

# The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough



## Broomlands, Speldhurst



February 2009



# **Broomlands**

Speldhurst, Kent

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

With many thanks to the owners of Broomlands for allowing access to the gardens, sharing their garden archives and memories, and for commenting on the text.

## INTRODUCTION

This site dossier and description has been prepared as part of the **Review of The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough 2009**, and should be read in conjunction with the full project report which can be found at <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/>. This site is one of many sites that have been researched, visited and written about across the Borough and as a consequence has been included in the revised list of Historic Parks and Gardens covered by the Borough Councils Planning Policies. The list is not conclusive and further gardens may be added over time as research continues or information comes to light

The review for Tunbridge Wells Borough was a pilot project to establish a partnership and methodology for the review of the compendium across Kent and provide an example of good practice across the County and the region. The research was largely carried out by volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust with support and training from the project consultants Virginia Hinze and Dr Barbara Simms.

The extent of the area identified represents the remains of the designed landscape and does not necessarily cover all remaining elements or the historical extent of landscape changes and takes no account of current ownership. Further Information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Planning Services Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1RS 01892 526121 <a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>	Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Invicta House County Hall Maidstone ME14 1XX 01622 696918 <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a>
Kent Gardens Trust <a href="http://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk">www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk</a>	High Weald AONB Unit Woodland Enterprise Centre Hastings Road Flimwell East Sussex TN5 7PR 01580 879500 <a href="http://www.highweald.org/">www.highweald.org/</a>

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

KENT

BROOMLANDS

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

SPELDHURST

TQ 5455 3882

## **SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST**

An informal garden designed from the early C19 around a Regency house and set in parkland with mature oak and beech trees.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

Broomlands occupies the site of an earlier property (date unknown) named Little Broom (Tithe Map). At that time the owner was a Thomas Bingham Richards. His holding comprised 'house premises and garden' together with a pond and extensive pasture, meadow and woodland. An 1820 print shows the house with a Regency veranda and stone ha-ha, separating the lawn to the south of the house from the park (Kent Compendium). Richards was still in residence in 1847 (Bagshaw), but it is likely that the Barrow family acquired Little Broom (and Broom Farm on its southern boundary) when they bought an extensive tract of land in the 1850s (1863 lease) on which to build a new house (Holmewood House). Holmewood House was constructed 800m to the south-east of Little Broom and was set in extensive gardens and parkland. At the same time Little Broom was renamed Broomlands, its house enlarged and gardens developed (1st edn OS map).

Broomlands was tenanted for thirty years, first to a Mr G. J. Rust (Kelly's 1867) and then to a Reverend William Perkins (Kelly's 1874). No significant changes appear to have been made to the property during this period (Indenture 1875; 2nd edn OS map). By 1899 a Major Leonard Barrow (Kelly's) was in residence and after his death, Broomlands appears to have been used as a dower house for Holmewood House. The owner in 1911 was a Mrs Dorothea Barrow (Inland Revenue Valuation), but after World War One, during which Broomlands was used as an auxiliary hospital, its occupier was a Mrs J. Barrow (Kelly's). She remained there until the 1930s, when the Barrow family sold Broomlands as part of the Holmewood Estate.

Broomlands was bought in 1940 by a Lionel Savill and in 1955 by a Peter Hope. The current owners bought the property from a Mr A. Schiff in 1985. Since then, a programme of tree replanting has been implemented, new garden areas have been created and additional land has been acquired. The property remains in single private ownership.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Broomlands, with its house set back from the road, stands at the northern end of a sloping and undulating site with fine views south across its parkland. It is within Langton Green's residential area approximately 3km west of Royal Tunbridge Wells and 7km south-west of Tonbridge. The c.8.5ha site lies east of the B2188 (Broom Lane) which runs south-east from Langton Green for c.3km to join the A26 (Tunbridge Wells-Crowborough road). The A264 (Langton Road) from Tunbridge Wells to East Grinstead runs some 200m to its north. Broomlands is bordered to the west by Broom Lane, to the south by Broom Farm and to the south-east by pastureland. The north and north-east boundaries are formed by gardens of the adjoining private houses.

#### ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Broomlands is entered from the east side of Broom Lane through a 1m high, wrought iron gate hung on octagonal stone piers with stone capping. One-metre high, evergreen hedges enclose the property from the road with tall conifers behind the hedge to the north of the entrance gate. The conifers extend eastwards as a 3m high, clipped hedge along the northern property boundary. The land immediately north of the hedge was once fields belonging to Little Broom (Tithe Map). Immediately inside the gate, on the south side of a consolidated gravel drive, stands a C19, single-storey lodge, Broomlands Lodge (now tenanted). It is built in rusticated sandstone with a slate roof. Immediately east of the lodge a service drive off the main drive runs south for 50m to a stable block and walled kitchen garden.

There are views of Broomlands house from the drive as it gently descends for 100m in a south-easterly direction to arrive at a gravelled forecourt on the north, entrance front. This approach is shown on maps from 1840. The drive is framed on its south side by lawns and shrub beds and on its north side by rough grass studded with mature and young native trees. The forecourt is enclosed on its north and east sides by shrub borders below a clipped rhododendron hedge. Wrought iron gates attached to the north-east and north-west ends of the house gives access to, respectively, the south garden front and walled kitchen garden.

#### PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Broomlands house (listed grade II) incorporated an earlier building and was probably built in the 1850s. It is a two-storey house of rusticated local sandstone ashlar with a slate roof and deep eaves and an asymmetrical layout (listed building description). An integral service block on its north-west end had been extended by 1908 in the same materials as the main house (3rd edn OS map). In 1989, a conservatory with small-pane windows on small, stone, footings was added to the south-east garden front.

Forty metres to the west of the house is a single-storey sandstone stable block with an adjoining coach house and gardener's cottage. The coach house and cottage were converted to two cottages (North and South Cottage) in 1986 and these are now tenanted. The stable block is used for storage.

#### GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The ornamental gardens lie on the south and east sides of the house with a partly brick-walled garden, formerly used as a kitchen garden, to its west. The

south garden front opens onto lawns that slope gently down to shrub borders planted at the foot of a low stone wall that forms the upper section of a 1.5m deep stone ha-ha (listed grade II). From these lawns there are wide views to the south-west and south-east to pastureland immediately below the ha-ha and beyond to woodland on the property's southern and western boundaries.

From the south garden front a gravel path runs for 50m in a westerly direction to arrive at the stable block, and for 70m in an easterly direction to a wire-enclosed hard tennis court. Immediately south of the house, on the south side of this path is a sunken lawn partly enclosed on its north side by a 0.5m stone retaining wall with planting at its foot. The lawn was possibly used as a croquet lawn in the C19 (personal communication). Some 100m east from the house is a late C20 wooden summerhouse. This was placed here by the current owners on the site of a mature Turkey oak that was felled by a storm in 1986. Some thirty metres east of the house there are a number of clipped rhododendron hedges, possibly the remains of a maze (personal communication). To their north and north-east and extending to the eastern boundary are informal lawns of c.0.25ha planted with mature and young deciduous trees and stands of pine species. Within these lawns, approximately 100m to the north-east of the house is an ornamental circular concrete pool enclosed by shrub beds, uncovered in 1987 during storm damage tree clearance (Kent Compendium).

Ninety metres east from the house, immediately to the east of the tennis court a grass path descends gently between young beech trees for c.100m to the southern property boundary. It is separated from the parkland on its west side by a row of mature oaks on a bank with a drainage ditch at its foot.

#### PARKLAND

The undulating parkland to the south and south-east of the house is managed as grazed pasture with many mature oaks surviving (2009). It slopes southwards from the ha-ha towards a wood separating the land of Broomlands from that of Broom Farm and is partly enclosed by narrow belts of woodland on its east and west sides. Some 80m south-west of the house is a small pond first mapped in 1862.

#### KITCHEN GARDEN

The early C19 kitchen garden (c.40m x 25m) adjoins the north-west end of the house and extends westwards to the stable block (Tithe Map) with entrances in its east and west sides. Its north and east sides are enclosed by 2m high red brick walls with rounded north-east and north-west corners. The garden's west side is formed by the east wall of the stable block and its south side by a 2m high, clipped yew hedge, the hedge forming a screen to the gardens on the south front of the house. It is laid out as a rectangular lawn with perimeter beds. An enclosed kitchen garden between the house and stable block is shown on maps from at least 1840 (Tithe Map). Before the house was enlarged in the 1860s, there was also a service courtyard to the east of this garden. On the 1st edn map, the kitchen garden is laid out with perimeter paths and cross paths dividing it into three sections. By the 1900s only a path from the forecourt to the stable block is shown and this is also the layout shown in post World War 2 photographs. A glass house attached to the interior south-east wall is shown on

maps from 1907, but this was replaced by a new one by the current owners in the late C20.

At the south-east corner of the kitchen garden a sunken courtyard has been made (C21) to open from the west end of the house. It is enclosed on its north side by a random stone retaining wall in which are set four steps that ascend to the main kitchen garden.

## REFERENCES

### **Books and articles**

Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Speldhurst', *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 3* (1797), pp. 275-300.

Bagshaw's Directory 1847

Kelly's Directory 1867, 1874, 1899, 1922, 1930, 1940, 1955, 1961

### **Maps**

Tithe Map and apportionment (1841-42)

Broomlands map from 1863 lease (private collection)

OS maps      1st edition 6" 1862  
                  2nd edition 6" 1897  
                  3rd edition 6" 1907  
                  4th edition 6" 1929

OS maps      1st edition 25" OS 1870  
                  2nd edition 25" OS 1895  
                  3rd edition 25" OS 1906  
                  Revd edition 25" OS 1938

Plan of Broomlands and Holmewood from 1875 Indenture (private collection)

Estate Map of Broomlands and the Holmewood 1910 (private collection)

Modern Mastermap 1:2,500 2007

Map showing listed buildings within Broomlands boundaries

### **Illustrations**

1918 Photograph of Broomlands Auxiliary Hospital (private collection)

WW2 doodlebug crashed near the house (private collection)

Aerial photographs 1946, 1950, 1959, 1968, 1993. RAF refs

Aerial photographs 1964, 1981, 1986, 1990, 2003 (private collection)

1981/2 photograph of house from parkland

Aerial photograph 2003

### **Archival items**

Inland Revenue valuation 1911

English Heritage Listed Buildings entries: undated.

Kent Compendium entry 1996s

Research by Hugh Vaux

Description written by Barbara Simms

Edited by Virginia Hinze

February 2009



Fig. 1 Boundary map

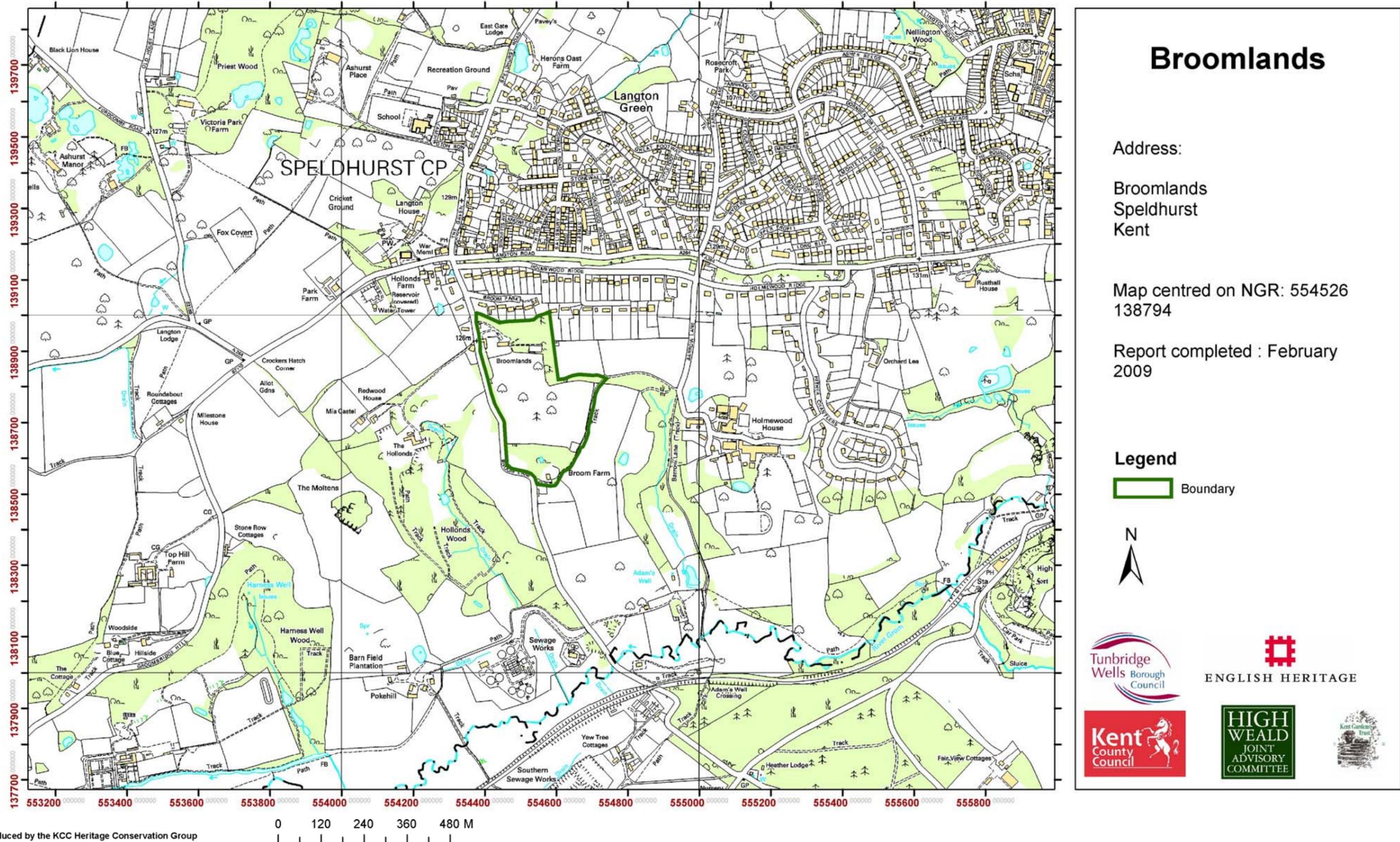
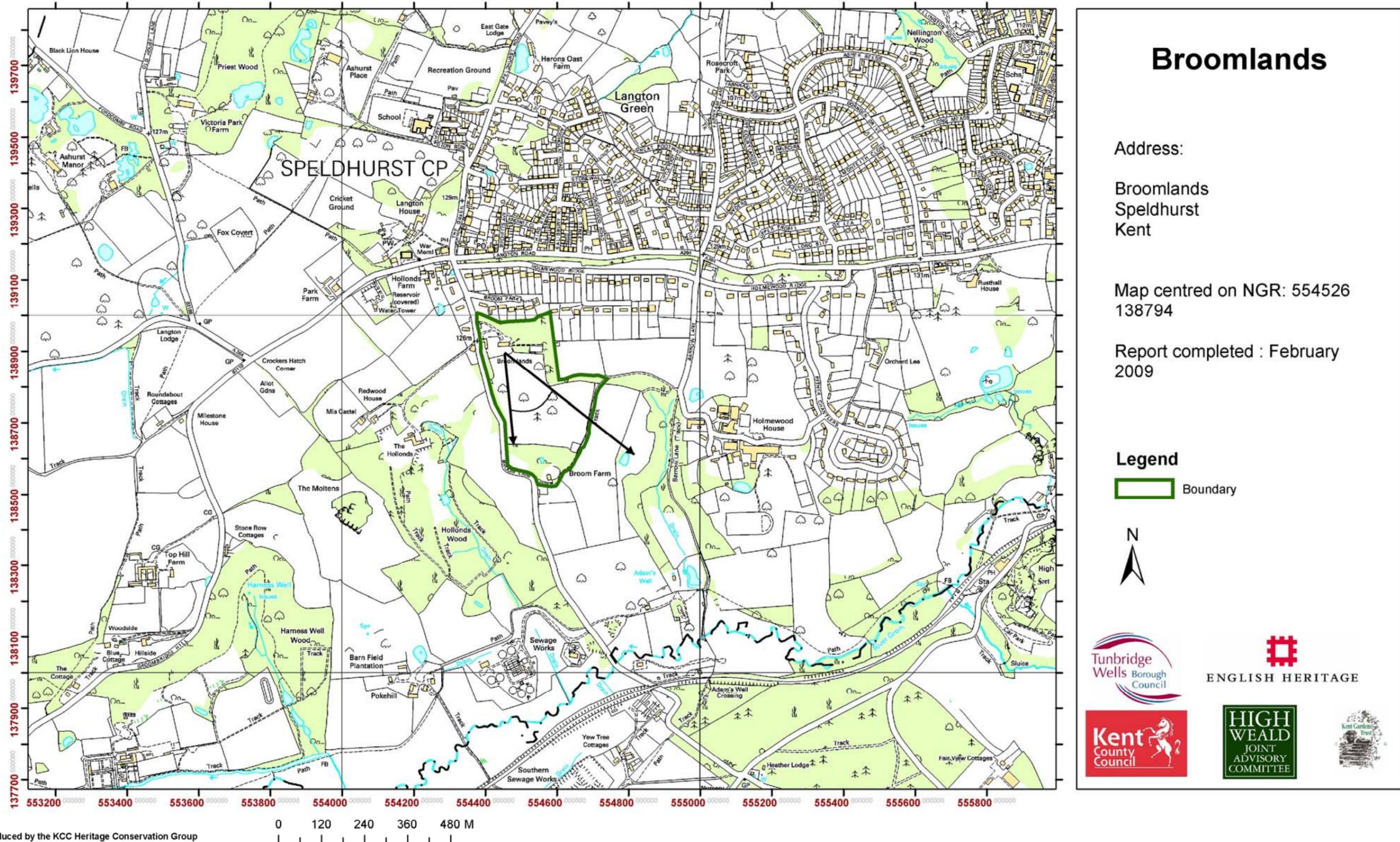
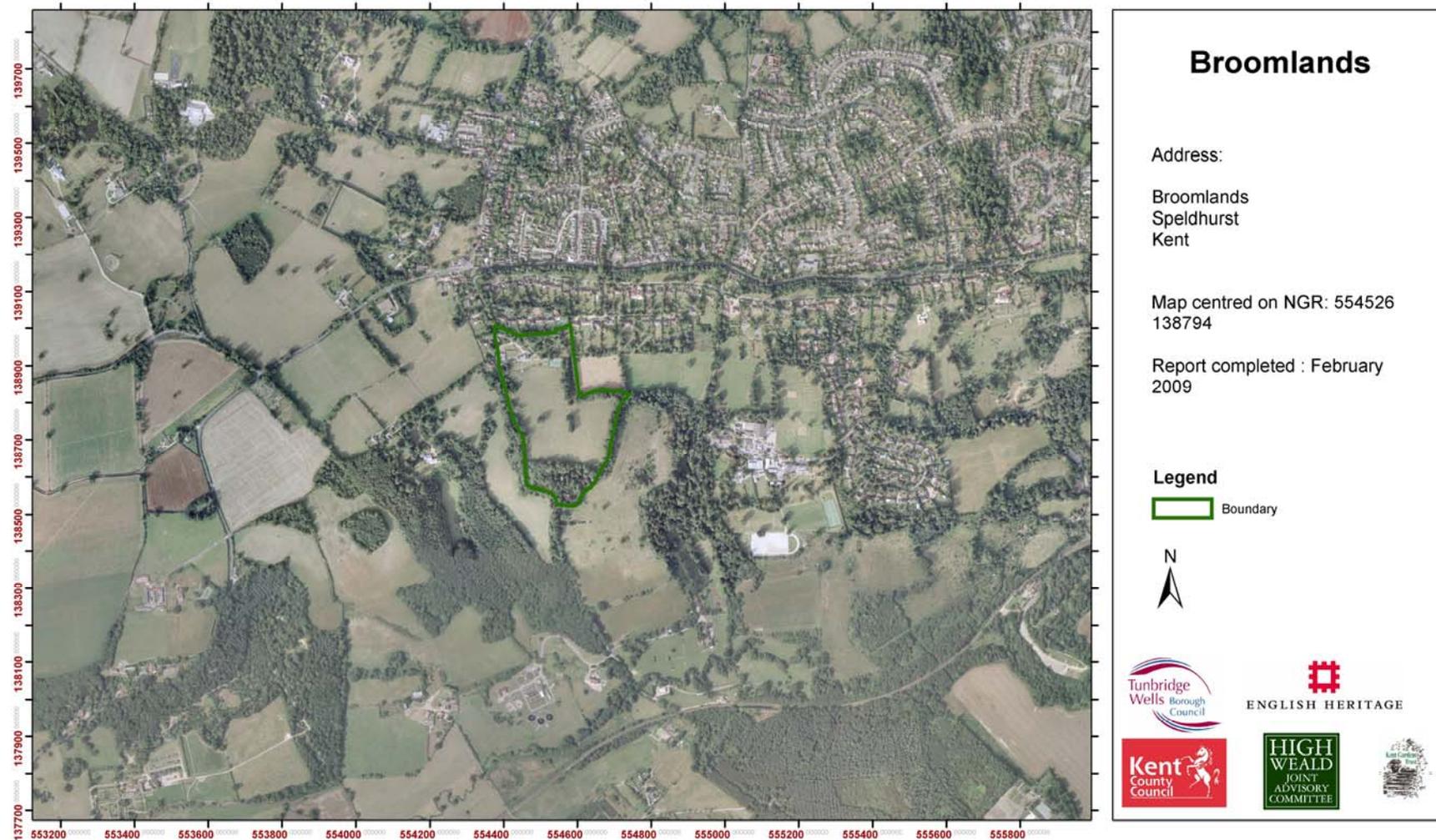


Fig. 2 Key views map



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## Fig. 3 Aerial photograph



Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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Fig. 4 Map of listed buildings at Broomlands.



Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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Former farmhouse. Early C17 or earlier, C19 and C20 additions. Framed construction, the ground floor underbuilt in Flemish bond brick, the first floor tile-hung; peg-tile roof; brick stacks.

Plan: The house faces east. 3-room lobby entrance plan, the 2 right hand (north) rooms heated from back-to-back fireplaces in an axial stack, unheated service room to the left (west). The house has been extended by 2 late C19/early C20 rear wings at right angles and a single storey wing adjoining at the right.(north) end. It may be a C17 remodelling of an earlier house.

Exterior: 2 storeys. Roof of the main block hipped at the left end, half-hipped and gabled at the right end. Axial stack to right of centre with staggered triple shafts of handmade brick with corbelled brick cornices and vertical ribs.

Probably C19 left end stack with a tall shaft and corbelled cornice.

Asymmetrical 4-window front with a C20 front door to the lobby entrance with a flat porch hood. Various 2-, 3- and 4-light casement windows mostly glazed with square leaded panes: the 2 first floor left hand windows are circa early C17 with chamfered mullions. First floor window right and the ground floor window left of the porch are probably C18. The other windows are C20. The single storey addition at the right end is 3 bays with small-pane sash windows. The rear elevation of the early range is largely obscured by rear additions, one of the rear wings has a 2-span roof, the rear left wing has a canted bay.

Interior: The north end has an exposed ceiling beam in the long axis with scroll stops and an open fireplace with stone jambs. A crossbeam close to the fireplace has redundant mortises: it may be re-used or could predate the stack, suggesting a late medieval core to the house. The 2 southern rooms were not available for inspection at time of survey (1989) but preserve exposed ceiling carpentry. The partition between them has been removed. The wall framing survives on the rear wall with jowled wall posts.

Roof: Tie beam, collar and clasped purlin design of slender scantling, probably mid/late C17 in date.

An attractive traditional house of the region.