

Faversham conservation area character appraisal

(Extract from report to Planning Committee 9 September 2004 (Agenda item 1.1, Annex B.)

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Location and geology

1.1. Faversham is situated towards the eastern end of the Borough of Swale at the head of a narrow tidal creek flowing north into The Swale waterway. The town of Sittingbourne lies some 11 kilometres to the west, whilst Canterbury lies some 14.5 kilometres to the south east. At Faversham low interfluvial Thanet Sands with brickearth are separated by shallow valleys that have been cut down through the chalk. The town centre is sited on a ridge of chalk overlain with brickearth; it then extends west into a valley where springs emerging from the chalk feed into the creek. To the south of the town is the gently rising dip slope of the North Downs, whilst the extensive alluvial flats of the Swale marshes lie to the north.

History

1.2. From a very early date the small, but navigable, waterway made the higher ground at its southern end an ideal place for settlement which, the evidence suggests, happened in pre-Roman times. Archaeological finds have confirmed that later, in Roman times, a small roadside settlement existed at Ospringe and that a series of villa estates prospered in the agricultural lands between Watling Street and the Swale. However, firm proof of a settlement on the site of the present town centre has yet to emerge.

1.3. During Saxon times, from the C6 at least, Faversham appears to have been a royal estate centre, perhaps of comparable status with Milton Regis to the west. The C6 and C7 finds from the Kings Field cemetery suggest that it was a wealthy place (with a jeweller's workshop enjoying royal patronage). It continued to be an important centre into the C10 and eventually acquired its own market. During the C11 the town became a member of the Cinque Ports Confederation (although formal evidence of its admission appears later in the first half of the C12).

1.4. The founding of the royal abbey in 1147 enabled the town to prosper still further, and by the late C12 merchants' houses were being built on the east bank of Faversham creek along the line of Abbey Street and Court Street. By the end of the C16 much of London's grain was being shipped out through Faversham port, and then into the C17 and C18 a combination of industries flourished including oyster fishing, gunpowder manufacturing and brewing.

1.5. In the C19 the railway opened up a new round of economic opportunities and proved to be the catalyst for far-reaching change, including large new areas of housing. The C20 saw the contraction of the traditional port-based industries but with new activities being attracted to industrial estates on the edge of town; a ring of new housing estates was also built around much of the town. At the start of the C21 the town centre remains an important focus for retailing, services and community facilities, although many residents now travel out of Faversham for their work.

1.6. Despite its proximity to the London-Canterbury (A2) road the maritime draw of the small port and its associated industries has been strong enough over the years to keep most of the town's development on the north side of the A2. The fact of the town's position just off the strategic road network has, perhaps, helped the survival here of an outstanding heritage of archaeological sites, old wharves, historic buildings, streets and other spaces. Whilst the

medieval core of the town remains the outstanding feature of the place a significant part of Faversham's heritage now embraces C19 development, and some C20 work as well.

Chapter 2: Faversham Abbey and Abbey Farm

Introduction

2.1. The site of Faversham Abbey, along with Abbey Farm, lies on the north-eastern edge of the town close to the south-eastern bank of the creek. Virtually nothing of the abbey now remains standing, so the surviving evidence is almost all archaeological. The principal survivals above ground are a small part of the abbey's outer gatehouse, two timber-framed barns at the farmstead, and a quantity of reclaimed materials in nearby walls and buildings.

2.2. Archaeological work has, in fact, revealed a much earlier settlement here, as the remains of a Roman villa were found overlying a Belgic, or Iron Age, farmstead. The villa and its estate dated from the C2; it possibly looked east to the Cooksditch stream (then much deeper) for its water supply and perhaps even for transport.

Historical background

2.3. The medieval Royal Abbey of St Saviour was founded in 1147 by King Stephen, grandson of William the Conqueror, for the royal tombs. It was originally colonised by Cluniac monks but then it appears for the most part to have been run as an independent house.

2.4. The site for the abbey was perhaps chosen for strategic reasons: Faversham was an important centre in Saxon times and a thriving port and town by Norman times. There were important monastic houses on other Kentish estuaries, such as Canterbury on the Stour and Rochester on the Medway, so Faversham with its position just off the Swale might have been an equally attractive prospect where the natural advantages of marsh and water offered seclusion, protection and navigable access together with the benefits of a thriving town nearby.

2.5. Matilda, wife of Stephen, was buried within the abbey in 1152 and Eustace, son of Stephen, in 1153. The body of King Stephen himself was then placed here in 1154. The tombs were subsequently destroyed and the fate of the royal remains is unknown. The end of the abbey came in 1538 with the suppression of the monasteries, with the order to demolish the buildings being given by Henry VIII in 1539. Quantities of the salvaged stone from the abbey were shipped across the channel for re-use in the fortifications at Calais.

The abbey

2.6. The abbey remains are situated in the angle now formed by Abbey Street and Abbey Road. The Cooksditch stream ran along the eastern edge of the precinct; although quite modest in size this watercourse remains an important feature in the local landscape. The abbey's western boundary probably followed the edge of Faversham creek, which was then wider than it is today. The precinct therefore extended across the northern part of present-day Abbey Street, with the latter ending at the outer gate to the abbey.

2.7. The abbey church was designed on a grand scale with an aisled nave and transepts, a central tower, and a nine-bay choir nearly as long as the nave. The cloisters, chapter house, dormitory and refectory were similarly ambitious. The buildings were mostly constructed of Kentish ragstone, probably brought by boat from quarries near Maidstone around the coast and into the creek (a distance of some 80 kilometres or more). The interior of the church was finished with Caen stone from France and roofing slate was brought from the West Country. By 1220, more than seventy years on from the abbey's foundation, and with building work

still not completed, the size of the church as originally conceived was reduced, probably for financial reasons.

2.8. Only fragmentary above-ground remains of the abbey stonework have survived to the present day. The most significant of these is at Arden's House in Abbey Street (itself used as a guesthouse for the abbey) where remnants of the east side of the old gateway still survive; ragstone rubble in the wall enclosing the present-day garden is also likely to have been recovered from the abbey site. A short distance to the north the stone masonry that was once part of the inner gateway to the abbey is built into no. 63 Abbey Street, whilst in Abbey Place the Fighting Cocks Cottages incorporate ragstone rubble from the abbey into a ground floor wall.

2.9. The greater part of the abbey site is, however, now used as a playing field by the adjoining grammar school; it is for the most part flat, open and grassed. The very thorough removal of the abbey buildings means that some considerable imagination is now required to visualise the place as an important and thriving monastic community founded by the King of England. The abbey site remains, however, a site of remarkable historic significance and although most of the evidence is archaeological enough fragments still survive to provide a real and tangible link with the important medieval monastic foundation.

Abbey Farm

2.10. Abbey Farm served as the grange to Faversham Abbey, the farmstead itself being positioned just a short distance to the east of the abbey church. The farm buildings that survive from the time of the monastery are the major and minor barns, a stables building and the farmhouse but there are also later buildings from the C18 and C19 which add to the richness of the farm complex. The site therefore now contains an outstanding historical sequence of vernacular agricultural building forms, methods and materials which help to illustrate the nature of the medieval monastic economy and its supporting agricultural and commercial activities

2.11. The change of ownership in 2001 promised much-needed repairs to the buildings but broke the all-important link between the farm buildings and their agricultural use (until then the barns were still being used for animal husbandry and fruit/vegetable storage whereas now the principle buildings at the farm accommodate a joinery business). The ownership of the immediately adjoining group of fields has also now been severed from the farm complex.

2.12. The farmyard is arranged around an unmetalled access track (a continuation of Abbey Road) with the farmhouse positioned just to one side (the original use, however, of this building is unclear). The scissor-braced roof is C13/early C14; a cross-wing was added in the late C17 or early C18, together with an outshut. Much of the timber-framing is now hidden beneath brick or render but the steeply pitched roof, covered with clay peg tiles, is very clearly Kentish in form.

2.13. The northern edge of the farmyard itself is defined by two stable buildings; the first is in brick and dates from the C18 whilst a part of the second (with its early sans purlin roof) is timber-framed, clad with weatherboarding, and thought to be medieval, possibly C14. The hipped roof was formerly thatched but is now covered with corrugated iron sheets. The trough and tethering rings provide the evidence that the structure was probably used for stabling horses.

2.14. Across the farm track to the south other farm buildings are arranged around three sides of a rectangular yard, the western and southern sides being defined by the substantial presence of two timber-framed barns. Surfaces in and around the yard are entirely modern, being a utilitarian mixture of in situ concrete and rolled road planings.

2.15. The major barn is an aisled structure and the larger of the two barns; the timbers have been dated (by tree ring analysis) to between 1401 and 1475. Some 40 metres long and clad with tarred weatherboarding its huge, steeply pitched, hipped roof is now covered with corrugated iron sheets. The cart entrance, formed in the early C19, faces into the yard. The minor barn, also aisled, is set at right angles and built of timbers felled no later than 1426. Originally longer than its current five bays it is also clad with weatherboarding. Kent peg tiles have recently been reinstated on the fire-damaged section of the roof.

2.16. Also arranged around the yard are a cart lodge, carpenter's shop and bull sheds. These C18 and C19 buildings are important in their own right, partly because of their own historical significance but also because they contribute to the larger group of buildings.

2.17. A long period of neglect has left many of the Abbey Farm buildings in a poor state of repair; indeed, smaller buildings such as the hen house and milking shed have failed to survive at all, although the calf shed (at one time reduced to a skeletal frame) has now been converted into an office. Whilst the place is for the moment rather dilapidated in appearance, a programme of restoration and refurbishment works now promises a better future for the buildings, albeit not an agricultural one.

2.18. Abbey Farm lies on the southern edge of the Swale marshes - a place of low-lying fields, reed-fringed drainage channels and vast open skies. Encircling the farmstead is a group of four fields, also low-lying and rather open in appearance, and themselves of historical importance having been farmed continuously from the C14 until the end of the C20 as part of the Abbey Farm holding. Whilst the two northern fields are used as permanent pasture the south-eastern one is fallow with old agricultural machinery and other farm debris dumped in a seemingly semi-permanent fashion around the edges so causing an unwelcome scar on the local landscape. The fourth field, to the south-west of the barns, is much smaller in size but this is substantially offset by the open expanse of the adjoining grammar school playing field.

2.19. Notwithstanding their rather reduced circumstances these encircling fields maintain a modest but vital separation between the farmstead and the urban development of Faversham, and they help to maintain the separate identity of the farmstead and its integrity as an historic site. They also connect with the wider expanse of marshlands to the north and so help to maintain a semblance of the abbey's once remote situation.

2.20. The setting of the abbey site and its farmstead continues to be of crucial importance to its character, integrity and interpretation. The sense here of a place deliberately positioned between the comfort and warmth of the town and the perils of the watery Swale marshes beyond, remains an integral part of the character of the place.

Chapter 3: Market Place, Court Street and Abbey Street

Market Place

3.1. Market Place lies at the centre of Faversham. Its long history is reflected in the fine grain and varied appearance of the many narrow-fronted buildings around the space. With its shops, banks, cafes and restaurants it is Faversham's prime urban space, busy with the hustle and bustle of people visiting the shops and the market, eating, drinking and pursuing all the many other activities traditionally associated with small town centres.

3.2. The free-standing Guildhall is a major presence in Market Place and one of the town's landmark buildings. Built as a market hall in 1574 and converted to its present use in 1603 the ground floor open colonnade survives but the rest of the stuccoed structure dates from

1814. The clocktower, topped with its dome and weathervane, gives visual expression to the primacy of this public building, and as the meeting place still of the Town Council it ensures that Market Place remains in every sense at the centre of public life in Faversham; the fact of civic issues still being debated here amid the jostle of the town's daily routine is a vital element in the character of the space. The ground floor colonnade beneath the building is itself a distinctive space: cold and draughty in winter but cool and shady in summer. A general market, held here three days a week with stalls spilling out into Market Place and into Court Street to the north, brings a constantly revitalising cycle of life and colour into the space. The market is therefore another essential ingredient in the historical character of the space; it is important too for the more general character of Faversham and its long-standing role as a market town.

3.3. Timber-framed buildings occupy most of the west side of Market Place; included here is an important medieval courtyard house, the earliest parts of which date from around 1300. The survival of part of an early undercroft is of special interest and its position suggests that, over the years, this building (and perhaps others) has been steadily extended out into the public space. A similar pattern of building evolution around other market places of medieval origin has been documented elsewhere in England.

3.4. Buildings along the south side of Market Place range in date from the C16 to the C19 and are consequently rather varied in appearance; they also embrace several important pedestrian ways between, or beneath, them. Of particular note is The Ship, a C17 timber-framed building with an C18 brick front pierced by a carriage entrance. For many years a coaching inn it has now been converted to flats, houses and shops, thereby securing much-needed repairs but also eliminating a long-standing commercial activity from the town centre.

3.5. The eastern side of the space is split by Middle Row and rather unusually embraces two prominent examples of C20 buildings in mock-tudor style that have become a valued part of the town centre environment in their own right. One confidently terminates the southern end of Middle Row, the other is the town's cinema opened in 1936 and which is still a key venue in the town centre.

3.6. Market Place embraces, therefore, an array of buildings ranging in date from the C13 to the C20, some brick fronted and some timber-framed, others mathematically tiled or sometimes stuccoed; roofs, in many shapes and sizes, are mostly steeply pitched and covered with colourful Kent peg tiles and studded with chimney stacks. Local materials and building forms here play a crucial role (as they also do elsewhere in the town) in making this a place of outstanding visual delight.

3.7. Vehicular access is severely restricted so that the space has a rather intimate and relaxed feel where pedestrians take priority over vehicles. The surfaces date from 1986 and whilst they lack the rugged, textural qualities of old paving they do maintain the traditional distinction between footways and carriageway, and the red brick paving brings an important sense of continuity to the space. The mid C19 cast iron town pump survives as an authentic item of street furniture.

3.8. Back Lane, passing beneath no.12 Market Place, is the principal pedestrian access into Market Place from the main town centre car park. This historic lane passes, however, between rather unappealing rear extensions and the only physical expression of its age now is a small area of granite sett paving at its junction with Market Place. Hugh Place, to the west, is an attractive (but recently gated) courtyard with a mix of C16 and late C18 buildings arranged on either side. Beddington Square, formerly the stable yard to The Ship, is also now a gated private space, somewhat prettified in the course of the building conversion. The closure, or gating, of these pedestrian routes has markedly reduced the permeability of the town centre environment in the approach from the south.

Court Street

3.9. Court Street (which takes its name from the Guildhall or 'Court Hall') runs north from Market Place and merges with Abbey Street as Quay Lane joins from the west. The southern end of the street is characterised by shops, banks and cafes but further north commercial uses predominate, so there is here quite a significant transition in character. Court Street, with Abbey Street, was probably laid out by the abbey authorities in the C12 and C13 to join the town with the abbey. The two roads consequently served as both a grand approach and as a source of rental income from market stalls and fairs. At the southern end the impermanent market stalls were at some time replaced by more permanent buildings (now represented by Middle Row) and in the process a separate street was created alongside.

3.10. Court Street is special for its outstanding assembly of buildings dating from between C15-C18, many timber-framed. It is also unusual for having two groups of brewery buildings. The 'Whitbread' complex on the east side of the road, although no longer used for brewing, contains an outstanding group of C19 brewery buildings that make a highly distinctive contribution to the street scene. By contrast, the Shepherd Neame brewery on the west side of the street continues to flourish, although here the production buildings are largely hidden behind frontage properties adapted over the years for the brewery's administrative use. The pungent aroma of malt and barley associated with the breweries over the course of many centuries is of such long standing that it might now be described as an integral part of Faversham's character and identity.

3.11. A combination of factors seem to have helped the brewing industry to prosper: the high quality of the calcium-rich water essential for the brewing process, the proximity of the Kent hop gardens, and a hinterland that was conveniently accessible for the distribution and sale of beer. The tradition is that the Shepherd Neame brewery was established by Richard Marsh on its present site in 1698 although documentary evidence suggests there was a brewery here even earlier in the mid C16. Whatever the precise facts, the brewery is one of the oldest, perhaps the oldest, in the country still operating on its original site. The other brewery in Court Street was built by Rigdens; it was eventually acquired by Whitbreads and then closed in 1990.

3.12. The buildings along the west side of Court Street between Market Place and Partridge Lane are timber-framed, plastered, and date from C15-C17, with the exception of the red brick C18 Barclays Bank building. Just beyond is a fine-looking C15 hall house, now the brewery's hospitality centre, whilst the buildings to the north (which are rather more mixed in age and appearance) are mostly used by the brewery as offices. The front elevations superficially retain their individuality but the accommodation behind is now interconnected. Two buildings are comprised wholly, or in part, of C20 work that is noticeably plainer in appearance, and in one instance the absence of an entrance interrupts the otherwise attractive rhythm of the group.

3.13. The corner of Quay Lane is marked by an early C17 timber-framed building, once the home of a local shipmaster, which quite typically for its time has a narrow frontage (less than nine metres) but a substantial depth (some thirty three metres); the accommodation once embraced a small shop and a brewhouse as well as a living area.

3.14. On the opposite side of Court Street is the substantial presence of the former Whitbread brewery (described by one commentator as 'an eruption of C19 red-brick, multi-storeyed warehouses'). However, since 1995 the ground floors of the larger buildings have been amalgamated and converted to a supermarket. Whilst the buildings along Court Street are of a similar, if slightly larger, scale to other nearby frontage buildings, those at the heart of the complex are appreciably taller and bulkier. The dour, red brick is well matched to the industrial character of the site and yet when the sun shines the buildings glow with life and

colour. From Court Street the old brewery now seems uncannily quiet and lifeless but the building forms, many unique to the brewing industry, are nevertheless truly striking and their commanding presence remains at least superficially intact. The view into the space between the brewhouse and the tun block has a special appeal, for here the buildings are set tightly together, projecting boarded lucams are supported high up on decorative iron brackets, a high-level covered walkway spans the yard, and the large brewery clock set into a stone insert on the end elevation of the malt house presides over the now silent yard. The supermarket conversion has, however, been less than perfect leaving entire buildings still vacant and creating isolated voids in the extensive upper floor areas. Blanked-off windows are a daily reminder that all is far from well and that more work remains to be done.

3.15. Elsewhere on this eastern side of the street the frontage is comprised of a number of other timber-framed buildings. At no. 34 (once the home of the proprietor of Rigdens' brewery) the upper floor of the C16 house is notable for being clad with Faversham's local speciality of yellow mathematical tiles applied in the C18. South of Crescent Road the C18 brick front to no. 40 disguises a fine Elizabethan wing to the rear whilst further south again, in the attractive 'island' of buildings' forming Middle Row, C18 and C19 fronts often hide older cores. The classically detailed front to the Lloyds TSB bank building is especially impressive.

3.16. Aside from the buildings, Court Street is also notable for its broad and generous thoroughfare, although near Market Place its width has been reduced by the 'later' appearance of Middle Row. Quite remarkably, old and interesting areas of paving have survived here which are now an integral part of the character of the street. The most striking of these is an extensive area of C19, blue-grey coloured, granite sett paving in the carriageway running south from Crescent Road, now attractively worn and polished in appearance; the setts most probably came from quarries in Guernsey. The later insertion of a raised central kerb, brick flower boxes and brick paved crossings has, however, rather spoil the original visual simplicity of the highway. Also noteworthy are old footway pavings outside nos. 39-40 Court Street (of squared limestone setts and york stone slabs) and another smaller area of limestone kerbs and setts in front of no. 41 Court Street. Each one of these flagstones, setts, kerbstones (some still with recessed sockets for poles that once supported shop blinds) and channel blocks is now an integral part of the town's historic fabric.

3.17. In recent times the traffic management measures around the northern edge of the town centre have tended to divide Court Street into two separate parts. Between Quay Lane and Crescent Road (ie. Court Street 'north') there is through traffic and on-street car parking, whereas between Crescent Road and Market Place (Court Street 'south') vehicular access is severely restricted and pedestrians take priority. These different approaches have been coupled with distinctly different environmental treatments, so Court Street 'north' is presented as a conventional public highway whilst Court Street 'south' is a welter of town centre signs, paving types, street furniture and flower displays. The paving surfaces at the entry to the southern section of the road are especially bewildering. The division of this special street into two separate halves by traffic and environmental measures in a number of respects runs counter to the underlying imperative to manage the historic environment here as a single cohesive entity.

Middle Row

3.18. Middle Row was created by the later insertion of a row of buildings into the original width of Court Street/ Market Place and is, by comparison, a narrow little street. Recently, residential accommodation for the elderly has come to predominate along most of the eastern side, making it now a rather quiet and subdued place.

3.19. The western side of the road consists of the backs of Court Street properties where the mostly rendered elevations are generally of lesser standing than those at the front, often

being characterised by back doors, air conditioning units and external plumbing. This side of the road, with its mostly three storey buildings set directly onto the edge of the narrow carriageway, is nevertheless quite striking. By contrast, the properties on the opposite side are generally smaller and more cottage-like in appearance but they nevertheless present their best red-brick fronts to the street and their clay-tiled roofs and slender chimney stacks are prominent in the gently curving view along the street. The old police station building (now used by Age Concern) is unusual for the rare incorporation of Kentish ragstone, now painted, into the front elevation.

3.20. The two ends of the narrow little carriageway are paved with an assortment of large, well-worn stone setts (some limestone and some granite), but of special interest are the old limestone kerbs and the knobbly old limestone slabs in the drainage channels both probably originating from quarries on the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset.

Abbey Street

3.21. The first record of Abbey Street is from around 1350 when it was referred to as 'New Town' linking the abbey with the 'Old Town'. The abbey precinct then extended across to the east bank of the creek with Abbey Street stopping at the abbey's outer gate, whereas today it extends well on to the north and terminates at The Anchor Inn on the edge of Standard Quay.

3.22. Abbey Street, between Court Street and the site of the abbey gateway, is comprised almost entirely of fine, medieval, timber-framed buildings, many still with their characteristic gabled fronts and first floor overhangs whilst others have a later skin of brick and tile often applied in the C18. These present-day elevations combine to form an outstanding example of a pre-C19 street which is ranked, by common consent, as a place of national importance.

3.23. The street was in serious disarray in the years after the second world war when many buildings were in perilous condition and heading for slum clearance, but in 1958 the then Faversham Borough Council promoted a scheme of restoration in conjunction with the private property owners and now, some forty five years on, the entire street is in good heart.

3.24. Abbey Street is today a smarter but quieter and more genteel place than hitherto; the Anchor Inn and the Phoenix Tavern (which contains a part of a C14 medieval hall) are now the main exceptions to an otherwise uniform pattern of residential use; gentrification has, almost inevitably, been the consequence of investment in much-needed refurbishment works. Now there is the orderly quiet here of a desirable and historical residential environment, whereas in its heyday the street would have been a place buzzing with activity, where all manner of port-related business was conducted, where goods bound for the creekside wharves crammed the road, and where working folk crowded the several ale houses.

3.25. The form and alignment of Abbey Street still records the presence of the old abbey. Both sides of the broad thoroughfare, as far north as Abbey Place, are fronted almost entirely with buildings dating back to medieval times, whereas the later extension of Abbey Street to the north (across the old abbey precinct) is narrower and fronted with development from the 1800s/early 1900s and late C20. However, despite these differences the two parts of the street meld comfortably together into a single, entirely pleasing, entity.

3.26. Abbey Street, between Quay Lane and Abbey Place, is fronted on either side by virtually unbroken groups of buildings dating from the C14-C18 all set along the edge of the footway. Generally two or three storeys high these buildings are often quite narrow in width, a reflection perhaps of the old burgage plot divisions. The array of vernacular architecture includes jettied upper floors, bay windows that nibble into the footways, old sash windows with finely shaped and dimensioned glazing bars, undulating peg-tiled roofs punctuated by

tile-clad dormers and chimney stacks, and brickwork in the red and yellow colours that are special to north Kent. Exceptionally, the now vacant brewery training centre (on the corner with Church Street) is a well-detailed, solid-looking Victorian building. Alongside to the north a high brick wall encloses an open yard; punctuated by tall gate piers and boarded gates this wall is a prominent feature in the street scene and rather successfully perpetuates the important sense of enclosure achieved by the medieval buildings which originally occupied the site.

3.27. Arden's House marks the divide between the medieval character of the southern section of the street and the later C19 and C20 work to the north; one of Faversham's landmark buildings it is also notorious for the murder here in 1550 of Thomas Arden, then mayor of Faversham. The large timber-framed, twice-jettied part of the building dates from the C15 but incorporates the eastern part of the old abbey gateway (built circa 1250). The constricting influence of the old gateway still lives on in the marked narrowing hereabouts of the Abbey Street roadway.

3.28. To the north of Abbey Place the form and structure of Abbey Street substantially rests on groups of terraced houses mostly built in the first half of the C19; the recent Lammas Gate development is the exception being only some twenty years old. However, at Abbey Green an open green space still marks the site of the abbey's inner precinct or Nether Green. The terraces are mostly in red brick and rather cottagey in appearance but the yellow brick Sondes Terrace (partly demolished in a recent explosion) is more austere (and has been rather ill-served by later changes particularly the substitution of roofing slates with coarse-looking concrete tiles). These terraces are set on, or close to, the edge of the footway in the manner of the buildings in the southern part of the street but perhaps lack their fine-grained subtlety, and the detailing of the modern Lammas Gate buildings falls a little short of the quality elsewhere in the street. The linked-detached houses built in the 1980s opposite Abbey Place are unhelpfully set back from the footway, and therefore break the important 'edge of footway' rule successfully followed elsewhere in the street. The very northern end of the street is decisively terminated by the C17 Anchor Inn which attractively closes the view and which use as a public house brings a sense of real and important purpose to the end of the street. Other buildings positioned around this far end of the street play a valuable supporting role in defining this northern end of the street.

3.29. Abbey Street runs purposefully north from the town centre only to peter out on the edge of the low-lying land around southern edges of the Swale marshes. The short journey from Market Place along Court Street and Abbey Street effectively embraces the transition from the warmth and security of the town centre to the windswept marshy open spaces around the northern edge of the town; this marked transition in character (in concert with Court Street) is an abiding feature of Abbey Street. The southern section of the street, which follows smoothly on from Court Street, is a pleasantly wide place where the sweep of the generous footways quietly reinforces the attractive flow of the built environment. The heavy traffic once generated by the industrial activities previously present alongside the creek has largely now abated although some additional activity has been generated by new housing in the vicinity. Iron cellar grilles, granite sett paving and old lighting columns contribute to the period character of the place although mop-headed street trees may soon obstruct the unique views along the historic street. North of Abbey Place the surfaces are rather more ordinary, although some granite kerbs have survived.

Abbey Road, including The Maltings

3.30. Unadopted Abbey Road runs east towards Abbey Farm from the northern end of Abbey Street. Once notable for being a rather isolated part of the town, change is now under way here (comprising new housing and the conversion of old dairy buildings) that will make it a rather more orderly place. The Maltings development (a pleasantly coherent group of nine

houses built in the 1880s) backs onto Abbey Road but looks inwards to a private, block-paved parking area.

Abbey Place

3.31. Abbey Place runs east from Abbey Street across land once forming part of the abbey precinct between the outer and inner gateways. Small C19 houses, mostly terraced, are positioned along the northern side, all now painted or rendered and with replacement windows and doors in various modern designs. The eye-catching exception is a large furniture warehouse (built as a church soon after 1851) the striking yellow brick front of which has rudimentary classical detailing and later, brutally inserted, loading doors. The southern side of the road adjoins the long back garden to Arden's House where drab-looking evergreen trees line the boundary.

3.32. The delight of the road is, however, the two C18 and C19 cottages set across the eastern end and which attractively close the view. Their refurbished yellow brickwork and black-stained weatherboarding is set partly onto the top of a ragstone rubble wall (once part of the abbey). From here a quiet and shady footpath leads to the old Free Grammar School building, one of the town's most important historic buildings. Built in 1587 and now used as a masonic hall its construction is similar to that of the Guildhall, being timber-framed and standing on octagonal columns although here the once-open arcade is now enclosed.

3.33. With grass verges along either side, Abbey Place has a rather spacious and green appearance, reinforced by street trees on the south side, which contrasts with the rather more urban character of Abbey Street. Whilst the concrete 'estate road' carriageway is a jarring feature, the manner in which the surviving remains of Faversham Abbey are now attractively woven into the present-day fabric of this residential street makes it a special place.

Church Street

3.34. Church Street links Abbey Street with the west door of Faversham parish church and is special for the dramatic way in which the front elevation of the church and spire is precisely positioned at the eastern end of a rather humdrum C19 street, terminating the view in textbook fashion with a theatrical flourish.

3.35. The south side of the street is largely comprised of the backs of ex-brewery buildings lacking the usual pattern of windows and doors; the old red brick brewery chimney towers above. The other side of the street is comprised of yellow brick buildings, including two rather workaday C19 terraces of houses, both somewhat compromised by later changes including rendered brickwork, replacement windows and modern doors.

3.36. It is, however, the church of St Mary of Charity, with its glinting black flintwork and openwork spire, which dominates the street. The wide approach to the church door from the end of the street is appropriately paved with smoothly-worn york stone slabs and lined with chunky, green-painted, cast-iron railings. The sombre churchyard around is crowded with large yews, hawthorns, planes and sycamores. An elegant C19 cast iron lamp column survives close by.

3.37. Church Street itself is a narrow and hard-looking place unsoftened by greenery, where the old brewery buildings shut out the sunlight for most of the day. It is, however, the juxtaposition of this harsh and workaday C19 environment with the soaring drama of the parish church that is the defining feature of this little street and makes it such a special place. Rather remarkably, the church itself continues to be a commanding visual presence across the entirety of Faversham.

3.38. Vicarage Street, which strikes off to the north from mid way along Church Street, is a predominantly late C19 street, although C20 development is now present at the northern end.

Crescent Road and Garfield Place

3.39. Crescent Road is a relatively modern thoroughfare that was opened in 1960 to connect Court Street with East Street/Newton Road (and to by-pass Market Place). The road is characterised by the absence of any significant frontage development so the traditional street form associated with older towns is, in some ways, absent. The nearby development of Gange Mews (accessed via Garfield Place) has, however, helped to establish a better sense of structure to the built environment along the western side of the road, although the supermarket car park on the other side of the road still constitutes a significant gap, albeit behind a brick boundary wall.

Chapter 4: Creekside

Historical background

4.1. Faversham creek is a tidal inlet of the Swale waterway penetrating some six kilometres inland on a winding course across the Nagden and Ham Marshes of the north Kent coast. Over the centuries it has afforded sheltered access for vessels of modest size, but navigation has always been constrained by its restricted width and depth. Thorn Quay, about 1.6 km north of Faversham, was the docking point for vessels until 1558; a sluice was then built to enable boats to sail further up the creek and load/unload closer to the town. In 1842/3 improvements to the creek were made by cutting new channels that eliminated two of the worst bends.

4.2. By the end of the C16 the port of Faversham was a place of considerable importance handling much of the grain required to feed the population of London, and by the end of the C17 it was one of the country's largest wool exporting ports. But whilst it could claim then to be one of Kent's leading ports it never attained a significant size in the wider national context.

4.3. Historically, the town's wharves and waterside activities were mostly concentrated along the south-east bank of the creek although Pollock's shipyard opposite Standard Quay was a notable exception where tankers, dredgers and tugs were built from 1917 to 1970.

4.4. After the second world war coasters up to 400 tons in size continued to bring in fertiliser, corn and cattle feed from Rotterdam and Bremen, timber was imported from Scandinavia and tankers from the Isle of Grain refinery delivered petroleum for onward distribution. Commercial boat traffic nevertheless steadily declined through the second half of the C20 and by 2000 it had completely ceased, thus ending the centuries-old interdependence of Faversham town with the creek.

The creek above the bridge

4.5. Early illustrations of Faversham show a tidal mill sited close to the head of the creek; the construction of the mill (and its successors), together with adaptations to manage the flow of water, started a process of change which has resulted now in a clear divide between the saltwater areas of the tidal creek and the freshwater channel that feeds it. At the end of the C19 much of the land around the head of the creek was home to coal wharves and barge building/repair yards. The hustle and bustle of those wharves has, however, long since vanished, present-day uses have turned their backs on the water and silt has accumulated in the water channel. Almost all traces of the old creekside activities have vanished although the presence of old brick and timber wharf fronts is a nostalgic, but important, reminder of those past activities.

4.6. Aside from the wharf fronts, the C19 yellow-brick purifier building (once part of the gasworks) is now a lone survivor hereabouts from the industrial days of the creek. Its western wall drops directly into the creek (the only building along the creek to do so). Empty and in poor condition it is one of the few surviving industrial buildings relating directly to the creek and it is, therefore, an important component of Faversham's waterside environment.

4.7. To the south is the Co-op supermarket completed in 1992; its pinkish-yellow brickwork, red brick detailing and slate roofs (topped by prominent ventilator features) neatly echo the range of Faversham's traditional building materials. The carefully crafted building form enables its substantial bulk to fit comfortably into the creekside environment, although it is the relatively lifeless back of the building that abuts the creek.

4.8. Adjoining to the north-east is the concrete apron of a former transport yard (although change is in prospect here following its acquisition by the brewery). Just beyond is the brewery's bottling plant, an exciting place of pounding machinery and chattering bottles being sped around on conveyor belts; rather disappointingly, all this activity is enclosed within a charm-less, shed-like building that pointedly ignores the adjoining creek.

4.9. Opposite, on the north-west side of the creek, industrial buildings are set some distance back from the water's edge behind Brent Road. The tidy, brick-fronted elevations, dating from the 1940s, fit rather well with the local environment although there is little pretence that they have any special relationship with the creek. The car park along the water's edge, once a place of coal yards and barge building works, has a greenish edge of self-sown shrubs that affords some modest compensatory screening.

4.10. This part of Faversham creek is, therefore, for the time being a somewhat melancholy and muddy place where not a single activity now relates to the water. Nevertheless, the daily rhythm of the tides lapping against the old wharf fronts is still sufficient for the place to retain just a little of its former magic, and the two shallow-arched bridges carrying Flood Lane across the top end of the creek still terminate the head of the waterway in an interesting way. The all-important historical link through to Stonebridge Pond and the shallow Westbrook valley continues to embrace land that remains free from development, so that it is possible still to trace the old transition from the tidal creek into the freshwater valley. By contrast, to the north-west is the attractive sequence of brick walls and buildings climbing the slope up Brent Hill towards the prominent landmark of Davington church - a view that still encapsulates an important part of the traditional character of the old town.

4.11. The steel road bridge across the creek dates from 1976 but is set onto older, more interesting, abutments of brick and stone. Hydraulic accumulators and a hand operated pump of 1878 still provide the means for lifting the bridge off its seatings, but the last vessel to pass through here was in 1993. The release of water through the sluices is still the all-important means of cleansing the navigational channel, but with the head of the creek steadily silting up the reducing volume of available water makes the flushing action progressively less effective. This crossing point, with its panoramic views up and down the creek, its sluice gates and its old brick and stone abutments, continues to be a place of special appeal.

The Brents and brickmaking

4.12. Development on the north-west bank of the creek came very late - not until the first half of the C19 when the brickfields opened up. Brickmaking until this time had been a localised and small-scale activity using locally-dug brickearth fired in small clamps, but the C19 prompted an unprecedented demand for bricks. Brickearth was readily available in Faversham, as also was chalk which when added to the clay coloured the bricks yellow. And also suddenly available was clinker (mixed in with the clay to burn the bricks more

effectively) which was recovered from the household refuse brought down river from London by sailing barge. Accordingly, the output of stock bricks from Faversham (and from the area through to Rainham) grew rapidly after 1840 and large-scale brick production in the town continued until the 1930s, but then declined as the conveniently sited brickearth reserves were exhausted and as the demand for bricks slowed and competition from cheaper flettons grew.

4.13. Buildings and equipment associated with brick production in Faversham have largely disappeared although the extensive mineral excavations, mostly quite shallow, have in places left a lasting mark on the town. Brickmaking still continues on the western edge of the town where small quantities of traditional, hand thrown, red stock bricks are produced.

Front Brents

4.14. Small C19 terraced houses, now punctuated by green areas, are set out along Front Brents on the north-west bank of the creek, although the more substantial stuccoed bulk of Bridge House (built in the early C19 and once a place of mercantile exchange) defines the corner with Church Road. Whilst the terraced houses mostly now have painted or rendered brickwork, replacement windows/doors and concrete roof tiles, their modest form and character still contributes positively to the character and history of the creekside scene. The early C19 Albion public house is distinctive for its white-painted weatherboarding and slate-covered roofs; with twelve-paned sash windows overlooking the creek, and tables and chairs spilling out into the roadway, it is the attractive focus for eating, drinking and conversation which brings welcome life and vitality to the creekside.

4.15. Green spaces (sometimes taking the place of demolished terraced houses) are now a significant feature of Front Brents and give the place a rather informal and relaxed feel. The largest of these is at the northern end of the road, where the lower unkempt section is historically important for embracing a severed loop in the creek left by the straightening of the channel in 1843.

4.16. Front Brents itself is a private street with restricted vehicular use so that it has the character of a path-cum-road where views of the creek can be enjoyed in peace and comfort. The creek-side verge (Town Green) forms an attractive green edge with well-spaced willow, birch and hawthorns trees. Kerbs, footways and all the clutter often prevalent in public streets are absent from the roadway so that an attractive and relaxed character predominates. There is access here to a timber jetty built in 1985 with moorings for a dozen or so small leisure craft; this trickle of life and activity on the water, important though it is, is not however on a scale to compensate for the demise of commercial craft. The view here confirms that the 'gritty' working waterside character of the creek has largely vanished and that it is now a quieter and more orderly place.

Church Road into Upper Brents

4.17. Church Road and Upper Brents run parallel with Front Brents on ground still rising from the creek. The southern end of Church Road is distinctively marked by the vicarage, church and parish room; all were built in the C19 to serve a then-growing community of brickworkers. The rambling red-brick vicarage, despite its elevated position, is now substantially hidden behind high trees which are themselves an attractive feature in the local scene, but the flint church built in 1881 and the yellow brick 'school' room next door remain very prominent in the view from the road. The uses for which each was built have, however, all now ceased.

4.18. Much of the mid/late C19 development originally built along Upper Brents comprised single-storey brickworkers' houses; Brents Tavern and the pleasantly proportioned houses on either side of Kennedy Close were exceptions. These rather mean little dwellings were demolished when the North Preston council housing estate was built, but a group of sturdier

houses (fronting onto an unmade cul-de-sac at the northern eastern end of the road) has survived. Only one property in this group, however, retains its sash windows and boarded front door, roofing slates have all been replaced and iron railings around the front gardens have gone. Nevertheless, the group forms an agreeable entity and in the context of the town's brickmaking industry it is an interesting historical survival.

4.19. The south-east side of Church Road/Upper Brents is largely comprised of green spaces sloping up from Front Brents. The weatherboarded, early C19 Willow Tap, now a house but once a public house, and the recent housing development adjoining to the north-east are exceptions. At the far northern end of Upper Brents change is also under way at the old Faversham shipyard site: housing at Faversham Reach to the south dates from the 1980s, but other new housing incorporating office suites-cum-studios has recently been completed on the front part of the old shipyard site alongside the creek.

Grazing land opposite Standard Quay

4.20. The unimproved grazing land just beyond the old shipyard forms part of a southern finger of the Swale marshes. Here there is another by-passed bend of the creek, isolated since 1843 when the creek was straightened to improve navigation. The shallow depression of the old channel is still just identifiable and in the wetter places it still retains a plant community that contrasts with the surrounding closely grazed turf. Here, therefore, it is still possible to trace the slowly vanishing bend of the old creek and to see the physical evidence of an historical event of special local significance that helped to keep the town's quays and wharves in business for more than another hundred years.

North Lane, Conduit Street and Quay Lane

4.21. North Lane, Conduit Street and Quay Lane now comprise the through route for vehicles travelling around the north-western edge of the town centre. They pass through a predominantly industrial environment that has for long been home to both waterside activities and the Shepherd Neame brewery. Quay Lane has been one of the main links between the town and the creek; the once-narrow track was widened to its present size in 1891. Conduit Street records the one-time presence of an artificial water-course built in 1546 (the water-flow powered a mill in Mill Place). The underground water remains of critical importance as the brewery draws its supply from its borehole here. Conduit Street runs on into North Lane without a break, but at the start of South Road there is a pronounced change in character as industrial uses give way to residential development.

4.22. Town Quay, alongside the bridge, played a key role in the development of Faversham's port. A timber-framed warehouse (now known as 'training ship' Hazard) was built here circa 1475 by the Corporation of Faversham to provide storage facilities for local merchants lacking their own premises. Built in the Kentish vernacular, it is a rare and remarkable example of an early commercial building and an important historical link with the creek.

4.23. It is, however, now the Shepherd Neame brewery that dominates this part of Faversham. Over the years it has spread across a number of sites still separated from one another by public roads, so that the sounds and smells of brewing activities readily spill out into the adjoining streets: brewery drays drive in and out, fork-lift trucks whizz back and forth, passers-by are assailed at close quarters by the crash of barrels and the chattering of conveyor belts, whilst the distinctive aroma of malt periodically fills the air. This most intimate of relationships between town and industry is a defining feature of the place.

4.24. The built form of the brewery lacks the style and cohesion of its 'Whitbread' counterpart in Court Street, the buildings here being more varied in age and appearance and modern plant being visually prominent. However, the distinctive, louvered-roof brewhouse built in 1864 still rises high above the brewery complex and together with the modern steel

chimney is a landmark from many vantage points around the town. The frontage along the south-east side of North Lane consists of rather workaday, late C19 buildings and the prominent corner with Partridge Lane is marked by a rather plain-looking, red brick building dated 1936. Other surviving buildings of traditional appearance include the peg-tiled cask store and the C19 cottage opposite Bridge Road. Later buildings such as the engineer's workshop tend to fall short of the stature and distinctiveness of the C19 industrial buildings, and the bottling plant on the north west side of North Lane is decidedly utilitarian. However, the modern high-level walkway spanning North Lane brings welcome incident to the street scene.

4.25. Conduit Street is interesting for the nicely defined, somewhat triangular-shaped, space at its northern end. The C18 Swan and Harlequin public house and the adjoining early C19 red brick house on the north-eastern edge neatly terminate the view looking from North Lane; here there is a strong echo of the 'grain' of old waterside development that was historically set side-on to the creek. Other rather disparate buildings that define this important space include the timber store (a large, partly open-sided, storage shed), the former pump house (built in 1911 with precise architectural detailing) and the medieval TS. Hazard. The sturdy, red brick Chaff House lends important substance to the corner with Bridge Road.

4.26. The north side of Quay Lane is dominated by the extensive yellow brickwork of the joinery works (a building that originally housed Rigden's bottling store), whilst on the opposite side the small, boarded-up, red brick Two Brewers building gives crucial shape to the roadway. Rather less welcome is the gap in the frontage around into Conduit Street (with its open storage and car parking) and which for the present interrupts the continuity of the built environment.

4.27. All three roads are functional places that are urban in character and hard in appearance; even the distinctive space in Conduit Street is a functional, tarmac-surfaced place. A few fragments of old stone paving, perhaps once extensive hereabouts, are still present however, most notably in the access to Town Wharf where granite paving, comprising both setts and wheelers, has been worn smooth by years of wear and is now an important historical and irreplaceable survival.

Partridge Lane

4.28. Partridge Lane (together with Water Lane) connects Court Street with North Lane, and is for the most part dominated by Shepherd Neame's brewery. Close to the junction with Court Street the traditional character of the lane still survives with buildings, some timber framed, set directly onto the footway. Elsewhere, however, the old frontage buildings have disappeared and the small-scale, tightly knit historic character has all but vanished.

4.29. The paving at the top end of the lane is notable for its high granite kerbs and wide, black-coloured, granite channels now attractively polished by years of wear; the infill paving of modern concrete blocks is, however, rather less appealing. Stone steps outside the front doors of properties on the south side of the street project into the narrow footway and provide pleasing visual incident.

Belvedere Road

4.30. Belvedere Road, on the east side of the creek, was until recently home to a hotchpotch of water-related industrial activities but now the area is undergoing radical change as sites are redeveloped for housing. Land here in fact came into industrial use rather late but by the end of the C19 it was a patchwork of wharves, timber yards, coal yards and cement works. From 1860 it was served by the Faversham Creek Branch Line with a wagon-way running south as far as Stockwell Lane along the present-day alignment of the road

4.31. A cement works stood here from 1813 until 1901 (when Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers was formed). Samuel Shepherd initially manufactured 'Roman' cement in Faversham (an early form of water-resisting cement made from septaria stone found in clay on the foreshores around the Isle of Sheppey), and then later in 1849 James Hilton produced a version of Portland cement.

4.32. The last industries to close in this vicinity, in the 1980/90s, were the grain handlers, feed mills and timber yards so that by the end of the C20 the working relationship between Belvedere Road and Faversham creek had ended. But despite this history of waterside activities the legacy of historical buildings has been relatively thin.

4.33. A large joinery works occupies the southern end of Belvedere Road, where a rather pleasing array of traditional-looking industrial buildings fronts onto the creek (although most of the structures are relatively modern). Exceptionally, Faversham Chandlery is a brightly-painted weatherboarded building dating from the early C19. Despite having no direct connection with the water this site has established a rather convincing aesthetic relationship with the creek, the buildings being expressed for the most part in a local vernacular of treated weatherboarding and slated roofs. Alongside to the north is the impressive C19, five storeys high, yellow brick-built Belvedere Mill now being converted to flats and a restaurant. With its characteristic projecting hoist bays the structure is a crucial and prominent part of the historical record of the creek's industrial past. On the opposite side of Belvedere Road are other vacant buildings and land, whilst to the north are brewery premises where barrels and pallets are stored both in the open and under cover.

4.34. Alongside the creek, further to the north, the character changes where new, two and three storey terraced housing (completed in 2001) overlooks the water from behind a pedestrian walkway. Neither the town's local building vernacular nor its rich history have seemingly much influenced the design of the development and the resulting frontage to the creek is rather suburban in character. Other recently completed three storey houses are also present on the other side of the road. The associated highway improvements along Belvedere Road have produced a rather joyless 'anyplace' environment with a double row of blue-coloured scoria blocks outside the joinery works being the only item of distinctive paving.

Standard Quay and Iron Wharf

4.35. Standard Quay, for centuries a principal quay in the port of Faversham, is today the town's only traditional, working, waterside environment where spritsail barges, once commonplace in the Thames and Medway estuaries, still visit. C18 and C19 weatherboarded warehouses-cum-workshops still stand on the quay, distinctive for their gables, loft and loading doors, and battered-looking corrugated iron roofs. A C17 warehouse on the eastern edge of the quay is stone based, then brick, then half-timbered and infilled with various patterns of red brick nogging); it is now used for the sale of animal feedstuffs and garden products, its rugged working character having survived with minimal adaptations.

4.36. Visiting boats are no longer commercial craft but used for pleasure, for chartering and as living accommodation. Still, however, they depend on a range of traditional quayside facilities and trades being available. Consequently the quay is characterised by the traditional sounds and smells of waterside activities: of timber being sawn and shaped, of ironwork being fashioned and repaired, of the smell of varnish and paint, and also the aroma of old ropes and Stockholm tar. Alongside the yellow brick fronted quay lie visiting barges with evocative names such as Lady of the Lea, Raybel and Remercie, their transoms decorated with scroll work and name ribbons. Pitch pine timber masts, braced with their distinctive rig, are topped with colourful pennants. But most nostalgic of all are the brick-red sails that, even though here tightly furled, are still most obviously the hallmark of the Thames and Medway sailing barges.

4.37. Iron Wharf adjoins Standard Quay to the north. Its past association with the branch railway is still recorded by the presence of several dozen, wheel-less, goods wagons stranded here when the railway track was removed. They continue to earn a living, however, as storage lock-ups and are an intriguing survival from the creek's 'railway era' and, as an evocative reminder of past times, they now form part of the wharf's special identity. And ever present here is the persistent metallic clang of masts and metal rigging, as they respond to the constant rise and fall of the wind.

4.38. The wharf is now occupied by small leisure craft laid up for repairs or for storage, especially during the winter months. Buildings here are sparser than at Standard Quay although the commanding presence of the Oyster Bay Warehouse, formerly a secure store for goods in transit through the port but now used for offices and flats, is exceptional. Its height and yellow-brick bulk, coupled with its position on the very edge of the flat expanse of the Swale marshes, makes it one of the town's landmark buildings. Elsewhere, portakabins and sheds serving as small stores and workshops, are stationed at intervals amongst the orderly muddle. Rows of masts, when viewed from the east, are attractively silhouetted against the sky and are an important tell-tale in the flat landscape of the presence of the otherwise-hidden water channel.

4.39. Alongside Iron Wharf is Chambers Dock where the course of the Cooksditch stream has been deepened and widened as it joins Faversham creek. A small footbridge across the entrance carries the long distance Saxon Shore Way footpath away to the north, and although the dock itself is now a rather forlorn and muddy affair it still remains home to a number of veteran craft.

4.40. Here at Standard Quay and at Iron Wharf, the long-standing relationship of Faversham town with Faversham creek is still expressed in the traditional way: old waterside buildings have survived, veteran sailing craft still visit, and water-related activities continue to thrive. Here therefore is an authentic echo of the old, somewhat rough and ready working environment that once characterised this side of the creek. To the north, the muddy banks of the channel are the refuge of whistling oystercatchers and quarrelling gulls; the dribble of water at low tide is scarcely sufficient to float the smallest of dinghies. But still it is possible to visualise how, with high water filling the creek brimful with water, commercial craft once made their way quietly upstream, through meadows grazed by cattle and sheep, to discharge their loads at the Faversham quays. Over the centuries the creek environment has been a place of outstanding character and an integral part of the wider identity of Faversham town itself. The continued survival of this small pocket of traditional character and activity is therefore of crucial importance to the town's individuality.

The Cardox International works

4.41. The Cardox works, in Abbeyfields, lie just to the south-west of the sewage works. Originally known as the Abbey Works, the site was opened in 1924 by the Mexco Mining Explosives Company.

4.42. The works now comprise a rather widely-spaced scatter of wooden huts set within a large grassy enclosure dotted with hawthorn and other trees. An old narrow-gauge track connecting the buildings is still just visible in places; a small truck was once pushed manually along it to move loads around the site. Here, in this rather green and peaceful environment, blasting cartridges are manufactured for the quarrying industry, although the 'explosive' content is now a heater, or chemical energiser, which activates a carbon dioxide blasting cartridge. The huts, laid out in rows, are of simple wooden construction with felt covered roofs; despite the somewhat ephemeral nature of these structures the site is of special importance to Faversham because it constitutes the last active link with the town's long-standing explosives industry.

4.43. The disturbed land to the south-west (from which material has been removed in the past for brick-making) is currently unused, but the spatial separation that this site affords is the vital means of distancing the Cardox works from the edge of the town (originally for safety reasons but now for historical authenticity). The sense here of a place being 'set apart' from the town is, therefore, an important part of the special character of this last surviving component of Faversham's 'gunpowder' story.

Chapter 5: Tanners Street, West Street and Preston Street

Historical background

5.1. Until the mid C16 the town of Faversham was centred on Tanners Street and West Street; the first Guildhall, for example, stood close to the corner of Napleton Road. The town's early focus here was probably linked to the ancient trackway connecting Tonge with Boughton and the nearby fording point across the Westbrook Stream.

5.2. Tanners Street now marks the north-western edge of historic Faversham. Although it takes its name from the tanning trade once practised here, it is the physical survivals from the gunpowder industry that have perhaps left the more lasting impression on the street and its immediate vicinity.

5.3. West Street, one of Faversham's most historic streets, formed the town's main east-west axis during Anglo-Saxon times. It went on to serve as the town's 'High Street' until Preston Street captured the role at the end of the C19.

5.4. Preston Street runs south from the town centre and takes its name from the parish of Preston to which it leads. Although it comprised one of the four arms of the town's medieval street network, joined-up frontage development even by 1780 reached only as far as Gatefield Lane. A small and quite separate cluster of properties, approximating to a 'village' of Preston, lay further south along the street.

The Westbrook stream

5.5. The Westbrook stream runs roughly parallel with Tanners Street, and although originally fed by headwaters from relatively far away (at Painters Forstal and the Willow Beds below Davington Hill) it is now the springs lower down the watercourse that keep it flowing. This stream water once powered a series of mills that drove the machinery used in gunpowder manufacture at the Home Works. Indeed, gunpowder made here was used in the crucial battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo so that this now-quiet valley can be said, in its own peculiar way, to have played a role in the course of European history. Over the years the watercourse has been much altered and adapted, so that at the back of Tanners Street it now winds gently between an attractive margin of trees and waterside vegetation.

5.6. At Chart Mills, now rather marooned amongst estate houses, one of the four gunpowder incorporating mills still survives (having been saved from demolition at the eleventh hour by local enthusiasts). It was here that the gunpowder ingredients of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal were blended together between huge millstones driven by a large breast-shot iron water wheel. This powder mill is reckoned to be the oldest one surviving anywhere in the world and is therefore of special historic significance. Mature trees around the mill are a survival from the days when planting was deliberately used to moderate the effect of gunpowder explosions; today these trees help to maintain a modest, but important, sense of physical separation between the mills and the modern housing around.

Tanners Street

5.7. Tanners Street runs south-west from West Street to South Road and is an attractive blend of old and new buildings, threaded through with survivals from the town's once-important gunpowder industry. A special part of its distinctive identity is the informality of its street form (sometimes with footways and sometimes without) which rises and falls, twists and turns, narrows and widens in a most appealing way. Although predominantly residential in character, a scattering of other uses (and building forms) does much to animate the street.

5.8. The northern limit of Tanners Street is marked by the C15, timber-framed Bull Inn; characteristically Kentish in form and appearance (despite missing its chimneys) it is commandingly set up on a small rise, known as Snoure Hill, behind a raised footway away from the flood waters of the creek. Alongside to the south are ranges of small C19 and C20 brick-built cottages that sweep gently around to the yellow-brick Gospel Mission Hall, built in 1888 and important for the substance it gives to the corner with Napleton Road. On the opposite side of the street other buildings combine to form a characteristically Kentish scene; some are C15 to C17 and timber-framed with jettied first floors, whilst others are brick-built including three terraced houses built around 1770 for officials of the Royal Gunpowder Factory. A narrow passageway leads to another little group of cottages positioned on the edge of the slope down to the Westbrook stream, so that the resulting jumble of old houses and colourful peg-tiled roofs all silhouetted against a background of billowy green trees is quite outstanding.

5.9. Beyond Napleton Road, Tanners Street turns and climbs a short but sharp rise. The corner is marked by the sturdy C17 Three Tuns public house set up on a deep plinth to accommodate the sudden change in ground levels, but then groups of small C19 and C20 cottages sweep up the hill all huddled along the edge of the curving carriageway. Through a gap between these cottages there is an unexpectedly dramatic view up to the back of the almshouses' chapel, where the imposing Bath stone elevation sharply contrasts with the workaday brick and timber-framed construction in Tanners Street. The southern cross-wing of the distinctive almshouses marks the south-western end of the street.

5.10. The Roman Catholic church, with a huge poplar tree alongside, brings additional variety to the street scene, but tucked hard up against the footway it fits neatly into the well-defined form of the street. Built as a school in 1861 (by the owner of the Home Works) it was then used as a cinema until 1935 when it was converted to its present use. The, grey coloured slate roofs (unusually steeply pitched) contrast with the reddy-brown, peg tiled roofs of the older properties nearby and are the easily recognised hallmark of C19 work. Alongside the church stands an attractive early Georgian red brick house (now used as the priest's house but originally built for a local tanner John Gilbert). Beyond to the south, where buildings are suddenly absent, the street is edged by an old ragstone wall that once enclosed the gunpowder works. Built in squared stone blocks, the sizes graded as they rise and finished with a shaped stone coping, it is notable for its quality and distinction in a town characterised by rather little stonework; it also indicates the importance of the industry that it once enclosed and now nicely defines the corner round into South Road.

5.11. The varied history of Tanners Street is therefore recorded both in the architecture of its buildings and in its informal shape as it squeezes past the church, twists and turns down the hill, and then broadens out into the triangular space at its junction with Dark Hill. This informality records the organic manner of the street's growth and renewal over the centuries, and sharply contrasts with the more regular street pattern and repeating building forms in the adjoining Napleton Road area.

5.12. The lower part of Tanners Street is now paved in brick, although the upper section still has a conventional macadam surfacing. The brick paving is further subdivided by colour

coding into parking bays, which C20 demarcations now read as rather unhelpful distractions in the otherwise easy and natural flow of the historic environment. An original cast iron lamp column is a rare survival here in the town.

Flood Lane

5.13. Flood Lane, at the western end of West Street, takes its name from the tidal Flood Mill that originally stood at the head of Faversham creek. Following slum clearance the road now has relatively few houses and a rather pleasantly ragged and unfinished appearance. The lane itself is notable for embracing, within a few short steps, the transition from the hurly-burly of West Street to the tranquillity of the small but attractive greenspace alongside the quietly flowing Westbrook stream. The informality of the unsurfaced section of road, the mature trees set within small grassy areas, and the crystal clear flow of stream water all help to create a rather special little backwater which is in striking contrast with the hustle and bustle of the town around.

West Street

5.14. West Street runs from Market Place through to Tanners Street but is now cut in two by North Lane/South Road, a busy route taking traffic around the edge of the town centre. Nevertheless, the continuity of West Street's historic development form still holds up remarkably well for most of its considerable length, although there is a gap in the historic building frontages where a group of C19 and C20 industrial buildings once stood.

5.15. Close to Market Place (in 'upper' West Street) small shops, offices and eating places all jostle for frontage space along the narrow road, but west of North Lane (in 'lower' West Street) the retail uses tend to thin out, the town centre character fades, and the street turns more residential in character; close to Tanners Street the frontage properties are largely in residential use.

5.16. 'Upper' West Street is tightly defined by frontage development, unbroken except for Water Lane which joins from the north and brought to order by both the gently curving street form and the steady fall in levels away from Market Place. The resulting environment is intimately human in scale with an outstanding array of historic buildings dating for the most part from the C16-C18, but with others also from the C15. Generally they are small in scale, closely spaced and set directly onto the edge of the footways. Despite later re-fronts, upper floor overhangs still mostly survive so that they, together with the rhythmical form of steeply pitched gables, are a defining feature of the street. No single building really outshines the others although the C18 'Ardennes' is a commanding presence, the architecture of its deep eaves cornice with paired modillion brackets being especially striking; the later timber cladding on the ground floor is, however, disfiguring.

5.17. This 'upper' section of the street is notable, therefore, for its Kentish vernacular buildings where timber-framing, plaster infill, brick nogging, red brick and just occasionally yellow brick are all present, along with an appealing jumble of russet-coloured, peg tiled roofs. Also here is Faversham's speciality of mathematical tiling, and a notable example of pargetting at 'Gullivers' shop where deep relief stylised foliage surrounds a cartouche with the date of 1697 (the sole example of such decoration in the town, despite plasterwork fronts having been at one time quite commonplace). However, there are examples too of other less sensitive work and now that plastered, rendered and sometimes even brick elevations have been extensively painted, occasional shabby corners are ever-present.

5.18. West of the 'junction' with North Lane/South Road the gently winding form of West Street resumes, as also does the tightly defined street form, fronted initially by a remarkable mix of properties embracing work from each of the centuries from the C15 up to the present day. The sequence of historic buildings is, however, then interrupted by a round of late C20 redevelopment on the site of C19/C20 industrial/commercial development (including the

town's gasworks) which once spilled over from the head of the creek into West Street. The visual impact of the large supermarket building on the north side of the street is, however, quite modest, due to its position set well back into the site; here the street frontage consists of a boundary wall and railings that screen the car park, and also a late C19 building formerly used as a gas showroom. New housing development (built in the 1990s) on the opposite side of the street follows the general form and character of the street, but the set-back of the buildings behind a servicing/parking lay-by has opened up the width of the street; the larger scale and cruder detailing of the modern work also contrasts with the architectural subtlety of the rest of the street.

5.19. Beyond this C20 development the historical frontage development reasserts itself and the traditional character of the street is once again present, this time defined by ranges of C15 timber-framed buildings and C17 brick-built cottages. The much later (and now converted) Faversham Co-operative shop is an exception, and marks the founding in 1874 of the town's co-operative movement by workers in the gunpowder industry. The substantial Twyman's mill, formerly a wool warehouse but now converted to flats, marks the western end of the street with a lively flourish of red brick.

5.20. 'Upper' West Street was pedestrianised in 1975, at which time the carriageway was overlaid with red paving bricks (a relatively early example locally of such an initiative). In the summertime, therefore, the street takes on a pleasant and a rather leisurely alfresco character with tables and chairs spilling out of the cafes and other eating-places. At quieter times, however, the street is given over to a rather desultory assortment of advertising A-boards and flower containers. However, the front of Gullivers is notable for being daily festooned with hardware and gardening products, which display rather positively engages the shop with the public street. When the carriageway was paved the footways were left undisturbed, so that the kerb face disappeared and a part of the street's traditional shape consequently went missing.

5.21. The well-defined street environment falls apart at the junction with North Lane/South Road where road widening in 1903 and 1965 destroyed the old sense of building enclosure. The clutter here of road signs, pedestrian guardrails and the muddle of paving somewhat unwittingly reinforces the sense of anti-climax hereabouts in the street environment.

5.22. 'Lower' West Street is, by contrast, trafficked in a single direction. The completion of the Western Link road in the late 1980s greatly reduced the numbers of heavy vehicles here to the very substantial benefit of the street environment, but the narrowness of the street and the proximity of buildings to the carriageway still make even the residual traffic surprisingly intrusive. This section of West Street was repaved in the late 1980s; the carriageway is now paved with red brick and the footways with 'small element' concrete flagstones. Speed humps and bollards, particularly near to North Lane, are visually intrusive and the reconstruction of projecting steps outside the cottage doors with modern materials has eliminated a part of their charm.

Thomas Road

5.23. Thomas Road is a rear access road built in the 1970s to serve properties facing West Street, Market Place and Court Street; its construction has permanently shortened the old rear plots and yards. The backs of these town centre properties, although almost always interesting, lack the finesse and continuity of the front elevations and the adaptation of rear yards for parking and servicing has sometimes been quite roughly executed. The large steel-framed warehouse on the opposite side of the road (built in the 1980s as a supermarket but now used as a brewery warehouse) is a somewhat coarse-mannered neighbour given its position so close to the historic core of the town, although the landform fortunately mitigates some of the bulk of the building.

Market Street

5.24. Market Street connects Market Place with Preston Street. It is a short and narrow thoroughfare lined with shops and always busy with people. Despite its position in the very heart of the town centre, however, many of the buildings now date from the C20.

5.25. Much of the south side of the street is set back behind a notional widening line, and the rather unremarkable appearance of the C20 properties is further reinforced by the somewhat lacklustre array of modern shop fronts. Some of the buildings on the opposite side of the road are similarly unremarkable but those at either end are more worthy of this central position in the town. The three storey, late C18, stuccoed building on the corner with Market Place has a pleasantly rounded corner to its wedge-shaped western end which is perfectly tailored to fit the corner site, whilst the Swan Inn with its steeply pitched clay tiled roof neatly concludes the other end of the building group.

5.26. Paving surfaces in Market Street match those of Market Place, East Street and Preston Street and therefore maintain an important sense of continuity in the treatment of the 'pedestrian priority' highway areas. The narrow lay-by on the south side of the road is, for much of the time, used for parking.

Preston Street

5.27. Preston Street runs south from the town centre on a gently rising gradient towards London Road. Despite its medieval origins it was much later that the street gained its present-day prominence, after the arrival of the railway in 1858. The new railway station (some distance to the south of then more-important West Street) caused the town's centre of gravity to shift decisively in favour of Preston Street, so that with shops and other services all taking full advantage of convenient access to and from the railway the present-day role of 'High Street' was established.

5.28. Today, Preston Street is the town's principal shopping street, daily busy with the hustle and bustle of people shopping, visiting the Council offices, meeting with friends and so on. It is above all else the place in the town where goods and services are bought and sold; its 'High Street' character is therefore its defining feature. The very slightly curving form of the road, aligned along the shallowest of valley features, perhaps lacks some of the visual subtlety of some of the town's other historic streets, but its medieval origins and its later evolution are nevertheless all faithfully recorded in its present-day built environment.

5.29. The 'two stage' development of Preston Street is reflected in the two rather distinct rounds of building activity. The older, northern section of the street contains buildings from the C15-C18 characterised by timber-framed construction and traditional finishes, whilst the 'newer' parts of the street date largely from the second half of the C19 with rather plainer-looking buildings mostly built of brick and often with larger shop fronts and with slate covered roofs. These different building forms and styles have, however, linked well together so that the entire street reads very clearly as a single and coherent entity, with disciplined frontages of two and three-storey buildings and few gaps. Whilst the contribution from C20 development has been rather mediocre, the thoughtful repair and refurbishment in recent years of many older buildings in the street has secured some notable improvements.

5.30. The cluster of timber-framed buildings at the northern end of the street in the vicinity of the heritage centre (itself dating from the C15 and formerly the Fleur de Lis Inn) is the defining historical component of the street. Here are the forms and materials so characteristic of Kentish vernacular building including jettied first floors, colour-washed plaster, white-painted weather-boarding, mellow red brick, mathematical tiles and Kent peg roof tiles laid on undulating and steeply-pitched roofs. And here too there is an eye-catching array of brick chimney stacks, some short and stout but others tall and slender, and mostly topped off with terracotta pots in various shapes and sizes, and all contributing to a lively rooftop skyline.

5.31. By contrast, just south of Gatefield Lane is the imposing, red brick Alexander Centre built in the 1860s (once the home of local businessman Henry Barnes and now used as Council offices); the porch with its heavy entablature supported on columns thrusts confidently out into the public footway. It is hereabouts, in the view south, that the buildings of the C19 come to predominate, with brickwork in the familiar yellows and reds of the Faversham brickfields, with larger and more commercial-looking shop fronts, and with the grey uniformity of Welsh roofing slates in evidence rather than the colourful exuberance of Kent peg tiles. The 'Italianate' Assembly Rooms (dating from 1848 but now a drill hall) and the huge, but austere-looking, former Co-op building dating from the 1920s both record important developments in the town's social and economic history. The street ends on a rather distinguished note with Shepherd House (early C19), Chase House (C18) and Delbridge House (C19), and also a C19 church notable for its Gothic revival style, Kentish ragstone front (now somewhat marred by heavy re-pointing) and polychromatic brickwork.

5.32. Preston Street ends abruptly at the railway where it is reduced to the status of a footway scurrying beneath the tracks through a white-tiled subway. However, the vestigial frontage buildings in the detached section of old Preston Street, particularly the George Inn and Wrights House, still serve as important historic markers in the urban landscape when viewed across the railway.

5.33. The relatively straightforward shape of Preston Street (after freeing itself from the narrow junction with Market Street) means that odd little nooks and crannies are rather few in number, but the old cross routes following the alignments of centuries-old footpaths are still present at intervals as at Gatefield Lane, Cross Lane and Solomons Lane. Jacobs Yard is a later, but successful, creation where C19 workshop buildings have been opened up and converted to form an attractive courtyard enlivened with brick and stone paving.

5.34. In common with Faversham's other principal historic roads, traffic management and paving works have divided Preston Street into two parts. South of the junction with Stone Street it is a conventional highway with two-way traffic and on-street parking, an asphalt-surfaced carriageway and concrete paved footways (and a mixture of granite kerbs apparently from such disparate places as Cornwall, Guernsey and Brittany). But to the north of Stone Street the carriageway is paved with red brick in the same 'town centre' way as Market Street and Market Place and traffic restrictions provide for pedestrian priority. The point of division between the two parts is reinforced by a kerb build-out that is now the home for a clutter of security cameras, bollards, litter bins, telephone kiosks, planters, traffic signs and more. Nevertheless, despite this hiccup in the visual flow of the street and the different approaches to highway management and presentation, the strength of the built environment is such that it continues still to read as a single entity.

Shopfronts in the town centre

5.35 Buildings used for retailing are notable for their ground floor shopfronts and window displays. The design and detailing of, and the choice of materials for, these shopfronts has played a unique role in the character and appearance of both individual buildings and the wider street scene. Despite the imperative to frequently update and refurbish there is still an important survival of old shopfronts in Faversham town centre.

5.36 Preston Street is notable for the larger-paned shopfront formats introduced in Victorian times, with examples also of later C19 features such as curved glass and bronze framing. The bold, but matching, shopfronts in Queen's Parade (East Street) illustrate the beginnings of C20 design, whilst the heavily timber-framed shopfront applied to the C19 'Geerings' building (at the far northern end of Preston Street) is an unusual example of 1920s mock Tudor design. Of special historical note, however, are the small-paned shopfronts of much

earlier times; an outstanding C18 example survives at the southern end of Abbey Street alongside the joinery works (where the property is now in residential use).

Gatefield Lane

5.37. The pedestrian cross routes at Gatefield and Solomans Lanes for the most part cut across the grain of mid/late C19 development. In the case of Gatefield Lane (which once led to Preston village across Gate field) the C18 and C19 cottages along the frontage close to Preston Street confirm the earlier origins of the footpath; frontage properties are then absent on the other side of Newton Road but the pedestrian way continues to be distinctive for the presence of high yellow brick boundary walls on either side enclosing the adjoining private gardens.

Forbes Road

5.38. The old railway crossing at Preston Street was by passed by the construction of Forbes Road, which runs west alongside Delbridge House. Development in the vicinity is somewhat disjointed in appearance, although Queen's Hall is attractively set up on top of a prominent bank. The car park to the north is partially enclosed with a rugged-looking flint wall.

Chapter 6: Davington and Stonebridge Pond

Historical background

6.1. Davington is a largely residential area situated on high ground to the north-west of the town centre. Set somewhat apart from the hustle and bustle of the historic core of Faversham it has a rather quiet and peaceful atmosphere. Four roads - Brent Hill, Davington Hill, Priory Row and Priory Road - all meet alongside the church.

6.2. Davington church is of Norman origin and probably dates from the early C12; it therefore contains some of the oldest building fabric in the town. The priory, the remains of which stand alongside the church, was founded in 1153 although it was never on the grand scale of Faversham Abbey and petered out altogether in 1535. Its closure before the Dissolution did, however, allow the building to escape destruction. Over the subsequent centuries the priory was used for a variety of purposes but in 1845 it was acquired by Thomas Willement (a distinguished stained-glass artist) who then sensitively restored the surviving parts. The church was purchased by the Church of England in 1932 and also restored.

6.3. The history of Davington parish is otherwise rather sketchily recorded although it has been speculated that some kind of 'village' nucleus might have existed at the bottom of Davington Hill before the gunpowder works, destined to become one of the town's principal industries, transformed the area in the C16 and C17.

Gunpowder manufacture in Faversham

6.4. The precise beginnings of the gunpowder industry in the town are not recorded, but the earliest documented reference to a gunpowder maker is in 1573. The first records of a fully operational gunpowder industry, however, date from the mid C17 when the Home Works factory was in production close to the town. Subsequently, gunpowder was also manufactured at the Oare Works just south of Oare village and at the Marsh Works which opened in 1786.

6.5. Sites for gunpowder manufacturing needed to be close to the main centres of military and naval activity and close to a port or a river for the import of nitre and sulphur. They also

needed a supply of wood for charcoal making and a dependable supply of water to drive the mills that powered the machinery. Faversham offered all these features.

6.6. The Home Works was established for certain by 1653. By 1759 it occupied a site over one kilometre long (and an average 400 metres wide) extending along the Westbrook stream from just north of the London-Canterbury road at Ospringe all the way through to the head of Faversham creek. By 1774 the works contained eleven watermills and five horse-worked incorporating mills where the three ingredients of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal were blended, as well as many other buildings where pressing, granulating and drying the powder took place. And as demand increased in the late C18 more process houses were built on the north side Brent Hill. For safety reasons the manufacturing processes were rather widely spaced, so that even at the height of its output the 'factory' site was often quite a thickly wooded place where many of the manufacturing processes proceeded in relative quiet.

6.7. The Home Works started as three or four small independent factories that were consolidated into a single large one by the mid C18. About the same time the Government decided that the gunpowder made by private suppliers was unacceptably variable in quality, so to be sure of reliable powder it nationalised the Home Works in 1759. After the Napoleonic Wars the Faversham works were first leased, then sold, to John Hall and Son, which company played an important role in the further development of explosives. The Faversham powder mills finally closed in 1934 when the machinery was dismantled except for just one of the four water-powered Chart Mills (left standing by chance) With the demise also of the town's other gunpowder works the Cardox Works, in Abbeyfields, now constitutes the sole surviving link with the long explosives-making tradition in Faversham.

Stonebridge Pond

6.8. Stonebridge Pond (named after the bridge that replaced the ford across the Westbrook stream in 1773) is a major survival from the days of gunpowder making. The reservoir of water created here was not only used to work the powder mills but the associated network of waterways also provided the means of moving unfinished powder by punt safely between the various processes of corning, pressing, dusting and packing. Until 1790 the finished gunpowder was loaded onto boats moored at the adjoining quay at the head of the creek.

6.9. The pond, with its encircling margin of self-sown trees and shrubs, is now a quiet refuge for wildlife and an important oasis of green space in the heart of the town. A small amenity area alongside Dark Hill is popular with local residents for feeding the ducks but the greater part of the land around is now comprised of well-tended allotments. Rather appropriately these allotments continue a 'leisure-related' tradition from the past, because even when gunpowder was being manufactured the plots of land in amongst the production buildings were rented by local people and used for growing vegetables, as places to relax, and even for fishing.

Davington Hill and Priory Road

6.10. Davington Hill runs north from Dark Hill and climbs a sharp gradient alongside Stonebridge pond on an alignment that probably dates from the time of Willement's extensive restoration work at the priory. Despite its position deep into the town, the hill's appearance is rather remarkably that of a rural lane because buildings are few in number, the surrounding landscape is dominated by trees and green spaces, and the slope is overlooked from the top of the hill by the landmark tower of Davington church which emerges through the encircling trees as though presiding over a rural parish. At the bottom of the hill the white-painted weatherboarding and colourful peg tiled roofs of a C16 house and a group of C18 cottages (once owned by the gunpowder factory) are characteristically Kentish in appearance. By contrast, the top of the hill is marked by the remains of the old priory wall; here the heavily buttressed medieval stonework provides both physical and visual confirmation of the long-standing historical importance of this part of Faversham. A special delight is the postern gate

with its intriguing little lookout window alongside; apparently of Norman date it was probably inserted by Willement in 1850.

6.11. The surviving priory buildings, comprising the prioress' parlour, the library, the western alley of the cloister and the Norman doorway of the refectory, now form part of a private house attached to the south side of the church. However, it is largely hidden from public view so that the most significant glimpse of its C17 gabled and half-timbered front is through the trees alongside Priory Road close to Dark Hill. It is, therefore, the grounds around the house (consisting largely of informally grassed and wooded areas) that set the character of the area; lime, beech, ash and sycamore trees are concentrated around the perimeter giving both Priory Road and Dark Hill a pleasantly rural appearance. This large area of green space around the priory, coupled with the extensive area of open space at Stonebridge Pond (adjoining to the south east), is a defining feature of Davington.

6.12. St Mary Magdalen church stands on the corner of Davington Hill with Priory Road, but is set back behind a small graveyard enclosed by high flint and stone rubble walls and entered through a clay-tiled lychgate. The mature yew, sycamore and lime trees in and around the graveyard now substantially obscure the view of the church from the high ground within Davington itself. However, in the wider 'hilltop' view from the south, the high-ground prominence of the tower with its unusual pyramid-shaped roof and weather vane makes it a landmark feature for miles around. Austerely Norman in style, and now consisting only of the nave and a single tower, the church is built of Kentish ragstone rubble and flint.

6.13. Just beyond the churchyard, at the start of Priory Road, is the curving gravelled drive to Davington Priory appropriately guarded by a small, single-storey, red brick lodge house. Just opposite is a large C17 red brick farmhouse, the only surviving part of Davington Farm. Beyond to the west, however, the road turns decidedly suburban in character with frontages on both sides comprised of detached houses built for the most part in the 1970s (although a cluster of earlier, mainly inter-war properties, is present around the corner). The properties on the southern side of the road have a pleasantly matured appearance where trees and shrubs rather successfully link them together.

Priory Row

6.14. Priory Row runs into Davington from the north and was brought onto its present, very straight, alignment about the time the mid-Victorian terraced houses along the eastern side were built for workers in the local brickfields. These yellow brick houses are notable for their higher standard of construction than some of their counterparts elsewhere in the town. They are nevertheless decidedly plain in appearance, the only ornamentation being the cast door hoods supported on enriched console brackets. Almost all the original windows and doors have been replaced and the once-slatted roofs have been covered with concrete interlocking tiles, but the front gardens are still generally intact (just a small number being used for off-street car parking). The first house in the row, rather larger than the rest, was reputedly built for the brickfield foreman.

6.15. The houses along the opposite side of the road are a mix of rather commonplace semi-detached and terraced properties built in the second half of C20. However, the row is terminated at the northern end by Davington School which is an attractive yellow and red brick building with clay tiled roofs, designed by local architect Benjamin Adkins in vernacular Gothic style and built in 1887. The recently re-laid roofs are covered with the original tiles in plain and ornamental courses manufactured by the Aylesford Pottery Co. near Maidstone. The form and design of the building, including its small bell turret, makes it instantly recognisable as a school and, with the substantial later extensions helpfully hidden from view at the rear, its architectural integrity remains largely intact.

Brent Hill

6.16. Brent Hill climbs a pronounced gradient away from the head of Faversham creek up to Davington; towards the top a splendid panoramic view opens up over Stonebridge Pond and across Faversham town. This little roadway is special for the way in which it twists and turns its way up the hill between high, free-standing brick walls set directly onto both edges of the carriageway. Built in the C18 these blast walls were designed to minimise damage to neighbouring properties from explosions in the gunpowder works. Various built from local red and yellow bricks, and sometimes with sloping courses that follow the gradient of the road, these walls are an all-important and defining feature of the road.

6.17. Towards the top of the hill the front elevations of a number of small properties break through into the unusual walled environment, including the C19 Brent Hill Bungalow (originally built as a tiny pair of two-room cottages for gunpowder workers) and a small red brick barn now converted to a dwelling. Set directly onto the edge of the carriageway in the same way as the walls they reinforce and enrich the tightly defined street environment. By contrast, Davington Manor (never a manor) and The Lawn (late C18 or early C19) are set well back on the rising ground above Brent Hill which once formed part of the gunpowder factory's Upper Works. Davington Manor itself has been created by combining structures that were originally built in the late C18 by the Board of Ordnance for storing saltpetre and sulphur.

6.18. Just below to the south east is the BMM Weston works where a white painted factory/office building stands in a prominently elevated position, widely visible in the view from the opposite side of the creek. Its stark appearance results from alteration and extension works completed in the 1940s but the centre portion improbably incorporates a three-bay Italianate residence. Mature trees, including horse chestnut, poplar and sycamore, are grouped around the entrance drive; towering impressively over the road they are an important feature in the street scene.

6.19. Brent Hill is a special place, therefore, not only for the survivals of buildings and structures from the town's gunpowder industry but also for its distinctive highway environment, with its sharp gradient, enclosing walls and absence of footways, which is both visually striking and truly characterful.

Chapter 7: The railway and its vicinity

Historical background

7. 1. The railway arrived in Faversham in January 1858. The line initially connected with Chatham but was quickly extended to Strood and the North Kent line. In 1860 the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company (previously the East Kent Railway Company) extended services to Canterbury, Whitstable and London. The network was completed soon after with connections to other East Kent towns and then at the end of the century the principal railway operators in Kent amalgamated to form the South East and Chatham Railway Company.

7.2. A single-track spur for goods traffic, linking the main line at Faversham with the creek, opened in 1860. A goods yard was built at its southern end, a fan of sidings was laid down at Iron Wharf, and a track was installed along the edge of Standard Quay. Whilst the branch line held out the prospect of reinvigorating the port, in practice it made rather little long-term difference.

7.3. The convergence at Faversham of two main lines made it a relatively important junction with an array of railway buildings including the main passenger station, engine and carriage sheds, signal box, water tower, and a separate goods station. Later on, during the Southern Region days, locomotives continued to be maintained here but when the main line was electrified in 1959 railway activity declined. In 1967, the track on Standard Quay was lifted and general goods traffic on the remaining section of the branch line ceased in 1971.

7.4. The railway was the catalyst for far-reaching change in the town, provoking an unprecedented burst of development activity. Well into the C19 Faversham was still a rather remote country community where the form and extent of the town was essentially that of much earlier times. After 1860, however, development took place on an altogether different scale, often in the form of small rectilinear streets very different in character from anything that had gone before. This was, therefore, a time of crucial change as the country town was jolted out of its relative isolation. The physical record of C19 railway activity, and the development associated with it, is consequently a crucial part of Faversham's history. The surviving array of railway structures is the most complete on the old South East and Chatham line; collectively and individually, therefore, these buildings are of special interest.

The railway environment

7.5. The main line from London runs east-west through Faversham and is joined from the north by the North Kent Coast line just to the east of the station; the branch line to the creek formerly split away to the north at the same point. The passenger station, comprising booking halls and two island platforms, is the principal survival from the C19, although the present buildings date from the rebuilding of 1897/8 (when the original station was demolished to widen the mainline tracks). A late C19 two-road engine-shed survives in the angle between the converging lines from Whitstable and Canterbury (an earlier shed that adjoined to the south was demolished as a consequence of the track widening). The smaller shed to the north, described in 1952 as a wagon repair shop, dates from a similar time. Both are built in local yellow brick and whilst the smaller one still has roofing slates the larger one is covered with lightweight corrugated sheets. Both buildings are redundant, in poor repair, and with little immediate prospect of gainful use. By contrast, the yellow brick water tower in Station Road (built circa 1858 and still with its riveted iron water tank) has a more assured future, having been sensitively converted to a dwelling in the 1980s whilst preserving the integrity of an important item of industrial archaeology.

7.6. The distinctive latticework spans of the 'Longbridge' footbridge are modern copies of the 1906 originals, but preserve the very characteristic railway engineering design of the time. The piers and trestles with their decorative stiffeners, tie bars and connecting rings are, however, all original. The bridge is unusual for its remarkable length, crossing both main lines in two legs to make the all-important pedestrian connection between the town centre and the south-eastern area of the town. The nearby brick-built signal box opened in 1959 at the time of electrification.

7.7. Much of the physical evidence of the branch line to the creek has now disappeared but the low embankment alongside the recreation ground is still clearly identifiable despite being overgrown. The small goods station building is still in place on the eastern edge of the now-dismantled goods yard; the large boarded doors at either end reveal how railway wagons were admitted to an internal platform where goods were transferred by a (still-present) iron loading crane. Characteristically built in Faversham's C19 'vernacular' of local yellow stock bricks highlighted with red brick dressings, the building is an important component in the town's railway heritage.

Station Road

7.8. The railway, including the station entrance and booking hall, occupies the whole of the southern side of Station Road and is therefore its defining feature. The station building, with

its pale yellow brick elevations and bright red dressings, typifies the railway company's architectural style of the time and is still the focal point of the road. The booking hall has tall round-headed windows and boarded doors and is remarkable for having survived almost entirely unaltered, although the foreshortened canopy valance somewhat diminishes the presence of its public face. On either side of the station building the long trackside boundary is marked by a two metre high yellow stock brick wall topped by a coping of blue engineering bricks, which trademark detail gives it a nice touch of railway identity.

7.9. The yellow brick terraced houses on the north side of the road, dating from the 1880s, are modest in size and appearance but their continuity of form and repeating ground floor bay windows impart a pleasant rhythm to the group. A distinctive metal cresting detail applied to the eaves survives in a few instances (as it does in one or two other places elsewhere in the town). Most of the old wooden sash windows have been replaced, however, so that the glazing pattern that originally reinforced the architectural rhythm of the houses has vanished, and the roofing slates have been replaced with heavy-looking concrete tiles. The red brick Railway Hotel gives a business-like sense of purpose to the corner with Preston Street and the adjoining yard is interesting for its old, brick-built outbuildings where loading doors and a hoist gantry recall a working environment of earlier times.

7.10. The paving surfaces in Station Road are mostly unremarkable but the granite kerbs provide reassuring confirmation of the age of the road. The lay-by outside the station used by taxis, buses and cars is notable for being a rather low-key affair for such a significant entry-point into the town.

Residential streets to the north of the station

7.11. The area of the town embracing St Mary's Road, St John's Road and Park Road might once have been described as Faversham's 'railway quarter', albeit in miniature, being the place where many of the railway workers lived.

7.12. Superficially these streets, all built in the second half of the C19, have a rather uniform appearance with small and closely spaced houses, often terraced and set close to or directly onto the edge of the footway. Closer inspection reveals however that the streets are comprised of smaller groups of houses each a little different in appearance from one another. This has much to do with the way in which the original developer parcelled up and sold the plots to individual builders with stringent covenants attached. The covenants secured an area-wide continuity of form and appearance to the development whilst allowing a degree of freedom and individuality in the detailed design.

7.13. The houses in St Mary's Road are, by a narrow margin, the oldest in the area dating from the mid 1860s. Generally they are terraced and built in red or yellow brick but some are stucco fronted; window and door openings often have precisely-fashioned, gauged red brick arches. Most distinctive of all is Angelo Terrace with its central pediment and large incised plaque dated 1863, and polychrome brickwork used to startling effect around the paired doors. Also notable is the substantial presence of the 1872 Baptist Church with its large and rather forbidding (but characteristic of its time) front elevation.

7.14. St John's Road is, by comparison, noticeably tighter for space and harder looking in appearance with houses set directly onto the footways and with even the tiniest of front gardens absent. The junctions with the cross-routes are variously marked by corner shops and public house buildings, which are of contrasting appearance to the surrounding houses. These tightly formed and strongly expressed corners give an important focus to the street layout; the stucco-fronted (former) Royal William public house with its angled corner marking the junction with William Street has particular style and presence.

7.15. Park Road is different for having development along one side only (the other side being occupied by the recreation ground) and consisting of one long, almost unbroken, run of flat-fronted terraced houses built between 1860 and 1890. But here again there is considerable variation in the brickwork detailing and the treatment of window openings and entrances; windows, doors and roof coverings have however often been substituted with modern products. The three houses at the southern end are exceptional for being faced with flint and the southern end of the road is unusual for being terminated by the distinctive outline of the old Shepherd Neame maltings (now converted to residential use). Projecting york stone thresholds-cum-steps make a pleasing physical connection between the houses and the street, and cast-iron bootscrapers *are* occasionally still in place beside the front doors.

7.16. Granite kerbs survive in places along all three roads, their attractive blue colour suggesting Guernsey origins. Their toughness and durability are well matched to the workmanlike C19 character of these streets and they are consequently an important component of the physical fabric.

7.17. Chapel Street and Beaumont Terrace (marking the southern end of this grid of C19 housing), together with William Street, and Institute Road (at the northern end) are set at right angles to the main north-south streets. Chapel Street (with Preston Place) is effectively a continuation of the old Solomon's Lane cross route, while Beaumont Terrace is a dog-legged continuation of Station Road; both are fronted in part with small terraced houses. By contrast, Institute Road and William Street are both notable for the absence, almost completely, of frontage development.

Newton Road

7.18. Newton Road is an altogether grander street, comprised mostly of substantial detached and semi-detached houses. For many years it was the favoured location for prosperous local business people and it still retains some of that original cachet. Although conceived in the 1860s development occurred here over a period of some forty years, which extended time has given rise to a rather wide range of Victorian house-types along the length of the street. At the southern end the properties are older, smaller and plainer, whereas further north the houses tend to be large, imposing and impressively detailed. A number of the larger plots have been redeveloped in recent times, most notably for the public library, Herbert Dane Court (a sheltered housing scheme for the elderly opened 1976) and the Newton Road medical practice (opened 1998).

7.19. The defining feature of the road is, therefore, the array of imposing detached and semi-detached houses and villas, mostly built in local yellow stock bricks and often with gault brick detailing. However, the Welsh slates once uniformly present on the roofs are being substituted with concrete tiles so that the authenticity of the 'roofscape' is beginning to be eroded. The detailing of the principle elevations is often quite special with, for example, panels of moulded bricks in gable ends, elaborately patterned bricks forming intricate decoration around entrances, and stonework embellishments with incised decoration. Impressive front doors sometimes have glazed upper panels with ornamental security grilles that can be opened and closed.

7.20. Mostly these houses have small front gardens so that in the view along the street the role of greenery in the street scene is rather modest, but at the new medical centre a lime tree does make a significant statement. Front boundary walls, gate piers and gates therefore feature prominently; those that have been demolished to provide car parking spaces in the front gardens have created awkward and unwelcome gaps that disrupt the continuity of the edge to the highway.

7.21. The highway is notable for its rather generous width, its straight alignment and its steady but gentle fall from south to north. Although a residential road it now forms part of the

main traffic route around the eastern side of the town centre so that through traffic and parked cars are a feature of the place. The original granite kerbs are rather remarkably still present along almost the entirety of both sides of the carriageway and they are, therefore, an irreplaceable historical component of this C19 street scene.

Faversham recreation ground

7.22. The recreation ground was laid out as the town's first public park in 1860 on the initiative of charitable trustees. Today it is used formally and informally for football and other games, strolling and dog walking, and just occasionally it is the temporary home of a visiting funfair. It is now an important component of the town's C19 heritage.

7.23. The generally flat, eight hectare site is ringed by a perimeter path (originally used as a formal promenade) over one kilometre long that is fringed with now-mature trees including oak, lime and ash. The distinctive-looking gardener's lodge, designed by local architect Benjamin Adkins in Picturesque Gothic style and currently used as a clubhouse, is skilfully positioned on slightly elevated ground towards the southern end of the site where it neatly focuses the view looking south. This unmistakably Victorian building is crucial to the period character of the space, especially as the bandstand and boundary railings along Whitstable Road are both now absent. The later, functional buildings on the western boundary (comprising changing rooms and public conveniences) fall noticeably short of the quality of earlier work.

7.24. Closely spaced and rather spindly-looking self-seeded sycamores growing on the low embankment of the old Faversham Creek branch line now create a valuable sense of green enclosure around two sides of the park. The C19 terraced houses fronting Park Road and Whitstable Road decisively enclose the other two sides.

Faversham cemetery

7.25. This large municipal cemetery was opened in 1898 and like the recreation ground forms part of the town's C19 heritage. Its formal character, buildings and planting all faithfully reflect the Victorian values and tastes of the time. The chapel is a pleasantly proportioned, well-detailed red brick building prominently positioned inside the Love Lane entrance and now rather attractively encircled by mature trees. From here a very formal grid of wide metalled pathways gives access to the burial plots.

7.26. The dense screen of funereal evergreen trees and shrubs along the frontage to Love Lane is a defining feature of both the cemetery and the lane, whilst gaunt Chilean pines elsewhere in the site are another distinctive legacy of the Victorian planting. The reinstatement of the long-absent iron railings to the Love Lane frontage has recaptured much of the robust Victorian character that is a key feature of the long front boundary and makes sense once again of the high brick piers and large iron gates at the imposing entrance.

7.27. Of special interest amongst the many graves is one commemorating 73 victims of Faversham's great gunpowder explosion in 1916: a sombre reminder of the price paid by the local community for its toil in the town's gunpowder works.

7.28. The small extension to the main cemetery, opened in the 1990s, has an informal layout with curving pathways of gravel and brick and plantings of deciduous and flowering trees. The contrast in character with the rigid formality of the older cemetery environment provides an interesting illustration of the way in which the attitudes of the day become firmly embedded in the design of the physical environment.

Chapter 8: South Road/Ospringe Road and vicinity

Historical background

8.1. This part of Faversham, lying to the south-west of the town centre, consists almost entirely of mid to late C19 housing. Just prior to this development taking place a good part of the area was progressively worked from 1845 until about 1885 as the large Kingsfield brickfield (although the evidence of the brickearth, chalk and clay excavations is now quite localised).

8.2. When the railway was being built in the C19 a quantity of Anglo Saxon jewellery was recovered hereabouts from a pagan cemetery. The exceptional quality of the finds suggested that it was almost certainly the burial place of members of the Jutish court, and that for a time at least Faversham possibly served as the 'capital' of their kingdom.

8.3. Residential development in this part of the town began along the north-west side of Ospringe Road and parts of South Road. Then, when Forbes Road and Stone Street were built, access was opened up into the large area to the south-east of South Road enabling the by-then exhausted brickfield to be quickly developed. This extensive area of C19 housing is notable for the way in which similarities in development form, scale and building materials have combined to produce a place of special local distinctiveness; these key features have survived substantially intact.

Ospringe Road into South Road

8.4. Ospringe Road and South Road together form the main route into the town from the south-west; they run gently downhill from the A2 (London-Canterbury road) to the town centre at West Street. House building started around 1840 at the Ospringe Road end, although it took another sixty or so years to substantially complete the development of both roads. The built environment is consequently quite varied in appearance, ranging from the exuberant Faversham almshouses and the interesting survivals from the Home Works, to the terraces of (once) pretty little Regency houses and the sturdy individuality of Victorian housing. Much of this development is closely spaced and also closely positioned to the road, but in the centre section near to the almshouses the layout is rather less rigid and a little greener in appearance.

8.5. The small, mid C19 houses in Ospringe Road were the first to be built; they are mostly terraced, mostly built in yellow brick (although some are stuccoed), and mostly rather restrained in appearance. Recent alterations have, however, too often obliterated or coarsened the original delicate detailing but some interesting fragments of Regency work nevertheless survive, including a pair of delicately proportioned stuccoed entrance porches and the curved sliding sashes of a diminutive bow window. In the long view up and down the road these houses appear to merge into one long terrace stepping slightly erratically down the slope; the roofline is notable for the repeating outlines of squat chimneystacks topped by clusters of red and yellow chimney pots.

8.6. The closely spaced houses on the opposite side of Ospringe Road, although mostly detached or semi-detached, also present a seemingly solid and terrace-like frontage to the road. Built between 1870 and 1910, their steeply-pitched gables and single-storey bay windows are characteristically late-Victorian in appearance, and many are embellished with moulded brick and terracotta panels, with decorated and fretted and pierced bargeboards, and with shaped gable finials and bracketed eaves. Brickwork is predominantly yellow with red or gault brick detailing, a combination so widely present in the town that it now forms part of the local building vernacular. The front garden walls, mostly in yellow brick, are still largely intact but weakened by the absence of the original railings and gates; near to South Road

these front boundaries transform into substantial retaining walls and become even more prominent in the street scene.

8.7. Beyond the junction with Lower Road the unrelenting frontage development of Ospringe Road gives way to something a little more informal in character. At Manor Pound, where inter-war houses are set some distance back from the road, there is an attractive little area of greenspace (carpeted in spring with primroses and shaded in summer by mature lime trees) which brings a touch of the countryside deep into the town. Meanwhile, on the opposite side of South Road there are the scattered remnants (now interspersed with modern houses) of the gunpowder manufacturing days of the Home Works, including the grey-coloured ragstone boundary wall, the slate-roofed ragstone lodge-cum-gatehouse built circa 1851, and the sturdy iron entrance gates to the old works hung on large ragstone piers.

8.8. However, it is the outstanding presence of the Faversham Almshouses set within a pleasing sweep of precision-cut greensward that marks the visual high point of the two roads, the powerful individuality of the buildings setting them very clearly apart from everything else around. The long range of arcaded buildings, arranged around an imposing centrally-placed ashlar chapel, was built in 1863 of red brick and Bath stone, and has steeply pitched clay tiled roofs, pointed turrets and large chimney stacks with distinctive yellow banding. Massive gate piers, with carved stone copings and an overthrow lantern, make a grand boundary statement although the long stretch of connecting railings fronting South Road seems understated by comparison.

8.9. Beyond the almshouses to the north, terraced housing vigorously reasserts itself causing the road to become more urban in character and rather harder-looking in appearance. Two groups of terraced houses are prominent here. The earlier one, dating from the 1850/60s, consists of largely unaltered two and three storey, yellow brick houses of elegantly restrained appearance owing much to a Georgian sense of scale and proportion; the piecemeal conversion to car parking of some of the small front gardens is, however, rather less becoming. The three-storey, red brick terrace to the south (dated 1887) is, by contrast, confidently Victorian in appearance; the canted and square bays create a more animated appearance, and decorative brickwork and shaped stone pediments above the entrances are characteristic embellishments of the period. A low brick wall with panelled railings running along the front of the terrace and round into Stone Street (where it connects with other front boundaries) gives the edges to the highway a pleasing appearance of strength and continuity.

8.10. Although Ospringe and South Roads now serve as the main traffic route into the town centre from the south west their C19 character remains more or less intact, with on-street parking in Ospringe Road perhaps being the most intrusive feature. The paving finishes are entirely unremarkable, although some sections of granite kerbs are present.

The Napleton Road area

8.11. This enclave of narrow little residential roads was laid out in the second half of the C19 and bears the names of Faversham's many benefactors including Napleton, Mendfield, Hatch, Beckett and Caslocke; the Mendfield family, for example, operated a copperas works near Whitstable and perhaps supplied sulphur to the Faversham gunpowder works.

8.12. These streets are predominantly fronted by two storey terraced houses set directly onto the back of the narrow footways, although in Napleton Road the slightly superior houses have single-storey bay windows and small front gardens. The roads here are consequently rather intimate and private places, where the built environment is tightly contained and urban in character. The houses are mostly flat-fronted and built in yellow brick, although in Beckett Street and parts of Mendfield Street the fronts are stuccoed and rather unusually divided into bays with projecting band courses. Windows and doors have mostly all been replaced in

piecemeal fashion with modern substitutes but some older, diagonally-boarded front doors survive in Beckett Street. Most of the original Welsh roofing slates have been replaced with modern concrete tiles so that the once grey-coloured roofs have now all been coarsened and turned a dull brown.

8.13. Area-wide traffic-calming/management measures were introduced here in the early 1990s, at which time the highways were repaved. The traditional separation of carriageway and footways has been retained but the roads now have a rather modern appearance (with brick paving, planters, localised narrowing and speed humps). The environment is consequently a slightly awkward blend of old and new, with C19 terraced houses fronting onto streets that have been re-structured in C20 ways.

Stone Street, Cross Lane and the central car park area

8.14. Stone Street was laid out in the late 1880s and marks the significant change in character between the town's historic core (to the north) and the grid of C19 residential streets (to the south). It was built on the site of old clay pits so that in the case of the cottage hospital the ground floor is set onto the old excavations some two metres lower than the street, with the main entry to the building at first floor level.

8.15. The hospital is the focal point of the road, and its position roughly mid-way along Stone Street marks the western extent of commercial activities that spill over from Preston Street. The original 1887 building has a distinctive gable-fronted elevation and a sturdy balustraded boundary that rather skilfully carries the presence of the building out onto the street. The modern 1988 wing alongside echoes the form of the original building but not, perhaps, the quality of its detailing. Other buildings to the rear are accessed from adjoining Bank Street.

8.16. The tidy formality of the small public garden opposite complements the late C19/early C20 character of the street and, as its purpose was originally to ensure privacy for patients in the hospital, it also has a noteworthy historical origin. The sturdy-looking iron scrollwork entrance gate still survives, but the rather flimsy-looking sectional steel railing on either side is a less-than-convincing substitute for the Victorian original.

8.17. It is, however, the Victorian housing that is the defining feature of Stone Street. The substantial, red brick houses on the north side (between the hospital and South Road) are the most outstanding and are notable for having survived with few alterations to windows, doors and roof coverings. Of these, Warren House (built in 1889 for Mr Smith, Master Grocer of Faversham) is remarkable for its rich and curious detailing including eaves brickwork that looks like pseudo-machicolations. The front boundary railings, set onto chunky low brick walls, illustrate the vital contribution made by such features to the appearance and cohesion of the street scene, especially so in a town where the appearance of the extensive C19 housing environments has been much impoverished by the removal of railings during the second world war.

8.18. The smaller, terraced houses along the south side of the road are, by comparison, rather more commonplace. Mostly built in yellow brick with gault or red brick dressings they are nevertheless all of sufficient ranking to each command single-storey bay windows. Here and there sections of old, individually pocketed, ornamental, cast-iron railings have by good fortune survived, and offer a glimpse of how coherent and imposing the front boundaries to these houses must originally have been. Roofing slates have mostly been replaced with concrete tiles although many of the old sash windows and doors have survived.

8.19. Stone Street forms part of the main traffic route into the town centre so the highway is a functional place, and even the appearance of the concrete-paved footways is somewhat utilitarian (although some have noted this work to be of a high quality). The continuing role of the street as a traffic route around the edge of the town centre perhaps excuses the

presence of the garage and petrol filling station, the form and appearance of which contrasts with the otherwise C19 character of the street.

Cross Lane and central car park

8.20. Cross Lane, running parallel with Stone Street, is a well-used footpath linking the town centre with the residential areas to the west. Rather broad at its western end it passes between brick-built garden walls, then close to Bank Street it is fronted by a run of C19 houses. Near to Preston Street, however, it squeezes alley-like between brick walls and old timber-framed buildings. The main town centre car park, established in 1952, is rather uncompromisingly juxtaposed with the outstanding historic environments of Preston Street, Market Place and West Street. It also provides the means of rear servicing to many town centre properties; in a number of instances the rear boundaries and yards abutting the car park are rather unattractive in appearance. Leslie Smith Drive, the service road at the back of West Street, has foreshortened the original property curtilages. The substantial bulk of the swimming pool, built, in the 1980s, marks the western edge of the car park, and the small Arden theatre building stands alongside.

Union Street

8.21. Union Street/Victoria Place (on the south side of Stone Street) is another discrete enclave of small, rather workaday, C19 terraced houses; the closely-spaced buildings (some in red brick and some in yellow brick) create a tightly contained environment. Small workshops and yards, latterly converted to residential use, record the way in which homes and workplaces were then intimately entwined and provide the area with a measure of visual diversity. Dorset Place, where yellow brick, terraced houses front onto a footpath, runs parallel with Union Street on the line of a C19 rope walk. The land on the western edge drops sharply down into a long row of back gardens and marks the position where the old brickfield excavations finished.

Other streets between Ospringe Road/South Road and the railway

8.22. This extensive area of housing is comprised almost entirely of rectilinear roads aligned roughly north-south and east-west, which nearly all date from the last two decades of the C19. Spillet Close and Hidden Meadow are, however, exceptions as both were built in the 1990s. Spillet Close stands on the site of the old Faversham grammar school (demolished in 1970), where terraced houses are now arranged in the form of a large horseshoe around a communal greenspace. Hidden Meadow just to the north is, by contrast, a rather private place where a small group of detached houses is hidden from public view within an old chalk quarry behind protective security gates.

8.23. The broad swathe of C19 development itself divides into three areas; the easternmost section is bounded by the rather spacious-looking Roman and Saxon Roads, the middle section is centred on the more tightly developed Plantation and Nightingale Roads, whilst the western section is edged by Cambridge Road and St Ann's Road. School Road (together with Cambridge Road) runs parallel with the railway line and marks the southern extent of this area.

8.24. Roman and Saxon Roads, plus the connecting Briton Road, are notable for their long rows of archetypal, late C19 terraced houses. Although they are superficially all of similar appearance the detailing of the various groups of houses is in practice quite varied. Houses in Roman Road are mostly in yellow brick with red or gault brick dressings but there are other combinations as well; the front entrances are mostly recessed but the surrounds are detailed in a variety of ways; and chimney stacks are variously built in red and yellow brick, but sometimes also with oversailing brick courses. In Saxon Road, however, the ground floor bays are stuccoed and rather plainer in appearance, and whilst the houses along Briton Road are similarly late Victorian in character, towards Forbes Road they are rather more Edwardian in appearance with Dutch gables and large shell motifs over the entrances.

8.25. Briton Road is unusual for the presence of an almost a complete set of original front garden walls and which, despite the absence of railings and gates, is the important means by which the architecture of the terraces is drawn together to create a coherent street environment. However, in Norman Road (where the houses are rather later in date and generally in the form of semi-detached pairs rather than terraces) the front gardens are larger and a number have been converted into parking spaces, so that the continuity and fully connected-up appearance of the street environment is already starting to disappear as boundary walls, gates and hedges are removed and gaps occur.

8.26. Further to the west, Plantation Road, Kings Road and Nightingale Road continue the pattern of C19 rectilinear terraced streets (although Cavour Road is an exception being fronted mostly by modern development). Once again these streets are roughly aligned north-south but here they are generally narrower, the terraced houses are more closely packed together, the back gardens are much reduced in size and the front gardens are little more than yards. Mostly the houses are built in yellow brick but along Nightingale Road they are generally plainer in appearance, stucco fronted and front gardens are generally absent altogether. Exceptions to this somewhat unrelenting pattern of C19, yellow brick houses are rather few and far between, although there is an interesting clay-tiled C18/C19 stables-cum-coach house in Nightingale Road, and Havelock Terrace (almost opposite) is distinctive for being three storeys high and set onto a sharp gradient.

8.27. St Ann's Road lies towards the western end of the grid of C19 housing and was formerly part of the old Hangman's Lane (now cut in two by the railway line). Its deeper-rooted origins are reflected in the character of the road with slopes, retaining walls, trees and a variety of house designs all making a distinctive contribution (in contrast to the more uniform appearance and 'real-estate' character of the terraced streets around). The C19 houses along the western side are the principle feature of the road; they are substantial in size and rather showy in appearance and consequently relate to the florid properties around the corner in Ospringe Road. The vigour of Victorian architecture is here given full expression with stuccoed ornamentation, incised patterning on the gables, and decorative chimney pots. At the southern end of the road, close to the railway line, the old grammar school site is set up above the sloping carriageway behind a two metres high yellow brick retaining wall, which is itself an important feature in the street scene. A number of mature trees along this edge (survivors from the days of the grammar school) bring a pleasantly green appearance to the road, especially welcome given the rather tree-less environment of the surrounding streets. But, now marooned within the small back gardens of modern houses fronting onto Spillet Close, the heavily-pruned appearance of these trees suggests that their presence is now permanently diminished.

8.28. Queens Road, Capel Road and Cambridge Road lie to the west of St Ann's Road and once again comprise small streets of terraced houses. Properties along Cambridge Road, and also School Road to the east, are restricted to the north side of the street where they overlook the railway line; date plaques of 1887 and 1888 are present on two of the yellow brick terraces in Cambridge Road. Traditional steel railings along the edge of the railway line to the east of the former railway crossing are neat and workmanlike in appearance, whereas the newer boundary along Cambridge Road (with cranked concrete posts and chain link fencing) is rather less pleasing.

8.29. The residential roads between South Road and the railway line are for the most part quiet and rather functional places where the street environments are highly ordered, surfaces are uniformly macadam-paved, street trees are rather few in number, and the colour, texture and incident afforded by front gardens is quite sparing (and sometimes altogether absent). The distinctiveness of these streets therefore rests on the authentic (if rather workaday) architecture of the terraced houses and their curtilages, including original roofing materials

and brickwork/stucco detailing, original window and door designs, chimney stacks and pots, and also authentic boundary treatments. Consequently, the special character of this C19 pattern of terraced streets is vulnerable to detrimental change resulting from the widespread loss of these original features, including the use of unsuitable modern coatings and claddings, the substitution of old doors and windows with modern products, and also the removal of features such as boundary walls and railings.

Chapter 9: East Street, Church Road and Orchard Place

East Street

9.1. East Street is the shortest of the four arms of Faversham's medieval street pattern. Its historic origins are now only sketchily recorded in a somewhat thin scattering of older buildings towards its western end; for the most part the environment is now shaped by C19 and C20 work.

9.2. When Crescent Road was built in the 1960s East Street was effectively chopped in two. The western section is still very much an integral part of the town centre environment, daily thronged with people shopping and using the main post office. In the eastern section beyond the road junction, however, shops are suddenly absent (excepting those at Queen's Parade), housing predominates (although interwoven with a scattering of other uses), and the road itself serves as the principal traffic route into the town centre from the east.

9.3. East Street mutates into Whitstable Road where Park Road joins from the south alongside the recreation ground; further beyond to the east the frontage development largely dates from the early C20.

9.4. The original fine-grain of development in the western part of East Street is now somewhat fractured by the later and coarser footprints of C19 and C20 buildings. In addition, the post-war buildings on the south side of the street (comprising the main Post Office opened in 1957 and a functional-looking supermarket) are set back on a now-abandoned widening line; any real sense of the old street form has consequently vanished. Nevertheless, the buildings along the north side are of sufficient size and stature to maintain a good sense of visual continuity to the now foreshortened and widened street; their rather varied elevations include those of a C15 timber-framed building, the old post office built in 1897, and a Dutch-gabled three storey building dating from 1887.

9.5. A somewhat detached outpost of older cottages, small in scale and hugging the footway, survives just to the east of the junction with Crescent Road (on the north side of the road). This fragment of the 'old' East Street, though small, still illustrates the character and form of the place in former times and also provides an important sense of historical continuity hereabouts, especially now that just opposite is the modern John Anderson Court sheltered housing development.

9.6. Just beyond to the east is Cooksditch, built as a 'country house' on the edge of town but now used as a residential home for the elderly and surrounded by later C19 and C20 development. Considered by many to be the town's finest C18 house (and notable for its mathematical tiling) its much-changed setting means that it now forms part of a continuously built-up street frontage. However, the quality of its architecture, including its grand Ionic stone doorcase and elegant single storey pavilions, is such that it remains an outstanding presence in East Street; the front garden boundary still forms an appropriately robust edge to the highway despite the original pocketed railings having been replaced with simplified panels.

9.7. In contrast to the refined elegance of Cooksditch, the late C19/early C20 development further to the east is decidedly more commonplace in appearance. Much of it is comprised of terraced housing often now altered by changes to roof coverings, windows and doors, but public house buildings on corner sites (such as Market Inn with its distinctive architecture and busy signage) do much to enliven the scene. The workaday character of this built environment nevertheless reflects the C19 focus of the town when employment was concentrated in and around the small port, on the railways, and in the brick making and gunpowder industries. This part of East Street/Whitstable Road is nevertheless distinctive for the presence of yellow bricks from the town's own brickfields, for the unusual corrugated iron church of St Saviour's (built in 1885), and for the large open space of the recreation ground (where the iron gates are now the only remnants of the ironwork which once graced the front boundary). The distinctive-looking parade of six shops at Queens Parade (built in 1901 opposite Cooksditch) is also notable for the survival of its original shopfronts in more or less unaltered state.

9.8. The red brick paving in the western section of East Street matches that of Preston Street, Market Street and Market Place, and visually reinforces the 'town centre' role of the street; elsewhere East Street is conventionally surfaced. Traffic restrictions match the paving formats (vehicular access being restricted in the western part of East Street) and reinforce the present-day division of the street into two rather different sections. In common, therefore, with Court Street, West Street and Preston Street the continuity of the East Street environment has also been much affected by later changes.

Whitstable Road

9.9. Beyond Park Road, where East Street becomes Whitstable Road, the large open space of Faversham recreation ground is the principal feature. However, the terraced houses, dating from the late C19, on the north side of the road present a pleasantly coherent frontage to the road, with the interesting points of incident at St. Saviours tin church and the Park Tavern public house serving to strengthen the street corners. This frontage development is important for the survival of its C19 character, which both complements the Victorian character of the Faversham recreation ground and plays an important role in the authentic physical containment of the open space.

Church Road

9.10. Church Road is a quiet cul-de-sac running north from East Street alongside the eastern edge of the old 'Whitbread' brewery site on an alignment that probably once formed part of an old trackway leading to Preston church. The view north is special for the dramatic terminal feature of the Faversham church spire rising above the encircling churchyard trees and also the substantial red brick bulk of the former brewery. Both are landmark buildings in the town and a part of the special identity of Church Road. It is, nevertheless, the individuality of the buildings along its eastern side that is a defining feature of Church Road, although their individuality belies the linking thread of their civic origins as school buildings and the town's police station. The schools record the town's highly progressive and widely admired approach to education in the C19.

9.11. The Faversham National School, built in 1852 and now converted to housing, is a striking, two-storey building, and distinctive for its collegiate character (a high gatehouse gives access to an irregularly-shaped quadrangle) and its facing of coursed and galletted knapped flintwork. The adjoining Flint House, empty since 1998, was built as a Commercial School in 1857; the remarkable Gothic revival elevations are similarly faced with flint and dressed with stone. Private car parking on the old school playground at the front for the moment intrudes into the otherwise mature and largely C19 character of the road and somewhat diminishes the presence of Flint House.

9.12. The police station is a substantial, rambling, red brick building, built in 1904 which continues to be used for its original purpose. The original coverings of precise-looking, machine-made clay tiles are still present on the array of pitched roofs. By contrast, Telfer Hall at the other end of the road is modest-looking, timber-clad, and dates from the 1930s; it has recently been converted from a school canteen to flats. Whilst the design is not amongst the most innovative of its time the distinctive inter-war architecture has produced a decidedly rare example, locally at least, of a building in the style of the Modern Movement.

9.13. The western side of the road is the functional edge of the supermarket car park and consists of a red brick retaining wall set onto the carriageway edge; the oldest section has a pleasant bellying profile. Its hard appearance is attractively tempered in the summer months by the canopy of leafy branches that spreads across from the sycamore trees on the edge of the car park. The northern end of the road is decisively terminated by a stone archway-cum-gate (built in 1882 to commemorate local benefactor Henry Hatch) positioned at the entrance to the churchyard.

9.14. The striking presence of flintwork in and around Church Road is, unquestionably, a feature of the built environment. These flints have been locally sourced from the upper layers of the North Downs chalk formations. The inner surfaces of the (best quality) flints when split or knapped reveal an attractive translucent black appearance that is highly susceptible to the play of light; galletting (the process of pressing small fragments of flint into the joints between the flints) was used in the best quality work to reduce the area of exposed mortar. The appearance of flintwork is so highly distinctive that it readily contributes to the local identity of the town and although its use in Faversham has been relatively sparing it is sufficiently widely present to be part of the local building vernacular.

9.15. The surfaces in Church Road are for the most part unremarkable but traces of granite sett paving are present in the drainage channels beneath the later macadam surfacing and the remains of banded granite sett paving are evident on one of the police station crossovers. These tell-tale survivals, together with one of the town's last-surviving, old-style, cast-iron lighting columns, form part of the history and character of the place. But notably missing from the period character of the street are two important lengths of railings from the front boundaries at the old National School and at the police station (although the old, overthrow lighting bracket still exists at the station entrance).

Orchard Place

9.16. Orchard Place runs parallel with East Street but connects back at either end. It rather uniquely has a sequence of four school buildings along the northern side, two from the C19 and now converted to residential use and two late C20 buildings owned and maintained by the local education authority. By contrast, the southern side of the road is fronted by two long terraces of relatively run-of-the-mill C19 houses (one has a plaque dated 1866). Out of term time Orchard Place is a quiet residential road, but on school days it is briefly busy twice daily with children, parents and their cars. It is, therefore, a place of rather widely varying cycles of activity.

9.17. The smallest of the four school buildings, now converted to housing, dates from the 1850s and is tucked into the corner of the road behind the old school yard where its school-like form and appearance remains instantly recognisable; two new 'lodges' in matching yellow brick now stand on either side of the entrance. Alongside to the east stands the mighty bulk of the William Gibbs school, made all the more imposing for its proximity to the workday little houses opposite. Built in Queen Anne style in 1882 it is remarkable for its impressive scale, red brick and stone dressings, decorative terracotta panels, and alternating bands of shaped roof tiles. Even the front boundary makes a powerful statement in the street scene, with railings set onto a sturdy red brick wall stopped off with 2.25m high gate piers and capped with massive oversailing coping stones. Although its original use as a school has

ceased and it is now used as sheltered housing accommodation, the front of the building is little altered.

9.18. Beyond the William Gibbs building lies the modern St Mary of Charity junior school site, comprised of two building complexes both built in the 1980s in the form of single-storey, brick-built structures with shallow-pitched roofs covered with concrete pan tiles. Their contrasting form and appearance (to that of the William Gibbs school) forcefully reflects the changed priorities in school design. The buildings make little attempt to impress outwardly; they only indirectly address the street being set back behind a muddle of paths, planting, parking areas and forecourt, and the front boundary merits only a basic chain-link fence with a meagre-looking hedge.

9.19. Just three of the thirty or so yellow brick houses on the south side of Orchard Place retain their sash windows and all the original doors have been replaced; a handful have painted or rendered brickwork on the front elevations and all the roofing slates have been replaced with concrete tiles.

9.20. Orchard Place is conventionally surfaced in macadam and on-street car parking is ever-present. However, there are still some interesting remnants of paving along here; the vehicle crossover to the old school is paved in york stone strips, there are granite kerbs in front of the terraced houses, and stone setts are present in the crossover to the William Gibbs building, probably of Purbeck limestone. These modest fragments are, therefore, important facets of the street's character.

The grammar school site

9.21. The Queen Elizabeth's grammar school occupies a large site formerly known as the Shooting Meadows lying to the north of the two schools in Orchard Place (with access via Abbey Place). The main building complex lies to the north east of Faversham church and dates from the 1960s but there are many later extensions and ancillary buildings.

9.22. The eastern edge of the school grounds is marked by the course of the Cooksditch stream, the historical presence of which in the landscape is marked by a fringing line of trees. The school playing fields are generally flat and featureless but constitute an important area of greenspace in the town. The northernmost part of the playing fields contains the buried remains of Faversham Abbey.

Chapter 10: Upper St Ann's Road, London Road and Ospringe Place

Historical background

10.1. Much of this part of Faversham was once occupied by two substantial C18 houses, The Mount and Ospringe Place. The houses still survive, but in substantially altered circumstances; both have been converted to flats and the grounds within they once stood have now been put to other uses. Their authentic country house settings have therefore vanished and the buildings themselves have, in effect, been absorbed into the urban environment of Faversham.

London Road

10.2. The Mount is prominently positioned on the northern side of London Road at the top of a short rise out of Ospringe. It was used as a private residence until 1914, but was subsequently purchased in 1936 by the Borough Council with grant aid from the King George V playing field fund so that the open space around the house (previously the private grounds) could be laid out as a public recreation ground. Coincidentally this use reinstated an earlier sporting tradition, the land having been used in earlier times as a private cricket ground. This

open space is now of special importance in the urban structure of Faversham as, aside from its recreational use, it is the last vestige of the once well-defined gap between the settlements of Ospringe and Faversham.

10.3. The recreation ground today is a flat and grassy area that wraps around the back of The Mount; its municipal use has brought with it a free-standing block of embattled-looking, brick-built changing rooms, a group of tennis courts and a children's playspace. The northern boundary alongside the railway track is attractively edged by a substantial, mixed-species tree-screen, whereas the eastern edge is decidedly suburban-looking with a straggle of thinly-spaced ornamental trees set parallel with the line of back-garden fences. Other trees are informally grouped along the London Road boundary including mature specimens of beech and lime, whilst distant views across to Judd Hill (on the other side of the Ospringe valley) connect the site with the countryside to the west.

10.4. Ospringe Place lies on the southern side of London Road close to the junction with Brogdale Road and like The Mount it originally stood within its own private, if rather modest sized, grounds. The two storey house was built in 1799 by Charles Beazley in pale yellow brick, although the sombre front elevation is dominated by a massive porch flanked by two pairs of fluted stone Doric columns. The roof, set behind parapet walls, is unusually topped by a round glazed lantern that lights a circular staircase within. A brick and weather-boarded cottage is attached at the back of the house, and two other cottages are separately positioned to the south. In the early 1980s sixteen, well-spaced, detached houses were built in the grounds around the house, informally laid out around two, winding, semi-private culs-de-sac branching off a newly built access road from London Road. Consequently, Ospringe Place house now finds itself in the centre of a small housing estate.

10.5. This housing estate is special, however, for its unusually spacious layout with large and generously planted areas of landscaping. The open-plan character of the scheme allows the planting to flow smoothly and almost seamlessly around the site, so that the formality of individual plot divisions is substantially blurred. Many of the mature trees including plane, horse chestnut and pine that previously stood in the grounds to the old house now form the basic structure to the landscaping around the new houses, supplemented by many other additional trees and shrubs. The green and spacious appearance of this development is its defining feature, and the contrast between it and the urban/suburban housing environments elsewhere in the town is very pronounced. That the special character of Ospringe Place house has survived tolerably intact is mostly due to the well-spaced form of the layout.

10.6. Frontage development elsewhere along London Road close to Ospringe Place is for the most part rather humdrum and suburban in appearance. A row of rather unremarkable inter-war and post-war houses (detached and semi-detached) is strung out along the northern side of the road; by comparison, the properties on the southern side are smaller in number but larger in size and rather earlier in date. A number of large mature trees do, however, make an important contribution to the street scene. The C18 Chapel House, on the corner with Brogdale Road, is notable for its white-painted brick, slate-covered roof and white-painted paling fence.

Upper St Ann's Road

10.7. This quiet suburban road lies to the east of the municipal recreation ground and runs north from London Road. It forms the southern section of the old Hangman's Lane that once ran through to Ospringe Road but which is now cut in two by the railway line and a permanently-closed crossing gate.

10.8. St Ann's Road is special for its well-ordered early C20 residential environment, structured around a centrally placed line of fine, evenly sized, mature trees. The individually designed detached houses are spaced rather regularly along either side of the road and

each is set within a good-sized garden. This plot-by-plot development of the road, over a period of some thirty to forty years, has by interesting chance created a rather special place where the evolution of domestic house design, from Victorian through Edwardian and into the 1930s, is substantially illustrated in a single road. With generous-sized gardens and mature trees being a prominent feature of the street scene, the spacious suburban character contrasts sharply with the many small and tightly-packed streets of houses built elsewhere in the town during the previous two decades of the C19.

10.9. The earlier houses (along the eastern side) mostly date from the very early years of the C20; they are substantial in size, highly individual in appearance, and for the most part have survived with rather few alterations. Their varied architecture reflects the significant change in domestic house design then under way. Some display the still-present influence of Victorian taste and are relatively flamboyant in appearance with impressive entrances framed with pilasters of moulded and patterned bricks, and with leaded and coloured glasses in the imposing front doors. But others are very Edwardian in appearance with characteristic features such as mock timbering in the gables, verandahs with timber balustrading and clay roof tiles laid in patterned bands.

10.10. In amongst these red and yellow brick houses is a contrasting example of a 1930s house design, reflecting the very different design influences brought to bear by the arts and crafts movement. The carefully crafted detailing, here re-interpreted at the level of an affordable, middle-class, suburban home, includes such traditional features as cottagey-looking, leaded-light casement windows and carefully-shaped roof pitches; the detailing even to the external works where a scallop-topped, close-boarded fence marks the front boundary.

10.11. The houses along the west side of the road more generally date from the 1930s and are characterised by their smaller size and pared-down architectural detailing. Included here is an example of the clean, smooth-rendered lines of a 1920s suburban house type popular at the time in the south of England and still with its characteristic steel windows and distinctive green-coloured roof pantiles. There is evidence here too of the emerging importance of the motor car with, in a couple of instances, small garages (served by private drives) forming an integral part of the original house design. However, later extensions and alterations, including replacement windows and doors, are in places cumulatively approaching a point where they could compromise the early C20 character and authenticity of this frontage.

10.12. The land along the eastern side of the road is generally set a metre or more above the footway, which additional elevation substantially reinforces the presence of the houses in the street scene. Mostly, the low retaining walls along the edge of the public footway are built in yellow burrs. These over-fired misshapen bricks (which fused together in the kiln) have been used elsewhere in the town in garden walls and other lesser situations, so that that the practice might be said to constitute a local building speciality. Here in St Ann's Road these lumps of fused yellow brick, now almost unrecognisably blackened and hardened with age, have been skilfully laid in the manner of random rubble stonework, strengthened with red brick piers and weathered with shaped, red brick copings. Often with shrubs and other plants now cascading over the brickwork, the boundary is a distinctive and attractive feature; it is also an important unifying element in the appearance of the road.

10.13. The turning from London Road is pleasantly squeezed on the eastern side by the corner plot where a panelled, yellow brick boundary wall, with its red detailing, projects into the road causing the footway to be omitted for lack of space. This small variation in the street layout brings a modest, but entirely pleasing, sense of variation to the corner. It is, however, the generous width of the 'public' space between the houses that is especially striking: alongside the main carriageway is a grassy verge and a separate unadopted and unsurfaced service road (serving the houses along the western side of the road). Stretching all along the

'central' verge is an impressive line of mature horse chestnut trees which when originally planted marked the edge of the old cricket ground attached to The Mount. These evenly sized, regularly spaced trees are by virtue of their size and prominence now a key feature of the street scene.

Chapter 11: The Mall, Preston Lane and Preston Grove

Historical background

11.1. This area of Faversham is centred on The Mall and extends south from the railway line towards London Road. Here, pockets of older buildings have been overtaken by surges of C19 and C20 development as the town expanded outwards towards the London-Canterbury road, with the consequence that the remnants of Preston 'village' have become absorbed into the C19 development of The Mall and Preston church has become surrounded by C20 housing.

11.2. The present distinctive form of The Mall dates from 1773 when the road was widened and laid out as a tree-lined promenade. It originally ran straight on north through Preston Street and into the centre of town but the route was severed when Forbes Road was built and the level crossing at the railway was closed. The detached end of Preston Street is therefore now a cul-de-sac accessed from The Mall, where there is a handful of older properties which, some would argue, once formed part of 'Preston village'.

11.3. Preston church, although now largely C19 in appearance, has in fact an Early English chancel dating from the C13 but it is thought that a church was present here even earlier in Saxon times. Until the start of the C20 the church still stood in a semi-rural setting but now it is substantially encircled with suburban housing and very firmly part of the built-up area of Faversham. Preston House, the 'big house' of the parish, was demolished in 1930; it stood more or less opposite Grove House and the grounds extended the length of what is now Preston Grove. Parts of the old boundary wall still survive, however, and a mid C19 octagonal wooden gazebo that stood in the grounds has been repositioned on the corner with London Road.

Preston Street

11.4. Preston 'village' was largely obliterated when the railway was built, but Mall House, Wreights House and George House (formerly the George Inn but now converted to a house) continue to form an attractive historic enclave alongside the old Preston Street railway crossing.

11.5. Mall House, built in 1743, is the oldest, and most imposing of this group and notable for its fine Georgian brick front and impressive entrance. Wreights House, alongside to the north, dates from the early 1800s (or perhaps slightly earlier) and was the one-time home of local benefactor Henry Wreight. Both are set back behind small front gardens whereas the early C18 George House crowds forward to the edge of the footway as though signalling the prospective change in character on the north side of the railway. The high, red brick garden wall around the large side garden to Mall House, in combination with the line of bristly-trunked lime trees just behind, forms an important, well-defined and attractive edge to the street.

11.6. An unnamed public passageway, informally described in a local history as Tickle Belly Alley, squeezes between Wreights and Mall Houses and is special for the rather intimidating presence of old red brick boundary walls rising dramatically on either side to heights in

excess of four metres. This local drama ends very quickly, however, as the passageway breaks through into the newer environment of Aldred Road.

The Mall

11.7. The broad thoroughfare of The Mall forms the principal entrance into the town from the south and is therefore constantly busy with traffic. However, the western edge of the road, set back from the main carriageway behind a parallel secondary service road, is noticeably quieter. Development along the eastern (and more prominent) side of The Mall occurred first, mostly during the first half of the C19, whereas the terraced houses on the opposite side followed some decades later in the 1890s. All the houses along the western side are still in private residential use, but along the other side of the road (much of which is also residential) there is a significant scattering of other uses including a motorcycle showroom/ garage, a builder's merchants, and two public houses. Whilst the residential uses and the C19 architecture of the built environment are, therefore, the special and unifying features of The Mall, the character and appearance of the principal (eastern) frontage is now enriched by other activities.

11.8. Development along the eastern side of the road is closely spaced and set close to, or directly onto, the edge of the footway. The liveliest looking section is around Nelson Street (which joins from the east) with its chromium-plated forecourt display of motorcycles, public houses with elevations decorated with signboards and flower baskets, and the large plate-glass window displays of the builder's merchant. However, it is the architecture of the C19 buildings that sets the special historical context and included here are small red brick houses built in 1853, groups of yellow brick properties built between 1829 and 1841 with railed basements and flying steps up to the front doors; a pair of red brick 'Tudor lodges', the three storey Crown and Anchor public house (circa 1846) and the stucco-fronted Elephant public house which occupies an end-of-terrace property extended across the front later in 1918.

11.9. A builder's merchant now rather appropriately occupies the site of a C19 brick and tile works and the early C18 house standing alongside to the south was originally the home of local brickmaker Thomas Barnes, so there is a sense here of an historical continuity with earlier activities. The modern single-storey showroom at the front of the site makes few concessions, however, to the architecture close by. The very southern end of The Mall ends on a slightly low note with two pairs of post war houses set back on a generous radius (perhaps a highway widening line) although a flint wall along the front boundary nevertheless marks the edge of the street in a locally distinctive way.

11.10. The three, archetypal Victorian terraces on the opposite side of The Mall are notable for their disciplined and carefully detailed appearance. The most impressive is the southernmost terrace where the semi-basements push the ground floors of the yellow brick houses well above street level, the front doors are approached up flights of steps, embellishments include decorative terracotta panels and elaborate brick detailing, and an array of gables produces a lively rhythmical appearance. The longer (but in some ways lesser) terrace to the north is more modest in appearance with houses just two storeys high and plainer brickwork; nevertheless, the repeating ground floor bays, paired windows with stone colonettes, and moulded brick eaves all combine to produce a pleasing composition. The northernmost terrace with its yellow brick and red brick dressings has a rather more subdued appearance although even here the facades are enlivened by the rhythm of the gables. Unusually, the brickwork, sash windows and front doors of the houses (in all three terraces) have survived with few alterations, although the roofing slates have largely been substituted with concrete tiles. The majority of the brick walls around the small front gardens have also survived as also have a few of the patterned tiled garden paths. The original sturdy-looking iron railings and gates have, however, disappeared leaving the upstanding brick piers looking curiously gaunt and naked; the absence from The Mall of this long run of

Victorian ironwork is to the significant detriment of the street scene and has caused an important part of the original architecture to go missing.

11.11. The generous width of The Mall, which includes a 'central' grass verge, has allowed the 'avenue' of street trees to grow unchecked to full maturity, so that large specimens of plane, ash and other species are now a defining feature of the street (in a way that is probably unmatched anywhere else in the town). Their huge canopies now completely fill the road, although gaps in the planting pattern and sawn-off stumps suggest that the continuing presence of the trees in their present form is unlikely to be sustained.

11.12. The paving finishes are for the most part unremarkable; a granite sett crossover at the builder's merchants is a lone, but welcome, representative from earlier times and the granite horse trough (near to London Road) is an interesting item of street furniture. As elsewhere in the town, traffic management measures now divide The Mall into separate sections with kerb build-outs, road markings and traffic signs at Forbes Road (which direct through traffic into and out of The Mall) creating something of a hiccup in the visual flow of the street. Here, however, the visual strength of the mature street trees is for the time being sufficient to over-ride much of the effect.

Edith Road

11.13. A series of streets of terraced housing lie to the west of The Mall but the immediately adjoining Edith Road is unusual for having survived with relatively few alterations so that the street scene, comprised of two and three storey houses, is unusually authentic in appearance with most of its original late C19 architecture still present.

Nelson Street

11.14. Tucked in between The Mall and Preston Grove is an enclave of small, brick-built terraced houses dating from the mid C19 and which were perhaps associated with the nearby brick and tile works. A number of these little workers' properties are distinctive for being approached only by private footpath and also for having detached gardens.

Preston Lane and Preston Grove

11.15. These two residential roads lie to the east of The Mall. They are for the most part comprised of C20 housing but a few older buildings are nevertheless still present as the skeletal record of an earlier pattern of development.

11.16. Preston church and graveyard, the vicarage and the Sunday School building form an attractive little historical group, neatly positioned directly at the eastern end of Preston Lane. The old footpath connecting Faversham town with Preston Next Faversham still threads its historical way through the churchyard. Externally the church is now largely C19 in appearance and the black knapped flintwork illustrates the popularity of the material in the C19 for public buildings in Faversham. The churchyard is an attractive little oasis of greenspace dotted with trees including large mature yews. The C19, red brick, Sunday School building is tucked into the north-western corner, but later single-storey extensions have not enhanced its Victorian appearance. The C18 red brick front of the adjoining Preston vicarage in fact hides a rather earlier core; the surrounding garden is notable for its large mature trees including lime, sycamore and ginko which are now a significant presence and an important visual marker in the urban landscape of Faversham of this area of historical interest.

11.17. Development along Preston Lane is otherwise suburban in character, mostly post-war, and rather unremarkable in appearance, although detached houses built in the 1980s on the south side of the road have a rather pleasing cottagey quality.

Preston Grove

11.18. Preston Grove is rather similar in character to Preston Lane insofar as residential development here also mostly dates from the C20, but its form and appearance are rather more varied. Grove House, an early C19 red brick house set side-on to the carriageway, is the key historical 'anchor' in the road; a large spreading copper beech tree in the road alongside gives it an additional sense of historical presence. Its large garden extends south to Nelson Street and is edged by an old red brick wall now attractively topped with a tangle of wisteria and other shrubs; this boundary, together with the open appearance of the garden behind, is a crucial part of the special character of the road. Further south is another interesting historical fragment, comprising a pair of three storey C18/early C19 red brick houses with steps up to the front doors and an unusual side profile.

11.19. Preston Grove is also distinctive for a row of archetypal, inter-war, detached houses built in the 1930s, all more or less identical in design with gabled and rendered fronts, bay windows, arched and recessed entrance porches, and machine-made clay roofing tiles. Although only one house now still has its original timber windows and only one other has an original front garden wall, the group is sufficiently well preserved to be a distinctive 'inter war' feature of the road. Just opposite is a small group of 1990s detached houses arranged around a short, winding concrete-block paved access road, where the development is very clearly the product of a late C20 'design guide' approach; incorporated into it is Grove Cottage dating from the C17/early C18 but now heavily refurbished.

11.20. The highway environment along Preston Grove has a slightly informal-looking appearance, with footways being absent for much of its length and the kerb-line being a somewhat disjointed affair. In consequence, the road has a rather relaxed and ill-disciplined appearance, perhaps affirming its early C20 origins before the full rigour of orderly highway layouts had been imposed. The isolated stretch of grass verge in front of the 1970 houses tends to reinforce the sense of informality, and the fact of walls and other boundaries (old and new) being set a little haphazardly onto the edge of the carriageway helps to set this street environment a little apart from that of other suburban areas in the town.

London Road

11.21. Just to the west of the junction of The Mall with London Road is a row of substantial semi-detached and terraced houses all built at the end of the C19. All are two storeys high and built of red or yellow brick, and rather unusually most of the original slate roof coverings still survive. Although they are individually different (occasionally with stylish cast iron embellishments) the close proximity of the houses one to another, and their similarity in overall form and general appearance, is such that the group reads as a single coherent entity.

11.22. The London Road itself has for some long time been seen to mark the southern edge of Faversham where the town ends and the countryside begins. In practice, this sharp divide is no longer as well-defined as it once was, but on the southern side of London Road close to the junction with Ashford Road two early C19 brick and weatherboarded cottages are still to be found set deep within a patch of old orchard at the end of unmade track, so that their peg-tiled roofs are viewed across the tops of old fruit trees. Just here, therefore, is a fragment of 'rural Kent' positioned right alongside the southern edge of the town. Despite the rather lacklustre appearance of the orchard (a collection of rather randomly spaced trees of varying sizes, varieties and vigour) the traditional Kentish character of the houses, the orchard setting, and the position on the very edge of Faversham town are in combination such that this remains a rather special place.
