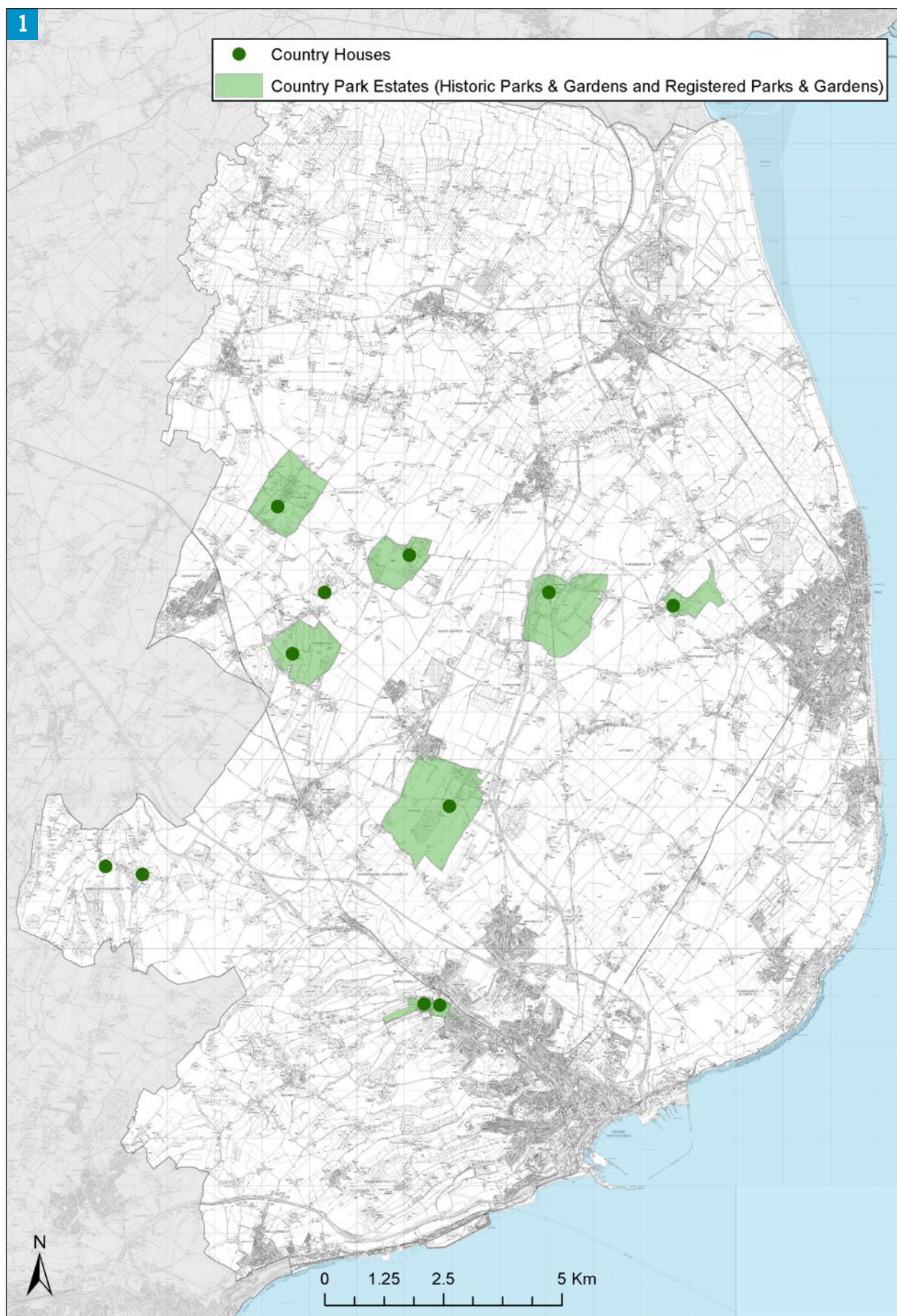


Appendix 1:

Theme 7.1 – Country Houses and Estates





Cover Goodnestone House. © Ben Found
Figure 1 Country Houses in Dover District (based on Hasted)

Theme 7.1 – Country Houses and Estates

Summary

7.1 The District contains a number of Country Houses and Estates, particularly on the rich agricultural chalk downland. Many of the houses and estates have origins in the medieval period and display a significant-time depth. Some are connected to leading architects such as Lutyens, Devey and Blomfield, whilst others have other connections, such as at to the novelist Jane Austin. Many of the District's country houses retain their fine parkland setting and the quality of the houses themselves is reflected in the number that are Listed at Grade I or Grade II*.

Introduction

7.2 In the later medieval and early post-medieval period there were no major lay estates or houses in the District. This was partly a result of the Kentish system of inheritance (the *gavelkind* through which any dowager would be entitled to half the estate and all male heirs, not just the first-born son, were entitled to an equal share of the remainder) that resulted in estates being divided into increasingly smaller parcels, but perhaps was also influenced by the size and wealth of the ecclesiastical holdings.

7.3 In the medieval period the major land-holdings in the District were dominated by ecclesiastical institutions. The two ancient houses in Canterbury (Christ Church Priory and St Augustine's Abbey) were the dominant landowners in the District, although Dover Priory was also well endowed and the two Premonstratensian Abbeys at Langdon and

Bradsole both held land.

7.4 The Dissolution of the Monasteries in the first half of the sixteenth century led to their break up, with the great ecclesiastical lands passing to the crown. It had been intended that this land would provide a regular governmental income, however Henry VIII's need to raise money for his military campaigns led to the selling off of former monastic properties to private owners. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards we see the emergence of a new class of *Landed Gentry* who derived prestige and wealth from land ownership. Grander and more elaborate country-houses set in estate parkland emerge, with a number of greater and lesser examples developing in Dover District.

7.5 It is worth noting that the District contains a number of manor courts and other minor seats but these are not discussed in detail here (see instead Theme 7.2). Instead there has been a selection process, with only the District's grander and more substantial country houses and estates being looked at in detail in this Theme. These are largely those properties that are shown as being set in significant areas of parkland on the maps accompanying Edward Hasted's *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent (1788–99)*. In addition the estates of Betteshanger House and Kearsney Court are also detailed. These developed after the time of Hasted's study, but are included as they lie within extensive parkland or gardens that are included either in the Kent Gardens Compendium or English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The estate at Dane Court is also included as this forms a significant part of the Tilmanstone Conservation Area, in recognition of its historic interest.

7.6 The majority of the main Country Houses in the District fall within the area of rich agricultural land on the North Downs.



The estates and houses of Goodnestone, Knowlton, Northbourne, Waldershare, Betteshanger and Fredville for example can all be found within 9 km. of each other.

Description of the Heritage Assets

Northbourne

7.7 Northbourne Court is a Grade II Listed Building altered in the eighteenth

century, but with a seventeenth century core. Northbourne is located on the site of a Grange of St Augustine's Abbey, and is reputed to be the site of an Anglo-Saxon palace of King Eadbald. Following the dissolution Northbourne Court passed into Crown hands, but was granted to Sir Edwin Sandys by James I who built a new mansion house at Northbourne in c. 1614. Sandys' house was demolished in the mid eighteenth century. The present house is believed to have been built on the site of Sandys' house, or perhaps one of its outbuildings.

Goodnestone

7.8 The estate at Goodnestone Park was in existence before the Norman Conquest, when it formed part of the holdings of Godwin, earl of Kent. The manor and lands were held for many years by the Goodwyneston family. During the reign of Henry VIII the mansion and manorial estate appear to have been divided, but were



Figure 2 Northbourne Court Wall and Gate
Figure 3 Goodnestone House. © Ben Found

reunited by Sir Thomas Engham in the late sixteenth century. The estate remained in the Engham family until c.1700 when it was purchased by Brook Bridges. The present Goodnestone House was built in 1704 by Brook Bridges and extensive formal gardens, in the Franco-Dutch style that was the fashion of the time, were established. In the later eighteenth century garden fashions changed and the formal gardens were replaced by Sir Brook Bridges (great grandson of the original builder) in the more naturalistic landscape style that was becoming popular in the later eighteenth century. Goodnestone House was also remodelled in the late eighteenth century. Edward Hasted, writing at the turn of the nineteenth century described the situation at Goodnestone:

'...though small in extent, and commanding but little, if any prospect beyond the bounds of it, is a beautiful and elegant situation.'

7.9 Sir Brook Bridges' daughter Elizabeth married Edward Austen (Edward Knight), brother of the author Jane Austen. Elizabeth and Edward's daughter Fanny was a favourite niece of Jane's and was one of her favourite correspondents. It is understood that Jane Austen was a regular visitor to the estate at Goodnestone.

7.10 Goodnestone House is a Grade II* Listed Building which remains in private ownership. The walled Garden, steps and ha-ha, estate buildings, stable block and estate farm all survive and are Grade II Listed. Much of the wider parkland setting of Goodnestone House survives, whilst the gardens in the immediate vicinity of the house have been further developed with elements of Italian style, Arts and Crafts and Gardenesque planting employed. The garden and part of the surrounding parkland are open to the public and is included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (Grade II*).

Fredville

7.11 **Fredville Park**, which lies about two kilometres to the south of Goodnestone, has its origins as a manor held by Dover Castle. In the fifteenth century the estate passed to the Boys family, but the house and estate passed from the family in the seventeenth century when they were unable to repay debts on loans they had taken out. In the mid seventeenth century the estate was purchased by Margaret Bridges (sister of Sir Brook Bridges of Goodnestone). In 1750 Margaret married John Plumptre(e) who rebuilt the house in its entirety. Letters by Jane Austen mention visits to the Plumptre family at Fredville and taking walks in the park. Fredville mansion was the residence of the Plumptre family until the 1920s until they relocated to Little Fredville, a smaller house nearby. Fredville mansion house was then used as a girls boarding school until being requisitioned for the Canadian Army in the Second World War. Whilst occupied by Canadian troops a fire broke out and the mansion house was destroyed.

7.12 Nothing survives of the main mansion house, although the coach-house, clock tower, icehouse, stables and outbuildings do remain, as do the two lodges at the entrances to the park. The mansion house at Fredville was set in landscape parkland that survives relatively intact (although parts are now under plough). Fredville Park is known for its trees, including ancient oaks and chestnuts. One of the oak trees, known as the '*Majesty Oak*', is reputed to be over 1000 years old.

Nonington

7.13 Close to both Fredville and Goodnestone was the estate of **St Alban's Court** (previously Eswalt Manor and now known as Nonington Court). The manor of Eswalt is recorded in Domesday, having been possessed by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. Following Odo's disgrace the manor passed



into the hands of the Crown from whom it passed to the Abbot of St Alban's. During the reign of Henry VIII the Abbot of St Alban's sold St Alban's Court to Sir Christopher Hales. Following Sir Christopher's death St Alban's Court passed into the hands of the Culpepper family, from whom it was sold to Thomas Hammond in 1556. The estate remained in the hands of the Hammond Family until the late 1930s.

7.14 Archaeological investigations at St Alban's Court by the Dover Archaeological Group have revealed evidence of a late medieval hall-house which was later re-built, in the 1550s, in brick. This house, now known as Old St Alban's Court and Grade II* Listed, was subsequently rebuilt and extended in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Hammond family were social acquaintances of the Plumptre family of Fredville and the Bridges family of Goodnestone and are again mentioned in the

letters of Jane Austen. In the late 1870s William Oxenden Hammond built a new mansion house to the north-east of the old house. This new mansion was designed by the architect George Devey and is a Grade I Listed Building. St Alban's Court was set in landscaped parkland gardens of which elements survive.

Knowlton

7.15 The estate of **Knowlton Court** to the north-east of St Alban's was another of Bishop Odo's possessions and as with Eswalt Manor (St Alban's Court) passed to the Crown after Odo was disgraced. The manor of Knowlton was granted by William I to William de Albini and subsequently passing down the Pyrot family in *knights fee* (a form of feudal land tenure). The manor later passed to the Langley family and then through marriage to the Peytons. The present house was built in the 1580s for Sir Thomas Peyton.

Figure 4 Knowlton Court

The house remained in the Peyton family until the late seventeenth century when it was sold to Admiral Sir John Narborough, but following a series of naval deaths, passed by marriage to the D'Aeth family. In 1715 Sir Thomas D'Aeth altered and extended the house adding an English Baroque façade and Dutch gables. The house was further extended in the mid-eighteenth century. The house and estate remained in the D'Aeth family until 1904 when it was sold to Major Frances Elmer Speed. Following its purchase by Major Elmer Speed the house and gardens were refurbished and modernised under the direction of Reginald Blomfield and Edwin Lutyens.

7.16 The Knowlton Court house is still in private ownership and is a Grade I Listed Building. Adjacent to Knowlton Court is the Church of St Clement, Knowlton which was originally the chapel for Knowlton Manor and later used as the parish church. The Church is Grade I Listed. There is also a Grade II* Listed Dower House of late sixteenth century date, a sixteenth century Grade II Barn and a Grade II Listed early twentieth century Lodge (by Edwin Lutyens) at Knowlton. A tree-lined drive, a walled garden and some parkland surround the house, although much of the former parkland is now used for arable cultivation.

Waldershare

7.17 At the time of the Domesday Survey the Manor at Waldershare is also reported to be under the possession of Bishop Odo, from whom it passed to the Crown. It was then held as a manor of Dover Castle by the Malmains family. The manor was subsequently split up by inheritance, but the parts were later reunited under the possession of John Monins during the reign of Henry VI. In the mid-seventeenth century the estate was sold to Sir Henry Furnese who built a new house at **Waldershare Park** with extensive gardens between 1705 and 1712.

Through inheritance and marriage the estate at Waldershare passed to the earl of Guilford in 1766 and remained the seat of the Lords North, earls of Guilford until the mid twentieth century.

7.18 The main house at Waldershare Park survives and is a Grade I Listed Building, now converted into flats. The house was restored by Sir Reginald Blomfield (who also undertook work at Knowlton) in 1915 after a fire. The fire and conversion to flats has meant that most of the original interior has been lost. The house is set in extensive parkland of some 400 hectares, which is Registered as Grade II within the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Within the Park there is the Grade I Listed **Waldershare Belvedere** as well as an ice house, riding school and stables, fountain, kennels, cottages, home farm, cottages granaries, lodges and walled gardens (all Grade II Listed). Waldershare Belvedere was built 1725-7 for Sir Henry Furnese and is attributed to either



Figure 5 Waldershare Belvedere. © English Heritage

Lord Burlington, known as “the architect Earl” or Colen Campbell. The Belvedere is recognised as a nationally important Palladian style building, but is currently in a ruinous state and has been derelict for a number of years. The Belvedere is included on English Heritage’s *Heritage at Risk Register* and its condition is highlighted in the register as being “very bad”.

Betteshanger

7.19 The manor of Great Betteshanger formed one of the baronies of Dover Castle and was possessed by the De Marines family for a number of generations. By the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century the manor had passed to the Boys family who held a number of estates in the area. A new (or substantially rebuilt) mansion house was erected by Edward Boys in the first half of the seventeenth century. This house is understood to have been located close to the parish church, but was demolished sometime around 1829 when a new ‘villa’ was built to the west. This new villa was designed by Robert Luggar, but was not to last long. The estate was bought in 1850 by Sir Walter James (the first Baron Northbourne). The existing villa was heavily modified and extended from 1856 to form **Betteshanger House**, a grand new mansion designed by George Devey (who also designed St Alban’s Court). Betteshanger House is now home to Northbourne Park School and is a Grade II* Listed Building.

7.20 As well as designing the house Devey also laid out new garden terraces, with the house and gardens set in a wider wooded parkland. Other works believed to be by Devey include two gate lodges located on the northern boundary of the parkland, an estate cottage and a gardener’s cottage (all Grade II Listed). Other Listed Buildings at Betteshanger House include a Grade II Listed cowshed and the Grade II* St Mary’s Church

also lies within the estate grounds.

Dane Court

7.21 A manor at Tilmanstone is mentioned in the Domesday Survey when it formed part of the lands of Christ Church, Canterbury. It appears that the manor was later split, becoming North and South Court. The manor of **Dane Court**, also in Tilmanstone parish, appears to have anciently had the same owners as the North and South Courts, having been under the possession of the Tilmanstone, Sandhurst and Langley families. By the Elizabethan period the manor was held by the Fogge family (who also held South Court) and remained so until the early eighteenth century when the manor of Dane Court was sold in 1724 to Major Richard Harvey. Major Harvey built a grand new residence at Dane Court, which was subsequently extended by the Hattons in 1765-76 and again by the Rice family in the early nineteenth century. Dane Court House is now a Grade II* Listed Building and is now divided into private residences. Dane Court was set in extensive parkland of which elements, including a tree-lined *broad walk*, survive. Service and stable blocks are present to the rear of the house and there are also the remnants of a walled garden. The estate’s gatekeeper’s lodge on School Road is a Grade II Listed Building and is similar in style to the cottages designed by Devey at Betteshanger and St Alban’s Court.

Wootton

7.22 **Wootton Court** was a former country mansion towards the south of the District but the main mansion house has now been destroyed. The estate started as a secular house, which formed parts of the lands of Christ Church Priory. Following the dissolution the residence passed to the Digges family and then passed through a number of hands before coming into the possession of the Coppins family and then

through inheritance to the Brydges. In the late eighteenth century the Rev Tymewell Brydges employed the architect John Plaw to redesign the house, which was totally rebuilt and new parkland grounds were laid out. In the 1860s the house was sold by the trustees of the Brydges family to George Joseph Murray who remodelled it with new flint and brick elevations. It was latterly used by a school until the outbreak of the Second World War when it was apparently used for the temporary detention of prisoners of war. Following the war the main house was in a derelict state and was subsequently demolished in 1952. The stable block and coach house of Wootton Court survive and are now private residences; part of the surrounding parkland also survives.

Denton

7.23 Less than one kilometre to the west of Wootton Court was **Denton Court**. The manor of Denton is recorded in Domesday as being under the possession of Bishop Odo and, like the rest of his holdings, passed to the

Crown in 1082. It then passed from the crown to Gilbert Magminot and later to the Earde family. The estate then passed by marriage to the Peyton family who then disposed of it to the Boys family (who also possessed Fredville). A new mansion house was built by William Boys in 1574. William Boys' son Edward later sold the house and estate and it passed through a number of hands, until being purchased by Samuel Egerton Brydges (a second-son of one of the Brydges of nearby Wootton Court). The present house was constructed for Samuel Egerton Brydges in 1792 and incorporates part of Boys' house of the sixteenth century. The house was further extended in the nineteenth century for the Willats family.

7.24 The main house at Denton Court is a Grade II* Listed Building and lies within the Denton Conservation area. The house is set in landscaped parkland. Service range buildings (shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map) also survive, as does a walled garden and a nineteenth century gatekeeper's lodge (Grade II Listed). The



Figure 6 The Hall Denton Court. © Dover Museum (d21426)

Grade II* parish church of St Mary's adjoins Denton Court to the west

Kearsney

7.25 Kearsney Abbey lies on the River Dour to the west of the town of Dover and was built within the grounds of Kearsney Manor (also formerly known as Kearsney Court – not to be confused with the later house of the same name described below). Kearsney Manor was held by a barony of Dover Castle. It passed through the hands of a number of families including the Paganels and Ropers (of Canterbury). In the late eighteenth century the estate was purchased by the Fectors, a family of local merchants, and in 1820 John Minet Fector erected a new mansion house in the grounds which he called Kearsney Abbey. There was never an abbey in the area but Fector tried to give the house and its grounds an ancient look by using medieval remains from Dover, including

remnants of the Townwall Street Town Wall, to build the house, estate walls and numerous 'ruined' follies. These included bridges, arches and a medieval style mill. The mill was used to pump water from springs to the house and Fector may have used the remains of the sixteenth century Town Mill to construct it. John Minet Fector became MP for Dover, but in 1837 lost the mayoral election and he sold the estate and moved from the area.

7.26 After the sale by the Fectors the mansion house was used for a number of purposes including a private boarding school. As with many of the large country houses in the District the Government commandeered it during the Second World War for military accommodation. After the war the estate was purchased by Dover Corporation, but the main house (with the exception of one wing) had to be demolished in the late 1950s. The gardens of Kearsney Abbey are maintained as a public garden, whilst the surviving wing is a



Figure 7 Kearsney Abbey Gardens, bridge and pond. © Explore Kent

Grade II Listed Building. Sections of walling, gates and bridges within the pleasure gardens are also Grade II Listed.

7.27 The Manor House itself was purchased by the brewer Frederick Leaney in 1901 but was taken over as a convent by Augustinian nuns in 1914 and in 1981 it became a nursing home, also run by nuns.

7.28 In the early twentieth century the industrialist Edward Percy (owner of the Wiggins Teape paper company) built a new residence on the opposite bank of the river from Kearsney Abbey (the original Kearsney Court) which he named **Kearsney Court**. Kearsney Court had originally been planned for Alfred Leaney the brewer, but he sold the project on to Percy before completion. The house was set in landscaped pleasure gardens designed by Thomas Mawson, the leading garden designer of the day. Kearsney Court house survives and is now sub-divided into a number of individual private properties. The

house is not Listed. The pleasure gardens, including a canal, bastion, terraces, pools, tennis courts and ornamental summerhouses are Registered as Grade II within the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, but none of the structures are Listed.

7.29 So Kearsney Manor (once known as Kearsney Court and Kearsney Court Farm) still stands. The “Abbey” was built in the grounds in 1821 and a new Kearsney Court built in 1900 for E.P. Barlow, Managing Director of Wiggins Teape Paper Mill at Buckland.

Statement of Significance

7.30 Although the District has no seats that could be considered to truly great country houses, it does include a number of substantial estates. These often have significant time-depth and are sometimes connected to leading architects, such as

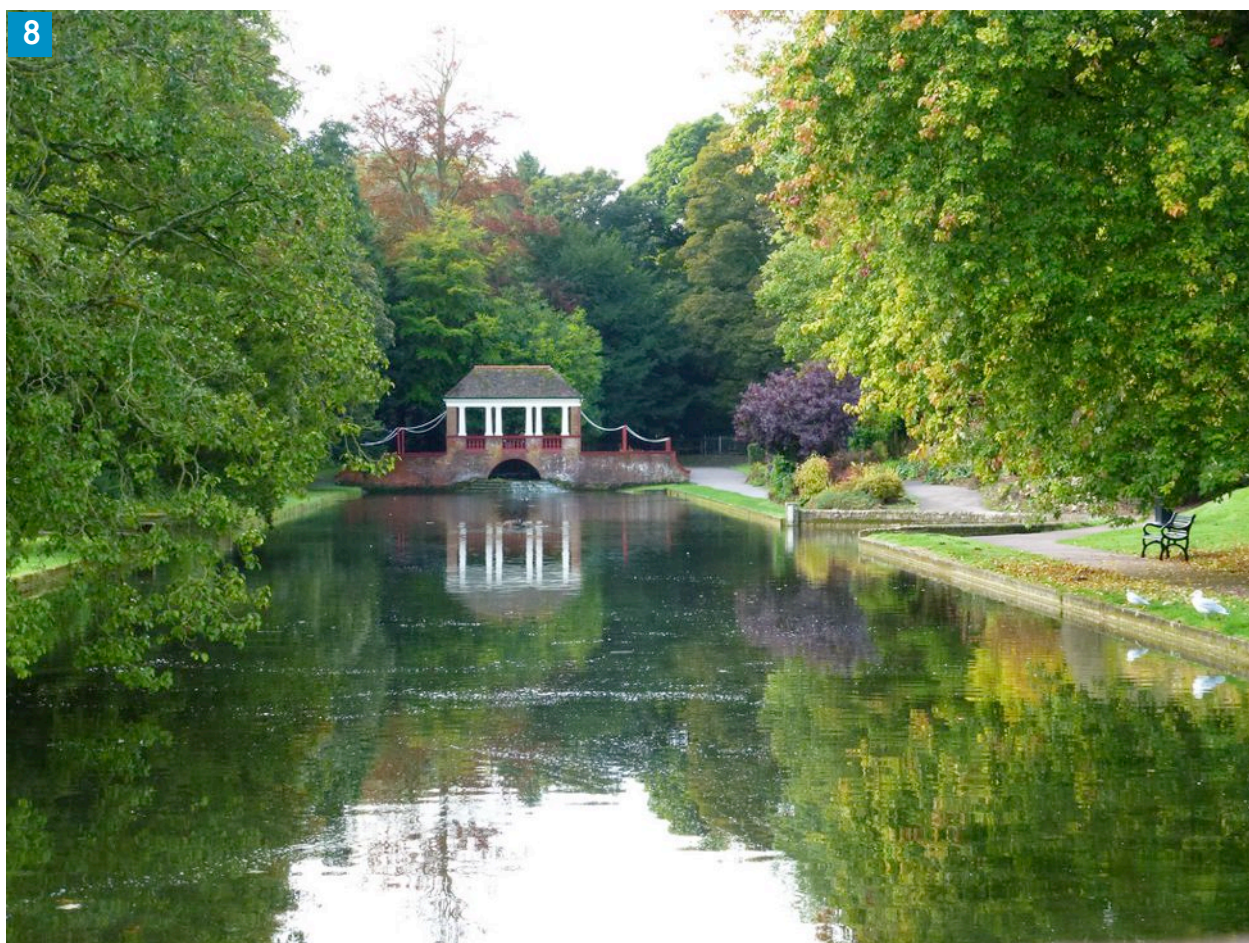


Figure 8 *Pleasure gardens designed by Thomas Mawson at Kearsney Court (now known as Russell Gardens). © Explore Kent*

Lutyens, Devey and Blomfield, or designers, such as Mawson. The quality of the houses is reflected in the number that are Listed at Grade I or Grade II* and all have significant elements of their parkland setting surviving. As a group the country houses and estates within the District are considered to be of **considerable significance**.

Evidential Value

7.31 Many of the estates develop from medieval manors mentioned in the Domesday survey and for some earlier origins in the Anglo-Saxon period are possible. It is therefore likely that many of the sites may contain buried archaeological evidence that could illustrate the earlier histories of the sites. The buildings themselves have often been modified and extended over the centuries and detailed examination of the fabric of these buildings may reveal evidence for their earlier incarnations. It is also possible that the core of some of these houses (or their out-buildings or home farms) could include evidence for much earlier elements that have been incorporated into later re-buildings. Whilst most of the estates are laid out to parkland that became fashionable from the later eighteenth century onwards, it is likely that some may have previously been set out with earlier more formal gardens for which buried archaeological evidence may survive.

Historical Value

7.32 The country houses and estates within the District illustrate the values and desires of the landed gentry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and many were significantly extended and rebuilt in accordance with the new tastes of the time. Kearsney Court is different, having been built as a residence and pleasure gardens for an industrialist and is illustrative of a new moneyed elite who derived their wealth from industry and commerce. The scale and type of



estates that survive in the District are of historical value for illustrating the effects of gravelkind and the break-up of the great ecclesiastical holdings at the Dissolution.

7.33 A number of the houses and gardens are connected with significant and leading architects of their time. Devey who worked at St Alban's Court and Betteshanger used elements of the local vernacular and motifs from a range of periods in his work to present a sense of evolution over the centuries; whilst Edward Lutyens who worked at Knowlton was a leading proponent of the 'arts and crafts style'. Some of the houses in the District have literary connections; the families at Goodnestone, Fredville and St Alban's Court were all well known to Jane Austen and are mentioned in her various letters. She is known to have stayed at both Goodnestone and Fredville.

Aesthetic Value

7.34 The country houses and estates in the District have a strong aesthetic value as carefully considered and artistically designed

Figure 9 The Dovecote at Knowlton is of early eighteenth century date and is a Grade II* Listed Building

10



places. The surviving houses generally sit in a parkland setting that is designed to accompany and compliment the house. The gardens and houses are also often designed to reinforce and make use of the beauty of the surrounding landscape, for example the Belvedere at Waldershare has been purposefully designed and sited so as to provide sweeping views along a valley.

Communal Value

7.35 The country estates are a reminder of the former social hierarchy of British society, from the great house of the landed gentry, to the farm worker's and gatekeeper's cottages that sit on the edges of such estates. They often remain valued and can provide a sense of local prestige. At some of the Country Houses the Parish Church is co-located within the estate grounds and the country estate may still act as a focus for the modern community. The houses and estates also provide a link between the modern community and those of the past, with many generations of local people having been in the employment of the 'big house'.

Vulnerabilities

7.36 Within this theme the majority of the principal assets are afforded some form of statutory designation, with some assets being covered by multiple designations. Despite this some assets are still vulnerable; indeed the Belvedere at Waldershare has been derelict for many years and is now in a ruinous state;

11



English Heritage describes its condition as being 'very bad'. The Belvedere is therefore listed on English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk Register* and is identified as being as one of English Heritage's top-ten priority sites of those listed in register for the south-east. Given the seriousness of the Belvedere's current condition there is an urgent need to find it a beneficial use so as to secure its long-term future.

7.37 The principal country houses in the District all have a current use, although they are generally in private hands and therefore inaccessible to the public. As with all historic buildings they will be vulnerable to a greater or lesser extent to decay unless proper management and maintenance plans are in place. The ancillary buildings associated with these country estates are also at risk, particularly from minor alterations (for example changes to fenestration or conversion works), which could have a detrimental effect on the character of the place. The home farms and agricultural buildings associated with these country houses, particularly where these remain in agricultural use, are particularly susceptible to such change.

7.38 The parkland setting of many of the District's country houses plays a major part in the character and significance of these assets. Without management such parkland is vulnerable to neglect and change which can significantly impact upon the significance of the place. Specimen and designed tree

Figure 10 Northbourne Court Wall - detail of the imposing wall that runs from the village

Figure 11 Interior view of the Waldershare Park Belvedere which is on the Heritage at Risk register. © English Heritage

planting is a key feature of such naturalistic parkland landscapes and should be maintained and cared for. Where trees are lost through disease, lightning strike or old age, there should be provision for their replacement.

7.39 The setting of the District's country houses and their wider parkland landscapes are also vulnerable to change. New development could impact upon the historic integrity, character or setting of the District's country houses and estates and needs to be managed so as to avoid harm. Development that causes harm to the setting of the District's country houses and estates, or diminishes the ability for visitors to the site to appreciate the significance of the place should be avoided.

Opportunities

7.40 Whilst the District's country houses themselves are largely in private hands and are not publicly accessible many areas of parkland are crossed by public footpaths and bridleways. Opportunities should be sought to further open up these areas of parkland for walking and other recreational uses. A number of country houses lie relatively close together, particularly Goodnestone, Knowlton, St Albans and Fredville and these could potentially be linked together as part of a walking trail. The connection of these places with the author Jane Austen could be used to promote such a trail.



7.41 The historic gardens at Kearsney are maintained as a public garden and provide valuable green space close to the urban centre of Dover. The gardens provide an attractive open area and are valued by the local community. Opportunity should be sought to continue to promote, interpret and develop the historic gardens as an important local amenity space.

Sources Used & Additional Information

Hasted, E., 1800: *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 9.*

Hasted, E., 1800: *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 10.*

The National Heritage List for England available at <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>



Figure 12 The Gardens at Goodnestone Park are open to the public as a paid visitor attraction. © Ben Found

Figure 13 Russell Gardens and Kearsney Abbey Gardens are an important amenity space for Dover. © Explore Kent

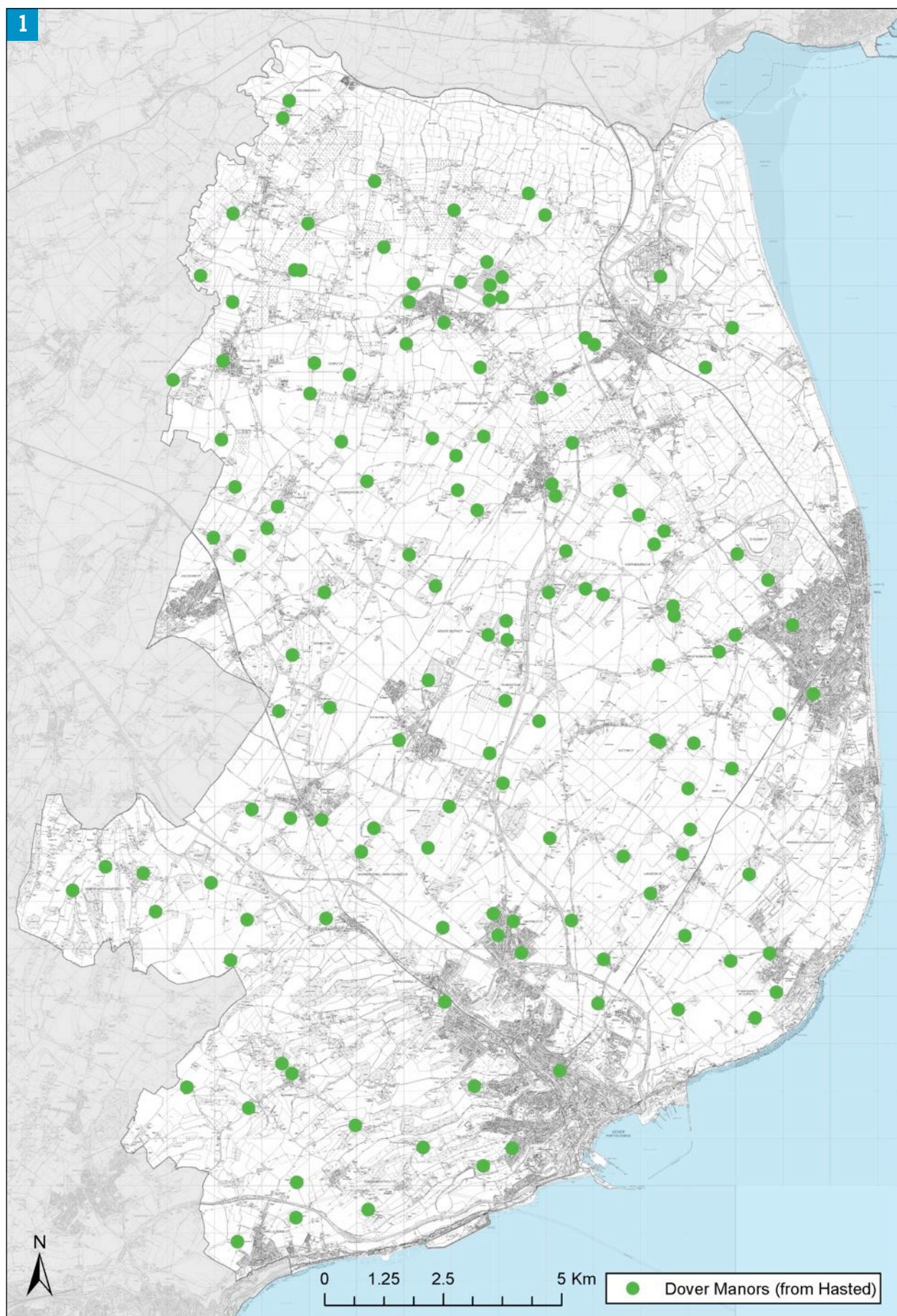
Key Heritage Assets

Asset	Form	Designation & Protection	Accessibility	Interpretation
Northbourne Court	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried Archaeology	Registered Park & Garden, Conservation Area (part) and Listed Building (main house Grade II)	Not publically accessible	None
Goodnestone Park	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Registered Park & Garden, Conservation Area (part) and Listed Building (main house Grade II*)	Gardens are open as a managed visitor attraction	Some
Fredville Park	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried	The two Lodges are Grade II Listed	Not publically accessible	None
St Alban's Court	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried Archaeology	Listed Buildings (main house Grade I)	Not publically accessible	None
Knowlton Court	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Listed Buildings (main house Grade I)	Some public access	Information Panels
Waldershare Park	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Registered Park & Garden, Listed Buildings (main house Grade I)	Not publically accessible	None
Betteshanger House	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried Archaeology	Listed Buildings (main house Grade II*)	Private School	None
Dane Court	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Conservation Area & Listed Buildings (main house Grade II*)	Not publicly accessible	None
Wootton Court	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried Archaeology	Conservation Area	Not publicly accessible	None
Denton Court	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Conservation Area and Listed Building (main house Grade II*)	Not publicly accessible	None
Kearsney Abbey	Historic Buildings, Parkland and Buried Archaeology	Listed Buildings (surviving part of main house Grade II)	Public Park and Cafe	Information Panels
Kearsney Court	Historic Buildings and Parkland	Registered Park & Garden	Main House and part of Gardens are Privately owned, the Pleasure Gardens are a public park	None

Appendix 1:

Theme 7.2 – Medieval Courts and Manors





Cover
Figure 1

Tappington Hall, Denton. © B Hollingsbee (loaned to Dover Museum (d41130))
Distribution of Dover District's courts and manors identified from Hasted's 'The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent'

Theme 7.2 – Medieval Courts and Manors

Summary

7.42 The medieval courts and manors in Dover District have helped to shape and inform the development of the rural landscape of this part of East Kent. They formed an important part of the Feudal structure on which medieval English society was based. The District includes a number of moated sites, of which examples near Ash and Woodnesborough are particularly well preserved, whilst Walmer Court is a good example of a substantial fortified manor house. It is likely that significant buried archaeological remains will survive at other

manor sites across the District.

Introduction

7.43 In the Middle Ages England was governed under a feudal system, with land granted by the King to important nobles, knights and the church in return for services. Feudalism and Manorialism worked hand in hand, with the manorial estate being granted by the King to provide a source of income against which services could be exchanged. The term manor therefore refers to a parcel of land – a unit of landed estate. Sometimes the Lord of the Manor would be the tenant-in-chief; where the tenant-in-chief held multiple manors as part of a larger estate; a *mense* (or middle) lord might hold the position of Lord of the Manor. The land within a manor fell into two main parts: the lord's *demesne* (land under his immediate control whose produce supported the lord and his household) and tenanted land from which rent services were provided to maintain the *demesne*.



Figure 2 The ruins of Walmer Court, a fortified manor

7.44 The manorial system gave the Lord of the Manor economic and legal powers over his peasant tenants. The Lord of the Manor held the right of jurisdiction over their domain and presided over a manorial court at which matters of civil disputes, land tenancy, local by-laws were dealt with. The manor and manorial court was therefore one of the key building blocks of medieval society upon which rural economy and society was organised.

7.45 At the time of Domesday the majority of the manors of Dover District were held by a small number of principal tenants-in-chief. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, was granted substantial landholdings in the County including a number of manorial estates in the District. Hugh de Montfort, who had also helped to secure the area following the Norman Conquest, held lands to the west of the Dour, whilst the Church and in particular St Augustine's Abbey and the Archbishop of Canterbury also had large landholdings in the District. Following the disgrace of Odo in 1088 and the seizure of his lands the Church became the District's dominant landowner.

Description of the Heritage Assets

7.46 At the centre of the manorial estate was the Manor House, where the Lord of the Manor and his family would have lived. Where the Lord of the Manor held the estate in absentee a bailiff would have managed the estate on his behalf. The manor house would also have been the place where sessions of the manor court were held. There are a large number of courts and manors spread across the District. It is not possible to describe each and every court and manor within the District. Instead key characteristics are summarised and significant sites are highlighted.

7.47 Manorial Estates in England would have varied in size, but typically extended to some 1,200-1,800 acres, but could be much larger or much smaller. Wingham, for example, which was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was surveyed at Domesday as measuring some 35 sulungs. If we use Taylor's calculation of 1 sulung being approximately 160 acres, this would suggest the manorial estate of Wingham extended to some 5,600 acres. Arable land was a key part of the holdings in Dover District, but areas of pasture and woodland would also have made up the estate. Within the manorial estate orchards, granaries, deer parks, fish ponds and warrens may have been provided.

7.48 The centre of the medieval manorial estate was the manor house. The medieval manor house would have varied in size and form, depending on the wealth of the lord, but generally comprised a principal building containing a **great hall** which acted as the main meeting and dining area with apartments or a **solar** for the private use of the Lord of the Manor. The manorial court would have been held within the great hall. A **kitchen, bakehouse, buttery, and storerooms** would likely have served the manor, either integrated into the main house or as subsidiary buildings and ranges. A private **Chapel** may have been provided for use by the household. The manor house site may also have included farm, subsidiary and other working buildings for the running of the Lord of the Manor's *demesne*. Many of the District's manor houses however would not have developed beyond what we would now consider to be a largish farmhouse.

7.49 Some manors were fortified, partly to protect from casual raiders and animals, but primarily as a show of prestige and wealth. There are a number of moated manor-houses recorded in the District. These include the Scheduled site of **Chequer Court** near Ash. The moat at Chequer Court comprises a



generally wide and water-filled moat, each arm some 60m in length, which has an integral fishpond at the south-west corner and which defines an almost square moat island. The interior of the moat is currently occupied by a house of sixteenth century date, although it is likely that buried archaeological remains of earlier manor houses survive at the site. The moated site at Chequer Court is believed to have been built sometime between 1250 and 1350, which was the main period for the construction of moated sites in the District. A similarly well preserved moated manor site at **Grove Manor** near Woodnesborough is also Scheduled.

7.50 At **Walmer Court** substantial remains of a semi-fortified manor house survive and are designated as a Scheduled Monument. The manor house at Walmer was a substantial stone built building, with a first floor hall at the upper level and undercrofts below. The hall was entered by an external stair via a forebuilding at first floor level and was further enhanced by four corner turrets. The walls of the building are substantial and measure some 1.2 m. to 1.4 m. in thickness and the building, along with the neighbouring

church, was enclosed within a moated enclosure. Pottery of 1150-1175 has been excavated at the site and the main fortified manor house is believed to date to the early twelfth century.

7.51 The Black Death of the mid fourteenth century marked an important juncture in the District's manorial system. Prior to the visitation of plague in the late 1340s labour had been plentiful and cheap and the Lords of the Manor could easily exploit their tenants. Following the Black Death the rural labour pool was vastly reduced, more land was available and enterprising peasant farmers were able to extend their holdings and we begin to see the emergence of larger farms. Following the Black Death there was a period of sustained re-building from the late thirteenth to mid sixteenth century and it is from this period that the majority of the District's surviving medieval buildings date. These include a number of timber-framed manor houses such as the Grade II Listed fifteenth century **Hoptons Manor** (formerly a manor of St Radigund's Abbey), **West Court**, near Shepherdswell (a fourteenth century Grade II* manor house) and **Tappington Hall** (an early fifteenth century

Figure 3 Grove Manor near Woodnesborough. Note the Scheduled Moated site in the centre of the picture

4



Grade II* manor house near Denton).

7.52 The majority of the District's medieval court and manor house sites have continued to be occupied in the later medieval, post-medieval and modern period. The manor house rebuilt and modified or extended by their various owners according to the latest style. At **Wingham Barton**, for example, it is suggested that elements of the thirteenth century timber manor house have been incorporated into a later fifteenth century building. Some manorial estate centres later developed into grander country houses and estates and these are discussed in Theme 7.1. Others remained fairly modest in size and continued to be used as farmsteads – see Theme 9. As such, sites of medieval manor houses may have a succession of later buildings overlying them.

7.53 Within the District place-name elements such as Manor, Court, Hall or Place may indicate the site of an earlier manorial estate centre. It should be noted however that such elements were also added to later residences to add a sense of grandeur, and although named as a manor are no such thing.

7.54 A number of key heritage assets are identified in the table at the end of this Theme. The manors and courts listed in the table are those that are Scheduled Monuments, those that have a substantial part of their moat surviving or those that have a substantial part of a pre-1600 building surviving as listed in the Kent Historic Environment Record.

Statement of Significance

7.55 The medieval courts and manors in Dover District have helped to shape and inform the development of the rural landscape of this part of East Kent. They formed an important part of the Feudal structure on which medieval English society was based. The District includes a number of moated sites, of which examples near Ash and Woodnesborough are particularly well preserved, whilst Walmer Court is a good example of a substantial fortified manor house. It is likely that significant buried archaeological remains will survive at other manor sites across the District. Overall as a theme the medieval courts and manors of the District are considered to be of **moderate to considerable significance**.

Evidential Value

7.56 The historic court and manor sites of Dover District have the potential to provide important evidence for the layout, organisation and development of medieval manors. Buried archaeological remains in particular have the potential to provide key information about the day-to-day lives and running of such sites. This information might be enhanced through study of the evidence contained within documents associated with each manor – such as accounts, court rolls, surveys, maps and rent rolls.

7.57 The site of some medieval manor houses may have even earlier origins in the Anglo-Saxon period and may also be superseded by later medieval and post medieval residences. As such the District's courts and manors may contain a combination of important buried archaeological evidence and above ground remains which provide evidence for the evolution of such sites over a number of centuries. It is possible that some of the later buildings which occupy the site of a medieval manor may include earlier medieval fabric



that has been re-used and incorporated into later re-buildings.

Historical Value

7.58 Fortified manor sites such as the moated manors near Woodnesborough and Ash as well as the substantial stone hall at Walmer Court illustrate the historical importance and power of the Lord of the Manor in medieval society. The large number of manorial sites in the District which were under religious ownership illustrates the importance and power of the Church and help to explain how the major institutions of Canterbury Christ Church and St Augustine's Abbey generated their wealth.

7.59 Many of the District's courts and manors have associations with important historical figures such as Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and Hugh de Montfort. The size of lands and the number of the holdings given illustrate the important role that these nobles played in the Norman Conquest.

Aesthetic Value

7.60 The timber built manor houses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are now celebrated for their aesthetic qualities. They are buildings constructed using local materials and form an integral part of the landscape character of the District.

Communal Value

7.61 The manor houses of the District provide a tangible link with the society of the District in the Middle Ages. They are a reminder of the social hierarchies that once governed life in medieval England and in many instances the manor house is still seen as an important building at the heart of a village.

Vulnerabilities

7.62 Archaeological remains associated with the District's medieval courts and manors are susceptible to all forms of development and these need to be carefully managed to avoid

Figure 5 Eastry Court (GI LB - 1250-1732) thought to be on the site of the Saxon royal palace

harm to the significance of these assets. The nature of archaeological remains associated with the earliest phases of the District's courts and manors are often particularly vulnerable, as these early timber buildings may have only left ephemeral remains. Some sites such as Walmer Court, Chequer Court and Grove Manor are designated as Scheduled Monuments. However the majority of archaeological remains associated with the District's courts and manors have no statutory protection.

7.63 Dover District includes a number of surviving medieval manor houses that are Listed at Grade II or II*. Designation helps to minimise the vulnerability of these surviving structures to change and to secure them for the future. Nevertheless as historic structures they still remain vulnerable to change. Encroachment on their setting could harm their historic character, whilst the need to maintain these places as modern family homes can often bring with it desire for change and development which needs to be carefully managed and sympathetic to the significance of the asset. Medieval structures can be expensive to maintain and careful and long-term maintenance is required to ensure that their fabric does not deteriorate. Issues relating to climate change could potentially exacerbate such deterioration.

Opportunities

7.64 The medieval court and manor sites in Dover District present an ideal opportunity to connect people with the local history and heritage of the place that they live in. Manors often have excellent documentary records associated with them such as accounts, court rolls, surveys, maps and rent rolls. Study of these documents, perhaps as part of a community or parish survey/project, could help to better understand the history of the local community.

7.65 Walmer Court is an important

Figure 6 Walmer Court and moat



defended medieval manor of a type that is relatively rare nationally. The site is currently in private hands and there is no public access. If possible, opportunity should be sought to better link the medieval defended manor house into the story of the development of Walmer. The southern wall of the manor house forms part of the boundary to St Mary's Church which is believed to be contemporary and consideration should be given to providing interpretation of the manorial history of the site to visitors to the church.

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Key Heritage Assets

Asset	Form	Designation & Protection	Accessibility	Interpretation
Chequer Court, moated site	Buried Archaeology, Earthworks and Historic Structures	Scheduled Monument & Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Grove Manor, moated site	Buried Archaeology and Earthworks	Scheduled Monument & Grade II Listed Building (barn)	Private property	None
Old Walmer Court	Buried Archaeology, Earthworks and Historic Structures	Scheduled Monument & Grade II Listed Building (church)	Private property	None
Crixhall Manor, moated site	Buried Archaeology and Earthworks	None	Private property	None
Coldred Court, medieval manor house	Historic Building, Buried Archaeology and Earthworks	Scheduled Monument and Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None?
Shingleton Manor, manorial enclosure	Buried Archaeology, Earthworks and Historic Structures	Scheduled Monument	Private property?	None
Weddington, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Tappington Hall, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II* Listed Building (hall)	Private property	None
Oxney Court, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Great Everden, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
West Court, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II* Listed Building	Private property	None
Solton Manor, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Wingham Barton, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II* Listed Building	Private property	None
Rowling House, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Halton Court, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None

Asset	Form	Designation & Protection	Accessibility	Interpretation
Wallets Court, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II* Listed Building	Private property	None
Ham Manor, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Cottington Court, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Malmains, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II* Listed Building	Private property	None
Paddledock Manor, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Hoptons Manor, medieval manor house	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade II Listed Building	Private property	None
Eastry Court, medieval manor	Historic Building and Buried Archaeology	Grade I Listed Building	Private property	None