Kent Historic Towns Survey

ASHFORD

Archaeological Assessment Document

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KENT HISTORIC TOWNS' SURVEY

ASHFORD - KENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Until the nineteenth century, Ashford was a small market town based on a settlement of pre-Conquest origin, situated at a ford on the river Great Stour where the Roman road from Canterbury (Margary route 130) ran through the North Downs gap to Tenterden and was crossed by the main route from Maidstone to Hythe. It is 25km south-west of Canterbury and 28km south-east of Maidstone.

This study aims to provide an evaluation of the archaeological and historical remains of the settlement as a basis for informing decision-making in the planning process where archaeological deposits may be affected by development proposals. The Kent County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was checked for information relating to the study area (see Archaeological Data). Ashford is fairly typical of many small towns in England in that there has, as yet, been no significant archaeological research either within the town, or in the area of study. Thus most of this study is based on documentary evidence, secondary published sources and an analysis of the settlement's topography.

1.2 Situation

Bounded to the east and south by the river Great Stour, the oldest part of the town stands at 50m OD on a small hill of river gravel. The hill falls gently away from the town except on the northern side (Figures 1 and 2). The natural bedrock is the Sandgate beds of the lower greensand ridge, and Wealden clay lies immediately to the south.

1.3 Study area

The general area for study lies between TR0041 and TR0344; an area for closer study focuses on the High Street, between TR005425 and TR015430.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

There are virtually no archaeological data from Ashford town itself; most of the following are from its environs.

2.1 Neolithic

TR 04 SW 14 - A polished stone axe was found in 1937 on the surface of a ploughed field, at *c*. TR 02834168.

TR 04 SW 18 - A flint arrowhead was found *c.* 1946 on the surface of a ploughed field, at *c* TR 01894118.

TR 04 SW 20 - A neolithic polished greenstone axe was found in the 1930s *c*. 50m south of Willesborough church, at *c*. TR 02864148.

2.2 Iron Age

TR 04 SW 70 - Excavations in 1990 at TR 02704100 revealed the southern half of a late iron age enclosure, consisting of at least two large ditches containing pottery from the third to first century BC. The site had been destroyed on the north by a nineteenth century railway cutting (Willson 1990).

TR 04 SW 71 - Excavations in 1990 at *c*. TR 03154055 revealed at least 10 shallow ditches and gullies containing pottery and domestic rubbish, relating to a small Belgic/early Romano-British farmstead of *c*. AD 25-75 (Willson 1990).

2.3 Romano-British

TR 04 SW 72 - Excavations in 1990 at TR 02504072 revealed at least 15 ditches, several small pits, post-holes and two cremation burials belonging to a Romano-British farmstead of first to second century AD date (Willson 1990).

TR 04 SW 105 - Excavations at Sevington in 1993, *c*. TR 03004075, located a series of probable ditches, possibly associated with the iron age sites listed above. Another feature may have been a seventeenth century man-made stream to the medieval moat (Russell 1993.

TR 04 SW 117 - A Romano-British roadside settlement has recently been found at Westhawk Farm, at TR 00154015 where the Canterbury to Tenterden Roman road (Margary 130) crosses the Maidstone to Lympne Roman road (Margary 1973, route 131).

2.4 Medieval

TR 04 SW 2 - In 1990 a measured survey at Boy's Hall moated site, Sevington, *c.* TR 03004073, produced evidence for a medieval moated residence. Although no traces of buildings were observed, floor and roof tile and mortar were noted. The site, which had been converted into a garden with terraced walks and water features in the late sixteenth-or seventeenth century, was abandoned as a residence in the seventeenth century. It is a Scheduled Monument, SAM Kent 146 (RCHME 1993).

TR 04 SW 29 - A medieval moated farmstead of thirteenth to fifteenth century date was excavated in 1980 at Parsonage Barn Farm, TR 01444332. The island, surrounded by a wet moat with a causewayed entrance on the W side, contained traces of two possible buildings and remains of some form of post-medieval industrial process. The site may be that of the fourteenth century manor house of Juliana de Leybourne.

TR 04 SW 132 - The town's medieval lock-up was discovered in 1981, next to cellars of No.1 Middle Row, at TR 01504280 (Briscall 1984, 57).

TR 04 SW 133 - Excavations in Sevington in 1990 located a small medieval site, at TR 02624076 to TR 02704085, comprising ditches and pits with potsherds from *c*. AD 1250-1350.

3 HISTORICAL RECORDS

3.1 Early charters

Ashford may be referred to in charters of AD 835 and 858. It is mentioned in a grant of land near Ashford in AD 940, and in a will of 1046 (Sawyer, 1968, charter no. 183).

3.2 Domesday Book

The Domesday Survey records four manors in the vicinity of modern Ashford: *Essetesford* (Ashford), *Estefort* (South Ashford), *Essella* (East Stour) and *Rapentone* (Repton). *Essetesford*, which seems to have grown into Ashford as we know it today, had two villagers, 15 smallholders, three slaves, a church, a priest, two mills. Its value in 1086 was 100*s*.

3.3 Origin of place name

The place name of *Essetesford* has been translated both as a 'collection of ash trees' and as 'a corner (bend of the Great Stour) where ash trees are found'. It can be traced to its present day form thus:

1086 *Essetesford* ------ *c*. 1100 *Aescedesford*
1211 *Esseteford* ----- 1262 *Essheteforde*
1610 Ashford

4 HISTORICAL DATA BY PERIOD

4.1 Pre-urban evidence

4.1.1 The Romano-British period

Recent research has located a possible small town at Westhawk Farm, Kingsnorth, where the Roman road from Canterbury was crossed by that from Maidstone to Hythe, 2.7km S of modern Ashford. The limited evidence recovered so far suggests that the settlement had been abandoned by the late fourth century and that there was no occupation there during the Anglo-Saxon period. This small Romano-British town may have been the forerunner of medieval and modern Ashford.

4.1.2 Saxon period

There is no definite evidence for a settlement at Ashford in the Saxon period, but Domesday Book records a church at *Essetesford* in 1086. The church may have served as a focus for settlement before the Norman Conquest and its position where land and water routes converged may have encouraged the growth of a trading exchange point, which subsequently developed into a market.

4.2 Urban evidence

4.2.1 The medieval period

The foundation during the late Saxon period of a church at the crossing of land and water routes perhaps reflects a settlement at Ashford, which by 1086 comprised a priest, *c.* 50 inhabitants and possibly an incipient market. This developed into a small market town in the Middle Ages.

4.2.1.1 Markets and fairs

The market at Ashford was held in a spindle-shaped widening of the High Street north of the church, a common arrangement in medieval towns. Originally occupied by temporary stalls, there were permanent shops in the market place by the end of the fifteenth century, particularly on the south side where they may have encroached on the churchyard, and in an island or block of buildings in the centre of the High Street, known as Middle Row. This included a market-hall or court-hall incorporating the town cage (or lock-up), shops on the ground floor and a meeting hall above.

In 1243, Henry III granted Simon de Cryol the right to hold a weekly Saturday market in Ashford, and an annual fair from 28th to 30th August. In 1348 Juliana de Leybourne was allowed a Sunday market and a fair; and in 1466 the rights to the August fair were granted to the dean and canons of the chapel of St Stephen, Westminster.

4.2.1.2 The manor

Before the Norman Conquest, the manor of Ashford, including most of Ashford (*Essetesford*) and South Ashford (*Estefort*), was divided between the King, the abbey of St Augustine in Canterbury, and Earl Godwin. It then passed into the hands of various local families, until the death of Juliana de Leybourne in 1368, when it reverted to the Crown. In 1382 Richard II granted the manor to the dean and canons of the chapel of St Stephen at Westminster Palace who held it until 1547.

Little is known of the manor house or its position, but the site of The Saracen's Head Inn, which belonged to the lord of the manor until the early nineteenth century, appears to have been the lodgings of the steward of the medieval manor. Records mention a manor house in 1368, perhaps on the site of present day Parsonage Barn.

4.2.1.3 The church

The church of St Mary the Virgin is mentioned in Domesday Book and the roughly contemporary Domesday Monachorum, where it is described as being subordinate to the church at Wye. Its advowson was given to the priory of Monks Horton in the mid-twelfth century, and in 1374/5 it and its vicarage were granted to Leeds priory. At the Dissolution they passed to the Crown and were granted to the dean and chapter of Rochester in 1540/1.

Nothing remains of the early church, although blocks of Caen stone in the north-east and south-east quoins of the nave could date from the Norman period. Otherwise, a blocked fourteenth century window in the W wall of the south transept is the earliest feature to have survived. The chancel and transepts were enlarged over the next hundred years, and a central tower (*c.* 37m high and topped with four pinnacles) and nave were rebuilt in ragstone *c.*1475-1483. The church then became one of the largest in East Kent, able to accommodate up to 1700 people.

4.2.1.4 The college

Permission to build a college of priests in the south-east corner of the churchyard was granted to Sir John Fogge in 1464, but legal procedures for its foundation were not completed before the death of Sir John's sponsor Edward IV in 1483. Consequently, the college was never officially established and it was dissolved *c.* 1503.

The college comprised three ranges of timber-framed buildings around a small courtyard, with a porter's lodge and a gateway into the churchyard on the fourth side. Most of the north wing was demolished in the eighteenth century to make way for new parish rooms, leaving only the present L-shaped building, now used as the vicarage.

4.2.1.5 Industry and trade

Watermills

The mill recorded in Domesday Book was probably situated at East Hill, where there was a mill in 1382 and 1516, when it is recorded as the 'lord's mill' with a stream running beside it.

4.2.1.6 The town cage

The town's medieval lock-up was discovered in 1981, next to cellars of No.1 Middle Row, High Street. Its ragstone walls survive under the pavement of the house, enclosing an area *c.* 2.5 x 1.5m and *c.* 2m high.

4.2.2 The post-medieval period

4.2.2.1 Markets and fairs

In 1659 a market was still held in Ashford every Saturday, and there were two fairs, on 6th May and 29th August. In 1671 a new market was granted to Viscount Strangford, Lord of the Manor, to be held 'within or next the town of Ashford' on every second Tuesday throughout the year. From 1784 the first and third Tuesdays of each month were given over to a livestock market in Lower High Street and by the end of the eighteenth century a livestock market, a butter market, a butchery, a fish market and a corn market were all held along the High Street in market stalls (known as lord's shops),. By then there were three annual fairs for general merchandise, held on 17th May, 9th September and 24th October, and a wool fair on 2nd August.

In *c.*1602 a new market and court-hall was built in the area occupied by the corn and fish markets It consisted of a room above and an arcaded open space on the ground floor, similar to the market hall at Faversham. In the 1830s the Corn Exchange was transferred from the Royal Oak Inn to the Old Assembly Rooms in Kings Parade, and in 1861 a new Corn Exchange was opened in Elwick Road opposite the new cattle market which had been built on the edge of town in 1856. By 1865 the livestock market, run by the Ashford Cattle Market Company Ltd, was held weekly and it soon became one of the largest in the south of England.

4.2.2.2 The manor

In 1549 the manor of Ashford was sold to Sir Anthony Aucher of Ottenden, and it remained in the family until 1765. The Jemmett family took it over in 1805 and held it until 1951. Until the beginning of the eighteenth century the manor owned much of the town, including parkland, shops, and houses. The Saracen's Head Inn was probably administrative centre of the manor, for it contained lodgings for the steward in the Middle Ages and later. Since its demolition at the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been no manorial presence in the town.

4.2.2.3 The church

In 1776 the parish church was described as 'a large edifice with an ancient tower', and it was then much as it had been in the fifteenth century, the only changes being in the provision of bells, which had been increased to eight in number in 1762. The church underwent some alterations in the nineteenth century, with the aisles being widened and a north port added in 1827. The nave was lengthened westwards by one bay in 1860. In essence, the church still retains its medieval form.

4.2.2.4 Other religious organisations

Ashford became a centre of non-conformity in the seventeenth century, when several chapels were built. A Baptist chapel was founded in 1653 (replaced by a building in Station Road in 1881) and in 1662 a Congregational chapel was established (its new church being built in Tufton Street in 1865). The Methodists met in the Assembly Rooms in the early years of the nineteenth century and they then built a chapel in Hempsted Street in 1843. The Roman Catholic church of St Theresa of Avila opened in New Street in 1865 and other Anglican churches and non-conformist chapels followed in and around the town as the nineteenth century progressed.

4.2.2.5 The grammar school

Sir Norton Knatchbull founded Ashford Grammar School in 1635. The school remained on the same site until 1874 when the building was sold to raise money for a new school at Willesborough, which opened in 1881. Knatchbull's building still stands facing the W side of the churchyard, and is now the town museum.

4.2.2.6 Industry and Trade

Ashford developed little in the way of industry until the coming of the railway in 1842. Before then agriculture was the mainstay of Ashford's economy and even after the development of the industrial railway works, Ashford remained the most important market centre in its region. In the second half of the nineteenth century Ashford cattle market was one of the largest and most important in the south of England; wool fleeces were collected and auctioned in the town, and hops were grown on an increasingly large scale, with more than two thousand hop pickers coming down by train every harvest time.

Agriculturally associated trades such as milling, tanning, blacksmithing, carpentry and saddlery were practised, bricks and tiles were produced and some linen was woven. The iron foundry established in St John's Lane in 1773, which moved to land next to the railway in 1922, originally produced mainly agricultural implements. The Ashford Original Brewery and The Lion Brewery (both founded by 1850) used locally produced grain and hops.

Virtually the only non-agricultural activity before the railway's arrival was the quarrying of ragstone, mainly for local use but with some export to other places in Kent and London.

Mills

The mill on East Hill recorded in Domesday Book, later known as Provender Mill; was expanded with a seven-storey tower block in 1901. The mill was badly damaged by fire in 1974, but the tower still survives as a landmark. A smock windmill for grinding corn was built *c.*1820 in Regent's Place, *c.* 400m W of the parish church. It was sold in 1872, dismantled and re-erected at Baddlesmere, near Faversham. In 1890 a new steam-powered flourmill was built in Victoria Road. It was one of the largest flourmills in Kent until it was demolished after a fire in 1983.

Inns

The post and coach services led to there being 46 guest beds and stabling for 136 horses in Ashford's inns in 1686, and there were *c.* 20 inns in the town centre by the eighteenth century. The only surviving coaching inn is The George in the upper part of the High Street, first mentioned in 1553. Others which have been demolished included The Saracen's Head on the probable site of the manor house, The Royal Oak and The Crown in the lower High Street, The White Hart in the upper High Street; and The Red Lion in North Street.

Carriers and stage coaches

Ashford was designated a post town in 1675, and mail was carried to Maidstone and Canterbury throughout the next two centuries. Roads improved after the introduction of the turnpikes 1762-1795, but even then the maintenance of Ashford bridge continued to cause problems. The bridge had been rebuilt in 1638, but the twelve complaints registered between 1709 and 1795 suggest that it was little improvement on its precursor. Nevertheless, by 1830 Ashford was the centre of coaching routes to Hythe, Maidstone and Canterbury. After the

railway came in 1842 a network of horse-drawn coaches and carts linked the villages to their nearest railway station.

Public Utilities
One of the first improvements in Ashford was the paving of the streets between 1780 and 1800. They were lit by oil lamps after 1824, and then by gas when the gasworks opened in Marsh Street (Station Road) in 1833. The town's water was first supplied through wells and the town pump in the lower High Street, but in 1853 a waterworks was built at Kennington and a reservoir holding 280,000 gallons was provided in 1898. A sewage works built at Bybrook in 1883 stopped the dumping of raw sewage into the river Great. Electricity was not generally available until 1926.

4.2.2.7 The railway
The South Eastern Railway line from London to Dover, via Ashford was opened in 1842, and the Ashford to Canterbury line was opened three years later.

In 1847 the engineering workshops of the South Eastern Railway opened in south Ashford. Alfred Town, an estate of 72 workmen's cottages, was built to house the employees. Soon renamed New Town Estate, it was provided with a general store, public baths, a school, a small reading room and library, a church and a Mechanics' Institute (but no public house until The Locomotive was built in 1866). This was one of the earliest examples of industrial planning in England, comparable with Bourneville in Birmingham and the railway towns of Crewe and Swindon. By 1851 the workshops were supporting almost 3,000 people, including wives and children of the workmen

The Ashford, Rye and Hastings line was built in 1850, and in the same year carriage and wagon departments were established at the workshops. By 1865 the volume of goods and passengers had increased so much that Ashford railway station had to be reconstructed. Ashford West goods station opened in 1884 but was closed by 1889. The engineering workshops were enlarged in 1894 and 1900.

In 1912 New Town Estate was expanded to 272 houses and a girls' school was built. When the Southern Railway Company was formed by amalgamation in 1922 the engineering works at Ashford were retained.

4.2.3 The modern town
The Borough of Ashford, created in 1974, covers 580 km^2 and incorporates the town of Tenterden and more than 40 villages. Ashford's centre still retains a scatter of surviving older buildings and is still a market centre, but the town has undergone major changes since its designation as Kent's Growth Town. The M20 motorway and the Channel rail link make Ashford a centre of modern communications.

Although there was little housing development away from the town centre until the mid-nineteenth century, there was then a huge expansion in the population, a marked increase in trade and widespread domestic and industrial building. The effects of this dramatic growth can be seen by comparing early maps (Figures 3-5) with the 1896 OS map (Figure 6), compiled *c.* 50 years after the coming of the railway.

4.2.4 Population

In 1086 Ashford had only *c.* 50 inhabitants; even by the 1550s and 1560s there were no more than *c.* 700 people in the town. The hearth tax of 1664 indicates a population of *c.* 1,100 and in 1676 there were *c.* 1,500. The first census in 1801 records 2,151, a gradual increase over little more than a century and reflecting immigration from the countryside. Ashford began to expand rapidly in the mid nineteenth century. By 1851 there were 5,007 inhabitants; by 1901 there were 12,808, by 1931 there were 22,099 and in 1991 there were 43,348.

5 URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

The following summary of Ashford's urban characteristics has been divided into medieval and post-medieval periods (i.e. pre- and post-dating *c.* 1540). For the post-medieval period the focus has been on the principal features. The Ordnance Surveyors' field drawing of 1800 is taken as the basis for the historic town plan. This has been chosen because it reflects the town in its pre-industrial and pre-railway phase, that is, the period before nineteenth and twentieth century development radically changed or obliterated the medieval or post-medieval urban layout.

5.1 Medieval plan components and urban features (Figures 8 and 9)*:*

Ashford appears to have grown up during the late Saxon period near a ford across the river Great Stour and *c.* 2.7km north of a junction of former Roman roads, where there had been a small Romano-British town.

The church and churchyard (PC1) were founded west of the ford by at least the early eleventh century, and probably attracted a market (PC2) in what was to become the High Street. The churchyard was encroached upon by a group of tenements (PC4) and other groups of tenement plots (PC5, 8, 9 and 10) developed around the market place, which was itself encroached upon by Middle Row (PC3) by the end of the Middle Ages. Further tenement plots (PC6 and 7) developed to the east and west of North Street, leading off the market place and at the east (PC12) and west ends (PC13 and 14) of the High Street. At the end of the fifteenth century The College (PC11) was established at the south-east corner of the churchyard.

The early plan of Ashford seems relatively simple, comprising the principle elements of church, High Street market, and tenement plots, perhaps including a manor house (or at least a manorial steward's lodgings) in PC5. The chronological framework for its development is, however, less clear.

PC1 The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin and its surrounding churchyard.

a) (MUF1) The parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, mainly fifteenth and nineteenth century date.

PC2 The Market Place.

PC3 Middle Row.

a) (MFU2) 4 Middle Row. Site of the market hall, erected *c.*1512.

b) (MUF3) 1 Middle Row. The late medieval town cage.

c) (MUF4) Site of the town well.

PC4 Group of tenement plots fronting south side of Middle Row and encroaching on north side of churchyard.

a) (MUF5) 51-55 High Street. Row of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century buildings, now shops (DoE 1976, 28-29).

b) (MUF6) Rear of 75 High Street. A fifteenth century house, thought to have been owned by Sir John Fogge of Repton Manor before 1490, now The Chilli Bite (DoE 1976, 31).

PC5 Group of tenement plots fronting north-west side of market.

a) (MUF7) Site of the Manor House or lodgings for the manorial steward, later The Saracen's Head Inn. Now Boots the Chemist.

b) (MUF8) The George Hotel, 68 High Street. The oldest surviving public house and coaching inn in Ashford, mentioned in a will of 1553. Now The Duty Free public house (DoE 1976, 34).

PC6 Group of tenement plots facing west side of North Street.

a) (MUF9) 7 North Street. A sixteenth century building with date-stone 1671, said to have been a blacksmith's. Now Cargills Optometrist

PC7 Group of tenement plots facing east side of North Street.

PC8 Group of tenement plots facing north-east side of market.

PC9 Group of tenement plots facing south-east side of market.

PC10 Group of tenement plots facing south-west side of market.

PC11 Site of College, south-east of churchyard.

a) (MUF 10) The College, Church Yard. Now two dwellings and the vicarage (DoE 1976, 17).

PC12 Group of tenement plots south of East Hill and east of Station Road

PC13 Group of tenement plots east of Forge Lane, west of Drum Lane and south of the High Street.

PC14 Group of tenement plots east of Forge Lane and north of the High Street

5.2 Post-medieval plan components and urban features (Figure10)

Ashford town centre basically retained its medieval plan and function as a market until the middle of the nineteenth century when the arrival of the railway and associated engineering workshops led to large-scale expansion. No post-medieval plan components map has therefore been produced. Much of the built environment of Ashford is post-medieval, with most buildings in the town centre being no earlier than eighteenth century, and those in the suburban areas no earlier than nineteenth century.

(PMUF1) The parish church of St Mary the Virgin, mainly fifteenth and nineteenth century in date.

(PMUF2) Middle Row, site of market hall and court hall. Built in 1602 to replace earlier market-hall *c.* 50m to east.

(PMUF3) Site of the Six Bells Inn.

(PMUF4) Site of The Saracen's Head Inn, now Boots the Chemist.

(PMUF5) Site of the Baptist chapel (Plan of Ashford, 1853).

(PMUF6) Site of the Pyd Bull Inn.

(PMUF7) The Grammar School, on the west side of the churchyard, founded in 1635, now town museum.

(PMUF8) Site of Wesleyan Methodist chapel (OS 25', 1871).

(PMUF9) Remains of the medieval college, now two dwellings and the vicarage.

(PMUF10) Congregational chapel, Tufton Street, built 1865 to replace earlier chapel founded 1662.

(PMUF 11) Site of the Police Station, built 1864 (OS 25', 1871).

(PMUF12) The Corn Exchange, Elwick Road. Built in 1861 to replace the informal exchange held in the Old Assembly Rooms in King's Parade (OS 25', 1871).

(PMUF13) The Cattle Market and present market place. Built in 1856 to replace the former livestock market in the Market Place (OS 25', 1871).

(PMUF14) Site of Tannery Lane Almshouses, built 1853-4 (OS 25', 1871).

(PMUF15) Site of the old Ashford smock windmill in Regent's Place, built *c.*1820-1850, dismantled 1871 (OS 25', 1871).

6 THE POTENTIAL OF ASHFORD

6.1 Archaeological resource overview

No archaeological investigations have so far been undertaken within the town or its surroundings. Thus little is known about the extent of surviving archaeological sub-surface

deposits. There is a good possibility that some sub-surface archaeological deposits may have survived in those areas that have not been cellared, but a cellar survey of the town (Figure 11), has shown that much of the sub-surface archaeological deposit underlying the buildings along the street frontages has been destroyed through modern development and earlier housing. Cellars have also been inserted beneath many of the surviving late-medieval buildings. Trenches dug for public utilities in recent years have also destroyed much of the archaeology that may have underlain the streets and street frontages, but some small pockets of archaeological evidence still survives, for example remains of the Town Cage were discovered adjacent to the cellars of No.1 Middle Row in 1984. If other surviving areas of intact medieval and earlier stratigraphy can be located they could help to establish the evolution and development of medieval and post-medieval Ashford

6.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this document is to develop policy for Ashford's urban archaeological deposits, particularly the historic urban core. None of the medieval and post-medieval components of the town have been archaeologically investigated and there is virtually no archaeological evidence for the economic base of the medieval town.

6.3 Key areas for research

6.3.1 The origins of Ashford

The following need to be investigated

The nature, date and extent of the earliest settlement remains at Ashford
The earliest remains which can be classed as urban or proto-urban
The relationship of the settlement to the Roman small town at Westhawk Farm and early road systems
Evidence for a ford over the river Great Stour
Evidence for an early bridge replacing the ford
The origin and development of the market
The origins, location and development of the church

6.3.2 Ashford in the medieval period

The following need to be investigated

The development of the market and fairs
The development of the church and churchyard
The nature and date of encroachments on to the churchyard
The nature and date of encroachments on to the market
The economic base of the medieval town, including industry
The origins, location and development of the manor house and its relationship to the medieval town
The origins, location, development and decline of the College
The form and character of individual properties
The development of the early High Street and Middle Row and the date of its development into the commercial centre

6.3.3 Ashford in the post-medieval period

The following need to be investigated

The pattern of settlement and the relationship of individual plots to the settlement framework
The development and nature of occupation within the urban core

The form and character of individual properties
The economic base of the post-medieval town including its trading and industrial contacts with its hinterland
Its influence on surrounding settlements
The origin and development of suburbs

6.3.4 General questions

The evidence of artefactual remains in interpreting Ashford's pre-urban and urban role
The palaeo-environmental history of the town

The discovery and study of both structures and artefacts would illuminate these topics. Small-scale archaeological sampling in individual properties in Ashford could provide answers to specific questions. Consideration should be given, however, to large-scale excavation over a number of adjacent properties, which would provide a wider picture, if desk-top assessment and field evaluation demonstrate the case. The position and importance of Ashford in the hierarchy of Kent towns can be solved only through excavation, field survey and consultation of historical documentation.

7. REFERENCES

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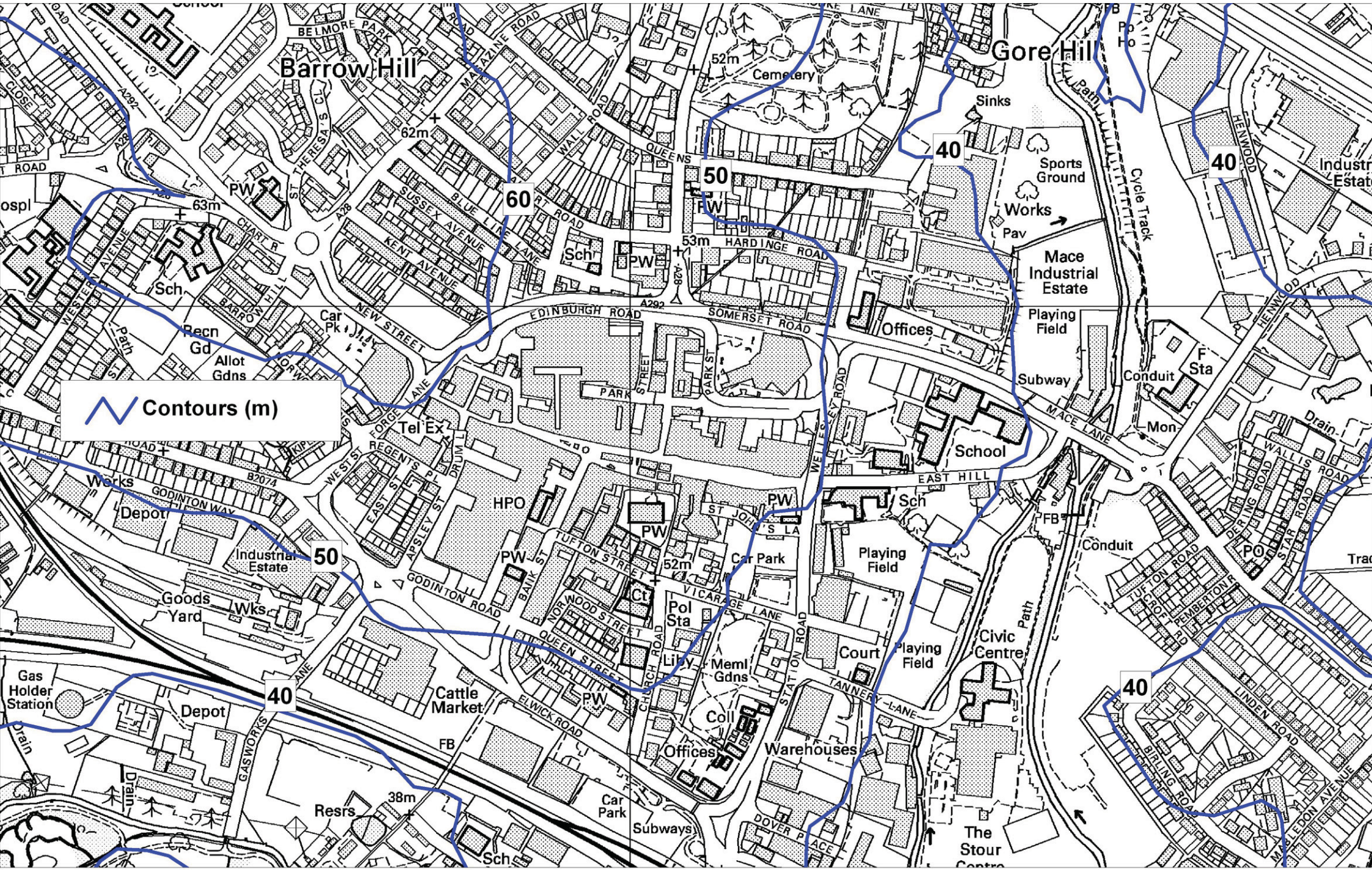

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Figure 1 Map of Ashford showing contours

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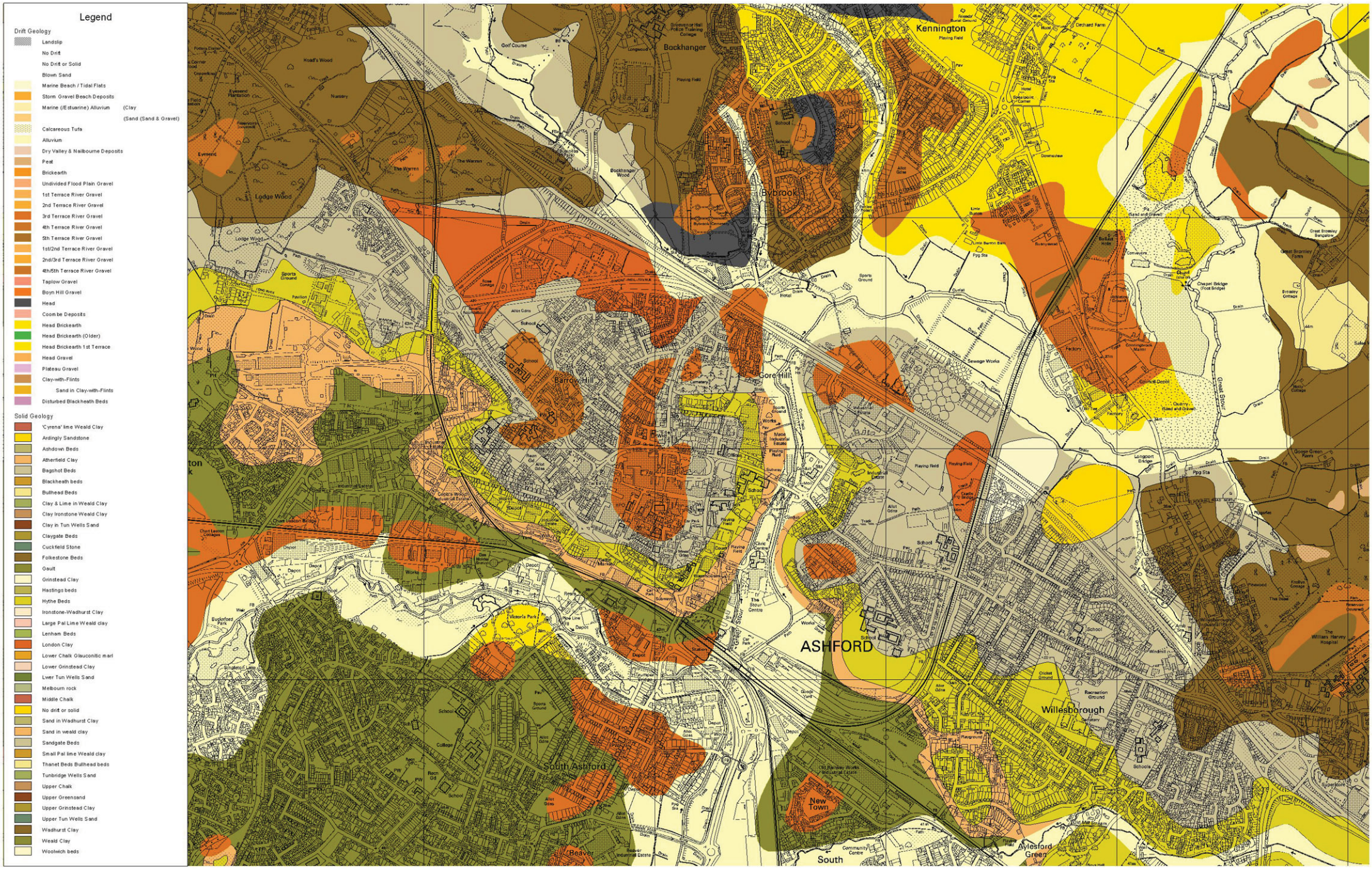

Scale 1:15000 Figure 2 Map of Ashford showing geology

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Figure 3. Andrews, Dury and Herbert's map of Ashford, *c*.1769

Figure 4. Hasted's map of Ashford, *c*.1798

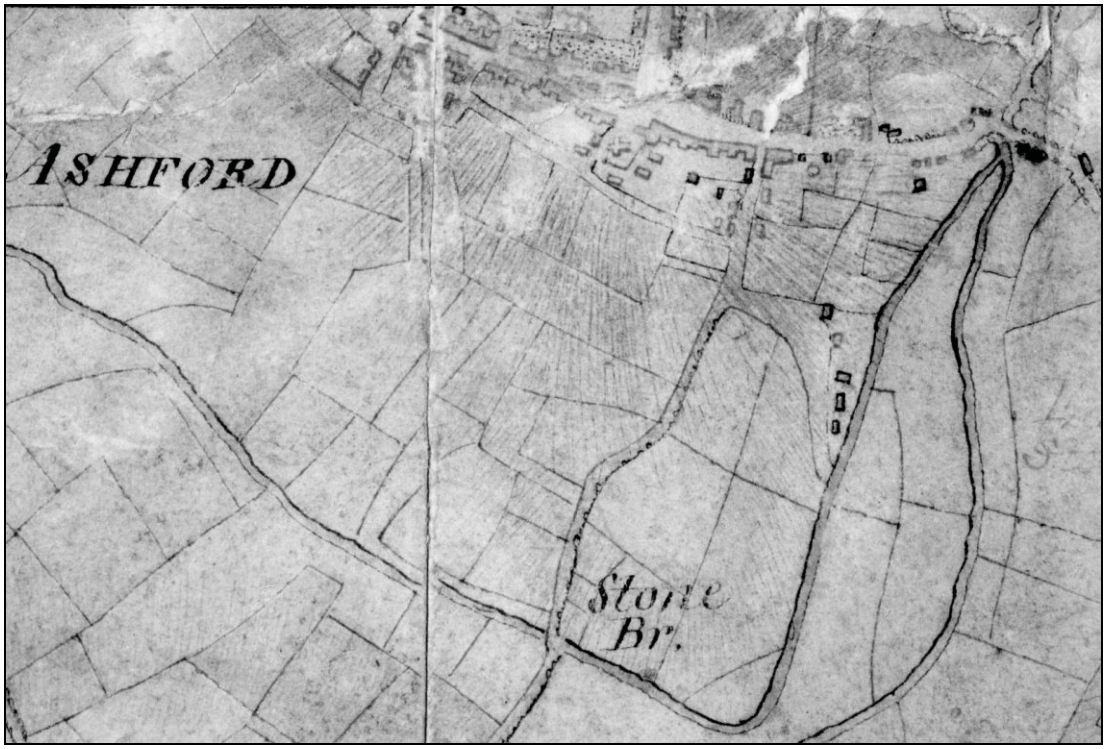

Figure 5. Ordnance Surveyor's field drawing for 1st Edition OS map, *c.*1800

Figure 6. The 2nd Edition OS map of Ashford, 1896

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Figure 7 Map of Ashford showing historic buildings

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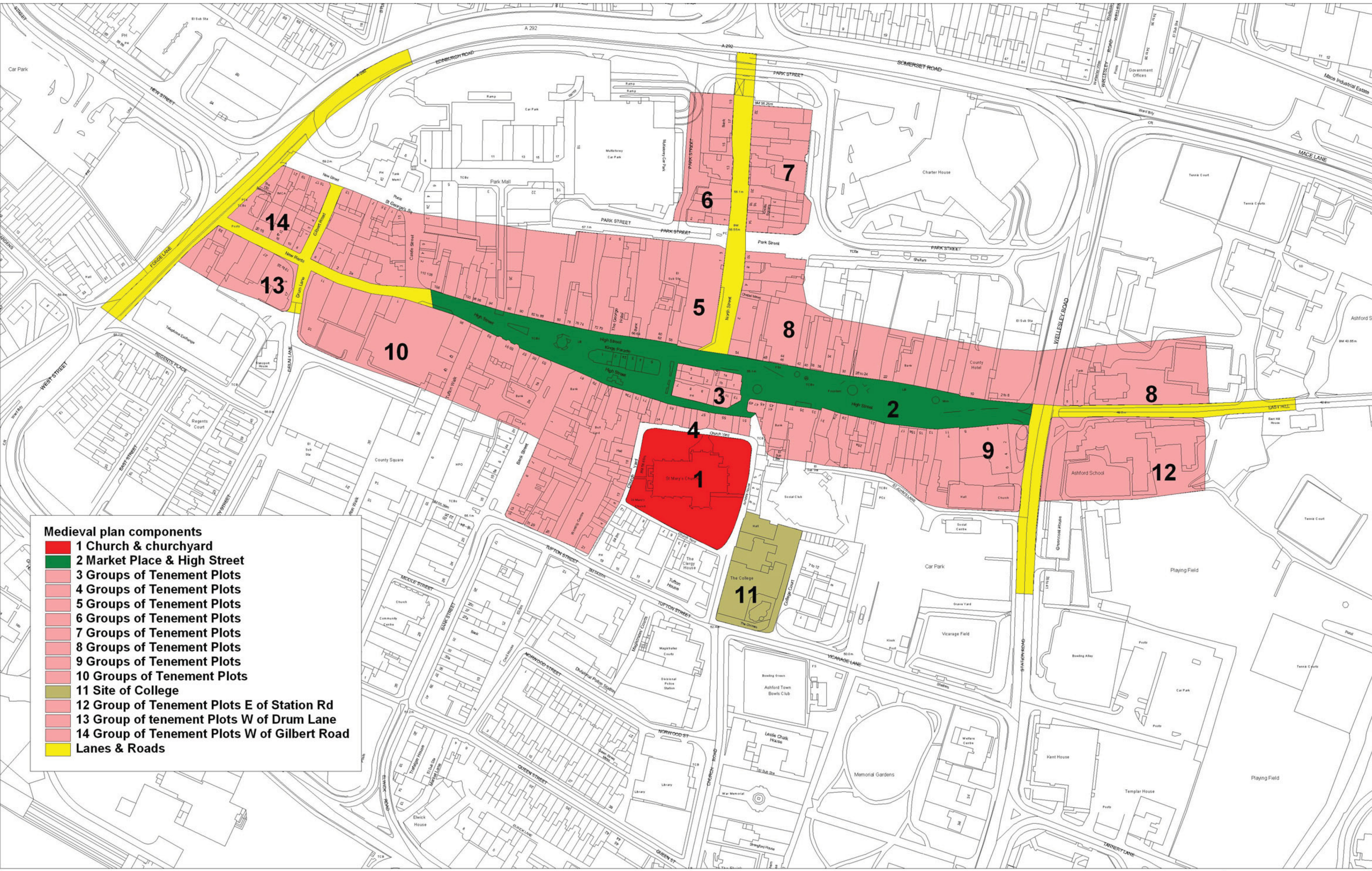

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Figure 8 Map of Ashford showing medieval plan components

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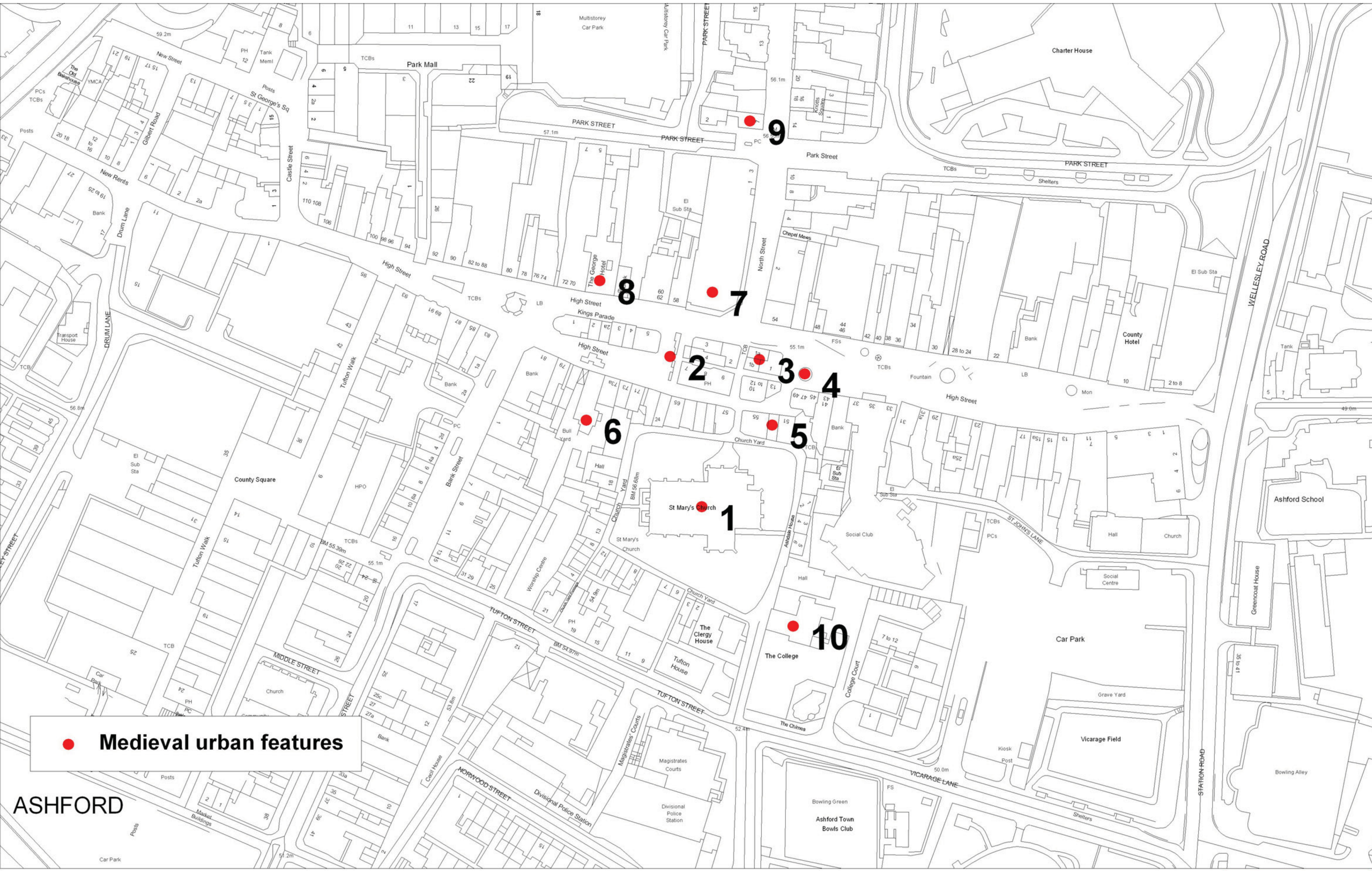

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Figure 9 Map of Ashford showing medieval urban features

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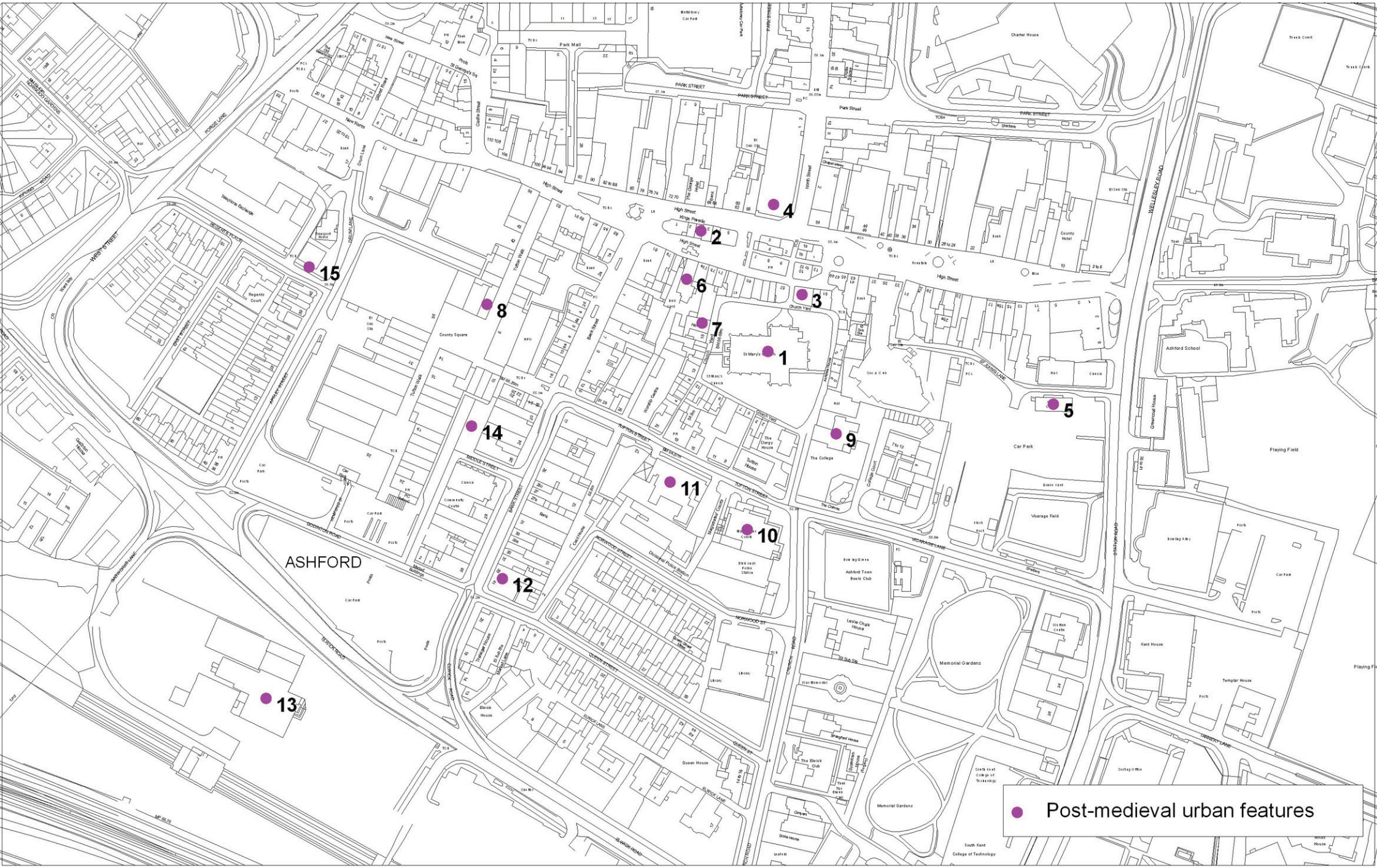

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Figure 10. Map of Ashford showing post-medieval urban features

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Figure 11 Map of Ashford showing results of cellar survey

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APPENDIX I: KENT AND MEDWAY STRUCTURE PLAN – MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE: *DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG 3) ON ARCHAEOLOGY IN HISTORIC TOWNS*

1. Introduction

1.1 The Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey, undertaken by Kent County Council, assesses the archaeological potential of the historic towns in Kent and Medway, particularly in relation to potential impacts from development. It constitutes draft supplementary planning guidance (as revised following consultation). Following adoption of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (KMSP) (anticipated in late 2005) this draft guidance will be taken forward as Supplementary Planning Guidance to KMSP Policy QL8 [Archaeological Sites] which sets out the requirements for the conservation and management of archaeological sites and finds. The draft KMSP and the draft supplementary guidance on archaeology (SPG3) were subject to full public consultation in late 2003. The draft supplementary planning guidance has been revised in the light of the responses received to that consultation. Policy QL8 is also the subject of a Proposed Change put forward in 2004 prior to the Structure Plan Examination in Public.

Policy QL8: Archaeological Sites

The archaeological and historic integrity of scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development which would adversely affect them will not normally be permitted.

Where important or potentially important archaeological remains may exist, developers will be required to arrange for archaeological assessment and/or field evaluation to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications.

Where the case for development affecting an archaeological site is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ. Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required.

Source : Kent and Medway Structure Plan:Deposit Plan September 2003 as amended by Propsed Pre – Examination in Public Changes: June 2004

1.2 Precisely defining what is a town is not straightforward; for the purposes of this study, places that can be seen historically to have fulfilled roles as central places socially and economically, and perhaps with a market, have been included. Inevitably the distinction between village and town is not always clear. The Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey includes some medieval towns that are no longer of urban character and extends to towns which developed in the eighteenth century. Roman towns that now only survive as buried remains in a rural context are not included. The Guidance is concerned with the impact of development on archaeological remains within towns rather than sites in the surrounding countryside. In particular it seeks to raise awareness of areas of archaeological importance

within a town, provide more accurate information on the extent of these areas and establish a consistent approach towards dealing with the impact of development proposals across Kent and Medway[1]. Canterbury and Dover have not been included in the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey, as a more detailed Urban Archaeological Database is being developed for Canterbury and one is proposed for Dover.

1.3 The Guidance is aimed at local planning authorities, developers and their advisers. It may also be of interest to landowners, householders and local historical groups. Pending adoption of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, this Guidance amplifies Policy ENV18 of the adopted Kent Structure Plan 1996. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to take the guidance into account in the preparation of their Local Plans/ Development Plan Documents and site specific Supplementary Planning Documents. The Guidance does not apply outside the identified urban areas and should be read alongside existing Local Plan policies on archaeology. The Guidance has been issued both as a Kent and Medway edition containing maps for all the settlements to which it applies and a district edition containing maps only for those settlements falling in the respective district area. There is no difference in the wording or application of the Guidance in either edition.

2. SPG Background

2.1 Kent's historic towns, some of which have been occupied since Roman times or even earlier, contain a wealth of evidence of past ways of life. This may take the form of buried archaeological deposits, standing buildings or structures, such as castles or town walls, or the present street patterns which may reflect past urban forms. At the same time, our towns need to develop as thriving communities. The Guidance aims to reduce conflict between the need for development and the need to preserve important archaeological remains, through the preparation of an ongoing and integrated strategy for conserving the urban archaeological resource.

2.2 The Government's policy on archaeological remains is set out in PPG16: Archaeology and Planning. It states (para. 6) that:

'Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore essential to ensure they survive in good condition. In particular, care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed. They can contain irreplaceable information about our past and the potential for an increase in future knowledge. They are part of our sense of national identity and are valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism.'

2.3 Archaeological remains are not always buried below ground and in many cases historic buildings within a town will contain important archaeological information, irrespective of whether they are Listed Buildings or not. Indeed, as noted in PPG15 (para. 2.15):

[1] Please note that Kent County Council provides an archaeological service for the Medway area on behalf of Medway Council.

'Some historic buildings are scheduled ancient monuments, and many which are not scheduled are of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains` archaeological remains.'

2.4 The means by which provision for archaeological preservation or recording is secured is also discussed in PPG16. In the event that archaeological work may be required prior to a planning decision being taken (para 21):

`it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.'

If the planning authority is willing to grant planning permission but requires that preservation in-situ or archaeological recording take place (para 30):

`it is open to them to do so by the use of a negative condition i.e. a condition prohibiting the carrying out of development until such time as works or other action, e.g. an excavation, have been carried out by a third party. '

3. Urban Archaeological Zones and Guidance

3.1 The Guidance relates to 46 towns in Kent and Medway as listed in Section 9. A plan has been produced for each town (for Ashford here Figure 12) providing archaeological response zones based on the known importance of archaeological deposits in that town, which again derives from the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey. The boundaries of these zones are related to the possible extent of archaeological deposits rather than modern boundaries. Key documents in assessing the archaeological potential of Kent's towns are the Ordnance Surveyors' Field Drawings of c. 1800 (held by the British Library). These provide consistent, fairly detailed cartography of the various towns before the population explosion of the 19th century. While they do not map the extent and layout of the towns in the medieval period, they nonetheless provide a useful baseline for assessing the extent and layout of the towns in the Middle Ages. In the case of applications for Listed Building Consent or where the building is historic in character, and where the proposal impacts on the historic fabric, then the Local Planning Authority will need to consider whether or not to consult the County Archaeologist in respect of considerations of archaeology or industrial archaeology. Similarly, developers considering proposals in these areas are encouraged to consult the County Archaeologist at an early stage in the design process. Four types of Urban Archaeological Zone have been identified although they will not necessarily be present in all the towns. The zones indicate:

Zone 1 – Areas of known national importance;

Zone 2 – Areas of known archaeological potential where clarification of the nature of this potential is required;

Zone 3 – Areas where archaeological potential is thought to be lower; and

Zone 4 – Areas in which archaeological remains have been completely removed.

Further information detailing the state of knowledge of the archaeology of each of these towns including analysis of their topography and historical development is available in the form of an

Assessment Report. These reports can be purchased from the County Archaeologist (see section 7 for contact details).

3.2 **Zone 1** identifies, as suggested in PPG16 (para 16), archaeological remains of known national importance, and comprises both Scheduled Monuments and unscheduled remains. PPG16 (para 8) states that:

'Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.'

3.3 Scheduled Monuments (formerly known as Scheduled Ancient Monuments) are protected under Part 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, and prior consent from the Secretary of State is required for all works affecting such monuments, whether or not those works require planning permission. Local planning authorities should secure, through the development control process, the protection of nationally important remains that are not scheduled.

3.4 Development proposals within Zone 1 that are likely to affect nationally important archaeological remains whether scheduled or not, should include a detailed archaeological assessment of the remains and a mitigation strategy setting out how the remains will be protected. Buildings and foundations may need to be designed and/or located to allow preservation of archaeological remains. Such considerations should be addressed at an early stage in the design process, if possible before a planning application is actually submitted, in order to avoid unnecessary costs.

3.5 The archaeological and historic integrity of sites within Zone 1, together with their settings, should be protected and where possible enhanced. Where development would adversely affect them permission will normally be refused.

3.6 Where permission is granted, conditions will normally be applied, or agreements entered into, to ensure that any necessary mitigation strategy is implemented. Applications for planning permission and other consents that affect the fabric of historic buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that disturb the ground, should be accompanied by the following:

i.) a detailed report on the character and extent of any archaeological remains likely to be affected; and

ii.) a mitigation strategy detailing how any possible archaeological impacts would be avoided.

3.7 **Zone 2** contains archaeological remains, some of which may be of national importance but whose precise extent, quality or level of importance is currently not clear, and where clarification of potential is required. Early consultation with the local planning authority, preferably prior to the submission of a planning application, will enable the implications of the proposals to be assessed, the appropriate course of action identified, and expensive redesign costs avoided.

3.8 The archaeological and historic integrity of sites within Zone 2, together with their settings, should be protected and where possible enhanced. Further information will be needed in this respect before informed decisions can be made. Therefore development proposals within Zone 2 that affect the historic fabric of buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that disturb the ground, should be accompanied by a detailed report on the character and extent of any archaeological remains likely to be affected. Field evaluation may need to be carried out and the results made available prior to the determination of a planning application.

3.9 If significant archaeological remains are found to be affected by the proposals, preservation *in situ* of the remains will normally be sought. In some cases the need to preserve important archaeological remains may result in planning permission having to be refused. If permission is granted, a mitigation strategy detailing how preservation *in situ* is to be achieved should be submitted to and agreed with the local planning authority. Where preservation *in situ* is not justified appropriate provision for archaeological investigation, recording, analysis, publication and archiving will be required, in accordance with a written specification and timetable to be agreed with the local planning authority. Conditions will normally be applied to permissions or agreements sought to implement the mitigation strategy or programme of archaeological work.

3.10 **Zone 3** contains archaeological remains which on current evidence are of lesser importance. Development proposals within Zone 3 that affect the historic fabric of buildings, or other historic structures or earthworks, and/or that will disturb the ground should include provision for archaeological investigation, generally in the form of monitoring and/or borehole investigation, and the recording of finds and information of archaeological interest. If extensive or particularly important archaeological remains are unexpectedly encountered during the development process, there may be a need to arrange for their physical preservation and/or a more detailed programme of archaeological investigation and recording. Where permission is granted, conditions will normally be applied or agreements sought to implement the archaeological work.

3.11 **Zone 4** comprises areas where archaeological remains are known already to have been entirely removed by previous development, or other activity, including archaeological excavation. This Zone is only defined on the plan where it lies within the study area.

4. Outside the Urban Archaeological Zoned Area

4.1 Archaeological remains may be known or thought likely to exist outside the areas covered by the Extensive Urban Archaeological Survey and the Urban Archaeological Zones. Developers considering proposals in these areas are encouraged to consult the County Archaeologist at an early stage in the design process.

5. Updating of the Urban Archaeological Zones

As new archaeological and historical information concerning the historic towns becomes available, it may be necessary for the County Archaeologist in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority to revise the boundaries of the Urban Archaeological Zones.

6. Glossary of Terms

Scheduled Monument

Under the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments, such monuments having statutory protection. Monuments on the schedule are by definition of national importance and the appropriateness of addition to the list is assessed against a set of criteria as set out in PPG16 Annex 4.

PPG15
Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (Department of the Environment and the Department of National Heritage 1994)

PPG16
Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990)

NB PPG15 and PPG16 are currently being revised and consolidated into a new Planning Policy Statement for the Historic Environment – PPS15

Assessment
This is normally a desk based activity bringing together all known evidence relating to the importance or potential of a given site or area.

Evaluation
This is normally supplementary work undertaken in the field (either non-intrusive such as fieldwalking or geophysical survey, or intrusive such as boreholing or trial trenching) to obtain further information on the character, extent, date and potential of a given site or area.

Mitigation
Archaeological mitigation aims to minimise the effects of proposed development and normally consists of either preservation *in situ* of the archaeological remains, and/or archaeological investigation, recording, publication and archiving, where preservation is not justified or possible.

7. Useful Addresses and Contacts

County Archaeologist
Heritage Conservation Group
Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XX
Tel: 01622-221541

English Heritage
Eastgate Court
195-205 High Street
Guildford
GU1 3EH

Tel: 01483 252038

8. List of Settlements to which draft SPG3 Applies

Appledore
Ashford
Charing
Chatham
Chilham
Cranbrook
Dartford
Deal
Edenbridge
Elham
Faversham
Folkestone
Fordwich
Gillingham
Goudhurst
Gravesend
Headcorn
Hythe
Ightham
Lenham
Lydd
Maidstone
Marden
Margate
Milton Regis
Minster in Thanet
New Romney
Northfleet
Queenborough
Ramsgate
Rochester
Sandwich
Sevenoaks
Sheerness
Sittingbourne
Smarden
Tenterden
Tonbridge
Tunbridge Wells
West Malling
Westerham
Whitstable
Wingham
Wrotham
Wye

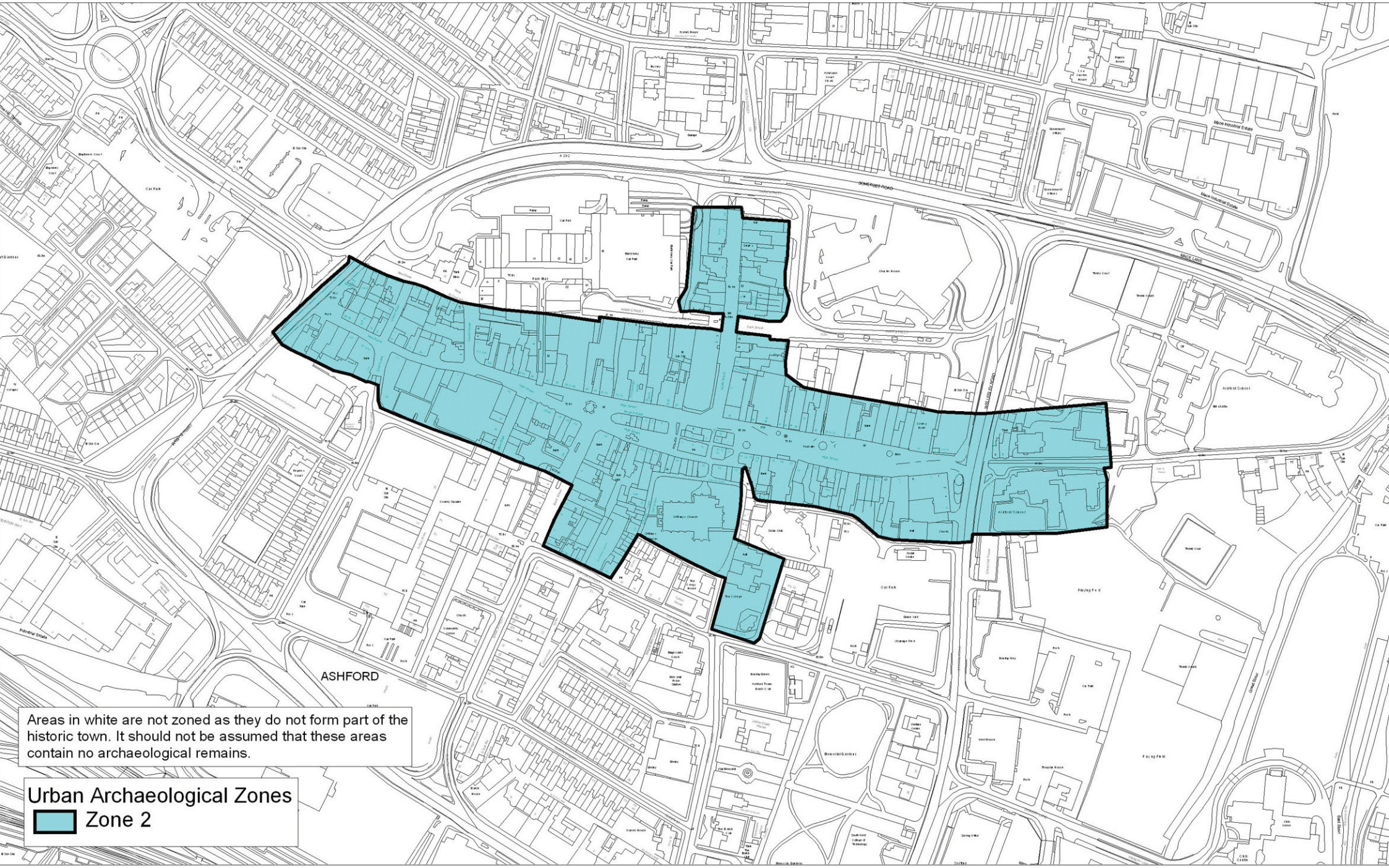

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Figure 12. Map of Ashford showing Urban Archaeological Zones

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