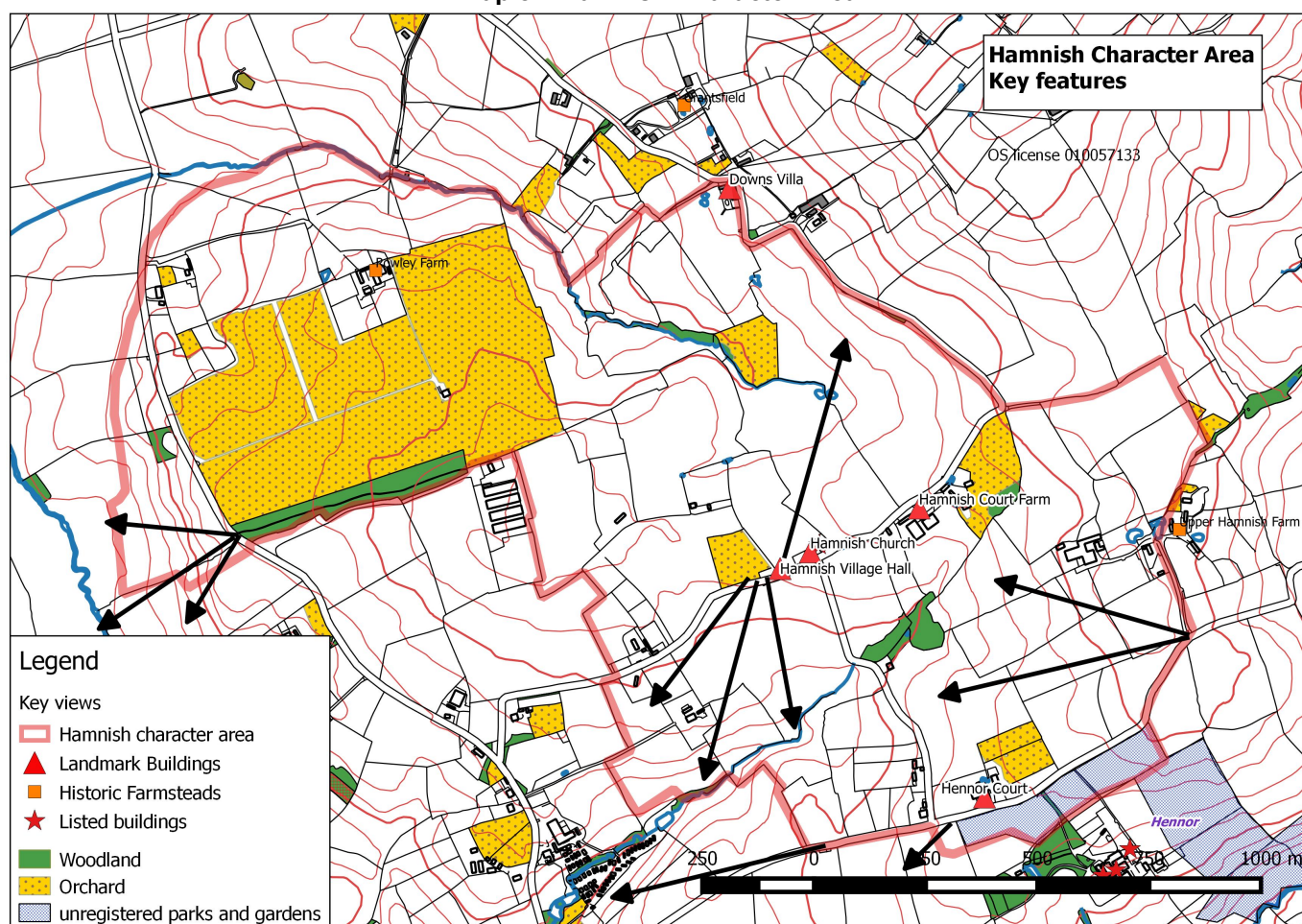


4.3 Hamnish Rural Character Area

4.3.1 Hamnish forms the southernmost part of the Parish and is entirely located within the Bromyard Plateau sub-regional Landscape Character Area. It is also wholly classified as Timbered Plateau Farmland – the dominant Landscape Character Type of the Parish.

Map 8 – Hamnish Character Area



4.3.2 Topography

4.3.3 The area is characterised by elevated gently rolling countryside rising from west to east with the highest point near Hamnish Court in the south-east at 154m AOD. The countryside is bisected by two shallow valleys – the Holly Brook and Whitley Brook both of which drain into the Stretford Brook to the west. The underlying sandstone is visible in a number of locations, including to the east of the Downs Farm.



Image 27 – view west from Hamnish Court showing the elevated, gently rolling topography with extensive tree cover

4.3.4 Land uses

4.3.5 Modern land use consists of rotational arable use, which has encompassed cereals, oilseeds, potatoes and grass leys, noting that the large area of commercial orchard also previously enjoyed such use. This is clearly interspersed with smaller areas of pasture fields and traditional orchard frequently associated with residential dwellings including remnant orchards visible from field patterns at Brock Hall and Bonaventure. Woodland is limited to a small number of copses with the majority of trees being within hedgerows.

4.3.6 Roads, streets, routes

4.3.7 The area is characterised by narrow rural lanes enclosed by hedgerows with wide verges. There is an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways which includes the Herefordshire Trail.

4.3.8 Historic features

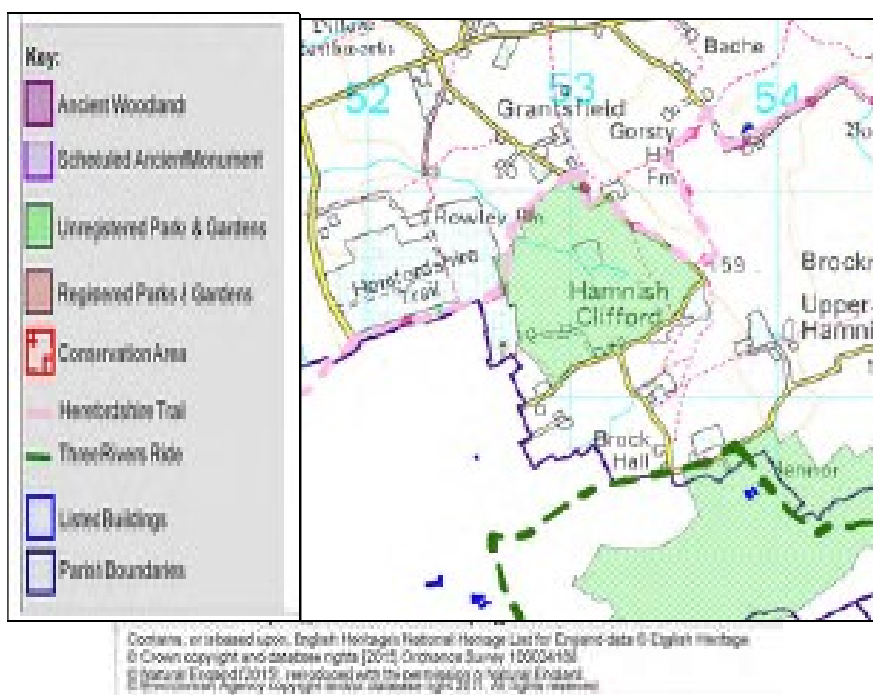
4.3.9 The area contains a number of historic features which provide evidence of settlement across a wide range of eras.

4.3.10 It is possible that the line of the Roman Road which ran south to Blackwardine and north to Stockton Cross and onto the Ride Lane followed a route now marked by the bridleway which crosses the Whittey Brook to the north of Rowley Farm.

4.3.11 The Herefordshire SEA map shown below refers to part of the former Hamnish Deer Park to have possibly been contained within the area boundary. This was a medieval park for keeping deer. It would have been enclosed by a bank and ditch, some of which may still

be seen. The mother house of Leominster Priory, Reading Abbey, produced a charter (dated between 1135-1170) granting 28 acres of land to Walter de Clifford so that he could enlarge his park. For this he had to pay 2 shillings and a white doe skin annually (D Whitehead 'A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Herefordshire', 2001 page 187).

Herefordshire SEA Map extract showing former Hamnish Deer Park



4.3.12 In the southernmost part of the area is an unregistered parkland associated with Hennor House.

4.3.13 There is evidence of ridge and furrow farming in a number of locations in the area including at Downs Farm.

4.3.14 Rowley Farm is identified as a historic farmstead..

4.3.15 Settlement pattern and Buildings

4.3.16 The area has a predominantly dispersed settlement pattern made up of farmsteads and free-standing dwelling houses.

4.3.17 The exception is the small hamlet of Hamnish which contains St Dubricius & All Saints Church, the Village Hall and a number of well-spaced cottages and farmsteads along the road.

4.3.18 The Church was consecrated in 1910 and is in a compact decorated 'Victorian' style built of local sandstone with Corsham dressings. Mr AW Walker of Hennor House donated £1,000 to begin the building and the parishioners raised the balance of £688. Notable features include the stained glass windows installed between 1918 and 1921. Fifty years

later a pair of wooden entrance gates were replaced to commemorate the Golden Jubilee.

4.3.19 The Village Hall is located 50 metres to the west of the Church and is known locally as the 'Tin Tabernacle'. It was erected in 1887 and is an early example of a building that could be bought by mail order and shipped to the colonies throughout the British Empire as a 'flat pack' Mission Church. In 1910 the spirelet was removed and the bell hung in the new stone church of St Dubricius and All Saints. The old building then became the Hall which we see today.



Image 28 – St Dubricius & All Saints Church, Hamnish showing the use of local stone, wide verge to the road and distinctive fence.



Image 29 – Hamnish Village Hall – a distinctive former Chapel replaced as a place of worship in the early 20th century by the building of the Church to the east.

4.3.20 The majority of domestic buildings are of a modest two storey scale of sandstone rubble construction with slate or clay tiled roofs. The older buildings date from the 17th century

and notable examples include Hamnish Court. A feature common to many buildings is the massive stone chimney stack, often associated with a bread oven.



Image 30 – picture of traditional sandstone cottage (with brick infill) with massive chimney stack and bread oven.

4.3.21 Timber structures are rare and are limited mainly to agricultural buildings including the barns at Hamnish Court.



Image 31 – picture of Hamnish Court barns

4.3.22 There are a limited number of free-standing well-proportioned larger dwellings including the early 20th century Downs Villa, Brock Hall and Hennor Court.



Image 32 – Downs Farm – an example of a well-proportioned early 20th century dwelling set in extensive grounds with brick detailing.

4.3.23 These buildings are constructed predominantly of sandstone with brick or stone detailing set in extensive grounds.

4.3.24 Landmarks

4.3.25 St Dubricius & All Saints Church and the Village Hall are the principal landmarks in the area. The setting of the Church in particular gives it a degree of prominence in the wider landscape, particularly when viewed from the north.

4.3.26 Green and natural features



Image 33 – open countryside to the west of Hamnish Village Hall showing the oak trees on the line of a former hedgerow.

4.3.27 The principal natural features are the extensive network of hedgerows and associated hedgerow trees. In a number of locations, including to the south-west of St Dubricius & All Saints Church, the hedgerow trees have survived the removal of the hedgerow itself. Hedgerows are predominantly mixed native species and on the whole are well maintained but with some opportunities for restoration and enhancement.



Image 34 – the broad and shallow valley of the Whittey Brook showing the extensive tree coverage in the hedgerows

4.3.28 The two principal watercourses which run through the area – the Whittey Brook and Holly Brook run through shallow valleys and provide important wildlife habitats.

4.3.29 Views

4.3.30 The elevated location of the eastern part of the area provides a number of far reaching views particularly to the west. The lower-lying western parts of the area have a more intimate character with views secluded by the network of trees and hedgerows. The key views are shown on Map 8.

4.3.31 Summary of key defining characteristics / other observations

4.3.32 The area has a deeply tranquil character made up of gently rolling countryside with an extensive network of fields enclosed by mature and well-treed hedgerows. The settlement pattern is dispersed and the small hamlet of Hamnish contains the distinctive setting of the Church and Village Hall. The elevated topography provides a number of long-distance views particularly to the west. The area contains a number of significant archaeological features which provide evidence of historic settlement over a wide era.

4.3.33 Management guidelines and priorities

4.3.34 The key priorities are:

- Conservation and enhancement of existing hedgerows.
- Conservation and enhancement of traditional orchards
- Conservation and restoration of tree cover along the two key watercourses
- Maintain the dispersed settlement pattern and resist proposals for prominently located large scale buildings.
- Develop a greater understanding of historic elements of the landscape and protect and enhance key features.