

Conservation Area



RIVER WEY

EASTHAMPSHIRE



Partners

Introduction

The River Wey Conservation Area was designated in May 1983. It was designated in order to protect the series of aqueducts built along the River Wey in the 18th century to create an extensive water meadow system.

The section of river designated as a Conservation Area in May, 1983 runs from the County boundary at Hammer Bottom to Headley Mill, passing downstream through Marshes Hollow, Radford, Liphook, Bramshott, Passfield and Standford. Part of the Conservation Area lies in West Sussex.

Character of the Conservation Area

The River Wey Conservation Area is very unusual in that it covers a long stretch of river and has very few historic buildings in it. The river, its valley setting and the 18th century system of water meadows combine to create an historic landscape which is worthy of protection.

The southern branch of the River Wey rises in the hills surrounding Haslemere and flows for 15 miles westwards then northwards in an arc through Hampshire to re-enter Surrey near Frensham.

The River Wey flows through a predominantly rural landscape of ancient woodlands, meadows, alder carr, pastures, fen, grasslands, sunken lanes, and past fine individual trees. This range of landscape characteristics has resulted in a number of wildlife habitats and an extensive array of flora and fauna.

The river system varies as it passes through Hampshire, flowing through wide, open spaces at some points and through narrow pinchpoints in others. These natural features of the river system have been exploited by mankind throughout the centuries, both for farming and industrial purposes.



Pophole Sluice



Passfield Sluice



Hewshott Bridge.

Up to a dozen watermills were built along the Wey and were associated with iron working, grain milling, paper making, cloth making and related industries. Many of these mills are still in existence and include:

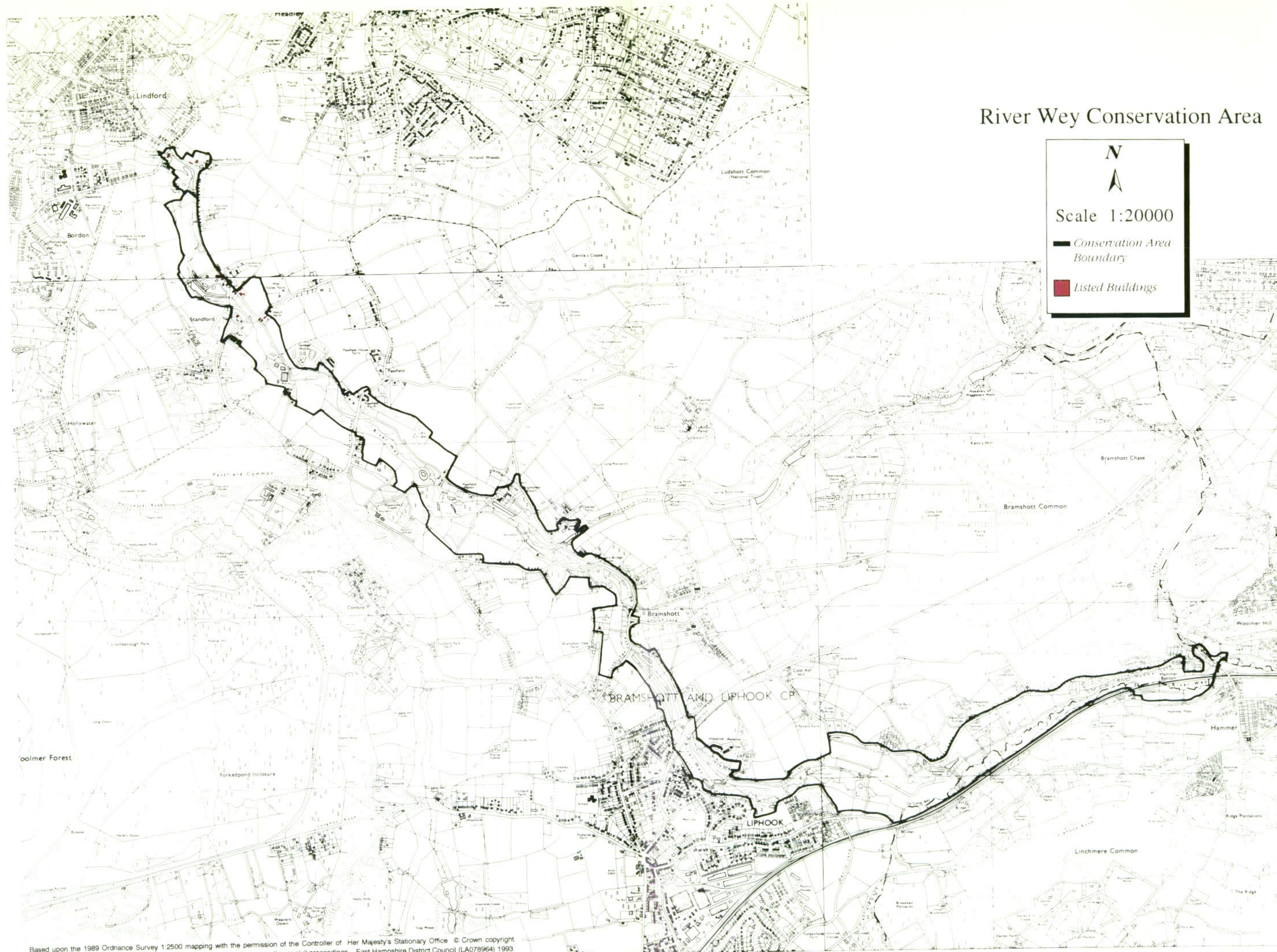
- **Headley Mill** : built of stone and forming a continuous range of sixteenth century buildings.



Headley Mill.

River Wey Conservation Area

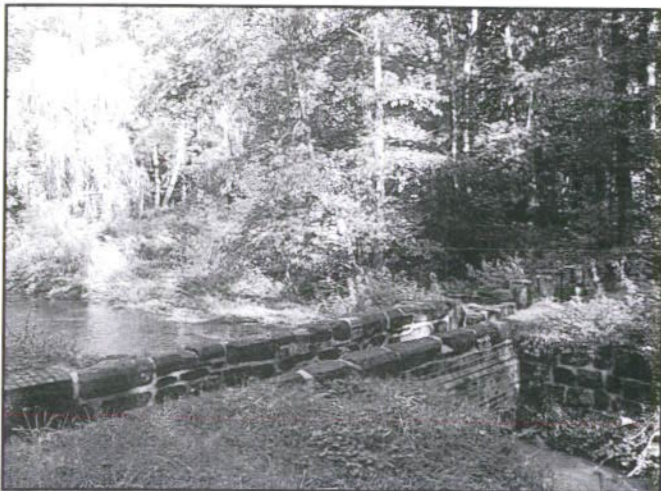
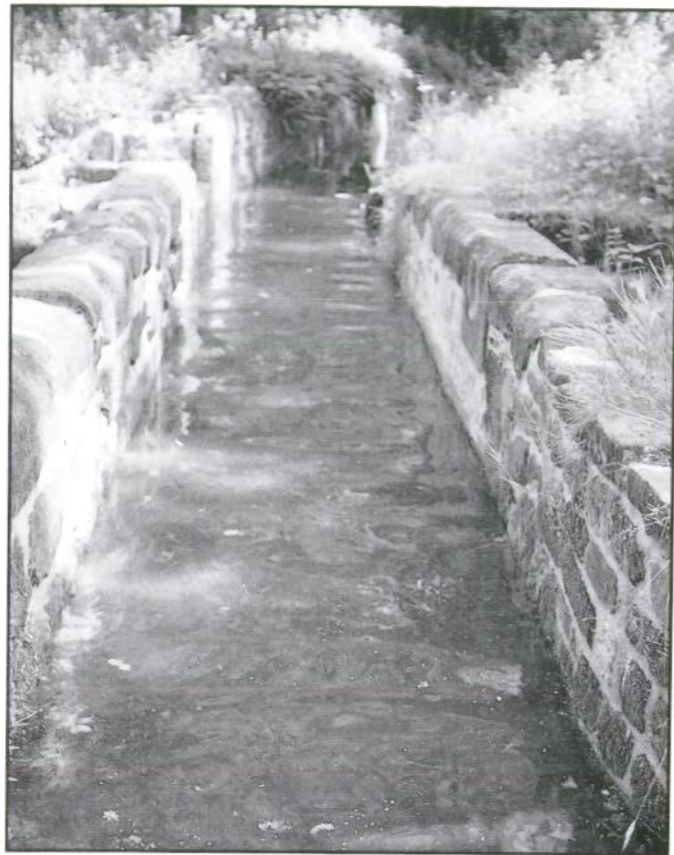
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— Conservation Area Boundary
■ Listed Buildings



- **Standford Corn Mill** : A 3-storey stone mill attached to a 2 storey stone mill house.
- **Standford Mill** : now a private house.
- **Pophole Mill**.
- **Bramshott Paper Mill** : Dating from the early 17th century.
- **Bramshott Flour Mill** : Remodelled 19th century buildings.

There are also two fine examples of late 15th/early 16th century timberframed "open hall" houses within the Conservation Area: Bramshott Meadows and Passfield Farm.

The water meadows were established to irrigate, fertilise and drain the riverside meadows by artificially diverting riverwater onto meadows along a network of man-made channels or "carriers".



Bramshott Court carriers over aquaduct

To this end a complex arrangement of sluices, hatches, tunnels, stone aqueducts (some of which are scheduled as Ancient Monuments) as well as less conspicuous features such as "stops" were erected.

Many of these structures remain intact, thanks to the efforts of the River Wey Trust, which has renovated and cleared many of them. With support from East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council and Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council the Trust continues to repair these features, improve public access to the River and protect areas of interest, such as the sunken lanes, ancient woodlands and areas of nature conservation interest.

New Development

The Conservation Area covers an area where new development is not normally permitted where new development is allowed it will need to respect the details, overall form and materials used within the Conservation Area.

Further advice is given in the following leaflets which are published by East Hampshire District Council as part of the Conservation Directory:-

- East Hampshire's Conservation Areas.
- Caring for East Hampshire's Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings.

Further Reading

- The Southern Wey, A Guide. The River Wey Trust, 1988 (Blackwell Press).

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Some of the photos: Courtesy of Adrian Bird. River Wey Trust.