

& Conservation Environmental Policy Statement



CANTERBURY
CITY COUNCIL

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This Conservation and Environmental Policy Statement was approved for development control purposes on 15th November 1988 for areas not covered by an existing Local Plan. It refers to the area which was formerly the Bridge Blean Rural District. The purpose of it is to demonstrate the City Council's commitment to the protection of the man-made and natural heritage of the area and to provide a policy context for development control purposes which reflects this commitment.

Canterbury District is very rich in listed buildings, with about 3,500 in total. Over one-third of these buildings are situated in the area covered by this policy statement. There are also 40 conservation areas in the district, 24 of which are located in the area covered by this document, together with 14 scheduled ancient monuments. This serves to indicate the architectural, historical and archaeological importance of the area.

In addition to the area's man-made heritage there is a wealth of natural features such as the thousands of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and vast tracts of countryside which have been identified as Special Landscape Areas, much of which has received national recognition by being designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Despite the level of protection that already exists to safeguard both the man-made and natural heritage of the rural area, increasing pressures for development in and around villages and in the open countryside require strong planning policies to ensure that the unique environmental qualities in this part of Kent are not degraded. Ultimately it will be the function of the Canterbury District Local Plan (which the City Council is currently preparing, with policies to guide the development of the district over a ten year period to 2001) to provide the overall planning context for the City and rural area of Bridge Blean. Until the Local Plan is adopted as a statutory plan the policies contained in this policy statement will be used for development control purposes and to demonstrate the City Council's commitment to the protection of the environment of the rural area.

The Appendix at the end of this policy statement lists the conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, ancient woodlands, Areas of High Nature Conservation Value, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Reserves and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest which relate to the area covered by this document.

LISTED BUILDINGS - ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS AND NEW BUILDING WORKS

1. In order to safeguard the character and appearance of buildings listed as being of architectural or historic interest the City Council will:-
 - (i) refuse consent for the demolition of a listed building; unless it can be demonstrated that there is a special overriding justification for demolition;
 - (ii) refuse consent for the alteration, internally or externally, of a listed building if the proposals are considered to be detrimental to the character of that building;
 - (iii) in granting consent to alter, internally or externally, a listed building, to impose such conditions as may be necessary to protect the character of that building especially in so far as the retention or reinstatement of traditional features or materials are concerned;
 - (iv) in granting planning permission near to a listed building, impose such conditions as may be necessary to protect its setting;
 - (v) require applications for planning permission to change the use of a listed building to be accompanied by full details of any alterations to the building, in order that the effect on the character of the building can be ascertained. Applicants may also be required, in appropriate cases, to demonstrate that the building cannot reasonably be retained in the use for which it was originally built;
 - (vi) restrict the display of signs and advertisements on a listed building to a level which does not detract from the character of that building.

Listed buildings are those which have been identified as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest by the Secretary of State for the Environment and are protected by law. In considering proposals affecting listed buildings the City Council will seek to ensure such buildings are neither lost nor adversely affected by unsympathetic alterations, additions or new building works.

If the City Council has reason to believe that a building may contain an historic structure or feature not readily visible, a building survey may be required prior to grant of listed building consent, planning permission or grant aid, or such a survey may be imposed as a condition on any such approval or offer.

REPAIR OF LISTED AND OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS

2. The City Council will seek to maintain and restore listed and other historic buildings by:-

- (i) making grants available through the Listed Buildings Grants Scheme for their proper repair and restoration;
- (ii) encouraging applications to be made to English Heritage for grants to enhance the appearance of buildings in the Conservation Areas;
- (iii) giving technical design advice on the correct detailing of period features and construction techniques.

The City Council sets aside funds under the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act 1962, to enable grants to be paid to assist in the repair of historic buildings.

CONSERVATION AREAS

3. The City Council will preserve and enhance the special character of designated conservation areas by:-

- (i) refusing Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of buildings, the loss of which would be detrimental to the special character of the conservation area;
- (ii) seeking to retain the materials, features and details of unlisted buildings or structures which contribute to the character of a conservation area;
- (iii) requiring the height, size, design, roofscape, plot width and visual appearance of new development, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, to respect the character of the conservation area and make a positive contribution towards its enhancement;
- (iv) requiring all planning applications for development within a conservation area to be in a detailed form in order that the effect of the proposal on the character of a conservation area may be properly assessed. In certain cases detailed proposals will be required on sensitive sites adjoining a conservation area;
- (v) retaining and reinstating traditional street and paving materials and furniture, lamp standards, brackets, bollards, railings, boundary walls and telephone kiosks which help to form the character of a conservation area and extending their use where appropriate;

(vi) seeking to retain the historic street pattern, traditional building lines, open spaces, footways, footpaths and kerblines which contribute to the character of a conservation area;

(vii) protecting trees which contribute to, or which will in future contribute to, the character of a conservation area and trees and hedgerows which contribute to the landscape setting of a conservation area;

(viii) promoting, where appropriate, schemes of hard and soft landscaping utilising traditional materials;

(ix) seeking the removal of obtrusive wires, cables and telegraph poles from streets and buildings;

(x) encouraging the redesign or replacement of buildings, structures and features which are visually detrimental to the character of a conservation area;

(xi) introducing painting and other enhancement schemes on appropriate groups of buildings.

Most works of demolition in conservation areas require Conservation Area Consent for either total or partial demolitions. The City Council will use Conservation Area Consent to protect existing buildings which contribute to the character of a conservation area.

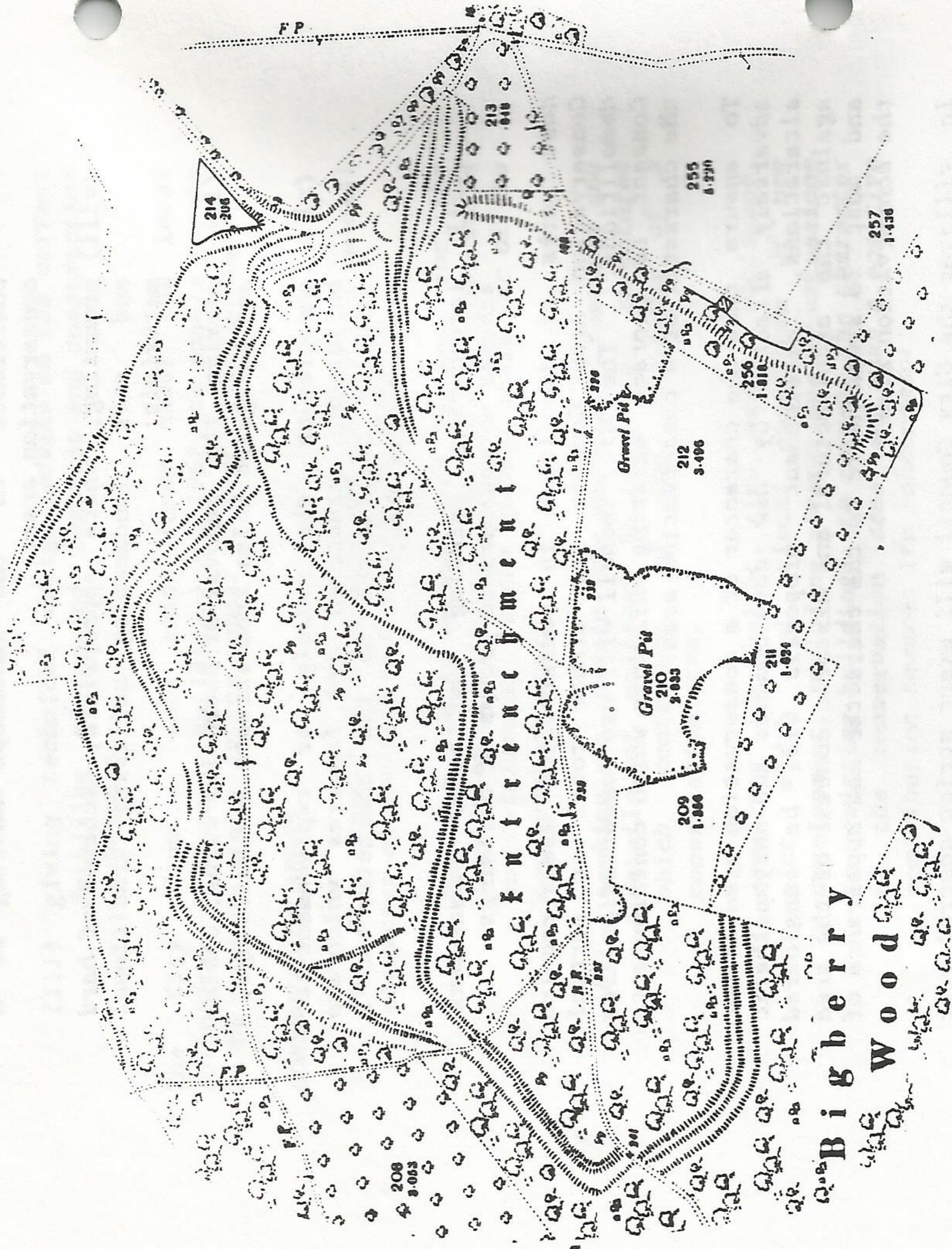
To ensure that the character of a conservation area is not adversely affected by new developments and unsympathetic alterations, development proposals will be considered against the architectural and historic context of the area and must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In villages the City Council will exert strict control over proposals for infill development to ensure that the special character of a village conservation area is not eroded by a process of suburbanisation resulting from excessive infilling.

The City Council will investigate the potential for designation of new conservation areas and the extension of existing conservation areas and also consider whether additional protection for conservation areas is required through the use of Article IV Directions to remove permitted development rights.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

4. The City Council will promote the identification, recording, protection and enhancement of archaeological sites, ancient monuments and historic landscape features, and their setting, and will normally refuse permission for development which would lead to their damage or destruction.



5. In cases where a special justification has been demonstrated the City Council will, when granting planning permission for development which would damage or destroy archaeological sites, ancient monuments or historic landscape features, require adequate archaeological investigations to be carried out and recording to be made by a recognised archaeological team before and/or during building or other operations.

6. The City Council may require planning applications affecting areas of known or suspected archaeological interest to be accompanied by an assessment of the site's archaeological importance.

The City Council is committed to the preservation of the archaeological heritage of the area. The Canterbury Archaeological Trust will be recognised as the relevant investigating body in respect of Policy 5. In considering whether development proposals will affect an archaeological interest on a particular site the views of English Heritage and the Canterbury Archaeological Trust will be sought.

REDUNDANT AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

7. Proposals for the change of use of agricultural buildings will not normally be granted unless they are supported by evidence that the building is redundant - that is incapable of reasonably fulfilling an agricultural or other permitted use. The change of use will only be permitted where the change would provide the best reasonable means of conserving the character, appearance, fabric and setting of buildings which are of architectural or historic interest or where the loss of a building would be detrimental to the character of the countryside.

8. Proposals for the change of use of agricultural buildings which form part of a group of buildings or are associated with other agricultural buildings will be considered with due regard to the physical and functional relationship to other nearby buildings and to the landscape setting of the buildings.

9. Where it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that an agricultural building is incapable of fulfilling an agricultural use, the City Council will give preference to alternative uses which maintain the architectural and historic character of the building. There will be a presumption against proposals for conversion which will result in unsympathetic alterations to the building. Applications must be supported by evidence that the building cannot reasonably be put to a more appropriate use that would cause less damage to its structure and character.

11. The City Council will, in granting planning permission for the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential use, remove the "permitted development" rights conferred by the General Development Order.

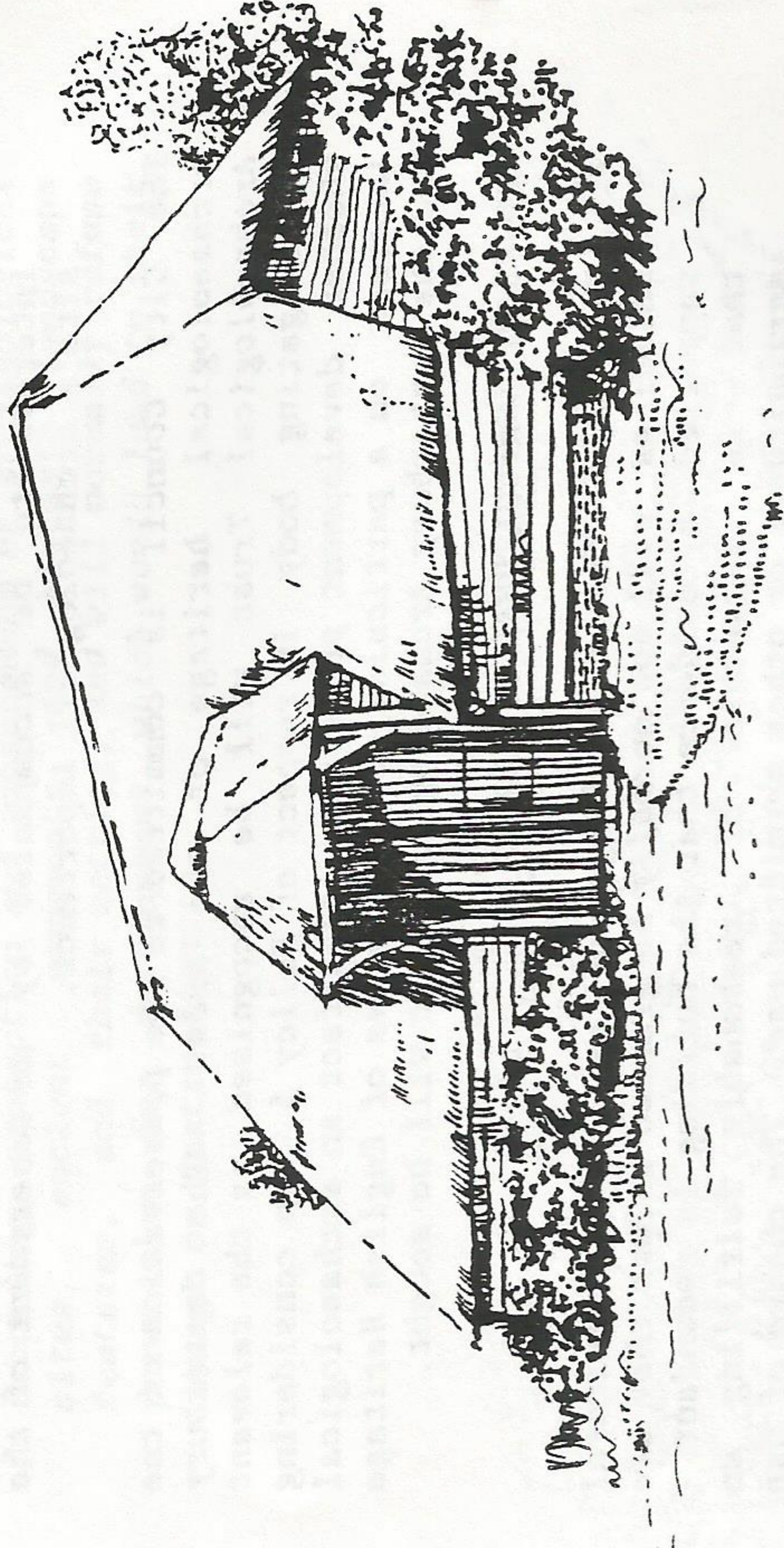
The Kent Structure Plan makes a general presumption against development in the open countryside. An exception may be made to this presumption if a change of use is necessary to ensure the retention of a building which is of architectural, historic or landscape value.

To prove a building is redundant the applicant will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the options for a continued or reinstated agricultural use have been fully explored and explain why the building is incapable of fulfilling any agricultural or other approved use.

The City Council wishes to ensure that any conversion will not prejudice the continued agricultural use of adjacent or associated buildings. Proposals for change of use will not, therefore, be considered in isolation but with due regard to the physical, functional and landscape setting of the building.

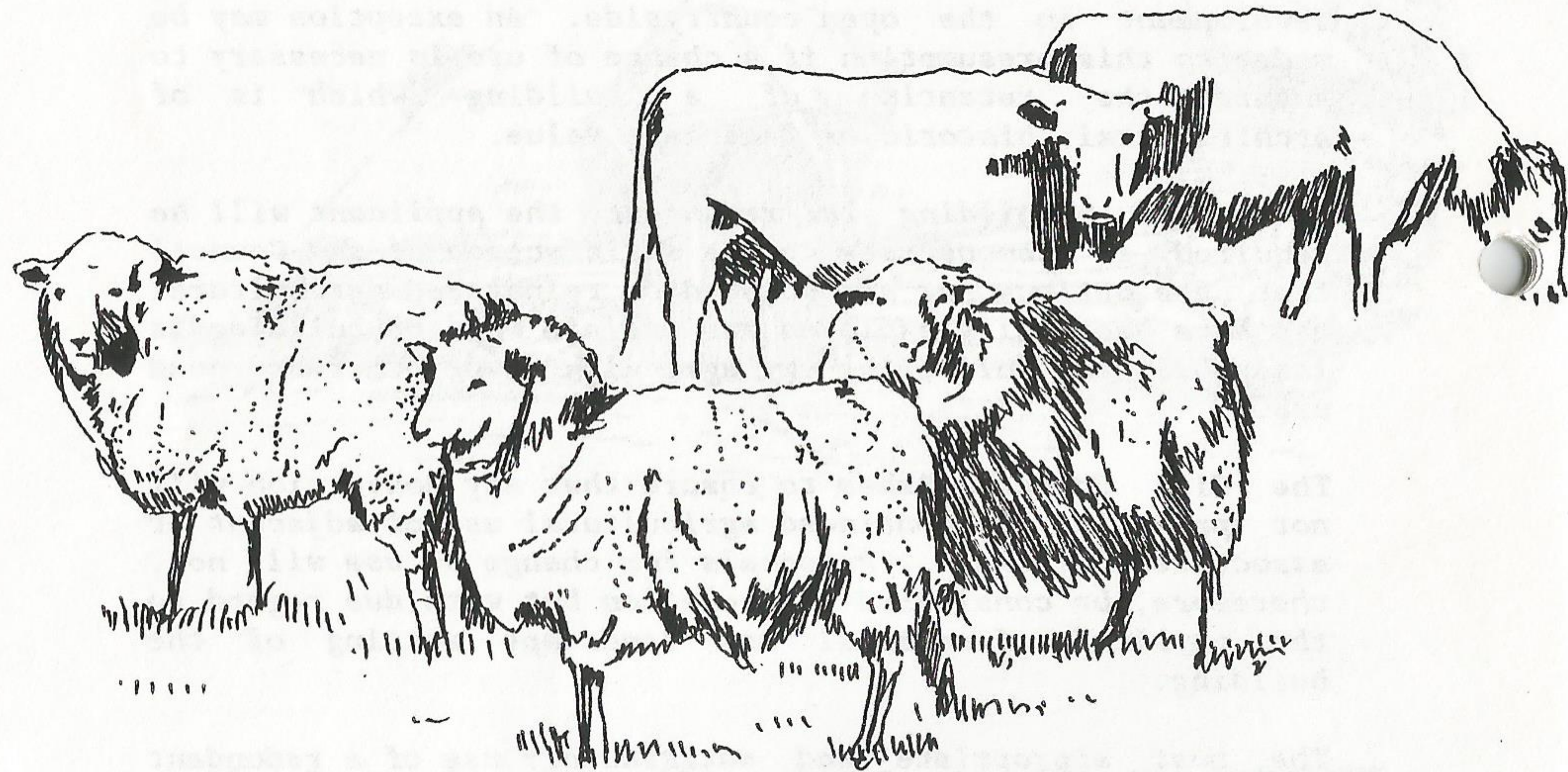
The most appropriate and satisfactory use of a redundant agricultural building is one similar to that for which the building was originally designed and which requires little or no physical alterations to the building. Conversion to residential use is very often the option which necessitates the greatest alteration to the physical structure and character of an agricultural building.

It is possible that a well planned and executed scheme for residential conversion may subsequently be altered by owners exercising their permitted development rights confirmed by the General Development Order. The Council will normally remove such permitted development rights by attaching a condition to this effect so as to bring those operations usually regarded as permitted development within the scope of planning control.



10. Proposals for the change of use of redundant agricultural buildings considered to be worthy of retention must be accompanied by:-

- (a) A detailed and accurate survey including full details of any structural timber framing.
- (b) An accurate record of the building in the form of black and white photographs.
- (c) Detailed plans indicating that the conversion can be achieved in accordance with the following objectives:-
 - (1) minimum alteration to the external appearance of the building;
 - (2) minimum alteration to the structure of the building;
 - (3) internal arrangements to respect the original character of the building.
- (d) Details of the treatment of landscaping, open spaces and boundaries to respect the character of the building and its setting.



AREAS OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR AGRICULTURE

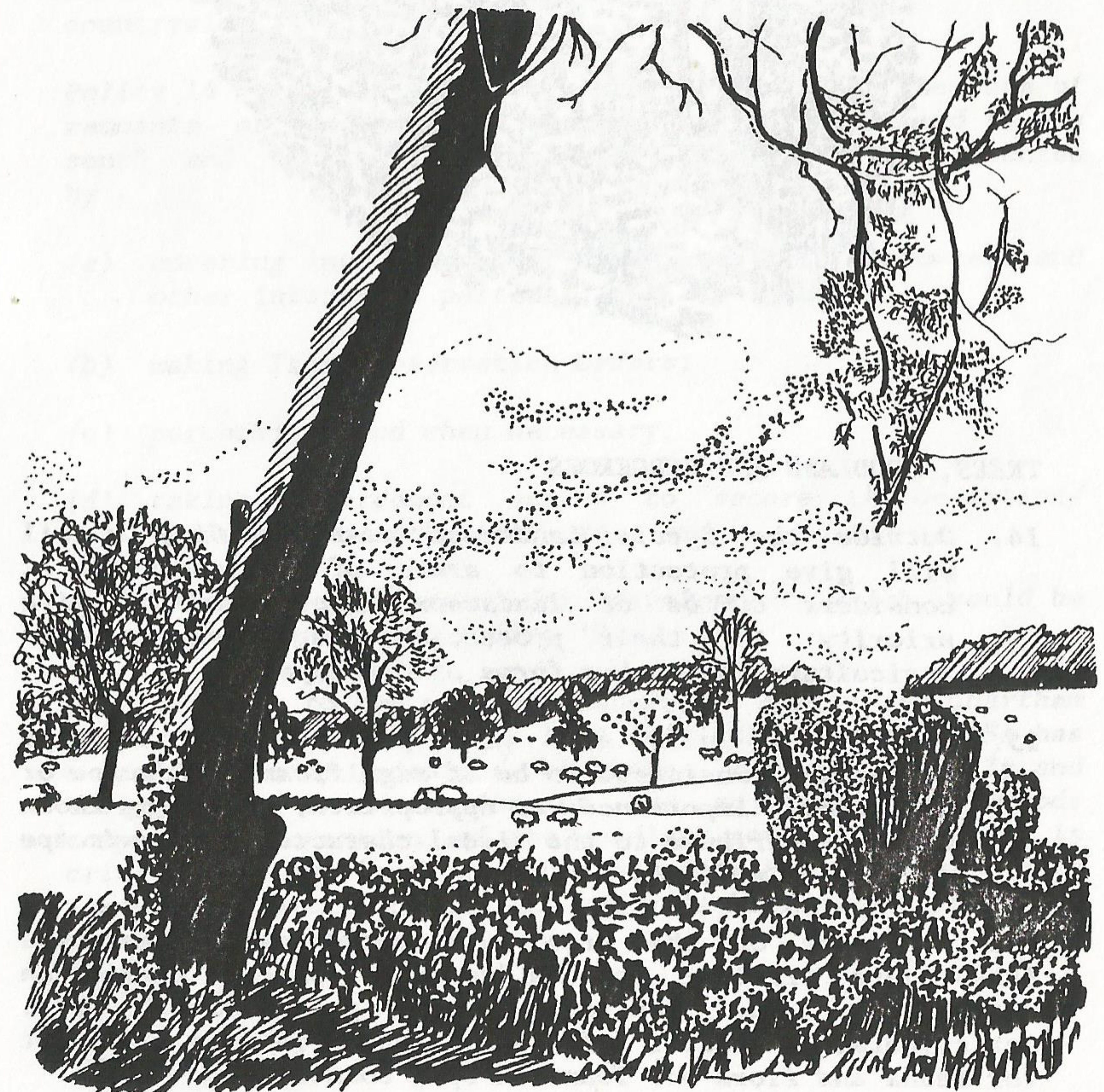
12. The City Council will give long term protection to the Areas of Special Significance for Agriculture defined in the Kent Countryside Plan and will give priority to the needs of agriculture over other planning considerations except in those areas of woodland identified in Policy 14 and areas subject to tree preservation orders where landscape protection will be given priority, and other areas of nature conservation interest as defined in Policy 15.

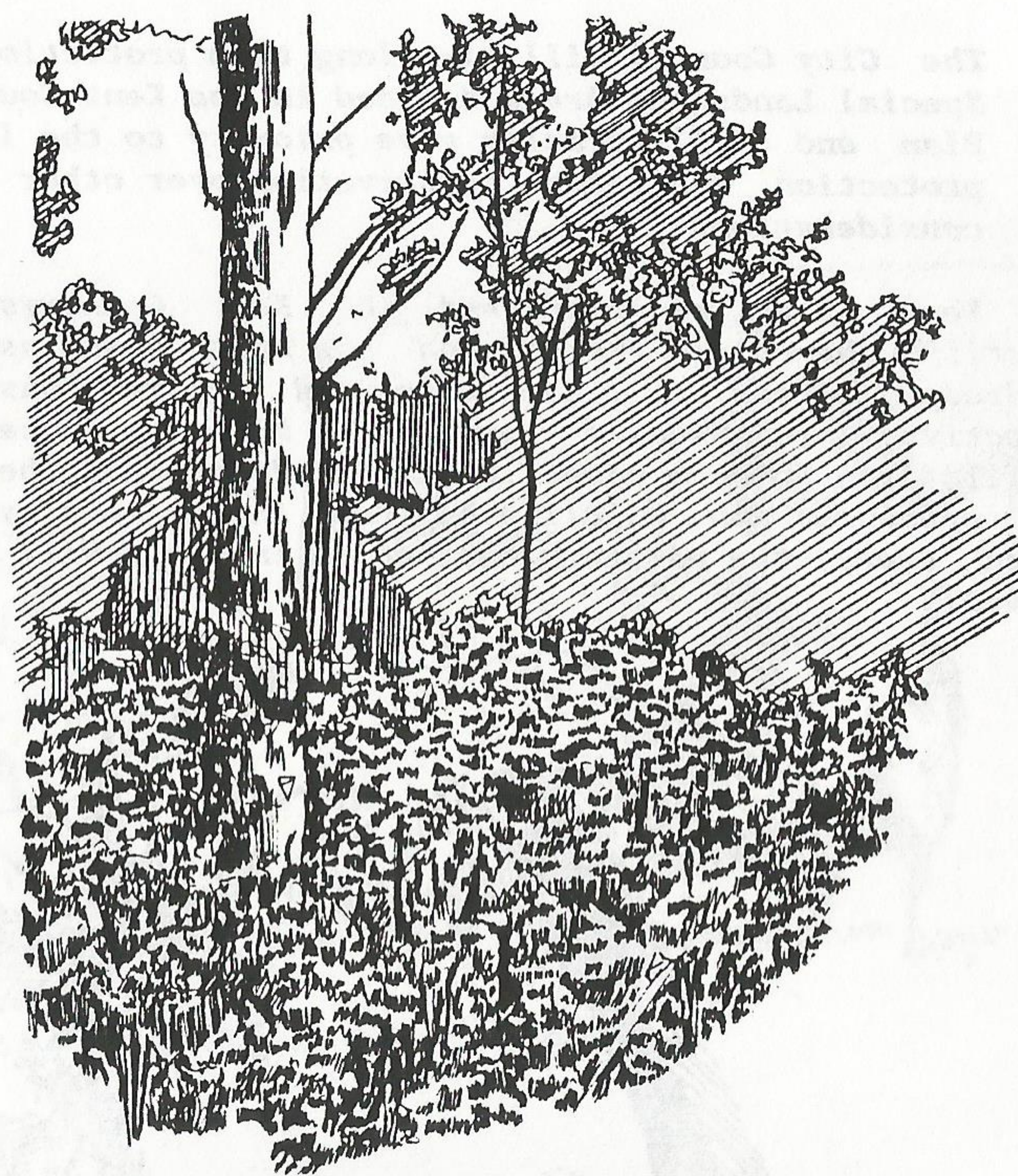
Long term protection is provided for Areas of Special Significance for Agriculture in order that farmers and land owners may be encouraged to make appropriate capital investment, confident of an assured future.

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

13. The City Council will give long term protection to the Special Landscape Areas defined in the Kent Countryside Plan and will normally give priority to the landscape protection and nature conservation over other planning considerations.

The Kent Structure Plan and the Kent Countryside Plan identify the Blean Woods and the North Downs as Special Landscape Areas. Landscape and nature conservation objectives are usually compatible but may occasionally conflict. In such cases it is considered that, because of the pressures on wildlife habitats in the countryside and urban areas, the nature conservation interest will normally prevail.





TREES, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROWS

14. Outside the Special Landscape Areas, the City Council will give protection to areas of woodland which it considers to be of landscape importance and give priority to their protection over the needs of agricultural and other forms of development.
15. The Council will also give protection to trees and hedgerows considered to be of significant landscape or historical importance as appropriate, including those which contribute to the visual character and landscape setting of villages.

The woodlands of the area, outside the Special Landscape Areas, are critical to the landscape quality, forming an attractive visual contrast to the predominantly open, agricultural character of the area and providing a habitat for fauna and flora not found in open countryside.

Trees, individually and in groups, often make an important contribution to both the visual character and wider landscape setting of the rural settlements. The City Council recognises the need to protect and maintain trees and will make Tree Preservation Orders as necessary for this purpose.

Hedgerows and individual trees may have historical importance in marking old parish boundaries or indicating the pattern of Medieval or Saxon land uses. The City Council has carried out a detailed survey of these in part of the area covered by this policy statement (this included the parishes of Littlebourne, Petham and Waltham) and are making Tree Preservation Orders where necessary to afford them protection throughout the policy area. Such orders may be applied to hedgerows comprised of trees, but where their use is inappropriate, the City Council will seek the voluntary co-operation of farmers and other country landowners in maintaining the traditional British countryside.

Policy 14 will take precedence over Policy 12 in the case of remnants of woodland in the open agricultural land to the south and east of Canterbury. This will be implemented by:-

- (a) entering into management agreements with landowners and other interested parties;
- (b) making Tree Preservation Orders;
- (c) purchasing land when necessary;
- (d) taking enforcement action to secure the cessation/removal of unauthorised uses; and
- (e) refusing permission for development which would be incompatible with Policy 13.

The landscape to the west of Canterbury, centred on Chartham Hatch and within the North Kent Horticultural Belt ASSA has a predominantly woodland character and is visually and ecologically an extension of the adjacent Blean Woods complex. Retention of the woodland cover in this area is critical to the landscape and therefore Policy 14 will take precedence over Policy 12 and will be implemented by the means set out above.

AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

16. There will be a general presumption against development affecting Areas of High Nature Conservation Value, within and adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, within and adjacent to Designated Nature Reserves and in areas of woodland of nature conservation value. The City Council will seek to protect their scientific interest, maintain scarce and potentially vulnerable wildlife habitats and give priority to the requirements of nature conservation over other considerations.

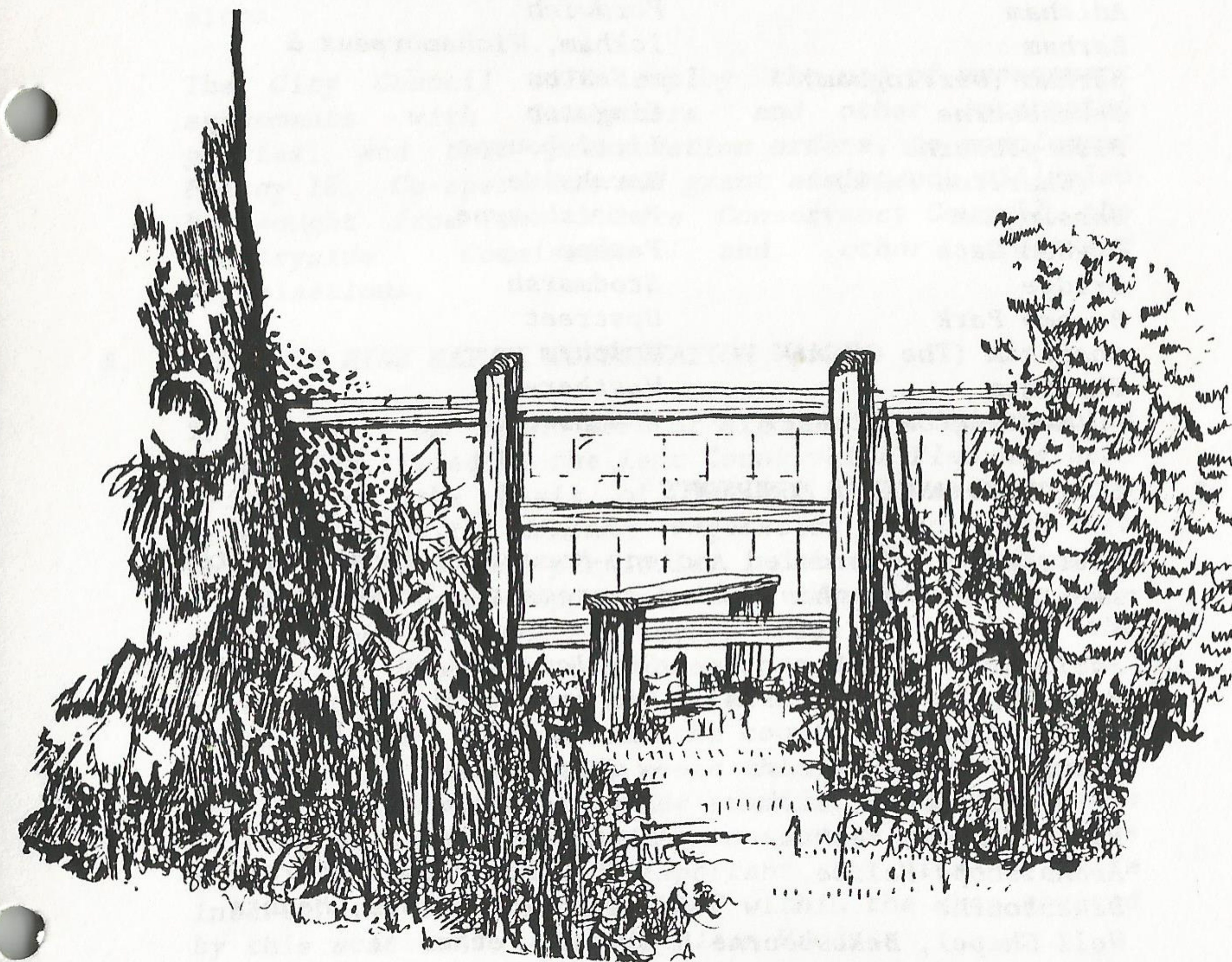
Policies CC8 and CC9 of the Kent Structure Plan and the above Policy 16 give protection to nature conservation interests in areas of High Nature Conservation Value, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Designated Nature Reserves and Woodlands. The mode of definition of these areas of nature conservation interest and their location in the Policy Statement Area are set out in the Appendix.

OTHER AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

17. The City Council will generally refuse planning permission for development if it is likely to cause a loss of habitat of importance to nature conservation unless it can be demonstrated that the need for the development overrides the nature conservation interest and no appropriate alternative site is available.
18. The City Council will encourage and enhance opportunities for nature conservation including the preservation of natural ponds and review the nature conservation significance of land in its ownership with a view to establishing local nature reserves.

The presumption against development proposals contained in Policy CC10 of the Kent Structure Plan and Policy 17 will apply to proposals which would adversely affect sites considered to be of high nature conservation value in particular Areas of Nature Conservation Interest as identified by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation (See the Appendix).

The City Council has a variety of landholdings of nature conservation value including ancient woodlands, unimproved grasslands and wetlands. A local nature reserve will be established at Larkey Valley Wood. Through Policy 17 the Council intends to encourage and enhance opportunities for nature conservation and will undertake a review of the nature conservation significance of land in its ownership with a view to establishing other local nature reserves.



FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

19. The City Council and County Council will seek to maintain and improve the existing network of public rights of way, footpaths and bridleways and to identify the potential for establishing way-marked routes.
20. The City Council will seek to provide new recreational footpaths and bridleways where appropriate and where they improve access to the countryside without detriment to agricultural, forestry or nature conservation interests.

APPENDIX

1. CONSERVATION AREAS

There are 24 conservation areas situated in the area covered by this policy statement.

These are:

Adisham	Fordwich
Barham	Ickham, Wichambreaux &
Barham (Derringham)	Seaton
Bekesbourne	Kingston
Bishopsbourne	Littlebourne
(Charlton Park)	Marshside
Bossingham	Patixbourne
Boyden Gate	Petham
Bridge	Stodmarsh
Broome Park	Upstreet
Chartham (The Green)	Waltham
Chartham	Westbere
(Rattington Street)	Womenswold

2. SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS

There are 14 Scheduled Ancient Monuments located in the area covered by this policy statement. These are:-

Enclosures, Adisham	Gorsley Wood,
Earth Works on Barham	Bishopsbourne
Downs, Barham	Horton Manor Chapel,
Group of round barrows	Chartham
on Breech Downs, Barham	Town Hall, Fordwich
Round Barrow, Barham	Earthworks in Iffin Wood,
Archbishops Palace,	Thanington/Lower Hardres
Bekesbourne	Two round barrows, Mounts
Well Chapel, Bekesbourne	Wood, Petham
Mounds in Bourne Park,	Three barrows, Eggringe
Bishopsbourne	Wood, Waltham
Three round barrows in	Enclosures and ring ditch,
	Wickhambreaux

3. ANCIENT WOODLANDS

A recent survey carried out for the Council has identified many of the woodland areas in the District as being ancient in origin. Ancient woodlands possess a distinctive flora and fauna which have poor colonising ability and are thus not found in more recent woodlands. Ancient woodland communities cannot be recreated by tree planting and conservation depends on the retention and sympathetic management of existing sites.

The City Council will employ the use of management agreements with landowners and other interested parties, and tree preservation orders, to complement Policy 16. Co-operation and grant assistance will also be sought from the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission and other relevant organisations.

4. AREAS OF HIGH NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE

The extent of each Area of High Nature Conservation Value identified by the Kent Countryside Plan has been defined on the basis of habitat type, as indicated principally by the dominant vegetation and/or land-form which reflects each particular interest. On a broader basis the same approach was adopted during the preparation of the Structure Plan to select the AHNCV's. Each of these Areas has as its core one or more nature reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest but also includes the countryside surrounding or linking these sites, where this comprises relevant habitats, in order to provide a buffer against off-site development pressures and to conserve a more extensive area of countryside important for its wildlife interest. There is one AHNCV within the area covered by this statement, which is Blean Woods.

Blean Woods is identified as being of wildlife interest by the Kent Countryside Plan which coincides with Structure Plan Policy CC9 relating to AHNCV's. The Blean Woods complex is particularly important as it provides one of the few remaining habitats of the heath fritillary butterfly (*Mellicta Athalia*), now considered the British butterfly most threatened with extinction. The Blean woodland complex is one of the most heavily wooded areas remaining in Kent and much of the wood is ancient in origin.

5. SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

SSSI's are designated by the Nature Conservancy Council to provide for the protection of a representative sample of wildlife habitats and species adequate to ensure the survival of the existing diversity of Britain's wildlife. The following SSSI's are within the area covered by this Policy Statement:-

- (i) Clangate and Buckwell Wood SSSI - Part of the larger East Blean Wood SSSI these two woods are amongst the best remaining examples of primary deciduous woodland in the Blean Woods complex.
- (ii) Stodmarsh SSSI - An extensive valley wetland with a wide range of habitats including open water, extensive reedbeds, scrub, alder carr and wet grassland. The site is of particular interest for breeding and wintering birds.
- (iii) Preston Marshes SSSI - This is the last remaining area of fen vegetation in the Little Stour Valley and comprises reedbeds and willow scrub and a small area of pasture. The site has a diverse plant community.
- (iv) Chequers Wood and Old Park - An area of base-rich springline alder wood associated with acid grassland and heath.
- (v) Larkey Valley Woods SSSI - An area of ancient deciduous woodland comprising high forest and coppice communities. The wood has a particularly interesting ground flora with many orchid species.
- (vi) Ileden and Oxenden Woods SSSI - An ancient woodland on a chalk plateau with a rich flora. The site comprises mixed and pure sweet chestnut coppice with small amounts of beech high forest.
- (vii) Lynsore Bottom SSSI - A good example of a traditional coppice with standards with pedunculate oak/hornbeam and the ash maple stands on the shallow soils of the eastern valley side and oak/ash/sweet chestnut on the deeper soils of the western side.
- (viii) Yockletts Bank SSSI - An area of mixed ash/beech/hornbeam woodland with some open grassland species. The site is well known for its flora which include a number of orchid species.

6. DESIGNATED NATURE RESERVES

There are seven designated nature reserves in the area covered by this Policy Statement. These are:-

- (i) Blean Woods National Nature Reserve - Nature Conservancy Council.
- (ii) Stodmarsh Woods National Nature Reserve - Nature Conservancy Council.
- (iii) Church Woods - RSPB.
- (iv) Nickle and Hunstead Woods - KTNC.
- (v) Yorkletts Banks - KTNC.
- (vi) Earley Wood - Woodland Trust.
- (vii) Denge Wood - Woodland Trust.

These sites may be vulnerable to external pressures and the City Council will resist any development within, near or adjacent to a designated nature reserve that is likely to adversely affect the nature conservation interest.

7. SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

The Kent Trust for Nature Conservation has carried out a survey to identify sites of nature conservation interest in the local, Kent context which have not been identified as AHNCV's, SSSI's or designated nature reserves. There are 37 such sites in the area covered by the policy statement as listed below:-

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| • Chislet Marshes & Sarre Penn | • Bursted Wood, Upper Hardres |
| • Blean Pasture | • Baldock & Palmtree Down, Wingmore |
| • Denton Meadows & Copse | • Upper Hardres Wood, Bossingham |
| • Blean Woods South | • Syngate Wood, Stone Street |
| • Thornden Woods (The Blean Woods) | • Little Westwood Wood & Pasture, Lynsore Bottom |
| • Broadway Green Wood, Petham | • Manns Wood, Lynsore Bottom |
| • Early Wood, Petham | • Broome Park, Denton |
| • Whitehall Wood, Lower Hardres | • Denge Wood Complex |
| • Seaton Pits & Wenderton Manor Woods | • Woolwich Wood, Woolage Green |
| • Woods, South of Snowdown | • Bavinge Wood, Hastingleigh |
| • Gorsley Wood, Pett Bottom | • Disused railway line Bishopsbourne to Kingston |
| • Walderchain to Bedlam Woods, Barham Valley | • Covert Wood & Pasture, Kingston |
| • Great Stour, Ashford to Fordwich | • Hobday Wood, Anvil Green |
| • Trenley Park Wood, Fordwich | |
| • Swanton Aerial Site, Littlebourne | |

- Littlebourne Pasture
- River Nail Bourne,
Bourne Park
- Iffin Wood, Street End
- Petham Churchyard
- Blean Wood, Harbledown
to Dunkirk
- Marley Wood
- Adisham Churchyard
- Hunstreet Woods &
Pasture
- Catshill Shaw, Upper
Hardres

