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1.0 Introduction and Background

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The production of the Deposit Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (1994) and Deposit Draft Swale Borough Local Plan (1996) have highlighted inconsistencies in the delineation of the boundary of the Special Landscape Area in the Dargate-Denstroude area. The two local authorities engaged Chris Blandford Associates in May 1997 to give guidance on criteria for boundary definition and to suggest a new boundary which may arise from consideration of the area's characteristics.

1.2 The Brief

1.2.1 The scope of the study is set out in a "Consultants Brief" dated February 1997 and a copy is appended for ease of reference. The consultancy proposal prepared by CBA in response, set out the methodology for the detailed work. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- to review the inconsistencies of the boundary in the Dargate-Denstroude area;
- to prepare a methodology for defining the particular characteristics of Special Landscape Areas and their boundaries;
- to undertake an assessment of the Blean Woods SLA and review the current boundaries. To define, if necessary, a revised boundary.

1.3 Structure of the Report

1.3.1 The report is structured in four parts, as listed in the *Contents* page before. Section 2.0, *Desk Studies*, can be regarded as the initial data gathering stage of the process. Planning policy documentation has been reviewed together with related topic papers. Other special studies have also been examined together with national guidelines on the evaluation of landscapes. These documents are then appraised in Section 2.7, *Analysis of the Desk Studies*.

- 1.3.2 Section 3.1, *Field Method*, explains the method for examination of the landscape. The results of field work are summarised; the site assessment sheets are appended for detailed reference. Section 3.2, *Landscape Character Assessment*, addresses the specific question of the current boundary to the SLA. This part of the Report then moves on to discuss current delineation of the boundary.
- 1.3.3 The Report finishes with section 4.0, *Conclusion and Recommendations*, which summarises the assessment work and gives recommendations on changes to the SLA boundary.

2.0 Desk Studies

2.0 DESK STUDIES

2.1 A range of existing documentation has been reviewed in order to understand the context of Blean Woods SLA and in order to gain understanding of the characteristics of the area itself. The documents studied are briefly discussed below so as to provide a composite picture of the study undertaken.

2.2 Planning Review

Planning Designation

2.2.1 The Kent Structure Plan identifies landscapes of both national and county level importance. There are eight designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) in Kent, identified in the Kent Structure Plan. County level designations are non statutory but the need for them is recognised from the Department of the Environment. PPG7, *The Countryside and the Rural Economy* states that:

“there are further designations applied to other areas of the countryside.....which serve to highlight particularly important features in the countryside that should be taken into account in planning decisions. These include locally devised ones.....to denote areas to which special countryside protection or other policies apply”.

2.2.2 The County Council identifies such areas in broad strategic terms for inclusion in the structure plan. Policy ENV4 relates to the SLAs and makes it clear that it is for the Local Planning Authorities to refine the detailed boundaries. It is for the District Councils in their local plans to interpret and define boundaries for the SLAs at a local level.

2.3 Local Plans

2.3.1 The relevant policies and background in the Deposit Draft Canterbury District Local Plan 1994 and the Deposit Swale Borough Local Plan 1996 have been reviewed.

Canterbury District Local Plan

2.3.2 Paragraph 6.5 states that three Special Landscape Areas have been identified, one of which is Blean Woods. Within the Special Landscape Area, the City Council will give priority to landscape protection over other planning considerations. Policy R4

applies. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) also occur within Blean Woods SLA and these are further governed by Policy R7, (D 33a and D 33b)..

Swale Borough Local Plan

- 2.3.3 The Special Landscape Area is governed by policy E16 which gives priority to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape over other planning considerations. Other policies apply to the countryside: Policy E11 defines the extent of the Borough's countryside and states that it should be protected for its own sake. Policy E17 relates to Local Landscape Areas.

2.4 Special Papers

- 2.4.1 The following special papers have been reviewed:

Kent Countryside Plan Report of Survey (1980)
 Kent Countryside Plan Written Statement (1983)
 Background Proof Number 3: Landscape (1996)
 Technical Paper Three: Landscape, Nature Conservation
 & Open Space (1994)
 Swale Plan Topic Paper No. 2 Environmental Issues 1996
 Eastern Swale Landscape Assessment KCC 1996
 Review of Special Landscape Areas in Kent 1993 (Cobham Resource
 Consultants)

Kent Countryside Plan Report of Survey (1980)

- 2.4.2 This document summarises the background work that was undertaken, in the form of Aspect Reports, to prepare the Kent Countryside Plan. The function of the Report of Survey is to provide a sufficiently precise interpretation of the objectives and policies set out in the Structure Plan. As a result of the analysis, relative priorities can be assigned to agriculture, forestry, landscape conservation and to nature conservation. There is a discussion on pressures on the countryside, which lead to larger land holdings and reduction in tree cover and hedgerows.
- 2.4.3 The Aspect Reports identified thirteen different landscape zones in Kent, each of which can be readily identified because it has its own characteristic scenery. A plan

at 1 : 100 000 delineates the AONBs and SLAs and also delineates those areas that scored six points or more in the "Tandy" system of landscape evaluation. It should be noted that the Blean Woods Area does not score six or more. However, it should also be noted that Blean Woods scored low under numerical evaluation because of the lack of diversity. A non-quantitative technique of evaluation was therefore used for Blean Woods and the Report of Survey comments that the area has a particular character which it is important to conserve, notwithstanding the low numerical evaluation.

2.4.4 In drawing up the SLAs a wide range of factors were considered and which can be summarised as falling under the following broad headings:

- the areas must have contrast and diversity,
- the landscape quality must be scarce,
- there should be a sense of remoteness,
- cultural associations may also give the area value.

The Report of Survey contains one paragraph that describes the quality of Blean Woods SLA. The emphasis is on the woodland cover and it is described as being one of the few heavily wooded areas remaining in Kent.

Boundary Definition

2.4.5 Appendix I of the Report of Survey discusses the detailed criteria for boundary definition. It states that it is preferable for all detailed boundaries to follow stable physical features. Thus features such as roads, paths and rivers have generally been used in preference to mapped features that can not readily be identified on the ground. In delineating the boundary of the SLA the Report of Survey recognises the importance of preserving the foreground to important scenic features. However, it also makes clear that land uses at the periphery of the SLA should be excluded if their inclusion would be inconsistent with Structure Plan policies.

Kent Countryside Plan Written Statement (1983)

2.4.6 This document is the subject plan for agriculture, landscape, nature conservation, the undeveloped coast and the Metropolitan Green Belt outer boundary. The method by which the SLAs were delineated is summarised. Detailed surveys were conducted which sought to analyse the landscape quality as objectively as possible. Two

different techniques were adopted; one using a numerical analysis technique and the second using a more conventional approach of recording subjective evaluations. The survey occasionally identified outlying pockets that were considered to be of high landscape quality. It is important to note that the extent to which such features were included in the SLA is a function of **whether their intrinsic character is the same as that of the SLA**. In addition, it was important to judge whether the inclusion of outlying areas would necessitate the inclusion of other substantial areas of lower landscape quality. In summary, the peripheral non wooded areas that are included in the SLA are included because they are considered to be areas of more open countryside that surround and intersperse the woodland and act as a foreground to the woodlands.

- 2.4.7 The Kent Countryside Plan Written Statement contains three paragraphs that describe the landscape quality of Blean Woods. In addition to an outline of the survey method adopted ~ as discussed above ~ the text describes the woodland character of Blean Woods:

“The Blean Woods SLA comprises the belt of woodland which extend from west of Canterbury to Herne and includes both the woodland blocks and more open countryside which surrounds and intersperses them, acting as foreground. This is one of the few heavily wooded areas remaining in Kent. Parts of the woodland are ancient in origin and at one time the Blean Woods probably formed an extension to the Challock and Lyminge forests to the south. The woodland comprises both broadleaved and coniferous species and the former are a remnant of the more ancient forest.”

The text then goes on to describe the high nature conservation value of the woodlands.

Background Proof Number 3: Landscape (1996)

- 2.4.8 This paper sets out Canterbury City Council’s philosophy and objectives in conserving landscapes. It formed part of the case at the Local Plan Inquiry. A key concept that underpins landscape conservation is that of sustainability. The Proof concludes that the identified landscapes possess a remoteness and tranquillity rarely to be found in the south-east of England. It states that the SLAs have a specific beauty and character which it is vital to conserve.

i Quality of Blean Woods SLA

The SLA is based on an extensive area of ancient woodland stretching across Northern Kent. Appendix 2 of the Proof gives a fuller description of the landscape quality of the SLA and explains that the landscape is dominated by Blean Woods which forms an extensive, virtually continuous band of woodland. Paragraph 5.1 on Blean Wood SLA emphasises that its value lies in its woodland. This is further reinforced by the rationale behind extension of the SLA in two additional areas: extensions are proposed because they safeguard the setting of the woods and in order to conserve outlying woodland and associated hedgerows.

ii Boundaries to the SLAs

The boundaries to the SLAs are reviewed in the Proof and some additional areas are evaluated in order to judge whether they are of sufficiently high quality to merit designation as SLAs. The areas reviewed are considered to be very Kentish landscapes. The Proof goes on to comment that there is precedent for the inclusion of agricultural land with the Blean Woods SLA; it is accepted that agricultural land provides the setting and context within which the major blocks of woodland are seen.

Technical Paper Three: Landscape, Nature Conservation and Open Space (1994)

- 2.4.9 This defines three "Natural Areas" in Canterbury District, of which one is Blean Wood. Paragraph 2.6 addresses the SLA itself and describes the area as one of the few heavily wooded areas still remaining in Kent. The emphasis in this document is yet again on the wooded character of the SLA. The Technical Paper is the background to the Deposit Draft Local Plan which is recognised as the correct forum for review of the SLA boundaries. The Paper contains brief reviews of the proposed additions to the SLA. It is notable that these descriptions centre on the function of the additional areas in providing a setting to the woods and also on the function of capturing additional outlying woodlands.

Swale Plan Topic Paper No. 2 Environmental Issues 1996

- 2.4.10 The purpose of this Paper is to amplify the choices made by providing an analysis of the context for policies and by giving a description of the landscape. The wide diversity of the landscapes in the Borough is described and the resource is then classified into four broad landscape character areas. One of these areas is the complex of hills and valleys covered by Blean Woods; this landscape is further described as one that creates enclosure to the marshes to the north. Thus both the topography that underlies the SLA and the woodlands that cover it are clearly considered to be the salient features.

2.5 Literature Review

- 2.5.1 A range of publications has been studied in order to gain insight into the intrinsic landscape qualities of Kent; these sources have included general guidebooks about the Kent landscape, books on physical geography, landscape history, ecology and the built environment of Kent.

Cultural Associations

- 2.5.2 Cultural associations, such as writings or paintings that feature Kent have been briefly reviewed. Preliminary consultation with Blean Parish Council has revealed that in the 18th and 19th centuries one of the principal routes for pack horses carrying contraband from the coast lay through Yorkletts and Dargate. In addition to the association with smuggling activities, the area has associations with the hiding of French prisoners of war: between 1793 and 1810 assistance was given to French prisoners of war who had escaped from the prison hulks in the Thames and Medway rivers and who were concealed in the woods before they could be moved onwards. Part of this route lay along the lane known as *Cut Throat Lane*, now called *Pilgrims Lane*.

2.6 Map Studies

1 : 50 000 OS Landranger 179

- 2.6.1 This map provides general mapping of the study area and also illustrates the context of the SLA boundary studied. The broad pattern of land cover ~ woodland, farmland and orchard ~ is shown effectively at this scale, as is the proximity of the sea.

1 : 25 000 OS Pathfinder TR 06/16

- 2.6.2 This map shows the study area at a large enough scale to examine the broad pattern of landform, water courses and land use. The landscape character areas identified have been delineated at this scale.

1 : 10 000 OS TR 06 SE

- 2.6.3 This map shows the study area at a large scale and was used to examine the detailed landform and land use.
- 2.6.4 In parallel with the desk studies, overlay maps were prepared of geology, topography, soils, woodland cover, settlements and communications. This technique highlighted the factors that have given rise to different types of landscape character and formed a basis for the study.

2.7 Analysis of the Desk Studies

- 2.7.1 The designation of Blean Woods as an SLA has been laid down in planning policy over successive years, from initial delineation in 1980. A review of the documentation makes it clear that the complex of wooded hills and valleys **is valued in essence for its woodland cover**. It is noted as the largest area of woodland in Kent. The characteristics cited in the different documents studied are consistent and complimentary, presence of woodland and high nature conservation value being repeatedly stated.

Characteristics of the SLA

2.7.2 The characteristics of Blean Woods SLA that emerge from the documents studied can be summarised as follows:

- it is an extensive block of woodland,
- the main woodland complex includes 'satellite' woodland outliers,
- the area is heavily wooded and of a character that is rare in Kent,
- the woods are of high nature conservation interest,
- areas of wood meadow are included,
- the close proximity of the sea gives the area a distinctive sense of place,
- there is topographical variation, which contributes to give a sense of remoteness,
- arable areas that have woodland as a backdrop or context,
- it has limited area of attractive orchard,
- it has limited extent of hedgerow or shelterbelt.

Review of the SLA

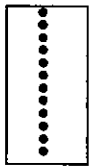
2.7.3 New findings need to be tested against the background of successive review and the intrinsic nature of the Blean Woods SLA needs to be upheld and respected in any new examination that is undertaken. It is essential that any extension that is proposed to the SLA can be demonstrated to be of comparable landscape quality. It is clear from review of the landscape descriptions of the SLA that it is **the consistent presence of woodland that gives it its essential character**. The designation of SLA has been reinforced at successive review and it is notable that none of these reviews have investigated whether it would be appropriate to extend the SLA to include substantial adjoining areas of different landscape character, such as farmland or orchard. Indeed the only recommendations for extension (given in the Canterbury District Local Plan: Technical Paper No 3) is made in order to 'capture' two additional outliers of the main woodland complex. These proposed extensions include areas of open agricultural land and hedgerow features as the setting for Blean Woods. The implications here are that although the presence of woodland is a key SLA criteria, the setting of these wooded areas is also an important consideration; in effect, the SLA designation reflects the visual dominance of the woods.

Deletions to the SLA

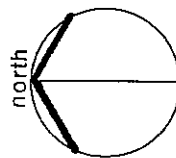
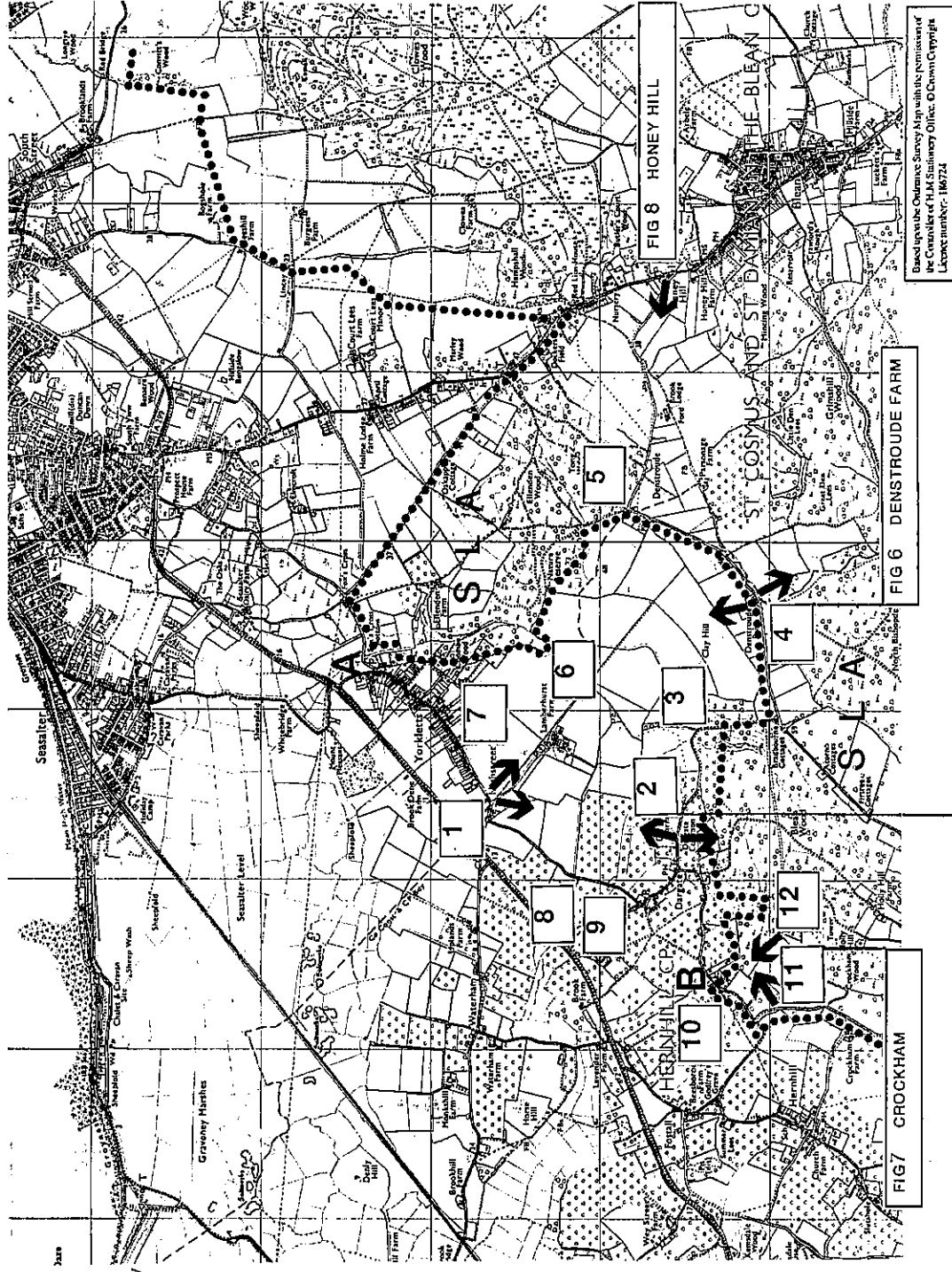
- 2.7.4 In addition to proposed extensions to the SLA, there is a recent recommendation to delete a part of the designation within the study area (refer to Canterbury District Public Local Plan Inquiry statement: CCC/PR/28). The recommended deletion was made on the grounds that the original reason for designation (scrub woodland) has been removed and the area is now under agricultural use. The absence of any definition of the boundary by features on the ground was a key influence in the recommended deletion of this particular area from the SLA designation. This case implies that boundaries should follow identifiable features on the ground; any proposed amendments to the existing boundary should therefore be based on linear features such as hedgerows, roads or watercourses.

3.0 Landscape Character Assessment

Legend



Current SLA Boundary



1km
2km

Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Ordnance Survey Licence number: 106724

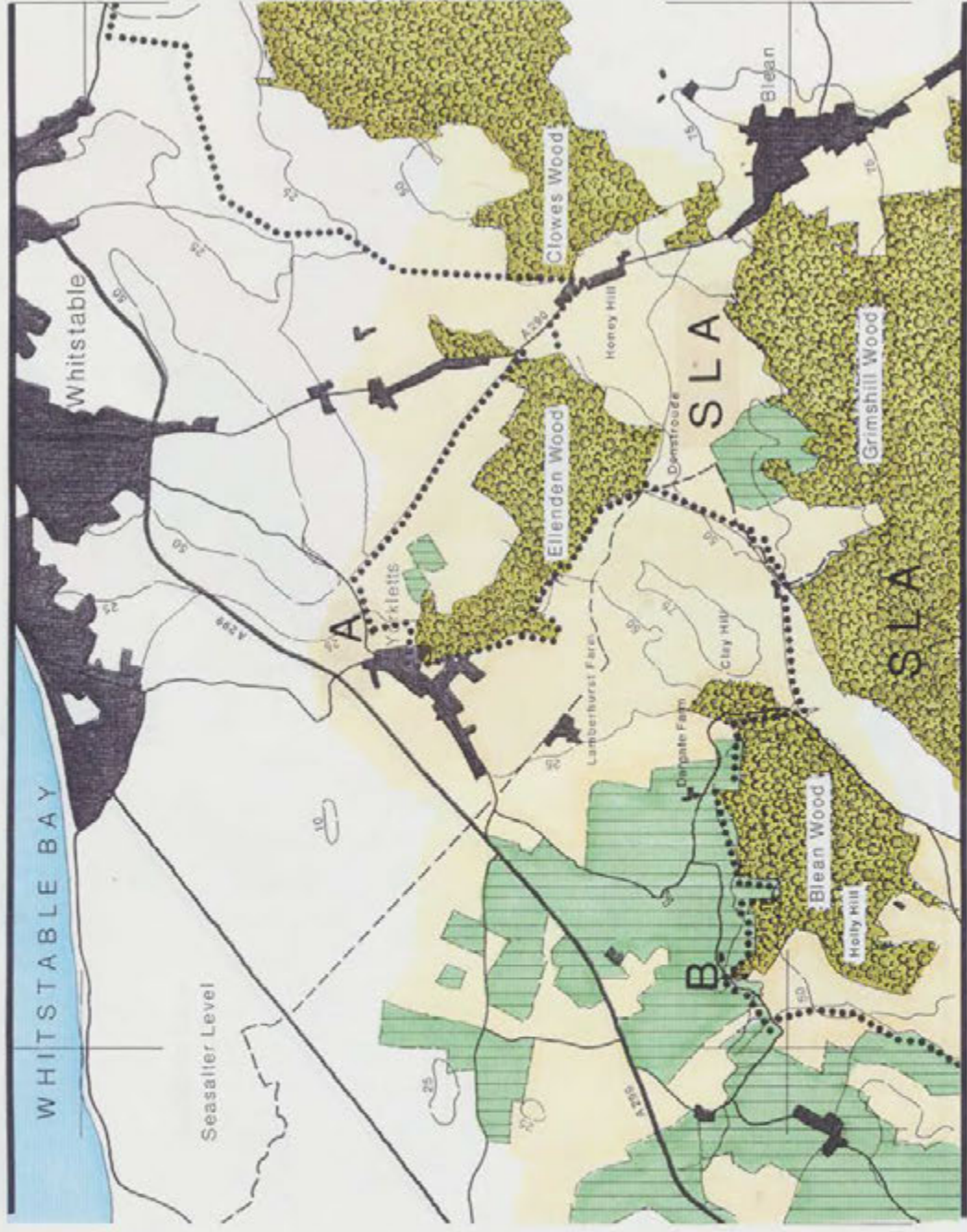


VIEWPOINTS






Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

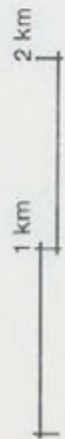
Fig 1

June 1997



Legend

-  Woodland
-  Orchard
-  Agriculture
-  Current SLA Boundary
-  District Boundary



LAND COVER

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Legend

-
- Below 25 metres AOD
- 25 to 50 metres AOD
- Above 50 metres AOD
- Above 100 metres AOD

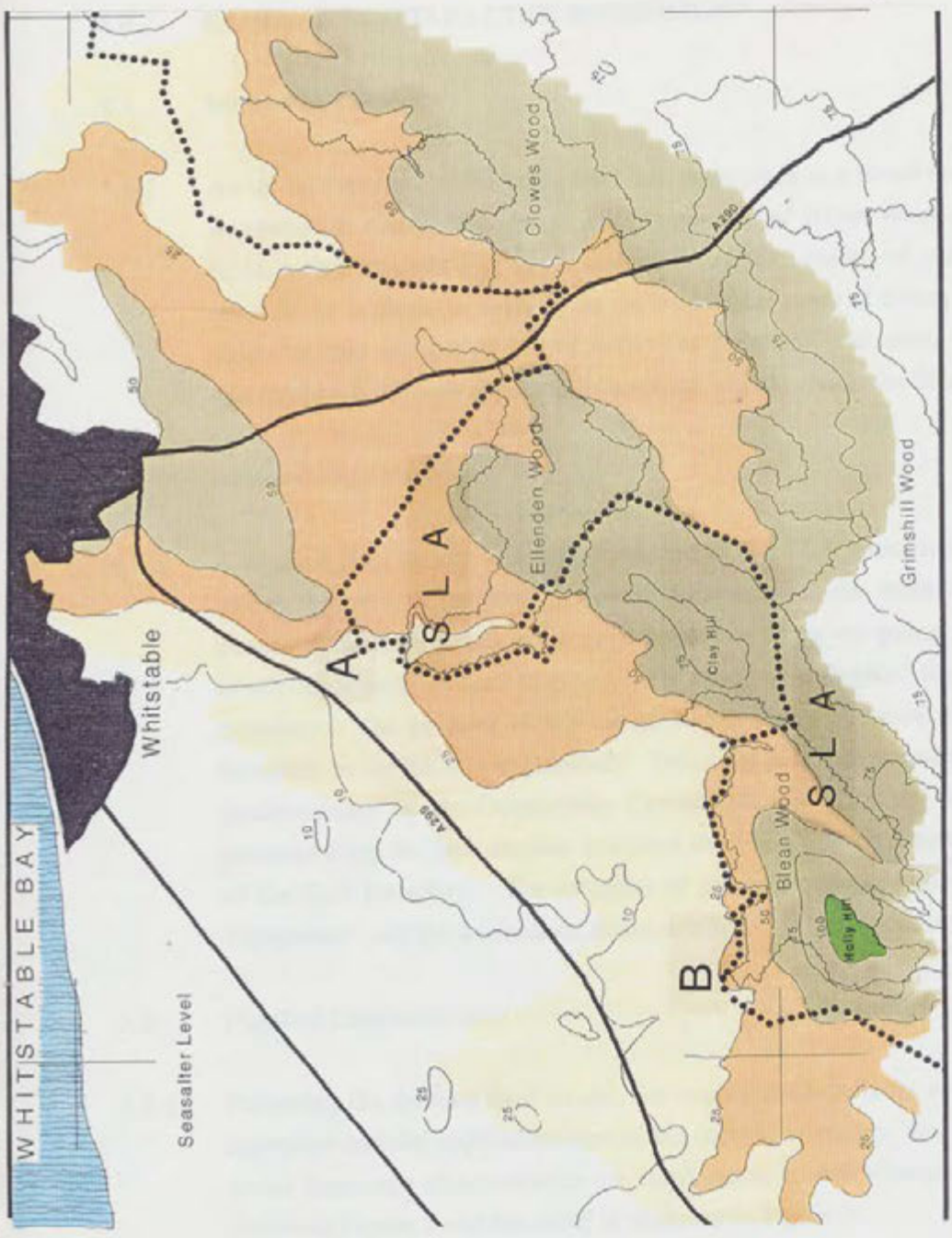
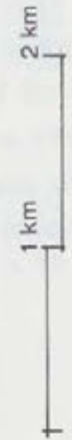
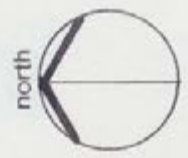
Current SLA Boundary

Below 25 metres AOD

25 to 50 metres AOD

Above 50 metres AOD

Above 100 metres AOD



RELIEF ANALYSIS

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Fig 3

August 1997



3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

3.1 Initial Field Study

3.1.1 An initial overview of the study area was undertaken at a broad brush level. The aim was twofold: firstly, to make an initial appraisal of Blean Wood SLA. Secondly, a rapid review was made of the visual character and quality of parts of some of the other SLAs in Kent, in order to set the context for study of Blean Wood itself. Both objective and subjective information was recorded and notes were made as to whether the landscape appeared to meet the visual criteria for SLA designation.

Detailed Field Survey

3.1.2 A detailed field survey was then conducted of the SLA boundary and its immediate visual context. This used the same approach as the initial overview but was conducted in more detail and a greater number of survey points were visited, twelve in all; these were selected to give a fairly evenly distribution along the current SLA boundary. The purpose of the survey was to assess on visual grounds whether the boundary to the SLA is appropriate. This field assessment was recorded on a sheet recommended by the Countryside Commission and, together with the information gathered from the desk studies, provided the basis for comments on the delineation of the SLA boundary. The locations of the points studied are shown on Figure 1 *Viewpoints*, and the assessment sheets are included in Appendix II.

3.2 Physical Characteristics

3.2.1 Following the detailed field survey, the overall characteristics of the SLA have been appraised and the appropriateness of the current boundary has been reviewed. The broad landscape characteristics are summarised in two illustrations: *Land Cover* is shown in Figure 2 and the relief is analysed in Figure 3.

Land Cover

3.2.2 Three main sorts of land cover occur: woodland, orchard and farmland. These are illustrated in Figure 2, *Land Cover*. The distribution of the different land cover tends to reflect the underlying topography. Thus the areas where the land is under agriculture tend to be more low lying, whilst orchard occurs on the margins of the clay ridge. The upper central portion of the clay ridge is mainly heavily wooded

and in the portion of SLA under review, the dominant land cover is in fact deciduous woodland. Indeed, the majority of the SLA is Blean Woods, which stretches across North Kent and is one of the largest complexes of ancient woodland in the county. This is in contrast with the adjoining Clay Hill, from which the woodland cover, was removed in the early 1960's.

Topography






- 3.2.3 An analysis of relief is given in Figure 3. The area studied broadly comprises of a wide clay ridge stretching from north-east to south west. The clay ridge occurs close to the coast and contrasts starkly with the wide, flat coastal plain. The transition in topography from the ridge to the coast is quite abrupt, with a narrow steep slope to the ridge falling to the north.

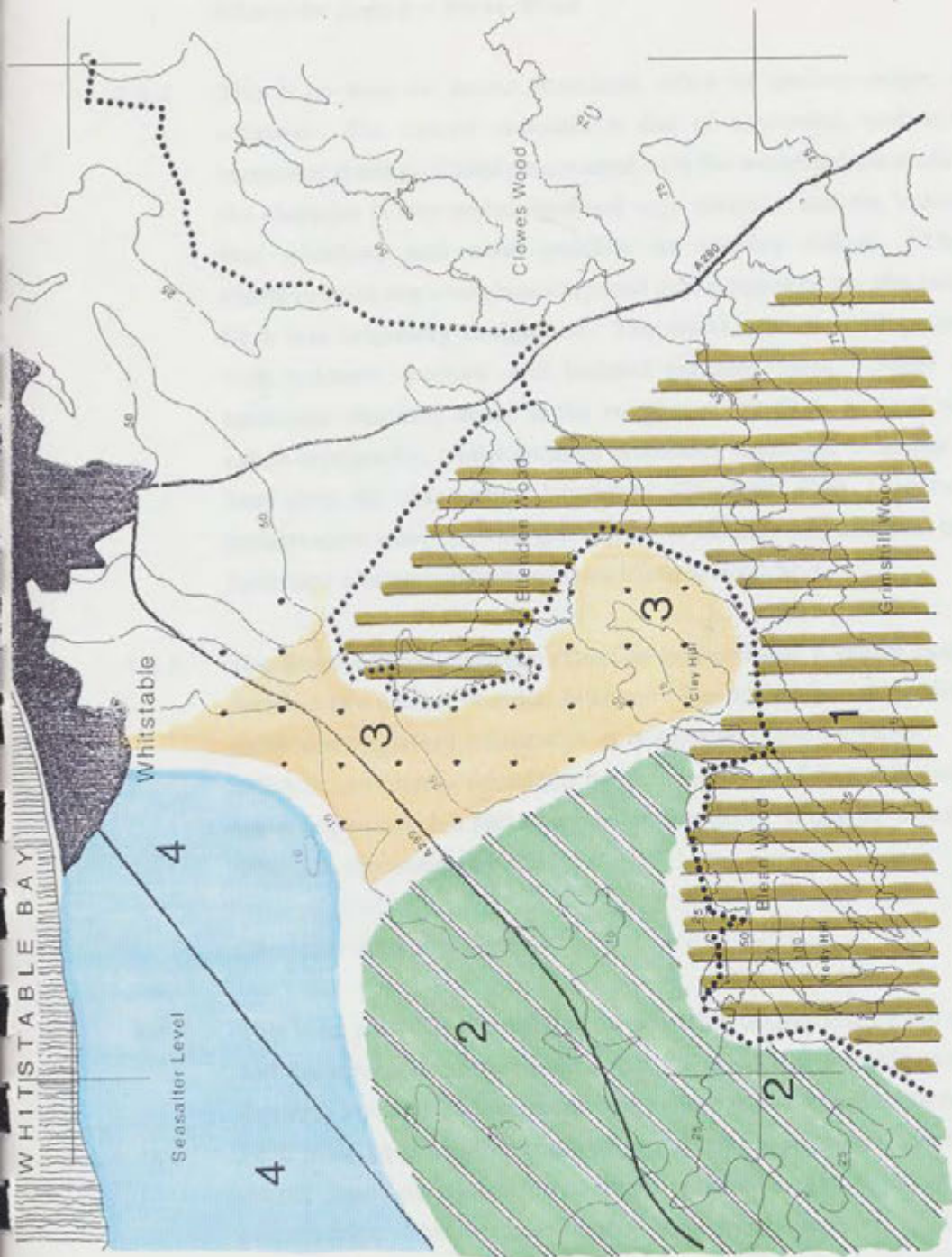
3.3 The Current SLA Boundary

- 3.3.1 The majority of the SLA is formed of an extensive clay ridge but the SLA also includes some of the rolling adjacent areas and wooded shaws that extend out from the main woodland. In the main the boundary of the SLA follows the edge of the woodland. It is also interesting to observe that the broad alignment of the current SLA boundary often coincides with the landform transition described in paragraph 3.2.3 above: the point where the narrow, fairly steep northwards slope of the clay ridge meets flatter land. Around the majority of the Blean Woods SLA, the woodland is surrounded by a margin of undulating land, except at Clay Hill where the pattern is completely different because the hill is in fact part of the main clay ridge and therefore rises to a similar elevation as the surrounding woodland areas.

3.4 Landscape Character Areas

- 3.4.1 The area studied can be subdivided into four areas, each with a different landscape character. These areas have been broadly defined and are mapped on Figure 4, *Landscape Character Areas*. The salient characteristics of each of the areas identified are summarised below.

-  Area 1 ~ Blean Woods
-  Area 2 ~ Dargate
-  Area 3 ~ Yorklets
-  Area 4 ~ Seasalter Level
-  Current SLA Boundary



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area



Fig 4

September 1997

Character Area 1 ~ Blean Wood

3.4.2 This is an area of mixed woodland, often of ancient origin, and related wood meadow. The overall character is that of a wooded, undisturbed landscape of consistent quality. Closely associated with the woodland are areas of wood meadow: the character is also undisturbed and very attractive and the indented margins mean that woodland and wood meadow are visually linked. These two principle characteristics are complimentary and taken together are **the basis upon which the SLA was originally designated**. The wood meadows are generally of small size with indented margins and isolated parkland trees. Areas of wood meadow landscape character occur at the margins of the SLA, on land with a complex and subtle topography, whilst areas of woodland landscape character occur on the high land over the clay ridge. Landscape Character Area 1 is one of high nature conservation value, providing a mosaic of habitats and marginal habitats. This is the landscape character that dominates Blean Woods SLA.

3.4.3 The Blean Woods landscape character area includes a gently shaped valley, running between two steeper wooded hillsides. The valley has an intricate, fine pattern of fields and vegetated boundaries at a generally low elevation. In visual terms the valley is completely contained by the sloping land to north and south and in this sense is very much a part of the adjoining SLA. It can be described as providing a setting to the woodland blocks.

Character Area 2 ~ Dargate

3.4.4 This is an area where the character is mainly determined by the presence of orchard and the strongest characteristic is that the landscape is highly managed and ordered. Textures are bold and the rectilinear pattern of the trees is a dominant characteristic. Fruit growing generally occurs on lower lying land and on shallow slopes where the deeper loam soils occur but these orchard areas are of relatively low nature conservation value because of the commercial emphasis of fruit growing. This landscape character occurs on gently undulating land, sometimes protruding into low lying areas towards the coast and often makes an attractive margin to the wooded SLA to the south.

Character Area 3 ~ Yorkletts

- 3.4.4 This is an open area that connects visually with the expansive coastal plain. It is arable land or pasture on a relatively low elevation and has little tree cover. Field sizes are quite large and the hedgerows that do occur are well managed agricultural boundaries. The area includes the prominent landscape feature of Clay Hill; although the topography of the Hill is clearly different from the adjacent low lying area, the overall landscape character is dominated by the intensive agricultural land use and is considered to form one homogeneous area with land to the north. The northern portion of the hill links with the coastal plain and the overall visual impression is that of openness
- 3.4.5 The high land of Clay Hill is directly visible from a large section of the SLA and is an important landscape feature in its own right. Clay Hill is a significant landscape feature that forms a continuous skyline and frames views from the south. The southern portion of Clay Hill falls towards the SLA boundary and in topographical terms relates to the complex of hills and valleys that form Blean Woods SLA. This portion of Clay Hill, therefore, could be considered to fall within Character Area 1, and the ridge line could be taken as the boundary to the SLA. However, because there are no field boundaries or hedges, the ridge is not a clear feature and it is difficult to discern the crest of the hill. A definitive boundary cannot, therefore, be identified. In any event the plain character of the slope makes a sharp visual contrast with the rich landscape that lies to the south. It is therefore considered that this part of Clay Hill properly falls within Landscape Character Area 3.
- 3.4.6 As a whole the Yorkletts landscape character area does not display the salient characteristics of the SLA: it contains neither woodland nor wood meadow and is therefore in marked contrast to Character Area 1. The high elevation of Clay Hill itself means that the land does not act as a foreground and can not therefore be described as providing a setting for the woodland blocks of the SLA.

Character Area 4 ~ Seasalter Level

- 3.4.7 Land to the north west of Blean Woods SLA is a wide, flat, expansive plain leading to the coastline and includes the North Kent Marshes SLA. The openness and lack of cover are characteristic of this landscape.

3.5 Illustrations of the Character Areas

3.5.1 Selected viewpoints studied are described in more detail below, in order to illustrate the landscape character areas identified. The location of the viewpoints are shown on Figure 1 and they are illustrated with photographs as cross referenced.

Points 2 and 3 ~ Belvedere Farm (refer to Figure 5)

3.5.2 Looking to the **north** the land flattens out quite abruptly and opens out to a wide expanse of pasture. The land is typical of Landscape Character Area 3. Rising land to the east at Ellenden Wood is thickly wooded and frames the area around Clay Hill which is itself outside the SLA.

3.5.3 Looking to the **south west** there is a subtle margin to the SLA of undulating land, with a small scale field pattern. This presents a good compliment to the thick fringe of woodland beyond. This landscape is of a type that fits into Landscape Character Area 1.

Point 4 ~ Denstroude Farm (refer to Figure 6)

3.5.4 Looking to the **north east** the horizon is formed by the wide, dome like shape of Clay Hill. The slopes are shallow but the land rises to an elevation of 75 metres AOD. The area has qualities that make it part of Landscape Character Area 3.

3.5.5 Looking to the **south east** the margin of the woodlands is irregular and, coupled with the undulating topography, makes a rich and attractive landscape. The horizon is formed of thick woodland. This high quality landscape falls within Landscape Character Area 1.

Points 11 and 12 ~ Crockam (refer to Figure 7)

3.5.6 Looking north east and north west at the boundary of the SLA the edge of the woodland is thick and forms a striking pattern with the adjacent pasture; specimen parkland trees contribute to the attractive quality and make this part of Landscape Character Area 1.

Viewpoint 2



Looking north towards Lamberhurst Farm. The orchard in the foreground is a strongly characteristic landscape in this part of Kent. The small copse is a strong feature and gives interest to the plain arable landscape around Lamberhurst Farm.



Looking south west into the SLA. The margin of Bleau Wood is indented and its heavy fringe forms an attractive pattern with the surrounding pasture. This kind of small scale landscape, on subtly rising landform, compliments the adjacent SLA perfectly.



Fig 5

June 1997

VIEW FROM BELVEDERE FARM

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Viewpoint 4



Looking south east on the boundary of the SLA towards Grimshill Wood. Substantial blocks of deciduous woodland are very striking and form the horizon to the view southwards. The margin of the woodland and adjacent pasture is indented in an attractive and irregular pattern and this is echoed by the undulations in topography. These elements combine to form a visually rich and varied landscape.



Looking north from the same viewpoint. Clay Hill rises in a shallow slope and forms a large uninterrupted mass. The area contrasts with the intricate patterns of most of the surrounding landscape.

VIEW FROM DENSTROUDE FARM

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area



Fig 6

August 1997

Viewpoint 11



Looking north east towards Blean Wood at the boundary of the SLA. The wood has a thick margin and this forms a striking landscape pattern with the adjacent pasture. Specimen parkland trees contribute to the quiet and attractive quality of the SLA.

Viewpoint 12



Viewed from Holly Hill looking north west along the margin of the SLA. Meadow and specimen parkland trees form a varied and attractive landscape around the western portion of Blean Wood. This kind of landscape makes a good neighbour to the SLA.

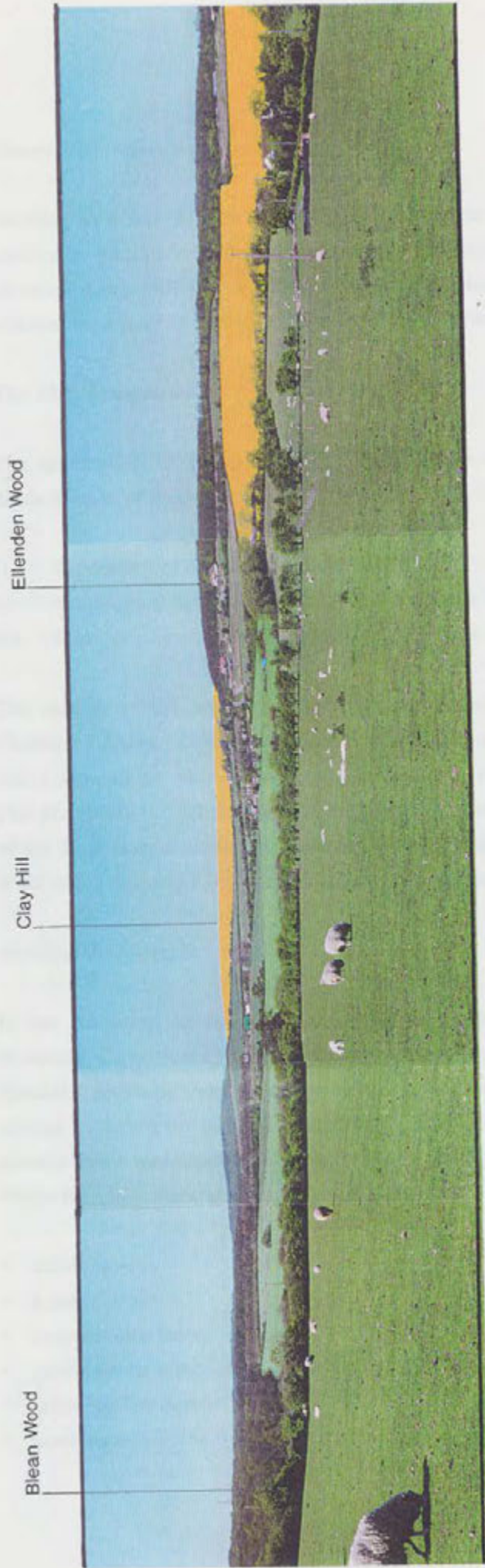


VIEW FROM CROCKHAM

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Fig 7

June 1997



Looking west from Honey Hill. Clay Hill in the centre of the view is part of the same geological complex as Blean Woods and is a significant landscape feature that forms a continuous skyline and frames views.



VIEW FROM HONEY HILL

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Fig 8

October 1997

Honey Hill (refer to Figure 8)

- 3.5.7 Looking west from Honey Hill, Clay Hill lies in the centre view and is a significant landscape feature that forms part of the continuous skyline of the clay ridge. However Clay Hill has a different landscape character to the adjacent heavily wooded high land of Ellenden Wood and Blean Wood.

3.6 The SLA Designation

- 3.6.1 The delineation of Blean Woods SLA has been examined in three parallel but distinct areas of study:

- i) the quality of the area has been reviewed,
- ii) the original designation of the SLA has been studied,
- iii) other portions of the SLA margin have been compared.

- 3.6.2 The quality of the area has been discussed above in paragraph 3.4, *Landscape Character Areas*. The original designation is discussed in Section 2.0, *Desk Studies* and a comparison with other portions of the SLA margin is made in paragraph 3.9 *The SLA Margin*. Taken together, these studies have led to the conclusion that parts of the SLA margin should be extended and that a small part should be deleted; this is set out in Section 4.0 *Conclusions and Recommendations*.

3.7 Meeting the Criteria

- 3.7.1 In the “*Review of Special Landscape Areas in Kent*” prepared by Cobham Resource Consultants for Kent County Council in 1993, it is explained that the Special Landscape Area review is based on two criteria: first that the designation should be based on **natural beauty** and second, that the SLA must be of at least **county level importance**. For an area to merit SLA status it must display the following characteristics:

- scenic quality,
- a sense of place,
- unspoilt character,
- landscape as a resource,
- conservation interest,
- consensus.

Methods of assessment are based on guidance given in the Countryside Commission's 1993 advisory booklet *Landscape Assessment Guidance*, which provides a systematic means for describing and classifying landscapes that takes into account subjective and qualitative aspects as well as physical, cultural and historic ones. The degree to which the area under review meets these criteria is analysed below.

Scenic Quality

- 3.7.2 The area of open farmland south of Yorkletts mainly comprises large scale arable land, with little vegetation at the field boundaries. Clay Hill itself has a plain, dome shaped landform. In contrast, the area to the west at Dargate Common has an attractive orchard landscape where the orchards give a strong sense of being in Kent; the small field size and fine grain of this landscape make a sympathetic edge to the woodlands of the SLA.

Sense of Place

- 3.7.3 Where the area is dominated by large scale fields, such as around Yorkletts, there is little sense of place. However in places where there are orchards, such as in the western portion of the study area near Dargate, there is a distinct sense of being in Kent. Although such apple orchards are very characteristic of the north east of Kent it should be noted that orchards are not a component of the descriptions in the original SLA designation: the topic papers listed in paragraph 2.3.4 that address Blean Wood SLA do not include description of the orchard landscape.

Unspoilt Character

- 3.7.4 The area under review is surrounded by woodland much of which is designated as ancient woodland and which can be described as unspoilt. Similarly, the area around Dargate Common can be regarded as unspoilt. The area of hanger woodland north of Bradbourne Cottages forms part of the main woodland complex and is clearly also unspoilt.
- 3.7.5 In contrast, the open area south of Yorkletts which is not designated as SLA is mainly under agricultural management; even though there are no intrusive or discordant elements, it can not be termed "unspoilt".

Landscape as a Resource

- 3.7.6 The dominant landscape type of the area excluded from the SLA is farmland. This is a widespread resource, in landscape terms, and does not have a rarity value that merits protection.

Conservation Interest

- 3.7.7 Blean Woods SLA is valued for the mosaic of habitats it offers. The SLA includes the Blean Woods NNR and SSSI, the Ellenden Woods SSSI and the East Blean Woods SSSI. It provides habitat for nationally rare heath fritillary butterfly. In contrast, the area south of Yorkletts has no nature conservation designations. Being dominated by arable farming, it can be described as an area of low nature conservation value.

3.8 The Original Designation

- 3.8.1 The characteristics of the area studied are further tested against the reasons for the original designation of Blean Woods SLA, in order to ascertain whether detailed criteria are met. The original reasons ~ also summarised in paragraph 2.7.2 of this report ~ are as follows:

- i) an extensive block of woodland,
- ii) a main woodland complex that includes 'satellite' woodland outliers,
- iii) heavily wooded and of a character that is rare in Kent,
- iv) the woods are of high nature conservation interest,
- v) areas of wood pasture are included,
- vi) the close proximity of the sea gives the area a distinctive sense of place,
- vii) there is topographical variation, which contributes to give a sense of remoteness,
- viii) it is an arable area that has woodland as a backdrop or context,
- ix) it is a limited area of attractive orchard,
- x) it is a limited extent of hedgerow or shelterbelt.

- 3.8.2 It is clear that the majority of the area examined which has been defined as Landscape Character Area 3 does not have the main attributes behind designation of the SLA, points i) to v) inclusive listed above. Nor does it meet reasons vii), ix) and

x) above. However, it can be described as an arable area with a woodland context and is also distinctive because of the relative proximity of the sea. Nevertheless, it is considered that meeting these reasons alone is insufficient ground to merit SLA status.

3.8.3 The high land of Clay Hill is part of the same geological complex as the hills of Blean Wood, meaning that its geological form is the same as that of land within the SLA. Furthermore the southern portion of Clay Hill relates, in topographical terms, closely to the complex of hills and valleys that form the Blean Woods SLA. Consideration has therefore been given to the suitability of including the southern slopes of Clay Hill within the SLA. However the ridgeline of the hill, which would define the new boundary to the SLA is not readily discernible. This is partly because the slopes are slack and partly because there is not vegetation to reinforce the ridge visually. Therefore the ridgeline cannot be recommended as a robust and definitive northern boundary to the SLA. Of more fundamental concern, however, is that the plain arable character of the southern slope, and of Clay Hill as a whole, is in marked contrast to the rich wooded landscape to the south. Because of this it is considered that Clay Hill does not have the salient attributes of the SLA.

3.8.4 Land further north, around Yorkletts and towards the A299, does not display characteristics that would merit SLA designation. It is therefore considered that it would be inappropriate to extend the SLA to include any part of Character Area 3.

3.8.5 The area around Dargate Common, however, does meet many of the original reasons for the designation of Blean Woods SLA. Reasons vi) to x) inclusive are all evident in the landscape character of the Dargate Common area, it being of consistent character with the SLA, Character Area 1.

3.9 The SLA Margin

3.9.1 Selected margins of the SLA beyond the study area have been briefly reviewed in order to examine the relationship between the woodland itself and those areas that act as settings to the woodland. This broad assessment has been undertaken in order to provide a comparison between the Dargate and Denstroude area that is under review and other margins. Four different areas have been reviewed; between them they are regarded as providing a reasonable basis for comparison.

Clowes Farm (Grid ref. TR 1263E)

- 3.9.2 This is a localised area of high ground that lies in the northern portion of the SLA. It has been selected because it is elevated and because it does not have any woodland cover and ~ as discussed previously ~ the intrinsic character of this SLA is that of woodland. In its elevation and openness the area is similar to Clay Hill. However, the Clowes Farm area is dissimilar to Clay Hill in two important ways: one, it is almost completely surrounded by woodland and two, it is much smaller than Clay Hill. The close relationship between Clowes Hill and the surrounding woodland is further reinforced by the fact that the woodland margins are indented. It is therefore considered appropriate that this area is designated as SLA.

Broad Oak (Grid ref. TR 1262)

- 3.9.3 This is a wide band measuring 2 kms by 1 km. It is an area with a complex topography, with the overall slope rising up to West Blean Wood. The northern part of this area has a strong backdrop of woodland with varied and indented margins. The field pattern is quite small and the land is also finely dissected by tracks and roads. It provides a sympathetic setting to the woodland and it is considered appropriate that the area is included within Blean Woods SLA. Clearly the intricate, fine grain of the landscape around Broad Oak is very different to the plain landscape around Yorkletts.

Ridgeway Farm (Grid ref. TR 1865)

- 3.9.4 This area is not wooded but does include two outlying areas of woodland. It merits inclusion within the SLA in order to “capture” these outliers. The area also provides an attractive setting for East Blean Woods to the south. Because of the presence of woodland the Ridgeway Farm area is of higher landscape quality than Yorkletts and it is considered appropriate that it is included in the SLA.

Ruckinge Farm (Grid ref. TR 1565)

- 3.9.5 A northern portion of the SLA between Warren Farm and Ruckinge Farm has been briefly reviewed. Two outcrops of the main clay ridge, Knowel Hill and a second knoll, rise to around 40 metres AOD and their subtle contours give an attractive and varied topography that is complimentary to the main SLA. The fields south of Warren Farm form an intricate, indented margin with the woodland of Thornden

Wood. There are trees in the fields north of Warren Farm and these, together with the wooded shaw of Bleanbottom, means that even although the area under review is not itself wooded, it is of a complimentary landscape character to Blean Woods SLA. An addition to the SLA in the Local Plan, takes the SLA up to the A 299 Thanet Way Improvement which means that the area under review lies within a clear, defensible boundary. It is considered appropriate that this area is designated as SLA.

Yorkletts (Character Area 3)

- 3.9.6 In contrast to the four areas discussed briefly above, the landscape south of Yorkletts can broadly be described as open and plain: it has only one small block of woodland and there is little vegetation at field boundaries. The open, arable land running over the hill known as Clay Hill contrasts with the other margins to the SLA, which rise up towards the woodlands. Clay Hill itself, whilst generally attractive, does not have a special rarity nor an unusual beauty and there is no particular sense of being in Kent. Nevertheless, Clay Hill is an important topographical feature in the landscape and forms a continuous skyline with Blean Woods. The hill also contains views from the south.
- 3.9.7 It is, however, clear that the core attributes of the SLA are not manifest in the area south of Yorkletts. The woodland cover over Clay Hill was lost in the early 1960's and the land has low nature conservation value because it is now under arable farming. The open area that lies south of Yorkletts and immediately north of the SLA has a landscape character that is different from that of the land within the SLA and is considered to be modest visual quality.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Yorkletts Area (Character Area 3)

4.1.1 The intrinsic landscape character of the SLA is that of mixed woodland and wood meadow. The area south of Yorkletts is, in contrast, mainly arable land with relatively few landscape features and a simple landform. Thus this part of the study area, although surrounded on three sides by SLA, is itself very different in its landscape character, does not have qualities that are consistent with those found in the SLA and should not be included in it.

4.2 Review of the SLA Boundary

Boundary Revisions

4.2.1 There are three portions of the SLA boundary that is under study where changes are recommended; these areas are highlighted on Figure 9, *Recommended Changes*.

Bradbourne Cottages (Grid ref. TR 0961).

4.2.2 This area, marked **a** on Figure 10, is in Swale Borough, lying immediately to the west of Clay Hill and north of Bradbourne Cottages. It is an area of hanger woodland that links entirely with the main woodland. The area was included within the SLA in the initial Kent Countryside Plan dated 1983. However, in the Deposit Draft Swale Borough Local Plan dated January 1996 the area is excluded from the SLA, although it is still designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance in Kent. It is considered that the initial delineation was appropriate and it is recommended that the boundary be altered during the review process to **include** the hanger woodland within Blean Woods SLA.

Ellenden Wood

4.2.3 The second area, marked **b** on Figure 10, is in Canterbury District and borders Ellenden Wood, lying north east of Clay Hill. The delineation of the boundary was contested at Public Local Inquiry and is summarised in Appearance Statement CCC/PR/28. At the Inquiry Canterbury City Council concurred with the objector and agreed to revise the boundary to follow the edge of Ellenden Wood. The original reason for including this area within the SLA was because it contained scrub

woodland but in the period following publication of the Kent Countryside Plan in 1983 the vegetation was removed. Furthermore, there are no boundary features to define the western limit. It is therefore considered appropriate to amend the boundary to follow the edge of the woodland, in accordance with the line shown in Plan 1 of the Appearance Statement, and to **delete** this area from Blean Woods SLA.

Dargate Common

- 4.2.4 It is also recommended that the SLA boundary be extended northwards around Dargate Common to include the fringe of orchards and small fields. This area, marked c on Figure 10, forms an attractive border to the SLA and there is a strong sense of being in Kent. It is a high quality landscape and should be **included** within the designated SLA.

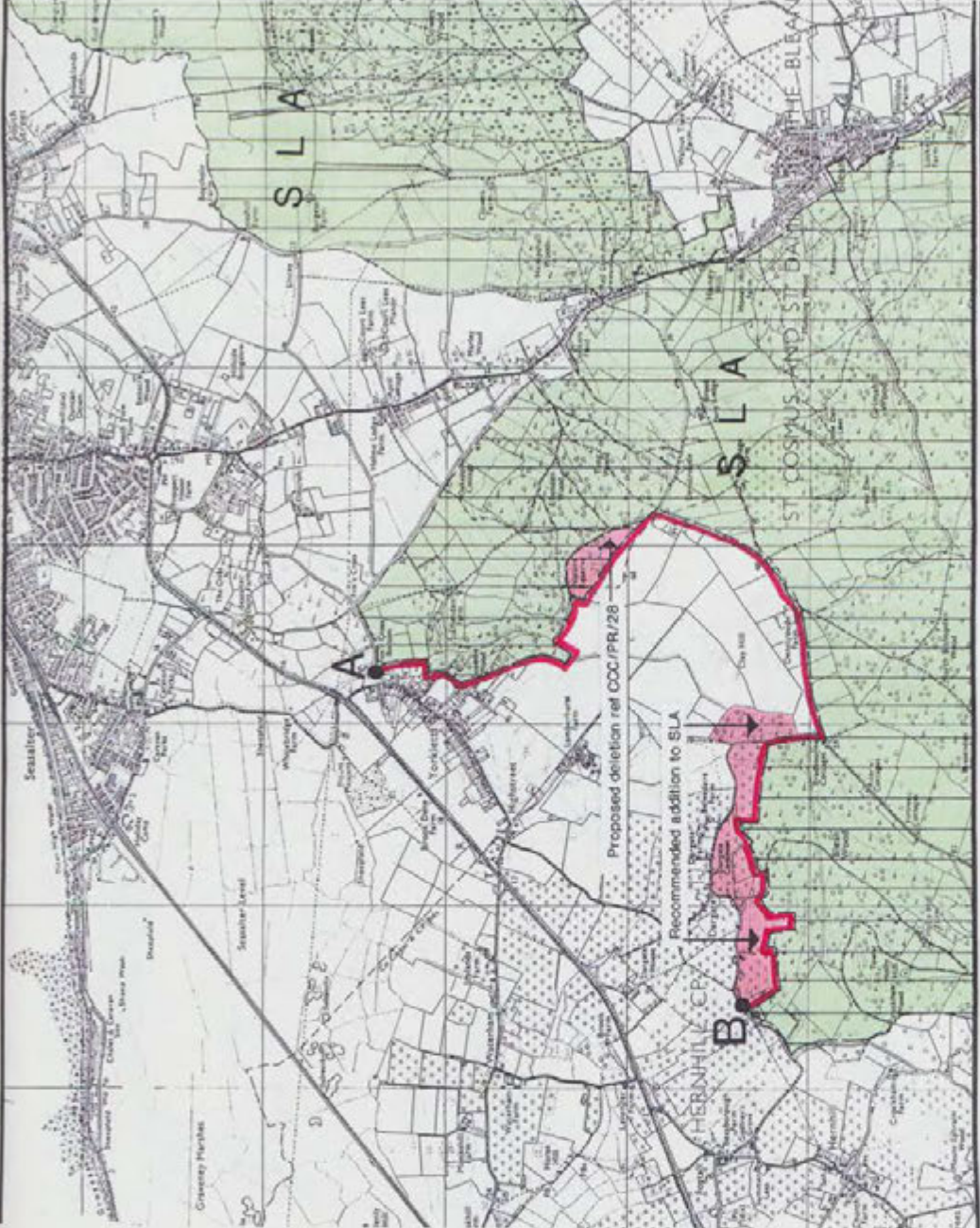
4.3 **Recommended Boundary**

It is recommended that the boundary of Blean Woods SLA be redefined as summarised above. The recommended delineation of the SLA boundary is shown on Figure 10, *Recommended Boundary*.

Legend



Special Landscape Area boundary under study



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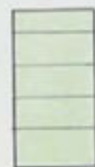
RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Fig 9

October 1997

Legend



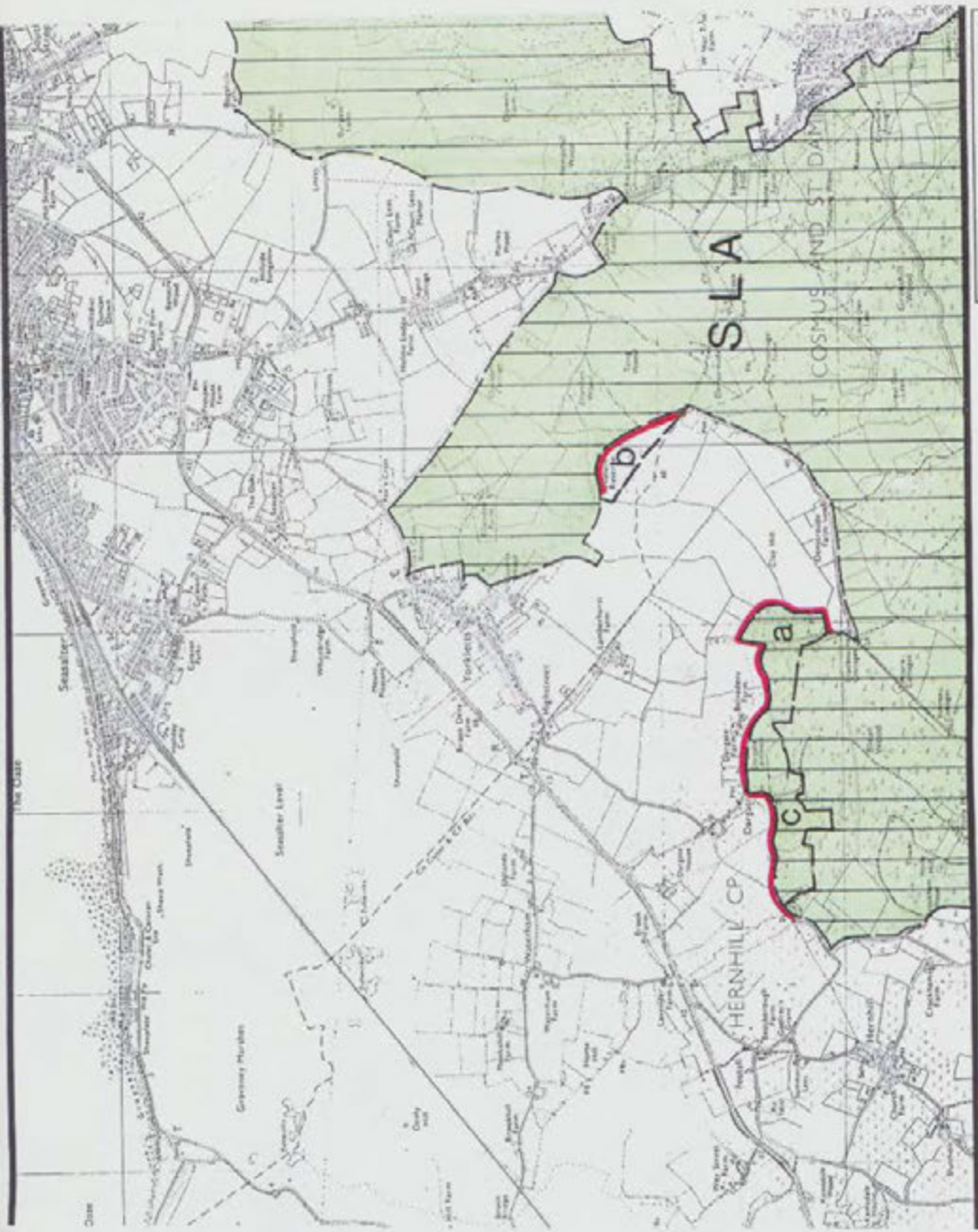
Blean Woods SLA



Current SLA boundary



Recommended boundary



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RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY

Blean Woods Special Landscape Area

Fig 10

October 1997

Appendix I

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BLEAN WOODS SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA REVIEW

CONSULTANTS' BRIEF

FEBRUARY 1997

A partnership between:

Canterbury City Council and Swale Borough Council



BLEAN WOODS SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA REVIEW

1. SUMMARY

The Partners to this project wish to review the boundary of the Blean Woods Special Landscape Area in the Dargate/Denstroude area to ensure the current inconsistencies are addressed (see location plan).

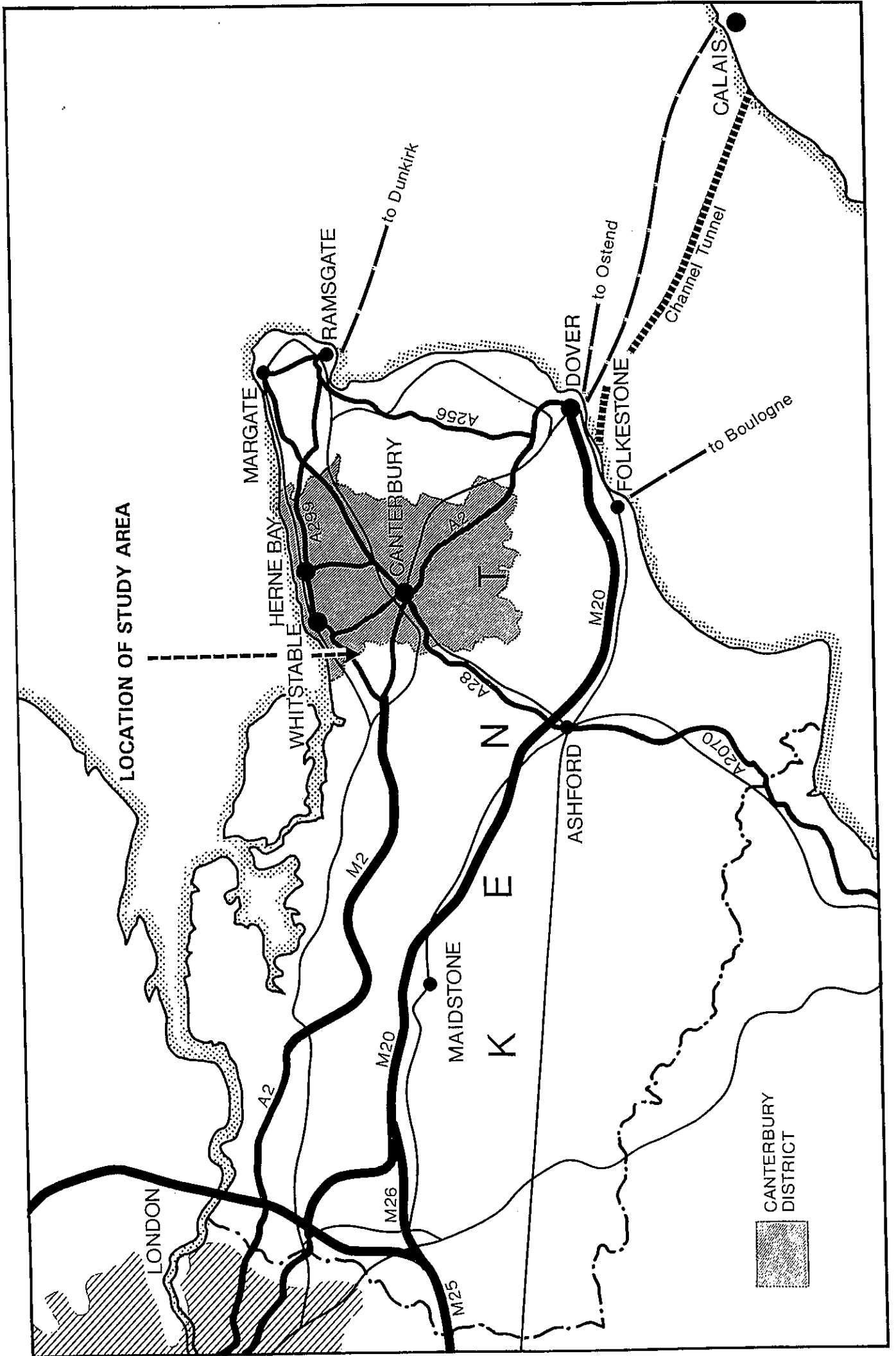
The study will focus on the current designation and ways in which its boundaries have been defined. It will ensure the SLA is drawn in a consistent way with other similar landscapes and parts of this SLA.

Consultants will be expected to draw conclusions from their assessment of this area and comparisons with other good practice and make clear any proposals they have for the area. The assessment should therefore be clearly set out and contain a summary which will be capable of being understood by the 'layman'.

The results of the study will form important inputs into the planning work of both local authorities and in particular to the preparation and review of local plans. The consultants will also be required to present the results of their study to a joint meeting of the project partners.

In tendering for this contract, Consultants will be expected to demonstrate how they would address these matters and to give examples of similar exercises they have undertaken elsewhere.

LOCATION PLAN



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The current SLA boundary is taken from the Kent Countryside Plan (1983) and the background to its assessment is set out in the Report of Survey and Issues - July 1980. The production of the Deposit Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (1994) and Deposit Draft Swale Borough Local Plan (1996) have highlighted the inconsistencies of boundaries to the SLA in the Dargate-Denstroude area. The two local authorities wish to retain the services of landscape specialists to address this issue. In particular, the report will be expected to give guidance on criteria for boundary definition and a new suggested boundary which may arise from consideration of the area's characteristics.

2.2 The Project Partners

The study will be advanced by a partnership of **Canterbury City Council and Swale Borough Council**.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The primary objectives of this study are:

A. Landscape character area definition - A description is required of the characteristics making up a Special Landscape Area. The study should address the methods of defining special landscape areas with a view to setting down criteria for the definition of boundaries.

B. Review of current boundary definition - This will address the way in which the boundaries of the current Special Landscape Area were derived. More particularly, the types of areas which have been included within the Blean Woods Special Landscape Area, including the main woodland complexes, outliers of the woodland and areas providing the setting to the main woodland itself. This may include a review of other parts of the SLA and how these areas have been handled throughout the strategic designation.

The study will be expected to follow accepted methodology as described in Countryside Commission practice. Key visual points will also need to be identified from which the area's character can be assessed.

C. Detailed boundary definition criteria - The study will be expected to give a clear and defensible set of criteria with which to assess current boundaries and any changes to the existing boundary. This will draw on experience of the consultants elsewhere in undertaking landscape area assessments of county importance and will also relate particularly to the circumstances within Kent.

4. AREA OF STUDY

Around Dargate and Denstroude - an indication of the area is shown on Plan 1 - the study will address the boundary between points A and B.

5. REQUIREMENTS

5.1 This investigation will require detailed site appraisals together with the collation and analysis of existing data and information. The main sources of information are likely to be:

- a) a desk study of published documents and other relevant sources of information available locally.
- b) consultation with local groups and representatives, and other relevant regional and national organisations.

Site visits will be essential to understand the nature of the area and to assess the situation in the SLA and other landscape designations in Kent.

A list of background information and a suggested list of consultees are shown in Appendix 1.

Consultants will be expected to complete the study in a period not to exceed three months from the date of commission. The investigation will be in two stages:-

5.2 Stage 1 will conclude with an interim report outlining the main issues and draft recommendations.

There is likely to be a break of about three weeks between Stages 1 and 2, to allow for consultation and for a brief review.

5.3 Stage 2 - A final report and recommendations. This will be presented to a joint meeting of the project partners and the consultant.

5.4 Reports

5.4.1 Stage 1: An interim report will be required for comment to cover Stage 1 work, followed by a meeting with the project partners. At least 6 copies of the report will be required.

5.4.2 Stage 2: The next stage will involve the submission of the draft final report (6 copies) - for comment, at least 3 weeks before the end of the contract period. Following comments from the project partners the final report will be produced (25 copies).

The final report should:-

- * be a colour document;
- * contain sketches, photographs and annotated plans;
- * should be A4 in size with, if necessary, A3 maps folded to A4 at a scale no smaller than 1:25,000;
- * include an executive summary;
- * include field data used in the analysis of study area as an annex;

The copyright of the document and any database compiled in relation to this review, rests with the project partners. The master copy and all original artwork should be submitted with 25 copies of the final report to the project partners. The emphasis should be on producing a constructive working document which will be used to progress the chosen option. It should be in a form capable of being copied for future presentations and for use as a working document.

6. ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Canterbury City Council will assume the role of Client and Coordinator on behalf of the funders.

6.2 The contract will be awarded by Canterbury City Council. The Consultant will be expected to commence work within 3 weeks of receiving the formal notification.

6.3 Payment will be in 2 parts, and will be made within 28 days of satisfactory completion of each stage.

Stage 1 50% of quoted fixed fee
Stage 2 remaining 50% of fee.

7. TENDER SUBMISSION

7.1 Consultants are requested to provide a realistic quote which covers all aspects of the study, as set out in this brief.

7.2 In submitting tenders, Consultants are requested to provide:-

- (1)** Details of the project team and their experience in relation to the work required. Information will be required on the actual team undertaking the work. Tenderers should give outline details of similar studies undertaken by the team members and these should be submitted with tenders if required - to be returned.
- (2)** An outline project management plan and method statement.
- (3)** Details of fees. The sum quoted should be a fixed fee and should include all printing costs, charges etc, stationery costs, map and plan purchase, transport and other expenses. The tender sum should be exclusive of VAT. An allowance should be made for at least two daytime meetings at Canterbury - as referred to in section 5.
- (4)** A breakdown of costs and manhours in relation to the two stages and particular aspects of the study.
- (5)** Consultants are asked to quote for possible attendance at any subsequent public inquiries and to give hourly/daily rates for both principal and landscape architect level staff (current rates and those likely to pertain in 1998/99) .

7.3 Details of fees should be set out in the accompanying Tender Document.

This appointment will be under the terms and conditions as set out in the Tender Document. A shortlist of Tenderers will be invited to make a brief presentation by the project leader. The successful tender will be chosen on a combination of price and quality.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CONSULTEES

Background Information

The following documents can be made available to the successful Tenderer at the commencement of Stage 1.

Canterbury District Local Plan (1994)
Swale Borough Local Plan (1996)
Kent Countryside Plan Written Statement (1983)
Kent Countryside Plan Report of Survey (1980)
Canterbury District Local Plan Background Proof Number 3: Landscape (1996)
Canterbury District Local Plan Technical Paper Three: Landscape, Nature Conservation and Open Space (1994)
Swale Local Plan Topic Paper No.2 Environmental Issues 1996
Eastern Swale Landscape Assessment KCC 1996

Consultees (Not exhaustive)

Details of contact names, addresses and telephone numbers of the consultees listed below will be supplied to the successful tenderer.

Blean Parish Council
Dunkirk Parish Council
Hernhill Parish Council
Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council
Whitstable Society
Faversham Society
STOP
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Countryside Commission
Forestry Authority
National Farmers Union
Country Landowners Association

Appendix II

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BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: Highstreet

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 1

WEATHER: clear, light cloud

DIRECTION OF VIEW: south

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity Orchard ✓	Flat Gently sloping Steeply sloping Undulating ✓ Hill Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges ✓ Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges Hedgebanks Woodland With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings ✓ Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads ✓		Small Medium ✓ Large
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular Rectangular ✓ Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :
Well managed orchard & arable fields fill the majority of this view but woodland on rising ground is prominent.

SCALE	DIVERSITY	UNITY
Open ✓ Enclosed Confined	Uniform Simple Diverse Complex ✓	Unified ✓ Interrupted Fragmented Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :
There is a strong contrast in texture between rectilinear orchard & arable land. Agricultural hedges are managed in formal shape.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :
The mid & fore ground are farmland that is not distinctively in Kent.

VIEWS :
There are long views framed to the south & east by rising wooded ground. A linear & fairly open tree shelter belt is a notable feature in the farmland.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: Bevedere Farm

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 2

WEATHER: light cloud

DIRECTION OF VIEW: norm

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity <u>orchard</u> ✓	Flat Gently sloping Steeply sloping Undulating ✓ Hill Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges ✓ Hedgebanks Woodland ✓ With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads Major roads		Small Medium ✓ Large
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Open farmland fills most of this view but strong blocks of woodland & high land are visually dominant.

SCALE

Open ✓
Enclosed
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple
Diverse
Complex ✓

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Dense woodland contrasts sharply with the farmland. Ordered orchards also provide a striking contrast.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

Open farmland is not distinctive to Kent but presence of orchard at the periphery of this view is characteristic of Kent.

VIEWS :

A thick mixed hedge & hedges form strong containment to the south. There are long views to the north east over farmland & Lambemurst Farm lies in centre view. The small copse near Lambemurst Farm is a distinctive element in the fairly bland arable landscape.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: Norm of Bradbourne Cottages

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 3

WEATHER: clear, light cloud

DIRECTION OF VIEW: norm & south

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat Gently sloping Steeply sloping Undulating ✓ Hill Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges ✓ Hedgebanks Woodland With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings ✓ Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads		Small Medium Large ✓
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

In the area to the north the farmland landscape dominates.
To the south there is an intricate mixture of woods & meadows.

SCALE

Open ✓
Enclosed
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple
Diverse
Complex ✓

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

There are strong contrasts in texture between woodland & farmland.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

The area to the south is typical of wooded Kent.
The area to the north has no distinctive sense of place.

VIEWS :

LOOKING NORTH : after the subtle crest of clay hill the land flattens out very abruptly & opens out to open farmland.

LOOKING SOUTH : the view is of small scale fields heavily fringed with woodland.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: *Denstroude Farm*

DATE: *3 June 1997*

VIEWPOINT NO: *4*

WEATHER: *min cloud*

DIRECTION OF VIEW: *North*

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat Gently sloping ✓ Steeply sloping Undulating Hill Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges ✓ Hedgebanks Woodland With trees ✓ Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings ✓ Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads		Small Medium Large ✓
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

*Wide expanse of pasture is the dominant element.
Heavily fringe of woodland is prominent.*

SCALE

Open ✓
Enclosed
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple ✓
Diverse
Complex

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

*Light green colour of the pasture dominates.
Contrasts with dark green of woodland.*

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

Expansive & undisturbed landscape with few man made elements visible. Not characteristic of Kent or W.

VIEWS :

*Clay Hill has flat, broad down with steep side slopes which do not form a definite hill shape.
Views to the north are limited by a horizon of his higher land.*

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: *Densvonde*

DATE: *3 June 1997*

VIEWPOINT NO: *5*

WEATHER: *clear, light cloud*

DIRECTION OF VIEW: *south*

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Flat	Thick hedges	Isolated farms/buildings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pasture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gently sloping <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clipped hedges	Agricultural buildings/barns
Heath	Steeply sloping	Laid hedges	Historical features
Common	Undulating	Mixed hedges	Hamlets
Rough grassland	Hill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Intermittent hedges	Villages
Scrub	Mountain	Hedgebanks	Towns
Woodland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Valley	Woodland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Forest Plantation	Plateau	With trees	FIELD SIZE
Watermeadow	Floodplain	Without trees	Small
Parkland		Post and wire fence	Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Amenity	ROUTES / TRANSPORT	Fencing	Large
	Railway	Stone walls	
WATER FEATURES	Tracks		OTHER
	Lanes	FIELD PATTERN	
	Minor roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regular	
	Major roads	Irregular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Rectangular	
		Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

There is a harmonious balance of 1/3 each of following elements: woodland / orchard / farmland.

SCALE	DIVERSITY	UNITY
Open <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uniform	Unified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enclosed	Simple	Interrupted
Confined	Diverse	Fragmented
	Complex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

There are strong contrasts in texture between the dark green woods & the rectilinear light green orchards.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

This attractive combination of elements is typical of eastern Kent.

VIEWS :

There is a wide panorama looking south, limited by rising, wooded ground. The view is very attractive & contains a rich range of elements.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: Euenden Wood

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 6

WEATHER: light cloud

DIRECTION OF VIEW: WEST

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat Gently sloping ✓ Steeply sloping Undulating Hill Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges ✓ Hedgebanks Woodland With trees ✓ Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads		Small Medium Large ✓
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Organisation is dominated by large scale arable fields which are the dominant element.

SCALE

Open ✓
Enclosed
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple ✓
Diverse
Complex

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Arable land will vary in colour & texture. Woodland on high ground to the south gives contrast in colour & texture.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

The arable fields do not have a distinct sense of place. Woodland beyond is typical of eastern Kent.

VIEWS :

The view is dominated by arable farmland, with Lambhurst Farm in the centre view. Woodland on high ground to the south & west provides a more distant framework.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: Yorklets

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 7

WEATHER: clear

DIRECTION OF VIEW: south

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat Gently sloping ✓ Steeply sloping Undulating Hill ✓ Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges ✓ Intermittent hedges Hedgebanks Woodland With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings ✓ Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads		Small Medium ✓ Large
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION/PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Fairly equal proportion of high, wooded land & low lying farmland

SCALE	DIVERSITY	UNITY
Open ✓ Enclosed Confined	Uniform Simple Diverse ✓ Complex	Unified Interrupted Fragmented Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Deep green colour of the woodland contrasts strongly with the lighter colour & textures of the farmland.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

The view contains two contrasting landscape character areas. Farmland character is not distinctively marked out.

VIEWS :

There is a wide panorama with wooded Hough Hill dominating the western portion. To the north the land widens very expansively in a coastal plain. This viewpoint is a transition point between an inland landscape of wooded hills & the flat coastal levels.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: High Street - Doggate

DATE: 3 June 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 8

WEATHER: light cloud

DIRECTION OF VIEW: south

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable ✓ Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat ✓ Gently sloping Steeply sloping Undulating Hill ✓ Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges ✓ Hedgebanks Woodland With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads ✓ Major roads		Small Medium Large ✓
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION/PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

This view is dominated by the wide expanse of arable land.

SCALE	DIVERSITY	UNITY
Open ✓ Enclosed Confined	Uniform Simple ✓ Diverse Complex	Unified ✓ Interrupted Fragmented Chaotic

TEXTURE/COLOUR :

The texture & colour of the arable land will vary & this area dominates the view. Woodland on high ground contrast in colour & texture.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI/SENSE OF PLACE :

The open arable land has no distinctive sense of place. Woodland beyond is typical of Kent but not unique to it.

VIEWS :

This viewpoint gives a wide panorama with Lambhurst Farm in the centre ground. The mid & fore grounds are flat & featureless but woodland beyond gives an attractive panorama.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: *Dargate*

DATE: *3 June 1997*

VIEWPOINT NO: *9*

WEATHER: *light cloud.*

DIRECTION OF VIEW: *South east*

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable	Flat	Thick hedges	Isolated farms/buildings ✓
Pasture	Gently sloping ✓	Clipped hedges ✓	Agricultural buildings/barns
Heath	Steeply sloping	Laid hedges	Historical features
Common	Undulating	Mixed hedges	Hamlets
Rough grassland	Hill ✓	Intermittent hedges	Villages
Scrub	Mountain	Hedgebanks	Towns
Woodland ✓	Valley	Woodland ✓	
Forest Plantation	Plateau	With trees	FIELD SIZE
Watermeadow	Floodplain	Without trees	Small
Parkland		Post and wire fence	Medium ✓
Amenity	ROUTES / TRANSPORT	Fencing	Large
<i>Orchard</i> ✓	Railway	Stone walls	OTHER
WATER FEATURES	Tracks		
	Lanes	FIELD PATTERN	
	Minor roads	Regular	
	Major roads	Irregular	
		Rectangular ✓	
		Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Orchards fill the view, with woodland visible beyond in between the fruit trees.

SCALE	DIVERSITY	UNITY
Open	Uniform	Unified ✓
Enclosed ✓	Simple ✓	Interrupted
Confined	Diverse	Fragmented
	Complex	Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Views into the orchard have a rich texture of the fruit trees that will vary seasonally.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

The apple orchards are typical of eastern Kent but are a highly managed, commercial landscape.

VIEWS :

Orchards dominate the view & are a highly ordered, rectilinear landscape. Woodland beyond gives a distant framework that is also visible between the fruit trees.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: *Darqare*

DATE: *3 June 1997* VIEWPOINT NO: *10*

WEATHER: *clear, scattered cloud* DIRECTION OF VIEW: *south*

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable	Flat	Thick hedges	Isolated farms/buildings
Pasture	Gently sloping ✓	Clipped hedges ✓	Agricultural buildings/barns
Heath	Steeply sloping	Laid hedges	Historical features
Common	Undulating	Mixed hedges	Hamlets
Rough grassland	Hill	Intermittent hedges	Villages
Scrub	Mountain	Hedgebanks	Towns
Woodland ✓	Valley	Woodland ✓	
Forest Plantation	Plateau	With trees	FIELD SIZE
Watermeadow	Floodplain	Without trees	Small
Parkland		Post and wire fence	Medium ✓
Amenity	ROUTES / TRANSPORT	Fencing	Large
<i>Orchard</i>	Railway	Stone walls	OTHER
WATER FEATURES	Tracks		
	Lanes	FIELD PATTERN	
	Minor roads ✓	Regular	
	Major roads	Irregular ✓	
		Rectangular	
		Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Equal balance of woodland & orchard.

SCALE

Open
Enclosed ✓
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple ✓
Diverse
Complex

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Dark mass of deciduous woodland contrasts with open texture of the orchards.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

This is a strongly defined landscape with an unusual combination of elements that are typical of Kent.

VIEWS :

Distant views are limited by high, wooded ground. The roadside is often lined with high, pleached hedges which block views out. This is a managed & well cared for landscape that is characteristic of eastern Kent.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: CROCKHAM

DATE: 3 JUNE 1997

VIEWPOINT NO: 11

WEATHER: fine

DIRECTION OF VIEW: norm east

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable Pasture ✓ Heath Common Rough grassland Scrub Woodland ✓ Forest Plantation Watermeadow Parkland Amenity	Flat Gently sloping Steeply sloping Undulating ✓ Hill ✓ Mountain Valley Plateau Floodplain	Thick hedges Clipped hedges Laid hedges Mixed hedges Intermittent hedges Hedgebanks Woodland ✓ With trees Without trees Post and wire fence Fencing Stone walls	Isolated farms/buildings Agricultural buildings/barns Historical features Hamlets Villages Towns
	ROUTES / TRANSPORT		FIELD SIZE
	Railway Tracks Lanes Minor roads Major roads		Small Medium ✓ Large
WATER FEATURES		FIELD PATTERN	OTHER
		Regular Irregular ✓ Rectangular Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

An equal balance of wood meadow & woodland

SCALE

Open
Enclosed ✓
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple
Diverse ✓
Complex

UNITY

Unified ✓
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

There is a strong contrast in both colour & texture between the pasture & the woodland.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

An attractive combination that is fairly characteristic of this part of Kent.

VIEWS :

Views are framed by dense woodland on rising ground. Pasture intermingles with the indented margins of the woods, giving an attractive & strong landscape.

BLEAN WOODS LANDSCAPE QUALITY - ASSESSMENT FORM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA :

LOCATION: *Houm Hill*

DATE: *3 JUNE 1997*

VIEWPOINT NO: *12*

WEATHER: *fine*

DIRECTION OF VIEW: *norm*

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

LANDCOVER	LANDFORM	FIELD BOUNDARIES	SETTLEMENT
Arable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Flat	Thick hedges	Isolated farms/buildings
Pasture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gently sloping <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clipped hedges	Agricultural buildings/barns
Heath	Steeply sloping	Laid hedges	Historical features
Common	Undulating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mixed hedges	Hamlets
Rough grassland	Hill	Intermittent hedges <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Villages
Scrub	Mountain	Hedgebanks	Towns
Woodland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Valley	Woodland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Forest Plantation	Plateau	With trees	FIELD SIZE
Watermeadow	Floodplain	Without trees	Small
Parkland		Post and wire fence	Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Amenity	ROUTES / TRANSPORT	Fencing	Large
	Railway	Stone walls	
WATER FEATURES	Tracks		OTHER
	Lanes	FIELD PATTERN	
	Minor roads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regular	
	Major roads	Irregular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Rectangular	
		Linear	

AESTHETIC FEATURES

ORGANISATION / PROPORTION AND BALANCE OF ELEMENTS :

Swirling woodlands dominate the landscape character. Subtle transition to adjoining wood meadow.

SCALE

Open
Enclosed
Confined

DIVERSITY

Uniform
Simple
Diverse
Complex

UNITY

Unified
Interrupted
Fragmented
Chaotic

TEXTURE / COLOUR :

Strong green of dense summer foliage is the dominant colour. Contrast in texture between woodland & meadow

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENIUS LOCI / SENSE OF PLACE :

Irregular field margin & edge of woodland are a distinctive combination.

VIEWS :

Complex topography with undulating form makes an attractive & varied view. The horizon is formed by rising ground with a thick cloak of woodland.

Appendix III

A1.0 STATUS OF CONSULTATIONS

A1.1 Local Consultations

Consultations were undertaken with bodies selected as organisations that have specialist knowledge of the Kent landscape or with bodies selected because they are organisations that have specialist knowledge of the principle issues under review. The approach was to ask for an opinion on the relative importance of the Blean Wood SLA, with the dialogue particularly focusing on the non visual dimensions of landscape such as archaeology, landscape history, ecology and the built environment. A summary of correspondence follows.

Blean Parish Council

- A1.1.1 A letter dated 24 June 1997 was received from parishioner Mrs V Rook commenting that the boundary change at Ellenden Wood is contrary to policy KCP3 in the Kent Countryside Plan.
- A1.1.2 A letter was received dated 4 July 1997 from two parishioners, Mary Fox and Eric Fox, commenting that they would very much welcome a review of the SLA. They consider the present boundary to be an arbitrary one and consider that the beauty of the landscape around Dargate, Clay Hill and Denstroude fully merits SLA status.
- A1.1.3 A letter dated 23 July 1997 was received from the Clerk showing the previous southern boundary of Ellenden Wood within Canterbury District.

Dunkirk Parish Council

- A1.1.4 In a telephone discussion Mrs C Dennis of the Parish Council explained that the Parish Council would be advised at a meeting on 6 June that a review of the SLA was underway. No further comments have been received.

Hernhill Parish Council

- A1.1.5 In a letter dated 27 June the Parish Council advised that the study area falls outside the boundary of Hernhill.

A1.2 Interest Groups

- A1.2.1 Letters were sent to both the Whitstable Society and to the Faversham Society but no replies received.

A1.22 A letter dated 10 July 1997 was received from STOP, a local group opposing an integrated waste facility in the area. The group comments that the area is being considered under a European Habitat Directive as having a list of habitats and species of European importance. The group urges the extension of SLA status to this attractive area, which is described as being very much a working agricultural area of farming, orchards, soft fruits and tourism.

A1.3 National Consultation

A1.3.1 Following discussion with the local authorities on the First Stage Report, it has not been considered appropriate to consult at national level because the recommended changes to the SLA boundary are minor and do not carry significant implications as to the overall SLA designation.