

Proposed Tennis Courts, Parking, Allotments and Garden,
Church Landway, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent
Heritage Statement

April 2022



Report reference & issue

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Front cover: Holy Cross Church and Church Landway.

Back cover: Carved animal on parapet of church tower, one of three thought to represent a lion, a panther and a griffin, probably derived from a medieval bestiary and the work of a local guild of stone masons directed by the Bertie or Barty family. Thomas Bertie left Bearsted in 1532 to become Master Mason at Winchester Cathedral.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background



Figure 1 Site Location (Source: Bearsted Parish Council)

This Heritage Statement (HS) has been prepared by Louise Hooper Landscape Architect to support a planning application for two new tennis courts, parking and the relocation of existing allotments at Church Landway, Bearsted.

It has been prepared to inform the planning and design process, working with the client, Bearsted Parish Council and their design team. The early identification of any potential heritage impacts on the site or its context allows appropriate mitigation measures to be integrated into the site planning and design stages.

By looking at the history of the site and its surroundings, Conservation Areas, listed buildings, historic routeways and industrial heritage can be identified and their setting protected.

A HS identifies any potential heritage impacts of the proposed development. By fully understanding the site and its historic context, we can explore the opportunities to embed the proposed development into the local area.

1.2 The Site

The site comprises an existing car park, an area of allotments and a small rectangular paddock with a block of woodland. It lies on the south-eastern fringe of Bearsted, some 4 kilometres to the east of central Maidstone.

To the north and west lies Bearsted village, to the southwest is the Bearsted and Thurnham Lawn Tennis Club, to the south and east lies open space managed by the Bearsted Woodland Trust and to the north is Mote Hall, a Grade II listed house with a large garden, tennis court and a cluster of barns and outbuildings, and Holy Cross Church, a Grade I listed building.



Figure 2 Site Context (Source: Googleearth Pro)

1 Introduction

1.3 Definition of terms

A Heritage Statement describes a heritage asset, its significance, and assesses any impact that the proposed works could have on the heritage asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 defines the terms below for use with regards to heritage assets and heritage policy:

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Setting of a heritage asset

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance of a heritage asset

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

1 Introduction

1.4 NPPF guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 provides the following guidelines:

Proposals affecting heritage assets

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

196. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

(a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

(b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

(c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

198. In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.

Considering potential impacts

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

(a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

(b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional ⁶⁸.

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

(a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

(b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

(c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

(d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible ⁶⁹. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

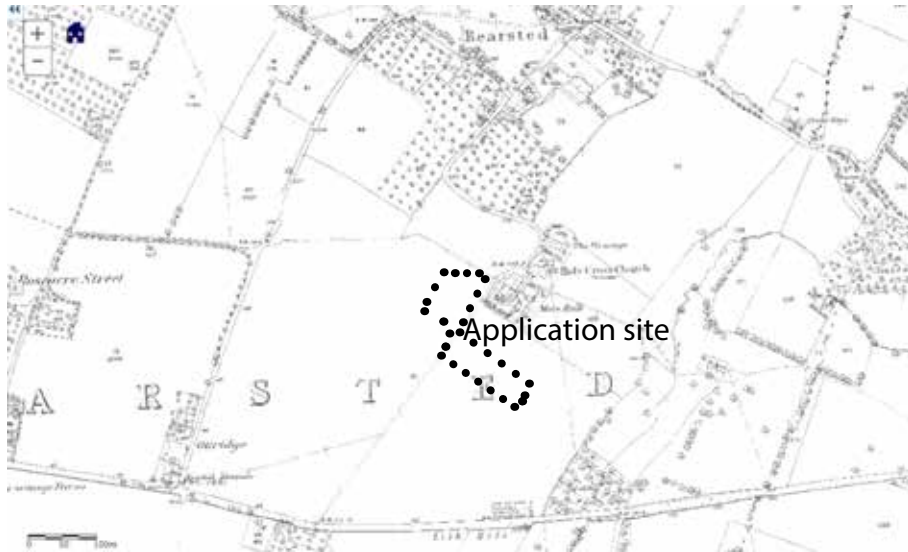
206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

207. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under [paragraph 201](#) or less than substantial harm under [paragraph 202](#), as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

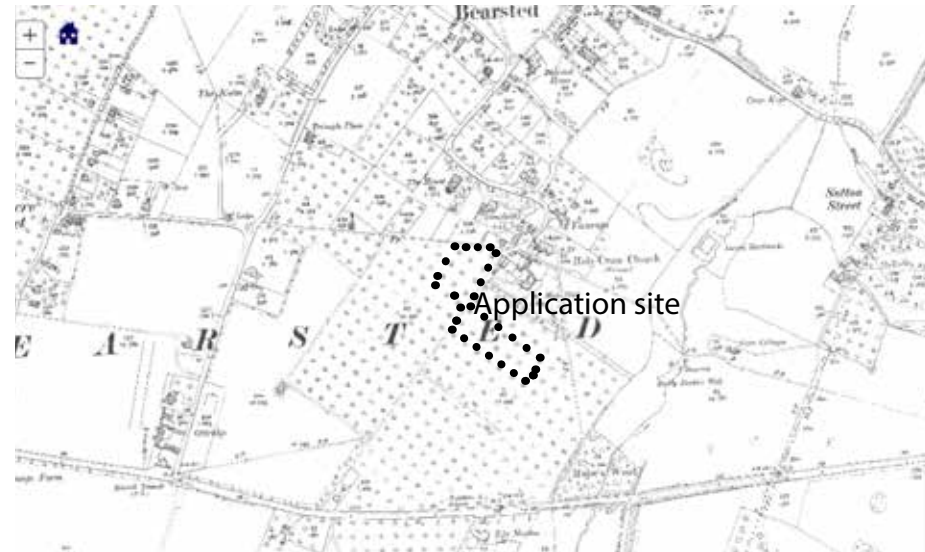
208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

2 Heritage Context

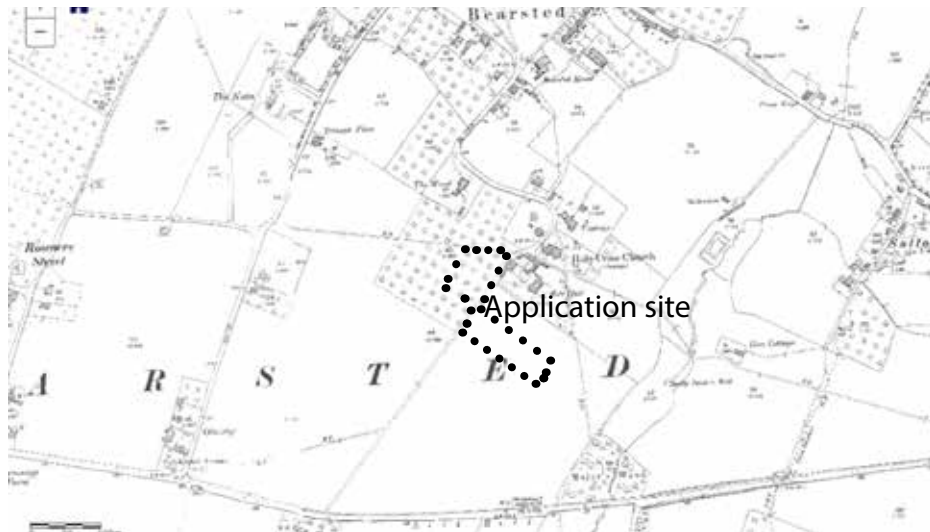
2.1 History: maps



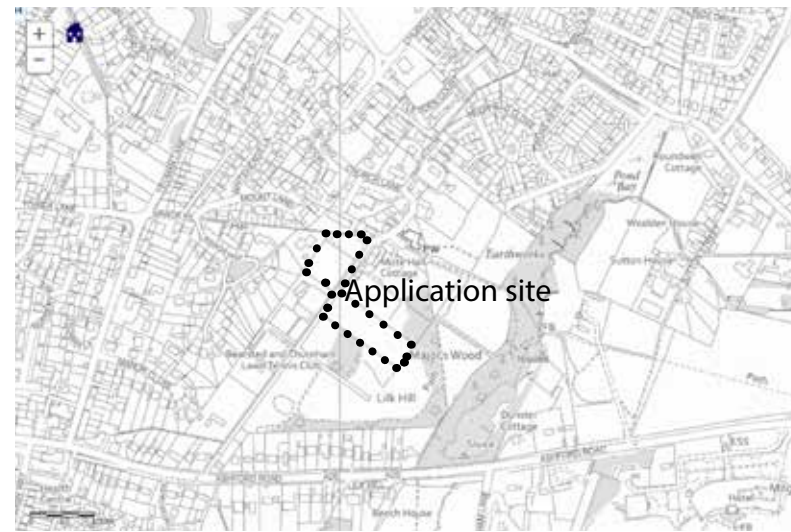
1871 Ordnance Survey Source: klis



1907 Ordnance Survey Source: klis



1897 Ordnance Survey Source: klis



2022 Ordnance Survey Source: klis

Figure 3 Historic maps

2 Heritage Context

2.1 History: maps

On the 1871 map, the only buildings close to the application site are the church, Mote Hall and the Vicarage. Orchards separate these buildings from the rest of Bearsted village which is centred around the Green.

The 1897 map shows the Mount to the west of the church, and three dwellings fronting Church Lane: the Coach House, Danefield Cottage and Danedale and North Down, a pair of dwellings at the junction of Church Lane and Trapfield Lane. The orchard extends as far south as Mote Hall.

The 1907 map shows the addition of Danefield, a large property located between the church and the Mount. There appear to be some additional building plots on Church Lane. The orchard extends as far south as Ashford Road and Major's Wood.

The 2022 map shows the extent of infill within the grounds of the Mount and Danefield, the construction of the Bearsted and Thurnham Tennis Club, and new housing in Manor Rise, Manor Close, Mount Lane and along Ashford Road.

2 Heritage Context

2.2 History: photographs



Figure 4: The Site in 1940

Aerial image: Google Earth



Figure 5: The Site in 1960



Figure 6: The Site in 2006

Aerial image: Google Earth



Figure 7: The Site in 2006

Aerial image: Google

2 Heritage Context

2.2 History: photographs

Over the last 60 years there has been enormous change at Bearsted. The aerial photograph from 1940 suggests little had altered - the Mount and Danefield can be seen in the curve of Church Lane to the west of the church, Danefield Cottage near the church, with a significant orchard to the south of the church and towards the Lilt valley to the south-east. Most of this landscape was still present in 1960, with hints of change - some suburban plots have been formed within the grounds of the Mount. By 1990 the car park had been formed with allotments and tennis courts, Danefield Flats and some new houses on Church Lane close to the church.

2 Heritage Context

2.3 Local Scheduled Monuments

Figure xx shows the wealth of Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings and Parks within the vicinity of the application site at Bearsted.

There are 59 listed buildings in Bearsted, the majority are located around Bearsted Green, but there are six listed structures in the Holy Cross conservation area - the Grade I listed Holy Cross Church, which dates from the 13th century, three tombs, and the War Memorial in the graveyard, plus Mote House adjacent to the church.



Figure 9: Mote Hall



Figure 10: Listed buildings in Bearsted

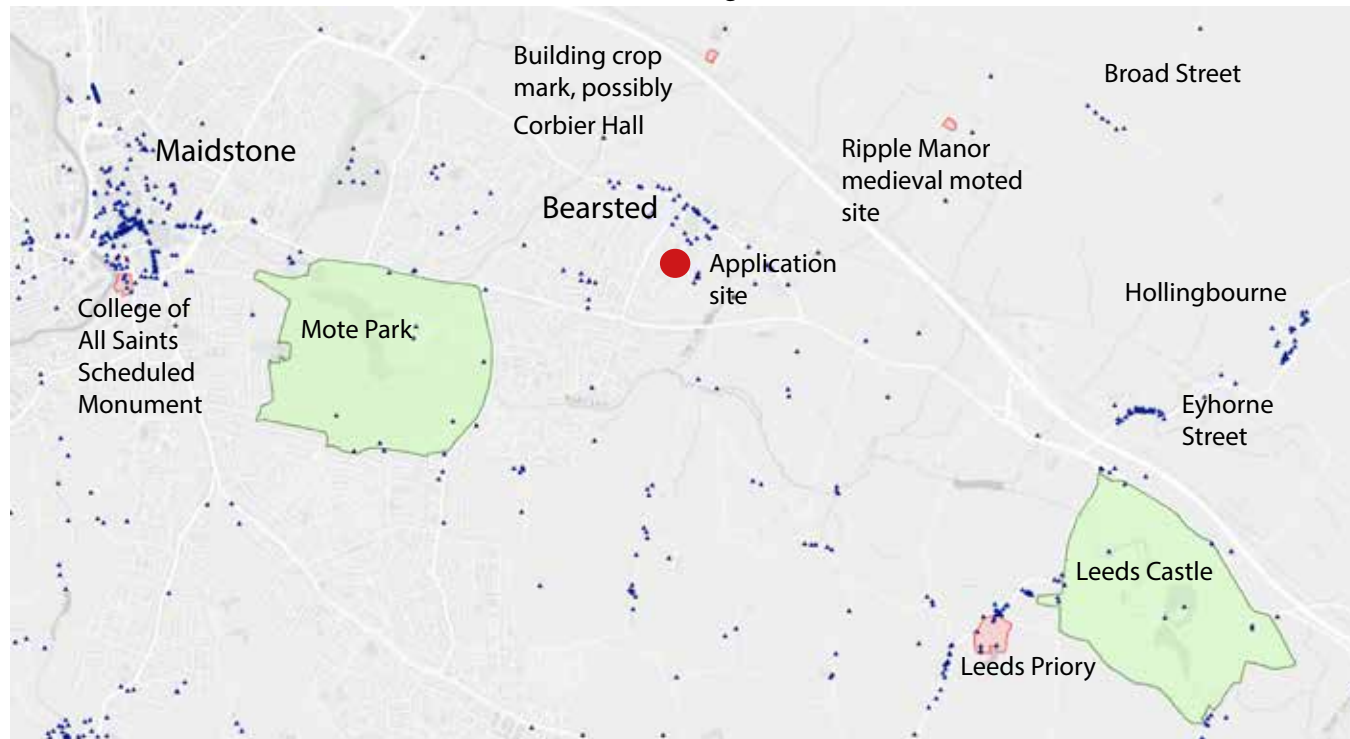


Figure 8 Scheduled monuments and listed buildings close to the application site (Source: historicengland.org.uk)



Figure 11: The War Memorial in the churchyard



Figure 12: Holy Cross Church with Mote Hall Barn in the foreground

2 Heritage Context

2.4 Archaeology

Close to the application site lie the archaeological earthworks of the medieval Mott Hall. They are visible and sit in the valley of the Lilk Stream to the east of Holy Cross church, and comprise a house platform surrounded by a moat with a large fishpond to the north east.

There is an ongoing discussion over a possible extension of the Holy Cross Conservation Area to include this site.



Figure 13 Mote Park to the south-west of Bearsted



Figure 14: Holy Cross Church is Grade I listed.

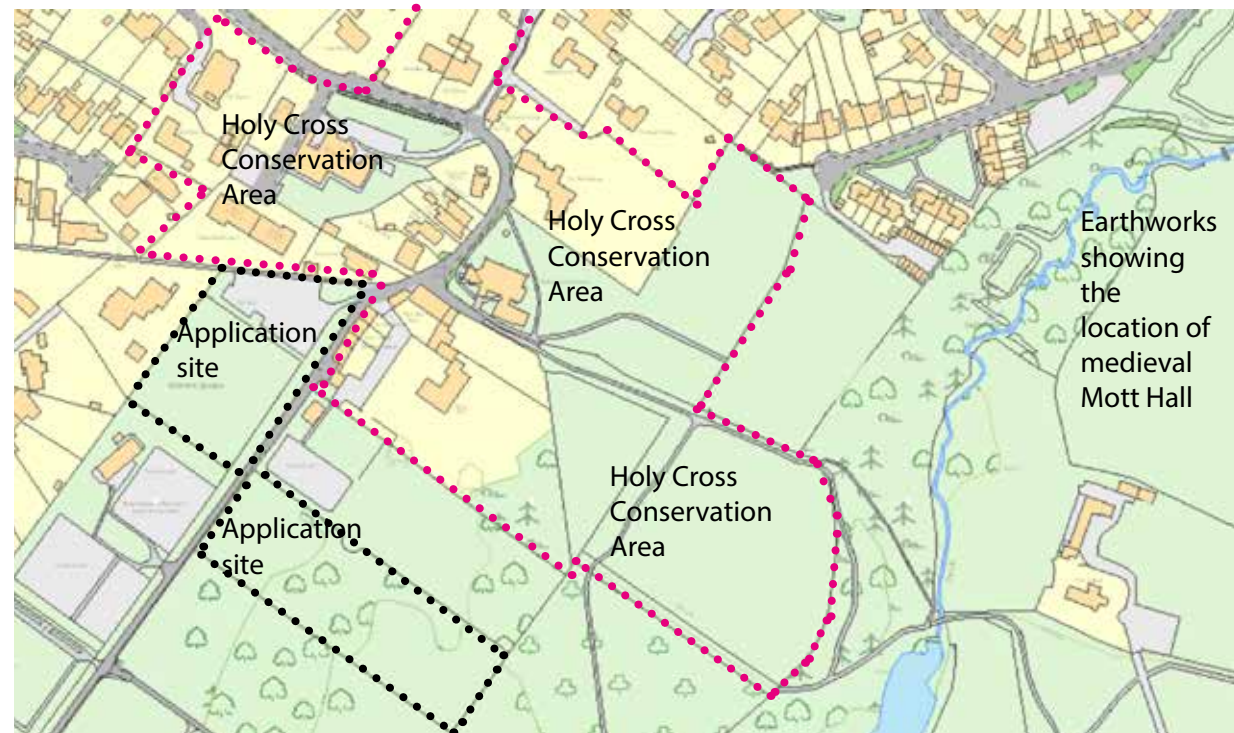


Figure 15 Bearsted Archaeological Site and Holy Cross Conservation Area
(Source: maidstone.gov.uk annotated by LHLA)

2 Heritage Context

2.5 Bearsted Conservation Areas

The Maidstone Borough Council Bearsted Conservation Areas Appraisal & Management Plan was adopted in March 2010. There are two Conservation Areas in Bearsted, Bearsted Conservation Area and Bearsted

Holy Cross Conservation Area.

The existing car park which is part of the application site is adjacent to Holy Cross Conservation Area on its

north and eastern boundaries.

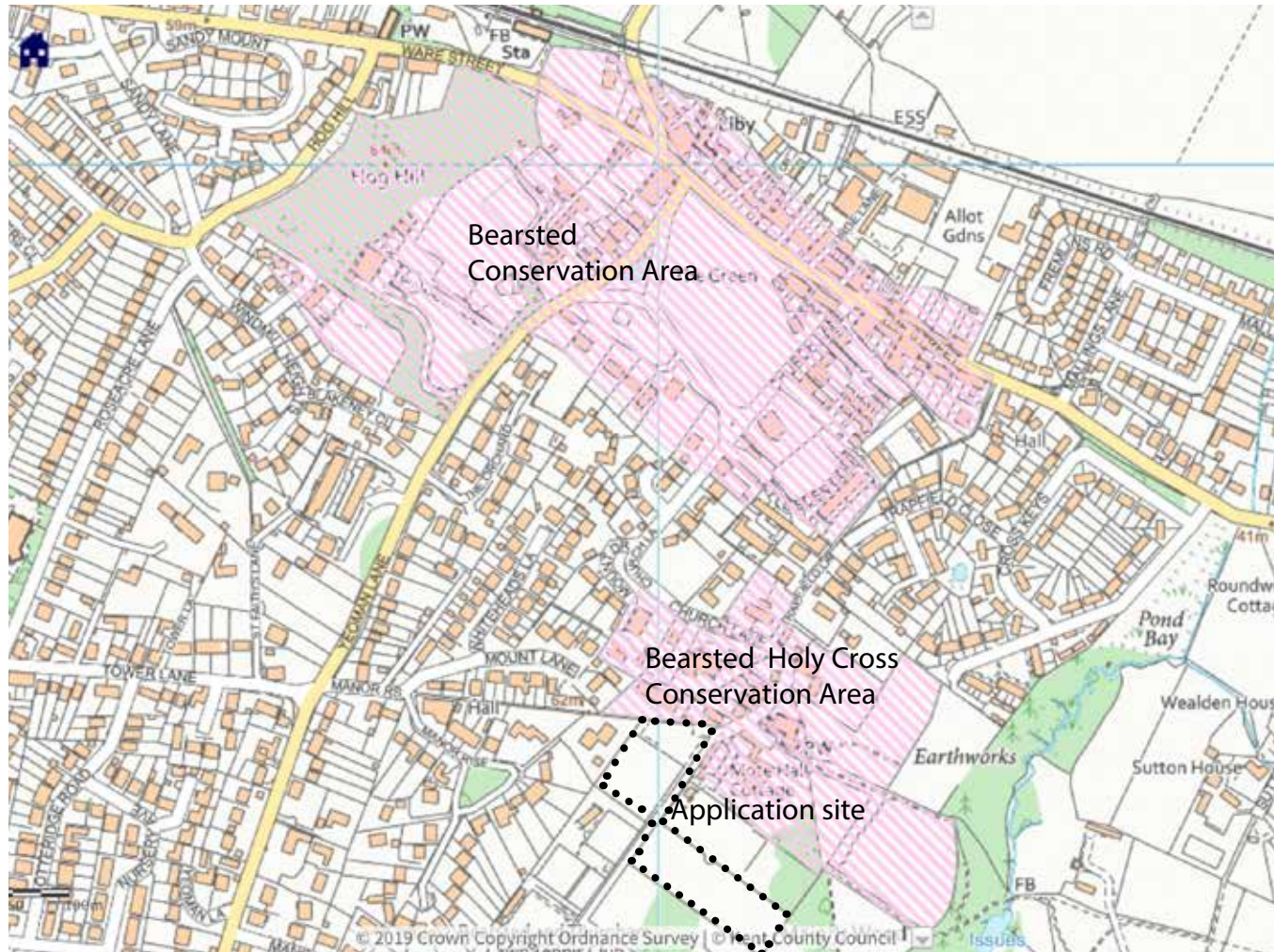


Figure 16 Bearsted Conservation Areas (Source: klis)

Bearsted Conservation Areas Appraisal & Management Plan



Maidstone Borough Council

Adopted 22 March 2010

Figure 17 Bearsted Conservation Area Appraisal
(Source: maidstone.gov.uk)

2 Heritage Context

2.5 Bearsted Conservation Areas

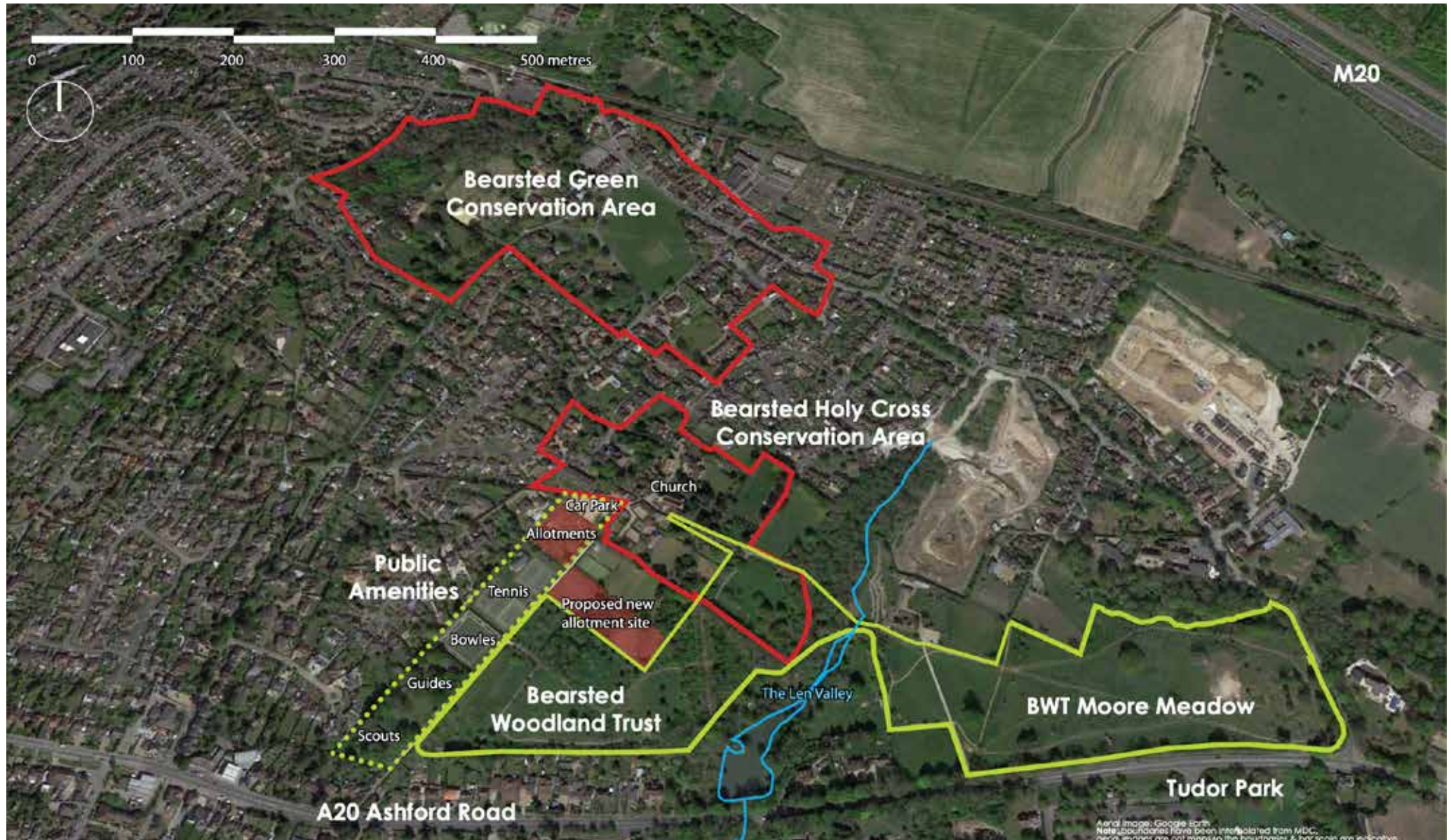


Figure 18 Context: The site in relation to Conservation Areas, Bearsted Woodland Trust & Public Amenities

3 Conservation Areas

3.1 Bearsted Conservation Area

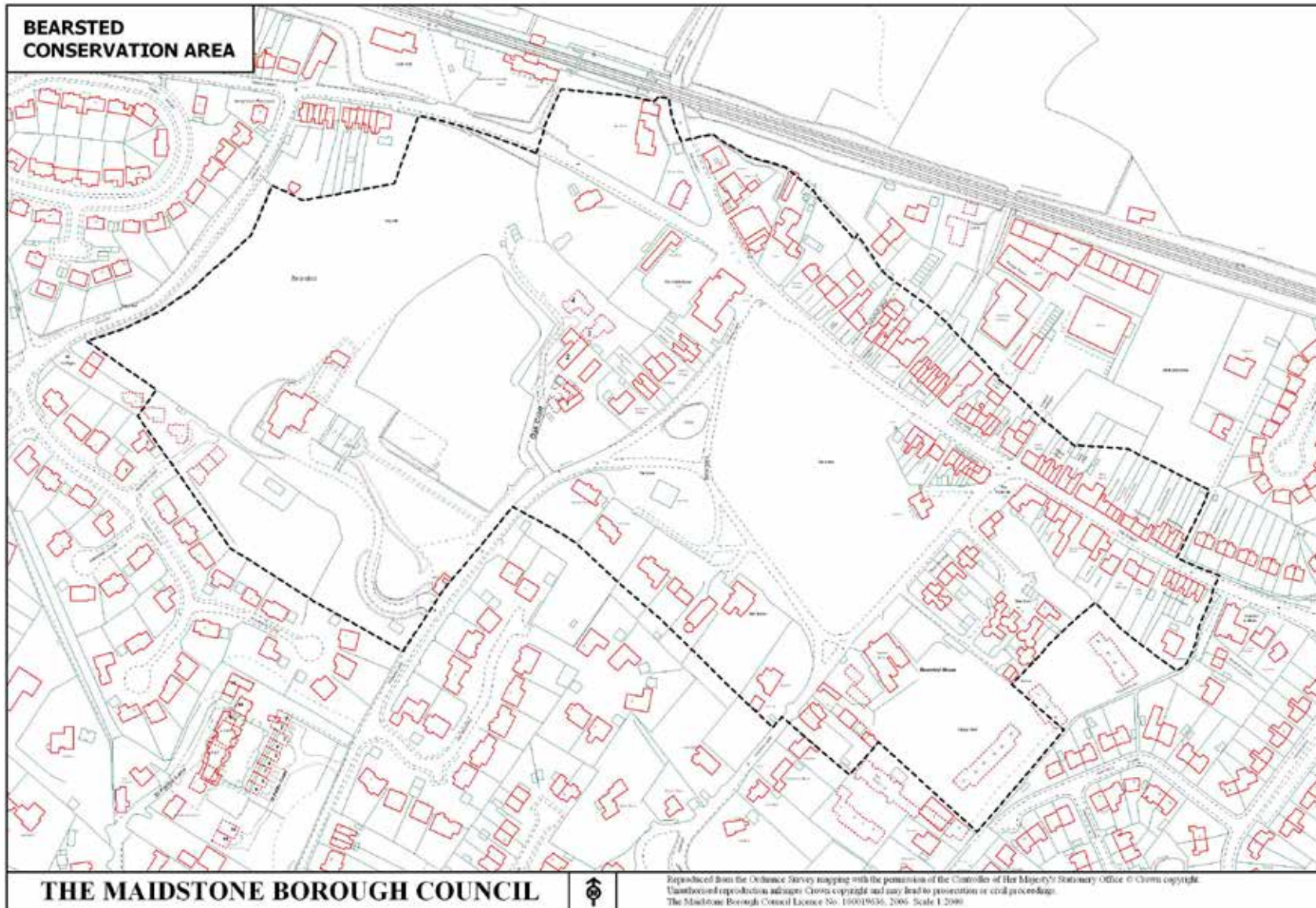


Figure 19 Bearsted CA (Source: maidstone.gov.uk)

3 Conservation Areas

3.2 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area

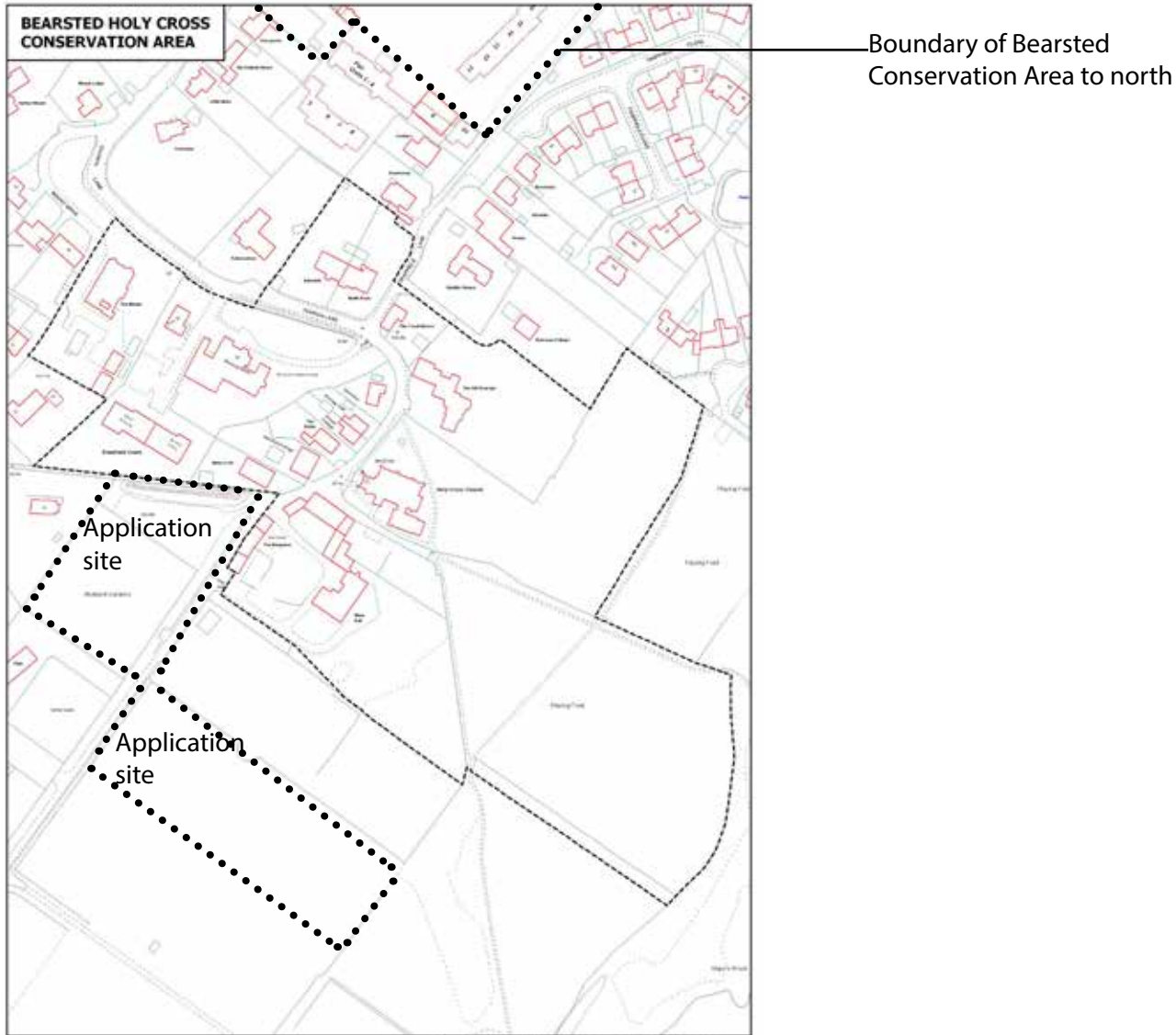


Figure 20 Bearsted Holy Cross CA annotated by LHILA
(Source: maidstone.gov.uk)

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.3 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area - Figure Ground



Figure 21 Figure ground

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.4 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area - Character Areas

A This Character Area is the oldest part of the Conservation Area and contains the Holy Cross Church which dates back to Saxon times with medieval and Victorian phases, Mote Hall and outbuildings and the Vicarage. The Character Area also includes the rural setting and backdrop for these properties.

B This area was developed in the late nineteenth century when Mote Hall started to sell off some building plots. Danefield is the largest of these, with the Mount to the west and a pair of houses, Danedale and North Down to the north.

C Character Area C is dominated by smaller properties to the west of the church developed between the 1880's and the late twentieth century, and the flats at Danefield Court, just to the south of Danefield.

Bearsted (Holy Cross Church) Conservation Area

The Bearsted Conservation Area can be divided into three different Character Areas:

Character Area A

This area has long been dominated by the church and the Mote Hall estate; until the late nineteenth century these two elements, together with the vicarage and Mote Hall farm buildings, were surrounded by fields and were relatively remote from Bearsted village, which historically was clustered around the Green.

Character Area B

In the 1880's Mote Hall began to sell off building plots, which allowed some large new houses to be built to the north-west of the church. To connect to the older village houses around the Green. Some of these newer houses such as Danefield and the Mount are large, set in substantial grounds. Despite late twentieth century infill in the grounds, there is a feeling of leafiness due to mature trees and garden planting. Church Lane runs from north-west to south-east and has a spacious character with substantial late Victorian/Edwardian houses with elements of Queen Anne and vernacular revival style.

Character Area C

Close to the church there are some smaller, higher density properties developed between the late 1880's and the late twentieth century, giving a different townscape character.

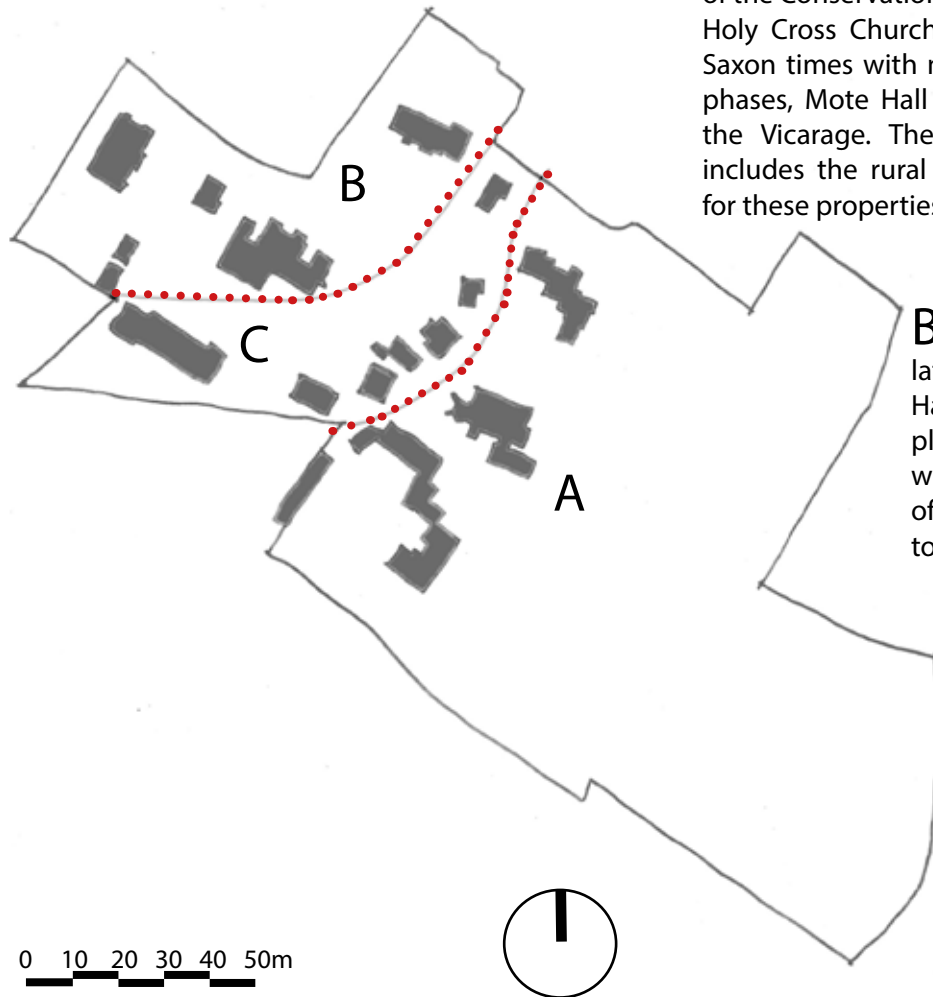


Figure 22 Character Areas within Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.5 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area - Public Rights of Way



Figure 23 PRoWs within Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area

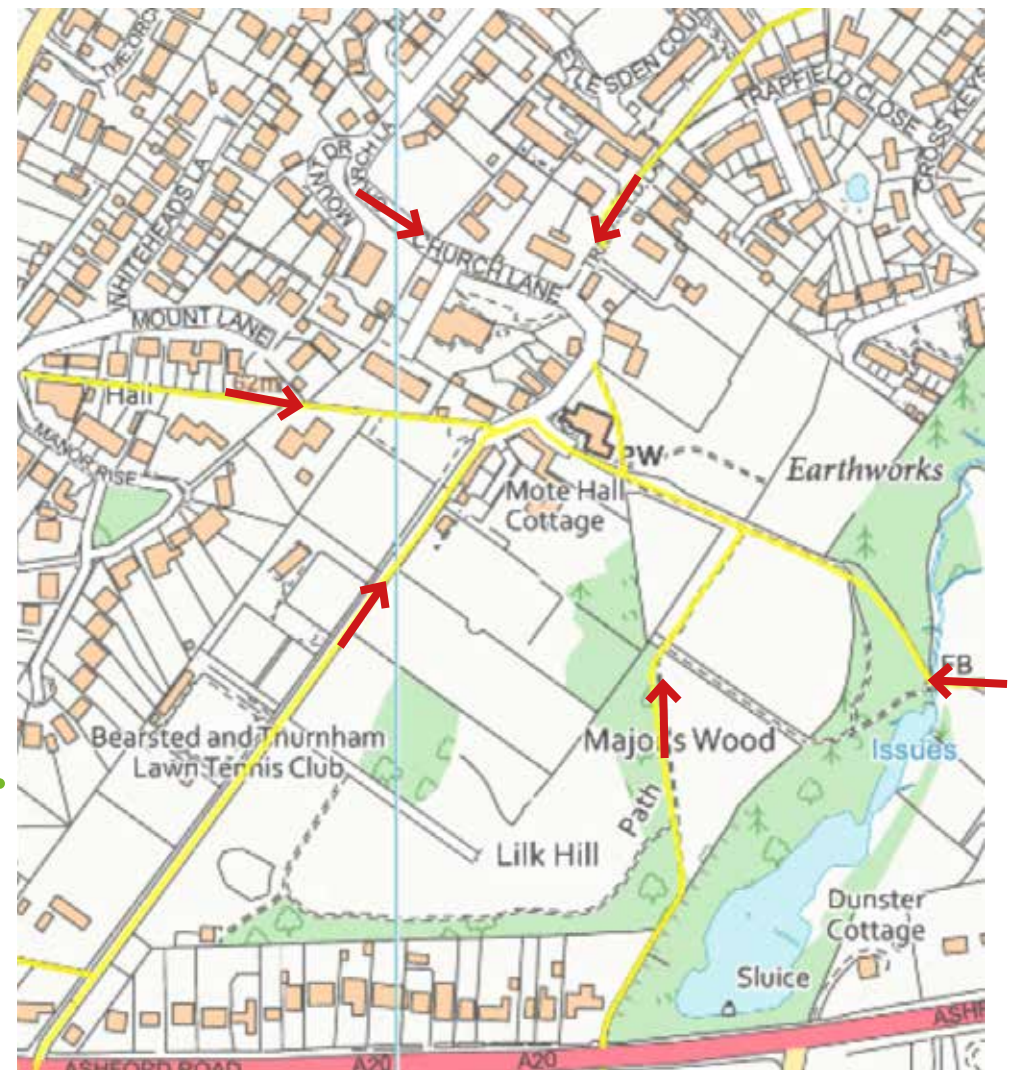


Figure 24 PRoWs around Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area and approaches to the Conservation Area

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.6 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation

Area - Approaches

There are six approaches to the Conservation Area:

- from the north-west along Church Lane
- from the north along Trapfield Lane footpath (KM83)
- from the east across the River Lilk and Sutton Street (KM75)
- from the south through Major's Wood and Bearsted Woodland Trust (KM85)
- from the south-west via Church Landway (KM77)
- from the west from Yeoman Lane/Tower Lane/Roseacre/Manor Rise via KM75

These different routes all converge at the church. Today only Church Lane is open to vehicles, leading to the church and the car park; the other routes remain open as public right of way. Historically this is a meeting of old routes which are still evident in footpath form.

3.7 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area - Historic Routeways



Figure 25 Historic routes through Bearsted (Source: klis annotated by LHLA)

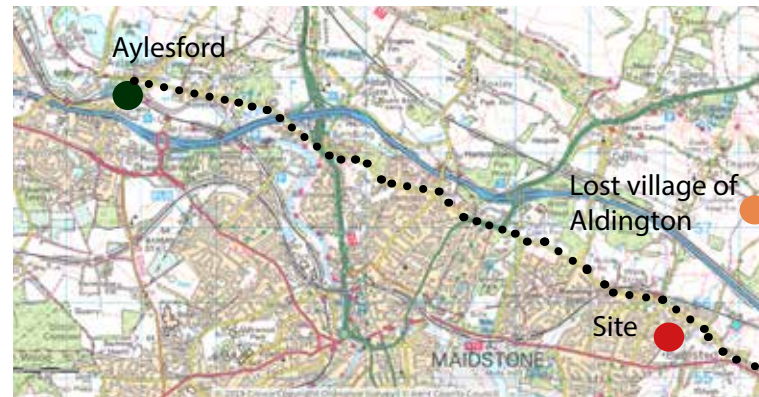


Figure 26 Historic east-west route from Medway crossing at Aylesford through Bearsted (Source: klis annotated by LHLA)

The main east-west route in the area was from the River Medway crossing in Aylesford via Ware Street, The Street and Roundwell. According to History of Bearsted and Thurnham (1988), this route was possibly prehistoric and certainly was in use in Saxon times, a time when Bearsted's origins can be traced to.

An early Saxon droveway linking Wealden summer pastures and woodlands with primary Saxon settlements in north Kent along Watling Street followed Sutton Street and Water Lane to the east of the site. A possible droveway bisected the application site following Church Landway from Otham, to the south near Ashford Road, past Holy Cross Church along Church Lane, Trapfield Lane and Mallings Lane north towards the lost village of Aldington located to the east of Thurnham, near the site of Thurnham Keep Farm.

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.7 Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area



Figure 27 View 1 towards the church from the carpark



Figure 29 View 3 Church Landway away from the church



Figure 32 View 6 towards the carpark past the church



Figure 30 View 4 Mote Hall from Church Lane



Figure 33 View 7 along Willsons Avenue towards the church



Figure 28 View 2 Church Landway towards the church



Figure 31 View 5 towards Mote Hall Barn past the church



Figure 34 View 8 the Glebe

3 Conservation Areas (continued)

3.6 Vulnerable boundaries with neutral or negative features



Figure 37 View 10 along the footpath flanking the car park towards Roseacre and Manor Drive



Figure 38 View 11 across the car park to Danefield Court



Figure 39 View 12 across the carpark towards Mote Croft, Mote Hall Barn, the Bungalow and the church



Figure 40 View 13 across the carpark towards Mote Hall Barn, the Bungalow, Mote Cottage, Mote Hall Cottage and the allotments. The roof of Mote Hall can be seen.

4 Proposed development

4.1 Schematic Plan

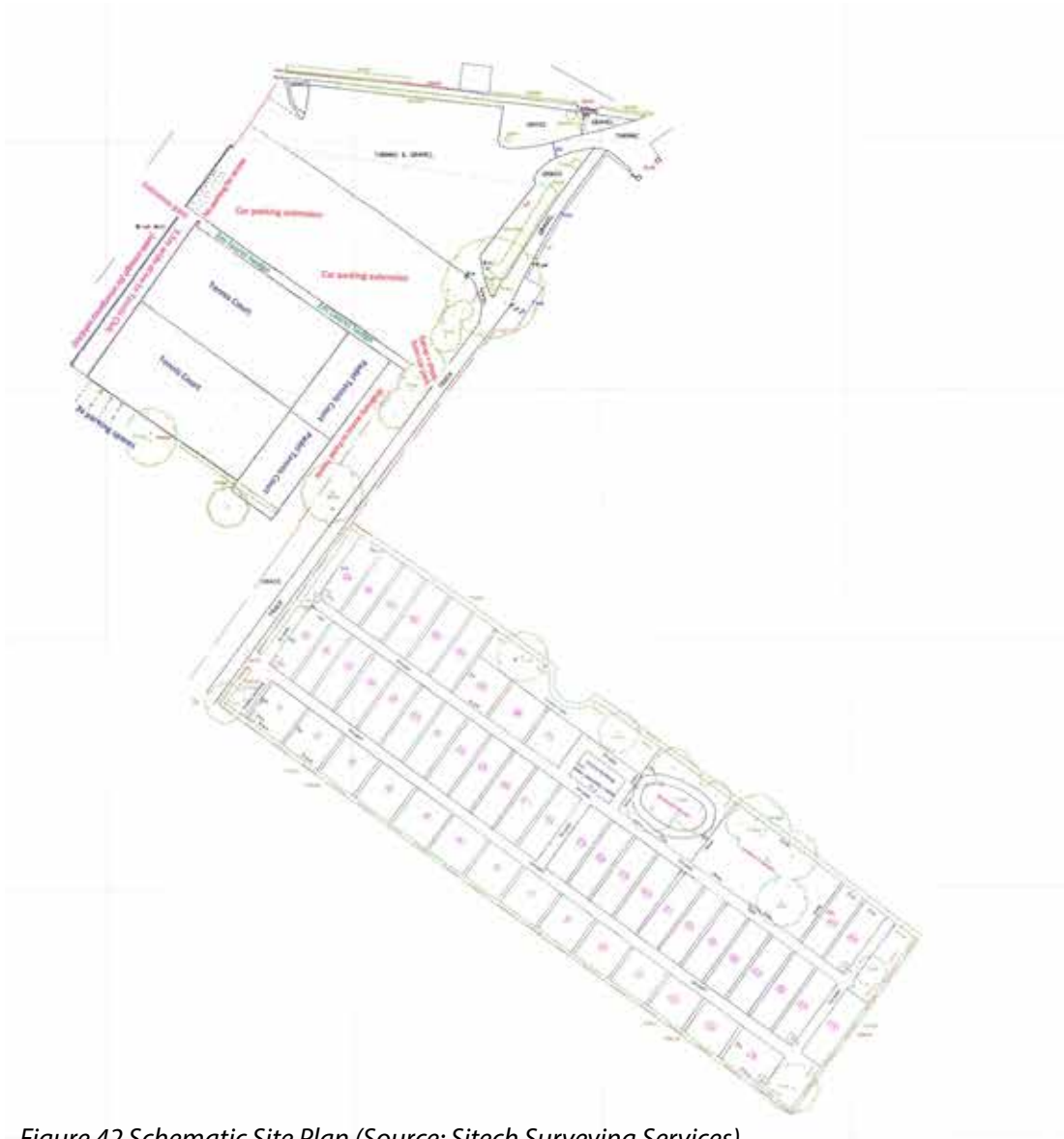


Figure 42 Schematic Site Plan (Source: Sitech Surveying Services)

The proposed development would take place on two adjacent sites. The existing allotments plots would be moved to a new site to the east of Church Landway and to the south of the grounds of Mote Hall.

The northern part of the existing allotment plots would be replaced by an extended area of car parking. The southern part of the allotment plots would be used to construct two new tennis courts for the Bearsted and Thurnham Tennis Club.

A schematic plan is shown in Figure 42.

The schematic plan shows new allotment plots throughout the area to the south of Mote Hall. Approximately a third of the site is currently covered by a spinney of regenerating woodland which would be lost if this layout of allotment plots was used.

5 Heritage Impacts

5.1 Setting of Heritage Assets

The heritage assets which have been considered in connection with this planning application include a conservation area, six listed buildings/monuments and a historic routeway:

- Holy Cross Conservation Area
- Holy Cross Church (grade I listed)
- Table tomb of Packman family (grade II listed)
- Table tomb of Ducklebery family (grade II listed)
- Table tomb (grade II listed)
- War memorial in churchyard (grade II listed)
- Mote Hall
- Church Landway, a possible Saxon droveway

5.2 Setting of Heritage Assets

The setting of a heritage asset refers to the surroundings in which the asset is seen. These surroundings may vary and depend on the direction of view, the season, the weather, the temperature and the time of day. The setting can provide a positive or a negative contribution to the asset, and it may affect the ability to appreciate the significance of the asset.

The approach to a heritage asset is of importance and affects the setting and the appreciation of the asset. The Bearsted Holy Cross Conservation Area, listed buildings and monuments and the Church Landway are mainly accessed on foot. This allows for a slower and more appreciative view of the heritage assets, compared to a view from a passing vehicle. The only vehicular access is from Church Lane which is a no-through road, ending at the Church Landway carpark.

5.3 Significance of Heritage Assets

The significance of a heritage asset is its value to this generation and to future generations due to its heritage interest. This may be an archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. The significance comes from the setting of a heritage asset as well as from its physical presence.

As a Grade I listed building, Holy Cross Church and its setting is an asset of the highest significance.

5.4 Impact on Heritage Assets

When considering the impact of the proposed development on these heritage assets, greatest weight should be given to the conservation of the asset and any harm or damage to its significance.

The proposed development includes an extension of the existing carpark which is adjacent to the Holy Cross Conservation Area on two boundaries. The extended carpark would be formed on the site of the existing allotments, which would be re-located to the eastern side of Church Landway, to a site which is currently mown meadow and a small spinney of regenerating woodland. The southern part of the existing allotment site would be re-developed as tennis courts for Bearsted and Thurnham Tennis Club.

At Bearsted, none of the identified heritage assets would be physically impacted by the proposed development. The setting of and approach to three of the identified assets, however, could be impacted by the proposals unless the design approach is carefully and sensitively considered.

The Holy Cross Conservation Area shares two boundaries with the proposed development. The north boundary of the existing carpark has already seen some unsympathetic development in terms of fencing and house alteration/extension, so is particularly sensitive. View 11 on page 25 shows the extent of the boundary fence which does not make a positive contribution to the local landscape character.

The approach to and views of the Holy Cross Church are of particular concern. As a fine Grade I listed building, this church is a jewel in the Bearsted crown and its setting is paramount. View 12 on page 25 shows how one of these important views of the church is now dominated by the enlarged Mote Croft and white garage, and is particularly sensitive to further change.

The scale of the existing carpark is sympathetic to the setting of the church and Mote Hall. The proposed carpark extension would approximately double the size of the carpark; this increased scale of carpark would have an adverse impact on the setting of the church and Mote Hall.

The character of the existing carpark is sympathetic to the setting of the church and Mote Hall. Features such as the grass verges, golden gravel paving, the lack of lighting, defined parking bays and rural setting of allotments and the views of the church and the Mote Hall building cluster give the carpark an attractive and village feel. The proposed carpark could introduce blacktop, white line markings, signage and lighting which would add a suburban character and clutter with an adverse impact on the setting of the church and Mote Hall.

5 Heritage Impacts

5.4 Impact on Heritage Assets (contd)

The proposed new tennis courts would be lit for evening use. There is currently no lighting in the carpark or the existing allotments, so the proposed illuminated courts would introduce light pollution to an area where there is none.

One of the approaches to the church is via Church Landway, itself a historic routeway, possibly a Saxon droveway. The proposed development would take place to the east and west of Church Landway, and the application site includes a short section of the Landway. The character of Church Landway is defined by its boundaries, its setting and its views. The proposed development could impact on these features.

5.5 Mitigation of Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposed development offers an opportunity to re-furbish the northern boundary of the existing carpark to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The proposed development offers an opportunity to re-consider the character of the view of Holy Cross Church from the existing carpark to enhance the setting of the church.

The adverse impact of the enlarged carpark could be mitigated through sensitive design with shade trees and native hedgerow to delineate parking bays.

The adverse impact of the proposed tennis courts, in particular the flood-lighting, could be mitigated through screen planting with native hedgerow, and properly designed lighting which avoids unnecessary light spill.

Any adverse impact on the character of Church Landway could be mitigated by the retention of existing hedged boundaries, tree cover and through the sensitive design of new interventions such as gate details, pathway junctions and signage.



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