

Shepway District Council

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



FROGHOLT



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## INTRODUCTION

- 1 A Conservation Area (CA) is, by law, an area of special architectural and historic interest. The purpose of this appraisal is to help us understand why Frogholt is special and provide a framework for keeping it that way. Its character, or specialness, needs to be defined. What is happening to it needs to be documented and analysed. What should happen in the future needs to be celebrated, guided and well managed.
- 2 This appraisal forms one of a series of 14 such appraisals, commissioned by Shepway District Council. Original designation came into effect on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1990.
- 3 This appraisal has been undertaken using the methodology of the English Heritage consultative '*Guidance on conservation area appraisals*', 2005. Annual reviews and 5 yearly updating are recommended. A companion guide, '*Guidance on the management of conservation areas*', recommends a procedure to follow the appraisal.

## PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the process of assessment, definition or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for CA's as well as the identification and protection of listed buildings. Authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA, or in the case of listed buildings, to have special regard for their preservation in the exercise of their powers under the Planning Acts.
- 5 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15, for local and other public authorities, property owners, developers, amenity bodies and the public, sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, CA's and other elements of the historic environment. Shepway Council's District Plan includes its statutory policies for implementing the Acts and applying the PPG. This Appraisal should be taken into account when considering, applying for or determining planning or listed building applications within the CA.
- 6 The underlying objective of the relevant legislation and guidance is the preservation or enhancement of character or appearance of CA's. Any proposed development which conflicts with that objective should normally expect to be refused. PPG 15 and local policy support a presumption in favour of preservation of any building or object which is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of a CA. At the same time, the need to accommodate change which respects or reinforces the character of the area in order to maintain its vitality is recognised. Regard must also be had to the requirements of other national guidance, including PPG16 covering archaeology and PPS 1, which includes policies on sustainable development and urban design.

- 7 Many local planning policies, not just those relating to design and conservation, can affect what happens in a CA. For example, policies on sustainable development, meeting housing needs, affordable housing, landscape, biodiversity, energy efficiency, transport, people with disabilities, employment, town centres and many others can all influence development and the quality of the environment in CA's. However, policies concerned with design quality and character generally take on greater importance in CA's. The adopted District Plan's chapter on Built Environment covers conservation and design matters. The key policies of this chapter state:

POLICY BE3

- 8 When considering new CA's or reviewing existing CA's the following criteria will be taken into account:

The area is:

- a. of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance;
- b. includes sufficient buildings of historic and/or architectural interest, listed or unlisted, to give a strong character;
- c. includes sufficient good quality hard and/or soft landscape;
- d. shows strong relationships between buildings, and buildings and open spaces that create a sense of place;
- e. one which either illustrates local architectural development or an area of one architectural period which remains largely in its original condition.

POLICY BE4

- 9 The District Planning Authority will:
- a. refuse CA Consent for the demolition of buildings which contribute to the character or appearance of a CA;
  - b. refuse proposals for infill or backland development which would adversely affect the character of a CA;
  - c. require the height, scale, form and materials of new development, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, to respect the character of CA's;
  - d. seek to retain materials, features and details of unlisted buildings or structures which preserve or enhance the character or appearance of CA's;
  - e. seek to retain the historic patterns, plot boundaries, building lines, open spaces, footways, footpaths and kerblines which are essential to the character or appearance of CA's;
  - f. protect trees and hedgerows which enhance both the setting and character of CA's.
- 10 Other policies dealing with historic or built environment matters are BE 1, 2 and 5-19.

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

- 11 Greater restrictions on “permitted development” apply in CA’s than elsewhere. In CA’s any Article 4 Direction in force further restricts householder development without planning permission as well as the erection of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure. Anyone contemplating alterations, extensions or new building should familiarise themselves with the policies set out above and consult the Council’s Planning Department for advice on how to apply for permission and whether the proposal is likely to be acceptable.

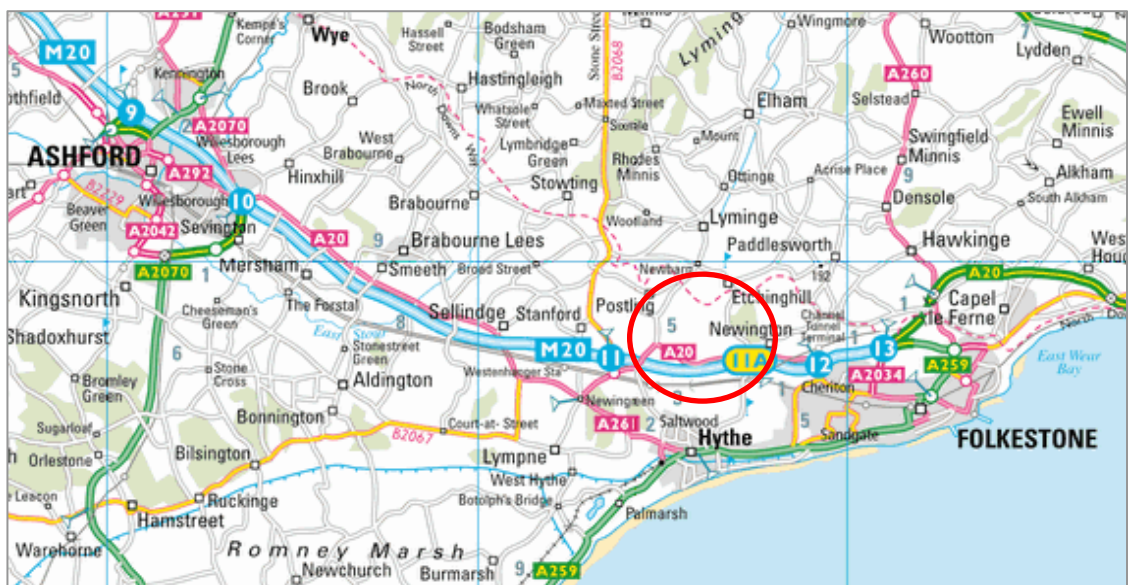
**BOUNDARIES**

- 12 Frogholt consists of a single lane that runs due north from the Ashford Road and follows a curve to the west terminating at a vehicular dead end. The CA boundary encompasses the entire hamlet and provides protection to the surrounding trees that contribute to its setting.

**SUMMARY of SPECIAL INTEREST**

**Location & setting**

- 13 Set in the Parish of Newington, Frogholt is a tiny settlement of 8 dwellings situated close to the North Downs in south east Kent. Located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) it is largely unchanged since the C18<sup>th</sup> and maintains a distinct identity and sense of place, even with it’s close proximity to the M20 and Folkestone Eurotunnel Terminal.
- 14 The hamlet is set in a valley and is well obscured from view by mature trees. Areas of ancient woodland lie directly to the north of the area. The Seabrook stream, originating in the north west near Etchinghill, runs through the hamlet on it’s route to the south coast.



- 15 The area enjoys good connections for both national and international travel. Westenhanger Station, approximately 3 miles to the west is on the South Eastern Main Line and 65 miles from London's Charing Cross. Directly to the south the M20 motorway connects with Ashford International Station and the Channel Tunnel's high-speed rail link. Ashford is approximately 15 miles to the north west and Folkestone 4 miles south east. Stone Street (the B2068 and old Roman Road) lies to the west linking with Canterbury approximately 16 miles distant.

### Historic development & archaeology

- 16 There is evidence of widespread clearance and extensive agriculture in the area from around the beginning of the Iron Age. Farming must always have been the principal occupation, although forestry too would have been of importance throughout this once densely-wooded part of the county.
- 17 Frogholt was once on the route of what was historically the road between Ashford and Folkestone. The lane through the hamlet is thought to be pre-Conquest in origin. The road heading northwards from neighbouring Newington would have allowed the villagers to trade with the market town of Elham, and ultimately with Canterbury, while routes to the south east linked it with the former ports of Hythe and West Hythe.



*Frogholt's Newington Mill, which has now completely disappeared to make way for the M20 and associated Channel Terminal connections.*

- 18 Newington Mill, once part of the village but now demolished, would have played a key part in the local community, since the mill was an essential part of the agricultural industry on which prosperity depended.

- 19 During the 1980's the area underwent unprecedented change and the very existence of Frogholt, Newington and Peene (neighbouring villages to the east), was under threat due to proposals for the new rail terminal and Channel Tunnel. Fortunately, their sacrifice was avoided and an amendment to the terminal access road was negotiated to avoid the three villages being completely surrounded by roads and traffic.

### Map regression

- 20 Frogholt itself has changed very little since Edward Hasted's 1793 Historical and Topographical Survey of Kent (Appendix 1). Referred to as 'Frogwell', the hamlet clearly shows a small cluster of houses around the main Ashford to Folkestone Road running west to east, with Newington Mill visible to the south.
- 21 In the Tythe map (circa 1840) 'Frogwell' has transmuted to 'Froghole' and it is around this time that construction of the South Eastern and Chatham railway took place, providing a rail service from London to the south east of England.



*View of Frogholt ( taken from where the A20 now exists) before the new road to bypass the village was constructed. The stream in the foreground fed the Mill which is just out of sight to the left.*

- 22 There is no change evident between the OS maps of 1898 and 1907. It is not until the map of 1938 that Frogholt starts to show evidence of the impact of the C20th. The newly constructed Ashford Road (A20) appears, effectively separating Newington Mill from the hamlet and furthermore it's change in name to 'Mill House' suggests it's cessation as a working mill. Also around this time two dwellings in the village appear to have been demolished and rebuilt to form what is now referred to as 'Weyside' and 'Frogdene'.
- 23 Today's map of the area (Appendix 2) shows backland development with the addition of Stewart Cottage within the curtilage of Magpie Cottage. The dwelling,



referred to in previous maps as 'Bank House', has been changed to 'Brook Cottage' and the road through the village has become a vehicular dead end. To the south of the Ashford Road, just outside the CA boundary, the Mill has been demolished to make way for the M20 and associated Channel Tunnel links.



*Above: View into the CA from the Ashford Road  
Below: View looking out of the CA towards the North Downs.*



### **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

#### **Key views & vistas**

- 24 Frogholt is a picturesque hamlet nestled in a hollow, with an attractive group of dwellings. Views along the course of it's single lane are for the most part pleasing to the eye, as are the far reaching views looking out from the CA over farmland and fields towards the backdrop of the North Downs. Mature trees and hedgerows add to the setting and make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Activity, uses & influence on layout & building types

- 25 With its close proximity to Newington (in its day an active and thriving farming community providing the local church, ale house - and in later years a school) Frogholt appears to have grown simply as a cluster of small farmsteads around the Seabrook Stream and the local mill. The ancient buildings of the village are of the local vernacular, and would have originally been relatively humble homes serving the local farming community.

### Architectural & historic qualities & contribution to special interest

- 26 Four of the eight dwellings in Frogholt are Grade 2 listed. Brook House, the first building on entering the hamlet from the Ashford Road, is timber framed of around C17<sup>th</sup> or earlier with C20<sup>th</sup> additions. Consisting of a main range and cross wing on a galletted stone plinth, its front elevation is of grey and red brick in Flemish bond under a plain tile, hipped roof. Screened from the road by mature shrubs, it sits in a generous plot with the Seabrook Stream running through its garden.



*Brook Cottage*

- 27 Further into the hamlet, Magpie Cottage is a well maintained late C18<sup>th</sup> timber framed house set at right angles to the road. Mathematical tiles are evident to the left gable end and the front elevation is weather boarded with a plain clay tile roof. Previous records indicate that the building was once thatched.



Above: Magpie Cottage shows gable end with mathematical tiling;  
Below: Old Kent Cottage



- 28 Perhaps the most unusual building in Frogholt is the picturesque timber framed hall house, Old Kent Cottage, dating back to the early C14<sup>th</sup>. With its thatched roof, a jettied overhang at one end and a cruck-like construction above, it sits on a stone plinth at right angles and directly on the edge of the Seabrook stream.
- 29 Frogholt Manor (previously Frogholt House), dates from around C17<sup>th</sup> or earlier and is another timber framed building with later C19<sup>th</sup> and C20<sup>th</sup> additions. Its ground floor is galleted stone with brick dressings and the first floor is tile hung under a plain tiled roof. There is long single story stone extension to the right gable end.



*Frogholt Manor*

### **Contribution made by key unlisted buildings**

- 30 The architectural qualities of Frogholt are, for the most part, those of the local rural vernacular, with all the buildings appearing well maintained and contributing to the sense of place.



*Frogdene, a relative newcomer to the hamlet, was built circa 1920's. It is well maintained and makes a positive contribution to the CA's sense of place*

### Prevalent local and traditional building materials & the public realm

- 31 Predominant building materials in the CA are brick, timber and tile. The traditional local brick is soft-textured and of a warm orange-red colour, often alternating with blue-grey burnt brick. The other masonry type seen in the village is Kentish ragstone, a mid-grey uncoursed rubble with quoins and window-dressings of brick. Reddish-brown clay tile is the dominant roofing material and is uniform throughout the village. Tile-hanging and weatherboarding is also in evidence.

### Greenery, green spaces & ecology

- 32 Frogholt is nestled in an AONB. Trees, boundary hedges and verges are generally well maintained and add to landscape quality and an overall sense of place. The use of post and rail fencing and low walling further increases the sense of space and enhances visibility. Furthermore, the green spaces that lie outside the CA are as important to its character as those within it. Access points leading to footpaths and the open countryside are accessible from the lane.

### Negative & neutral factors

- 33 The most recent C20<sup>th</sup> developments in Frogholt are relatively harmonious, and a good attempt has been made to use materials appropriate to the setting.
- 34 Efforts have been made to minimize the visual impact of the recently constructed M20 and associated Channel Tunnel infrastructure by way of additional landscaping and tree planting to the south of the CA. This has resulted in some success in maintaining the visual quality, however noise pollution is an issue.



*The Folkestone EuroTunnel terminal is visible in the distance to the east of the hamlet.*

**General condition, problems, pressures and the capacity for change**

- 35 Frogholt is quite unique in that it has remained nothing more than a small hamlet - a little scattering of buildings set among fields, pasture and woodland. It is still possible today to read this historic identity.

**INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY**

- 36 In accordance with English Heritage advice, the Council's brief included a requirement to involve key stakeholders in the appraisal process. The principal means was by a questionnaire, the content of which was agreed with the Council, requiring careful consideration and in some instances detailed responses. Careful regard to the questionnaire responses has been paid in this text.
- 37 The questionnaire was sent to 2 groups and individuals as advised by the Council. Of these, no responses were received.

**SUGGESTED BOUNDARY REVISIONS**

- 38 No boundary amendments are recommended.

**LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE**

- 39 The most common threat to the character of a CA are erosion of detail, inappropriate alteration or extension and uncontrolled, disfiguring householder alterations such as UPVC windows. Fortunately, Frogholt has to date avoided the blight of UPVC. Control of development outside the CA boundaries affecting character or setting is already provided for by way of Government policy Section 4.14 of PPG15 which refers to Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

**Article 4 Directions**

- 40 The introduction of Article 4 Directions is recommended. Their purpose is to prevent further harmful alteration to the exteriors of single family houses by removing the rights to make changes allowed under permitted development rights. The following are examples of what can be controlled:
- a. Any changes to roof coverings.
  - b. Certain roof lights and solar panels.
  - c. The erection of fencing and boundary walls.
  - d. The removal of walls, fences or any other boundary treatments.
  - e. The erection of sheds, garages and outbuildings.
  - f. The formation of hard standings.
  - g. Painting or rendering of natural masonry.
  - h. Any extensions or conservatories.
  - i. Any changes to doors and windows.
  - j. Any changes to elevations of the building that are visible from the public highway.

## MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS / STRATEGY

### Design guidance

- 41 A local design guide is desirable in order to inform building owners of best practice with regard to maintenance, repair and reinstatement, as well as what the Council is likely to consider acceptable by way of design, alteration and extension of property. This could include topics on the design, layout and density of any new development as well as traffic, parking and circulation issues. Reference to the scope of a future Management Scheme and details of any Article 4 Directions is also recommended. In the interim, the IHBC/SPAB guide, A Stitch in Time, directed at householders and downloadable from the IHBC website, is recommended for publicising and distribution. Encouragement to reverse inappropriate changes to historic buildings is desirable.
- 42 The main problems and pressures identified above should be addressed in this guide. Topics could include:
- Description of principal design features
  - Extensions
  - Building materials and details
  - Roof conversions and dormers
  - Rain and foul water systems
  - Chimneys
  - Porches
  - Windows and doors
  - Garages and parking spaces
  - Garden buildings
  - Fences, walls and hedges
  - Trees and landscape
  - Communication aerials
  - Reinstating lost features
  - How to make an application
- 43 Issues concerning works within the public realm, which are within the control of the Council, should be grouped together for inclusion in a policy document for implementation by the Council or County Councils, as appropriate. Specific guidance on the importance of co-ordinated design of objects, installations and surfaces within the CA, and of collaboration between Council services to that end should be included. A comprehensive audit of street furniture and signs would be an essential preliminary towards de-cluttering the public realm
- 44 Consideration should be given in the Management Plan Stage to the development of a detailed local evaluation tool which would be more objective in measuring development proposals, whether alterations or new build, against the key characteristics of the CA, or its character areas, as appropriate.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Contact details

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### Further information

For design guidance on a range of matters including boundary treatments, highways and traffic management and building materials, the following publications can be downloaded from [www.kentdowns.org.uk](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk)

- Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook
- Kent Downs Streetscape Handbook

### Bibliography

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*Kent in the 50's*, Reginald Turner, reprinted 1978

*The History & Topographical Survey of Kent*, Edward Hasted (1778)

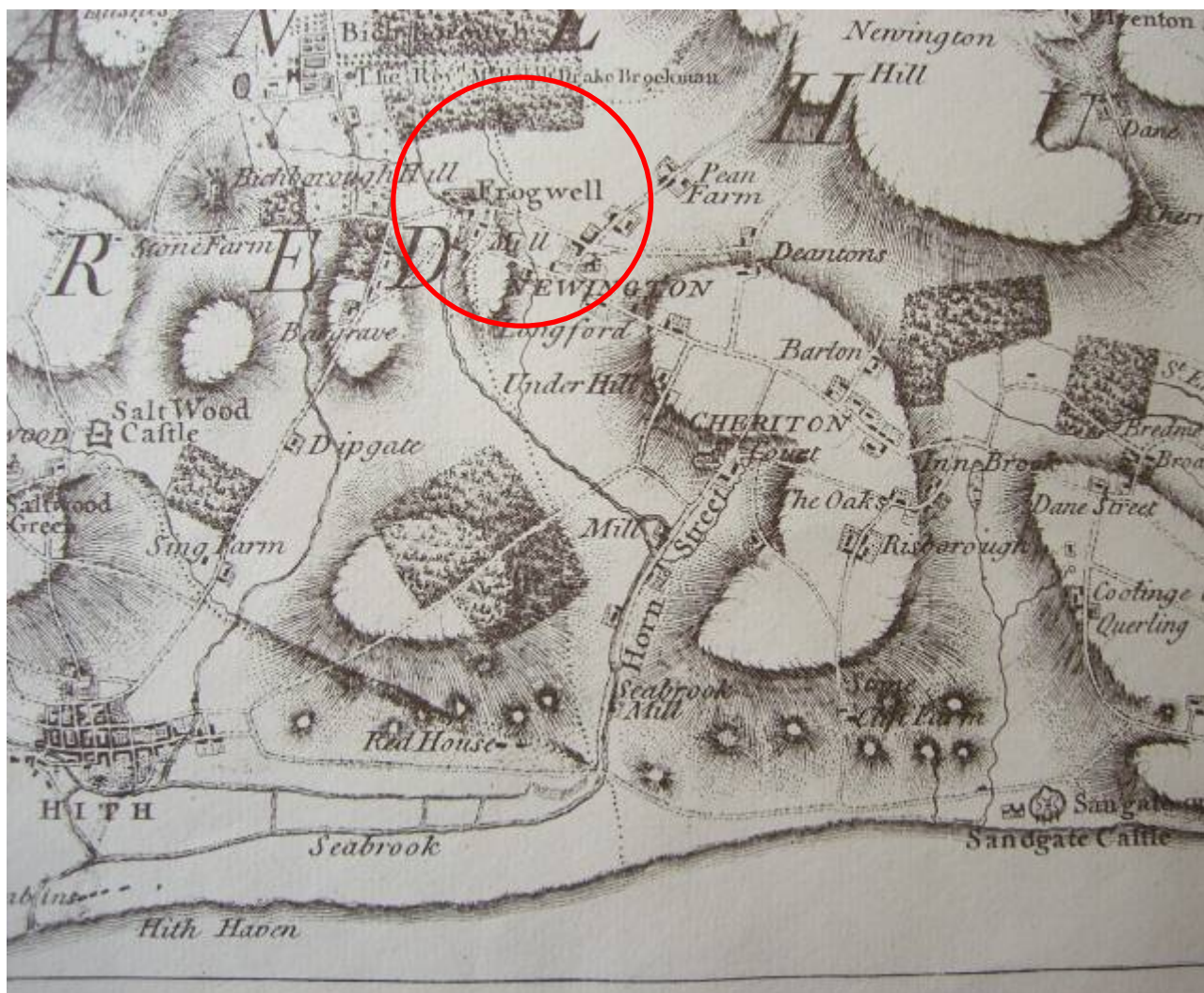
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*The Literary Guide and Companion to Southern England*, RMCooper, 1998

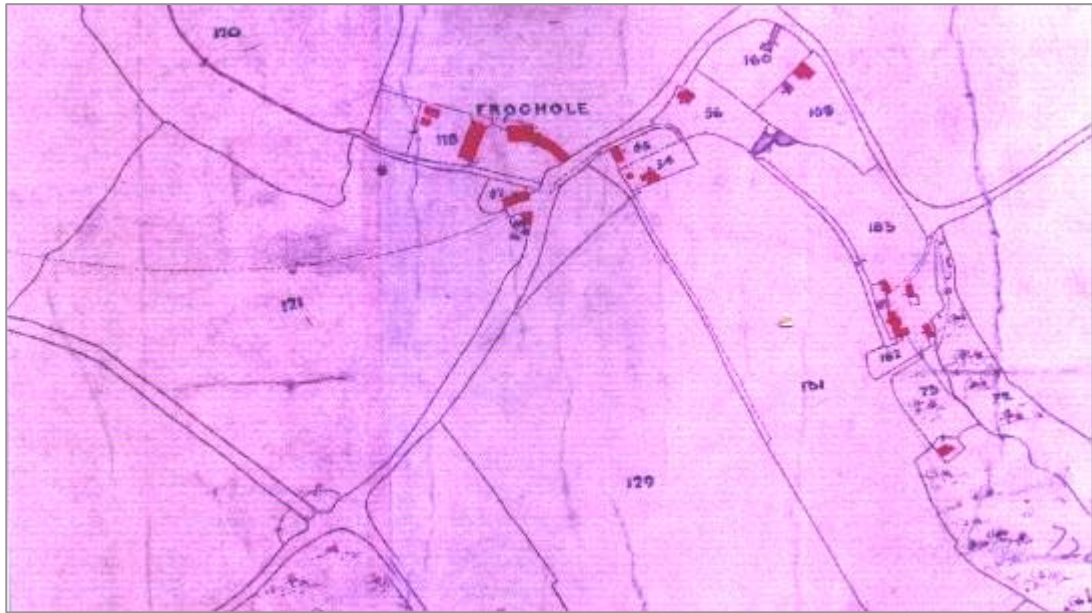
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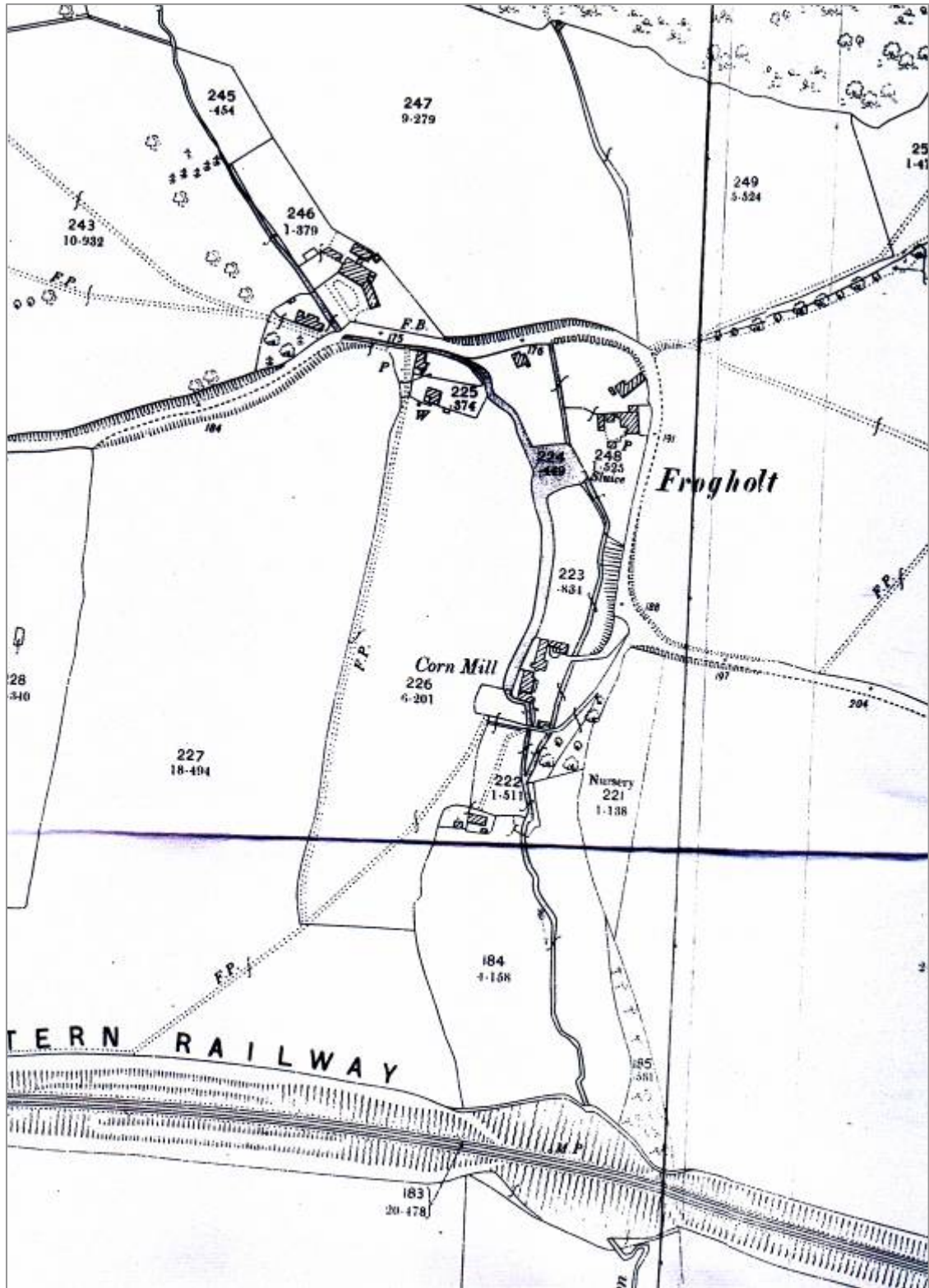
**APPENDIX 1**  
**HISTORIC MAPS**



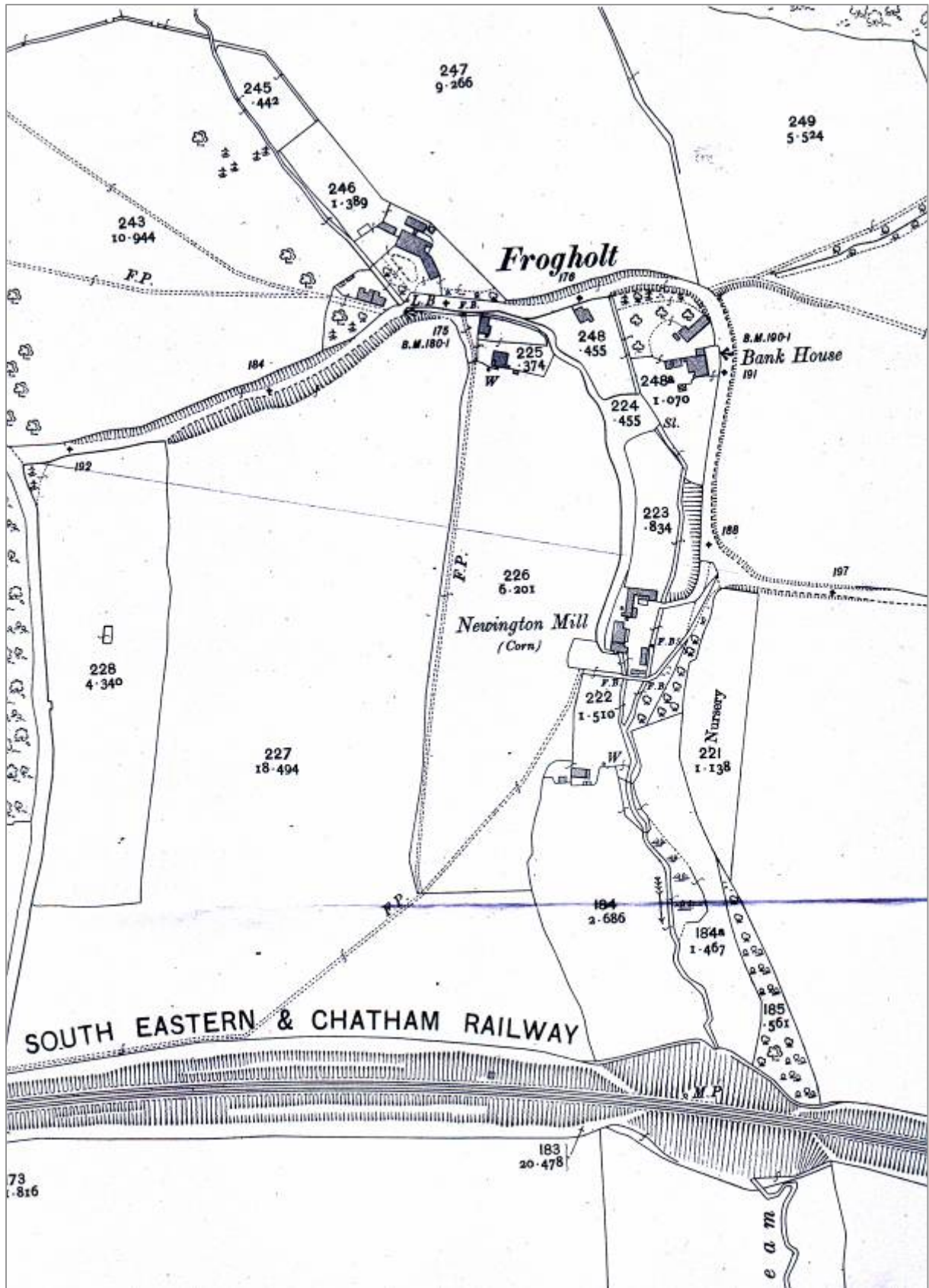
Historical and Topographical Survey of Kent  
Edward Hasted 1793 (2nd Edition)



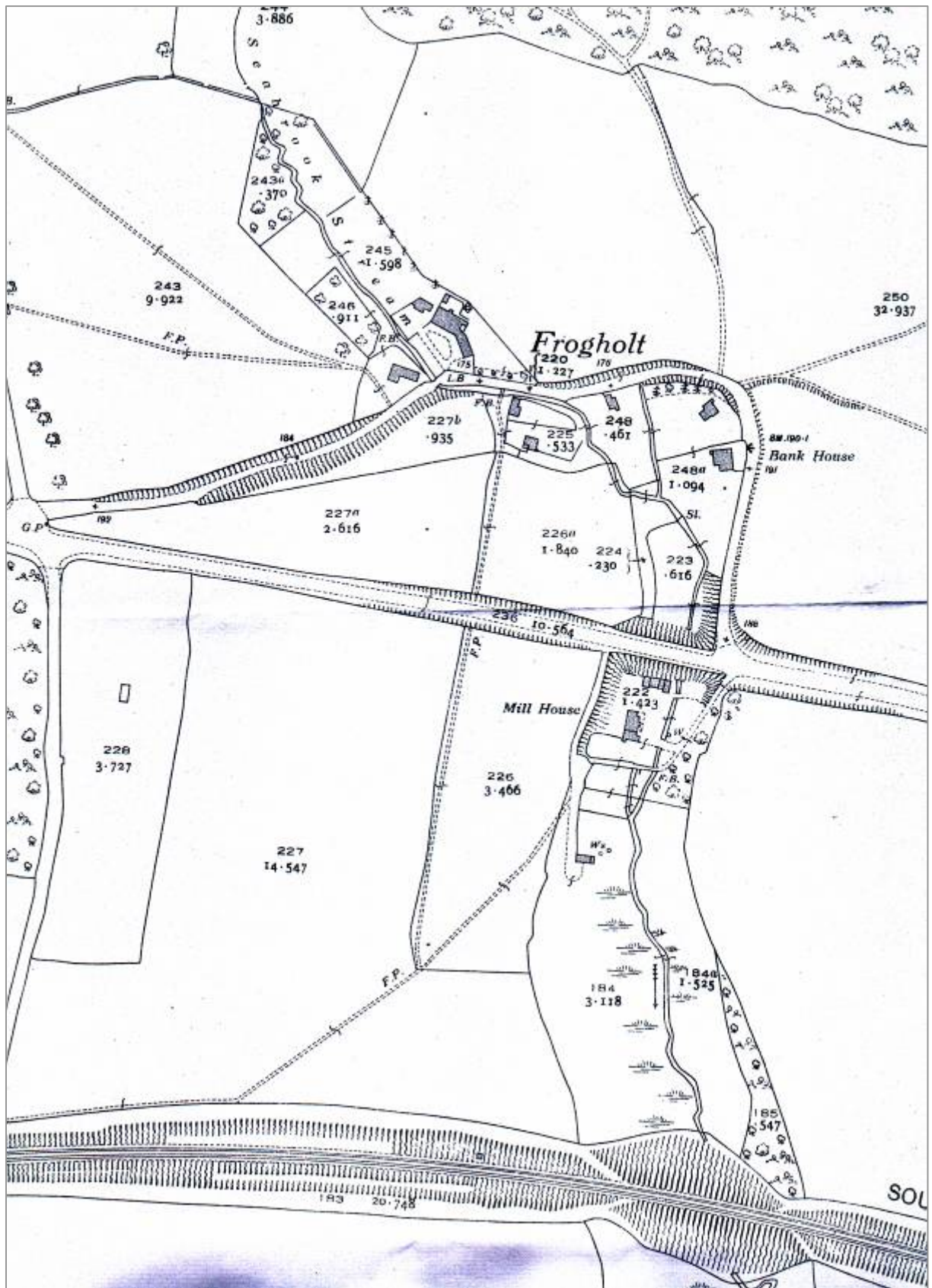
Tythe Map c 1840



1898 OS map 1<sup>st</sup> edition



1907 OS map 2<sup>nd</sup> edition



1938 OS map 3<sup>rd</sup> edition