

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



Brattles Grange, Brenchley



April 2009

Brattles Grange

Brenchley, Kent

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SITE DESCRIPTION

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Boundary map.

FIGURE 2: Aerial photograph

FIGURE 3: Map of listed buildings at Brattles Grange.

FIGURE 4: Listed buildings at Brattles Grange.

FIGURES ONLY ON CD

FIGURE 5: Edward Hasted map of Brenchley 1778

FIGURE 6: Tithe map 1842-44.

FIGURE 7: Ordnance Survey 1st edn 25" map (1870). Sheet 61/11.

FIGURE 8: Ordnance Survey 2nd edn 25" map (1897). Sheet 61/11.

FIGURE 9: Ordnance Survey 3rd edn 25" map (1908). Sheet 61/11.

FIGURE 10: Ordnance Survey Revd edn 25" map (1938). Sheet 61/11.

FIGURE 11: Cover of sales particulars November 1924.

FIGURE 12: Sales advertisement in *Home Buyer* (9 June 2001)

FIGURE 13: Photographs of Brattles Grange January 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With many thanks to the owners of Brattles Grange for allowing access to the garden and for commenting on the text.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

SITE DESCRIPTION

KENT

BRATTLES GRANGE

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

BRENCHLEY

TQ 6744 4039

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

Water and woodland gardens laid out from the 1930s around a C16 Wealden timber-framed house (with C19 additions). The gardens were re-modelled in 2003 by garden designer Ryl Nowell to include a rill with fountains and an ornamental grass meadow.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Until the late C12, Brenchley was within the parish of Eldyryge (later known as Yalding) and probably originated as a clearing in the ancient Wealden oak forest (Barr). The Manor of Brenchley was granted by William the Conqueror to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and later passed to Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford, and then to Edward, Duke of Buckingham (Pike). After Edward's beheading in 1521, Henry VIII first gave the Manor to Cardinal Wolsey and then, in 1539, to Paul Sydnor for his services as agent to the Court of Spain. In 1578, it became the property of the Kent antiquary William Lambarde.

Between 1593 and 1597 Lambarde made further land purchases in Kent including the site of the present Brattles Grange, where he built a house and lived briefly before his death in 1601(DNB). In 1778, a house named Brattils, one of the many 'mostly old-fashioned timbered buildings' in the Wealden area, is shown on a map of Brenchley (Hasted).The property remained in the Lambarde family until at least 1842 when William Lambarde's descendant, also William, is recorded as the owner of a house named Brattles (Tithe Map). The property included a house and a lodge with gardens, an orchard, woods and fields, most of which were leased to a Mr Ranger. By the 1860s the property had been renamed Brattles Farm and two oast houses had been added.

Until the turn of the century, the house and garden continued to be surrounded by its orchards, woodland and fields (1st and 2nd edn OS maps). In 1903, probably following a change of ownership, the house was enlarged by the architect Albert Chambers Freeman (Newman) and renamed Brattles Grange. In the grounds, the lodge was demolished and the entrance drive and forecourt were redesigned, a kitchen garden built and ornamental gardens were laid out (3rd edn OS map). In 1924, the property was offered for sale and the sales particulars depict a view of the entrance front of an elegant timber-framed building set on a terrace and framed with flower beds and young trees.

Brattles Grange probably continued as a working farm until 1932, when it was bought by a Mr John Alexander Murdocke (*Country Life*). He was responsible for further minor additions to the house, the construction of a garage block and

a tennis court, and the redesign of the kitchen garden (4th edn OS map). Following World War Two, to the south of the kitchen garden, he also made a 'meandering' swimming pool with a pool house disguised as an oast house (RAF photographs; Hall). In occupation until 1976, Murdocke also created ornamental gardens which included a stream with waterfalls, a rose garden and an extensive woodland garden.

A Mr Alan Lowe and his wife Josephine owned Brattles Grange until 2002 when it was sold to the present owners. In 2003, they commissioned Ryl Nowell to redesign the gardens which included the construction of a new swimming pool and ornamental gardens in the walled kitchen garden. The property remains in single private ownership.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Brattles Grange stands on southward-sloping ground with natural springs surrounded by the woodland, hop gardens and orchards of the undulating High Weald. Brenchley is approximately 3km to the east, Paddock Wood 4km north and Royal Tunbridge Wells 6.5 km to the west. The c.9h site is approximately 3km east of the main Tunbridge Wells-Hastings road (A21). The site is bordered to the east by Tong Road which runs north from Lamberhurst to Brenchley, and to the north-east by Tibbs Court Lane. The north-west, west and south boundaries abut farmland and orchards.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The entrance to Brattles Grange stands on the west side of Tibbs Court Lane at its junction with Tong Road. A gravelled drive passes through a 1.5m high white, wooden gate from which point there is a commanding view of the house. The drive runs for c.80m in a south-westerly direction between columnar clipped Irish yews and open lawns with low shrub and rose borders to arrive at a circular, gravelled forecourt. A grassed circle (10m diameter) with a C16 Venetian stone well-head forms the centre of the forecourt's turning circle (*County Life*). Approximately halfway along the main drive a fork from it curves in a westerly direction to a garage block standing about 20m to the west of the house.

The present entrance and drive to Brattles Grange follows the course shown on maps from 1840. A turning circle (semi-circular in 1840) on the forecourt was first shown in 1908 (3rd edn OS map). The three Irish yews along the drive remain from the many pairs of yews and 'large specimens of topiary in the form of peacocks and other ornamental shapes' planted by John Murdocke from the 1930s (RAF photographs; *Country Life*).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Brattles Grange (listed grade II), built in the early C16, is a two-storey timber-framed house with an attic. The tiled roof is gabled at each end with three gabled attic windows on the east entrance front. In 1903 the house was altered to the designs of Albert Chambers Freeman in the 'Vernacular Revival style' (listed building description). These included the addition of a wing with a first-

floor gallery and an open loggia below on the south side of the house and a gabled porch over a Tudor arched doorway on the entrance front. Brick-built, tile-roofed additions were also made to the rear of the house. In 2002, the house was refurbished internally and a glass passageway under a tiled roof, a few metres long, was constructed from its south-west corner to link with a surviving oast house a few metres to its south-west end.

Twenty metres to the west of the house is an early C20 two-storey brick garage. It has a tiled roof with gabled windows on the first floor and an outside staircase and has been converted for use as a studio with garages below. Ten metres to the west of the house a Tudor-style dove cote (built 2002) stands over a storage tank.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The house stands on a terrace that encircles the building. On the entrance front the terrace is laid to York flagstones with low box-edged parterres, bedding and topiary. As the ground slopes away from the house on the south side, the terrace continues as a raised, wide, brick-paved path which is planted with lavender borders. On the west front of the house, the terrace, once more stone flagged but with brick detailing, broadens out to form a rectangular seating area with two herb beds set in the paving. In the angle between this seating area and the garage block to its north is a lawn with perimeter borders and, as a focal point at the lawn's southern end, a stainless steel and glass water feature set in a semi-circular bed. Running in a south-westerly direction at the base of the garage wall is a raised walkway beneath a black-painted wooden pergola that offers views over the lawn.

The main ornamental gardens lie some 50m south-west of the house within and on the boundary of a 0.5ha partly-walled, former kitchen garden. It is brick walled on three sides forming an open quadrilateral, with the end of the 75m west wall curving inwards. A walled kitchen garden is first shown on a 1908 map (3rd edn OS map) as a parallelogram-shaped enclosure (80m x 30m). It was altered to its present shape by 1939 during John Murdocke's ownership. He probably also replaced the south wall with a hedge, constructed a bothy on the exterior of the north wall (still present, 2009), a 20m long glass house on the interior of the same wall, and two smaller glasshouses on each side of the north-west end of the west wall. It was used as a kitchen garden until 2002 but is now laid out as a pool house and ornamental garden.

The glazed, T-shaped, pool house (constructed in 2002 in a C19-conservatory style) is built onto the interior of the kitchen garden's 2m high north wall on the site of the early C20 glasshouse. From each end of the wall two further brick walls extend to form the garden's east side (at right angles to it) and west side (at approximately 45 degrees). The gardens enclosed within these walls are in two sections separated by a row of brick piers with rose swags between. The rectangular-shaped, south-east sloping section on the east side is laid out with a c.40m rill aligned on the pool house and descending to it from a circular pool with a central jet to a rectangular pool on the apron of the pool house. The immediate rill surrounds are paved in limestone flags in which are set pairs of fountains with arching water jets. Beyond its paving the rill is framed by lawn

with perimeter paths and herbaceous borders. The western raised section of the garden is triangular in shape and is reached by two sets of three broad shallow steps leading from the pool house to a deck with a central walnut tree. Southwards from the deck a 75m long, broad, terracotta-tiled walk beneath a rose-covered metal pergola at the foot of the western kitchen garden wall. It is also framed by herbaceous borders. Southern unwallied end of the garden is enclosed by a thickly planted arc of ornamental grasses of mainly *Miscanthus* varieties (Nowell plans), which extends westwards to merge with mature shrubs and trees on the western site boundary. Seventy-five metres to the south of the house at the eastern end of the grass planting the mid-C20 oast-style pool house survives (now used for storage), although the pool has been filled in (2002).

One hundred and fifty metres south-west from the house, a spring-fed stream (its source in an adjoining field) descends through rough grass studded with matures beech trees. The stream is planted as an ornamental feature with water-loving species on its banks and its course crossed by flat wooden bridges. It continues its course through an underground pipe to reappear fifty metres south-east of the house to flows eastwards below the south-east front of the house. C19 maps record the stream running down into a pond some 40m south-west of the house and both were still present in the 1970s (RAF photographs). It was described in the 1950s as 'diverted over a series of cascades' (*Country Life*). A mid-C20 rockery survives at its lower eastern end. To the north and north-west of the house there are extensive informal lawns with perimeter shrub borders and serpentine walks (Nowell plans).

About 40m south of the house, adjacent to the east side of the former walled kitchen garden, is a sunken wire-enclosed tennis court screened by shrubberies. To its east the land slopes steeply to water and woodland gardens with glades of rhododendrons set amongst mature oaks, Scots pine, beech and birch, all laid out and planted by John Murdocke from the 1930s onwards.

REFERENCES

Books and articles

Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Brenchley, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 7* (London, 1798), pp. 280-94.

Bradshaw's Directory for Brenchley (1847).

Gordon Cooper, 'The Gardens at Brattles Grange', *RHS Journal* vol. 82 (1957), pp. 416-24.

Leslie Elgar Pike, *Brenchley and Matfield, Kent. The Official Guide* (1966).

Newman, John, *West Kent and the Weald* (Pevsner's Buildings of England series, 1969), p. 182.

Elisabeth Hall, *Garden of England. Evolution of Historic Gardens in Kent* (Kent County Council, 2005), p. 47.

Denise Barr, 'The Shaping of our Parish', *Brenchley and Matfield Revisited* (Brenchley and Matfield Local History Society, 2008).

J. D. Alsop, 'William Lambarde (1536-1601)', *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Maps

Edward Hasted map of Brenchley 1778. CKS.

Tithe map and apportionment (Brenchley Parish) 1842-44. CKS

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

OS maps 1st edn 25" OS map 1870 Sheet 61/11
 2nd edn 25" OS map 1897 Sheet 61/11
 3rd edn 25" OS map 1908 Sheet 61/11
 4th edn 25" OS map 1938 Sheet 61/11

Brattles Grange estate map 1989. Hamptons.

8 Ryl Nowell drawings for Brattles Grange gardens 2003 (private collection).

Modern Mastermap 1:10,000 2007

Map showing listed buildings within Brattles Grange boundaries.

Illustrations

Cover of sales particulars November 1924.

4 b/w aerial views of Brattles Grange 1946. RAF Aerial Photos

b/w photograph of shrubs at Brattles Grange, *Country Life* (14 March 1957), p. 467.

3 b/w aerial views of Brattles Grange 1972. RAF Aerial Photos

Colour photograph 1981/82 KCC

Aerial photograph of Brattles Grange 2003

Archival items

Kent Compendium notes 1996

English Heritage Listed Buildings: entry undated.

Advertisement in *Home Buyer* (9 June 2001)

List of grasses for Brattles Grange ornamental grass meadow. Ryl Nowell, 2003.

Research by Janet Mayfield

Description written by Barbara Simms

Edited by Virginia Hinze

April 2009

Fig. 1 Boundary map

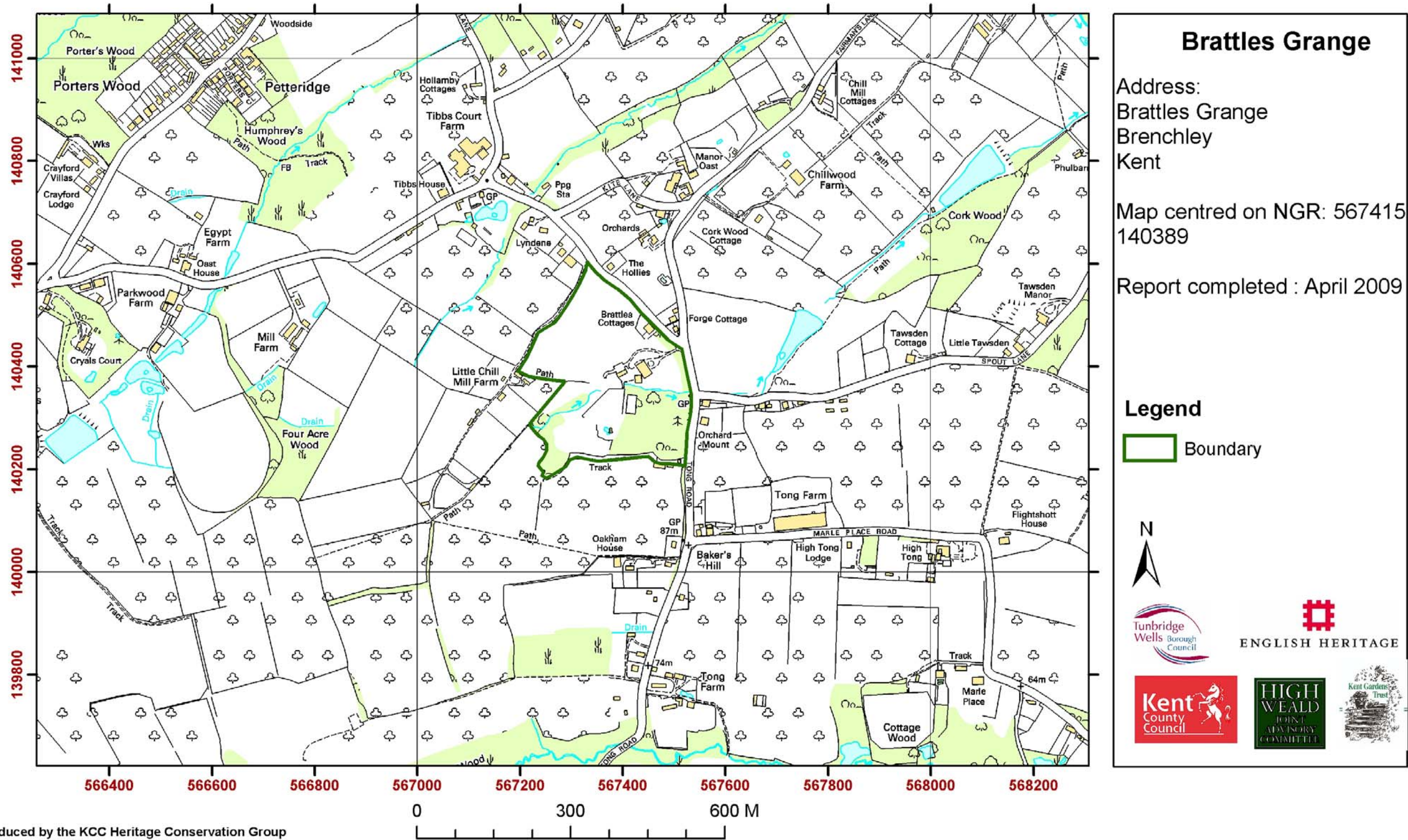
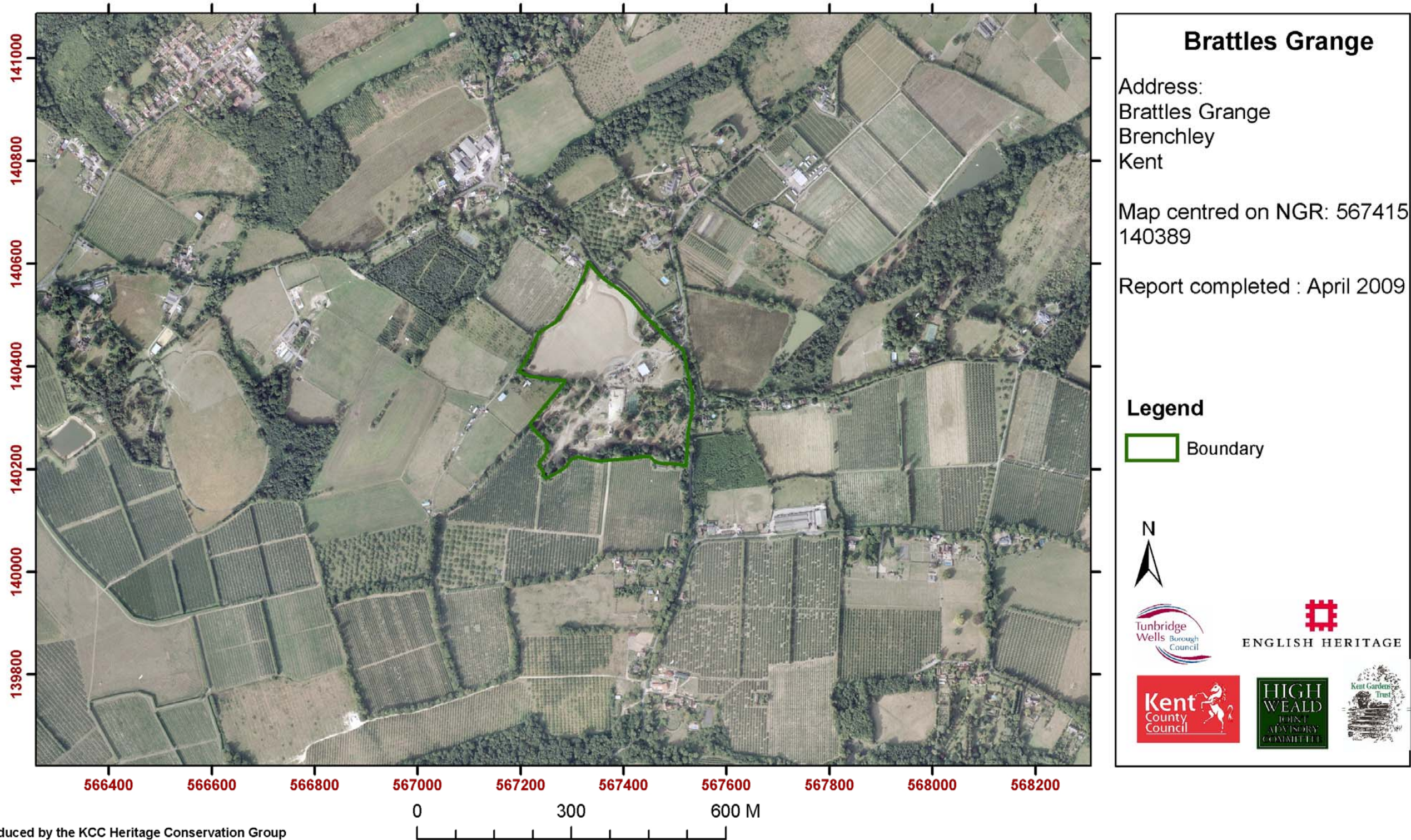


Fig. 2 Aerial photograph

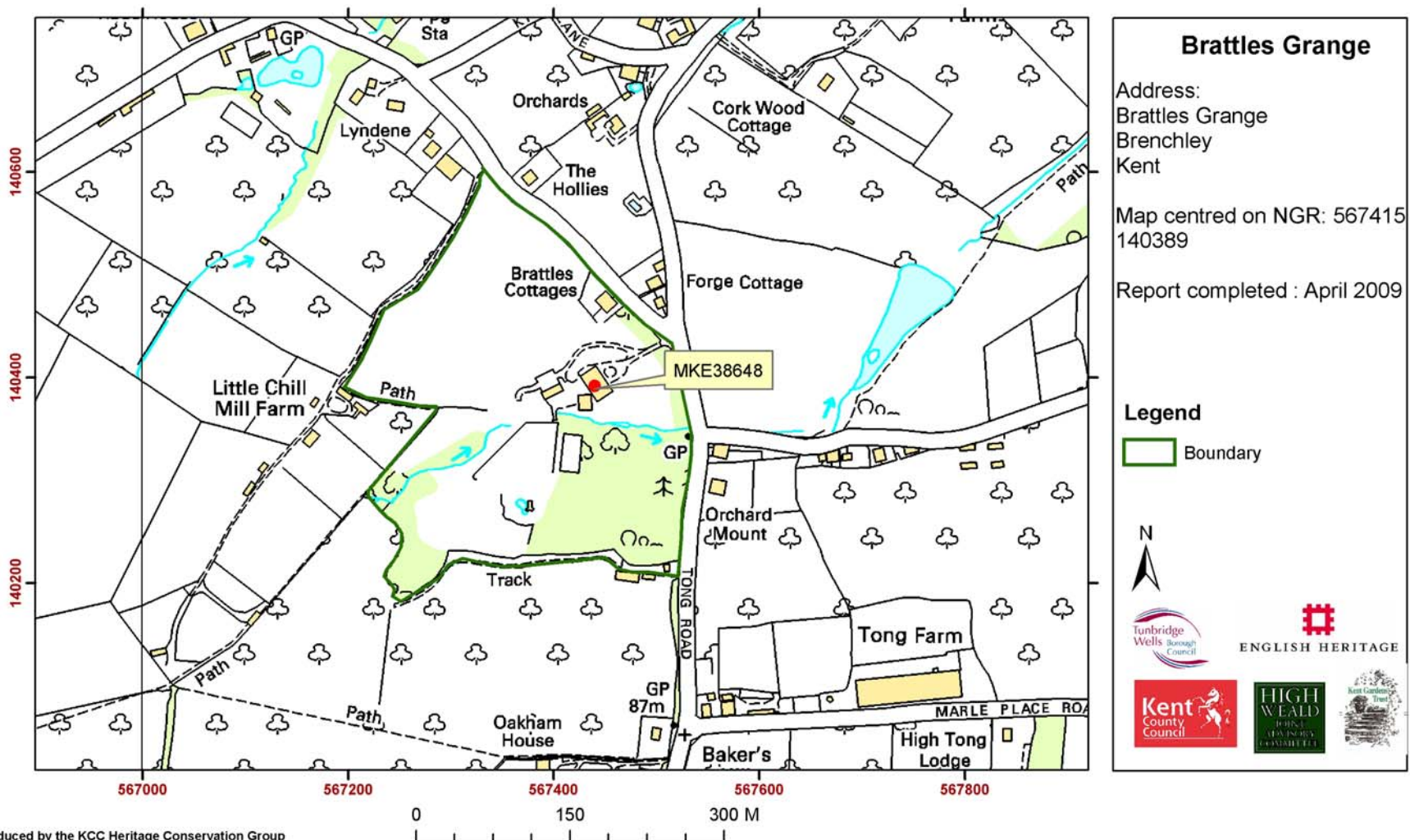


Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. 100019238. 2007

Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2009 review of Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 3 Map of listed buildings



Brattles Grange

Address:
Brattles Grange
Brenchley
Kent

Map centred on NGR: 567415
140389

Report completed : April 2009

Legend

Boundary

N

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Kent County Council

HIGH WEALED

Kent Gardens Trust

Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. 100019238. 2007

Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2009 review of Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 4 Listed buildings at Brattles Grange

Kent Historic Environment Record reference: **MKE38648**

TQ 64 SE BRENCHLEY FAIRMANS LANE
6/77 Brattles Grange 20.10.54 II

Large house. Circa early C16 origins, thoroughly renovated and enlarged in 1903 to the designs of Albert C. Freeman (Pevsner, *West Kent and the Weald* (1976)). Framed construction on sandstone footings; peg-tile roof; brick stacks.

Plan: The house faces east. The core of the building is a C16 3 room lobby entrance plan, the 2 northern rooms heated by back-to-back fireplaces in an axial stack. In 1903 the house was altered. The former C16 hall was converted into a full-height galleried entrance hall with an open well stair to the rear. The hall fireplace was blocked and the former service end, to the left (south) given a fireplace. The house was extended at the south end by a 2 room plan crosswing in a Vernacular Revival style with various other additions to the rear of the main range.

Exterior: 2 storeys and attic. Roof gabled at ends; axial stacks to left of centre and to right of centre, the latter to the rear of the ridge. Asymmetrical 1:5-window front, the one window to the 1903 addition crosswing, which is gabled to the front at the left, one window to the right end lean-to. Close-studded framing, both to the original and to the crosswing, some of the C16 studs renewed, especially to right of centre. First floor jettied, the jetty with curved braces. 1903 gabled porch on posts to left of centre with a coeval Tudor arched doorway with a plank and cover strip front door. Approximately central blocked doorway to the lobby entrance visible in the framing. 4 first floor and 5 ground floor 2- and 3-light casement windows of 1903 with square leaded panes, evidence of first and ground floor original windows in the framing. The right end lean-to is probably 1903 and has a similar 2-light casement. 3 1903 gabled attic dormers with deep eaves, curly bargeboards and finials. The crosswing, at the left end, is jettied and gabled to the front with deep eaves, cusped bargeboards and a pendant and finial at the apex. 5-light ground floor transomed casement with square leaded panes; similarly glazed 5-light transomed first floor oriel on curly brackets; 2-light attic window. The left (south) return of the crosswing has an attractive 1903 gallery projection, close-studded and in a Vernacular Revival style. This is gabled to the south with a first floor gallery and an open verandah below, the gallery supported on posts. Beyond the gallery, to the rear (west), the crosswing is brick to the ground floor, tile-hung to the first floor. The rear elevation of the main range, which includes an outshut with a lean-to roof and various rear additions, is brick and tile-hung.

Interior: A mixture of early C16 and 1903 features. The right end room of the main range preserves C16 ceiling beams, fireplace rebuilt. The entrance hall is almost wholly 1903 with an open wall stair with turned balusters. The front (east) room of the crosswing is lined with linenfold panelling, said to have come from the Victoria and Albert Museum (information from the owner) and Flemish panelling including projecting carved heads. The rear (west) room of the crosswing is panelled in an early C18 style. The wall framing visible on the first floor has wall posts with flared jowls and tension braces.

Roof: The main range preserves an early C16 crown post roof with plain posts with 3-way bracing.

The 1903 remodelling of this traditional house is of a high quality.