

Westerham

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



PLANNING GUIDANCE 2015



Westerham

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The historic environment is a social asset of immense value and one of the keys to the continuing prosperity of Sevenoaks District. Conservation area appraisals and management plans are part of the process of ensuring that we make the best use of our historic environment. They are tools for the positive management of change, not a means of preventing development. Conservation is focused on the entire historic environment, not just listed buildings. Trees, open spaces, buildings, uses and streets all contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the District's conservation areas.

The built environment of our conservation areas has used energy and materials moulded by people both past and present. The District Council will creatively manage the fabric of these areas in a sustainable way as a legacy for future generations.

It is intended that this appraisal and management plan will inform the activities of the Council, the public and other bodies where these affect the conservation area. This Appraisal and Management Plan was approved by the District Council

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Westerham is a busy town with ancient origins. It was first established as a market town in the 12th century, and then expanded with the coming of the railway and small industries, and later developed into a destination for shopping and tourism. It is set within a unique landscape, being on a small hill but within a valley, in the shadow of the North Downs. Views into the town from the undulating landscape provide a pleasant aspect of a varied, mostly red-tiled roofscape punctuated by landmarks such as St. Mary's Church. Views from the town include vistas of the North Downs to the north, and the rolling, undeveloped pasture land to the south, which helps to retain its rural setting. Westerham has always attracted residents who are drawn to the agreeable market town life whilst being in close proximity to London, as well as local crafts and business people. The built form of the town is therefore a pleasing mix of small cottages and larger dwellings of various periods, with a unifying theme of orange/red brick and hanging and roof tiles, and ragstone and brick walls. Place and building names, building types and landscape features provide clues to past industries, such as Mill Lane, Brewery Cottages and the restored mill ponds, providing continuity to the local identity. The former market square continues to be a bustling centre providing a sense of prosperity.

This document replaces the Westerham Conservation Area Appraisal that was produced in December 2003 by Sevenoaks District Council. Local authorities are required by law to regularly review their conservation areas and produce conservation area appraisals and management plans. These summarise what is important about the area and what improvements are needed.

This Appraisal and Management Plan follows the broad format suggested by English Heritage in its 2011 document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. The Appraisal draws heavily on the original document. The boundary was assessed for possible extension and it has been determined that there is no requirement for additions or exclusions at this point in time.

The omission of any particular feature or building does not imply that it is of no significance.

1.1 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation areas first came into being as a result of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are intended to identify any valuable architectural or historic characteristics in a locality that may need protection and enhancement. Along with World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields, conservation areas are defined as 'designated heritage assets' in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF).

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 recognises that there are particular areas of 'architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and charges

planning authorities with a duty to designate any such locations within their jurisdiction as conservation areas. This designation then empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to planning considerations and development with conservation areas and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses of the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, fostering a sense of communal pride.

It has been recognised that designation, because of the responsibilities and obligations it places on both owners and the local authority, should only be imposed on areas that are demonstrably suitable. Where the criteria have been met, the area should then benefit from the additional control and protection that designation confers, and from official recognition of the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the locality.

One of the 12 core planning principles for achieving sustainable development within the NPPF is to 'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'. Historic areas and buildings are now recognised not only as historic assets worth of protection but are increasingly being valued as important tourism, economic, education and cultural assets.

1.2 The Benefits of Being in a Conservation Area

The historic environment is of particular importance for tourism and leisure. English Heritage's annual '*Heritage Counts*' report for the South East in 2012 concluded that the number of visitors to historic sites has grown substantially over the last decade, significantly contributing towards the economy in the South East. In addition, maintaining the appearance of a conservation area and the character of the groups of buildings within it can often sustain or enhance the value of individual properties. Research carried out by the London School of Economics on behalf of English Heritage, published in 2012, proves the value of conservation areas in terms of the economic results of pride of place. Conservation areas can offer attractive living and working conditions that will encourage further investment.

The principles of conservation management planning – that managing any historic place should be based on understanding it and assessing its significance and values – are now accepted as applying to historic areas as much as historic buildings (English Heritage '*Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance*', 2008)



The Heritage Cycle, English Heritage

1.3 Purpose of Appraisals and Management Plans

As their number grows, it has become even more important for local authorities to include a well-defined and considered policy for designated conservation areas in their development plans. Development pressures are such that any designation is likely to be subjected to detailed scrutiny and must be readily and demonstrably defensible against adverse criticism. The criteria for designation should be kept as consistent as possible and the public involved in any proposed changes in their area.

The 1990 Act charges local authorities with the responsibility of undertaking a review of their conservation areas from time to time, both to consider the possibility of revisiting their extent, and to identify any past changes or future pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation. English Heritage published an advisory leaflet on appraisals in 1997 and more detailed guidance on both appraisals and management plans in 2006, which was then updated in the most recent 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (March 2011). This document outlines the principles of the approach that local authorities and communities can take in adopting conservation areas and management plans.

Appraisals and management plans define the key elements which together give the areas their special character and appearance, and shows how they interact to enhance their individual impact. Future policies and improvements can be based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities of the area that contribute towards its local distinctiveness. The plans will assist the District Council, development professions (planners, architects, landscape architects, highways engineers, etc.) and the local community to engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and help secure the long term viability of the Conservation Area as an important heritage asset.

This revised appraisal and management plan for Westerham has been developed from the Westerham Conservation Area Appraisal published in 2003. The plan sets objectives for the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area, addresses areas identified in the first appraisal and brings forward opportunities to enhance the area.

1.4 Key Purposes of the Plan

The key purposes of this plan are to:

- Review the boundaries of the conservation area and define the key characteristics and features which contribute to its special character or appearance and should be preserved or enhanced;
- provide a basis for making sustainable community-based planning decisions about the future of the conservation area;
- raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage;
- record those principal elements that detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area;

- identify distinctive built form and character within the conservation area;
- identify distinctive public realm character within the conservation area;
- identify opportunities for enhancement to be delivered through the accompanying management plan or other initiatives;
- inform key agencies, societies and residents whose activities impact on the conservation area and maximise the investment in the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area to the benefit of the social and economic quality of life;
- provide guidance and set out objectives to preserve and enhance the buildings, structures and features;
- Protect and maintain biodiversity;
- outline the key statutory requirements in respect of development within the conservation area;
- provide guidance and set out actions to secure the proper and effective application of these requirements;
- propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance works within the public realm.

As a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, the plan will be a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

1.5 Conservation Area Boundary Review

One building of merit has been identified that is located outside the conservation area boundary, a former oast barn at 21 Croydon Road that has been altered and converted into a house.



However, extending the boundary to include just this building would afford it protection from demolition but otherwise has little justification for including the other buildings, roads and spaces that would also need to be included. It has been noted on the map as a building of merit and therefore is identified as being a non-designated heritage asset, in accordance with paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A further considered boundary change is to include the former mill ponds directly to the east of the boundary line that wraps around Squerryes Court. However, the restored mill ponds to the north are included in the boundary, and the other ponds in question are included within the Historic Park and Garden boundary as part of Squerryes. Also, the pump house and corn mill that were associated with the ponds are now gone. Therefore, extension of the boundary in this location is not considered to have sufficient justification.



Oast roundel and barn on Croydon Road

2.0 GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

2.1 National and Regional Guidance

Government advice concerning heritage assets, including conservation areas, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and in the Planning Policy Statement 5 Planning Practice Guide, which is due for re-publication following the publication of the NPPF, which superseded PPS5. The intention is to provide three tiers of guidance, from Government online planning practice guidance, to sectoral guidance (such as the PPS5 Practice Guide substitution), through to more detailed technical guidance, including case studies.

Further advice about conservation areas, including the production of management plans, has been produced by English Heritage (2011).

2.2 The Development Plan

Sevenoaks District Council is currently preparing the Local Plan (formally know as the Local Development Framework) for the period up to 2026. The Core Strategy section of the Local Plan for Sevenoaks District was adopted in February 2011 and the Allocations and development Management Plan was adopted in February 2015.

2.2.1 Adopted Local Policies

As part of the Local Plan, the Council has adopted the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. This is the key document in the Plan, providing the overarching principles that will deliver the essential development needs of the District.

- Core Policy SP1: Design of New Development and Conservation: *'All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. Account should be taken of guidance adopted by the Council in the form of Kent Design, local Character Area Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Village Design Statements and Parish Plans. In rural areas account should be taken of guidance in the Countryside Assessment and AONB Management Plans. In areas where the local environment lacks positive features new development should contribute to an improvement in the quality of the environment. New development should create safe, inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users, incorporate principles of sustainable development and maintain and enhance biodiversity. The District's heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, historic buildings, landscapes and outstanding views will be protected and enhanced.'*
- Core Policy LO8: The Countryside and the Rural Economy (relevant as part of the Conservation Area is outside the settlement boundary): *'The countryside will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape and its biodiversity will be protected and enhanced where possible. The distinctive character of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced.'*

The following policies in the Allocations and Development Management Plan are relevant to Westerham:

- Policy EN4: *Proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset. Applications will be assessed with reference to the following:*
 - a) *the historic and/or architectural significance of the asset*
 - b) *the prominence of its location and setting; and*
 - c) *the historic and/or architectural significance of any elements to be lost or replaced*

Where the application is located within, or would affect, an area or suspected area of archaeological importance an archaeological assessment must be provided to ensure that provision is made for the preservation of important archaeological remains/findings. Preference will be given to preservation in situ unless it can be shown that recording of remains, assessment, analysis report and deposition of archive is more important.

- Policy GI1: *Proposals will be permitted where opportunities for provision of additional Green Infrastructure have been fully considered and would be provided where justified by the character of the area or the need for open space. Any open space provided as part of new development should, wherever practical and appropriate, be located where they can provide a safe link for the population and connectivity for biodiversity with the existing features of the Green Infrastructure Network. Additional green infrastructure and habitat restoration and/or re-creation, should be provided in accordance with the appropriate guidance contained in the Kent Design Guide and the Countryside Assessment SPD and should take into account of the guidance within the AONB Management Plans and associated guidance where appropriate.*
- Policy GI2: *Change of use or redevelopment of Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Sport or Recreation Sites within the urban confines of towns and villages, as defined in ADMP Appendix 9, and redundant school playing fields will not be permitted unless the applicant demonstrates that:*
 - a) *the open space is surplus to requirements; and that there is no need for an appropriate alternative community, sports or recreational use, or*
 - b) *the loss will be mitigated by equivalent replacement provision (in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility) or*
 - c) *the development is for alternative sports/recreational use.*

Supporting development will be permitted where it is appropriate and ancillary to the use of the site as a community playing field or sports pitch. There should be no significance adverse impact on the character of the local environment and any potential loss of biodiversity interests should be mitigated. Proposals for built development on redundant school playing fields in the Greenbelt, other than for essential facilities for outside sport and recreation will be refused.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) form part of the Local Plan, and the following are relevant to Westerham Conservation Area:

- Kent Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- Countryside Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document
- Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (adopted February 2015)

2.2.2 Westerham and Crockham Hill Village Design Statement (2000)

Westerham Town Council has produced a Westerham and Crockham Hill Village Design Statement that has been adopted by Sevenoaks District Council as Informal Planning Guidance. This means that it is a consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2.3 Buildings Contributing to Character

These are identified on map 3 at the end of this document.

English Heritage's guidance document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management 2011* recommends that key unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area are identified in conservation area appraisals, and provides a checklist in order to assess candidates for this. This checklist, reproduced below, has been used to identify buildings within the Westerham Conservation Area as being of local importance. The Council has therefore identified these buildings as contributing positively towards the character of the conservation area, and therefore as being 'non-designated heritage assets'.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF acknowledges this and states that *'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'*

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF will also apply so that the impact of any proposed development on a building that contributes to character will be considered in terms of the impact on the significance of the conservation area, a designated heritage asset, as a whole: *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.'*

CHECKLIST
Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
Does it have landmark quality?
Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or any other historically significant way?
Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent heritage assets?
Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
Does it have significant historic association with features such as

the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

One building outside the conservation area has strong associations with the history of Westerham and has therefore been identified on the map as being a building contributing to character. This is the former oast house on Croydon Road, also mentioned in the Westerham and Crockham Hill Guide as being the last oast house in Westerham. Whilst not located within the conservation area boundary and therefore not subject to control over demolition, proposals that would impact on this building as a ‘non-designated heritage asset’ that may also affect the setting of the conservation area will be taken into account.

2.4 Conservation and Enhancement

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states in section 71 that Local Planning Authorities should undertake detailed assessments of conservation areas and prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. This includes the assessment of elements of the conservation area that contribute positively towards its special character.

Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the enhancement of the character and appearance of the area. An assessment of this and the detailed analysis of the area contained should form part of any application for development within a conservation area (paragraph 128 of the NPPF).

Westerham is an historic town with a distinctive landscape and townscape of high quality. This appraisal aims to ensure that this rich context is respected and that only design solutions of a high standard are introduced, allowing the West Kent area to continue to maintain its quality and status as one of the most desirable places in the south east.

There is a richness, variety, quality and history of townscape and landscape within this area that is special and a need to maintain and enhance this is crucial. Attention to context and quality design is vitally important in reinforcing the character of this area and this character must not be harmed through undue pressure for poorly designed infill development or redevelopment of an unacceptable nature.

2.5 Special Controls within Conservation Areas

Emerging Government policy and legislation such as that being introduced through the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill will have an impact on planning regulations relating to the historic environment. The requirement for conservation area consent for demolition will eventually be abolished and this type of development will instead require planning permission.

Designation of a conservation area does not mean that changes within it or close to it cannot occur, but that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character. Controls are imposed in addition to normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area. The effect of this and the maintenance of a high quality environment are perceived by most people who live and work in conservation areas as beneficial to the value and local distinctiveness of the area.

Additional controls within conservation areas are outlined here for information. However, other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by conservation area status, such as those indicated within the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO).

Any proposals should always be discussed with the Council at an early stage.

2.5.1 Permitted Development Rights

A wide range of minor works are permitted through the GPDO without the requirement for formal planning permission, granted by the Secretary of State. In conservation areas certain forms of these types of development are restricted in conservation areas (identified as Article 1(5) land in the GPDO). These include, but are not restricted to:

- Installation of flues, chimneys or soil and vent pipes
- Certain types of extension
- Alterations to the roof, including dormer windows
- Certain positions within the curtilage of outbuildings
- Positions of satellite dishes
- Positions of micro-generation equipment such as solar panels

Further information can be found on the Planning Portal website, www.planningportal.gov.uk, where you can also find an interactive house tool.

2.5.2 Demolition

Please see note above regarding forthcoming changes to controls over demolition in conservation areas, through the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act, which mean that changes to the legislation will require planning permission for demolition. Currently, the legislation requires conservation area consent to totally or substantially demolish a building or structure, including boundary walls, within a conservation area. Exemptions to this are set out in paragraph 31 of Government Circular 1/01, and further information can be found on the Planning Portal website.

2.5.3 Trees

Six weeks notice must be given to the Council before any work to a tree within a conservation area is carried out. The Council will then advise if it wishes to make an objection and make a Tree Preservation Order. If a response is not received from the Council within the six weeks, work may go ahead. This does not apply to trees which

have a diameter less than 75mm (3") when measured at a height of 1.5m (4'11") above the ground, and trees already covered by a Tree Preservation Order, in which case any works will require consent.

2.6 Unauthorised Works and Development

Sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the District Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take enforcement action if it is made aware of any alleged unauthorised works and has undertaken an investigation. It is also a criminal offence to demolish a building or structure not made exempt by Government Circular 1/01, without conservation area consent.

2.7 Maintenance and Repairs

The Council has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are limited. The principal guardians of the character and appearance of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the conservation area and who are responsible for maintaining their individual properties.

The character of conservation areas can be altered or lost due to the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, roads, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as street furniture, signs, lights, and hard surfacing, can change an area's character. In the proposed conservation area few of the buildings are isolated. Even if they are detached, they are part of a wider street scene, often of buildings of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one building can affect not only that building, but also the whole street.

Unsympathetic replacement windows (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials used) can alter the appearance of a building considerably. Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably damage the street scene. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. In older buildings paint or render can also trap moisture which may cause damage to walls. Many alterations to older properties using modern materials can upset the balance within these properties and can cause more costly problems, such as cracks, damp, or rot. Care should be taken with any alteration to an older building.

2.8 Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatment, especially to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or Kent ragstone wall, railings, fencing or hedges, should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area. Boundary features, particularly ragstone and brick walls, form an important part of the significance of the Conservation Area and any loss is likely to cause harm.

2.9 Listed Buildings

Many historic buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport because of their architectural and historic interest. The main purpose of listing a building is to ensure that care will be taken over decisions affecting its future, that alterations respect the particular character and interest of the building, and that the case for its preservation is taken fully into account in considering the merits of any development proposals. Westerham is densely populated with listed buildings.

When a building is listed, this covers the building both internally and externally, any object or structure fixed to it and any extensions whenever constructed. In addition, any object or structure within the grounds or garden of the building, which was there by 1948, is also listed. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition, extension or alteration of listed buildings in any way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, internally as well as externally.

New gates, fences, walls, railings or other means of enclosure surrounding a listed building will require planning permission. Similarly, most sheds, garages and greenhouses and other outbuildings will also require planning permission. The scale and design of these should harmonise with the existing building and its setting.

2.10 Green and Open Spaces

Westerham is surrounded by green spaces, and has two particularly important open green spaces that are essential elements of its special character: the Green, and the churchyard at St. Mary's. These spaces and their settings should be taken into consideration for any changes that are planned that would have an impact. The Sevenoaks District Council Allocations and Development Management Plan, identifies areas of open space and green infrastructure within Westerham, which are to be safeguarded and enhanced. The surrounding area is designated as Metropolitan Greenbelt, which is to be safeguarded through the adopted Core Strategy.

2.11 Archaeology and Historic Environment Records in Westerham

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that applications affecting heritage assets include sufficient information about the asset (such as a conservation area) so that the impact of the proposal can be properly assessed. It states in paragraph 128 that, 'as a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted.'

Kent County Council maintains Kent's Historic Environment Record (HER), which is a computerised database for any information that can be gathered about the historic environment in the county, which is then recorded on the website. There are several entries in the HER within the Conservation Area boundary, which can be viewed on the Kent County Council website within the Leisure and Culture, and then the Heritage section. They record both lost and existing heritage assets.

The entries include:

- The former Black Eagle brewery at Black Eagle close;
- the milepost (only the stone backing remaining) at the corner of Market Square and Wells Close and opposite 4-6 High Street;
- Site of 19th century factory buildings behind Stratton Terrace and off of Croydon Road;
- Evidence of a post medieval wall south of Market Square; and
- Site of a group of 19th century laundry buildings in Wells Close.



Mile post marker, High Street

2.12 Squerryes Court Registered Historic Park and Garden

Overlapping with the south western corner of the Conservation Area is the grade II registered Historic Park and Garden, Squerryes Court, which includes the house itself, 9 hectares of formal and ornamental gardens and 60 hectares of parkland and woodland. This is identified in map 5. The gardens are located within the Conservation Area boundary, as are the lodge buildings and the former drive to Park Lodge to the east, which is lined with an avenue of replanted lime trees.

The English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England recognises gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. Inclusion on the register is a material consideration in the planning process and local planning authorities must consider the impact of proposed developments on the landscape's special character.

3.0 CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 General Description

Westerham Conservation Area covers some 36 hectares and contains about 100 listed buildings. It was designated in 1973 and extended in 1994. It includes the historic centre of the town including St. Mary's Church and the Green, some open parkland to the south, the Squerryes Court Estate and some of its associated park, and several well known properties such as Quebec House, Pitts Cottage and the Kings Arms Hotel. The area extends from the junction of the A25 and Hosey Hill to the east, the western boundary of Squerryes Court bordering Goodley Stock Road to the west, and extends up to include parts of London Road to the north.

The surrounding countryside is designated as Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which provides an important green setting for the town.

The town itself is a bustling small town in an attractive setting, which has a good number and variety of retail outlets, pubs and restaurants. It is well known and popular with tourists visiting nearby Chartwell and Quebec House.

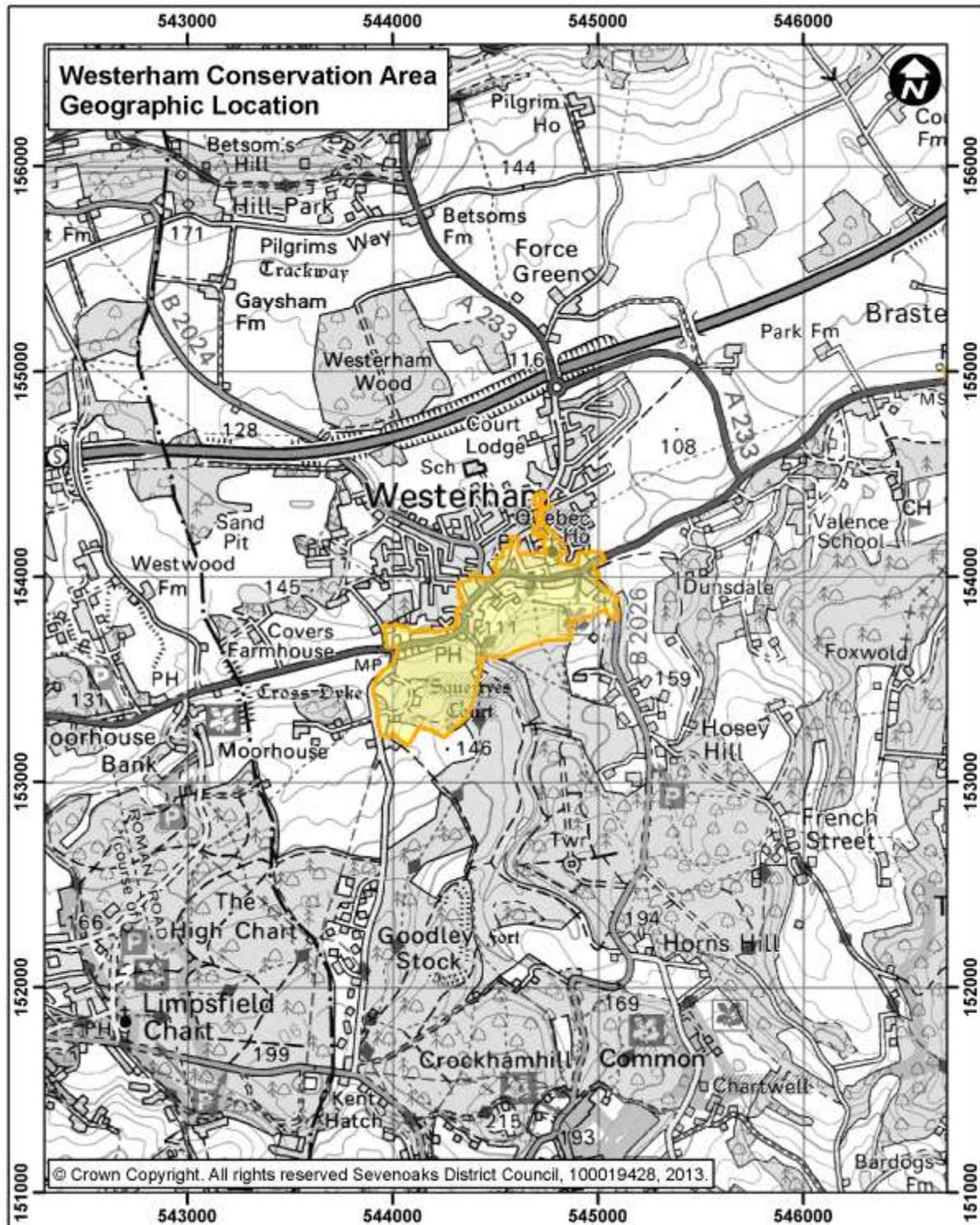
Small industry, long a part of the economic prosperity of the town, continues in the site of the old railway station to the north of the town. There are also several office developments within the centre.

The main housing developments in the 20th and 21st century have developed to the north of the A25, although there have been some recent developments on infill sites along, or just off, the main road.



Squerryes Court

3.2 Location and Geographical Context



Westerham lies on the A25, which runs east/west through the town and intersects with Beggars Lane and London Road, which turn into the A233, connecting the town to Biggin Hill and Bromley to the north.

The river Darent flows through the town, and the surrounding countryside is characterised by farmland to the north, and wooded parkland to the south.

The railway line that served Westerham was closed in 1961, and the M25 now follows the former rail route to the north of the town. The nearest motorway junctions are at Godstone in the west and Chipstead in the east. The nearest railway stations are Sevenoaks, 5 miles away, Edenbridge, 4.8 miles away and Oxted, 4 miles away. Both have connections to London. Biggin Hill, Bromley and Sevenoaks are all within easy reach by car.

3.3 Historical Development

John Newman states in the Pevsner Architectural Guide (*Kent, West and the Weald 2012*) that ‘the “neat handsome well built market-town” that Defoe admired in 1724 retains much of that character today.’ The small town of Westerham has over 1000 years of recorded history, but a find in 1928 of Celtic coins in Hosey Common nearby, dating from the 2nd century BC, indicated much earlier activity. The original settlement grew up from a clearing in the woodland at a point where a number of small streams joined the River Darent. Although the Cantra tribe is believed to have had an encampment on the site of the Squerryes Estate as long ago as 100BC, it was the Jutish tribes that inhabited the area until the time of the Norman conquest. A Roman road connecting London and the south coast passed close by the Westerham.

The manor of Westerham was then granted by William the Conqueror to the knight Eustace, Earl of Boulogne. In the Domesday survey of 1085 the village, as it was then, had a population of 59. At the Town Council building is a mosaic illustrating the ‘Oistreham’ survey, by artist Kenneth Budd. Its installation was sponsored by the Rotary Club in 1980. The Church was recorded on its present site from around 1115 and is believed to have been built on the remains of a Saxon watch tower, at the highest point of the Green. A market charter was granted by Henry III in 1227, with the last cattle market being held in 1961.



Domesday Mural

Squerryes Lodge, to the west of the town, also dates from the 12th or 13th century and there was a chapel by the river in use by monks until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539. The present building dates mostly from the 17th century. The Squerryes estate changed hands many times after being acquired by Henry VIII along with the manor of

Westerham. In 1751 it was sold to the Warde family, who still own the property to this day.

The town generally has a modern history of small industry and of wealthy families, given the close proximity of London, settling in large properties. Growth from a small market village didn't occur until the 19th century. Before then, links were improved by the introduction of a turnpike road from Sevenoaks to Bromley, through Westerham, in the late 18th century. Following this, further developments included a town hall, and the introduction of the railway in 1881, which was followed by the establishment of brick and tile works, lime works and a timber and coal merchant. The building of public and private schools also occurred. Other small industries included market gardens, brewing, and building industries, many of which are still evident today either in existing businesses, buildings or place names. Mill Lane, for example, is the site of one of the old corn mills, disused by the end of the 19th century. Black Eagle Close carries on the name of the former brewery in this location – the other brewery, the Swan, was located at the bottom of Hosey Hill. The oast house on Croydon Road, still in existence, is the last oast house in the area. Outside of the Conservation Area but just to the north were the old brickfields, remembered now by the cottages named Brickfield Cottages, near the bridge over the motorway on London Road. 97 High Street is the location of the former Blacksmith's and is known as Verrall's Corner, after the master blacksmith at the turn of the 20th century, George Verrall.



Colthersts Almshouses, Vicarage Hill, said to date from 1572

A notable resident whose legacy is important to the character of Westerham was General James Wolfe. He was born at Westerham in 1727 and lived at Spiers (now Quebec House) during his boyhood. A statue of General Wolfe was unveiled on the Green in 1911.

New housing development occurred in the 1920s and 30s, and in the later part of the 1930s the town centre underwent a substantial change when Winterton House and the Grange passed out of private residential ownership. The demolition of their garden walls opened up the area, and the Grange Estate was subdivided and developed. After the economic depression of the 1930s, there was an increase in light industry. The Westerham trading estate was developed and office accommodation and retail offerings also increased.

Over 50 years ago Westerham established a twin town relationship with Bonneval, France, and formed the Bonneval Association. This is commemorated in the Bonneval Garden next to the Town Council building.



Bonneval Garden plaque

3.4 Building Forms, Materials, Textures and Colours, and Public Realm

Westerham displays a variety of building and paving materials that reflect its organic history, but there is a strong consistency to the palette, with red/orange tiles and white or other soft shades of render prevalent, as well as ragstone detailing and walls.

The Conservation Area contains examples of most of the vernacular features that are typically found in traditional Kentish buildings. Vernacular is a term to describe forms of buildings and materials used that are typical of a local area, before materials such as Welsh roofing slates were mass produced and distributed throughout the country (and world) as transportation improved. The palette of the town will have been influenced by the local building materials industry.

In Westerham today, the roofs are either covered in slates, with lead hip and ridge rolls, or clay tiles that are hung on pegs or nibs. The use of full or half hips to one side of the roof with a gable end on the other is common.



51-55 London Road – shaped tiles, gablets and tall chimneys

Chimney stacks are often tall and decorative. Dormer windows are often inserted into roof slopes historically, giving light to attic spaces. The pitches of tiled roofs tend to be steep, whilst those that are covered in slates are shallower, and the contrasting heights of the ridge lines lend variety and interest to the street scene. Catslide roofs, which sweep down from the ridge to ground floor ceiling level have long been a popular way of covering a single storey extension to the side or rear of a building.

Many timber framed buildings survive from the era before brickwork became a popular and affordable alternative construction material, although they may now be clad in brick, weatherboarding, tile or render, completely hiding the external evidence of their original construction.

In some cases the first floor timber frame remains exposed, with rendered panels between the structural members; in others the frame is clad with vertical tile hanging or painted weatherboarding. Where brick has been used on ground and first floors to encase a timber frame, a parapet gutter is often formed at roof level to give the building a 'gentrified' classical appearance.

Brick is the most popular building material and the local red stock bricks can be seen in many buildings, together with decorative arches above doors and windows. Patterns formed by the inclusion of blue headers or bands of different colour brick are common.

The use of local stone (ragstone, limestone and sandstone) either on its own or combined with brickwork, adds another colour and texture to the built environment, on buildings, walls and paving.



Substantial brick boundary wall at The Old House, Vicarage Hill

Galleting in the mortar joints is often employed as a decorative and functional feature. A typical feature of buildings in a polite, Classical style from the late 18th century onwards is the use of imitation ashlar stone frontage, which is a cheaper version of using real stone. Rendered facades are painted, originally in a colour to mimic sandstone, and lined out to simulate natural stone coursing.



Ragstone walls

Windows are either painted timber casements or sliding sashes, usually white and sometimes with the frames painted a darker colour. Leaded lights can be found in buildings of many ages, and coloured glass was popular in Edwardian and Victorian doors and windows. The detailing of the joinery to these tends to be more robust than those of earlier buildings.



Local sandstone built Drill Hall at corner of Stratton Terrace

The public realm has been altered quite a few times in the town's past and there are several areas of modern tarmac and highways interventions. In St Mary's Churchyard there is an area of ironstone paving, and there are a few examples of natural stone kerbs, whether granite or limestone. Street lighting is mainly traditional and finished in black, although new versions of early 20th century patterns.

Bollards and other street furniture are generally painted black, as is the bus shelter on the Green. Some of the pedestrian areas within the centre have late 20th century herringbone-patterned brick paving, with cross paths picked out in granite setts. The Green in Market Square has wooden benches with black metal frames, and this is also the location of the two statues that commemorate important Westerham figures – General Wolfe and Winston Churchill.



Statue of Winston Churchill



Ironstone paving



Brick paving, granite setts and cast iron bollards at Fullers Hill

4.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

4.1 Spatial Analysis

4.1.1 Townscape

Westerham is a topographical paradox; on a hill but at the same time nestling in a valley. Look along almost any street from the centre and the road falls away to a backdrop of verdant countryside which provides an important setting for the conservation area. From the centre the wooded hills beyond the town are clearly seen, and form a distinctive part of Westerham's character.

The historic form of Westerham comes from the grouping of buildings around the market square on the western end, where the church is also located, and the otherwise linear format of residential and small industry or retail buildings lining the routes mostly east to west, with some development north to south. Smaller streets lead off the main routes, usually lined with workers cottages. The settlement clearly relates to the river, which gave power to the mills. The 20th century brought expansion to the residential settlement, extending the pattern of development to the north west.

Westerham's built form is mostly modest in scale, with a mixture of two and three storey buildings around the Green and Market Square, and predominantly two storey dwellings elsewhere.

4.1.2 Approaches

Entering Westerham from the east, a bend in the road leads to the first sight of the built environs of the town. From the junction with Hosey Hill at Quebec Square there are views up Vicarage Hill, but another bend in the road hides the town centre. Unfolding views such as these are characteristic of the historic layout and topography of the town.



View east into town from Quebec Square

Vicarage Hill the view opens up to take in the open space of the Green, with the historic buildings surrounding it creating a strong sense of place and enclosure of the most important space in Westerham. The Green and the Market Square are the heart of Westerham and there is a sense of bustle and prosperity about the area.

The main southern route to the town is down Hosey Hill, a very green approach and a steep hill passing first large detached houses set in expansive grounds, to the more tightly grained houses as road enters the western end of town, first passing the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist. The chimney of the former Vulcan Plastic works, next to new residential development on the site, is also just visible.

From the north, London Road and Croydon Road are both historic routes into the town, the latter being undeveloped until the 20th century, with only the oast house remaining to provide clues as to the former use of the land. The routes both head uphill into Market Square, with Croydon Road's interwar housing leading to the historic centre, and London Road's mix of historic and newer buildings (the boundary line wraps around the historic buildings and excludes others) providing clues to the layout of the historic settlement, starting with the former National School for Girls and Infants at the northern end.

The western route into Westerham is mostly characterised by its rural nature, enhanced by the parkland setting of Squerryes Court. The A25 meets Farley Road at the entrance to the Conservation Area, demarcated by an historic brick boundary wall, and then meets Goodley Stock Road, leading to Squerryes, at the corner of which are the Squerryes Park Cottages. The buildings then start to line the road more densely further into the Conservation Area.

4.1.3 Spaces

The most important space in the Conservation Area is the Green, the focal point of the town and an important part of its special character. Spaces are otherwise mostly private rather than public, relating to former house plots, or the parkland to the south. These are mostly glimpsed from the main routes.



St. Mary's churchyard

A sense of space is also created by the small streets and passageways leading from the main routes, which also creates a sense of the unexpected. Also important to the Conservation Area is the public space around the Church of St Mary, a large churchyard on the hill above the Green, providing a setting for this important historic building and allowing for views across the roof tops of the town.

4.1.4 Key views, vistas and landmarks

Please see map 4 for key views. The varied topography and winding routes allow for views across the town and to the Downs to the north, and parklands to the south. The roofscape is a very important characteristic which can be seen from these long views, as well as from other elevated points within the town. Glimpses into areas behind the strong built form lining the main routes provide clues to the former uses within the area, and the green setting. Unfolding views of the townscape are provided by the winding of the A25 through the town; new features are revealed at each turn.

Although hidden behind the Green, St. Mary's Church is located at the top of a hill and views to its tower can be seen from most points within, and looking into, the Conservation Area. The church is the most important landmark in Westerham.



Views from hills to the south of town to the church tower.

Specific important views that define the rich character of the area include the following:

- The unfolding view into the town entering on the A25 from the west
- The view to St Mary's Church from the junction of Hosey Hill and the A25
- Glimpses into and out of Mill Street



Mill Street



St. Mary's churchyard

- Unfolding views of the Green from the westerly approach
- Views to the east from St. Mary's churchyard and to the Greensand ridge
- The unfolding views to the north from the footpath adjacent to the church
- The eastern approach to the Green, with its statues prominent, from Market Square
- Glimpses through to the historic settlement along London Road and the North Downs, from the carriageway of the George and Dragon pub.



George and Dragon

- The intriguing glimpses into the pedestrian area of Fullers hill from the Market Square
- The regular rhythm and planned form of the Victorian Stratton Terrace and New Street, easily viewed from the High Street



Stratton Terrace

- Glimpses into and from Lodge Lane
- The landmark of the old Forge at Verrall's Corner at the junction with Mill Lane, as viewed from the eastern approach
- The change from rural to built form as seen in views from the eastern approach, at the junction with Goodley Stock Road

- Vistas across the town, and to the Downs, seen from the parkland to the south
- Glimpses to the former mill race and ponds from the footpaths to the south



Mill race

4.2 Character Areas and Key Unlisted Buildings

4.2.1 Quebec Square and Vicarage Hill

The public car park, largely hidden down a bank adjacent to the A25, is the first feature notable when entering towards Quebec Square. To the left is an uphill bank of trees and vegetation, a positive feature contributing to the green setting of the Conservation Area. A substantial brick wall with heavy coping, a key characteristic of Westerham, lines the right hand side of the road at the boundary to Westerham Place nursing home, a former Victorian house with large 20th century extension. Next is Quebec House, a grade I listed Jacobean House with distinctive gables, which is partially hidden behind its walls and amongst mature trees, but the grouping of the grade II listed neo-classical Quebec Cottages, with later shop fronts, on the road junction is the first real indication of the quality of the built environment of the town.

To the left at the junction of Hosey Hill is the attractive picturesque West Lodge at the edge of the former Dunsdale Estate. On the opposite side is the site of the former Swan brewery. Behind the houses here is a water course of the river Darent used by former industries and footpaths leading to the open rising park and woodland that extends along the southern border of the town as far as Squerryes Court. New development on the site of the Vulcan Plastic works is a mix of traditionally designed houses with vernacular detailing, and, in Swan Place, housing of a more contemporary design but of an appropriate modest scale that utilises the spaces and is clad in brick and render to blend in well with the area.



Swan Place at site of Vulcan Plastic works

The Conservation Area includes buildings on the south west side of Hosey Hill up as far as the Old Well house. This area contains the Roman Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist, a pleasant early 20th century church with tower, as well as residential properties.

Turning the corner up Vicarage Hill, the road leads past a former public house, probably related to the brewery, and up the hill past a number of imposing and attractive residences, mixed with some more modest artisan houses, and a continuation of large brick walls with dentil course underneath the coping. Grosvenor House on the south side, and Darenth on the north are both impressive examples of their type. Darenth is a Wealden hall house with widely spaced timber frame. Otherwise, the character at this point is defined by polite, 18th and early 19th century architecture. The Old Vicarage's early 19th century façade hides a Wealden hall house behind.

20th century houses on the right hand side break the pattern of tight enclosure of the road, with buildings against the footpath, but otherwise utilise materials and roof forms that complement the area. Most of the other buildings lining the route are either listed, or buildings of merit. The Coultherst's Almshouses on the right purportedly date back to the 16th century, but appear more recent from the front, with tile hanging on the first floor and local ragstone fronting the ground floor, and modern casement windows. To the left is a long ragstone wall, another important boundary feature.

4.2.2 The Green, Market Square and Fullers Hill

The historic centre of the town boasts an abundance of listed buildings, grouped in a picturesque manner around the Green and Market Square. The Green is a focal point, with a range of historic buildings on the north side and the sweeping view down to Breaches and the Pheasantry on the south side. On the north side is the Grasshopper Inn, a popular meeting place that takes its name from the grasshopper incorporated in the crest of the Gresham family, who owned the Manor of Westerham from the time of Henry VIII till the late 17th century. At the highest point of the town St. Mary's Church is tucked behind the Green, but its elevated position means that the spire is visible from much of the town. Another landmark here, but for different reasons, is the grade II listed Church Cottage, a timber framed 17th century listed cottage that forms part of the

various views to the church, and whose exposed timber frame provides clues as to the age of the town.

The two statues, of Winston Churchill and General Wolfe, on the open expanse of the Green are well known landmarks. The Green is a pleasant open space surrounding by dwelling houses, natural paving, some of which is historic, and a number of benches for exploring the space; this contrasts with the bustling nature of the start of the Market Square. On the south side of the Green a footpath, Water Lane, leads south towards the valley of the river Darent and open countryside beyond. Detractors in the area include the long flat dormer window on the roof of Owl House, and the car parking around the Green, which detracts from its otherwise tranquil atmosphere.



View from Fullers Hill to Market Square

The triangular shape of the Green and the rising land draw the eye up to the Market Square, where the buildings are taller, and more closely spaced. The majority of the buildings both around the Green and along Market Square and Fullers Hill are either listed, or identified as buildings of merit. This includes the Grade II listed Kings Arms Hotel. The buildings to the north of the Market Square are set in a triangle between Fullers Hill and London Road, and these roads lead back down the hill, with views to the Downs beyond. Buildings are mostly dignified and substantial with enough variety to maintain interest. For example, the tiny building, tucked between two larger 'gentrified' facades of No. 24 and No.26 comes as a delightful visual surprise.

There is a mix of building ages and styles here, but most are historic and date from the 18th and 19th century, often with older cores. There is a mix of brick and rendered frontages, and many sliding sash windows. Shop fronts are mainly historic or follow the traditional pattern, and present a regular rhythm with a similar height along Market Square. Nos. 17 to 23 Market Square is an arcade of shops dating from 1890, with intact shop fronts, a good example of preserved architectural harmony. There are some exceptions to the retention of well proportioned historic shop fronts, where signage or shop fronts do not relate well to the host building, in terms of materials, scale and design.



17 to 23 Market Square

The road narrows from the wider expanse of the Market Square, and Fullers Hill has a number of listed buildings and little lanes leading off it to the characteristic small enclaves of former workers cottages, such as the grade II listed 17th century Duncan's Cottages, a terrace complete with an historic row of privies. Set back from the thoroughfare and behind Duncan's Cottages is the 1839 Evangelical Congregational Church, its Greek Revival style unique within the town. The entrance to Fullers Hill is marked by a change to a more pedestrian character, with granite setts and brick paving, and seating to either side. At the bottom of Fuller's Hill a triangular space, formerly the site of the fire station and now a small car park, allows views back up the hill to the George and Dragon public house and the centre of town.

4.2.3 London Road

The northern spur of the Conservation Area takes in a number of interesting buildings, along the busy north/south route of London Road. These include the restored Victorian, neo-Tudor Moretons Almshouses with the separately listed lych gate and wall to the front. Also a key survivor of the history of Westerham in this area is the remaining part of a goods yard where the railway station was located, at Hortons Way.



Moretons Almshouses, London Road

To the south of the almshouses and behind Westerham Hall is a former barn that has been sensitively converted into a residence, a rare remaining feature in this now largely residential area.



Barn conversion behind Westerham Hall



Station House Hortons Way

At the northern point of the conservation area is the former National School for Girls and Infants, London Road, opened in 1861, now in use as an office building. The other national school was located on Hosey Hill.

4.2.4 Lodge Lane to Verralls Corner

At the junction of Croydon Road and the High Street a small lane, Lodge Lane, leads south to Squerryes Lodge, a grade II* listed building with 13th century origins, and later additions, which was later used as the Dower House to Squerryes Court. It is mostly hidden from view except from the higher parkland beyond. Lodge Lane itself is a remarkable catalogue of architectural styles, but with a consistent palette and form characteristic of the area, dating from the 14th century to the 20th. There are a number of listed cottages on the west side, and a larger house behind a high brick wall to the east.

To the other side, where Croydon Road meets Market Square, are two of the most significant detractors to the area; the row of shops that do not relate well architecturally or in terms of layout, to the street and area, including the parking to the front, and the apartment buildings which are slightly out of scale, with uncharacteristic juliet balconies and also include parking to the front, leaked space with a poor public realm. These are excluded from the Conservation Area but have a direct impact on its setting. On the northwest side of the junction is a landmark building which draws the eye when travelling west. The Old Manor is a large manor house clad in brick dating to the late 17th century, and is an impressive presence in the street scene.

There are few listed buildings in this section, but the majority of the historic buildings are considered to be buildings of merit. These include the pleasant Victorian terraces of Stratton Terrace and New Street, which may have been related to the factory buildings just to the north east or to house other residents working within the small industries in the town. The smaller residential streets off the High Street are a quiet contrast to the busy main road.



Lodge Lane

From Lodge Lane the High Street runs southwest and south through an area of mainly residential properties, set close to the road and interspersed with the occasional larger property and office development. Some of these were former shops, with shop fronts and, in some cases, tiled plinths still remaining. At the site of the former laundry on the south side is Wells Close, a new residential development that also blends in well by using vernacular detailing and materials. An historic ragstone and brick wall borders the High Street to the entrance to the close, where the remaining stone backing of a mile marker can be seen. Opposite, The Drill Hall (now used by the Sea Cadets) is a striking building faced with randomly coursed ragstone. Shaped tiles on the first floor of buildings is particular prevalent in this area.

Heading up Mill Lane, the built form is less dense, dominated by the hall building and ragstone walls, and leading to the parkland and Park Lodge, a pleasant early 20th century lodge building. Also located behind Park Lodge is the former pond to the mills located on this site.

4.2.5 The Forge to Farley Lane

The old forge at Verralls Corner forms a node at the sharp bend in High Street, and is a landmark within the area in terms of its former use and position. Opposite to it is a small green space, opening up this corner, with a red telephone box on one side. The buildings at this end of high street maintain the consistent modest scale and red brick, tile and painted brick or render of the rest of the Conservation Area. Most are listed. The road dominates, again as with rest of the route of the A25 through the area.

On the north side is a series of reminders of the brewing history of the town, such as the General Wolfe public house, Brewery Cottages, and the old Black Eagle Brewery house, the brewery site itself having been redeveloped as housing behind.



Brewery Cottages

Across from here is the restored Long Pond, which had been silted up and became wasteland after the war, until its restoration as a millennium project. The south side of the road here becomes markedly rural in nature, with the parkland beyond, mature trees and post and rail fencing.

Beyond the General Wolfe is a building known as Moretons, Great Moretons and Moretons End, a striking building with Dutch gables, substantial iron gates and burnt brick facade with red brick dressings. This was originally one house divided into three. Next to this is Pitts Cottage, a grade II listed timber framed building with a plaque commemorating the fact that William Pitt lived here. Wolfelands, formerly known as Farley, completes this group. This is a former farmhouse and the associated buildings to the north, and substantial brick and ragstone wall, mark the western limit of town.

4.2.6 Squerryes Court and Park, and Parkland to the South

Across the A25 at Farley Lane is Goodley Stock Road and Squerryes Cottages. Further along Goodley Stock Lane is Squerryes Court Lodge which marks the entrance to the grounds of the grade I listed Squerryes Court. Squerryes Court is a substantial Renaissance house dating from the late 17th century and set within landscaped grounds and parkland, with a home farm which is outside of the Conservation Area, but within the Squerryes Court Registered Park and Garden. Opposite the house is an ornamental pond, and to the south are the former stables, farmyard and dovecote. A grade II listed cenotaph just north of the dovecote commemorates the spot where General Wolfe, aged 14, first received news of his army commission.



Squerryes Park Cottages

From Park Cottages to the west side of Hosey Hill runs a swathe of wooded parkland that rises steeply to the south. The river runs at the bottom of the valley and there are a series of ponds on both public and private land. The area is crossed by footpaths and gives some panoramic views across the town, and glimpses of Squerryes Court among the trees. One of the footpaths connects to Water Lane, a pedestrian route to the Green. The parkland is an important part of the green setting of Westerham, a town of a reasonable size and close proximity to a motorway, but retaining its rural setting.

4.3 Negative Features

Westerham has largely retained its architectural and historic character, making it worthy of its designation as a conservation area. However, there are a number of features which, although mostly minor, together detract from the area's special character. These are as follows:

- Inappropriate street furniture and excessive road marking, resulting in visual clutter;
- heavy traffic;
- replacement architectural features of inappropriate modern materials, such as uPVC windows and concrete roof tiles;
- loss of historic paving and kerbs;



Replacement windows and concrete roof tiles

- areas of poor landscaping and leaked space;
- satellite dishes at the front of properties;
- weak architecture within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area;
- replacement shop fronts that are out of scale or of inappropriate materials, and excessive or inappropriate signage.



uPVC windows



5.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.1 Conservation Area Management

Management of change which allows for the preservation or enhancement of the special character of the Westerham Conservation Area, and recognises local distinctiveness, is the key aim of this appraisal and management plan. The last section of the appraisal highlights areas where there may be potential for harmful change, or where there are opportunities for enhancement. The management plan sets out how pressure or neglect will be managed to ensure that the Westerham Conservation Area retains the special character that is identified in the appraisal.

5.2 Current and Future Pressures

5.2.1 New development

Westerham town is surrounded by land designated as Metropolitan Green Belt, and some of the areas within the Conservation Area boundary are located within the designated area. This is therefore afforded a level of protection as laid out in the Core Strategy. In the Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD, there are no sites allocated for new housing development in the area. The Westerham Trading Centre, which is located just outside the Conservation Area boundary on the north side at Hortons Way, is supported as an employment site in Core Policy SP8 and more specifically within the Allocations Development Management Plan DPD as an area where the use will be retained, intensified and regenerated, and appropriate new development will be supported. It is important that any new development within this site looks for opportunities to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area, and does not harm its significance.

Development pressure is inevitable within Westerham and there are recent examples of new housing within the boundary. There are some areas identified as negative features in or adjacent to the Conservation Area within the appraisal where appropriate new development or landscaping could better reveal the significance of the area. The leaked space and poor architecture of certain buildings around the junction with Croydon Road, for instance, which is just outside the Conservation Area, could be improved with new landscaping or development which could better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area. Where infill development is proposed inside the Conservation Area, it must respond to its environment and context, in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Westerham boasts a diverse range of architectural form and style, of various periods, but there is a consistent palette as identified in the appraisal section. A useful guide for new development in historic areas, published by English Heritage and CABE, is *Building in Context: New Development in Historic Areas*, and its accompanying toolkit for assessing proposals for new development. Its eight principles are as follows and are useful measures for objective assessment to ensure that development within the Westerham Conservation Area maintains or enhances its significance:

Principle 1: A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

Principle 2: A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context

Principle 4: A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it.

Principle 5: A successful project will respect important views.

Principle 6: A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

Principle 7: A successful project will use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used on existing buildings.

Principle 8: A successful project will create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and text of the setting.

Place names are very important to the local distinctiveness of Westerham as they often reflect past uses that are no longer in existence, such as the mills and breweries. Retention of names should be considered with any new development.



5.2.2 Alterations

Article 4 Directions

Minor inappropriate alterations to buildings, spaces and the public realm can cumulatively detract from an areas special character. In Westerham Conservation Area, as identified in the appraisal, this includes replacement or loss of architectural features and boundary treatments, which may be a permitted development right for dwelling houses, and alterations to shop fronts and signage.

The District Council could consider making an Article 4 direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. This would require home owners to submit planning applications for any number of different minor alterations, such as replacement windows, replacement doors, or alterations to boundary treatments. As this would only apply to dwelling houses and the proportion of these within the Conservation Area boundary is not high and the process for making and subsequently enforcing an Article 4 direction is resource-heavy, it is not considered to be an effective measure to take at this time. If in the future funds may be made available to concurrently offer grants to encourage people to apply for permission to reinstate original features, this could be reconsidered. For instance, a high number of dwellings have unfortunately replaced original windows with uPVC windows, which detract from the special character of the area.

Guidance notes for minor alterations

An alternative to making an Article 4 direction that does not provide the statutory control, but could be effective in other ways, is to produce a guidance note specific to the Westerham Conservation Area that celebrates its special character and raises awareness of the importance of retaining features that contribute towards this character. A guidance note could also provide advice on maintenance and appropriate replacements where necessary. English Heritage research carried out in relation to the Conservation Areas at Risk campaign, and available on their website, provides useful information for homeowners about the value of living in conservation areas, and the effect of harmful change. This could be included in any guidance notes.

Shop fronts

There are a number of surviving Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts in the Conservation Area, including some that survive even where the building has been converted into residential use. It is very important in maintaining the significance of the Conservation Area that these shop fronts be retained, as they were designed to complement the building in which they sit, are appropriately proportioned and provide a sense of place and retention of historic character. Management of this will be through the Development Management process, and the guidance note on shop fronts that accompanies saved Policy EN27 of the Local Plan. It would be beneficial, however, to create a specific guidance note for Westerham, which acknowledges outstanding shop fronts, such as the surviving row next to the Kings Arms Hotel on the Market Square, and provides guidelines on alterations, design of new shop fronts, and advertisements. There are a few instances of signage where, for instance, the fascia sign is too deep and out of proportion with the shop front, or obscures features of the building, that should be avoided.

5.2.3 Streetscape and Public Realm

Traffic is, despite the creation of the M25 in 1986, often heavy along the A25 route through Westerham. Traffic calming measures may be a consideration, although the winding route and change in levels through town help to naturally slow traffic down. It is important that any measures taken would not produce clutter within the Conservation Area, such as excessive signage or barriers, or inappropriate colouring of surfaces. Regular liaison between traffic engineers and local authority planning and conservation officers is a constructive way of ensuring that change is effectively managed, and a formal system could be considered for this. Statutory undertakers are also required to permanently reinstate a highway where they disturb it with the existing materials, or if not possible, with the closest possible match. The historic character of the traffic and pedestrian routes, including their orientation, widths, materials and names, should be maintained. Best practice and helpful case studies can be found in the following, which should be taken into consideration for works to the public realm in the Westerham Conservation Area:

- *Manual for Streets 2, Department of Transport 2010*. This document provides guidance on delivering more contextually sensitive designs, including historic context.

- *Streets for All South East, English Heritage, 2005.*

The guidance provided in these documents provide best practice principles to be adopted for the following:

Surface Materials

Quality of surface materials in the public realm, and the retention of historic surfaces, is vital to the significance of the Westerham Conservation Area. There are some surviving stone kerbs which should be maintained, and consideration should be given to reinstatement where materials are made available through reuse. Parts of the pedestrianised area have herringbone brick pavers as surfaces, which is a generic and visually distracting surface that has no historic precedent. Where management plans are in place to replace these when necessary, materials used should better reflect the local distinctiveness of the area, taking into consideration what was available locally in the past (stone), or what historically was imported, such as granite setts. There are several areas of hard limestone paving and kerbs that could be replicated and should also be maintained, which historically may have been either ragstone or ironstone. Local stone such as Kentish rag stone may be an appropriate choice of material.



Generally, these principles should be followed:

- Relate ground surfaces to the local context.
- Keep paving simple and avoid discordant colours.
- Maintain and restore historic paving and detail such as kerbs and gulleys.

Street furniture

There is no particular pattern for street furniture in the Conservation Area, but the majority of the bollards, street lighting and sign posts are finished in black. This is an appropriate finish where historic colours are not known, although it needs to be acknowledged that true black is a relative latecomer to painted street furniture and railings, since the late 19th century onwards. All new or redecorated street furniture in the area should be finished in black to maintain a consistent character. The exception to this are the timber bollards surrounding the Green, which set apart this important space and soften the landscaping with the use of natural materials.

There are no historic street lamps within Westerham, but there are a few on Market Square that are replicas of Victorian patterns, and are painted black. New street lighting is likely to be more successful if it is based on historic photos of past lighting columns, or is an appropriate contemporary design and complements the area, which again would need to be finished in black.

In general, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Identify and remove superfluous or redundant items.
- Minimise signage and locate signs on existing bollards, lampposts or walls and buildings at the back edge of the pavement.
- Unify street furniture by finishing in black.
- Reduce guard rails to a minimum and use simple designs that relate to local character.
- Avoid standardised lighting and choose the design and light source most appropriate for the area.
- If traffic-calming measures are required, they should be fitted sensitively into the street scene.
- Adopt a minimalist approach. Any works should involve minimal visual interference with the established streetscape and respect the historic street layout.
- Limit road markings to those essential for highway safety and use a muted yellow colour where double lines are absolutely necessary.



Street furniture in need of maintenance



Bespoke black painted street furniture

A positive step, along with liaison with traffic engineers, could be a complete audit of street furniture and subsequent removal of any redundant signage or other furniture.

APPENDIX 1 - Maps

Map 1 – Conservation Area Boundary

Map 2 – Designations

Map 3 – Character Appraisal

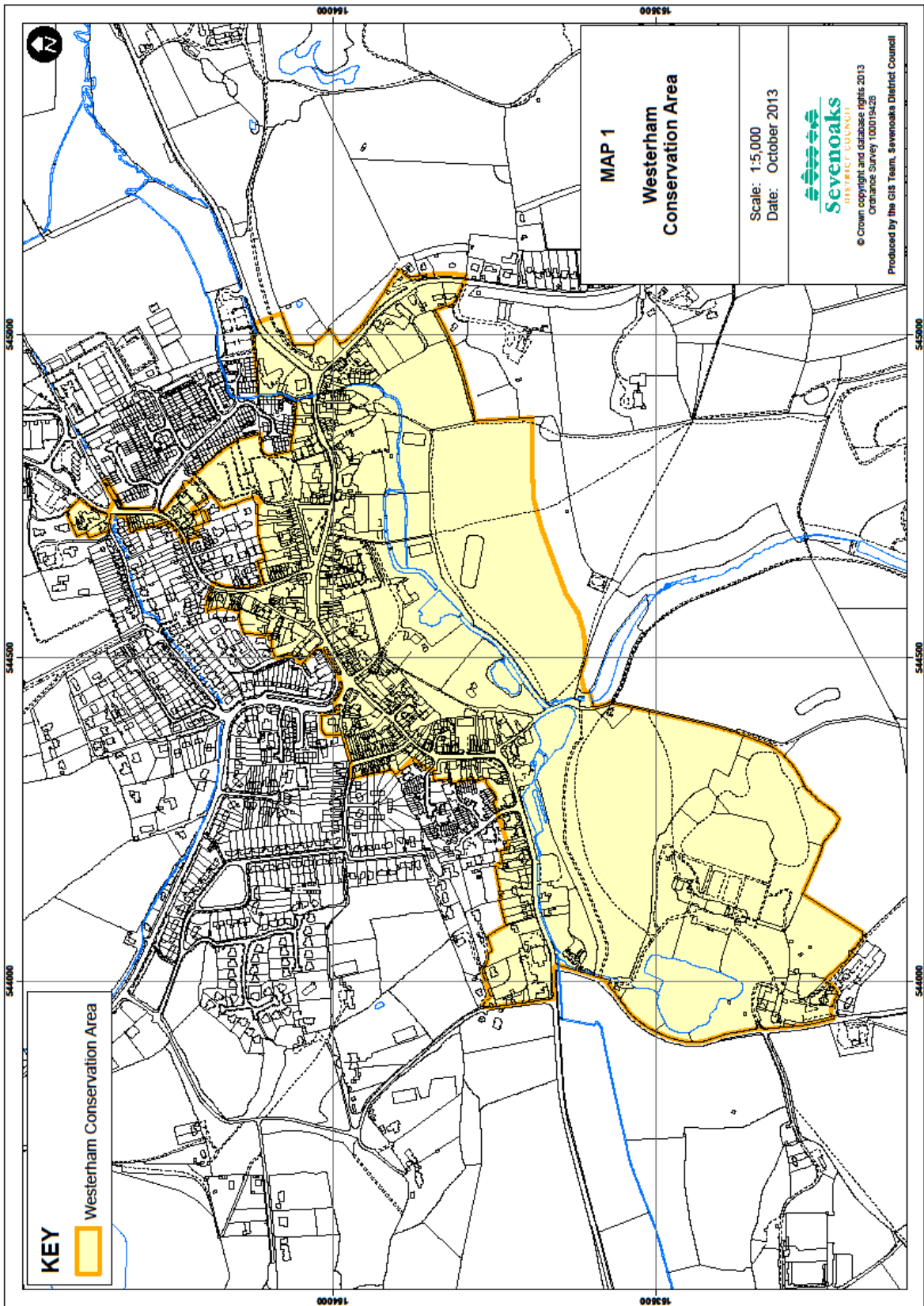
Map 4 – Views

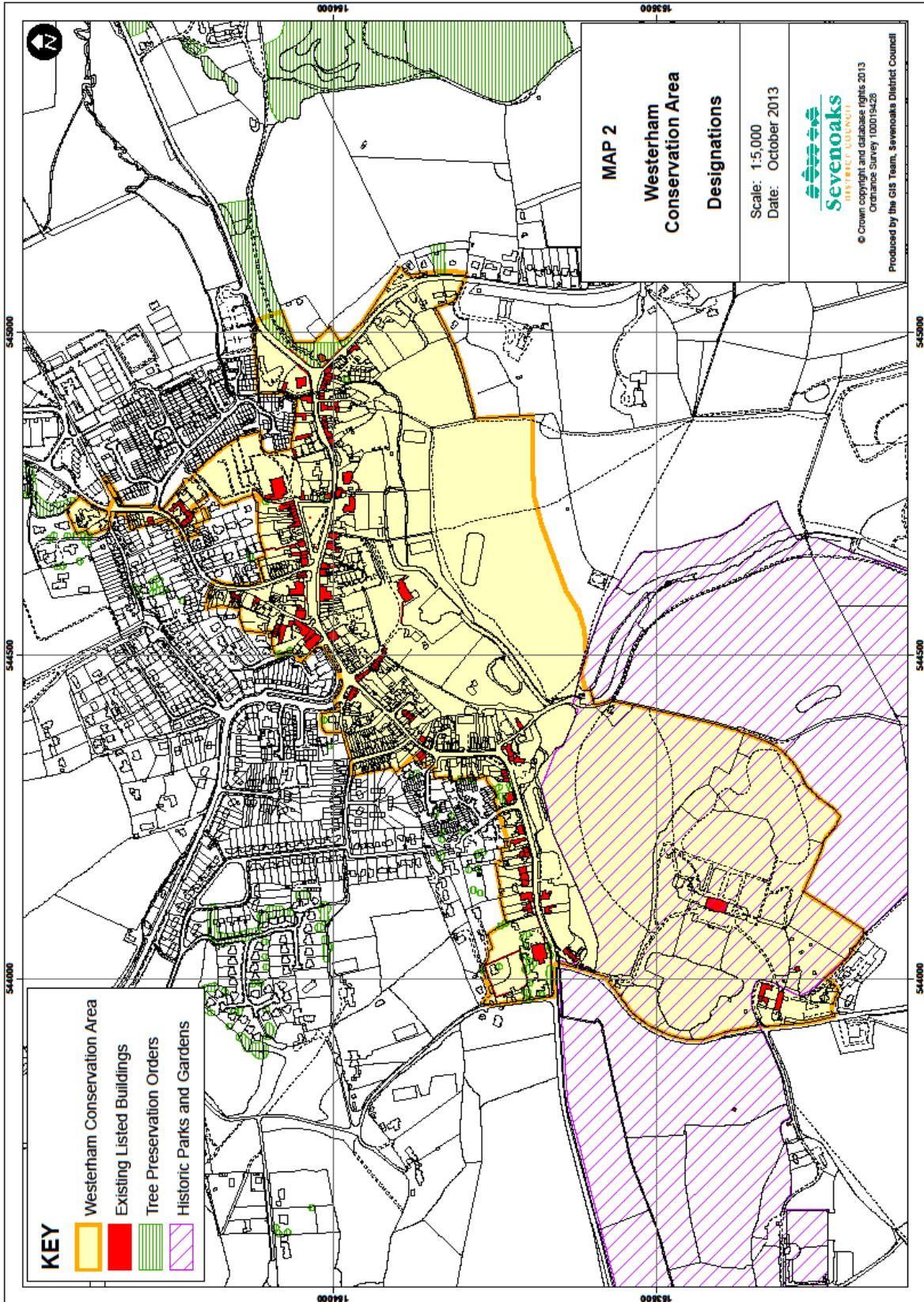
Map 5 – Squerryes Court Historic Park and Garden

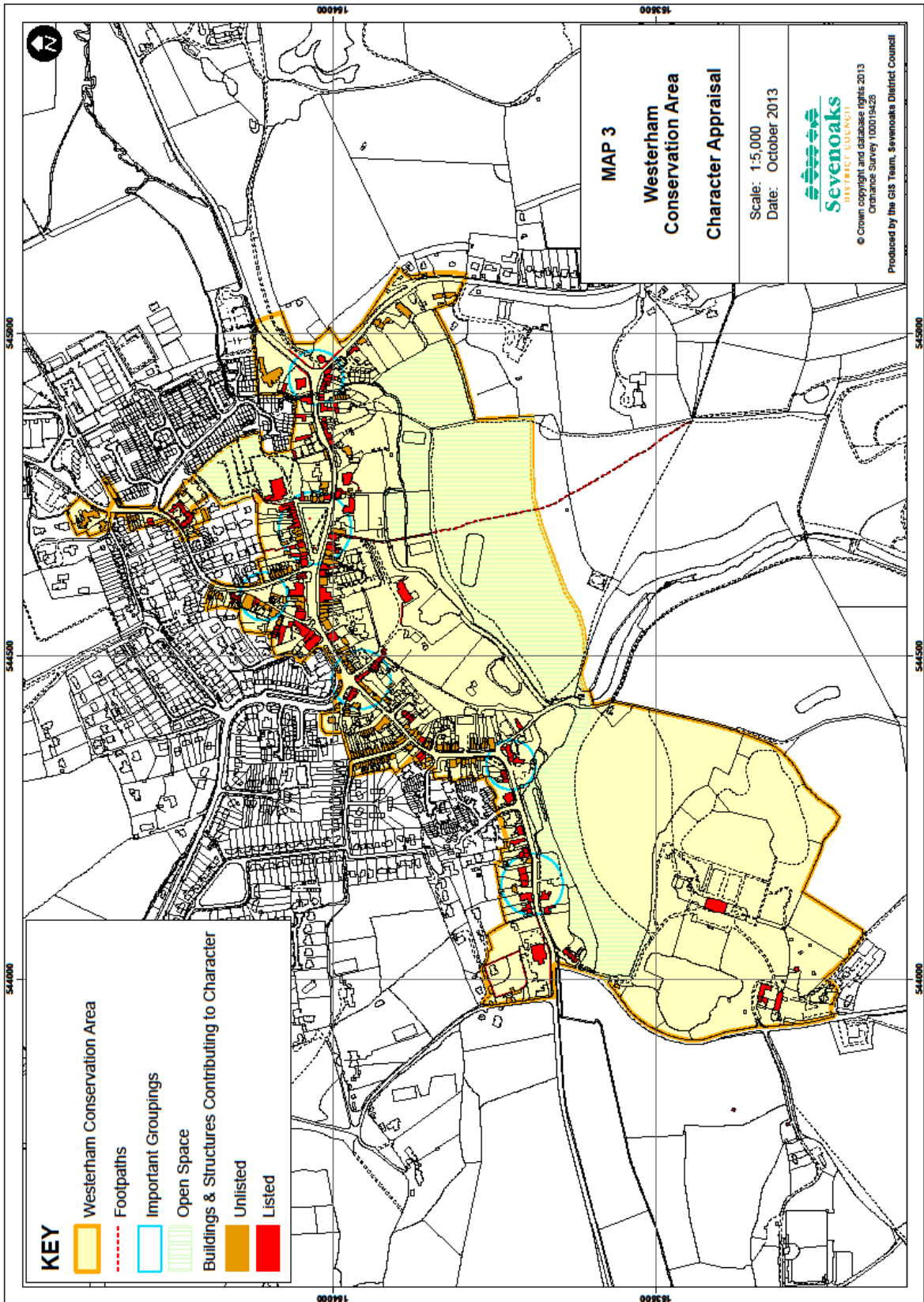
Map 6 – Westerham 1884 – 1894

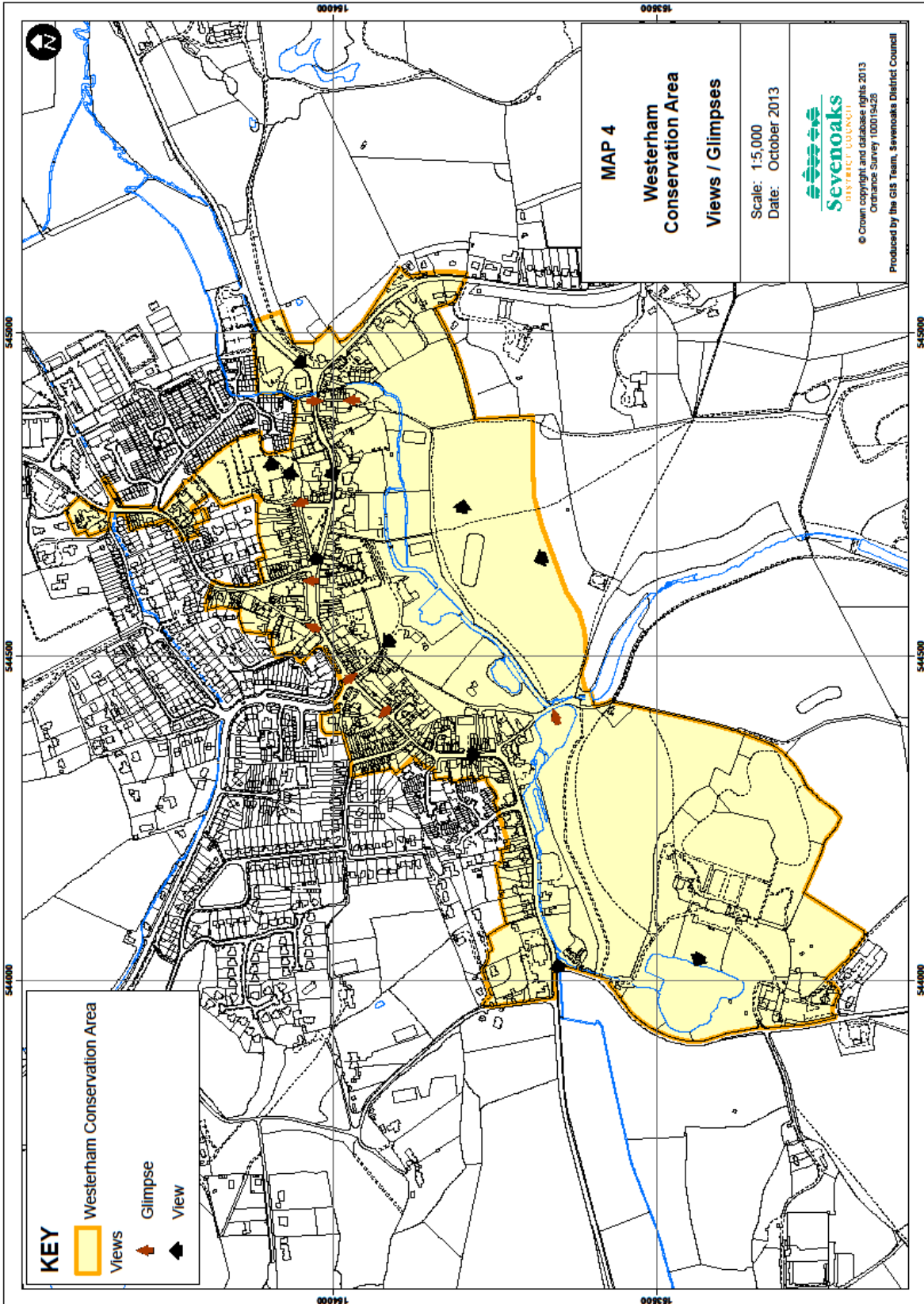
Map 7 – Westerham 1909

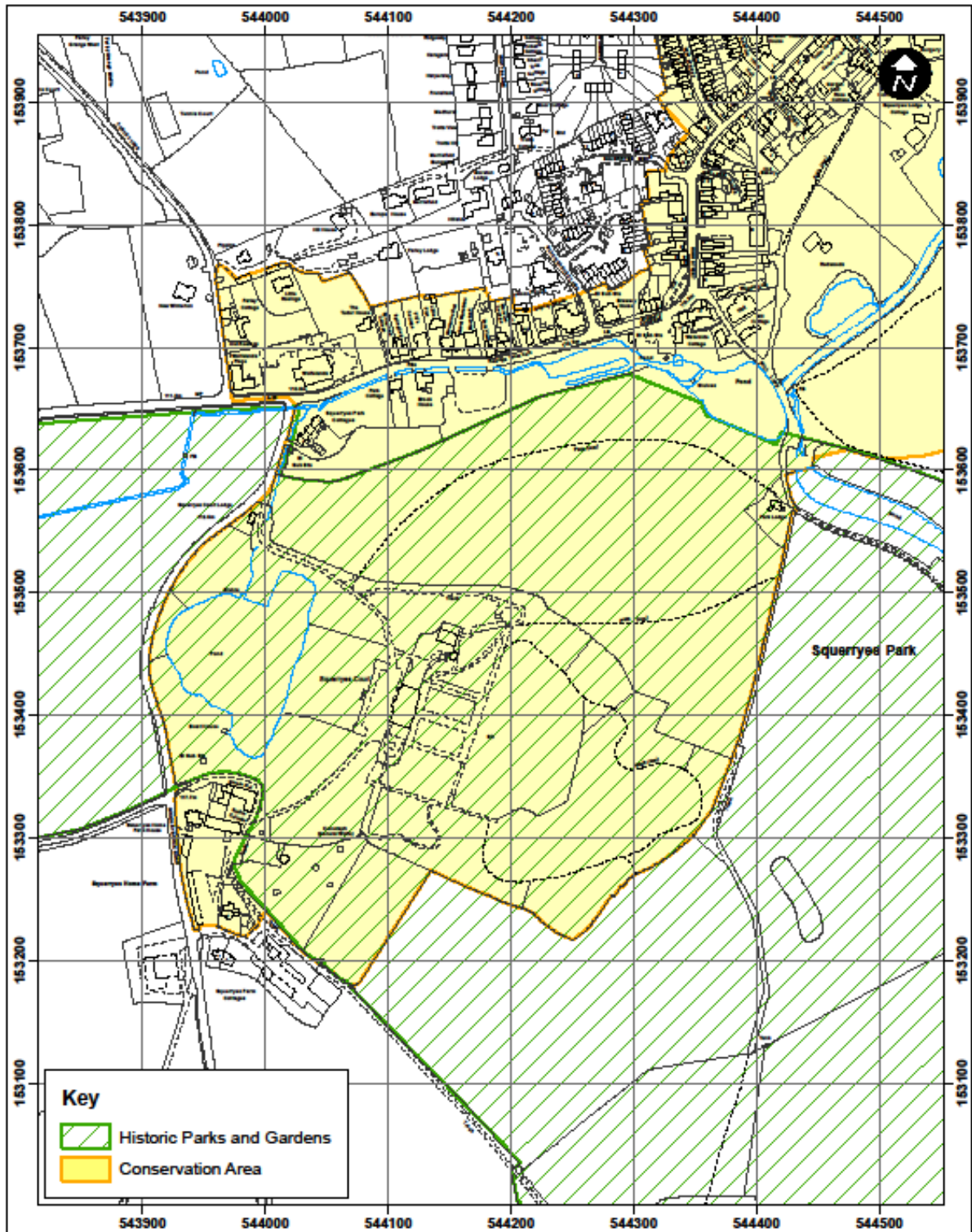
Map 8 – Westerham 1938 - 1939











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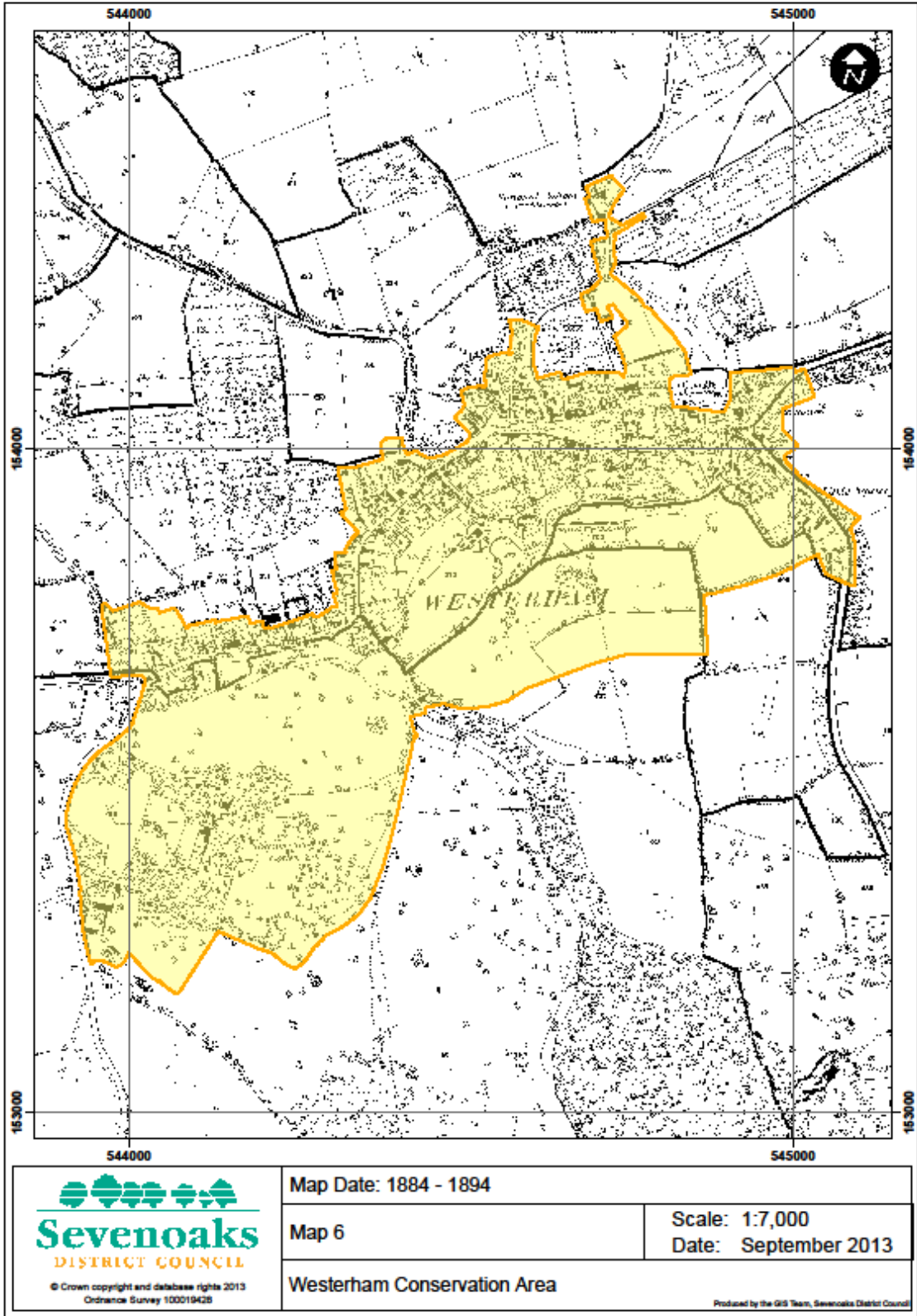
Squerries Court Historic Park and Gardens

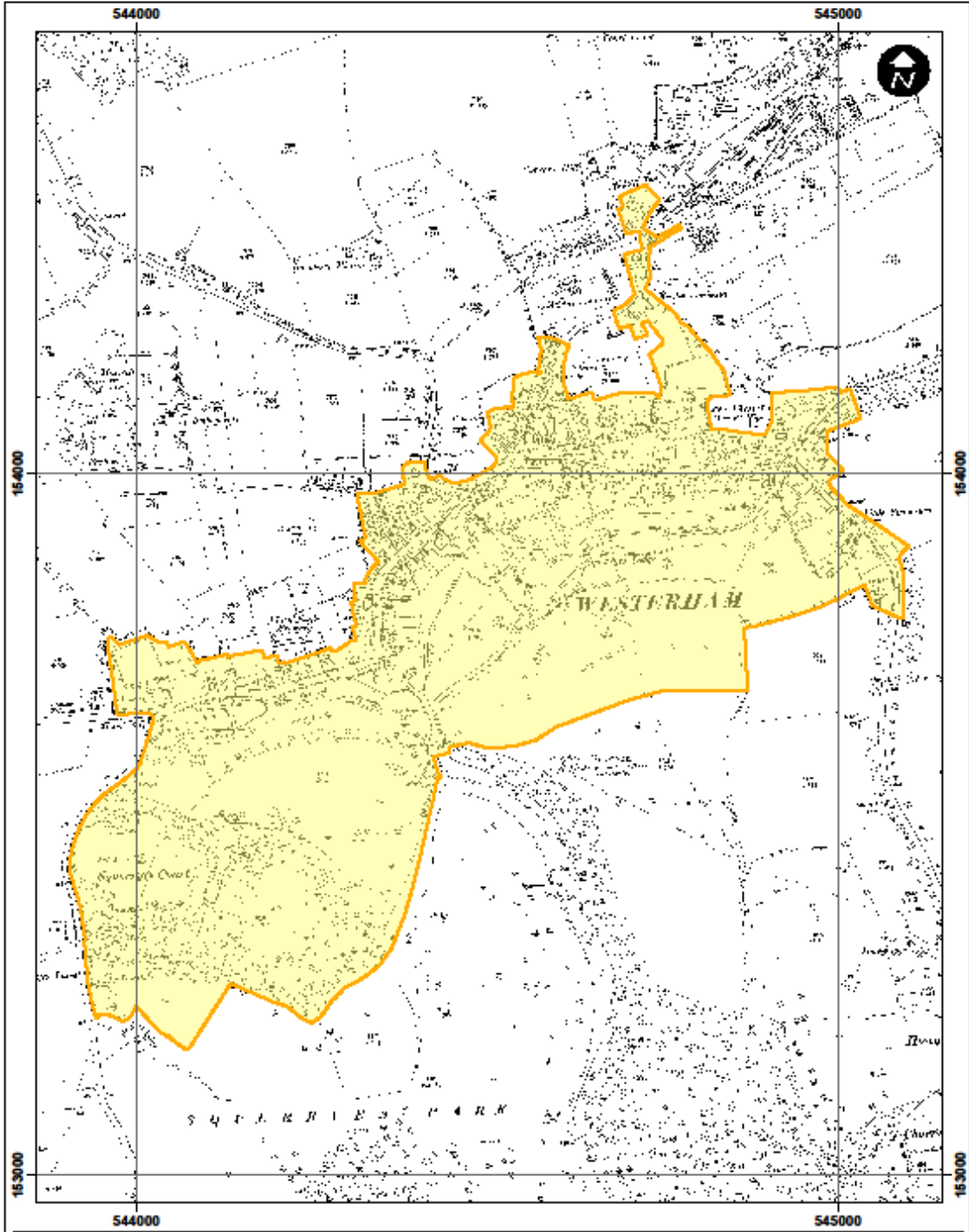
Map 5


Scale: 1:4,000
Date: September 2013

Westerham Conservation Area

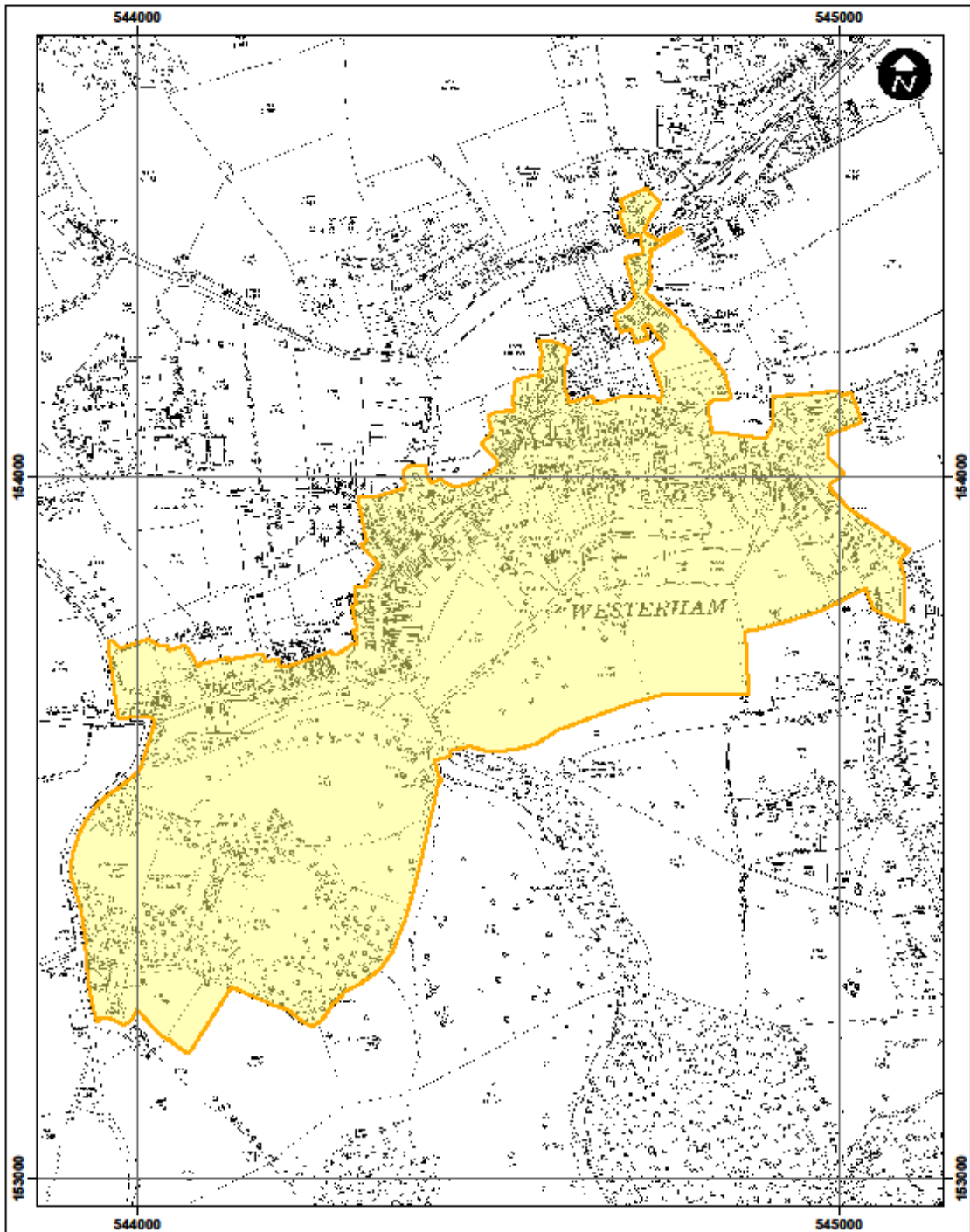
Produced by the GIS Team, Sevenoaks District Council






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	Map 7	Scale: 1:7,000 Date: September 2013
	Westerham Conservation Area	

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 <p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100019428</p>	Map Date: 1938 - 1939	
	Map 8	Scale: 1:7,000 Date: September 2013
	Westerham Conservation Area	

Produced by the GIS Team, Sevenoaks District Council

APPENDIX 2 - Bibliography

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APPENDIX 3 - Glossary

Ashlar – Walls or facings of dressed stonework laid in courses with thin joints.

Catslide roof – A roof with one side longer than the other, continuing at the same pitch over an extension to a building

Dentil - one of a number of small rectangular blocks resembling teeth, usually found as a decoration under the moulding of a cornice at eaves level.

Hip roof – a pitched roof which has four slopes instead of the two of a gable roof.

Gable – The triangular part of an end wall of a building with a pitched roof.

Gabled roof - The commonest type of roof with sloping sides meeting at a ridge and with a gable at each end

Gallet – a flake of stone (or flint) used for filling the joints in rubble stone walls

Parapet – A low wall standing on top of an external wall or a separating fire wall, at roof level. Often obscuring guttering.

Weatherboard – Horizontal boards used to externally clad walls, typically on timber-framed buildings