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Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The sensitivity of land around key settlements

Final Report
Prepared by LUC

May 2017



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1 Introduction

Background and Purpose of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.1 Sevenoaks District Council commissioned LUC in August 2016 to review and update the existing landscape character evidence base, and produce an updated landscape character assessment and landscape sensitivity assessment. The landscape character assessment is presented as a separate report and should be read as context to this landscape sensitivity assessment.
- 1.2 This landscape sensitivity assessment is intended to provide context for policies and proposals within the emerging Local Plan, in particular in relation to built development (both housing and employment land). It is at a landscape character area scale and therefore is intended to provide a general overview of comparative landscape sensitivity around the key settlements based on landscape character. The information within each assessment can be used to identify key sensitivities in each assessment area, and to achieve best integration of built development in each area. It is too broad a scale to make judgements on the appropriateness of specific developments on individual sites (and does not consider specific development proposals where these might exist), but can provide the context for more detailed studies of individual sites.
- 1.3 The settlements that this assessment relates to are shown on **Figure 1.1**.

How to Assess Specific Sites

- 1.4 This assessment considers sensitivity of relatively broad areas to the 'principle' of development. As well as providing an overall indication of relative landscape sensitivity of different areas, it provides guidance about what sort of locations might be most appropriate for development. This information provides useful context for a more detailed assessment of specific site options. The following questions provide a structure for appraising a specific site within each area:

Which assessment area does the site lie in and what is the sensitivity level for the assessment area?



Are there any indications of which areas would have higher or lower sensitivity and how does the site fit with this?



Would development on the site affect any of the 'key sensitivities'?



Would development on the site be in line with the 'guidance' provided for the area?



How should the development respond to the sensitivities highlighted?

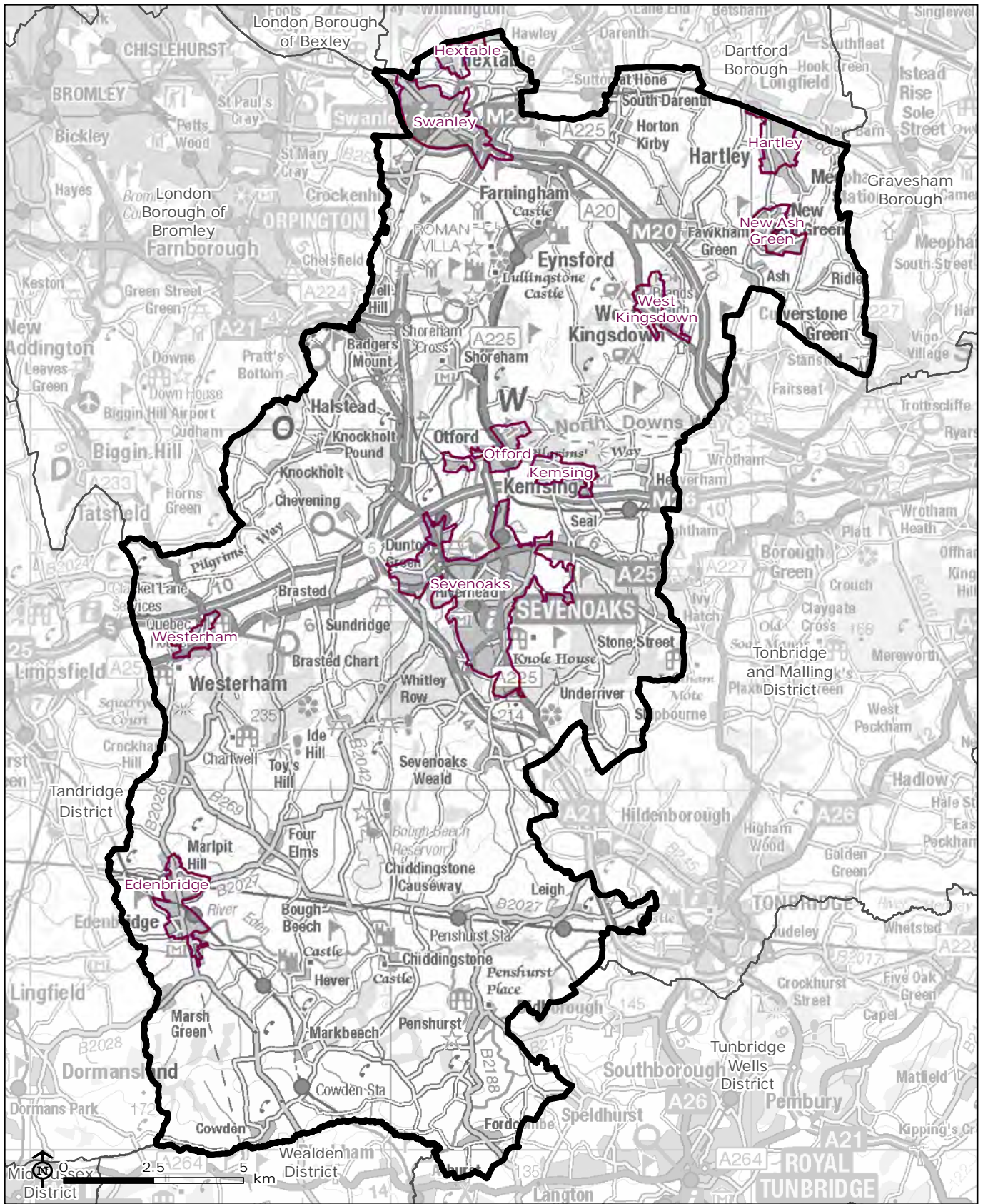
Structure of this report

1.5 This report comprises:

- **Section 1** (this section) which sets out an introduction and background;
- **Section 2** which presents the methodology; and
- **Section 3** which presents the results.

1.6 This report is supported by the following appendices:

- **Appendix 1** provides a glossary of terms;
- **Appendix 2** presents the assessment areas and absolute constraints on a large fold-out OS 1:25,000 base map.



- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Adjacent district boundary
- Settlement

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 1.1: Settlements that the sensitivity assessment relates to

Source: SDC



Map Scale @ A4: 1:150,000

2 Methodology

Identifying the areas for assessment

- 2.1 A list of key settlements for assessment was provided by Sevenoaks District Council, based on the top tiers of the settlement hierarchy. A 1km buffer was drawn around each settlement or settlement cluster (where settlements are closer than 2km apart) as a starting point for the study area (see **Figure 2.1**). This resulted in the following settlements or settlement clusters:
- Swanley/Hextable;
 - Hartley/New Ash Green;
 - West Kingsdown;
 - Sevenoaks/ Seal
 - Otford/ Kemsing;
 - Westerham;
 - Edenbridge.
- 2.2 The 1km buffer area around each settlement cluster was then divided into assessment areas along the boundaries of landscape character areas (LCAs) except in the case of the large assessment area to the north of Sevenoaks which was subdivided along the route of M26 which was a convenient physical boundary. These areas were then refined by:
- omitting areas outside Sevenoaks' administrative boundary;
 - drawing around 'absolute constraints' (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3) where they occur at the outer edge of the study area;
 - limiting the study area to those areas contained within major barriers such as the M25 to the north of Westerham, and the A21 to the south-west of Sevenoaks;
 - omitting any small areas of other LCAs on the outer edge of the 1km buffer;
 - omitting a small area between Otford and Kemsing which lies outside the settlement boundary but contains existing residential development and a Scheduled Monument which represents an 'absolute constraint' to development.
- 2.3 The final assessment areas are shown in **Figure 2.2**. and in more detail on a fold-out 1:25,000 OS base map at **Appendix 2**.

Types of development to be considered

- 2.4 This assessment considers sensitivity to the most likely type of development to come forward in Sevenoaks, that is:
- residential development – defined as 2/3 storey properties
 - commercial development – defined as small-scale office, light industry or small sheds (B1/B2).
- 2.5 The assessment considers sensitivity to the 'principle' of these development types, without knowing the specific size or location of potential development. However, the sensitivity ratings relate to field-sized extensions rather than single houses (most landscapes would have a lower sensitivity to the latter). Therefore the sensitivity score can only be an overall indication of relative landscape sensitivity. Sensitivity often varies across the area and the evaluation/ landscape sensitivity judgement sections give an indication of higher or lower sensitivity areas.

Approach to assessing sensitivity

2.6 There is currently no published method for evaluating the landscape sensitivity of different types of landscape to development. However, the *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (Scottish Natural Heritage and the former Countryside Agency, 2002) is a discussion paper on landscape sensitivity and capacity and has informed LUC's approaches over the years. The methodology used in this study builds on LUC's considerable experience from previous and on-going studies of a similar nature and was developed in consultation with Sevenoaks District Council.

2.1 Landscape sensitivity is a measure of the resilience of the landscape to change. *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Sensitivity and Capacity* defines landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change or development as follows:

'It should be defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape itself, the way that it is perceived and the particular nature of the type of change or development in question.'

2.2 In this study the following definition of landscape sensitivity has been used:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape are susceptible to change as a result of introducing a particular type of development, in principle.

2.3 Landscape sensitivity in this study is a relative measurement of the extent to which the character of the landscape is likely to change as a result of proposed development within it.

2.4 For example, a higher sensitivity area would likely result in greater adverse impacts on landscape features and character while a lower sensitivity site would likely be more able to accommodate that change without such adverse effects. However, there are always cases where good development can be sensitively accommodated into high sensitivity landscapes, and cases where poor development will result in adverse impacts even in low sensitivity landscapes. The guidance provides information as to how to minimise adverse effects.

2.5 It should be noted that the term 'sensitivity' in this study is equivalent to term 'susceptibility' as defined in the Landscape Institute and IEMA's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Third Edition).

2.6 Landscape and visual sensitivity has been assessed for each 'assessment area' with reference to six criteria, set out in **Table 2.1** overleaf.

Table 2.1: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria						
Physical character						
This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. It also considers the presence of landscape features if they are important to landscape character (i.e. the representation of elements which are key characteristics or valued features, with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment) because these would potentially be liable to loss.						
Lower sensitivity		→			Higher sensitivity	
<i>Eg the landscape has smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform; the area has fewer landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</i>		<i>Eg the landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features within it; the area has some landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</i>			<i>Eg the landscapes has dramatic landforms or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</i>	
Settlement form and edge						
This considers the overall settlement form and character of the settlement edge and considers whether development in the assessment area would be in accordance with the general settlement form/ pattern, and how it might affect the existing settlement edge.						
Lower sensitivity		→			Higher sensitivity	
<i>Eg development in the assessment area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern, and could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.</i>		<i>Eg development in the assessment area may be slightly at odds with the settlement form/ pattern, and may adversely affect the existing edge to some extent.</i>			<i>Eg Development in the assessment area would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern, and would adversely affect an existing settlement edge (the settlement edge may be historic or distinctive and have an important relationship to the adjacent countryside). The area may provide an important separation between adjacent settlements.</i>	

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Settlement setting

This considers the extent to which the assessment area contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, or playing an important part in views from a settlement. This also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

Eg the area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement or play a separation role.

Eg the area provides some contribution to the setting of the settlement by providing, or plays some part in views from the settlement, or play a role in the perception of a gap between settlements.

Eg the area provides an important setting to the settlement by providing an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, or playing an important part in views from the settlement, or an area which plays an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements.

Visual character

This considers the visual prominence of the assessment area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible). It also considers the skyline character of the area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

Eg the area is enclosed/ visually contained and/or has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes (particularly AONBs), and the area does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline

Eg the area is semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas. It is likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes (perhaps including small parts of the AONBs), and may have some visually distinctive or undeveloped skylines within the area.

Eg the area is open and/ or has a high degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes (particularly AONBs), and/ or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Perceptual qualities

This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Consistently high scenic value, perceived naturalness, freedom from human activity/disturbance and 'dark skies' would all add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

Eg the area is significantly influenced by development/ human activity, where new development would not be out of character.

Eg A landscape with some sense of rurality, but with some modern elements and human influences.

Eg A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. Dark skies and a high perceived degree of rurality/ naturalness with few modern human influences. High scenic value.

Historic character

This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' (a sense of being an historic landscape, with reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings or other features listed in the landscape character assessment such as ancient routeways and historic farmsteads).

Lower sensitivity

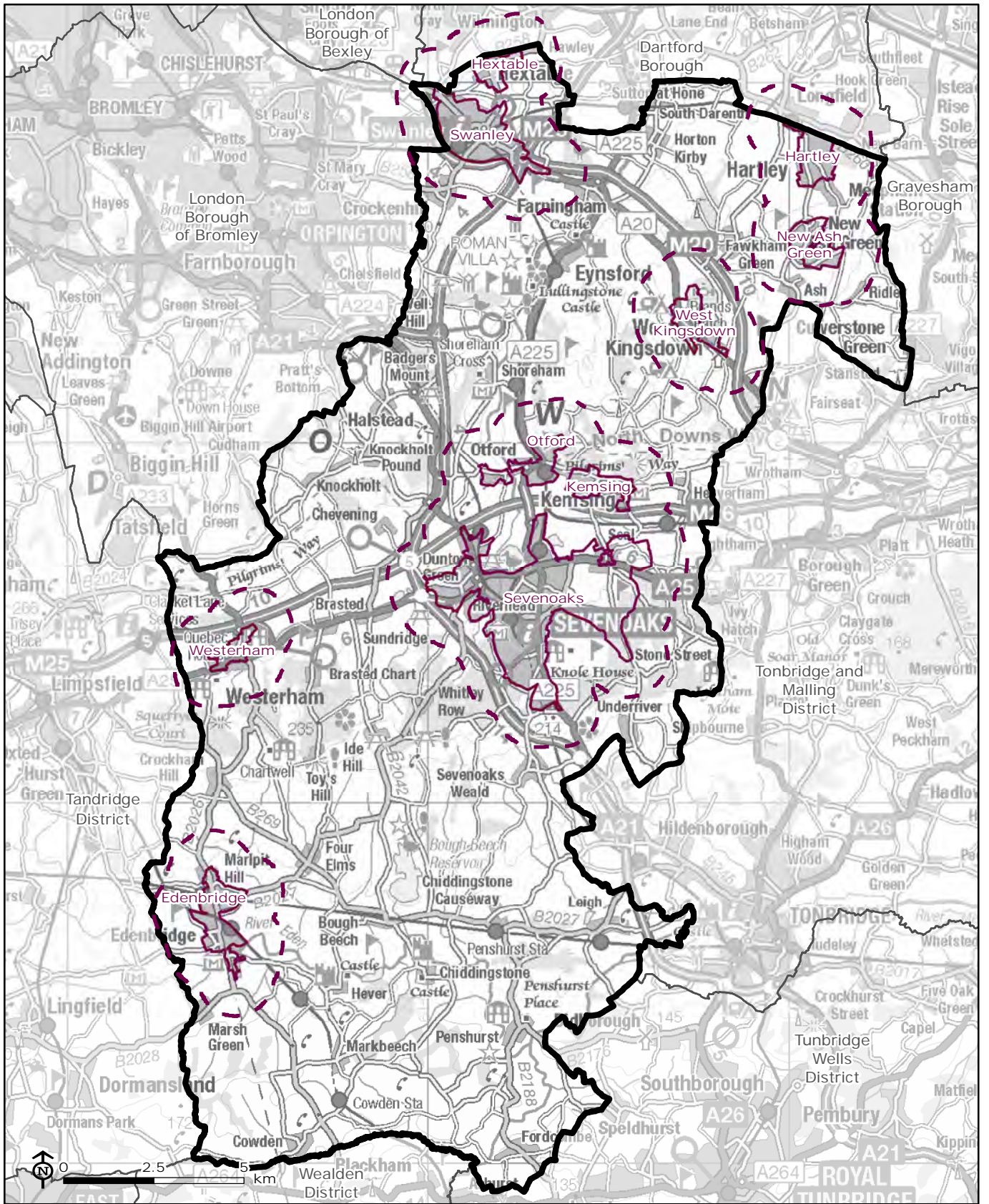


Higher sensitivity

Eg A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. larger areas of parliamentary and prairie fields and fewer areas of assarts, fields with wavy boundaries, pre-1810 parkland, deer parks, and commons).

Eg A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.

Eg A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth (i.e. large areas of assarts, fields with wavy boundaries, pre-1810 parkland, deer parks, and commons).



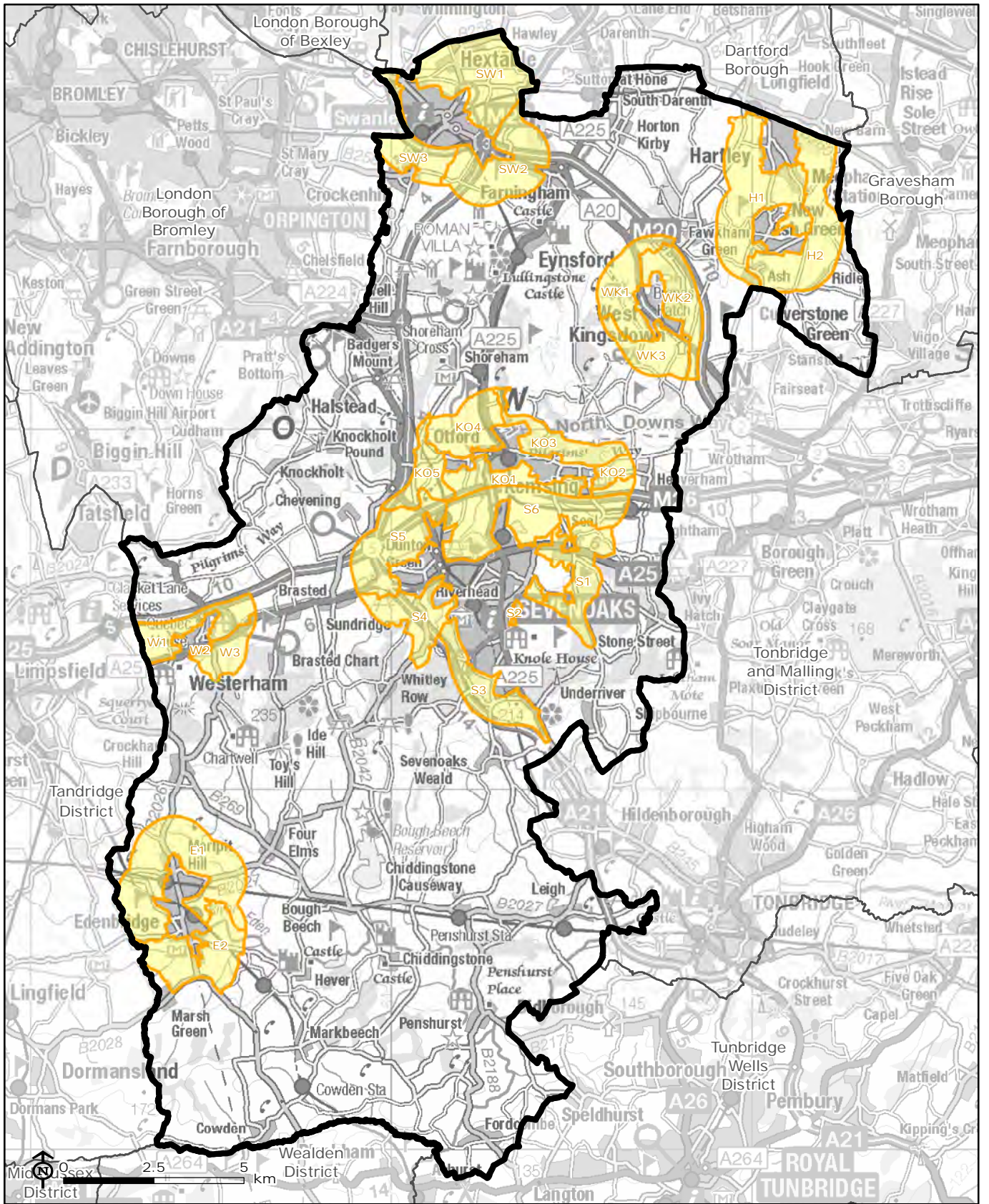
Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment




Figure 2.1: 1 km buffers around settlements

Source: SDC



Map Scale @ A4: 1:150,000



-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Adjacent district boundary
-  Sensitivity assessment area

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 2.2: Assessment Areas

Source: SDC, LUC



Map Scale @ A4: 1:150,000

Sensitivity Judgements

- 2.7 A rating for landscape sensitivity has been provided in relation to each of the development types, according to the five point scale set out below:

Table 2.2: Sensitivity Rating Definitions

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The character and quality of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape are highly susceptible to being changed as a result of introducing the development type, in principle.
Medium-high	The character and quality of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape are moderate-highly susceptible to being changed as a result of introducing the development type, in principle
Medium	The character and quality of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape are moderately susceptible to being changed as a result of introducing the development type, in principle
Low-medium	The character and quality of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape are low-moderately susceptible to being changed as a result of introducing the development type, in principle
Low	The character and quality of the landscape or characteristics of the landscape have a low susceptibility to being changed as a result of introducing the development type, in principle

- 2.8 An area rated as having *high* sensitivity may do so because it has a relatively high sensitivity to a number of different criteria but it may also do so because of a particularly high sensitivity to just one criterion.

Presentation of results

- 2.9 Each settlement/ settlement group is presented by introducing the character and brief history of its development, and the features that pose a constraint to development. This is accompanied by maps showing the location of the settlements in relation to key constraints and landscape character areas, and an historic OS map (dated 1868-1895) is also included as an indication of how the settlement has changed over the past 120 years or so.
- 2.10 This introduction is followed by the sensitivity assessments. Each assessment area starts with a map showing the area being assessed. Under this is information about which character area adjoins the settlement boundary, plus any information about 'absolute constraints'¹ to growth. This is followed by a couple of representative photos from the area.
- 2.11 The next page sets out a description of the assessment area using the sensitivity assessment criteria set out in the method, and this is followed by an evaluation of overall sensitivity with reference to these criteria, providing an assessment rating on a five point scale. The assessment reports on overall sensitivity for the majority of the area, but also includes details of higher and lower sensitivity areas where this can be determined at this scale.
- 2.12 This is followed by key landscape sensitivities to development which aims to set out those features and characteristics that are most sensitive to built development, and this is followed by guidance for any potential development.

¹ Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland, Flood Zone 3.

3 Results

3.1 The following pages set out the results of the sensitivity assessment by settlement/ settlement cluster as follows:

- Swanley/Hextable;
- Hartley/New Ash Green;
- West Kingsdown;
- Sevenoaks/ Seal
- Otford/ Kemsing;
- Westerham;
- Edenbridge.

Summary Table of Results

3.2 The table below gives a summary of the comparative landscape sensitivity of each assessment area for residential and commercial development. It should be noted that this reports on overall sensitivity for the majority of the area but does not include variation of sensitivity within the area.

Table 3.1 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Summary

Area Code	Area Name	Residential Development	Commercial Development
Swanley and Hextable			
SW1	Swanley north including Hextable	L-M	L-M
SW2	Swanley east	L-M	L-M
SW3	Swanley south	M	M
Harley/New Ash Green			
H1	Hartley/New Ash Green west	L-M	M
H2	Hartley/New Ash Green east	M	M-H
West Kingsdown			
WK1	West Kingsdown west	M-H	M-H
WK2	West Kingsdown east	M	M
WK3	West Kingsdown south	L-M	M

Area Code	Area Name	Residential Development	Commercial Development
Sevenoaks and Seal			
S1	Sevenoaks east (Seal)	M-H	H
S2	Sevenoaks east (Knole paddock)	M-H	M-H
S3	Sevenoaks south-west	M-H	H
S4	Sevenoaks west	M-H	H
S5	Sevenoaks north west	M	M
S6	Sevenoaks north	L-M	L-M
Kemsing/ Otford			
KO1	Kemsing & Otford south	M	M-H
KO2	Kemsing east	M-H	H
KO3	Kemsing north	H	H
KO4	Otford north	M	M-H
KO5	Otford west	L-M	M
Westerham			
W1	Westerham north	M	M
W2	Westerham south	M-H	M-H
W3	Westerham south-east	M-H	H
Edenbridge			
E1	Edenbridge north	M-H	M-H
E2	Edenbridge south	M	M

Swanley/Hextable








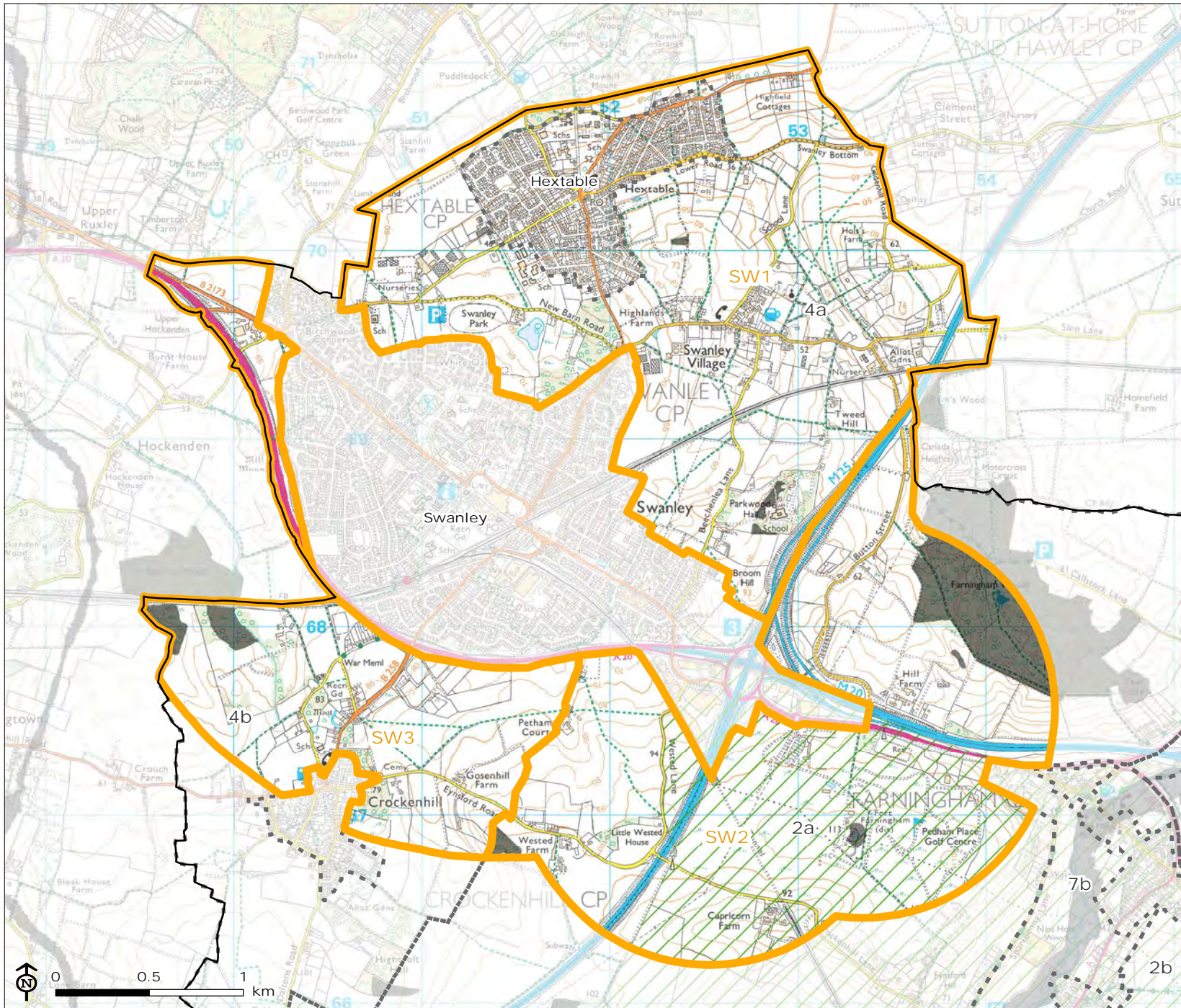
Swanley/Hextable

- 3.3 Swanley and Hextable are located in the north-west corner of Sevenoaks District, adjacent to Dartford and the London Borough of Bromley. Historically, both settlements originated as small clusters of farms and homesteads which expanded rapidly following the construction of the railway in Victorian times. Today, the settlements serve as commuter towns/villages as a result of their close proximity to London and the presence of the mainline railway and motorways. Swanley Park (a public park occupying surviving open land of a former market garden typical of the C19 and C20 local horticultural industry supplying vegetables fruit and flowers for the London markets) separates the two settlements.
- 3.4 The rapid expansion of the settlements into adjacent fields has resulted in some hard urban edges. The southern edge of Swanley is contained by the A20 road. Swanley Village, located outside Swanley's settlement boundary, is an historic village which has retained its traditional settlement pattern, with limited areas of modern infill development.
- 3.5 There are three assessment areas around these settlements:
- SW1 Swanley north including Hextable
 - SW2 Swanley east
 - SW3 Swanley south

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.1: Swanley/Hextable

-  Sevenoaks district boundary
 -  Sensitivity assessment area
 -  Area of outstanding natural beauty
 -  Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
 -  Landscape Character Areas
- 2a: Farningham Downs
 - 2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
 - 4a: Hextable Settled Farmland
 - 4b: Crockenhill Settled Farmland
 - 7a: Darent Valley - South Darent to Farningham
 - 7b: Darent Valley - Farningham to Otford



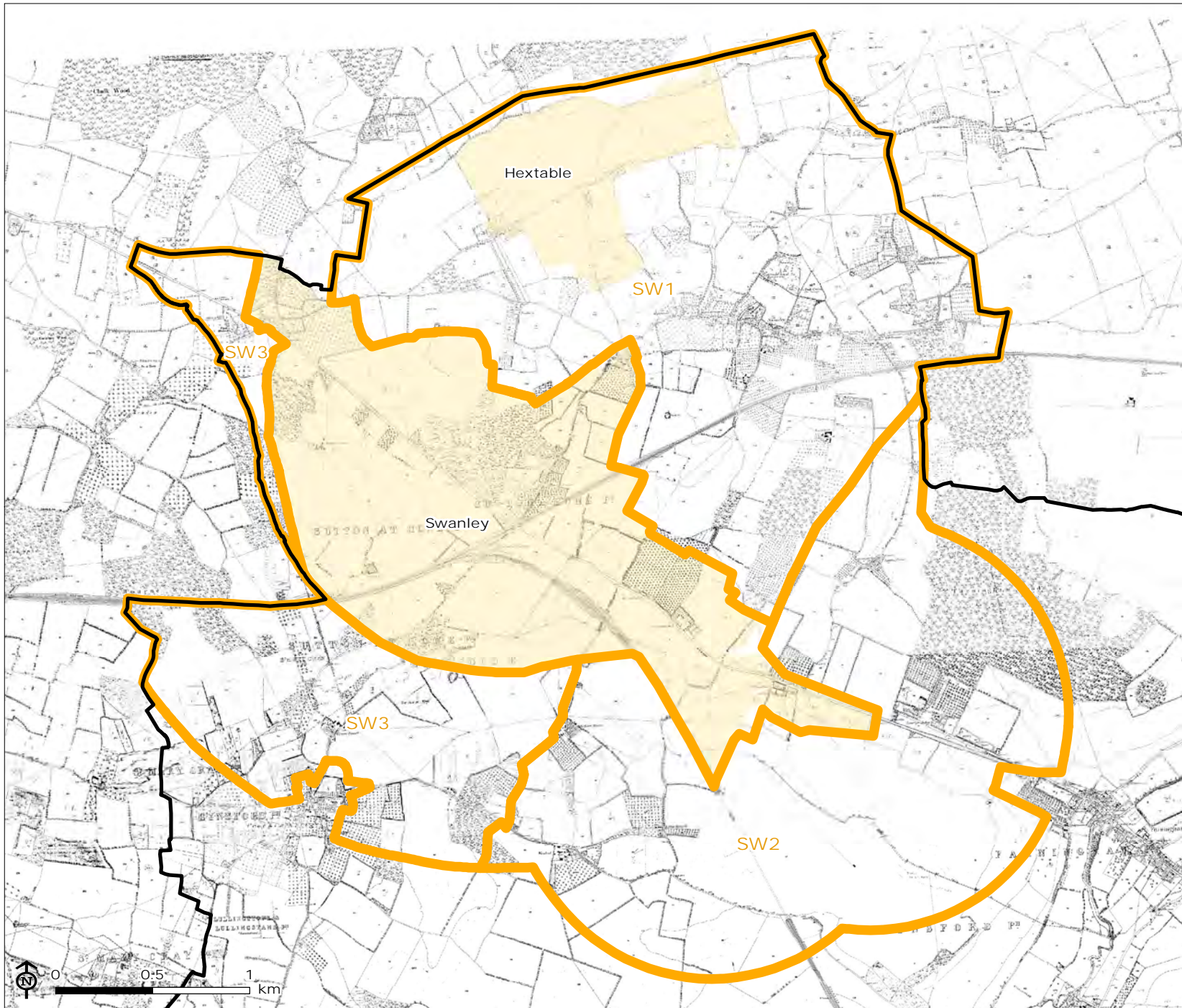
Map Scale @ A4: 1:29,000



Sevenoaks Landscape
Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.2: OS 1st edition
Historic Map (1868-1895)
for Swanley/ Hextable

- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Sensitivity assessment area
- Settlement

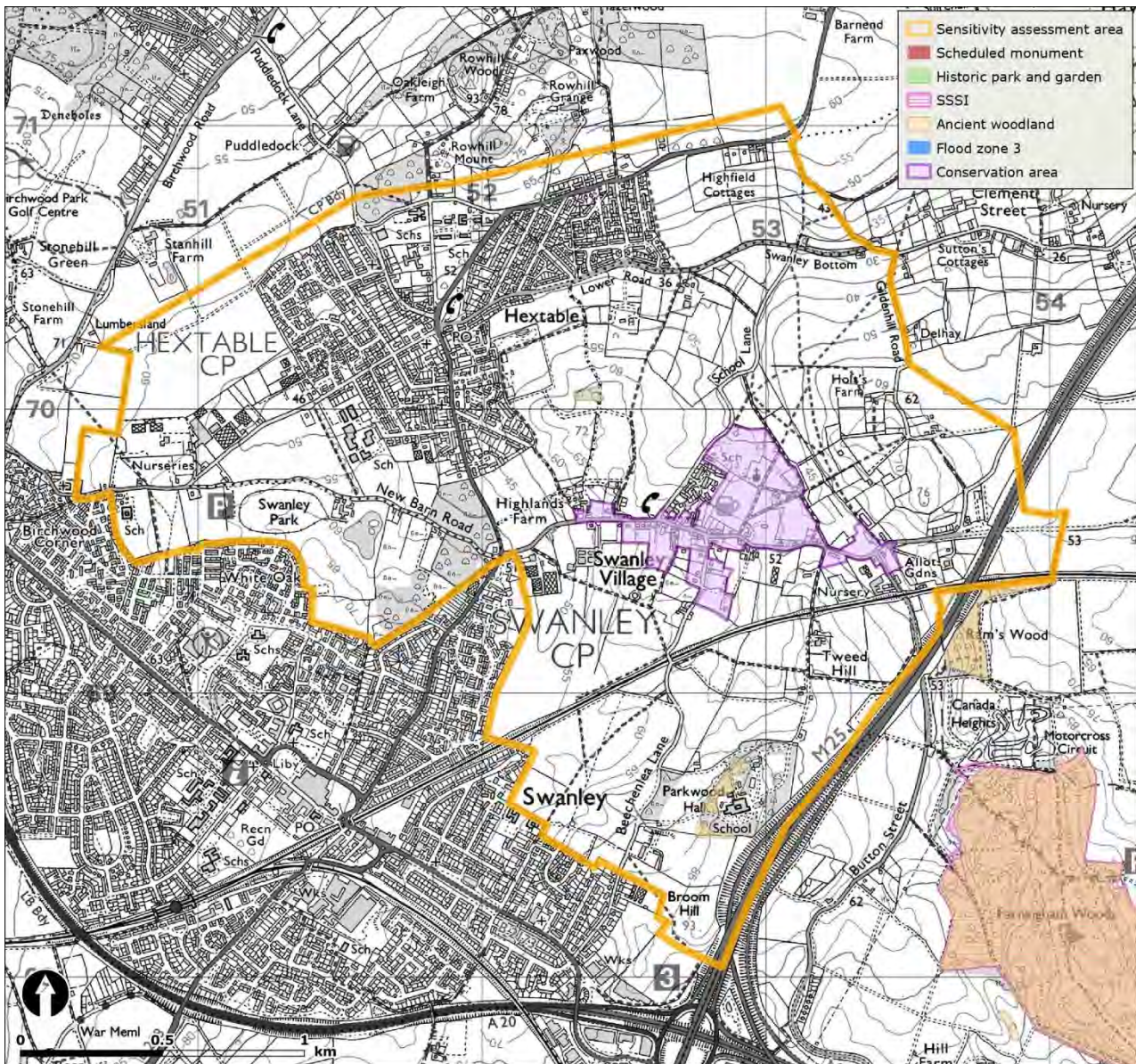


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:28,000



SW1: Swanley north including Hextable



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the north of Swanley which contains Hextable and Swanley Village forms part of the **Hextable Settled Farmland Landscape Character Area** which comprises a gently undulating chalk landscape overlain by Thanet sandstone giving rise to a mixed arable and pastoral farmland with fields of varied sizes and origins, defined by a mixture of hedgerows, woodland and post and wire fences. The area is influenced by the urban fringes of Swanley and Hextable, and the M25 which forms its eastern boundary. Two small areas of ancient woodland at Little Wood and Parkwood Hall form 'absolute constraints'² to development in this area.

² 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Gently undulating chalk and sandstone landform which indicates lower sensitivity but is punctuated by several locally distinct small rounded hills. The landscape pattern is varied in scale, with some small scale enclosures located to the east of Swanley Village (south of Holt's Farm) which are of higher sensitivity and more open fields to the west of Swanley which indicate lower sensitivity. Swanley Park which occupies surviving open land of a former market garden, and its associated avenue, are valued features that increase sensitivity. There are remnant areas of thick mature hedgerows, broadleaved woodland and scrub which are valued and raise sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	This area contains the historic nucleated village of Swanley Village (designated as a Conservation Area), which has some modern 20 th century in-fill development but is well integrated into the landscape and retains a rural character with narrow lanes and numerous blocks of woodland and trees surrounding the settlement, increasing sensitivity around this village. This contrasts with the hard settlement edges on the north eastern side of Swanley and the south of Hextable which have more recently expanded into the farmland and are not well screened or integrated into the surrounding landscape and therefore have a lower sensitivity.
Settlement setting	The area to the east of Swanley Village forms an important part of the rural setting of the village as it retains many characteristic features including mature hedgerows and trees and has less incongruous features than the west of the area resulting in increased sensitivity. Close to the edges of Swanley and Hextable there has been loss of some characteristic rural landscape features including hedgerows and the introduction of modern/suburban land uses including glass houses and horsiculture, which reduces sensitivity. The three settlements within the area are close together and are at risk of coalescence. Swanley Park and its surrounds form an important part of the gap between Hextable and Swanley.
Visual character	For the most part, this is a relatively low lying landscape and is generally not particularly visually prominent. However, the slopes of the small hills within the areas are locally visually prominent, as are more open areas of the landscape which have seen historic hedgerow loss and now have a more open character, increasing visual sensitivity. Areas with more woodland coverage such as

	around Swanley Park and the area surrounding Parkwood Hall are more enclosed and have reduced sensitivity with regards to visual character.
Perceptual qualities	<p>Around Swanley Village the landscape retains many rural features including small-scale fields, mature hedgerows and narrow, winding lanes which indicate higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The area adjacent to the settlements of Hextable and Swanley has become suburbanised, with horticulture and other uses such as glass houses resulting in an urban fringe feel in some places and heavy road traffic on rural roads and is therefore less sensitive in terms of perceptual character. Noise from the M25 is often intrusive across the whole of this area.</p>
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises small scale fields of regular parliamentary enclosure and fields bounded by tracks and other rights of way which resulted from post-medieval informal enclosures</p> <p>Sensitivity is raised by the presence of the Conservation Area at Swanley Village which contains numerous listed buildings including St. Paul's Church which forms a focal point of the village and pockets of ancient woodland surround the listed building of Parkwood Hall.</p> <p>Closer to the edges of Swanley and Hextable there are more modern land uses including glass houses and larger fields of more recent origin that have less time depth and therefore reduced sensitivity.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the gentle landform and existing urban influences (particularly on the edges of Hextable and Swanley where characteristic rural features have been lost) reduce sensitivity to built development, the valued landscape features (thick hedgerows, small woodlands and scrub), historic character (with some historic field patterns and a Conservation Area) and the role of the undeveloped parts of the landscape in separating Swanley, Swanley Village and Hextable increase sensitivity to **low-medium** overall for both residential housing and commercial development.

The more rural areas away from the settlement edge, the locally distinct small rounded hills and areas around Swanley Village, Swanley Park and Parkwood Hall are more sensitive to development than the areas on the edge of the settlements.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- Local hills which are visible features in the landscape.
- Swanley Park which occupies surviving open land of a former market garden, and its associated avenue, which is a valued landscape feature and provides the separation between Swanley and Hextable.
- The rural character of Swanley Village Conservation Area, which contains numerous listed buildings of a varied yet locally traditional vernacular.
- The narrow rural lanes, with steep banks and high hedges.
- The remnant small-scale field pattern located around the edges of Swanley Village.

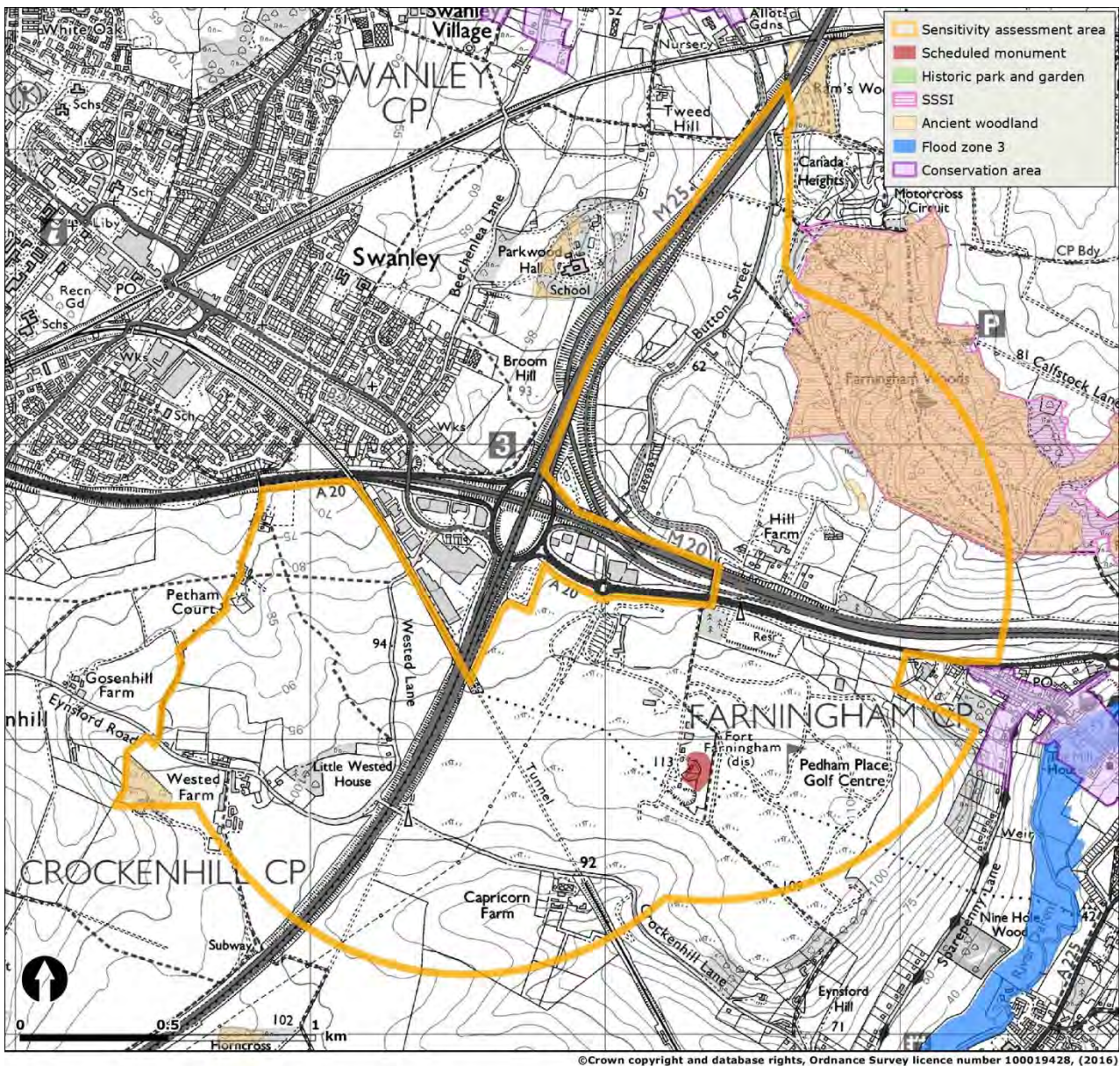
- Small copses of ancient woodland, areas of scrub and mature hedgerows which are valued landscape features as well as being important for biodiversity.

Guidance

This area has a low-medium sensitivity to built development. The hard urban edges of Swanley and Hextable would have a slightly lower sensitivity and new built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges. Any new development should:

- Avoid building over the local hills that provide distinctive landforms and focal points in the landscape;
- Conserve Swanley Park which occupies surviving open land of a former market garden, and its associated avenue;
- Respect the rural setting of Swanley Village Conservation Area and the typically rural and low density settlement pattern away from Swanley and Hextable.
- Integrate and soften the existing hard urban edges of Hextable and Swanley town;
- Retain thick, mature hedgerows where they remain and enhance these features in association with any development (as these have already seen losses in other parts of the landscape);
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible. Avoid widening of roads and introduce formal passing places;
- Retain the historic field patterns, areas of ancient woodlands and rural settings of historic buildings;
- Complement the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades.

SW2: Swanley east



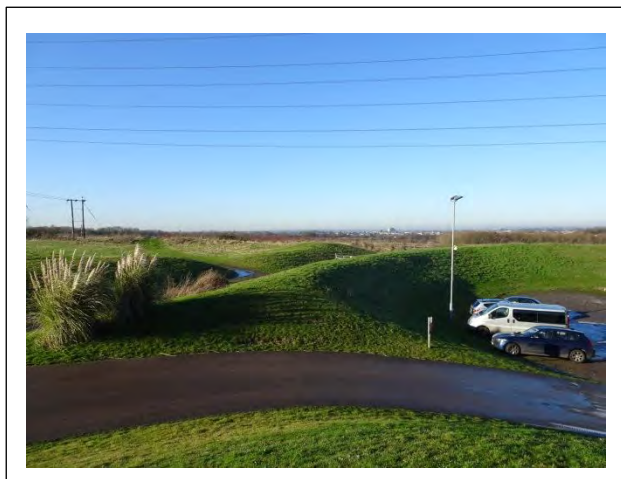
Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the east of Swanley is within the **Farningham Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises a gently undulating chalk landscape which steeply slopes down into the Darent Valley in the east, comprising a mixture of arable and pasture farmland in a medium-large scale field pattern of parliamentary origin. The north of the area is more rural but has urban fringe influences including Pedham Place golf course, pylon lines and the M25 and M20.

'Absolute constraints'³ in this assessment area include ancient woodland and SSSI at Farningham Woods, a small area of ancient woodland at Cogetts Hill and Fort Farningham Scheduled Monument.

³ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>A gently undulating landform with a medium-large regular field pattern which indicates lower sensitivity but with some valued landscape features including broadleaved (including ancient) woodland and hedgerows along field boundaries and tracks which raise sensitivity.</p> <p>The land which slopes steeply down to the Darent Valley in the east is likely to be of higher sensitivity due to the more dramatic landform.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>The dense urban development of Swanley town to the west is contained by the existing motorways with industrial estates at the Swanley Motorway Interchange – additional development in this area is likely to have a poor relationship with existing settlement due to the presence of these well integrated, permanent boundaries. Settlement away from Swanley tends to consist of scattered farm complexes and isolated large houses. A small amount of linear development is found along Button Street.</p> <p>The settlement of Farningham (part of which is a Conservation Area) is located immediately to the east of the area. This edge of Farningham is well contained by woodland and landform.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>Although it has some detracting features, the landscape provides a rural setting to the dense urban development of Swanley. However, it does not play a particularly important role in views from the settlement or backdrop to the settlement. The area forms an important gap between Swanley town and Farningham, raising sensitivity to development in this respect.</p>
Visual character	<p>This is an undulating landscape above the Darent valley. The area north of the M20 is well enclosed by hedgerows and trees which reduces visual sensitivity. Other areas have a more open and exposed character due to larger field sizes and a lack of hedgerows and are more sensitive with regards to visual character. The valley sides and skylines above the Darent Valley have a higher visual sensitivity to development.</p>
Perceptual qualities	<p>The rural qualities of the landscape are affected by some large complexes of farm buildings, a golf course, telecommunications masts and pylon lines which give an urban fringe character to the landscape which reduce sensitivity. Noise from the numerous major transport routes crossing through and adjacent to the landscape is intrusive.</p>

Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area mostly comprises irregular fields bounded by roads, tracks and paths which resulted from post-medieval informal enclosures. There are some pockets of parliamentary enclosure to the west of Farningham. These field patterns have been disrupted by hedgerow loss and other more modern intrusions and therefore have some sensitivity, but are not as sensitive as intact historic landscapes. Features of the landscape which result in higher levels of sensitivity to development include Fort Farningham which is a Scheduled Monument located approximately 1.5km to the west of Farningham and ancient woodland at Farningham Woods.
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Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the landscape has an urban fringe character due to pylons, masts and large scale transport routes which reduces sensitivity to built development, sensitivity is raised by the rural and open nature of the landscape, the presence of ancient woodland, the role the area plays as a backdrop to the Darent valley, the presence of historical features including Fort Farningham Scheduled Monument and the role of the landscape in separating Swanley and Farningham. Overall the area is considered to have a **low-medium** sensitivity to housing or commercial development.

The steeper areas that form the slopes of the Darent Valley are more sensitive to development, due to the long views down the Darent Valley and the setting the landscape provides to Farningham Conservation Area. Areas close to the edge of Swanley and the motorway junction would have a lower sensitivity, including to commercial development which is already present in this area.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The steeply sloping landform of the slopes of the Darent Valley.
- Areas of intact historic field pattern and hedgerows.
- Areas of ancient woodland at Farningham Woods and Coggets Hill, valued for nature conservation.
- The Scheduled Monument at Fort Farningham, dating from the 1890s.
- The narrow, winding rural lanes which are often banked by high hedges.
- The rural nature of the landscape including sparse settlement of isolated farms and detached houses outside the main settlements.

Guidance

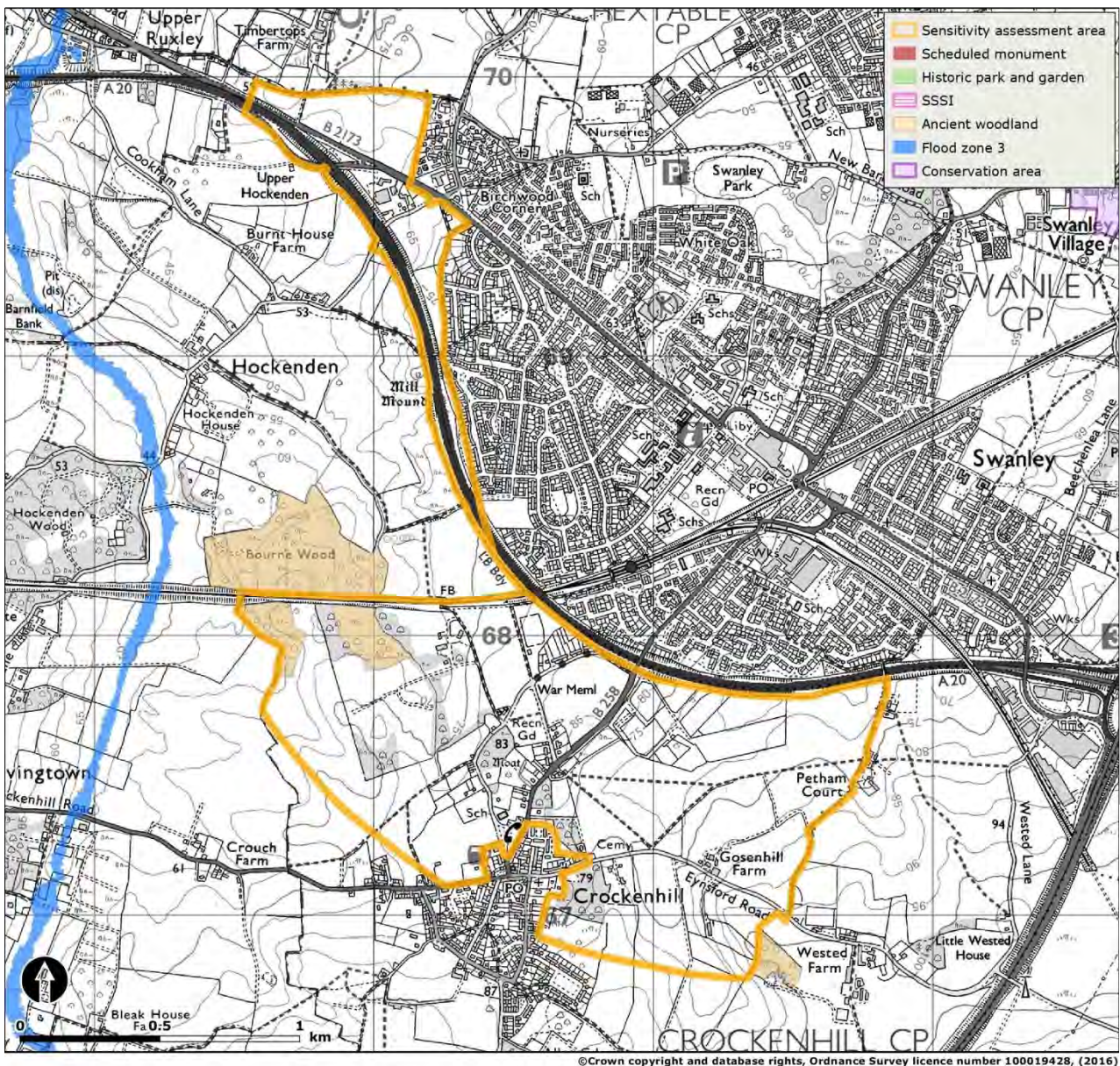
This area has a low-medium sensitivity to built development. The area lies partially within the Kent Downs AONB, although this designation does not necessarily coincide with the most sensitive parts of the assessment area. The edges of Swanley would have a slightly lower sensitivity and new built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges. Any new development should:

- Avoid the steep slopes leading down to the Darent valley or the skyline above the valley – consider views from the opposite valley side, for example above Eynsford, when planning any development in this area;
- Retain remnant thick hedgerows and woodlands and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- Retain the rural and low density settlement pattern away from the edges of Swanley - any settlement should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads and hamlets. Avoid any

further linear development extending along roadsides;

- Maintain the separation between Farningham and Swanley;
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting in the wider rural landscape;
- Retain the remnant historic field patterns and important areas of ancient woodland;
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades to improve coherence in an area with many building styles and ages.

SW3: Swanley south



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the south of Swanley which also abuts the village of Crockenhill forms part of the **Crockenhill Settled Farmland Landscape Character Area** which comprises a gently undulating chalk and sandstone landscape of mostly arable cropping with some pasture contained within a mixed field pattern defined by a mixture of hedgerows, woodland and tracks/roads. The area has an overall rural character but has urban fringe influences adjacent to Swanley and is disturbed by major transport corridors, including the A20 which forms the northern boundary of the assessment area.

Ancient woodland at Bourne Wood forms an 'absolute constraint'⁴ to development in the north-west of the area.

⁴ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Gently undulating landform which indicates lower sensitivity but is overlain by a relatively small scale landscape pattern in places with characteristic thick hedges, remnant orchards and blocks of mature woodland which are more sensitive features.
Settlement form & edge	<p>The A20 motorway contains the dense urban development of Swanley and forms a distinct edge to the south of the settlement. The embankments of the road are well wooded, visually separating Swanley from the wider countryside, so any development on this edge would represent a noticeable extension into countryside.</p> <p>The edges of Crockenhill are less well defined, and well integrated into the landscape by existing blocks of woodland and lines of trees. Development in this area could alter the historic relationship with the core of Crockenhill and its landscape setting.</p> <p>Outside these two settlements there are occasional isolated farm buildings located along rural roads and tracks, as well as 20th century linear development along some roads which detracts from the traditional rural settlement pattern.</p>
Settlement setting	Intervisibility and thus the role of the landscape as part of the setting between Swanley and this area is limited by the screening vegetation along the A20 dual carriageway. However, the area has an important role in the setting of Crockenhill and retaining the sense of separation between Crockenhill and the southern edge of Swanley – linear development along the B258 has already compromised this somewhat.
Visual character	This is a low lying landscape and is therefore not particularly visually prominent, which reduces visual sensitivity. The area around the village of Crockenhill in particular is fairly well enclosed by trees, hedgerows and copses which reduces visual sensitivity. However, some of the larger fields which rise up the gently rising slope to Crockenhill have seen hedgerow loss and are more open and exposed and therefore more visually sensitive.
Perceptual qualities	Despite its proximity to dense urban development at Swanley, this landscape retains many of its rural qualities, including thick mature hedgerows, remnant orchards and areas of deciduous woodland. There are some urban fringe influences in the landscape, including horse paddocks and modern dwellings

	<p>along the road, which reduce sensitivity.</p> <p>Traffic noise from the A20 dual carriageway and nearby motorways is an intrusive factor.</p>
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area mostly comprises irregular fields bounded by roads, tracks and paths which resulted from post-medieval informal enclosures. There are some pockets of parliamentary enclosure immediately to the south of Swanley. These field patterns have been disrupted by hedgerow loss and other more modern intrusions and therefore have some sensitivity, but are not as sensitive as intact historic landscapes.</p> <p>Other sensitive features include listed buildings located in the historic core of Crockenhill to the north of the settlement and ancient woodland in the north-west of the area at Bourne Wood.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the gentle landform and existing suburban influences reduce sensitivity to built development, the existing strong landscape edge to Swanley, rural character, the presence of valued landscape features (thick hedgerows, small woodlands and orchards), important role in the setting of Crockenhill and in separating Swanley and Crockenhill all increase sensitivity. Overall, the landscape would have a **medium** sensitivity to residential housing and commercial developments. The area would be better suited to smaller, rural style developments in keeping with the existing scale of the landscape features and historic rural settlement pattern.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- Characteristic rural features including narrow winding lanes with thick hedges, orchards and frequent blocks of broadleaved woodland.
- The rural character of the area and low density settlement pattern outside Swanley comprising the small village of Crockenhill and isolated farms.
- The relationship between the historic core at Crockenhill and its landscape setting.
- Areas of small-scale field patterns.
- The rural setting to the listed buildings to the north of Crockenhill.
- The valued semi-natural ancient woodland at Bourne Wood.
- The local traditional vernacular including timber frame, local brick, steeply pitched clay tile roofs, weatherboarding, and tile-hung facades.

Guidance

Ancient woodland at Bourne Wood forms an 'absolute constraint' to development in the north-west of the area. However, the rest of this area has medium sensitivity to built development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- Retain the thick hedgerows and woodlands and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- Maintain the gap and visual sense of separation between Crockenhill and Swanley;
- Retain the rural and low density settlement pattern outside Swanley. Any settlement should fit with

the rural settlement pattern and the scale of the existing village and isolated farms. Further linear road-side development should be avoided;

- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- Retain the areas of intact small-scale field patterns, orchards and ancient woodlands;
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, clay tile, weatherboard and tile-hung facades to increase the coherence of the existing built environment which is of numerous styles and ages.

Hartley/New Ash Green



Hartley/New Ash Green

- 3.6 Hartley and New Ash Green are located in the north east of Sevenoaks District. New Ash Green was a new settlement constructed in the 1960s as part of an innovative and ambitious project by Span Developments. Hartley is based around a historic settlement of scattered farms which was recorded in the Domesday Book, however much of the development has occurred in the 20th century following the construction of the railway at Longfield in 1872. The villages are found atop a gently undulating plateau located between two steeply sloping dry valleys.





There are two assessment areas around this settlement:

H1 Hartley/New Ash Green west

H2 Hartley/New Ash Green east

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.3: Hartley/ New Ash Green

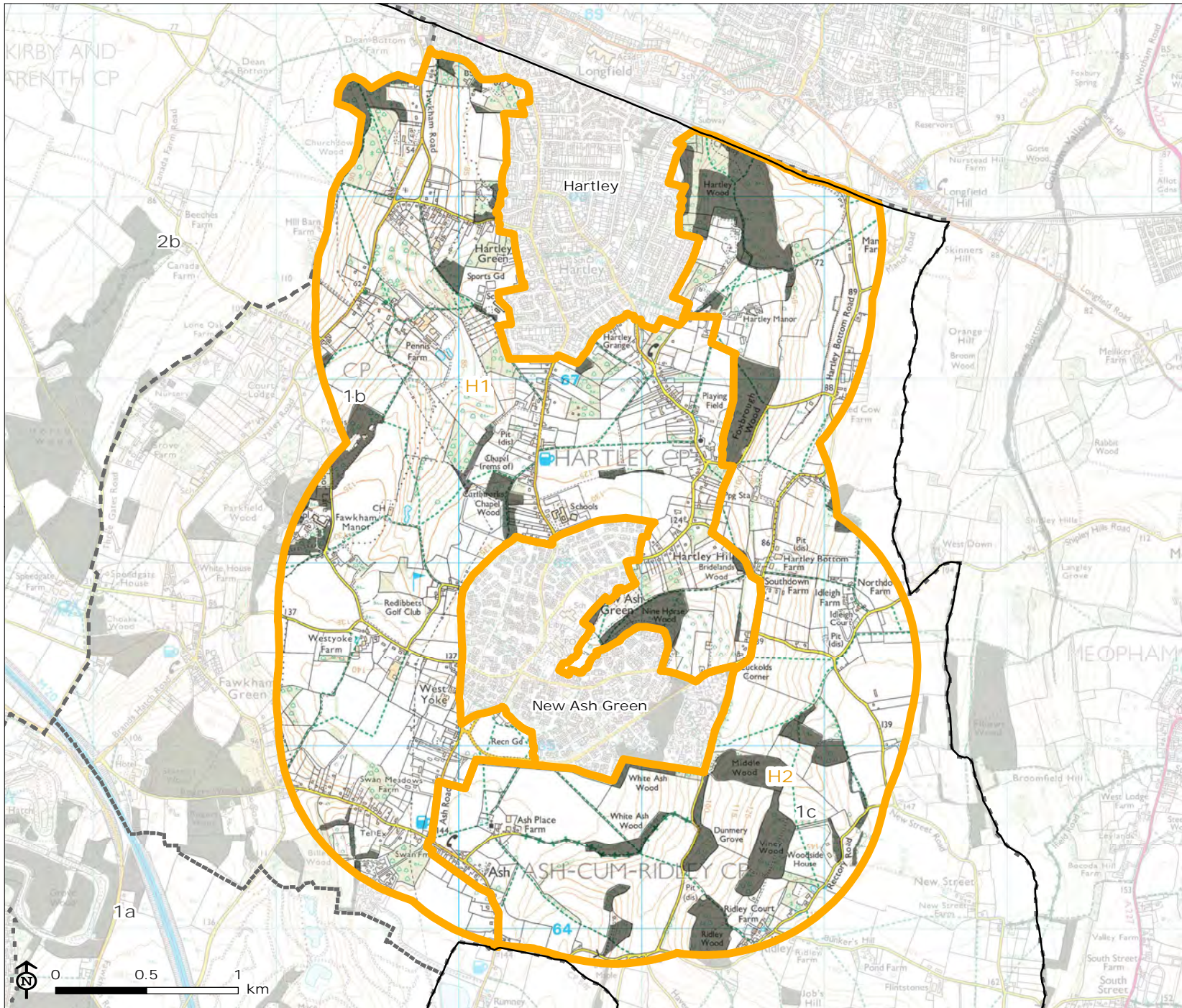
-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Sensitivity assessment area
-  Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
-  Landscape Character Areas

1a: West Kingsdown Settled Downs

1b: Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs

1c: Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs

2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs



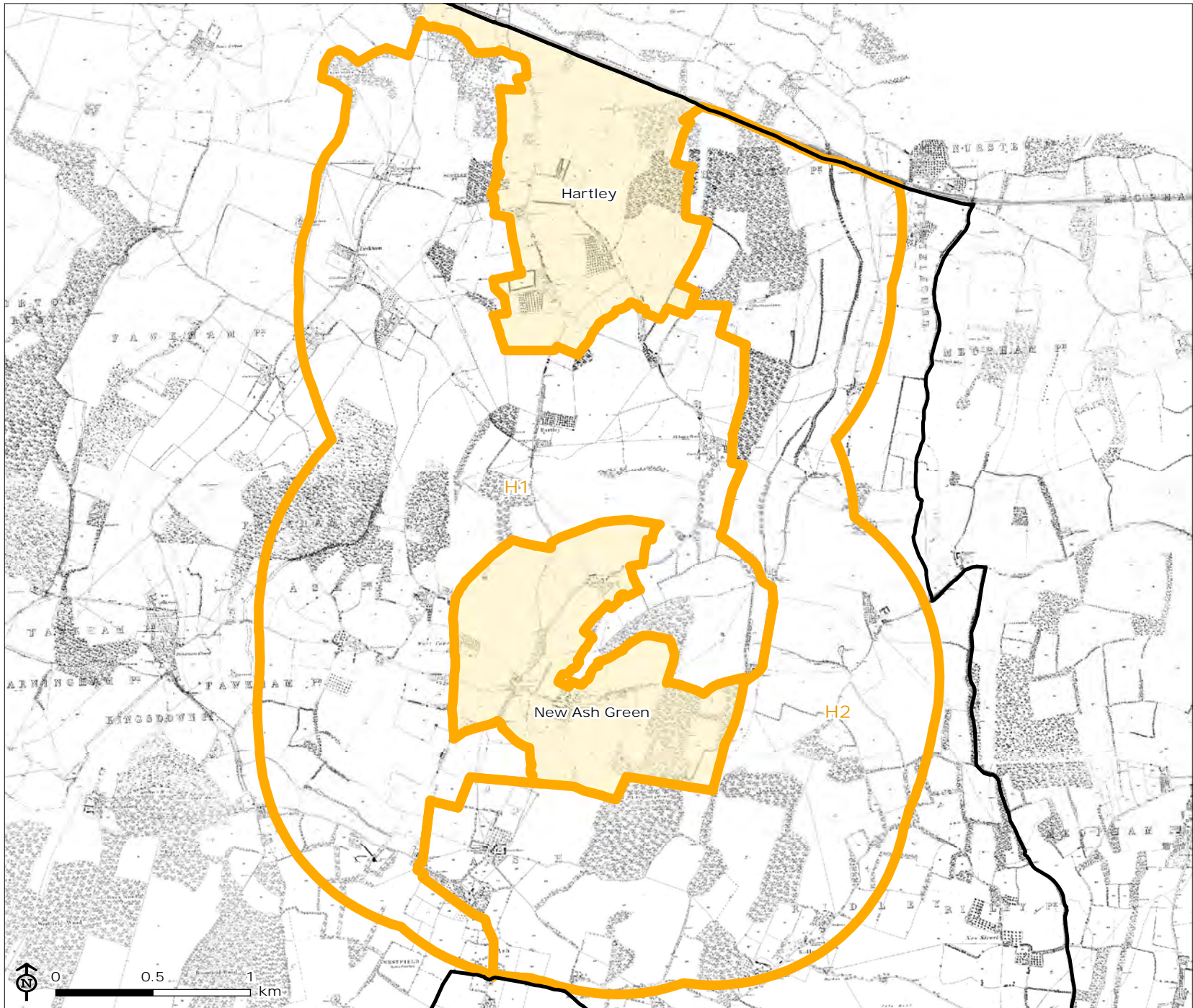
Map Scale @ A4: 1:29,800



Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.4: OS 1st edition Historic Map (1868-1895) for Hartley/ New Ash Green

- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Sensitivity assessment area
- Settlement

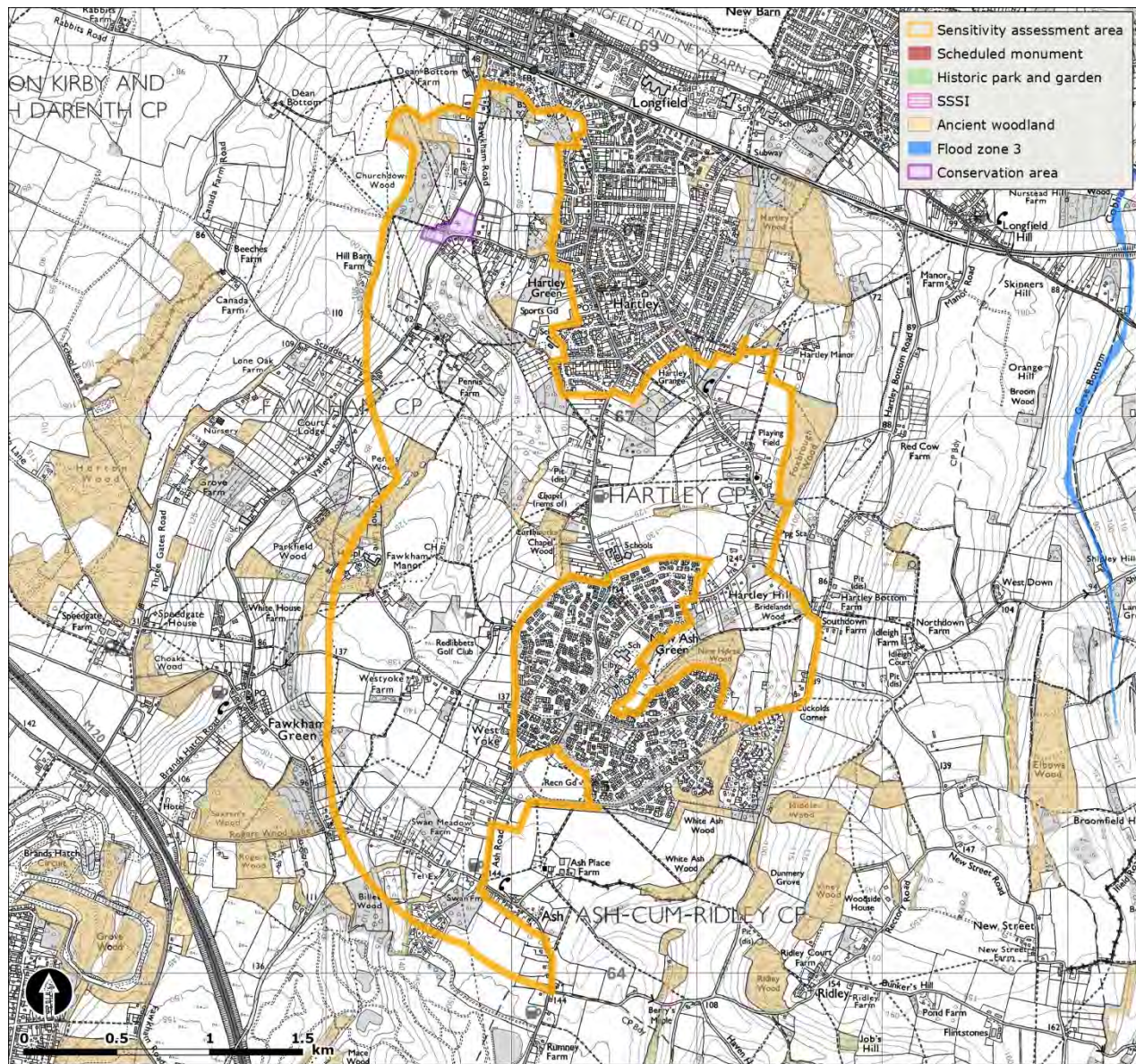


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:28,000



H1: Hartley/New Ash Green west



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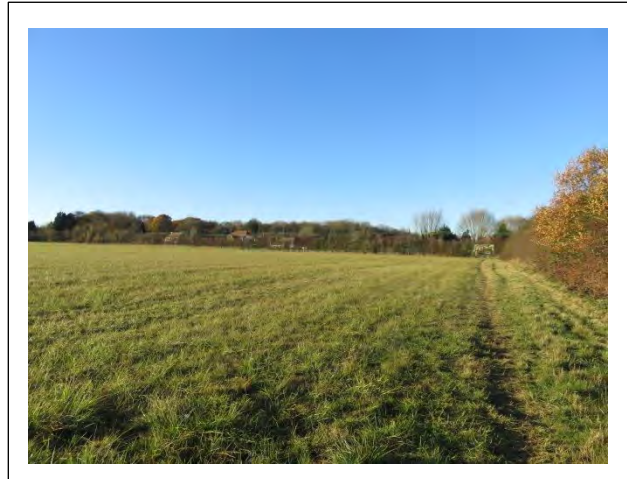
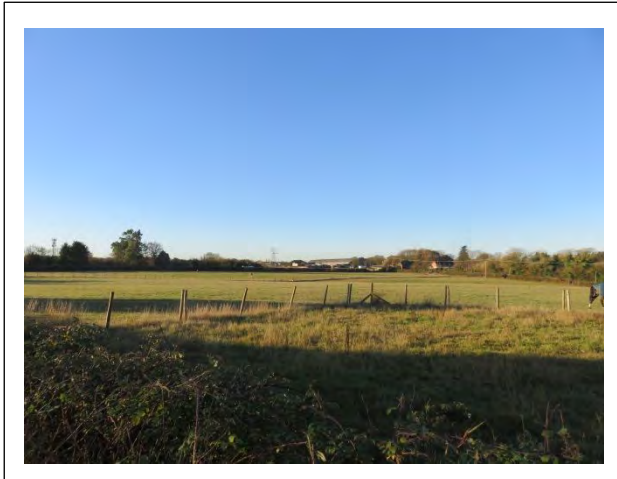
Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the west of New Ash Green and Hartley is found within the **Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises a chalk plateau which slopes to the west into a dry valley. The area contains a mixture of arable and pasture farmland in a field pattern of varied sizes and origins, with smaller pasture fields on the steeper slopes and larger arable fields on flatter ground. Fields are defined by a mixture of hedgerows, woodland and post and wire fences. The area retains many rural qualities and high levels of tranquillity, although there are some urbanising features including golf courses and pylons.

Areas of ancient woodland form 'absolute constraints'⁵ in this area.

⁵ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>The gently undulating chalk plateau between Hartley and New Ash Green indicates lower sensitivity. The dramatic steeper slopes of the dry valley in the west of the area have higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Sensitivity is also increased by the valued landscape features including the frequent areas of broadleaved woodlands and thick hedgerows.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>New Ash Green is a planned settlement of modern origin constructed in the 1960s by Span housing, with many cul-de-sacs. Hartley is a settlement of historic origin and is listed in the Domesday book, but is mostly of 20th century origin following the construction of the railway at Longfield. The edges of the settlements are mostly well integrated into the landscape and screened by dense woodland.</p> <p>Throughout the rest of the area are scattered farm buildings and existing linear development along roads emanating from the settlements including Billets Hill and Castle Hill.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>This area provides a traditional rural setting to both of the adjacent villages, with characteristic features including the frequent areas of broadleaved woodland and hedgerows, which increases sensitivity. Close to the edge of the villages there are some features which detract from the traditional rural character including large modern farm complexes, horse paddocks, large school buildings and sports grounds, which reduce sensitivity.</p> <p>The area between New Ash Green and Hartley is important in maintaining the gap between the two settlements as the sense of separation has already been compromised by linear development along Ash Road and Church Road.</p>
Visual character	<p>For the most part the landscape is well enclosed by the frequent trees and hedgerows, which reduces sensitivity. There are some more open areas within the larger scale fields where hedgerows have been lost, increasing visual sensitivity.</p> <p>The slopes in the west of the area are more visually prominent and thus more sensitive.</p>
Perceptual qualities	<p>Away from dense urban development, there are high levels of tranquillity and many characteristic rural features including the broadleaved woodland the</p>

	<p>traditional weatherboarded buildings and oast houses.</p> <p>Suburban features including a golf course, pylon lines, large modern farm buildings, heavy road traffic on rural roads and linear development detract from the rural characteristics and reduce sensitivity.</p>
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area comprises a mixture of small and medium parliamentary type enclosures, golf courses and areas which have suffered hedgerow loss which have less time depth and sensitivity.</p> <p>The Conservation Area at Baldwins Green, numerous Listed Buildings of a traditional vernacular and pockets of ancient woodland increase sensitivity with regards to historic landscape character.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the existing linear development pattern, suburban features, and strong sense of enclosure reduce sensitivity to built development, the valued landscape features (including ancient woodland and hedgerows), historic character (with some historic field patterns and a Conservation Area) and the role of the undeveloped parts of the landscape in separating Hartley and New Ash Green increase sensitivity to **low-medium** overall for residential housing. The small scale of the settlement and field patterns indicate a higher sensitivity to commercial development.

Compared to the overall sensitivity, the dramatic steeper slopes of the dry valley in the west of the area are more traditionally rural with historic buildings, woodland and intact hedgerows and have higher sensitivity to development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The dramatic slopes of the dry valley in the west of the area.
- Small-scale field pattern particularly on the valley sides.
- The ancient rural lanes, which follow the contours of the valley.
- Strong wooded character of the landscape, including areas of ancient woodland and hedgerow trees.
- Buildings of a traditional vernacular including weather boarded houses and the numerous listed buildings at the Baldwin's Green, Fawkham Conservation Area.
- Historic rural buildings including Grade I listed churches (Church of All Saints and Church of St Mary)

Guidance

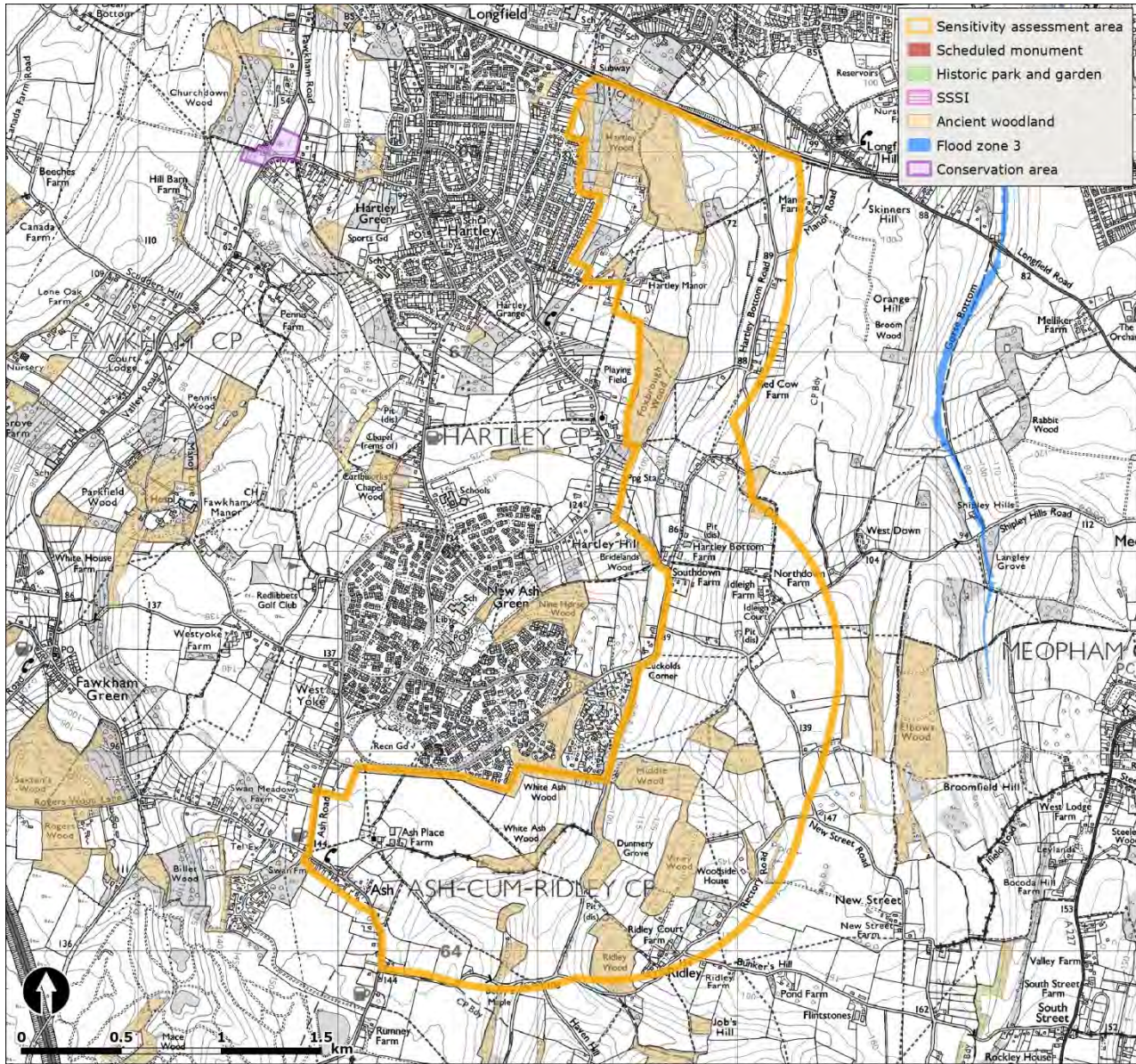
The frequent areas of ancient woodland form 'absolute constraints' to development. This area has low-medium sensitivity to residential development and a higher sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- Retain the small-scale field patterns and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape;
- Retain the low density settlement pattern outside of the main villages;
- Protect the setting of valued heritage assets including the Conservation Area at Baldwins Green and the many listed buildings, including two Grade I listed churches;
- Maintain the sense of separation between Hartley and New Ash Green, as linear development has

already resulted in a perception of coalescence. Avoid further linear development;

- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible. Avoid widening of roads and introduce formal passing places;
- Protect the valued areas of ancient woodland and thick hedgerows;
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades. Retain historic rural buildings including oast houses.

H2: Hartley/New Ash Green east



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the east of Hartley and New Ash Green is contained within **Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises undulating chalk and clay slopes. The area contains a mixture of arable crops, pasture and horticulture within a small-medium field pattern defined by a hedgerows and woodland blocks. The area has a highly rural and tranquil character, with narrow winding tracks and few modern features.

Ancient woodland including Hartley Wood, Middle Wood and Viney Wood form 'absolute constraints'⁶ in this character area.

⁶ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	A steeply undulating landform which also contains the slopes of a dry chalk valley, overlain by a small-medium scale field pattern enclosed by thick hedgerows and blocks of mature broadleaved woodland which indicates higher levels of sensitivity to built development.
Settlement form & edge	<p>New Ash Green is a planned settlement of modern origin constructed in the 1960s by Span housing, with many cul-de-sacs. Hartley is a settlement of historic origin and is listed in the Domesday book, but is mostly of 20th century origin following the construction of the railway at Longfield. The eastern edges of Hartley and New Ash Green are both well contained by dense mature broadleaved woodland, which raises sensitivity.</p> <p>Settlement elsewhere in the area is sparse and comprises the small historic villages of Ash and Ridley and scattered farms and manor houses.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The landscape forms an attractive, highly rural setting to the villages, with few human influences and many characteristic rural features including mature broadleaved woodland, thick hedgerows and traditional buildings.</p> <p>The south of this area retains the separation between the larger settlement of New Ash Green and the smaller villages of Ash and Ridley, which are different in both scale and form.</p>
Visual character	Visual character and sensitivity in this landscape is varied. Some of the larger fields in the landscape, particularly along Hartley Bottom Road, have a more open character with longer views out. There are some locally prominent slopes which will more sensitive in visual terms. Other areas are well enclosed by the dense woodland/hedgerows or the topography which reduces visual sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	The landscape is highly rural and tranquil with narrow winding lanes and little human influence which indicates higher levels of sensitivity to built development. Some incongruous modern barns and large metal gates/fencing around properties can detract from these qualities.

Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area has some areas of older irregular fields which give the landscape time depth and increase sensitivity. The fields to the north east of Ash have suffered extensive boundary loss, lowering sensitivity.</p> <p>Frequent blocks of ancient woodland are characteristic of the area and historic buildings of traditional local vernacular (including some which are listed) are found in the small villages of Ash and Ridley which also contribute to the historic character of the area.</p>
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Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although there are some large-scale prairie fields which have suffered extensive hedgerow loss and some limited incongruous features (including large modern barns and large metal gates/fencing) which reduces sensitivity to built development, the frequent landscape features (including ancient woodland and thick hedgerows), historic character (with historic lanes and traditional rural buildings), steep slopes and highly rural and tranquil character increase sensitivity to **medium** for residential housing and **medium-high** for commercial development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The frequent tracts of ancient woodland and hedgerows with trees which give the landscape a well-wooded character.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern with small villages of a traditional rural vernacular.
- The strong rural character with high levels of tranquillity.
- The narrow rural lanes and historic trackways with high hedges.
- The small-scale field pattern.
- Traditional buildings including oast houses and St. Peter and St. Pauls Church in Ash which is a Grade I Listed Building.
- Long views along the valleys and from the more prominent slopes of the dry chalk valley.

Guidance

The frequent areas of ancient woodland form 'absolute constraints' to development. This area has medium sensitivity to residential development and medium high sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- Protect the thick hedgerows and valued areas of ancient woodland;
- Retain the small scale of the landscape;
- Retain the rural and low density settlement pattern outside New Ash Green and Hartley. Ensure any new development is well integrated into the landscape;
- Retain the strong rural character and high levels of tranquillity within the landscape;
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, tile and flint. Retain and protect historic rural buildings including oast houses;

- Avoid siting development on prominent slopes or in highly visible areas.

West Kingsdown



West Kingsdown

- 3.7 West Kingsdown (originally known as Kingsdown) originates from the Anglo-Saxon period and was originally a small farming community which saw a substantial growth in population following the First World War, becoming a commuter village for London. Houses were constructed in fields along London Road, which is now the A20 trunk road. Growth of the settlement is constrained by blocks of ancient woodland including Church Wood, Grove Wood and Sidehilly Wood. Historical maps show that a manor house was located in the south-east of the settlement close to the Baptist church but no longer exists.

There are three assessment areas around this settlement:






WK1 West Kingsdown west

WK2 West Kingsdown east

WK3 West Kingsdown south

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.5: West Kingsdown

-  Sevenoaks district boundary
 -  Sensitivity assessment area
 -  Area of outstanding natural beauty
 -  Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
 -  Landscape Character Areas
- 1a: West Kingsdown Settled Downs
 1b: Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs
 2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
 3b: East Hill Wooded Downs

Map Scale @ A4: 1:23,800

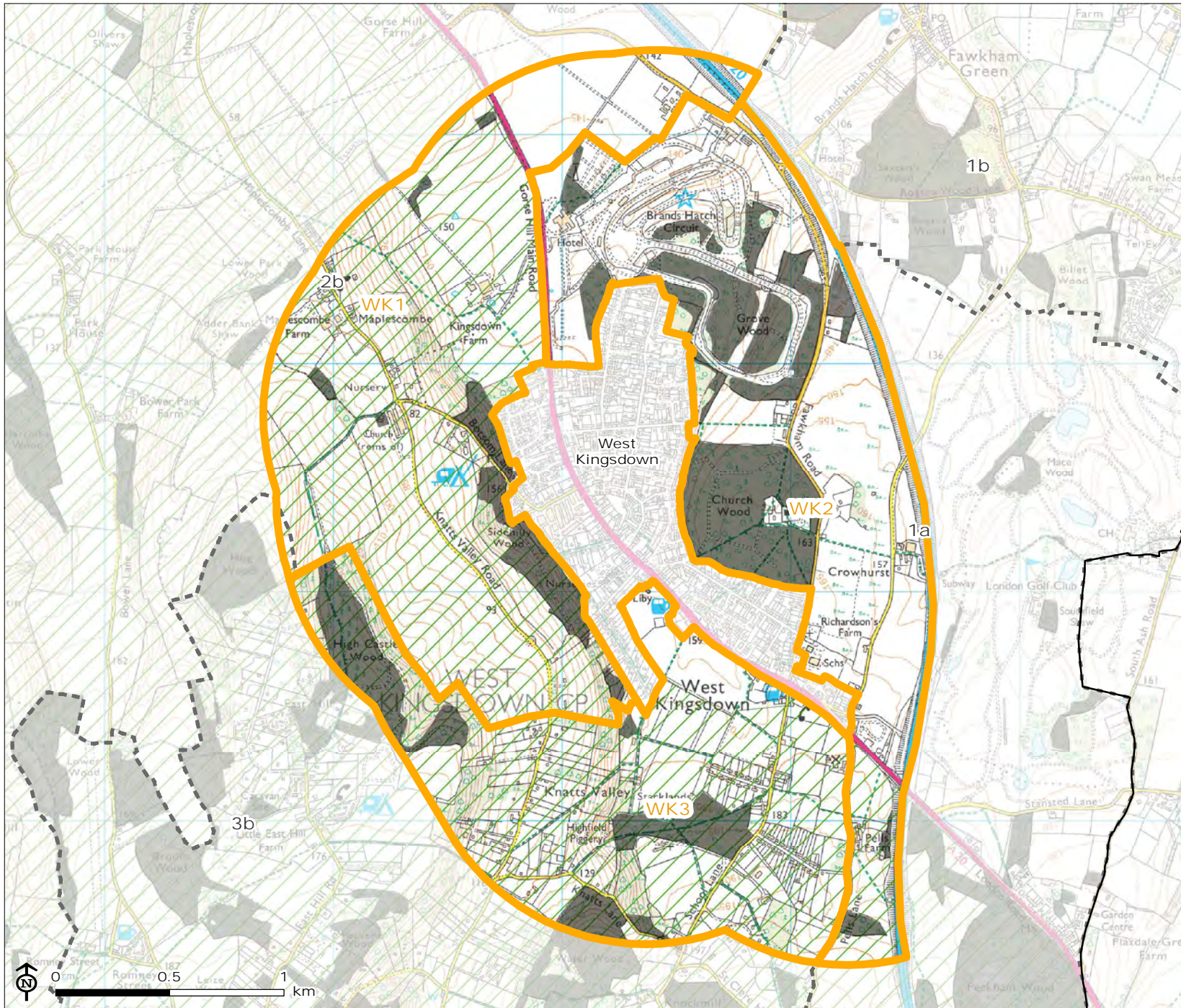
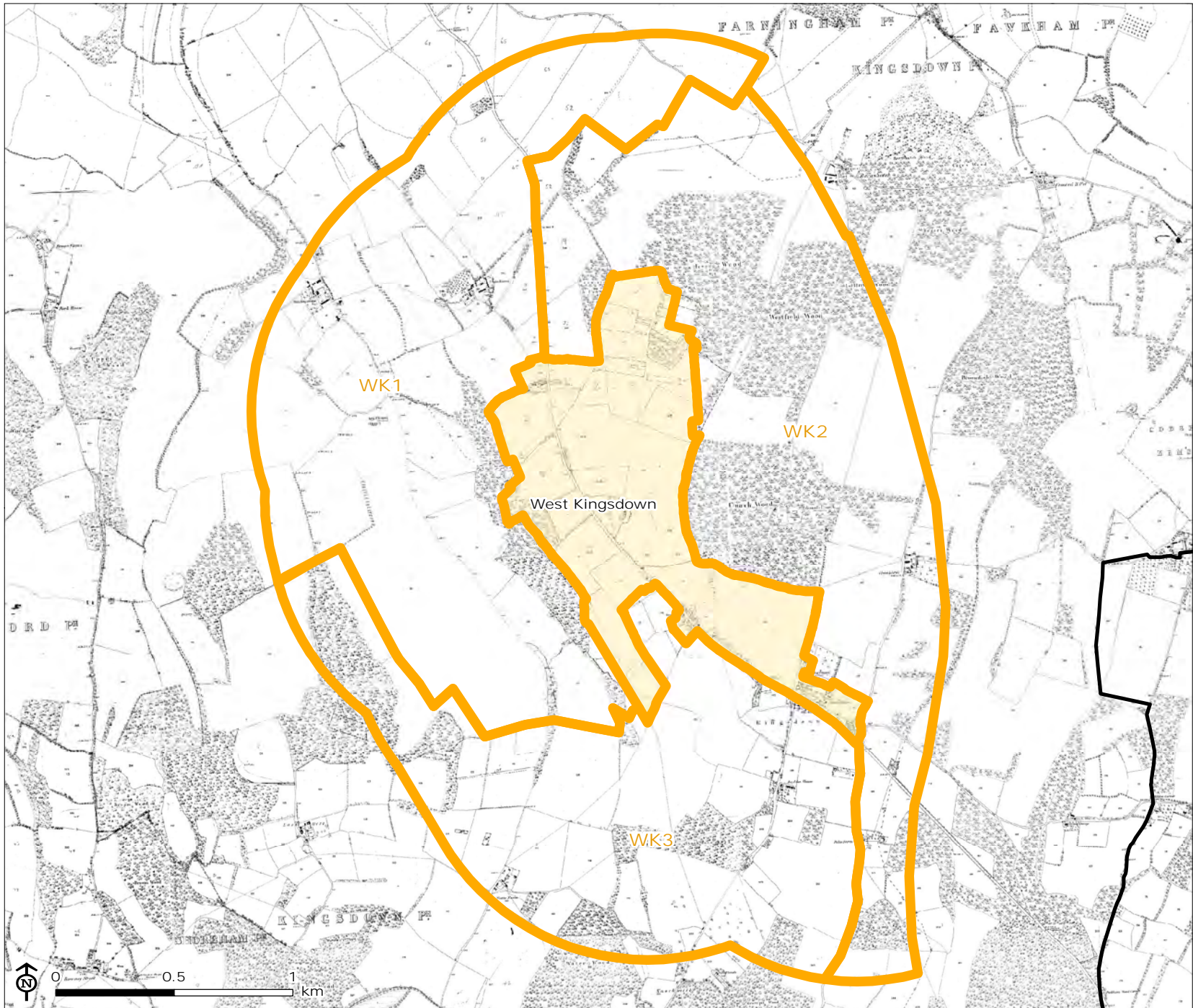


Figure 3.6: OS 1st edition Historic Map (1868-1895) for West Kingsdown

- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Sensitivity assessment area
- Settlement

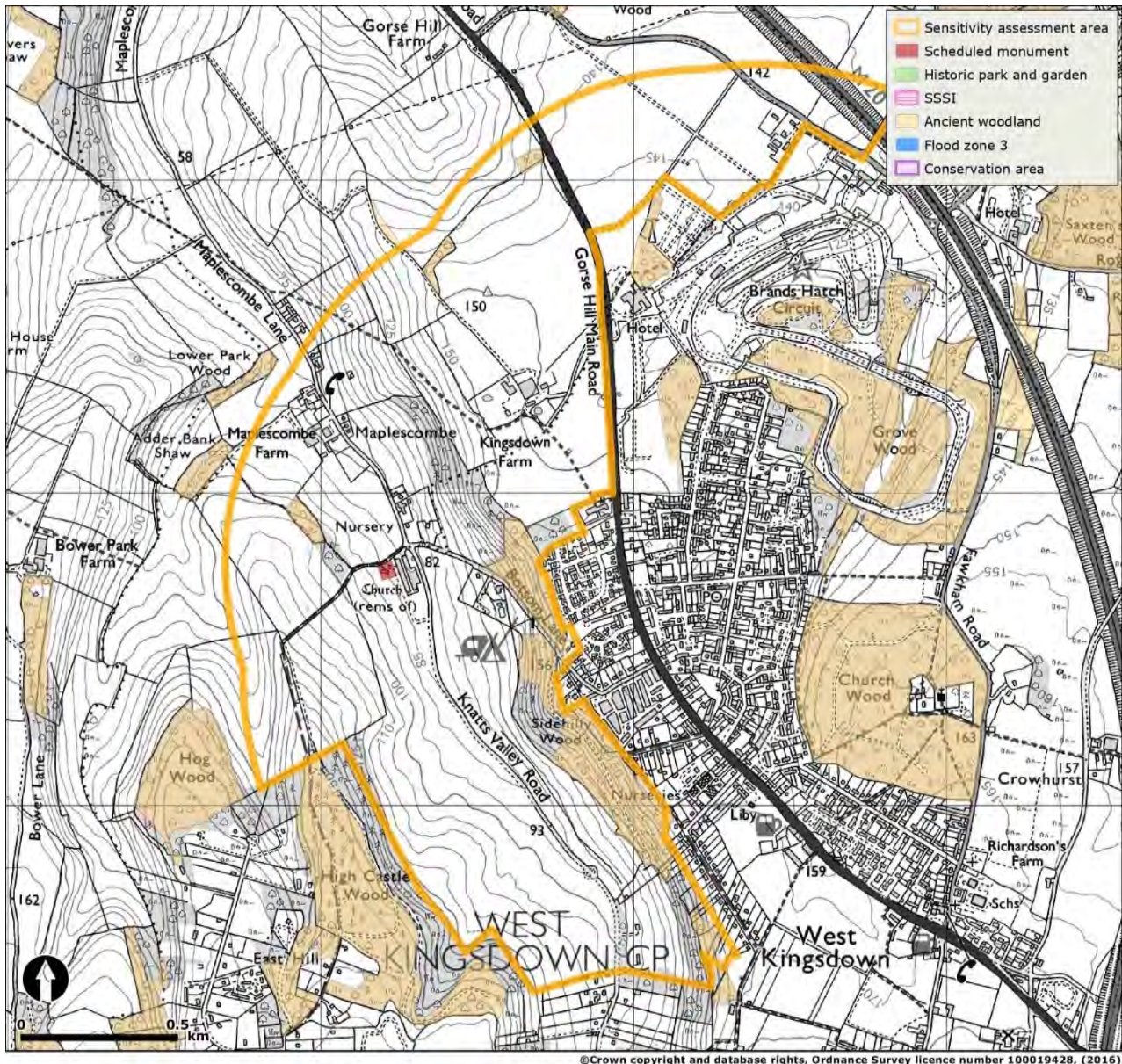


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:23,000



WK1: West Kingsdown west



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the west of West Kingsdown is found within the **Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises a steep dry valley carved into the underlying chalk geology overlain by medium-large scale arable fields, with some pasture farmland in smaller fields. Field boundaries are mostly defined by hedgerows and woodlands giving the landscape a well-treed character. The LCA is generally rural but is disturbed by major transport corridors, including the M20 and A20 which pass through this area.

Tracts of ancient woodland on slopes and the Scheduled Monument at Maplescombe Chapel form 'absolute constraints'⁷ in this character area.

⁷ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	This area comprises a distinct steeply sloping dry chalk valley overlain by a medium-large scale field pattern. Hedgerows and large blocks of broadleaved woodland are frequent naturalistic features within the landscape and raise levels of sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	The existing western settlement edge of West Kingsdown is well-integrated into the landscape and contained by dense woodland in Sidehilly Wood. The northern edge of West Kingsdown is less well contained and screened indicating in lower sensitivity. Away from the edges of West Kingsdown, settlement is sparse, with several farm complexes and isolated detached houses.
Settlement setting	Although there is limited visibility between West Kingsdown and this area, the landscape forms a traditional rural setting to the village, with the dense woodland forming a naturalistic setting. The south of this area separates West Kingsdown from the distinct linear settlement of Knatts Valley.
Visual character	Areas with larger fields, particularly along Knatts Valley Road, have raised sensitivity due to their open character with long views funnelled down the valley and the steep, prominent slopes. The elevated, flatter parts of the landscape in the north east of the area (to the north of West Kingsdown) are less prominent although they still have an open character.
Perceptual qualities	The landscape is generally rural in character with high levels of tranquillity and is visually separated from the adjacent urban development at West Kingsdown by the dense woodland and topography. Narrow rural lanes following the topographical features of the landscape contribute to the rural character, although traffic noise from the A20 and M20 in the north of the area detracts from the high levels of tranquillity. There are some large corrugated iron buildings and chain link fences which detract from rural character at Maplescombe.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises a mixture of medium-large scale parliamentary type enclosures with regular boundaries, which indicate lower

sensitivity.

The ruins of Maplescombe Chapel are designated as a Scheduled Monument which contributes positively to historic character, although the ruins are noted as being in a declining condition due to scrub growth.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the medium-large scale field pattern and some incongruous farm buildings reduce sensitivity to built development, the semi-natural landscape features (including mature woodlands and hedgerows), rural character (with sparse farmhouses and dwellings linked by narrow rural lanes) and the prominent steeply sloping landform with funnelled views along the valley increase sensitivity to **medium-high** overall for both residential housing and commercial development.

Compared to the overall rating the flatter area to the north of West Kingsdown and the Brands Hatch Circuit, and lies adjacent to the A20, is less sensitive to development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

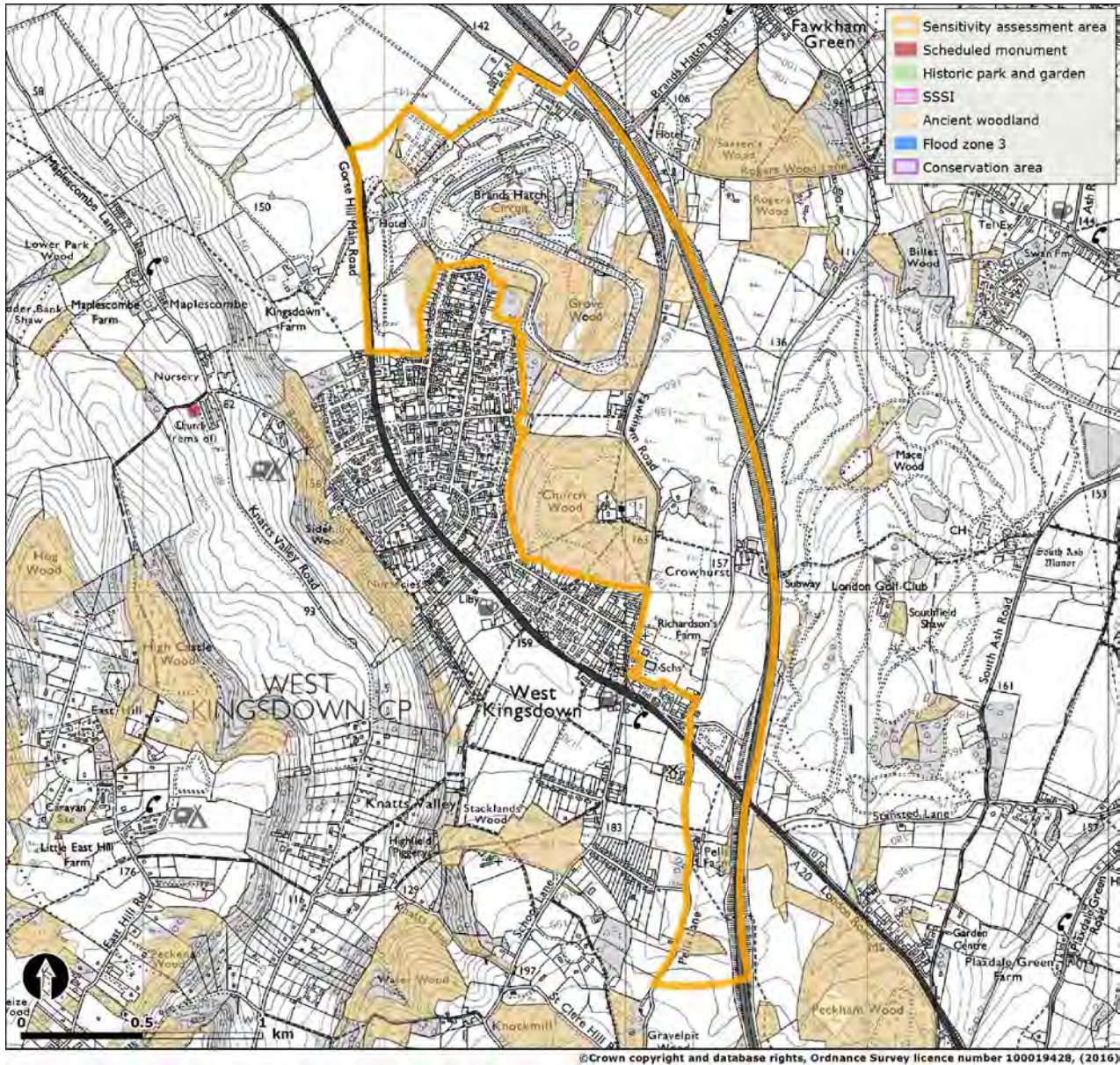
- The dramatic steep slopes of the dry chalk valley.
- The strong wooded character, with in-field and hedgerow trees and areas of ancient replanted woodland, particularly on slopes.
- The narrow rural lanes which follow the underlying topography.
- The sparse settlement pattern of isolated farms and scattered detached houses.
- Important historic features including the ruins of Maplescombe Chapel which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- Buildings of a local, traditional vernacular including weatherboarding and hanging tile facades.

Guidance

This area has medium-high sensitivity to built development. The area lies mostly within the Kent Downs AONB. Any new development should:

- Avoid siting development on the steep slopes of the Knatts Valley or in highly visible locations;
- Retain the thick hedgerows, in-field trees and areas of mixed and ancient woodland;
- Retain the rural and low density settlement pattern outside West Kingsdown - ensure that any new development fits with the settlement pattern and scale of the existing scattered farms and houses;
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- Retain the areas of ancient woodlands and historic rural buildings;
- Protect important heritage features including Maplescombe Chapel Scheduled Monument which is included on the Heritage at Risk Register and noted as being in declining condition.
- Complement the existing local vernacular with use of weatherboard and hanging tile facades.

WK2: West Kingsdown east



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the east of West Kingsdown is contained within **West Kingsdown Settled Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises gently undulating chalk and clay slopes. The LCA is mostly used for recreation, with Brands Hatch Racing Circuit occupying the north of the area. The LCA has many blocks of woodland which give the landscape a naturalistic and well-treed character. The rural character is disturbed by major transport corridors, including the M20, which forms the eastern boundary of the LCA.

Ancient woodland including Church Wood and Grove Wood form 'absolute constraints'⁸ in this character area.

⁸ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Elevated, gently undulating chalk landform indicates lower sensitivity but is overlain by areas of historic woodland and a mixed field pattern including some small-medium scale enclosures bounded by thick hedgerows which raise sensitivity. Steeper slopes in the northern part of the area are associated with a dry chalk valley and are of higher sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	Historically, development at West Kingsdown has involved the construction of cul-de-sacs in fields adjacent to the A20, although development in the east of the settlement is now restricted by existing woodland at Church Wood and Grove Wood which contains the edges of West Kingsdown. Existing development outside of West Kingsdown is sparse, with occasional farms and isolated houses. There is some limited linear development along Fawkham Road.
Settlement setting	The dense broadleaved woodland provides a valued naturalistic backdrop to West Kingsdown. The rest of the landscape is not as visually connected with the settlement and plays less of an important role.
Visual character	Despite its elevation, the landscape is, for the most part, visually enclosed by dense woodland which reduces visual sensitivity. There are some longer views out from more open areas, including from Crowhurst Lane in the east of the area which has views over flat open fields towards the M20.
Perceptual qualities	The landscape is generally rural and tranquil in the woodland areas which feel removed from the adjacent urban development, indicating higher sensitivity. Noise from the M20, A20 and Brands Hatch Racing Circuit detract from tranquillity.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises a mix of major sports fields and complexes (Brand's Hatch) which indicate lower sensitivity and common marsh and historic woodland which increases sensitivity. Large blocks of ancient woodland including Church Wood and Grove Wood are characteristic of the area and contribute positively to historic character. The Grade I listed church of St Edmund King and Martyr originates from the at least the 12 th century and is found in a clearing within Church Wood.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the undulating landform, visual enclosure and existing urban influences including traffic noise reduce sensitivity to built development, the rural character of the landscape (due to dense woodland and scrub coverage), valued historic features (including the Grade I listed church of St Edmund King and Martyr) and the role of the landscape in containing and providing a wooded setting to West Kingsdown raises sensitivity to **medium** overall for both residential housing and commercial development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

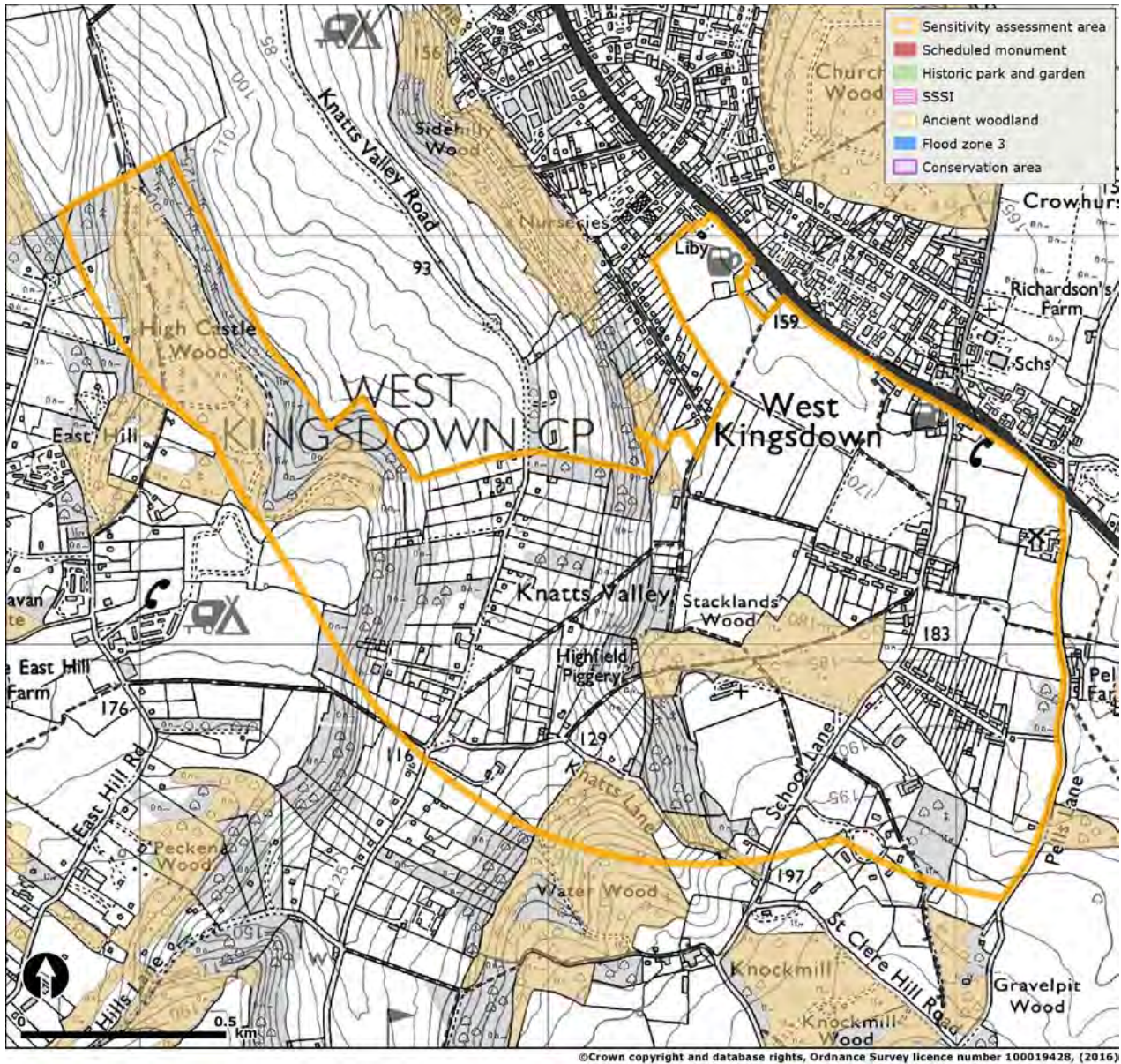
- The semi-natural habitats including scrub and dense areas of broadleaved woodland including ancient woodland Church Wood and Grove Wood.
- The sparse settlement of isolated farms and houses.
- The narrow rural lanes, often with a strong sense of enclosure due to high hedges.
- The remnant small-scale historic field patterns and areas of common marsh.
- The important historic features, including the Grade I listed church of St Edmund King and Martyr which has Saxon origins.

Guidance

A small part of this area along the M20 lies within the Kent Downs AONB, although this designation does not necessarily coincide with the most sensitive parts of the assessment area. This area has medium sensitivity to both residential and commercial development. Any new development should:

- Protect the valued semi-natural habitats including broadleaved ancient woodland and scrub;
- Retain and enhance remnant historic field patterns which have seen significant loss in the past;
- Retain the low density settlement pattern outside of West Kingsdown. Avoid further linear development;
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- Protect valued historic features including the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr.

WK3: West Kingsdown south



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the south of West Kingsdown is contained within **East Hill Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area** which comprises a mixture of chalk plateaux carved by steep dry valleys. The landscape contains a mixture of arable and pasture fields in a small scale field pattern. Pony paddocks are often associated with development. The area has a rural character with many blocks of woodland giving a naturalistic feel to the landscape.

Blocks of ancient woodland including Stacklands Wood form 'absolute constraints'⁹ in this character area.

⁹ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	This area consists of a steeply sloping dry chalk valley overlain by a small-scale field pattern of parliamentary origin. Large areas of woodland and frequent hedgerows contribute to the naturalistic character of the landscape and raise sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	<p>This part of West Kingsdown differs from the rest of the settlement, as there is little development adjacent to the A20 main road. Development along Kingsfield Road in West Kingsdown forms a spur emanating from the settlement and is not well screened or integrated with the rest of the settlement.</p> <p>The area contains modern linear development along roads and tracks which is not contiguous with West Kingsdown, including Hollywood Lane and The Grove (off School Lane) and the linear settlement of Knatts Valley along Knatts Valley Road. Buildings in Knatts Valley tend to be varied in form, size and vernacular but are largely screened by the landform and the woodland/hedgerows.</p>
Settlement setting	The landscape provides a rural setting to both West Kingsdown and Knatts Valley, with the woodland in particular forming a valued backdrop. The landscape maintains the separation between the distinct settlements of West Kingsdown and Knatts Valley.
Visual character	<p>Visual character within the landscape is mixed due to the variation in landform, elevation and land cover. Areas within the valley are generally enclosed by the dense woodland and hedgerows which reduces visual sensitivity.</p> <p>There are some prominent steep slopes and long views from elevated, open parts of the landscape, which have a higher sensitivity to built development.</p>
Perceptual qualities	The landscape is rural and tranquil with characteristic rural features including mature broadleaved woodland and narrow rural lanes with high hedges which follow the landform which raise sensitivity. There are suburbanising features including pony paddocks bound by fencing and pony tape, heavy traffic on the rural lanes and traffic noise from the A20 and M20 which can reduce sensitivity.

Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area includes ancient woodland, which increases sensitivity. This contrasts with the areas of small fields of parliamentary enclosure, post 1810 settlement with paddocks which indicate lower levels of sensitivity.</p> <p>Blocks of ancient woodland on slopes are characteristic of the area. Several listed buildings including the distinctive Kingsdown Mill (a smock mill built in 1880) also contribute to the historic character.</p>
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Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the weak settlement edge and linear modern development, suburbanising features, heavy traffic and visual enclosure reduce sensitivity to built development, the semi-natural landscape features (thick hedgerows, blocks of broadleaved woodlands and scrub), rural character (with narrow lanes and tranquillity) and prominent steep slopes increase sensitivity to **low-medium** overall for residential housing and **medium** for commercial development.

Compared to the overall rating, the steeper valley slopes and area that are disconnected from the settlement edge will have higher sensitivity to development. Due to the small scale field pattern, the landscape would be better able to accommodate smaller, lower density housing developments which may also present an opportunity to improve the coherence of the existing settlement edge, particularly to the north of the area adjacent to West Kingsdown. Larger commercial buildings are likely to be out of scale with the existing development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The dramatic and prominent steep slopes, which offer long views.
- The valued broadleaved woodland including some of ancient origin and thick, mature hedgerows.
- The low density settlement pattern.
- The narrow rural lanes and historic trackways which are often lined by thick, mature hedgerows, giving a sense of enclosure.
- The small-scale field patterns and characterful rural buildings including Kingsdown Mill.
- Some traditional building styles including brick, weatherboarding and hanging tile.

Guidance

This area has low-medium sensitivity to residential development and medium sensitivity to commercial development. The area lies mostly within the Kent Downs AONB. Any new development should:

- Avoid the steep slopes and highly visible locations;
- Enhance the existing urban edge and help to integrate existing development;
- Retain and enhance the small-scale field pattern;
- Protect valued areas of ancient woodland and thick mature hedgerows;
- Avoid further linear development.
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads but introduce formal passing places where necessary. Avoid suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;

- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades, and seek to unify the varied building styles that currently exist.

Sevenoaks and Seal



Sevenoaks/ Seal

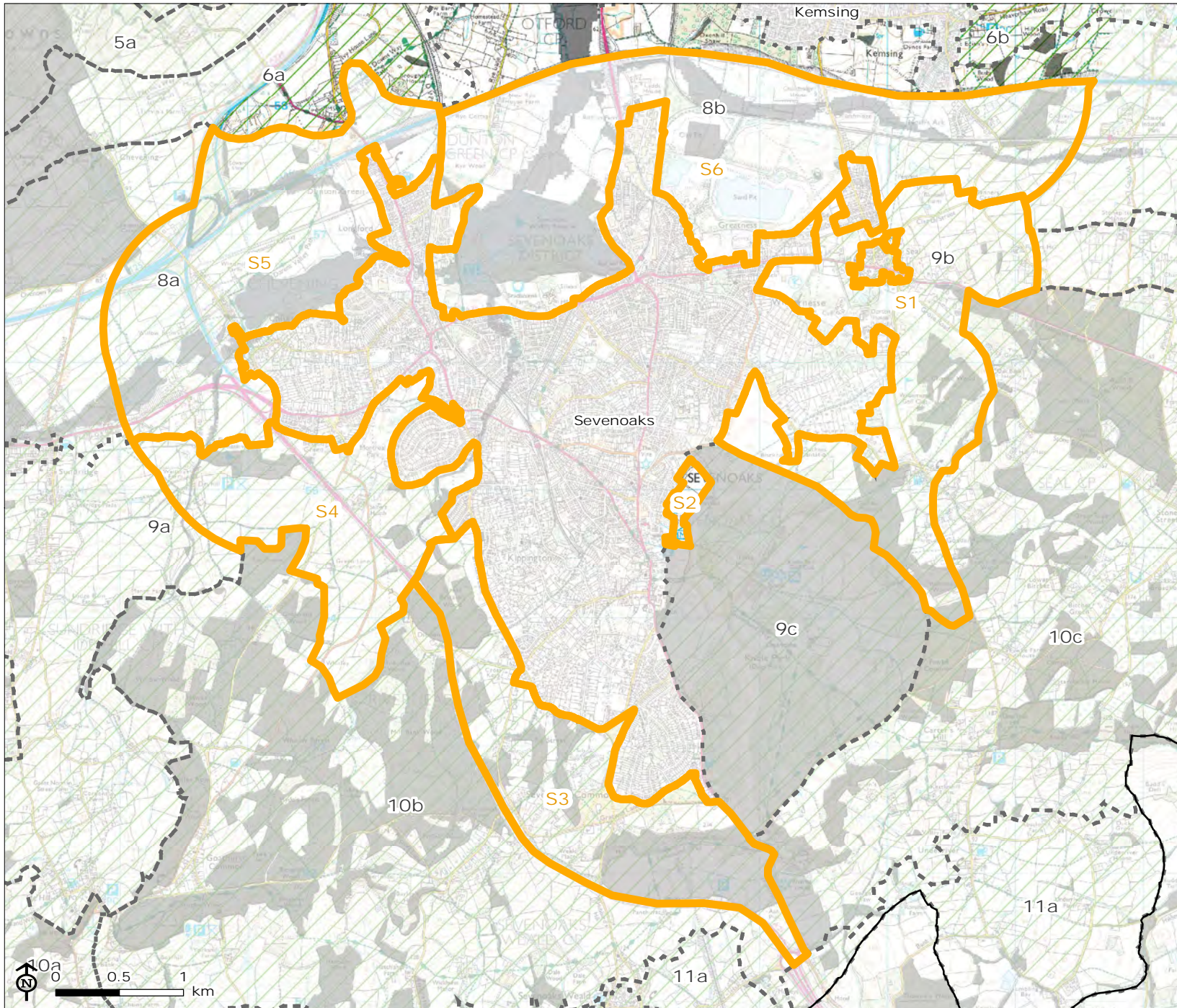
- 3.9 Sevenoaks is comprised of a number of smaller Wealden villages that have grown into one larger conurbation, although the village centres have maintained their identity with each of the centres of Riverhead, Dunton Green, Bessels Green and Chipstead having an historic core. Seal has remained separate from Sevenoaks.
- 3.10 Sevenoaks began as a small cluster of houses around the sub-manor of Knole. The first church was constructed in the 11th century at the site of the present St Nicholas' Church and Flemish weavers settled in the area in the 14th Century. Knole was the home of the Archbishops of Canterbury from the 15th century until it was bought from Archbishop Cranmer by King Henry VIII. Iron smelting was a key industry in the 17th Century during which time the structure of the High Street and market place was well established. In the late 18th century and early 19th centuries a number of estates enclosed common land to increase their extent and influence and employment in the town was based on running the estates and a variety of local industries including silk weaving, corn milling, papermaking, brickfields and whitening quarries. The town began to expand northwards in the Victorian period and with the arrival of the railway resulted in the opening of the Bat and Ball Station in 1862 and Tubs Hill Station in 1868. Sevenoaks began to form a base for commuting to London and areas of villas grew up. After the First World War many large houses were sold off for redevelopment and Sevenoaks expanded westwards to form a continuous built up area with the villages of Bessels Green and Chipstead. Building in the 1950s created Montreal Park and surrounding areas. During the 1930s Sevenoaks expanded northwards with ribbon development and planned estates extending up the London Road connecting Riverhead and Dunton Green and up the Otford Road. Since 1960, the rapid expansion of the town ceased with the introduction of the Green Belt and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and most development since then has been within the urban boundary on infill plots or through the redevelopment of earlier properties at higher densities. Sevenoaks therefore has few of the extensive 1960s and 1970s housing developments found on the edges of many Kent towns.
- 3.11 The growth of Sevenoaks is constrained by flood zones to the north, Knole Park to the south-east and woodlands associated with the Charts.
- 3.12 Seal was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 and has a church which dates from the 13th century. The historic core is located on the northern edge of what was the Wildernesse Estate on the Greensand Ridge. There is a more modern area of development to the north of the historic village. There are no absolute constraints to further expansion of this village.
- 3.13 Otford is a village located north of Sevenoaks on the River Darent. A Roman villa once existed here (the remains were re-discovered and excavated during the 1930s) and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it shows that the Archbishop of Canterbury possessed eight mills. In the later 19th century it was still a rural village set around a village green to the east of the river. In 1882, Otford Station opened linking it to London and it expanded to the north-east, south and west across the other side of the river. The floodplain and the Kemsing scarp form constraints to further expansion in certain directions.
- 3.14 Kemsing is a village located at the foot of the Kemsing Scarp, and is the birthplace of Saint Edith of Wilton, an illegitimate daughter of the Saxon King Edgar I. The historic village centre includes St. Edith's Hall and a Saxon church. In the late 19th century it was still a small rural village, but has since expanded south and west so that it almost joins Otford. There are no 'absolute constraints' to further expansion of this village, although the scarp topography to the north is an obvious barrier to further expansion in that direction.
- 3.15 There are six assessment areas around this settlement cluster:
- S1 Sevenoaks east (Seal)
 - S2 Sevenoaks east (Knole Paddock)
 - S3 Sevenoaks south-west
 - S4 Sevenoaks west

S5 Sevenoaks north-west

S6 Sevenoaks north

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.7: Sevenoaks



-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Sensitivity assessment area
-  Area of outstanding natural beauty
-  Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
-  Landscape Character Areas
- 10a: Westerham and Brasted Chart
- 10b: Sevenoaks Western Chart
- 10c: Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
- 11a: Sevenoaks Low Weald
- 3a: Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs
- 5a: Chevening Scarp
- 6a: Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland
- 6b: Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland
- 8a: Upper Darent Valley - West
- 8b: Upper Darent Valley - East
- 9a: Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands
- 9b: Seal Parks and Farmlands
- 9c: Knole Park

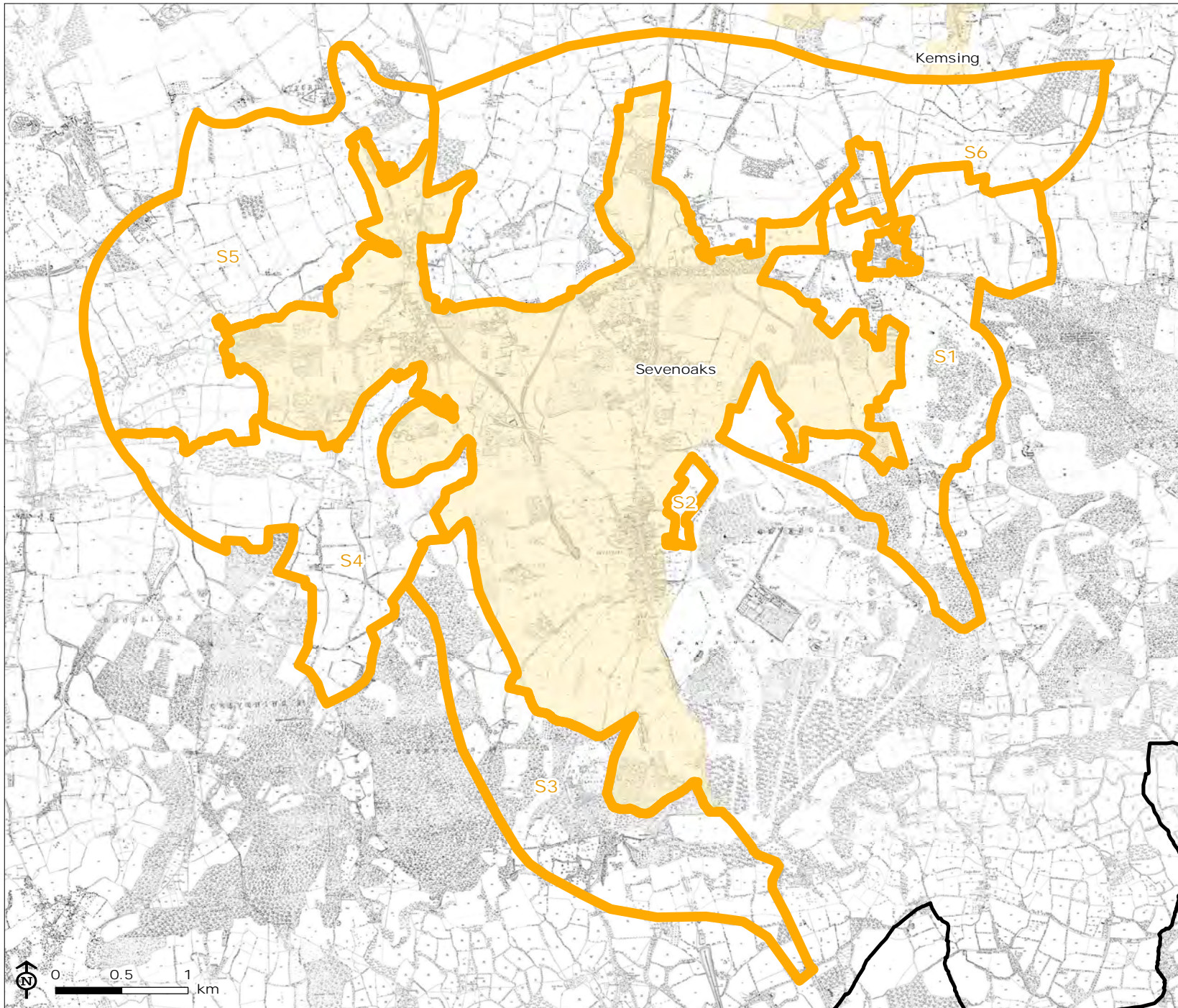
Map Scale @ A4: 1:42,600



Sevenoaks Landscape
Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.8: OS 1st edition
Historic Map (1868-1895)
for Sevenoaks

- ▭ Sevenoaks district boundary
- ▭ Sensitivity assessment area
- ▭ Settlement

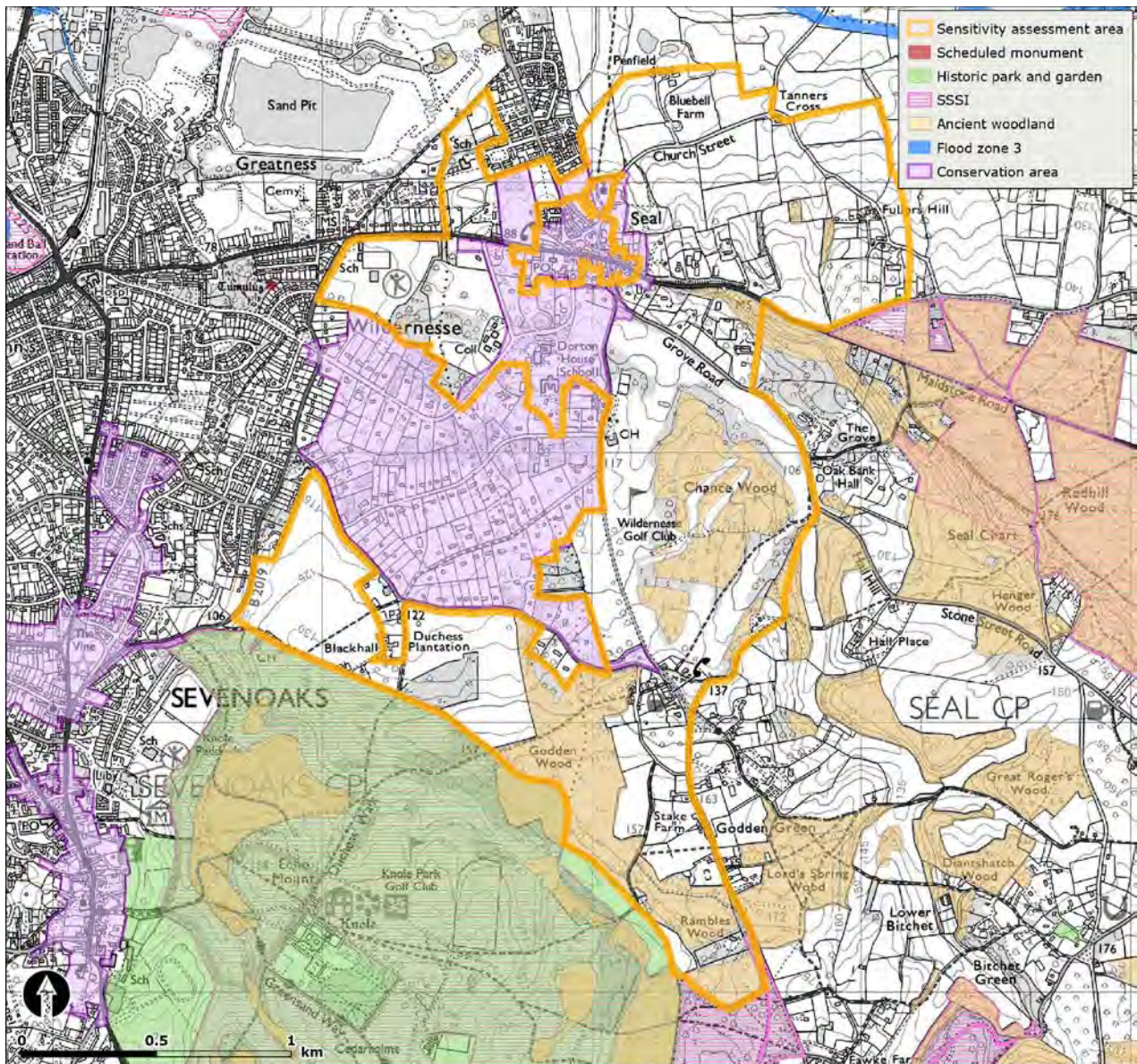


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:41,000



S1: Sevenoaks east (Seal)



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Landscape character & absolute constraints

The eastern part of Sevenoaks and the area around Seal lies within the **Seal Parks and Farmlands landscape character area** which is a parkland and estate farmland belt which runs along the undulating north-facing slopes of the Greensand Ridge, on the edge of the Darent Valley.

Tracts of ancient woodland at Chance Wood, Godden Wood and Rambles Wood form 'absolute constraints'¹⁰ to development around these edges of the settlement and there are a number of sensitive features as set out overleaf.

¹⁰ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	An undulating area with some steep slopes which increases sensitivity compared to flatter landforms. The landform is overlain by a variable scale landscape pattern of some smaller fields surrounded by hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands north of the A25 and areas of remnant parkland and ancient woodland south of the A25 indicate higher sensitivity. There are some areas of larger fields on flatter ground which are generally less sensitive.
Settlement form & edge	This area lies remote from the historic core of Sevenoaks, and surrounds the historic village of Seal (a Conservation Area) as well as wrapping around the north-eastern edge of Sevenoaks, including the Wildernesse Conservation area, an area of 1920s-30s large houses in the Arts and Crafts style, in a spacious landscape setting located in the former Wildernesse Estate. The existing settlement edges are generally well wooded and the historic edges of Seal increase sensitivity to more modern housing or commercial buildings.
Settlement setting	The rural landscape around Seal, the former Wilderness Estate between Seal and Wildernesse, and the former parkland to the east of Wildernesse (now Wildernesse Golf Course) contribute positively to the setting of these settlements, increasing sensitivity. In addition, the area between Sevenoaks and Seal provides a separation function for these settlements which increases sensitivity.
Visual character	The north facing slopes of the Darent Valley around Seal are clearly visible from the other side of the valley which increases sensitivity. Other areas tend to be well enclosed by trees which reduces sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	Although this is generally a highly rural landscape with moderately dark skies which indicates higher sensitivity to built development, there are modern human influences relating to the edges of Wildernesse, and the Wildernesse golf club. There is more light intrusion on the edges of Sevenoaks, and darker skies towards the eastern edges of the area.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises a mixture of late medieval to 17-18 th century enclosures, 19 th century designed landscapes, ancient woodland and post 1810 settlement. The areas of ancient woodland and historic parkland (including the former Wildernesse Estate which is now designated a Conservation Area) are particularly sensitive in terms of historic character.

There are also a number of listed buildings that would increase sensitivity to new development.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although there is a good amount of woodland and tree screening and some flatter areas that reduce sensitivity, the presence of steep slopes, remnant parkland, ancient woodland, the role of the rural landscape around Seal, the remnants of the former Wilderness Estate, high density of listed buildings and rural character all increase sensitivity to **medium-high** overall for residential housing development. The landscape would have an even higher sensitivity (**high**) to commercial development due to the residential nature of the settlement edges and presence of small scale historic villages.

Areas closer to the existing modern settlement edges of Sevenoaks and areas that are well enclosed by trees are less sensitive than the areas of historic parkland and historic village edges. The landscape would have a higher sensitivity to large scale developments and a lower sensitivity to smaller, rural style developments.

Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The steep slopes that are visible from the north.
- The intact hedgerows with hedgerow trees, shaws and woodlands (including ancient woodlands).
- The areas of remnant parkland and the parkland features.
- The historic villages of Seal (a Conservation Area) and Godden Green, and their historic edges that relate to the surrounding rural landscape.
- The former Wilderness Estate (now Wilderness Conservation area, an area of 1920s-30s large houses in the Arts and Crafts style, in a spacious landscape setting).
- The rural character of the landscape around Seal and the function of the area between Sevenoaks and Seal as a separation for these settlements.
- The former parkland to the east of Wilderness which contributes positively to the setting of Wilderness, and its ancient woodland.

Guidance

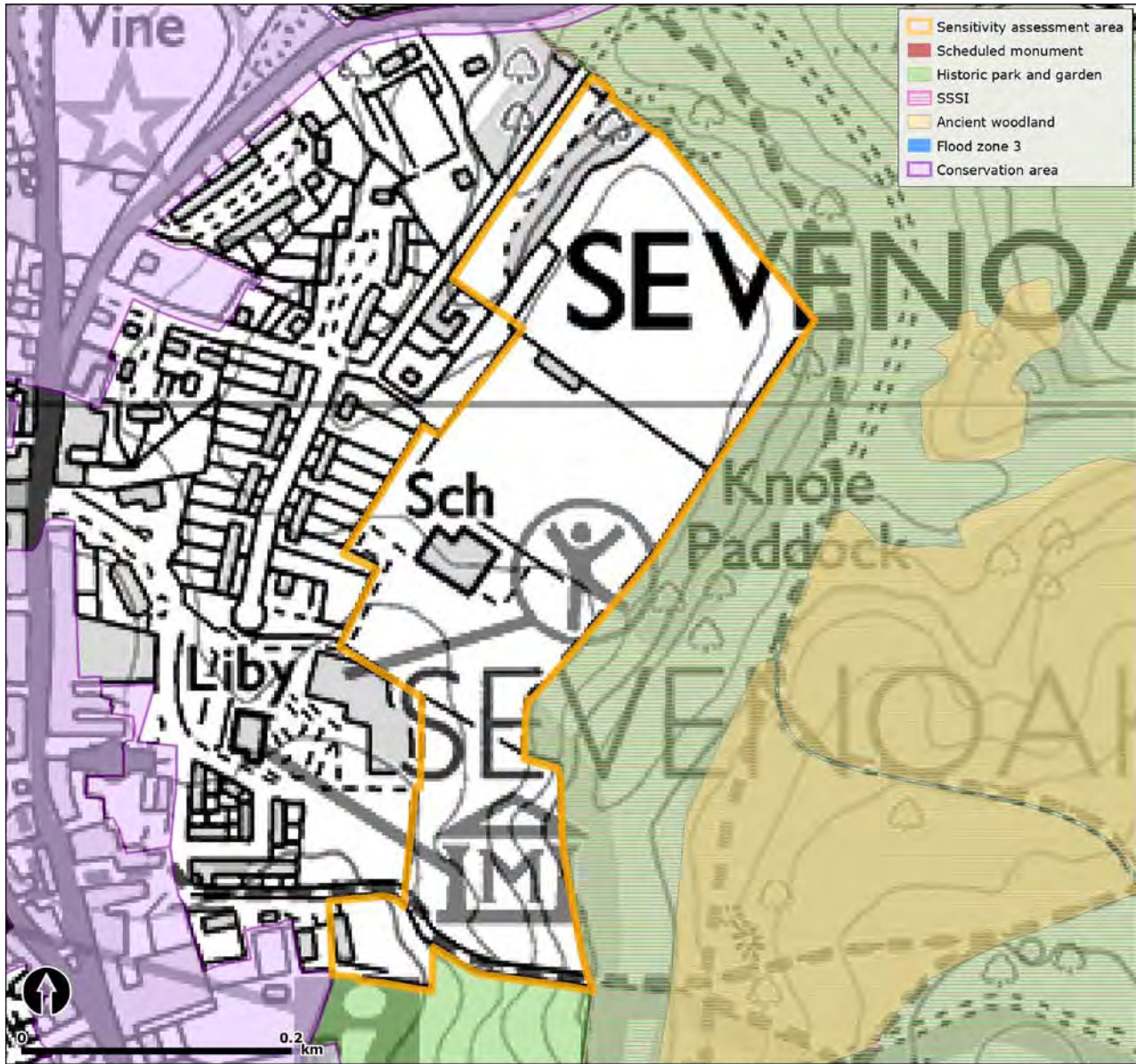
Much of this area forms part of the Kent Downs AONB and the tracts of ancient woodland form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. The area has a medium high sensitivity to residential development and for the reasons presented above. Areas closer to the existing modern settlement edges of Sevenoaks and areas that are well enclosed by trees would have a slightly lower sensitivity. Any new development should:

- Be located on less steep landform - consider views from Kemsing and north side of the Darent Valley/ North Downs scarp when planning any development and minimise visibility using siting and planting.
- retain the thick hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain areas of remnant parkland and their associated parkland features;
- conserve the special architectural and historic character of Seal (a Conservation Area) and Godden Green, and maintain a strong link between their historic edges and surrounding rural

landscape;

- conserve the sense of separation between Sevenoaks and Seal;
- conserve the character of the Wildernesse Conservation area – ensure any development on its edge fits with the character of the Conservation Area;
- conserve views from Seal over the Darent Valley to the North Downs;
- any settlement should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads, individual historic houses and small villages and hamlets set around greens;
- retain the highly rural character – special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas);
- ensure that any development pays regard to the Kentish vernacular including brick walls, painted or undecorated, steeply pitched clay tiled roofs, vertical tile hanging on first floor walls and white painted weather boarding;
- include references to the historic hop growing/ fruit growing industries where appropriate;
- protect the setting of Knole Park which lies to the south;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as concrete kerbs and street lighting where possible.

S2: Sevenoaks east (Knole Paddock)



Landscape character & absolute constraints

This small parcel of land lies on the edge of the **Knole Park character area** which contains the only remaining medieval deer park in Kent. The area (which comprises playing fields, a school, play area and steep wooded open space) lies between the settlement boundary of Sevenoaks and the registered Park. It is not within the Registered Park itself, but the park forms an absolute constraint¹¹ to development to the north, east and south.

¹¹ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	The northern part is a relatively flat, but elevated, area of land overlain by modern fields with a steep drop to the east into Knole Park. The southernmost area is steeply sloping and faces east over Knole Park. The elevated skyline location and steeper slopes increase sensitivity while the flatter areas have relatively lower sensitivity. Although there are relatively few landscape features in the top three fields (limited to a few mature trees), the woodland around the edges of these fields and in the southernmost area are valued features and increase sensitivity of the edges and southern area.
Settlement form & edge	This area lies adjacent to some 20 th century development on the edge of Sevenoaks, but not far from the historic core of Sevenoaks. The existing settlement edge is relatively modern, but well contained by trees so it is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement.
Settlement setting	The top three fields are a self-contained area of playing fields and associated buildings that do not play a particularly important role in the setting of Sevenoaks. However, the trees surrounding the area do provide a wooded skyline in views and the area provides a setting to Knole Park. The southernmost area slopes away from the settlement and therefore plays an even greater role in the setting of the Registered Park than the northern fields. The area does not form a separation function between settlements.
Visual character	This area lies on a ridge and skyline as viewed from Knole Park which increases sensitivity. However, it is surrounded by trees which minimises visibility of the site from some directions. Assuming trees are retained the flat playing fields are less visually sensitive than the sloping areas. The southern area slopes east and is more visible from Knole Park and is more sensitive in this respect.
Perceptual qualities	The northern three fields are playing fields with little sense of rurality or natural character and presence of floodlights which indicates lower sensitivity. The southernmost area has a greater sense of naturalness and scenic value which increases sensitivity.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that northern three fields are part of the post 1810 settlement, while the southern area is part of the Deer Park (which indicates higher sensitivity). There are no notable heritage assets on site that contribute to landscape character but the site's proximity to Knole Park is a key feature of

the area.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the relatively flat landform, modern settlement edge location, lack of contribution to the setting of Sevenoaks, relatively enclosed nature, and general absence of historic character reduce sensitivity to built development, the elevated skyline, location next to a Registered Park, and visibility from elevated parts of the Park increase sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have a **medium-high** sensitivity to housing or commercial development. It should be noted that the southernmost area has a higher sensitivity due to the different orientation, land use, visibility from Knole Park, greater sense of naturalness, higher scenic value and greater time depth (likely to be **high** sensitivity). The flat playing field areas closer to the edge of Sevenoaks are less sensitive.

Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

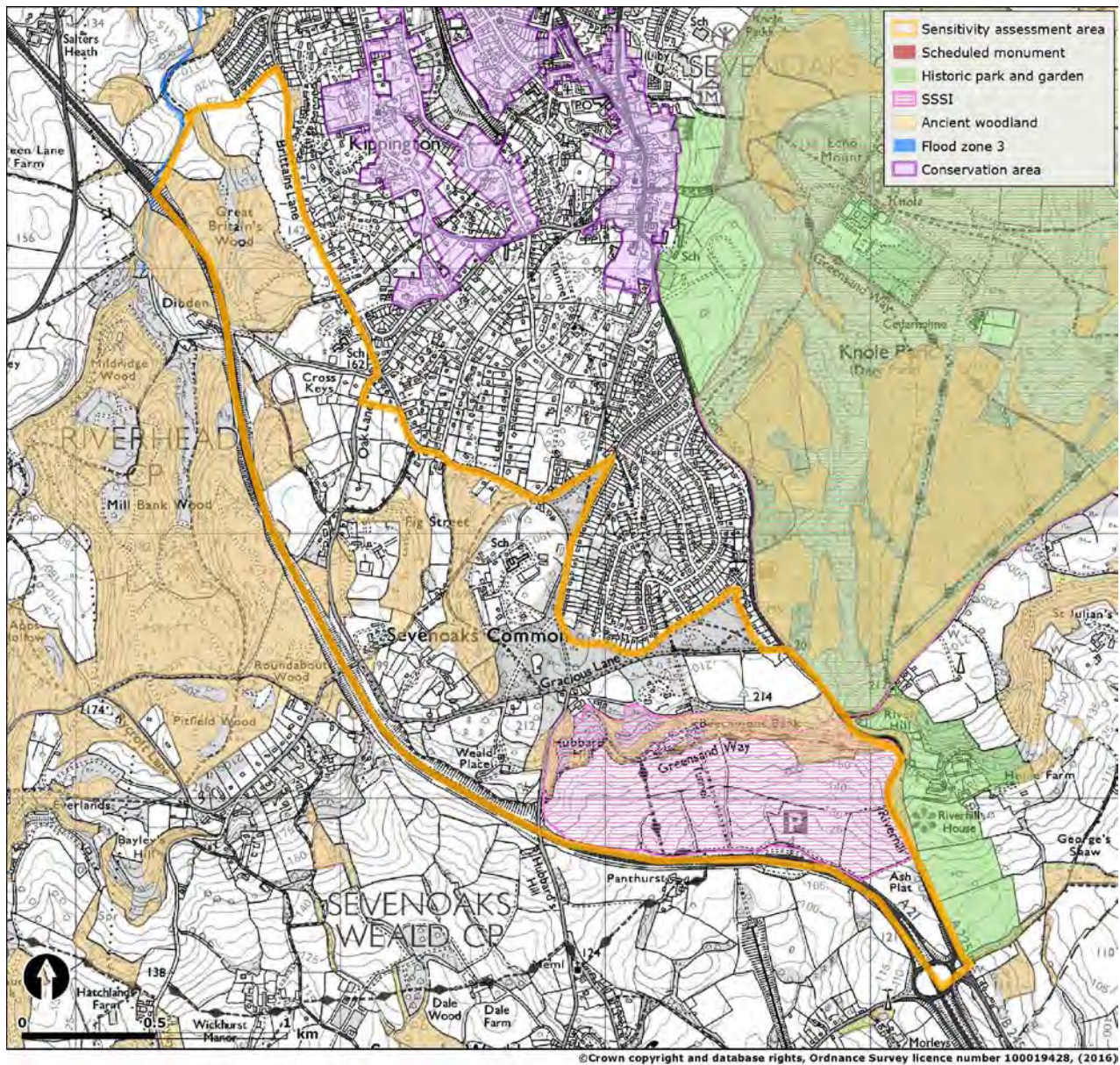
- The ridgelines and steep slopes that face into Knole Park.
- The trees surrounding the area which provide a wooded skyline and largely screen built development from Knole Park (some development is visible through trees in winter).
- The sense of naturalness and scenic value associated with the southernmost area and the eastern edges of the northern area and the role this plays in the setting of Knole Park.

Guidance

This area is directly adjacent to Knole Park which is a highly sensitive landscape and the area forms a skyline to views from the park giving it a relatively high sensitivity to any development. However, there may be some opportunity to accommodate some development on the flat land along the urban edge as long as it is set back from the break of slope and screened by vegetation. The southernmost area has a higher sensitivity than the three playing fields. Any new development should:

- be located on flatter land away from steep slopes - consider views, particularly from Knole Park, when planning any development and ensure no visibility using siting and planting;
- retain the tree belts and areas of woodland and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape to maintain a wooded rather than built skyline;
- retain the sense of naturalness and scenic value associated with the southernmost area and the role it plays in the setting of Knole Park;
- retain the rural character within Knole Park – special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin the park) and lighting (which should be minimised along this edge);
- ensure that any development pays regard to the Kentish vernacular.

S3: Sevenoaks south-west



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The south-western edge of Sevenoaks adjoins the **Sevenoaks Western Chart landscape character area** which is an undulating wooded and agricultural landscape characterised by ‘charts’ (wooded commons distinctive of east Surrey and west Kent). There are several ancient woodlands and a (geological) SSSI in this area which form ‘absolute constraints’¹² to development. The area beyond the A21 has not been assessed as the road forms a physical barrier.

¹² ‘Absolute constraints’ are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	The undulating nature of the area and presence of some steep slopes indicate a higher sensitivity to development. The landform is overlain by a variable scale landscape pattern of fields (mostly pasture, some arable) and woodlands (many ancient) and wooded commons which also increase sensitivity. The arable fields are generally less sensitive as they are less characteristic of the Cherts than other landscape features.
Settlement form & edge	This area wraps around the south-western edge of Sevenoaks, which comprises various 20 th century estates and is very well enclosed by high hedgerows with trees or woodland. The edge is therefore not particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement. There are many scattered large houses in woodland beyond the settlement edge with a rural character, which increase sensitivity to dense development in these areas.
Settlement setting	Although the rural nature of the landscape and its features, particularly the woodland and commons, are valued in their own right and as a setting to Sevenoaks, the area does not form an important backdrop or role in views because there is a well vegetated edge to Sevenoaks which separates it from the wider landscape in this direction. Neither does the area provide a role in separating settlements.
Visual character	The area has a lot of woodland and high hedges which provides a sense of enclosure and reduces sensitivity to built development. However, there are some elevated ridges and hills that increase sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	This is a highly rural landscape with moderately dark skies and a high scenic value which indicate a higher sensitivity to built development. There are modern human influences on the very edges of Sevenoaks, along Brittain's Lane which reduce sensitivity locally.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises a mixture of pre-1810 woodland, pre-19 th century copses, scattered settlement with paddocks, irregular fields with straight boundaries, small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries, commons and assarts. The areas of ancient woodland, commons and assarts are particularly sensitive in terms of historic character. There are also a couple of listed buildings that would increase sensitivity to new development in these areas.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the relatively modern edge to Sevenoaks and the sense of enclosure might indicate a lower sensitivity to built development, the highly rural character, high scenic value and presence of historic landscape features including woodland, historic fields (including assarts) and commons increase sensitivity to **medium-high** overall for housing development. The sensitivity to commercial development would be even higher (**high**) due to the highly rural character and residential nature of this settlement edge. There may be lower sensitivity to high quality low density rural style development within previously settled areas.

Areas with lower sensitivity would be the areas of flat land well enclosed by trees on the modern edges of Sevenoaks while areas of higher sensitivity would include elevated hills and ridges including the scarp top, areas of common land and areas that are disconnected from the settlement edge.

	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The steep slopes and elevated hill tops/ridges, including the Greensand Scarp in the south of the area.
- The woodlands and commons (including the characteristic 'Charts').
- The rural nature of the landscape including relatively dark skies and high scenic quality.
- The pre-1810 woodland, pre-19th century copses, historic field patterns (including assarts) and commons.
- The historic buildings in the countryside which are sensitive to change in their setting.

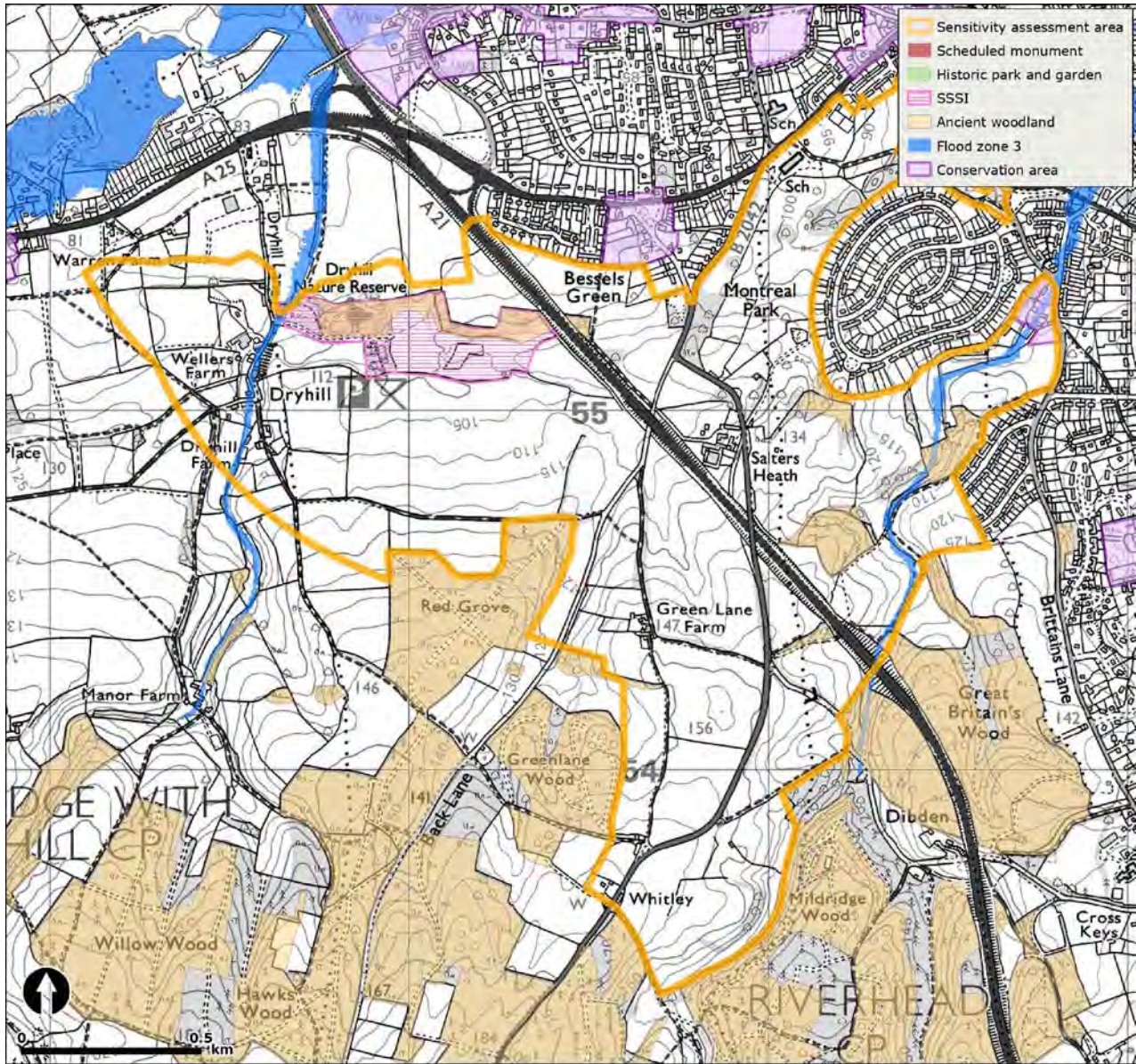
Guidance

This area forms part of the Kent Downs AONB. There are several ancient woodlands and a (geological) SSSI in this area which form 'absolute constraints' to development and the remainder of the area has a relatively high sensitivity to built development for the reasons set out above. Areas closer to the existing modern settlement edges of Sevenoaks and areas that are well enclosed by trees would have a slightly lower sensitivity. Any new development should:

- be located on less steep landform and avoid the elevated hill tops/ridges or the Greensand Scarp;
- retain the woodlands and commons (including the characteristic 'Charts') and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the highly rural character – special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised);
- retain the pre-1810 woodland, pre-19th century copses, historic field patterns (including assarts) and commons;
- fit with the density and character of development that defines the character of areas that border this part of Sevenoaks;
- ensure that any development pays some regard to the Kentish vernacular which comprises brick or ragstone walls and buildings, clay tiled roofs, vertical tile hanging on first floor walls, and white painted weather boarding;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features

such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.

S4: Sevenoaks west



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The western edge of Sevenoaks adjoins the **Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands landscape character area** which is a parkland and estate farmland belt that runs along the undulating north-facing slopes of the Greensand Ridge, on the north facing slopes of the Darent Valley. There are a few areas of ancient woodland, a (geological) SSSI and a small area of Flood Zone 3 which form 'absolute constraints'¹³ to development in this area.

¹³ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	An undulating area with slopes (some steep) and elevated ridges that increase sensitivity. The landform is overlain by a strong field pattern marked by thick hedgerows, shaws and woodland which are valued features of the landscape and increase sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	This area lies adjacent to the edge of Sevenoaks, including the mid-20 th century development on the former Montreal estate that was built following the demolition of the 18th century Palladian mansion. However, this edge of Sevenoaks is well concealed by vegetation. The edge is therefore not particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement.
Settlement setting	The remnant parkland landscape around the mid-20 th century development of 'Montreal Park' provides an historic setting to this part of Sevenoaks. However, the edge of Sevenoaks is well enclosed by vegetation and so the landscape in this area does not tend to form a key role in the backdrop to views or visual setting of Sevenoaks. Nevertheless there are some views from residential areas on the edge where orientation of buildings allows, for example the view south along Bessels Way. The area does not play particular role in the separation of settlements.
Visual character	Parts of the area (particularly west and south) are visible from the north side of the Darent Valley which increases sensitivity. However, the thick hedgerows and good tree cover provide a sense of enclosure and limit views.
Perceptual qualities	Although this area lies on the edge of Sevenoaks the edge has a rural well treed character and the area is perceived as a highly rural landscape with moderately dark skies which indicates higher sensitivity to built development.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises a mixture of 'medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries' surrounding the Montreal Park suburb (this is an area of fields which were formed by the clearance of woodland and scrub to form agricultural land, generally of medieval to early post-medieval in age), 'irregular fields with straight boundaries' adjacent to Bessel's Green (which are probably late medieval or 17 th /18 th -century informal enclosures with straightened boundaries), and 'small rectilinear with wavy boundaries' south-west of the A21 around Green Lane Farm (which reflect a process of informal enclosure probably dating from the late medieval

or 17th/18th-centuries). These are all interesting historic field patterns, although the assarts in the area of Montreal Park are the oldest and most unaltered, and therefore likely to be most sensitive.

There are some listed buildings linked to Montreal Park including a summerhouse in the former grounds, five listed buildings at Brittain's Farm including an oast (once part of the historic Montreal Estate and now a Conservation Area), the Montreal Park Obelisk on the edge of the area, and a number of areas of ancient woodland.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the area has thick hedgerows and good tree cover which provide a sense of enclosure and may indicate a lower sensitivity, the steeply undulating landform, remnant historic parkland landscape (including listed parkland features) at Montreal Park, the highly rural character and historic field patterns increase sensitivity so that overall the area is judged to have a **medium-high** sensitivity to housing development. Since this is a highly rural landscape with a residential edge, sensitivity to commercial development is even higher (**high** sensitivity).

Areas closer to the existing modern settlement edges of Sevenoaks (but not associated with the historic Montreal Park) and on flatter land and well enclosed by trees are marginally less sensitive. The landscape would have a higher sensitivity to large scale developments and a lower sensitivity to smaller, rural style developments.

Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The thick hedgerows, shaws and woodland (including ancient woodland) which are valued features of the landscape.
- The remnant historic parkland landscape of 'Montreal Park', and its historic features including the summerhouse, the five listed buildings at Brittain's Farm including an oast (also a Conservation Area), and the Montreal Park Obelisk on the edge of the area.
- The steeper and more visible slopes that are visible from the north side of the Darent valley (particularly the west and south parts of the area), and from areas on the edges of Sevenoaks.
- The highly rural character and moderately dark skies.
- The historic field patterns, and particularly the assarts surrounding the Montreal Park suburb which were formed by the clearance of woodland and scrub to form agricultural land, generally of medieval to early post-medieval in age.

Guidance

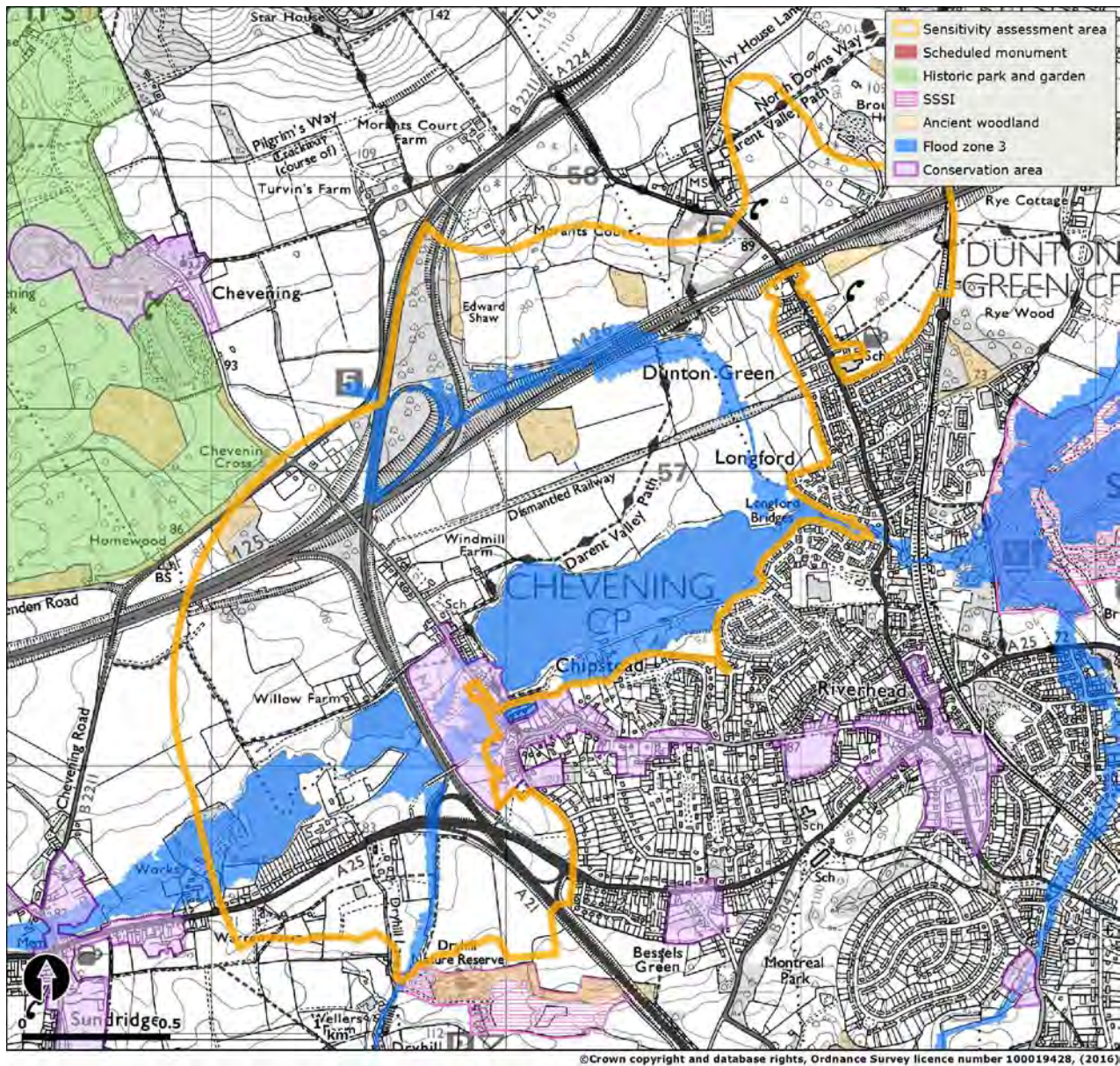
Most of this area forms part of the Kent Downs AONB. There are a few areas of ancient woodland, a (geological) SSSI and a small area of Flood Zone 3 which form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. The remainder of this area has a medium-high sensitivity to housing development and a high sensitivity to commercial development. Any new development should:

- be located on flat or less steep landform - consider views from the north side of the Darent Valley/ North Downs scarp and from the edges of Sevenoaks when planning any development and minimise visibility using siting and planting.
- retain the thick hedgerows, shaws and copses and ensure any new built development is well

integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;

- retain remnant historic parkland landscape of 'Montreal Park' and its historic features and their landscape setting including the summerhouse, the five listed buildings at Brittain's Farm including an oast (also a Conservation Area), and the Montreal Park Obelisk on the edge of the area;
- retain the highly rural character – special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas);
- conserve historic field patterns, and particularly the assarts surrounding the Montreal Park suburb;
- ensure that any development pays regard to the Kentish vernacular including brick walls, steeply pitched clay tiled roofs, vertical tile hanging on first floor walls and weather boarding;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.

S5: Sevenoaks north-west



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The north-western part of Sevenoaks lies within the **Upper Darent Valley West landscape character area** which is gently undulating farmland within a river valley enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge and crossed by major transport corridors. Small areas of ancient woodland and the area of Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent and a tributary west of Duntun Green form 'absolute constraints'¹⁴ to development.

¹⁴ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>A gently undulating landform with a landscape pattern that has been disrupted locally by major transport corridors and former gravel workings on the valley floor, hedgerows are often fragmented or lost resulting in large scale arable fields (particularly to the west of the M25) which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The area between Chipstead Lake and Dunton Green has a more intact pattern of smaller pastoral fields with mature hedgerows and oak tree, shaws and small woodlands, which are characteristic and valued, and indicate higher sensitivity.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>This area of Sevenoaks was historically comprised of a number of smaller Wealden villages interspersed by large historic estates (Chipstead Place, Montreal Park) which grew into one larger conurbation. The country houses were demolished in the first half of the 20th century to make way for residential development when Sevenoaks expanded to form a continuous built up area with Chipstead in the west and Dunton Green in the north. Further growth of Sevenoaks northwards from Chipstead is constrained by Chipstead Lake and the flood plain along the River Darent.</p> <p>The original village centres have maintained their identity and development around the historic core at Chipstead would adversely affect this attractive historic settlement edge and its relationship with the wooded farmland around Chipstead Lake. In other areas, the settlement edge is generally unremarkable and characterised by a pattern of 20th century residential development although the edges are often softened by trees, so it is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement (except to the west of London Road in Dunton Green and along Homedean Road in Chipstead where the settlement edge is more open which indicates lower sensitivity). The settlement edge is less clearly defined on the main approach roads to Sevenoaks due to ribbon development which indicates lower sensitivity (extending east from Sundridge along the A25 and north along the Chevening Road from Chipstead and London Road from Dunton Green).</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The wooded farmland around Chipstead lake provides a rural setting to Chipstead which indicates higher sensitivity. However, it is the landscape beyond the assessment zone, on the wooded slopes of the North Downs to the north of the M25 which forms a more visible rural backdrop to this part of Sevenoaks.</p> <p>The area provides a gap between Sevenoaks and the surrounding villages</p>

	although ribbon development reduces the perception of this gap between settlements which indicates lower sensitivity.
Visual character	This is a low lying area and there is little intervisibility with the surrounding landscape due to enclosure provided by trees, hedgerows and copses and by the wooded embankments along the motorway corridor which reduces visual sensitivity. However, the area has intervisibility with the North Downs scarp meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from elevated points on the scarp slopes, increasing sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	The area is influenced by the major transport routes (A25, A21, M25 and M26) which have an intrusive impact on the rural character of the valley and the area is therefore less sensitive in terms of perceptual character.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises prairie fields to the west of the M26/25 junction and smaller scale parliamentary enclosures with wooded copses to the north of Chipstead Lake which have little time depth. There is a concentration of listed buildings within Chipstead on the settlement edge to the south west of the area and ancient woodland both north and south of the motorway embankments which increase sensitivity to built development.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The gentle landform, disrupted field pattern, disturbance to rural character as a result of the major transport routes and areas of gravel workings, undefined settlement edge and sense of enclosure reduce sensitivity to built development. However, the landscape features (hedgerows, shaws, mature oak trees and small woodlands), historic character (ancient woodlands and Chipstead settlement edge) and intervisibility with the North Downs, increase sensitivity, resulting in a **medium** overall sensitivity.

Compared to the overall rating, areas closer to the historic settlement edge at Chipstead (designated as Conservation Area) have higher sensitivity. The rolling pastoral fields and mature oak trees and hedgerows west of Dunton Green indicate a higher sensitivity in this location.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- The hedgerows, mature field trees, shaws and woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valleys.
- The ancient woodlands along the motorway corridor.
- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick at Chipstead.
- Views to the backdrop of the North Downs.

Guidance

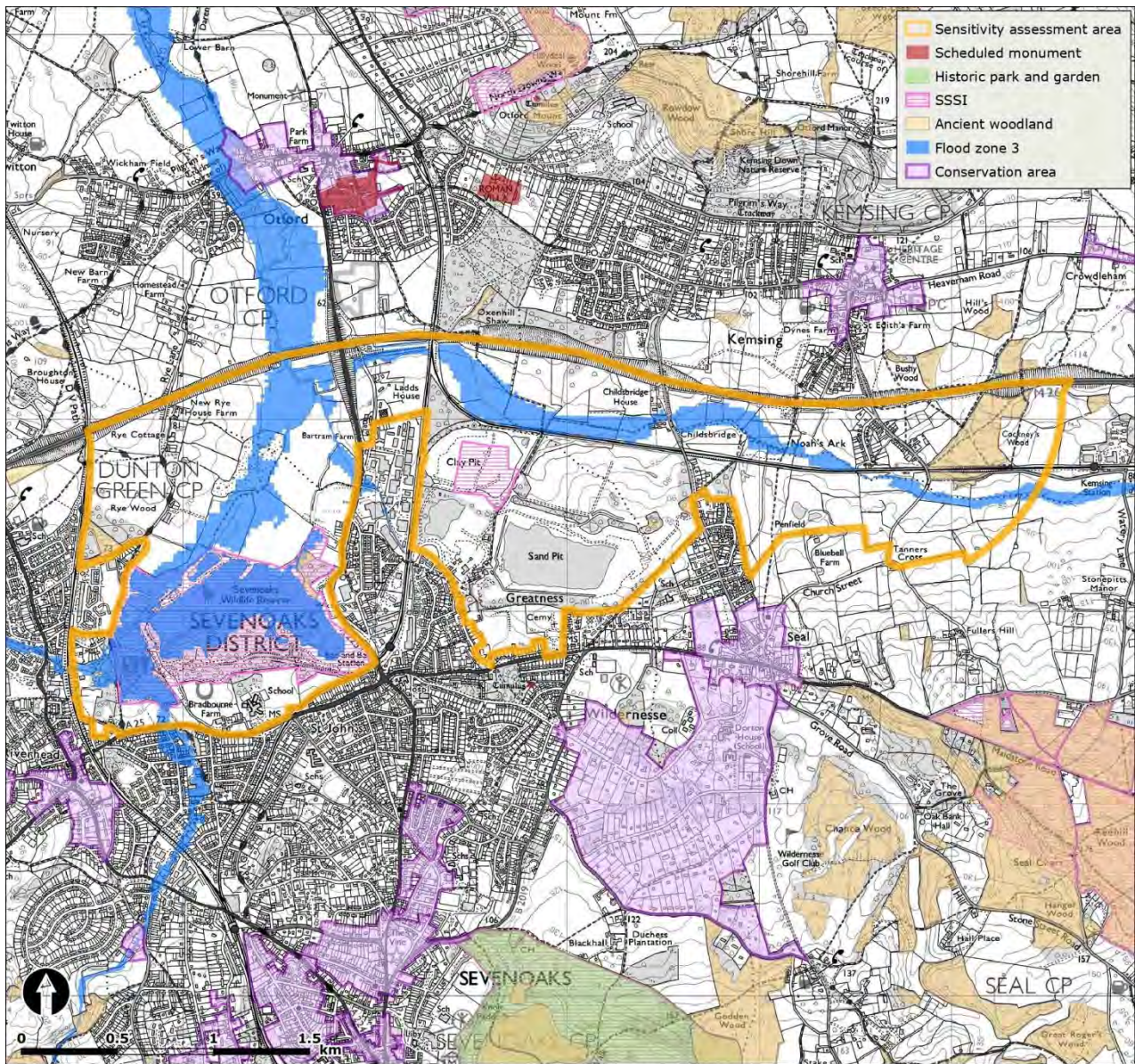
Much of this area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. Small areas of ancient woodland and Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent and a tributary west of Dunton Green form 'absolute constraints' to development. The remainder of the area has a medium sensitivity to any built development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- enhance the existing interface between Sevenoaks and the surrounding countryside of the Clay Valleys. New built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less

attractive or harsh urban edges at Dunton Green or at Homedean Road in Chipstead;

- retain the hedgerows, mature trees, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valley and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas);
- retain the areas of ancient woodlands;
- ensure any development pays regard to the local Kentish vernacular;
- consider intervisibility with the scarp. Development should be well integrated into the landscape.

S6: Sevenoaks north

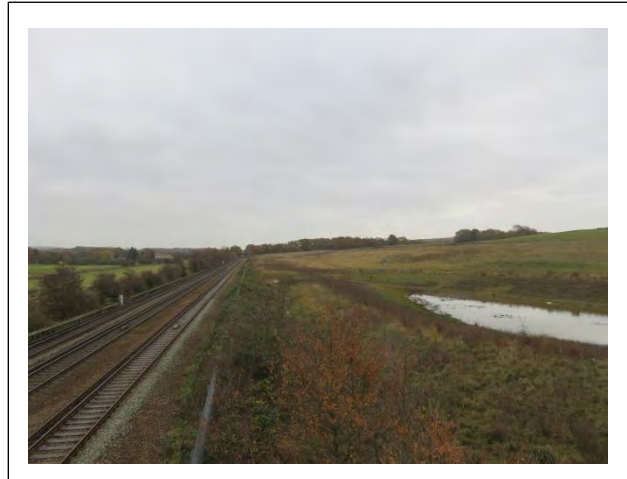


Landscape character & absolute constraints

The northern part of Sevenoaks and the area north of Seal lies within the **Upper Darent Valley East landscape character area** which is a river valley which opens into a wide floodplain enclosed to the north by the North Downs and crossed by transport corridors. Small pockets of ancient woodland, the SSSI at Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and Greatness Brickworks (geological) SSSI and Flood Zone 3 along the course of the Darent and its tributary form 'absolute constraints'¹⁵ to development in this area.

¹⁵ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>The flat to gently undulating nature of the area indicates a lower sensitivity. The landscape pattern has been disrupted by major transport routes and former and former and on-going gravel workings on the valley floor which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The remaining wet pasture on the river valley floor to the north and east of the area and the restored wetland and riparian woodland at the Sevenoaks Nature Reserve are more sensitive. The intact hedgerow network, trees and woodlands which enclose the small fields and narrow hedged lanes are characteristic and valued which raises sensitivity.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>This area lies remote from the historic core of Sevenoaks and wraps around the northern edge of the modern town below the M26. Historically this area was comprised of a number of small villages (Dunton Green, Riverhead and Harland) interspersed by farmland and large estates at Bradbourne and Greatness. The villages were overtaken as Sevenoaks expanded northwards growing into one large conurbation by the mid-20th century. Development was largely constrained by the A25 (which runs east-west) except where it extended northwards alongside the two main railway lines to Dunton Green and Otford. Further growth of Sevenoaks is largely constrained by flood zones along the Darent and the Honeypot stream. The M26 forms a barrier between Sevenoaks and Kemsing/ Otford.</p> <p>The modern outskirts of the town between the two railway lines (around the Sevenoaks Nature Reserve) are characterised by unremarkable residential estates laid out primarily in the 1930s on the site of the Bradbourne Estate with piecemeal infilling from later decades. These settlement edges are fairly well contained by the A25 or the railway line, and are intermittently tree lined, so is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement.</p> <p>Where development extends northwards, both along London Road and Otford Road, the settlement edge consists of industrial and retail estates. The large scale of the buildings and the lack of screening particularly along the Otford Road results in a harsh settlement edge facing onto the Darent floodplain. Development in this area could provide the opportunity to improve the existing edge which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>Development between the railway line and Childsbridge Lane (around the</p>

	<p>Greatness Brickworks and sandpit) began in the 1930s on the site of the Greatness Estate. This low lying area had traditionally been used for watercress beds and more recently for mineral extraction and landfill. Development continued in a piecemeal fashion between the 1960s and 1990s north of the A25 and ranges from large detached houses in extensive grounds to small terraces. The settlement edge is intermittently screened by tree belts which enclose the Greatness sandpit and landfill site and extend to enclose the western settlement edge of Seal so it is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement. Newer residential development to the east of Seal presents a harsher settlement edge, which results in lower sensitivity in that area.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The open river corridor in the northern and eastern part of the area plays a role in separating northern Sevenoaks from Otford and Kemsing which increases its sensitivity. The rural small scale farmland and woodland contribute positively to the rural setting of Sevenoaks, particularly north of the railway line and to the east of Seal beyond Noah's Ark/Church Lane, which indicates higher sensitivity. The restored woodland wetland in the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve represents an absolute constraint to development and plays an important role in providing a rural setting to northern Sevenoaks between the two rail lines. However, the heavily screened mineral extraction and landfill site at Greatness to the north east of the town does not currently provide a rural setting to the town which indicates low sensitivity.</p> <p>The landscape beyond the assessment zone, on the wooded slopes of the Kemsing scarp forms a rural backdrop to Sevenoaks.</p>
Visual character	<p>This is a low lying landscape which is not visually prominent. Woodland both around the Greatness Sand pit and within the Sevenoaks Nature Reserve (a few hundred metres north of the A25) encloses much of the existing settlement edge indicating lower sensitivity in this location. However, further north and east the openness of level floodplain lacks enclosure indicating higher sensitivity and has a high degree of intervisibility with the North Downs meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from elevated points on the scarp slopes.</p>
Perceptual qualities	<p>The major transport routes (M26, A225 and two rail lines) within the area have an intrusive impact on the rural character of the valley indicating lower sensitive in terms of perceptual character both in terms of noise and light intrusion. Farmland to the east of Seal has fewer human influences which indicate higher sensitivity to built development in this location.</p>
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area comprises 'Miscellaneous Valley Bottom Paddocks and Pastures' which have probably resulted from enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor. No indication of date is given in the Kent HLC but it is assumed that the smaller more irregular fields could have some time depth indicating higher sensitivity. Areas of small and medium fields enclosed in the 19th century and areas of field boundary loss around the Greatness sand pits have less time depth.</p> <p>There are areas of ancient woodland to the east of Seal at Cockney's Wood, which indicate higher sensitivity.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The low lying, flat to gently undulating landform, disturbance to rural character as a result of the M26 and gravel workings and landfill, harsher settlement edges along London Road and Otford Road, and sense of enclosure provided by woodland, reduces sensitivity to built development. However, the landscape features (wet pasture and restored wetland, hedgerow networks, shaws and woodland),

visually prominent floodplain, historic character (valley bottom pasture and ancient woodland) increases sensitivity resulting in a **low-medium** sensitivity to commercial development and housing.

However, sensitivity within this large area varies considerably, for example areas more remote from the settlement edge of Sevenoaks, particularly to the north of the railway line and east of Seal, have a higher sensitivity compared to the overall rating. This is due to the rural settlement pattern, intact historic character of the valley bottom pasture, narrow hedged lanes and higher occurrence of landscape features including intact hedgerows and small historic woodlands. By contrast, the heavily disrupted landscape within the Greatness sandpit and landfill site has a low sensitivity due to the loss of landscape features and historic field pattern.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- The tranquil farmland to the east of the area with historic farm buildings and oasts retains a strong sense of place.
- The local Kentish vernacular.
- Narrow winding lanes.
- Wetland and wet pasture and the ditch network along the river valley.
- Large water bodies enclosed with riparian scrub.
- The hedgerow, shaws and woodland (including ancient woodland) which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.
- Long views across the floodplain to the backdrop of the scarp.

Guidance

A small area to the east of this area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. Small pockets of ancient woodland, the SSSI at Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and Greatness Brickworks (geological SSSI) and the flood plain along the course of the Darent and its tributary (marked by Flood Zone 3) form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. However, the rest of the area has a low-medium sensitivity to residential development and commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should;

- enhance the existing interface between Sevenoaks and the surrounding countryside. New built development presents an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive and harsher urban edges particularly along the Otford Road and London Road;
- retain the wetland, wet pasture and large water bodies enclosed by riparian vegetation on the valley floor that are typical of the Clay Valleys and ensure any new built development is well integrated into this riparian landscape, improving and enhancing these wetland features where possible;
- retain the rural character of the valley away from settlement edge – any new settlement should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale. Special care should be paid to boundaries which should be rural in nature (when they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised);
- ensure any new development pays regard to the local Kentish vernacular;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, where they exist, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- retain hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands (including ancient woodland) improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- consider views to and from the North Downs scarp and ensure new development is well integrated

into the landscape;

- conserve the sense of separation between Sevenoaks and Otford/Kemsing.

Kemsing/Otford



Kemsing/Otford

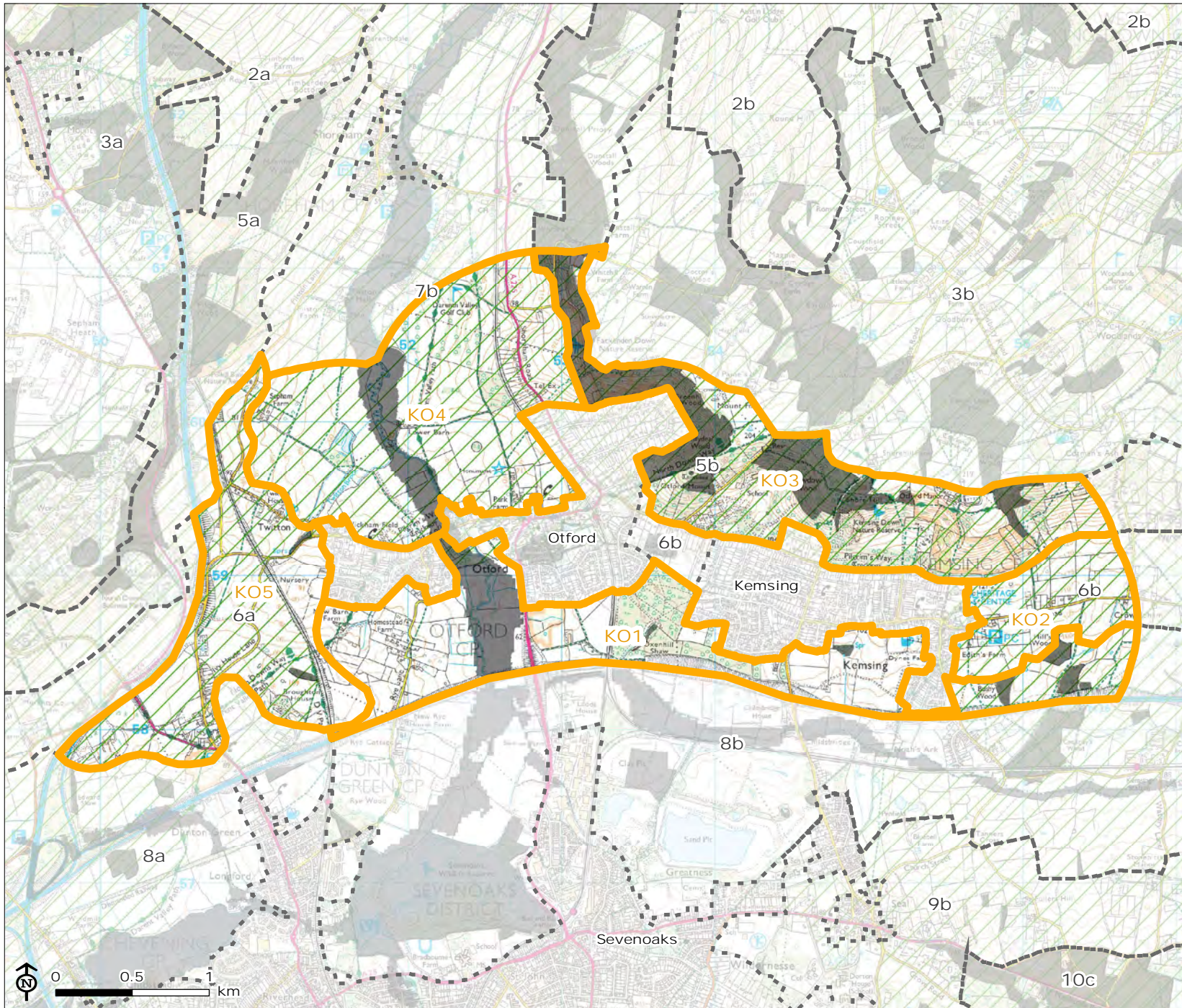
- 3.16 Kemsing and Otford are villages located to the north of Sevenoaks which have remained separate settlements.
- 3.17 Kemsing is a village located at the foot of the Kemsing Scarp, and is the birthplace of Saint Edith of Wilton, an illegitimate daughter of the Saxon King Edgar I. The historic village centre includes St. Edith's Hall and a Saxon church. In the late 19th century it was still a small rural village, but has since expanded south and west so that it almost joins Otford. There are no absolute constraints to further expansion of this village, although the scarp topography to the north is an obvious barrier to further expansion in that direction.
- 3.18 Otford is a village located north of Sevenoaks on the River Darent. A Roman villa once existed here (the remains were re-discovered and excavated during the 1930s) and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it shows that the Archbishop of Canterbury possessed 8 mills. In the later 19th century it was still a rural village set around a village green to the east of the River. In 1882, Otford Station opened linking it to London and it expanded to the north-east, south and west across the other side of the river. The floodplain and the Kemsing scarp form constraints to further expansion in certain directions.
- 3.19 There are five assessment areas around this settlement cluster:
- KO1 Kemsing and Otford south
 - KO2 Kemsing east
 - KO3 Kemsing north
 - KO4 Otford north
 - KO5 Otford west

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.9: Kemsing and Otford

-  Sevenoaks district boundary
 -  Sensitivity assessment area
 -  Area of outstanding natural beauty
 -  Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
 -  Landscape Character Areas
- 10c: Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
 2a: Farningham Downs
 2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
 3a: Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs
 3b: East Hill Wooded Downs
 5a: Chevinging Scarp
 5b: Kemsing Scarp
 6a: Chevinging Scarp Foot Farmland
 6b: Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland
 7b: Darent Valley - Farningham to Otford
 8a: Upper Darent Valley - West
 8b: Upper Darent Valley - East
 9b: Seal Parks and Farmlands

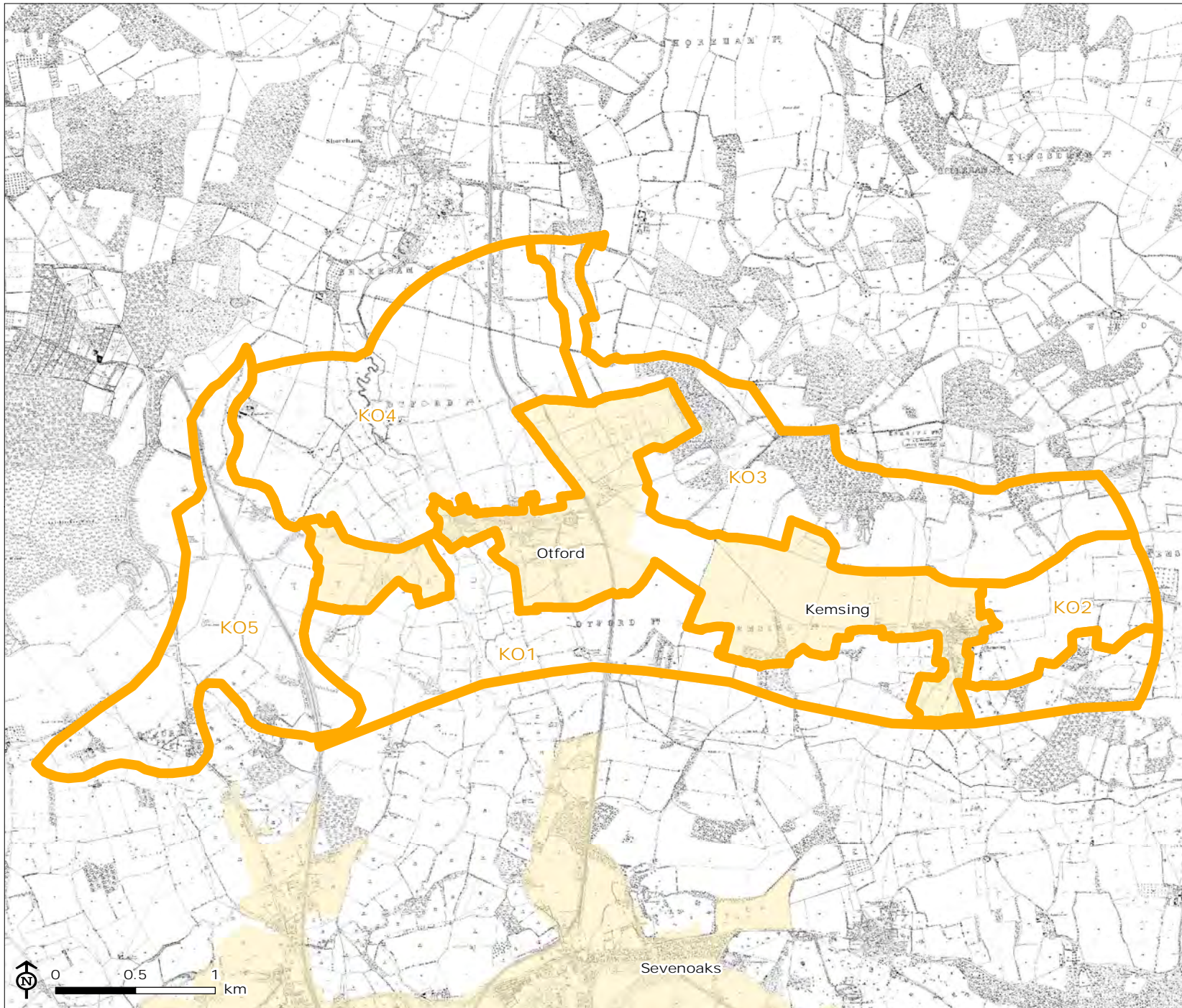
Map Scale @ A4: 1:35,400



Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.10: OS 1st edition Historic Map (1868-1895) for Kemsing and Otford

- ▭ Sevenoaks district boundary
- ▭ Sensitivity assessment area
- ▭ Settlement

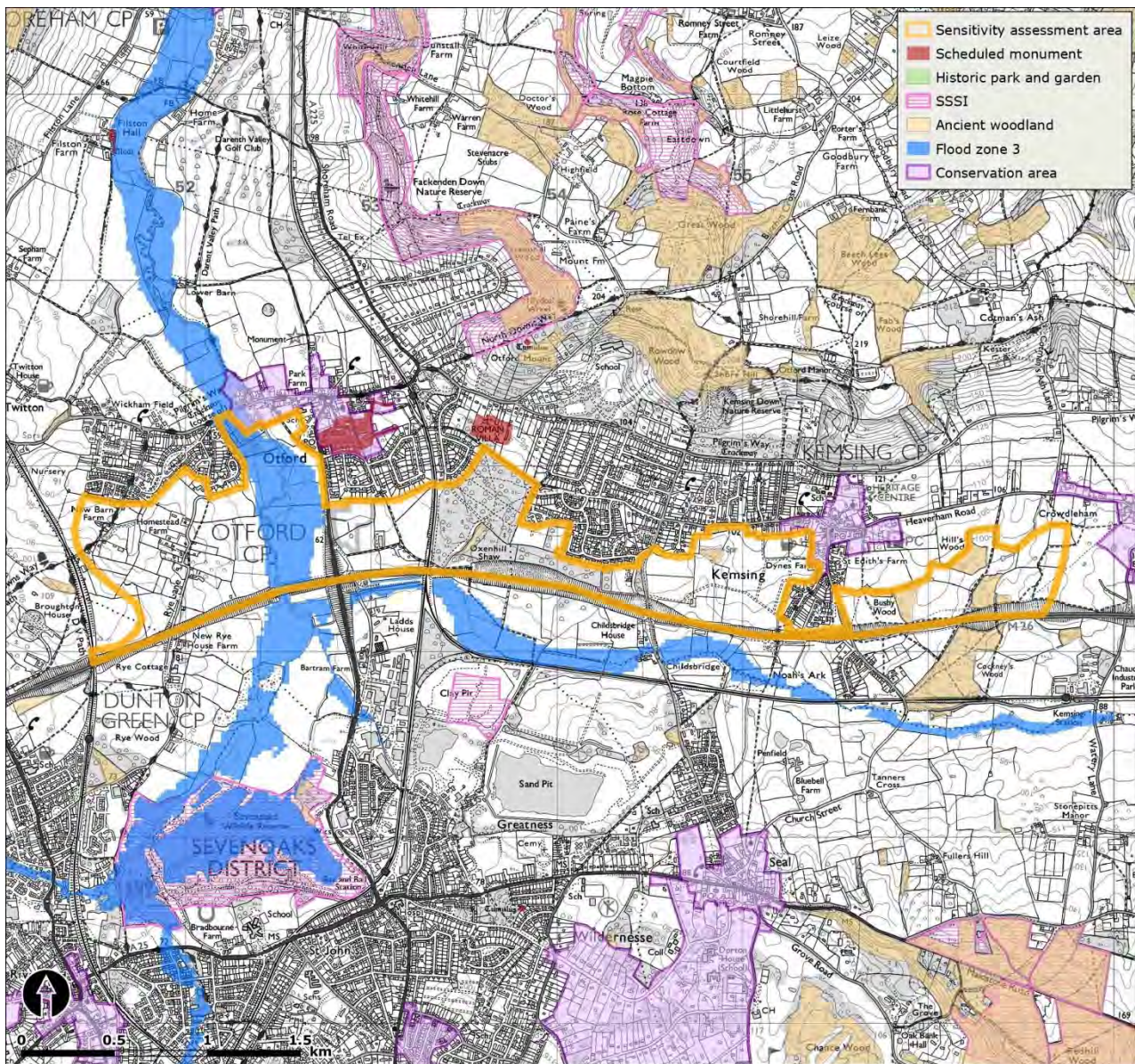


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:34,000



KO1: Kemsing and Otford south



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the south of Kemsing and Otford lies within the **Upper Darent Valley East landscape character area**, a river valley which opens into a wide floodplain enclosed to the north by the North Downs and crossed by transport corridors. Small pockets of ancient woodland and the area of Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent and its tributary, the Honeypot stream form 'absolute constraints'¹⁶ to development in this area.

¹⁶ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Flat to gently undulating landform overlain with a landscape pattern that has been disrupted by transport routes which indicates lower sensitivity. The wet pasture on the valley floor bounded by narrow lanes, the woodlands to the south of Kemsing (Oxenhill Shaw) and the small scale farmland enclosed by an intact hedgerow network outside the floodplain, particularly to the east of Kemsing are characteristic and valued which indicates higher sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	<p>There is now little separation between the villages of Otford and Kemsing. Residential expansion from the original centres began with the building of the railway station at Otford in 1882 and increased rapidly during the 1920s and 30s, west from Kemsing along the foot of the scarp and as ribbon development along the routes radiating from Otford. The M26 forms a barrier between Kemsing/ Otford and Sevenoaks.</p> <p>The existing southern settlement edge of both villages consists of varied pre- and post-war planned estates but is mostly well contained by trees or woodland (Oxenhill Shaw) and so it is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement. Areas to the south west of Otford (off Telston Lane), commercial buildings along the Otford Road on the edge of the village and a small area south of West End in Kemsing (situated higher on the valley side) are more open and would benefit from improvement.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The Darent and its open floodplain play an important role in providing a rural setting to Otford, separating the village from the M26 and the northern edge of Sevenoaks, which indicates higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The areas of small fields and woodland away from the river floodplain provide a valued rural setting particularly to Kemsing providing some separation between the village and the M26.</p>
Visual character	<p>This is generally a low lying landscape and is therefore not visually prominent however the openness of level floodplain south of Otford increases its visual sensitivity. The area has a high degree of intervisibility with the North Downs meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from elevated points on the scarp slopes (e.g. the Otford Mount) increasing sensitivity.</p> <p>South facing slopes, immediately to the south of Kemsing are visible from the</p>

	valley bottom which increases sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	The major transport corridors (M26, A225 and rail line) in this area have an intrusive impact on the rural character of the valley which indicates lower sensitive in terms of perceptual character. Farmland to the east of the area has fewer human influences which indicate higher sensitivity to built development in this location.
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that this area comprises 'Miscellaneous Valley Bottom Paddocks and Pastures' which have probably resulted from enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor. No indication of date is given in the Kent HLC but it is assumed that the smaller more irregular fields could have some time depth.</p> <p>There are also areas of smaller fields away from the floodplain which were enclosed in the 19th century which have less time depth.</p> <p>There are areas of ancient woodland in the east of the area, south-east of Kemsing which indicate higher sensitivity.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the low-lying, flat to gently undulating landform and disturbance to rural character as a result of the busy transport corridors reduce sensitivity to built development, the landscape features (wet pasture bounded by narrow lanes, small fields with intact hedgerows and woodlands), historic character (time depth of the valley bottom pasture and ancient woodlands), rural setting and separation the area provides from the M26 and Sevenoaks and visual character (openness of the valley floor, steeper slopes south of Kemsing and intervisibility with the surrounding scarps) increase sensitivity, resulting in a **medium** sensitivity overall to residential development. The visibility of the landscape from the scarp slopes and the small scale of the existing settlement mean that this area would have higher (**medium-high**) sensitivity to large scale developments and a lower sensitivity to smaller, rural style developments.

Compared to the overall rating, the more tranquil farmland to the east of the area has a higher sensitivity to built development due to its smaller field pattern, ancient woodland and more rural settlement pattern and distance from the urban edge of Sevenoaks.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

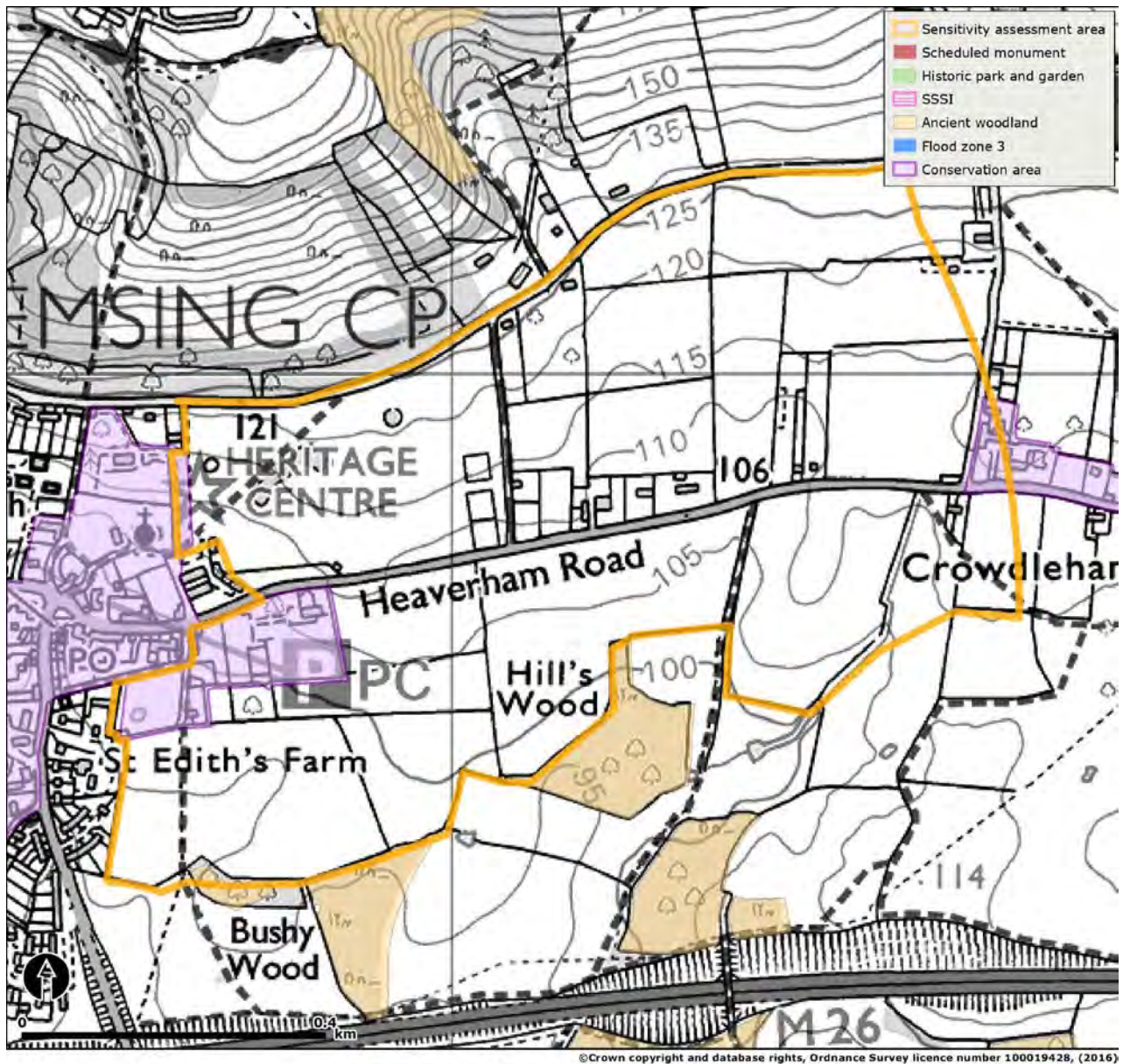
- The tranquil farmland, particularly to the east of the area, which retains a strong sense of place despite the proximity of Sevenoaks.
- The typical Kentish style vernacular of the local buildings.
- Historic narrow lanes running north-south from the Downs.
- Wetland and wet pasture and the ditch network along the river valley.
- The hedgerows, shaws and woodland (including ancient woodland) which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.
- Long views across the floodplain to the backdrop of the scarps.

Guidance

The small part to the east of this area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. Small pockets of ancient woodland and the floodplain along the course of the River Darent and its tributary, the Honeypot stream (marked by Flood Zone 3) form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. However, the rest of the area has a medium sensitivity to residential development and medium-high sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should;

- enhance the existing interface between Otford and Kemsing and the surrounding countryside of the Clay Valleys. New built development present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive and harsher urban edges along the south west settlement boundaries of Otford, along Otford Road and West End in Kemsing;
- retain the wetland and wet pasture on the floodplain that are typical of the Clay Valleys;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- retain the open nature of the floodplain in order to retain views to the scarps;
- consider views from the scarps. New development should be well integrated into the landscape;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern and scale to the east of the area. Any new settlement not attached to Otford or Kemsing should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads. Special care should be paid to boundaries which should be rural in nature (where they adjoin the countryside and lighting (which should be minimised));
- conserve the sense of separation between Otford/Kemsing and Sevenoaks;
- ensure any new development pays regard to the local Kentish vernacular.

KO2: Kemsing east



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the east of Kemsing lies within the **Kemsing scarp foot farmland landscape character area** which is a farmland and parkland belt that lies at the foot of the North Downs scarp.

Small pockets of ancient woodland and Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent and its tributary form 'absolute constraints'¹⁷ to development in this area.

¹⁷ Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Undulating lower slopes of the North Downs scarp with some steep slopes which increase sensitivity compared to flatter landform. The landform is overlain by a small scale landscape pattern of pastoral fields, surrounded by narrow hedged lane which indicates higher sensitivity. There are some areas where field boundary loss and the division of pasture fields into smaller paddocks which indicate lower sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	The original village centre of Kemsing is located at the east of the current village and has maintained its identity. Development in the assessment area would adversely affect this attractive historic settlement edge and would have a poor relationship with the existing rural settlement pattern.
Settlement setting	The pastoral farmland in this area plays an important role in providing a valued rural setting to the village and separating Kemsing from the historic hamlets of Crowdleham and Heaverham to the east. The landscape beyond the assessment zone, on the wooded slopes of the Kemsing scarp above the village forms a backdrop to the village and forms part of its rural setting.
Visual character	The lower slopes of the North Downs are visually prominent which indicates a higher sensitivity. The area has a high degree of intervisibility with the river valley floor below and from higher points on the North Downs meaning that potential development could be visible in long views across the valley, and from high points on the scarp, indicating higher sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	The area is generally tranquil and has few human influences which indicate higher sensitivity to built development in this area. However, auditory intrusion from the M26 motorway impacts on the rural character of the area which indicates lower sensitivity in terms of perceptual character.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area largely comprises areas of small fields enclosed in the 19 th century and a recreation ground and areas of paddocks around the scattered settlements north of the Heaversham Road. These do not reflect any time-depth and so indicate lower sensitivity. However the historic hamlets within the area and the Pilgrim's Way, an ancient trackway which runs along the northern boundary indicates high sensitivity to built development.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the disturbance to rural character as a result of the M26, the lack of time depth in the field pattern and field boundary loss in some areas reduce sensitivity to built development, the landscape features (the small scale landscape pattern of pastoral fields, intact hedgerows) tranquil rural character, rural settlement pattern and historic character (narrow drove lanes, ancient trackway and historic settlement edge) and visual prominence of the steeper slopes increase sensitivity, resulting in a **medium-high** sensitivity to residential development. The landscape would have higher sensitivity to large scale commercial developments due to the residential nature of the settlement edge and present of small-scale historic villages and a lower sensitivity to smaller, rural style developments.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

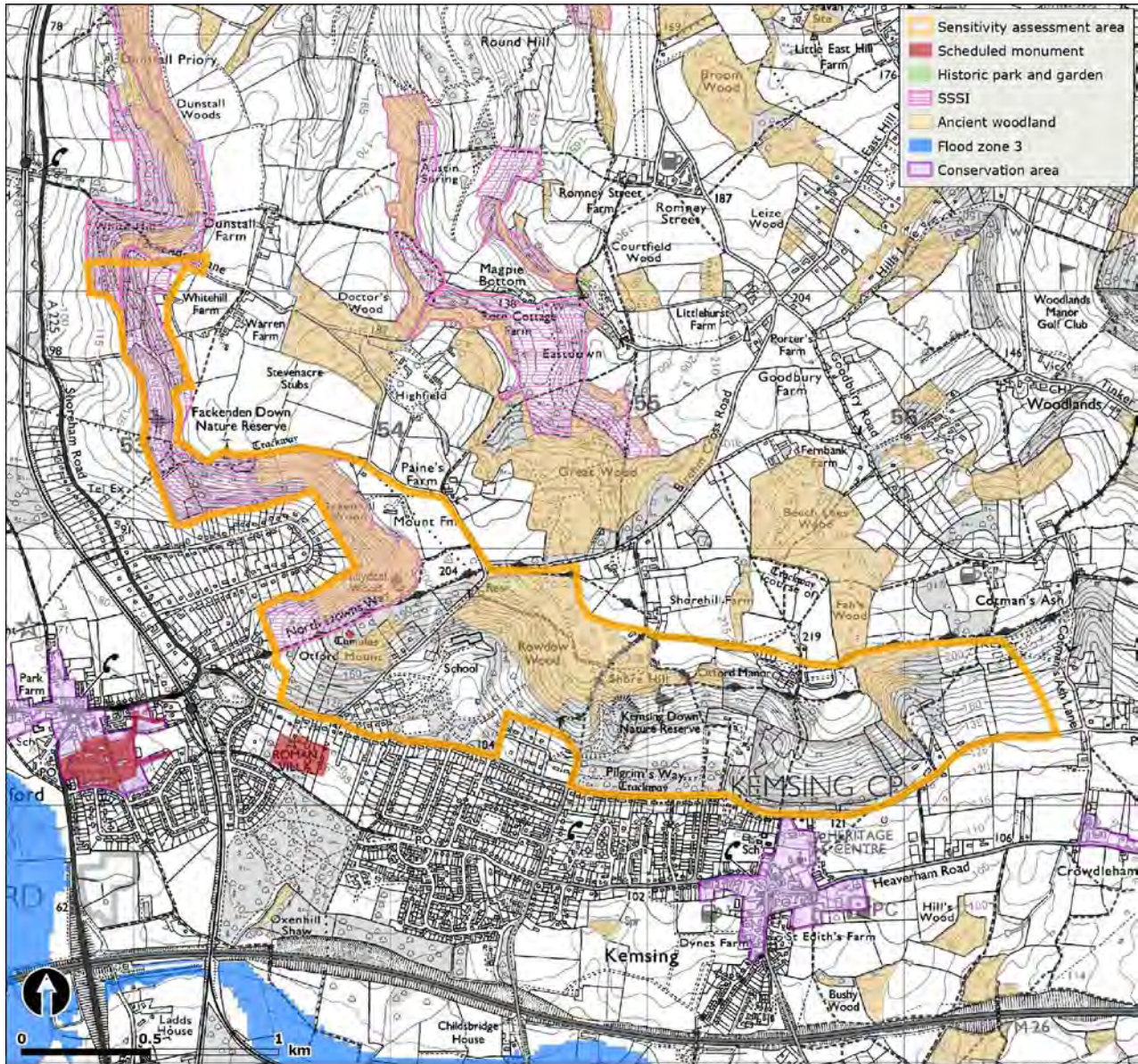
- Tranquil small scale pastoral farmland bounded by a network of hedgerows and shaws.
- Historic narrow winding lanes with mature hedgerows which follow the route of the historic drove roads.
- Ancient trackway of the Pilgrim's Way.
- Historic settlement pattern of isolated farms, hamlets and small country houses.
- The historic village of Kemsing (a Conservation Area) and hamlet of Crowdelham.
- Typical Kentish vernacular styles of the local buildings.
- Open views across the fields and to the backdrop of the scarps.

Guidance

This area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. Small pockets of ancient woodland and Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent and its tributary form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. However, the rest of the area has a medium-high sensitivity to residential and high sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should;

- retain the tranquil and small scale pastoral farmland that is typical of the Scarp Foot Farmland;
- retain hedgerows and shaws and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes and avoid widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern. Any new development should fit with the rural settlement pattern;
- protect the historic settlement edge of Kemsing and ensure any new development reflects the rural Kentish vernacular;
- consider views from the scarp. New development should be well integrated into the landscape;
- protect the open views across the fields and to the scarp.

KO3: Kemsing north



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the north of Kemsing lies within the **Kemsing scarp character area** which is a mosaic of woodland, grassland and farmland which runs up the steep south-facing slopes of the North Downs that rises above the Darent Valley.

Large areas of ancient woodland (Greenhill, Hillydeal and Scrubs Woods) and the extensive SSSI (Otford to Shoreham Down) along the top of the scarp, along with the Scheduled Monument at Otford Mount, form 'absolute constraints'¹⁸ to development in this area.

¹⁸ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	The distinctive steep scarp slopes of the North Downs increase sensitivity compared to flatter landforms. The landform is overlain by a mosaic of mature mixed woodland, species rich chalk grassland, scrub and small pastoral fields enclosed by mature hedgerows and shaws, bounded by narrow winding lanes, which are characteristic and valued which indicates high sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	Settlement on the steep scarp slope is limited to a small number of large detached houses and farmsteads which are set back from the ridge. Residential properties have expanded west from the original village centre at Kemsing and east from Otford along the Shoreham Road (Hillydeal Road and Greenhill Road) along the lower foot slopes of the scarp. Development further up the scarp slope is generally constrained by the steep topography. Development in the assessment area would have a poor relationship with the sparse rural settlement pattern which indicates higher sensitivity.
Settlement setting	The chalk downs in this area provides a valued rural backdrop to the villages below the scarp slope and forms part of the rural setting of a wide area in the valley to the south, including Sevenoaks and Seal, which indicates a high sensitivity.
Visual character	The scarp slopes of the North Downs are visually prominent which indicates a high sensitivity. The area has a high degree of intervisibility with the river valley floor and from higher points on the Greensand Ridge to the south meaning that potential development could be visible in long views across the valley, and from high points on the opposite scarp, indicating a high sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	The area is a highly rural landscape and has few human influences which indicate high sensitive in terms of perceptual character. There is some auditory intrusion from the M26 in the valley below the scarp.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises downland (chalk grazing land of medieval origin) and scarp woodland much of which is ancient which reflect the great time-depth of this area and indicate high sensitivity. There are smaller areas of assarts formed by the clearance of woodland in the 19 th century and small fields enclosed in the 19 th century which have less time-depth. The Victorian house and historic parkland at Otford Court and the ancient trackway (Pilgrim's Way) which runs along the southern boundary of the area

also indicates high sensitivity to built development in terms of historic character.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The landscape features (the distinctive landform, complex and small-scale landscape pattern (of species-rich chalk grassland, pastoral fields, mature hedgerows, shaws and mature mixed woodland), rural character with a sparse settlement pattern, visual prominence, historic character (ancient woodland, time-depth of the chalk downland, narrow winding drove lanes, ancient trackways and historic parkland) and the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to a wide area to the south, results in a **high** sensitivity to development.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

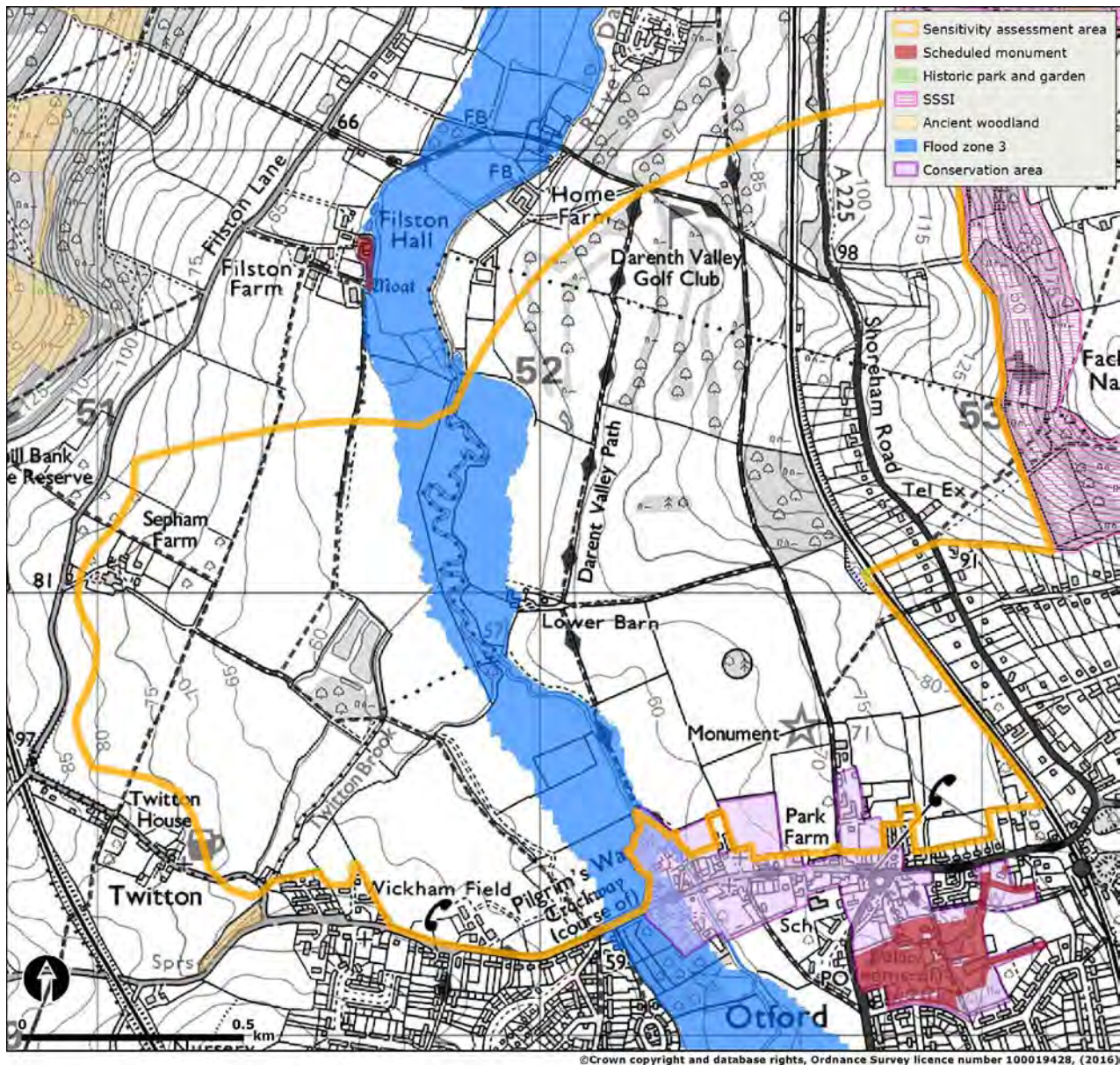
- The distinctive landform of the steep scarp slopes which is largely free of development.
- Extensive areas of native broad-leaved woodland, particularly areas of ancient woodland.
- Areas of chalk grassland and scrub.
- Intact network of hedges and copses enclosing pastoral fields.
- Ancient trackways at the top and base of the scarp.
- Historic narrow winding lanes with high grassy banks.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and houses characteristically set back from the ridge.
- The long views and sense of tranquillity on the elevated slopes.

Guidance

This area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. Large areas of ancient woodland (Greenhill, Hillydeal and Scrubs Woods) and the extensive SSSI (Otford to Shoreham Down) along the top of the scarp, along with the Scheduled Monument at Otford Mount, form 'absolute constraints' to development in this area. The remaining area has a high sensitivity to residential and commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should;

- retain the extensive areas of woodland, chalk grassland, hedgerows and copses enclosing pastoral fields that are typical of the Scarp Landscapes;
- retain the character and pattern of the narrow rural winding lanes and ancient trackways;
- retain the rural character of the area and the low density settlement pattern which is set back from the ridge;
- consider views from the valley floor and the Greensand Ridge and ensure any new development is well integrated into the landscape.

KO4: Otford north



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the north of Otford lies within the **Darent Valley – Farningham to Otford landscape character area** which is a river valley with mixed farmland running north-south between the scarp slopes of the North Downs.

The Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent forms an 'absolute constraint'¹⁹ to development in this area.

¹⁹ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>Gently undulating landform of the valley floor which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The wet pasture and riparian trees and vegetation on the valley floor, small to medium scale field pattern, small copses and narrow hedged lanes are characteristic and valued which indicates higher sensitivity.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>Residential properties have expanded from the original village centre at Otford, west along the Pilgrim's Way towards Twitton and north (extending beyond the settlement edge) as ribbon development along the A225 Shoreham Road on the lower slopes of the scarp. Further expansion west from the A225 is constrained by the railway line.</p> <p>The settlement edge to the east of the river includes the historic core of Otford with some modern infill, and development of more modern housing or commercial buildings in this location could adversely affect the attractive historic centre.</p> <p>Much of the existing northern settlement edge of Otford, west of the River Darent, is relatively modern and only intermittently screened by vegetation and so is not particularly sensitive. Development in this area could provide the opportunity to improve the existing settlement edge. Twitton Meadows to the north of the Pilgrim's Way, is a well-enclosed residential development from the 1990s.</p> <p>Away from Otford and the A225, the settlement pattern is rural, with isolated farmsteads, which indicates higher sensitivity.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The pastoral landscape to the north of Otford with the River Darent and its open floodplain contribute positively to the rural setting to Otford. The slopes of the North Downs on either side of the valley form an important backdrop to the village which indicates higher sensitivity.</p>
Visual character	<p>This river valley is low lying landscape is not particularly visually prominent and enclosed along the river by trees and vegetation which indicates lower sensitivity. However, the area has a high degree of intervisibility with the scarp slopes of the North Downs meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from elevated points on the scarp slopes, increasing sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual qualities	<p>The A225 and the railway line, suburban land use such as the Darenth Valley Golf Club and residential development along the Shoreham Road have an</p>

	intrusive impact on the rural character of the valley, which indicates lower sensitive in terms of perceptual character. However, pastoral farmland along the river floor and closer to the western scarp has fewer human influences which indicate higher sensitivity to built development in this location.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area comprises 'Miscellaneous Valley Bottom Paddocks and Pastures' which have probably resulted from enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor. No indication of date is given in the Kent HLC but it is assumed that the smaller more irregular fields could have some time depth. West of the river the field system results from 'Irregular fields bounded by tracks, roads and paths' which the HLC describes as large fields which have probably resulted from post-medieval informal enclosure. The roads and tracks referred to are possibly old drove roads to and from the downlands. The time-depth present in this field pattern indicates higher sensitivity. To the east of the river floodplain, either side of the Shoreham Road, there are areas of small and medium fields enclosed in the 19 th century which have less time depth.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the gently undulating landform of the valley floor, disturbance to rural character as a result of the busy road and rail network, suburban land uses and the open modern settlement edges (particularly to the west of the settlement edge) reduce sensitivity to built development, the landscape features (wet pasture and riparian trees and vegetation, small to medium scale field pattern, small copses and narrow hedged lanes) historic character (time depth of the landscape and historic settlement edge at Otford) increases sensitivity and result in in a medium sensitivity to residential development. The intervisibility of the landscape from the scarp slopes, the small scale of the settlement and its residential nature means that this area would have a **medium-high** sensitivity to large scale developments and a **medium** sensitivity to smaller, rural style developments.

The more tranquil pastoral farmland along the river valley floor and to the east of the valley has a higher sensitivity to built development due to its historic field pattern, more rural character and settlement pattern.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- Small-medium scale field pattern with some time-depth.
- Wet pasture and riparian woodland on the valley floor.
- Traditional and locally distinctive land uses such as hop and lavender growing.
- Historic rural settlement pattern
- Traditional vernacular building styles.
- The narrow winding lanes enclosed by dense hedgerows.
- Attractive views from adjacent landscapes across the Darent Valley.

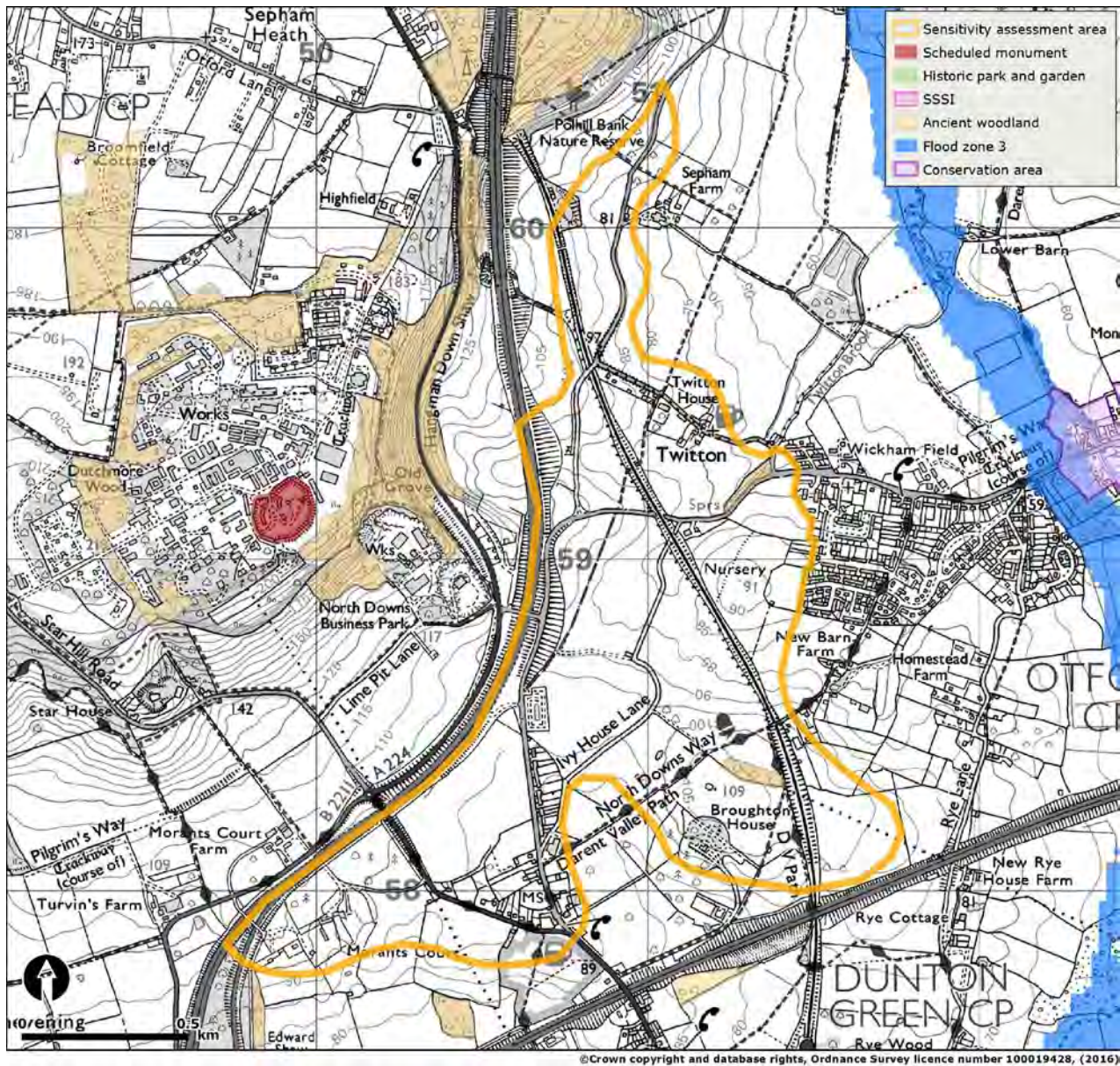
Guidance

The area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. There are few 'absolute constraints' to development in the area except for the Flood Zone 3 along the course of the River Darent. Overall, this area has a medium sensitivity to residential development and medium-high sensitivity to commercial development for the

reasons set out above. Any new development should;

- enhance the existing interface between the modern settlement edge of Otford and the surrounding countryside of the Chalk Valleys. New built development presents an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive and harsher urban edges along the northern boundary of Otford;
- conserve the historic field pattern, wet pasture and riparian woodland on the valley floor that are valued and typical of the Chalk Valleys and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the traditional and locally distinctive land uses of the Chalk Valleys;
- any new settlement not attached to Otford should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads;
- retain the historic settlement edge of Otford (within the Conservation Area) and its existing interface with the valley floor;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- consider views from the scarp slopes and ensure development is well integrated into the landscape and minimise visibility using siting and planting;
- ensure any new development pays regard to the Kentish vernacular;
- retain the rural character – special regard should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin the countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised).

KO5: Otford west



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The area to the west of Otford lies within the **Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland landscape character area** which is a farmland and parkland belt that lies at the foot of the North Downs scarp. Small pockets of ancient woodland form 'absolute constraints'²⁰ to development in this area.

²⁰ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	Undulating lower slopes of the North Downs with fields bounded by mature hedgerows, shaws and small copses and parkland which are characteristic and valued which indicates higher sensitivity. Field boundary loss in some areas resulting in larger fields are generally less sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	<p>20th century residential development has extended west from the original village centre of Otford along the Pilgrim's Way towards the railway. The inter-war estate to the south of Pilgrim's Way is largely open with little vegetative screening and development in this area could provide the opportunity to improve the existing settlement edge. The smaller and more recent 1990s development to the north of the road (Twitton Meadows) is well screened by tree belts.</p> <p>Away from Otford, ribbon development extends from the edge of Sevenoaks at Dunton Green along the London Road and Morants Court Road.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>The wooded railway embankment encloses the western settlement edge of Otford and separates it from the farmland to the west and does not contribute to the setting of the settlement reducing the sensitivity of this area.</p> <p>The area plays an important role in the perception of a gap between Otford and Sevenoaks (Dunton Green) to the south.</p> <p>The wooded slopes of the North Downs scarp, beyond the M25/A224 and outside this assessment area, forms a backdrop to the village and forms part of its rural setting.</p>
Visual character	<p>Otford in this area is enclosed by the undulating topography (which rises towards the wooded railway and motorway embankment to the west) and the narrow hedged lanes which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The area has a high degree of intervisibility with higher points on the North Downs meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from high points on the scarp, increasing sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual qualities	The M25 motorway, A224, A225 and the mainline railway line as well as ribbon development along the London Road running north from the edge of Sevenoaks at Dunton Green, all impacts on the rural character of the area which indicates lower sensitive in terms of perceptual character.

Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that much of this area comprises 'Irregular fields bounded by tracks, roads and paths' to the west of the railway line. These are typically large fields which have probably resulted from post-medieval informal enclosure. The roads and tracks referred to are possibly old drove roads to and from the downlands. No indication of date is given in the Kent HLC but it is assumed that the fields could have some time depth which indicates a higher sensitivity. To the south of the area and on the Otford settlement edge the field system results from regular parliamentary enclosure which has less time depth and indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The historic parkland at Morants Court and the scattered villas (Morants Court and Broughton House) along the southern edge of this assessment area indicates high sensitivity in terms of historic character.</p>
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Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although there are some valued landscape features (hedgerows, shaws and small copses) and remnants of an historic field pattern and intervisibility with the North Downs which increases sensitivity, the enclosed nature of the area, disturbance to rural character (as a result of the busy road and rail network and ribbon development outside the settlement edge) the boundary loss and lack of time-depth in the field pattern to the east of the area and the open modern settlement edge at Otford reduce sensitivity to built development, resulting in a **low-medium** sensitivity to residential development.

The tight urban grain of the village indicates a **medium** sensitivity to commercial development in close proximity to Otford.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- The hedgerow network, shaws and woodland.
- Parkland trees and woodland.
- Narrow winding lanes which follow the route of the historic drove roads.
- Historic field pattern.
- Rural settlement pattern of isolated farms.
- Open views to the scarps.

Guidance

The area lies mostly within the Kent Downs AONB. There are few 'absolute constraints' to development in the area except for small pockets of ancient woodland and overall this area has a low-medium sensitivity to residential development and medium sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- enhance the existing interface between Otford and the surrounding countryside of the Scarp Foot Farmland. New built development may present an opportunity to improve the less attractive and harsh urban edge on the western settlement edge of Otford but special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised);
- retain the hedgerows, woodland and shaws which are typical of the Scarp Foot Farmland and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and

enhancing these features where possible;

- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- retain the historic character of the area including the field patterns, estate parkland and associated woodland and trees;
- consider views from the Scarp and ensure new development is well integrated within the Scarp Foot Farmland;
- conserve view to the North Downs and consider views from the scarp. Development should be well integrated into the landscape and minimise visibility using siting and planting;
- conserve the sense of separation between Otford and Sevenoaks.

Westerham



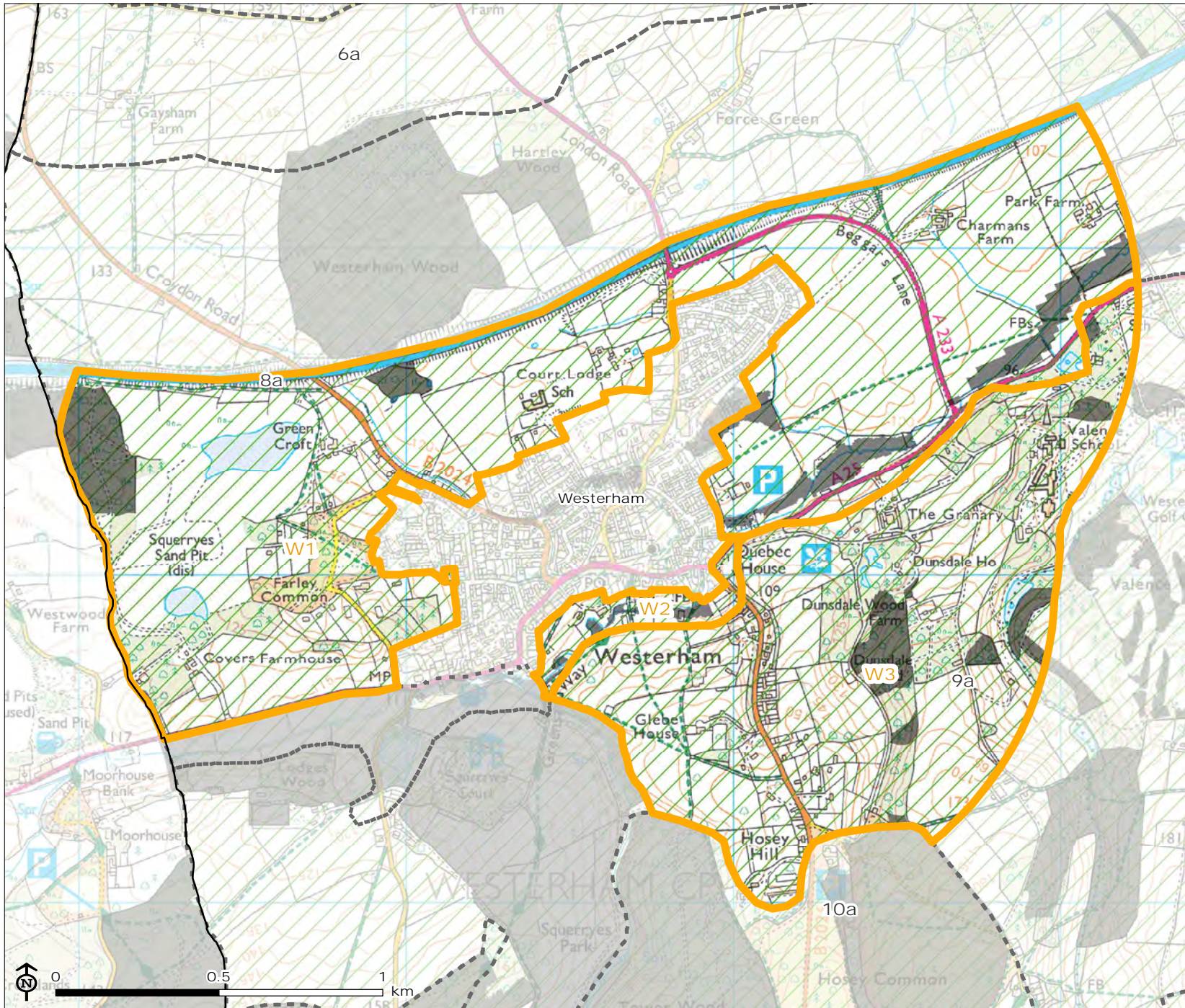
Westerham

- 3.20 Westerham is located on the A25 which bisects the town. The original settlement was built on a small hill at a point where several streams joined the River Darent. The town lies within a valley between the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge and its setting is characterised by farmland to the north and wooded parkland to the south.
- 3.21 There is evidence that the area around Westerham has been settled for thousands of years with finds such as a Celtic fortification (c 2000 BC) on the Squerryes estate. The town appears in the Domesday Book as 'Oistreham' and by 1227 Henry III granted Westerham a market charter, making the new village a major player in the buying and selling of cattle in Kent, a tradition that survived to 1961 when the last cattle market was held.
- 3.22 The historic town was built around a market square and green and extended in a linear form east and west. The settlement form relates to the river which gave power to the local mills. The town expanded with the arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century, which was followed by the establishment of small industries including brewing, market gardens and building industries. The 20th century brought expansion to the residential settlement to the north-west.
- 3.23 The buildings include a mix of small cottages and larger dwellings of various periods, with a unifying theme of distinctive vernacular styles, including orange/red brick, hanging and roof tiles, ragstone and brick walls. Unremarkable 20th and 21st century residential developments and light industrial buildings on the site of the old railway station, are located on the outskirts of the town to the north of the A25.
- 3.24 A flood zone to the east of the town along the River Darent forms an 'absolute constraint'²¹ to development, while the M25 forms a physical barrier to the north.
- 3.25 There are three assessment areas around this settlement:
- | | |
|----|----------------------|
| W1 | Westerham north |
| W2 | Westerham south |
| W3 | Westerham south-east |

²¹ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.11: Westerham



- Sevenoaks district boundary
 - Sensitivity assessment area
 - Area of outstanding natural beauty
 - Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
 - Landscape Character Areas
- 10a: Westerham and Brasted Chart
- 5a: Chevening Scarp
- 6a: Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland
- 8a: Upper Darent Valley - West
- 9a: Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands

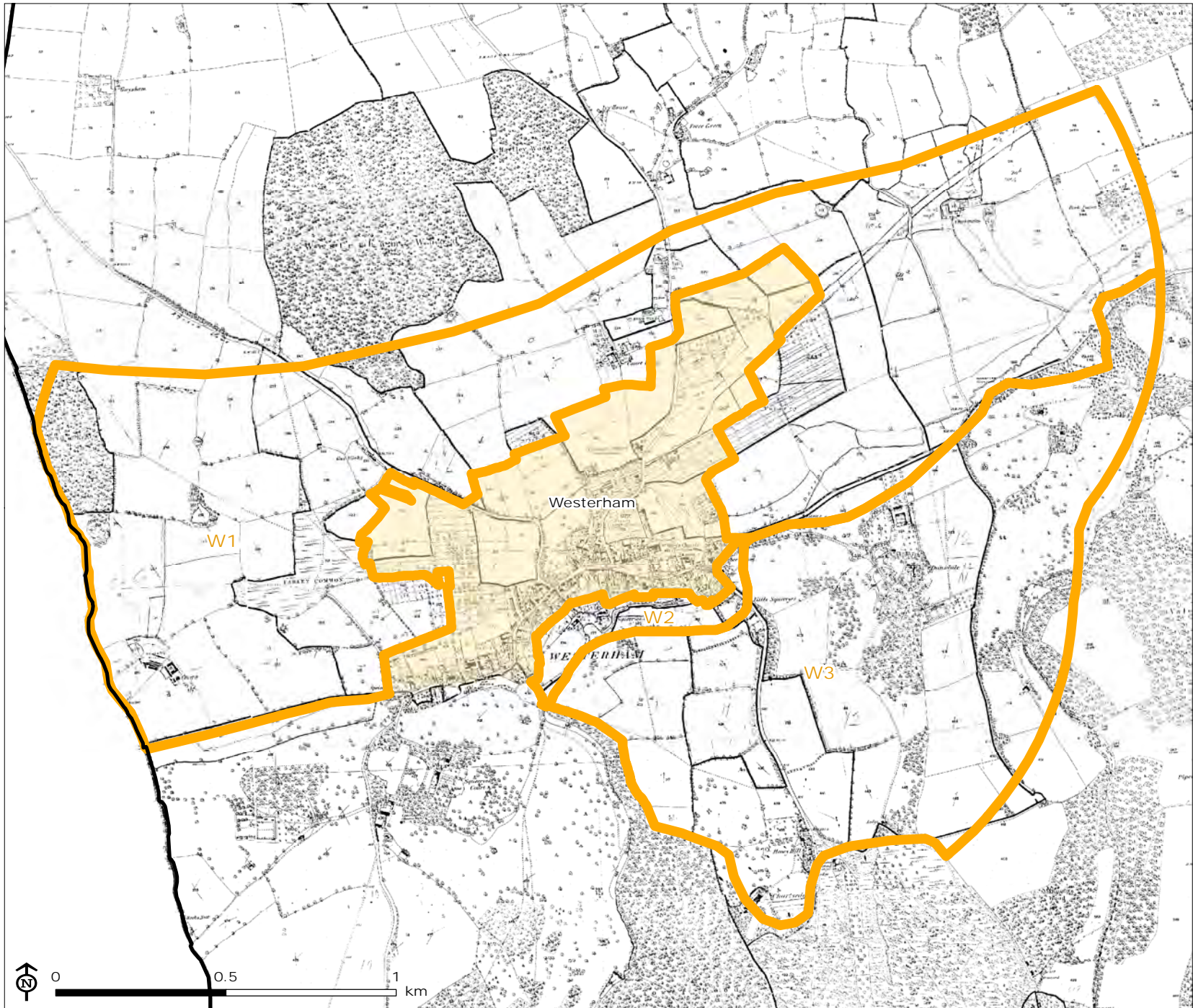
Map Scale @ A4: 1:16,700



Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.12: OS 1st edition Historic Map (1868-1895) for Westerham

- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Sensitivity assessment area
- Settlement

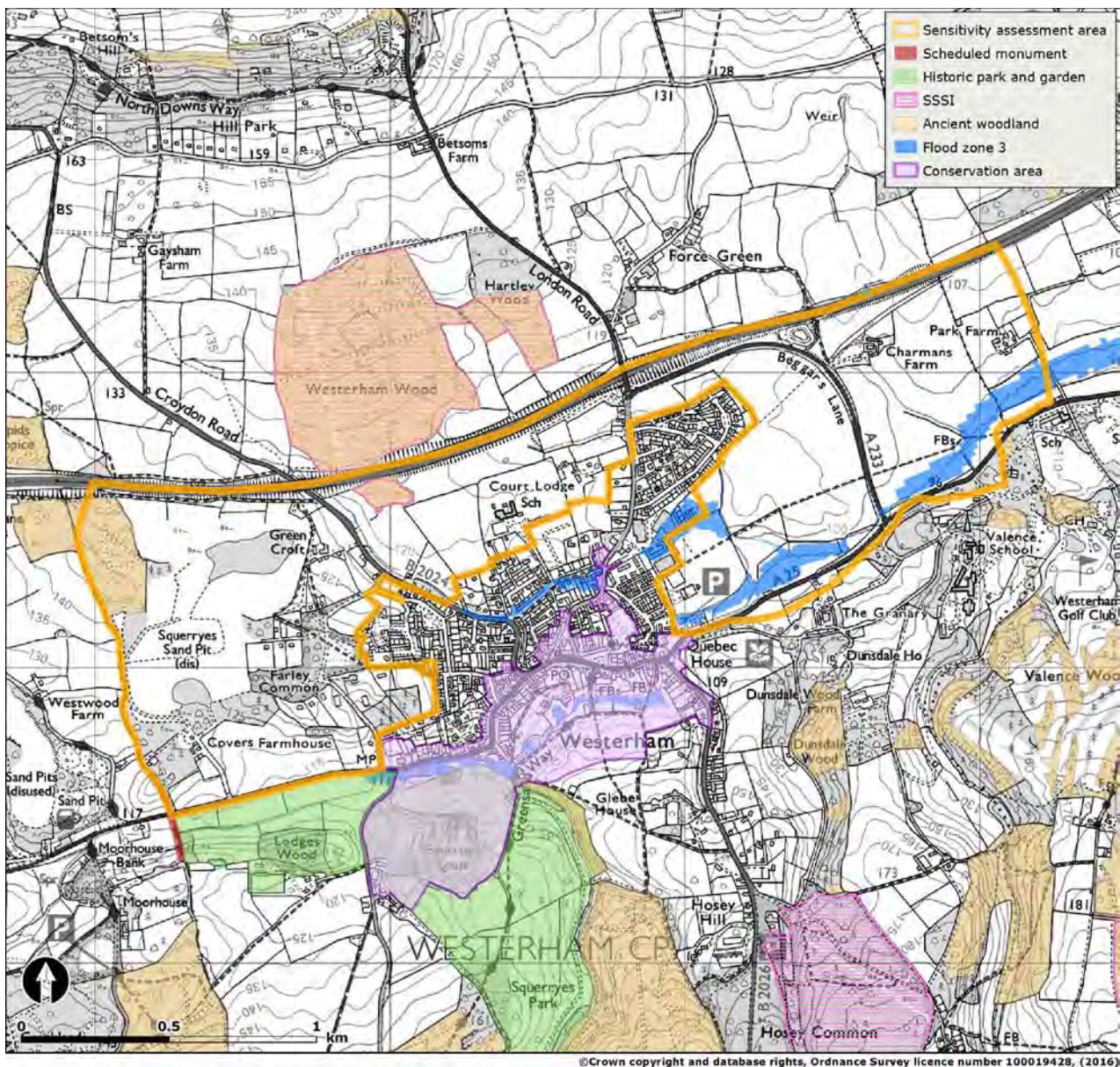


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:16,000



W1: Westerham north



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The northern part of Westerham lies within the **Upper Darent Valley West landscape character area** which is an area of gently undulating farmland within a valley which is enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge and crossed by major transport corridors.

Ancient woodland near Clacket Lane and at Westerham Wood (also an SSSI) and the Flood Zone 3 to the east of the settlement edge and along the course of the River Darent forms an 'absolute constraint'²² to development.

²² 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	<p>A gently undulating landform which indicates lower sensitivity. The field pattern is disrupted locally resulting in large arable fields, particularly to the east of the town which indicate lower sensitivity. In other areas, smaller fields with mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees, shaws and woodlands which are characteristic and valued, indicate higher sensitivity. The wooded area at Farley Common which rises to the west of the settlement edge is a valuable semi-natural habitat.</p>
Settlement form & edge	<p>Historically Westerham was located east-west along the A25, north of the River Darent. The historic core of the town (within the Conservation Area) extends east and west along the A25 and historic buildings at the entrance to the town on these approaches (designated as Conservation Area) constitute the most sensitive settlement edges within this area.</p> <p>In the 20th century development extended north of the A25 and is typically modern residential estates and commercial/ light industrial areas that have expanded into the rural fields. Additional development in this area would continue this pattern, although it is not characteristic of the typical settlement pattern outside Westerham which is typically rural with scattered farmsteads linked by narrow lanes.</p> <p>The existing settlement edge on the north east of the town towards the M25 consists of unremarkable 20th century housing which is unenclosed by vegetation and development in this area could provide the opportunity to improve the existing settlement edge which indicates lower sensitivity. To the east the modern settlement edge and the industrial estate are intermittently screened by trees so it is neither particularly sensitive in this respect, nor particularly in need of improvement. To the west and north-west the settlement edge is less clearly defined with some large detached houses outside the settlement boundary but the area is screened from view by the woodland and the topography of Farley Common and plays some part in providing a setting to Westerham, so is neither particularly sensitive nor particularly in need of improvement.</p>
Settlement setting	<p>Low lying farmland, bounded by thick hedgerows and mature trees, to the north and east and areas of woodland to the west at Farley Common provide a rural setting to Westerham. However, it is the landscape beyond the assessment zone, on the wooded slopes of the scarp foot to the north of the M25 which forms the more important rural backdrop to Westerham. The</p>

	<p>heavily screened mineral extraction site at Moorhouse (Squerreys Sandpit) to the west of the town does not provide an important setting to the town which indicates lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The area does not play a particular role in the perception of a gap between settlements.</p>
Visual character	<p>The low lying valley landscape around Westerham is enclosed by trees, hedgerows and copses and the town is largely hidden except for the church spire which indicates lower visual sensitivity. The area to the west is enclosed by woodland which indicates lower sensitivity in terms of visual character.</p> <p>However, Westerham is situated on a small hill within the wider Darent valley and there are narrow views to the farmland, particularly to the east from elevated points within the town. Parts of the area, particularly to the east, have a high degree of intervisibility with the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge meaning that potential development could be visible in long views from elevated points on these slopes, increasing sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual qualities	<p>The area, particularly to the north of the settlement is influenced by the motorway corridor which has an intrusive impact on the rural character of the valley which indicates lower sensitivity in terms of perceptual character. The busy traffic along the A25, which runs along the southern boundary of the area, is also an intrusive element.</p>
Historic character	<p>The HLC indicates that the east of the area contains modern prairie fields and in the west there is a large area of gravel workings, both of which have little time depth and so lower sensitivity. On the west and north-west edge of the settlement there are areas of post-1810 scattered settlement, mostly large detached houses with extensive gardens within woodland which indicate lower sensitivity to built development. There are small areas of ancient woodland and one pocket of small fields to the east of the Croydon Road in the north of the area, which date from later medieval to the 17th/18th century which increase sensitivity to built development.</p>

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the gentle landform, disrupted field pattern and disturbance to rural character (as a result of the M25, A25 and areas of gravel workings) reduce sensitivity to built development, the landscape features (thick hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands), rural settlement pattern, historic character (ancient woodlands and historic farmhouses) and visual character (intervisibility with the North Downs and Greensand Ridge) increase sensitivity, resulting in a **medium** sensitivity to commercial and residential development.

However, landscape sensitivity varies across the area, for example areas adjacent to north eastern settlement edge have a lower sensitivity due to the harsh settlement edge and disruption to rural character from the motorway corridor, and the sand pit in the west of the area has a lower sensitivity due to the loss of historic field boundaries and landscape features, and its enclosure.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.

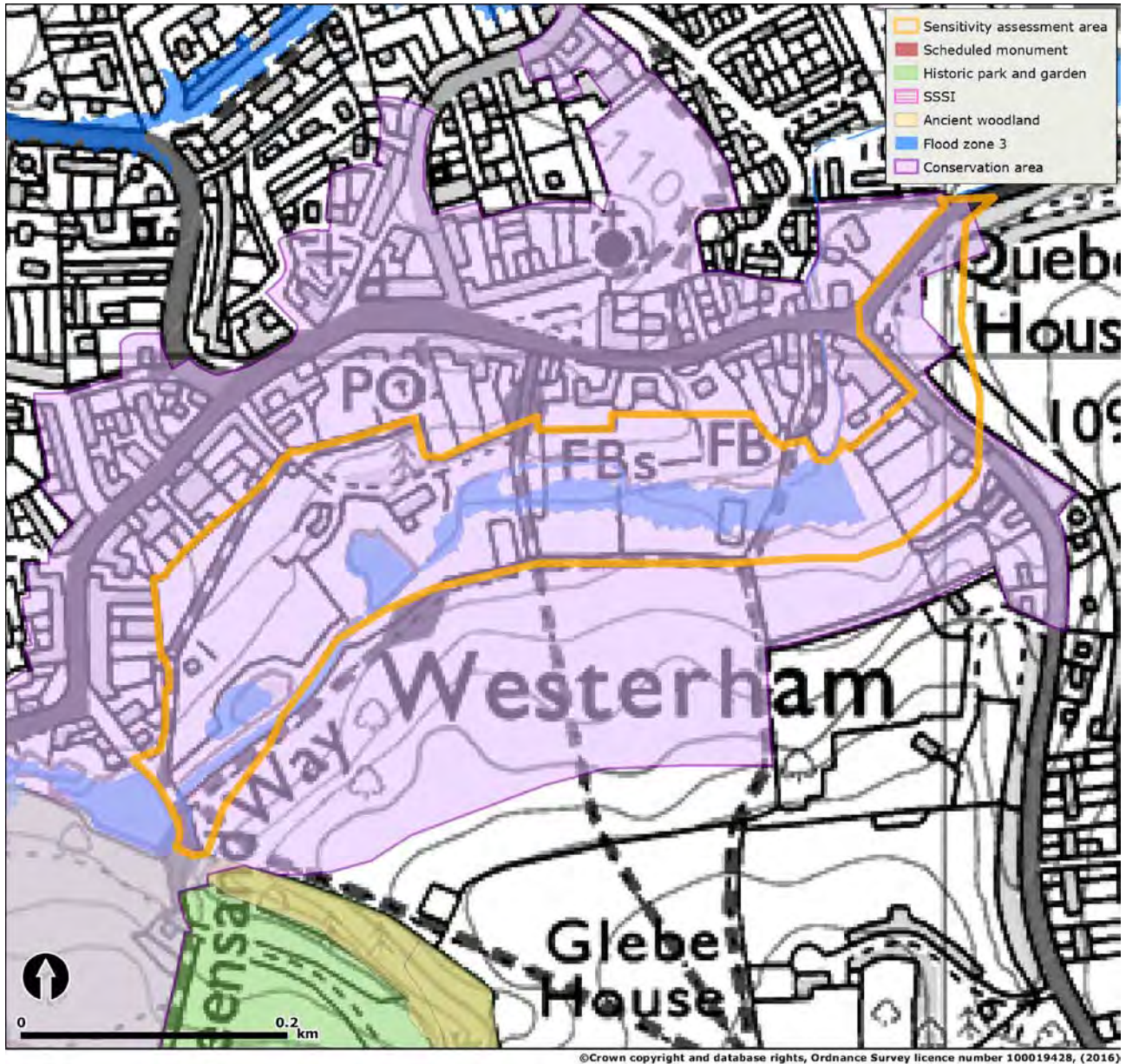
- The historic field pattern where this pattern is still intact.
- The ancient woodlands, including Westerham Wood.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham with scattered farmhouses outside the villages.
- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick
- Farley Common which has historic time depth and is a localised hill.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.

Guidance

This area is within the Kent Downs AONB. Ancient woodland near Clacket Lane and at Westerham Wood (also an SSSI), and the flood plain (marked by Flood Zone 3) to the east of the settlement edge and along the course of the Darent forms an 'absolute constraint' to development. However, the rest of this area has a low-medium sensitivity to residential development and medium sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- conserve the special architectural and historic character of Westerham and maintain a strong link between its historic edges and surrounding rural landscape;
- conserve the sense of separation between Westerham and Brasted;
- enhance the existing interface between Westerham and the surrounding countryside of the Clay Valleys. New built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges particularly on the north and north east settlement edge;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern outside Westerham. Any settlement not attached to Westerham should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads
- retain the hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valley and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas);
- Avoid further development on Farley Common which has historic time depth and is a localised hill;
- retain the historic field patterns, areas of ancient woodlands and historic rural buildings;
- celebrate the local Kentish vernacular with use of local red brick, ragstone, weather boarding and half tile hung facades;
- consider views from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. Ensure any new development is well integrated with the landscape and minimise visibility through siting and landscaping.

W2: Westerham south



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The southern part of Westerham lies within the **Upper Darent Valley West landscape character area** which is an area of gently undulating farmland within a valley which is enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge and crossed by major transport corridors.

Flood Zone 3 forms an 'absolute constraint'²³ to development over much of the area.

²³ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	This small area consists of the gardens of large detached houses on a sloping landform along the river corridor. The pockets of riparian woodland and vegetation along the river which are characteristic and valued, indicate higher sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	The historic core of Westerham (within the Conservation Area) extends east-west along the High Street, on the north side the river. Modern development has generally extended to the north of the town and the southern settlement edge which borders this area is a mix of attractive historic buildings south of the high street with narrow lanes which traditionally gave the townspeople access to the river. There is some 20 th century infill including large detached houses which are fairly well screened by trees and small copses. Further development would adversely affect the form of the existing historic settlement edge which indicates higher sensitivity.
Settlement setting	This area plays an important role in the setting to Westerham by providing a narrow riparian corridor to the south of the town between the settlement edge and the steeply rising wooded parkland of the Greensand Ridge and it is included in the Westerham Conservation Area which extends beyond the settlement boundary and includes Squerreys Court to the west.
Visual character	This area is well enclosed by trees and copses which indicates lower visual sensitivity in terms of visual character.
Perceptual qualities	The river corridor retains its rural character despite its proximity to the settlement edge and is therefore sensitive in terms of perceptual character.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises medium regular parliamentary type enclosure which probably resulted from enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor and post 1810 settlement consisting of large detached houses with gardens running down to the river which indicates lower sensitivity. However, the Westerham Conservation Area extends beyond the settlement boundary to include this area. There is a listed building at Squerreys Lodge and a number of historic lanes which traditionally provided access to the river for the townspeople and which indicates higher sensitivity.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although enclosure provided by vegetation indicates lower sensitivity to built development, the landscape features (riparian vegetation), role of the river corridor in providing a rural setting to the town and relationship with the historic settlement edge increases sensitivity to **medium-high** overall.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

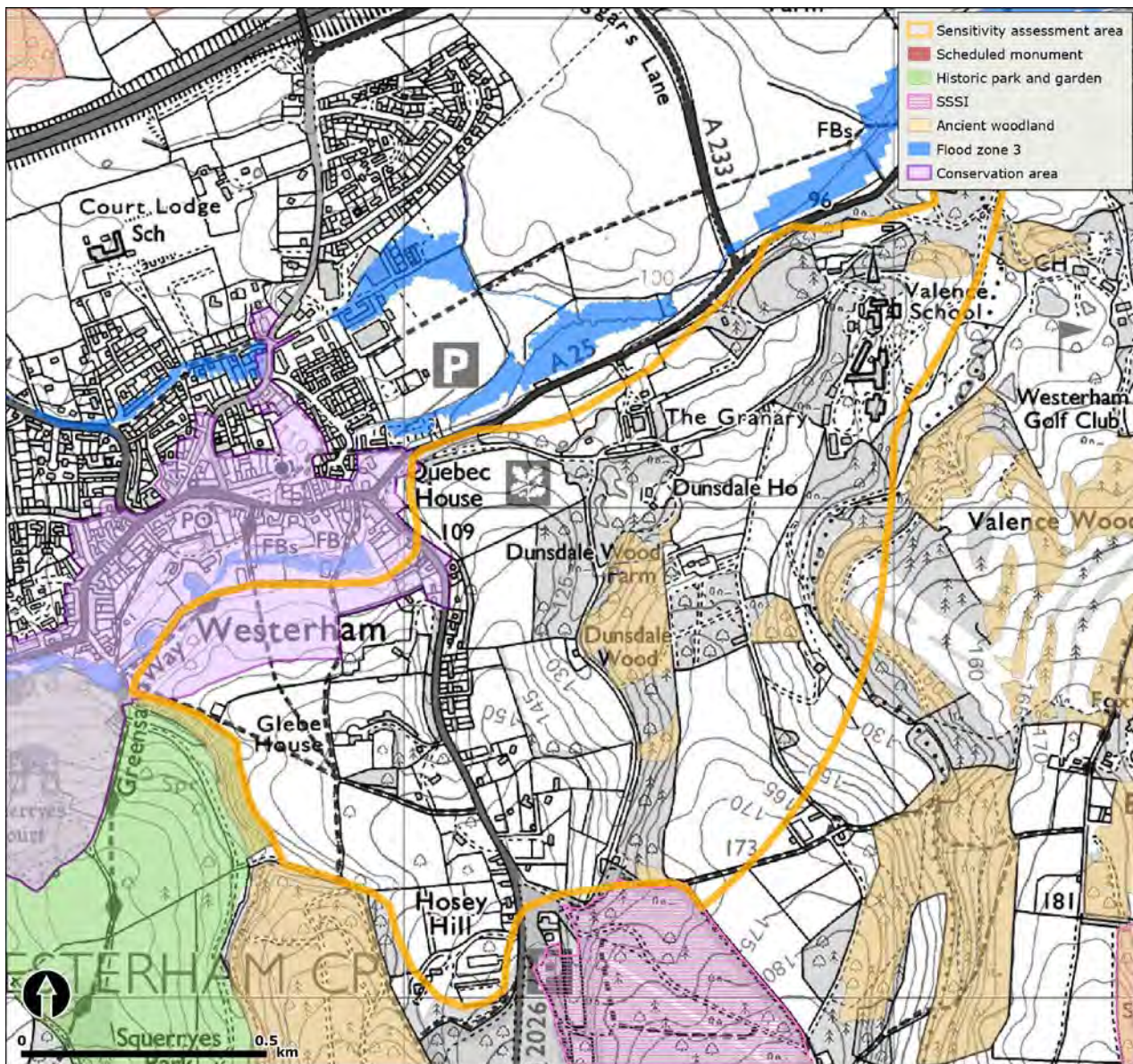
- The gently undulating river corridor with riparian vegetation.
- The historic pattern of small pastoral fields running down to the river where this pattern is still intact.
- The traditional settlement pattern of Westerham as an historic riverside settlement.
- Characteristic local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick.
- Public access to the river and riverside ponds.

Guidance

This area is within the Kent Downs AONB. Flood Zone 3 forms an 'absolute constraint' to development over much of this small area and the remaining area has a medium-high sensitivity to built development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- Conserve the special architectural and historic character of Westerham (a Conservation Area) and maintain the strong relationship between the historic edge of the town and the river corridor;
- ensure any development on the edge of the Conservation Area fits with the character of the Westerham Conservation area and celebrate the local vernacular with use of ragstone, weatherboarding and warm red brick;
- retain the riparian vegetation and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the riverside landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain and aim to enhance/extend wetland habitats along the river corridor where possible in association with any new development;
- protect the rural setting to Squerreys Court which lies to the west of the area;
- retain the historic lanes to the river and enhance public access including riverside walks.

W3: Westerham south-east



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Landscape character & absolute constraints

The south eastern part of Westerham lies within the **Westerham to Sundrige Parks and Farmlands landscape character area** which is a small scale undulating pastoral and woodland landscape that runs along the gentle northern slopes of the Greensand Ridge. Ancient woodland at Dunsdale Woods and Valence forms an 'absolute constraint'²⁴ to development.

²⁴ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity
Physical character	An area consisting of the steep undulating northern slopes of the Greensand Ridge which increases sensitivity compared to flatter landforms. The landform is overlain by small to medium pastoral fields with a near-intact hedgerow pattern, historic parkland and scattered dense woodland are characteristic and valued which indicates higher sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	<p>Historically Westerham was located on the north side of the river and in the 20th century development extended mainly to the north rather than the south. Residential development in this area is restricted to Hosey Hill, a steep hill which forms the main southern approach to the town. As the road leaves the town, it is flanked by historic tightly grained houses but as the road rises it passes large detached 20th century houses, set back from the road in expansive grounds and well screened by surrounding woodland.</p> <p>The historic core of Westerham, within the Conservation Area, borders the River Darent to the south of the town. Development on the wooded slopes of the Greensand ridge to the south of Westerham would adversely affect this attractive historic settlement edge and would not be characteristic of the prevalent settlement pattern of the town or of the wider Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands LCA which is typically rural with scattered farmsteads and hamlets linked by narrow lanes. The nature of the existing settlement form and edge therefore indicates a higher sensitivity to modern housing and commercial development.</p>
Settlement setting	Although this area is separated from the settlement edge by the narrow river on the valley floor, the Westerham Conservation Area extends beyond the settlement boundary to include the wooded slopes above the town which are cited as an important part of the rural setting of the town ²⁵ which indicates a higher sensitivity. The area also plays an important role in the perception of a gap between Westerham and Brasted to the east.
Visual character	The north facing slope of the Greensand Ridge is visually prominent from the centre of Westerham which increases its visual sensitivity. The area is crossed by footpaths which afford glimpsed views to the tower of St Mary's Church in the town centre and beyond to the North Downs. These unfolding views of the

²⁵ Draft Westerham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2014) SDC

	town are characteristic and valued which raises the sensitivity of the area.
Perceptual qualities	This is generally a highly rural landscape with little human influence which indicates higher sensitivity to built development although auditory intrusion from the transport routes to the north (A25 and M25) affects the tranquillity.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises small to medium regular parliamentary type fields enclosed by woodland. Much of the woodland on the valley side is ancient (Dunsdale Wood) and some is 19 th century woodland associated with the historic houses in the area such as Dunsdale House and Valance (now a school). Much of the area to the east of Hosey Hill is listed within the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens. The time depth prevalent in this area indicates a higher sensitivity to development.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although auditory intrusion from the A25 and M25 reduces sensitivity to built development in this area, the steep topography, landscape features (intact hedgerows, small scale pasture and dense woodland), the rural settlement pattern, historic character (historic parkland, ancient woodlands and 19th century plantations), visual character (visual prominence from and intervisibility with Westerham) and role of the area as an important backdrop to the town and relationship with the existing historic settlement edge of Westerham, increases the sensitivity of the area to **medium-high** overall.

The landscape would have a higher sensitivity to large scale developments and a lower sensitivity to smaller, individual dwellings due to the rural settlement character, the small scale of the existing landscape, the visual prominence of the area and its role as a setting for the town.

Development scenario	Overall sensitivity assessment				
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the LCA

- The gently undulating slopes of the Greensand Ridge.
- Small to medium scale fields with strong hedgerows and scattered dense woodland.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of scattered farmhouses.
- Characteristic local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone and/or brick, some half tile hung, and with clay tile roofs.
- Dunsdale House and Valance and their associated parkland and woodland.
- Newer residential properties well sited with vegetative screening.
- Narrow sunken hedge lined lanes and droving roads.
- Views northwards, over Westerham to the North Downs scarp.

Guidance

The area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. There are few 'absolute constraints' to development in the area except for the ancient woodland at Dunsdale Woods and Valence. However, the rest of the area has a medium-high sensitivity to residential development and a high sensitivity to commercial development for the reasons set out above. Any new development should:

- maintain the strong link between the historic edge of the town and the surrounding rural setting provided by the north facing slopes of the Greensand Ridge;
- retain the thick hedgerows and well wooded character of the landscape and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern comprising farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets – ensure that any new development fits with the rural settlement pattern and scale;
- ensure any new development reflects the local vernacular including timber framed barns, ragstone, brick, tile hanging and clay tile roofs;
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- conserve the historic parkland and woodland associated with Valance and Dunsdale House;
- protect the setting of Squerreys Park which lies to the west of the area;
- conserve the sense of separation between Westerham and Brasted;
- retain the highly rural character, special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin the countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised);
- consider views from Westerham towards the rising slopes of the Greensand Ridge and ensure new development is well integrated with the landscape;
- retain views over Westerham from the Greensand Ridge towards the North Downs scarp.

Edenbridge

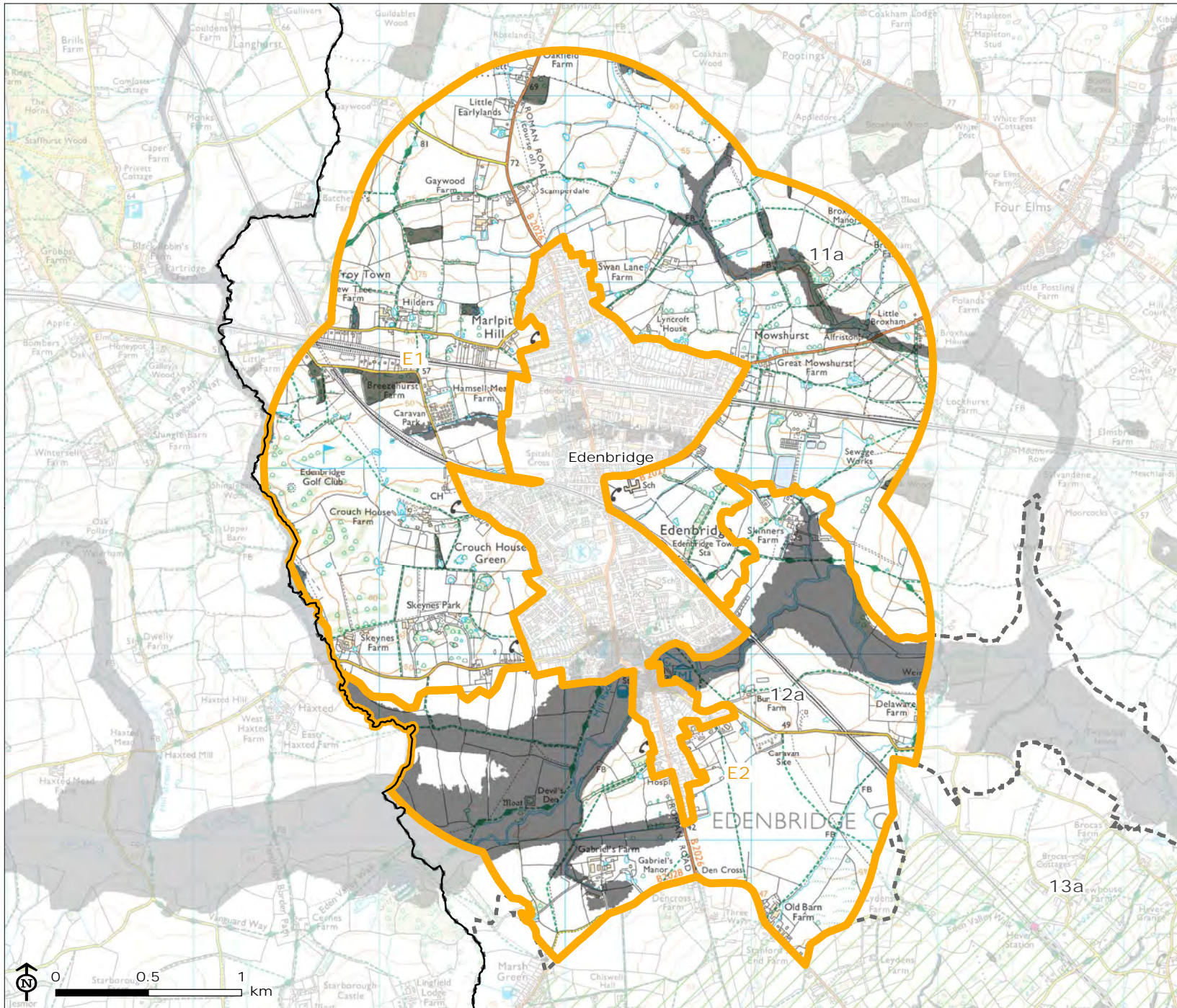


Edenbridge

- 3.26 Edenbridge is located on the River Eden, a tributary of the River Medway, and the historic centre of the town is therefore prone to flooding. The old part of the town grew along a section of Roman road, the London to Lewes Way, at the point where it crossed the river. Its location in the Weald means that in the Middle Ages it was heavily influenced by the Wealden iron industry. There was also a tannery and leather market. A number of mediaeval timber buildings survive in the town. The arrival of the South Eastern Railway in the mid-19th century resulted in expansion of the community of Marlpit Hill to the north which has now joined Edenbridge. Growth of this settlement is constrained by the flood zone along the River Eden.
- 3.27 There are two assessment areas around this settlement:
- E1 Edenbridge north
 - E2 Edenbridge south

Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.13: Edenbridge



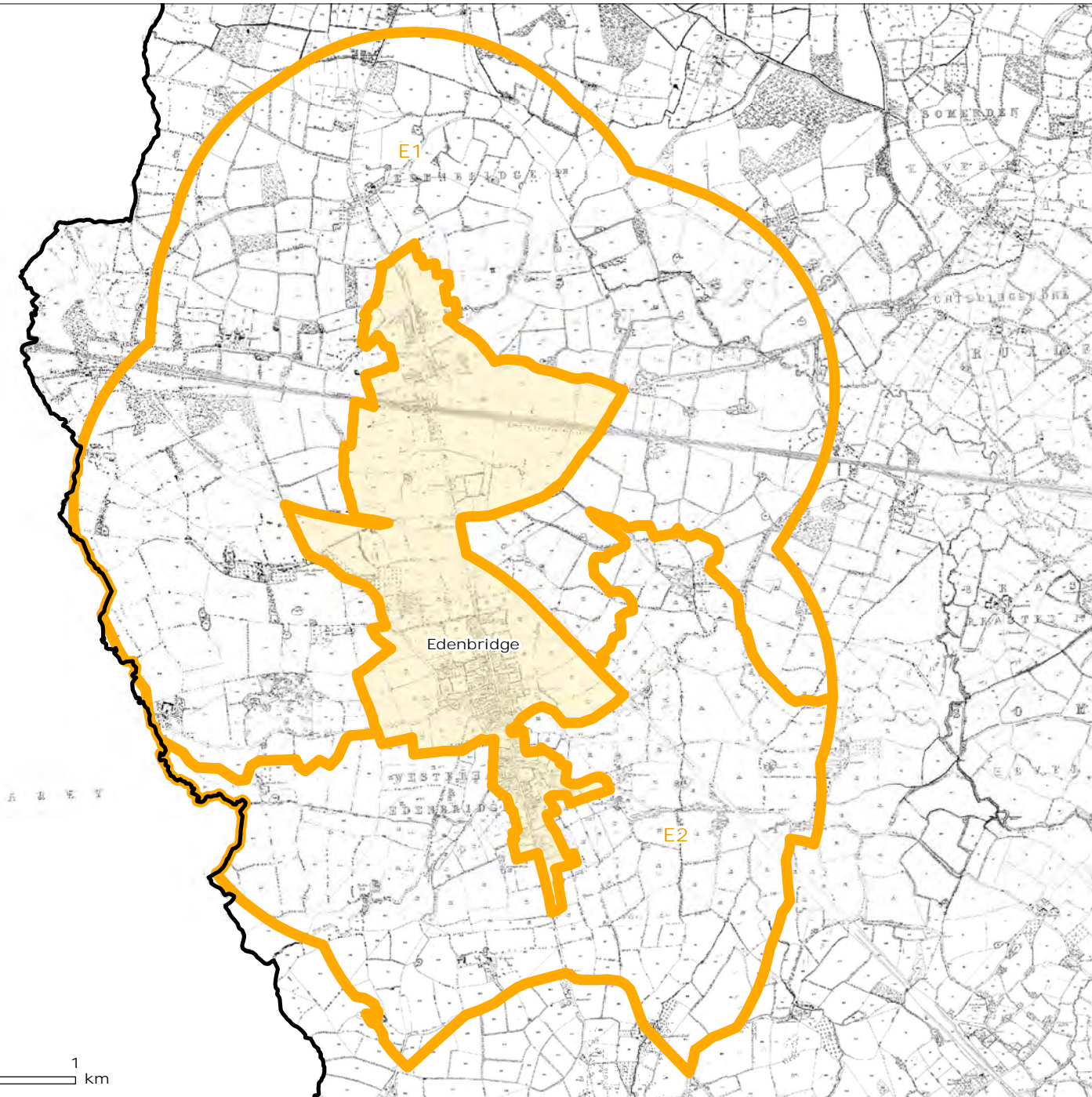
- Sevenoaks district boundary
 - Sensitivity assessment area
 - Area of outstanding natural beauty
 - Constraints including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Flood zone 3, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodland
 - Landscape Character Areas
- 11a: Sevenoaks Low Weald
 12a: Eden Valley
 13a: Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald

Map Scale @ A4: 1:29,300



Figure 3.14: OS 1st edition
Historic Map (1868-1895)
for Edenbridge

- ▭ Sevenoaks district boundary
- ▭ Sensitivity assessment area
- ▭ Settlement

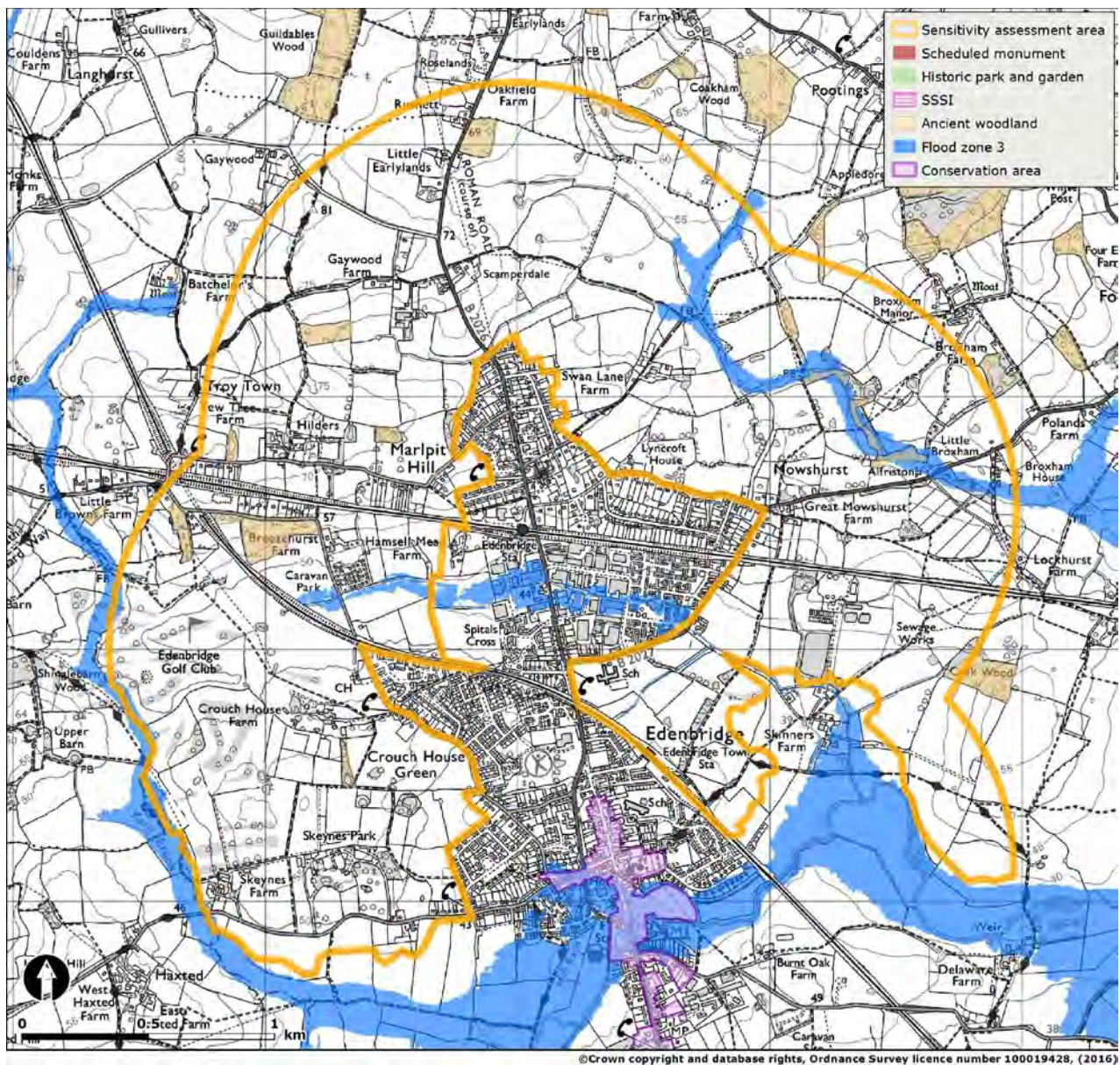


Source: SDC, LUC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:28,000



E1: Edenbridge north



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Landscape character & absolute constraints

The northern part of Edenbridge lies within the **Sevenoaks Low Weald landscape character area** which is a low-lying gently undulating and agricultural landscape on Wealden Clay with a mixture of arable and pasture land use within small to medium scale irregular fields, well-defined by hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands. There are few 'absolute constraints'²⁶ to development around these edges of the settlement, although there is an area of flood zone 3 and some small areas of ancient woodland within the assessment area.

²⁶ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	Gently undulating landform which indicates lower sensitivity but overlain by a relatively small scale landscape pattern with thick hedgerows, shaws, small woodlands and ponds which are characteristic and valued and raise sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	This part of Edenbridge is typically modern estates of residential houses and commercial/ light industrial areas that have expanded into the rural fields. Although additional development in this area would continue this pattern, it is not characteristic of the typical settlement pattern outside Edenbridge which is typically rural with scattered farmsteads and large houses and hamlets set around greens or commons, linked by narrow lanes. The settlement edges of Edenbridge are generally unremarkable, and mostly hidden by trees and hedgerows.
Settlement setting	The area around Edenbridge is distinctive and characteristic of the Low Weald and therefore provides some positive contribution to the rural setting of Edenbridge. However, it does not form a prominent backdrop or play a particular role in the perception of a gap between settlements.
Visual character	This is a low lying landscape and is therefore not particularly visually prominent. It is also fairly well enclosed by trees, hedgerows and copses which reduces visual sensitivity.
Perceptual qualities	Although this is generally a highly rural landscape with dark skies which indicates higher sensitivity to built development, the areas closer to the edges of Edenbridge have greater human influences and are therefore less sensitive in terms of perceptual character.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries, which date from later medieval to the 17 th /18 th century, which increases sensitivity to built development. There are also some pockets of more recent fields that have less time depth. There is also a scattering of listed buildings and ancient woodland.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the gentle landform, sense of enclosure and modern built influences on the edges of Edenbridge reduce sensitivity to built development, the presence of valued landscape features (thick hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands), highly rural character, and historic character (resulting from historic field patterns, ancient woodlands and historic rural buildings) increase sensitivity. Overall the area is judged to have a **medium-high** sensitivity overall.

Quality and presence of valued landscape features varies which affects sensitivity on a field by field basis, reducing the sensitivity of some pockets, particularly immediately adjoining the settlement. Sloping sites that are visible from surrounding areas tend to have higher sensitivity than flatter and enclosed areas.

	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The thick hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Low Weald.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern with small villages/ hamlets set around greens or commons.
- The highly rural character with dark skies, and the views out to these rural areas from Edenbridge.
- The narrow rural lanes, ancient highways and former Roman roads.
- The historic field patterns, ancient woodlands and historic rural buildings.
- The ponds that provide wetland habitats and a sense of history relating to quarrying and marl pits.
- The remnant orchards and oast houses that represent the remnants of the hop-growing industry.

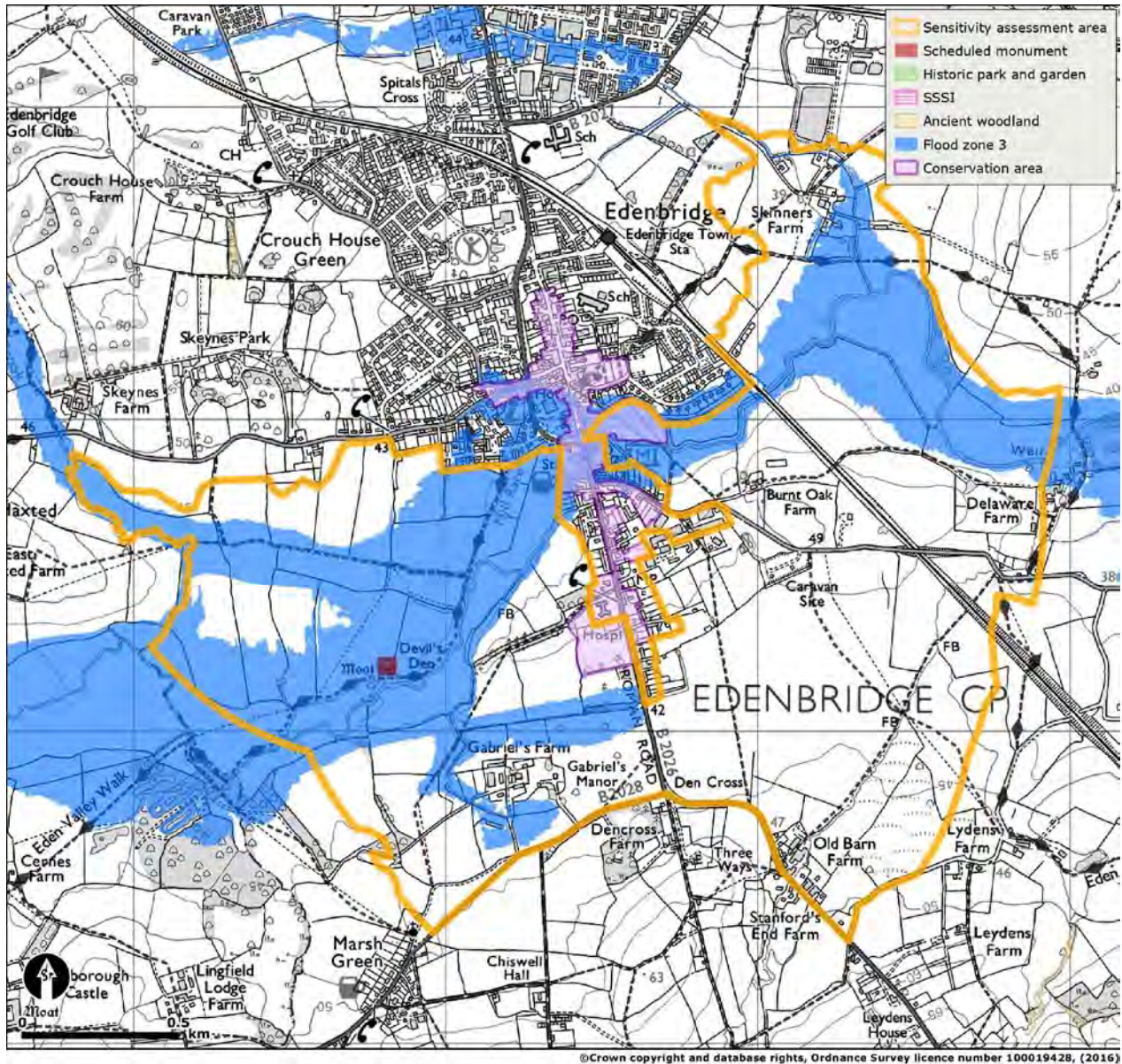
Guidance

There are few 'absolute constraints' to development in the area and overall the area has a medium-high sensitivity to built development for the reasons set out above. New built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges. Any new development should:

- enhance the existing interface between Edenbridge and the surrounding countryside of the Low Weald whilst retaining the rural landscape setting;
- retain the thick hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Low Weald and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern outside Edenbridge - beyond the edges of Edenbridge any settlement should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of scattered farmsteads, individual historic houses and small hamlets set around greens or commons;
- retain the highly rural character with dark skies – special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas);
- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible;
- retain the historic field patterns, areas of ancient woodlands and historic rural buildings;
- retain the ponds that link to the Wealden Iron industry;
- celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades, and

include references to the hop growing/ fruit growing industries where appropriate.

E2: Edenbridge south



Landscape character & absolute constraints

The southern part of Edenbridge lies within the **Eden Valley landscape character area** which is a low-lying flat valley bottom landscape through which the River Eden meanders, bordered by historic irregular fields of pasture, meadows and wet woodland. The Flood plain (marked by Flood Zone 3) and the Medieval moated site at Devil's Den form 'absolute constraints'²⁷ to development.

²⁷ 'Absolute constraints' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Woodland and Flood Zone 3.

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description
Physical character	Relatively flat landform with gently undulating areas above the floodplain which indicates lower sensitivity compared to more steeply undulating landscapes. Overlain by a varied field pattern and with hedgerows and mature trees which are characteristic and valued and which raise sensitivity.
Settlement form & edge	Historically Edenbridge was located at the crossing of the river, located on both the north and south sides of the river. In the 20 th century development has extended mainly to the north rather than the south. The part of Edenbridge that lies south of the river is relatively old and the edges that border onto the river are attractive. However, there are some more modern outskirts including some commercial/ light industrial areas further to the south and east – these are fairly well screened by trees and hedgerows at present.
Settlement setting	The river and its floodplain plays an important role in the setting to Edenbridge by providing an open floodplain. The areas away from the river floodplain play less of a role, particularly where hedgerow loss has occurred, but the areas of historic fields bounded by thick hedgerows and mature trees and areas of woodland provide a valued rural setting. The area around Gabriel's Farm plays a role in separating Marsh Green from Edenbridge.
Visual character	This is a low lying landscape and is therefore not particularly visually prominent. However, it is generally open due to low hedgerows. There are some areas of enclosure along the river.
Perceptual qualities	Although this is generally a highly rural landscape which indicates higher sensitivity to built development, the areas closer to the edges of Edenbridge have greater human influences and are therefore less sensitive in terms of perceptual character.
Historic character	The HLC indicates that this area generally comprises 'Miscellaneous Valley Bottom Paddocks and Pastures' which have probably resulted from enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor. No indication of date is given in the Kent HLC but it is assumed that the smaller more irregular fields could have some considerable time depth. There are also areas of modern fields which have less time depth. There is a Medieval moated site at Devil's Den, listed building at Gabriel's manor, and a Conservation Area which extends

beyond the settlement boundary at Blossom’s Farm which increases sensitivity in these areas.

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

Although the flat to gently undulating landform and presence of some modern edges to Edenbridge reduce sensitivity to built development, the relatively open and rural character, floodplain that plays an important role in the setting of Edenbridge, and historic character (resulting from historic field patterns, conservation area, historic buildings and the Medieval site at Devil’s Den) increase sensitivity to **medium** overall to both housing and commercial development.

The floodplain and intact rural locations away from the edges of Edenbridge are more sensitive due to the rurality and higher historic intactness in these areas.

Residential housing 2-3 stories	L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Commercial development	L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

- The river, associated drainage ditches and wetland habitats in the floodplain including lowland meadows and fen.
- The historic pattern of small pastoral fields bounded by thick hedgerows, mature trees and shaws, where this pattern is still intact.
- The rural character of the lanes and low density rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads.
- Hever Castle and its associated grounds and woodland which create a strong sense of place and contribute to the sense of history.
- The medieval moated site at Devil’s Den which provides a sense of history (designated as a scheduled monument).
- Views from the edges of Edenbridge across the river valley.
- Public access to the river and riverside walks.
- The highly rural character with dark skies away from the edges of Edenbridge.

Guidance

The Flood plain (marked by Flood Zone 3) and the Medieval moated site at Devil’s Den form ‘absolute constraints’ to development. However, the rest of the area has a medium sensitivity to built development, with the floodplain and intact rural landscapes away from the edges of Edenbridge having a higher sensitivity. Any new development should:

- retain the existing relationship of the historic core with the river and views across the river valley;
- enhance the existing interface between Edenbridge and the surrounding countryside if it is located on the edge of the settlement;
- retain the hedgerows and mature trees and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible;
- retain the drainage ditches and wetland habitats in the floodplain including lowland meadows and fen and aim to enhance/ extend these where possible in association with any development;
- retain the rural and low density settlement pattern beyond the edges of Edenbridge - any settlement in this area should fit with the rural settlement pattern and scale of traditional farmsteads;
- retain the rural character of the valley and dark skies at night – special care should be paid to

boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised);

- retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as fencing and street lighting where possible;
- celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades;
- conserve the rural setting to Hever Castle and preserve the character of views, particularly designed historic views;
- preserve the medieval moated site at Devil's Den and its setting;
- aim to improve landscape structure and enhance public access to the river including riverside walks with any development.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Aesthetic	Concerning the visual appeal of a feature or landscape
Amenity	The pleasantness or attractiveness of a place.
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales.
Ancient woodland	Woods that are believed to have been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD.
Alluvium	Loose soil or sediments, which have been eroded, reshaped by water in some form, and redeposited in a non-marine setting.
Arable	The growing of crops.
Assart	A piece of land converted from forest to agricultural use. Most such piecemeal enclosures date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and are bounded by species rich hedgerows, an indicator of land assarted from woodland.
Assarting	The act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes (in English land law, it was illegal to assart any part of a Royal forest).
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Built Form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Characteristic	A distinctive element of the landscape that contributes to landscape character for instance a particular hedgerow pattern or sense of tranquillity.
Charts	Wooded commons distinctive of east Surrey and west Kent.
Cobnut platts	Cobnut orchards producing a kind of cultivated hazelnut characteristic of the Kent Downs. There was once a thriving industry in Kent but there are few cobnut platts left today.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coniferous woodland	Woodland comprised of coniferous trees often having needle like leaves. They are usually evergreen.
Copse	A small group of trees

Deciduous woodland	Woodland where the majority of tree lose their leaves at the end of the growing season
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there was previously common rights; the merging of strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils in an area, together with natural processes, such as erosion and landslips that may still be active.
Gill	A narrow steep-sided valley typical of the Weald.
GIS	Geographic Information System.
GPS	Global Positioning System.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
Hammer pond	An artificial pond for maintaining a head of water, for example at a water mill
Head	A superficial geological deposit formed mostly by solifluction and/or hillwash and soil creep, typically comprising gravel, sand and clay depending on the upslope source.
Heathland	A shrubland habitat found mainly on free-draining infertile, acidic soils, characterised by open, low-growing woody vegetation.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation.
HLT	Historic Landscape Type
Horsiculture	Development of farmland for horses and equestrianism
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere
Intact	Not changed or diminished
Land cover	The physical material at the surface of the earth.
Landscape character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how these are perceived. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Landscape character areas (LCA)	Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a particular landscape type.

Landscape character types (LCT)	Distinct types of landscape that is relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement pattern.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location (from the Oxford Dictionaries online: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/landmark)
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
Marl Pit	A pit from which marl, a mixture of clay and carbonate of lime, is excavated. Marl is used as a fertilizer.
Naturalness	The quality or state of being natural.
NCA	National Character Area – defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
Nucleated settlements	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Oast house	A building containing an oast (a kiln used for drying hops), typically built of brick in a conical shape with a cowl on top.
OS	Ordnance Survey.
Parliamentary fields/ enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18 th and 19 th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).
Perceptual	The ability to interpret or become aware of something through the senses.
Permeability	The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Rural	Relating to or characteristic of the countryside
Scarp	A steep slope produced by faulting or erosion of rock.
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change
SDC	Sevenoaks District Council
Sense of Place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.

Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Shaws	Remnant strips of cleared woodland
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest.
Superficial deposits	Geological deposit from the Quaternary age may include stream channel and floodplain deposits. All pre quaternary deposits are known as bedrock.
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	The arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.
Valued attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.

Appendix 2: A0 size map

This appendix presents the classification on a 1:25,000 scale OS base map. The map has been slightly reduced in scale to 1:30,000 so that it fits into an A0 page. If you are reading this as an electronic document the map will be available to download as a separate document from the Council's website.