# The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Dover



Marke Wood Recreation Ground







# **Marke Wood Recreation Ground**

Walmer, Dover, Kent

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#### INTRODUCTION

This site description and accompanying dossier have been prepared by the Kent Gardens Trust as part of its wider review of *The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens*. This part of the review was carried out for Dover District Council (DDC) from 2015-2017 and covers sites within the Dover local authority area. The reports detail the historic nature, content, current state and significance of the sites currently identified in the *Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens* for the Dover local authority area along with others identified by DDC.

#### Dover District Heritage Strategy.

The Dover District Heritage Strategy 2013 (DDHS) seeks to ensure that heritage plays a clear role in shaping any future regeneration, development and management decisions. To achieve this aim the DDHS contains a series of recommendations intended to promote and enhance the protection and enjoyment of the Districts heritage assets. A heritage asset is defined as a "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)"<sup>1</sup>.

The review carried out by the Kent Gardens Trust supports the following DDHS recommendations:

- Recommendation 9: Systems should be put in place to ensure that historic environment information and advice is readily accessible to local communities to help them shape the places in which they live.
- Recommendation 14: a Local List of Heritage Assets should be developed...gardens identified within the Kent Gardens Compendium and any enhancement of the Compendium should be included in the Local List.
- Recommendation 23: Opportunities should be sought and support given to local communities, groups and individuals in researching their past, develop projects with them that identify, enhance understanding of the Districts heritage assets and involve them in condition assessment, monitoring, management, promotion and interpretation of the assets:

## How was the review carried out?

The review has been undertaken using Historic England's criteria for identifying the significance of local heritage assets to provide a consistent approach<sup>2</sup>. A template for the reports was developed by DDC, building on the experience of previous work by the Kent Gardens Trust. The heritage values of the historic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework 2012

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Historic England "Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance" 2008

park or garden subject to the report are defined within the Statement of Significance.

The extent of the area identified represents the current surviving area of the designed landscape, the boundary line generally reflecting the maximum extent of the historic gardens or parkland (although there are exceptions such as where land has been irreversibly lost to development). The boundary line takes no account of current ownership.

## How will the reports be used?

- a) The revised list of sites has the potential to support development of a Local List<sup>3</sup> of Heritage Assets in Dover, should the Council progress with the recommendation in the DDHS in the future. The list of sites researched and evaluated in this review would be subject to consultation as part of any Local List development and is therefore not intended to be final.
- b) In response to recommendation 9 of the DDHS, the reports will be made publically available both on the DDC website and to the Historic Environment Record held by Kent County Council.
- c) The reports will help to inform future funding applications for historic spaces by the identification of significance.
- d) The review will help to inform future policy making, conservation and/or any development of sites, and contribute to the understanding, and where possible enjoyment, of these heritage assets by the identification of the significance of key historic character, features and association including that of setting and viewpoints.

Further information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Dover District Council
White Cliffs Business Park
Dover
CT16 3PJ
www.dover.gov.uk

Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Invicta House County Hall Maidstone ME14 1XX www.kent.gov.uk

Kent Gardens Trust www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk

<sup>3</sup> Historic England "Local Heritage Listing": Historic England Advice Note 7 2016

#### MARKE WOOD RECREATION GROUND

KENT WALMER DOVER

TR 3750 5074

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### HISTORICAL

An early C20 recreation ground and children's playground donated to the local council by Mrs Marke Wood and her daughter. The local council extended the area in the 1950s and created a formal garden, parts of which of which survive. An early C20 avenue divides the ground, most of which remains.

A granite memorial fountain, unveiled in 1930, records the gift of Mrs Marke Wood.

The site is a typical example of the provision of public open space in the early C20, often, as here, enabled by generous benefactors, designed to provide recreational areas within new housing developments.

#### **AESTHETIC**

The tree avenue together with other large trees in the rear gardens of the surrounding properties provide a tranquil setting. The level ground creates an ideal recreation ground location and provides an important area of open space in the landscape of the parish.

#### **COMMUNAL**

This public park was the response of Walmer UDC in the early C20, to the demand for a recreation ground as housing development increased the size of the town. It is still enjoyed as a public amenity and valuable open space, by the local community.

#### SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

An early C20 sports ground and children's play area. Formal gardens and an avenue containing specimen trees probably of early C20 date, provide the main features to this open space. The area is surrounded by the rear gardens of early C20 housing containing large trees which adds to the tranquil setting.

#### CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The area which was to become Marke Wood Recreation Ground, lying between Lower and Upper Walmer on the east side of the A258 Dover Road, was farmland throughout the C18 and C19. The tithe map of 1843 indicates that the

Recreation Ground is situated on part of Court Great Field of 44 acres, denoted as arable land, which was owned by the Trustees of Walmer Court and farmed by Smithett Spain. The Trustees at that time owned most of the surrounding land and houses, with Smithett Spain given as 'Occupier' of 360 acres of farmland on the tithe award schedule. George Leith (1722-1810) had purchased the Manor of Walmer Court in c1789 and having bought 100 acres around Walmer Castle in 1765. Following his death, his elder son, George J P Leith (1755-1831), inherited the estate and was appointed Captain of Walmer Castle from 1800 to 1831. The estate passed to his great nephew, George Leith (1814-52), and then to his younger brother Frederick Leith (1818-1899) on his elder brother's death (Eastkenthistory.org.uk).

The military presence at Deal during the C19 increased the population and prosperity of the town. This created a demand for good housing, so that by the 1860s the 1st edition OS map (1862-1875) shows that the northern end of the Court Great Field had been converted into Archery Square (then known as the Green Park) overlooked by new housing. The 2nd edition OS map (1897-1900) shows further extension of this housing and similar development elsewhere on the outskirts of Deal, which lies immediately to the north. In December 1896, Walmer Estates Company Limited purchased '12 acres and 8 perches' of the northern end of the former Court Great Field. This was followed by a further purchase of '15 acres and 1 rood', in January 1897, of the remaining southern section as far south as a recently constructed new road called Granville Road (Abstract of title of the purchase of Marke Wood Recreation Ground by Deal Borough Council).

By 1907, Walmer Estates had sold various building plots along the Dover Road, the sale documents suggesting that the perimeter of the land, which had been purchased in 1897 and 1898, had been subdivided into eighty four separate building plots, each with a frontage onto the surrounding roads. In 1907, two additional building plots were sold behind new housing in Dover Road, with access to these plots being via a suggested new road from Warwick Road. This proposed road was not constructed but the intention to construct it may explain the short avenue of mature trees now (2016) found along the line of the planned route. These two plots were subsequently combined to extend the garden of the house in Dover Road. In June 1913, Walmer Estates went into liquidation and the assets were conveyed to the parent company, Transvaal and Rhodesian Estates Limited, a mining company (Abstract of title of the purchase of Marke Wood Recreation Ground by Deal Borough Council).

In the early 1920s, Walmer Urban District Council, which had been looking for a suitable recreation ground, had approached Mr Leith, the largest land owner in the district, to purchase land between Balfour Road and Downs Road on the west of A258 Dover Road. As this land had been earmarked for housing, the cost of purchase of £4000 was considered to be too high by the council. The council had also considered purchasing part of the grounds of Walmer Castle, but these grounds were held in trust and could not be sold. The minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Parks Committee of Walmer UDC dated 5 February 1926 record that the clerk was instructed to enquire, from Transvaal and Rhodesian

Estates Limited, the lowest price for the purchase of 10.6 acres of land to the east of the A258 Dover Road (Kent History and Library Centre ref UD/Wa/AM15).

Transvaal and Rhodesian Estates offered to sell the land for £2000 and Mrs Angus Marke Wood (1843-1927), who occupied Walmer Place immediately east of the ground, offered £1000 towards the cost. Mrs Wood subsequently increased her offer to £2000 but died on 18 May 1927. Her wish was for the ground to be made into a playground for young children of school age. On 1st September 1927, Mrs Wood's daughter, Rosamond Contessa Di Santelia (1881-1965), purchased the land for £2000, gifting it to the council for use as a park or recreation ground playing field. The sale documents record that the land had previously been owned by Walmer Estates Company Limited and members of the Leith family (Kent History and Library Centre ref. UD/Wa/C/89).

The purchased land was set back from the five enclosing roads, Liverpool Road to the east which was the old coach road between Dover and Deal, Granville Road to the south which had been constructed at the end of the C19, Dover Road to the west built about 1800 as the Turnpike Road between Dover and Sandwich, and Clifton and Warwick Roads to the north, constructed in the early 1900s. Access to the ground was via two strips of land from Warwick and Granville Roads, the frontage along the four roads being retained for building development. At the time of the purchase, most of the Dover Road frontage had been developed for housing except for an approximately 100m length at the southern end. Walmer UDC considered purchasing this vacant frontage at development rates as this was cheaper than having to provide drainage services to any properties built on this land which lies below the high tide level (Kent History and Library Centre ref UD/Wa/C/89).

On 26th July 1930, a memorial fountain was unveiled to mark the opening of the grounds. *Walmer The Official Guide 1931* (Deal Library), describes the Ground thus:

An extensive new ground in a central position has recently been provided by the magnificent gift of Contessa di St. Elia, of Walmer Place, in memory of her mother, the late Mrs A Marke Wood. Spaces are set apart for cricket, football and hockey, and for children's play, and the new ground is planted with shrubs and provided with sufficiency of seats.

In January 1927, Transvaal and Rhodesian Estates sold two building plots, nos. 18 and 19, fronting Liverpool Road, for £80 each, to John Henry Allwork and William James Edwin Mose respectively, Allwork subsequently selling his plot to Mose in March 1928 for £80. Rosamond Contessa Di Santelia bought these two plots from Mose in January 1929 for £220 and later that month purchased plots 2-17 and 20-23 from the liquidator of Transvaal and Rhodesian Estates which had been wound up in March 1928. Rosamund had also inherited from her mother plots 80-84 which her father had purchased from the North and Mercantile Insurance Company in October 1909, so that she now owned all vacant building plots along Liverpool Road (Abstract of title of the purchase of Marke Wood Recreation Ground by Deal Borough Council).

The liquidator of Transvaal and Rhodesian Estates sold the Dover Road frontage of fifteen plots (nos 52-66) to Edmund Herbert Hind (Estate Agent) in July 1929, for £750. Hind sold these plots to Ernest Cavell, Emily Cavell and Albert Henry Cavell for £1250 in March 1933 who then sold thirteen of them to Herbert Gibbon for £1745 10s, in October 1934. Walmer UDC was merged with Deal Borough Council in 1935, and the Borough purchased eleven of these plots. in April 1955, for £1728 from Marshall R Gibbon who had been given power of attorney by Herbert Gibbon who was now residing in India.

Contessa Di Santelia sought planning permission (CH/I/54/79) in September 1954, for the building of houses along the Liverpool Road frontage which was refused by Kent County Council in January 1955, on the grounds that the land was required for an extension of Marke Wood Recreation Ground. Dover BC records include correspondence from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in May and October 1957 awarding £3424 compensation as planning permission for residential development had been refused, resulting in the Contessa selling these former building plots to Deal BC for £775in May 1957 (Abstract of title of the purchase of Marke Wood Recreation Ground by Deal Borough Council).

Since the Borough's purchase of the Dover Road and Liverpool Road frontages in the 1950s, the extent of Marke Wood Recreation Ground has remained unchanged. On 1 September 1999, Dover District Council conveyed Marke Wood Recreation Ground in trust to Charles Sports Ground Charity, along with Charles Sports Ground, home of Deal Town F.C., although the land along Liverpool Road purchased from the Contessa was excluded from the transfer (Dover D C legal records).

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

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

Marke Wood Recreation Ground lies between Deal and Walmer, immediately to the east of the A258 Dover Road and approximately 200m from the sea to the east. Dover lies 12km to the south-west and Canterbury is situated 25km to the west.

The approximately 6ha site is bordered on the majority of the southern, northern and western sides by the rear garden boundaries of private houses which are formed of a variety of timber and chain link fences, hedges and brick walls. The eastern boundary along Liverpool Road consists of a 1m high concrete post and steel rail fence, set back approximately 2m from the pavement, with occasional pedestrian access gaps. A line of semi-mature trees including beech, fir, oak, silver birch and cherry has been planted inside the boundary fence. A 1.2m high yew hedge, planted in the early 2000s, provides the boundary screen to the 100m southern end of the western boundary, where the Ground is adjacent to the Dover Road.

The recreation ground is flat and lies approximately 5m above sea level, but is protected from flooding during high tides by a higher land barrier and a shingle

bank to the east. Large mature trees in rear gardens of the adjacent properties form intermittent tree belts around the ground perimeter which, with the avenue of trees which run north to south across the western side of the grounds, create a rural setting in an area dominated by domestic housing.

#### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

Marke Wood Recreation Ground can be approached from each of the four surrounding roads: Dover Road to the west, Warwick Road to the north, Liverpool Road to the east and Granville Road to the south. When the ground was created in the 1920s, access was only available from Warwick and Granville Roads as the original purchase of the land did not extend to the Dover and Liverpool Roads, the intervening strip being designated as building plots. The Warwick Road entrance is approximately 12m wide and extends from the road for 35m between adjacent domestic properties, before opening out onto the Recreation Ground. The 6m central section is tarmac surfaced with 3m wide grass strips to either side planted with an avenue of mature alder trees. Parking is permitted between the trees, with vehicular access prevented from entering the Ground by six painted metal posts. The Granville Road entrance is similar, approximately 12m wide and extending 60m between adjacent domestic properties from the road to the Ground. A tarmac access road approximately 6m wide between raised kerbs, forms parking for cars and access to the rear of an adjacent property to the west. Occupying the 3m wide grass strips on either side is an avenue of alders which were planted on 30 September 2005 as a commemorative tree avenue to individual local residents and councillors, the names being recorded on a small plague at the foot of each tree (Walmer Parish Council Amenity and Environment Committee minutes dated 28 September 2005). Some of the trees have not survived. A low wooden post and rail fence at the end of this access road, together with a low galvanised metal locked gate. prevents vehicles entering the ground.

The access to the Ground from the west was created following Deal BC's purchase, in 1955, of an approximately 100m frontage, 55m deep, along the Dover Road. Here, three openings in the yew hedge forming the boundary at the back of the pavement provide the entrances from Dover Road. Centrally along the hedge, two 450mm square brick piers with concrete cappings, supporting an ornamental metal arch, erected in memory of Councillor Mrs Margaret Webber, create the entrance (Parks and Gardens UK website). At the southern end of the hedge, a 1.2m wide tarmac path runs eastwards from the pavement. At the northern end, a flight of six steps flanked by 1m high brick walls capped with concrete coping stones, descends around a 500mm brick planter, into the Ground.

The possibility of access from the east arose following the purchase of the Liverpool Road frontage in 1957 when the Ground was extended eastwards to the road. Gaps in the post and rail boundary fence that stands here, permit pedestrian access into the recreation ground.

#### PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The principal building on the site is the pavilion situated centrally on the western edge of the Ground. It is an approximately 32m long by 8m wide single storey structure with a brick plinth supporting white painted rendered walls and a tiled roof. Two prefabricated garages behind the pavilion each 3m wide by 5m deep, provide storage for grounds maintenance equipment.

#### **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The gardens associated with Marke Wood Recreation Ground lie on the western edge of the Ground adjacent to the A258 Dover Road. This area extends for approximately 100m along the road to a depth of approximately 35m, the land being that purchased by Deal BC in 1955. In addition, a series of rose beds are located in the north-west corner of the Ground adjacent to the boundary fences of private properties which face the Dover and Clifton Roads.

The main gardens are enclosed by a 1.2m high yew hedge along Dover Road, a wooden fence at the northern end, a coniferous hedge along the east side screening the tennis courts behind, and a brick boundary wall along the southern edge. Perimeter paths, either 1.2 or 1.8m wide, of concrete paying stones. together with a central path running east/west, provide easy access around the gardens. Four longitudinal flowers beds parallel to the perimeter paths contain a variety of shrubs and perennials including buddleia, geraniums, cornus, laurel and hellebores, together with a variety of seedlings which have been allow to grow, highlighting the current (2016) lack of maintenance of the gardens. Seven semi-mature sycamore trees have been planted in the grass area within the flower borders, the three at the northern end being a red/copper leaved variety. An aerial photograph taken in 1990, shows that there were originally four trees at the northern end to create planting symmetry. Individual specimen trees, including copper beech and cherry, have been planted alongside the hedge forming the Dover Road boundary and the brick boundary wall at the south end of the garden.

The 1990 aerial photograph shows that the gardens were previously laid out as a series of at least twenty four rectangular beds arranged in a symmetrical pattern around the central path. Photographs held at Dover Museum and Bronze Age Boat Gallery show these beds full of standard and bush roses. The entry on the Parks and Garden UK website, written in 2007, records that the garden contained over 3000 roses.

The central path incorporates a raised bed within a 800mm high circular brick wall containing roses and a plaque denoting that it is dedicated to the Pilgrims Hospice in East Kent. Another raised bed, rectangular in shape within 500mm high brick walls, planted with begonias during the summer period, is located at the northern entrance off the Dover Road. This bed is surrounded by concrete paving stones which lead eastwards to a short flight of six steps down to a 2.2m wide concrete paving path under a pergola. This structure is formed from ten pairs of brick piers, 300mm square and 2.3m high, spaced approximately 3m apart, supporting timber beams and crossbeams. These extend eastwards for 30m to the limit of the garden, where an additional eight piers, 3m high, provide support to a circular wooden framework. The pergola now (2016) carries a variety

of climbing shrubs and plants such as wisteria and passion flower (currently overgrown and in need of maintenance). Photographs taken during late C20, held at the Dover Museum and Bronze Age Boat Gallery, suggest that this pergola previously extended further east alongside the tennis courts and that it was planted with climbing roses.

In the north-west corner of the Ground are three longitudinal flower beds parallel to the perimeter fence surrounding a circular central bed, all planted with roses and young specimen trees including crab apple.

On the western edge of the site, between the main garden area and the rose beds, lies the children's play area, approximately 35m square, which was refurbished in the mid 2000's. OS maps of the 1950s show the play area as less than half its current size. In front of this area (some 20m northeast of the pavilion) stands a memorial fountain, erected to commemorate the opening of the grounds on 26 July 1930. The fountain, unveiled by Earl Beauchamp, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, comprises a Cornish granite base and shaft encircled by a troupe of five life-sized children in bronze relief, with the inscription 'tis love that makes the world go round'. Originally, the plinth incorporated two drinking fountains, now (2016) no longer working.

Four tennis courts occupy the area to the east of the Dover Road gardens, along the south-west edge of the Ground. Tennis courts have been been located here since 1933 and were one of the first facilities to be provided. The original three courts, laid out along the then western boundary, were opened to the public at Whitsun, although Walmer Baptist Church objected to the use of the recreation ground on a Sunday (Kent History and Library Centre ref UD/Wa/C/89). The OS map dated 1967 shows an additional two courts on the western side of the earlier courts. At some time before 1990, an aerial photograph shows that the courts had been reduced to the current four court layout.

An avenue of trees runs from the northern entrance on Warwick Road, southwards across the Ground, passing in front of the rose beds, children's play area, pavilion and tennis courts, following the route of a tarmac path of varying width which connects the Warwick and Granville Road entrances. The trees at the northern end appear to have been planted about 1910 along the line of a proposed access (never built), and include a cedar and several sycamores (3rd edition OS map, 1907-1923). Walmer UDC correspondence files record that an avenue of trees was planted in 1929 to extend the existing line southwards to the southern boundary. Although the 4th edition OS map (1929-1952) suggests a single line of trees, an aerial survey photo taken in 1946, confirms that an avenue had been planted. This southern section includes oak, ash and white poplar. Not all of these trees have survived and two stumps remain, one 500mm high and the other 6m. Some replanting of crab apple has taken place but these trees are suffering from lack of light caused by the adjacent tree canopies.

Many semi mature specimen trees grow along the eastern boundary, probably planted c1960 when the land came under Deal BC ownership. They include beech, fir, oak, silver birch and cherry.

The remaining areas of the site are grassed and accommodate four football pitches in winter which, until recently, doubled as cricket pitches during the summer. A metal shelter is located below the tree avenue at the southern end for those watching football. Numerous benches are provided around the gardens and recreation grounds.

#### REFERENCES

#### Books, articles

Walmer Official Guide, (1931) (Deal Library)
Walmer Parish Council Amenity and Environment Committee Minutes, 28
September 2005 (Parish Council Website)
Walmer Design Statement Group, (2006)
Eira Elizabeth Martin, *An inn and a mansion*, (2015) (Deal Library)

#### Maps

Tithe Map of Walmer 1843 (Kent History and Library Centre)

Ordnance Survey 25"to 1mile: 1st edition (1862-1875) Ordnance Survey 25"to 1mile: 2nd edition (1897-1900) Ordnance Survey 25"to 1mile: 3rd edition (1907-1923) Ordnance Survey 25"to 1mile: 4th edition (1929-1952)

Plan of Marke Wood Recreation Ground purchased in 1927, Dover District

Council legal documents

#### Illustrations

Selection of photographs of Marke Wood Recreation Ground, Dover Museum and Bronze Age Boat Gallery

Aerial photograph 2012, Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group

#### **Archival items**

Tithe Apportionments (Walmer Parish), Kent History and Library Centre Legal document relating to purchase of Marke Wood Recreation Ground 1896-1999, Dover District Council Offices

Walmer UDC Minutes 1918-35 (Kent History and Library Centre ref UD/Wa/AM13-17)

Walmer UDC correspondence on Marke Wood Recreation Ground 1925-1933 (Kent History and Library Centre ref UD/Wa/C89)

Kent Gardens Compendium entry 1996

Parks and Gardens UK entry. Record id 2232

Research and written by Mike O'Brien Harriet Jordan (editor)

Fig. 1 Boundary map

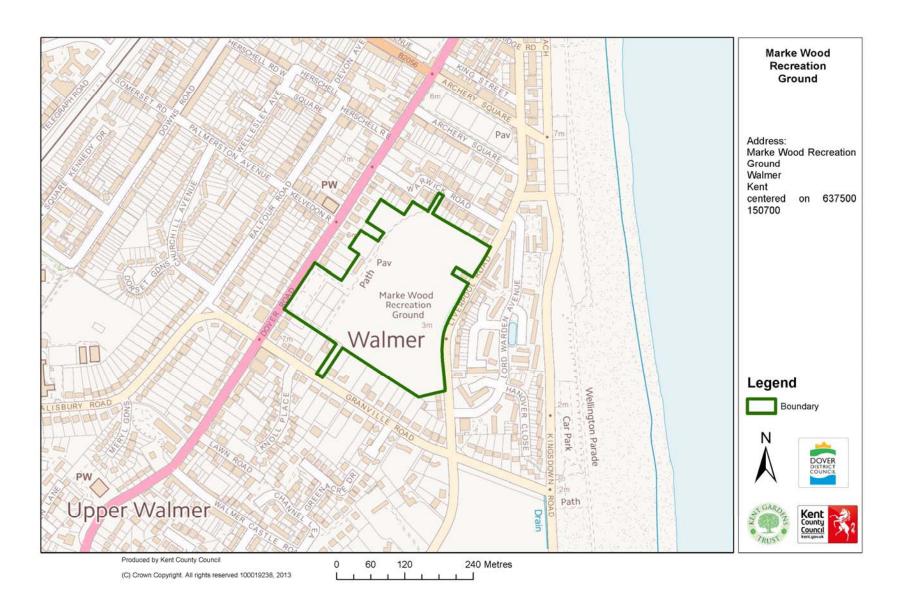


Fig. 2 Key views map

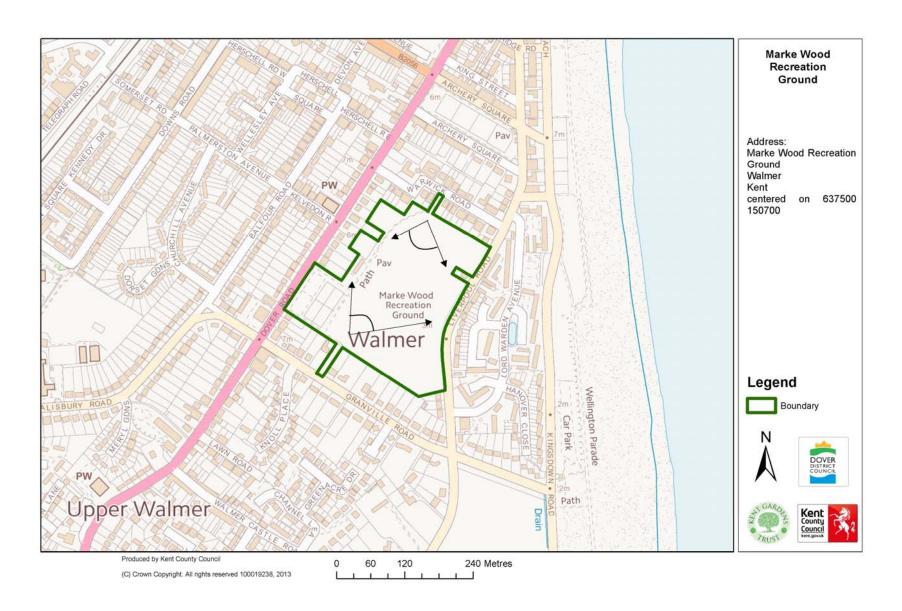


Fig. 3 Map of key features

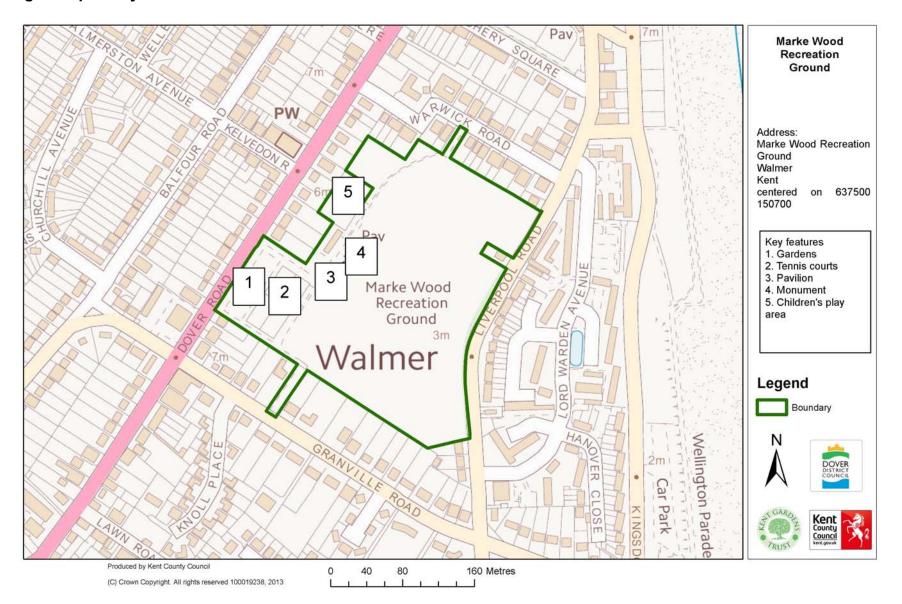


Fig. 4 Aerial photograph (2012)



Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey 1st edn 25" map (1862-1875)



Fig. 6 Ordnance Survey 2nd edn 25" map (1897-1900)

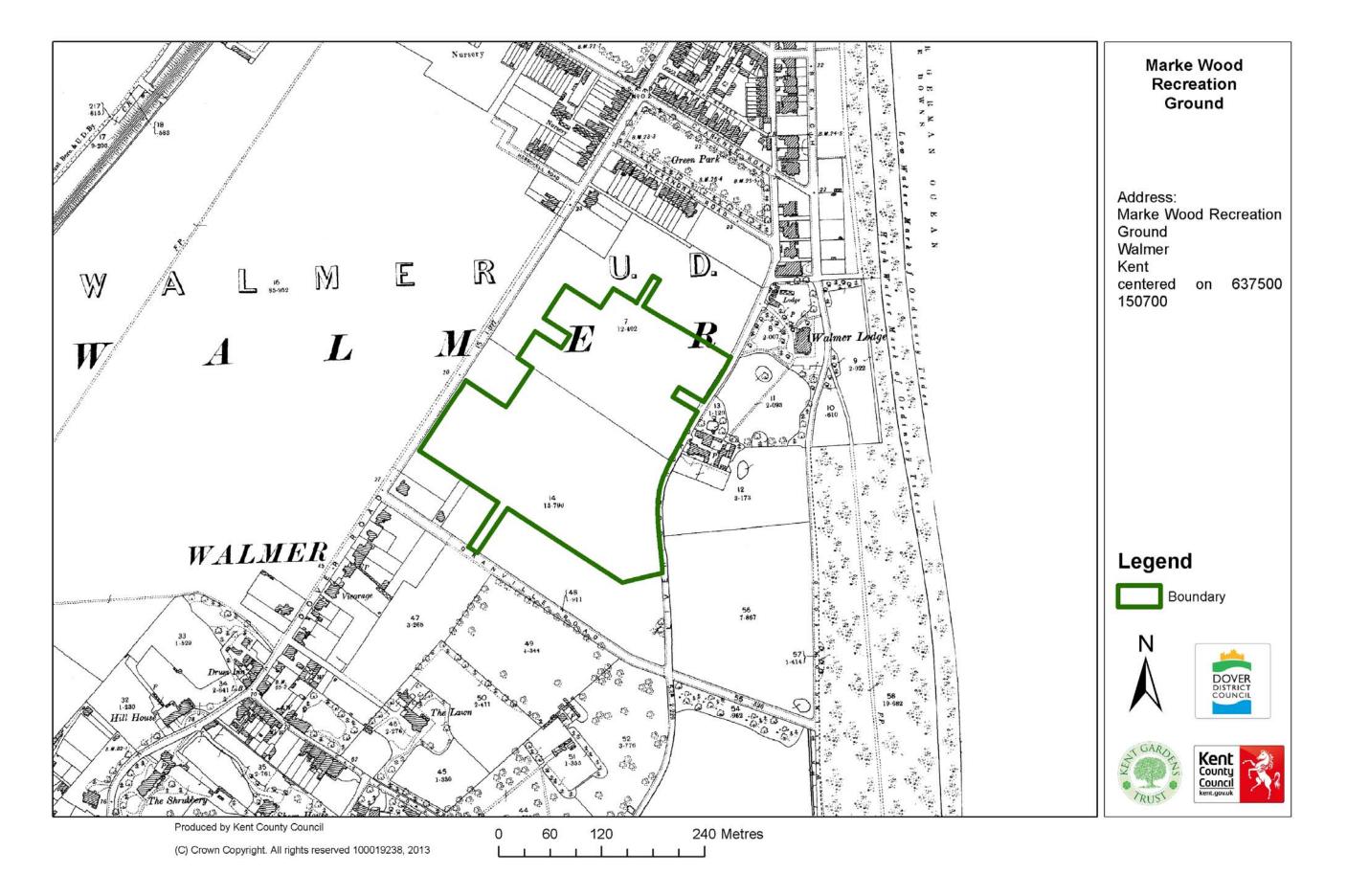


Fig. 7 Ordnance Survey 3rd edn 25" map (1907-1923)

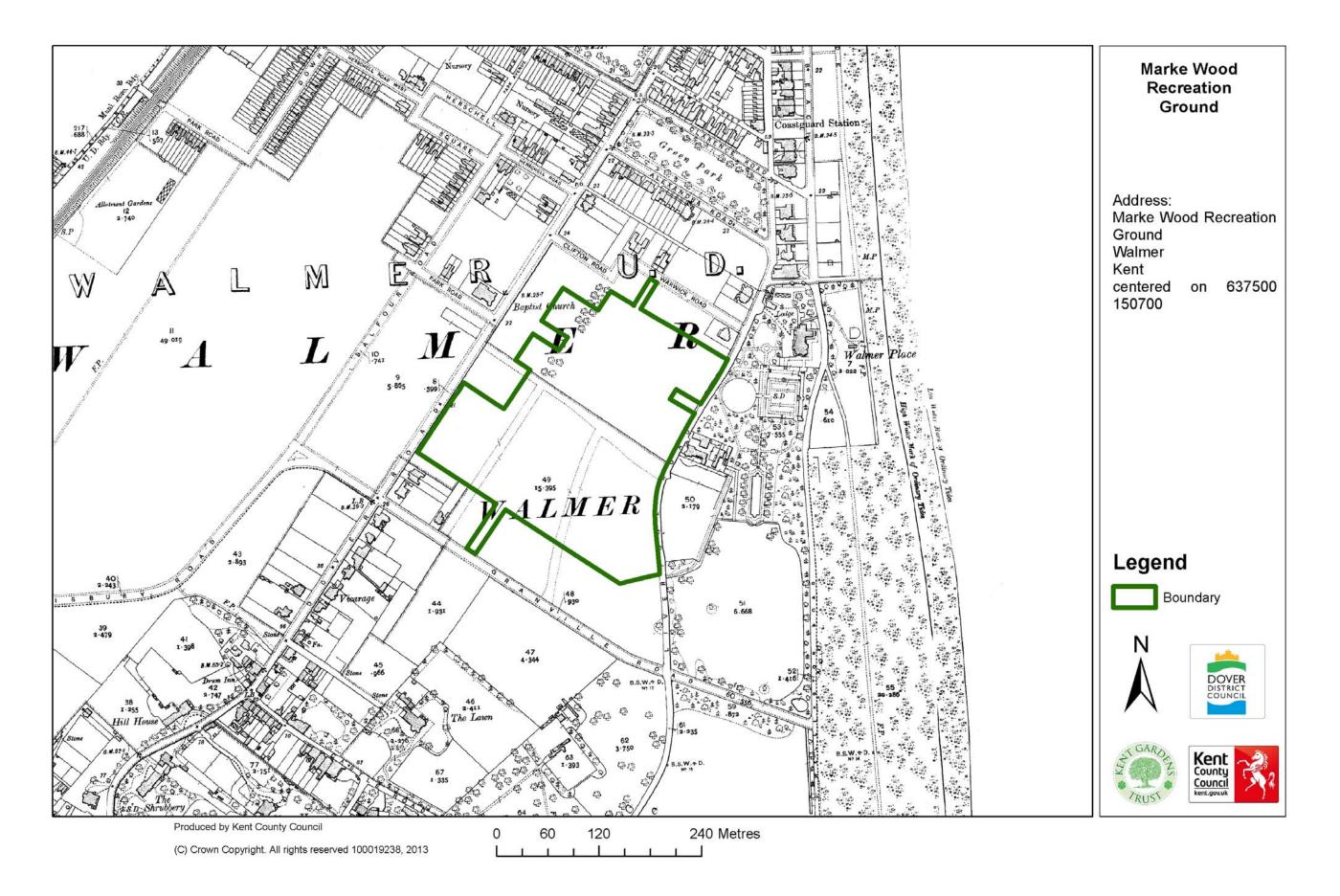


Fig. 8 Ordnance Survey 4th edn 25" map (1929-1952)

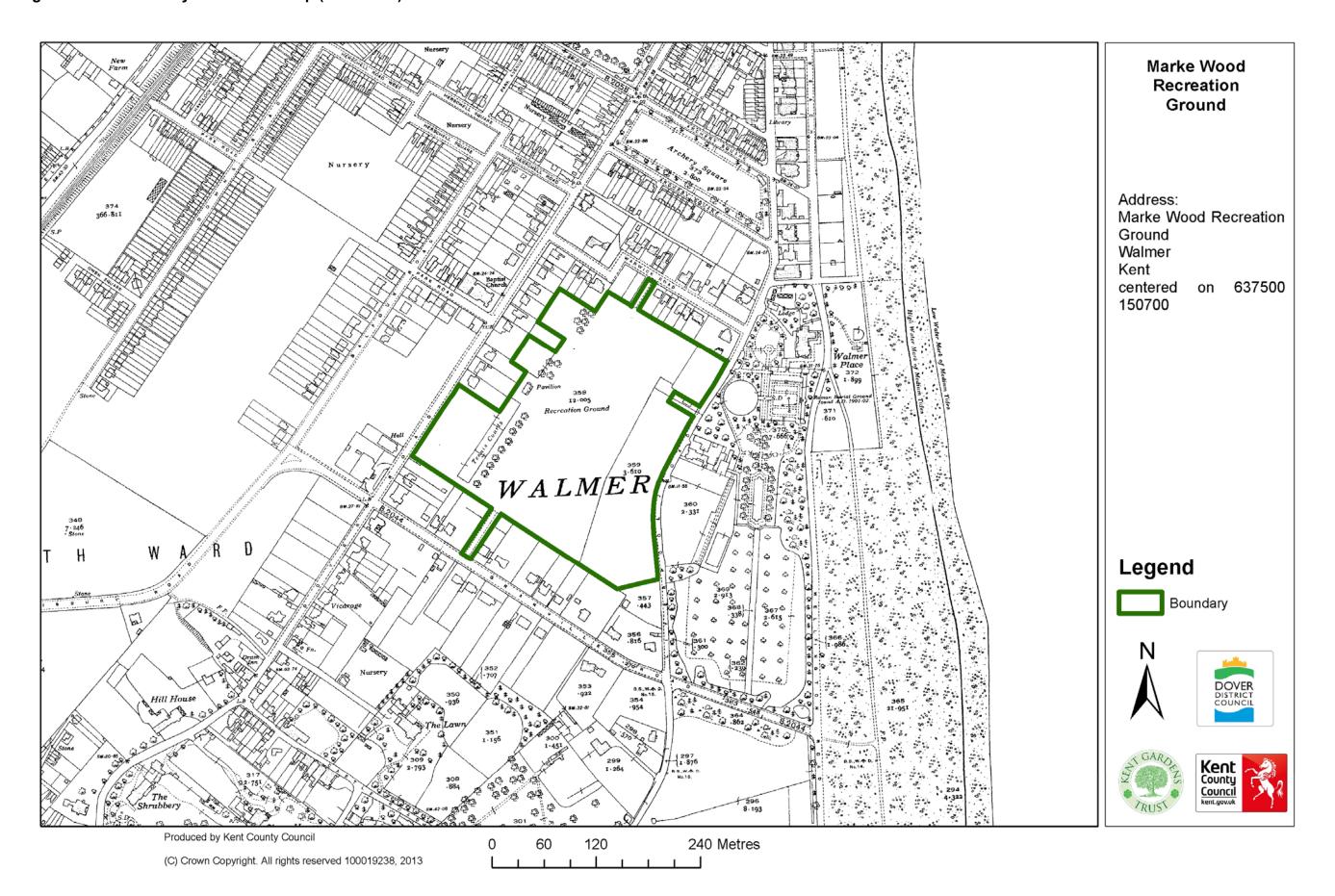


Fig. 9 Plan of Marke Wood Recreation Ground purchased in 1927

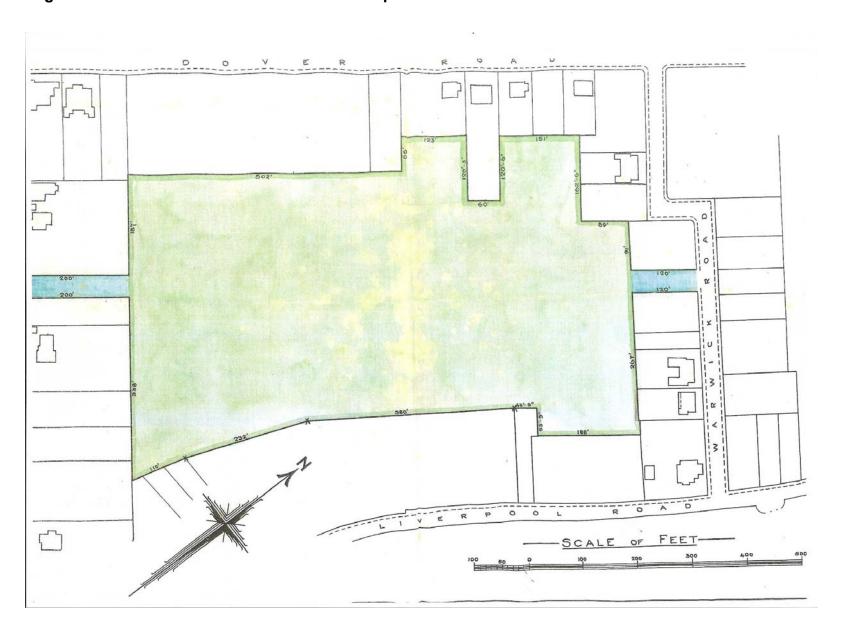


Fig. 10 Rose Pergola late C20

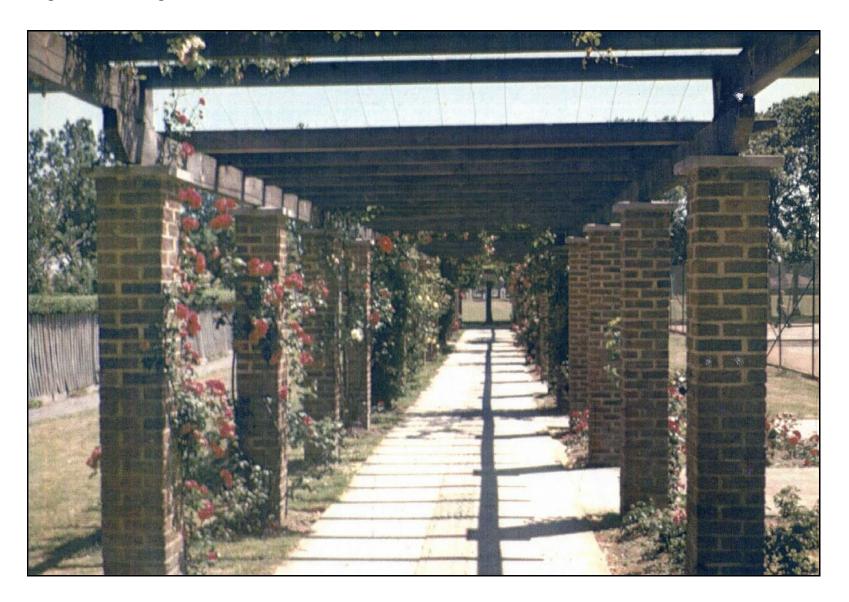


Fig. 11 Rose Garden late C20



Fig. 12 Photograph September 2016 – General view of the Gardens



Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2015-2017 review of Dover District

Fig. 13 Photograph September 2016 – Avenue looking north from tennis courts

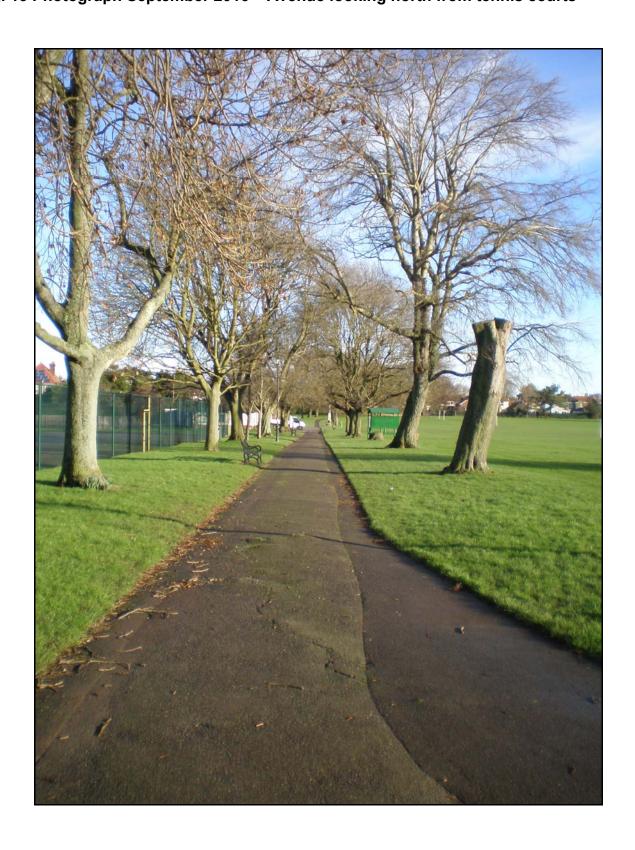
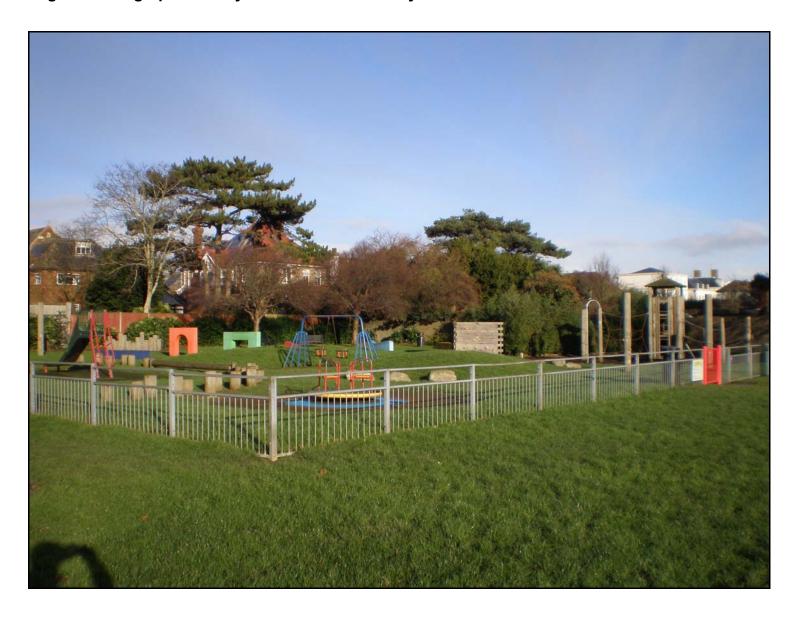


Fig. 14 Photograph January 2016 – Children's Play Area



Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2015-2017 review of Dover District Fig. 15 Photograph January 2016 – Commemorative Fountain

