

HEARING SESSION 8 – EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND ALLOCATIONS

Matter 1 **Employment Needs and Supply**

Matter 3 **EMP1(5) Woodcut Farm**

APPENDIX 4: DOCUMENTS

201/21A
C001/1258
FOLIO 157

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE,
COUNTY HALL,
MAIDSTONE.

Maidstone 54321

Extension 326
Your Ref. AB/39/B/X
My Ref. D6/TP 588

10th March, 1966.

Dear Sir,

National Parks and Access to the Countryside
Act, 1949, Section 87 - The Kent Downs Area
of Outstanding Natural Beauty

ak JH
14/3

With reference to my letter of the 17th January, 1966, the appropriate County Members have now duly considered the revised proposals of your Commission for the designation of the Kent North Downs as an area of outstanding natural beauty. The results of the various consultations carried out with the District Councils concerned are set out in the appendix hereto, together with the respective views of the County Council thereon.

Arising out of the consideration which the County Members have given to this matter, I am to inform the National Parks Commission that the County Council as Local Planning Authority:-

- (i) whilst recognising that the North Downs escarpment should provide the core of a designated area of outstanding natural beauty, must press for the inclusion of those related areas which have been deleted since the submission of its previous proposals, if a worth-while environment to the area is to be created by the submission of improvement schemes;
- (ii) approves the proposed retention in the designated area of land on the west side of Sevenoaks, thereby enabling the Sevenoaks By-Pass to thread its way through the designated area instead of being bounded by it; but requests that the Homesdale Valley, except the built-up areas of Otford and Kemsing, be included in the designated area;
- (iii) requests that similar consideration to that accorded to land on the west side of Sevenoaks be given to those important sections of highways and/or motorways such as Route M.2, A.20(M) and its proposed extension westwards to Wrotham Heath, and A.2, by the inclusion of sufficient land on both sides of such roads to preserve the views therefrom;

/(iv)

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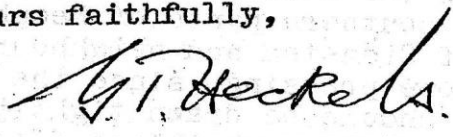
- (iv) approves the additions to the area as originally proposed by the appropriate District Councils in respect of (a) the area lying to the north of Badlesmere and Chilham including Lees Court Park, Perry Wood and the villages of Shottenden and Old Wives Lees, and (b) the areas east of Wrotham including Wrotham Water and north of Ryarsh and Birling including Birling Place, and which had been notified to the Commission by the County Council in 1962, but considers that the additions do not go far enough to meet the point raised in (iii) above since the additions are bounded by the respective traffic routes;
- (v) considers that the deletion of an area by the Commission in pursuance of its apparent policy to limit the designated area by a motorway, may well result in the perpetuation of eyesores visible from the proposed designated area on the opposite side of the motorway;
- (vi) approves the amendment for the inclusion of the area at West Kingsdown in the designated area, since it includes the windmill upon which considerable restoration work has been carried out;
- (vii) must urge the Commission to include the following areas in the designated area:-
- (1) The area lying between Button Street and the Fawkham Valley, including the Darent Valley north of Farningham and the parishes of Fawkham and Ash-cum-Ridley and bounded on the north by the railway line;
 - (2) the area at Saltwood, Hythe, lying to the south-west of the railway line and including the Castle and Saltwood Church;
 - (3) the area at Meopham, north of Meopham Green, and adjoining and to the east of the A.227;
 - (4) a number of small areas on the fringe of Knole Park Estate, Sevenoaks;
 - (5) the area between the Rochester-Maidstone road and the Medway Towns Motorway at Nashenden

- (6) the area east of Aylesham including the parks of Goodnestone, Knowlton, Fredville, Dane Court and St. Alban's Court but excluding the villages of Shepherdswell, Tilmanstone and Snowdown;
- (7) Northbourne Court.
- (viii) considers the need to restore to the designated area the southern parts of Meopham and the parish of Stansted and neighbouring areas has become more pressing, since the designated area boundary should be drawn tightly about the confines of the new village site at Hartley, thus allowing for the loss of the village site for development to be compensated for by schemes for enhancing the amenities of its immediate rural environment;
- (ix) considers that the proximity to the coast of the areas in the Dover and Eastry Rural Districts (which have been deleted from the originally proposed designated area) adds to their potential value as an integral part of Downland scenery, which should be rescued from the visual effects of the coal-mining industry, and as Local Planning Authority it must therefore strongly support the representations made by the Rural District Councils concerned;
- (x) approves of the inclusion in the designated area of the areas in the vicinity of Dover harbour, which is objected to by the Dover Borough Council, as the inclusion recognised their national and indeed international scenic value, as part of the last scenery of this country to be visible to travellers proceeding abroad from the port of Dover and as the first glimpse for the visitor or homeward-bound traveller. However, the Local Planning Authority seeks an assurance from the Commission that the proposed inclusion of these areas is based upon the Commission's willingness in principle to certify that the setting is worthy of schemes for the improvement of the buildings and their setting in this locality; and
- (xi) considers that the area in Folkestone between the proposed northern bypass below Sugarloaf Hill and the built-up portion of the town is less worthy of inclusion in the designated area than the areas through which Route A.2 penetrates, and to that extent it supports the representations made by the Borough Council.

A map showing the amendments as suggested by the Local Planning Authority is being prepared and will be sent to you as soon as possible.

No doubt you will let me have in due course the Commission's comments on the alterations suggested by the County Council.

Yours faithfully,



Clerk of the County Council.

The Secretary,
National Parks Commission,
3, Chester Gate,
Regent's Park,
London, N.W.1.



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KENT DOWNS AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Mr. Greenwood Confirms Order for 326 Square Miles

The designation by the National Parks Commission* of 326 square miles of the Kent Downs as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has been confirmed without modification by Mr. Anthony Greenwood, Minister of Housing and Local Government.

The designated areas run from the Surrey border near Westerham to the coast near Dover and Folkestone, a distance of about 60 miles, and include a coastal outlier at South Foreland and a narrow strip of the old sea cliff escarpment west of Hythe overlooking Romney Marsh, as well as much pleasant pastoral scenery, a number of picturesque villages, ancient churches and castles.

The Downs rise in places to 600 feet, and the escarpments provide some fine views over the Weald. There is considerable wild-life interest within the areas and at Crundale Downs near Wye there is a National Nature Reserve.

The western boundary of the Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty adjoins that of the Surrey Hills Area, which was confirmed in 1958. The Commission thus plan to have an almost continuous tract of designated territory covering most of the remaining unspoiled landscape of the North Downs extending from the Hampshire border near Hindhead to the cliffs of Dover.

Responsibility for preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape rests with the local planning authorities - Kent County Council, and the Greater London Council. Government grants at the rate of 75% of approved expenditure can be made towards the cost of removal of unsightly development, clearance of derelict land and buildings, tree planting, the securing of access to open country for the public and for the appointment of wardens. Designation does not provide any right of access to land which is not already open to the public, nor does it affect any existing use which is made of the land.

23rd July 1968

No. 176

*Under section 87 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The report of a study undertaken for the
Countryside Commission by Land Use Consultants

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THE KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Introduction

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have been designated in the countryside since the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Thirty-three areas, varying widely in their character, have now been designated. In 1978 the Countryside Commission launched a programme of study and consultation aimed at clarifying the role of this designation in countryside conservation and assessing its effectiveness. This programme has two main components. The first is a national review of the designated areas, drawing upon the experiences and policies of local authorities in whose areas the AONBs lie, and aimed at finding out how far the actual purposes of designation have been achieved. The second is a wide-ranging consultation exercise based upon the publication of a discussion paper about AONBs (1).

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was formally designated in 1968. It covers an area of 845 square kilometres (326 square miles) and is the fifth largest AONB in the country. The area lies within one of the most heavily populated counties in England and because of the strategic position of Kent in relation to London and the Channel Ports, pressures are great. Recently concern has grown about changes in the landscape of the area, particularly in response to one or two well publicised examples of agricultural reclamation.

The Kent Downs AONB falls within the area covered by the recently created Greater London and South East Regional office of the Countryside Commission. In view of the concern about change in the landscape of the Kent Downs, and the wider desire of the Commission at national level to assess the role of the AONB designation, the regional office commissioned a research study of the Kent Downs AONB with the intention of contributing to the resolution of problems at both local and national levels. In July 1978 Land Use Consultants were appointed by the regional office to carry out this research study.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The broad aims of the study defined by the Countryside Commission were:

- i) to investigate changes in the landscape and land use of the area since designation;
- ii) to assess the effectiveness of designation; and
- iii) to make recommendations for any review of planning policies and management initiatives.

(ii)

The more detailed objectives set down for the study were:

- i) to identify the critical components of the landscape which made the Kent Downs worthy of designation;
- ii) to identify and quantify, as far as possible, the changes which have affected the landscape, since designation, and to comment on the likely future trends;
- iii) to investigate the effectiveness of planning policies, instruments and decisions (e.g. TPOs, Article 4 directions, appeal decisions) and to assess their success compared with other parts of Kent. This should include an identification, where possible, of changes which would have occurred without designation;
- iv) to assess the extent to which the designation has influenced the policies and actions of Government Departments and other public agencies (e.g. Department of Transport, MAFF, MOD, Electricity Boards, etc.);
- v) to determine broadly what positive actions are needed to retain and enhance the landscape beauty, to suggest areas and subjects where such actions are most likely to be fruitful and to establish priorities for both long and short term initiatives;
- vi) to take account of the various land uses of the area and suggest how they harmonize with the major objectives of the AONB.

ADVISORY GROUP

In carrying out this research we were assisted by an advisory group made up of representatives of the Countryside Commission, Kent County Council, Nature Conservancy Council, Ministry of Agriculture, National Farmer's Union, Forestry Commission and the Council for the Protection for Rural England. This Advisory Group met on four occasions during the work, and discussed the direction of the study and the findings, conclusions and recommendations as they emerged.

METHODS OF STUDY

Because of the potentially vast scope of the study, the geographical extent of the area, and the range of issues to be studied, factual research was limited to a level of definition which would allow conclusions to be drawn and recommendations made. Sampling methods, where necessary, were chosen to suit the level of information available and greater attention was focused on the main area of chalk down escarpment, with comparisons being made, wherever possible, with undesignated areas and with pre-designation conditions. Aspects which received detailed study included designation history, change in the landscape, development control, and individual land uses.

THE REPORT

This publication is an edited version of the report submitted to the Countryside Commission in 1979. Library copies of the full report are available for study at the Countryside Commission, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3RA and at Land Use Consultants, 731 Fulham Road, London SW6 5UL. Much factual and peripheral information has been omitted, including several tables, but we have not amended information to take account of subsequent changes.

SECTION ONE: The Designation and Landscape of the Kent Downs AONB

CHAPTER ONE

THE DESIGNATION OF THE KENT DOWNS AONB

THE CONCEPT OF AN AONB

1.1 There is a considerable mass of legislation which gets out the purposes of AONB designation. The relevant sections, however, are not a model of clarity and have resulted in the original intentions of the designation remaining rather obscure. It does, however, seem clear, although not explicitly stated, that the main function of the designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area in question by the use of development control, tree preservation orders, statutory instruments, tree planting and clearance of dereliction and eyesores. The provision for enjoyment by the public is afforded lesser importance. In the translation of the original ideas of the Dower and Hobhouse reports (1) (2) to the statute books much was lost - including the emphasis on the integration between scientific interest and natural beauty, the proposals for joint advisory committees, the need for special technical advice from the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission and the need for special consultation machinery with statutory undertakers and public authorities. However, despite these omissions, designation of AONBs since 1949 has been based largely on the Hobhouse list of proposed Conservation Areas.

THE PROCESS OF DESIGNATION

1.2 The idea of recognising the landscape quality of the Kent Downs by national designation first arose with their inclusion in the list of amenity areas in the Dower report and subsequently as one of the fifty two Conservation Areas in the Hobhouse Report in 1947. These reports were not concerned with drawing detailed boundaries for these areas and the maps accompanying the report show their location and extent only schematically. It is clear though, from the configuration of the areas shown, that the main target for designation at this stage was the scarp face of the section of the North Downs lying in Kent, with its predominantly semi-natural vegetation of rough chalk grassland, scrub and woodland.

1.3 The Downs were listed as one of 4 potential amenity preservation areas in the 1948 Report "A Planning Basis for Kent". The designation of the AONB was preceded by some ten years by definition of the County Area of Great Landscape Value. In an extended debate about boundaries this became a critical factor, with the point at issue being essentially whether the landscape to be designated was of local or national significance and hence whether the AONB should have the same boundaries as the County designated area. The logic of the relationship between the two designations is admirably summarised in the letter written by the Council for the Protection of Rural Kent to the National Parks Commission, in which they observe that:

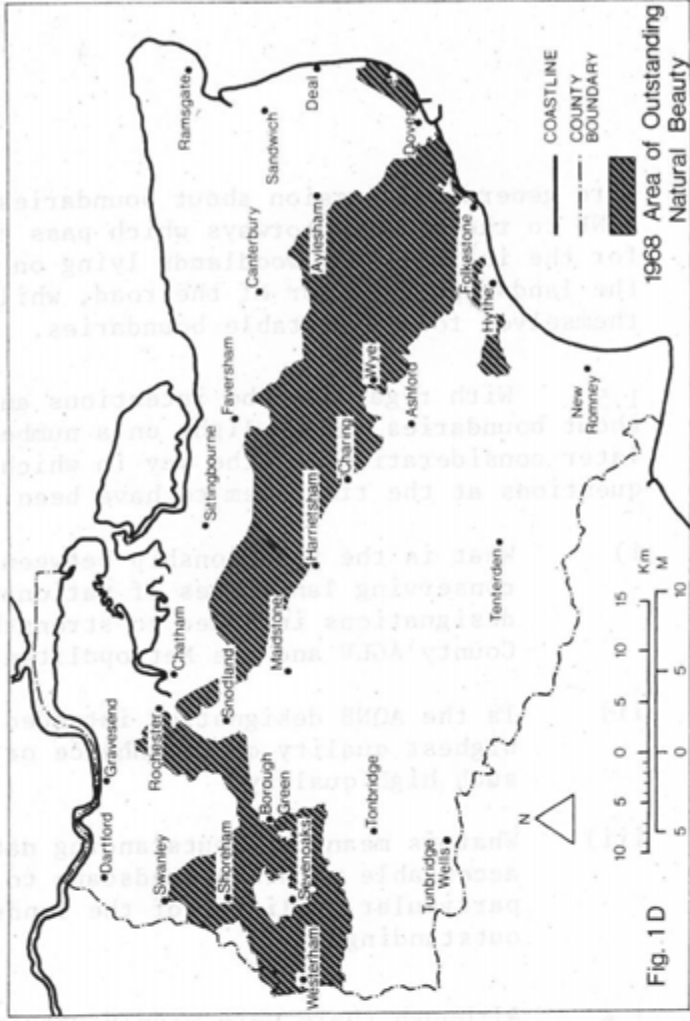
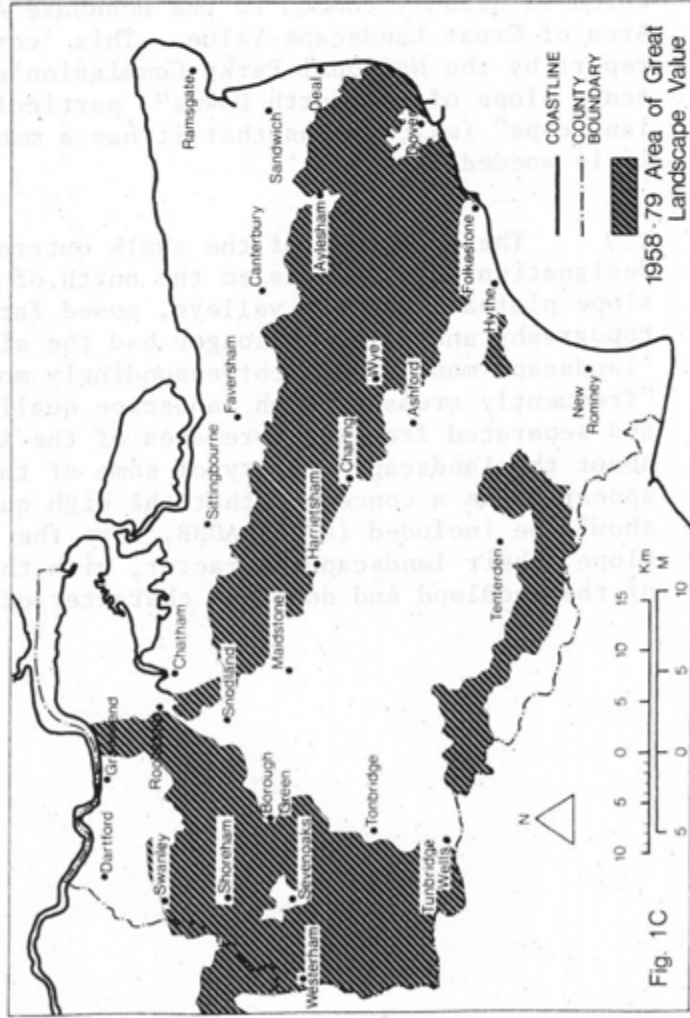
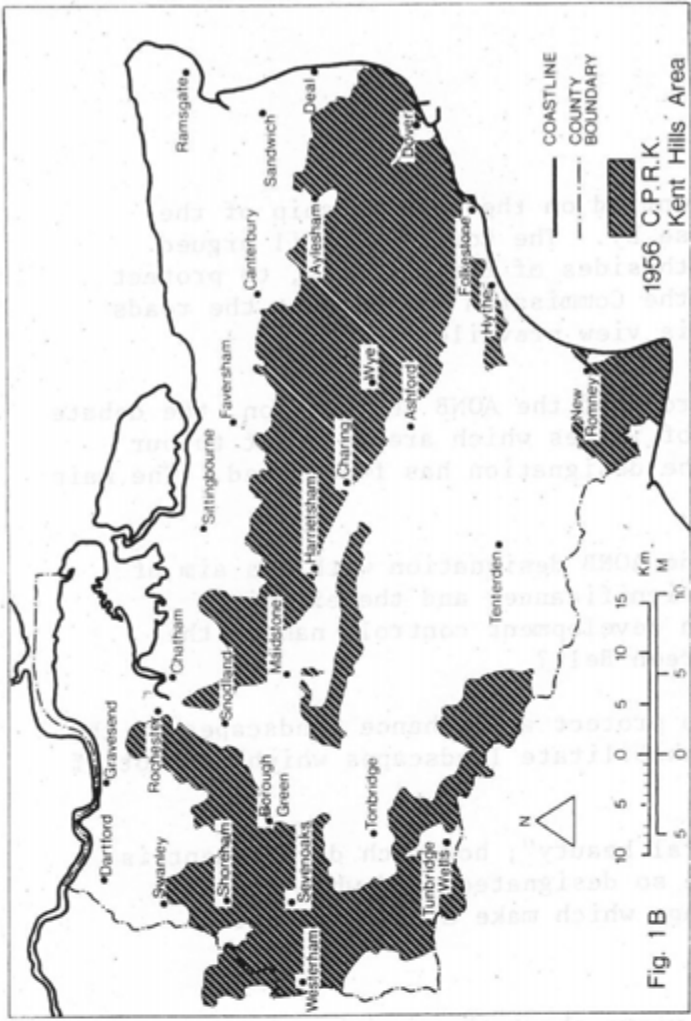
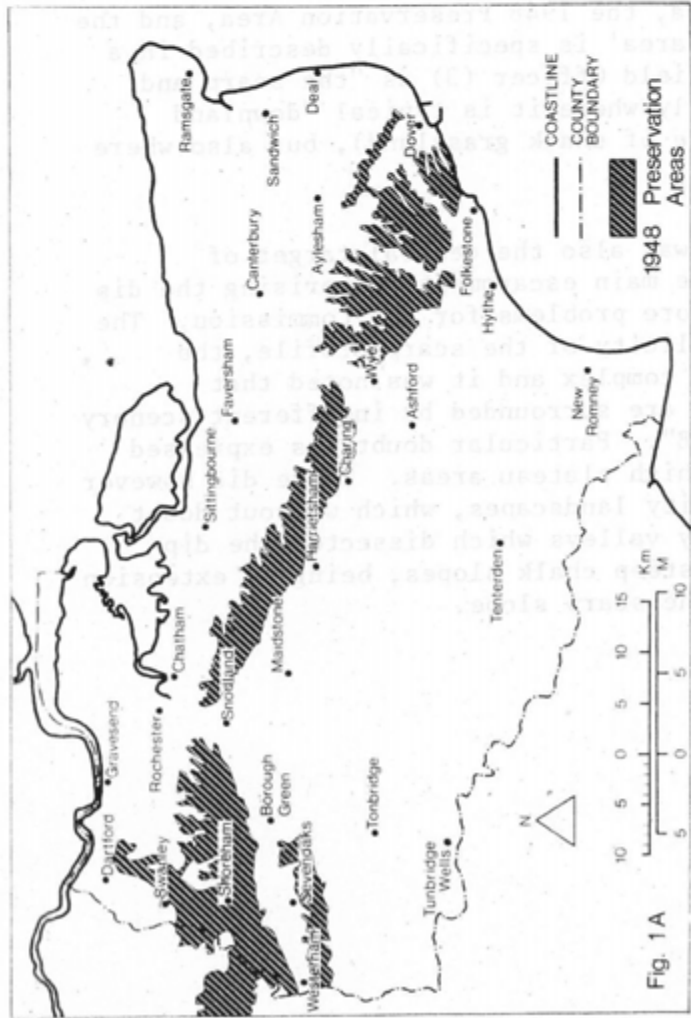
"The area is, by definition, one of outstanding natural beauty; the generally corresponding area in the Development Plan is one of great landscape value. It would therefore be reasonable for the former to be smaller than the latter; but every part of the former should be included in the latter".

Thus, 'outstanding' has connotations of national significance while 'great' is applied to areas of local significance. Obviously, though, such a line is extremely difficult to draw in practice.

1.4 Within this broad context the major areas of disagreement about the boundary of the AONB and the related issues which caused the National Parks Commission to completely re-examine the proposal in 1964 were as follows:

- i) The Greensand Ridge: it was argued that this area was not downland but a forest landscape, and that it was no longer an outstanding natural landscape because of the influence of development. On the other hand, Kent County Council argued that exclusion of this area would remove a fundamental constituent of the AONB, that it had a similar, although less pronounced sequence of dip slope, scarp, and scarp slope as the Downs, and that under the mantle of woodland cover, fine parklands, private estates, scattered houses and low density suburbs were dispersed with no clear zonation, so that it would be necessary to designate either the whole ridge, or none of it. Eventually the area was included in the AONB.
- ii) Western part of the Downs: the National Parks Commission expressed the opinion at one stage that large areas of the Downs proposed for inclusion in the AONB were of great value as Green Belt landscapes related to London, but presented a planning rather than a landscape problem. The Commission considered that built-up areas already detracted from the landscape quality in this part of the Downs and it was finally excluded from the designation.
- iii) Downs north-west of Dover: Kent County Council pressed strongly for the inclusion of parts of the parishes which lie in the vicinity of the North Kent Coalfield and the Commission felt that the character of the area - agricultural land and a number of large estates with good parkland, but sometimes spoiled by glimpses of pit-head gear - was generally not of a high enough standard to merit AONB status.
- iv) Old Romney Shoreline: It was argued that the AONB should be extended westwards from Folkestone to incorporate the cliffs and escarpment of the Old Romney Shoreline, although geologically and topographically this was not a part of the Downs. This extension was incorporated into the designation without great debate.
- v) The Coast: The Commission considered at one stage that the coast-line at the eastern extremity posed entirely new problems and that it might be as well to treat the coast and the North Downs as separate entities. However, it was agreed that this coast represented the first sight of England on arriving at Dover and the coastal area was eventually incorporated into the AONB.

Figs. 1A-D show the sequence of the various boundaries which have been proposed for the designated area at various times.



More general discussion about boundaries centred on the relationship of the AONB to the major motorways which pass close by. The County Council argued for the inclusion of woodlands lying on both sides of the motorway, to protect the landscape corridor of the road, while the Commission argued that the roads themselves formed suitable boundaries. This view prevailed.

1.5 With regard to the intentions and role of the AONB designation, the debate about boundaries throws light on a number of issues which are relevant to our later considerations of the way in which the designation has functioned. The main questions at the time seem to have been:

- i) What is the relationship between the AONB designation with its aim of conserving landscapes of national significance, and the existing designations intended to strengthen development control, namely the County AGLV and the Metropolitan Green Belt?
- ii) Is the AONB designation intended to protect and enhance landscapes of the highest quality or to enhance or rehabilitate landscapes which are not of such high quality?
- iii) What is meant by "outstanding natural beauty", how much development is acceptable within a landscape to be so designated, and what are the particular qualities of the landscape which make a given landscape outstanding?

1.6 Although there were widely varying views about the peripheral parts of the AONB there was little, if any, debate about the core of the area to be protected, which is broadly common to the Hobhouse Area, the 1948 Preservation Area, and the Area of Great Landscape Value. This 'core area' is specifically described in a report by the National Parks Commission's Field Officer (3) as "the scarp and scarp slope of the North Downs", particularly where it is typical "downland landscape" (which means that it has a mantle of chalk grassland), but also where it is wooded.

1.7 The remainder of the chalk outcrop was also the central target of designation but the area to the north of the main escarpment, comprising the dip slope plateaus and dry valleys, posed far more problems for the Commission. The topography and soils no longer had the simplicity of the scarp profile, the 'landscape mantle' was correspondingly more complex and it was noted that "frequently areas of high landscape quality are surrounded by indifferent scenery and separated from the core area of the AONB". Particular doubt was expressed about the landscape quality of some of the high plateau areas. There did however appear to be a consensus that the high quality landscapes, which without doubt should be included in the AONB, were the dry valleys which dissected the dip slope, their landscape character, with the steep chalk slopes, being an extension of the woodland and downland character of the scarp slope.

1.8 The comments made by other parties during the consultation stages confirmed this emphasis on wooded valley landscapes. For example:

"...the area consists of unspoilt hills and valleys and many beautiful woods".

"...woods which form prominent features in the landscape ..."

"...the suggested extension includes ... its attractive valley, the valleys and woods to the north ... and the valley running down from the north west".

1.9 Elsewhere the importance of woodland trees and parkland was emphasised, but there was little other mention of specific qualities of the landscape, other than discussion of the merits of individual localities. We can therefore conclude from this review of designation that the scarp slope and dry valleys of the Kent Downs were the main target for designation, particularly where they retained a downland character, that woodlands were highly valued throughout the designated area and particularly on the scarp slope and dry valley sides, and that other qualities of note were views from the escarpment, pastoral scenery, parklands, villages, churches and castles. The area which was finally designated as representing the highest quality landscape comprising these elements is illustrated in Figure 1D . The designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was finally confirmed in 1968. The press release reported that "the purpose of this designation is to safeguard and enhance the natural beauty of the area. It will give it a national significance."



LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

THE KENT DOWNS LANDSCAPE

An assessment of the
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION

FOREWORD

The Kent Downs and the White Cliffs of Dover are the well-known and much-loved first sights of England for those who cross the Channel from the continent. This landscape is so important that it is a nationally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

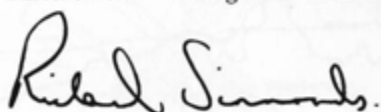
The Kent Downs landscape is valued for its dramatic south-facing scarp, secluded dry valleys, the network of tiny lanes and for its isolated farms and churches. It is an area of ancient woodlands and unimproved grasslands, scattered oast-houses and small orchards. There is a rich tapestry of wildlife habitats of international nature conservation importance, and a legacy of sites of historic interest. The North Downs Way National Trail winds its way along the escarpment to Canterbury and Dover.

Despite its proximity to London and other major growth areas such as the Thames Gateway, much of the Kent Downs has remained secluded, or even isolated. The designated area contains no large settlements and most of the major roads in the area skirt the awkward topography of the chalk hills and the greensand ridge, adding to this feeling of remoteness. Situated between the capital and the coast, however, this landscape is seen by millions of people using the railways and the motorways along its boundaries.

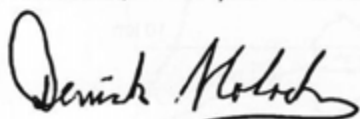
However, there is a lack of general awareness of this landscape's real significance and status, which equates to our treasured National Parks. We have produced this assessment by identifying the landscape characteristics and patterns which give rise to its beauty and distinctiveness.

Sensitive planning for the long term is needed to secure the conservation and enhancement of its special character. Accordingly, this document also contains our guidelines for the landscape, an outline of the pressures on the Kent Downs, and proposals for action to safeguard it.

We hope this publication will stimulate debate and commitment for the Kent Downs. Then we will need a management plan to guide policy and to stimulate activity in conserving and enhancing this very special Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Richard Simmonds
Chairman, Countryside Commission



Derrick Molock
Chairman, Kent County Council

SUMMARY

This publication is one of a national series of landscape assessments for the designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Landscape assessment is a systematic means of identifying, describing and classifying the character of areas of the countryside. Subjective and qualitative aspects as well as physical, cultural and historical features and interests are taken into account in the assessments. They are an important first step in conserving and enhancing landscapes.

The document defines the characteristics of the Kent Downs based on a landscape assessment approach built on the Countryside Commission's published guidance on landscape assessment (CCP 423). The document identifies the elements and features that are characteristic of the Kent Downs. In recognition of the local identity of different areas of landscape, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is described in 13 **character areas**. These areas reflect not just the physical nature of the countryside but also its social identity and 'sense of place'. Many of the character areas have been sub-divided into **local character areas**, which look in more detail at the specific characteristics of these localities and highlight some of the pressures facing them. Areas of particular sensitivity have been highlighted as vulnerable landscapes. In addition, six characteristic features, such as species-rich chalk grassland, have been examined in more detail.

The publication is intended to raise awareness of the importance of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, locally and nationally.

HOLLINGBOURNE VALE



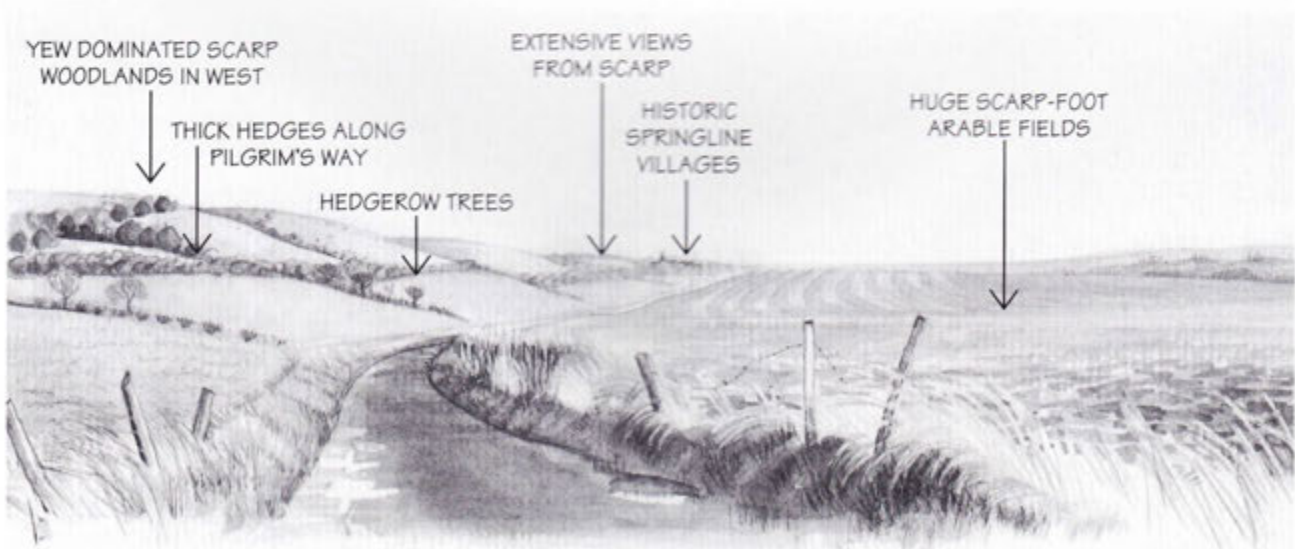
Parts of the Hollingbourne scarp have been cultivated, reducing its overall landscape impact.

The steep scarp of the downs, between Boxley and the Stour Valley, overlooks a wide, rolling landscape of mixed farmland. The greensand ridge to the south, although less prominent here than near Sevenoaks, forms a gentle rise before the flat, low-lying countryside associated with the River Beult and the Low Weald.

The scarp in this area of the AONB is predominantly grassland, although some parts around Thurnham have been ploughed as a result of arable cultivation in the recent past. This has exposed the highly visible white chalk beneath the shallow, unstable soils. In contrast to the dense woodlands above Boxley, there is only an intermittent fringe of woodland along the scarp top and some scattered trees along field boundaries.

The southern boundary of the AONB extends across the fertile strip of land along the scarp foot. The continual down-wash of soil from the scarp, combined with the sheltered aspect of the resulting fields, produces a belt of very productive agricultural land. For most of its length, the extent of this fertile strip is clearly evident from the single-width and uniformity of the large, intensively cultivated fields which divide it up. Beyond this strip, the fields are often smaller and more irregular, with more trees and woodland scattered between them.

The agricultural value of the scarp foot has long been recognised and exploited. The Ordnance Survey maps of the late 19th century show a pattern of large,



Typical landscape characteristics.



regular fields similar to that of today. In recent years, however, some parts of the scarp foot have been denuded even of the few trees and hedges which formerly occurred there. This has produced vast arable 'prairies', that in places sweep up over the scarp onto the downland plateaux. The scale of these 'prairies' is inappropriate to the character of the surrounding landscape.

The scarp foot is also characterised by the string of old-established villages, such as Hollingbourne, which have grown up along the line of springs that seep out from the lower levels of the chalk. Hollingbourne Manor is a good example of Elizabethan brickwork. A number of historic parks adjoin the Pilgrim's Way and the Greenway ancient roads, which pass through the area, usually marked out by thick hedges along each side.

The scarp is crossed by a considerable number of roads and footpaths, while for most of its length the North Downs Way runs along the top of the scarp and the Pilgrim's Way runs along the bottom. Its open nature, and the wide views it offers, mean that this stretch of landscape is particularly sensitive to development. The existing road and railway network, along the southern boundary, already has a considerable impact on the views and quiet enjoyment of this part of the AONB.



Intensive cultivation of the chalk scarp near Charing.