

Is Landscape Significant?



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Part I

Setting the Scene

"For the personality of a man reacting upon the spirit of a place
produces something which is neither man nor the place, but fiercer
and more beautiful than either"

Mary Webb. The Golden Arrow





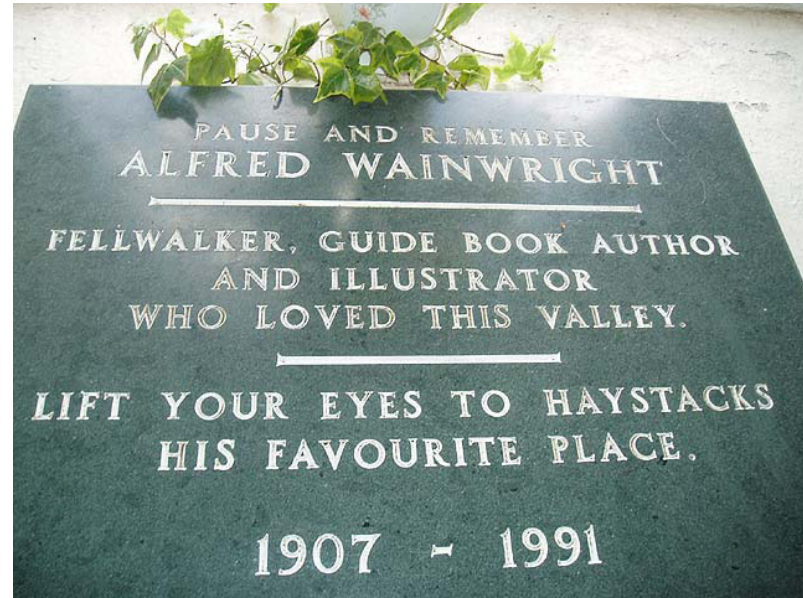
St Clement's Church (12th century and later), Thurrock, Essex, England



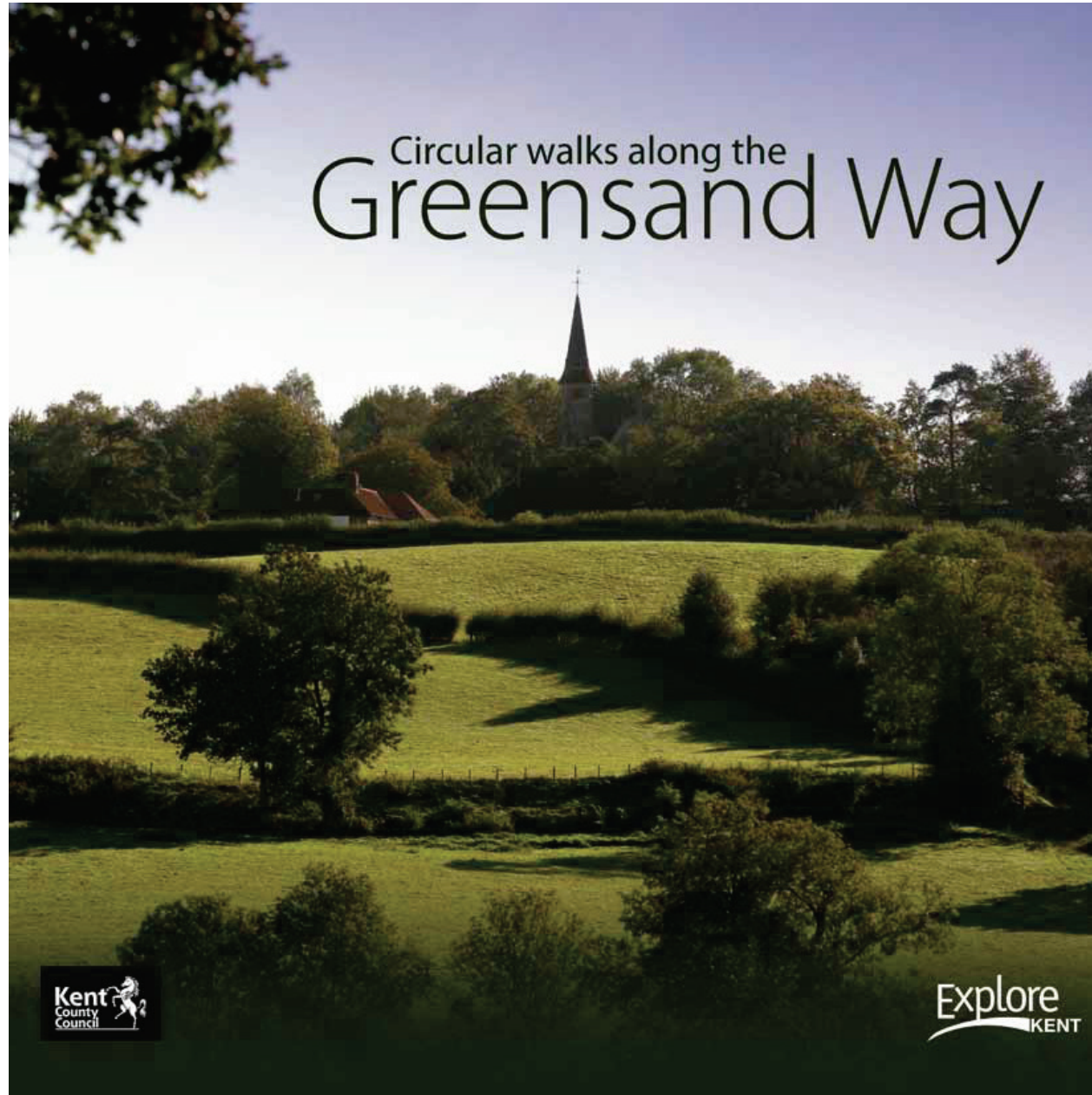
St Clement's Church (12th century and later), Thurrock, Essex, England



Church Farm Oast and St Margaret's Church (13th century and later), Horsmonden, Kent, England



St James's Church (1840) Buttermere, Cumbria, England



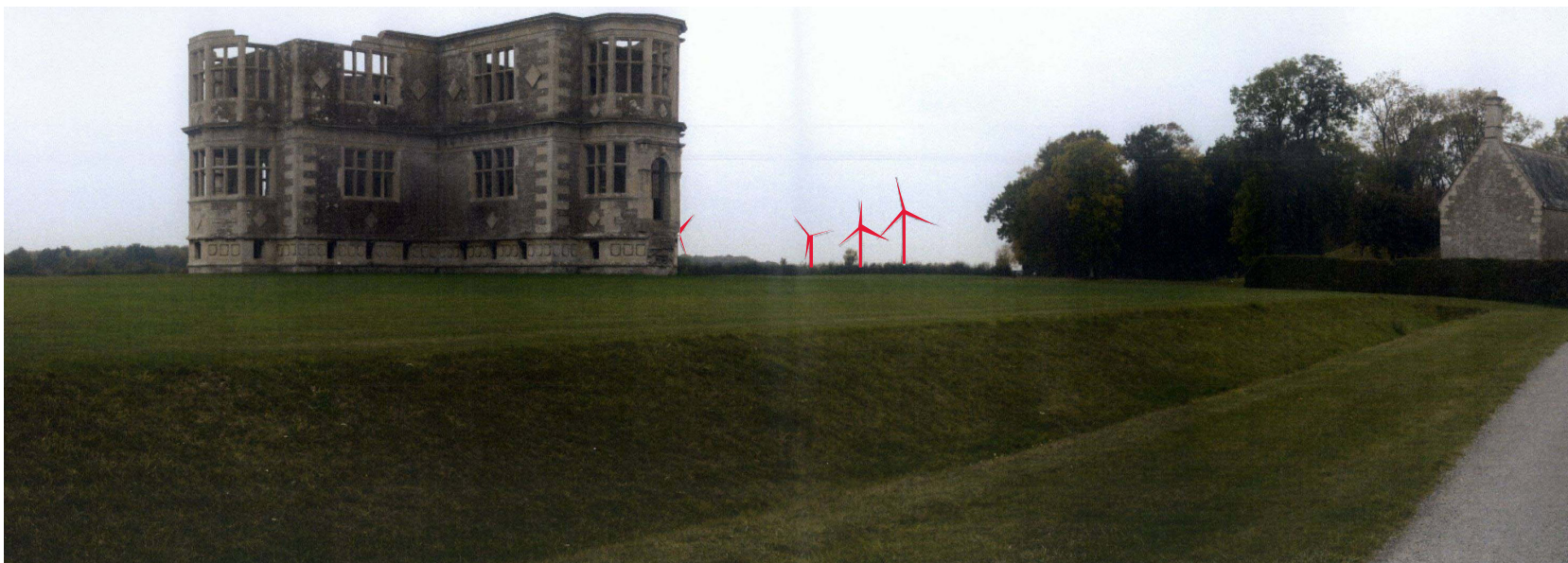
St Mary's Church (1865), Ide Hill, Kent, England



Stonehenge (2,500BC and earlier), Wiltshire, England



Stonehenge (2,500BC and earlier), Wiltshire, England



Turbines highlighted by Michelle Bolger for presentation purposes only

Kimbolton Castle (1720 and earlier) Cambridgeshire and
Lyveden New Bield (1605) Northamptonshire, England

Is Landscape Significant?

Michele Bolger : Liz Lake Associates

Landscape Architect and experienced expert witness at public inquiries concerning the impact of wind turbine development on the landscape and on heritage assets.

Involved in the development of methodologies for assessing impacts on the setting of heritage assets.

Terms used when discussing places with historic value in English planning policy and planning law:

- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.
- **Setting:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- **Significance:** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

World Heritage Sites can include a buffer zone that protects the landscape surrounding the WHS.

Other landscapes are designated in their own right for their heritage value (English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens) but these are mostly designed landscapes.

Most landscapes containing heritage assets are only protected as the setting for those heritage assets.

There has been a fierce debate over the last ten years regarding the definition of setting. There have been many attempts to limit its extent or downgrade its importance.

- The most recent argument concerned the definition of significance. Until two months ago the definition did not include the sentence. *'Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'* It was regularly argued that setting did not have significance in its own right.
- There are currently attempts to try and quantify a proportion of the significance of the asset that is 'derived from setting'. This inevitably underestimates the setting of very important assets.
- Another recent approach says that no reasonable observer would be confused by the juxtaposition of heritage assets and, for example, wind turbines. Therefore turbines are acceptable within the setting of all heritage assets even those with international importance.

How is the significance of our heritage assets affected when their English Landscape setting is diminished?

Liz Lake Associates

With growing interest in our environment, the desire for high-quality and well-planned outside spaces has never been greater. From public parks to private gardens, and from town squares to office schemes, elegant, inspiring and safe places provide a positive and lasting benefit to our quality of life. No matter how large or small the project, at Liz Lake Associates we believe that the art of the landscape architect is to discover the special sense of place... and then to enhance it.

A holistic approach

Our approach is a holistic one. From the outset we come with a fresh vision, take a broad view to assess the context and challenges, look for local inspiration, propose creative solutions and devise a strategic, sustainable approach. At all times we are mindful of the financial, and sometimes also the emotional, investment of the client. Every scheme begins with a site visit.

We then work with clients to develop the brief and explore the creative and planning scope of the scheme stage by stage. We will anticipate local planning and environmental requirements, identify the necessary surveys and reports that will be required, negotiate with all interested parties, draw up plans and submit them, produce a full and accurate budget report and propose realistic time schedules to see the project to completion.

A comprehensive skills base

Our practice is small enough to offer individual attention from highly experienced professionals, and large enough to offer a comprehensive range of skills for even the largest and most complex schemes.

At Liz Lake Associates, we involve our clients in a collaborative and multi-disciplinary process. With any new development, we believe that the design of the public realm and the location of open spaces must be seen as equally important to the built form, helping to ensure a functional and meaningful integration between the two.

21st century residential solutions

Liz Lake Associates Residential Landscape Design Team is at the forefront of public realm design for both residential new build and mixed-use schemes. With the recent publication of the *Manual for Streets* by the Department for Transport and the Department for Local Communities, design excellence for external space is now high on the agenda for those involved in creating new and exciting residential environments.

As well as providing a competitive standard landscape design service, we specialise in the detailed design of the signature public open spaces that are so often at the heart of our clients' new developments. These open spaces are vital in setting the tone for a positive sales environment and creating a strong sense of location.

Looking to the future, conserving the past

Liz Lake Associates has been working with a number of far-sighted developers to create high-quality and sensitive landscape settings for restoration and conversion projects. Current government guidelines actively encourage, where possible and appropriate, the re-use of existing buildings to help meet targets for the provision of new homes. These properties are often key buildings within the local urban fabric and are an integral part of the area's history.

The key to our success in this process has been in understanding the historic importance of these properties, whilst interpreting the developer's vision for their potential clients. We help to balance historic landscape details with the creation of high quality, contemporary and easily maintainable planting design. The result has been sensitive and stunning landscape settings for properties that are starting a new and exciting chapter in their history.



St Botolph's Priory



Herringswell Manor



Colchester Garrison



Bentley Priory

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Liz Lake Associates offers the following expertise:

- Landscape Design
- Urban Design
- Residential Landscape Design
- Landscape Planning
- Expert Witness
- Heritage Landscapes
- Nature Conservation
- Landscape Management
- Specialist Consultancy
- Graphic and 3D Design