Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy

Appendix 1: Theme 5b
Defence – Castles

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V01	INTERNAL DRAFT	F Clark	12.05.17
Comments – first draft of text. No illustrations, figures or photographs.			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V02	RETURNED DRAFT	D Whittington	16.11.18
Update back from FHDC			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V03	CONSULTATION DRAFT	S MASON	29.11.18
Check through and cover added			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V04			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V05			

Appendix 1, Theme 5b - Castles

1. Summary

Folkestone & Hythe District contains an important collection of castle buildings and remains that can be dated to various points across the medieval period beginning at the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 AD. They are valuable examples of this type of building and demonstrate the complex and varied role of the castle. As a county, Kent has a relatively high density of castles that survive in significant form and range from simple earthworks to large masonry fortifications. Those that survive within the district are varied in both form and utility and can illustrate the changing functions of the castle over time. These buildings, whilst often acting in a strategic or defensive capacity, were also important in conveying the social, economic and aesthetic values of the medieval period as well as the values and authority of their owners.

2. Introduction

This theme paper will look at the medieval defences of the district beginning from the Norman Conquest of England by William Duke of Normandy in 1066 AD through to the reign of King Henry VIII which ended in 1547. Alterations to the castle buildings that have occurred after that time will also be identified in order to fully demonstrate the changing function of the castle over the centuries.

The term "castle" broadly refers to the *private defended residence of a medieval lord* and is often seen as being solely a military fortification. However very few castles can be considered as being primarily military in character as their functions were in reality far more complex and continued to evolve over time. Whilst a strategic and defensive function is clearly the overriding factor for some castles in Kent such as Dover and Queenborough, castles also played other equally important roles that included acting as judicial administration centres, expressing social and economic power, maintaining social order as well as expressing contemporary aesthetic values.

The use of defensive sites had already begun prior to the Norman Conquest though it was not until this time that "castles" as we know them today begin to become the primary form of fortified structure. Early "fortified" sites in the form of hill forts had begun during the late Bronze Age and became larger and more elaborate during the Iron Age. These hill forts had become the predominant form of community space and it is believed that they fulfilled a defensive, social and trading function. During the Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupations of Britain, a number of Iron Age strategic sites continued to be occupied as defensive sites against foreign invaders though many hill forts were subsequently destroyed.

The arrival of the Normans during the Norman Conquest in 1066 led to a new age of fortification construction and early castles began appearing at strategic points across the Kentish landscape. Many castles were not originally stone-built but started life as a timber and earth structure. Frequently these were *motte and bailey* castles; a

motte being a raised mound that was usually accompanied by a fortified enclosure known as a *bailey*. Structures existed on the motte and within the bailey such as a keep or tower that acted as the most strongly defended point of the castle. Other early castles were simple self-contained enclosures known as *ringworks* that were often accompanied by a tower-like gatehouse. Within the district, Saltwood Castle is believed to have started life as a ringwork with a bailey and at Stowting there are the remains of an early motte and bailey castle. The Castle Hill site at Folkestone is the largest and most complete example of a ringwork with bailey and causeway in the South East of England and so is a notable example of this type of early castle. Little is known about the castle that would have stood in the Bayle area of Folkestone as it no longer exists though it may have been another important example of these types of early castles. The remaining castles within the District were constructed later and so began life as stone structures.

It is likely that during the first few weeks of the Norman Conquest a number of hastily built motte and bailey castles were erected and garrisoned at strategic points on the Kentish coastline as well as along the Norman's route into London. These castles that immediately followed the Norman victory at Hastings in 1066 would have been initially constructed with royal authority as a means of maintaining territorial as well as government control and also to defend against raiders. The likely route into London was along Watling Street which seems to be confirmed by the presence of castles with a primarily military function at Dover, Canterbury and Rochester. Other early castles only have local significance, but those at Folkestone and Saltwood may also be counted amongst those that initially played a more strategic purpose following the Norman Conquest.

A number of the earlier castles exploited natural defences and relied more heavily on a central keep. Many of Kent's castles utilise water defences and are set alongside watercourses that would have contributed to this. Three of the castles within the district evidently employed this method of defence; Stowting, Westenhanger and Saltwood castles. Where castles had initially been built from timber and earth, they were later replaced by stone and often grew in size as well as increasing the number of structures that made up the castle and its associated grounds. During the reign of Henry II (1154 - 1189), the military engineering of the castle would begin to undergo a transformation and much expense would later be devoted to improving the defensive capabilities of castles throughout Kent as well as the country. Notable sieges during the early thirteenth century at Dover and Rochester castles further hastened these improvements in Kent that included the construction of concentric defences, free-standing great towers, improved outer curtains and mural towers as well as additional barbicans.

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the nature of castle life was evolving. A castle did not just fulfil a military role but was also important in conveying the social and economic authority of its owner, expressing contemporary aesthetic values and contributing to the maintenance of social order within the locality. They were powerful expressions of prestige and power and would impress visitors, local people as well as guests. Planning for accommodation and other residential buildings was now becoming more common, such as a great hall that would be used for feasting, ceremonial occasions, judicial courts and an estate office. The residential function grew in importance as part of a knightly society and whilst castles continued to sport

military architecture, they were becoming more important in demonstrating their owner's status. Licences to crenellate continued at this time, and a castellated appearance would continue to be used in some country houses as late as the nineteenth century. Castles in the district such as Westenhanger and Saltwood underwent alterations both to the building and the adjoining estate to accommodate for a more residential function.

Moving into the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, coastal defence again became important though this time against the threat of French raids. Saltwood Castle was in an important position overlooking the Cinque Port of Hythe and Westenhanger Castle was also relatively close to the coast. It has been suggested that during this time castles like these would have served a dual role in the defence against a foreign threat as well as in continuing as the important household of a particular owner. The introduction of gunpowder artillery and gunports during the fifteenth century further affected castle building as they now needed to accommodate for this new artillery and method of warfare.

Permanent artillery fortifications would begin to replace the defensive role of the castle, and the building of castles began to decline into the sixteenth century. Sandgate Castle is a notable example of this transition and illustrates the move away from castles as working defensive fortifications. It was originally built between 1539 and 1540 as part of a coastal defence system authorised by Henry VIII though was already derelict by the 1560s. The castle continued to go through periods of dereliction, rebuilding and military service such as during the Second English Civil War between 1648 and 1649. However, in response to the threat of a Napoleonic invasion during the early nineteenth century it was then converted into a Martello Tower as part of the Martello scheme of coastal defence against the Napoleonic threat.

Castles did not fall completely out of use and were sometimes retained as judicial centres as well as acting as hereditary seats to aristocratic families. During later conflicts such as the English Civil War (1641-1651) castles were again used and refortified. However, by the seventeenth century the great country house was overtaking the residential function of the castle and these became in a sense the castles of their day. No new castles were built after the sixteenth century although mock castles would become a popular manifestation of the romanticism of the medieval era and chivalry as part of a wider gothic architectural revival later on. Artificial ruins to resemble castles such as follies drew on elements of castle architecture though served no military purpose.

The castles within the district vary in time depth, form and function and are an important collection that demonstrates the varied roles of the castle across time.

3. Description of the Heritage Assets

Key Components

Name	Description	Survival
Lympne Castle	Lympne Castle is a fortified manor house that for the most part dates to between	Lympne Castle is a **Grade I Listed Building**. Despite modern additions, the

	1420 and 1430. From the eleventh century Lympne was granted to the Archdeacons of Canterbury who treated it as a semi-fortified position. In the nineteenth century Archdeacon Croft turned Lympne into a private freehold and sold it. It remains as a private residence and is used primarily for weddings and corporate events. It is located just outside the village of Lympne above the Romney Marsh.	nucleus of the original house can still be distinguished. The oldest remaining part of the original building is the square tower-like element at the east end which is probably of thirteenth century date. There must have been a gatehouse to the forecourt which no longer exists. There may have also been an earlier hall that again no longer exists. The exterior survives in good condition although the internal fabric has suffered due to army occupation during the Second World War 1939-1945. Modern restoration and additions have been made from 1907 and 1911-12.
Saltwood Castle	Archbishop Lanfranc took Saltwood into his personal possession in 1086 and it apparently remained the property of the archbishops until later on in the Middle Ages. It is possible that a ringwork castle was constructed on the site of a manorial establishment at the time of Domesday. The castle as a ringwork and bailey is first mentioned in 1163 and so probably dates to this period. Other parts of the building date to the fourteenth century with the great gatehouse displaying the arms of Archbishop Courtney who lived here from 1382. The castle gained notoriety as the refuge of the knights who murdered Thomas Becket in 1170. It is located in the Saltwood village 1 mile north of Hythe. It is a private residence and is only open to the public on specified open	Saltwood Castle is a **Grade I Listed Building** as well as a **Scheduled Monument** (uninhabited portions). The castle is now largely ruinous and has had restoration work and additions made during the 1880s and 1930s. Principal domestic buildings are ruinous and there are also remains of the original hall, inner bailey buildings and chapel. Surviving parts of the castle include curtain walls, outer and inner bailey, bastions, garderobe towers, gate-tower, hall, rampart walkway and undercroft. The castle was also formerly moated but this is believed to have been lost during an earthquake in 1580.

	days and events.	
Sandgate Castle	Sandgate Castle was constructed as a coastal fort between 1539 and 1540 as part of a series of coastal defences commissioned by Henry VIII. Others in the series included Walmer, Deal and Sandown Castles. It was reportedly the only coastal fort that was not used to defend a harbour or an anchorage, but instead protected the beach and coastal road to Dover. It was designed by Stefan von Haschenperg and served the Crown until it became derelict during the 1560s. The castle continued to go through periods of dereliction, rebuilding and military service until it was then converted into a Martello Tower between 1805 and 1806 to serve as part of the Martello scheme of coastal defence during the Napoleonic Wars. The castle is now a private residence and is located along Castle Road near Folkestone.	Sandgate Castle is a **Grade I Listed Building** as well as a **Scheduled Monument**. The original building comprised of a large central tower that was surrounded by 3 smaller towers connected by a curtain wall and covered galleries, with an outer curtain wall and gate-tower on the north and a rectangular building connecting the latter to the central tower. The castle had become derelict by the 1560s but remained essentially a Tudor building until extensive remodelling between 1805 and 1808. The castle was converted to a Martello tower to serve as part of the Martello system of Napoleonic defences along the Kent coast. The roofs of the keep, bastions and gatehouse were swept away and the bastions and entire inner curtain were reduced to first-floor level with the rubble being used to fill the outer ward of the castle to form the esplanade. During the 1870s the castle walls were breached by the sea and in 1928 the southern side was further undermined and eroded before the building of the seawall in the early 1950s. About a third of the original castle has been destroyed.
Westenhanger Castle	Westenhanger Castle or Manor is a fourteenth century fortified manor house. The inner court of the castle and its outer court adjacent to the west are built on the site of two earlier manors, Westenhanger and	Westenhanger Castle is a **Grade I Listed Building** as well as a **Scheduled Monument** (uninhabited outbuildings). Parts of Westenhanger Castle are now ruinous. The remains of the fourteenth century

	Ostenhanger, into which the parish had been divided into by the end of the twelfth century. A medieval church and cemetery also previously occupied the site until the sixteenth century when the parish was merged with Stanford and they fell out of use. Also during the sixteenth century, the two manors were united and works were planned to enhance the castle for royal use. Formal gardens were laid out and a deer park was created though the intended works on the castle building were not realised. From the late sixteenth century the castle was in private hands again and was sold in 1701 when a number of the buildings were subsequently taken down. The present Westenhanger Manor was constructed during the eighteenth century from the remains of the sixteenth century building. It remains as a private residence but also hosts weddings and other corporate events. The site is located on Stone Street next to Westenhanger railway station and Folkestone Racecourse.	fortified manor house are ruinous and only parts of the moat survive. The courtyard no longer exists but was still present on seventeenth century maps and plans of the site. Standing and buried remains of curtain walls, towers, the gatehouse and hall survive. A cross-wing was added to the north end of the medieval hall which is now the present manor building. A sixteenth century tithe barn survives in excellent condition as well as outbuildings of the same date. Parts of the park and gardens also survive.
Motte and Bailey Castle, Stowting	The castle at Stowting was of a motte and bailey design. It is located north-west of Stowting church in a wide valley within the North Downs and is known locally as *Castle Mound*. The motte was surrounded by a ditch and then a second ditch defining an outer defended bailey. Finds suggest that there were buildings on top of the motte during the medieval occupation of the site.	The Motte and Bailey Castle at Stowting is a **Scheduled Monument**. The motte and its ditch are now tree covered but survive in excellent condition. The bailey however has almost been completely lost. The outer moat has been more extensively infilled and now only survives as a slight depression in the ground. The top of the motte was also disturbed during the

	Remains of buildings in the bailey area such as stables and workshops have also been observed. The bailey was bounded by a second moat. The site is accessible to the public and can still be identified in the landscape though built remains do not survive above ground.	Second World War 1939-1945 but still remains in good condition.
Folkestone, Castle Hill	The site is sometimes referred to as "Caesar's Camp" but is also known as Caste Hill. Its date of construction is contested but it is widely believed to have been between the 1070s and 1130s. The castle is a medieval ringwork with bailey and approach causeway. It lays north-west of Folkestone and has been excavated by Pitt-Rivers in 1878 and again as part of the Channel Tunnel project between 1988-9. A large defensive earthen bank or rampart encloses the summit of Castle Hill except on the western side where the steep slope was a sufficient defence. Within the enclosed area is a smaller oval enclosure surrounded by another ditch. This inner ringwork was the site of the main residential building of the castle as well as a small chapel. Between the ringwork and outer bank was the bailey which was an enclosed area where other buildings were located such as storage huts and workshops. A raised causeway crossed the bailey which joined the entrance to the ringwork on its eastern side with the entrance to the castle being on the north-west. This was the only original entrance to the	The medieval ringwork and bailey at Castle Hill (Folkestone) is a **Scheduled Monument**. The castle survives as an earthwork with no built remains surviving above ground. It is the largest and most complete ringwork in the south east of England and survives largely undisturbed. Defensive trenches were cut into the castle during the Second World War (1939-1945) and a fall of earth in 1949 exposed a portion of walling from the southern face which seems to have supported the causeway across the inner ditch. Remains of a Bronze Age bowl barrow are also incorporated into the causeway which adds to the diversity and significance of the site.

	castle.	
Site of a castle, The Bayle, Folkestone	The castle of Folkestone is mentioned in a charter dated to around 1137. It may have been the main seat of the Folkestone Barony. A church may also have been removed from the castle site as it is also mentioned in 1137. Hasted records the castle as having been destroyed by erosion except for a small length of wall to the east side of its precinct. During excavation work by the Department of Archaeology, York a major ditch was located which contained pottery of late tenth to early twelfth century date. The ditch was probably the boundary of the "Castle Yard" as was recorded by Leland in 1576 and then later in estate maps of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.	The castle has been lost, probably to erosion. Excavations have found evidence of the "Castle Yard" boundary and finds such as pottery have also been excavated at the alleged site of the castle. No remains survive above ground today.

4. Statement of Significance

The district contains a number of important medieval fortifications that range in date across this period as well as in form and function. They are a valuable collection of this type of building and clearly demonstrate the various and changing functions that the castle fulfilled over time. As residences that once belonged to some of the most influential and powerful members of medieval society, they should be considered to be of national importance and have strong historical evidential value. They are further significant in demonstrating the social, economic and aesthetic values of the medieval period and are therefore of **considerable to outstanding significance**.

Evidential Value

The evidential value of the heritage assets identified within this theme is considerable. A number of the castle sites have great archaeological potential to reveal further remains and evidence of human activity that will further enhance the understanding not only of these sites individually, but also of castle sites as a collective theme and their development as royal and civic defences through the medieval period to becoming more residential sites that expressed social and economic status. Identification of buried remains will help to clarify further the phases of development at each site as well as the overall development of castle buildings.

At Westenhanger Castle, the archaeological potential for buried remains is high due to them being overlain rather then cut over time. Future investigation of this site will improve understandings of the high status medieval features here and their association to the landscape and natural features that are also an important part of the overall site such as the watercourse and parkland. Archaeological remains at Stowting motte and bailey castle have also survived particularly well due to low levels of serious disturbance. This is again the case at Castle Hill in Folkestone where the archaeological potential for further remains is high due to low levels of disturbance. Particularly with this site, future investigation would be significant in improving the overall understanding of Castle Hill which itself is the largest and most complete example of its type in the South East of England. The survival of the causeway is rare and the incorporation of a barrow into this feature further diversifies this site and makes future archaeological work important and valuable to the understanding of this type of castle structure as well as its development over time.

Historical Value

Significant historical value can be derived from the castles within the district. They have historically been the residences of some of the most powerful and influential members of medieval society and strong historical associations to these individuals can still be obtained from these buildings and their remains. These include figures such as King Henry VIII, Bishop Odo, the Archdeacons of Canterbury and Archbishops such as Archbishop Courtney. These strong historical associations illustrate the significance of the towns or villages during the medieval period, the movements of notable families and people as well as the investment into coastal defence across the centuries. They can also demonstrate strong historical connections to key events such as civil wars and threats of foreign invasions during conflicts such as the Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century. Sandgate Castle was a part of a coastal defence system authorised by Henry VIII against foreign invaders and Saltwood Castle is notorious as the meeting place of the knights who murdered Thomas Becket in 1170.

Aesthetic Value

The castles within the district have strong aesthetic value as imposing and dramatic buildings within the landscape. They are distinctive to the local character and are also often located in attractive settings such as along the coast or in the more rural areas of the District. Where some of the castles are partly ruinous as at Westenhanger and Saltwood, they are a particularly dramatic and iconic feature within the landscape which has resulted in many being used as venues for a number of social and professional events due to their desirable location and setting. Many also have associated land and gardens which again contributes to a strong aesthetic value and impact.

As imposing structures, they are further able to offer powerful sensory and intellectual experiences of the castles and the histories that they represent. Many of the alterations to these assets in the later years of the medieval period were done with the intention of expressing the status and authority of the associated lord or individual and so resulting in striking and imposing buildings with a high aesthetic value.

Communal Value

The communal value of the assets in this theme is high due to their strong contribution to the local character as well as the important roles that they continue to play within the local communities. These sites illustrate strong historical associations as well as highlighting the importance of the place during the medieval period. This will allow local people as well as visitors to derive a strong sense of place as well as historical significance from these sites. They also make a valuable contribution to the local character which allows for the collective pride of place for its local communities. As many of the castles also play important roles in acting as venues for various events, open days and activities they continue to contribute to the local communities in a practical way as well as communal.

5. Vulnerabilities

There are a number of ways in which the castles within the district are potentially susceptible to a range of vulnerabilities. Whilst all except the alleged site of the castle at Folkestone in the Bayle area are designated as either a Listed Building, Scheduled Monument or both, they are costly buildings to maintain and may need higher levels of ongoing repair than other historic buildings from other themes in this strategy. The designations will afford the features listed a level of statutory protection as well as ongoing conservation, however care should be taken to closely monitor the ongoing maintenance of these buildings as a build-up of work will be costly and as many of these castles are already partly ruinous they may be at risk of deteriorating at a faster rate.

Care should also be taken to ensure that the setting of the castle is preserved as well as the built remains as the associated land is important to the overall character, function and understanding of the site. The story of the castle includes its associated parklands, gardens and landscape as they are all important in illustrating the connection of the castle to the surrounding estate as well as its royal and wider residential functions. Proposed developments should take into account the grounds of the castle as much as the building itself and efforts should be made to have as little impact on the setting as is possible which may harm the overall character of the castle. This is particularly true at Westenhanger Castle where proposed developments will be in close proximity to the castle and its grounds. Any future developments should be designed to avoid harm to the setting of castles should they be in the vicinity of these sites.

Other vulnerabilities that will particularly affect earthwork castles such as the motte and bailey castle at Stowting and Castle Hill are the erosion of features by natural factors such as uncontrolled vegetation growth, root damage and ground slippage. At the Stowting site, much of the earthwork features are covered by trees and so care must be taken that roots do not cause damage to buried remains that are otherwise well preserved and important for future research. Uncontrolled vegetation growth may also cause damage to the integrity of the structures still remaining and so again natural vulnerabilities must be monitored and controlled.

A further natural vulnerability is the risk posed to structures and buried remains by animal burrows. This is particularly relevant to the motte and bailey castle at

Stowting which is listed on the *Heritage at Risk* register for 2016 due to extensive animal burrowing. This poses a serious threat not only to the integrity of the surviving features, but also to the buried remains that up until now have been well preserved and again will be important in future investigation work.

6. Opportunities

There are significant opportunities for future archaeological work at a number of the castles within the district, namely at Westenhanger, Stowting and Castle Hill in Folkestone. Buried remains at these sites have survived in good condition and so can reveal further information about the development of the castles as well as their changing functions over time. New information that could come from these remains may also provide further information on the broader understanding of castle fortifications within this country and help to build on understood histories. Enhanced interpretation of the castles within the district could subsequently be provided in light of new discoveries and improved appreciations of the sites and their significance may be obtained.

A number of the castles also play important roles in the local tourism offering and regularly bring numerous visitors to the area. Many offer events and activities such as open days, educational visits, special events as well as corporate events and act as wedding venues. In providing this access to the sites there are important opportunities to be able to engage with the castles as well as the histories that they represent. This will also have valuable economic opportunities for local businesses such as leisure and amenity facilities that will benefit from the visitors that are attracted to these sites. These castles are important in their social and communal roles, and so there may be opportunities to develop in this role in the future through various activities, events and local involvement in the preservation and maintenance of these valuable assets.

7. Current Activities

The majority of the surviving castles within the district are now privately owned and are only accessible to the public on particular occasions. The events that they hold do however give visitors a chance to experience the castle and their grounds and connect with these important heritage assets as well as with the history that they represent. The owners of these castles are also active in the upkeep, preservation and restoration of these sites as is evident in extensive restoration work that has been undertaken in collaboration with heritage bodies such as at Westenhanger and Saltwood Castles. This work will preserve and maintain these significant heritage assets for present and future generations.

Lympne, Westenhanger and Saltwood castles all fulfil a number of hospitality roles that allow people access to the castles and their grounds as part of organised events and days. Saltwood Castle is privately owned but runs a twice yearly "Open Garden and Plant Fair and Crafts" day where the grounds are open to the public and visitors are able to experience the castle and the history that it embodies. The castle also holds regular charity fund raising events, open days as well as educational and private tours that again provide access to this valuable heritage asset.

Lympne Castle provides a number of hospitality services that provide access to the castle and the gardens. These include acting as a venue for weddings, corporate events and private functions, open days, a food and wine club as well as offering accommodation as part of selected events. Similarly, Westenhanger Castle acts as a venue for weddings, corporate events, and private hire as well as also hoping to provide educational visits in the future. Whilst this only provides limited access to these sites, they remain important in providing a level of accessibility so that visitors are still able to experience these heritage assets. These events will also be important in the maintenance of these historic buildings as well as their grounds so that they can continue to be enjoyed in the future.

8. Sources Used & Additional Information

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