

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:

Lowland Mosaic Small Scale

Confined to central southern Hampshire, subtle differences to other lowland mosaic types.



SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

Basingstoke:	Primary Associations: Mixed Farmland and Woodland, Mixed farmland and Woodland Small Scale. Secondary Associations: Enclosed Valley Sides, Enclosed Valley Floor Farmland, Small Scale Minor Valleys.
East Hampshire	Mixed Farmland and Woodland
Eastleigh	Farmsteads and Small Fields, Undulating Farmland, Golf Course.
Fareham	n/a
Gosport	n/a
Hart	Mixed Farmland and Woodland Large Scale (unsure why the difference in perception of scale).
Havant	n/a
New Forest	Ancient Forest Farmlands, Enclosed Farmland and Woodland.
Rushmoor	n/a
Test Valley	Mixed Farmland and Woodland Small Scale (some Mixed Farmland and Woodland Small Scale)
Winchester	Mixed Farmland and Woodland, Pasture on Clay, Mixed Farmland and Woodland Enclosed.

SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS

Dorset	
West Berkshire	
West Sussex	
Wiltshire	

KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- Low lying silty clay, but not sandy soils, that are seasonally wet and waterlogged in parts but also with better drained areas.
- The soils support predominantly permanent pasture land use.
- Less marginal farmed areas than the lowland mosaic medium scale and lowland mosaic heath associated types.
- Often small enclosures, small areas of woodland and undulating topography which produces the sense of a small scale landscape.
- Associated mostly with small chalk fed streams apart from where they border the New Forest perambulation where they are more acidic.
- Generally, high to very high density of dispersed small farmsteads and hamlets and associated with nucleated spring line settlements in the south and north Hampshire lowlands.
- Small semi natural and ancient woodland copses and hedges of varying character.
- Frequently a high density of public rights of way and winding lanes.
- Varying periods and types of enclosure but generally small scale but has some of the earliest enclosures out of all the lowland mosaic types – perhaps indicating less marginal and richer soils.
- Particular association with hamlets and villages of medieval and Saxon origin often associated with wood and wood clearance.

PHYSICAL

GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

Bedrock and Superficial Geology: London clay and Wittering formations typically close to the surface with little alluvial and superficial deposits.

Landform and Elevation: Shallow and relatively flat, low lying stream valley bottom landscapes.

SOILS TYPES:

Typical soil type pattern: Clay soils, types 711g and better drained only slight seasonal waterlogging 712c.

FUNCTIONS:

Hydrological function: Minor groundwater vulnerability zones, no source protection zones.

Food and Biomass: Very mixed grade soils, from grade I to unclassified. The best soils tend to be associated with the narrow stream floodplains. Variable biomass potential due to the variability in soils.

Biodiversity potential: Very little habitat creation potential for chalk grassland, heath and ancient woodland reversion.

LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:

Similar size of fields to Lowland Mosaic Small Scale Wooded, but with hardly any woodland cover. Hedged small field size (below 3 to 4 ha), generally well connected. Belts of mature trees are typical. Boundaries tend to be thickly wooded and treed. Dominated by improved grassland and pasture land use. Not associated with sand and gravel mineral extraction.

HYDROLOGY:

These landscapes are located close to the bottom of local hydrological basins where there is good access to streams. The presence of small streams is a fundamental part of their character.

EXPERIENTIAL

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES:

Moderate PRow network density (rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths.) emanating from settlements – typically less dense on the more waterlogged clay soils.

Generally minor road network which tends to be quite dense and comparable with the Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated LCTs. 'Doorstep' countryside for many local people – little or no open access land and commons.

TRANQUILLITY:

Not identified as being tranquil, but mapped as transitional areas between low and moderate tranquillity levels in the CPRE 2006 work.

CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS:

BIODIVERSITY

The Lowland Mosaic Small Scale landscape character type is a wooded agricultural landscape comprising improved grassland and arable land with woodland, unimproved grassland and occasional heath associated habitats.

Hedgerows are of various form and typically have mature trees. Some may be of ancient origin and associated with woodland pre disafforestation. In places the network is relatively dense, however, this density is inconsistent within the type and some locations are relatively open and unenclosed. Arable land and grassland improved for agriculture can support bird species include curlew, corn bunting and grey partridge.

There is a substantial resource of unimproved or semi-improved grassland within the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale landscape character type. Such grasslands are most likely associated with grazing or hay meadows and provide an important resource of more biodiverse grasslands within this arable landscape: unimproved grasslands play a vital role in supporting farmland associated species and biodiversity. Most grassland is neutral; however, there is some acid grassland and occasional patches of base rich fen within this landscape.

Patches of heathland habitats exist within the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale landscape character type, including both wet and dry heaths – but to a much lesser extent than the heath associated lowland mosaic. Where this type fringes the new Forest and Wealden area, heathland habitats exist when tree growth has been suppressed, often historically, through grazing and clearance. Dry heath supports heather and bristle bent grass and usually exist on higher, better drained ground. Lower down, as drainage becomes impeded, the species mix alters and indicates a wet heath habitat. Species including purple moor grass and cross leaved heath indicate acid fen. Acid fens have a similar character to wet heath, although there tends to be less heather associated with fens.

Woodland varies, there is a significant amount of ancient and semi-natural woodland, along with mixed and coniferous plantations, new tree growth and some parkland/ trees scattered over grassland (wood pasture). Wood pasture can represent areas where timber cropping and livestock grazing have historically undertaken concurrently and are often species rich. There is active coppice with standards and active coppice without standards in this landscape. Hazel coppice with oak and ash standards is a widespread habitat in Hampshire relating from the

historical production of wattle sheep hurdling. Hazel coppice woodlands can support rich flora and butterfly populations if the coppice is active and regularly cut.

Two BOAs exist within this landscape character type:

- Rother Valley BOA identifies opportunities for lowland meadow, wet woodland, reedbed and lowland fen habitat creation and enhancement.
- Ampfield – Baddesley – Chilworth – Lordworth BOA identifies opportunities for lowland heath, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, lowland dry acid grassland, wet woodland and lowland meadow habitat creation and enhancement.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

ARCHAEOLOGY

There is light evidence of exploitation during the Mesolithic and Neolithic. In the Bronze Age there is little evidence and no suggestion that this is a farmed or settled landscape, and there are few Bronze Age burial mounds except along the fringes of the Avon valley. Likewise in Iron Age there is little evidence of settlement, although there is some on the fringes of the Avon valley. However, where the river valleys cut through the bands of lowland mosaic there are several examples where the valley is marked by an Iron Age hill fort, such as at Buckland (Lymington), or Bulls Down Copse (Loddon). In the Roman period there are some Villa sites on the margins of these areas suggesting that exploitation, such as for woodland, hunting and quasi industrial activity such as pottery or tile production is making them slightly less marginal. There is a close correlation between lowland mosaic landscapes and pottery/tile production which may well reflect the availability of clay and fuel. In the medieval period assart landscapes, moats and deer parks, speak eloquently of the release of forest land to farming at this late stage in the evolution of the landscape.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscapes which have a high proportion small scale field enclosures. They can be recent formal enclosures, with a previous use as common land or small scale informal enclosures or small field assarts with little remaining woodland. There are few copses and woodland although hedges may be well treed – compared with the Lowland Mosaic Small Scale Wooded. May include late enclosure of parts of commons which were heathy and open rather than wooded.

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Settlement types by form:

There is frequently a high density of small dispersed hamlets and farmsteads associated with this type where it occurs in north and south Hampshire lowlands. The land has been typically more intensively farmed and managed than the medium scale and heath associated lowland mosaic types.

Building materials and type:

Traditionally local clay tile and brick were used. There also tends to be a higher proportion of pre 1750 and timber framed buildings than other lowland types.

VISIBILITY

Prominency: Locally low lying, intervisibility with other landscape types reduced because of the latter's relatively high presence of woodland.

Enclosure: Very enclosed intimate landscape, due to the small fields with high hedges and the higher surrounding land.

Public perceptions: Although close to large centres of population of central southern Hampshire, the landscape is still very rural and valued as local countryside, visible from often heavily trafficked rural roads.