



## REPAIR Good Practice Example: Medway, Historic Dockyard Chatham



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## ***The Royal Dockyard at Chatham was once the most important naval dockyard in Britain.***

*Dating from 1570 ships maintained and repaired at Chatham defeated the Spanish Armada; the yard built Nelson's flagship HMS Victory together with many of the Royal Navy's larger ships that fought in the major naval battles of the 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

The dockyard has therefore a very special place in cultural heritage as well as in terms of military heritage.

Royal Dockyards provided the Royal Navy with the shore support facilities it required to build, repair and maintain the fleet. It was the dry docks that set the Royal Yards apart from their civilian counterparts until well into the 19th century.

By the mid-18th Century the Royal Yards had developed into the largest industrial organisations in the world with complex facilities supporting thousands of skilled workers in a wide number of trades. It was the level of the facilities and skills provided in the Royal Dockyard's, particularly at Chatham, that underpinned the success at sea of the Royal Navy – from victory in battle; through the epic voyages of discovery made by Cook, Darwin and others; to the ceaseless anti-slavery patrols of the 19th century and the imposition of Pax Britannica.

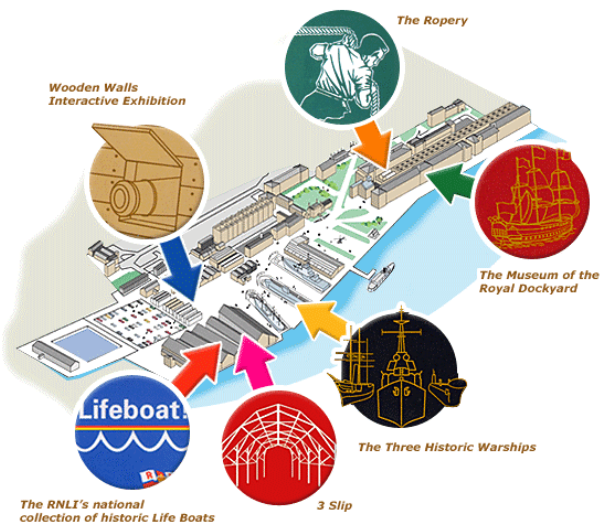


The Royal Dockyard was defended by a complex land defence system including the most well preserved site at Fort Amherst and the Elizabethan – Upnor Castle, which survives today as a tourist attraction.

The unique significance of the Dockyard's legacy is now recognised in the fact that the Historic Dockyard and its immediate defensive system have been short listed by the UK Government for inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage Site List.

Responsibility for the majority of the Royal Dockyard site, including most of St Mary's Island, the fitting-out and repairing-basins and the buildings of HMS Pembroke passed first to English Estates, then to SEEDA, for redevelopment and is now known as Chatham Maritime.

The outer basin became a commercial port operated by the Chatham Dock Company, whilst the Georgian yard, with its 100 listed buildings (of which 47 were Scheduled Ancient Monuments) was set aside for preservation as The Historic Dockyard, in the stewardship of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.



Local people came together with National figures and experts who had the vision and commitment to take on the huge challenge of meeting the Trust objectives preserving this important historic site in ways befitting its significance and of educating the public in the historic, architectural and archaeological value. Trustees shared a vision of creating a 'living museum' where people would live, work and visit, developed over time into the current strategy of "preservation through Re-Use".

The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, an independent charitable trust (not for profit) was established by government to take responsibility for the 80 acre site with huge buildings, of which 47 are Scheduled National Monuments, all in a sorry state of repair as was the infrastructure. The roads, sewers and water supply pipes and electrical distribution were not fit for purpose after years of neglect.

***The clearly defined approach and commitment to the vision has led to successful redevelopment and regeneration of the site as a mixed use community with over 100 homes, more than 100 businesses creating jobs and wealth and over 150,000 tourist visits each year.***

***The Historic Dockyard is now a core component in the Medway economy drawing large numbers of visitors into the area from further a field.***

*New innovative uses for historic buildings include the development of the Bridgewarden's College for the University of Kent in the Historic Dockyard Clock Tower building.*

In time this has led to the very significant development of Universities at Medway on the adjacent site of the former naval barracks of HMS Pembroke.

*Universities at Medway* is an innovative partnership between four Universities together with Mid Kent College who share the Chatham Maritime campus, working together to respond to the educational needs of Medway and the Thames Gateway. More than 10,000 students are studying on the campus with a further 3,000 expected by 2013. This initiative has been described as a shining example to the country of how higher education can transform a region's economy and workforce.



Partnerships underpin much of the work of the Historic Dockyard and have underpinned the restoration of the last 'at risk' historic building on the site – *No. 1 Smithery* – which opened in 2010 as National Museums at Chatham offering a fine collection of Ship Models and Art.

This innovative joint venture with two of Britain's national museums will add a further dimension to the site and provide a major new cultural venue

confirming the importance of the Historic Dockyard Chatham as a catalyst for the continued cultural regeneration of Medway and the wider community. The venture secures the future of the



The redevelopment of Chatham Dockyard makes an enormous impact on the broader sustainable development of the surrounding area through the wealth it has shared, the economy it has grown and the opportunities it provides residents and visitors alike.

The combination of Chatham Maritime, where the Universities at Medway and residential developments are located; Chatham Historic Dockyard which provides hundreds of homes and jobs on site and the commercial Chatham Docks is a shining example of "preservation through Re-Use" and has proved to be very beneficial to the community so far.



The benefits have taken a long time to mature but they are definitely visible: New jobs, New opportunities, new education and training prospects and the ability to enhance the local economy.

***This special position will defend the Historic Dockyard Chatham into the future.***

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Links:

[www.chdt.org.uk](http://www.chdt.org.uk)

[http://www.thedockyard.co.uk/Plan\\_Your\\_Day/Launch\\_of\\_No.1\\_Smithery/smithery.html](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk/Plan_Your_Day/Launch_of_No.1_Smithery/smithery.html)

<http://www.medway.ac.uk/>

<http://www.chathamworldheritage.org.uk/what-will-it-mean-for-medway>

URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

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