

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:

Downland Mosaic Small Scale



Found throughout the Hampshire Downland. Most prevalent where the South Downs abuts lowland Hampshire, the north west chalk landscape and the southern slopes either side of the Wooded Plateau type.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

Basingstoke:	Primary associations: Semi Enclosed Chalk and Clay Farmland, Enclosed Chalk and Clay farmland: Small Scale, Semi Enclosed Clay plateau Farmland Secondary associations: Enclosed Chalk and Clay Farmland: Large Scale
East Hampshire	Downland Mosaic (sub div. Enclosed)
Eastleigh	N/a
Fareham	N/a
Gosport	N/a
Hart	N/a
Havant	N/a
New Forest	Primary association: Enclosed Arable Farmland Secondary association: Historic Parkland
Rushmoor	N/a
Test Valley	Semi Enclosed Clay Plateau Farmland, Enclosed Chalk and Clay Woodland (where woodlands are small and fragmented).
Winchester	Primary associations: Chalk and Clay Woodland, Chalk and Clay Farmland Secondary associations: Scarp Downland, Parkland, occ. Open Downland.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS

Dorset	
West Berkshire	Southern Chalkland
West Sussex	N/a
Wiltshire	Wooded Downland

KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- Frequently undulating chalk and clay downland with fairly steep slopes and occasional small scarps which can be a mix of wooded and open downland.
- A well wooded, some of ancient origin and strong hedgerow network which contrasts with areas of more open predominantly arable fields.
- Numerous, small woodlands and mature and well treed mixed hedgerows, indicative of assarting and small fields with wavy boundaries suggesting informal enclosures.
- Assart woods and fields tend to be most numerous and intact in these landscapes compared with other downland types.
- Few late parliamentary enclosures.
- Falls almost exclusively within AONB boundaries suggesting high degree of aesthetic qualities.
- Low density road and lane network where this type occurs in mid and west Hampshire –higher density further east.
- A mosaic of land uses and management; arable dominated but also with permanent pasture, sites managed for biodiversity objectives, public access and, woodland and field margins managed for game.
- Association with open access areas under CRow Act on small scarps and downland.
- Settlements outside the river valleys are mainly small hamlets and church and manors in dry valley bottoms where this type occurs.
- Higher proportion of older (17th C and before) farmsteads than other downland types.
- Constantly changing views with panoramas from high points across undulating downs to river valleys and more truncated ones constrained by woodland strips and high hedges and along dry valleys.

PHYSICAL

GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

Bedrock and Superficial Geology: Almost exclusively Upper and Middle Chalk formation, the key members often have marl beds or marly chalk, such as Newhaven Chalk, and Lewes Nodular formation. There are often patches of clay with flint superficial deposits, where these areas are more extensive, District and Borough assessments have identified them as separate types.

Landform and Elevation: This landscape type is strongly associated with more frequently undulating areas than other downland types, such as the ridges and dry valleys that run north south off the main central ridge of the South Downs, or the predominantly east west ones either side of the clay plateau downland area in central eastern Hampshire. These series of small dry valleys also known as coombes, are key in imparting a sense of comparative enclosure and smallness of scale in an otherwise more open downland setting in neighbouring types.

SOILS TYPES: The ridges and higher ground are associated with type 581d plateau drift and clay with flint soils, which are well drained fine silty over clay, often very flinty. The valleys tend to have type; 343h this soil is deep calcareous and non calcareous fine and silty.

Typical soil type pattern:

FUNCTIONS:

Hydrological function: Medium to high; often major groundwater vulnerability zone and predominantly grade 2/3 source protection zones, occasionally grade 1 where this type adjoins the Wooded Downland Plateau type.

Food and Biomass: Predominantly grade 3, but less land available for agriculture than other downland types because of the relatively high proportion of woodland.

Biodiversity potential: Predominantly moderate chalk grassland opportunity, occasionally high and more frequently low. But with relatively high ancient woodland cover, ancient woodland reversion potential is provides an equally important biodiversity opportunity.

LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:

Much greater prevalence of small fields (numbers under 7ha abundant) than other downland types. High proportion of woodland under 2 ha, sometimes high cover of woodland as a percentage of the total land area. Hedges well treed. The undulating landscape heightens the sense of enclosure compared with the Downland Mosaic Large Scale LCT. Mostly, small hamlets and villages, small field patterns associated with the presence of these settlements. Predominantly arable land use but with a greater proportion of improved grassland in South Hampshire than north west Hampshire where this type occurs.

HYDROLOGY:

Few streams. Often areas with springs and seasonal winterbournes in valley bottoms. River Swift, major tributary of the Test in north west Hampshire, is a noticeable exception to the typical size.

EXPERIENTIAL

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES:

Moderately dense minor road and track network certainly greater than the Open Downland Type, but not as great as in the Wooded Downland Plateau. Of key significance is the fact that this type falls almost exclusively within 2 AONBs, the North Wessex Downs and East Hampshire.

TRANQUILLITY:

Deemed to be of relatively and consistently high tranquillity in the CPRE tranquillity mapping project 2006.

CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS:

BIODIVERSITY

The Downland Mosaic Small Scale landscape character type is an agricultural landscape consisting of arable land and improved grassland with interconnected woodland strips and patches. Within this, there are patches of unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland and some unimproved neutral grassland.

Unimproved grasslands tend to be botanically very rich. Hedgerows enclose fields and provide a network throughout the landscape. Arable land on the Hampshire Downs can be rich in arable weed flora, and can support bird species including corn bunting and barn owl.

Woodland character varies but is generally interconnected. Broadleaved woodland exists as patches and strips; some of this is ancient and semi-natural woodland. There are a significant number of plantations in this landscape, including mixed plantations, broadleaved and coniferous plantations. Again, many of these are interconnected, both with each other and with other woodlands. Plantation woodlands tend to have a lower ecological value than older, semi-natural woodlands. There are areas of coppice with standards, which, in Hampshire often represents woodland with a long history of human management and cultivation associated with the production of wattle sheep hurdles. Coppice woodlands can be species rich because the coppice stools provide unique habitats. There are also areas of parkland/ scattered trees over grassland which can represent areas where timber cropping and livestock grazing are undertaken concurrently and these can often be species rich. Areas of young trees exist and these should enhance the wooded character of this landscape into the future.

There are moderate to high opportunities for chalk grassland restoration and re-creation in this landscape character type. A number of BOAs exist within this type:

- Vernham's Dean to Hurstbourne Tarant BOA;
- Northern Escarpment: West Woodhay to Watership Down BOA;
- East Hampshire Hangers BOA;
- St Catherine's Hill to Cheesefoot Head BOA;
- Bere Ashley BOA and;
- Sombourne Woods BOA.

All these BOAs present opportunity to recreate and enhance lowland mixed deciduous woodlands and lowland calcareous grassland, the East Hampshire Hangers BOA presents opportunities for lowland meadow creation.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

ARCHAEOLOGY

There is only very light evidence of Mesolithic activity. In the Neolithic this downland type seems to be peripheral to the settled and farmed areas, although there is Neolithic evidence in the area north of Andover. In the Bronze Age, there is little evidence of farming or settlement, although burial mounds suggest the landscape is in use. There is evidence of some settlement north of Andover. In the Iron Age, whilst many areas have little evidence of settlement, there is an increase in settlement evidence on the margins, for instance on the southern edge of the open downland type, located in the South Downs. The discreet area in the open downland east of the Test is settled and farmed and areas north west of Andover seem to have a concentration of settlement. A similar pattern can be traced in the Roman period. Increasingly areas were settled and farmed beyond the margins of the open down onto the mosaic downland types, particularly in the area between the open downland and the southern lowland belt. This seems to suggest that these areas were increasingly intensively used.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This LCT has a tendency to be associated with assart fields and woodland, although generally the extent of assarts is less extensive than Hampshire lowland mosaic landscapes. The field assarts tend to be types 1.1, 1.2, most likely to be related to medieval to 17th century origin and as expected for a downland setting - large field assarts 1.3, are more common than in lowland mosaic areas – although described as large, this is a matter of scale. The field sizes in

the HLTs 1.10 and 1.11, medium and large scale parliamentary are typically much larger than the equivalent field sizes in the HLT 1.3 large assarts. Consequently it is reasonable for large assarts to occur in this landscape type. There is also a tendency for this LCT to be linked with the presence of small fields with wavy boundaries which are associated with late medieval to 17th/18th C informal enclosure processes. Farm holdings tend not to be as large as in the Open Downland types and their smaller size may be contributory to the survival of early enclosure landscapes.

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Settlement types by form: The historic focus for development in the Hampshire Downs has been the main chalk valleys. The overall pattern is more nucleated in the chalk than in the adjoining lowland landscapes. Hamlets and church and manor are the most prevalent settlement forms where this type falls outside the river valley character area boundaries. There is a higher density of settlement than in the open downs type. There are close similarities with the Downland mosaic large scale landscapes. Both these landscapes have a greater proportion of older farmsteads (18th century and older) than the Open Downland and Wooded Downland Plateau types This landscape type has perhaps a greater density of older farmsteads (17th and medieval origin) than the large scale version – particularly where it occurs in the southern and eastern Hampshire downs. Farmsteads of medieval origin tend to be located in a few small villages and hamlets and there are some post 1750 isolated farmsteads. Farmsteads are very prominent features in the settlements and the landscape, the great majority being located alongside highways and set within the setting of the river valleys, dry valleys and undulations of the landscape rather than ridge top.

Building materials and type;

The majority of farm buildings pre 1850 are timber framed although brick was used from the 18th century where it was locally available. There is a high density of brick and flint buildings with tile or slate half hipped or gabled roofs, possibly higher density than downland mosaic large scale – outside the extent of the river valley character areas. Straw thatch laid in longstraw style with flush wrap over ridge and sparred eaves was the traditional roofing material for many farm buildings although tile has been used since medieval times. Many farms are dominated by one or more large timber framed aisled threshing barns of up to 9 bays dating from the 16th century onwards. Granaries are typically 18th or 19th century timber framed and set on straddle tones. Chalk cob was used for many of the smaller buildings of the farmstead and these were often thatched. Buildings for cattle are not always present, where found they often consist of single storey open fronted shelters facing into the yard and are normally 19th century additions to earlier complexes.

VISIBILITY

Prominency: The presence of ridges and dry valleys associated with the fringes of higher land like the South Downs ridge and Wooded Downland Plateau, mean that this type is of relatively high prominence.

Enclosure: The high instance of woodland and hedgerows and valley and ridge landscape has a dramatic effect on overall visibility and means that it is probably the least visible in terms of availability of distant views of all the Downland types.

Public perceptions: This type is associated with very rural and undeveloped areas in Hampshire and as this type is found in designated landscapes, public expectation is high in terms of being able to experience tranquillity.