

# West Malling Character Areas

## Draft Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted February 2012





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## Key to Maps



**Views**



**Panoramas**



**Visual Intrusion**



**Protected Trees**



**Protected Woodland or Groups of Trees**



**Important Tree and Hedge Belts**



**Walls**



**Conservation Area**



**Open Space**



**Listed Buildings**

# 1 What is the Supplementary Planning Document?

Good design is a key element of sustainable development, so the Borough Council will promote a high standard of design. A high quality, well designed, development can enhance the sense of place and identity of an area and can bring significant benefits to the local environment and economy.

The 'character of an area' is often mentioned in the context of considering development proposals. What is often missing is a clear identification of, and agreement about, the locally distinctive features of an area that give it character that should be given careful regard in considering proposals for development. This Character Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out to define the character of identifiable local areas across the Borough for that purpose.

The Managing Development and the Environment DPD states that it is important that unique characteristics of an area are identified and protected and where practicable enhanced having regard to the Character Areas SPD in order to strengthen this diversity rather than eroding its character and local distinctiveness. Government guidance (PPS3) advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area.

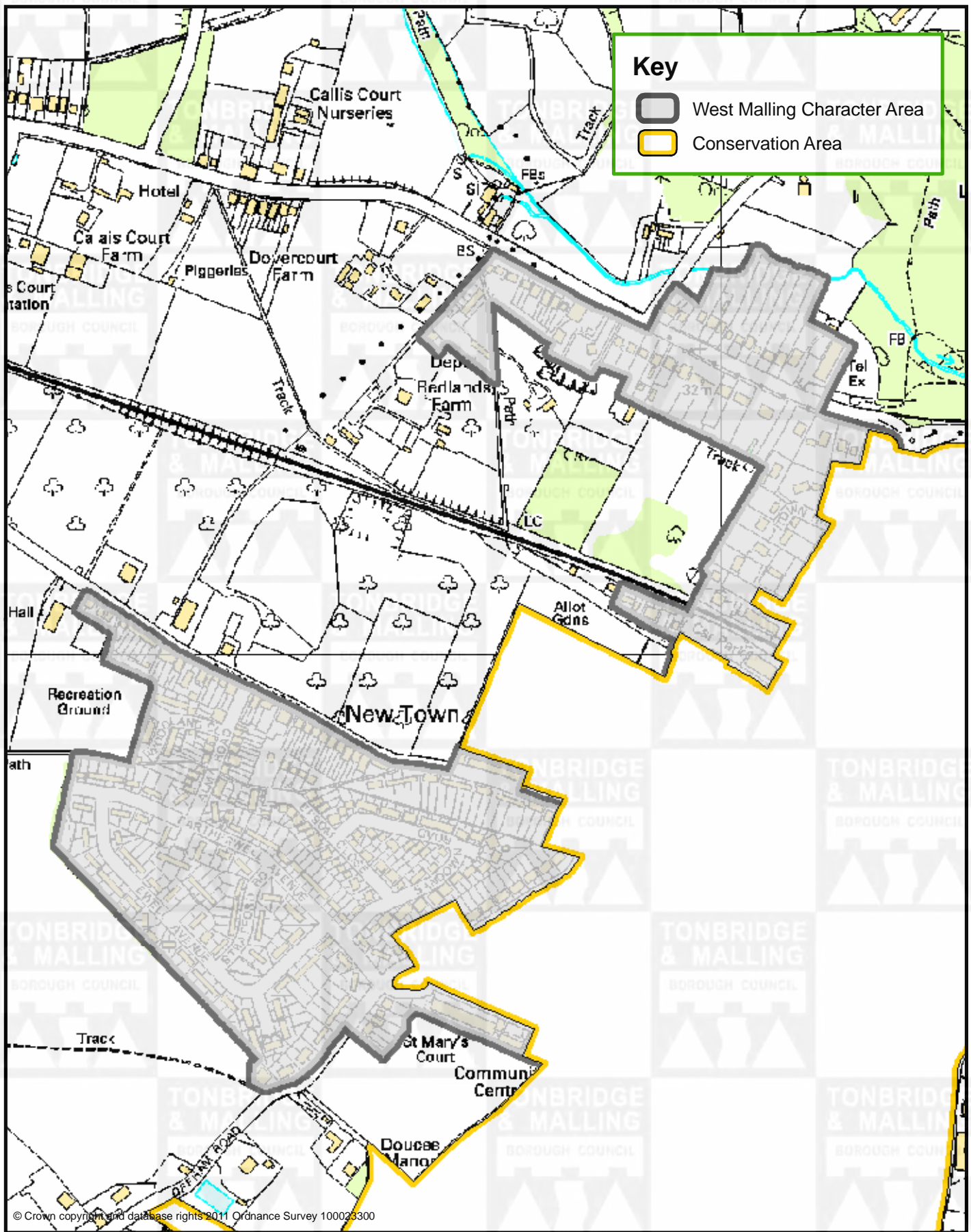
The Borough Council is undertaking character area appraisals of all of the main urban areas in the Borough, including the larger villages, defined in the Local Development Framework (LDF) as Rural Service Centres. The Character Area Appraisals SPD therefore comprises a number of separate volumes. Appraisals are being prepared for:

- the Tonbridge Urban Area;
- the northern urban areas (including the Medway Gap, Snodland and Walderslade) and
- the Rural Service Centres - Hadlow, Hildenborough (including Hilden Park), Borough Green, East Peckham, and West Malling

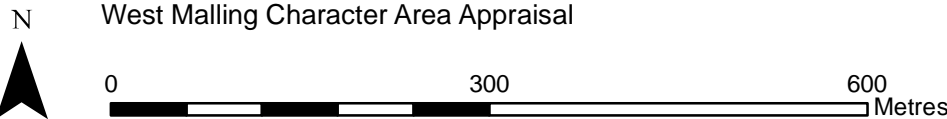
This particular part of the SPD sets out to define the character of, and appropriate design guidance for, the built up area of West Malling outside of the Conservation Area for which a separate Conservation Area Appraisal exists.

The SPD will be adopted as part of the LDF. Once adopted, it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications in the built up area of West Malling to which it applies. Developers and householders should refer to the document in formulating proposals.

The document aims to raise the standard of design of new proposals such that they fit well with the locally distinctive character of an area. Design which is considered to be inappropriate in its context is unlikely to be acceptable and efforts will be made to improve the character and quality of an area through the preparation and consideration of development proposals.



Map 1: West Malling Area Boundary



## 2 Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD aims:

- To supplement adopted design policies for assessing development proposals within an area;
- To identify the locally distinctive features that define the character of the built up area of West Malling;
- To raise awareness of, and provide guidance on, the appropriateness of the design of development within an area in order to strengthen diversity rather than erode character and local distinctiveness;
- To assist the appraisal of planning and allied applications; and
- To deliver improved designs, in practice, which enhance the character of the area

## 3 Policy Context

The SPD is consistent with national planning policy and is supplementary to the policies set out in the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) contained in the LDF.

### 3.1 National Planning Policies

*Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)* states that the Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole.

Planning authorities should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space.

Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people and take the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area.

Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.



*Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing)* affirms that good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

The guidance advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area, aimed at:

- Creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, are visually attractive, safe, accessible, functional, inclusive, have their own distinctive identity and maintain and improve local character.
- Promoting designs and layouts which make efficient and effective use of land, including encouraging innovative approaches to help deliver high quality outcomes.

Good design is fundamental to using land efficiently. Local Planning Authorities should facilitate good design by identifying the distinctive features that define the character of a particular local area.

Careful attention to design is particularly important where the chosen local strategy involves intensification of the existing urban fabric. More intensive development is not always appropriate. However, when well designed and built in the right location, it can enhance the character and quality of an area.

PPS3 states that the density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing by stifling change or requiring replication of existing style or form. If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment.

### **3.2 Core Strategy – September 2007**

One of the prime aims of the Core Strategy is to ensure that new development result in a high quality environment by, for example, promoting and delivering new development that can positively contribute to the spatial quality of towns and maintaining or enhancing local distinctiveness.

Core Policy CP24 states that all development must be well designed and of a high quality in terms of detailing and use of appropriate materials, and must, through its scale, density, layout, siting, character and appearance, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings. Wherever possible, all development should make a positive contribution towards the enhancement of the appearance of the area.



### 3.3 Managing Development and the Environment DPD – April 2010

The DPD states that the diverse character of the Rural Service Centre of West Malling should be protected and enhanced for its own sake as it is important for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough. It is important that the unique characteristics of the area are identified and protected and where practicable enhanced in line with Core Policy CP24 having regard to the Character Area Appraisals SPD in order to strengthen this diversity rather than eroding its character and local distinctiveness.

Policy SQ1 requires proposals for development to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the local character areas as defined in the Character Area Appraisals SPD.

*All new development should protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance:*

*(a) the character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity;*

*(b) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views.*

## 4 Methodology

Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) advises local authorities to prepare robust policies on design. These should be based on an understanding and evaluation of the present defining characteristics of an area and that is the purpose and function of this SPD.

The evaluation of the built up area of the West Malling has involved an assessment of the character of the development of the area through the review of historic maps and comprehensive site surveys using the approach and characteristics advocated in By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (DETR, 2000) – see Appendix 1.

An initial appraisal was undertaken of all areas of the village covered by this draft SPD and it was evident that a number of areas shared similar characteristics. From this assessment it was possible to identify a typology of character areas such as Victorian and Edwardian Houses, Inter War Housing, Post-war Public Housing Schemes, Open Plan Housing, Lower Density Detached, Clustered Development, Bungalows and Commercial Areas.

The main road frontage of London Road is part of the framework around which West Malling has developed. As main frontages accommodate the most journeys, they also have a disproportionate influence on the perception of the village. For these reasons, the Main Road Frontage is classified as a character area typology.

Although not necessarily physically adjoining each other, each character area typology generally grew up over the same period using layouts, designs and materials which were based on the technology, legislation and planning and design philosophies of that time. Thus these character area typologies share common generic characteristics which were recorded using the following matrices:

- Locally Distinctive Contextual Features (including the age, type and height of buildings, the main uses, the predominant building materials and boundary treatments, and the types of open space).
- Locally Distinctive Positive Features
- Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

Street by street surveys were then undertaken of each of the separate areas which made up the broad character area typologies. These surveys identified features which were specific to each area such as landscape features, landmarks, views and detracting features. Locally Distinctive Positive and Negative Features were recorded for each area as text and on a Townscape Analysis Map.

Identifying the generic and area-specific Locally Distinctive Contextual and Positive Features should assist in interpreting Core Strategy Core Policy CP24 and Managing Development and the Environment DPD Policy SQ1 which seek designs which fit well with the local context and protect and conserve the character and local distinctiveness of an area. By identifying the Locally Distinctive Negative Features, the SPD also indicates features which could, through the application of Policy SQ1, be enhanced particularly through development opportunities.

Representative groups and elected Members of the Borough Council assisted at each of these stages – see Community Involvement below.

## 5 Community Involvement

Community involvement in the preparation of the SPD has closely followed the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement which states that specific consultation will take place at an early stage on a draft of the document. Consultation is to be targeted at particular groups and individuals, depending on the specific nature of the issue or location dealt with by the SPD. There has been stakeholder involvement in preparing this SPD in order to develop a shared vision with the local community of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and to develop appropriate design guidance.

Prior to the drafting of the SPD, two local stakeholder events were held.

Firstly, a briefing and walkabout session was held involving Borough Council local Ward Councillors, Parish Councillors and members of the Malling Society and the Malling Action Partnership who visited a number of sub-areas to observe and record the key features which made up the character of the area.

As a second exercise the recorded features were then presented back as summarised text and photographs to the local stakeholders at a locally held workshop for review and discussion. Representatives were also asked about the elements of the environment they most valued about their local area and important detractors to the character of the town.

Ward Councillors have been kept informed from the inception of the SPD and have participated in the process of assisting with the preparation of the consultation document.

Planning Consultants Tony Fullwood Associates preparing the SPD and the Borough Council would like to thank the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the process to date.

Formal consultation under Regulation 17 on the Draft Character Assessment SPD took place between 2 September 2011 and 14 October 2011. This included a manned exhibition in the Clout Memorial Institute on the afternoon of Saturday 10 September 2011.

Copies of the SPD were available during this time for comment at the Borough Council offices, local library and on the website. Statutory consultees, including the Parish Council, as well as the existing network of resident, community and specialist interest groups were consulted as appropriate. The SPD was publicised in the local press and on the Council's website and there was a formal Public Notice in the press under Regulation 17.

The Council recognises that it is important to report back to the community and other stakeholders on the response to their comments. The Council has published the feedback to the consultation on its website and in document format that is available in all Council offices and the local library.

## **6 How to use the Document**

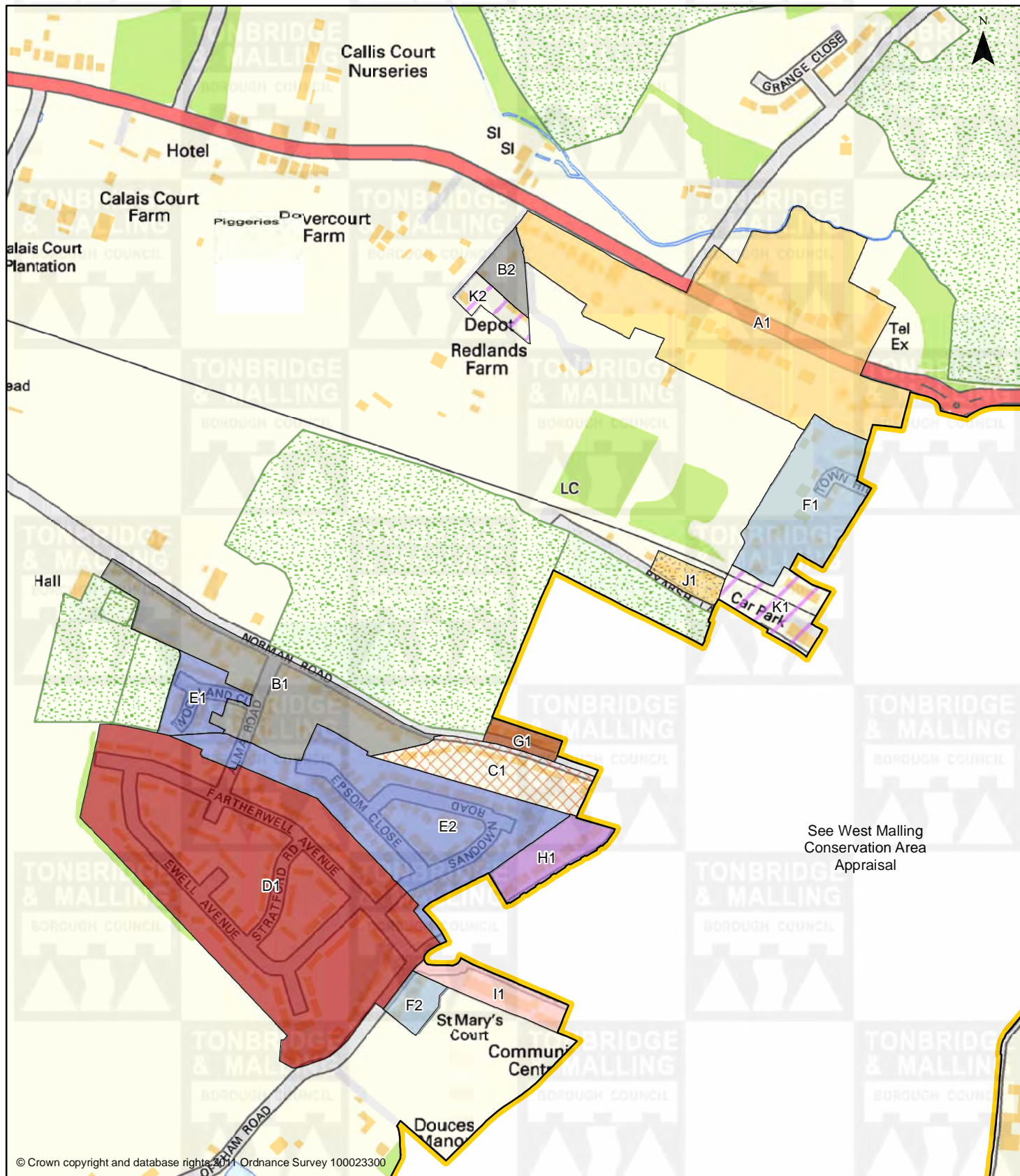
Section 8 divides the built up area of the West Malling into separate character areas based on the methodology set out above.

For each of the individual areas there is an assessment of the locally distinctive contextual features such as age, height and types of buildings; main uses; prominent building materials and boundary treatments and open spaces. Locally distinctive positive features and negative features worthy of enhancement are also recorded.

Each separate character area is named and numbered on Map 2. If you are interested in a particular area, locate it on Map 2 and turn to the section on that character area in Section 8. The relevant page can be found by reference to the Contents page.

Design Guidelines based on the locally distinctive features may be found in Section 9.

In setting out the important features and overall character of identifiable areas of the Borough, a local context is provided for the preparation and consideration of development proposals. This forms a canvas within which proposals for development should be conceived and determined. Generic Design Guidelines based on the identified locally distinctive features may be found in Section 9. These will form the basis for decision making which will interpret the individual character area appraisals.



## Map 2: West Malling Character Areas

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

### Key

	Conservation Areas		Bungalows		Main Road Frontages
	Open Space		Clustered Development		Mixed Character Areas
	Schools and Institutions		Commercial Areas		Open Plan Developments
<b>Character Areas</b>			Inter-War Housing		Post-War Public Housing
	Victorian and Edwardian Houses		Lower Density Detached Housing		Sheltered Housing

## **7 Origins and Development of West Malling**

Environments grow in response to local circumstances and it is therefore important to understand the principal influences which created the distinctive character areas of West Malling.

The name of Malling is believed to originate from 'Mallengetis' reference to which can be found in the Domesday Book. The settlement has pre-Roman origins, but the Romans built an ancient highway for military purposes along the route now followed by the A20. The Saxons were believed to be the first to settle in numbers in the area and they undertook deforestation, cultivation and erected buildings.

In the Middle Ages, the town owed its prosperity to tanning with yards located in the meadows near Frog Lane. Ragstone and sand were quarried locally and used to build local buildings.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the town prospered. Many of the medieval properties within the centre were given new facades and a significant number of new houses were built.

The growth of the town continued apace in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In 1855 the North Kent Railway was constructed and in 1875 the West Malling station opened – resulting in expansion of the town with terraced houses for railway workers and other employees.

Modern development has largely been concentrated to the west of the historic town. A major new housing development, known as the Fatherwell Estate was started in the late 1940's. Many other smaller developments have occurred since then. The opening of the bypass to the east of the town in 1988 relieved the centre of traffic.

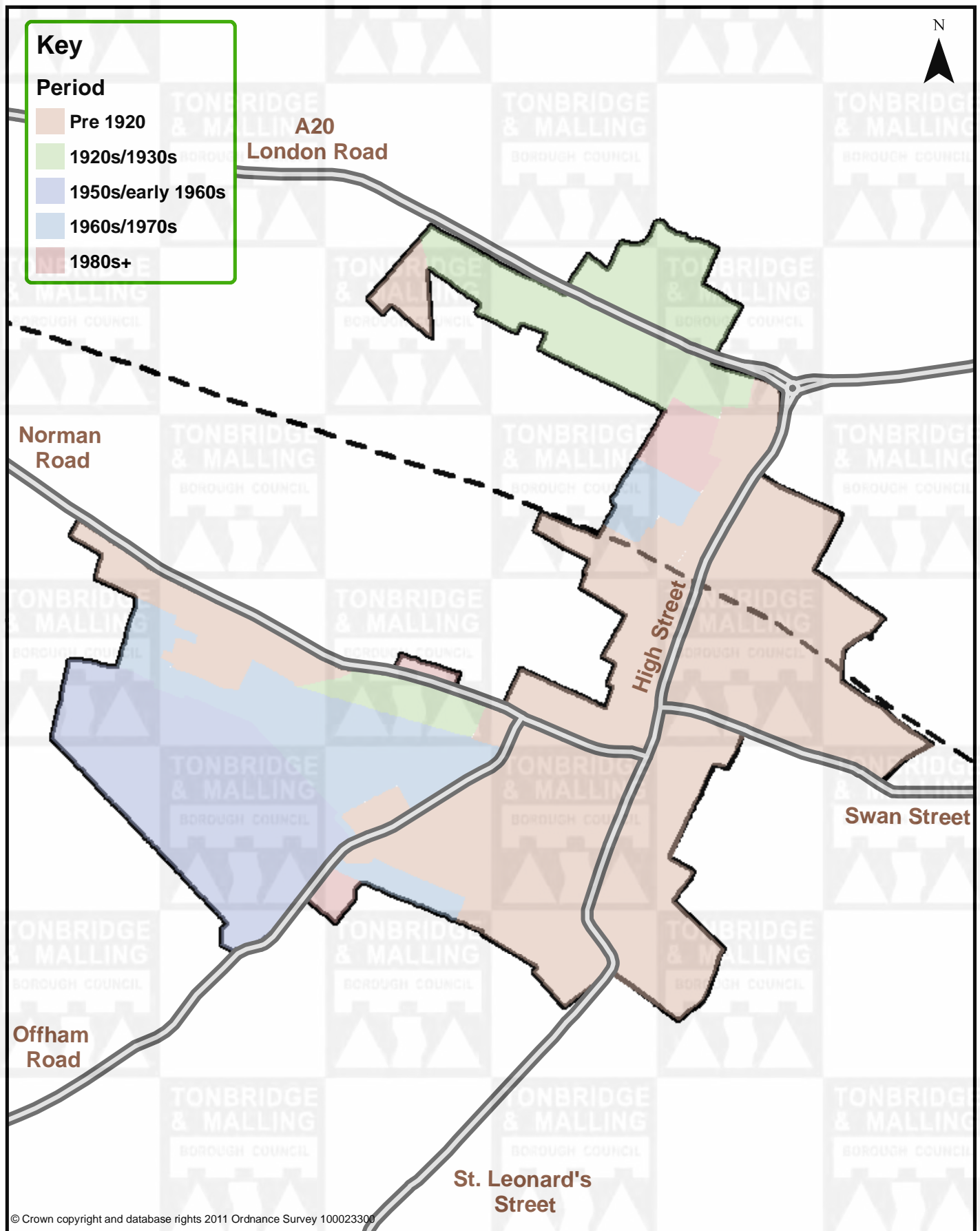
## **8 Character Area Appraisals**

Close analysis has been undertaken to identify the distinctive features that define the character of the different parts of West Malling which are subject of this Appraisal using recognised methodologies and with public involvement. The next sections of the SPD describe the locally distinctive contextual features of each area as well as locally distinctive positive features and negative features worthy of enhancement.

Key characteristics of each Character Area are illustrated on a Townscape Analysis map and are summarised in table form. Annotated photographs are also included to depict part of the character of the area.

Whilst the principal characteristics for all areas have been summarised, it has not been possible to illustrate each individual feature and consequently the absence of a feature from this document does not necessarily mean that it is unimportant to the character of the local area.





**Map 3: Evolution of West Malling**  
West Malling Character Area Assessment

0 500 1,000 Metres



## A – MAIN ROAD FRONTAGES

*Although the route of the A20 was originally a Roman highway used for military purposes and was the focus for Saxon development, the current development along the road is much more recent.*

*The medieval settlement now included within the West Malling Conservation Area grew up south of the A20 along Town Hill and the High Street*

*The pattern of development of West Malling has been shaped strongly by historic routes serving the town which form the framework around which the town has subsequently developed as it has spread out from the medieval core. These routes have the most vehicular movements along them, and, as a result, have a disproportionate influence on the perception of the town.*

### A1 – LONDON ROAD



*The wide, straight and level London Road is generally verdant with tall boundary trees and hedges bordering both sides and views to the north creating a gradual transition from the town into the country.*

*London Road with hedges and tall trees, providing a gradual transition from countryside to the town.*

*The buildings along the A20 frontage are generally of a variety of ages from the Victorian period to the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the oldest located closer to the town centre. The majority of buildings are two storey, with a few bungalows.*

*The frontage is mainly residential but there are some commercial uses.*

*Many of the older buildings are of a greater scale and, to the south side, this is exaggerated by their location on higher ground.*

*The buildings along this frontage are of a more varied design than other residential character areas. There is a greater proportion of individually designed buildings and more decorative detail.*

*Since this area is situated on a busier route, traffic noise and movement affect the character.*







*A group of individually designed 2 storey Victorian properties are set well back along the south side of London Road. The buildings are set behind mature landscaping which generally reveals only part of the building. The large detached properties are set on higher ground adding to the impression of scale. Most properties are constructed in red brick, with bands of contrasting brickwork, and have steeply pitched slate roofs. Two storey bay windows add grandeur to the front façades. Tall decorative chimneys add historic detail and scale to the properties.*

*Narrow drives are important in partially concealing the buildings and retaining the verdant frontage to the street. Pillars mark the entrances.*

*Brick arches or white painted lintels and decorative ridge tiles and barge boards add historic detail and interest to the properties.*



*One large detached house contrasts with the group through the use of ragstone, stone quoins and a slate roof. The roof is also of a much shallower pitch than other properties and the front more open with a metal railing exposing views of the full façade.*



*A group of 2 storey 1950's detached and semi-detached properties are set along the south and north side of London Road. The red brick properties with half timbered and rendered upper floors are set back from the road. The red tiled hipped roofs topped with chimneys contain projecting gables which face the road. Some properties have decorative porches.*

*Houses to the south side are set high above the road. A ragstone retaining wall, sometimes topped with a hedge is a feature.*



*Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century semi-detached red brick gable fronted houses with vertical window proportions and white painted lintels are also present within this group on the south side of London Road.*



*More recent development close to the Brickfields junction comprises bungalows which are set back from London Road. The scale is in contrast to other detached buildings along the road.*

*Parked cars add to visual clutter and obstruct pedestrian movement.*



*Two bungalows are well set back and screened from London Road but the scale is in contrast to other detached buildings along the road.*

*Modern development respects the scale, set back and verdant frontage of the character area.*





*The scale and nature of commercial development, the designs and materials used and the lack of landscape at the north eastern edge of the area detract from the character of this part of the area.*

*The large flat garage canopy sited well forward of the general building line, advertising and the absence of landscaping detract from the character of this part of the area.*



*Long views are limited except to the north west beyond development where there are panoramic views of the countryside towards the North Downs.*



### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	1900 – present day
Type of buildings	Detached and semi detached
Main uses	Mainly residential, with some commercial
Building heights	1 - 2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Red brick, painted render with half timber, mainly red clay tile roofs, white sash and casement windows
Predominant boundary treatments	Hedges, trees, ragstone wall and black railings
Open spaces	Countryside located immediately to the north west

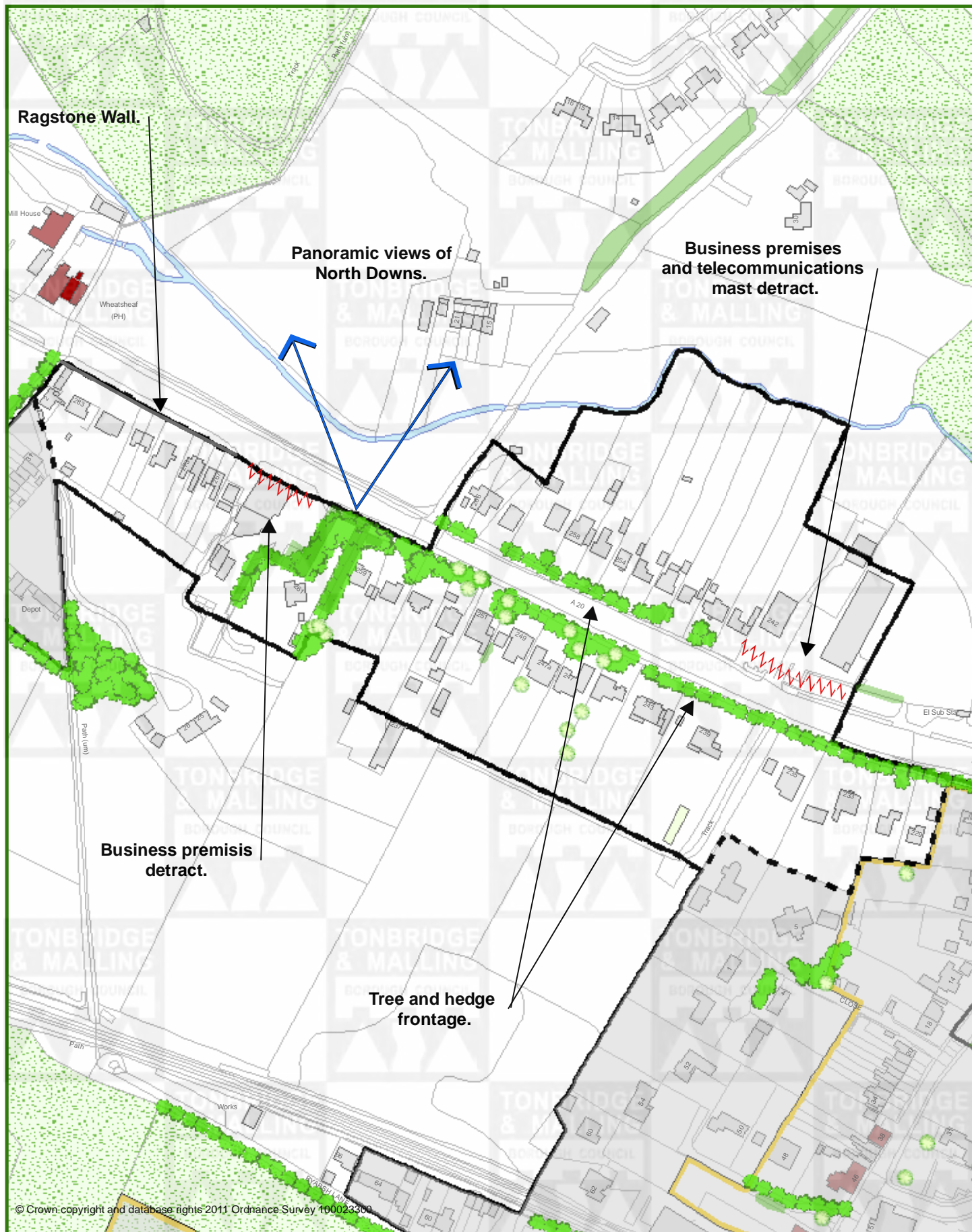
#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Verdant frontage provided by hedges and tall trees, with panoramic views of the countryside
- Buildings are set in wide, deep plots giving space between and around buildings forming a strong landscaped setting
- Cohesive group of large detached Victorian properties constructed in red brick with steeply pitched slate roofs
- Traditional materials with original details and decorative features

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Traffic noise from A20
- Parked cars add to visual clutter and obstruct pedestrian movement
- Commercial buildings and structures detract from the character of the area





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0 20 40 60 80 100 200 Metres

Ref **A1**

Title **London Road**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal



## B – VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN HOUSES



*The 2 storey semi-detached properties are situated behind narrow front gardens. Many have single or two storey bays and some gable ends face onto the road. The original dimensions of the houses have generally been retained, preserving the balance and harmony of the streetscene. In addition decorative details have been preserved, contributing greatly to the character of the area. The roofs are embellished with ridge tiles, painted bargeboards, finials and chimneys, the gable ends have timber detailing and original railings have been retained. The area has a semi-rural character directly abutting the countryside to the north.*

*The proximity of the houses to each other and to the road creates pressure for on-street parking.*

### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	18 <sup>th</sup> Century to early 20th century
Type of buildings	Mainly semi-detached and terraced
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys, with some bungalows
Prominent building materials	Red or yellow brick, ragstone, slate roof tiles, white painted windows and woodwork
Predominant boundary treatments	Red brick walls, railings and hedges
Open spaces	Countryside located immediately to the north

#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Original materials and traditional decorative detailing are retained

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Loss of front boundaries and gardens
- Some use of unsympathetic replacement windows, doors and roofs



## B1 – NORMAN ROAD (WEST)

Comprising: Norman Road; Alma Road (part)

The linear development of semi-detached houses and the listed terraced properties along Norman Road stands opposite a hedged field boundary and the countryside to the north, providing a contrast of urban development and rural character in this part of the street. Alma Road leads off Norman Road at right angles and comprises buildings on both sides of the road.



*The closely spaced buildings are set back behind shallow front gardens and enclose the street on the south side, with a high hedge enclosing the northern side of the street. At the eastern end of the street, the houses are set on a common building line with projecting single storey bays. Shallow gables above the bays face the street, with white barge boards, and create a rhythm of repeated patterns along the street uninterrupted by dormer windows. Some of these gables have timber detailing to infill the gable end. White barge boards on the gable ends between the properties are also striking within the street scene*

*Yellow stock brick (with red brick string courses) and red/orange brick provide a limited and harmonious range of materials along the front facades. On some properties the original character has been diminished by the replacement of slate roofs with concrete tiles. Decorative brickwork and ridge tiles have been retained on some properties adding to the character of the street. Chimneys are a recurring feature along the street.*

*A number of properties have white painted pillars, porch detailing and balustrade balconies. This, together with the white painted barge boards, window frames, stone lintels and sills provides a repeated and distinctive feature in the street scene.*

*Traditional low brick walls, some with hedges and railings above, enclose the front gardens and brick piers mark the entrance. In some places the character has been eroded by the removal of the front boundary and the loss of the front garden to parking space.*





*Some properties have been rendered and are painted in a pastel shade – brightening the street scene. The retention of the original form of the buildings, window proportions/ designs and chimneys retains the unity of character with the remainder of the street.*

*Single storey properties appear out of scale with the street scene.*



*Original details such as decorative contrasting brick arches and front boundary railings greatly add to the character of the area.*



*Pair of cottages which have retained much of the original character through the retention of original materials, brick details, window and door styles and front boundary with brick piers*

*Ragstone is used to face a number of buildings in the street. This tall pair of semi detached houses provide a visual stop to the street. Many original details remain and add significantly to the character of the building.*



*More recent infill development has used visual cues from adjoining properties and the character area by setting the buildings back behind a shallow front garden. The properties also employ ragstone to the front façade and a contrasting red brick string course type of detail. The window proportions have a vertical emphasis and have contrasting red brick arches. Chimneys are also important to the character.*



*There are glimpses of the attractive orchard or wider countryside to the north above, or at openings in, the hedge which runs along the north side of Norman Road. The verdant appearance of the hedge and the views are important to the character of the area.*



*Alma Road rises gently up from Norman Road and is enclosed on both sides by Victorian development.*

*The enclosure of the Victorian street has been eroded by modern development set back from the Victorian building line and the opening created by Woodland Close.*

*Significant alterations by way of side and front extensions, or alterations (such as replacement windows, doors and roofs) have also affected the character of some properties and the wider street scene.*

*Overhead wires add clutter to the street scene.*



*The gentle rise in Alma Road allows views out to the countryside to the north.*

## Listed Buildings

### 147 – 165 (odd) Norman Road (Norman Place)

Row of two storey cottages dated 1841. Built of coursed ragstone rubble with ragstone galleting. Hipped slate roof with 5 cemented chimneys. 10 windows, 16 pane sashes in cambered architraves with glazing bars in tact, except Nos 153 and 159. Simple cambered doorcases 20<sup>th</sup> Century doors.

Grade II



## Listed Buildings

### Puckle Cottage No 91 Norman Road

Cottage, formerly Pest House and later 2 cottages. Earliest part comprising 1 room on ground floor and one room on 1<sup>st</sup> floor built in isolated position from the town as a pest house C1760 after plague. This was extended soon afterwards to add two more rooms, then in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century an adjoining 2 up 2 down cottage was built and the whole now forms an L-shape. Timber frame building clad mainly in weatherboarding with stone and red brick to the ground floor and right end, and tiled roof with 2 brick chimneys.

Grade II

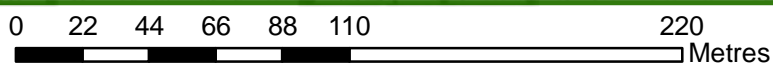
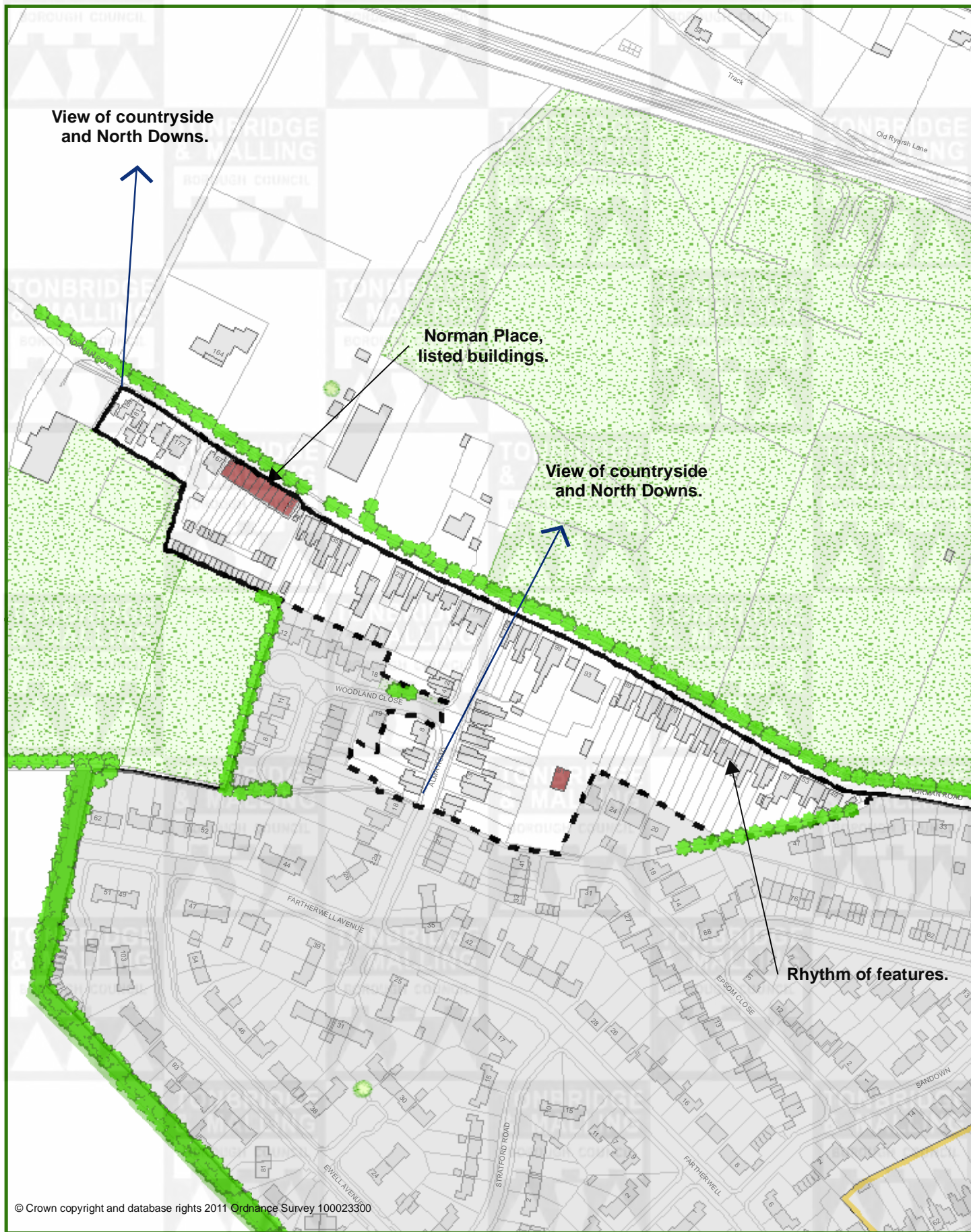
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## Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Strong cohesive character in Norman Road created by consistency of building line set behind shallow front gardens, the rhythm of gable ends facing the street, a limited palette of materials, white painted windows and woodwork, traditional details and front boundaries
- Contrasting forms of enclosure to the street by buildings (south side) and hedge (north side)
- Verdant northern edge created by hedge and cherry orchard with views of the surrounding countryside to the north
- Two listed buildings with Norman Place prominent in the street scene

## Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Unsympathetic infill development
- Overhead wires add clutter



Ref **B1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Norman Road (West)**





## B2 – BRICKFIELDS (NORTH)

Comprising: Brickfields (Part)

Brickfields is a short lane set at right angles to London Road, Built development is located to the east side of the lane with a high hedge enclosing the western boundary. The red brick terrace is set well back from the lane which, together with the views to the north, gives a spacious character. Two cottages are set forward close to the lane as 'bookends' either side of the terrace.

*A tall red brick terrace designed as a single symmetrical building with three projecting gable ends is set well back from Brickfields. Stone quoins emphasise the corners of the building and the window and door openings. Four tall chimneys are important to the original character.*

*Most original sash windows have been replaced and concrete tiles now cover most of the roof.*

*Front extensions have reduced the integrity of the symmetrical façade.*

*The setting of the building has been altered with some front gardens now paved as parking areas with high fences subdividing the space.*



*A two storey red brick detached house with a shallow front garden enclosed by railings (above right) is sited to the south of the terrace. It retains traditional details and materials. The building is set close to Brickfields.*

*A newly constructed two storey red/ orange brick house of similar scale and mass (above left) has been constructed to the north of the terrace adding some symmetry to the arrangement of buildings in this character area. The stone quoins reflect those in the larger terrace.*



*Extensive countryside views are available to the north and west.*

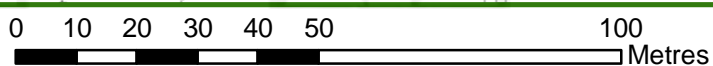
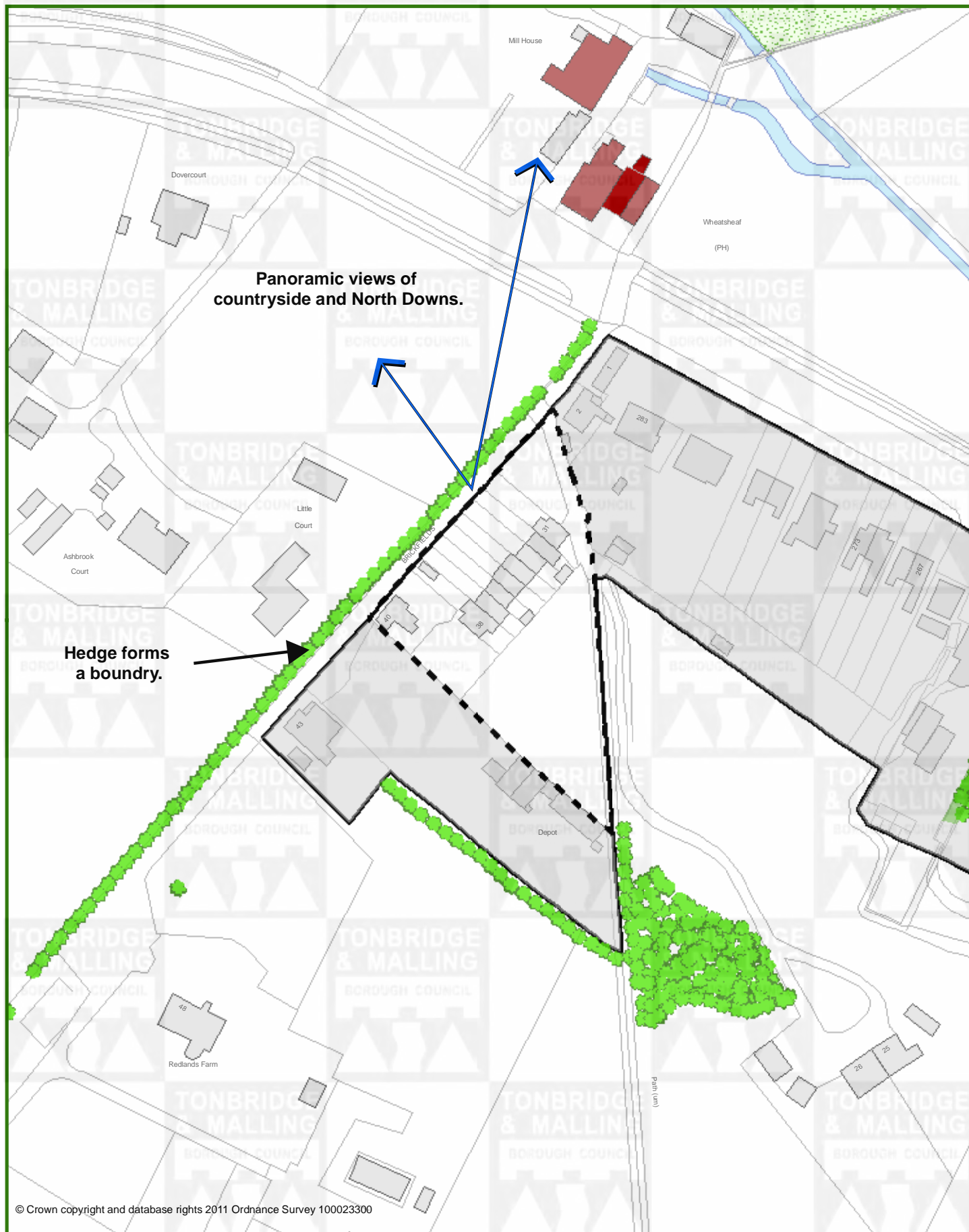


#### **Locally Distinctive Positive Features**

- Traditional original materials and details
- Open views to the north and west

#### **Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement**

- Loss of front boundaries and gardens



Ref **B2**

Title **Brickfields (North)**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal



## C – INTER-WAR HOUSING



*Substantial semi-detached and terraced properties set back behind front gardens line one side of the eastern end of Norman Road. The properties are of similar design with gently sloping hipped tiled roofs. Although frequently built to a standard design, the individual buildings were enhanced with painted cement render generally in white or cream. In the 1930s it became common for the doorways to be situated on the outer sides of semi-detached properties.*

*Properties from this period are usually set back from the road behind enclosed front gardens and often have generous gardens to the rear giving these areas a green and spacious character.*

## C1 – NORMAN ROAD (EAST)

Comprising: Norman Road (Part)

Semi detached and terraced blocks of four houses alternate along the south side of Norman Road and curve behind houses from the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Although the properties are set above the road level, they are set back behind deep front gardens, reducing the sense of enclosure. The character area is located opposite the linear row of attached houses and the cricket field and countryside with mature trees and hedged boundaries respectively. The hedges, trees and front gardens give parts of this area a verdant character.



*The semi-detached properties are symmetrically designed with a central gable facing the road and a hipped pitched main roof. The properties are faced with red/ brown brick and brown tile roofs. Chimneys appear above the roof line and add interest to the buildings.*



*The blocks of four terraced houses are designed in symmetrical form with projecting gables at either end and at the centre of the block. The end gable roofs are half-hipped. Light coloured render contrasts with the red/brown roof tiles and hanging tiles. Chimneys appear above the roof line and add interest to the roof line.*

*Some boundaries are hedged, enhancing the green character of Norman Road.*



*Extensions and alterations to this property have retained the general characteristics of gable ends facing the street and materials but have reduced the symmetry of the building.*



*The houses at the western end of this character area curve behind the older properties of Norman Road and overlook the footpath,*

*The hedged and narrow footpath gives an informal appearance.*



*Limited views of the attractive countryside are available to the north from this area.*



### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

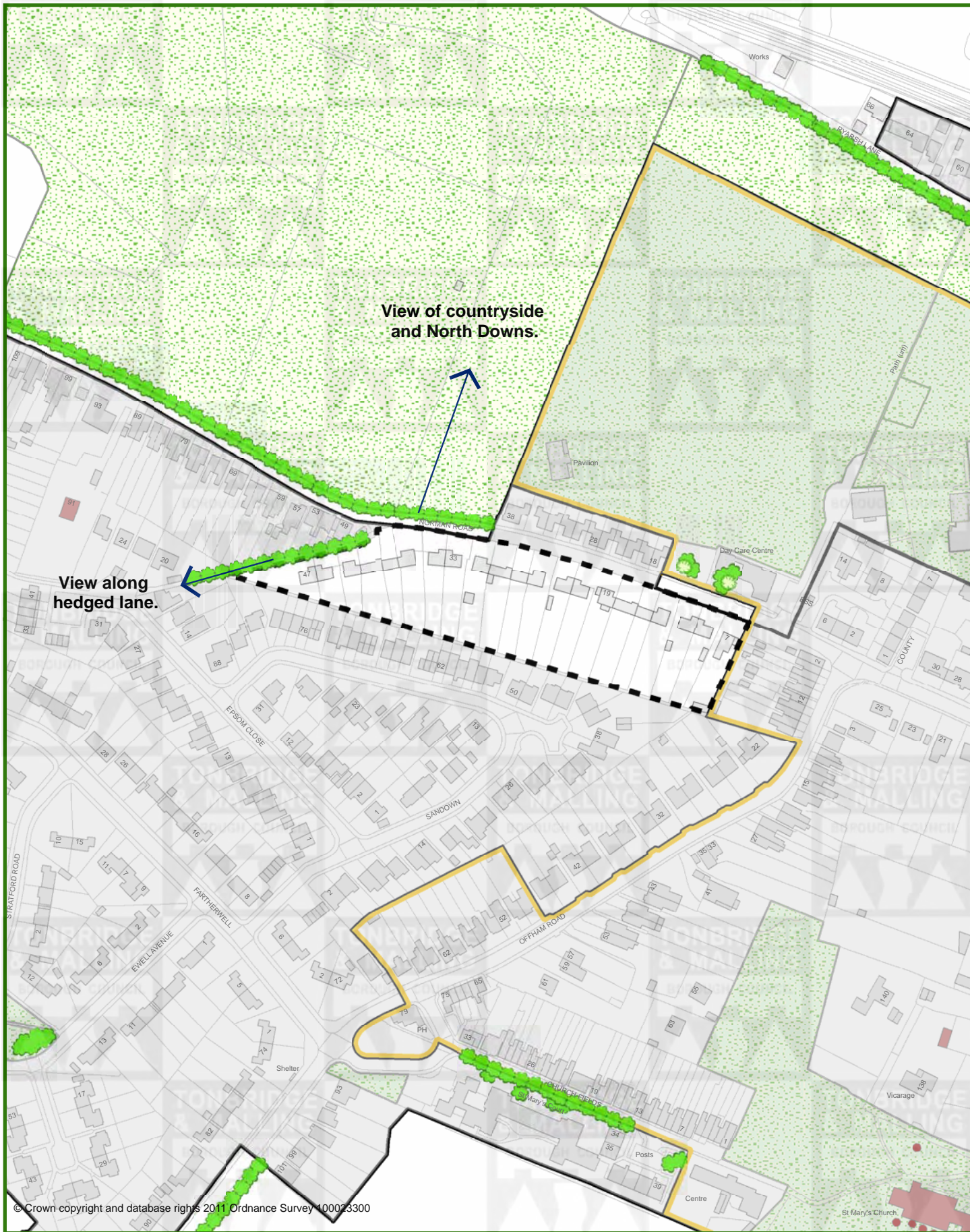
Age of buildings	Late 1920s – 1930s
Type of buildings	Semi-detached and terraced blocks
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Red/ brown brick, cream or white render, tiled roofs, casement windows, decorative details including hanging tiles.
Predominant boundary treatments	Raised rendered walls, hedges
Open spaces	Generally few public open spaces but footpath connection and generous private space

#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Substantial semi-detached and terraced blocks set back behind front gardens
- Symmetrical form of the semi-detached and terraced block designs alternate along the street
- Strong cohesive character created by consistency of the building line, height and materials
- Views and glimpses of attractive countryside to the north

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Front extensions may erode the symmetry of the designs



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0 20 40 60 80 100 200 Metres

Ref **C1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Norman Road (East)**





## D – POST-WAR PUBLIC HOUSING SCHEMES



*These developments have a distinctive layout and design of housing which gives them a clearly recognisable and unique character.*

*The houses are built along curving streets and culs-de-sac arranged around grassed and treed communal amenity areas. Often set back from the road the properties frequently face onto the footpaths and open spaces or are set at an angle to the road.*

*The two storey houses comprise semi detached and terraced properties. The facades of the terraced properties are given visual interest through the introduction of flush or projecting steeply pitched gables, sometimes in different materials, facing the street (above). Pastel coloured render predominates on some properties.*

*The semi-detached properties at the eastern end of the area from Stratford Road appear to be of a slightly later phase of development with plain red brick facades and brown concrete tiled roofs.*

*Properties are set well back from the road behind front gardens, often with hedge, picket fence or low walled boundaries. The vista from Fatherwell Avenue eastwards terminates with mature trees and provides a view of the church spire which orientates this area with the town centre.*



## D1 – FATHERWELL ESTATE

Comprising: Fatherwell Avenue; Ewell Avenue; Stratford Road; Offham Road



*Square casement windows predominate, with a wider window featuring on the ground floor. The gable ends facing the road are of a shallower pitch than the older phase of development.*

*Front and side additions have been added but the pitched roof extension (left) with a modest forward projection and matching bricks and casement window style respects the original design.*

*The Offham Road frontage comprises terraced and semi detached two storey houses in red brick with gable fronted projections at intervals along the street. The boundaries are generally hedge or fence and are located opposite the lower density detached housing development itself set back behind front gardens with hedged front boundaries giving a verdant character to this part of the street.*



*A wide open space, contained by trees close to the road, is located in the south eastern corner of Ewell Avenue. The area adds a green and spacious element to the character area.*



*The spacious character of the area is enhanced by the mature landscaping within and beyond the area, gardens, grassed public areas and views of the surrounding countryside. The roadside verge in Ewell Avenue adds to this character.*



*The character area abuts the countryside on its western, eastern and southern boundaries. Mature trees provide a backdrop to development, enclose the character area and form the edge with the countryside.*

*Views of the countryside are available from Fatherwell Road and Ewell Avenue to the west and Offham Road to the south.*



*Swan neck street lights complement the character of the area.*

## LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	Late 1940s – 1960s
Type of buildings	Semi-detached and terraced
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Red brick, brown roof tiles, cream or white painted render.
Predominant boundary treatments	Hedges, picket fences and some low brick walls.
Open spaces	Grassed amenity area and road verges in Ewell Avenue.

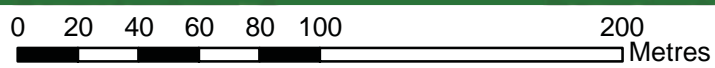
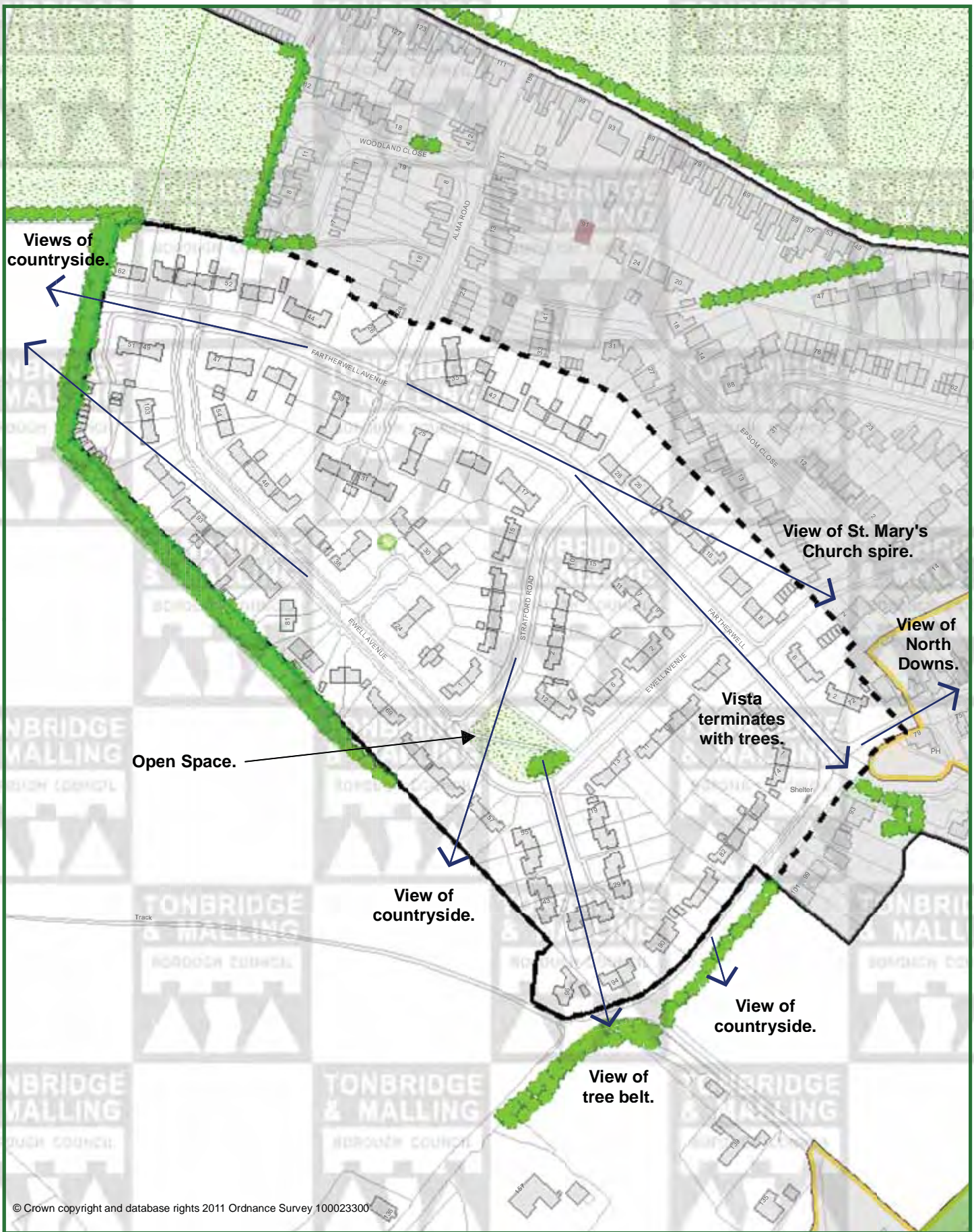
### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Repeated building designs give a cohesive character and strong sense of place
- Views of surrounding countryside
- View of church spire to the east
- Public open space at the south eastern corner of Ewell Road
- A spacious and verdant character created by properties being set back from the road, verges and other open space in Ewell Road, mature trees within and surrounding the area and long views
- Swan neck street lights

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- No significant detractors





Ref **D1**

Title **Fartherwell Estate**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal





## E – OPEN PLAN HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS



*The open space between the Victorian frontage of Norman Road and the 1950's Fatherwell Estate was filled in the 1960s by private estates of semi detached and terraced housing around Sandown Road, Epsom Close and Woodland Close. The new development paid little regard in its layout to the original field boundary which bisects this area but its alignment is still marked by an enclosed footpath which runs to the back and sides of properties.*

*These housing developments comprise mainly semi-detached two storey properties with integral or attached garages relatively evenly spaced along straight or curving roads, culs-de-sac and loops. The distinctive feature of these areas is the open plan character with the houses generally set behind dwarf walls or unenclosed lawns and driveways. There are few public open spaces and no community facilities within the area.*

*The buildings are constructed in various brick shades and are frequently decorated with hung concrete tiles and weatherboard. Wide white painted casement windows with a distinctive horizontal emphasis are a general characteristic. Windows and doors frequently appear to be randomly distributed within elevations without aligning vertically or horizontally with each other. Significant openings make the buildings appear less robust. Properties characteristically have a shallow roof pitch with brown concrete roof tiles and either no, or only small, chimneys. Many properties have porches. The developments incorporate buildings of repeated design. The buildings show few local references in terms of materials or design and there are no local landmarks.*

*Some landscaping features such as trees and shrubs are prominent in the streetscene. These character areas are quiet with a peaceful residential ambience. They have no through or fast moving traffic and ample off-street parking.*

LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES	
Age of buildings	1960s-1970s
Type of buildings	Terraced, semi-detached and detached
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Red/brown or buff coloured brick, concrete roof tiles, wide casement windows, hung tiles often coloured and shaped.
Predominant boundary treatments	Deep, open grassed frontages
Open spaces	Unenclosed privately owned frontages create an open character.

#### **Locally Distinctive Positive Features**

- Cul de sac layout reduces through traffic and gives a quiet residential character

#### **Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement**

- Lack of local reference in terms of materials; detailing and boundaries

## E1 – WOODLAND CLOSE

Comprising: Woodland Close

The area comprises two short, straight residential culs de sac linked at right angles to each other. The semi-detached, terraced and single detached properties are closely linked but set behind open plan front gardens. Narrow landscaped areas are placed at the entrance to Woodland Close and form the southern and western edges to this area, terminating the vista in each cul de sac.

*The entrance to Woodland Close is framed by a grassed verge and group of trees to the north, and a hedged boundary to a rear garden to the south, providing an attractive entrance and partially screening development at this point. The vista is also terminated by a hedgerow which visually separates the built up area from the countryside. The landscape provides an attractive foil to the built development. Buff coloured bricks and hanging tiles form the predominant material.*



*The southern arm of the cul de sac is fronted by a terrace with a slightly staggered building line and porch extension to the east and linked semi detached properties to the west. The hedge terminating the vista is important in enclosing this part of the cul de sac and providing a contrast to the built form*

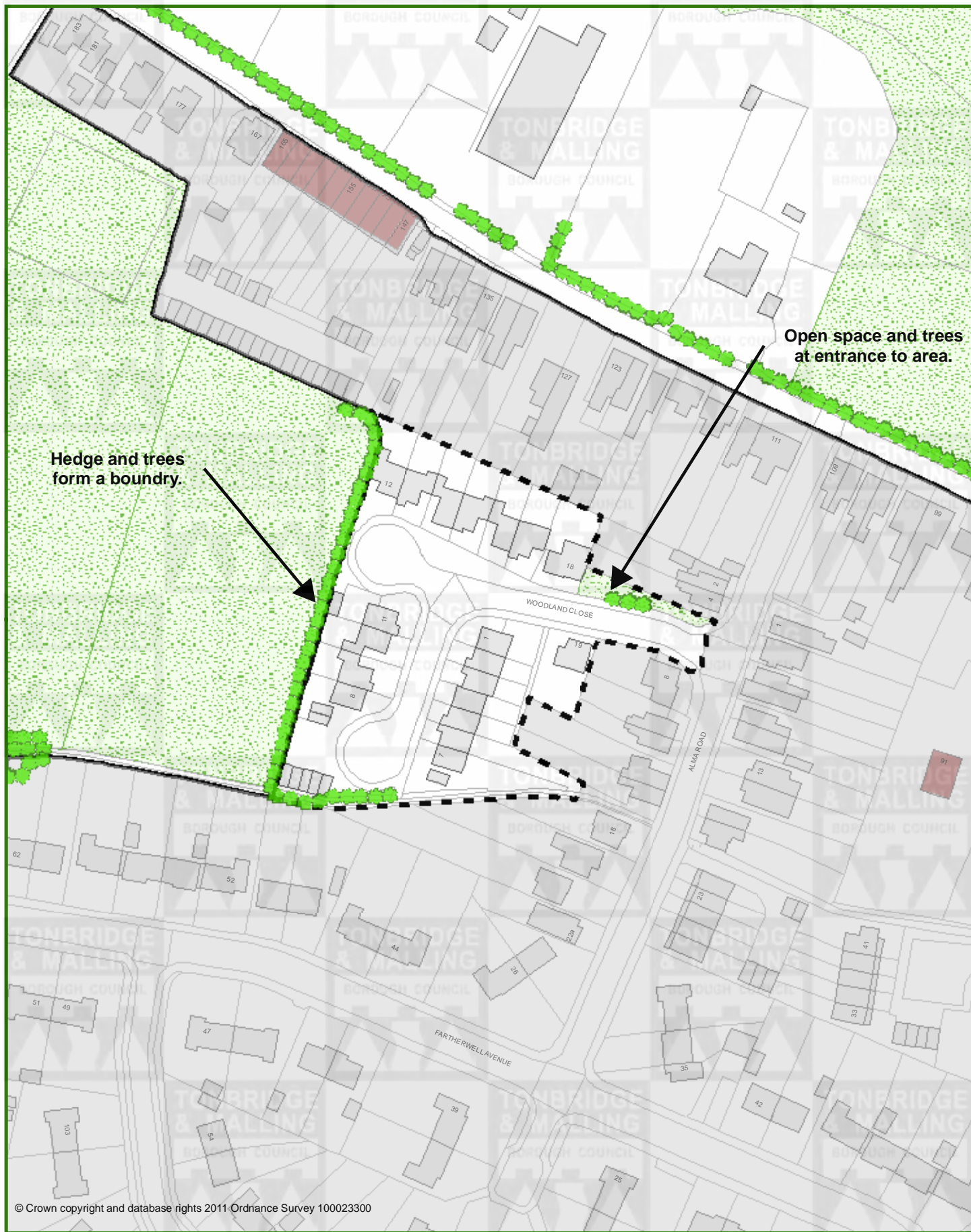
*Buff coloured bricks and hanging tiles form the predominant material.*

### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Green entrance and ends to the culs de sac provide an attractive foil to the built development and terminate the vistas

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- No significant detractors



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0 10 20 30 40 50 100 Metres

Ref **E1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Woodland Close**





## E2 SANDOWN ROAD AREA

Comprising: Sandown Road; Epsom Close; Alma Road (part); Offham Road (part)

Sandown Road forms a short loop off the relatively straight Epsom Close. The area has a variety of house types (detached, semi-detached and terraced) and designs and a varied building line but is unified by the limited range of materials and the overall scale of the residential properties. The orientation of Epsom Close results in views of the church spire to the south east.

*A mix of house types are sited at angles to the road and follow a stepped building line. Gable fronted and pitched roof properties are mixed together in the same street. White weather board contrasts with buff and red/brown brickwork and grey concrete tiles and brightens the street scene. Some front gardens are being lost to forecourt parking. Some trees and hedge planting soften the townscape. The church spire is visible from Epsom Close above the trees in the distance.*



*Two distinctive house types are present in the Sandown Road area.*

*A cluster of 14 semi-detached houses with mono-pitched roofs are set around the end of a short cul de sac in the eastern corner of this area. Isolated properties of similar design also provide a distinctive feature at the Corner of Sandown Road and Epsom Close and fronting Offham Road.*

*The houses have a stepped frontage, the recess often filled across on the ground floor by a flat roofed porch which extends out to the more prominent part of the frontage which contains an integral garage and is faced with yellow or brown/red bricks, whilst the recesses are faced with weatherboard. Some of the integral garages have been converted to living accommodation with wide windows to match others in the front elevation and retaining the overall composition. One of the most distinctive features is the mono-pitched roofs which, along with the other common features, give this area a distinctive and unified appearance.*





*The second distinctive house type is the terraced row of two storey houses. Blocks of these terraces appear on the north side of Sandown Road and at the western end of Epsom Close cul de sac (one of which faces Alma Road). The front façade is recessed at ground and first floor level forming a balcony and recessed ground floor entrance. Some of the balconies have been brought into living space by bringing the ground or first floor forward to the front building line. The use of wide windows to match others in the front elevation retains the overall composition. Front porches which project beyond the building line can reduce the overall integrity of the composition.*

*The rows of garages associated with these terraced properties form prominent features and, together with the forecourts, detract from the street scene.*



*A small enclave of open plan properties links the mainly Victorian part of Alma Road to the Post War housing development. The distinctive terraced row of two storey houses with recessed ground and first floor facades and balconies forms the east side of the street. Four detached two storey houses with shallow gable ends facing the street on a staggered building line form the western side. Both groups of properties are set back from the road behind open plan gardens providing a less enclosed character than the Victorian part of the road.*

*A new infill property represents a modern interpretation of the character of the adjoining properties and respects the height, roof pitch, horizontal window style and materials of the open plan character area.*



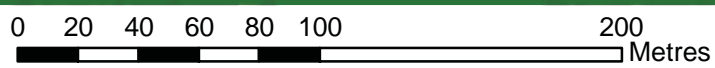
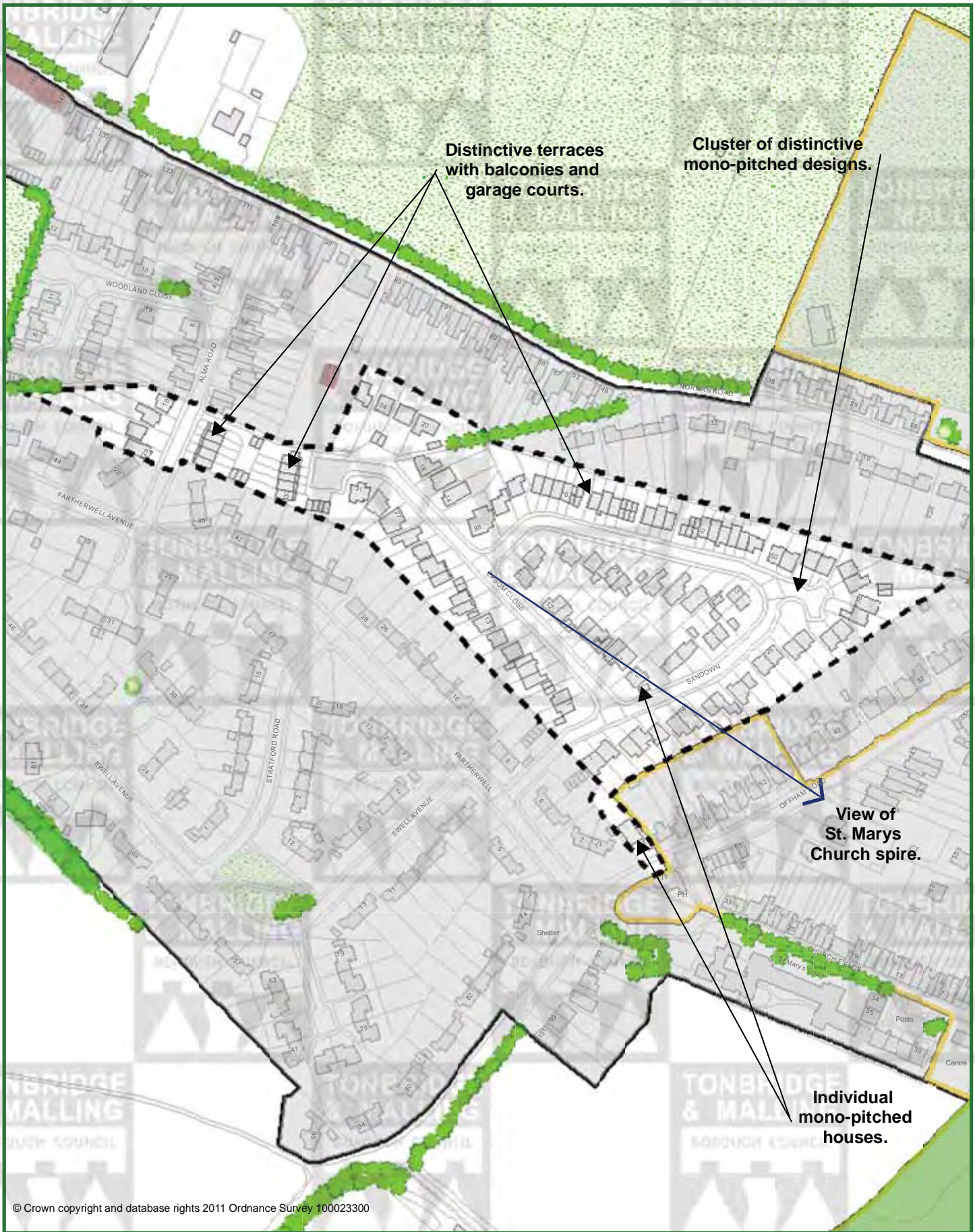
**Locally Distinctive Positive Features**

- Two types of distinctive house types whose overall composition has been retained and which give parts of this area a distinctive and unified appearance
- View of church spire

**Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement**

- Garage courts and associated forecourts





Ref E2

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title Sandown Road Area





## F– LOWER DENSITY DETACHED HOUSING



*This category incorporates small areas of larger detached houses set amongst mature specimen trees.*

*The two storey houses incorporate a limited range of materials and a variety of designs. The buildings are typically constructed in orange/red or red/brown brick with some hanging tiles. The houses generally have pitched red/brown tiled roofs. The use of hipped and gabled roofs and dormers produces complex and interesting roof patterns. Front gardens are often enclosed by mature hedges or with railings. Often gardens contain mature trees and vegetation*

### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	1960s to present day
Type of buildings	Detached
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Orange/red, buff and red/brown brick, concrete tiled roofs, hung tiles, white or brown casement windows.
Predominant boundary treatments	Railings, hedges or shrubs with some open plan
Open spaces	Retention of mature trees in private drives or gardens.

### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Cohesive character created by height and a limited harmonious range of materials
- Mature specimen trees, hedges and front gardens provide a verdant character to the small developments

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- No significant detractors

## F1 –AREA TO REAR OF TOWN HILL

Comprising: Town Hill Close and land off Town Hill

These three abutting areas of lower density housing to the rear of Town Hill are served by three separate private drives.

*The central area is accessed down a narrow drive between two listed buildings. The gravelled drive gives an informal character and is unobtrusive in the context of the listed buildings and the adjoining historic wall.*

*The building materials are varied including red/brown brick, white render and weatherboarding. The use of hipped and gabled roofs with dormers produces an interesting roof line.*



*A high historic red brick garden wall forms an attractive southern boundary to this drive and encloses the entrance. Mature specimen trees and a hedge form the northern boundary to the drive, enclosing the entrance and providing a verdant setting for the small development.*

*The most southerly pair of dwellings is accessed through Area K1.*



*The most northerly development is accessed down Town Hill Close. Mature specimen trees and traditional black metal railings line the northern boundary, allowing views of the gardens and providing openness.*

*The modern large red brick and tiled houses include a number of traditional details including decorative bargeboards, stone lintels and tall brick chimneys. The use of hipped and gabled roofs with dormers and chimneys produces an interesting roof line.*



*At right angles to the modern development is an open plan cul de sac developed in the 1960's. The wide-fronted properties with horizontal windows have little detailing. The roof line is varied with gable ended and pitched roofs facing the drive, together with dormer windows.*

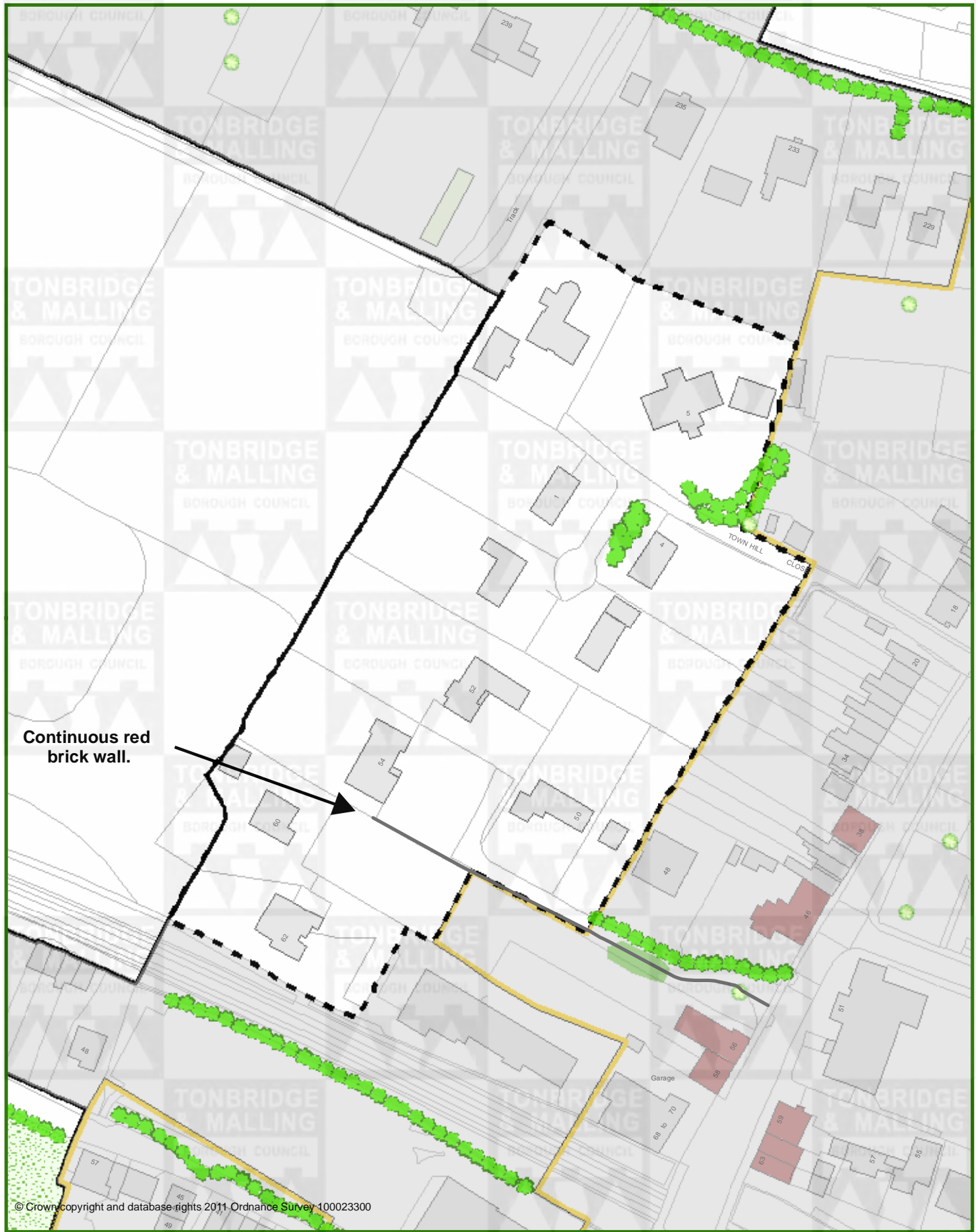
*Mature trees contribute to the green character.*

### **Locally Distinctive Positive Features**

- Narrow informal drives
- Interesting roof line
- High historic red brick garden wall
- Mature specimen trees, hedges and front gardens provide a verdant character to the small developments
- Detailing on some houses
- Enclosed, private character

### **Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement**

- No significant detractors



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0 10 20 30 40 50 100 Metres

Ref **F1**

Medway Gap Character Area Appraisal

Title **Town Hill Close**





## F2 – OFFHAM ROAD (SOUTH)

Comprising: Offham Road (part)

This small group of mainly detached two storey houses on the eastern side of Offham Road are aligned on a consistent building line, with projecting bay windows or small front extensions. They are located opposite the post war Fatherwell housing development itself set back behind front gardens with hedged front boundaries giving a verdant character to this part of the street.



*Four detached houses with one semi-detached property form this small character area. The properties are unified by their common building line, the use of red/brown brick, some with hanging tiles and painted render to the upper floors. Plain or concrete tiles and chimneys top gable fronted and pitched roofs.*

*Hedge boundaries with some trees enclose part of the street whilst open frontages break the continuity of the group.*



*Traditional street lamp designs are used in Offham Road.*



*The semi-detached pair of houses have a wide street frontage compared with the other properties in the group, and have large open parking areas contrasting with the surrounding character. A pitched roof front extension in similar brick and tile has also been added to the front elevation.*

### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Cohesive character created by consistency of building line height and materials.
- Verdant frontages created by landscaped gardens, hedges and tall trees and the adjoining countryside.
- Traditional street lamp designs

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Lack of front boundaries and gardens to some properties



## G – CLUSTERED DEVELOPMENT



*In the last twenty years several opportunities have been taken to redevelop redundant sites for housing or create new residential areas on previously open land within the built up area. These developments are not as extensive as the earlier open plan estates characteristic of the 1960s and 70s. In line with Government policy of making the best use of sites, these housing schemes are generally designed to a higher density than in the previous decades and using different design principles.*

*Properties often front directly onto the pavement/road or shared surface or are set behind a shallow unenclosed front garden of low planting and have private enclosed space to the side or rear. Houses have parking spaces or garages. The steep roofs and more compact form give the development a more enclosed urban character.*

*Whilst a variety of materials and building designs are used, the overall form, materials, scale and character is generally very cohesive.*

*Properties are finished in a variety of traditional materials with relevance to the Kent vernacular such as red/orange bricks, weatherboarding, white painted render and hanging clay tiles (sometimes decorative). Windows and doors are often well aligned with each other and the dominant areas of brickwork over glazing give the facades a robust appearance.*

## G1 – NORMAN ROAD (NORTH)

Comprising: Norman Road (north side)

A single cohesive row of evenly spaced two storey houses set along a common building line is given some variety through a subtle variation in materials and roof lines. The development provides a more enclosed character to the north side of the street in contrast to the cricket field and orchard which are set either side.



*Properties are all of the same design but are finished in a variety of traditional materials of buff and red/brown brick, weatherboard, hung tiles, brown concrete tiled roofs, brown casement windows. Windows and doors are well aligned with each other. Further interest is added to each front façade by the introduction of a centrally positioned pitched roof porch.*

*There are no front boundaries.*



*Whilst a variety of materials and roof shapes are used, the overall form, materials, scale and character of this part of Norman Road is cohesive.*

*The attached properties enclose the north side of this part of Norman Road.*



### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

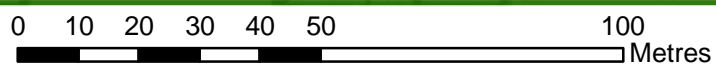
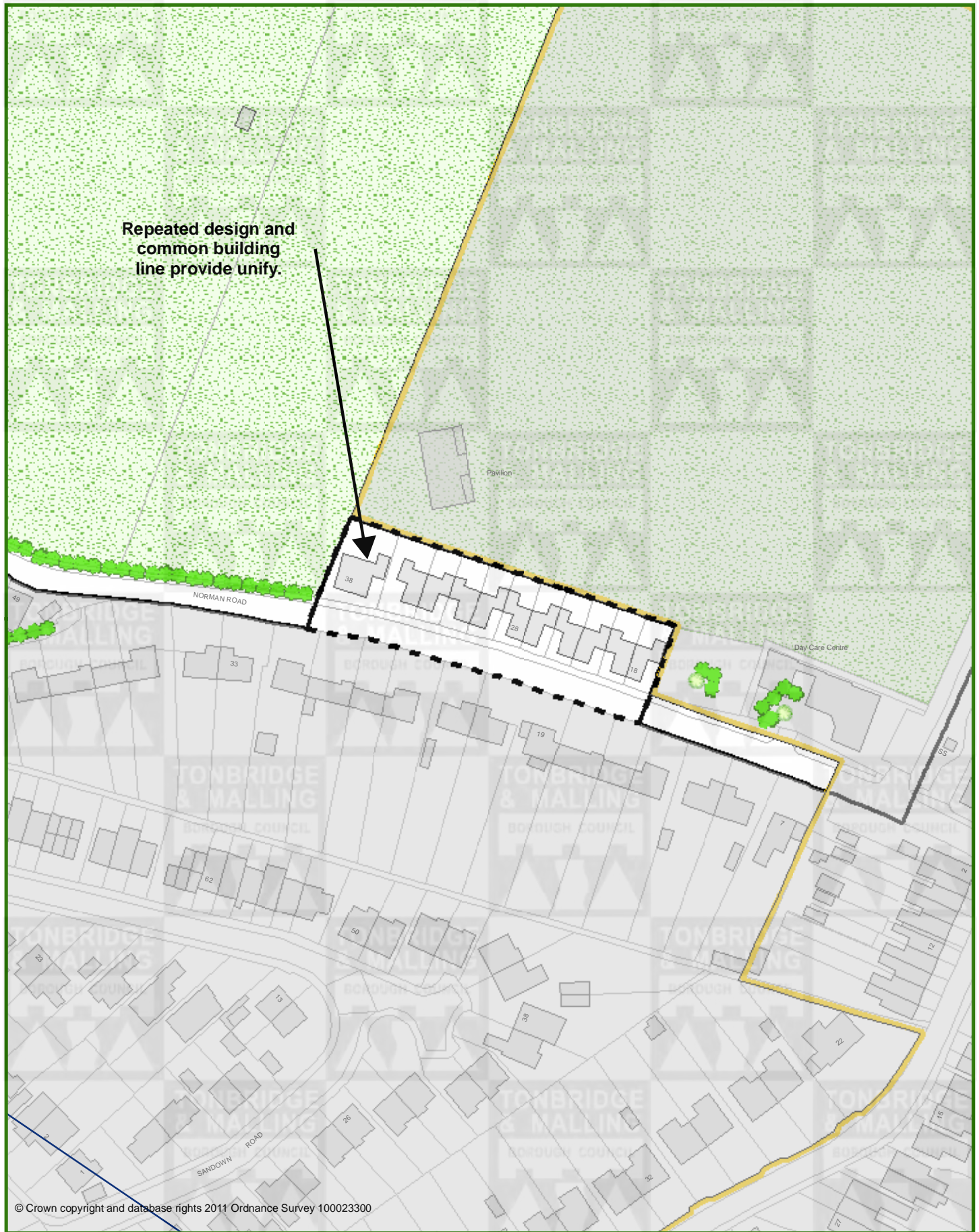
Age of buildings	Mid 1980s onwards
Type of buildings	Attached houses
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Buff and red/brown brick, weatherboard, hung tiles, tiled roofs, brown casement windows.
Predominant boundary treatments	Open frontages
Open spaces	None

#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Strong cohesive character created by the uniformity of building line, height, scale, design and materials

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Overhead wires add clutter to the street scene



Ref **G1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Norman Road (North)**



## H – BUNGALOWS



*Bungalows became a popular form of development initially in the 1930s particularly on what would have been relatively cheap suburban land. The bungalows in West Malling date from the 1960s/1970s. The single storey buildings create an open, relatively uniform townscape.*

## H1 – OFFHAM ROAD (NORTH)

Comprising: Offham Road (Part)

The row of bungalows along Offham Road is situated opposite and between two storey Victorian properties which form part of the West Malling Conservation Area. The bungalows are set back from the road on a different building line and are of a different scale to the surrounding historic development and significantly reduce the sense of enclosure within the street.

*Pairs of semi-detached bungalows with half hipped and pitched roofs alternate down Offham Road. The bungalows are set on a uniform building line behind deep front gardens which are enclosed by picket fences.*

*The bungalows have a single bay and porch canopy to the front elevation.*

*Red/ brown bricks and brown roof tiles unify the character area.*



*A single detached bungalow is located to the north of the character area.*



*Whilst the red brick used respects the red brick Victorian properties opposite, the building line, scale and design of the bungalows contrast with the predominant Victorian buildings, and has an adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.*

*Some front gardens have been paved.*





### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

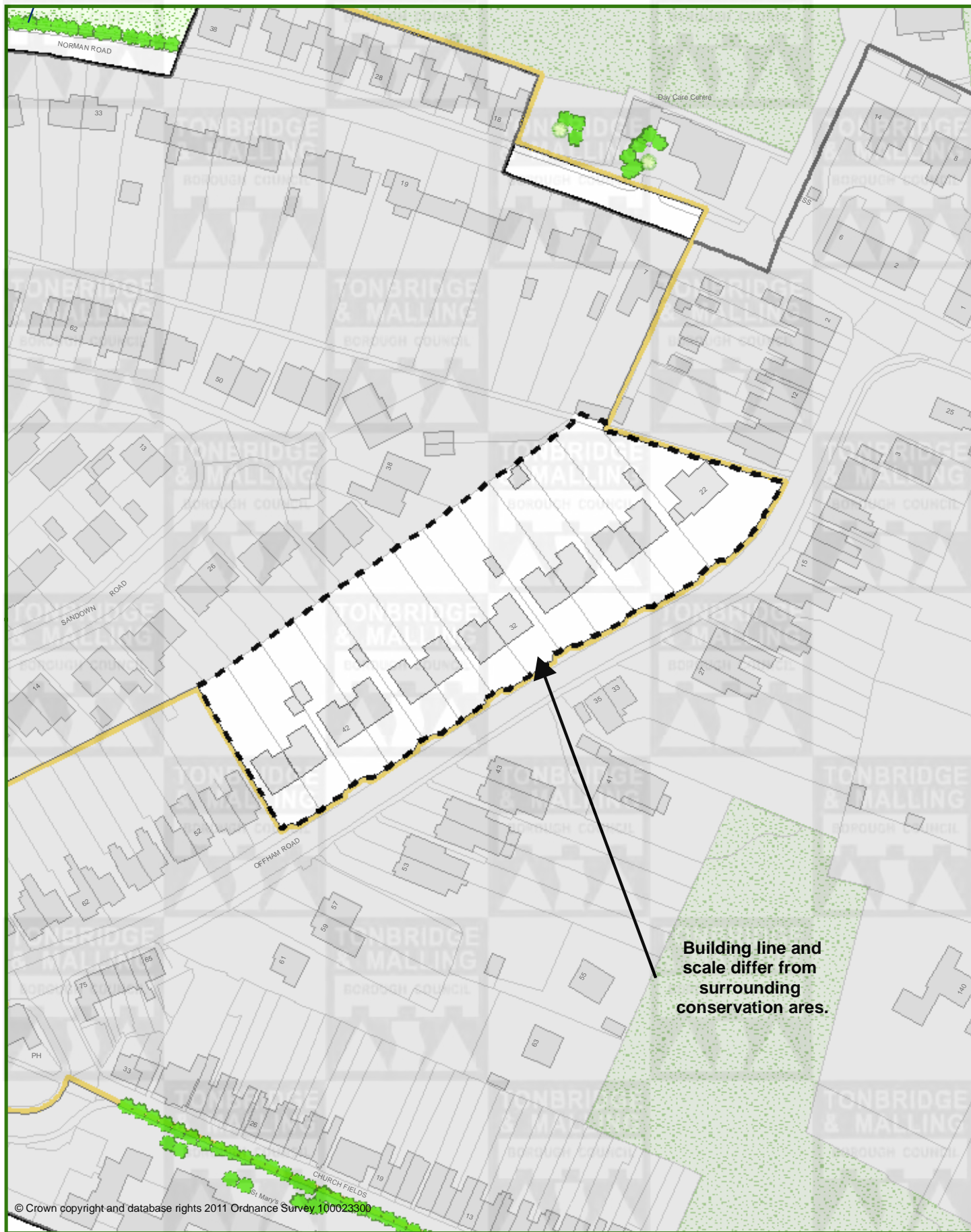
Age of buildings	1960s/1970s
Type of buildings	Semi-detached and one detached
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	1 storey
Prominent building materials	Red, brown brick, brown roof tiles, white windows
Predominant boundary treatments	Picket fences
Open spaces	None

#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Cohesive character created by uniformity of building line, roof lines, height, scale, design and materials

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Lacks visual interest or local references derived from the adjoining Conservation Area



Ref **H1**

Title **Offham Road (North)**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal



## I – SHELTERED HOUSING BLOCK



*Two and single storey complex arranged in courtyards comprising open space and parking areas.*

## II – ST. MARY'S SHELTERED HOUSING



*The courtyard is separated from the West Malling Conservation Area by a continuous hedge and a row of trees within the grounds of the development. The vegetation encloses the north edge of the character area and screens it from the adjoining Victorian street within the Conservation Area allowing the two areas of distinctively different character to co-exist without any significant impact on each other.*

*The complex is surrounded by a fence boundary which, together with the siting of the buildings, forms an enclosed open space and car parking area.*

*This group of housing is dominated by buff brick.*



*A view of the church spire can be seen above the hedge from the footpath, helping to orientate the development with the historic town.*



#### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	1970s
Type of buildings	Sheltered housing block
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	One and two storeys
Prominent building materials	Buff brick
Predominant boundary treatments	Post and rail fencing
Open spaces	Small enclosed grassed amenity areas

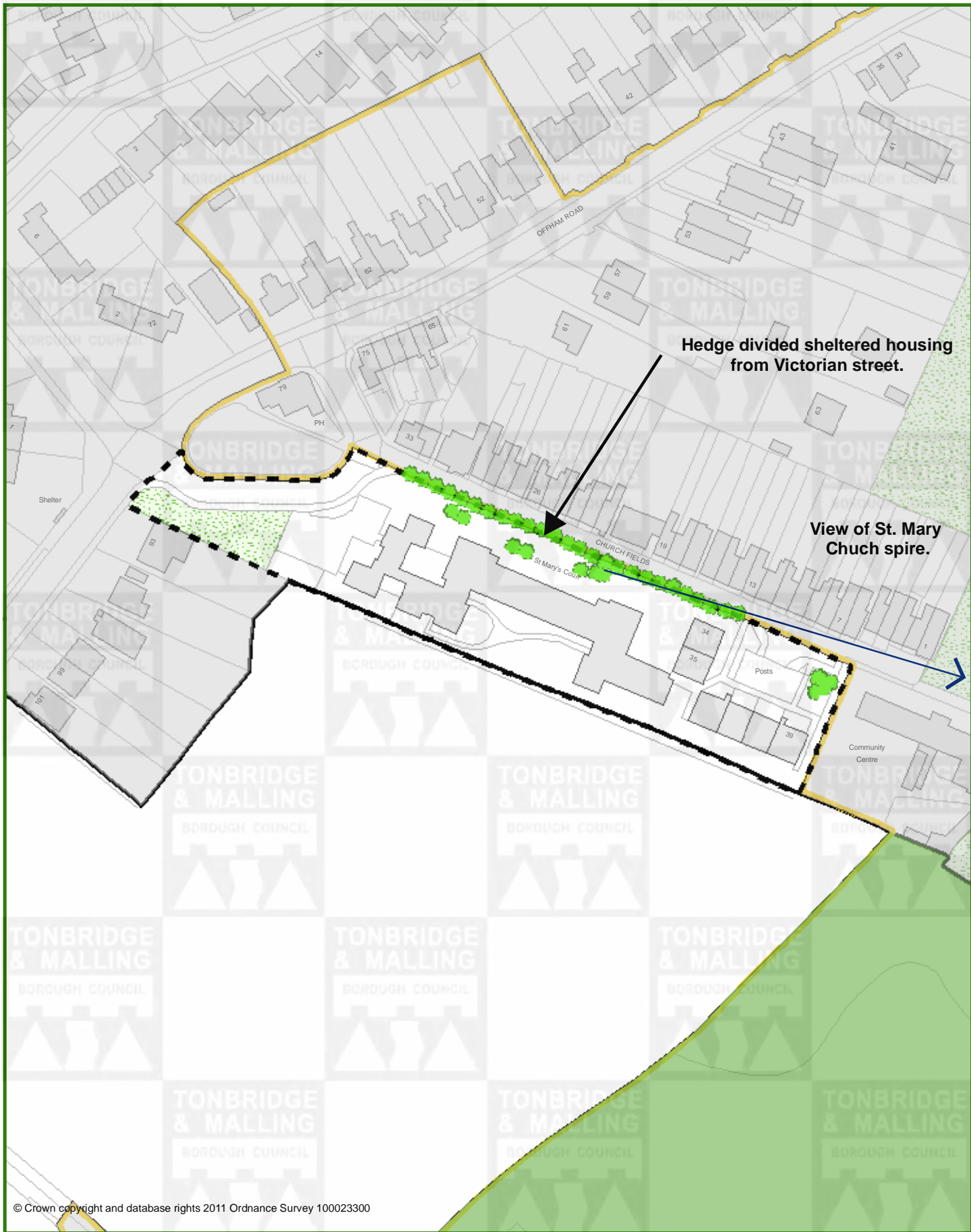
#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Cohesive character created by the use of a single building material
- Verdant enclosed northern edge provided by a continuous hedge and tree group
- Hedge and tree vegetation visually separates this modern development from an historic Victorian street within the Conservation Area
- Views of the historical church spire landmark
- Quiet, enclosed and inward looking character

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- No significant detractors





Ref **I1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **St. Mary's Sheltered Housing Scheme**



## J – MIXED CHARACTER AREA



*In some areas, piecemeal development can result in a frontage that is very mixed in terms of the layout, style and age of buildings. In West Malling outside the Conservation Area, the housing areas have generally retained a distinctive character related to the period in which they were designed, by whom and for whom they were constructed and the physical factors of their location. There are however exceptions where the individual houses vary so in age, materials and appearance that no particular character predominates. For the purposes of this appraisal, these areas have been designated as being of mixed character.*

## J1 – RYARSH LANE

Comprising: Ryarsh Lane

This area is located between the railway line and Ryarsh Lane. The short linear development is served by an unmade track and no footpath and contains buildings of a variety of designs which face onto allotments.



*There is a mix of designs, materials and heights and a varied building line within Ryarsh Lane. The narrow unmade track has no footways and is bounded to the south by a hedge and is generally unenclosed to the north. The narrow track continues between hedged boundaries and has an informal appearance.*

*A terrace of white painted properties is set next to the railway line and is well screened from Ryarsh Lane by landscaped gardens.*



*Ryarsh Lane has a cluttered townscape due to prominent parking, bins and overhead wires. There is generally an absence of front boundaries revealing parking forecourts with little or no landscaping.*



*Allotments are visible behind the hedge which encloses the south side of Ryarsh Lane and provide a contrast to the built form opposite.*

### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	Various
Type of buildings	Detached, semi detached, terraced
Main uses	Residential
Building heights	1-2 storeys
Prominent building materials	Various
Predominant boundary treatments	Mostly open plan
Open spaces	Some views over allotments

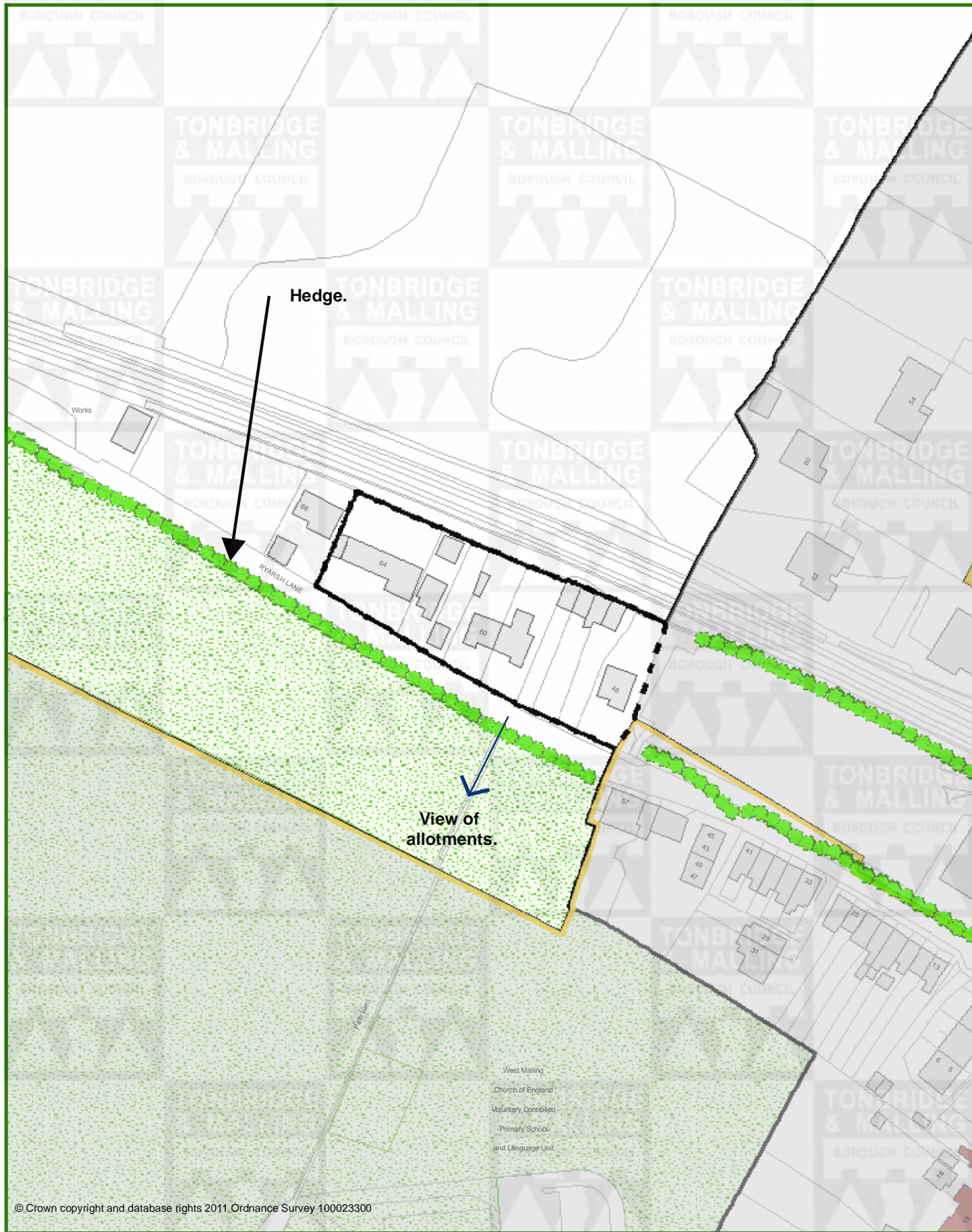
### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Hedgerow and view of allotments to south

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Cluttered townscape due to prominent parking, bins and overhead wires
- Absence of front boundaries and gardens and unsightly forecourts





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0 10 20 30 40 50 100 Metres

Ref **J1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Ryarsh Lane**



## K – COMMERCIAL AREAS



*Of the two small commercial areas in West Malling one is located close to the railway line and the other abutts the countryside. Units are single storey with shallow pitched or curved roofs and built form comprises cream painted brickwork.*

### LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Age of buildings	Early 1900s onwards
Type of buildings	Small low rise buildings
Main uses	Business, storage and car parking
Building heights	1 storey
Prominent building materials	Painted brickwork
Predominant boundary treatments	Wall or hedging
Open spaces	None

#### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Unobtrusive development

#### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

No significant detractors

## K1 – RYARSH LANE/ RAILWAY AREA

Comprising: Ryarsh Lane/ Railway

This small, unobtrusive business area is located on two sites either side of the railway line.

*To the south, low rise painted business units and car parking generally screened by site boundary trees make this an unobtrusive area. Development is elevated from Ryarsh Lane and is partially visible from this street.*



*Whilst the overall character of the northern area is commercial, the area abuts the Conservation Area and a Listed Building and is therefore sensitive to new development. The access road which serves both commercial and residential properties is private and belongs to adjacent residential properties.*



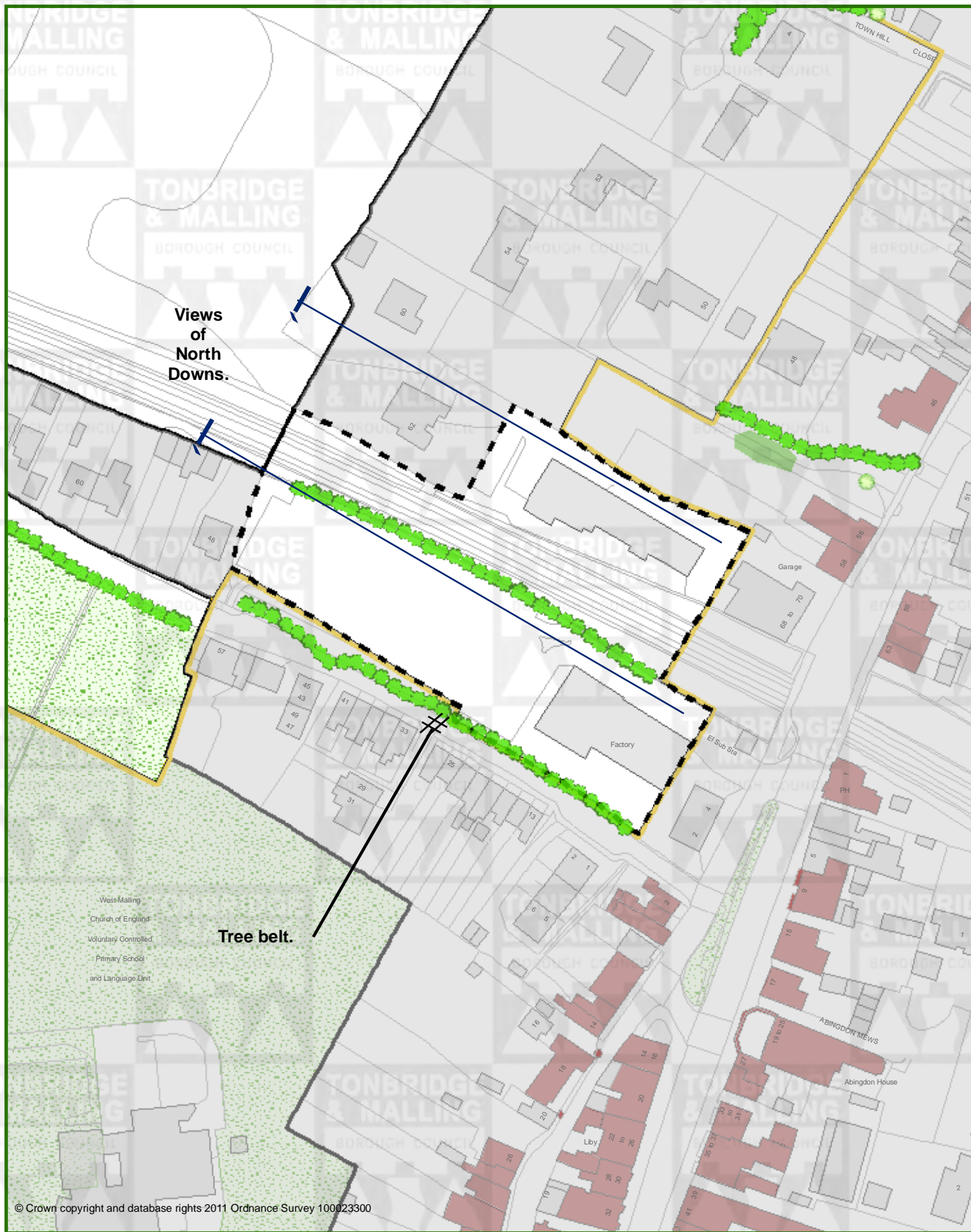
### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

- Hedges/ trees surrounding the area

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- No significant detractors





Ref **K1**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Ryarsh Lane / Railway Area**





## K2 – BRICKFIELDS (SOUTH)

Comprising: Brickfields (part)

This small area abuts the countryside on the north western edge of West Malling.



*The area mainly comprises an enclosed storage area with limited built development and containers located at the rear of the deep site. The site is screened from Brickfields by a brick wall and gated entrance. The trees around the edge of the site provide the visual amenity.*

*A single storey brick built building adjoins the storage area. The trees around the site provide a visual amenity.*



### Locally Distinctive Positive Features

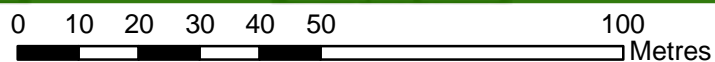
- Trees around the site

### Negative Features Worthy of Enhancement

- Whilst the area itself appears visually unattractive it is largely screened from the surrounding area



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Ref **K2**

West Malling Character Area Appraisal

Title **Brickfields (South)**





## 9 Design Guidance

New development of whatever scale cannot be viewed in isolation. The design of all new development should take into account the character of the building or site on which it is situated and the surroundings (the locally distinctive contextual features). This will help ensure that the design of new buildings evolves, where appropriate, from the qualities that make many parts of West Malling distinctive. It is important that new development creates a place that is valued and well related to local character. Where such distinctiveness is present and is ignored, new development can be bland, lose reference to essential local features and, as a result, erode local character and distinctiveness.

Some minor development is permitted, by Parliament, without the need for a planning application (usually known as “permitted development”) and, home owners and developers who are considering such alterations are encouraged to refer to the distinctive characteristics of their area as described in this SPD when considering even minor development. The Council’s planning staff will also use the SPD as a basis for giving advice to those who intend to exercise permitted development rights. Although the Council will not be in a position to *require* these good design principles in such cases, it will nevertheless encourage their use where possible.

There are four principles which the Council will apply in protecting, conserving and, where possible, enhancing the character and local distinctiveness of the area. The principles are consistent with, and supplement, the policies in the Core Strategy and the Managing Development and the Environment DPD. In applying these principles, regard must also be paid to the need to achieve sustainably designed properties that, where practicable, take advantage of local site conditions and incorporate materials, technologies and planting that help to reduce their energy requirements and therefore lower their carbon footprint. This is a key priority of the Council as well as being an objective of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD. Providing this objective is addressed early in the design process in a sensitive way that respects the local character as identified in the Character Area Appraisals, there is no reason why it should not be effectively delivered without compromising the principles set out below:

**Where validation provisions require it, proposals should be accompanied by a design and access statement that explains how the proposal:**

- **respects the locally distinctive positive features of the character area identified in the SPD. The positive features of an area such as building and roof lines, scale, massing, design characteristics, boundary treatments, landscape and layout should normally be reinforced by the proposal. Using local historic details and materials will also reinforce the character and local distinctiveness of the area.**
- **wherever possible, improves the character and design quality of the character area, and thus West Malling, by reinstating or reinforcing locally distinctive positive features of the character area identified in the SPD and/or replacing, screening or otherwise mitigating negative features worthy of enhancement, or**
- **creates a new local character in areas where there are few locally distinctive positive features or on more extensive sites where there is a greater opportunity to create a new local character.**



**Proposals may come forward that can, exceptionally justify a departure from the local context. Such proposals will need to establish clear and overriding planning and design justification if they are to prove acceptable.**

Local analysis and consultation has been used to interpret these design principles and develop appropriate design guidance for assessing development proposals within each character area. This is set out below.

## **Respecting the locally distinctive positive features of the character area identified in the SPD.**

**In order to respect the locally distinctive positive features of the character area, development will be expected to:**

### **(1) Protect or enhance the setting of listed buildings**

There are two listed buildings situated within West Mallings' character areas (outside of the Conservation Area). Listed building controls apply to all works, both external and internal, that would affect a listed building's special interest, whether or not the particular feature concerned is specifically mentioned in the list description. Consent is not normally required for repairs, but, where repairs involve alterations which would affect the character of the listed building, consent is required.

The design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In relation to listed buildings the setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function.

### **(2) Respect the scale, height, form, alignment, space, layout and density, materials and character of the area**

For each character area there are identified locally distinctive contextual features and positive features which new development should respect. In considering new designs, visual clues are seen, at the large scale, in terms of the form, height and alignment of the buildings and the rhythms formed, for example, by chimneys, porches, brick details and fenestration and, at the small scale, in relation to details such as materials, colour and brick patterning, the shape and pattern of windows and doors and boundary treatment.

At the large scale, the **height and form** of buildings are often relatively uniform within character areas, although some variation may be evident. Significant differences in height may not respect the local context. Roofscape patterns are often repeated through a street, bringing unity or a rhythm of repeated shapes (hipped or half-hipped roofs, gable ends facing the road, or unified, simple roof lines which front the street with no projections such as dormer windows). The unity or rhythm of rooflines should preferably not be compromised by inappropriate roof extensions.

In relation to **alignment** of the buildings, in some instances regular building lines are established. For example, 1930s or 1960's – 1970s properties set back along a common building line. In other clusters, groups of Victorian properties are situated on a straight building line with a minimal set back from the street providing a tight knit urban form. A distinctive unity is retained. It is important that new buildings respect the alignment of buildings in order to fit well within the local context. Where buildings are set back a

consistent distance from the street along a common building line the visual integrity of a whole street should not be compromised by porches or front extensions.

These considerations apply to the front building line and also to the width of the development within the plot and the **space** that exists between and around buildings. There should be sufficient width within a plot to locate the building(s) and provide adequate separation between them in order to reflect the general spacing characteristics of an area. There are considerable pressures to maximise the use of sites but this should not be to the detriment or erosion of the distinctive character of the area.

Many of the character areas possess a strong unified palette of **materials**. For example, the red or yellow brick, slate roofs and white sash windows of the 19 Century development or the red brick, brown tiles; red brick and cream or white painted render with brown roof tiles of the post war public housing schemes. The choice and combination of materials is crucial to the success of a scheme. In creating a locally distinctive environment, the number of different materials used should generally be kept to a minimum. New buildings, or extensions, should be constructed of materials which respect those used in the character area within which they are proposed.

A richness of design and texture can be achieved through careful **detailing** eg brick detailing such as arches above windows and doors and string courses, bay windows. The following typologies of character areas contain significant examples of original and valuable detailing:

- Main Road Frontage of London Road
- Victorian/ Edwardian Houses
- Lower Density Detached

New buildings, or extensions, should, where appropriate, apply local detailing which reinforces the character of the area within which they are proposed.

Careful consideration should also be given to ensuring that good quality traditional detailing on buildings is retained. Where these have been removed, efforts should be made to restore them. Replacement doors, windows and roofs should closely match the design and materials of the original features. Where inappropriate new windows, doors and roofs are to be replaced, the opportunity should be taken to put back in the original style.

The principles set out above should drive the design process in the vast majority of cases. However, they should not necessarily be regarded as a deterrent to the creation of imaginative high quality contemporary designs using appropriate contemporary materials in the right setting.

### **(3) Retain traditional boundary treatment and natural features**

Ragstone and red brick walls, hedges and mature trees, picket fences and black metal railings are features in different character areas. They help enclose the road space, define the boundary between public and private space and help reinforce the character of an area. Areas can be distinctive by virtue of their well-treed appearance. Development should not erode such features through the loss of walls, railings, hedges/ trees or the use of unsympathetic boundary treatment.

Parking areas have been created on some frontages leading to an erosion of the street enclosure, a loss of defensible space around the building and the link to the character of the area. Wherever possible, traditional boundary enclosure should be reinstated. Where the

opportunity arises, new boundaries should use the prevailing materials and designs in the character area.

#### **(4) Protect views of local landmarks**

West Malling contains a number of landmark buildings including Saint Mary's church with its prominent spire which help give historic and visual reference points, assist legibility of the area and help prevent a monotonous appearance. These buildings, although located outside a character area, and views of them are important in the distinctive character of a street scene.

#### **(5) Protect and Enhance Landscape Features**

Some character areas such as the post-war public housing schemes and the sheltered housing scheme have larger areas of open space within or adjoining the areas (shown on the Townscape Analysis Maps) as an integral part of their character. Important open spaces may already be protected for their recreational value by other policies in the LDF but open spaces should also be retained because of their importance to the amenity and character of the area.

The appraisal also identifies a number of tree belts which are visible from the public domain (shown on the Townscape Analysis Maps) some of which may form an edge to the character area (sometimes representing an original field boundary), and some form a backdrop to development or act as a visual amenity (sometimes in an area where the buildings themselves may have little distinctive character). These features perform an important function within a character area(s) and should be protected and, so far as possible, retained in any new development.

Development should not erode these unique features through the loss of trees which are important to the character or the generation of substantial additional traffic that would cause the erosion of the boundary features.

#### **(6) Protect views of the open countryside**

The topography of the area and the disposition and scale of development allows some views of the surrounding countryside from some of the character areas (shown on the Townscape Analysis Maps). These views are important to the character of the area and should not be lost through future development.

#### **(7) Respect the quiet residential character**

The cul de sac layout with no through traffic; distance from the main roads; proximity of the countryside and almost exclusively residential development has resulted in a quiet residential character within a large number of the West Malling character areas. This character should not be adversely affected by new development.

## **Improving the character and design quality of the character area, and as a result, the village of West Malling**

**In order to improve the character and design quality of the character area, and in turn the village of West Malling, development will be expected to:**

**(8) In residential character areas of standard architecture with few historic place references, assess the opportunity to create new buildings of interest and/or landmark buildings**

Many parts of West Malling are likely to remain largely unchanged by substantial redevelopment over time but there may be opportunities for new development. For example, isolated properties or garage courts could be replaced. In such cases, the scale and form of the surrounding development as well as the locally distinctive positive features should be respected.

In some cases there may be opportunities to enhance the area through the creation of individual buildings of interest or additional landscape features. Landmark buildings can lift a design from the ordinary and may be justified on the basis of a sound urban design appraisal of their context and a perceived environmental uplift to the quality of the area.

In designing new development a high standard of intrinsic design quality is required. Interesting detailing such as created by brick patterning and the shape and pattern of roofs, windows and doors can enhance a design whether for new build or alteration to an existing building which can add to the character and distinctiveness of an area.



In designing new development such as replacing buildings which detract from the character of the area, or other opportunities, a high quality, visually attractive design is required. Detailing was not a feature of modern designs in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s to the detriment of the character of buildings and the wider housing estates within which they were situated. More recently, detailing such as brick patterning and the shape and pattern of windows and doors is being added to designs, and this will be encouraged, firstly when making an alteration to such a building and secondly where new buildings are erected to add to the character and distinctiveness of an area.





Over-generous road space should be avoided and streets should be defined by a coherent and well structured layout using different road widths which create a hierarchy of spaces with the buildings providing a strong sense of enclosure where the setting demands it (as in the example shown left). However, it would be inappropriate to seek to impose such a design solution in every case and where this would be inappropriate to the character of the area. (eg areas of open plan housing).

There is likely to be a demand to retrofit some buildings, not built to current energy efficiency standards, with new cladding, solar panels and added insulation (such as the example shown below). Whilst it would be desirable to minimise the impact of such changes on buildings of quality, it may be a virtue to use such improvements to uplift undistinguished, standardised architecture and add a new distinctiveness to an area. Likewise, new development built to a high sustainable standard can achieve similar benefits, providing the principles of passive design are addressed sensitively at the conception stage of the scheme having regard to the character of the area.



### **(9) Reinstate or reinforce positive features**

Through the development process there will be opportunities to reinstate or reinforce the positive features which contribute to the character of the area. This could mean reinforcing the verdant landscape character with substantial specimen trees and boundary hedges.

There are examples where open frontages are created to the road leaving no definition of the space, reducing security and in many cases a loss of pride in the maintenance of the space. Where appropriate to the character of an area, private space should be defined by a clear boundary. Front boundaries should be retained or restored to the prevailing feature in the character area.



### **(10) Provide streetscape enhancements**

Opportunity should be taken as part of development proposals to ameliorate the negative features of an area identified in the Character Area Appraisals. Improvements to footway/road surfaces in some areas would contribute to improving the character of the wider area.



## Appendix 1

### **By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (DETR 2000)**

The guide is intended as a companion to Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) [and subsequent Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)] and aims to encourage better design and to stimulate thinking about urban design.

The guide states that understanding the local context should be the prelude to drawing up the planning 'toolkit'.

A range of techniques is available, but the guide states that carrying out an appraisal is more important than the specific technique used and a simple assessment is better than none. The guide provides pointers to understanding an area in terms of its urban design.

The guide sets out a series of checklists to act as a guide to the assessment of an area. They are not meant to be followed slavishly. Understanding the local context does not require every item on the checklists to be examined on every occasion and in every place or in the same depth. The checklists provide pointers to understanding an area in terms of its urban design and the following elements have been particularly relevant to the built up area of the West Malling:

#### **Character**

*A place with its own identity*

Appraisals can include assessments of:

- the origins and development of the topography of the area, including surviving elements of historic street patterns, plot subdivisions, boundary treatments and the relationships between buildings and spaces;
- the architecture and historic quality, character and coherence of buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area;
- the character and hierarchy of spaces and their townscape quality;
- prevalent and historic building materials;
- the contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces, trees, hedges and other cultivated elements;
- the area's prevailing (or former) uses, plan forms and building types;
- the relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside, including significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas;
- features which have been lost, or which intrude on or detract from the character of the area.

#### **Continuity of building frontages and enclosure of public spaces**

*A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished*



Techniques include identifying and mapping:

- gap sites and abnormal setbacks which interrupt the common building line of the street;
- instances where the backs of buildings are exposed to public view and access (as in the case of back gardens on to roads, alleys and public spaces);
- active and dead frontages at ground floor level: positive factors such as entrances, shopfronts and windows; and negative factors such as long blank facades and high boundary walls, and service entrances and yards;
- active and dead frontages at upper floors: positive factors such as windows of habitable rooms overlooking public space; and negative factors such as blank gable walls and unused space over shops;
- places where buildings meet the public realm: boundary treatments such as gates, railings, fences and boundary walls; front gardens and in-curtilage parking; and servicing;
- spatial enclosure: the relationship between the heights of buildings and the spaces they define;
- planting (such as trees and hedges), natural features, land form, and retaining walls which define and enclose blocks and spaces.

### **Quality of the public realm**

*A place with attractive and successful outdoor*

Public realm audits can include assessments of:

- hard landscaping (paving materials, kerbs, walls, steps and ramps);
- planting (trees, planters, grassed areas, flowers and borders);
- street furniture (seats, bins, bollards and railings);
- lighting (pavement, pedestrian, highway, security, building and feature);
- shopfronts (thresholds, glazing, stall risers, signs, banners and shutters).
- advertisements (hoardings, kiosks and banners);
- traffic and highways installations (including highway markings, traffic signals and control boxes);
- public space use and management (informal use as well as formal, events, markets, graffiti removal, litter collection and street cleansing).

### **Legibility**

*A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand*

Appraisals of:

- gateways and points of transition (at main entry points, between different areas and at transitions between different uses);
- nodes (important junctions and points of interaction);
- landmarks and features (important buildings, corners);
- views and vistas (seen from within the area and from the outside);
- edges, seams and barriers (including the boundaries between different zones and areas, and streets which integrate or sever).



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