

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Heritage Topic Paper 2016



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INTRODUCTION

1. The conservation of heritage assets is one of the core planning principles within the NPPF (paragraph 17). As such heritage has been a consideration in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and this topic paper will outline the approach taken. The aims of the paper are:
 1. To present the evidence of heritage assets within the borough in a more comprehensive format;
 2. To show how heritage considerations have underpinned the preparation of the Local Plan; and
 3. To outline other streams of work undertaken by the council that support heritage
2. This Topic Paper has been prepared in response to the letter dated 30th June 2016 from Historic England (HE) raising concerns over the Local Plan's approach to heritage matters. In that letter, HE proposes that the preparation of a topic paper, or similar, would be an appropriate means to present the evidence of heritage assets in the borough.

HERITAGE ASSETS IN MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

3. The following chapter outlines the historic character and heritage assets in the borough using up to date information sources. In this way, it is considered that this demonstrates an up to date evidence base which identifies the significance of the heritage assets in the borough and their overall contribution in the environment, and therefore accords with the requirement of paragraph 169 of the Framework.

Overview of heritage in Maidstone Borough

4. Maidstone Borough occupies a central location within the county of Kent. The River Medway flows through the western part of the Borough and Maidstone itself lies on it. The Medway traditionally forms the boundary between the lands of the Men of Kent (East of the river) and the Kentish Men (West of the river). These traditional terms may relate to settlement by different ethnic groups in the period after the Roman withdrawal –the Jutes in eastern Kent and the Saxons in western Kent.
5. The Medway forms the main topographical feature cutting through the varied geology of the Borough which, from North to South, encompasses the chalk of the North Downs, the Upper Greensand and Gault Clay of the Vale of Holmesdale, the Greensand Ridge formed of the Lower Greensand and the Wealden Clays of the Low Weald.
6. This varied geology leads to a varied and attractive landscape of hills and vales and is also important in providing the raw materials for local building materials which contribute most significantly to the character of the area and its historic buildings. Most important amongst these are ragstone (from the Lower Greensand), Wealden Clay for brick and tile making and oak from the natural Wealden forest for use structurally in timber-framed buildings but also

to form cladding such as weatherboarding. Other examples of traditional building materials of local provenance include chalk block (not common and mainly found on minor buildings but the old maltings at Boxley is one example of its use on a larger building) and flint from the chalk of the North Downs.

Nature of the historical growth

7. Whilst Mesolithic hunter/gatherer finds are known such as the tool assemblages found at Harrietsham, it is the first farmers of the Neolithic period who make the earliest visible impact on the landscape of the Borough. The Medway Valley near Maidstone was clearly an important focus as evidenced by the impressive group of monuments known as the Medway Megaliths, most of which (such as the well-known Kit's Coty House, remains of a long barrow) are sited just outside the Borough's boundaries. The White Horse Stone is another possible such monument and is sited just inside the Borough; nearby as part of archaeological excavation in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link two possible Neolithic houses were identified.
8. Land clearance for farming and the laying out of field systems and farm settlements continued through the Bronze Age but there are no known major features of this period currently known. Towards the end of the Iron Age, however, the creation of the Boughton Quarry Camp (an oppidum or proto-town) together with its extensive defensive outworks stretching along the Greensand Ridge, represents a different scale of human settlement and intervention in the landscape and a centre of economic and political importance. In this respect it can perhaps be seen as the precursor of the town of Maidstone which was to grow up later a few miles to the North.
9. That the inhabitants of Boughton Quarry Camp were in touch with the Roman world is perhaps attested by the discovery of an amphora there. Whilst there is currently no

knowledge of any substantial Roman settlement within the borough there is plentiful evidence of the Roman presence. The route of the Roman road from Rochester to the Bodiam/ Hastings area bisects the borough and runs through the centre of Maidstone where it still forms the basis of the main North-South route through the town. Just South of Maidstone a branch turns off this road running to the port of Lympne. These routes were probably primarily of military importance in the first instance (Lympne being the headquarters of the Roman fleet in Britain) but also gave access to the iron reserves of The Weald. Other roads have been suggested along the Vale of Holmesdale towards Lenham and crossing the Medway by a ford at Maidstone to run up the Medway Valley. Although there is no definitive evidence of a town at Maidstone it is possible that there was a settlement of some kind, possibly built around a mansione (or official inn). A number of villa sites are known in the vicinity of Maidstone and it is known that the Romans exploited the nearby Ragstone deposits as the walls of Roman London are built of the stone. This was presumably shipped via the Medway and the Thames from the Maidstone area. Other Roman villas are known in Teston and East Farleigh in the Medway Valley and at Thurnham in the Vale of Holmesdale and other Roman buildings are known on the route to Lympne at Boughton Monchelsea and Sutton Valence.

10. Rome abandoned Britain in the early 5th Century AD and it is only after this time that Kent with something akin to its current boundaries evolved (originally Cantium referred only to the area east of the Medway). Land west of the Medway was incorporated before the end of the 6th Century but during the 7th and 8th Centuries pairs of kings ruled Kent, one for each half.

11. During this time royal estates emerged, one of which appears to have been based at Maidstone. Following St. Augustine's mission in 597AD bishoprics were established at Canterbury and Rochester and a number of early churches throughout Kent were founded, largely on royal estates. One of these was at Maidstone, where the church was founded in,

probably, the 7th Century. This minster church (on the site of the present All Saints church) would have been accompanied by a monastic establishment and daughter churches were established radiating out from it such as Harrietsham and Hollingbourne. The 11th Century Domesday Monachorum lists 17 daughter churches, which when plotted bear a remarkable resemblance to the spread of the current borough. The establishment of the church is probably what gave rise to the development of the settlement of Maidstone at a crossing point of the Medway. Ownership of the Manor by the Archbishop of Canterbury resulted in the foundation of the Archbishops' Palace.

12. The various daughter churches also gave rise to the growth of villages which we still recognise today, with the parish system being created in the later Saxon era. Much of the basic settlement pattern was established by the time of the Norman conquest. Another legacy of the Saxon period is the predominantly North-South road pattern of the borough, reflecting the routes from primary Saxon settlements along the line of Watling Street to their pasture lands in the Low Weald.
13. To the Normans can be ascribed the consolidation of the settlement pattern and also the introduction of a specific heritage feature – the castle. Early motte and bailey examples can be found at Stockbury, Binbury (Detling) and Thurnham and a more conventional stone-built one at Sutton Valence. The culmination of the medieval castle in the borough is represented by Leeds Castle and Allington Castle.
14. Probably in the early 12th Century the Archbishops “founded” a new town of Maidstone on a site further north than the original settlement focus and the planned layout of this development is still apparent in the town centre today. In 1395 work began on the redevelopment of the old minster church of St. Mary into the collegiate church of All Saints and the adjacent Maidstone College was built at the same time. From the 16th Century onwards Maidstone increasingly became recognised as the County Town, taking on the commercial and legal/administrative functions which came with such status. It also became

the town base for fashionable society from the surrounding country estates, with fine examples of town houses being built. From the early 19th Century shops were developed which established the flavour of the town centre as it appears today.

15. Meanwhile the agricultural hinterland and its associated villages appear to have prospered. Prosperity is attested by the large numbers of fine medieval and early post-medieval farmhouses which survive throughout the countryside; the numbers of these may also be a function of the local custom of gavelkind (partible inheritance) where land was passed down to all sons, not just the eldest. Grain was being exported to London by the 1590s and many fine threshing barns survive which illustrate the importance of this crop. In the 17th Century hops and fruit (particularly apples and pears) began to become specialist products of the area. The high acreages of hops grown gave rise to one of the most regionally distinctive building types – the oast house, whose characteristic kilns, either circular or square, with their revolving cowls are common sights throughout the countryside.
16. The 18th and early 19th Centuries saw both the modernisation of older houses, both urban and rural, with new fashionable brick (or mathematical tiled) facades in the Classical style to hide their timber-framed structure and also the development of new urban and rural houses in the same style. Some of these are particularly fine examples of their type, such as Grove House and Romney House in Maidstone or Elm House in Boughton Monchelsea. Many town and village streets now present a “Georgian” appearance despite many of the buildings actually being older. The timber-frame tradition of construction, however, continued into the 19th Century, even in the town centre of Maidstone, but masked behind brick or mathematical-tiled fronts. Even large country houses were not immune from fashionable refrontings, some of which exhibit finely detailed brickwork such as at Milgate House, Thurnham (Grade I). Elsewhere such houses were rebuilt anew, such as at Linton Park, Linton, Barham Court, Teston (where the walls and windows of the earlier 17th Century

house can still be seen in the basement) and Mote House (rebuilt in a different location within an extended park).

17. Communications began to be improved in the 18th Century with the turnpiking of major roads. In the 19th Century the arrival of the railways produced further improvements in communications, particularly with London, and provided easier export facilities for agricultural produce and other local products. The earliest line to open was the South Eastern Railway which served stations at Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn. Maidstone was reached in 1844 by a branch off this line to Maidstone West (an earlier scheme to build a station at the top of Bank Street having been resisted); it did not acquire a direct link to London until the opening of the line to Maidstone East in 1874 by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, this line being extended to Ashford via Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Lenham in 1884. Apart from the impact on trade and farming, the arrival of the railways often led to the expansion of settlements with stations.
18. This is particularly noticeable at Staplehurst where the station was sited some considerable way to the North of the original village, to which it became, however, joined by ribbon development along the Maidstone road. At Marden the station was sited at the western extremity of the original village and seems to have sparked linear development westwards along the Goudhurst Road. At Headcorn, where the station was sited to the East of the main village, development appears to have been slower, only a Station Hotel being sited near the station by the 1870s, but development linking the station to the village centre had started by the mid 1890s.
19. Such growth does not appear to have taken place on the branch line to Maidstone West where the station at Yalding remains to this day isolated and no substantial growth around East Farleigh Station seems to have occurred. In Maidstone itself, considerable expansion of housing areas took place during the 1800s, not all of this due to the railways. To the West of the Medway considerable additions to the urban area took place from the 1830s to the

1890s, largely of spacious, well-to-do suburbs although south of the Tonbridge Road the area of Fant was mainly developed with smaller terraced houses. A sizeable area on the western side of Sandling Road was developed as a very tight-knit workers' suburb, probably influenced by the proximity of the major employer of Springfield Paper Mill opposite, and other relatively high density housing areas developed to the North and South of the town centre. To the East, however, growth of the town was constrained by the presence of the large country estates at Mote Park and Vinters Park.

20. On the LCDR line, however, there appears to be little evidence of village expansion caused by the railway.
21. The railways themselves may be considered as part of the Borough's heritage and the stations at East Farleigh, and Bearsted have been listed, together with the former goods shed at Bearsted and an impressive signal box at Maidstone West.
22. In the 20th Century there has been accelerating change. Growth of car ownership from the 1920s onwards combined with a housing boom has resulted in hardly any village being immune from expansion. Unfortunately in many cases this expansion has been of a suburban character, with house designs and layouts paying little attention to the established character of villages. The 20th Century has also seen the considerable expansion of the built area of Maidstone, so that it is now joined to the formerly separate village of Bearsted for example. Despite the indifferent quality of much of this housing development, there are individual examples of 20th Century buildings which do add to the quality of the environment – a few of these are listed but others (in particular some good examples of individual post-1945 houses in Maidstone and surrounding villages) remain unprotected.
23. In conclusion, Maidstone has a wide-ranging heritage with tangible examples of buildings and monuments dating from the Iron Age right the way through to the post Second World War era. These make a vital contribution to the character and economic health of the Borough and do much to ensure local distinctiveness. It is particularly rich in timber-framed

houses dating from the 14th to the 17th Centuries and contains many fine Georgian buildings. There are also widespread examples of traditional farm buildings, including some magnificent barns and, of course, oast houses. There are many fine medieval churches as well as castles and country houses. There are monuments to industries past which have played an important part in the area's history. A good proportion of these are protected by listing or scheduling, but others remain unrecognised by such official designations. The rural parishes were the subject of comprehensive listing re-surveys in the 1980s so protection of buildings here is relatively extensive; however, the list for the town of Maidstone itself was last comprehensively revised in 1974 and it is the Council's view that it no longer fully reflects the diversity of heritage which is such an important factor in the town, particularly for buildings of the 19th and 20th Centuries. To this end the Council is engaging in discussions with Historic England, in conjunction with other initiatives, to press for a listing review of the town.

Industries that have shaped the character of the Borough

24. Particularly in the Low Weald area the 14th-16th Centuries saw the development of a successful weaving industry. Cloth halls, particularly in settlements such as Headcorn, are a visible testimony to the past importance of this industry and money from the cloth trade also funded improvements and extensions to some of the medieval churches. In Maidstone itself, weaving also became important, particularly after the arrival of Huguenot refugees in the 16th Century.
25. An early consequence of the weaving industry was the growth of fulling mills (exploiting local deposits of Fullers Earth, in the Weaverling area for example). Often these mills took over the site of previous corn mills. In time, with the demise of the cloth trade, these mills reverted sometimes to grinding grain; others, however, were utilised in the production of

paper, thus ushering in one of the most important industries in the borough. The earliest known paper mill was probably at Turkey Mill just to the east of Maidstone (before 1680) and by the mid 1800s there were nearly 40 mills in operation; it is only recently that the last one closed down. The Maidstone area has been at the forefront of paper making technology, with famous names such as Whatman and Balston being associated with local mills. The best preserved example is at Hayle Mill, Tovil, which is Grade II* listed.

26. Another industry previously important to the area was brewing; the earliest known brewery was the Lower Brewery in Stone Street, Maidstone, operating from the 17th Century onwards; the Upper Brewery in Brewer Street probably originated at roughly the same time. Both later came under the same ownership and the Upper Brewery closed in about 1820 and the site was redeveloped with housing which still exists. The Lower Brewery continued to about 1930 when it closed and became the site of Granada House. Other breweries include Fremlins in Earl Street which took over the former Heathorn Brewery in 1831 and the Medway Brewery in St. Peter Street from 1799, later to become Style and Winch and even later Courage and Barclay. These breweries were all demolished in the late 20th Century with only some vestigial structures in St. Peter's Street and the Fremlin Brewery offices and works entrance in Earl Street surviving. Another brewery at Wateringbury (largely in Tonbridge and Malling Borough) has also been demolished with only vestigial elements remaining.

27. We have already seen that ragstone from the area was utilised by the Romans. It remained an important export to other parts of the country in medieval times, both for building purposes and also for cannon balls. Quarrying probably reached its maximum in the Victorian period when the stone was much used for the construction of new churches in London and Essex. Whereas medieval quarries had essentially been small scale, often excavating along the sides of valleys as at Boughton Monchelsea, those of the 19th and early 20th Century were vast affairs such as Coombe Quarry to the south of Maidstone or those

near Otham which created large holes in the landscape. All of these have closed and been infilled and developed with little evidence remaining; only one ragstone quarry is still functioning and that is just outside the borough boundary.

28. The importance of shipping to Maidstone should also not be forgotten. The Medway was formerly tidal as far as East Farleigh and there were four landing places in the town in the 16th century. Sailing barges (some of which were built in Maidstone) ferried ragstone, timber and agricultural produce out (as well as iron ordnance and cannon balls when the Wealden iron industry was flourishing). In return, goods were offloaded at Maidstone for shipment on to the rural hinterland, or trans-shipped to smaller vessels for the voyage upstream to Tonbridge.

29. In the 19th Century engineering industries appeared in Maidstone, often originally associated with agricultural machinery. From these developed two important concerns associated with the motor trade. Firstly, Tilling Stevens in St. Peter's Street, from the 1890s, who became important commercial vehicle manufacturers in the first decade of the 20th century and whose large factory of 1917 survives today as a fine example of a "daylight factory" of reinforced concrete construction and is the earliest surviving work of the acclaimed factory architects Wallis Gilbert and Partners. Secondly, William Rootes took over the old tannery site in Mill Street, Maidstone in 1917 and used it in the production of motor cars. The tannery buildings were demolished in the 1930s and replaced by the new showrooms and workshops in a modern style in 1938-9. Both of these buildings are now listed.

Overview of the 5 rural service centres

Lenham

30. Lenham lies some 14km south-east of Maidstone. It is a large village whose centre has something of an urban character formed by its large market square. It is probably of late Saxon origin, founded on the spring line – Lenham has the sources of both the River Len, which flows westwards to join the Medway at Maidstone, and the River Stour which flows Eastwards to Canterbury and the English Channel.
31. There was probably settlement of some type here in Roman times as there are Roman bricks built into the fabric of the parish church. 6th Century burials have been discovered in the village centre.
32. In the early 9th Century the kings of Kent and Mercia granted land at Lenham to the abbot of St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury and ownership of the manor remained with his successor at the time of the Domesday survey.
33. The village grew up between the springs and at the junction of the ancient East-West route along the foot of the downs and the road over the North Downs from Faversham which was probably formed in the Saxon period as a route from the Faversham area to pasture lands in The Weald. In 1086 a right to hold a market was granted and this was held in the large market square which still exists next to the church (but which may have originally extended further South). The church itself has the dedication to St. Mary and is probably of late Saxon foundation and seems to have been a minster church. The manor house was at Court Lodge, adjacent to the church, which together with Abbey Farm formed a complex run by the abbey; it included two great tithe barns (rebuilt in the early 14th century after a fire, one of which survives to this day).
34. The basis of the economy from medieval times to the present has remained agriculture. The market flourished until the mid 18th Century, a market hall being built in its centre – this was

later altered and converted to the Chequers Inn (now a café). The Red Lion Inn, which still stands, was extant by the late 15th Century and the adjacent Dog and Bear became an inn in 1602, later becoming an important coaching inn.

35. The railway arrived at a station a little outside the village in 1884 but this appears to have stimulated little in the way of new growth. The 20th Century has seen housing development mainly to the west and south of the village centre. The centre has remained remarkably intact and contains many houses and shops of 15th-17th Century date, many faced in brick in the 18th and 19th Centuries, and there is a high concentration of listed buildings. The presence of the market square gives a strong identity and within the village centre there are few jarring elements.

36. Notable heritage assets within the village centre include the Parish Church, Court Lodge, Court Lodge Barn, the two surviving inns and the former Chequers Inn, Corner House and Wickham House in The Square, Forge House in Old Ashford Road, The Douglas Almshouses and the old village lock-up.

Marden

37. Marden lies 14km south of Maidstone and is a large village/ small market town of probable pre-Norman foundation. It lies in the Low Weald on a low ridge of gravel surrounded by Weald Clay. The first reference to its place name (which means “boundary pasture”) is circa 1100 and the village grew from a clearing made in the forest of Andradswæld to provide pasture land for the settlement of Milton Regis near Sittingbourne whose manor it remained in until the 18th Century. The village grew up at the junction of three early tracks and probably originated as a roadside settlement at this junction, perhaps accompanied by a church. Marden is not mentioned in the Domesday Book but the church is listed as a daughter church to Maidstone in the Domesday Monachorum of 1089. The present church is

a replacement probably commenced in the late 12th Century by the monks of Lesnes Abbey (at Erith on the Thames) to whom it had been granted in 1178 by the Lord of the Manor.

38. The settlement was important enough by 1283 for it to be granted a market charter, with the market area evolving in the triangular space at the junction of the present High Street, Howland Road and Albion Road. A market house was built in this space c.1360 and a 16th century successor to this still stands. There was possibly a further market place west of the church.
39. Marden was largely an agricultural community but in the 14th Century a few Flemish weavers settled in Marden and the cloth trade flourished for a while. It is possible that the 15th Century White Lyon House may have been a cloth hall. The cloth trade reached its peak in the early 17th Century but went into severe decline soon after.
40. The railway came to Marden in 1842 and seems to have led to some ribbon development at the western end of the settlement. Fruit was regularly sent from Marden to London by train.
41. Considerable expansion to the west and east occurred in the 19th and 20th Centuries and post 1945 to the south of the High Street. The original village, laid out along the three principal streets, survives quite well, with buildings of 16th-19th Century date remaining and with few jarring elements within the central part.
42. Notable heritage assets within the village centre include the parish church, White Lyon House, The Court Hall/ market hall and Cornerways.

Headcorn

43. Headcorn lies some 13km south-east of Maidstone and is a large village/ small market town of pre- or early Norman foundation. It lies in the Low Weald at the intersection of a number of early routes into The Weald, close to the River Beult.

44. Headcorn does not appear in the Domesday Book but is first mentioned by name circa 1100 and a church had probably been founded by the middle of the 11th Century as it is mentioned in the Domesday Monachorum. It was important enough by 1249/1250 for a market charter to be granted, the market being held immediately east of the church in the area where the main street is still markedly wider.
45. In the 14th Century a weaving industry grew up in Headcorn which flourished until the end of the 15th Century. At least two cloth halls were built, which both survive (The Cloth Hall and Shakespeare House) and some of the other fine surviving timber-framed houses within the village were probably built for cloth masters.
46. The market seems not to have survived into the post-medieval period and the economy was then based on arable farming and stock breeding, with fruit and hop growing becoming more important in the 18th and 19th Centuries.
47. Communications towards Maidstone and Biddenden were improved with the construction of a new road in the early 19th Century, said to have been built utilising the labour of prisoners of war from the Napoleonic Wars.
48. The railway came to Headcorn in 1842 but apart from facilitating the export of agricultural produce and bringing in the seasonal hop pickers from London, seems to have had limited impact on growth. In 1905 a branch light railway was opened from Headcorn to Tenterden but this closed in 1954.
49. The 20th Century has seen new housing developments largely sited to the North of the High Street, leaving the original settlement largely unspoiled. It clearly retains its medieval street pattern and tenement plots and retains a large number of historic buildings, all of which combine to form a high quality and attractive environment.
50. Notable heritage assets within the village include the Parish Church, The Cloth Hall, Shakespeare House, 23-25 High Street, Chequers (22 High Street), 26-28 High Street, Rushford Manor, High Street and Headcorn Manor.

Staplehurst

51. Staplehurst is a large village situated some 15km. to the south of Maidstone. It lies on the A229 Rochester to Hastings road which here follows the line of the Roman road linking Rochester to Bodiam. The village lies on a low but pronounced ridge standing above the clay lowlands of the Low Weald.
52. As with many of the Wealden villages hereabouts, Staplehurst is not mentioned in Domesday Book but this does not mean that there was no settlement. Many farms in the area have Saxon place-name elements and these probably denote early clearances of the Wealden forest – the “hurst” element in Staplehurst refers to woodland. The area would have originally been a den, or seasonal pastureland, probably for pigs, which would have been associated with a primary settlement to the north of the Weald and which gradually became settled. The current site of the village on high land away from the worst of the wet soils of the Low Weald would have formed an attractive location for development; the fact that the main road here still follows the line of the Roman road suggests that the road never went out of use and therefore would have been another impetus to development.
53. It is likely that a church existed earlier, but the current structure dates from the late 12th Century onwards. The first documentary mention of Staplehurst is in 1232. The village grew up as a simple linear settlement along the main road and originally stretched from the parish church on the brow of the hill in the south to Loddenden Manor in the north.
54. Agriculture has always been a mainstay of the local economy, but other important medieval industries included tanning and clothmaking. The Usbornes of Loddenden Manor are one local example of a family involved in tanning and there is still a listed building in the High Street called Tanyard although there is no specific evidence that tanning took place on this site. Clothmaking became important in Staplehurst in the 15th and 16th Centuries and some of the larger and more elaborate houses of this period such as Fuller House may have been the homes of clothmasters, but unlike Headcorn and Marden no cloth halls have so far been

identified in Staplehurst. The cloth trade seems to have declined from the early 17th Century.

55. A number of inns grew up in Staplehurst, spread along the main road. These included The Bell, The King's Head and The Crown, of which only The King's Head remains as a pub, the others having been converted to residential use. The King's Head is one of the oldest secular buildings in the area, having been dated to 1370-1400; other buildings nearby such as Hill Crest and Kent Cottage, are of similar age.
56. The main road was always an important feature of the village and it became an important postal route. It was turnpiked in 1759 and in 1834 the top of the hill in the High Street was lowered to ease the gradient for horse carriages – the raised pavements in the southern part of the High Street are a legacy of these works.
57. Communications were further improved by the opening of the South Eastern Railway station in 1842. This was, however, sited a considerable distance to the north of the village, where it sparked a small sub-settlement comprising a hotel and shop and some small cottages probably built for railway workers. A cattle market, served by railway sidings, grew up in Market Place in the later 19th century and survived until the 1930s. Gradually the intervening road between the station and the village began to fill with development, originally in the form of substantial villas such as Sorrento, but later with more modest dwellings, most dating from the early 20th Century. Expansion of the village is also signalled by the erection of a large new school building to the north of Loddenden Manor, erected in 1873 to the designs of a London-based architect and catering for 320 pupils.
58. The massive expansion of Staplehurst to the sizeable settlement which it is today began, however, in the post-war years, beginning with a small Council estate development to the south west of the old village centre in 1949. From 1960 onwards massive developments of private housing took place on either side of the main road which paid no respect to the character or form of the village and are essentially of suburban appearance. In 1964 a new

shopping development (The Parade) was constructed at the northern end of the original High Street, set back behind a parking area. Its alien form and undistinguished architecture have a severely detrimental impact on the setting of the conservation area which was designated only seven years later in 1971. Staplehurst remains under pressure for housing development, with a number of substantial schemes in the pipeline.

59. Notable heritage assets in the village include the parish church, Loddenden Manor, The King's Head Inn, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 The Crown and Vine House in the High Street, Bly Court Manor in Chapel Lane and Fuller House to the south in Cranbrook Road.

Harrietsham

60. Harrietsham probably has its origins in the mid-Saxon period, its church being one of the earliest of the daughter churches founded by St. Mary's minster church in Maidstone. The church was sited at the crossing of the ancient trackway along the foot of the North Downs and the track over the Downs from the Sittingbourne area. Archaeological excavations in the field to the South of the church have revealed evidence of a Saxon settlement with a road running through it and this, together with the nearby situation of Court Lodge suggest that this staggered crossroads formed the earliest nucleus of the village, the focus of which moved southwards in later years to line the road between Maidstone and Lenham. The original centre around the church and the later settlement are now joined together by largely 20th Century housing developments.
61. The current main village centre falls into two halves, West Street and East Street. There seems to have always been some separation between these but this was consolidated by first the turnpike road towards Lenham and the later improvement of this road towards Maidstone to form the A20. Although much of the traffic is now taken by the M20, this large and still quite busy road has an unfortunate effect of isolating the two halves of the village from each other.
62. The village grew up as a simple linear development along the former main road. Both halves contain historic buildings at their extremities so the settlement was always a very long one. Character is strongest in East Street, which has been designated a conservation area, but

West Street also contains a number of historic buildings, producing an attractive environment.

63. The railway came to Harrietsham in the 1880s but does not seem to have sparked much in the way of expansion.
64. Agriculture has always been the mainstay of the economy of Harrietsham, and it is notable in East Street that farmhouses and buildings are prominent features of the street.
65. Harrietsham has suffered somewhat from residential developments in the post-war years which have weakened the character in some areas, although the core areas of East Street and West Street retain most of their historic integrity.
66. Notable heritage assets include the Parish Church, Court Lodge, the 18th Century almshouses in East Street, Bell Farm in East Street (a particularly fine timber-framed house), Bell House, East Street and Malthouse, East Street.

Record of Heritage Assets

67. Maidstone Borough has many designated heritage assets in addition to locally identified non-designated sites. In turn, the designated and non-designated assets will be presented, with information about the quantity, location and quality of the heritage assets.

Conservation Areas

68. There are 41¹ conservation areas in the borough which cover both rural and urban localities.

Table 1 below provides information on the conservation areas including date of designation, whether there is an Article 4 Direction in place and whether other designations covering the same area.

¹ English Heritage Conservation Areas Survey (2010)

Table 1 - Conservation Areas in Maidstone Borough²

Conservation Area	First designation	Review date	Character Appraisal	Management Plan	Article 4 Direction	Does the Conservation Area overlap with another heritage designation?
Bearsted (Holy Cross Church)	09/06/1992		22/03/2010	22/03/2010		Listed Buildings
Bearsted	03/07/1970	19/10/1977 29/10/1999	22/03/2010	22/03/2010		Listed Buildings
Boughton Malherbe	18/07/1974					Listed Buildings
Boughton Monchelsea (Cock Street)	17/01/1990		27/02/2009	27/02/2009		Listed Buildings
Boughton Monchelsea The Green	03/07/1970	19/10/1977	26/03/2008	26/03/2008		Listed Buildings
Boughton Monchelsea The Quarries	03/07/1970	19/10/1977	27/02/2009	27/02/2009		Listed Buildings
Boxley Abbey	19/10/1977					Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Boxley	07/08/1970	19/10/1977				Listed Buildings
Broomfield	07/08/1970					Listed Buildings
Detling	07/08/1970		26/03/2008	22/03/2010		Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments
East Farleigh Dean Street	28/07/1972					Listed Buildings
East Farleigh Lower Road	19/10/1977					Listed Buildings
Elmstone Hole	19/10/1977					Listed Buildings
Grove Green	24/09/1971					Listed Buildings
Harrietsham East Street	28/05/1971					Listed Buildings

² English Heritage Conservation Areas Survey (2010)

Conservation Area	First designation	Review date	Character Appraisal	Management Plan	Article 4 Direction	Does the Conservation Area overlap with another heritage designation?
Headcorn	19/10/1977				Yes (part)	Listed Buildings
Hollingbourne Broad Street	07/08/1970					Listed Buildings
Hollingbourne Eyhorne Street	19/10/1977				Yes	Listed Buildings
Hollingbourne Upper Street	25/09/1970					Listed Buildings
Leeds Lower Street	19/10/1977					Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Leeds Upper Street	07/08/1970	19/10/1977				Listed Buildings
Lenham	02/01/1970				Yes (part)	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Linton	04/09/1970	28/01/1972	26/03/2008	22/03/2010		Listed Buildings, Registered Park and Garden
Liverton Street (Lenham)	18/07/1974					Listed Buildings
Loose Valley	21/06/2000				Yes (part)	Listed Buildings
Maidstone All Saints Church	25/01/1974		2003	2003		Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Maidstone Ashford Road	19/10/1977		26/03/2008			Listed Buildings
Maidstone Centre	19/10/1977		27/02/2009			Listed Buildings
Maidstone Chillington House	25/01/1974					Listed Buildings
Maidstone Holy Trinity	19/10/1977	29/12/1988	02/10/2007	22/03/2010	Yes	Listed Buildings
Maidstone Rocky Hill	18/07/1974					Listed Buildings
Marden	12/12/1969 and 26/11/1971	19/10/1977 (combined)				Listed Buildings
Otham	19/10/1977	09/06/1992	27/02/2009			Listed Buildings
Sandway	18/07/1974					Listed Buildings

Conservation Area	First designation	Review date	Character Appraisal	Management Plan	Article 4 Direction	Does the Conservation Area overlap with another heritage designation?
Staplehurst	28/05/1971	26/11/1987				Listed Buildings
Sutton Valence	24/09/1971					Listed Buildings
Teston	03/07/1970	19/10/1977 29/10/1999				Listed Buildings
Waterringbury	30/03/1994					Listed Buildings
West Farleigh	03/07/1970					Listed Buildings
Wormshill	19/10/1977					Listed Buildings
Yalding	03/07/1970	19/10/1977				Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments

69. The distribution of designated conservation areas across the borough is shown in the map in Appendix A. There is a cluster of 5 conservation areas in Maidstone Town Centre, plus 16 in the rest of the urban fringe and an additional 4 that straddle the urban/rural boundary. The balance of 16 conservation areas is focused in the villages of the rural area.
70. A total of 12 of the 41 conservation areas have character appraisals which are important in identifying particular assets within the area and contribute to the significance of the conservation area. These assets include listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and registered parks and gardens as well as other non-designated assets which make a positive contribution to significance. Furthermore, character appraisals identify the pressures and developments with the potential to threaten local character. Pressures on conservation areas include the cumulative impact of minor alterations such as replacement of windows and doors to individual buildings, visual intrusion of telegraph poles and overhead wires, and weak character of approach to the conservation area.
71. Management plans have been produced for 9 conservation areas which propose measures to address the threats to local character highlighted in the character appraisals. Such measures include the proposals to consider Article 4 Directions to control the cumulative impact of development. Table 1 also indicates that there are 5 conservation areas that have Article 4 Directions which are essential to restricting development that would otherwise cause harm to heritage assets.

Listed Buildings

72. Grade I Listed Buildings are, as defined by Historic England, those of exceptional interest, whilst Grade II* are those with particular importance of more than special interest and Grade II are buildings of special interest. The National Heritage List for England (as of July 2016) indicates that in Maidstone Borough there are 2023 listed buildings. Of those, the

majority (92.7%) are Grade II listed buildings with 1876 listed buildings. Table 2 shows the breakdown of listings across the borough.

Table 2 – Number of Listed Buildings designations in Maidstone Borough (July 2016)³

	Grade I	Grade II*	Grade II	Total
Maidstone	43	104	1,876	2,023
Maidstone (as a percentage)	2.1%	5.2%	92.7%	

73. The map in Appendix B shows the distribution of Listed Buildings across the borough. There is a particular cluster of Listed Buildings around the town centre. Table 3 shows the number of listed buildings within the parishes of Maidstone. Marden has the highest number of listed buildings with 129 entries, followed by Yalding (114), Staplehurst (111) and Lenham (104). The concentration of listed buildings shown on the map in Appendix B corresponds with the location of the conservation areas (Appendix A).

Table 3 – Listed Buildings by parish (July 2016)⁴

Parish	Listed Buildings	Parish	Listed Buildings
Barming	21	Langley	17
Bearsted	59	Leeds	70
Bicknor	3	Lenham	104
Boughton Malherbe	34	Linton	39
Boughton Monchelsea	78	Loose	49
Boxley	70	Marden	129
Bredhurst	10	Nettlestead	12
Broomfield and Kingswood	17	Otham	26

³ Historic England's Natural Heritage List for England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

⁴ Historic England's Natural Heritage List for England

Chart Sutton	38	Otterden	16
Collier Street	47	Staplehurst	111
Coxheath	5	Stockbury	30
Detling	25	Sutton Valence	59
Downswood	NA	Teston	23
East Farleigh	37	Thurnham	25
East Sutton	36	Tovil	20
Frinsted	7	Ulcombe	36
Harrietsham	61	West Farleigh	27
Headcorn	89	Wichling	5
Hollingbourne	76	Wormshill	14
Hucking	8	Yalding	114
Hunton	71		
Total		1718	

Scheduled ancient monuments

74. The National Heritage List for England also includes Scheduled Ancient Monuments. As of July 2016 there are 26⁵ scheduled monuments across Maidstone Borough. Table 4 provides a complete list of the designated monuments which include bridges and medieval moated sites.

Table 4 – List of Schedule Ancient Monuments in Maidstone Borough (July 2016)⁶

Name of Scheduled Ancient Monument	Location
Building crop mark, possibly 'Corbier Hall'	Thurnham
Sherway Bridge	Smarden/Headcorn
Lock-up, Lenham	Lenham
Boughton Quarry camp	Loose/Boughton

⁵ The number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments differs from that stated in the submitted Local Plan (paragraph 3.5) due to de-scheduling undertaken by Historic England

⁶ Historic England's Natural Heritage List for England

Name of Scheduled Ancient Monument	Location
	Monchelsea
Len Bridge, Mill Street	Maidstone
Laddingford Bridge near Yalding	Yalding
Earthwork in Milbay's Wood	Nettlestead
White Horse Stone, Aylesford	Boxley/Aylesford
Tithe Barn, Mill Street	Maidstone
Teston Bridge, over the Medway	West Farleigh/Teston
Twyford Bridge in Yalding parish	Yalding
Yalding Bridge	Yalding
East Farleigh Bridge, over the Medway	East Farleigh/Barming
The 'Gatehouse', Palace Gardens, Mill Street	Maidstone
Ringwork and baileys at Church Farm	Stockbury
Binbury motte and bailey castle	Thurnham
Leeds Priory: Augustinian Priory of St Mary and St Nicholas with associated dovecotes and slype, and the site of the 18th Century Meredith mansion	Leeds
The College of All Saints	Maidstone
Thurnham motte and bailey castle	Thurnham
Cistercian Abbey at Boxley	Boxley
Medieval moated site, East Sutton	East Sutton
Medieval moated site, Lovehurst Manor	Staplehurst
Medieval moated site, fishpond and paddock boundary, Coldbridge Farm, Egerton	Egerton/Boughton Malherbe
Moot Mound 400m west of Knox Bridge	Staplehurst
Tower keep castle at Sutton Valence	Sutton Valence
Medieval moated site, Ripple Manor	Hollingbourne

75. The distribution of these scheduled monuments is shown in Table 4 and on the map in Appendix C, with a particular concentration of monuments in the north west of the borough in the parishes of Boxley, Detling, Thurnham, West Farleigh and East Farleigh as well as the town centre. Two of the scheduled ancient monuments straddle the boundary with

neighbouring local authority boundaries, these sites are Sherway Bridge and a medieval moated site at Coldbridge Farm in Egerton.

76. Among the important monuments located in the borough are a major Iron Age settlement and surrounding defensive bank and ditch at Boughton Quarry Camp; Medieval bridges over the Medway at Yalding, Teston and East Farleigh; Medieval monastic sites at Leeds Priory and Boxley Abbey; the Maidstone College of All Saints; Medieval moated sites such as Lovehurst Manor; Medieval castle ruins at Sutton Valence Castle.

Historic parks and gardens of special interest

77. Parks and gardens which are of particular significance for their designed landscape that reflects the characteristics of landscaping of the time are included on the Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Interest⁷.

78. Maidstone Borough contains five sites included on the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens – Leeds Castle, Linton Park, Boughton Monchelsea Place, Chilston Park and Mote Park (table 5). All of these consist of extensive parkland associated with country houses. They include examples of the works of well-known garden and landscape designers (Russell Page at Leeds Castle, J C Loudon at Linton Park). Some have evolved from medieval deer parks (Mote House and Boughton Monchelsea Place). All contain archaeological evidence of former garden and landscape layouts.

⁷Historic England website provides further guidance <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

Table 5 – Complete list of historic parks and gardens of national special interest on the Historic England Register (July 2016)

Historic England Register	Grade
Boughton Monchelsea Place	Grade II
Chilston Park, Lenham	Grade II
Leeds Castle	Grade II*
Linton Park	Grade II*
Mote Park, Maidstone	Grade II

79. As a county, Kent has 61 registered historic parks and gardens of special interest on the Historic England register, with an average of approximately 5 per local authority. When compared to the whole of Kent, the number of parks and gardens within the borough is approximately average.

80. The map in Appendix D shows the spatial distribution of the parks across the borough. They are focused around the central parishes of Leeds, Broomfield and Kingswood, Boughton Monchelsea and Linton, with Chilston Park located to the east, straddling Lenham and Boughton Malherbe.

81. In addition to these registered sites, a large number of other parks and gardens of local interest have been identified in the Kent Gardens Compendium by the Kent Gardens Trust. In total there are 53 historic parks and gardens on the record, which includes the 5 mentioned previously. Table 6 shows the remaining 48 historic parks and gardens within Maidstone Borough.

Table 6 – Complete list of historic parks and gardens of local special interest on the Kent Gardens Compendium (July 2016)⁸

Kent Gardens Compendium	
Allington Castle	Parsonage Farm, Boxley
Archbishops Palace, Maidstone	Penenden Heath Recreation Ground
Bramley, Otham	Placketts Hole, Bicknor
Brenchley Gardens, Maidstone	Rock Cottage, Boughton Monchelsea
Clare Park Recreation Ground, Maidstone	Rock Farm, Nettlestead
Cobtree Manor Park, Maidstone	Roydon Hall
Congelow House, Yalding	Shirley House, Sutton Valence
Court Lodge, West Farleigh	South Park, Maidstone
Elmscroft, West Farleigh	Southover, Hunton
Gore Court, Otham	Stoneacre, Otham
Greenhill House, Otham	The Dower House, Chilston Park
Hollingbourne House	The Limes, Otham
Hunton Court	The Oast House, Otham
Husheath Manor	The Old Parsonage, Sutton Valence
Kingsbroom, Kingswood	Thurnham Friars, Thurnham
Land associated with Chilston Park	Timbold Hill House, Frinsted
Land associated with Chilston Park	Torry Hill Park
Land associated with Otterden Park	Turkey Court, Maidstone
Land associated with Torry Hill Park	Ulcombe Place
Land associated with West Farleigh Hall	Upper Mill Cottage. Loose
Leeds Abbey	Vinters Valley Nature Reserve, Maidstone
Loddington House	West Farleigh Hall
Nettlestead	Whitehurst, Chainhurst
Otterden Park	Wierton Place

82. Some of these parks and gardens also relate to parklands associated with country houses such as Gore Court, Otham, Hunton Court, Hunton, Leeds Abbey (where the house has long

⁸ Kent Garden Compendium

since disappeared but where it is known that Capability Brown was involved in landscaping) and Otterden Place. Other entries relate to smaller gardens associated with more modest dwellings, some of them notable for their planting rather than their landscape importance. There are also examples of 19th Century urban parks such as that around the Archbishops' Palace in Maidstone and Brenchley Gardens in Maidstone (the latter an example of the work of the well-known Victorian designer Alexander McKenzie and designated as a conservation area).

Heritage at risk

83. Historic England maintains a record of designated heritage assets which are at risk. The list includes conservation areas, listed buildings, and scheduled ancient monuments. As of July 2016, the borough of Maidstone has 14 designated heritage assets considered to be at risk shown in table 7. In total across the county there are 131 heritage assets at risk, therefore the borough of Maidstone is slightly above the Kent average of 10 per local authority.
84. The condition of designations on the heritage at risk register varies from 11 Lower Stone Street regarded as fair to Leeds Priory with extensive significant problems. There are 7 listed buildings in the borough at risk, including 4 Grade I Listed Places of Worship. There are a further 5 scheduled monuments on the register and 2 conservation areas at risk, including the Maidstone Centre which is considered to be in a very bad condition.
85. Maidstone Centre Conservation Area is classified as being in a very bad condition due to a loss of historic detail from inappropriate alterations particularly to unlisted buildings, vacancy rates and condition of the public realm (including advertisements, street clutter, street furniture, traffic). In response, in addition to public realm improvements to the High Street completed in 2013, Maidstone Borough Council has bid for Heritage Lottery Funding

of £2 million to fund the regeneration of Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street. More detail of both these schemes can be found later in this paper.

Table 7 – Designations at risk within Maidstone Borough (July 2016)⁹

Designation	Category of designation	Condition
Elmstone Hole, Grafty Green, Boughton Malherbe	Conservation Area	Poor
Maidstone Centre	Conservation Area	Very bad
All Saints, Ulcombe Hill, Ulcombe	Listed Place of Worship grade I	Poor
Church of St Mary, Lenham	Listed Place of Worship grade I	Poor
Church of St Nicholas, Lower Street, Leeds	Listed Place of Worship grade I	Poor
Parish Church of All Saints, Mill Street, Maidstone	Listed Place of Worship grade I	Poor
Leeds Priory: Augustinian Priory of St Mary and St Nicholas with associated dovecotes and slype, and the site of the C18 Meredith Mansion, Leeds	Scheduled Monument	Extensive significant problems
Binbury motte and bailey castle, Thurnham	Scheduled Monument	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems
Boxley Abbey Barn, Boxley Abbey, Boxley	Scheduled Monument	Poor
St Andrews Chapel, Boarley Lane, Boxley Abbey, Boxley	Listed Building grade II*	Poor
Dovecotes at Leeds Priory, Lower Street, Leeds	Scheduled Monument	Very bad
11, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone	Listed Building grade II*	Fair
Slype and associated remains at Leeds Priory, Lower Street, Leeds	Scheduled Monument	Very bad

⁹ Historic England's Heritage at risk register <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

The Dungeons at the Archbishop's Palace, Mill Street, Maidstone	Listed Building grade II*	Poor
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Defence Heritage

86. The Kent's Defence Heritage report carried out in 2001 by Kent County Council provides a comprehensive assessment of defence heritage in the borough by identifying specific sites and assessing their degree of survival and historic significance. The report provides a detailed analysis of individual defence heritage assets and outlines the historical background, archaeological potential, tourism potential and public accessibility among other factors.

87. Within the borough there are 14 entries which include pillboxes at Delting Airfield, Yalding GHQ Line and Teston GHQ Line, and 7 Castles.

Archaeological Heritage

88. In accordance with paragraph 169 of the Framework, the council has access to the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) which is maintained by Kent County Council. The HER records archaeological sites as well as other heritage assets such as listed buildings, monuments, crash sites and maritime records. Within the borough there are 6395 entries on the HER database and this shows that the borough has rich archaeological history and potential.

89. Work undertaken by Kent County Council has identified areas of archaeological significance across the county and the results are presented in the Kent Historic Towns Surveys. In total, 5 surveys were conducted for Maidstone Borough covering Maidstone Town Centre, Yalding, Lenham, Headcorn, and Marden.

90. The surveys form part of the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey which sought to evaluate the archaeological potential and the subsequent impacts from development on historic towns. It was originally prepared as part of a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG 3) to the Kent and Medway Structure Plan¹⁰.

91. Within the surveys, the archaeological potential of the historic towns was classified using 4 archaeological zones. Table 8 below indicates the archaeological zone in each town.

Table 8 – Types of archaeological zones

	Maidstone Town Centre	Yalding	Lenham	Headcorn	Marden
Zone 1 (areas of known national importance)	Yes	Yes			
Zone 2 (areas of known archaeological potential where clarification of the nature of this potential is required)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zone 3 (areas where archaeological potential is thought to be lower)					Yes
Zone 4 (areas in which archaeological remains have been completely removed)					

Sites of local significance

92. Within central Maidstone, many heritage assets have been identified as locally significant and are included on the Local List. The list seeks to preserve locally significant heritage assets which have not been designated as nationally significant and acts as a material consideration when determining planning applications. The Local List only covers central

¹⁰ Appendix I of the Kent Historic Towns Survey for Maidstone

Maidstone; this is because rural sites were relisted at a different time. When the rural sites were re-surveyed in the 1980s, most of the Grade III (locally listed buildings) were upgraded to grade II.

93. The Local List was compiled by the Secretary of State as an appendix to the 1974 statutory list. Otherwise sites are identified on an ad hoc basis and are selected based on a site meeting at least two of the following criteria:

- a. Architectural significance – a building or structure which is valued for its design
- b. Historic importance – a building or structure which is associated with an important local or national event or person
- c. Community significance – a building or structure which is valued by the local community for its social history
- d. Environmental significance – a building or group of buildings which contributes positively to the local townscape or landscape
- e. Authenticity – a building or structure which is in a reasonable state of preservation

94. In total there are 46 entries on the Maidstone Borough's Local List (2011). The list consists of residential and commercial properties dating back to as early as the 15th Century.

Unidentified Heritage

95. The Framework indicates that data collated on the known heritage assets can be used to predict the likelihood of the discovery of unidentified sites of historic and archaeological interest in the future¹¹. Whilst such prediction cannot be done with a high level of certainty, the contextual analysis of the borough's heritage in the overview of heritage in Maidstone Borough section above points towards the particular influences on the borough's heritage. Such influences include works associated with paper making and other industries and

¹¹ NPPF paragraph 169

agricultural buildings as well as a greater number of 19th and 20th Century buildings or sites. It can be expected that sites and features associated with these processes might continue to be identified for their historical interest in the future. Overall, it is likely that non-designated heritage assets will be identified incrementally, in particular through the development management process.

HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN THE LOCAL PLAN

96. The Local Plan makes reference to studies that aims to consider the role that heritage plays in enhancing the natural and built environment. The findings of such studies have underpinned the content of the Local Plan. Each document will be discussed in turn.

Local Plan supporting evidence

Town Centre Study

97. The Town Centre Study (CEN 002) published in 2010 provides an analysis of the opportunities within the town centre for growth of employment, retail and leisure. In doing so it considers the historic growth of the town centre and the role that heritage and conservation plays in enhancing the town centre. The study draws on information produced in conservation area appraisals to summarise the important assets within the conservation area; what threats there are and the steps future development must take to prevent further damage. In total, six of the 41 conservation areas in the borough are within the town centre.

They are:

- a. All Saints Conservation Area;

- b. Maidstone Centre Conservation Area;
- c. Holy Trinity Conservation Area;
- d. Maidstone Ashford Road Conservation Area;
- e. Maidstone Rocky Hill Conservation Area; and
- f. Maidstone Chillington House Conservation Area.

Landscape Character Assessment

98. The Council commissioned the Landscape Character Assessment (2012) (ENV 001) which identified 58 specific character areas in the rural areas of the borough. For each character area the presence and significance of heritage features is outlined to form a complete assessment of the key characteristics. The assessment provides recommendations for mitigation and improvements, within which consideration of the impact on heritage assets and the wider landscape is made.

99. The Landscape Character Assessment Supplement (2012) (ENV 001(A)) provides landscape and design guidance that reflects the specific character areas outlined in the Landscape Character Assessment. The supplement identifies conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, and sites of archaeological interest among the issues that have specific guidance.

100. The Council's approach to integrate heritage as part of the Landscape Character Assessment conforms with paragraph 170 of the Framework.

Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study: Sensitivity Assessment

101. In 2015, further work was commissioned to assess the sensitivity of landscapes identified in the 2012 Landscape Character Assessment to development in a Landscape Capacity Study (ENV 014(A)). Each individual landscape is assessed on its landscape

character sensitivity and visual sensitivity with a score of high, moderate or low. The presence and protection of heritage assets is integral to these assessments and the proposed mitigation that follows.

102. Further work was done to assess the particular sensitivity of specific sites within the LCAs to change through development (ENV 014(B)). This work helped to inform the selection of sites for allocation in the Local Plan.

SHEDLAA

103. The Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment (SHEDLAA) (HOU 007) assesses the suitability of sites for housing and economic development for inclusion in the Local Plan. Sites were identified through a series of call for site exercises, further site identification work and omission sites resulting from the consultation process.

104. Proposed sites were assessed by officers with the guidance of specialist advice from national and local stakeholders. Notably, advice was sought from the Maidstone Borough Council's Heritage, Landscape and Design team and Kent County Council's Archaeology team. Sites were assessed on the timing of delivery, achievability based on barriers to development and market attractiveness, availability of the site and suitability.

105. The SHEDLAA assessment of suitability of development allocations uses up-to-date information about the heritage assets and archaeological remains present, assesses the potential impacts of development with expert inputs and considers the scope for mitigation where impacts are identified.

Sustainability Appraisal

106. The protection of the historic environment is a central theme in the Sustainability Appraisal of Maidstone Local Plan (2016) (SUB 002). The appraisal provides a brief description of the heritage assets in Maidstone Borough. Particular attention is given to the heritage assets which are included on the Historic England Risk Register as of 2014. It is noted that whilst some assets have been downgraded in risk, Boxley Abbey Barn and The Diary at Cobham Hall have seen an increase in risk from E to C categorisation.
107. The appraisal outlines sustainability issues which have been used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal objectives. Objective 14 requires the local plan to “protect, enhance and make accessible for the enjoyment, the Borough’s countryside, open space and historic environment”.
108. In assessing the options for housing, employment and mixed use, and gypsy and traveller sites, each site is assessed based on the impact of heritage. A series of appraisal questions are asked of each site which cover whether the allocation is likely to impact upon a scheduled ancient monument, a listed building or conservation area, or whether the site lies within an area with significant archaeological features or potential.

Supporting documents

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

109. In June 2016 Maidstone Borough Council published its Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (ENV 017) with a vision of “Greener, healthier, attractive towns and villages sustainably connected to the rich tapestry of distinctive landscapes, wildlife habitats and waterways – valued, enjoyed and cared for by local people”.

110. The strategy outlines key landscapes and factors that form part of the green and blue infrastructure of the borough, and acknowledges parks and gardens of historic interest, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas as key contributors. Among the 7 objectives to achieve the strategy's vision, is "Theme 3: Promoting a distinctive townscape and landscape" which outlines the importance of the natural and cultural heritage of the borough in creating a distinctive landscape that in turn generates economic success. Thus, it is recognised that natural and cultural heritage assets that are vulnerable to damage from development should be protected and enhanced.

111. Overall, the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy can be seen to recognise the important role of heritage to the overall quality of life in the borough.

Maidstone Borough Local Plan

Site allocation policies

112. The Local Plan provides site allocation policies covering housing, gypsy and traveller, retail and mixed use, and employment allocation sites. The allocation policies include site specific measures which seek to control development. Importantly, measures to enhance or protect heritage assets have been included where potential impacts have been identified.

Policy DM 3 Historic and natural environment

113. Policy DM3 in the submission Local Plan is a combined policy which encompasses both the natural and historic environment. The Council is now proposing that a better approach is to have a dedicated policy for the historic environment. The proposed policy is set out as part of the response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions (Session 4 – Environmental

Constraints). The Council considers that the new policy should be a Proposed Modification to the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood plans

114. The preparation of neighbourhood plans gives the opportunity for specific, locally attuned policies which support heritage to be developed and to eventually become part of the Development Plan for the relevant parish or neighbourhood area. Many of the neighbourhood plans being prepared in Maidstone Borough include specific heritage policies.

115. For example, North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2031 (ORD 025) which was made in April 2016 has integrated the need to limit the impact of development on heritage within its sustainable development policy. Further neighbourhood plans which are currently being prepared are also identifying heritage as a specific, local issue. Notably Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (ORD 028), Headcorn Matters – Headcorn Parish Neighbourhood Plan: 2011-2031 (ORD 027) and Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan, Submission Plan 2015-2031 (ORD 026) all look into heritage in more detail, each with a specific policy on the impact of development on heritage.

OTHER HERITAGE INITIATIVES IN MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

116. In addition to steps taken within the planning process and the creation of planning policy, there are other actions that can be taken to support heritage in the borough. The next section outlines schemes and strategies which have been implemented to drive economic

development in Maidstone Borough all of which consider heritage and the role that it can play in regeneration.

Town Centre Regeneration

117. Significant public realm enhancements were carried out in 2013 to High Street in Maidstone Town Centre¹² to create a more pedestrian friendly environment and reduce the impact of vehicles. The improvements included new seating and pedestrian areas in Remembrance Square and Jubilee Square, with new paving throughout. The design of the paving scheme echoes the local history of the area. The redevelopment was a joint scheme between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council, with a total investment of £3.1 million.

Heritage Lottery Funding

118. The Council has actively sought Heritage Lottery Funding for schemes within the borough.

Successful bids include:

1. Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery – Almost £2 million was awarded to fund improvements to the museum and gallery. The improvements aimed to increase the amount of artefacts on display and improve the learning facilities.
2. Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery – £79,000 of Heritage Lottery Funding for refurbishment and creation of an Ancient Civilisation Gallery showcasing internationally important collections from ancient Thebes, Alexandria and across Greece. The funding enables a new, purpose built gallery and opportunities for community engagement including events specifically for young people, facilities for the visual impaired and a paid internship to research Greek archaeology.

¹² <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/business/regeneration/maidstone-high-street>

119. A bid was submitted in August 2016 for a grant of up to £2 million to regenerate Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street within Maidstone Town Centre. The funding, alongside £3 million allocated for the regeneration of the north end Week Street, will be used to restore historic shopfronts, improve outdoor spaces and buildings along Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street.

Economic development, cultural and tourism related strategies

120. A positioning report has been commissioned into Maidstone's Culture and Heritage. The report acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of the heritage and cultural offering. In addressing some of the issues faced by the town centre potential actions are proposed. One such problem is the inaccessibility of character and heritage assets within the town centre due to poor public realm and transport infrastructure. To overcome this problem a town centre Heritage Zone is proposed. The Heritage Zone will enhance the cultural and heritage offering through increasing connectivity, public art installations and lighting.

121. A Destination Management Plan was produced in July 2015 with the aim of outlining the factors that make Maidstone Borough a special and attractive destination through the creation of a "Shared Story". The "Shared Story" aims to guide those working in the tourism and visitor economy on how best to invest in improvements and new experiences with the hope of strengthening the unique selling points of the area. The management plan acknowledges that heritage is integral in the creation of an attractive tourist destination.

122. The Maidstone Economic Development Strategy 2015-2031¹³ (June 2015) (ORD 005) also identifies heritage as an avenue to guide development in the future. The strategy outlines a vision of making Maidstone "a model 21st century county town, a distinctive place, known for its blend of sustainable rural and urban living, dynamic service sector-based economy,

¹³ <https://www.businessinmaidstone.co.uk/media/1140/maidstone-final-economic-development-strategy.pdf>

excellence in public services and above all, quality of life". It has been previously recognised that Leeds Castle is an important heritage asset, and along with the Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery the strategy states that they are important tourist destinations within the borough. The Maidstone Economic Development Strategy acknowledges that a fundamental challenge to Maidstone Borough is to capture a greater share of south east tourism and to capitalise on its heritage.

Other examples of heritage schemes

123. Heritage England's Urban Panel¹⁴ is used to advise local authorities, development agencies and others on regeneration on historic cities and towns. Maidstone town has been selected for a visit by the panel in the next 6 months.

CONCLUSION

124. To conclude, in presenting information about the borough's heritage assets and the attendant studies in a more comprehensive format, the topic paper has affirmed that the Local Plan has been prepared with relevant understanding of heritage stemming from up to date and proportionate evidence¹⁵.

125. The topic paper has helped to draw together the sources of information and analysis on the historic environment in Maidstone Borough and thereby affirm that this information is readily available and accessible as required by paragraph 141 of the Framework.

¹⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/who-we-are/committees-and-panels/urban-panel/>

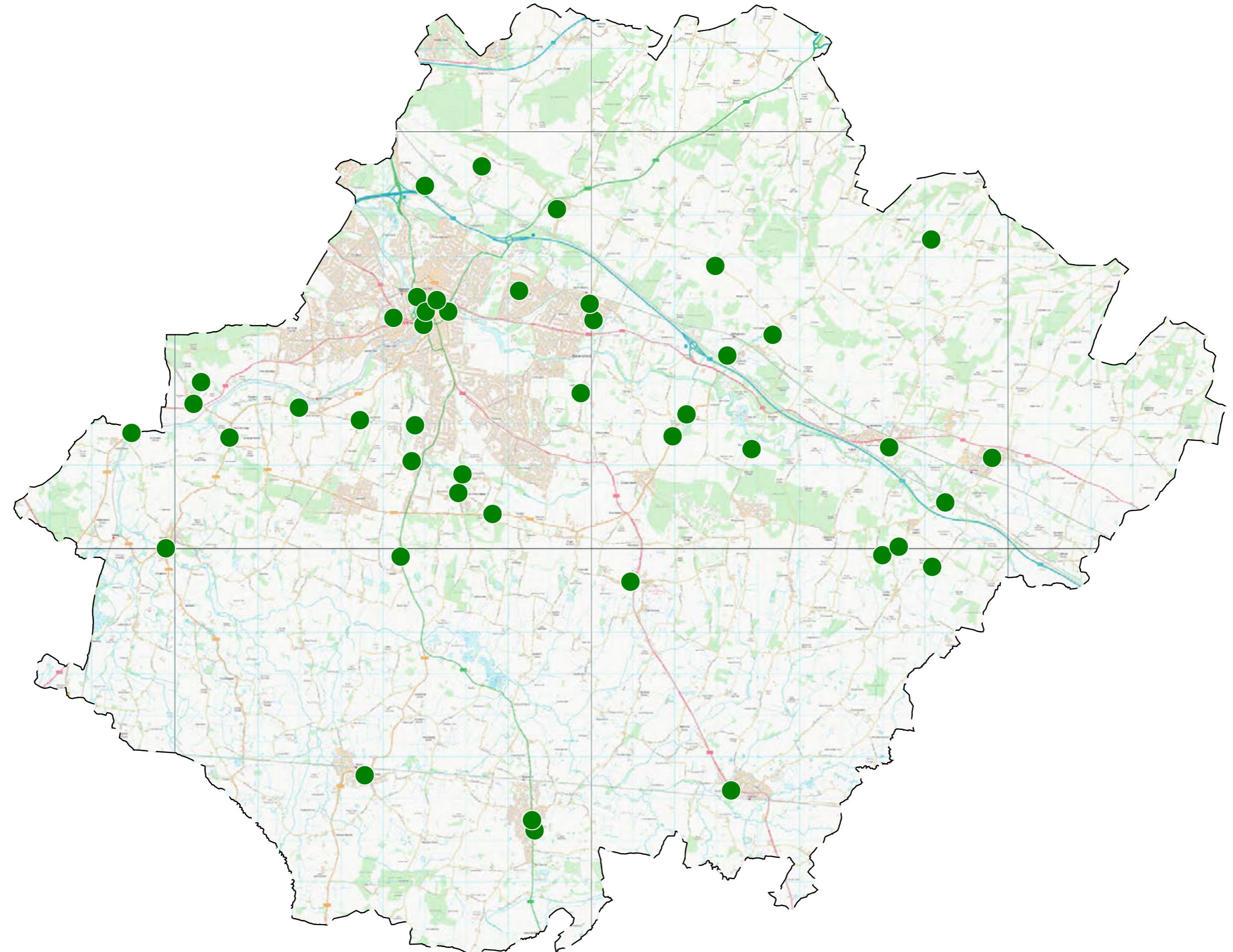
¹⁵ NPPF paragraph 158

126. The preparation of the Local Plan has been underpinned by supporting documents such as the SHEDLAA and the Landscape Character Assessment for which heritage is an important input. In assessing potential development sites the SHEDLAA and the Sustainability Appraisal have helped to identify potential impacts and the scope for mitigation in reaching conclusions about the overall suitability of sites for development.

127. The proposed dedicated policy for the historic environment will present a positive strategy for heritage, will provide a strategic policy framework and will set out the more specific policy criteria and considerations needed for the development management process.

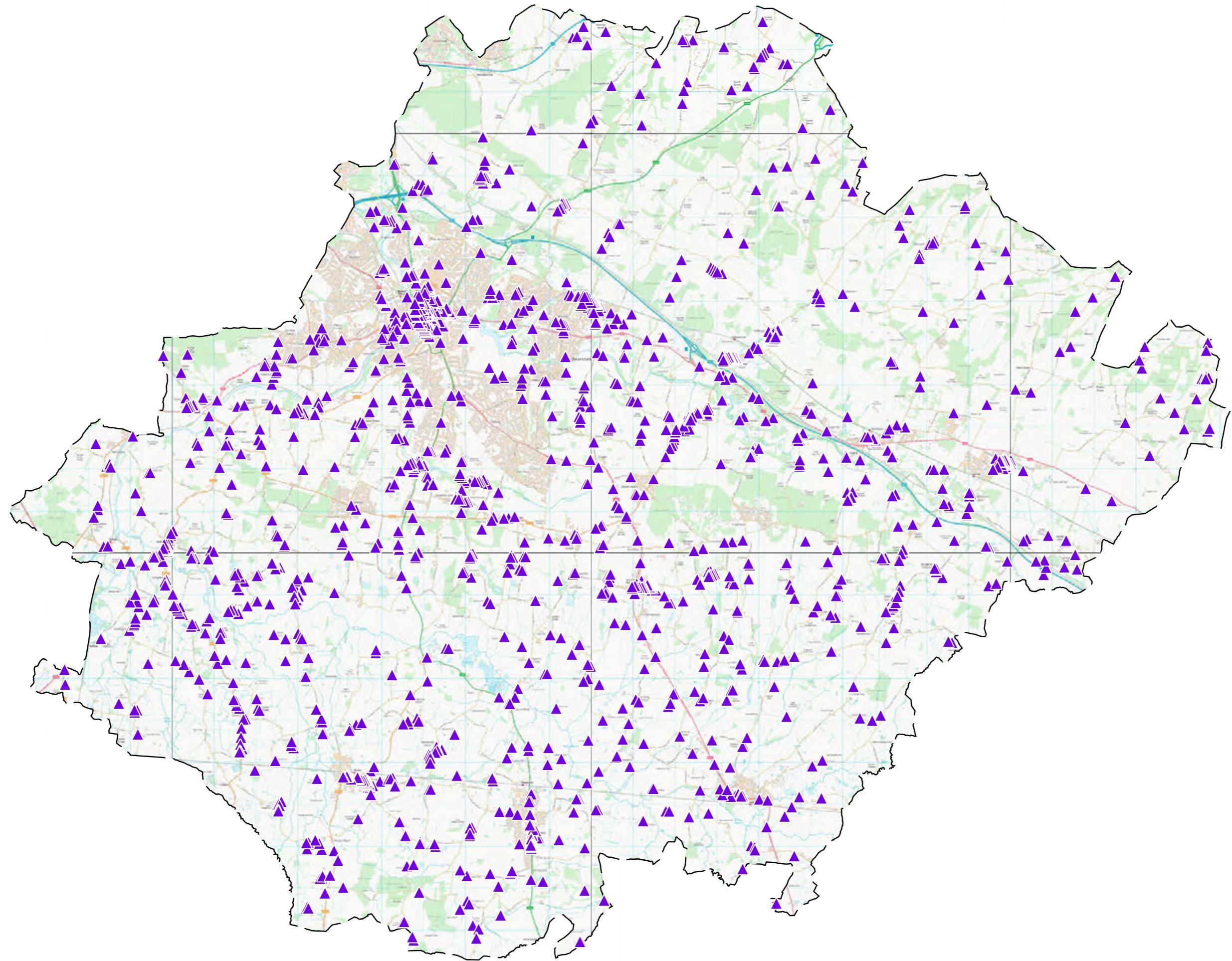
128. Furthermore, the Topic Paper has touched on the prospects for unidentified heritage assets to be identified in the future as outlined in paragraph 169 of the Framework.

129. In addition to work undertaken in preparation of the Plan, the Topic Paper has highlighted other streams of work in the borough that support heritage, notably ongoing regeneration schemes in Maidstone Town Centre.



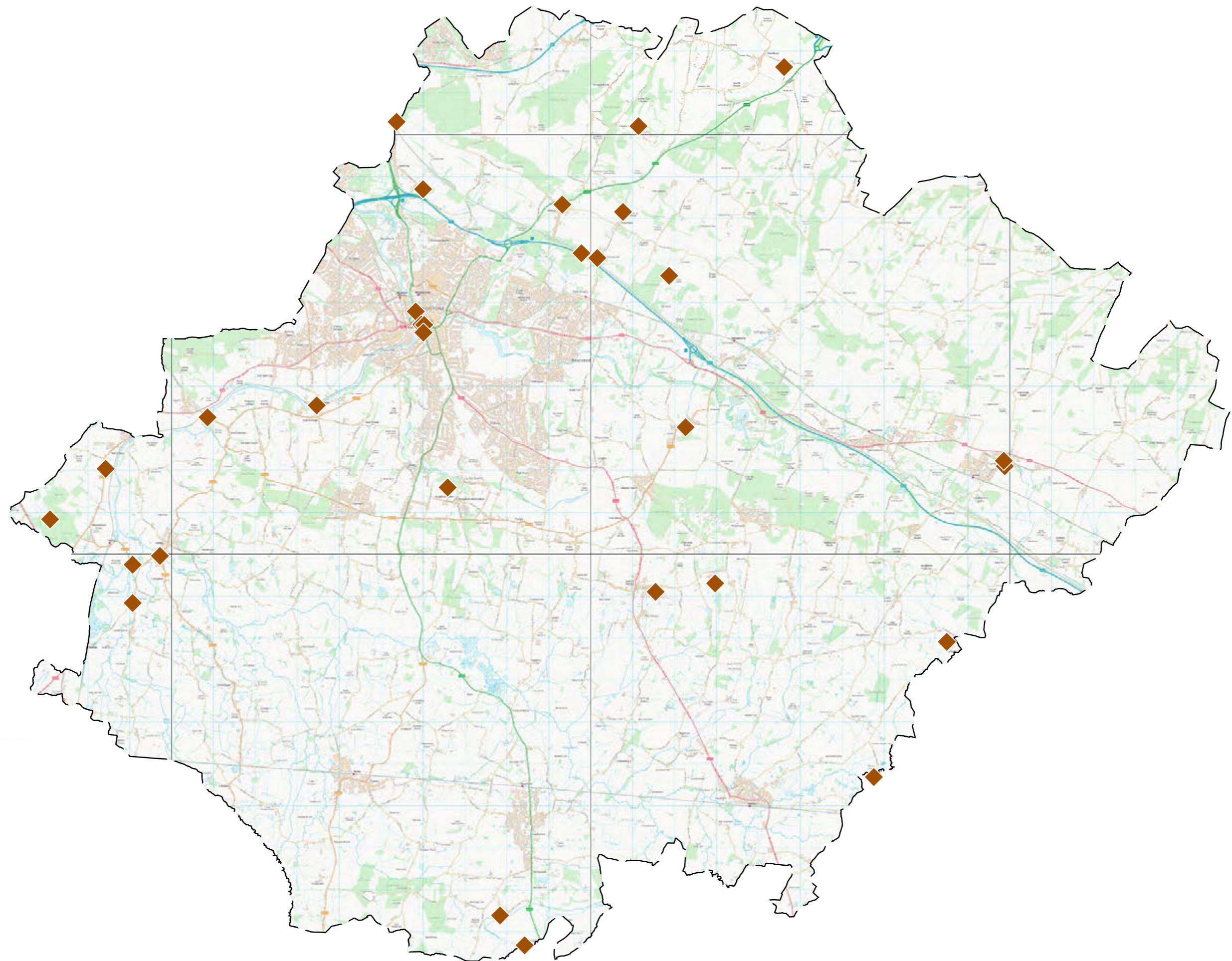
Location of Conservation Areas within Maidstone Borough

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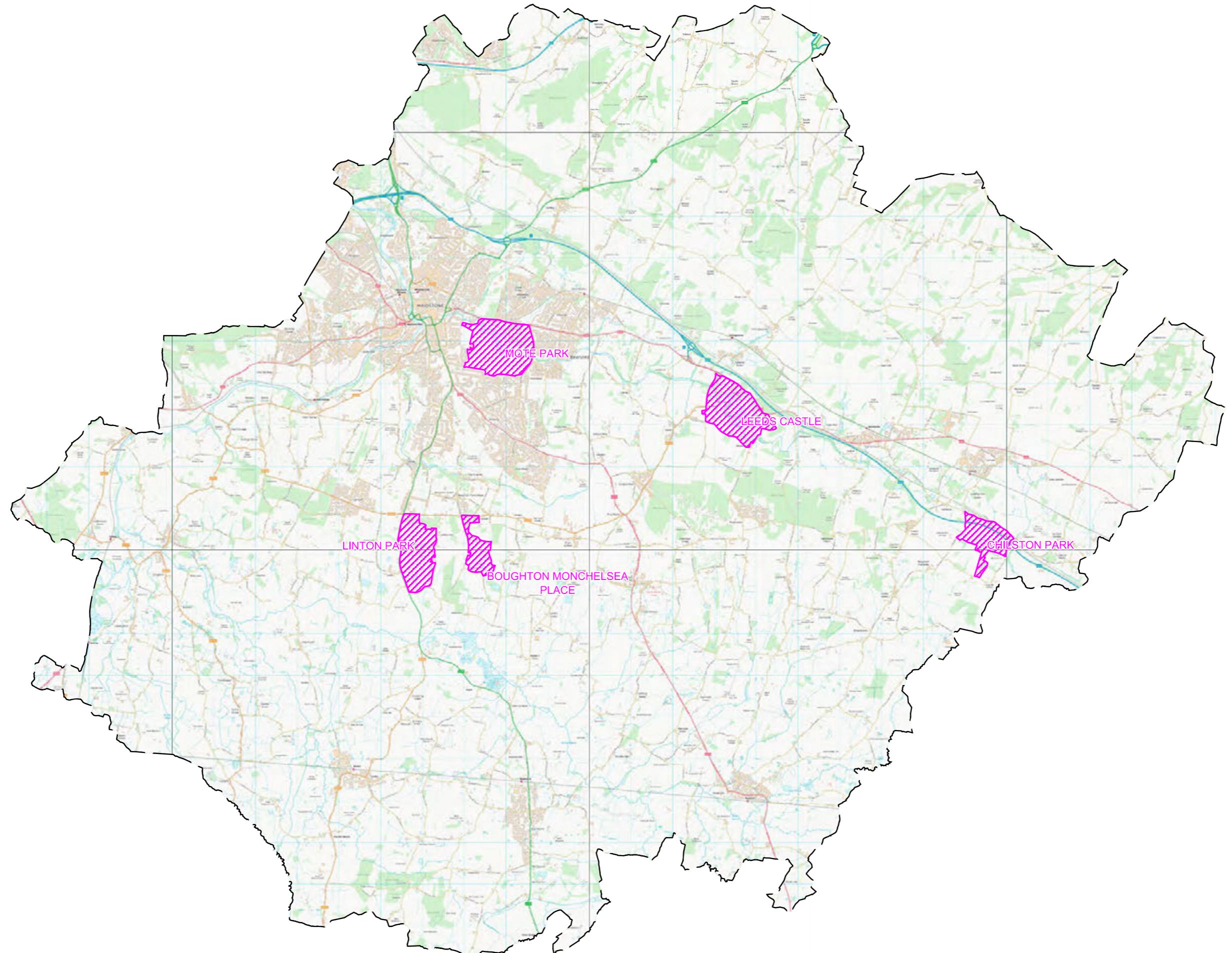
Location of Listed Buildings within Maidstone Borough

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Location of Ancient Monuments within Maidstone Borough

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Location of Historic Parks & Gardens within Maidstone Borough

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