

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



Marle Place, Brenchley



December 2008

Marle Place

Brenchley, Kent

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With many thanks to the owners for sharing their archives and for allowing access to the garden.

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

MARLE PLACE

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

BRENCHLEY

TQ 6814 3978

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

A formal compartmentalised garden laid out from the mid-C19 around an early C17 timber-framed house, with garden features from the early C20, including terraced gardens and a rock garden.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Until the late C12, Brenchley (at that time known variously as Braencesli, Braencheslie, Brancheslega, Branchesle or Btaencesle) was within the parish of Eldyrige (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 (*Millennium Record*). It became the property of William Lambard in 1578.

From the C14, the Brenchley area had flourished with trades associated with cloth making and the iron industry, many of the 'mostly old-fashioned timbered buildings' resulting from the wealth generated (Hasted). At Marle Place, although the origins and names of the early owners are unrecorded, the core of the house is timber-framed and characteristic of the Wealden area in the early C17 (listed building description). It is shown on Hasted's map of 1778. Census data records a farming family, Anne Fuggle and her children, as resident in 1841 and the Tithe Map 1842-44 documents the property (Marl Place) as a house with farm buildings and surrounding land. By 1851 Thomas Mainwaring, his wife and two young children were living there (Census) and the holding had expanded from 220 to 600 acres (89 to 243ha)

In the late 1850s, the house was enlarged, as shown in a C19 drawing by William Twopenny. In the 1860s, a gazebo was built south-east of the house (listed building description) and, later in the century, a conservatory added on the west side. The work in progress was documented by the local Brenchley photographer, William Hodges. By 1897, the house and garden had been divided from the farm buildings by a brick wall (2nd edn OS map). A Mr Langer bought and remodelled the house in the early C20, removing the farm buildings on the south and immediately west of the house. He also relocated the glass houses from south of the house to a new site 100m further west.

The house had a number of owners in the period leading up to and during the Second World War, but was bought by a Mr Victor Canning in 1946. His

daughter inherited the property in 1965. The house, outbuildings and gardens remain in single, private ownership. Some of the C19 and early C20 garden layouts remain intact, but now (2008) with modern planting.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Marle Place stands on sloping ground with views to the south, south-west and south-east to the surrounding ancient woodland, hop gardens and orchards of the undulating High Weald. Brenchley is approximately 2km to the north, Lamberhurst 3km south and Royal Tunbridge Wells 8km to the west. The c.10h site is approximately 1.3km north-west of the junction between Marle Place Road and the Lamberhurst to Claygate road (B2100). The main Tunbridge Wells-Hastings road (A21) is about 2km to the south. The site is bordered to the south and west by woodland (Cottage Wood), to the east and north-east by Marle Place Road, and on the northern boundary by an access track to Honeycomb Cottage, immediately west of the property boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The entrance gateway to Marle Place late (C19 listed grade II) stands on the south side of Marle Place Road. It is set within a late C19 brick garden wall with buttresses (listed grade II), which extends along the roadside with evergreen trees (hollies and conifers) on its garden side. The lych-style gateway has a 'gabled roof on brick piers, the roof supported on curved timber braces' (listed building description). One-metre high double wooden gates with wrought-iron fixings are hung on the brick piers of the gateway. They open into a gravelled courtyard on the north entrance front of the house (3rd edn OS map).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Marle Place (listed grade II), built in the early C17, is a two-storey timber-framed house with an attic. It has a gabled porch (dated 1619), gabled bays, brick stacks and a tiled roof (listed building description). Internal refurbishments were made in the C18 and extensive internal and external modelling was carried out in the late C19 and early C20 centuries in the Vernacular Revival style. There is a late C19 conservatory with a crested iron ridge on the west side of the house.

Twenty metres to the north-west of the house is a C19 two-storey brick coach house. It has a tiled upper storey and roof and an outside staircase and has been converted for use as an art gallery with garages below. Set back on the building's west end is a single-storey brick stable block now used for storage. Fifty metres to the south-west of the stable block there are two C19 outbuildings, now converted as workshops.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The formal terraced gardens are to the immediate south-east of the house, surrounded by southward sloping lawns. The four main terraces are each approximately 60m wide. From the top to the bottom terrace, they now (2008) contain a lawn with shrub borders, a croquet lawn, a swimming pool and a scented garden. The terraces are mostly enclosed by yew hedges, each with an arch through to adjoining garden areas. Central flights of steps, partially lined

with pleached limes, descend from each terrace to the next providing a long view down approximately 40 steps to the scented garden. The terraces, supported by brick retaining walls or grass slopes, were constructed in the interwar period on the site of C19 orchards and hop gardens (4th edn OS map).

The entrance to the top terrace is from the courtyard on the main north front via a gravelled path along the east side of the house. The top terrace is laid out in a roughly triangular-shaped lawn with shrub borders, bounded on its north side by the roadside garden wall and on the south and east by a 1.5m yew hedge. Set in the south yew hedge approximately 50m east of the house is a late C19 single-storey, circular brick gazebo (listed grade II). It has a conical tiled roof and stained glass windows. In the late C20, its entrance was changed from north facing to south facing and is now from the croquet lawn terrace below.

Below the croquet lawn terrace is the swimming pool terrace, the pool with a tiled surround and set in a lawn with an old quince tree, pampas grass and evergreens. Below this terrace are two shallow grassed terraces planted with pleached limes along their lengths. Nine brick steps descend to a similar narrow terrace, a low brick wall on its south side forming the north enclosure of the scented garden, with borders of plants such as roses, lavender and herbs. This was developed by the current owners from a sunken rose garden with lily pool (photographs in private collection), the lily pool (10m x 4m) with semi-circular ends and stone surround remaining. On the west side of the pool a gateway flanked by two 1.5m brick piers has been created in an early C20 wall to give access to the south garden front, with views north across the lawn to the house.

Immediately east of the top terrace and running south-east, is a double herbaceous border planted in the mid-1990s. It is enclosed by the roadside boundary wall on the north and a beech hedge on the south and is terminated by a modern C20 bronze cast of a terracotta warrior on a stone plinth. East of the statue the brick walls curve south along the property boundary alongside an avenue of mature conifers, which leads south to a woodland walk. South of the statue a yew arch opens into a quarter-circle-shaped spring garden where a mature spruce tree is underplanted with bulbs.

On the south garden front of the house there is a raised terrace of exposed aggregate concrete slabs with wisteria-covered pergolas framing the east and west ends. The terrace projects southwards at its east end enclosed by a further pergola. Views south-east from the terrace are across a lawn to two mature cedars, a weeping lime and conifers, with woodland beyond. The terrace extends northwards between the west side of the house and a mature horse chestnut to a gravel pathway fronting the converted coach house and stable block. To the east of the coach house there is an exit to an access road running east-west along the property boundary from Marle Place Road to Honeycomb Cottage.

To the west of the stable block and north of the gravel path is an early C20 rock garden (approximately 10m x 20m). It has a central cascade (2008 not working) designed to flow north-south into a rill and a well, the well covered by a lych-gate-style roof. The layout of the rock garden is intact, but apart from a few small trees (an *Acer*, a *Magnolia* and a yew), the plants have been replaced. To

the south of the gravel path an ornamental rectangular pool with fountain forms the central feature of a lawn bounded by beech and evergreen hedges. A track runs north along the west side of the rock garden to join the access road to Marle Place Road.

Approximately 300m south of the house, is a 80m semi-circular 2m high double beech hedge, planted by the current owners in the 1970s. Until the late C19, when Marl Place was a working farm, this land was pasture (1st edn OS map), but by 1895 it is shown planted with an orchard or hops (2nd edn OS map). It was laid out as a garden in the 1920s (4th edn OS map). Since the late C20, a number of new garden areas, including silver birch and lime avenues, an arboretum, a bog garden and an ornamental lake, have been created south of the hedge. From the west end of the hedge, the young silver birch avenue runs south for approximately 100m. A temple, partly constructed from a dismantled Victorian orangery at Capel Manor, Horsmonden, forms a focal point at the southern end. Also from the west end of the beech hedge, a lime avenue extends 120m south-west to a Chilstone urn. To the west of the avenue is a C21 children's play area, incorporating a mid-C20 concrete-lined sandpit and paddling pool. A few metres west of the end of the lime avenue, approximately 200m south-west of the house, is a pond into which a stream, its edges planted as a bog garden, runs southwards. A few metres before the stream enters the pond, a red wooden bridge crosses it, leading to parkland.

PARKLAND

Parkland to the south-west of the mansion is laid out as an arboretum. The area of approximately 150m x 150m has been planted since 1990 with 7000 European tree species on the site of an earlier hop garden. At the south-west corner of the arboretum, 400m from the house, is a lake, enlarged from from an existing pond (possibly in a C19 marl pit). To the south of the arboretum, the park is bounded by Cottage Wood, through which a stream runs in an east-west direction. Boardwalk crossings provide access to woodland walks.

KITCHEN GARDEN

Approximately 200m to the west of the house there is a late C20 yew-hedged parterre-style kitchen garden (approximately 20m x 80m) with two C19 greenhouses. The layout comprises a series of small parterres with ornamental planting enclosed by low box edging, or timber-edged raised beds for vegetables, with gravel paths between them. An orchard and a nut plat have been planted by the current owners south of the yew hedge. These two areas are on the site of a mid-C20 century yew-enclosed kitchen garden extending south for 180m (1965 photograph). Located at the north end of the kitchen garden, the two surviving glasshouses (one now used as an orchid house) have fish scale glass roofs and finials (shown on the 4th edn OS map). A cold frame (labelled Tuckers of Tottenham) is sited alongside.

REFERENCES

Books and articles

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

Leslie Elgar Pike, *Brenchley and Matfield, Kent. The Official Guide* (1966).
John Newman, *West Kent and the Weald* (Pevsner's Buildings of England series, 1969), p. 181.
Elisabeth Hall, *Garden of England. Evolution of Historic Gardens in Kent* (Kent County Council, 2005), pp. 8, 9, 45.
'Greener Fingers: gardening with nature in mind', *High Weald Anvil* (2006).
Denise Barr, 'The Shaping of our Parish', *Brenchley and Matfield Revisited* (Brenchley and Matfield Local History Society, 2008).

Maps

Edward Hasted, Map of Kent 1778.

Tithe map (Brenchley Parish) 1842-44. CKS ref CTR4SA+B

OS 25" to 1mile: 1st edition published 1870 (Sheets 61/11)
 2nd edition published 1895 (Sheets 61/11)
 3rd edition published 1906 (Sheets 61/11)
 Revised edition published 1938 (Sheets 61/11)

Topographic survey, 2001. Scale 1:500. Monson Surveyors Drawing No 2182A/01 (private collection)

Modern Mastermap 1:2,500

Map showing listed buildings within Marle Place boundaries

Diagram of Marle Place garden, 2008

Illustrations

William Hodges, Photographs of Marle Place. Late C19 (private collection)

William Twopenny, Drawing of Marle Place. Late C19 (private collection)

Colour aerial photographs 1964, 1980, 1995, 2005 (private collection)

Aerial photograph of Marle Place 2003

Archival Items

Census data 1841-1901.

Marle Place publicity leaflet 2009

English Heritage Listed Buildings entries (extracts?) undated.

Research by Barbara Piper

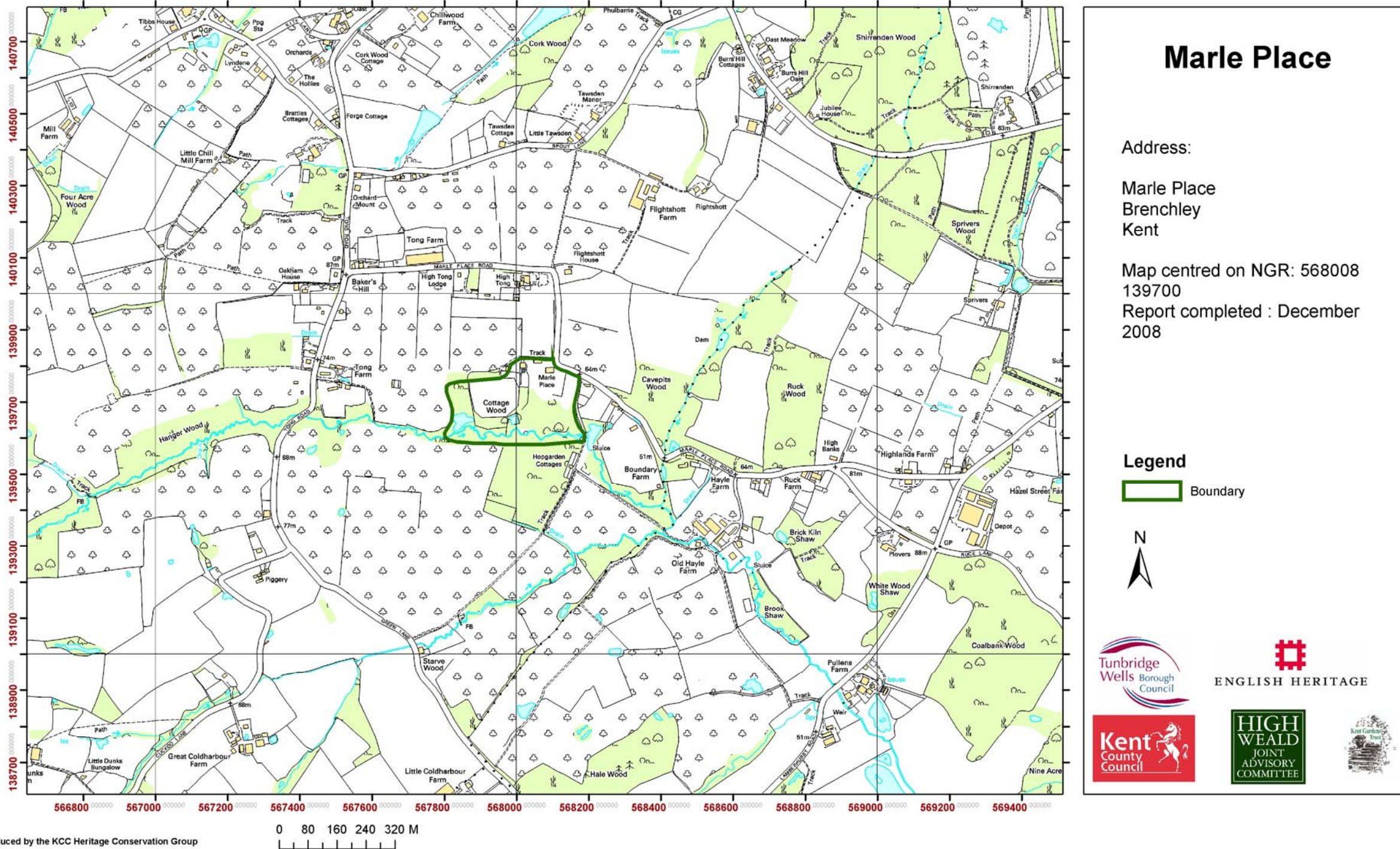
Description written by Barbara Simms

Edited by Virginia Hinze

December 2008

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Fig. 1 Boundary map



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Fig. 2 Key views map

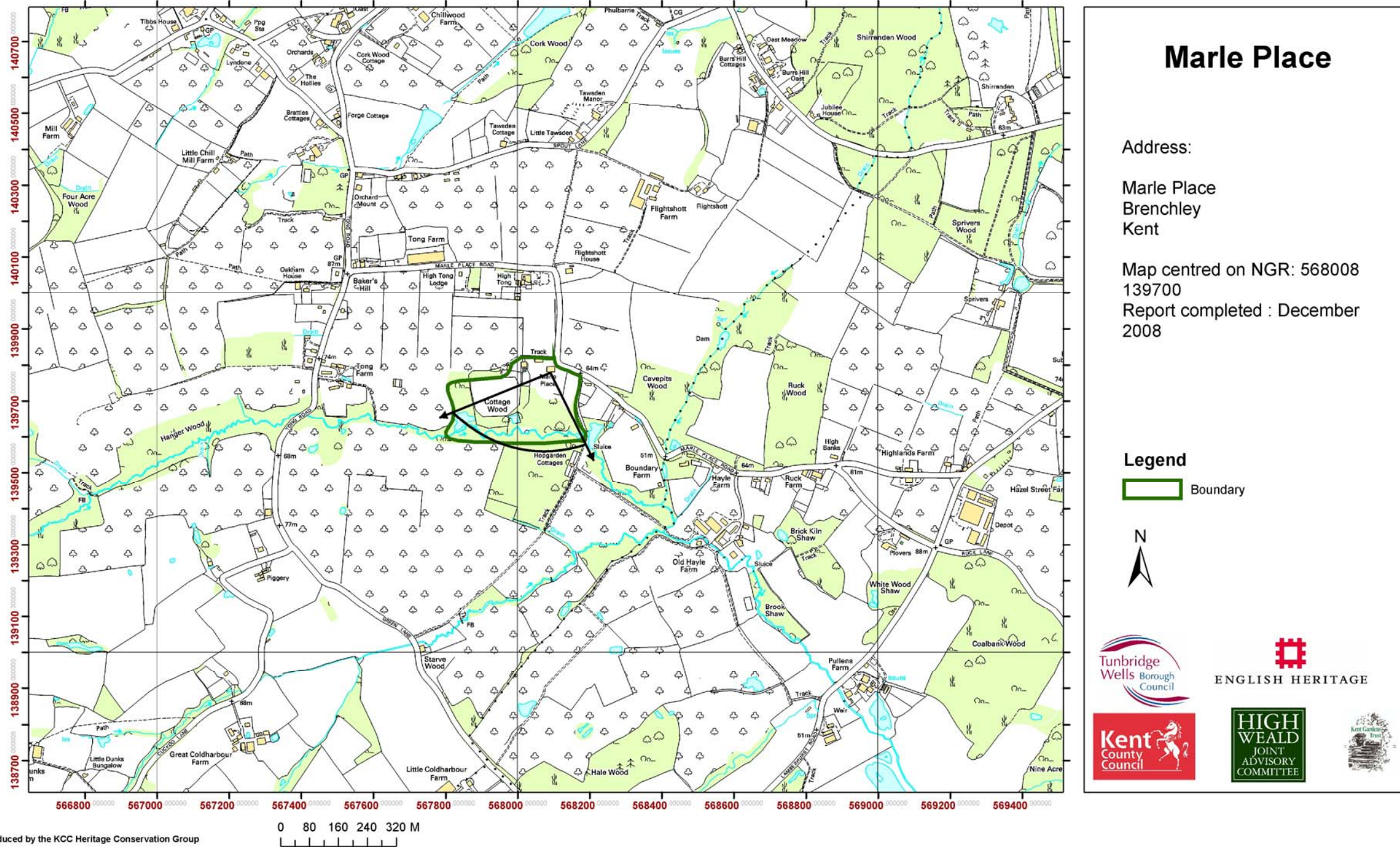
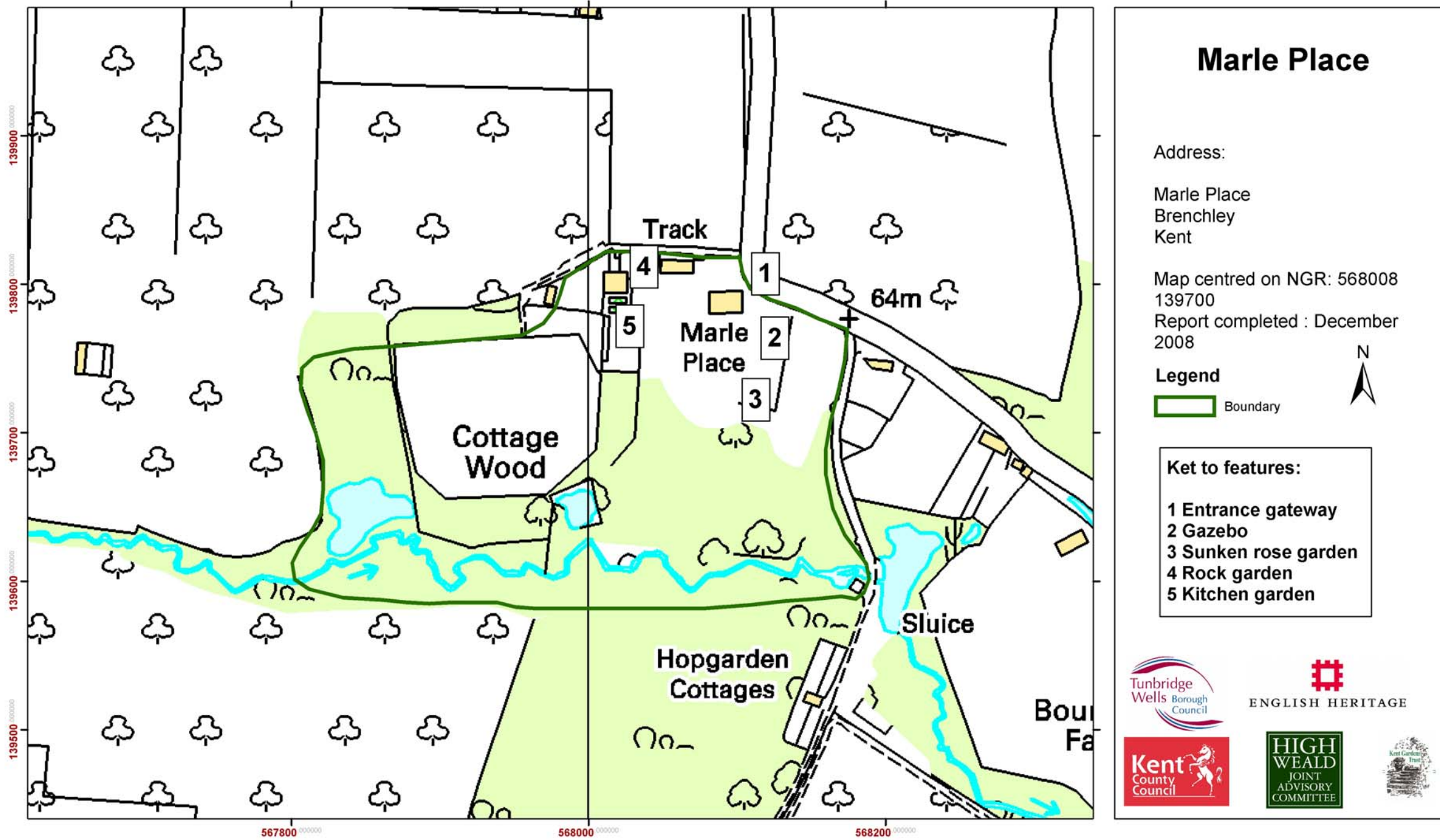


Fig. 3 Key features map



Marle Place

Address:

Marle Place
Brenchley
Kent

Map centred on NGR: 568008
139700
Report completed : December
2008

Legend

 Boundary



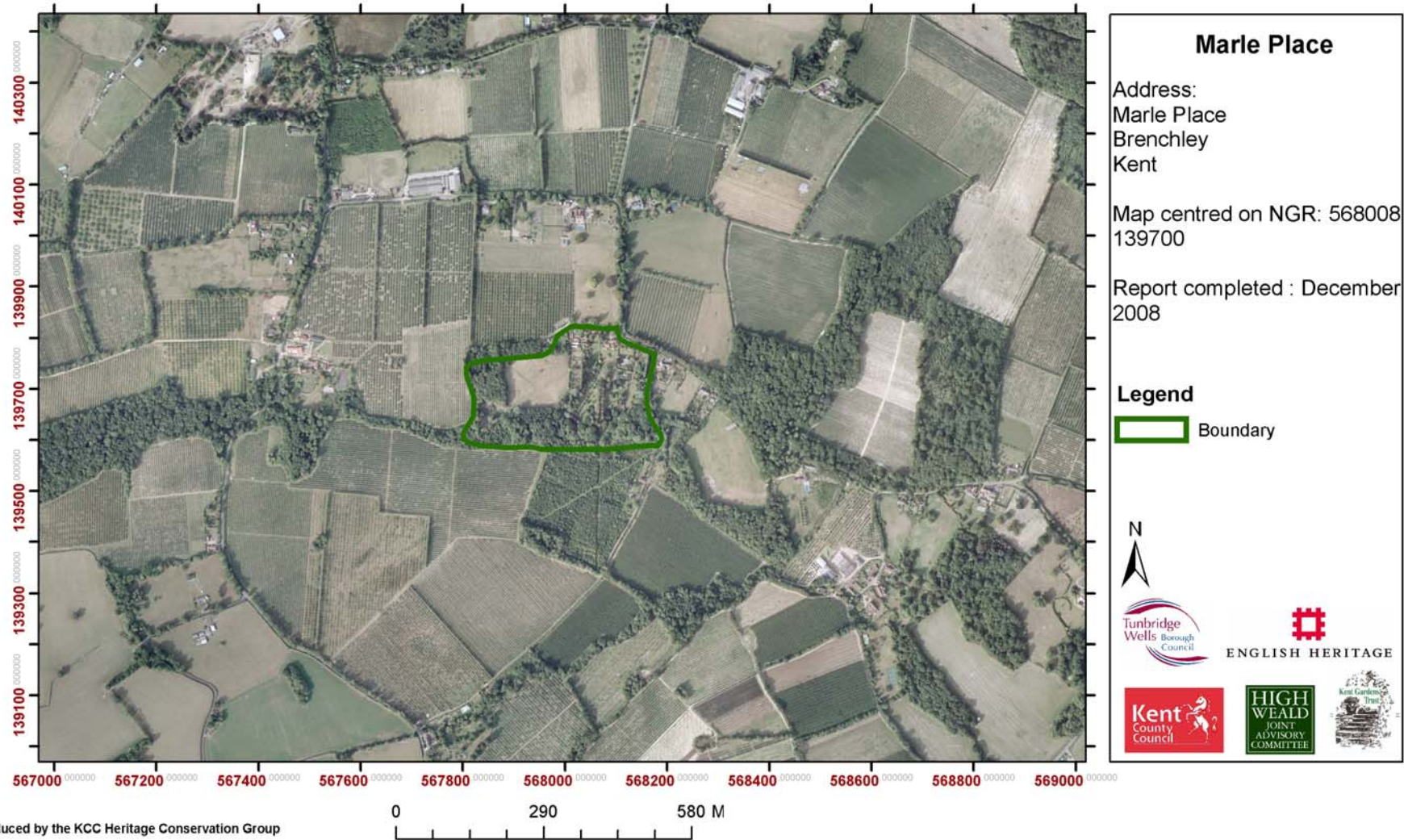
Ket to features:

- 1 Entrance gateway
- 2 Gazebo
- 3 Sunken rose garden
- 4 Rock garden
- 5 Kitchen garden



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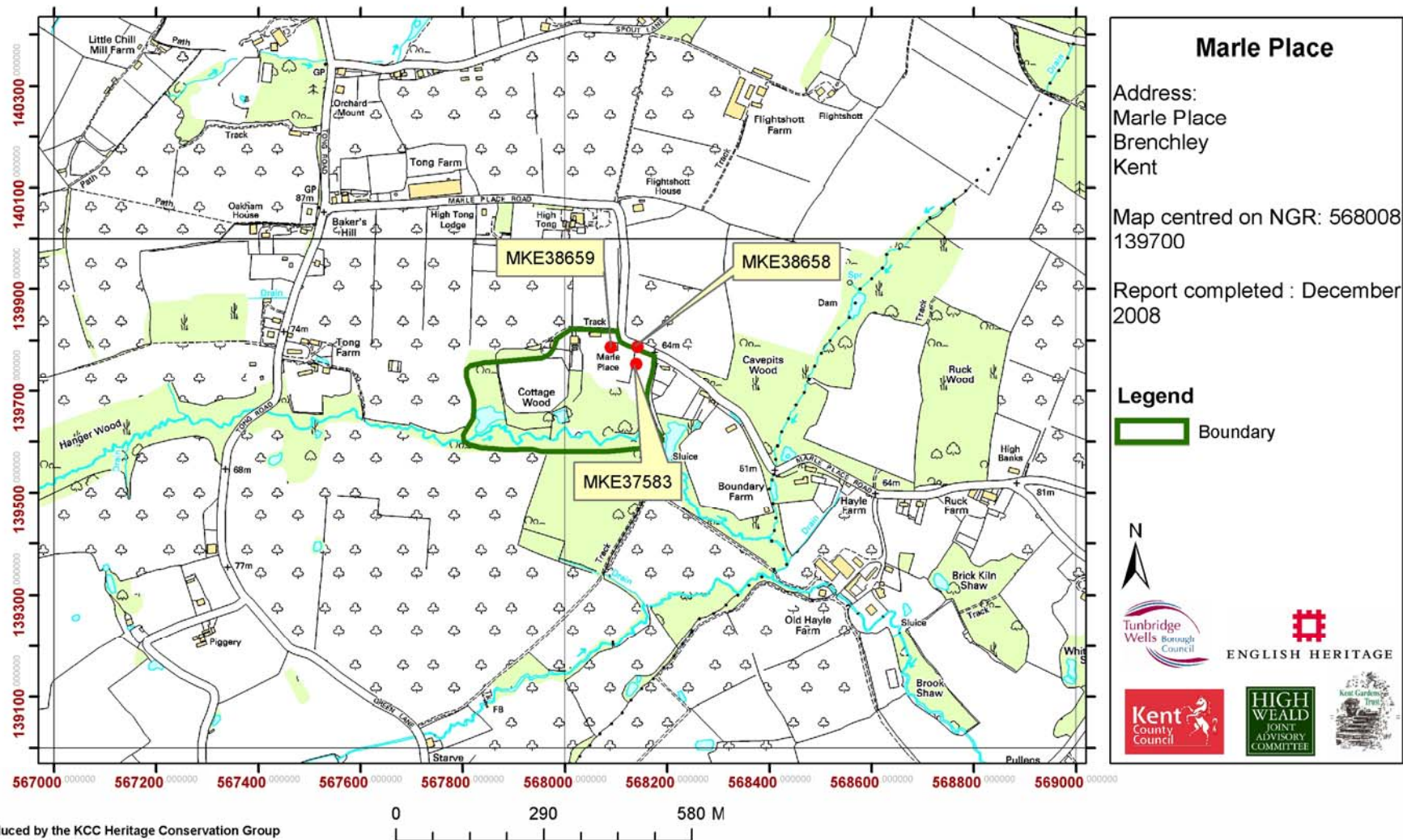
Fig. 4 Aerial photograph



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

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Fig. 5 Map of listed buildings



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Fig. 6 Listed buildings at Marle Place (from the Kent Historic Environment Record)

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37583

TQ 63 NE BRENCHLEY MARLE PLACE ROAD
10/154 Gazebo in the garden south east
of Marle Place

GV II

Gazebo. Probably 1860s. Brick; peg-tile roof.

Plan: Sited in the terraced garden of Marle Place. Circular on plan. The position of the doors has been altered in the late C20.

Exterior: Single storey. The gazebo has a continuous band of windows below the conical roof, which has a ball finial.

The windows have diamond panes in the centre and margin glazing and are filled with stained glass. 2-leaf, curved, half-glazed doors with margin glazing and stained glass.

Interior: Curved bench fixed to the walls. Floor of patterned tiles.

A particularly attractive Victorian gazebo. Group value with Marle Place.

Listing NGR: TQ6809039787

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE38658

TQ 63 NE BRENCHLEY MARLE ROAD
10/155 Garden walls to the garden south and east of
Marle Place including gateway to the courtyard GV II

Garden walls and gateway. Late C19. Brick garden walls; gateway brick with a tiled roof. The garden walls extend parallel to the road and are buttressed. The gateway has a gabled roof on brick piers, the roof supported on curved timber braces.

Group value with Marle Place.

Listing NGR: TQ6809039787

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE38659

TQ 63 NE BRENCHLEY MARLE PLACE ROAD
10/153 Marle Place including courtyard wall and gateway
wall to the north west GV II

House. Early C17 (porch dated 1619) with some C18 internal refurbishment.

C19 alterations (date of 1858 on rear addition); late C19 conservatory addition.

Framed construction, tile-hung in the C19 with bands of scalloped tiles; C19 tiled roof with bands of scalloped tiles; brick stacks. Early C20 gateway.

Plan: The house faces north. The early arrangement was a compact 2 room lobby entrance plan to the main block, the principal rooms heated by back-to-back fireplaces in an axial stack with a rear centre stair projection. The position of the original services is not clear, one of the front rooms may have served as a kitchen or the services may have been sited to the rear where considerable remodelling has taken place. The stair projection was extended in 1858, and this may be the date of a more extensive phase of remodelling although other alterations appear to be late C19/early C20, including a cross passage broken through the axial stack on the ground floor, extensive window repair and the Vernacular Revival style cladding of the frame. Late C19 photographs by the local Brenchley photographer, William Hodges, show the conservatory under construction.

Exterior: 2 storeys, and attic. Symmetrical 3-bay front, 2 gables to the front with a projecting gabled 2-storey porch in the centre, the gables with deep eaves, moulded bargeboards, pendants and finials. Fine chimneyshaft to the axial stack with 4 octagonal clustered shafts with moulded star-shaped cornices. Fine gabled porch, with an early C17 ovolo-moulded outer doorframe, the returns of the porch on the ground floor each incorporating a balustrade of 6 turned balusters. Late C19/early C20 C17 style 6-panel porch door with elaborately decorated strap hinges. The first floor of the porch has a coved oriel with a 5-light ovolo-moulded transomed window, the transom with a cornice. The gabled bays to left and right each have a 2-storey canted bay with a hipped roof with one first and one ground floor ovolo-moulded mullion and transomed window, 4-lights to the centre, one to each return; 3-light mullioned attic windows with square leaded panes. The left (east) return has 2 gables to the east. The ground floor canted bays are late C19/early C20, the left hand bay with moulded mullioned windows, the right hand bay with French windows. First and attic floor 3- and 4-light transomed windows with square leaded panes. The rear elevation is irregular, with 2 rear wings, one on either side of the stair projection which has been extended in 1858. A late C19 conservatory with a crested iron ridge adjoins the main block at the right (west) end. Courtyard wall to the north west with an early C20 gateway included in the listing.

Interior: Interesting features from a number of different periods. The cross passage broken through the axial stack has a circa early C20 coved ceiling. The right hand ground floor room was refurbished in the early C18 with wall panelling, a bolection-moulded chimney-piece with integral cupboards, a cornice and decorated plaster ceiling frieze. Fine C17 dog-leg stair with turned balusters, an open string, moulded handrail and peaked finials. The stair shows evidence of alteration with flights down to the cellar and to an open fronted closet off the half landing. The first floor rooms preserve original C17 high-set ovolo-moulded 3-light windows, blocked externally. The first floor left hand room has a moulded ceiling beam and exposed joists; the right hand room has plain ceiling carpentry probably designed to take a plaster ceiling. Late C19/early C20 panelling survives on both ground and first floors. Some of the jowled wall posts of the original frame are visible on the first floor. Roof: Clapsed purlin roof over the main range and stair projection. Marle Place is a high quality early C17 house with interesting later features.

A reproduction of a late C19 drawing of the house by William Twopeny exists in the National Monument Record.

Listing NGR: TQ6809039787