



NORTH WESSEX DOWNS

AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Historic Landscape Character Areas and their special qualities and features of significance



Volume 1

Third Edition March 2016

Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy





Emma Rouse, Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy

www.wyvernheritage.co.uk – info@wyvernheritage.co.uk – 01747 870810

March 2016 – Third Edition



Summary

The North Wessex Downs AONB is one of the most attractive and fascinating landscapes of England and Wales. Its beauty is the result of many centuries of human influence on the countryside and the daily interaction of people with nature. The history of these outstanding landscapes is fundamental to its present-day appearance and to the importance which society accords it. If these essential qualities are to be retained in the future, as the countryside continues to evolve, it is vital that the heritage of the AONB is understood and valued by those charged with its care and management, and is enjoyed and celebrated by local communities.

The North Wessex Downs is an ancient landscape. The archaeology is immensely rich, with many of its monuments ranking among the most impressive in Europe. However, the past is etched in every facet of the landscape – in the fields and woods, tracks and lanes, villages and hamlets – and plays a major part in defining its present-day character. Despite the importance of individual archaeological and historic sites, the complex story of the North Wessex Downs cannot be fully appreciated without a complementary awareness of the character of the wider historic landscape, its time depth and settlement evolution.

This wider character can be broken down into its constituent parts. This process called ‘Characterisation’ is the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

The North Wessex Downs AONB has an existing landscape character assessment (Land Use Consultants 2002) which identifies unique single areas of particular landscape types within the AONB such as chalk river valleys such as the Kennet. It also has a complementary Historic Landscape Characterisation (Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy, 2012; Conway 2007) which characterises the distinctive historic dimension of today’s landscape. This is a complex and multifaceted database concerned with time depth in the landscape as well as present day character comprised of recurrent but not necessarily geographically discrete Historic Landscape Types.

*This database has therefore been used as a basis for the identification of more strategic **Historic Landscape Character Areas**, which are akin to Landscape Character Areas in that they identify geographically discrete areas, with distinctive historic environment characteristics. These highlight surviving time-depth and the legibility and the enjoyment of the past in the present landscape. They identify the North Wessex Downs landscape’s cultural, historic and archaeological attributes and the importance of change through time as a primary characteristic. They provide a systematic overview of the characteristics of the historic landscape in the AONB and in this revised edition includes **their special qualities and features of significance** which can be used as a basis for the identification of management priorities and issues and actions.*

Contents

Summary.....	1
Figures	4
Section 1: Introducing the North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas	5
Introducing Historic Landscape Character Areas	5
General Approach	7
Guiding Principles	7
Identifying a framework for identifying the Significance of each Historic Landscape Character Area	8
Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to West Berkshire HLCAs	9
Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to the Avebury World Heritage Site	10
Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Area Assessment	11
Relationship of Historic Landscape Character Areas to Local Authority Boundaries	12
Consultation on North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas	14
Section 2: North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Character Areas with Special Qualities and Features of Significance	15
Area 1: Pewsey Downs	16
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	20
Area 2: Avebury Plain	22
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	26
Area 3: Barbury Downs	28
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	32
Area 4: Aldbourne Downs	35
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	39
Area 5: Northern Escarpment	42
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	45
Area 6: Lambourn wooded downs plateau	47
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	51
Area 7: Lambourn Valley.....	53
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	57
Area 8: West Ilsley and downland	59
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	61
Area 9: Winterbourne Valley & downland.....	63
Area 10: Upper Pang Valley	69
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	72

Area 11: Greenhill and Thurle downlands.....	74
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	77
Area 12: Thame Valley North	80
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	82
Area 13: Pewsey Vale	84
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	87
Area 14: Upper Kennet Valley	90
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	93
Area 15: Savernake Forest and West Woods	96
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	100
Area 16: Middle Kennet Valley.....	102
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	106
Area 17: Stockcross - Wickham Heath	108
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	111
Area 18: Snelmore and Bucklebury Commons	112
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	116
Area 19: Pang Valley and Sulham Gap	118
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	122
Area 20: Pang-Thames Plateaux	124
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	128
Area 21: Kennet Valley East.....	130
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	132
Area 22: Thames Valley South	134
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	136
Area 23: Milton Hill and Down	138
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	141
Area 24 Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down	143
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	145
Area 25: Linkenholt, Facombe & Hannington	148
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	151
Area 26: Highclere and Inkpen Common	153
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	157
Area 27: Chute Forest & Facombe	159
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	162
Area 28 Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park	164
Special Qualities and features of Significance.....	166
Section 3: Methodology	168
Creating Historic Landscape Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs AONB.....	168

Describing Historic Landscape Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs AONB	172
Section 4: Further Work.....	179
Section 5: Conclusion.....	181
Section 6: References	182
Section 7: List of Figures provided in Volume 2.....	183

Figures

Figure One: North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas.....	6
Figure Two: Relationship of North Wessex Downs HLCAs to West Berkshire HCAs.....	9
Figure Three: Relationship of North Wessex Downs HLCAs to Avebury World Heritage Site...	10
Figure Four: Relationship of North Wessex Downs HLCAs to AONB LCA.....	11
Figure Five: Relationship of North Wessex Downs HLCAs to Local Authority Boundaries.....	12
Figure Six: Present Day Historic Landscape Character.....	169
Figure Seven: Time depth in the Historic Landscape.....	169
Figure Eight: Present day landscape character overlain by Trend Areas.....	170
Figure Nine: Time depth in the landscape overlain by Trend Areas.....	171

Section 1: Introducing the North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas

Twenty Eight distinct Historic Landscape Character Areas have been identified in the North Wessex AONB. The attributes used to identify the Historic Landscape Character Areas were based on information in the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation. The HLC provided two key pieces of information:-

1. The present day historic landscape character present in the AONB.
2. The surviving evidence of the historical development of the area.

The following descriptions aim to provide an overview of each area which encapsulate the main features of the Historic Environment present and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent.

The process by which the Historic Landscape Character Areas were identified, and mapped, and the sources of information used to create these descriptions is documented in Section 3: Methodology.

Introducing Historic Landscape Character Areas

The creation of Historic Character Areas provides a method of consolidating historic characterisation data, and other sources such as Historic Environment Records into a more generalised dataset based on geographically specific areas.

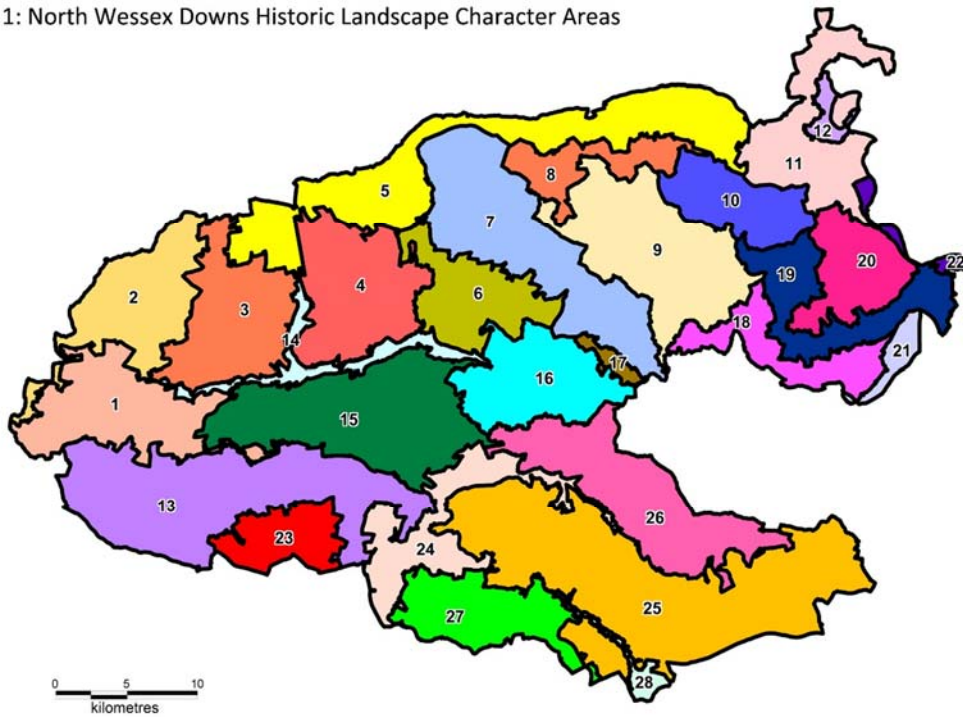
All historic characterisations (landscape, urban or seascape) form detailed, often complex, datasets which record the historic dimension of the present day. This complexity derives from the interrelation of several factors:

1. The characterisation dataset is often formed of many thousands of individual parcels of land each associated with a large amount of data.
2. The primary unit of these characterisations often called the Historic Character Type is usually not geographically specific. They often occur across the full geographical range of any given landscape. This forms a complex spatial pattern of interrelated types.
3. More recent characterisations record information on previous as well as present character

It is sometimes desirable to rework the datasets to provide a synthesis of the complex characterisation based on discrete geographical areas. This can be undertaken for three main reasons:

1. To allow the broad assessment of the historic and archaeological dimensions of the landscape.
2. To create areas that can be more easily engaged with and recognised by local people.
3. To aid in the creation of Historic Environment Action Plans and other management tools.

Figure 1: North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Character Areas



Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Pewsey Downs | 16. | Middle Kennet Valley |
| 2. | Avebury Plain | 17. | Stockcross-Wickham Heath |
| 3. | Barbury Downs | 18. | Snelmore and Bucklebury Commons |
| 4. | Aldbourn Downs | 19. | Pang Valley and Sulham Gap |
| 5. | Northern Chalk Escarpment | 20. | Pang-Thames Plateaux |
| 6. | Lambourn Wooded Plateau | 21. | Kennet Valley East |
| 7. | Lambourn Valley | 22. | Thames Valley South |
| 8. | West Ilsley and Downland | 23. | Milton Hill and Down |
| 9. | Winterbourne Valley and Downs | 24. | Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down |
| 10. | Upper Pang Valley | 25. | Linkenholt, Litchfield and Hannington |
| 11. | Greenhill and Thurle Downlands | 26. | Highclere and Inkpen Common |
| 12. | Thames Valley North | 27. | Chute Forest - Faccombe |
| 13. | Pewsey Vale | 28. | Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park |
| 14. | Upper Kennet Valley | | |
| 15. | Savernake Forest and West Woods | | |

See Volume 2 Figure 1 for an A3 version of this map and for A3 Maps showing the individual location of these areas in relationship to Ordnance Survey 1:25000 mapping.

The creation of Historic Character Areas has often been used as a first step in the study of sensitivity and significance of a given area (as with West Berkshire District Council *M.Conways pers.com*) or the creation of wider Historic Environment Characterisations (as with the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB *Rouse 2011*).

Once an Historic Character Area has been identified it needs to be accompanied by text which identifies and describes the main characteristics of each area.

This description should include both the nationally important and unique but also the commonplace and locally distinctive. It should encapsulate the main features of the Historic Environment in its widest form and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent. It should aim to be comprehensive but also, in the interests of usability, concise. The descriptions for each area should be consistent in order to allow easy communication. They should also capture the imagination of the reader, creating a mental picture of the area in question.

General Approach

The attributes used to identify an area should reflect the key information available in the Historic Characterisation, which is data on the present day historic landscape character and the surviving evidence of the historical development of that area of landscape. These two exist in a recursive relationship, both contributing to the character of the present day landscape:

Present Day Historic Landscape Character  Time depth historic development

Guiding Principles

A series of fundamental principles underlie the creation of any Historic Landscape Character Areas. These follow closely the guiding principles of both Historic Seascape and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

- Each area should reflect a unique locally distinctive part of the wider landscape with its own particular characteristics and historical trajectory.
- It is the historic aspects of the present day landscape which in the first instance defines each area, with subsequent reference made to factors such as groundcover or topography.
- One of the most crucial characteristics of any area is its time depth.
- All parts of any given area are important, not just special or designated sites, though the quality of a given area is also crucial.
- The boundaries and characteristics of any area should be derived from the available historic characterisation dataset.
- The process of the creation and subsequent description of HLCAs should be transparent and easily understandable.
- Wider public perceptions of areas should be considered where feasible alongside more expert views.

In addition a balance needs to be struck between capturing the detailed information available from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and maintaining an overview of the area as a whole. This is mirrored by the balance struck between using an expert view and incorporating a wider range of viewpoints.

Identifying a framework for identifying the Significance of each Historic Landscape Character Area

Understanding and articulating the values and significance of an area are necessary to inform decisions about its future.

Each Historic Landscape Character Area description is accompanied by a statement which identifies its Special Qualities and features of Significance

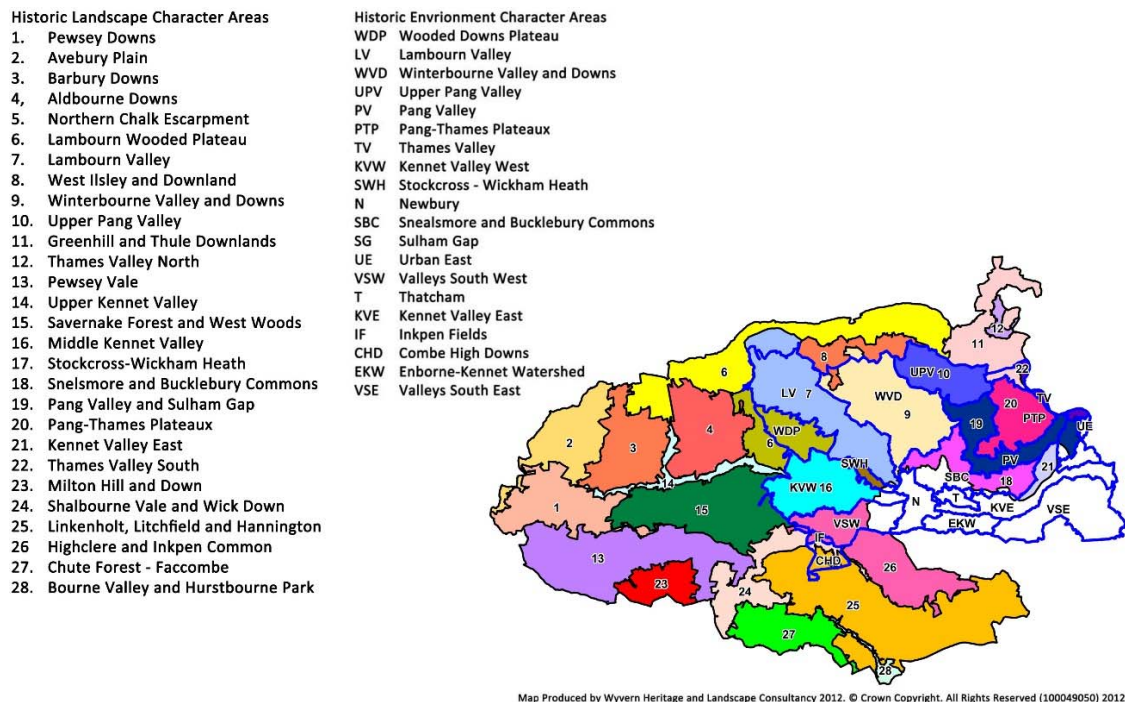
The degree of significance is determined by the historic characteristics and assets present in the area, and by the relationship between these characteristics. The term «special qualities' » relates to the AONB Management Plan and is used as a way of determining the key attributes which relate to the AONB designation.

Section	Description
Archaeological Interest	The heritage assets and historic landscape characteristics that further might reveal more about the AONB's past. There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Assets or landscapes with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Historic Interest	An historic interest is an interest in what is already known about past lives and events that may be used to illustrate the story of the landscape or a feature which can clearly be associated with a key event or person. There will be historic interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or may potentially hold, evidence of the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This could be either illustrative or associative. Illustrative interest is defined as the perception of a place as a link between past and present people while associative interest relates to the association with a notable family, person, event, or movement which gives historical interest a particular resonance

Section	Description
Architectural Interest	This derives from built features of significance in the landscape. There will be architectural interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or may potentially hold, evidence of the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through architecture to the present. This also could be illustrative or associative.
Aesthetic and artistic interest	This derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place including from folkloric associations.
Coherence, Rarity and Time depth	The coherence in the historic landscape character of the landscape – a measure of intactness and survival. Rarity relates to key characteristics which are either unusual within the AONB or even rare nationally. Time depth relates to the number of layers of human activity and land use which can be ‘read’ in the landscape and how far they date back.

Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to West Berkshire HLCAs

Figure 2 - Relationship of AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to West Berkshire Historic Environment Character Areas



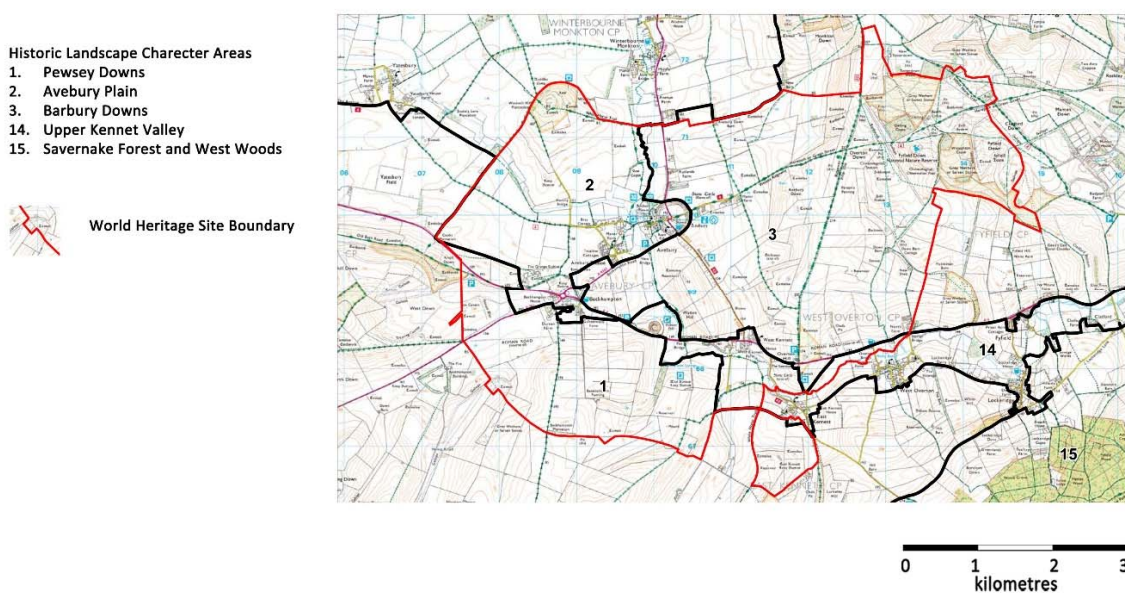
See Volume 2 Figure 38 for an A3 version of this map.

20 Historic Landscape Character Areas (with 91 nested Historic Landscape Character Zones) have already been identified for West Berkshire District Council based on the same methodology. These overlap with the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape and the boundaries of these areas are concurrent with the new Historic Landscape Character Areas.

For more information see <http://www.Westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13297> [last accessed 1st November 2012

Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to the Avebury World Heritage Site

Figure 3 - Relationship of AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to Avebury World Heritage Site



Map Produced by Weyern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

See Volume 2 for Figure 39 for an A3 version of this map.

Four of the Historic Landscape Character Areas identified fall within the Avebury World Heritage Site and five areas are within its setting. The Historic Landscape Character Area descriptions have been drawn at a broader scale and have not sought to duplicate the much more detailed information which relates to the World Heritage Site and its setting. This includes the Avebury World Heritage Site management Plan and the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

These can be accessed at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/artsheritageandlibraries/museumhistoryheritage/worldheritagesite/aveburyworldheritagesitemanagementplan.htm>

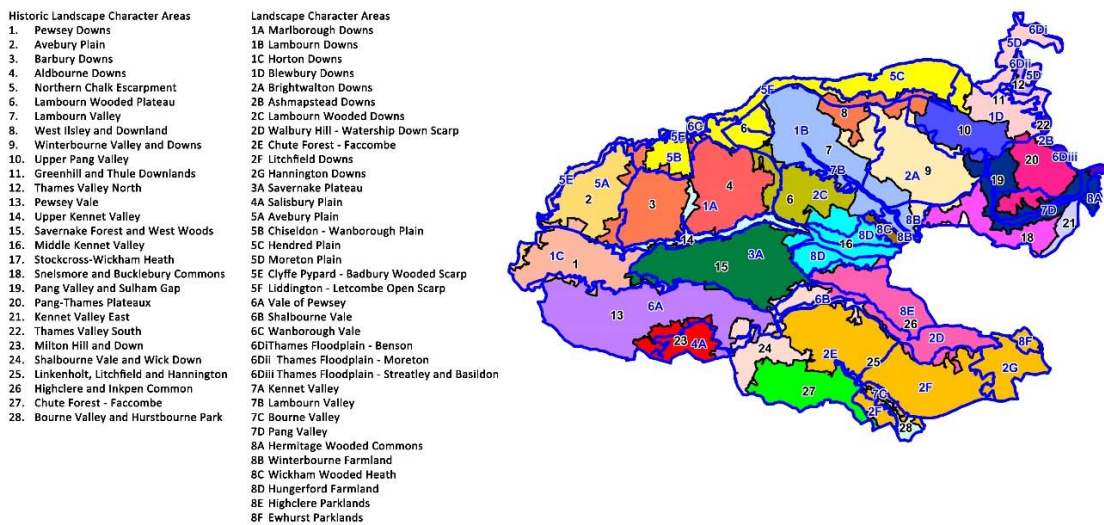
<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/artsheritageandlibraries/museumhistoryheritage/worldheritagesite/stonehengeandaveburysouv.htm>

[Last accessed 10th October 2012.]

The rationale for the boundary and setting of the World Heritage Site are complex. In relation to areas of the AONB that fall within the World Heritage Site and its setting, especially in relation to planning and management decisions, this more detailed information should be given precedence.

Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Area Assessment

Figure 4 - Relationship of AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to AONB Landscape Character Areas



Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

See Volume 2 Figure 40 for an A3 version of this map.

Landscape Character Assessment is an objective method for describing landscape, based on the identification of generic landscape types (e.g. Open downland) and more specific landscape character areas (e.g. Marlborough Downs). The approach identifies the unique character of different areas of the countryside without making judgements about their relative worth. Landscape character areas are classified based on sense of place, local distinctiveness, characteristic wildlife, natural features and nature of change. A Landscape Character Assessment was carried out for the North Wessex Downs AONB by Lands Use Consultants in 2002.

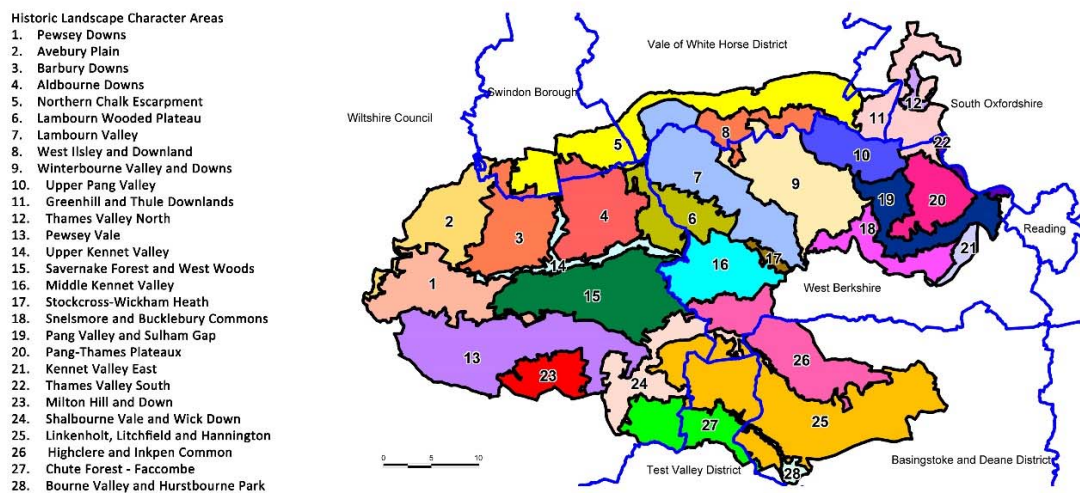
This can be accessed at:

[http://www.Northwessexdowns.org.uk/wba/nwd-aonb/NWDWebsiteV3.nsf/\\$LUcontent/7.1?OpenDocument](http://www.Northwessexdowns.org.uk/wba/nwd-aonb/NWDWebsiteV3.nsf/$LUcontent/7.1?OpenDocument)

This assessment seeks to present a fully integrated view of the landscape incorporating all the features and attributes that contribute to the special and distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs AONB. These include the physical, ecological, visual, historic and cultural forces that have shaped the present day landscape. It also recognises the AONB today as a living and working landscape and considers the social, economic and recreational characteristics that contribute to its current character. It offers a complementary approach to the Historic Landscape Character Areas presented in this document and can be used in parallel with these descriptions. However, the different datasets used means that the areas presented do not nest within the Landscape Character Areas although there are many similarities.

Relationship of Historic Landscape Character Areas to Local Authority Boundaries

Figure 5 - Relationship of AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas to Local Authorities



Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

See Volume 2 for Figure 41 for an A3 version of this map.

	Historic Landscape Character Areas	Basingstoke & Deane District	Test Valley District	South Oxford District	Vale of the White Horse	West Berkshire	Swindon Council	Wiltshire Council
1	Pewsey Downs							Yes
2	Avebury Plain							Yes
3	Barbury Downs						Part	Part
4	Aldbourn Downs						Part	Part
5	Northern Chalk Escarpment				Part		Part	Part
6	Lambourn Wooded Plateau					Part		Part
7	Lambourn Valley				Part			
8	West Ilsley and downland				Part	Part		
9	Winterbourne Valley and Downs				Part	Part		
10	Upper Pang Valley							
11	Greenhill and Thurle downlands			Part	Part	Part		
12	Thames Valley North			Yes				
13	Pewsey Vale							Yes
14	Upper Kennet Valley							Yes
15	Savernake Forest and West Woods							Yes
16	Middle Kennet Valley					Yes		
17	Stockcross-Wickham Heath					Yes		
18	Snelsmore and Bucklebury					Yes		
19	Pang Valley and Sulham Gap					Yes		
20	Pang-Thames Plateaux					Yes		
21	Kennet Valley East					Yes		
22	Thames Valley South					Yes		
23	Milton Hill and Down							Yes
24	Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down							Part
25	Linkenholt, Litchfield and Hannington	Part	Part					Part
26	Highclere and Inkpen Common	Part				Part		
27	Chute Forest - Faccombe		Part					Part
28	Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park	Part	Part					

Consultation on North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Character Areas

The Historic Landscape Character Areas have been developed in consultation with a steering group including representatives from the AONB and from the county based archaeological services.

The steering group comprised:

Rowan Whimster

Henry Oliver, NWD AONB

Andrew Lord, NWD AONB

Tom Sunley, Wiltshire Council

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Wiltshire Council

Duncan Coe, West Berkshire

Alex Duncan, West Berkshire

David Hopkins, Hampshire County Council

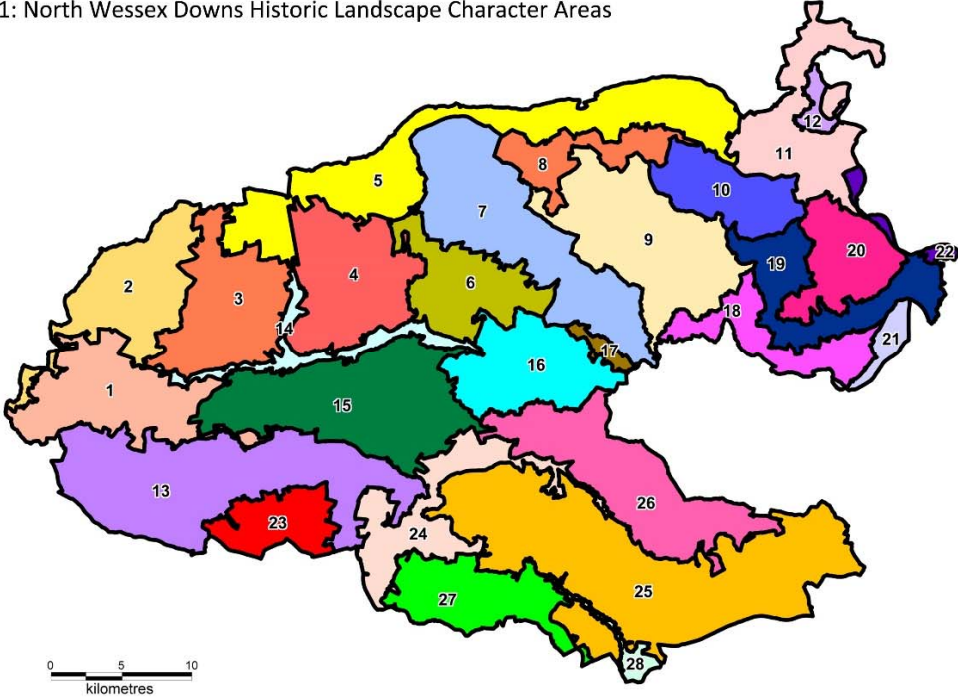
Sarah Simmonds, Avebury WHS

Susan Lisk, Oxfordshire County Council

Vicky Fletcher, Oxfordshire County Council

Section 2: North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Character Areas with Special Qualities and Features of Significance

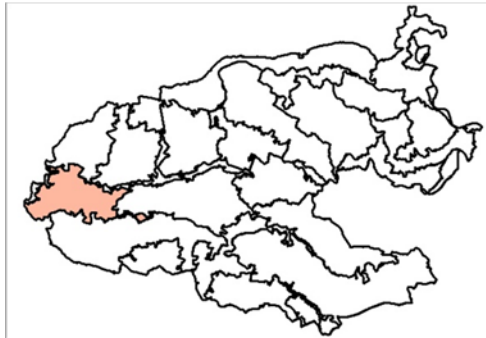
Figure 1: North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Character Areas



Map Produced by Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy 2012. © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2012.

Area 1: Pewsey Downs

An archaeologically exceptional landscape relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particularly rich. Significant areas of open downland survive. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of pre 20th century open grazed chalk downland. The area is partly within the landscape of the Avebury World Heritage Site.



Location – This area is the western most extent of the high chalk downlands of Wiltshire and Berkshire, with the AONB boundary wrapping around the base of the steep slopes at Heddington and Roundway forming a clear landscape divide with the adjacent low lying Avon Vales. The area extends along the chalk escarpment to the South of the Savernake Plateau as far East as Lockeridge.

Geology and Topography – The geology is dominated by Upper Chalk, with Middle Chalk in the dry valleys. The

landform is of open rolling downland dissected by dry valleys and hills.

Landscape Character – This is a large scale landscape of extreme openness with strong ridgelines and wide expansive areas. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 1A: Horton Downs.

Archaeological Character – The archaeological record is dominated by prehistoric archaeology. This includes evidence for intense Mesolithic exploitation of the area recorded as flint scatters, including the large scatter excavated at Golden Ball Hill. The Neolithic evidence is particularly rich; this includes sites within the boundary of the Avebury World Heritage Site which overlaps in part with the far North East of the area and includes the iconic site of the long barrow at West Kennet and the less well known example at East Kennet; part of the West Kennet Palisade complex; as well as numerous Bronze Age round barrows including the cemetery at Fox Covert.

However, nationally important Neolithic and early Bronze Age monuments also extend across the rest of the area and in some instances are in a good state of preservation. These include the Knap Hill Causewayed Enclosure; Adams Grave long barrow and other examples including at Oldbury and Hill Farm; as well as numerous extant Bronze Age round barrows. The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age sites under plough are of equal importance including prehistoric flint scatters, ploughed out round barrows and enclosures.

There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric field systems (later Bronze Age and Iron Age) and farming across the areas. These have generally been ascribed a later prehistoric/Romano-British date. Extensive areas of these field systems survived until recently as earthworks but have been levelled due to increased intensity of ploughing. Early, Middle and Later Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements have also been recorded. There are a notable concentration of Iron Age hillforts along the edge of the chalk escarpment including Cherhill, Rybury Camp and Oliver's Castle.

Roman evidence includes field systems, finds of coins and metal work, a Roman road which survives as an earthwork as well as enclosures.



Cherhill White Horse, Wiltshire - Open areas of close-cropped chalk grassland formerly dominated this area. These were used as part of the common grazing regime that operated in many Downs parishes in the Medieval period. White Horses on the edge of chalk escarpment form an iconic Post Medieval characteristic of the area. The ramparts of an Iron Age hillfort are also visible.

© Copyright [Mike Gentry](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Roundway Down, looking towards Furze Knoll – The present day historic landscape character is dominated by 20th century enclosure. This is divided roughly into two types: to the East new fields created by the ploughing up of open chalk downland and to the West fields created in the 20th century by modifying earlier 17th to 19th century enclosure. Woodland is limited to small post 1800 plantations. Roundway Down is the site of a Civil War battlefield.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



The Wansdyke on Tan Hill – An early Medieval linear boundary. This forms a major earthwork running across the area. Extant major monuments are an important and characteristic feature of the area dating from the Neolithic to the Early Medieval period.

© Copyright [Trevor Rickard](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Early Medieval archaeology is dominated by the Wansdyke which runs along the Southern escarpment marking the Southern boundary of the area. It dates to the 5th/6th century AD. It consists of a ditch and a running embankment from the ditch spoil, with the ditching facing North. It runs between Savernake Forest and Morgan's Hill. Some evidence for Medieval exploitation of the downland has also been recorded including possible Medieval lynchets, and sheep enclosures.

Post Medieval archaeology recorded includes a network of dewponds, and several chalk cut figures of horses including at Cherhill and above Honeystreet. These are iconic features of the AONB. Cherhill is also associated with the Lansdowne Monument erected in 1845. The Civil War battlefield at Roundway Down is another important feature. Traces of World War Two defensive structures have also been recorded across the area.

Archaeological potential is extremely high across this area. There is potential for buried deposits from the Neolithic to the Roman period. Many field systems, linear banks and ditches and enclosures remain undated. Additional information on the early and later Medieval exploitation of this area could also be gathered.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Open areas of close-cropped chalk grassland formerly dominated this area. This was used as grazing for animals. The land was also associated with small patches of scrub and gorse, which were used as fuel, and meandering open chalk trackways, used to cross this area. These open areas used as part of the common grazing regime that operated in many downland parishes in the Medieval period. Large swathes of common downland were enclosed during parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th century. This trend is especially notable along the Southern chalk escarpment above the Vale of Pewsey as far North as Morgans Hill and along the Northern edge of the area below Cherhill Hill.

However, significant reserves remained as a major part of the sheep/corn system of agriculture until the early 20th century. This was a system of grain production made possible by the large sheep flocks, supported by early crops of grass produced by the water meadows in the Kennet Valley, which fed all day on the high open chalk downland and by night were folded on arable lands to enrich the soils. With the collapse of this system in the 20th century further enclosure and ploughing up of chalk grassland occurred.

Today areas of open downland survive located especially on steep slopes including Cherhill Hill and Morgans Down and along the tops of the Southern chalk escarpment in areas where arable agriculture is impractical or uneconomic. This is however a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

Ancient woodland is absent from this area.

Only one area of pre 1700 regular enclosure is found in the area to the South of Kings Play Hill; this probably represents early enclosure of downland by agreement in this area.

One historic park was created around Rainscombe House in the early 19th century beneath the chalk escarpment to the South of the Savernake Plateau.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – The present day historic landscape character is dominated by 20th century enclosure. This is divided roughly into two types.

In the East new fields were created by ploughing up of open chalk downland. These fields are usually regular in shape and have straight boundaries. The majority of these fields have been created due to the expansion of agriculture onto downland areas, traditionally used as grazing, that had escaped historic enclosure.

In the West fields were created in the 20th century by modifying earlier 17th to 19th century enclosure. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields. These fields are located along the Southern chalk escarpment above the Vale of Pewsey as far North as Morgans Hill and along the Northern edge of the areas below Cherhill Hill and further South.

New Woodland creation occurred in the form of the development of secondary deciduous woodlands dating from 1600 to 1800 on Kings Play Hill and post 1800 regular plantations of woodland. These are small and scattered across the landscape especially on areas surviving as chalk downland. But they are much less common and much less characteristic compared to downland areas to the East.

Another trend is the creation of gallops for racehorse training to the South and East of Beckhampton. These are characterised by long, often sinuous, strips of grass which are sometimes demarked by white rails. They are not as common as on downland areas to the East.

Historic Settlement Character – Historically the area was devoid of settlement in the Medieval and Post Medieval period. Isolated agricultural cottages were created as arable farming spread into the area. Settlement development in the 20th century has likewise been negligible.

Historic Farmstead Character – Historically the area was devoid of farm buildings in the Medieval and Post Medieval period. Post 1800 isolated field barns were created as arable farming spread into the area but compared to other areas the historic farmstead legacy is less significant.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Historic Interest

Many nationally important Prehistoric and Roman archaeological sites survive as earthworks. These have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to communicate how past human activity shaped the landscape.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use as they provide an impression of the landscape prior to enclosure in the 18th and 19th century.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value including those associated with William Stukeley (1687-1785), and Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838).

Archaeological Interest

- Prehistoric activity in the landscape including Neolithic and early Bronze Age monuments, flint scatters and ploughed out round barrows and enclosures.
- There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric field systems (later Bronze Age and Iron Age) and farming across the areas.
- There is a notable concentration of Iron Age hillforts.
- Roman evidence including field systems and a Roman road.
- Early Medieval boundary of the Wansdyke.
- Chalk cut figures of horses.

Architectural Interest

Historically the area was devoid of settlement; therefore any isolated agricultural cottages or buildings dating to before 1900 are important. Buildings associated with the historic park of Rainscombe have particular architectural interest.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Rainscombe Park has aesthetic value as a historic designed landscape.

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists including Paul Nash (1889-1946).

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent, dominated by 20th century enclosure, although showing a clear split between East and West in the origin of these fields.

Significant areas of open downland survive located especially on steep slopes including Cherhill Hill and Morgans Down and along the tops of the Southern chalk escarpment in areas where arable agriculture is impractical or uneconomic. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particularly rich.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (157) are dominated by prehistoric monuments. These include the Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure at Knapp Hill, Neolithic long barrows, henges and stone circles, numerous Bronze Age round barrows; Iron Age hillforts including Oliver's Camp and Oldbury; Iron Age Settlements. They also include multiple sections of the Wansdyke, other linear boundaries and the Roman Road which crosses the area.

The Listed Buildings (9) are related to Rainscombe House, The Lacket a small 18th century cottage, The Landsdowne Monument and a series of milestones relating to the old carriage road and turnpike from London to Bath via Beckhampton and Cherhill and a Southern turnpike running South from Avebury to Devizes .

There is 1 battlefield on the national register of battlefields. Roundway Down is the site of a Civil War battle which took place on 13 July 1643. The King had despatched Lord Wilmot and Sir John Byron to relieve Devizes with 12,000 cavalry. As Wilmot approached Devizes, they found the Parliamentarians arrayed on the Southern slopes of Roundway Down. The Royalists defeated the Parliamentarians and in the hard fought action that followed their remaining cavalry were put to flight. Many fled West unaware of the dangerous 300 foot drop ahead, where Roundway Down ends abruptly at Oliver's Castle. Galloping for their lives many ploughed straight over into what is now known as Bloody Ditch.

There are no Listed Historic Parks and Gardens.

The North Eastern edge of the area is within the Avebury World Heritage Site and the area beyond that within the setting of the World Heritage Site.

Area 2: Avebury Plain

One of the densest concentrations of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity in Britain including the Causewayed Enclosure at Windmill Hill, the Henge and Stone Circle at Avebury, the Beckhampton avenue and numerous Neolithic long barrows and Bronze Age round barrows. Surviving areas of open chalk downland have a strong historic interest as they can be used provide an impression of the landscape prior to enclosure in the 18th and 19th century.



Location – Chalk escarpment and downland on western side of the AONB running from Heddington South of Calne to Overtown to the West of Wroughton, including Avebury to the South. The northern boundary is formed by the steep chalk escarpment above villages including Clyffe Pypard and the eastern boundary by the North South escarpment below the Ridgeway.

Geology and Topography – The area is a topographically homogenous area formed from Lower Chalk. The area is flat and level with clearly defined boundaries. The area slopes towards Avebury and the Winterbourne Stream.

Landscape Character – A level flat plain cut by the shallow valley of the Winterbourne Stream characterised by an expanse of open arable fields bounded by fences and thin hedges. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 5a: Avebury Plain.

Archaeological Character – The dominant archaeological traces in this area are prehistoric, often surviving as extant monuments. This partly relates to the fact that the area was grazed unenclosed chalk grassland during the Medieval and early Post Medieval period meaning that these monuments were not subject to ploughing until post 1700. The southern tip of this area is dominated by the Avebury World Heritage Site, one of the densest concentrations of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity in Britain including the Causewayed Enclosure at Windmill Hill and the henge at Avebury itself, the Beckhampton avenue and numerous long barrows. The Avebury henge comprises a roughly circular ditch enclosing an area approximately 350 metres by 380 metres, with an external bank originally up to 6 metres in height. There are four entrances, at least three of which are of prehistoric origin. Three main settings of standing sarsens exist within the henge, a circle which follows the inner edge of the ditch plus two smaller circles, one in the North, the other in the South. The Neolithic Windmill Hill monument encloses an area of 8.45 hectares, making it one of the largest in England; it was also one of the first to be recognised as a causewayed 'camp' or enclosure.

The area subsequently became a focus for Bronze Age activity including important concentrations of Bronze Age round barrows. Later Prehistoric activity is represented by prehistoric field systems on

the chalk escarpment on the eastern edge of the area. Field systems have been recorded along the Winterbourne Valley, probably of prehistoric origin.

Roman activity is represented by several villas; examples including at Cuffs Corner and South of Windmill Hill.



Windmill Hill - Today ribbon like areas of unenclosed escarpment survive along the top of chalk escarpment to the North infilled with pre 1700 enclosure. Pre 1700 enclosure also survives either side and of the Kennet and the Winterborne stream. Open grassland also survives on areas with archaeological earthworks including deserted Medieval villages and Windmill Hill Neolithic enclosure.

© Copyright Emma Townsend.



Avebury – The Southern tip of this area is dominated by the Avebury World Heritage Site, one of the densest concentrations of Mesolithic and later Neolithic activity in Britain including the Causewayed Enclosure at Windmill Hill and the Henge at Avebury itself, the Beckhampton avenue and numerous long barrows.

© Copyright Emma Townsend



Farmland East of Winterbourne Monkton – In the rest of the area post 1900 enclosure dominates. This is split into two types : reorganised fields along the base of the eastern chalk escarpment and to the South East of the area around Avebury, elsewhere amalgamated fields dominate.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Medieval archaeology is less dominant but included deserted Medieval settlements along the dry valley bottoms echoed by the modern enclosure pattern, and a motte and bailey castle at Binknoll. Post Medieval archaeology includes airfields at Yatesbury and Clyffe Pypard and water meadows along the Winterbourne.

Archaeological potential is extremely high across this area. There is potential for buried deposits from the Neolithic to the Roman period. Many field systems, linear banks and ditches and enclosures remain undated. Additional information on the early and later Medieval exploitation of this area could also be gathered.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The Medieval landscape was composed of communities within open fields utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland. The only place that this pattern survived into the 1700s was between Broad Hinton and Broad Town to the North of the area. Pre 1700 enclosure dominated this landscape by 1700 with open land surviving along the edge of the chalk escarpment which marks the Northern edge of the area. This pre 1700 enclosure was in general regular in form. These fields were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields.

However, earlier irregular enclosure existed on the steep slopes of the chalk escarpment and below between Highway and Broad Town, to the East of Theobald's Green, and on the plain to the North of Yatesbury and Winterbourne Bassett. These early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries. This suggests that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. In addition, areas of sinuous pre 1800 enclosure were created on the land above Clewancy. The shape of these enclosures reflects a preceding open field regime, their sinuous boundaries preserving the pattern of strips within the common fields. It is likely that these fields were formed through piecemeal enclosure of these strips. The majority of these pre 1800 fields were modified in the 20th century.

There is only one area of 1700 to 1900 parliamentary enclosure which enclosed the remaining open fields to the North of Broad Hinton. These have been modified in the 20th century.

Thin strips of ancient woodland survived along the top edge of the Northern chalk escarpment and at Stanmore Copse.

Historic parkland dating to 1700 to 1900 was created around Compton Bassett House including areas of replanted ancient woodland.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Today ribbon like areas of unenclosed escarpment survive along the top of chalk escarpment to the North infilled with pre 1700 enclosure. Pre 1700 enclosure also survives either side and of the Kennet and the Winterborne stream. Open grassland

also survives on areas with archaeological earthworks including deserted Medieval villages and Windmill Hill Neolithic enclosure.

In the rest of the area post 1900 enclosure dominates. This is split into two types: firstly reorganised fields along the base of the eastern chalk escarpment and to the South East of the area around Avebury. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and the realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field system visible in these modernised fields. Elsewhere amalgamated fields dominate. These enclosures are created by the removal of boundaries between fields and are also often known as prairie fields. Many of the examples are true prairie fields, especially those on the downs. However, significant numbers are also found that do not fit the prairie field pattern – many are in-use as pasture and/or remain as small to medium sized units following boundary removal. There is usually some trace of the prior field system visible in these modernised fields.

Regular areas of post 1900 woodland plantation have been created across the plain and infilling the ancient woodland which stretches across the top of the chalk escarpment to the North.

Other post 1900 activity includes defunct military activity to the South West of the area to the South of Jugglers Farm.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is spread into two types. Along the base of the chalk escarpment which bounds the North and West of the area there are a series of irregular row settlements. These are characterised by dispersed settlements intermittently found along a route way, in this case running up the escarpment or along the bottom. However to the East settlements become more nucleated. These are all located on the spring line at the base of the escarpment. On the plain itself settlements are nucleated and grouped around a single point, often the church or manor house. These are arranged down the Winterbourne or down the infant Kennet River. This picture is supported by the deserted Medieval villages which have been abandoned or survive as historic farmsteads such as at Richardson, or to the East of Avebury. The area is infilled by scattered and individual historic farmsteads. 18th and 19th settlement expansion only occurred to the West of Avebury around the Beckhampton roundabout

Post 1900 settlement growth has been focused on the Winterbourne valley with the settlements becoming more linear in nature. This is not as noticeable as in other areas and their settlement plan is still discernible. The historic pattern of farmsteads has been infilled with 19th and 20th century examples.

Historic Farmstead Character – A few isolated historic farmsteads dot the plain with other examples on the edge of historic settlements. There is a low to medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- The dominant archaeological traces in this area are prehistoric often, surviving as extant monuments which provide a wealth of evidence about the Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age.
- One of the densest concentrations of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity in Britain including the Causewayed Enclosure at Windmill Hill and the Henge at Avebury itself, the Beckhampton avenue and numerous long barrows.
- There is a notable concentration of Iron Age hillforts.
- Later Prehistoric activity is represented by intact prehistoric field systems.
- There are an important number of Roman villas.
- Deserted Medieval Villages provide evidence of the former Medieval exploitation of the landscape.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory and in particular to the Neolithic and Bronze Age have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to communicate how past human activity shaped the landscape.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland have a strong historic interest as they can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use, as they provide an impression of the landscape prior to enclosure in the 18th and 19th century.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value, including those associated with William Stukeley (1687-1785), and Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838).

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with irregular row settlements at the base of the chalk escarpment have architectural interest as they relate to the pre 1800 exploitation of the landscape. Areas of surviving pre 1750 farmstead buildings are important especially those dating to pre 1750.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists, this is especially true of the Avebury area.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent and dominated by 20th century enclosure, although showing a clear split between East and West in the origin of these fields.

Ribbon like areas of unenclosed escarpment survive along the top of chalk escarpment to the North infilled with pre 1700 enclosure. Pre 1700 enclosure also survives either side and of the Kennet and the Winterborne stream. Open grassland survives on areas with archaeological earthworks including deserted Medieval villages and Windmill Hill Neolithic enclosure. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

There is strong time depth particularly relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particularly rich.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (26) are dominated by monuments relating to the Avebury Neolithic complex, as well as Bronze Age round barrows, Bicknoll Camp and deserted Medieval villages. The Listed Buildings (167) are related to the historic settlements at the bottom of the chalk escarpment on the edge of the area and the nucleated historic settlements on the plain. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens. The South Eastern part of area is within the Avebury World Heritage Site and the area beyond that falls within the setting of the World Heritage Site.

Area 3: Barbury Downs

This area has a key association with the Avebury World Heritage Site, including an important concentration of Mesolithic Flint Scatters and the wealth of Neolithic monuments associated with the henge at Avebury itself. There is also an important array of archaeological features across Fyfield and Overton Downs. Together these form an extremely rare and intact survival representing an important landscape palimpsest, the diverse elements of which contain evidence of changing settlement, agriculture and economy from the Prehistoric to Post Medieval periods. Significant areas of open downland survive. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland and relating to former pre 1800 land use. There is a rare survival of an unmodified 18th and 19th century landscape around Rockley Manor. 20th century military features in the area of Wroughton Airfield are an important survival with strong illustrative value relating to the history of warfare in the 20th century.



Location – This area, which forms the Western side of the Marlborough Downs is formed by an area of chalk downland bounded by the river Og to the East and the escarpment above the Avebury Plain to the West. Its southern boundary is formed by the river Kennet and by a prominent chalk escarpment to the North.

Geology and Topography – The geology is dominated by Middle and Upper Chalk. The topography is strongly articulated by rolling downland dissected by steep scarps along dry valleys and rising to gently rounded hills.

Landscape Character – The Downs form an open expanse of landscape of smoothly rolling downland mostly under arable cultivation. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 1A: Marlborough Downs.

Archaeological Character – The archaeology of this area is so rich that this short overview is not sufficient to do it justice. This includes not just the more well known Prehistoric sites but also Roman and later archaeology as well. Mesolithic evidence is important and includes concentrations of flint scatters. The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence is particular rich; this includes sites within the boundary of the Avebury World Heritage Site which overlaps with the South West corner of the area. This includes the area to the East and South of the Avebury henge including the well known monuments of the West Kennet Avenue, and the Sanctuary. Whilst other Neolithic long barrows, the many Bronze Age round barrows and other associated sites are less well known, together they define one of the richest and most varied areas of Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial and ritual monuments in the country. Also within the World Heritage Site but again less well known are the complex array of archaeological features across Fyfield and Overton Downs. These offer an

important dimension to understanding the development of the prehistoric ceremonial complex at Avebury and its immediate environs. The remains are also broadly representative of those visible across much of the Marlborough Downs before the changes brought about by intensive agriculture in the 20th century. Together they are an extremely rare and intact survival representing an important landscape palimpsest, the diverse elements of which contain evidence of changing settlement, agriculture and economy from the prehistoric to Post Medieval periods. In the 20th century the archaeological remains within the downs were the subject of the longest and most intensive research project in Britain by Peter Fowler, with the result that they have become an important educational resource.



Barbury Castle – The Iron Age multivallate hillfort is one of many extant prehistoric earthworks surviving in this area.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Grey wethers on Fyfield Down – The remains visible here are broadly representative of those visible across much of the Marlborough Downs before the changes brought about by intensive agriculture in the 20th century.

© Copyright [Vieve Forward](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Downland South of Wroughton – The present day historic landscape character is dominated by 20th century enclosure intermingled with large surviving areas of open chalk downland. Gallops and regular woodland plantations are also a common and distinctive feature.

© Copyright [Brian Robert Marshall](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Prehistoric monuments, including numerous Bronze Age round barrows and prehistoric field systems and enclosures are also known across the rest of the area. Many of these have not been firmly dated but have been given a Bronze Age/ Iron Age and/or Roman date. There is also a developed multivallate Iron Age hillfort, Barbury Castle. Excavations have uncovered Iron Age rubbish pits. Iron Age /Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds have been made and Anglo-Saxon inhumations have been found. There is a similar wealth of Roman archaeology which includes burial mounds, Roman roads and settlement evidence including the villa on Barton Down.

Medieval archaeology includes strip lynchets, pillow mounds, deserted Medieval villages, and the historic route way of the Ridgeway. Post Medieval archaeology recorded includes the chalk cut figure of a horse at Rockley Down. These are iconic features of the AONB. There is also important Second World War archaeology relating to Wroughton airfield.

There is potential for deposits of Mesolithic to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of the relict field systems is not properly understood and many enclosures with a tentative prehistoric date remain undated. Occupation deposits from the early Medieval period onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Open areas of close-cropped chalk grassland formerly dominated this area. This was used as grazing for animals. The land was also associated with small patches of scrub/gorse which were used as fuel and meandering open chalk track ways used to cross this area. These open areas were used as part of the common grazing regime that operated in many downs parishes in the Medieval period. Large swathes of common downland, between a third to a half, were enclosed during the 18th and 19th centuries. On the edges of the area this was created through parliamentary enclosures of the late 18th and early 19th century. The fields created by this process are usually regular in shape with straight boundaries and the boundaries are usually hedged and/or fenced. Examples in the South include the area to the East of Avebury, to the South of Fyfield Down, and to the South of Manton House. Likewise in the far North of the area parliamentary enclosure was created to the South of Wroughton and to the North-West of Ogbourne St George. Deeper into the downland area enclosure came later in the 19th century as part of post-parliamentary enclosure. The majority of fields of this type are morphologically similar to Parliamentary Enclosures; although some are more irregular in shape, often reflecting the land that they have been enclosed from - notably on Rockley Down, below the Western chalk escarpment and to the North-West of Ogbourne St George. These have been modified in the 20th century.

However, significant reserves of open land remained as a major part of the sheep/corn system of agriculture until the early 20th century. This was a system of grain production made possible by the large sheep flocks, supported by early crops of grass produced by the water meadows in the Kennet Valley, which fed all day on the high open chalk downland and by night were folded on arable lands to enrich the soils. With the collapse of this system in the 20th century further enclosure and ploughing up of chalk grassland occurred.

Today significant areas of open downland survive located especially in thin ribbons in areas where arable agriculture is impractical or uneconomic such as the edge of chalk escarpments or the edge of steep valleys. Examples include the chalk escarpment below Hackpen Hill, Wick Down, Rockley Down, Ogbourne Maizey Down and Smeathes Ridge. The exception to this is the area of Barbury where a large contiguous areas of open chalk survives and the even larger area of open downland at Fyfield Down. The latter is associated with scatters of sarsen stones which were once much more common across the area. This is, however, only a part of the former extent of chalk downland. Common land to the immediate West of Marlborough also survives. This was an area established in/by the Medieval period and used for grazing.

Small areas of pre 1700 irregular enclosure were located in the South of the area in an arc from the Kennet Valley up Clatford Bottom. These are typified by irregularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges. They have been modified in the 20th century. These were created from former Medieval open fields. These relate to the Medieval settlements of the Kennet and Og Valley which exploited the open fields on the valley sides and common grazing on riverside meadows as well as the open chalk downlands beyond. Their irregular shape suggests that they were slotted into the framework of the landscape established by roads and tracks and open field strips, suggesting that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. Regular pre 1700 enclosure, typified by regularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges, is located to the East leading from the Og valley up a dry valley to the North of Ogbourne Maizey. These were created from open fields but these were probably enclosed as part of early enclosure by agreement.

In the Medieval period woodland was limited; there was one small area of ancient woodland at Barton House. Post 1700 designed landscapes were created around Rockley Manor and a smaller area around Manton House to the South.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The present day historic landscape character is dominated by 20th century enclosures intermingled with large surviving areas of open chalk downland. The 20th century enclosure can be divided into two types:

Firstly, reorganised fields were created around the edges of the area by modifying earlier 18th and 19th century enclosure and the small areas of pre 1700 enclosure. These were formed through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. These are interspersed with smaller areas of amalgamated enclosures where field boundaries have simply been removed. The latter type results in a higher survival of earlier field boundaries and patterns.

Secondly, in the centre of the area new fields were created by ploughing up open chalk downland. These fields are usually regular in shape and have straight boundaries following the morphology of

the downland areas. The majority of these fields have been created due to the expansion of agriculture onto downland areas, traditionally used as grazing, that had escaped historic enclosure.

Some areas of 18th to 19th century enclosure remain unmodified in the Western side of the area and to the West of Rockley Manor. The centre of the area is associated with small but notable numbers of post 1800 regular woodland plantations and smaller and less frequent areas of 1600 to 1800 secondary woodland. Some of these extend as thin fingers of woodland along the edge of dry valleys. This is much more notable than the downland to the West. The centre of the area is also associated with extensive areas of gallops for racehorse training to the South and East of Beckhampton. These are characterised by long, often sinuous, strips of grass which are sometimes demarked by white rails. They are not as common as on downland areas to the East.

A significant 20th century industrial feature is the area of Wroughton Airfield in the North of the area. The station was an operational military installation from the late 1930s through the 1970s, during which time it served as host to maintenance units and was home to the RAF Princess Alexandra Hospital. Although it is no longer a military installation, the airfield and some of the original buildings still exist today. Part of the common land to the West of Marlborough has been converted into a golf course.

Historic Settlement Character – Historic settlement character pre 1700 was limited to occasional isolated farmsteads including at Manton and Rockley Manor. These were joined by a handful of farms in the 18th and 19th century and a few more in the 20th century as arable farming spread into the area.

Historic Farmstead Character – Where historic farmsteads do exist these are likely to have loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Mesolithic evidence is important and includes concentrations of flint scatters.
- The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence is particularly rich
- Complex of prehistoric monuments at Avebury and its environs
- Complex array of archaeological features across Fyfield and Overton Downs. Together they are an extremely rare and intact survival representing an important landscape palimpsest, the diverse elements of which contain evidence of changing settlement, agriculture and economy from the prehistoric to Post Medieval periods.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory and later have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to communicate how past human activity shaped the landscape.

20th century military features in the area of Wroughton Airfield are an important survival with strong illustrative value relating to the history of warfare in the 20th century.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre-modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Especially important buildings associated with Rockley Manor and Manton dating to pre 1700 and also surviving farm buildings relating to the 18th and 19th century are an important historic survival.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent, dominated by 20th century enclosure intermingled with large surviving areas of open chalk downland. The 20th century enclosure shows a clear split between reorganised fields and new fields in the centre of the areas.

Significant areas of open downland survive. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland and relating to former pre 1800 land use.

Rarer survival of unmodified 18th and 19th century landscape around Rockley Manor.

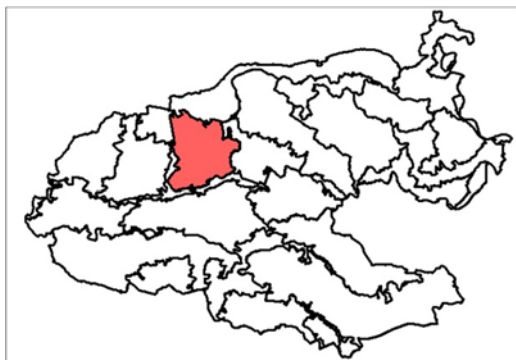
There is strong time depth relating to archaeology of the area from the Prehistoric period through to the Medieval with the Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments being particularly important.

Designated Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monuments (92) are dominated by prehistoric monuments relating to the Avebury complex and further afield. Other monuments include Medieval villages and intact field systems. The Listed Buildings (31) are related to milestones, Rockley manor, Manton house and historic farm buildings. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens. The south western part of area is within the Avebury World Heritage Site and the area beyond that falls within the setting of the World Heritage Site.

Area 4: Aldbourne Downs

There are extensive numbers of Bronze Age round barrows on higher downland areas including extant and ploughed out examples and complete barrow cemeteries. Iron Age archaeology is likewise extensive including settlements, banjo enclosures and cross dykes. There are also many known Roman sites. The extent of Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy including sites which can be used to illustrate activity within the former Medieval deer park of the Aldbourne Chase. This area is characterised by a greater proportion of surviving pre 1700 enclosure than the downland to the West or East which can be used to illustrate the early privatisation of the Medieval communal farming systems that had formerly supported many parishes.



Location – This area is formed by an area of chalk downland bounded by the river Og to the West and the Lambourn downs to the East which are more wooded. Its southern boundary is formed by the river Kennet and by a prominent chalk escarpment to the North. It forms the eastern half of the Marlborough Downs.

Geology and Topography – The geology is dominated by Middle and Upper Chalk. The topography is strongly articulated by rolling downland dissected by steep scarps along dry valleys and rising to gently rounded hills.

Landscape Character – The area forms an open expanse landscape of smoothly rolling downland mostly under arable cultivation. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 1A: Marlborough Downs.

Archaeological Character – The earliest archaeological evidence is for stray Mesolithic finds and flint scatters. Neolithic archaeology is not as prominent as areas to the West but includes flint scatters, and finds including polished axes.

There are extensive numbers of Bronze Age round barrows on higher downland areas including extant and ploughed out examples and complete barrow cemeteries. Some of the extensive field systems identified may date to the later Bronze Age and there is evidence for later Bronze Age settlement.

Iron Age archaeology is likewise extensive including settlements, banjo enclosures and cross dykes as well as the earthwork remains of a small univallate hillfort at Liddington Castle

There are many known Roman sites not surprising when considering Cunetio lies just to the South. The Roman Ermin Street crosses the area while to the West the road from Cirencester to Mildenhall (Cunetio) runs roughly North to South. There are also substantial Roman field systems, and the area

seems to have been well farmed at this time. There is some evidence for the location of Roman farmsteads which complements the evidence for nearby high status buildings such as Littlecote.

The extent of Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy, including sites relating to the former Medieval deer park of the Aldbourne Chase. There are a number of deserted or shrunken villages, as well as the fortified manor at Lewisham Castle. These are surrounded by relict Medieval fields, ridge and furrow and lynchets and other features including pillow mounds. Post Medieval archaeology is limited and relates to the site of the battle of Aldbourne in the English Civil War and a stretch of the former Marlborough to Swindon railway which crosses the South East corner of the area.



Farmland near Warren Farm – The reorganisation of the landscape has been less complete than in other parts of the AONB, and large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across the South of the area. Here this is a much greater survival of pre 1800 enclosure interspersed with ancient woodland and replanted ancient woodland.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Aldbourne – The historic settlement pattern is dominated by the nucleated village of Aldbourne, originally built around a green and the church. However, this picture needs to be supplemented by the number of deserted Medieval villages which have been abandoned or survive as historic farmsteads such as Shaw, Snap, Woodsend and Upham.

© Copyright [Martyn Pattison](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland, Upham – The development of mechanised farming over the latter half of the 20th century led to substantial change in the area with many fields being heavily altered and the remaining areas of open field and downland enclosed by new fields especially in the North of the area.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for reuse under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of the relict field systems is not properly understood and many enclosures with a tentative prehistoric date remain undated. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval period onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area. The 19th century farms are important features but little is known about the nature of their historic building stock.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Like neighbouring downland areas to the East, the Medieval landscape was composed of communities living in nucleated villages within open fields utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland. The open fields surrounded villages within the area, such as Aldbourne, or villages beyond, such as in the Kennet Valley to the South. This gave way to open chalk downland on the higher ground above. This was used as grazing for animals. This open land was also associated with small patches of scrub and gorse, which were used as fuel, and meandering open chalk track ways used to cross these areas. These open areas were used as part of the common grazing regime that operated in many Downs parishes in the Medieval period. Much of this open land was enclosed in the 18th and 19th century leaving a small amount of enclosure in the 20th century around Liddington Hill and Poulton Down.

Parliamentary enclosures of the late 18th and early 19th century were created to the West of Liddington Hill, East of Ogbourne St George, North-East of Marlborough, North of Axford and South and North East of Aldbourne. The fields created by this process are usually regular in shape with straight boundaries and the boundaries are usually hedged and/or fenced. In some parts of the North of the area enclosure came later in the 19th century as part of post-parliamentary enclosure. The majority of fields of this type are morphologically similar to Parliamentary Enclosures; although some are more irregular in shape, often reflecting the land that they have been enclosed from. Examples include South East of Liddington Hill and East of Aldbourne. These fields have been modified in the 20th century.

This area is characterised by a greater proportion of pre 1700 enclosure than the downland to the West or East. Many of these were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries. They are located to the North-East of Ramsbury and to the East and West of Aldbourne. These are typified by irregularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges. The majority of early enclosures have few traces of previous land-use. In a number of cases, however, many of these fields show traces of having been created from open fields. These indicate an early privatisation of the Medieval communal farming systems that had formerly supported many parishes. Beyond these fields areas of more regularly-shaped early enclosures existed on higher downland. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields. Other early fields include assarts created by clearing fields in ancient woodland located to the North-West of Ramsbury. Many of these fields were modified in the 20th century.

The South-West of the area, which forms a triangle with the Kennet Valley, at the bottom following the driveway to the West of Poulton Down as far North as Aldbourne Chase and then back South-East to Ramsbury, was associated with small areas of irregular ancient woodland some of which have been replanted post 1800, and which have been the subject of assarting.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – The development of mechanised farming over the latter half of the 20th century led to substantial change in the area with many fields being heavily altered and the remaining areas of open field and downland enclosed by new fields created around Liddington Hill and on Poulton Hill.

However, the reorganisation of the landscape has been less complete than in other parts of the AONB, and large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across the South of the area. Here this is a much greater survival of pre 1800 enclosure interspersed with ancient woodland and replanted ancient woodland. Unlike in the area to the North most field alteration has been through the amalgamation of fields by boundary removal as opposed to re-organisation and insertion of new boundaries. This has preserved some of the grain of the historic landscape and, in many cases, stubs of removed boundaries remain. Some of this area coincides with the Medieval deer park of the Aldbourne Chase

To the North of the area, the reorganisation of fields through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields has eroded more of the pre 1900 enclosure pattern. Areas of 18th and 19th century enclosure survive to the South and East of Liddington Hill characterised by fields which are usually regular in shape with straight boundaries and the boundaries are usually hedged and/or fenced. Small regular woodland plantations have also been created on the tops of the hills.

The North is also associated with the surviving areas of open chalk downland surviving as thin ribbons, for example along the line of the chalk escarpment which runs down the South Western side of the area and from Liddington Hill towards Aldbourne.

A small area of 18th and 19th century designed parkland surrounds Upham Court.

20th century development includes the creation of a golf course on Ogbourne Down.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is dominated by the nucleated village of Aldbourne, originally built around the green and the church. It was established in the 7th or 8th century AD at the junction of five dry valleys and by the Medieval period was established as a classic downland village surrounded by open fields to the North and West, with common grazing beyond. However this picture needs to be supplemented by the number of deserted Medieval villages which have been abandoned or survive as historic farmsteads such as Shaw, Snap, Woodsend and Upham. Indeed Upham Manor was the centre of a royal manor, with a hunting lodge on the edge of Aldbourne Chase. This picture was infilled by smaller hamlets and farmsteads spread throughout the remainder of the area. This settlement pattern contrasts strongly with the downland areas to the East.

The village of Aldbourne continued to prosper as an industrial centre in the 18th century. The 1960s and 1970s saw a large expansion of the village to the North, and there has also been settlement expansion to the South. Several new farms have also been established across the South of the area post 1900.

Historic Farmstead Character – Historic farmsteads of a pre 1800 origin dominate, some being the remnants of once larger Medieval settlements. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- There are extensive numbers of Bronze Age round barrows on higher downland areas including extant and ploughed out examples and complete barrow cemeteries.
- Iron Age archaeology is likewise extensive including settlements, banjo enclosures and cross dykes
- Many known Roman sites
- Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory and the Roman period have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to communicate how past human activity shaped the landscape.

The extent of Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy, including sites which can be used to illustrate activity within the former Medieval deer park of the Aldbourne Chase.

Surviving areas of pre 1700 enclosure have a strong illustrative value demonstrating an early privatisation of the Medieval communal farming systems that had formerly supported many parishes.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with nucleated village of Aldbourne are important as they provide information on Medieval Settlement patterns in the AONB.

Historic farmsteads of a pre-1800 origin dominate, some being the remnants of once larger Medieval settlements which have strong illustrative interest where they survive especially when placed in context with the archaeology relating to the deserted Medieval villages.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent, dominated by 20th century enclosure. This has led to substantial change in the area with many fields being heavily altered and the remaining areas of open field and downland enclosed

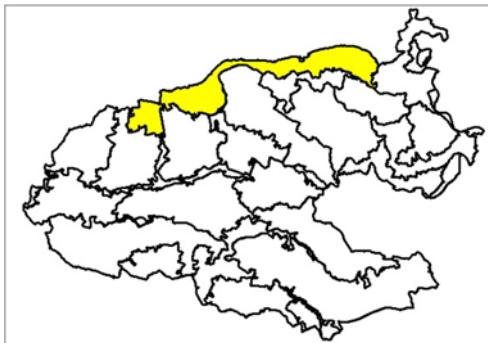
However, this area is characterised by a greater proportion of surviving pre 1700 enclosure than the downland to the West or East. The North is also associated with the surviving areas of open chalk downland surviving as thin ribbons

There is strong time depth relating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Medieval period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (27) are related to Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age and Roman settlement and field systems, Medieval settlement and field systems. The Listed Buildings (103) are related to the Medieval settlement of Aldbourne where most of the buildings are concentrated, historic milestones and historic farm buildings in the surrounding area. There is no parkland on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 5: Northern Escarpment

There is strong association with the Prehistoric period, with Bronze Age and Iron Age evidence being particularly rich. This includes evocative sites such as the Bronze Age Uffington White Horse and Hillfort. Significant pockets of open downland survive on the steep sides of the escarpment slopes for example around Liddington hill. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland. In addition pockets of pre 1700 regular enclosure survive in the West of the area and 1700 to 1900 enclosure in the East.



Location – Escarpment on northern side of the AONB between Chiseldon to the West and Chilton to the East, to the South of Wantage and Didcot.

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly Lower Chalk which gives way to Gault Clay at the foot of the scarp. The topography is formed of a steep scarp face with deep combes becoming more undulating to the South.

Landscape Character – The defining edge of the AONB. It is a steep scarp slope formed of unimproved chalk grassland giving way to arable fields to the South. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 5F: Liddington- Letcombe Open Scarp

Archaeological Character – The prominent position of the scarp edge and the survival of unimproved grassland means that this area is associated with a number of prominent, extant and nationally important earthworks. The earliest archaeological evidence is for stray Mesolithic finds and flint scatters. Neolithic archaeology includes flint scatters, finds and the excavated long barrow at Waylands Smithy and another example at Uffington.

There are considerable numbers of Bronze Age round barrows on higher downland areas including extant and ploughed out examples and complete barrow cemeteries. Some of the extensive field systems identified may date to the later Bronze Age and there is evidence for later Bronze Age settlement.

An iconic element is the Uffington White Horse situated below Uffington Castle hillfort. In 1995 Optical Stimulated Luminescence dating was used to date the figure to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age, and it was probably constructed between 1380 and 550 BC.

Iron Age archaeology is likewise extensive including a string of prominent Iron Age hillforts including Hardwell Camp, Uffington Castle, Alfred's Castle and other earthworks including cross dykes

There are substantial Iron Age/Romano British field systems and the area seems to have been well farmed at this time. There is some evidence for the location of Roman farmsteads which complements the evidence for nearby high status buildings such as the Roman Villa at Strevall Farm. Important early Medieval archaeology includes the Goldbury Hill Anglo-Saxon cemetery.



White Horse Hill Looking North-West- An iconic element is the Uffington White Horse situated below Uffington Castle hillfort. It was probably constructed between 1380 and 550 BC. Iron Age archaeology is likewise extensive including a string of prominent Iron Age hillforts and other earthworks including cross dykes

© Copyright [2020](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Fields South of Lockinge– Parliamentary enclosure of the late 18th and early 19th century across the West of the area were created to the South of Sparsholt and in the vicinity of Lockinge.

© Copyright [Fly](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Chalbury Hill from Hinton Parva Combe – The prominent position of the scarp edge and the survival of unimproved grassland means that this area is associated with a number of prominent, extant and nationally important earthworks.

© Copyright [Brian Robert Marshall](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

The extent of Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy. There are a number of deserted or shrunken villages, such as at Overtown, these are surrounded by relict Medieval fields, ridge and furrow. Lynchets are a prominent feature on the scarp slope and other features including pillow mounds. Post Medieval archaeology is limited and relates to the Second World War including Chiseldon Camp and the relict Chiseldon to Marlborough Railway.

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of the relict field systems is not properly understood and many enclosures with a tentative prehistoric date remain undated. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside of settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area. The 19th century farms are important features but little is known about the nature of their historic building stock.

Historic Trajectory - Like neighbouring downland areas, the Medieval landscape was composed of communities within open fields utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland, for example at Lammy Down. In the East of the area this pattern survived into the 1700s. However in the West of the area around Chiseldon and Liddington the open fieldscapes were replaced by regular pre 1700 enclosure along the edge of the chalk escarpment which marks the northern edge of the area. This pre 1700 enclosure was in general regular in form. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields.

Earlier irregular enclosure existed to the West of Chiseldon. These early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries. This suggests that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. Parliamentary enclosures of the late 18th and early 19th century across the West of the area were created to the South of Sparsholt and in the vicinity of Lockinge. The fields created by this process are usually regular in shape with straight boundaries and the boundaries are usually hedged and/or fenced. In some parts of the North of the area enclosure came later in the 19th century as part of post-parliamentary enclosure. The majority of fields of this type are morphologically similar to Parliamentary Enclosures; although some are more irregular in shape often reflecting the land that they have been enclosed from. Examples include South-East of Ashbury. These fields have been modified in the 20th century.

Despite this enclosure substantial areas of open land survived into the 20th century especially in the area of Bishopstone Down

Woodland was extremely scarce. However a string of small historic parks and gardens were created between 1700 and 1900, for example Ashdown Park, which started as a Medieval deer park; Arnhill Park - some of which was associated with small pockets of ancient woodland

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Today open land only survives in pockets on the steep sides of the escarpment slopes, for example around Liddington hill. The historic landscape is dominated by 20th century fields including new fields which enclosed the last areas of open land, for example around Bishopstone Down and around Letcombe. Many fields have been reorganised in the 20th century. These are modern fields formed through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are

straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field system visible in these modernised fields

In addition pockets of pre 1700 regular enclosure survive in the West of the area and 1700 to 1900 enclosure in the East. The historic parks also survived in today's landscape.

Small blocks of modern plantation have also been created across the area.

One area of major 20th century development is the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and Rutherford Appleton Laboratory to the East of Chilton next to the A34 which crosses the area.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is dominated by nucleated villages along the spring line at the base of the scarp slope or distributed along the combes and valleys which score into the chalk escarpment face such as at Letcombe Regis. The exception is Chiseldon which is located at the top of the chalk escarpment on a plateau before the downland rises further at another escarpment.

Chiseldon has seen significant settlement expansion in the 20th century and most other villages have seen some edge expansion but not to the detriment of the historic settlement character. Settlement creep can be seen on the bottom of the chalk scarp nearest to Wantage.

Historic Farmstead Character – There are only a few hamlet farm clusters on the eastern side of the area.

There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottoms. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Neolithic long barrows included the excavated long barrow at Waylands Smithy and another example at Uffington.
- Extensive numbers of Bronze Age round barrows on higher downland areas including extant and ploughed out examples.
- Bronze Age Uffington White Horse.
- Iron Age archaeology is extensive including a string of prominent Iron Age hillforts including Hardwell Camp, Uffington Castle, Alfred's Castle and other earthworks including cross dykes
- Substantial Iron Age/Romano British field systems.
- Important early Medieval archaeology including an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Goldbury Hill.
- The extent of Medieval archaeology is particularly noteworthy.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating from Prehistory through to the Medieval period survive as earthworks so have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to communicate how past human activity shaped the landscape.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland and pre 1800 enclosure can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with nucleated villages along the spring line have architectural interest dating from the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods.

Surviving pre-1750 farmstead buildings including timber frame barns are particularly important as they provide key evidence as to the pre 1750 exploitation of the landscape

Buildings associated with Ashdown Park.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Ashdown Park has aesthetic value as a designed landscape.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent, dominated by 20th century enclosure, relating to the reorganisation of later fieldscapes.

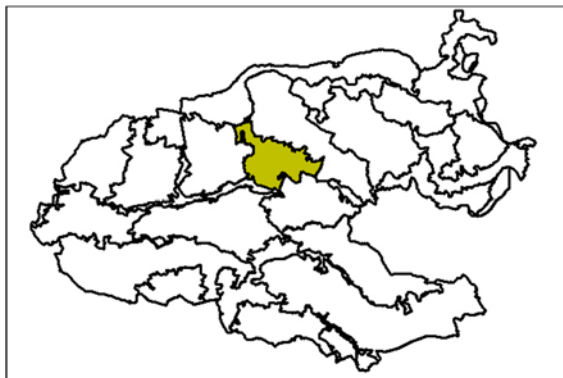
Significant pockets of open downland survive on the steep sides of the escarpment slopes, for example around Liddington hill. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland. In addition pockets of pre 1700 regular enclosure survive in the West of the area and 1700 to 1900 enclosure in the East.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Bronze Age and Iron Age evidence being particularly rich.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (24) are varied in type and include Waylands Smith Neolithic long barrow, Bronze Age Round Barrow, Iron Age Hill forts, and Letcombe Castle hillfort. Roman villas, Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and deserted Medieval villages, The Listed Buildings (287) are related to the historic settlements and historic farm buildings. There is 1 parkland on the register of parks and gardens at Ashdown House. The rides were laid out during the mid 17th century to accompany the house. During the 19th century the park was landscaped and formal gardens laid out.

Area 6: Lambourn wooded downs plateau

There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric field systems (later Bronze Age and Iron Age) across the area. The Ermin Street Roman road is a dominant feature with associated Roman activity. On the northern side of the area small pockets of ancient woodland interspersed with post 1800 plantation and old secondary woodland (1600 to 1800) survive. These are an important historical survival representing evidence of the former medieval and post-medieval exploitation of woodlands. Historic Designed Parklands are another important historical survival. Surviving World War Two features including Membury Airfield have a strong illustrative interest these offer an opportunity for oral history and local 'stories'.



Location – This area is the highest section of the Kennet – Lambourn watershed. It is a wide plateau that drops steeply away on the North side to the Lambourn valley and more gently to the Kennet on the South. It abuts the Marlborough Downs to the West

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly chalk with occasional very localised outcrops of Reading Beds. The floor of the major dry valley has deposits of valley gravels. The topography is formed of a rolling chalk plateau.

Landscape Character – A strongly rolling chalk plateau; a mosaic of woodland and mixed arable and pasture farmland. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 2c: Lambourn Wooded Downs

Archaeological Character – There is little evidence for early use and management of the area as HER records are fairly sparse and there has been little archaeological work carried out on the ground. The East of the area was covered by the Berkshire Downs Survey and aerial photograph transcription and analysis by the National Mapping Programme. Little other archaeological work has been carried out. This is reflected in the fact that the Archaeological record is dominated by find spots rather than sites.

Prehistoric material is not common and includes a single long barrow at Balards Copse and isolated Bronze Age round barrows. A barrow of clearly Bronze Age date near Shefford Park Farm was excavated on at least two occasions. The Iron Age hillfort at Membury is a dominant feature.

However other prehistoric material is not common and is mostly limited to finds of worked flint from a handful of locations. The NMP mapped several groups of cropmark features thought to be part of later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems.

The dominant feature is the Ermin Street Roman road which still forms the major route through this area as the B4000. Although the course of Ermin Street is well-known and it is still largely in use, there has been limited investigation of the physical nature of the road itself. Other Romano-British features have been observed near the road including a probable building on the site of Membury Services and a group of Romano-British features, including a corn-drier, were excavated at Lodge Farm prior to construction of the M4. Beyond the road corridor evidence of Romano-British activity in this area is limited apart from the possibly contemporary field systems, and an a Romano-British industrial site in the West of the area.

Suggested early Medieval evidence comes from an inhumation burial found near Horseclose Copse. Records of late Medieval activity are also scarce and limited to two areas of lynchets North-East of Rooksnest Farm. A linear earthwork of possible Medieval date, Hug Ditch, runs along the part of the boundary between this area and the Lambourn Valley area to the East.

Later periods are represented almost entirely by standing buildings. Second World War military remains are found on land that was occupied by Membury airfield. Concrete runways remain within fields, and buildings related to the airfield are found over an extensive area to the North and East, many of which have been re-used for alternative, mainly industrial, uses.

It is hard to assess the archaeological resource in this area as little is known of the extent and quality of below-ground deposits. It is likely that prehistoric and Romano-British deposits are present where cropmarks of field systems exist, but it is not clear how well the features represented survive. A woodland archaeology survey of banks and enclosures in Coldridge Copse suggests that there may be other unrecorded earthworks in other woods in this area. Physical remains of the Roman road are likely to survive underneath the present road surface and in areas on the course of the road where the modern route has been diverted. Excavations in advance of the M4 found some evidence for contemporary settlement along Ermin Street and it is possible that further settlement deposits are located on the course of the road. The historic farm sites retain significant historic buildings and it is possible that deposits relating to early settlement and use of these sites may also remain. Any such deposits could be crucial in understanding the enclosure and exploitation of this area from the Medieval period onwards.



Hodd's Hill - Very little of the area remained unenclosed or not covered by mature woodland by the start of the 18th century. Although areas of pre 1700 open land has been identified including the slopes to the North of Chilton Foliat, and the area around the deeply incised valley flowing South from Aldbourne.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland near Greenlands Copse, East Garston Woodlands – Across the rest of the area fieldscapes have seen large-scale rationalisation through a combination of field reorganisation and boundary removal. This has led to a much less irregular-looking landscape. Boundary removal was commonest in the assarts around East Garston woodlands.

© Copyright [Brian Robert Marshall](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland near Woodland St Marys – Woodland was widely spread across the area. Most woodland is ancient; smaller areas of other old woods were also present for example around Ballams Wood. The ancient woodland was present in large blocks, most of which show signs of assartment.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory –This is a largely early enclosed landscape with substantial areas of woodland and a dispersed settlement pattern. The main route through the area was Ermin Street, the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester, which ran along the crest of the watershed.

Numerous small, sinuous roads and tracks branched off Ermin Street linking the plateau and the valley floors.

Very little of the area remained unenclosed or not covered by mature woodland by the start of the 18th century, although areas of pre 1700 open land have been identified including the slopes to the North of Chilton Foliat, and the area around the deeply incised valley flowing South from Aldbourne. The fieldscapes were mostly composed of small-scale, irregularly-shaped enclosures interleaved with woodland. Some fields were identified as assarts and it is likely that other early enclosures may also be assarts; this could be clarified by further research. In the South-East of the area, fields are larger and more sinuous, suggesting that they may have been enclosed from open downland. In most cases there is no definite evidence of what kind of land the fields were created from, and the typical downs combination of open fields and common downland grazing seems absent from this area. The exception being the far North West of the area where the village of Baydon reflects just this pattern, with open fields and common downland not enclosed until the 20th century.

Parliamentary enclosures were only present at King's Heath. This was an area of common heath that, unlike the rest of the area, had remained unenclosed into the 19th century.

Woodland was widely spread across the area. Most woodland is ancient; smaller areas of other old woods were also present for example around Ballams Wood. The ancient woodland was present in large blocks, most of which show signs of assartment.

Small parklands are found in this area. Two smallish parks were established almost next-door to each other in the southern half of the area at Inholmes and Poughley and to the West of the area small parks existed at Membury House, Crowood House and Eastridge House.

The combination of farm names, assarted woodlands and the irregular early enclosed landscape suggests that this area had long been enclosed into fields, probably by individual farmers carving out their own farmland from the downs and woodlands. Much of this landscape is likely to date back at last to the Medieval period.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – The western portion of the area has been heavily modified by the construction of Membury Airfield during WWII. This took an angular chunk out of the landscape, truncating surrounding fields, and included the insertion of shielding plantations of fast growing conifers around parts of the base's perimeter. Although now disused, the airfield still has a presence in the landscape. Most of the airfield area is farmed and the remains of runways and service routes form the boundaries of the fields. Many of the airfield buildings have been re-used as business and industrial premises leading to a small industrial estate developing in an otherwise very rural area. Membury motorway services have also been constructed within the former airfield footprint.

Across the rest of the area fieldscapes have seen large-scale rationalisation through a combination of field reorganisation and boundary removal. This has led to a much less irregular-looking landscape. Boundary removal was commonest in the assarts around East Garston Woodlands. The construction of the M4 motorway also contributed to this reorganisation through disruption and truncation of historic field systems. The conversion of historic enclosures into paddocks is common. They are most widespread around the Kingwood Stud but are also found in blocks across the rest of the area. Some blocks of historic fields survive around Lambourn Woodlands and East Garston Woodlands and South of King's Heath.

A few blocks of ancient woodland were cleared for agricultural use, mostly in the later 20th century. Some areas have also been cleared of their native woodland cover and been replanted with new trees; this is commonest to the South of Inholmes Park. The Northern side small pockets of ancient woodland interspersed with post 1800 plantation and old secondary woodland (1600 to 1800) including large blocks of new woodland the South Eastern side

Parks remain but have contracted slightly with some of their grounds having been turned over to agriculture.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern was dispersed and there are no nucleated villages. It is typified by small discontinuous settlements, such as Lambourn Woodlands and Shefford Woodlands, which are strung out along the Roman road and lack a clear centre. There is evidence for slight settlement growth over the 18th and 19th centuries with new housing built along the Roman road.

Settlement growth has been negligible and mostly consists of new houses or groups of houses constructed between historic settlement nuclei along the Roman road.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were fairly densely scattered across the area and most are named after individuals, such as Dixon’s Farm and Gooding’s Farm. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Single long barrow at Balards Copse and isolated Bronze Age round barrows.
- There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric field systems (later Bronze Age and Iron Age) and farming across the area.
- Dominant feature is the Ermin Street Roman road with associated Roman activity.
- Potential Early Medieval inhumation cemetery at Horseclose Copse
- 20th century military archaeology

Historic Interest

The Ermin Street Roman road is a dominant feature so has a strong illustrative interest relating to Roman activity in the landscape.

Surviving areas of ancient woodland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Surviving World War Two features have a strong illustrative interest. They offer an opportunity for oral history and local 'stories'

Architectural Interest

Historic farm buildings especially related to pre 1750 farm buildings and timber frame barns are important historic survivals.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Surviving historic parks and gardens have a strong aesthetic value relating to their designed aspects.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

There is strong time depth relating to the Roman period.

The historic landscape of this area in the West of the area is dominated by the disused, Membury Airfield constructed in World War Two. Across the rest of the area fieldscapes have seen large-scale rationalisation through a combination of field reorganisation and boundary removal in the 20th century creating a coherent landscape.

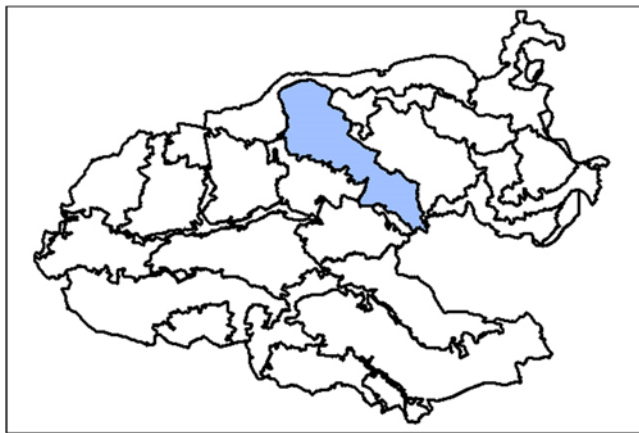
On the Northern side of the area small pockets of ancient woodland interspersed with post 1800 plantation and old secondary woodland (1600 to 1800) survive. These are an important historical survival representing evidence of the former medieval and post-medieval exploitation of woodlands.

Historic Designed Parklands are another important historical survival.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (3) relate to Membury Camp and the Neolithic long barrow at Ballard's Copse. The Listed Buildings (53) are related to historic farms and farm buildings and milestones. There is 0 parkland on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 7: Lambourn Valley

This area has important and rare surviving evidence for Palaeolithic activity. There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particularly rich. The Lambourn Seven Barrows cemetery has particular illustrative interest. There is significant cropmark and excavated evidence of Romano-British activity, particularly relating to settlements at Boxford and Maddal Farm. There is evidence for early Medieval settlement in the valley bottom and a possible Royal enclosure at Lambourn and a wealth of Medieval archaeology. There is a conglomeration of later Post-medieval built architectural heritage in the valley bottom.



Location – This area consists of the Lambourn valley and the surrounding downs from Bagnor to the valley heading North-West of Lambourn. The valley has a narrow floor with many dry valleys cut into the valley sides from its watersheds with the Kennet and Winterbourne.

Geology and Topography – The geology of the area is almost entirely chalk, although small areas of Reading Beds occur on the upper valley slopes South of Weston and a narrow band of gravel exists in the valley floor. Narrow valley with medium sloping sides.

Landscape Character – The River Lambourn flows through this narrow and visually contained valley, forming a small scale landscape of great interest. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 7B: Lambourn Valley.*

Archaeological Character – There is significantly more evidence of earlier prehistoric activity in the Lower Lambourn than in adjacent parts of the valley and watershed. Palaeolithic material has been recovered near Woodspen and Mesolithic material was also found at this location. Neolithic material is also more widespread and flint tools have been found at several sites. There is also some Neolithic evidence at the head of the Lambourn Valley. There is one Neolithic long barrow.

Evidence of Bronze Age activity in the lower valley comes from probable barrow sites and circular earthworks. There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric settlement and farming all along the valley, in particular on the valley sides and fields have generally been ascribed a later prehistoric/Romano-British date. Elements of these field systems survived until recently as earthworks but have been levelled due to increased intensity of ploughing. It is likely that the river and valley floor were heavily exploited too in this period but that evidence has not been recognised due to a lack of both cropmark development and opportunities for chance finds. A possible Iron Age

hillfort exists on Borough Hill and a series of circular features were excavated on Boxford Common in the 1930s.



Oxford Street, Lambourn - Lambourn was a royal estate in the early Medieval period. The distinctive oval layout of the village's roads is likely to date back to this period and a church is thought to have stood at the site of the present church since at least the early 11th century. The road layout and positioning of church and market is similar to that seen at other settlements of this date.

© Copyright [Des Blenkinsopp](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Kington Bushes Plantation, Upper Lambourn – 19th and 20th century plantations are common sitting in open expanses of 20th century fields created by the ploughing up of formerly open chalk grassland.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Lambourn River at Woodspeen – The older historic character of the meadows and fields of the valley bottom contrasts markedly with the more open and more recent fields on the valley sides. The archaeological pattern is also on of contrast with a greater concentration of Medieval and later activity focused on the valley bottom and probably obscuring earlier traces.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

There is significant cropmark evidence of Romano- British activity but evidence is limited to stray finds on the valley bottom. Significant Romano-British activity, in addition to the field-systems, is documented in the Lower Lambourn Valley, in the area from Stancombe Down to Great Shefford and at the head of the valley. In the lower valley the line of Ermine Street, the road from Silchester

to Cirencester, runs through the south-western side of the area. A villa also exists South of Wyfield Farm. At the head of the valley Roman settlement is widespread and includes the 2nd to 3rd century villa at Maddle Farm.

In the valley bottom there is evidence for early Medieval settlement at several locations. Boxford and Welford were both referred to in 10th century documents and Bagnor was mentioned as having a mill at Domesday. A settlement at Shefford was mentioned at Domesday. Most historic settlements had developed by the end of the late Medieval period. The churches at East Garston, Boxford, Welford, East Shefford and Great Shefford all retain significant Medieval elements despite Victorian alteration. Evidence of desertion or shrinkage exists at several settlements. In the lower Lambourn Medieval records are uncommon and consist mainly of finds. Large concentrations of finds from an area immediately North of Boxford Farm have been interpreted as from an early Saxon cemetery.

Post Medieval records are of buildings, industrial structures and transport features. Much of the building stock at each settlement dates from this period. Watermills existed at most historic settlements and the majority of remaining mill buildings date from this period. It is possible that these are on the site of Medieval mills. The Lambourn Valley railway was constructed through the area in the 1890s ;the line of the railway is preserved in places as a wooded earthwork.

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of present day settlements is poorly understood. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area. The 19th century farms are important features but little is known about the nature of their historic building stock.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The Medieval landscape of this area was based on nucleated settlements on the valley floor, with open fields on the valley sides and common grazing on riverside meadows and downs at the head of the valley and on its sides. The majority of the open fields south of East Garston were enclosed into fields by the 18th century. Most were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape established by roads and tracks and open field strips, suggesting that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. Significant areas of more regularly-shaped early enclosures existed around East Shefford, East Garston and Welford. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields. The meadows had also largely been enclosed by this date; some were simply enclosed into pasture fields, but the majority became water meadows. These covered the valley floor between East Garston and Bagnor and formed the AONB's most significant concentration of water meadows outside the Kennet Valley.

The majority of the remaining open fields and downs, including almost all of Lambourn parish, were enclosed into fields through Act of Parliament in the early 19th century. The only unenclosed downland that remained were small areas West of Lambourn and north of East Garston. Woodland was historically very sparse in this area with little ancient or other historic broadleaf woodland. Some blocks of ancient woodland did exist but they were generally small and most were in the South of the area near its edge. The only large ancient wood was on the Southern edge of Welford Park, the single substantial park in the area.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - Agricultural mechanisation from the mid 20th century led to a dramatic alteration of this landscape as existing fields were amalgamated into larger holdings, either through boundary removal or through reorganisation. Many historic features, such as hedgerows, were removed, creating expanses of relatively featureless arable fields. This trend also saw the enclosure of the majority of remaining downland for further large arable fields. Downland is now found only in small areas on steep scarp slopes where farming is uneconomic or impractical. Some historic fields do survive as functioning parts of the farming landscape, mostly around Boxford and Bagnor, but these are usually isolated instances of a couple of fields. Active management of water meadows ceased in the earlier 20th century and most became pasture or fields. Some have become wooded areas, either through active plantation or gradual scrubbing over and re-colonisation.

Due to the growth of Lambourn as a nationally important centre of the racehorse industry, large parts of the landscape are now covered by land-uses related to horse breeding and training. This is most evident around Lambourn itself where significant areas of former fields and downs are now extensive stretches of paddocks and gallops. Several studs have been established, including some that have developed at historic farms in the downs above Lambourn.

A large American military base exists at Welford. The base started as an RAF airfield in WWII and has now become one of the USAF's most significant European bomb stores. Most previous land-use features, including field boundaries and a large area of ancient woodland, were removed by construction of the base.

There has been a slight increase in tree cover across the whole area. Woodland regeneration has contributed to this but the rise is largely due to the creation of tree plantations. Some plantations are 19th century in date, but most were created in the late 20th century. Most were created as shelter features and are small and rectilinear. This is most visible in Lambourn parish, previously an almost totally un-wooded area that now contains many irregularly-shaped plantations. Despite overall growth, areas of ancient and other old woodland have been lost. Many were removed for cultivation or construction, as at RAF Welford, and some were replanted with non-native species. Replanted ancient woods exist between Boxford and Bagnor.

The changes have had a significant impact on character, as large and regular arable expanses have been created over the whole of the area where previously there would have been either open downland or a more intimate network of smaller fields.

Historic Settlement Character – Settlement was linear but nucleated and concentrated in a few large villages and hamlets of Medieval or earlier origin. These were sited on the valley floor and were spaced at fairly regular intervals. Timber-framing was the traditional construction form across much of the area until the later 17th century, after which time brick became the dominant walling material. Chalk cob was also widely used for cottages and boundary walls. Brick combined with flint is also characteristic – its use dating mainly from the late 18th and 19th centuries. Settlement growth has been modest and confined largely to infill or growth around existing settlements and has centred on East Garston, West Shefford and Boxford. Most housing has been constructed since the later 20th century but a small amount of growth took place at East Garston in the late 19th century. Very few new settlement nuclei have been created.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were not common and were located either along the river in gaps between the hamlets and villages or, more commonly, on the upper slopes of the valley. Most were named after adjacent settlements or topographic features. There is a low to medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Evidence for Palaeolithic activity.
- Neolithic evidence at the head of the Lambourn Valley and possible cropmark of a henge at Elton lane
- Significant earthwork and cropmark evidence of Bronze Age barrows, including surviving cemeteries at the Seven Barrows and Stancombe Hatts.
- There is significant cropmark evidence of later prehistoric settlement and farming all along the valley in particular on the valley sides.
- Possible Iron Age hillfort exists on Borough Hill
- Significant cropmark and excavated evidence of Romano- British activity, particularly at settlements at Boxford and Maddle farm
- Evidence for early Medieval settlement in the valley bottom and possible royal enclosure at Lambourn
- Historic mill sites
- Landscape evidence of horse racing industry from the 18th to 20th century
- WWII and Cold War structures at RAF Welford

Historic Interest

Many prehistoric and Roman Archaeological sites do not survive as earthworks so have less illustrative interest than in other areas with the exception of the Bronze Age Lambourn Seven Barrows cemetery.

Early Medieval and later earthworks in the valley bottom do survive however. Surviving areas of open chalk downland and pre 1750 fields can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Former RAF Welford has a strong illustrative interest relating to WWII.

Architectural Interest

Importance should be attached to timber frame buildings surviving to before 1800. Vernacular chalk cob buildings and Pre-1750 farmstead buildings and in particular large timber-frame barns are also important historical survivals

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Horse racing industry at Lambourn will have aesthetic and artistic interest

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century enclosure, created through the amalgamation of existing fields.

Small areas of open downland survive on steep scarp slopes. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

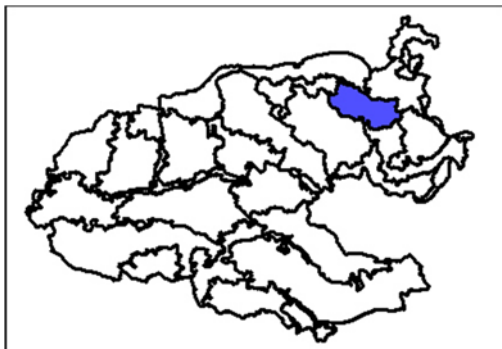
Some historic fields do survive as functioning parts of the farming landscape, mostly around Boxford and Bagnor, but these are usually isolated instances of a couple of fields. These are an important historical survival.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particular rich.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (25) are dominated by Bronze Age round barrows. The Listed Buildings (238) are related to the cottages and farmhouses along the valley bottom. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 8: West Ilsley and downland

The area is marked by the dominant form of the Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch. There is significant cropmark evidence of Romano- British activity including potential Roman settlements. Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets. Small ribbons of open downland survive. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland pre 1800. Areas of intact parliamentary enclosure have survived adjacent to the Ridgeway and around Locking representing an important historical survival of 18th and 19th century landscapes in the AONB.



Location – Downland to the North and South Ridgeway between Letcombe Bassett in the West and West and East Ilsley to the South

Geology and Topography – Middle and Upper Chalk overlain with drift deposits of clay with flint. Rolling upland with a round or flat topped hills intersected by dry valleys.

Landscape Character – Rolling downland dominated by arable fields with sparse woodland. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 1D: Blewbury Downs*

Archaeological Character – The majority of sites in this area are known from cropmarks. Earlier prehistoric archaeology is scarce. Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread, many existing only as ring ditches. Part of the Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch is visible as earthworks and cropmarks on aerial photographs. The ditch and bank follow a sinuous and broken course. Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the downland areas, for example, near Letcombe Bassett - cropmarks perhaps denoting settlement exist within extensive field systems. In fact field systems are widespread across the area mapped from aerial photographs. These fields have generally been ascribed a later Iron Age/Romano-British date. Elements of these field systems survived until recently as earthworks but have been levelled due to increased intensity of ploughing. There is an Iron Age Hillfort, Letcombe Castle.

There is significant cropmark evidence of Romano- British activity including potential Roman settlements.

Possible Medieval and/or Post Medieval ridge and furrow and headlands are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets which have been given a Medieval and Post Medieval date. A number of Post Medieval hollow ways, (many associated with clay pits or quarries marked on OS maps), cross the earlier Grim's ditch at various places.

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many

features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of present day settlements is poorly understood. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside of settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area.



Farmland West Ilsley - Today the area is dominated by new 20th century fields created by enclosing the remaining downland and reorganised fields created by modifying the underlying parliamentary field patterns. These changes have created a landscape typified by very large arable fields with some earlier field boundaries remaining.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Farmland East Ilsley – Open areas of close-cropped chalk grassland formerly dominated this area either side of the Ridgeway which ran East-West across this area. This was used as grazing for animals. The land was also associated with small patches of scrub and gorse which were used as fuel. Chalk track ways led from the villages to the South and North to join the Ridgeway.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Church Farm, Compton – Apart from the isolated farms there is no pre 1800 historic settlement. Compton is close to the Eastern boundary of the area

© Copyright Nicholls and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory– Open areas of close-cropped chalk grassland formerly dominated this area either side of the Ridgeway which ran East-West across this area. This was used as grazing for animals. The land was also associated with

small patches of scrub and gorse which were used as fuel. Chalk track ways fed from the villages to the South and North to join the Ridgeway. These open areas were used as part of the common grazing regime that operated in many Downs parishes in the Medieval period. Some small areas were enclosed prior to 1700 through the creation of regularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges. The form of these fields is likely to be because these fields are the result of phases of planned, but undocumented, enclosure. Large swathes of common downland in the centre of this area were enclosed during parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th century notably in the parishes of Letcombe Regis and Wantage.

However, significant reserves remained as a major part of the sheep/corn system of agriculture until the early 20th century. This was a system of grain production made possible by the large sheep flocks, supported by early crops of grass produced by the water meadows in the Winterbourne Valley and the Thames flood plain, which fed all day on the high open chalk downland and by night were folded on arable lands to enrich the soils. These were located to the far West and far East of the area. With the collapse of this system in the 20th century further enclosure and ploughing up of chalk grassland occurred.

There were small areas of ancient woodland on the steep downland slopes.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Today the area is dominated by new 20th century fields created by enclosing the remaining downland and reorganised fields created by modifying the underlying parliamentary field patterns. The mechanisation of agriculture in the later 20th century has led to an almost total re-organisation of these fieldscapes. These changes have created a landscape typified by very large arable fields with some earlier field boundaries remaining. Areas of parliamentary enclosure have survived adjacent to the Ridgeway and around Locking. Large regular blocks of post 1800 plantation woodland have been created on the South side of the area.

Today small ribbons of unenclosed chalk downland survive along the tops of the North facing chalk escarpment and in steep sided combs in areas where arable agriculture is impractical or uneconomic. This is however a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland. New gallops have been created adjacent to the Ridgeway on Warren Down.

Historic Settlement Character – Apart from the isolated farms there is no pre 1700 historic settlement.

Historic Farmstead Character – Historic farms pre 1800 are not common and where they do exist they are isolated in the landscape. A few new 19th century farmsteads were also created for example at Angeldown Farm.

There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread many existing only as ring ditches.
- Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch.
- Later prehistoric activity is widespread.
- Significant cropmark evidence of Romano- British activity including potential Roman settlements.
- Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites in this area have less illustrative value than other areas as the majority of sites are only known from cropmarks. Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch and Iron Age hillfort, of Letcombe Castle have strong illustrative value.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with pre-1750 farmstead buildings are important architectural survivals.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century enclosure. These changes have created a landscape typified by very large arable fields with some earlier field boundaries remaining.

Areas of intact parliamentary enclosure have survived adjacent to the Ridgeway and around Locking.

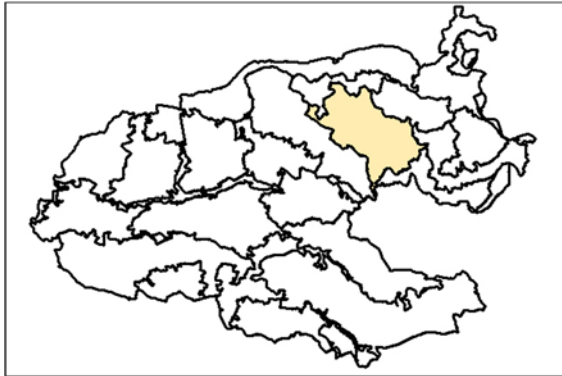
Small ribbons of open downland survive. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

There is strong time depth relating to the later prehistoric and Roman period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (14) are dominated by sections of Grim's Ditch, Bronze Age round barrows and Letcombe Castle hillfort. The Listed Buildings (5) are related to milestones on the Ridgeway and historic farmsteads. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 9: Winterbourne Valley & downland

Iron Age activity is quite widespread and includes cropmarks of nine banjo enclosures. There is also significant evidence of Romano- British activity including Roman settlements. Important evidence for early Medieval settlement survives at Chieveley, Chaddleworth Fawley, Winterbourne and Leckhampstead, Catmore and Beedon. Large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across much of the area. This has preserved evidence of the grain of the 15th to 19th century historic landscape of the AONB.



Location – This is the Winterbourne valley and areas of the high downs formed by watersheds between the Lambourn, Winterbourne and Pang rivers.

Geology and Topography – The geology is almost entirely chalk, although small outcrops of Reading Beds occur South of Leckhampstead and Chieveley.

The topography of the area is open rolling downland surrounded the Winterbourne Valley featuring dry incised valley.

Landscape Character – Open undulating downland with a mixed farmland landscape of pasture and arable fields enclosed by hedgerows. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 2A: Brightwalton Downs.

Archaeological Character – HER records exist across the area. Many records are derived from cropmarks and many were discovered through the National Mapping Programme. The area was also covered by the Berkshire Downs Survey and some excavation and field walking has been carried out by local archaeological groups. Other archaeological work has been limited. Most has been carried out in advance of development, particularly the Southern Feeder gas pipeline and improvement works at the M4/A34 junction. A significant landscape archaeology project is being undertaken at Peasemore by the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group and there is a long running excavation of an Iron Age and Romano-British site near Stanmore Farm being run by a local volunteer group.

There are limited Mesolithic find spots across the area. In the lower and middle valley, Neolithic material is more common than elsewhere but is limited to find spots and flint scatters. Bronze Age activity is dominated by definite and probable round barrows. The barrows are all located on the upper slopes of dry valleys and upper valley slopes. Evidence of a Bronze Age settlement near Beedon Wood was found by field walking by the Berkshire Downs Survey and later excavated.

Iron Age activity is quite widespread and includes cropmarks of nine banjo enclosures. An enclosed settlement, formed by three banjo enclosures, exists at Wellhill Road in the West of the area and in the East of the area Iron Age occupation has been found during excavations at Oareborough Hill, Stanmore and World's End. Patches of cropmarks of later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems exist across the area but become scarcer in the upper part of the valley.

An early Romano-British farmstead with some evidence of burials was also partially excavated at Chieveley prior to road construction. A rectangular cropmark exists South-East of Chaddleworth and field walking on site has produced Roman coins and pottery. Evidence of settlement of this period has been found during excavations at Stanmore, World's End and Oareborough Hill. The Iron Age settlement at Oareborough Hill was re-occupied during the late Roman period and it has been suggested, on the basis of finds and cropmarks, that a villa exists a short distance to the North of this settlement. Evidence of Romano-British buildings was also found during the 19th century at Stanmore Farm and Beedon Brickworks.

There is evidence for early Medieval settlement at Chieveley, Chaddleworth Fawley, Winterbourne and Leckhampstead. Leckhampstead is recorded as having a church in 1050 and the site of this was at Chapel Farm. But other evidence of early Medieval activity is quite scarce. In both Winterbourne and Leckhampstead settlement seems to have migrated from its original location around the church.

Most late Medieval evidence comes from buildings including churches and farmstead. Three deserted Medieval villages, Whatcombe, Henley and Woolley are recorded. Earthworks at Bussock Court have been interpreted as a manorial site mentioned in the 16th century. In the East of the area a deer park, established in the 14th century, existed immediately South-West of Beedon and elements of the park, such as at Park Copse, are still visible in the landscape.

Post Medieval records are mainly of buildings. A World War Two bombing decoy has been identified at Beedon.

Deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date are likely to exist across the area. The preservation of deposits could be varied, as ploughing since the Medieval period has possibly truncated the archaeological layers. Deposits relating to early occupation may survive within historic settlement nuclei and any such deposits could be crucial to understanding the development of settlement in this area. A high number of deserted Medieval village sites exist in the area and any deposits will be valuable as desertion is a poorly understood phenomenon in the AONB. The historic building stock is fairly well-studied, but it is possible that further significant buildings or structural elements may be identified.

Historic Landscape Trajectory– Like neighbouring downland areas, the Medieval landscape was composed of communities within open fields utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland. Commons existed at Chaddleworth, Beedon and Rowbury, but these were not frequent features of downland areas. Most of the open field and some downland had been enclosed into private fields by the start of the 18th century.

Most early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries. This suggests that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. Significant areas of more regularly-shaped early enclosures existed around Brightwalton, Catmore, Leckhampstead and Winterbourne. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields.

The majority of remaining open fields, commons and downs were enclosed into fields through Act of Parliament in the early 19th century, and large areas of Parliamentary fields existed in Chaddleworth, Chieveley and Beedon. Some open field and larger areas of downland around Fawley and South Fawley remained unenclosed into the 20th century.

This was a much more wooded area than other parts of the downs and large blocks of ancient woodland and smaller blocks of other old woods were distributed across the area. Most wooded areas were located on or near parish boundaries.

South of South Fawley the landscape was different, being comprised of irregularly-shaped fields and blocks of woodland with numerous small farms. It lacked traces of any open fields and most farms were named after individuals. This area may not have been part of the common farming regime but have been occupied by small farms and their fields throughout the Medieval period.

Parks however were relatively uncommon with only a handful (Woolley Park, Chaddleworth House, Winterbourne House and the adjoining Priorscourt and Bradley Parks) existing in the area.



Peasemore Hill - Most early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Farmland, Brightwalton – The development of mechanised farming over the latter half of the 20th century led to substantial change in the area. However, the reorganisation of the landscape has been less complete than in other parts of the AONB, and large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across much of the area.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Woolley House – All parks survive in some form in the landscape but large portions of parkland have come under arable cultivation.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present day Historic Landscape Character - The development of mechanised farming over the latter half of the 20th century led to substantial change in the area with most fields being heavily altered and the remaining areas of open field and downland enclosed.

However, the reorganisation of the landscape has been less complete than in other parts of the AONB, and large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across much of the area. Unlike surrounding areas, most field alteration has been through amalgamation of fields by boundary removal as opposed to re-organisation and insertion of new boundaries. This has preserved some of the grain of the historic landscape and, in many cases, traces of removed boundaries remain. A significant area of paddocks has been created out of early enclosures at Fawley.

Existing woodland has had a mixed history; much seems to have survived but several large blocks of ancient woodland have been cleared for agriculture. This is largely a later 20th century phenomenon; however, one wood was cleared in the late 19th century. Ancient woodlands at Brightwalton and Catmore have been cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species. There has been a small growth in new tree-cover, mostly linear shelter plantations around Catmore.

All parks survive in some form in the landscape but large portions of parkland have come under arable cultivation. The adjoining parks at Priorscourt and Bradley have seen most change. All of Priorscourt Park is now under different usage, the grounds mainly under arable cultivation and the house itself used as a school. Bradley Park is now a small stub around the house and the rest of the grounds are fields.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern was mixed and consisted of a few nucleated villages and a larger number of hamlets and farms; some dispersed types of settlement were also present. The villages (Farnborough, Brightwalton, Peasmore and Chieveley) were located on the valley slopes on ridges overlooking the valley floor. Hamlets were widely scattered across the area but were a varied group containing small hamlets, such as Fawley and Catmore, and settlements consisting of multiple foci, such as Beedon, Leckhampstead and Bothampstead. Many

parishes, such as Chaddleworth and Beedon, had no main central settlement but a series of small related hamlets instead. Red brick was the commonest building material with many thatch buildings also surviving.

Substantial growth in housing has occurred around Chieveley in recent years, largely due to its proximity to the M4/A34 junction. Most of this growth is in the form of small housing estates that have been built on the edge of Chieveley itself and to the North at Downend. Historically these were two separate settlement nuclei, but recent development has linked them, effectively creating one village. Little growth in settlement has occurred across the rest of the area and is mainly limited to ad-hoc infill and growth or construction of small housing developments in and around existing settlements, such as at Chaddleworth, Peasemore and Leckhampstead.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were common across the centre of the area and most were named after topographic features or the nearest settlement. There is a low to medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- In the lower and middle valley Neolithic material is common.
- Bronze Age activity is dominated by definite and probable round barrows
- Iron Age activity is quite widespread and includes cropmarks of nine banjo enclosures.
- Significant evidence of Romano- British activity including Roman settlements.
- Evidence for early Medieval settlement at Chieveley, Chaddleworth Fawley, Winterbourne and Leckhampstead, Catmore and Beedon
- Earthwork and cropmark evidence for deserted Medieval Villages

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites in this area have less illustrative value than other downland areas as the majority of sites are only known from cropmarks.

Architectural Interest

Medieval and post-medieval buildings associated with the villages of Farnborough, Brightwalton, Peasemore and Chieveley.

Buildings associated with pre-1750 farmstead buildings. Survival of large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Aesthetic interest of surviving evidence for historic parks and gardens in the landscape although large portions of parkland have come under arable cultivation.

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

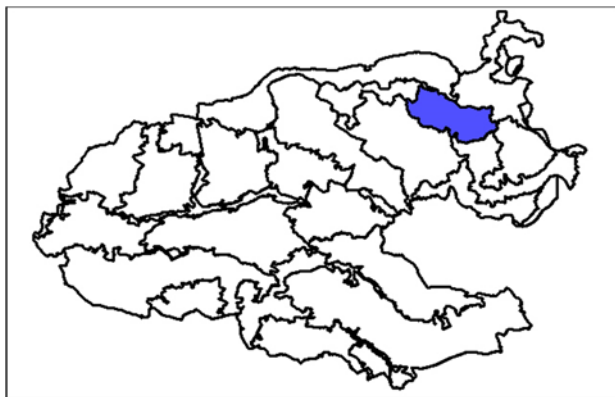
The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by later 20th century enclosure. However, the reorganisation of the landscape has been less complete than in other parts of the AONB, and large and coherent areas of early enclosures remain across much of the area. This has preserved some of the grain of the historic landscape.

There is strong time depth relating to the Roman and Early Medieval period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (5) are dominated by Bronze Age round barrows. The Listed Buildings (167) are dispersed across the area and relate to vernacular buildings, designed landscapes and farmhouses and farm buildings. There are 0 parkland on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 10: Upper Pang Valley

Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread many existing only as ring ditches, with Grim's Ditch representing a probable Bronze Age territorial boundary. Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the higher downland areas. There is significant cropmark evidence of Romano-British activity and excavated sites including a villa site, and two Romano-British pottery kilns of the fourth century AD. Evidence for Medieval activity including lynchets and settlements is visually dominant. Significant areas of surviving ancient woodland preserve evidence of the Post-Medieval exploitation of Woodlands in the AONB and protect earlier archaeological sites and evidence.



Location – This is the upper end of the Pang Valley and neighbouring areas of the high-downs. It includes a major dry valley that joins the Pang Valley from the North at Compton.

Geology and Topography – The geology is almost entirely chalk, although a small outcrop of Reading Beds exists at Aldworth, and is overlain on the valley floor by gravels. Rolling downland with gently rounded of flat-topped hills, intersected by dry valleys

Landscape Character – Rolling downland with gently rounded of flat-topped hills, intersected by dry valleys surrounding the upper reaches of the Pang consisting of arable fields. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 1D: Blewbury Downs.*

Archaeological Character – Earlier prehistoric archaeology is scarce with the one notable known monument being the Sheep Down Neolithic long barrow. Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread many existing only as ring ditches. Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the higher downland areas, for example, in the parish of East Ilsey Bronze Age earthworks perhaps denoting settlement exist within extensive field systems. In fact field systems are widespread across the area mapped from aerial photographs these fields have generally been ascribed a later Iron Age/Romano-British date. Elements of these field systems survived until recently as earthworks but have been levelled due to increased intensity of ploughing. An Iron Age hill fort has been identified at Perborough Castle.

There is significant cropmark evidence of Romano-British activity and excavated sites including a villa site, and two Romano-British pottery kilns of fourth century AD date in the parish of Compton. Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets which have been given a Medieval and Post Medieval date and the site of windmill mounds, and windmills dating from the Medieval period until 1920.



Farmland near Compton - The mechanisation of agriculture in the later 20th century has led to an almost total re-organisation of these fieldscapes and few historic enclosures remain unaltered.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Farmland above West Ilsley – Some plantations have been created in the area: mostly shelter belts and long, thin plantations.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Compton Village – The historic settlement pattern was dominated by nucleated villages sited on the valley floor, such as West Ilsley, East Ilsley, West Compton and Compton.

© Copyright [Bill Nicholls](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

In the valley bottom of the Pang evidence tends to relate to the Medieval settlements of West Ilsley, East Ilsley, West Compton and Compton, including pits and settlement features uncovered during settlement development, areas of ridge and furrow are also known as well as deserted Medieval settlements and Medieval fish ponds. Post Medieval archaeology includes military archaeology relating to World War Two including a Royal Observer Corps monitoring post and industrial archaeology including the former site of the Compton Railway station.

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. The origin of present day settlements is poorly understood. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area.

Historic Landscape Trajectory since 1700 – Like adjacent downland areas the Medieval landscape was based around nucleated settlements set amongst open fields on the lower valley sides and utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downs. Most of the boundary of this area coincides with parish boundaries. Some open field between Compton and Aldworth had been enclosed by the 18th century. This process is far less widespread than in adjacent areas and most of the open field and downland were enclosed through Act of Parliament in the early 19th century. East Ilsley is the exception to this pattern and remained an unenclosed parish throughout the great phase of Parliamentary enclosures. It was one of the latest parishes to be enclosed, the open field finally being divided into private fields by agreement in the late 19th century whilst its downs remained unenclosed into the 20th century. Many field barns existed within the open fields.

This was a relatively unwooded area although some areas of woodland did exist. South of West Ilsley and Compton sizeable blocks of ancient woodland existed near the edge of the area and small isolated blocks of other old woodland were scattered across the area.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The mechanisation of agriculture in the later 20th century has led to an almost total re-organisation of these fieldscapes and few historic enclosures remain unaltered. The East Ilsley downs have also now been enclosed into fields and only small strips of downland grassland remain within the area. These changes have created a landscape typified by very large arable fields with few obvious boundaries in the place of extensive downlands. The growth of the racehorse industry has also had an effect on the area; extensive gallops exist amongst the modern fields on former downs and areas of studs and paddocks are developing around West Ilsley and Compton. The loss of downland is significant as it is now recognised as a significant and threatened habitat; the AONB as a whole has lost around 95% of recorded downland.

Some sizeable areas of ancient woodland have been lost through clearance to create farmland but most of this was carried out in the late 19th century. The remaining areas of ancient woodland have fared better than in many other areas, and only small sections have been subject to clearance and replanting. Some plantations have been created in the area: mostly shelter belts and long, thin plantations. They do not gel with the grain of the landscape but since they are not common and mostly small-scale they have not had much of an impact on the overall character of the area.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern was dominated by nucleated villages sited on the valley floor, such as West Compton and Compton. This trend was so strong across most of the area that other forms of settlement were almost totally absent. A slightly different pattern existed around the village of Aldworth. Aldworth was situated at the extreme

East of the area on the Pang–Thames watershed, and several farms existed in its immediate neighbourhood.

Modern settlement is concentrated on expansion around West Compton with little growth elsewhere in the area. The growth at Compton is typified by small housing estates which were probably constructed to house personnel at the local research establishment, now named the Institute for Animal Health, or possibly at the UK Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell, established North of the village in the 1950s. These residential developments also seem to coincide with creation of a single village, known simply as Compton, from the neighbouring villages of Compton and West Compton.

Historic Farmstead Character – There is a low concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date are known in this area.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread, many existing only as ring ditches, with Grim's Ditch representing a probable Bronze Age territorial boundary.
- Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the higher downland areas .
- Iron Age hillfort at Perborough Castle.
- Significant cropmark evidence of Romano- British activity and excavated sites including a villa site, and two Romano-British pottery kilns of fourth century AD date in the parish of Compton
- Early Medieval boundary of the Grims Ditch.
- Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets
- Valley bottom Medieval settlement evidence

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites often do not survive as earthworks so have less illustrative interest than in other areas. Evidence for Medieval activity including lynchets and settlements is visually dominant and therefore has importance illustrative interest.

Areas of ancient woodland have strong illustrative interest

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated nucleated settlements on valley floor. Pre 1750- farm buildings including large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

N/A

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

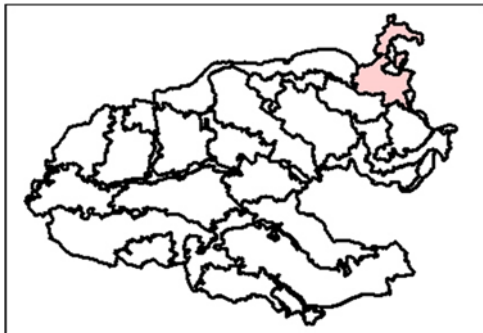
The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century enclosure, with an almost total re-organisation of these fieldscapes.

Significant areas of surviving ancient woodland. There is strong time depth relating to the Roman Period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (7) are related to the long barrow 1 km of East Illsey, and several round barrows, the Iron Age hillfort at Perborough Castle and the Deserted Medieval Village West of Compton Church. The Listed Buildings (69) are related nearly exclusively to the historic centres of the nucleated villages and include churches, manor houses and smaller vernacular dwellings. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 11: Greenhill and Thurle downlands

In the lower and middle valley Neolithic material is common. Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread. The Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch is visible as earthworks and cropmarks. There is significant cropmark evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British activity including potential Roman settlements and industrial sites. Field systems of late Iron Age/Romano-British date survive as earthworks at Streatley Warren and Hollies Wood. Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets. Large areas of unmodified 1700 to 1900 enclosure survive across the centre of the area below the downland.



Location – downland on the North-Eastern edge of the AONB to the West and South of the Thames Flood Plain centred on Blewbury

Geology and Topography – The area has a varied geology and includes layers of Chalk, with Upper Greensand to the North. Landform is varied, with rolling uplands to the South and flatter areas to the North.

Landscape Character – A transitional landscape of large intensive arable farmland forming an open and expansive landscape. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 5D: Moreton Plain*

Archaeological Character – Earlier prehistoric archaeology relates to numerous flint scatters and findspots from both the Mesolithic and Neolithic period. Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread many existing only as ring ditches. Part of the Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch is visible as earthworks and cropmarks on aerial photographs. The ditch and bank follow a sinuous and broken course. Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the downland areas, for example near to Aston Tirrold - cropmarks perhaps denoting settlement exist within extensive field systems. In fact field systems are widespread across the area, mapped from aerial photographs; these fields have generally been ascribed a later Iron Age/Romano-British date. Elements of these field systems survived until recently as earthworks but have been levelled due to increased intensity of ploughing.

There is significant cropmark evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British activity including potential Roman settlements and industrial sites. An Iron Age settlement was excavated at Blewburton Hill and the settlement was found to be palisaded. There are Iron Age Hillforts, at Blewburton Hill, and Lowbury Hill.

Possible Medieval and/or Post Medieval ridge and furrow and headlands are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets which have been given a Medieval and Post Medieval date, and pillow mounds. There is a possible Medieval moated site situated to the South of Blewbury Farmhouse.

Later Post Medieval archaeology includes the site of Second World War searchlight battery and a bombing decoy, and a 32-foot high galvanized iron 'Climax-type' tower wind pump of ca 1930 behind Thurle Grange.

There is potential for deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date across the area but preservation may be varied. Deep ploughing is likely to have caused significant truncation of many features. The extent of survival of the cropmark features is unclear as few have been excavated. Many enclosures and linear features remain undated.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Historically this area marked the transition from open chalk downland in the South which provided grazing for Medieval settlements and open fields closer to the settlement utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland. Historically parishes were linear encompassing a strip of downland, open fields and meadows.

This pattern of Medieval land use survived into the 1700s. Two exceptions to this pattern was the far North-West tip of the area where pre 1700 irregular fields were created and the South of the area in the parish of Ashton Tirrold where pre 1700 regular enclosure occurred. The former is characterised by fields created from pre 1700 chalk downland and open fields with the exception of the North East tip of the area and a small area on the South side which have been created by modifying pre 1700 enclosure. The former represents an early privatisation of the Medieval communal farming systems that had supported many parishes. They are typified by irregularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges. The latter, in contrast, are probably later in date and are the result of phases of planned, but undocumented, enclosure. They are typified by regularly-shaped, small to medium sized fields with boundaries composed mainly of hedges.

In the South of the area to the East of Mouslford Downs there was a sinuous blocks of ancient woodland following the edges of the steep sides of the downland.

Between 1700 to 1900 nearly the whole area was subject to parliamentary enclosure except in the parishes of Ashton Tirrold and Mouslford. These created regular uniform fields with new hedged boundaries.

A designed park was created at Rush Court adjacent to the Thames between 1700 and 1900.



Ovenbottom - Historically this area marked the transition from open chalk downland in the South which provided grazing for Medieval settlements and open fields closer to the settlement utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Blewbury – Blewbury is a classic spring line settlement at the foot of the chalk escarpment. This has undergone post 1900 expansion but the historic plan remains. Building materials include thatch, red brick and weatherboard.

© Copyright [Roger Sweet](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Castle Hill Iron Age Hillfort – Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the downland area.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Today, 20th century fields created by reorganising the parliamentary enclosures dominate. These are modern fields formed through the consolidation or amalgamation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. Traces of the earlier field patterns will remain fossilised in these alterations.

These are interspersed with large areas of unmodified 1700 to 1900 enclosure across the centre of the area below the downland.

South of Blewbury large areas of gallops interspersed with regular blocks of woodland plantation have been created. New plantations of sinuous blocks of woodland have also been created in the parishes of Mouslford, Ashton Tirrold and Ashton Upthorpe, and areas of ancient woodland replanted.

Small areas of open chalk downland survive associated with small areas of ancient woodland in the region of Mouslford Downs and areas to the East. The historic park at Rush Court survives, though in some areas its character has been eroded.

Historic Settlement Character – There is one nucleated villages in the centre of the area. Blewbury is a classic springline settlement at the foot of the chalk escarpment. This has undergone post 1900 expansion but the historic plan remains. Building materials include thatch, red brick and weatherboard. Other small patches of 19th and 20th century settlement expansion in the far North of the area relates to settlement which is outside of the AONB

Historic Farmstead Character – There are isolated farmsteads distributed across the southern half of the area. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- In the lower and middle valley Neolithic material is common.
- Earlier Bronze Age round barrows are widespread.
- Late Bronze Age linear earthwork Grim's Ditch is visible as earthworks and cropmarks.
- Later prehistoric activity is widespread across the downland areas.
- There is significant cropmark evidence of Iron Age and Romano- British activity including potential Roman settlements and industrial sites. Field systems of late Iron Age/Romano-British date survive as earthworks at Streatley Warren and Hollies Wood.
- Later Medieval activity on the downland areas includes extensive areas of lynchets.
- Medieval moated site.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites in this area have less illustrative value than other downland areas as the majority of sites are only known from cropmarks. There are Iron Age Hillforts, at Blewburton Hill, Lowbury Hill and Sinodun Hill which have a strong illustrative value.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the village of Blewbury.

Buildings associated with historic park at Rush court

Buildings associated with pre-1750 farmstead buildings. Survival of Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date of particular importance.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Aesthetic interest of surviving evidence for historic parks and garden at Rush Court.

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

The Ridgeway runs through this area- the track is of possible prehistoric origin and has been formalised as a National Trail.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent, dominated by 20th century fields created by reorganising the parliamentary enclosures. These are interspersed with large areas of unmodified 1700 to 1900 enclosure across the centre of the area below the downland. This has preserved some of the grain of the historic landscape

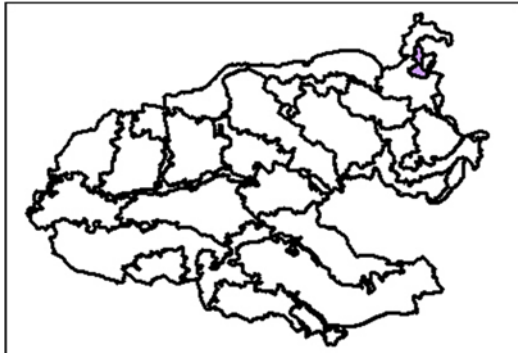
Small areas of open chalk downland survive associated with small areas of ancient woodland in the region of Mouslford Downs and areas to the East. These are an important survival.

There is strong time depth relating to the Iron Age and Medieval period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (12) are dominated by Bronze Age round barrows and Iron Age hillforts. The Listed Buildings (108) are related to the nuclei of the historic settlements. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 12: Thame Valley North

The area is notable for its Roman archaeology including cropmarks of a potential Roman road, enclosures and a possible 4th century Roman Settlement. Small areas of enclosure remain in the South of the area associated with surviving pre 1700 enclosed meadows. These are an important historical survival of earlier pre 1700 land use.



Location – Small area of Thames Floodplain to the East of Wallingford Geology and Topography – The valley floor is cut into the chalk and overlain by alluvium and gravels. It is a flat low lying landscape .

Landscape Character – Distinct low lying area crossed by numerous watercourses and dominated by arable fields. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 6D: Thames Floodplain*

Archaeological Character – Prehistoric archaeology is limited to stray finds including Bronze Age flint tools and an arrowhead.

The area is notable for its Roman archaeology including cropmarks of a potential Roman road, enclosures and a possible 4th century Roman settlement.

The church at Aston Tirrold has a Saxon origin with 12th and 13th century fabric. There is also a possible early Medieval linear bank. Other later Medieval features include a moat around Lollington Farm, Cholsey and the manor house of South Moreton, now a farmhouse which appears to date from the late 15th or early 16th century. It has a central hall and two wings but has been much altered. A moat surrounds the site. The manor house of Bray, South Moreton, is now converted into two cottages. The central hall of Tudor date remains, other parts are of the 17th century. There is also a motte castle.

There is archaeological potential for additional Roman sites and evidence of the Early Medieval origins of the historic settlements at their historic cores.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Formerly in the Medieval period this area was dominated by open marshland which was part of the Thames floodplain with the nucleated historic settlement on higher ground. With the exception of one small area of pre 1700 enclosed meadow to the South of the area the marshland was enclosed through parliamentary enclosure between 1750 and 1850, and regular fields with drainage channels created. This transformed the landscape into an agriculturally productive landscape.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Today the area is dominated by reorganised and amalgamated fields which have modified the former areas of parliamentary enclosure. These are modern fields formed through the consolidation or amalgamation of existing, historic, enclosures

into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. Traces of the earlier field patterns will remain fossilised in these alterations. Areas of parliamentary enclosure remain in the South of the area associated with surviving pre 1700 enclosed meadows.



Ashton Tirrold Formerly in the Medieval period this area was dominated by open marshland which was part of the Thames floodplain with the nucleated historic settlement on higher ground. The marshland was enclosed through parliamentary enclosure between 1750 and 1850, and regular fields with drainage channels created.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



High Street, North Moreton – North and South Moreton are located on pockets of higher ground and have a loosely nucleated form.

© Copyright [Colin Bates](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Pasture, North Moreton – Today the area is dominated by reorganised and amalgamated fields which have modified the former areas of parliamentary enclosure.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Settlement Character – Pre 1800 nucleated settlements is found at Ashton Upthorpe/ Ashton Tirrod which is located at the spring line at the bottom of the chalk escarpment. North and South Moreton are located on pockets of higher ground and have a loosely nucleated form. These have undergone post 1900 expansion but the historic plan remains. Building materials include thatch, red brick and weatherboard.

Historic Farmstead Character – There are very few isolated farms. Loose courtyard farms, mostly concentrated in villages, with often large barns, stables, granaries and open-fronted shelter sheds ranged around a yard are typical of the area. Often shelter sheds were attached to barns at right angles. Farm houses usually form one side of the yard, but detached from agricultural buildings, or lie close to, but away from the yard. Regular, planned courtyard farmsteads are also found.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- The area is notable for its Roman archaeology including cropmarks of a potential Roman road, enclosures and a possible 4th century Roman Settlement.
- Evidence of the Early Medieval origins of the historic settlements.
- Medieval features includes a moat around Lollington Farm, Cholsey and the manor house of South Moreton.

Historic Interest

Where areas of pre 1700 enclosure survive these have a strong illustrative interest as they can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

The church at Aston Tirrold has a Saxon origin with 12th and 13th century fabric

Historic buildings associated with spring line settlements hold important evidence of the development of settlement in the area

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Strong aesthetic value to the areas of formerly open marshland

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century enclosure, created through reorganised and amalgamated fields which have modified the former areas of parliamentary enclosure.

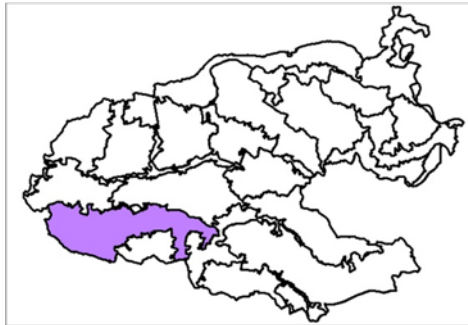
Small areas of enclosure remain in the South of the area associated with surviving pre 1700 enclosed meadows. These are an important historical survival of earlier pre 1700 land use.

There is strong time depth relating to the Roman period.

Designated Heritage – The single Scheduled Monument (1) is a motte castle. The Listed Buildings (112) are related to the nuclei of the historic settlements. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 13: Pewsey Vale

An important conglomeration of prehistoric sites which include extensive Mesolithic flint scatters at Free Warren Farm; numerous Neolithic flint scatters; the Neolithic Marden Henge and associated sites. Significant areas of 1700-1900 enclosure survive to the West of the area, combined with relict water meadow. These are an important historical survival representing evidence of land use in this period and of the Sheep-Corn system of agriculture. There is a varied and rich evidence base of architectural heritage dating to the Medieval period onwards.



Location – Vale landscape running West from Devizes bounded by the chalk escarpments of the Downs South of Marlborough to the North and Salisbury Plain to the South.

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly Greensand the vale is broad low lying almost flat. The vale forms a vast open level space

Landscape Character – The broad low lying Upper Greensand vale forms a vast open level space with varied

land cover. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 6A: Vale of Pewsey.*

Archaeological Character – The density of recorded archaeology in this area is much less than in the downland areas to the North partly due to the more extensive exploitation of this area in the Post Medieval period obscuring archaeological traces and partly due to lack of exploitation in earlier periods. Prehistoric archaeology was once presumed to be limited compared to the chalk downland areas to the North and South but new research has shown that it was exploited much more intensively than was previously thought. Important sites include extensive Mesolithic flint scatters at Free Warren Farm, numerous Neolithic flint scatters, Marden Henge and associated sites, and Henge to the North West of Wilsford House. There are several extant Bronze Age round barrows, plus ploughed out ring ditches. Dated later Bronze Age and Iron Age sites are infrequent though there is a density of undated field systems, many potentially prehistoric; these are located on the steep escarpment sides on the North and South side of the vale and on the sides of chalk outcrops.

Roman activity is limited although there is an identified Roman enclosure at Ingham Down and Roman kilns at Broomsgrove Farm. Most of the dated recorded archaeological traces relate to Medieval exploitation, including the Medieval deer parks at East Gratton, and Suddon Farm, fishponds on Burbage common, and rabbit warrens (pillow mounds). Traces of abandoned or former Medieval villages and settlements are common. Existing villages in the vale also have traces of their Medieval origins, and possibly with Early Medieval origin as well. There are a number of undated rectangular and circular enclosures and ditches, many identified on aerial photographs. Recorded Post Medieval archaeology is scarce relating to traces of relict water meadows and the World War II airfield at Manningford and Alton Barnes, and the Kennet and Avon Canal.

There is potential for new prehistoric sites to be uncovered but preservation may be varied. The origin of the relict field systems is not properly understood and many enclosures with a tentative prehistoric date remain undated. Occupation deposits from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside of settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area. The 19th century farms are important features but little is known about the nature of their historic building stock.



Ploughed field near Beechingstoke - The 20th century fieldscapes have been created through an even mixture of amalgamation or reorganisation of earlier field patterns.

© Copyright [Rog Frost](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Kennet and Avon Canal and Vale near All Cannings – The most noticeable Post Medieval historic landscape component is the creation of a historic transportation corridor in the 19th century firstly by the canal and second by the railway, which both run East to West across the vale

© Copyright [Russel Wills](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



View from Martinsell Hill across the Pewsey Vale – The present day landscape has a very heterogeneous feel forming a mosaic of unaltered pre 1700, and 1700 to 1900 fields surrounded by areas of 20th century enclosure. The survival of pre 1700 fieldscapes becomes denser in the East of the area.

© Copyright [Brian Robert Marshall](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The western side of the area was dominated by a Medieval pattern of nucleated Medieval settlements surrounded by open fields which exploited the open grazing of downland areas to the South and North. These were enclosed pre 1700 at the same time as the eastern side. However the East of the area is defined by Medieval nucleated regular row settlements and does not have the same discernible pattern of open fields. Areas of pre 1700 irregular fields are concentrated between Bishop Cannings and Etchilhampton in the East of the area. These are irregularly-shaped fields and slotted into the framework of the landscape established by roads and tracks and open field strips, suggesting that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. They are interspersed evenly with regular pre 1700 enclosure across the rest of the area. These regular shaped fields were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in common fields but obscure these earlier traces much more effectively. There are also small strips of enclosed meadows along the sides of the numerous watercourses which run East to West across the area to join the infant River Avon, which runs through Pewsey, or the river Bourne to the far East, these were enclosed into pasture fields post 1700.

Large areas of parliamentary and post parliamentary enclosure were created across the West of the area enclosing areas of open fields which had not already been enclosed prior to 1750, the main area of parliamentary enclosure stretched from All Cannings to Marden with areas of post-parliamentary enclosure around Stanton St Bernard and Alton Barnes and South West of Coate. 1700 to 1900 enclosures are much less common to the East of the area due to the domination of pre 1700 enclosure. Water meadows were created along the River Avon and its tributaries but these were less dominating than in the narrow valley of the River Kennet to the North.

Ancient woodland was scarce with small areas around the edge of watercourses with the exception of Southgrove Copse to the North of river Bourne.

Designed pre 1700 to 1900 parkland was common to the centre and South West of the area including around the Manor House at Manningford Bruce, Wilcot Manor, Stowell Park, Rushall, Marden Manor and Conock Manor.

Present day Historic Landscape Character – The present day character has a very mixed character forming a mosaic of unaltered pre 1700, and 1700 to 1900 fields surrounded by areas of 20th century enclosure. The survival of intact pre 1700 fieldscapes becomes denser in the East of the area. Some large blocks of 1700-1900 enclosure survive to the West of the area. The fields created by this process are usually regular in shape with straight boundaries and the boundaries are usually hedged and/or fenced. Water meadows form relict landscapes in the water channel bottoms. They utilised sophisticated water management systems (leats, sluices, ridges) to flood meadows, evidence of which survives today. The 20th century fieldscapes have been created through an even mixture of amalgamation or reorganisation of earlier field patterns. Amalgamated fields are created through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into larger holdings while reorganised fields are formed through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields while amalgamation is more likely to obscure previous traces. Small areas of new 20th century fields were created replacing early water meadows and paddocks have been created on the edge of settlements.

The area to the West and North of Pewsey is more wooded in character with regular post 1900 plantations and post 1600 to 1900 irregular deciduous woodlands being a much more noticeable component of the landscape than the areas to the East or West.

Small areas of open chalk downland survive on the tops of hill which form outcrops of the downland areas to the North.

The historic parklands preserve their historic characteristics.

The most noticeable Post Medieval historic landscape component is the creation of an historic transportation corridor in the 19th century firstly by the canal and secondly by the railway, which both run East to West across the vale. The railway takes a central more direct route while the canal meanders to the North of the area. These are much more noticeable than the road network which maintains its pre 1800 pattern.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is formed of nucleated settlements to the West surrounded by isolated historic farms. These agglomerated settlements are grouped around a single point, often a church or manor house. In contrast to the East of Pewsey pre 1700 linear regular row settlements predominate surrounded again by isolated historic farms. These have developed arranged contiguously along a road. The plots can be of regular width. There are some exceptions to this rule for example the irregular row settlement which is more dispersed in character which developed around Manningford Bruce and Manningford Abbot.

The largest settlement today is Pewsey which has seen considerable growth around the historic core in the 20th century including the creation of light industrial areas and civic areas, compared to the other settlements in the vale. Individual new houses and farms have also spread from Pewsey into the surrounding countryside. The other village which has seen a great deal of infilling, masking its original linear plan is Burbage. Most other villages have seen some expansion in the 20th century but not to the detriment of the historic plan form.

Historic Farmstead Character – The pattern of historic farms is of clusters of farms to the West away from villages these become smaller and more dispersed to the West. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Important prehistoric sites include extensive Mesolithic flint scatters at Free Warren Farm, numerous Neolithic flint scatters, Marden Henge and associated sites, and Hange to the North West of Wilsford House. There are several extant Bronze Age round barrows.

- There is a notable concentration of Iron Age hillforts.
- Roman activity is limited although there is an identified Roman enclosure at Ingham Down and Roman kilns at Broomsgrove Farm .
- Traces of abandoned or former Medieval villages and settlements are common. Existing villages in the vale also have traces of their Medieval origins, and possibly with Early Medieval origin as well.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory at Marsden henge have a strong illustrative interest.

Surviving areas of 1700 to 1900 fields can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use and in particular the sheep corn system of agriculture.

Historic Parks and Gardens at Conock Manor and Oare House have both strong illustrative and associative value.

Medieval archaeology combined with surviving buildings also has a strong illustrative value.

Architectural Interest

Important cluster of historic buildings associated with the nucleated settlements to the West surrounded by isolated historic farms and linear settlements to the East of Pewsey.

Surviving pre 1750 farm buildings including timber frame barns.

Buildings associated with historic parks at Conock Manor and Oare House.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Conock Manor and Oare House has aesthetic value.

The canal corridor has a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely mixed forming a mosaic of unaltered pre 1700, and 1700 to 1900 fields surrounded by areas of 20th century enclosure.

Significant areas of large blocks of 1700-1900 enclosure survive to the West of the area, combined with relict water meadows these are an important historical survival representing evidence of land use in this period.

The historic parklands preserve their historic characteristics.

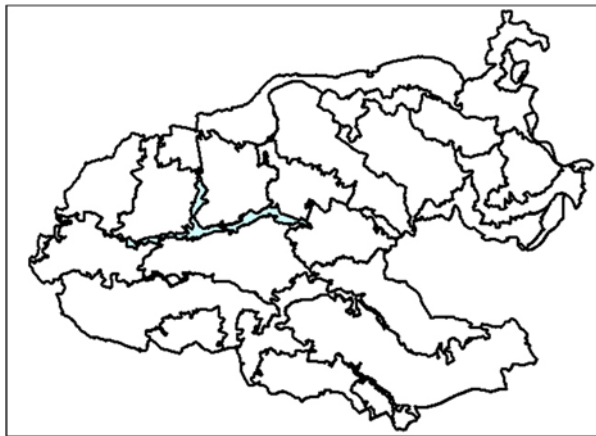
Dominant historic transportation corridor created in the 19th century.

There is strong time depth relating to the Medieval period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (8) include Marden Henge, Bronze Age round barrows, several deserted Medieval villages. The Listed Buildings (645) are spread throughout the vale and relate to the core of the historic settlements mentioned above, the historic farmsteads, the designed landscapes, and the Kennet and Avon Canal. There are 2 parklands on the register of parks and gardens at Conock Manor, where the garden and parkland date to c. 1820, and Oare House where formal gardens laid were out between 1921 and 1925 by Sir Bertram Clough Williams-Ellis within 18th century walled gardens.

Area 14: Upper Kennet Valley

The upper reaches of the Kennet valley are dominated by the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments which are within the Avebury World Heritage Site including Silbury Hill and the West Kennet Palisade Enclosures. There is also Neolithic evidence at the head of the Lambourn Valley. There is also a notable presence of Roman archaeology; this includes a Roman settlement at the base of Silbury Hill, Roman roads, and the Roman Town at Cunetio (Mildenhall). Traces of early and late Medieval archaeology dominate due to the intense exploitation of the valley resources. Evidence for early Medieval settlement in the valley bottom. Small slivers of open land surviving along the South-Eastern valley edge. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former open pre 1600 land use. These exist alongside surviving areas of 1700 landscapes, and later 1700-1900 relict water meadow landscapes.



Location – Valley containing the River Kennet flowing from Beckhampton to the East through Marlborough and Hungerford towards Newbury, includes the tributary of the Ogbourne flowing from the North and joining the Kennet at Marlborough.

Geology and Topography – There are alluvium and gravel deposits on the valley floor. The valley cuts through the chalk upland with a smooth valley form, relatively steep sides and a narrow valley floor.

Landscape Character – Chalk valley with steep sides and narrow floor dominated by pasture *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 7a: Kennet Valley.*

Archaeological Character – The upper reaches of the valley are dominated by the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments which are within the Avebury World Heritage Site. This includes the major Neolithic mound at Silbury Hill, standing 31 metres high, the West Kennet palisaded enclosure, sub-circular enclosures which cross the current course of the River and the Sanctuary, an excavated timber circle at the end of the West Kennet Avenue.

There is a notable presence of Roman archaeology; this includes a Roman settlement at the base of Silbury Hill, Roman roads, and the Roman Town at Cunetio (Mildenhall). The town lies at the point where at least six main Roman roads converge to cross the River Kennet. The town plan has been revealed by evidence from aerial photographs and consists of a street system with several stone buildings identifiable, including a large complex surrounding a courtyard within the centre of the settlement. The town was enclosed by two phases of defences, with stone defences replacing the earlier phase in the 4th century. There is also a high status Roman villa at Littlecote. This was first discovered in 1730 when the Orpheus Mosaic and a coin hoard, supposedly containing coins of Vespasian (AD 69-79), was found. The site was rediscovered and excavated from 1978. These sites are related to the extensive Roman field systems and settlements on the downland to the North.

The rest of valley is dominated by early and late Medieval archaeology due to the intense exploitation of the valley resources. This includes traces of Medieval settlements which in fills the existing settlement pattern for example at Littlcote, a Medieval hunting lodge and deer park again at Littlecote and also at Ramsbury. Both Marlborough and Overton have known Saxon origins. Marlborough was an important Medieval settlement with a motte and bailey castle established on the pre-existing Marlborough mound, and the town was granted a charter in 1204. A small priory was also established to the South of the town and was excavated in the 20th century. Post Medieval archaeology is dominated by the relict t water meadows which were established all along the river bottom.



The A4 bypassing Silbury Hill - The upper reaches of the valley are dominated by the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments which are within the Avebury World Heritage Site. This includes the major Neolithic mound at Silbury Hill. Another notable feature is the historic coach road of the modern A4 which runs along the valley bottom.

© Copyright [Jim Champion](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Marlborough High Street – This is a mixed area of both nucleated and nucleated regular row Medieval valley floor settlements punctuated by the Medieval planned town of Marlborough. Here the houses were arranged along the main road with regular Burbage plots in behind.

© Copyright [Ron Strutt](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Footbridge over the Kennet near Knighton – Extensive open meadows probably existed on the valley floor and were used as common grazing but these have been obscured by water meadows. Small areas of marsh existed on the eastern edge of the area. Small areas of post 1700 woodland have naturally occurred on the eastern edge of the area as meadows have been taken out of use. © Copyright [Des](#)

[Blenkinsopp](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This is a mixed area of both nucleated and nucleated regular row Medieval valley floor settlements, surrounded by open fields with riverside meadow grazing, and of smaller settlements and scattered farms, early enclosures and woodland. Open field systems are documented as having operated on the lower slopes of the southern side of the valley and along the tributary of the Og. Extensive open meadows probably existed on the valley floor and were used as common grazing but these have been obscured by water meadows. Small areas of marsh existed on the eastern edge of the area.

The areas of open land were enclosed prior to 1700. The upper reaches of the Og valley, the area to the South of Ramsbury, to the South of Axford, to the North of Marlborough were all subject to irregular pre 1700 enclosure. These early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a network of roads and tracks either side of the river and leading to downland areas. The upper reaches of the Kennet valley and the lower reaches of the Og were covered at the same time by enclosed meadows. These are characterised by sinuous fields on low-lying ground in valley bottoms, usually next to the course of a river or stream. These were probably originally for hay cultivation but are now mainly grazing and are likely to be Medieval or early Post Medieval in origin. Like early enclosures, they represent an important component of the Medieval and early Post Medieval farming landscape. This pattern was infilled with areas of regular pre 1700 enclosure. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields. About half of these fields have been modified in the 20th century although the majority of these enclosures have been altered in the Og valley.

There were also several deer parks, at Ramsbury and Littlecote dating to before 1700 which were subsequently transformed into large designed landscapes. A smaller post 1700 designed landscape was also created around Manton manor. In the period 1700 to 1900 expansive areas of water meadows were created in the bottom of the river valley. These utilised sophisticated water management systems (leats, sluices, ridges) to flood meadows during winter months to prevent the ground freezing and so ensure an early growth of spring grass for grazing animals (mostly sheep and lambs). The meadows formed a central feature of the local sheep/corn system of agriculture and are therefore intimately related to the downland areas to the North. They are comprised of enclosed fields with channels and sluices to ensure stable water flow over the meadow. These have been enclosed in the 20th century.

Areas of ancient woodland were limited although trees lining the banks of the Kennet and may be of considerable antiquity.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Large areas of pre 1700 enclosure described above survive in the landscape today. However, in the Og valley and upper reaches of the Kennet reorganised 20th century fields were created. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields. In the area to the East of Marlborough some amalgamated 20th century fields were created especially adjacent to the water meadows in the centre of the valley. These enclosures are created by the removal of boundaries between fields – many are in use as pasture and remain as small to

medium sized units following boundary removal. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields.

The water meadows themselves went out of use in the 20th century and were subsequently enclosed. Despite their relict nature the water meadow systems are not entirely destroyed and there are many instances where earthworks of the system (channels and ridges) still survive in the midst of these new fields.

The large areas of designed landscape survive and there are also small slivers of open land surviving along the south-eastern valley edge.

Small areas of post 1700 woodland have naturally occurred on the eastern edge of the area as meadows have been taken out of use.

The centre of the area is dominated by the expansion of settlement around Marlborough. This includes the development of the grounds of Marlborough College and the creation of a golf course on part of Marlborough common.

Another notable feature is the historic coach road route of the A4 which runs along the valley bottom.

Historic Settlement Character – This is a mixed area of both nucleated and nucleated regular row Medieval valley floor settlements punctuated by the Medieval planned town of Marlborough. Here the houses were arranged along the main road with regular Burbage plots in behind. These settlements are infilled by small farms and hamlets along the length of the valley.

Marlborough has seen considerable settlement growth infilling the junction between the river Og and the Kennet and including 1700 to 1900 settlement to the North-West, pre war settlement expansion to the North and post war expansion to the South and West. Most of the other nucleated villages in the valley have seen some settlement expansion in the 20th century with many settlements doubling in size in some instances; this is creating a new linear settlement pattern spreading along the Kennet valley.

Historic Farmstead Character – Historic farmsteads were arranged on the edge of historic settlements and hamlets. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Upper reaches of the valley are dominated by the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments which are within the Avebury World Heritage Site including Silbury Hill and

West Kennet Palisade Enclosures. There is also Neolithic evidence at the head of the Lambourn Valley

- Notable presence of Roman archaeology; this includes a Roman settlement at the base of Silbury Hill, Roman roads, and the Roman Town at Cunetio (Mildenhall).
- Dominant traces of early and late Medieval archaeology due to the intense exploitation of the valley resources. Evidence for early Medieval settlement in the valley bottom.

Historic Interest

Many prehistoric sites survive as earthworks and in particular Silbury Hill have a very strong illustrative value as they are such dominant features. Early Medieval and later earthworks in the valley bottom also survive.

Surviving areas of open land, earlier enclosures and water meadows can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use. Earlier Medieval activity can also be illustrated through surviving buildings and earthworks.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with Medieval valley floor settlements and the Medieval planned town of Marlborough. Vernacular chalk cob buildings. Pre-1750 farmstead buildings and in particular large timber-frame barns where these survive

Buildings associated with historic parks at Ramsbury Manor and Marlborough College

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Historic parks and gardens at Ramsbury Manor and Marlborough College have an important aesthetic interest.

The prehistoric monuments of the Avebury WHS have been the focus of interest of many artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely mixed but dominated by survival of pre 1700 landscapes, and later 1700-1900 relict water meadow landscape.

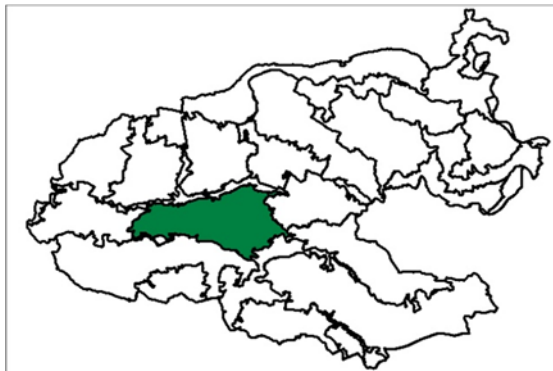
Small slivers of open land survive along the South-Eastern valley edge. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former open pre 1600 land use.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particularly rich, Roman archaeology is also present but the majority of the valley is dominated by early and late Medieval archaeology.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (13) relate to the Avebury World heritage sites, the Roman villa at Littlecote, the Roman settlement at Cunetio and Medieval archaeology relating to the settlement of Marlborough. The Listed Buildings (506) are concentrated around the historic core of Marlborough and the core of the other historic settlements in the valley. There are 2 parklands on the register of parks and gardens. The landscape park to Ramsbury Manor which was originally a Medieval deer park, landscaped during the late 17th century and re-landscaped in the late 18th century, and the remains of a late 17th/early 18th century garden to Marlborough Castle House, which now form parts of the grounds of Marlborough College. The Western part of area is within the Avebury World Heritage site and the area beyond that falls within the setting of the World Heritage site.

Area 15: Savernake Forest and West Woods

A rich patina of layers of human land use. There are a considerable number of later prehistoric sites including enclosures, linear boundaries and field systems which have been recorded throughout Savernake Forest and the immediate area. Two major Iron Age centres are known. In the Roman period the Forest formed the heart of the Savernake Ware Roman pottery industry and there is evidence for two Roman Villa Sites. Early Medieval archaeology is dominated by the Wansdyke. Significant areas of ancient woodland survive. These are an important historical survivals representing the core of the Medieval hunting area, which were subsequently shaped by the Great Enclosure of the 17th century.



Location – Area in the Western part of the AONB, comprising the area of West Woods and Savernake Forest to the South of Marlborough. It includes the River Dun and the Kennet and Avon Canal to the West. The boundary is defined to the North by the Kennet Valley and to the South by the Pewsey Vale.

Geology and Topography – The plateau is formed almost entirely of Upper Chalk overlain with clay-with-flint. Further to the East, clays sand and gravels are found. The plateau dips to the East. The

landform is of rolling hills dissected by small valleys.

Landscape Character – The area is distinguished by its dense woodland character and with its relationship to the former Medieval Royal Forest of Savernake. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type 3A: Savernake Plateau.*

Archaeological Character – The earliest archaeological evidence is the recovery of a Palaeolithic hand axe on the North side of Granham Hill to the South of Marlborough. The cropmark remains of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Crofton were discovered in 2001 as part of an English Heritage survey. Now entirely plough-levelled it is only visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs. A Neolithic long barrow was excavated above West Overton in the West of the area and one is known within West Woods.

Though sparse and few in number, the potential Bronze Age barrows appear either to be situated in prominent locations on the northern and southern edges of the Savernake massif or at the head of dry valleys. Several other cropmarks of ring ditches, also presumed to be Bronze Age round barrows, are known.

Immediately to the West of Crofton aerial photographs have revealed the cropmarks of a probable later prehistoric farmstead. A considerable number of potentially later prehistoric sites including enclosures, linear boundaries and field systems have been recorded throughout Savernake Forest and the immediate area. Most of the sites identified outside the woodlands had been plough-levelled and only visible as cropmarks. The largest area of probable prehistoric fields recorded during

the NMP survey was seen to the South of the forest around Tottenham Park. Several prehistoric earthen banks and ditches are known to cross the area as well as dykes crossing the valleys.

There are two major Iron Age centres known in the area: Chisbury hillfort, a large multivallate hillfort and the possible late Iron Age oppidum at Forest Hill, possibly the regional capital prior to the Roman conquest large enclosure. The remains of a possible late Iron Age temple enclosure have been identified solely from lidar imagery in a heavily overgrown area within Savernake Forest. Another Iron Age or early Roman shrine has been found to the East of the 2nd -4th century AD villa site at Postern Hill. Another villa site is known at Villa Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn. A Roman road crosses the area cutting the forest.

The forest was the heart of the Savernake Ware Roman pottery industry. This industry almost certainly had its origins in, at the very least, the late Iron Age, and it is possible that some of the enclosures identified within the area were linked in some way to the pottery industry. Within Savernake Forest the combined sources of aerial photographs and lidar derived imagery have recorded a number of enclosures, many surviving as earthworks, probably the remains of small settlements or farmsteads of Iron Age or Roman date

Early Medieval archaeology is dominated by the Wansdyke which dates to the 5th/6th century AD. It consists of a ditch and a running embankment from the ditch spoil, with the ditching facing North. It ran between Savernake Forest, through West Woods, to Morgan's Hill.

The history of the Medieval hunting forest of Savernake has been researched using documentary sources and more recently lidar derived imagery supplied by the Forestry Commission. Prior to the emparkment of Savernake Forest and the creation of the deer park known as Savernake Great Park in 1570s, there were originally five hunting lodges vaguely marked on early maps, their exact locations have been lost. The possible site of only one, the Great Lodge, is thought to have been identified from aerial photographs. Savernake Forest is littered with the traces of numerous hollow ways, many of which are almost certainly the remains of former routes through the forest. There is also evidence for the Great Enclosure of 17th century. Outside the forest Medieval archaeology includes the deserted Medieval Village of Shaw to the West of West Woods, and Medieval field systems to the East of the river Dun.

Post Medieval archaeological sites include the traces of the former Marlborough railway line which runs North, South across the area between West Woods and Savernake Forest.

There is important Second World War archaeology including airfields at Marlborough Landing Ground, Overton Heath and Ramsbury, plus, within the forest, ammunition dumps and gas storage areas.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The far West of the area is dominated by the ancient woodland of West Woods. This was part of the Savernake Forest at its greatest extent but was disafforested by the 13th century. West Woods has been subsequently replanted. It is surrounded by pre 1700 irregular enclosure the southern part of which has been enclosed from heathland. These early enclosures were irregularly-shaped and slotted into the framework of the landscape that had been established by a dense network of deeply incised roads and tracks and open field boundaries. This suggests that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis.

The area between West Woods and Savernake was dominated by pre 1700 regular enclosure which has obscured traces of previous land uses apart from the southern edge of the Kennet Valley where open fields were present. These were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields.



Savernake Forest - The centre of the area is dominated by Savernake Forest which was an established royal hunting forest by the time of the Domesday survey.

© Copyright [Brian Robert Marshall](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Kennet and Avon Canal, Crofton – The Kennet and Avon Canal is an important historic feature running parallel to the river Dun through Great Bedwyn and Little Bedwyn. The area includes the Crofton pumping station for the canal which was built 1802-09. The engines are the earliest steam beam engines still in working order.

© Copyright [David Stowell](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



West Woods long barrow – The far West of the area is dominated by the ancient woodland of West Woods. This was part of the Savernake Forest at its greatest extent but was disafforested by the 13th century. West Woods has been subsequently replanted. It includes monuments including this long barrow and the Wansdyke

© Copyright [Doug Lee](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

The centre of the area is dominated by Savernake Forest which was an established royal hunting forest by the time of the Domesday survey, and in common with other royal forests was managed primarily for hunting of game, particularly deer by the King. Hunting rights and rights to gather tithes were granted by the king to various noblemen or the church, and the forest was used, abused and

trespassed upon by commoners living around the periphery. Commoners and borderers (commoners living adjacent to the forest edge) exercised their rights to graze animals, collect firewood, brushwood and bracken. In 1280 the limits of the forest were much more extensive than now, running from West Overton to Denford beyond Hungerford. By the perambulation recorded in 1301, however, 80% of lands were disafforested, but two of the wooded parcels that remained correspond to what is now Savernake. Whilst there are several thousand ancient oaks and ancient beeches, as well as over a hundred ancient chestnut trees in the present forest, it must be remembered that a Medieval forest was a legal designation rather than a description and did not necessarily imply an abundance of trees. Given the importance of hunting in forests it is likely that in the Medieval period it would have been made up of sporadic copses and coverts for game. It was also likely to have been largely unenclosed until it passed into private hands in the 16th century at which point its deer were not protected by royal forest law and so a park pale was built (completed c 1600), some of which still survives. In the early 18th century there was a vigorous planting regime. 'Capability' Brown laid out the Grand Avenue, in the late 1790s. At its centre Eight Walks radiate out into the surrounding forest.

The land to the East of Savernake is formed by a series of pre 1700 assarts, enclosures created by the clearance of woodlands, small commons and ancient irregular blocks of woodland. These give way to pre 1700 irregular enclosure above the Western side of the Dun valley. The Eastern side of the river is characterised as an area of small irregular ancient woodland, assarts and pre 1700 irregular enclosures. The latter are enclosed from open fields the only such example in the area. In the area surrounding Little Bedwyn and to the South West of Great Bedwyn, on either side of the river, open fields survived until 1700 when they were enclosed by parliamentary enclosure.

Present Day Historic Landscape Trajectory – The West of the area is dominated by the ancient replanted woodland of West Woods surrounded by modified 20th century fields with pre 1700 enclosure surviving to the South.

The area between West woods and Savernake is 20th century modified fields to the South with a greater survival of pre 1700 enclosure to the South dotted with small regular post 1900 enclosures.

The centre of the area is dominated by the ancient replanted woodlands, ancient woodlands and designed landscapes of Savernake. These become increasingly fragmented to the East, interspersed with surviving pre 1700 enclosure and post 1900 fields

The areas to the West of the river Dun is formed of small ancient woodlands and a mixed pattern of pre 1700 enclosure and post 1900 enclosure. On the eastern side of the river **ancient** woodland becomes increasingly frequent surrounded by modified 20th century fields except around the designed landscape 1700 to 1900 AD park at Stype Grange where pre 1700 field patterns survive.

The 20th century fields are as mixture of amalgamated fields and reorganised fields but both types retain evidence of earlier field patterns.

The Kennet and Avon Canal is an important historic feature running parallel to the river Dun through Great Bedwyn and Little Bedwyn. The area includes the Crofton pumping station for the canal which was built 1802-09. The engines are the earliest steam beam engines still in working order. Another iconic feature is the Wilton Windmill this was built in 1821 and is the only complete windmill in Wiltshire.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is mixed. On the Western side of Savernake it consists of deserted Medieval villages and surviving isolated farmsteads. Isolated farmsteads occur directly to the East of Savernake with common edge settlements further South. In contrast nucleated and nucleated regular row settlements occur along the length of the River Dun.

The only notable settlement growth in the 20th century has been around Great Bedwyn. The pattern of historic farmstead has been slightly infilled by further post 1800 farmsteads.

Historic Farmstead Character – Isolated farmsteads are spread across the area, outside the wooded areas. There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Considerable number of potentially later prehistoric sites including enclosures, linear boundaries and field systems have been recorded throughout Savernake Forest and the immediate area
- There is a notable concentration of Iron Age hillforts
- Two major Iron Age centres known in the area. These are Chisbury hillfort, a large multivallate hillfort and the possible late Iron Age oppidum at Forest Hill
- Roman evidence including two villa sites, a potential shrine site and a Roman road
- Heart of the Savernake Ware Roman pottery industry
- Early Medieval archaeology is dominated by the Wansdyke
- Medieval archaeology relating to the use of the Forest
- Evidence for the Great Enclosure of 17th century
- important Second World War archaeology

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks under trees relating to Prehistory and the Roman period so have a strong illustrative interest.

Surviving areas of ancient woodland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Designed landscapes have high illustrative value

Architectural Interest

Many buildings associated with historic post-medieval parks. Low to medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings associated with large timber-frame barns, which where surviving have strong architectural interest.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The two historic Parks have aesthetic value.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is very coherent. The western part of the area is dominated by the ancient replanted woodland of West Woods surrounded by modified 20th century fields with pre 1700 enclosure surviving to the South. The centre of the area is dominated by the ancient replanted woodlands, ancient woodlands and designed landscapes of Savernake

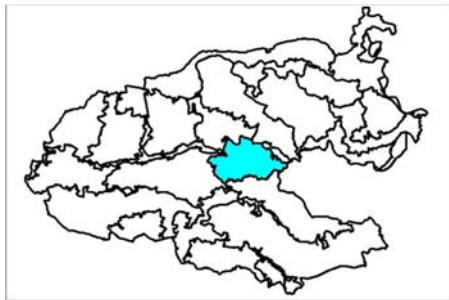
Significant areas of ancient woodland survive. These are an important historical survival representing the core of the Medieval hunting area.

There is strong time depth relating to the later prehistoric period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (39) are related to prehistoric monuments, the Wansdyke and other ditches and Roman sites including villas. The Listed Buildings (144) are related to the edge of Savernake Forest, Tottenham park, milestones on the Marlborough to Hungerford Road or the villages along the river Dun. There are 2 parklands on the register of parks and gardens at Tottenham House at Savernake Forest and Littlecote House. The latter is described in the area 'Upper Kennet Valley'.

Area 16: Middle Kennet Valley

This area contains important early archaeology including a rare example of an *in situ* Palaeolithic flint working site at Avington and nationally significant Mesolithic sites. Many medieval sites including Deer Parks and villages survive as earthworks and have a very strong illustrative value as they are such a dominant and visible feature. Freeman's Marsh represents a surviving example of late medieval land use. There is a nationally significant parkland at Benham Valence, originating as a 14th century deer park which then formed the core of the 18th century landscape park designed by Capability Brown. Industrial archaeology focused on the Kennet and Avon Canal provides important evidence relating to the industrial revolution.



Location – Middle stretch of the Kennet Valley from the Wiltshire border to Newbury, including the tributary valleys and watersheds of the Froxfield Stream and the Shalbourne. The Northern side of the valley is bisected by several dry valleys including a major valley that runs from Hungerford Newtown to Kintbury.

Geology and Topography –The geology is mostly chalk with small sections of Reading Beds at the northern and southern edges. There are extensive gravel deposits on the valley floor, the lower part of the Northern valley side and also in the bases of the dry valley North of Kintbury and the Froxfield Stream and Shalbourne valleys. Valley cuts through the chalk upland with a smooth valley form relatively steep sides and a narrow valley floor.

Landscape Character – Chalk valley with steep sides and narrow floor dominated by pasture *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 7a: Kennet Valley.*

Archaeological Character – HER records are common; they are densely distributed across the valley floor and unevenly distributed across the rest of the area. They are dominated by cropmarks, features known from documentary evidence and buildings. Most known sites are near the junction with the Kennet valley floor and its tributary or on the upper valley sides. The area has been covered by the National Mapping Programme, but little other archaeological work has been carried out.

Prehistoric activity has been documented at several locations. Early activity is attested by finds of Palaeolithic flintwork however, these seem to be from re-deposited material. Probable Mesolithic occupation sites have been located by fieldwalking and form a continuation of the concentration of Mesolithic material from Avington and Hamstead Marshall on the valley floor to the North-West side of the valley. It is unclear whether this reflects the extent of fieldwork or an actual pattern of Mesolithic land-use.

Cropmark ring ditches have been mapped at several locations and most are around the dry valley sides. Two large groups of cropmarked ring ditches, one East of Standen Manor and the other North-East of Anville's Farm, have been interpreted as later Neolithic/early Bronze Age barrow cemeteries.

Definite later prehistoric material is scarce and consists of Iron Age pottery found at Eddington. Areas of cropmark field systems thought to be later prehistoric/Romano-British in date have been mapped across the area. Some Romano-British evidence has been found in the area and consists of probable settlements and the course of a Roman road.

Early Medieval settlement is known to have existed. For example 'Standone' was recorded in Domesday and was thought to be Standen Manor, but it may be referring to North Standen Farm or both. The origin, extent and precise location of the early Medieval settlement are unclear and no deposits of this date have been found.

Hungerford Park was established in the mid-15th century and earthworks on its periphery are thought to be remnants of the Medieval park pale, but have not been investigated in detail. A deer park was referred to at Benham in 1349; its location is unclear, but it is assumed to have formed the core of the 18th landscape park of Benham Valence. Several deserted Medieval village have been identified such as Leverton, North Standon and Calcot.

Several Post Medieval features are recorded in this area. Water meadows, Canal bridges and locks, milestones and toll-roads are an important component of the Post Medieval records.

World War Two evidence relating to the Kennet and Avon stop line exists

There are several areas with clear potential for below-ground deposits of Prehistoric, Romano-British and Medieval date. The potential of the area as a whole is hard to assess on present evidence. Later Prehistoric and Romano-British field systems may continue across the area. Most of the valley sides have been subject to ploughing since the Medieval period and it is possible that this has caused truncation of deposits in places. Below-ground archaeological deposits of early settlement are likely to survive; any such material is crucial in understanding the development of settlement in this area. On the valley floor much of the area has been covered by parkland, a land-use that can mask archaeological features, but could also preserve them. The area has the potential to contain Mesolithic material, but the location and quality of any deposits that may exist is unclear.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This is a mixed area of both nucleated valley floor settlements, surrounded by open fields with riverside meadow grazing, and of smaller settlements and scattered farms, early enclosures and woodland. Open field systems are documented as having operated on the lower slopes of the northern side of the valley and to the South of the river around Hungerford and Kintbury.

Extensive meadows existed on the valley floor and were used as common grazing. It is unclear if the open fields spread into parts of the area of less-nucleated settlement or onto the higher valley slopes. Most of the area was enclosed into fields by the 18th century. Some of this land was probably enclosed on a piecemeal basis as implied by the irregularity of many of the early enclosures.

The majority of early enclosure fields were regularly-shaped, particularly North of the Kennet, suggesting that they may result from agreements between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise holdings in the common fields or grazing.

Most of the common meadows were enclosed into water meadows. This created the largest concentration of water meadows in the AONB and covered most of the valley floor between Chilton and Newbury.

Remaining areas of open fields and most areas of common land were enclosed by Act of Parliament in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and large areas of Parliamentary fields existed around Hungerford, Kintbury, Elcot and Speen. Freeman’s Marsh and Hungerford Common were common land that remained unenclosed into the 20th century.



Farmland, Templeton - The agricultural landscape has been subject to considerable modification. The majority of historic enclosures have been reorganised into modern fields more suited to mechanised agriculture.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for reuse under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Kennet and Avon Canal, Freemans Marsh – The valley forms an important historic transportation corridor with river, canal, railway and historic coach road.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for reuse under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Hungerford – The Medieval market town of Hungerford is the largest settlement within the area. The historic settlement pattern was a mix of nucleated settlements on the valley floor and farms and small hamlets scattered across the upper valley sides.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for reuse under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

The majority of wooded areas were ancient woodland and were located on the upper slopes of the Northern valley side or toward the Wiltshire border. Large blocks of ancient woodland existed between Elcot and Hungerford Newtown and between Littlecote Park and Hungerford. A significant

loss of ancient woodland occurred in the latter half of the 19th century when an extensive area of Winding Wood, next to Clapton, was cleared for fields.

Many extensive parklands, such as Elcot and Benham Valence, were established on the lower slopes of the valley.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The agricultural landscape has been subjected to considerable modification. The majority of historic enclosures have been reorganised into modern fields more suited to mechanised agriculture. Some historic enclosures have escaped reorganisation and examples can be found throughout the area with substantial blocks present between Denford, Hungerford Newtown and Clapton.

Another important effect of agricultural change is the loss of water meadows from the valley floor. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, active management of water meadows for early spring grazing ceased. Much of the area that was water meadows is now in use as pasture fields, but significant areas have also become wooded-over through both colonisation and planting, and some have been converted into arable fields. Woodland and arable uses are leading to the erosion and loss of water meadow features through ploughing and root disturbance.

Conversion of parkland to arable is particularly common and is most visible between Hungerford and Kintbury where large areas of former parks are now fields. Smaller-scale instances of clearance of ancient woodland for farming also exist. Large areas of paddocks have been created around the studs at Templeton and Marsh Benham.

Tree-cover has seen significant change with clearance of ancient woodlands and new woods and plantations created on previously unwooded areas. Although only a few ancient woods were cleared for agriculture, others have been cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species.

Large areas of water meadow have become secondary woodlands through regeneration and scrubbing-over between Hungerford and Kintbury. Woodland plantations of various sizes have been created across the area. Most plantations are rectilinear in shape; this is particularly visible between North Standen Farm and Hungerford.

Historic Settlement Character – The Medieval market town of Hungerford is the largest settlement within the area and it is sited at a crossing point on the Kennet near its confluence with the Dun. The historic settlement pattern was a mix of nucleated settlements on the valley floor and farms and small hamlets scattered across the upper valley sides. Nucleated settlements, such as Kintbury and Avington, were sited just off the floodplain and seem to be spaced at fairly regular intervals along the valley. There was a mix of hamlets and large farms on the upper valley sides. Some hamlets are the centres of manors and seem to be shrunken Medieval settlements, such as Elcot, whilst others may be secondary or subsidiary settlements, such as Hungerford Newtown.

Settlement growth is focussed around Hungerford and Kintbury with only small growth around other historic settlement nuclei in the area. Both Hungerford and Kintbury have expanded since the 1970s with the additions of several large housing estates around the fringes of both settlements.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were fairly evenly distributed across the upper slopes of the valley and generally lie in areas of irregular early enclosure. Most farms are named after nearby places or topographic features. There is a low to medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Early activity is attested by finds of Palaeolithic flintwork, including a rare example of an *in situ* flint working site at Avington.
- Nationally significant Mesolithic sites have been found along the Kennet Valley; significant potential exists for further evidence.
- A possible Roman villa exists at Kintbury, following the discovery of a bath house in the 1950s
- Early Medieval and Medieval settlement at Eddington, Standen Manor and North Standen Farm
- Hungerford Medieval deer park.
- Deserted Medieval villages at Leverton and Calcot.
- 18th and 19th century transportation archaeology focused on the Kennet & Avon Canal.
- Nationally significant parkland at Benham Valence, originating as a 14th century deer park which then formed the core of the 18th century landscape park designed by Capability Brown
- 20th century military archaeology, in particular WWII defensive structures along the Canal.

Historic Interest

Many medieval sites including Deer Parks and villages survive as earthworks and have a very strong illustrative value as they are such a dominant and visible feature.

Surviving areas of earlier enclosures and water meadows can be used to illustrate early pre-modern land use. Earlier Medieval activity can also be illustrated through surviving buildings and earthworks.

Kennet & Avon Canal and associated structures such as locks etc. have good survival, as well as WWII defensive structures associated with this transportation route

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associate with Medieval valley floor settlements and the Medieval Hungerford. Pre-1750 farmstead buildings and in particular large timber-frame barns were these survive.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The Kennet & Avon canal may have some aesthetic or artistic interest

The Capability Brown designed landscape park at Benham Valence will have aesthetic or artistic interest.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is dominated by modern field reorganisation.

Some historic enclosures have escaped reorganisation and examples can be found throughout the area. There are also some surviving areas of relict water meadows. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former open pre 1900 land use.

Freeman's Marsh represents a surviving example of late Medieval land use

Many parklands have also been converted to arable.

There is strong time depth relating to early and late Medieval archaeology.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (1) is a Bronze Age round barrow at Hungerford Newton. The Listed Buildings (192) are related to the historic high street in Hungerford, the historic transportation links, designed landscapes and historic farmsteads scattered on the valley sides. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 17: Stockcross - Wickham Heath

Most notable archaeology features relate to the Roman period; for example surviving earthwork sections of Ermin Street. There is good archaeological potential for archaeology to survive within the woodland plantations and heathland which cover this area. Surviving areas of unmodified enclosures can be used to illustrate early pre 1800 land use.



Location – This is the South-Eastern tip of the Lambourn – Kennet watershed. It is a small, visually and geographically distinct area formed by a wooded gravel ridge between the Winterbourne Valley and the Lambourn Valley

Geology and Topography – This area has a different geology to neighbouring areas and is comprised of Reading Beds overlain on the ridge top by London Clay and capped by plateau gravels. The topography

is a broad flat topped plateau

Landscape Character – Densely wooded gravel ridge forming a broad flat topped plateau. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 8c: Wickham Wooded Heath.

Archaeological Character – Archaeological information in this area is limited due to the 19th and 20th plantations which now cover the areas of extensive heathland common. The most notable archaeology features relate to the Roman period, the Ermine Street crosses the North East side of the area and evidence for Roman occupation has been uncovered from the area around Wickham Green.

There is good archaeological potential for archaeology to survive within the woodland plantations which cover this area.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – There was formerly a mix of early enclosures, extensive commons, small areas of woodland, dispersed settlement and some small to medium sized parks. This was a largely open landscape into the 18th century, centred on an extensive heathland common, Wickham Heath, which occupied most of the ridge. Some early enclosure fields were present around the fringes of the common; most were regularly-shaped but some irregular enclosures existed at Wickham, Stockcross and Hoe Benham. A large area of regularly-shaped early enclosures was present between Hoe Benham and Stockcross. The regularity of these fields suggests that this was a part of the common that was enclosed by agreement between commoners and local farmers. The majority of this common was enclosed into fields in the early 19th century by a series of Acts of

Parliament with only a small portion around Sole Common remaining unenclosed into the 20th century.

Some areas of woodland existed around the fringes of the common. These areas were a mix of ancient and other old woods that were mostly small in extent and coppiced.



Stockcross Woodlands - The most substantial change in this area is the huge growth in tree-cover.

© Copyright [Chris Shaw](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Pasture and Houses at Wickham – This was a largely open landscape into the 18th century, centred on an extensive heathland common, Wickham Heath, which occupied most of the ridge

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Hoe Benham Farm– The historic settlement pattern was dispersed and settlements were located on the edge of the common heath

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The area has been transformed over the course of the 20th century by agricultural changes and afforestation. The process of rationalising historic enclosures into fields more suited to modern agriculture has taken place widely across this area and most fields in the area have been altered to some extent. An area of largely unmodified historic enclosures remains between Hoe Benham and Ownham. Sole Common has remained unenclosed.

The most substantial change in this area is the huge growth in tree-cover. The majority of Parliamentary enclosures on the heath have been turned into conifer plantations. This process had begun in the 1880s, but most plantations were put in during the mid-20th century. It is likely that the heathland was found to be unsuited to agriculture soon after its enclosure and trees were planted instead as the most productive use of the land. This has altered the feel of landscape from a visually very open one, with views into Kennet and Lambourn valleys and to the high downs, to a very enclosed area with only short horizons due to the density and extent of tree-plantations. Some blocks of secondary woodland have also grown up on previously farmed land around the fringes of the area. Ancient woodlands in the area have had mixed fortunes; one wood was cleared for agriculture and several others have been cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species.

Some parks are present in the area but are mostly small in extent, such as Foley Lodge and Deanwood. A larger landscape park existed at Wormstall, and this seems to have been created or enlarged in the later 18th century. This park may have been laid out over an extant or deserted Medieval settlement as an early church lies within the park extent at Wickham. The parks at Foley Lodge and Deanwood have largely been adapted for recreational use and are now home to the Vineyard hotel at Stockcross and a small golf course. The park at Wormstall has remained largely unaltered.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern was dispersed and settlements were located on the edge of the common heath. Stockcross and Wickham seem to be common-edge settlements but the nature of Hoe Benham is less clear. The settlement at Wickham Heath does not appear to have existed in the 18th century. It was established in the 19th century, perhaps to resettle commoners turned out when the Act to enclose the common was implemented. Stockcross also seems to have grown substantially in the early 19th century and this may also have been due to resettlement of commoners, although it is also an estate village.

Settlement growth has occurred at all historic settlement nuclei, except Hoe Benham, and is characterised by expansion around existing nuclei and infill within the historic core. It has been most significant at Stockcross where new housing and recreation areas have nearly doubled the size of the settlement. The growth of Stockcross has been spurred by it being far enough away from Newbury to feel rural but well-located for transport at the A4 and A34 junction.

Historic Farmstead Character – There is a low-medium concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. These farmsteads are often large with loose courtyard plans or 19th century regular courtyard plans and are associated with the valley bottom. Large timber-frame barns, some of 15th century date but more often of 17th – 18th century date may be typical of many farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Most notable archaeology features relate to the Roman period; for example surviving earthwork sections of Ermin Street have been located and Wickham maybe the location of the Roman town of Spinae.
- Wickham is the suggested site of a Saxon or possibly earlier settlement
- Good archaeological potential for archaeology to survive within the woodland plantations and heathland which cover this area.

Historic Interest

Surviving areas of unmodified enclosures can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

N/A

Aesthetic and artistic interest

N/A

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

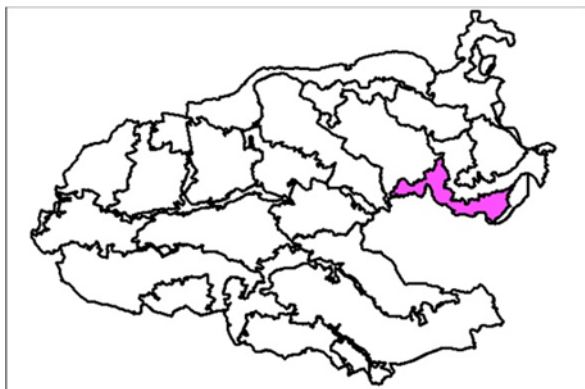
The area has been transformed over the course of the 20th century by agricultural changes and afforestation. The most substantial change in this area is the huge growth in tree-cover.

There is strong time depth relating to the Roman Period.

Designated Heritage – There are 0 Scheduled Monuments. The Listed Buildings (5) are related to the area around Wickham Green and include Wickham House and more modest vernacular buildings. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 18: Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons

Significant concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork survive around Beenham. Evidence for Roman activity relates to a villa at Wellhouse and earthworks representing a probable religious complex in Box Wood. This is one of the most highly modified areas in the Eastern half of the AONB. However Snelsmore Common and Snelsmore East Common have their origins in the late Medieval period and survive as common land today. Parks are a common feature in the area, most being minor designed parklands that had been established in the 19th century.



Location – This is an area of high ground and dry valleys between the high Downs and the Pang and Kennet Valleys. Much of the area is composed of the watershed between the Pang and the Kennet-Lambourn-Winterbourne drainage network.

Geology and Topography – London Clays are found across most of the area and on the highest ground are overlain by Bagshot Beds capped by plateau gravels. Chalk outcrops in the valley bases and is overlain by Reading Beds. On high ground in the North and West Reading Beds are overlain by London Clays capped by plateau gravels. The landform forms a broad lowland plateau.

Landscape Character – Small irregular fields with a dispersed settlement and an intricate network of rural lanes. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 8A: Hermitage Wooded Commons.

Archaeological Character – HER records are unevenly distributed across this area. Part of the area was covered by the Berkshire Downs Survey and the Lower Kennet Valley Survey. The West of the area has been covered by the National Mapping Programme.

Significant concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork and some late Bronze Age pottery were found during fieldwalking around Beenham. Evidence for later prehistoric activity is dominated by the two hillforts in the area. Firstly Grimsbury Castle which survives as substantial earthworks within Grimsbury Wood and secondly Bussock Camp a substantial wooded earthworks within Bussock Wood. Two convergent linear earthworks, one known as the Black Ditch, run across the centre of Snelsmore Common. These are undated and may be prehistoric.

Evidence for Roman activity relates to a villa which was discovered during ploughing immediately East of Wellhouse in the early 19th century. The site was partially excavated and contained remains of walls and mosaics. A significant complex of earthworks and structures exist in Box Wood and Rook's Copse at the northern tip of the area.

The linear earthworks on Snelmore Common have also been interpreted as early Medieval boundary features and are superficially similar to Bury's Bank on Greenham Common. An earthwork enclosure, Cinges Haga, was mentioned in a charter of 951 and is thought to have run across Snelmore East Common.



Curridge - This is one of the most highly modified areas in the Eastern half of the AONB. Most historic enclosures have been rationalised into fields suited to modern mechanised agriculture through boundary removal and reorganisation.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Pasture, Bucklebury – This area seems to have had a Medieval landscape characterised by small fields and dispersed small settlements and farms, inter-related with large commons and woods with a dense network of roads and tracks

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Bucklebury Common – A lack of grazing on remaining commons and some plantations led to many becoming substantially wooded over by the middle of the 20th century.

© Copyright [Sebastian Ballard](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Late Medieval material is mainly represented by features related to the use of Bucklebury and Snelsmore Common. An earthwork bank, thought to be late Medieval in date, can be traced forming the boundary of Snelsmore Common at several places on its western side. A Medieval pillow mound also exists as an earthwork at the common's Northern tip. A deer park, known from documentary references of 1509, is thought to have existed near Snelsmore Common and it has been suggested that the common boundary bank may have formed the pale of this park.

Post Medieval features are represented by standing buildings. Several records of 19th and 20th century industrial features exist in the North of the area. A large brickworks existed on the edge of the area by Little Hungerford, and part of its site was used in the mid-20th century as a military new housing development. Both commons were exploited during the Second World War. The railway line from Newbury to Oxford runs along the edge of the area it is now disused but survives as a tree-covered earthwork.

The location, nature and quality of any below-ground archaeology are unspecified. The origin and nature of the settlement within the area is also unclear. The historic building stock is not extensive and is poorly understood and poorly recorded.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This area seems to have had a Medieval landscape characterised by small fields and dispersed small settlements and farms, inter-related with large commons and woods with a dense network of roads and tracks. The interplay of land-use, roads and the axes of the ridges and valleys created a very irregular grain to the landscape.

Much of the area was enclosed into small irregularly-shaped fields suggesting that they were created by numerous individual farmers, perhaps over a long period of time. Many assarts existed on the fringes of larger commons and some woods, and it is possible that some fields identified as early enclosures were assarts. Three blocks of regularly-shaped fields existed in the area: between Snelsmore Common and Bussock; around Bradfield South End; and between Oare and Eling. The regularity of the fields suggests that they were created in a planned fashion and may result from agreement between local land-holders, farmers and commoners to rationalise their holdings and rights in the common grazing into fields. Traces of open fields existed South of Curridge and these too, had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century. This area may have been part of the open field of Shaw and Thatcham and is probably a continuation of the Medieval landscape of the Kennet Valley that has been cut-off from similar landscapes by the development of Newbury and Thatcham.

Extensive commons covered much of the area; an almost continuous chain ran along the Pang watershed from Bradfield South End to Eling. Some were enclosed privately before the late 18th century but many were enclosed through Act of Parliament. Expanses of common land at Bucklebury and Snelsmore remained unenclosed into the 20th century.

The landscape was densely wooded; most woods were large and have been identified as ancient woodlands. The largest ancient woods were adjacent to or interleaved with commons (e.g. Carbins Wood, Fence Wood). Areas of other old woods existed across the area. These were generally small in size and located mostly on the edges of ancient woods. A very large area of this type of woodland was present on the East side of Snelsmore Common. Most woods in the area were coppiced

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - This is one of the most highly modified areas in the Eastern half of the AONB. Most historic enclosures have been rationalised into fields suited to modern mechanised agriculture through boundary removal and reorganisation. This has been intensified with the construction of the M4 and A34 through parts of the area. Large areas of paddocks have also been created from historic fields around settlements. Few historic enclosures are unaltered, large areas of historic fields do not survive and those fields that do remain exist as small, isolated groups amidst a modern farming landscape. These changes have created a much more regular landscape and have significantly broken up the historic character of the area. Parliamentary enclosures are almost entirely absent from the modern landscape and most have been used for housing and tree plantations. Many former parkland areas have been enclosed into arable fields and paddocks.

Significant changes have occurred in the tree-cover with many blocks of ancient woodland cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species. This has impacted on the character of the area as many replanted woods are very large in size. Replanted woods often have dense single species tree-cover. Several areas of ancient and other old woods have been cleared over the course of the 20th century. Some clearance has been for farming or quarrying but most has been used for housing. A huge number of plantations, many very large, have been established within the area. Most were created on former common heathland, including areas enclosed to fields under Parliamentary enclosure. Some of the largest plantations were created in the later 19th century East of Hermitage. Plantations have greatly increased the wooded cover of the area and introduced very tightly packed woodland into areas that were very open. This has changed the character of the area and made large parts of it feel much more visually enclosed than previously.

A lack of grazing on remaining commons and some plantations led to many becoming substantially wooded over by the middle of the 20th century. This is being tackled by management and conservation work at Snelsmore Common. Bucklebury Common and Snelsmore East Common remain very wooded.

Parks are a common feature in the area, most being minor parklands that had been established in the 19th century. A large section of Dunston Park extended into this area.

Historic Settlement Character – The area was more densely settled than the neighbouring valleys, and small settlements were distributed thickly across the landscape. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed and dominated by common-edge settlements and farms. Largest concentrations of settlements were at Cold Ash, Hermitage, and on the North and East fringes of Bucklebury Common. The largest settlement around Bucklebury Common was Chapel Row but most had no formal name. These settlements have their roots in squatter occupation by those wishing to exploit the resources of the common. Their development is poorly understood: they existed by the 18th century but may date back further. Some small-scale settlement growth occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries and this was mainly confined to infill around existing settlement or the construction of small numbers of large houses for the affluent classes.

Huge housing growth has occurred since the later 20th century and is ongoing as the area lies within easy reach of Newbury, Thatcham, the M4, A34 and A4. New housing has focused around historic settlement nuclei and has spread along roads that join them. It is a mixture of small estates and developments of a few large houses. Much of the housing is affluent in nature and swimming pools and tennis courts are common features. Development has been so intense that it can be hard to tell

where one settlement finishes and the next starts. This is true on the road between Thatcham and Hampstead Norreys where a band of settlement runs for about four miles from Cold Ash, taking in Longlane, Curridge and Hermitage, to Little Hungerford. A settlement consisting of several small estates has grown up at Upper Bucklebury; previously there was only a small common-edge settlement (Byles's Green) anywhere in this vicinity. The combination of large areas of housing and paddocks has given much of the central portion of the area a suburban feel.

Historic Farmstead Character – Numerous farms were scattered across the area, the majority named after topographic features and places. Farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard plans with detached buildings arranged around a yard. Some 19th century farmsteads, built to house cattle for fattening or dairying are more likely to be of L-or U-plan. Historically, farms in this area were small and there is a high density of farmsteads in the landscape. Small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive. Within the wood – pasture areas and areas of better soils farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard arrangements, often including an aisled barn. This area has one of the main concentrations of timber-framed aisled barns in the country.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Significant concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork around Beenham.
- Earliest evidence for iron-working at late Bronze Age settlement in Hartshill
- Evidence for later prehistoric activity is dominated by the two hillforts in the area.
- Evidence for Roman activity relates to a villa at Wellhouse and earthworks representing a probable religious complex in Box Wood. Cropmark evidence of possible late prehistoric or Romano-British settlement exists North of the M4
- The linear earthworks on Snelsmore Common have also been interpreted as early Medieval boundary features.
- Earthworks on Oare Common may relate to Medieval activity, including a possible motte and tofts & crofts.
- Late Medieval material is mainly represented by features related to the use of Bucklebury and Snelsmore Common.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory, Roman period and later have a strong illustrative interest. Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the dispersed settlement pattern including farmsteads with loose courtyard plans.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Surviving parkland features have aesthetic interest.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

This is one of the most highly modified areas in the Eastern half of the AONB. Few historic enclosures are unaltered, large areas of historic fields do not survive and those fields that do remain exist as small, isolated groups amidst a modern farming landscape. Significant changes have occurred in the tree-cover with many blocks of ancient woodland cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species. However, Snelsmore Common and Snelsmore East Common have their origins in the late Medieval period and survive as common land today. Parks are a common feature in the area, most being minor parklands that had been established in the 19th century.

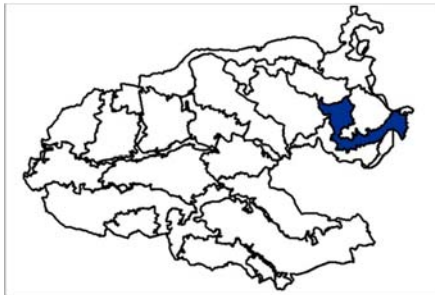
There is strong time depth relating to all archaeological periods from the Neolithic onwards.

Designated Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monuments (2) relate to Grimsbury Castle and Bussock Camp two Iron Age Hillforts. The Listed Buildings (77) are scattered across the area and relate to the cottages, farmhouses and farm buildings which comprised the bulk of the dispersed settlement pattern. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 19: Pang Valley and Sulham Gap

There is a concentration of significant early prehistoric sites, including a potential Palaeolithic-Mesolithic transition site at Nunhide farm. Significant Romano-British features, including a villa at Eling and Maidenhatch. Bucklebury is known to have been a Medieval royal manor and possibly the site of an Early Medieval 'proto-urban' centre. Surviving areas of earlier pre 1800 enclosures and settlement patterns on the Sulham Gap can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use. The historic gardens and park at Purley Hall have a strong illustrative interest and an associative interest due to their known link with Charles Bridgeman.



Location – This area comprises the middle and lower Pang Valley from above Hampstead Norreys to the Thames at Pangbourne. It also incorporates the area of the Sulham Gap to the East. This is an area which comprises low-lying marshy land around the Pang and the Sulham Brook and the slope of the Thames watershed at Reading.

Geology and Topography – Most of the area is chalk; South of Eling on the upper valley sides it is capped by Reading Beds. At the Southern end of the Eastern watershed the chalk is overlain by extensive Reading Beds with a capping of London Clays around Frilsham. Extensive gravel deposits exist on the valley floor. In the Sulham Gap. The landform comprises an open shallow valley.

Landscape Character – The River Pang flows through an open shallow valley which has varied character along its course varying from open arable to enclosed and wooded landscapes. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area7D: Pang Valley.*

Archaeological Character – HER records are fairly evenly distributed in the North of the valley and more unevenly distributed further South. The area was covered by the Berkshire Downs Survey, Middle Thames Valley Survey and partially by the National Mapping Programme.

Evidence of prehistoric activity is not very common. Palaeolithic flintwork has been found at Bradfield Halland. Mesolithic finds are scarce. Early Neolithic to early Bronze Age flintwork has been found near Frilsham, Four Points and Beche Farm. Bronze Age activity is much better documented. Several definite and probable round barrows exist on the upper valley slope between Hampstead Norreys and Frilsham. Bronze Age finds have been recovered from several locations and two hoards with material of this period have been found. Iron Age material is limited and includes field-system ditches excavated at Maidenhatch prior to construction of the M4. Cropmarks of field systems of probable later prehistoric/ Romano-British date have been mapped across the Northern part of the area.

Significant Romano-British features, including a villa at Eling exist, but activity is not widespread over the area. The site has not been fully excavated and its date and whether any preceding Iron Age settlement existed are unknown. A villa and kiln were excavated at Maidenhatch prior to

construction of the M4. Scatters of building debris in plough soil South-West of Bucklebury have been interpreted as a possible villa. Evidence of Roman building material has also been found in Stanford Dingley and South and East of Bradfield.

The only evidence of early Medieval activity comes from documentary sources. Yattendon, Hampstead Norreys and Frilsham were all recorded in Domesday. A settlement existed at Pangbourne in the early Medieval period. Late Medieval features are dominated by buildings and earthworks. A settlement existed at Wyld Court, but was deserted by the early Post Medieval period.. A manor house, fortified in the mid-14th century, existed at de La Beche; earthworks of the moat and house platform are visible at the site. The manor house also had a deer park.

Post Medieval records are of industrial sites, mills and buildings. Watermills existed at Marlston, Bucklebury, Stanford Dingley, Bradfield and Tidmarsh. A structure interpreted as a windmill base was found during construction of Yattendon Court in the 19th century. A Second World War airfield was established North-West of Hampstead Norreys from 1940. Two gun-emplacements from the GHQ stop-line exist North-East of Tidmarsh between the Pang and Sulham Brook.



Farmland near Stanford Dingley - There have been major changes to the agricultural landscape. Most historic fields have been rationalised into fields better suited to modern agriculture and much of this has been through removal of historic field boundaries.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Upper Pang Valley – The Medieval landscape of the area was characterised by nucleated settlements, mostly sited on the valley floor, surrounded by open fields on the valley slopes and with common meadow grazing by the riverside.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Sulham Woods, Pasture and Brook – In contrast the area of the Sulham Gap was well-wooded and characterised by early enclosure fields and a dispersed settlement pattern. There have been varying degrees of change in this area

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

The archaeological potential of the area is varied and deposits of Bronze Age to Romano-British date are likely to exist across much of the area. The preservation of deposits may be varied as ploughing since the Medieval period could have truncated archaeological layers. Deposits relating to early occupation may survive within historic settlement nuclei. The historic building stock is fairly well-studied but it is possible that further significant buildings or structural elements may be identified

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The Medieval landscape of the Pang Valley was characterised by nucleated settlements, mostly sited on the valley floor, surrounded by open fields on the valley slopes and with common meadow grazing by the riverside. Most of the open fields had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century. The majority of these fields were irregularly-shaped which suggests that much of the land was probably enclosed on a piecemeal basis. Areas of regularly-shaped early enclosures existed between Yattendon and Beche Farm, between Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley and around Bradfield. The regularity of these fields suggests that they were created in a more planned fashion and may result from agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise holdings in the common fields and grazing or woods and turn them into fields. The valley floor meadows had also been largely enclosed by the 18th century; most were simply enclosed into pasture fields. Areas around Frilsham, between Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley and between Bradfield and Tidmarsh, were turned into water-meadows over the course of the 18th century. Parliamentary enclosures were only found around Hampstead Norreys and a small area at Frilsham.

The area was not well-wooded but some large blocks of woods existed on the upper valley slopes, mostly around Hampstead Norreys, Yattendon and Ashampstead. Most woods were ancient woodlands and existed either as large blocks or groups of woods on or near the top of the valley slopes. Areas of other old woods were present but were generally much smaller and less frequent than ancient woods, most existing along boundaries and historic track ways. Parks were not frequent features of this area and most were near the edge of the area. Minor parklands existed at Bucklebury House, Bradfield Hall, Marlston House, Frilsham Park and Yattendon Park.

In contrast the area of the Sulham Gap was well-wooded and characterised by early enclosure fields and a dispersed settlement pattern. The majority of fields were irregularly shaped early enclosures

with a small block of regularly shaped early enclosures immediately North-East of Sulham. The regular enclosures were enclosed from an area of open fields and probably resulted from an agreement between local land-holders and farmers. There was no trace of an open field system having operated in the rest of the area. Historic parkland and gardens were created around Purley Hall in the 18th century.

Historic Landscape Character - There have been major changes to the agricultural landscape of the Pang Valley. Most historic fields have been rationalised into fields better suited to modern agriculture and much of this has been through removal of historic field boundaries. All former water meadows have now been converted to arable. Although most enclosed meadows were also reorganised, blocks of them survive between Everington and Hampstead Norreys and around Stanford Dingley. The construction of the M4 further contributed to the reorganisation of the landscape by disrupting and truncating fieldscapes.

Substantial changes have occurred in the tree-cover of the area. Although no woodland has been cleared for other land-uses, large areas of ancient woodland have been cleared of native tree cover and replanted with other species. Large tree plantations have been created at several locations: the largest are between Frilsham and Yattendon, and between Stanford Dingley and Bradfield.

Much of the parkland in the area has been enclosed and converted to arable fields and many parks now have only small stubs of grounds immediately around the house, such as Frilsham Park and Bucklebury House. Parks have also been subject to change of use, with housing developed on sections of Yattendon Park and a school established at Marlston House.

In the Sulham Gap There have been varying degrees of change in this area: whilst fieldscapes have been substantially altered and recent leisure developments have had an effect on the area, there has been only some change to the extent of tree-cover and very little settlement growth. Historic enclosures have been subject to large-scale alteration across the area into modern fields more suited to mechanised agriculture. A group of unaltered historic enclosures interspersed with woodland is present around Sulham and gives a good example of what the historic landscape of the area was like. The construction of the M4 motorway also contributed to the reorganisation of the landscape by disrupting and truncating historic field systems. New areas of woodland are rare and include a couple of plantations and some small areas of secondary woodland that have developed on the fringes of historic woods. The 18th century historic gardens and park at Purley Hall have survived.

Historic Settlement Character – In the Pang Valley the historic settlement pattern of the area was nucleated and composed mainly of villages and hamlets located on the valley floor, such as Pangbourne, Bucklebury, Frilsham and Hampstead Norreys. Yattendon was an exception to this pattern and lay at the junction of several routes through the area on the crest of the Eastern watershed. The dominant building material is red brick. The historic settlement pattern in the Sulham Gap of the area was a mix of small hamlets, such as Sulham and North Street, and numerous small farms.

Pangbourne has experienced large-scale housing growth and is now several times the size of its historic extent. Growth at other settlements has been less marked and is typified by small-scale growth around the historic nuclei. Most growth has been at Yattendon and Hampstead Norreys.

Some new settlement nuclei have been created at previously unsettled locations, most of these being single large houses. In the Sulham Gap, despite being located next to Reading and the M4, this area has largely escaped the effects of settlement sprawl in the later 20th century. Some new housing has been constructed at Sulham and on the fringes of Tidmarsh.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were found in the area but were not particularly common features within the Pang Valley landscape. They were located either on the valley floor between villages or on the upper slopes of the valley; most were named after nearby places or topographic features. The dispersed settlement pattern in the Sulham Gap means small farms are more common.

Farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard plans with detached buildings arranged around a yard. Some 19th century farmsteads, built to house cattle for fattening or dairying are more likely to be of L-or U-plan. Historically, farms in this area were small and there is a high density of farmsteads in the landscape. Small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive. Within the wood-pasture areas and areas of better soils farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard arrangements, often including an aisled barn.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Significant early prehistoric sites, including a potential Palaeolithic- Mesolithic transition site at Nunhide farm
- Evidence of Bronze Age activity, including barrows and the Yattendon Hoard.
- Significant Romano-British features, including a villa at Eling and Maidenhatch.
- Bucklebury was a royal manor and possibly the site of an early Medieval ‘proto-urban’ centre
- A manor house, fortified in the mid-14th century, existed at de La Beche.
- Post Medieval records are of industrial sites, mills and buildings.
- A WWII airfield was established at Hampstead Norreys, for which many elements survive including pillboxes, runway fragments and other structures. Structural remains of the GHQ ‘Stop Line’ defensive system survive.

Historic Interest

Late Post-Medieval archaeology surviving as earthworks have a very strong illustrative value as they are such dominant features.

Surviving areas of earlier pre 1800 enclosures and settlement patterns on the Sulham Gap can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

The historic gardens and park at Purley Hall have a strong illustrative interest and an associative interest due to their known link with Charles Bridgeman.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with Medieval valley floor settlements in the Pang Valley. Pre-1750 farmstead buildings survive in the Sulham Gap including Medieval examples.

Architectural interest of buildings and designed features associated with Purley Hall.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Purley Hall has a strong aesthetic interest in its designed landscape.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of the Pang Valley area is dominated by modern field reorganisation and replanted ancient woodland. Much of the parkland has also been enclosed. In the Sulham Gap there have been varying degrees of change in this area: whilst fieldscapes have been substantially altered and recent leisure developments have had an effect on the area, there has been only some change to the extent of tree-cover and very little settlement growth.

There is strong time depth relating to post Medieval archaeology.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (4) are the remains of Grim's Ditch, a late Bronze Age linear earthwork and ditch, Eling Roman Villa, a Motte at Hampstead Norreys and a Bronze Age round barrow. The Listed Buildings (196) are related to the nucleated settlements of the Pang Valley and are more dispersed and denser in the Sulham Gap. They include a number of historic manor houses, designed features and historic barns. There is 1 parkland on the register of parks and gardens the landscape park and formal gardens to Purley Hall. The formal gardens were designed by Charles Bridgeman in 1721. The park dates to the late 18th century-early 19th century and contains 20th century planting.

Area 20: Pang-Thames Plateaux

Parts of the area especially in the North have extensive tracts of little-modified pre 1800 landscape and retain considerable historic character. Earthworks and cropmarks of probable later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems exist over much of the Northern part of the area. There is a concentration of Medieval sites relating to Ashampstead Common which includes kilns.



Location – This area contains a series of dry valleys and watersheds between the Pang and Thames valleys and the high downs around Aldworth. The major dry valley within the area runs from Aldworth through Ashampstead to the Pang at Maidenhatch Farm.

Geology and Topography – The geology over much of the area is chalk which is overlain by gravel at the

base of the major dry valley. The chalk is capped by Reading Beds around Hartridge Farm, Upper Basildon and by capped Reading Beds and London Clays on the watershed ridge East of Yattendon. Extensive deposits of plateau gravels exist around Upper Basildon. The landform forms part of a chalk dip slope with deeply incised valleys.

Landscape Character – Extensive wooded area forming a dense mosaic with arable farmland.

Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 2B: Ashampton Downs.

Archaeological Character – HER records exist across the whole area. Some parts of the area have been covered by the Middle Thames Valley Survey, the National Mapping Programme and the Berkshire Downs Survey

Evidence of prehistoric activity is not common and comes from finds. Palaeolithic handaxes have been found at Upper Basildon, Pangbourne Hill, Pennycroft Copse and at Lambden's Bottom. Neolithic flintwork, including a core, has been found around Upper Basildon, tools from two locations at Ashampstead Common and axes near Blandy's Farm. In the North of the area there are numerous earthwork and cropmarked features thought to be of prehistoric date. The most visible is Grim's Ditch, a probable Bronze Age territorial earthwork that runs between the Pang and Thames valleys. Grim's Ditch exists for significant sections as an earthwork at Foxborough Copse and Portobello Wood and Holies Shaw and can be partially traced as a cropmark in between. Earthworks and cropmarks of probable later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems exist over much of the Northern part of the area.

Other Romano-British features, in addition to the field systems, have been found in the area. A villa has been observed as cropmarks North of Southridge Farm, it has not been excavated but has been speculatively dated it to the 2nd century on morphological grounds. Kilns were found near Lynch's Copse during construction of the M4. Romano-British finds were made in Upper Basildon at Kiln

Ground and New Town. It has been suggested that the large quantities of Roman pottery found at Kiln Ground are indicative of a settlement or pottery manufacturing site.



Descent towards Ashampstead - This area seems to have had a Medieval landscape characterised by small fields inter-related with woods and some commons.

© Copyright [Graham Horn](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Farmland at Basildon – Parts of the area have extensive tracts of little-modified landscape and retain considerable historic character, whereas substantial change has occurred over much of the area creating a landscape with a new and different character.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Houses, Ashhampton – The historic settlement pattern was varied with dispersed settlements and farms across the southern part of the area and mostly farms and a few hamlets in the North.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Medieval evidence is not widely distributed and this probably reflects the fact that most of the area was farmland, common and woodland during these periods. Bere Court was a residence of the Abbots of Reading established in the 13th century. It is now a house mostly dating from the 16th century and later, but incorporates some Medieval monastic elements. Yattendon Court deer park is thought to extend into this area at Old Park Woods, but it is unclear if any parkland features survive as the woods have been mechanically replanted. Many Medieval sites relate to Ashampstead Common and include finds and a kiln. A bank and ditch have been observed at several locations on the edges of Ashampstead and Burnthill Commons. It has been suggested that this is a previously unrecorded deer park, but it may be a boundary feature demarking the commons. Basildon Park contains remains of Medieval ridge and furrow and lynchets exist on the park's lawns. This suggests that much of the park was laid out over open fields.

Post Medieval records are composed of industrial sites and buildings. A chalk mine was discovered South of Yattendon and 19th century brickworks existed at Frilsham Common and Luck's Hall Farm. Ruins of the works and pits survive at both brickworks sites. During the Second World War Basildon park was requisitioned and served as a US army base and prisoner of war camp. A concrete hut, known as Ivy Cottage, is thought to be the only surviving hut from the WWII camp. Practice firing trenches were also constructed in this area and are still visible.

The archaeological potential of most of the area is unclear. It is possible that prehistoric and Romano-British deposits exist in the area but it is not possible to be more specific about the location, nature and quality of any below-ground archaeology. Deposits of early occupation may survive at historic settlement nuclei, and any such deposits could be crucial to understanding the development of settlement in this area. The historic building stock is fairly well-studied but it is possible that further significant buildings or structural elements may be identified, particularly at Frilsham Common.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This area seems to have had a Medieval landscape characterised by small fields inter-related with woods and some commons. The combination of land-use and topography gave a very sinuous grain to the historic landscape of the area.

Most of the early enclosures were small irregularly-shaped fields, which suggest that they were created in an ad-hoc manner, perhaps over a long period of time. Many of the fields were probably created by Medieval assartment, or clearance of woodland. Burnthill and Ashampstead Commons, two areas of common heathland grazing, were located amidst the intimate network of fields and woods. Unlike many commons, these were not later enclosed. Ashampstead Common, however, had become substantially wooded-over by the end of the 19th century and was no longer an open heathland area.

This was a well-wooded area and most woods have been identified as ancient. Woods existed across the area but the highest concentration was in the South where a belt of several large woodlands existed. Large blocks of other old woods also existed in the middle of the area. Most woods had very irregular edges, as if they had had chunks taken out of them, and this was most visible between Yattendon and Bradfield. It is probable this is due to Medieval and later assartment. Some woodland clearance took place during the mid-19th century to create fields at Hewin's Wood, Bradfield and College Wood and Westridge Green.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - Parts of the area have extensive tracts of little-modified landscape and retain considerable historic character, whereas substantial change has occurred over much of the area creating a landscape with a new and different character.

The reorganisation of historic enclosures into fields suited to modern agriculture and the creation of extensive woodland plantations have been the two most substantial changes to the area. The South of the area has seen considerable change with the majority of historic enclosures reorganised and very large areas of conifer plantations established. The plantations are mostly commercial forestry and many are on areas that were fields. Large plantations have also been created in areas that were ancient woodlands. These woods have been cleared of native tree cover and replanted as commercial plantations. A lack of grazing and some plantation led to dense tree-cover developing on all commons by the middle of the 20th century. The character of the southern part of the area has now changed from a mix of open commons, fields and woods into an almost continuously wooded block.

Across the northern half of the area (North of Ashampstead) large areas of unmodified fieldscapes exist with only a small degree of field reorganisation and plantation. Changes in this part of the area have largely respected the grain of the landscape and much of the historic character remains intact.

Parks existed only in the East of the area and there were only two within the area by the end of the 19th century. A small park was present at Bere Park whilst a very large landscape park existed at Basildon around Basildon House. A large park was laid out over early enclosure fields at the end of the 19th century around Buckhold, a new country house. The designed landscape was very extensive and involved the creation of an ornamental woodland plantation, Great Bear, as well as avenues and a walled garden. The majority of parklands have experienced either a total change in use or a contraction in the area they cover. This change has been most marked at Buckhold, where much of the former parkland is now a stable and paddocks, the house is occupied by a school and the ornamental woodland has been replaced by a mix of conifer plantation, housing and paddocks. Basildon Park is in the ownership of the National Trust and has not been subject to large-scale alteration, but has transferred to operating as a visitor attraction for part of the year.

Historic Settlement Character – Settlement was less nucleated and more densely spread across the landscape than in adjacent areas. The historic settlement pattern was varied with dispersed settlements and farms across the South part of the area and mostly farms and a few hamlets in the North. Most settlement in the South was in hamlets, such as Upper Basildon, and common edge settlements around Burnthill and Ashampstead Commons. The common edge settlements have their roots in squatter occupation by those wishing to exploit the resources of the common. They were in existence by the 18th century but probably date back further. Ashampstead was the largest settlement in the area and consisted of several separate nuclei. Farms had a mix of topographic and occupier names.

Settlement growth has been extensive across the centre of the area and has comprised infill around historic settlement nuclei and growth along the roads between them. New housing has focussed around historic settlement nuclei and has spread along roads that join them. It is a mixture of small estates and developments of a few large houses and much of the housing is affluent in nature with swimming pools and tennis courts being common features. Development has been so intense that it

is now hard to tell where one settlement finishes and the next starts. A band of settlement runs from Ashampstead to Upper Basildon and then North on to Basildon and East to Pangbourne. This has created an almost continuous belt of housing uniting several previously separate settlements.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard plans with detached buildings arranged around a yard. Some 19th century farmsteads, built to house cattle for fattening or dairying are more likely to be of L-or U-plan. Historically, farms in this area were small and there is a high density of farmsteads in the landscape. Small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive. Within the wood – pasture areas and areas of better soils farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard arrangements, often including an aisled barn. This area has one of the main concentrations of timber-framed aisled barns in the country. Free-standing staddle granaries are also characteristic.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Grim's Ditch (a possible Bronze Age territorial boundary) survives as an earthwork in several woods, and as a cropmark in between.
- Earthworks and cropmarks of probable later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems exist over much of the Northern part of the area.
- A villa has been observed as cropmarks North of Southridge Farm and kilns were found near Lynch's Copse and at Kiln Ground. The latter possibly represents a settlement or pottery manufacturing site.
- Many Medieval sites relate to Ashampstead Common and include finds and a kiln.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks, Roman period and later have a strong illustrative interest including sites relating to the Medieval exploitation of the common

Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Basildon park has associative interest being linked with Lancelot Brown

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the dispersed settlement pattern including farmsteads with loose courtyard plans. Small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive. Architectural interest of buildings associated with Basildon Park

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Surviving parkland features have aesthetic interest.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

Parts of the area especially in the North have extensive tracts of little-modified landscape and retain considerable historic character.

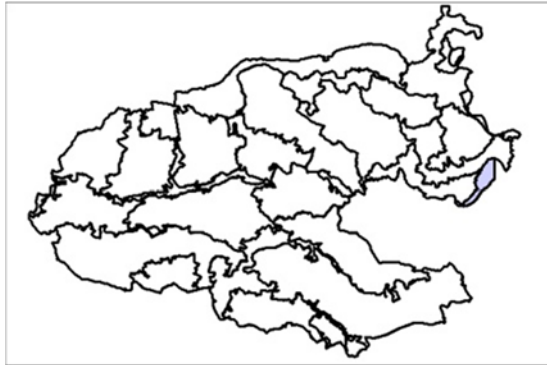
Parks are a common feature in the area, most being minor parklands that had been established in the 19th century. The majority of parklands have experienced either a total change in use or a contraction in the area they cover.

There is strong time depth relating to the Roman Period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (2) relate to the Grim's Ditch, a late Bronze Age linear earthwork and ditch. The Listed buildings (89) are dispersed across the area and relate to manor houses, farmhouses, cottages and barns with some designed landscape elements. There is 1 parkland on the register of parks and gardens at Basildon House. This is a late 18th century country house surrounded by contemporary landscape park and woodland, elements having been designed by Lancelot Brown in 1778. Mid 19th century formal gardens lie adjacent to the house.

Area 21: Kennet Valley East

There is an important possible Neolithic / Bronze Age ritual or funerary landscape at Aldermaston Wharf. Excavations at Ufton Bridge have produced rare settlement evidence dating to the Early Medieval period. Later Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology relates to the development of the Englefield Estate firstly as a Medieval deer park and later as a designed landscape.



Location – This area covers the lower slopes the Kennet Valley around and below Englefield, on the far Eastern edge of the AONB.

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly London Clays which are overlain by extensive gravels on the valley floor. The landform is the sloping valley sides of the River Kennet valley.

Landscape Character – The Landscape Character

Area Assessment includes this area with the historic commons and irregular fields to the West.

Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 8A: Hermitage Wooded Commons.

Archaeological Character – The earliest archaeological information from this area relates to Palaeolithic tools recovered from the gravels exposed in small scale gravel extraction around Englefield in the early 1900s. Stray Neolithic finds have also been found at Cranmere Lake in Englefield Park.

A series of four contiguous ring ditches lie along a terrace of the River Kennet one was excavated and identified as an early Bronze Age Round Barrow. The suggested sequence is some later Neolithic activity associated with Peterborough Ware, plus Grooved Ware pottery, including the pit, followed by construction of the ring ditch in the Early Bronze Age.

The area of fields to the South is associated with extensive mostly undated cropmarks identified from aerial photographs which include sub rectangular enclosures, pits and linear features which may be of later prehistoric date.

Englefield is accepted as Englafeld, the site of a battle between the Saxons and the Danes in 871, although published records have not identified any archaeological features relating to this historical event. Later Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology relates to the development of the Englefield Estate firstly as a Medieval deer park and later as a designed landscape.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The area was characterised by open fields on the lower slopes of the valley below the nucleated linear village of Englefield and around Midgham. These areas were enclosed into fields by the 18th century. The fields near Englefield were much more regularly-shaped and probably represent a planned phase of enclosure. The London to Bath coaching route, itself formed from an earlier route and now the A4, runs along the Southern boundary of the area.

Ancient woodlands hug the steep North-Western slopes of the area.

Englefield Park began as a Medieval deer park and developed into a sizeable landscape park in the 18th and 19th centuries. Englefield had a significant impact on the landscape. Features include a walled kitchen garden situated to the East-North-East of the house. Most of the park is of open parkland with scattered mature trees. Woodland is present in belts or plantations in the North and West.



Road from Victoria Lodge - Huge changes have occurred in this area over the course of the 20th century, the major factors being agricultural change. Almost all fields have been altered either through re-organisation or boundary removal and, although traces of the historic fields survive, the fieldscapes of the area are modern in character.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Mayridge Farm – Large farms were present throughout the area and were mainly found in areas of early enclosure of open fields.

© Copyright [Graham Horn](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Engleford House and Grounds – Englefield Park began as a Medieval deer park and developed into a sizeable landscape park in the 18th and 19th centuries. Englefield had a significant impact on the landscape.

© Copyright [Pam Brophy](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - Huge changes have occurred in this area over the course of the 20th century, the major factors being agricultural change. Almost all fields have been altered either through re-organisation or boundary removal and, although traces of the historic fields survive, the fieldscapes of the area are modern in character. Only a very few examples of unaltered historic fields remain and they survive as islands within the current farming landscape. The arable extent has also increased with the extension of cultivation into previously non-arable areas.

Ancient woodlands have been replanted with plantations on the upper slopes of these areas; however, tree-cover has increased greatly within this area through the creation of woodland plantations around the parkland.

Englefield Park has seen little significant change.

The South-West end of the area has seen post 1900 industrial development in the form of gravel extraction and the creation of factories to the West of Beenham Grange. Further to the East a private landing strip for Englefield Park can be made out in fields.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is nucleated with settlement on the higher slopes of the valley toward the North-West edge of the area.

Housing growth has been extremely limited.

Historic Farmstead Character – Large farms were present throughout the area and were mainly found in areas of early enclosure of open fields. Farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard plans with detached buildings arranged around a yard. Some 19th century farmsteads, built to house cattle for fattening or dairying are more likely to be of L-or U-plan. Historically, farms in this area were small and there is a high density of farmsteads in the landscape. Small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive. Within the wood-pasture areas and areas of better soils farmsteads typically consist of loose courtyard arrangements, often including an aisled barn. This area has one of the main concentrations of timber-framed aisled barns in the country.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Palaeolithic tools recovered from the gravels exposed in small scale gravel extraction around Englefield
- Possible Neolithic / Bronze Age ritual or funerary landscape at Aldermaston Wharf
- Excavations at Ufton Bridge have produced rare settlement evidence dating to the Early Medieval period
- Later Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology relates to the development of the Englefield Estate firstly as a Medieval deer park and later as a designed landscape
- Kennet and Avon Canal and associated structures, including WWII defences

Historic Interest

Historic post-medieval designed features and earlier archaeology relating to Englefield have strong illustrative value.

Surviving islands of earlier enclosures can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with nucleated valley floor settlements.

Pre-1750 farmstead buildings survive; the small farm size often meant that there was little capital to replace buildings so Medieval and 16th/17th century farm buildings often survive.

Architectural interest of buildings and designed features associated with Englefield

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Englefield has a strong aesthetic interest in its designed landscape.

The Kennet & Avon canal may have some aesthetic or artistic interest

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of the Eastern Kenney Valley is dominated by modern field reorganisation and boundary removal. Only a very few examples of unaltered historic fields remain and they survive as islands within the current farming landscape.

Englefield Park has seen little change and remains as a coherent designed landscape.

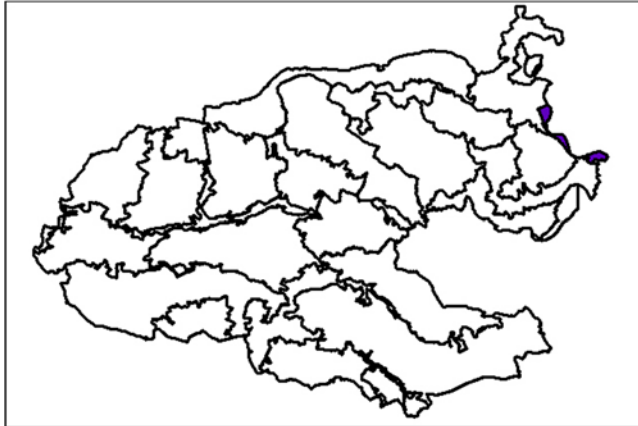
There is strong time depth relating to the archaeology of the river gravels.

Designated Heritage Assets

There are no Scheduled Monuments (0). The Listed Buildings (18) are related to Englefield Park, the farmsteads to the South, milestones along the line of the A4 and the church of St Marks. There is 1 parkland on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens: the formal and woodland gardens situated in a landscape park to Englefield House. Formal gardens at Englefield Park had been laid out by the

Area 22: Thames Valley South

Important Palaeolithic and Mesolithic finds are associated with the river gravels and floodplain. Bronze Age round barrows have also been identified as cropmarks. Second World War archaeology is associated with defensive features on the banks of the River Thames. There is great potential for further archaeological information from the floodplain including relating to earliest Palaeolithic activity as well as later prehistoric and Roman exploitation of the same area.



Location – This area is in two discontinuous parts, but is composed of the West Berkshire side of the Thames valley from the Oxfordshire border to the outskirts of Reading. The Thames tow path marks the Eastern boundary. The valley floor forms most of the area.

Geology and Topography – The geology is chalk which is overlain by gravels on the valley floor. A mix of soil types is found in the

area. These are flat low-lying landscape with long views.

Landscape Character – A number of small areas of vale landscapes on the Eastern edge of the AONB.
Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 6D: Thames Valley Floodplain

Archaeological Character –The earliest archaeological information from this area relates to Palaeolithic tools recovered from the gravels exposed in the Thames floodplain. Mesolithic finds have also been found on the flood plain including blades and flakes at Streatley Farm and a series of Mesolithic sites South of Gatehampton (albeit on the opposite side of the river bank). Neolithic axes have also been recovered from the River Thames.

Bronze Age round barrows have also been identified as cropmarks on the floodplain, and possible prehistoric enclosures has been observed from cropmarks.

Evidence for later prehistoric and Roman exploitation of the floodplain is also apparent. Building foundations and numerous finds of Iron Age and Roman date were found near Streatley Farm in the early 19th century, some at least during gravel quarrying. The buildings seem to be regarded as Roman, and the presence of a villa has been suggested. Evidence for a villa was also found at Church Field at Basildon, during the construction of the railway in 1839.

Medieval archaeology is more limited and probably relates to existing settlement nuclei.

Second World War archaeology is associated with defensive features on the bank of the River Thames.

There is great potential for further archaeological information from the floodplain including relating to earliest Palaeolithic activity as well as later prehistoric and Roman exploitation of the same area. Deposits of occupation from the early Medieval onwards are likely in historic settlement nuclei as well as deposits outside of settlements which are crucial to understanding the development of settlement in the area.



Wet grazing meadow, Streatley - Most of this area was formerly covered by common downland grazing.

© Copyright [Hugh Venables](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Westbury Lane – There has been significant modification to the area with large-scale changes to fieldscapes. Most historic enclosures have been reorganised.

© Copyright [Chris Collard](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



View past Streatley Farm – Some areas of open field and meadow land had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century, and farms established amongst these fields.

© Copyright [Bill Nicholls](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This was an area of nucleated settlement. Villages such as Streatley and Basildon were located at the edge of the valley floor with open fields on the valley floor and common meadow grazing next to the river on the floodplain. Most of this area was covered by common downland grazing. Some areas of open field and meadow land had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century, and farms established amongst these fields. Early enclosures at Streatley Farm and Basildon Farm were of regularly-shaped fields; this suggests that they may be planned enclosures resulting from agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise holdings in the common fields. Early enclosures at Westbury Farm and Scrace’s Farm were irregularly-shaped suggesting that they were created on a more piecemeal basis. The remaining areas of open field, meadow and most downland were enclosed into fields by Act of Parliament in the early 19th century. Few other landscape elements existed in this area. A minor parkland existed around ‘The Grotto’, an 18th century mansion next to the Thames North of Basildon.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - There has been significant modification to the area with large-scale changes to fieldscapes in the 20th century. Most historic enclosures have been reorganised but since much of the area was historically covered in regularly-shaped fields this has had less impact than in other areas.

The development of leisure facilities has introduced a significant element to the landscape that was not previously present. Beale Park, a wildlife visitor attraction, has been created on land that was Parliamentary fields created from open field.

Historic Settlement Character – Extensive settlement growth took place around Streatley in the late 19th and early 20th century and was spurred on by the construction of the railway through the area. The provision of a station serving both Streatley and Goring made working in Reading or further afield yet living in a pleasant riverside location achievable to the affluent. The housing of this period is typified by large detached villa properties. Housing growth has continued at Streatley and it has nearly trebled in size from its historic extent; some growth has also occurred at Basildon. Recent housing follows the pattern of early 20th century development and consists mostly of large, individually constructed detached houses.

Historic Farmstead Character – Some areas of open field and meadow land had been enclosed into fields by the 18th century, and farms established amongst these fields. Pre 1750 farmsteads are very rare.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Palaeolithic tools recovered from the gravels exposed in the Thames floodplain
- Mesolithic finds have also been found on the flood plain
- A possible Neolithic monument complex is evidenced by cropmarks near Westbury Farm, including a possible mortuary enclosure and long barrow.

- Bronze Age round barrows have also been identified as cropmarks on the floodplain.
- Evidence for later prehistoric and Roman exploitation of the floodplain is also apparent
- Second World War archaeology is associated with defensive features on the banks of the River Thames

Historic Interest

Surviving areas of earlier enclosures can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with nucleated valley floor settlements.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

N/A

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of the Eastern Kenney Valley is dominated by modern field reorganisation although the pattern of 1700 to 1900 AD historic enclosures can still be read.

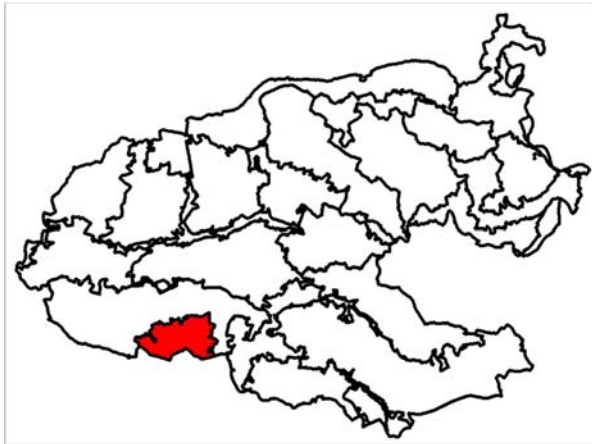
There is strong time depth relating to archaeology of the river gravels of the flood plain.

The Bronze Age territorial boundary earthwork of Grim's Ditch forms part of the parish boundary between Basildon and Streatley

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monument (1) is a Dovecote. The Listed Buildings (46) are related to the nucleated historic settlements and farmsteads established on the floodplain and relate to manor houses, historic churches, cottages and barns. There are 0 parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 23: Milton Hill and Down

There are notable Prehistoric funerary monuments including Bronze Age round barrows and extensive areas of prehistoric field systems and related settlements. Areas of open unimproved chalk grassland survive on the steeper chalk escarpments and hilltops. These are an important survival of the earlier pre 1700 landscape. Small pockets of 1700 to 1900 parliamentary enclosures survive notably along the bottom of the chalk escarpment to the North on the greensand terrace and around Everleigh Ashes.



Location – Area to the South of Pewsey in Wiltshire; on the northern side the area follows the bottom of the chalk escarpment and downland of Salisbury Plain encompassing Pewsey Hill and Milton Hill. The southern boundary coincides with the boundary of the Salisbury Plain Defence Training Estate and the eastern side coincides with the upper slopes of the upper Bourne Valley.

Geology and Topography – Geology is dominated by upper chalk giving way to middle chalk along the steep scarp to the North. Steep sided chalk escarpment and downland rises dramatically from the lowing lying greensand in the Vale of Pewsey.

Landscape Character – Expansive chalk upland with an absence of clay with flints leading to a bleaker more open landscape. Arable fields predominant with isolated fragments of chalk grassland surviving especially along the edge of the steep escarpments. There are small patches of wood and scrub. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type 4: High Chalk Plain.*

Archaeological Character - The dominant archaeological traces in this area are prehistoric, often surviving as extant monuments. This relates to the fact that the area was grazed unenclosed chalk grassland during the Medieval and early Post Medieval period meaning that these monuments were not subject to ploughing until post 1700. Typical archaeology includes prehistoric funerary monuments including Bronze Age round barrows and extensive areas of prehistoric field systems and related settlements. These date to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age but not all have been formally dated. The late enclosure of downland areas and the subsequent recent ploughing means that there is a strong likelihood for prehistoric sites and finds to be identified through aerial photographic interpretation and field walking. This is supported by the density of find spots especially across the Northern half of the area.

Historic Landscape Trajectory - Prior to 1700 this area was dominated by open chalk downland with pockets of scrub, furze and ancient woodland, exploited for grazing and fuel by people living in the settlements in the vale below. This historic character survives in the pockets of open chalk downland notably linear areas following the sides of the steep chalk escarpments. A small area of enclosure was created prior to 1700 around Milton Hill Farm but the first large scale areas to be enclosed and converted to arable post 1700 were at the foot of the chalk escarpments and up its sides. The outlines of these parliamentary enclosure fields survive although their internal patterns have been modified in the last 100 years. This enclosure pattern spread laterally in the later 19th century through less regular post-parliamentary enclosure. Enclosure did not spread to the high downland areas until the 20th century when irregular new fields were created and the chalk grassland ploughed up to create arable land . This coincided with the establishment of regular woodland plantations, a pattern which began in the 19th century.



Fyfield Down - Just above Fyfield Field Barn showing surviving areas of pre 1700 open chalk grassland. Note the regular plantations on the crest of the downland.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Byway, Milton Hill -Arable fields created in the 20th century retain the sense of openness of the former chalk grassland; pockets of ancient woodland also survive.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Chalky track, Fyfield Down - A series of pre 1700 droveways provide access from the vale to the downlands, these run parallel to each other.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The area is dominated by Post 1900 enclosure. This consists of two types, to the North linear ladder style fields with straight boundaries running from the Vale up the sides of the chalk escarpment to the edge of the higher downland. This represents modified 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure. Beyond this to the South, the fields are much more irregular with semi-irregular boundaries following the micro-topography of the downland. These are new fields created in the 20th century from former open chalk downland.

Areas of open unimproved chalk grassland survive on the steeper chalk escarpments and hilltops. These are associated with small regular plantations of woodland planted from 1800 onwards.

There are small pockets of 1700 to 1900 parliamentary enclosures surviving, notably along the bottom of the chalk escarpment to the North on the greensand terrace and around Everleigh Ashes. Everleigh Ashes itself is associated with an area of pre 1600 woodland surrounded by 1600-1800 woodland expansion and replanted ancient woodland all of which is inside the Defence Training Estate.

There is a small area of pre 1700 regular enclosure around Milton Hill Farm marking the first enclosure on this area of downland in the Post Medieval period.

Another distinctive feature are the parallel droveways which run North-West to South-East across the landscape providing access from the nucleated historic villages of the Vale of Pewsey to the downland above. These are heavily abraded in places; further up on the higher downland the impact of the military is felt in the presence of multiple criss-crossing tracks.

The droveways follow the same orientation as the parish boundaries which again run North-West to South-East providing each linear parish with a slice of vale, escarpment and downland; to the South the parishes fully on the downland are more irregular in shape such as Everleigh.

Pewsey White Horse, created in 1937 is a dominant feature of the escarpment below Pewsey Hill.

Historic Settlement Character – Settlement is extremely scarce consisting of isolated farms located at the top of the chalk escarpments and chalk hills.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms and farm buildings do not start to appear in this area until the 18th century representing expansion of arable farming into downland areas and the replacement of the former sheep dominated agricultural regimes, even then they are isolated and small, associated with loose courtyard plans or represented by single field barns.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Prehistoric funerary monuments including Bronze Age round barrows and extensive areas of prehistoric field systems and related settlements

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites in this area have strong illustrative value as many sites survive as earthworks. These have strong illustrative value.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value.

Architectural Interest

N/A

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The chalk downlands in general have a strong artistic interest being the focus of interest of numerous artists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century fields. These consist of two types, modified 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure to the North and later field enclosed from downland to the South.

Small pockets of 1700 to 1900 parliamentary enclosures survive notably along the bottom of the chalk escarpment to the North on the greensand terrace and around Everleigh Ashes. These are an important survival.

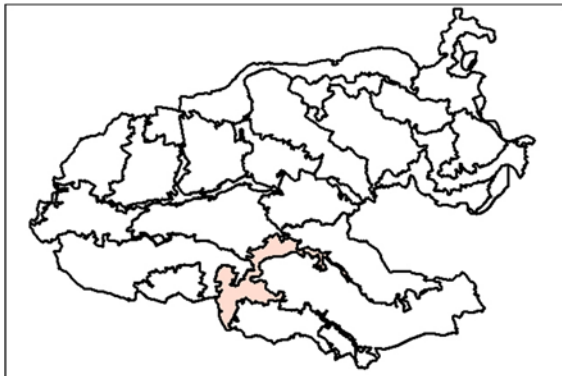
Areas of open unimproved chalk grassland survive on the steeper chalk escarpments and hilltops. These are an important survival of the earlier 1700 landscape.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (15) are dominated by prehistoric earthworks which are still visible on ridges and hilltops including the Giant's Grave Neolithic long barrow on Milton Hill, round barrows groups on Easton Down, and Down Farm and extensive traces of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age field systems and associated settlements surviving as faint traces including on Milton Hill and Aughton Down. These field systems are likely to continue as cropmarks outside of the scheduled area. The Listed Buildings (2) are an early 19th Century aisled barn at Pewsey Hill Farm and a 19th century milestone.

Area 24 Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down

There is considerable time depth present relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age sites being particularly rich. Ribbon like areas of unenclosed chalk downland survive across the area. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland pre 1800. Compared with other areas large blocks of parliamentary enclosure survive especially in the vicinity of Gratton fields with their distinctive regular linear form providing evidence of the 19th century enclosure of the landscape.



Location – Downland and Chalk Escarpment arching between Collingbourne Kingston to the West, Shalbourne to the North and Ashmansworth to the East

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly upper chalk with upper and lower chalk outcropping as narrow bands. Chalk upland with rolling topography dissected by dry valleys.

Landscape Character – Farmland woodland mosaic part of the Southern block of upland chalk.

Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe

Archaeological Character – There is a density of prehistoric archaeology in the area especially on the edge of chalk escarpment and higher chalk hill including on Hippenscombe Bottom, Maccombe Down and Wexcombe Hill. These are not as dense as recorded around the Avebury environs but include concentrations of Neolithic long barrows, for example, on Tidcombe Down, Fairmile Down and the Town Barrow. The area also has concentrations of Bronze Age round barrows on Wexcombe Down, Tidcombe Down, Scotspoor, North Hill Fairmile Down, as well as undated ploughed out ring ditches.

Dated later Bronze Age and Iron Age sites are infrequent though there are dense concentrations of field systems probably of a prehistoric or Roman origin. For example to the South of Collingbourne Ducis, on the escarpment edge at Hippenscombe, between Grafton and Wexcombe Down, and along the Ham Hill escarpment.

Roman traces are sparse but include an enclosure North-West of Spicey Buildings.

Early Medieval (Saxon traces) are more common including the Saxon burials at Boxley Copse and the modern villages with Saxon origins such as Shalbourne, Fosbury. There are many examples of Medieval village earthworks including abandoned sites and traces around existing villages again such as Shalbourne. Other Medieval sites on higher downland areas include Pillow Mounds and Ridge and Furrow on areas which are not density settled today such as Tidcombe Down and Ham Hill.



The Slay - This area marks the transition between downland and areas of open fields. The Medieval landscape was based around nucleated settlements set amongst open fields on the lower valley sides and utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downs. Most of this area cuts across linear parish boundaries which exploited this range of land uses.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Farmland, Scot's Poor – 20th century enclosed fields dominate including new fields created post 1900 which enclosed in the remaining large areas of downland. Other 20th century fields relate to the reorganisation of previous fields .

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland , Grafton – Compared with other areas large blocks of parliamentary enclosure survive especially in the vicinity of Grafton fields with their distinctive regular linear form.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – This area marks the transition between downland and areas of open fields. The Medieval landscape was based around nucleated settlements set amongst open fields on the lower valley sides and utilising common grazing on adjacent or nearby downs. Most of this area cuts across linear parishes which exploited this range of land uses. Some open field to the East of Cadley had been enclosed by 1700. This process is far less widespread than in adjacent areas and most of the open field and downland were enclosed through Act of Parliament in the early 19th

century or through post Parliamentary Enclosure. These created regular grid like fields in the landscape.

This was a relatively unwooded area although some areas of ancient woodland did exist in the East of the area on the steep slopes of Maccombe Down

Small local historic parks were created between 1700 and 1900 in the East of the area at Ham Spray House and around Ham manor house.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Ribbon -like areas of unenclosed chalk downland survive across the area associated with steep slopes not suitable for modern agriculture and with small recent regular woodland plantations.

20th century enclosed fields dominate including new fields created post 1900 which enclosed the remaining large areas of downland. Other 20th century fields relate to the reorganisation of previous fields. These are modern fields formed through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields.

The small historic parks and gardens survive in today's landscape

Compared with other areas large blocks of parliamentary enclosure survive especially in the vicinity of Gratton fields with their distinctive regular linear form.

Another 20th century creation is a large area of gallops near Lynden Down.

Historic Settlement Character – The area is only associated with two pre 1800 nucleated villages in the North at Shalbourne and Ham situated at the top of a steep combe and chalk stream which flows North West. These have undergone limited settlement expansion in the 20th century.

Historic Farmstead Character – There are only a few historic farm clusters in this area. Large courtyard farms, geared to large-scale arable production, are the dominant farmstead type. These include some of the earliest of this type (dating from the 18th century and earlier) in the country. Complete examples with one or more threshing barns, stabling, cartshed and a granary are very rare.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Concentrations of Neolithic long barrows.
- Concentrations of Bronze Age round barrows on Wexcombe Down, Tidcombe Down, Scotspoor, North Hill Fairmile Down.

- Largest hillfort in West Berkshire – Walbury Hill
- Dense concentrations of field systems probably of a prehistoric or Roman origin Roman, evidence including field systems and a Roman road.
- Medieval village earthworks.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks relating to Prehistory and the early Medieval period survive as earthworks so have a strong illustrative interest.

Surviving areas of open chalk downland and areas of surviving Parliamentary enclosure can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Sites investigated by antiquarians have a strong associative value.

Walbury Hill was excavated by O.G.S Crawford when he was a young man living locally

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with historic parks and gardens have architectural interest.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Buildings associated with historic parks and gardens have aesthetic value.

Combe Gibbet is a popular and long recognised local landmark – focus of famous 17th century murder case and 1940's film 'The Black Legend' directed by John Schlesinger

The Wayfarers Walk is a possible prehistoric trackway, now respected by a Right Of Way popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The historic landscape of this area is extremely coherent dominated by 20th century enclosure. Compared with other areas large blocks of parliamentary enclosure survive, especially in the vicinity of Graton fields with their distinctive regular linear form.

The small historic parks and gardens survive in today's landscape.

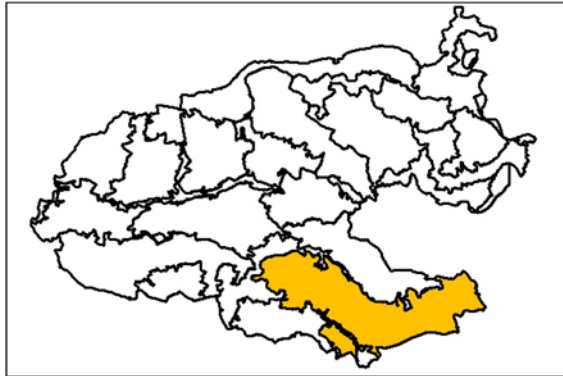
Ribbon like areas of unenclosed chalk downland survive across the area. These are an important historical survival representing a fraction of the former extent of chalk downland.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Neolithic and Early Bronze Age evidence being particular rich.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (32) are dominated by several Neolithic long barrows, multiple Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age hillforts and the Wansdyke. The Listed Buildings (56) are related to the historic settlement core. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 25: Linkenholt, Facombe & Hannington

There is an extensive area of Later Prehistoric field systems around Linkenholt and Facombe and to the East in Wiltshire, for example around Smay Down. Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields and open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use. There is evidence of the post medieval pottery industry at Inkpen



Location – Downland stretching between Oxenwood to the West and the edge of the AONB at Quidhampton and Upper Wootton to the East. It straddles the Wiltshire Hampshire border.

Geology and Topography – The geology is mainly middle and upper chalk. An elevated rolling chalk upland.

Landscape Character – Elevated chalk upland distinguished by chalk with flints with a strongly rolling land form dominated by arable farmland. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type 2: downland with woodland*

Archaeological Character – In the East on the dip slope behind the scarp as it runs across towards Kingsclere, there are two Neolithic long barrows and quite a number of features of Neolithic date clustered onto the open downland. This suggests that the downland landscape has been evolving as a farmed landscape from this time. Whilst no Bronze Age settlement has been found there are a number of undated simple enclosures which may yet be established to be of Bronze Age date. The field systems which have been plotted from cropmarks may in some cases have Bronze Age origins, and it remains possible that some elements of the evidence of early farming landscape structure may emerge. There are also quite a number of burial mounds in the area. Extensive Celtic field systems and numerous Iron Age settlements indicate that this area was farmed and settled in the Iron Age. There are a number of Roman sites, particularly on the edge of the Test in the South. However no villas have been found, and it might be possible to suggest that the farmed and settled landscape continues to evolve in the Roman period, being ‘newly settled’.

To the West the light and general spread of Mesolithic material, with a preference for areas close to water courses, suggests that the area was only lightly exploited. There is little evidence of Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement and landscape exploitation, although there is some settlement and burial mound evidence overlooking the Test.

This pattern continues into the Iron Age and the core of the character area probably remained under-exploited, perhaps suggesting a late evolution of this part of the landscape. However, there is an extensive area of Celtic field systems around Linkenholt and Facombe, and to the East in Wiltshire, for example around Smay Down. It is critical to understand whether these are of Iron Age or Roman in date as this may suggest when an agricultural landscape started to emerge. It is notable

that there is a relationship between the Celtic field systems embedded in the woods at Facombe and Celtic field systems still traceable within the present landscape.

Medieval activity relates to abandoned settlements for example around Chapel Cottages in Shalbourne.



Ashley Warren - The area was dominated by a Medieval pattern of nucleated dispersed settlements surrounded by open fields which exploited the open grazing of downland areas on higher ground.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Lane South of Ashmansworth – Areas of pre 1700 irregular fields are concentrated to the north of the area. These are irregularly-shaped fields and slotted into the framework of the landscape established by roads and tracks and open field strips, suggesting that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland Vernham Dean – There is a high survival of pre 1700 enclosure interspersed with reorganised and amalgamated fields.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The area was dominated by a Medieval pattern of nucleated dispersed settlements surrounded by open fields which exploited the open grazing of downland areas on higher ground. These were enclosed pre 1700. Areas of pre 1700 irregular fields are concentrated to the North of the area. These are irregularly-shaped fields and slotted into the framework of the landscape established by roads and tracks and open field strips, suggesting that they were enclosed on a gradual, piecemeal basis. The South and East of the area is associated with regular pre 1700 enclosure. These regular shaped fields were probably created following an agreement between local land-holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in common fields but obscure these earlier traces much more effectively. There are also small areas of assarts where woodland has been cleared in the centre of the area near Faccombe. Only small areas of parliamentary and post parliamentary enclosure were created, notably to the North of Whitchurch. It should be noted that whilst the field patterns may be dominated by pre 1700 enclosure, there are large scale frameworks to those field patterns which are clearly much older, certainly medieval, possibly Saxon, and in some places even older. The field patterns sit within a much older framework.

Ancient woodland was common with small blocks scattered across the landscape. Designed pre 1700 to 1900 parkland was less common than in other areas with small parklands being associated with Fosbury house for example.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – Ribbon like areas of unenclosed chalk downland survive across the North-East of the area associated with steep slopes not suitable for modern agriculture and with small recent regular woodland plantations.

There is a high survival of pre 1700 enclosure interspersed with reorganised and amalgamated fields. These are modern fields formed through the consolidation of existing, historic, enclosures into more regular holdings, usually to enable more efficient, mechanised arable agriculture. This type is usually created through a mixture of boundary removal and realignment of existing fields. The commonest origin of this type is where irregular boundaries of historic fields are straightened and more regularly-shaped fields are created in their place. There is usually some trace of the prior field-system visible in these modernised fields.

The small historic parks and gardens survive in today's landscape. On the North-East side of the area there is a mosaic of replanted ancient woodland and ancient woodland.

Historic Settlement Character – The historic settlement pattern is dispersed. Apart from the hamlet/farm clusters and isolated farms, pre 1800 settlement is rare and is represented by irregular row settlement in the North-West corner of the area around Inkpen Common and one nucleated settlement in the far Eastern side at Hannington. There has been limited post 1900 settlement infill and this is dispersed in nature focusing on the area around Ashmansworth.

Historic Farmstead Character – Large pre 1800 historic farmsteads are spread thinly throughout the area with notable concentrations in the far South-East and North-West. There is a concentration of hamlets and farm clusters related to the belt of dispersed woodland which runs between Buttermere and Litchfield.

A low density of farmsteads in the landscape, due to a large holding size by national standards and the concentration of farmsteads in villages and hamlets. Large courtyard farms, geared to large-scale arable production, are the dominant farmstead type. These include some of the earliest of this type (dating from the 18th century and earlier) in the country. Complete examples with one or more threshing barns, stabling, cartshed and a granary are very rare.

Courtyard plans present blank exteriors to surrounding settlements and landscapes, openings being concentrated on the elevations facing into the yards. Aisled barns are an iconic feature of the downland landscape, their integrity being dependent on their degree of structural completeness and the dominance of the expanse of the roof. Long straw style thatch roofing may be present, which is rare in a regional context. Boundary walls are dominant and critical to the setting, particularly of village-based farmsteads.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Two Neolithic long barrows and quite a number of **items** of Neolithic date cluster on the open downland.
- Number of undated simple enclosures which may yet be established to be of Bronze Age date
- There is an extensive area of Later Prehistoric field systems around Linkenholt and Facombe and to the East in Wiltshire for example around Smay Down.
- The Wansdyke - a linear earthwork ascribed in the Early Medieval period and associated with other sites of the same name in Wiltshire and Somerset
- Evidence of post medieval pottery industry at Inkpen

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks, from the Iron Age and Romano-British period have a strong illustrative interest. It is notable that there is a relationship between the Celtic field systems embedded in the woods at Facombe and Celtic field systems still traceable within the present landscape.

Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields and open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

The area was used during preparations for D-Day, including the construction of a replica gun battery for training purposes.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the dispersed settlement pattern, including large pre 1800 historic farmsteads, are spread thinly throughout the area with notable concentrations in the far South-East and North-West.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

N/A

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

There is a high survival of pre 1700 enclosure interspersed with reorganised and amalgamated fields.

Ribbon like areas of unenclosed chalk downland survive across the North-East of the area representing an important historical survival

The small historic parks and gardens survive in today's landscape.

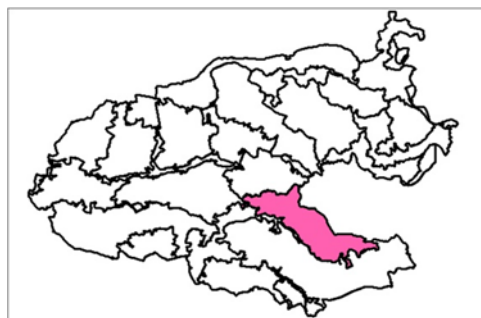
On the North-East side of the area there is a mosaic of replanted ancient woodland and ancient woodland.

There is strong time depth relating to the Iron Age period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (16) relate to Neolithic long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age hillforts, a Roman Road and a deserted Medieval village. The Listed Buildings (193) are related to the historic cores of the settlements in the area. There are no parklands on the register of parks and gardens.

Area 26: Highclere and Inkpen Common

Archaeological sites survive as earthworks on the chalk scarp, dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British period. Although about half of the historic fields have been modified, large areas of earlier pre 1700 enclosures have been left largely unaltered and are important survivals of early Post-Medieval land use.



Location – Area South of Hungerford in the East of the AONB. It is bounded by chalk escarpment to the West as far South as Kingsclere. The North of the area is composed of a series of valleys of Kennet tributaries and the watershed plateaux between them. The eastern edge is formed by the AONB boundary. To the South the area includes the escarpment edge at Watership Down and the outlier of Beacon Hill.

Geology and Topography – In the North the majority of the area is composed of Reading Beds and overlain by London Clays. Some of the higher watershed ridges are capped by Bagshot Beds with localised deposits of plateau gravels. The South-East of the area rises to areas of lower, middle chalk with upper greensand. There is a complex micro topography.

Landscape Character – A lowland landscape with complex micro topography, extensive woodland cover, remnant heaths and parkland. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 8E: Highclere Lowlands and Heath.*

Archaeological Character – Limited evidence from the Mesolithic occurs above the streams and suggests at least some exploitation of this area, although it is peripheral to the rich Mesolithic of the Kennet valley. There is no evidence of Neolithic settlement, although some artefacts have been found and so for much of prehistory the area was extensively but not intensively exploited (e.g. hunting and herding). The limited archaeological evidence indicates suggests this continued through the Bronze Age and Iron Age. The dispersed settlement and the multiple tracks and paths which indicate an open landscape seems to suggest that the landscape has only recently evolved from the Medieval period. Indeed in the Roman period there is only one site recorded, at Horris Hill, and although this may have been a significant site, it perhaps represents a small encroachment onto unenclosed land, or perhaps it is a site associated with a hunting landscape. The Medieval evolution of the landscape, with enclosure of common land and woodland is apparent in the historic landscape character of the area. The presence of deer parks reflects the forest status of the area, and has connections to the Bishop of Winchester as a significant local landowner. Whilst this area does not have a rich archaeology, the archaeology of Medieval landscape features and glimpses of Medieval landscape are higher than in most places and include traces of ridge and furrow, moated manors and motte and bailey castles.

There is however a significant block of chalk ridge along the Southern edge which has a much more dramatic archaeology. There is some evidence of Neolithic occupation on the chalk dip slope to the South, but there is no direct evidence on the scarp to the West (although to the West and outside this area is a Neolithic long barrow at Coombe Gibbet overlooking the Kennet Valley).

In the Bronze Age there are burial mounds on the scarp and in the Iron Age there are two important hill fort sites on the scarp, overlooking the gap in the scarp where the A34 runs and which will have been an important route way. To the South of the scarp there is evidence of later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems and settlement. It seems likely that the small chalk area was exploited from the Neolithic as farmed and settled land, and that the scarp represents the edge between that and the adjacent less intensively exploited land that forms the bulk of this character area. This area has a richer archaeological potential, and may be associated with ritual and burial sites on the high dominant scarp.



Woodland, Inkpen Common - There are no conclusive traces of an open field system in the area to the North and East of Highclere and the Medieval landscape seems to have been characterised by small fields interspersed with commons and woods

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Parkland, Highclere – Several parklands were found in the area, most being small in size, but one very large park was established at Highclere Park. Highclere started as a deer park established by the early 12^h century. A mansion and formal gardens were constructed in the 17th century, and later its grounds were enlarged creating an early-mid 18th century landscape park.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Watership Down – South and East of Highclere and Sidown Hill and on the far eastern edge of the area the historic grain of the landscape is different. The historic landscape character has more in common with neighbouring downland areas. The Medieval landscape was composed of communities exploiting common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Historic Landscape Trajectory – There are no conclusive traces of an open field system in the area to the North and East of Highclere, and the Medieval landscape seems to have been characterised by small fields interspersed with commons and woods. A dense network of roads and tracks ran through the area and these were heavily influenced by the complex micro topography within the area. The interplay of topography, roads, fields and woods gave a very irregular and small scale grain to the landscape. This suggests late enclosure in a landscape which had high levels of access which had to be retained during the enclosure process.

Most fields were small and irregularly-shaped suggesting that their enclosure was undertaken in a piecemeal manner by numerous farmers over a long period of time, but probably from the medieval period.

Their grain becomes finer as you move South towards Highclere Park and here in the area around Great Pen Wood the fields have been identified as assarts (or clearances) created from the ancient woodland. Several small-medium sized areas of heath, used for common grazing, were found amidst the intimate network of fields and roads; the largest was Inkpen Common, but also included Hatt Common and The Chase. Commons and woods were the only parts of the area that had not been enclosed into fields by the 18th century excepting the chalk downland to the South of Highclere. Much of the common heath was enclosed by Act of Parliament in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and only a stub of Inkpen Common remained after this process. This was a more wooded area prior to 1800 than adjacent parts of the AONB and much of it was formed of discrete irregular blocks of woodland. About half of the woodland was ancient (Medieval or earlier) and it was spread across the area in medium sized irregular blocks, much of which was coppice.

Other old woodlands were also widespread across the area and existed as small and large blocks. These were sited both adjacent to ancient woods and also as discrete woods, the larger examples creating wooded areas in their own right, such as Curr and Hightree Copses South-East of Kintbury.

Several parklands were found in the area, most being small in size, but one very large park was established at Highclere Park. The smaller parks were typified by large farmsteads, manor houses and minor gentry's homes set within a few acres of landscaped grounds. Highclere dominates the centre of the area. Highclere started as a deer park established by the early 12th century. A mansion and formal gardens were constructed in the 17th century, and later its grounds were enlarged creating an early-mid 18th century rococo pleasure grounds and landscape park, enlarged and remodelled during 1770s by Henry Herbert incorporating designs by Capability Brown. The area also

includes a small part of the Western extent of Hamstead Park which also started life as a Medieval deer park.

South and East of Highclere and Sidown Hill and on the far Eastern edge of the area the historic grain of the landscape is different, with landscape character which has more in common with neighbouring downland areas. The Medieval landscape was composed of communities exploited common grazing on adjacent or nearby downland. Early piecemeal enclosure were still common below the escarpment but were a lot less irregular than the fields to the East. They are Medieval or early Post Medieval in date and are likely to be the result of phases of planned, but undocumented, enclosure. Large areas of open land also survived to South and East of Highclere and Sidown Hill. These represent a pattern of open fields with common downland grazing on the escarpment above. Most of the open field and some downland had been enclosed into private fields by the start of the 18th century.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - Agricultural changes have led to reorganisation of fieldscapes to create fields more suited to modern, mechanised farming. Although about half of the historic fields have been modified, large chunks of early enclosures have been left largely unaltered. Parliamentary enclosures do not survive as well and most have been reorganised or have come under different land-uses. A growing number of paddocks have been created in this area. Most have been created on an ad-hoc basis and cluster around settlements, such as at Inkpen. Paddocks are often for hobby/pet ponies and, as they are mostly associated with settlements, they can have the effect of suburbanising areas around villages.

A big increase in tree-cover has occurred despite some clearance of historic woodlands. Large plantations have been created and woodland regeneration and colonisation has led to the development of secondary woodlands. Several plantations were established on Parliamentary fields. This may have been because the fields that were created from heath were too poor to support long-term agriculture. Most plantations are rectilinear and sited next to ancient and old woodlands and fit into the grain of the landscape reasonably well. Some areas of ancient woodland have been cleared to create fields and housing. Much larger blocks of ancient woodland have been cleared of mature tree cover and replanted with other species losing historic features and much of their biodiversity value.

Some parks have barely been altered, such as Kirby House, whilst others have almost totally disappeared. Most parks have seen some degrees of contraction in area occupied and many former parkland areas are now fields and under arable cultivation.

Historic Settlement Character – Settlement was fairly dense and comprised dispersed settlements, small hamlets and poly-focal settlements. The majority of the dispersed settlements were common-edge settlements, such as Hell Green at Inkpen. These were irregular, unplanned, settlements that had grown-up on the fringes of the common and represent squatter occupation by those wishing to exploit the common's resources. Such settlements were usually "unofficial" and often lacked a formal name. Many took the name of the common that they sat on the edge of, for instance, Crockham Heath. Poly-focal settlements are also a feature of this area and Inkpen and Hamstead

Marshall are the best examples. Inkpen was made up of four different settlement nuclei, and Hamstead Marshall of three nuclei strung along the road between Kintbury and Crockham Heath.

Settlement growth is patchy across the area and varied in character. Some new housing has been constructed at historic settlements and farms whilst building at previously undeveloped locations has created new settlements in the landscape. Most growth has been around Inkpen, where all of its historic settlement nuclei, including those around the former common, have been foci of housing growth. The majority of growth at Inkpen took place between the 1970s and 1990s and is a mix of large family houses and small-scale housing developments; many now have swimming pools and tennis courts. The expansion of Inkpen has linked up its previously distinct historic settlement nuclei and created a sprawling modern settlement. There has also been some growth around West Woodhay and Hamstead Marshall with similarly large homes constructed between their historic nuclei and around their fringes.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms were also an important component of the settlement pattern and their distribution, size and names are different to that seen in adjacent areas. Farms were generally smaller, more frequent and more widely distributed across the landscape than in neighbouring HECAs. Over half the farms recorded on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area have names referring to persons, such as Vanner’s Farm, as opposed to place, topographic or other names. This suggests that they were established by numerous individual farmers living on and cultivating their own farms.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- There are Bronze Age burial mounds on the scarp and two Iron Age hill fort sites on the scarp. These overlook the gap in the scarp where the A34 runs and which was an important route way.
- To the South of the scarp there is evidence of later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems and settlement.

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks on the chalk scarp, dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British period have a strong illustrative interest.

The two historic parklands have a strong illustrative and associative interest,

Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields and open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Lord Carnarvon was born at Highclere Castle and buried on Beacon Hill

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the dispersed settlement pattern including small pre 1800 historic farmsteads are spread thinly throughout the area with notable concentrations in the far South East and North West. The majority of the dispersed settlements were common-edge settlements, such as Hell Green at Inkpen.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The two historic parklands have a strong aesthetic interest.

Highclere Castle as location for 'Downton Abbey' – modern artistic/aesthetic interest?

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

Although about half of the historic fields have been modified, large chunks of early enclosures have been left largely unaltered.

Some parks have barely been altered, such as Kirby House, whilst others have almost totally disappeared.

A big increase in tree-cover has occurred despite some clearance of historic woodlands.

There is strong time depth relating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (19) relate to Bronze Age round barrows, Iron age Hillforts and enclosures and the Wansdyke. The Listed Buildings (131) are spread throughout the area and relate to cottages, historic farmstead and designed features. There are 2 parklands on the register of parks and gardens Highclere Park, a late 18th century landscape park and Inkpen House which has a late 17th century/early 18th century formal garden.

Area 27: Chute Forest & Faccombe

Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields, ancient woodland and open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early post-medieval and earlier land use associated with the Medieval exploitation of Chute Forest. Archaeological earthworks dating to the Prehistoric and Roman period survive under woodland and on chalk downland.



Location – Area adjacent to the Southern AONB boundary and straddling the Wiltshire, Hampshire border. The area is bounded to the West by Collingbourne Wood and the North by the top of the North facing chalk escarpment. The area abuts the Bourne Valley to the East and the AONB boundary to the South. Villages include Upper and Lower Chute.

Geology and Topography – Geology is dominated by Upper Chalk. Topographically varied rolling chalk hills bounded to the North by a steep chalk escarpment.

Landscape Character – Part of the Southern block of chalk upland, capped by clays and presenting a varied landform of high rolling hills cut by steep sided dry valleys; a farmland-woodland mosaic. Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Type 2: downland with Woodland.

Archaeological Character – There is a Neolithic long barrow at Wick Down on the western edge and one towards the southern edge of the area and some Neolithic sites around Andover which suggest that the landscape to the South and West was settled. However it is likely that in the Neolithic the area itself was not intensively exploited, possibly used just for hunting and herding. This is reinforced in the Bronze Age, where burial mounds are richly clustered along the river valley to the South but infrequent within the character area itself. However by the Iron Age a range of sites are emerging and Celtic fields systems laid out which suggest that the landscape starts to be settled in this period. Interestingly, the Roman period is marked by a series of Roman villas and this may point to a landscape that is settled and evolves principally in the Roman period, rather than one that evolves out of a rich palimpsest of earlier settlement, which seems to be the case further South. There is potential for undiscovered earlier possible prehistoric features within the woodland which has existed since the Medieval period. Known recorded Medieval archaeology is limited and includes the pale of the Medieval deer park in Collingbourne Wood, it is likely that many other features relating the legacy of the Medieval hunting forest also await discovery.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – The area coincides with the Medieval hunting area of Chute Forest which lay partly in Hampshire and partly in Wiltshire and was first mentioned in historical sources in 1156. At its greatest extent on the 13th century it enclosed an area of over 100 square miles. A perambulation of 1300 reduced the limits to an area nearly co-terminus with the modern parish of Chute Forest although outside these bounds the manor of Ludgershall remained subject to forest

law. Collingbourne wood was disafforested in 1330 and the remaining areas of the forest were all disafforested by 1661. Source: A history of the County of Wiltshire: Victoria County History of Wiltshire Volume 4. The importance of this legacy to the historic landscape of the area is due to the effect of the special laws which governed the area and the gradual break up of the forest by disafforestation leading to gradual creation of large areas of Medieval and Post Medieval enclosure.



Collingbourne Woods

A track heading North between Merrylawne Copse and Whittle Copse – representing the core of the ancient Medieval Chute Forest

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



Downland, Upper Chute – the mosaic of ancient woodland, unenclosed downland and surviving semi-irregular enclosure is a feature of this area

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Farmland, Tangley – Boundaries are associated with thick hedgerows and mature trees. Away from wooded areas the sense of openness remains.

© Copyright [Andrew Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Prior to 1700 this area was dominated by two distinct areas of ancient woodland centre on Collingbourne Woods to the West and Dole Wood and Blagden Copse to the East, the latter of which has seen large areas of woodland clearance post 1700. Smaller areas of ancient woodland were also located on the steeper sides of the chalk downland hills. On the fringes of the woodland were areas of open chalk downland, common land and wastes. This historic character survives in small pockets of open chalk downland on the edge of woodlands. Between the two areas of woodland were large areas of pre 1700 enclosure marking the break up of the forest area. This includes assarts to the South of Collingbourne woods, regular later enclosure to the North and irregular possibly older in the centre and South of the area.

Present Day Historic Landscape Character - The area is heterogeneous in character, with replanted ancient woodland to the East and West sandwiching a mosaic of post 1900 and pre 1700 enclosure and parkland.

The pre 1900 enclosure consists of two types, modified pre 1700 enclosure and amalgamated pre 1700 fields. These are interspersed with pre 1700 enclosure which has escaped modification consisting of regular later enclosure to the North and irregular possibly older in the centre and South of the area.

There is only one small pocket of 1700 to 1900 parliamentary enclosures surviving around Tanglely, much of which was subsequently modified post 1900.

Areas of open unimproved chalk grassland survive on the steeper chalk escarpments on the fringes of the woodland.

Smaller pockets of ancient woodland also survive to the North on the steep sides of chalk downland as woodland hangers and on the clay tops while much of the core of the Medieval hunting forest has been replanted post 1700, new sinuous and linear areas of woodland have also been created in the 1700 to 1900 period.

Another distinctive feature is the area of post 1600 parkland including that surrounding Biddesden House, Chute Lodge and Conholt Park.

Historic parish boundaries are closely related to the boundaries and woodlands of the former ancient hunting forest. No major roads cross the area, access to the forest, a royal forest, may for long have been restricted, and roads ran along its boundaries. The centre of the area is associated with a dense network of lanes with indicative place names such as Forest Lane, or Lodge Lane. The line of former Roman roads is also preserved in the line of existing roads and rights of way forming the only linear route (North-South) across the landscape.

Historic Settlement Character – The settlement pattern consists of dispersed hamlets and farmsteads along the edge of the lanes mentioned above; these are arranged in an East-West direction between the two areas of woodland; only the villages of Upper and Lower Chute have developed enough to become nucleated. Built forms included chalk, chalk cob and thatch with some timber framing.

Historic Farmstead Character – Farms and farm buildings do not start to appear in this area until the 18th century, representing expansion of arable farming into downland areas and the replacement of the former sheep dominated agricultural regimes, even then they are isolated and small, associated with loose courtyard plans or represented by single field barns.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Neolithic long barrow at Wick Down
- A range of Iron Age sites and field systems
- Series of Roman villas

Historic Interest

Archaeological sites surviving as earthworks under woodland or on chalk downland, have a strong illustrative interest.

The historic parklands have a strong illustrative and associative interest.

Surviving areas of unaltered pre 1700 fields, ancient woodland and open chalk downland can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use.

Architectural Interest

Buildings associated with the dispersed settlement pattern. Built forms included chalk, chalk cob and thatch with some timber framing.

Aesthetic and artistic interest

The historic parklands have a strong aesthetic interest.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The area is heterogeneous in character, with replanted ancient woodland to the East and West sandwiching a mosaic of post 1900 and pre 1700 enclosure and parkland.

Areas of open unimproved chalk grassland survive on the steeper chalk escarpments on the fringes of the woodland. Smaller pockets of ancient woodland also survive to the North.

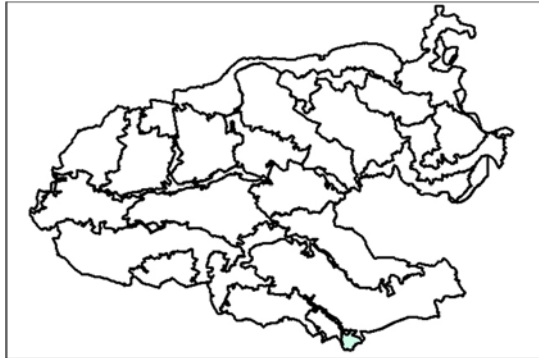
Another distinctive feature is the areas of post 1600 parkland

There is strong time depth relating to the Iron Age and Roman period.

Designated Heritage - Scheduled Monuments (5) are dominated by Iron Age archaeology including Berisbury camp, Iron age enclosures and field systems. There are also several Bronze Age round barrows. The Listed Buildings (57) are related to grand houses (Grade I Chute Lodge, and Biddesden House) designed parkland features, historic farmsteads and Upper and Lower Chute. There is one parkland on the register of parks and gardens at Biddesdon (Grade II), an 18th century pleasure park with formal 18th century terraces and 19th century kitchen garden.

Area 28 Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park

Iron Age and Roman settlement and burials are known in the Bourne Valley particularly at the southern end. Medieval archaeology includes the remains of the Medieval deer park related to Hurstbourne Park, which in turn became a designed 18th century park.



Geology and Topography – The river cuts through the Upper Chalk exposing Middle Chalk on the valley sides. Valley gravel deposits overlay the valley floor. The valley has a distinct form with a flat, narrow floor enclosed by relatively steep sides

Landscape Character – Narrow valley floor and abruptly rising valley sides. This is an enclosed and intimate landscape. *Source: North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Area 7C: Bourne Valley*

Archaeological Character – This valley is a tributary of the Test. The utilisation of the valley through time reflects the nature of the exploitation of the adjacent landscapes as well as the resources of the valley. The valley floor was a focus of occupation and route ways, farming and exploiting the chalk land either side. This might be the case from the Neolithic, but certainly Bronze Age burial mounds are known and Iron Age and Roman settlement and burials are known in the Bourne valley particularly at the southern end.

Medieval archaeology includes the remains of the Medieval deer park related to Hurstbourne Park.

Later Post Medieval archaeology includes watermeadows, and the Landscape Park and pleasure grounds of Hurstbourne Park.

The valley has been a route and a settled area from earliest times and the potential for the archaeology of past settlement is high.

Historic Landscape Trajectory – Formerly the valley bottom was dominated by pre 1700 enclosed meadows along each side of the river punctuated by small nucleated settlements. The meadows are formed of sinuous fields. These were probably originally for hay cultivation but are now mainly grazing and are likely to be Medieval or early Post Medieval in origin. In some instances they may have enclosed earlier open Medieval meadows which were used in combination with open fields which were outside of this area on the valley sides. In some areas these were interspersed with pre 1700 regular enclosure. These were probably created following an agreement between local land holders and farmers to rationalise and enclose holdings in the common fields.

The South of the area is associated with the former Medieval deer park at Hurstbourne. This was near a former area of ancient woodland adjacent to which were open areas of common land. These represent areas of common grazing in the valley bottom. The park was transformed into a designed landscape in the 18th century.

Between 1700 and 1900 century many of the enclosed meadows were replaced with water meadows with bedworks, channels and sluices created as part of the sheep-corn system of agriculture. These went out of use in the beginning of the 20th century.



The River Bourne, Hurstbourne Priors -

Formerly the valley bottom was dominated by pre 1700 enclosed meadows along each side of the river punctuated by small nucleated settlements.

© Copyright [Chris Talbot](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).



St Mary Bourne – The valley was historically densely settled with clusters of nucleated settlements at the top end of the valley with nucleated regular row settlements arranged along the course of the valley bottom. Buildings are largely of the local vernacular brick and tile.

© Copyright [Colin Smith](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Hurstbourne Tarrant – The Pre 1700 enclosed meadows are still the dominant historic landscape type in the river valley where settlement infilling hasn't occurred. The water meadows were enclosed in the 20th century but many of the channels and bedworks remain as relicts in the landscape.

© Copyright [nick macneill](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under a [Creative Commons Licence](#).

Present Day Historic Landscape Character – The Pre 1700 enclosed meadows are still the dominant historic landscape type in the river valley where settlement infilling hasn't occurred. The water meadows were enclosed in the 20th century but many of the channels and bedworks remain as relicts in the landscape. Hurstbourne Park remains as a dominant feature associated with an area of replanted ancient woodland.

Historic Settlement Character – The valley was historically densely settled with clusters of nucleated settlements at the top end of the valley with nucleated regular row settlements arranged along the course of the valley bottom. Buildings are largely of the local vernacular brick and tile.

There has been significant infilling of settlement in the 20th century which has eroded the original nucleated settlement pattern and replacing it with long linear settlements either side of the river course.

Historic Farmstead Character – Isolated individual historic farmsteads are rare with most being situated on the edge of the historic settlements. Large courtyard farms, geared to large-scale arable production, are the dominant farmstead type. These include some of the earliest of this type (dating from the 18th century and earlier) in the country. Complete examples with one or more threshing barns, stabling, cart shed and a granary are very rare.

Courtyard plans present blank exteriors to surrounding settlements and landscapes, openings being concentrated on the elevations facing into the yards. The aisled barn is an iconic feature of the downland landscape, its integrity depending on the degree of structural completeness and the dominance of the expanse of the roof. Long straw style thatched roofing, which is rare in a regional context. Boundary walls are dominant and critical to the setting, particularly of village-based farmsteads.

Special Qualities and features of Significance

Archaeological Interest

- Bronze Age burial mounds
- Iron Age and Roman settlement and burials are known in the Bourne valley particularly at the Southern end.
- Medieval archaeology including the remains of the Medieval deer park related to Hurstbourne Park
- Later Post Medieval archaeology includes water meadows.

Historic Interest

Many prehistoric sites surviving as earthworks and have a very strong illustrative value as they are such dominant feature. Early Medieval and later earthworks in the valley bottom also survive

Surviving areas of pre 1700 enclosed meadows, and water meadows can be used to illustrate early pre modern land use. Earlier Medieval activity can also be illustrated through surviving buildings and earthworks.

Hurstbourne Park has a strong associative value with the designer Thomas Archer.

Architectural Interest

Historic buildings associated with Medieval valley floor settlements and the Medieval planned town of Marlborough. Vernacular chalk cob buildings.

Buildings associated with historic park at Hurstbourne

Aesthetic and artistic interest

Historic parks and garden at Hurstbourne have an important aesthetic interest.

Coherence, Rarity and Time depth

The Pre 1700 enclosed meadows are still the dominant historic landscape type in the river valley where settlement infilling hasn't occurred. The water meadows were enclosed in the 20th century but many of the channels and bedworks remain as relicts in the landscape.

Hurstbourne Park remains as a coherent feature associated with an area of replanted ancient woodland.

There is strong time depth relating to the prehistoric period with Bronze Age and Iron Age evidence being present, Roman archaeology is also present but the majority of the valley is dominated by early and late Medieval archaeology.

Designated Heritage – The one Scheduled Monuments (1) is a Bronze Age round barrow. The Listed Buildings (162) are related to the valley bottom settlement. There is 1 parkland on the register of parks and gardens at Hurstbourne. The park was emparked in 1332 and documented in 1558 as comprising orchards and gardens. In about 1712 Thomas Archer re-landscaped the park for John Farley. Further alterations were made during the late 18th century and early 19th century.

Section 3: Methodology

Creating Historic Landscape Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs AONB

The methodology used for creating the Historic Landscape Character Areas was based on a literature review and pilot methodology previously developed by the author for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk/conserving_heap_area.html [last accessed 10.10.12]

The North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset is the primary evidence base used to identify Historic Character Areas. The original dataset and report was created for the area of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the whole of the district of Wessex Berkshire (completed in 2006 by Melissa Conway). The dataset has been subsequently cut to the AONB boundary and a North Wessex Downs specific HLC report created (Rouse 2012).

The methodology used to map, create and identify Historic Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs AONB has six distinct stages.

Step One: Collating Existing Historic Character Areas and Zones

20 Historic Character Areas (with 91 nested Historic Character Zones) have already been identified for West Berkshire district council. These overlap with the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape and the boundaries of these areas. A GIS dataset of these areas was used to inform the location of the Historic Landscape Character Areas in the East of the AONB.

Step Two: Mapping present day Historic Landscape Character

A GIS map was created which displayed the main categories of current Historic Landscape Types existing in the present day landscape, at an appropriate scale for the whole AONB. When looking at this dataset at a more detailed scale these categories can be broken down into their constituent sub types to look at more local trends in the data.

Step Three: Mapping Time depth in the Landscape

A GIS map was created which highlighted the main traces of past land use that survive in the landscape. This allows spatial patterns to be distinguished at an AONB scale.

Step Four: Identifying trend areas

These two maps were used in combination in a GIS system and as paper based print outs to identify areas in the landscape with common historic landscape attributes representing a combination of the visually dominant current Historic Landscape Types present and the patterns of past land use.

The areas selected could be either homogenous in character, with similar current Historic Landscape Types or similar evidence for time depth of past human land use (represented by areas of the maps that are all one colour) or heterogeneous in character reflecting an area which has a large variety of current Historic Landscape Types or a variety of previous land uses (represented by more mixed areas on the maps).

North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation
Present day Historic Landscape Character

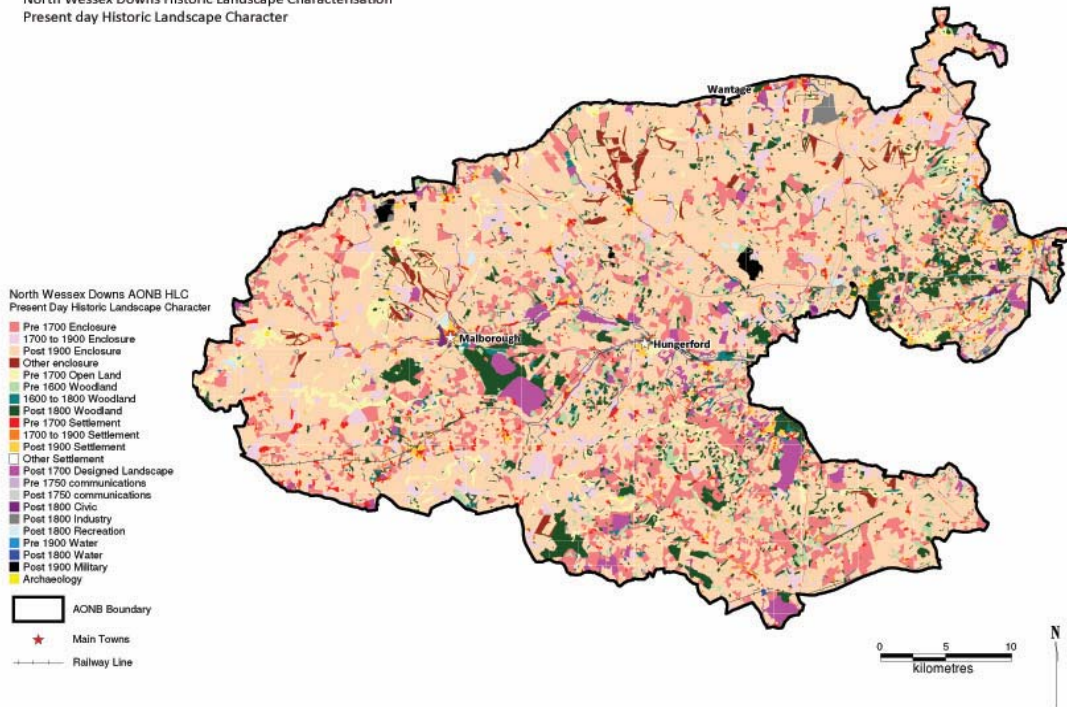


Figure Six: Present Day Historic Landscape Character

North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation
Timedepth in the Landscape

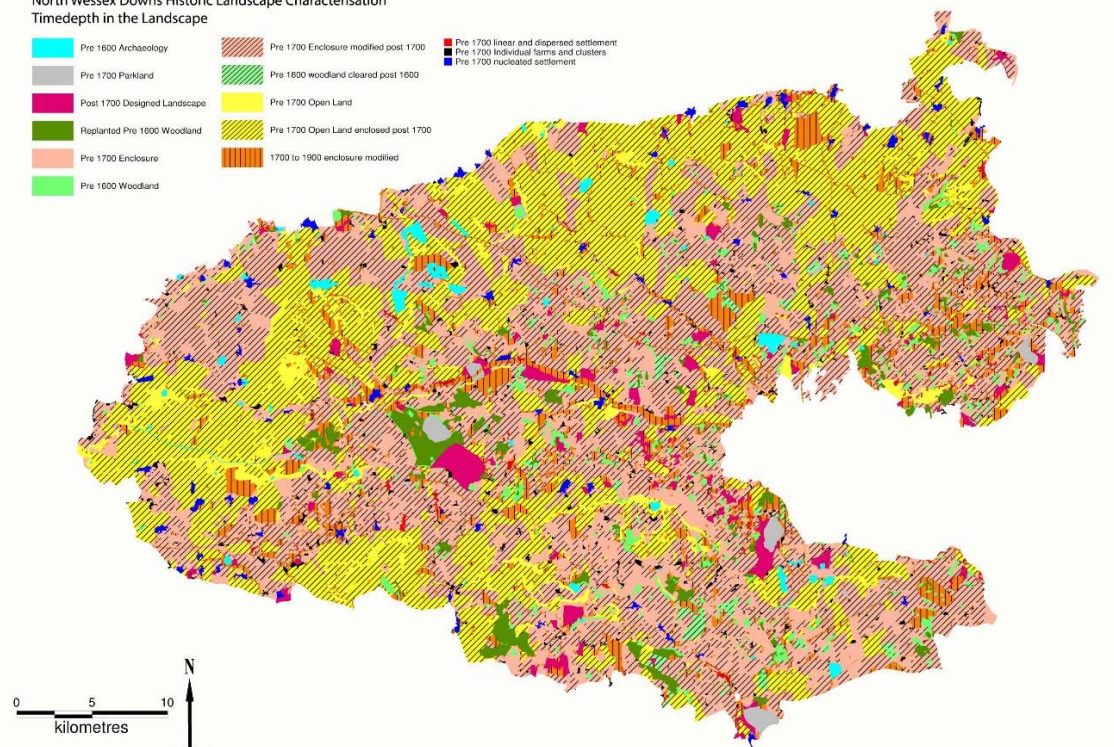


Figure Seven: Time depth in the Historic Landscape

Naturally an area could be comprised of a combination of any one of these (e.g. similar current Historic Landscape Type but with a mixed pattern of previous land uses) and professional judgement is used to determine which trends to follow; the rationale for each decision made can be set down to maintain transparency of method. These trend areas were then captured in a GIS dataset. These areas could be cut by other areas where appropriate. The trend areas created were geographically seamless and matched the underlying Historic Landscape Characterisation polygons. This step produced 63 separate trend areas which are similar in scale to the West Berkshire Historic Character Areas (HCZs)

North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation : Present Day Landscape Character overlain by Trend Areas

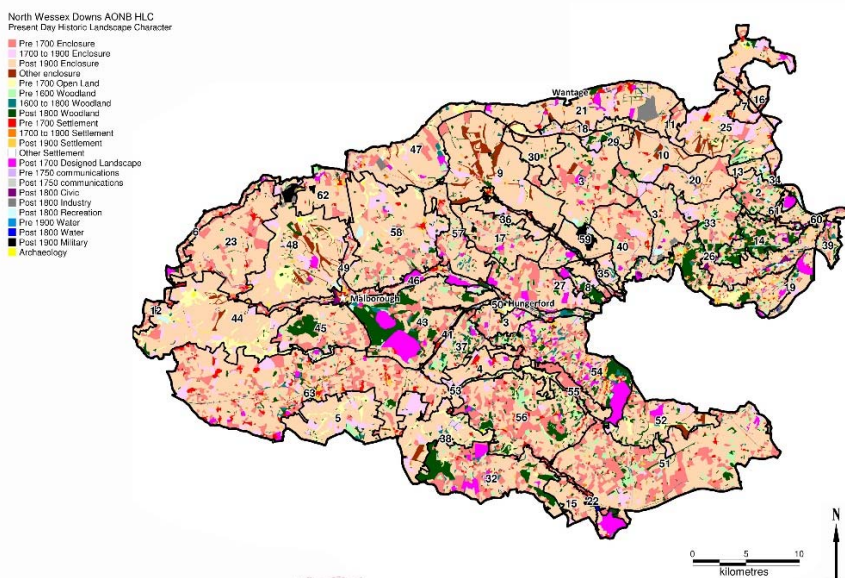


Figure Eight: Present day Landscape character overlain by Trend Areas

North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Characterisation: Time depth in the Landscape overlain by trend areas

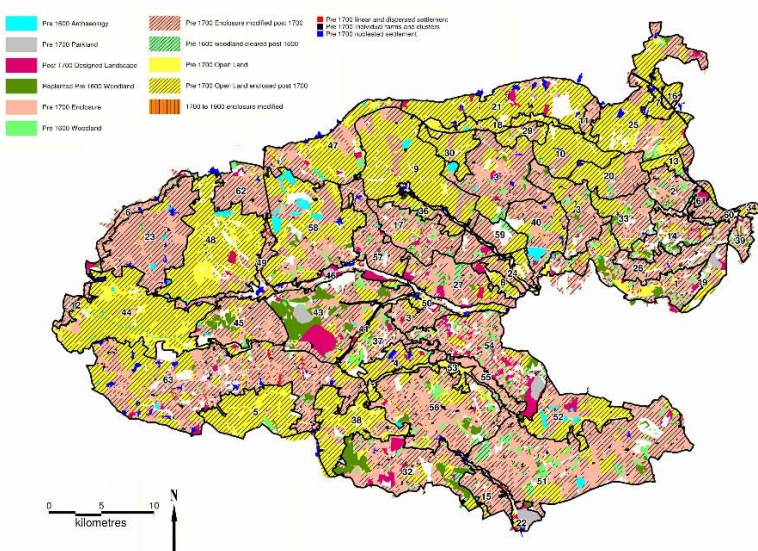


Figure Nine: Time depth in the landscape overlain by Trend Areas

Step Five: Creating Historic Landscape Character Areas

The final number of Historic Landscape Character Areas needs to be governed by striking a balance between capturing detail and effective communication. The trend areas were therefore grouped together into composite trend areas by allocating areas with similar characteristics, a common number and a common colour.

These groupings were not necessarily geographically contiguous, but were instead used to identify shared characteristics

North Wessex Downs Historic Landscape Character Trend Areas

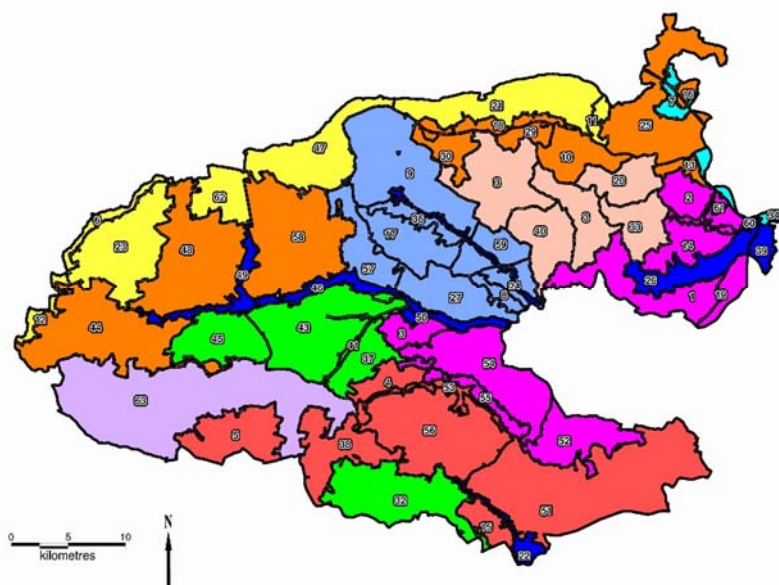


Figure Ten: Historic Landscape Character Trend Areas

These were then used to identify the final 28 Historic Landscape Character Areas.

Stage Six: Gathering other material to assess and justify grouped areas

The coherence of these Historic Landscape Character Types and Areas then needed to be tested. This was achieved by gathering together a range of relevant material to assess whether the tentative grouping retained coherence. A rapid written description of each Historic Landscape Character area was undertaken.

Information was recorded in a table as follows:

Name of Area	<i>Potential descriptive name</i>
Number	<i>1A or similar</i>
Linkages	<i>Other areas in grouping, potential combinations with other areas</i>
Historic Landscape Types	<i>Historic Landscape Types present</i>

Iconic Sites	<i>Key sites and visitor attractions</i>
Key Places	<i>Key settlement, places, woodlands etc within the area</i>
Designated Archaeology	<i>Pattern in Designated Archaeology</i>
Settlement Pattern	<i>Settlement morphology and date</i>
Archaeology	<i>Notable archaeological sites or trends in data</i>

Stage Seven: Wider consultation on the draft Historic Character Areas

Maps of the potential draft areas were presented to the project steering group and AONB team whose opinions were sought on the appropriateness of the areas and their number. Changes were then made to the areas and their boundaries as appropriate.

Stage Eight: Modifying the Grouped Areas

The assessments and descriptions were used to list potential issues with the coherency of the draft areas and their boundaries. An overview of possible changes at this stage was undertaken and a series of final Historic Landscape Character Areas created.

Describing Historic Landscape Character Areas for the North Wessex Downs AONB

Once an Historic Character Area has been identified it needs to be accompanied by text which identifies and describes the main characteristics of each area.

This description should include both the nationally important and unique but also commonplace and locally distinctive. It should encapsulate the main features of the Historic Environment in its widest form and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent. It should aim to be comprehensive but also in the interests of usability concise. The descriptions for each area should be consistent in order to allow easy communication. They should also capture the imagination of the reader, creating a mental picture of the area in question.

Stage One: Review and collation of Comprehensive Datasets available

Any descriptive framework depends on the sources of information which are available.

It is important that the individual Historic Character Areas are described in a comprehensive and systematic manner therefore as a first stage information was collated from datasets which cover the whole AONB.

- Internationally Designated Heritage

- **World Heritage Sites** - World Heritage Sites are places of outstanding universal value to all humanity and are of great importance for the conservation of mankind's cultural and natural heritage. They need to be preserved for future generations, as part of a common universal heritage. A GIS dataset of World Heritage Sites can be obtained from English Heritage and this was cropped for the AONB. There is 1 World Heritage Site in the AONB.

- **Nationally Designated Heritage**

The national system of heritage protection has two parts, firstly identifying heritage through designation and secondly protecting it through the planning system by using different kinds of consent. These datasets can be used to identify nationally important historic and archaeological features, sites and buildings in the AONB.

- **Scheduled Ancient Monuments** - Scheduling is the only legal protection specifically for nationally important archaeological sites. The word 'monument' includes 200 classes of features ranging from burial mounds to modern features such as pillboxes. The current legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, supports a formal system of Scheduled Monument Consent for any work to a designated monument. A GIS dataset of SAMs can be obtained from English Heritage and this was cropped for the AONB. There are 558 SAMs in the AONB.
- **Listed Buildings** –These are nationally important buildings of special architectural or historical value, which have a group value or have close historical association with important buildings or events. These buildings are protected through the use of Listed Buildings Consent. Listed buildings are given one of three categories:
 - Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important.
 - Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest.
 - Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest.
 A GIS dataset of Listed Buildings can be obtained from English Heritage and this was cropped for the AONB. This includes details on the buildings name, ref number and grade. There are 3886 Listed Buildings in the AONB, 17 Grade I and 171 Grade II*.
- **Register of Parks and Gardens** - National record of the historic parks and gardens, known as the Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. Inclusion of an historic park or garden on the Register in itself brings no additional statutory controls, but they should be recognised in Local Authority plans. A GIS dataset of Listed Buildings can be obtained from English Heritage and this was cropped for the AONB. There are 14 Parks and Gardens in the AONB on the Register.

- **Register of Battlefields** – The English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 43 important English battlefields. Its purpose is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their significance. There is 1 Historic Battlefield in the AONB on the Register.

- **Sites and Monuments Record and Historic Environment Records**

The AONB covers four counties West Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire. These each have their own archaeological record which is either called a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) or a Historical Environment Record (HER). These are the same kinds of database, HER being an augmentation of an SMR containing a wider scope of data, such as information on buildings or the inclusion of Urban Archaeological Databases. SMRs commonly evolve into HERs when a certain data standard is reached. Most HERs/SMRs maintain three types of records: monuments (sites and finds), events and sources/archives. Sites within a SMR/HER are given a monument type. These are compiled using the MIDAS (A Manual and Data Standard for Monument Inventories) data standard (MIDAS Heritage: 2007), in association with other shared reference data such as National Monuments Record The Thesaurus of Monument Types (English Heritage 1999). This means that there will be a high level of similarity between the databases of different HERs/SMRs.

- **Conservation Areas**

Local authorities have the power to designate as conservation areas any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This 'specialness' is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance as is the case with listing. Within a conservation area the local authority has extra controls over demolition, minor developments and the protection of trees. Local authorities hold GIS datasets of their Conservation Areas which can be combined and cropped to the AONB boundary.

- **Historic Landscape Characterisation**

The Historic Landscape Characterisation was completed for the AONB in 2006. It maps and describes the historic dimension of the present day landscape of the AONB and identifies time depth. It formed the basis for the identification of the discrete Historic Character Areas, and therefore also forms a major component in the description of these areas. More information on the Historic Landscape Characterisation can be accessed from www.Northwessexdownsaonb.co.uk.

A series of map queries was created from the Historic Landscape Characterisation to aid the description of the area. These are included at the beginning of Volume 2.

Stage Two: Review and collation of other datasets available

Once the comprehensive datasets have been collated other sources which cover parts of the AONB can be collated.

- Conservation Area Appraisals

Following designation, local planning authorities have a duty from time to time to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. These proposals take the form of Conservation Area Appraisals. Currently only a small proportion of the Conservation Areas in the AONB have CAAs, though many of the Local Authorities are undertaking rolling programs of CAA creation. Where they exist, Conservation Area Appraisals form a useful source of information on the history of settlements in the AONB, and descriptions of their main historic features which can be used to augment Historic Character Area descriptions.

- Extensive Urban Surveys

Wiltshire County Archaeology Service began work on the Wiltshire Historic Towns Survey in August 1999 as part of the national EUS programme instigated and funded by English Heritage. The project comprised a survey of the historic towns of Wiltshire, including those in the Unitary Authority of Swindon Borough Council. In all, thirty-four towns were surveyed, including the five rural Roman towns and the city of Salisbury between 1999 and 2004. Relevant towns covered in the AONB include Marlborough, Cunetio, Great Bedwyn and Ramsbury.

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/wiltshire_eus_2009/index.cfm

- Historic Farmstead characterisation

The online farmsteads Toolkit <http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/local.html> provides preliminary descriptions for all of England's 159 National Character Areas. These are based on a variety of sources and set out under the key headings of: Historical Development, Landscape and Settlement, Farmstead and Building Types and Materials and Detail. More detailed Historic Farmstead Characterisation is available for the AONB but in the time available the detail from the relevant National Character Area descriptions were used.

- Research and Written Sources

This may include the Victoria County History, Excavation and Survey reports, National Trust strategies and individual estate management plans as well as the Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan and Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Stage Three: Writing and organising the Historic Character Area descriptions

Clarity and ease of comparison are key factors influencing the legibility and usability of the Historic Character Areas descriptions. As discussed above these descriptions should seek to be transparent and the sources of information clearly related. For ease of reference the descriptions should have the same layout though obviously the variable availability of data will affect the length of any given section.

- ***Title***

This should capture the imagination and the main features of the area, drawing on local features and place names.

- ***Location***

Describes the location of the area

- ***Geology, and Topography***

Describes the area's topography and dominant geology and soil.

- ***Land Use and Landscape Character***

Link to the relevant North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment and a short statement describing dominant land use and landscape character.

- ***Location Map***

The map should show the outline of the area and the adjacent areas. Due to the size of the AONB a thumbnail map was included accompanied by A3 maps on 1:25000 mapping in a separate volume.

- ***Archaeological Character***

The main archaeological components present in the area, notably visible sites, iconic sites of those which have been subject to research and a short sentence on archaeological potential

- ***Illustrative Photographs***

These are used to draw out the key themes in the text.

- **Historic Landscape Trajectory**

Time depth in the landscape should also be noted along with major historical developments and processes which have impacted on the landscape. Important Previous Historic Landscape Types

- **Present day Historic Landscape Character**

The main Historic Landscape Character Types present and their contribution to the historic landscape character of the present day. Particularly important morphological features should be described e.g. the visual aspects of the fields and woodlands.

- **Historic Settlement Character**

The character of the historic built environment, the pattern of settlement, local building materials and features and notable buildings of interest. The impact of 20th century development.

- **Historic Farmstead Character**

The type, distribution and form of historic farmsteads and farms drawn from the HLC dataset and the Historic Farmstead National Character Area descriptions.

Special Qualities and Features of Significance

- **Archaeological Interest**

The heritage assets and historic landscape characteristics that might reveal more about the AONB's past. There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Assets or landscapes with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

- **Historic Interest**

An historic interest is an interest in what is already known about past lives and events that may be used to illustrate the story of the landscape or a feature which can clearly be associated with a key event or person. There will be historic interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or may potentially hold, evidence of the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This could be either illustrative or associative. Illustrative interest is defined as the perception of a place as a link between past and present people while associative interest relates to the association with a notable family, person, event, or movement which gives historical interest a particular resonance

- **Architectural Interest**

This derives from built features of significance in the landscape. There will be architectural interest in a heritage asset or historic landscape characteristic if it holds, or may potentially hold, evidence of the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through architecture to the present. This also could be illustrative or associative.

- **Aesthetic and artistic interest**

This derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place including from folkloric associations.

- **Coherence, Rarity and Time depth**

The coherence in the historic landscape character of the landscape – a measure of intactness and survival. Rarity relates to key characteristics which are either unusual within the AONB or even rare nationally. Time depth relates to the number of layers of human activity and land use which can be ‘read’ in the landscape and how far they date back.

- **Designated Heritage**

Details on designated national and international heritage in the area.

Section 4: Further Work

Each Historic Character Area is accompanied by a comprehensive and concise description of its main historic and archaeological components. There are several directions that further work could be taken.

Promotion

The first obvious step is to ensure that the document is effectively promoted within the wider AONB partnership. This would include individuals with an interest in the following areas:

- Increasing understanding of the archaeological, historical and cultural aspects of the North Wessex Downs AONBs. The HLCA can be used as to provide a:
 - synthesis of the wealth of available historic environment information about the AONB;
 - provide a clearer vision of how different aspects of the historic environment contribute to the special qualities of the protected landscape;
 - present the key historic environment characteristics of the protected landscape in a way which is accessible to non-specialists.
- A spatial planning evidence base. The information in the Historic Landscape Character Area report can be used to inform
 - the strategic evidence base for Local Development Frameworks and other strategies
 - forward planning documents including regeneration strategies and master plans
 - development management decisions
- An engagement tool

A potential next step is to summarise the information collated into this document into a summary of the 'story' of the AONB and its development

Historic Environment Action Plan for the North Wessex Downs AONB

This document is the next step in creating an Historic Environment Action Plan for the AONB.

At the heart of Historic Environment Action Plans (or HEAP for short) is an action plan, a series of specific, attainable time based actions which address key threats to or opportunities in the historic

environment of the AONB landscape. The actions flow from assessments which describe the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the landscape, in this case within the 28 Historic Landscape Character Areas, and set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting these historic characteristics.

These assessments are based on information derived from the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation; the county based Historic Environment Records and other surveys and studies. The documents also form an important evidence base in their own right which can be used to inform planning policy and strategy, management policy and practice, research and outreach.

If this is an avenue the AONB is interested in exploring the next step would be to identify action and targets for each area.

Gaps in Knowledge

The process of creating the Historic Landscape Character Area descriptions has thrown up gaps in knowledge or access to information. Two clear areas where further work could enhance our understating of the historic environment in the AONB are:

- Farmstead Character – detailed Farmstead Characterisation work has been undertaken in Wiltshire and Hampshire; this could be collated and reviewed for the AONB.
- Historic Settlement Character – the AONB lacks information on the historic character of its settlements, including information on settlement form, building material, building styles, settlement age, relationship between settlement and surrounding landscape. As a first step Wyvern Heritage and Landscape created an overview of historical settlement character across its landscape as a launch pad for more detailed research entitled “North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Settlement Character Report”.

Section 5: Conclusion

The AONB Historic Character Areas are based on information in the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation. The HLC provided two key pieces of information: -

1. The present day historic landscape character present in the AONB.
2. The surviving evidence of the historical development of the area.

This analysis led to the identification of 28 Historic character areas in the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Each area is accompanied by a description which aims to provide an overview of each area which encapsulates the main features of the Historic Environment present and includes both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent.

They are accompanied by a description of their Special Qualities and Features of Significance.

These areas will:

1. allow the broad assessment of the historic and archaeological dimensions of the landscape.
2. provide an accessible source of information that can be more easily engaged with and recognised by local people.
3. aid the creation of Historic Environment Action Plans and other management tools.

Section 6: References

Conway, M. 2006. *West Berkshire Historic Environment Character Zoning*. West Berkshire District Council. Newbury.

Land Use Consultants 2002 *North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment Technical Report*. Land Use Consultants: London

Wyvern Heritage and Landscape Consultancy, 2012. *The North Wessex Downs AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation*. Wyvern Heritage: Tisbury

Section 7: List of Figures provided in Volume 2

- Figure 1: Historic Landscape Character Areas
- Figure 2: Location of Historic Landscape Character Areas
- Figure 3: Overview of Present day Historic Landscape Character
- Figure 4: Overview of Time depth in the Landscape
- Figure 5: Historic distribution of open land
- Figure 6: Historic distribution of pre 1700 enclosure
- Figure 7: Historic distribution of 1700 to 1900 enclosure
- Figure 8: Post 1900 enclosure
- Figure 9: Historic Settlement Morphology
- Figure 10: Map of Area 1.Pewsey Downs
- Figure 11: Map of Area 2.Avebury Plain
- Figure 12: Map of Area 3.Barbury Downs
- Figure 13: Map of Area 4. Aldbourne Downs
- Figure 14: Map of Area 5.Northern Chalk Escarpment
- Figure 15: Map of Area 6.Lambourn Wooded Plateau
- Figure 16: Map of Area 7.Lambourn Valley
- Figure 17: Map of Area 8.West Ilsley and downland
- Figure 18: Map of Area 9.Winterbourne Valley and Downs
- Figure 19: Map of Area 10.Upper Pang Valley
- Figure 20: Map of Area 11.Greenhill and Thurle downlands
- Figure 21: Map of Area 12.Thames Valley North
- Figure 22: Map of Area 13.Pewsey Vale
- Figure 23: Map of Area 14.Upper Kennet Valley
- Figure 24: Map of Area 15.Savernake Forest and West Woods
- Figure 25: Map of Area 16.Middle Kennet Valley
- Figure 26: Map of Area 17. Stockcross-Wickham Heath
- Figure 27: Map of Area 18. Snelsmore and Bucklebury Commons
- Figure 28: Map of Area 19. Pang Valley and Sulham Gap
- Figure 29: Map of Area 20. Pang-Thames Plateaux
- Figure 30: Map of Area 21. Kennet Valley East
- Figure 31: Map of Area 22. Thames Valley South

Figure 32: Map of Area 23. Milton Hill and Down

Figure 33: Map of Area 24. Shalbourne Vale and Wick Down

Figure 34: Map of Area 25. Linkenholt, Litchfield and Hannington

Figure 35: Map of Area 26. Highclere and Inkpen Common

Figure 36: Map of Area 27. Chute Forest - Faccombe

Figure 37: Map of Area 28. Bourne Valley and Hurstbourne Park

Figure 38: Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB HLCAs to West Berkshire HLAs

Figure 39: Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB HLCAs to the Avebury WHS

Figure 40: Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB HLCAs to the AONB LCA

Figure 41: Relationship of North Wessex Downs AONB HLCAs to Local Authority Boundaries