

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



## Sprivers, Horsmonden



May 2009



# Sprivers

Horsmonden, Kent

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## INTRODUCTION

## SITE DESCRIPTION

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Boundary map.

FIGURE 2: Key views map.

FIGURE 3: Key features map.

FIGURE 4: Aerial photograph.

FIGURE 5: Map of listed buildings at Sprivers.

FIGURE 6: Listed buildings at Sprivers.

## FIGURES ONLY ON CD

FIGURE 7: *A map of..... Mr Courthope 1705* (private collection).

FIGURE 8: *A Survey and map of Sprivers lying ...* undated (private collection).

FIGURE 9: Detail of undated C18 estate map.

FIGURE 10: J. Andrews, W. Dury and W. Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent ...* 1769.

FIGURE 11: Edward Hasted map 1778

FIGURE 12: Tithe map 1842. CKS ref CTR912B.

FIGURE 13: 1st edn 25" OS map 1869 Sheet 61/12.

FIGURE 14: 2nd edn 25" OS map 1897 Sheet 61/12.

FIGURE 15: 3rd edn 25" OS map 1908 Sheet 61/12.

FIGURE 16: Revd edn 25" OS map 1938 Sheet 61/12.

FIGURE 17: Photographs of Sprivers 1981/2.

FIGURE 18: Photographs of Sprivers January 2009.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

With many thanks to the tenants of Sprivers for allowing access to the gardens, sharing their knowledge of the gardens' development and commenting on the site description; and to Sally Bushell (Property Manager) and Dr Wendy Monkhouse (Curator, Interiors), National Trust Scotney Castle, for their help.

## 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 <a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>	Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Invicta House County Hall Maidstone ME14 1XX 01622 696918 <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a>
Kent Gardens Trust <a href="http://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk">www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk</a>	High Weald AONB Unit Woodland Enterprise Centre Hastings Road Flimwell East Sussex TN5 7PR 01580 879500 <a href="http://www.highweald.org/">www.highweald.org/</a>

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

KENT

SPRIVERS

TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
HORSMONDEN  
TQ 69303994

## **SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST**

A formal, compartmentalised garden laid out around a C15 manor house (extended in the C16 and C18) and with surviving elements of garden and landscape features from the C16 onwards.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

The parish of Horsmonden was described by the historian Edward Hasted as 'being a surface of continued hill and dale' and 'much interspersed with coppice woods of oaks, especially on the west and north sides of it'. 'Fine spreading oak trees' to the west of Horsmonden are indicated on C16 maps (Saxton, Symonson) and probably formed part of Sprivers Wood, land attached to the Manor of Sprivers (sometimes known as Sprevers or Sprevors). The Manor of Sprivers is thought to have taken its name from the Sprivers family who owned it until 1447 and probably built the first house on the site (Hasted).

Over the subsequent two hundred and fifty years Sprivers changed hands a number of times and, during the C16 and probably under the ownership of a Robert Bathurst, the house was enlarged (listed building description). A Miss Anne Holman was in occupation in 1704 and she sold the estate to a John Courthope, who made a survey of his new property (1705 estate map). The survey records a house with ponds, orchards, fields, meadow and woodland (including part of the present Sprivers Woods). Two arms of a feature resembling a moat are also shown. A later (undated) map, probably also C18, confirms that the estate, including Sprivers Wood, was some 145ha in extent and was approached by drives from the north, south, east and north-west.

John Courthope died in 1718 and the property passed to his son, Alexander, who in 1756 enlarged and restyled the house in brick and built a stable block, game larder and various outbuildings (listed building description). In the 1760s he laid out the gardens and planted many new trees including larch, American walnut, scarlet oak, acacia, oaks, ash and willow (Courthope papers). An C18 print shows 'walled and sunken gardens' and an 1810 painting shows young yew hedging around a forecourt (Kent Compendium). Sprivers estate is shown on county maps from 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert; Hasted; Mudge; Greenwood) and the Tithe Map records that George Courthope owned the property in 1840 although a John Duncan was in residence.

In 1861 Sprivers was occupied by George Faithfull, curate of Horsmonden, and his family. The 1st edn OS map shows ornamental gardens, probably laid out by the Courthopes, although the property continued to be tenanted until 1881

when George Courthope's son, also George, and his family were living there (Census data). A clearing in Sprivers Wood is occupied by allotment gardens in 1881 but these are not shown on maps after 1897. In 1898 the property was unoccupied (Kellys) but by 1901 it was tenanted again. The 1908 OS map shows a new walled garden and it is recorded that in the early C20 the family 'planted hedges and built garden walls' to commemorate a win in the Grand National (National Trust).

During World War Two the house was occupied as a military command centre and Sprivers Wood used as an ammunition dump. In 1966, Robert Courthope bequeathed the estate with approximately 44ha of land to the National Trust. Since then the gardens have been administered and largely maintained on the Trust's behalf by a resident tenant. Chilstone, the makers of garden ornaments, used the gardens as a display for its wares for twenty years and the present tenants have been in residence since 1997. The property remains in single, corporate ownership and the gardens are open to the public a few days each year.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING**

Sprivers lies on a gently sloping sandstone ridge enclosed by the orchards, pasture and woodlands of the High Weald's undulating topography. The c.15ha site is about 1km south-west of Horsmonden, 3km north of Lamberhurst and 9.5km east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The site is bounded on its north side by Brenchley Road, to its east by Lamberhurst Road (B2162) and to its south and west by the orchards of Highlands and Flightshot Farms.

### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

The present main approach to Sprivers is off the west side of Lamberhurst Road, at the south-east corner of the site. A consolidated gravel drive lined with C18 sweet chestnut trees runs c.170m in a north-westerly direction before making a right-angled turn due north to continue for a further 170m through its parkland. The drive passes between 1.5m high beech and yew hedges to arrive at a gravelled forecourt (c.40m x 20m) immediately to its west. Separating the hedge and the drive is a narrow area of lawn on which four Wellingtonias survive from a C19 planting. The forecourt opens onto lawns on its south and north sides. The lawn to the north is backed by a 1.5m high yew hedge which forms one side of another yew-hedged lawn with rhododendrons on it, and that to the south by a shallow grassy bank leading up to a c.0.1ha shrub and woodland area (with C18 larches).

From the forecourt entrance the drive continues in a northerly direction for 150m passing between ponds (Horse Pond and the Moat), probably of medieval origin, to a junction of three further secondary drives. These are partly tarmac surfaced and used as forest trails. The north and north-west drives run from entrances 600m apart on Brenchley Road, respectively, for 350m and 650m through Sprivers Wood. The fourth tree-lined drive leads c.250m westwards from Lamberhurst Road through parkland to the junction of the other two secondary drives. All four drives survive from the C18.

## PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Sprivers (listed grade II\*), built in 1756, is a two-storey red-brick house with an attic under a hipped, plain-tiled roof. The building with five bays and three pedimented dormers (listed building description) incorporates an older Elizabethan structure to its north and was described by Pevsner as 'nice but simple'. The west front opens onto an C18 walled courtyard, the west side of which is formed by a range of C18 outbuildings (a former granary, a honey house with apple loft, and a bakehouse/ brewery, listed grade II).

Forty metres to the north of the house is an C18, single-storey, red-brick, stable block with an attic (listed grade II) with a walled courtyard to its west. The building is now used for storage.

## GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The west, south and north fronts of the house overlook small garden enclosures, some parts of which are walled. The form and internal layout of these gardens survives from the mid-C19 (1st edn OS map).

In the southern enclosure, built onto the south front of the house is a wisteria-covered early C20 loggia from which there are views south across a lawn. The loggia replaced a late C19 conservatory (2nd and 3rd OS maps) which is shown in an undated photograph (private collection) with a tennis lawn to its south. From the lawn a broad grass path runs 20m southwards flanked by herbaceous borders and terminated by a 2m high yew hedge with a 'Lutyens' seat below. The west side of the borders is enclosed by a brick wall which also forms the east side of an adjoining fully walled rose garden (c.20m x 40m). A brick path bisects the rose garden which is built on land gently rising to the south and is enclosed at its south end by a yew hedge planted at the foot of the wall. The southern section is laid out as eight rose beds with grassed perimeter paths and borders at the foot of its enclosing walls and the northern section is lawn from which there are views down to the courtyard on the west front of the house.

The west front garden enclosure, to the west again of the walled courtyard, is also walled and laid to grass with borders and is thought that this garden was a formerly a maids' garden (personal communication).

The north front enclosure (c.20m x 20m) occupies the area between the house and the stable block and is laid to lawn with an C18, octagonal, timber-framed game larder (listed grade II) standing 10m north-west of the house.

Immediately west of the former maids' garden and now managed as rough grass is an area (c.70m x 70m) shown on the 1st edn map laid out in a formal arrangement of cross axes and perimeter walks. The outline of the north-south axis is still visible in the grass and is lined by surviving, C19 pear trees. Four, clipped, box balls mark the point where this axis crossed the main east-west axis. The area is enclosed on its south and west boundaries by 2m high clipped hedges, the hedge on the west end curving in at both ends. A row of mature yew trees marks the western boundary with adjacent fields. The northern boundary of this area is also formed by a row of mature yew trees, the latter



running some 70m in a south-easterly direction along the curved edge of a dry, semi-circular pond (0.03ha) lying 20m north-west of the house and shown on the C18 estate map. The straight, northern edge of the former pond is formed by a 40m long brick wall surmounted by a stone balustrade, now possibly part Chilstone (personal communication). From the west end of the balustrade six, shallow, wide, stone steps descend to a walk along its length with views down to the dry pond several metres below. OS maps show that the pond was dry by 1908 and that the steps and balustrade had been built by 1938.

North of the pond is the remains of 'a feature resembling a moat' (scheduled ancient monument description). It is probably of medieval origin and there appears to be an eastern and northern arm as well as parts of the adjoining angles, but no traces of the remaining sections. The moat arms are shown on the C18 estate map and referred to by previous owners of Sprivers as 'The Moat'. Two arms of moat enclose the north-east sides of a wild flower meadow planted in the late C20 on the site of an C18 orchard.

#### PARKLAND

Parkland to the east and north-east of the house was probably laid out on former woodland or heath by the late C18 (Hasted). It is managed as pasture, with mature trees surviving in the east parkland only (since the 1930s in separate ownership). Former parkland to the south-east is now laid out as an orchard. To the north and north-west of the house Sprivers Wood comprises sweet chestnut coppice with oak and beech trees and is managed sustainably by the National Trust. The present woodland trails are the rides and woodland walks laid out from at least the mid-C19.

#### KITCHEN GARDEN

A kitchen garden lies 15m to the south-west of the house and adjoining the west wall of the rose garden below which runs a brick path surviving from the C19 (1st edn OS map). The south end of the garden is bounded by a post-and-wire fence which allows views over the surrounding pasture. The garden is now laid to grass with a C20 greenhouse and cold frames and at 75m and 65m respectively south-west of the house, two, mid-C18, timber-framed and weather-boarded barns (listed grade II).

Orchards appear on maps of Sprivers from the C18, the present kitchen garden being recorded on an C18 estate map as a 'walnut tree orchard'; it remained an orchard until at least 1938. Other orchards to its south, gone by the mid-C19 (1st edn OS map) were recorded as 'the cherry orchard' and 'the apple orchard'. Evidence from the C18 estate map suggests that the garden adjoining the east side of 'walnut tree orchard' (now the lawn to the south of the forecourt) might have been a kitchen garden.

#### **Books and articles**

Richard Gough, *Camden's Britannia-Kent*. 1797 edn edited by G. J. Copely (1789).

Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Horsmonden, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 5* (London, 1798), pp. 311-22.

*Bagshaw's Directory for Horsmonden* (1847, 1901)

*Kelly's Directory for Horsmonden* (1899, 1909, 1913, 1918, 1927, 1934)  
John Newman, *West Kent and the Weald* (Pevsner's Buildings of England series, 1969), p. 334.  
Judith Glover, *Place Names of Kent* (Batsford, 1976), p. 179.

## Maps

*A map of..... Mr Courthope 1705* (private collection)  
*A Survey and map of Sprivers lying ...* undated (private collection) (C18?)  
J. Andrews, W. Dury and W. Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent ...* 1769.  
Edward Hasted map 1778  
William Mudge, *A New and Accurate Survey of Kent* 1801.  
Charles Greenwood, *Map of the County of Kent* 1821.  
Tithe map and apportionment 1840-42. CKS ref CTR912B.

OS maps      1st edn 6" OS map 1862.  
                  1st edn 6" OS map revised 1881  
                  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 1869. Sheet 61/12  
                  2nd edn 25" OS map 1897 Sheet 61/12  
                  3rd edn 25" OS map 1908 Sheet 61/12  
                  Revd edn 25" OS map 1938 Sheet 61/12

Modern Mastermap 1:10,000 2007.  
Map showing listed buildings within Sprivers boundaries

## Illustrations

Print of the layout of the gardens C18 (private collection).  
Postcards of Sprivers House and Avenue 1903.  
C19 photographs (private collection).  
8 colour photographs 1981/2  
Aerial photograph of Sprivers 2003.

## Archival items

Land ownership records (1735). Danny Estate archives. East Sussex Record Office ref. U814/P16 (notes).  
Land purchase records (1748). Courthope Family of Whiligh archives. East Sussex Record Office ref. SAS-CO/1/1309 (notes).  
Family settlement documents of the Partheriche family 1766. Danny Estate archives. East Sussex Record Office ref. DAN/638, 637 (notes).  
John Cole occupancy 1796. Campion family archive. East Sussex Record Office ref. DAN/153/155.  
Correspondence from John Luxford to Curteis family 1809. Curteis family archive. East Sussex Record Office ref. AMSQ.  
Court Baron 1821. CKS ref. U1006M35.  
Census data 1841-1901.  
Sale/ purchase of shares 1910. Chester archives ref. DDB.

Notes for 1981 Compendium.  
Kent Compendium entry 1996.  
English Heritage Listed Buildings entries: undated.  
Statement of Significance of Sprivers. National Trust (private collection)  
Documents relating to Sprivers 1976-present. National Trust file held at Scotney  
Castle.

Research by Barbara Piper  
Description written by Barbara Simms  
Edited by Virginia Hinze  
May 2009

Fig. 1 Boundary map

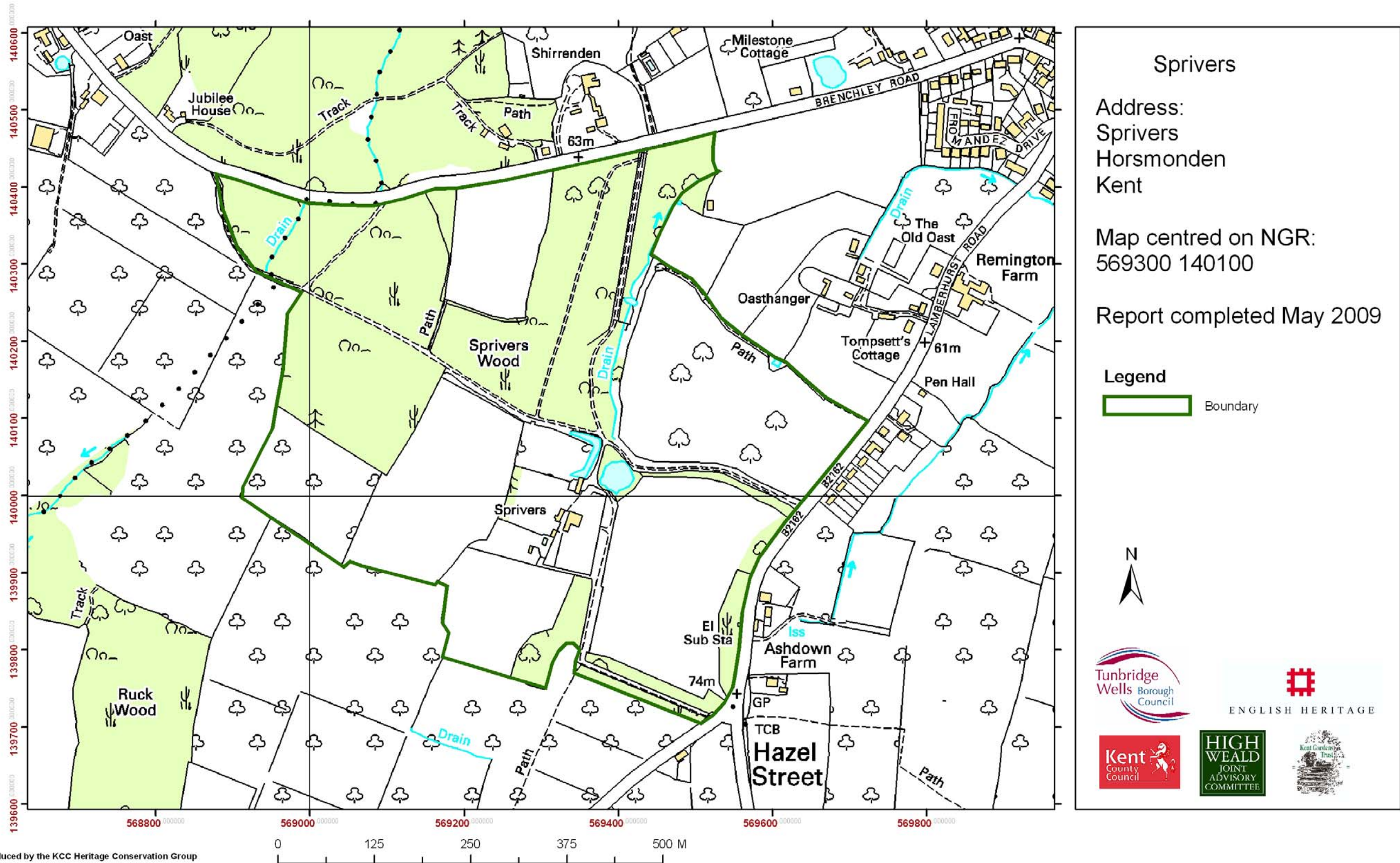


Fig. 2 Key views map

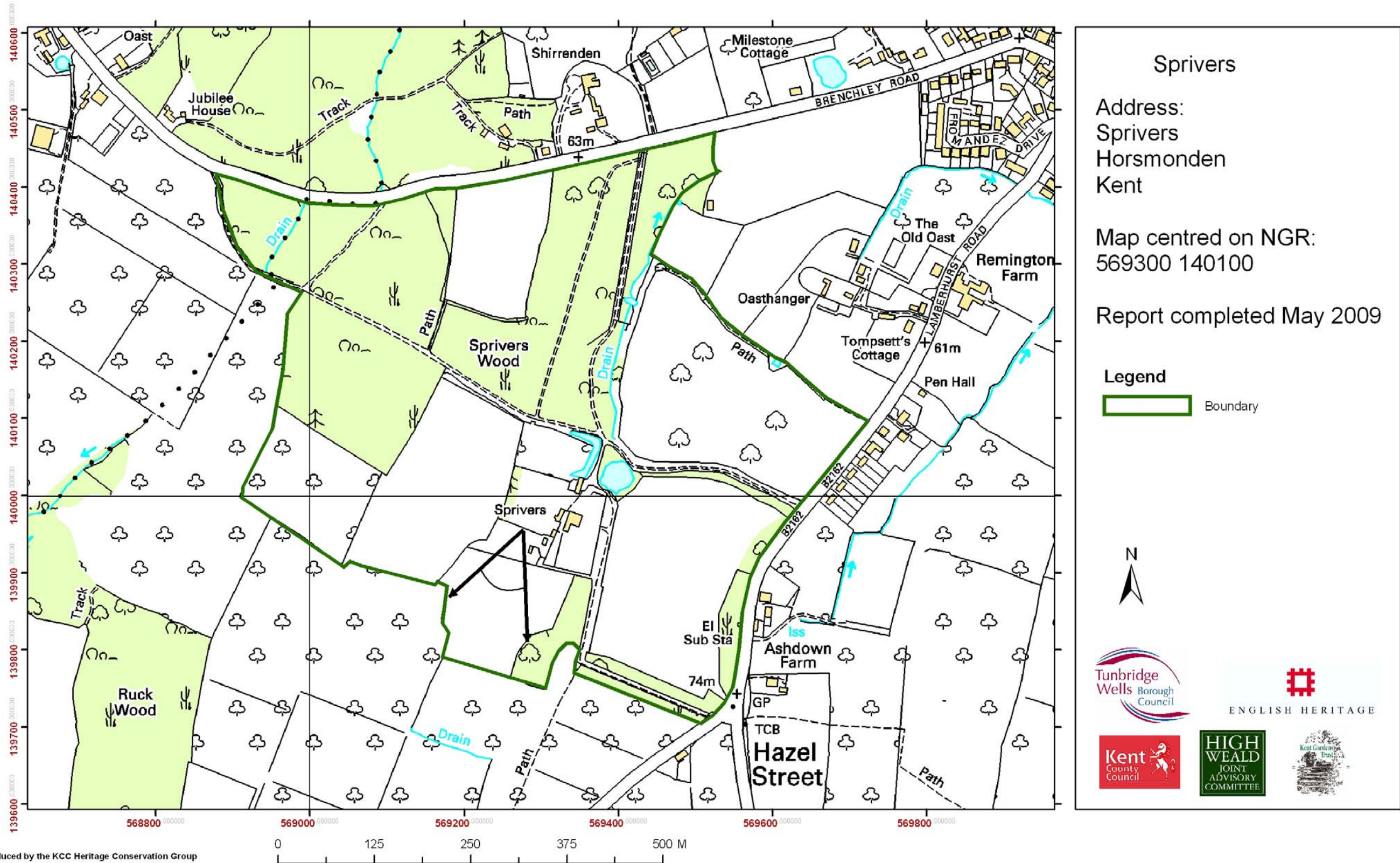
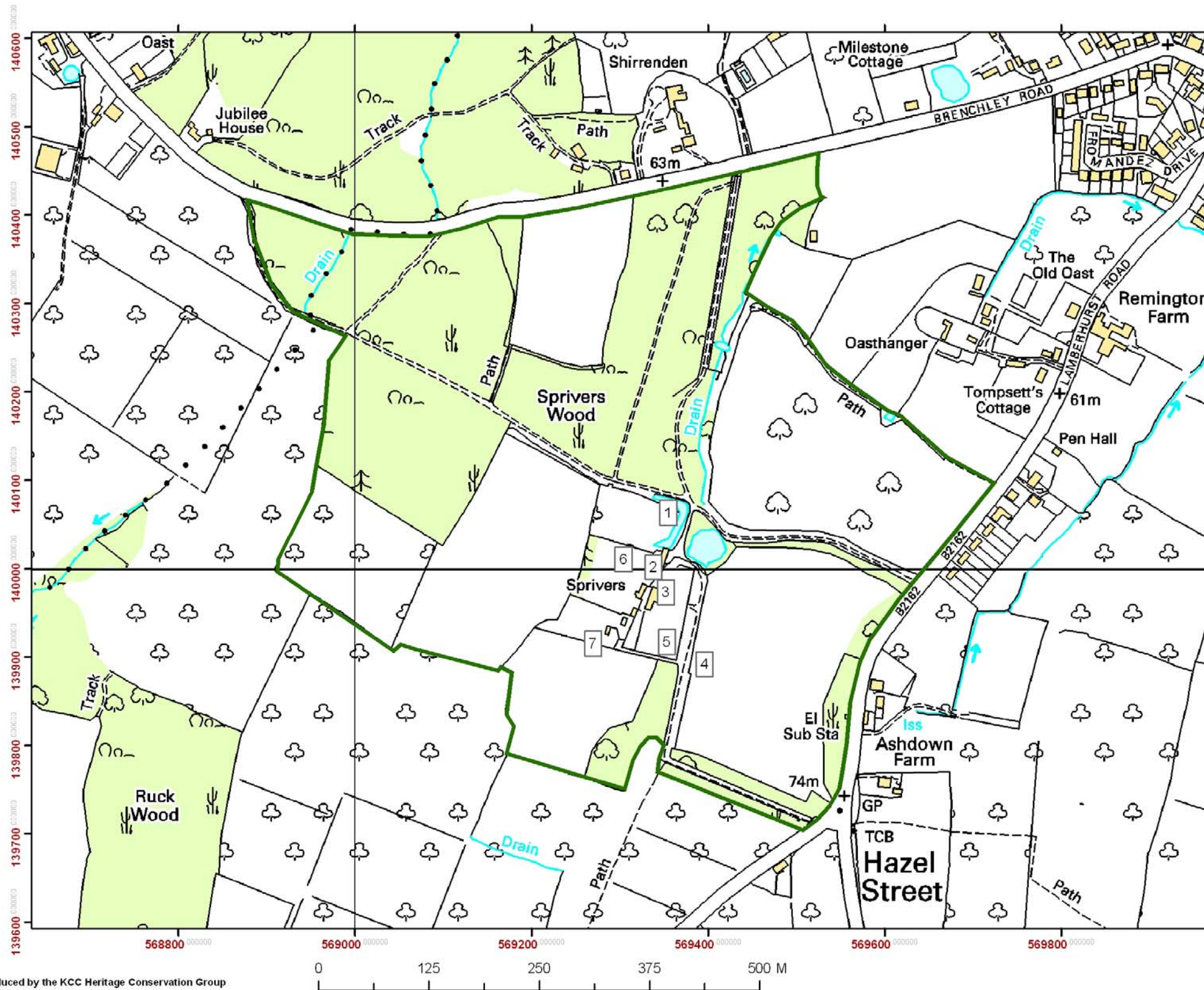


Fig. 3 Key features map



**Sprivers**

Address:  
Sprivers  
Horsmonden  
Kent

Map centred on NGR:  
569300 140100

Report completed May 2009

- Key to features**
1. Moat-like feature
  2. Stable block
  3. Game larder
  4. C19 Wellingtonias
  5. Walled rose garden (former kitchen garden)
  6. Dry pond and balustrade
  7. Kitchen garden on site of former orchards

**Legend**

N

 Boundary

Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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## Fig. 4 Aerial photograph

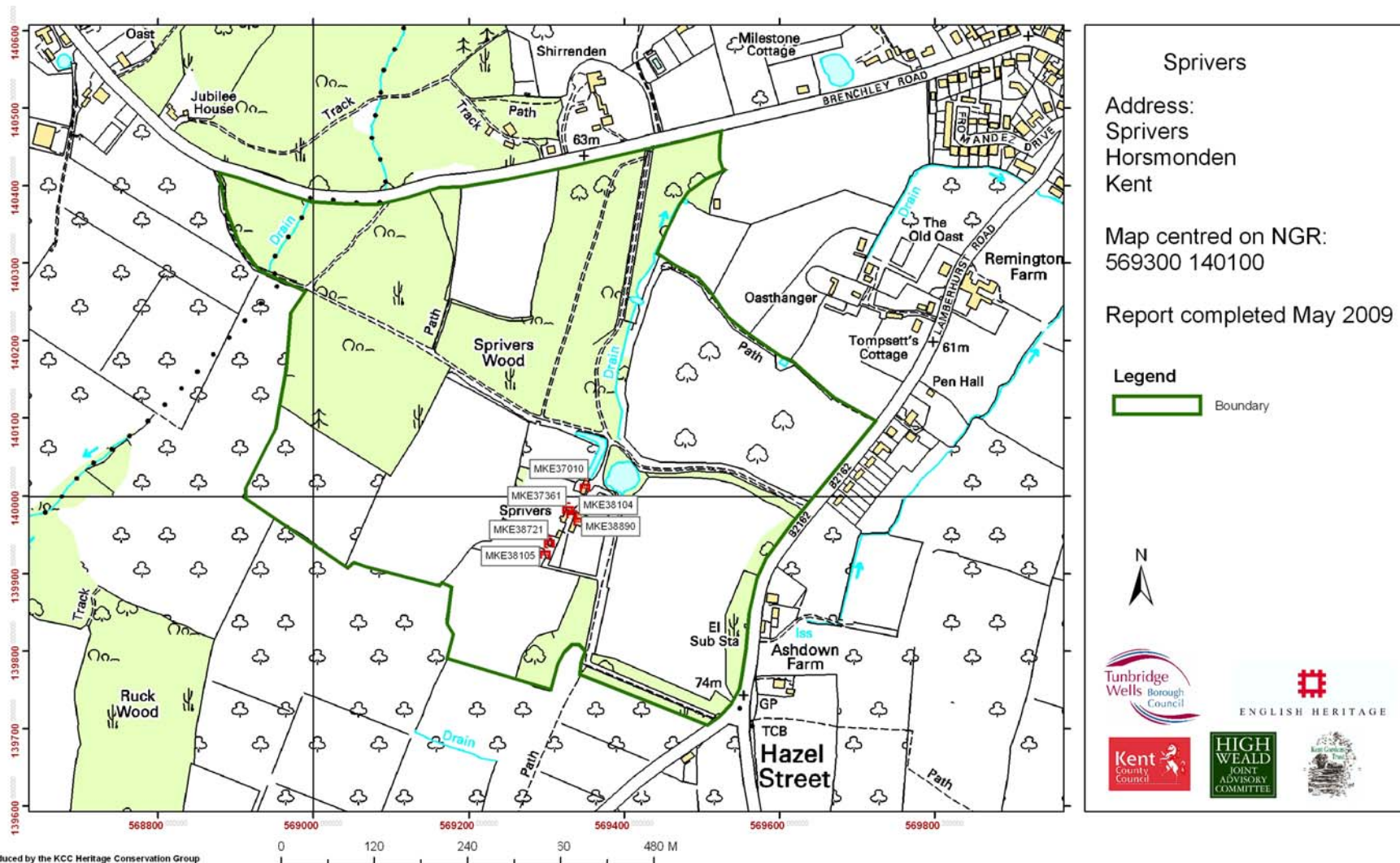


Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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## Fig. 5 Map of listed buildings at Sprivers



Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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### Fig. 6 Listed buildings at Sprivers

#### Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE37010

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 6840-6940  
(west side) 6/65

Stable block and walled courtyard to rear about 50 metres north of Sprivers

Grade II

Stable block, now workshops. Dated 1746 and intended early C19. Red brick and plain tiled roof. One storey and loft on plinth with plat band and corbelled brick eaves cornice to hipped roof with 3 hipped dormers. Boarded loft door to centre left and 2 segmentally headed wooden casements on ground floor and boarded door to centre with segmental fanlight. Dated brick over door with relief inscription: A C 1746, the letters separated by the Courthope fleur-de-lys. Single storey hipped extension to right with 2 boarded carriage doors. Interior structurally unaltered. Walled courtyard attached to rear.

#### Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE37361

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 63 NE  
(west side) 3/64

Game Larder about 10 metres north of Sprivers

Grade II

Game Larder. Circa 1750. Timber framed on red brick base with plain tiled roof. Octagonal single storeyed building with veranda on all sides on octagonal posts and with octagonal louvre. Inner wall of red brick with continuous wooden casements to upper section and with door of 4 panels. Interior: preserves the original layout of shelving and game hooks of varying sizes.

#### Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE38104

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 63 NE  
(west side) 3/63

Outbuildings, walls & rear courtyard north of Sprivers

Grade II

Outbuildings walls and courtyard. Circa 1750 and earlier. Red brick walls and storehouse with timber framed and weather boarded block; plain tiled roofs. Brick building, used as granary, honey house with apple loft over and bakehouse/brewery. Single storey on plinth with brick corbelled eaves cornice to hipped roof with stacks to rear left and to rear right. Three segmentally headed wooden casements, the centre with lattice work shutters, and 4 boarded doors. Hipped rear wing, the base in earlier English bond brickwork. Interior: end right section still with large sink and pump for brewing or washing purposes. Attached to left and enclosing a small garden area are red and blue chequered brick walls about 7 feet high in garden wall bond with boarded gateways linking to weather boarded building of 1 storey with half-hipped roof and stack to rear in red brick section. Two boarded doors, and simple window openings on returns. Interior: brick paviour floor; end bays lofted over; clasped purlin roof. Red brick wall, about 7 feet

high extending to left (south) about 30 metres parallel to that extending southwards from the main house. Courtyard between House and outbuildings paved with brick.

**Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE38105**

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 63 0li  
(west side) 3/67

Barn about 75 metres south west of Sprivers

Grade II

Barn. Mid C18. Timber framed and weather boarded, with some cortical boarding, on red brick base with plain tiled roof. Single storey with roof hipped to left and half-hipped to right. Paired boarded doors to centre right. Interior: Clasped purlin roof.

**Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE38721**

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 63 NE  
(west side) 3/66

Barn about 65 metres south west of Sprivers

Grade II

Barn. Mid C18. Timber framed and weather boarded on red brick base with plain tiled roof. Single storey with half-hipped roof. Window opening to right and boarded door to right. Interior: divided into two sections; clasped purlin roof.

**Kent Historic Environment Record reference: MKE38890**

HORSMONDEN                      LAMBERHURST ROAD TQ 63 NE  
(west side) 3/62

Sprivers and wall attached 20-10-54

Grade II\*

House. C15, extended C16 and altered and extended 1756 for Alexander Courthope. Timber framed core clad with red brick and tile hung to rear and extended with red brick. Plain tiled roofs. Older wing of hall house origin. Main block of 2 storeys and attic on plinth with moulded brick plat band and eaves cornice to hipped roof with stacks to rear left and right and with 3 pedimented dormers, that to centre with segmental pediment. Regular fenestration of 5 glazing bar sashes on first floor and 4 on ground floor with central doubled doors of 4 raised and fielded panels with lion head door knockers in panelled surround with keyed architrave and pediment on Doric pilasters and with flight of 3 steps. Left return with glazing bar sash on first floor and C19 canted bay on ground floor. Right return wing of 2 storeys and attic at lower level with identical moulded details as front block, 6 pedimented dormers and with semi-circular headed glazing bar sash stair window with keyed surround, the imposts and keystone inscribed: AC 17 56 with the fleur-de-lys emblem of the Courthopes. The rear wing, incorporating the original timber framed building, clad at same time as front wing with red brick on both floors to front elevation, tile hung on first floor to rear elevation, with moulded plinth and plat bands, half hipped roof, half hipped dormers and stacks ranged left to right. Irregular wooden casements on both elevations and boarded and panelled doors irregularly placed. Attached and extending from south end of rear wing a red brick wall, in part in English bond, about 7 feet in height with buttresses and coping and gateway openings. Interior: rear wing with full frame visible with arched braces and close studded walls, extended C16 with queen strut roofed block, this section with chamfered and stopped cross beamed ceilings on massive posts and with strapwork enriched Bethersden marble fireplaces on both floors; imported C17 wainscoting in upper room. C18 interiors

include small entrance hall with very good quality rococo plaster cartouches with the Arms and badges of the Courthope and Lloyd families and with enriched modillion cornice to ceiling. All the principal rooms and corridors on both floors have similar cornices and also dado rails with simple fielded and beaded panelling, the left hand drawing room with egg and tongue surrounds to panelling. Moulded and lugged wooden fireplaces with rocaille scrolled friezes (the scrolls emanating from eagle heads). Stair hall with dog leg stair and half landing with ramped and moulded handrail with renewed " Chinese Chippendale " balustrade, dado and bead moulded panelling and with grooved and gadrooned cornice to coved ceiling with guilloched surround. Segmentally headed corridor openings and panelled doors with original door furniture throughout. Secondary stairs with original chinoiserie balustrade and ramped and moulded hand rail to upper flight and newel stair to attic with tenoned purlin roof. Kitchen semi-basement with very large fireplace with moulded cornice mantelpiece, fitted cupboards and ramped and moulded rail to stair. A manorial site passing from the Sprivers family to the Bathursts and by 1704 to the Courthope family (see Hasted,vol.V, 316-317).