Meopham Green

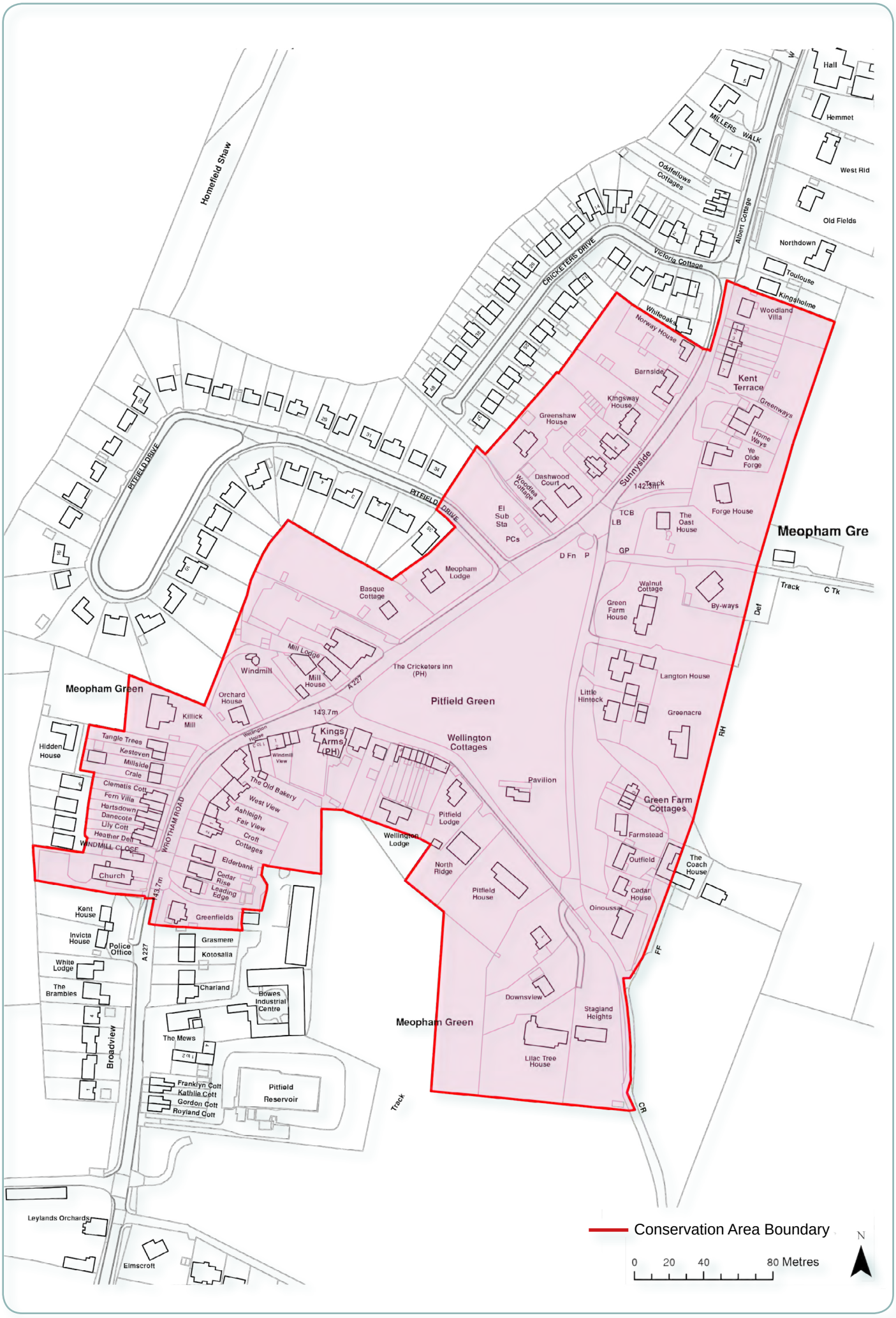
Rural Conservation Area Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document

Delivering for the Community

Gravesham Borough Council

Meopham Green, Conservation Area Boundary



MEOPHAM GREEN RURAL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL 2016

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1 STATEMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The special interest of Meopham Green Conservation Area lies firstly in its large, two-part, village green. This is almost all down to grass but with a few mature trees in key places. The setting of the green comprises historic and other buildings facing onto it from all three sides. Some of these stand in mature gardens with hedges and trees between and around them, helping to frame the green. Of particular note among the buildings is Meopham windmill. This stands at the point where the south west corner of the green meets the second area of interest, the south-west quarter of the conservation area. This area, urban in character and thus contrasting with the green, for the most part comprises historic buildings arranged along, and fronting, both sides of Wrotham Road.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Meopham Green Conservation Area

Meopham Green Conservation Area was first designated on 23rd of January 1970. In 1999 a draft conservation area statement was prepared; this included a proposal for a small extension to the conservation area. A public meeting to discuss the draft statement was held on 15th October 1999 and the results of this consultation were included in the statement. The statement was subsequently adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council.

The conservation area's boundary contains parts of the historic streets of Wrotham Road and Steele's Lane.

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 Meopham Green Conservation Area merits designation. It also identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character 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 may also be adopted as a separate Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Plan.

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 area:

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

- The local planning authority must consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of 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 Meopham Green 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

Prior to its adoption by the Council, the conservation area statement of 1999, including the two proposed boundary extensions and the omission, was the subject of public consultation and support.

The present survey identifies in more detail the following:

- The special characteristics of the Meopham Green Conservation Area
- The key negative features and issues
- A range of possible actions that would mitigate or offset these detractors

A draft version of the appraisal will be the subject of further local stakeholder consultation prior to determination of its final form.

3 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

3.1 Location, communications and local context
Figure 1 showing main nearby centres, roads. plus parish and parish boundaries

Meopham Green, on the A 227 Wrotham Road about 6 miles south of the centre of Gravesend, is on the dip slope of the Downs and at between about 140 and 145 metres AOD. A little distance away to the south, are the heights of the chalk. To the immediate west of the village a system of dry valleys leads north to the Thames at Northfleet and Gravesend. Close to the east side of the village the deep dry 'Happy Valley' curves away north east to Luddesdown, falling eventually into the Medway at Cuxton. The landscape around Meopham Green is a balance of large open arable fields, permanent grass, hedges, copses and small woods to some extent reflecting local geological conditions.

Historically Meopham Green is a satellite settlement of Meopham The Street. The latter, with its church and great house, is the original settlement of Meopham and today has another outlying satellite, Hook Green, beyond it to the north. All three places occur now as 'incidents' along the A227. This road provides a direct connection from Gravesend on the Thames Estuary, due south up and over the more or less east/west running dip slope, and then the escarpment, of the North Downs to the Vale of Holmsdale and the Chartlands below this, and thence to the Low Weald beyond. In the north it crosses the modern M2, Roman Watling Street. In the south, on reaching the base of the chalk escarpment, it links to a second set of major historic east/west routes in this case following along the foot of, and below, the Downs.

The line of the A 227 is anciently established. It was one of the many Kent 'droveways', along which in Saxon times and perhaps before, pigs and other domestic animals were driven to summer and autumn pasture in the woods of the Weald. Saxon Meopham's area of such detached pasture was probably around Meopham Bank in the Tonbridge area, about 12 miles away (Everitt 1986). In traversing the chalk dip slope the road takes care to avoid the area's deep north and north east running dry valleys, always following the line of the watershed between them and taking a gradually ascending, more or less due north/south, route.

Modern Meopham Green takes the form of development around a large two-part triangular green with the A 227 as one side. Today an un-made track, Steele's Lane, leads off south from the south east corner of the triangle, exactly as it did more than 100 years ago. The New Series 1896 Ordnance Map has this progressively becoming more track than road as it descends from the ridge on which Meopham Green stands into the Happy Valley leading round to Luddesdown to the east. The stretch of the Wrotham Road within the conservation area south beyond the Green and as far as South Street used to be called Leading Street. Depending on the map consulted, it is now known either as South Street or Wrotham Road.

3.2 Activities and uses

The historic village, small today but less of a hamlet than historic Meopham The Street, is within easy reach of Gravesend and Dartford and is close to the M2 motorway. It is even closer to Meopham station, providing easy access to London Victoria, which has long made the area attractive to commuters. In the recent historical past it possessed two Baptist Chapels (one 'Zion Chapel' and one 'Bethel Chapel', the latter later 'Mission Rooms', then 'Hall'), three farmhouses with their

yards and agricultural buildings, a smithy, two public houses, a Cricket Pavilion (Meopham Green Cricket Club is reckoned to be the second oldest in the world and cricket has been played on the Green for over 200 years), a windmill and miller's house, some village shops including a bakery, a post office and numbers of terraced and detached houses and terrace cottages.

Today the village is a dormitory settlement with modern development around Pitfield Drive and Cricketers Drive on its north-west side, as well as north along the A 227 joining it up to Meopham The Street, and south out along the A 227 for some distance also. It retains its windmill and its two public houses though it has lost its post office, shops and bakery.

3.3 Geology, topography and local building materials
Figures 2 & 3

The village is sited on Quaternary Drift deposits, in this case the intractable formation known as the Clay with Flints which tops the higher parts of the chalk of the Upper Cretaceous period, here forming the dip slope of the North Downs. The settlement makes use of a small, narrowing, plateau area developed on the dip slope with north and north-east running dry valleys closing in to each side. The valleys to the west of the village are relatively shallow; that to the east, the 'Happy Valley', is deeper and its sides are more precipitate. Within most of the conservation area the A 227 passes southwards at a level grade. Northward from the conservation area it runs gradually downhill to Meopham The Street while to the south it climbs, again gradually, towards the heights of the chalk. The green itself rises almost imperceptibly towards a high point at its south east corner.

Flint from the chalk of the region has a long history of use in local building but there is little of it showing in Meopham Green. It appears as boundary walling (of which there is not a lot) in one or two places. The earliest known regional vernacular walling form, hardwood timber framing, is found in at least one house in the village. The later form based on the use of softwood framing, occurs in a number of places. Exposed hardwood frame with brick infill and softwood framing behind weatherboarding or tile hanging can all be seen. Chalk was burned through the region for lime for mortar and plaster from very early times. Chalk and clay were mixed and processed locally from the late 18th century to produce various sorts of cement for exterior stucco and renders. Examples of these over brick and lathed timber frame occur in the village. Different varieties and mixes of local clay were used in brick-making in the area. The reds came first, the yellow/browns following, again from the late 18th century (though reds continued to be made also). Reds predominate within the village. The clay Kent peg roofing tile was made and in use in the region from the middle ages through to the mid 20th century. This too is the predominant traditional material on roofs in the village. Examples of the later Welsh slate, probably brought in by rail and boat, are also found.

3.4 Relationship of the conservation area to its surroundings
(General setting and land-use characterisation. The village in the wider landscape)
Figures 4 & 5

Views of the rear of the eastern side of the village may be had from pubic footpaths leading out from it there. The near-level rear setting of the mostly modern houses on this east side of the green is to a dominated by mature tree and shrub planting in back gardens. Hedges also play a part in screening suburbia here. From the south,

from Steele's Lane, the Pitfield reservoir and modern development around this beyond the conservation area conceal the distant view. An enclosed open field lies between these developments and the south boundary of the conservation area. On the west side of the village all development within the conservation area (apart from the burial ground of the Baptist Chapel) is hidden by modern development which as it were 'wraps around it' externally. There is thus no view of the conservation area from this side. Glimpses of the mill can be had for up to a mile and a half south along the Wrotham Road. To the north modern development again cuts off any possibility of open views. 19th century and subsequent OS maps show that formerly the village was more or less surrounded by orchards, this having a similar, but rather more attractive, external screening effect to the present perimeter development of modern houses.

The following feature forms the wider setting of the conservation area:

- On the east side only, the near level agricultural land forming the setting to this side of the village

4 GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Early settlers in the region. A brief note on the recent history of the settlement

North Kent has a long history of known settlement. Iron Age and Roman remains have been found at Meopham The Street including a Roman villa, discovered just to the south of the George Inn. Meopham is a Saxon name which Eckwall records as first being mentioned in 778. The existence of a Saxon church along the road at The Street is confirmed through a will made in the 10th century by one Blythric which was witnessed by Wina, the parish priest. Blythric left a large part of his considerable possessions to Christ Church, Canterbury and this began a long connection between Meopham and the Church. Meopham and Nurstead were both mentioned in the Domesday Book and in 1327 Simon de Meopham was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. At first the demesne lands of the manor were farmed to supply food to the monks of Christ Church but later they were, in the usual way, rented out to tenant farmers. After the dissolution, ownership of the manor passed to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

Outlying small village greens within the Kent down-lands such as those at Harvel or Hook Green are considered by Alan Everitt to often indicate 'early cattle stations or vaccaries' (Everitt, 1986) developed within areas of 'wood-pasture' during the period of primary colonisation in the region (see endnote 1). Such small greens are thought to have often been associated initially with one farmstead, others being added around the space later. Compared to the greens at Harvel and Hook Green, Meopham Green's green is on a grand scale though in recent historical times it seems to have serviced directly only three farmsteads. It remained common land on which sheep grazed up until the last century.

Meopham Green was also called Pitfield Green, a name first recorded (as Pettesfield) in a document of 1306, and it carried this alternative title into the last century. Pits in fields on clays such as the Clay with Flints at Meopham Green were dug to bring up underlying chalk for 'marling'. The benefits of marling were known in the middle ages. The chalk was mixed with the clay to improve its workability and productivity, a practice that continued until the 19th century when artificial fertilizers came in.

Just before the start of the 19th century the hamlet comprised a few buildings scattered around the edges of the great triangular green with its smaller offshoot to the north and even smaller enclave west across the A 227. Buildings then included the King's Arms public house at the green's south west corner, the new (1794) Cricketers pubic house just across the A 227, Pitfield Barn at the green's south east corner, Green Farm on its east side, Basque Cottage on its west side and Barnside on its north west side. Following the building of the windmill in 1801 – also probably the date of the adjoining Mill house – more buildings were constructed around the green. These included Pitfield Farm at the south east corner (comprising a house and two farm yards, one incorporating an earlier barn). The larger, and earlier, of the village's two Baptist Chapels, Zion Chapel, was built in South Street in 1824.

By the time of the 1840 Tithe Map a few cottages had appeared along the south side of the Green. Further farm buildings around Barnside at the north end of the village are also shown as is the village pond a little to the south of Barnside, set against the east edge of the green.

The OS Map of Epoch I shows that in places then the green extended a little further out then than now but with the triangle of tracks and road around its three sides in the same place as today. There were a few more cottages around the corner onto the A 227 beyond the King's Arms. Green Farm Cottages had been built a little south of Green Farm. Meopham Lodge had appeared on the west side of the Green while across the road from the pond there was a possible oast house where the village's second Baptist chapel (Bethel Chapel now Woodlea Cottage) latterly stood. East of the pond was another small oast house with a single roundel. Also near the pond was the village lock-up and at the east side of the north extension of the green was the village smithy. About 1912 this took the form of a lean-to workshop in front of a low bungalow**.** The bungalow survives as The Old Forge but the workshop is gone though the wheelwright's tyring stone is still there. At least six forges were operated in Meopham at different times (see endnote 2). Close to the smithy stood a small building, possibly still there as the front part of the modern house, Forge House, that now occupies this site. This northern end of the green was closed by a building, possibly two cottages, subsequently lost to redevelopment.

At the close of the 19th century the village's three farm steadings, Pitfield farm (its farmhouse now become a 'cottage'), Green Farm and Barnside all retained their buildings and yards. Norway House had been built just north of Barnside and one of a number of outbuildings to its rear had become the Bethel Chapel. A 'mission room' now occupied the former Bethel Chapel building on the main road and the frontage between this and Barnside's farm buildings had been infilled with a detached and two pairs of semi-detached houses. The long brick terrace, Kent Terrace, across the road from Norway House is dated 1867 (but does not appear on the Epoch I Map). The double fronted house north beyond this, Woodland Villa, looks 1840'ish but again is not on the Epoch I Map. Along the south side of the green a triangular piece of the common land south of Steele's Lane had been privately 'engrossed' and fenced off. At the west end of this 'privatised' land Pitfield Lodge had been built. There was a new single house opposite the King's Arms, within the grounds of the windmill. On the other (south) side of the road a set-back and curved-plan row of four further new houses extended the built-up area southward. After a gap beyond these at the south extremity of the conservation area the detached Greenfields now stood.

Through the first half of the 20th century there was little change. Early on six terraced houses were built just north of the 1824 Baptist Chapel on the A 227, followed between the wars by two pairs of semi detached houses. While still present at the end of the 19th century, the village pond finally disappeared during this period. Pitsfield Farm steading and house also disappeared, replaced by a new Pitfield Cottage. A gap between the Smithy and the end of Kent Terrace was occupied by a large semi-detached house and nearby, at the north apex of the main Green, the village war memorial was dedicated in 1919. In the same year the Meopham Green Cricket Club's first cricket pavilion was erected at the Green's south east corner.

Today within the conservation area along the west side of the green, along the A 227, the modern village is much as it was in the early 20th century with only a few post 1945 infillings. One of these infillings is on part of the site of the traditional agricultural buildings that stood around Barnside. There is also a fairly discreet new side road – Pitfield Drive – leading off from the main road north of Meopham Lodge to partly hidden new development to the west. Towards the green's north eastern corner the former smithy has been modernised into a bungalow and Forge House into a much larger modern detached residence. The original stowage part of the oast house south west of Forge House was demolished. Another substantial modern house now occupies the oast house site with the original roundel retained as a

'feature' in the garden. On the green's east side there has been a good deal of later 20th century infill, partly as a result of the destruction of the agricultural buildings and yards of Green Farm by a bomb in World War II. The attractiveness of this 'prime' residential location has meant that almost all the new dwellings on this side of the green are detached. The same picture applies to the once open edge to the green from Pitfield Lodge south east up to the site of the later 19th century Pitfield Cottage, where there are now two large 20th century houses. Immediately south from these Pitfield Cottage itself was in its turn demolished after the last war to make way for the access road to another small, hidden, private estate of four more modern houses. It will be remembered that some of this area had not so long ago been common land.

4.2 Water supply and the original siting of the village

Prior to the introduction of mains water, water supply in Meopham Green in the 19th, and into the 20th, centuries, was from wells and pumps driven down into the chalk aquifer. The arrangement will have been the same in previous centuries; today there appear to be no surface water flows, continuous or seasonal, in the vicinity. For this reason as well, ponds were also important. Apart from the large village pond quite close to Green Farm, the maps show them also at Pitfield Farm, Barnside and in the corner of the enclave of common land west of the Wrotham Road; all have disappeared. Outside pumps are shown at Kent Terrace, Pitfield Farm (2), the present Old Coach House (near Pitfield Farm) and the Cricketers Public House while wells appear at Norway House and Green Farm. The well at Green Farm was a little way from the house and the 1870s OS Map shows it joined to the corner of this by a long narrow structure. This may have been the cover over a horse or donkey winding drum of the sort still found now and then on the Kent chalklands.

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

5.1 The village's historic layout and the form today
Figures 6 & 7

The conservation area is divided into three parts for the purposes of discussion. These are the north end of the village as far south as the War Memorial, the main green with its three sides and the south end of the village from the King's Arms public house south along the A 227 to the conservation area boundary.

Travelling south along the Wrotham Road from Meopham The Street, 20th century suburban development set in wooded gardens follows the road into the village from the north. This picture is unbroken as it arrives at the conservation area where historic buildings take up the theme. Two well preserved and contrasting 19th century two storey villas, the smaller timber frame and boarded Norway House and larger brick and stucco Woodland Villa set well back one to each side of the road, announce the start of the conservation area. Woodland Villa was built for the village's Baptist minister in the 1870s. The separate Baptist 'Bethel Chapel', the second incarnation of which once stood to the rear of Norway House, is long gone.

Immediately south of Woodland Villa and facing the road and Norway House, over front garden hedges and a low flint boundary wall, is the long two storey brick range of Kent Terrace. To the Terrace's rear the conservation area includes a strip of open land, formerly part of an orchard that originally ran within much of the length of its east boundary. The main part of Kent Terrace, with a hipped and peg tile roof, has the date 1867 centrally on the front facade. Its north end comprises two further bays with a separate hipped and slated roof. Its southern flank looks over the north end of the north part of the green which here opens up to view on the east side of the A 227.

Looking east over to the north end of the green immediately south of Norway House, as the main road curves to the west slightly, is Barnside. Its road boundary is formed of a brick wall and hedging. Barnside shows signs of timber framing and a first floor jetty and it may possibly be of 16th century date. Alterations made over a long time have resulted in its present complex appearance and footprint. It has a substantial single storey extension at the south end, extending out towards the highway. The overhanging pent-roof to the front of this extension (with shop window and door below) confirms that this was once a butcher's shop with meat hung outside under it**.**

South along the road from Barnside is set-back Kingsway House, modern infill, sadly replacing the old thatched roadside barn demolished in about 1955 and belonging to Barnside's now lost farm yard. The barn's tall wagon-entry doors with the usual projecting canopy above, opened almost directly onto the public highway. South beyond this and infilling former orchard ground are two pairs of unusual and attractive late 19th century two storey semi-detached houses, known as Sunnyside**.** These are slate roofed with tile hung upper and brick lower storeys. Again they are set back from the highway with part of one and the whole of another front garden given over to car-parking. Immediately beyond the garden of the more southerly of these two 'semis' is the drive to a well hidden modern back-land development, Greenshaw House. South again from this drive is Dashwood Court, a small 19th century double fronted house again standing well back from the road and largely concealed from direct view by a low row of pollarded lime trees. Stuccoed and with a hipped slate roof, this occupies another piece of former orchard ground. Lastly, to end this examination of some of the development to the west of the A 227, there is

the present Woodlea Cottage behind its road front wall and hedge. This, set back a little with its east gable to the main road, may incorporate part or all of a former oast house, transformed successively into Baptist Bethel Chapel, Mission Room, Hall, and lastly house**.** The south flank of Woodlea Cottage faces onto the small, separate, western enclave of the green, to be considered later when the main green is discussed.

Returning now to the east side of the A 227 and to the north end of the north extension of the green, the east side of this almost level area of grass is closed by three wide spaced buildings with gardens between and behind. Firstly, to the north is a large pre-War semi-detached house filling the gap between the end of Kent terrace and the Old Forge, again on land that had formerly been orchard ground. To provide routes to its garaging and also to the Old Forge to its south, hard surface tracks are carried across the grass. The area these occupy is divided off from the rest of the green by a row of posts, making it seem an almost private part of the public realm. The considerable bulk of the semi, with its red brickwork and tall pyramidal slate roof, is hidden in summer at least by the various tree groups on this part of the green. As elsewhere in Meopham Green, mature forest trees are of prime importance for their contribution to conservation area character.

Ye Olde Forge, as was noted earlier, has lost its frontage workshop. Forge House a little way on from the Ye Olde Forge's south flank, is reached by a track parallel to the south side of this part of the green. This track, of roadstone and with a grassed central strip, is more informal than those at the north end of the green. It is again marked by posts – a double row this time. Initially Ye Olde Forge and Forge House shared the same garden but in modern times these were separated and at the same time enlarged. The mature garden planting in the gap between the two buildings ensures that the east side of the green has continuous visual enclosure here. Forge House comprises a small scale two storey house in the early 19th century style attached behind to larger two storey structure of indeterminate date.

On its south side this northern part of the green is partly closed by the back garden boundary wall and tall hedges and other planting of The Oast House, a modern house to be discussed further below. This faces west across a narrowed 'neck' of grassed open green space which joins the north extension of the green to the main green to the south. The village pond was here and this is where the narrow road that follows along the east side of the triangular main green branches off from the A 227. More roadside posts spaced out at intervals protect the green's edges around this corner.

The south boundary of The Oast House's plot is against an historic footpath leading out eastward from the village between high fences and hedges. The Oast House, a modern, visually complex house in brick, tile and render, stands on a site that was again orchard until the later part of the 20th century. Prior to its development this small orchard field had within it the small oast house described earlier and of which the roundel alone has survived. The new house is said to incorporate recycled materials from 'the old barn', possibly the demolished oast house stowage building once attached to the roundel.

The new Oast House (oast in name only) is partly hidden by fortuitously sited mature forest trees on the green, in front of and across the road from it. Three of these trees, at the north apex of the main green, also form a backdrop to the War Memorial when seen as one approaches along the main road from the north. They were planted in commemoration of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. They effectively

enclose the Memorial, erected in 1919, inside the northern extension of the green, concealing it from view from within the main green triangle.

The meeting of roads, tracks and paths at the north apex of the main green, where of course as just noted the village pond was once a key feature, made this a logical place to site subsequent village public services and works. Thus in addition to the tall stone cross of the war memorial in its circular, low hedged enclosure, under the trees there is also a drinking fountain erected in 1903 at the time of the coronation of Edward VII. Just across the road are grouped the Parish notice-board, a cast iron post box, a modern telephone box, a small road-grit container with some sarsen stones lying on the road verge. Across the main road is an attractive concrete milestone replacing one erected by the Turnpike Trust in 1827. A lay-by, bus stop and bus shelter with public lavatories close by feature some 50 yards south along the A 227.

Turning now to the second area for consideration, the three-sided main village green itself, this wide spreading, open and nearly level grassed space – far and away the biggest green in Gravesham district – is the focus around which the village was initially developed. The narrow road along its east side is set almost everywhere a little within this green space, rather than running at its edge. Thus dwellings on this side of the green are mostly reached by varying lengths of track running from them to the road. Some of these tracks are heavily metalled while others, more 'in keeping', are lightweight – stones or gravel, sometimes with a central grass strip. Rows of short posts alongside the road are used everywhere to prevent vehicles from getting onto the green.

Travelling as before from north to south, and along this eastern-side road, discussion commences at its north end close to the War Memorial. Here the conjoined Walnut Cottage and Green Farm farmhouse facing out towards the green is concealed from view by dense planting, including yews and other forest trees. These extend around the corner of the east-leading public footpath referred to above. The view of the house's frontage to the green is largely blocked out in summer by tree and shrub growth. The building, being comprehensively restored at the moment, is of late 18th or early 19th century, and no doubt earlier, date. Its front section is of brick with a hipped slate roof. Its large size confirms the former importance of Green Farm. Behind it, and completely hidden from view, is a separate plot still within the conservation area on which there is one large modern dwelling, Byways.

Immediately south beyond Green Farm farmhouse is the site of its lost farmyard, barn and other agricultural buildings. This is now a small modern residential estate comprising frontage and back-land development. To one side a private track leads east to the back-land plot which includes one large house, Greenacre. Only the upper parts of this can be seen from the green, and then only from limited viewpoints. The estate is however signalled from the west by its two prominent modern frontage houses, separated from each other by two large garages with a tiled 'fringe' roof and with front gardens enclosed by brick street walls. One of these walls returns along the south side of the garden of the more southerly of the pair, Little Hintock, alongside which part of the main green extends eastward well beyond the road.

This extension of the Green originally pushed east up to the front doors of the next building in this southwards progression, Green Farm Cottages. Subsequently a small amount of common land was encroached on for Cottage front gardens; these are now enclosed by an attractive hedge. The Cottages are a simple 19th century

rendered and whitewashed terraced row of three small farm workers dwellings. The three substantial chimney stacks are a distinguishing feature.

South beyond Green Farm Cottages the line of garden hedges comes forward a little and then back again in front of three more detached modern houses. The first of these is built on what was part of the Green Farm Cottage gardens while the other two are within a former small paddock or croft. The area of modern development here preserves some earlier boundaries within it. One, today rendered particularly meaningless, is a crooked shaped strip of land immediately north and east of Green Farm Cottages. This is the last remnant of what was once a short and wide droveway between Green Farm's farmyard and its arable fields along the east side of the conservation area.

The site of the last modern dwelling fronting the green on this side, Oinoussai, was that of some farm buildings and a pond belonging to the lost Pitfield Farm. After the buildings disappeared the pond lingered on within a small copse presumably until its replacement by a house and garden. The house is hedged around and is reached from the top of Steele's Lane at the south east corner of the Green. Behind Oinoussai is an unmade historic access to a part modern/part historic house abutting, and extending beyond, the conservation area boundary, known as The Coach House. This is hidden from view from within the conservation area. Steele's Lane here still retains the character of a country byway with an unmade stony surface, soft verges, hedges and mature trees.

The south-west side of the green is now considered, beginning at its south east end. The perimeter road on this side runs at or close to the edge of the green throughout. Near the south extremity of the green as the road along the east side turns sharply to run along the south-west side, is the entrance to a development of four modern houses, one of considerable size. As noted earlier the late Victorian house here (on the former site of Pitfield Farm) has gone; removing it may have made it easier to maximise profit in developing the site. This small new group is entirely hidden from view from the public road by dense hedges. Along the road north west of this self contained development are two houses from the second half of the last century, Pitfield House and North Ridge. These are accessed directly from the road, from which they are hidden by their frontage boundary wall and hedges. Though of flint, the boundary wall here is of no great age since it stands on land engrossed from the green in the first half of the last century.

Within the green towards its south east corner and across the road from North Ridge, facing due north over the village cricket pitch, is its long, low, white boarded cricket pavilion. This is relatively recent, having replaced an earlier version on the same spot. It is backed by a row of mature forest trees, the only ones other than those at the war memorial that have been allowed to grow within the main green itself.

North-west beyond North Ridge is Pitfield Lodge, a part late 19th century and part modern house. Its front garden is enclosed along the roadside by a white picket fence with wide gates at the north-west end. At this point the road line changes direction slightly becoming more west of north. A corner thus occurs in the building line where, looking from the east, the angled white rendered south east gable end of Wellington Cottages is thrown into relief beyond Pitfield Lodge.

Built in the first half of the 19th century Wellington Cottages is a long terraced row of small dwellings, in recent historical times 8 in total, looking directly over the green from close to the back of the carriageway. The front façade of each dwelling is

minimalist, comprising at ground floor a front door and window with a first floor window above the ground floor one. The low level streetscape of its tiny open front yards and steps adds visual interest. Formerly at its west end there was one more unit. North-west beyond, and attached to, this was yet another now lost pair of thatched timber framed terraced houses. These were known as Black Cottages from their black tarred weatherboarding. They almost closed the gap to what was until the later part of the 20th century Russell's Clothing and Boot Store, next in line along the road.

As just noted a wide gap was opened in recent times between the reduced end of Wellington Cottages and the former Clothing and Boot store to its north-west. Today this is partly filled by a modern detached house. This might be any new house on any new estate. It is set back into its plot which emphasises its separateness and the break in frontage here.

The old Clothing and Boot store, converted to residential use with a brick ground and a tile-hung first floor and large sash windows, stands beyond the frontage break. It is a jump up in scale from the little houses of Wellington Terrace and is also higher than the King's Arms public house next door. In addition it projects slightly forward of the building line to each side. It must always have stood out and its change of scale compared to those of its neighbours must always have been noticeable. While still a shop it was more recognisable as such than it is today; the ground floor shop windows have been removed and replaced by smaller domestic ones.

Just beyond the old stores the two storey King's Arms terminates development on this side of the green. The public house's elevation to the green suggests an early 19th century date but is in fact a later re-fronting – modernising – of a 17th century building. The white painted elevation is symmetrical with a central front door, has windows to each side at ground and first floor and three dormers above. The peg tile roof is gabled with end chimney stacks.

The third, west, side of the green is now considered, proceeding from the site of the windmill northwards back to the former Bethel Baptist Chapel. In the early 19th century the windmill stood at the back of a larger open area than surrounds it today. Orchard House to the south occupies some of this earlier plot and for a while there was also a small building across the windmill access path from the recently vacated windmill café. This was probably the original tea room shown in early photographs. It subsequently disappeared leaving the present attractive grassed and planted roughly rectangular open space with its information boards, neat hedges and flagpole. The mill, built as noted in 1801, was owned by the Killick family until it was sold in 1895 to the Nortons, another well known Kentish milling family. The last miller died in 1967 after which a Trust was set up which restored the building and which now opens it to the public. Meopham Green mill is a smock mill with a two storey high brick base supporting an encircling decked and railed 'stage', a black weather-boarded main body and a revolving cap. The cap carries the sails and the prominent rear fantail gear, all painted white.

The windmill café, now a cake baking and decorating shop, is in the front half of a once longer single storey building associated with the mill and Mill House, probably originally the mill's corn and feed shop and stores. This enclosed the south side of the Mill House's front garden. This garden is bounded at the roadside by a low white picket fence backed by a tall hedge, so that little can be seen of the building set back behind it. In fact seen from the front Mill House is a very attractive symmetrical white weather-boarded and slate roofed two storey cottage.

For many years the north side of The Mill House front garden was enclosed by a (probably single storey) subsidiary building of similar plan-form to that on the south side. Now this little building's replacement, Mill Lodge, a bulky gabled brick building, crowds closer to, and hems in, the Mill House. The new building's white street elevation has wide modern openings including one towards the top of the gable, all this adding extra weight to its all round prominence.

Immediately north of Mill Lodge is the south part of the Cricketers public house. White painted on brick with a steep peg tiled roof, this is said to have been built by one Richard Buggs in 1794. It was extended on the north with a mid 19th century whitened brick and slate roofed extension with large first floor sash windows overlooking the Green. A flat roofed two storey link connects the two buildings. The relatively unobtrusive pub car park lies along the north flank of the later building.

North beyond The Cricketers is the garden of Basque Cottages. This house may date originally to the 18th century or possibly earlier. It is a small two storey house with a hip at one end and a gable at the other, part of a longer building now reduced in size. The ground floor is brickwork with framing at first floor which is clad in tiles and boards. The widows etc are modern. All this is largely hidden from the road behind a white picket fence, shrubs, trees and hedges.

North again beyond Basque Cottage is the roadside garden of a larger detached house, Meopham Lodge dating from the 1850s and in the neo-Gothic style. Its site was formerly a field with a pond in it. Close to, it is almost completely hidden behind a long, tall and well kept hedge and more trees. From the green the peg tiled roof and white rendered upper parts of the house's façade can be seen.

Meopham Lodge's roadside garden hedge continues north before returning west around the corner of modern Pitfield Road where this joins the A 227. Between the north side of this first stretch of Pitfield Road and the site of the former Bethel Baptist Chapel further up the A 227 (and discussed earlier) is a separate piece of the green, the last to be described. This relatively small rectangular public open space has along its north side a public footpath running off west from the Wrotham Road into the countryside beyond the village. This is a westward continuation of the path that heads east out of the village from near the War memorial, already described.

Formerly this small independent area of green had a pond in its south west corner. Today one or two fine trees stand in its centre and around it, helping to conceal an electricity sub station. The west end of a small pubic toilet block and a solidly built and roofed bus shelter complete the picture as seen from the main green to the east. The former Bethel Chapel, now Woodlea Cottage stands within hedges and trees immediately next to the footpath just mentioned. This completes the review of the west side extension of the green.

The final part of the conservation area for examination is in the south end of the village from immediately beyond the King's Arms public house south along South Street or Leading Lane (alternative names for the Wrotham Road here) to its south boundary. Commencing on the east side of the road at the south west gable of the King's Arms, this stands up above a 19th century single storey monopitch side extension. This extension returns down the side of the entry to the pub's car park. The little building has been cut back somewhat to help make a larger car park entrance. The car park occupies a considerable area of former yards and gardens to the rear of the pub.

Across the pub car park entry on the South Street front, a small two storied terraced building, possibly a house, was demolished recently and rebuilt with a drive-through entry to the rear, under the building. The demolished building was no doubt part of what the 1999 conservation area statement described as 'a motley group… which currently sit on the road edge… they appear to be empty and some of the windows are boarded up. Restoration is urgently needed.'

There are two other surviving members of this group. One is an abutting, late 19th or early 20th century, two-storey building, half of which is in use as an office, white painted and with paired gables to the street. The office half has a large modern mock Georgian shop window with a very deep, flat, signboard over it. Abutting this to the south again is a two storey house with an 'L' shaped roof plan. The walls are finished with brown pebble dash, the roof is tiled and the front elevation, in spite of its modern plastic windows and front door, appears to date from the 1920s or 30s. In the crook of this house's 'L' are various single storey pebble dashed flat roofed structures open to view from the street. One of these has overtones of an institutional 'gents and ladies' lavatory. The modern OS Map (though none of its predecessors) carries a nearby appellation, 'Wellington Hotel', which may refer to this grouping and if so explains the supposed toilet block.

Next a narrow driveway leads to the back of these roadside premises, passing between the possible lavatories and the north-east gable wall of the former village bakery. This entrance is a fulcrum about which the building line bends to follow the curve in the road here. The Old Bakery is now a financial services outlet**.** It is a 19th century building divided into a whitened, slate roofed, narrow-width two storied part to the north and a flat roofed with fascia board section to the south. The latter part has a street door and tall and long shop windows.

From the King's Arms car park entry around the corner to the Old Bakery the main road comes close up to the building line, leaving pedestrians with an uncomfortably narrow and in places an almost non-existent footway. After the Old Bakery, back of footway development ends and the building line steps away from the road with the footway widening a little. This building line set-back allows a brick street wall and mature shrubs and planting in front gardens behind it to fill the foreground view.

Back well beyond the street wall and planting and set slightly up a bank is the next piece of development south along the road here, a terrace of five brick Victorian houses beginning with West View and ending in Croft Cottages. The two storey terrace is cranked in plan, following the bend in the road. It divides into two parts, a northerly pair with their own hip ended roof built perhaps in the 1840-50s and southern block of three dating perhaps from the 1860s -70s. The latter have an asymmetrical plan arrangement and a barge-boarded south gable. All buildings in the terrace have slated roofs and stucco mouldings around windows and doors.

South again beyond Croft Cottages three detached modern bungalows lie up from the road on the bank behind a further brick boundary and retaining wall. These bungalows are on the site of part of the once quite extensive grounds of Greenfields, the final building in the conservation area on this side of the A 227. This substantial framed and white weather boarded and slated two storey house dates from the early 19th century. Later alterations to its west elevation do not damage its integrity. It stands high on the bank away from the road but still prominent. Its front garden wall functions almost entirely to retain the bank behind it, showing just how much the road level is reduced here as the highway cuts into the slope of the ground. The character

of the retaining walling suggests 20th century highway improvements, perhaps made to provide the footway on this side of the carriageway.

Returning to a point on the A 227 immediately south of the open space in front of the windmill and now moving south along the west side of the road, the first building here is Orchard House, mentioned earlier. This is an 'L' shaped two storey yellow brick and slate roofed late 19th century house. It stands prominent and alone a little away from the road towards one side of its plot with bushes and small trees to each side and a low brick front garden wall at the back of footway. South beyond this, highway enclosure continues as a low hedge backed by a tall modern brick wall which conceals most of a modern house, Killick Mill (surely named for and by the last mill owners, the Killicks). Parts of this building's large roof show between more bushes and trees in its garden.

At its south end of Killick Mill's road frontage, as the road swings round to run from south west to south, Killick Mill's street wall turns suddenly west for a short distance. South from this boundary indent, and facing the road, are the hedged and fenced front gardens of two well set back pairs of inter-war semi detached houses. When new these were classic examples of 1930s 'moderne' style; with careful reconstruction they could be again. They are aligned due north-south following the line the main road takes south beyond the bend. As the road curves past Killick Mill these alignment arrangements produce a small triangle of mostly grassed public land between the front gardens of the semis and the back of footway, with a few posts to keep cars from parking on it. At the wider, north, end of this open triangle is a black and white highway chevron sign warning drivers about the approaching bend in the road. A mature tree group stands in front of the more southerly of the two semis.

Immediately south of the southernmost semi, a narrow drive leads west from the road to modern Hidden House behind the road frontage development. South from this drive is a brick and slate roofed Victorian terrace of six two storey houses dated 1898. This stands forward of the 20th century semis with its whitened north gable exposed to view from the north. Like the semis it is set down slightly from road level; steps down from the footway into small front gardens deal with the level change. The gardens are generally enclosed by low brick walls and were originally railed and gated above the brickwork**.**

South once more from the Victorian terrace is a vehicular entry to a residential development, outside the conservation area. To the south side of this entry is a small two storey commercial building with parking behind, originally very much in the Kent vernacular although not erected until the 20th century. Though its east and north facades are rendered its south side, built into the wall of the Chapel graveyard next door, shows as very passable brickwork. The narrow street elevation has been comprehensively re-windowed in plastic.

The same fate has befallen the Baptist Chapel (1824) next door, with the windows of its east, street facing entrance, façade, as well as those of its flanks given the plastic treatment. Standing in its graveyard at the south boundary of the conservation area, the Chapel is of two tall rendered and white painted storeys with a slate roof. It is set well back from the road within the graveyard which has low carefully looked after clipped yew bushes among the grass and tombstones. There is a worshippers car park to the left hand, rear, side of the buildings. The front boundary wall against the footway is crude, being made up of partly pierced concrete block work**.**

This completes the survey of the village's historic layout within the conservation area and its form today.

5.2 The associated public realm

The most important features of the conservation area at Meopham Green, its grassed public open spaces around which much of the village is arranged, have been described in the course of the previous section. They are all very well looked after, managed and maintained and there is therefore no call for comment on this account. Please refer to the maps accompanying this section for the fine detail of their layout and features.

Pedestrians using the very quiet roads to the east and south sides of the main green share these comfortably with traffic. Their informal character is emphasised by their lack of kerbs. Where the greens abut the A 227 they are however kerbed though they do not have footways at the carriageway edges (other than at the road frontage of the small, independent, Green associated with the village bus shelter). The A 227 through the village has footways to each side at its north and south ends, as implied above. Where it follows along the side of the main green it has a footpath on its west side only. Almost all of these arrangements appear to work satisfactorily but there is one location where conflict between highway standards and pedestrian safety and convenience arises. This is at the 'pinch point' on the A 227 south of the King's Arms public house. On the east side of the bend around this corner development is so close to south running traffic that the footway in front of it all but disappears at one point. Traffic blight contributes to the poor appearance and apparent un-sustainability of a few of the roadside properties here.

The main communal parking areas in the village, other than at the roadside along the south side of the Green, are the two pub car parks. Both are relatively well hidden from view and do not have much impact on the 'external' character of the conservation area. Utility service poles, wires and street lights do little damage to overall conservation area character. There is a cluttered grouping of notice boards, telephone box, post box and grit container at the south roadside corner of the northerly half of the green.

6 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 Building types

Meopham The Street has a medieval church; Meopham Green had two Baptist Chapels. The former existence of competing Baptist chapels in the village is an indication of the attraction non-conformist religion had in the 19th century for the rural poor, the agricultural land workers. It also gives a flavour of some of the social character of the village and its hinterland at that time. The larger of the two buildings, the Zion Chapel of 1824, survives; the smaller and later, the Bethel Chapel, moved from one site to another and eventually fell out of use. Its first incarnation may form part of the modern Woodlea Cottage**.**

Meopham Green has no high status domestic 'establishment' building or even the equivalent of Meopham The Street's 19th century Old Vicarage. Its nearest thing to the last, Woodland Villa, built as noted for the village's Baptist minister in the 1870s, is a step down from it in scale and certainly status also.

18th century and earlier Green Farmhouse/Walnut Cottage, presumably once the home of a well off Yeoman, was probably matched originally by post medieval Barnside, when that too was a farmhouse. The Pitfield Lodge site may also have originated as a farmstead.

Other small villas perhaps for people of independent means are the 19th century Meopham and Pitfield Lodges. Early 19th century Greenfields at the south end of the village may also have been in this category but may at some time have related to a tradesman. It is close to the boundary of its large plot, the neighbouring field being shown on later maps as a timber yard.

Other small detached Victorian houses are Norway House (late c.19), Dashwood Court and Orchard House (late c.19). (Basque Cottage is of uncertain derivation and research would be needed to help establish its original raison d'etre.)

Three 19th century workers terraces, the first two probably built for farm labourers, are Wellington Cottages, Green Farm Cottages and Kent Terrace, today totalling 17 dwellings in all. A further row of five, more pretentious, 19th century terraced houses – West View to Croft Cottages – occurs in the south of the village. Almost opposite these is a row of six late 19th century narrow frontage terrace houses of a common entirely urban style and form. These two terraces are unlikely to have been intended for agricultural workers.

The village still has its two public houses but its former shop and bakery have gone, converted to residential and art gallery use.

There are almost no traditional farm buildings left in what will have started out purely as an agricultural hamlet, latterly of three farmsteads at the most. A small, sad remnant of one such building does survive, however – the roundel of the former oast house adjoining a modern house near the village war memorial.

The former village smith's living quarters are now a house. Fortunately both windmill and adjoining miller's house have survived well.

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.
Figure 8

6.4 Brief descriptions of some buildings contributing to conservation area character.

This list is not comprehensive. Other historic buildings not included also contribute to conservation area character. Descriptions are generally 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.

The Mount Zion Chapel of 1824

The building is of two tall storeys, in brickwork rendered over and painted white throughout. It has a slate roof gabled to the street. This gable takes the sloped parapet form with kneelers to each side at the eaves. In the centre at ground floor is a small projecting, white rendered, open sided porch with a pitched roof and a tiny gable parapet. Its doorway is arch-headed. To each side of the porch is a vertically proportioned window opening. At first floor three similar sized windows are arranged to match the opening positions below. Unfortunately all five windows, as well as those in the sides of the building, have lost their original fenestration to modern, plastic and proportionally inappropriate, replacements.

Woodlea Cottage

The original Bethel Chapel stood on the site of Woodlea Cottage and it is likely that some or all of it is part of this building. A tiled roof and boarding and tile hanging can be seen on the parts of the building publicly visible.

Woodland Villa

As previously noted this is a freestanding double fronted two storey house built for the village's Baptist minister in the 1870s. It is in yellow stock brick with a large-hipped slated roof and two symmetrically arranged chimney stacks. The excellent front elevation comprises a central front door with a semi-circular arched-head window above it at first floor and to each side what were formerly double hung timber sash windows at ground and first floors. The ground floor window and door openings have heavy cills and are enriched with stucco architraves. Stucco console brackets enclose fascia panels above the windows and support cornices above these, again all in stucco. Re-fenestration in UPVC has taken place. While the appearance of the vertical sliding plastic system used is an improvement over other plastic systems, failure to produce an appropriate depth bottom rail to the lower sashes is just the most obvious example of how difficult it is to achieve historic veracity using this material.

Green Farmhouse/Walnut Cottage

This important building has been comprehensively reconstructed recently.

Barnside

Now a house; almost certainly formerly a farmhouse. This was originally a two-storey timber framed house with a jettied first floor facing the main road. Its ground floor front wall has been underbuilt in brick, its front upper floor is brick-nogged between timbers and also tile hung. It has an added rear cat-slide roofed extension bringing the rear elevation down from two to one storey in height. There are Kent half-hips to the ends of the peg tiled roof, two chimney stacks (one relatively substantial) and a low dormer 'gablet' in the front roof slope. The added single storey peg tiled pitched roofed and gabled shop extension at the south end has itself been enlarged by an addition on its south side. This has a tiled, low-pitched, cat slide roof running up to join the main roof of the extension. As noted earlier the little shop has an overhanging pent-roof to the front and this is supported by timber brackets to each side. Beneath this, the street elevation comprises a three light shop window over a whitened stall riser with the shop door to one side.

Meopham Lodge

This is a symmetrical neo-Gothic, white painted rendered building of the 1850s. Given the building date and style a slated roof might have been expected; it is in fact peg-tiled. The street front comprises two matching, close projecting, gabled wings joined by a short central section. At ground floor a modern porch is set into the slot between the two gables. Window openings in the front façade have render drip moulds and label stops and the building's eaves including those sloping up the gables have shallow moulded and dentilled fascias**.** The original windows, probably side hung casements, are missing, replaced by modern plastic ones.

Pitfield Lodge

In contrast to Meopham Lodge, the original part of this later Victorian building (1897) follows an informal asymmetrical, cottage style, typical of that period. It projects forward towards the street with a cross wing at the back. The latter has a shallow west facing projection with a slightly overhanging first floor, the cantilever supported on moulded projecting first floor beam-ends. The building is fully gabled, its scale reduced a little by putting first floor rooms partly within the roof space. The exterior of the ground floor is of red brick and that of the first floor and gable panels is of peg-tiles hung on timber framing. Roofing is peg-tiles. Windows are cottage style. The Lodge has been comprehensively extended to the point where it can take no more.

Greenfields

As originally built presumably in the early 19th century this house had a symmetrical front elevation (see the boarding discontinuity to the front, left hand side, and the asymmetrical roof above). The front elevation consisted of the central front door and single timber double hung vertically sliding sash windows to each side, repeated above. Sashes are the 6 over 6 pane type and appear original. The house front was later extended north, causing the asymmetry. The whole structure may be timber framed; certainly this is so for the front. The low pitched and hipped roof with its two very substantial rendered chimney stacks was slated from the start. The later veranda, incorporating an open porch, runs only the length of the original part of the house. Its fretwork detail and openwork fascia give extra interest to the building. It is supported by four posts, two relating to a central small glazed and pitched porch roof. The south end of the veranda abuts the lean-to gable of a conservatory running along the south side of the building. The house's main entrance is now on the south

side. While the front of the building is weather boarded, its south side is rendered**.** Boards and render are painted white.

Norway House

Like Greenfields this was built in the early19th century. The ground floor is in local yellow stock bricks with red dressings while the upper floor is white weather boarded. The front door is central with sash windows to each side and three above. All the sashes have narrow margin lights; these, in timber, may be modern but following the original pattern. Eaves overhangs are generous and the pair of chimney stacks have good corbelled brick tops. A good example of later Victorian plain-building.

Dashwood Court

Dating from the second half of the 19th century, this is a plain two storey white stuccoed building with a low pitched, hipped and slated roof. Tall rendered chimney stacks stand up at each end, flush with the gable walls**.** The corners of the front façade have stucco quoins, returned round the gable ends and the eaves soffit of the roof overhang here is (notionally) supported on wide spaced slender curved and decorative brackets. The quoins and brackets appear to be the building's only surviving decorative features – for the rest it is very plain. The bay windows to each side of the front door in the symmetrical front elevation appear modern and this may also be so for the porch over the front door. The two large and one small central upper floor window openings may retain original double hung timber sashes.

Orchard House

An 'L' plan late 19th century detached house in yellow brick with red brick banding and gabled slate roofs. The building's elevations are a reflection of the asymmetrical plan arrangement. Modern alterations have somewhat damaged its historic integrity.

Basque Cottage

As noted this small two storey building is hipped at one end and gabled at the other. It appears truncated and did formerly have a further, north, section. The brickwork of the ground floor has an irregular bond and may be of late 18th early 19th century date. The upper floor below the windows is clad in tiling while between the windows it is boarded, an unusual arrangement; this part of the elevation is presumably timber framed. The house is closed at its gabled end by a thick brick gable wall attached to which is a small boarded single storey lean-to extension. Windows and doors are modern.

Wellington Cottages

As noted earlier the number of dwellings in this terrace was eight. The facades of four of them are rendered and the rest are in fair faced red Flemish Bond brickwork**.** The row is difficult to date exactly partly because the Duke had a long and active life, not dying until 1852. Like Green Farm Cottages (see further below) it was an economical project. For a start the individual dwellings were very small. Again, the brick arches to the window and door openings were carried out more cheaply than would be expected for the first half of the 19th century. The single uncut and un-rubbed bricks used for the arches were scored alternately to suggest the joint-work of more expensive practice. Floor and wall openings step down following what is a very

gentle ground slope down towards the A 227. The row has suffered various minor, but still unfortunate, modern changes to doors and windows.

Green Farm Cottages

Like Wellington Cottages this short terrace of three originally tiny cottages probably belongs to the first half of the 19th century. Façade arrangements are identical between the two projects – front door to one side of the plan, window to the other with a first floor window above that. The row was originally built in fair-faced brickwork but is now rendered and whitened throughout with a modern concrete-tile roof. The three chimney stacks are eye catching in their largeness. Windows and doors have been altered in the 20th century. Investigation would be needed to establish original window type but it was probably the side hung casement form.

Kent Terrace

The hipped and peg tiled roof of the main part of this two storied mainly stock brick terrace steps down in height towards each end, producing an unusually complex roof plan. Substantial chimney stacks stand one to each end, just above the start of the roof's drop down to a lower level. A secondary part of the terrace at the north end consists of two further bays with their own hipped and slated roof with a central chimney stack. As befitted its mid 19th century date, the building was originally fitted out with timber vertically sliding double hung sash windows. Openings in walls are spanned by slightly rustic seeming rubbed and gauged red brick arches. Arches over the front doors may have approached the semi-circular. The terrace has suffered various small scale additions including a number of modern non-matching front porches. At its south end a square projecting flat roofed two storey brick bay with modern 'cottage' windows has been added. Windows in general have proved vulnerable to replacement in UPVC.

West View to Croft Cottages, (Wrotham Road/South Road/ A 227)

The most northerly and it is assumed earlier pair of two storey houses in this terrace is a composition in its own right and involves quite high status development. The walls of the building are in local yellow stock brick. Its slate roof, hipped to each end, has one central and two opposite-end chimney stacks. Elevations to each half involve three spaced out first floor window openings over three ground floor openings, the latter comprising windows to each side of a central entrance door. The entrance door opening is round headed with a semi circular light over the door. Windows and doorway have stucco architraves at sides and heads, the heads with expressed stucco keystones, and the windows with substantial window cills below. A string course runs the length of the façade at first floor cill level. Some ormer timber double hung sash windows have been replaced by modern windows.

The remaining three dwellings in the terrace comprise a pair of less high status houses in which the plans are handed to bring front doors side by side and a third house of much shallower depth but greater frontage width. Brickwork is yellow stocks, roofing is slate, and stucco architraves and the rest are all as before. This south part of the terrace ends in a gable with a roof overhang at the verge finished by decorative timber barge boards. The two first floor windows in the fronts of each of the handed dwellings do not align with front door and window openings below. The ground floor windows are about 1 ½ times the width of those above and will therefore originally have had side lights to central sashes.

Clematis Cottage to Meather Dell, (Wrotham Road/South Road)

As noted earlier this is a row of six brick and slate roofed late 19th century narrow frontage terrace houses. Whereas some of the other terraces in the village built earlier in the century were to house agricultural labourers and the like, this terrace aimed at slightly better off people, could easily have come directly from any one of the expanding towns of the region. Features such as the pre-cast mass produced bay window structures and lintels, bracketed pent roofs over front doors joining together pairs of houses, pale brickwork decorated with red brick quoins, string courses and a red terracotta date plaque, all speak of pattern book town work. The ground level tunnels under the block dividing one pair from another are the only slightly uncommon, maybe lavish, feature of the development. One house has been white painted and there has been much replacing of original timber double hung sash windows with UPVC, all to the detriment of the appearance of the terrace.

Two pairs of semi-detached houses known as Sunnyside

This pair of late 19th century semis articulates the front façade in the same way as the rear of such buildings was often managed; the designer effectively gave their fronts front extensions. The paired front extensions are wide and are topped by a prominent slated hip roof at the peak of which is a substantial chimney stack. Higher and back beyond this and at right angles, are the front roof slope and ridge of the main block of the composition. On each side of this front roof slope are large pitched-roofed dormers whose ridges run back to join the main roof ridge at right angles. The main roof extends further out and down at the rear of the building than it does at the front. The buildings are of yellow stock bricks with red dressings below and are tile hung on framing above. The tiles are red with red ornamental tile bands. Ground floor front rooms are lit by attractive projecting rectangular bay windows hung off the face of the buildings. UPVC re-fenestration and small inappropriate additions have damaged parts of these very interesting elevations.

The King's Arms pub

As noted the building appears to be of 19th century date when seen from the green due to a re-fronting of that time; behind it is said to be of the17th century. Something of its earlier flavour is retained in the sloping gable parapets with their brick-built kneelers, the three small hipped-back dormers in the roof, the chimney stacks to each end and the exposed eave line. Below, the façade follows later precedent with tall double hung sash windows at first floor and at ground level a central, classically proportioned, door. The only jarring features are the two modern ground floor imitation 'bow' windows, one to each side of the door.

The Cricketers pub

The whitened two-storey street elevation of the earlier, late 18th century, part of this building is asymmetrical with an off centre projecting entrance porch. Curious and interesting features are the deep eaves overhang of the tall peg tiled roof at the front and the siting of the chimney stacks down from the ridge. The north part of The Cricketers pub is a two storey hipped and slate roofed building not quite at right angles to the road, probably built in the second quarter of the 19th century, its front half whitened brick, its rear weather-boarded. Its south corner to the road is chamfered off at an angle producing an odd split sided hip to the roof there which overhangs in a point at the eaves. As originally built it may have been separate from the earlier range but it was subsequently joined to it by means of a flat roofed two

storey infill section. Towards the road the upper floor of this link is set back uneasily at an angle over the lower floor.

The former boot and clothing shop

This late 19th/early 20th century building seems originally to have been a tall two storey structure with space for a larger and smaller shop on the ground floor and a flat, or flats, above. Ground floor elevation corners are 'chamfered-off' originally for shop entrance doors. The entrance to the flat is via the round headed doorway in the front façade. The ground floor is brick-built and the upper floor is timber framed. The roof is slated. The upper floor retains its banded pattern tile hanging and sash windows (timber replaced with UPVC). The ground floor, its whitened brickwork now dominating the front of the building, was originally more window than wall. It comprised a number of tall shop windows, some related to an angle-sided shop-door 'in-go' and others to a corner door. Above these a flat shop signboard latterly ran most of the building's length. Unfortunately when the shop finally closed the part-blocking up of the shop windows for the introduction of smaller modern domestic windows was permitted.

The roundel of the former oast house

This adjoins a modern house, The Oast, near the village War Memorial. The Roundel is built of pale red brick**.** The conical roof is clad with peg tiles and is topped by a typical white painted revolving Kent cowl with wind vane. In the side of the structure facing towards the public footpath (i.e. to the south) are two doors, one above the other. The upper one projects above the roundel eaves and is finished with its own peg tiled roof. These doors related to the ground and first floors of the destroyed oast stowage building which the Maps show stood between the roundel and the public footpath at the south boundary of the present house plot.

The former village smithy (now a house)

This brick built bungalow with peg tiled roof and paired front bay windows may have been developed out of the last incarnation of the village smithy, the site of which it occupies.

Forge House

This building is today in two halves. Towards the Green it has a simple symmetrical brick front with a low pitched hipped roof and a central front door typical of the early 19th century. The roof is clad in modern concrete tiles. The projecting porch is modern as is the lean-too roofed end extension. Secondly, and attached behind, there rises a higher, more bulky, two storey pitched and gabled-roof structure, possibly a later 'raising' of, or extension to, the original building.

Mill House

Mill house, seen from the front, is a well preserved, small, timber-framed, two-storey building with a central door, sash proportion window openings to each side at ground and first-floor and a low pitched hipped slate roof. The picture is let down by the fact that the windows themselves appear to be a modern form, probably UPVC.

6.5 Building materials

The usual palette of traditional Kent building materials occurs within the historic buildings of the conservation area including a relatively small scale, late, display of tile hanging on timber framing. Timber frames clad externally with weatherboarding, and possibly also finished with painted external lath and plaster, do occur. Flint walling is absent from the buildings but there is a small amount in boundary walling. Local plain red, red and blue header and later yellow, brickwork features as does painted brickwork and the later smooth stucco and modern painted renders over brick. Roofs, if not covered in modern materials, are almost all clad in local peg-tile with a few covered in natural slate imported from Wales.

6.6 Local details

Local village detail follows the general tradition and development of Kent's timber and brick vernacular architecture with no building or use of material that has a character unique to Meopham Green.

Original exterior joinery survives, but in places modern replacements damage the appearance of 'host' buildings. Inroads into appropriate character are invariably made by the introduction of off-the-peg timber and plastic windows. The design, detail and appearance of these are almost always unacceptable in conservation areas. Similar problems of character-damage can arise through poor brickwork re-pointing and the replacing of original exterior renders by different modern ones.

7 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Spatial character and form of development within the conservation area
MAP showing arrangement of Village 'character areas'

The village is divided up notionally into three separate, abutting, areas each with its own distinctive character. These are all shown on Figure 9. The areas are:

1 The north entry to the conservation area and the semidetached north part of The Green and its surroundings

2 The area of the main Green and its surroundings

3 The south part of the conservation area around South Street

Note: Trees, mostly deciduous, are a key element of conservation area character in Meopham Green. Environments are described below with the trees in full leaf. In winter, with leaves absent, more will be seen through their open canopies.

7.2 Individual character areas

Each character area is identified individually and its special character (as set out here below) briefly described in the discussion that follows. Figure 10 shows the relationship of buildings to spaces, nature of spaces, contributing and detrimental features as well as main contributing trees, garden areas, planting and important boundaries are shown.

Discussion assumes an approach to the village along the A 227 from the north.

1 The north entry to the conservation area and the semidetached north part of the green and its surroundings

Travelling southward along the A 227 from Meopham The Street, twentieth century ribbon, and wider spreading, suburban development set in wooded gardens follows the road into the village from the north. This encloses the view to east and west, concentrating it forward past the conservation area's first buildings here (Woodland Villa, Kent Terrace and Norway House) and across the small northerly extension of the main green with some of its trees in the foreground.

As it swings to the west the A 227 forms the west boundary to this first green sub-space and a mix of dwellings, walls and garden planting on the road's west side provides continuous western enclosure. Though denser than elsewhere, development here retains a spaced out, village, character with trees at the edges important in places (note for instance the attractive row of small pleached limes along the footway hiding Dashwood Court). Full visual enclosure is given in the same way on the opposite, east, side of the Green and at its narrow north end though development along these sides is generally subservient to garden settings, a taste of the even more 'rural' character to come in the main green.

On the green's south side the view is partly closed by the boundary wall, tall hedges and planting of a modern house. West of this a narrow 'neck' of grassed open space joins the northern green to the space of the main green to the south. The narrow road along the east side of the main green branches off from the A 227 alongside this linking grassed area. The mature forest trees close to the link space are particularly

important. Those on the main green immediately south of the War Memorial visually separate the two parts of the green ensuring that the Memorial and its setting form a key element of the north space.

The north green itself, set within the various bounds described, is an approximate triangle in shape rising imperceptibly to the east. It has an intimate feel due to its size, the low density of development to its north, east and south sides, the slightly more urban development along its west side and the various mature forest trees within it and towards its edges.

2 The area of the main green and its surroundings

Continuing southward along the A 227, once the trees around the war memorial are passed the main green opens up to view to the east. Immediately to the west beyond Woodlea Cottage is the small rectangular part of the green west of the main road with its footpath leading out of the village to the west. From the road this is largely hidden from view behind the bus shelter, the public toilet block, roadside planting and mature forest trees. It is enclosed by back garden fences and hedges on three sides and its grassy open space is dominated by various fine trees within and at its edges. On the south it is open to Pitfield Drive, a modern road leading to a modern estate immediately to the west. The fine north boundary hedge of the garden of Meopham Lodge provides south enclosure to the space, helping it retain its character as a lightly wooded enclave away from the open main green. Though Woodlea Cottage almost abuts the space on the north side, because of its alignment, scale and detailed design it does not devalue the little enclave's essential small scale, private, character.

The main green, triangular in plan, extends out to east and south when viewed from the north along the A 227 which runs more or less straight south-west along its north-west side. Its scale is great and it has no features within it which conflict with its overwhelming effect of spreading space and wide sky. Though along its south side development provides spatial enclosure and everywhere else perimeter trees, hedges and shrubs predominate to fulfil the same function, all these are secondary in importance to the space itself. The green's dominating open effect is underwritten by the fact that almost all the buildings around its edges are no more than two storeys high and that few, apart of course from the windmill just outside its south west corner, are of the sort that 'call attention' to themselves.

There are two places within the green where earlier open space is disturbed by significant later 'interventions'. One is at its north end where the group of mature trees immediately south of the village war memorial blocks views out northward from the green to its northern outlier, all as previously described. The other is its south east corner where a row of forest trees is established against the highway along its south-east border. These stand behind, and frame, the second intervention, the white village cricket club pavilion which looks due north towards the cricket pitch in the middle of the green. In addition there are one or two individual trees just within the green where it extends eastward beyond its east-side roadway.

The north-west side of the green is formed by the A 227. Along the road's north-west side south from the green's separate western enclave, trees of greatly varying scales predominate behind long high hedges, as far as the entrance to the Cricketers pub car park. One building stands out from a distance here, white stuccoed Meopham Lodge in part concealed by its front hedge. Basque Cottage is more retiring, hiding in a gap behind a white front fence. This stretch of road frontage provides an idyllic

manicured garden and woodland-seeming setting for the green. Further west the Cricketers pub, and other buildings to one side of and in front of the windmill, form a separate white, red tile and slate roof group close to the south west corner of the green. Across the road from these, on the south-west side of the green, the King's Arms pub and the former boot and clothes shop together form another noticeable group. Between these two sets of buildings when seen from the north-east side of the green, is one of the few views out from the conservation area over and between trees to glimpses of woodland beyond.

The south-west side of the green is enclosed throughout its length by development. Towards its west end are the King's Arms and the former boot and clothes store. South east beyond these the building frontage is more continuous with Wellington Terrace sited close to the edge of the road along this side of the green. Slightly set back and further along is Pitfield Lodge and beyond this again modern houses are set back further still behind concealing walls, hedges and fences. In any case the latter make no contribution to the green's setting, being hidden behind the trees and Cricket pavilion in this south east corner of the space.

On the green's east side nature dominates the distant view but there has been competition from modern development. Most fortunately the various and sporadic modern developments here do not run together at their green frontages, being separated from each other there by groupings of trees and planting. These natural elements provide the essential breathing spaces and concealment necessary where conflicting modern designs strive to look special and different.

3 The south part of the conservation area around South Street.

The A 227 curves round eastward as it leaves the green going south beyond the King's Arms pub. Immediately west of the road here is the original windmill field subsequently reduced in size with the building of Orchard House. North of this the Mill House is concealed within its front garden. The Mill House garden, the present windmill enclosure and the Orchard House plot, form one unit in townscape terms, starting at the hedge to the Mill House front garden, passing the Windmill Café Bar and extending round the bend to the south-west, street, boundary of the house plot. All features here – walls, hedges, trees bushes, flagpole, access paths, concealed front garden, open grassed space, Mill House, Bar, windmill and Orchard House – are parts of this unit, a sensitive composition composed of managed nature and interesting buildings.

South around the corner from the King's Arms on the east side of the road is the group of run-down looking properties close to the edge of the highway that was discussed earlier. The built-up nature of this side of the bend does of course enhance the element of surprise as the space of the main green opens up to view for those travelling north along the main road. Continuing south beyond the former Bakery (now Art Gallery) which because of its siting is another key building on this side of the road, the next building is the well set back early Victorian terrace. This is fronted by a street wall and mass-planting. Another 19th century terrace and a couple of later semis stand across the road and parallel to it. Space enclosure to each side of the road from here south is linear with a slight indent against Killick Mill's garden wall. From this point looking south, one sees up the road past three modern bungalows on the east side to where the conservation area ends at Greenfields. The Baptist Chapel fulfils the same function to the west side of the road. Modern ribbon development continues south up the road beyond these properties. As noted earlier buildings to the east of the highway are raised up here behind front garden retaining walls while

some to the west are set a little below highway level. The retaining walls are quite prominent features in the street scene.

7.3 Landmarks or key buildings, focal points and views
Figure 11

8 SUMMARY CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Including positive, neutral and negative features

The conservation area is almost entirely experienced from the inside – no part of it has a significant relationship with the 'external' context with the exception of the windmill which locates the settlement in some distant views**.** The greater part of Meopham Green conservation area comprises three grassed open spaces differing from each other in size and character and with the edges of each defined by development, be that buildings, walls etc or 'gardened' natural features, from hedges to forest trees.

In the case of the small rectangular enclave west of the Wrotham Road, character derives from grassed public open space under, and surrounded by, a variety of fine trees. This sylvan quality is generally maintained in the boundary treatments of abutting developments here and the 'private-ness' of the space is thus respected and enhanced.

The smaller northern grassy rough triangle of green has a narrow link to the main green to the south. There is a generally satisfactory visual balance between development around its sides and the grassed open space itself. Built-up enclosure along the main road to the space's west side is more continuous, while that to its other sides is more broken up visually – the breaks are closed by garden planting etc. A number of trees and tree groups on and off the Green are important. Trees close-off the south end of the space from its larger neighbour to the south. Mistakes with modern (20th century) infilling have been made in places. Arrangements for access routes to properties on the east side of the Green cause confusion about its extent at its north end. They have changed its informal rural character there to something more suburban than before.

By its sheer size the main triangular green space dominates its surroundings. All three sides are almost fully enclosed and there are few outward views. Enclosure to much of the west side of the A 227 comes from natural features, trees, hedges etc. with Meopham Lodge an 'incident' in the greenery. The Cricketers pub and the windmill building group at the green's south west corner mark the main road's south exit there. They are reflected opposite by the landmark King's Arms pub and the former stores building. Some of the green's length on the south west side is enclosed by a two storey terrace row. East beyond this everything is hidden behind the cricket pavilion and its backing of tall trees which fill the green's south east corner. Along the green's eastern side two storey historic and modern developments are fortunately often separated and part-concealed by planting. This reduces the effect of those less sympathetic new buildings on the character of the green's edge here. A small group of tall mature trees marks the green's north east corner.

The windmill site, including The Mill House, the café, the Mill and Orchard Houses, forms a discrete sub area with its own underlying historic/industrial character all now in a 'gardened' setting.

The south part of the conservation area starts at the road bend beyond the King's Arms and moves into corridor development to each side of the A 227, this carrying on up to the conservation area boundary. With the exception of the Baptist Chapel and some interesting inter-war semis, character here is noticeably Victorian, encompassing periods from 1840 to 1900 in a small area. Apart from some modern bungalows everything here has some degree or other of architectural interest and

character about it. The urban quality of the area is in contrast to the rest of the conservation area.

Traffic using the A 227 within the conservation area is most in conflict with residential development in the south where terraced dwellings front onto both sides of the highway, with the problem extending on the east side as far north as the King's Arms car park entrance.

Positive features:

The north entry to the conservation area

- The north entry to the conservation area flanked by Kent Terrace and Woodland Villa to the east and by Norway House to the west

The smaller and larger open greens

- The one smaller and one larger open grassed village greens

The small open village green.

- The enclosing small scale village character of development around the green
- The historic buildings around the green
- The relatively intensive scale of development to the west side of the green
- The 'green gaps' between development on the east and south sides of the green
- The trees on and the single sinuous access track across the green (to Forge House)
- The war memorial and its setting, facing into the green
- The row of pleached lime trees fronting Dashwood Court opposite the 'link' green space between the small and large greens
- The 'link' green space between the small and large greens

The large open village Green

- The open, wide spreading 'landscape' character of the green
- The buildings, gardens, hedges, trees etc around the edges of the green that define it as a space rather than enclosing it
- The historic buildings around the green
- The informally designed and used side roads on the east and south west sides of the Green with on the east side informal tracks at right angles leading to individual dwellings or groups of dwellings

- The cricket pavilion and trees in the south east corner of the green
- The trees at the north east corner of the green

The small wooded rectangular green west of the Wrotham Road

- The separate small rectangular grassed and wooded public green space west of the A227
- The mature trees around and within the rectangular green
- The enclosed and sylvan internal quality of this subsidiary area of green
- The rural style boundaries to much of the space

Development opposite the west corner of the large open green

- The King's Arms pub south of the A 227 and the Cricketers Pub and associated buildings, together forming a group

Development around the windmill.

- The development around the windmill including the windmill and the café, the Mill House and Orchard House and their settings of mature planting, grass, walls and trees

The A 227 south of the King's Arms.

- The architectural and streetscape interest of the varying historic developments to each side of the Wrotham Road south from the King's Arms pub to the conservation area boundary

Neutral features:

- Most of the modern houses around the two open Greens

Negative features:

- The modern house between the former boot and clothes store and the west end of Wellington Terrace on the south side of the large open green
- The large inter-war semi-detached house between The Old Forge and the south end of Kent Terrace fronting the north end of the small open green
- The vehicle access ways etc across the north end of the small open green to the semi-detached house referred to above
- The problematic road frontage buildings on the east side of the A 227 from the King's Arms pub south as far as, but not including, the former Bakery building
- Related to the above, the minimal width pedestrian footway here which is unpleasant and potentially dangerous to use

- Along the southernmost section of the A 227 from the conservation area boundary as far as the King's Arms pub the environment for pedestrians is more oppressive than elsewhere in the conservation area (This is due to the locally high density of development and its closeness to the highway, bringing traffic on this 'A' road closer to the buildings than elsewhere.)

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 Baptist Chapel is a religious focus for quite a widely spread area. The village hall, just outside the conservation area, also makes a valuable contribution to the social life of the village. The village cricket club is likewise important, with cricket matches bringing the green to life in the summer. The two public houses continue in their traditional roles, although the windmill café is currently vacant. Other commercial activity shows in the art gallery and the two or three small businesses**.** The windmill itself is intermittently opened to the public**.** For the rest, the conservation area is today essentially a dormitory where many people travel elsewhere to work or alternatively where they have decided to take their retirement.

9.5 Locally listed buildings

There is no adopted comprehensive Local List for the Borough and, subject to the 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 management measures and footway improvements in the south west corner of the conservation area along the A 227, might help to make this location more pedestrian-friendly This will need to be carefully considered in order not to exacerbate traffic flows and create further disruption within the conservation area. 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

Local streetscape enhancement could arise from the traffic calming measures suggested above.

Should the opportunity arise, the gravel and tarmac finish of the private drives and turning heads at the north end of the separate, most northerly, part of the Green might be replaced by ‘grasscrete’ or something similar. This would return the appearance of this area to its original, grassed character, thus enhancing the appearance of the conservation area.

9.8 Trees

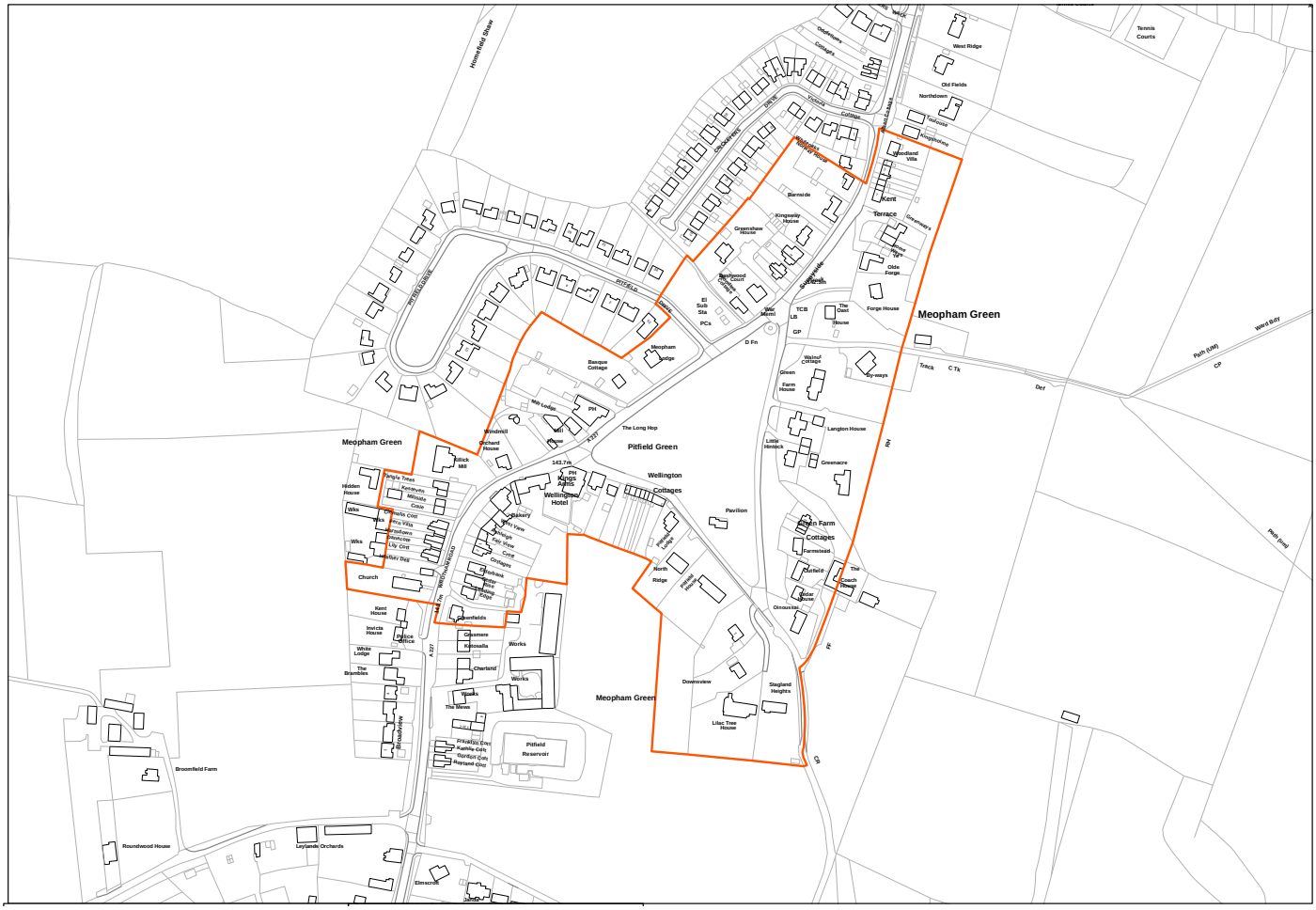
Subject to certain size restrictions, all trees within the conservation area benefit from a level of protection, and permission is required from the local planning authority to undertake works to them.

The above control is particularly important as mature trees within the Green make important contributions to its character.

9.9 Archaeology

The Conservation Area has archaeological potential relating to the windmill and any earlier structures, to three historic farmsteads and the use of the Green during the Second World War as a barrage balloon site. There is potential for further archaeological remains to be discovered within the Conservation Area and in the event of development proposals being submitted appropriate archaeological mitigation may be needed.

APPENDIX 1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Pitfield Green
Meopham Green
Meopham Green
Wellington Cottages
Wellington Hotel
Pitfield Reservoir
Broomfield Farm
Roundwood House
Elmscroft
Church
Bakery
Pavilion
Works
Terrace
Cottages
Tennis Courts
West Ridge
Old Fields
Northdown
Woodland Villa
Kent
Barnside
Kingsvale House
Greenshaw House
Forge House
Olde Forge
The Oast House
Langton House
Greenacre
Little Hemlock
Walnut Cottage
Farm House
Farmstead
Chestnuts
Oakwood
Downsview
Stagland Heights
Lilac Tree House
Meopham Lodge
Banque Cottage
Windmill
Orchard House
Mill House
Mill Lodge
The Long Hop
Hidden House
Kent House
Invicta House
White Lodge
The Brambles
Cherland
Greenfields
Gloucester
Kenmella
Broadview
Ivy Cottage
Rose Cottage
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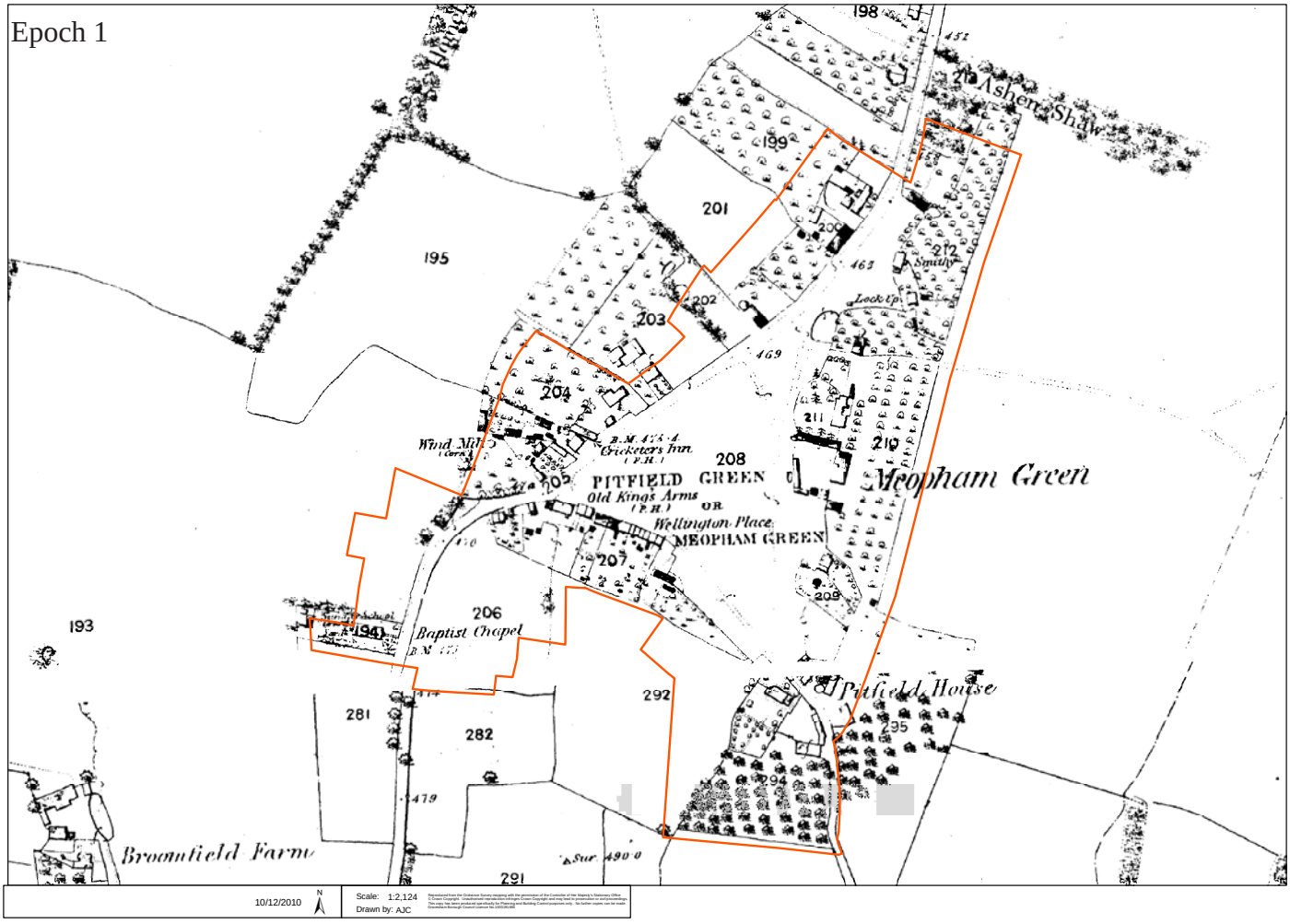
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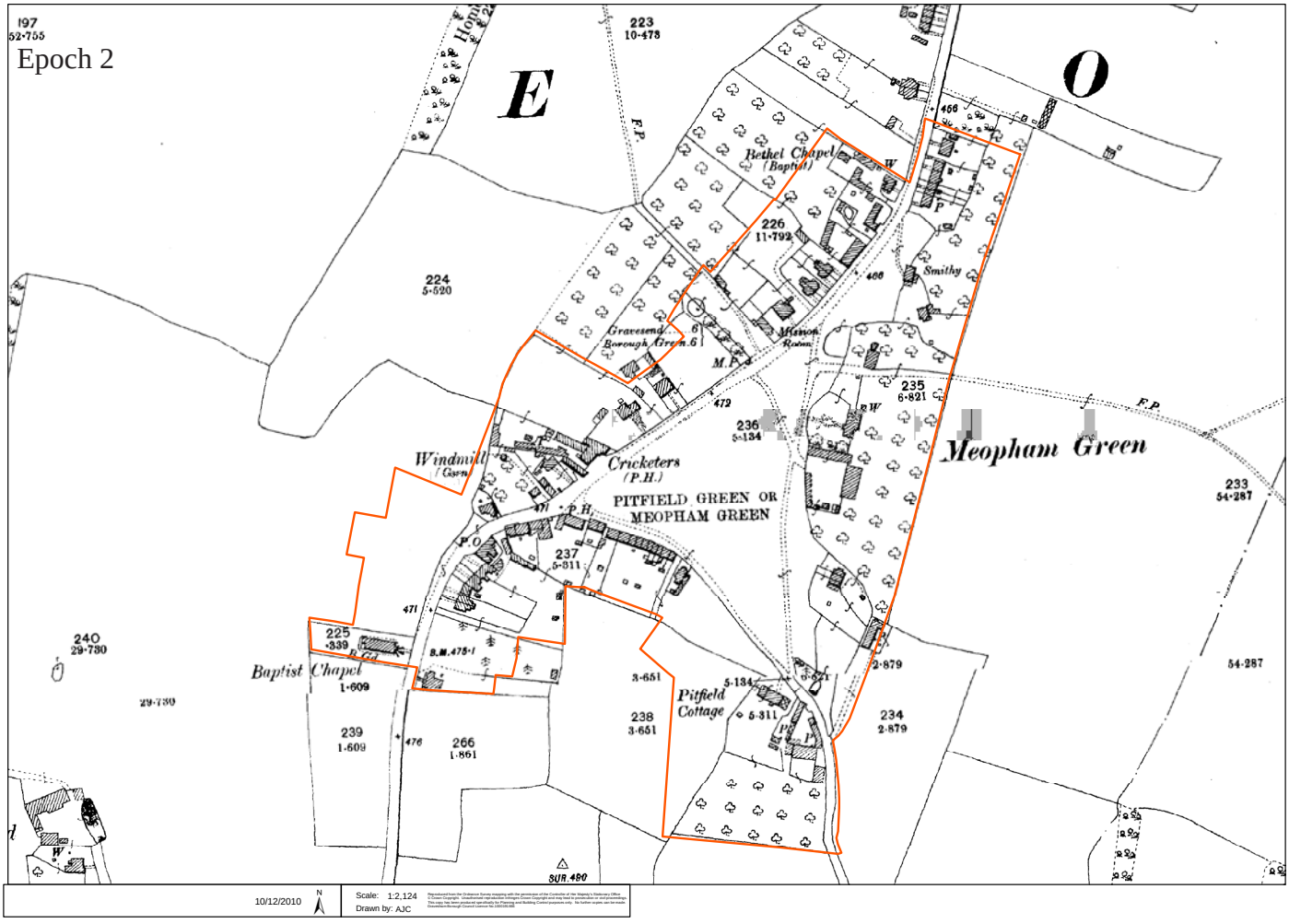
199
201
195
202
203
204
208
PITFIELD GREEN
Old Kings Arms
(P.H.)
OR
Wellington Place
MEOPHAM GREEN
Meopham Green
206
Baptist Chapel
193
194
281
282
292
Pitfield House
Broomfield Farm
291
10/12/2010
Scale: 1:2,124
Drawn by: AJC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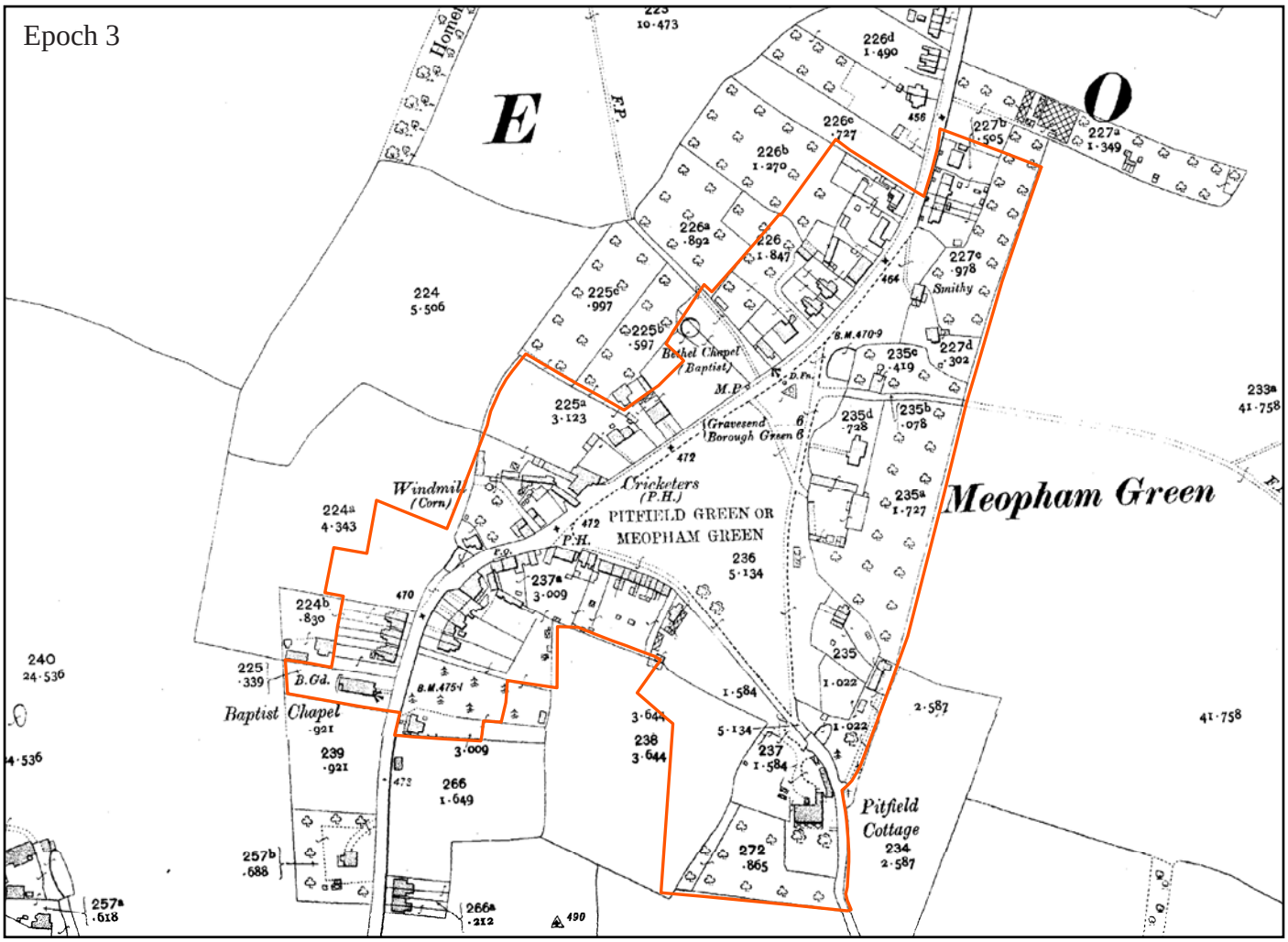
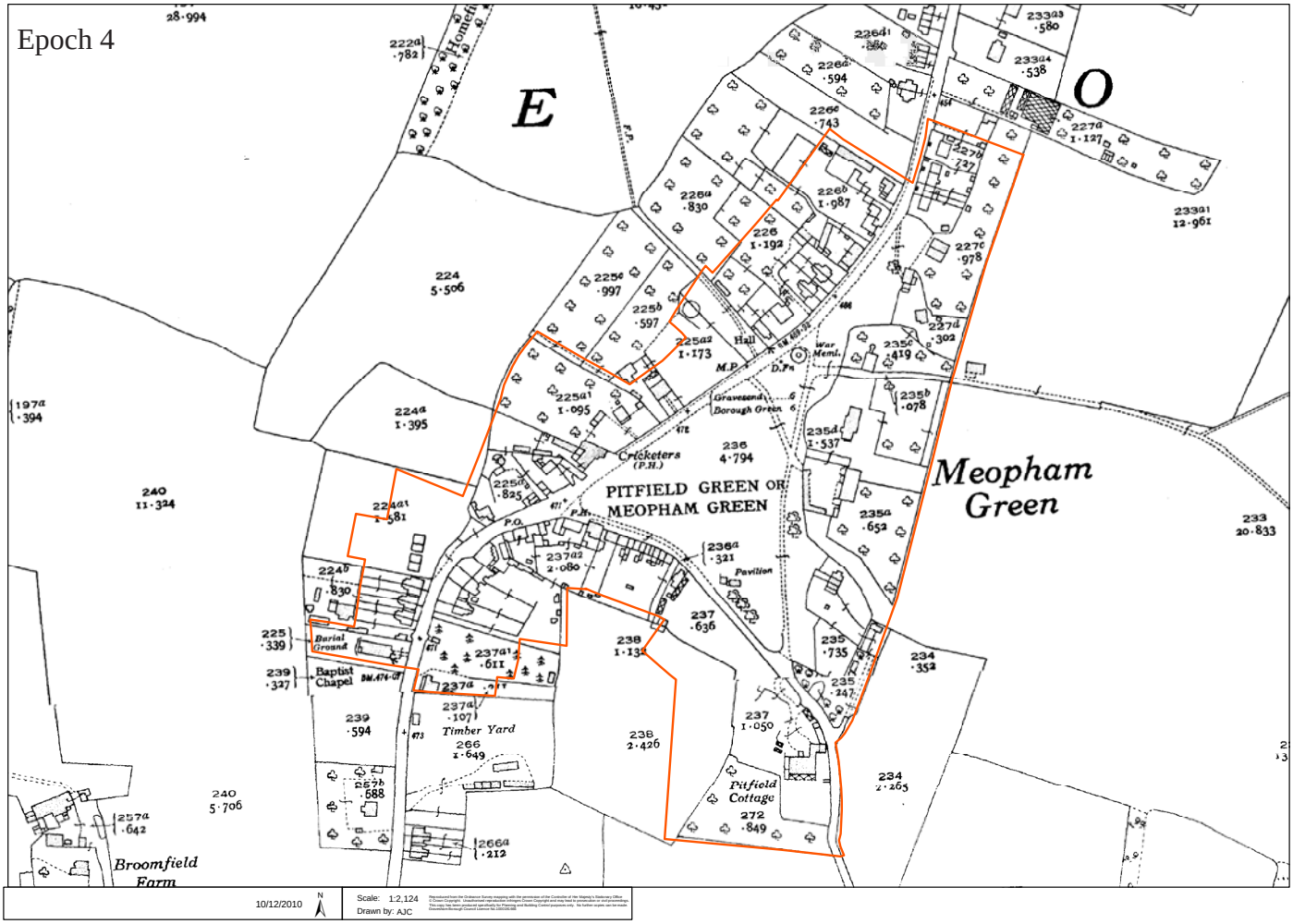
223
10·478
224
5·520
226
11·792
Bethel Chapel
(Baptist)
Smithy
Gravesend
Borough Green 6
Manor
Meopham Green
235
6·821
236
5·134
Windmill
Cricketers
(P.H.)
PITFIELD GREEN OR
MEOPHAM GREEN
237
5·511
240
29·730
225
·339
Baptist Chapel
1·609
239
1·509
266
1·861
238
3·651
Pitfield
Cottage
234
2·879
233
54·287
SUR.490
10/12/2010
Scale: 1:2,124
Drawn by: AJC

Epoch 3



Epoch 4



10/12/2010 N Scale: 1:2,124 Drawn by: AJC

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ENDNOTES

Endnote 1 Alan Everitt ‘Continuity and Colonisation - the evolution of Kentish settlement, LUP 1986’ notes that the Kent historian Hasted mentions houses and cottages ‘.. built round the little greens or forstalls, …’ and says that Fore + steall seems literally to have meant a ‘stall’, ‘enclosure’, or ‘standing place’ in front of a farmhouse. He notes that in origin forstall ‘no doubt referred to an enclosure for livestock, often perhaps a place where cattle were brought in to be milked’ and says that this word eventually became interchangeable with ‘green’. He also points out that over time, with the subdivision of farm-holding through Kent’s partible inheritance system, further farmhouses might appear around these little farm-greens.

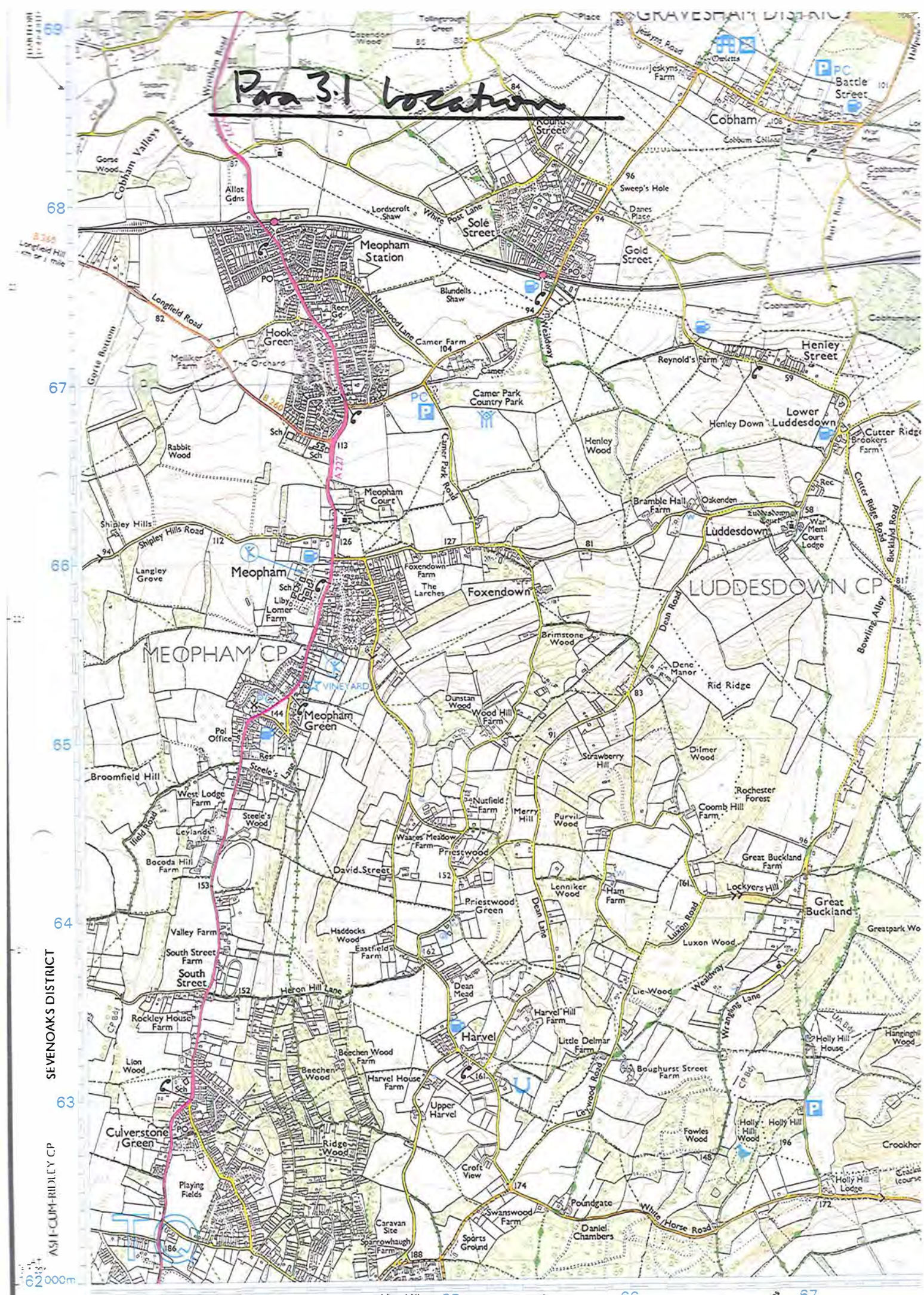
Endnote 2 Carley, J. ‘Meopham in old pictures’ Zaltbommel/Netherlands,1986 p.39.

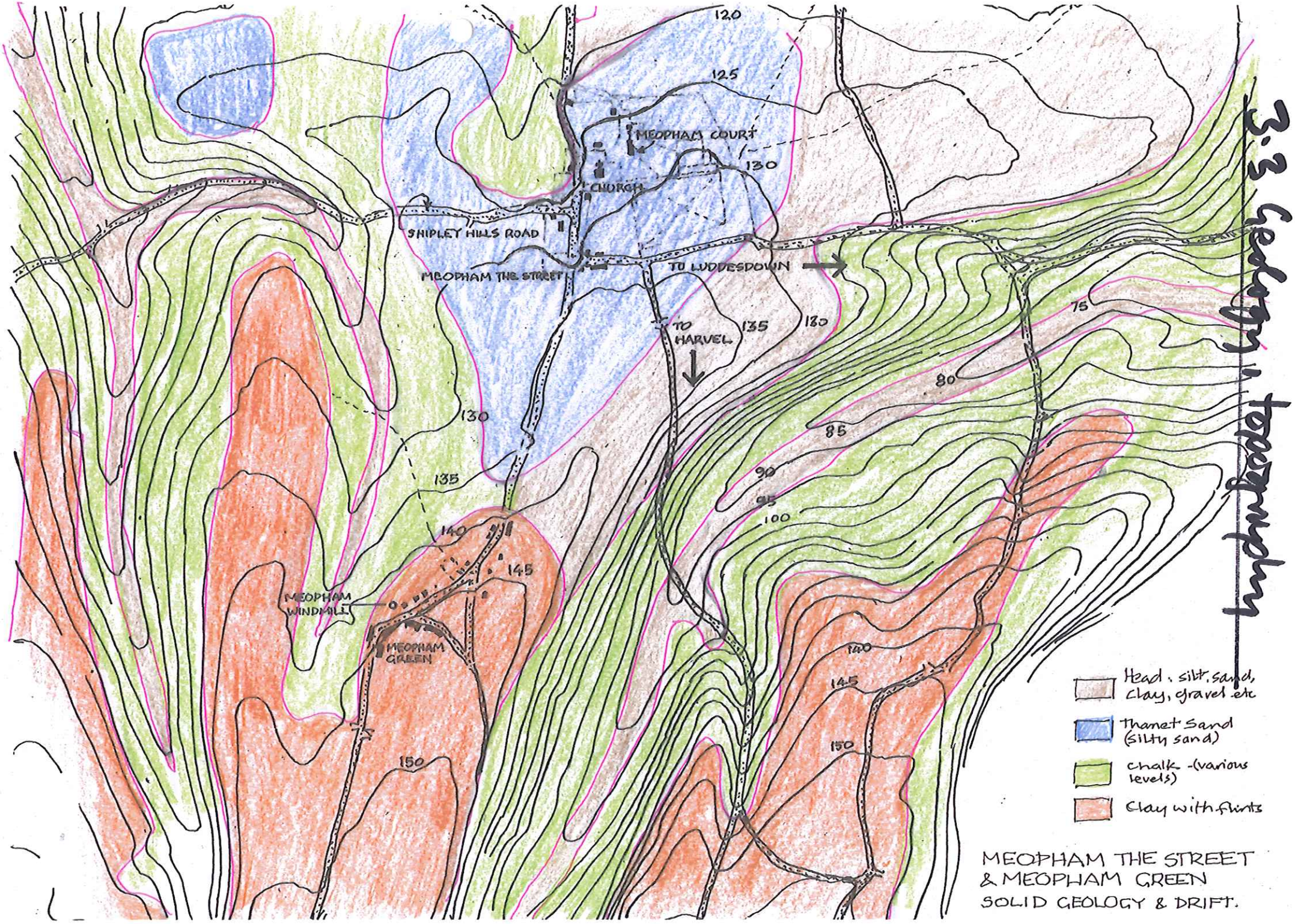
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Conservation Studio. ‘Meopham Green Conservation Area Statement’, Lewes 1999

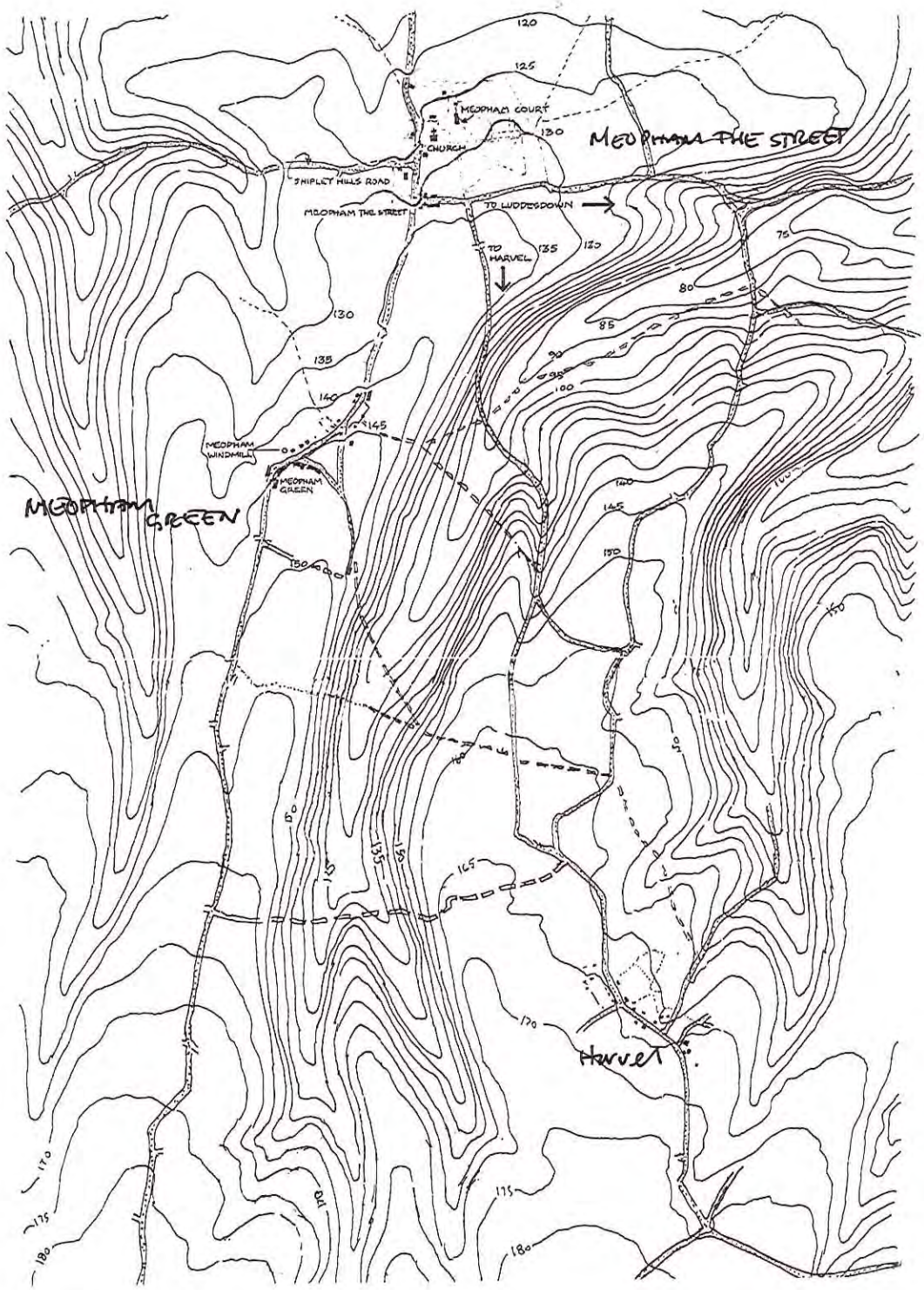
Carley, J. ‘Meopham in old pictures’ Zaltbommel/Netherlands,1986

Everitt A ‘Continuity and Colonisation - the evolution of Kentish settlement’, LUP 1986


Para 3.1 location
GRAVESHAM DISTRICT
Cobham
Battle Street
Round Street
Sweep's Hole
Danes Place
Gold Street
Solé Street
Meopham Station
Lordscroft Shaw
White Post Lane
Blundells Shaw
Norwood Lane
Camer Farm
Camer Park Country Park
Hook Green
Longfield Road
Melliker Farm
The Orchard
Rabbit Wood
Meopham Court
Camer Park Road
Henley Street
Reynold's Farm
Henley Down
Lower Luddesdown
Cutter Ridge
Brookers Farm
Henley Wood
Bramble Hall Farm
Oakenden
Luddesdown
War Meml
Court Lodge
Cutter Ridge Road
Buckland Road
Shipley Hills
Shipley Hills Road
Langley Grove
Meopham
Foxendown Farm
The Larches
Foxendown
LUDDESDOWN CP
Dean Road
Bowling Alley
Brimstone Wood
MEOPHAM CP
Dene Manor
Rid Ridge
Dunstan Wood
Wood Hill Farm
Meopham Green
Pol Office
Strawberry Hill
Dilmer Wood
Broomfield Hill
West Lodge Farm
Steele's Lane
Steele's Wood
Nutfield Farm
Merry Hill
Purvil Wood
Rochester Forest
Coomb Hill Farm
Ifield Road
Leylands
Waares Meadow Farm
Priestwood
Bocoda Hill Farm
David Street
Great Buckland Farm
Lenniker Wood
Ham Farm
Lockyers Hill
Great Buckland
Priestwood Green
Dean Lane
Luxon Road
Valley Farm
Haddocks Wood
Eastfield Farm
Luxon Wood
Greatpark Wo
South Street Farm
South Street
Heron Hill Lane
Dean Mead
Lie Wood
Wealdway
Wrangling Lane
Rockley House Farm
Harvel Hill Farm
Harvel
Little Delmar Farm
Holly Hill House
Hanginghill Wood
Lion Wood
Beechen Wood Farm
Beechen Wood
Harvel House Farm
Boughurst Street Farm
Upper Harvel
Leywood Road
Culverstone Green
Ridge Wood
Fowles Wood
Holly Hill Wood
Holly Hill
Crookhor
Croft View
Playing Fields
Poundgate
Holly Hill Lodge
Swanswood Farm
White Horse Road
Daniel Chambers
Caravan Site
Sparrowhaugh Farm
Sports Ground
Vigo Village
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT
ASH-CUM-RIDLEY CP
62000m
64
65
66
67
68
69

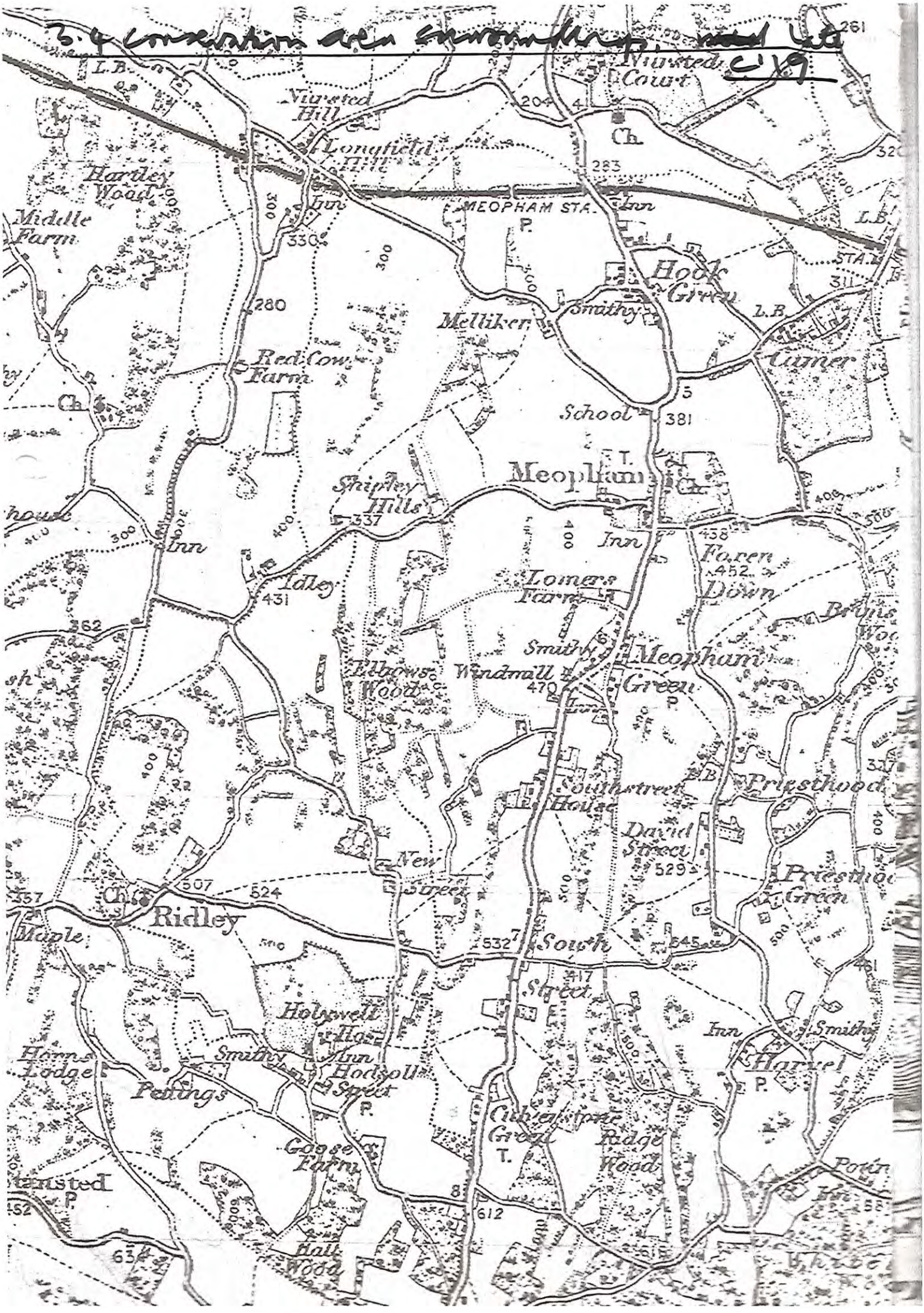

120
125
MEOPHAM COURT
130
CHURCH
SHIPLEY HILLS ROAD
MEOPHAM THE STREET
TO LUDDESDOWN
TO HARVEL
135
130
75
80
85
90
95
100
130
135
140
145
MEOPHAM WINDMILL
MEOPHAM GREEN
150
140
145
150
Head : silt, sand, clay, gravel etc
Thanet Sand (silty sand)
chalk - (various levels)
Clay with flints
MEOPHAM THE STREET & MEOPHAM GREEN SOLID GEOLOGY & DRIFT.
3.3 Geology, Topography & Hydrology

3.3 wider topography

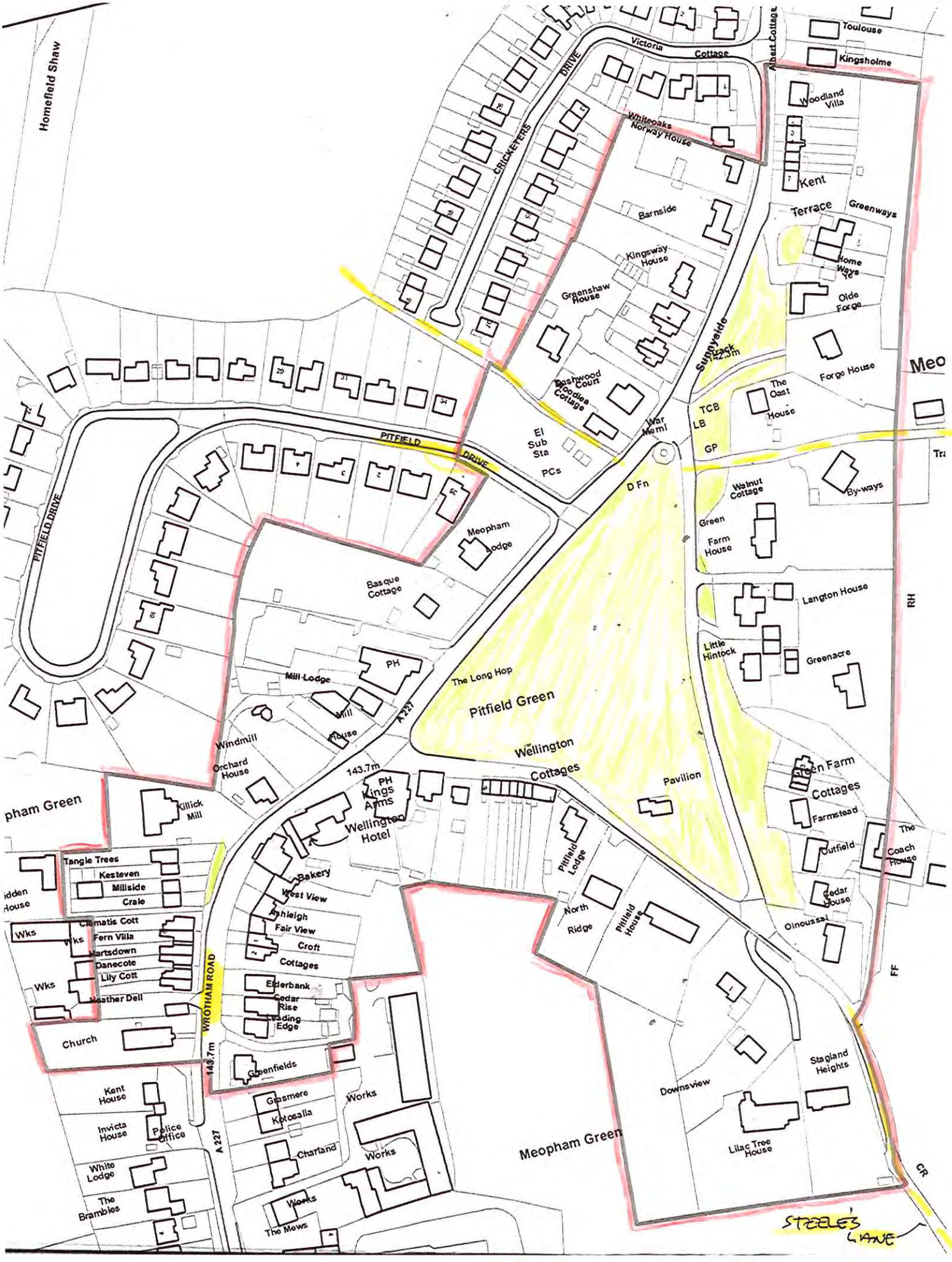



3-4 Conservation Area Surroundings
Country Park
Rabbit Wood
Sch
113
A 227
Manner Park Road
Henley Wood
Meopham Court
Shipley Hills
Shipley Hills Road
112
126
127
81
94
66
Langley Grove
Meopham
Sch
Liby
Lomer Farm
Foxendown Farm
The Larches
Foxendown
MEOPHAM CP
Brimstone Wood
VINEYARD
144
Meopham Green
Dunstan Wood
Wood Hill Farm
Pol Office
Resr
65
Steele's Lane
Broomfield Hill
Strawberry Hill
West Lodge Farm
Steele's Wood
Nutfield Farm
Merry Hill
Purvil Wood
Ifield Road
Leylands
Waares Meadow Farm
Priestwood
Bocoda Hill Farm
David Street
153
152
Lenniker Wood
Ham Farm
Priestwood Green
Dean Lane
64
Valley Farm
Haddocks Wood
Eastfield Farm
162
South Street Farm
South Street
152
Heron Hill Lane
Dean Mead
Rockley House Farm
CP Bdy
Harvel Hill Farm
Harvel
Little Delmar Farm
Lion Wood
Beechen Wood Farm
Beechen Wood
Harvel House Farm
161
Sch
63
Leywood Road
Upper Harvel
Culverstone Green
PO
Ridge Wood
Croft View
Playing Fields
174
Poundgate
Swanswood Farm
Caravan Site
Sparrowhaugh Farm
Sports Ground
Daniel Chambers
186
188
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT
ASH-CUM-RIDLEY CP

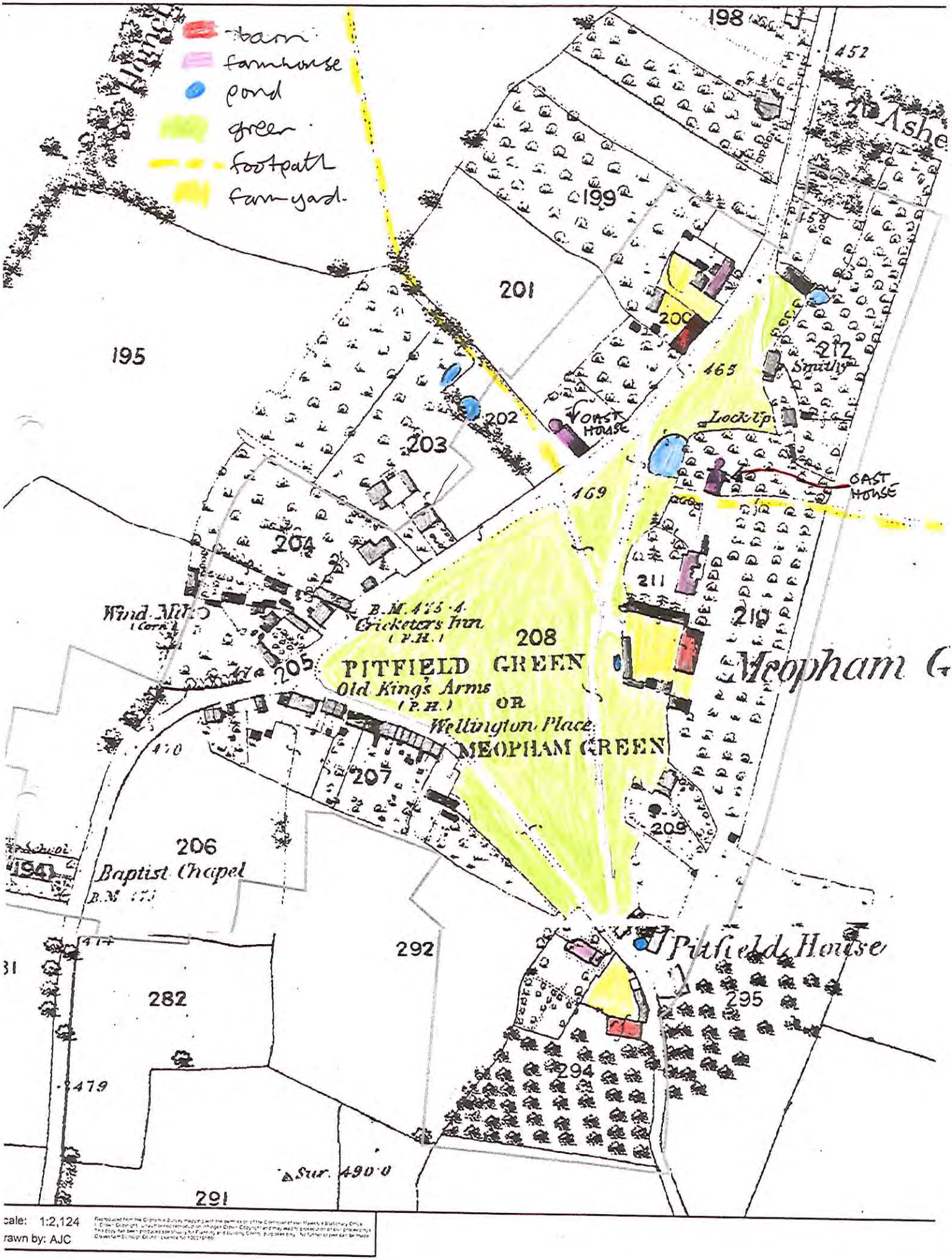
3.4 conservation area surroundings, mid late c'19



Paras 4 + 5.1 C.A boundary. Streets, paths green etc



Pms 445-1. Epoch 1. green, paths, farmsteads.



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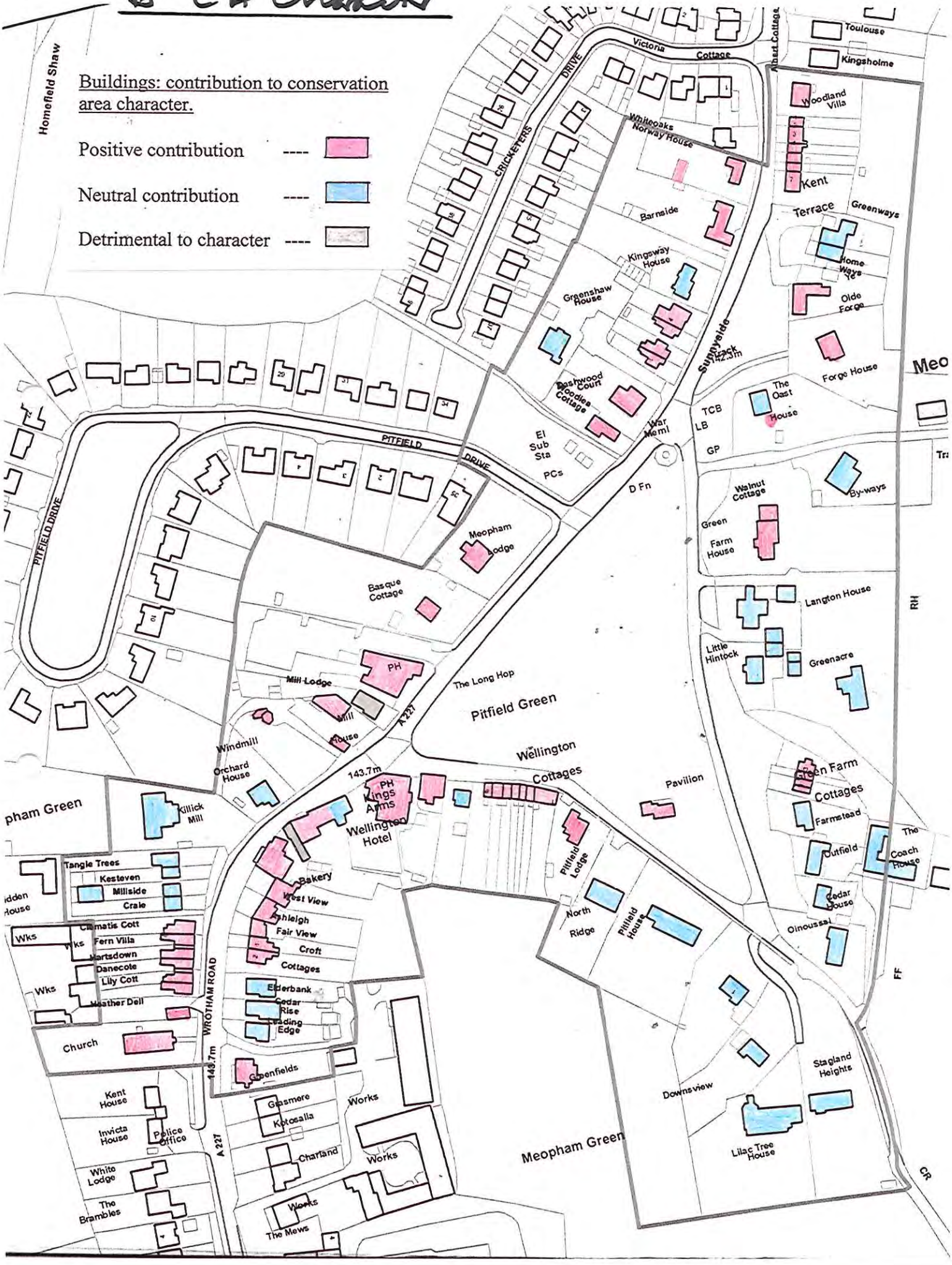
para 6.3. Buildings contributing or detrimental to CA character



7.1 Spatial Character Areas



7.2 Village Character contributing & detrimental elements other than buildings



Landmarks (or key buildings), focal points and views.

Important views contributing to the character of the conservation area ----

Important views detrimental to the character of the conservation area ----

Focal points ----

Landmark/key buildings. ----

