



# **Cranleigh, Shamley Green Landscape Assessment**

---

**Final report for  
Surrey CPRE**  
by  
**Chris Burnett Associates**

**April 2010**



© Chris Burnett Associates 2010

Chris Burnett Associates, Landscape Architects,  
White House Farm, Shocklach, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 7BN  
Tel: 01829 250646  
Fax 01829 250527

[Chris@cba.u-net.com](mailto:Chris@cba.u-net.com) [www.chris-burnett-associates.co.uk](http://www.chris-burnett-associates.co.uk)

## 1.0 Introduction and background

1.1 Chris Burnett Associates have had a long association with the landscape of Surrey. As part of a team, the practice was instrumental in re-evaluating the landscape of the Surrey Hills AONB in 1998, using contemporary landscape assessment methodology. In 2006 the practice was appointed to prepare a landscape assessment for the river Wey as part of a landscape partnership bid. In 2007 the practice reviewed the Surrey AGLV for the Surrey Hills Planning Officers Association (SPOA) with a recommendations advising the retention of the AGLV until such time as the AONB boundary could be reviewed. Subsequently CBA was then invited by the Surrey CPRE to apply the same methodology and examine a small area of land around Eashing that was also part of the AGLV.

1.2 CBA's Surrey AGLV Review 2007 was prepared on the instructions of the Surrey Planning Officers Association and was accepted by the Surrey Hills Board. The Surrey Hills Board have now invited Natural England to consider a boundary review of the AONB based on the findings of the CBA report. However, until that time the AGLV designation has been retained by the LDF Inspectors in core strategies. A recent report, for example, on the Mole Valley Core Strategy stated that

*"I am satisfied that the AGLV Review is a thorough and detailed assessment which identifies the close link between the AONB and the AGLV. It demonstrates through structured landscape character assessment, that there is a very strong likelihood that any further review of the AONB boundary would lead to the inclusion of most, if not all, of the AGLV within it".*

1.3 The Review also noted that certain areas (shown in amber on the Review maps) needed further investigation to establish whether such areas shared some or all of the characteristics of the neighbouring AONB.

1.4 CBA's 2007 Review was carried out in response to Government proposals in PPS 7 that Local Landscape Designations such as Surrey's Areas of Great Landscape Value should be justified by robust Landscape Assessments. The study was based on an approach which used the AONB as the baseline. Primarily it focused:

*'on using the character of the Surrey Hills AONB, a nationally important designation, recently re-evaluated in 1998 using contemporary LCA based methodology, as a baseline for comparing the AGLV. A systematic approach was adopted which divided the AGLV up into compartments based on local authority boundaries. Following brief, preparatory desk, based research into topics such as geology, topography and using the existing landscape character designations applied by Surrey County Council's landscape character assessment of Surrey, a fieldwork exercise was undertaken for each compartment. Record forms using the agreed baseline characteristics of the adjacent AONB and photographic records were used at a selected number of locations in each compartment with a view of mapping and grading the AGLV along the following lines:*

<i>Green</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>area of AGLV with identical characteristics to the AONB</i>
<i>Amber</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>area of AGLV with some shared characteristics to that of the AONB</i>
<i>Red</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>area with few or no characteristics in comparison to the AONB</i>

*In some cases it was also possible to identify areas outside of the AGLV designation which had comparable landscape character.*

*These grades were mapped on and recorded on the AGLV Landscape Character Evaluation map and represent the findings of this study. It should be noted, however, that this review is broad brush in scope and more detailed work will undoubtedly be required in specific areas.'*

- 1.5 The Surrey CPRE have again invited CBA to examine two further areas of the Surrey Landscape that were designated in the AGLV Review for further study, using the same methodology as the Review. The two areas are (see Map 1):-
1. The area to the west of W7 and South of Cranleigh.
  2. The area to the South of Guildford including Shamley Green is designated W8 in the AGLV Review and shaded Amber. The southern limit of the study area is to be Smithbrook kilns.

## 2.0 **Methodology**

- 2.1 A desk study was carried out to place both areas in the context of the neighbouring AONB and the underlying geology. Both areas lie in close proximity, or adjacent to, the Surrey Hills AONB. Information concerning the relevant landscape character areas is drawn from the current AONB Management Plan (2009) and is now recorded as follows:

### **AREA 1 CRANLEIGH**

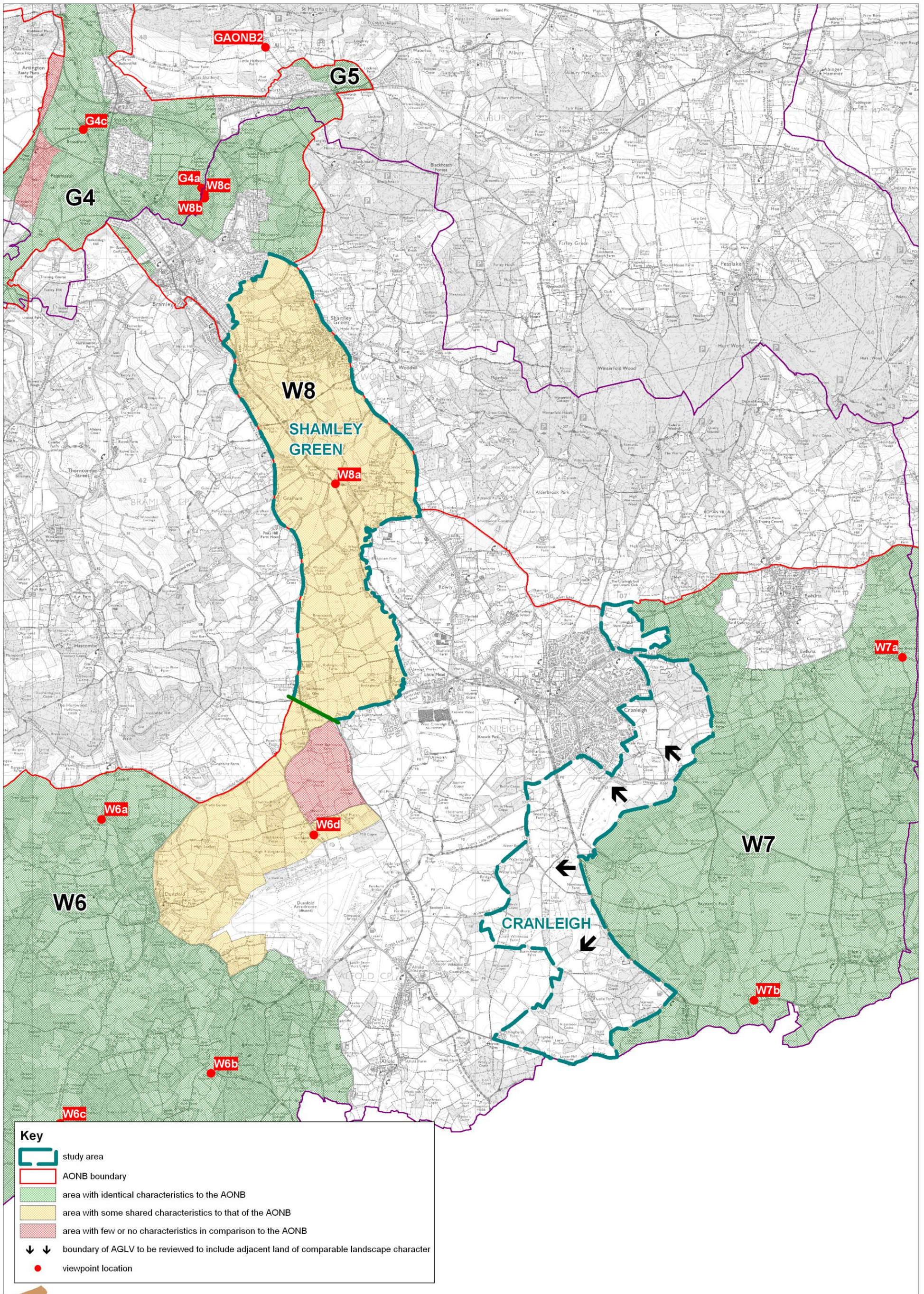
Comparable AONB landscape character area : **Wooded Weald : Wonersh to Holmwood**

*'Stretching from Holmwood Common in the east to Wonersh in the west, this is a low lying area of gently undulating farmland rising up to join the Greensand ridge. The area comprises a small-scale irregular field pattern, largely pastoral, within a well-defined woodland setting. The area has an intimate, secluded feel with a scattering of villages and hamlets, greens and commons, and a network of narrow, winding, enclosed lanes with mature hedgerow oak trees. Other features in the area include localised framed views of the Greensand escarpment, unique wooded ghylls, large country houses with parkland, and distinctive styles of buildings, especially cottages and farmhouses.*

*The key local AONB features identified*

- *Attractive glimpsed views of Leith Hill and Greensand escarpment from various roadside and footpath locations.*
- *Network of narrow, winding, enclosed lanes, often with dense tall hedgerows and hedge banks*
- *Traditional building styles of local brick, tile hanging, and half-timbered, with slate roofs.*
- *Species rich ancient woodland, small coppice woods, copses, shaws and hedgerows, dominated by oak*
- *Scattered settlement pattern of hamlets and villages alongside roads, with large greens, commons and roadside wastes (eg Ockley and Forest Green)*
- *Irregular intricate field pattern with boundaries formed by woodland, shaws and tall hedgerows*







## AREA 2 SHAMLEY GREEN

There are three comparable landscape character areas which abut, or are in close proximity to the Shamley green study area. These are ;

### **Wooded Weald : Wonersh to Holmwood** ( see above for characteristics)

This area lies immediately to the east of the area in question and runs as a continuous fringe to the higher and larger character area : Greensand Hills : Leith Hill

### **Greensand Hills and Wooded Weald: Hascombe**

*'The Hascombe countryside is an open rolling plateau with a pattern of rounded interlocking hills and steep sided valleys. It forms a large-scale landscape of pasture, wooded ridges and heaths. This secluded landscape has provided the inspiration and the setting for the Arts and Crafts Movement. The area has a pleasant rural atmosphere, concealing hidden villages and hamlets, with distinctive old cottages and Edwardian country houses, many constructed in local Bargate stone and tile hung.*

*The key local AONB features identified*

- Dense broadleaved woods on ridges and hill spurs, enclosing pockets of pastoral farmland
- Dense hedgerows along network of roads, lanes, paths and tracks
- Narrow, winding, enclosed lanes, many of them 'sunken' with high banks and exposed tree roots
- Scattered farmsteads, attractive hamlets and villages along valley road corridors (eg Hambledon)
- Old cottages and period properties, many half timbered, with large gardens (eg Winkworth Farm)
- Historic parkland, designed landscape and arboreta (eg Winkworth Arboretum and Munstead Wood)

This area forms a distinctive backdrop of hills to the west and runs continuously down the western margins of the study area.

### **Greensand Valley : Pippbrook and Tillingbourne**

*'Located between the high ground of the North Downs and Leith Hill Greensand, this is a delightful and highly attractive secluded valley landscape of mixed farming within a wooded setting. The landscape has a rich mosaic of fields, woods, country estates, streams, ponds, villages, parkland, hills, churches and scenic roads. It also has a wealth of cultural and historic interest and is a popular visitor destination.*

*The key local AONB features identified*

- Tillingbourne stream with rich industrial past (eg corn milling, iron working, fulling, tanning, weaving, flax, paper making, and gunpowder)
- Landmark buildings in the landscape (eg Wotton Church, St Martha's Church, Shalford Mill, Albury's chimneys and Apostolic Church, Abinger Hammer clock)
- Picturesque, secluded hamlets and villages, and linear settlement spread along valley (eg Friday Street, Abinger Hammer, Gomshall, Shere, Albury, Chilworth)
- Spectacular viewpoints (eg St Martha's Hill) and framed views from road corridors and valley
- Small wooded hills with blocks of ancient semi natural woodland and coppice (eg Deerleap Wood and The Chuntries)
- Scenic road corridors (eg A25 and A248) and network of narrow winding lanes and tracks,



*some sunken (eg Coast Hill on A25)*

Although this landscape character area lies some way to the north of the study area and the characteristics of its western margin are not as strong as those that are found centrally and to the east, nevertheless the valley landscape character of the AGLV, to the north of the study area and to the south of Guildford, shares very similar characteristics to this AONB landscape character area and that of its cousin: Greensand Valley : The Upper Wey.

### Fieldwork

A field visit was made in early March to evaluate the area in more detail. The same methodology used in the Surrey AGLV Review was applied. This involved gathering information in written and photographic form on the nature of the landscape character from a selected number of representative, publicly accessible, viewpoints from within the :

- AGLV
- AONB
- Adjacent undesignated countryside

The objective of this exercise was to compare and contrast the characteristics of both the AGLV and AONB, or in the case of the Cranleigh area the nature of the open, undesignated countryside, to establish, or dismiss, a match and where appropriate, a boundary.

Panoramic photographs were taken at each location and the results recorded on Figs 2.1 to 2.13 and the results of the fieldwork exercise are set out in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 below.

**TABLE 1 : CRANLEIGH SURVEY** ( see Map 2 )

Viewpoint ref	Current designation	Description	Fig ref
C1	AGLV	Small fields, rolling small scale landscape, mature trees, oak, ash. Winding lanes, mature hedges – often bushy pasture. Distant views to Greensand hills. Sinuous boundaries, mature blocks of woodland. Isolated houses. Individual mature trees in fields.	2.1
C2	AGLV	Small, heavily enclosed fields. Dense mature woodland consisting mainly of oak and ash. Enclosed roads in shaws. Rolling topography. Agriculture is a mixture of maize and pasture. Isolated houses. Individual trees in fields.	2.1
C3	Undesignated land	Irregular, small fields confined by small dense blocks of mature woodland, oak, ash, birch and hazel. Tall trimmed hazel/hawthorn hedges with hedgerow trees. Gentle undulating landform. Agriculture is arable crops of beans.	2.2
C4	Undesignated land	As above but with long distance views to Greensand hills at Hindhead. Pasture.	2.2



C5	AGLV	Irregular undulating fields confined by woodland – oak, ash. Isolated farmsteads. Individual field trees. Bushy roadside hedges. Pasture and maize are the crops	2.3
C6	Undesignated land	Large scale landscape of large fields on flat land enclosed by distant woodland which consists of dense woods of oak and ash or thin tree belts. Scrappy, fragmented, tall spindly hedges. Individual trees – made stag headed by intensive farming. Isolated modern farmsteads. Pasture.	2.3
C7	Undesignated land	Large scale landscape of large fields bounded by distant woodland. Low trimmed hedges with mature hedgerow trees . Topography is very flat. Pasture.	2.4
C8	Undesignated land	Parkland landscape of open gently sloping large field enclosed by mature woodland with isolated pine clumps and individual oaks. Pasture	2.4
C9	Undesignated land	A Large field which slopes down to the fringes of Cranleigh. Mature trees soften the fringe and the woodland associated with the railway line corridor breaks the view and encloses. Fragmentary field pattern. Pasture	2.5
C10	Undesignated land	The impact of Cranleigh is diminished from this elevated viewpoint as the treed boundary conceals the perimeter housing and most of Cranleigh. The distant views of the Greensand Hills become more dominant. Isolated vernacular buildings add to the rural quality and the area is heavily enclosed by woodland. Rolling pastoral landscape.	2.5
C11	Undesignated land	Rolling small scale, landscape with tall hedges and mature hedgerow trees. Pasture but not intensively grazed. Wooded railway corridor provides enclosure. No views of Cranleigh.	2.6
C12	Undesignated land	Regular small fields, gently sloping but with heavily treed boundaries and some evidence of parkland tree planting. Pasture.	2.6
C13	Undesignated land	Irregular shaped small field (arable) with heavily treed boundary. Gently sloping. Woodland is mature oak with hazel understorey. Shaw runs N-S enclosing bridleway.	2.7
C14	Undesignated land	Cranleigh Showground. Enclosed by woodland on three sides. Close grazed sloping pasture with a scattering of individual mature trees. Influenced to a limited extent by fringe of housing along southern perimeter. AONB boundary on northern side.	2.7



**TABLE 2 SURVEY – SHAMLEY GREEN SURVEY** ( see Map 3)

<b>Viewpoint ref</b>	<b>Current designation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Fig ref</b>
SG1	AONB	Panoramic view of Surrey Hills AONB small wooded hills of mature woodland, mainly oak and ash but ornamented and embellished by exotic conifers mature conifers, occ. small grass fields on slopes. Incised sinuous mall roads enclosed by trees run up hill. Rolling mainly pastoral landscape note sandy soils.	Fig 2.8
SG2	AGLV amber	Small fields – largely flat but some rising ground. Alder birch woodland often scrappy. Lanes only slightly sunken. Isolated houses. Holly hedges along roads with some mature oaks. Not a homogenous landscape and not the same character as adjoining landscape.	Fig 2.8
SG3	AGLV Amber	Medium to large flat fields (pasture) with views of nearby Hascombe Hills dominant. Farmsteads and modern barns. No hedges and no individual mature trees very different character to adjacent AONB on both sides.	Fig 2.9
SG4a and b	AGLV Amber	Very large scale field (maize) on a rolling landscape. Scale of both hills and landscape very different to surrounding landscape character. Wooded fringes area a mixture of ages and composition form ash and oak to birch and willow. Some conifers also. The landscape has a different feel to neighbouring land and is not of homogenous character.	Fig 2.9/2.10
SG5	AGLV Amber	Valley type landscape. Flat to gently undulating fields – irregular size and shape and mainly pastoral. Lines of young, small, alder, ash and birch enclose small irregular fields. River. No sunken lanes and no rolling topography but landscape more associated with floodplain and river	Fig 2.10
SG6	AONB	Rolling wooded hills typical of Greensand and Wooded Weald Hascombe landscape character area. Medium to large fields but strongly enclosed on all sides by mature oak ash woodland. Pasture.	Fig 2.11
SG7	Amber	Gently undulating topography – large fields. Thin, low, fragmentary hedges populated by hedgerow oaks. Woodland not really a feature. Lanes not sunken. Agriculture is predominantly arable. Not typical of AONB landscape although undulating rolling topographic is a characteristic of the foothills of Hascombe.	Fig 2.11
SG8	Amber	Very large, gently sloping fields partially, not strongly,	Fig 2.12



		enclosed by a mixture of woodland, hedgerow trees and scrappy hedges. No views of Hascombe hills. Pasture.	
SG9	Amber	Small flat irregular fields associated with river floodplain. Tall hedges and a sporadic cover of hedgerow trees with copses of alder and birch. Isolated farmsteads. Agriculture consists of pasture and maize.	Fig 2.12
SG10	Amber	Small flat irregular fields associated with a river floodplain type landscape. Tall hedges and a sporadic cover of hedgerow trees with copses of alder and birch. Isolated farmsteads. Agriculture consists of pasture and maize.	Fig 2.13
SG11	AGLV Green	A flat landscape associated with the River Wey floodplain. The R. Wey describes a sinuous course amongst a flat pastoral landscape with occasional flooded scrapes. Individual mature hedgerow oaks mix with willow and alder which combine occasionally to form wet woodland. Pasture and horses.	Fig 2.13











































SG 6



SG 7













### 3.0 Findings

#### **AREA 1 CRANLEIGH; W7**

3.1 The landscape character of W7, as illustrated by panoramas of viewpoint C1 and C2, is typical of the wooded weald. This is a homogenous character area that the 2007 AGLV review found to be identical in nature to that of the corresponding AONB landscape character area Wooded Weald : Womersley to Holmwood. The key characteristics which make this area special are all present namely :

- Woodland in the form of small copses, coppice woods, ancient woodland and shaws dominated by oak
- A network of winding lanes, often enclosed by trees
- Hedgerows, often species rich and bushy
- Mature hedgerow or individual trees
- A rolling or gently undulating topography
- A small scale patchwork of fields which are farmed as pasture or maize

3.2 The boundary of W7, however did not appear logical as there was no obvious distinction between the landscape of the AGLV and the area immediately to the west. Further detailed assessment on the ground carried out as part of this study reinforced this notion and found that the characteristics found in the current AGLV extended into the undesignated countryside to the west.

3.3 The proposed extension is mapped on Map 2 and the study area has been divided up into separate areas or sub compartments of similar character to facilitate the assessment description.

#### **3.4 Sub compartment W7a**

All of the characteristics of the Wooded Weald are found in this area which is the most extensive of the sub compartments. The mapped area consists of an intricate combination of small scale fields and woodland on gently rolling topography which matches the neighbouring AGLV area seamlessly. This is illustrated convincingly in the panoramas C3 and C4 ( undesignated land) and C5 ( AGLV) which demonstrate similar characteristics. This breaks down however, at Location C6 where the scale of the landscape changes markedly. The topography becomes flatter and the intricate mosaic of woodland and small field is replaced with very large fields and large woods.

3.5 This effect is also found at Location C7 which also lies at the edge of the breakdown between a smaller scale landscape of the proposed extension and that of larger scale, flatter, alternative.

3.6 The northern boundary of this sub compartment lies just south of Coldharbour farm. Up to this point shared characteristics are in abundance but beyond and to the north, the settled fringe of Cranleigh exerts more of an influence and a more suburban character prevails.

#### **3.7 Sub compartment W7b**

This area of landscape is dominated by the disused railway line which is now used as a major trail. Characteristics of historic parkland planting are found here, manifest in small isolated clumps of parkland trees, nonetheless the dense woodland cover and topographic variation in landform provide the basis of a continued classification as AGLV code green. Although the influence of Cranleigh does affect the northern fringes of this sub compartment, the perimeter tree cover is sufficient for the effect not to become overtly intrusive. This is demonstrated by C10, which is taken from the higher ground, in which Cranleigh is almost wholly obscured by tree cover allowing distant views of the Greensand Hills.

3.8 **Sub compartment W7c**

Further north the pattern of small fields enclosed by oak woodland, some of it coppice woodland, with hedgerows in rolling pasture continues and the compartment is sufficiently homogenous in character for it to be included in the extended area. This is illustrated by C12 and C13.

**Sub compartment W7d**

- 3.9 This is the most northerly of the sub compartments and covers the area occupied by the Cranleigh showground and is illustrated by C 14 on Fig 2.7. The AONB boundary lies immediately to the north and the AGLV boundary lies to the east. The area is heavily enclosed by woodland on its eastern margins and hedgerows, lines of mature trees and the occasional mature trees break up an even expanse of intensively grazed pasture. The urban fringe of Cranleigh only becomes apparent on the southern margins of this space as the western perimeter is well screened by mature trees. Good views of the Greensand Hills to the north are obtained throughout the area. The characteristics of the Wooded Weald are sufficiently well developed, therefore, for the area to be considered for inclusion within the proposed extended area of AGLV /AONB.

**AREA 2 SHAMLEY GREEN; W8**

- 3.10 This finger of land which extends southeast from Guildford is sandwiched between two distinctive areas of the AONB : Wooded Weald : Womersley to Holmwood to the east and Greensand Hills and Wooded Weald: Hascombe to the west. These are two distinctive landscape character areas with qualities that are readily identifiable. Area W8 was shaded amber in the 2007 review because, although it shared some of the characteristics, first impressions suggested that these characteristics were not strong or widespread enough to warrant a 'green' classification.
- 3.11 The qualities exhibited by the two AONB landscape character areas is illustrated by SG 1 on Fig 2.8 and SG 6 on Fig 2.11. The key characteristic that underpins both areas is the dramatic topography of rolling hills enhanced by extensive areas of woodland cover. The field patterns is one which appears hewn from the surrounding woodland.
- 3.12 In order to gauge the extent to which these corresponding qualities could be found in W8, a detailed assessment of the area was undertaken which has also been broken down into sub compartments.

**Sub compartment W8a.**

- 3.19 The picturesque village of Shamley green is situated within this sub compartment. Although the village occupies an extensive area, however, its prominence in the landscape is restricted due to the nature of the surrounding topography which is largely flat. The area to the north is similarly flat and enclosed by scrappy wet woodland consisting of alder, birch and willow with occasional mature oaks. See SG02. The lack of overall homogeneity is reinforced with reference to two other locations in W8a : SG03 and SG04. Both locations present large scale landscapes which reflect none of the small scale charm of the Greensand Hills or Wooded weald largely due to the prevailing scale of agriculture practiced at both locations. In conclusion therefore, there is little by way of similarity with the adjoining Womersley to Holmwood or Hascombe character areas.

**Sub compartment W8b**

- 3.20 This compartment possesses similar characteristics although the landform is perhaps more undulating in character. Nevertheless, large fields, some under arable cultivation, with trimmed hedges, occasional hedgerow trees and a lower intensity of woodland cover overall combine to make direct comparisons with its neighbouring AONB landscape character area difficult. It is true to say that some aspects are present but these are too weak for a direct link to be made.



### 3.21 **Subcompartment W8c**

On closer scrutiny, the landscape characteristics of this compartment similarly do not reflect those of the neighbouring AONB land which encloses it although in this instance undesignated land makes up the boundary to the south. In fact the characteristics are much more typical of those of a river valley landscape. These characteristics are illustrated in SG 5 and SG10 . Small irregular fields form a matrix of open spaces amongst small copses or lines of willow birch and alder through which the river Wey meanders . This is supplemented by vestiges of the R Wey and Arun Junction canal which is now disused. The topography is universally flat. Whilst there is clearly no match with the surrounding landscape of the AONB, sufficient characteristics are present to make a valid comparison with those of the Greensand Valley landscapes to the north and east of Guildford or the landscape of the Upper Wey to the west of Guildford. These characteristics have already been recognized in the AGLV area around Peasmarsh which is represented by SG11. Here the characteristics of a landscape that are associated with a river are clearly evident. They are represented by willow and alder trees which mark the line of the river, pasture, here grazed by horses, flooded scrapes , isolated individual mature oak trees, small copses and flat topography and distant views of hills. This landscape type has been coded green as part of the AGLV review as it has strong similarities with that of the neighbouring river valley AONB.

### 3.22 **Conclusions**

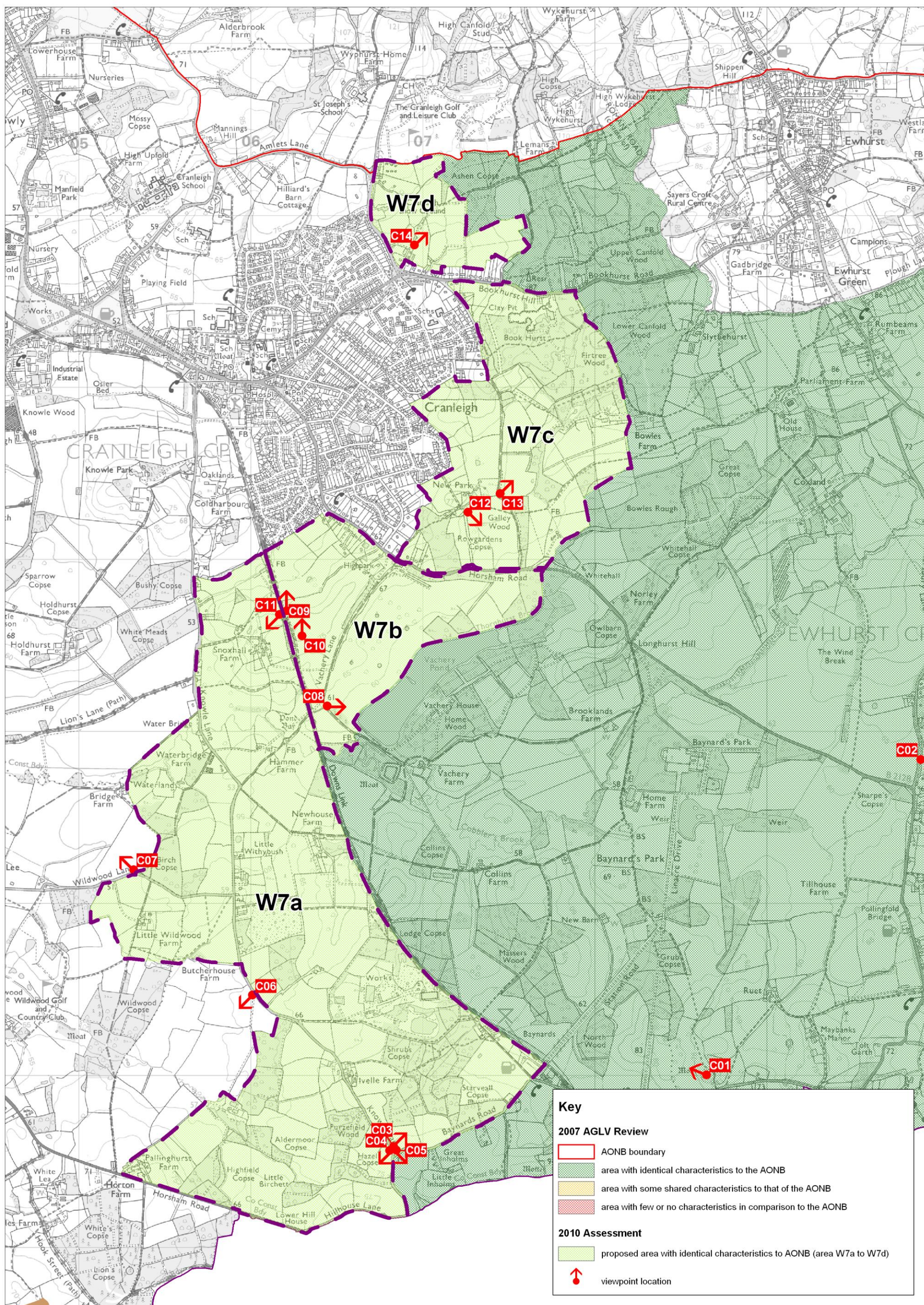
#### **Area 1 Cranleigh**

There is considerable justification for extending the AGLV boundary, and hence by inference the AONB boundary, in a westerly direction to cover the area marked on Map 2. The similarities between the extension and the existing AGLV are sufficiently closely matched to make a comparisons between the two areas both valid and robust.

#### **Area 2 Shamley Green**

Closer examination has revealed that association of much of this area with the neighbouring AONB is too weak to justify an upgrade from amber to green. Some similarity in landscape character can be found but this is insufficient to provide a strong enough correlation between much of W8 and the adjacent AONB landscape. However, the central thread of this area which corresponds to the river Wey (south) is of high quality and can be linked directly to the same AGLV landscape type to the north and consequently with the AONB itself.





## Shamley Green & Cranleigh Landscape Assessment

Map 2. Proposed Changes to the Cranleigh Area with Viewpoints

0 0 210 2 420 4  
metres



© Copyright Chris Burnett Associates 2010. This figure should not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission. This product includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey ©. © Crown copyright and/or database right 2010. Licence No. 100019613.





Map 3. Proposed Changes to the Shamley Green Area with Viewpoints

© Copyright Chris Burnett Associates 2010. This figure should not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission. This product includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey ®. © Crown copyright and/or database right 2010. Licence No. 100019613.