Queens Farm

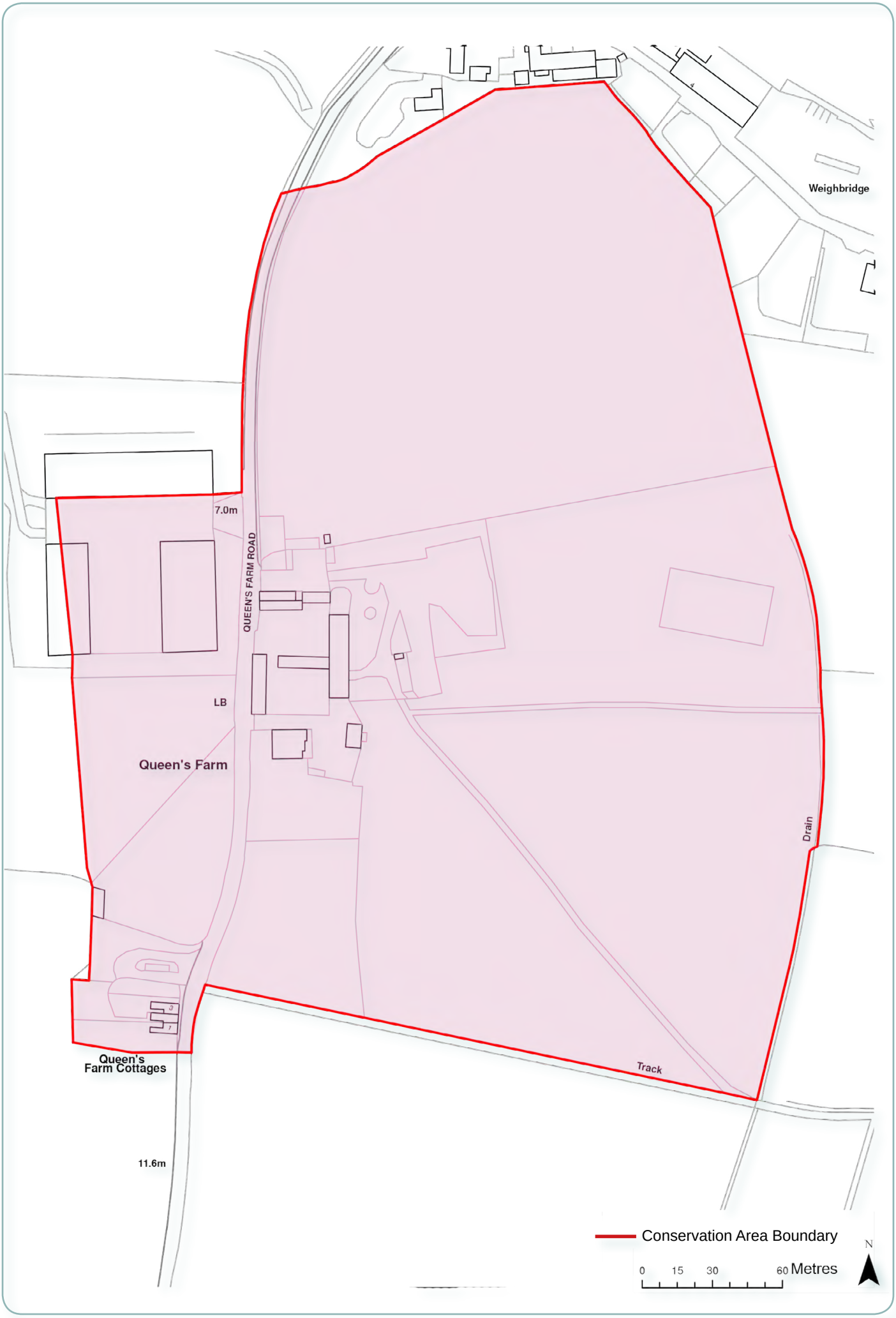
Rural Conservation Area Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document

Delivering for the Community

Gravesham Borough Council

Queens Farm, Conservation Area Boundary



QUEEN'S FARM, SHORNE, RURAL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL 2016

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1 STATEMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Queen's Farm, Shorne, Conservation Area, east of Gravesend and at the edge of the Thames-side marshes, comprises an historic farmstead and workers cottages all within their historic rural setting. When designated the group was an historic focal point within a wide spreading agricultural landscape. The local special interest of the area lies in the relative completeness of the building group of farmhouse, farm buildings and yards and workers houses. These arrangements exemplify the last stages of small scale traditional agricultural operations, before they were overtaken by modern practice as embodied in the three huge sheds recently erected partly within the conservation area.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Queen's Farm, Shorne, Conservation Area

Queen's Farm, Shorne, Conservation Area was designated on 14th February 2001. A conservation area statement was approved by stakeholders in March 2001 and was subsequently adopted by the Council. The conservation area's boundary contains the historic street of Queen's Farm Road.

2.2 The purpose of the appraisal

This appraisal supersedes the conservation area statement referred to above. It identifies and defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Queen's Farm Conservation Area has merited designation. It also identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Borough Council in considering relevant applications for planning permission, including proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments. It will also help property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the conservation area.

The appraisal is to be included as a background paper in the Local Plan and, as such, will be a due consideration in the planning process. The appraisal was adopted as a separate Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Plan on the 21 February 2017.

Preparation of the appraisal involved an extensive survey of the conservation area. However, the omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Gravesham is managed by Kent County Council and can provide information for a wide variety of buildings and sites, from finds of prehistoric flint tools to medieval castles and Second World War pillboxes. For further information visit: www.kent.gov.uk/HER

2.3 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Local planning authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Local authorities must submit proposals for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration at a public meeting within the relevant area. They should also have regard to any views expressed by people attending the meeting.

Broadly, the effects of designation are:

- Conservation Area Consent must be obtained from the local planning authority or Secretary of State prior to the substantial or total demolition or any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions

- The local planning authority must consider the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance or the conservation area when assessing relevant applications

- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas

- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or prune a tree over a certain size

As well as receiving statutory protection, conservation areas are afforded a degree of protection under the planning system whereby it is expected that proposed development will preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting as an irreplaceable resource. The exception to this would be where any substantial harm or loss of heritage interest is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

In the case of Gravesham, the development plan effectively comprises the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and remaining 'saved' policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994). In certain instances, the Kent Minerals Plan and Waste Plan will also be of relevance and a material planning consideration. Plans in preparation are also capable of being a material planning consideration with the weight accorded them depending on the stage reached, whether there are unresolved objections and the consistency of the emerging plan with national policy.

Amongst a range of other things, policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and Planning Practice Guidance (2014) issued by the Government are also material planning considerations in the determination of planning applications. Of particular importance in this respect are paragraphs 126 – 141 of the NPPF which set out the approach toward conserving and enhancing the historic environment, with the weight to be accorded the conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings dependent on the significance of the asset, the degree of harm likely to occur as a result of development, and whether such harm is outweighed by any public benefits that would arise.

The importance of retaining the built as well as natural heritage of Gravesham is well recognised because of the contribution this can make through reinforcing local distinctiveness and the creation of sense of place. This document identifies both the special character of Queen's Farm Conservation Area and how that special character can best be preserved and enhanced.

In terms of the setting of the rural conservation areas, it is important to recognise that the surrounding landscape may also be of significance in determining impact or developing an appropriate design response. The reader's attention is therefore drawn to other documents available on the Council's website relating to landscape character appraisal in general and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNB) in particular. In the case of the latter, the Council is under a statutory duty to have regard to the purposes of including land within the AoNB when taking decisions on applications that may impact on it or its setting.

2.4 Community involvement

Local stakeholder support was obtained for the conservation area statement of March 2001. The statement was adopted by the Council following the consultations.

The present survey identifies in more detail the following:

- The special characteristics of Queen's Farm Shorne Conservation Area
- The key negative features and issues

3 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

3.1 Location, communications and local context
Figure 1

Queen's Farm is in Shorne parish, some 4 ½ miles east of the centre of Gravesend. It is a little to the north of the east-west running back road between Gravesend and Lower Higham. It is very close to the south edge of Shorne marsh, permanent low lying grazing land extending a mile or so north to the Thames estuary. The side road on which it is located, Queen's Farm Road, continues heading north as a track beyond the farm – over a level crossing at the railway line and over the canal, see below – out over the marshes to end at the south bank of the Thames next to Shornemead Fort. To the west of the road the marsh is now occupied by the MOD Milton firing range. Inland, extensions to Queen's Farm Road run south to Shorne village.

The railway line between Gravesend and Stroud passes the north end of the conservation area on a low embankment and to the east here there are sidings and a former Uralite works building. From this point a branch line leads off to the Isle of Grain. Immediately north beyond the railway line is a section of the former Gravesend to Stroud canal, the Thames and Medway Canal.

3.2 Activities and uses

The historic buildings of the conservation area comprise a farmhouse, a terrace of three agricultural workers cottages and various farm buildings. Since its designation there has been a certain amount of small scale alteration to, and removal of parts of, lesser structures within the overall group. In addition some very large modern agricultural buildings have been built partly within the conservation area just beyond, and across the road from, the old farmyard. The traditional yard and its buildings are going out of agricultural use; at the time of survey the farmhouse was advertised as to-let.

3.3 Geology, topography and local building materials
Figure 2 and 3

The underlying geology here is the dip-slope of the chalk of the North Downs. This is overlain in the area of Queen's Farm by the later Palaeocene Thanet Beds and these in turn are hidden in places by the Woolwich Beds topped by small outcrops of London Clay. Over all these, very geologically recent local and discontinuous areas of river gravels are sometimes found. Queen's Farm is on an 'island' of such gravel, a dry area standing at around 9 metres AOD, close to the edge of the alluvial marsh. It is clear from this that the farm founders sought a site on sound ground, as close as possible to the unstable but rich reclaimed marshland grazing from which they drew part of their livelihood. Apparently the farm was at one time known as Marshside. A pond lies at the north end of the conservation area alongside the road where this drops down before climbing again to cross the railway line, and is close to marsh-level. This may have served the farm. Unusually there is no historic map evidence for a farm pond within the main historic farm steading – perhaps gravel was not the best of bases for one.

A countryside stewardship scheme was put in place on an area of old orchard trees immediately south of the conservation area, abutting the east side of the road. A smaller relict of this same orchard extends north within the conservation area

alongside the road here as far as the south garden of Queen's Farm house. New trees were to be planted to replace any lost.

Materials used on and in historic buildings in the conservation area are brick, tile, slate and weatherboard on timber frame. Some brick is rendered. There is much galvanised corrugated iron on roofs and on some walls of the older agricultural buildings. A few old gravel workings occur in various places in and around the conservation area. Gravel was used for roads and also as a component of cement which was another local product utilising the chalk and clays of the area. As in other farms and villages in the region lumps of locally found sarsen stone placed on or fixed into the ground were used traditionally to protect the corners of walls etc from damage by turning vehicles.

3.4 Relationship of the conservation area to its surroundings

(General setting and land-use characterisation. The village in the wider landscape)
Figures 4 Conservation Area Surroundings 1819

Approached from the south along Queen's Farm Road the southern edge of the conservation area is defined by the bright white flank wall of Queen's Farm Cottages with mature trees and hedging along its back garden boundary to the west. Across the road, a hedge stretching east forms the south boundary of old orchard grounds, the trees of which appear above and behind it. This hedge conceals the conservation area boundary here which is further north, along the line of an east/west field path. The general effect is of an island of greenery within a wide, open and very gently rolling, arable landscape. One or two large trees stand out in the distance above the rest; one marks the site of the farmhouse. Closer to the settlement, as the land dips down towards the marsh, the surrounding farmed landscape flattens still more. The tall pylons of a local section of the national grid north of the conservation area are prominent in any view from the south

From the north within the marsh the site is hidden by trees and bushes growing along the railway embankment. There is thus no long, contextual, view from this direction. The best 'exterior' views are to be had from the fields, again mostly open, east of the farmstead. Here the survival of part of the farm's old orchard in and beyond the south east quarter of the conservation area gives a hint of former agricultural regimes and contributes to a long-distance setting for the collection of small scale historic and later buildings including the farmhouse. These are interspersed with local garden and hedge growth and a few mature trees.

Seen from the west the recent development of the very large scale new agricultural buildings – cattle sheds – on their particular site within and adjoining the conservation area, has a very unfortunate effect on the latter's character within the landscape.

Figure 5 Topography and land use

The following features are important in the wider setting of the conservation area:

- From the south and to east and west, a wide, gently rolling landscape of large modern fields, falling gradually north towards the farmstead site which is at the junction of marsh and arable

- To the south a rising arable landscape culminating in wooded high land with the north running spur upon which Shorne windmill once stood out prominently

- To the north a former view to and from the marsh is interrupted at close quarters by the east/west running embankment of the railway line with its bushes and trees

- To the west the visually intrusive bulk of the modern cattle sheds

4 GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Early settlers in the region, the recent history of the farmstead and local land use
Figure 6 – Epoch 1

Extensive crop marks have been identified around Queen's Farm. Features interpreted as Bronze Age barrows and an enclosed settlement, an iron age enclosed settlement and an undated trackway, enclosure and field system, form a complex of crop marks some 200m south of Queen's Farm. Another large group of Bronze Age barrows is located some 400m to the south west with another one about 130m to the north east. Other crop marks include an undated trackway about 120m to the west.

Evidence of Roman occupation in this part of Shorne parish is extensive. Recorded finds closest to Queen's Farm are kilns, rubbish pits and graves 400m to the west. To the north east in the area of the railway sidings and former Uralite works quantities of pottery, funeral urns and kilns have been found. This is quite strong evidence for a Roman settlement somewhere in the vicinity.

The farmstead site has a long and direct documented association with Shorne itself. John Norden's Map of Kent, 1605, shows it and labels it 'Shorne II' presumably to distinguish it from the parent village which he also shows. Hasted's map of 1797 and the OS map of 1806 show the farm, then called Lower Shorne. From this it seems that the present, relatively recent historic buildings on the site have replaced a much more ancient set, or sets. By the time of the 1819 OS map Lower Shorne had become Queen's Farm and had a new partner, King's Farm (also called Prince's Farm) a little to the north east, even closer to the marsh edge. This was taken down and moved south at the time of the building of the railway yards.

It has been suggested that the construction of the Thames and Medway Canal in the early 19th century, followed by the railway in 1841, precipitated the enclosing of the Mead, Shorne Marshes, in 1845. The Mead, which was permanent grassland, had been shared common grazing land until then. Its name is perpetuated today in that of Shornemead Fort on the bank of the Thames, north of Queen's Farm. Built about 1870 this was one of a system of forts constructed at that time and replaced a late 18th century predecessor. The Mead was eventually acquired by the War Office as part of the Milton firing ranges.

4.2 Water supply and the original siting of the village

The historic maps provide no evidence for an on-site farm pond but there is one just down the road. General water supply will have been from wells; again the maps are no help in this case.

5 THE FARMSTEAD'S HISTORIC LAYOUT, ITS FORM TODAY AND ITS ASSOCIATED PUBLIC REALM

5.1 The historic layout and the form today of the farmstead and its setting
Figure 7 Queens Farm Conservation Area
Figure 8 Comparisons MAP 1963,

The main body of the conservation area is on the east side of north/south running Queen's Farm Road and comprises two fields, one to the south east and the other to the north east of the main farmstead. These are the east setting of the main building group. Their eastern boundary is formed by a gently curving more or less north-south running ditch, probably a very long established feature. The field to the north is bounded on its west side by Queen's Farm Road and has in its north-west corner the pond referred to earlier. In the 1880s there was a small area of possibly scrubby woodland beyond the pond and outside the conservation area. This joined up to another small patch of garden/woodland around Prince's Farm to the east, also outside the conservation area. Woods and farm are gone now but the old boundary line, the conservation area boundary line here, remains. Turning a little east of south it eventually joins the ditch line forming the east boundary to the south field.

The west side of the south field is 'eaten into', as it were, by yards and gardens of the farmhouse and its farm buildings which face west close to the roadside. The south field's southern boundary is the east-west line of a field path connecting to the road just north of Queen's Farm Cottages. This is also the south boundary of this part of the conservation area. South beyond this is the main area of old orchards referred to earlier. Part of this orchard extends north towards the farmhouse within the conservation area as a strip against the roadside.

West of the road the south end of the conservation area is drawn tightly and appropriately to pass north around the back gardens of Queen's Farm Cottages. Until recently it then followed an old established north-running line enclosing a field or paddock across the road from the farmhouse, providing this with a western setting. Only some of this arrangement survives today. The field line then turned east/west to join the road just north of the original farm building complex opposite. The boundary of the conservation area still follows this line. From this last point it turns north along the west side of the road and back to the pond.

On the west side of the road, north beyond the conservation area boundary, there was, until recently, a large field running alongside the road and down to the level of the marsh. As noted earlier, gravel was taken from here, the maps showing that in recent historical times its surface was disturbed. Part of it is deliberately picked out as a space connected with the highway on the 1819 OS map. One possible explanation for this could be that it was once a common holding area for cattle coming from or going to the marsh.

The site of the three recent substantial wide-span modern farm buildings to the west of the road falls partly within and partly outside the conservation area. They overlap from the north part of the field opposite the farm house and historic farm buildings within the conservation area into the adjacent, formerly gravel pitted field outside the conservation area to the north. The siting of these buildings thus makes nonsense of both history and the conservation area boundary. Their construction post-dates the conservation area statement of 2001.

Allowing for the small scale of the 1819 OS map, the basic disposition of historic buildings in relation to the highway within the conservation area was already established then i.e. there was a main group of buildings on the east side of the road no doubt on the site of the present steading and there was a smaller group to the south, on the west side of the road probably where Queen's Farm Cottages stand. An inventory of Queen's Farm dated 1834 shows the farm to be then owned by a Mrs Hafsell. The tenant was Mr Solomon, a member of an important local farming family. The yellow brick roadside gable to the northernmost traditional farm building on the site – a cart shed – carries two plaques, both dated 1832.

Stylistic grounds make it likely that 1832 or thereabouts is the building date also for the farm's intact barn with its two thrashing floor, possibly the open cattle sheds and also the double yard plan still surviving with them. Such extensive cattle yards and sheds only became common in Kent in the late 18th/early 19th centuries. The farm building with a cut-down roof along the road frontage of the yards, probably originally stables or calf houses etc., may pre-date the rest – it is of red brick topped with later brick with a modern mono-pitch roof.

The yellow brick front part of the farmhouse may date from the same time as most of the farm buildings. The back, in red brick, may survive from the 18th century. Whatever the exact dating of the house, it seems certain that an earlier farmstead group underwent a major rebuilding campaign here in the early 19th century.

By 1866 there was a third cattle yard south across the road from the farmhouse immediately to the north of Queen's Farm Cottages. All but a tiny fraction of this has now gone, as site inspection and study of the maps shows. The maps also show that the cottages themselves started very small and that their rears were gradually and successively enlarged by means of back extensions. Stylistically they appear to have been built around the mid 19th century. As the 1819 OS shows they, like the two main farmyards, replaced earlier buildings here.

5.2 The associated public realm

This is not a case where the public realm has much to offer other than Queen's Farm Road itself and a small post box on a post.

6 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 Building types

Historic building types within the main group comprise one traditional Kent farmhouse which, although a little degraded architecturally in places by modern interventions, remains of historic and architectural interest. The farm buildings comprise a Kent barn from late on in the county's tradition of barn building but of special interest nonetheless; an open sided cattle shed associated with the barn and yards; the open cattle yards themselves; another open sided shed for cattle to its south side and carts and implements to its north side (an arrangement as prescribed in the farmstead design manuals of the time) dated 1832, and a further north facing cart shed with a (probable) granary above it (again common, recommended practice). In addition, there is one earlier, altered, brick building, perhaps stabling/calf boxes facing into one of the yards. All together this is a good group demonstrating the way farming advice of the time affected layout and function.

In the secondary group little is left to show of the former second yard and its surrounding buildings. Just one small brick and slate single storey shed off in the back corner of its former site survives. The terrace of three cottages remains to show the level of accommodation farm workers could expect in the mid 19th century and how this was increased in size thereafter.

6.2 Building form

The two-storey farmhouse, though simple in its 'footprint', has a complex set of peg tiled roofs, gabled and hipped, indicating change and development over time. The building's elevations, including modern work, also show these processes of change and development in their materials, detail and disposition of features.

The farmyard buildings, with the exception of the central cattle shelters, are all seen as freestanding structures with spatial gaps where they meet at right angles. The barn is a visually simple structure of one build and design with tall boarded sides and a slate roof. The central cattle shelter is defined mainly by its roof, again very low pitched. The roof of the brick gabled implement and cattle shelter to the north of the yards was designed for slate though it is now clad in corrugated galvanised iron sheet. The form of the older street frontage brick building, as noted probably originally stabling and calf houses and the like, has been altered by the modern mono-pitched roof clapped onto it but still retains significant historic interest.

The cottages originally took the form of a simple rectangular two-storey brick box divided in three along its length with hipped ends to a slate roof. The degree to which subsequent rear extensions have disguised the original form shows (approaching from the south along the highway) in the long two storey white rendered gable/flank walls stretching back from the road.

6.3 Listed, locally listed and key unlisted buildings; buildings making a neutral contribution to conservation area character; and buildings detrimental to conservation area character

There are no listed buildings at this site.
Figure 9 - Buildings - key unlisted buildings, those 'neutral' and those 'detrimental' to conservation area character.

6.4 Brief descriptions of some buildings contributing to conservation are character This list is not comprehensive. Descriptions may be confined to the street façade of the building only.

Comment is made without the benefit of internal inspection. Interiors invariably fill-out the picture and may sometimes change the emphasis of exterior descriptions.

Queen's Farm House

The front of the house, in the 19th century yellow stock bricks of the area, is three bays wide with inset double hung timber vertical sliding sash windows to ground and first floor with shallow brick arches to the opening heads. Each sash has a single vertical central glazing bar. Taking the place of the central window on the ground floor is the front door, hidden inside a small modern porch with a modern door. Each end of this part of the building is gabled and the roof above is peg-tiled. As already noted, the building's complex roof-scape suggests an historic house developed over time, with its origins dating from well before the 19th century.

The barn

With its two thrashing floors this is on the large side for a new built local barn of the first half of the 19th century. It is of its time in its narrow width to length proportions, its high boarded sides, low pitched slate roof and half hipped Kentish gables. It is without canopies to its wagon entries, a feature found in the area in some other barns of this late period. It is without aisles. The usual diagonal braces between wall-post and cross-tie are missing, their places taken by original iron brackets.

The remaining farm buildings

The unaltered cattle sheds seen here are increasingly rare, many in Kent having suffered the destructive alteration to their character that comes with infilling of their open sides for residential use. The more northerly of the two structures with its low-pitched roof has its freestanding posts mounted on low stylobates to keep them from rotting, a detail often foregone in less well built examples. The double sided shed at the north perimeter of the farmyard is of particular interest for its combination of wagon and implement storage on the north facing side and beast shelter on the south side (the latter is the cattle shed described above) These were the recommended positions for these functions, as given in the agricultural textbooks of the time. Carts and implements were protected from the sun if stored facing north; animals did best with shelter facing south. The roadside building though 'cut down' is of interest for its late 18th/early 19th century brickwork, its walls and openings and its positioning as an enclosing side of the former yard.

The 19th century cottage row

This is built in yellow stock bricks with a slated, hipped roof. One gable end has been rendered. The front elevation of each dwelling has the common local arrangement of a front door to one side with the ground floor window next to it and with the first floor window above that. Openings all have low cambered red brick arches and windows are set back into reveals in the wall. The original timber double hung sash pattern windows with eight over eight pane sashes survive in the fronts of two dwellings. The third dwelling has modern plastic windows.

6.5 Building materials

See under section 3.3 above.

6.6 Local details

The house is 18th and 19th century in style with details appropriate to those periods – inset timber sashed or casement windows some with stone window cills, little roof overhang at eaves, roof tiles extended over gable walls with minimal overhang at the verge. The barn and the largely intact farmyard buildings follow the Kent agricultural building style of the early to mid 19th century. The altered red brick beast shed/stable along the roadside may be a little earlier. Detailing, whether in timber or brick, is invariably simple. The street elevation of Queen's Farm Cottages follows the general style of the mid to later 19th century with contrasting red brick lintels to window and door openings.

7 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Spatial character and form of development within the conservation area
Figure 10 arrangement of 'character areas'.

7.2 Individual character areas
Figure 11

Each character area is identified individually and its special character (as set out here below) indicated on the Map that follows. The relationship of buildings to spaces, nature of spaces, contributing and detrimental features are all shown. Main contributing trees, garden areas, planting and important boundaries are shown. Discussion assumes an approach to the settlement from its south end.

1 The area of garden and field forming the south east half of the conservation area (termed above the 'south field') and including the farm house, yard etc. Landscape here is relatively flat grassland (at the time of survey), wide spreading and open east beyond the farm buildings and south to the right of way marking the boundary there of the conservation area. The length of this boundary is enclosed to the south by the old orchard mentioned earlier. Again as mentioned earlier there is a small extension of this orchard north along the roadside. This forms a south setting to the house and its garden. The farm house and buildings form a group on the west side of the main part of the field. A few trees to the east of the farmhouse combine with garden hedges and a very large forest tree further west, along the roadside, to greatly enhance its local setting as seen from the east and south east.

2 The public highway itself and the small field west of the house and road, including Queen's Farm Cottages at its south end. As the road approaches the conservation area from the south a hedge to the right and the prominent south flank Queen's Farm cottages to the left, signal its beginning. On the right the big sycamore which stands out above the hedged and treed, then low walled and curving, roadside, hides the farmhouse a little beyond it.

To the left beyond the cottages the open space of the former second cattle yard is passed with its sad small remnant standing off to the west on the conservation area boundary. The space in front of this is partly hard surfaced towards the road and is used as a rough parking area. North beyond this the level, open, presently grassed field forms the west setting of the historic buildings. This is now closed to the north by the visually overbearing and intrusive gables and sides of the modern cattle sheds part-occupying this northwest corner of the conservation area.

The farmhouse is set back behind a small hedged and walled front garden and it looks out over the field opposite. Immediately north of it is its main entrance drive shared with the drive to the old farmyards. The character of part of this setting is now compromised by the new cattle sheds. Beyond the farmhouse the road is enclosed to the east by the brick back wall of the 'cut-down' roofed probable former stable block. This shields the traditional farmyards to the east from direct view from the road. The latter are partially visible, on the angle, when seen via the entrance drive or from a second yard entrance further north along the road.

A little further north still along the road the full negative impact on the character of the historic settlement of the new farm buildings on its north west side can be felt. This unfortunate incursion happens opposite the 1832-dated road front gable of the most northerly of the historic farmyard buildings. The north, cart lodge, side of this building faces north onto area 3.

3 The field forming the north part of the conservation area beyond the farmyard (termed above, the north field).
The west boundary of the conservation area here follows the west side of Queen's Farm Road from the new cattle buildings as it runs very gradually down northward originally towards the marsh (now to the rail and canal crossings). It has slight banks up to the fields on each side topped by ragged hedges and fences. At the north extremity of the conservation area the road curves slightly to enclose in the bend the overgrown and derelict remnant of the farm pond. Bushes and the occasional taller tree beyond this to the north and east and adjacent to the conservation area boundary partly hide various small modern industrial sheds. These features in combination, more or less close outward views from the road to the north, north east and east. The north field itself, somewhat elevated as it approaches the former line of the marsh edge, was at time of survey a slightly undulating and open expanse of grazing land. From within it there are views back to, and southward beyond, the historic farm group. Here again the modern cattle sheds west of the road compete for visual dominance with the historic group.

7.3 Landmarks or key buildings, focal points and views
Figure 12 showing Landmarks, focal points and views. Main contributing and detrimental views are identified. Important distant views are shown earlier, on a map under para 3.4.

8 SUMMARY CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Including positive and negative features

The character of this very small conservation area centres on its two groups of historic buildings. The farmstead group is substantially intact. It is essentially early 19th century in character and its layout and buildings are evidence of the theory and practice in agriculture of the time. The farmhouse included, the group has examples of the various building types required in a farmstead of its date along also with a 'period' layout around two stock yards.

The three cottages form a separate 'block' well away from the farmstead. Their original cores are evidence of the small scale of accommodation that might be provided for land workers in the mid 19th century. Their fronts, though altered in minor ways, still have architectural character of the mid 19th century. A single building remains as a reminder of the stockyard that one stood immediately north of the cottage row.

From the wider 'external' view the built up and treed parts of the conservation area form islands of interest standing out within a landscape of large fields and few hedgerows. The original effect here has been severely compromised by the recent building of the three large scale modern cattle sheds on a site adjoining the historic group to the west. These now dominate views from the west. Closer up, the fields and other spaces around the farmstead and cottages and within the conservation area, form the immediate setting of the buildings. To the east these fields are essentially wide and very slightly undulating areas of open permanent grass. Within this eastern area immediately south and to a lesser degree west of the farmhouse its gardens, orchard plot, roadside hedge and wall, extend group character, helping to visually anchor the buildings down into the landscape. House and barn are prominent.

To the north within the eastern fields the historic group interacts more starkly and directly with its immediate context, the former cart sheds looking out over rather ramshackle and ephemeral modern agricultural structures to the open field beyond.

From the west the farmhouse is the centrepiece of the historic group, the rest being more or less hidden behind the historic brick agricultural building along the road frontage of the yards. The small field west across the road provides the farm house with its setting here. Various mature trees, orchards, hedges and walls east of the road are key contributors to the scene.

The terrace of cottages to the south of the conservation area are only visually linked to the main group by the continuous planting, trees and wall along the east side of the road which extend up to the farmhouse. The cottage buildings, their back gardens, hedges etc almost form a separate visual 'island' at the edge of the conservation area.

Lastly, the local effect the modern agricultural sheds northwest of the farmstead on the character of the conservation area is purely negative. Through their siting, scale, materials and form they undermine the historic setting of the farmstead both in the close, and as noted, the long views. They also compete with the historic buildings for local architectural predominance of the western part of the site.

9 ISSUES

9.1 Definition of issues

The following issues form part of the means by which it is intended to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Some arrangements by which to manage change have already been adopted following public consultation, such as the Article 4 Direction explained below, whilst others have been identified by the appraisal process and represent proposals only at this stage.

9.2 Conservation area boundary review

No amendments to the conservation area boundary are considered necessary.

9.3 Alterations to buildings

It is evident that some well-intentioned, but unsympathetic changes, especially to doors and windows, have had an effect that is damaging to the conservation area. An Article 4 Direction is now in force, applying to all building frontages facing the public highway and bringing many small scale incremental changes under the remit of the planning system.

9.4 Uses and vitality

The historic farmstead and farmhouse are going completely out of agricultural use. The very large sheds built partly within the conservation area form the replacement steading. The rest of the conservation area will no doubt become a dormitory for those working elsewhere in due course.

9.5 Locally listed buildings

There is no adopted comprehensive Local List for the Borough and, subject to availability of resources, identification of buildings or structures for a local list is considered to be a priority once criteria have been agreed. Any Local List should be drawn up with the full consultation of the local community.

9.6 Highways and traffic

Traffic movements have increased as a result of commercial operations and residential conversion of the farmstead. Access to the marshes and cycle route via Shorenmead Crossing requires some form of protection through traffic calming and management.
It should be noted that highways matters are the remit of KCC and subject to their funding arrangements and further consultation with GBC and the Parish Council.

9.7 Enhancement potential

The historic farm buildings at Queens Farm. These have ceased to be in agricultural use and have recently been converted to residential use.. Tree planting to the west of the modern agricultural buildings would reduce their visual impact when viewed across fields.

9.8 Trees

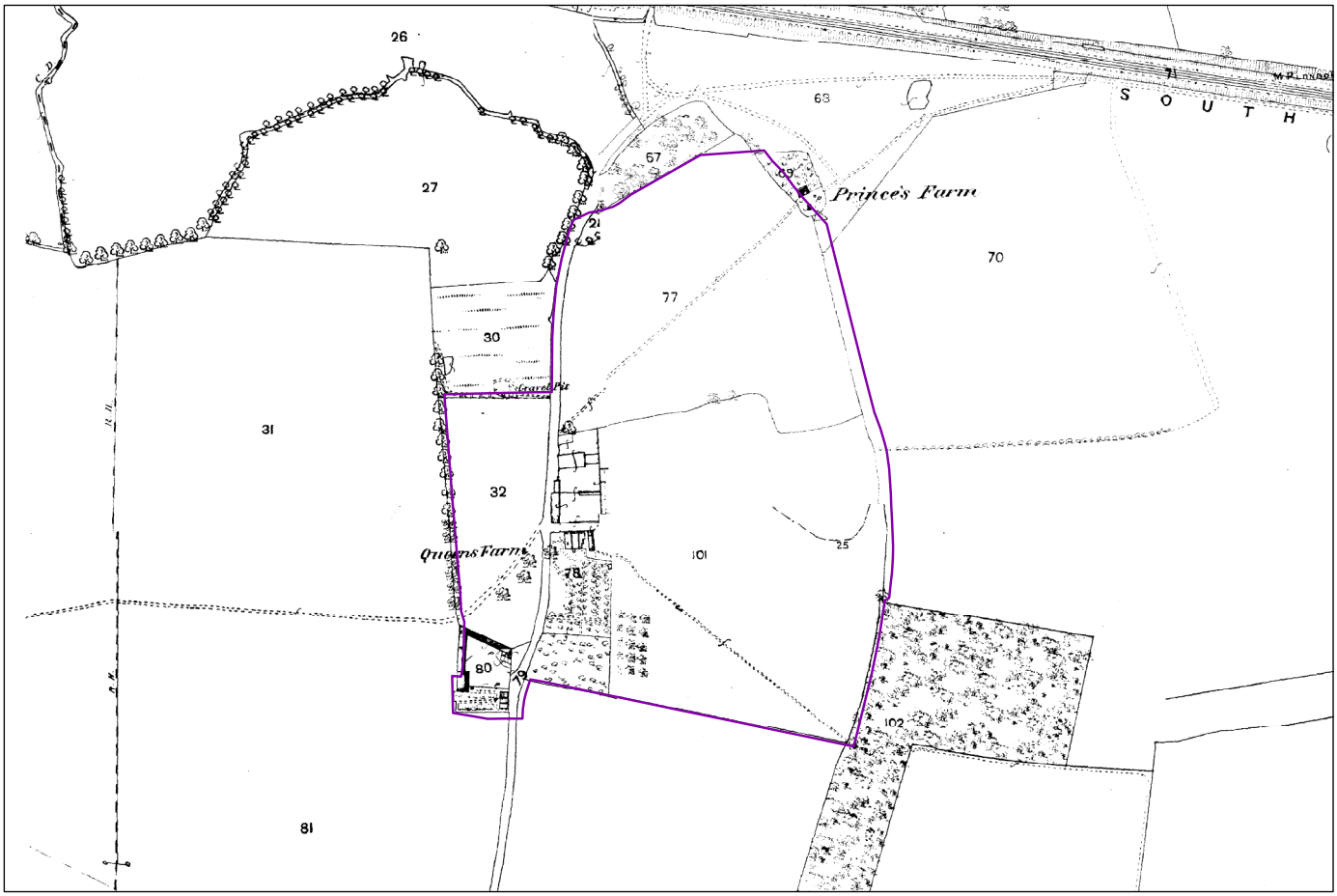
Subject to certain size restrictions, all trees within the conservation area benefit from a level of protection and permission is required from the local planning authority to undertake works to them.

9.9 Archaeology

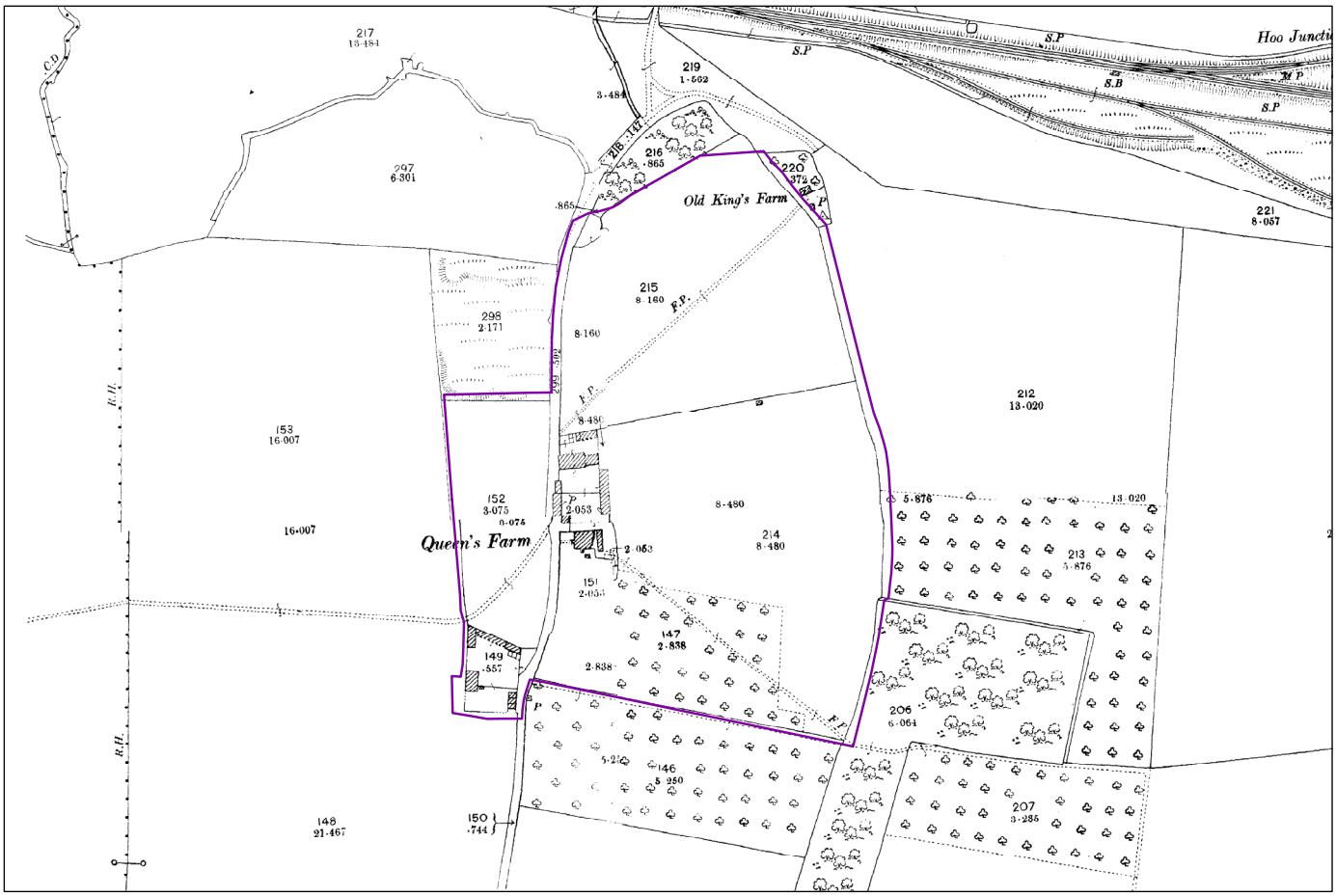
The Conservation Area has archaeological potential relating to the prehistoric, roman and Medieval periods. There is potential for further archaeological remains to be discovered and in the event of development proposals being submitted appropriate archaeological mitigation may be needed.

APPENDIX 1

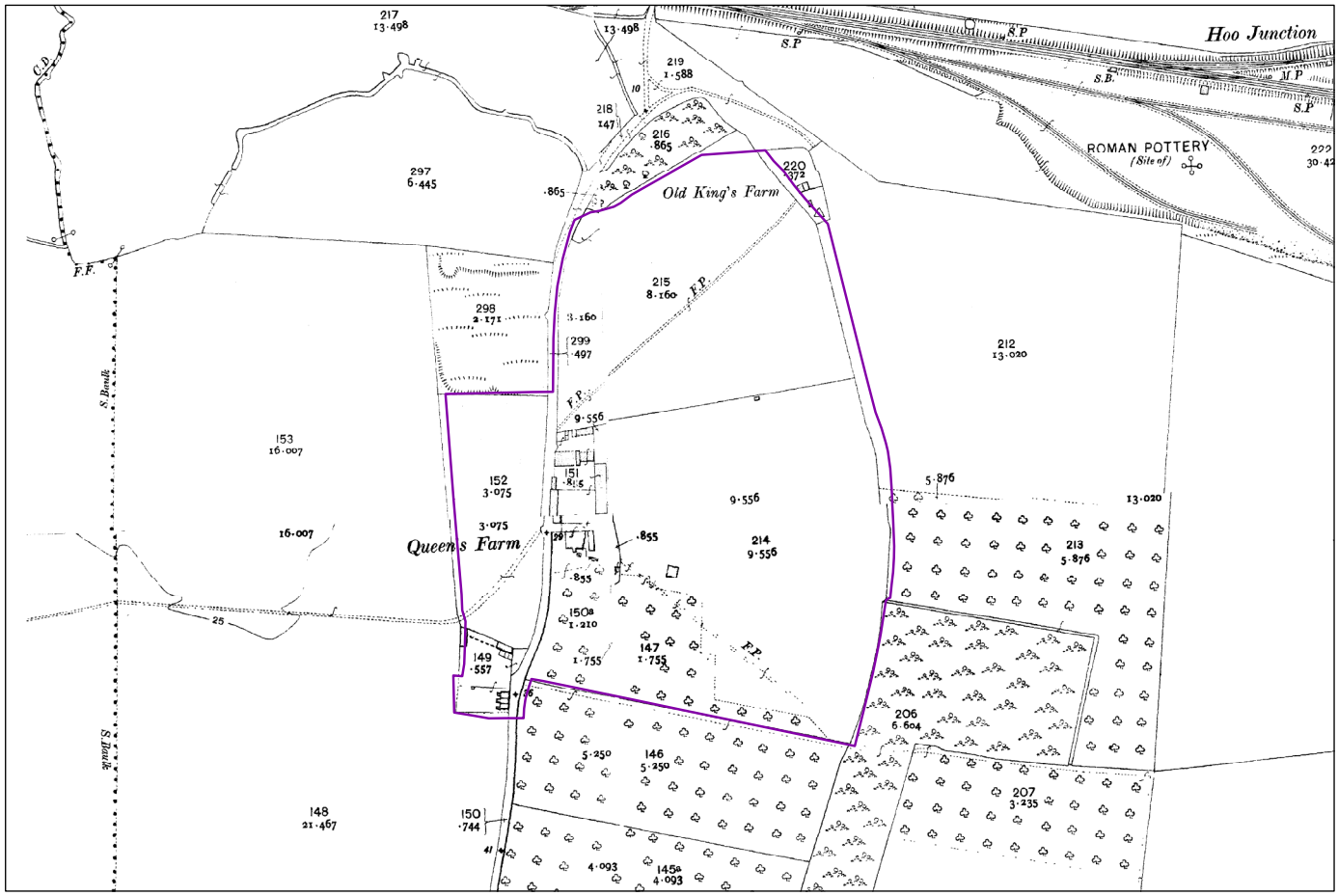
1843-93



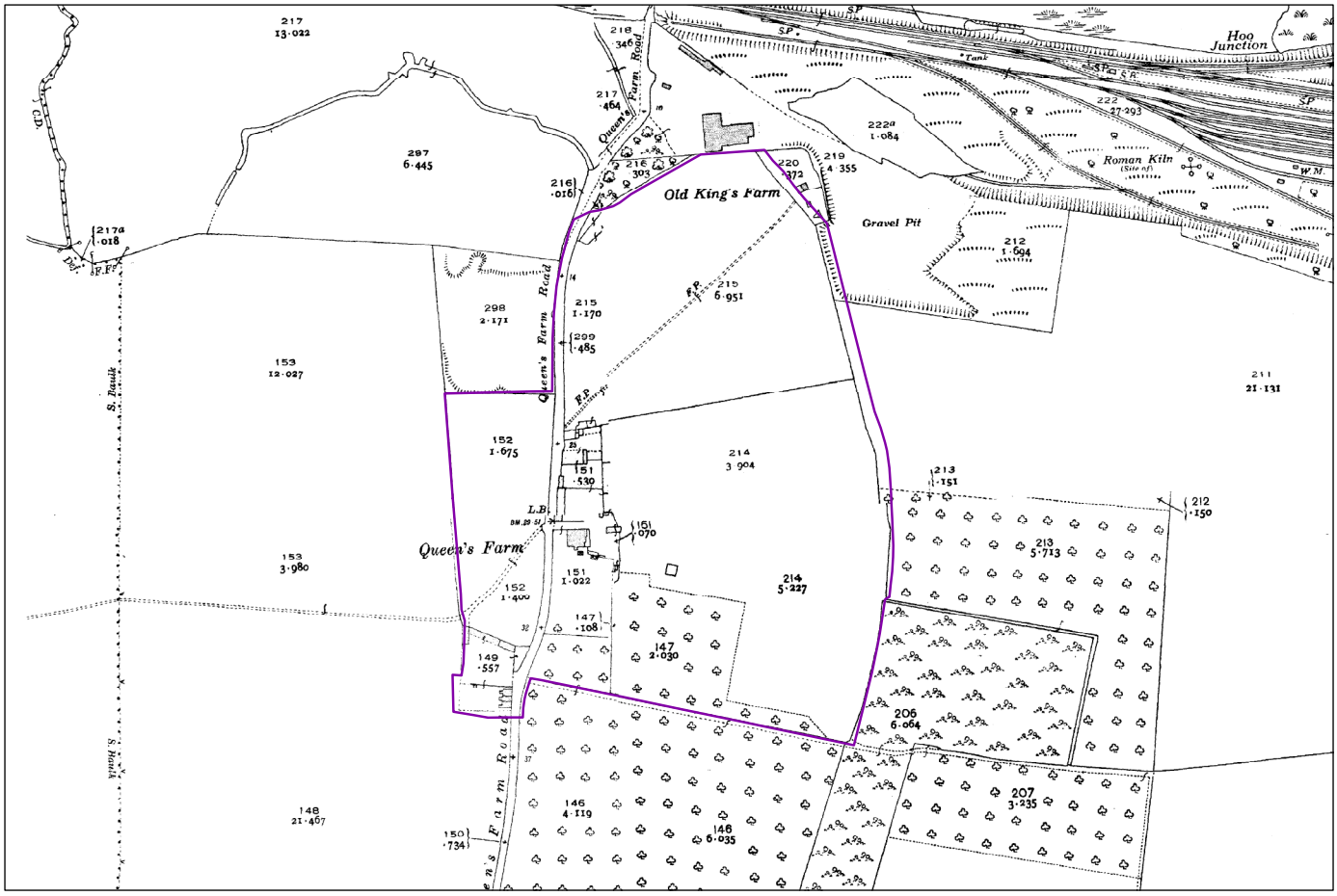
1891-1912



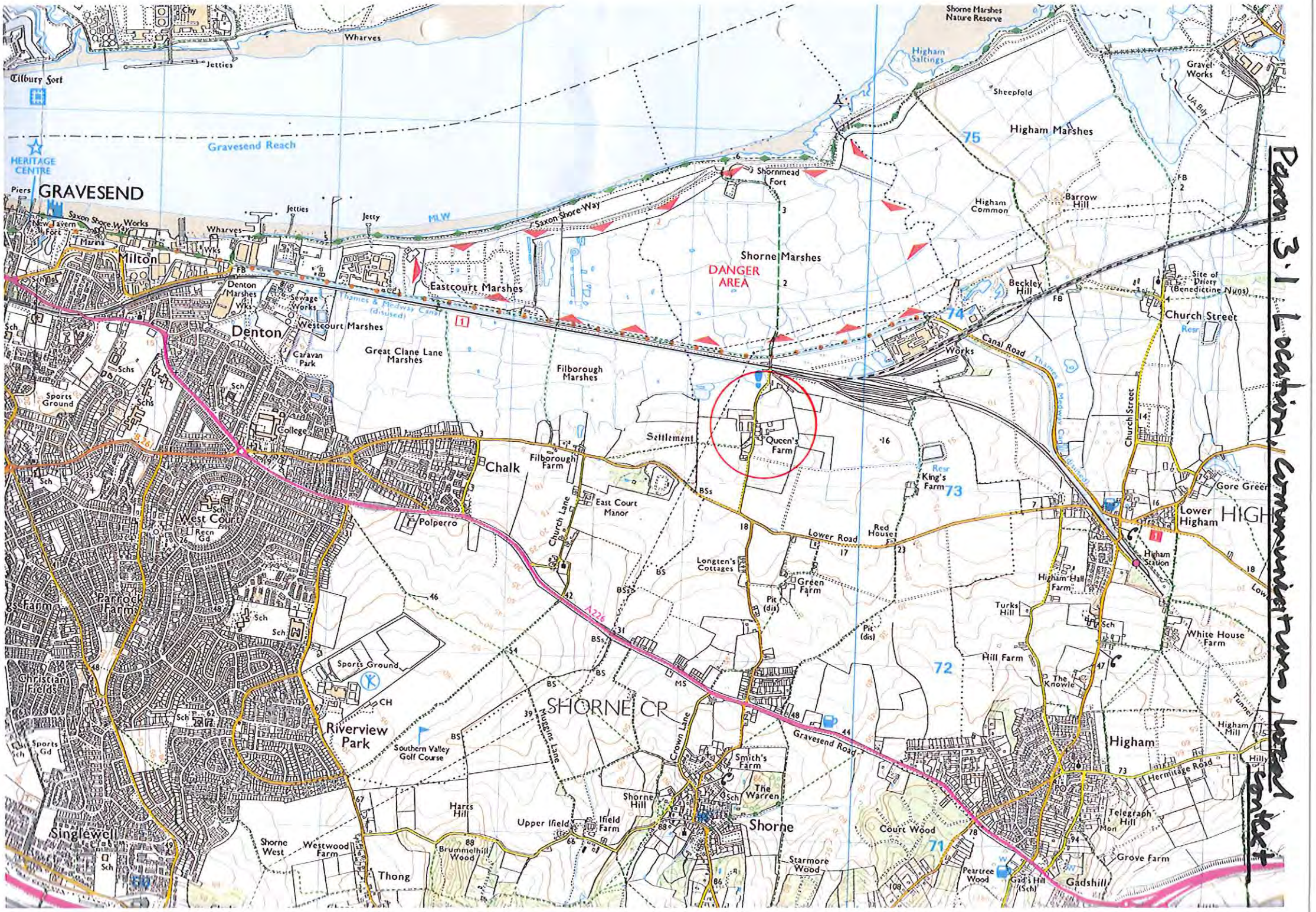
1904-39



1919-43



FIGURES


Penn 3.1 location, communications, historical context
Tilbury Fort
Wharves
Jetties
Gravesend Reach
HERITAGE CENTRE
GRAVESEND
Piers
Saxon Shore Way
New Tavern Fort
Marina
Works
Milton
Jetty
MLW
Shornmead Fort
Shorne Marshes Nature Reserve
Higham Saltings
Sheepfold
Gravel Works
Higham Marshes
Higham Common
Barrow Hill
Shorne Marshes
DANGER AREA
Eastcourt Marshes
Denton Marshes
Sewage Works
Thames & Medway Canal (disused)
Westcourt Marshes
Denton
Caravan Park
Great Clane Lane Marshes
Filborough Marshes
Beckley Hill
Site of Priory (Benedictine Nuns)
Church Street
Canal Road
Works
Sports Ground
College
Settlement
Queen's Farm
Chalk
Filborough Farm
King's Farm
Gore Green
Lower Higham
West Court
Polperro
East Court Manor
Church Lane
Lower Road
Red House
Longten's Cottages
Green Farm
Higham Station
Higham Hall Farm
Parrock Farm
Pit (dis)
Turks Hill
White House Farm
Christian Fields
Sports Ground
Hill Farm
The Knowle
SHORNE CP
Riverview Park
Southern Valley Golf Course
Muggins Lane
Crown Lane
Gravesend Road
Smith's Farm
Higham
Higham Mill
Hermitage Road
Shorne Hill
The Warren
Harcs Hill
Upper Ifield
Ifield Farm
Shorne
Court Wood
Telegraph Hill
Singlewell
Shorne West
Westwood Farm
Brummelhill Wood
Thong
Starmore Wood
Peartree Wood
Gad's Hill (Sch)
Gadshill
Grove Farm
72
73
74
75
71
70

Para 3.3. Geology & drift etc

Head: silt, sand and clay with variable gravel; chalky in places

Head Gravel: flint pebbles or cobbles in clay, variably silt and sand matrix

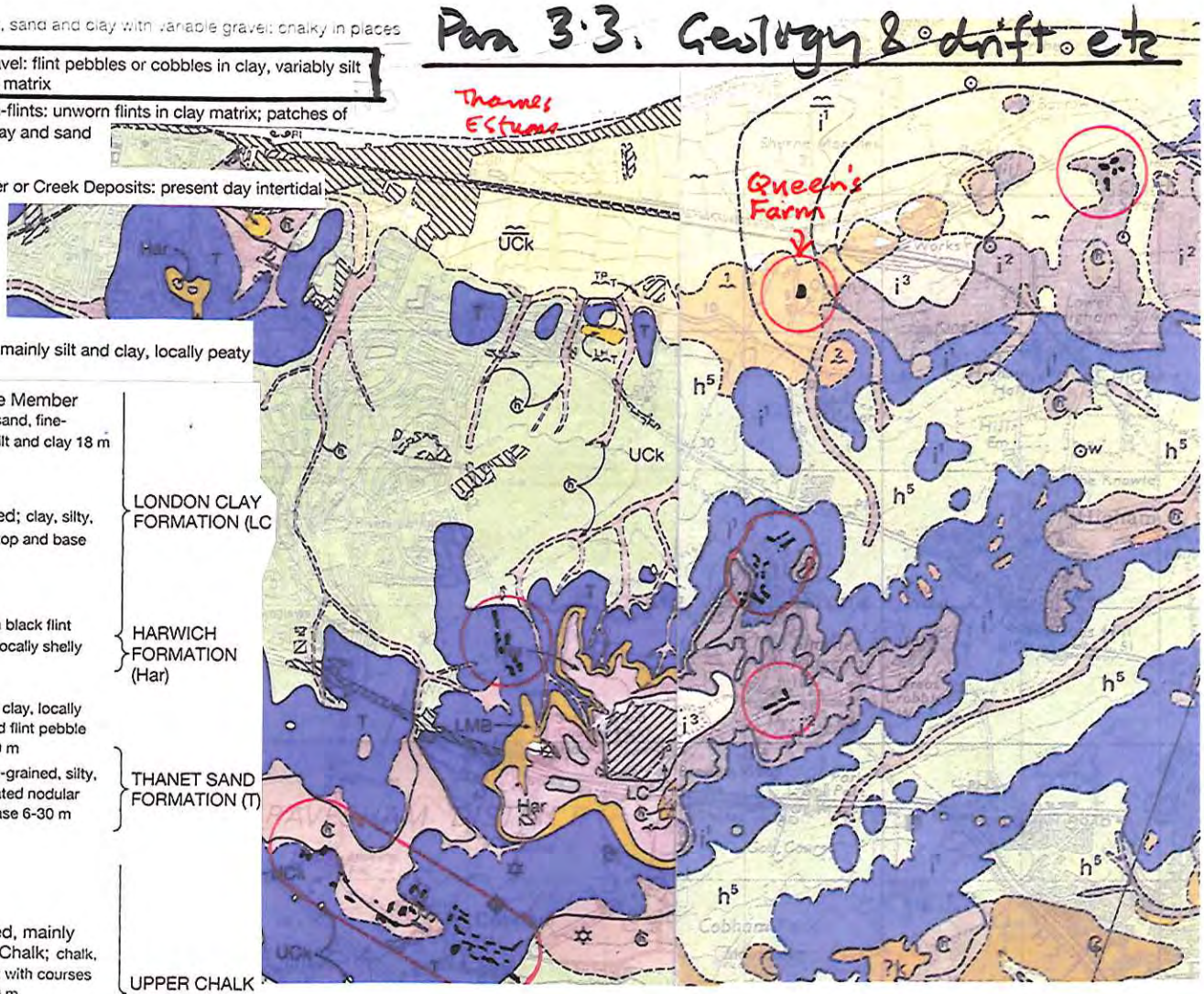
Clay-with-flints: unworn flints in clay matrix; patches of pebbly clay and sand

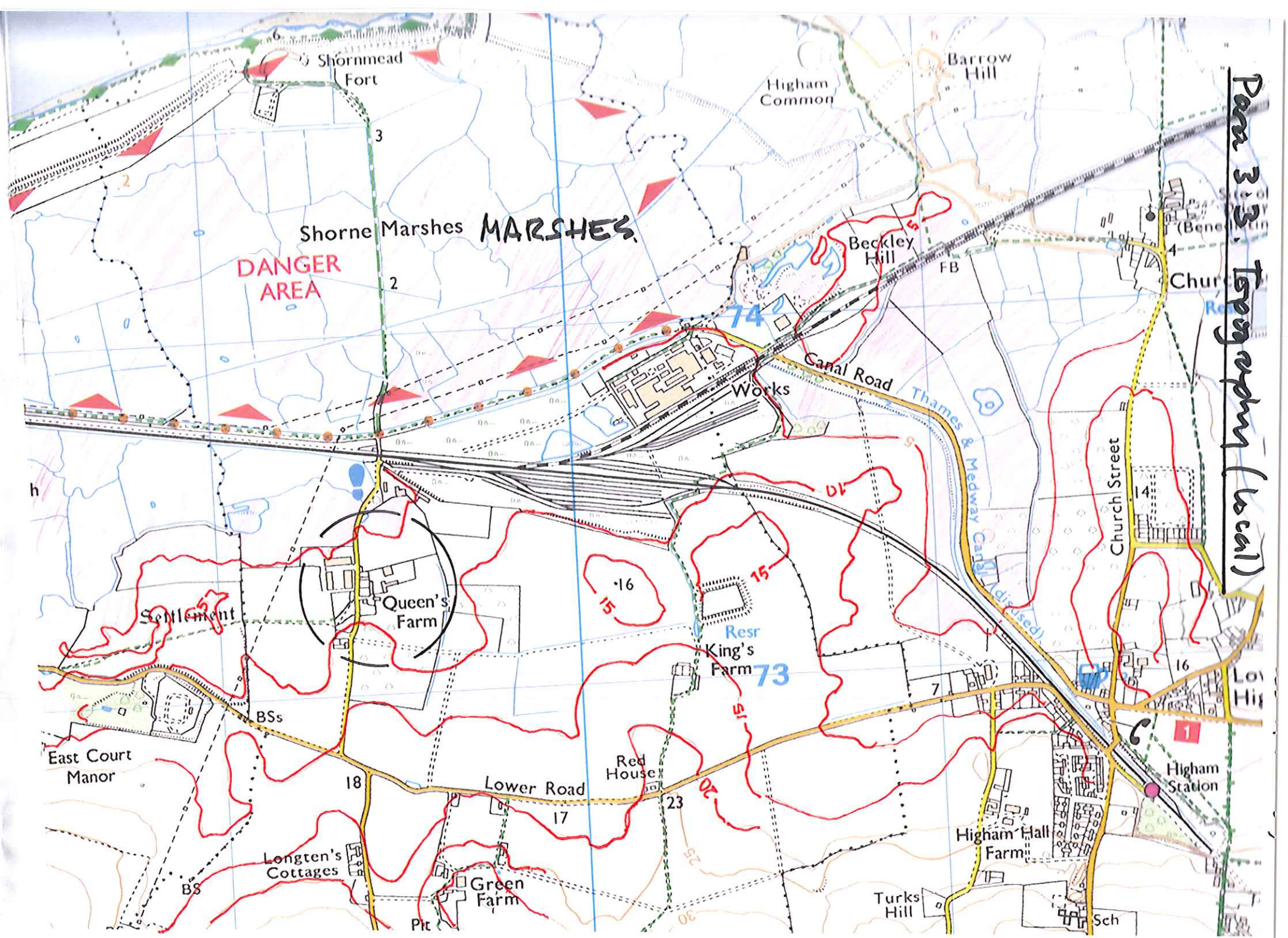
Tidal River or Creek Deposits: present day intertidal mudflat

Peat

Alluvium: mainly silt and clay, locally peaty

ClgB	Claygate Member (ClgB); sand, fine-grained silt and clay 18 m	LONDON CLAY FORMATION (LC
LC	Undivided; clay, silty, sandy at top and base 70 m	
Har	Sand with black flint pebbles, locally shelly 0-12 m	HARWICH FORMATION (Har)
Unconformity		
B	Sand and clay, locally shelly, and flint pebble beds 5-20 m	THANET SAND FORMATION (T)
T	Sand, fine-grained, silty, green-coated nodular flints at base 6-30 m	
Unconformity		
UCk	Undivided, mainly Seaford Chalk; chalk, white, soft with courses of flints 70 m	UPPER CHALK (UCk)

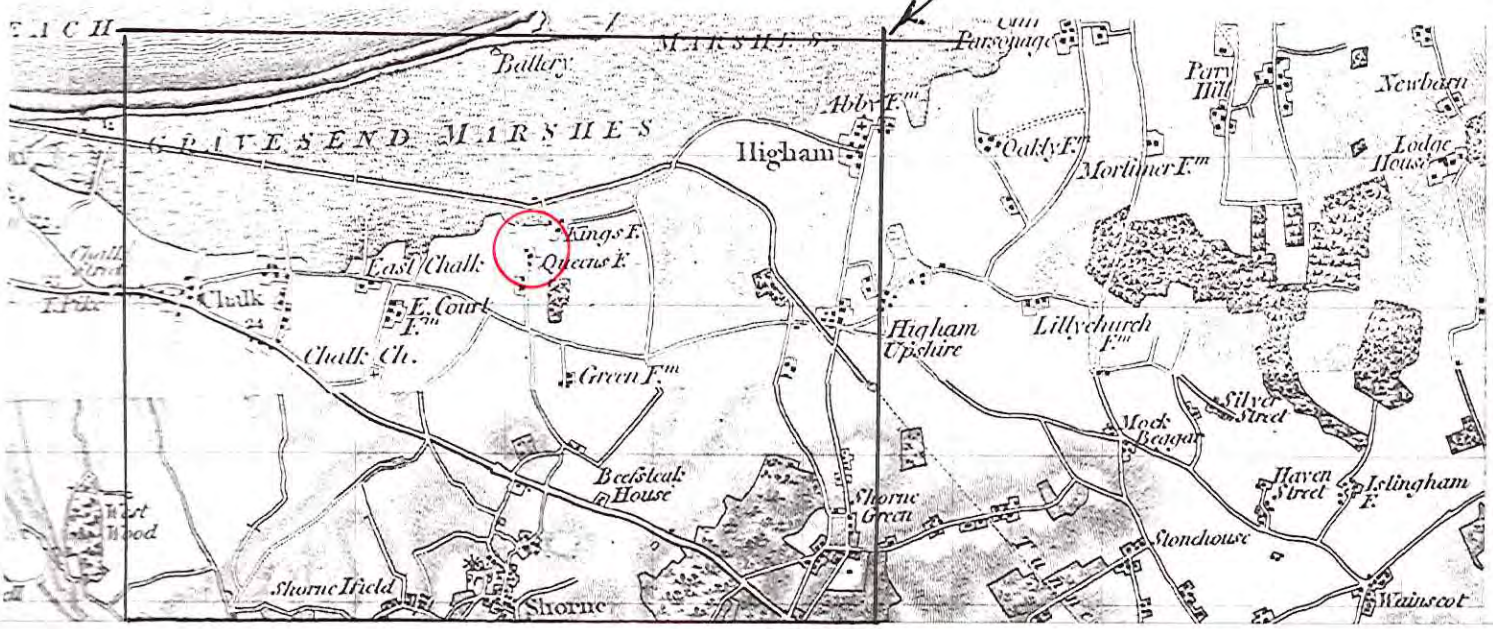



Shornmead Fort
Higham Common
Barrow Hill
Shorne Marshes
MARSHES
DANGER AREA
Beckley Hill
FB
Canal Road
Works
Thames & Medway Canal (disused)
Church Street
Queen's Farm
Settlement
Resr
King's Farm
East Court Manor
BSs
Red House
Lower Road
Higham Station
Higham Hall Farm
Longten's Cottages
BS
Green Farm
Pit
Turks Hill
Sch
Para 3.3 Topography (local)

Para 3.4. Conservation Area Surroundings

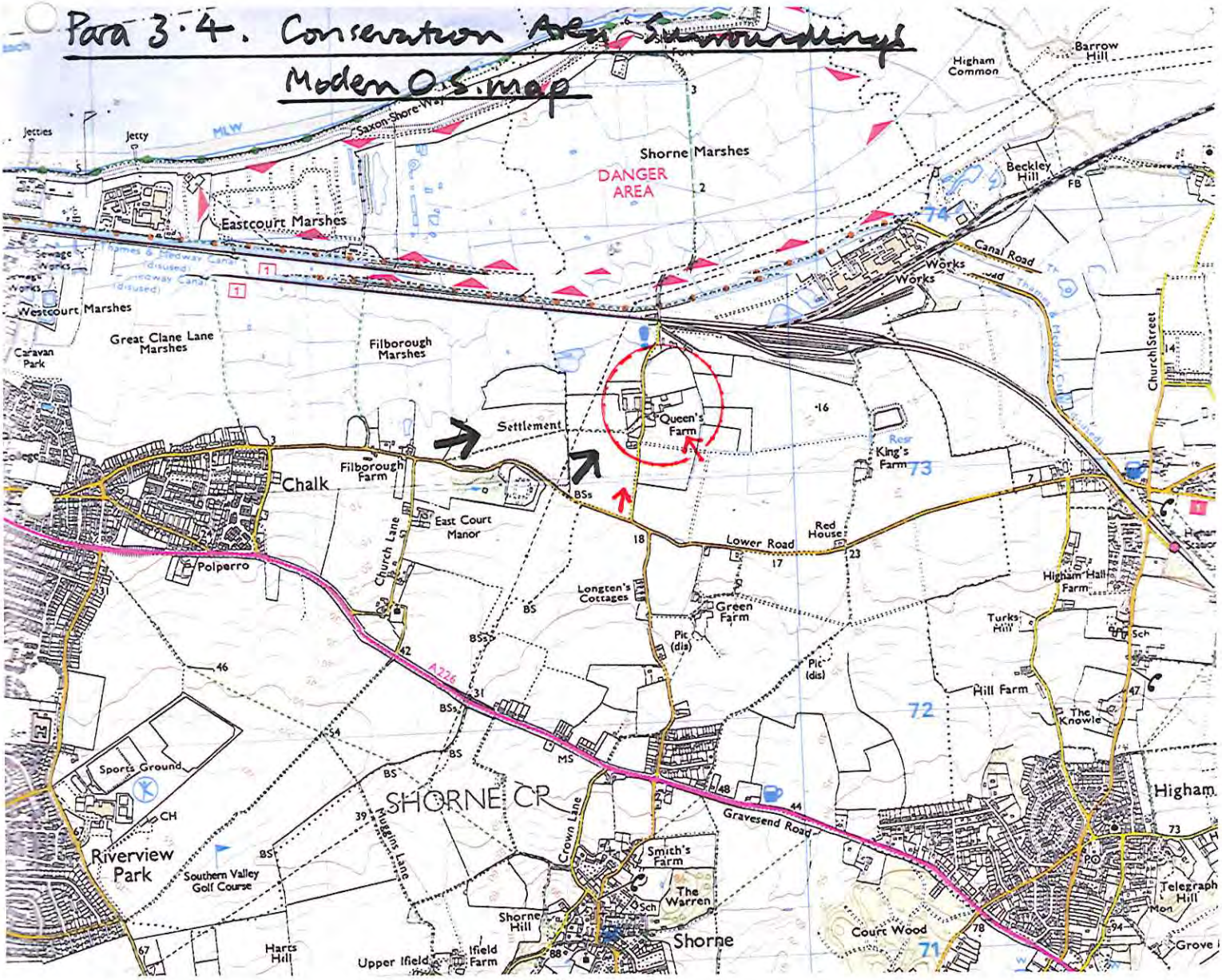
1819 O.S.

approx area covered by modern O.S. extract below.



Para 3.4. Conservation Area Surroundings

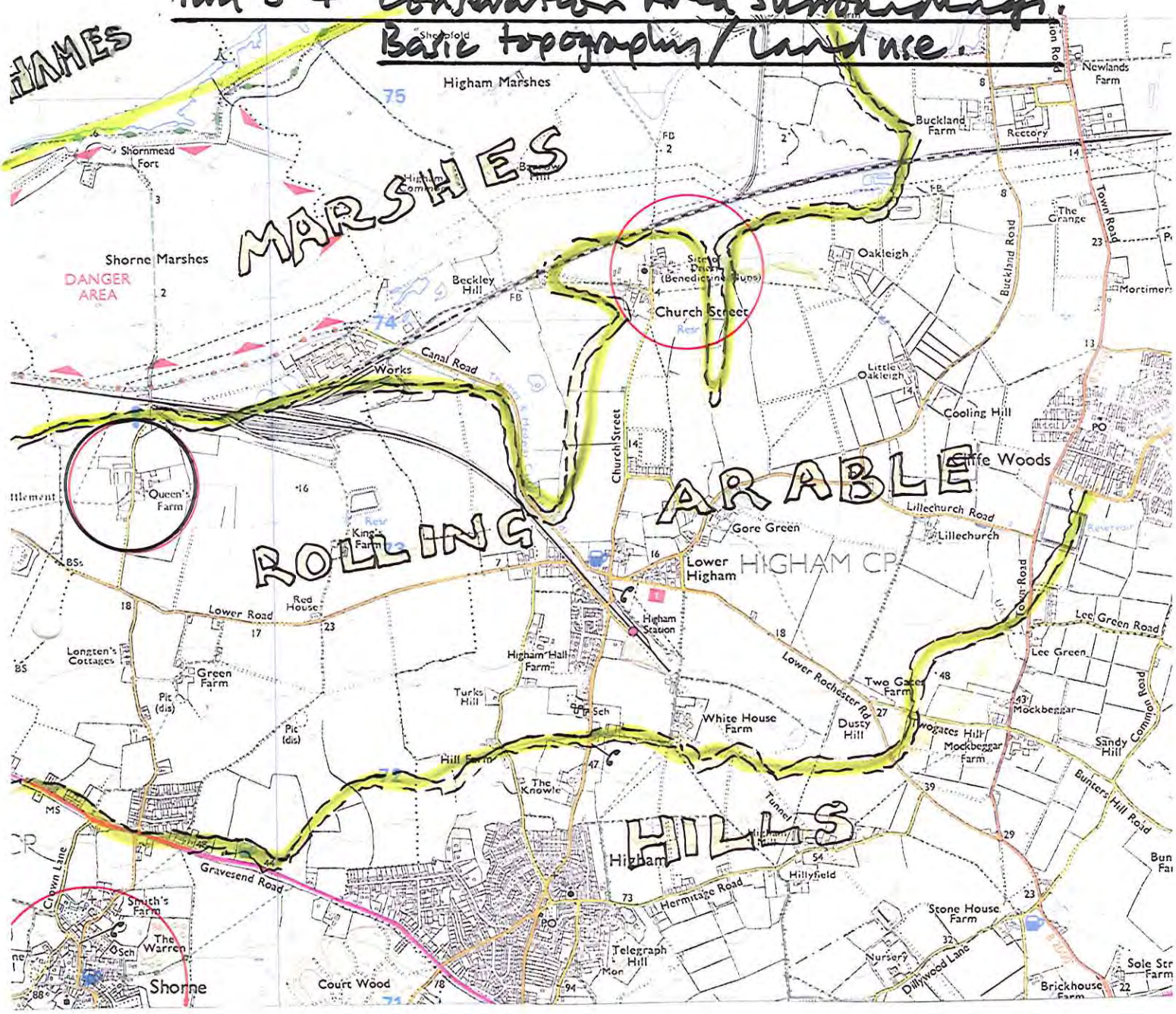
Modern O.S. map



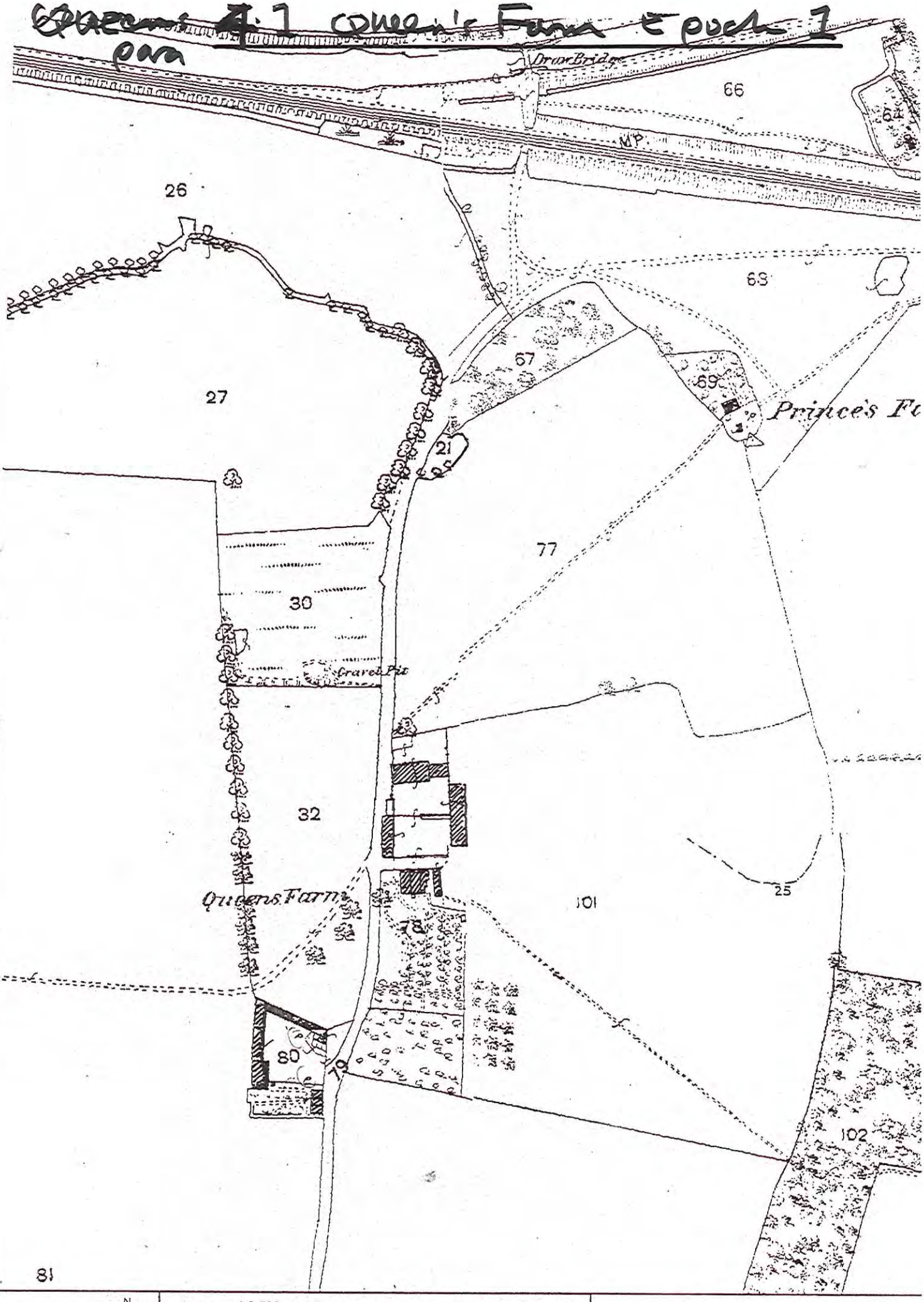
Distant views: negative →

positive →

Para 3.4 Conservation Area Surroundings. Basic topography / Land use.



Queens Farm Epoch 1



21/09/2010 N

Scale: 1:2,500
Drawn by: AJC

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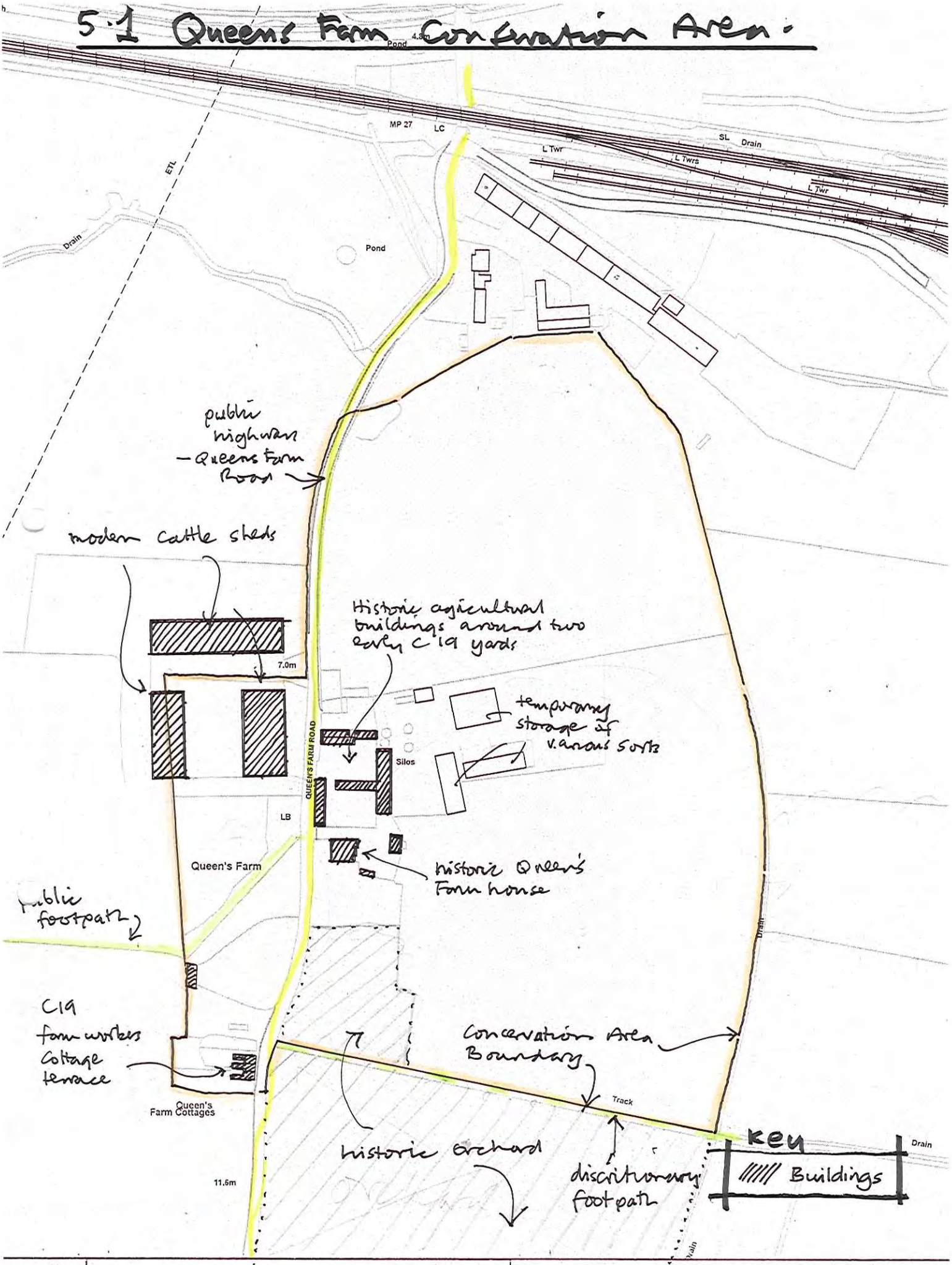
EPOCH 1

5.1 Queens Farm Conservation Area:



2010 N

Scale: 1:2,500
Drawn by: AJC

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Queens Farm.

5.1 Queens Farm 1963



21/09/2010

N

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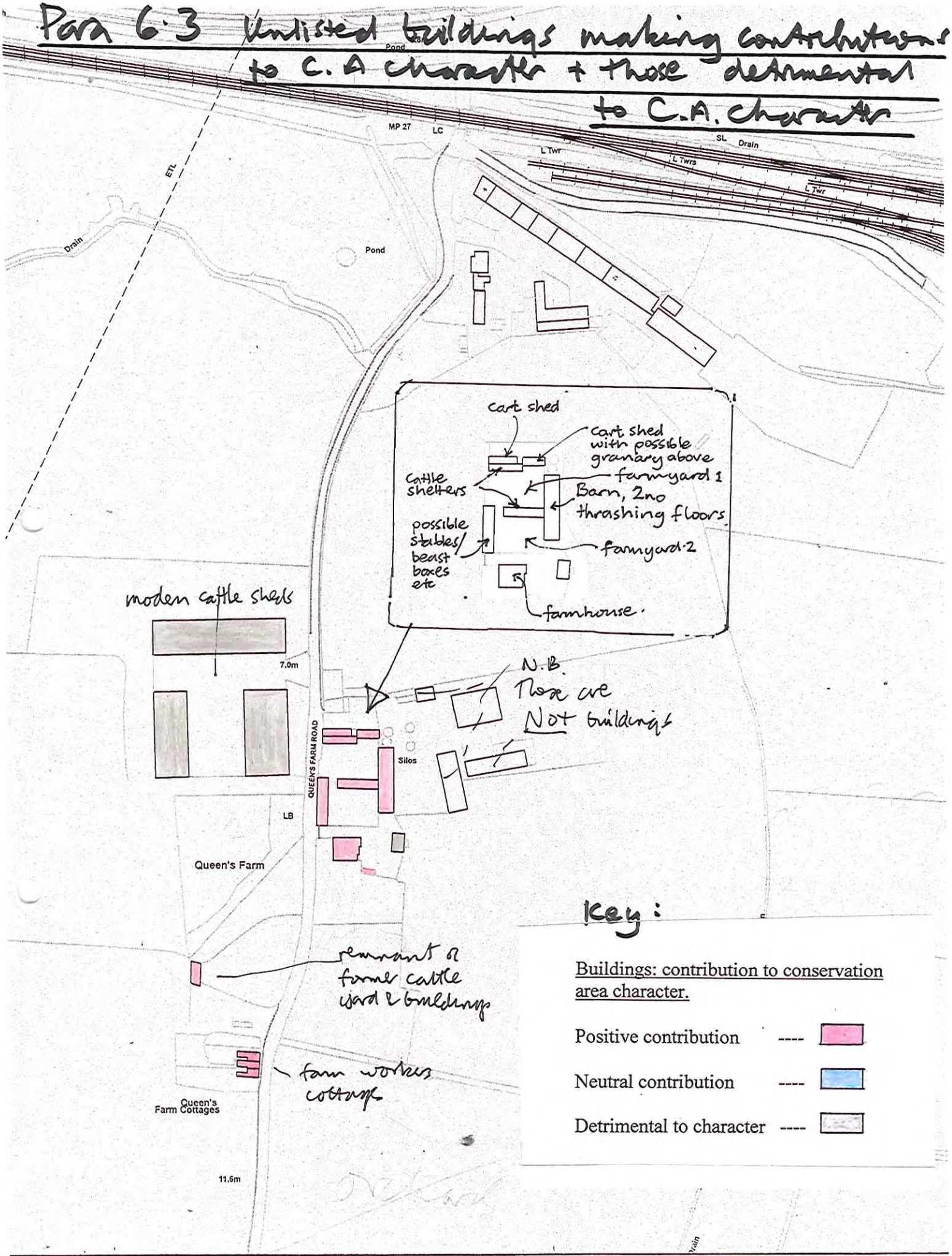
1963

Para 6.3 Unlisted buildings making contributions to C.A character + those detrimental to C.A. character



2010 N
Scale: 1:2,500
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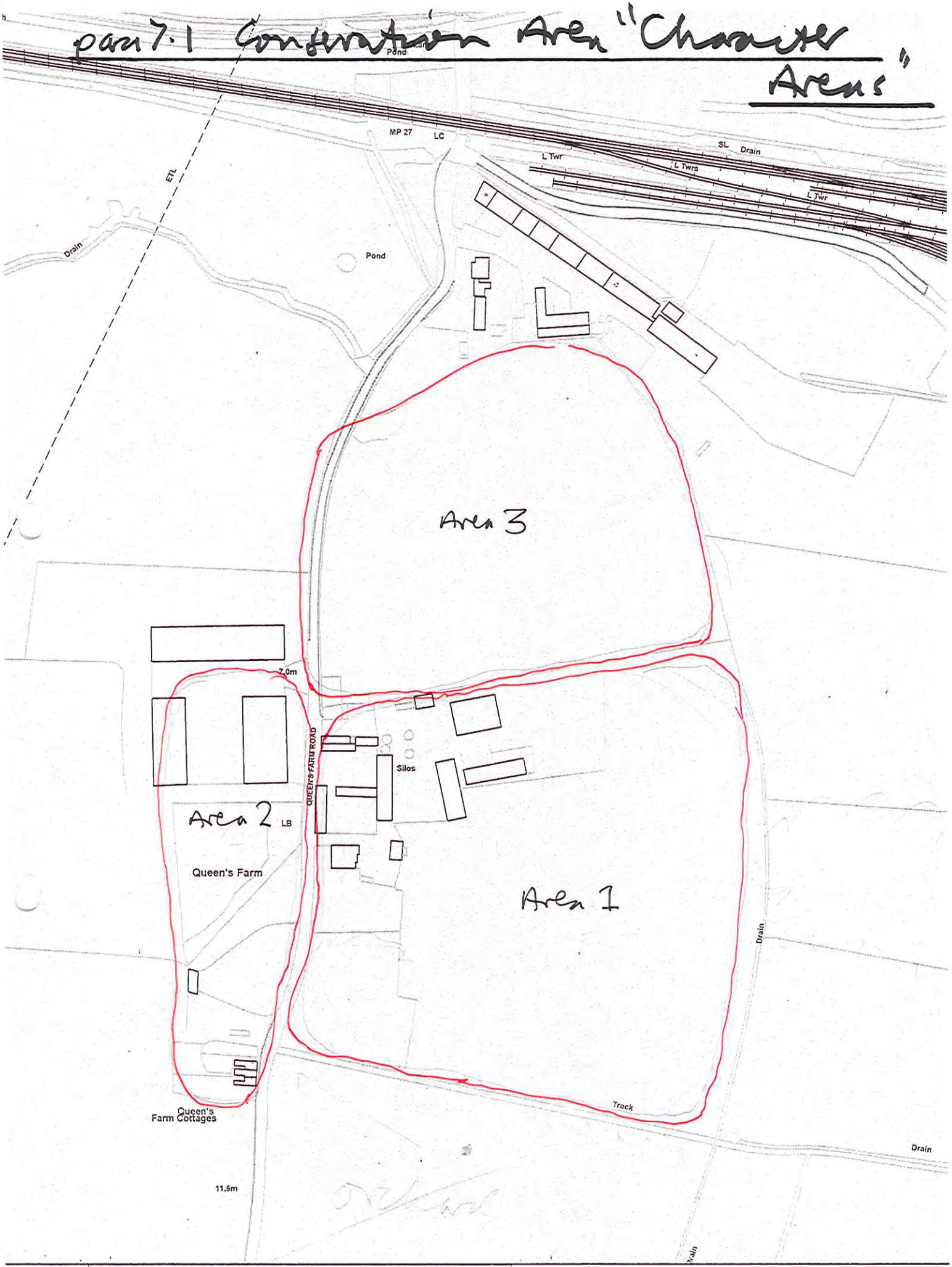
para 7.1 Conservation Area "Character Areas"



2010 N

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Para. 7.2. Spatial characte - contributing & detrimental features. (other than buildings)
MP 27
LC
L Twr
ETL
Drain
Pond
7.0m
QUEEN'S FARM ROAD
Silos
LB
Queen's Farm
temporary enclosure/ tracks etc relating to present farming use (spread into the field.)
Drain
Queen's Farm Cottages
Track
historic orchards
Section outside the conservation area
Drain
11.6m
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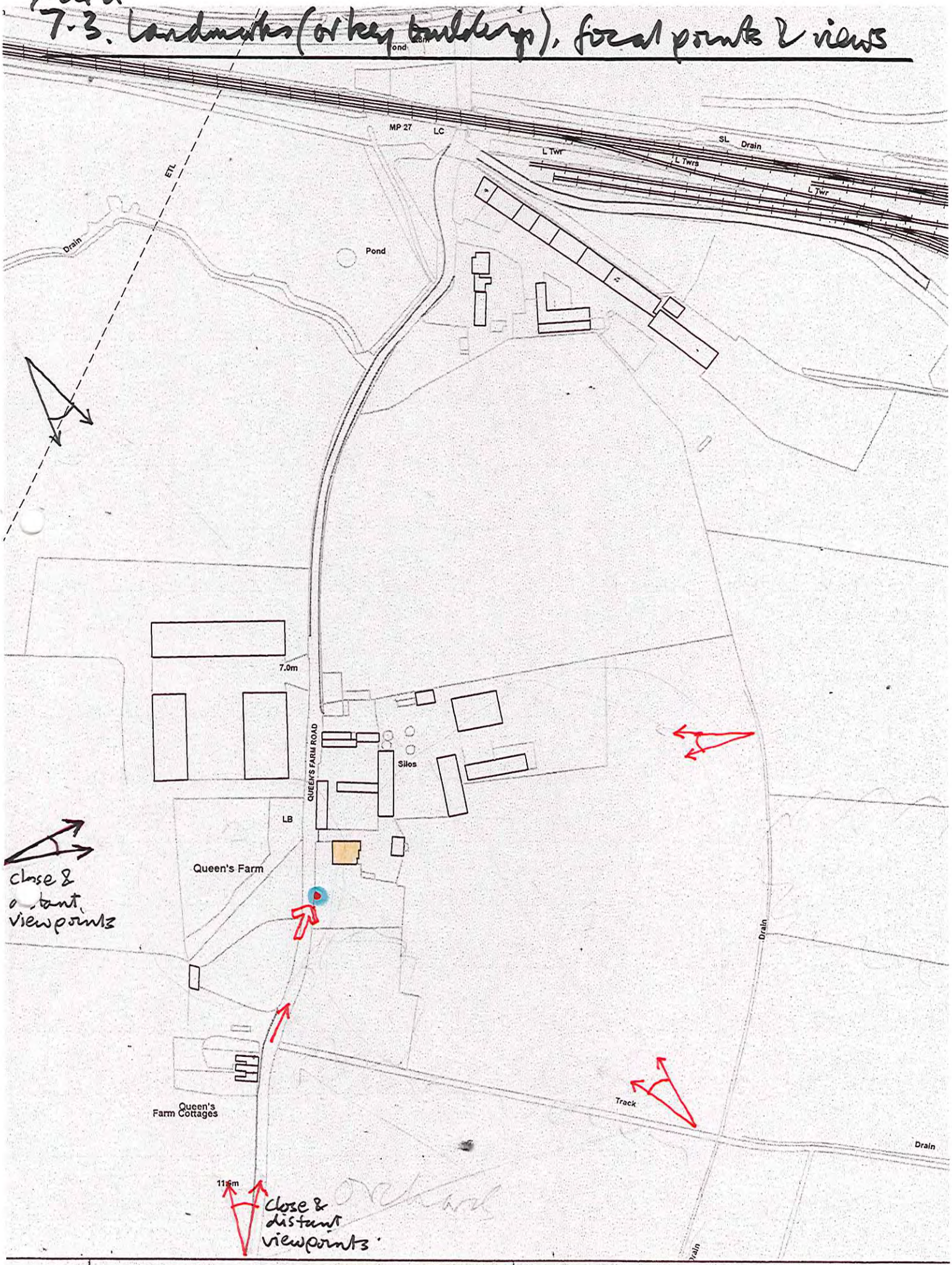
para 7.3. Landmarks (or key buildings), focal points & views



2010 N

Scale: 1:2,500

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Conservation Studio, ‘Queen’s Farm Conservation Statement’, Lewes, 2001