

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:

Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated



Associated with lowland landscapes in Hampshire but not in the coastal plain areas. May occur as small pockets at District level assessment scale, but not considered large enough for County scale mapping. Close association with Heath and Forest and Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Wooded types.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

Basingstoke:	Primary association: Small Scale Pasture and Woodland: Heath Associated, Forest on Heath, Mixed heathland and forest, Mixed Farmland and Woodland, Mixed Farm land and Woodland Small Scale. Secondary association: Parkland, Estate Farmland
East Hampshire	Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic. (unusually for a LCT the description is qualified by geographical location – Wealden)
Eastleigh	Gravel Terrace, Parkland Pasture, Pasture and Woodland, Small Holdings, Woodland and Clearings.
Fareham	N/a
Gosport	N/a
Hart	Mixed Farmland and Woodland: Large Scale, Mixed Pasture and Woodland: Large Scale Mixed Pasture and Woodland: Small Scale, Broadleaved Forest on Heath
Havant	N/a
New Forest	Primary association: Heath Associated Estates, Heath Associated Small Holdings and Dwellings, Secondary association: Ancient Forest Farmlands
Rushmoor	Pasture and Woodland, Southwood Amenity Open Space.
Test Valley	Pasture and Woodland Associated with Heath.
Winchester	Pasture Woodland and Heath Associated, Heathland Secondary Association: Horticulture and Small Holdings.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS

Dorset	Heath / Farmland Mosaic
West Berkshire	Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
West Sussex	Wooded Ridges
Wiltshire	Forest – Heathland Mosaic

KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- This landscape occurs on a varying geology of sands, sandy clays and gravels, occasionally with narrow valleys underlain by the clay.
- A mixture of acidic sandy and clay soils.
- Typically, grazed pasture small enclosures, in well wooded settings closely linked with adjoining heath and common land and strongly associated with the presence of purlieus and back up land of the New Forest.
- Widespread horse grazing and urban fringe uses such as golf courses.
- Low agricultural grade land. More fertile loamy soils are associated with arable landuse.
- Bracken, gorse, oak and birch..... (complete when biodiversity profile in)
- Typically, small to very small size regular pattern field with very strong association with 19th century origins of enclosure over commons.
- In the New Forest associated with larger scale pattern of Heath Associated Estates.
- Often located on rising or elevated land compared with the other predominantly clay based lowland mosaic landscape types.
- Tend to be associated with small holding development, particularly the 19th century and development on the edge and the filling in of commons.
- Associated with 19th and 20th century conifer plantations.
- Modern trend of large detached houses and farm building conversions.
- No market towns indicating historic economic focus was generally outside these landscapes.

PHYSICAL

GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

Bedrock and Superficial Geology: Tend to occur on relatively recent geology of the Bracklesham Beds Group; part of the Eocene series. The formations are predominantly sandy and gravelly and / or head and alluvial deposits where this LCT occurs in lower lying areas such as south of the New Forest. Tends to occur on the periphery of sand and gravel plateaux and mixed with more clayey soils than the Heath and Forest type. In North and South Hampshire there is a strong association with underlying Wittering Formation, little of this remains undeveloped over in the south. The geology is mainly of the Barton formation where this LCT occurs above the river terrace, east of the River Avon. The presence of this LCT in the Weald is associated with a older period, in particular the Sandgate and Bargate formations, part of the Lower Greensand group.

Landform and Elevation: Often on locally highest ground where it occurs in the Lowland Mosaic landscape. Also at the edge and slopes to more extensive gravel plateaux. This imparts a rising and also more frequently undulating feel to the landscape than the surrounding more clay based LCTs.

SOILS TYPES:

Typical soil type pattern: Key associations with types 571g and h, 572j, 841b,c,d (north Hampshire and south of the New Forest) and 711g. These are sand and loamy soils, river gravel and drift with pockets of clayey soils. Mainly brown earth soils but occasional podzol soils.

FUNCTIONS:

Hydrological function: Predominantly lies over minor aquifer and groundwater protection zones, apart from north west Hampshire, where there are grade 1 and 2 source protection zones.

Food and Biomass: Mixed agricultural grade often 4 or 5, and typically 3 in north Hampshire. Moderate capacity for biomass function.

Biodiversity potential: Moderate to very high potential for heathland opportunity and moderate capacity for Ancient Woodland reversion.

LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:

Improved grassland dominates over arable by percentage area in the order of 75% to 25%. Woodland cover is comparatively high second only to Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Wooded LCT in the Lowland Mosaic range of types, and not as much as Woodland and Plantation Heath which it frequently adjoins. In many areas of Hampshire, this LCT is synonymous with a small to very small field pattern size, under 3ha, often smaller than the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale Wooded type. The smallest hedged field of all are on the fringes the New Forest where 1ha fields are common. These purlieus are associated with the practice of commoning. This type also includes the areas where this type occurs in central southern Hampshire the field size is larger and boundaries more fragmented than in other locations. In the New Forest, this type also includes the larger scale landscape of the Heath Associated Estates – generally outside the New Forest perambulation. Varied percentage settlement cover, much more development present than adjoining and closely associated Heath and Forest LCT. Widespread horse grazing and livery practices. Occasional horticultural land use, but not nearly as common as found in the coastal plain LCTs. Much of where this LCT would have occurred in southern central Hampshire has been built over. A similar but less extensive pattern of expansion over this LCT has occurred in north east Hampshire.

Where this LCT occurs there is generally high pressure for sand and gravel extraction.

HYDROLOGY: Predominantly well drained but slow drainage over clay. Where this LCT occurs in North and South Hampshire streams are chalk fed.

EXPERIENTIAL**ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES:**

Often abuts large settlements and conurbations. In remoter areas such as the fringes of the New Forest, access is very tourist related. There is a close correlation with the presence of commons. There is a noticeable increase in density of the PRoW and road transport network travelling from the adjoining Heath and Forest LCT and often but less consistent similar change in density compared with the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Wooded LCT.

TRANQUILLITY:

Typically higher levels of housing development than other lowland landscapes - especially 19th and predominantly 20th century expansion reduces rurality and brings with it urban fringe character to the adjoining rural areas. The wooded and typically small scale fields with thick hedgerows provide intimacy and seclusion.

BIODIVERSITY

Arable land and grassland improved for agriculture tends not to be species rich due to commercial food production objectives but can support a range of species, including birds such as curlew, corn bunting and grey partridge, along with mammals, the most notable being the harvest mouse, and many insect species. Unimproved grassland is an increasingly scarce habitat but there is a strong resource of unimproved or semi-improved grassland within the Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated landscape character type, most likely associated with grazing or hay meadows. There are also patches of marshy grassland, often associated with springs and frequently supporting *Molinia* grass or rushes.

There are some small, heathland habitats within the Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated landscape character type, these vary. In the north east of the county, dry heath predominates, often as part of a mosaic with acid grassland, although there is some wet heath. In the east of the county, dry heath with associated bracken stands exist, whilst further west there are more wet heaths, with some acid fens, although dry heath and acid grassland mosaics also exist here.

Heathland habitats exist when tree growth has been suppressed, often historically, through grazing and clearance. Dry heath supports heather and bristle bent grass and mainly exists on higher, better drained ground. As drainage becomes more impeded the species mix alters and indicates a wet heath habitat. Species such as *Molinia* grass and cross leaved heath indicate wet heath, a type of acid mire. Acid fens have a similar character to wet heath, although there tends to be a much less heather present.

Woodland varies, there is a significant amount of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated landscape character type, along with mixed and coniferous plantations, new tree growth and some parkland/ trees scattered over grassland which can represent areas where timber cropping and livestock grazing are undertaken concurrently. These are often species rich.

There are six BOAs covering parts of this landscape character type:

- Silchester to Tadley BOA identifies opportunities for lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heath, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland and lowland meadow habitat creation and enhancement.
- North Hampshire Lowland Heath and Ancient Woods BOA identifies opportunities for lowland heath, lowland acid grassland, lowland meadow, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland and purple moor grass and rush pastures habitat creation and enhancement.
- The Forest of Bere BOA identifies opportunities for lowland heath, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland and lowland meadow habitat creation and enhancement.
- Ashford Hill BOA identifies opportunities for lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, lowland meadow and purple moor grass and rush pastures habitat creation and enhancement.
- Wealden Heaths BOA identifies opportunities for lowland dry acid grassland, lowland

heath, wet woodland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland habitat creation and enhancement.

- Meon Valley BOA identifies opportunities for purple moor grass and rush pastures, wet woodland, lowland meadow, reedbed and lowland fen habitat creation and enhancement.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

ARCHAEOLOGY

There is generally light evidence of exploitation during the Mesolithic, but with more significant distributions adjacent to the higher heath as at Bordon and Yateley. Like wise in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age there is no suggestion that this is a farmed or settled landscape. However there are some significant clusters of Bronze Age burial mounds suggesting that the landscape was used, possibly for grazing or hunting. The prominent clusters are on the fringes of the Avon valley, over looking the Blackwater, and at the bottom of the Test as it flows through the lowland landscape. There are also burial mounds on the heathland around the Bordon area. Likewise in the Iron Age there is little evidence of settlement, although there is some on the fringes of the north end of the Avon valley and in the Calleva area. There are also a number of hill forts in the block of lowland between the Test Valley and the New Forest suggesting control of this zone without necessarily implying settlement. In the Roman period there is only limited evidence of the utilisation of this landscape.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This landscape type is strongly associated with enclosed commons and heath – and some small areas of remnant open landscapes. In the north east and east this mostly informal enclosure is established as piecemeal encroachment from the more intensively farmed valleys on former open heath and marginal land. This is also very evident on the fringes of the Avon valley where progressive encroachment of enclosure is characteristic. In the southern lowland and east in the western extremity of the Weald there is a mix of formal enclosure of common - often small scale and less formal enclosure from a woodland landscape. In the north west the woodland origin is more dominant with more piecemeal and informal enclosure. Often associated with large late 19th century and 20th century conifer plantations and in some places extensive sand and gravel extraction and MOD land in the north east and east Hampshire. Opportunistic 20th century land management practices and uses such as nurseries, small holdings, liveries and stables and horse paddock to turf production, and golf courses are a feature.

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Historically pre 1850s dispersed medium density settlement pattern of small common edge settlements, typically isolated farmsteads of 18th and 19th century origin. Modern trends of common edge infill and move towards nucleation. Detached speculative individual houses of very varying styles.

Settlement types by form: Strong association with Common Edge and Common Edge Infill.
Building materials and type; High proportion of early pre 1750 and pre 1850 brick dwellings due to proximity to clay sources. Clay tile roofs. Decorative tiles to roofs and first floor elevations commensurate with building fashion and mass production techniques in Victorian and Edwardian times. Use of flint is rare.

VISIBILITY

Prominency: High from the other lower lying Lowland Mosaic LCTs, but low from adjoining gravel plateau areas and Downland escarpments.

Enclosure: The predominance of small fields with thick treed hedged and significant presence of woodland imparts a strong sense of enclosure and intimacy.

Public perceptions: Often in close proximity and adjoining to large centres of population, where it the LCT occurs in more remote locations such as the New Forest and North Wessex Downs there public expectation is high in terms of being able to access the landscape and its rural quality.