



# HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION TAKING STOCK OF THE METHOD

The National HLC Method Review 2002

Carried out for English Heritage by Somerset County Council

Oscar Aldred & Graham Fairclough

EH & SCC  
2003



**Copies of this report can be obtained from**  
Room 210  
English Heritage  
23 Savile Row  
London  
W1S 2ET

020 7973 3124  
[graham.fairclough@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:graham.fairclough@english-heritage.org.uk)

# CONTENTS

Summary and  
Acknowledgements

Chapter 1	Introduction, Context and Method	1
Chapter 2	Waves of Development	5
Chapter 3	Modes of Characterisation	15
Chapter 4	Core, Periphery and Trend Methods	21
Chapter 5	Testing Methods	29
Chapter 6	Drawing Conclusions	39
Bibliography		47

## Figures

Figure 1	Progress of English county-based HLC programme (Vince Griffin)	2
Figure 2	HLC programme time-line (Oscars Aldred)	5
Figure 3	Avon HLC (Mike Chapman & Bob Sydes)	8
Figure 4	Suffolk HLC; Broad and Sub types (Matt Ford & Ed Martin)	9
Figure 5	Surrey HLC (Nicola Bannister & Patrick Willis)	11
Figure 6	Cheshire HLC: in progress, Dec 2002 (Rob Edwards)	12
Figure 7	SW Regional Character Map. (Nick Johnson, Peter Herring et al)	13
Figure 8	Characterisation of the Surrey IPC sample area in the existing whole-county HLC for Surrey (Nicola Bannister)	29
Figure 9	Characterisation of IPC area of Surrey by the Essex (above) and Herefordshire (right) methods, the extremes of the methodological range in the IPC (Lynn Dyson-Bruce, David Green, Keith Ray, Paul White)	30-31
Figure 10	Characterisation of Surrey by the Cornwall (above) and Lancashire (right) methods, core of the methodological range in the IPC (Pete Herring, Bryn Tapper, Jo Clark, John Darlington)	34-35

## Tables

Table 1	HLC Input method type	16
Table 2	HLC Output type	17
Table 3	Relationship of Wave and Output type	17
Table 4	Number of projects in each family and waves.	19
Table 5	Summary of the method families, showing Input and Output modes, and Ease of Adaptability	20
Table 6	Statistics for the Surrey IPC, with Surrey HLC as a baseline for comparison.	31
Table 7	Comparison of landscape texture of the Lancashire and Cornwall IPC tests with Surreys' HLC	36



## SUMMARY

This document is a streamlined version of the Project Report prepared by Oscar Aldred. It is focussed principally on providing a clear explanation of HLC's methodological history, and on identifying the core components - or most effective aspects - of the HLC method. Part 1 explains how the Review was carried out, Part 2 describes its results, and Part 3 presents a summary of recommendations.

The review supports a companion document, a newly-written

Template Project Design for county-level HLC that reflects the Review's conclusions as well as combining the best approaches of the most recent projects into a single document. This has been written since the Review was completed, and incorporating its findings into an amalgamation of the Method Statement and Project Design of the most recent attribute-based HLC projects. It will be used for future HLC projects, including contributing to new urban characterisation projects. It will be updated as necessary.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Review Project was commissioned from Somerset County Council by Graham Fairclough for English Heritage. It was project-managed by Bob Croft, and carried out by Oscar Aldred (who had created the Somerset HLC), who analysed the Review results, prepared the Project Report and is the principal author of most of this published report, which has been modified and edited by Graham Fairclough. Oscar's work was supported by a Project Group, and we are very grateful for the help, support and expert advice of its members (Oscar Aldred, Bob Croft, Graham Fairclough, Peter Herring, John Darlington, Keith Ray, Paul Gilman and Lynn Dyson-Bruce). Liz Page greatly assisted Oscar Aldred in organising the Review Workshop at the Society of

Antiquaries in March 2002 that was an important part of the whole project. Another key component of the Review were the inter-project tests (see Chapter 5), carried out by John Darlington and Jo Clark (Lancashire), Lynn Dyson-Bruce and David Green (Essex), Paul White and Keith Ray (Herefordshire), Bryn Tapper and Peter Herring (Cornwall) and Nicola Bannister, Patrick Wills and David Bird (Surrey). The Review only achieved its objectives, however, because of the help given by HLC officers, county archaeologists and their colleagues in the 29 separate project areas considered by the Review, and of course the work of Bob Croft and Richard Brunning who steered the project from beginning to end.

