

# **HEAVERHAM**

## **Conservation Area Appraisal**



### **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**



**December 2003**

# Heaverham

## Conservation Area Appraisal

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

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

**It is intended that this appraisal will inform the activities of the Council, the public and other bodies where these impact on the conservation area. The appraisal was approved by the Council in December 2003 and adopted as supplementary planning guidance.**

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## **1.00 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas**

Conservation Areas first came into being as a result of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are intended to identify any valuable visual or historic characteristics in a locality that may warrant special measures in order to protect and preserve them.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 recognises that there are particular areas of ‘architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ and charges planning authorities with a duty to designate any such locations within their jurisdiction as Conservation Areas. This designation then empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to planning considerations and development within them and gives greater control over such matters as demolitions, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

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

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

The management of our national cultural and historic inheritance is of paramount importance and Conservation Areas are a vital ‘grass roots’ starting point from which to safeguard the continuing care of our environment.

## **1.2 Purpose of Appraisals**

As their number grows, it has become even more important for local authorities to include a well-defined and considered policy for their designated Conservation Areas in their Local Plans.

Planning pressures are such that any designation is likely to be subjected to detailed scrutiny and must be readily and demonstrably defensible against adverse criticism. The criteria for designation should be kept as uniform as possible and the public should be kept fully aware of the reasons for any proposed changes in their area.

The 1990 Act charges local authorities with the responsibility of undertaking a review of their Conservation Areas from time to time, both to consider the possibility of revising their extent, and to identify any past changes or future pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.

English Heritage published an advisory leaflet on the subject in March 1997, which outlines the preferred approach to these appraisals and gives examples of the type of content that it would be useful to include.

The appraisals should define the key elements that together give the area its character, and objectively analyse how they interact to enhance their individual impact.

They can then provide suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that highlight the area and give it its local distinctiveness.

These appraisals can also be used as a valuable means by which the impact of planning policies and the implementation of enhancement measures can be assessed.

### 1.3 Local Conservation Area Policies

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted March 2000) lists the following policies which relate to Conservation Areas:

- EN21 In the designation and review of Conservation Areas the Local Planning Authority will assess all the following matters:**
- 1) The special architectural or historic interest of the area.**
  - 2) The cohesive character and integrity of the area including spaces round buildings their settings and trees.**
  - 3) The desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.**
  - 4) The pressures for change which may encourage piecemeal development which would threaten the character of the area.**
  - 5) The need to promote economic prosperity, through schemes of environmental enhancement, to overcome vacancy, neglect, decay or dereliction.**
- EN22 Proposals to demolish buildings which contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be permitted in the absence of overriding justification. Preference will be given to conversion and/or refurbishment as opposed to outright demolition of a building. Proposals to demolish extensions to original buildings or outbuildings will be judged on their contribution to the overall character of the area.**
- EN23 Proposals for development or redevelopment within or affecting Conservation Areas should be of positive architectural benefit by paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and of its setting. The design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings should respect local character, whilst the treatment of external spaces including hard and soft landscaping, boundary walls, street furniture and signs should be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area.**

Buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area are identified on the character appraisal plan at the end of this document . English Heritage national guidance on conservation areas sets out the criteria used to identify these buildings.

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan states that the local planning authority will undertake detailed assessments of designated Conservation Areas and will prepare proposals for their preservation. Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the enhancement of the character and appearance of the area as set out in any scheme which may have been prepared. This assessment and the detailed analysis of the area contained in the report are intended to fulfill this commitment and provide the background for enhancement schemes.

## **1.4 Other Local Plan Policies**

The Local Plan also identifies specific policies designed to protect the natural environment and historic buildings.

Policy EN6 places restrictions on development within the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and EN7 gives priority to the enhancement of natural beauty, landscape, open space, geographical features and wildlife over other planning considerations within the North Downs and Greensand Ridge Special Landscape Areas. Other Areas of Local Landscape Importance where development may be restricted are noted in policy EN8.

Landscape features and wildlife habitats beyond the confines of the urban areas, towns and villages are also protected by policy EN11.

Important areas of greenspace within the built confines are safeguarded under policy EN9 and EN10 protects important areas of urban fringe.

Listed building policy is defined in sections EN18 and EN19 and the reuse rather than the demolition of unlisted buildings of local interest is promoted by policy EN20.

Trees over a certain size are automatically protected within Conservation Areas, with any proposed work to them having to be notified to the local authority in writing six weeks in advance.

Transport strategy for the District is summarised by the following section.

### **T1. A co-ordinated transport strategy will be implemented including:**

- 1) Encouragement of the provision of appropriate public transport services and facilities.**
- 2) Use of traffic management to achieve a safer and more efficient use of existing roads.**
- 3) An integrated car parking strategy involving residents' parking, local enforcement and consideration of the need for park and ride facilities.**
- 4) New highway construction and improvements to the existing network.**
- 5) Encouragement of walking and cycling.**

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION AREA**

### **2.1 General Description**

Heaverham Conservation Area covers some 3.1 hectares and contains 5 listed buildings. It was designated in 1991 and has not been extended since. It includes the Chequers public house and the agricultural and farmstead buildings around the road junction. The area extends southwards to include the group of cottages on the road to Broughtons Farm, although the former farmhouse itself is not included.

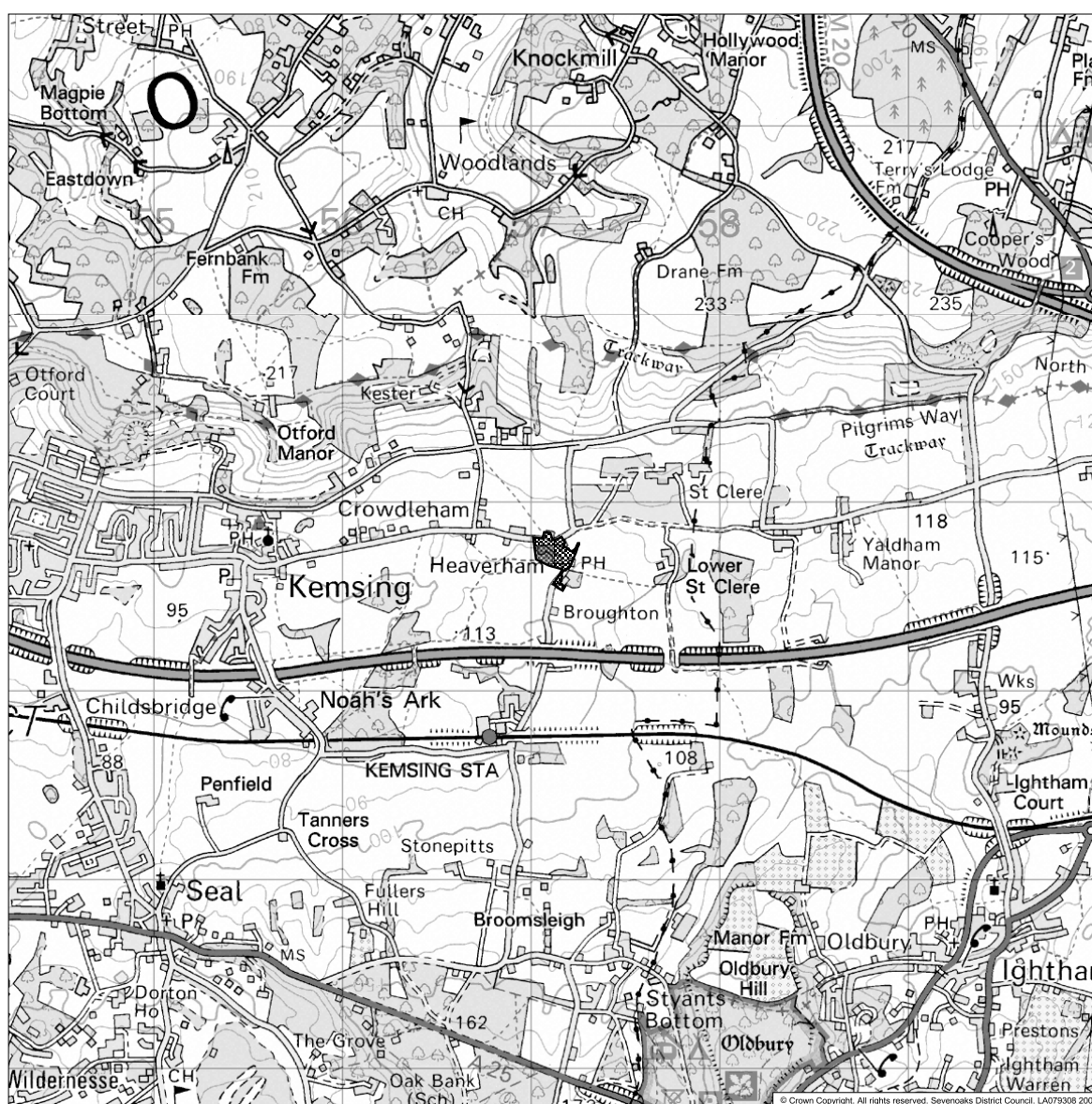
The Conservation Area lies entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Area.

Heaverham is a tiny rural settlement east of the larger village of Kemsing, which serves it in terms of shops and other facilities. The only activity apart from the public house and restaurant, is farming which has been the mainstay of the settlement for centuries.

## 2.2 Location and Geographical Context

Heaverham lies on the route between Kemsing and Wrotham and lies at the foot of the North Downs. The Pilgrim's Way runs to the north and its 20<sup>th</sup> Century equivalent the M26, runs parallel to it in the south.

The nearest station, Kemsing, lies close to the Chaucer industrial estate at the southern end of Watery Lane. Borough Green and Sevenoaks are the two nearest towns.



Map 1 Geographical Location

## 2.3 Historical Development

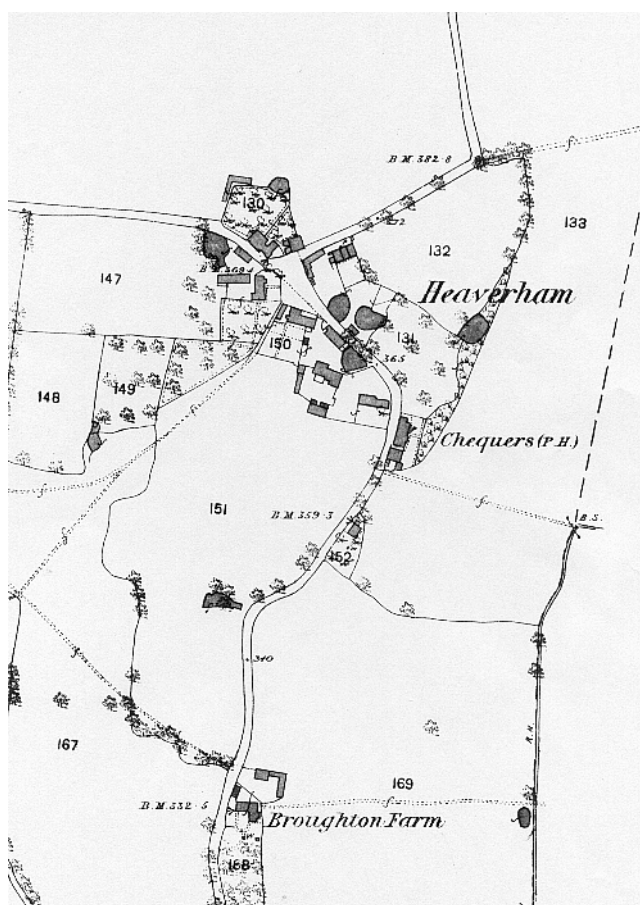
Heaverham is historically linked with the larger settlement of Kemsing, specifically by some 19<sup>th</sup> Century landowners with estates that included parts of both areas.

Many of the properties in Heaverham are Georgian or later, but Walnut Tree Cottage dates back to medieval times, and Nearly Corner may have 15<sup>th</sup> Century origins.

The hamlet is surrounded by the major estates, Crowdleham, built in 1806 to the west, and St. Clere and Lower St. Clere to the north east and south east respectively. St. Clere was built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century and is similar in design to nearby Chevening. Lower St. Clere dates from about 1600 with many later modifications and additions.

Sir Mark W. Collet and Lord Norman, both former governors of the Bank of England, lived at St. Clere, and Sir Mark and his son were great local benefactors, building St. Edith's Hall in Kemsing, among other properties. One of the lodges to St. Clere stands at the road junction just past Forge Cottages.

The monogram BF seen on Nearly Corner and the Manor House, belongs to Barclay Field, a Kemsing landowner at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, who died in 1892.



Map 2 Heaverham in 1869

## 2.4 Architectural Description

The buildings in Heaverham are typical Kentish agricultural and vernacular properties using local materials and functional designs.



**Figure 1 The Oast House**

The oast house and attached barns are built from a mixture of galleted coursed ragstone and red brick, under clay-tiled roofs and white cowls. Although converted to residential use, this has been done sensitively and has respected the original detail and form of the building.



**Figure 2 Nearly Corner from the south east and north west**

Nearly Corner is constructed of a variety of materials – timber framed with brick and render infill, some tile hanging and some stonework in a large extension to the older core of the building. The large south-west facing gable and porch on the same elevation are also later modifications to an older core. Similarly, the dormer window on the south east side appears to have been altered in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The roof is typically steeply pitched with a variety of lines and pitches that gives the house much character.



**Figure 3 Walnut Tree Cottage**

Opposite here, Walnut Tree Cottage also shows signs of later modification – presumably by Barclay Field, whose initials appear on both this property the Manor House and Nearly Corner. It has tile hanging to part of the first floor, and walls of stone and brick, and a large stone chimney stack.



**Figure 4 The Manor House**

The Manor House is of later construction, all in brick with two large gables, timber framing and ornate bargeboards. The windows are a combination of white painted timber sliding sashes and casements, in contrast to other buildings in the group that only have casements.



**Figure 5 The Old Dairy and The Granary**

The converted farm buildings are in the main, simple brick walled and tiled roof single storey ranges, but with a double height central section topped with a cupola and weather vane.



**Figure 6 The Chequers Public House**

The Chequers has a central core built of ragstone with brick and weatherboard lean-to side extensions and a large attached 17<sup>th</sup> Century black stained weather boarded barn to the south. The link between the two buildings is not particularly well detailed and has a negative effect on their character as historic buildings.



**Figure 7 Ivy Cottage**

Ivy Cottage is again built in ragstone, with brick quoins together with brick window and door surrounds. There is a catslide roof to the rear, and a small side extension. It has a typical Kentish roof configuration, with a gable at the chimney stack end and a half hip at the other. Parallel to the road its wide garden provides an open and spacious character in contrast to the more common hedging enclosure to the road edge.



**Figure 8 New Cottages**

New Cottages are built to emulate older style cottages, with rough cast panels between timber framing to the first floor above a ground floor of brick. Half dormers held on timber brackets pierce the roofline, and there are half hips at each end of the block.

### 3.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

#### 3.1 Setting of the Area and Spatial Relationships

Heaverham is a tiny hamlet clustered round a junction of two unclassified roads, and best known for its unspoilt and picturesque character and the Chequers Inn.



Figure 9 The junction of Heaverham Road and Watery Lane

All the historic buildings, apart from the public house, are associated with the surrounding agricultural land. There are farm workers' cottages, an oast house, converted farm buildings and farmhouses. They are closely grouped and set at varying angles, and much of the charm of the setting derives from the views between the buildings and across from one to another.



Figure 10 A view towards the Chequers from the Forge

There are views across the open countryside and farmland to the wooded hills in the north, and the hedgerows and mature trees within the Conservation Area soften the built environment.



Figure 11 A view north towards the converted farm buildings

The road through the hamlet twists and turns, providing a constantly changing vista that accentuates the intimate nature of this peaceful backwater.



**Figure 12** A view south down Watery Lane

### 3.2 The Impact of Individual Features/Groups of Buildings

The group of properties at the road junction forms the focal point of the hamlet. The Oast House, Nearly Corner, Walnut Tree Cottage and the Manor House sit well together and their juxtaposition enhances the individual attractiveness of each building.



**Figure 13** The group of buildings at the road junction

The group of cottages by the Forge, although unremarkable architecturally have a simple vernacular character that contributes to the character of the area providing a contrast with the larger detached houses further down the lane.



**Figure 14** Forge Cottages

From the tight grouping at the junction, the vista opens out towards the Chequers to take in the expanse of landscaped forecourt to the mainly single storey Old Byre, Granary and Old Dairy buildings.



**Figure 15 The Old Byre and the Granary**

On the corner, The Chequers draws the eye down the lane to the little group of cottages on the southern arm of the conservation area. Although New Cottages are a relatively modern early 20<sup>th</sup> Century addition to the scene, they are not unattractive, although the garages adjacent are rather an eyesore and have been excluded from the boundaries of the conservation area.

Ivy Cottage is a charming little property dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century that faces onto fields to the west.



**Figure 16 The modern farm buildings behind Walnut Tree Cottage**

The modern farm buildings to the west of Walnut Tree Cottage tend to detract from the picturesque nature of the hamlet; nevertheless they serve as a reminder of the agricultural base of this hamlet.

The single storey Forge and associated weatherboarded sheds have been refurbished and now make a more positive contribution to the conservation area.



**Figure 17 The Forge**

The garages to the rear of Forge Cottages are unattractive and out of character with the visual quality in the rest of the hamlet.



**Figure 18 The garages to the rear of Forge Cottages**

## **4.0 FUTURE TRENDS**

### **4.1 Current and Future Pressures on the Area**

There is a continuing pressure to convert agricultural buildings to residential use, and this has happened with many of the buildings in Heaverham. Whilst this has meant that these properties are now well maintained and are contributing to the character of the area, there is a danger that the farms will later find a need to replace them with modern, prefabricated equivalents. The restrictions on erecting such buildings are considerably more relaxed than for non-agricultural development, and can lead to some unsightly intrusions in the countryside. Care is needed using appropriate location, colour, form and landscaping to mitigate any adverse effects on the character and appearance of conservation areas and the wider countryside.

### **4.2 Potential for Enhancement and Future Policy Recommendations**

Heaverham is a picturesque, compact hamlet and the boundaries of the Conservation Area are tightly drawn around the built confines to include those buildings and open spaces that contribute to the character of the area. Physical improvement that could be implemented would be to replace the unattractive garages beyond New Cottages and then include this area within the boundary of the conservation area. The boundary should be realigned to take in the whole residential plot at Nearly Corner. West Lodge to the east is a visual stop currently outside the area but could be considered for inclusion together with Broughton and its outbuildings to the south. Woodland east of Ivy cottage should be considered for the visual contribution made to the setting and character of the conservation area.

When the modern farm buildings in the west are ready for replacement, a more sympathetic design in less obtrusive materials might be preferable.

It should also be remembered that there are several unlisted buildings whose windows are not, at present, exempt from the possibility of replacement in plastic. An Article 4 direction could control this and help to retain this distinctive element of local character.

## Acknowledgements:

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Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted March 2000)

Sevenoaks District Council

Development in the Historic Environment

English Heritage 1995

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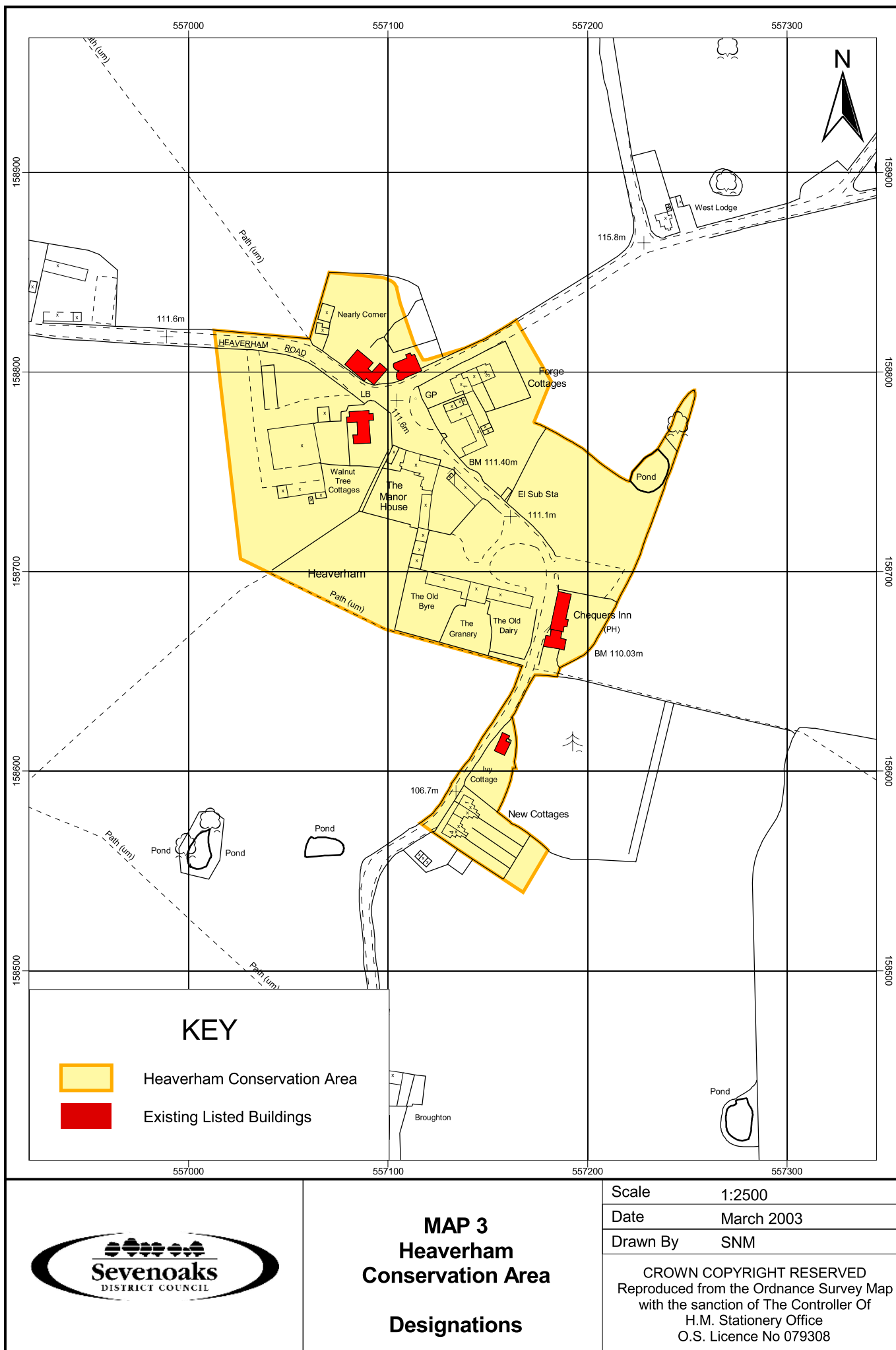
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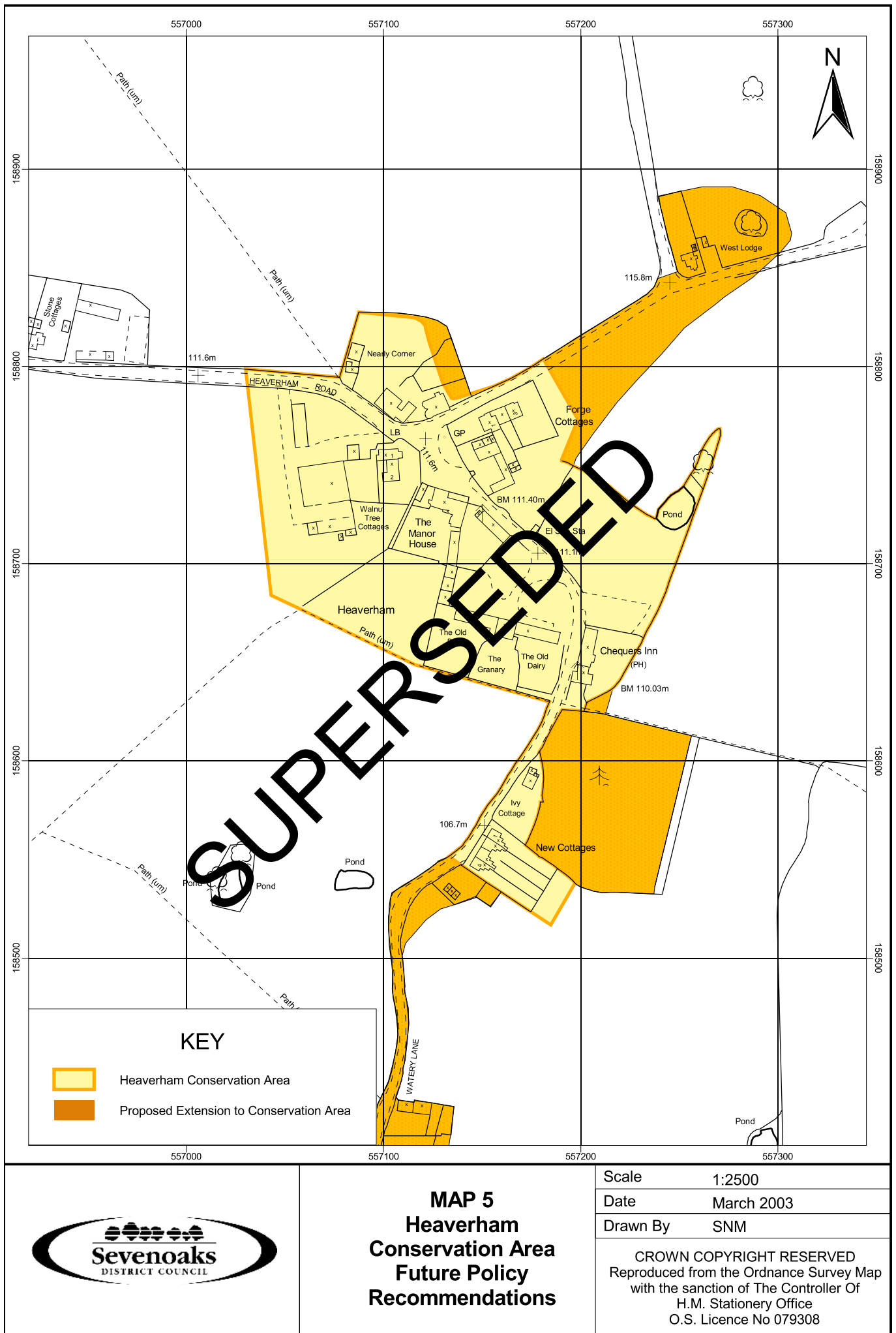
## MAP 4 Heaverham Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Scale 1:2500

Date March 2003

Drawn By CW-T

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Map superseded. Please refer to Heaverham Appraisal map, PDF dated June 2019