

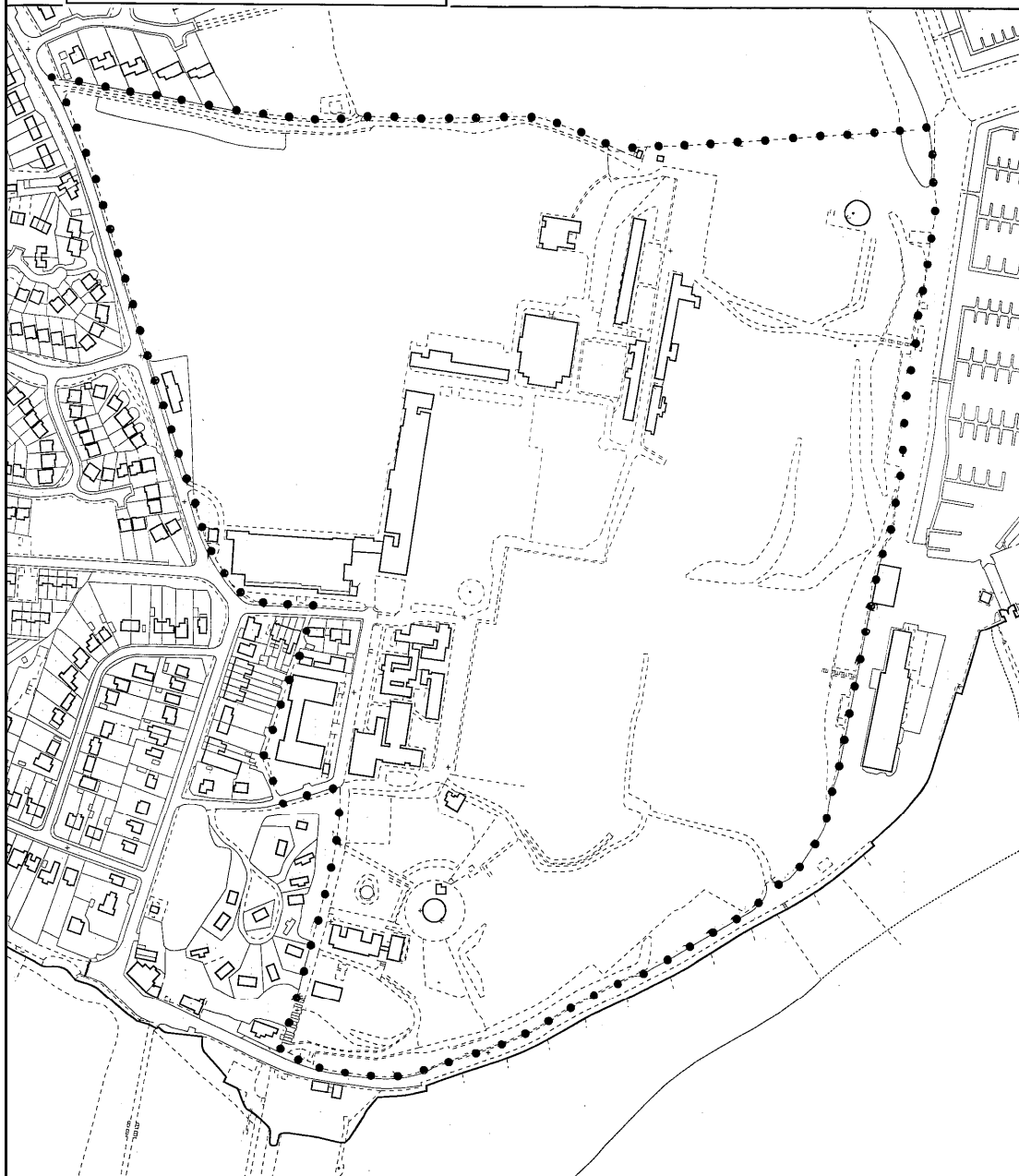
*Shotley Gate*

*conservation area appraisal*

**Introduction**

• • • Conservation Area Boundary

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# Introduction

*The idea of a conservation area covering the HMS Ganges site at Shotley Gate was put forward during 2010.*

*The Council has a duty to review its conservation area designations from time to time, and following an initial investigation, this more detailed appraisal has now been produced in line with the Council's other appraisals.*

*This appraisal examines Shotley Gate under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's new 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006). As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Shotley Gate's built environment in conservation terms, which is felt sufficient to justify the area's designation as a conservation area.*



*As a document it is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient for the briefing of the Planning Officer when assessing proposed works in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.*

*As the English Heritage guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.*

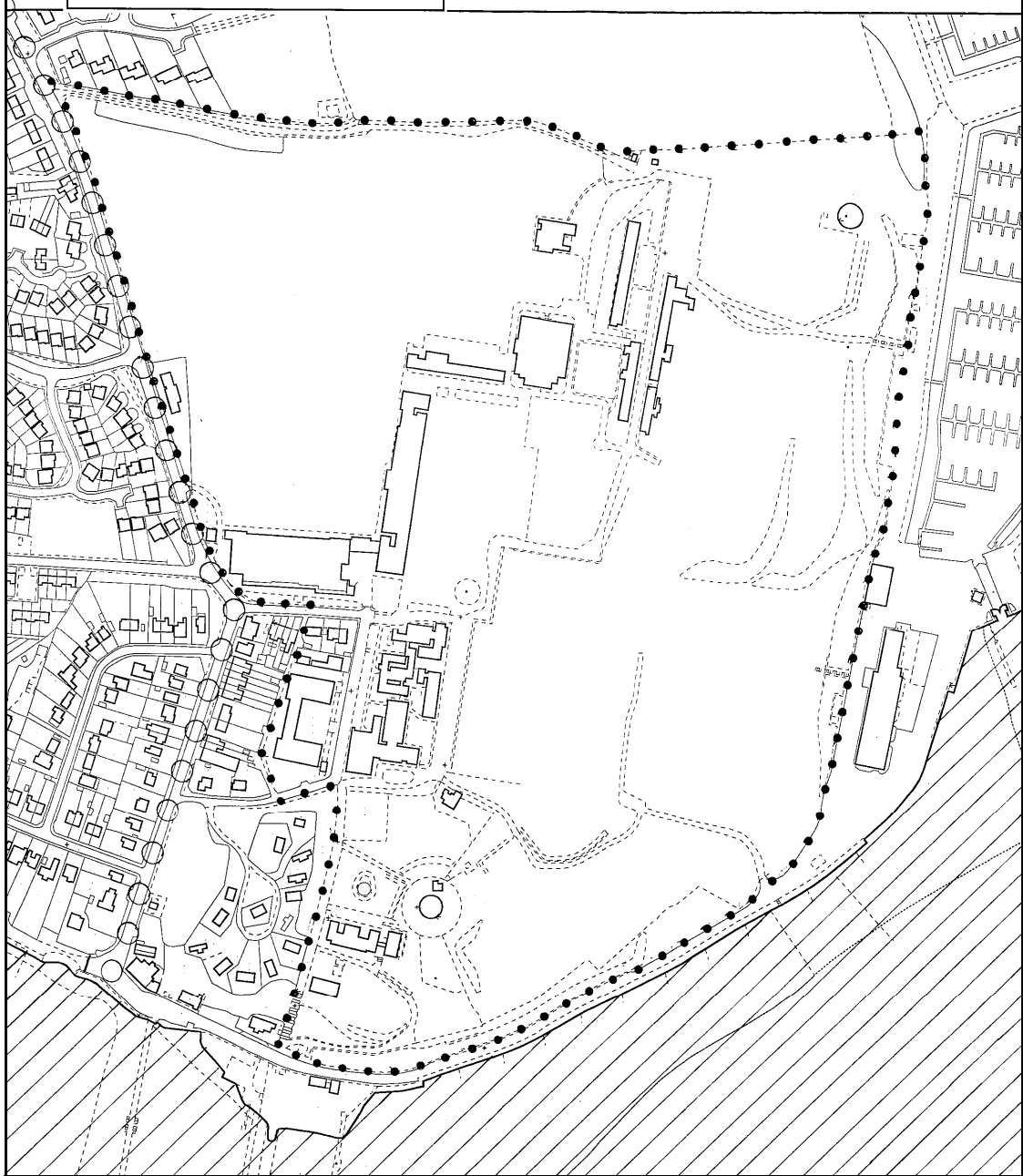
*Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Babergh District Council 2011.*

**Topographical Framework**

○ ○ Road

/// Estuary

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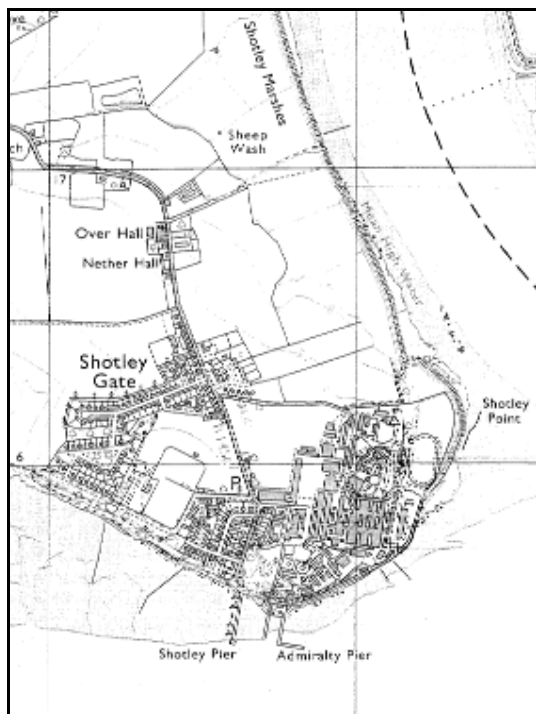


# Topographical Framework

*Shotley Gate is a small settlement right on the tip of the Shotley peninsula, where the Rivers Orwell and Stour meet. The county town of Ipswich, at the head of the Orwell estuary, lies ten miles to the north-west, whilst the villages of Brantham in Suffolk and Manningtree in Essex face each other across the head of the Stour estuary a similar distance west.*

*On the south side of the Stour opposite Shotley Gate there is the port of Harwich, whilst to the east across the Orwell, the docks of Felixstowe can be seen just inside the river mouth.*

*Starting from just the Bristol Arms, the settlement at Shotley Gate has spread firstly as ribbon development up either side of Bristol Hill, running northwards from the waterfront to 30m above O.D.*



*In behind this to the west there are extensive modern estates, whilst on the eastern side there is the conservation area, that was formerly the site of HMS Ganges, a Royal Navy training establishment, stretching down to the shore of the Orwell.*

*Situated clear of the high Suffolk claylands on the coastal sandlings strip, the underlying geology is basically glacial sands and gravels, with exposures at low level of Red Crag more prevalent across the River Orwell to the north. These exposures are underlain in their turn by the older London Clay, itself more prevalent to the south.*

*Within this clay are to be found nodular concretionary masses of a clayey limestone, known as 'septaria', at one time dredged from the river locally, for both building and to make a form of Roman Cement.*

**Archaeological Significance**

- ⊕ Historic Environment Record Site
- ⊗ Scheduled Monument

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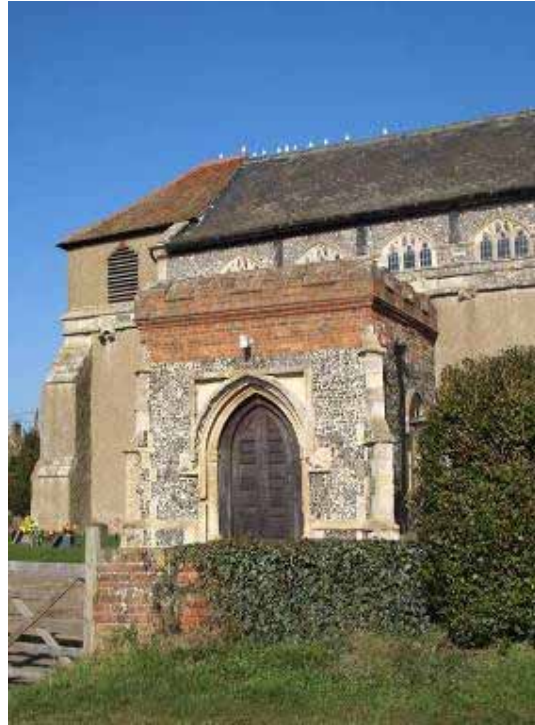


# Archaeological Significance

*The parish of Shotley covers the entire tip of the peninsula, the village itself being situated on higher ground about a mile north-west of Shotley Gate. The church is remotely situated about half a mile further north again.*

*The Suffolk County Historic Environment Record lists over eighty sites of archaeological interest in the parish. The earliest of these is a flint arrowhead from the Neolithic. Slightly later from the Bronze Age there are also a looped spear, a barbed and tanged arrowhead, a flat axehead and a spearhead fragment, all signs of an early arms race here.*

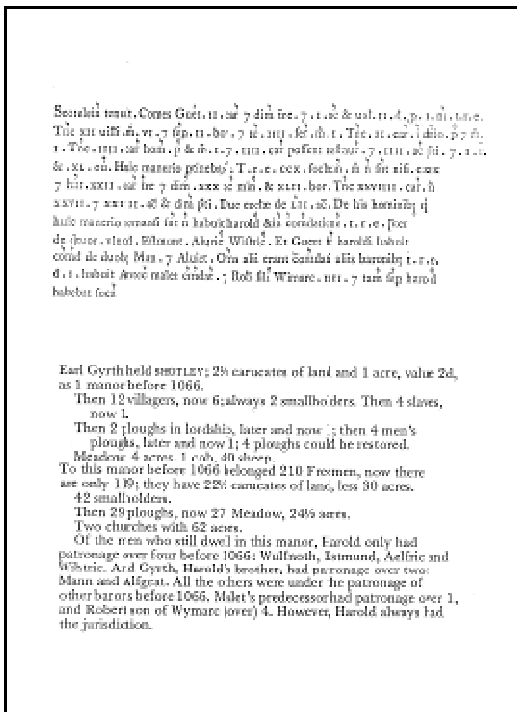
*There are also over twenty 'Ring Ditches', and various other 'Field Systems', 'Cropmarks' and 'Enclosures' all undated, some of which may well be Neolithic or Bronze Age in date.*



*Two coins have been found from the Iron Age, whilst the Romans have left us various scatter finds and two further coins, one from the reign of Constantine.*

*The area seems to have been the subject of continuous human settlement as there are also Saxon remains in the form of two brooches, a bronze plaque and a belt fitting. More recently there is some Medieval pottery and the Church and graveyard are listed, along with a Moat at nearby Old Hall.*

*Two separate holdings were recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086, the main one as part of 'Land of the King, of which Aelfric Wand has charge'. This was quite a large settlement and included some 27 ploughs, 24½ acres of meadow and two churches with 62 acres.*



**Quality of Buildings**

- Grade I Listed
- Grade II\* Listed
- Grade II Listed

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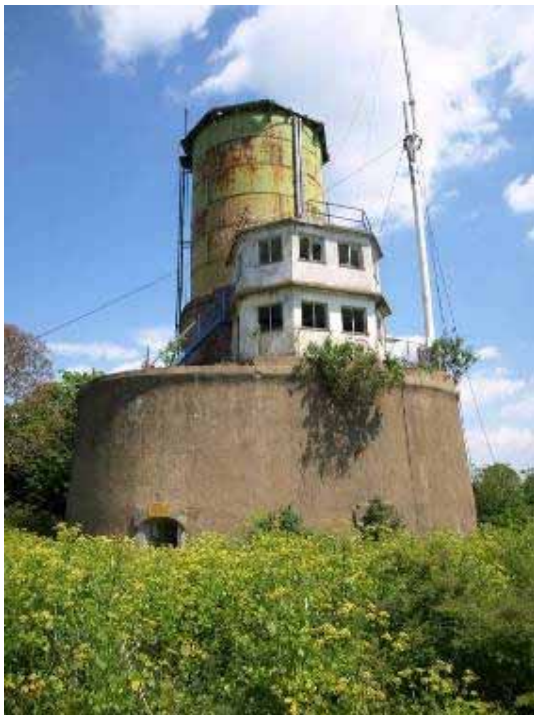




# *Intrinsic Quality of Buildings*

*Within the greater parish of Shotley there are some eight grade II listed houses or farmhouses and one barn, all dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The Church of St Mary is grade II\* and older, parts dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Mainly built of flint with stone dressings, with some brickwork and pebbledash and both slate and plaintile roofs, Pevsner comments on it being “A somewhat awkward-looking church”.*

*The main interest for the conservation area is its four listed ‘buildings’. These comprise the set of gates, piers, railings and lamp standards at the entrance to HMS Ganges along with its ceremonial mast and two Martello Towers within the grounds. The gates etc. date from c.1905, when the Royal Naval Training Establishment was set up.*



*The 143 foot high ceremonial mast is of a similar age, having been compounded from the foremast of HMS Cordelia, a corvette paid off in 1900, and the topmast of HMS Agincourt, a sailing battleship built in 1892. Much repaired and replaced in recent times, the repairs themselves are now in need of repair.*

*The Martello Towers are earlier and date from 1808-12, built as part of a string of defences to England’s south and east coasts during the Napoleonic war. The northern one (M) now supports a water tower, whilst the southern (L) also has a lookout tower. As well as being grade II listed, both these towers are now Scheduled Monuments, as are the remains of a more recent Victorian Fort built between them in 1862/3, as a supplementary defence that was recommended by a Royal Commission.*

# *Traditional Building Materials*



# Traditional Building Materials

*The two Martello towers are basically of brick construction with massive walls several feet thick. They both employ rusticated stone dressings and look very similar, although one is rendered and the other is fair-faced brick, but of a very dull colour. The original parts act now simply as a neutral solid base to the later accretions, which tend to be what you notice.*

*The rest of the site is basically built using local red brick, mostly with slate roofs. The Vincent Building, the impressive three storey block to the north of the parade ground is in neo-Georgian style, plain and uncomplicated, whilst the Old School House outside the gates has rusticated brick quoins and a hipped slate roof with modillion eaves brackets.*



*Variety to this theme is introduced with the use of blue engineering brick banding on the Nelson Building with its Art Deco style entrance west of the parade ground and the use of pebbledash rendering on some other buildings, sometimes left natural, sometimes painted over. There is also an element of Art Deco inside the Swimming Pool building.*

*None of these materials is foreign to Suffolk and the other listed buildings in the parish do complete the palette of traditional materials. As we have seen the Church has flint, stone, red brick and render with both slate and plaintile roofs.*

*The various other listed buildings employ both rendered and exposed timber-framing, black weather-boarding, both Suffolk Red and White brick, sometimes painted, with roofs variously of plaintile, slate and pantile.*

**Hierarchy of Spaces**

- Former Parade Ground
- Coastal Cliff
- Important Vista

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# Hierarchy of Spaces

*The conservation area in Shotley Gate comprises three main spaces.*

*The first is the very obvious space in the centre of the site that used to be the parade ground. Here the ceremonial mast is the main focus, the space being contained to the north, west and south by surviving buildings. These provide the historic setting for the grade II listed mast, defining the parade ground with access to it from the public realm being controlled by the grade II listed gates and railings between the western and southern buildings.*

*A gap through between the western and northern buildings leads to the playing fields behind. This area, currently green and extending to the site's northern and western boundaries is partly screened by tree belts, but in places allows views in and out through railings or hedges.*



*Perhaps the area within the site best suited to development, the playing fields are also furthest away from the other main space.*

*The third main space in the area is essentially the coastal strip. Not quite a cliff, the land does drop away sharply to the south and east of the Ganges site. Two remaining sets of steps provide access up this cliff, one to the north-east leads to a gated brick entrance near the old fort, the other at the south-west end in three flights was known as Faith, Hope and Charity and used in punishments for trainee's misdemeanors.*

*The height of the Martello Tower sites undoubtedly helped in increasing their range and today places these two less in danger from coastal erosion than many others in the historic chain. The space here is effectively the whole estuary mouth, overlooked as it is by the other fortifications of the Redoubt at Harwich and Landguard Fort at Felixstowe.*

**Trees & Planting**

⊕⊕ TPO Trees

⊕⊕ Other Trees

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# Trees & Planting

*Whilst the lower edges of the 'cliff' are perhaps a little scrubby and only covered with gorse and blackthorn, there is not in general sufficient wind blown salt around Shotley Gate to seriously restrict tree growth. This is largely the result of its not being directly on the coast and thus exposed to the full blast of North Sea winds.*

*Numerous trees have thus survived on the higher ground within the former training establishment, mostly around the top of the 'cliff' between the two towers where good young specimens of Lime, Corsican Pine, Poplar and Sycamore can now be found. These along with the intervening grassland provide a potential 'parkland' setting for the historical monuments, a valuable asset to any future plans for public interpretation.*



*Three small areas south-west of the Ganges site have been considered at sufficient risk of losing their trees to warrant Tree Preservation Orders. TPOs 59 and 121 protect a group of mainly Oak, Ash, Pine and Chestnut immediately south of Battery Lane whilst TPO 402 protects a group of Holm Oak, Sycamore and Pine adjoining the sailing club further south.*

*To the north of the playing field TPO 211 covers a screening belt of Silver Birch, Beech and Holly along the line of Marsh Lane. Because of redevelopment proposals, the entire Ganges site was also included in TPO 401 made in 2006. This included other screening belts of Holm Oak on School Road and of Limes: one to the west of the playing fields behind Shotley Cottage on the main road, the other along the north side of Caledonia Road approaching the gates.*

**Open Countryside**

○ ○ Definitive Footpath

/// AONB Area of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty

XXXX SSSI

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# Relationship to Open Countryside

*In historical times the area around Shotley was probably not tree covered, but would have been mainly heathland: poor sandy soils grazed by sheep, being the southernmost outpost of Suffolk's sandling heaths.*

*The northern edge of the Ganges site along Marsh Lane here forms the southern boundary of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covering both the Stour and Orwell estuaries. This boundary continues westwards excluding the majority of the housing estates west of the main road, which qualify as 'built up area' in the Babergh Local Plan. The rest including the Ganges site is by definition 'countryside' and is for the most part easily accessible by a number of footpaths.*



*Marsh Lane itself is one of these footpaths, no.17, giving access from the main road down to the Orwell estuary. Northwards along the seawall it becomes footpath 16 whilst southwards it is footpath 18 which follows the shore around to the foot of Bristol Hill, before continuing westwards along the Stour estuary. Adjoining these, parts of the foreshore strip are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).*

*It is this coastal footpath that makes Shotley Gate such a popular tourist destination a short distance from the large conurbation of Ipswich. Here one can enjoy a gentle stroll betwixt sea and land, with distant views of busy docks across the waters and the green cliffs with their historic fortifications as a backdrop.*

**Former Usage**

- Ⓜ Martello Tower
- ⓕ Fortification
- Ⓢ Shotley Gate Inn

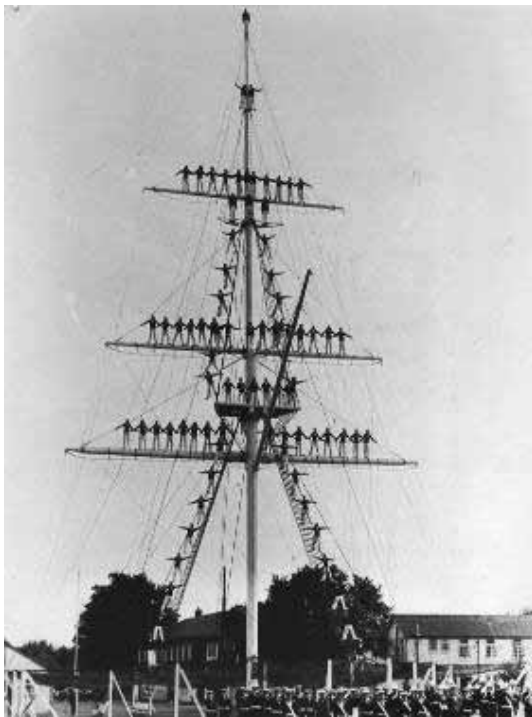
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# Prevailing & Former Usage

*The village of Shotley is not untypical of historic Suffolk coastal villages. It was mentioned in Domesday and in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century there are records of 9 husbandmen and 12 yeomen involved with farming, 2 tailors, a weaver and 2 spinsters in the cloth industry and 6 sailors, 3 fishermen and a ship's carpenter on the maritime side.*

*By 1844 there were 2 shopkeepers, a wheelwright, a shoemaker and several boats employed in the collection of stone (by dredging) for Roman Cement. This general picture is borne out by the Tithe map of 1839 with field names implying the existence of 'Mill', 'Malt Office' and 'Dovehouse' along with others indicative of various extractive industries such as 'Gravel Pit Piece' or 'Cragg Pitts' (sic).*



*Also shown on the Tithe map are both the Martello towers, each within its own field or meadow owned by the 'Board of Ordnance' and let out as pasture to Benjamin Page. Both are remotely sited, accessed by short lanes off the road, the only other destination here being the Shotley Gate Inn (now the Bristol Arms) at its water-side terminus.*

*The hamlet of Shotley Gate came later with its development either side of Bristol Hill. The building of the HMS Ganges complex in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century would have been both a major event and boost to the rural economy, but not out of place in such a remote militarised landscape. During its active life through that century up to 1976 many thousands of trainees have passed through the establishment and performed the ceremonial masting of the mast.*

# Losses & Possible Gains

*The few buildings that remain standing at HMS Ganges are of a more permanent nature than the many huts that provided the basic residential accommodation, now swept away. Of insufficient age to guarantee their future by being listed, the historical associations of these buildings and their importance to so many young trainees that used them should ensure the survival of the best.*

*Redevelopment proposals for the site should thus respect what is left, particularly the Swimming Pool, Vincent and Nelson Buildings, and attempt to find new uses within the scheme for these and other extant buildings of sufficient quality. Obviously some buildings are not of such quality and will inevitably face demolition, something Conservation Area status does allow, once a case has been made.*



# Losses & Possible Gains

*The listed buildings are by their nature better protected and should be the subjects of Conservation Plans, accurately assessing the many layers of accretions and agreeing what should be removed and what retained.*

*This is imperative for the two Martello Towers, where the need for water storage has seriously overshadowed the historical structures beneath. The other landmark, the mast also needs careful consideration, especially since it seems that past well-intended repairs are now the main cause of its structural failings.*

*The spaces on the site should similarly be respected. The area of the former training ground with the mast at its focus should remain as an open space surrounded by buildings, preferably including those that are still there.*



*Similarly the open space of the cliff and cliff-top should remain as such, as a setting for the historic Scheduled Monuments within it, sweeping right around from the Bristol Arms to behind the Marina. This area must also be considered in the larger context of its being viewed from the greater space on the water and in relation to the other historic fortifications at Harwich (Redoubt) and Felixstowe (Landguard).*

*At the northern end within the marina precinct the boats are generally aesthetically pleasing, even hauled out for maintenance or storage, and continue Shotley Gate's nautical associations. Some further development has been approved here at the foot of the cliff behind the marina and should not detract from the overall picture.*

# References & Further Reading

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*Conservation Area designated and this Appraisal adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Babergh D C Strategy Committee 2 June 2011*