

THE BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

REVISION OF KENT HLC (2000)



OCTOBER 2016

Summary of the parish of CAPEL

DRAFT

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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).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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 the parish of Capel
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 Capel 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 some of the results for the civil parish of Southborough. A Methods Report [Draft] together with a Gazetteer of Typologies and attributes has been prepared for the end of the first phase of this revision (end of September 2016). The parish of Capel together with the following three parishes (Brenchley, Horsmonden and Frittenden) form the second phase of the Kent HLC (2001) Revision for the Borough of Tunbridge Wells..

2. Historic context of parish of Capel

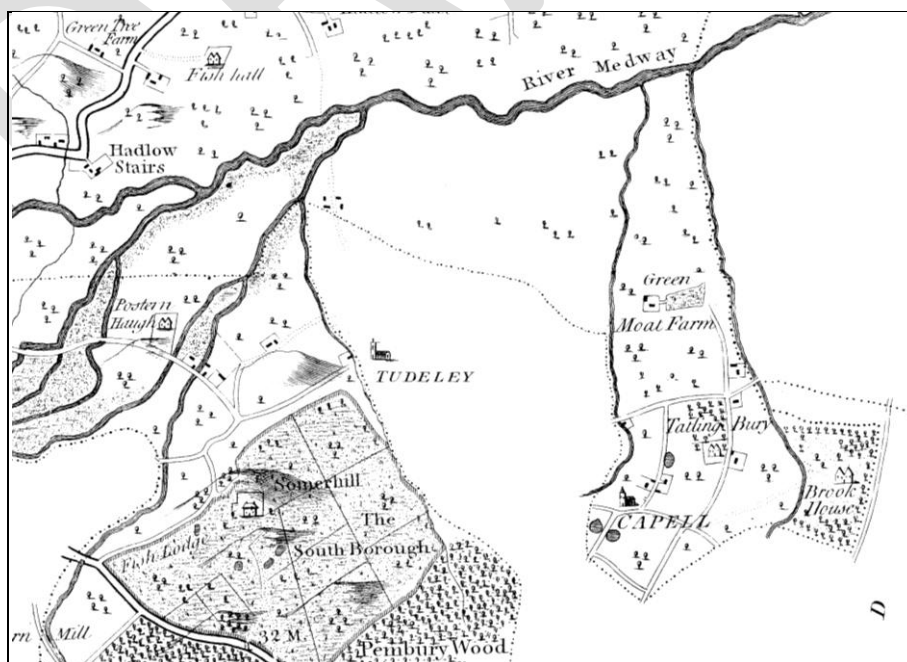
The civil parish of Capel is a modern territory comprising not only the ecclesiastical parish of Capel but also that of the majority of ecclesiastical parishes of Tudeley, together with parts of Pembury and Brenchley parishes. The northern boundary is formed by the River Medway and parts of its alluvial flood plain. The south western boundary extends into the High Weald whilst the south eastern boundary abuts the modern parish of Paddock Wood in the Low Weald. This is a parish characterised by medieval and earlier territories influenced by physical boundaries of the geology and topography; which in turn is reflected in the historic landscape characterisation.

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The geology and topography reflect the position of the civil parish of Capel on the edge of the High Weald, Low Weald and including part of the Medway valley. The latter extends from Tonbridge to Whetstead and comprises river alluvium. The Tunbridge Wells Sandstone formation occurs at Postern in the west and extends to Tatlingbury in the east, with Wadhurst Clay formation occurring in the centre of the parish in the vicinity of Crockhurst Street. The topography comprises at the southern part of the parish higher ground cut by smaller incised valleys running north, and north east into the Medway valley. The highest hills are at Knowles Bank and The Brakes near Somerhill Park. The land then drops away northwards to the gently undulating farmland on the edge of the flood plain.

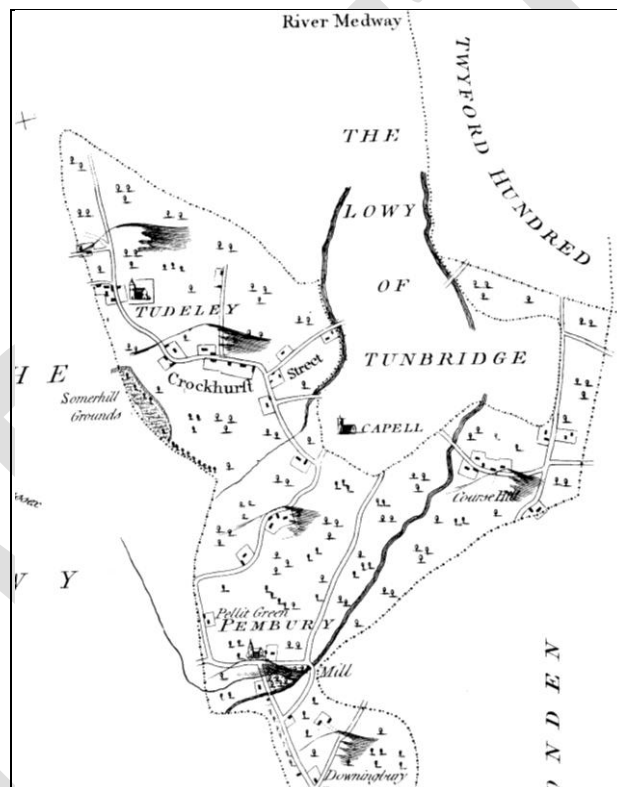
The western part of the parish lay within the historic Lowy of Tonbridge. The boundary of the Lowy ran south from the River Medway alongside the hamlets of Tudeley, Crockhurst Street and towards Knowle Bank. The Lowy also included a small spur at Capel and Moat Farm. (See Edward Hasted's map of circa 1796 below).

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 ? 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 dates and refs here. The southern part of the lowy comprised the manor and lands of Southborough together with a district named the South-frith, 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).



Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of the Lowy of Tonbridge – Somerhill and Capel

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. The area of Speldhurst and the western end of the district of Tunbridge Wells lay in the large and powerful lathes of Aylesford and Dartford, dominated by the manors such as Otford and Wrotham claiming extensive grazing pastures across this area of higher ground bounded by the River Medway.



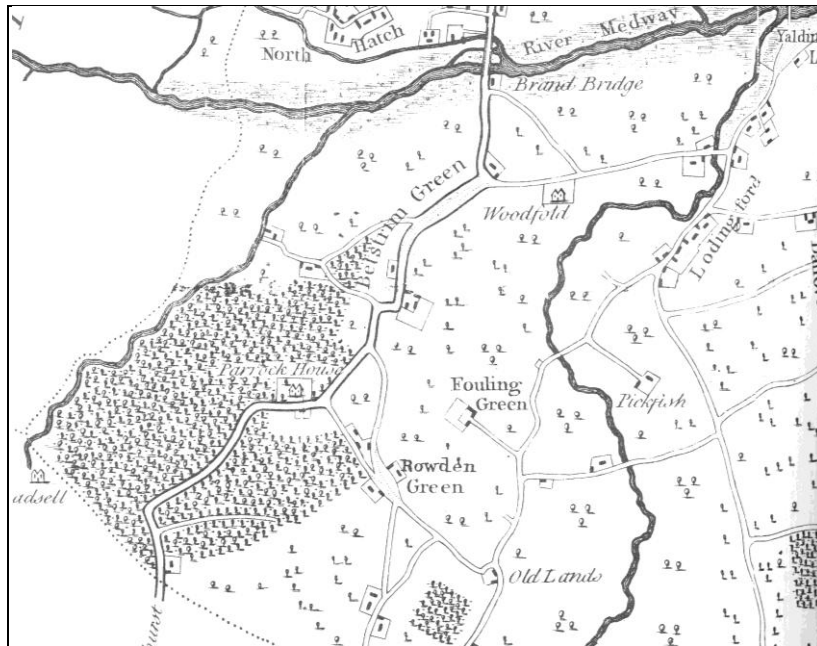
Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of The Hundred of Wachlingstone showing Tudeey and Crockhurst

The civil parish of Capel illustrates the historic development of manors and farmsteads on the higher ground extending their agricultural territory into the former grazing pastures of the River Medway. Medieval farmsteads occupy the higher ground along the edge of the flood plain such as Tudeley, Capel, Moat Farm, Tatlingbury and Whetstead. At the southern end of the parish the landscape comprises hillside and ridge-top farmsteads surrounded by fields with ancient gill woodland in the narrow steep-sided stream valleys.

The south west part of the parish is dominated by the parkland of Somerhill, the former hunting odge within the South Frith of the Lowy. This parkland was extended in the C19 to

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include farmland to the west as at Park Farm. Tudeley Wood is an important area of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland, a modified remnant and survivor the former chase of South Frith belonging to Tonbridge Castle.



Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of the Hundred of Tyford on the edge of the River Medway



Extract from Edward Hasted's Map of the Hundred of Brenchley and Horsmonden

Tudeley is one of the few settlements in the Weald to be recorded in the Domesday Book. *In the Lathe of Aylesford in the Hundred of Washingstone. Richard [Clare] of Tonbridge holds Tudeley from the Archbishop [of Canterbury]. It answers for 1 yoke. Land for 1 plough. It is*

there, in Lordship (demesne). A church; woodland for 2 pigs. The value is and always was 15s. Edeva held it from the King. (Morris 1983 5:62).

This was a small settlement supporting two or three extended families, but had reached a significant degree of independence from its Saxon parent manor to be recorded as a separate settlement within the Wealden forest (similar to Benenden to the south east). Today Tudeley still is a small settlement comprising a hamlet together with scattered medieval farmsteads. By contrast Capel church was a chapelry of the Manor of Hadlow to the north and included all the areas of Capel within the Lowy. It was a fragmented parish and included a detached portion Pippins in the parish of Pembury. Crockhurst Street was a den of the Manor of Nettlestead and belonged to the Wahull family in the C13 (Witney 1976, 237).

3. Results of the revised HLC for the parish of Capel

Some examples of the digitising of Capel parish 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 has been completed and is presented in a GIS project for the parishes of Speldhurst, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. Capel marks the first parish for the second phase. 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 for the civil parish of Capel. The Kent was one of the earliest HLCs to be undertaken in England and was produced using a very broad-brush approach to characterisation. The broad character areas of Capel can clearly be seen, from the valley meadows along the Medway, the intensively farmed land through the middle of the parish with the large areas of Horticulture. The south west where it extends into the High Weald is characterised by large blocks of woodland inter-mixed with fields and the park of Somerhill dominating the area adjacent to Tonbridge.

There is an absence of smaller woods and together with a lack of scattered settlement and farmsteads, which Witney describes for Tudeley (Witney 1976, 127).

3.2 The Revised Kent HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough – Capel

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 through the middle of the parish, the areas of parkland and the higher incidence of woodland in the west. Parkland and designed landscapes of all types, are a strong historic landscape feature of the countryside around Somerhill. There is less evidence for Horticulture. The revised HLC does not have a Broad type category for valley enclosures separate from other types of enclosures, thus the River valley character is not visible at the Broad type level. Industrial and water features are however characterised.

3.3. The HLC Types for present day landscape of Capel

Map 3 shows the HLC types for Capel. Immediately it can be seen that the main part of the parish is dominated by modern field amalgamation extending from the flood plain south and eastwards towards the Lowe Weald. The loss of so many boundaries is the result of modern farming techniques dating from the mid-C19. Field enlargement coincided with both the development and installation of clay land drains and the laying out of the railway. The whole area around Shernden has lost its historic field pattern to modern farming. With the latter fields were subdivided and cut off from the historic field use so new field layouts were developed. The installation of land drains was easier in larger fields and these new layouts were suitable for the planting up of extensive orchards. The laying out of modern orchards in the early C20 and their subsequent grubbing in the late C20 has resulted in large areas of the parish undergoing significant landscape change since the Late post-medieval period. This can be seen in Map 7. Fragments of the former field systems survive such as the irregular informal fields along the river valley, the regular informal fields on the slightly higher ground and the fragments of formal fields around Five Oak Green. It is in the south and southwest where the wooded landscape of the High Weald still survives.

Aggregate assart fields occur around areas of ancient woodland at Knowles Bank. These fields are thought to be the results of the last period of assarting and woodland clearance in the C13. Where the topography is more undulating the older field systems survive relatively intact, for example east of Somerhill.

The areas of parkland tend to occur also on the ridge tops whilst the smaller landscaped gardens occur within the areas of settlement as at Tudeley and Tudeley Hale. Many of these are smaller landscaped gardens around farmsteads which have become gentrified. The dispersed nature of the settlement can be seen through the middle of the parish. The modern settlement in this parish has developed at Five Oak Green. The extent of horticulture has reduced since 2000 and become more fragmented. A 21st century character type is that of the extensive solar panel farms, one of which sits in the middle of the parish. Also lost are the areas of hop gardens. These were difficult to identify on the 1940 RAF AP and the limit on time meant that a systematic search of the Tithe map schedules was not undertaken. Thus some of the areas identified as orchards may have been hop gardens.

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

Map 4 shows the projected period of origin for each character type in Capel based on the historic map evidence and understanding of the Kent landscape. The southern and western parts of Capel retain the most historic landscape antiquity with character types originating in the medieval period surviving into the present day. By contrast the areas to the east and north show a landscape of the post-medieval and modern origin. Sixteen years on from the Kent Phase 1 HLC in 2000 has revealed a landscape where extensive areas of orchards have been converted to arable lands and in some cases to industry (with the solar farm).

Elements of that past historic landscape character still may survive within the present landscape, for example some of the field boundaries for the older field systems in the areas of modern field amalgamation or within the parkland at Somerhill. These boundaries are also the remnants of the older parishes, manors, farmsteads and the Lowy.

3.5 Analysis of different character types

Map 5 shows only the HLC broad type for Enclosures by HLC type for Capel. 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 and it can be seen that Capel is dominated by modern field amalgamation, the result of the railway, agricultural improvements and changes in cropping regimes in the modern era. The areas of modern field amalgamation occur on the lower ground and along the flood plain where the soils and topography enabled changes and improvements in cultivation techniques to take place. The assart fields occur scattered across the southern part of the parish, following a historic alignment along the edge of the High Weald with fragments of formal planned type fields around Whetstead and Postern. At Tudeley Hale the field pattern suggests some survival of consolidated strip fields. Irregular informal fields are a feature of the flood plain where the numerous streams and ditches provided the boundaries for enclosing meadows.

Map 6 gives an indication of this where the same polygons have been illustrated by the Boundary type attribute. Immediately the River Medway valley can be identified by the fields bounded by ditches. The boundaries are dominated by hedges across the middle of the parish. In some case where modern field amalgamation has taken place the boundaries have been removed altogether leaving just grass balks. In the centre and southern parts of Capel wooded hedges dominate accentuating the wooded landscape character of this area. In parts these wooded hedges are all that remain of the former woodland that did occur across parts of this area. Wooded hedges are either outgrown hedges (due to lack of management) or wider wooded shaws. The fences are evidence of paddocks, laid out in an older field system. They tend to occur near settlement or farmsteads.

3.6. The conjectured medieval and early post-medieval landscape of Capel

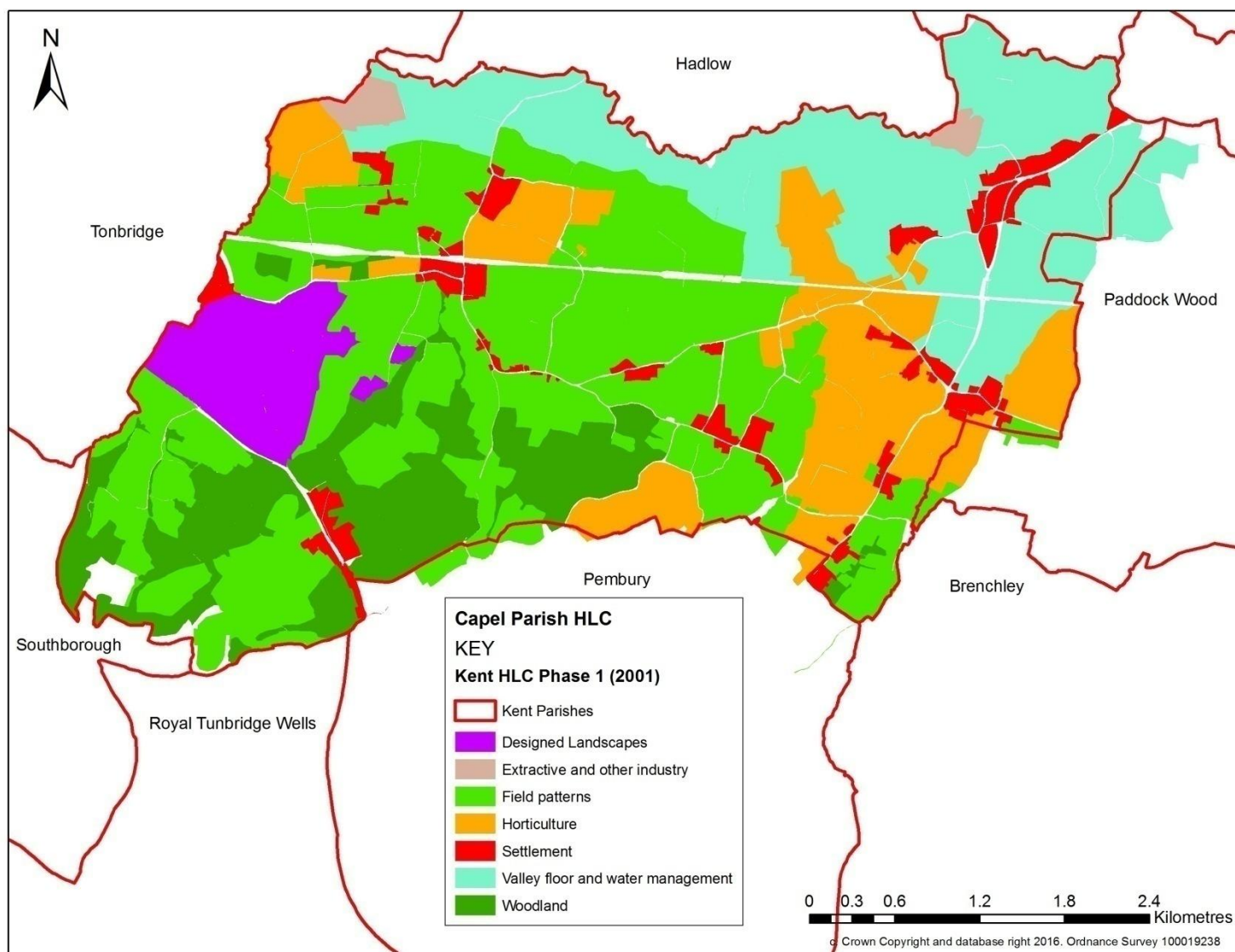
Map 7 is a composite map of the present HLC overlain with those polygons where the previous historic character can be identified from the historic mapping. Each time there is a character change as shown by the historic maps (up to 4 changes recorded in the GIS attribute table as Prev1 to Prev 4) this has been captured in the data base. The result is that this map gives an indication of what the landscape may have appeared like c.1500-1600, when much the medieval features would still have been intact.

Formal planned fields tend to occur near areas of early settlement or near to areas called 'green such as Five Oak Green. South of Five Oak there was a large area of ancient woodland known as Fobles Wood. This was cleared in early C19 to create formal planned fields which were then laid out to large orchards. The original field pattern around Five Oak Green – Moat Farm (which was part of the Lowy) suggests a strip form of farming as dose parts of the meadows along the Medway.

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 or may even be medieval in date.

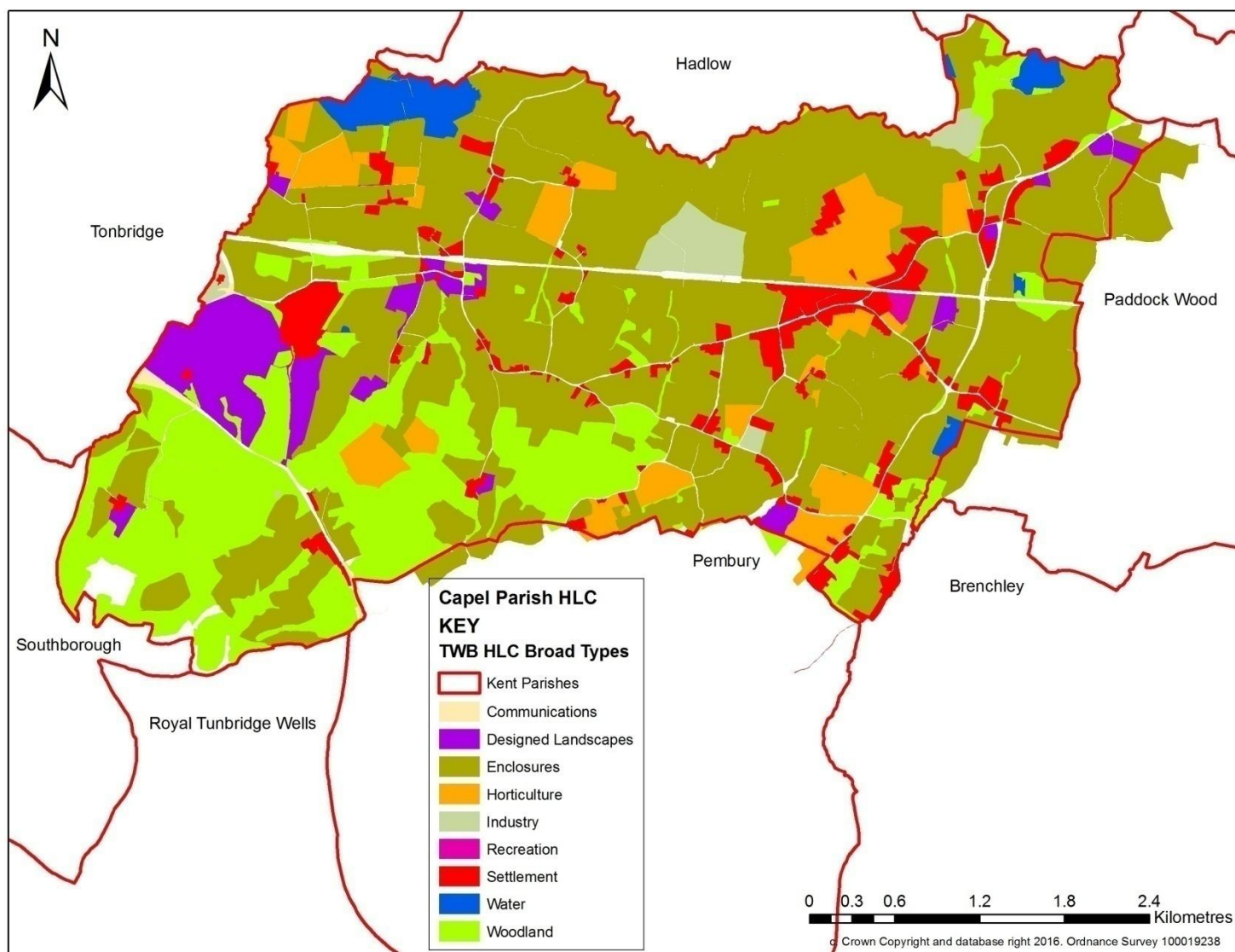
The extent of the organised (cohesive assarts) can be seen in the area of Capel extending into the High Weald, with the close association with ancient woodland.

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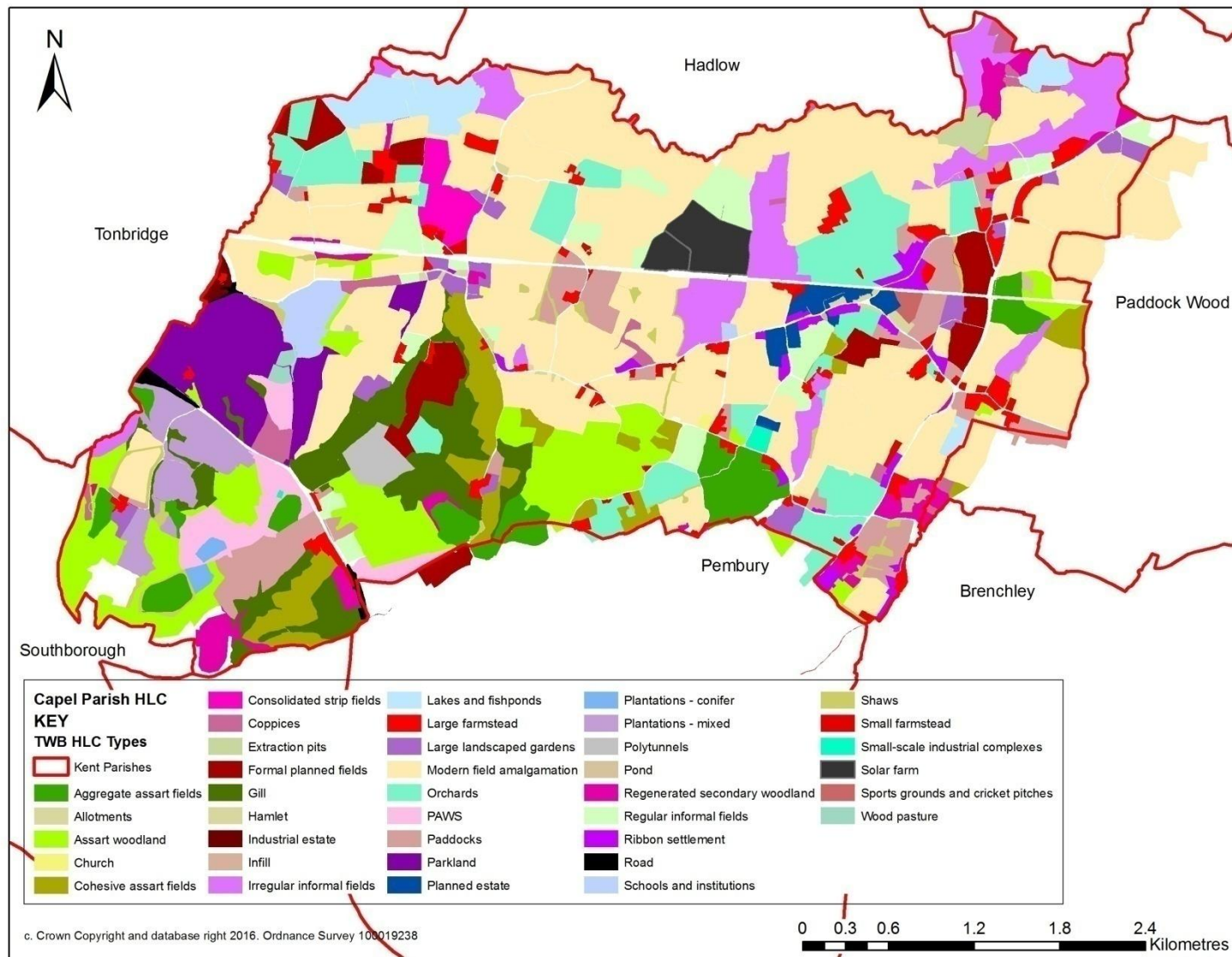
MAP 1

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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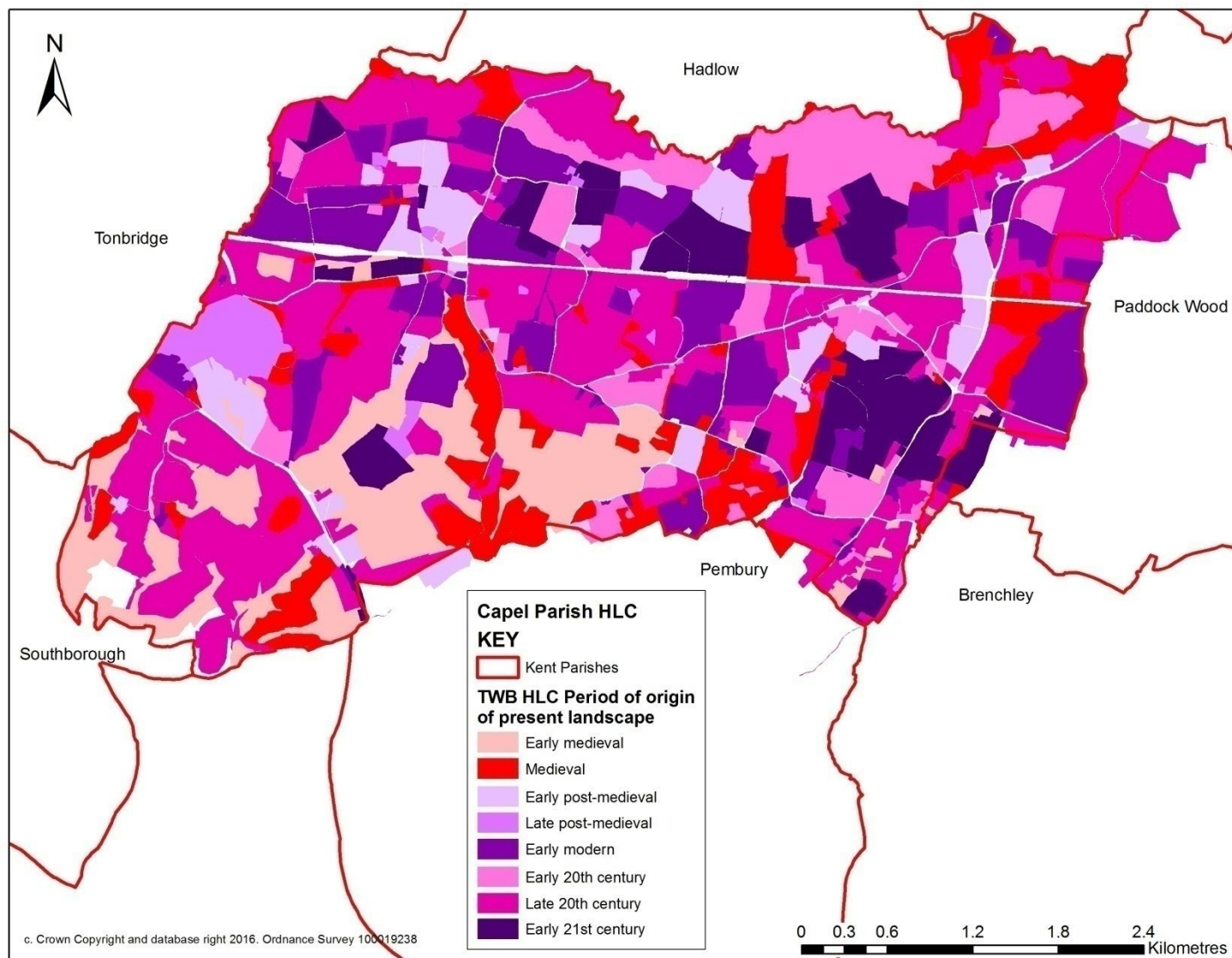
MAP 2

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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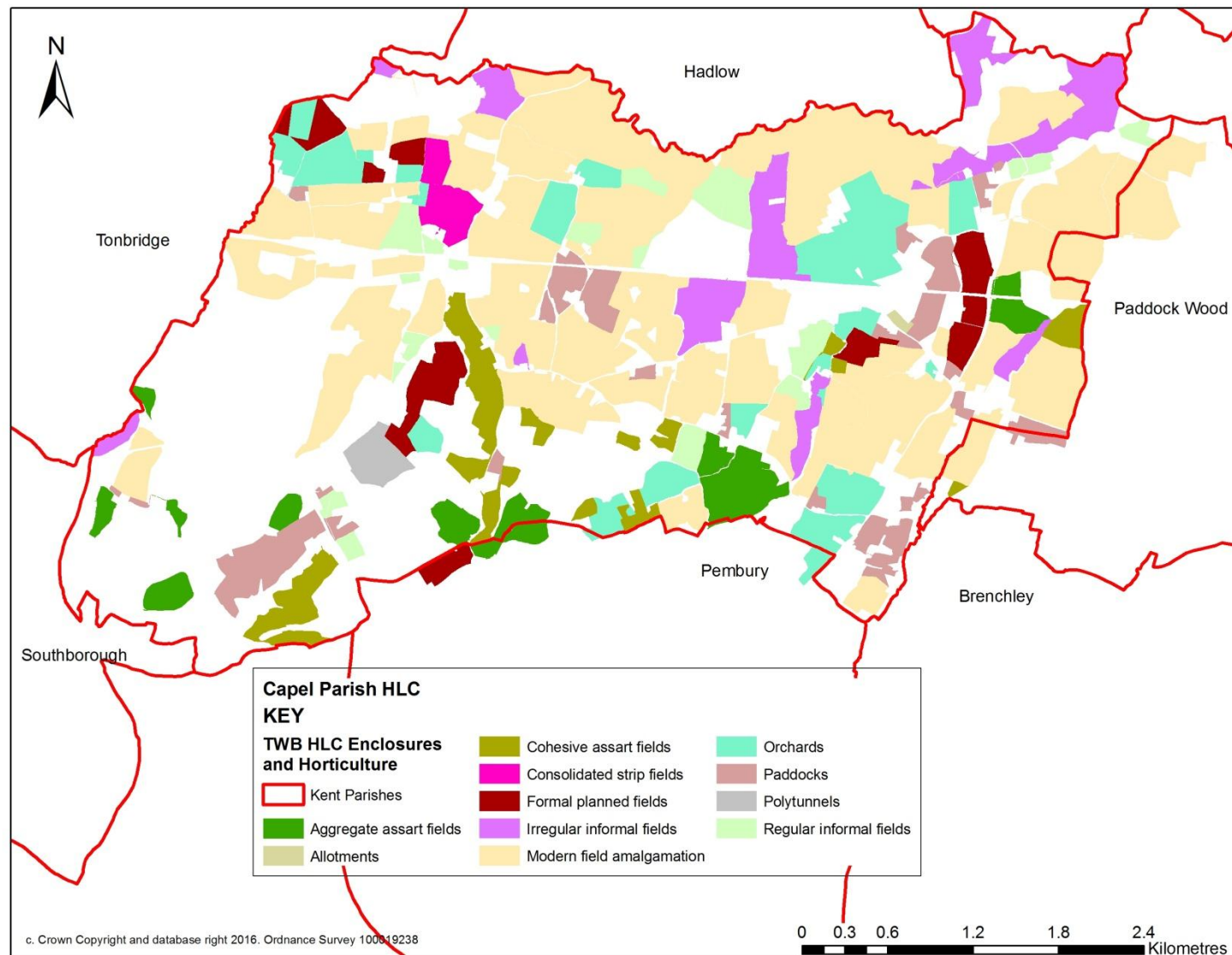
Map 3

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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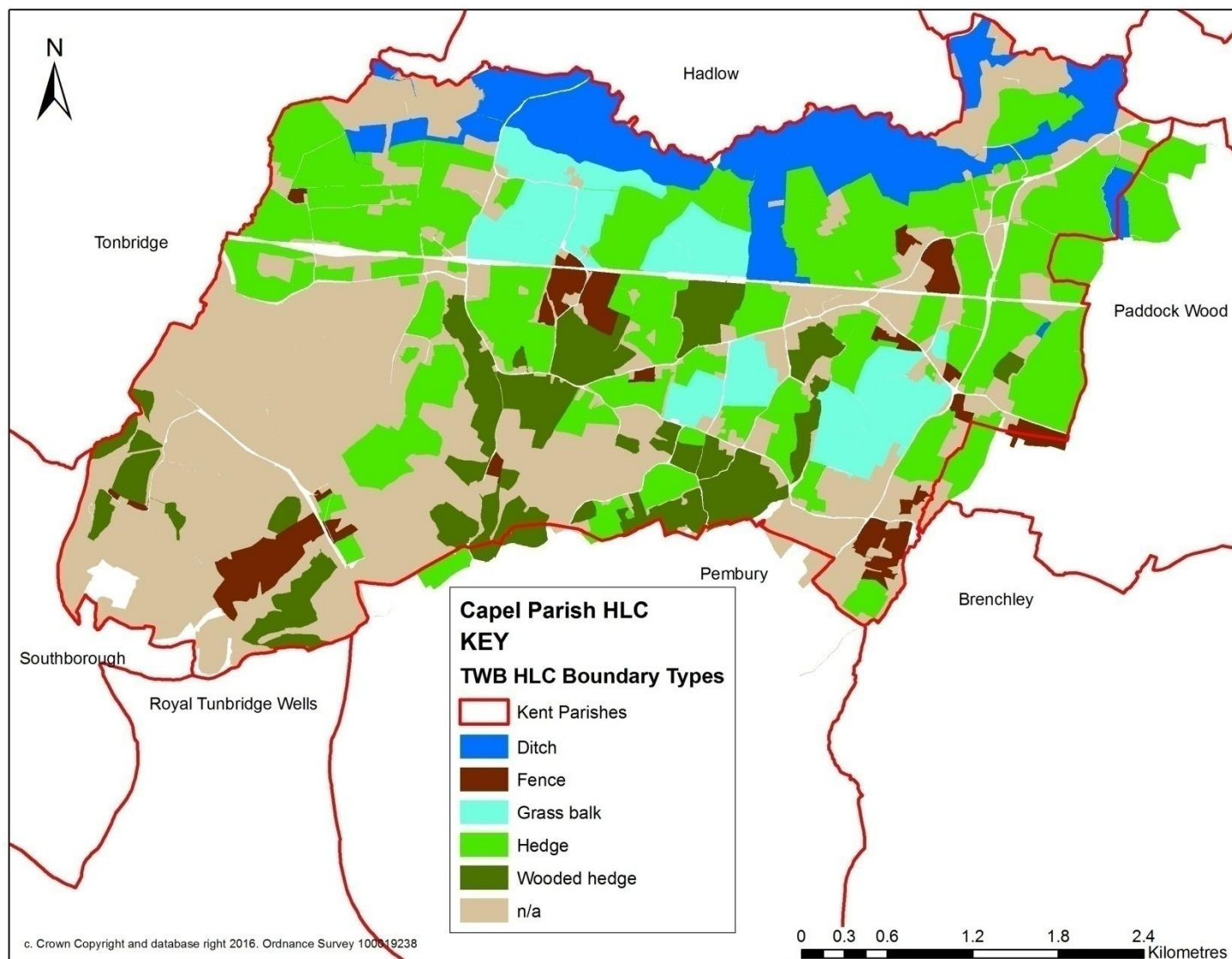
MAP 4

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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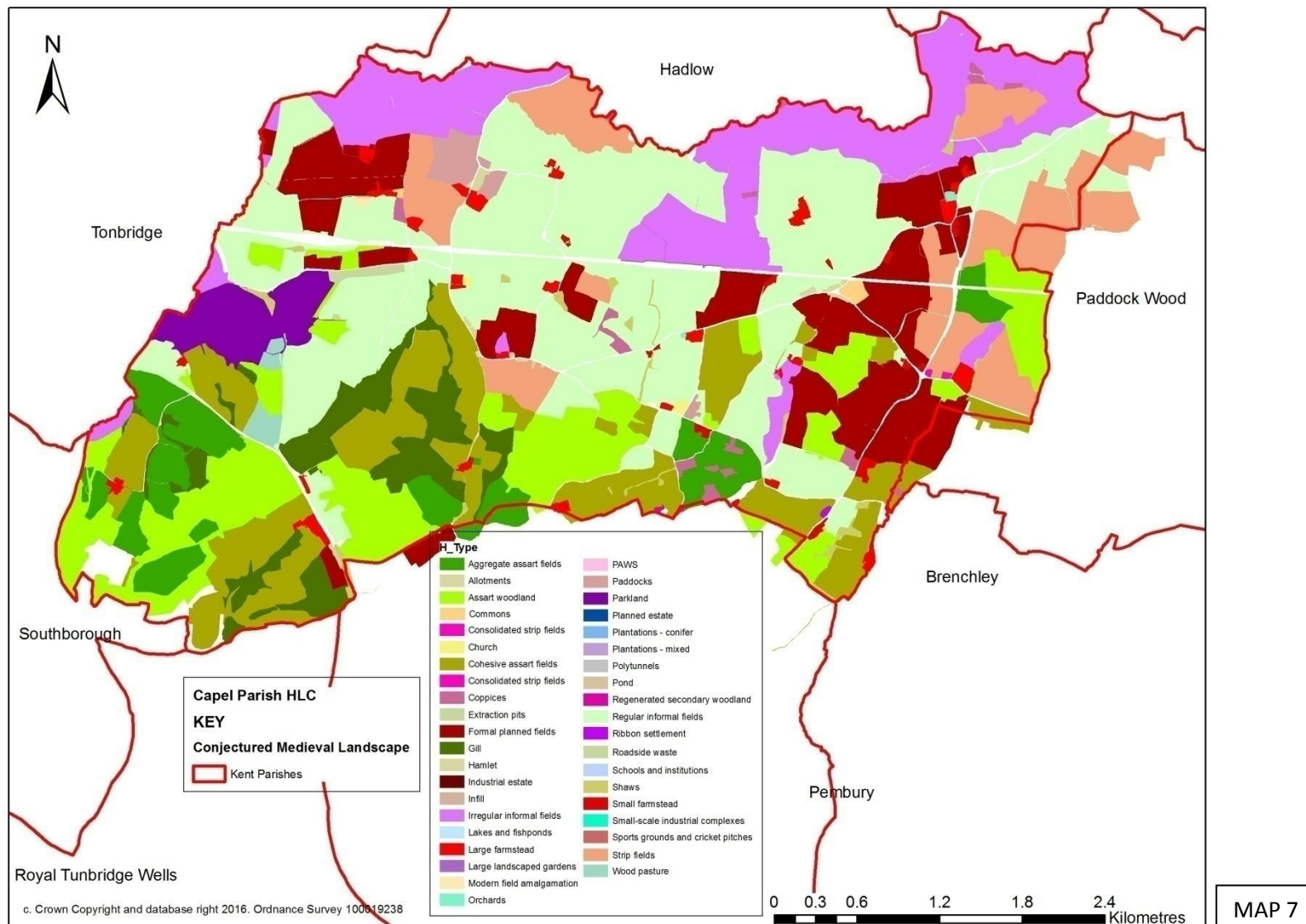
MAP 5

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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MAP 6

**BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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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 the landscape of Capel is a sharp contrast of Early modern and C20 land use to the middle and north of the parish with remnants of the older medieval farmed landscape to the south. Somerhill Park has evolved from the hunting lodge in South Frith. Postern Farm is located on the edge of the Lowy and suggests one the 'gates' or entrances into this territory. The historic character of Capel reflects both the ancient landscapes (antiquity) and the modern landscapes (time-depth). The changes in the C19 and C20 are shown most clearly along the edge of the Medway valley but the underlying structure of remaining field boundaries old routeways (lanes and paths) and the dispersed nature of the historic settlement is still present and can be identified here.

Far more research is needed to understand the different process 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 yokes, yardlands, sulungs, virgates etc. and interpreting medieval manorial surveys with the actual territories in the landscape.

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