



Supplementary Planning Document

Landscape Character Assessment

Development Plans Team
September 2007

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the
East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007**

Landscape Character Assessment

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Document**



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The Landscape Partnership produced this technical study on behalf of East Herts District Council in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The Landscape Partnership Ltd is a practice registered with the Landscape Institute and the Royal Town Planning Institute and is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. In the Act, the Government introduced changes to the planning system for England.

1.2 At the strategic level, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) will supersede the County Structure Plans. Thus, the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan will be replaced by the RSS for the East of England: The East of England Plan.

1.3 At the local level, a new portfolio of documents, known as the Local Development Framework (LDF), will replace the East Hertfordshire Local Plan. The statutory element of the LDF will be the Development Plan Documents (DPD), supported by non-statutory Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) - these will replace the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance notes. In addition, Hertfordshire County Council will prepare statutory Minerals and Waste Planning documents - these will replace the existing Minerals and Waste Local Plans.

1.4 On 18th April 2007 East Herts adopted its Local Plan Second Review. Under the 'transitional arrangements' this Plan will be saved for three years from its date of adoption, until subsequently replaced by the emerging LDF.

2.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Planning document is to identify the distinct landscapes within East Hertfordshire by describing their key characteristics and natural, historical and cultural features. The document then provides a structured evaluation of these landscapes, a landscape strategy and guidelines for conserving and enhancing the character of each character area. The document will provide a framework for assessing planning applications and other landscape planning, regulation, conservation and management activities in East Hertfordshire for the benefit of the landscape of the District as a whole.

2.2 'Landscape' is defined as an area, "as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (European Landscape Convention).

2.3 This SPD has been prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) published in 2004. Although not part of the statutory Development Plan, PPS12 states that supplementary planning documents should relate to a policy or policies in the local plan. Thus, the landscape character assessment will supplement Policy GBC14 on landscape character in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007, and as such will be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

2.4 Policy GBC14 states:
Landscape Character Assessment prepared in accordance with an agreed methodology will be used to assess development proposals which will be required to improve and conserve local landscape character by:

- (a) conserving, enhancing or creating landscape features which are considered desirable to strengthen local landscape character;
- (b) contributing to the strategy for managing change, with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment for the area; and
- (c) enhancing or conserving key characteristics and distinctive features, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment.

Where damage to local landscape character is unavoidable, appropriate mitigation measures will be sought. The relevant Landscape Character Assessment will inform the nature of these measures.

2.5 When assessing planning applications in, adjacent to, or having an impact on the character of the landscape, proposals should be reviewed against the relevant landscape character areas statement/s. Sites near the boundary of the character area should be mindful of the implications of the proposal on any adjacent character areas.

2.0 PURPOSE & STATUS

2.6 Proposals should consider how each section of the relevant character area assessment is applicable, for example:

Summary Section:

Conserve and enhance positive key characteristics and distinctive features.

Assessment Section:

Physical Influences - Respect and reflect local patterns in soils, topography, hydrology, land cover and vegetation and wildlife.
Historic & Cultural Influences - Respect and reflect historic features and patterns in the landscape including field structure, transport routes, settlements and built form.

Evaluation Section:

Visual & Sensory Perception - Make a positive contribution to the visual environment where possible to seek to redress existing intrusive development.

Accessibility - Encourage means of providing wider and enhanced accessibility to the countryside.

Community Views - Conserve and enhance locally valued and landscapes.

Guidelines Section:

Support and contribute to the realisation of the overall strategy and delivery of the guidelines relevant to specific proposals. To provide other measures to conserve, enhance and create landscapes that redress deficiencies or adverse aspects of landscape condition and strength of character pertinent of each landscape character area.

3.1 The classification and designation of areas of the countryside for their 'landscape value' has long been part of the planning system. This dates back to the creation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from the 1940s and in subsequent decades by the introduction of local landscaper designations at a county/district scale. However, in 1997 a watershed was reached with the publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 7: The Countryside, (PPG7) which prioritised "new ways of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development". Indeed, "the Government believes that carefully drafted, criteria-based policies [...] utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for [highly valued local landscape] without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development and the economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas" (Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7)).

3.2 The process of landscape characterisation and assessment was spearheaded in England by the work of the Countryside Agency* and was also subsequently supported in PPG7. The approach is now supported in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) and PPS7. In tandem with English Nature*, parallel approaches were formulated and tested during 1995-1997 to derive, on the one hand, a series of Natural Area profiles for the whole of England and, on the other, the Countryside character profiles. While the Natural Area profiles highlighted the distinctive ecology of rural areas, the Countryside Character profiles analysed landscape character in fairly broad-brush terms via the assessment of physical influences, historic and cultural influences, buildings and settlement, land cover and changes in the landscape.

3.3 Through this process 120 Natural Areas and 181 Character Areas were formulated and a joint map published, called 'The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features' (Figure 1). This map defines the County of Hertfordshire as lying within six character areas:

- Area 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- Area 87 East Anglian Chalk
- Area 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands
- Area 110 Chilterns
- Area 111 Northern Thames Basin
- Area 115 Thames Valley

3.4 Since the publication of the Character Map of England, further guidance has been issued; firstly in 2000 with the publication of the Rural White Paper which reaffirmed that local authorities should seek to enrich the countryside as a whole, not just the protected areas, and maintain its distinctive local features; and secondly in 2002 with the publication by the then Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage of the Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and

* On 1st April 1999 the Countryside Agency replaced the Countryside Commission. On 1st October 2006, English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service, and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation (LAR) Division were united as a single body called Natural England.

3.0 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

• Figure 01
The Character of England

© Countryside
Commission/
English Nature



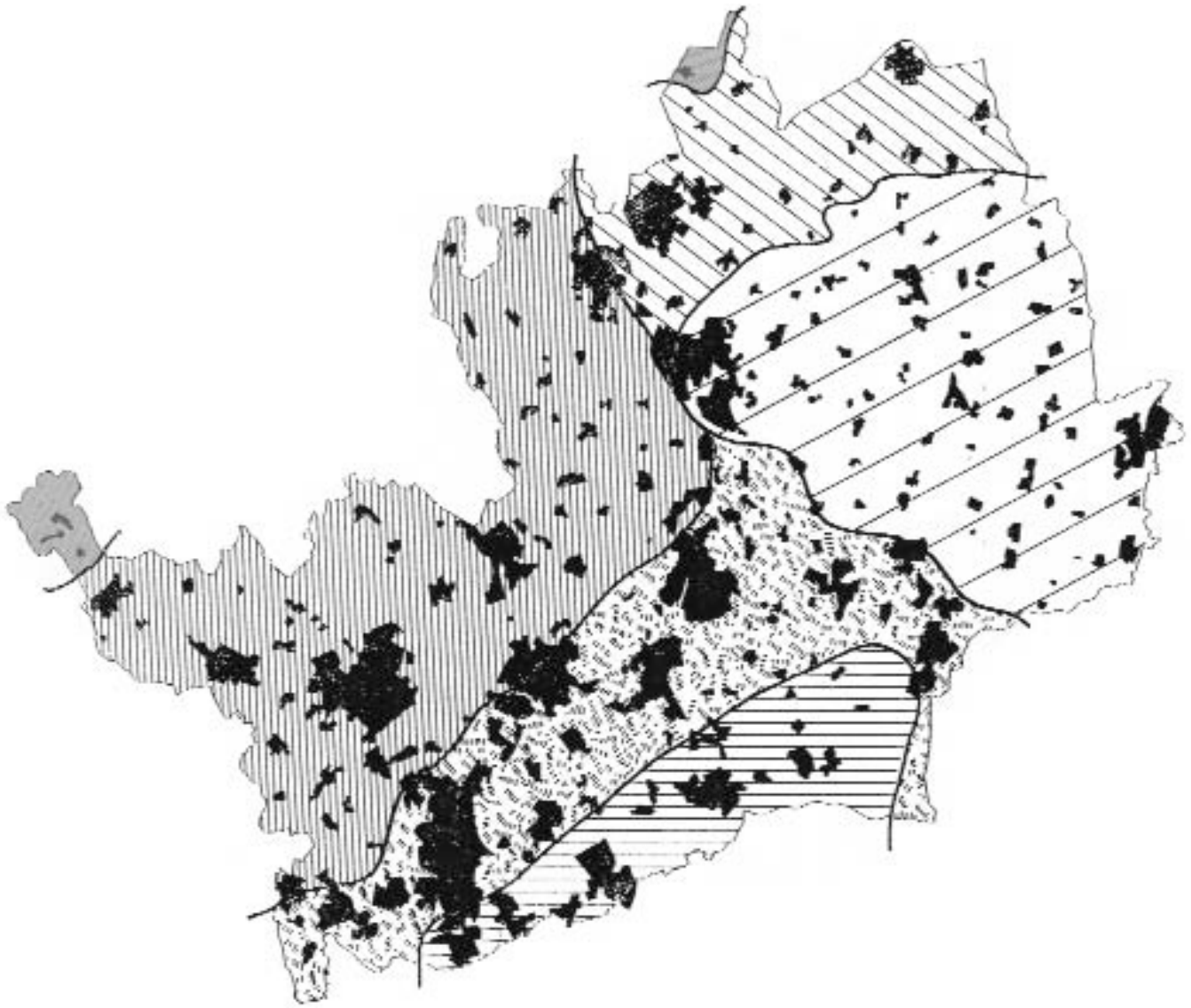


Figure 02
Landscape Regions of Hertfordshire
 © Hertfordshire County Council

- Region 1: The Northern Vale Salients.
A transition zone between the Chilterns scarp face and the adjacent open plains (Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire).
- Region 2: The Chilterns.
- Region 3: The East Anglian Chalk (North Hertfordshire Ridge). A sub-section of the Chilterns.

- Region 4: The East Hertfordshire Plateau.
(The South Suffolk and North Essex Clay Lands).
- Region 5: The Central River Valleys.
A sub-section of the Northern Thames Basin.
- Region 6: The South Hertfordshire Plateau.
A sub-section of the Northern Thames Basin.

3.0 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Scotland. This guidance outlines how the same approach to national character assessment can be cascaded locally. A series of Topic Papers have also been produced to accompany this Guidance and these explore more specific themes in greater detail including discussion on more up-to-date aspects including examples of good practice of landscape character assessment.

3.5 Hertfordshire County Council embraced this approach in their 1998 Structure Plan, adopting as Supplementary Planning Guidance the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy Volume 1, which had been published the previous year. The strategy identified six landscape character regions for the county (Fig 02), of which there are three in East Herts, namely: Region 4 The East Hertfordshire Plateau; Region 5 The Central River Valleys Region; and a small part of Region 6 The South Hertfordshire Plateau. East Herts District also corresponds to Areas 86 and 111 from the Character Map of England.

3.6 A key action within Volume 1 was the pledge to undertake landscape character assessments at a finer resolution for each of the ten district councils. This work was completed in stages. In February 2000 The Landscape Partnership undertook a landscape character assessment for southern Hertfordshire; in 2001/02 the work was extended to cover the remainder of St Albans, Dacorum and Welwyn Hatfield, and in 2003/04, the assessment was extended to encompass the remaining northern third of East Herts District.

3.7 Character area descriptions included in the 2000 study have been retained largely unmodified, as are their area numbers. Areas that have been modified in either extent or content include areas 39, 72, 73, 86 and 91. The new areas forming part of the 2003/4 study are areas 140-152.

3.8 In order to provide complete geographical coverage within East Herts, four character area statements prepared by Babbie, on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council are included. These statements were produced as part of a complimentary assessment carried out in the neighbouring district. The areas involved are 221, 222, 229 and 231 and relate to locations where small parts of an area(s) cross into East Hertfordshire.

3.9 This Draft SPD is based on the Government guidance on landscape character assessment, which consists of Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPST). (PPST) and Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1).

3.10 In addition, at the regional level, Policy ENV2 of The East of England Plan Draft Regional Spatial Strategy states, "the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape character throughout the East of England should be protected and enhanced".

GEOLOGY & SOILS

4.1 Hertfordshire is not old in geological terms. Its base stratum is heavy blue-grey gault clay, which forms an impermeable layer beneath the chalk, whose outward expression is best seen in the Chilterns, in the north west of the county. Over the chalk a thin layer of clays, sands and pebbles - the Reading Beds - was then deposited. In the south-eastern part of the county (Rickmansworth to Bishop's Stortford) a layer of thick London clay was later laid down.

4.2 Still later (about 200,000 years ago during the last Ice Age) glaciers moved southwards over the chalk, depositing 'drift' - layers of broken rock from the areas further north over which the glacier had passed, which were then left behind as it melted. This is the chalky boulder clay found in the north-eastern part of the county. In the west of the county, where there were no glaciers, a natural weathering process produced the 'clay-with-flints' - a clay deposit containing frost-shattered flints and pebbles from the Reading Beds. Glaciation had one other significant impact on the county's geology - the proto-Thames.

4.3 During the last Ice Age what is now the Vale of St Albans was the valley of a much larger Thames, with lakes at Wheathampstead and St Albans. Eventually the Thames cut itself a new valley further south and, when the ice melted, the earlier valley formed the Lea and Colne rivers.

4.4 Today the soils within the county are of two kinds: alkaline or neutral chalky soil (boulder clay) in the north and east of the county; and more or less acid leached soils over the centre and west of the county. These two soil types, which divide the county very roughly along a north-west/south-east line between Stevenage/Hitchin and Ware/Hoddesdon, have had a defining impact on vegetation, agriculture and development - that is, on fundamental aspects of the landscape character of the county. The light chalky soils of the north west were easily cultivated, if not particularly fertile, and were possibly never heavily wooded in any event. Cultivation of the boulder clay seems to have been intense in the early medieval period, especially on sloping land where drainage could be more easily achieved.

4.5 On the heavy, poorly-drained London clay, south east of a line drawn roughly between Rickmansworth and Hertford, via Hatfield, cultivation proved very difficult, so it was long left to support oak and hornbeam forest and pasture. There is very little arable farming and, until comparatively recently, little settlement. North and west of this area lie the Lea and Colne gravel regions

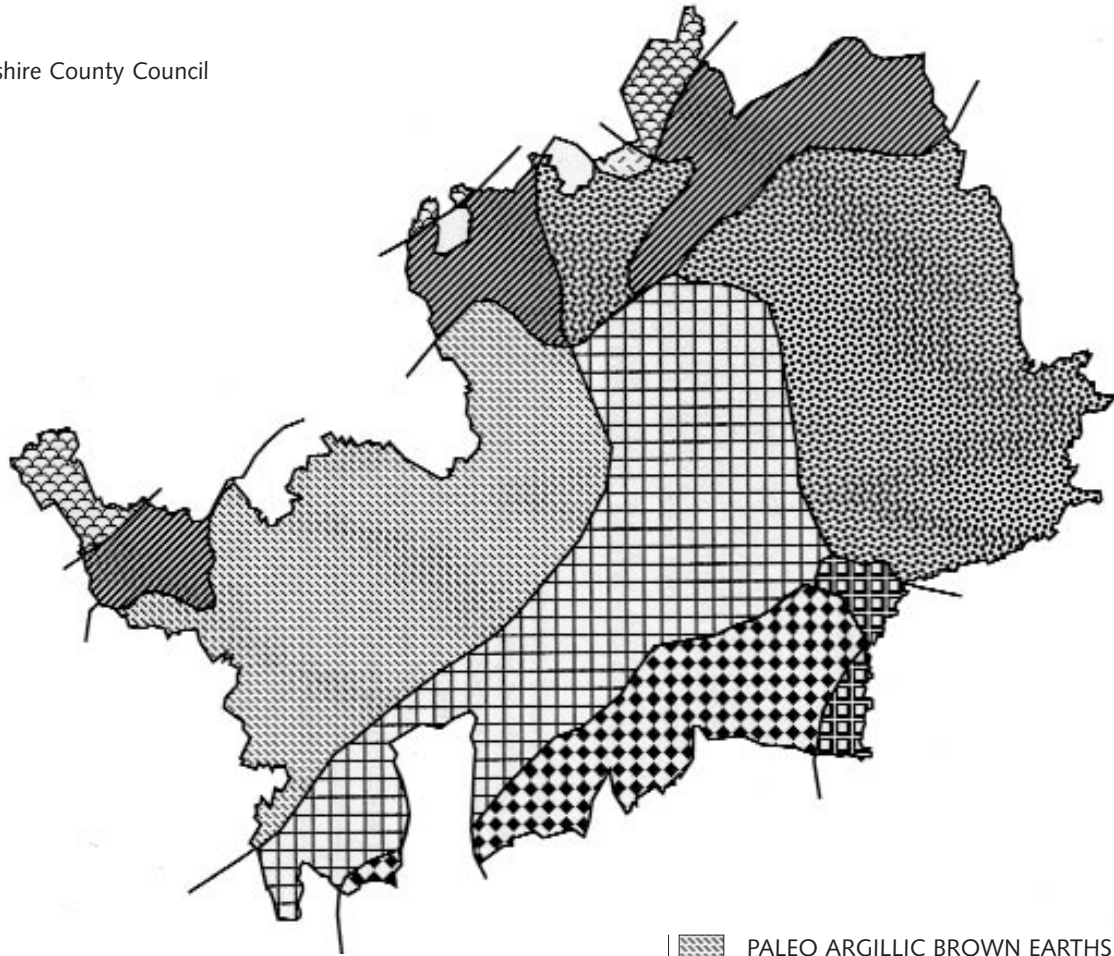
4.6 The river diversion mentioned above left rich gravel deposits in the old Thames valley, which provided better-drained, more accessible routes through the county than the forested clays. Settlements grew up in these valleys, and most of the modern towns in Hertfordshire are on these gravels. The river valleys are therefore the areas most heavily affected by human interference, settlement throughout the centuries and, more recently, transport routes and gravel extraction.


4.7 Within East Hertfordshire District there are four main soil types; Calcareous Pelosols to the centre north and east; Stagnogley Soils and Agrillic Brown Earths to the south and Paleo Agrillic Brown Earths to the Central River Valleys to the west.


4.0 THE LANDSCAPE OF HERTFORDSHIRE


• Figure 03
Soils


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



 **RENDZINAS:** Associated - Brown Calcareous earths and argillic or paleo-argillic earths. Parent material: Chalk and associated drift. Character: Well drained, shallow chalky soils, with deeper loamy or clayey/flinty soils.


 **STAGNOGLEY SOILS:** Associated - Calcareous pelosols and brown earths and brown earth. Parent material: Jurassic or cretaceous clay and associated drift. Character clayey soils and non-calcareous loamy or loamy over clayey soils.


 **BROWN EARTHS:** Associated - Argillic brown earths and alluvial gley soils. Parent material: River-terrace drift and associated alluvium. Character: Deep or moderately deep, well-drained loam soils, locally shallow over gravel, associated with clayey or loamy soils with high ground water.

 **STAGNOGLEY SOILS:** Associated - Argillic brown earths or brown earths. Parent material: Cretaceous or Tertiary clay and associated drift. Character: Clayey or loamy over clayey soils with impeded drainage, associated locally with better-drained mainly loamy soils.

 **PALEO ARGILLIC BROWN EARTHS:** Associated - Brown calcareous earths and argillic brown earths. Parent material: Plateau drifts (clay with flints) and associated drift over chalk. Character: Deep well drained to moderately well drained loamy (usually silty) over clayey or occasionally clayey soils with associated less clayey or calcareous soils.

 **CALCAREOUS PELOSOLS:** Associated - Stagnogley soils and argillic brown earths. Parent material: Chalky glacial drift. Character: Slowly permeable, well structured, calcareous clayey soils, associated with non calcareous clayey soils with impeded drainage or less clayey better drained soils, often stony.

 **PALEO ARGILLIC BROWN EARTHS:** Associated - Argillic brown earths and stagnogley soils. Parent material: Glacial, glaciofluvial or river-terrace drift and associated brick earth. Character: Deep well-drained to moderately well-drained loamy (often silty) or loamy over clayey soils, usually stony and locally shallow over gravel. Associated with loamy over clayey soils with impeded drainage.

 **ARGILLIC BROWN EARTHS:** Associated: Paleo argillic brown earths and alluvial gley soils. Parent material: river-terrace drift, brick earth and associated alluvium. Character: Deep well-drained loamy (often silty) soils, locally stony or shallow over gravel, associated with poorly-drained and clayey soils with high ground water.

TOPOGRAPHY

4.8 Hertfordshire contains three upland areas: the southern upland area of London Clay; the northeast upland area of boulder clay; and the western chalk/clay-with-flints uplands (Fig 04). Most of the first and a small part of the second of these areas fall within East Herts District.

4.9 Early activity in the county was focused on the river valleys and the lighter gravel soils, especially around the proto-Thames, although it may have been limited by swamplands. Significant areas of woodland were cleared from the mid to late Bronze Age onwards. This process accelerated during the Iron Age and was nearly complete by the Roman period.

4.10 The upland areas are divided by a number of river valleys and lowland areas. The valleys of the Colne, Lea, and Stort form a broad belt from Rickmansworth to Ware, curving round to Bishop's Stortford. The north-eastern and western uplands are divided by a narrow belt of lower ground stretching from Hitchin through Stevenage to Ware. The central river valleys including the Lea are generally shallow. On the boulder clay of the northeast plateau the rivers are deeply incised, often within very narrow valleys of no great length.

4.11 Following an intense period of development during the late Iron Age, the Roman occupation had a strong impact on the landscape, linked to the development of existing settlements at Verulamium, (now St Albans), Welwyn, Braughing and Ware and the roads between these and other strategic locations. This was combined with 'industrial' activity at Berkhamsted and Verulamium and large-scale tile and pottery production, using local materials, at Elstree, Radlett, Bricket Wood and Verulamium. Many villas were built in Hertfordshire and the villa of Gorhambury, for example, shows evidence of the use of the landscape for recreational purposes, in that there was probably a covered walkway and an avenue of trees and shrubs.

4.12 The division of the country under Danelaw (the frontier ran approximately north west to south east across the county) led to a divergence in settlement patterns and associated landscape management. Evidence can be found in the pattern of place names and the contrast between villages and greens in the east and larger areas of commonland in the west.

4.13 The Normans built castles at strategic locations: Great Berkhamsted (guarding the Tring gap), Hertford (at the confluence of several rivers with the Lea) and Waytemore (the Bishop of London's stronghold at Bishop's Stortford). These were superimposed on an already well-settled landscape; by the time of the Domesday Book there were 168 settlements recorded for Hertfordshire, the majority in the north east.

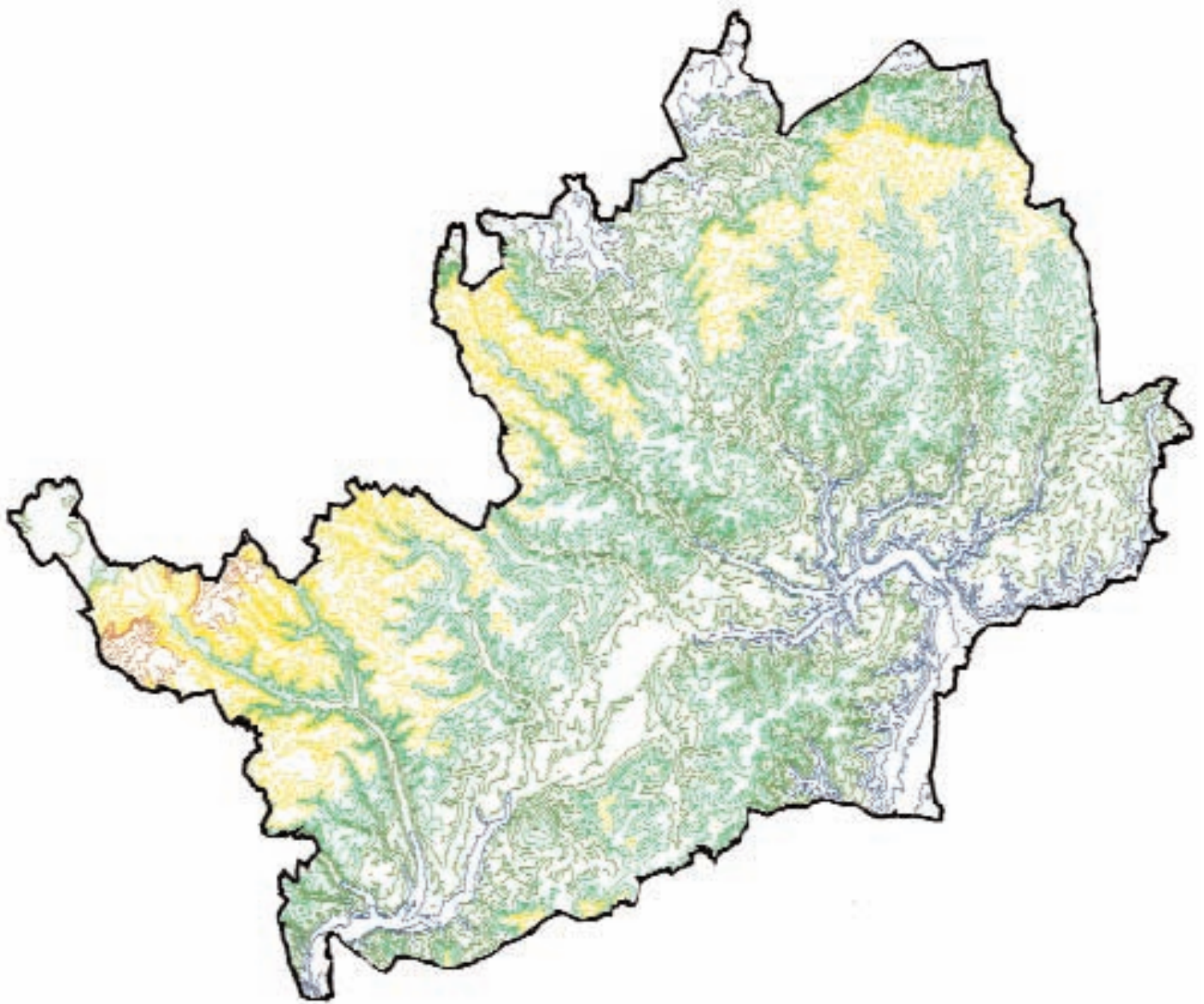
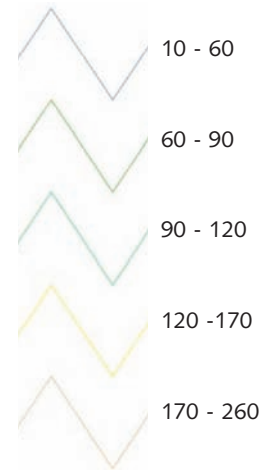
4.14 Medieval farming practices developed and the Abbey of St Albans, a major landowner, continued to have a widespread influence on land management. Hunting parks, more for food than ornament, became major features in the landscape in the medieval period and Hertfordshire probably has a higher density than any other county. Relic features from these are still present today in several areas

4.15 The Plague of 1348 reduced the rural population and a number of the villages and lands around were abandoned, especially in the north and east of the county.

4.0 THE LANDSCAPE OF HERTFORDSHIRE

- **Figure 04**
Topography
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Hertfordshire County Council LA076678
2003

Contour lines in metres
above sea level



4.16 On the dissolution of the Monasteries, much of the land confiscated by the Crown from St Albans Abbey was conveyed to courtiers and businessmen, all keen for status and a healthy retreat from the capital. This change in ownership accounts for a growth in country-house building in the mid-16th century, for example at Cassiobury, Gorhambury, Knebworth and Theobalds. The parks associated with these houses were increasingly ornamental as well as functional. Status was an important motivator here and the gardens at Theobalds, created by Lord Burleigh, Minister to Elizabeth I, became very influential.

4.17 Morden, writing in 1704, stated: *'This County has an incredible number of Pallaces and fair Structures of the gentry and Nobility...The rich Soil and wholesome Air, and the excellence of the County, have drawn hither the Wealthiest Citizens of London.'* (R. Morden, *The New Description and State of England*, 2nd edition. (1704), p.71).

4.18 Hertfordshire's links with the London commercial centre grew in importance and there emerged a stronger radial force within the developing geography. Development was not consistent or uniform, with buildings constructed, altered, destroyed and rebuilt, lands emparked and later disemparked, and great houses built and later abandoned. This process continued throughout the following centuries and is still evident today. As Lionel Munby remarked, *'the surviving parks are among the most beautiful places in Hertfordshire', and Hertfordshire is often the first move out to 'the country' for many Londoners.*

4.19 Hertfordshire shares much in common with other Home Counties in its pattern of development from the 17th century onwards, although the construction of the New River in the Lea Valley to supply London with water was notable. As elsewhere, lands were enclosed, creating the regular patchwork pattern of much of the landscape, and communications improved as canals, roads and later railways were built, most often along the river valleys. Town growth was slow, but for a time in the 19th century the scale of malting and brewing, and associated cereal growing in eastern Hertfordshire made it one of the largest centres of the industry in western Europe.

BUILDINGS & SETTLEMENT

4.20 Since the middle of the 19th century there has been a major change in the landscape of the county. Until then it had no useable natural resources on which to base an Industrial Revolution (see transport section below). The development of modern Portland cement in 1900 made reinforced concrete viable, using the gravel deposits of the proto-Thames basin, with consequent effect on the local landscape.

4.21 The development of the New Towns after WWII increased the demand for local gravels and perpetuates a seemingly natural division in the county. Most construction within the last century and a half has been in the southern and south-western parts of the county, while the north east, which was the most populated during the medieval period, remains sparsely populated and rural. This is probably the most obvious pattern in the landscape of the county.

TRANSPORT

4.22 The prehistoric routes in the county are notable for their continuity. They result from topography and geology, following the chalk scarp and the river valleys. The Romans then constructed radial routes from their Thames crossing-place, which became Londinium.

4.0 THE LANDSCAPE OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Their main roads went through the Tring Gap (Akeman Street), through Verulamium (Watling Street) and up the Lea Valley (Ermine Street). Other roads connected the towns to each other. Puckeridge, for example, became a nexus of roads, on the route between Colchester and Sandy.

4.23 The poor state of roads through the county demanded significant financial input - the first successful toll-house in the country was at Wadesmill. A parallel system of drove roads - used for animals rather than vehicles - is still partly visible in the green lanes and footpaths, often with the name 'green', 'travellers' or 'bull' attached. It is recorded that in 1766, 992,400 head of beef cattle were driven to Smithfield, many of them through Hertfordshire, so these tracks were an important part of the transport network. Only in the 19th century was there a significant improvement in the county's roads - due chiefly to the efforts of John and James McAdam, sometime Hoddesdon residents.

4.24 The late-19th and 20th Century growth of settlements in the county entailed a massive change in the road system, with ever more elaborate routes radiating out from London, compounded by the exceptionally high rate of car ownership in the county. Apart from the A10, however, East Hertfordshire, has seen relatively few road schemes and old lanes still characterise much of the District. Indeed river crossings in rural areas typically include fords which form a characteristic element in the valley landscapes.

RIVERS

4.25 The rivers have always been important transport routes, not least because of the poor state of the roads, which on the London clay became impassable in wet weather until the use of tarmacadam became widespread in the 19th century

4.26 The rivers provided the only industrial focus, with overlapping uses for the watermills as technology advanced. Flour production until the 16th century was contemporary with wool fulling (12th - 17th centuries) and paper milling (15th - 19th centuries), with malting from the 17th to the 19th centuries. At Hertford there was even a mill for grinding oak bark for tanning in the early 19th century. The River Lea linked the rich grain-producing lands of the north east and adjoining counties to the insatiable markets in London, its continuous programme of improvements regulated by Act of Parliament.

RAILWAYS

4.27 Like the road system, the railway spread in a radial pattern from the capital. East Hertfordshire is currently served by two lines to the west, with Hertford having two stations while to the east the district is served by the Cambridge line. Former railways such as the line from St Margarets to Buntingford which was cut by Beeching and the line from Hatfield, Welwyn and St Albans, have been dismantled.

4.28 The arrival of the railway provided a focus for new settlements around stations and the development of light industry. Hertfordshire became a commuter belt; free first-class railway tickets were handed out to purchasers of the houses in the new garden cities

LAND COVER & LAND USE

4.29 Hertfordshire is an enclosed county. Sir John Parnell, writing in 1769, called it 'a most exquisitely Beautifull cultivated Hedgerow'ed country', while Walker described it in 1785 thus: 'The land is generally inclosed, though there are many small common fields, or lands, laying intermixed in small pieces, the property of different persons, which are cultivated nearly in the same way as inclosed lands; the large common fields lie towards Cambridgeshire.' (Quoted in Munby, *The Hertfordshire Landscape* (1977)).

4.30 Agriculture was the dominant source of employment. Additional factors were market gardening on the fertile alluvial land between Hoddesdon and Wormley and on the eastern side of the Lea valley and forest industries in the north-west and south. Patten and clog makers, coopers and stavemakers all used wood, and other woodland products included shovels, spoons, bowls and other 'hollow wares'. Significant and ecologically valuable areas of woodland remain, especially on the heavy London clay which is unfit for arable cultivation.

4.31 Both woodland and hedges were an important part of the rural economy as well as of its landscape: '*I know of no part of England more beautiful in its stile than Hertfordshire: thro'out the oak and Elm hedgerows Appear Rather the work of Nature than Plantation, generally Extending thirty or forty feet Broad, growing irregularly in these stripes, and giving the fields the air of being reclaimed from a general tract of woodland.*' (Thomas Fuller, *The Worthies of England*, ed. J. Freeman (1952), p.229).

4.32 Parliamentary enclosure was the last major transformation of the rural landscape before the ploughing-out of hedgerows of the mid-20th century. In the south and west, where piecemeal enclosure had already transformed the arable, enclosure was largely of the surviving commons.

4.33 In the early 1960s some 5500 acres were common, almost all of it in the west of the county. In the north and north east enclosure was of open arable fields, generally after the General Act of 1845. Thus the present landscape of this part of the county has now, after the impact of 20th century arable intensification, largely reverted to its pre-enclosure pattern.

4.34 Before 1900 the major impact on the landscape other than agriculture was parkland. The gentry of Hertfordshire were pioneer gardeners, laying out a new landscape as a frame for the house and as a status symbol in its own right. Lord Burghley built himself a palace at Theobalds in 1564. His son, Robert Cecil, spent £40,000 on building Hatfield House and rearranged the entire landscape to give himself more privacy. Woodland and arable were switched around on a grand scale. Today there are still almost no views into the parkland from outside.

4.0 THE LANDSCAPE OF HERTFORDSHIRE

4.35 Country house building took place in waves: pre-1580 and between 1640s and 1660, with a lot of 'improvements' between 1680 and 1720. Another building boom took place between 1750 and 1780. The fashionable site for a country house changed, from proximity to remoteness, from hilltops to near water, with four grand houses built along the Mimram valley in the 18th century. But parklands could be destroyed even more quickly than they were made. The opportunities for profitable farming were such that medieval parkland was ploughed up whenever there was no permanent resident on the estate. Some parklands were first wooded, then cleared for farming, returned to open woodland as a deer park and then cleared and ploughed for farmland once again.

4.36 In the 20th century the greatest threats to parkland were from housing development, the transport infrastructure and mineral extraction, whereas arable farming of former wood pasture at least retains woodland boundaries and the outline of the park.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

5.1 The guiding principles and format for the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy Volume 3 Part 3: Landscape Character Assessment, Evaluation and Guidelines for East Hertfordshire District are set out in the following documents:

- Landscape Character Assessment in connection with Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review, Contract Documents - Appendix A Landscape Character Assessment Brief (Hertfordshire County Council, Environment Department).
- Landscape Character Assessment in connection with Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review Contract - Appendix A Landscape Character Assessment: Methodology Specification (Hertfordshire County Council, Environment Department).
- Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland 2002 (Countryside Agency).
- Summary Specification for Extensions to Landscape Strategy from Hertfordshire County Council dated 10/1/02.

The key elements of the method used in the study, incorporating the above guidance, are set out below

5.2 Following the award of the contract, an initial briefing meeting was held between the Contract Manager, staff of East Hertfordshire District Council and key members of the project team to discuss the project brief and programme. A familiarisation tour of the study area followed the above meeting to gain a flavour of the range of landscape types involved.

5.3 The project was monitored throughout the contract period by the County Council's Head of Landscape in liaison with the Development Plans Manager from East Hertfordshire District Council. Monitoring included the use of progress meetings, liaison by phone, correspondence by letter, fax and e-mail, and an updated work programme that identifies the main activities against the contract period.

DESK STUDY

5.4 The initial desk study work was sub-contracted to The Living Landscapes Project, following guidance in the brief. This stage involved the division of the study area into a number of Landscape Description Units or LDUs and involved consideration of the following levels of detail.

5.5 **Level 1**

Subdivision at a national/regional scale in accordance with the Joint Character Map of England combining both Landscape Character Regions and Natural Areas. This information provided a framework for analysis at a finer grain: levels 2 and 3.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.6 **Level 2: Physiography and Soils (Scale 1:150,000)**

The following subjects were considered and a relevant category identified:

Topography

- Flat – F
- Low Lying – L
- Rolling / Undulating – R
- Valley – V
- Upstanding / Plateau – U

Soils

- Sandy Brown Soils – S
- Brown Free-draining Soils – B
- Clay Soils – C
- Gleyed (Poorly Draining) Soils – G
- Mixed Soils – M

Geology

- Fluvial-glacial & River Drift – F
- Till (Glacial Drift) – T
- Clay – C
- Limestone / Chalk – L
- Mixed – M

The study area was divided into units based on a combination of the above three factors and a combined coding given, e.g. VLB denotes a limestone/chalk valley with brown free-draining soils.

5.7 **Level 2: Cultural Pattern (scale 1:50,000).**

To the physiographic pattern the way that man has utilised the land, or the 'cultural pattern', was then added using the following categories:

Settlement Pattern

- Nucleated - N
- Clustered - C
- Dispersed - D
- Urban - U
- Unsettled - R

Tree Cover

- Wooded - W
- Estate plantations - P
- Other trees - T
- Secondary - S
- Open/unwooded - O
- Trees and woods - A

Farm Type

- Large Estates - E
- Large Farms - F
- Small Farms - S
- Unenclosed Common land - U

A separate three-letter code was then given to each LDU to express cultural pattern. This may have led to some sub-division of the physiographic units.

5.8 **Level 3: Land Cover Coding (scale 1:25,000).**

This level of detail was derived from the historic landscape characterisation information made available digitally through the English Heritage project undertaken for Hertfordshire in 2000. This information provided a further level of resolution and sub-division of the LDUs. The following categories were given:

Current Land Cover

- Farmland - F
- Woodland - W
- Urban - U
- Parkland - Pk
- Rough - R
- Disturbed - D

Field Size

- Small - 1
- Small-medium - 2
- Medium-large - 3
- Large - 4

Historic Field Pattern

- Irregular - I
- Sub-regular - S
- Regular - R
- Geometric - G
- Unenclosed - U

5.9 The above data was collated as a series of overlays suitable for reading against a 1:25,000 scale OS base. A glossary of terms used by The Living Landscapes Project has also been included in Appendix B of this Draft SPD.

FIELDWORK

5.10 The field work for Areas 140-152 was carried out between October 2003 and February 2004. Each survey team consisted of a team of two, including a landscape architect, who was responsible for drafting the text and defining the boundaries of each landscape character area surveyed, and another landscape-related professional. The total survey team included a total of three people with qualifications from a variety of disciplines including geography and landscape architecture. A moderation process was built in, to ensure consistency of appraisal across both the study area and the previous studies for Southern Hertfordshire in 2000, St. Albans in 2001 and Dacorum in 2002.

5.11 Each study area was systematically appraised by a survey team, who considered each LDU in turn. Field survey record sheets were used to record data. A sample of the two-page pro forma used is included as Appendix C. The form was updated from that used in previous studies to allow for greater transparency in the completion of the Evaluation Matrix. The use of forms was supplemented by additional notes and photographic records. Both notes and photographs informed the process of drafting a description of and illustrating each character area in the final report.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

LITERATURE REVIEW

5.12 In parallel with the desk study and fieldwork a literature review was carried out. This provided background information and informed the process of defining character areas. The methodology specification in the contract documents provided an important list of suggested sources. This was supplemented by a number of other source materials. The Bibliography, (Appendix A), lists all the sources

DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

5.13 Draft Landscape Character Areas were defined, using the survey data from the fieldwork. This process involved identifying which LDUs were character areas in their own right and those which required aggregating or splitting on the basis of consistent landscape character as identified in the field.

5.14 The definition of boundaries required careful consideration. As the LDUs had been defined primarily on the basis of geology, soils or landform the boundaries, although real, rarely accorded with fixed features on the ground, such as the edge of a woodland or a road or track. In defining boundaries for each character area, a decision was made to follow an identifiable feature visible on the ground wherever possible. It was considered that this approach would be both more comprehensible to a lay audience/reader and more defensible within the local authority planning process. However, in a limited number of situations there was no clear line on the ground. In these instances boundaries were drawn either along a contour line (where there is break in slope reasonably clearly visible in the field), or as a straight line between two fixed features.

5.15 The boundaries arising from the foregoing methodology were also reviewed against previous studies involving aspects of landscape character assessment including the Landscape Conservation Areas (as defined by local authorities). Where possible, and particularly where there were only marginal variations, the boundaries established for this study were amended to match those previously defined. However, due to the different methodologies utilised, this was not always possible without compromising the integrity of this study. Furthermore the process was made more difficult where two different boundary lines were already present in a given area. This landscape character assessment followed best practice as defined in the methodology available at the time (Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland (2002), published by The Countryside Agency), as suitable for the scale of study involved and as the most effective criteria of boundary definition.

5.16 It should be clearly understood that although the drawing of boundary lines on a plan is an inevitable part of the process, this does not always mean that landscape character is dramatically different to either side of each and every line. Landscape character can suddenly change, e.g. at the interface of an historic parkland, at the foot of a steep scarp slope or at a settlement edge, but generally there is often a more gradual transition. In such cases the boundary line marks more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape type to another.

5.17 This should be understood when viewing the GIS version of the landscape character areas, as the lines are digitised against a 1:10,000 base and at a scale of accuracy of c.1:2,000. This level of detail suggests that a decision has been made about which side of a road defines a change in landscape character and whether one particular house is included in an area or not. In practice a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the available OS data,

existing boundary information and the fieldwork data and survey sheets, but will be subject to change over time and cannot in every instance be regarded as definitive, but rather as indicative of a transition.

CONSULTATION

5.18 An important part of the process of landscape character assessment in this study was the involvement of the local community. The 2003/4 study that encompassed areas 140-152 followed a similar consultation process as for the previous studies in 2000, 2001 and 2002. This involved stakeholder input from the Hertfordshire Citizens Panel and local interest groups. The key elements are set out below.

5.19 *Tier A - Community of Interest*

This group included 42 different authorities and societies with a professional, statutory or local interest in the process, including many of those that had been involved in similar previous studies. Those who registered an interest in receiving further information were then sent the draft area boundaries, draft text of the Summary Page and were invited to comment. The option of a meeting to discuss the issues was offered and a presentation was given to interested parties on 6 February 2004. Other information was made available on request.

5.20 In March 2004 a more complete consultation draft of the text was made available via the County Council's website. This was drawn to the attention of Tier A stakeholders. Comments received up to March 2004 were processed and conveyed to the consultants for incorporation as appropriate. The most significant inputs were received from HBRC (HCC), Historic Environment Unit (HCC), Landscape Unit (HCC) and East Hertfordshire District Council. The main contribution made by this category of stakeholders is to review and challenge the suggested area boundaries rigorously and to provide detailed information to populate the character statements

5.21 *Tier B - Community of Place*

Views of a representative cross-section of the local community were sought. The process used has been developed by Hertfordshire and appears as a case study in Countryside Agency (now Natural England) guidance.

5.22 The sample for the survey was derived by MORI. In part it came from the Hertfordshire Citizens Panel, and in part from additional respondents based on postcodes. MORI then sent this sample a questionnaire with a map (12 by 14km) which included the recipients postal address. The questionnaire invited recipients to mark up the areas that they value and to make comments about them. Responses from this were then collated systematically by Hertfordshire County Council and the findings used to guide both the insertion of an appropriate summary comment in the community views section and individual quotations from respondents where particularly relevant.

5.23 To provide a historical context to these community views, quotations from literature have also been included. These were selected by the County Council's Head of Landscape for their relevance, age, eloquence, and authority. In some cases they provide an alternate view of the area.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.24 In March 2004, the draft assessment was published on the well-established consultation page on the County Council's Landscape website to enable representations by the general public (with internet access). Landscape assessments are routinely published by Hertfordshire County Council on the Internet, and a protocol has been devised through which changes can be suggested by readers, and subject to being approved by a panel, incorporated.

REPORT FORMAT

5.25 Following the receipt of inputs from the stakeholders and continuing literature review, the landscape character descriptions were developed into a final form. A consistent pattern was used to describe each of the character areas that emerged. This took the form of a nominal four to five pages of text and illustrations as follows.

5.26 Summary Page

- Location – Brief Geographical Description
- Landscape Character – Summary Statement of the Area
- Key Characteristics – Main Elements Defining the Character
- Distinctive Features – Individual Features of Note

5.27 Assessment Page

Physical Influences

- Geology & Soils
- Topography (Including Degree of Slope & Altitude Range)
- Hydrology
- Land Cover & Land Use
- Vegetation & Wildlife

Historic & Cultural Influences

- Field Pattern & Field Size
- Transport Pattern
- Settlement & Built Form
- Other Sources of Area Specific Information

5.28 Evaluation Page

- Visual & Sensory Perception
- Rarity & Distinctiveness
- Visual Impact of Built Development
- Accessibility
- Community Views
- Condition & Robustness Matrix
- Landscape & Ecological Designations

5.29 The above topics were considered systematically for the evaluation section of the report. The entry for each topic was devised on the basis of professional judgement, input from HCC staff, responses from the public consultation process and the following specific criteria.

5.30 Visual and Sensory Perception

This included views to, from and within an area, the scale of elements, sense of enclosure, visual unity and noise/tranquility. Information was largely gleaned during the field survey process and recorded on the survey sheets.

5.31 **Rarity and Distinctiveness**

Rarity was assessed on the frequency of the landscape type within parts of Southern Hertfordshire, St Albans District, Dacorum Borough and the study area (not the whole county). Distinctiveness relates to those particular landscape characteristics or features that help distinguish one particular landscape character area from another and make it special. This may have referred to individual features or the overall character. The entry for rarity and distinctiveness was added later in the report process when an overview of the whole study area was available.

5.32 **Visual impact of Built Development**

This identified the magnitude and extent of the impact of built features on local landscape character. It included settlements, roads, railways, etc. Data was gathered during the field survey and presented on the survey sheets.

5.33 **Accessibility**

This was a qualitative assessment of the number lengths of rights of way, areas of publically accessible land and the presence of associated recreational activities.

5.34 **Community Views**

These were based on an aggregate statement from the Community of Place questionnaire returns, which were analysed by HCC Head of Landscape. A provisional five-point rating was given to each landscape area (or sub-area) with 'A' being the most valued and 'E' the least acknowledged. These ratings are included at the end of each community views section. Historic or literary quotations were added when available, to give a 'time depth' perspective. Some extracts from questionnaire responses may also have been included where apt or where there is little history of commentary.

5.35 **Condition and Strength of Character matrix**

(See paragraph 5.40)

5.36 **Landscape and Ecological Designations**

Relevant designations were collated from HCC, English Nature and English Heritage. These include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Landscape Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments (visible features), Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs), historic parks and gardens of the English Heritage Register.

5.37 **Guidelines Page**

A general strategy and list of area-specific guidelines for managing change is included for each character area (see paragraph 5.40).

5.38 In addition to the above each description is illustrated with a diagrammatic location plan and photographs of the area. The Landscape Character Areas are also identified on a map. This was done digitally as an ArcView 3.2 project set against a 1:10,000 scale OS base, at a resolution of 1;2000 scale.

5.39 The text for the report was also provided as an Access database, to enable the GIS map data to be made interactive with the text. The data described above was delivered to the client in both hard copy and on CD-ROM

5.0 METHODOLOGY

ANNALYSING LANDSCAPE CHANGE

5.40 Under paragraph 5.35 above there is reference to a 'Condition and Strength of Character Matrix'. In order to assess any landscape's potential ability to adapt to change without losing its intrinsic character, it is necessary to analyse the functional integrity or condition of the landscape and balance this against the strength of character as demonstrated by the more permanent or robust elements of the landscape. Landscape condition is determined from an evaluation of the relative state (poor/moderate/good) of elements within the landscape which are subject to change, such as survival of hedgerows, extent and impact of built development. Strength of character is determined from an evaluation of the impact of relatively stable factors, such as landform and landcover, the apparent continuity of historic pattern, the degree of visibility of and within the area and its rarity.

5.41 Seven factors were considered for each area (see Matrix for any area in Chapter 6). Each was evaluated in the field and an entry made on a survey sheet. They were then considered against a three-point scale and entered in the matrix table. Values for the factors on each axis were then aggregated and a majority total applied. The resulting intersection for each landscape character area (see last page of each character area).

5.42 This evaluation via matrix enables a general guideline to be determined, such as, for example 'conserve and strengthen', where a landscape area is in good condition but only moderate condition and of weak robustness. Once this primary guideline has been established, specific guidelines can be put forward that will address issues within the particular area, with a view to improving both condition and strength of character as necessary to reinforce its distinctiveness.

5.43 Recent change within a landscape area may suggest a difference of character that is in fact superficial. Logical and consistent observation and analysis was therefore used to derive the Landscape Character Areas, as described in this report. Each character area is distinct. One of the intentions of this SPD is to highlight, conserve and reinforce this distinctiveness.

5.44 By employing the methodology described in above some 67 character areas have been identified. Each demonstrates distinct patterns of physical and cultural features. The character assessment also evaluate the landscape and promote means of conserving, and enhancing the distinctiveness.

Index of East Herts Landscape Character Areas

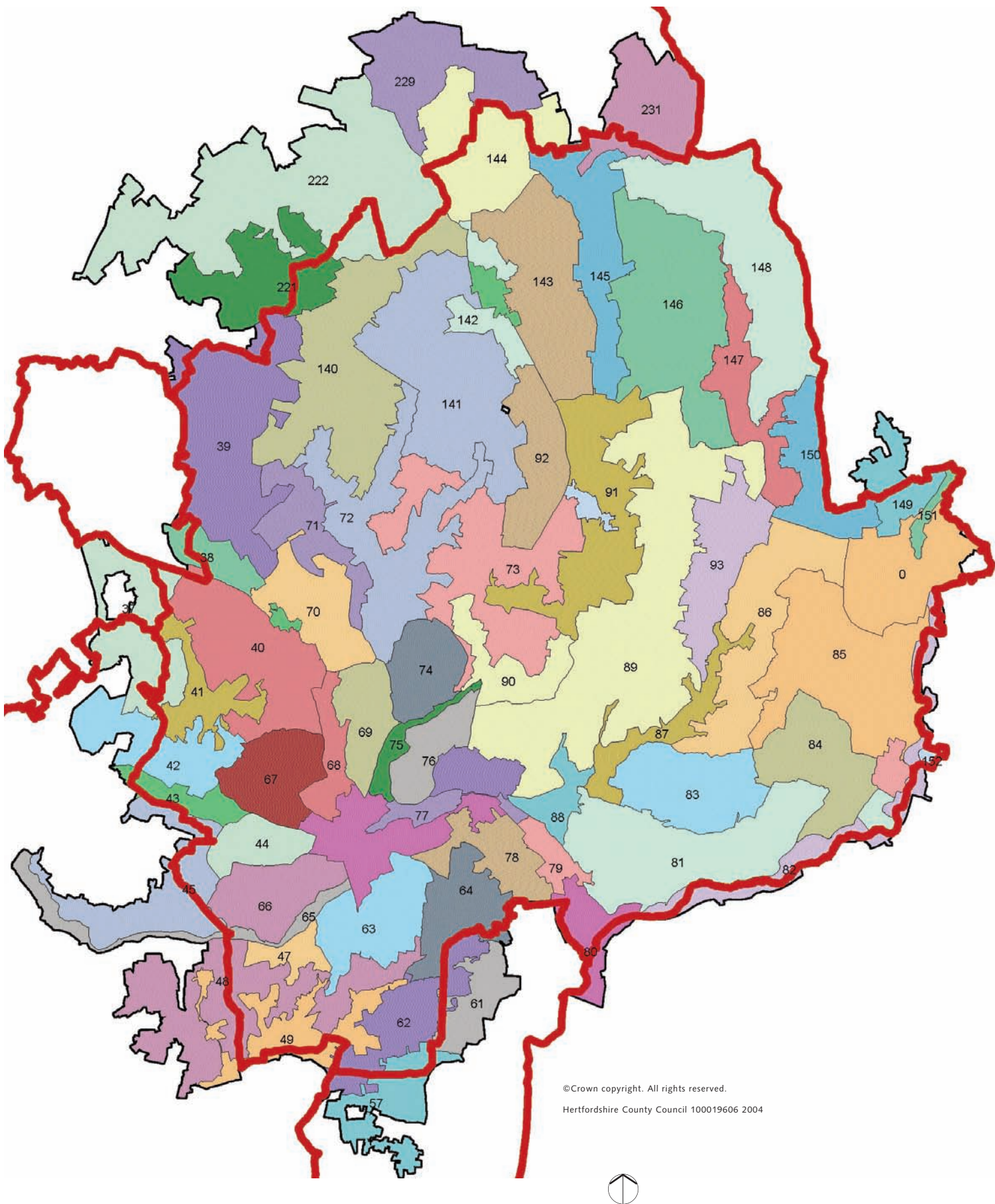
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6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

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***Area Statements produced on behalf of
North Herts District Council***

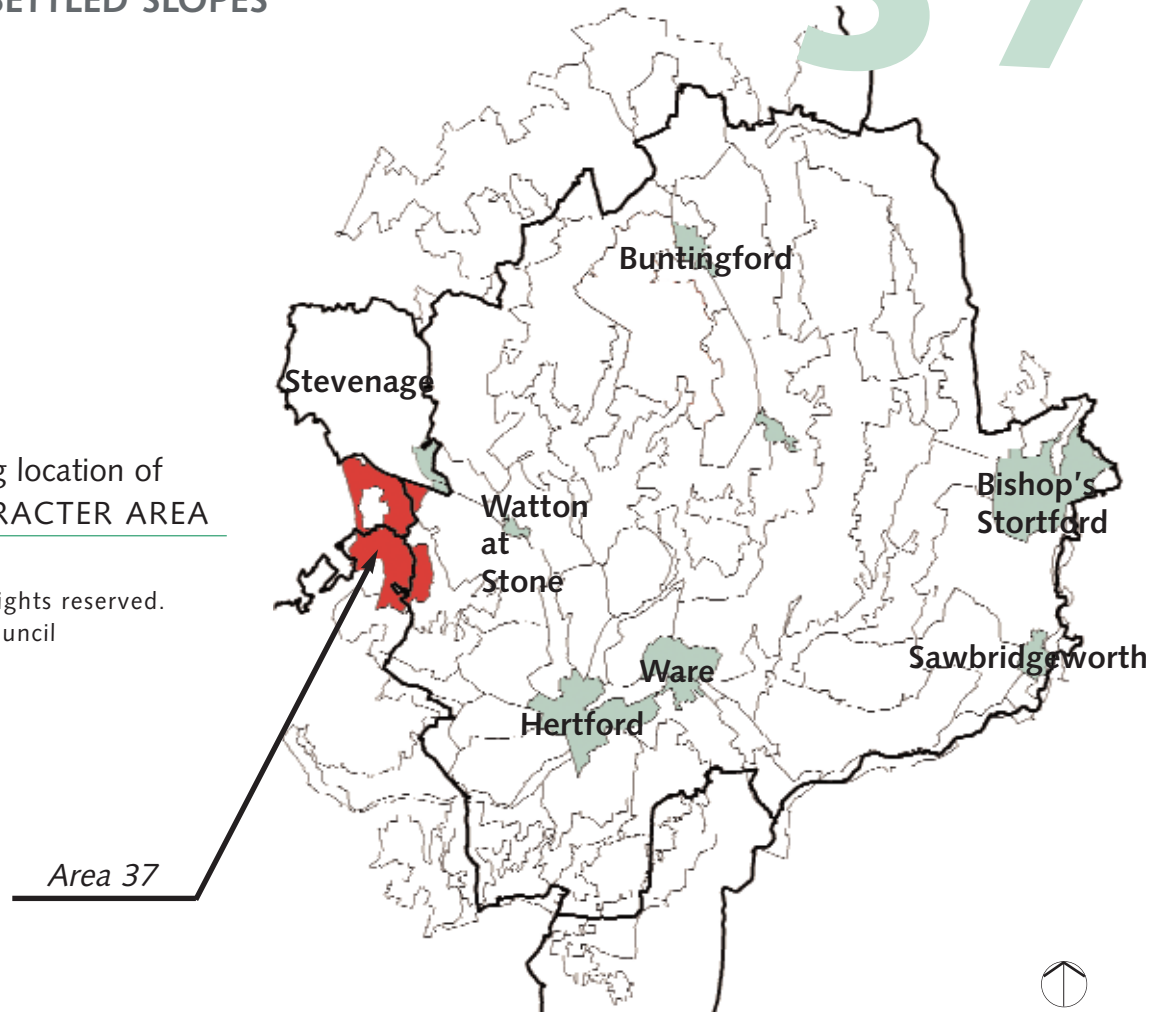
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DATCHWORTH SETTLED SLOPES

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

North-west and west-facing slope south of Stevenage, between the Datchworth plateau and the linear urban development associated with the A1(M) between Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Undulating and gently sloping, west-facing, open arable farmland. An ancient landscape with modern settlements. Large blocks of woodland (Harmergreen Wood) screen views of some of the urban development and block views to the south. This is very much an 'in between' area, still rural but exhibiting a stronger urban influence than the adjoining areas to the east and south.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- sloping intermediate area with extensive views up to Datchworth plateau
- farms and villages linking the plateau settlements to the urban edges - a curving link between Knebworth and Digswell
- large-scale open arable farmland, lacking hedges
- large area of woodland and a few scattered blocks
- small semicircular greens along winding lanes and sunken ways

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- sinuous open lanes, some very narrow and steeply banked
- extensive views towards Stevenage
- proximity of urban settlements (Oaklands, Knebworth)
- veteran hornbeams west of Burnham Green



Hempstall Spinney hornbeam coppice woodland (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep fine loam and clay over slowly permeable clay subsoils, over plateau drift (Hornbeam 3 series). Superficial deposits of clay-with-flints at Woolmer Green.

Topography. Undulating west-facing slope with local variations - slight valley formation running north-south and now containing a railway, often in tunnel.

Degree of slope. 1 in 50

Altitude range. 85m to 120m

Hydrology. There is little water in this area; one ditch drains westwards to Hempstall Spinney but the local topography discourages any northwards drainage into Stevenage Brook. There are some springs. Mardleybury Pond is one of the few waterbodies in this area.

Land cover and land use. Open arable farmland and woodland

Vegetation and wildlife. Although the cropped fields generally lack hedges, the woodlands are of interest, being generally oak/hornbeam with holly. Hempstall Spinney is coppiced hornbeam with hornbeam standards, with a ground flora of bluebells and mixed hornbeam and holly around the perimeter. Nearby lanes lie between steep hedgebanks supporting a wide range of chalk-loving wildflowers. Remnants of old commons (Barns Green) and isolated greens with old grasslands (Sedge Green) are typical of the area, with remnant pasture and little grazing greens as semi-circular verge details along the lanes. To the west of Burnham Green there are several veteran hornbeams.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Pevsner refers to a site at Six Hills, south of Stevenage, with Roman barrows. This area of arable farmland with associated farm buildings and of hamlets developed as outliers of the plateau or valley settlements and enlarged during the 20th century.

Field pattern. Most of the former field pattern has been lost as fields have been enlarged during arable intensification.

Transport pattern. Within this area there is a strong network of winding lanes linking the villages to the larger plateau settlements. The B197 runs parallel to the railway on the western edge, between Mardley Heath and Knebworth, through Woolmer Green. The Roman road between Welwyn and Watton has dwindled here to a lane and a footpath.

Settlements and built form. Datchworth, Woolmer and Harmer Greens are the settlements in this area and the 'green' suffix denotes their evolution as outliers of larger settlements.

- Woolmer Green benefits from natural springs, around which the manor of Mardley Bury developed. Its population was swelled by railway workers after 1851 and it has a more urban character than most of the villages in this part of Hertfordshire.
- Datchworth Green consists of 19th and 20th-century cottages around an extensive green, but is a considerably older settlement than this suggests.
- Harmer Green is similar in character to Burnham Green, on the plateau, but changes noticeably where it becomes Digswell. The former is small scale, domestic and rural, while the latter is gradually larger in scale, still in woodland but with a much denser, more urban character, linking with Welwyn.

DATCHWORTH SETTLED SLOPES - Area 37

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The variable topography and extensive woodland in this area serve to block long-distance views within and outside this area, adding to its character as an 'in between' area, remote yet close to the urban centres along the A1(M), rural yet influenced by the proximity of the 20th-century developments around Welwyn. There is a certain uneasiness to this area, a conflict between old and new.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Hempstall Spinney is a good example of hornbeam coppice with standards. The UK contains nearly 25% of the world total of bluebell woods, of which this is a good example. The impact of housing on the rural landscape is very typical of the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

Much of the urban impact of the A1(M) and associated development is screened in this area by topography and woodland. Despite this there is an underlying sense of the encroachment of urban influence.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: none
There are footpath links between Hamer Green and Oaklands, but little elsewhere.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is valued as a distinctive landscape (C).

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmennted
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

DATCHWORTH SETTLED SLOPES - Area 37**STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE**

- integration of new development within the historic landscape fabric is a priority in this area. The use of woodland planting to screen new/recent development as well as to create ecological corridors linking to existing woods should be carefully considered
- any proposed development in this area should respect its character and reflect current land use.
- encourage landowners and tenant farmers to reinstate historic hedges and maintain relic hedges where appropriate, preferably alongside public rights of way and significant field boundaries rather than along roadsides. The open views within this area are part of its distinctiveness.
- encourage landowners and tenant farmers to create and manage verges for their biodiversity and wildlife interest. Similarly, where the reinstatement of former hedges is held to be inappropriate, consideration could be given to the creation of beetle banks, nature conservation headlands and other biodiversity initiatives. Advice and possible grant aid may be available.
- proposals for new woodland planting should focus on existing woodlands with a view to creating buffer zones around them and links to other woodlands or areas of nature conservation interest (grasslands, etc.). All woodland planting should be of native species of local provenance, to reinforce local distinctiveness.

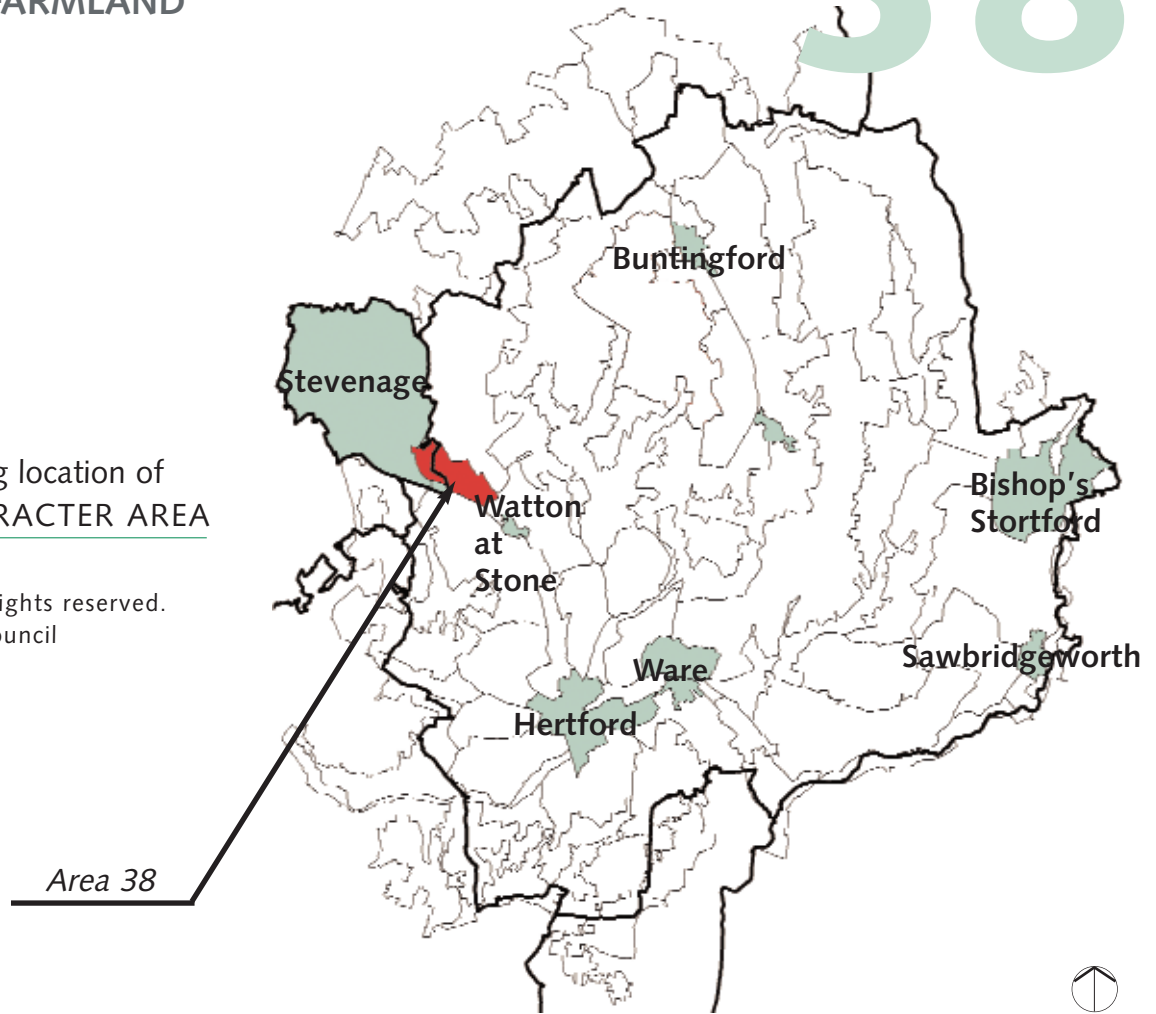


Datchworth Green Post Office historic building reflecting age of settlement (P. Shears)

ASTON ESTATE FARMLAND

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

East of Stevenage and north of the railway line, including Stevenage Brook.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

South-facing undulating parkland dominated by two estates - Astonbury and Frogmore - exhibiting planned and unified characteristics of estate farmland. Rural, seemingly remote and ancient, despite proximity to Stevenage.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- uniformity of field and road boundaries created by estate management, with young hedgerow trees, well-maintained hedges and narrow verges

- undulating estate farmland, primarily pastoral, with extensive golf course on western boundary
- well wooded and hedged
- ornamental tree species within parkland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- both Astonbury House and Frogmore Hall are notable buildings with associated buildings (farm diversification, Field Centre)
- watercourses
- golf course
- gravel workings completely screened from view from public roads
- consistent presence of young ash trees in hedgerows



Astonbury (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hanslope series) with a small gravel plateau and chalk quite close to the surface.

Topography. Gently undulating minor ridge, sloping southwards to Stevenage Brook and eastwards to the middle reaches of the river Beane.

Degree of slope. Variable: 1 in 45 to 1 in 12.5.

Altitude range. 60m to 75m (91m locally).

Hydrology. Stevenage Brook is the main tributary of the Beane and its flow helps to maintain fish species, although it is polluted. Within the grounds of Frogmore Hall the Beane is interrupted by a weir and waterfall.

Land cover and land use. Both estates are predominantly in pastoral cultivation, with parkland trees and significant blocks of deciduous woodland. In the western part of the area there is a large golf course. In the southern part of this area there are, or have been, mineral extraction works, but these are completely screened from public view by surrounding vegetation and are now managed as a wildlife site.

Vegetation and wildlife. Most of this area is grassland of variable quality - in pastoral cultivation or in use as a golf course. The woodlands are also variable, mainly deciduous, with pines and limes mixed with oak, ash and holly. Astonbury has oak/hornbeam woodland and neutral grassland with notable mature hornbeam in the parkland.

Astonbury Wood is a nature reserve as well as being part of the field study centre. Field boundaries are generally hedged, with some degradation at the arable edges, and consist of holly, elder and hazel, with ash and oak as hedgerow trees. Significant lengths of hedge around Astonbury Wood have been re-laid. Young plantings of hedgerow ash are a notable feature around Frogmore, as are the gravel complexes, previously worked and now supporting a rich flora around a chalk/marl lake. Despite its pollution, there are reasonable wildlife margins along Stevenage Brook.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area is characterised by the presence of two estates with mansions. The earliest record of the deer park at Frogmore is 1676, while Astonbury developed from an 11th-century bury or manor which was given to Bishop Odo of Bayeux, brother of William the Conqueror and has been continuously occupied at or near the existing buildings ever since. Many trees were planted when the grounds were rescued from near dereliction c.1910.

Field pattern. Sub-regular pattern of medium to large fields in arable cultivation, plus extensive parkland. The historic field pattern both within and around the parklands of Astonbury and Frogmore appears to be somewhat disturbed, interrupted by mineral extraction and a golf course.

Transport pattern. The road network is pre-20th century, following the boundaries of the estate landholdings. The few lanes within the area are narrow and winding, generally with narrow verges, occasionally marked by young plantings of ash trees in the hedgerow. The southern boundary of this area is the A602 from Hertford to Stevenage, paralleled by the railway. Both are in a slight valley and do not intrude visually, although they do produce noise.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within the area, rather two large country houses with associated farm buildings and dwellings and small blocks of single-storey 20th-century linear development along some of the lanes. This is tending to bring a more settled character to the area, possibly influenced by its proximity to Stevenage.

Frogmore Hall is a red brick neo-Gothic mansion with a large square tower. Astonbury House is a three-storeyed Jacobean mansion, dating in part from c.1540. It was converted to multiple residential units in the 1980s.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000)

ASTON ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 38

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is locally visible from the higher ground to the north. Within the area extensive views are available, especially from higher ground. The scale of landscape elements is medium to large, while the area is visually coherent and apparently open, because the woodland blocks are not linked and are not of such scale as to dominate the area, which is quiet, but with constant low road traffic noise.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unusual, especially so close to a large urban centre. Compact and remote.

VISUAL IMPACT

The visual impact of the railway and A602 to the south is insignificant and localised (but note noise impact above). Locally there is some change from pastoral to arable cultivation, but this is of limited impact and is chiefly demonstrated by a local degradation of hedges.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: golf course to west
Frequency/density of footpaths, bridleways - both widespread.
Astonbury Wood is open to the public on a permit system, or more generally on Bluebell Sunday each April.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Insufficient data available from the community exercise to provide a rating. (C) estimated.

"A unique compact and remote area...a visual transmittion...between Stevenage and open countryside", (respondent 4353, SPD Consultation 2006).

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- promote the maintenance of grazing as a management technique in parklands
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture where appropriate
- ensure that landowners are aware of the conservation value of veteran trees and dead wood
- promote the use of locally native species for hedgerow planting along road frontages, in preference to fencing or walls
- encourage the restoration of former mineral workings to maximise their nature conservation potential and complement local landscape character, especially where restoration to previous landform is not possible
- encourage the planting of new parkland trees to ensure that a mixed-age stock of parkland trees is maintained
- within golf courses, encourage the retention of the local landform, existing mature and semi-mature trees, the planting of native trees in preference to ornamentals, especially around the perimeter of the course, and the management of roughs, etc., to maximise their nature conservation potential. Where golf courses are proposed within historic parkland, ensure that adequate buffer zones are maintained around historic built features, to protect their integrity.
- assist landowners to conserve the historic continuity of the area by offering advice on historic grant aid, woodland management, veteran trees, etc.
- encourage landowners to maintain pastoral land management
- encourage landowners to restore or replace degraded hedges
- encourage the use of management techniques to encourage biodiversity within recreational areas, such as different mowing regimes, use of locally indigenous tree and shrub species, etc



Ash in thorn hedge at Frogmore Farm (P. Shears)

MIDDLE BEANE VALLEY



District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

From Lamsden Common, north of Watton-at-Stone, this area extends northwards along the valley to Walkern and up as far as Cromer. It is defined to the west by the urban edge of Stevenage and to the east by the narrow Benington settled ridge and the Cottered/Ardleley settled plateau.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Open arable farmland with small grouped woodlands linked by hedges. Medium to large-scale field pattern over strongly undulating slopes, with a remote character despite proximity to Stevenage.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- strongly undulating west-facing slope
- sharp transition to ridge to east and to urban edge to west
- built edge of Stevenage generally well concealed and contained by mature and semi mature woodland.
- woods located to the tributary valley heads and on the upper slopes adjacent to Stevenage
- well-managed hornbeam coppice woodland
- large fields and arable cultivation
- few settlements
- expansive views from the edges to the Beane Valley

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- historic features around Walkern
- Aston End village to the upper slopes a smaller scale intimate landscape with pasture

Beane valley south of Walkern
(J.Billingsley)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils, over plateau drift (Hornbeam 2 series), with well-drained calcareous loams over chalky drift on the valley slopes (Swaffham Prior series) and slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (Hanslope series) on the plateau to the west. Chalk is visible at the surface on both sides of the river.

Topography. Strongly undulating valley slopes.

Degree of slope. 1 in 10 on the steepest slopes to 1 in 40 further north.

Altitude range. 60 m to 100m.

Hydrology. A few streams flow into the river, especially south of Walkern, and the river has a significant impact on local topography, having carved out a well-marked U-shaped valley. The main source of the Beane are the springs to the north of the village, (see Area 221). To the east a narrow plateau forms an interfluvium between the Beane valley and The Old Bourne tributary. The Beane has a predominantly natural chalk stream character, with shallow banks and gravel beds set within an intensively agricultural landscape, but now suffers from reduced flows due to water abstraction at Whitehall. There are no surface streams or ponds on the slopes to the north west.

Land cover and land use. This area consists mainly of intensively cultivated open arable farmland, with a little woodland in the west. The central area and the river valley itself are unsettled, but there is some settlement at the northern and western extremities of the area.

Vegetation and wildlife. Species in the woodlands are predominantly ash, oak and hornbeam, with cherry, blackthorn and poplar. Most of the woodland is ancient with some old secondary woods. There are no elms. Field boundaries are few or missing, although there are examples of young hawthorn hedges and one Scots pine hedge. Hedgerow trees are not common, and consist of oak, of various ages and locally some pear. There is very little grassland in the river valley but orchids can be found in the verges and chalk-tolerant species such as goatsbeard, scabious and bracken are frequent. Formerly there was chalk grassland on Oxshot Hill and on banks below Benington High Wood; now only vestiges remain.

The roadside verge along Walkern road, between Walkern and Watton-at-Stone, supports a rich mix of calcareous herbs and the adjacent arable fields are rich in arable weeds. In 1991 this verge was designated the county's first Heritage Roadside Verge. Benington High Wood, on the eastern slope, is a designated SSSI as one of the best remaining examples in the county of the pedunculate oak/hornbeam woodland of the ash/maple variant. It also contains hazel and midland hawthorn, with dog's mercury and bluebell dominating the ground flora.

Box Wood, to the north west resembles Chilterns woodland and holds a diverse flora, including Green Hellebore, Violet Helleborine etc. It also has dormouse populations, and was, until recently at least, a stronghold for the hawfinch. Uncommon insects have also been recorded from it, such as the ancient woodland beetle *Platycis minuta*.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

On the valley sides there are no significant present day settlement nuclei, but historic evidence, including cropmarks visible on aerial photographs and other data, indicates that the landscape has been exploited since the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. By the Late Iron Age and Roman periods a pattern of shifting occupation can be traced in the area; archaeological excavations nearby at Lobs Hole and Chells identified settlements spanning the late 1st century to the late 4th century A.D., and Roman finds are known from other sites in the area. Later settlements continued to shift or decline, and the series of earthworks of banks and ditches in Box Wood probably indicates the site of a deserted medieval settlement associated with the Domesday manor of Box. An adjacent field to the east is believed to contain the site of its church.

Field Patterns. Variable; usually large and regular or irregular (which is difficult to discern in the field at this scale) but occasionally appearing to be of a smaller scale around the farms. The large common arable fields of the area indicated by the survival of the names such as Churchend Common, probably originated in the late Saxon period and most survived well into the 19th century, in spite of piecemeal enclosure over the centuries. However the area is now dominated by large fields enclosed in the 18th or 19th centuries, and by later, piecemeal, 20th century enclosure. There are also a few small areas where the smaller fields suggest earlier, pre-18th century irregular enclosure. The arable regime led to woodland clearance at an early date, with the remaining areas of ancient woodland surviving only on the higher slopes on the area. Small areas of 19th and 20th century woodland plantation have had limited impact on its character.

Transport pattern. Winding, narrow-verged lanes link to the wooded plateau settlements of the north east, which focus on Dane End. Whemstead (sic) Road marks the boundary between the valley slope and the plateau, while Walkern Road runs north/south below the plateau edge on the eastern valley slope. To the west a network of narrow lanes links Aston village and Aston End to the encroaching but largely concealed housing development on the edge of Stevenage.

MIDDLE BEANE VALLEY - Area 39

Settlements and built form. The central area and the river valley itself are unsettled, but there is settlement at the northern end and Aston village in the west, very close to the eastern edge of Stevenage. Until the mid-20th century Stevenage was a small town on the Great North Road and appears to have had very little influence on the landscape of this area.

The oldest houses in Walkern date from the 17th century, often with Georgian facades over older structures. Its church has a 14th-century tower and a late Saxon sculpture above the south door. Walkern is described in Munby as 'one of the most attractive street villages in Hertfordshire...a medieval pattern of houses along the street, with crofts behind them and hedges marking the boundary with the arable fields behind' (p. 86).

The village has a 13th-century church, and 16th-century cottages, with little building between the reigns of Elizabeth I and Victoria, but considerable development in the last quarter of the 20th century.

There are a few isolated farms, such as Whempstead Gate Farm and Gregory's Farm, but no hamlets.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Rowe, A. The Protected Valley, Hamels Publishing (1999).

Munby, L., The Hertfordshire Landscape, Hodder and Stoughton (1977).



Boxbury Farm, Walkern
(J. Billingsley)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From the outside this area is visible from the west, less so from the plateau to the east, being concealed by topography. The overwhelming impressions here are of remoteness, tranquillity and continuity, a sense that nothing has changed much over the centuries. Within the area there are quite extensive views as there is little woodland and the topography is quite simple.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although this area is similar to the boulder clay plateaux of the north-east of the county, this is its first expression in the centre of the county. It also demonstrates well the south west/north east shift in vegetation patterns across the county, with boulder clay and alluvial gravels on opposite sides of the river, both mixed with chalk.

VISUAL IMPACT

This area is quite widely visible due to its sloping landform and elevated position. It offers extensive views across the Beane valley, which to the east are blocked by the plateau landform. It is a simple, unified landscape of arable fields, rendered more interesting by the often sculptural shape of the landform. Despite the proximity of Stevenage to the west there is very little visual impact from the town.

ACCESSIBILITY

Although readily accessible from both Stevenage and Hertford there are limited recreational opportunities due to the dominance of arable production. A Chain Walk links the extensive footpath network to Watton in the south, and a footpath runs up the valley from Frogmore Hill to Walkern. There are several footpaths from the development on the eastern edge of Stevenage.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The Beane Valley has been promoted by HCC as a special project. There was insufficient data from the community exercise to establish a perceived level of distinctiveness; this area has been estimated as (D).

“Wide open views... a strong visual boundary that masks the urban area of Stevenage from the open countryside and beyond” (Respondent 4353, SPD Consultation 2006).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

- SM : Earthworks in Box Wood
- Areas of Archaeological Significance
- SSSI: Benington High Wood
- Heritage Roadside Verge: Walkern Road

CONDITION

- Land cover change:* Localised
- Age structure of tree cover:* mixed
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:* fragmennted
- Management of semi-natural habitat:* good
- Survival of cultural pattern:* interrupted
- Impact of built development:* low
- Impact of land-use change:* low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform:* prominent
- Impact of land cover:* apparent
- Impact of historic pattern:* continuous
- Visibility from outside:* widley visable
- Sense of enclosure:* open
- Visual unity:* coherent
- Distinctiveness/rarity:* unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

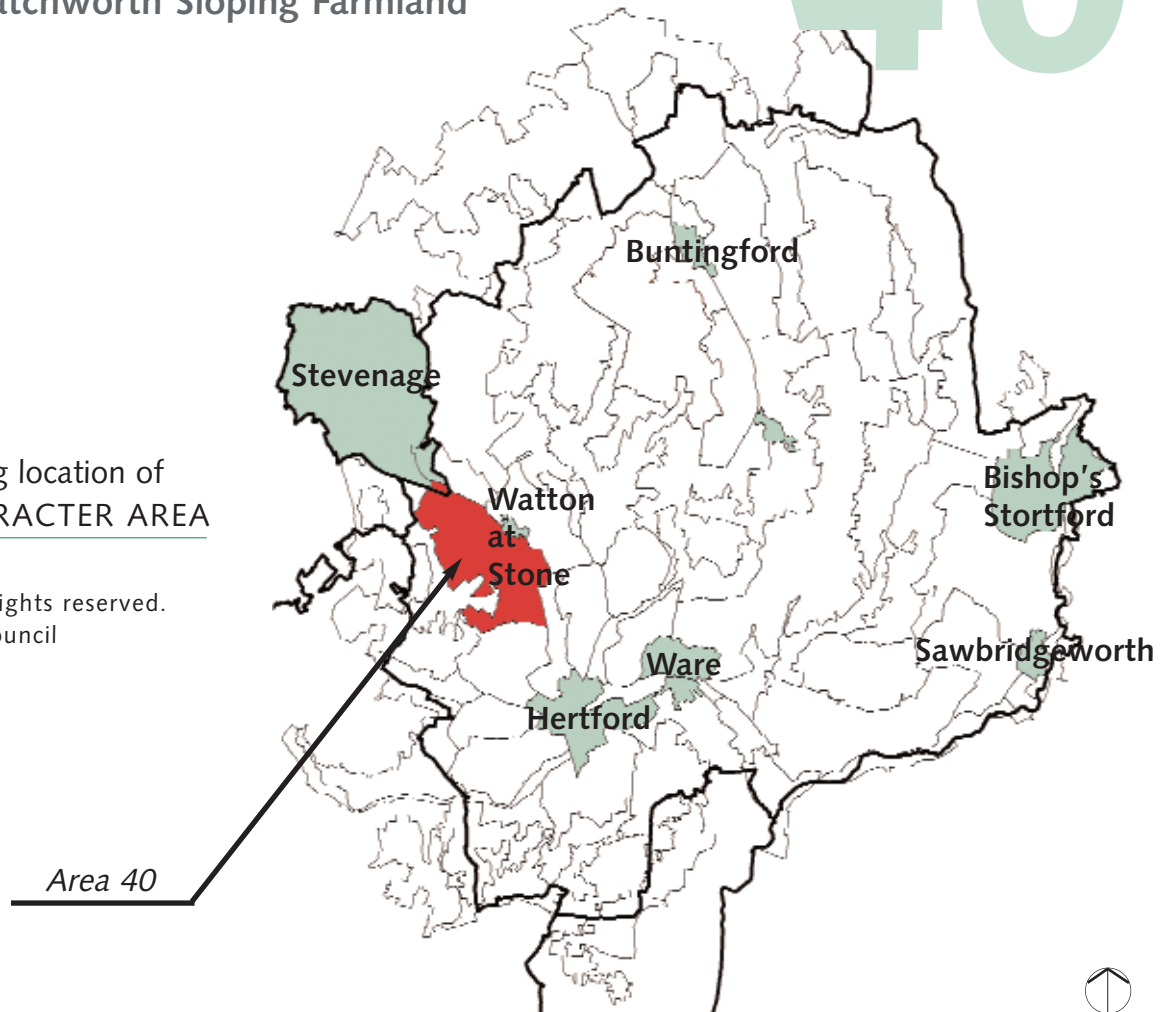
MIDDLE BEANE VALLEY - Area 39

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available, with a particular view to enhancing the quality of habitats adjacent to existing high-quality habitats in the Beane valley
- consider the possibilities of creating circular footpath routes in the area, especially from the re-opened railway station in Watton-at-Stone (adjoining area), to take advantage of views over the sculptural landform
- focus hedging opportunities on internal field boundaries, not those along roads and footpaths which could interrupt views over this area
- encourage the conservation of the existing settlement pattern and resist any extensive development which would significantly affect this
- consider the retention/replanting of trees along the watercourse to reflect its location. Care should be taken to select species that will reflect local distinctiveness and a quasi-waterside location but that can survive without a permanent water source
- continue to manage both the established and young woodlands to the western boundary with Stevenage to minimise the visual impact of the settlement on the landscape to the east
- encourage traditional woodland management measures including coppicing

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

To the south east of Stevenage, between the Datchworth plateau and the upper Beane valley to the east; bounded to the west by Knebworth and to the south by Bramfield Plain.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Undulating and gently sloping large-scale arable farmland with no settlements. Discrete medium to large blocks of woodland frame views over large fields with few hedges, but are insufficient in scale to create strong vertical elements. A long cultivated landscape, lacking variety.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- sloping intermediate area
- extensive views up to plateau woodland and out over distant valley landform
- isolated farms; no settlements
- open, large-scale arable farmland with discrete woodland blocks

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- sinuous open lanes (including Roman road)
- woodland is almost all deciduous ancient woodland
- extensive views towards Stevenage
- arable cropping right up to road edge, with a few good wildflowers
- modern crematorium outside urban edge of Stevenage



Bragbury Lane and edge of Stevenage
 (P. Shears)

BRAMFIELD - Datchworth Sloping Farmland - Area 40

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. East-facing slope.

Degree of slope. 1 in 60.

Altitude range. 75m to 122m.

Hydrology. The north-eastern edge of this area is marked by the Stevenage Brook, a tributary of the river Beane, which delineates the eastern edge of this area. Stevenage Brook is the main tributary of the Beane and helps maintain fish species, despite recent problems associated with low water flows, high temperatures and algal blooms.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land use in this area is arable cultivation, with several areas of woodland linked to the more prominent woodland on the plateau above. There are several chalk pits in the area.

Vegetation and wildlife. Most of the woodland in this area is ancient hornbeam woodland with bluebells, with a linked group just north of the Roman road. There are very few hedges. Field boundaries abut roads without any intervention, although there are a few medium-width verges of considerable wildflower interest. Bramfield Park Wood contains aspen, hornbeam, silver birch, hawthorn, ash, oak, *Viburnum opulus* and sycamore. There is some neutral grassland with cowslips but most tends to be acidic, except where chalk is found at the surface.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is historically an area of large arable fields. The area's significance in Roman times is marked by the Roman road; there are also moated enclosures in Well Wood and Chapel Wood, both Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Bramfield Park is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey, but not earlier.

Field pattern. Large regular and irregular fields, with a distinct radial pattern out from the plateau, narrower in the west, bearing the marks of post-18th century enclosure.

Transport pattern. The roads also follow this radial pattern and, although sinuous, are markedly straighter than those on the plateau, and open. Even the Roman road, linking Welwyn and Watton-at-Stone, although apparently straight on the map is undulating and sinuous, mainly open but partly edged with ragged hedges, small woodland belts or hedgerow trees.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements in this area, only isolated farms of some antiquity (Great and Little Gobions) and Bramfield Park, which has a well-wooded enclosed park. The crematorium on the south-eastern edge of Stevenage, outside the urban envelope, is an anomaly.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

HCC information on historic parks and gardens.

BRAMFIELD - Datchworth Sloping Farmland - Area 40

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is widely visible, both from the Datchworth plateau and from the lower areas on both sides of the river Beane. Similarly, extensive views can be obtained from within the area. It is a large-scale, unified, rather exposed landscape, somewhat monotonous and lacking vertical elements. It is quite tranquil, with occasional distant noise from road traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The radial field pattern of this area is unusual, but not directly distinguishable as a visual landscape feature. The area is perhaps unusual in its unity and lack of variety.

VISUAL IMPACT

The crematorium on the southern edge of Stevenage has a stronger visual impact within this area than the urban area itself. It stands outside the urban envelope, in open arable farmland within which there are few other structures, and is of an unusual design with little obvious attempt at integration, making it a distinctive feature within this area.

ACCESSIBILITY

There are no noted recreational land uses within the area and footpaths and bridleways are almost non-existent..

COMMUNITY VIEWS

There is little evidence that this area is valued for its distinctiveness, although the Roman Road was highlighted. (D).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented/relic
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BRAMFIELD - Datchworth Sloping Farmland - Area 40

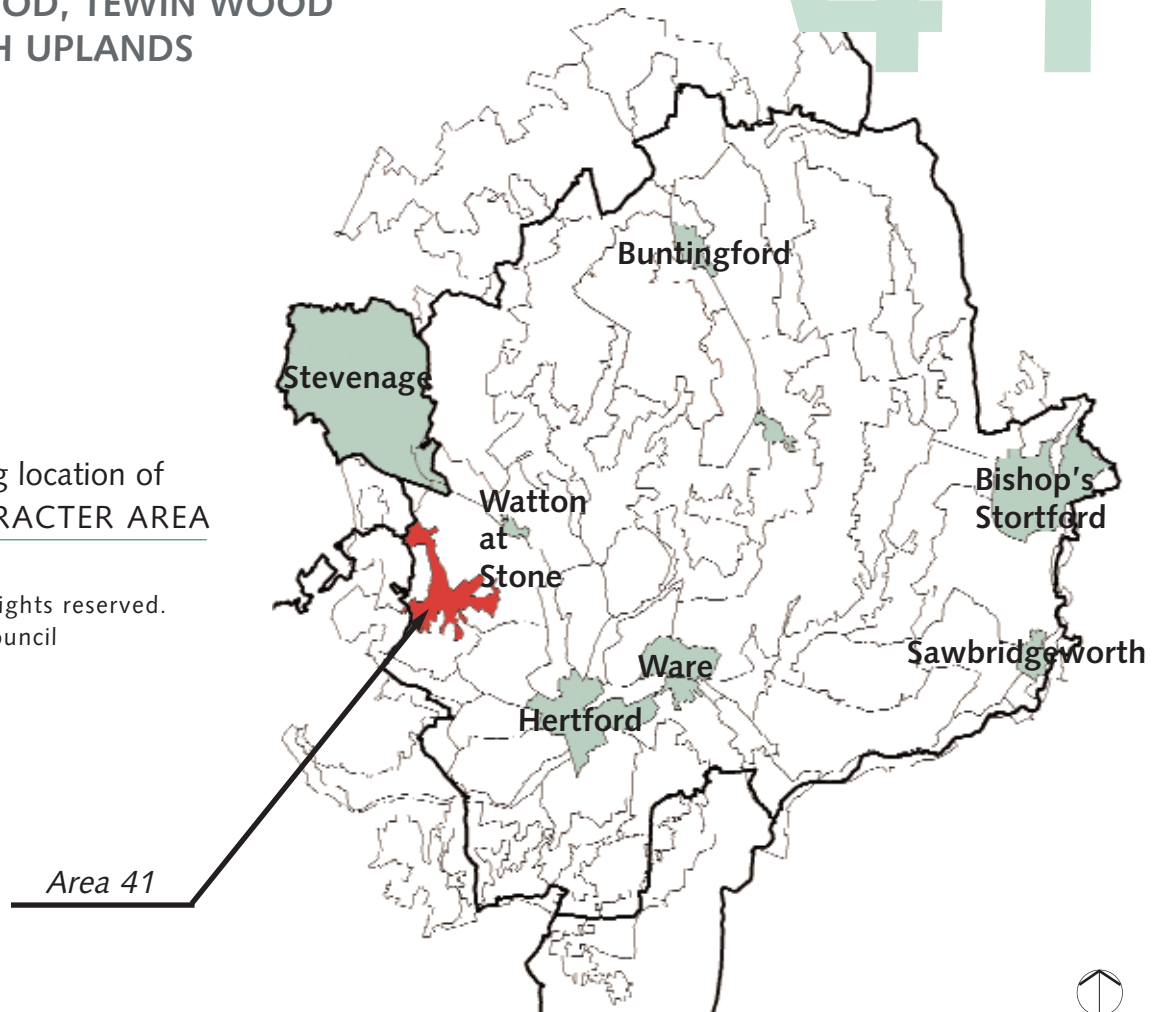
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- encourage the management of existing and the replacement of former hedges, to assist in creating wildlife corridors.
Concentrate efforts on creating linkages between the discrete woodlands
- do not plant hedges along roadsides - in this area wide open views are very characteristic
- encourage the creation of new woodlands related to existing woods, where possible on historic woodland sites and/or linking woodland together. The scale of new woodland should be in scale with the surrounding landscape
- encourage the management of verges to maximise their nature conservation potential, especially with regard to arable weeds and other wildflowers
- landowners and tenant farmers should be encouraged to create and manage verges for their biodiversity and wildlife interest. Similarly, where the reinstatement of former hedges is held to be inappropriate, consideration could be given to the creation of beetle banks, nature conservation headlands and other biodiversity initiatives. Advice and possible grant aid may be available
- support the establishment of agri-environmental schemes in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and Countryside Heritage Areas (CHAs)
- although the crematorium is a very intrusive element in this area, it might be possible to screen it in the long term by creating a new woodland belt to the south. This would have to be of considerable size to blend with the overall scale of the area.

BRAMFIELD WOOD, TEWIN WOOD & DATCHWORTH UPLANDS

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Plateau area incorporating the sub-areas of the Bramfield Woods complex, Burnham Green, Bulls Green and Datchworth, and the settlement of Tewin Wood.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A densely wooded upland area, gently undulating, with settlements of different ages either grouped around village greens or carefully planned within wooded areas. Although woodland is a dominant feature, arable production is also characteristic and prominent, with very little pasture even around the villages. It divides into three sub-areas. The Bramfield Woods area is unsettled and consists of a dense complex of plateau woodlands, with mixed deciduous and conifer plantations, surrounded by large-scale arable fields. Bull's Green and Burnham Green, like Datchworth, are old settlements clustered around extensive village



greens. Tewin Wood, on the south-western part of the plateau, shares the woodland character of Bramfield Woods but contains 20th-century settlement.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating upland plateau
- extensively wooded arable farmland
- several linked settlements of varying ages
- tall mixed hedgerows around settlements screening views out, with no verges
- lack of hedges or hedgerow trees within arable farmland
- intimate blend of settled, forestry and agricultural land use
- mainly tranquil but with heavy road traffic at peak hours
- tight road network of sharply winding enclosed lanes
- quite remote, with filtered views of Stevenage in distance to north west
- frequently gloomy due to density of vegetation
- different ages of settlements

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- village greens, some with formal recreational facilities
- Tewin Wood planned settlement
- arable production extends to settlement edge
- extensive views out; very limited views within, due to extensive woodland and tall hedgerows
- *water tower* - since demolished

Bramfield Woods
(HCC Landscape Unit)

BRAMFIELD WOOD, TEWIN WOOD & DATCHWORTH UPLANDS - Area 41

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep fine loamy and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils, over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hornbeam 3 series). Reading gravels on the plateau.

Topography. Gently undulating upland

Degree of slope. Level, locally 1 in 190

Altitude range. 110m-122m

Hydrology. There are a few ponds locally, but no watercourses

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly a mix of ancient woodland/plantation and small settlements edging out on the plateau spurs (c. 60% of total area), with significant arable farmland interlocking with the woodland. There is a little pasture around the settlements, but this is not typical, and a few local nurseries on the edge of settlements. Local variation in land cover defines the sub-areas. Bramfield Woods has no settlements but a strongly defined mix of woodland and arable cultivation. Tewin Wood is densely settled within extensive woodland, with little farmland. Datchworth has no woodland and the village is surrounded by extensive arable cultivation, from which it is separated by tall, dense hedges within and around the edge of the village, which gives it a rather wooded character.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woodland cover is extensive and interlocking, with different species in the different coupes of the Forestry Commission managed woodland. The dominant species are oak/hornbeam/bracken (*Quercus robur* and *Quercus rubra*) with elm, sycamore and holly, with some conifers (Corsican pine) in Bramfield Wood and willow, hawthorn and a little beech elsewhere. A significant local feature is the presence of very tall mixed hedges without verges, typically of holly and hawthorn with some hornbeam, within and on the edge of the settlements. Elsewhere, the medium height hedges are generally fragmented, with occasional new planting, or have declined into tree rows through lack of management. Typical species are hawthorn, field maple and holly, with hornbeam locally. At Bulls Green the acidic grassland tends to heath and this is one of the few locations in the county of alder buckthorn.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is an apparent and widespread pre-20th century pattern throughout this area, exemplified by the pattern of ancient woodland and small medieval settlements, which are usually centred around an extensive village green (Datchworth Green, Burnham Green, Bulls Green). Datchworth Green now has a suburban character due to 20th-century development. The purely 20th-century settlement of Tewin Wood is unified by its evenly-sized plots within mature woodland.

Field pattern. The field pattern and scale of the arable land is now consistently medium to large regular, with discontinuous field boundaries and arable cultivation right up to the settlements.

Transport pattern. The road pattern is sinuous and linear, linking the settlements, except to the north of Datchworth, where it is more intricate. Within Bramfield Wood the lanes are winding and sunken.

Settlements and built form. The various 'green' settlements have medieval origins, with a variety of building styles and ages.

- Datchworth has a small flint church, originally 13th century, formerly enclosed by a moat, which included the original Bury. It is the focus of a scattered parish of a number of 'greens' and a convergence of several green lanes. There is a Roman road on

the south side of the green, with fine oaks and ashes. Hoppers Hall is a timber frame and plastered gabled 17th-century building.

- Queen Hoo is a small early Elizabethan brick hunting lodge at the southern edge of the plateau, with extensive views over the Mimram valley. It is described in Munby as '*an impressive Elizabethan brick hunting lodge set in a tangled Saxon landscape*'.
- Tewin Wood, originally planted up for shooting, was sold by Lord Desborough in 1925 to Homeland Garden Estates Ltd, who divided it into individual building plots 200 by 600 ft in area. Development continued slowly during the 1940s, and in the 1960s the remaining plots were sold on and developed in smaller units.
- Sally Rainbow's Dell commemorates a local 'witch' who was fed and placated by local farmers to prevent her casting spells to blight their crops.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Munby, L., *The Landscape of Hertfordshire*, Hodder and Stoughton (1977).

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

Public exhibition on the history of Tewin in the village hall, 5th July 2000.

BRAMFIELD WOOD, TEWIN WOOD & DATCHWORTH UPLANDS - Area 41

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From the outside this area is widely visible as a wooded ridge above an area of gently sloping arable farmland, within which the settlements are screened from outside view. Views within the area are very limited, due to the presence of extensive woodland blocks and tall hedges throughout, which often give a gloomy cast and sense of confinement to the area. The scale of landscape elements is medium, with some large woodland blocks, while the settlements are compact within this. There is a coherent quality to the character of this area, despite the different ages of the settlements, due to the dominance of woodland as a major landscape element. It is a tranquil area, except during rush hour, when the winding, narrow road network is heavily used by commuters.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unusual combination of settlements within woodland

VISUAL IMPACT

As there are so few views out from this area, the impact of built development elsewhere is insignificant. Similarly, the settlement within the area is screened from the wider landscape by woodland. There is a sense of being high and contained locally, with extensive open areas on the perimeter. The usual transition

zone from pasture around settlements to arable within the wider landscape is absent in this area, and arable cultivation encroaches right up to the settlements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: walking, hiking, horseriding. Almost non-existent footpaths in northern part but good in south; widespread in woodland.

Condition: fair except where trampled by horses, but generally unsurfaced.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The wooded and settled landscape area of Tewin Wood is valued for its distinctiveness (C), as is the mixed woodland landscape of Bramfield Wood (C). Some aspects of the Datchworth landscape are also valued for distinctiveness, but not as highly (D).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Bramfield Woods is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its woodlands.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: wide spread
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BRAMFIELD WOOD, TEWIN WOOD & DATCHWORTH UPLANDS - Area 41

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage planting of locally indigenous species within plantation coupes
- where new development on plateau is deemed appropriate, ensure that it both respects the existing settlement pattern and is well screened from outside views, possibly with new woodland belts on the plateau edge
- encourage the Forestry Commission to publicise its red oak plantation in autumn - it must be magnificent - and to take the opportunity to provide information on the importance of ancient woodland and plantations
- manage the woodland to achieve age diversity of locally indigenous species and to maintain a species-rich ground flora, as well as expressing different forms of management, such as high forest, coppice and coppice-with-standards
- encourage the creation of rides and glades in the woodland to increase biodiversity and improve public access
- encourage the creation of eco-corridors, such as hedges, beetle banks and wide field margins, within the arable farmland to link more diverse areas, such as the woods
- encourage the development and maintenance of wide verges along roadsides, to encourage arable wildflowers; do not plant hedges in these locations

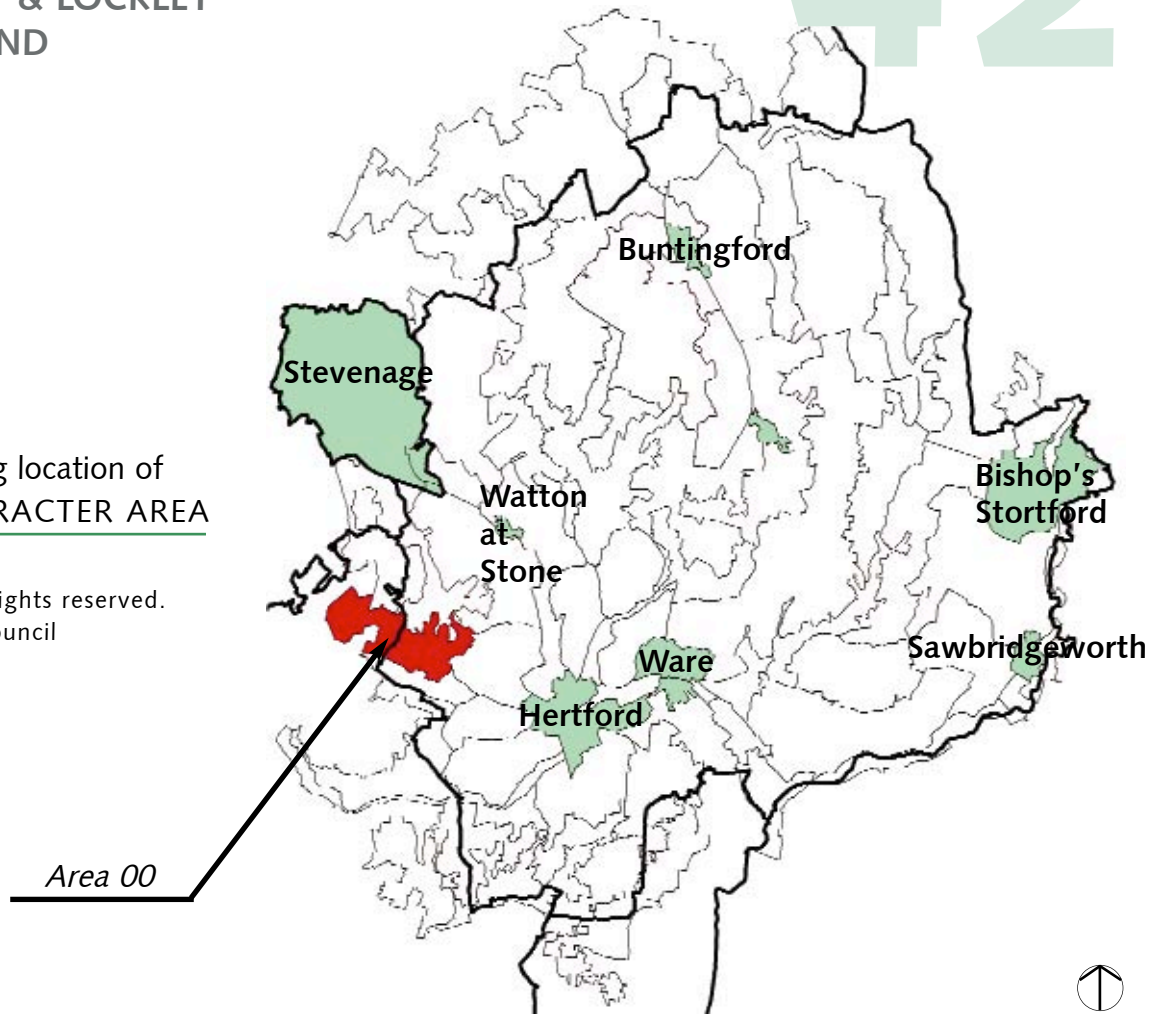


Woodland along Bramfield Road
(HCC Landscape Unit)

TEWIN, DAWLEY & LOCKLEY ESTATE FARMLAND

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

A rectangle bounded by the A1(M) to the west, Oaklands and the Datchworth plateau to the north, the B1000 to the south and Bramfield to the east. It is divided into three sub-areas: Lockley estate farmland, Dawley Wood farmland and Tewin village.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This area is a south-facing, strongly undulating rural slope consisting of mixed arable farmland and woodland, readily distinguishable from the surrounding urban and suburban settlements associated with Welwyn. The Lockley estate farmland and Dawley Wood farmland share the settlement of Digswell as a

boundary, while Dawley Wood and Tewin share the Mimram valley parkland boundary. Although each sub-area has distinguishing characteristics, they are unified by their over-riding shared physiographic characteristics. Lockleys has a strong pattern of arable farmland and woodland blocks, with some parkland features around the farm on its summit and many mature oaks. Dawley Wood farmland is less unified by management and has south-facing views over the Mimram to the Haldens part of Welwyn Garden City, so that it is less remote than Lockleys. Tewin village's views to the south are filtered by vegetation along the river and around the edge of the Panshanger part of Welwyn Garden City. The village is a strong feature within the arable farmland around it, contained by woodland on three sides.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- strong pattern of woodland and arable farmland on a strongly undulating canvas
- three enclosed, discrete areas on a south-facing slope
- extensively wooded
- well managed farmland partly fringed by urban development
- retains some tranquillity, especially to the east, despite constant motorway and frequent railway noise

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- mature parkland oaks within Lockleys



Hempstall Spinney hornbeam coppice woodland
(P. Shears)

TEWIN, DAWLEY & LOCKLEY ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 42

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The eastern part of this area, around Tewin, consists of deep fine loamy soils over clay, with slowly permeable subsoils over plateau drift (Hornbeam 2 series). The Lockleys estate and farmland east of Digswell lie on soils of the Marlow series, being well-drained loams and clays over plateau and river-terrace drift. Chalk is evident on the surface at Dawley Warren, with gravel present on the minor ridges.

Topography. South-facing undulating slope; a series of minor parallel dry valleys into the Mimram.

Degree of slope. 1 in 20 (Lockley and Dawley); 1 in 35 (Tewin).

Altitude range. 65m to 122m (Lockley and Dawley); 55m to 115m (Tewin).

Hydrology. The River Mimram (with the A1000) forms the southern boundary of this area. There appears to be little drainage into it from these slopes.

Land cover and land use. This area is a mix of arable farmland and woodland, with some mixed farmland in the Dawley sub-area, with pasture around the farmhouses. Lockleys has a unified estate character and limited parkland around the house. Tewin village shares some characteristics with the plateau settlements above.

Vegetation and wildlife. Extensive broadleaf woodland cover on the gravel interfluvies, consisting of hornbeam coppice with occasional sweet chestnut standard, holly, silver birch, ash and oak, with bluebells and dog's mercury in the understorey, as well as chalk flora in some places. There are some conifers within Dawley Plantation and an orchard/nature reserve at Tewin. The whole area generally lacks hedges and verges, although there are some wet ditches and individual relic hedgerow oaks (mature). At Lockleys there are also mature parkland oaks, avenues of mature oaks and some grassland. Dawley Warren, now within Dawley Wood, was formerly a firing range where surface chalk was used to form firing platforms. It is now rough ground with chalk flora.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is a distinctive planned landscape which bears the traces of man's influence over many centuries. On the south-western edge of Lockleys the remains of a Roman bath house has been preserved beneath the A1(M), and a Roman villa have been excavated nearby. Both are now Scheduled Monuments. The earliest record of a deer park at Lockleys is 1766 and it was a warren (for breeding rabbits) until the early 19th century. It lost some coherence from later enclosure. The village of Tewin is ancient but strongly influenced by the Cowper family, who owned the Panshanger estate and much of this farmland from 1720 to 1953. The bulk of the Cowper estates in Tewin and Digswell were sold in 1953 to pay death duties and were subsequently developed as settlements. Tewin also has a Grade II listed house by Cecil Kemp, built in 1936.

Field pattern. Within the farmland the field pattern is regular and medium to large in scale, while the woodlands provide a consistent geometric pattern.

Transport pattern. Although the area is bounded by a strong road and railway transport network (the A1(M) and the A1000), within it there are few roads, all of them linking Tewin to other areas. The main access within this area is via footpaths.

Settlements and built form.

- Tewin is a scattered village of 16th to 20th-century houses around a pleasant elongated green and it has a yellow brick school house (now a private residence) dating from 1823. Visual continuity is derived from the unified style and colour of the 19th-century estate cottages within and beyond the settlement. Yellow brick estate dwellings and red brick farmhouses often bear the Cowper family crest and their date of construction.
- Lockleys is a fine brick house of 1717, now part of Sherrardswood School. It is described thus in *The Mystery of George Edward Dering: 'a beautiful house in a beautiful setting, and it still looks like "an enchanted castle" as you come upon it through the trees'*. (*Hertfordshire Countryside*, Vol. 22, No. 102, October 1967). The plan of an important Roman villa in its grounds is marked out in turf and brick.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

TEWIN, DAWLEY & LOCKLEY ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 42

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside, this area is concealed by development and transport and enclosed by vegetation. Access is difficult, with few roads within the area, and it appears to be a very contained landscape. Within the area there are extensive southerly views, generally limited to east, west and north by woodland. It is of a medium scale, with a match between the scale of the woodlands and the field pattern which contributes to its visual unity. Dawley Wood is somewhat smaller in scale than the other sub-areas. Its apparent remoteness is belied by the lack of tranquillity due to the ever-present road traffic noise and occasional train over the viaduct. This impact diminishes further east within the area, but is never entirely absent.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The evident historic continuity of this area is quite unusual. The Roman villa at Lockleys is currently unique.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is a widespread visual impact within the area from built development and the transport corridor in the west. Although the A1(M) is not visible, there is a permanent noise impact. There are extensive views southwards over Welwyn and Digswell, although Oaklands and the plateau villages are well screened. It is likely

that there has been some loss of parkland around Lockleys to arable cultivation, but the relic hedgerow oaks remain.

ACCESSIBILITY

There are local footpaths through the arable areas and the woodland. They tend to be narrow and unsurfaced.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The landscape around Tewin is regarded as distinctive and within the village Tewin Orchard is one particular place that is highlighted (C). Some aspects of the Dawley landscape are valued for their distinctiveness (D). The Lockleys landscape includes some valued and distinctive aspects (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

TEWIN, DAWLEY & LOCKLEY ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 42

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage landowners to conserve veteran trees and to replant as necessary. Ensure that information on grant aid and advice is readily available
- encourage the retention of mixed farming around farm buildings, particularly where this cannot be linked to eg ESA payments
- ensure that further development of the surrounding settlements is adequately screened by vegetation so as not to diminish the local distinctiveness of this area
- ensure that any development within the Tewin envelope respects the existing settlement pattern and form and is adequately screened from within the area
- consider the implications for views from this area when assessing development proposals on the northern edge of Welwyn
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- disseminate information on the importance of chalk grassland, to encourage its retention in this area
- encourage natural regeneration or the planting of native trees of local provenance when plantations are being replanted
- protect ancient woodland by planting buffer zones of native species around them, where possible respecting historic woodland boundaries and linking discrete woods to provide ecological corridors
- build on existing local knowledge of ancient hedgerows to encourage their retention and new planting where appropriate, especially around settlements



Edge of Digswell village from south west (P. Shears)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Variable band on south-facing slope of Mimram valley between Digswell Water and the western edge of the Panshanger estate, west of Hertford. It is bounded to the south by the A414 and B1000 and includes part of the course of the river Mimram.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A consistent parkland character overlies any change in topography throughout this sinuous ribbon of floodplain pasture and woodland. Twentieth-century development and the busy transport network mask this character in some places.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow ribbon of floodplain pasture and woodland
- isolated farms and mills along length and at foot of slope

- dense boundary parkland generally precludes any views in
- limited diversification to commercial activity in river valley outside parklands
- pasture in river valley with some arable. Arable on gentle valley slopes
- abrupt transition to urban edge

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- parkland boundary planting
- river Mimram
- fish ponds and associated evergreen vegetation at Tewin Bury
- veteran sweet chestnut at Tewin Water
- Digswell Viaduct visible at western end
- pollarded hornbeam on hillside at Marden Hill



Tewin Meadows bridge
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

MIMRAM VALLEY PARKLANDS - Area 43

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep, well-drained fine loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty, over glaciofluvial drift (Ludford series).

Topography. River floodplain and gentle south-facing valley slopes.

Degree of slope. 1 in 40 (max).

Altitude range. 44m to 76m.

Hydrology. The Mimram is a relatively fast-flowing, gravel bedded chalk stream with a wide range of species and extensive marginal growth. It is one of the most natural rivers in the county, being least affected by abstraction and discharges, and is regarded by English Nature as the best chalk stream in East Anglia/Midlands. Fed by chalk springs, it flows mainly through parkland and agricultural land. Its middle reaches flow through several important wetland habitat complexes and the river is designated 'salmonid', indicating its suitability for trout and grayling.

Land cover and land use. This area consists of parkland, with a mix of pasture and wetland vegetation in the floodplain and arable and broadleaf woodland on the valley slopes. The primary land use is arable wooded farmland, while the secondary land uses include commercial ventures and pasture (cattle in parkland). There is evidence of significant farm diversification in ventures within this area, such as a change from farming to a hotel/conference centre and from watercress to fish farming.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woodland cover is very extensive, especially around the perimeter of the individual parklands, and the hornbeam at Marden Hill includes parkland pollards. Within the floodplain the dominant species is willow with alder; elsewhere the main mature species are hornbeam, oak and sweet chestnut. There are several notable veteran sweet chestnut at Tewin Water. In addition there are many mixed and variable young plantings, including conifers, generally associated with mineral extraction screening but in some instances likely to be relic game coverts. A series of alluvial meadows and marshes bordering the Mimram at Tewinbury is designated SSSI. It consists of mixed glyceria and reed swamp with associated carr developed in old cressbed lagoons; alder carr with rich ground flora; and neutral grassland (at Archers Green) with associated conservation species of green-winged orchid, snakeshead fritillary and corn cockle. This is one of the most important species-rich river valley complexes in Hertfordshire. Rare invertebrates, otters and many bird species can be found in this area.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this area is still apparent and widespread. It should be noted that the history of this area has been one of destruction and renewal since at least the mid-18th century, when the Earls Cowper bought up the notable houses around Tewin and demolished them, before building Panshanger. The modern road pattern tends to follow the historic park boundaries to north and south and there are no accessible internal roads or tracks within the parklands.

- Tewin Water was the home of the Beit family (diamond magnates, philanthropists and associated with Cecil Rhodes) during the 19th and early 20th century. It is now a school within the remains of a late 18th-century landscape park of some 30ha. There was a deer park here in 1766. Repton was consulted on the grounds and produced a Red Book in 1799. His plan related to his general scheme for landscaping the Mimram valley and the Panshanger landscape. The river was dammed below the house to create a lake and woodland was planted along the northern shore.
- Marden Hill: significant gardens show on all maps from 1766 onwards.

Field pattern. Field boundaries are either estate fencing or overgrown hedgerows, usually of oak or ash. Boundaries are more often oak or ash copses or plantation, to screen views in, frequently mature or over-mature. Field sizes vary from small (pasture) to medium (arable).

Transport pattern. The boundaries of the parklands are defined by the road network, with the B1000 marking the southern boundary of the area against the outskirts of Welwyn Garden City. Digsweil Viaduct, at the western end of this area, marks the advent of the railway in the 19th century and is '*sometimes called one of the seven wonders of Hertfordshire*' (*Hertfordshire Countryside*, Vol. 19, No.77, p.229).

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area, which is characterised by country houses and isolated farms. Eighteenth-century red brick former stables can be found at Marden Hill Farm, together with a 16th-century weatherboarded barn and octagonal brick stockhouse. At Tewin Water Farm there is a brick lodge of oval plan, with a rustic portico of four tree-trunk columns. Tewin church is partly 11th-century.

- Marden Hill was built in 1790-94 as a plain block of yellow brick. In 1819 Sir John Soane added a four-column porch.
- Tewin Water is described in Pevsner as '*a new and handsome house*' in 1819, having been rebuilt in 1798 in neo-Greek style with a west front of seven bays
- The Digsweil viaduct which is visible at the western end of the area is an austere structure designed by Lewis Cubitt between 1848-1850 and used bricks dug and fired on site. It is 1,560 feet long and nearly 100 feet high.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
 English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens*.
Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, pp. 54/55.
 English Nature SSSI notification.

MIMRAM VALLEY PARKLANDS - Area 43

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside, this area is largely concealed by boundary woodlands, with very limited views from the A414. Views within the area are very limited, due to lack of access, and are generally framed by wetland vegetation. The scale of the landscape elements is small to medium and it has a very contained, coherent character. It is not tranquil, with constant distant noise from road traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unusual area for its scale and the unity and completeness of the focus of the parkland on the river. This stretch of the Mimram has been highly regarded for its scenic beauty since at least the end of the 18th century (see below). The SSSI contains some county rarities.

VISUAL IMPACT

Although new roads have in general followed old park boundaries, there is still a strong local impact from road transport and built development, such as farm diversification within the floodplain. The impact of land-use change within the area is less palpable. There has been some change from pasture or parkland to arable

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: fishing (signs for). Waymarked routes and footpaths are localised rather than widespread and there is no access to the private parklands.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This is a distinctive and valued valley landscape(C). *'The whole of the beautiful valley from Welwin (sic) to Hertford, including Digswell, Tewin Water, Panshanger and Cole Green, belonging to the same noble family...while each possesses its independent privacy and seclusion, their united woods and lawns will by extending through the whole valley, enrich the general face of the county.'* Repton in his Red Book of suggested improvements to Tewin Water for Henry Cowper, 1799

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The lower Mimram is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its wetlands and woodlands
 SSSI: Tewinbury
 Tewin Water is Grade II listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	extensive
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	wide spread
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	localised
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

MIMRAM VALLEYS PARKLANDS - Area 43

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- ensure that future development proposals within this area reflect and protect its historic parkland character
- ensure that future development proposals for adjoining areas are adequately screened to prevent impact on the character of this area
- encourage local landowners to retain and manage pasture
- encourage local landowners to maintain the existing high quality of the Mimram watercourse and banks and to manage its riverbanks to increase biodiversity
- encourage linkages between the different wetland habitats along the Mimram, to increase biodiversity
- support the establishment of agri-environmental schemes within ESAs and CHAs (Countryside Heritage Areas)



Tewin Meadow
(HCC Landscape Unit)



Footbridge over Tewin Water
(P. Cullens)

PANSHANGER PARKLAND

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

From the western edge of Hertford westwards along the Mimram valley; circumscribed by the B1000 to the north and the A414 to the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Relic historic ornamental parkland with dense wooded boundaries and extensive mineral excavation, developed around the valley of the river Mimram. Little remains of the historic buildings within the park, but Repton's landscape design has not yet been completely obliterated, although screened from public view. The parkland character is of grazing pastures fringed with beech woods.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- focused on valley of river Mimram
- designed parkland
- dense boundary plantations
- many veteran trees
- extensive and important habitats

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- lack of views into the park
- destruction of most buildings within the park
- mix of historic deciduous and modern mixed-species amenity planting on boundaries
- potential heritage treasures screened from public view



Panshanger Park floodplain and slope
(P. Shears)

PANSHANGER PARKLAND - Area 44

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well-drained fine loams and sands, locally flinty or over gravel, over glaciofluvial drift (Ludford series). The river Mimram has cut right through to the underlying chalk.

Topography. The local topography demonstrates the effect of a breakthrough from an interglacial lake, whose rapid drainage and draw-down led to erosion of the hanging valleys, of which Panshanger is the most obvious example in the county.

Degree of slope. 1 in 20 at the steepest point; more generally 1 in 26. The fall along the river Mimram through the parkland is 1 in 340.

Altitude range. 44m to 76m

Hydrology. The Mimram is a shallow, relatively fast-flowing, gravel-bedded chalk stream, with a wide range of characteristic species. The river bisects the park and broadens out into a lake in the north west. There is a series of springs along the eastern reaches of the river and three ponds.

Land cover and land use. The parkland farmland is mainly in arable cultivation and pasture, with significant water meadows along the Mimram and extensive woodland belts. The whole parkland, with the exception of a small area in the east, has consent for mineral extraction. There is no longer a grand house within the park and the focus of land use has changed accordingly.

Vegetation and wildlife. Extensive woodland, particularly along the boundaries. The Panshanger Oak, known to be over 500 years old and the largest maiden (i.e. non-pollarded) oak in Britain, stands in the former Pleasure Gardens. An engraving in George Strutt's *Sylva Britannica* of 1826 shows it at 19 feet circumference. It is now 42 feet in circumference at breast height. Panshanger is designated SSSI for its wood pasture and parkland status, with many trees known to be about 1000 years old, over 500 veteran trees, mainly oak, and for its heathland and neutral grassland, which can be found in the areas of former lawns around the house. It is important for invertebrates, with many notable species recorded; there are also records of protected birds and mammals within the site.

- Broadwater Meadow is the most important grassland, with at least 106 species of flowering plant recorded. It also supports a 3ha site of alder carr with associated flora and fauna. There are also areas of ancient oak-dominated woodland with bluebells and dog's mercury, but former stands of willow and osier have largely gone. Along the Mimram there are extensive, diverse marginal plant growth and stands of wetland tree species.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Since 1720 the Cowpers had owned a large house at Cole Green. In 1756 Capability Brown was called in to landscape that estate (roughly the south-west quarter of the present Panshanger estate). In 1806 Repton was brought in to advise the 5th Earl, then the largest landowner in Hertfordshire, on the design and siting of a new house. Panshanger was constructed on the other side of the Mimram in the castellated Gothic style, of bricks made on site with a concrete coating, and incorporated an Elizabethan farmhouse already on the site, which was possibly within the deer park first recorded in 1749. It became a centre of culture and lavish entertaining '*full to the brim of vice and agreeableness [sic], foreignness and ruses*'. In 1919 some 1458 acres of the estate was sold to Ebenezer Howard and became the first part of Welwyn

Garden City. '*All that is left of Panshanger are remnants of the admirable landscape created after Humphry Repton's plan of 1799....The views from the N of the valley past the trees down to the series of lakes created by the widening of the river Mimram are still superb, one of Repton's most perfect schemes.*' (Pevsner, p. 269).

Field pattern. The whole estate is classified as informal parkland and it therefore lacks a field pattern. It is not known how divisions between arable and pasture are enforced. Originally the estate would have been grassland or wood pasture, therefore possibly common land during the medieval period and until it became part of the Cowper estates in the 17th century.

Transport pattern. The A414 was constructed in 1974 through the Mimram valley and has somewhat destroyed the integrity of the southern edge of Panshanger.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within Panshanger, and few buildings, most of them having been demolished. There is an 18th-century mill on the Mimram. The house was demolished in 1953 and the estate has been worked for sand and gravel since 1960. Now only the Orangery, walled nursery garden, the stables and some associated farmhouses, estate cottages and four lodges, of Victorian yellow brick, remain.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire.

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

It is not possible to provide an assessment of this area because of difficulties in gaining access.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This was a unique landscape, and traces of its former beauty apparently remain (see Pevsner quote above). It remains to be seen what the post-extraction restoration will bring.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are very limited views into the parkland, which is particularly well screened by historic and modern boundary planting. The extensive but localised mineral extraction is therefore generally well screened but the change of use and disturbance of the historic fabric can be detected. Modern mixed tree plantings have been used to reinforce the historic, more limited range of tree species in the boundary plantings and new site entrances have been created which do not reflect the historic land use.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a Chain Walk through the parkland south of the Mimram, and a short public footpath across the north-eastern edge of the parkland adjacent to the western edge of Hertford. There are no other public footpaths within the parkland.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Panshanger Park is recognised as a distinctive and valued parkland landscape (C).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

County Wildlife Site

Grade II* in English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens*

CONDITION

Land cover change: wide spread
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmennted
Management of semi-natural habitat: poor
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: insignificant
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: not known
Visual unity: not known
Distinctiveness/rarity: unique

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

PANSHANGER PARKLAND - Area 44

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- ensure that mineral extraction does not destroy significant landscape features and remaining structures or areas of ecological significance
- encourage discourse to secure public access to relic historic built features within parkland, with due regard to public safety issues
- encourage the planting of native species used in historic boundary plantings wherever reinforcement planting is required
- ensure that restoration after extraction respects the relic parkland and reinforces it where possible
- ensure that mineral extraction does not affect the water table within the parkland, with potential consequent impact on vegetation
- ensure that the SSSI status of the parkland is adequately protected, with particular reference to wood pasture, veteran trees, heathland, neutral grassland and alder carr



River Mimram marginal vegetation
(P. Shears)

WELWYN FRINGES

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Curving belt between Welwyn and Hatfield, bounded by the A1(M) to the west, the River Lea valley to the south beyond Hatfield and the Mimram valley parklands and Cole Green to the east.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An urban fringe belt around the eastern flanks of Welwyn, with a wide range of land uses, from recreation through arable cultivation to mineral extraction. While the western end of this area, squeezed between Welwyn and Hatfield, has very obvious urban-fringe land uses, the area to the east is more rural, with arable cultivation and some blocks of woodland.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- mainly gently undulating land on the northern valley slopes of the river Lea
- proximity of large settlements very obvious, via transport network and land uses
- open, with large woodland blocks
- disturbed or restored mineral extraction sites

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- railway, pylons and major road transport network: A1(M), A414, A1000, A6129
- fly-tipping



Fishing lake from former mineral workings at Holwell Court Farm (P. Shears)

WELWYN FRINGES - Area 45

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Mainly deep, well-drained fine loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty, over glaciofluvial drift (Ludford series), with deep fine loamy over clay soils over chalky till to the east (Hornbeam 3 series).

Topography. Gently undulating with localised mounding. Flat around Panshanger aerodrome.

Degree of slope. 1 in 70

Altitude range. 65m to 80m

Hydrology. There is some drainage into the river Lea, not significant enough to be named, and many ponds and lakes associated with former mineral workings.

Land cover and land use. Mainly arable cultivation and recreation, with a small aerodrome, golf course, fishing lake, sewage works, woodland and small areas of pasture. Part of The Commons is a local nature reserve, but there appears to be no public access to the remainder of the woodland. The extensive mineral extraction site at Holwell Hyde has been restored to pasture, arable and a well-used fishing lake. The surrounding land is in large-scale arable cultivation.

Vegetation and wildlife. The south-western part of this area was formerly alluvial floodplain pasture with alder woodland, with arable cultivation on the upper slopes, but is now an area of mainly urban fringe development. The Commons is a unique area of totally secondary woodland, of elm and sycamore, with very mixed plantation flora. The Holwell Park estate supports ancient semi-natural hornbeam woodlands with an associated spring system. In addition to the woodland blocks the southern edge of Welwyn (Hatfield Hyde) is well screened by mature trees and the local network of lanes is well hedged, with tall thorn hedges and many medium hedges with ash or hornbeam standards, as well as individual mature oaks. Other species found in this area are hazel and blackthorn, while Great Captain's Wood is hornbeam with silver birch and cherry. Some former field boundaries have been planted with poplar and white poplar.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Much of the historic alluvial floodplain and estate pattern of this landscape has been disturbed or lost, to development, mineral extraction or WWII disturbance. In 1919 Ebenezer Howard bought 1,458 acres of the Panshanger Estate, which became the first part of Welwyn Garden City. The relics of WWII depots and army camps are still visible at the western end of this area and the aerodrome at Panshanger was used as an RAF training field. Starting in the 1930s, a vast artificial plateau was created at Holwell Hyde, using London waste to infill a massive gravel extraction complex. It has since been returned to secondary grassland and arable use. There are no settlements within the area. Holwell Court Farm, Holwell Manor, Holwellpark Wood and Holwell Hyde Farm indicate a formerly extensive estate. (A 'hyde' is a Saxon land measurement (120 acres) used as part of the process of assarting, that is, enlarging the area of cultivated land around the edge of a manorial settlement).

Field pattern. The remaining field pattern is large-scale and regular.

Transport pattern. The few lanes are sinuous and level, while the major road transport pattern (A1000, A6129, A414) is modern.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within the area and very few isolated dwellings and farm buildings. The aircraft hangars at Panshanger aerodrome are quite well concealed by woodland.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This is a rather bleak and seemingly forgotten area, useful for hiding utilities necessary to the nearby urban centres and providing low-key recreation on former minerals sites. It is rather large in scale, with large individual elements such as the aerodrome, the minerals sites, etc. and the areas of woodland, but lacks coherence due to the variety of land uses. On the southern edge of Welwyn Garden City an area bounded by the A6129 and the A1000 now has so many urban-edge land uses as to have lost any rural character.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The Commons is regarded as a unique area ecologically, although the local landscape could not be described as distinctive.

VISUAL IMPACT

The southern edge of Welwyn is well screened by vegetation and the main visual impacts are from utilities and transport, with busy traffic on the A414 and pylons overhead.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Lea Valley Walk/Cole Green Way and chain cycle track links Welwyn and Hertford. There is a byway (farm track) between Holwell Hyde Farm and Hertford Road (A414), with a link across disused workings to the Lea Valley Chain Walk; also a circular walk within and to the east of the Panshanger part of Welwyn Garden City.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area includes a significant range of elements valued for their distinctiveness (C) (possibly due to their proximity to large settlements).

CONDITION

Land cover change: Localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

WELWYN FRINGES - Area 45

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available.
- where further mineral extraction is proposed, ensure that restoration proposals conform to existing landform and land use; if restoration to arable cultivation is proposed, especial care of topsoil will be essential
- encourage the use of low-density grazing as a management technique and maintain unimproved pasture wherever possible
- restore distinctive rural features where possible, especially along the cycle track. This could include new hedge and tree planting (where historically appropriate), using locally distinctive species of local provenance, and restoration to pasture in the floodplain.
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors. This could be particularly appropriate along the southern edge of this area, where new golf courses could be managed to provide semi-natural habitat and a link between riverside and woodland habitats.
- promote the expansion of woodland beyond ancient woodland boundaries, especially where this will help in creating habitat links and could assist in providing vertical elements to balance the large-scale horizontal elements in this landscape area.
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats
- encourage woodland planting of native species local to the Character Area on poor quality agricultural land, where this is in keeping with local landscape character, is on the site of former woodland or can provide an ecological link to other woodlands or habitats.



Poplars Green. Boundary with Mimram Valley parklands (HCC Landscape Unit)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Linear area south of Lea Valley (West) between the eastern edge of Hatfield Park and the south-western edge of Hertford, bounded to the south by wooded upper slopes and the plateau.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently undulating north-facing arable slopes, interrupted locally by extensive mineral workings. Generally unsettled, with isolated farms and tiny hamlets within hidden valleys. Dwarfed by the steeper wooded slopes to the south but with good views out over the river Lea.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating arable slopes between the Lea floodplain and the small arable plateaux and associated steep slopes to the south
- north facing
- separated from river valley by B158 just above floodplain
- extensive mineral extraction
- narrow wooded valleys cut back into steeper slopes above

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- impact of mineral extraction



View over Lea Valley from Bedwell Park golf course (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep fine loamy over clay soils over chalky till (Hornbeam 3 series).

Topography. Gently undulating north-facing slope with intermittent stream valleys.

Degree of slope. 1 in 65 (locally 1 in 30 to 1 in 100)

Altitude range. 55m to 75m.

Hydrology. Upper valley slopes of river Lea, with streams (Essendon Brook) flowing north to river. Gravel bournes or summer-dry 'brooks' occur naturally across this area, with very steep banks.

Land cover and land use. Treed arable farmland with discrete woodlands. A considerable amount of the arable farmland has been lost to mineral extraction. Limited pasture.

Vegetation and wildlife. Variable, discrete woodlands of oak/ash and some hornbeam, with a mix of ancient woodland and plantations. Mainly in arable cultivation, with some former pasture gone to scrub. Hedgerow species are oak and ash with hawthorn. There are also hawthorn hedgerows with oak and ash standards. Pollards Wood contains many veteran trees and is a remnant of formerly more extensive woodland cover. The growth of secondary woodland on common strips on the edge of settlements is particularly notable around Brickendon.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is a landscape with a regular post-1800 medium to large-scale field pattern with consistent hedgerow boundaries, except where these have been disrupted by 20th-century land uses such as golf courses and mineral extraction. The hidden valleys that run back into the steeper wooded slopes to the south have retained their historic landscape and buildings.

Field pattern. The field boundaries are of variable size and content. In the main they are treed hedgerows, that is, overgrown hedgerows which now consist mainly of trees with some shrubs, but they have been heavily degraded by mineral extraction.

Transport pattern. From the B158 in the valley small sinuous sunken lanes with treed hedgebanks, some of them mown, climb the slopes to the south. There are no verges along these roads.

Settlements and built form. There are no large settlements within this area, simply small groups or isolated houses or farms, generally in vernacular style and well screened from the road, tucked up into the narrow valleys. Building materials in this area are red brick or black weatherboard with tiled roofs. Farm buildings are small in scale and frequently of black weatherboard.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is widely visible from the upper slopes to the south and from the northern slopes of the Lea valley, particularly along the A414. Within the area, views are generally filtered by vegetation, particularly the dense hedgerows and treed hedgerows. It is a tranquil area, apart from occasional noise from the B158 and is a medium-scale contained landscape of generally coherent visual unity. Locally this is disrupted by young planting within the golf course which does not reflect the historic avenues and other planted features within the former parkland.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Arable farmland on shallow slopes is a fairly typical feature of the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

This area suffers from the localised impact of 20th-century land use, not built development but mineral extraction, a dominant land use with high impact. In general, the mineral extraction land use is contained within the landform and by vegetation. In particular, the large mineral extraction site within the Lea valley is widely visible within the lower part of Bedwell Park. Although that site lies outside this area, this is where its impact is most visible.

ACCESSIBILITY

The B158 is not suitable for use as a footpath, although it is an extension of the Lea Valley footpath. There are several lateral footpaths linking to the settlements on the plateau above.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is hardly remarked upon (E).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	extensive but localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	incoherent/interrupted
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

ESSENDON - Brickendon Farmed Slopes - Area 47

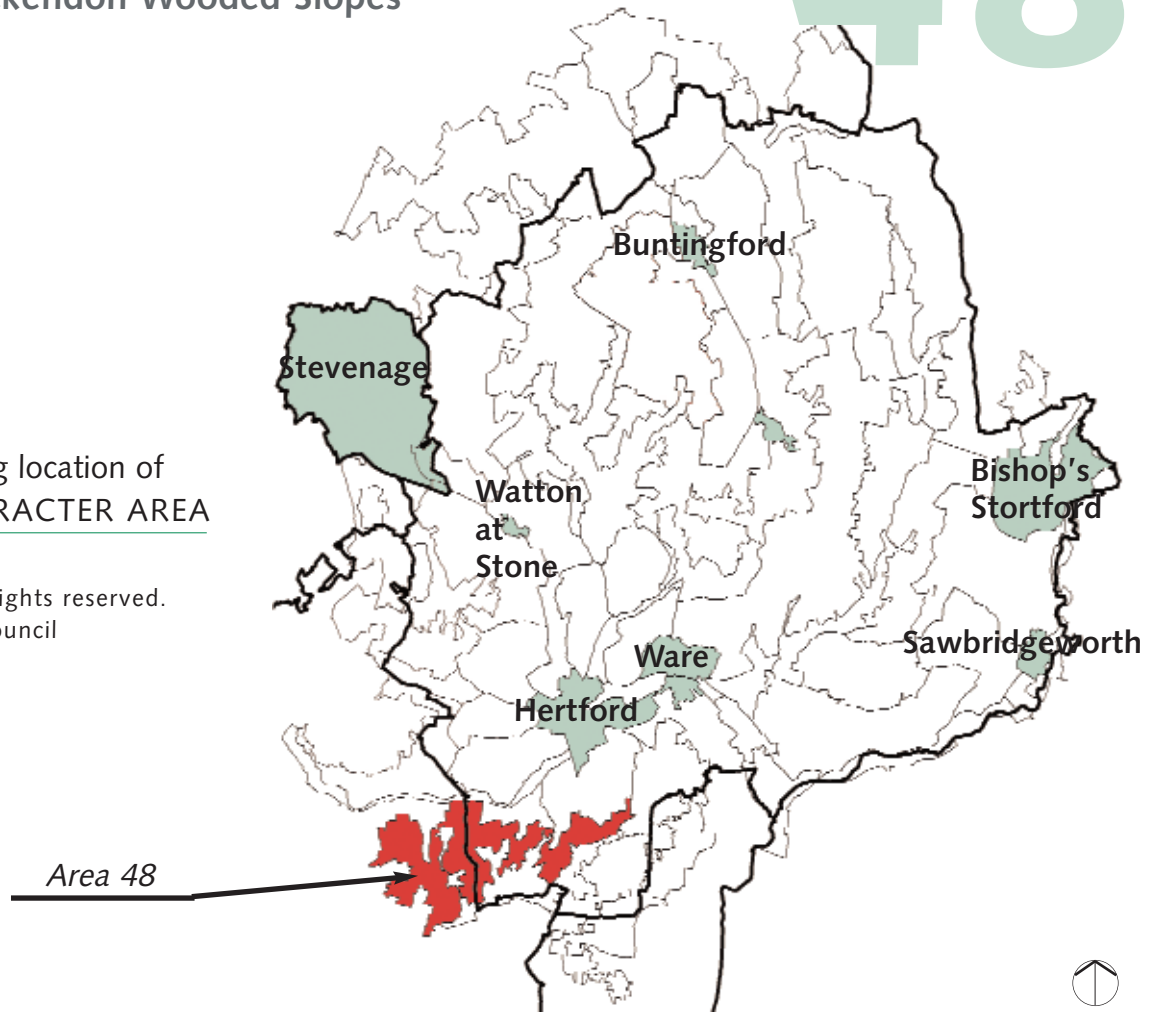
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- no development that would result in permanent damage to the historic landscape fabric of this area will be permitted. This applies particularly to ancient woodland and parkland
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- ensure that any future proposals for mineral extraction include restoration proposals that reflect local landscape character, especially in terms of their scale. Restoration could be to grassland or arable, but efforts should be made to re-create the historic hedgerow and woodland pattern. Restoration schemes should be carried out progressively and promptly to an agreed timetable.
- ensure that the brooks are managed in such a way as to maintain their ecological interest and biodiversity, i.e. that they are not taken into arable cultivation or mineral extraction
- ensure that proposed improvements to the landscape within Landscape Conservation Areas will reinforce and contribute to the distinctiveness of the local landscape character, by reflecting the scale and land use of the area

WEST END - Brickendon Wooded Slopes

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Amorphous area between West End in the west and the southern edge of Hertford Heath in the east, and between the arable, north-facing slopes of the Lea valley to the north and the small plateau to the south.

landscape pattern, remote and enclosed, with a small, domestic scale. Densely wooded and treed, with a clear pattern of irregular fields with tall treed boundaries and good views across the Lea valley. Here arable conversion does not appear to have had a negative impact on hedges.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Steeply undulating wooded slopes, clearly differentiated by topography, woodland and age of settlement from both the arable slope to the north and the small plateau to the south. Very articulated and complex topography, with parkland and ancient settlements strung out along winding undulating lanes. An 'old'

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- small ancient settlements
- intricate road system
- extensive broadleaf woodland
- strongly undulating north-facing landform
- small woodland blocks and tall dense hedges
- very private area, with discreetly concealed parkland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- flint houses and walls
- mature hedgerow oaks, young mature hedgerow ash
- ancient settlements with 16th-18th century cottages
- lodges and boundary woodland associated with parkland



View of West End Farm from A414 showing double slope (P. Shears)

WEST END - Brickendon Wooded Slopes - Area 48

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils over Tertiary clay (Windsor series).

Topography. Very undulating north-facing slope with many minor valleys.

Degree of slope. 1 in 35.

Altitude range. 75m to 120m.

Hydrology. A few hidden streams in woodland; artificial lakes and ponds in parkland.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly wooded farmland and parkland. Most land uses are well screened from view, except for the golf course in Bedwell Park. The farmland consists mainly of pastoral fields, often in equine occupation, with some arable.

Vegetation and wildlife. Woodland cover is extensive and interlocking, particularly with the screening woodland belts around parkland. It is complex in origin, a mix of ancient and secondary woodland as a result of late medieval clearance. The dominant species are oak/hornbeam and ash, with some elm. Field boundaries are prominent and of several types: low to medium thorn hedges with oak or ash standards; tree rows, ie., overgrown hedges, again of thorn, oak and ash; very tall elm hedges; or a low hedge on a bank, usually mixed with hornbeam. Hedgerow trees are either mature oak standards or young mature ash standards. North of Little Berkhamsted there are some veteran oak pollards, while Great Groves contains the locally rare wild service tree. There is some wet rush pasture towards the summit; elsewhere most cattle pasture is now equestrian grazing.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area appears to have remained largely untouched by the 20th century. Most of the settlements are small and medieval in origin, with few modern developments. Deer parks (Camfield pre-1766; Bedwell pre-1406) have evolved into parklands and the pattern of fields and woodlands appears to have changed very little over time. In Stocking Lane, Bayford, just east of the village, there is a moated site which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Parklands include:

- Camfield Place (home of the late Barbara Cartland and previously frequently visited by Beatrice Potter). It is 19th century Italianate with a water tower, a small 18th-century stable block and early 19th-century lodges and gates to Hatfield Road.
- Bedwell Park is a late 17th-century building in extensive parkland, which was formerly a medieval deer park. It is now a golf course with tree belts, an avenue, clumps, ponds and lakes and a walled kitchen garden. Repton is thought to have worked there but there is no Red Book. The exterior of the house is gabled Tudor with a battlemented tower and ornate lodges dating from 1861.
- Culverwood House parkland is well screened and the house is set on the plateau above.

- Essendon Place, now in institutional use, but marked by very fine early 18th-century wrought iron gates.

Field pattern. The field pattern is irregular, with small to medium size fields.

Transport pattern. This area has a very organic pattern of winding, undulating and sunken roads linking small villages, hamlets and isolated farms. Verges tend to be narrow, and some are ditched.

Settlements and built form. Dwellings in this area are notably older in origin and style than those on the plateau, and feature soft red and blue brick (often in a chequerboard pattern), black weatherboard and clay pegtile roofs. They are found only at the western end of the area (West End and Wildhill). Farmhouses are of white weatherboard or white render and there is considerable use of flint (with red brick) for buildings as well as walls.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000), p.141. HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

WEST END - Brickendon Wooded Slopes - Area 48

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Although the topography and location of this area make it widely visible from the north, it is not possible to discern details within the area, due to the dense woodland and hedgerows. Similarly, within the area views are short and limited by vegetation, with few views out. This small-scale, very contained landscape of woods, treed field boundaries and irregular fields, has a coherent and distinctive common pattern. It is a tranquil area, with comparatively little road traffic on minor roads and no railway.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is a very unusual area by virtue of the combination of landform, settlement and land cover. The parklands are not/no longer considered to be of especial historic value.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development within this area is negligible - the older linear settlements sit well in the landscape. There is some apparent land-use change, from pasture to arable, but this is one of the few areas within which this change to arable appears to have had little impact on field boundaries.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths, bridleways and waymarked routes are widespread throughout the area. Their condition is fair; they are of variable width, usually with a mud surface.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

'In the woodland, where the sunlight splashes from leaf to leaf, spangling a moist earth carpeted with rusty leaves, dead sticks and creeping moss, and along the lanes, narrow and winding with many a hill and blind bend, you could feel yourself 100 miles from anywhere, yet the rim of London is only half-a-dozen miles away.'
A description of Bedwell Park in 'Essendon - the village on a hill', Herts. *Countryside*, Vol. 19, No.77, pp.206-09.

There is little evidence that this area is valued for its distinctiveness but some local sites within it are mentioned (E).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	extensive
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

WEST END - Brickendon Wooded Slopes - Area 48

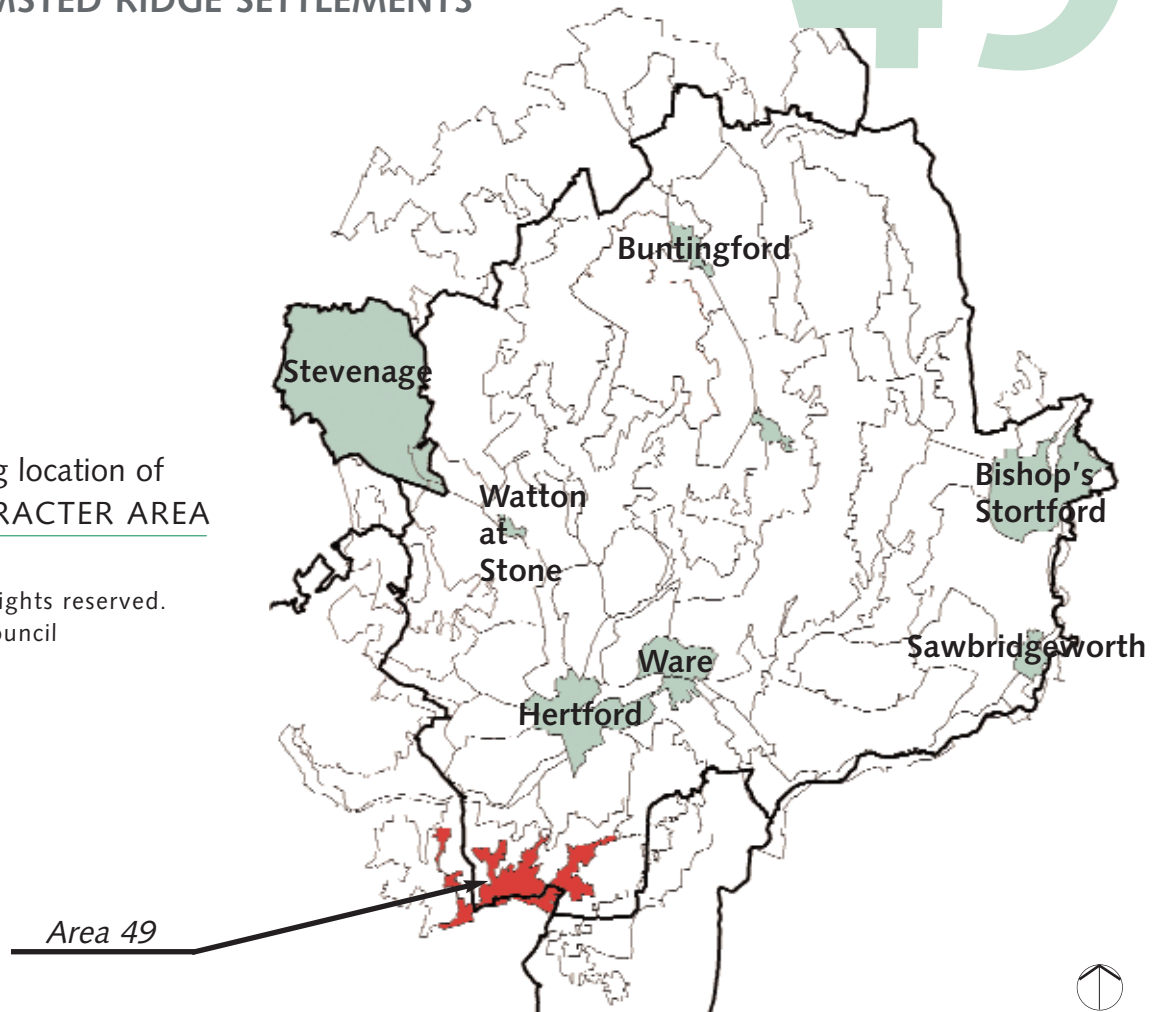
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage local farmers to resist further change from pasture to arable
- encourage local farmers to retain unimproved pasture and grazing animals other than horses
- ensure, via SPG if necessary, that developments in equine recreation respect the character of the area, especially in the detail of boundary treatments and buildings
- development proposals that would result in permanent change to the historic landscape character of this area will not be permitted
- promote woodland/farm management as a means of increasing biodiversity, by maintaining a 5-20m rough grassland strip around arable field margins and woodland edges
- golf courses should only be permitted in historic parklands where:
 - i) the original layout and features of the parkland can be retained;
 - ii) existing trees are retained and adequate provision is made for their maintenance and management;
 - iii) all new tree and shrub planting either uses species already present within the parkland, in similar designs, proportions and mixes, or uses locally native species where these would be more appropriate;
 - iv) a buffer zone can be created around any historic artefacts, to protect their historic integrity;
 - v) a long-term management plan is submitted with the planning application and adhered to. Periodic review with interested parties will be necessary.
- promote through education and access the multiple uses of ancient woodland and woodland products
- encourage the management of woodland to ensure age diversity, a species-rich ground flora and a variety of management types, such as high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture
- promote the planting of locally indigenous species only, of local provenance where possible
- encourage the provision of better surfaced rights of way, to encourage greater use of the rights-of-way network. Consider separate provision for pedestrians and equestrians
- consider the provision of small, low-key car parks to improve access to the footpath network
- golf courses should only be permitted within historic parklands where:
 - i) the original layout and features of the grounds are retained;
 - ii) existing trees are retained and adequate provision is made for their maintenance and management;
 - iii) fairways and greens are designed to complement the historic designed landscape with regard to their location and extent;
 - iv) all new tree and shrub planting either uses species already present within the parkland, in similar designs, proportions and mixes, or uses locally native species where these would be more appropriate;
 - v) a high proportion of the total area should be dedicated to and managed as wildlife habitat, building upon established areas of wildlife interest already present;
- vi) all new waterbodies should be designed to be either naturalistic or in keeping with historic waterbodies already present;
- vii) all (and only) necessary buildings and structures are designed to be in keeping with the primary age of the remaining historic character of the site;
- viii) a long-term management plan should be submitted with the planning application and adhered to. Plans to be reviewed periodically via meetings of interested parties (liaison groups). English Heritage have published new guidelines on Golf in Historic Parks and Landscapes.

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED RIDGE SETTLEMENTS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Small plateau south the of the Lea Valley West, surrounded by steep slopes.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A small settled plateau of several very narrow 'finger' ridges, each of which has a settlement at its extreme end, with extensive views out over wooded valleys and the Lea valley to the north, where vegetation permits. Around each settlement pasture gives way to arable and views out are frequently screened by small blocks of woodland or hedges.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating narrow plateau
- settlements at extreme end of each 'finger'
- some older buildings, but mainly 19th and 20th-century in style
- limited views out due to density of vegetation
- pasture around settlements gives way to small to medium arable fields

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Bedwell Park house and lodges
- Stratton's Folly
- settlement at ridge ends



Transmitter
near Little Berkhamsted
(C. Bailey)

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED RIDGE SETTLEMENTS - Area 49

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged coarse loamy over clayey soils, over plateau and river terrace drift (Essendon series). Variable London clay with Reading gravels and boulder clay over.

Topography. Gently undulating plateau.

Degree of slope. 1 in 80 to 1 in 120.

Altitude range. 89m to 126m.

Hydrology. Only artificial ponds and lakes, but this is a wet plateau because of the poor drainage through the London clay and there are many ponds.

Land cover and land use. This is a lightly wooded and very settled area, with mixed farmland, chiefly small pasture fields and odd small copses. Some woodland appears to be poorly managed.

Vegetation. Locally tall elm hedges around the villages, elsewhere medium hawthorn hedges with oak, ash and sycamore, often untended, and hybrid Midland thorn, hazel and hornbeam, with some holly. Tree rows. Lime avenues associated with parkland. Brickendon Green is a key acid grassland site and Dalmonds Farm Meadows is a key neutral grassland site, with additional species-rich heathy grasslands around Bayford and at Ashendene and Claypits, where butcher's broom is a rare indicator of wood pasture origins.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The pre-20th century pattern of this area is apparent throughout, in the settlements and field pattern and the density of tree cover. There is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Coldharbour Moat, in woodland at the junction of Tyler's Causeway and Woodfield Lane and a deer park is recorded at Little Berkhamsted in 1337 and at Bedwell in 1406. The county's Record Office holds a record dating from 1475 about the export of 62 loads of charcoal from Little Berkhamsted to London.

Field pattern. Field sizes are mixed - medium to large arable, often lacking field boundaries, plus small pasture fields around settlements, usually well hedged or fenced.

Transport pattern. The villages in this area are linked by narrow winding lanes on the plateau and to the wider landscape by straight roads which plunge off the plateau into the dense woodland below.

Settlements and built form. The settlements in this area, Essendon, Little Berkhamsted and Bayford, occupy a position at the extreme end of each finger of the plateau, overlooking the valley below, while Brickendon occupies a wider upland area.

- Brickendon is an archetypal English village, with black-painted weatherboard farm buildings and red brick cottages clustered around a large village green, on which five oaks have been planted to celebrate each sovereign from Victoria to Elizabeth II. Some buildings date from the 17th century, and there are many examples of black weatherboard, clay tile and red brick, plus 20th-century non-vernacular design and materials.
- Essendon is a medieval settlement at the ridge end with vernacular building styles and extensive use of vernacular materials, such as white and black weatherboard and some flint, as in the church.
- Bayford village also occupies a ridge end position and extends slightly downhill, with red-brick estate cottages with large dormer windows and some mid-18th century red brick private houses of substance.
- Little Berkhamsted has several large red-brick Georgian houses near the church and a red brick Folly Tower erected in 1789 by John Stratton, with classical cornices and battlements. It has the appearance of a lookout and is visible over a wide area.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, p.82.

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED RIDGE SETTLEMENTS - Area 49

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are many views up to but not into the plateau, while from within there are occasional extensive views over the valley to the north, but by no means from every point. This makes it quite a contained landscape, despite its open character. It is tranquil, unified by the pattern of settlement, the topography and the land cover, and is of small to medium scale.

Rarity and distinctiveness. There are other areas within the county which have this pattern of ridge-top settlements, but they lack both the historic character of this area and the surrounding belt of dense vegetation on the upper slopes.

VISUAL IMPACT

The settlements make an important contribution to the local landscape but are generally not very visible from outside. There is a clear distinction in land cover and scale between the pastoral and the arable farmland, with a gradual increase in scale with increasing distance from each settlement.

ACCESSIBILITY

Some Chain Walks and byways are linked to the local road system, providing good access to all the settlements.
Condition: fair to poor - often impassable to pedestrians in wet weather due to equine use.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Of Essendon: *'in a pocket of deeply rural country almost unique in south Hertfordshire'* (W. Branch Johnson); *'In Essendon itself, with its views all ways where the trees part...'* (Herts. Countryside, Vol. 119, No. 77).

This large area is recognised as having various locations of value for their distinctiveness, especially the villages (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: wide spread
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: intact
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED RIDGE SETTLEMENTS - Area 49

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- proposed development within the settlements will need careful consideration to ensure that local landscape character is not compromised by a change of scale or inappropriate non-vernacular design
- encourage the planting of woodland on poor quality agricultural land, using locally native species of local provenance, where this is on the site of former woodland or can provide a link to other woodlands or habitat. Do not encourage woodland planting on former grassland areas, rather encourage their reversion to heathy grassland
- ensure that any proposed woodland planting will contribute to the local landscape rather than impoverishing or destroying an existing and valued habitat or historic artefact
- consider clearing some of the secondary woodland from common edges, especially the narrow bands frequently found on the edge of settlements, and encourage their reversion to heathland/acidic grassland and possible use for recreational purposes. Cut timber could be sold to local inhabitants and the cleared areas managed by grazing. Issues of animal safety/welfare would have to be addressed near public highways
- ensure that any proposed improvements to the landscape within Landscape Conservation Areas will reinforce and contribute to the distinctiveness of local landscape character
- promote the retention of mixed farming in this area
- establish realistic and attractive countryside management schemes for all sites with heathland and acid grassland/scrub communities

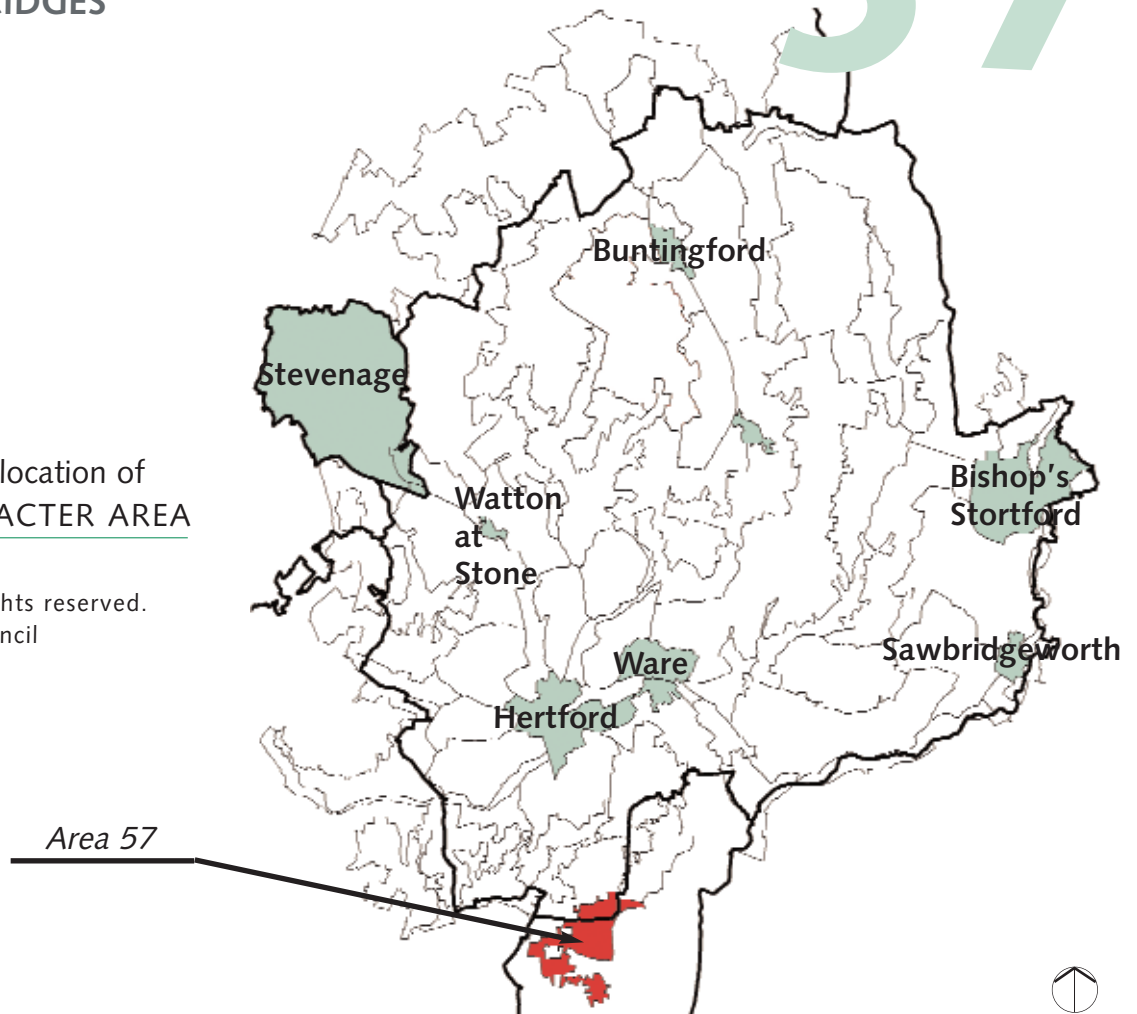


Walking near The Folly (Stratton's Tower) at Little Berkhamsted (C. Bailey)

THUNDERFIELD RIDGES

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Northern edge of Hammond Street north to Wormley West End, bounded to west by Wormley Wood and to east by Park Lane Paradise. A relic area of similar character remains to the south, squeezed between the increasing housing development around Hammond Street and Goff's Oak.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Very rural area dominated by wave-like landform and opportunity for extensive long-range views. A small-scale mixture of woodland and pasture with limited 19th and 20th-century development. From the northern edge of Hammond Street a



distinctive pattern of fields and strip woodland can be seen at Wormley West End. South of Hammond Street new housing development is rapidly obliterating a similar relic field pattern.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- small-scale co-axial field system within extensive woodland fringe
- distinction between pasture and woodland on the slopes and built development on the narrow flat ridges (20th century) or in the valley (pre-20th century)
- system of east-west narrow ridges with small streams in the narrow valley bottoms, echoed in the alignment of roads and fields
- linked blocks of ancient woodland
- small scale and very rural
- very limited views within area, except from ridges
- impact of built development on southern part of area

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- horsiculture, with very limited cattle grazing
- very extensive north-easterly views
- sharply right-angled narrow lanes with tall hedges
- older settlement in valley with several large 19th-century houses
- loss of former nurseries to housing

View west of co-axial field system north of Hammond Street (Environmental Land Management Service (Rural Estates) HCC)

THUNDERFIELD RIDGES - Area 57

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. A mix of seasonally waterlogged poorly drained clay soils over Tertiary clay (Windsor series) or plateau and river terrace drift (Essendon series).

Topography. Strongly undulating series of east-west ridges and valleys

Degree of slope. 1 in 12

Altitude range. 50m to 95m

Hydrology. Rags Brook, Turnford Brook and Wormleybury Brook all flow eastwards towards the Lea valley

Land cover and land use. A distinctive mix of treed pasture and woodland in small parcels. These fields are grazed mainly by horses, but there are some cattle. There are also a few large glasshouses for nursery production, and significant housing development around Hammond Street. This area was formerly a focus of nursery production, most of which is now disused and derelict or given over to new housing.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woodland is entirely broadleaf ancient semi-natural oak/hornbeam and birch/bracken woodland, with nature reserves to the east and north west. The dominant woodland species are oak and ash, with field maple and elm. There are important networks of old hedges (hornbeam and blackthorn) and old lanes along the ancient boundaries. Field boundaries are most often very tall (elm) on the higher ground or medium height without standards, or overgrown, usually of hawthorn and field maple. Acid grassland - former cattle pasture - is found in the valleys to either side of the important stream complexes.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The pre-20th century landscape pattern of this area is widespread and apparent in the northern half, but is being eroded and engulfed in the southern half by housing development. It is likely that this co-axial landscape pattern is both extensive (to the north a similar pattern can be traced within the Wormleywood/Hoddesdonpark Wood complex) and ancient, dating possibly from the Iron Age.

Field pattern and field size. Each field forms a narrow north-south rectangle, its consistent pattern reinforced by the broad treed field boundaries, which are generally prominent but variable, consisting of treed hedgerows, medium to high hedgerows without trees, fences, and hedge banks with no verges. These lines of consistently equal fields are bounded to

north and south by a series of parallel east-west lanes or brooks, forming a very distinctive small-scale regular but sinuous pattern.

Transport pattern. The road pattern is regular and unusual, consisting of east-west lines on the ridgetop or in the valley, linked by densely-hedged acutely right-angled lanes down the slopes. Park Lane Paradise/Holy Cross Hill marks the eastern boundary of this area, formed by that of a medieval deer park and therefore curved, while Bread and Cheese Lane is extremely angular, possibly denoting later enclosure. Verges, where present, are generally very narrow.

Settlements and built form. In this area settlements take the form of isolated farmhouses or linear bands of houses along the few lanes. Wormley West End is an old settlement with buildings in black weatherboard or brick and tile, now a 17th to 20th-century mix of farms and bungalows, plus several large 18th / 19th century houses in large gardens. Beaumont Road is a linear settlement of mainly 20th-century houses and some earlier/larger with extensive grounds. The relic area to the south was formerly home to an immigrant Italian community, allied to the nursery business, but most of this has been lost to housing development of the late 20th century.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From high points on roads and footpaths within the area it is extremely visible and extensive views north and east to Hoddeson are available. Within the valleys views are contained by the topography and vegetation. The scale of landscape elements is mixed, with small fields and large blocks of woodland combining to give a sense of coherent visual unity in the northern part of this area, which has been lost further south. There is a sense of enclosure within the valleys, while the ridges are open. There is little intrusion from traffic or aircraft and it is a tranquil area to the north, while to the south the accumulation of unrelated housing development is visually jarring. North of Hammond Street extensive views can be obtained over this area and the Lea valley to the north east.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The very distinctive northern half of this area is the only clearly visible example in southern Hertfordshire of a traditional co-axial field system. It is possible that this system is very old - there are examples elsewhere in the country that are known to be pre-Roman - and is of significant historic value, the more so because it is still in traditional use. It is probably unique in the county and most unusual nationally. It seems likely that the area to the south was very similar, but much of this has now been lost to housing.

VISUAL IMPACT

The most distinctive visual feature is the small field pattern carved out of the woodland and the shaws (linear tree belts) at Wormley West End. There is localised impact from built development on a significant scale. This links the southern part of the area to the very urban areas adjoining, and makes the rarity of the northern part more apparent. Pylons are visible within the area, matching the scale of the woodland. There is also localised impact from structures such as glasshouses for nursery production.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses are riding and walking. There are several footpaths within the area, but fewer bridleways. However, the condition of the footpaths is poor - they tend to be narrow, muddy, of variable width and poorly maintained, with a mud or grass surface.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area has some distinctive aspects, particularly the more wooded northern end (D).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	incoherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unique

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

THUNDERFIELD RIDGES - Area 57

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

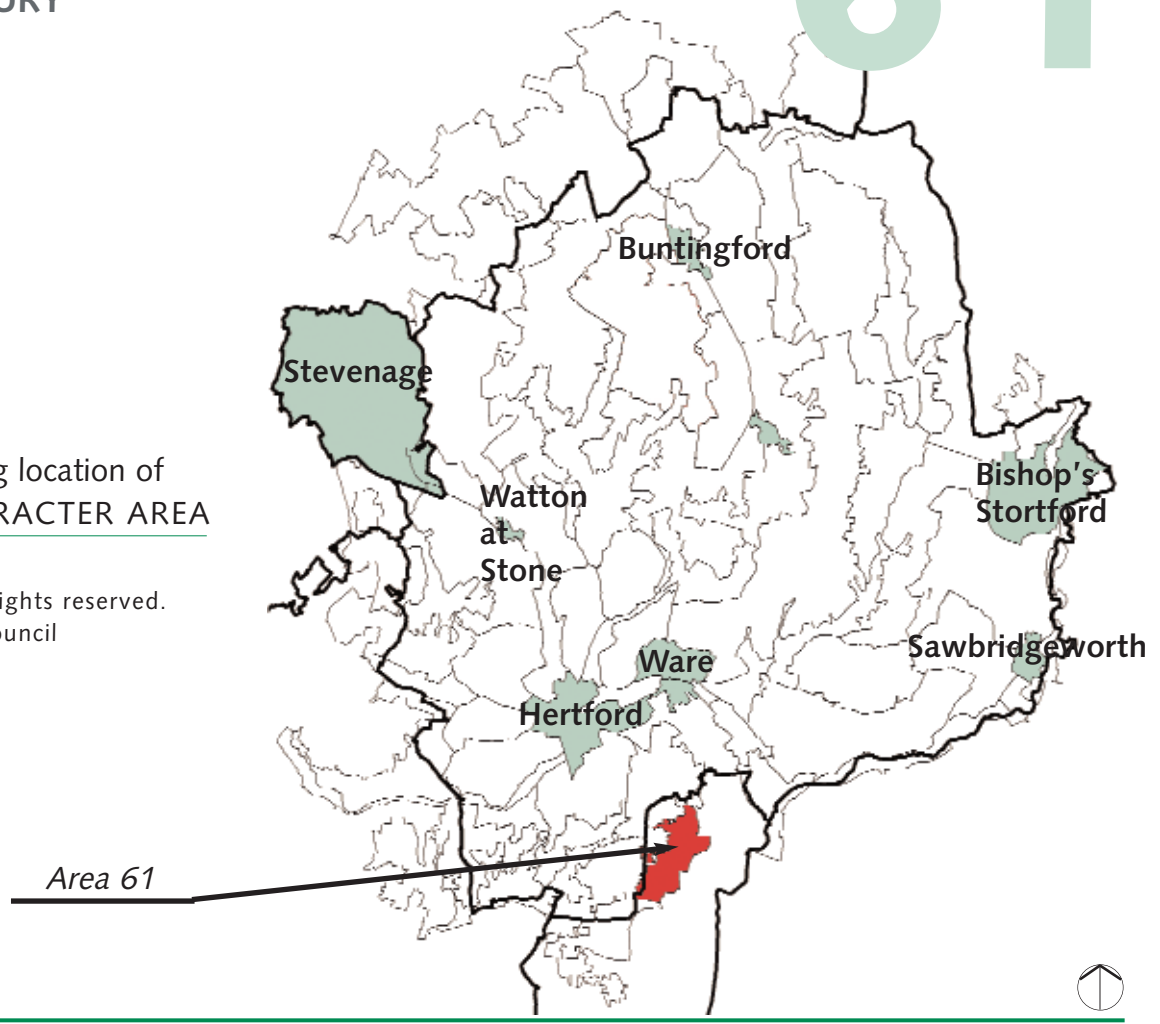
- in this area the 'conserve' guideline should be applied to the northern half, while the 'improve' guideline should be applied to the southern half
- a programme of hedgerow management in this area would ensure that hedges did not fall into decline, become gappy or otherwise diminish the landscape character of this area
- woodland management should focus on the establishment and maintenance of mixed-age woodland with species-rich ground flora, with clear distinctions between the different types of management, all of which might be appropriate in different areas of woodland: high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture
- resist the targeting of redundant or derelict pasture for development
- promote the retention of grassland and pasture in this area, where possible reverting to sheep or cattle grazing rather than horse pasture, for beneficial effects on ecological value
- encourage the maintenance of the historic field pattern and resist further development within the southern valley
- consider the possibility of maintaining the remaining fields within the southern half of this area as public open space, with an emphasis on the historic and ecological importance of the former field system/hedgerows and their retention or replanting
- ensure that derelict hedges and woodland are managed and replanted as necessary to maintain the existing field pattern
- promote the development of natural woodland around large blocks of Ancient Woodland and ensure that developers and landowners are aware of this objective
- where nursery production is in decline or no longer functional, consideration should be given to alternative development, such as allotments, production of trees of local provenance or organic farming. Care should be taken to retain the historic field pattern rather than allowing it to be destroyed by the pattern of new housing estates.
- seek to maintain open space between Hammond Street and Goff's Oak, especially around Rags Brook; possibly by the creation of a local country park or nature reserve
- seek to increase awareness of the age and historic importance of local landscape features, in particular the co-axial field pattern
- encourage the establishment of buffer strips along watercourses to give protection from pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser run-off and to provide a wildlife refuge. Ensure that this does not conflict with public access objectives.
- seek to expand the local footpath network, secure separate provision for pedestrians and equestrians and provide low-key small car parks at suitable access points.



Thunderfield Ridge from Gammon Farm (HCC Landscape Unit)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

On western edge of Broxbourne, north of Wormleybury and south of Hertford Heath

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- ornamental parkland trees

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This area is now a mix of parkland, converted parkland and mixed farmland, with small areas of woodland scattered throughout and an extensive golf course in former parkland. The A10(T) cuts a swathe through it but it is surprisingly undisturbed by the urban area to the east.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- twentieth-century amenity and leisure on former parkland
- ornamental parkland



Cock Lane, Broxbourne
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

BROXBOURNEBURY - Area 61

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep stoneless well-drained silty soils over gravel, over Aeolian silty drift (Hamble 2 series)

Topography. Sloping gently from west to east, and even more gently from north to south, with a general impression of being quite level.

Degree of slope. 1 in 150

Altitude range. 60m to 75m

Hydrology. Spital Brook flows eastwards from Hoddesdonpark Wood towards the Lea, while an unnamed parallel stream to the south has been diverted to form ornamental waterbodies within the former parkland of Broxbournebury.

Land cover and land use. In this area the main land uses are leisure and arable farming, with some mixed farming and forestry. There has been mineral extraction in one northern section of the parkland, south of Cock Lane. Broxbournebury is now an extensive golf course and there is mixed parkland and arable farmland around High Leigh

Vegetation and wildlife. Within this area there are significant small areas of woodland which combine to provide a generally wooded appearance, with important old hornbeam woodland and very important streamside wet woodlands by Spital Brook. Within the arable farmland hedges are generally low to medium, either young hawthorn or older (oak, ash, sycamore and field maple). Oak and ash are the dominant woodland species.

The A 10(T) is well vegetated, albeit with a standard mix of mainly indigenous, if not local, species. Broxbournebury Park is a key parkland site in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, with important veteran tree relics. The acidic sands and gravels produce gorse/birch heath when disturbed and there is some old acidic grassland, eg. at Hoddesdon Lodge.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area was formerly an important complex of ancient parkland (Broxbournebury deer park) and adjoining minor parks (High Leigh, etc.) but has been much damaged since the break-up of the estate in the 1940s, especially from extensive gravel extraction, which may over time become ecologically valuable.

The Broxbournebury estate belonged to the Knights Hospitallers before the Dissolution, and James I entertained there in 1603. The earliest record of a deer park there is 1695, predated by the record of 1227 for a deer park at Hoddesdon. South of Cock Lane, near Hoddesdonbury, lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the remains of a motte castle. High Leigh, on the edge of Hoddesdon, is mid-19th century parkland with ornamental conifers around the house. It had a formal parterre and a rocky valley complete with grotto and waterfalls, a characteristic piece of Pulham landscape, but has been simplified.

Field pattern. Where the field pattern has not been disturbed by parkland or golf courses, it is quite large in scale, and regular, with more irregularity against the woodland edge to the west.

Transport pattern. Until late into the 20th century the transport pattern reflected the cultural pattern, with curving lanes marking out the boundaries of the parklands. The diversion of the A10(T) cuts across this pattern but does not destroy it. The road is well planted to either side, which prevents many views out.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area.

- Although there is an ice-house in the grounds, indicative of a long-established site, the current Broxbournebury house is a 19th-century remodelling of a 16th-century house, of which some old brickwork and stone windows survive. The imposing red brick building is now the centrepiece of a golf club, within whose highly manicured lawns the parkland trees remain.
- High Leigh house dates from 1851 but the property was enlarged in 1871, with the formation of a new park, a lake, avenues and a parterre below the house. It is now a conference centre.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penquin (2000). HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of area from outside are so restricted by woodland that it is very difficult to get any views in, while views within the area are limited by blocks of woodland and topographical variation. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium, with a sense of containment from the woodland boundaries and a coherent, if mixed, character. It is a tranquil area away from the A10(T), from which there is a constant low hum.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The ancient parkland and veteran pollard trees in this area are internationally important, a mark of their rarity. The hornbeam woodland is important and the streamside wet woodland very important.

VISUAL IMPACT

Impact of built development: A10, golf club house, localised but high. Impact of land use change: parkland to arable or amenity - prominent; mineral extraction - not visible.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses are golf, walking and informal play. There are few footpaths within the area, but waymarked routes along the boundary. Due to the density of vegetation there are few opportunities to view the scenery within the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

There is no evidence that this area is regarded as distinctive, although Barclay Park is mentioned(D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BROXBOURNEBURY - Area 61

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

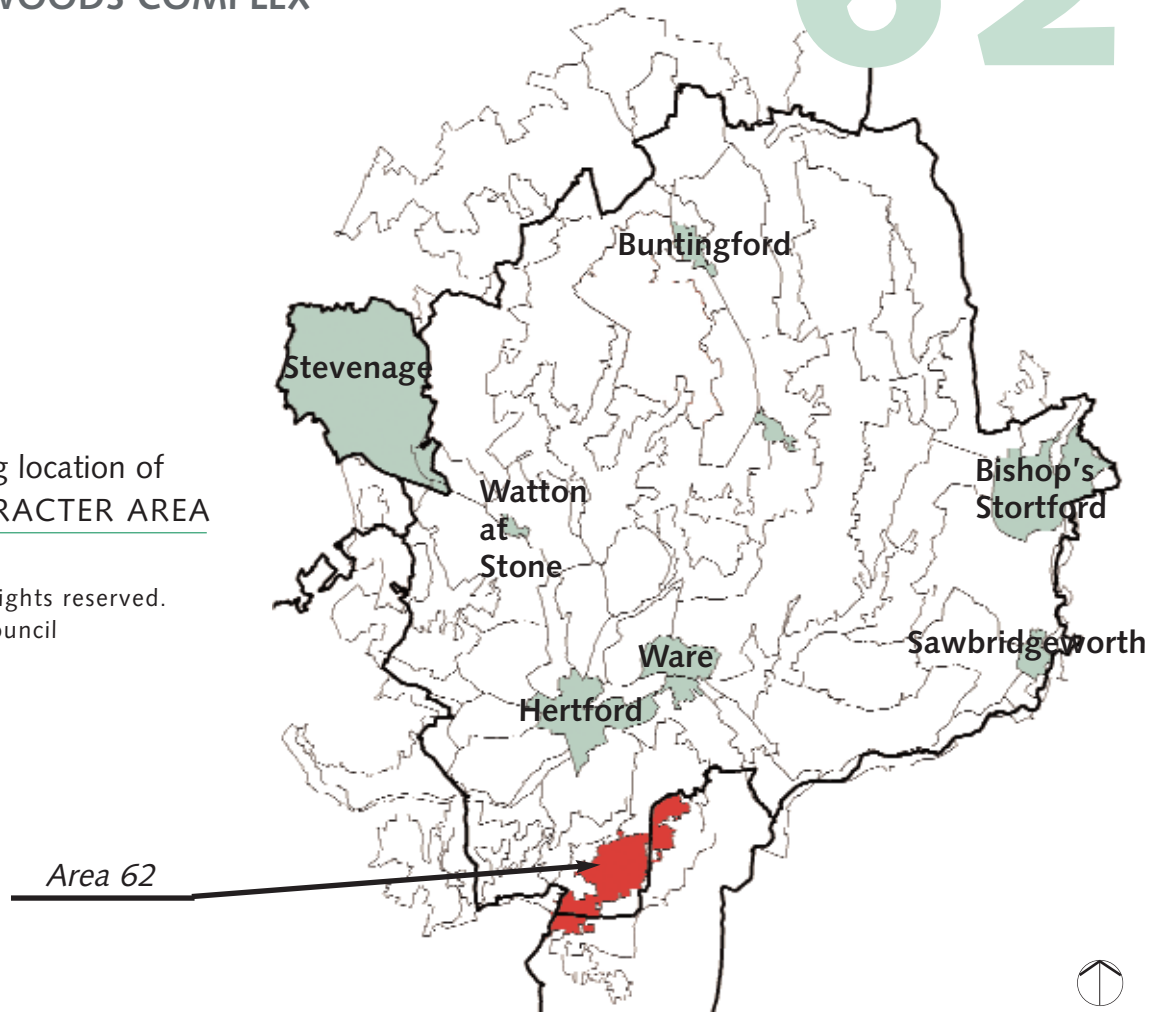
- encourage the owners/managers of existing golf courses within historic parklands to adopt a management strategy that reflects and respects the historic context. New planting should reflect the historic planting mixes, groupings and species or, where considered more appropriate, be of locally indigenous species to increase biodiversity potential.
- encourage the owners/managers of existing golf courses to adopt management regimes that will maximise biodiversity, such as reductions in grass cutting and the establishment of scrub in roughs, where this will not conflict with the historic integrity of parkland
- within historic parklands a buffer zone should be established around historic artefacts to ensure that their integrity is not compromised by more modern land uses
- encourage woodland management to achieve a mixed age structure of locally indigenous species and a species-rich ground flora. Woodland type - high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards, wood pasture - should reflect and enhance local landscape character distinctiveness
- encourage the establishment of buffer zones alongside watercourses to provide additional habitat and protection from potentially injurious operations such as the use of pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser sprays
- ensure that future development proposals pay due regard to the integrity and setting of historic parklands and houses
- encourage the owners of historic houses and parklands to research and disseminate information about their surroundings, particularly where the house/gardens are in institutional use
- encourage the creation of a wider footpath network, with low-key, informal car parks at access points



Barclay Park, Hoddesdon
(HCC Landscape Unit)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Extensive area of woodland to the west of Hoddesdon, between Hammond Hill and Hertford Heath, divided into two sub-areas, Wormley-Hoddesdon Park Wood South and Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods North (sic). The northern area is further sub-divided by Ermine Street.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Dense and extensive hornbeam coppice and forestry plantations in a linked series of woodlands on strongly undulating terrain. A very unified landscape with few other features. The north-south line of the ancient Ermine Street through the woodland is a strong historic feature.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- dense hornbeam coppice ancient woodland with forestry plantations
- strongly undulating landform
- few roads within woodland; narrow lanes, typically north-south and east-west, along some perimeters
- no settlement
- small pasture fields within or on edge of woodland
- surrounded by pasture and arable land

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- relic laid hedges on woodland perimeter of some woodland blocks
- nature reserves (Hoddesdonpark Wood, Wormley Wood)
- Ermine Street
- extensive possibly Iron Age grid pattern of former field boundaries within woods

Anemones in Hoddesdonpark Wood
 (J. Crew)

BROXBOURNE WOOD COMPLEX - Area 62

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Acid gravel deposits over London clay. Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clay soils, over chalky till (Beccles 3 series)

Topography. Strongly undulating and sloping slightly towards the east. The rather dramatically incised undulating landform, together with the hydrological influence of the streams, is masked by the vegetation.

Degree of slope. Locally 1 in 15; generally 1 in 110

Altitude range. 55m to 112m

Hydrology. Meandering high-quality streams run eastward along the shallow valleys (Wormleybury Brook and Spital Brook). There are several ponds, especially in Westfield Grove.

Land cover and land use. Broadleaf woodland is the overriding feature of this area, with a secondary land use as recreation. The woodland cover is extensive. There are several car parks and picnic areas, all in reasonable condition but rather gloomy, and very localised evidence of former mineral extraction in the woodland near Hoddesdonbury.

Vegetation and wildlife. Broxbourne Woods has been designated a proposed Special Area of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive as one of only two areas in the whole country of extensive hornbeam/oak woodland. It is now a Management Zone of over 320 ha. The northern area consists of a series of discrete woodland blocks which have developed from ancient wood pasture and heath and retain many large oak and hornbeam pollards along the boundaries. It exhibits a varied woodland structure, wide habitat diversity and rich ground flora. Despite extensive clearance and conifer replanting, the remaining semi-natural woodland is of national importance as an example of lowland south-eastern sessile oak/hornbeam woodland. Hoddesdonpark Wood is particularly well structured, with a wide age-range of oak over a varied shrub layer including coppiced hornbeam and hazel, with widespread silver birch, downy birch and aspen.

The southern area is also sessile oak/hornbeam woodland, with pedunculate oak, birch and ash, hazel, elder, field maple, dogwood, hawthorn and blackthorn. The dominant ground flora species include bluebell, wood anemone, honeysuckle and dog's mercury. Along the deeply cut streams alder has developed with a characteristic rich flora, including some uncommon species. Other habitats include marsh and semi-improved acid grassland on relic areas of old commons/greens. Bencroft Wood has a relic laid edge on a bank. The pockets of pasture on the southern edge of the woodland are possibly relics of former mineral extraction. There are a few pollarded hornbeams on Ermine Street.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Wormley Wood has been mapped as a major woodland block for 500 years. Most of the remaining woods were wood-pasture acidic oak/hornbeam/bracken/heath communities until relatively recently. Hoddesdonpark Wood was probably converted to high forest in the 18th century from wood pasture and contains a moated site which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The whole area is predominantly ancient woodland, of high historic significance, with blocks of more modern plantations within it. Ermine Street is of national importance as a good example of a surviving Roman road.

Field pattern. There are extensive relic field boundaries within the woodland, indicative of very ancient field systems predating the woodland cover.

Transport pattern. Ermine Street is a pre-Roman road which maintains its integrity in this area. The more modern transport pattern exists mainly on an east-west axis along woodland edges, such as White Stubbs Lane, Pembridge Lane and Lord Street.

These lanes are narrow and winding, with tall hornbeam hedges and no verges. There are also many tracks through the woodland.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements or country houses, and few areas of open land.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature Natural Area Profile: London Basin.

English Nature SSSI notification.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is widely visible as an extensive block of woodland from high points to the south. Within the area, views are limited by the dense vegetation. The extensive nature of the woodland is very apparent, giving a large-scale aspect to the landscape. Within much of the woodland there is an apparent lack of recent management, with overgrown coppice and dying silver birch, and an air of confinement, contrasting with more open areas of recent coppice management.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The Broxbourne Woods complex includes two SSSIs, an NNR and a proposed SAC, designations that reflect its rarity and importance. Hertfordshire has a particular responsibility for oak-hornbeam woodlands, with a large proportion of the national total. The complex also contains some key wood pasture and heathland SSSI sites. It is most unusual to have a unified block of ancient woodland of this size, representing an invaluable resource (Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive).

VISUAL IMPACT

There is neither visual impact from built development nor land-use change and the sole distinctive feature of the entire area is its use as hornbeam coppice. At a very local level there is limited evidence of mineral extraction in the woodland near Hoddesdonbury.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: walking (nature reserve). The chainwalk runs north/south through the western edge of the woodland. Footpaths are actually fairly limited within the woodland and wet conditions can make them very heavy going. There are several car parks and picnic areas, some better managed than others.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This is one of the most valued areas in the county for its distinctiveness (A).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI's at Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Wood South and Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods North. National Nature Reserve (NNR) in part. Proposed Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Broxbourne Woods are recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) within the Biodiversity Action Plan for the county, for its woodlands.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: wide spread
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: intact
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unique

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BROXBOURNE WOOD COMPLEX - Area 62

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- promote the development of natural woodland, via natural regeneration or the use of seed/plants of local provenance, as a buffer around large blocks of ancient woodland and ensure that developers and landowners are aware of this objective
- design and manage woodland car parks to maximise public access, perceptions of personal safety and the use of woodland products.
- focus woodland management around major points of public access
- seek to improve footpath surfaces through the woods, without bringing in unsuitable hard detailing; provide segregated routes for pedestrians and equestrians, since the latter often make routes impassable for the former in wet weather
- promote initiatives to reintroduce traditional woodland management and to encourage new markets for wood products
- diversify the structure of existing woodland to increase its nature conservation and landscape value by creating a varied age structure
- enhance plantation woodland by encouraging a more semi-natural character by eg. diversifying species, retaining some standard trees, allowing some neglected coppice to develop into high forest
- promote the restoration of degraded sites associated with former mineral extraction to maximise their nature conservation potential
- ensure that any proposed woodland planting will contribute to the local landscape rather than impoverishing or destroying an existing and valued habitats or historic artefact, such as a bank or ditch or, in this area, relic field pattern within the woodland
- resist any development or mineral extraction within woodland
- ensure that adequate consideration is given to the use of Tree Preservation Orders as a protective mechanism
- address the issue of the provision of additional local footpath and recreational networks, ensuring a separation where possible between footpaths and bridleways within the woodland



North of Wareside
fragmented field boundary (P. Shears)

BAYFORDBURY, BRICKENDONBURY & BALLS PARKLANDS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

South of Hertford between Bayford Lane and Hertford Heath, contained to the south by sloping land and to the north by the Lea valley and the B158.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently undulating parkland and estate farmland with large mansions now used for institutional purposes. Elsewhere this is a landscape of isolated farms and farm cottages, with some influence along the northern edge from Hertford's urban fringe. Bayfordbury occupies a sloping site and is characterised by its semi-natural oak/hornbeam woodland and many ornamental trees. Brickendonbury and Balls Park occupy a plateau divided by a brook, which is a strong landscape feature, and they are surrounded by arable farmland.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- sparse settlement pattern
- gently undulating landform
- large country mansions in extensive parkland
- strong north-south axis of transport routes
- regular field pattern with parkland accents, such as avenues

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- country mansions and parkland trees are highly visible due to their prominent position

Bayfordbury cedars
(HCC Landscape Unit)

BAYFORDBURY, BRICKENDONBURY & BALLS PARKLANDS - Area 63

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Gently undulating north-facing slope

Degree of slope. Generally 1 in 60; locally 1 in 30

Altitude range. 43m to 82m

Hydrology. Brickendon Brook, Bayford Brook and many moats, lakes and ponds associated with parks.

Land cover and land use. Arable estate farmland and parkland with associated indigenous and exotic woodland planting. Recreational use, particularly the sports fields associated with the educational institutions, is a notable secondary land use, with a caravan and camp site located in the southern part of Balls Park. There are a few disused mineral extraction sites adjacent to the railway line.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woodlands in this area are oak/hornbeam and oak/ash, with a relic lime avenue at Brickendonbury, now in very poor condition. Great Stocks and Little Stocks are woodlands of parkland origin, as evidenced by the pollards within them. Field boundaries are widespread and consist either of hedges with hedgerow trees or narrow woodland belts.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is a strong pre-20th century estate character to this area, and no settlements. The mansions within the parklands are prominent features, but the character of both the houses and their parkland has been compromised by their more recent institutional use, which has introduced new buildings, sports fields, car parks, etc.

- At Jenningsbury there is a waterfilled homestead moat of unknown date and origin.
- Bayfordbury is set within a former royal possession and a manor belonging to John of Gaunt. The earliest known date for the deer park here is 1766. Pevsner states, '*The grounds are of famous beauty.*' A new park was begun in 1763 and planting and improvements continued throughout the 19th century. In 1837 a pinetum was begun with the advice of J C Loudon and subsequently restored by the John Innes Horticultural Institution, which took over part of the estate in 1846. The house now belongs to the University of Hertfordshire. Some of the planting appears to be neglected, with a loss of hedgerows, elms and some woodland in recent years.
- Brickendonbury is on a moated site and is connected to Hertford by an 18th-century three-quarter mile long avenue, now derelict. A deer park was recorded here in 1766. The moat was enlarged in the 19th century to make a canal, which survives, and the garden continued to develop into the 20th century, with a rock garden and cascade at the end of the moat. This was the work of James Pulham, one of Hertfordshire's most illustrious and remarkable garden makers. The garden was chiefly renowned for its kitchen garden, and particularly for its large collection of fruit. During WWII the mansion was used by SOE.
- A deer park was recorded at Balls Park in 1676 and the house dates from 1640.

Field pattern. Large regular fields

Transport pattern. A few north/south sinuous lanes, usually along the parkland boundaries, with no east-west routes. There are few views out from these lanes, which are either densely hedged or sunken. The railway line also has a north-south axis.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements in this area, in which parkland character is dominant, focused on the prominent mansions.

- The current mansion at Bayfordbury has a Regency facade of twenty-five bays, set behind an ornamental lake, but is an addition to an earlier red brick house of 1759-62.
- Records for Brickendonbury suggest a late 17th century house, built for the Lord Mayor of London, to the north of the L-shaped moat, but according to Pevsner the house '*seems to be Georgian*' and is credited elsewhere as being '*early Georgian*'. It was re-done in 1885-86 and again in 1898 (and 1902), when half-timbering and ornamental plasterwork were added.
- Balls Park is described by Pevsner as '*one of the most puzzling houses of Hertfordshire*'. Although the house appears to be early Georgian, it in fact dates from around 1640 (with improvements in 1705 to 1725) and is remarkably plain for that date. Since 1924 a number of new buildings have been added, reflecting the mansion's new use as a collage of further education (now part of the University of Hertfordshire).

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens*.

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and Bisgrove, R., *Hertfordshire Gardens on Ermine Street* (1996).

Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

BAYFORDBURY, BRICKENDONBURY & BALLS PARKLANDS - Area 63

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The parkland is well contained and the wooded boundaries are dominant in the landscape. This is therefore an internally open but contained landscape, with few views in from the outside. From within views are often screened by vegetation, but there are some longer distance views across the large fields to the east of Swallow Grove Farm, blocked by the relic avenue in Brickendonbury Park.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although Hertfordshire is rich in parklands, this area is unusual in being dominated by a series of parklands, most of which have undergone a wholesale change to institutional use, influenced by their location close to an urban centre.

VISUAL IMPACT

In general terms the parklands are in reasonable order, although the relic avenue at Brickendonbury is visible over a wide area. They have, however, changed their terms of reference and the impact of institutional use is widespread and evident. The signage and entrance treatments of the institutions detract from their parkland character, as does the massing of the modern buildings and extensive car parks within. Some of the parkland has also undergone conversion to arable production, and throughout the

area there has been an impact from the loss of hedges as field boundaries. There is limited impact from the southern edge of Hertford, which is generally well screened by vegetation.

ACCESSIBILITY

Institutional use means that the parklands are accessible to a large number of people, if not to the public at large. There are a few public footpaths around Brickendonbury, one within Bayfordbury's parkland and none within Balls Park.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

There is little evidence that this area is valued for its distinctiveness, but the parklands are highlighted (D).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Bayfordbury is listed Grade II* in the English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*, while Balls Park is listed Grade II. Brickendonbury is referred to in the HCC list of historic parks and gardens.

CONDITION

- Land cover change:*
- Age structure of tree cover:*
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:*
- Management of semi-natural habitat:*
- Survival of cultural pattern:*
- Impact of built development:*
- Impact of land-use change:*

- localised
- mature/overmature
- fragmented
- not obvious
- declining
- high
- moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform:*
- Impact of land cover:*
- Impact of historic pattern:*
- Visibility from outside:*
- Sense of enclosure:*
- Visual unity:*
- Distinctiveness/rarity:*

- apparent
- prominent
- interrupted
- concealed
- open
- incoherent
- unique

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BAYFORDBURY, BRICKENDONBURY & BALLS PARKLANDS - Area 63

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND REINFORCE

- ensure that landowners are made aware of grant aid possibilities for woodland and parkland management, including the Veteran Trees initiative
- ensure that landowners and managers are aware of the importance of veteran trees and parkland habitats for biodiversity
- encourage landowners to establish and maintain ecological links between woodland blocks, especially in the open arable landscape
- promote the reinstatement of hedgerows along historic boundaries and the replacement of relic avenues with appropriate species
- encourage farming techniques which contribute to biodiversity, such as wide field margins, beetle banks, etc.
- promote the expansion of woodland beyond ancient woodland boundaries, especially where this will help in creating habitat links
- encourage the reintroduction of wood pasture on appropriate sites
- encourage woodland planting of locally native species on poor quality agricultural land, where this is in keeping with local landscape character, is on the site of former woodland or can provide an ecological link to other woodlands or habitat.
- encourage the appropriate restoration of parkland features that have been destroyed, with due regard to both historic context and the possibility of improving biodiversity
- resist any development within parkland areas to ensure that historically valuable parkland features are not lost and that the context of parkland and mansion is safeguarded. This concept extends to the setting of listed parks and gardens and may therefore extend beyond their present boundaries.



Bayfordbury
(HCC Landscape Unit)

HERTFORD HEATH

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

North of Broxbourne Woods, east of the Bayfordbury and Balls Parklands and west of Great Amwell.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An area of gently undulating wooded farmland, much of it pasture, with extensive areas of woodland and heath. At the heart of this rural area lies Haileybury College, which also influences the only settlement in the area, from which it takes its name. The damp acid grasslands and relic heath are ecologically and visually important.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating wooded pasture
- open aspect to east
- strong presence of woodland with regular field pattern
- ancient woodland throughout with heathland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- settlement of Hertford Heath and Haileybury College
- Ermine Street
- Nature Reserve (Balls Wood) and Hertford Heath
- A10(T) appears to form boundary of urban edge to east



Golders Wood, Hertford Heath
(HCC Landscape Unit)

HERTFORD HEATH - Area 64

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loam and clay soils over chalky till (Beccles 3 series) with some similar Windsor series and Hallsworth 1 series soils overlying boulder clay

Topography. Narrow plateau orientated north-south that slopes to the north and east towards the Lea Valley and more gently westwards.

Degree of slope. Typically 1 in 25 but up to 1 in 10 in the secondary valleys to the eastern slopes.

Altitude range. 75m to 98m

Hydrology. There are many ponds within the woodland in this area, and several minor watercourses flowing north-eastwards to the river Lea

Land cover and land use. This area is wooded farmland, with farmed areas mainly under pasture yet with some localised arable land to the perimeter. Forestry is the dominant land use, with recreational use as a secondary feature.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is predominantly a relatively flat de-calcified boulder clay plateau, dominated ecologically by damp acid grasslands, mostly improved but with important remaining old pastures at Dalmonds and by Balls Wood. Several ancient and old secondary woodland blocks are basically acidic/damp oak/hornbeam, botanically rich with Herb Paris, orchids and a range of sedges. Old hornbeam coppice stools are characteristic features along sections of Ermine Street. Balls Wood is partly replanted mixed woodland. The other main feature of the area is the relic wet heath at The Roundings, which although partially scrubbed with oak/birch and aspen, contains open areas which are actively maintained as a nature reserve and contain some rare species including petty whin. Old acidic ponds here are highly important for invertebrates, amphibians and bats. The other half of the heath (Goldingtons) is largely secondary oak/hornbeam. Wild service trees are a feature of many old hedges.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Early evidence of human dates from the Bronze Age. Significant finds include ingots and tools associated with bronze manufactured and a chieftain's chariot grave found in 1956 north of Trinity Road. The historic pattern of this area today is both apparent and widespread, with a mix of ancient woodland, a medieval settlement and an early 19th-century educational establishment. Haileybury College was designed in 1806 by William Wilkins (who designed Downing College, Cambridge and University College, London) as a training school for the East India Company. Repton visited in 1808, the year before it opened. He skilfully adapted three rectangular brick pits to form two sinuous pools and an island, and visually combined the two pools by careful planting to give the impression of a wide, meandering river through the park

Field pattern. The field pattern is irregular and small to medium in scale, with grazing sheep. Adjacent to Balls Wood the field size is larger, where fields are subdivided by fencing for horse pasture.

Transport pattern. Elbow Lane is part of Ermine Street and contributes its Roman strictness of line, despite the modern surfacing. Roads in this area are narrow and sinuous, except for the A10(T) which curves around the eastern boundary; verges are variable and not notable.

Settlements and built form. Hertford Heath is now a sizeable village, but developed from two separate hamlets including Little Amwell to the north end around the Goat Public House and another hamlet closer to the site of Haileybury College now an educational establishment. There are also some isolated farms.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, p.82.

English Nature SSSI notification.

Pevsner, N. rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are few views into this area, due to the density of woodland and the lack of roads. From within views are limited by hedgerows and woodland. This is a small to medium scale contained landscape, with large woodland blocks balanced by small to medium fields. It is in many ways a simple landscape, coherent, ancient and tranquil, save for the constant hum of vehicles on the A10(T).

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although the farmland is not unusual, the architecture of the college is notable. Hertford Heath SSSI is important as a fine example of a threatened habitat in southern England, now rare in the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

There appears to have been little land-use change in this area, possibly minor changes from pasture to arable. The main impact is that of the high embankments of the transport corridor (A10(T)), which is limited to the eastern side of the area. Hertford Heath appears to have accommodated 20th-century housing within its envelope, rather than on its edge, and it has no significant impact on the wider landscape.

ACCESSIBILITY

No recreational land uses were noted during the survey, although there is a limited network of footpaths. Ermine Street forms part of a north-south route but its character has been eroded by transformation to a gravelled/tarmac access road. Equestrian activity is widespread.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is regarded as distinctive, largely on account of its woodlands (D).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI: Hertford Heath.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: intact
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

HERTFORD HEATH - Area 64

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available.
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture and management to maximise biodiversity potential
- promote crop diversification and the maintenance of mixed farming in this area
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats to form ecological corridors
- encourage woodland planting on poor quality agricultural land, where this is in keeping with local landscape character, is on the site of former woodland or can provide an ecological link to other woodlands or habitat. Use only locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible.
- ensure that any proposed woodland planting will contribute to the local landscape rather than impoverishing or destroying an existing and valued habitat or historic artefact, such as a bank or ditch
- ensure that proposed improvement to the landscape within Landscape Conservation/Development Areas will reinforce and contribute to the distinctiveness of the local landscape character and that they will not jeopardize any existing area of historic, ecological or landscape significance
- resist any development, reclamation or drainage of heathland areas and areas adjacent to them
- promote the re-establishment of low-density stock grazing for the management of heathland habitats
- resist any development or change of use that might affect or diminish the distinctiveness and integrity of this landscape character area, unless it can be effectively and immediately screened in a manner that would not in itself have a negative impact on local landscape character



View north from Goldings Wood
(HCC Landscape Unit)

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Linear east-west area between the A1(M) in the west (Lemsford) and the western urban edge of Hertford

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Pastoral farmland within a flat valley landform. Grazing marshes along both banks of the river (which is not a prominent feature) and parkland which is well integrated and locally prominent. Mineral extraction tends to be on the valley side rather than in the valley bottom, so there are few extensive waterbodies except at the western end between Hatfield and Hatfield Hyde.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- flat pastoral valley of the river Lea, with derelict meadows, scrub and trees.

- open in parts; in others masked by wetland vegetation.
- parkland is a dominant local feature.
- the river is not a dominant landscape feature.
- shallow valley slopes are screened by wetland and associated vegetation

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- floodplain marked to south by parallel hedged road, which screens views in
- mansion and parkland at Woolmer's Park, parkland at Holwell Court
- Cecil Saw Mill
- Stanborough Lakes



North bank, River Lea, near Water Hall Farm (HCC Landscape Unit)

MIDDLE LEA VALLEY WEST - Area 65

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. In the valley floor the soils are stoneless mainly calcareous clay soils over river alluvium, with deep, well-drained fine loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty, over glaciofluvial drift on the shallow slopes (Ludford series)

Topography. Flat valley floor

Degree of slope. 1 in 400 fall along the river between Stanborough and Hertford

Altitude range. 45m to 70m along length

Hydrology. Valley of river Lea. In this area the river valley consists of a broad suite of habitats, within which agricultural improvements to floodplain meadows and gravel extraction have had a significant impact, although some gravel pits now provide a significant habitat in their own right. The physical habitat of the Lee between Welwyn and Hertford is good, with medium to fast water flow over a gravel riverbed. It supports 15 coarse fish species, including barbel (*Barbus barbus*), which is a noted species within the EC Habitats Directive. Stanborough Lake, to the south of Welwyn Garden City, is a 14-acre stillwater lake much used for fishing. It is now home to the zander, an illegally introduced predatory fish.

Land cover and land use. Pastoral farmland and parkland, with limited mineral extraction, some of which has been restored to fishing lakes (viz. Stanborough Lake). Derelict meadows are a feature of the area, with scrub and trees giving it a well-vegetated appearance.

Vegetation and wildlife. Consists of discrete woodlands, mainly oak and ash with some willow and poplar, and treed thorn hedgerows where the valley has been enclosed. Wetland species, such as willow, poplar and alder, can be found around those minerals sites restored to wetland use, either planted as part of the restoration or developing in the new habitat. The Lemsford-Stanborough and Water Hall-Hertford stretches of the river are of reasonable water quality and support a good flora, while at Stanborough the reedswamp derived from old cress beds adjacent to the Lee and the old willow carr associated with it are noted in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire. Most of the floodplain grasslands of this area have been lost to mineral extraction or have been 'improved' and are therefore of reduced biodiversity.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The main influences on this area are the parklands on both north and south-facing slopes which were established to take advantage of the river valley landform and views. It is an area with a long history of settlement, viz. the moated site at Roxford (SAM), which is within the present floodplain.

Field pattern. The field pattern in this area is not obvious because much of the grazing marsh is not confined by hedgerows. Around the parkland the field pattern is more distinctive; elsewhere it is screened by vegetation or disturbed by mineral extraction. Where the field pattern is evident the field sizes are large.

Transport pattern. The few river crossings are over unobtrusive brick bridges. This area is bounded to the west by the A414 along its northern edge and to the east by the B158 along its southern edge. Elsewhere there are no roads, although the Lea Valley Walk continues the line of the B158 west of Essendon. The road to the south lies on the edge of the floodplain and is used as a commuter route. It is narrow, twisting and well hedged, permitting few views over the valley, and has no verges. The A414 lies above the floodplain.

Settlements and built form. The settlement pattern in this area is of isolated houses or farms and parkland, with the associated mansion on higher ground to the north. The building style is vernacular and dates from at least the 17th century. It consists mainly of brick-and-tile and some timber-framed buildings (Water Hall). Bridges across the river Lea are generally of yellow brick of late 19th or 20th century nondescript design. At the western end of this area, towards the boundary with Hatfield Park, there is a Victorian brick sawmill.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire (p.54).

English Heritage *List of Scheduled Ancient Monuments*.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is widely visible from the valley slopes to either side. Within the area views are filtered by trees within the river valley. This is a small-scale landscape contained by the landform of the opposing valley slopes and the vegetation. It has a unified character. It is not, however, completely tranquil due to the noise of traffic on the B158 and the A414.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is not a unique landscape but the historic interest of the parklands and the ecological value of the river corridor should be conserved and improved where possible.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is little visual impact upon this area except from traffic on the A414 at its western end and this has only a localised impact. Within the river valley there appears to be little mineral extraction, which has taken place on the lower slopes of the areas to either side and is occasionally visible from within the area. The distinctive features of this area are the lack of development and the occasional large houses such as Woolmer's Park and Water Hall.

ACCESSIBILITY

No recreational land uses were noted although there are footpaths and waymarked routes along part of the river. Their condition is fair with narrow footpaths and poor surfacing and maintenance.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This stretch of the Lea or Lee Valley appears not to be valued as a distinctive landscape (E).

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

MIDDLE LEA VALLEY WEST - Area 65

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- support the Environment Agency's initiative in encouraging a partnership approach to habitat management in the Lea at Bayfordbury
- encourage habitat protection within the Upper Lee to safeguard the survival and dispersal of notable species, including the barbel
- ensure that any proposals for development within this area pay due regard to safeguarding its important associated historic and ecological features
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- ensure that any further proposals for mineral extraction in this or adjoining areas avoid areas of historic or ecological importance and are adequately screened from view
- encourage the development of best-practice guidelines to safeguard existing nature conservation interest in working mineral extraction sites to create suitable conditions for maximising nature conservation potential and to minimise management needs within restored sites
- ensure that all landowners and developers are aware of the BAP objective of creating a 'necklace' of inter-connected wetland habitats along the river valleys
- resist the targeting of redundant or derelict pasture for development
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats

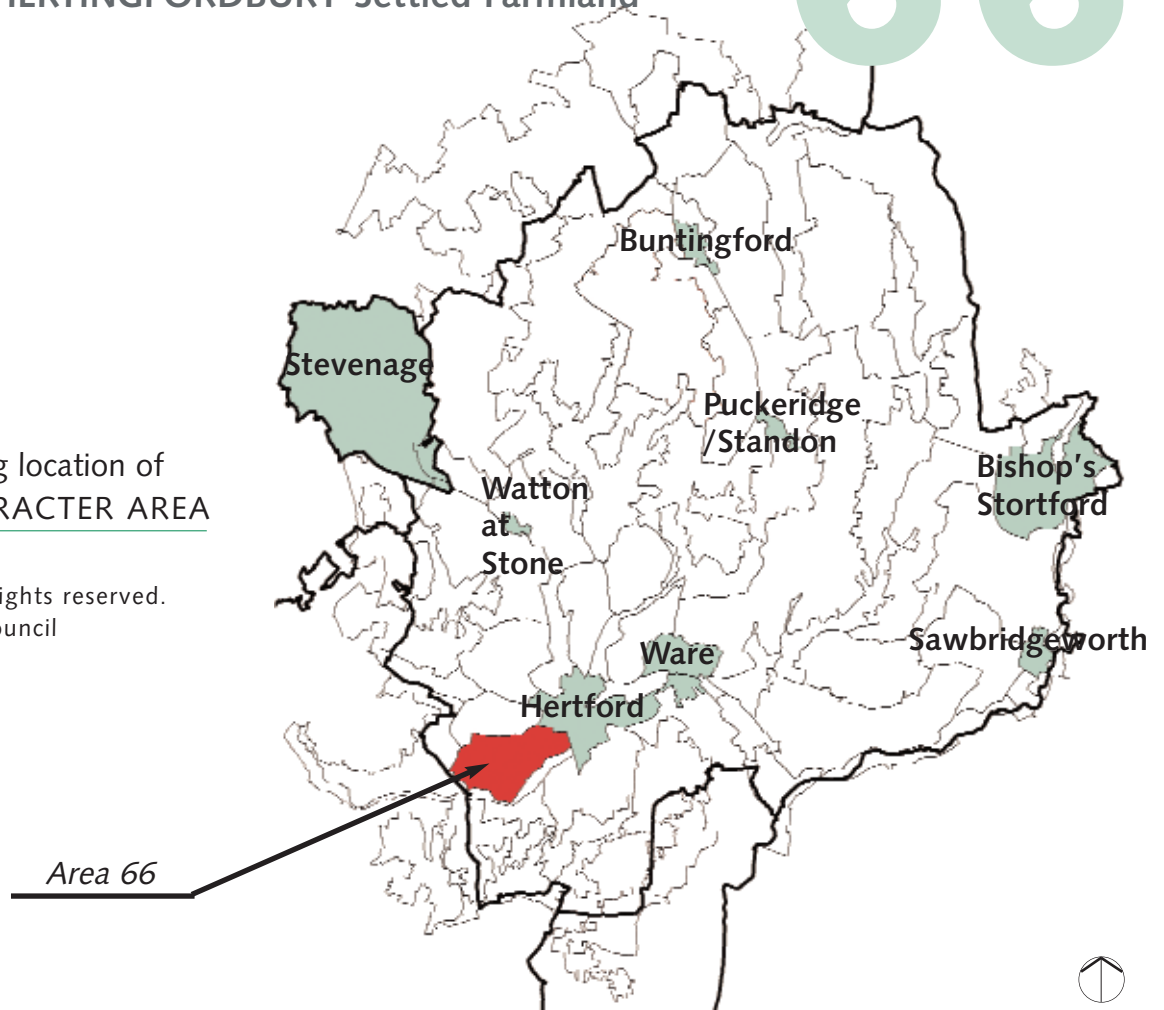


Woolmer's Park
(HCC Landscape Unit)

COLE GREEN & HERTINGFORDBURY Settled Farmland

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Bounded by the Mimram valley parklands to the north and the Lea valley to the south and roughly by the A414 to the west.



Cole Green Way, Hertingfordbury
(P. Shears)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A mainly pastoral area of small hamlets, with parkland and mineral extraction along its southern edge and urban influence at its eastern extent.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- small double gravel ridge between two rivers, with a small valley between
- although focused on Hertford at its eastern end, most of this area is remote and tranquil, despite the presence of the A414 in the north west.
- small variable villages and hamlets, long established and with 20th-century additions, clustered around village greens
- influence of rivers not apparent, even at confluence

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- use of disused railway for Lea Valley Walk/Cole Green Way. Possibly the best signed and accessed footpath in the county, with fine views but dull and gloomy in part. The Cole Green Way is a part of Sustrans Route 61, part of the national cycle network
- railway viaduct at eastern end
- Woolmer's Park

COLE GREEN & HERTINGFORDBURY Settled Farmland - Area 66

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Clay soils over till (glacial drift); gravel locally
Topography. Gently undulating minor ridges with a small valley between them

Degree of slope. 1 in 35

Altitude range. 44m to 75m

Hydrology. The Mimram and the Lea flow eastwards to their confluence on the western edge of Hertford. Both rivers are covered in other landscape character area descriptions. There are springs within the central valley and a designed lake at Holwell Court.

Land cover and land use. This area consists mainly of treed arable farmland with small settlements. There are a few nurseries and some pasture around the settlements. There are a number of existing and former mineral workings to the valley slopes of the River Lea south and east of East End Green.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is little woodland, mainly focused in small blocks along the Lea, but the general impression of the area is of views filtered by vegetation. Woodland species are hornbeam, with ash and sycamore. Field boundaries are tall hedges of hawthorn and hazel with hedgerow oaks or ash. Elm is seen locally, as are relic orchards around East End Green and Letty Green.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To the north east of Letty Green there is a settlement site which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The earliest records of deer parks in this area are 1285 (Hertingfordbury Park) and 1749 (Cole Green Park, worked on by 'Capability' Brown), and the first major Cowper residence was at Cole Green, before Repton's advice was taken and a new mansion was constructed at Panshanger.

Historically there was rich grassland through the central valley. The settlements in this area demonstrate its historic character, while Woolmer's Park adds further interest. *'Hertingfordbury, on the spur between the Lea and the Mimram rivers, has all the appearance of an old settlement site, indeed it could be a place in which settlement has been continuous since the Iron Age - bury may mean Iron Age stronghold.'* (Munby, p.91). The A414 has caused severance of previous historic unity (Holwell Court).

Field pattern. There has been some loss of field boundaries to arable production, and a change to medium-sized fields, but there is still a strong small-scale pattern of hedges and fences and a considerable number of mature hedgerow oaks.

Transport pattern. The parkland influence is apparent in the number of no through roads. Most of the villages are accessed from Birchall Lane but have no exit to the south. The lanes vary between deep and level, but all are winding and generally well vegetated. Cole Green Way/Lea Valley Walk/Chain Walk is a combined footpath, bridleway and cycle route.

Settlements and built form. The long-settled character of this area is very evident within the various settlements, which are quite variable in style

- Cole Green dates from 1220 and has 18th and 19th century yellow brick houses clustered around a triangular green, now planted along its edge with young oaks.

- Letty Green also has modest Victorian cottages and some white weatherboard, while Birch Green has a 20th century, sub-commuter character as well as Victorian houses in diaper-patterned red brick. It is surrounded by small pasture fields, as is Staines Green.
- Hertingfordbury is the largest settlement in this area and has many substantial red brick Georgian properties and a hotel. It has a prosperous and long-settled character.
- Woolmers, or Woolmer Park, consists of a brick house dating from 1796-1802 with a later one-storeyed colonnade between two canted bay windows. The house is set on the northern slopes of the Lea valley, looking out over the grazing meadows along the river and framed by trees

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
 Munby, L., *The Landscape of Hertfordshire*, Hodder and Stoughton (1977).

COLE GREEN & HERTINGFORDBURY Settled Farmland - Area 66

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is generally concealed from outside views by vegetation along the rivers and by the bunds along the A414. Within the area views are limited by topography, vegetation and the embankment of the disused railway. The scale of landscape elements is small and it has a confined, unified character. It is quite tranquil in the central settled areas, but there is constant low-level noise from the road and rail transport network.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is an unusual area in terms of the grouping of small settlements and the road network which reflects the area's former parkland character. Woolmer's Park is not listed by English Heritage or HCC, but has its own entry in Pevsner (no reference to parkland).

VISUAL IMPACT

Any impact from the edge of Hertford is well screened by vegetation. Although the A414 is observable only at some points on the northern edge, it has had the effect of cutting this area off from the adjoining areas to the north and west. There is a strong impact from the railway viaduct at the eastern end of this area, which is gloomy and constricted. The change from pasture to arable cultivation is localised, but it is notable that pasture is now used more for horses than for cattle or sheep. A number of mineral sites and associated bunding create local visual impact on the slopes of the Lea Valley.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses include walking and horiculture. There is one linear footpath, the Lea Valley Walk/ Cole Green Way, which is excellent in terms of surfacing, signage and hard detailing, but described by one user as 'a *sepulchral alleyway*'. Routine management of vegetation would soon remedy this by creating views out over the countryside.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The northern half of this area is highly valued for a range of distinctive village and old railway landscapes including Letty Green, Cole Green, and the 'olde worlde' East End Green (B).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM north east of Letty Green (settlement site).
East End Green is a Conservation Area.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: poor
Survival of cultural pattern: strong
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: insignificant
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: apparent/prominent
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

COLE GREEN & HERTINGFORDBURY Settled Farmland - Area 66

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- encourage limited development within established settlements to maintain their diversity but discourage any aggregation of settlements
- ensure that restoration proposals for existing mineral workings are appropriate for the landscape character of this area, such as grassland
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- encourage landowners to retain hedges around pasture and resist any change to fences
- cut back vegetation along Cole Green Way to provide views out and increase biodiversity
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming
- where possible and practicable, seek the restoration of relic orchards
- promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to contribute to local landscape character
- disseminate information about the landscape, historic and ecological value of veteran and hedgerow pollards and encourage their retention and management

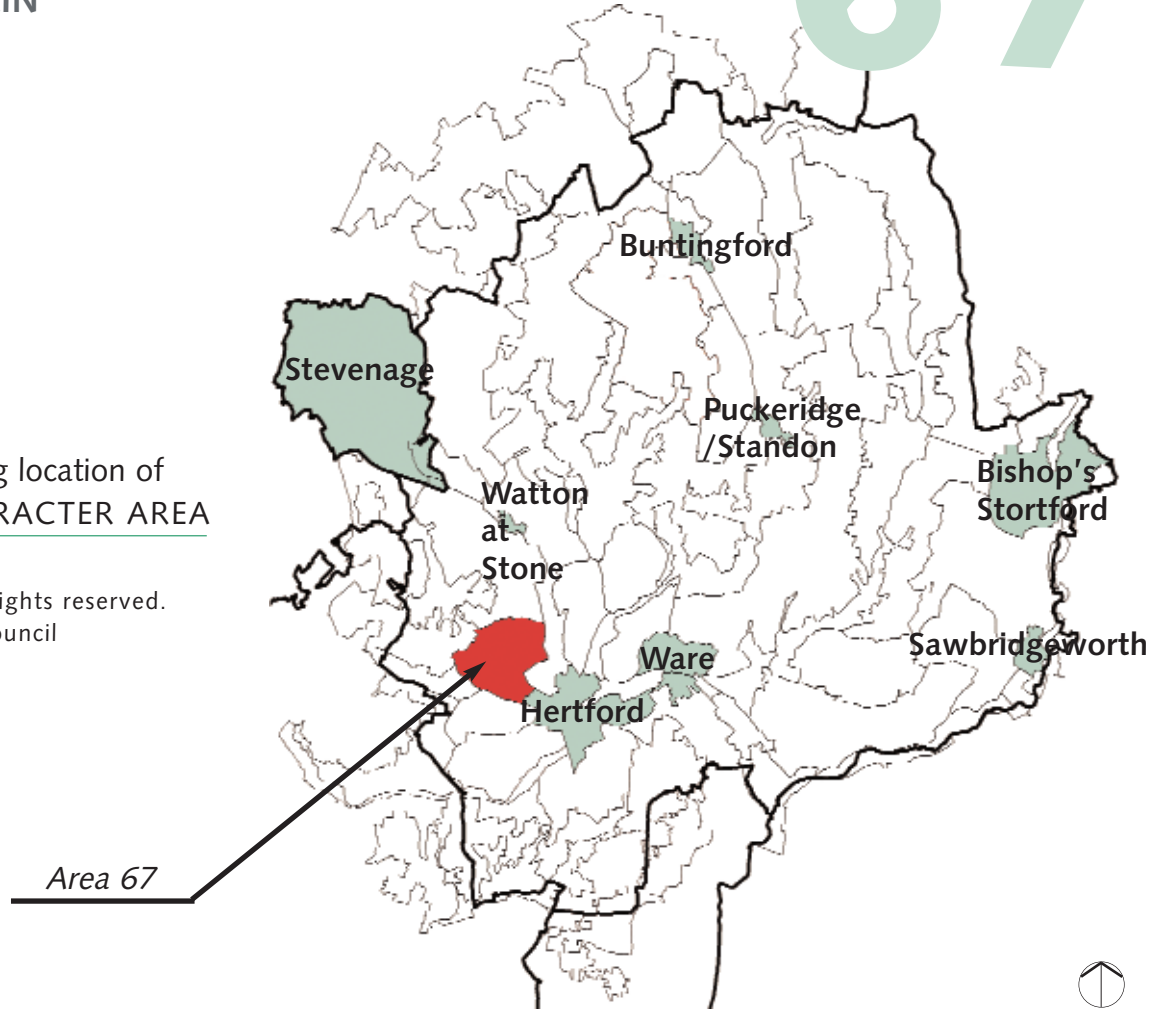


East End Green
(HCC Landscape Unit)

BRAMFIELD PLAIN

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire County Council
100019606 2004



LOCATION

Shallow bowl bounded by the western Beane valley slopes to the east, the Panshanger estate to the south and the higher ground beyond Bramfield to the north and west.

- narrow winding lanes with bare or over-managed hedgebanks, with passing places and 'oxbow' verges
- few hedges or hedgerow trees
- estate character of Bramfield village and outlying buildings

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A very gently undulating to flat area of open arable land, unsettled and with little woodland. It is enclosed to the north west by the wooded ridge of the Tewin-Datchworth plateau and by river valleys to south (Mimram) and east (Rib).

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- very large red and yellow brick barns

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- flat open arable farmland
- long views over area and river valleys



Bramfield post office
(P. Shears)

BRAMFIELD PLAIN - Area 67

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep, well-drained fine loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty, over glaciofluvial drift. (Ludford series)

Topography. Flat to very gently undulating

Degree of slope. 1 in 120

Altitude range. 70m to 80m

Hydrology. This area is bounded to the east by the valley of the river Beane and there is one eastward-flowing ditch or stream within it. The Bramfield swallowhole is unique. A spring at one end of a wet grassland field rises to form a stream which then disappears down a hole at the opposite end of the field. This is the source for Goldings canal (see Beane valley character area description).

Land cover and land use. This area consists mainly of open arable farmland, with a few large blocks of woodland (Priests Wood) and small areas of pasture. On its eastern edge there is a large mineral extraction site, which is being restored as a nature reserve. Elsewhere a small extraction site has been backfilled and restored to arable cultivation.

Vegetation and wildlife. The few woodland blocks in this area tend to be large and prominent, the more so for the surrounding lack of hedges, with some blocks of ancient woodland. Species are sweet chestnut, beech coppice and hornbeam, with standard oaks, also field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and elder. Within the woodland the almost calcareous conditions give rise to a bluebell and orchid ground flora, despite the clay. Field boundaries are marked by hedgebanks.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The pre-20th century pattern of this area is apparent, despite the loss of hedges. Within Priest Wood, west of Stapleford, lie well preserved earthworks of banks and ditches, which almost certainly represent the remains of an Iron Age or Roman field system.

Field pattern. The field pattern is generally irregular and the field size consistently large. This is an area in which 19th-century enclosure overlies a pattern of pre-18th century 'organic' enclosure.

Transport pattern. The transport pattern is very simple, with one lane (Tattle Hill) linking Bramfield to Hertford and another linking to the Beane valley, winding their way between the hedgebanks which are a consistent feature. The area is bounded by larger roads, with the B1000 along the southern boundary and the A119 within the Beane valley to the east.

Settlements and built form. Bramfield village is an ancient settlement and has some of the character of an estate village, with groups of cottages in a consistent style, in red or yellow brick, usually with dark blue paintwork detail. Bramfield House occupies a prominent position within the village. A house with ornamental grounds is shown on a map of 1766 and it appears currently to have extensive ornamental grounds with a lake.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

See also Area 68: Lower Beane Valley

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is generally visible from the high ground to the north west and the slopes below, and it commands extensive views to the edge of Hertford. This is a coherent, long-settled, tranquil, medium-scale landscape.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unusual by virtue of its flatness in this generally undulating county, but otherwise an unremarkable arable landscape.

VISUAL IMPACT

There has been little visual impact on this area from built development, other than extensive mineral extraction on its eastern edge. This has markedly changed the local landform but will extend the range of local biodiversity and will help link it to the Beane river valley. The northwestern edge of Hertford is well screened from view and there has been little obtrusive development within Bramfield. Loss of field boundaries is likely to have been a result of arable intensification and visually this area resembles a prairie, more typical of areas to the north east.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses are walking and family play. There is an extensive footpath network, in good condition with a wide hoggin surface in some parts.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area includes various distinctive elements in the landscape, including Bramfield (C).

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmennted
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BRAMFIELD PLAIN - Area 67

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- where possible and appropriate, replace former hedges along historic field boundaries, but not necessarily along road boundaries, where they could obscure views over this open landscape. Use only local species, preferably of local provenance, to reinforce distinctiveness
- do not plant hedgerow trees, as these are not found in this area
- tree planting should be confined to the creation of buffer zones round existing woods, preferably following historic field or woodland boundaries. Where possible, use this type of planting to link discrete woodlands. Use only locally native species of local provenance. Do not plant trees in areas that have not previously been woodland as this could alter the balance of landscape features in this area. Ensure that new woodland planting is of a scale to match existing woodland in the area
- encourage the appropriate management of the new nature reserve to maximise biodiversity, since it is not a feature that contributes to the historic local landscape character
- encourage the management of road verges and banks to increase biodiversity
- within arable farmland encourage the establishment of wide field margins, beetle banks, etc. to increase biodiversity without altering the landscape character of the area
- look at creating green corridors between ridges and river valleys

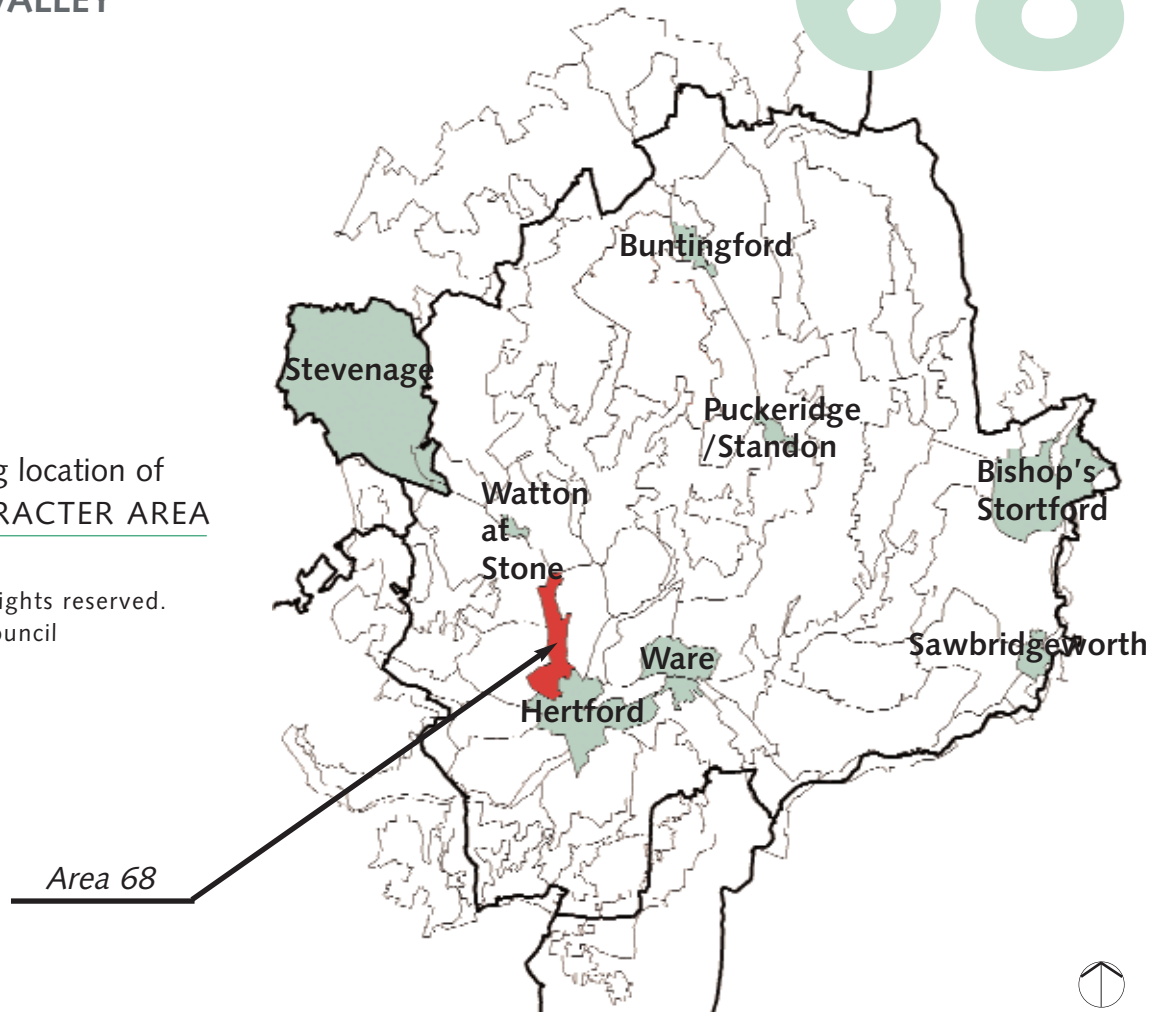


Waterford Heath nature reserve
(R. Hare)

LOWER BEANE VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Linear north-south feature between the southern edge of Woodhall Park and Hertford/Bengeo, including the flat valley floor and short, sharp valley slopes.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A narrow flat floodplain with steeply rising valley sides. The river is not dominant enough to be a major landscape feature, but the valley does differ significantly from the arable uplands to either side, not least in the congregation within it of transport features, such as road and railway. A mix of pasture and woodland is typical throughout, with the southern part strongly influenced by ribbon development, industry and mineral extraction, while the northern part is more rural and remote.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- series of 'ford' villages set along floodplain on both sides of river, linked by narrow lanes
- mineral workings on both slopes in the southern part of the

area. Some restored to 'nature reserve' (Waterford)

- isolated arable farms above floodplain, linked to valley settlements
- pasture, arable and woodland within floodplain, especially at the northern end, where the divided watercourse is only an incident within the floodplain
- mixed land-use pattern, with some grazing on slopes, some arable in valley bottom

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- railway
- very small, low bridges over the watercourses
- Goldings mansion and parkland
- some ribbon development along valley

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON

HCC Countryside Management Services: Beane Valley Project.

LOWER BEANE VALLEY - Area 68

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The valley floor has gleyed (poorly draining) mainly calcareous soils over alluvial drift (Thames series), while the slopes to either side are brown (free draining loamy) soils over chalky till (Melford series).

Topography. The river Beane occupies a narrow flat floodplain, within steeply sloping valley sides

Degree of slope. 1 in 10 to 1 in 20 on the valley sides; 1 in 275 along the length of the river between Goldings Park and the A119

Altitude range. 40m to 75m. There is a fall of 20m along the length of the river between Watton-at-Stone and Hertford.

Hydrology. The river Beane flows southwards to its confluence with the Lea at Hertford. It is classified as a chalk stream but has suffered from low flows since the early 1950s, as a result of public water supply abstractions, and retains valuable features only in its lower reaches between Waterford and Hertford. Despite this it retains a largely natural character, with shallow banks and gravel beds. Submerged and emergent species are typical of chalk rivers and are often abundant enough to choke the channel. Although the surrounding area is chiefly in intensive arable cultivation, there are valuable wetland habitats.

Land cover and land use. This is a landscape of treed farmland and wetland vegetation, with a high proportion of mineral extraction sites at the southern end and some low-key recreational use. Most of the pasture is on the valley floor or the lower slopes, especially at the northern end of the area, with arable production flowing down the slopes from the uplands above. There are few field boundaries. At Waterford a large former mineral extraction site has been allowed to regenerate at low level as a nature reserve. On the opposite bank alternative uses for redundant sites have been found.

Vegetation and wildlife. Most of the floodplain grasslands at the northern end of this area have been drained and ploughed, although some have recently been put back to grass. At the southern end (Bengeo Mead and parts of Waterford Marsh) there are remnant alluvial grasslands, with some valley slope grassland at Goldings. The valley slopes, where not cultivated, can support heathy vegetation such as is developing at the Waterford Heath nature reserve. Within the floodplain there are wet woodland habitats including alder and willow carr, marshy grasslands, reed bed and fen. Adjacent to this on the steepest slopes are linear woodlands of willow, hazel, poplar, field maple, hornbeam, oak and ash. Great Mole Wood forms the boundary at the southern end and contains relic oak/hazel and hornbeam woodland. At Clusterbolts/Foxleys Woods there are unique 'hanging woodlands' with calcareous spring systems from perched water tables. Oak is an infrequent hedgerow tree and there are some distinctive conifers associated with settlement.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The dominant historic pattern of this area is its change of use from common to intensive arable production and the impact of 20th-century development. Its chief historic feature is Goldings, which has been recorded as a significant landscape since at least 1766 and was described in 1770 as *'upon a gentle eminence. Before it [the mansion] lies a beautiful vale enriched with a serpentine river, fed by a trout stream, called Beneficial (or Beautiful) River. The lands are happily varied, the hills are adorned with dropping woods and the town of Hertford perfects*

this pleasure-giving view' (sale particulars, 1770). When the estate changed hands in 1861, the new owner improved and enlarged the park. Bramfield Road was diverted around the perimeter and the Watton Road was moved to bring a loop of the River Beane into the park. The Mole Wood millstream was also tapped to feed a new, wide, meandering 'river' called Goldings Canal, with a series of bridges. Elements from the 18th century survive within this landscape, which was until recently owned by Hertfordshire County Council.

Field pattern. There is no consistent field pattern or size in this area. Some grazing meadows are clearly marked in small parcels on the valley floor, while on the slopes field sizes tend to echo the large size of the arable plateau above. Field boundary hedges are infrequent, usually medium height and mixed species, sometimes recently planted.

Transport pattern. The A119 follows a route along the valley side between Hertford and Watton-at-Stone, on the west bank of the river. The railway between Hertford and Stevenage crosses the floodplain on embankment above Hertford and then veers away onto the high ground to the west. There are three minor east-west road crossings between Hertford and Watton-at-Stone, with sunken lanes diving precipitously off the plateau towards the valley settlements between densely hedged banks with minimal verges.

Settlements and built form.

- Stapleford and Waterford, as their names imply, are lower valley-side settlements on both sides of the river, linked by narrow lanes over unassuming brick bridges across the watermeadows. In addition there are individual farmsteads set slightly higher on the valley slopes, of varying ages. Waterford Hall Farm is of yellow brick and clay tile, while Patchendon Farm dates from at least the 17th century.
- Goldings mansion was rebuilt between 1871-77 on higher ground away from river as a neo-Jacobean/Tudoresque red brick mansion, within an improved and enlarged park with pleasure gardens

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Herts. Gardens Trust and R. Bisgrove, *Hertfordshire Gardens on Ermine Street* (1996), p.13.

HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

Environment Agency *LEAP* for Upper Lee (1999).

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is widely visible from neighbouring valley slopes and the plateau above. Views within the area are filtered by wetland/valley bottom vegetation. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium and this is a contained and coherent landscape area. It is generally tranquil, especially away from the road and railway, from which there is occasional noise.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The river valley contains the best example of wetlands in central Hertfordshire, at Waterford marsh and Bengeo Mead, albeit with a slightly greater urban influence at its southern end. Goldings is an important historic park.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development, from light industry and housing on the valley floor, is apparent. The impact of land use change is perceived most in the loss of grassland to arable, particularly where there is arable cultivation on the valley floor.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths and the waymarked routes of the Herts Way are localised along the river, with areas of informal public open space. Condition: fair.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is valued for its distinctive valley landscapes, particularly between Waterford and Hertford (C). "There have been extensive recent changes... in some ways the landscape has been considerably improved" (Respondent 1665, SPD Consultation 2006).

"Waterford Heath, Waterford Marsh and Goldings... represent a wildlife continuum" (Respondent 1665, SPD Consultation 2006).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The lower Beane is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its wetlands and woodlands.

Goldings is listed Grade II in the English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	moderate
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

LOWER BEANE VALLEY - Area 68

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- consider the possibility of constructing fords rather than bridges whenever new crossings of the Beane are contemplated, in light of current low flows
- protect river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain, grazing marsh, fen and swamp
- promote the de-intensification of agricultural practices within river valleys
- resist the targeting of redundant or derelict pasture for development
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- promote an increase in stock grazing as a management technique
- promote the re-introduction of permanent pasture and flooding regimes as normal agricultural practices, to increase landscape and habitat diversity
- promote the establishment of buffer strips along the river to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife. Encourage linkage to eco-corridors and woodlands within the wider landscape
- resist further mineral extraction within the area, unless restoration proposals can be seen as a positive impact over time. Consider de-watering implications and proposed levels of restoration, ensuring that the latter respects the existing contours
- ensure that restoration proposals for existing minerals site are properly implemented and maintained. Where necessary, negotiate improved restoration by agreement, preferably to grassland or woodland and without permanent damage to existing landforms
- promote increased linear and circular footpaths within the river valley.

STONYHILLS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Interfluvium of rivers Beane and Rib, north of Bengoe to Tonwell and the edge of Woodhall Park

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently undulating light arable upland and valley slopes between the Rib and Beane valleys, widening to the north. Generally large irregular fields and woodlands on very light soils, with several blocks of ancient woodland in the south. Very rural, with few settlements but many mineral extraction sites.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating open arable farmland with woodland
- small to medium scale
- few settlements; a few isolated farms
- regular blocks of woodland of different ages
- active, disused and restored mineral extraction sites, with mix of field sizes and variety of restoration uses
- sunken lanes with steep sides, often very narrow and gently sinuous
- usually treed rather than hedged, or with fragmented hedges and occasional mature hedgerow oak
- very light soils

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- occasional huge arable fields
- abrupt transition from urban to rural character on edge of Bengoe
- conspicuous water tower at Tonwell
- gravel erosion
- young conifer or mixed plantation abutting hornbeam ancient woodland, with beech/hazel edge
- bracken
- former mineral workings now developing heathland grass species with butterflies and skylarks

Moat in woodland south of Watton-at-Stone
(P. Shears)

STONYHILLS - Area 69

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well-drained fine loam with clay subsoil, over chalky till on the plateau (Hanslope series), with brown (free draining loamy) soils over chalk on the slopes (Melford series).

Topography. Undulating sloping land rising to a small plateau in the north

Degree of slope. 1 in 30 to 1 in 50

Altitude range. 40m to 83m

Hydrology. This area is partly defined by the effect of two watercourses on the landform, but there are few streams draining into them, due to the free-draining nature of the soils.

Land cover and land use. This area of wooded farmland has experienced a high degree of disturbance from mineral extraction. Some areas have been restored to grassland and now support a range of heath-related species. Elsewhere the farmland is mainly in arable cultivation, with a few paddocks, while ancient woodland and conifer plantations abut each other.

Vegetation and wildlife. The ancient woodland in this area is dominated by oak/hornbeam, but a wide variety of other species are also present, as hazel, elm and field maple, with ash, willow and sallow on the slopes near the watercourses. Recent plantations are of Scots pine, hazel and sycamore behind a hazel edge. There are some well maintained hedgerows or relic hedgerow oaks and very trimmed field maple, with hawthorn, blackthorn (sloe), field maple and holly (on the slopes) but hedges are generally poor or absent, with a few overgrown tree rows and some important relic hedge systems. Field boundaries are treed holly or hawthorn hedgerows, occasionally mixed, with large oaks. Mature individual oaks and holly are locally distinctive species. The northern part of this area has more calcareous soils, with cowslips along the roadsides. The gravel pits are not ecologically valuable at present.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of land use in this area has been significantly disturbed locally by mineral extraction, but elsewhere there is a strong pattern of fields and woodland.

Field pattern. Large regular and irregular fields. Field boundaries are usually medium height treed hedgerows, occasionally hedgebanks or fences. In many instances they are in poor condition.

Transport pattern. There is a limited rather cruciform road network within this area, consisting of narrow, often sunken, unhedged lanes with occasional hedgerow trees. Where verges are present they are usually very narrow.

Settlements and built form. Chapmore End is the only settlement within this area, an 18th/20th century hamlet with houses of the Georgian and Victorian eras and the 20th century, surrounded by paddocks.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This is an open area, rising above the river valleys to either side and with wide views over the surrounding landscape, filtered in places by the woodland blocks. It is visible from the higher ground to the north, i.e. the Sacombe estate farmland. It is a tranquil area, with occasional distant noise from the railway to the west, and is very clearly demarcated from the urban area to the south

Rarity and distinctiveness. The soils in this area appear to be lighter than in most other areas in the south of the county, and are obviously mineral-bearing. This has had an impact on the character of the area.

VISUAL IMPACT

Most of the mineral extraction sites in this area are well screened, but there are very limited views of huge landfill sites on the skyline and evidence throughout the area of former workings, some of which are now restored for nature conservation interest.

ACCESSIBILITY

Extensive footpaths

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is not regarded as particularly distinctive (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change:
Age structure of tree cover:
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:
Management of semi-natural habitat:
Survival of cultural pattern:
Impact of built development:
Impact of land-use change:

localised
 mixed
 fragmennted
 good
 declining
 low
 high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform:
Impact of land cover:
Impact of historic pattern:
Visibility from outside:
Sense of enclosure:
Visual unity:
Distinctiveness/rarity:

apparent
 apparent
 relic
 locally visible
 open
 incoherent
 unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STONYHILLS - Area 69

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- encourage the replanting and/or improvement of hedges along historic field boundaries, within arable areas rather than along roadsides, where open verges would reinforce the distinctiveness of this area
- support the establishment of new woodlands, especially around existing woodlands where this would create additional habitat and protection. Ensure that new woodland would not damage historic features such as banks and ditches, but use ancient field and woodland boundaries as appropriate
- new woodland planting should be of locally indigenous species only, using seed/plants of local provenance if possible
- promote the appropriate management of woodland, whether high forest, coppice, or coppice-with-standards, ensuring that a wide age-range is established, together with a species-rich ground flora
- support the establishment of deer management groups
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors
- ensure that the restoration of exhausted minerals sites is carried out in accordance with agreed restoration plans, amended where necessary to reflect current best practice in maximising nature conservation potential and to ensure that they reflect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness

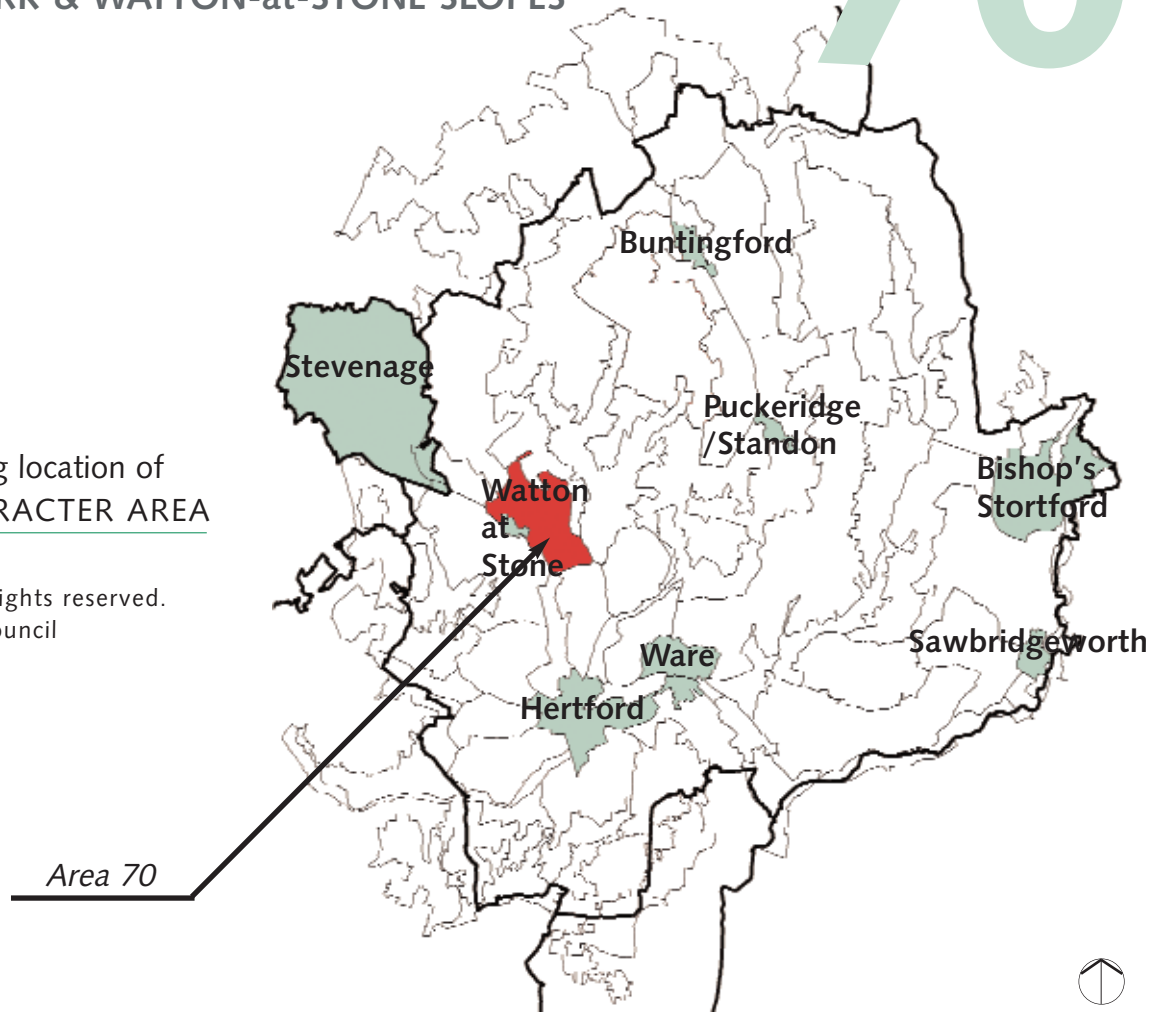


Stoneyhills
(P. Shears)

WOODHALL PARK & WATTON-at-STONE SLOPES

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Woodhall Park and an area of wooded farmland to the north along the eastern flank of the Beane valley.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An upland arable landscape, more enclosed by woodland than the open area to the north and with very strong overlying planned parkland characteristics within Woodhall, which makes a strong statement, contained within its extensive brick wall yet visible over a wide area

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating landform
- unifying architectural style of estate farm buildings and lodges throughout area
- well wooded, with exotic tree species within parkland
- parkland influence of ornamental trees and boundary tree belts; estate influence of many mature hedgerow oaks
- parkland character overrides topography

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- brick wall around perimeter of Woodhall Park
- Woodhall Park mansion



The Broad Water, Woodhall Park
(P. Shears)

WOODHALL PARK & WATTON-at-STONE SLOPES - Area 70

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Woodhall Park has deep, well-drained loamy soils over chalky till (Melford series in the south; Hornbeam 3 series in the north);

Topography. Undulating upland, sloping south-westwards towards the Beane.

Degree of slope. 1 in 30 to 1 in 45

Altitude range. 60m to 100m

Hydrology. The Dane End tributary flows in a south-easterly direction to the Beane, which lies parallel to the western edge of Woodhall Park. In the parkland the river has been dammed to create lakes, augmented by natural springs in the area to the south-east of Watton-at-Stone.

Land cover and land use. This wooded farmland consists of estate farmland and parkland and is in mainly arable cultivation with significant amounts of pasture, with a group of linked woodlands in the north-eastern part.

Vegetation and wildlife. Most of the woodland in this area is ancient woodland, with species including oak, holly, field maple, elder, ash and hawthorn. Hog's Wood is hornbeam coppice with oak standards, well managed and with a distinct banked edge. High Wood is designated SSSI for its ancient oak/hornbeam woodland and has had the same boundaries since the 16th century. New Wood is also ancient woodland. Species in the other woodlands are ash, oak and horse chestnut, with blackthorn and poplar. Field boundaries tend to be modern medium-height hawthorn. The permanent pasture contains many mature oaks and there are conifers within the Woodhall Park estate. The roadside verge along Walkern road, between Walkern and Watton-at-Stone, supports a rich mix of calcareous herbs and the adjacent arable fields are a rich area for arable weeds. In 1991 this verge was designated the county's first Heritage Roadside Verge. A very sharp hanger off the A602 above Watton-at-Stone, over the river valley, marks the transition between gravel and chalk.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The remains of a Roman road which ran from Verulamium and passed through Watton-at-Stone can be seen in this area. A Saxon-Dane battle took place here in 1016, and its market is mentioned in Domesday. Woodhall (formerly known as Watton Woodhall) is a visually dominant parkland, walled and with a very conspicuous mansion set within open grassland slopes down to the dammed river Beane. The first record of a deer park here is 1645 and the herd was only disposed of in 1939. The park was created in the 18th century from farmland which was 'landscaped' by William Malcolm, who dammed the Beane to form a narrow sinuous lake with cascade, weir and sluice. It has planted parkland and pre-parkland trees, extensive boundary belts, a fine walled garden and a 1-hectare garden laid out by Brenda Colvin c.1958 near the converted stables. Much of the former parkland has been returned to agriculture but pre-parkland hedges and fossil roads are still visible.

Field pattern. Regular and small to medium in scale. Bardolphs, to the north of Woodhall Park, is a tenanted farm belonging to the estate.

Transport pattern. The A 602 trunk route, with its modern hawthorn hedges, wide banked verges and traffic, follows the eastern and northern boundaries of Woodhall Park. Walkern Road runs north/south below the plateau edge on the eastern valley slope

Settlements and built form.

- Watton-at-Stone is the largest settlement associated with this rural stretch of the Beane. It has a 15th-century church and cottages ranging from Early Tudor through to late Georgian. It is currently undergoing a significant housing expansion. Watton Hall is Early Tudor and there are several 17th-century houses and cottages in the village, as well as significant 21st-century development on the western edge. The name 'at Stone' derives from the presence of two puddingstone lumps. There are natural springs in the area and the town was at one time a popular spa. It has developed considerably since the reopening of the station in the 1990s. Hitch's large (300mm x 150mm) patent bricks (patented 1828) were used to build the road bridge at Watton-at-Stone; later additions and repairs have used conventional bricks
- Woodhall Park (originally Watton Wood Hall) is a white brick oblong built in 1777-82 for Sir Thomas Rumbold, replacing a 16th-century house. It has four yellow-brick early Victorian lodges with approach drives.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens*.
Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

WOODHALL PARK & WATTON-at-STONE SLOPES - Area 70

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

To the north potential views are filtered or blocked by woodland. From the outside this area is concealed by woodland from the north and by topography from the south. Views within the area are extensive, occasionally blocked locally by woodland. This is a medium-scale, contained landscape, visually unified and tranquil. Although there has been a considerable change from parkland to arable within Woodhall Park, the overall character is retained. **Rarity and distinctiveness.** Woodhall Park is listed Grade II* in the English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is little impact from built development in this area, other than from the A119.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths are limited and occasionally unmarked, with some along farm tracks and some lost.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The large parkland of Woodhall is regarded as distinctive (C).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Woodhall Park is Grade II* listed by English Heritage.

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: wide spread
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: intact
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: dominant
Impact of land cover: dominant
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: open
Sense of enclosure: unified
Visual unity: open
Distinctiveness/rarity: rare/unique

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

WOODHALL PARK & WATTON-at-STONE SLOPES - Area 70

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- resist any development proposals that would affect the integrity and historic value of this landscape area
- encourage the dissemination of information about the value of parkland and veteran trees
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture, especially within the parkland
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and semi-natural habitats, i.e. along the stream courses, to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser run-off and to provide additional habitat. Where possible, link these buffer zones to the wider landscape via ecological corridors such as hedges and woodlands, to increase biodiversity
- encourage the establishment and management of wet native woodland along watercourses, such as willow and black poplar
- encourage woodland planting around or adjacent to existing woodlands, using only locally indigenous species of local provenance
- establish realistic and attractive management schemes for all sites with heathland and grassland communities
- promote the management of woodland to maintain a distinction between different systems: high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards, wood pasture; establish a good age-spread through the woodland and a species-rich ground flora
- encourage the replanting of hedges along historic field boundaries, avoiding roadside verges, which should be managed for their nature conservation potential
- As part of the management of historic park lands, a succession planting approach should be undertaken.

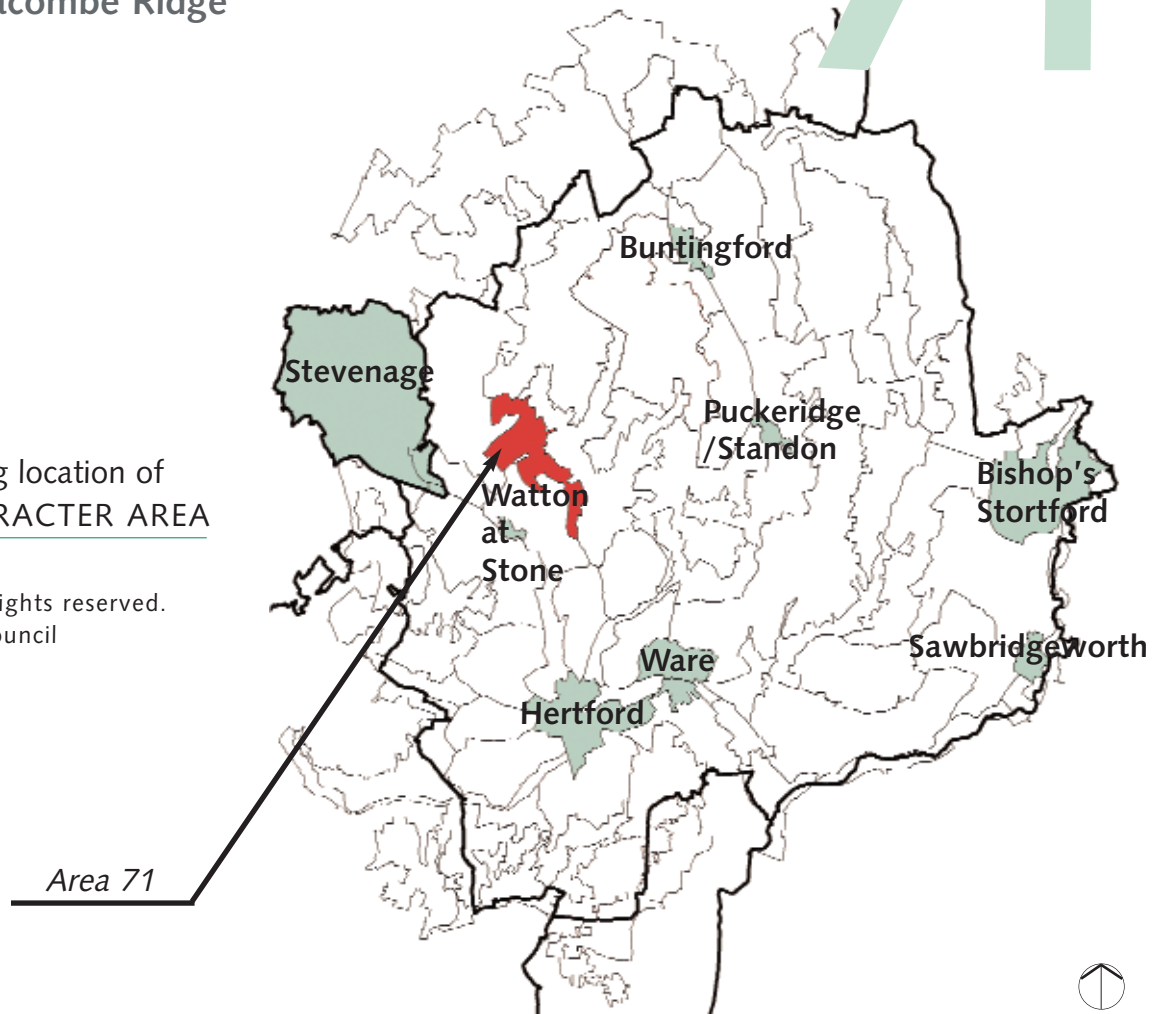


Watton-at-Stone church
(P. Shears)

BENINGTON - Sacombe Ridge

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Narrow interfluvium between Beane and Upper Bourne valleys, north from Woodhall Park and expanding into larger area.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An area of ancient countryside with small woods, winding green lanes and numerous stream-eroded valleys. It consists of a narrow, gently undulating settled plateau, with a continuous ribbon of development along its length from Benington southwards. Although predominantly in agricultural production, this is also a more populated area, with a slight commuter character derived from the substantial houses in large plots and a variance in character through the different linked villages.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow undulating plateau
- chalk visible on the surface
- settled, with ribbon development
- small woodlands set among large unhedged fields

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- chalk flora: beech as prominent tree, with scabious, wild hops and clematis in field banks



Benington, view towards church
(P. Shears)

BENINGTON - Sacombe Ridge - Area 71

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series). In this area the chalk content is visible at the surface and directly influences the native flora.

Topography. Very narrow north/south ridge, sloping gently southwards.

Degree of slope. 1 in 160 between Benington and the northern edge of Woodhall Park; 1 in 44 across the plateau, with minor local variations.

Altitude range. 90m to 120m.

Hydrology. Between the northern edge of Woodhall Park and Benington village this narrow ridge forms the interfluvium between the valleys of the upper Beane and the Old Bourne, a tributary of the Beane. There are many field ponds in the area.

Land cover and land use. This is a more domesticated area than most, primarily due to the ribbon development along Whemstead Road, which occupies most of this narrow plateau. The settlements appear to form one linear development, beyond which there is arable cultivation of the large fields and generally small blocks of grouped woodlands. Around Burns Green there is also some light industrial development.

Vegetation and wildlife. To the south of Benington there are very few hedges, merely the odd hawthorn cut tightly into a block by the roadside. Within the woodlands common species are oak, hazel, field maple, ash and sycamore, with beech dominant. In general the woodland is transitional between oak/hornbeam and ash/hazel/field maple, with dogwood and dog's mercury in the understorey. This area also contains one of the county's most important complexes of neutral grassland - old cattle pasture - where cuckoo flower and cowslips flower in the spring. Cowslips can also be found elsewhere throughout the area in pasture remnants.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The ancient, settled character of this area is exemplified by Benington and its surroundings. There was a castle here, but it was pulled down in 1212; Benington was one of only three deer parks listed at Domesday. Benington Lordship was built in the late 17th century adjacent to the remains of the castle, and with the church of St Peter also in the grounds. One of the main features of the gardens is a rectangular sunken terrace dating from the 17th or possibly 16th century. The parkland was planted with ornamental avenues and trees before 1743 but parts of the parkland were later ploughed up. Many of the other features in the gardens date from the early years of the 20th century under the guidance of Lillian Bott.

Field pattern. This is an area of large unhedged fields, with a consequent loss of field pattern except around the settlements, where the scale is more medium and regular to geometric. Fields generally lack hedges; some have hedge banks (without the hedge) but several have a wide field margin rather than a verge.

Transport pattern. The transport pattern in this area is dominated by Whemstead (sic) Road, which follows the narrow plateau top and along which all the settlement has developed.

Settlements and built form. Benington is a medieval settlement with a 14th-century flint church and an '*almost perfect*' (Pevsner, p.94) village green, with individual cottages scattered around it, timber-framed, pargetted, with overhangs and gables, and with views through its perimeter trees to the church. Throughout the village there is a scattering of larger houses of interest. These range from 16th-century timber frame (The Old House) to Georgian neo-Gothic fantasy (The Lordship), designed in 1832 to match the remains of the keep of Benington Castle. The village has two distinct parts: the ancient, picture-postcard area around the green, and the more suburban, recent ribbon development linking to Burns Green and Hebing End, with its scattering of light industrial uses.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Bisgrove, R., *The Gardens of Britain* (1978), p.33.

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens.

BENINGTON - Sacombe Ridge - Area 71

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The location of this area on a narrow ridge provides extensive views out over the surrounding countryside and within it, while it remains largely unseen from the outside. It has an atmosphere of remoteness in the northern part of the area which diminishes as ribbon development increases further south. Any sense of unity is belied by the different ages of development along Whemstead (sic) Road - there is a strong contrast between the village green in Benington and the light industrial uses around Burn's Green, despite their proximity.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Benington village is unusual in Hertfordshire for being quite so 'picture postcard' and is more gentrified than the surrounding villages within the valleys. Benington Lordship is listed in the English Heritage List of Parks and Gardens and the gardens are frequently open to the public.

VISUAL IMPACT

The different ages of development along Whemstead (sic) Road lack unity, while the light industrial uses at Burn's Green distract from the predominantly agricultural land use of the area.

ACCESSIBILITY

Few footpaths; Chain Walk along western edge of plateau, linking to Burn's Green

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Insufficient data was available from the community exercise to provide a rating. It has therefore been estimated as (D)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The Cottered/Ardeley/Benington area is recognised in the BAP as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its oak-hornbeam and ash-maple woodlands and meadows. Benington Lordship is English Heritage Grade II listed Park and Garden.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	nearly intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BENINGTON - Sacombe Ridge - Area 71

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- support the creation of targeted agri-environmental schemes within Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and Countryside Heritage Areas (CHAs)
- support and encourage the reinstatement of hedges along historic boundary lines, while retaining open views from roads and footpaths
- promote and support initiatives to encourage local distinctiveness and a visual separation between the different settlements along the ridge
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture
- promote the establishment of markets for woodland products, training to provide a skilled work force and adequate protection from damage
- support the establishment of deer management groups
- ancient hedge and field boundaries are often associated with ancient woodland. Where woodland restoration and expansion are considered appropriate, use them to define the most appropriate location for such initiatives
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation within arable landscapes and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors (but see hedgerow guideline above)
- within the arable farmland encourage the establishment of wild field margins, beetle banks, etc, to increase biodiversity and establish eco-corridors where hedges would be inappropriate

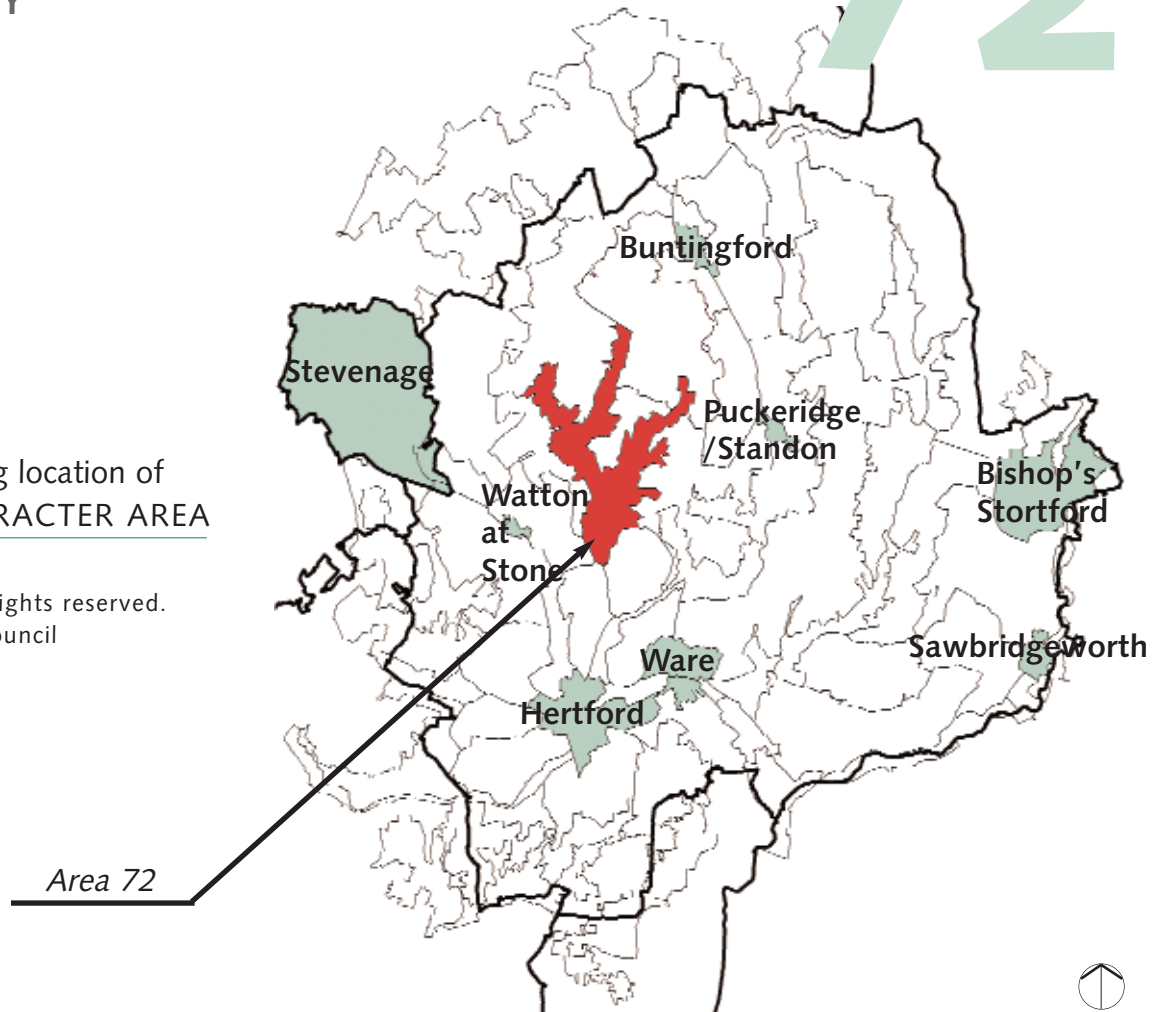


Benington gardens spreading onto green (P. Shears)

MUNDEN VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Valley formation stretching northwards from the northern edge of Sacombe and Woodhall Parks, eastwards to include Great Munden and westwards around the northern edge of Benington.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

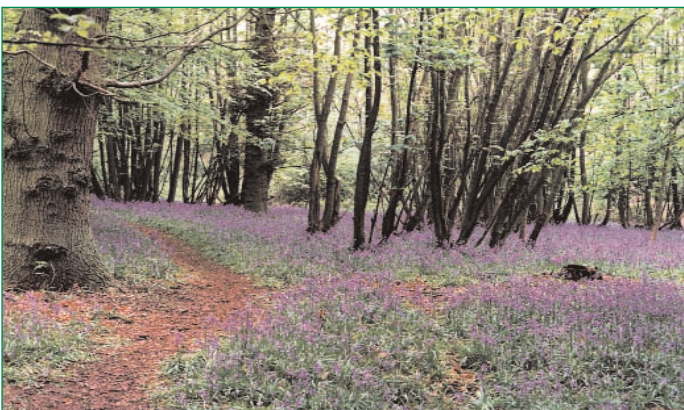
This area is a group of small, remote pastoral and arable valleys carrying tributaries to the river Beane, dominated by important relic woodlands. The Old Bourne is a small watercourse with wetland flora but no trees, lying within a wide, shallow valley, while the Dane End Tributary, often no more than a ditch, has its course marked by non-wetland trees within a long, narrow valley with moderately steep sides and a gentle gradient. It is a long-settled area, with grouped hamlets.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- valley landform
- arable cultivation with pasture around settlements
- small scattered woodlands
- remote and peaceful

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Dane End settlement
- hedgebanks
- 'common' names along Dane End tributary
- roads following watercourses along valley bottoms



Bluebells in Comb's Wood near Whempstead
(J. Crew)

MUNDEN VALLEY - Area 72

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep fine loam and clay soils with slowly permeable subsoils over chalky till. The chalk is very near the surface in some places and the local vegetation reflects this.

Degree of slope. 1 in 20 in the Old Bourne valley; 1 in 15 in the Dane End Tributary valley; 1 in 30 at the southern end, above Sacombe village. The Old Bourne tributary falls by 1 in 200 between its upper reaches near Moor Green and Sacombe.

Altitude range. 60 m to 110m

Hydrology. The headwaters of the river Beane have been surveyed recently by the Environment Agency. They are of poor quality, heavily influenced by land use, groundwater levels and pollution sources, but are still important as chalk streams, which are considered to be internationally important because of their ecological communities. The dry valleys are bournes, with winter flows from subterranean sources.

Land cover and land use. Most of this area is in arable cultivation, with pockets of pasture around settlements and farms and sheep pasture notable locally. In many places arable cultivation now extends right to the water's edge, which reduces the impact of the watercourses within the landscape. Pasture is, unusually, more frequent on the plateau than in the valleys. There is a golf course south east of Dane End on former arable farmland.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is an area of small, discrete woodlands, composed of fragmented ancient woodland, mainly hornbeam coppice, and mixed plantations. Hazel is the most common species, with oak, ash, hornbeam and some lime. Willow can be found along the ditches. Hedges are generally infrequent, having been lost to arable intensification. Where present they are usually hawthorn, sometimes with hazel and dogwood. Hedgerow oaks are infrequent. Many of the former commons are now under arable cultivation, although their place names are still marked on the OS map. There is some grassland around Dane End, with isolated patches of chalk grassland and a few small chalk pits.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is an area that has been settled since at least the early Bronze Age but has lost many small settlements. Parts of the parish boundary are at least 1400 years old and probably formed the boundary between two Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Records suggest that there was a deer park at Smart's Hill until the 18th century, and there is a very prominent bank indicative of this. The earliest records of deer parks in this area are 1283 (Great Munden) and 1299 (Little Munden). In the 19th century the rose gardens at Dane End Park were renowned and visited.

Field pattern. The large common arable fields, which are characteristic of NE Herts, probably originated in the late Saxon period and most survived well into the 19th century, despite piecemeal enclosure. The sloping ground on the valley sides drains more freely and is therefore easier to plough than the heavy clay on the neighbouring plateaux. The former meadows along the watercourses have been ploughed up since the mid 19th century.

Transport pattern. In their upper reaches the road system follows the watercourses along the valley slope, while between Dane End and Sacombe the road and the watercourse criss-cross, with the stream an open ditch which used to flood regularly. The A602 forms part of the southern boundary of this area, but is not typical of its character.

Settlements and built form. Little Munden (Dane End) consists of five hamlets: Dane End, Green End, Haultwick, White Hill and Potters Green, set in rolling farmland, with narrow lanes, and is known locally as 'Little Devon'. Dane End is set in the valley (dene=end of valley), its satellite hamlets on the hills above.

- Dane End is by a long way the largest settlement in this area. From 30 dwellings in 1903 it increased to 253 in 1977, as land accrued by the Chauncy family as part of the Dane End estate was sold off for housing development, and is now a commuter village. These modern houses have rather swamped the older village centre, with its weatherboarded and thatched cottages.
 - Little Munden church dates in part from the 11th century; the settlement itself has never been more than a collection of cottages around Lordship's Farm.
 - Sacombe village contains several estate cottages in yellow brick, dating from the early 20th century.
- Great Munden and Nasty are located at the head of Dane End Tributary

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Rowe, A., *The Protected Valley*, Hamels Publishing (1999).
Environment Agency LEAP for the Upper Lee (1999).

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This is a very coherent and unified landscape, based on its landform of small valleys and relative remoteness and tranquility. There are extensive views within and beyond the area, especially to the east and west, with only small blocks of woodland to filter views and few hedges. It is thus also an open landscape, of medium scale.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is not an unusual landscape but should be valued for its historic integrity and blend of form and function.

VISUAL IMPACT

The built development in this area is generally in keeping, although Dane End is out of scale with its neighbouring settlements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Good track along The Old Bourne, elsewhere a bit sporadic

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Insufficient data (estimated D)

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

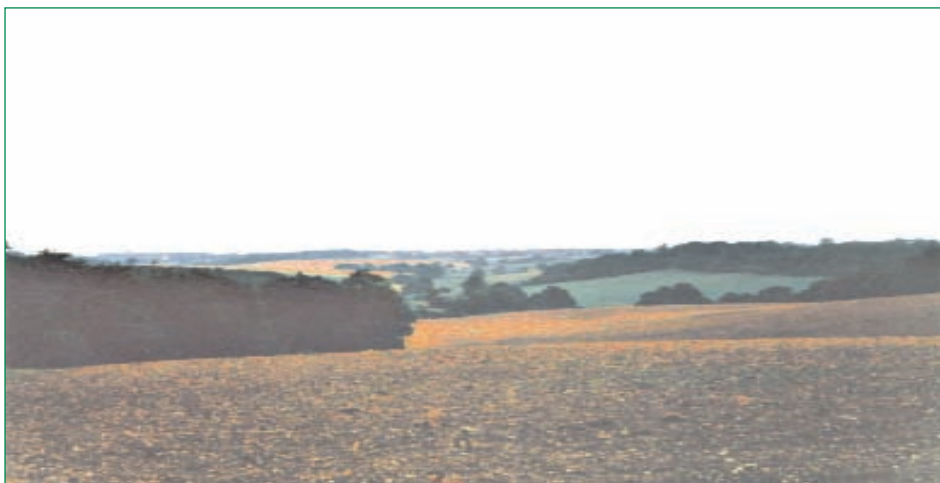
Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

MUNDEN VALLEY - Area 72

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

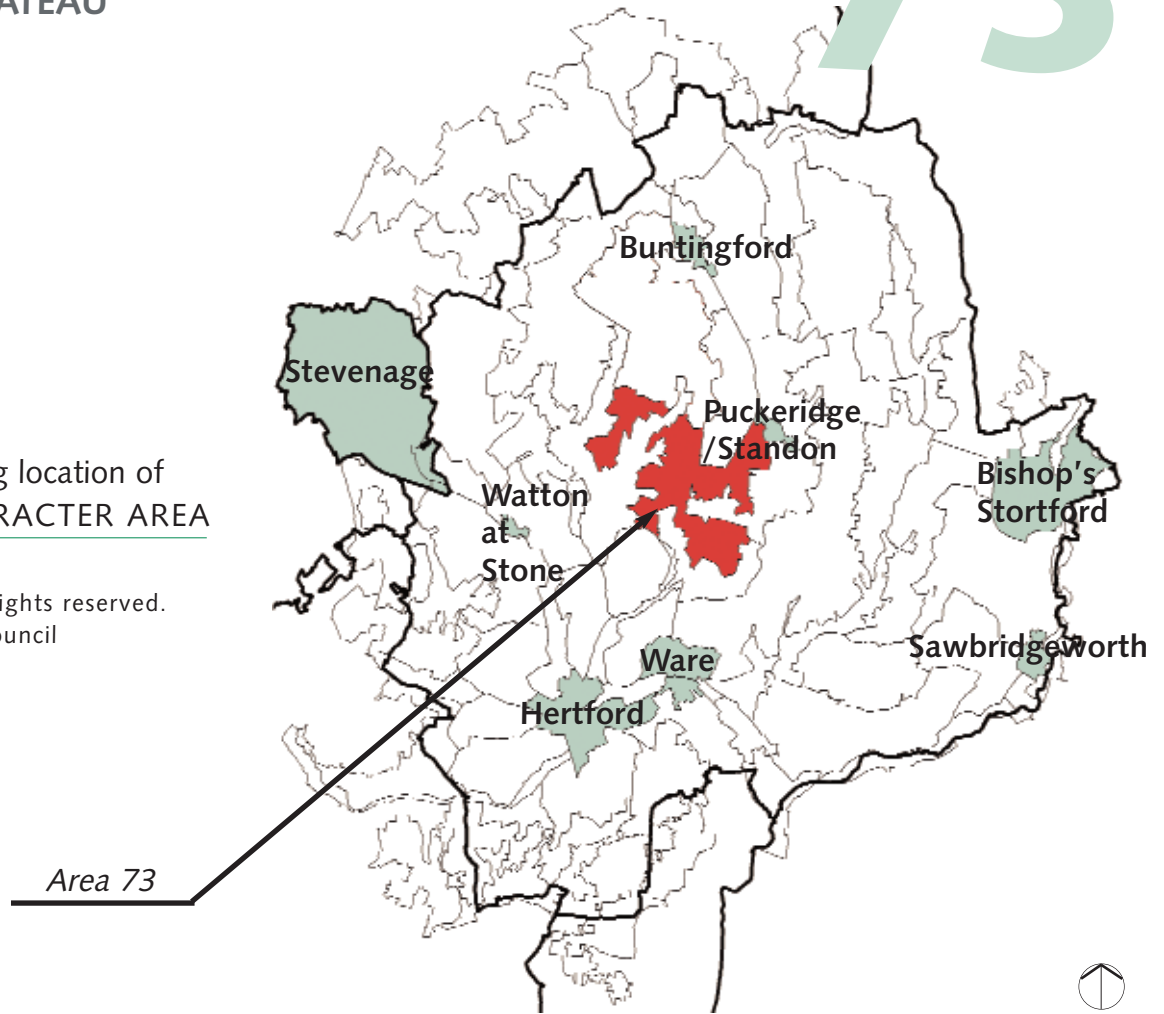
- increase landowners' awareness of the biodiversity value of streamside vegetation. Encourage them to plant buffer strips adjacent to watercourses to prevent pollution and create wetland vegetation.
- encourage landowners to replant hedges along former field boundaries, where appropriate, ensuring that no damage is caused to historic features such as ditches and banks.
- when considering applications for new housing, be aware of the current imbalance in settlement sizes in this area.
- encourage a reversion of arable to pasture and a continuation of mixed farming
- promote the establishment of buffer zones between intensive arable production and semi-natural habitats, including woodlands and watercourses, to prevent run-off from herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers
- encourage the planting of woodlands and hedges to create links between semi-natural habitats. Ensure that such features follow historic boundary lines and do not inadvertently destroy historic features
- encourage the establishment of wetland species along watercourses, such as willow and black poplar
- maintain ponds by ensuring that unavoidable losses are replaced by new ponds of at least equivalent value for wildlife
- ensure that proposed improvements to the landscape within Landscape Conservation Areas will reinforce and contribute to the distinctiveness of the local landscape character.
- promote the appropriate management of woodland to ensure a balanced age structure and the development of a species-rich ground flora. New woodlands should use only locally indigenous species, with stock of local provenance if possible



View north-east up Old Bourne Valley
(P. Shears)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Plateau between High Cross and Colliers End, bounded to the east by the Rib valley, to the south by a tributary and to the west by a tributary of the Beane. To the north this area abuts and runs to the west of the Puckeridge parklands. There is a small sub-area on the western edge around Haultwick, separated by The Dane End Tributary, (part of Area 72).

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A two-speed landscape. Open undulating clay plateau bisected by fast A-road along ancient route with several wayside settlements.



In arable cultivation with several ancient woodlands. Noticeably larger field pattern to the east of the A10, without settlements; more ancient, smaller scale to the west, with settlements. The narrow linear area west of The Bourne shares some of the characteristics of the Sacombe estate farmland but does not lie within it, relating rather to the wooded farmland to its north.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating arable upland
- filtered views out from and along A10
- limited views elsewhere, filtered by hedgerow vegetation
- isolated blocks of woodland, some large, especially east of A10
- ancient buildings in roadside settlements
- place names with 'green' or 'end' in small, remote settlements
- irregular or sinuous lanes and field boundaries

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- impact of A10
- transport-related commercial development along the A10
- the transition to the neighbouring valley areas is blurred because arable cultivation extends right down to the watercourses
- Roman roads

High Cross Plateau
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

HIGH CROSS PLATEAU - Area 73

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (Hanslope series). Neutral to mildly acidic.

Topography. Strongly undulating upland

Degree of slope. 1 in 20 locally; generally 1 in 55

Altitude range. 80m to 125m

Hydrology. The boundaries of this area are formed by tributary streams of the Beane and Rib, which flow into the river Lea. Small watercourses flow off this upland area into the tributaries. There are many ponds on this poorly drained land.

Land cover and land use. This area is treed farmland with some woodland. Major land uses are arable cultivation and forestry, with a likelihood that the woodland is managed for shooting. There is a private airstrip on the plateau part of this area and pasture in small fields around the settlements, which are small and remote.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woodland cover in this area consists of isolated blocks of ancient woodland, largely oak/ash/maple and hornbeam on gravelly soils, with some beech, sweet chestnut, holly, oak and willow but not especially species-rich. Bracken is also plentiful in this area. Great Southey Wood with Ash Plantation is the largest area of woodland. Dilly Wood is unmanaged hornbeam coppice with hazel coppice on the edge. There are some good old neutral grass pastures and important hedges at Standon Green End. With arable cultivation dominating there has been an inevitable loss of hedges, but it is not extreme in this area. Hedges are usually medium-height hawthorn with young mature and mature hedgerow oaks. Hornbeam, elm, willow, ash and hazel are also present in hedges, especially where the verges are ditched. Near Levens Green the vegetation is distinctly water tolerant, with oak, willow, ash and willow, hazel, field maple and dogwood and some blackthorn encroachment on the edge of the green. Rowney Priory has a lime avenue leading through parkland.

Associated features: old benches under young mature oaks with views across Bourne valley.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This has long been a farmed landscape in arable cultivation, with woodlands linked by hedges and small, isolated settlements and farms. The large common arable fields probably originated in the late Saxon period and most survived well into the 19th century in spite of piecemeal enclosure over the centuries.

- Rigery Lane, west of the A10, is a section of Roman road and a SM.
- It is possible that there was a medieval deer park around Shelly's Wood, north of Potter's Green.
- The historic importance of the old A10 as a major transport route from London to the north is reflected in the ancient linear settlements along it, such as High Cross and Colliers End, which lies just south of a Roman crossroads and formerly had a weighbridge, turnpike and several inns.
- Rowney Priory is largely Victorian but is on the site of a small Benedictine nunnery founded circa 1164.
- There is an ancient moat at Sutes, north of High Cross and just off the A10, and the remains of a medieval moated house in Roughground Wood.

Field pattern. Fields are generally hedged to form a regular medium to large field pattern. Around the settlements there are smaller, unhedged pasture fields.

Transport pattern. The A10/Ermine Street has historically been the major route through the area. The new alignment bypasses a number of the old settlements to the east. Ditched lanes, often very narrow. Very wide verge on lane near Rowney Priory, opposite wooded edged with hazel. Verges are variable, either absent or medium-width with ditches.

Settlements and built form

- High Cross, the largest settlement in the area, is an ancient linear village, with coaching inns, car dealers and equestrian enterprises along Ermine Street and further 20th-century development both on and off the linear route. Balhams Hall at High Cross is a 15th-century hall-house with an 18th-century front.
- Colliers End is another linear settlement with many weatherboarded houses, painted a distinctive buff colour.
- The houses in Sacombe Green cluster around a tiny historic green with young manna ash planted on its edge. The Old Rectory (15th-century timber-framed) is described in Pevsner as 'exceptionally picturesque'.
- Standon Green End is an ancient hamlet with red brick, white weatherboard and flint buildings.
- Levens Green, on the edge of the plateau, has a large village green and is surrounded by small meadows.
- Potter's Green is a deserted village dating from at least the 12th century. Farmhouses and houses in the hamlets may date from the 16th century.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Rowe, A., *The Protected Valley: a history of Little Munden*, Hamels Publishing, Buntingford (1999).

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

English Heritage, *List of Scheduled Monuments*.

English Heritage, *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is largely concealed from outside by reason of its topography. From within it appears very open, with extensive views over the plateau and across the Bourne valley. The original alignment of the A10 is not widely visible, being screened by vegetation, however the new A10 is locally prominent, particularly where it crosses the watercourses. The scale of landscape elements is generally medium to large, usually smaller near settlements. It is both a coherent and a tranquil area, away from the A10, which brings the 21st century to this ancient area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is not a rare landscape type but the tranquillity and historic character of the settlements deserves protection and conservation.

VISUAL IMPACT

Along the A10 there is high local impact from built development and associated light industrial and commercial uses, contrasting with the absence of impact elsewhere within the area. Most of the area has long been in arable cultivation; there has been some loss of hedges and enlargement of field sizes, balanced by the retention of small pasture fields around settlements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths are limited to the southern part of the area. Waymarked routes include the Harlowcam Way. Both are in fair condition and of medium width.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

With the significant exceptions of the contributions made by woodlands and Roman landscape features, this is a rarely remarked upon landscape (D)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM: Rigery Lane

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

HIGH CROSS PLATEAU - Area 73

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming
- encourage woodland planting around existing woodland, where this is in keeping with local landscape character, is on the site of former woodland or can provide an ecological link to other woodlands/habitat
- ensure that proposed woodland planting will contribute to the local landscape rather than destroying an existing and valued habitat or historic artefact, such as a bank or ditch
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture and appropriate management to increase grassland biodiversity
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland to establish and maintain a species-rich ground flora and a distinction between high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links such as hedges and small woodlands
- replacement hedges should follow historic field boundaries
- ensure the implementation and management of the landscape proposals for the A10 bypass reflect the historic character of the settlements along the existing road, the landscape character of the surrounding area and the traditional pattern of fields and hedgerows

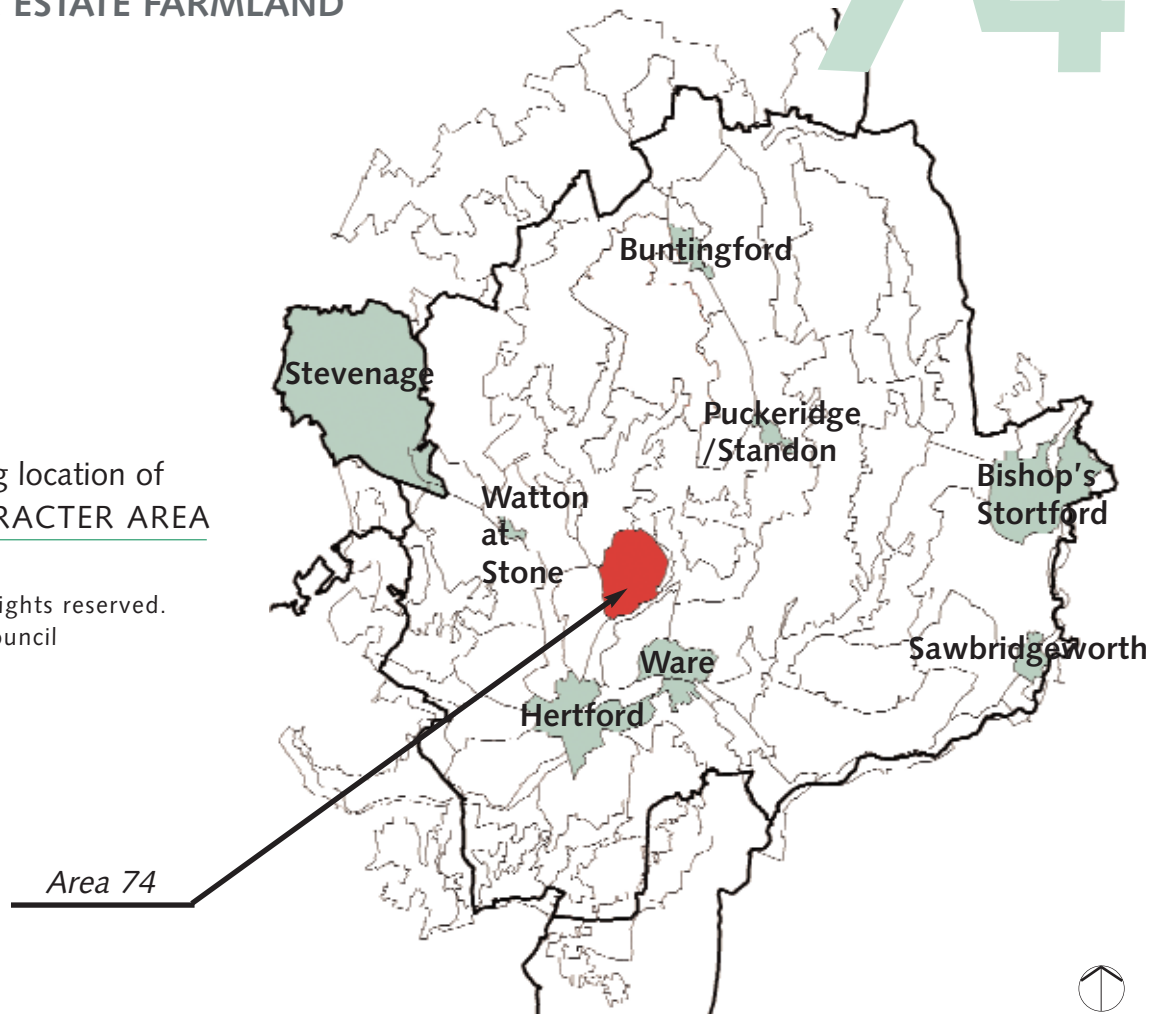


High Cross Plateau-Knoll Farm
(HCC Landscape Unit)

SACOMBE PARK ESTATE FARMLAND

District map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Sacombe Park and associated estate farmland, south to include Tonwell, south-east to the river Rib/B158, excluding Sacombe village.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Strongly undulating wooded arable farmland and parkland. Rural, remote and tranquil. The parkland and farmland are unified by the consistency of architectural style and the presence of many mature hedgerow oaks and parkland trees. Sacombe House is discreetly concealed within its parkland, which is set tightly around the house, with the estate farmland spread out to the south and more visible.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating landform
- unifying architectural style of estate farm buildings and lodges throughout area
- well wooded, with exotic tree species within parkland
- parkland influence of ornamental trees and boundary tree belts; estate influence of many mature hedgerow oaks
- parkland character overrides topography

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- moat at Bengoe Temple Farm and other earthworks
- water tower at Tonwell
- Sacombe House mansion
- permanent pasture with mature oaks in parkland
- heron and English partridge; skylarks
- B158 forms boundary with Rib floodplain

Hempstall Spinney hornbeam coppice woodland (P. Shears)

SACOMBE PARK ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 74

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Sacombe has slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Undulating upland, sloping gently south-eastwards towards the Rib.

Degree of slope. 1 in 20

Altitude range. 50m to 103m

Hydrology. Several streams flow through the Sacombe estate into the Rib, including Chelsings Tributary and The Bourne.

Land cover and land use. This wooded farmland consists of estate farmland and parkland and is in mainly arable cultivation with significant amounts of pasture and extensive woodland.

Vegetation and wildlife. Woodland species include oak, hazel, holly, field maple, elder, ash, and hawthorn. Field boundaries tend to be modern medium-height hawthorn. The permanent pasture contains many mature oaks, indicative of wood pasture origins, with many notable large oaks within the Sacombe parkland in particular and poplar plantations associated with the water meadows. There is some relic calcareous and neutral grassland. Sacombe is a key parkland site in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is a strong historic pattern in this area, deriving from the continuous land use and style of land management. There is a moat hidden in woodland near Bengo Temple Farm, and a deer park is recorded at Sacombe in 1360 and 1676. Sacombe House was built in the early 19th century and is discreetly concealed. Its main significance lies in the early 18th-century landscape. Vanbrugh and then Gibbs were commissioned to design a house and garden. The garden was completed by Bridgeman: *'a magnificent vista with a parterre and formal basin leading through blocks of woodland to a long canal, and with lateral vistas radiating into the woodland to rond-points and cascades. The result bore a strong resemblance to Blenheim and also to Mollet's C17 French garden at Hampton Court.'* (Bisgrove) The house, however, was either never started or early destroyed (some authorities state that the outlines of a house by Vanbrugh are identifiable under the turf). The Bridgeman garden probably now lies beneath the trees below the house. There are avenues, earthworks, an amphitheatre, canals and ponds, and lots of yew. The presence of mature hedgerow oaks and a unified architectural style for farm buildings, estate cottages and lodges is very apparent

Field pattern. Field sizes are large and regular.

Transport pattern. There is only one road within this area, dividing this estate from Woodhall Park. There are several footpaths within the area, often at right angles to the A602.

Settlements and built form.

- Tonwell is the only settlement in this area, and has a strong estate character due to the uniformity of building style and materials. Like the estate lodges and farms within the wider landscape of this area, they are yellow or red Victorian brick with steeply pitched clay tile roofs. There is also much mid 20th-century housing within the village and a water tower on its outskirts
- Sacombe Park is an example of the Greek revival, built c.1802-08 in yellow brick, with two storeys and nine bays with a four-column portico. It replaced the old house and Vanbrugh's walled garden, which were demolished c. 1780
- Chelsing Temple
- There is no church at Tonwell and Sacombe church stands on its own, apart from both the village and the house

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and Richard Bisgrove, *Hertfordshire Gardens on Ermine Street* (1996), p.11
HCC list of parks and gardens of historic interest

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From the outside this area is concealed by woodland from the north and by topography from the south. Views within the area are extensive, occasionally blocked locally by woodland. This is a medium-scale, contained landscape, visually unified and tranquil. Although there has been some change from parkland to arable, the overall character is retained. The unity of the estate parkland and woodland extends southwards and is exemplified as far as Tonwell.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Sacombe Park is listed by HCC but not currently by English Heritage.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is little impact from built development in this area, with recent development within Tonwell contained within the village envelope.

ACCESSIBILITY

Frequency/density of footpaths limited and occasionally unmarked. Localised. Some along farm tracks, some lost

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The parkland of Sacombe is regarded as distinctive (C)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

High Biodiversity Area (HBA)

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

SACOMBE PARK ESTATE FARMLAND - Area 74

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- resist any development proposals that would affect the integrity and historic value of this landscape area
- encourage the dissemination of information about the value of parkland and veteran trees
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture, especially within the parkland
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and semi-natural habitats, i.e. along the stream courses, to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser run-off and to provide additional habitat. Where possible, link these buffer zones to the wider landscape via ecological corridors such as hedges and woodlands, to increase biodiversity
- encourage the establishment and management of wet native woodland along watercourses, such as willow and black poplar
- encourage woodland planting around or adjacent to existing woodlands, using only locally indigenous species of local provenance
- establish realistic and attractive management schemes for all sites with heathland and grassland communities
- promote the management of woodland to maintain a distinction between different systems: high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards, wood pasture; establish a good age-spread through the woodland; establish a species-rich ground flora
- encourage an increase in the local footpath network, with links from the river valley up the tributaries. Small low-key car parks at access points would increase the accessibility of the area



View south from near Sacombe church (HCC Landscape Unit)

LOWER RIB VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Valley of the river Rib from its confluence with the Lea at Bengoe northwards to Wadesmill and Thundridge

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Flat valley bottom with extensive wetland vegetation. Extensive mineral extraction on both valley slopes

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- river valley with significant wetland vegetation , within which the river is an insignificant feature
- pastoral
- influenced by extensive mineral workings on valley slopes
- Thundridge and Wadesmill settlements face each other at a major bridging point

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- willow and alder on valley floor



Lower Rib valley north of Bengoe
(HCC Landscape Unit)

LOWER RIB VALLEY - Area 75

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Stoneless clayey soils, in places calcareous, over river alluvium

Topography. Flat valley floor

Degree of slope. There is a drop of 5m between Wadesmill/Thundridge and Bengo, giving a fall of 1 in 1100, which is very slight.

Altitude range. 40 to 45m

Hydrology. The Rib is a small river which suffered from low flow during 1995-98. It exhibits strong human influence in its lower reaches, where numerous closely spaced weirs impound and interrupt its flow. This has a detrimental ecological impact but reduces the need for fish rescues in drought periods.

Land cover and land use. Much of the river valley floor is in intensive agricultural production, usually arable, although there is a little pasture, mainly at the southern end around Bengo. There are also areas of wetland vegetation, particularly adjacent to former or existing mineral workings on the slopes above, and large fishing lakes south of Westmill Farm. Alongside the three fishing lakes Westmill Farm Complex now includes restaurant and conference facilities, artshed and workshops, a pine retail outlet and mini golf.

Vegetation and wildlife. Willow and alder. There are few hedges within the floodplain, reflecting its former use as grazing pasture. Most of the river valley grasslands have been ploughed up or improved. The river itself has some remnant alder stands of some ecological value, but it is badly degraded in places.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Historically this area would have been grazing marsh, but this has largely been superseded by arable cultivation and wetland vegetation, which merges with the plantations screening the mineral extraction sites on the lower valley slopes.

Field pattern. Regular to geometric medium scale on the west bank; lacking elsewhere.

Transport pattern. There are no roads within the river valley, save for the A602 and the A10(T) crossings at Wadesmill/Thundridge. The B158 runs well above the floodplain on the western slopes.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within the river valley except the lower part of Wadesmill on the north bank and several listed properties at Westmill. Crouchfield, a former Reformatory has been converted to 135 dwellings.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

At the southern end the river appears hemmed in by urban development and estate woodland. The landscape has a medium-scale generally organic appearance, the small river meandering across the floodplain with water meadows and wetland vegetation to either side. It is tranquil except at the crossing points and the extreme southern end.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This area demonstrates the impact of human intervention on natural resources.

VISUAL IMPACT

The main impact on this area is the extensive range of mineral workings, both active and restored, on the lower valley slopes, especially on the eastern bank. The golf course attached to Hanbury Park is a poor example of restoration; south of Westmill Farm a large man-made lake is used for fishing

ACCESSIBILITY

There is one very short stretch of public footpath at the extreme southern end of this area - none elsewhere

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is regarded as of some value for its distinctiveness, perhaps more so the stretch between Tonwell and Wadesmill (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: wide spread
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmennted
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

LOWER RIB VALLEY - Area 75

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: RESTORE CONDITION TO MAINTAIN CHARACTER

- protect remaining river valley habitats of nature conservation interest by establishing buffer zones against herbicide, pesticide and fertilizer run-off and maintain them as wildlife refuges. Where possible, link them in to habitats within the wider landscape via woodlands and hedges
- do not create new hedges within the river valley. Replacement hedges should only be established along historic field boundaries
- promote de-intensification of agricultural practices within the river valley
- encourage a reversion from arable to pasture and mixed farming, ensuring that grasslands are managed to maximise their nature conservation potential
- resist the targeting of redundant or derelict pasture for development
- resist development that could lower the water table within the river valley and affect wetland habitats
- all golf courses should respect local landform and use only locally indigenous trees and shrubs, unless they are reflecting historic parkland influence. English Heritage has recently published new guidelines on golf in historic parks.
- promote the re-introduction of permanent pasture and flooding regimes as normal agricultural practices, to increase landscape and habitat diversity
- encourage the establishment of wetland species along watercourses, such as black poplar and willow
- encourage an extension of the local footpath network along the river valley, with small, low-key car parks at access points



Active quarry on slopes of river valley north of Bengeo (P. Shears)

WARE PARKLANDS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Curved ridge between western edge of Ware and Rib valley

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently undulating ridge above river valleys with narrow steep slopes to Lea and Rib rivers, with small pasture and large arable fields. On the ridge there is relic parkland and extensive mineral extraction, with a strong urban edge to the south east. Strong influence of road transport network.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow undulating ridge with short steep slopes to Lea and Rib valley
- exotic and indigenous mature trees and woodland

- extensive mineral extraction sites usually screened by vegetation and topography
- geometric field pattern
- mansions and farmhouses

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- golf course
- A10 trunk road
- urban edge of Ware and Hertford



A10 bridge and Hertford from Ware Park
(R. Hare)

WARE PARKLANDS - Area 76

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well-drained fine loam with clay subsoil, over chalky till on the plateau (Hanslope series), with brown (free draining loamy) soils over chalk on the slopes (Melford series).

Downfield Pit at Westmill is designated SSSI for its thick and complex sequence of Pleistocene gravels and tills, which is important for establishing the pre-diversion course of the Thames.

Topography. Narrow ridge sloping steeply to river valleys.

Degree of slope. Generally 1 in 25; 1 in 10 locally.

Altitude range. 45m to 74m.

Hydrology. Artificial lakes associated with parkland and mineral extraction. No watercourses flowing into the Rib or Lea.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land use here is still parkland, with wooded farmland in arable cultivation with some neglected pasture, despite the extensive areas of mineral extraction (Ware Quarry, Westhall Quarry and south of Hanbury Manor) and some landfill. Former mineral workings on the valley slopes north east of Hanbury Manor have been restored to a golf course.

Vegetation and wildlife. The parklands contain exotic tree species such as Wellingtonia and sweet chestnut close to the mansions but elsewhere the indigenous, largely deciduous, boundary belts are generally less than a century old, with holly, elm, robinia, silver birch and conifers. The hanging ash/oak/hazel/elm woodland above Kings Meads is probably the most noteworthy, visually and ecologically. Elsewhere there are significant screen plantings around mineral extraction sites, usually a standard amenity mix. The large regular fields have medium height hedges of hawthorn, and field maple, holly or elm. There is a young avenue of mixed lime, sycamore and ash within Ware Park, replacing a former lime avenue.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Despite extensive mineral extraction, the historic pattern of this area is still apparent, albeit with a different pattern of use for the mansions and parkland.

- Ware Park was informal parkland in 1766, previously a deer park (earliest record 1086), and has recent (1990) plantations screening mineral workings.
- Hanbury Manor was described in 1872 as '*one of the most beautiful examples of horticultural gardening to be found in the country*'. Some parkland and remnants of the 19th-century arboretum remain and the framework of the garden is being refurbished.

Field pattern. The large regular field pattern of the area has been significantly disrupted by mineral extraction but is still evident, despite some loss of hedgerows.

Transport pattern. There are few roads within this area. The A602 winds across from the centre of Ware, crossed by the modern A10(T) which forms a strong boundary to urban development. There are no lanes and few footpaths. The A10(T) severs part of the parkland of both Ware Park and Hanbury Manor.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area. The mansions at either end enclose a few isolated farms and there is a business park against the A10(T)/A602 junction.

- Ware Park is a yellow brick Victorian mansion with a three-storey tower, now converted into apartments;
- Hanbury Manor is now an hotel with golf course on former

mineral workings. The house, formerly called Poles, is set in a late 18th-century park and was rebuilt in 1844 and 1890/91, when terraces and terrace borders were added. It was used as convent between 1923 and 1985. There is also a monastery in the area, well screened from view.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Herts. Garden Trust and Bisgrove, R. in *Hertfordshire Gardens on Ermine Street* (1996).

English Heritage *Register of Listed Parks and Gardens : Herts.* HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are some views into this area from the opposing valley slopes, but views from Ware are blocked by the A10(T) embankments. Views within the area are extensive except where screened by vegetation, which blocks views of the river(s). They include the A10 bridge and the urban edge of Ware, including a golf course and a huge mineral extraction site south of Hanbury Manor. The scale of landscape elements is medium, with a sense of containment by vegetation and separation by the river valleys. It is not a coherent landscape, due to the mixed pattern of land use, and there is a constant low hum of road traffic noise.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is no longer an unusual area, due to the impact of mineral extraction, the road transport network and urban development, which have started to obliterate and change the historic landscape pattern and landform.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development along the urban edge and from the road transport corridor is high, especially in the eastern part of this area. Land-use change from mineral extraction has also had a very significant impact on landform and land use, despite being generally screened from view. It is surprising that such extensive mineral extraction should be so unobtrusive visually.

ACCESSIBILITY

No recreational land uses were observed during survey. Footpaths are only found at the southern end, but are in fair condition.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The parks in this area are noted as distinctive elements (D).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI: Downfield Pit, Westmill
 Hanbury Manor (Poles Park) is a Registered Park and Garden and Ware Park is included on the list of locally important sites.

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted/relic
Visibility from outside: localised
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

WARE PARKLANDS - Area 76

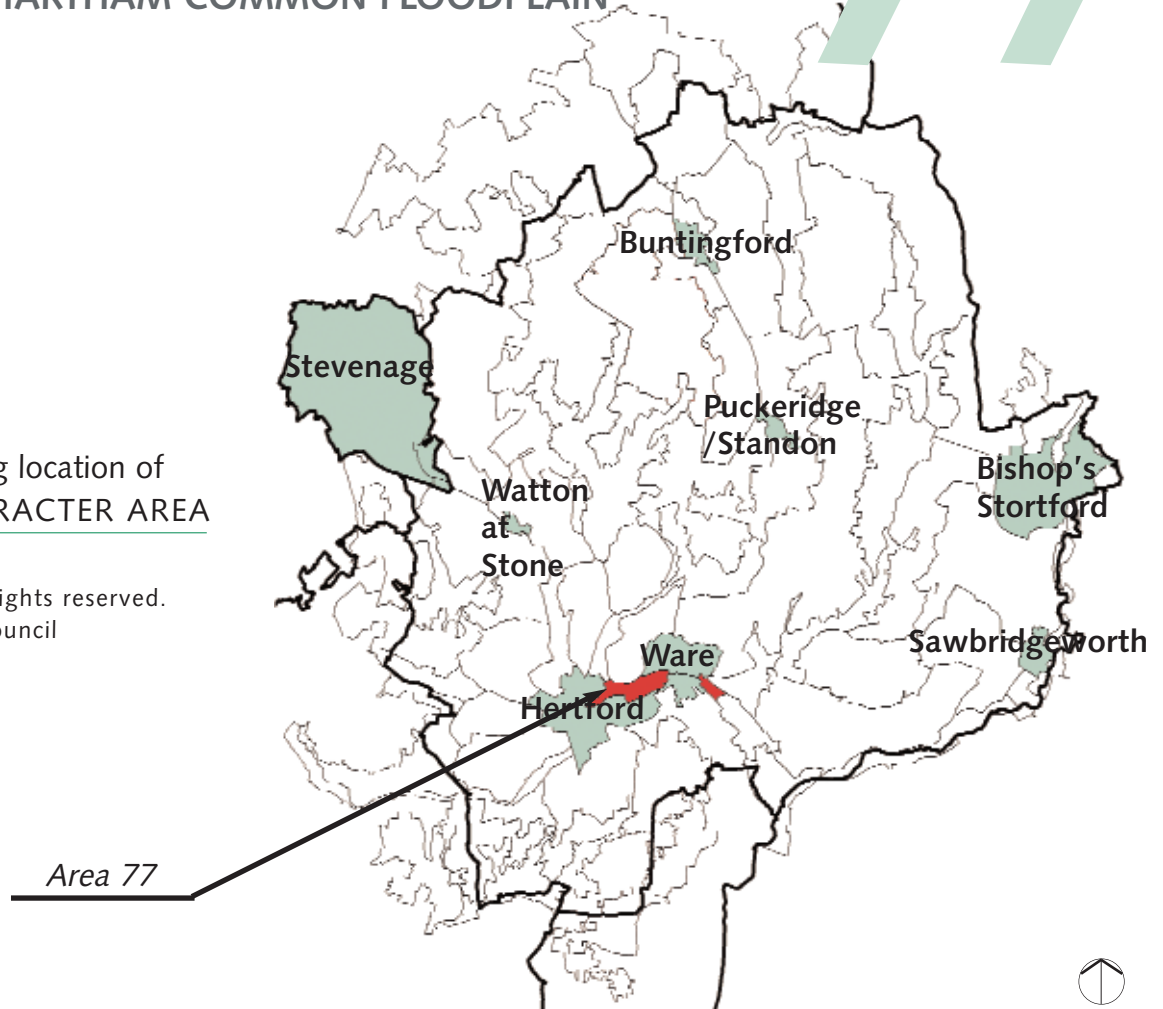
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: RESTORE CONDITION TO MAINTAIN CHARACTER

- ensure that restoration proposals for mineral extraction sites are implemented properly and as soon after extraction ceases as is practicable. Restoration plans could be reviewed to ensure that they will enhance the distinctiveness of the local landscape character. For example, there is currently no visual or ecological link between the parkland at either end of this area. Restoration to a significant woodland component would address both these issues and help give this area some coherence.
- new woodlands should generally be of locally indigenous species and use stock of local provenance. In this area it might be appropriate to include a proportion of exotic species, to reinforce the mature ornamental planting within the parklands
- where restoration to woodland is deemed inappropriate, grassland would be preferred to arable, and should be managed to maximise its nature conservation potential
- it is possible that low-level restoration could be accommodated without permanent damage to the landscape character of this area, if it could include lakes and wetland habitats of a parkland nature and if contours could be feathered in to existing ground level around the perimeter. Golf courses should only be permitted within or adjacent to historic parklands where they can contribute to the enhancement of the landscape, such as by the replacement of historic avenues, clumps, etc. Only tree species already present or, where appropriate, native trees of nature conservation value should be planted. Nature conservation improvements along boundaries or within roughs should be emphasised.
- a strategy for improvement of the whole area should include footpath provision, access from the northern edge of Ware and suitable car-parking provision.

KINGSMEAD & HARTHAM COMMON FLOODPLAIN

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Lea river valley within the confines of the urban settlements of Hertford and Ware

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Urbanised public amenity/nature conservation site between Hertford and Ware, with some rural characteristics; large area of public open space, divided between formal/informal sports facilities at Hartham and a broad area of predominantly wet grassland of joint nature conservation and informal recreation value (Kings Mead).The eastern end of this area is more urbanised, with the Lee Navigation a particular feature through Ware.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- flat river valley tightly enclosed by urban development on the surrounding slopes
- very linear, but extensive area of open space within urban envelope
- mainly grassland, but managed in different ways
- strong urban influences
- engineered character of Navigation
- confluence of rivers Beane, Rib and Lee

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- locks and narrow boats on the Navigation
- sports facilities at Hartham
- A10(T) road bridge over Kings Mead
- The confluence of several rivers

Gazebos on the River Lea in Ware
(T. Hamilton)

KINGSMEAD & HARTHAM COMMON FLOODPLAIN - Area 77

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Gleyed (poorly draining) soils over alluvial drift (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat river valley

Degree of slope. Fall of 1 in 1000 between Hartham and Hartmead Lock

Altitude range. 31m to 35m

Hydrology. This area is notable as the confluence of most major rivers in central and eastern Hertfordshire. Within the area the Lea has been altered to a broad, deep, artificial navigable channel which now reflects lowland riverine habitat. At Kings Mead several sluices have been constructed to retain a higher water level across the meads and along with the system of ditches reinforce its nature conservation importance. Within Ware the river assumes a more confined, canalised character, enlivened by the historic gazebos lining it on the northern bank. The New River lies parallel to the railway towards the southern edge of this area, with its additional source at Chadwell springs.

Land cover and land use. There is an extensive area of informal public open space/nature reserve at Kings Mead, with playing fields and formal recreation further west at Hartham and sheep-grazed meadows visible to the west. The River Lea and the Lee Navigation flow closely together along the northern edge of the area, with the Navigation providing a well used transport route into the centre of Hertford, past new and old housing and allotments. Within Ware the two watercourses unite, only to divide again to the east of the town.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is an area of key conservation importance, being the largest (5 acres) remaining flood meadow complex in Hertfordshire, with several areas of unimproved alluvial grassland, ditch systems and the important chalk springs at Chadwell. Although much degraded, the site floods regularly and many scarce plants survive there. The area is important for birds, dragonflies and invertebrates as well as plants. The Lea contains species such as yellow waterlily, branched bur-reed, reed sweet grass and club-rush, at least seven coarse fish species and a number of uncommon invertebrates. Around the edge of the meadows there are wetland species such as willow, poplar and alder, with ash and beech. Within the meadows at Hartham there are plantings of more ornamental species.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The Lea was the most important natural waterway in Hertfordshire, linking the rich grain-producing lands of the north-east to London, and was the more useful because of the poor state of most of the roads, which ran over (or into) the heavy, waterlogged London clay. The royal borough of Hertford had been given monopolies over navigation on the Lea in the 12th century, but the construction of weirs at Ware to obstruct navigation led to its decline. The Lea Navigation canalised sections of the river and still provides a route through the valley, with frequent locks.

Field pattern. The drainage pattern within Kings Mead echoes the former field pattern. This would have been large and irregular, subject to the vagaries of the river's course through the grazing meadows.

Transport pattern. The Lee Navigation offered the first transport route through the area, and still does. The railway follows the line of the valley but partly bisects Kings Mead, while the A10(T) bridge soars overhead.

Settlements and built form. Although this area is hemmed in at either end by settlement, only in Ware does this development occur within the floodplain. Here the river has been canalised and houses and gardens extend to the water's edge. At the eastern end of Ware, running back from the High Street, there is a group of gazebos built out overlooking the water by the wealthy maltsters and merchants of the town in the 18th/19th centuries. Although it is within the urban area, mention should be made of Scott's Grotto in Scotts Road. Built c 1760, it consists of a number of passages and chambers lined with flint, shell, quartz and bits of glass, with a Gothick-windowed gazebo above. Other structures within the valley are the locks on the Lea Navigation and footbridges over it.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
Lee Valley Regional Park *Park Plan Part Two*.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

At Hartham there is small-scale unity around the combination of Edwardian terraced houses with allotments and the Lea Navigation, echoed by the scale of more recent development around it. It is also quite tranquil, with road traffic noise masked by the dense tree cover. Hartham Meadow is a mainly medium-scale contained landscape, unified and made coherent by the simplicity of its elements, as is the Navigation within Ware. Kings Mead is larger in scale, so that the A10(T) bridge overhead does not dwarf it (although it destroys any hint of tranquillity), but is also contained by urban development.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The section of river within Ware is unique and valuable as an example of the historic continuity of use. The watermeadow habitats are unusual relics of previous land use and require conservation, protection and sound management particularly given the significance adjacent to the settlement. The confluence of four rivers at or above this area is also unique.

VISUAL IMPACT

The gazebos at Ware and the Lea Navigation at Hartham are locally distinctive features, while the scale of the meadows at Hartham and Kings Mead offers a refreshing change from the tighter, denser scale of their urban surroundings.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: walking, cycling, fishing, jogging, boating
 Frequency/density of footpaths: extensive (there are more routes than shown on OS map)
 Waymarked routes: widespread
 Access not particularly good from north east
 Condition: good; wide, narrow; surface: tarmac, gravel, rendered concrete with setts

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is significant for its distinctiveness (C).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	wide spread
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	relic
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

KINGSMEAD & HARTHAM COMMON FLOODPLAIN - Area 77

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

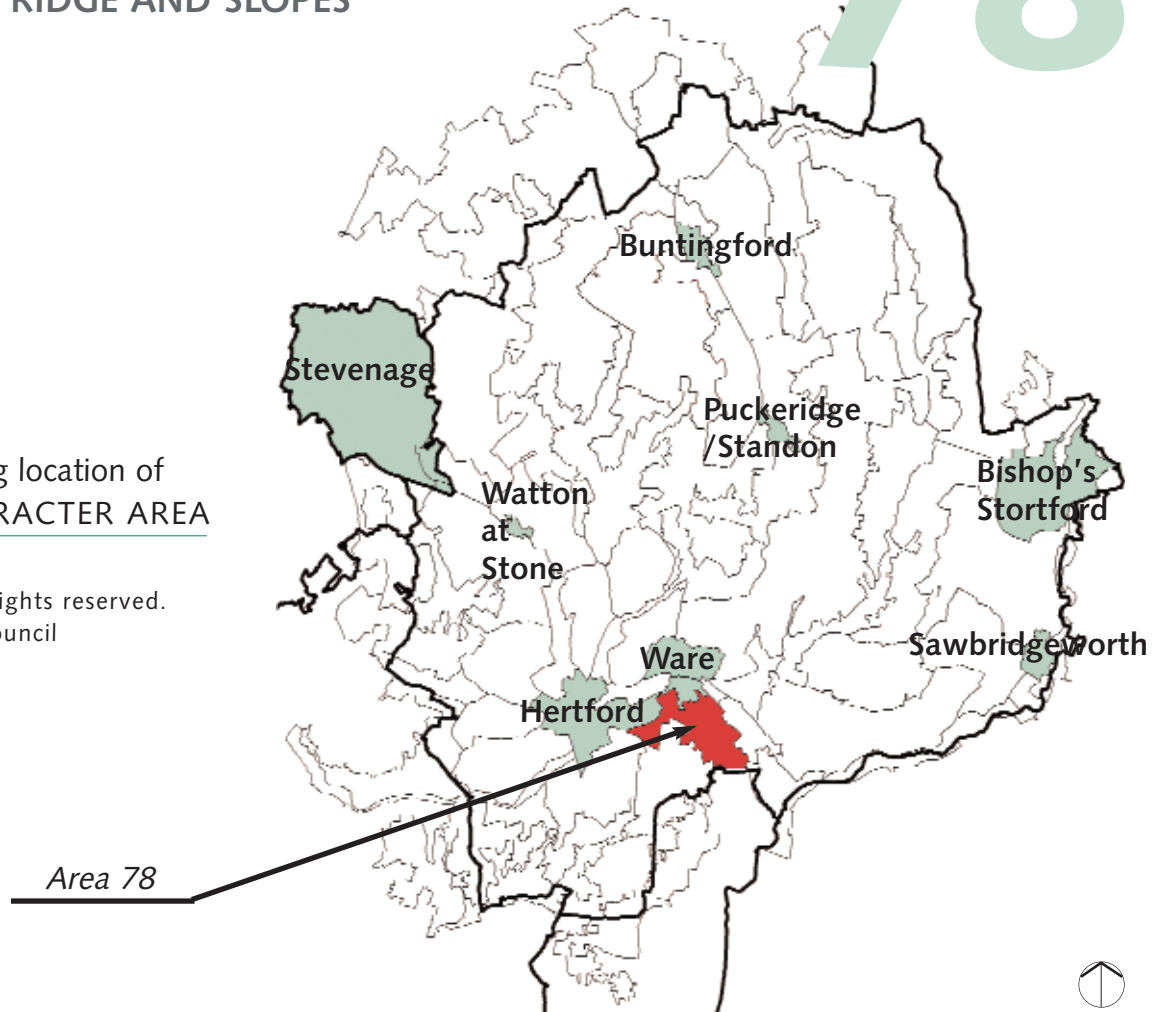
- support the work of HMWT in managing the Kings Mead site to enable it to realise its full potential
- encourage the development of connected wetlands along the river valley
- protect the area from development that would alter its character visually or environmentally, such as culverting, impact on floodplain or water table, loss of water meadows or storage ponds
- encourage the establishment of appropriate tree planting along watercourses, such as black poplar and pollarded willow, mindful of the need to safeguard waterway walls.
- ensure that proposed improvements within the Landscape Development Area will contribute to and reinforce the distinctiveness of this area and that they will not jeopardize any existing areas of historic, ecological or landscape importance
- ensure that all landowners and developers are aware of the BAP objective of creating a 'necklace' of inter-connected wetland habitats along the river valleys
- encourage the establishment of buffer strips which may vary in nature along all watercourses, avoiding potential conflict with recreational use. Kingsmead is now a HMWT nature reserve with an agreed management plan. Hartham Common is public open space which in part could be managed in a more ecologically friendly manner.
- resist the targeting of redundant or derelict pasture for development
- resist development in adjoining areas that could lower the water table and affect wetland habitats
- promote the use of low-density grazing as a management technique
- promote the re-introduction of permanent pasture and flooding regimes as normal agricultural practices, to increase landscape and habitat diversity
- encourage the management of the area through zoning, to maximise its potential for both wildlife and recreation



Kings Mead and the New River, between Hertford and Ware (C. Bailey)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

'Elbow' within curve of river Lea through Ware, south of Ware, extending westwards to Balls Park and south to Hertford Heath and the northern edge of Hoddesdon

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A complex semi-urban area with two settlements and combined-urban edge and rural land uses.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- north west/south east ridgeline bounded by Lea valley slopes to north east and dry bowl landform to south west

- parkland remnants
- 20th-century residential development
- woodland with public access
- flint walls and sunken lanes
- severance by road transport network

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- redundant mineral workings
- recreational use (golf course)
- country houses in institutional use
- monument at Great Amwell and source of New River



Water in Lea Valley
 (C. Bailey)

GREAT AMWELL RIDGE AND SLOPES - Area 78

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well drained silty soils, locally flinty or over gravel, sometimes affected by groundwater, over glaciofluvial drift (Hamble 1 series) or silty drift (Hamble 2 series).

Topography. Narrow north west/south east ridge with Lea valley to the north and shallow bowl to the south west, then rising to Hertford Heath plateau

Degree of slope. Locally 1 in 20 and 1 in 27

Altitude range. 31m to 90m

Hydrology. The New River rises from a spring at Great Amwell and flows in canal south-eastwards to London.

Land cover and land use. This area is a complex mix of wooded farmland, parkland and forestry, with mineral extraction, recreational and amenity use, industry, nursery production and settlement. The farmland is a mix of pasture near the settlements and on the valley slopes, with arable around the A10(T). Formal and informal recreational facilities are located around the settlements and along the river valley.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is an ecologically mixed but generally impoverished area, due to the spread of arable cultivation. The oak/hornbeam woodland at Post Wood is mixed with other planted species, including weeping willow, alder, poplar, ash, horse chestnut, sycamore, hazel, holly and pine, with much secondary growth of sycamore. Hedges on the valley slopes are medium in height and of hawthorn and blackthorn. There is one small relic orchard near the floodplain. Hedgebanks define the boundaries of the sunken lanes, with elm, hawthorn and hornbeam present, often as medium height pure hawthorn hedges (modern), and often provide the only remnants of the natural mixed calcareous/heath grassland of this area. There are remnant old meadows between Great Amwell and Ware, containing meadow saxifrage, etc. on alluvial gravels.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area has undergone many changes to its historic pattern, chiefly from the growth of settlements and the impact of the modern road transport network. There has been much 20th-century development in the triangle between the A10(T)/A119 and 21st-century development between the New River and the Lea Navigation, in an area which historically consisted of unenclosed grazing meadows. Former parkland has changed to institutional use and public amenity, with some relic features retained. The historic pattern of tracks has been retained as footpaths and bridleways and offers a very regular network over and along the small ridge.

- The space north of the church in Great Amwell is described in Pevsner as '*one of the most delightful spots in Herts*', thanks to Robert Mylne. He erected a monument to the creator of the New River, Sir Hugh Myddelton, who achieved the feat of supplying water to London in only four years, between 1609 and 1614. The monument stands on a small island with weeping willows, a wellingtonia and a yew tree nearby on manicured lawns.

Field pattern. Field sizes vary between small (pasture) and medium-large (arable), with a modern pattern of fences in the pasture and loss of boundaries in the arable. Hedgebanks mark the old tracks and the sunken lanes, while fields are either hedged or fenced, with some loss of field boundaries in the arable areas.

Transport pattern. Modern trunk and primary roads are a feature

of this landscape area. The A10(T), A10, A414 and A119, plus B1502, B181 and other minor roads, all divide the area into discrete chunks and destroy its unity. The New River provides a strong linear element in the north-eastern section, as does the railway.

Settlements and built form. Although there are isolated farms on the valley slopes, the main form in this area is clustered and infilled settlements, probably old but with significant 20th-century components and generally lacking a coherent or vernacular style.

- Amwellbury is a large timber-framed farmhouse with a 17th-century polygonal dovecote with cupola.
- There are many flint walls associated with settlements, and some stone (ragstone?)
- In the 19th century Italianate pumping stations were built along the New River, the earliest of which is at Amwell Hill (1847).
- There is a notable flint house in Great Amwell, near the Myddleton monument (see above)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside the form of this area is quite visible, especially the low ridge near the river and the sloping ground in the south west, but the elements within it are generally concealed by vegetation. From within the area there are extensive views from high ground over a medium-scale, rather incoherent landscape, enclosed by the slopes to southwest and northeast. The vegetation along the river Lea acts to conceal the presence of the river and associated waterbodies, so that the natural boundary appears to be the slopes between Stanstead Abbots and Ware. This is not a tranquil area, due to the constant traffic on the many roads. The New River is, however, remarkably peaceful apart from the passage of trains on the railway.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is certainly an unusual area, due to the complexity of land uses, but its rarity lies in the historic associations with the creation of the New River and the limpid tranquillity of the area around the monument. The New River is unusual and its monument unique.

VISUAL IMPACT

This is a very visually disturbed landscape, with many different elements within it. The impact of built development in the form of the road transport network, housing and utilities is widespread

and dominant, making this predominantly a suburban rather than a rural area. This is also demonstrated by the presence of degraded pasture and neglected orchards.

Mineral extraction has also had an impact on the local landform south of Great Amwell.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses include dog walking/fishing/narrow boating on the canal/cycling

There is a widespread network of footpaths, with a variety of surfacing, mainly good. Signage to and parking at the monument could be improved.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The area around Great Amwell, particularly that part linked closest to the Lee valley, is regarded as significantly distinctive (C).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Amwell Pool and Grove is listed Grade II in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	wide spread
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	poor
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	incoherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

GREAT AMWELL RIDGE AND SLOPES - Area 78

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- every effort should be made to protect and enhance the area around the Myddelton monument and the New River
- encourage the replanting of orchards on former sites, where this is economically viable or as a community resource.
- encourage the reversion of arable farmland to pasture, and the reversion of horse pasture to cattle and sheep grazing, to increase biodiversity
- encourage appropriate management of woodland to ensure a good age-spread and the establishment of a species-rich ground flora
- encourage the planting of locally indigenous tree and shrub species of local provenance
- promote the planting of new native woodland around existing woodlands to protect them and increase biodiversity, ensuring that this would not conflict with the protection of historic features such as hedgebanks, ditches, etc. on the edge of woodland
- encourage the replanting of hedges along historic field boundaries, using only locally indigenous species of local provenance
- ensure that development proposals are only permitted where they will contribute to the distinctiveness of the local landscape character. Any screening required should be appropriate to this character area, reflecting local species diversity and woodland form, i.e., small woodland blocks with linking hedgerows
- ensure that further promotion of cycling is consistent with landscape, safety and practical objectives.



Great Amwell Valley from Post Wood (E. Staveley)

AMWELL FLOODPLAIN

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

River valley east of Ware, south-eastwards to Stanstead Abbots

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An area of man-made lakes and wetland vegetation with a 20th-century character belied by the presence of the manicured surrounds of the New River on the south-western edge. A significant transport route with an urban tinge to its character. An open wetland landscape within a flat river valley bottom, extensively wooded, comprising the River Lea Navigation, the Lea river and extensive flooded former mineral workings, some of which have been restored as nature reserves



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- enclosed river valley
- variety of hydrological types: meandering river, canalised Navigation and extensive waterbodies from former mineral workings
- urban influences
- sharp transition between rural and urban character
- densely vegetated with wetland species
- contrast between ordered Lea Navigation canal and apparent naturalness of flooded mineral workings
- relatively tranquil, despite proximity of railway
- screening effect of vegetation

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- extensive waterbodies and wetland vegetation
- nature reserves

Amwell Quarry Nature Reserve
(C. Bailey)

AMWELL FLOODPLAIN - Area 79

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Gleyed (poorly draining) soils over alluvial drift (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat floodplain

Degree of slope. There is a slope of 1 in 966 between the eastern edge of Ware and Stanstead Lock.

Altitude range. 30m to 40m.

Hydrology. This stretch of the Lea valley contains the river Lea/Lee and the River Lea Navigation. This is an important stretch of the river (2km) for nature conservation interest, especially flora, but the two watercourses are not dominant landscape features within the valley, which is nonetheless characterised by water, chiefly in flooded former mineral extraction sites. At Amwell Magna a major enhancement programme has placed wetland shelves in a loop of a backwater to the Lee navigation to provide a fringe of marginal plants at the water's edge, to maintain an adequate depth of water for fish movement and to prevent siltation.

Land cover and land use. There is still a little grazing pasture within the valley, and pockets of arable cultivation, but the dominant land use is recreation and amenity, with nature conservation. Mineral extraction continues, and housing development is taking the place of former nurseries along the south bank to the east of Ware. There is a significant nature reserve at Amwell Quarry, a former mineral extraction site.

Vegetation and wildlife. The ecology of this area is dominated by Amwell Quarry SSSI, which is now a private nature reserve. The former floodplain grasslands and ditch systems were replaced in the 1970s-80s by gravel extraction and then restored for nature conservation, to include important spring-fed lakes, reed beds, wet grasslands and alder/willow woodland. It forms part of the proposed Lee Valley SPA. Beyond the SSSI woodland cover is extensive and consists of wetland species such as willow, poplar and alder, with ash and beech. Around the man-made lakes a variety of wetland tree species have either been planted or have evolved naturally. Amwell Quarry attracts overwintering wildfowl populations of national importance and outstanding assemblages of breeding birds, dragonflies and damselflies. It is also important for mammals, grass snakes, common newts and frogs and supports a small area of reedswamp, an important habitat for bittern.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The organic character of this area is masked by the extensive impact of mineral extraction, which has created an artificial landscape. The Lea Navigation is also a planned element but the lush vegetation masks this artificiality with a cloak of naturalness. Former land uses have all but disappeared, with arable cultivation replacing grazing meadows in some of the remaining terrestrial areas, while most of the former farmland is now under water.

Field pattern. The historic field pattern of grazing meadows is no longer present.

Transport pattern. There are no roads within the river valley, rather they are set just above the floodplain. Both the Lee Navigation and the railway provide a strong linear element.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements or buildings within the river valley. All development is on the adjoining slopes, above the floodplain.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature SSSI notification.

Lee Valley Regional Park *Park Plan Volume Two*.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This area is enclosed by landform and vegetation and is remarkably rural in parts despite its proximity to urban centres and a major road network, although the over-riding character is urban fringe.

Rarity and distinctiveness. In the context of the Lea Valley character areas this is a frequent landscape

VISUAL IMPACT

Housing, development and the railway all have an impact on this area generally, which can be transformed locally by the screening effects of vegetation

ACCESSIBILITY

The Lea Valley Walk links Ware and Stanstead Abbots along the Lee Navigation, but there are no cross-routes or other access

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is highly regarded by the community for its distinctiveness, in particular Amwell pits/mouth of the River Ash (B).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI and part of Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar site: Amwell Quarry.

CONDITION

Land cover change: wide spread
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: extensive
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: relic
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

AMWELL FLOODPLAIN - Area 79

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: RESTORE CONDITION TO MAINTAIN CHARACTER

- support the proposals of the Lee Valley Regional Park management plan
- support the BAP initiative to create a 'necklace' of wetland habitats along the river valley
- encourage an improvement in the local footpath network, particularly in relation to railway stations and railway crossings, building on the existing paths to both sides of the Lea Navigation, with connecting footbridges over. Although ensure that further promotion of access takes into account landscape, safety and contextual objectives.
- resist development that would not contribute to or enhance the landscape character of the area, such as light industry, housing or glasshouses
- resist any development that could affect the local water table and thence wetland habitats
- encourage the connection of existing wetland habitats along the river valley
- ensure that new woodlands are managed to develop a diverse age structure and to maximise their nature conservation potential by favouring locally indigenous species over amenity species
- ensure that restoration plans for mineral extraction sites are adhered to and are designed to maximise nature conservation potential by increasing the range of wetland habitat types within the river valley
- encourage the development of passive recreational opportunities, where these will not conflict with nature conservation objectives
- encourage the restoration of derelict orchards, with financial incentives where necessary
- encourage the provision of additional planting to screen development on the edge of this area, ensuring that species are locally indigenous



Lee Navigation
(P. Shears)

RYE MEADS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Area around junction of rivers Lea and Stort, south of Stanstead Abbots and east of the northern part of Hoddesdon.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A curious mix of utilities such as sewage works, leisure activities (marina) and the quasi-rural character of nature reserves and historic artefacts in partly restored former mineral workings, around highly important remnant floodplain grazing grasslands.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- flat river valley
- mineral extraction
- industrial/utilities
- wetland vegetation
- extensive waterbodies

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Rye gatehouse
- pylons
- A414 road bridge
- marina on southern edge of Stanstead Abbots
- nurseries on north-eastern edge of river valley

Rye Meads gatehouse
(P. Shears)

RYE MEADS - Area 80

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Stoneless clayey soils, in places calcareous, over river alluvium (Fladbury 1 series)

Topography. Flat river valley.

Degree of slope. 0.

Altitude range. 30m throughout.

Hydrology. The Lower Lea flows from Feildes Weir south to the Thames, a distance of approximately 34km. This gives an average gradient of 1 in 1300, which is very shallow, but unsurprising given the low-lying floodplain catchment. The river lies on the London clay and demonstrates the typically 'flashy' nature of urban and clay run-off rivers. Much of the fluvial gravel has been extracted and the redundant workings now form lakes, many of them connected to the Flood Relief Channel. Below Stanstead Abbots the Stanstead Mill Stream joins the river Lea Navigation, the canalised river, which then splits into several channels south of the A414 road bridge. At Glen Faba the Lea Navigation splits to provide an additional Flood Relief Channel.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land cover in this area is a mix of utilities/industry and open water and wetland vegetation associated with former mineral workings. There is a rail-served aggregates depot, an ancillary asphalt plant and consent for a ready-mix concrete plant as well as extensive sewage works at Rye Meads. These contrast with leisure uses, such as the marina south of Stanstead Abbots and the stadium near Rye House railway station, on the edge of the residential area of Hoddesdon. On the eastern edge of this area there are also nurseries and glasshouses, a relic of a once more extensive industry.

Vegetation and wildlife. Much of the Rye Meads area has SSSI status and forms part of the proposed Lea Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive. The meadows are the last substantial remnants of ancient flood meadows in the Lea valley and support one of the largest areas of tall fen vegetation in the county, a valuable habitat for wet grassland plants and birds, including over-wintering bittern and breeding colonies of common tern and tufted duck. The 17 shallow sewage treatment lagoons are highly significant for breeding and wintering wildfowl and form an integral part of a large and rich complex of wetland habitats, including fen/mire communities, sedge swamp and sweet-grass swamp. The RSPB/HMWT reserves at Rye Meads/Rye House Marsh accommodate the largest area of reedbed in the county. The tree cover in this area is very extensive, part planted and part natural regeneration, consisting of water-related species, such as willow, poplar and alder and reclamation species such as silver birch and aspen. Other species are ash, oak, hazel, sycamore, downy birch and Lombardy poplar. Scrub regeneration includes hazel, elder, hawthorn and willow.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The Lea valley is a very disturbed area that has been transformed more than once. The river was used to transport produce from the Hertfordshire area to London and began to be canalised in Elizabethan times, when the structure of which Rye Gatehouse is the last remaining part was built. The earliest record of a deer park here is 1443. The original grazing meadows within the river valley have been largely destroyed, having given way in the 19th century to nurseries and allotments to feed the increasing London population. In turn the Lea Valley became the focus for the development of utilities to service the continuing expansion of

London and sand and gravel expansion began in the northern part in the early 20th century to serve the London construction industry. A scheme to beautify the Rye Meads area in the mid 19th century has also been and gone (see below).

Field pattern. The original field pattern no longer exists and the landscape scale has been considerably enlarged.

Transport pattern. Within the northern edge of this area the B181 crosses the river at Stanstead Abbots, while the A414 road bridge is a dominant feature further south above the valley and with extensive views out. There is also a minor toll road linking Stanstead Bury and Rye Park, a curious lane that provides a link between the many disparate features that make up this area.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this part of the Lea valley, although Stanstead Abbots, on the northern edge, lies partly within it and completely blocks any perception of the river valley extending northwards. Rye Common Pumping station is Italianate yellow brick, erected in 1882, and visible from the A414. Rye Meads gatehouse (SM) dates from 1443 and is a red brick rectangle with blue brick diapering, standing on a moated site beside the river. Nearby is the Rye House Inn, part of a Victorian scheme of 1864 to convert the Rye House neighbourhood into a pleasure garden *a la* Vauxhall and Ranelagh.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

Lee Valley Management Plan.

Lee Valley Regional Park Park Plan: Part Two.

Environment Agency *LEAP for North London.*

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The strongest impression here is the contrast between industrial and nature conservation land uses. Despite the A414 road bridge overhead it is a surprisingly tranquil area and the ongoing restoration projects provide a dynamism that contrasts with the static nature of the sewage works. It is not unified, being a jumble of contrasting land uses, but is fascinating. The river, wedged between the urban edge and the industrial area, is a less dominant landscape feature than the waterbodies of the former mineral workings.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Designation as a proposed SPA denotes the special nature and national importance of this area for nature conservation - the bittern is now a rare and endangered species. It is also regionally important for its breeding bird colonies and as a focal point for bird migration routes, recognised in Rye Meads Ringing Station, one of the oldest bird-ringing stations in the UK. In landscape terms this is certainly a most unusual area at present, although it is likely that, as restoration proceeds, it will more resemble the Regional Park areas south of Dobb’s Weir. Rye Gatehouse is unique.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of urban and industrial development, the transport corridor and utilities is especially apparent. Within this there are gems, such as Rye Gatehouse.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses include walking, bird watching and boating.

In some places the condition of footpaths is poor.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This landscape is significantly valued (C).

‘The locality is pleasant but it is the resort of too many vulgar Londoners to be desirable’, B.Moran in The Journal of Benjamin Moran 1857-65, Gillespie, Chicago (1868), quoted in So that was Hertfordshire, M Tompkins, (1998).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI and part of Lea Valley SPA/Ramsar site.

The Lea Valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its wetlands.

CONDITION

Land cover change: wide spread
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmennted
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

RYE MEADS - Area 80

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

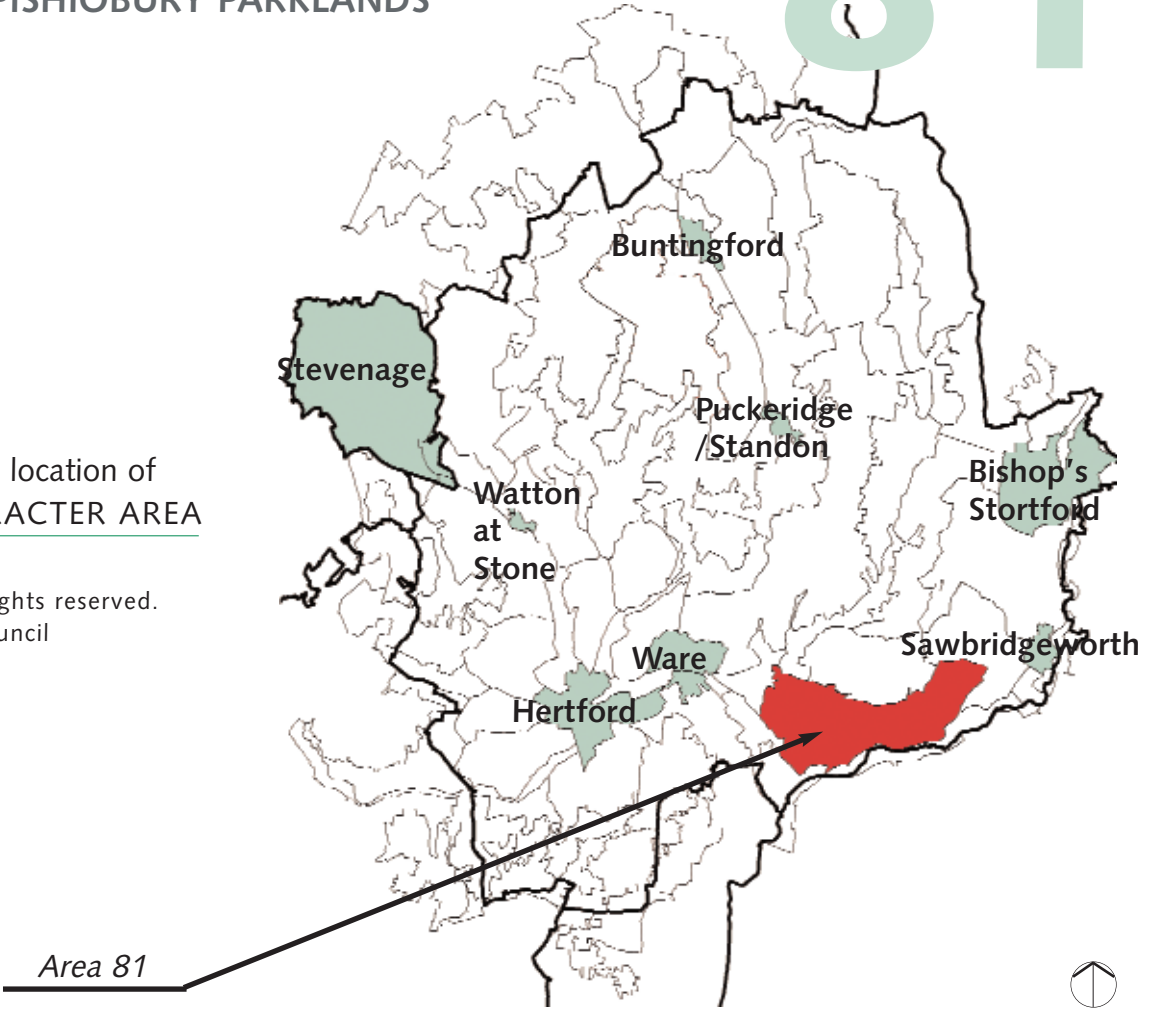
- encourage a reversion to pastoral grazing within the floodplain where this is possible and practicable
- encourage the Environment Agency to ensure that any new flood alleviation works are designed to complement the landscape and biodiversity of the area
- ensure that any proposals for waste management development in the vicinity of Rye Meads power station are developed with due regard to landscape, water quality, biodiversity and other environmental issues and with a view to improving the local landscape
- encourage the use of the Lee Navigation and the railway for the transport of aggregates from sites within the valley
- encourage the work of the RSPB in providing birdwatching facilities at Rye House Marsh Reserve
- encourage Sustrans' proposal for a cycle path along the Lee Flood Relief Channel, with links to the River Lee Country Park cycle route
- support the work of LVRPA in developing a Water Management Strategy to resolve wildlife/leisure conflicts
- encourage LVRPA in the creation of a diverse suite of wetland habitats to make full use of the biodiversity and landscape potential of the valley
- if water quality and groundwater protection requirements can be met, give consideration to granting consent for inert waste tips within the valley, to provide potential restoration to non-waterbody sites and increase the ecological diversity of the area
- encourage investigation of the potential for white water canoeing at Glen Faba, to provide additional recreational facilities
- investigate the potential to provide additional footpath links from the New River to the Lee Navigation and other river channels taking into account local context.



Rye Meads Nature Reserve
(P. Shears)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

A broad band on the north bank of the Stort between Stanstead Abbots in the west and the south-western edge of Sawbridgeworth, divided into four sub-areas of parklands.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Parkland and arable farmland on gently undulating south-facing slope interrupted by valleys of the Stort's tributaries. Cultural pattern overrides topographical change. An area of ancient settlements, dominated by the many parklands on the south-facing slopes above the Stort valley.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- parkland: Stanstead Bury, Bonnington, Hunsdonbury and Briggens Park; Eastwick (relic); Gilston Park and former deer park around Sayes Park Farm; Pishiobury
- large-scale arable farmland with little woodland out of the valleys
- views of Harlow across river valley with taller buildings nestling in trees
- change from floodplain to rounded slopes is apparent throughout
- constant noise from cars and aircraft
- open round slopes above Stort flood plain

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- country houses
- southerly aspect
- relic cultural pattern reflects topographic change and different landcover, e.g. Hunsdon Mead - Hunsdon Mill - Hunsdonbury
- dovecote water tower at Briggens
- historic moats at Eastwick
- transition to adjoining area, with small parklands on boundary



Cottages at Eastwick (P. Shears)

STANSTEAD TO PISHIOBURY PARKLANDS - Area 81

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series) on the higher ground, with better drained loamy soils towards the river (Melford series).

Topography. South-facing undulating valley slope with minor tributaries of the Stort.

Degree of slope. 1 in 10 to 1 in 65.

Altitude range. 40m to 70m.

Hydrology. Hunsdon Brook, Fiddlers Brook and other un-named tributaries of the Stort flow southwards into the main river at gradients of 1 in 125.

Land cover and land use. This area consists of wooded farmland and parkland with well-integrated landholdings, a mix of parkland, open arable farmland, woodland and water meadow. The primary land use is arable cultivation but there is also significant parkland (except around Eastwick), some of which is now being developed with secondary settlements around the original mansion. Associated features: dovecote, water tower, moats, estate fencing. Some fly-tipping.

Vegetation and wildlife. The south-western part has little woodland, while the north-eastern part contains several important, isolated blocks of old woodland, with elm, ash, hawthorn, willow and hornbeam. Around the parklands in this area there are extensive deciduous plantations, some grassland and ornamental lakes which are valuable locally for birds.

- The parkland at Bonningtons is scarcely visible, most having gone to arable production; the large lake is completely screened by vegetation from the B180.
- Eastwick has few areas of ecological value except for the neutral/calcareous rough grassland associated with the old moats.
- Gilston Park has some notable veteran trees and a lake, but has lost much of its grassland to the plough.
- Sayes Park is mainly open arable, but has some important old woodland. Field boundaries are either medium hedgerows or rows of individual trees, such as a young lime avenue. Usual hedgerow species are blackthorn/hawthorn, hazel, willow and field maple, with wild clematis. There are many individual relic oak standards and some ash.
- Pishiobury has important riverside alder/willow woodlands, some good neutral pasture on its undulating slopes and a spring-fed lake on the line of an old meander.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this area is very prominent, with the field pattern reflecting its planned, estate character, including the parklands and associated farmlands of Bonnington, Hunsdonbury, Briggens and Stansteadbury.

- To the north of the village are two Scheduled Monuments, moated sites with associated earthworks which are the relics of a manor belonging to Edward III, which burned down in the 1840s.
- Within Gilston Park there is another SM, a moated site with associated deer-pen enclosure and park pale, south of the existing house and indicating the location of the former deer park. This may have extended into or been adjacent to a deer park (pre-1676) on the land now occupied by Sayes Park Farm, and was possibly linked to either The Manor of Groves or High Wych Park, both of which lie on the boundary of the adjoining area.
- The designed parkland of Pishiobury, south of Sawbridgeworth, somewhat isolated from the other parklands.

Field pattern. The regular fields are generally small to medium size, with some larger arable fields.

Transport pattern. The transport pattern in this area is of narrow, winding, sunken lanes running north-south from the river valley. Most lanes are hedged on one side only, and are frequently ditched. Verges are usually absent. The A414 forms part of the southern boundary of the area and divides Briggens from the other parklands in this area.

Settlements and built form. Settlements are of varying sizes within this area, most of them at least Victorian in age, several older. Stanstead Abbots has a partly 15th-century church and several 17th and 18th-century houses, including Stanstead Hall, the Red Lion Inn and The Old Clock School, plus Victorian buildings such as the Mill. The streetscape has white weatherboard and black bargeboards on white rendered houses.

- Stanstead Bury dates from the late 15th century and has, according to Pevsner, '*an eminently picturesque exterior, the result of several centuries' alterations. The shapes and textures and colours of the approach side (W) must delight the eye of any painter*'. It has a garden and park of some 25 hectares. Briggens was built in 1719 for a director of the South Sea Company. The grounds were worked on by Charles Bridgeman in 1720 and had a deer park from at least the 16th until the late 19th century. The house has been considerably altered over time and is now an hotel, with a young lime avenue and a golf course laid out among the mature parkland trees. Salmon described Briggens in 1728 as standing '*upon a beautiful hill overlooking the Meadows, the river Stort, and part of Essex*', and its features included '*a graceful Plantation of Trees, with Variety of Slopes, adorned with Statues*' (N. Salmon, *History of Hertfordshire*). '*The turfed ramps and terraces forming these "Slopes" are familiar elements in Bridgeman's designs*' (Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden, by Peter Willis, London (1977)). Hunsdon House, adjacent to Hunsdonbury park and well south of the village, is of great historic significance, being a remnant of a great mansion belonging to Henry VIII, where the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth spent a great deal of their childhood. It had an established deer park in 1296.

At Bonningtons there is c.86ha of informal parkland dating from pre-1760, much of which appears to be in arable cultivation.

- Eastwick church, with a 13th-century chancel arch, stands outside the ancient hamlet on the edge of the Stort floodplain. There is now no parkland here. Many of the cottages in the village are mid-Victorian, built by the Hodgson family who held both Eastwick and Gilston Park.
- Gilston Park was enclosed in the 17th century and its present house, replacing one demolished in 1851, is a '*large asymmetrical mansion of random rubble in the Early Tudor style with Gothic details*' (Pevsner). The estate has been refurbished and large new houses built within the parkland. The half-coppiced lime avenue, neat hedges and estate fencing lend an estate influence to the surrounding arable farmland. The church of cut and uncut flint with red brick tower stands isolated from the park and village.
- Pishiobury is described as '*mildly medievalizing*' in Pevsner. It is a red brick late Tudor mansion, remodelled or rebuilt by James Wyatt in 1782 with castellations. It had a deer park in 1343. The stables and barn are still essentially c.1600, while the lake (part of the river Stort) and planting are due to Capability Brown.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
Hertfordshire Gardens by Anthony Wiggins, Hatfield, 1970.
 English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.
 HCC list of historic parks and gardens.

STANSTEAD TO PISHIOBURY PARKLANDS - Area 81

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views from within the area are extensive across the floodplain to the industrial edge of Harlow. The southern edge of the area is also widely visible from the A414, which forms part of its boundary. It is a fairly tranquil area away from the roads but has lost unity because of the different land uses to which the parklands have been put. Near-constant noise from planes in and out of Stanstead also reduces tranquillity generally.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This area is most unusual in having so many associated parklands. Not all are in good condition and the landscape flow between Gilston and Pishiobury has been broken by mineral workings (included in Area 82) and suburban development around High Wych and Sawbridgeworth (included in Area 84).

VISUAL IMPACT

From the valley slopes there are views across the Stort valley to the northern edge of Harlow, its tall chimneys and industrial buildings in some contrast to the wetlands within the shallow valley.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Harcamlow Way extends along various routes in this area through the river valley, but is not extensive on the slopes. There is little access to the parklands.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Some aspects of this area are valued for their distinctiveness (D). The northern flanks of the lower Stort Valley below Sawbridgeworth [are] characterised by topographic pattern, land use, visual relationship with Harlow, the presence of a number of historic country houses in designed landscape settings and a lack of tranquillity (Respondent 3792, SPD Consultation 2006).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM at Eastwick moats and in Gilston Park. Pishiobury and Stansteadbury are Grade II listed by English Heritage. Gilston Park and Briggens are referred to in HCC documentation on historic parks and gardens.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- encourage the authorities responsible for the Eastwick moats to review their management of the site to achieve a more informative balance between nature conservation and historic objectives
- disseminate information about the historic landscape and ecological value of veteran and parkland trees
- discourage ploughing up of parkland grasslands
- encourage a reversion from arable to pasture where practicable, and the management of new and existing grasslands to maximise their biodiversity potential
- encourage management of woodland to ensure age diversity, favour locally indigenous species and maintain species-rich ground flora
- encourage the planting of new woodland around existing woodlands where this will contribute to ecological diversity and will not damage the local landscape character or historic features such as banks and ditches
- encourage the replanting of hedges along historic field boundaries, using locally indigenous species
- ensure that new features and planting within historic parklands, especially in connection with development within them, respects their historic integrity by reflecting the dominant period of the house and parkland and using similar species to those planted originally in order to reinforce its character
- ensure that proposed development is only permitted where it will enhance local landscape character

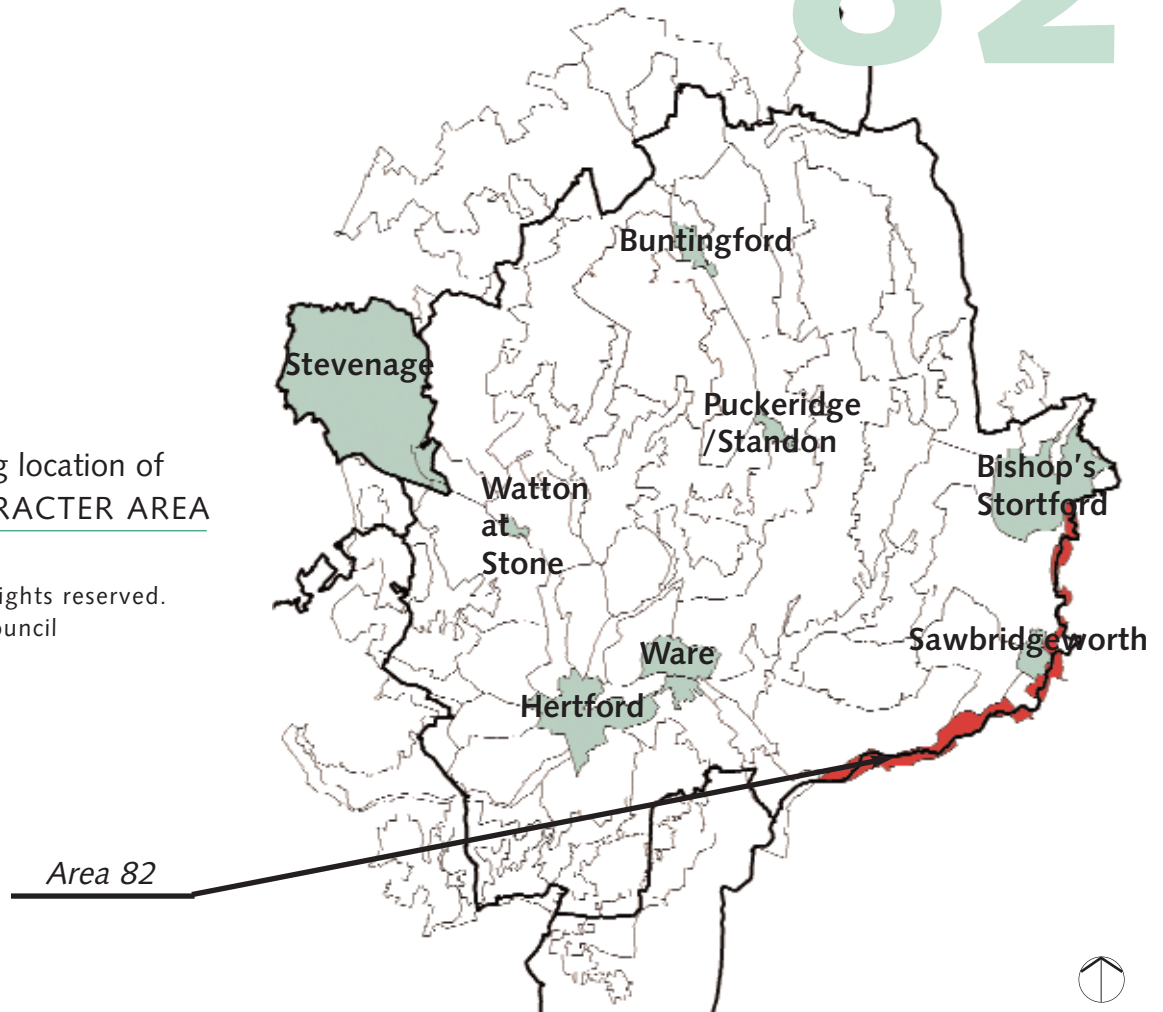


Briggens Park with mature trees and ha-ha
(P. Shears)

RIVER STORT

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

The valley of the river Stort between its confluence with the Lea at Rye Meads and the southern edge of Bishop's Stortford.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

An enclosed landscape, focused on the Stort Navigation with its locks and the more natural original river with its side loops. The landform is dominant, although the watercourses within it are relatively insignificant visually. The valley is predominantly rural with significant localised urban impact, varying with the degree to which industry is water related.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- river valley
- generally rural in character
- generally enclosed, lacking panoramic views, therefore focused on river
- variation in urban impact, dependent on whether industry is water-related or not

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- narrowboats on river
- relic water-related industrial, versus 20th-century non-related industry - graffiti etc
- tranquil watercourse, willow-fringed with locks

Farm track near Thorley church
(M. Pole)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The flat valley bottom consists of stoneless mainly calcareous clayey soils over river alluvium (Thames series), with better drained loamy or clayey soils over chalky till on the lower slopes (Melford series).

Topography. Flat with gentle side slopes.

Degree of slope. The river has a fall of 1 in 750 between Bishop's Stortford and Rye Meads; the side slopes are between 1 in 100 and 1 in 500.

Altitude range. 32m to 55m along the river; 35m to 60m on the edge of the floodplain.

Hydrology. The river valley contains the original river Stort, the channelled Stort Navigation and tributaries such as Canons Brook. Parts of the original river channel are retained as 'side loops', as at Pishiobury. These support diverse ecological communities and are very rich in fish habitat.

Land cover and land use. This area is open farmland with wetlands and open water. The floodplain contains a mix of pasture and wetland vegetation, with some arable and the Navigation is a significant recreational amenity. The A414, set just above the floodplain on the northern slope, marks a break between this predominantly wetland vegetation and the arable slopes above. There has been significant mineral extraction within the river valley between Redericks and Hollingson Meads.

Vegetation and wildlife. This natural floodplain of extensive riverside grasslands and wetlands is a major ecological and landscape resource. Wetland species dominate, mainly willow and alder, the latter an uncommon species elsewhere in Hertfordshire. The river's flora includes rarities such as shining pondweed, arrowhead, yellow waterlilies and red and flat-stalked pondweeds. It supports large numbers of invertebrates, birds and mammals, including water vole, although the canalised main river is now severely degraded. It can be divided into three ecological sub-areas.

- The upper Stort contains high quality alluvial floodplain grasslands and calcareous fen communities, together with some alder/ash/willow woodland. The SSSIs at Sawbridgeworth Marsh and Thorley Flood Pound are very important for tall wash grassland, marsh, reedbed and permanent grassland, which provides habitat for snipe, water rail, wildfowl and ground-nesting birds.
- The section of river between Sawbridgeworth and Pye Corner is rather degraded by mineral extraction but still contains some old alluvial pasture, as at Hollingson Mead. The post-extraction gravel pits are developing local value for wildlife.
- The most important floodplain grasslands in Hertfordshire occur in the lower Stort at Hunsdon (SSSI) and Parndon Meads. Hunsdon Mead is managed on the ancient Lammas system of haymaking followed by winter grazing and supports an interesting and now uncommon flora, including green-winged orchid.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic landscape pattern of this area is generally less disturbed than many others and has largely retained its natural landform and, in part, land use. Traditionally it was grazing marsh for the historic parkland estates on the south-facing slopes to the north. The Stort at this point was probably an important boundary in pre-history. Within and adjacent to the towns the river is

heavily influenced by water-related industrial use, dating mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Field pattern. The field pattern in this area is discontinuous and variable, relating to the traditional unenclosed pattern of grazing meadows but interrupted by mineral extraction.

Transport pattern. This is a busy area, with a dual carriageway (A414) on the northern edge of the lower reaches of the floodplain, a railway snaking to either side of it and the B181, A1184, B1004, A414 and other minor lanes crossing it.

Settlements and built form. Sawbridgeworth has an Edwardian character near the river, with 19th-century water-related industrial buildings, some now converted but retaining their scale. The maltings on both sides of the railway and along the Stort are the most extensive remaining range of pre-20th century maltings buildings in Hertfordshire. The southern edge of Bishop's Stortford, by contrast, has a 20th-century urban industrial character, with graffiti, industrial buildings and blank walls backing on to the Navigation. The estates associated with the middle reaches of the river are screened by vegetation (Wallbury) or topography (Hyde Hall) and lie outside the floodplain. (See also Area 81 for the parklands traditionally associated with the river, set on the northern slopes above the floodplain.)

Other built features: Locks - consistent black/white timber; bridges of 19th or 20th-century brick; lock houses; narrowboats.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, p.55.

English Nature *Natural Area Profile; East Anglian Plain*.

English Nature: SSSI notifications.

RIVER STORT - Area 82

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of the area from outside are concealed by intervening vegetation and buildings, not landform, while views within the area are limited by vegetation. The scale of landscape elements is small and there is a significant sense of enclosure. This is a coherent but discordant area, with noise from railway, road traffic and planes. Although it lies outside the urban envelope it is heavily influenced visually by it.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Some of the habitats within the SSSIs are now rare within the county or nationally. This is one of the more intact river valleys in the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development is high but localised in this area, with the urban/transport corridor and a telemast.

ACCESSIBILITY

Frequency/density of footpaths and towpaths - widespread in river valley, absent elsewhere.

Noted recreational land uses: walking, boating, fishing.

Frequency/density of waymarked routes - widespread.

Condition: fair; medium width; surface: gravelled but muddy.

Harcamlow Way along towpath and redundant railway.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is highly valued in its entirety for its distinctive and accessible landscape spanning the county boundary and with added value to out-of-county visitors (A).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSIs at Hunsdon Mead, Sawbridgeworth Marsh and Thorley Flood Pound, all for hay meadows and/or species-rich grassland. The Stort Valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its grasslands and wetlands.

CONDITION

Land cover change:

Age structure of tree cover:

Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:

Management of semi-natural habitat:

Survival of cultural pattern:

Impact of built development:

Impact of land-use change:

wide spread

mixed

wide spread

not obvious

declining

low

high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform:

Impact of land cover:

Impact of historic pattern:

Visibility from outside:

Sense of enclosure:

Visual unity:

Distinctiveness/rarity:

apparent

prominent

interrupted

concealed

partial

coherent

rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

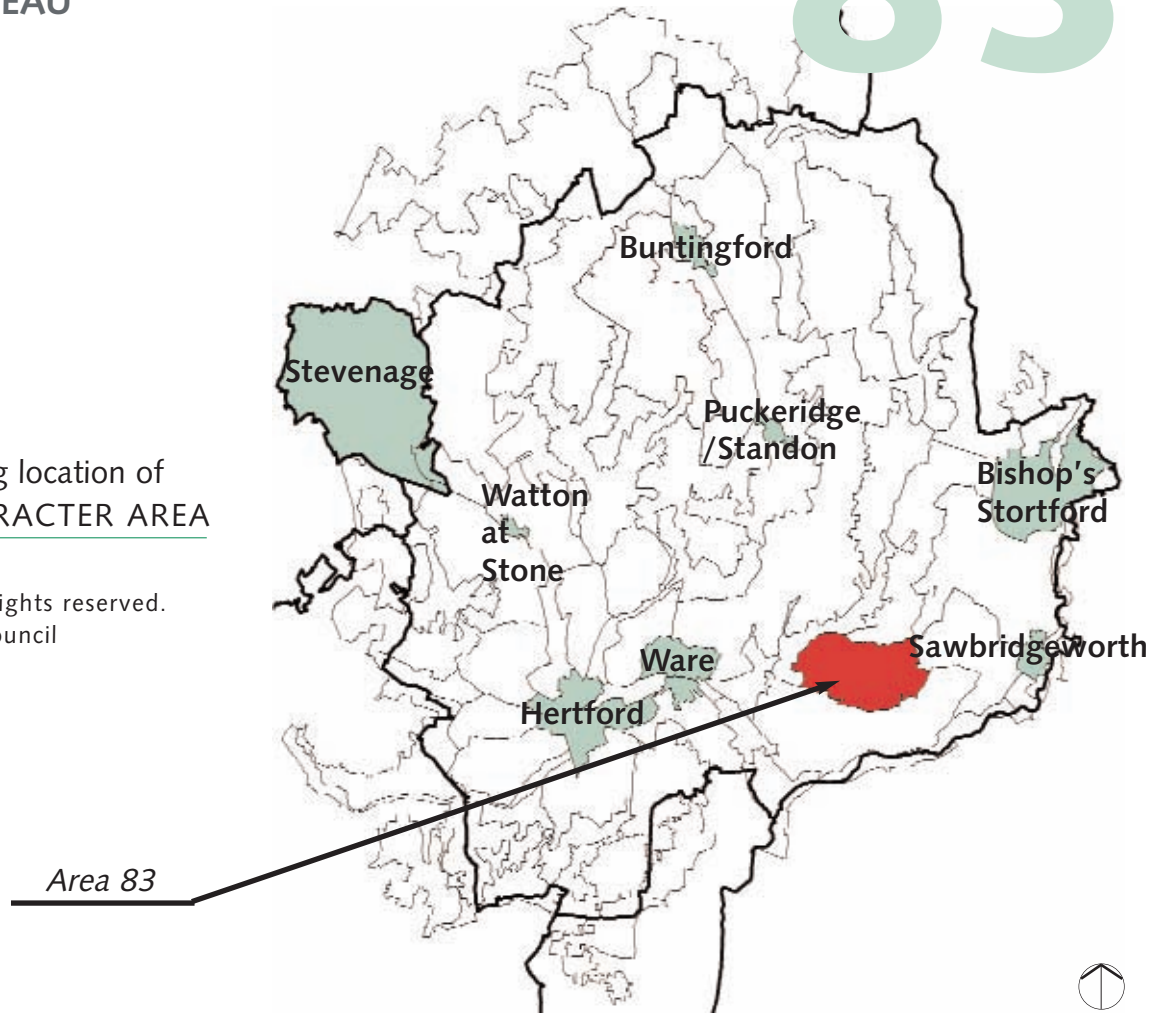
- resist any development within or adjacent to the floodplain which could damage the ecological interest of the river
- encourage landowners to create buffer strips which may vary in nature along the watercourse, to prevent ploughing right up to it and increase its ecological diversity and value as an ecological corridor
- encourage landowners to avoid the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer near the river channel, in order to reduce loss of ecological diversity or eutrophication of the water
- encourage good practice in water and vegetation management, especially in the SSSIs
- encourage research into or consultation on mixed grazing or vegetation management systems that do not conflict with flood defence requirements
- encourage the conservation and enhancement of riverside and other wetland habitats and the connection of wetlands along the river valley
- support the establishment of agri-environmental schemes within Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and Countryside Heritage areas (CHAs)
- ensure that mineral restoration proposals are adhered to and that they are designed to maximise nature conservation potential by contributing to the BAP objective of creating a 'necklace' of wetland habitats along the river valley
- resist any further proposals for mineral extraction in this area which might affect the local water table or permanently damage the local landscape character or high ecological value



Stort Valley lock at Twyfordbury
(P. Shears)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Focused on Hunsdon village, bounded to the south by estate/parkland associated with the river Stort, to the east by less disturbed farmland, and to the north by the river Ash valley.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Large-scale open arable farmland on flat upland plateau, with smaller fields and woodland to north west of Hunsdon.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- few settlements: Hunsdon, Widford
- significant woodland groups clustered in north east and south west
- poor or fragmented hedges

- quite remote
- large-scale arable fields
- heavy wet clay - ditched

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- former World War II airfield south-east of Hunsdon - very bleak and lacking in features
- homogenous style of villages
- pylons and overhead power lines
- historic links down to river Stort
- distinction between settlement and generally unsettled countryside



Hunsdon Plateau, view to north west (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Clay soils over till (glacial drift). Hunsdon village lies on fine loamy over clayey soils, with slowly permeable subsoils (chalky till and glaciofluvial drift) (Ashley series), while the surrounding area lies on slowly permeable calcareous clay (Hanslope series).

Topograph. Flat plateau.

Degree of slope. 1 in 375.

Altitude range. 66m to 81m.

Hydrology. There are many ditches in this poorly drained area, but few streams. To the south they flow into the Stort or Lea; in the north into the Ash.

Land cover and land use. This area is in intensive arable production, with areas of ancient woodland in an aggregated block to the north east of Hunsdon village. The impact of former land use as a World War II airfield is very apparent to the south east of the village, where all trees and hedgerows were removed and have not been replaced. Associated features: ditches, moats.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a uniform area of arable farmland with wet boulder clay woodlands of transitional oak/hornbeam and ash/maple/hazel and a fairly diverse ground flora dominated by dog's mercury. The woodland is a mix of ancient woodland in the north east and plantations of between 50 and 120 years old in the south west. In both cases the individual blocks are quite large (5 to 15ha); the ancient woodland blocks are closer together and linked by hedgerows. Elm is a prominent species locally, with willow along the ditches. Hedge species are elm, hawthorn and sallow with standard oak or ash, but there are few of them and they are not in good condition. Marshland Wood contains field maple, hornbeam, hawthorn, spindle, ash, oak and elm. In the churchyard at Hunsden there is a veteran yew and veteran oaks are scattered through this area, as at Olive's Farm, Hunsdon.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this area is apparent but very altered locally by the destruction of the field pattern on the former WWII airfield. Hunsdon House, on the outskirts of the village (in Area 81), was the favoured residence of Henry VIII, to escape the London plague and for hunting. There was an extensive deer park and the possible remnants of a hunting lodge survive as a barn at Hunsdon Lodge Farm. The Tudor palace became a Georgian mansion in the early 19th century. The central block of woodland was formerly much more extensive but suffered from clearances in the early 1970s.

'It is perhaps typical of Hunsdon that where a medieval hunting ground has not been transformed into a later park, the ground has been radically altered by modern construction.' (Munby, *The Landscape of Hertfordshire*, p.134.)

Field pattern. Field sizes are generally large to vast, smaller and more regular immediately to the west of Hunsdon. They vary between very geometric north of Gilston to irregular within the ancient woodland, but are generally irregular (although this is difficult to see in the field, due to the scale). On the former WWII airfield the former field pattern has not been reinstated.

Transport pattern. One notable feature of this area is the difficulty of access. There are no public roads within the rectangle bounded by the B1004, the B180 and Hollycross Road, an area of c.1200ha. The remaining 550 hectares of the area are similarly un-roaded, and the B180 is the only road within the whole area. Despite an extensive network of footpaths, much of the area remains inaccessible by car or on foot. The B180 winds across the plateau, usually ditched and hedged along much of its length, although open between Widford and Hunsdon.

Settlements and built form. There are two villages within the area. Although Widford lies on the plateau edge, it is perhaps more associated with the Ash valley, unlike Hunsdon which is a focus for the whole area. Between Hunsdon and Widford there is linear settlement along the B180. Elsewhere there are only isolated farms.

- Hunsdon has a homogeneous character due to the extensive use of white weatherboard or render and uniform black-painted bargeboards for groups of houses of different styles. The date of some estate cottages is 1856, but there are older houses too, notably a timber-framed hall house in Widford Road.
- Widford is also a long-established village, with 12th-century fragments in the church and some 16th-century (Nether Hall) and 18th-century (Goddard House) houses.
- Widfordbury, perched above the river Ash, is a 17th-century farmhouse with 16th-century brick-wall relics.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

HUNSDON PLATEAU - Area 83

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of the area from outside are concealed by local topography, while views within are extensive. The scale of landscape elements varies between small and large, with an emphasis on the latter. This is a very open, incoherent but tranquil landscape.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unique in the impact the WWII airfield still has on the area. The north-eastern part of the area shows the former cultural pattern of the whole area.

VISUAL IMPACT

Impact of built development: the airfield has altered the historic scale locally.

Distinctive features: former airfield, now large-scale arable - strong contrast with pre-existing/remaining landscape to north east and south west.

ACCESSIBILITY

Frequency/density of footpaths and waymarked routes: extensive and widespread but unwelcoming across airfield.
Condition: fair.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

A few locations are noted for their distinctiveness but this area also includes large tracts of unremarked landscape (D).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SMs at former Hunsdon airfield.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: localised
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: mature
Management of semi-natural habitat: fragmented
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: open
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

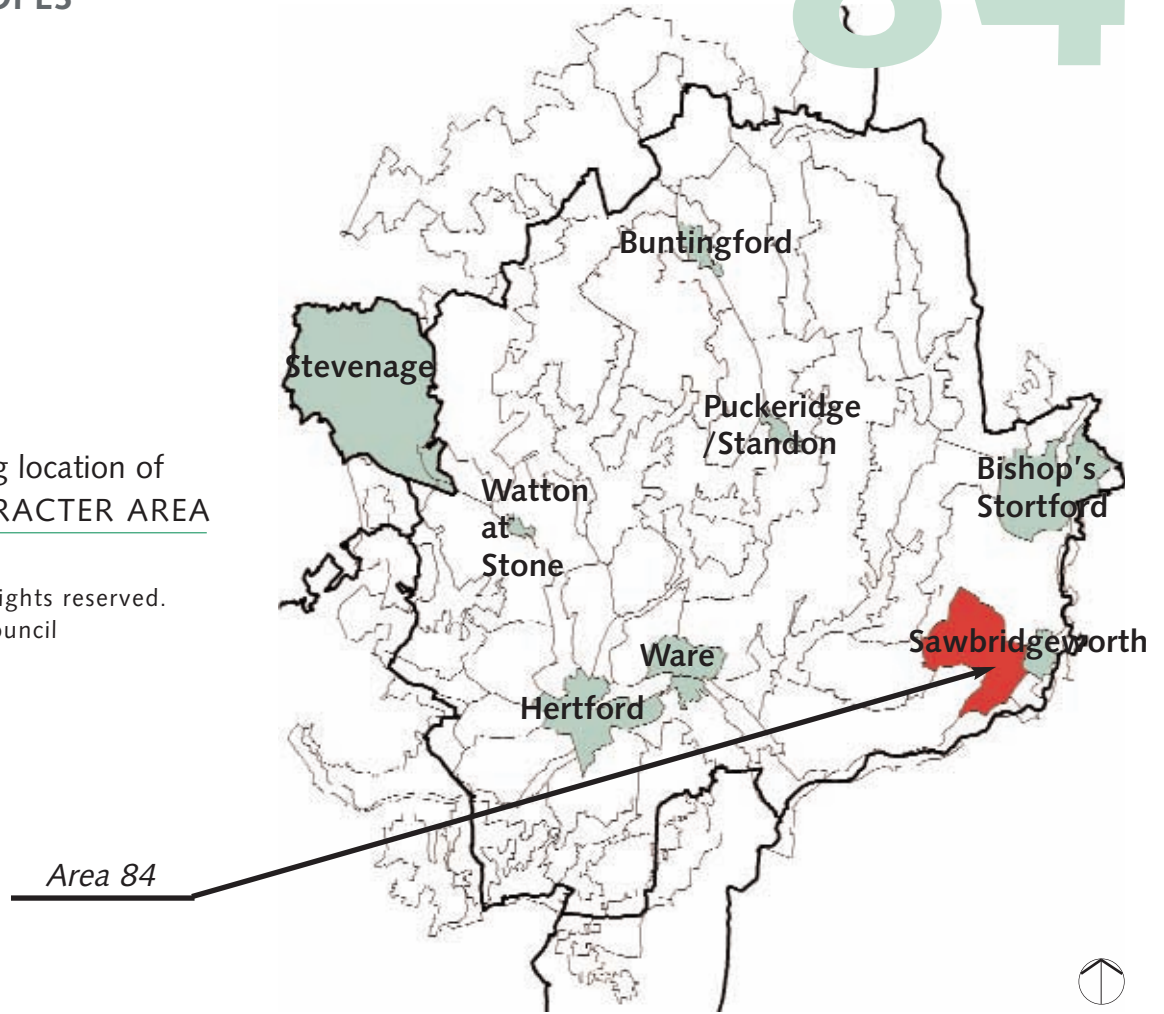
CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- the north east part of this area retains its historic characteristics of ancient woodland blocks linked by ditched hedgerows. This part should be conserved and protected, while the remainder should be improved to achieve the same landscape and ecological value
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- encourage the replanting of hedges along historic field boundaries, where this will not damage historic features such as ditches and banks
- encourage the planting of new woodland around existing, to protect them, increase the scale of woodland in this area and improve ecological diversity
- new woodland planting should use only locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible
- plantations and woodlands should be managed to favour locally indigenous species, to encourage good age diversity and to maintain a species-rich ground flora
- where the loss of ponds and ditches is unavoidable, ensure that replacement features of at least equal potential nature conservation value are created and maintained
- encourage awareness of the importance and value of veteran trees
- retain and conserve any artefacts and features (including Scheduled Monuments) relating to WWII use of the airfield.

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Bounded by Sawbridgeworth to the east, the Hunsdon plateau to the west and the Stort valley to the south, with an open arable plateau to the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A south-facing slope of mixed farming within a small irregular field pattern, usually ditched rather than hedged. An area of transition, showing increasing urban influence in the southern part and with links to the parkland area to the west. Around High Wych there are wide stretches of open farmland with old houses nestling in small coppices. The flint church is surrounded by the school, ancient houses and thatched cottages.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- isolated farms and houses
- small-scale open farmed landscape
- gently undulating south-facing slope
- discrete blocks of woodland
- tight network of narrow, winding, sunken lanes, usually ditched
- small areas of parkland on the western edge

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- High Wych retains village character despite links to Sawbridgeworth
- golf course and hotel add suburban character to generally rural area
- High Wych Road is a commuter-run, therefore not tranquil



Allens Green
 (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Gently undulating south-facing slope with slight dip to Fiddlers' Brook in west.

Degree of slope. 1 in 70 to 1 in 130.

Altitude range. 60m to 80m.

Hydrology. Fiddlers' Brook meanders southwards through Gilston Park (where it is dammed to form a lake) to the Stort. There are other minor streams flowing into the Stort.

Land cover and land use. Open arable farmland, small areas of parkland and suburban development, in a confusing mix. Few hedgerows and little pasture. Around the urban edge development is dense enough to completely mask the local topography.

Vegetation and wildlife. This uniform area of boulder clay farmland contains rather species-poor remnants of semi-natural woodland, mostly ash/maple but formerly with frequent elm. The former hazel/maple/elm hedges have largely been removed and almost no natural grassland remains. Poplar, lime and horse chestnut have all been planted within the area.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is arable farmland with a pattern of dispersed settlement.

Field pattern. Irregular, with a gradual increase in size away from settlements, varying from very small to very large. Generally unhedged and divided by ditches.

Transport pattern. A tight network of small lanes, with a rectangular pattern west of Sawbridgeworth, often enclosing small areas.

Settlements and built form. 'G.E.Pritchett's High Wych [church] of 1861 deserves to be specially mentioned as an eminently typical example of High Victorian design at its most revolting' (Pevsner).

- There are no settlements other than the village of High Wych. Elsewhere the built form is of isolated houses or farms, often using black weatherboard and red brick.
- The hotel at The Manor of Groves, with its golf course, is almost an extension of the urban character of Sawbridgeworth, despite its geographical links to the former deer park and parkland of Gilston. Although screened, it is hedged with non-indigenous species, and the rear of the hotel backs directly onto the lane.
- Allen's Green is the only hamlet within the area, with its own tiny flint church.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

HIGH WYCH SLOPES - Area 84

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside this area is largely concealed from view by its topography, while from within it offers extensive views over the Stort valley to the industrial edge of Harlow and mineral workings. The scale of landscape elements is mixed and there is little visual unity, giving an appearance of incoherence, despite the openness. This is not a tranquil area, with commuter through-routes and the constant noise of traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The change within this area from north to south provides a good indication of the effect of creeping urbanisation.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is a widespread and significant visual impact on this area from the transport corridor and urban development to the south and east. Farmland is being lost to the spread of suburban housing and the balance of the landscape is changing. This is particularly noticeable along Gangies Hill and West Road. West of

the junction with Beaufield Road isolated farmhouses are strung along the lane with indigenous vegetation associated with them. East of the junction the development is cramped suburban with 'golf course' vegetation - laurels and cherry trees - set in the still predominantly agricultural landscape. On the western edge of this area there are links to the parkland beyond, at High Wych Park and The Manor of Groves, but these give the appearance of being relic rather than maintained historic elements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Frequency/density of footpaths: network along former field boundaries.

Condition: not known.

CONDITION

Land cover change:
Age structure of tree cover:
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:
Management of semi-natural habitat:
Survival of cultural pattern:
Impact of built development:
Impact of land-use change:

localised
 mature
 fragmennted
 not obvious
 declining
 high
 high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform:
Impact of land cover:
Impact of historic pattern:
Visibility from outside:
Sense of enclosure:
Visual unity:
Distinctiveness/rarity:

apparent
 apparent
 relic
 concealed
 open
 incoherent
 frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

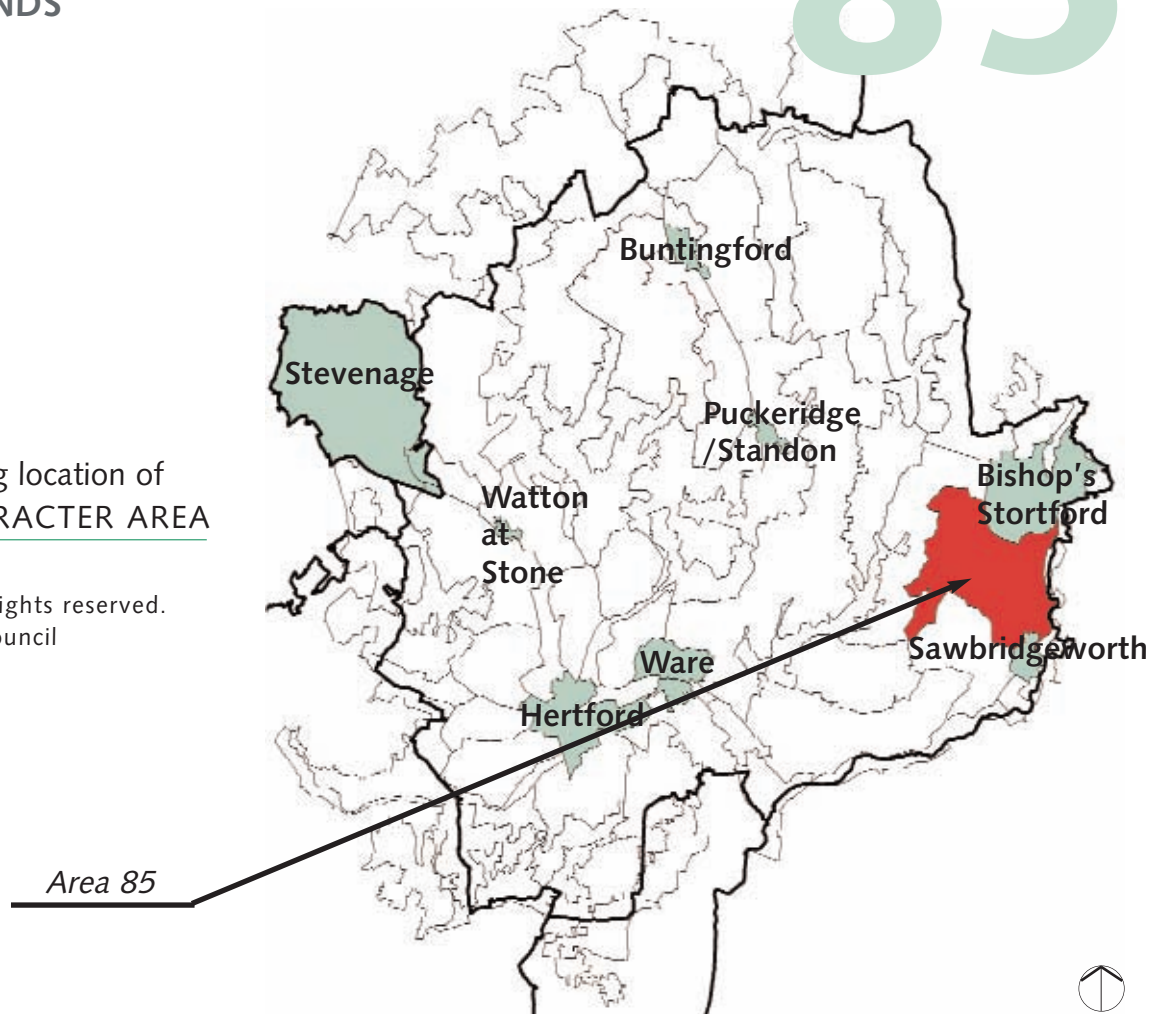
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- discourage the use of non-native species for woodland and hedgerow planting
- encourage the use of native species of local provenance for all new planting
- encourage the replanting of former hedges along historic boundaries, ensuring that historic features such as ditches and banks are not destroyed
- encourage the reduction of urban impact by dense woodland planting around settlements. Over time this could become a valuable local amenity; public participation in its establishment should be encouraged
- reinforce the small parklands by planting additional woodlands adjacent to their boundaries, using locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible
- encourage a reversion of arable to pasture and the management of new and existing grasslands to maximise their biodiversity potential, using low-density stock grazing where possible

THORLEY UPLANDS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Arable upland between the western edge of Bishop's Stortford and the upper Ash valley, bounded by the western Stort valley to the east and smaller-scale settled areas to the west and south, including both plateau and sloping farmland.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The western half of this area is an extensive area of monotonous flat arable farmland, lacking vertical elements except for infrequent large blocks of woodland, young roadside trees and the occasional large barn. Very large fields with no hedges are locally characteristic, while isolated farms with associated groups of farm buildings add incident and a sense of productivity. Cattle in meadows around the farms add occasional movement to what is otherwise a static landscape. The eastern half of this area consists of sloping arable farmland around a tributary stream on the west bank of the river Stort. It too is arable land, with some pasture and isolated farms with the occasional group of three or four cottages. The area is remote but lacks tranquillity, due to the aircraft overhead coming and going from Stansted.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- almost flat upland plateau and east-facing slope
- extremely open, with no hedges but infrequent large blocks of woodland
- young hedgerow trees planted in threes are a local feature
- roadsides have wide mown verges with ditches
- few settlements or buildings
- distinctive isolated farms, often with very large historic barns
- mainly arable production, with pasture for pedigree cattle around farms
- very rural, almost isolated, with negligible impact from southern edge of Bishop's Stortford
- constant noise of aircraft from Stansted airport, plus visual impact

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- outstanding medieval aisled barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
- river valley is screened by linear development and vegetation, so little awareness of topographical change
- farm buildings; fenced paddocks
- Matham's Wood has a significant local impact

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hanslope series).

Topography. Flat to gently undulating uplands, with minor valley of Spell Brook in east.

Degree of slope. 1 in 75.

Altitude range. 60m to 95m.

Hydrology. Several springs feed into Spell Brook off the high land, and there are many ditches and ponds throughout the area.

Land cover and land use. This area is dominated and has been simplified by intensive arable production and has very little woodland and few hedges. Locally there is limited pasture for horse and cattle grazing (pedigree Limousin herd) near farmhouses. There is a 20th-century industrial edge to the village of Spellbrook.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is one large (24ha) wood within this area, and a few scattered woodland fragments. There are very few hedges - this is one of the distinctive features of the area - but some young planting of hedgerow trees, occasionally in groups of three across a ditch. There is no grassland of any ecological importance. Matham's Wood is ancient woodland, wet boulder-clay woodland dominated by ash/maple/hazel, diversified by wartime disturbance and with some young plantations within. The sloping farmland to the east is species-poor, with relic woodlands of the ash/maple/hazel type and virtually no old grassland.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this area is masked by current land use and agricultural intensification. Shingle Hall is the site of a medieval park, of which perhaps only the curving footpath around Matham's Wood and the moat and other earthworks within it are relics. The earliest record of a deer park at Shingle Hall/Matham's Park is 1477; it is shown on many of the historic maps of the county, with a certain lack of precision in its location. It is now a planned landscape of huge regular and irregular fields without hedges and very dispersed settlement. The remains of a WWII airfield are still apparent around Matham's Wood.

Field pattern. Although the field pattern varies between regular and semi-regular, this is not apparent, due to the large scale and lack of hedges.

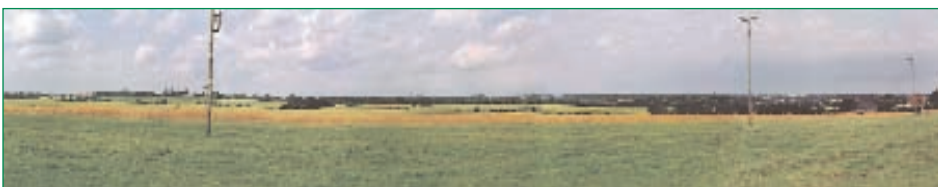
Transport pattern. There is a curiously regular pattern of lanes through the middle of this area which, with the footpaths, creates a geometric network linking the valleys of the Ash and Stort. Although the lanes themselves are often sinuous, they create an angular pattern. They are unhedged, usually with a medium to wide verge and ditch.

Settlements and built form

- Spellbrook is a small settlement on the edge of the Stort, intermediate between Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth and characteristic of neither river valley nor upland
- Thorley is now subsumed into the edge of Bishop's Stortford
- Thorley Hall is an 18th-century modernisation around a 14th-century aisled hall, just outside the ring road. It's associated village shifted to Thorley Street, mile east, which is now a prelude to Bishop's Stortford
- Houses and farms are long-established, infrequent and isolated, often with an associated cluster of farm buildings. Large barns are a local feature, with an outstanding medieval aisled barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
- Bishop's Stortford itself is screened by new development and extensive planting along the A1184 ring road, including a new vernacular housing development at Brook Farm, complete with country park

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).



View east over Stort valley
(P. Shears)

THORLEY UPLANDS - Area 85

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of the area from outside are very limited. It is visible from the A120, but otherwise screened by topography and vegetation within adjoining areas. Views within the area are extensive, with views from the eastern edge and Trims Green into the shallow wooded middle Stort valley, out to the notable treed edge to the west and, to the north, the wooded edge of Bishop’s Stortford. The scale of landscape elements varies between large and vast but it is unified. There is no sense of enclosure. This would be a tranquil area, with little road noise, were it not for the constant noise from Stansted air traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is a most unusual area, elemental and simple and of a scale undreamed of in the cluttered south west of the county. No doubt it is also bleak in the winter.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is a minor impact of new built development (St Michael's Mead) on the urban edge of Bishop’s Stortford, which is mainly screened by vegetation. Some farms have prominent large tin roofs. Pylons cross the area and there is a development of a sports field complex on the B1004 north of Exnalls Farm.

ACCESSIBILITY

Frequency/density of waymarked routes - localised; Herts Way along western edge.

Condition: not known. Well signed but frequently narrow track through arable crop. Near Matham’s Wood is a wide former concrete/tarmac track. There is a link route between Perry Green/Spellbrook but few north/south routes.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area includes some distinctive and valued elements, e.g. around Trims Green (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: insignificant
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage landowners to create permanent grass strips around field margins and on verges to increase nature conservation interest
- where the loss of ponds and ditches is unavoidable, ensure that they are replaced by new features of at least equivalent nature conservation potential
- encourage the planting of individual trees along ditches and roadsides
- any woodland planting in this area should be of an appropriate scale, i.e. large, and should focus on or link to existing woodlands. All planting should be of locally indigenous species, using stock of local provenance if possible
- encourage the management of woodlands and plantation to achieve good age diversity and a species-rich ground flora, with an emphasis on locally indigenous species
- resist development proposals that would permanently damage the character of this area by altering its scale and landscape pattern
- encourage more planting of hedgerow trees
- promote recognition of roadside/field ditches as potential ecological corridors; discourage use of herbicides, fertiliser run-off, over-zealous management
- encourage woodland planting, but not new hedges, as this would not reflect local landscape character
- encourage the retention of mixed farming, with pasture around farms and hamlets
- resist conversion of pasture to arable and encourage management of grassland to increase biodiversity

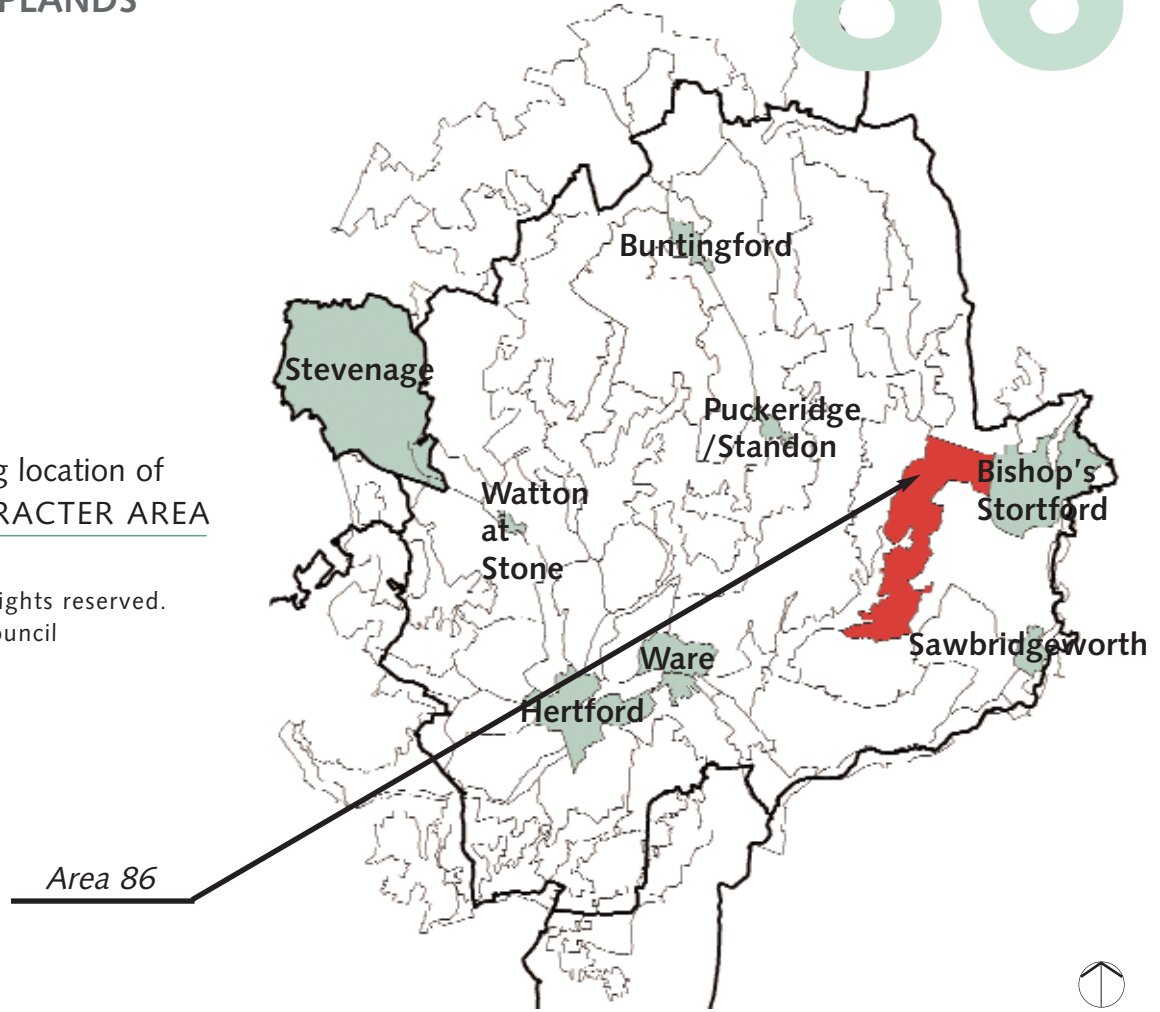


Historic barns at Shingle Hall
(P. Shears)

PERRY GREEN UPLANDS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Linear block to east of Hadham valley slopes, bounded to east by large-scale Thorley plateau, to south by the woodland north east of Hunsdon and to the north by the A120.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Undulating settled uplands with meandering lanes linking hamlets and small villages of varying ages. Predominantly a medium-scale arable landscape of neat hedges and few hedgerow trees. Open, with narrow sunken lanes and very extensive views out but limited views within.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- clustered hamlets linked by narrow winding lanes
- undulating upland
- treed farmland, lacking woodland
- village greens
- ancient settlements
- intact and well-managed cultural pattern
- place names all include 'green' or 'end'

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Henry Moore gallery at Perry Green - huge sculptures set out in nearby fields
- golf course
- restored landfill sites
- elm hedgerows
- occasional fragmentation of field pattern due to arable intensification

Henry Moore sculpture at Perry Green (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series), with a narrow band of loamy and clayey soils over brown subsoils along a minor tributary of the Ash (Wickham 4 series).

Topography. Gently undulating, rising slightly to the north.

Degree of slope. 1 in 30 to 1 in 40.

Altitude range. 65 to 105.

Hydrology. This poorly draining area drains westwards into the Ash.

Land cover and land use. This is an area of treed arable farmland, with pockets of woodland and pasture around the settlements. Near Perry Green there is a large former mineral extraction site which has been restored to nature conservation and agricultural (pasture) use. There is a large golf course due east of Great Hadham, in the middle of arable farmland.

Vegetation and wildlife. Ecologically this area can be divided into dry and wet boulder clay areas. Around Perry Green there are a few remaining old pastures and good hedgerows with hazel and spindle, but virtually no woods, except the hornbeam hangers on gravel overlooking the Ash. The damper boulder clay around Bury Green supports oak/hornbeam/ash/maple woodland with wild daffodil as a local feature. There are rich road verges in some places and many ponds. Hedgerow species are hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood and hazel or pure elm, in low hedges of mixed condition - new hedgerows of mixed species are in good order but frequently on one side of the lane or track only. There are few hedgerow trees. The formerly extensive grasslands are now largely lost to arable cultivation.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this settled landscape is widespread, not least in its place names (Tye, Green, End), showing how arable land was gradually carved out of the woodland and the small fields later amalgamated as part of agricultural intensification, but also in the many timber-framed houses. The Henry Moore Foundation is a significant cultural attraction, with large sculptures set out among the fields.

Field pattern. The pattern here is irregular and semi-regular, in a variety of small to medium-sized fields, usually hedged or with a hedgebank, but seldom treed.

Transport pattern. There is a very meandering network of narrow sunken lanes and tracks through this area, linked mainly to the Ash valley and edged with narrow ditched verges. The B1004 links Much Hadham and Spellbrook. The linear A120- 'Stane Street' marks the northern boundary.

Settlements and built form. The minor settlements in this area date from the 16th/17th century or earlier, with 20th-century additions. A variety of materials are used, including thatch and copper, but more often clay tiles over red brick, rendered, black weatherboarded or flint walls. There are no parklands or mansions in this area but many well-kept former farmhouses and cottages, such as Grudds Farm (moated) and Greentye Farmhouse (16/17th century jettied house) at Green Tye and Buckler's Farm and Hoglands at Perry Green. At Kettlehall Green, Moat Farmhouse (16th-18th century) has several barns, while Lower Farm at Bury Green and Clintons are late medieval houses. Many of these villages are clustered around their village green but also have a linear character, spreading out along the narrow lanes. Bury Green seems to have a 15th-century character, while Cradle End contains listed buildings dating back to the 16th-century and may have earlier origins.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

PERRY GREEN UPLANDS - Area 86

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of the area from outside are limited; it is only locally visible from surrounding upland areas. To the east it is screened from Much Hadham by riverside vegetation within the valley. Views within the area are extensive, very long over the valley and limited locally by vegetation. The scale of landscape elements is medium to large, with a variable sense of enclosure, depending on location. It is a unified and tranquil area away from the A120. **Rarity and distinctiveness.** Unusual by virtue of the intensity of settlement within an agricultural area, divided up into small linked hamlets and owing allegiance to the large settlements within the valley.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development is apparent in the rural housing, especially the linear development along roads, with its mix of 20th-century infill among older dwellings. In addition the Bury Green farm complex can be seen from the south west, the greenhouses at Green Tye are visible from the north west and the golf course at Exnalls Farm is clearly visible from the B1004.

The impact of mineral extraction is now insignificant since post-restoration and its integration into the agricultural landscape, although the vent pipes within the fields are a reminder of their former status.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths are widespread but localised, while waymarked routes are widespread. Condition is good, with wide soil and gravel surfaces.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

A few locations are noted for their distinctiveness, such as Perry Green (D).

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: open & contained
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- should mineral extraction in this area be considered appropriate, the restored sites in this area are a good example of restoration to pre-existing contours and to appropriate land use, i.e. grazing where arable use cannot be restored
- consideration should be given to providing links between the small scattered woodlands in this area, in order to improve eco-corridors. The most appropriate method would be via hedges, which are very typical of the area, rather than the union of different blocks of woodland. New planting should use only locally indigenous species, using stock of local provenance where possible
- hedges could be planted or restored along historic field boundaries, ensuring that no damage was caused to historic features such as ditches and banks
- ditches and ponds are a local feature and should be carefully maintained to maximise their biodiversity potential, especially where a suite of compatible habitats can be established, such as woodland/hedge/grassy field margin/pond/scrub. Where the loss of ponds or ditches is unavoidable, they should be replaced by features of at least equivalent nature conservation potential
- linear hamlets are a feature of this area but coalescence should be resisted
- verges in this area merit particular attention - together with the ditches they offer good nature conservation potential and should be managed accordingly
- golf courses and other sports features in an agricultural setting should respect local landscape character, using dense hedges as boundaries, with hedgerow trees, and focusing on locally indigenous trees and shrubs in preference to exotics. Associated buildings should be designed, if possible, within an agricultural vernacular style

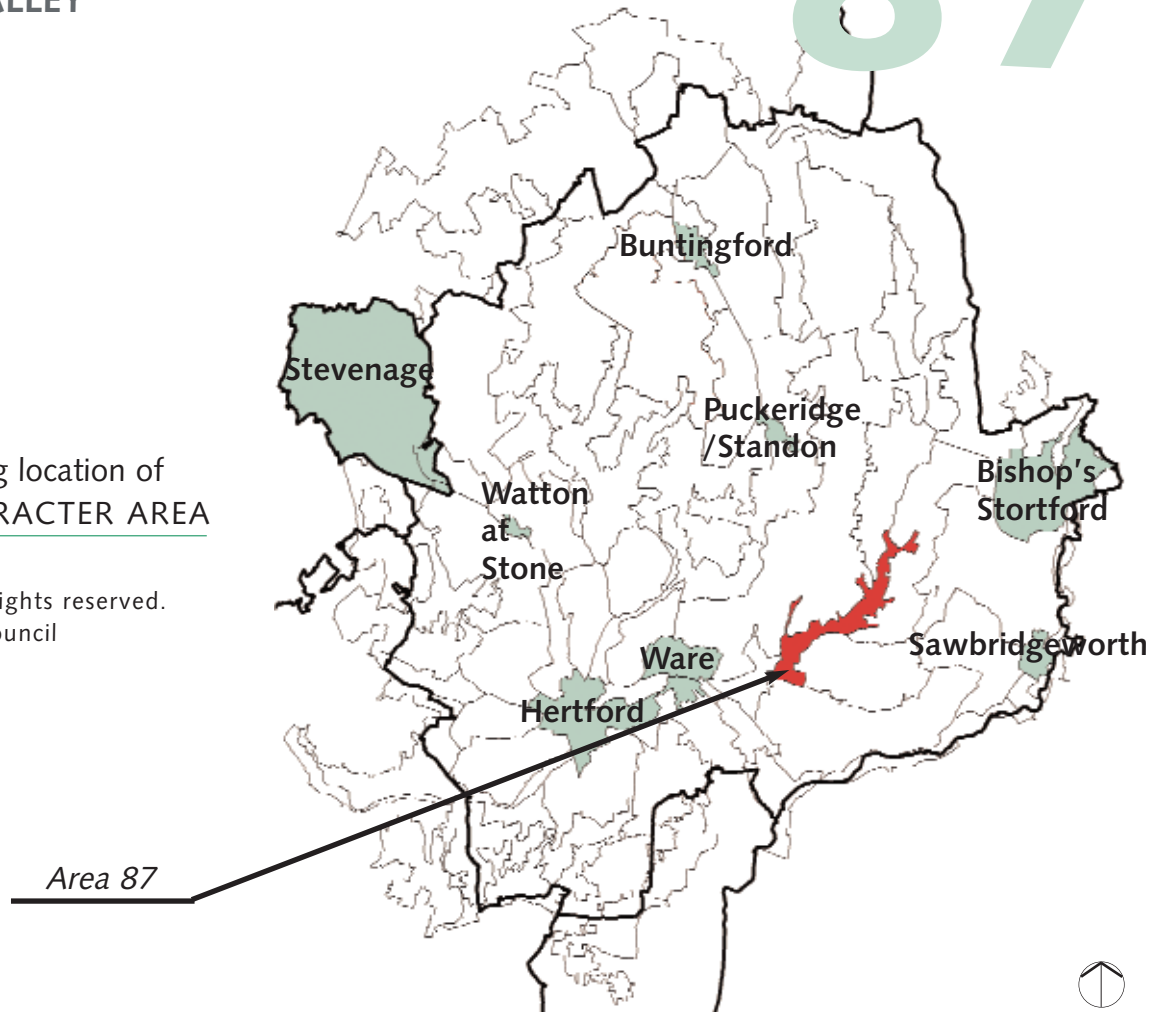


Nether Street, cottages and buttercups
(B. Smith)

MIDDLE ASH VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

River valley south of Wareside (Mardocks Mill) north to Hadham Cross, including tributary stream north-eastwards to Dane Bridge.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Narrow flat river valley floor, falling gradually to the south, with steep undulating slopes on either side. A landscape of distinctive wetland vegetation in the valley and woodland on the interlocking spurs of the valley sides.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow flat valley floor contained by steep side slopes
- pronounced wetland vegetation

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- dismantled railway now partly available as footpath/track
- much narrower than the Lea valley
- sewage works and water works are inconspicuous



View south west of Ash Valley from Helham Green (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well-drained loam or clay soils over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hanslope series).

Topography. The river meanders through a narrow floodplain with strongly undulating side slopes and spurs.

Degree of slope. 1 in 540 along the river; 1 in 10 to 1 in 12 on the valley slopes.

Altitude range. 39m to 75m.

Hydrology. The Ash supports a low fish population except in its lower reaches. It is predominantly natural in form, although affected by impoundment, and is lined along much of its length with mature trees and shrubs. It is of high invertebrate value.

Land cover and land use. Despite the traditional use of valley floors for grazing, much of this valley is now in intensive arable cultivation, with dense woodland on the steep valley slopes. The river supports the rare river water dropwort.

Vegetation and wildlife. Woodland cover clings to the steep slopes lining the valley, and consists of weeping willow, white willow, hornbeam, oak, elm, silver birch, sweet chestnut, lime and sycamore, indicative of the slight parkland character of parts of the area, set within the mainly arable cultivation. There is little alder. Boundary hedgerows consist of thorn, elder and poplar. The old quarry site at Hadham Towers has diverse spring-fed pools and secondary woodland/plantations, as well as rough grassland.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There appears to have been very little change to this landscape until the advent of the railway - which has now been dismantled. The river valley floor was too narrow and the slopes too steep for settlement, which lies instead on the plateau above. The main change will have been the loss of pastoral cultivation to arable.

Field pattern. The field pattern is irregular and organic, following the base of slopes and the meandering river. Field boundaries are a mix of tree rows, fences, medium hedgerows and wet ditches, with the tree rows making a significant contribution to the local vegetation. Field sizes are generally small to medium but variable and often large, especially on the valley floor, while the woodland on the slopes provides a larger scale.

Transport pattern. The B1004 crosses the valley obliquely between Wareside and Widford, and again at Hadham Mill, but the dismantled railway is the only linear feature within the valley and now provides part of the track for the Hertfordshire Way waymarked footpath route.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within the valley, rather they cling to minor indentations in the plateau edge above, as at Wareside, Widford and Hadham Cross, although the latter does extend down to a ford across the river.

MIDDLE ASH VALLEY - Area 87

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views into the area are obstructed by landform and vegetation. This is echoed in the views within the area, which are generally framed by vegetation and landform, giving it an enclosed character. Extensive views are possible along the valley and up the valley slopes, but are contained by the plateau edge or the woodland on the steep slopes. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium and there is a general sense of containment. It is unified, tranquil and coherent.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is one of the most traditional and picturesque river valleys in Hertfordshire, with steeper sides than many others and a wooded farmland character that differentiates it from the shallow parkland valleys elsewhere.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is little to impact on this area, with roads and settlements set away from the steep slopes. The dismantled railway creates a local feature but has largely been absorbed into the web of farm tracks and footpaths.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses are walking/riding/fishing. Although localised, footpaths and bridleways are clearly marked and easily accessed. Waymarked routes are extensive, if linear (following the former railway along a wide, reasonably well-surfaced track of road planings).

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This landscape area is highly regarded for its distinctiveness (C).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The Ash Valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Areas. (HBA) for its woodlands and wetlands.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- promote the reversion of arable to pasture and management by low-density stock grazing. Encourage an improvement in biodiversity within meadows by reducing chemical intervention
- where arable cultivation occurs near watercourses, encourage the establishment of a buffer zone to absorb fertiliser, herbicide and pesticide run-off and to create a wildlife refuge. This strip should, where possible, be linked to the wider landscape via rough grass headlands, hedges or woodland
- encourage the planting of wetland tree species along the watercourse, especially willow and black poplar
- ensure that the current good management of local footpaths is maintained and extended. Small low-key car parks in suitable locations would present additional opportunities where parking is currently difficult along the narrow lanes
- encourage additional woodland planting around existing woodlands, especially where this would increase biodiversity without damaging any historic features such as banks or ditches. New woodlands should follow historic boundaries, either former woodland or hedges
- promote the restoration of hedges along historic field boundaries, especially within the intensive arable areas, rather than along roadsides, where they can obscure views over this landscape
- resist any development which could permanently damage the local landscape character. In essence, this means any development, as this is an unsettled area
- increase awareness of the BAP objective of creating as 'necklace' of wetland habitats along the river valley



View south east across Hogham Wood from Helham Green (P. Shears)

LOWER ASH VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Linear north/south river valley and tributaries with undulating side slopes between confluence with the Lea at Hollycross Road (Amwell Magna) and Mardocks Mill/Wareside within the valley to the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Narrow flat river valley floor with steep, undulating wooded slopes on either side. Distinctive wetland vegetation and historic settlement with traditional dairy and sheep farming create a picturesque rural setting. The impact of settlement is absorbed and contained by topography. There is a clear distinction between the Ash and the Lea valleys, with the Ash valley concealed by extensive vegetation around its mouth. Within this area, Easneye stands out as a distinctive sub area for its topography and vegetation cover.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow flat valley floor contained by steep side slopes
- pronounced wetland vegetation
- traditional pastoral agriculture and woodland with extensive estate character
- isolated farmhouses and grouped farm buildings
- tranquil and remote

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- dismantled railway now partly available as footpath/track
- much narrower than the Lea valley
- the coherence and integrity of old dwellings and farmhouses, their vernacular architecture and careful siting within the valley
- dominant position of Easneye woodland on southern promontory
- dairy farming - traditional pasture with cows



Pasture in Ash Valley (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The lower end of the river valley consists of stoneless, mainly calcareous clayey soils over river alluvium (Thames series), as far north as Wareside, with deep, well-drained fine loams and clays over chalky tills on the valley slopes (Melford series).

Topography. The river meanders through a narrow floodplain with strongly undulating side slopes and spurs, the most prominent of which is on the southern bank at Easneye.

Degree of slope. 1 in 6 on the slopes, with a river gradient of 1 in 275.

Altitude range. 31m to 70m.

Hydrology. The Ash supports a low fish population except in its lower reaches. It is predominantly natural in form, although affected by impoundment, and is quite species-rich and of high invertebrate value.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly treed pastoral farmland, with woodland on the steepest slopes, especially on the southern promontory occupied by Easneye. There is some arable on the shallower slopes.

Vegetation and wildlife. Woodland cover tends to be linear along the steeper slopes. Easneye is characterised by acidic oak/hornbeam woodland on gravel hangers over chalk, with dog's mercury, bluebells and acid grassland below and in open rides, changing to neutral grassland on the valley floor. There is also some remnant floodplain ash/willow woodland, with spring-fed pools adjoining the river Ash and a number of old native black poplar, in one of their few remaining natural sites in Hertfordshire. Boundary hedgerows consist of thorn, elder, weeping willow and poplar. Most grasslands, formerly species-rich with a mix of calcareous and acid conditions on the slopes, are now 'improved'. The river Ash is one of the best rivers in east Hertfordshire, with relic native crayfish and water vole populations. It is characterised throughout by variable floodplain grasslands and wetlands, overhung by oak/hornbeam woods on gravel terraces, with native colonies of wood forget-me-not.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area appears to be of a character that has altered little over the centuries. The dominance of pastoral production means that there has been little loss of field boundaries and most of the dwellings are 19th-century or earlier. There is a bowl barrow (SAM) in Easneye Wood. Easneye, now a college, is a mid-Victorian redbrick mansion with much diapering, stepped gabling and tracery details, and much use of red terracotta. It is set amid extensive woodland on the southern slopes of the river just above its confluence with the Lea. There is a record of a deer park here in 1322.

Field pattern. The field pattern is irregular and organic, following the base of slopes and the meandering river. Field boundaries are a mix of tree rows, fences, medium hedgerows and wet ditches, with the tree rows making a significant contribution to the local vegetation. Field sizes are small to medium, variable.

Transport pattern. In this area the B1004 clings to the plateau edge on the northern valley side, while Hollycross Road marks the divide between the Lea and the Ash. The dismantled railway occupies a direct route through the valley while the river meanders to either side.

Settlements and built form. Buildings in this area are isolated houses or farms with clusters of farm buildings, usually in the vernacular tradition. Materials are red and yellow brick with clay tile roofs, or weatherboard, with bargeboards, dentil courses, etc., generally dating from the 18th century and before. Waterspace Farm and Hall is a collection of various dwellings and farm buildings in the valley north of Easneye Wood. There are also disused railway bridges and Mardocks Mill, hinting at former industrial uses within the valley.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

LOWER ASH VALLEY - Area 88

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside, this area is widely visible at the southern end. The landform is very obvious from the road and footpaths which run parallel to the valley and offer views in and across. Views within the area are generally framed by vegetation and landform, being extensive along the valley and up the valley slopes, but contained by the plateau edge. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium and there is a general sense of containment. It is unified, tranquil and coherent.

Rarity and distinctiveness. While the promontory of Easneye is quite distinctive, the lower reaches of the Ash valley are possibly the most typical representation in Hertfordshire of pastoral farming within the floodplain.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development (rural housing) is pronounced and positive in this area. There are scattered but extensive farm units and isolated houses nestling in the valley, which contribute to its settled and productive character. There has been some change from pastoral to arable production but, especially at the southern end, the pastoral tradition is very evident.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: walking/riding.
 Frequency/density of footpaths, bridleways and waymarked routes - localised but clearly marked.
 Good access. Condition: good; wide
 Surface: dirt/road planings; variable.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is of significant regard for its distinctiveness (C).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM: Easneye Wood bowl barrow.
 The Ash Valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Areas (HBA) for its woodlands and wetlands.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	extensive
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	good
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

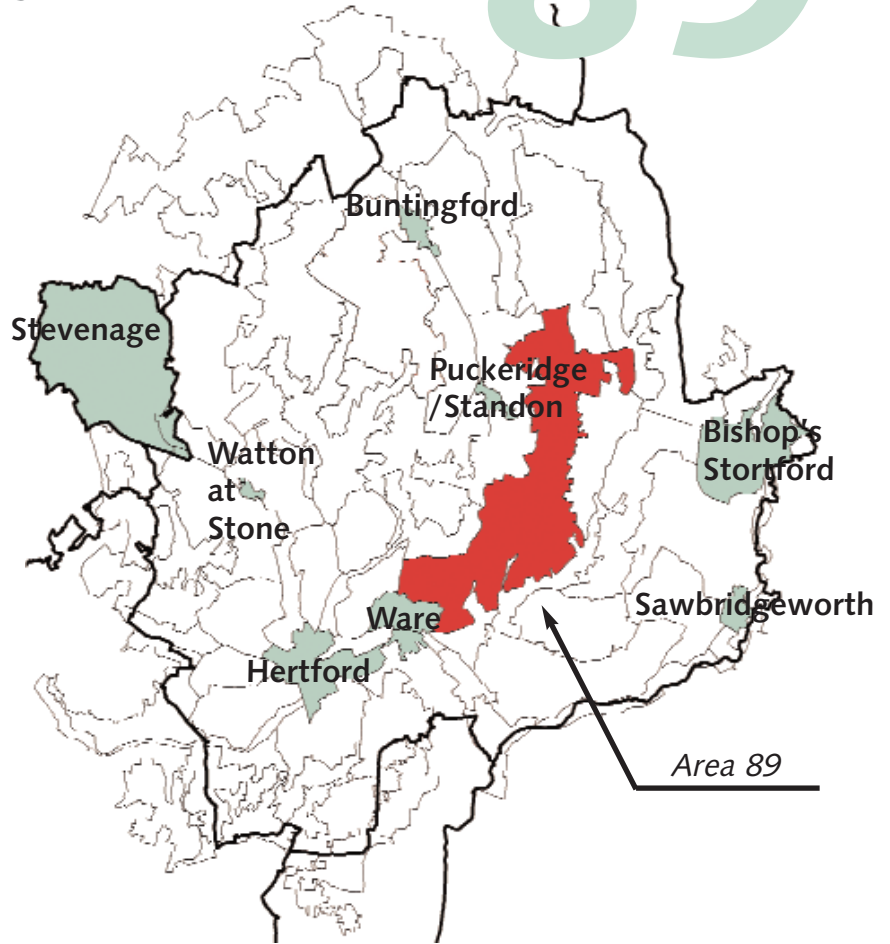
CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- support and encourage the continuation of the pastoral tradition within the valley
- encourage the reversion of arable to pasture and the management of grassland to enhance its biodiversity potential
- encourage an increase in woodland on the steeper slopes, around existing woodland. Plant only locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible. Do not encourage woodland planting on the shallower slopes
- encourage the planting of wetland vegetation along the watercourses, especially willow and black poplar
- encourage the establishment of buffer zones along the river, to absorb herbicide, pesticide and fertilizer run-off and to create wildlife refuges. Where possible, link these to the wider landscape via field margins, hedges or woodland, as appropriate
- ensure that local landowners are aware of the BAP initiative to create a 'necklace' of wetland habitats along the river valley
- encourage the establishment of circular walks, possibly with interpretation boards near the river, to encourage awareness of the historic, landscape and ecological value of this area
- encourage a pastoral management system of reduced herbicide and fertilizer, to encourage greater species diversity within the sward
- support the provision and extension of a linear footpath/bridleway route along the river, with small informal car parking facilities to facilitate access

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Uplands east of Standon and Braughing, between the Rib and Ash valleys, south to the northern edge of Ware

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Open, gently undulating arable farmland with clustered settlements and few roads, on a clay plateau of varying width between the valleys of the rivers Rib and Ash. Can be divided into four sub-areas: the Fanhams Plateau; the central plateau area; Westland/Wellpond Green and Braughing Friars. Arable cultivation has removed field boundaries and reduced woodland cover and the significant settlements lie within the river valleys, with isolated farms set above them on the edge of the plateau.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating upland interfluvium
- generally large-scale field size
- little woodland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- horticultural nurseries
- largest uninterrupted plateau area in south Hertfordshire
- hedgerow oaks within fields rather than in hedge line



Large scale arable plateau near Braughing (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Upland clay plateau incised by river valleys; gently undulating, rising slightly to the north

Degree of slope. 1 in 30 to 1 in 225

Altitude range. 53m to 116m

Hydrology. This poorly drained plateau has streams and ditches draining east and west into the adjoining river valleys. The Nimney Bourne valley is treated as part of the Ash Valley character area.

Land cover and land use. Arable farmland with fragmented woodland cover, with minor variations within the sub-areas. The Fanhams plateau has little woodland, with no settlements but some individual houses, isolated farms and small hamlets. There are woods on the slopes of the central plateau area and a few hamlets, with some historic houses on the eastern edge above the Ash valley. The Wellpond Green area is characterised by a collection of hamlets. Both the central and northern sub-areas also contain nurseries with glasshouses. Braughing Friars is very open, large-scale arable.

Vegetation and wildlife. The Fanhams plateau has important remnant hedgerow/green lane systems, with hazel, dogwood, spindle and ash, and little woodland (except Buckney Wood). There are some pure elm hedges, often unmanaged. Around Fanhams Hall there is a little neutral to calcareous grassland which supports cowslips. The central area is very open and has few hedges but some important woods of ash/maple/hazel/oak and old grassland/park remnants on the upper valley slopes. Blakes Bushes woodland has a fairly rich ground flora, including orchids. The Wellpond Green sub-area contains a complex of small old acid grassland/neutral grass meadows and old pits, with hornbeam woods. Ash, oak, sycamore, poplar, beech, hazel and wayfaring tree can be found in woodland and plantations, with elm, field maple, hornbeam and oak, with hazel and ash, in the hedgerows. Hedgerow trees are oak and ash. Modern hedges are mixed species, with field maple dominant. The few woods north of Westland Green are oak/ash/maple or oak/hornbeam, while chalk near the surface supports locally important habitats on field edges and among arable weeds.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

- At Thundridge there are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, a moated mound and a moated enclosure and associated remains. Near Wareside there is another SAM, the Morley Ponds moated site, with another, the motte castle of Barrow Hill, near Widford, all above but associated with the river valleys. There is no longer a distinct historic pattern to this area, except perhaps in the central plateau, towards the valley edge.
- Blakesware Manor was rebuilt in 1876-89 in red-brick neo-Tudor style and is set in extensive parkland with dense boundary tree belts, formerly a pre-1766 deer park (Blakes Ware). It extends right down to the river, with what appears to be possibly a dammed section, but is well treed.
- Wynches, south-west of Hadham Cross, is a Regency re-modelling of a 17th-century timber-framed house, set in extensive grounds, while Hadham Mill is also 17th century.

- Although originally a ford settlement, Thundridge is set on the slopes above the Rib and is the only settlement in the southern part of this area.
- The collection of hamlets around Westland Green is the only settlement of more than minimal size further north, and even this is clustered around the head of a stream feeding the Ash.
- Fanhams Hall has a listed early 19th-century authentic Japanese garden and formal English gardens, including a lake, within 11ha. of parkland

Field pattern. The huge size of most fields means that the variation in this area between regular and irregular is impossible to discern. The field pattern is much smaller locally around the isolated hamlets. Historically this is an area of common arable and pre-18th century 'organic' enclosure, with some 19th-century parliamentary enclosure.

Transport pattern. This large area contains very few roads. The A120, partly aligned along the Roman Stane Street, has been modernized and has wide verges and dense hedge planting along much of its length. It crosses this area towards its northern boundary in an east-west direction but there are no major north-south routes and much of the plateau is without roads, indicating extensive and long-held land ownerships. The minor roads are winding and slightly sunken, with variable verges - usually they are absent, occasionally very wide.

Settlements and built form. Bakers End, Newhall Green, Kettle Green, Wellpond Green, Broken Green and Westland Green: all indicate small sub-settlements or outposts of larger settlements, which in this part of the county lie on the edge of the river valleys, reflecting their ancient need for water. There are few substantial country houses or large farmhouses.

- Upp Hall, south east of Braughing, is a fine early 17th-century brick manor house with a spectacular 140 foot long brick barn with blue diaperwork.
- Fanhams Hall, a mile north of Ware, is a converted Queen Anne house, now a vast neo-Tudor building. It was remodelled at the turn of the 20th century, when a lodge was added at the end of the approach drive

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

WARESIDE - BRAUGHING UPLANDS - Area 89

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are few views into this area, due to its elevation, but from within there are extensive views over the neighbouring valleys to areas beyond. The scale of landscape elements is large, possibly the largest within south Hertfordshire and it is a very open landscape. It is also a simple, coherent, and productive landscape, ancient and tranquil, largely untouched by the 21st century, apart from the loss of field boundaries. Minor local variations in the balance of arable to woodland, or comparative hedgerow cover, serve to distinguish sub-areas.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is possibly the single largest landscape character unit in south Hertfordshire, and extends north over the boundary with the A120. It is rare by virtue of its simplicity and large scale. Despite the impact of late 20th century arable intensification, the hamlets retain their character and provide a historic focus.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are high local impacts from features outside the area, such as phone masts, transmitting stations and the water tower on the M11. The chief impact throughout the area (least on the Fanhams plateau) is the loss of hedges and the impact this has on scale.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: none
 Frequency/density of: footpaths, bridleways, waymarked routes (in north) - widespread in northern part, absent south of Wellpond Green

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is not generally regarded as distinctive (E) but includes particular elements that are valued, such as the park at Fanhams and some of the woods (D)

'The many scattered hamlets and farms in Braughing and Standon parishes are the result of localised assarting undertaken from two large nucleated villages, which were the original centres of settlement. What is fascinating is that so many of these later settlement sites are today so inaccessible...Braughing and Standen are full of roads to nowhere' (Munby, L., The Landscape of Hertfordshire, Hodder and Stoughton, (1977)).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Fanhams Hall is Grade II listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact/interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- this is one of the few areas in which moderation of the distinctiveness of sub-areas could be regarded as positive enhancement. In the northern part of this area in particular, arable intensification has degraded the local landscape by removing all vertical features and the landform is insufficiently varied to mitigate these losses. An emphasis on hedgerow replacement, with hedgerow trees, and the planting of small woodlands in appropriate historic locations, would do much to make this area less bleak.
- replant/restore historic hedgerows, using species appropriate to the sub-area, to retain some local distinctiveness.
- plant woodlands on the central plateau, of a species mix and scale that echoes Blakes Bushes, etc.
- protect and enhance the important road verges of Stane Street and around Albury End
- encourage the planting of new woodland around existing woodland, to protect it and increase biodiversity. Use only locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible
- ensure that new woodland planting reflects historic land use patterns, following historic woodland or field boundary patterns where possible and ensuring that historic artefacts, such as ditches and banks, are not destroyed
- encourage the planting of hedgerow oaks wherever woodland planting would be inappropriate
- wherever the loss of ponds is unavoidable, ensure that replacement ponds of at least equivalent nature conservation potential are created
- encourage a reversion of arable to grassland and management of grassland sites to maximise their biodiversity potential
- encourage the management of woodland to promote age diversity and a species-rich ground flora. Management strategies may be the maintenance of high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards or wood pasture.
- encourage the dissemination of information about the historic and ecological value of veteran and parkland trees

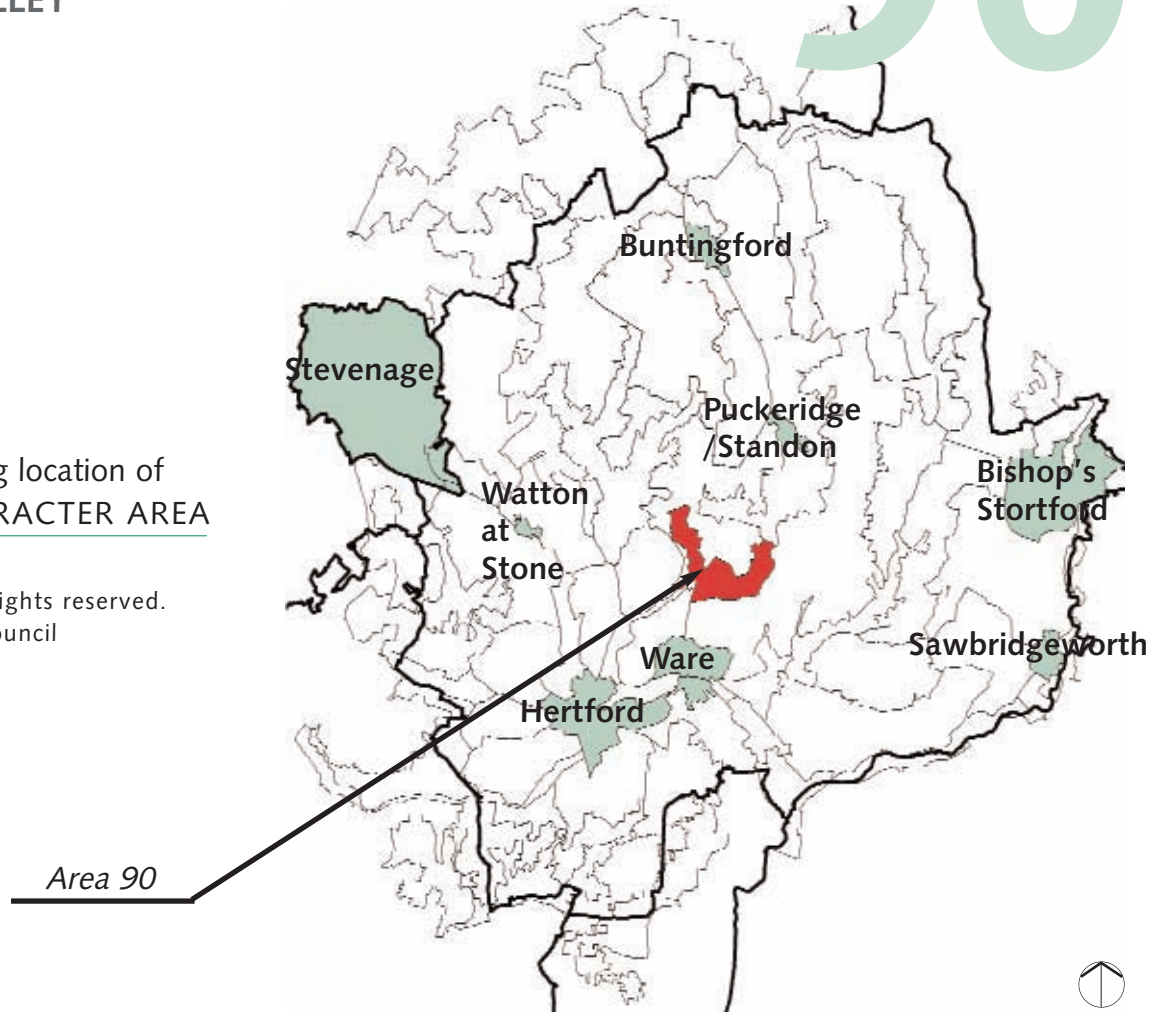


North of Wareside
fragmented field boundary (P. Shears)

MIDDLE RIB VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

The Rib Valley between Thundridge and Barwick Ford

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Short, steep valley slopes with a V-shaped valley floor and little wetland, with woodland on the steepest slopes. Historic Youngsbury lies on the north bank

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating narrow valley landform
- arable production
- little woodland except Sawtrees Wood
- hamlets and isolated farmhouses - no significant settlements other than Wadesmill/Thundridge
- similarity of opposing valley slopes
- tributary valleys (The Bourne, Barwick Tributary) of similar scale and character to main river valley

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Youngsbury's historic landscape



TimberHall, Cold Christmas (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Stoneless clayey calcareous soils over river alluvium on the valley floor, with deep well-drained loamy soils over till (glacial drift) on the valley slopes (Melford series).

Topography. Steep valley slopes above narrow valley floor, especially between Youngsbury and Thundridge; elsewhere more open valley with less obvious floor

Degree of slope. 1 in 6 on the steepest slopes; elsewhere 1 in 11 to 1 in 22. The fall of the river through this area is 1 in 470.

Altitude range. 55m to 90m

Hydrology. The Bourne flows into the Rib at Wadesmill from the north and the Barwick tributary flows eastwards to Barwick Ford. The Rib is classified by the Environment Agency (EA) as a salmonid river and supports exceptionally diverse groups of invertebrates, ranking in the top 5-10% nationally.

Land cover and land use. Arable cultivation throughout, with indigenous woodland on the steepest slopes and very small amounts of pasture

Vegetation and wildlife. On the valley floor there is only discontinuous streamside ground flora and very little river valley grassland. The valley slopes are covered with arable fields, except on the steepest slopes, where small woodland blocks link to the plateau above and there are some important old hedge complexes, within which hazel is the dominant species. Woodland species include hornbeam with elm, hazel and holly. The hanging woods at Sawtrees Wood have vestiges of dry grassland on their southern side. There are a few pure elm hedges, or mixed hedges of holly, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple and elder, occasionally pure hawthorn, but many are fragmented or lost. Youngsbury Park is a key parkland site in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, with some acid grassland and important old oak and beech.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is a significant settlement at Thundridge/Wadesmill, a fording point on the river and a staging point on the A10. Elsewhere any previous contrast between pastoral cultivation on the valley floor and arable cultivation on the slopes has been lost and little of the former field pattern remains.

- Youngsbury consists of an 18th-century park and woodland with 4 hectares of garden around the house, the front part of which is dated 1745, the back early 19th century, with 18th-century stables. There are extensive 16th to 18th-century walled kitchen gardens, an arboretum, an icehouse and tumuli and Roman barrows within the grounds, which extend to the river Rib. Capability Brown's involvement included widening the river and creating two islands, designing a ha ha and placing small groups of trees in open parkland. Nineteenth-century development of the kitchen garden was re-created in the late 20th century, with notable mixed borders. There is a moat and church in a bend of the river on the southern edge of the parkland.

Field pattern. Medium irregular with few hedgerows and some very large fields

Transport pattern. One narrow lane winds its way along the valley slope, below the plateau edge, on the south of the river between Thundridge and Barwick Ford, except at the steepest point around Sawtrees Wood. There are no other roads in this area, but many footpaths and waymarked routes.

Settlements and built form. Thundridge and Wadesmill were staging points on the old A10 and still have several 'coaching inns'. Most of the housing, though, dates from the late 18th and 19th centuries.

- Fabdens is a late medieval hall-house with exposed studding and several original doorways.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Bisgrove, R., *The Gardens of Britain*, 3, (1978).

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

Stroud, D., *Capability Brown*, (1975).

English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens: Hertfordshire*.

MIDDLE RIB VALLEY - Area 90

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Within the area there are extensive views from the upper slopes, while at pinch points within the valley there are few views and a sense of confinement.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The remoteness and tranquillity of this area are now rare in Hertfordshire.

VISUAL IMPACT

This is a remote and tranquil rural area, but arable cultivation has blurred the distinction between the river valley and its slopes. There is no impact from built development or transport.

ACCESSIBILITY

Widespread footpaths in the western and central parts of this area, linking through to those in other areas; little in the eastern part.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This is a distinctive and valued landscape (C)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

The Rib valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its wetlands and woodlands
Youngsbury is Grade II* listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: continuous
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- intensive agricultural practices prevent the establishment of an ecological and landscape corridor along the Rib, which would provide food, cover and a migratory route for wildlife. Encourage landowners to establish buffer zones along the watercourses to prevent run-off from herbicides, pesticides and fertilizer and to provide wildlife havens. Where possible, link these buffer zones to the wider landscape via hedges, field margins or woodland
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available.
- use ancient wood, hedge and field boundaries, including banks and ditches, to identify the most appropriate location for woodland expansion on the steeper valley slopes
- use only indigenous species of local provenance wherever possible.
- encourage reversion from arable use to pasture and grassland within the river valley, while retaining arable cultivation on the upper slopes to reinforce this area's distinctiveness
- encourage landowners and developers to retain and increase ponds and wetland areas to enhance their visual and wildlife functions.
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- ensure that local inhabitants are aware of the BAP objective of creating a 'necklace' of inter-connected wetland habitats along the river valley
- encourage the planting of wetland species along the watercourses, such as willow and black poplar
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value
- encourage new woodland planting and management to maintain age diversity and a species-rich ground flora.
- when planting within parklands, care should be taken to respect the historic context of existing features and their form and character. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- hard landscaping details such as steps, balustrades, pond copings, statuary and urns should be conserved. Replacements should be in facsimile and in natural materials. Gazebos, temples, follies, grottoes, obelisks, park bridges, ice houses, terraces, ha-has, boundary walls, gates and gate piers should contribute to the planned landscape and its setting. Replacement, renovated or new features should be architect designed and in keeping with their original setting
- discourage the ploughing of grasslands within parkland
- initiate discussion on public access to woodland areas on fringes of the estate for informal recreation

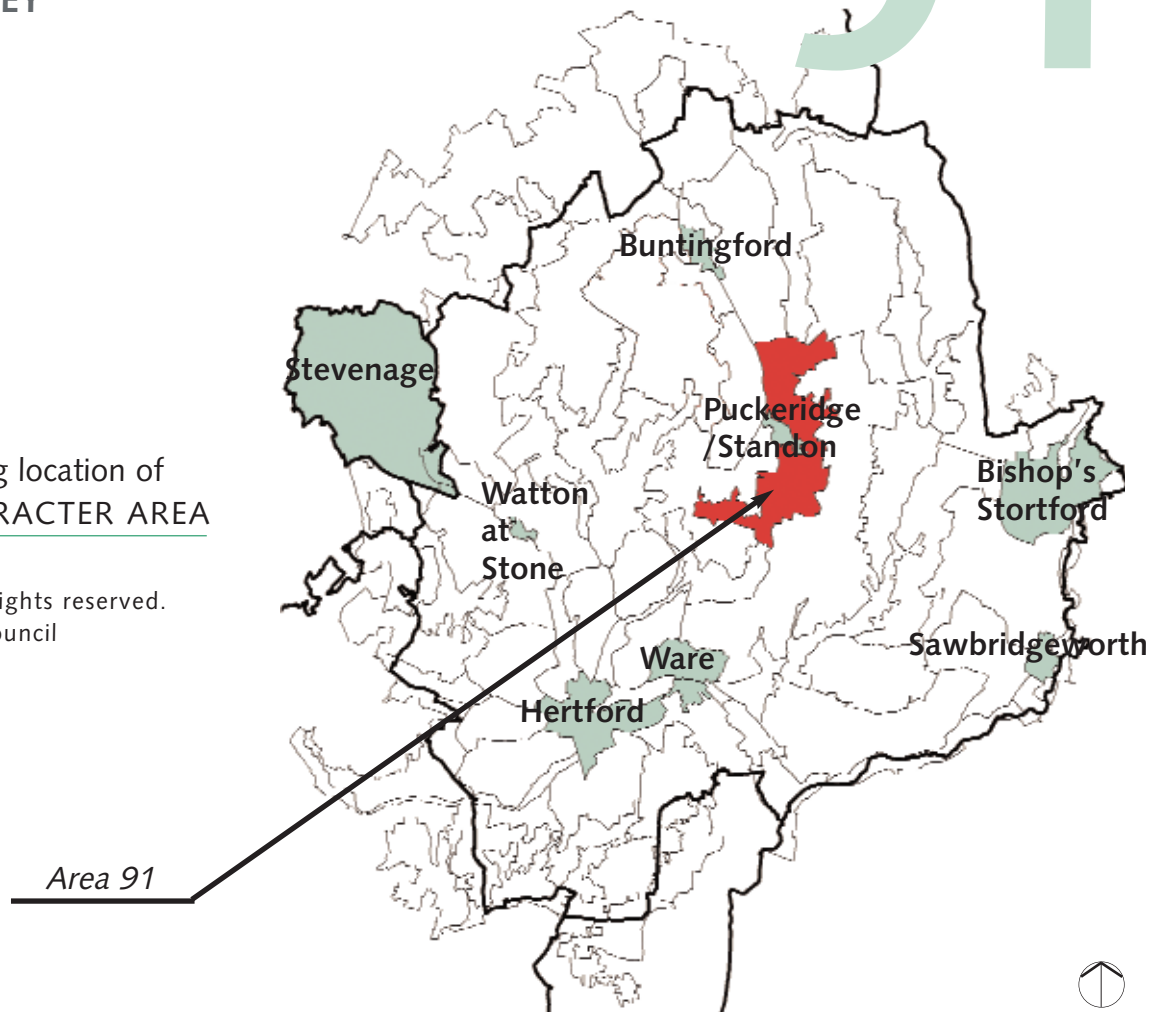


Timber Hall, Cold Christmas
(HCC Landscape Unit)

UPPER RIB VALLEY

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

The Rib Valley and slopes between Barwick Ford and Braughing

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Variable valley landform, within which watercourses are not a significant feature, opening out to a broader undulating arable valley. Between Barwick Ford and The Lordship and again around Braughing it is an undulating arable valley, while north and south of Standon it is much narrower. The ancient settlements on the valley slopes are a notable local feature.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating valley landform, generally quite open but narrowing towards Standon

- arable production
- tributary valleys (Braughing Warren Bourne and Braughing Bourne) of similar scale and character to main river valley
- extensive woodland (Plashes Wood)
- hamlets and isolated farmhouses, with significant ancient settlements at Standon, Puckeridge and Braughing
- similarity of opposing valley slopes

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Standon and Braughing settlements
- hedgerow oaks set within fields rather than in hedge
- herbicide spray marks out the watercourse



Rib Valley south of Standon. Watercourse marked only by herbicide (P. Shears)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep well-drained loamy soils over till (glacial drift) on the lower valley slopes (Melford series), overlaid with slowly permeable calcareous clay soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Steep valley slopes above narrow valley floor (Standon to The Lordship), elsewhere open valley with no obvious floor

Degree of slope. 1 in 8 to 1 in 30; river fall between Standon and Barwick Ford is 1 in 5000

Altitude range. 60m to 100m

Hydrology. The Rib is classified by the Environment Agency (EA) as a salmonid river and supports exceptionally diverse groups of invertebrates, ranking in the top 5-10% nationally. It is very meandering in this area, especially between Latchford and Standon, but is a significant feature in the villages of Braughing and Green End. In its upper reaches Braughing Bourne and the river Quin enter from the east. Low flows in the 1990s resulted in sections of dry riverbed, with consequent impact on water quality, but in mid 2000 the river Quin was a running shallow watercourse.

Land cover and land use. Arable cultivation throughout, with indigenous woodland on the steepest slopes and very small amounts of pasture

Vegetation and wildlife. There are some important old grasslands on the alluvial floodplain and on the gravel terraces at Standon Lordship. Apart from these there is little wetland vegetation and the watercourse is scarcely noticeable. There is some pasture in the valley bottom above Braughing, with woodland, giving a sense of enclosure, and a young wetland plantation by the fishing lake below The Lordship. Veteran oaks have been recorded at Hamelsmead. The valley slopes are covered with arable fields with a few fragmented hedgerows of pure elm or mixed holly, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple and elder, occasionally pure hawthorn. Bracken is widespread on the upper slopes. Standon Lordship supports the last significant fen habitat in the Rib valley.

Plashes Wood, between Colliers End and Latchford, is designated SSSI for the richness and diversity of its ancient woodland and is among the most important as well as largest woods in this part of the county (72 ha). The rich ground flora reflects the local variation in soil types (mixed acidic/calcareous) and good management in the past. It contains chiefly oak/hornbeam coppice with standards, with ash and beech, over bluebells and dog's mercury. It also has oak, ash, beech and silver birch over hazel, elder and blackthorn, as well as some coniferous plantation, marshy clearings and ponds.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Braughing and Standon are significant ancient settlements within the valley, but beyond their boundaries arable cultivation prevails and little of the former field pattern remains. Braughing was an important Belgic and Roman settlement and there is a cluster of six Scheduled Ancient Monuments, representing the remains of the Roman town, near the railway station south west of the present village. The earliest record of a deer park at Standon Lordship is 1240.

Field pattern. Medium irregular with few hedgerows and some very large fields. Degraded by loss of hedge boundaries, although hedges are often retained along roadsides.

Transport pattern. One narrow lane without verges winds its way along the valley slope between Barwick Ford and Standon, while the B 1368 runs northward through Green End from its junction with the A10(T) near the site of a Roman town. Standon and Puckeridge lie on the A120, a fast, modern road with wide verges and modern amenity planting.

Settlements and built form

- Puckeridge has benefited from a bypass; the apparently late Georgian vernacular facades of many of its buildings conceal much earlier structures behind, including medieval hall houses. It is linked via 20th-century housing to :
- Standon, described in Pevsner as '*a very pretty village, with houses nicely grouped between the church and the Endowed School to the south ...a long two-storey house with a 16th century timber frame with brick-nogging infill.*'
- Braughing has a mainly 15th-century church, a handsome 16th-century cottage with a pargetted upper floor and a square of 17th-century houses. The river here is no more than a stream and is accessible only by footpath.
- The Lordship includes the remains of an early Tudor mansion and is set picturesquely in a meander of the river.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, p.54.
 English Nature *Natural Area Profile: East Anglian Plain*.
 HCC data on parks and gardens.
 English Nature SSSI notification.

UPPER RIB VALLEY - Area 91

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This is an area in which historic continuity is rather masked by 20th-century development but retains its integrity, although its historic importance is not readily perceived in the wider landscape, rather retained in the settlements. It is generally quite open, with extensive views within the area, although the landform provides a sense of containment within much of the area. It is very tranquil away from the A120.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Plashes Wood is rare by virtue of the diversity of its vegetation and is unusually large for this area. The settlements indicate the historic value of this area, which is not reflected in its landscape features.

VISUAL IMPACT

Distinctive features: The Lordship set in a large meander of the river. Loss of internal field boundaries has degraded the visual unity of this area.

ACCESSIBILITY

Quite good - central footpath (Harcamlow Way) along river valley in the main, plus many lateral routes.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

All the locations that include fords, and the stretches of valley in between, are noted for their distinctiveness, alongside mention of historic and cultural associations, making the Rib valley as a whole one of the most valued landscapes in the district. (B)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI and Ancient Woodland: Plashes Wood
The Rib valley is recognised as a High Biodiversity Area (HBA) for its wetlands and woodlands

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- promote the development of natural woodland around large blocks of ancient woodland and ensure that developers and landowners are aware of this BAP objective
- intensive agricultural practices prevent the establishment of an ecological and landscape corridor along the Rib, which would provide food, cover and a migratory route for wildlife. Encourage landowners to establish buffer zones along the watercourses to prevent run-off from herbicides, pesticides and fertilizer and to provide wildlife havens. Where possible, link these buffer zones to the wider landscape via hedges, field margins or woodland
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- use ancient wood, hedge and field boundaries, including banks and ditches, to identify the most appropriate location for woodland expansion on the steeper valley slopes
- use only indigenous species of local provenance wherever possible
- encourage reversion from arable use to pasture and grassland within the river valley, while retaining arable cultivation on the upper slopes to reinforce this area's distinctiveness
- encourage landowners and developers to retain and increase ponds and wetland areas to enhance their visual and wildlife functions
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- ensure that local inhabitants are aware of the BAP objective of creating a 'necklace' of inter-connected wetland habitats along the river valley
- encourage the planting of wetland species along the watercourses, such as willow and black poplar
- encourage management of the planting along the A120 to promote locally indigenous species

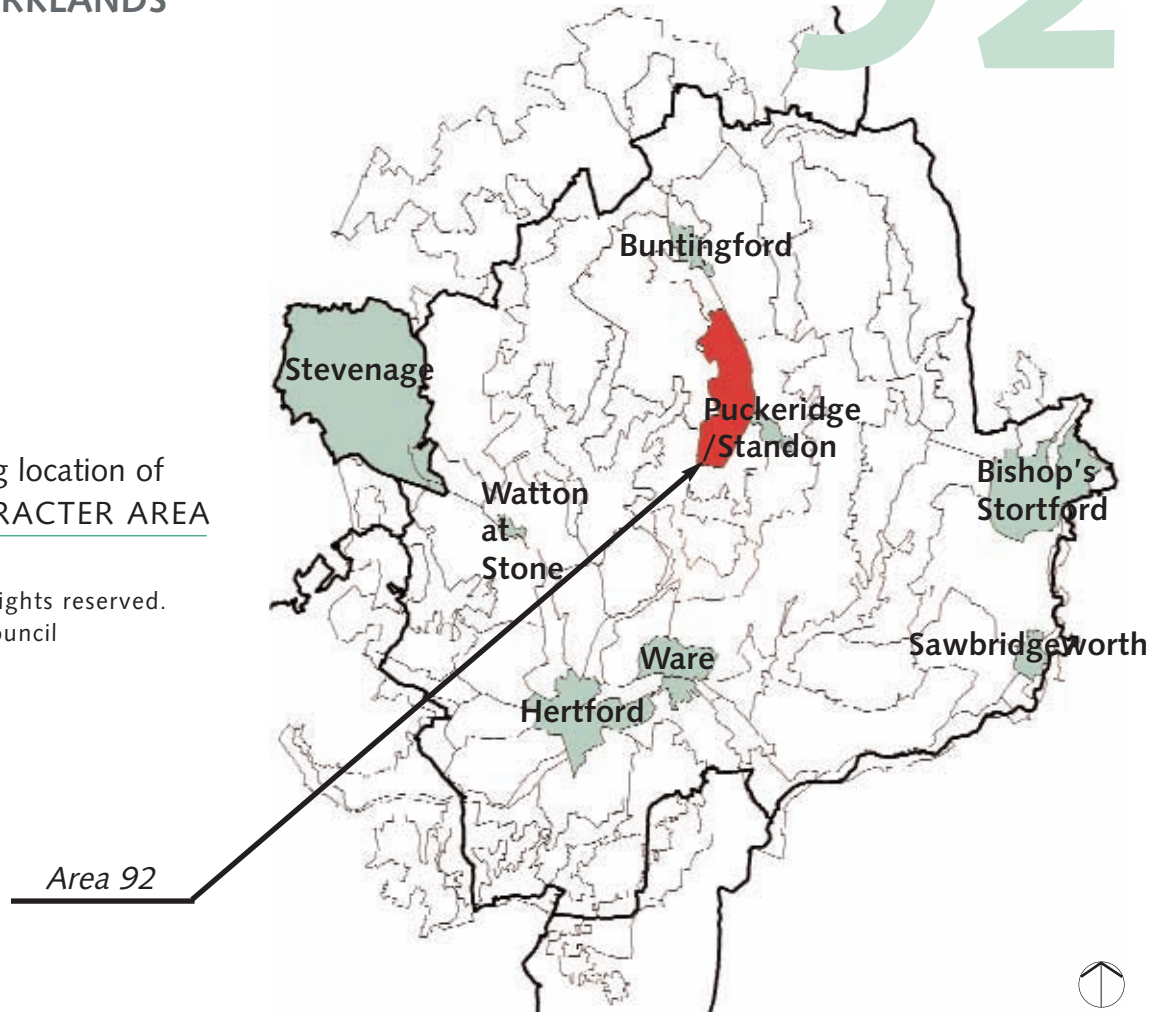


Standon Village
(P. Shears)

PUCKERIDGE PARKLANDS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Linear belt to west of A10 and river Rib, north and south of Puckeridge

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Group of disturbed parklands along the A10 Roman road, on the upper slopes of the Rib Valley.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating east-facing slope
- former parkland, disturbed by current land use, with no settlements

- well wooded
- estate arable farmland with isolated farms
- mature parkland trees

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- transmitting station and water tower
- St Edmunds College - buildings, parkland and playing fields
- Hamels Park - hotel, golf course and corporate entertainment
- A10 as boundary - parkland overrides valley topography



Estate farmland on edge of Hamels Park (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loams and clays on drift over Tertiary clay (Wickham 4 series).

Topography. Upper valley slopes

Degree of slope. 1 in 30

Altitude range. 75m to 127m

Hydrology. Several streams and ditches flow eastwards into the Rib, including two Puckeridge Tributaries

Land cover and land use. Wooded estate farmland and parkland. Golf course within Hamels Park. Arable and pasture.

Vegetation and wildlife. Extensive woodland boundary plantings, with beech, coppiced hornbeam, ash, oak, hawthorn and some conifers. Kings Wood is the best example within the area of oak/ash/maple and hornbeam woodland on de-calcified boulder clay; the Hamels woodlands are mainly plantation. There is some old neutral grassland, mostly improved, and many hedges of varying ages, some with very large hedgerow oaks, especially around Mentley Lane. Species include willow, hawthorn, dogwood, elm and hazel and there are some modern mixed hedges. A veteran tree survey of Hamels Park has been undertaken but the findings are not currently (2000) available.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area is dominated by the three parklands of Coles Park, Hamels Park and St Edmunds College, all bounded by the A10 to the east.

- St Edmunds College is the successor to the famous Catholic English College at Douai, in Flanders, and moved to Old Hall Green in 1759, having been established at The Lordship ten years before. It is set within parkland which slopes westwards from the A10 and has many mature parkland trees, mainly oaks
- The original house and park at Hamels date from the end of the 16th century and appear as a significant landscape on all maps from 1695 (Oliver's county map) onwards. The earliest record of a deer park here is 1695. Elements of the earlier landscape remain within this essentially late-18th century landscape, including the remnants of a canal (1719) and an icehouse (1729). Pre-park landscape features include hollow-ways of medieval roads, ancient hedgebanks and a small area of ridge and furrow. The present day Park dates from circa 1780 including perimeter tree belts, a naturalised pond and specimen trees. The ha-ha and current gardens around the house date from the early 19th-century. The current golf course fits reasonably with the Park Land (Rowe, 1997). But the historic value of the Park is being eroded by inappropriate planting and some re-modelling to greens.
- Coles Park house was built c 1790, rebuilt in 1847 and demolished in the 1950s. It was described in 1853 as standing in a park of '240 acres of fertile ground with some fine timber and flourishing plantations. The garden is laid out after the Italian fashion'. Several buildings have been converted to houses and parts of the formal gardens survive. The attractive park landscape survives more or less intact - pasture (sheep and cattle) with single mature trees, some immature replacements and surrounding woodlands. Preserved within the park are hollow-ways marking the course of former roads (shown on Drury and Andrews map of 1766) and carriageways to the house which fell out of use at Inclosure in 1819.

Field pattern. On the arable farmland around the parklands field sizes tend to be quite small, well hedged and semi-regular in form.

Transport pattern. The dominant feature in this area is the A10, here still following the route of the Roman road. From this road narrow winding lanes run off to the west on the boundaries of the parkland estates through treed hedgerows. Verges are variable, often very wide.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements in this area, only mansions and isolated farms, which are often 17th century or earlier.

- The Dower House of Coles Park is a red brick Georgian building with walled gardens, near the listed 19th-century farmhouse and associated buildings at Knights Hill Farm. The English Heritage listing states that the park contains a valuable assemblage of historic landscape, archeological features and buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, including an icehouse beneath the pasture in the park.
- The current house at Hamels is set in pleasure grounds laid out in the mid-19th century and separated from the park by a ha ha. There are mature specimens of cedar, redwood, horse chestnut and London plane and a late 18th-century walled garden, gardener's bothy and lodges, all designed by Sir John Soane.
- St Edmunds College. A brick house of 1630 is still in use but a new college of stock brick was built in 1795-99, fifteen bays wide and three storeys high, and Pugin designed a chapel for it in 1845

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

Master's thesis (University of Cambridge) 1997 by Anne Rowe entitled 'Hamels: The Evolution of a Hertfordshire Country House and its Landscape'.

J B Burke, *Visitation of Seats* Vol. II, 1853, Local Studies Library H728.82.

PUCKERIDGE PARKLANDS - Area 92

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The parkland overlay lends quite a large-scale impression to what is essentially a medium-scale arable landscape. Its potential tranquillity is damaged by constant traffic on the A10 but is widespread away from this major transport route. The area is partly visible from the A10, at points where there is little intervening vegetation, but from elsewhere, especially from the west, there are very limited views due to the extensive boundary plantations.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The pattern of this area, with the junction of the parklands with the A10, is unusual. The parklands are important in landscape history terms, and the buildings at St Edmund's College are historically important.

VISUAL IMPACT

The main visual impact in this area is the road traffic on the A10. There are no settlements or other development within the area, to which the parkland features and old farmhouses bring an air of stability and history. Between Hamels Park and Coles Park there is a transmitting station, which is visible over a wide area.

ACCESSIBILITY

Two footpaths run alongside the Puckeridge tributaries, between the parklands, but there is no other public access

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The distinctive parkland and Roman features in this area seem to be valued (D)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Both parklands are listed in HCC data on historic parks and gardens

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: intact
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

- encourage the replacement of softwoods in plantations with indigenous native deciduous communities and management to re-establish a species-rich ground flora
- use ancient wood, hedge and field boundaries, including banks and ditches, to identify the most appropriate location for woodland expansion
- use only indigenous species of local provenance wherever possible
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value
- encourage new planting to maintain age diversity. Landscape improvements should respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parklands and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- hard landscaping details such as steps, balustrades, pond copings, statuary and urns should be conserved. Replacements should be in facsimile and in natural materials. Gazebos, temples, follies, grottoes, obelisks, park bridges, ice houses, terraces, ha-has, boundary walls, gates and gate piers should contribute to the planned landscape and its setting. Replacement, renovated or new features should be architect designed and in keeping with their original setting
- encourage reversion from arable use to pasture and grassland
- discourage the ploughing of grasslands within parkland
- encourage landowners and developers to retain and increase ponds and wetland areas to enhance their visual and wildlife functions
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- initiate discussion on public access to woodland areas on fringes of the estate for informal recreation
- any design proposals for a bypass of the A10 should reflect the historic importance of this area, its landscape character and the traditional field pattern. Amenity planting along a new road which did not follow the 'grain' of the landscape would be unacceptable. New planting should use locally indigenous trees and shrubs and reflect planting mixes found locally.



Transmitting station near Hamels Park
(HCC Landscape Unit)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

Distinctive valley landform from Hadham Cross north to Little Hadham

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Marked valley formation with flat valley floor, within which the river Ash is marked only by linear wetland vegetation rather than as a visible watercourse. It is edged by steep undulating slopes, some densely vegetated, some in arable cultivation, with little pasture. It is characterised chiefly by ancient settlements with historic houses: Much Hadham and Little Hadham, which merit sub-areas.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- extensive linear settlements derived from crossing points on the river
- deep, wide, distinctive river valley with notable ancient settlements at crossing points
- linear feature running north-south with few tributary streams
- watercourse only noticeable from associated wetland trees

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- settlements



Hadham Valley Lordship Bridgefoot Farm (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Upland clay plateau incised by river valleys; gently undulating, rising slightly to the north

Degree of slope. 1 in 30 to 1 in 225

Altitude range. 53m to 116m

Hydrology. This poorly drained plateau has streams and ditches draining east and west into the adjoining river valleys. The Nimney Bourne valley is treated as part of the Ash Valley character area.

Land cover and land use. Arable farmland with fragmented woodland cover, with minor variations within the sub-areas. The Fanhams plateau has little woodland, with no settlements but some individual houses, isolated farms and small hamlets. There are woods on the slopes of the central plateau area and a few hamlets, with some historic houses on the eastern edge above the Ash valley. The Wellpond Green area is characterised by a collection of hamlets. Both the central and northern sub-areas also contain nurseries with glasshouses. Braughing Friars is very open, large-scale arable.

Vegetation and wildlife. The Fanhams plateau has important remnant hedgerow/green lane systems, with hazel, dogwood, spindle and ash, and little woodland (except Buckney Wood). There are some pure elm hedges, often unmanaged. Around Fanhams Hall there is a little neutral to calcareous grassland which supports cowslips. The central area is very open and has few hedges but some important woods of ash/maple/hazel/oak and old grassland/park remnants on the upper valley slopes. Blakes Bushes woodland has a fairly rich ground flora, including orchids. The Wellpond Green sub-area contains a complex of small old acid grassland/neutral grass meadows and old pits, with hornbeam woods. Ash, oak, sycamore, poplar, beech, hazel and wayfaring tree can be found in woodland and plantations, with elm, field maple, hornbeam and oak, with hazel and ash, in the hedgerows. Hedgerow trees are oak and ash. Modern hedges are mixed species, with field maple dominant. The few woods north of Westland Green are oak/ash/maple or oak/hornbeam, while chalk near the surface supports locally important habitats on field edges and among arable weeds.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

- At Thundridge there are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, a moated mound and a moated enclosure and associated remains. Near Wareside there is another SAM, the Morley Ponds moated site, with another, the motte castle of Barrow Hill, near Widford, all above but associated with the river valleys. There is no longer a distinct historic pattern to this area, except perhaps in the central plateau, towards the valley edge.
- Blakesware Manor was rebuilt in 1876-89 in red-brick neo-Tudor style and is set in extensive parkland with dense boundary tree belts, formerly a pre-1766 deer park (Blakes Ware). It extends right down to the river, with what appears to be possibly a dammed section, but is well treed.
- Wynches, south-west of Hadham Cross, is a Regency re-modelling of a 17th-century timber-framed house, set in extensive grounds, while Hadham Mill is also 17th century.

- Although originally a ford settlement, Thundridge is set on the slopes above the Rib and is the only settlement in the southern part of this area.
- The collection of hamlets around Westland Green is the only settlement of more than minimal size further north, and even this is clustered around the head of a stream feeding the Ash.
- Fanhams Hall has a listed early 19th-century authentic Japanese garden and formal English gardens, including a lake, within 11ha. of parkland

Field pattern. The huge size of most fields means that the variation in this area between regular and irregular is impossible to discern. The field pattern is much smaller locally around the isolated hamlets. Historically this is an area of common arable and pre-18th century 'organic' enclosure, with some 19th-century parliamentary enclosure.

Transport pattern. This large area contains very few roads. The A120, partly aligned along the Roman Stane Street, has been modernized and has wide verges and dense hedge planting along much of its length. It crosses this area towards its northern boundary in an east-west direction but there are no major north-south routes and much of the plateau is without roads, indicating extensive and long-held land ownerships. The minor roads are winding and slightly sunken, with variable verges - usually they are absent, occasionally very wide.

Settlements and built form. Bakers End, Newhall Green, Kettle Green, Wellpond Green, Broken Green and Westland Green: all indicate small sub-settlements or outposts of larger settlements, which in this part of the county lie on the edge of the river valleys, reflecting their ancient need for water. There are few substantial country houses or large farmhouses.

- Upp Hall, south east of Braughing, is a fine early 17th-century brick manor house with a spectacular 140 foot long brick barn with blue diaperwork.
- Fanhams Hall, a mile north of Ware, is a converted Queen Anne house, now a vast neo-Tudor building. It was remodelled at the turn of the 20th century, when a lodge was added at the end of the approach drive

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).
English Heritage *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*.

HADHAMS VALLEY - Area 93

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are few views into this area, due to its elevation, but from within there are extensive views over the neighbouring valleys to areas beyond. The scale of landscape elements is large, possibly the largest within south Hertfordshire and it is a very open landscape. It is also a simple, coherent, and productive landscape, ancient and tranquil, largely untouched by the 21st century, apart from the loss of field boundaries. Minor local variations in the balance of arable to woodland, or comparative hedgerow cover, serve to distinguish sub-areas.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is possibly the single largest landscape character unit in south Hertfordshire, and extends north over the boundary with the A120. It is rare by virtue of its simplicity and large scale. Despite the impact of late 20th century arable intensification, the hamlets retain their character and provide a historic focus.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are high local impacts from features outside the area, such as phone masts, transmitting stations and the water tower on the M11. The chief impact throughout the area (least on the Fanhams plateau) is the loss of hedges and the impact this has on scale.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses: none
 Frequency/density of: footpaths, bridleways, waymarked routes (in north) - widespread in northern part, absent south of Wellpond Green

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is not generally regarded as distinctive (E) but includes particular elements that are valued, such as the park at Fanhams and some of the woods (D)

'The many scattered hamlets and farms in Braughing and Standon parishes are the result of localised assarting undertaken from two large nucleated villages, which were the original centres of settlement. What is fascinating is that so many of these later settlement sites are today so inaccessible...Braughing and Standen are full of roads to nowhere' (Munby, L., The Landscape of Hertfordshire, Hodder and Stoughton, (1977)).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Fanhams Hall is Grade II listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact/interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

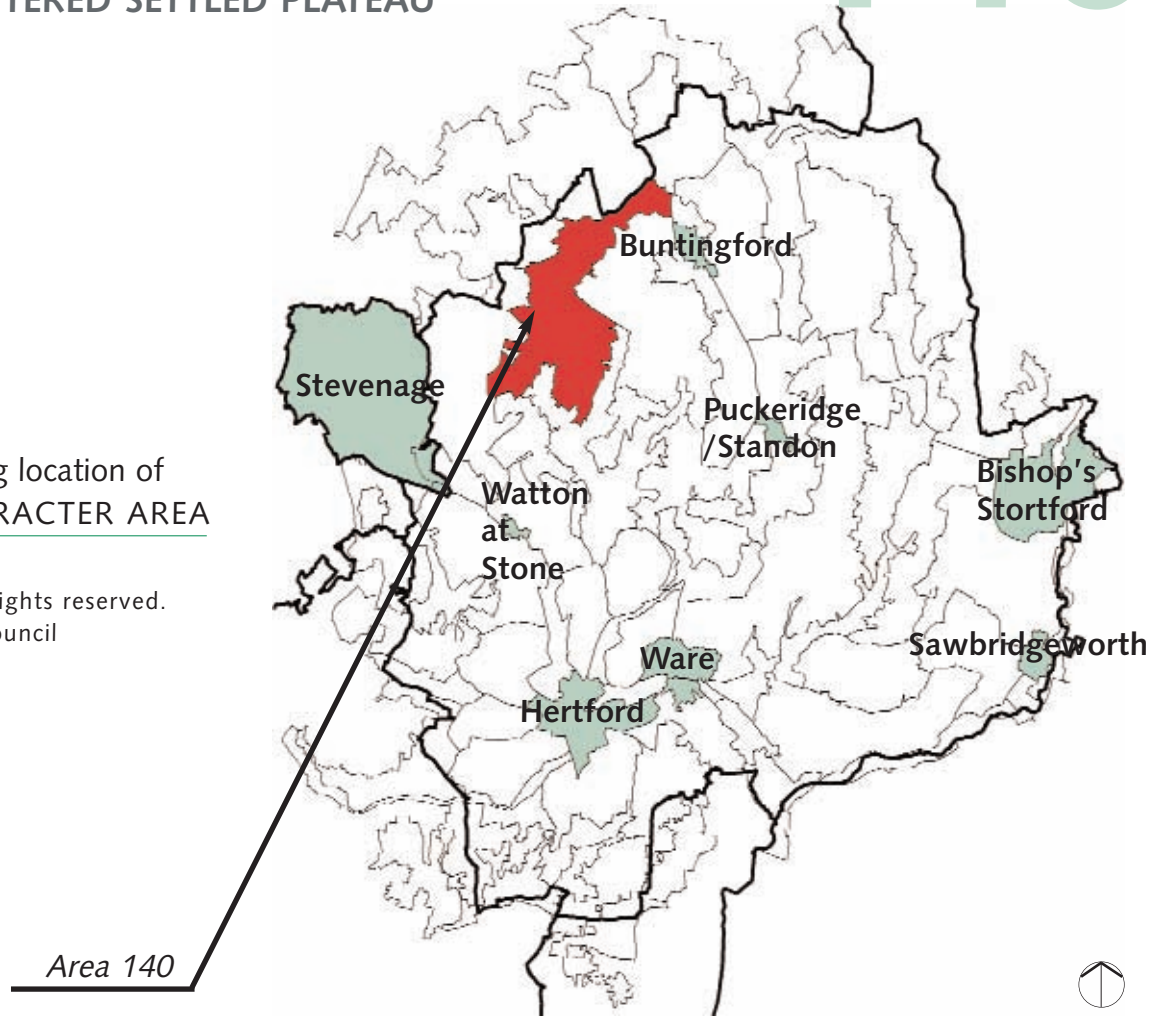
- this is one of the few areas in which moderation of the distinctiveness of sub-areas could be regarded as positive enhancement. In the northern part of this area in particular, arable intensification has degraded the local landscape by removing all vertical features and the landform is insufficiently varied to mitigate these losses. An emphasis on hedgerow replacement, with hedgerow trees, and the planting of small woodlands in appropriate historic locations, would do much to make this area less bleak.
- replant/restore historic hedgerows, using species appropriate to the sub-area, to retain some local distinctiveness.
- plant woodlands on the central plateau, of a species mix and scale that echoes Blakes Bushes, etc.
- protect and enhance the important road verges of Stane Street and around Albury End
- encourage the planting of new woodland around existing woodland, to protect it and increase biodiversity. Use only locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible
- ensure that new woodland planting reflects historic land use patterns, following historic woodland or field boundary patterns where possible and ensuring that historic artefacts, such as ditches and banks, are not destroyed
- encourage the planting of hedgerow oaks wherever woodland planting would be inappropriate
- wherever the loss of ponds is unavoidable, ensure that replacement ponds of at least equivalent nature conservation potential are created
- encourage a reversion of arable to grassland and management of grassland sites to maximise their biodiversity potential
- encourage the management of woodland to promote age diversity and a species-rich ground flora. Management strategies may be the maintenance of high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards or wood pasture.
- encourage the dissemination of information about the historic and ecological value of veteran and parkland trees



North of Wareside
fragmented field boundary (P. Shears)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

The area is located on the elevated plateau between the valleys of the River Beane to the west and the more open arable plateau to the east. It stretches from Cottered in the north to Wood End and Walkern Hall in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The character area comprises a settled plateau landscape with a strong sense of historic continuity, demonstrated in the relatively complete field patterns, mixed agriculture and the dispersed and widespread settlement. There is a good intact network of mixed species hedged field boundaries with numerous field trees. Woodlands are generally small but are dispersed throughout the area helping to reduce the overall scale. There is a good range of vernacular buildings within villages, hamlets and as isolated individual properties. Small commons and parklands also add to the varied pattern and richness of the landscape. This is a tranquil and traditional landscape with few detractors.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- dispersed settlement pattern
- strong sense of historic continuity in structure
- range of field sizes including many smaller fields around settlements
- strong hedgerow pattern including mature trees
- mixed land use with arable and range of pasture for horses, sheep and cattle
- organic winding lanes with few direct connections across the plateau, (except for A507)
- village greens/commons
- wide range of vernacular domestic buildings
- moderate woodland cover, particularly to west
- widespread rights of way network
- tranquil area
- minimal visual detractors

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Ardeley Green - model estate cottages to the village green
- Ardeley Bury Hall and park
- ponds associated with settlements
- Moor Green
- Back Lane - linear ancient Roman Road and trackway
- parish churches at Ardeley and Cottered
- Cromer Windmill
- Throcking water tower

Moor Green (HCC Landscape Unit)

ARDELEY & COTTERED SETTLED PLATEAU - Area 140
PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The plateau is dominated by calcareous boulder clay overlying the solid chalk of the escarpment dip slope. However around Ardeley and Cottered the underlying clay-with-flints and some peri-glacial gravels and chalk appear at the surface. Chalk also outcrops west of Bassus Green, and east of Wood End. The soils are typically slowly permeable and a mix of calcareous clayey and non-calcareous clayey with a slight risk of water erosion, (Hanslope association). Locally the peri-glacial gravels are more freely-drained.

Topography. The plateau gently undulates from north to south. There is a marked break of slope to the south and west where the plateau meets with the Beane valley and its associated tributaries.

Degree of slope. The main plateau falls by about 1 in 400, but there are local undulations in the plateau, typically up to about 1 in 20.

Altitude range. The dip slope plateau slowly falls from about 151m in the north at Throcking to 128m in the south at Wood End.

Hydrology. To the south the area is drained by often spring-fed streams, which rise e.g. at Moor Hall (feeding the Old Bourne), Gardners, and Walkern Park etc. Old pond complexes occur around the settlements e.g. at Munchers Green, Moor Hall, and Wood End etc., and there is an ornamental lake at Ardeley Bury. To the north there are fewer ponds except at Cottered and Throcking Hall. In the north minor ditches drain the area to the River Rib in the east, the River Beane in the west, and to the Old Bourne towards the south.

Land cover and land use. There is a pattern of treed farmland and mixed agriculture throughout the area. The main land use is arable but there many smaller pockets of pasture, with mixed livestock and horses associated with the widespread smaller settlements and the smaller pattern of fields e.g. around Cottered. There are also areas of mixed woodland cover particularly to the south between Bassus Green and Wood End. Small parks are a feature such as at Ardeley Bury and Walkern Hall. There are a number of village greens and commons within the area, some of which are largely enclosed e.g. at Cottered while others are still more open e.g. at Moor End and Throcking.

Vegetation and wildlife. Ecologically there is a contrast between the Ardeley Plateau to the south and the Cottered Plateau to the north. The Ardeley Plateau is noted for the overall complex of wet, ancient semi-natural woodlands (partially ash/maple and partially hornbeam), and old green lanes with often wooded hedges. Associated with these are a series of highly important, usually wet neutral/calcareous grasslands, such as at Moor Hall SSSI, Moor Green, Munchers Green and Parkers Green, with some remaining adjoining pastures. Broad, damp road verges are also important, especially around Clay End and Bassus Green, where road salting is rare. The old grassland and parkland trees at Ardeley Bury Park are also important, including for scarce invertebrates of old trees. The most important semi-natural woodlands are St John's/Lord's Woods, partially very old secondary woodland; but other important woods occur at Moor Hall Great Wood and the remnants of Witnesses Wood in the south. Wetlands of importance include especially spring-fed mires at Moor Hall and Bury Mead, and the old ponds around

Munchers Green. Back Lane (Roman Road) forms a highly important wooded corridor along the north-east boundary of the area, linking a number of individual sites. In general this complex forms one of the most important, ecologically intact complexes of habitat in the County, although it has suffered recently from severe management in places. The Ardeley Plateau holds some of the last high quality wet meadows in the County, with rare species, such as Dense-flowered Fragrant Orchid, Frog Orchid, Marsh Helleborine, Green-winged Orchid, and the County's last known site for Bog Cotton in its rare fen habitat type. Wet meadows at Moor Hall still occasionally have Snipe in summer. Wide road verges near Bassus Green harbour nationally rare invertebrates, notably the Scarlet Malachite Beetle at one of its last known sites in the UK. Ardeley Bury Park is known to harbour rare invertebrates of old trees. The area also has dormouse, and there are occasional sightings of roe deer, which is rare in Hertfordshire, as well as Harvest Mouse and Yellow-necked Mouse in its woodlands. Great Crested Newts are a feature of ponds at Moor Hall. The Cottered Plateau to the north is more dominated by intensive arable, however there are some semi-improved neutral grassland remains at Cottered and Throcking Hall, especially the damp grasslands at Little Osbournes and Flanders Green. Woodlands are fewer and mainly hornbeam, the most sizeable fragment being Drinkwater Wood by Back Lane in the south. Green lanes are important, particularly the complex around Brook End and Flanders Green, and linking with Back Lane to the south.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is some evidence, mainly in the form of cropmarks, for prehistoric and Roman occupation in the area, and considerable evidence for a widespread pattern of dispersed medieval settlement. The area retains a network of small settlements and farmsteads and their associated greens, trackways and field systems, reflecting both the topography and more ancient settlement patterns. These include the villages of Cottered and Ardeley, the many small Greens and Ends of the area, and several medieval moated sites. The most notable of these are the high status moated manorial sites of Ardeley Bury and Moor Hall, and the ringwork of a probable adulterine castle at Walkern Bury Farm, near Bassus Green. Other, now deserted sites, such as Munches Green and the shrunken village earthworks near Middle Farm, Throcking, indicate that that settlements have also shifted or declined during the medieval and post-medieval periods. At The Garden House, Cottered is a Grade II* early 20th century garden in the Japanese Style. Developed between 1905-37 by a wealthy china merchant, Herbert Goode, there are a range of features including stone lanterns, waterfalls, bridges, arches and ceremonial tea drinking pavilion. Ardeley Bury is of medieval origins but the existing house and park mainly dates from 1820 and is the fanciful gothic creation of John Murray, complete with turrets, baronial hall and Tudor boathouse. To the south west is Walkern Hall an early 19th century House in the classical style with a Doric porch.

ARDELEY & COTTERED SETTLED PLATEAU - Area 140

Field Patterns. The field pattern of the area remains varied, with medium and large fields resulting from 18th century and more recent enclosure mixed with extensive areas of pre-18th century 'irregularly' enclosed fields, and small areas of enclosed meadow pasture, ancient woodland, parkland and surviving commons. These smaller irregular fields survive particularly well around Cottered, Ardeley, and Wood End, and reflect the ancient settlement pattern. Field enclosures are principally mixed species hedges including field trees. Fences are locally present where there is equestrian activity. Both Walkern Bury and Ardeley Bury had deerparks in the medieval period, and the informal parkland surrounding the latter is a small remnant of its medieval extent. The earliest record of a deer park at Walkern Park is 1360; it is still in existence, albeit in modified form.

Transport pattern. With the exception of the A507 Baldock Road, which passes through the north of the area, the transport pattern comprises a widespread network of sinuous and winding lanes and tracks. These features create a slow pace to the area in keeping with the ancient dispersed and settled character. The lanes are locally sunken in the undulations in the plateau and generally enclosed by mixed native hedges with variable width verges. Back Lane is a trackway which follows the line of the Roman road that linked Baldock and Braughing, and it has been the historic boundary between the parishes of Ardeley and Cottered and Aspenden since at least the medieval period.

Settlements and built form. There is a widespread pattern of traditional settlement. Cottered is the largest village in the area, centred around a wide tree lined verges, with some of the buildings set well below road level of the A507 that passes through. There is a range of vernacular materials and historic periods represented. Within the village The Lordship claims to be one of the oldest inhabited houses in Hertfordshire. The parish church of St John the Baptist is embedded within the core of the village. At The Green, Ardeley there is a distinctive cluster of white washed thatched cottages dating from 1917. The restored Cromer Windmill, is a distinctive landmark, particularly when seen from Character Area 221. The village of Throcking was largely deserted in the later Middle Ages.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature: SSSI notification
 EHDC: Historic Parks and Gardens in East Hertfordshire (SPG)
 English Heritage: Schedule entries
 Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)



ARDELEY & COTTERED SETTLED PLATEAU - Area 140

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of the plateau landscape are relatively concealed from the outside. The area has a coherent character with the unifying features being the small to medium scale of the fields, the widespread distribution of settlement including traditional buildings and the relatively intact field and hedgerow patterns. The area mainly has a quiet and remote feel with a strong sense of historic continuity. The only evidence of decline is within some of the arable areas between the settlements, where the field units have been enlarged.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area is unusual within Hertfordshire.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is minimal visual impact from built development in the area. This due to both the relatively contained nature and scale of the landscape and the minimal presence of modern development or lack of intrusive features. The A507 is contained within Cottered village although it is more locally prominent to the east as are the 20th century houses on the edge of the village. Throcking water tower is a prominent local feature.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is an extensive network of rights of ways in the area, including waymarked routes, such as Chain Walk and various byways, e.g. Back Lane, footpaths and bridleways.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Although data is limited this area appears to be regarded of significant value [C]
 "A stroll around Ardeley and Ardeley Bury leads the visitor into some of the quietest spots to be found in the county. The windmill on the hill above Cromer, near by, is useful as a landmark when threading the many winding lanes in the neighbourhood." H Tompkins 'Hertfordshire' 1903

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI: Moor Hall Meadows
 The Garden House (Grade II*), Cottered is listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens
 SMs: Ardeley Bury, The island and Moor Hall moated sites, Walkern Bury ringwork.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	linked
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	prominent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

ARDELEY & COTTERED SETTLED PLATEAU - Area 140

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

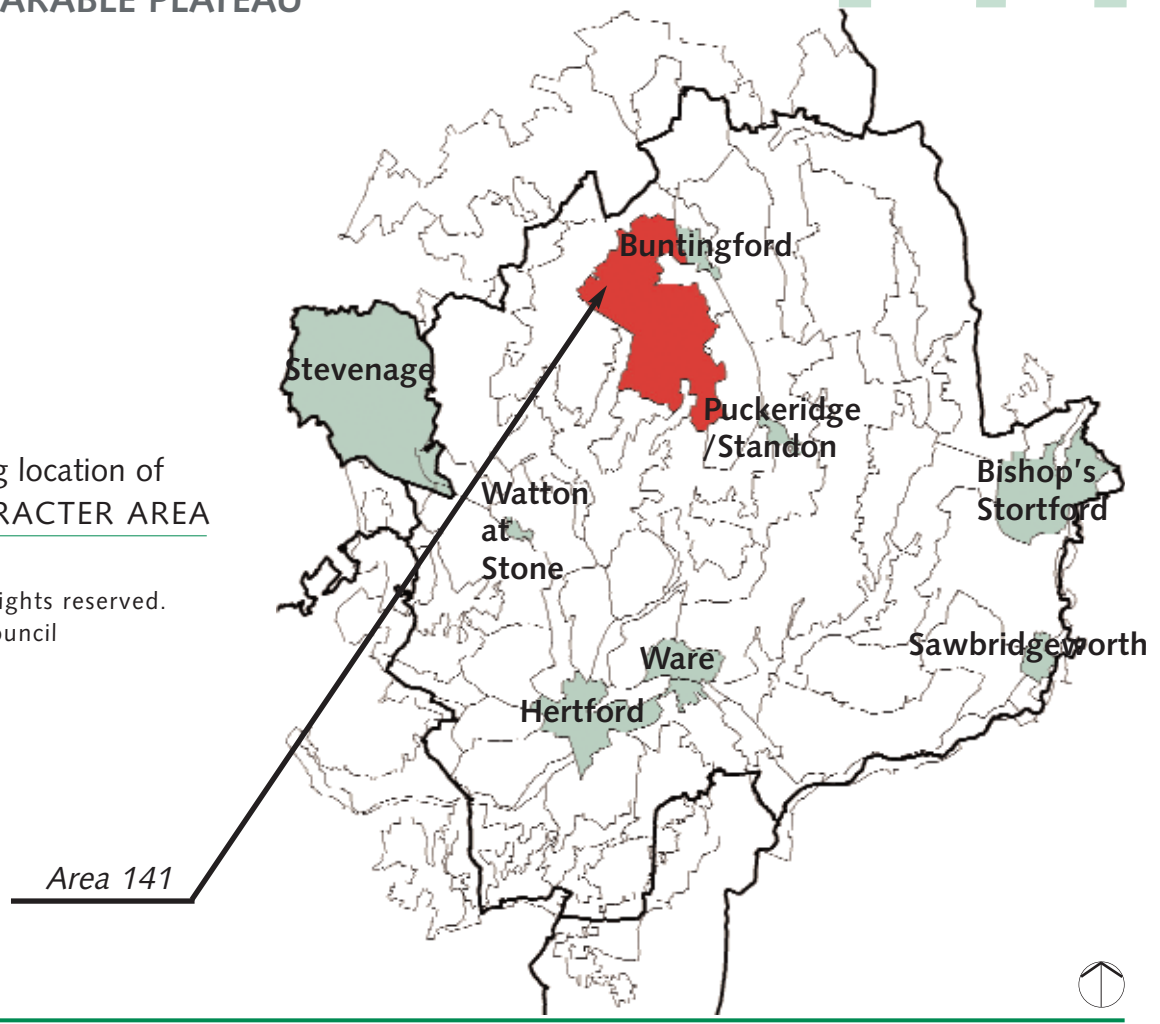
- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available, with a particular view to enhancing the quality of habitats adjacent to existing high-quality habitats in the Beane valley
- consider the possibilities of creating circular footpath routes in the area, especially from the re-opened railway station in Watton-at-Stone (adjoining area), to take advantage of views over the sculptural landform
- focus hedging opportunities on internal field boundaries, not those along roads and footpaths which could interrupt views over this area
- encourage the conservation of the existing settlement pattern and resist any extensive development which would significantly affect this
- consider the retention/replanting of trees along the watercourse to reflect its location. Care should be taken to select species that will reflect local distinctiveness and a quasi-waterside location but that can survive without a permanent water source
- continue to manage both the established and young woodlands to the western boundary with Stevenage to minimise the visual impact of the settlement on the landscape to the east
- encourage traditional woodland management measures including coppicing



Hedged plateau - Gardners End
(J.Billingsley)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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LOCATION

The area is located on the elevated plateau between the valley of the River Rib to the east and the more settled plateau to the west. It stretches from Throcking in the north to Nasty in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The area is principally an open arable landscape with extensive views over a gently undulating plateau. The area retains a historic ambiance through the winding lanes, however many of the features have been eroded or disappeared completely including a

deserted medieval village. Settlement comprises isolated farms and the occasional cottage. There are few features of note within the area with the most prominent landmarks being outside the area.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- open arable plateau with some very large field units
- minimal settlement, restricted to individual farmhouses
- remote and isolated feel
- minimal woodland cover
- degraded landscape pattern with few hedgerows and associated trees
- organic winding lanes with few direct connections across the plateau, (except for A507)
- water towers, LV electricity cables and aerial masts locally prominent features due to open landscape
- open views across plateau and to valley of the Rib

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- deserted medieval village of Wakeley
- Sainsbury's distribution depot (outside area)
- Throcking Church (outside area)



Great Munden Church
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

CHERRY GREEN ARABLE PLATEAU - Area 141

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The geology of the area comprises a chalky till boulder clay overlying the solid chalk of the escarpment dip slope. The soils are almost entirely dominated by calcareous boulder clay, except for minor areas of peri-glacial sand or gravel at the heads of minor valleys draining the area. Chalk also tends to outcrop in these areas. Soils are slowly permeable with a slight risk of water erosion, (Hanslope association).

Topography. The plateau gently undulates from north to south. There is a more marked break of slope to the east where the plateau meets with the High Rib Valley and to the south where it meets a number of the tributaries of the River Beane.

Degree of slope. The main plateau falls by about 1 in 300, but there are local undulations in the plateau, typically up to about 1 in 20. These are most noticeable in the upper tributaries that flow into the Rib Valley to the east.

Altitude range. The dip slope plateau slowly falls from about 141m in the north at Buttermilk Farm to 124m in the south at Mently Lane.

Hydrology. The clay tends to be poorly-drained, and so there are clusters of old ponds such as at Cherry Green, Wakeley and Westmill Green. Others are scattered at farmsteads and field corners. The only flowing water is in seasonal drainage ditches, particularly the upper tributary of the Old Bourne, Aspenden Brook and Thistley Vale Brook. Some minor spring-fed streams arise above Westmill.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land cover and land use is open large scale arable agriculture. There are a number of small woods, but these are discrete and isolated. There is minimal pasture.

Vegetation and wildlife. Now mostly arable, the area formerly had extensive old, damp neutral pastures, but these are now very limited, with remnants at Westmill Green, Wakeley and Cherry Green. The most extensive remnants of unimproved grassland now tend to occur on road verges and green lanes, such as at Cherry Green, although even some of these have suffered badly from severe management. Ancient semi-natural woodland is limited, but includes Graves Wood, Thrift Wood, Berkesdon Green Spring and Wakeley Spring, all of which are primarily ash/maple woodlands, sometimes with frequent field elm. The limited ponds in the area tend to be eutrophic and neglected.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is limited evidence in the form of cropmarks and chance finds for settlement activity on the plateau since the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, and the area may have supported a network of small dispersed settlements and farmsteads similar to those of today since the Roman, and certainly since the medieval period. A substantial Roman site, possibly a villa, is known on the plateau edge west of Westmill. Historically the Parishes of Aspenden, Westmill and Great Munden have always included parts of the valley of the River Rib to the east (see Area 142), where occupation, including the villages of Aspenden and Westmill, has been attracted to the valley slopes, close to Roman Ermine Street (the A10). The plateau itself is sparsely populated, with small hamlets and isolated farms and houses. While many perpetuate a longstanding settlement pattern, other sites have shifted or

declined during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Whilst the deserted settlement earthworks at Great Munden and Wakeley are adjacent to existing settlements; many other examples are now isolated, such as the former settlements at Berkesdon Green, Westmill Green and Throcking, and the moated manorial sites near Gardners, Tannis Court, Mill Farm, Rush Green and Stockalls.

At Cherry Green, 'Buttonsnap' a picture book thatched cottage was inherited by Charles Lamb in 1812, but sold three years later for £50.

Field Patterns. The field pattern, was originally one of unenclosed common arable fields and lesser areas of irregular enclosure, probably formed before the 18th century. It is now dominated by large 'prairie' fields. These have succeeded interim stages of gradual 18th and 19th century enclosure, and later, piecemeal 20th century enclosure and amalgamations creating large expansive prairie field units. Hedged field boundaries have been mainly removed. There are a few small areas where these smaller pre-18th century irregular fields survive, east of Nasty, around Cherry Green and Wakeley, and west of Berkesdon Green. There is little pasture or woodland in the area and it is evident that woodland cover was already slight by the later 19th century, due the long term use of the area for arable cultivation.

Transport pattern. With the exception of the A507 Baldock Road which passes through the north of the area there are no direct routes across the area making it remote and isolated in character. The dispersed farmsteads are served by various narrow sinuous winding lanes and tracks. Most of the roads, including the A507, are locally sunken in the undulations and to the plateau edge. They are partially bounded by mixed native hedges but invariably are more open in character. The trackway Back Lane, follows the line of the Roman road that linked Baldock and Braughing, and it has been the historic boundary between the parishes of Westmill and Great Munden since at least the medieval period.

Settlements and built form. Settlement within the area is sparse and limited to isolated farmsteads often at the end of long tracks and a few small hamlets such as Cherry Green. There are a few vernacular buildings including barn conversions however a number of the buildings and farmsteads are architecturally poor and add little to the locality.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Heritage: Schedule entry

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The plateau landscape is visible from both the neighbouring plateaux and the upper slopes of the Rib Valley. There are extensive views within the area and the scale of the area is large with exposed views. As a result it is visually sensitive to changes in built form. The area mainly has a quiet and remote feel apart from where locally closer to the A507 and the A10 corridor.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The landscape is a fairly frequent landscape type within the county with no major distinctive characteristics.

VISUAL IMPACT

The major visual impact on the area comes from the perimeter of Buntingford with significant impact arising from both industrial and residential developments on the upper slopes of the Rib Valley. The widest reaching single impact is caused by the Sainsbury's warehouses, which are major structures on the skyline to the east.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is an moderate to sparse network of rights of ways in the area, including byways such as Back Lane, footpaths and bridleways. A number of these provide links between the Rib

valley and the Ardeley/Cottered Settled Plateau.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Although data is limited this area appears to be regarded as very distinctive [B]

"Greater beauty lies...where the rolling hills between Stevenage and Buntingford extend in an unbroken vista. The wayfarer will see that mere height is a less important feature of a countryside than generous contours and rich colouring. Here too are the great cornfields to cheer the eye, with narrow paths traversing them." H. Shelton 'Lovely Britain' Ed by SPB Mains & Tom Stephenson. Odhams. No date

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM: Site of St Giles Church and medieval Village - Wakeley Farm Areas of Archaeological Significance (to higher ground to east)

CONDITION

Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: poor
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: dominant
Impact of historic pattern: apparent
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: exposed
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

CHERRY GREEN ARABLE PLATEAU - Area 141

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards
- promote the creation of new small to medium scale native broadleaved woods throughout the area to reduce the scale of the open arable areas, using ancient hedge and field boundaries to locate the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production as important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats. Buffers also to target rights of way where possible
- promote selected hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and/or rights of way where possible
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that hard landscape and 'Garden' details are be screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- promote a strategy for reducing the visual impact of development on the upper slopes of Buntingford including the Sainsbury's warehouses
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees

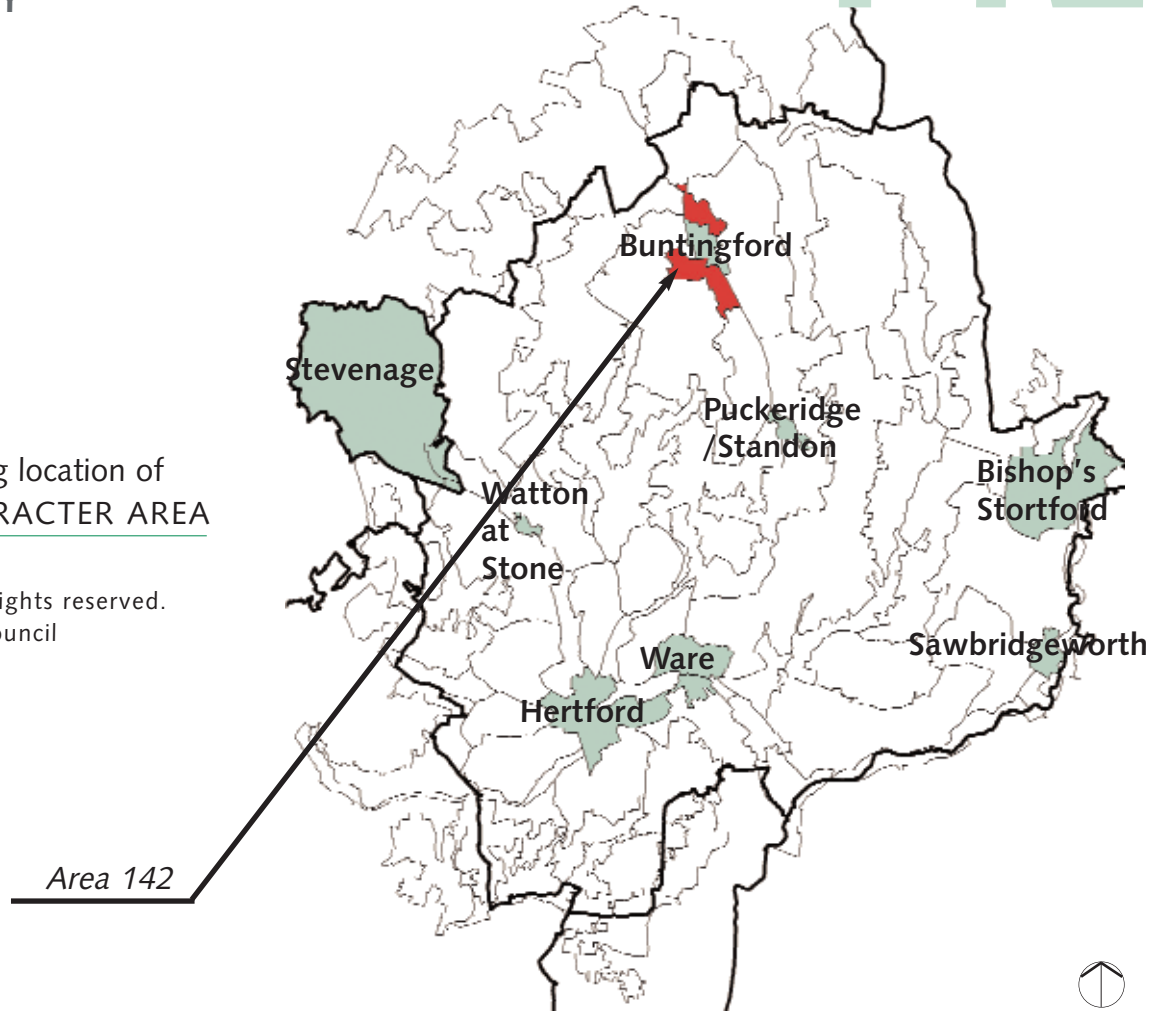


Arable plateau near Wakeley (J.Billingsley)

HIGH RIB VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Upper stretches of the River Rib between Westmill in the south and Chipping in the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The area represents the last section of the River Rib that retains a distinctive valley form and associated land uses. Further north and out of the area the river climbs onto the high plateau and has more the character of a local stream. The area is effectively divided into two sub areas by Buntingford which initially developed along the Ermine Street corridor, but in the 20th century has spread up the valley sides. The Rib is marked by a

combination of pasture and riparian trees, however arable fields are found both close to the valley bottom and on the slopes. The villages of Aspenden and Westmill are historically coherent and contain a number of fine traditional buildings and groupings. There are areas of parkland supporting traditional grazing e.g. Corney Bury. The A10 corridor is a strong feature of the area and the traffic is locally intrusive as are some of the built features within Buntingford.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- relatively narrow valley feature
- mixed land use including arable and pasture
- small to medium scale landscape in contrast to open arable areas to the adjacent plateaux
- historic villages to valley edge at Westmill and Aspenden
- parkland at Corney Bury
- sub-divided by Buntingford
- willow and poplar tree lined watercourse
- urban influence of Buntingford locally intrusive
- A10 corridor and associated traffic
- limited rights of way

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- ruined St Bartholomew's Church- Buntingford on plateau edge
- Sainsbury's distribution depot
- Westmill village centre



Westmill (HCC Landscape Unit)

HIGH RIB VALLEY - Area 142

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The geology of the river valley comprises chalky till, which overlies most of the dip slope of the escarpment including the upper valleys. The underlying chalk is exposed in places, notably above Corney Bury Park. The soils are dominated by neutral/calcareous boulder clay soils which are deep and well drained with a mix of fine and coarse loamy soils and some calcareous sub soils, (Melford Association). There are some mixed fluvo-glacial gravels and alluvium which occupy the Rib Valley floor.

Topography. The valley forms the upper reaches of the Rib as it flows off the dip slope of the chalk escarpment. The valley is more defined to the south but becomes less pronounced to the north where it merges with the upper plateau landform.

Degree of slope. Along the valley floor the slope is typically less than 1 in 250. The side slopes range from 1 in 20 to 1 in 10.

Altitude range. Along the valley floor the levels drop from 100m near Chipping to 80m above Westmill. Across the valley the side slopes are typically 10-20m above the valley floor.

Hydrology. The valley contains the upper reaches of the River Rib which is a relatively small feature in itself. However the line of the river is marked in part by poplars, willows and some pasture at Corney Bury. There is a ford within Buntingford. The river is fed by a number of secondary ditches and streams including Aspenden Brook. The River Rib is affected by arable run-off, but Aspenden Brook is less eutrophic, feeding The Bourne downstream to Westmill. The only substantial standing water is Westminster Pond at Aspenden.

Land cover and land use. Land cover includes arable to the valley slopes and floor and pasture associated with the settlements of Westmill, Aspenden and the parkland at Corney Bury. To the fringes of Buntingford the land use is more fragmented and smaller in scale. There are limited areas of scrub, mainly around Buntingford.

Vegetation and wildlife. The area has limited semi-natural habitat. Old secondary woodland and wooded hedges are important at Aspenden. Extensive old grasslands at Corney Bury and Westmill have unfortunately been improved. St Bartholomew's Churchyard is of local importance, and the developing verges of the A10 bypass at Buntingford are becoming more important. The River Rib, with its marginal stands of trees, is only of local value in the Westmill area. Westminster Pond is too heavily shaded to be of any special value.

Old hedge banks by Corney Bury Park are recorded as a site for the nationally scarce mollusc *Ena montana*. The uncommon arable weed Shepherd's Needle is a feature of fields near St Bartholomew's Church. There are a number of fine mature trees within the villages and the parklands of Corney Bury and Aspenden.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This valley area is dominated by the urban settlement of Buntingford, which lies at the intersection of five medieval parishes and the junction of two significant roads, the Roman road Ermine Street (the A10) and Hare Street, at the point at which the Roman road forded the River Rib. Buntingford itself probably grew as a settlement from the 13th-century, superseding

an earlier now deserted settlement at Layston on the plateau edge, close to St Bartholomew's Church, (now disused) which served the town of Buntingford until 1901. Within Buntingford the Almshouses are reputedly the work of the 17th century chemist Robert Hooke.

While there is some evidence for human activity in the High Rib Valley from the Neolithic period, the current settlement pattern reflects the medieval and post-medieval development of the area. Settlements existed at Layston (now deserted), Aspenden and Westmill before 1066, and manorial sites at Corney Bury, Aspenden Hall, Westmill and Layston.

Field Patterns. The area is exceptional for its well-preserved field systems and parklands. There are a few small blocks of pre-18th century common arable and meadow pasture, now superseded by 19th century enclosure, and later 20th century prairie fields, particularly around the bypass. However the greater part of the area comprises the post-medieval or earlier informal parklands surrounding Corney Bury and Aspenden Hall, and the significant block of small, irregular fields, formed by pre-18th century enclosure, that lies north of Westmill.

Transport pattern. The historic Roman Road, Ermine Street, now the A10, passes north-south through the area. Buntingford grew up along the original linear alignment developing as a typical coaching town. The route south of the town is unchanged, but the A10 now bypasses the town to the west before rejoining the original alignment near Chipping to the north. Remaining roads are more minor and sinuous in character linking the smaller settlements of Aspenden, Westmill and around the fringes of Buntingford. Some of the lanes are sunken on the slopes. The eastern bank of the A10, south of Buntingford is retained by rows of visually inappropriate concrete slabs.

Settlements and built form. Aspenden and Westmill are attractive traditional settlements with focal parish churches. and a large number of vernacular buildings, using a mix of thatch, pargeting, brick and clay tiles together with some relatively sympathetic modern infill. Aspenden nestles in a tributary valley to the Rib and is largely contained by mature trees and hedges. Aspenden Brook runs through the village and a number of properties are accessed by bridges across the stream. Westmill is located within the main valley west of the flood meadows. The village features an attractive tree lined village core, elegant Georgian houses and a diminutive green complete with well-pump. North of Buntingford Corney Bury is red bricked 'E' shaped house with mullion and transom windows. The historic core of Buntingford lies along the old A10 with a number of Georgian and Victorian houses. Modern estates have developed to the fringes of the town.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The valley landscape is locally visible from outside the area from the adjacent plateaux edges. Within the area there is a small to medium scale with contained views and a coherent though at times diverse character. Riverside vegetation and the presence of livestock grazing helps to highlight the line of the watercourses and meadows. The A10 follows and cuts through the area and brings visual and audible distraction. North of Buntingford the diverted A10 means that Corney Bury has benefited. The upper slopes accessed off The Causeway towards St Bartholomew's provide some attractive views to the west over the town of Buntingford.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The valley landscape is fairly unusual in the county. The villages of Westmill and Aspenden and the riverside parkland at Corney Bury are the most distinctive features.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are a number of visual impacts on the area. These originate from the fact the river valley has also developed as a transport corridor. The most extensive visual impact comes from the adjacent residential developments, which in some cases lie adjacent and unscreened e.g. northern edge of Buntingford overlooking Corney Bury. The A10 is also locally intrusive, but

contains sections in cutting. The slab detailing to the eastern verge south of the town is visually jarring. The widest reaching single impact is caused by the Sainsbury's distribution warehouses, which are major structures on the ridgeline, particularly as seen from the south.

ACCESSIBILITY

Despite the relatively attractive quality of the area and the local population, the river valley is poorly served with rights of way, with no access to Corney Bury and access to Westmill only by road from Buntingford. There are a few footpaths from and to Aspenden, but minimal equestrian access.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Although data is incomplete this area appears to be one of the most highly valued in the district and this is not limited to the nationally-noted village of Westmill [A]. "Buntingford nestles well into the Rib Valley" (Respondent 1633, SPD Counsultation Response 2006).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Areas of Archaeological Significance: at Westmill, Buntingford and Corney Bury

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: linked
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: apparent
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: contained
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

HIGH RIB VALLEY - Area 142

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity in parklands and village environments of Westmill and Aspenden. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens
- restrict further ploughing of grasslands within parklands and encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland with historically accurate specimen tree planting
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value, including Aspenden, Westmill and Corney Bury
- protect the remaining river valley habitats of nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain woodland and grazing marsh
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- promote a strategy for reducing the visual impact of development on the upper slopes of Buntingford including the Sainsbury's warehouses
- improve the management of old meadows and pastures e.g. at Corney Bury by ceasing fertilizer and herbicide application and introducing sensitive grassland management such as late hay cutting or low density livestock grazing
- promote the enhancement of the River Rib and its tributaries by the creation of wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds and scrapes
- promote the management of existing riparian trees including pollarding. Promote additional tree planting of native water loving species, willow, alder and poplar to emphasize the line of the watercourse
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements to reduce their acid or calcareous nature, in order to maintain their nature conservation value
- traffic calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the local the landscape character of the settlement. The use of unsympathetic materials, such as concrete paviors, coloured concrete and brightly coloured road markings should be avoided and kerbing should be kept to a minimum
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees
- develop a strategy for the planting and management of the A10 corridor through the area that respects the historic setting but minimizes the visual context in keeping with local character
- encourage the development of an improved network of rights of way both along and across the valley giving enhanced recreational opportunities for residents

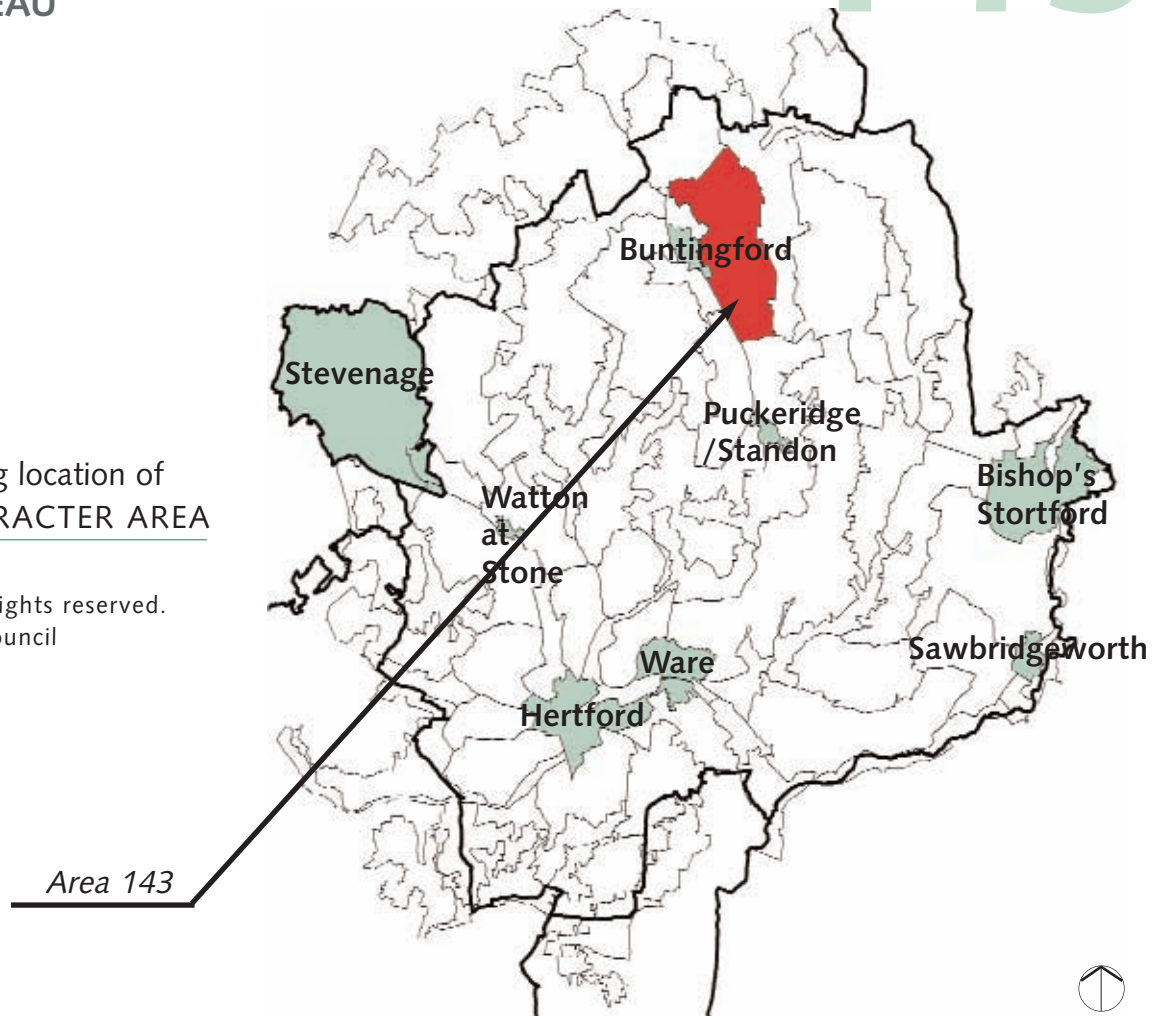


Corney Bury Parkland
(HHC Landscape Unit)

WYDDIAL PLATEAU

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

The area is located on the elevated plateau between the valleys of the River Quin to the east and the River Rib to the west. It stretches from Wyddial in the north to Hay Street in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The character area comprises an elevated arable landscape with extensive views over a gently undulating plateau. There is a moderately strong historic character to the north resulting from the winding lanes, retained field patterns and scattered woodland cover while to the south the character is more open. Settlement typically comprises isolated farms and occasional cottage groups.



The most distinctive areas are located near the larger houses including Alswick and at Wyddial where the hall and core of the village retain an important focus. The major detractors are the high voltage electricity cables and pylons that dwarf local features on the plateau and the Sainsbury's warehouse at Buntingford.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating plateau
- predominantly arable land use
- field sizes generally medium to large with some historic continuity but locally interrupted
- isolated but distinctive country houses set in small parklands
- small to medium discrete woods
- plateau crossed by sinuous lanes from east to west

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Wyddial Hall and relic parkland
- Owles Hall - castellated
- Sainsbury's distribution depot
- high voltage electricity pylons
- ponds

Power lines near Brown's Corner
(J.Billingsley)

WYDDIAL PLATEAU - Area 143

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The geology of the area comprises chalky till boulder clay overlying the solid chalk of the escarpment dip slope with some minor superficial fluvo-glacial deposits overlying it to the south. The soils are slowly permeable and a mix of calcareous clayey and non-calcareous clayey with a slight risk of water erosion, (Hanslope association).

Topography. The plateau gently undulates from north to south. There is a more marked break of slope to the west and south where the plateau meets with the High Rib valley and a more subtle change to the east where it meets the River Quin.

Degree of slope. The main plateau falls by about 1 in 350, but there are local undulations in the plateau which may get as steep as 1 in 20. Haley Hill Ditch, east of Buntingford on the edge of the Rib Valley is locally 1 in 12.

Altitude range. The dip slope plateau slowly falls from about 131m in the north near Wyddial to 114m in the south near Hay Street.

Hydrology. There are a number of ponds on the plateau, most of which are associated with the settlements, moated houses and farmsteads to the north e.g. at Wyddial Hall. A number of streams and brooks rise on the plateau, draining the boulder clay and then flow out into the neighbouring valleys.

Land cover and land use. The prominent land use and land cover is arable farming within medium to large fields, some of which have been converted from parkland as at Wyddial. There are smaller areas of pasture associated with the villages and individual settlements. There are a few discrete woodlands, concentrated to the north of the area around Wyddial, some of which are of plantation origin.

Vegetation and wildlife. Most of the area is very open, hedgeless and intensive arable, but there are remnant semi-natural woodlands at Alswick Hall, near Stonebury, and around Wyddial itself. These tend to be rather species-poor ash/maple woodlands, with frequent field elm. None of the ponds in the area are known to be of particular importance. Grasslands are almost non-existent, except for some reasonable paddocks east of Buntingford. The old chalk pits south of Buntingford have a diverse and locally important flora, absent elsewhere in the entire region.

Great Bellflower is a feature in some hedgerows to the north end of the area. Westmill chalk pit has local species such as Common Eyebright, Tall Broomrape and Rockrose.

Ornamental parkland trees including cedars and chestnuts are a feature at Wyddial.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The plateau contains parts of several parishes, including Wyddial, Buntingford, Hormead, Westmill and Braughing, and supports a network of dispersed farmsteads manor houses and occasional groups of houses, most of which are on medieval sites. There is also some evidence for settlement activity on the plateau since the later prehistoric period in the form of cropmarks, finds of Roman amphorae (east of Westmill and adjacent to the Roman road Ermine Street, the A10) and other finds.

The area is characterised by isolated farmsteads and houses, many of which stand on or adjacent to earlier manorial sites and thereby perpetuate a settlement pattern established in the medieval period. Many are moated, such as those at Moles Farm, Beauchamps and Alswick Hall, and traces of small associated settlements can be traced at Alswick Hall and Wyddial. Other sites have shifted or declined during the medieval and post-medieval periods, and are now deserted, such as Hobbs Moat at Dassels. The current house at Wyddial Hall dates from the late 18th century. Its elegant white stucco mid-Georgian façade represents a bold feature in the landscape as seen from the east. The grounds of the house once contained bold avenues to the north east and west, but these were slowly removed as the Repton scheme commissioned by John Ellis MP was implemented. The immediate gardens near the house remain but the wider parkland has predominantly been converted to arable. A few forlorn cedars provide the only indication of the former park. In the garden of the lodge, Cave Gate is the blocked entrance to the mythical Anstey Cave, a tunnel that reputedly provided a link with Anstey Castle, 3km to the east.

Field Patterns. Fields units are typically medium to large in size, with some pockets of smaller units linked to the settlement clusters. The field systems of the area were originally a combination of unenclosed common arable fields and smaller 'irregular' enclosure fields, both established before the 18th century. A small area of these irregular fields has survived around Wyddial, and also at least part of the informal parkland of Wyddial Hall. The remainder of the area is now dominated by large 'prairie' fields that succeeded an interim stage of gradual enclosure of common arable during the 18th and 19th century. The result are some enormous fields e.g. east of Westmill. There is little pasture or woodland and it is evident that woodland cover was already slight by the later 19th century, due the long term use of the area for arable cultivation. Hedges are typically medium to low in height and contain mixed species. They are often gappy and include few hedgerow trees.

Transport pattern. The plateau is crossed by two secondary routes, the B1038 between Buntingford and Hare Street and the minor road to Wyddial, the latter of which is sinuous and marked by banks and ditches with narrow verges. There are no north south routes and any other tracks are cul de sacs to individual properties. The eastern bank of the A10, south of Buntingford is retained by rows of visually inappropriate concrete slabs.

Settlements and built form. The area is sparsely settled with a range of farmsteads, occasional cottages and houses e.g. Alswick Hall. The only village, Wyddial, includes a range of Victorian cottages, modern houses and more recent conversions. There is a small flint faced church close to the Hall. On the plateau edge east of Buntingford lies Owles house, a brick Victorian Manor with battlements.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

HCC: List of historic Parks and Gardens

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The plateau landscape is locally visible at a distance from neighbouring plateaux. From the adjacent valleys the plateau is more concealed. The landscape coherent with a medium scale, in contrast to some of the other plateau areas in the locality. There is an open character with extensive views due to the relative elevation of the landscape and as a result it is visually sensitive to changes in built form. The area is general tranquil with distant noise from the A10 and intermittent and local noise from the B1038. Wyddial Hall is distinctive from the open landscape to the east particularly when floodlit.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The plateau landscape is fairly frequent in the county. The immediate environment of Wyddial Hall is the most distinctive feature.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are a number of visual impacts on the area particularly to towards Buntingford. Some of the residential developments on the fringe of the town are unscreened and prominent e.g. eastern edge of the town. The A10 is also locally intrusive. The Sainsbury's distribution warehouse is a major structure on the ridgeline, particularly as seen from the east on Owles Lane. Further north the twin line of high voltage power lines and masts are a

widespread and prominent impact as they stride across the open countryside. Some of the recent tree species selection to the south east on the B1368 is out of context

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a moderate network of rights of way to the north of the area. These include footpaths, bridleways and byways. Active recreational use by ramblers, cyclists and equestrians was noted during the field survey. South of Stonebury Farm the area is a more open exposed area with no rights of way.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Although data is limited the distinctiveness of this hedgerow-less landscape is noted - although the lack of hedgerows is typically disliked [C]

"open upland fields, ditches and ash plantations" RM Healey, 'Hertfordshire: A Shell Guide', 1982

"Gently undulating contours; almost entirely arable with frequent small patches of woodland. Most pleasant walking with a good network of paths...some old hedgerows still, but many have gone. In essence - let it be!" (Respondent O689)

CONDITION

- Land cover change:*
- Age structure of tree cover:*
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:*
- Management of semi-natural habitat:*
- Survival of cultural pattern:*
- Impact of built development:*
- Impact of land-use change:*

- localised
- over mature
- scattered
- not obvious
- interrupted
- moderate
- moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform:*
- Impact of land cover:*
- Impact of historic pattern:*
- Visibility from outside:*
- Sense of enclosure:*
- Visual unity:*
- Distinctiveness/rarity:*

- apparent
- prominent
- apparent
- locally visible
- partial
- coherent
- frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

WYDDIAL PLATEAU - Area 143

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards
- promote the creation of new small to medium scale native broadleaved woods throughout the area and particularly to the south, to reduce the scale of the open arable areas, using ancient hedge and field boundaries to locate the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value at Wyddial Hall and Alswick
- restrict further ploughing of grasslands within parklands and encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland with historically accurate specimen tree planting
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production as important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats. Buffers to also target rights of way where possible
- promote selected hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and/or rights of way where possible
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their surroundings by ensuring that hard landscape and 'Garden' details are be screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- traffic calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the local the landscape character of the settlement. The use of unsympathetic materials, such as concrete paviers, coloured concrete and brightly coloured road markings should be avoided and kerbing should be kept to a minimum
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees
- encourage the development of an improved network of rights of way to the south of the area
- consider a strategy for reducing the visual impact of the existing high voltage power cables and pylons
- promote a strategy for reducing the visual impact of development on the upper slopes of Buntingford including the Sainsbury's warehouses

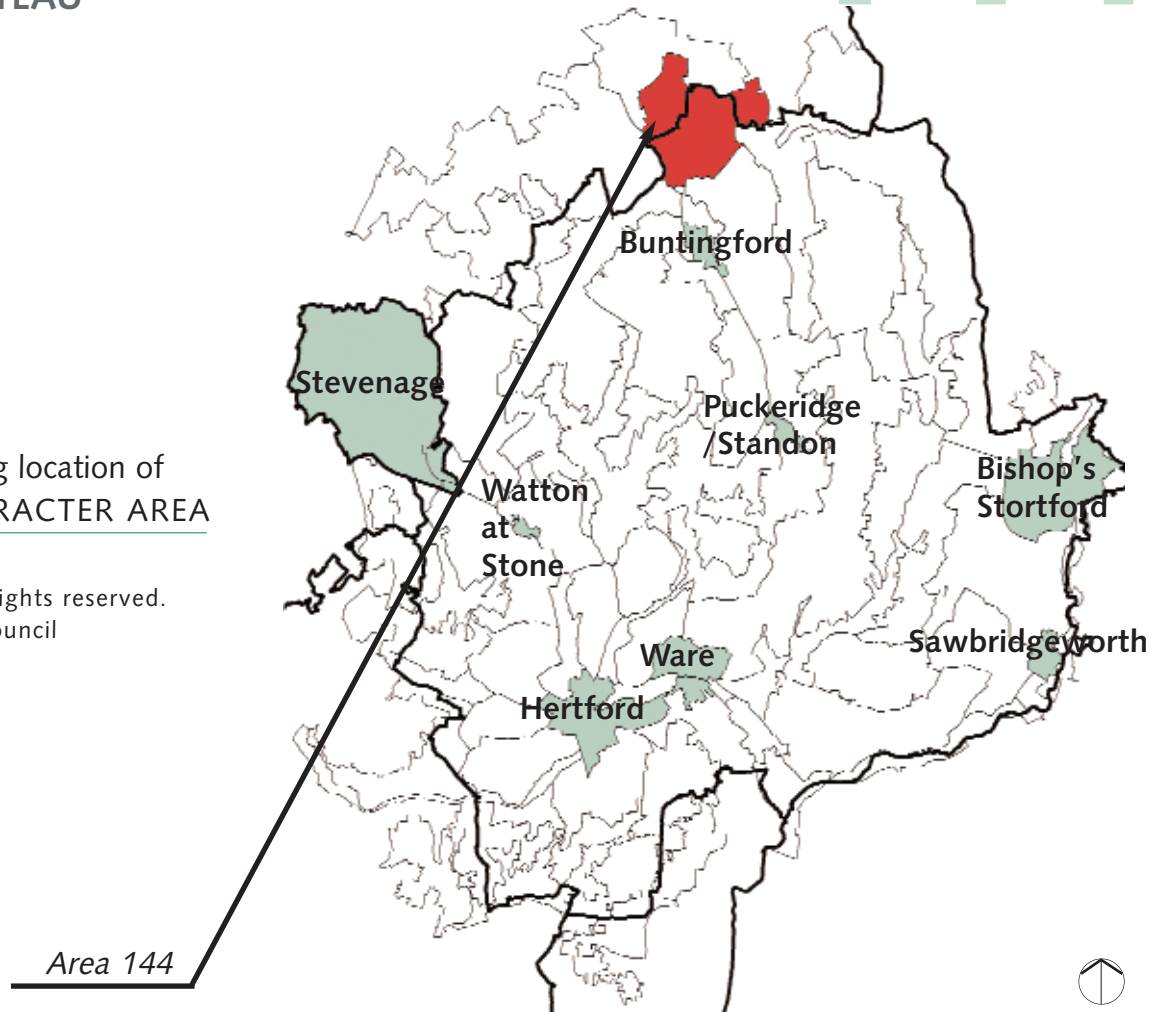


Hare Street Road towards Alswick (HCC Landscape Unit)

BUCKLAND PLATEAU

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Extensive plateau south of Reed extending east to Barkway and the B1368 and west towards Green End and Mill End. Incorporates the villages of Buckland and Chipping.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Large, open and elevated plateau with the village of Buckland in the centre and bisected in the middle by the roman road, Ermine Street (now the A10). Quiet area with few features, dominated by large arable fields with no hedgerows giving an unusual prairie-like character to the area. There are extensive views within and



across the plateau. The spire of Buckland church is a prominent feature at the highest point in the centre of the plateau. Small pockets of pasture exist within and around Buckland and Chipping. The River Rib runs through the western side of the area but is rarely noticeable other than at Buckland Bottom where a dense belt of tree and shrub vegetation creates a locally strong feature. A mature lime avenue extends between Buckland and west of Hodenhoe Manor and several new avenues have been planted in the area.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating elevated plateau
- open arable landscape with large fields
- very few hedgerows or defining boundaries
- small pockets of pasture within and around the villages of Buckland and Chipping
- cluster of farms in the village of Buckland but few elsewhere
- lime avenues

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Buckland church spire
- mature lime avenue between Buckland and west of Hodenhoe Manor
- Buckland Bottom belt of vegetation adjacent to the River Rib
- Capons Wood on the south-eastern edge
- Ermine Street roman road (now the A10)

Road to Buckland (HCC Landscape Unit)

BUCKLAND PLATEAU - Area 144

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Anglian boulder clay overlying chalk dominates most of the plateau and the soils are typically slowly permeable calcareous clays (Hanslope series). A small area on the eastern side has loamy soils over chalky till (Melford series). At Biggin Moor and west of Buckland, post-glacial erosion has exposed underlying clay-with-flints, which gives a more neutral or mildly acidic soil type, while chalk is also exposed in these areas. At Chipping and Biggin Manor there are also glacial sands and gravels in small areas. Narrow deposits of alluvium also exist along the course of the River Rib at Buckland Bottom and in the headwaters of the River Quin at Biggin Manor. Biggin Moor springs arise from the chalk and form a unique peat dome deposit.

Topography. A gently undulating elevated plateau including a shallow valley around the upper reaches of the River Rib on the west side and shallow valleys around upper tributaries of the River Quin on the east side. The highest point of the plateau is marked by the village of Buckland.

Degree of slope. Slopes are typically between 1 in 20 and 1 in 30. Around Mill Hill (west of Chipping) they increase to 1 in 10 and around Reed Wood and Southfield Grove they reduce to around 1 in 70.

Altitude range. The altitude varies from a high point of 140m in Buckland to a low point of 100m south of Chipping. Other high points include Capons Wood at 136m and Mill Hill at 125m.

Hydrology. The plateau is drained by a series of small ditches. The east side of the plateau drains into the River Quin and the west side drains in to the upper reaches of the River Rib. The ditches and streams are rarely marked by vegetation and are therefore often difficult to identify from a distance. The River Rib is heavily affected by arable run-off, and the area has few ponds, except for Daws Lane Common pond at Buckland, and woodland pools of probably great age in the remnant of Capons Wood, Dades's Wood and Brandish Wood.

Land cover and land use. The plateau is dominated by large open, arable fields with few hedgerows resulting in an open prairie-like landscape. This pattern of land use, together with the cropmark evidence of cultivation from the Late Iron Age or Roman period onwards, suggests that woodland has not been a significant component in the landscape since a very early date. Mature vegetation is therefore scarce other than Capons Wood to the south and three other smaller woods: Dades's Wood, Burhill Wood and Brandish Wood and a tree belt adjacent to the River Rib at Buckland Bottom. Small areas of pasture are present within the village of Buckland, and hedgerows (particularly hawthorn) are also more common within the village.

Vegetation and wildlife. Semi-natural vegetation is severely limited, most of the area being intensive, very open arable farmland. There were formerly extensive plateau woodlands south of Buckland, but the only remnant is a small part of Capons Wood, which is wet ash/maple former coppice-with-standards woodland. Remnant woodland flora persists in some hedgebanks and some old tracksides. There are also remnant fragments of ash/maple woodland at Brandish and Burhill Woods, also remnants of formerly larger woods, as well as beside the Rib at Buckland Bottom. Biggin Moor springs, although somewhat degraded, remain a unique peat fen, with some alder woodland, damp scrub and rough tall fen. Neutral grassland remains only at

Buckland churchyard and Daws Lane Common. Its pond is of some local interest. Biggin Moor retains locally rare plants, such as Marsh Valerian, Purple Moor-grass, Blunt-flowered Rush and Marsh Pennywort. Thin-spiked Wood Sedge and Great Bellflower survived the felling of woodland at Buckland. The open arable fields however can support uncommon bird species, such as Yellow Wagtails in rape fields.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

While the present day settlement pattern is medieval in origins there are indications of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age occupation activity, the plateau is bisected by the Roman road Ermine Street (the A10), and there is evidence for Late Iron Age and Romano-British exploitation of the landscape. While the evidence for habitation is limited, cropmarks indicate early field systems of Late Iron Age or Romano-British, and medieval dates, particularly in the central and southern part of the area. The major present day settlements within the area are Buckland and Chipping, both situated on Ermine Street, and both pre-Conquest in origin. Chipping is an interesting example of a failed market settlement. The name is an Anglo-Saxon word for 'market', and its market status is documented in the mid-13th century. By 1360, following crop failures and the Black Death, the site was 'vacant' and the market was formally transferred to Buntingford. The remainder of the area contains a sparse network of dispersed farmsteads and houses which again reflects a settlement pattern established in the medieval period, and provides some evidence of settlement shift and decline. Medieval moated sites are known at Hodenhoe Manor, north of Burhill Wood, and at Buckland (Bull Moat, north of the village, and south of the church).

Field Patterns. Fields units are typically large, a fact that is visually emphasised by the lack of hedgerows and other enclosing features. The field systems of the area were originally mainly pre-18th century unenclosed common arable fields, and smaller 'irregular' enclosure fields, though some field blocks north and east of Capons Wood, and west of Buckland Bottom, display a more mixed origin. Small areas of these 'irregular' enclosure field systems survive to the west and east of Buckland and at the northern end of the area, but the most of these pre-18th century field systems have been superseded by 18th century and later enclosure, and the greater part of the plateau is now primarily 20th century 'prairie' fields some of which are enormous. Former extensive pastures at Buckland were destroyed in the 1970's.

Transport pattern. The roman road, Ermine Street (now the A10), is the dominant road within the area and passes across the middle of the plateau in a north-south direction. This is a busy trunk road but is relatively narrow and undulating despite its importance. Road traffic produces a

continual background noise which is audible from much of the surrounding area. Elsewhere on the plateau, roads are quiet and infrequent. A narrow, minor road on the east side provides a route between Barkway and Buckland and a further minor road on the west side provides a winding route between Buckland and Sandon or Hay Green. Road verges throughout the area are generally narrow.

Settlements and built form. The area contains the two ancient villages of Buckland and Chipping both of which are situated on the Roman road of Ermine Street. Buckland which distinctively stands on a hill was listed in the Domesday Book as 'Bochelande'. Both settlements now contain a mix of vernacular and twentieth century buildings. Buckland has an attractive 14th century church, St Andrews, and a fine early Georgian house of chequered brick known as Buckland House. Unusually, the village of Buckland contains a concentration of farms located around a central area of pasture. The settlement of Chipping is smaller and more linear in form with housing either side of Ermine Street.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)
 Rook, T, A History of Hertfordshire, Phillimore and Co Ltd (1997)



Arable plateau east of Buckland
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

BUCKLAND PLATEAU - Area 144

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area has a remote and prairie-like character. It is a large-scale landscape, often feeling exposed and bare. Long distance views across the plateau are frequent with the spire of Buckland church forming a prominent and attractive feature in many views. Capons Wood (to the south of the area) also forms a significant feature on the horizon in views to the south. Along and adjacent to the A10, road traffic generates a continual background noise. However, elsewhere, the area is very quiet.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Within Hertfordshire the remote and prairie-like character of the area is both distinctive and rare

VISUAL IMPACT

Traffic on the A10 creates a significant visual impact locally. However generally, the plateau has a notable absence of features.

ACCESSIBILITY

Several footpath routes cross the plateau most of which radiate from Buckland or Chipping. This network of paths provides good access across the plateau for walkers. Access by bridlepath is much poorer with only one significant stretch of bridlepath in the area (between Mill Hill and Capons Wood).

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area has some distinctive aspects [D]
 "Good for farmland birds" (Respondent 3134)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Areas of Archaeological Significance – including Buckland village and large area to the east of Chipping
 Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological importance or interest – including Hilly Wood and Burhill Wood

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	scattered
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	dominant
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	dominant
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	apparent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open/exposed
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors
- protect remaining river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest along the River Rib
- encourage the establishment of wet native woodland along the River Rib including black poplar and pollarded willow
- promote the restoration of hedge improvement and planting adjacent to rights of way, green lanes and along parish boundaries
- ensure new planting is encouraged within the area particularly in and around the villages of Buckland and Chipping. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens
- ensure that design proposals for minor roads fit the grain of the local landscape both horizontally and vertically; avoid significant impact on the local field pattern and use only locally native tree and shrub species for associated planting. It should not be axiomatic to enclose any new or existing road with dense hedging on both sides – due reference should be made to local character and roads should be left open where appropriate
- develop a strategy for the planting and management of the A10 corridor through the area that respects the historic setting and is in keeping with local character but minimizes the visual impact
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their surroundings by ensuring that hard landscape and 'Garden' details are screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- protect and maintain the recently planted lime avenues within the area

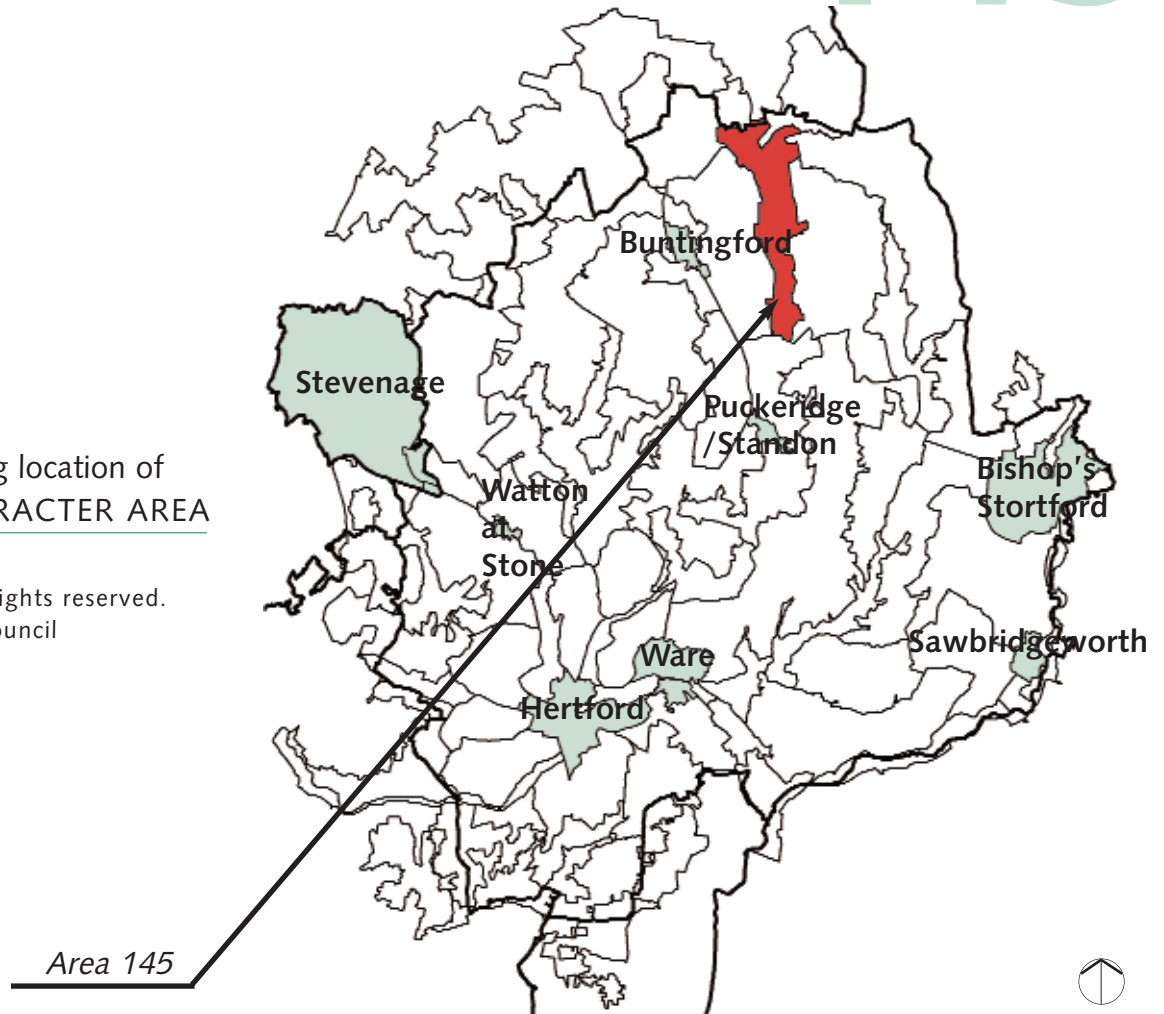


Lime avenue Whiteley Lane
(HCC Landscape Unit)

QUIN VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Valley of the River Quin located to the north of Braughing and extending northwards along the B1368 to Biggin Bridge (south of Barkway). Incorporates the settlements of Hare Street and Great Hormead.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A shallow valley around the River Quin with open arable farmland either side. A bland landscape with few treasures. The River Quin is poorly defined in many stretches with little or no streamside vegetation. Settlements and field patterns are focused on the B1368 which passes through the centre of the area. The area contains several twentieth century features which detract from the



quality of the area including: high voltage electricity pylons, chalk pit, Silkmead Farm industrial area, telecom masts, grain silos by Mutfords Farm and a sewage treatment works. The valley is sparsely vegetated but includes a substantial area of ornamental conifers north of Hare Street which form a dominant but inappropriate feature in the valley. The area includes the historic settlement of Great Hormead within a short, steep-sided tributary valley.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- shallow valley with gently sloping sides
- open, arable farmland
- small settlements and individual properties scattered along the B1368
- fragmented hedges, some low and broken, others more substantial
- frequent extensive views along and across the valley
- absence of woodland and few mature trees

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- telecom masts on distant horizon
- village of Great Hormead with many vernacular buildings in enclosed tributary valley
- B1368 passing through the centre of area

Silkmead Farm Quinn Valley (J.Billingsley)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The area is dominated by fluvo-glacial deposits from the Anglian glaciation, over much of the underlying chalk, except in some areas east of the river. Boulder clay occupies the upper valley slopes, and the valley floor has a narrow belt of recent alluvium. Soils are generally fertile, calcareous and well-drained due to the presence of sand. To the west side of valley soils are a mix of deep, fertile, well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and fine loamy soils, (Melford series). To the east side of valley there are areas of shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk (Upton 1series).

Topography. A shallow valley around the River Quin with gently sloping sides. At the northern end, the valley divides into three small shallow valleys, each following upper tributaries of the River Quin. At the southern end of the area (north of Braughing), the valley becomes slightly narrower with steeper sides.

Degree of slope. At the northern end of the valley the slopes are typically 1 in 20 and at the southern end slopes vary between 1 in 7 and 1 in 15.

Altitude range. Levels range between 73m in the valley bottom at Quinbury Farm (at the southern end of the valley) to 120m at the top of the valley sides (at the northern end of the valley).

Hydrology. The River Quin which rises near Barkway (north of the area) is a small and insignificant watercourse, typically a winterbourne, especially north of Great Hormead. The watercourse is fed by a number of sources including springs from Biggin Moor, Great Hormead Brook, Little Hormead Brook and various field ditches. Within the area, riverside vegetation is often absent which means the river is barely distinguishable at many points.

Land cover and land use. The valley sides are dominated by open arable farmland. Hedgerows between fields and along roads are fragmented. Some are low and broken with significant gaps and others more substantial. The area contains virtually no woodland, and map evidence, together with the cropmark evidence of early cultivation, suggests that woodland has not been a significant component in the landscape since a very early date. However, a significant block of mixed vegetation including a substantial proportion of ornamental conifers is present around a former works site to the north of Hare Street. This is visually intrusive and detracts from the character of the valley. A small area of trees and shrubs has also recently been planted close to Quinbury Farm. The valley also contains a few non-agricultural land uses including an industrial area at Silkmead Farm and a sewage works between Hay Street and Dassels.

Vegetation and wildlife. Owing to its fertile, well-drained soils, the area is almost devoid of semi-natural vegetation. There are some remaining neutral grasslands of local interest at Dassels, and some secondary grasslands and scrub on former allotments at Hare Street. The road verges of the B1368, and a green lane at Beauchamps are probably the most important remaining grasslands. There are no woods, and no aquatic habitats of any note. The chalk quarry west of Anstey is of local importance for a limited chalk flora on spoil banks etc.

The chalk spoil banks at Anstey Pit hold a significant colony of Kidney Vetch, as well as occasional plants of Woolly Thistle, both scarce in Hertfordshire. Tall Broomrape also occurs. The local arable weed Shepherd's Needle is known from fields at Hare Street. Pepper Saxifrage and Meadow Cranesbill survive in grasslands at Dassels.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The majority of its farmsteads and isolated houses are dispersed along the valley sides, with the settlements at Hare Street, Dassels and Great Hormead being sited on B1368, the road north from Braughing to Barkway, or on the B1038, the east-west road from Buntingford to Brent Pelham. These hamlets and villages all have medieval origins, as do the majority of farms within the area. Quinbury, Mutfords and Biggin Manor Farm are all medieval sites; and Biggin Farm is also the site of a medieval hospital and chapel. While the present day settlement pattern has medieval or post-medieval origins there are indications of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age activity along the valley, including an extant barrow at Bummers Hill and cropmarks of ring ditches (plough-raised burial mounds) at Lincoln Hill, Anstey and at Mutford's. A Bronze Age axe has been found at the latter site. Cropmarks of linear ditches and enclosures also provide evidence of undated, but early occupation and exploitation of the landscape. The villages of Hare Street and Great Hormead were once prosperous settlements and contain several large properties including Hare Street House, (the country residence of Catholic Archbishops of Westminster) the Georgian-fronted Dane End Farm in Great Hormead and the Tudor Old Rectory in Great Hormead. Until recently Great Hormead was known for its two windmills but these no longer remain.

Field Patterns. Fields units are typically large in size, particularly to the north, but locally there are some smaller units around settlements and properties. The field systems of the area were originally pre-18th century unenclosed common arable fields, and smaller 'irregular' enclosure fields, with the latter system predominating on the eastern side of the valley and at its southern end, close to and east of the river. Small areas of these 'irregular' enclosure field systems survive at Biggin Manor, Bandons, east of Hare Street and north east of Dassels, but nearly all the unenclosed common arable and irregularly enclosed field systems of pre-18th century date have been superseded. In the southern half of the area 20th century 'prairie' fields predominate, but substantial blocks of 18th century or later enclosure fields survive in the northern part of the area, north of the Hormead road. This contrasting survival appears to reflect the contour of the valley slope.

QUIN VALLEY - Area 145

Transport pattern. The B1368 runs through the area forming a locally important north-south route connecting the settlements of Barkway, Hare Street, Dassels, Braughing and Standon. At Hare Street the B1368 is crossed by the B1038 which is an east-west route providing routes to and from Buntingford. Several other minor roads connect with the B1368 and provide east-west connections across the valley. These are predominantly straight roads which join the B1368 at right angles.

Settlements and built form. The village is an historic settlement focussed around a central linear road. Pevsner refers to the village street as 'uncommonly charming' and it contains a large proportion of vernacular buildings many of which are thatched properties with large overhanging roofs and exposed timbers. The Three Tuns public house is a traditional pub in the centre of the village.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)



Towards Dassels (J.Billingsley)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is widely visible from the edge of the adjacent plateaux and from within the arable areas. Views are generally open and extensive due to the absence of significant blocks of vegetation. However, from the B1368 views are more infrequent and are often filtered or screened as a result of roadside vegetation. The settlement of Great Hormead is also visually contained due to its location within a narrow and relatively steep-sided valley.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area is a bland landscape with few distinctive features

VISUAL IMPACT

There are a number of detracting features along the length of the valley which affect the visual quality of the area. Hare Street includes a mixture of twentieth century development much of which does not compliment the older vernacular buildings in the village. To the north of Hare Street, a former works site contains a large number of coniferous trees which are highly visible and detract from the character of the river valley. Other detracting features in the area include a large silo on Mutfords Farm, Anstey quarry, Silkmead Farm industrial area and two high voltage powerlines which cross the valley north of Hare Street.

ACCESSIBILITY

Footpaths and bridlepaths cross the valley at regular intervals within the area. This includes a short section of the waymarked Hertfordshire Way which diverts across the valley from Great Hormead to Hare Street before crossing back across the valley to Little Hormead. However, there are few paths or bridleways in a north-south direction adjacent to the River Quin.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

An area of modest general regard but particularly valued locally, as evidenced by a community campaign to have the area included within a new AONB [D]

River Quin: "Sometimes the tiny feeders which swell the larger stream,
Will travel on the highway – a thing you'd scarcely dream;
And as for fords and bridges, they everywhere abound,
To lure the traveller onward where some goodly scene is found."

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	wide spread
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mixed
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	relic
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	moderate
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	apparent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open/exposed
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

QUIN VALLEY - Area 145

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

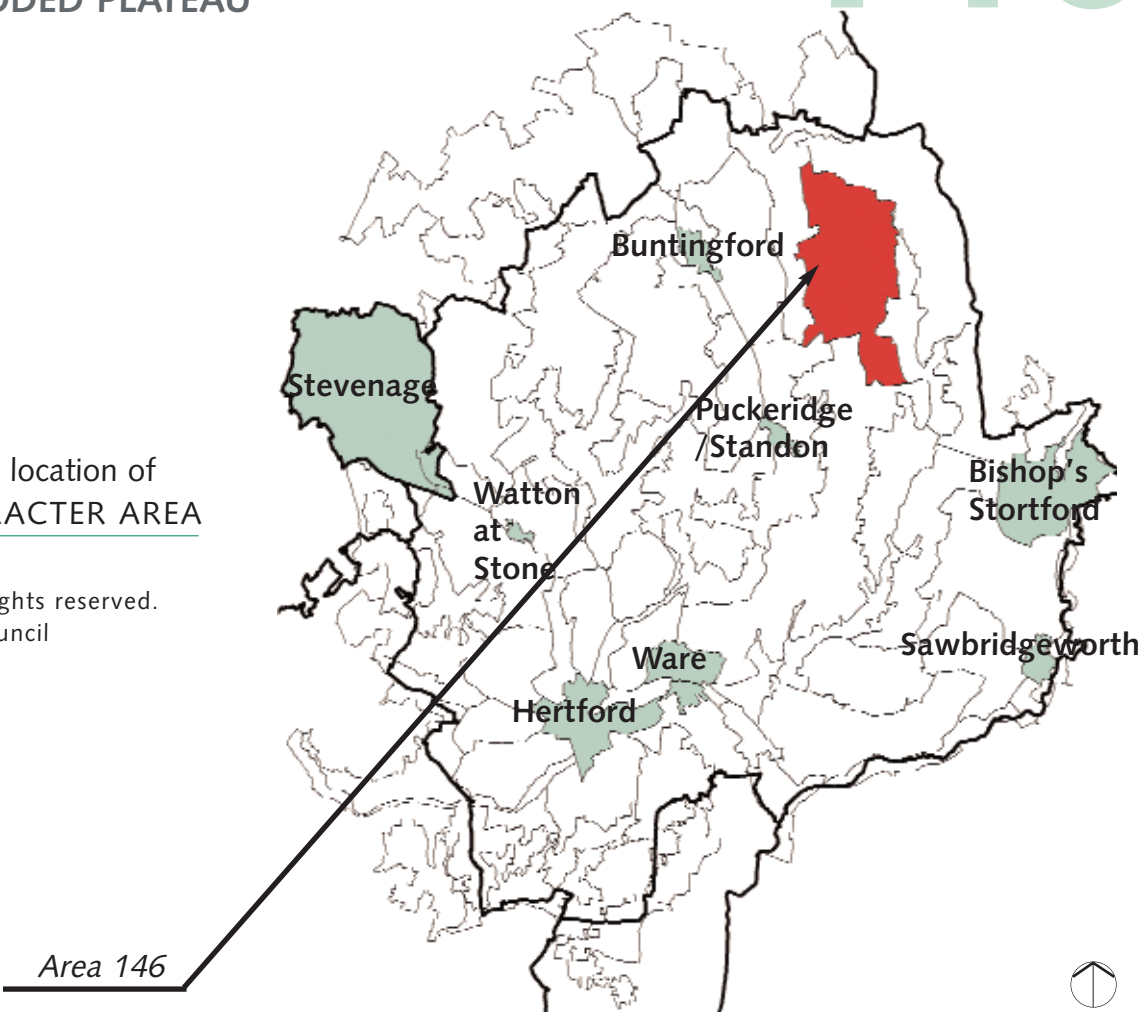
- ensure new planting is encouraged within the area. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens
- protect the remaining river valley habitats of nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain woodland and grazing marsh
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- promote the re-introduction of permanent pasture adjacent to the River Quin
- promote the enhancement of the River Quin and its tributaries by the creation of wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds and scrapes
- promote the management of existing riparian trees including pollarding where appropriate. Promote additional tree planting of native water loving species, willow, alder and poplar to emphasize the line of the watercourse
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements to reduce their acid or calcareous nature, in order to maintain their nature conservation value
- traffic calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the local the landscape character of the settlement. The use of unsympathetic materials, such as concrete paviers, coloured concrete and brightly coloured road markings should be avoided and kerbing should be kept to a minimum
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees
- encourage the development of an improved network of rights of way particularly along the valley giving enhanced recreational opportunities for residents



Mutfords Quinn Valley
(J.Billingsley)

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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 100019606 2004



LOCATION

Plateau area located between the valleys of the River Quin and the River Ash and extending to the edge of Anstey to the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Undulating plateau area with arable farmland and frequent woodland blocks especially on east side. In contrast the west side more open. Settlements of Little Hornead and Furneux Pelham are located on the edges of the plateau with no settlements other than occasional isolated farms in the centre of the plateau. Area has a quiet and empty feel with few roads or traffic. The woodland blocks create important features on the horizon

especially when seen from adjacent interfluves. Furneux Pelham Hall and the estate of the former Albury Hall include clusters of ponds and relics of parkland.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- gently undulating plateau
- frequent large woodland blocks especially on east side
- very little settlement in centre of the plateau, occasional isolated farms
- low, clipped hedges with few locally tall
- medium to large arable fields
- quiet area with few roads

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Furneux Pelham Hall
- Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath
- relic parkland area around former Albury Hall
- mixed broadleaf and conifer woodland blocks around Furneux Pelham Hall
- high voltage electricity pylons
- distant views to electricity transformer station in the east
- Little Hornead Church



Furneux Pelham (J.Billingsley)

HORMEAD WOODED PLATEAU - Area 146

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. This undulating plain is dominated largely by boulder clay, but with some of the underlying pre-glacial Tertiary deposits appearing in places, such as east of Great Hormead and around Albury Hall. These consist of localised gravels etc. Chalk also appears at the surface in a few places. Soils are slowly permeable calcareous and clayey over chalky till (Hanslope series). West of the former Albury Hall there is an area of deeper fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils (Bursledon series) over Eocene and Jurassic loam.

Topography. A large, gently undulating plateau area bordered to the east by the valley of the River Ash and to the west by the valley of the River Quin. Around the edge of the plateau the landform is more undulating and includes several shallow valleys formed by the upper part of tributaries to the River Ash and River Quin e.g. Little Hormead Brook and the upper section of Great Hormead Brook known as Black Ditch.

Degree of slope. The centre of the plateau has shallow slopes varying between 1 in 60 and 1 in 120. At the edges of the plateau, slopes are slightly steeper and range between 1 in 10 and 1 in 30.

Altitude range. At its highest point in the centre, the plateau reaches approximately 130m AOD. It falls away to the east and west to between 105m and 110m AOD

Hydrology. The plateau forms the watershed between the catchment areas for the River Quin to the west and the River Ash to the east. A series of ditches and narrow streams drain the agricultural land and flow off the plateau towards the River Quin or River Ash. There are also several ponds on the plateau particularly around Furneux Pelham Hall and the site of the former Albury Hall.

Land cover and land use. Arable farmland is the primary land use in the area with a large number of woodland blocks forming a significant secondary land use in the area particularly on the eastern side. The area is very sparsely populated with few farms and very little built development other than in the small village settlements of Furneux Pelham and Little Hormead on the edges of the plateau. The woodlands are generally substantial in size and some are deciduous while others are plantations with a mix of deciduous and coniferous species. There is a particularly dense concentration of woodland blocks in the vicinity of Furneux Pelham Hall and around the site of the former Albury Hall. There is evidence that much of the land is used for shooting.

Vegetation and wildlife. The majority of the plateau is arable farmland, especially on the boulder clay in the north. However, there are some extensive tracts of semi-natural woodland, mostly ash/maple, in the north, but with increasing hornbeam on the Tertiary deposits in the south. Important woods include Great Hormead Park, (SSSI), St Patrick's Wood, and the old, mainly secondary woodlands at Rotten Row and Furneux Pelham. The more acidic oak/hornbeam copses around Albury are relicts of a very large wood, long since destroyed (Albury Great Wood), with recent plantations. Old grasslands are almost non-existent, except for abandoned relicts at St John's, Pelham, and pastures at Great Hormead and Mutton Hall. Traces of more acidic grassland remain around Albury Hall. Road verges and green lanes are therefore important in this area e.g. there are patches of calcareous grassland on roadside banks at Furneux Pelham. Ponds at Albury Hall are locally valuable.

The area holds one of the only native populations of the true Oxlip in Hertfordshire, at Great Hormead Park Wood. Herb Paris and Greater Butterfly Orchid also persist in some woodlands. Albury Hall has the only remaining location in the County for Small Cudweed, a species of bare heathy ground. Some of the woodland areas and old buildings are notable for the scarce Whiskered Bat.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

While the present day settlement pattern has largely medieval origins there is evidence of activity throughout the area from the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age period. This includes cropmarks of at least three ring ditches (plough-raised prehistoric burial mounds), and groups of cropmarks, throughout the area, of linear ditches, enclosures, and trackways. These are largely undated, but provide evidence of early occupation and exploitation of the landscape. Settlement activity is also indicated by finds of Bronze Age and Romano-British pottery near Brick House Farm and a Roman quernstone near Great Hormead Park Wood. However, while the probable line of the Roman road linking the settlements at Braughing and Great Chesterford cuts across the plateau it is not followed by later routes, and does not appear to have acted as a focus for later human activity.

Farmsteads and isolated houses are dispersed across the plateau, and the larger settlement foci, the villages of Furneux Pelham, Albury, and Little Hormead are located on the lower plateau slopes, on or near the boundary of the area. These villages, and settlements such as Bozen Green, Patient's End and Puttocks End, have medieval origins, as do the majority of farms within the area.

Albury Hall, Great Hormead Hall, Little Hormead Bury, and Furneux Pelham Hall are all medieval manorial sites, and the deserted moat and fishponds of St Johns Pelham also have manorial origins. Former or extant medieval moats exist near Brick House Farm in Hormead, and possibly at Little Hormead Bury, at Duck Street, Furneux Pelham, Mutton Hall, and near The Hole and Parsonage Farm, in Albury. There are small remnants of informal parkland surviving around several of these manorial sites.

As a documented deerpark, the remaining informal parkland around Albury Hall has medieval origins and was recorded in the Domesday book of 1086. Since then the estate has had at least three different houses on different sites the most recent of which was taken over by the Army and RAF during the second world war and was used for secret service work including work with the French resistance. The house was demolished soon after the second world war, however, features and remnants of the former hall still remain including; the walled garden, parkland planting and steps, paths and terraces of the former formal gardens.

Field Patterns. There is a mixed pattern of field unit sizes throughout the area which locally combine with a number of small to medium sized woods and plantations. The field systems of the area were originally a combination of unenclosed common arable fields and smaller 'irregular' enclosure fields, both established before the 18th century. It also contained a sizable percentage of informal parklands including Albury Park. While much of this pattern has been superseded, by 18th century and later enclosure, there appears to be a notable difference in the survival of these earlier field systems. In the western half of the plateau there is a higher proportion of 20th century 'prairie' fields, succeeding 18th and 19th century enclosure, while the eastern half of the plateau contains a high percentage of fields of pre-18th century formation, and of pre-Parliamentary enclosure date. It is also notable that nearly all the current woodland is woodland plantation of 19-20th century date. Given the cropmark evidence for cultivation, it seems that woodland has not been a significant component in the landscape from a very early date.

Transport pattern. The area is large but contains only the B1038 which links Great Hormead with Brent Pelham and two other minor roads which provide east-west routes across the area. There are no north-south routes in the area. As a result there are large areas of land which are accessible only by farm tracks or public footpath/bridleway. The three roads through the area have narrow verges and are enclosed with low clipped hedges at many points. The road between Little Hormead and Furneux Pelham has a twisting organic form which follows the original field boundaries of the area. The B1038 and the road between Braughing and Patient End are straighter.

Settlements and built form. The area is sparsely populated other than in the small village settlements of Furneux Pelham and Little Hormead on the edges of the plateau. However the area contains an unusually large number of historically interesting buildings. The Norman church of St Mary's in Little Hormead contains what Pevsner calls 'the most lavish display of twelfth century ironwork'. In Furneux Pelham the large thirteenth century church with Hertfordshire spike and the sixteenth century brick manor house with stepped gables are both notable. Brick House is located to the north of the area and was built circa 1579 at a time when bricks were scarce. It is an unusual building with 4 feet thick walls in places, blocked slit windows and a curious '969' on one wall.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

www.alburyvillage.org.uk

English Nature SSSI notification

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)



Albury Hall parkland
(J.Billingsley)

HORMEAD WOODED PLATEAU - Area 146

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is visible from parts of the adjacent areas. In particular, the woodland blocks are significant features on the horizon and are important features in views from the adjacent interfluves.

Within the area, there is a mix of long distance extensive views over open arable land and others more limited by the woodland blocks. The scale of landscape elements is generally medium-large, with medium to large blocks of woodland and medium-large fields combining to give a sense of coherent visual unity. There is little intrusion from traffic, aircraft or built development which results in a tranquil area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This undulating arable landscape with mature woodlands is a simple but attractive landscape that is frequently found in Hertfordshire, particularly in the east. It is similar to the landscape of Area 150 (Hadham Plateau) and the less settled parts of Area 148 (Anstey and Pelhams Plateau).

VISUAL IMPACT

The area has little built development and contains few detracting features. A small mid twentieth century residential development on the north side of Furneux Pelham detracts from local views of the village from the Ash Valley and electricity pylons in the northern part of the area are a significant feature particularly in views from the north. From some parts of the area there are also distant views of Crabb Green electricity transformer station.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility within the area is varied. Several footpaths and bridleways cross the area including the Hertfordshire Way. These include paths which pass through or adjacent to several of the

large woodlands. However, there are also some large areas of land with little or no public access.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

An area now of modest general regard but particularly valued locally, as evidenced by a community campaign to have the area included within a new AONB [D]

"Here are peace, silence, stability, rest, abundant cornfields, tall and dignified copses, an overpowering scent of hawthorn in spring, birds unique in the county, one-storeyed, thatched villages in sleepy hollows, lanes that twist and turn and are deeply overgrown and liable to flood. No main road or railway penetrates the utter remoteness of this countryside on the Essex border" W Branch Johnson, 'A companion into Hertfordshire', Methuen & Co, 1952

Great Hornead: "It is a very peaceful situation on top of the hill [by Horseshoe lane] amid the elm trees" AJ Ford, 'The County's quiet corner', Hertfordshire Countryside Winter 1958/9 p120,121
 "I value the open countryside...ideal for cycle trips for all the family" (Respondent 0552)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Areas of Archaeological Significance - including around Furneux Pelham, Bozengreen Farm and to the west of Patrick's Wood
 Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest - The Thrift, St Patrick's Wood, High Wood, Furneux Pelham Hall and Conduit Spring (near Cockhamstead)
 SSSI - Great Hornead Park
 SM - St John's Pelham moated site and fishpond

CONDITION

- Land cover change:*
- Age structure of tree cover:*
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:*
- Management of semi-natural habitat:*
- Survival of cultural pattern:*
- Impact of built development:*
- Impact of land-use change:*

- localised
- mature/young
- scattered
- not obvious
- interrupted
- low
- low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform:*
- Impact of land cover:*
- Impact of historic pattern:*
- Visibility from outside:*
- Sense of enclosure:*
- Visual unity:*
- Distinctiveness/rarity:*

- apparent
- prominent
- apparent
- locally visible
- partial
- coherent
- frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- for existing woodlands, encourage the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities, hedgebank management and re-establishing a rich ground flora
- improve public access arrangements to woodlands with attention to car park design and safety
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice with standards and woodpasture
- promote through education and access the multiple uses of ancient woodland
- encourage the dissemination of information about the historic importance and appropriate management of woodland features such as banks and ditches
- seek to resolve conflicts arising from competing uses and activities in woodland
- in areas of new woodland and hedgerow planting use native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value in Hormead Hall, Furneux Pelham Hall and the estate of the former Albury Hall
- in parklands ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- in parklands and historic gardens hard landscaping details such as steps, balustrades, pond copings, statuary and urns should be conserved. Replacements should be in facsimile and in natural materials. Gazebos, temples, follies, grottoes, obelisks, park bridges, ice houses, terraces, ha-has, boundary walls, gates and gate piers should contribute to the planned landscape and its setting. Replacement, renovated or new features should be architect-designed and in keeping with their original setting
- in areas of former parkland encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland
- restrict ploughing of grasslands within parklands
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to reduce impact on the character of the local landscape.
- restoration of ditches and discouragement of enclosing existing open drainage systems
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible.
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- promote the restoration of hedge improvement and planting adjacent to rights of way, green lanes and along parish boundaries
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges

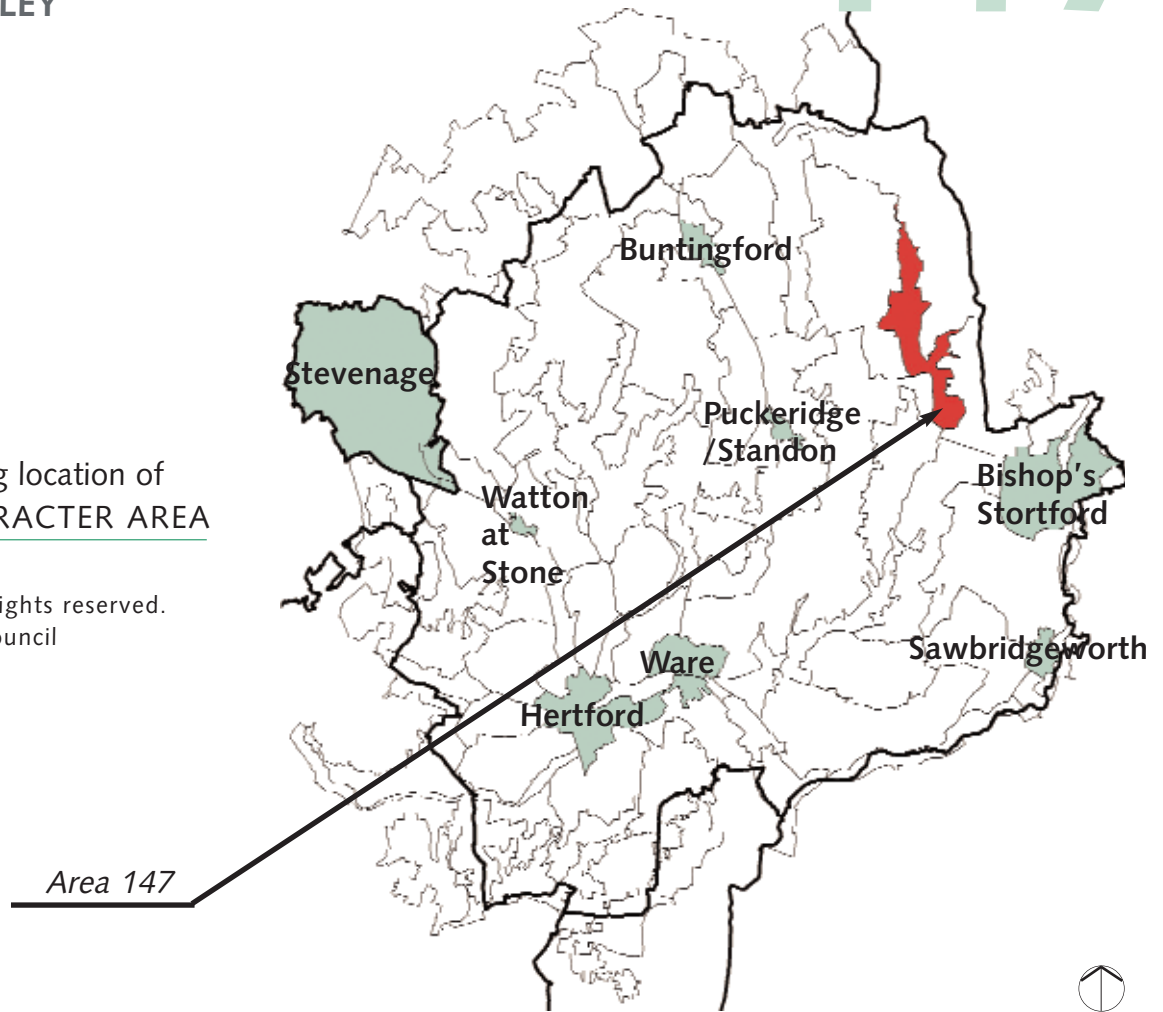


Little Hormead
(HCC Landscape Unit)

UPPER ASH VALLEY

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Valley of the River Ash from north of Little Hadham extending northwards to Brent Pelham. Bordered to the east by the Anstey Pelhams Plateau and to the west by the Hormead Wooded Plateau.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Narrow valley, locally very constricted by landform and woodland. To the north, open arable slopes run down to embryonic watercourse and ancient Violets Lane trackway which is densely lined with trees and shrubs. To south, valley is more open with the watercourse less defined and scattered woodland blocks on the



upper edges of the valley slopes. The area includes the small, nucleated settlements of Clapgate and Barleycroft End located close to crossing points on the River Ash but little other settlement within the valley. Mixed native species hedgerows are widespread especially along lanes.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow valley landform
- small to medium scale arable fields on valley slopes
- scattered woodland blocks on upper edges of valley slopes
- River Ash well defined in places by mature streamside vegetation
- occasional pockets of grassland used for sheep grazing
- extensive views across the valley from adjacent plateaux
- similarity of opposing valley slopes

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- electricity pylons cross the northern end of the valley
- electricity transformer station visible to the east
- Violets Lane - ancient trackway adjacent to River Ash
- recent housing development in converted brewery at Barleycroft End
- views to Pelham churches

Ash Valley near Albury (J.Billingsley)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The valley contains a mix of various loams, gravels, sands and other Tertiary and peri-glacial deposits, overlying the chalk, which also appears frequently at the surface. This variation also locally rises onto the adjacent plateau edges e.g. at Patmore Heath (see Area 148). The main soil type are the loams (Melford series).

Topography. A shallow valley around the River Ash with gently sloping sides. The area includes a narrow tributary valley to the north of Clapgate with slightly steeper sides. At the northern end the valley slopes are particularly shallow and the valley formation is not clearly distinguishable from the adjacent areas. At the southern end, between Gravesend and Little Hadham, the valley sides are steeper and the route twists to create a more pronounced and enclosed valley feature. Locally the valley bottom broadens with small areas of floodplain.

Degree of slope. Typical slopes vary between 1 in 15 and 1 in 30. Locally, slopes increase to between 1 in 7 and 1 in 10.

Altitude range. The upper valley slopes are typically between 100m and 105m with the valley bottom ranges between 70m at the southern end to 95 - 100m at the northern end.

Hydrology. The River Ash rises to the north west of Brent Pelham (north of the area) where it forms a narrow, shallow and seasonalbourne which passes through the centre of the area. The ditches and minor tributaries flow in to the river and drain the surrounding land. To the north of Barleycroft End the river bed is an ancient trackway known as Violets Lane which is reputed to be the longest ford in the country. In Bogs Wood on the valley sides, there are a series of spring-fed old stew ponds.

Land cover and land use. The valley sides are predominantly open farmland under arable production with some local areas of mixed woodland to the west of Gravesend and the south of Clapgate. A small area of parkland associated with the estate of the former Albury Hall is used for sheep grazing.

Vegetation and wildlife. Ancient woodlands in the valley are limited except for Ninno Woods and Upwick Wood which are basically hornbeam on more-or-less acidic soils. Violets Spring is a more calcareous woodland, of ash/maple and hornbeam. Old semi-natural grassland is rare.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There are indications of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age and later activity along the valley, including several undated cropmarks of former field systems and maculae (possibly former quarries), evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity close to Church End, Little Hadham, the deep hollow way running from Patmore Heath to Patmore Hall, and finds such as a Neolithic stone axe and a small Late Bronze Age 'founders' hoard of bronze axes and metal from Furneux Pelham.

The hamlets of Gravesend, Barleycroft End and Clapgate, are strung along the road from Little Hadham to Brent Pelham, and the latter two are also close to crossing points over the Ash. They all have medieval origins, but evidence of the wider settlement pattern in these later periods is fragmentary. At Barleycroft End, the line of the ancient route northwards to Brent Pelham is preserved by Violets Lane, and place-name evidence suggests that the site of the meeting place of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval hundred of Edwinstree may have been on the west side of the lane, just north of Barleycroft End.

Field Patterns. Within the valley field sizes are typically small to medium, with some localised areas of larger amalgamation. The area was originally dominated by small and medium 'irregularly' enclosed fields systems, established before the 18th century, though there were also some areas of enclosed meadow pasture along the Ash, and of unenclosed common arable, particularly to the south of Furneux Pelham village, and at the southern end of the valley. An exceptionally high proportion of this pre-18th century field pattern has survived, with substantial areas of these irregularly enclosed fields at the head of the valley in Brent Pelham, to the north of Gravesend, and especially around Clapgate and Patmore Heath. There is a correspondingly small percentage of 20th century 'prairie' fields throughout the area. This pattern is only significantly interrupted to the north of Furneux Pelham, where a block of surviving pre-Parliamentary enclosure fields superseded the earlier pattern, and by small areas of 19th and 20th century woodland plantations in the centre of the area.

Transport pattern. A local road passes along the length of the valley connecting the settlements of Barleycroft End, Gravesend, Clapgate and Little Hadham. Several minor roads connect with this, many of which are sunken. The northern end of the valley (north of Barleycroft End) contains only narrow minor roads and an ancient trackway known as Violets Lane.

Settlements and built form. Settlement is concentrated in the villages of Barleycroft End, Gravesend and Clapgate. Elsewhere, there are large areas with no farms or houses other than occasional isolated properties on the upper edge of the valley sides e.g. Whitebarns, Little Mead and Church End Farm. Barleycroft End includes a brewery and malt house which have recently been converted to a residential development.

UPPER ASH VALLEY - Area 147

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is locally visible from the adjacent plateaux and from the open arable areas within the valley. Views of the arable farmland are generally extensive both across and along the valley. Flint towers and Hertfordshire spires of the churches in the surrounding area are a characteristic feature in distant views. Locally however, some views are blocked or framed by the woodland and belts of mature vegetation within the valley. Upwick Wood and Ninno Wood on steep valley sides (to the south of Clapgate) locally create a narrow, concealed area with few views into or out of the area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area has a distinctive and relatively unusual character. It incorporates planned features such as the parkland around Albury Hall and regular-shaped arable fields in the valley floor with organic and irregular features such as the settlement of Clapgate and irregular field patterns on some of the upper valley slopes.

VISUAL IMPACT

The area has few detracting features particularly in the southern half. The most significant visual impact is created in the north of the area by two high voltage power lines which cross the valley and long distance views of the electricity transformer station at Crabb's Green. A twentieth century housing development on the edge of Furneux Pelham and modern housing in Clapgate also create localised visual intrusion.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a good network of public footpaths within the area providing good accessibility for walkers through most of the area. Access for equestrians and cyclists is poorer with few bridleways in the area. Two waymarked routes - the Hertfordshire Way and the Harcamlow Way, cross the southern part of the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This valley is of significant general regard and particularly valued locally, as evidenced by a community campaign to have the area included within a new AONB [C]
Furneux Pelham: "Wide views south over common and woods...Violets lane, an ancient and mysterious holloway, a green tunnel in summer" RM Healey 'Hertfordshire: A Shell Guide' 1982

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest - Ninno Wood, Upwick Wood, Violets Lane and Bogs Wood

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature/young
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	relic
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	apparent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- ensure new planting is encouraged within the area. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens
- protect the remaining river valley habitats of nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain woodland and grazing marsh
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- promote the re-introduction of permanent pasture adjacent to the River Ash
- promote the enhancement of the River Ash and its tributaries by the creation of wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds, scrapes and pollarded willows
- promote additional tree planting of native water loving species, willow, alder and poplar to emphasize the line of the watercourse
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements to reduce their acid or calcareous nature, in order to maintain their nature conservation value
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches, hedges and hedgerow trees
- encourage the development of an improved network of rights of way particularly along the valley giving enhanced recreational opportunities for residents
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value in the estate of the former Albury Hall
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors
- in parklands ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate



Near Furneux Pelham (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable Pleistocene Anglian boulder clay dominates the landscape, with chalk at depth and calcareous clayey soils (Hanslope series). At the plateau edges soils change to mix of deep well drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils. Around Patmore Heath small area of sands and gravels with slowly permeable subsoils over Eocene and Jurassic loam and clay (Bursledon series) result in acidic soils with seasonal waterlogging.

Topography. A gently undulating plateau with smooth slopes, predominantly to the west, towards the adjacent river valley of the River Ash and its tributaries. Locally, slopes are more pronounced e.g. around Anstey where a broad shallow valley runs east-west along an upper tributary to the River Quin.

Degree of slope. Slopes are typically 1 in 30 within the plateau. Around Anstey and Meesden, the slopes increase to between 1 in 14 and 1 in 20.

Altitude range. Levels typically range between 100m and 125m. A local high point of 140m is reached at Manor Farm in Meesden.

Hydrology. The plateau acts as a major watershed between the Stort and Ash basins, with many minor streams flowing west towards the Ash on the Hertfordshire side of the boundary. Small upland ponds some which may have derived in part from periglacial ice-hollows occur regularly throughout the area with a particularly large number in Meesden and on Patmore Heath. The ponds at Patmore Heath are of County significance, being acidic and oligotrophic.

Land cover and land use. The plateau is gently undulating and is predominantly used for arable farming other than around settlements where the land use is often pasture. Significant woodland blocks (both deciduous and mixed deciduous/conifer) are scattered throughout the area particularly around Meesden and Brent Pelham. Some of the woodlands and arable land are used for bird shooting and belts of cover crops such as maize are relatively common. The electricity transformer station at Crabb's Green occupies a substantial area of land near Stocking Pelham.

Vegetation and wildlife. The calcareous boulder clay generally dictates the nature of habitats, and much of the area is now open arable. There are some woodlands in which ash, maple and hazel predominate, almost entirely ancient semi-natural coppice-with-standards such as at Northey Wood, Beeches Wood, Hall Wood and Oxbury Wood. Field elm is a frequent feature in many of these, and of remaining old hedges. Unimproved neutral or moderately calcareous grassland was formerly a feature around villages, but is now rare, with important remnants at Meesden Green, Crabbs Green and The Hale at Anstey. Wetland habitats are scarce, but include the important ponds around Meesden and Crabbs Green. New excavations associated with the electricity transformer station have added to the latter. Some important old green lanes exist, such as those east of Brent Pelham, and road verge grassland can be locally important.

Some woodlands have important flora, such as Herb Paris, Thin-spiked Wood Sedge and Greater Butterfly Orchid around Anstey and Brent Pelham. The ponds at Meesden and Crabbs Green hold Great Crested Newts, as well as a range of aquatic invertebrates, while the old grassland at Meesden Green is well-known for its flowers, including orchids and Hay Rattle etc. Patmore Heath is an almost unique enclave of acidic grass-heath

in an otherwise more usual Hertfordshire arable farmland landscape, although clearings in Patmore Hall Wood (see Area 150) nearby, are similar ecologically.

Patmore Heath holds a large number of scarce species, including Marsh Violet at its site in the County, as well as Heath Rush, Bird's-foot, Star Sedge, Southern Marsh Orchid, Mat Grass, Purple Moor-grass, Marsh Willowherb etc. It formerly held the last remaining plants of Cross-leaved Heath in the County, but this is now probably extinct. The dominant bramble on the Heath, *Rubus proietus*, is almost restricted to this site in the County. The ponds on the Heath have an important invertebrate fauna, including Black Darter dragonfly, as well as having one of the few County colonies of Palmate Newt. Wild Daffodils are especially notable around in woods around Patmore Hall, while the calcareous grassland at Upwick Wood has local plants like Rockrose and Clustered Bellflower.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is some evidence, mainly in the form of cropmarks of ring ditches (plough-raised burial mounds) and enclosures, for earlier prehistoric occupation in the area and substantial evidence for occupation throughout the Late Iron Age, Roman and later periods. The Roman road from from Braughing to Great Chesterford runs through Brent Pelham and Meesden and Roman occupation material has been recorded at several points close to its route.

In addition to its villages, the area retains a network of small settlements and farmsteads and greens, trackways and field systems, mainly of medieval origin. These include the small Greens and Ends of the area, numerous medieval moated sites, and several sites indicating former settlement which has shifted or declined. At Anstey Hall the moated site is the successor to the medieval motte and bailey castle there, but examples have survived adjacent to the manorial sites of Meesden Bury and Stocking Pelham and at less high-status sites such as Crabbs Green Farm. Totally abandoned moats also survive, with 'Shonk's Moat' and Chamberlains in Brent Pelham being fine examples.

The Domesday Book shows that Anstey (known then as Anestige) already existed as a village when Count Eustace of Boulogne came into possession of the manor. It is likely that he was responsible for construction of the castle in the village which was destroyed during Henry III's reign. There is a local myth that anyone entering the passage that connects a chalk pit with the castle dungeons will never come out again alive. It is said that one such individual who took this route, known as Blind George the Fiddle, was indeed never seen again. St George's church, Anstey, is large and impressive with a Norman tower and traditional Hertfordshire spike.

The villages of Meesden, Brent Pelham and Stocking Pelham all have attractive village churches. In Meesden the church is set away from the village and is basically 12th century but was rebuilt in 1877 by the Victorians. It has an unusual 16th century brick porch and a rare mosaic of glazed tiles thought to be fourteenth century.

ANSTEY & PELHAMS PLATEAU - Area 148

The church in Brent Pelham is 14th century with a 15th century tower and Hertfordshire spike. It contains an unusual 13th century monument to a local resident called Piers Shonks who is reputed to have killed a local dragon. It is believed that Brent Pelham gained its name as a result of a fire in the early twelfth century hence the term 'Brent' originating from 'Burnt'.

Field Patterns. The field pattern of the area originally comprised widespread small and medium sized 'irregular' enclosure field systems, areas of unenclosed common arable fields e.g. south of Brent Pelham and west of Stocking Pelham, and areas of commons with open margins, informal parkland, and small blocks of ancient woodland, all established before the 18th century. While at least half of this this pattern has been superseded, by 18th century and later enclosure, and 'prairie' fields, these pre-18th century systems largely survive to a greater extent e.g. in Anstey, and around Brent Pelham village, Dawes Green, Patmore Heath and Hall, and Upwick Green.

Transport pattern. The area is served by a network of winding minor roads and lanes which connect the various small settlements throughout the area. Some roads are slightly sunken and most have narrow verges and are enclosed with mature hedges. Hedgebanks and wet ditches are present along some of the lanes. There are noticeably few links to the east towards Essex.

Settlements and built form. Villages and hamlets are scattered throughout the area including Meesden, Anstey, and Brent and Stocking Pelham. These are mainly medieval in origin and have further developed in a linear form along the minor roads and lanes which connect the different settlements. For example, the road between Barleycroft End and Stocking Pelham is bordered by settlement for most of its length. More nucleated settlements are found at Patmore Heath and Brent Pelham. Most of the settlements contain a large number of attractive, vernacular properties including timber framed and thatched properties. The use of bright-coloured renders on many of these properties is a distinctive feature in this area. Traditional country pubs are also a feature of most of the villages providing an attractive feature and important focus for the local communities.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature SSSI notification
 Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)



Towards Meesden
 (HCC Landscape Unit)

ANSTEY & PELHAMS PLATEAU - Area 148

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are few views of the area from the adjacent areas of the valleys of the River Ash, River Quin and River Stort due to its plateau character. Within the area, mature hedgerows and woodland blocks provide a sense of containment and filter or screen long distance views. Short and medium distance views are frequent. The area is generally tranquil and has a coherent rural character.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area has a distinctive rural character which is a fairly frequent landscape type within the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

The electricity transformer station at Crabb's Green (south of Stocking Pelham) and the associated high voltage cable lines which cut across the landscape are visually intrusive and highly visible from a wide area. There are few other intrusive features within the area.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a good network of public footpaths and bridleways within the area providing good accessibility through most of the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The area is of regard and currently the subject of a community campaign to be designated as an AONB. Most notably it contains

the highly valued site of Patmore Heath [B]

"I have no respect for those topographers who would have us believe that every place they visit is of ideal beauty...between Wyddial and the confines of Furneux Pelham I have seen little to attract the eye" M Tompkins 'Highways & Byways in Hertfordshire' 1902

Re Pat more Heath: "An area of natural beauty" (0876); "A rare example of acid heath land" (0986); "It is really vital to keep these natural unspoilt areas" (3384) Re Stocking Pelham sub station: "This is an eyesore" (0853)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATION

Areas of Archaeological Significance - including Stocking Pelham Hall, area around Maiden village, area between Maiden Bury and Maiden Hall

Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest - Hall Wood (Stocking Pelham), East Wood, Northery Wood, Hale Hill, Five Acre Wood, Meesden Green, White Hill, Smaley Wood, Oxbury Wood, Shaw Wood and Beeches Wood.

SSSI's - Pit and Patmore Heath

Conservation Areas - Anstey village, Crabb's Green and Brent Pelham village

SMS - Moated mound near Hale Farm, Pain's End moated site, Anstey motte and bailey castle, Moated mound at Cole Green near Brent Pelham, Shonk's moat enclosure and fishpond and Chamberlain's Moat

CONDITION

- Land cover change:*
- Age structure of tree cover:*
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:*
- Management of semi-natural habitat:*
- Survival of cultural pattern:*
- Impact of built development:*
- Impact of land-use change:*

- localised
- mature/young
- scattered
- not obvious
- interrupted
- low
- low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform:*
- Impact of land cover:*
- Impact of historic pattern:*
- Visibility from outside:*
- Sense of enclosure:*
- Visual unity:*
- Distinctiveness/rarity:*

- apparent
- dominant/prominent
- dominant/prominent
- concealed
- partial
- unified
- frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

ANSTEY & PELHAMS PLATEAU - Area 148

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- for existing woodlands, encourage the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities, hedgebank management and re-establishing a rich ground flora
- improve public access arrangements to woodlands with attention to car park design and safety
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice with standards and woodpasture
- plant belt of native planting around perimeter of Crabb's Green electricity transformer station to reduce impact on views from the surrounding area
- utilize ancient hedge and field boundaries to locate the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion
- restoration of arable land to permanent pasture and meadow. Priority should be given to land which buffers or links sites of existing wildlife importance
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors
- promote the expansion of woodland beyond ancient woodland boundaries, especially where this will help in creating habitat links
- encourage the dissemination of information about the historic importance and appropriate management of woodland features such as banks and ditches
- seek to resolve conflicts arising from competing uses and activities in woodland
- promote crop diversification, buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the restoration of mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges.
- ensure new planting in historic parklands is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- in historic parklands encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that 'Garden' details are be screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible and use native local provenance stock where possible
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement of ponds and open ditches for wildlife
- resist any development, reclamation or drainage of Patmore Heath and areas adjacent to it
- establish realistic and attractive countryside management schemes for Patmore Heath

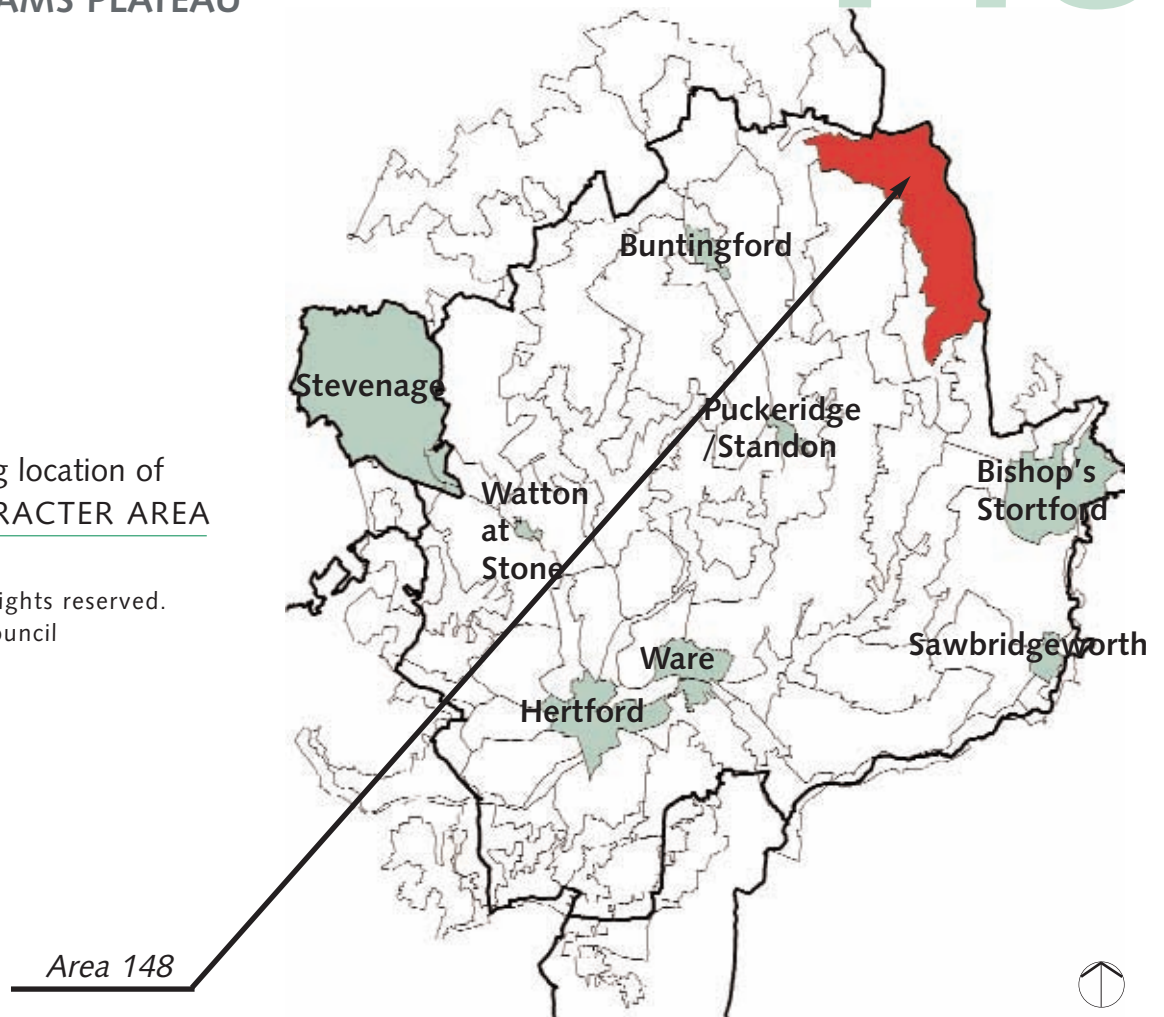


Towards Meesden and Scales Park
(HCC Landscape Unit)

ANSTEY & PELHAMS PLATEAU

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire County Council
100019606 2004



LOCATION

Located to the east of the River Ash valley and extends north towards the Nuthampstead Plateau. Incorporates the villages of Anstey, Meesden, Brent Pelham, Stocking Pelham and Gravesend. The area generally forms an extended, high ridge separating Hertfordshire from Essex. Its natural boundaries extend into Essex.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The area is an extensive plateau bounded by the valleys of the Rivers Quin and Ash to the west and the River Stort to the east. The area could also be described as the Essex Marches, sharing similar characteristics with the landscape to the east. An organic, ancient landscape with frequent settlements containing a high proportion of vernacular properties. The plateau is gently



undulating and is predominantly used for arable farming other than around settlements where the land use is often pasture. The area has a strong rural character with many village pubs, flint churches, a good rights of way network and prominent scattered blocks of woodland. An electricity transformer station at Stocking Pelham and the associated high voltage power lines which stride across the landscape are a major eyesore in an otherwise mature landscape where cultural patterns are generally intact.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- undulating plateau area
- tranquil, rural area
- medium scale arable farmland enclosed by mixed species hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees
- scattered small woodland blocks
- frequent villages with strong vernacular architecture
- small to medium pockets of pastoral fields around and within villages
- slightly sunken lanes

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

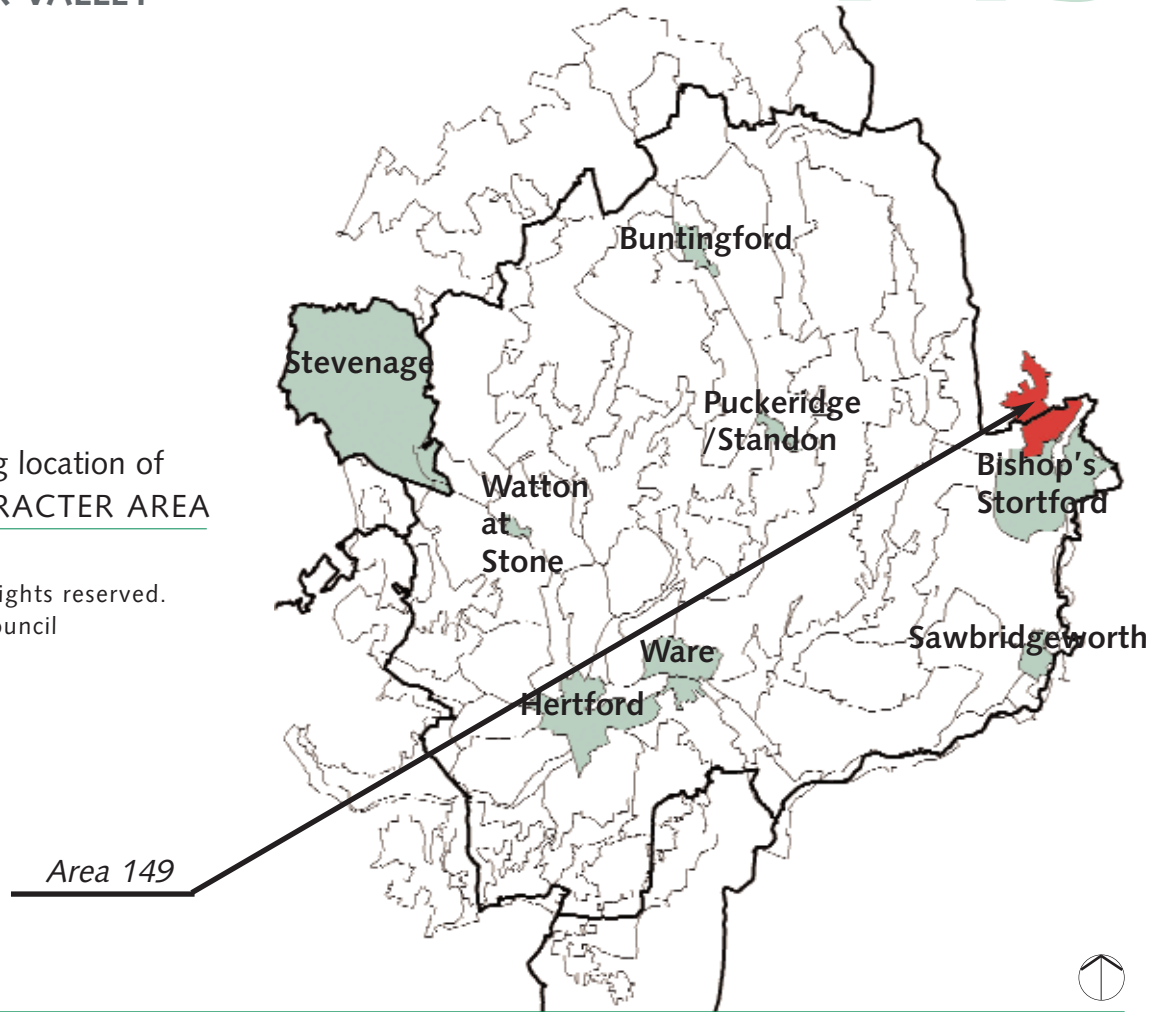
- many pubs and brightly coloured houses
- pollarded oaks
- Patmore Heath - a scarce example of grass heath habitat with ponds
- common land with ponds in the village of Meesden
- electricity transformer station

Patmore Heath (J.Billingsley)

BOURNE BROOK VALLEY

District map showing location of **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA**

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

Valley of Bourne Brook extending from the northern edge of Bishop's Stortford to the county boundary with Essex. Area is predominantly enclosed between the A120 and the edge of Bishop's Stortford.

across the valley partly in cutting and partly on an embankment close to the county boundary, forming a strong dividing feature within the area. To the north, close to the county of Essex, the area has a stronger rural and valley character with arable land use predominant.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Valley landscape formed by Bourne Brook with a strong urban fringe character. Land uses include: an animal sanctuary, higher education college, horse paddocks, set-aside, works yard and a disused quarry which has been used for fly-tipping. The A120 cuts

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- valley topography of Bourne Brook with series of shallow valleys and ridges on either side
- areas of poor pasture and urban fringe land uses around the edge of Bishop's Stortford
- arable farming along the northern edge adjacent to the county boundary with Essex



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- A120 in cutting and on embankment
- views towards the edge of Bishop's Stortford
- works yard and disused lime quarry adjacent to county boundary forming eyesores

Bourne Brook winterbourne
(J.Billingsley)

BOURNE BROOK VALLEY - Area 149

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The upper slopes of the valleys north of Bishops Stortford are capped with calcareous Anglian boulder clay, but extensive fluvo-glacial gravels and sands etc. occur on the valley sides. Chalk outcrops on the Herts/Essex border near Foxdells Farm. There is a mix of deep well drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils (Milford series). The area also includes small pocket of drift over the tertiary clays (Wickham 4 series).

Topography. Undulating area comprising a series of shallow valleys and ridges leading in to the valley formed by Bourne Brook. General slope to the south-east towards Bishop's Stortford.

Degree of slope. Typically between 1 in 10 and 1 in 15 on lower valley slopes to Bourne Brook and between 1 in 20 and 1 in 30 on upper valley slopes.

Altitude range. High points of 95m and 80m on ridges either side of valley falling to approximately 60m at the confluence of Bourne Brook with the River Stort.

Hydrology. The tributary streams of the River Stort, Bourne Brook and at Foxdells Farm are seasonal bournes standing dry for much of the year. There is virtually no standing water in the area. There are several small ponds around Whitehall College (on the south side of Dane O'Coys Road).

Land cover and land use. The area contains a mix of land uses. Around the southern edge, adjacent to Bishop's Stortford, the land has typical urban fringe uses including former allotments, college of education, playing fields, animal sanctuary, horse grazing, rough grassland and setaside areas. On the northern edge, adjacent to the county boundary with Essex, most land is used for arable farming. A disused lime quarry and unsightly works yard are located adjacent to the county boundary on the road to Farnham. The area also includes two substantial blocks of woodland: Hazelend Wood and Hoggates Wood.

Parts of Area 149 to the South of the A120 bypass have long-standing Local Plan designation as Special Countryside Area and Areas of Special Restraint. If required, under a review the Local Plan these will be brought forward for development, although until such time that they are required they will remain as open countryside.

Vegetation and wildlife. Semi-natural habitat remains in the form of some fairly extensive semi-improved neutral grasslands at Foxdells Farm on glacial gravels, and semi-natural, mainly hornbeam/ash/hazel woodland at Hazelend Wood, which is of local value. Chalk grassland remnants persist around Farnham Quarry and adjoining road verges, while secondary calcareous grassland exists at the former allotments north of Bishop's Stortford.

Farnham Quarry has some local chalk plants, such as Tall Broomrape, while the former allotments have one of the largest known colonies of Bee Orchid in the County, and scarce species, such as the County's only extant site for Pale Flax.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is little historic environment data available, but flint axes of Palaeolithic date are known from the area. There is also evidence for gravel extraction brick making near nearby. The historic pattern of this area is masked by current urban fringe land uses. Whitehall College, a large Edwardian property with 21 acres of parkland is now a residential education centre. The grounds contain the remains of a World War II air raid shelter which was built for the Gilbey's who were living there at that time. The grounds also contain a Rhododendron Walk which was planted as an ornamental carriage drive. Hoggates Wood is probably named after a local family with this surname, as a Richard Hogate appears in parish records in the late 16th-century.

Field Patterns. Within the Hertfordshire boundary the historic field pattern is predominantly pre-18th-century irregular enclosure, however the area has been subject to successive enclosure and the affects of urban development. Small areas of 'irregular' enclosure fields, enclosed meadow pasture, and woodland, survive at its eastern end, where the land use was, and still is, more mixed.

Transport pattern. The A120 passes through the area partly in cutting and partly on embankment. This is a large and busy road constructed in the 1970s that cuts across the topography and landscape patterns of the area. Two local roads also pass through the area providing routes to Hazel End and Farnham. These are narrow, minor roads which are old routes in to Bishop's Stortford. They were both altered in the 1970s to accommodate the construction of the A120.

Settlements and built form. The area is sparsely populated with several isolated properties mainly located in the southern part of the area adjacent to the edge of Bishop's Stortford. These include Dane O'Coys Farm, Whitehall College and Foxdells Farm.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are limited filtered and framed views into the area from the A120 when it is on embankment. From elsewhere in the surrounding areas there are few views. Views within the area are generally short or medium distance and are limited by the undulating topography. The area is generally incoherent due to the range of land uses and the presence of the A120 which divides the area into two. Much of the area feels neglected and poorly maintained.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area is generally unremarkable with the exception of Hoggates Wood Ancient Woodland. It is fairly typical of urban fringe areas in Hertfordshire.

VISUAL IMPACT

The area contains a considerable number of detracting features. The urban edge of Bishops Stortford is prominent to the south and the A120 is prominent as it passes around the northern side of the area. Urban fringe land uses such as the works area, fly tipping and lime quarry on the Farnham road and the rough grassland and set aside areas around Foxdells Farm also detract from the general quality of the area.

ACCESSIBILITY

There are several well-used footpaths in the area providing easy access from the urban area of Bishops Stortford to the rural areas beyond. However, the area contains no bridleways.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

The area as a whole, but particularly that part lying between the A120 and the town is very highly regarded [A] "A beautiful peaceful area much needed for recreation." D Watts, <http://freespace.virgin.net/gary.aldam/chantry/CAUSE/> 1999 "used for walks regularly" (Respondent 0840) "From the edge of town you can see right across the hills - an uninterrupted view which is rare so near to town...I love the view across to Hassobury house" (Respondent 0900). Of Foxdells Farm in particular: "an attractive group of buildings nestling in a tiny hilly micro-landscape of beech and pasture" (Respondent 4338, SPD Consultation 2006); and "...open green pasture and valued as a welcome break from the urban area of Bishop's Stortford" (Respondent 3017). "The views above Farnham Road are very valuable as no settlement can be seen and there is a strong sense of rural isolation" (Respondent 4338, SPD Consultation 2006).

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest - Hazeland Wood, Hoggates Wood and part of Dane O'Coys Farm
Ancient Woodland – Hoggates Wood

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	wide spread
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature/young
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	scattered
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	poor
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	moderate
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	apparent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	incoherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

BOURNE BROOK VALLEY - Area 149

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- improve public access to and multiple uses of woodlands
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice with standards and woodpasture
- encourage the reversal of habitat fragmentation and the creation and improvement of habitat links to create eco-corridors
- promote the expansion of woodland beyond ancient woodland boundaries, especially where this will help in creating habitat links
- encourage the dissemination of information about the historic importance and appropriate management of woodland features such as banks and ditches
- in areas of new planting use native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- protect remaining river valley habitats along the River Bourne of significant nature conservation interest
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible
- promote the management and restoration of ditches and discouragement of enclosing existing open drainage systems
- promote the restoration of hedge improvement and planting adjacent to rights of way, green lanes and along parish boundaries
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that 'Garden' details are be screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges.
- native tree species only should be planted on boundaries, with exotic/ornamental species only in close proximity to the dwelling
- promote the creation of buffer strips along watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- promote a planting strategy for screening the features creating visual impact including the A120, built forms to the edge of Bishops Stortford and the lime quarry and storage areas



From Dane O'Coys to Bishop's Stortford
(J.Billingsley)

HADHAMS PLATEAU - Area 150

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Mainly slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series). In contrast to Area 148 the boulder clay thinly overlies Tertiary period Reading Formations, and soils tend to be neutral and more free-draining. At the plateau edges soils change to mix of deep well drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils.

Topography. The land is largely flat with a gentle slope to the west, towards the adjacent river valley of the River Ash and its tributaries

Degree of slope. Typically slopes range between 1 in 120 and 1 in 60.

Altitude range. Levels range between 110m and 90m. A high point of 117m is reached to the north of Upwick Green Common.

Hydrology. The area contains very little surface drainage other than Blackthorn Spring and a ditch from Moorfield Spring to Green Street (both in the south of the area). Ponds associated with the large halls and farms occur frequently throughout the area including at Upwick Green and Bogs Wood, (see Area 147).

Land cover and land use. The plateau is predominantly used for arable farming other than around Upwick Green and Wickham Hall where some areas of pasture are also present. Significant woodland blocks (both deciduous and mixed deciduous/conifer) are scattered throughout the area particularly around Patmore Hall and between Hadham Park and Wickham Hall. Some of the woodlands and arable land are used for bird shooting.

Vegetation and wildlife. Ancient woodlands include Patmore Hall Wood which is basically hornbeam on more-or-less acidic soils. There are some transitional woodlands, with more hornbeam on soils derived from the Reading Formation, such as Bloodhounds Wood and Hoggate's Wood. Unimproved neutral or moderately calcareous grassland is now rare, with important remnants at Hadham Hall, Upwick Wood and on some roadside banks. Wild Daffodil is a feature of the less calcareous woodlands near Bishops Stortford.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To the south there is a Late Iron Age and Roman farmstead at Hadham Hall, adjacent to Roman Stane Street (the A120). There are medieval manorial sites at Hixham Hall and Patmore Hall. Hadham Hall is an Elizabethan mansion (c.1575) owned by the ancestors of the Earls of Wessex. Originally there were four ranges around a central courtyard with a sunken formal garden and a seventeenth century addition of a banqueting hall, but only the west range of the old house still survives. In the mid twentieth century the hall and parkland were used as a boarding school until 1989. The site has now been converted into a residential use.

Field Patterns. The origins of the majority of the area are pre 18th century irregular organic enclosure. However there has been considerable later enclosure creating a more regular and at times geometric field pattern. In the centre of the area north of Upwick Green there are areas of relic unenclosed open grazing common, however this has also experienced later enclosures and successive 'prairie-ization'. There are two small informal parklands to the south at Wickham Hall and Hadham Hall where the rectilinear fields north of the A120 and east of Hadham Hall are the result of dividing up the former deer park into farmland in the late 17th century.

Transport pattern. Between Hixham Hall and Upwick Green there are no roads or lanes resulting in a large area of arable land accessible only by bridlepath or farm track.

Settlements and built form. There is a sparse pattern of settlements in the area. Upwick Green is a small hamlet while other settlements are mainly in the form of old manor sites, houses of farmsteads. The area includes several buildings constructed from puddingstone (e.g. arch at entrance to Hadham Hall). Puddingstone is a material composed of rounded pebbles stuck together with natural cement that has washed between them and hardened into solid rock. It is a material rarely found outside Hertfordshire and Essex.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There are few views of the area from the adjacent areas of the valleys of the River Ash, River Quin and River Stort due to its plateau character. Within the area many views are long distance due to the open and large scale character of the area. The area is generally tranquil and has a coherent rural character.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area has a distinctive rural character which is a fairly frequent landscape type within the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

A120 which cuts through the south-eastern corner of the area. The electricity transformer station at Crabb's Green (south of Stocking Pelham) and the associated high voltage cable lines which cut across the landscape to the north of the area are also visible in the distance from most of the area.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a good network of public footpaths and bridleways within the area providing good accessibility through most of the area. Two waymarked routes - the Hertfordshire Way and the Harcamlow Way, cross the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is of significant regard, particularly close to Bishop's Stortford [C]

"A Beautiful area" (Respondent 3025), "good around [Bloodhounds] Wood (Respondent 0018) although the Water Tower (in Area 86) is a "Bit of an eyesore" (Respondent 0840)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Area of Archaeological Significance - including Wickham Hall, Hadham Hall and Patmore Hall

SM - north of Hadhams Hall , Moated Mound

Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest- including Shaw Wood, Bloodhounds Wood, and Patmore Hall Wood

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

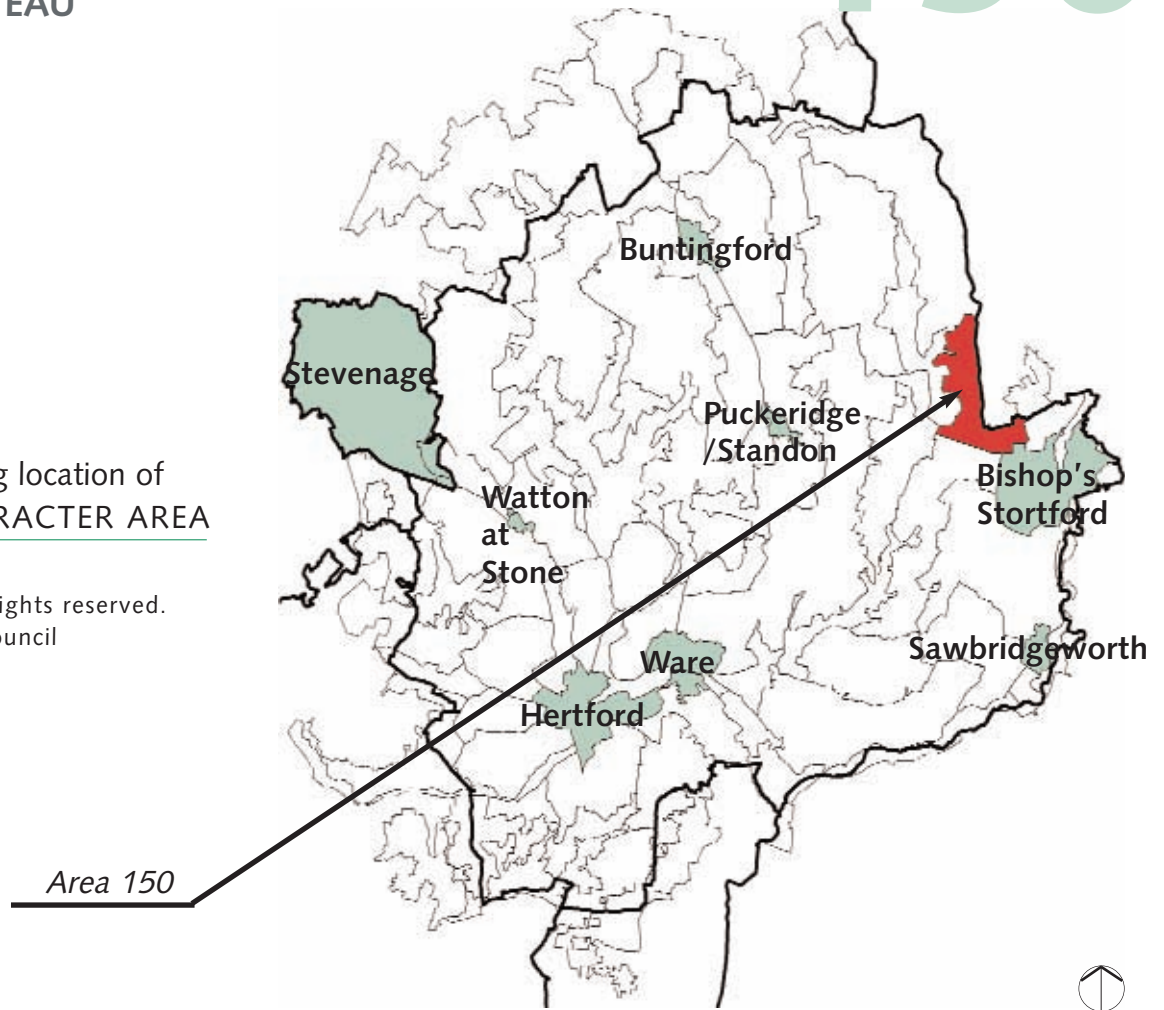
Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: apparent
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: open/exposed
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

HADHAMS PLATEAU

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Located to the northwest of Bishops Stortford extending between the A120 to the south, the Ash valley to the west and Hixham Hall to the north. To the east, the area extends in to the county of Essex. The area includes the village of Upwick Green.

undulating and with a gentle fall towards the Ash valley. The area is predominantly used for arable farming in large geometric fields interspersed with occasional woodland blocks. The area incorporates the dispersed settlement of Upwick Green and several large halls including Hadham Hall, Hadham Park, Wickham Hall, Upwick Hall and Patmore Hall.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A plateau area with an open rural character and few roads or settlements. The plateau is generally flat with some areas gently

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- arable farming in large geometric fields often unenclosed
- intermittent hedgerows
- long distance views across open fields
- large isolated halls or farms
- quiet area with few roads
- scattered woodland blocks

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- high voltage electricity pylons
- distant views to electricity transformer station
- Hertfordshire Way and Harcamlow Way long distance footpaths
- Bloodhounds' Wood and High Wood
- Hadham Hall
- extensive open arable area - Upwick Green Common



Hadham Hall pond (J.Billingsley)

HADHAMS PLATEAU - Area 150

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- for existing woodlands, encourage the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities, hedgebank management and re-establishing a rich ground flora
- improve public access arrangements to woodlands
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice with standards and woodpasture
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value in Wickham Hall, Patmore Hall, Hadham Hall and Hadham Park
- in parklands ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- in parklands and historic gardens hard landscaping details such as steps, balustrades, pond copings, statuary and urns should be conserved. Replacements should be in facsimile and in natural materials. Gazebos, temples, follies, grottoes, obelisks, park bridges, ice houses, terraces, ha-has, boundary walls, gates and gate piers should contribute to the planned landscape and its setting. Replacement, renovated or new features should be architect-designed and in keeping with their original setting
- in areas of former parkland restrict ploughing of grasslands and already occurred encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to reduce impact on the character of the local landscape
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and green lanes where possible maintaining areas of former unenclosed common without hedges
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource. Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges.
- native tree and shrub species, preferably of local provenance to be planted in area. Exotic/ornamental species only in close proximity to the dwellings or where present in parklands
- provide new uncropped or grass field margins to link areas of wildlife importance and /or existing and proposed rights of way
- restore open field ditches and discouragement of enclosing existing open drainage systems
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible
- promote the retention or conservation of large isolated halls or farms.

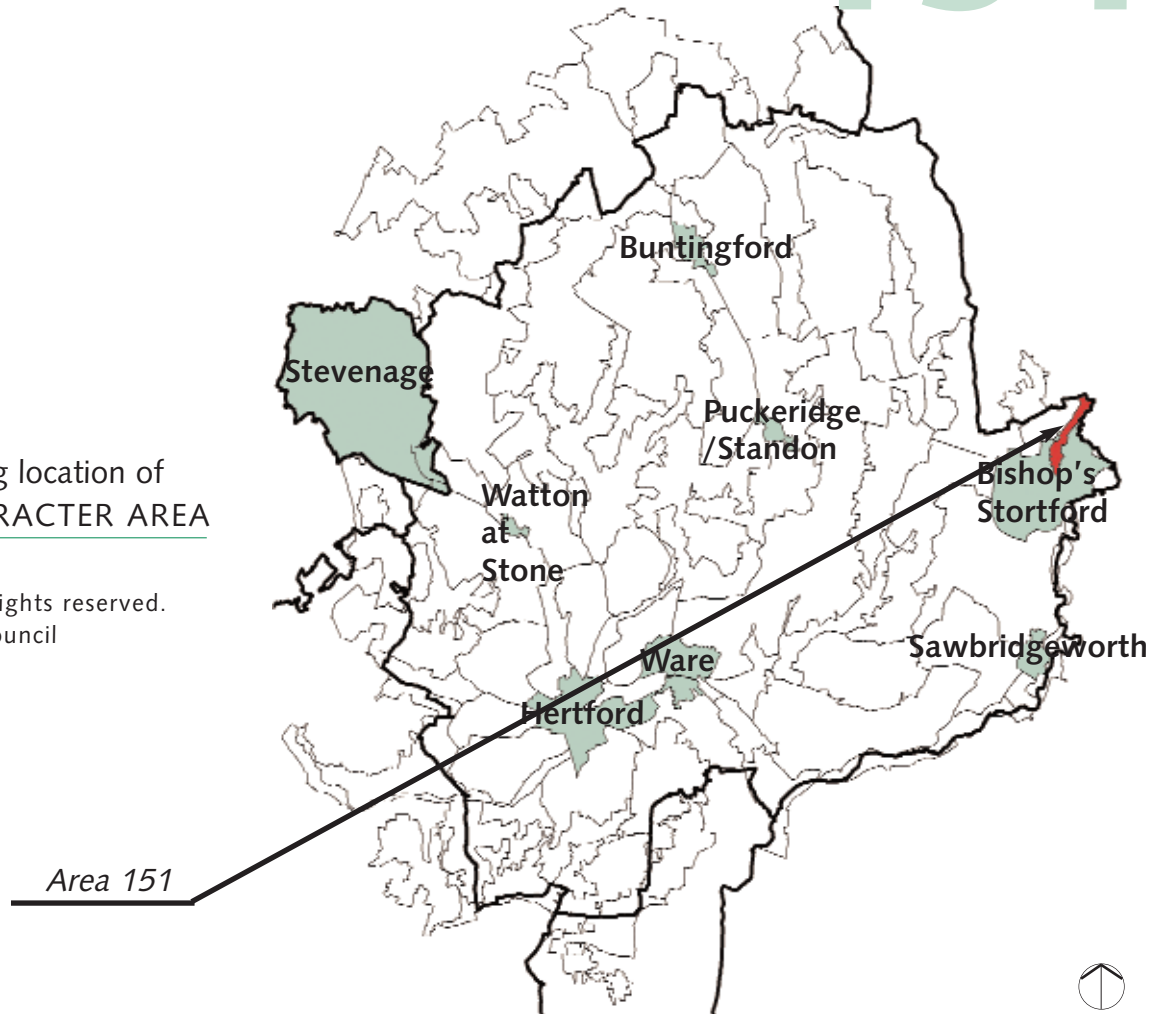


Open plateau east of Upwick Green
(J.Billingsley)

STORT MEADS

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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LOCATION

Narrow finger of floodplain around the River Stort extending from the centre of Bishops Stortford in the south to the boundary with the county of Essex in the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A narrow area of floodplain formed by the River Stort and extending between the urban centre of Bishops Stortford in the south to open countryside in the north. The area is predominantly flat but the section to the north of the A120 also includes the adjacent valley slopes. The floodplain becomes increasingly intensively used as public recreation space as it approaches the



town centre. The associated land use changes from pasture to informal open space and rough grassland to playing fields to a formal riverside park. The area also includes the town meads and intermittent blocks of vegetation including groups of willows, alders and over-mature hedgerows. The character of the area is strongly influenced by the adjacent urban areas which overlook the floodplain on either side.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- flat floodplain on either side of the River Stort
- predominantly amenity land uses including playing fields, public open space and play areas
- mix of rough grassland, pasture and mown amenity grassland
- over mature hedgerows within floodplain
- enclosed on either side by dense housing areas on adjacent valley sides

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Bishops Stortford castle mound
- A120 road bridge across the floodplain
- scattered relic parkland trees
- line of mature lime trees adjacent to B1004
- views of Bishops Stortford

River Stort in Bishops Stortford
(J.Billingsley)

STORT MEADS - Area 151

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Fluvio-glacial gravels and sands etc. occur on the valley sides, while the river flood-plain is formed on recent alluvium. Here there are stoneless mainly calcareous soils over river alluvium (Thames series) with a risk of flooding.

Topography. A flat floodplain with the River Stort flowing through the centre. The northern section includes an area of sloping valley side which falls to the west side of the Stort.

Degree of slope. The floodplain slopes very slightly from north to south at about 1 in 400. The ground also rises on either side of the floodplain with typical gradients of approximately 1 in 15.

Altitude range. The floodplain is at between approximately 58m and 60m. The valley sides in the northern section rise to nearly 80m.

Hydrology. The river valley contains the River Stort which flows south through the centre of Bishops Stortford and then onwards until its confluence with the Lea at Rye Meads. The River Stort is essentially a chalk stream, with spring-fed mires adjoining its course north of Bishops Stortford. Several minor streams and ditches flow in to the Stort including Bourne Brook, (see Area 149).

Land cover and land use. The land cover is predominantly a mix of rough grassland with occasional mature trees, amenity grassland and mown sports pitches. There are also several small stands of trees including alders, willows and poplars. Much of the land is used for recreational purposes including sports fields, informal public open space, formal public open space and children's play areas. To the north of the A120 the floodplain is grazing pasture and the adjacent valley side is under arable production.

Vegetation and wildlife. There are secondary stands of alder by the River Stort. Meadow Saxifrage and Meadow Rue are notable species in the Stort Valley meadows, along with Tussock Sedge in the riverside fen. Otters occasionally frequent the River Stort again, following their re-introduction downstream.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

There is little historic environment data available, but flint axes of Palaeolithic date are known from the area, and it is likely the gravels and peats of the Stort valley contain valuable evidence for early prehistoric settlement and exploitation of this landscape. In the Domesday Book Bishops Stortford is called Estereferd. This name may have originated from the name of a family or small clan who lived in the vicinity of the ford in Saxon times.

Waytemore Castle motte is a good example of a Norman motte and bailey castle. It was the fortress of Bishop Maurice of London and was constructed to protect and oversee the causeway of Stane Street (Roman road) over the Stort marshes. The Stort originally fed several mills including Cannons Mill in the centre of the area.

Field Patterns. The flood plain contains a mix of meadow pasture and recreational uses. The slopes of the valley are predominantly pre 18th century irregular enclosure, however there has been 20th century enclosure and change to leisure uses.

Transport pattern. The Stort valley is crossed in four places within the area. At the southern end, the Roman road, Stane Street (now the A1250) provides an important route through the town centre. In the centre of the area Cannons Mill Lane includes a small bridging point but no longer provides a vehicular through route across the valley. To the north of this, the B1004 and A120 both cross the valley. The A120 is a substantial modern concrete overbridge which detracts from the character of the river valley. The B1004 is an older crossing over a brick bridge which is more in keeping with the character and scale of the river valley. The B1004 also passes along the western side of the area and is marked by a substantial line of mature lime trees. A main railway line runs along the eastern edge of the floodplain and creates a strong boundary to the area.

Settlements and built form. The floodplain contains little built development other than the remains of Waytemore Castle, the town swimming pool and leisure centre and a row of pleasantly converted buildings on Cannons Mill Lane (now offices). A small number of twentieth century houses on the east side of the B1004 also back on to the floodplain. There is dense residential development on the higher valley slopes to the east and west of the area.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)
Whitelaw, J. W., Hidden Hertfordshire, Countryside Books (1988)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is widely visible from the railway line, properties on the valley slopes to the east and west and from the A120 and B1004 bridging points across the Stort. Within the floodplain views are generally short distance and are blocked by groups or belts of mature vegetation including over-mature hedgerows. There are attractive glimpsed views of St Michael’s church and spire in the town centre. The River Stort is a unifying feature within the area although the character of the area alters from north to south as it changes from rural pastures to suburban/urban amenity areas.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is part of the more intact river valleys within the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

The impact of built development on the adjacent valley slopes in Bishops Stortford is significant. A water tower in Birchanger Wood is a significant feature on the horizon. Within the floodplain the leisure centre, swimming pool and associated car park detract from the otherwise unbuild character of the floodplain.

ACCESSIBILITY

Most of the floodplain is accessible to the public as public open space or by public footpath. There are no bridleways within the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This is a valued landscape [C] particularly to local residents: "A river is always a great attraction to a town if only from the scenery and recreation...Walking by the river one may observe the jewelled flight of the kingfisher. On New Years Day of 1934, I saw 6 of these beautiful birds from the Town Mill Bridge. Voles and water rats and if you are very fortunate an otter may disturb the waters as you pass by." Bishop's Stortford Official Guides 1925 & 1935.

"Beautiful calm area with the river flowing through" (Respondent 3425) "an area of unmanicured scrubland...a haven for wildlife and colourful weeds and trees...very popular with dogwalkers" (Respondent 0843) This is a valued landscape.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Other Sites of Ecological, Geological and Geomorphological Importance or Interest- Stort meadows (north of A120)
SM – Waytemore Castle, Bishop’s Stortford
Area of Archaeological Significance - north of and including Waytemore Castle

CONDITION

Land cover change: wide spread
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: dominant
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: apparent
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: continued
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STORT MEADS - Area 151

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- develop strategy of planting species that marks the transition from town to country along the valley
- survey and manage parkland and veteran trees on the valley slopes for biodiversity value
- protect remaining river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest, especially where they contribute to a suite of habitats, such as neutral grassland, running water, wet grassland, valley or floodplain woodland, grazing marsh, fens and swamp
- keep River Stort clear of rubbish
- resist development that could lower the water table within river valleys and affect wetland habitats
- improve the management of old meadows and pastures by ceasing fertiliser and herbicide application and introducing sensitive grassland management such as late hay cutting or low density livestock grazing
- promote the creation of buffer strips along watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- protect river corridors and water meadows from development that would alter its character visually or environmentally, such as culverting, impact on a floodplain, loss of water meadows or storage ponds
- enhance and create wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds, scrapes and pollarded willows
- restoration of hedgerows and ditches as characteristic field boundary patterns
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- restore open ditches and discourage enclosing existing open drainage systems
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements to reduce their acid or calcareous nature, in order to maintain their nature conservation value

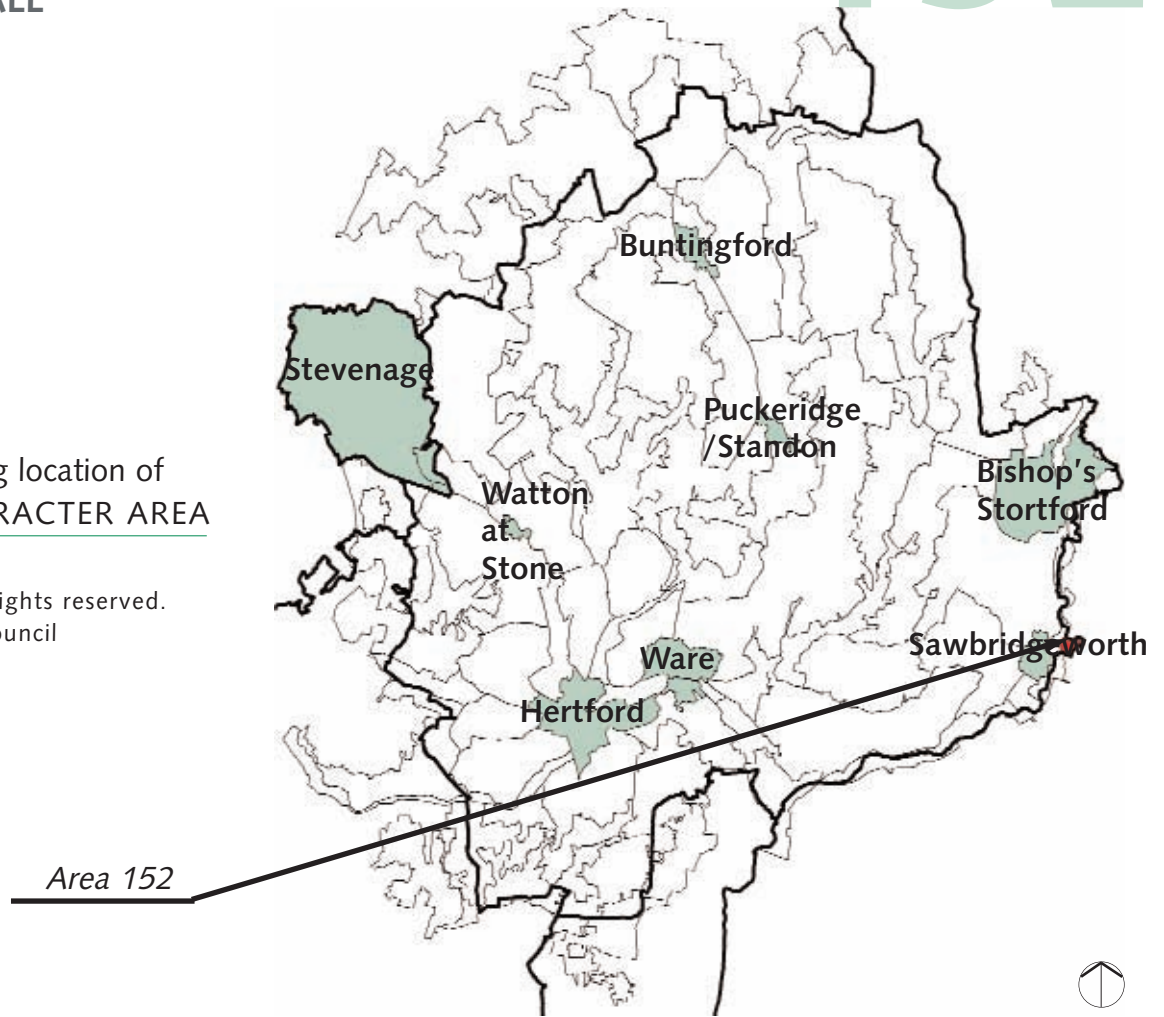


Stort Valley from Hazelend Road
(J.Billingsley)

GREAT HYDE HALL

District map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100019606 2004



LOCATION

The area is located to the east of Sawbridgeworth adjacent to the River Stort flood plain.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A small enclave of Hertfordshire that lies east of the River Stort where the remainder of the valley slopes are within Essex. At a wider scale the extensive eastern slopes of the Stort Valley rise up to form part of a broad north-south orientated valley of the Stort that follows the county boundary. The small character area itself comprises a large arable field to the west and an area of mature

woodland to the east, a pattern which is in common with much of the valley slopes. Great Hyde Hall and its associated parkland and grounds is partially concealed within the woodland.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- mature woodland
- parkland and ornamental grounds
- Hyde Hall
- large arable fields with poor/no hedges
- views to the west towards the valley and across to Sawbridgeworth

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- pair of Lodge Houses
- ornamental garden features and ponds
- specimen trees



Great Hyde Hall Lodges (J.Billingsley)

GREAT HYDE HALL - Area 152

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Mainly slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. The area comprises part of the wider valley slopes of the River Stort.

Degree of slope. The slopes of the valley are typically 1 in 20.

Altitude range. Levels range between 75m on the plateau edge to the east and 50 metres near the River Stort

Hydrology. There are a number of ponds within the grounds of the Hall on the higher ground to the west. A distinctive circular ornamental pond with island has been created which overflows into a second pond and then down towards the Stort. There are a number of ditches that bound the area to the west, diverting drainage from the higher slopes around the Hall and grounds.

Land cover and land use. The area to the west is a single large arable field while to the east there is an area of woodland which provides the entrance to the Hall. The northern part of the hall grounds are more ornamental and include areas of sports and recreational facilities.

Vegetation and wildlife. The woods contain a number of fine specimen trees including lime, oak, ash and beech. There are a few impressive ornamental trees including conifers and an evergreen oak in closer proximity to the Hall.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Great Hyde Hall is a Tudor house remodelled by Jeffery Wyattville in 1803. The house is described by Pevsner as 'distinctly 'Soanian' in its stuccoed details. The grounds are informal in character.

Field Patterns. Historic data from 1776 indicates that the whole of the area comprised informal medieval parkland, which is supported by the extensive Area of Archaeological Significance designation over the arable field. The western area has subsequently been converted to a large prairie field. There are no substantial hedges to the boundaries, however the woodland to the east is a very strong feature.

Transport pattern. There are minor roads to the south and west of the area. The Hall is approached via a meandering drive that leads through the mature woodland.

Settlements and built form. Great Hyde Hall is the principal building although there are a number of supporting buildings including a fine pair of Georgian lodges and associated brick outbuildings. The 20th century Heads House is less than sympathetic in its design or location. Parking areas for the hall and converted stables are located to the rear.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., Hertfordshire, Penguin (2000)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is open to view from the east, both adjacent to and from parts of Sawbridgeworth. The woods on the high ground are an imposing skyline from the valley while the Hall is partially concealed within them. The woods provide an enclosed character in contrast to the open arable fields that create the foreground to the Hall. The eastern boundary is very much the rear of the Hall. The railway follows the river valley to the west and together with the local roads provide intermittent sources of noise.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The area is unusual in the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

The residential development of Sawbridgeworth on the slopes is relatively intrusive to the setting of the hall, however in contrast the Heads House is more prominent than the hall itself from the valley which is most unfortunate. Within the grounds the presence of tennis courts and parking areas detract from the historic context of the hall and parkland, however much of the service areas are to the rear/north of the hall and do not impede on the main approach along the drive.

ACCESSIBILITY

There are no rights of way across the area and the Hall is 'Strictly Private.'

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Data is limited, however there is evidence that this area is of some regard [D]
 "The view to Great Hyde Hall is as good as anywhere in Southern Britain." (Respondent to "What makes the Stort Valley special" community survey 4-11 October 1997)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Area of Archaeological Significance-west of area

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat: good
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: moderate
Impact of land-use change: moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: prominent
Visibility from outside: widely visible
Sense of enclosure: open & contained
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

GREAT HYDE HALL - Area 152

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE

- encourage the continued management and maintenance of woodland
- survey and manage the parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their surroundings by ensuring that hard landscape and recreational uses are screened from view where possible and native species are used for hedging and tree planting to the perimeter
- encourage the sensitive development and maintenance of the parkland grounds including water features
- promote selected hedgerow restoration to the boundaries of the area
- seek a strategy to reduce the visual impact of Heads House
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production as important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats.
- encourage a programme of archaeological investigation to establish the character and importance of the medieval parkland and the original settlement



Woodland fringe on approach to Hall
(J.Billingsley)



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Character Area comprises the upper headwaters of the River Beane which continues to the south of the District within a previously identified Character Area – The Middle Beane Valley (Character Area 39). The Upper Beane Valley Tributaries are mainly the three upper arms of the valley that rise at Rushden village, Kingswoodbury and Church End to the east of Weston. All three tributaries join the main valley at Luffenhall. There is also a smaller local catchment to the west of Walkern (within Character Area 39) which extends to the east of Stevenage. Part of this Character Area lies outside the District.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Incised chalk landscape with water courses. Predominantly arable land use, organic enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes to the north and west of Luffenhall. The Beane valley to the north and west has regular rectilinear field boundaries often curving, set within an earlier organic pattern of boundaries.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Bowl like landform comprising steeply sloping chalk valley sides incised by a network of water courses
- Arable land use
- Irregular pattern, of medium to large sized fields
- Scattered hedgerows and waterside trees
- Small blocks of relict ancient woodland on the upper slopes
- Narrow winding lanes
- Sparse settlement

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Extensive areas of former common land
- Pylon lines cut across the valley

UPPER BEANE VALLEY TRIBUTES - Area 221

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils

Chalk overlain by Boulder Clay and generally free draining loamy brown soils.

Topography

Chalk valley incised into plateau landscape.

Degree of slope

Typically between 1:10 – 1:20.

Altitude range

125m at head of valley. Valley continues to fall well past district boundary.

Hydrology

Numerous incised streams and tributaries. Main catchment is the valley of the River Beane. Ponds are rare.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable.

Vegetation and wildlife

Very little ecological information is available. Lolleywood Green Lane contains neutral grassland and an ancient species-rich hedgerow, part of a network of ancient hedge lined lanes.

Limited woodland includes Southern Green Copse and Chalk Pit comprising ancient semi-natural woodland coppice with a disused chalk pit.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

No recorded archaeology. Cropmarks of ditches and enclosures of unknown date and function are known from aerial photographs and lie towards the west. At Luffenhall, to the east, finds of Romano-British cremations indicate that a cemetery may be present.

While the present day settlement pattern has medieval origins there is evidence that the landscape has been exploited since the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. This includes cropmarks, visible on aerial photographs, of field systems and enclosures of varying date and function, and of possible plough-raised burial mounds of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. There are also records of a Late Bronze Age hoard from Cumberlow Green (the name means 'burial mound of the Welsh'), of a Romano-British settlement and cremation cemetery south of Kingswoodbury, and Roman finds from all of these parishes. By the late Iron Age and Roman periods the area was crossed by the Roman road that linked

Baldock and Braughing.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of pre-18th century irregular enclosure, prairie fields with 1950s boundary loss and pre 18th century unenclosed common arable. Post 1950s enclosure lies to the south and 20th century leisure to the east. There are pockets of 19th – 20th century plantation.

The field systems of the area originally mainly comprised unenclosed common arable fields, such as Luffenhall Common and Kipple Field, and smaller 'irregular' enclosure fields, both systems being established before the 18th century. An extensive block of these irregular fields has survived west of Cumberlow Green, together with an area of informal parkland once associated with Cumberlow Manor. 'Irregularly' enclosed fields also survive north of Luffenhall Common. The remainder, primarily areas north of Cromer, around Hall's Green and south of Rushden, is now 20th century 'prairie' fields. There is little pasture or woodland in the area and it is evident that woodland cover was already slight by the later 19th century, due to the long term use of the area for arable cultivation.

Transport Pattern

The Character Area is bounded by narrow winding lanes to the north and west but is not crossed by any roads.

Settlements and Built Form

There are no significant present day settlement nuclei within the area, since the larger villages, Cottered and Weston (including Church End), lie outside its boundary towards the heads of the open valleys that form the area, and the village of Rushden, partly within it, is little more than a hamlet. All of these settlements predate the Norman Conquest, and Anglo-Saxon occupation in the area is also evidenced by several distinctive place-names.

While the current network of dispersed farmsteads and houses reflects a settlement pattern established in the medieval period, there is also evidence of settlement shift and decline. Rydals Wood contains an abandoned moated site, Cumberlow Green is the site of a manorial settlement and manor house, and there is evidence of medieval occupation spanning the 12th – 15th centuries south of Church End, Weston.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Expansive open areas of arable farmland.
 Rarity & distinctiveness
 Landscape type not uncommon.

VISUAL IMPACT

Area generally has little development. Edge of Stevenage well screened by woodland. Luffenhall on the Character Area boundary – locally prominent development. Cromer Windmill just outside the Character Area to the southwest is a prominent landmark.

ACCESSIBILITY

Well served by local network of winding lanes, tracks and rights of way.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor’s responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat: poor
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: insignificant
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

UPPER BEANE VALLEY TRIBUTES - Area 221

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Strengthen and Reinforce

- ⌘ Promote management of ancient woodlands to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- ⌘ Encourage the development of neutral, species-rich grasslands
- ⌘ Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- ⌘ Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- ⌘ Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- ⌘ Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- ⌘ Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- ⌘ Maintain and extend the rights of way network

WESTON - GREEN END PLATEAU



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The area extends from the Stevenage Gap scarp in the west to a line running east of the settlements of Sandon, Green End and Mill End.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Flat, gently sloping chalk plateau with some gentle undulations overlain by clay soils. Predominantly arable land use but with extensive blocks of ancient deciduous woodland cover. Density of woodland cover creates a sense of enclosure and enhances the mature character of the landscape. Pockets of grazing land adjacent to settlements. Character Area crossed by a network of winding lanes, densely scattered hedgerows and clusters of wayside dwellings and small dispersed settlements or farmsteads.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Plateau landform
- Predominantly arable land use
- Extensive mature woodland cover and hedgerow trees
- Organic pattern of field enclosures associated with irregular network of winding lanes

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Icknield Way crosses at Sandon



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WESTON - GREEN END PLATEAU - Area 222

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils

Glacial drift – calcareous/neutral Boulder Clay with some Clay-with-Flints overlying Chalk. Clay soils (Pelosols).

Topography

Plateau landscape, gently falling in a south easterly direction.

Degree of slope

Gentle crossfall of approximately 1:50.

Altitude range

115m to 145m.

Hydrology

A number of tributaries of the River Beane cross the Character Area - the Kingswoodbury Tributary, the upper reaches of the River Beane north of Rushden and a local water course running south from Green End. Additionally the Weston Tributary also takes water from the land to the east of Weston village. Ponds are frequent.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable cover with pockets of grazing adjacent to settlements and ancient semi-natural woodland.

Vegetation and wildlife

Two high biodiversity areas are included, one centred around the villages of Sandon and Green End and the other around the villages of Clothall, Wallington and Weston. These areas are typified by chalky boulder clay woodland and neutral meadows. The most abundant woodland habitats are ancient stands of ash and maple. Such woodlands have been covered with trees since at least the 17th century, when the planting of woodland was first recorded. Examples include Coldash Wood, Bachelors Wood, Munches Wood, Great Wood and Middle Wood.

Ancient woods composed primarily of oak and hornbeam also occur, but less frequently. Green lanes with species-rich hedgerows occur at a number of locations as do areas of unimproved neutral grassland, such as Notley Green Common.

Spring systems at Green End are of county significance and supporting calcareous mire habitats such as Blagrove Common and Sandon Moor. Blagrove Common is a SSSI, an unimproved marshy grassland on Boulder Clay. It is a rare example of such a habitat in the county. Important ponds occur at Wallington Meadow, Roc Green and Southern Green at the sources of streams feeding the river Beane.

Southern and early marsh orchids occur at some mires. Ash, maple and hazel woodlands may contain herb paris and greater butterfly orchids. Fallow deer are frequent.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

A moated mound, Sandon Mount, lies in the north, to the east of Sandon. It was originally constructed as a prehistoric burial mound. In the late 14th - early 15th century the site was used for a windmill, of which today no trace is remaining. To the south of Sandon Mount the ruins of medieval buildings are known to have existed. They probably formed part of a now deserted, medieval hamlet. Sandon is a medieval settlement and contains the 14th century church of All Saints. The remains of a medieval moated site lies to the south of the church at Danyells Farm. A medieval settlement at Green End lies to the south east of Sandon. A well-preserved post-medieval decoy pond lies at Hyde Hall, to the east of the area where there are also Romano-British earthworks.

Roe Green is a medieval settlement. To the South of Roe Green lie three well-preserved moated sites; Hankins, east of Friars Grange and north of Wood Farm.

Earthworks lie at Wallington in the northwest. The parish church of St Mary, Wallington, is 15th century. Bronze Age and Neolithic flint has been unearthed in the vicinity. To the west of Wallington, a Roman settlement and a Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement have been located. Cropmarks of ditches and fields belonging to the deserted medieval village of Quickwood lie to the west of the area.

Enclosure and earthworks lie southeast of Clothallbury House, probably remains of a medieval manorial site. Earthworks of a prehistoric burial mound and a well preserved medieval moated site and associated earthworks lie to the southwest of Clothallbury. Three medieval moated sites also lie to the south east of Clothallbury.

The Roman Villa of Lammas Field lies to the northeast of Weston with finds of Romano British pottery and building materials spread over a wide area.

To the far west of the area lie earthworks, which possibly represent medieval house platforms. There are cropmarks of a possible Neolithic henge site 500m northwest of Bush Wood.

Rushden, to the south, is a medieval settlement recorded in the Domesday Book as Risendene. The parish church of St Mary, Rushden, dates to the 14th century. Earthworks are present within the settlement. Earthworks representing remains of Cumberlow Manor House lie to the southwest of Rushden.

Field Pattern

The agricultural landscape is mixed, including 18th century and later enclosure, prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, post-1950s enclosure, prairie fields with relict elements within. Woodlands include ancient woodland, informal medieval parkland (Julians - designated Historic Park and Garden), 19th – 20th century plantation and pre 18th century 'irregular' enclosure, with small pockets of later enclosure – 18th century or later.

Transport Pattern

There is a network of winding lanes. The Icknield Way (prehistoric trackway) crosses at Sandon.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by clusters of wayside dwellings and small dispersed settlements or farmsteads. To the north lie the historic settlements of Sandon, Green End and Roe Green. Traditional buildings date from the 17th century and include the 17th century brick house of Sandonbury.

The historic settlement of Rushden lies in the centre. Traditional buildings date from the 16th century and include a plastered timber building formerly a post office with a tiled roof and one overhanging gable. The Old Rose and Crown dates to the end of the 16th century with a tiled roof and built plastered timber, decorated with combed work. Many 17th century thatched cottages and farm buildings lie within this scattered village.

WESTON - GREEN END PLATEAU - Area 222

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Complex area of arable farmland interspersed with blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, which frames local views. Plateau area locally exposed.

Rarity & distinctiveness
Landscape type common in North Hertfordshire.

VISUAL IMPACT

Limited development well integrated into the landscape.

ACCESSIBILITY

Served by locally dense network of winding lanes, tracks and rights of way.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

GD 1911	Julians
SM HT18	The Mount: Sandon
SM HT109	Site of Cumberlow Manor House: Clothall
SM 111	Enclosure and earthworks southeast of Clothellbury House: Clothall
SM HT11512	Hankins Moated Site, Roe Green: Sandon
SM HT 11517	Moated site and associated remains west of Hooks Green Farm: Clothall
SM 20764	Henge 500m northwest of Bush Wood: Weston
SM 27917	Lammas Field Roman Villa 680m northeast of Weston Bury: Therfield

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	weak
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Conserve

- ⌘ Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- ⌘ Encourage diverse woodland management practice
- ⌘ Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- ⌘ Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- ⌘ Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- ⌘ Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- ⌘ Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- ⌘ Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- ⌘ Maintain the ecological diversity and use of green lanes and associated species-rich hedgerows
- ⌘ Maintain and encourage the development of marshy grasslands on pockets of boulder clay



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

A broad band extending between the villages of Therfield / Kelshall in the west to the village of Reed in the east. The Character Area extends northwards to the break of slope defining the scarp edge and also extends locally to the District boundary in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling plateau landform. Predominantly arable but with grazing land adjacent to settlements. Generally well wooded with small pockets of ancient deciduous woodland and densely



scattered hedgerow trees. Network of ancient winding lanes and an extensive footpath network especially around the settlements. Organic enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes. Field sizes to the south generally medium to large sized, however, between Therfield and Reed fields are small to medium sized. Scattered farmsteads and wayside dwellings.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- ⌘ Gently rolling landform
- ⌘ Dominant arable land use
- ⌘ Irregular pattern of field boundaries and ancient lanes
- ⌘ Dispersed/scattered farmsteads

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- ⌘ Water tower at Therfield
- ⌘ Telecommunications masts at Reed End
- ⌘ Moated properties and fish ponds at Reed
- ⌘ Upper Icknield Way

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils

Glacial drift (till) overlying chalk. Calcareous loam soils, occasionally poorly drained.

Topography

Gently sloping plateau falling towards the south east.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:30.

Altitude range

125m to 165m.

Hydrology

Area drained by headwater drains of the River Rib which extends to the east of Therfield. Notable for ponds and moated properties.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable.

Vegetation and wildlife

An area of high biodiversity is centred around the village of Reed typified by chalky boulder clay woodland and species-rich neutral grasslands. Unimproved neutral grasslands are a nationally scarce resource, but occur at several locations, for example Therfield Motte and Bailey and Fiddlers Green.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands of ash, maple and hazel coppice occur frequently with interlinking green lanes, the most notable being Reed, West and Philpotts Woods. Other examples include Hawkins Wood and Bush Wood.

Semi-natural grassland typical of the Character Area is a damp calcareous pasture with cowslip and pepper saxifrage but now limited to sites at Reed and Therfield. Locally important ponds occur at Reed End, Reed and Washingditch Green at Therfield. The scarce herb paris, fallow deer and long-eared owls can be found in some woods.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To the north of the area is the medieval settlement of Therfield. Earthworks of a probable medieval Motte and Bailey Castle lie within the village. Cropmarks of enclosures, prehistoric ring ditches and linear ditches have been revealed by aerial photographs. A medieval moated site lies to the southeast of Therfield

The Medieval settlement of Kelshall located to the southwest of Therfield was recorded in the Domesday Book as Cheleselle. The parish church of St Faith, Kelshall, dates to the 15th century. A Romano-British burial is recorded nearby.

To the east of the area lies the medieval settlement of Reed. The parish church of St Mary, Reed, dates to the 14th century. At least 10 medieval moated sites surround the settlement; two moated sites and a Holloway at Gannock Grove and Bush Wood, a double moat and fish pond at Queenbury, Moated sites at Reed Hall and

Goodfellows. To the south of Reed there are cropmarks of an enclosure with associated linear ditches and a medieval moated site known as the Bull Moat.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of 18th century and later enclosure, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, prairie fields with post 1950s boundary loss, ancient woodland, post 1950s enclosure, prairie fields with relict elements within. There are pockets of 19th-20th century plantation and small areas of enclosed meadow pasture.

Transport Pattern

Network of ancient winding lanes and an extensive footpath network especially around the settlements. The Character Area is crossed by the Upper Icknield Way.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by villages, estates and dispersed/scattered farmsteads. There are a number of traditional buildings in the villages of Therfield, Reed and Kelshall. There are many good examples in the village of Therfield, these date from the 15th century. The Rectory, a former Manor House originally dates to the 15th century with later additions in the early 18th century. Elm House dates to the 16th century and Limes, a timber framed building with later additions dates to the 17th century. In Kelshall, a late Georgian five bay fronted Old Rectory lies close to the parish church. The village of Reed is unusual in plan with a number of buildings scattered around three greens and includes a large number of medieval moated sites. A Tudor chimney is all that remains of the original Reed Hall when it was altered in the 18th century.

THERFIELD - REED PLATEAU - Area 229

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Complex area of arable farmland mixed with grazing and woodland cover. Tapestry of varying sized fields and corridor network of winding lanes.

Rarity & distinctiveness
Landscape type comparatively common within the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

Local visual impact on northern edge caused by water towers and telecommunications masts.

ACCESSIBILITY

Well covered by network of lanes, tracks and rights of way. The very straight and busy Roman Road – Ermine Street (A10) cuts across the Character Area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor’s responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM 20603	Double Moat and fishpond Queenbury: Reed
SM 20605	Moated Site Goodfellows: Reed
SM 20672	Motte and Bailey Castle and associated earthworks 100m south of Tuthill Farm: Therfield
SM HT11513/1	Gannock Grove Moated Site and Hollow way: Reed
SM HT11514	Bush Wood Moated Site and Hollow way: Reed
SM HT11569	Reed Hall Moated Site: Reed

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	wide spread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	dominant
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

THERFIELD - REED PLATEAU - Area 229**STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:**

Improve and Conserve

- ⌘ Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- ⌘ Encourage diverse woodland management practice
- ⌘ Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- ⌘ Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- ⌘ Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- ⌘ Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- ⌘ Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- ⌘ Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- ⌘ Encourage the development of species-rich neutral grasslands on chalky boulder clays
- ⌘ Encourage planting of new woodland of ash and maple species

NUTHAMPSTEAD



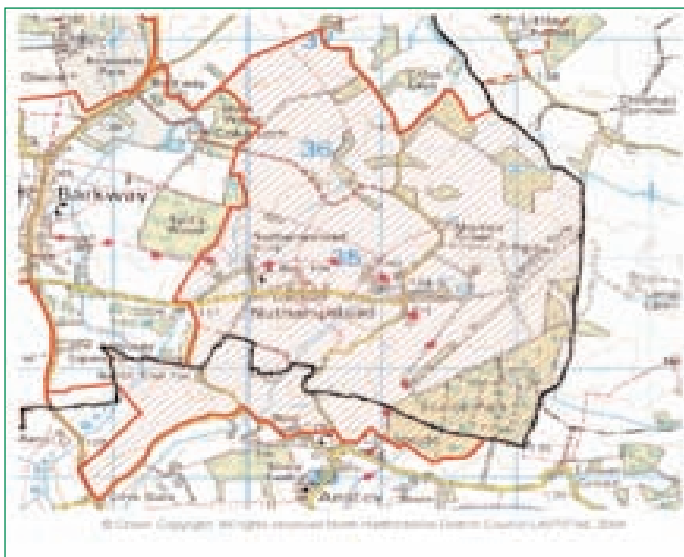
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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

This Character Area lies to the south of Barley and to the east of Barkway. The area extends eastwards as far as the disused airfield and Scales Park Plantation. To the south the area extends just beyond the District boundary and the head of the River Quin catchment.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling plateau landform eroded into a series of shallow local valleys. Predominantly arable use but land to the southeast given over to former MOD airfield with more recent extensive plantation at Scales Park, to the southeast. Well wooded with a mixture of ancient woodland parcels and more recent plantations. Organic enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes. Field sizes are generally medium to large. Nuthampstead is a network of dispersed farmsteads strung out along the local road network.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling landform
- Arable land use with extensive woodland cover
- Irregular pattern of field boundaries
- Dispersed scattered farmsteads

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Former MOD airfield
- Hertfordshire Way long distance path

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils

Glacial till over Chalk. Clay soils (pelosols).

Topography

Gently sloping land form falls to the southwest to join the River Quin catchment.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:40 but with plateau landscape over former airfield.

Altitude range

110m to 145m.

Hydrology

Two local streams drain the area southwestward into the River Quin catchment. The Stort rises at New England. Numerous old moats, surface ponds and lakes - some managed as commercial fishing concerns.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable but with other uses such as former military use and extensive recent plantations, mixed with ancient woodland cover.

Vegetation and wildlife

This Character Area encompasses an area of high biodiversity. Scales Wood lies within the south east corner of the area. It is a large (71ha) ancient woodland originally of ash, maple and hazel, formerly part of a substantial area of wood pasture (an historic woodland management regime) and has notably broad rides with species rich calcareous grassland. Wartime felling was replaced by conifer in the 1950's and 60's. All woodlands within this Character Area are typical of boulder clay habitats, and support a variety of invertebrate and mammal species, examples are Doctor's Grove/Oak Bushes, Cross Leys Wood and North Wood. Associated flora and fauna include, herb paris, early purple, great butterfly orchids, fallow deer and nightingale (Scales Park).

Areas of unimproved calcareous grassland occur occasionally within this Character Area, for example at New England Moor.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

A small well-preserved moated site lies in Sheepwash Grove in the north. It is probably a post medieval landscape feature. A moated site lies to the south at Little Cokenach. Cropmarks of enclosures lie to the south and east of Nuthampstead.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of ancient woodland, 18th century and later enclosure, prairie fields – post 1950s boundary loss, post 1950s enclosure pre 18th century 'irregular' enclosure, later enclosure – 18th century or later. 20th century leisure use lies to the west and informal medieval parkland to the south, and small pockets of prairie fields with relict elements within.

Transport Pattern

Irregular network of winding lanes. The Hertfordshire Way, a long distance path, terminates at Nuthampstead.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by a network of dispersed farmsteads, which are strung out along the local road network.

NUTHAMPSTEAD - Area 231

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Tree lined horizon widely visible from surrounding areas. Plateau area is complex with a mixture of open and smaller more intimate spaces.

Rarity & distinctiveness
The landscape type is comparatively frequent.

VISUAL IMPACT

Continuity of landscape pattern interrupted by former airfield at Scales Park.

ACCESSIBILITY

Northern and western parts are accessible by an extensive network of winding lanes and rights of way. To the south the network is sparser.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor’s responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SM 20607 Pains End Moated site: Anstey
SM HT17003 Moated site Little Cokenach: Nuthampstead

CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: wide spread
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: prominent
Impact of historic pattern: insignificant
Visibility from outside: locally visible
Sense of enclosure: partial
Visual unity: coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Conserve

- § Promote management of ancient woodlands to encourage a diverse woodland flora including replacement of conifers with native broadleaves
- § Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- § Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- § Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- § Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- § Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- § Maintain and extend the rights of way network particularly to the south
- § Encourage the development and management of calcareous grasslands
- § Encourage the management of existing and development of new wood pasture

APPENDIX A - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NB. Further information links stated on Assessment Page for each Landscape Character Area under 'Other sources of area specific information.'

Refer also to Chapter 5 Methodology.

LCA

landscape character area: one or more LDUs (see below), derived from both desktop study and field survey and defining a unique individual geographical area.

LDU

land description unit. a discrete unit of land with specific constituent physical, biological and historic elements which distinguish it from its neighbours at a desktop study level.

Level 2 - Physiography and soils

landform

an expression of the basic shape and structure of the land surface, as determined by the underlying geology (see above):

(L) lowland vales & valleys: low-lying level, or gently rolling land, generally below 90 metres/300 feet, associated mainly with glacial and soft rock sediments in clay vales and broad valley bottoms.

(R) rolling lowland: intermediate areas, generally below 90 metres/300 feet, with a pronounced rolling/undulating topography. May include low hills, or areas of low-lying land at a greater level of detail. Associated mainly with glacial and soft rock sediments but can also occur in hard rock zone.

(V) 'upland' valleys: tracts of lower lying, in places steeply sloping land in an 'upland' setting (ie. surrounded by higher ground). Mainly found in hard rock zone, but elsewhere also associated with limestone and sandstone escarpments (eg. Chiltern valleys).

(S) low hills and ridges: distinct, often steep sided tracts of elevated relief, generally well defined by clear breaks in slope. May be in the form of discrete hills/ridges, or as rising ground (eg. scarp slopes) on the edge of higher land.

(U) low plateau: uniformly elevated tracts of gently rolling relief, usually bounded on one or more sides by steeper slopes which drop to lower land. Often dissected by narrow, steep sided valleys at a greater level of detail, especially where associated with limestone.

geology

the underlying structure and origin of the land, described as follows:

(Fr) river alluvium: unconsolidated silty/clayey material laid down by a river in its floodplain.

(Fs) river terrace: unconsolidated sand/gravel laid down by a river in its floodplain.

(Ts) sandy drift: unconsolidated sand/gravel laid down by streams derived from the meltwater of ice sheets. Also includes sandy plateau drift.

(Tc) clay-with-flints: a residual clayey deposit (formed from chalk solution) covering the higher levels of some chalkland areas in southern England and giving rise to damp, acid soils.

(Tb) till/boulder clay: unsorted clayey material laid down by ice sheets, comprising a mixture of clay, sand, gravel and boulders.

(Mc) clay: a soft, fine textured sedimentary rock laid down mainly in the Jurassic and Tertiary periods. Usually gives rise to heavy, often poorly draining clayey soils.

(Ml) chalk: moderately hard, white sedimentary rock derived from calcium-rich shelly material.

(Mm) mixed: interbedded sedimentary rocks of varied age, usually comprising alternate layers of clay, siltstone and/or sandstone, but may also include limestone.

Level 2 - Cultural Pattern

settlements

an expression of the present day pattern of rural settlement in the context of its historic evolution.

(N) nucleated: discrete (usually large) villages with a low level of dispersal, associated with a late (regular) pattern of fields derived mainly from arable field.

(C) clustered: clusters of wayside dwellings and /or small villages associated with a low-moderate level of dispersal and sub regular pattern of fields derived mainly from arable field. Typically distinguished by frequent place names ending in 'Green', 'End', 'Heath', 'Houses', etc.

(D) dispersed: scattered farmsteads and/or clusters/strings of wayside dwellings associated with place names indicating enclosure from common pasture/wood pasture origins.

(M) meadow and marsh: unenclosed meadow and grazing marsh.

(R) unsettled: uninhabited, usually enclosed rough land.

(Ur) urban: extensive areas of predominantly built land where the rural settlement pattern has been completely subsumed by built development

farm types

(E) large Estates

(F) large Farms

(S) small Farms

(U) unenclosed/Common Land

tree cover

(W) wooded: well wooded landscapes (usually greater than 30% cover) characterised by interlocking (usually large), blocks of ancient woodland and/or wooded streamlines.

(S) secondary: extensive patches of secondary woodland/scrub and/or recent plantations. Associated with former mineral extraction sites along river corridors in Hertfordshire.

(P) estate plantations: ordered pattern associated with discrete of estate plantations, coverts and/or groups of trees.

(A) trees and woods: organic pattern associated with densely scattered hedgerow trees (typically oak) often with relic patches of ancient woodland. Typically associated with areas of clustered/dispersed settlement.

(T) trees: thinly scattered hedgerow/streamside trees and/or groups of trees around settlements.

(O) open/wooded: open land characterised by the absence of tree cover

Level 3 - Landscape Description units

land use

the broad pattern of primary land uses, as related to the inherent physical and economic constraints within a particular area.

commercial: built up, often urban edge

farmland: this can be arable, pastoral or mixed:

(A) arable: settled agricultural landscape, generally below 300metres/1000 feet, in which cultivation in order to produce crops is dominant.

(C) cropping: settled agricultural landscapes generally below 300 metres (1000 feet), which are dominated by arable cultivation, often in combination with livestock farming. Also known as mixed farming.

(P) pastoral: predominantly dairying and/or stock rearing

forestry: can be broadleaf, conifer or a mix of both.

industrial: built up, usually zoned away from residential areas.

mineral extraction: in Hertfordshire confined to sand and gravel extraction in river valleys and on slopes.

recreation or amenity: areas of public or private open space for formal or informal games, walking, bird-watching, sailing, horse-riding, etc.

(Ur) urban: cities, towns and other large built up areas greater than 5 km in extent

field pattern

a description of the boundaries around fields and the areas they enclose, frequently indicative of date of enclosure.

irregular: piecemeal enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes.

subregular: interlocking pattern of fields and lanes with curving boundaries.

regular: rectilinear pattern of fields with mainly curving boundaries.

geometric: ordered pattern of rectilinear fields and lanes with straight boundaries.

discontinuous: field pattern is so disturbed or destroyed that a pattern is no longer apparent

field size

denotes relative/average size of fields within a given LDU, as follows.

1 - small: more than 50% of fields less than 2 ha in size.

2 - small-medium: more than 50% of fields 2-8 ha in size.

3 - medium-large: more than 50% of fields greater than 8 ha in size.

field boundary

defining perimeter structure, such as hedge, tree row, fence, ditch or bank.

hedge

High - >3m.

Medium - above eye level (1.8 -3m).

Low - below eye level (>1.8m).

soils

the nature of the loose material covering the land surface in which terrestrial plants (natural and cultivated) grow. Derived from interpretation of Soil Survey data.

wet mineral soils: mineral soils affected by groundwater and supporting wetland (swamp, marsh and wet pasture), or relic wetland vegetation - almost always associated with fluvial (marine/riverine) drift. May be seasonally, or perennially wet, but in many cases groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps.

(WG) poorly draining: deep, stoneless clayey and fine loamy soils developed in river and marine alluvium. Includes soil associations 813b, 813d.

(WB) free draining: deep, free draining loamy, silty and sandy soils developed in river and marine alluvium. Includes soil association 812a.

heavy (clay) soils: slowly permeable mineral soils, typically developed on glacial tills and soft clays. Seasonal waterlogging is the main constraint on agricultural production, especially in areas of high rainfall. Used extensively for cereal growing in the East Midlands and East Anglia.

(CG) base-rich gleyed: poorly draining clayey soils, typically developed on soft (Jurassic/Tertiary) clays. Includes soil association 712c.

(CB) base-rich clayey: heavy clayey soils, typically developed on chalky till. Includes soil associations 411d, 582d.

(B) base-poor clayey: heavy/poorly draining clayey soils, typically developed on clay-with-flints, or glacial drift derived from hard (Palaeozoic) rocks and supporting damp heathland/woodland habitats. Includes soil associations 582a, 582c.

(PG) base-poor loamy: poorly draining loamy/sandy soils, often with clayey sub-soils, typically developed on plateau/glacial drift. Includes soil association 714d.

brown soils: reddish/brown, free-draining mineral soils developed on permeable rocks (limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone), or drift at elevations below about 300 metres. There are few constraints to agricultural production, other than those imposed by slope, and in most areas these soils are intensively cultivated

(LB) base-rich loamy: deep, free-draining loamy soils developed on chalk and chalky drift. Includes soil associations 511e, 571x.

(SB) base-poor sandy: light, free-draining sandy and coarse loamy soils developed on soft sandstones and sandy drift. Includes soil associations 581d, 581e.

land cover

a description of the permanent or semi-permanent features upon the earth's surface, such as: open farmland, treed farmland, wooded farmland, parkland, woodland, open water or wetlands. Not to be confused with land use, which refers to current but impermanent features (see below). The relative extent of land cover is as expressed below:

- dominant - >60%
- frequent - <30%
- occasional - <10%
- absent - not visible

A further distinction is made as to the relative extent of the wood/tree component of land cover, as follows:

tree cover: an expression of the nature and spatial pattern of the tree and woodland component of the cultural landscape.

ancient woodland: wooded landscapes characterised by mixed of broadleaved woodlands, mainly of ancient origin (as defined on the ancient woodland inventory), which pre-date the surrounding enclosure pattern. This pattern typically displays clear signs of piecemeal woodland clearance, such as irregular woodland outlines, densely scattered hedgerow oaks, woodland place names, etc.

FIELD SURVEY RECORD SHEET					
1					
Date :		Surveyors' Refs :		Area code:	
Location :				Photo Nos:	
Conditions:					
LANDFORM dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant					
Description: flat gently undulating strongly undulating steep broad valley narrow valley plain plateau upland sloping			Hydrology: river stream ponds lakes reservoir winterbourne wetlands other		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
				Degree of slope:	Altitude range:
LANDCOVER dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant					
Description: open farmland treed farmland wooded farmland parkland woodland moor/heath grassland / common open water or wetlands		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant	Primary land use: urban / suburban / commercial / industrial farmland: arable/pastoral/mixed forestry: broadleaf/conifer/mixed common or green: grassed/treed recreation or amenity: type reservoir rough grazing nursery / allotments / orchard disturbed		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Associated features: e.g. glasshouses/ marina.			Secondary land use (select from above)		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Woodland cover: extensive interlocking linear discrete fragmented	Species:	dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant	Field boundaries (in order of prominence): hedgerow (with/without trees) tree rows hedgebank fence wall/wet ditch other (high/medium/low)	Species:	dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised discontinuous insignificant
HISTORICAL PATTERN dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant					
Description: organic planned unenclosed					
Field pattern: geometric (ordered) regular (rectilinear) subregular (interlocking – curved boundaries) irregular (organic, winding lanes) discontinuous (no discernable pattern)		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised fragmented insignificant	Transport pattern: motorway A road B road track / lane canal railway straight winding sinuous sunken		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Field size: 1- small < 2ha 2- small/medium 3- medium/large 4- large > 8ha		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant	Settlement: Form: village / hamlet / isolated house or farm/ other Building style: vernacular / non-vernacular Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/ Victorian/Edwardian/20thC Materials: walls and roof		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Verges: absent variable uniform wide / medium / narrow ditched		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant	Country houses: Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/Victorian/Edwardian 20thC Materials:		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Other built features (function, age and materials):					dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Overall summary statement:					
VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION					
Views of area from outside: widely visible / locally visible / concealed			Views within area: extensive filtered framed / limited by:		
Scale of landscape elements: small medium large	Sense of enclosure: confined contained open exposed	Visual unity: unified coherent incoherent	Sound: tranquil/distant/discordant Source: Level and constancy:	Rarity: unique rare unusual	

VISUAL IMPACT				
		low	moderate	high
Impact of built development : transport corridor/rural housing/ utilities/structures/other	dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant	Impact of land use change: pasture to arable mineral extraction parkland to amenity		dominant prominent apparent widespread apparent localised insignificant
Magnitude of impact: high/moderate/low	Extent of impact: widespread/localised/insignificant	Magnitude of impact: high/moderate/low	Extent of impact: widespread/localised/insignificant	
Distinctive features : treasures		eyesores		
Notes:				

CONDITION

HISTORICAL INTEGRITY strong moderate weak

Extent and type of landcover change: farmland to built devt. change in extent of woodland/tree cover on farmland loss of field boundaries parkland to farmland, extraction or other commons to secondary woodland other	widespread localised insignificant	Survival of cultural pattern: intact and well managed intact but poorly managed interrupted (gen. intact but locally interrupted) declining (boundaries poorly managed) relic	Age structure of tree cover: over mature /mature/young mature/young/N.A. dominant prominent apparent (W/L) insignificant
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ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY strong moderate weak

Extent of habitat patch survival: Widespread Linked Scattered relic	Management of habitats: Good Not obvious Poor	Evidence of degradation Pollution Erosion Noise Light Traffic Intensity of use Other	Survival of ecological corridors: intact and well managed intact but poorly managed interrupted (gen. intact but locally interrupted) declining (corridors poorly managed) relic
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Notes:

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses:

Types of public access noted: footpaths bridleways waymarked routes county/regional parks commonland with public access	Frequency/density of public access widespread localised	Condition: good wide Surface: fair poor narrow Disabled access? not known
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CHARACTER SUMMARY

CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
1 Landcover Change 2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* 3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* 4 Management of semi-natural habitats 5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) 6 Impact of built development* 7 Impact of land use change * Prime condition categories if tie	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low Low
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie			

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
1 Impact of landform* 2 Impact of landcover* 3 Historic pattern* 4 Visibility from outside 5 Sense of enclosure 6 Visual unity 7 Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open/exposed Incoherent Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Coherent Unusual	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Concealed Contained/confined Unified Unique/rare
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie			

Boundary notes:

MATRIX CONDITION	Good			
	Moderate			
	Poor			
	Weak	Moderate	Strong	ROBUSTNESS

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