



## ENGLISH HERITAGE

### HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION CONCERNING DOVER CASTLE, DOVER, KENT

**Monument:** Dover Castle, Castle Hill, Dover, Kent CT16 1HU

**NGR:** TR 32479 41938

**Project:** Renewal of planning permission for use of car park in Broadlees Bottom

**Date:** 28 November 2023

#### I. Introduction

- I.1 English Heritage is applying to renew the existing temporary planning permission covering use of Broadlees Bottom as a car park. It is proposed to continue the current use of the site as overflow parking space for visitors to the castle and as primary parking for people visiting the Bleriot Memorial and Broadlees Bottom generally.
- I.2 This heritage statement is a reviewed and reissued version of one prepared to support previous renewals of the planning permission in 2018 and 2020. It has been prepared to provide the information recommended by the NPPF for planning applications affecting heritage assets. It takes into account online guidance provided by Dover District Council on the required content of heritage statements (<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Conservation/Statements-of-Significance.aspx>). Following a general account of the historical development of the site, it considers how the proposed use will affect the significance of the place and shows how any potential risks of harm to significance will be mitigated or offset. The pertinent issues have not changed since 2018.
- I.3 *Heritage designations*
  - Dover Castle is a scheduled ancient monument (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) no. 1019075). The car park falls outside the scheduled area.
  - Dover Castle is a Grade I listed building (NHLE no. 1070326).
  - The castle falls within, and forms the focus of, the Dover Castle Conservation Area. The road leading to Broadlees Bottom forms the northeast boundary of the conservation area, meaning that part of the car park falls within it.

## **2. Understanding the historic environment at Broadlees Bottom**

- 2.1 Broadlees Bottom lies adjacent to the northeast flank of Dover Castle. The historic use of Broadlees Bottom before the 19th century is not entirely clear and understanding has to be gleaned chiefly from cartographic evidence and assumptions made about the history of the castle. Early use of the site is demonstrated by prehistoric struck flints observed on the ground surface during the walkover survey and by numerous Neolithic-Bronze Age flints found in trenches opposite Hudson's Bastion and around Bleriot's memorial. It is not clear whether the latter represent occupation or were washed down from higher ground, but they provide evidence of prehistoric activity within the general area.
- 2.2 Given the putative origins of Dover Castle as an Iron Age hill fort with an entrance to the east, this side of the castle may once have included its principal approach. Even if the hill fort thesis is not accepted, the arrangement of the overlapping banks on this side of the castle creating a causeway between them running up to the curtain suggest the possibility of a medieval entrance in this location, later closed by Avranches Tower. (Lincoln Castle provides a possible analogue, with its main gate facing out away from the city.) Whatever the earliest use of the eastern part of the castle, by the 13<sup>th</sup> century it had become a secondary means of entering the site (through Fitzwilliam Gate). The earliest plans of the castle showing the land to the east of the outer curtain date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and depict this area as open land (figure 1). Some caution is necessary as these plans concentrate on the town, harbour and castle, and it is clear that they contain some topographical errors. At the very least, however, the lack of focus on the land to the east of the castle, combined with the absence of any documentary evidence associated with castle-related structures within this area, suggests that this area was probably open chalk downland.
- 2.3 A more detailed picture is presented by plans of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which again show the land east of the castle as open and devoid of structures and defensive features. Plans drawn in the 1730s and 1756 (figures 2 and 3), which show the east outer curtain of the castle before major changes were made to this section of the enceinte to provide better artillery defence, again depict the area east of the castle as open, with a road (subsequently called Upper Road) running south-eastwards towards the cliff edge. On the western side of the road is a tree or hedge boundary. The 1756 plan shows land northeast of the road being ploughed in regular strips and put to agricultural use, while the land closer to the castle (the area subject to the current proposals) is shown as open downland. At the salient of the eastern defences there are three banks outside the ditch.



Figure 1. Detail from a plan of Dover Havyn, 1541, attributed to Richard Cavendish (BL Cotton Augustus I.i f.26)



Figure 2. Plan of Dover Castle, c.1730s (Historic England Archive MP/DOV0033). East at top.

2.4 During the 1790s the medieval defences south of Avranches tower were completely remodelled, with four gun batteries built outside the line of the curtain, the curtain itself replaced with an enlarged counterscarp and the ditch widened and revetted with brick. Despite the changes to the immediate defences of the castle, there is no evidence to suggest development in Broadlees Bottom. Indeed, the rationale for the changes to the defences was based on the assumption that any attack on the castle would come from the east or north-east and the new defences required open land in

this direction for clear field of fire. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Broadlees Bottom was kept relatively clear of vegetation (figure 4); and as an accidental consequence of this treatment Louis Bleriot was able to land here after successfully completing the first cross-channel flight in 1909.



Figure 3. Plan of Dover Castle, dated 1756 (Historic England Archive, MP/ DOV0030)



Figure 4. View along northeast flank of Dover Castle c.1905, showing the open character of Broadlees Bottom at that time. (Photo used courtesy of Paul Wells.)



Figure 5. Photograph of 1920 showing the area of Broadlees Bottom immediately adjacent to Horseshoe Battery (Historic England Archive image EPW000565).

- 2.5 During World War I temporary barracks were constructed in Broadlees Bottom, accessed by a military road running parallel with the castle's north eastern defences and running as far south as East Arrow Bastion. There were nine huts between the road and East-Arrow Bastion, with over thirty more north-east of the road, laid out in herringbone plan with the road as a central spine, opposite and to the north of Horseshoe Bastion; the northern end of this group were located within the perimeter of the proposed car park. A photograph of 1920 (figure 5) gives a good, if partial, impression of this arrangement.
- 2.6 A plan of 1923 labels a large open area to the north of Horseshoe Bastions as a marshalling yard. To the east of this was a sergeants' mess. This consisted of a brick structure measuring approximately 36m x 15m and built on a raised terrace. In 1925 a new parade ground was formed northeast of Hudson's Bastion. A contemporary newspaper account describes how the creation of this feature involved the removal of earth down to bedrock and the laying of a new chalk platform.
- 2.7 During the 1930s the barrack accommodation was regularised by the construction of three large, two-storey barracks on the terrace between East-Demi and East Arrow bastions. A new road was formed to reach these barracks, running around the southern scarp of East-Demi Bastion. To the immediate north of Horseshoe Bastion a large Army motor transport building was constructed in 1938 (on the site of a World War I predecessor building).
- 2.8 Aerial photographs taken during World War II and in the later 1940s provide evidence of how Broadlees Bottom was further developed by the army (figure 6). These show a further barrack block immediately south of East Arrow Bastion and several long huts and small buildings on the parade ground northeast of Hudson's Bastion, laid out on an irregular grid and accessed by the main approach road running through the site and lying to the immediate south-west of the later site of Jubilee Way. The motor transport building can be seen adjacent to Horseshoe Bastion. A large anti-tank ditch was excavated across the site, running northwards from Horseshoe Bastion; the Type 28 anti-tank pillbox which survives at the base of the bastion was associated with this earthwork.
- 2.9 In the years following World War II, and in tandem with the removal of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century structures within the castle, the military buildings in Broadlees Bottom were demolished. The East Arrow barracks were demolished in the 1970s, while the last of the buildings to survive, the sergeants' mess and motor transport building, were demolished within the last 35 years.



Figure 6. Aerial photograph, 1941, showing Dover Castle and Broadlees Bottom (north at bottom). The sinuous linear feature running north-eastwards from Hudson's Bastion is an anti-tank ditch.

### 3. Current use and impacts on significance

- 3.1 Although the buildings have gone, the military access road through the site remains and the marshalling yard has been retained within the existing hard surfacing of the site. On the south side of the road the terraced tarmacked area marks the footprint of the demolished motor transport shed. To the northeast of the access road, tree growth obscures many surface features associated with the use of the site during the 20th century.
- 3.2 The northern end of Broadlees Bottom is currently used as a car park. Traffic enters via the military road running parallel with the northern earthworks of the castle.

Cars are parked on the former marshalling yard and the site of the motor transport depot (figures 7 and 8).



Figure 7. Aerial view of northern end of Broadlees Bottom, with two car parking areas highlighted.



Figure 8. View from site of motor transport shed north towards marshalling yard.

- 3.3 Both areas used for parking have tarmacked surfaces and were designed to accommodate vehicles. The current use therefore reflects the historic military use of this part of the site as a focus for vehicular activity. As the traffic uses only established vehicular areas there are no risks to the archaeological interest of the site and any cumulative physical impacts are to modern hard-wearing surfaces such as tarmac or concrete kerbs. Provided that these surfaces are well-maintained there should be no harm to the character of the place.
- 3.4 Car parking in the immediate vicinity of the castle obviously has an effect on the castle's setting. Fortunately, the location of the car park in a valley on the north side of the castle means that it does not affect the principal views found in historic



drawings and paintings of the castle (which were chiefly from the west and northwest), and its low-lying location relative to the castle and surrounding land means that it does not affect wider landscape views from the northeast (e.g the Deal Road). Its visual presence is further ameliorated by tree cover and surrounding vegetation.

- 3.5 The greatest impact, therefore, is on the immediate setting of the castle's northeast flank. While parking cars this close to the castle erodes some of the character of this area, as noted above the physical environment here was designed for accommodating motor vehicles. Further, without the use of this area as an overflow car park it would be necessary to expand areas of hard surfacing within the castle to accommodate cars, and this would be far more harmful since it would entail permanent changes to the character of the medieval and early modern interior of the monument.
- 3.6 Being able to provide car parking for visitors is essential for the operation of the castle as a sustainable visitor attraction. The commercial success of Dover Castle is critical to English Heritage; the castle is the second most popular property in the organisation's portfolio and income generated from the castle is crucial to funding conservation work across the National Heritage Collection in English Heritage's care.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The proposed continued use of Broadlees Bottom as a car parking area involves no new risks to the significance of Dover Castle. It continues to utilise a part of the site which was designed historically to accommodate motor vehicles and has no impact on the wider setting of the castle.
- 4.2 While parking cars in Broadlees Bottom affects the immediate setting of the castle's northeast flank, any harm here needs to be balanced against the high level of harm associated with any alternative scheme involving increased car parking within the castle.
- 4.3 In overall terms, the use of the Broadlees Bottom car park has a minor impact on the setting of the castle but no other harm on its significance, and is essential to the successful operation of the castle as a visitor attraction. In addition, the car park is used by visitors wishing to explore and enjoy the land around the castle and thus enjoys a communal value beyond that associated directly with the castle's operation.

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