

THE PARISH OF PEMBURY

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION REVISION OF KENT HLC (2000)



SEPTEMBER 2016

Summary of the Parish of Pembury

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The parish summary should be read in conjunction with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Historic Landscape characterisation Report (Section I User Guide and Interpretation; Section II The Gazetteer of HLC Types and Section III the Maps). June 2016.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The revised Historic Landscape Characterisation for the Borough of Tunbridge Wells could not have been undertaken without the dedicated support of David Scully, Landscape and Biodiversity Officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and also Lis Dyson County Archaeologists at Kent County Council. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Historic Landscape Characterisation builds on the project begun by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONB] Partnership. This work could not have been undertaken without the help of Paul Cuming Kent Historic Environment Records Manager and Richard Dadd GIS Technician at Kent County Council. A 'Thank you' is extended to all. Appreciation and thanks also goes to the team at the High Weald AONB Partnership especially Sally Marsh, Co-Director, Charles Winchester Landscape Researcher and Matt Pitts Land Manager Adviser.

My colleague Phil Sansum kindly undertook the processing of the missing Tithe maps for the Borough for which I am very grateful.

The views expressed in this report are entirely the author's own and do not reflect the policies of neither Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Kent County Council nor the High Weald AONB.

PERIOD TABLE

| Description | Archaeological Period | From | To |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Hunting societies | Upper Palaeolithic | 30,000 | 10,000 BC |
| Hunter-gather societies | Mesolithic | 10,000-8,000 | 4,000-3,500 BC |
| The first agriculturalists | Neolithic | 3,500 | 2,100 BC |
| Beginning of metal working in bronze | Bronze Age | 2,100 | 600 BC |
| Beginning of metal working in iron | Iron Age | 600 BC | AD 43 |
| | Romano-British | AD 43 | AD 410 |
| | Anglo-Saxons [or Early Medieval] | AD 410 | 1066 |
| | Medieval | 1066 | 1540 |
| | Post-medieval | 1540 | Present |

The Archaeological and Historical Periods used in the Sussex HLC & Revised Kent HLC

| Key to HLC-Prev | Description | Date | Combined |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| P1 | Late 20th century | AD1945 – present | Post 1900 |
| P2 | Early 20th century | AD 1914 – AD 1945 | |
| P3 | Early Modern | AD 1800 – AD 1913 | 19th century |
| P4 | Late Post-medieval | AD 1600 – AD 1799 | Post-medieval |
| P5 | Early Post-medieval | AD 1500 – AD 1599 | |
| P6 | Medieval | AD 1066 – AD 1499 | Medieval |
| P7 | Early-medieval | AD 410 – AD 1065 | |
| P8 | Roman | AD 43 – AD 409 | |
| P9 | Prehistoric | 500,000 BC – AD42 | |

**Summary Assessment of the Historic Landscape Characterisation
for parish of Pembury in
Borough of Royal Tunbridge Wells**

1. Introduction

Historic Landscape Characterisation [HLC] is a process by which the landscape of an area is interpreted and mapped by selected historic attributes which contribute to the local historic character. The dominant historic attributes are that of enclosure and settlement. The pattern of fields, the nature of the boundaries, the form and distribution of historic settlement shape the local character and distinctiveness of a given area. The term 'historic landscapes' means in this context all landscapes which have been shaped by human interaction. HLC maps character not land use though with finer grained HLCs for some of the historic types reflect the use of the land. It can be likened to a fine water-colour painting which despite using OSMM as its base does result in some 'blurred' boundaries between character types at the very detailed field by field level. HLC is a starting point when investigating the historic landscape for any given area. However it is not a substitute for detailed desk-based assessments and field observations.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation for Royal Tunbridge Wells forms part of a district wide revision of the Kent HLC (2000). Four parishes in the east of the district have been completed (Goudhurst, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook & Benenden) and the remaining parishes are being undertaken as part of a rolling programme of phased characterisation. As each parish is completed a short analysis is presented. The parishes will then be grouped up to form the district-wide HLC. The sequence of characterisation has been prioritised to provide firstly information on those parishes close to the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, and secondly to complete the wider countryside of the borough. The centre of the built-up area of the town has been omitted as the priority is to characterise the historic landscape of the rural parts of the borough.

This report sets out a summary of the some of the results for the present day parish of Pembury. A Methods Report together with a Gazetteer of Typologies and attributes is being prepared for the end of the first phase of this revision (at the end of September 2016).

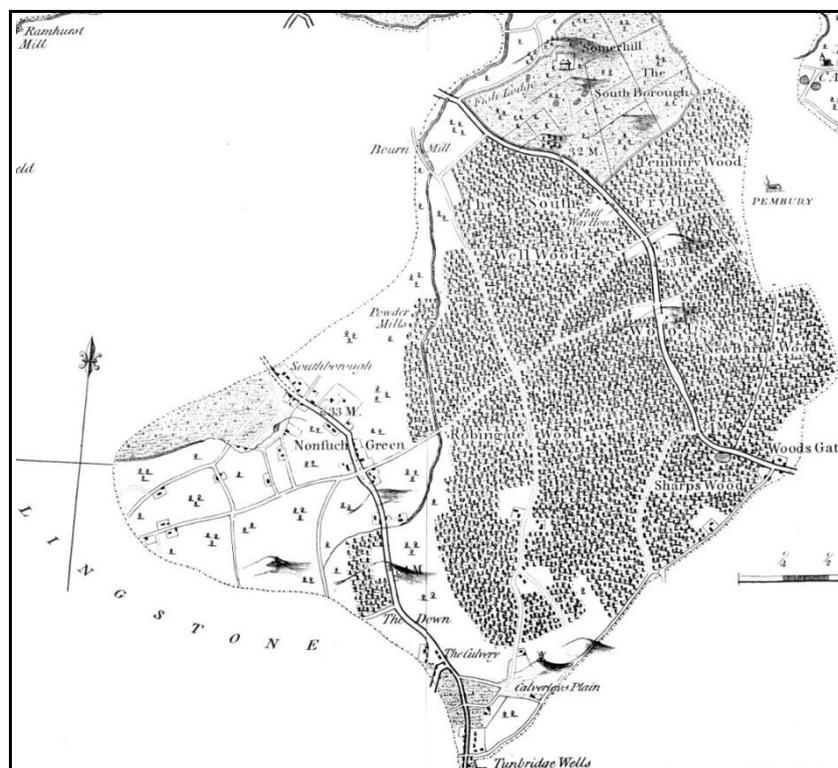
2. Historic context of Pembury

For the larger part of the civil parish of Pembury the underlying geology comprises the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. North and east of the woodland known as Pembury Walks outcrops of Wadhurst Clay occur. Pembury is located at the eastern end of the long ridge of high ground extending from West Sussex. The area of Pembury Walks marks the Kent end of the Weald Forest Ridge, where medieval forests and chases were laid out on the relatively poorer sandy soils. From the higher ground in the west, the topography becomes more undulating with incised valleys radiating north east towards the valley of the River Medway. Long ridges divide the valleys. The streams provided power for ironworks such as that near Badsell Park Farm (Cleere and Crossley 1995, p343 no 119).

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY**

The present civil parish of Pembury is somewhat reduced from its ecclesiastical extent. Great and Little Bayhall, Dodhurst, Mouseden, Muxlewell and Corn Foot Farms to the south and west now form part of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Within the middle of the Pembury parish was a detached portion of Capel called The Hamlet which today is called Pippins. At the northern end of the ecclesiastical parish was a small area of low-lying ground which extended towards the River Medway and now comes within the parish of Capel.

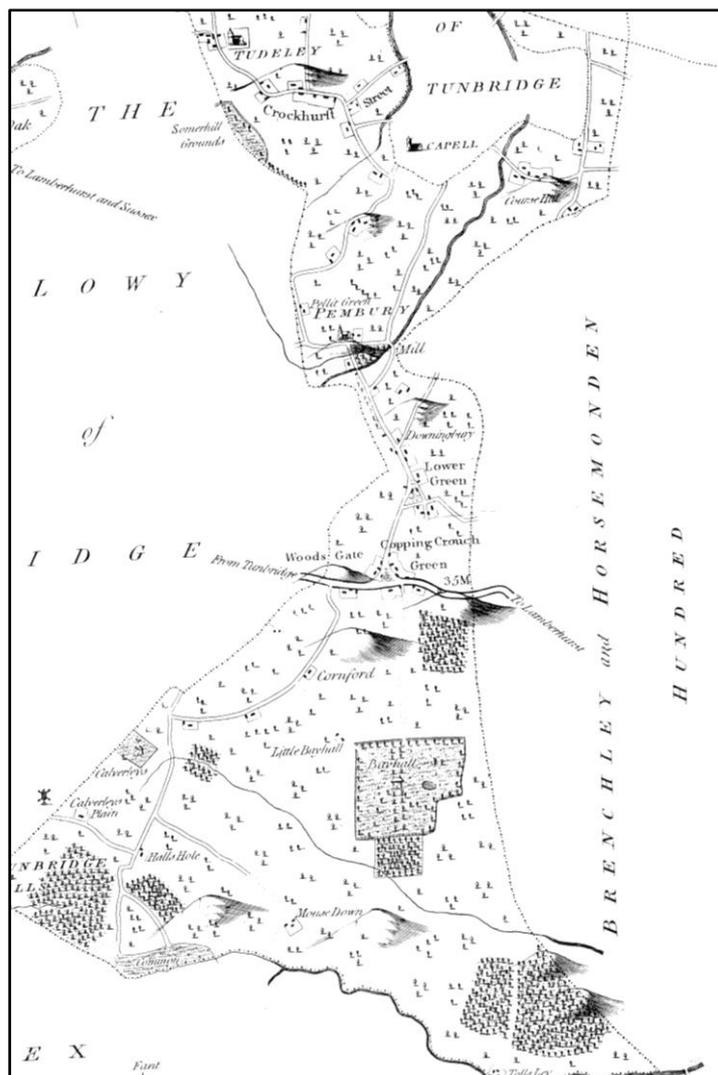
The western side of Pembury comprising Pembury Walks lay within the Lowy of Tonbridge. A lowy is an area of land or territory granted to a fortified settlement such as a castle. The land provided income so support the castle and its functions at a strategic crossing point on the River Medway. So when William I decided to fortify the crossing on the river at Tonbridge, the castle and the lands were seized from the Saxon owners (and which included a proportion of the Archbishop of Canterbury's property) and granted to Richard de Tonebridge alias Fitz Gilbert (Hasted 1797 Vol V. 203-204) and then to the powerful Clare family. Most of this land comprised the swine pastures and dens belonging to the large Kent manors of Otford and Wrotham in the Lathe of Aylesford. Succeeding archbishops fought legal battles to restore their lands. This resulted in two perambulations of the boundary of the Lowy being prepared in 1258 & 1279 (Cole 2014, p75-92). The southern part of the lowy comprised the manor and lands of Southborough together with a district named the Southfrith, which gave its name to a manor centred at Somerhill. This was a hunting chase which formed part of the demesne lands of the Clares as part of Tonbridge. For further background on the early medieval history of this area see Witney (1976), Cole (2014, 80, 88), and Hasted (1797 Vol V).



Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of the Lowy of Tonbridge - Southfrith

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY**

After AD 450 with the coming and settling in Kent of the Saxons the Weald was divided into large 'commons' attached to large agricultural estates in north and east Kent. Kent was carved up to utilise large swathes of the landscape. These estates became the lathes the territories of which spread into the Weald to lay claim to the woodland and grazing pastures. These commons were used for seasonal grazing but were gradually broken up into dens or swine pastures attached to the evolving manors located in the north and east on the demesne and farmed land. Eventually temporary settlements in the dens became permanent farmsteads taking their names from the 'dens' and the settlers enclosed land and laid out fields from the swine pastures in order to cultivate crops and keep stock.



Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of the Hundred of Wachlingstone 1797 for Pembury

The territory of Pembury which lies outside of the boundary of the Lowy comprised dens or swine pastures belonging to the Manor of Nettlestead which were held of the Wahull Family from their overlords the Clares of Tonbridge, (Witney 1976, p254-5). These dens were namely Pembury alias *Pepenbury Magna* located by the church in the north of the parish and the present Pembury village alias *Pepenbury Parva* located along the ridge of higher ground to the south. The names Pembury and Downingbury are according to Witney evidence of folk names with the suffix 'inga' which indicate very early Saxon settlements

(Witney 1976, p196). Downingbury was another den, formed part of the lands of Bayham Abbey in Frant and was located on a main north-south drove into the Sussex High Weald.

Evidence of the earlier medieval origins of the Lowy and the dens survives today in the landscape with the survival of some of the old farm and place names. Wood gate is probably one of the entrances into the Lowy or South Frith forest, with Pellet Gate to the north. Whilst the presence of the greens indicates the former wood pasture dens, as at Lower Green and Pembury Green. To the south are the farms which carved their fields from the Wealden forest, such as Dodhurst. Mouseden and Bayhall. Medieval farmsteads occupy the higher ground along the smaller ridges extending north eastwards such as Pippins, Hawkwell and Dislingbury Farms. Today Kent College occupies the site of Spring Grove Park.

3. Results of the revised HLC for the civil parish of Pembury

Some examples of the digitising of Pembury as part of the wider revised HLC for the borough of Tunbridge Wells are presented in the map extracts on the following pages. The first phase of this project will be presented in a GIS project for the parishes of Speldhurst, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. Only a brief analysis of the HLC attributes is presented here. It has been split into its main period and type component attributes, but by applying the different style sheets it is possible to show the various attributes for the present day HLC, as well as a conjectured image of what the historic character of the late medieval and early-post-medieval landscape might have looked like.

3.1 The Phase 1 Kent HLC

Map 1 shows the broad HLC type for the Kent Phase 1. This was one of the earliest HLCs to be undertaken in England and was produced using a very broad-brush approach.

The broad type of character is very much defined by large blocks types; Field patterns are not defined nor are the smaller settlement or areas of woodland.

3.2 The Revised Kent HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough – Pembury

Map 2 shows the broad HLC type for the revised Kent HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough. The finer-grained approach to the data capture can clearly be seen for example with the scattered settlements in the areas of enclosures, the areas of parkland and the higher incidence of woodland. Woodland is a major historic landscape feature of Pembury and Hasted refers to the extensive coppice woods and large spreading oaks (Hasted 1797, V, p260). The large areas of Pembury Walks and Snipe Woods occur in the north and mid part of the parish with smaller woods lying in the southern part towards Lamberhurst.

3.3. The HLC Types for present day landscape of Pembury

Map 3 shows the revised HLC types for Pembury. There is a clear distinction of areas of historic landscape character across Pembury reflecting the past land use history. To the east are the large tracts of woodland, part of the South Frith in the Tunbridge Lowy. Settlement here is sparse. The southern end of the parish has the wooded landscape of ancient woods with historic assarts, some of which have been modified by boundary changes. The eastern part of the parish is characterised by the early modern orchards and soft fruit agriculture the decline of which in the late 20th century has left a legacy of large modern fields. Settlement has developed around the medieval 'greens' rather than the medieval manorial centre with the church at South Park to the north. This is probably the

result of the importance of the two key routeways the A21 and the north-south drove way. By emparking around the church the manorial owners also controlled development here. Fragments of ancient woodland survive in the middle of the parish indicating that woodland cover was more extensive here as well. However there are areas of former orchards and fields which have become woods to the east of Lower Green and around the remnants of Snipe Wood.

3.4 The Time-depth and antiquity of the present landscape of Pembury

Map 4 shows the projected period of origin for each character type in Pembury based on the historic map evidence and an understanding of the development of the Kent landscape. Essentially much of the rural areas have a modern historic character resulting from the decline in fruit growing, the planting of coppice woods with conifers as well as modern field amalgamation. Fragments of the medieval origin of the landscape survive in the form of the historic farmsteads and areas of fragmented ancient semi-natural woodland, and pockets of assart fields to the north and south. However where there has been considerable landscape change the underlying medieval and early character still survives in the layout of some fields and the remnant woods.

3.5 Analysis of different character types

Map 5 shows only the HLC broad type for Enclosures by HLC type for Pembury. This is an example of how the HLC can be queried in order to assess the different historic character types. The rural landscape is dominated by the patterns of enclosures which appear to have a very fragmented historic enclosure pattern, the exception being in the area south of the A21. Woodland dominates Pembury, whether it is ancient, plantations or regenerated woods. Surviving in the non-ancient woods will be the former field patterns. Formal planned fields survive around Kippings Cross and also in the north east of the parish. These are remnants of once large extent of regular fields, the result of post-medieval enclosure of greens, woods or perhaps reorganisation of former field systems.

Map 6 gives an indication of this where the same polygons have been illustrated by the Boundary type attribute. The field boundaries associated with the former assart fields are dominated by wooded hedges which are either outgrown hedges (due to lack of management) or wider wooded shaws. The fences are evidence of paddocks, laid out within an older field system. Hedges are associated with the regular informal fields and the formal planned fields.

3.6 The conjectured medieval and early post-medieval landscape of rural Royal Tunbridge Wells

Map 7 is a composite map of the present HLC overlain with those polygons where the previous historic character can be identified from the historic mapping. Each time there is a character change as shown on the historic maps (up to 4 changes recorded in the GIS attribute table as Prev-1 to Prev-4) this has been captured in the HLC. The result is that map 7 gives an indication of what the historic landscape may have appeared like c.1500-1600, when many of the medieval features would still have been intact. It also shows the origins of the present historic character.

It is conjectured that Pembury Walks derived from ancient wood pasture of the South Frith. Across the ridge tops extending eastwards from the greens the land was enclosed on a

more formal planned way perhaps from commons (around Kippings Cross and Woods Gate) or from older field patterns (such as at Downingbury). The map also highlights in the southern part of the parish the medieval wooded landscape derived from piece-meal woodland clearance and enclosure.

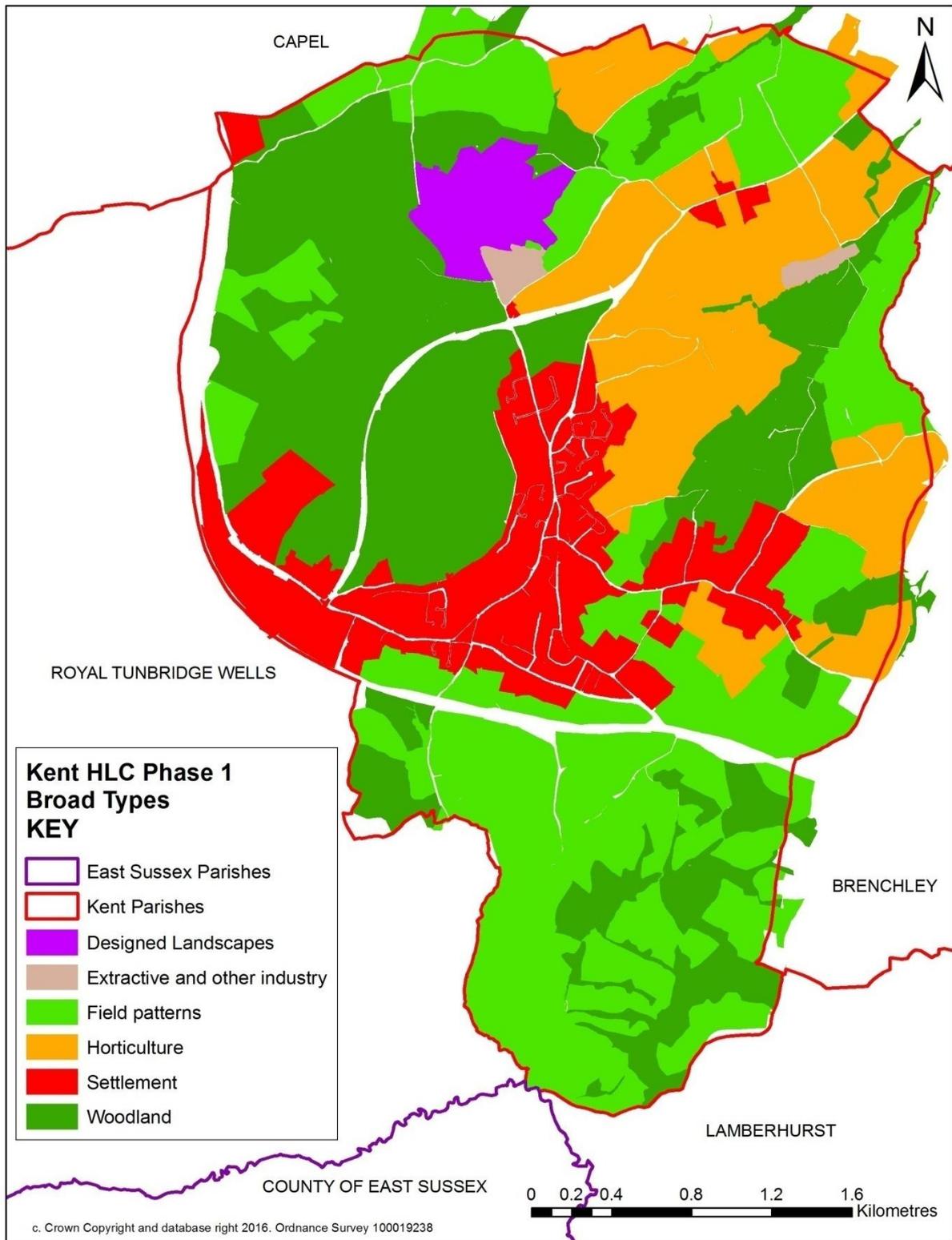
The origins and antiquity of the regular informal fields is difficult to assess, but these fields could date from the early post-medieval due to field re-organisation of an earlier field system or may even be medieval in date.

4. Initial Conclusions

This analysis only touches on the potential of HLC to understand the historic character of the landscape and provides the starting point for research for any given area. The HLC reveals that for much of the central core area of the parish of Pembury has considerable time-depth having undergone significant changes in the post-medieval period. However the area south of the A21 and parts of the eastern edge of the parish retain a historic landscape character of considerable antiquity. There is a clear contrast between the historic territorial divisions running through the parish with the influence of the Lowy clearly seen with the survival of so much woodland.

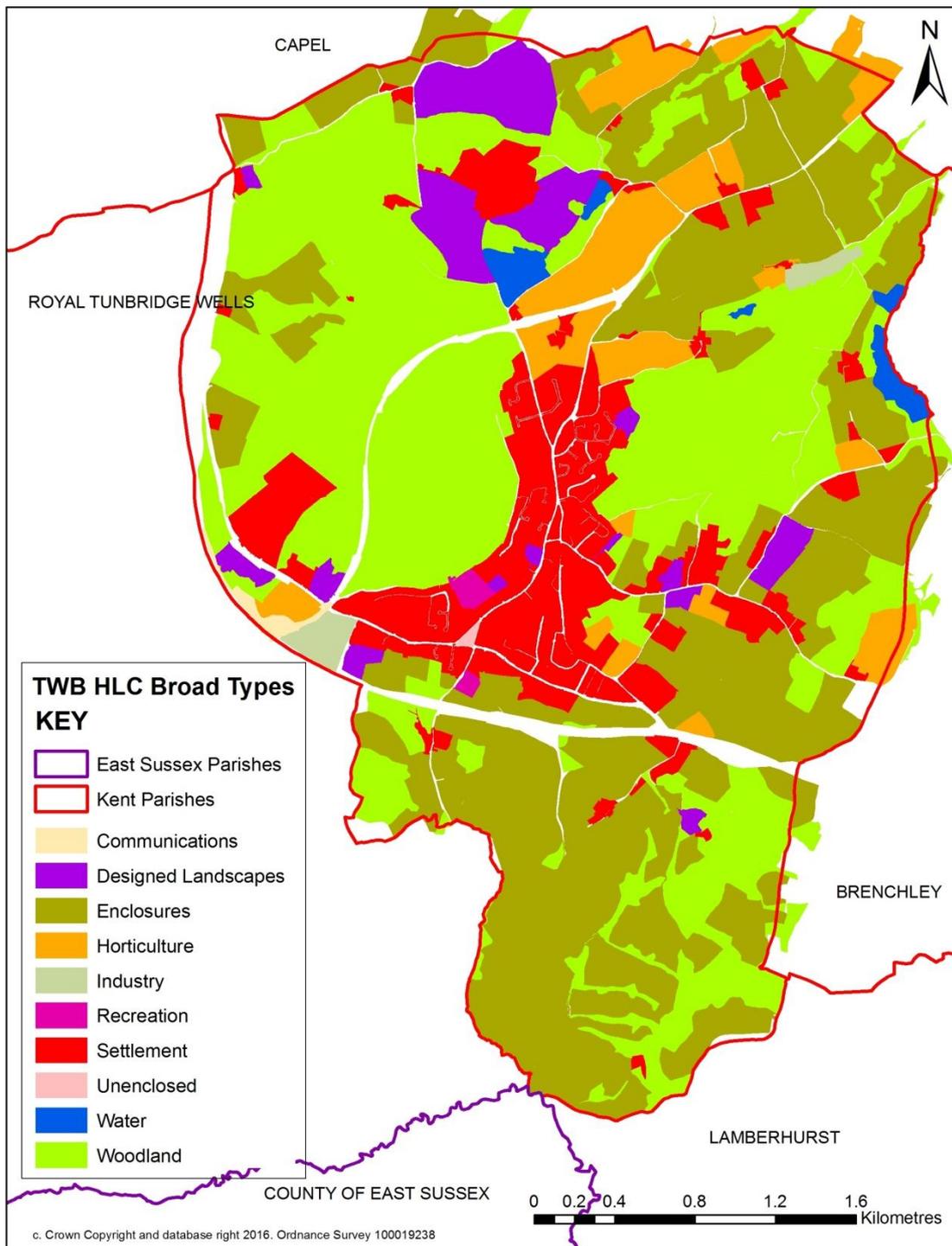
Far more research is needed to understand the different processes of enclosure in the Weald of Kent, especially in the understanding the medieval settlement and expansion. For example the division of land with their farmsteads into yardlands, sulungs, virgates etc. and interpreting medieval manorial surveys with the actual territories in the landscape.

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY



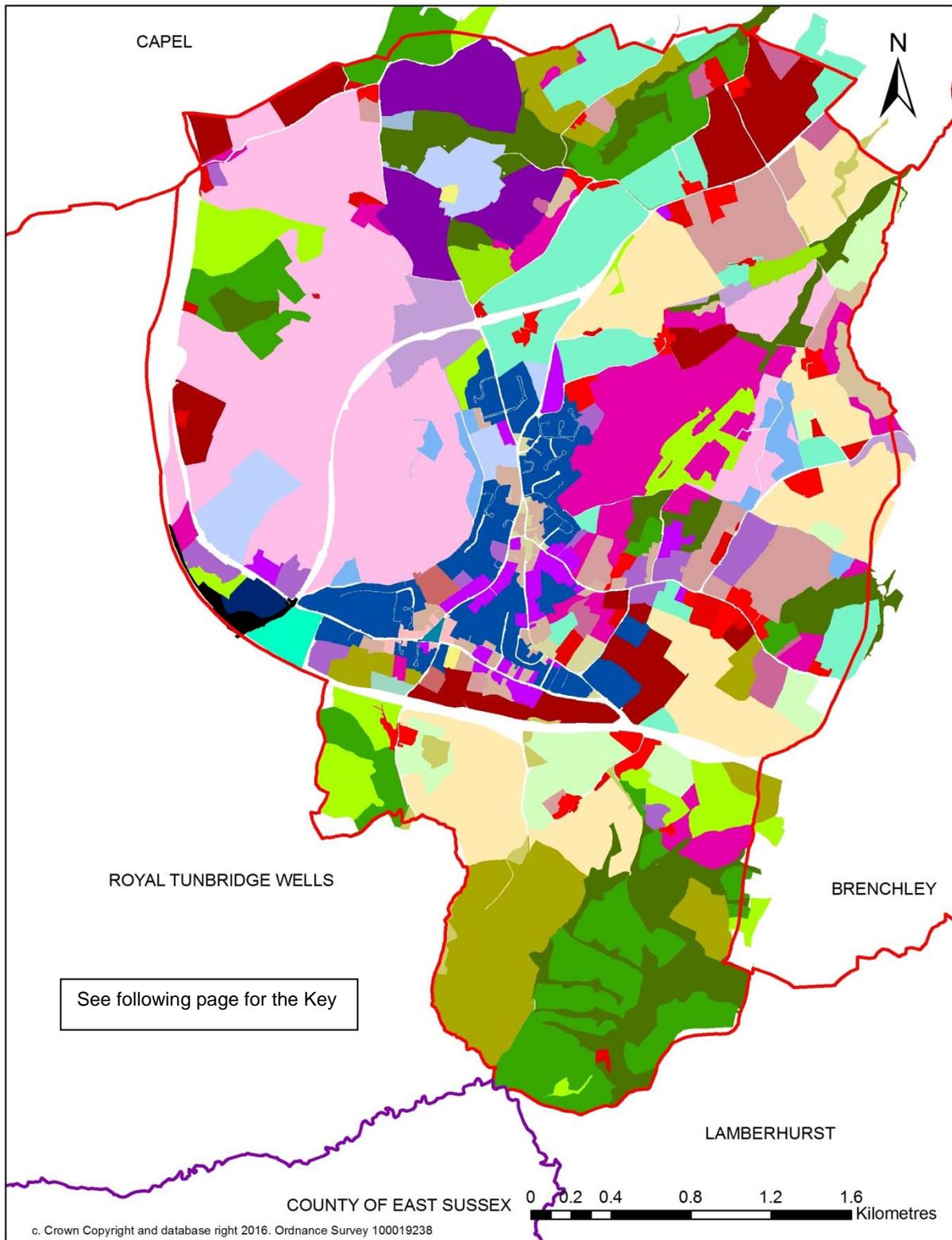
MAP 1

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY**



MAP 2

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY



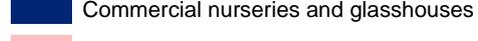
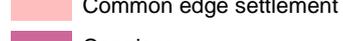
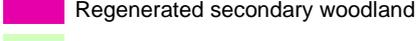
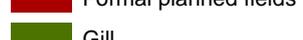
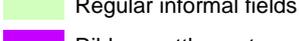
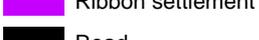
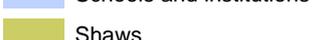
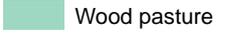
Map 3

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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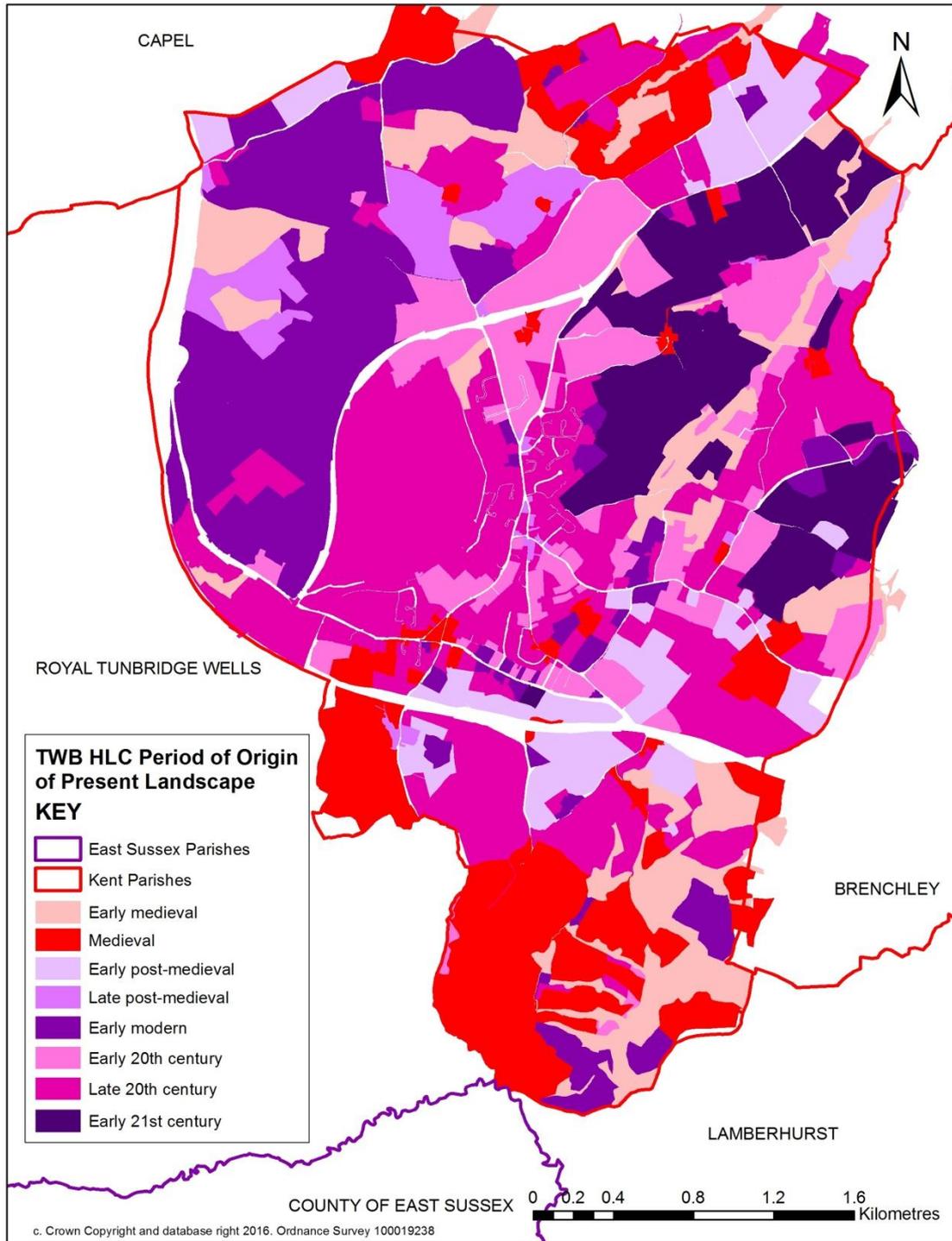
Key to Map 3

**TWB HLC
Pembury HLC Types**

KEY

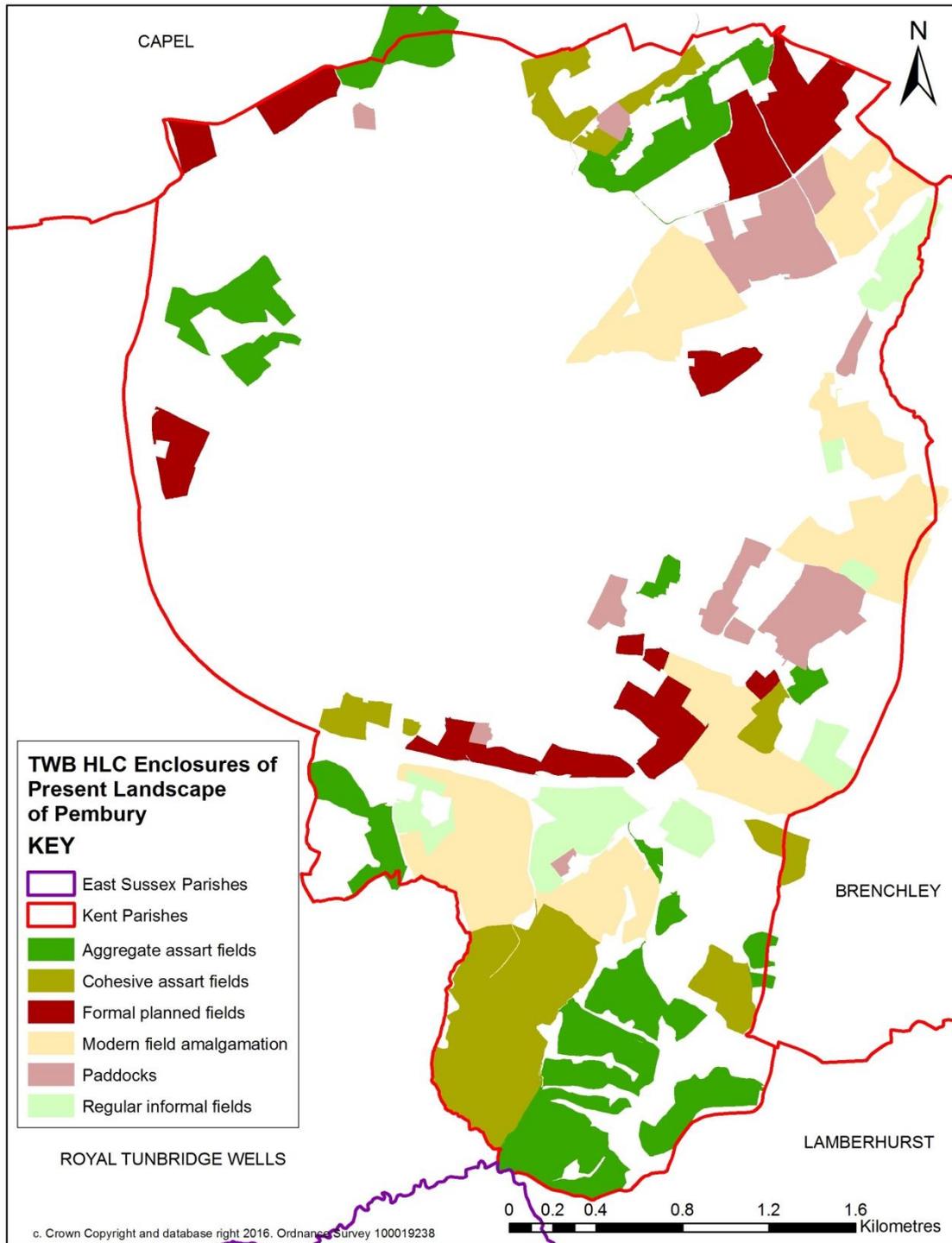
| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  East Sussex Parishes |  Orchards |
|  Kent Parishes |  PAWS |
|  Aggregate assart fields |  Paddocks |
|  Allotments |  Parkland |
|  Assart woodland |  Planned estate |
|  Church |  Plantations - broadleaved |
|  Cohesive assart fields |  Plantations - conifer |
|  Commercial nurseries and glasshouses |  Plantations - mixed |
|  Common edge settlement |  Pond |
|  Coppices |  Regenerated secondary woodland |
|  Formal planned fields |  Regular informal fields |
|  Gill |  Ribbon settlement |
|  Greens |  Road |
|  Hamlet |  Schools and institutions |
|  Infill |  Shaws |
|  Large farmstead |  Small farmstead |
|  Large landscaped gardens |  Small-scale industrial complexes |
|  Modern field amalgamation |  Sports grounds and cricket pitches |
| |  Water treatment |
| |  Wood pasture |

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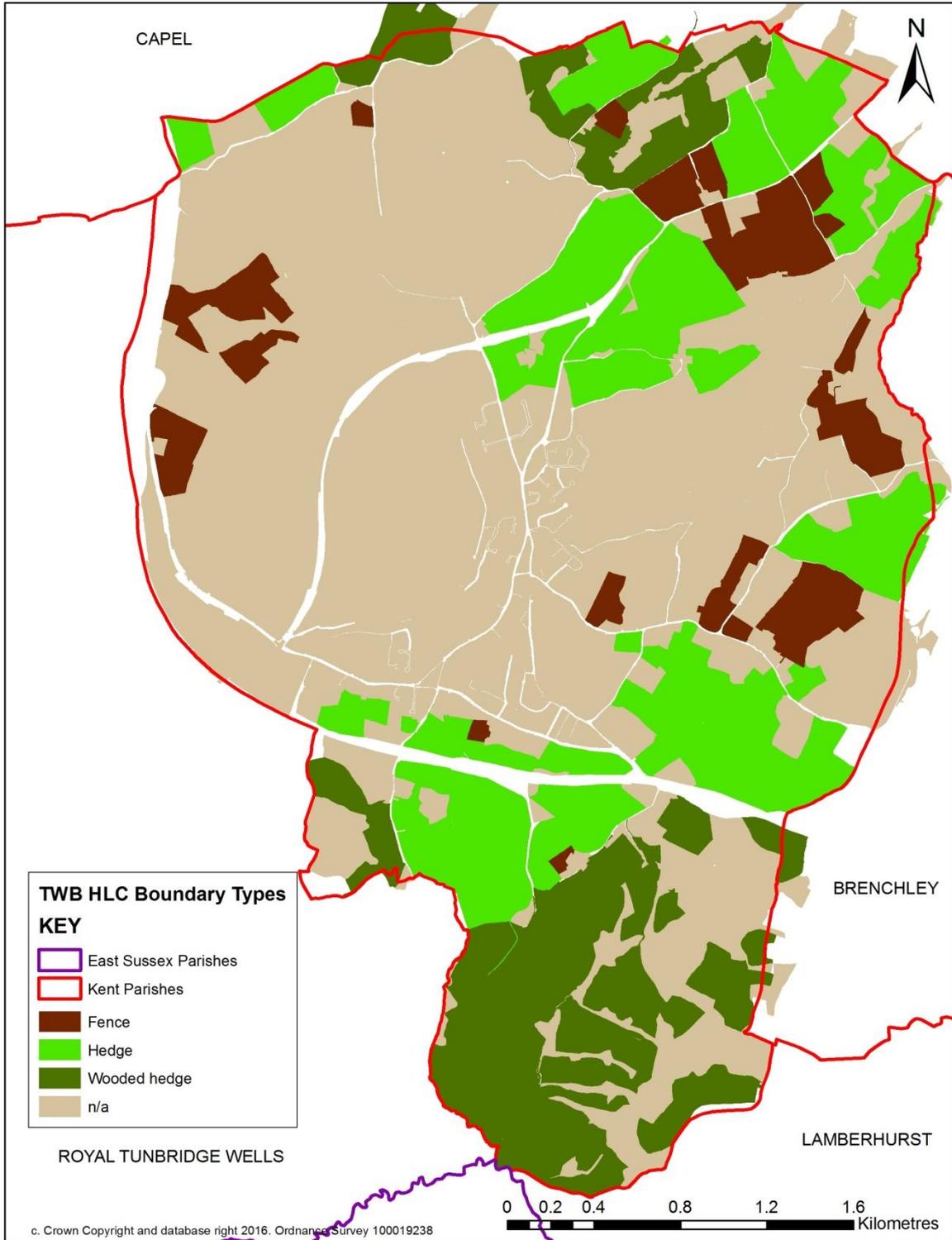
MAP 4

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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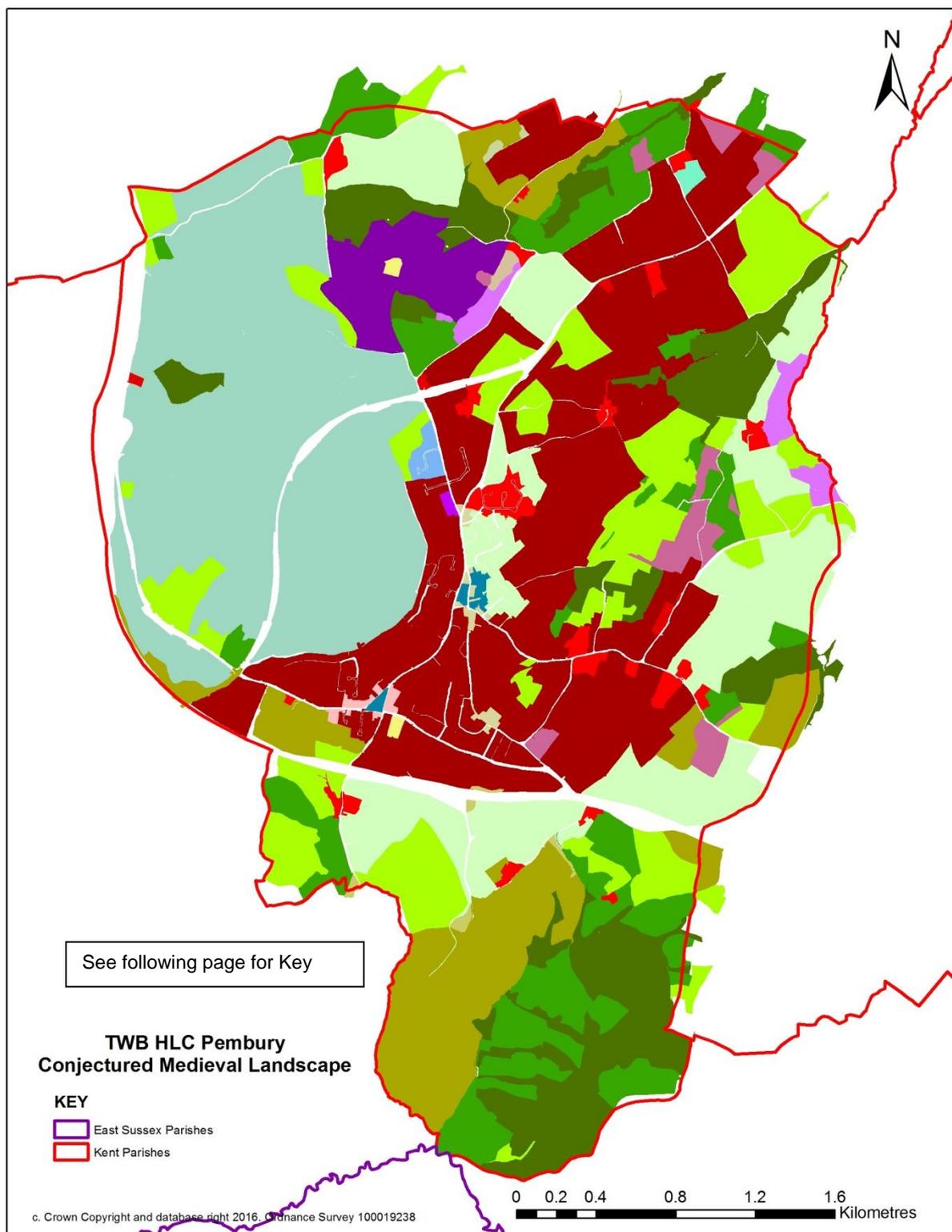
MAP 5

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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MAP 6

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY



MAP 7

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
REVISED KENT HLC (2000)
PARISH OF PEMBURY**

Key to Map 7

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Aggregate assart fields |  Orchards |
|  Allotments |  PAWS |
|  Assart woodland |  Paddocks |
|  Caravan and camping |  Parkland |
|  Cemetery |  Planned estate |
|  Church |  Plantations - broadleaved |
|  Cohesive assart fields |  Plantations - conifer |
|  Commercial nurseries and glasshouses |  Plantations - mixed |
|  Common edge settlement |  Pond |
|  Commons |  Regenerated secondary woodland |
|  Consolidated strip fields |  Regular informal fields |
|  Coppices |  Ribbon settlement |
|  Extraction pits |  Road |
|  Formal planned fields |  Roadside waste |
|  Gill |  Schools and institutions |
|  Greens |  Shaws |
|  Hamlet |  Small farmstead |
|  Industrial estate |  Small-scale industrial complexes |
|  Infill |  Sports grounds and cricket pitches |
|  Irregular informal fields |  Stations and sidings |
|  Lakes and fishponds |  Village |
|  Large farmstead |  Water treatment |
|  Large landscaped gardens |  Wood pasture |
|  Modern field amalgamation | |

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