

Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment Volume 1



February 2007

The Classification of Havant Borough Landscape:

Landscape Character Types (LCTs):

LCT	Havant Borough LCTs	Hampshire County LCTs
A	Pasture and Woodland (Heath Associated)	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Pasture and Woodland - Heath Associated
B	Lowland Settled Wooded Farmland	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Mixed Farmland and Woodland
C	Urban Lowlands	Urban Area
D	Settled Chalk Ridge	<i>Chalklands</i> : Open Arable
E	Urban Upper Harbour Plain	Urban Area
F	Open Upper Harbour Plain	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Open Coastal Plain
G	Urban Lower Harbour Plain	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Open Coastal Plain / Urban Area
H	Open Lower Harbour Plain	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Open Coastal Plain
I	Enclosed Lower Harbour Plain	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Enclosed Coastal Plain
J	Harbour Basin	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Coastline
K	Harbour Mouth	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Coastline
L	Broad Inlets	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Coastline
M	Minor Inlets	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Coastline
N	Lowland Coastal Settlement	Urban Area
O	Lowland Open Coastal Plain	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Open Coastal Plain
P	Open Coast	<i>Lowland Mosaic</i> : Coastline

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE A: PASTURE AND WOODLAND (HEATH ASSOCIATED)

General description

The Pasture and Woodland (Heath Associated) landscape character type LCT A forms one of a number of pockets of heath landscape character types scattered along the southern edge of the higher Chalklands on the northern edge of Havant Borough (and Southampton and Portsmouth). It forms an important open and predominantly rural area on the northern fringes of Havant. The type is characterised by an undulating landform of heathland, grassland or pasture and woodland. The type is found in the following Havant landscape character areas:

- o *LCA9 Waterlooville Golf Course*
- o *LCA10 Blendworth Common and woodlands*

The following key characteristics for the type are to be found in both the above character areas. They are not repeated in the landscape character area descriptions which focus in more detail on local variations in these characteristics and the complex mix of characteristics which go together to create local character, distinctiveness and a sense of place.

Physical characteristics

- o The underlying geology is a variety of Tertiary sands, sandy clays and gravels, with occasional narrow valleys underlain by periglacial clay (Head) deposits giving rise to poor quality acidic soils and a range of mainly poor, light or slowly permeable soils
- o An undulating landform, with some steep sided small valleys and elevated low ridges
- o Numerous surface streams and ditches.

Biodiversity and vegetation pattern

- o Soils have led to a landscape of un-intensively farmed pasture
- o A mosaic of heathland, poor grassland and woodland
- o Grassland is a mixture of acidic and generally unimproved grassland in the east and unimproved neutral grassland further west
- o A well wooded landscape, with broadleaved woodland some of which is ancient, semi-natural woodland, with some mixed plantation adjacent to the broadleaved woodland
- o Bracken is associated with the grassland and scrub is associated with the woodland
- o This landscape character type covers an area of 100 hectares. 30% of the area is deciduous woodland, 25% is unimproved neutral grassland, 22.5% is heathland, and 12.7% is recent plantation woodland. The remaining area includes built development and gardens, scrub, semi-improved grassland and a pond.

Historic influences

- o The type was largely unenclosed commonland and woodland throughout the historic period, with little evidence of settlement
- o The unenclosed heath of Blendworth Common and woodland of Bell's Copse retain the historic landscape character.

Built form and settlement pattern

- o There is no settlement within the type in Havant Borough but the Pasture and Woodland (Heath Associated) type forms a part of a larger area of low density roadside settlements and small farms
- o A network of forest tracks and rides and major route corridors.

Experiential qualities

- o Enclosed landscape, with views limited by landform, woodlands and thick hedgerows
- o In places a quiet landscape, however the major roads, and over head power lines reduce the sense of tranquillity
- o Areas of woodland and heathland with open access, making this landscape character type more accessible to the public.

Key issues

The following key issues within the type are to be found in all the above character areas. They are not repeated again in the landscape character areas which will identify locally important issues.

- o Ancient, semi-natural woodland is a valuable ecological resource
- o Decline in woodland management techniques as forestry has concentrated on conifer rotations. However recent guidance has started to reverse this trend with a new interest in native woodland management
- o Predominance of older trees which may be susceptible to droughts and wind damage due to the increase in severe gales
- o Risk of damage to heath and woodland from fires
- o Threat to heathland from inappropriate management and under-grazing. Marginal farms may be at risk in this area of low fertility sandy soils. Low production land could become vulnerable to purchase as hobby farms with equine activity often resulting in a poor quality rural landscape of post and rail fencing, horse shelters, access tracks, signage with additional poor maintenance of existing hedgerows. Less productive land adjacent to urban areas could become under pressure for recreational use.

Landscape and built form guidelines

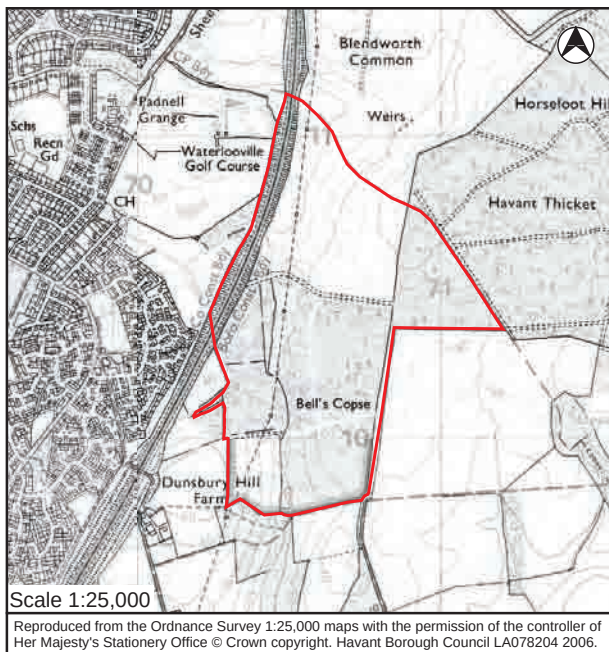
The following guidelines within the type are to be found in all the above character areas. They are not repeated under the landscape character area which will set out guidelines that are specific locally to the landscape character area. Both sets of guidelines will apply.

Landscape management

- o Retain variety of vegetation types to maintain areas of contrast i.e. heathland, scrub, native broadleaf woodland, and conifers
- o New woodland planting should not encroach on the open character of areas of heathland
- o Any new woodland planting should be native broadleaved woodland
- o Encourage management of areas of grassland used for horse grazing to avoid over grazing.
- o Encourage the use of hedgerows for field sub-divisions and encourage management of existing hedgerows.

Built form and development

- o New built form should be carefully considered within this area to avoid damage to the rural character
- o Where new development is unavoidable, siting and location should take into account the open landscape character and the impact on surrounding views within this predominantly development free area
- o Avoid the location of horse shelters/stabling and storage of horse equipment (horse boxes, jumps, etc) within prominent positions.
- o Retain low key rural character for tracks and any new roads, avoiding unsympathetic engineering solutions, and the loss of vegetation for sight lines.



LCA10

Blendworth Common and woodlands



Heathland on Blendworth Common

LCA10 Blendworth Common and woodlands

Introduction

The area contains one landscape character type: Pasture and Woodland (Heath Associated) LCTA. A full description of the characteristics common to this type is set out in Section 4. The area is composed of five historic landscape character types: Medium Regular Fields with Straight Boundaries (Parliamentary Type) (1.10); Assarted Pre-1810 Woodland (4.1); 20th Century Plantations (4.12); Unenclosed Heathland and Scrub (5.1); and Road (13.6) (Figure 1).

Location

Located in the north of the Borough adjacent to and including a section of the A3 (M).

Relationship to adjacent character areas

LCA9 Waterloooville golf course: LCA10 is separated from LCA9 by thick vegetation adjacent the A3 (M). The wooded character of LCA9 connects with the wooded character of LCA10, although the design of the golf course contrasts with the natural and organic vegetation pattern within LCA10.

LCA11 A3 (M) Eastern corridor: Similar wooded character to LCA10, although LCA10 is more heathy. The woodland also limits intervisibility between these two LCAs.

LCA20 Staunton Country Park: Open views from the edge of LCA10 across LCA20. Woodlands, designed for pleasure as well as originally for commercial uses, connect these two LCAs.

Beyond the Borough boundary: There are open views beyond the Borough boundary to Rowlands Castle and the South Downs. Heathy woodlands within LCA10 connect to the wider wooded area in the adjacent landscape character type.

Historic development and context

Historically, this area comprised Bell's Copse; part of the more extensive Havant Thicket.

Key characteristics of Blendworth Common and woodlands

Physical: Landform, soils and land cover

- o An undulating landscape, with a central shallow 'V' shaped valley aligning northwards
- o The soil is graded as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base rich loamy and clayey and classified as non productive agricultural land based on an underlying geology of London Clay to the south and the Lambeth Group to the north, which extends into Havant Thicket. Periglacial drift deposits (Head) are found within the valleys
- o A central stream with a number of tributaries joining from the east and west
- o An area of open rough grassland/heathland, scrub and individual trees to the north, while to the south the area is covered by a mix of broadleaved and commercial conifer woodland.

Biodiversity

- o A mosaic of habitats with open grassland to the north and ancient semi natural woodland to the south and east

- o To the north there is a large area of unimproved acidic grassland with large patches of bracken
- o In the south of the area there is a large patch of broadleaved woodland, a large proportion of which is ancient, semi-natural woodland which adjoins a patch of mixed plantation woodland
- o In the south west of the area there is a larger patch of unimproved neutral grassland which continues south of the area into LCA 11.

Historic and built environment

- o The historic landscape character for this LCA originates from an area of extensive woodland known as Bell's Copse. The southern area of the LCA retains this woodland character whilst the northern area has been substantially cleared of trees, which is now defined as unenclosed heath and scrub
- o This LCA contains no built features
- o Access along tracks of compacted hardcore
- o The A3 (M) runs along the western flank of the area.

Experiential: tranquillity, visual perceptions and access

- o Any sense of tranquillity is significantly affected by the noise from the adjacent A3 (M), although the A3 (M) is visually screened from the open adjacent areas
- o The overhead power lines are the only visible manmade feature within this semi natural environment
- o Evergreen conifers provide year long shade and areas of contrast with adjacent areas of broadleaf areas of woodland
- o Open access is provided within the wooded area of Bells Copse and Havant Thicket, however the open area of heathland to the north is enclosed by wire fence and is private.

Visual: openness/enclosure, prominence and visibility

- o Strong sense of enclosure within the small scale valleys and wooded landscape
- o Long rural views to the east to the adjacent open grassland character of LCA20 and with the South Downs beyond
- o A3 (M) largely contained within cutting, however there is an occasional glimpsed view of passing traffic to the north.

Specific local key issues

- o Erosion of landscape quality through vandalism and fly tipping
- o Loss of tranquillity through constant noise from adjacent A3 (M).

Designations

Bell's Copse SINC
Blendworth Common (South) SINC
Havant Thicket (South West Corner) SINC
Meadow by Bell's Copse SINC
Waterlooville Golf Course SINC

Landscape and built form strategy and guidelines

The landscape strategy is to *conserve* and *enhance* the local landscape character. The following guidelines apply:

Land management

- o Manage roadside vegetation to provide a screen and a link to adjacent areas
- o Manage the area to maintain the existing diverse range of habitats to increase its ecological potential and historic landscape value.

Built form and development

- o Seek opportunitites to relocate overhead pylons underground
- o Retain low key character of access tracks with a simple compacted hardcore surface.