



**CANTERBURY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN  
PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS  
BACKGROUND STUDY NUMBER 1  
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT:  
WANTSUM CHANNEL  
AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE**

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June 1998

Following a recommendation in the Canterbury District Local Plan Inspector's Report, a detailed landscape assessment was carried out for the Wantsum Channel Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) to assess the qualities and role of the landscape and to define a clear defensible western boundary.

## SUMMARY

# LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT: WANTSUM CHANNEL AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE



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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Canterbury District Local Plan Inspector's Report recommended that the City Council carried out a landscape assessment of the area covered by the Chislet Marshes to determine the landscape qualities, function and boundary of this area. The Deposit Draft Local Plan (March 1994) defined an area of local landscape importance called an Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV), at the Chislet Marshes which sought to recognise the importance of the former Wantsum Channel.

The former channel is at the eastern extremity of the Canterbury District and stretches into the neighbouring Districts of Thanet and Dover. All three District Councils agreed to reflect the importance of this landscape in East Kent in their local plans. Canterbury and Thanet proposed to call the designation Area of High Landscape Value while Dover called it an Area of Local Landscape Significance.

At the Canterbury District Local Plan Public Local Inquiry an objection was raised to the precise boundary of the area particularly as it applied to the higher plateau land to the west including the settlements of Highstead and Hoath. The Inspector concluded that this area should be excluded from the AHLV due to a difference in character and perceived remoteness from the marshes.

Two options were put forward at the Inquiry - i) the 5m contour as the original shoreline of the Channel and ii) the road that runs along the edge of the marsh. The Inspector concluded that:

*"As a designation intended to reflect the landscape characteristics derived from the former inundation of the sea, I think a boundary based on the past shoreline, identified as the 5m contour, would be appropriate and defensible."*

The Inspector also stated that:

*"the marshes are a distinctive feature in the landscape and have an East Kent significance being subject to local landscape designation in Thanet and proposed in Dover District.... I am satisfied that Chislet Marshes do merit inclusion in the Plan as a local landscape feature of importance in the area".*

The Inspector recommended that the City Council carry out a landscape assessment to determine the landscape qualities, function and boundaries of the Chislet Marshes. She also recommended that the area of land in the vicinity of Highstead and Hoath above the 5m contour line be excluded.

The City Council in considering the Inspector's recommendation concluded that:-

i) the area in the vicinity of Highstead and Hoath should be excluded; and  
ii) following the 5m contour is not a clear and defensible boundary as there are very few distinguishing features along the 5m contour and therefore it is difficult to detect on the ground.

This accords with the Countryside Commission's recommended approach that boundaries should follow "clear features on the ground" (CCP423).

## The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the qualities and role of this landscape and using this assessment, define a clear defensible western boundary for the proposed Wantsum Channel AHLV.

This detailed assessment will:

- Describe and identify the local landscape character area and its subdivisions
- Establish the condition and sensitivity of this landscape
- Define the landscape designation boundaries
- Identify the appropriate policy approach
- Suggest guidelines for the future

## 1.2 CONTEXT

### National Level

The broad policy framework for the countryside is set out at the national level in Planning Policy Guidance Number 7 (PPG7). Paragraph 4.16 of PPG7 states that local authorities should identify the particular features of the local countryside which need to be respected or enhanced and should consider the function and justification of these designations. Local authorities should ensure that such designations are soundly based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the countryside.

In addition to PPG7, English Nature and Countryside Commission have recently published the Character Map of England (1996) which identifies the broad character and natural areas of England. This area lies within the North Kent Plain as identified by this study, which consists of essentially low and undulating land between the North Downs to the south and the Greater Thames Estuary to the north.

### Regional/County Level

At a more regional level, Kent County Council (KCC) is currently undertaking a landscape assessment of the County which identifies the broad character areas within Kent. The proposed Wantsum Channel AHLV sits within the Wantsum Channel and Lower Stour Marshes character area as defined in the North-East Kent Assessment and Guidelines Consultation Document November 1997.

### Local/District Level

At the local level, the City Council is undertaking this study which forms part of the character areas already identified above. The landscape assessment of the Wantsum Channel will draw on the above studies and will focus at the local level, on

- 1) defining the outer boundaries of the AHLV;
- 2) identifying those features which contribute to the landscape quality of the area; and
- 3) consider variations in landscape character within the broad marshland character area.



## SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

The countryside today is the product of the interaction of the natural environment and human activity over many thousands of years. This interaction has resulted in the creation of diverse and different landscapes.

The two main determinants of landscape character are:-

- a) the physical influences such as geology, soils and landforms; and
- b) human activity such as settlement patterns and the management of the land e.g. farming practices.

The landscape is therefore the product of a continuous process of change. Recent processes of change can often degrade rather than strengthen the character of the landscape. To strengthen landscape character there is a need to firstly, retain the patterns and diversity within the landscape to ensure regional character and local distinctiveness are maintained. This means preventing everywhere from becoming the same. Secondly, to ensure that landscapes are visually satisfying and give enjoyment to those who live, work or visit them.

It is vital therefore that the decision making process, for example local plan policy, is underpinned by a robust and widely accepted character based framework that takes into account the natural, cultural and visual dimensions of the landscape.

Landscape character assessment involves the classification, description and evaluation of the landscape and therefore involves an element of subjective judgement. The value and/or attractiveness of the landscape means all things to all people, i.e. there is an element of personal preference. Some people may prefer or attach greater value to a downland landscape while others prefer a flat marshland landscape.

There is now a well established and widely accepted process of landscape assessment (Countryside Commission 1993) which involves two distinct phases - the **desk study** and the **field study**.

i) **The desk study:** involves looking at the natural processes such as geology, topography, soils, ecology and culture or man's influences such as land use, settlement and enclosure patterns. The main function of the desk study is to divide the countryside into distinct parcels of land with a similar pattern of physical, biological and historical components largely using map analysis.

ii) **The field study:** using standard field assessment sheets and taking photographs, an analysis of the character of the study area is undertaken. The field survey uses the desk study and provides information about the visual dimension i.e. what actually occurs on the ground. The main function of this stage is to assess the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and identify key characteristics that contribute to local distinctiveness. Field assessment sheets are used to analyse the character and condition and ultimately the sensitivity of the landscape. Character analysis considers features such as topography, tree cover, enclosure, settlement and land use including key natural and man-made features together with a brief description of the area.

Once the field work is completed there is then a process of information sorting and analysis to combine the desk study and the fieldwork. This is based on a combination of known facts, informed consensus and professional judgement leading to the identification of

different landscape types or character areas.

After the character areas or subdivisions have been identified assessment sheets are used to assess the quality of the landscape. This evaluates the inherent distinctiveness or *strength of character* and the *condition* of the landscape and its *sensitivity* i.e. its ability to accommodate change. These terms can be explained as follows:-

**Strength of character** is partly related to locally recurring features which give the landscape an identity and the pattern of elements that define the essence of a particular landscape. For example, the landform, field boundaries and the presence or lack of trees and woodland. Cultural patterns are vulnerable to land use change e.g. field patterns or drainage patterns and can have an effect on visual unity. Landscapes that appear unified and have many distinguishing features tend to have a stronger character.

**Condition** can best be explained by the way in which the landscape appears visually unified and the way in which the countryside functions as a self sustaining resource. It is heavily influenced by external factors such as land use change. Condition can be evaluated by two main indicators:-

i) **Functional integrity:** addresses issues such as a) *ecological integrity* which is the degree to which the countryside functions as a habitat for wildlife; and b) *continuity of land use* which is the extent of the impact of land use change on ecological and cultural identity.

iii) **Visual unity:** addresses issues such as a) *presence of incongruous features*. This is the extent of the impact of recent landscape change on the overall unity of the landscape e.g. hedgerow removal new buildings, tree planting - the latter may strengthen unity in a small scale hedged landscape but can also disrupt the simple unity of a large open landscape; and b) *pattern of elements:* how features relate to one another.

**Sensitivity:** is the measure of the ability of the landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. Sensitivity is evaluated using two main indicators:-

i) **Strength of character:** addresses the distinctiveness of the area whether there is a consistency of pattern and whether there are distinctive features, and continuity i.e. whether there are ancient, historic or recent features.

ii) **Visibility:** addresses the effect of the landform whether it is dominant or insignificant and the extent of tree cover.

Condition and sensitivity are then considered by means of a matrix as shown in Figure 1, which in turn identifies a future vision i.e. guidelines for policy, by considering the ability of each area or subdivision to accommodate a change in management or use without loss of overall integrity.



## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS

### 3.1 GEOLOGY, SOILS, LANDFORM

This area stretching from Reculver in the north to Grove Ferry in the south and eastwards to the administrative boundary forms the western part of the former Wantsum Channel which separated the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent. The underlying geology is London Clay, a blue-marine clay weathering to brown, overlying Upper Chalk, which covers most of the channel with some pockets of sand and loams. There are also outcrops of Thanet Beds which are green-grey sands with shell beds and sandy clay which have been exposed alongside the Wantsum Channel. This is overlain with recent deposits of marine clays and some river alluviums producing a grey-brown silty clay.

To the west the unprotected cliffs of London Clay are important geologically and scientifically due to their interesting fossil content, much of which is exposed at the cliff face and on the wave-cut platform exposed at low water. This is recognised by its international and national designations of Ramsar/Special Protection Area (Ramsar/SPA) and Site Of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is also a proposed candidate for a Special Area for Conservation under the European Habitats Directive.

The landform is generally flat and lowlying marked by ditches and dykes with relatively poor drainage so it tends to become waterlogged in winter, and dry and cracked in periods of low rainfall. As a result of these conditions the agricultural land classification as devised by MAFF, for this area is generally grade 4 on the marshland with some pockets of grade 1 around Chislet, grade 2 around Reculver and Chitty and grade 3 towards the district boundary in the east.

The marshland is below the 5m contour with large areas at only 2m above sea level. The gentle slopes of the former Wantsum Channel rise to a height of 30m at Highstead, 16m at Chislet and 21m at Upstreet. To the eastern side of the channel, the outcrop of Upper Chalk causes Thanet to rise to 23m at St Nicholas-at-Wade and to just above 50m at Manston Aerodrome and provides an elevated position above the flat lowlying marshland. The former channel roughly follows the 5m contour and it is still possible today to see former inlets in the channel at Shelvingford Farm, possibly reaching as far west as Ford and along the Nethergong Penn as far as Chislet Park to the north of Upstreet.

Upstreet occupies an elevated position high on the ridge and it is still possible to see the former cliff line at Puddledock and Walmers Hill, east of Upstreet. To the south, the floodplain of the River Stour meet the Wantsum Channel as it opens up towards Sandwich and Pegwell Bay to the south-east.

### 3.2 ECOLOGY

The study area is reclaimed marsh which is now intensively farmed with a network of ditches leading to the coast. At the northern mouth of the former channel, the coast has been designated a RAMSAR/SPA site and SSSI it is also a candidate under the European Habitats Directive to become a SAC. The Ramsar designation relates to the Thanet Coast SSSI and this designation recognises the importance of this area as a Wetland of International Importance as a Waterfowl Habitat under the Ramsar convention. It has also been designated a Special Protection Area under Article 4 of the European Community Directive of April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds. This requires Member states to

take appropriate steps to avoid pollution or the deterioration of habitats or any disturbance affecting birds.

This area is very important for wintering waders and waterfowl some of which come in land to winter on the marsh. To the west at the Bishopstone Cliffs is an important colony of sandmartins and this area is also important for its fossils content.

To the south at Upstreet the Channel abuts the Stodmarsh reedbeds which is also a Ramsar/SPA and SSSI and is extremely important for its birdlife e.g the bittern. In addition this area is also a national nature reserve and is also a candidate SAC under the Habitats Directive. The Wantsum Channel therefore effectively links two very important RAMSAR/SPA sites.

The lowlying marsh has lost some of its ecological value due to changing farming methods for example, the ploughing up of grazing marsh and infilling of ditches to increase the area under arable production. The loss of grazing marsh has meant that the ecological value is now largely restricted to the network of ditches. This has been recognised by the Kent Wildlife Trust designating the ditches and river of the channel as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). The unimproved pasture with ditch and dyke system near Marshside and the marshy area and lake with copse and shaws in the shallow valley at Chislet Park, are the richest in wildlife. The area is important as a breeding and roosting site for birds and invertebrates. There are a good number of common birds such as swan, moorhen and coot (KWT 1994).

A survey of the Floristic Interest of the Ditches of the Lower Stour Valley (1997) for the Kentish Stour Countryside Project revealed that the only significant remaining area of permanent grassland is east of Keel Farm. It also revealed that there had been some marked deterioration in the number of species in the ditches since an earlier study in 1978. It also revealed that the Wantsum channel is noteworthy for having lost more ditches than any other area. This survey also recorded signs of water voles which is a specie in serious decline and therefore where it exists its habitat should be protected.

The Kent Wildlife Habitat Survey (1995) identified that marsh/marshy grassland makes up 0.1% of the County and 0.3% of all habitats which is the lowest figure recorded for any grassland types and one of these important site identified is the Chislet Marshes.

### 3.3 LANDCOVER AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The channel is largely down to arable production with some remnant pockets of grazing marsh primarily used by horsey culture, although some small scale sheep grazing is still in evidence. Arable production has intensified in the last 10 years with large scale draining of the marshland in the early 1990's. The former marsh is largely down to arable cultivation for example, oilseed rape, wheat with crops such as onions, potatoes and brassicas being grown particularly on the slopes of the former channel.

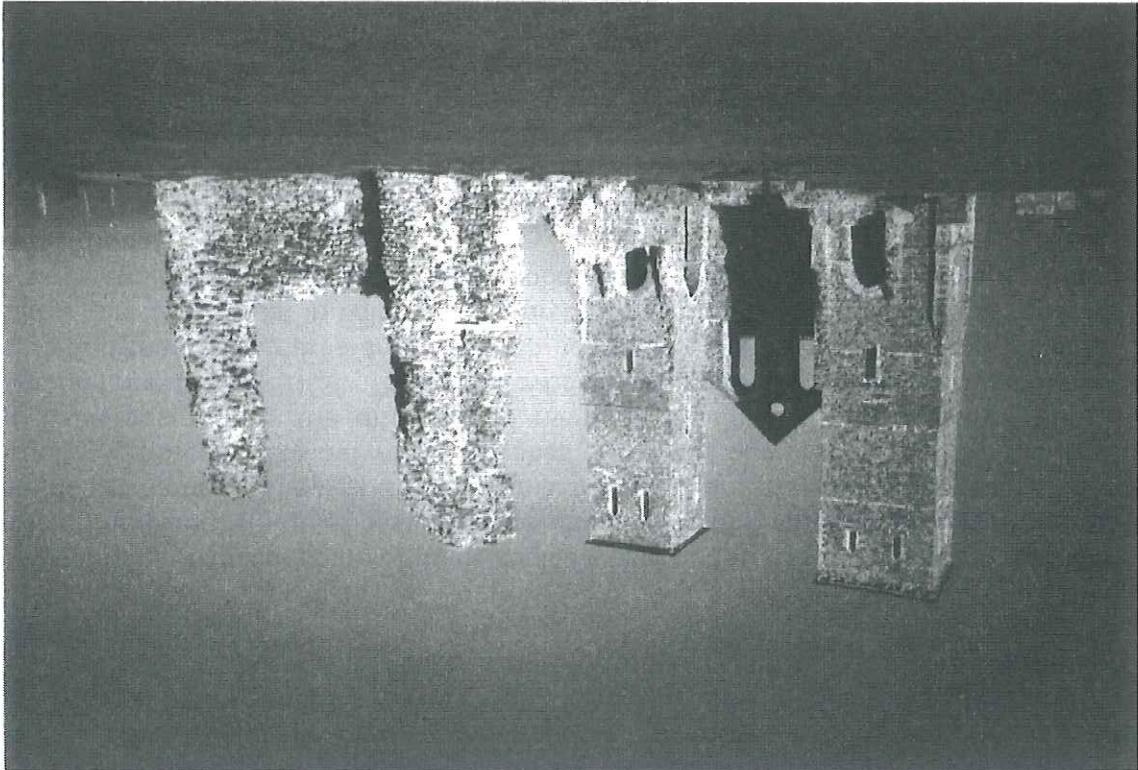
There are some pockets of woodland most notably at Shelving Wood (thought to be a remnant of a larger medieval deer park associated with the Manor at Ford) and at Puddledock near Walmers Hill. Tree cover is concentrated around the small settlements and farmstead and except for some recent planting on the marsh along the ancient droves, the marsh is largely devoid of trees. There is some planting associated with the upgraded Thanet Way and the railway line but these tend to be Hawthorn and Blackthorn and shrubby in comparison.

The hamlet of Chislet centres around the Norman church, Chislet Court farm and Chislet C of E school, both of which can be seen from a great distance. The larger settlement of Upstreet, mainly a linear settlement strung out along the A28 Roman Road, has been the subject of a number of recent small scale developments mainly infill plots. The village is largely of Victorian descent, with some older properties such as Port Farmhouse and Vision House dating back to 15th and 17th century, respectively.

Settlements tend to be concentrated around the edge of the Wantsum channel around former farmsteads. The only settlement of any size is Upstreet high up on the ridge. Sitting on the shores of the former channel, Marshside is a linear settlement interspersed with wide open spaces and clusters of dwellings around farmsteads such as Keel Farm and Home Farm. The small nucleated hamlet of Boyden Gate contains some 40 or so dwellings, a small Wesleyan Chapel and a public house. This hamlet once contained a variety of facilities such as baker, butcher, general store and post office and a forge, all of which are now private residences.

Moving inland the next cluster of dwellings of any size is at Grays centred around the farmstead with the remnant of a moat.

Figure 2: The ruin of St Mary's Church, Reculver



At Reculver there are two locally listed buildings associated with the caravan sites. The Roman/Saxon shore fort and St Mary's Church are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

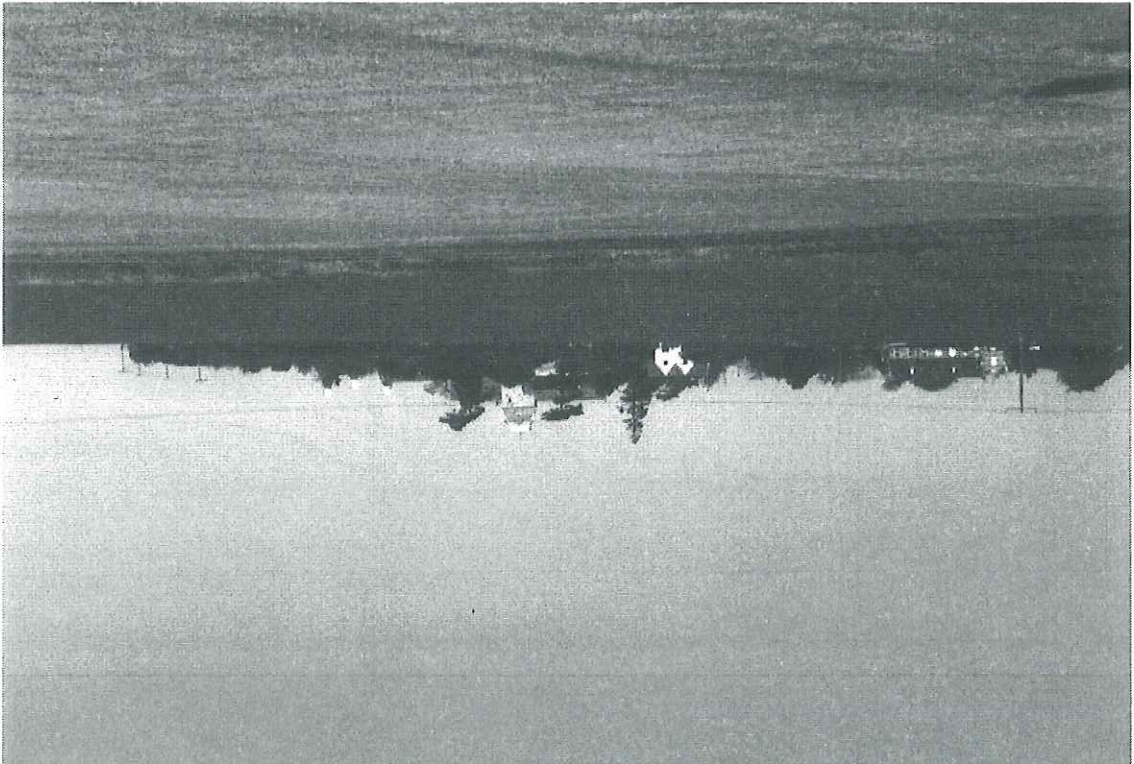
The channel is crossed from east to west by the London to Ramsgate railway line and the now upgraded A299 Thanet Way connecting Thanet with the M2 and London. This results in some visual and noise intrusion into an otherwise tranquil rural landscape. This is particularly noticeable at night with unsympathetic lighting associated with the A299 creating a linear orange glow across an otherwise flat and very dark landscape emanating in a considerable amount of light pollution.

A major stone fort was built at Reculver in the 3rd century and was probably a mile in land at this time, however, coastal erosion has meant that today a stone apron is all that prevents it from falling into the sea. This fort was a defensive measure against early Saxon raids and represents the first phase of the Saxon Shore Fort system of the south east coast. Therefore this fort guarded the northern mouth of the Wantsum Channel while Richborough guarded the southern end.

The current landscape was developed during the medieval and later times with a rich heritage of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon archaeology and the landscape we see today was largely completed by 1500/1550. The earliest finds from the Reculver area are a major collection of Palaeolithic (early Stone Age - 10,000 B.C.) flint tools that were washed out of the cliffs to the west in the 19th century. Mesolithic (middle Stone Age - 6,000 B.C.) flints have been found on the site itself. However, the earliest evidence of fixed settlement is represented by the Middle Bronze Age (1,000 BC) pottery finds which probably represents a farmstead in the area west of the church. Iron Age pottery (500 BC) has been found beneath the church levels and implies another farmstead.

### 3.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE

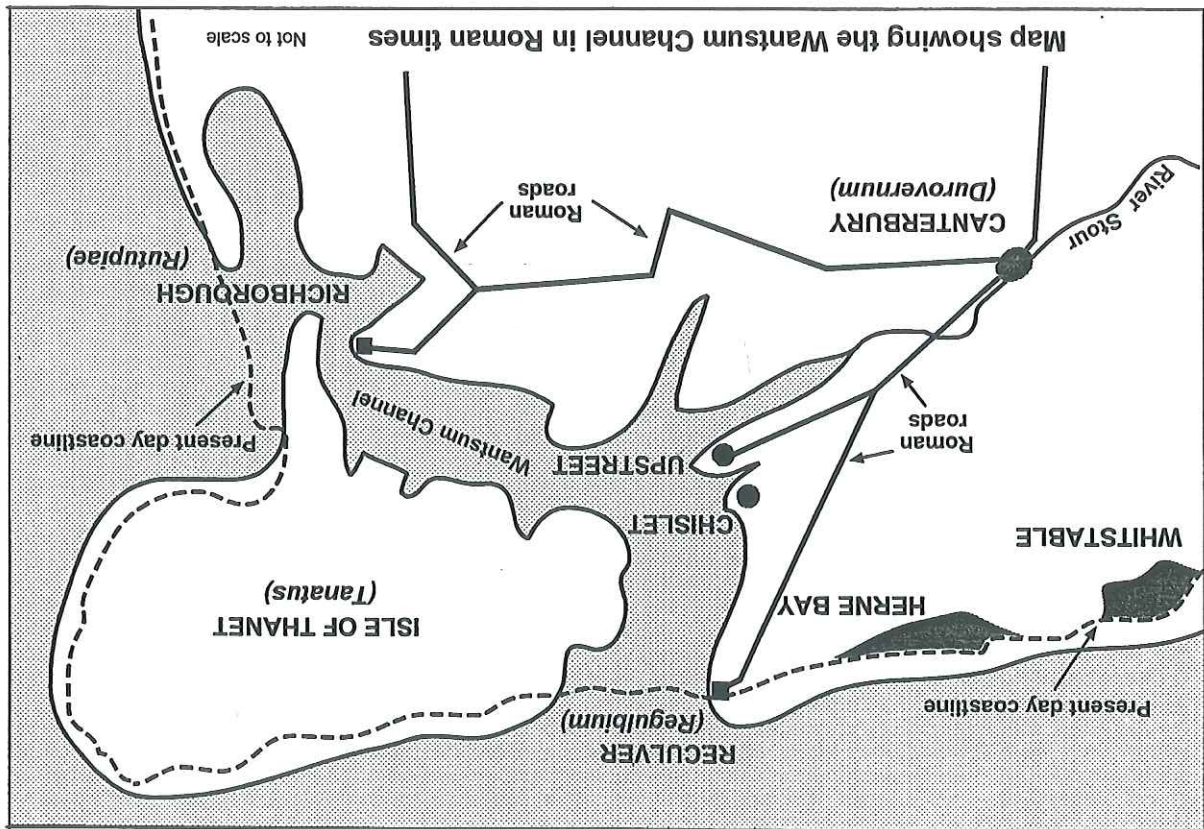
Figure 3: Chislet Church and C of E School



Air photographic evidence and archaeological fieldwork since 1990 have demonstrated an extensive, well managed and organised landscape in this area. This has been revealed by crop marks which are believed to be the remains of Belgic and Roman field systems. Investigations in the area between Highstead, just outside the study area, and Boyden Gate suggest that this area has had over 3,000 years of settlements. A small scale excavation in the mid 1970's revealed Iron Age enclosures covered by Romano-British fields and a small Roman inhumation cemetery. It seems likely, therefore, that this was the remains of a larger fort and they have provided an important navigable landmark through the centuries.

Excavations outside the fort have revealed a number of ditch systems and together with a find of mid-first century pottery, probably represent a fortlet of the Conquest period. Further excavations to the west of the fort on the hilltop, now part of Reculver Country Park have revealed metallurgy, ditches and a large pit which was probably the remains of the road to Canterbury. The twin towers of the ruined church are all that remain today of the fort and they have provided an important navigable landmark through the centuries.

Figure 4: The Wantsum Channel in Roman times



Source: Based on information provided by Canterbury Archaeological Trust



of a small Iron Age settlement, perhaps a homestead of a small family group. The remains of a Roman building and enclosure patterns in this area also suggest the location of a Roman farmstead. This building could have been used for drying corn as it is thought to have had an underground heating system.

The conversion of the Wantsum Channel was the consequence of a natural process of silting and partly due to human activity. As the silt accumulated, mudbanks were formed which were eventually colonised by grasses. These areas provided an attractive source of additional grazing and in order to protect livestock from periodic flooding from the Sarre Penn and North stream a piecemeal process of land reclamation began as early as the seventh century.

A standard practice was generally adopted with the construction of a bank to restrain the creeks from overflowing and then another groynes was constructed from the upland to help trap the silt. The third stage was the construction of a short stretch of seawall to keep the sea off the land. These groynes and seawall are still evident today as they have been preserved in the present day landscape in the form of Sarre Wall (now the A28), Rushbourne Seawall (16th century) Gilling, Tipper and Snake Drowes. There was a fourth Drove - May Drove but this was largely destroyed when the marsh was converted to arable cultivation in the early 1990's. Cross ditches were then cut to carry away surplus water. The northern seawall was eventually closed in 1808 transforming the Wantsum channel from a sea strait to farmland (1979 McIntosh).

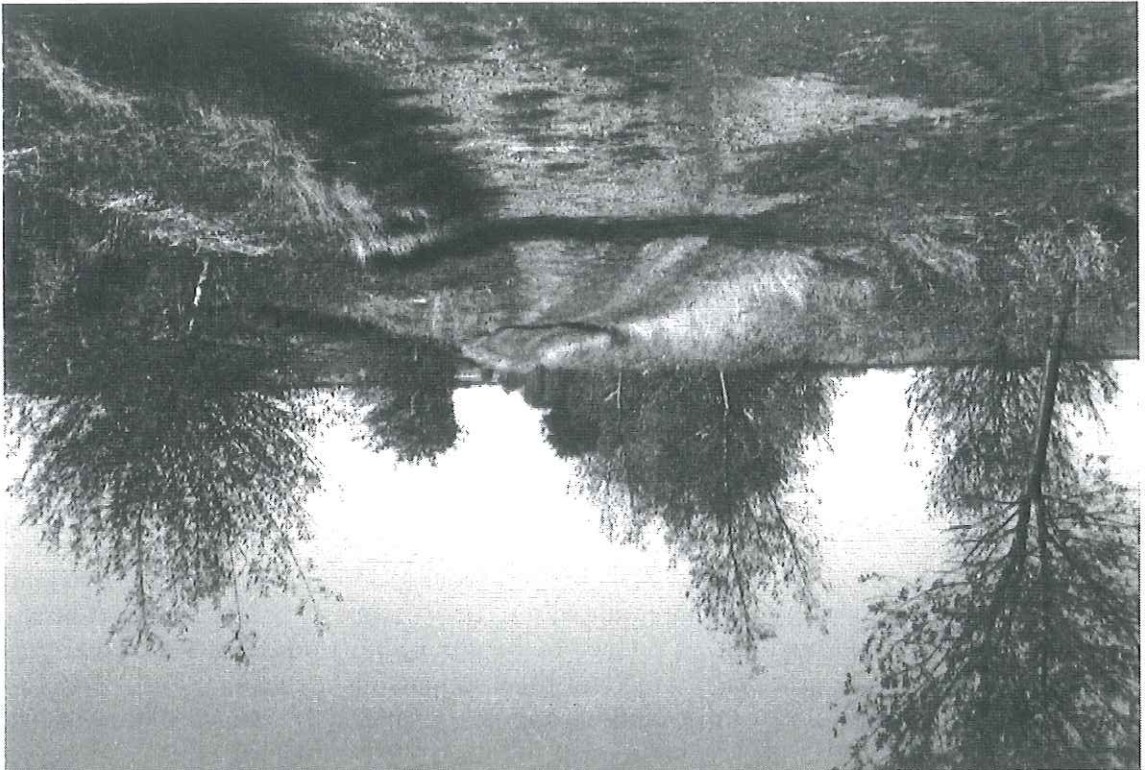


Figure 5: Gilling Drove

The drowes onto the marsh were also used for moving livestock down to summer grazing on the marshes and back to the farms on the higher ground for winter.

The Sarre Wall is a broad causeway averaging 14m in width and 1m in height with drainage ditches on either side. The Wall was wide enough to be used as a road under an

act of 1485 when the Wantsum Channel had silted up to such an extent that the area between Thanet and the mainland was only covered with water at high tides rendering the ferry that used to run connecting these areas, impracticable. The Sarre Wall now carries the A28 which is the main road connecting Canterbury to Thanet.

There are a number of medieval saltworks still evident today in the Wantsum Channel although the majority have been reduced by ploughing while others have been razed totally, some still rise to a height of over 3m and in some cases 350m in length. Most can be found in the middle of the channel which must have reached an advanced state of silting when they were formed. Burnt earth and oyster shells occur on all the mounds and fragments of 13th and 14th century pottery were found on some of them.

The process used was to wash brine from sludge collected from areas flooded during the spring tides and then to obtain the salt through evaporation by boiling. The waste sludge was dumped and in time formed the large conspicuous mounds we see today.

In the Domesday Book, the Archbishop of St. Augustine's Canterbury is recorded as having 47 salt-pans yielding 50 loads of salt at Chislet and 5 salt-pans at Reculver. Fifteen Saltcotes are mentioned amongst the tithes of the vicar of Chislet in 1345.

One of the most impressive buildings overlooking the former channel is Chislet Church (see figure 3). The earliest reference to the Church is 605AD when King Ethelbert gave the manor of *Chisteler* to the newly founded St Augustine's Abbey. The Church is dominated by its Norman tower measuring 17ft square and has a Norman nave with 13th century chancel and nave aisles. It is built of coursed rubble with Caen stone dressings and is Grade I listed. The historical associations with the Church are still in evidence today with Chislet Court adjacent to the Church still being owned by the Church Commissioners and the Church primary school. Chislet Court is a Grade II listed 18th century house probably built by Thomas Jones or his successor.

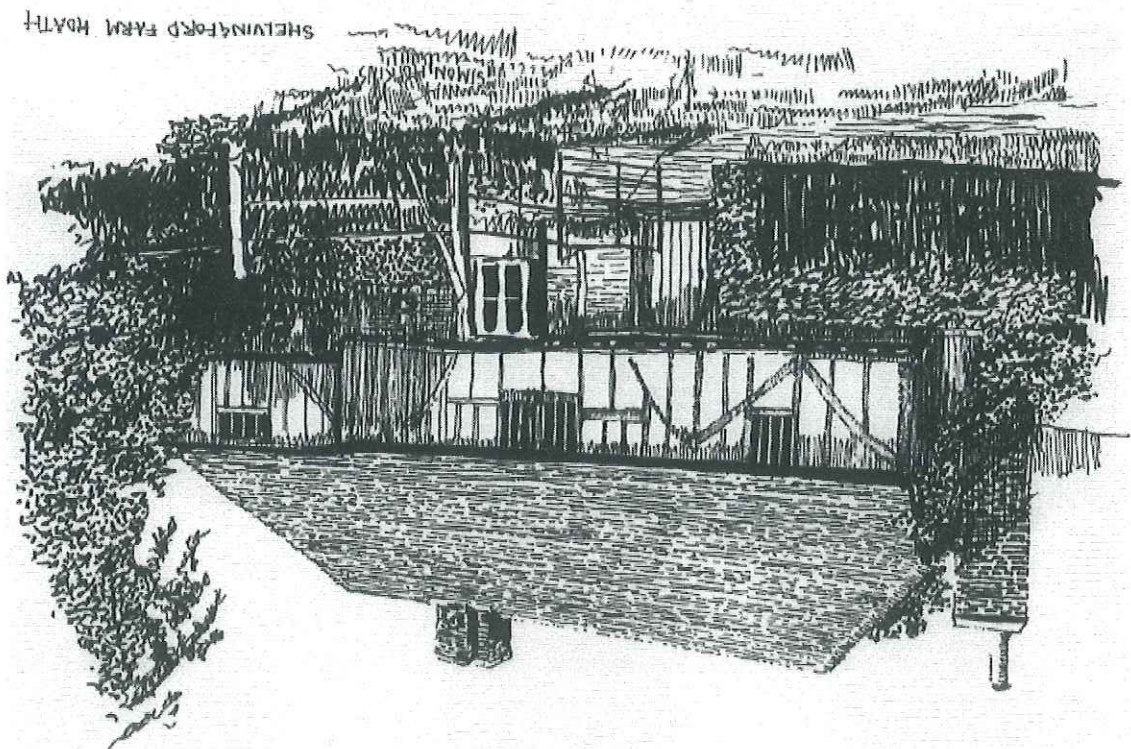
#### **Other buildings**

The other Scheduled Ancient Monument in this area is the Elizabethan gateway at Brook Farm which is also listed as Grade II. It dates from 1580 and is a red brick gateway which survives from an older house. Little Grays Farmhouse is also listed as Grade II and dates from the 17th century as are the weatherboarded and thatched barn adjacent to the house. Nearby at Grays Farm there is still evidence of a former homestead moat which was recorded on the Tithes Map of Chislet in 1838. The farmhouse at Shelvingford is an attractive grade II jettied timber-framed house. It dates from the 16th century and was much altered in the 19th century however, it has recently been restored.

for grazing sheep. Boyden Gate which has also been restored recently reflecting the former use of the marsh Parish Council and the City Council. There is also a redbrick sheep wash in a field at have been recently restored by means of a partnership scheme between the owners, the arch and the other an elliptical arch. These are an important feature in the landscape and access to the droves and fields. Six have round arches while the other two have a pointed bridges which cross the North Stream at Marshside. Some date back to 1793, and give Another important feature or group of features in this area are the series of eight brick larger farm which had been divided up.

The Vision House is a late medieval hall-house dating from the 18th century with 19th century additions and is Grade II listed. The Tithe Map of 1841 shows this formed part of and the red brick walls which form the walls to an out building with a 19th century roof. storey brick stable and extension, also Grade II, dating from the late 18th to 19th century of which are listed Grade II. Other noteworthy buildings in this complex are the single associated farm buildings such as the early 18th century brick built barn and granary both Upstreet. The former is a timber framed Grade II listed 15th century building with Two other buildings of notable interest are Port Farmhouse and The Vision House at At Chislet Forstal, the Tudor House is a hall-house of Wealden form dating back to the late and 16th centuries. It is Grade II\* listed and is recorded as having exceptional interior features and is a most impressive building.

Figure 6: Shelvingford Farmhouse



SHELVINGFORD FARM HOUSE

Figure 8: Sheepwash, Boyden Gate

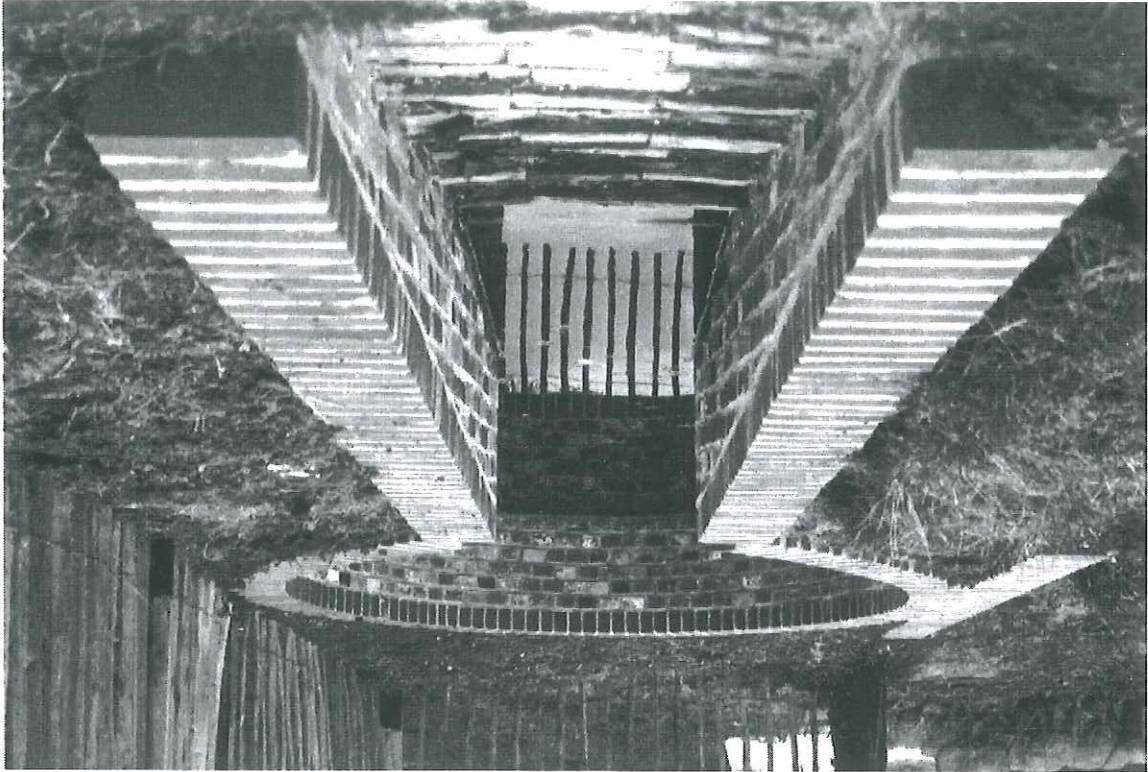
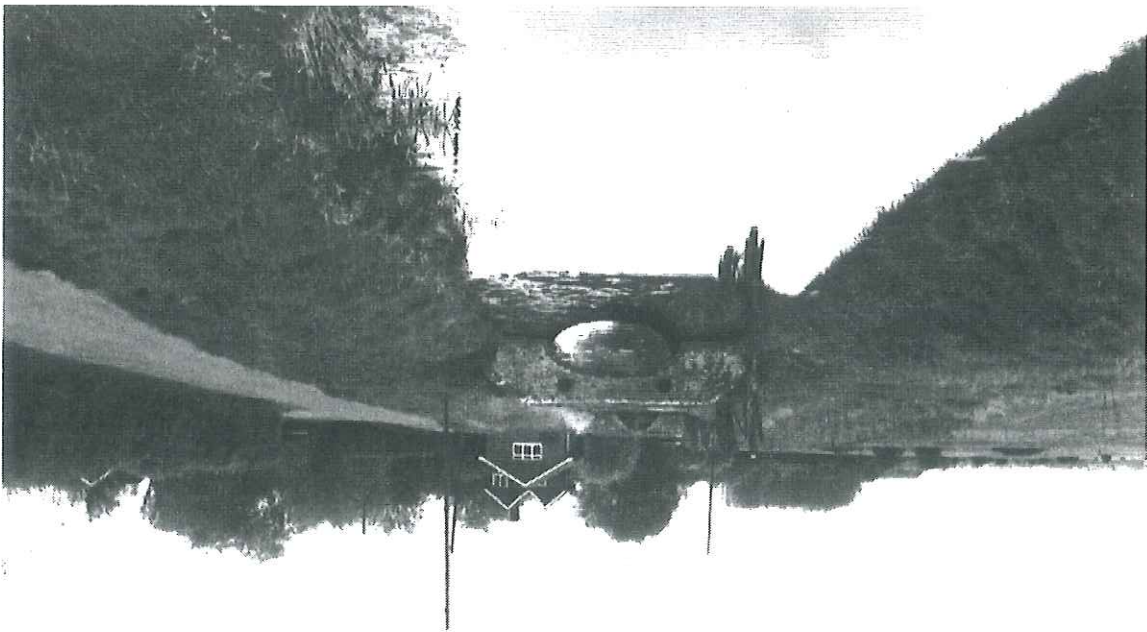


Figure 7: Brick bridges across the North Stream



### Conservation Areas

The rich heritage and importance of this area is recognised by the 8 Conservation Areas which have been designated. These are centred around the settlements located at the edge of the Wantsum Channel or abutting the study area and are as follows:-

- The Reculver Conservation Area - designated 9/12/97
- The Under the Wood (Chislet) Conservation Area - designated 20/7/93
- The Highstead (Chislet) Conservation Area - designated 20/7/93
- The Marshside Conservation Area - designated 9/12/97
- The Boyden Gate Conservation Area - designated 16/12/81
- The Chislet and Chitty Conservation Area - designated 20/7/93
- The Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal Conservation Area - designated 20/7/93
- The Upstreet Conservation Area - designated 15/4/87

### 3.5 RECREATION

This area is also very important for recreation. The City Council has also established a linear country park with a visitor centre, stretching along the cliff-top from Reculver to Bishopstone. Walking is an important recreational activity in this area with waymarked routes such as the Saxon Shore Way (which runs from North Kent to the Sussex border) cutting through this area and the series of circular walks associated with the Wantsum Channel. There is also the caravan site at Reculver which is used for 11 months of the year for static caravans and attracts a number of visitors each year.

Reculver's twin towers have been the subject of a number of paintings in the 18th and 19th century which are currently on display locally at Herne Bay Museum. Artists such as James Ward RA, William Daniells, Denis Dighton and Albert Goodwin have captured the remoteness of this part of the East Kent coast.

## SECTION 4: CHARACTER AREAS

This section identifies the main character areas and assesses them against the methodology set out in Section 2, and includes a general description and evaluates the condition and sensitivity of the areas and suggests possible guidelines.

The area is largely one character area of lowlying former marshland with gentle slopes forming the Wantsum channel. However, the character of this area does vary within this broad marshland character area. This assessment divides the channel into 5 subdivisions which are shown on Map1:-

- \* Reculver coastal fringe - the area from the coast to A299 Thanet Way
- \* Snake Drive pastures - the area from the A299 Thanet Way to Snake Drive
- \* Chislet Arable belt - the area from Snake Drive to River Stour
- \* Shelvingford Inlet - the area from Boyden Gate to Shelvingford Farm
- \* Nethergong/Sarre Penn Inlet - the area along the Nethergong and Sarre Penns

### 4.1 RECVLVER COASTAL FRINGE

#### Landscape Description

This is a wide expanse of lowlying former marshland between the A299 Thanet Way and the coast at Reculver and represents the northern extremity of the former Wantsum channel. The land rises gently to the west which marks the former slopes of the channel, while the deeper slopes at Brook Farm could represent a former small inlet.

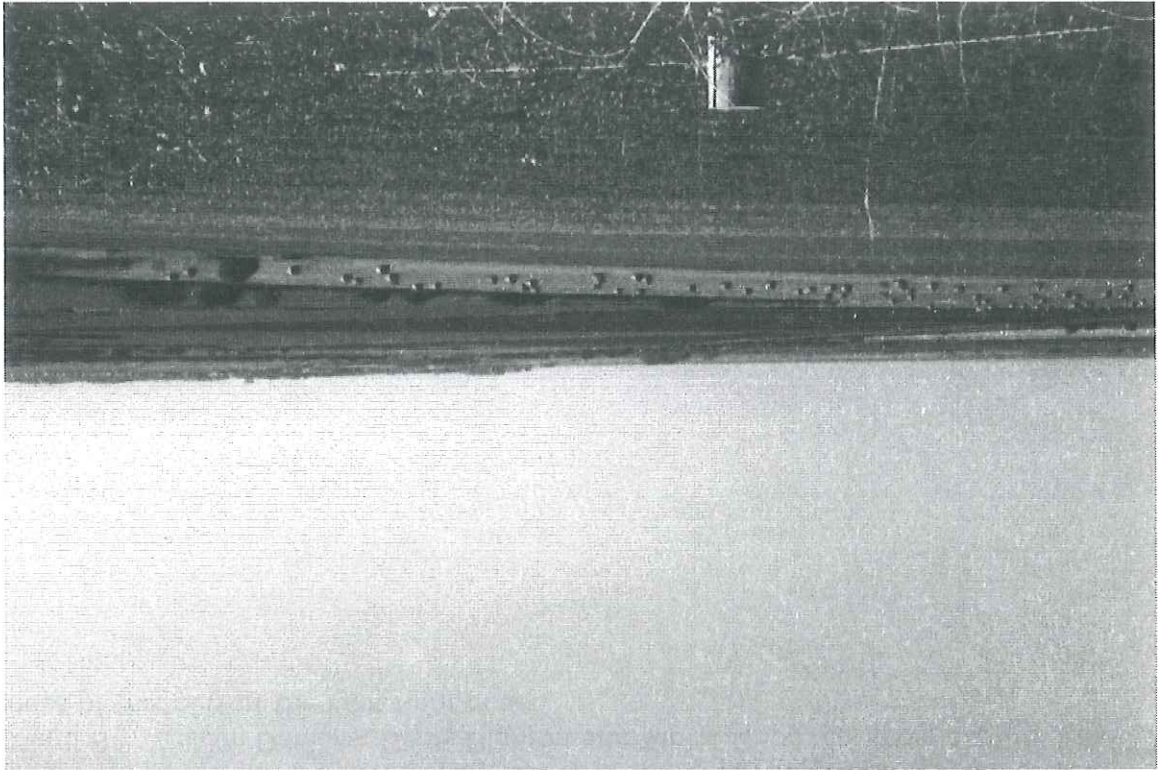
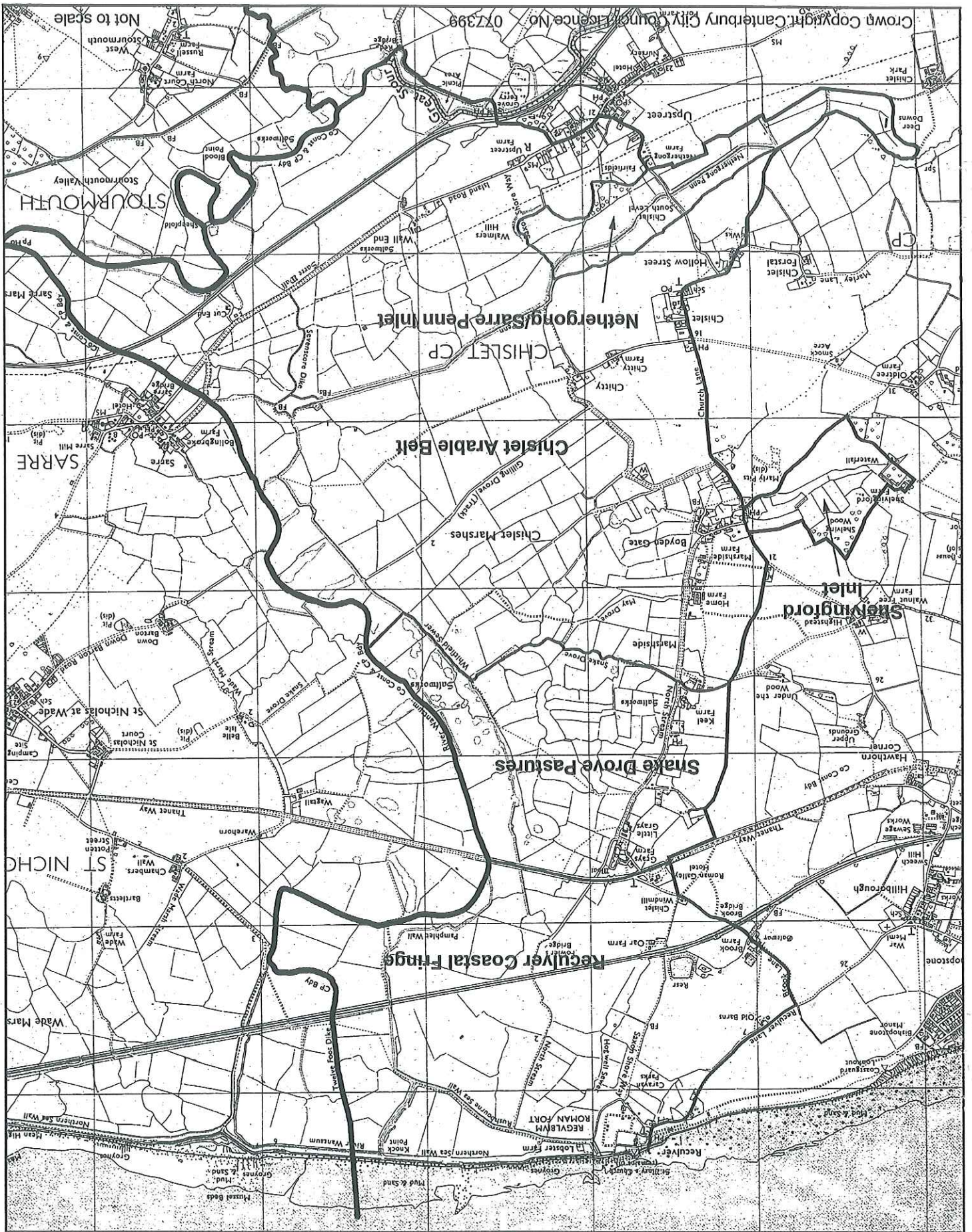


Figure 9: Reculver Coastal Fringe



MAP 1: Five main Character Areas of Wantsum Channel AHLV

Detracting features are those associated with 20th century development, namely the caravan park and associated development of amusement arcades, the industrial type buildings associated with the lobster and oyster farm and the light pollution at night

importance which is recognised by its international and national designations. The area between Reculver and the Thanet Way is dominated by arable production and is on the whole a unified landscape. The coastal fringe is of high nature conservation

### Condition

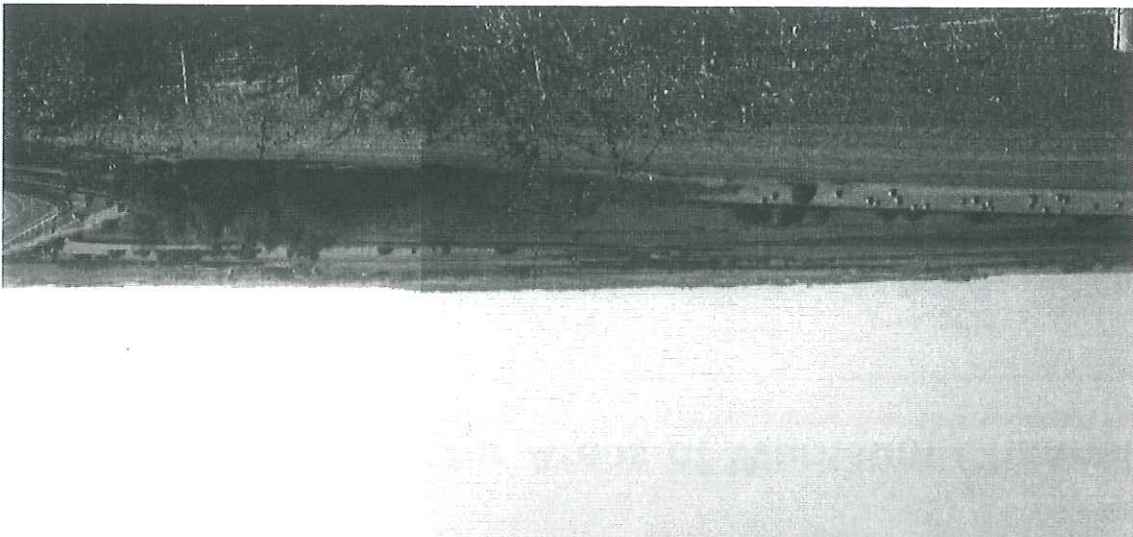
The agricultural improvement of the land was carried out many years ago and the largely rectangular fields give a sense of visual unity. The ecological importance of this area is largely associated with the foreshore although some birds winter inland in the marsh and reedlined ditches.

Important built features in this landscape are the Reculver Towers and associated ruins, Brook farmstead and its Elizabethan Gate. The seawall also dominates views from within the lowlying marsh. This area is bisected by the London to Ramsgate Railway carving out a straight treelined route across the marsh and the recently dualled A299 Thanet Way. Sounds tend to be related to the sea and associated wildlife and those linked with the transport corridor. However, the marsh still retains an element of remoteness rarely experienced elsewhere in East Kent.

There are extensive views both across the marshland and the Isle of Thanet to the east, to the south towards Upstreet and north to the Isle of Sheppey and sometimes to Essex beyond. It is a landscape containing few trees and so those trees and bushes which follow the major transport links and around the small settlements, stand out as important features in an otherwise barren landscape largely set down to arable production. It is a landscape where topography dominates because of the wide expanse of the mouth of the channel as it meets the sea. There are some small pockets of grazing marsh and most fields are enclosed by reedlined ditches.

The shoreline is an important component of the landscape. The shingle area is important for Hogs Fennel and Little Terns can be seen here. The inland sea wall is made of chalk and as a result contains plants that would normally be found in a chalk downland landscape. It also supports an isolated population of the small blue butterfly - a chalkland butterfly.

Figure 10: A299 southern boundary Reculver Coastal Fringe character area





- \* Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views
- \* Conserve and restore the nature conservation interest by encouraging more traditional methods of farming through initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship scheme, Kentish Stour Countryside Project
- \* Improve field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into water courses
- \* Resist new development on the open lowlying areas which would intrude into the openness

Guidelines could include:-

		SENSITIVITY				
		low	moderate	high		
C O N D I T I O N	Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & ENHANCE	CONSERVE	Tolerant of Change	Scope of change with certain constraints Sensitive to change
	Moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE	Scope of change with certain constraints	
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE	Sensitive to change	

**Guidelines**  
 Guidelines that are appropriate to this part of the Wantsum Channel are **conserve and restore** as sensitivity is high and condition is moderate. It would be appropriate to encourage the conservation and restoration of the marshland landscape in more marginal areas and to encourage and promote the nature conservation interest particularly ornithological interest associated with the RAMSAR site to the north. For example, this area could be enhanced to provide a wintering ground for migrating birds.

**Sensitivity**  
 This is a very open landscape with few distinctive features and has a moderate strength of character. It is a distinct and ancient landscape that has been occupied since before Roman times. Although large tracts of this area have been improved through arable intensification, it still retains some of its marshland character. The combination of the broad open topography and the lack of tree cover create a highly visible landscape which is very sensitive to change. The more open the landscape the more sensitive it is to change.

This area has strong cultural associations with the remains of the Roman fort and Church at Reculver and the Elizabethan gateway at Brook Farm. The functional integrity of the landscape is considered to be moderate and the overall condition of the landscape is moderate because of the agricultural improvements that have been carried out. associated with the transport corridor which impact on this lowlying landscape.

\* Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A299 by installing less light polluting columns in line with best practice

#### 4.2 SNAKE DROVE PASTURES

##### Landscape Description

This is an area from the A299 Thanet Way to Snake Drove. It falls into two distinct farming practices firstly, the intensive production of cereals and other arable crops on the more fertile gentle slopes of the former channel, and, secondly, pockets of grazing land on the more lowlying marsh now mainly used for grazing horses. This is a narrower part of the former channel up to the District boundary and is a sparsely settled landscape with most built development concentrated around the farmsteads. The farmsteads sit well in the landscape and tend to have an indigenous tree screening usually of willow and/or hawthorn.



Figure 11: Grazing land within the Snake Drove Pasture character area

The North Stream follows the lane leading from Grays Farm to Keel Farm and continues down as far as Boyden Gate. The road is often lined with willows and hawthorn hedgerows. Snake Drove wends its way across the marsh to St Nicholas-at-Wade and the deeper onto the marsh the greater the feeling of remoteness and tranquillity despite the distant drone of the Thanet Way and London to Ramsgate railway. There are a number of medieval saltworks evident in this area.

**Guidelines** that are appropriate to this part of the Wantsum Channel are **conserve and restore** as sensitivity is high and condition is moderate. Similarly, as with the previous area, it may be appropriate to encourage the conservation of existing area of grassland

**Sensitivity** The sensitivity of this area is high. Although its strength of character is moderate its visibility is high due to the general open nature of the marsh. However, there are some pockets of low visibility usually within the confines of the existing farmsteads.

Ecological interest is largely confined to linear features such as the stream and ditches, and pockets of grazing marsh. There is also interest associated with the small pockets of woodland near the Hog and Donkey public house.

**Condition** This area is in moderate to good condition and is on the whole, a unified landscape. It functions well despite the intensive arable production. It is an attractive landscape with the farmstead located on the edge of the marsh surrounded by trees. The most notable detracting feature is the lighting of the Thanet Way A299 at night which forms the north boundary of this subdivision.

There are also a number of important features in this character area such as the listed buildings at Little Gray, the Moat at Grays Farm and the brick bridges that cross the north stream providing access to the marsh.

**Figure 12:** Hawthorn and willow along the North Stream near Snake Drive



**Landscape Description**  
 This is a large area of essentially arable production stretching from Snake Drove in the north to the River Stour south of Upstreet at Grove Ferry in the south and excludes the former inlets of Shelvingford and the Sarre and Nethergong Penns.

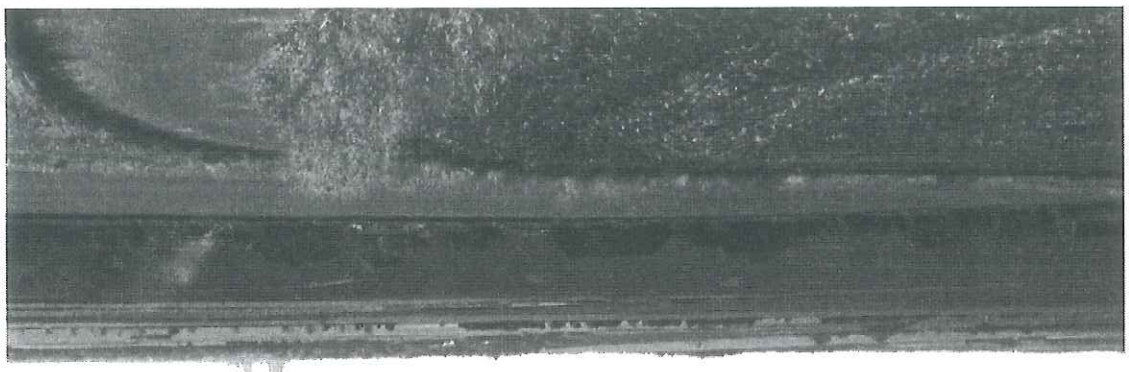
**4.3 THE CHISLET ARABLE BELT**

- Guidelines could include:-
- \* Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views
  - \* Conserve and restore the nature conservation interest by encouraging more traditional methods of farming through initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship scheme, Kentish Stour Countryside Project.
  - \* Improve field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into water courses
  - \* Resist new development on the open lowlying areas which would intrude into the openness
  - \* Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A299 by installing less light polluting columns in line with best practice
  - \* Encourage and promote the planting of indigenous species such as willow where these are ageing through appropriate schemes e.g. along the North Stream at Little Grays.

SENSITIVITY	C O N D I T I O N		
	Good	Moderate	Poor
low	REINFORCE	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	IMPROVE
moderate	CONSERVE & ENHANCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE
high	CONSERVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE	RESTORE

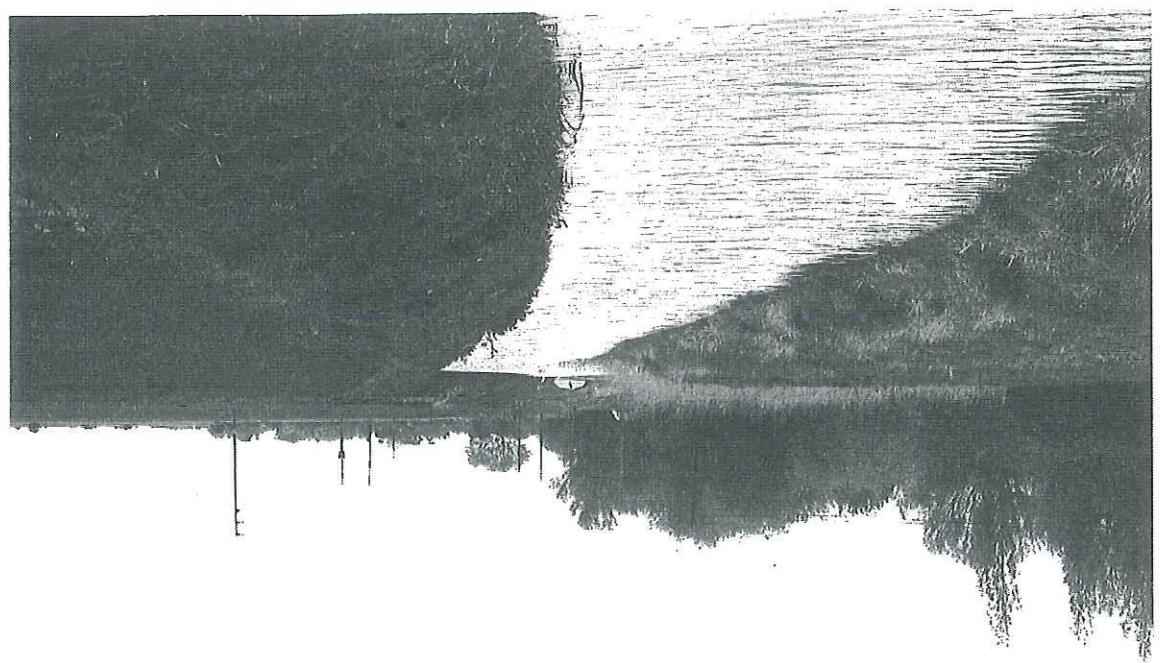
and restore more marginal areas to grazing marsh. This would enhance and promote the nature conservation interest particularly associated with stream and associated ditches.

Figure 14: The Chislet Arable Belt character area



There are some small pockets of grazing marsh limited to approximately half a dozen or so fields. It is an area which has undergone dramatic change in the last decade with the ploughing of the grazing marsh for intensive arable crop production, namely cereals.

Figure 13: North Stream at Marshside



It is a more settled landscape mainly confined to the edge of the marsh with the marsh itself uninhabited. There has been occupation of this landscape since 605AD right through medieval times to the present day. The small settlements of Marshside, Boyden Gate and Chitty are located at the edge of the marsh at the foot of the slopes of the former channel whilst Chislet and Upstreet occupy an elevated position overlooking the former channel. The landscape around the edge of the marsh tends to have greater tree cover, usually around the farmsteads and villages. However, there has been recent planting along the Drovers which stretch out across the former Channel. There are a number of medieval saltworks also evident in this area.

### **Condition**

The condition of this area is moderate as scale and topography of the open arable areas create a unified, coherent landscape despite the recent agricultural improvements. There are few detracting features within this landscape, mainly recent agricultural developments on land next to Heron Willows.

The ecological integrity of this area has been somewhat reduced in the last ten years as a result of agricultural improvements. There is still some ecological interest which is mainly confined to the streams and ditches which is recognised by the SNCI designation.

### **Sensitivity**

The sensitivity of this landscape is high. The visibility is generally high due to the open nature of the landscape and the general absence of built development on the marsh. There are some pockets of low visibility although these are usually within the confines of the settlements. It has a moderate to strong strength of character as there is evidence of early settlements.

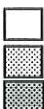
### **Guidelines**

The guidelines would be to conserve and restore those features which are important within this area. For example, conserve the remnants of grazing marsh and restore more marginal areas of agricultural production to grazing marsh.

It is important to conserve the identity of the settlements in this area and ensure new development where it is appropriate, is sympathetic in design and siting. It is important not to allow encroachment of development onto the slopes of the former channel at Upstreet.

- \* Conserve the open character of the marshland landscape and long distance views
- \* Conserve and restore the nature conservation interest by encouraging more traditional methods of farming through initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship scheme, Kentish Stour Countryside Project.
- \* Restore and strengthen field margins adjacent to ditch systems where arable production prevails by working with the relevant bodies and local farmers and to minimise nitrate leakage into water courses
- \* Resist new development on the open lowlying areas and slopes of the channel which would intrude into the openness
- \* Encourage and promote the planting of indigenous tree and hedgerow species through appropriate schemes e.g. Kentish Stour Countryside Project

Guidelines could be to:


  
 Sensitive to change
   
 Scope of change with certain constraints
   
 Tolerant of Change

<b>C O N D I T I O N</b>	Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & ENHANCE	CONSERVE
	Moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
		<b>SENSITIVITY</b>		

**Landscape description**

This is a narrow strip of lowlying grazing marsh which once formed a sheltered inlet to the Wantsum Channel and stretches from Boyden Gate to Shelvingford Farm. The lowlying land is bordered on one side by a gentle slope of large arable fields, and a steeper slope on the other. This steeper slope contains grazing land which abuts Shelving Wood. To the west is the farmstead of Shelvingford Farm.

Most of the ditches and the North Stream are lined with willows, some of which are in decay. Some ponds have been created at both ends of the inlet and the one to the west has been unsympathetically screened with evergreen conifers which is out of keeping with the nearby deciduous woodland. The creation of the ponds is associated with the wider practice of raising game birds.



**Figure 15:** Willow lined ditches and Shelving Wood



**Guidelines** The general guidelines would be to conserve these pockets of grazing marsh and pasture.

**Sensitivity** This is a moderately sensitive landscape. It has a moderate strength of character with moderate to high visibility. Visibility increases further west, while the eastern end is visually contained and framed by trees following the North Stream and the road.

**Condition** Despite the intensive arable cultivation of part of this area, the visual unit of the inlet is coherent and it has a strong functional integrity. The overall condition of this area is good and its ecological value is moderate to high as it contains a range of habitats - grassland, woodland and wetland habitats. There are also linear habitats associated with the hedgerows and watercourses. The willows that line the eastern end of the road and other watercourses are aged and in decline.

**Figure 16:** Traditional grazing pasture, Shelvingford Inlet

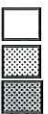


**Landscape Description**  
 This is a wide flat former inlet of the Wantsum Channel along the Nethergong and Sarre Penns. The landscape rises sharply to the south towards Upstreet and at the north western end near Deer Downs. Both slopes are well wooded in places and support a variety of wildlife. The banks of the Nethergong and Sarre Penns have been built up by a couple of metres to prevent the flooding of the adjacent farmland. The fields are rectangular and are mainly in arable cultivation. There are two areas, one to the southeast and one to the north west which are extensive areas of reedbeds associated with local shooting rights. To the east the inlet widens where it merges with the main channel. The flat fields adjacent to the Penns and the gentle slopes are under arable cultivation although not intensive. There is a tendency for the fields adjacent to the Penns to flood, hence the construction of the banks and so the land is more marginal for agriculture - agricultural classification Grade 4.

**4.5 THE NETHERGONG/SARRE PENN INLET**

- \* Encourage the removal of coniferous screening and the replanting of more indigenous species.
- \* Encourage the retention of grazing on the lowlying land to promote nature conservation interests
- \* Where there are ageing trees along the North Stream and road, encourage the planting of young appropriate species

Guidelines could be to:


  
 Tolerant of Change  
 Scope of change with certain constraints  
 Sensitive to change

		SENSITIVITY		
		low	moderate	high
C O N D I T I O N	Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & ENHANCE	CONSERVE
	Moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Figure 18: Sarre Penn

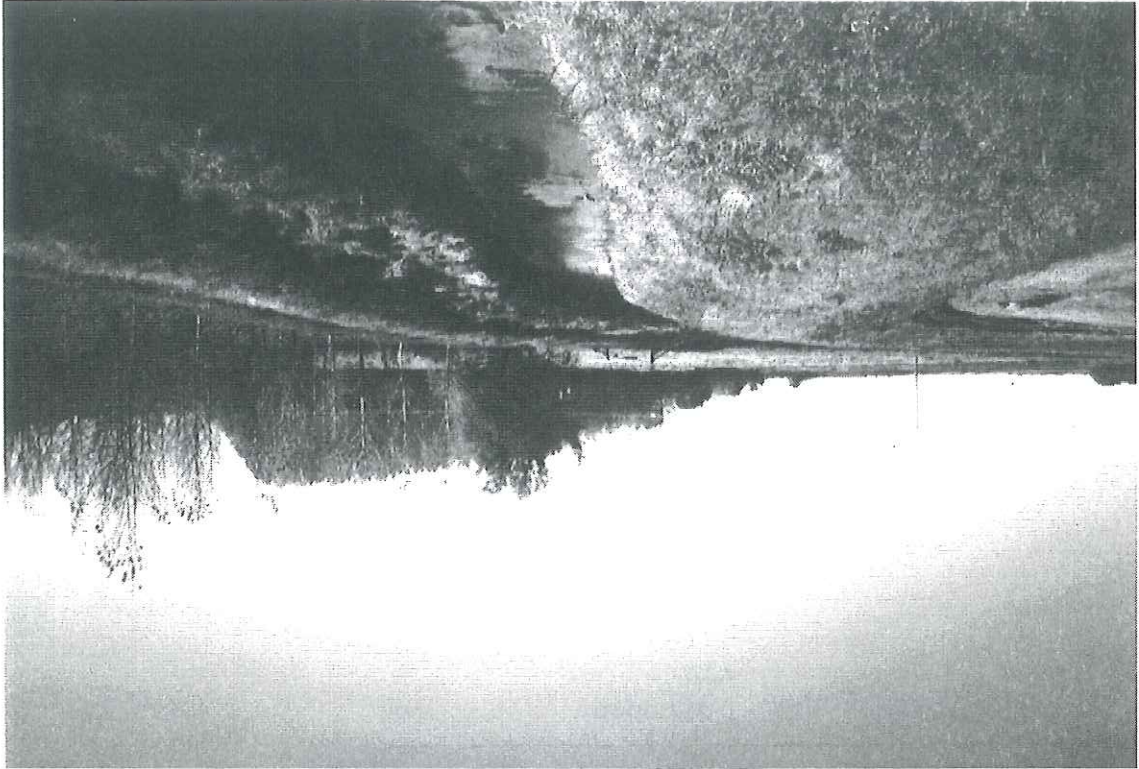
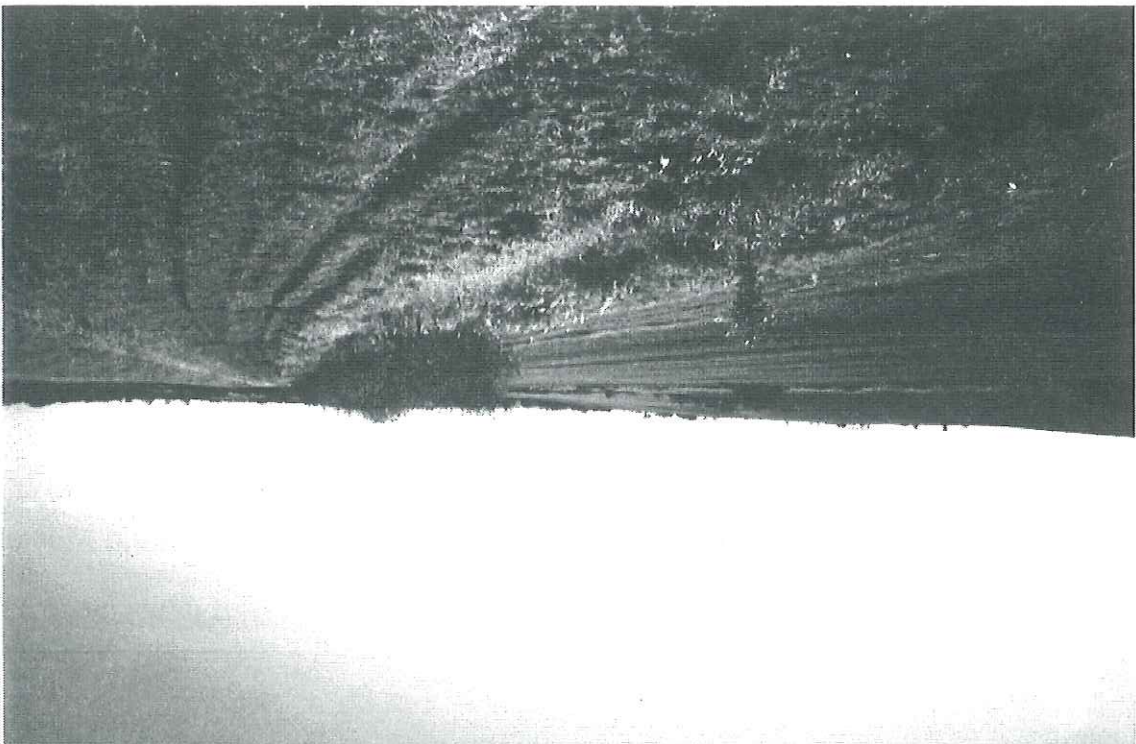


Figure 17: Nethergong Penn



- \* In the more marginal fields it may be possible to recreate wet meadows associated with the Penns
- \* Avoid intrusive development particularly on the slopes and ridges overlooking this area particularly at Upstreet
- \* Encourage appropriate maintenance of watercourses to enhance the nature conservation interest

Guidelines suitable for this area are:-

		SENSITIVITY		
		low	moderate	high
C O N D I T I O N	Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & ENHANCE	CONSERVE
	Moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE

Tolerant of Change (dotted pattern)
   
 Scope of change with certain constraints (horizontal lines)
   
 Sensitive to change (white)

**Guidelines**  
 The guidelines for this area are to **conserve and restore** with perhaps more emphasis on the need to conserve.

**Sensitivity**  
 Sensitivity is high. There is virtually no built form within this area and strength of character is moderate and visibility high. There are long distance views from this area towards Chislet, Hersden, Upstreet and Sarre.

**Condition**  
 The condition of this area is moderate to good as it is visually unified and has strong functional integrity even though the area has a mixture of land uses. The ecological integrity of this area is moderate to high with a number of semi-natural habitats associated with wooded slopes, watercourses and hedgerows.

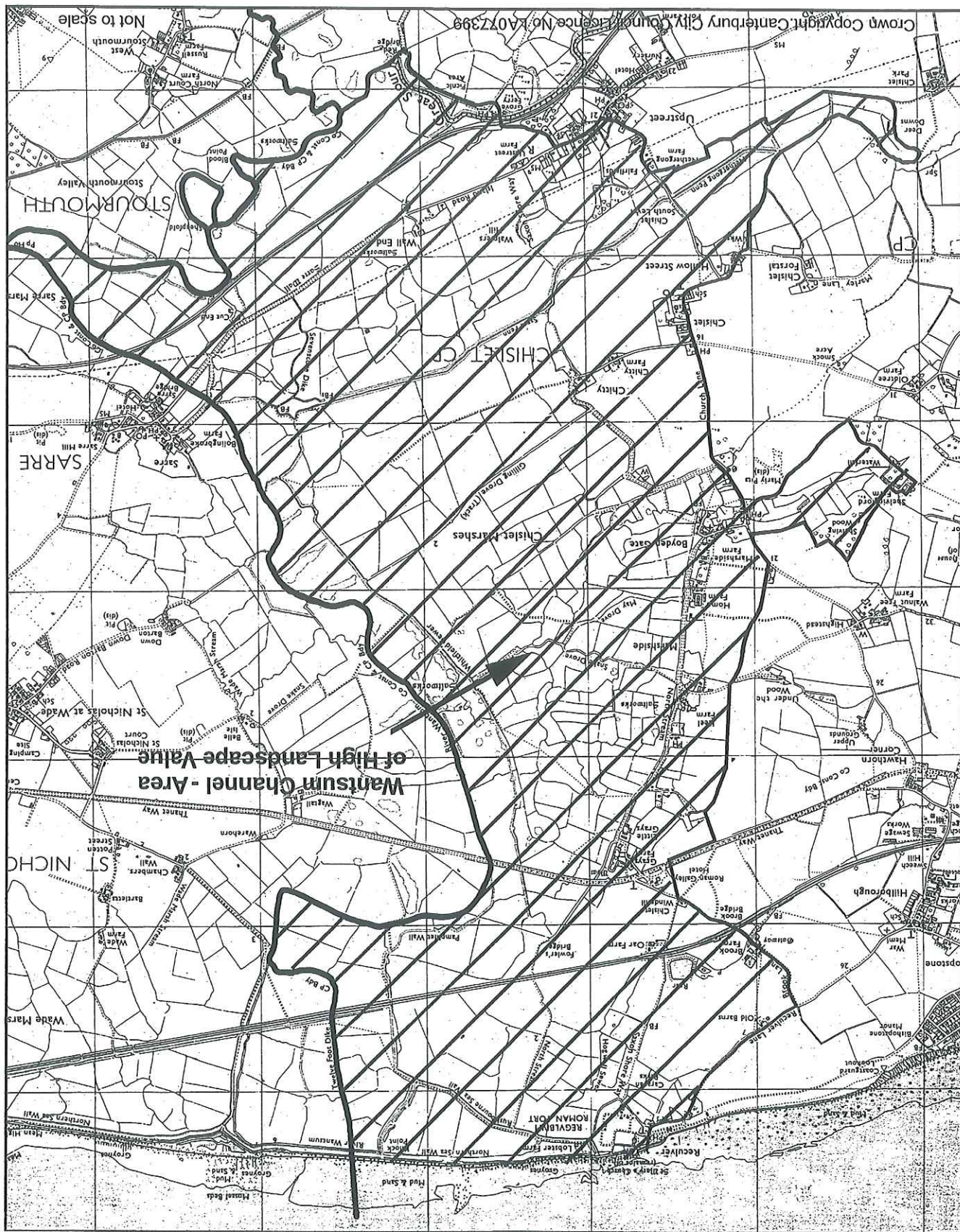
## SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A revised boundary is proposed as a result of the analysis of the character area and its subdivisions and is shown in Map 2 overleaf.

The proposed boundary follows clear defensible features such as roads, tracks, hedgerows and watercourses, close to the 5m contour as recommended by the Inspector, and reflects the historic shoreline and gentle slopes associated with the former Wantsum channel. It has included areas where the character of the area is more closely associated with the marshland landscape rather than the plateau landscape to the west around Hoath and Highstead. The boundary takes into account the historical importance of this area and its former function as a sea strait separating the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent - the importance of which has been recognised by the Local Plan Inspector and the neighbouring Districts of Thanet and Dover.

This assessment has shown that this area is highly vulnerable to changes in land use and although this has resulted in the loss of some of its ecological integrity, it is still an important landscape. As a result of this analysis possible guidelines have been put forward for the subdivisions of this landscape which could help to enhance and improve the ecological and landscape value of this area so that resources can be targeted to those areas most in need.

MAP 2: Boundary of Wantsum Channel Area of High Landscape Value



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FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEETS

APPENDIX



FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CHARACTER

DATE: 31/10/97 LOCATION: Reewer to Inat Way PHOTO: Yes

AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?

TOPOGRAPHY	Dominant	Landform: Flat level in marsh - wide Character: where meets sea. rising partly to reewer part + plateau level in west. several dunes - high than adjacent level.
	Insignificant	Views out: extensive - towards Reewer + some seaward, burning steeply + some seaward, burning part + rising ranged at sea. See complete contour St. Nicholas Views within: at Rec. la contained by topog.
TREE COVER	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: The core space mainly around farmstead as B&W + along the some bushes along dunes. some planning around mainland reservoir along Reewer la.
	Insignificant	
ENCLOSURE PATTERN	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: Some small hedges used in pasture - enclosed by dikes Mainly large arable fields all are ditch lined with some scrub.
	Insignificant	
SETTLEMENT & LAND USE	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: Largely unscattered curavan part around towers + assoc dune. farmstead at B&W - Reewer la, #229 largely arable some small scale grazing
	Insignificant	Seasonal variation: crops + seasonal occupation of curavans. Roman gallery pt only road

KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what way do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?

Natural features	<p>Marsh or former channel = wide narrow around St. Nicholas. gentle slopes of channel, steep at B&amp;W farm. small peninsula</p> <p>Species association: Willow - some Mainly Hawthorn / Blackthorn.</p> <p>Other: some pasture - sweep grazing.</p>
Farm type	<p>Primary: arable - large ploughed fields - mainly cereals.</p> <p>Heritage features: None</p>
Woodlands	<p>Heritage features: None</p> <p>Species:</p>
Hedgerow trees	<p>Heritage features: Will along southern lane - Reewer lane, B&amp;W lane</p> <p>Species: Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hawthorn</p>
Other trees	<p>Heritage features:</p> <p>Species: Willow near reservoir</p>
Field boundaries	<p>Heritage features: Ditches</p> <p>Species: Heeds, grasses, bushes</p>
Highways	<p>Sumner lane Reewer lane + B&amp;W lane in Verges: part - hedge lined. improved dual carriageway Kavon → Ravensgate railway - Reewer towers, Blackthorn gateway B&amp;W Villages: Reewer towers, Blackthorn gateway B&amp;W farmstead, cluster main + house, Roman gallery 1930's public house</p>
Buildings	<p>Pipers around Roman gallery - seen far miles. Sea wall. Other embankments. Robst; 1930's tower stands out as v. important feature.</p>

**Brief Description:** A wide expanse of low lying former marshland represents northern extremity of former channel. Very few trees except for those along railway or road, stand out due to topography. Western slopes of channel are gentle except for steeper parts at B&W farm - possibly former outlet. South field to be associated with sea + boulder plus railway + dune from agricultural. Detaching to dune particularly associated with curavan part surrounding scattered ancient and cypress lobster farm. General feeling of a wide flat channel with gently sloping valley sides to B&W / Hillborough in the west and B&W / Inat in the east. Any dirt on the flat low-lying marsh would have a significant and adverse impact on the landscape. Area has a general feeling of remoteness.

**FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CONDITION**

DATE: 3/11/97 LOCATION: Review to protect integrity - Reviewer listed in margin PHOTO: Yes

**Visual unity** - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significance of any detracting features

Largely intact although most grazing pastures have been lost to arable in many cereal production. Enclosure by ditches still apparent.

Detractors: Kibster & Oyster farm det, caravan park & asset amusement arcades.

**Ecological integrity** - how well does this area of countryside function as a habitat for wildlife?

Extent of semi-natural habitat: only assoc with ditches & small patch of grazing + meadow.  
Ecological corridors: Mainly associated with coastal marshes + ditches.

Intensity of land use: Intensive arable farming.

**Condition of heritage features**: assess current condition and make a note of vulnerability to change

Tree Cover: Extent: very low due to nature of landscape.  
Age structure: varied & generally in good condition.

Field Boundaries: Ditches form boundaries on the lowlying land - roads mark boundaries on slopes.

Other features: Man's influence - towers + mounds

**Impact of built development** - how well does modern devt respect local vernacular character and sense of place?

Type: Conversion + industrial assoc with Westerdale farm - locally.  
Siting: on the edge of lowlying channel.  
Design: Poor design.  
Road - light pollution.  
Extent: Low

**Future Vision** - what are the key conservation issues and enhancement opportunities?

Conservation: Heritage Conservation: conserve / protect scheduled Ancient Monument from detracting devt.  
Nature Conservation: encourage greater diversity of flora + fauna normally associated with a marshland habitat. Potential to create saltmarsh habitat.

Landscape Enhancement: Saltmarsh landscape grazing marsh - extend cover.

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CHARACTER

DATE: 3/11/97 LOCATION: Thicket Way to Snake Drive Reserve  
Snake Drive Reserve

ARTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?

TOPOGRAPHY	Views out: Extensive views across to St. Nicholas as at roads + to coast + Sandwalk		
	Dominant	Apparent	Insignificant
TREE COVER	Views within: Some views contained by at Weer farm		
	Dominant	Apparent	Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: Arund farms at Grays, Hog + Dawley on + Weer farm.		
ENCLOSURE PATTERN	Pattern: on marsh large rectangular fields + large arable fields on slopes. Regular grazing field pattern.		
	Dominant	Apparent	Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: Drainage ditches		
SETTLEMENT & LAND USE	Seasonal variation: No.		
	Dominant	Apparent	Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: Arund farms at edge of Marsh. Grays, with Grays Peat's farm.		

KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what way do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?

Natural features	Farm type	Woodlands	Hedgerow trees	Other trees	Field boundaries	Highways	Buildings	Other features
North stream + ditches Species association: Reeds	Primary: farmsteads. see above Other: former farm cottages.	Heritage features: small dense scrubby woodland adjacent hog + Dawley + Peat's farm. Species: Hawthorn Blackthorn Willow	Heritage features: occasionally oak - Willow	Heritage features: Poplars Birch	Heritage features: Ditches with reeds + reeds Species: —	Verger: Grass verges, ditch + stream Other features: —	Villages: — Farmsteads: ✓	Meat at Grays farm, former sawmills on marsh, Snake Drive Snake bridges across North stream.

Brief Description: This part of the channel up to the District boundary narrows. It is lowlying marshland with extensive arable farming with patches of trad grazing marsh now used for horsey culture. It is a sparsely settled landscape concentrated around former farmsteads. Farmsteads are well contained within landscape due to tree cover, many willows which also line the North stream. The deeper into the marsh the greater the feeling of remoteness + tranquillity despite distant drone of Thicket Way + railway line.

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CONDITION

DATE: 21/10/17 LOCATION: Thicket Way to Snake Drive - Snake Drive Pastures  
 PHOTO: Yes

Visual unity - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significance of any detracting features

Detractors:	Intact	Large arable fields uninterrupted by postures or grazing marsh.
	Interrupted	Recent coniferous plantings in row of The Bandings Thicket Way
	Fragmented	

Ecological integrity - how well does this area of countryside function as a habitat for wildlife?	High	Extent of semi-natural habitat: Associated with reedbed ditches + grazing marsh + small patches of scrublike woodland.	Ecological corridors: Hedgerows, drainage ditches + North stream
	Moderate	Intensity of land use: fairly intensive arable production mainly on slopes + new District boundary + postures or grazing marsh.	
	Low:		

Condition of heritage features: assess current condition and make a note of vulnerability to change

Tree Cover	Good	Extent: fairly extensive around farmsteads + along road, sparse on marsh.	Age structure: Vined.
	Variable		
	Poor		
Field Boundaries	Good	Ditches + roads / tracks	
	Variable		
	Poor		
Other features	Good	Former medieval salmon weirs	Snake Drive
	Variable	Rn on bridges	Listed buildings
	Poor		

Impact of built development - how well does modern dev't respect local vernacular character and sense of place?

Type: farmstead	Siting: Arable farmsteads mainly sit well in landscape	Design: Mainly trad. buildings + design	Extent: Low	High
				Moderate
				Low

Future Vision - what are the key conservation issues and enhancement opportunities?

Heritage Conservation	Conserve listed buildings + enhance. Ensure new dev't respects local vernacular + is carefully / appropriately sited.
Nature Conservation	encourage reinstatement of grazing marsh in more marginal quality areas to increase diversity of flora + fauna normally assoc. with marshland landscape.
Landscape Enhancement	encourage the creation of wide field margins where arable production prevails. In more marginal land encourage grazing marsh.

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CHARACTER

DATE: 3/11/97

LOCATION: Snaive Drive b.R. Stur - cluster of 1800s

PHOTO: Yes

AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?

TOPOGRAPHY	Dominant	Landform: low lying with slopes of character + small former headlands. High ridge at Upstreet. undulating in places	Views out: Extensive. St Nicholas + Snaive, to Kearn from road cluster. from Upstreet towards Sturmountain, Wingham + Ash.
	Apparent		
	Insignificant		

TREE COVER	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: associated with settlement or marshside (Boydens Gate)	Views within: mainly cultivated
	Apparent		
	Insignificant		

ENCLOSURE	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: reed lined ditches, w/h stream, dikes	Pattern: large rectangular fields
	Apparent		
	Insignificant		

SETTLEMENT & LAND USE	Dominant	Key Visual Elements: hawthorn of marshside, Boydens Gate + cluster. larger village Upstreet	Seasonal variation: For land use
	Apparent		
	Insignificant		

KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what way do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?

Natural features	Stream gentle slopes, curved land falling to former waters	Species association: Mannan's heath near Marypits
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Farm type	Primary: arable production	Other: some grazing
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Woodlands	Heritage features: wooded around settlements	Species: willows, Hawthorn, blackthorn
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Hedgerow trees	Heritage features: hedges along roads	Species: ash
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Other trees	Heritage features:	Species: willow Hawthorn Blackthorn Yew
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Field boundaries	Heritage features: ditches mainly some hedges	Species: Hawthorn
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Highways	Verges: ditch lined, barbed wire lanes, hedges	Other features:
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Buildings	Villages: Boydens Gate, Marshside, cluster Upstreet. listed buildings	Marshside farm, Hawthorn farm
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Other features	Former Marypits, Dresssome tree, 3 oak bridges	Swampish: cluster Church Tudor House (Layhanger Hall)
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**Brief Description:** This area is a more settled landscape with the villages of Boydens Gate + Marshside at the edge of the marsh, whilst cluster + Upstreet occupy an elevated position overlooking the marsh. It is generally an arable landscape with small patches of grazing marsh. Numerous interesting + listed buildings - generally farmsteads at foot of slopes. Landscape tends to be more treed than that of the middle of the marsh. Buildings / settlements sit well / comfortably within the landscape.

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CONDITION

DATE: 31/07/17 LOCATION: Snake Drove to River Stew - Clusset Franke Belt  
 PHOTO: Yes

Visual unity - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significance of any detracting features	
Intact	Large area in fact although most of grazing marsh recently lost to arable production. Settlement sit well within landscape at foot of slope or on high land.
Interrupted	Recent agnc built on land next to Heron willows. Detractors: Telegraph telegraph poles. Rhyppung at Upper Drove, Heron willows
Fragmented	
Ecological integrity - how well does this area of countryside function as a habitat for wildlife?	
High	Extent of semi-natural habitat: Only associated with ditches, small areas of grazing marsh. Not assoc. with farm reservoir. Some associated with copses / wetland.
Moderate	Ecological corridors: Ditches, hedgerows. N. stream. R. Stew to South + adjacent stream marsh.
Low	Intensity of land use: Intensive arable. South + railway line.
Condition of heritage features: assess current condition and make a note of vulnerability to change	
Good	Extent: Viable - in particular areas - settlements. Disused many pits.
Variable	Age structure: Variable.
Poor	
Field Boundaries	
Good	Ditches, hedgerows, roads.
Variable	
Poor	
Other features	
Good	Listed buildings, Chislet church, Drove, saltwans, Baul bridges, sheep wash, reservoir, some reedbeds/pods
Variable	
Poor	
Impact of built development - how well does modern devt respect local vernacular character and sense of place?	
High	Type: Small villages + farmsteads + on high ground. Siting: at edge of marsh. Design: Traditional. Extent: More than in other areas.
Moderate	
Low	
Future Vision - what are the key conservation issues and enhancement opportunities?	
Heritage Conservation	Ensure new devt adopts local vernacular - style + materials. Ensure adequate protection of Drove + watercourses.
Nature Conservation	Encourage marshland grazing in marginal areas particularly areas that have recently been converted to arable.
Landscape Enhancement	Wide field margins, verges, where decaying trees on roadside encourage replacement planting of Baydon gate hill sward pit hill, grave fence hill.



FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CHARACTER

DATE: 31/10/97 LOCATION: Boyden Gate to Sheringford Inlet PHOTO: Yes

AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?	
TOPOGRAPHY	Dominant: Flat marshland with steeping sides, former inlet
	Apparent: Ponds for shooting
	Insignificant: Views out: fairly contained from surrounding land
TREE COVER	Dominant: Willow on grazing pasture
	Apparent: deciduous wetland/shrub
	Insignificant: Views within: fanned views
ENCLOSURE PATTERN	Dominant: ditch
	Apparent: lead on large fields
	Insignificant: Pattern: Rectangular
SETTLEMENT & LAND USE	Dominant: gate w. edge Sheringford - rearing game birds
	Apparent: sheep grazing; shooting ponds
	Insignificant: Seasonal variation: Yes
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what way do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?	
Natural features	North stream, Shorn wood, wooded copse at muddy pits
Farm type	Primary: grazing, game birds, arable
Woodlands	Heritage features: Shorn wood (thought to be part of red deer park)
Hedgerow trees	Heritage features: Same
Other trees	Heritage features: Elderberry Hawthorn
Field boundaries	Heritage features: ditches, North stream + fence lined some hedgerows - hedges
Highways	Verges: Barrows, party sunken ditch lined in part
Buildings	Villages: Sheringford farmstead listed
Other features	Hersey culture adjacent to Shorn wood rd. Cast iron finger post
<p><b>Brief Description:</b> This is a narrow strip of low-lying grazing marsh bordered by gentle slope on one side and a steeper slope on the other. To the north in Shorn wood at the top of the slope + the grazing pasture abuts this wood. At the ditches + N-stream a treed lined with willows there are some ponds which have been created and unsympathetically screened with conifers. This use is associated with the wider use of raising game birds. The farmstead at Sheringford sits at the western edge of the inlet.</p>	

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CONDITION

DATE: 31/10/17 LOCATION: Boyden Gate to Sneehingford Inlet PHOTO: Yes

Visual Unity - assess the overall unity of the landscape and rate the significant of any detracting features	
Intact	Visual unity or this sweeping inlet is uninterrupted by the contours screening or new ponds.
Interrupted	
Fragmented	
Detractors: Pond creation + associated conifers planting/screening	
Ecological Integrity - how well does this area of countryside function as a habitat for wildlife?	
High	Extent of semi-natural habitat: Woodland Ditch + grazing Ecological corridors: ditch, hedgerows Stream
Moderate	Intensity of land use: moderate intensity as some arable farming on the slopes.
Low:	
Condition of heritage features: assess current condition and make a note of vulnerability to change	
Good	Extent: Tree cover is good. Shown in wood of tree-lined ditches. Age structure: varied.
Variable	
Poor	
Good	Field Boundaries
Variable	
Poor	
Good	Other features
Variable	
Poor	
Impact of built development - how well does modern devt respect local vernacular character and sense of place?	
High	Type: farmstead. Siting: At head of inlet Design: Traditional Extent: low
Moderate	
Low	
Future Vision - what are the key conservation issues and enhancement opportunities?	
Heritage Conservation Conserve + protect listed buildings (encourage rescreening of ponds with appropriate indigenous species; encourage maintenance of grazing pasture)	
Nature Conservation improving hedgerows + field margins	
Landscape Enhancement management around ponds, deciduous planting, planting in wetland to vary ag structure + improve broken hedgerows.	

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CHARACTER

DATE: 3/10/17 LOCATION: Surt Pennie/Wetherang Penn inlet PHOTO: Yes

ARTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?	
<b>TOPOGRAPHY</b> Landform: flat wet with levelled banks and a scarp to west valley sides becoming steeper to west Views out: views to W. framed by inlet to chislet Park - views to E widening as inlet flows into main channel. views highest here in chislet Park	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: Steeper slopes more wooded
	Views within:
<b>TREE COVER</b>	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: ditches/draws ditches are at a lower level considerably lower than adjacent in etc
	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Seasonal variation: Yes
<b>ENCLOSURE PATTERN</b>	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: ditches/draws
	Pattern: rectangular
	Seasonal variation: Yes
<b>SETTLEMENT &amp; LAND USE</b>	Dominant Apparent Insignificant
	Key Visual Elements: only settlement - chislet Park outside character area: Arable, reeds, shearing
	Insignificant
	In what way do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?
<b>Natural features</b> Species association:	
<b>Farm type</b> Primary: Arable - reeds Other: reeds - marshy	
<b>Woodlands</b> Heritage features: Puddles + scarp slope near Deer Downs Species: Poplars, Hawthorn Blackthorn willows	
<b>Hedgerow trees</b> Heritage features: some along green lane Species:	
<b>Other trees</b> Heritage features: Species: willows	
<b>Field boundaries</b> Heritage features: Ditches some hedgerows Species: Hawthorn Blackthorn	
<b>Highways</b> Verges: ditch lined	
<b>Buildings</b> Villages: None	
<b>Other features</b> green lane to Hallow street - reeds to east contain some willow	
<b>Brief Description:</b> This is a large narrow inlet (to the west) inlet at the former channel, larger than that at Sheringford. It is a flat landscape with steeper slopes to the west. The inlet curves to the north or beer downs. The wetherang Penn + some Penn flow at levels much lower than the lie of the land and the banks have been built up by a couple of metres. To the east - the inlet widens where it meets the main channel. The area is mainly in arable production however, there are areas to the far east + far west or reeds - primarily used for duck shooting.	

FIELD ASSESSMENT SHEET - CONDITION

DATE: 3/11/17 LOCATION: Same Penn/Wethersburg Penn Inlet PHOTO: Yes

<p>Visual unity - assess the overall unity of the landscape and note the significant of any detracting features</p>		<p>Intact</p>	<p>There is a strong visual unity as the wet sweeps in from the east.</p>	<p>Detractors:</p>	<p>- highway furniture reflective posts - fairly insignificant</p>
<p>Ecological integrity - how well does this area of countryside function as a habitat for wildlife?</p>					
<p>Extent of semi-natural habitat:</p>		<p>leachbeds, wetland + ponds</p>	<p>Ecological corridors:</p>	<p>The Penns + other dikebeds</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Intensity of land use:</p>					
<p>Moderate</p>		<p>fairly intensive arable production except for very steep slopes</p>			
<p>Low:</p>					
<p>Condition of heritage features: assess current condition and make a note of vulnerability to change</p>					
<p>Tree Cover</p>		<p>Extent: extensive on steep slopes</p>	<p>Age structure: Varned</p>		
<p>Good</p>	<p>Variable</p>	<p>Poor</p>			
<p>Field Boundaries</p>					
<p>Good</p>	<p>Variable</p>	<p>Poor</p>	<p>dikes - large rectangular fields</p>		
<p>Other features</p>					
<p>Good</p>	<p>Variable</p>	<p>Poor</p>	<p>former cut wire at Bear Downs + Puddlebrook (cultural tree)</p>		
<p>Impact of built development - how well does modern dev't respect local vernacular character and sense of place?</p>					
<p>Type:</p>		<p>Sting: in WPA</p>	<p>Design: poor</p>	<p>Extent: low</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Moderate</p>					
<p>Low</p>					
<p>Future Vision - what are the key conservation issues and enhancement opportunities?</p>					
<p>Heritage Conservation</p>		<p>western edge could have been part of medieval deer park</p>			
<p>Nature Conservation</p>		<p>could encourage grazing on leachbeds + wetlands + Penns or increase leachbeds</p>			
<p>Landscape Enhancement</p>		<p>increase area devoted to leachbeds - possibly</p>			