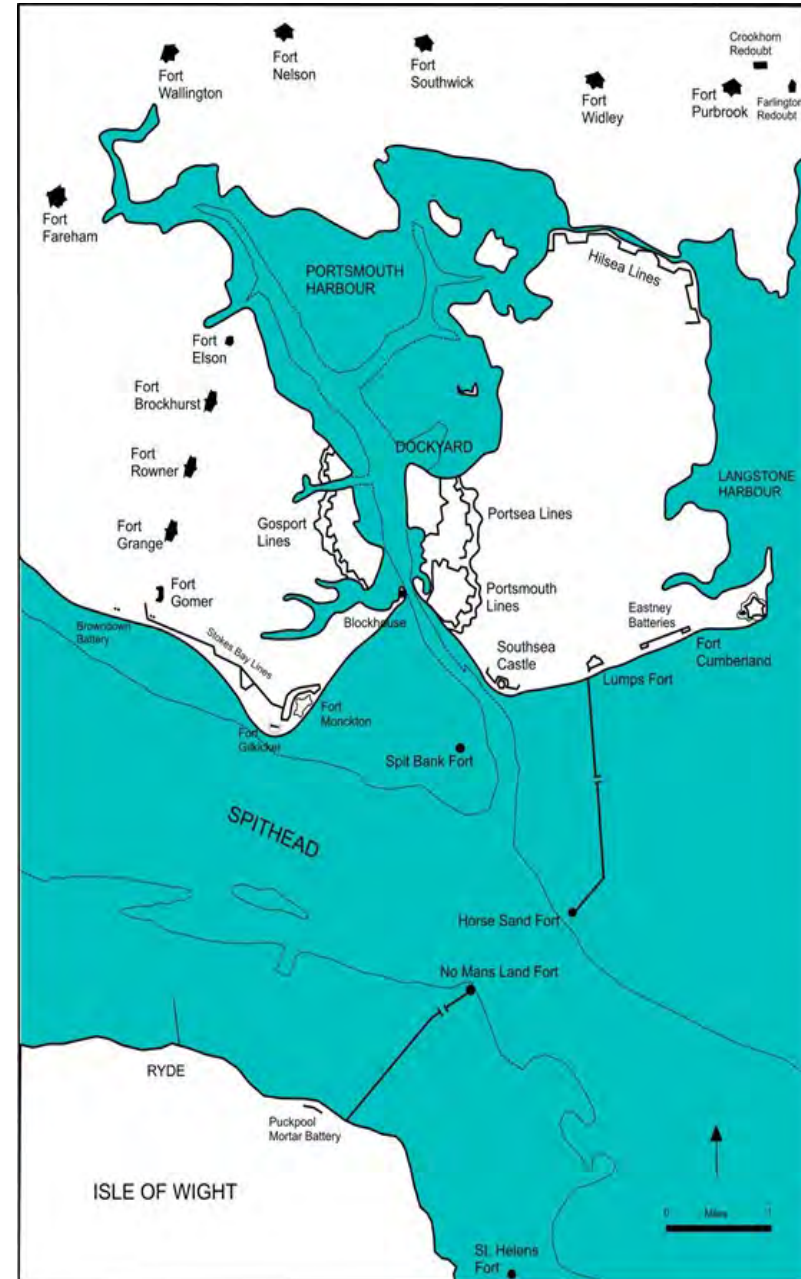
### 2.2 Topography

Stokes Bay forms part of the country's southern coastline and is a natural formation where the land curves gently inwards creating a body of water with a crescent-shaped, shingle shoreline. The topography of the bay with deep waters close to the shore, mean that it is a shelving beach ideally suited as a landing point for boats; this formation has, throughout history, made the Bay both vulnerable to invasion and suitable as an embarkation point for WWII activity.

Lying in the Hampshire Basin, Stokes Bay is a relatively flat, low lying area where the land descends gently from a natural bluff close to Stokes Bay Road and Fort Road down towards the sea. The inlet of Stoke Lake is located further to the north and the River Alver is located to the north west, terminating above ground within the remains of the canal system which once continued along the entirety of the Bay.

### 2.3 Setting

The area's position adjacent to Gosport and Portsmouth Harbour, and coastal setting, has played a crucial role in the area's strategic development and endows it with impressive, panoramic views along the coastline and across the Solent towards the Isle of Wight. The defensive infrastructure found within the Bay forms part of a wider collection of defences which formed an outer protective ring around Gosport, and by extension Portsmouth Harbour.



Stokes Bay Lines and wider Gosport and Portsmouth Defences  
(fort-gilkicker.co.uk)

The built-up, residential edge of Gosport lines the northern edge of Stokes Bay including predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing along Fort Road, Stokes Bay Road and Palmerston Way. A number of large, former residences and lodges are also located to the north of the Bay including Anglesey Lodge and Monckton House. Monckton House sits within large grounds which have been developed to provide accommodation for the Institute of Naval Medicine, and is lined with mature trees which largely screen the site in views from Fort Road. To the eastern end of Fort Road the built form is predominantly post-war and of a domestic, two storey scale.

To the west the area's setting includes Browndown Camp and its firing ranges which were established in 1804. To the east of the area lies the former site of the Monckton hutment camp, now open undeveloped land, beyond which is a former Immigration Centre occupying the site and buildings of the former military barracks constructed c1813.

## 3.0 Historic Development

### 3.1 Timeline

**Mid -16<sup>th</sup> century** Hasleworth Castle (or Hasilworth) constructed, on the site of the later Fort Monckton

**1545** Battle of the Solent fought close to Stokes Bay; flagship, the Mary Rose, sinks

**1588** Stokes Bay was identified as a potential landing site for the Spanish Armada. The Hampshire Militia were tasked with sending troops to defend Stokes Bay in the event of an alarm being raised

**1669-1679** Construction of the Gosport Lines, north of Stokes Bay to designs by famed military designer Sir Bernard de Gomme

**Mid-17<sup>th</sup> century** Gilkicker navigation landmark erected

**1779** Temporary defences were constructed in Stokes Bay on news of a Franco-Spanish Armada being sighted off the south coast.

**1782-3** Artillery redoubts constructed in Stokes Bay

**1788** First of three Military brickworks established at the west end of Stokes Bay, above the cliff

**1790** Fort Monckton replaces earlier temporary fort on the site

**1815** Napoleonic Wars come to an end

**Late 1820s** New suburb of Anglesey constructed immediately to the north of Stokes Bay

**1840** Alver Bank House (now Alverbank) built for John Wilson Croker

**1842** Ashburton House (now Bay House) built to designs by Decimus Burton for Alexander Baring, Lord Ashburton

**1850s** New gun batteries constructed Gilkicker and Browndown

**1850s** Rifle training commences on ranges at Browndown

**1858** Auxiliary battery of Fort Monckton constructed at Gilkicker Point

**1860-1869** Publication of the general report of Lord Palmerston's Royal Commission on the Defence of the United Kingdom. Recommendations include replacement of the Stokes Bay defences with the Stokes Bay Lines. Stokes Bay Lines, including batteries 1 to 5, constructed. River Alver diverted into the moat below the rampart

**1862-3** Construction of Stokes Bay branch railway line and pier

**1860s** Establishment of John Leather's yard and private pier at Stokes Bay, used in the construction of the Solent forts, between 1865 and 1880

**1863-71** Fort Gilkicker constructed

**1870s** Royal Engineers arrive at Haslar Barracks, and development of 'hutments' begins

**1880s** Leather's Yard acquired by the Royal Engineers. Narrow gauge railway built between it and Forts Monckton and Blockhouse to the north east.

**1885** Golf course established at the east end of Stokes Bay

**1892** School of Submarine Mining established at Stokes Bay

**1908** Former Submarine Mining establishment site used for the manufacture of concrete blocks for use in the Spithead Breakwater

**Early 20<sup>th</sup> century** School of Electric Lighting established at Stokes Bay

**1914** Outbreak of First World War. Fort Gilkicker used for anti-aircraft searchlights. Stokes Bay batteries occupied by army and navy, mostly in ancillary roles. Torpedo Experimental Station established near Stokes Bay pier

**1917** Alverbank frequented by officers training at Grange Airfield

**1920s** Construction of concrete leisure promenade begun

**1922** Stokes Bay pier sold by the London and South Western Railway to the Admiralty



**1923** Bathing Station and tea house constructed

**1920s** Battery 5 used as Navy Camp

**Late 1920s/early 1930s** Tennis courts and putting green built at Stokes Bay

**1929** RAF Torpedo Development Flight established at Stokes Bay pier

**1930s** Battery 2 acquired by Gosport Borough Council and made into a caravan park

**1939** Outbreak of Second World War

**WW2** Construction of concrete slipways (hards) on Stokes Bay beach

**WW2** New roads built parallel with the beach and connected to existing military roads. Bathing Station utilised as Hardmaster's Office. Parking areas built for tanks, and oil tanks and maintenance facilities constructed.

**WW2** Gilkicker Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) site established south of Battery 4

**1943** Training Wing of the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division of the US Army sets up a base at Stokes Bay for the development of amphibious tanks, and the training of crews

**December 1943-mid-1944** 'Phoenix' caissons to be used as part of the allied invasion of occupied Europe constructed at Stokes Bay

**1944** Control tower built to command operations on D Day

**6 June 1944** Normandy Landings. Landing craft containing vehicles and personnel leave Stokes Bay

**1947** Former gardens of Bay House opened as Stanley Park

**1948** Stokes Bay Miniature Railway opened. It operated until 1950

**Early 1950s** Causeway built from the junction of Stokes Bay Road and Anglesey Road to the promenade

**1954** Work begins to level the Stokes Bay Lines with sections of the earthworks used to backfill the moats

**1956** Fort Monckton becomes home of No. 1 Military Training Establishment

**1958** Opening of Bay House School

**1962** Royal Navy Physiological Laboratory moves into Battery 5

**1965** First revenue-earning hovercraft service to the Isle of Wight begins operations at Stokes Bay

**1975** Stokes Bay Development Scheme includes the construction of a new café

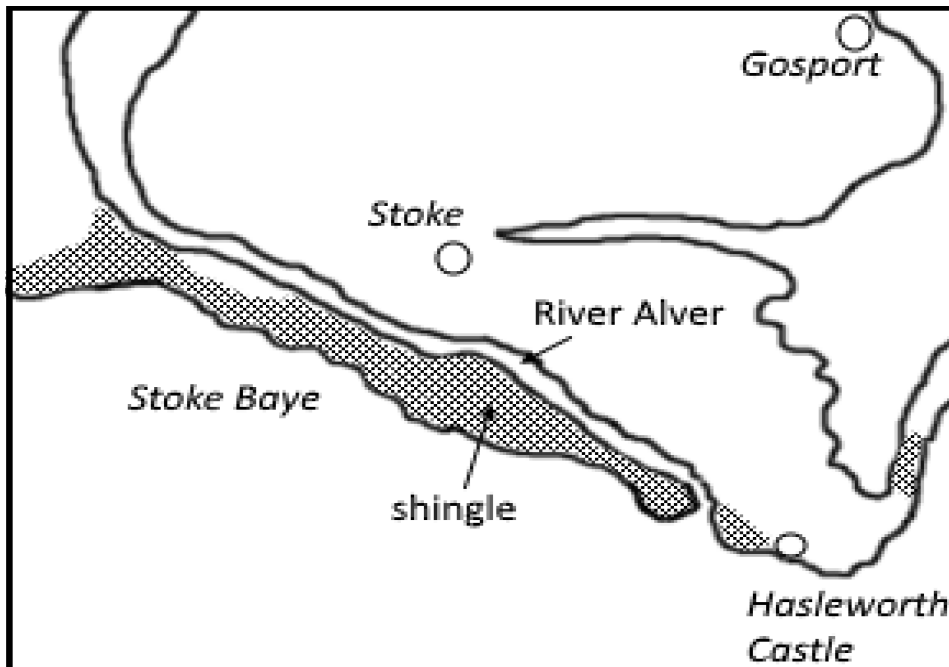
**1982** Battery 2 becomes Gosport Borough Council's nuclear bunker

**1988** Stokes Bay pier demolished

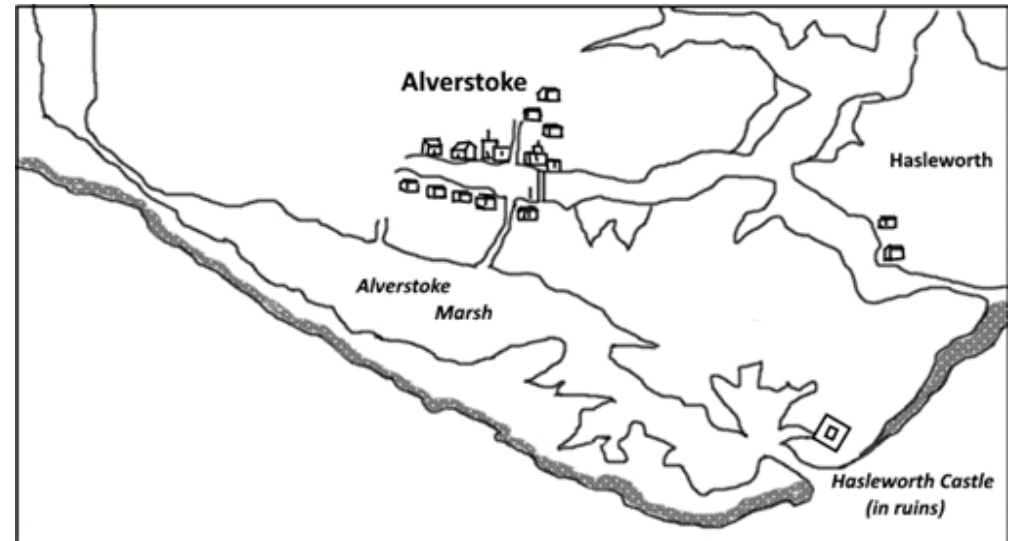
**2011** Diving Museum opens at Battery 2

### 3.2 Brief History of Stokes Bay

At the western end of Stokes Bay, a large number of Palaeolithic stone tools have been recovered, and Neolithic finds have been made elsewhere in the wider Gosport area, pointing to the presence of people here from quite an early date. During the 16th century, however, when Portsmouth was already a port of great importance, the area known as Stokes Bay was in a very wild, undeveloped state. An area of coastal saltmarsh, frequently flooded by the sea, it was a wet place. This wetness came partly from the Solent, and partly from the River Alver, which ran from the far north-west corner of Stokes Bay to its South-eastern corner, where it emptied into the sea. The winding course of the Alver was clearly shown on a chart of 1585, and on La Favelure's map of c1620s.



*Tracing of Stokes Bay from a chart of 1585 (original in the British Library).*



*Detail from La Favelure's map of c1620s.*

The latter map suggests that the extent of the open water within Stokes Bay had declined over the prior 150 years, through silting, drainage, diminution of the river flow, or a combination of all or any of the three. The Stokes Bay area was bounded on its north side by a low cliff or bluff which delineates the area to this day.

### 3.3 Early military developments at Stokes Bay

At the south-eastern end of the Bay a small fort named 'Haselworth Castle' was built in the mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century, as part of the defences of the Solent. The tower features in the background of the 'Cowdray engraving' showing the sinking of Henry VIII's flagship in 1545.



*The 1545 Cowdray engraving, showing Haselworth Castle on the extreme left (Friends of Stokes Bay).*

In 1587 the Earl of Sussex recommended improving the defences of Stokes Bay itself, in order to better deal with the threat of invasion by the Spaniards. This would have included the modification of the low cliff to the north, but it is not certain that any such work was carried out.

During the 17th century much effort was expended in the fortification of Portsmouth and Gosport, including the building of the Gosport Lines to designs by the military engineer Sir Bernard de Gomme. Little attention however was paid to Stokes Bay – not even Haselworth Castle was rebuilt from the ruinous state into which it

had fallen. It was replaced, instead, by a navigational aid in the shape of an obelisk known as the Gilkicker which – when lined up with a second obelisk situated east of Alverstoke village – enabled ships to enter Portsmouth Harbour safely.

Further proposals for defending Stokes Bay (with six gun platforms or redoubts) did not come until the threat of invasion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the detailed map by Archer and Pitts of 1774, shows the Bay just prior to military intervention.



*Detail from Archer and Pitts map of 1774*

The first new works were, in part, a response to the American War of Independence of 1775-83 when urgent temporary works were constructed in 1779 in the vicinity of the future Forts Monckton and Gilkicker, followed by artillery redoubts c1782-3. Maps of 1785 and 1810 shows six redoubts (small defensive works without flank defence from its own ditches).

The new defences were to have had two new forts at either end – one at Gilkicker point, and one at Browdown. The latter structure was not built, but an earth-banked rectangular structure with 24 gun embrasures – ‘the Fort at Gilkicker’ – was built on the site of Haselworth Castle (now the site of Fort Monckton).





The redoubts of the 1780s, shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS plan of the area, surveyed c1796, published 1810.

### 3.4 Fort Monckton

Work on the present triangular Fort Monckton, which replaced 'the Fort at Gilkicker', began soon after completion of its predecessor and was completed by 1789-90, just before the French Revolutionary War of 1793

It comprised a bastioned trace with three bastions on the landward side, and two facing the sea. The curtain wall between the two seaward bastions contained 22 casemated guns, with accommodation above. The parapet above had embrasures for further guns.

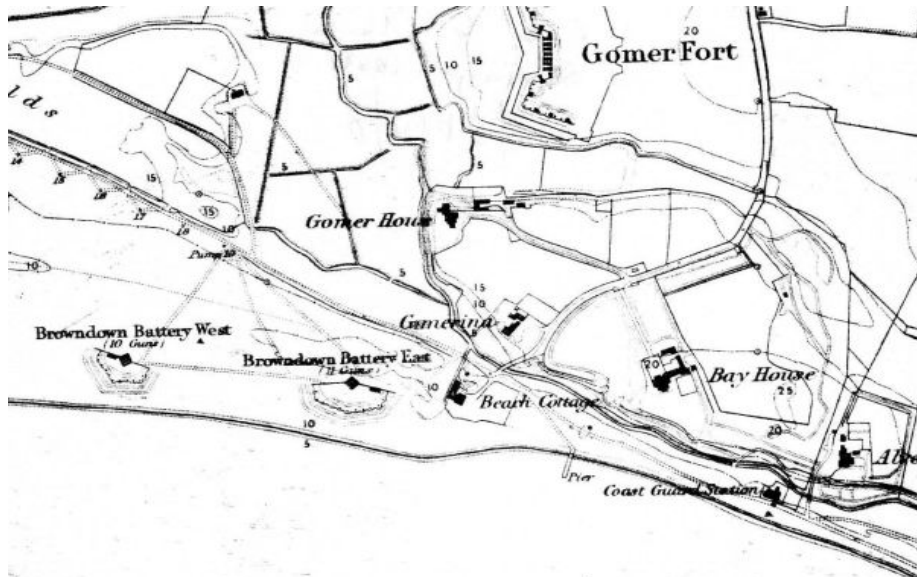
On the landward side the defences of the fort included a glacis (a shallow artificial slope) and a moat: the water of the River Alver formed a flooded termination of the fort's glacis on the western side. This was marked on at least one early map as the 'Inundation' and became known as Lake Gilkicker.



Detail of Fort Monckton and its surrounding moat and outworks. OS 1870s.



### 3.5 Stokes Bay Brickworks



The Browndown batteries of 1852, shown on the OS plan of 1856 (fortgilkicker.co.uk).

Land at the western end of Stokes Bay, acquired by the Board of Ordnance for a new fort was never developed for defensive purposes. In its place a brickworks was constructed in 1788 and used to develop military sites.

A second brickworks immediately to the east was apparently established in 1806, and a third site was opened up by 1828. Bricks produced here were used for local building projects and were also shipped to other locations from jetties on the beach – each works having its own jetty. Stokes Bay bricks were used for the construction of the Clarence Victualling Yard in Gosport, but on the completion of that project in 1832 brick production ended.

### 3.6 The 19<sup>th</sup> Century defences of Stokes Bay

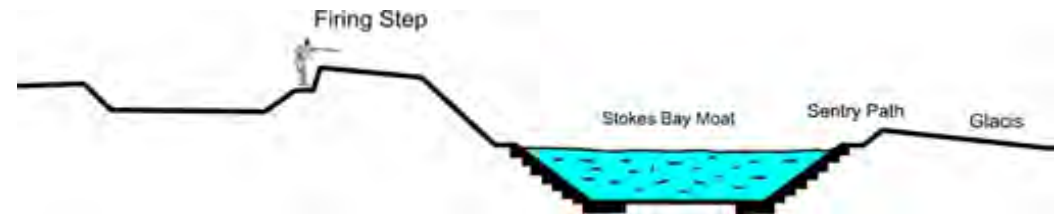
The next significant period of development for Stokes Bay was from the late 1840s, when fears were growing of a new war with France. As part of an extensive programme of defence building and refurbishment across the south coast, construction began in Stokes Bay in the 1850s. Three new batteries – two at Browndown and one at Gilkicker – were constructed as part of the same programme that saw Forts Gomer and Elson built on the west side of Gosport. The two batteries at Browndown consisted of earth parapets, designed to shelter a gun position, on the landward side.

These new defences, however, were widely considered to be unequal to the threat, and the Royal Commission on the Defence of the United Kingdom, set up in 1859 by Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, recommended a massive expansion in defensive building.



A plan of the Stokes Bay Lines and Batteries (numbered), 1860 (Friends of Stokes Bay).

The recommendations of the Royal Commission included the replacement of the existing Stokes Bay defences with what became known as the Stokes Bay Lines, creating a defensible landscape, and fully integrating Stokes Bay into the defences of Gosport and Portsmouth.



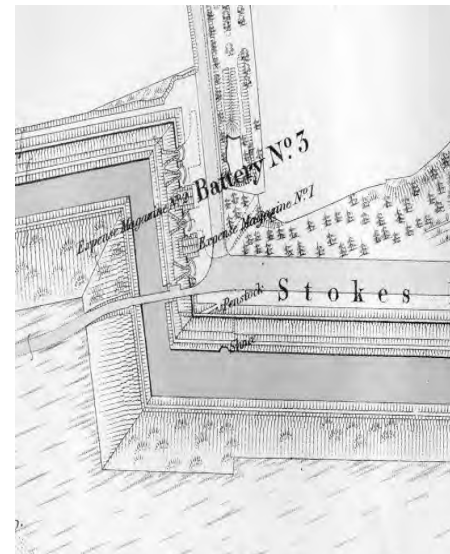
A section across the Stokes Bay Lines (Friends of Stokes Bay).

The new defences at Stokes Bay were designed by Col. WFD Jervois, but were heavily influenced by the earlier recommendations of James Fergusson, head of the Royal Commission. The principal feature of the defences was an earth

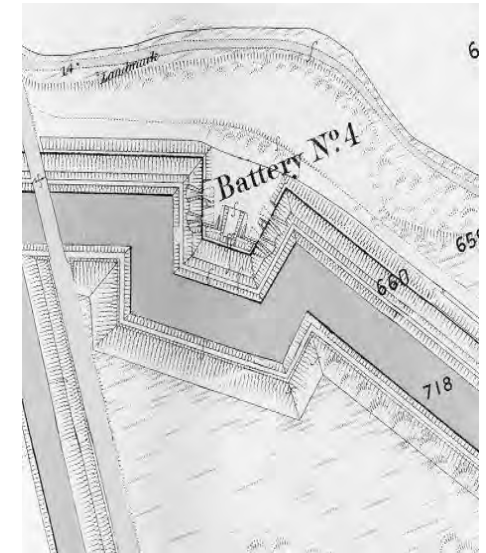
rampart fronted by a 60 foot-wide concrete-lined ditch or Moat, running from one end of the bay to the other, roughly along the line of the natural cliff.



Plan showing Battery No.1 and Battery No.2 as built (fortgilkicker.co.uk).



No 3 Battery, as built (fortgilkicker.co.uk)



No 4 Battery, as built (fortgilkicker.co.uk)

Five batteries (fortified sites for multiple guns), built behind or in the line of the rampart, defended the area behind the beach, or the lines themselves.

The River Alver, which formerly meandered across Stokes Bay towards Gilkicker Point, was canalised at the western end of the bay into a moat on the south side of the lines.

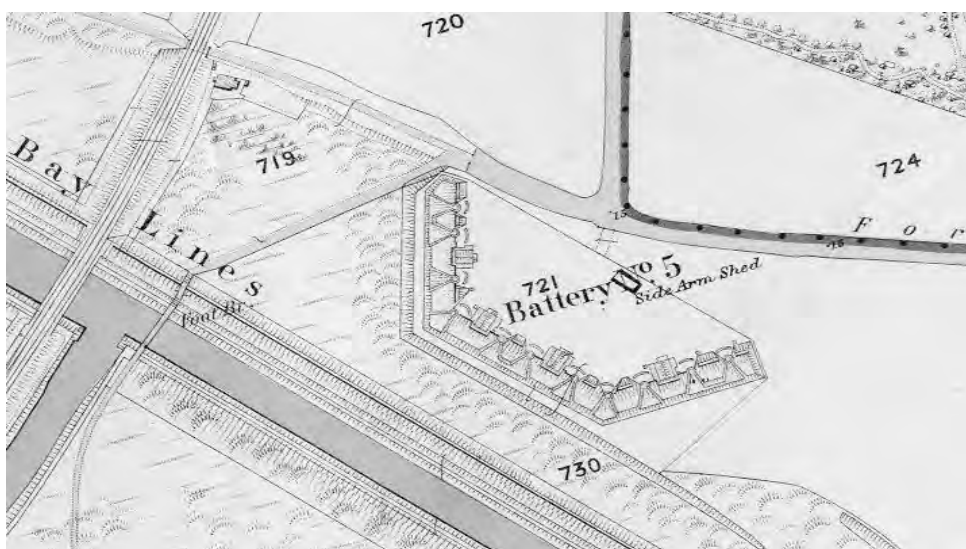
This moat continued along the whole length of the lines, giving the lowest reach of the Alver an entirely new alignment. The water discharged into Lake Gilkicker, from where it flowed into the sea via a culvert; the old course of the river gradually became lost.



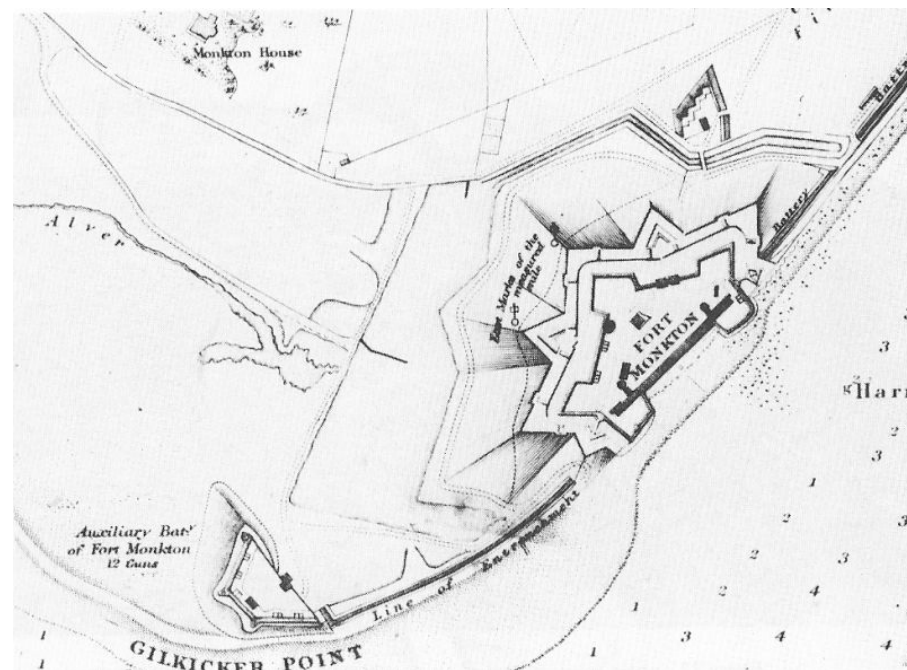
The water level in the moat was maintained by keeping a balance – using sluices – between the inflow of the Alver at the west end, and the level of Lake Gilkicker at the east. A western extension of the rampart and moat was built as a dam to allow the flooding of the Alver to the north, offering additional protection to the area. In 1878 a culvert and sluice were added at the west end, which allowed the water of the Alver to be directed into the moat or directly into the sea, depending upon requirements.

The Stokes Bay Lines featured five batteries, numbered sequentially from the west end.

Each was essentially a gun position, but magazines, shell stores and other essential ancillary structures also featured. Most were small structures built to the same height as the rampart, but Batteries 2 and 5 were larger, and offered a wider field of fire from their elevated guns. Battery 2 was originally surrounded by the moat. By contrast, Battery 5 was built behind the lines, probably on the site of an earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-century redoubt.



No. 5 Battery, as built, with the Lines shown on the seaward side (fortgilkicker.co.uk).



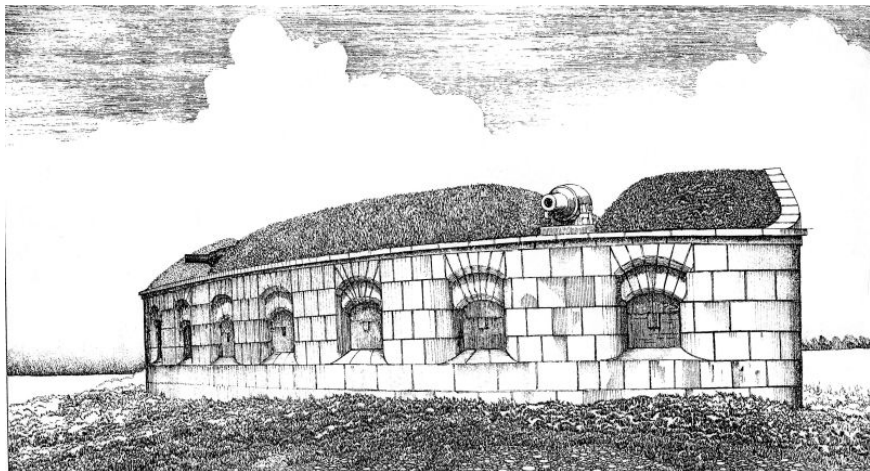
Fort Monckton and the first auxiliary battery at Gilkicker, 1858 (fortgilkicker.co.uk).

### 3.7 Fort Gilkicker

Just prior to the publication of the findings of the Royal Commission an auxiliary battery of Fort Monckton was built at Gilkicker Point.

It was built to defend the western approach to Portsmouth Harbour and Stokes Bay, but was almost immediately criticised as being inadequate. It was replaced by a new structure – Gilkicker Fort – which survives today.

The new structure was designed to defend Portsmouth Harbour, while the Stokes Bay lines defended the bay itself. Built between 1863 and 1871 it is a semi-circular design of two storeys, with barracks and stores to the rear. It was originally armed with 22 casemated guns, built above ammunition stores, and was home to five officers and 220 men.



*The new Fort Gilkicker, showing the gun casemates (fortgilkicker.co.uk)*



*Fort Gilkicker, c. 1890, showing the parade ground (Library and Archives of Canada, via fortgilkicker.co.uk)*

Fort Gilkicker was partially rearmed in 1888 (along with Browdown Battery) and in around 1906 the casemates were blocked and new guns installed in emplacements on the rampart. At the same time the outer face of the fort was embanked with earth, radically changing its appearance from the seaward side.

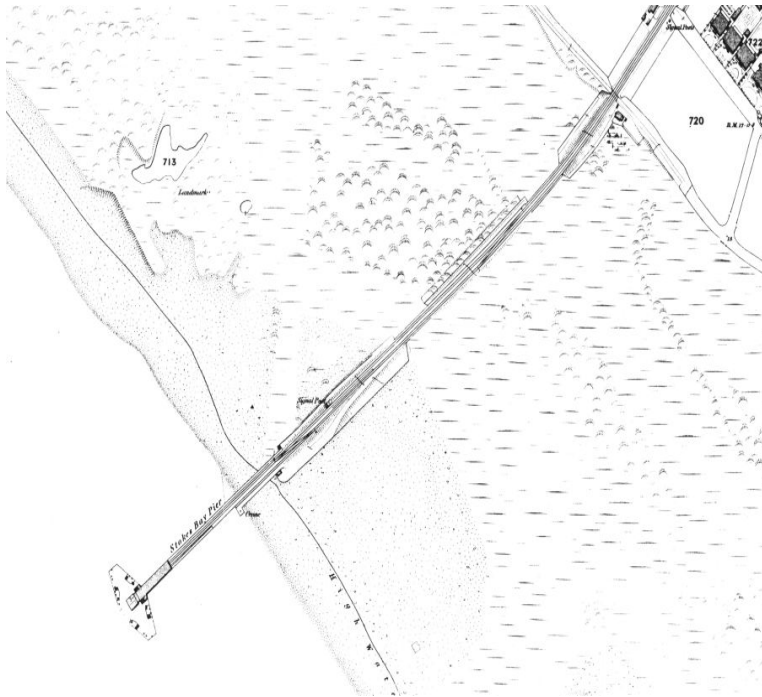
### **3.8 The Stokes Bay Railway**

In 1842 the railway reached Gosport, with a branch of the London and South Western Railway Co (LSWR).



*The Stokes Bay branch, as shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*





*The railway and pier at Stokes Bay in 1873 (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*

Though a scheme to connect Stokes Bay to the railway network was first promoted in 1846, it would be twenty one years before the Stokes Bay Railway and Pier Company opened its short line, running from Gosport Station south to a new pier at Stokes Bay. Stokes Bay Station, built entirely on the pier, opened in April 1863, with the aim of providing a convenient interchange for passengers travelling to the Isle of Wight.

Unfortunately, though the Stokes Bay Branch offered access to a quicker sea crossing to the island than that from Portsmouth, the lack of direct train from London meant that the new line failed to usurp the established London Brighton and South Coast Railway service via Portsmouth.

The Stokes Bay Company sold out to the LSWR in 1875, but the

company's efforts to develop the service to rival the LBSCR's route came to little. The line was only busy in the summer months, and in 1902 the ferry service to the Isle of Wight was suspended in the winter months.



*Stokes Bay Station and Pier, 1905 (Nick Catford, disused-stations.org.uk).*

A new direct service from Waterloo, via the Meon Valley Line did not bring the hoped-for increase in passengers when it began in 1902, and this service was withdrawn in 1914. In the same year the ferry service was withdrawn altogether, never to be reinstated. The passenger service still ran in 1915, but in November the line was closed for the duration of the First World War.

The pier was taken over by the Admiralty, and used for the transportation of munitions and fuel, and in 1922 it bought the pier and the line south of Gosport Road station from the LSWR, which never reopened the line to passengers after the war.

The pier was used by the Royal Air Force (RAF) Torpedo Development Unit, as a base for the retrieval of torpedoes from the Stokes Bay dropping zone, and for the deployment of targets

A narrow gauge line was laid on the pier in place of the standard gauge track for this purpose. The use of Stokes Bay and the pier for the development of new torpedoes and torpedo-carrying aircraft, and for the training of pilots in their deployment, carried on from 1929 until 1956.

The pier, and its narrow-gauge railway, appear on the 1963 25 inch OS map, and the pier was demolished in 1988.



Map showing Leather's Yard shortly after its transfer to the Submarine Mining Establishment (fortgilkicker.co.uk).

### 3.9 Leather's Yard

In the 1860s, as the new Fort Gilkicker was under construction, the engineer John Towler Leather (1804-1885) set up a yard in Stokes Bay to the west of the fort as the land base for the construction of the Solent or Spithead Forts: four circular forts built on the seabed in the Solent to defend Portsmouth and Gosport, and the most famous part of the 'Palmerston' defensive scheme. The Stokes Bay site was served by a short branch from the Stokes Bay Railway, and was used for the preparation of stone and concrete blocks, which would then be transported to the construction sites via a dedicated pier equipped with two railway lines and a steam crane.

A cement mill and cement stores, a blacksmiths, and numerous workshops were on the site. Raw materials – including Stokes Bay shingle and cement manufactured on the Isle of Wight - and finished products were moved around the site by rail, and using large overhead gantries. An adjacent extensive temporary hutted encampment for the workers became known as 'Leather Town'.

After the completion of the last Solent fort in 1880 the yard was acquired by the Royal Engineers. A school of Submarine Mining, training servicemen in the use for defensive purposes of submerged explosive mines, was established there in 1892 – a continuation of an activity first carried out there in 1873.

The 18-inch-gauge railway within the site was used for moving the mines around, and transporting them to the pier. This railway was later extended to the accommodation blocks and workshops recently built to the north-west of Fort Monckton (Monckton Hutments) and, beyond, to Haslar Barracks Fort Blockhouse.

After the abolition of the use of mines for the defence of rivers, the Stokes Bay site was taken over by the Royal Engineers and was used in 1908 for the construction of the concrete blocks of the Spithead Breakwater, a series of submerged concrete blocks



designed to restrict the passage through the Solent of enemy ships. Later, the Royal Engineer School of Electric Lighting was established there to train personnel in the use of electric searchlights for defensive purposes.

At some point after the First World War the tramway running north to the Monckton Hutments was re-laid to 2 foot gauge.

The line was known as the Stokes Bay Light Railway, and remained in place until the Second World War.

### 3.10 Stokes Bay Golf Course

A golf course was established at the east end of Stokes Bay in 1885. Laid out partly on the glacis of Fort Monckton, and extending to the north-west (including part of the area later occupied by the Monckton 'hutments'), the nine hole course was for the use of the United Services Golf Club and its members, officers of the army and navy stationed in Portsmouth and Gosport. Supposedly it was at the golf course in 1892 that the term 'Colonel Bogey' was first used.

A separate ladies course, established in 1893, was combined with the United Services Club at the turn of the century, to make an 18-hole course (later reduced to the current size by flooding and land sales).

### 3.11 Suburban developments

In 1842 Ashburton House (later renamed Bay House) was built on the site of the old brickworks as a summer residence for financier and former President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint, Alexander Baring, Lord Ashburton (1774-1848).

It was built to designs by one of the leading architects of his day, Decimus Burton (1800-1881), one of the key figures in the Neo-classical movement of the mid-19th century: pupil of and

collaborator with John Nash, and architect of buildings including the Athenaeum Club and the Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner in London. A pinetum in the grounds was reputedly the work of Lord Ashburton's friend, Joseph Paxton.

The Dowager Lady Ashburton died at the house in 1848, and members of the Baring family continued to live there until 1862, when it was leased by the Admiralty.



*Ashburton House, depicted in the Illustrated London News in 1862.*

At around this time the name of the building was changed to Bay House. It had been proposed to convert the house into a naval college, but this never took place, and in 1878 it was sold to Dr Burney of Burney's Naval Academy, who had already been living there for some time. From 1892 it was the home of Francis Sloane-Stanley, and then by his son, Ronald.

Two years earlier, in 1840, Alver Bank House (now Alverbank) had been built a short distance to the east for Lord Ashburton's friend, Irish statesman and writer John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), who from 1807-1832 had been first Secretary to the Admiralty, responsible in 1816 for a large reduction in the size of the Royal Navy.

After his death, the house was used as a residence for Queen Victoria's son, Alfred, while he was a naval cadet and then passed through a number of owners before being extended in 1912 by the Platt family.

The current access road of the house – now a hotel – formerly linked the brickworks with its jetty; the bridge over the Alver was built by the Royal Engineers in 1860, a replacement for an earlier bridge.

To the east, and on the north side of the bluff, the villas of Anglesey had begun to be erected from the late 1820s. The architectural highlight of the new suburb – The Crescent – was designed by Thomas Ellis Owen in 1828.

### **3.12 Stokes Bay in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century even the rearmed Stokes Bay Lines and batteries were considered to be defensively obsolete, and by 1907 the Lines were disarmed. The sluices admitting water into the moat were closed, and the moat dried up. Ever since then the River Alver has discharged into the sea near to Battery 2.

Fort Gilkicker, meanwhile, was rearmed and equipped with searchlights – Fort Monckton also received searchlight installations during the First World War. The other installations of Stokes Bay remained in military hands, but they were used in ancillary rather than defensive roles, including the Royal Navy Camp established at Battery 5. Forts Gilkicker and Monckton were utilised primarily as barracks, and the 'Hutments' at Fort Monckton – an extension of Haslar Barracks – continued to house, and employ, many hundreds of apprentices. In 1929 a group of Royal Engineers, the 'RE Mason Boys' built the three-sided tower near the present entrance to the golf club as a practice piece.

During the First World War Alverbank was let to Robert Smith-Barry

of the School of Special Flying, at Grange airfield, and the house became used as a sort of unofficial officers' mess

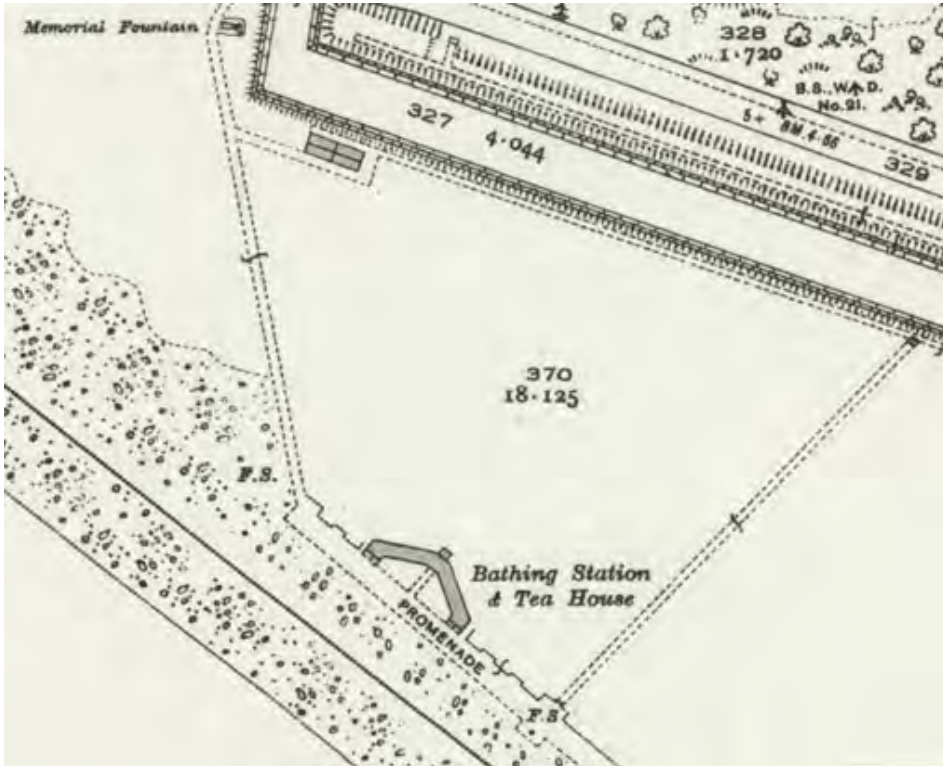
During his time at Grange Airfield Smith-Barry devised an influential and long-lived system of flying training, and perfected the 'Gosport Tube', used for communicating between instructor and pupil.

From the 1920s large detached houses were built along Fort Road, at the rear of Stokes Bay and to the west of the railway trackbed.



### 3.13 Leisure uses of the bay

After the First World War Stokes Bay was increasingly adapted to fulfil a leisure function. In 1923 funds from Gosport Council's Unemployment Grants Committee was used to build a reinforced concrete bathing station, comprising male and female changing rooms, and refreshment rooms.



*The bathing house, as shown on the 1939 revision of the 25 inch OS map (National Library of Scotland).*

In addition, 24 concrete seats were installed, and 150 deck chairs bought for the use of bathers.<sup>2</sup> In the following year work began on the construction of the promenade, and 104 existing beach huts

were repainted at the private owners' expense.



*Postcard view of the promenade and bathing station in 1939 (Friends of Stokes Bay).*

In the 1930s the area was a popular spot for bathing and relaxing, and the council also provided a concrete road leading to the 'paddling pool': a remnant of the 'Stokes Bay Morrass' that had long been a popular haunt of local children.

<sup>2</sup> [www.fortgilkicker.co.uk/pleasure](http://www.fortgilkicker.co.uk/pleasure)



*The Stokes Bay paddling pool, in a postcard view of 1936 (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*

North-west of the Bathing Station, beneath the Lines, a putting green and tennis courts were also established.

In the same decade Gosport Borough Council acquired Battery 2, and the area to the north, enclosed by Battery 1, was established as a caravan park, a function it retains to this day. To the south of Battery 2 public toilets were built to serve the western end of the beach.



*1930s postcard (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*



### 3.14 Stokes Bay in the Second World War

During the Second World War Stokes Bay regained some of its defensive utility, with the addition of features such as anti-aircraft guns. The main anti-aircraft installation was the Gilkicker Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) site, comprising four 4.5 inch guns within an embanked octagonal concrete emplacement behind the beach, to the south of Battery 4 and to the west of the old railway line.



*Members of the 57th HAA Regiment at the Gilkicker gun site (John Peters; Friends of Stokes Bay).*

Up to 80 personnel were accommodated in huts alongside. To the south-west of this an octagonal Ground Laying Radar was installed.

However, the greatest activity was concerned with the embarkation of troops: an activity for which Stokes Bay's sheltered shingle beach was ideally suited.

In early summer 1942 four concrete slipways or 'hards' were built along the beach, part of a network built along the south coast by 1944.



*Phoenix caissons under construction at Stokes Bay (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*

The Stokes Bay hards were constructed to permit exploratory raids. Four large landing craft, moored to a central jetty, could be loaded simultaneously from each hard. The hards were numbered from G1 (near Battery 2) to G4 (west of the railway pier).

Behind the beach new east-west roads linked the existing military roads, and a tank parking area was built to the east of Battery 2. The 1920s Bathing Station was requisitioned for use as the office of the Hardmaster, and a command centre was added to the west end of the building.

To the east of the Command Centre, to either side of Hard G3, civilian contractors were employed between December 1943 and mid-1944 on the construction of 'Mulberry Harbours', the giant floating structures that – when towed into place and partially submerged – would allow the efficient embarkation of troops and equipment along the French coast after D-Day.

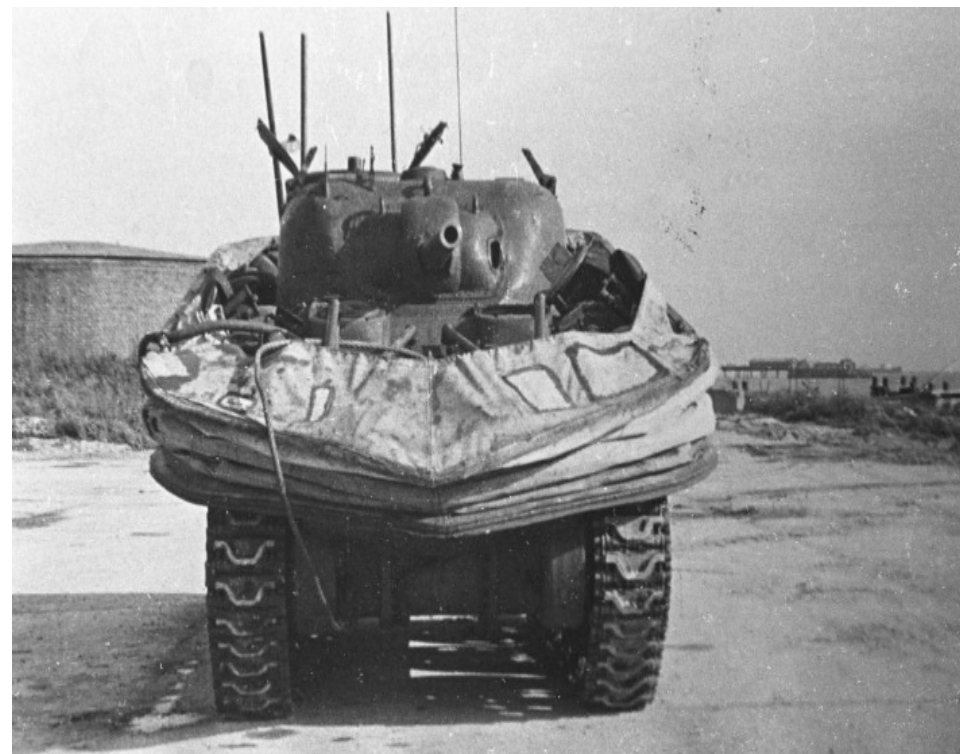
1400 workers constructed Phoenix B2 caissons at the two sites, and 14 of a total of 147 were constructed at Stokes Bay. Special slipways were constructed to launch the caissons into the Solent.



*A slipway under construction at the western Phoenix construction site at Stokes Bay (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*

The extensive construction yards dominated Stokes Bay by early 1944, but were cleared away during the 1950s.

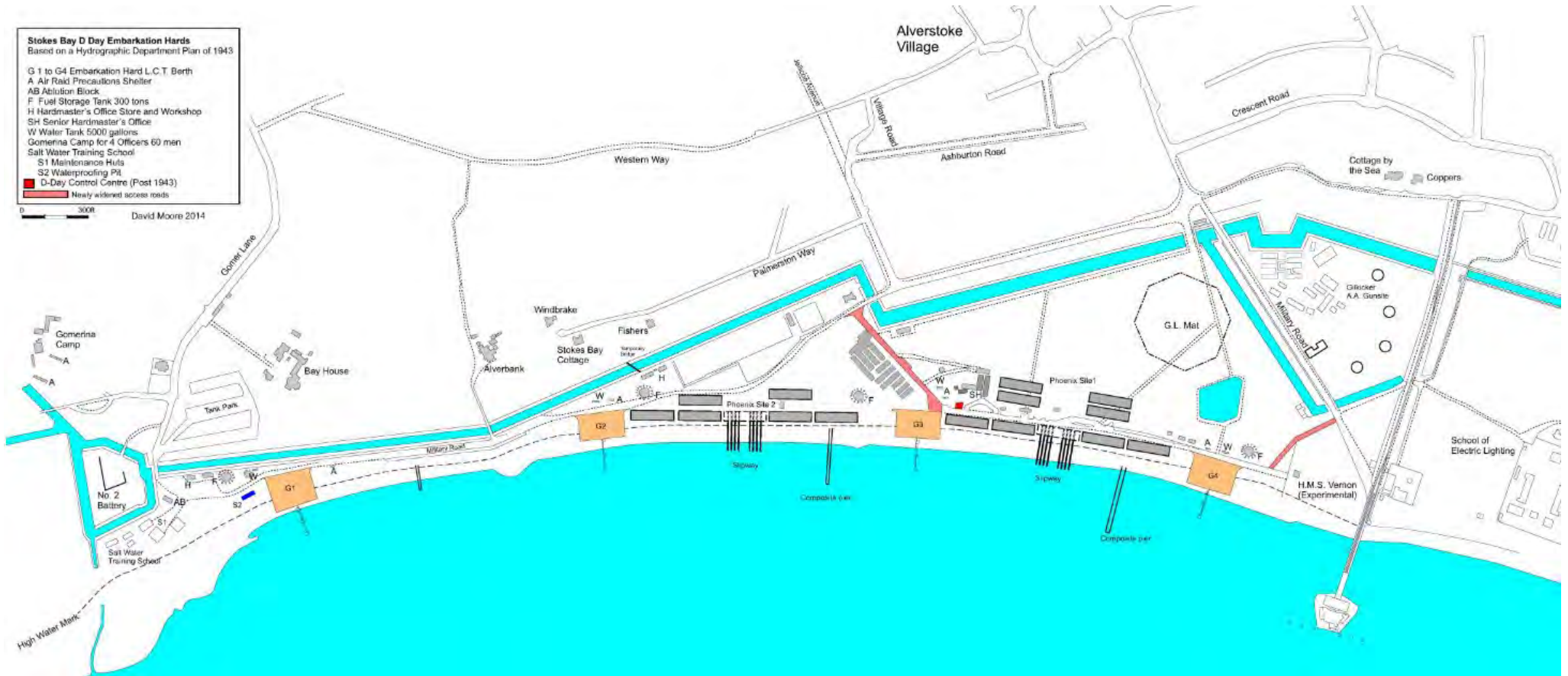
Stokes Bay was also the site of trials of amphibious (or 'Duplex drive') tanks, and 1200 troops were trained in their operation at Stokes Bay prior to D-Day.



*A 'Duplex Drive' amphibious Sherman tank at Stokes Bay, with the pier in the background (fortgilkicker.co.uk).*

Bay House was requisitioned for use as an officers' mess and accommodation in connection with this activity. Alverbank was used as supplementary accommodation.





Plan of the Embarkation Hards and Gilkicker AA site (Chris Howlett; [fortgilkicker.co.uk](http://fortgilkicker.co.uk))



### 3.15 Stokes Bay after the Second World War

After the Second World War Battery 5 was developed as a research site, hosting research into diving and submarine rescue for the Royal Navy. Experiments into diving and submarine rescue were carried out there by the Naval Physiological Laboratory. At the far west end of the bay, Browndown continued to function as a military rifle range, an activity that had been performed there since at least the 1850s.

After the war the Amphibious Wing of the army moved out of Bay House, which had been sold in 1943/4 to Gosport Borough Council. The larger part of the house's grounds was made into a public park, Stanley Park, and the house became a school, which opened in 1958.

In 1954 work began to remove the Stokes Bay Lines – a scheme first mooted in 1949.

The work of removal would continue until 1969, the moat being filled in using rubbish, much of it donated by Gosport householders. The clearance of the Lines, and the gradual removal of military infrastructure and personnel, as well as the industrial sites of the area has resulted in an area with an open character similar in some respects to its pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century appearance.

After the war there were efforts to make Stokes Bay popular once again for leisure. The bathing station returned to its original use, and behind it, the Stokes Bay Miniature Railway had a brief existence beginning in 1948.

Running west around the Paddling Pool and back to the rear of the D-Day command building, it operated for just three summer seasons.<sup>3</sup> After it departed the Stokes Bay Sailing Club, already installed in the

Command Centre, extended their site to the north over the former station.

In the early 1950s a causeway was built from the junction of Stokes Bay Road and Anglesey Road to the promenade, across the route of the recently removed miniature railway. Two shelters with distinctive reinforced concrete butterfly roofs, and a building to the south-west of the paddling pool for the Gosport Swimming Club were constructed at around the same time. New blocks of concrete beach huts also date from the 1950s, but Stokes Bay has not seen a return of the number of huts that characterised the area in the pre-war years. Stokes Bay struggled to regain its pre-war popularity, perhaps partly because of the length of time it took to remove the military infrastructure, and the noise and disruption associated with that process.

In 1961 the paddling pool was filled in due to concerns around the safety of the water, and a new pool was built to the west of the sailing club. The bathing station, meanwhile, continued in use until 1976, when it was taken over by Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue. It was demolished soon afterwards, and a new café built to the west of the old D-Day Command Centre – a key part of the 1975 Stokes Bay Development Scheme.

Housing covered much of the area of the Monckton Hutments, at the far eastern end of Stokes Bay from the 1960s, and in the 1960s part of Gilkicker Lake was filled in: it is now bisected by a golfer's causeway.

Browndown was also used for the development of military and civilian hovercraft in the 1960s, and the nearby beach immediately to the south of Battery 2 hosted hovercraft activity, including the very first revenue-earning hovercraft services, to the Isle of Wight in 1965.

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<sup>3</sup> For the final season of operation in 1950 the railway was shortened, to permit development at its western end – this shortened railway is shown on the first post-war revision of the 25 inch OS map.

At the other end of the bay, Battery 5 continued to expand, with new buildings added during the 1970s and 80s, but it has now been vacated by the Navy. In the west, No. 2 Battery became Gosport Borough Council's nuclear bunker in 1982, and in the early 2000s was at the centre of a scheme to convert it into a museum for the Historical Diving Society. The Diving Museum opened in 2011. Beyond, Browndown Camp was put up for sale by the Ministry of Defence in 2011, but the camping ground and ranges continue in military use.

### 3.16 Historic Ecology

The study area supports a rich and varied suite of habitats and species of international, national and local nature conservation value. Many, but not all of these habitats and species are within designated sites ranging from sites of international importance to non-statutory sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs). Designated sites cover large parts of the study area.

The diverse interest of the study area arises in large part due to its natural character comprising a coastal strip of shingle and sandy soils in a shallow bay. Without human interference this would mostly likely have given rise to a gradation from bare shingle on the shore line through to a mosaic of grassland, scrub, heath and eventually woodland, with low lying wet areas. Much of this natural gradation or mosaic of coastal habitat is still present, but much altered by human activity over hundreds of years which has been shaped and influenced the habitats and species in the study area today and much of the special interest also owes its survival and/or origin to the historical land uses of the study area and in particular military uses. Within the western end of the study area is the eastern end of Browndown SSSI an extensive area of vegetated shingle which survives in its current state as it has been retained and protected for military purposes.

Within the study area Gilkicker Lagoon (SSSI and part of the internationally important Solent and Isle of Wight Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar Site) is thought to have been created as part of defences associated with Gilkicker Fort, but prior to this is likely to have been present as a natural fleet (lagoon). The Gosport Golf Club was set out on what was Haslar common land for the officers located within military bases in Portsmouth and the earth mounds and landforms created by successive military construction associated with the forts provide habitats for a variety of species. Away from the military installations the open grasslands of the bay provide habitat for wintering geese and other man-made features such as the promenade provides habitat for rare species including the Red Data Book Insect, the Gilkicker Weevil (*Pachytchius haematocephalus*).

## 4.0 Architectural Features

### 4.1 Buildings and Architectural Features of Interest in Character Area 1

The predominant architectural style of Character Area 1 is of utilitarian, defensive structures dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century including batteries and forts, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century military buildings associated with WWII campaigns and events.

The batteries are partially earth-covered structures built of re-enforced concrete, brickwork and some stone. Some survive with iron and timber fixtures and fittings. Battery No.1 and 2 remain linked by a disused underground tunnel.



*Battery No. 2*



*Fort Gillkicker*

Fort Gillkicker is semi-circular structure built facing southwards to protect the fleet anchorage. The diameter line of the gorge is marked by a narrow barrack block, with a central entrance. On the ground floor there is a series of vaulted ammunition stores, with passages on the outer and inner sides for ventilation and access, all protected by thick outer walls. The first floor level comprises 22 casemates, linked by a continuous wide passageway, all covered by groined vaulting; the floor is solid with traces of curved rails. The middle section has a timber floor, and some casemates contain a chimney breast; at intervals an access between 2 casemates leads in a spiral staircase, which descends to the lower passageway. Between the middle section and the open rear is a glazed screen with a central door. The innermost section is an open veranda, with a continuous passageway on its inner side. The interior face is in red brickwork, the cambered arches of the end of the vaults being



supported on granite piers at the casemate level. The brick segmental vaulting converges towards the gun-ports (now walled up). Above the casemates is an open battery, of slightly later date (of 2 periods), containing the surviving features of 3 smaller (part of 5 original) and 2 larger (i.e. later) gun emplacements, all being circular sinks within a concrete surface. The central position latterly housed a modern brick and concrete superstructure used as a coastguard station (now demolished). The outer face is an earthwork which now masks the loopholes of the casemate stage, the granite walling of the outer face being exposed on the return (north face) at each end of the curve. There are external staircases, vents, interior hoists, specially detailed lamp positions, and other smaller features. Across the inner courtyard the cement-faced 2-storeyed barrack block is of domestic scale, with a mono-pitch roof and a series of sash windows, with doors at intervals on the ground floor. On the north (outer) side the parapet line of the fort is continued at the same height, the blank wall having a series of rifle loops at the first floor level. At about the centre is the round-arched gateway, which is formed in granite with an outer hood mould and with inner roll mouldings resting on a detached shaft again with simple classical detail. On the north side are 4 two-storeyed later outshuts in red brickwork.

Fort Monckton originally defended the western approaches to Portsmouth Harbour. The ramparts forming the main enclosure are built to a broadly triangular plan with three bastions at the main apexes flanking curtain walls, as well as an additional pair of bastions flanking a seaward-facing casemated battery. A dry ditch surrounds the ramparts into which projects two caponiers to defend the ends of the ditch (now blocked) where it originally met the beach. Beyond the ditch is a covered way conforming to the plan of the internal ramparts except for two triangular ravelins which project outwards to cover the sloping ground or glacis beyond it. This, in turn, is surrounded by the earthwork remains of a partly-infilled wet

moat at the north and an artificially-shaped defensive lake at the west.<sup>4</sup>



*Clock Tower*

At the far eastern point of the area is a stone tower with a triangular plan, built of three stages, though sadly missing its clock (which was removed and re-erected in Chepstow in the 1960s). It bears the inscription R.E Mason Boys and was built in 1929 by Royal Engineer's masons who were stationed in the surrounding Monckton Hutments, as a test piece.

Along the promenade is another building of interest – the former D-Day Command Centre (now Stokes Bay Sailing Club). It was built to the immediate west of the 1930s bathing station (since demolished) with a square planform built on brick pillars topped with a look-out



*Former D-Day Control Centre*

<sup>4</sup> Historic England List Descriptions of Fort Gilkicker and Monckton used as sites not accessed



accessed by an iron ladder. Since 1947 it has been used as the local sailing club and has been extended to the west and the pillars have been enclosed. It is a somewhat unassuming building today; with simple rectangular form with set-back, flat roofed tower. It is built of brickwork painted in an assortment of colours, with railings and modern fenestration.

Sitting alongside the military architecture is an eclectic combination of other buildings and architectural features including 1950s shelters along the promenade with eye-catching butterfly roofs.

Later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings are not considered of special interest.

Buildings and structures which are considered to make a positive contribution to the area include:

- Browndown Battery
- Batteries No.1, 2 and 5
- Building adjacent to Battery No.4
- Later 1930s buildings around Battery No 5
- Fort Gilkicker
- Fort Monckton
- D-Day Control Centre 1944 (later western extension and later alterations of no interest)
- Wall Between Ashburton Road And Stokes Bay Road
- Locally listed clock tower

#### **4.2 Buildings and Architectural Features of Interest in Character Area 2**

The architecture and landscape of Character Area 2 is somewhat different to that of 1, consisting of a pair of Victorian residences with their associated outbuildings and garden structures, set within remnants of their former picturesque gardens and parkland. The

architecture reflects 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural tastes for picturesque, revival styles with an eclectic combination of shaped gables, Tudor chimney stacks, hood moulds, decorative bargeboards, ashlar stone and brickwork. The architecture is typical of the period, reflecting fashions for asymmetry and variety.

Bay House, originally Ashburton, dates to the 1830s and was designed by Decimus Burton with an asymmetrical, Tudor composition, orientated to afford views from the principal south-east front over the surrounding bay. It consists of a two storeyed main range with attics, dormers windows, belvedere, and a projecting range to the south with bay window surmounted by a veranda with tent roof.



*Bay House School*

A lower range is attached to the east and a long conservatory projects to the north west. 1856 OS map shows it surrounded by extensive lawns to the front, with limited tree planting in order to maximise the views. To the north was a formal entrance drive with large areas of walled gardens and parkland on either side.

This formal entrance survives, consisting of a stone wall built of coursed and un-coursed rubble, pierced by a symmetrical entrance feature. The large wrought iron gate with scrolled wrought ironwork is flanked by 'pepper-pot' gate posts, and flanking walls with doorways marked by heavy quoins. On the north is a projecting lodge of one-storey, with hexagonal corner features; the south is similar in appearance but is a blank wall. Further to the east is another associated building; a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century two storey cottage which marks the entrance to the former parkland. It is built of red brick in Flemish bond with a red tile roof, and features a central gabled front, decorative bargeboards and an oriel window. Much of the surrounding land has been developed since the site was converted into a Grammar School in 1949, initially with buildings of stock brick and low copper roofs by Louis de Soissons, Peacock, Hodges and Robertson, but later with much larger and less sympathetic additions which are of no special interest. The Alverbank Hotel is also by Burton, built in 1842 to a picturesque Tudor Gothic design.



*Alverbank Hotel*



*One of the brick outbuildings next to The Alverbank*

It consists of two storeys with dormers under a slate roof with decorative bargeboards and Tudor chimney stacks. It is built of painted brick and has lattice windows with hood moulds and a veranda to the seafront side. The original terrace boundary wall with corner abutments is located to the south. There are a series of smaller, associated brick outbuildings to the rear one with a pleasant Dutch gable end facing the entrance to Stanley Park. The house is accessed from the south via a red brick bridge with small arch and stone coping to the parapet. The parapet walls turn to meet diagonally placed piers with stone caps and simple Gothic panels.

Buildings and structures which are considered to make a positive contribution to the area include:

- 19<sup>th</sup> century Bay House
- Boundary wall, entrance gates lodge to Bay House School
- Alverbank House
- Brick outbuildings to the rear of Alverbank
- Alverbank Bridge
- Cottage at northern entrance to Stanley Park
- Former brick and stone garden walls



## 5.0 Spatial Analysis

### 5.1 General Layout and Landscape Characteristics

The area begins at Browdown Battery in the west and stretches along the Bay to Fort Monkton in the east. The area is bounded by the sea to the south and runs along Fort Road to the north, widening at the north west corner to encompass The Alverbank Hotel, Stanley Park and significant parts of the Bay House School site.

The landscapes of Hampshire have been studied and characterised in the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment. Stokes Bay falls within the Gosport and Fareham Coastal Plain area 9F.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/landscape/integratedcharacterassessment/landscapetypes>

### 5.2 Views

The views into, around, and out of the area form a significant component of its special interest. Stokes Bay is visited and used by a large number of people who come specifically to enjoy the scenic and picturesque quality of the area. Internal views towards and between heritage assets are of significance and help us to appreciate each asset's setting and group value. Outward views gained from within the area and historic buildings towards the Solent, Isle of Wight and along the coastline are also of historic and artistic importance. Equally return views of the area from the surroundings, both land and sea are also of value, the area having been used as a wayfinding tool for centuries and as a catalyst for surrounding suburban development which aimed to take advantage of the seaside views. Key views are indicated on the adjacent plan, however these are not exhaustive and other views which contribute

to the significance of heritage assets may well be identified.

Many of the military buildings are considered to be local landmarks, due to their unusual form and architecture. Fort Gilkicker has a particular landmark quality, due to its unique architecture and physical dominance as a result of its height, scale and position. The belvedere of Bay House School is also a landmark feature which rises up above the tree canopy.

### 5.3 Open spaces and Ecology

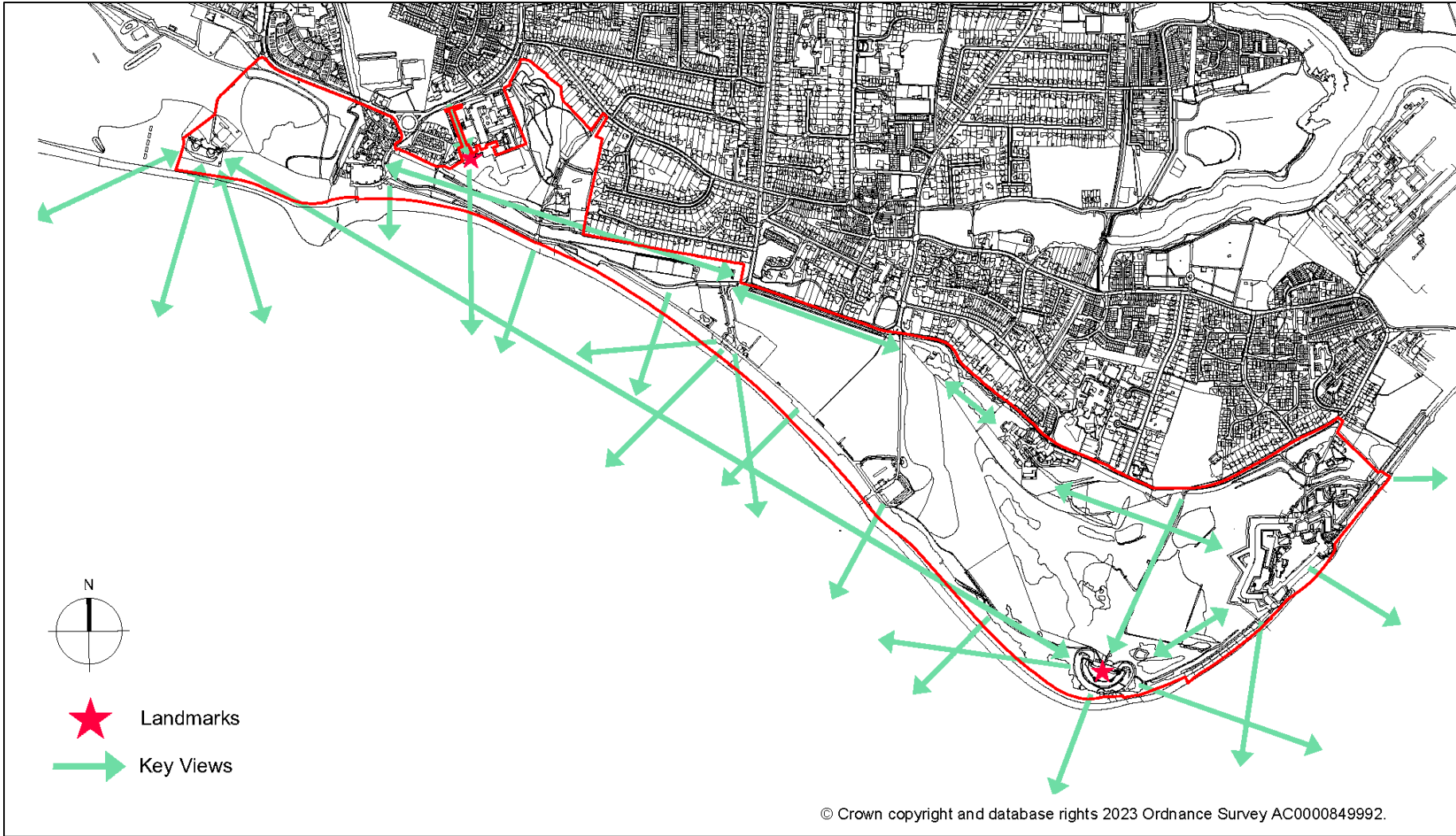
The number and scale of open spaces is another primary component of the area's special interest. Many of the spaces, along with the habitats and species within them, owe their survival and/or origin to the historical land uses of the area and in particular military uses. These open spaces include former parkland and gardens, a managed grassed golf course, natural grasslands, lagoon and shingle shoreline; all providing a rich variety of scenery, trees and shrubs. A significant part of the open spaces is subject to both statutory and non-statutory designations (Refer to Plates 7.1 & 7.2) sites. Statutory designations are of national (Site of Special Scientific Interest – SSSI) and international (Special Protection Areas - SPA, Special Area of Conservation – SAC) importance. Non-statutory sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation – SINC) are protected through national and local planning policies and are of importance in the local authority and county context. The various designations are of importance for the habitat or species they support or a combination of both. Specific designated areas are described briefly in each of the character areas descriptions below, but it should be noted that the whole of the site sits adjacent to the Solent and Dorset Coast (SPA) (Marine component) which runs along the sea front of the study area and is designated for its breeding populations of the birds, Common Tern, Little Tern and Sandwich Tern.

The study area also supports a range of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (HPI and SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity that are also protected by national and local planning policy and as such like the designated sites are material considerations in terms of decision making.

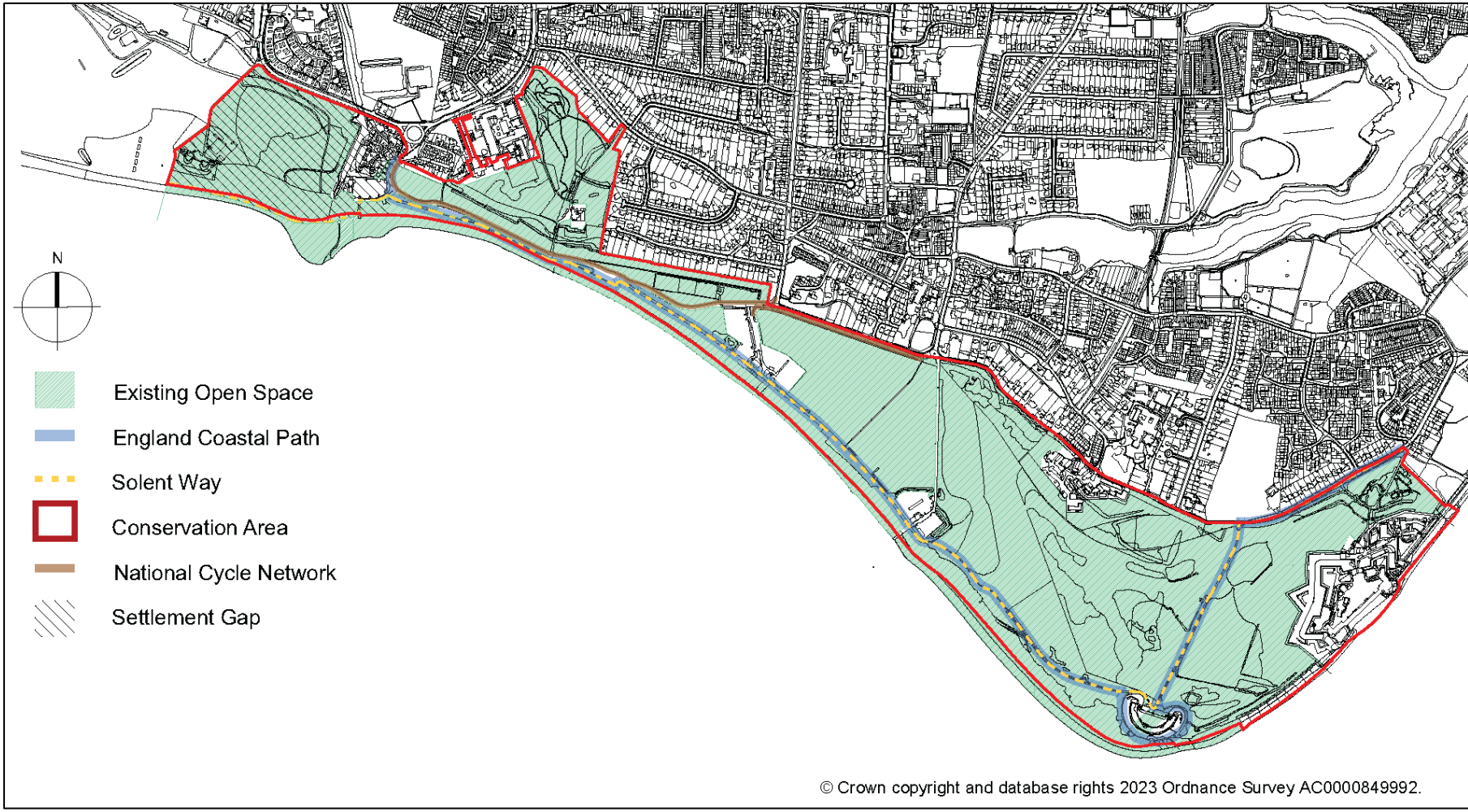
Within Character Area 1 there is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (Gilkicker Lagoon SSSI) which is also part of a larger internationally designated site (Solent and Isle of Wight Saline Lagoons SAC) located at the eastern end of the Bay area where it abuts the GO 0024 Gosport Golf Course Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and GO 0025 Gilkicker Point (SINC). This part of the bay supports the greatest diversity of habitats, a number of which are HPI. They form an intricate mosaic from lagoons through amenity grassland of the golf course to scrub and marshy wetland which are set back from the sea front that create a more sheltered and intricate landscape than the rest of the bay. A number of red-listed and SPI bird species are recorded with the habitat mosaic of grassland and scrub providing suitable nesting and foraging opportunities.

Beyond the eastern end of the bay the habitats in the central area become more uniform and open dominated by the mown grassland of playing fields and recreational spaces to the rear of the long shingle beach that stretches from Gilkicker Point in the south east to the car park at Battery No 1 and No 2 in the north west.





Stokes Bay Key Views and Landmarks



Stokes Bay Open Spaces





*Open landscape between Fort Road and Gillkicker Fort*

The shingle beach and the associated promenade is designated as the GO0021 Shingle Foreshore SINC for its vegetated shingle habitat and the presence of rare species including the Gilkicker Weevil which is found among its food plant on vegetated parts of shingle and the concrete slabs alongside the promenade. The front of the beach is dominated by bare shingle but towards the back and in localised patches in the middle of the beach the shingle is covered by a suite of plants characteristic of vegetated shingle, which is a HPI. Many of the plant species are restricted to this habitat type. At the western end of the character area to the west of the car park at Battery number 2 the character changes again as this includes the eastern end of Browndown SSSI which is dominated by semi-natural vegetation including vegetated shingle on the sea shore which grades into a mosaic of scrub, bare ground,

heathland and acid grassland.

The study area is also important for wintering birds and the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy identifies parts of the area as core and primary areas for birds associated with the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Portsmouth Harbour SPA. As such these areas are functionally linked to these international designated sites. These areas are located to the rear of the sailing club which is designated as GO 0023 Stokes Bay West SINC and between the Lifeboat station and the golf course which is part of the Gosport Golf Course SINC.

Between the sailing club car park and the car park at Battery No.1 and No.2 the primary feature of ecological interest is the shingle beach. The grasslands behind either side of Stokes Bay Road are of less interest providing a narrow but open stretch of recreational grassland.

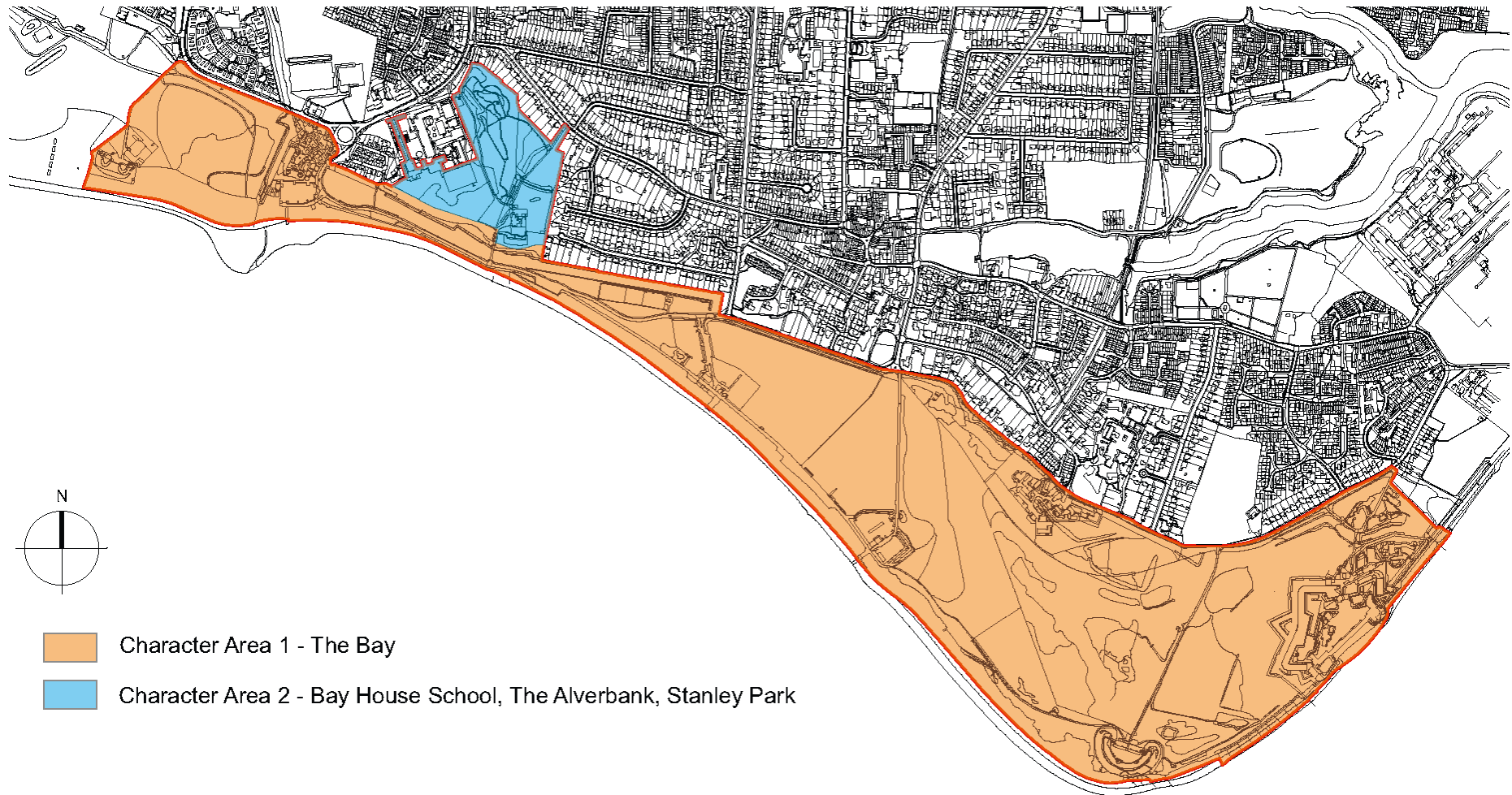
Character Area 2 has a very different character and appearance to the Bay largely due to the fact that the habitats have been created as part of gardens and grounds associated with the laying out and construction of Bay House and Alverbank House. This area is also on higher ground set back and overlooking the open areas of the Bay from which it is separated by the plantation woodland dominated by holm oak (*Quercus Ilex*) and a mixture other ornamental and native trees and shrubs. Whilst the woodland and parkland habitats are artificial in origin they have matured to provide a well-structured parkland and woodland landscape that supports a variety of wildlife and provides a sheltered, wooded environment in contrast to the exposed habitats of the Bay. These woodland and parkland are not designated for their nature conservation value, but their amenity and historic value.



## 6.0 Character and Appearance

### 6.1 Introduction

This section describes the character and appearance of the area as it appears today.



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## 6.2 Character and Appearance of Character Area

### The Bay

Stokes Bay is a gently sweeping bay with a crescent-shaped shoreline, characterised by large areas of undeveloped, open coastal landscape interspersed with a series of historic, defence structures and remains. The overall character and appearance of the area is dominated by its proximity to the sea, with impressive views of the surrounding coastline and the Solent, which form a picturesque backdrop against which unique military buildings and features of the Bay are seen. Despite clearance and landscaping in the 1960s, the large fortifications and extensive archaeological remains of earlier military structures and campaigns have shaped and still define the character and appearance of the area today.



*Area around Browdown Battery*

The western end of the area around Browdown Battery has a rugged, natural quality characterised by vegetation interspersed with areas of shingle and sandy tracks.



*Remains of part of the Stokes Bay Lines Moat*

Beyond this to the east are the remains of the former military concrete-lined, canal constructed as part of the Stokes Bay Lines, now bounded by dense vegetation. This area also contains two further 19<sup>th</sup> century

batteries (Battery No 1. and No 2.) constructed of concrete and brick and partially covered with earth, as well as a collection of later modern developments including a carpark, café, toilets and a mobile home site, with accompanying modern paraphernalia.

The land to the east is relatively flat, with an area of cut grass representing the route of the backfilled Stokes Bay Lines moat with some vestiges of the ramparts still in place along the rear of the



*Area surrounding Battery No.1 and No.2*



Palmerston Way properties.

The land to the north is largely screened here by dense, mature vegetation.



*Termination of the formal promenade leads to a wilder area*



*Central area with recreational paraphernalia adjacent to promenade*

At Alverbank East Car Park, the Stokes Bay Road and promenade diverge and the area widens. This central part of the bay is characterised by flat, open, grassed areas occupied in parts by structures and facilities associated with recreational uses, including sports courts, carparks, a Splash Park, Fish and Wine Bar, Sailing

Club, Lifeboat Station, Angling Club and a series of small scale buildings which line the promenade. These are all modest scale, one or two storey buildings.

As the formal promenade terminates, the area turns wilder and naturalistic.



*Open rugged landscape*

This part of the bay supports the greatest diversity of habitats that form an intricate mosaic from lagoons through amenity grassland of the golf course to scrub and marshy wetland which are set back from the sea front that create a more sheltered and intricate landscape than the rest of the bay. A number of red-listed bird species are recorded with the habitat mosaic of grassland and scrub providing suitable nesting and foraging opportunities.



*Some of the small scale buildings lining the promenade*





*Fort Gilkicker acts as a landmark*

The open land is dotted with military defensive structures including buried earthworks, Battery No. 5, Fort Gilkicker and Fort Monckton. Fort Gilkicker's location at the projecting point of the bay coupled with its scale and unusual form, means it is a strong landmark in the landscape.

The area around the two forts is characterised by the undulations of former earthworks associated with the military structures, which have been grassed over, as well as Gilkicker Lake. The associated golf centre buildings which occupy the eastern end of the area are a collection of later 20<sup>th</sup> century flat roofed structures of no historic or architectural significance.



*Golf course, with Battery No 5. area to the left and Fort Monckton in the distance*

As well as a series of depressions and earthworks which shape the topography of the area, the shoreline and adjacent land are dotted with structural remnants of military campaigns associated with World War II. This includes four concrete slips or *hards* which lie at intervals along the shingle beach and were used for troop embarkation and later D-Day preparations. The matting section of these hards, which have a 'chocolate box' appearance, have been dispersed and are only revealed at low tide. Remnants of the former Phoenix Caisson constructions sites and anti-aircraft batteries also survive as well as concrete bases of four early 20<sup>th</sup> century searchlight positions to the east and west of Fort Gilkicker and measured mile markers. The archaeological features of the area have been comprehensively described and mapped in Historic England's document *Stokes Bay, Gosport: Five Centuries of Coastal Defence* (2019).

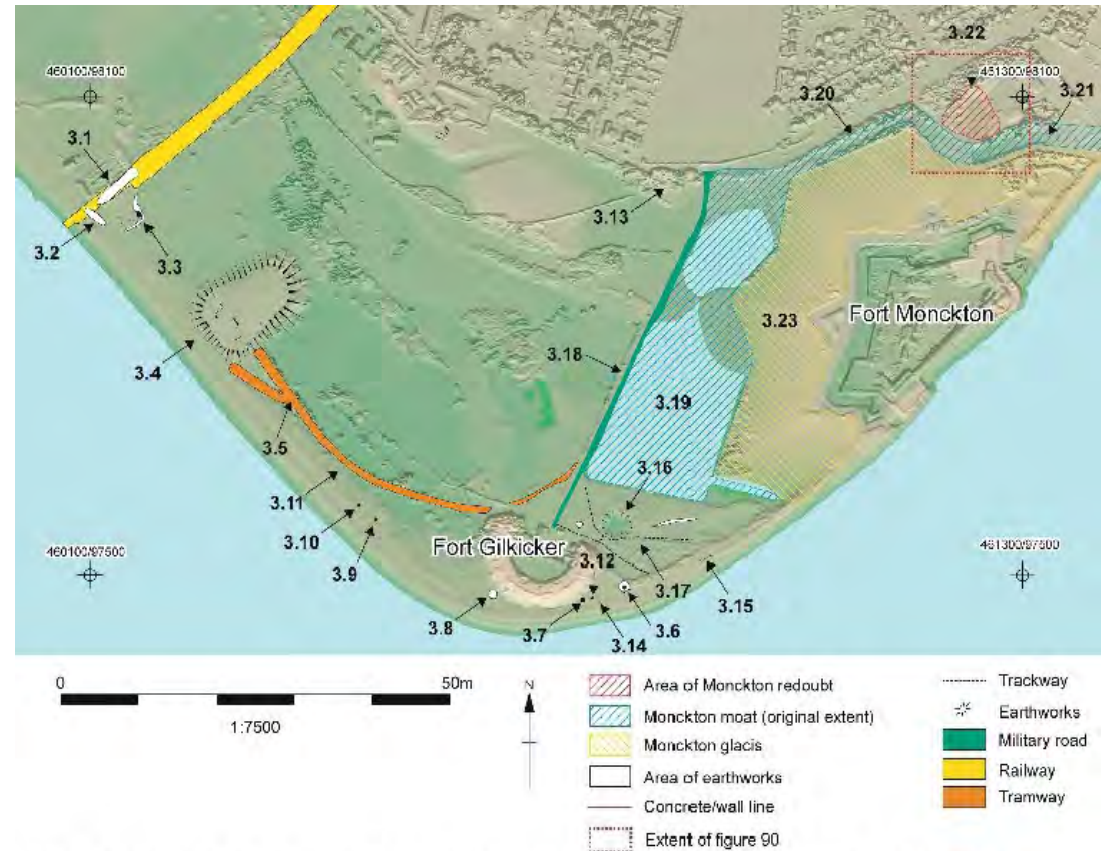


Figure 15. Archaeological features between Lifeboat Lane and Fort Monckton. Base mapping derived from 1m lidar DSM and DTM © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2018



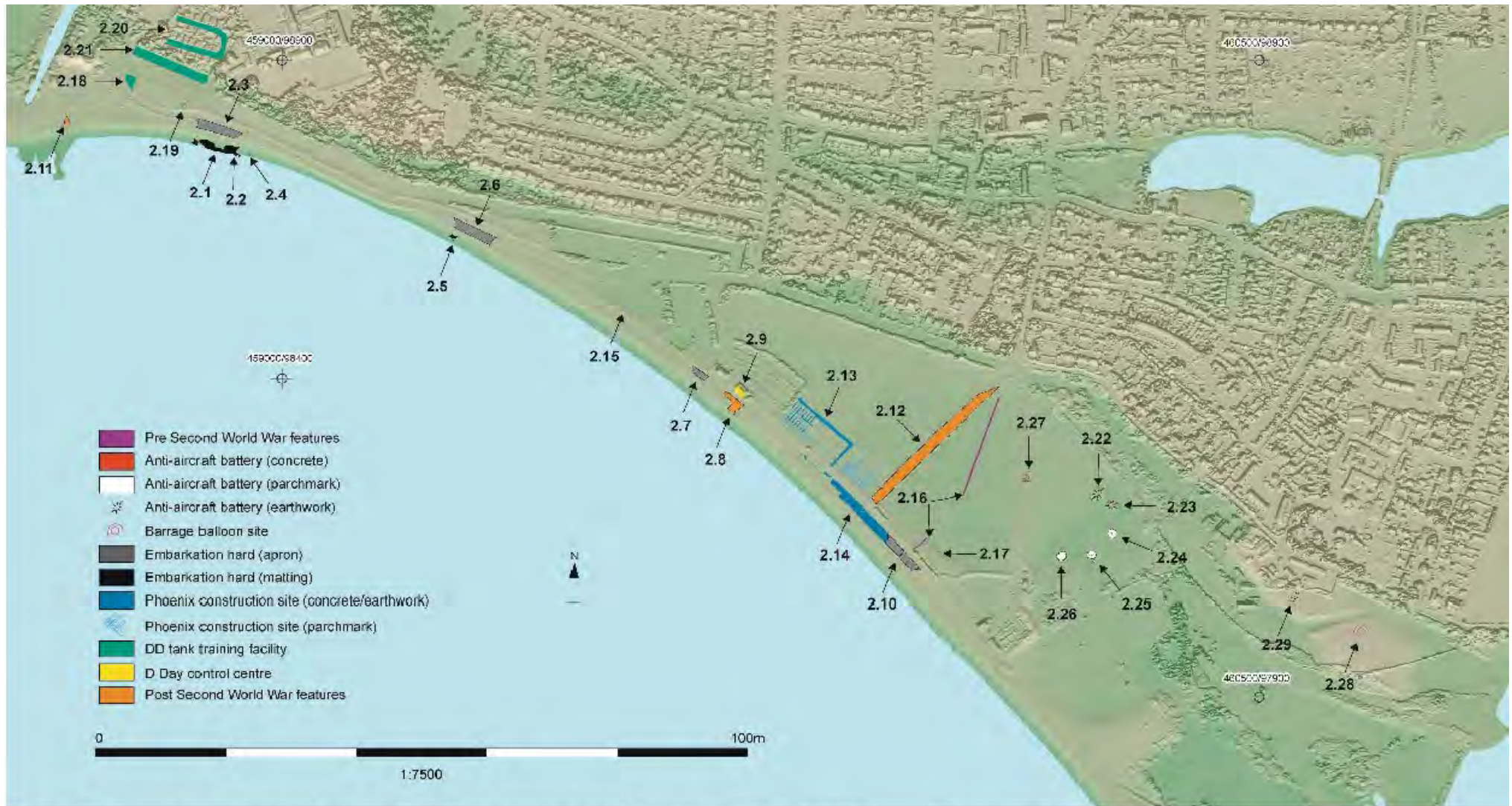


Figure 14. Second World War archaeological features at Stokes Bay. Base mapping derived from 1m lidar DSM and DTM © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2018.



Stokes Bay is a relatively extensive area of dark space in an urban area which links with Browdown and the Alver Valley. Whilst there is lighting on Stokes Bay Road and dwellings to the north, the rest of the area is unlit which provides a special atmosphere particularly when viewing the Isle of Wight and the wider Solent. These relative dark spaces are particularly rare and special in urban areas such as Gosport. The level of darkness enhances the sense of wildness, tranquillity and proximity to nature.

### 6.2.1 Features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area

- Open, undeveloped landscape
- Views of the sea, the Solent, the Isle of Wight and of landmark structures
- Military structures
- Archaeological remains
- Natural habitats, trees, ecology and species
- 'Peaceful' 'Oasis' atmosphere
- Historic leisure facilities including the golf course and promenade shelters
- Information boards and memorials
- Dark skies (lack of lighting)

### 6.2.2 Features which detract from the character and appearance of the area

- The unmanaged proliferation of street furniture such as bins, refuse areas, plant, car parking signs and barriers can add to visual clutter
- Introduction of modern materials has to be handled sensitively, with a risk that some, such as metal barriers or UPVC windows, could harm the historic character.

- Derelict, vacant buildings and sites can attract vandalism: including Fort Gilkicker and the Battery No. 5 site.
- Buildings in need of maintenance with overgrown vegetation and badly corroded materials.

### 6.3 Character and Appearance of Character Area 2: Bay House School, The Alverbank and Stanley Park

This character area is defined by two 19<sup>th</sup> century mansions, originally known as Ashburton and Alver House, and their once extensive garden and parkland settings, which were partly converted in a public park in the 1960s. The area is characterised by mature trees some of which are remnants of a Victorian pinetum, shrubs and flower displays as well a former 19<sup>th</sup> century walled garden known as Charles Osborne Gardens.



*View towards character area showing the projecting belvedere of Bay House School which stands amongst the tree tops*

The area contains the two main residential buildings along with associated outbuildings and garden structures which reflect 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural tastes for picturesque, revival styles with an eclectic combination of shaped gables, Tudor chimney stacks, hood moulds, decorative bargeboards, ashlar stone and brickwork.



*Architectural tastes for picturesque, revival styles*

Now a public park, hotel and school, the area is no longer private. The screening provided by mature, parkland style planting and trees provides a secluded and tranquil atmosphere which is valued by users.



*Holm Oaks*

Boundary treatments range from metal railings, roughly coursed stone walls to formal ashlar walls, gate piers and entrance gates.

### **6.3.1 Features which make a positive contribute to the character and appearance of the area**

- 19<sup>th</sup> century mansions built in eclectic revival styles with high quality materials and flamboyant detailing
- Historic boundary wall treatments and entrances of brick and stone
- Associated outbuildings and garden structures
- Open, green space
- Tranquil and secluded atmosphere
- Parkland setting including mature trees, shrubs and flower displays
- Combination of formal and informal footpaths
- Visual and spatial relationship between mansions and the bay

### **6.3.2 Features which detract from the character and appearance of the area**

- Development within the surroundings which are of a scale, form and detailing which is inconsistent with the area's prevailing character.
- Modern paraphernalia, plant and surface mounted services and downpipes on the exterior of listed buildings.
- Hardstanding and car parking around buildings, where road markings and modern fixtures such as steel barriers, can detract from the semi-rural wider setting of the Bay.

## 7.0 Existing Constraints and Designations

### 7.1 Existing Constraints and Designations

The principal constraints relate to the various designations both statutory and non-statutory that cover large parts of the area and many of its buildings, ecology and archaeological features, which are afforded varying degrees of protection from legislation or planning policy. The extent to which the designations might constrain future changes to the study area vary.

#### Ecology

There are two SSSIs and one SAC within the study area – Browdown SSSI and Gilkicker Lagoon SSSI (part of an SAC) and as such there are a list of activities that are not allowed to take place or require consent from Natural England. In addition planning policy is very strong in terms of the protection of SSSI and SACs.

The non-statutory sites (SINCs) are not protected by specific nature conservation legislation but are protected through planning policies in the Local Plan and national planning policy which seeks to protect and enhance such sites from harmful development.

As well as designated sites there are Habitats of Principal Importance and records for a range of legal protected species, species of Principal Importance and a number of rare species which would be material considerations in any development proposals affecting the study area. Perhaps the most vulnerable features in the study area are the shingle beach and promenade and recreational grasslands as these are subject to high levels of use and disturbance already and intensification of use or provision of more sea front facilities may cause harm to these habitats.

#### Heritage

Battery No.1, Battery No. 5, Fort Gilkicker, and Fort Monckton are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, which are protected in both legislation and planning policy. While some change may be possible, there is a presumption that they will be handed on to future generations in much the same state that we have found them. Scheduling derives its authority from the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. In addition planning policy is very strong in terms of the protection of scheduled monuments and their settings.

The area also includes several Grade II and Grade II\* listed buildings and structures. Listed buildings and their settings are protected in legislation and planning policy. Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations.

The area sits next to and falls within the setting of both the Alverstoke and Anglesey Conservation Areas which are protected in legislation. The areas' significance and settings are also protected within planning policy.

As well as nationally designated assets there are a number of local designations, including tree protection orders, a locally listed clock tower, locally listed Stokes Bay Lines and Moat and Stanley Park which is a 'Local Historic Park and Garden' protected by the Local Plan.

These existing designations offer a level of protection for the identified assets within the area on an individual level, however they do not protect their group value and interest as a collection of buildings and spaces which combine to create a valued 'place' with a cherished character and appearance.





LEGEND

Priority Habitat

- EM11 : Reedbeds
- EM12 : Other swamp
- GA12 : Other lowland dry acid
- GI0 : Improved grassland
- GN1 : Lowland meadows
- GN12 : Other lowland
- IS5 : Saline Lagoons [= Coastal lagoons (AN1)]
- LS3 : Coastal saltmarsh
- LS33 : Atlantic salt meadows [*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*]
- LS34 : Mediterranean salt meadows [*Juncetalia maritima*]
- SS12 : Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ["white dunes"]
- SS14 : Decalcified fixed dunes
- SS31 : Coastal vegetated
- SS311 : Perennial vegetation of stony
- SS312 : Annual vegetation of drift
- WB34Z : Other wet woodland
- WB36 : Lowland mixed deciduous
- Proposed Stokes Bay Conservation

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PROJECT TITLE  
P20-990 STOKES BAY, GOSPORT CA APPRAISAL

DRAWING TITLE  
Figure 7.2: Priority Habitats within Proposed Boundary

DATE: 19/05/2021      CHECKED: JMG      SCALE: 1:11,000  
DRAWN: LA      APPROVED: PS      VERSION: 1.2

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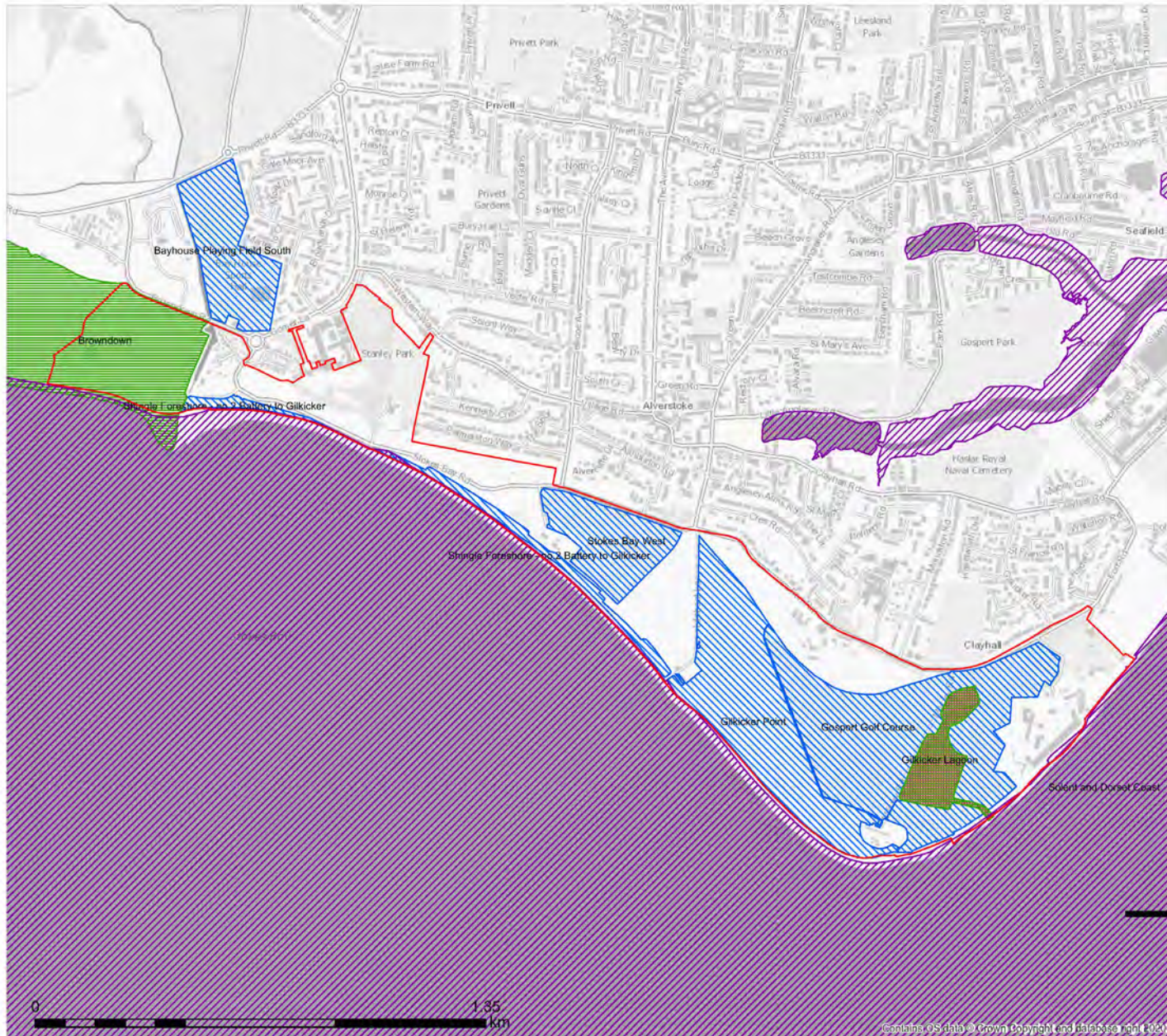
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- LEGEND**
- Proposed Stokes Bay Conservation Area
  - Special Protection Areas
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
  - Ramsar
  - Special Areas of Conservation
  - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

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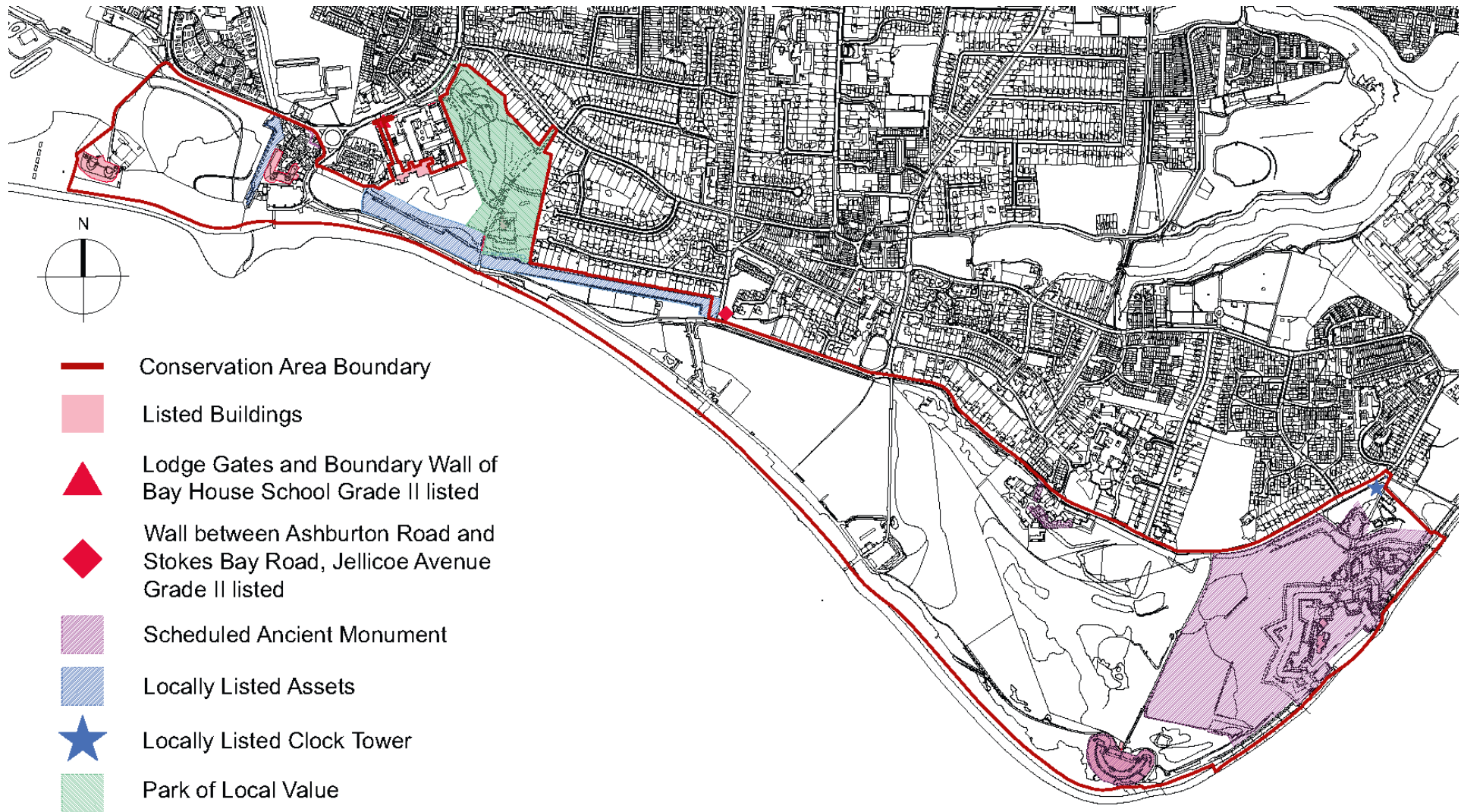
DRAWING TITLE  
Figure 7.1: Statutory and Non-statutory Designated Sites

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Designations



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## 8.0 Issues, Risks and Opportunities

### 8.1 Strategic overview

The following list summarises the key issues which have been identified through the research and consultation activities highlighted in Section 1. This list is not exhaustive and does not include additional issues which may present themselves in the future. It is therefore essential that this document remains flexible, being reviewed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure the following continues to reflect the changing issues which may affect the area.

A number of strategic Borough-wide issues have been identified within adopted local policy documents. The issues provided below have been included where applicable in support of existing advice and objectives. The issues identified relate primarily to the historic built and natural environment, both in the conservation of existing historic fabric and the impact of new development on the character and appearance of the area.

### 8.2 Views and setting

Attractive and interesting views form a significant component of the area's special interest. Stokes Bay is an area visited and used by a large number of people who come specifically to enjoy the scenic and picturesque quality of the area. Internal views towards and between heritage assets are of significance and help the viewer to appreciate each asset's setting and group value. Outward views gained from within the area and historic buildings towards the Solent, Isle of Wight and along the coastline are also of historic and artistic importance. Equally return views of the area from the surroundings are also of value, the area having been used as a wayfinding tool for centuries and as a catalyst for surrounding suburban development which aimed to take advantage of the seaside views.

Development within the area and its setting therefore has the potential to harm existing views within, out of and towards the area. This relates in particular to the introduction of tall buildings in an area which is predominantly undeveloped or consisting of single or two storey buildings.

### 8.3 Historic Ownerships

The military history of the site and its continued use and occupation by the Ministry of Defence, within Fort Monckton and Browdown have ensured that historic connections have been maintained and buildings and their immediate settings remain in their original intended use. Should the Ministry of Defence give up ownership of these sites in the future, this long association with the military and resulting character would be changed and may raise issues of the type of use which could be suitable for these buildings.

### 8.4 Vacant and derelict buildings

One of the main challenges facing the area is vacant and derelict historic buildings. This is a particular issue at the Battery No. 5 site and Gilkicker Fort. Such buildings, which have been designed with a specific military purpose often find difficulty in adapting to a new use which is economically viable and which would support development without causing harm to their significance. Whilst existing legislation and policy govern such development in respect of individually designated assets affected, Conservation Area designation would provide additional guidance and protection with respect to potential impacts on the wider area.

Due to the open quality of the site, the lack of maintenance to any buildings which sit within the area can have a detrimental impact regardless of scale. The deterioration of buildings and structures may create pressure for demolition and replacement.

The fragmentary, and fragile, nature of archaeological features such, as the remains of the D-Day slipways, lack interpretation and

subsequent appreciation. There is a risk that they could be lost or eroded if there is not an understanding and management of their significance.

### **8.5 New development and alteration**

The area may face pressure for new development within its open spaces which are valued. New development or structures may disrupt the open quality of the landscape, as well as take valued amenity space away from the local community.

Due to the archaeological significance of the area, new development has the risk of destroying archaeological deposits beneath ground level.

Introduction of materials, built forms and architectural styles which would not preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the area, can contribute to an erosion of its special interest.

The demands put on the area by an increase in volume of commercial activity, including increased recreational activity, may result in factors which could erode the character of the area. For example, new car parks, services, collection and deliveries and clutter due to elements in the public realm all need to be carefully considered and managed, and a joined-up approach taken at a borough-wide level.

There is an opportunity for proposed development and alterations to enhance the significance of heritage assets, for example the restoration of a clock on the locally listed clock tower, or the restoration of the interconnectivity between Battery Nos. 1 and 2, possibly via the disused tunnel.

Should the area be designated, these matters would be dealt with through the planning system according to legislation, local and national policies.

### **8.6 Boundary treatments, street furniture, signage, lighting, roads**

Street 'clutter' created by large amounts of public signage, bollards and barriers, particularly on roadsides and carparks, can cause confusion, obscure views and detract from the wider environment.

Increased traffic density and poorly managed road layouts can have a detrimental impact on the overall character of the area, and needs to be considered in relation to any new developments.

There is a lack of coordination in the treatment of pavements, roads and pedestrian footpaths, including a lack of cohesion in the use of materials, signage, road marking and barrier treatments. This can lead to a deterioration of character within the public realm and significant changes between areas which would otherwise share a strong connection to each other. The use of patch repairs and inappropriate repair methods has also led to a general deterioration of the public realm and landscape.

Throughout the area there is a lack of high quality and consistent design to furniture, including modern street lighting, benches, wayfinding boards, street signs and planting beds. A coordinated approach to street furniture of a high quality design would help to unify the character of the area and substantially uplift the quality of the public realm. This is particularly evident around Stokes Bay car park.

### **8.7 Climate Change**

Flood risk will be an ongoing challenge to the area, both in terms of the natural and built environment. Consideration within new development or retrofitting should ensure the use and design is compatible with this risk in a manner which does not compromise the architectural or historic character of the area. Future land use and flood defence will also need to take account of the fact that shingle beach habitats exist in a thin ecological zone between the sea and inland areas and as such are potentially threatened by coastal squeeze from rising sea levels if there is no scope for the

coastal habitats to move inland in response to sea level change.

### **8.8 Interpretation**

Stokes Bay is a place that people come to remember past historic events. There is an opportunity to provide enhanced interpretation of the area, particularly relating to obscure or fragmentary remains which are hard to understand without wider context.

### **8.9 Ecology considerations**

Future proposals for the renovation of Gilkicker Fort will need to consider how to mitigate for potential impacts on protected and rare species recorded using the fort including a strong population of common lizard, roosting common pipistrelle bats and rare invertebrates such as the Gilkicker Weevil.

There are opportunities to enhance habitats and species populations within the Bay through a combination of habitat and people management. The Bay currently supports an intricate mosaic of habitat types, but as with all habitats, over time natural succession can lead to the loss of early stage successional habitats and the species that depend upon them. There may be opportunities for limited scrub management where unimproved/semi-improved grassland and vegetated shingle are being colonised by bramble and gorse to maintain the right balance between scrub and more open coastal habitats.

Coastal shingle and coastal grassland habitat is showing signs around Gilkicker Fort of being subject to heavy footfall, resulting in trampling of vegetation and in places leading to loss of vegetation.

There is the opportunity to assess if visitor pressure is causing unacceptable damage to the more sensitive parts of the Bay and to develop in consultation with the local community effective measures to manage people that allows access but also protect habitats and

species.

The woodland habitats associated with Bay House and Alverbank House provide the only significant area of semi-mature woodland in the study area providing additional habitat and landscape diversity. There are numerous paths running through the woodland indicating it is a popular part of the study area with local communities and visitors. The woodlands are dominated by holm oak and other ornamental shrubs and trees, but there are also native trees such as English oak. There is an opportunity to bring these wooded areas into positive management which could consider gradually improving the balance within the woodland between native and non-native trees and shrub species, whilst respecting the historical nature of the original planting at these two houses and in particular the association with holm oak. Access could be improved through provision of improvement to particular paths with steps and surface improvements and closing of other paths. Seating could be provided and through careful management views out from the woodland and back towards the historic houses could also be enhanced. Management could also enhance habitats for species such as nesting birds and roosting bats.

Given the overall complexity of habitat and the intensive and diverse use of the site by the local community and visitors there is the need for a coordinated approach to managing habitats and species whilst protecting and enhancing historical assets and maintaining recreational access and uses in the study area. There is the opportunity to adopt a site-wide approach to maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity value of the Bay, but which is informed by the historical and recreational value of the study area. A site-wide ecology plan would identify and assess the relative value of the varied ecological features of the study area, identify threats to and management needs of the most sensitive elements of the study area and propose positive management solutions.



## 9.0 Key Recommendations

### 9.1 Recommendation

Our research demonstrates that the area of Stokes Bay has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' and that it is desirable for the area's character and appearance to be preserved and enhanced. In addition to this there is considerable community support for such a designation. We therefore advise that the area meets the statutory definition of a conservation area, and merits designation as such. The suggested boundary is shown below.

### 9.2 Statement of Special Interest

Stokes Bay is a gently sweeping bay with a crescent-shaped shoreline, characterised by large areas of undeveloped, open coastal landscape interspersed with a series of defence structures and remains, as well as two 19<sup>th</sup> century former mansions set within mature gardens and parkland. The overall character and appearance of the area is dominated by its proximity to the sea, with impressive views of the surrounding coastline and the Solent, which form a picturesque backdrop against which unique military buildings and features of the Bay are seen. Despite clearance and landscaping in the 1960s the large fortifications and extensive archaeological remains of earlier military structures and campaigns have shaped and still define the character and appearance of the area today. The area is relatively sparsely populated, but with a diverse range of structures and buildings; unique military buildings are interspersed with later small-scale recreational buildings and shelters, as well as two 19<sup>th</sup> century, picturesque seaside mansions; reflecting the bay's dual, and somewhat discordant, use as both a military line of defence and seaside destination. It is desirable that this unique character and appearance is preserved or enhanced.

### 9.3 Historic and Evidential Interest

The area contains a high concentration of important historic buildings, structures and archaeological remains some of which have been designated as listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Due to its topography and location, Stokes Bay has long been vulnerable to invasion and considered a strategically important position in the defence of Gosport and Portsmouth Harbour. The open landscapes, ecology, defensive structures and archaeological remains which characterise the area today are a legacy of this long military history which spans from the building of Haselworth Castle in the mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century to the Second World War, and are worthy of protection. As a result the area has considerable historic interest derived from its association with key national events and figures in the nation's military history. The surviving above and below-ground structures have evidential value in terms of what they can tell us about the evolving architectural and strategic response to historic military developments and technologies. Together the surviving military structures of the Stokes Bay Lines, the spatial and visual relationships between them and their relationship with the wider setting have considerable group value which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards the Bay's adaption to fulfil a leisure function and development as a seaside destination, provides another layer of historic and architectural interest. Two Victorian mansions set within large parkland and gardens illustrate the development of the area by the military elite who sought to take make the most of the seaside location and impressive coastal views. Over the course of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century a golf club, bathing station, refreshment rooms, concrete seats, deck chairs, beach huts, promenade, paddling pool, putting green and tennis courts were also established. The area today remains strongly characterised by this leisure use, has considerable amenity value and is still enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.



## 9.4 Ecological Interest

As well as the historic buildings and remains, the interest of the area arises in large part due to the natural character of the area as a coastal strip of shingle and sandy soils in a shallow bay. Without human interference this would mostly likely have given rise to a gradation from bare shingle through to a mosaic of grassland, scrub, heath and eventually woodland, with low lying wet areas. Much of this natural gradation or mosaic of coastal habitat is still present, but much altered by human activity over hundreds of years which has been shaped and influenced the habitats and species in the study area.

The study area supports a rich and varied suite of ecological interest ranging from internationally important statutory designated sites to non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance. Designated sites cover 60% of the study area. There are two SSSIs and part of an SAC and four non-statutory designated sites within the study area. These sites support a wide variety of habitat from saline lagoon to vegetated shingle, coastal scrub, freshwater marsh and pool, semi-improved grassland and amenity grassland. The habitats in turn support a wide range of plant and animal species from the common and widespread to legally protected species and species the highest level of national rarity (Red Data Book1).

Habitats of high importance and of primary importance for biodiversity in the UK include: vegetated coastal shingle and saline lagoon. Other habitats of note include deciduous woodland (on the edges of Stanley Park), scrub (Gosport Golf Course), semi-improved grassland, small pools and associated wetlands and sparsely vegetated surfaces including man-made features and structures (e.g. the promenade).

Some of the rarest species within the study area are invertebrates

and there is a significant number listed with perhaps the most famous and rarest being the Gilkicker Weevil. It is restricted to the study area being recorded from Gilkicker Fort along the Stokes Bay promenade to Browndown. It requires partially vegetated, exposed coastal grassland and shingle with a hot, frost free micro-climate. There is a long list of county rare plants and a suite of plant species closely associated with the nationally rare habitat of vegetated coastal shingle and the stabilised coastal soils and shingle that occur inland from the strandline.

The study area supports a range of breeding and wintering birds and the grasslands are important foraging and loafing sites for Brent geese and for spring migrants and the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy identifies parts of the area as core and primary areas for birds associated with the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Portsmouth Harbour SPA.

As well as the rare species the Friends of Stokes Bay have recorded a range of common species that are considered important elements of the natural environment of the bay by local people. More widespread protected species include common lizard and bats in Gilkicker Fort.

Many of the sites and habitats of the study area are only present because of the past historic uses, especially those associated with the military. Gilkicker Lagoon SSSI is thought to have been created as part of defences associated with the fort, but prior to this is likely to have been present as a natural fleet. The Gosport Golf Club was set out on what was Haslar common land for the officers located within military bases in Portsmouth and the earth mounds and landforms created by the successive military construction and renewal and today associated with the forts provide habitats for a variety of species.



The natural habitats and species are interconnected with the historic development of the site and contribute to its character and appearance which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Consultation responses demonstrate that these aspects of the area are valued by members of the community.

### **9.5 Architectural Interest**

The area's architectural interest is derived from the unique and complex series of military structures, how their plan form, construction, disposition, materials and detailing responded to their required function and unique strategic setting. In stark contrast, but also of value are the two mansions and outbuildings which reflect 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural tastes for picturesque, revival styles with an eclectic combination of shaped gables, Tudor chimney stacks, hood moulds, decorative bargeboards, ashlar stone and brickwork. These architectural features are considered special and worthy of protection and enhancement.

### **9.6 Communal Value**

The area has particular communal value, as a place where people come to remember the efforts, events and sacrifices made during World War II. It deserves to be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations. This is not only illustrated in the consultation responses but also the high level of memorials in the area, and special remembrance events which are held here, such as D-Day Anniversary celebrations. Consultation responses indicate that Stokes Bay is not just a place that people pass through, but a destination for people who come to learn about history, enjoy the open landscapes, natural habitats, historic buildings, panoramic views and recreational activities. This communal value strongly defines the Bay, with spaces populated and animated by the activity

of people walking their dogs, sailing, picnicking and playing.

### **9.7 Setting**

The Bay's position adjacent to Gosport and Portsmouth Harbour and its coastal setting has played a crucial role in the area's development and endows the area with impressive panoramic views along the coastline and across the Solent towards the Isle of Wight. Outward and return views towards/from the sea, the Isle of Wight and along the coastline are significant from a historic and visual amenity perspective, and warrant preservation or enhancement. Intervisibility between surviving elements of the Stokes Bay Lines are also of value, demonstrating how the system of now individual remnants, once collectively worked.

The defensive infrastructure found within the bay forms part of wider collection of defences which formed an outer protective ring around Gosport, and by extension Portsmouth Harbour, and form an important part of the area's wider context. Furthermore, the associated uses of surrounding land including Browdown Camp and Haslar contribute to our wider understanding of the area's historic military use and occupation.

Suburban development in the Bay's immediate setting began in the 1820s with the development of Anglesey as a seaside spa, and continued with small-scale detached buildings between Anglesey, Alverstoke and Fort Road. These Regency developments sought to take advantage of the seaside location and impressive views and therefore the spatial and architectural relationship and intervisibility between these residential buildings and the bay contribute to the wider interest of the area.

## 9.8 Conclusion

The special interest of the area, which it is desirable to preserve or enhance can be summarised as follows:

- Concentration of historically significant military complexes and installations
- Historic association with key events and figures in the nation's military history
- Group value of Stokes Bay Lines defences
- Development as a seaside destination and place of leisure and recreation from 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards
- Open landscapes shaped by historic land-use patterns
- Biodiversity value of the habitats and species which has been shaped by historic land-use patterns
- High potential for below-ground archaeology
- Topography and strategic setting next to the sea, Gosport and Portsmouth Harbour
- Picturesque and scenic quality of coastline location.

## 10.0 Management Recommendations

### 10.1 Introduction

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69). When dealing with planning applications in conservation areas the Council is required to ensure that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (Section 72). Also, Gosport Borough Council has a duty 'from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas' (Section 71). The 1990 Act (as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (2013)) prevents the demolition of buildings in conservation areas without planning permission and allows for the service of Urgent Works Notices for vacant buildings in a similar way to those for listed buildings.

The sections of the 1990 Act form the foundation for the Council to help manage the built environment in such a way as to retain the special qualities of conservation areas. There are, however, a wide range of other pieces of legislation, national guidance and local policy which assist in this task. They deal with other types of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, additional controls to supplement those included in the 1990 Act (often called Article 4 Directions), various types of repair and enforcement notices, and advice on how to assess the impact of development on the setting of an area or building and many other related topics. Consequently, it is important that this document is not read in isolation from additional guidance and policy documents.

What follows is a list of management recommendations intended to ensure the character, appearance and special architectural and historic interest of the Bay is preserved and enhanced.

### 10.2 Recommendations

#### 10.2.1 Designation and Review

It is recommended that the Stokes Bay Area is designated as a Conservation Area and that all statutory duties this places upon the Gosport Borough Council are adhered to.

#### 10.2.2 Protection of Views

New development within the designated area or its setting should not obscure or harm important views within, towards, or from the Bay. Important views and landmarks have been highlighted, however more may be identified by others. Proposals which enhance the significance of heritage assets should be encouraged, those which cause harm should be resisted. Accurate views indicating the likely impact of new development may be requested by the Council, to demonstrate the impact of a proposed development on the character and appearance of the area or its setting.

#### 10.2.3 Design of New Development and Alteration

Any new development should respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. The change of use of buildings should include careful consideration of the



consequent changes to, among others, delivery access, parking, and external services, such as condensing units. New extensions should have regard to the character and appearance of the principal building, and be of an appropriate design, mass, scale, height, colour, material, layout and form to ensure that it is not obscured or overdeveloped.

Proposals which seek to remedy features that are considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the character areas as described in Section 6 of this report, should be encouraged. Proposals which would perpetuate and heighten these features should be resisted. Proposals which would preserve and enhance the features considered to make a positive contribution to the area as noted in Section 6 should be encouraged. Those which would not preserve or enhance, but would cause harm to these features should be resisted.

#### 10.2.4 Protection of dark skies

The council and applicants should consider how development proposals would impact the levels of darkness in the area. Increased light levels during dark hours should be restricted or kept to low levels in order to protect the valued darkness and night sky visibility.

#### 10.2.5 Protection and management of open space

The area derives much of its special interest and valued character and appearance from the open landscapes as well as the habitats and species contained within them. Development within the areas noted as open space should be resisted in order to preserve the character, appearance and special interest of the Bay. Existing areas of landscape, including that to Stanley Park should be actively maintained

and management processes should be adopted which ensure their special interest is preserved and enhanced.

#### 10.2.6 Protection of the area's setting

Development within the Conservation Area's setting should be carefully assessed to understand the impact of the proposals of the special interest and character and appearance of the area. Those which are considered harmful should be resisted. Historic England provides guidance on understanding the importance of setting for a heritage asset in The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

#### 10.2.7 Protection of natural habitats and species

The designated sites should be protected and their interest maintained through positive management. This will require careful assessment of future proposals for restoration of historic assets, improvements to recreational facilities, proposals for new or increased intensity of existing recreational uses and new developments to understand impacts upon valued ecological assets. In relation to statutory designated sites Natural England provides guidance on activities that are considered to be harmful and must be consulted about proposals for new development or changes in use or proposed land management operations.

Non-statutory sites are protected by local planning policies and national planning policy guidance, however some impacts may arise that are not governed by planning policy or control mechanisms, such as increased levels of existing recreational uses. New development proposals should be

fully assessed against local plan policies to ensure the features of interest of designated sites are protected. Management policies and practices should also take account of the special interest of the site when considering changes in land management or land use. A future management plan should assess how best to manage the potentially conflicting interest of nature conservation and public recreation such that a balance can be achieved ensuring Stokes Bay continues to be a site rich in wildlife but also enjoyed by the many people who visit it each year.

Perhaps the most vulnerable habitats and designated areas are those associated with the coastal strip that supports shingle beach and vegetated shingle. This habitat is not only subject to high level of recreational disturbance but also is vulnerable to impacts of coastal squeeze resulting from climate change and predicted sea level rise especially if there is no capacity to allow habitats to move inland in response. The future management plan for the study area should consider how and where movement of coastal habitats inland can be accommodated to ensure the special interest of these habitats is retained. The coastal strip is subject to high visitor pressure and the impacts of this should be monitored and management measures introduced where required to maintain the interest of the coastal strip.

#### 10.2.8 Pro-active management of redundant, vacant buildings and fragile archaeological deposits

Re-use of vacant buildings with viable new uses that are sustainable and consistent with their conservation should be encouraged. Redevelopment should avoid unnecessary harm and should wherever possible enhance the significance of the buildings and be sympathetic to the Conservation Area's character and appearance. Further

guidance on optimum viable use is provided in National Planning Policy Guidance found here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment).

Proposals to demolish buildings or structures which make a positive contribution to the area as noted in Section 4 of this report should be resisted. Where buildings are vacant and require temporary security measures and protection to dissuade anti-social behaviour and protect the building from further deterioration, these measures should be of sufficient quality and be well maintained.

Buildings without a current use should be actively maintained to ensure that their condition does not worsen whilst a new use is found. It is recommended that GBC undertake regular surveys to identify potential buildings at risk through neglect or vacancy, and implement enforcement notices on neglected or dilapidated buildings.

The condition of sub-surface remains and archaeological fragments such as the hards should be professionally assessed and advice taken as to how they can be best preserved and protected.

#### 10.2.9 Pro-active approach to managing climate change issues

GBC should consider the whole life carbon cycles of buildings to ensure sustainable decision making and avoid the carbon dioxide of constructing new buildings if existing buildings can be re-used and improved instead. The care and reuse of heritage assets in the area in order to save energy and carbon dioxide through better maintenance, management and energy efficiency measures should be encouraged. Retrofits and proposals to improve energy efficiency should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with traditional building materials, functionality

and significance. Historic England have a wide selection of technical advice and guidance on improving the energy efficiency of historic buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings/>.

GBC should undertake comprehensive and integrated flood-risk management in order to ensure the historic environment including both above ground and sub-surface remains, is protected from coastal and other types of flooding. Where development is proposed in response to flood risk such as coastal barriers, the impact on the special interest of the conservation area and its character and appearance should be assessed and harm should be mitigated as far as possible. Historic England's guidance on flooding and historic buildings can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/flooding-and-historic-buildings-2ednrev/heag017-flooding-and-historic-buildings/>

#### 10.2.10 Support for community engagement and greater interpretation

It is recommended that the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is made available on the council's website and in interactive format to encourage its use. GBC should work with stakeholders to develop proposals to engage the community with the conservation area and its heritage assets. Proposals which introduce uses into vacant buildings that are focused on community engagement and well-being should be welcomed. Heritage Counts (Historic England, updated 2018) <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/> Heritage Schools (Historic England, updated 2018) <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/heritage-schools/>.

Increased interpretation should be encouraged. The inclusion of high quality interpretation boards, interpretative artwork and future events should be considered for implementation throughout the area to highlight and increase awareness of its special historic and architectural interest. This is particularly relevant for features which are difficult to understand in isolation, such as embarkation hards.

#### 10.2.11 Management of signage, street furniture and boundary treatments

Signage, furniture and paraphernalia should be sensitively designed and integrated in to the streetscene. GBC should produce further guidance on the design of signage, street furniture and boundary treatments to ensure a consistent and high quality approach is achieved across the area. National Advertisement Guidance (March 2014) [www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements)



## Appendix I: Sources

Friends of Stokes Bay website: [www.friendsofstokesbay.co.uk](http://www.friendsofstokesbay.co.uk)

Disused Stations website: [www.disused-stations.org.uk](http://www.disused-stations.org.uk)

Hampshire Gardens Trust website:

<http://research.hgt.org.uk/item/bay-house-school/>

English Heritage/Oxford Archaeology, *Gosport, Urban Characterisation Study*, 2014

Mike Williams and Olaf Bayer, *Stokes Bay, Gosport: Five Centuries of Coastal Defence*, 2019

Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment:

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICACharacterArea-9FGosportandFarehamCoastalPlain-Final2012-05.pdf>

## Appendix II: Gazetteer of Designated and Locally Listed Heritage Assets within the boundary

Heritage Asset	Type of designation	National Heritage List for England Entry Number
Fort Monckton	Scheduled Monument	1001844
Fort Monckton: The Former Central Magazine	Grade II* Listed	1445601
Fort Monckton: The Former Officers' Mess	Grade II Listed	1445604
Gilkicker Fort	Scheduled Monument	1001789
Fort Gilkicker	Grade II* Listed	1276716
No. 5 Battery, Stokes Bay Lines	Scheduled Monument	1001829
Wall Between Ashburton Road And Stokes Bay Road, Jellicoe Avenue	Grade II Listed	1233493
Bridge 30 Yards South Of Alverbank	Grade II Listed	1234516
Alverbank House	Grade II Listed	1234064
Entrance Lodge To Stanley Park, Bay House School	Grade II Listed	1276604

Lodge, Gates And Boundary Wall Of Bay House School	Grade II Listed	1276718
Bay House School	Grade II Listed	1276633
No 1 Battery, Stokes Bay Lines	Scheduled Monument	1405953
No. 2 Battery	Grade II* Listed	1276305
Browndown Battery	Grade II Listed	1232657
Moat To Stokes Bay Lines Between Battery No. 2 And Portsmouth Rd	Locally Listed Structure	
The Stokes Bay Lines From Battery No. 2 To Jellicoe Avenue, North Side Of Stokes Bay Rd	Locally Listed Structure	
Stanley Park	Locally Listed Park And Garden	
Monument 'Constructed By R E Mason Boys 1929'	Locally Listed Structure	





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