

CANTERBURY AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE: SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDANCE
- 2.0 THE CANTERBURY LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL
- 3.0 THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)
- 4.0 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK
- 5.0 AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE DESIGNATION: DETAILED POLICY INTERPRETATION



SUMMARY

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is produced to provide greater guidance when submitting planning applications within the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value. All SPG must be consistent with national and regional planning guidance and be in accordance with the adopted local plan. This SPG will form interim policy guidance for development control purposes pending its inclusion in the Review of the Canterbury District Local Plan.

When submitting an application the advice in this guidance will need to be taken into account where appropriate. Planning applications will therefore be assessed against the relevant policies in the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan (November 1998) and this supplementary planning guidance.



1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDANCE

1.1 The Inspector in her report into objections to the Canterbury District Local Plan (September 1997) recommended that the City Council “carry out a landscape assessment to determine the landscape qualities, function and boundaries of the following areas:

- (i) the valley setting to the City of Canterbury
- (ii) Chislet Marshes”

(The Chislet Marshes has been considered as part of a separate study and a boundary is included in the adopted Local Plan and therefore it will not form part of this Supplementary Planning Guidance.)

1.2 The Inspector recognised the importance of protecting the setting of the City and referred to Canterbury as a “valley settlement” with the cathedral and Bell Harry Tower sitting on the valley floor and dominating views from the higher ground. The Landscape Appraisal has now been completed and this Supplementary Planning Guidance takes forward its recommendations and complements existing adopted policy.

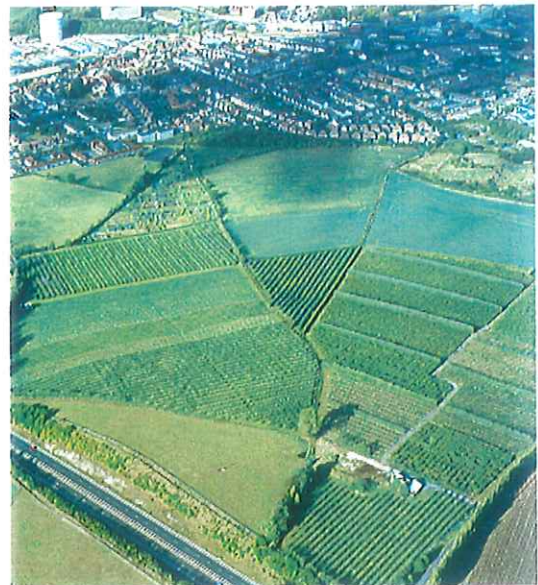
2.0 THE CANTERBURY LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

2.1 In October 1997 the City Council appointed consultants Kent Property Services Landscape Group to undertake an appraisal of the setting of the City. This appraisal identifies a number of landscape character areas. Eight of these character areas were found to be important to the setting of the City. The study considers the condition of these character areas as well as their sensitivity to change and recommends guidelines for the preservation and/or enhancement of particular areas. The key characteristics and guidelines to these character areas can be found within the “Canterbury Landscape Appraisal - November 1998”.

2.2 The appraisal underwent two rounds of public consultation (December 1997/January 1998 and August/September 1998) and a public meeting was held with local groups and other interested parties. The appraisal was well received by many local groups and individuals. A number of comments were made and wherever possible these were taken on board in the preparation of the published Landscape Appraisal.

2.3 The landscape appraisal is purely an assessment of the landscape and recommends that the City Council adopt a local landscape designation for development control purposes, to protect the setting of the City - “The Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value”. This recommendation was approved by Members of the City Council’s Planning Services Committee in November 1998. This designation is shown of the map accompanying this document.

2.4 In order to apply the policies in the Canterbury District Local Plan to the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value the consultants recommend in the Canterbury Landscape Appraisal that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) be produced.



3.0 THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG)

- 3.1 Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was prepared and was the subject of extensive public consultation for a period of six weeks during May and June 1999. An assessment of comments received was presented to Planning Services Committee on 17th August 1999. These comments were discussed and the draft SPG was formally adopted for development control purposes.
- 3.2 This adopted SPG applies to all land which lies within the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value. All development proposals falling within this area will be judged against the relevant policies contained within the Canterbury District Local Plan and the Kent Structure Plan. This guidance highlights the main policies which will apply and sets out the primary planning policy approach to development within this protected area. This SPG therefore, together with the Canterbury District Local Plan, form the main policy documents against which all proposals around Canterbury will be assessed.
- 3.3 The Canterbury Landscape Appraisal remains the background document and provides the justification for identifying the AHLV boundary as adopted.
- 3.4 This SPG will, in due course, be taken forward into the review of the Canterbury District Local Plan.

4.0 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Level: Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)

- 4.1 Policy guidance at the national level is embodied in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which sets out the plan-led system and provides the framework for rational and consistent decision making. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 54A of the 1990 Act requires that an application for planning permission or an appeal shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) are prepared by the Government to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on policies and the operation of the planning system. Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (PPG12) gives guidance on Development Plans. It reiterates that development should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It also states that local authorities may prepare planning guidance which supplement the policies and proposals of the plan and the Secretary of State believes this can provide helpful guidance for those preparing planning applications. This guidance may be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications and the weight accorded



to it will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and been the subject of a Council resolution.

- 4.3 Paragraph 4.16 of PPG7: The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, states that local authorities should "only maintain or extend local countryside designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection." It also states that they should be "soundly based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the countryside".



The County Level: Kent Structure Plan (1996)

- 4.4 At the strategic level the importance of the historic city and its setting has long been recognised by the Kent Structure Plan. The Secretary of State modified the written statement of the first Kent Structure Plan in 1980, in order to reinforce the strategy for development restraint at the City of Canterbury thereby recognising the historic importance of the City and its setting. This has been reiterated in subsequent structure plan reviews culminating in policy EK4 in the present Structure Plan (1996).

Policy EK4 as it relates to development policy, states that:

"At Canterbury, the quantity and location of new housing and economic development will be limited by the overriding need to conserve the built environment and setting of the historic city..."

- 4.5 Paragraph 3.65 of the Structure Plan further emphasises this point by stating "...The key consideration for Canterbury City remains one of conserving its historic character and landscape setting and therefore the quantity and location of new economic development and housing should continue to be limited by conservation considerations."
- 4.6 Other relevant policies in the structure plan are policy ENVI the protection of the environment for its own sake:

"The countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the countryside should seek to maintain or enhance it. Development which will adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for it which outweighs the requirement to protect the countryside."

policy ENV2 the protection of the landscape and wildlife habitats :

"Kent's landscape and wildlife (flora and fauna) habitats will be conserved and enhanced. Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of features or habitats which are of landscape, historic, geological or wildlife importance, or are of an unspoilt quality free from urban intrusion, unless there is a need for development which outweighs these countryside considerations."

and policy ENV7 the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows:

"It is policy to maintain tree cover and the hedgerow network in the County, and

enhance these where compatible with the character of the landscape. Local plans should include policies to protect, maintain and enhance tree cover and woodlands.”



The Local Level: Canterbury District Local Plan November 1998

4.7 The starting point for planning policy at the local level is the local plan and all development must be in accordance with its policies. The planning strategy for the City of Canterbury is to enable it to prosper while safeguarding its heritage. There are four main principles underlying the plan:-

- (i) Caring for the environment - both the man-made and natural environments;
- (ii) Conservation and restraint to ensure that the unique character and heritage of Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable and the countryside are not jeopardised;
- (iii) Economic development - to provide greater diversity of business and

- (iv) employment opportunities; and
- (iv) Enhancement - to make the most of the District and to ensure new development and other changes employ the highest possible standards of design and materials .

4.8 The principles of development restraint have been firmly established in Canterbury, through the Kent Structure Plan (1996) and the Canterbury City Local Plan (1985), for over a decade. However, Canterbury will continue to be under pressure for new development because it has such a special and attractive character. Although there is still capacity for change in the city, the need to preserve the character of the town may ultimately limit growth in activities. The Local Plan identified 4 restraint principles for Canterbury which are:-

- (i) protection and conservation;
- (ii) geographical containment;
- (iii) control of land use within the city; and
- (iv) control of traffic within the city.

4.9 It is essential that these principles are firmly applied since any further major growth would erode the character and setting of the City and generate additional traffic placing additional burdens on the road system in Canterbury. The clear aim of the City Council is to retain and enhance the special character of Canterbury and to ensure that it remains a desirable place in which to live, work, shop and visit.

4.10 A number of policies in the Canterbury District Local Plan are relevant to safeguarding the setting of the City. Policies D31 to D37 relate to the protection of the natural environment and state that the City Council will give long term protection to sites of scientific or wildlife importance and priority will be given to this over the needs of other planning considerations.

4.11 Where new development is permitted it is essential to ensure good quality design to

enhance the surrounding area. Policy D1 states:

“The City Council will permit development of a high standard of design which:

- a) is sympathetic to the appearance and character of the surrounding area and appropriate in scale, density, mass, appearance, materials layout and siting, having regard to the adjoining buildings, spaces and views;**
- b) avoids the loss of important open areas, and natural and built features which it is considered desirable to retain;**
- c) has a safe means of access and adequate car parking;**
- d) avoids placing an undue burden on existing infrastructure, services and the local road network;**
- e) avoids unduly interfering, disturbing or conflicting with adjoining uses;**
- f) provides high standards of landscaping;**
- g) conserves existing wildlife features.**

Policy D2 is also relevant stating:

“Development will only be permitted where it would not have a detrimental effect on townscapes or landscapes of architectural or historic interest.”

- 4.12 With reference to Canterbury, policy C1 is particularly important as are policies C2 to C4 relating to the conservation of the built environment. Policy C1 states:

“Applications for proposals in or around the City of Canterbury will be judged against the primary planning objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the city conservation areas and the landscape setting of the city.”

- 4.13 The designation of the Canterbury World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Convention (formulated by UNESCO) recognises the importance of the City at the international level. This is reflected in policy C6 of the Local Plan which states:

“The City Council recognises the importance of the World Heritage Site, will support and encourage the maintenance, interpretation and management of the Site and will refuse permission for development which would have a detrimental effect on its character or setting.”

- 4.14 Other applicable policies are those relating to countryside conservation (policies R1 and R2), and the protection of high quality agricultural land (policy R8) which state:

R1 Proposals for undeveloped land in the countryside will be permitted only exceptionally where it can be shown that the need for the development outweighs the harm that would be caused to the rural area.

R2 Proposals which would have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside and villages will not be permitted.

R8 The City Council will give long term protection to areas of high quality agricultural land and will not grant permission for development in these areas.

The Canterbury Conservation Study 1979

- 4.15 The City Council in conjunction with the County Council carried out a Conservation Study in 1979 which identified the elements which make up the City’s unique archaeological, architectural and visual character. It also provides a detailed



architectural and townscape study of the City and its setting. Much of this study, particularly chapter 2, is still relevant today.

Landscape Designations

- 4.16 There is a hierarchical approach to landscape designations which is reflected in the policies contained in the Kent Structure Plan and Local Plans such as the Canterbury District Local Plan. At the national level there are Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which are designated on the advice of the Countryside Commission. Within the Canterbury District this is the Kent Downs AONB.
- 4.17 The next level is the strategic landscape designations known as Special Landscape Areas which are designated by the County Council and are landscapes that are important to Kent as a whole rather than individual districts. They often straddle more than one district boundary for example, the North Downs SLA, the Blean Woods SLA and North Kent Marshes SLA - parts of which are within the Canterbury District.
- 4.18 The final level is the local landscape designation which can have a number of titles such as Local Landscape Area, Area of Local Landscape Importance and Area of High Landscape Value, and is designated by District Councils in their local plans. This designation applies to those landscapes that are important locally, i.e. within a particular district for a number of reasons. In the Canterbury District the Wantsum Channel Area of High Landscape Value is designated in the Canterbury District Local Plan to reflect its past role of separating the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent and because it remains today a remote landscape of strategic importance to the East Kent Authorities of Thanet, Dover and Canterbury. In addition the Canterbury AHLV as recommended by the Inspector, the consultants and approved by Members, is the other local designation. This will be implemented via this SPG and application of policy.

Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value Designation

- 4.19 The Canterbury Landscape Appraisal contains the detailed justification for the area to be included in the Canterbury AHLV and for completeness the boundary is reproduced in the map accompanying this document. The aim of this designation is to safeguard the setting of the City as defined by this boundary. The inner boundary is that taken from the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan (November 1998). The outer boundary stretches from Blean and Tyler Hill in the north, to Sturry and Patricxbourne in the east, to Nackington Farm and Street End in the south and Chartham Hatch and Upper Harbledown in the west.

5.0 AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE DESIGNATION: DETAILED POLICY INTERPRETATION

- 5.1 The Landscape Appraisal recommends that the City Council adopt a designation to recognise and define the important setting of the City. The designation and boundary are proposed in the Canterbury Landscape Appraisal and the following policy, as recommended by the Local Plan Inspector applies to this area and is adopted for development control purposes, in addition to the policies set out in the Kent Structure Plan and the Canterbury District Local Plan.

The following Area of High Landscape Value is defined as having local landscape importance in terms of the quality of the landscape and/or the special role it performs:

- The valley of the River Stour around Canterbury

In considering applications for development within this area the Council will pay particular attention to the impact of the proposals on the local landscape character and/or role. Development proposals which would cause unacceptable

harm to these qualities will not be permitted.

5.2 The local plan seeks to minimise the release of fresh land for development by allocating land within the urban boundary and addressing schemes within certain villages. There is therefore a general presumption against development outside the urban boundary in all but exceptional circumstances. If development is proposed outside the urban boundary as defined on the proposals map, it could only be granted if an overriding need was proven. The policies which apply to this area are those set out in the previous section and these policies aim to protect this important setting to the City.

5.3 Where there is a proven overriding need and the proposal falls within the AHLV, it will be assessed for its appropriateness to the character area in which it falls and whether it satisfies the guidelines for that character area as defined in the Canterbury Landscape Appraisal. The extent to which such a proposal would be acceptable needs to be judged by reference to its scale, bulk, form, location and quality of the design and its response to the local landscape character as defined in the appraisal - the Landscape Appraisal sets out the details for each character area. This SPG should therefore be read in conjunction with the Canterbury Landscape Appraisal November 1998.



If you would like more information on this guidance or wish to discuss a proposal please contact the Planning Department on 01227 862000