

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF A REPLACEMENT DWELLING AT HIGHLANDS FARM, COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS, WILTSHIRE

APPENDIX G LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT EXTRACTS

for
Mr Toby Helme

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North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment

LCT 2

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

Draft report

Prepared by LUC

July 2025

LCT 2 Downland with Woodland

Figure 5.28: Rolling chalk uplands with strong woodland coverage



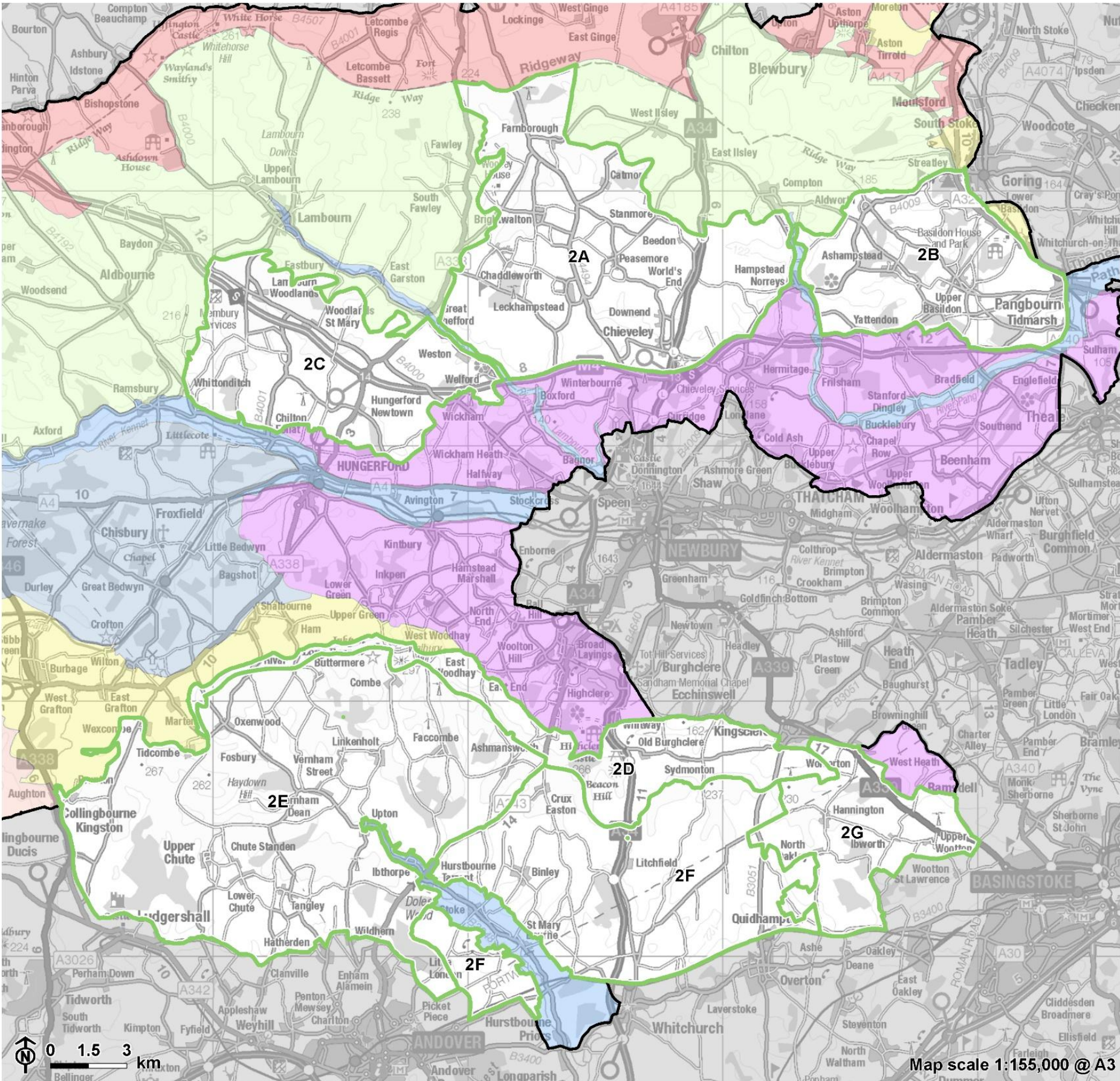
Location and overview

5.107 Downland with Woodland occurs in two main blocks: on the dipslope north of the River Kennet; and as an escarpment south of the Kennet. The southern escarpment forms the beginning of the main chalk upland running south and east as part of the Hampshire Downs. Boundaries are mainly defined by geology and relate to the landscape transition where clay-with-flint becomes more dominant, marked by an associated increase in woodland cover. The southern block of Downland with Woodland is clearly defined by the base of the distinctive linear escarpment that rises from the intervening clay lowlands.

5.108 The Downlands with Woodland landscape type is divided into seven geographic character areas. These comprise.

- 2A: Brightwalton Downs
- 2B: Ashampstead Downs
- 2C: Lambourn Wooded Downs
- 2D: Walbury Hill - Watership Down Scarp
- 2E: Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs
- 2F: Litchfield Downs
- 2G: Hannington Downs

Figure 5.29: Location of Downland with Woodland LCT



North Wessex Downs
Landscape Character Assessment
North Wessex Downs National Landscape

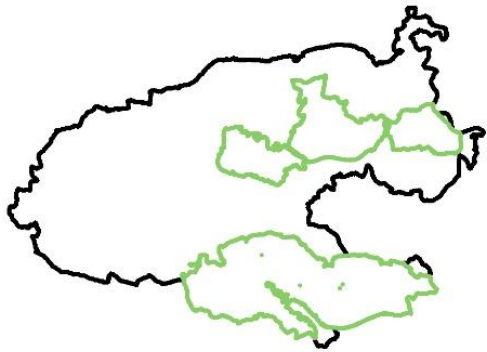


LCT 2 - Downland with Woodland

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

Landscape Character Type

- 2: Downland with Woodland
- 2A: Brightwalton Downs
- 2C: Lambourn Wooded Downs
- 2D: Walbury Hill - Watership Down Scarp
- 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe
- 2F: Litchfield Downs
- 2G: Hannington Downs



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5.109 The Downlands with Woodland are defined by contrast; of open rolling downland and enclosed woodland, of light and shade, and of prospect and refuge. The typical chalk landform has a strongly rolling topography, rising to gently domed hilltops and dissected by dry valleys. A thick mantling of clay-with-flint differentiates this landscape type from LCT 1 Open Downlands. The geology produces softer contours on the summits and creates heavy moist soils, which have retained their woodland cover. Sinuous woodlands cling to the steep slopes and, with the interconnected hedgerow network, create a strong framework and sense of enclosure in some areas. Ridgetop woods are a particular feature and form dark wooded horizons providing containment to the views. These enclosed areas are juxtaposed with contrasting more open arable and pastoral summits, and those areas where remnant chalk grassland survives on the steep slopes of the dry valleys and scarps. Bronze Age and Iron Age hill forts, strategically located on high summits, are a notable feature of the landscape type and command panoramic views over the surrounding countryside.

5.110 Ancient and semi-natural woodlands and hedgerows are an important ecological resource. Wooded commons and deer parks are a particular feature originating from medieval deer parks enclosed from areas of Royal Forest. A number of these deer parks were refashioned in the eighteenth century and are now important designed landscapes.

5.111 A dispersed settlement pattern with numerous isolated farms and small clustered hamlets and villages sheltering in folds in the chalk topography or exposed on the ridge tops. Evidence from the Domesday Survey of 1086 suggests that many of these were created during the early medieval period, typically with a church or manor house. Common vernacular includes redbrick, flint, weatherboard and clay tile. The settlements are connected by an intricate network of narrow winding lanes, many originating as medieval droveways, sunken into the chalk with a dense overhanging woodland canopy and high grassy banks.

5.112 The Downland with Woodland remains a deeply rural landscape, with a strong sense of peacefulness and tranquillity.

LCT 2 Wooded Downland: Key Characteristics

- Elevated chalk upland, distinguished by a thick capping of clay-with-flint. The reddish-brown clay creates heavy, sticky loams.

- A strongly rolling landform with gently domed hill tops, dry valleys and notable scarp and dipslope topography.
- A sheltered landscape with a diverse range of woodlands including on the clay summits, sinuous hangers on the steep slopes, shelterbelts, wooded pasture and parkland.
- Remnants of chalk grassland survive, including two of the largest areas of protected chalk grasslands in the North Wessex Downs.
- Arable farmland dominates, with strong hedgerow boundaries contributing to the mosaic of woodland cover. Medieval enclosure patterns of assarts are set against more open Parliamentary enclosure fields.
- Distinctive Bronze Age and Iron Age hill forts are prominent features on hill tops.
- Numerous historic parks and designed landscapes, many originating as medieval deer parks.
- Small villages nestled in sheltered valleys with widespread scattered farmsteads and hamlets. Varied vernacular built form includes redbrick, flint and render, weatherboard, plus roofs of tile and thatch.
- Intricate network of rural lanes, including characteristic sunken lanes overhung by deep grassy banks and woodland.
- High density of footpaths, bridleways and byways, which provide access to the attractive villages, woodlands, archaeological sites, and historic houses.
- A peaceful, tranquil and secluded rural landscape, with sheltered enclosed woodland areas contrasting with more open, remote summits.

LCT 2 Downland with Woodland: Evaluation

Forces for change

5.113 The following are identified as forces for change common to the Downland with Woodland as a whole:

- Decrease in livestock so that some marginal areas of pasture may no longer be grazed leading to alternative uses e.g. as horse paddocks/training gallops or neglect/scrub encroachment.

- Lack of appropriate management for woodlands, particularly ancient and semi-natural woodlands formerly managed by coppicing and as areas of wood pasture.
- Loss of hedgerow boundaries and poor management of remaining hedgerows, including hedgerow trees.
- The increased popularity in field sports, especially of shooting, impacts the management of both small-scale woodland and of nearby arable fields. This includes the planting of large blocks of maize as a cover crop to feed the young birds, complimenting grant-aided conservation plots such as wild bird seed mixes. The incremental associated infrastructure including platforms for shooting and pens for birds can have an impact on landscape character.
- An increase in visually intrusive larger agricultural barns disturbs the open horizon and interrupts the sinuosity of the smooth downland landscape.
- Development pressures within settlements both within the Downland with Woodlands and in adjacent landscapes may alter the landscape character, including the expansive skyline and panoramic views.
- Development in the setting to the National Landscape including large-scale and /or tall development on the edges of Andover, Basingstoke, Newbury, and Reading. These affect panoramic views from the downland and its wider setting, as well as the sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Pressure for tall structures such as communications masts, transmitters and renewable energy developments (potentially wind turbines) that will be particularly intrusive on the strong sweeping skylines and could have a negative impact on the sense of remoteness.
- High traffic levels on the rural lane network impact on the rural character of the lanes, and make them less attractive for walking and riding. Cumulative impact of small-scale incremental change for road upgrades e.g. signage, fencing, kerbing of rural lanes on the remote qualities of the chalk upland landscape.
- The Downland with Woodland landscapes are susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including:
 - Changes in rainfall patterns including wetter winters and drier summers may lead to different types of crop being grown (e.g. maize, grape vines, soya), which would change the appearance of the landscape.

- Wetter winters and increased flash flooding on the thin arable soils will cause erosion and impact the winter crop sowings and also decrease the water quality for livestock on the downs.
- Hotter, drier conditions in the summer will put more pressure on water resources, which may result in a change in crops to less water-reliant plants, and to increase the heat stress of livestock.
- Drier summers and wetter winters will cause increased tree mortality and die-back from drought and stress and waterlogging, affecting the distinctive pattern of woodlands.
- Drier and hotter summers increase fire risk affecting grassland habitats and the recreational resource of the landscape.
- Hotter temperatures may result in increased competition from invasive species and greater numbers of insect and mammal pests. This could impact the choice of crops grown, and the appearance of the landscape.
- More extreme weather events leading to a greater risk of wind-throw and loss of mature trees, which could affect the ancient woodlands.
- Deciduous woodlands are facing decline due to warmer winters, altered rainfall patterns, drier summers and increased frequency of extreme events. There may be a shift in vegetation type and composition, increased competition from invasive species, greater numbers of insect and mammal pests, a greater risk of infection by various soil and waterborne pathogens, and a greater risk of wind-throw and loss of mature trees. It could also lead to the die-back of certain hedgerow tree species, and increased storm activity may lead to the loss of mature and veteran trees within hedgerows.

Landscape guidance

5.114 The following are identified as guidelines for protecting and enhancing valued characteristics of the Downland with Woodland, taking into consideration the forces for change which are affecting, or which are expected to affect, this landscape:

- Manage the small areas of distinctive chalk grassland to enhance their biodiversity value; ensure best practice management through suitable grazing regimes and avoiding agrochemical and fertiliser inputs.
- Consider opportunities to increase the area of chalk grassland through restoration around existing areas, extending and linking existing sites.

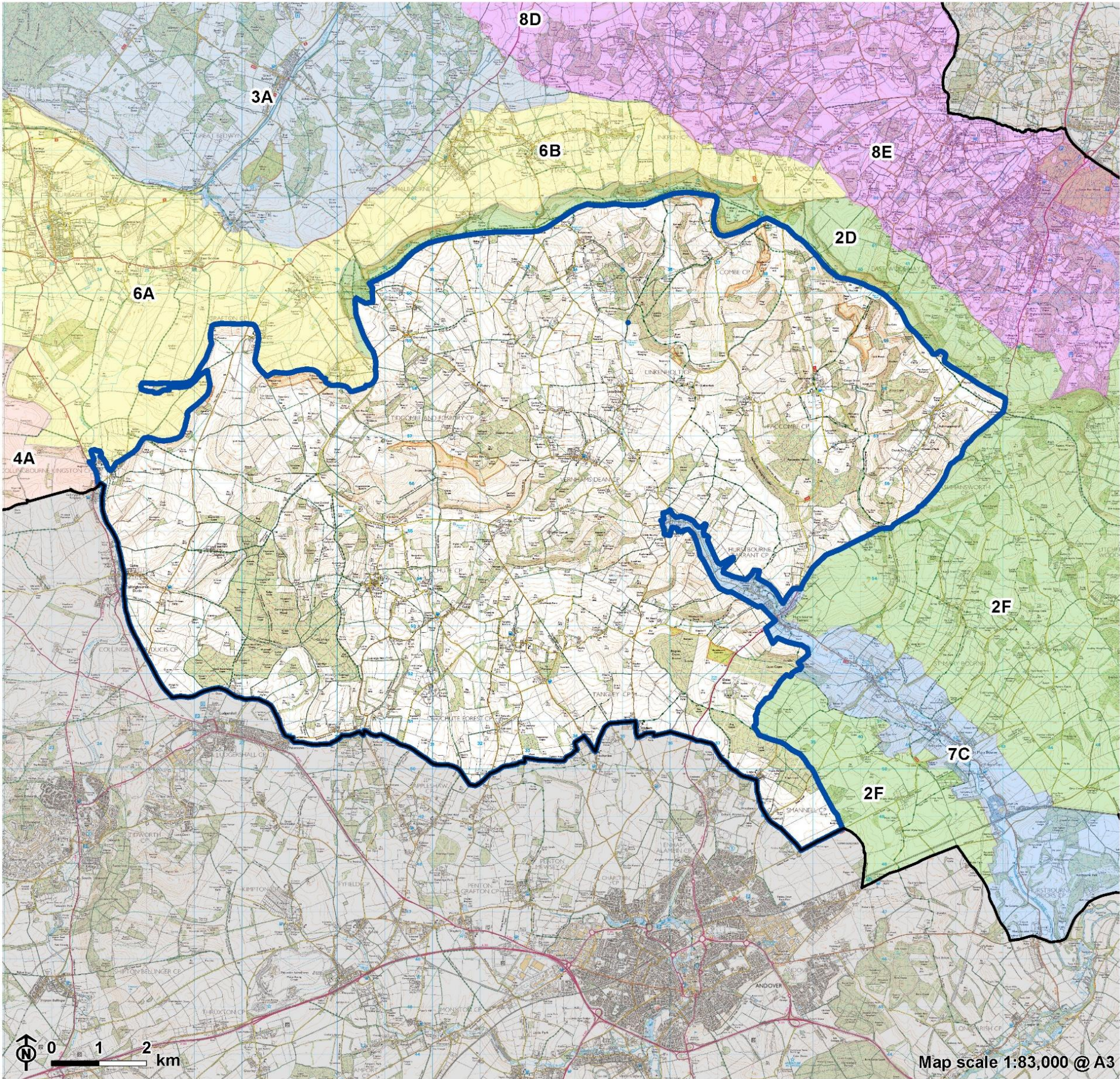
- Ensure that areas that might act as refugia from climate change (such as areas with north facing slopes, complex micro-topography and/or low nitrogen levels) are under optimal management.
- Focus on woodland areas that have been degraded to improve biodiversity and ecosystem health. Where appropriate, expand the extent of existing woodland through targeted restoration projects.
- Develop and implement woodland management plans that balance conservation and sustainable use by traditional practices including coppicing and selective thinning to maintain healthy woodlands.
- Carry out consistent management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock and enhance the historic hedgerow network. Where possible avoid replacing hedgerows with fencing.
- Consider the cumulative impact of incremental changes as a result of field sports and bird shoots. Minimise the size and extent of these structures where possible, using the existing woodland as screening where possible.
- Retain the sparse settlement pattern. Consider the cumulative impact of incremental changes to the small villages through extensions, which may change the character of the settlements.
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features, using local styles and materials. Ensure any road lighting schemes retain the experience of dark night skies within the wooded downland.
- Conserve the expansive open views from higher ground. Consider the impact of any tall structures on views from within this landscape, and in views from outside the landscape.
- Protect the tranquil character of the wooded downland. Consider the siting and colours used for any new agricultural barns or equestrian development so they do not disturb the open horizon and sinuosity of the smooth downland landscape as little as possible.
- Conserve the dark skies and minimise lighting with new lighting only introduced where necessary. Consider the impact of lighting on night-time views from lower ground as well as within the locality.

LCA 2E: Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs

Figure 5.50: Rolling downland and woodland blocks, Linkenholt



Figure 5.51: LCA 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe Downs: Location

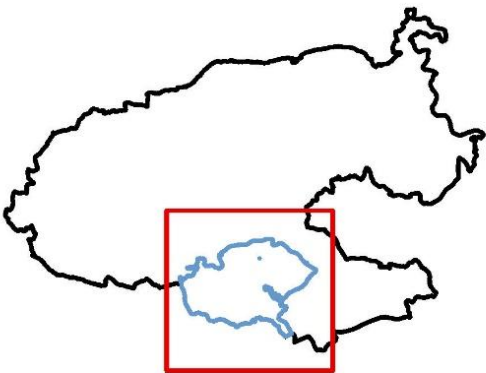


North Wessex Downs
Landscape Character Assessment
North Wessex Downs National Landscape



2E: Chute Forest - Facombe

- North Wessex Downs National Landscape
- Landscape Character Area**
- 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe
- 2D: Walbury Hill - Watership Down Scarp
- 2F: Litchfield Downs
- 3A: Savernake Plateau
- 4A: Salisbury Plain
- 6A: Vale of Pewsey
- 6B: Shalbourne Vale
- 7C: Bourne Valley
- 8D: Hungerford Farmland
- 8E: Highclere Parklands



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Figure 5.52: Rolling arable fields, woodland and tall infrastructure near Linkenholt



Figure 5.53: Electricity pylons cross arable fields



LCA 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe Downs: Description

5.189 The Chute Forest - Facombe LCA forms a distinct character area on the Wiltshire-Hampshire border. It is part of the southern block of chalk upland, which includes Salisbury Plain (LCA 3A) to the west and continues through the Hampshire Downs to the east. Boundaries are defined to the north by the escarpment rising from the Vale of Pewsey/Shalbourne Vale (LCA 2D) and to the south by the National Landscape boundary. The boundary to the east is less distinct and is marked by a transition to the more open arable farmland that characterises the downs around Litchfield (LCA 2F).

Natural Influences

Landform, geology, water and soils

5.190 The underlying solid geology of the area is almost exclusively formed by Upper Chalk, with Middle and Lower Chalks outcropping only in narrow bands, for example along the scarp above the Vale of Pewsey and steep slopes around Ashmansworth. Deposits of clay-with-flint occur across the central and higher parts of the area, forming heavier clay soils.

5.191 Landform is typical of chalk upland with a rolling topography, dissected by valleys, with the central part of the area cut through by the steep sided valley of the River Bourne* (LCA 7C). The high-rolling hills are cut by a number of dry valleys running parallel to each other into the Bourne valley. Scarps and dramatic coombes are also characteristic, for example at Verham Dean, the swelling steep sided form of Haydown Hill (258 metres) in the north-west, and the distinct steep slopes around Ashmansworth. The escarpment extends from Collingbourne Kingston in the west to Botley Down, near Marten, in the east. Although less distinct compared to the adjoining Walbury Hill - Watership Down Scarp (LCA 2E), is nevertheless a clear landform feature.

5.192 * There are two Bourne Valleys, a minor river on the boundary to the west adjacent to Salisbury Plain and more prominent valley which cuts through the character area. The latter has a distinct character and is described separately (LCA 7C).

Biodiversity

5.193 The area is characterised by the extensive and connected woodland cover, which occurs in association with the clay-with-flint covered summits. This produces a distinct landscape pattern comprising large blocks of woodland on

the higher areas and long sinuous hangers clinging to the slopes of the steep combes where they are intermixed with pasture.

5.194 The woodlands are varied ranging from areas of ancient woodland to more recent mixed plantations and shelterbelts. The vast Combe Wood and Linkenholt Hanging SSSI in a sheltered valley to the north is a good example of an ancient woodland and incorporates small areas of relict chalk grassland. This site forms an extensive area of ancient and secondary woodland located in a sheltered valley close to the point where the counties of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire meet. The site also supports small areas of chalk grassland and scrub, which are relicts of open downland. The woodland itself has developed good structural diversity and this together with its humid, sheltered position provide excellent conditions for epiphytic lichens and bryophytes.

5.195 Ash/field maple dominate the more calcareous soils, whilst the acidic clays support birch/pedunculate oak. The landscape pattern is repeated at Faccombe Wood and Netherton Hanging Copse. Sidley Wood is a further woodland SSSI of ancient hornbeam coppice.

5.196 The steep slopes also retain important areas of chalk grassland, such as at Hogs Hole SSSI. The SSSI at Rushmore and Conholt Downs contains what has been noted as possibly the oldest known juniper population found on English chalk.

Cultural Influences

Land use and field patterns

5.197 Much of the woodland shows signs of assarting. The fields are often small and irregular in these locations, with sinuous edges, and some may reflect medieval and early post-medieval boundaries (fifteenth/sixteenth centuries to the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries). In some cases the sequence of field intakes can be established, and some fields appear to have been piecemeal enclosures set out in between droveways or tracks formed by the clearance of woodland to create arable fields. Many of these tracks may also have medieval origins. Late medieval and postmedieval informal enclosure resulted in the medium to large sized regular fields with wavy or sinuous boundaries, typical of the open, more elevated chalk. This enclosure took place from the late fifteenth century but was especially common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. More formal enclosure in the nineteenth century produced regular, rectangular fields.

5.198 The farmland woodland mosaic also includes areas of arable land on high ground enclosed by intact hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees plus smaller assarted fields, such as around Chute and Faccombe. These contrast with areas of more open arable land on the slopes dropping down towards both valleys of the River Bourne. Areas of parkland and estate farmland provide further variation as at Conholt Park.

Historic features

5.199 Neolithic long barrows located at Tow Barrow, Fairmile Down and Smay Down are prominent features in the west. 'Celtic' fields visible as prominent terraces or lynchets on the scarp edge around Highdown and Hitchen had their origins during the late Bronze Age. Other Bronze Age remains include isolated round barrows, which survive as at Doles Copse, and Tringley Wood with a further group to the west of Heath Copse. Aerial photographs and excavations have shown that there were once many more round barrows in the area that have since been ploughed.

5.200 During the Iron Age, this was a densely occupied landscape with individual farmsteads concentrated on ridges and hilltops, with access to water, summer grazing and the other resources of the wetter valleys. This legacy is reflected in today's landscape in the form of several prominent monuments from the period, such as the hill fort of Fosbury, situated on Knolls Down, with associated field systems located nearby. Iron Age enclosures also survive as earthworks at Bevisbury, Tangley Clumps and near Upton Manor. At Blagden Copse, the northernmost of two earthworks enclosures may be a ritual shrine dating to the first centuries BC and AD, commanding views southwards down to Andover. Romano British settlements were concentrated along the river valleys and lower slopes of the chalk downs, with several villas and farmsteads clustered round Andover. The Roman Icknield Way, preserved in the modern line of Hungerford Lane, runs across the area. At Haydown Hill the road follows a curved route around the landform, an example of how Roman Roads sometimes have to deviate from their course. To the south at the foot of the more elevated chalk downland, the road met the Portway, the Roman road that ran to Calleva (Silchester), with the settlement of Leucomagus or Andover developing as a minor market town at the junction.

5.201 Following the disruptions of the fifth century, many areas may have reverted to scrub or woodland, and these became part of the Saxon Royal Forest of Chute. The fact that pre-Saxon earthworks such as those in Blagden Copse survive today suggests that many woodland pockets are remnants of this forest. Place names such as Doiley, Doiley Wood, Doles Wood and Doles

Copse may all be derived from the Old English word *Digerleah* meaning ‘thick wood’. Netherton in the north was a late Saxon manorial complex, and there was a small Saxon settlement and an early Saxon cemetery just north of Andover. The linear earthwork known as Grim’s Ditch may date to the late fifth century AD, and may have protected the approaches to Silchester. It is visible today running through Sawyers Wood and into Netherton Hanging Copse. The linear earthwork known as Devil’s Ditch may also be from this period.

Settlement pattern

5.202 The area is fairly sparsely populated, with a low settlement density comprising small villages and hamlets sheltering in the folds of the chalk topography particularly on the south facing slopes, for example the Chutes, Tidcombe and Vernham Dean. Scattered isolated farmsteads and mansions (Conhault). Ashmansworth and Linkenholt are located on ridgelines. The small village of Collingbourne Kingston is located in the Bourne Valley to the west.

5.203 Vernacular buildings in the area are predominantly of brick and flint, roofed with tile. Harder chalk was sometimes used in walls, and some older buildings retain timber framing, chalk cob and thatch.

5.204 Settlements include the now shrunken medieval village at Brunton. Biddesden was a separate manor to Ludgershall, and was owned by the Benedictine monastery (later a priory) of Amesbury. The medieval village at Netherton, was established on the earlier Saxon site, however, after the demise of the manor house in the fourteenth century, Netherton shrank as nearby Facombe expanded. Villages such as Vernham Dean were linear developments along central roads, but there were also scattered hamlets and individual farms.

5.205 A particular feature of the area is the large manors and houses. Facombe Manor, Tangle Manor, Biddesden House, Netherton House, Ibthorpe House and Upton House all had medieval beginnings, but in the eighteenth century were refashioned by the gentry, with associated gardens and polite landscape features. Biddesden House is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, designated for its 18th and 19th century park and garden from the early 1930s.

Communications and infrastructure

5.206 An intricate network of rural lanes winds across the area linking settlements, often following the lines of dry valleys such as the lane along Doiley Bottom. There are few main roads except the A343, connecting Andover

to Newbury. Two overhead electricity lines cross the landscape, and there is a single wind turbine north of Faccombe.

5.207 Many Public Rights of Way, including the promoted routes the Test Way and Brenda Parker Way, provide a good level of access across this LCA, linking the high downs to the Bourne Valley, lowlands to the north and vale to the west.

Perceptual Influences

5.208 The limited settlement pattern and intricate network of rural lanes creates a remote and tranquil rural character despite proximity to Andover, Ludgershall and the garrison town of North Tidworth.

5.209 The diverse landscape pattern creates experiences ranging from intimate and enclosed to dramatic and open depending on the particular combination of landform and land cover. Taken as a whole the rolling, elevated plateau combined with the distinct and repetitive patterns of woodland cover provides a strong degree of cohesiveness and unity to the area.

LCA 2E Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs: Evaluation

Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs valued qualities

5.210 The key valued qualities identified for LCA 2E Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs are:

- Dramatic landform of rolling hills, scarps, combes and dry valleys creates a distinctive sense of place.
- Woodland coverage including sinuous wooded hangers on coombe slopes, ancient and semi-natural woodlands.
- Remnants of unimproved chalk grassland are nationally important, as demonstrated by the SSSI designations of Hogs Hole and Rushmore and Conholt Downs.
- Strong sense of time-depth from prehistoric earthworks including Neolithic long barrows and Iron Age hill fort at Fosbury, along with historic field pattern with evidence of assarting, and large manors with associated parks, including Grade II Registered Biddesden House.
- Intricate network of winding rural lanes, with characteristic sunken lanes overhung by deep grass banks and trees creates an enclosed, tranquil character.
- Peaceful, unspoilt and tranquil landscape with long-reaching views from the higher ground towards wooded horizons and skylines.

Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs local forces for change/issues

5.211 In addition to the forces for change at LCT level, local forces for change and issues affecting LCA 2E Chute Forest - Faccombe Downs are:

- Lack of appropriate management for the extensive woodland cover of the ancient and semi natural woodlands of Chute Forest.
- An existing single wind turbine has recently gained permission to be extended in height. This may create pressure for new, taller wind turbines and other large infrastructure which could be very visible within this landscape.

Chute Forest - Facombe Downs strategy and local guidelines

5.212 In addition to the guidelines set out for the Downland with Woodland LCT, the following guidelines are of particular relevance to the Chute Forest - Facombe Downs:

- Develop and implement woodland management plans for Chute Forest that balance conservation and sustainable use by traditional practices including coppicing and selective thinning to maintain healthy woodlands. Where appropriate, consider new planting to link woodland areas, and convert conifer plantations to appropriate native deciduous woodlands.
- Carefully consider future applications for tall infrastructure including wind turbines within this landscape, and applications in adjacent landscapes which would be intrusive.