

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF BRENTWOOD BOROUGH

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4.1 General

4.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Areas within Brentwood Borough, structured as follows:

- Location of character area (map)
- Boundaries of character area (map)
- Photograph
- Key characteristics
- Overall character description
- Visual characteristics
- Historic land use
- Ecological features
- Key planning and land management issues
- Sensitivities to change
- Proposed landscape strategy objectives
- Suggested landscape planning guidelines
- Suggested land management guidelines

The profiles should be read as a whole when used to inform decision making. Where Landscape Character Areas fall within two or more adjacent District/Borough areas, included in this Study report the same profile has been included within the respective section. In such instances, a cross-reference is noted in the respective Character Area profile(s). Reference should also be made to other studies for neighbouring authority areas including:

- Thurrock Landscape Capacity Study

4.1.2 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified with Brentwood Borough (see Figure 4.1), and are described in the following sections:

A - River Valley

A11 - Roding River Valley

F - Wooded Farmland

F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland
 F8 - Doddinghurst Wooded Farmland
 F9 - Little Warley Wooded Farmland
 F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland
 F13 - Great Warley Wooded Farmland
 F14 - Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland
 F15 - Weald Wooded Farmland

G - Fenland

G1 - Horndon Fenland

4.2 River Valley Landscapes

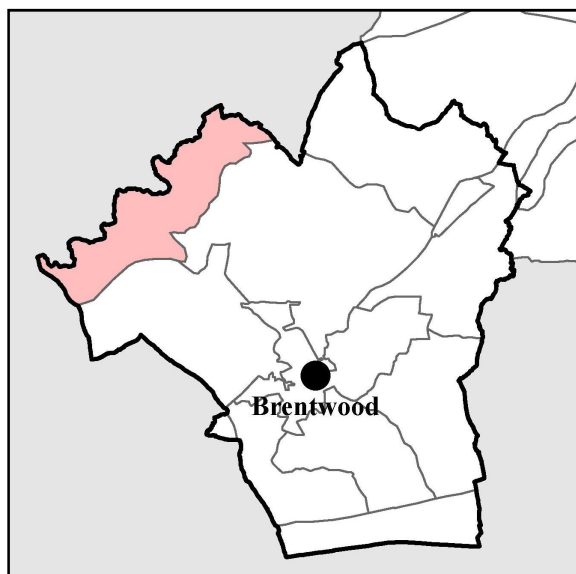
4.2.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau
- Main river valley served by several tributaries
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor
- Intimate character in places
- Wooded character in places

4.2.2 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Area:

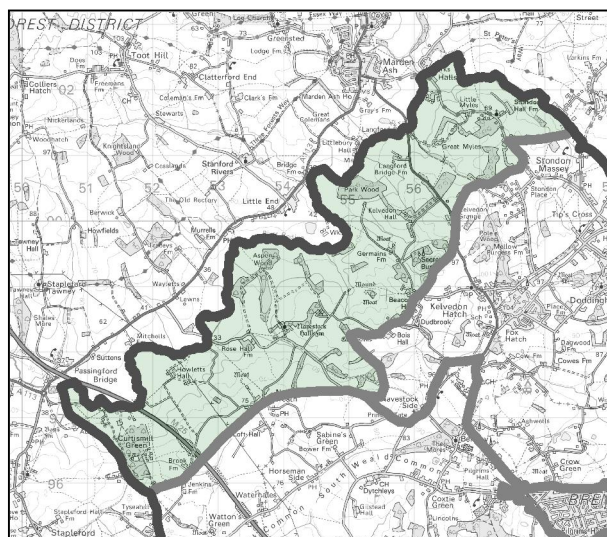
A11 - Roding Valley

A11 RODING RIVER VALLEY



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating slopes of the Roding Valley.
- Strong landscape pattern as a result of linear patches of woodland lining the valley sides.
- Short-distance, framed views along the river corridor and to surrounding wooded horizons.
- Mature, treed field boundaries.
- Dispersed settlement pattern, primarily consisting of scattered farmsteads and manor halls.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from B175 and M25 road corridors.



Overall Character

This character area is situated to the northwest of Stondon Massey, Kelvedon Hatch and Navestock Heath and encompasses the southern gently undulating slopes of the Roding Valley, which are intersected by narrow tributary valleys. The character of the area extends beyond the District boundary to the north to encompass the valley floor and northern slopes. Several linear patches of mature deciduous woodland line the valley sides (often following contour lines), providing a sense of enclosure and views to wooded horizons in places. An intricate and diverse patchwork of irregular and regular, small medium and large arable and pasture fields line the river corridor. Mature hedgerows, with many hedgerow trees, generally delineate fields. Networks of narrow lanes traverse the area and provide access to isolated farmsteads and manor halls. Although the A128 and B175 (a busy link road) runs through the area, and the M25 crosses the southern half of the character area, there is a sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from these major road corridors.

Visual Characteristics

- Patches of woodland frame cross-valley views.
- Open views to wooded horizons of farmland to the south.
- Views across and along M25 road corridor.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a complex network of heaths and commons, some of which were enclosed in the early post-medieval period and some in the 18th century. There is an extensive area of enclosed meadow along the banks of the River Roding. The historic settlement for the area was highly dispersed and rather sparse, comprising isolated manors, farms and very small hamlets, the latter spread out along the fringes of the heathland or at road junctions. The main historic landscape features include:

- A number of parks, some medieval in origin.
- Frequent areas of ancient woodland, some of which show signs of having been modified to form shaws or springs for game management.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture and pasture near the River Roding with pockets of woodland. The area contains the following features of nature conservation value:

- Curtismill Green SSSI (part of) is a relic of the ancient Forest of Waltham and has species rich dry grassland communities and areas of oak, hawthorn scrub and several ponds.
- Fifteen areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Conversion of valleyside pasture to arable.
- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the A128 and B175 and also the M25 (at the southern end of the area).
- Potential loss of mature field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the strong pattern of linear woodlands lining the valley sides and mature, treed field boundaries, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from main road corridors is also sensitive to potential new development. The skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive to potential new development, which may be particularly intrusive within views to the area from farmland to the north and south. There is relatively strong historic integrity as a result of a complex network of heaths and commons within the area (which are sensitive to changes in land management) extensive enclosed meadow along the banks of the River Roding and a dispersed settlement pattern, comprising isolated manors, farms and very small hamlets. As a result this character area is highly sensitive to change or new development.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure any development on the valley sides is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.
- Maintain cross-valley views.
- Ensure that new woodland planting is designed to enhance existing landscape character and species composition reflects local provenance.
- Conserve the largely undeveloped character of the area.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland upon the valley slopes as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and restore pastures.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of the area.

4.3 Wooded Farmland Landscapes

4.3.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Elevated undulating hills or ridges and slopes
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland
- Pockets of common and pasture
- Views to wooded horizons
- Well wooded with blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland (including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland); copses, hedges and mature single trees
- Mature field boundaries
- Framed views to adjacent character areas
- Enclosed character in places
- Network of quiet, often tree-lined narrow lanes

4.3.2 The Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Areas:

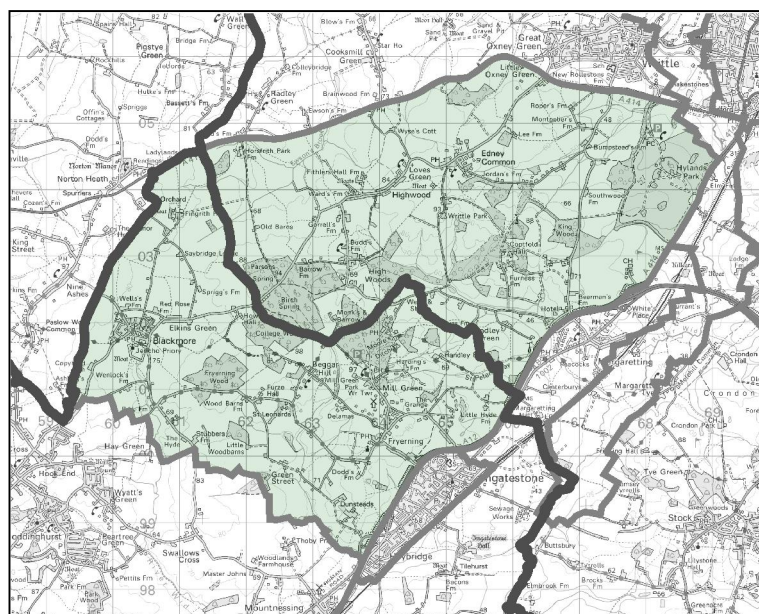
F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland
F8 - Doddinghurst Wooded Farmland
F9 - Little Warley Wooded Farmland
F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland
F13 - Great Warley Wooded Farmland
F14 - Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland
F15 - Weald Wooded Farmland

F7 BLACKMORE WOODED FARLMAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



Key Characteristics

- Undulating wooded farmland.
- Medium to large-scale patches of woodland interspersed with irregular arable fields.
- Mature hedgerows and deciduous treed field boundaries.
- Patches of smaller-scale pasture fields and pony paddocks.
- Views to wooded horizons.
- Several small hamlets and farmsteads lining routes through the area.
- Sense of tranquillity away from major roads.
- Network of narrow lanes.



Overall Character

This character area is situated to the north-west of Ingatestone and Margaretting villages and south of Writtle. The character of this area of undulating farmland is dominated by a wide belt of medium to large-scale woodlands stretching from Fryerning Wood in the southwest to South Wood (on the fringes of Hylands Park) in the northeast. Patches of predominantly deciduous woodland are interspersed with an irregular arrangement of medium to large-scale fields. Smaller-scale pasture fields and pony paddocks are also dotted within the landscape, particularly within woodland clearings to the north of Fryerning. Fields are generally delineated by mature hedges and deciduous treed field boundaries, which are usually in good condition but occasionally gappy in places. Within fields surrounding the patches of woodland, recognisable sense of place and character is provided by views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent character areas. Settlement pattern is scattered and consists of two main nucleated villages (Blackmore to the west and Fryerning to the east) and several small hamlets and farmsteads, which generally line routes through the area. St. Mary the Virgin church, Fryerning post mill and the tower of St. Lawrence church, Blackmore (which Pevsner describe as 'one of the most, if not the most impressive of all timber towers in England) are visible

landmarks within the landscape. The main A414, A12 and A1016 road corridors line this character area to the north, south and east. Therefore, although within patches of landscape enclosed by woodland there is an intimate character with a relatively strong sense of tranquillity; in proximity to road corridors this character is disturbed by constant background traffic noise. Views across the landscape generally unfold, enclosed by the rolling topography and patches of woodland. A network of narrow lanes, often covered by canopies of mature trees traverse the area, providing a sense of seclusion. The mature, designed parkland landscape of Hylands Park, containing several mature trees, and associated with Hylands House (a neo-classical mansion, built around 1730) dominates the character of the eastern part of this character area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Long-distance views across farmland enclosed by patches of woodland.
- Unfolding views, moving through the undulating landscape and patches of woodland.
- Open views to the Chelmsford's south-western urban edge from Hylands Park.
- St. Mary's Church (Widford) is a landmark within views north-eastwards from Hylands Park.
- St. Mary the Virgin church, Fryerning post mill and the tower of St. Lawrence church, Blackmore are landmarks within views across the character area.

Historic Land Use

Anciently, parts of this Character Area were within Writtle Forest, a medieval hunting forest. Substantial pockets of woodland survive, as does the historic settlement pattern of dispersed villages focussed on greens and commons, and scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern. The field pattern is rather mixed: to the east and south is an extensive area of pre-18th century co-axial enclosure; to the north and north-east is an area of pre-18th century irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, some of which may be the result of intermittent woodland clearance along the edges of Writtle Forest. Historically the settlement pattern has been very dispersed. The main historic landscape features include:

- Areas of large, irregular fields.
- Hylands Park, a medieval parkland.
- A single Saxon estate, the place-name evidence suggests that the area encompassed Ingatestone and the adjoining parishes of Mountnessing (F8), Margaretting, Fryerning and Buttsbury in the upper Wid valley.
- A number of areas of ancient woodland.
- A few small areas of parkland attached to mansion houses.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable and pastoral agriculture interspersed with deciduous woodland. The area contains 18 sites of nature conservation value including:

- Hylands Park SINC with unimproved grassland and woodland habitats and a further 17 sites with ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on major roads, rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development around the edges of Chelmsford (for example within the floodplain of the River Wid to the west of Chelmsford).
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A414, A12 and A1016 road corridors.
- Potential major road improvements (A414, A12 and A1016).
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include medium to large-scale patches of woodland, mature hedgerows and deciduous treed field boundaries, and patches of small-scale pasture fields and paddocks, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons (where gained) are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a historic settlement pattern of dispersed villages, focussed on greens and commons and scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern. This pattern is particularly sensitive to large-scale new development. Sensitive visible historic features also include Hylands Park (a medieval parkland) and a few smaller areas of parkland attached to mansion houses. The network of quiet rural lanes is also sensitive to change or increased traffic associated with new development along with the sense of tranquillity away from major road corridors. There are several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 18 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising unimproved grassland woodland habitats and ancient woodland). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

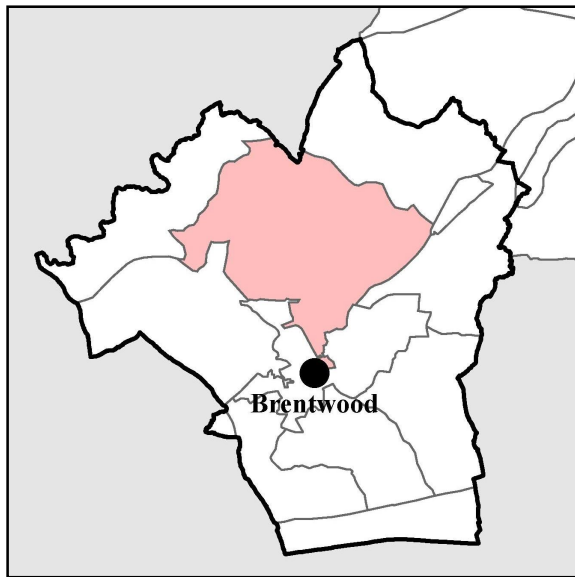
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Chelmsford town and Ingatestone village.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve views into the Wid valley from the eastern edge of the area.
- Conserve the setting of Hylands House and Park.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as major road corridors, for example with planted shelter belts).

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.

F8 DODDINGHURST WOODED FARMLAND

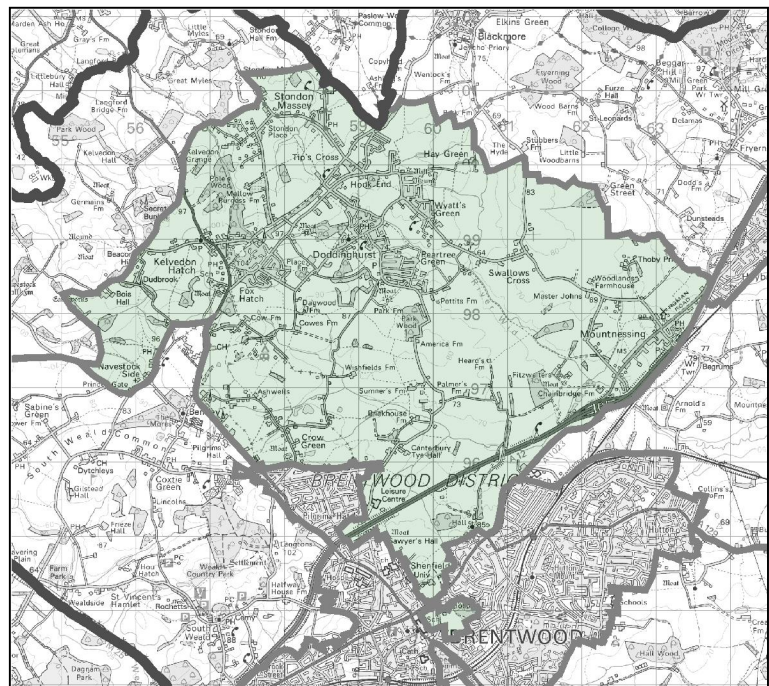


Key Characteristics

- Mature wooded farmland.
- Patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland.
- Undulating, predominantly arable farmland.
- Mature, treed-field boundaries.
- Tree-covered narrow lanes.
- Small nucleated and linear villages.
- Sense of tranquillity away from major A128 and A12 road corridors.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses an area of mature wooded farmland, situated to the north of Brentwood and overlooking the southern slopes of the Roding valley to the north. Patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland cover undulating, predominantly arable farmland. Wooded character is further enhanced by mature hedged field boundaries and tree covered narrow lanes (with canopies often forming umbrellas across the roads). Towards the northern edge of the area, sense of place is provided by views into the Roding Valley, whilst throughout the area, views to surrounding wooded horizons provides recognisable orientation. A very tall communications mast (close to Kelvedon Hatch) is a dominant landmark within views across this wooded landscape, particularly within views southwestwards from Stondon Massey. Settlement pattern consists of several small nucleated and linear villages, including Doddinghurst, Kelvedon Hatch, Stondon Massey and Mountnessing. Black vernacular barns are also scattered within the character area. Within pockets of the character area, an intricate landscape pattern creates a sense of tranquillity (for example around Navestock Side). This sense of tranquillity is, however disturbed in proximity to the A128 and A12 road corridors which



cross the area. The character of the area becomes less rural and more greatly influenced by human interaction at the southern edge of the area, in close proximity to the northern urban edge of Brentwood.

Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed views to wooded horizons within wooded farmland (adjacent character areas) to the east and west.
- Open views into and along the Roding valley from the northern edge of the area.
- Views to Brentwood urban edge from the southern part of the character area.
- Channelled views down narrow, tree-lined lanes.
- Unfolding views when moving through the undulating landscape.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by pre-18th century irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older. The historic settlement for the area was highly dispersed and rather sparse, comprising isolated manors, farms and very small hamlets, the latter spread out along the fringes of the heathland or at road junctions. The main historic landscape features include:

- A few parks, some of which are medieval in origin.
- Numerous areas of ancient woodland, some of which show signs of having been modified to form shaws or springs for game management.
- A single Saxon estate, the place-name evidence suggests that the area encompassed Ingatestone and the adjoining parishes of Mountnessing, Margaretting (F7), Fryerning (F7) and Buttsbury (F7) in the upper Wid valley.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture. The area contains The Coppice, Kelvedon Hatch SSSI comprised of ancient woodlands, plus 10 further undesignated sites of ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Loss of mature field boundaries.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the main A128 and A12 road corridors.
- Increased pressure on historic lanes and minor roads.
- Potential expansion of Doddinghurst, Stondon Massey, Kelvedon Hatch and Mountnessing settlements.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland, mature-treed field boundaries and tree-covered narrow lanes, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons and views into and along the Roding Valley (from the northern edges of the area) are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a highly dispersed historic settlement pattern of isolated manors, farms and very small hamlets. This pattern is particularly sensitive to large-scale new development. Sensitive visible historic features also include a few parks (some of which are Medieval in origin) and areas of ancient woodland (quite a few of which show signs of modification to form shaws or springs for game management). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the

area (including 10 sites of importance for nature conservation, predominantly comprising ancient woodland). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

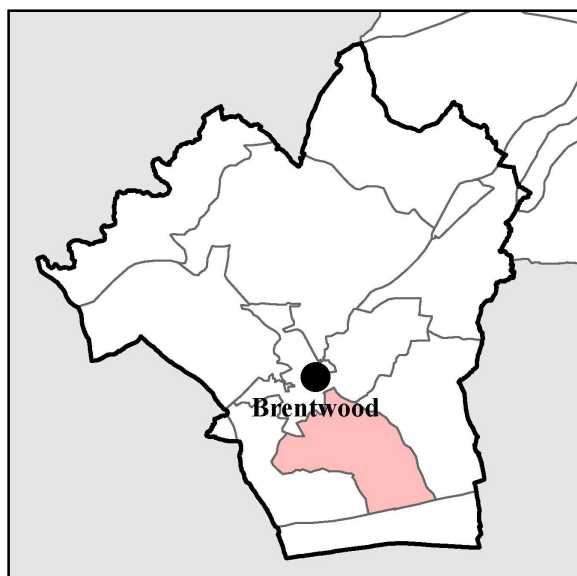
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that the design of new agricultural buildings reflects the local vernacular style and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Seek ways to ensure that any potential new development at the fringes of Brentwood or the other smaller settlements is not visually intrusive within the surrounding landscape setting.
- Conserve the landscape setting of settlements within the character area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

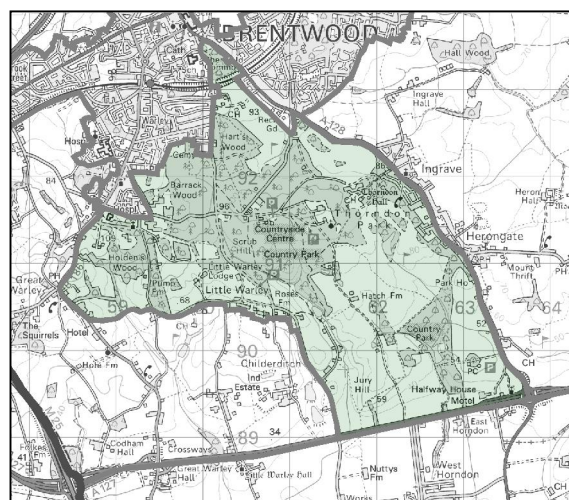
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Seek ways to mitigate the visual impact of the A12 and A128 road corridors through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelter belts.
- Conserve historic, tree lined and covered lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.

F9 LITTLE WARLEY WOODED FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Undulating, sloping wooded farmland containing the expansive Thorndon Country Park.
- Patchwork of mixed and deciduous semi-natural and plantation woodland, interspersed with commons, pasture and arable fields.
- Important recreation and nature conservation resource.
- Sense of enclosure provided by patches of woodland, framing views to surrounding wooded horizons.
- Sense of tranquillity at distance from the A127 and A128 road corridors and Brentwood urban edge.
- Scattered settlement pattern.
- Network of quiet, narrow rural lanes.



Overall Character

This character area extends from the southern urban edge of Brentwood in the north, to the relatively straight road corridor of the A127 in the south. The eastern boundary is formed by the A128. The expansive area of Thorndon Country Park, a mature landscape containing a diverse mixture of habitats, dominates character within the area. Old Thorndon pastures (with a small-scale hedged field pattern and cattle-grazed character) separates the higher northern area from plantation woodland and recreational/amenity space to the south. Areas of woodland provide a sense of enclosure and frame views to surrounding wooded horizons. Despite the popularity of the area as a recreation resource, proximity to Brentwood urban area in the north, the A128 road corridor to the east and the A127 road corridor in the south, there is a strong sense of tranquillity within pockets of the character area. Settlement pattern is small-scale, consisting predominantly of the small hamlet of Little Warley and occasional scattered farmsteads. A network of quiet, narrow rural lanes run across and down the slopes.

Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Open and framed views from the northern and higher areas of the park towards Thorndon and wooded farmland to the south.
- Open views to the Brentwood's southern urban edge from the northern end of the character area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a complex landform of undulating hills and ridges with panoramic views over the Thames and North Kent. It is heavily wooded, and contains within its bounds the extensive historic parkland of Thorndon Park. This is of medieval origin and was extensively re-landscaped in the 17th and 18th centuries. The remains of Thorndon Hall are located in the north-eastern corner of the Park. Where fields exist between the parks and copses, they are small and regular, and appear to have their origins as assarts into the woodland. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed around commons, including linear commons, and along roads. To a large extent this pattern survives, although there has been a tendency for settlement to coalesce creating linear villages along roads. The main historic landscape features include:

- Smaller areas of ancient origin woodland, copses and shaws, scattered across the landscape.
- Several small lakes, including dammed minor valleys.
- A strong linear grain, running south east/north west, reflecting the historic functional integration of this area with the low-lying areas to the south.
- Medieval, or earlier, origin fields.

Ecological Features

This Character Area contains Thorndon Park SSSI (148 hectares), comprised of ancient and semi-natural woodland, woodland pasture and unimproved grassland habitats. There are also 7 areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on major roads, rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development at the southern fringes of Brentwood urban area.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A127 and A128 road corridors.
- Potential major road improvements to the A127.
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature woodland, single trees and hedgerows.
- Management of Thorndon Country Park as a recreation and nature conservation resource.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include a patchwork of mixed and deciduous semi-natural and plantation woodland, interspersed with commons and pastures (several of which are within the mature Thorndon parkland landscape) and sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed and linear historic settlement pattern and several sensitive visible historic features, including small areas of ancient woodland, copses and shaws, scattered across the landscape and several small lakes. Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

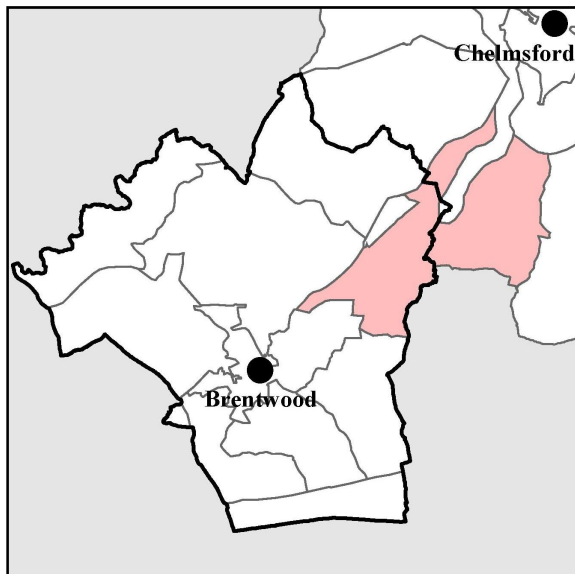
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Brentwood urban area.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve existing views across the area and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Conserve the setting of Thorndon Hall and Park.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as A127 road corridor, for example with planted shelter belts).

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve and manage the diverse patchwork of common and grassland habitats.

F10 HEYBRIDGE WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)

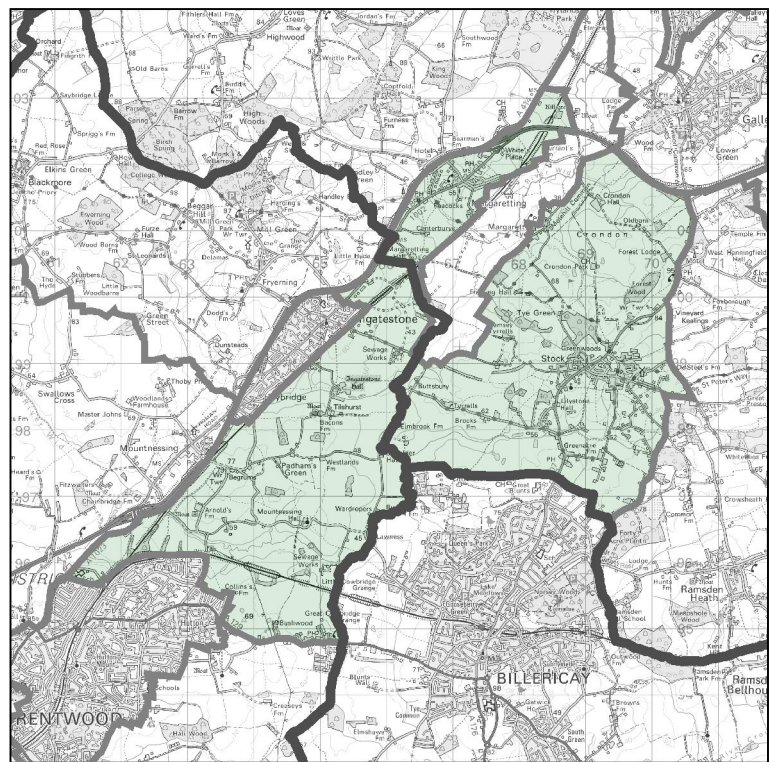


Key Characteristics

- Mature, undulating wooded farmland lining the B1002 road and railway corridor.
- Mixture of medium to large-scale predominantly arable fields with mature treed field boundaries.
- Single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches.
- Strong linear settlement pattern though the centre of the area, becoming more scattered at distance from the road/railway corridor.
- Landmark halls and churches.
- Narrow, often tree-lined rural lanes.

Overall Character

Situated to the northeast of Brentwood urban area, this character area encompasses wooded farmland to the south of the B1002 road and railway corridor. The northern half of the character area surrounds the southern half of the valley of the River Wid. A mixture of medium to large-scale, predominantly arable fields, delineated with mature trees, rather than lower hedges, dominates the character of the area. Several single mature trees and species-rich ditches also provide recognisable landscape features. The strong linear settlement pattern of Ingatestone and the edge of Mountnessing settlements (lining the straight B1002 road and railway corridor), and Brentwood urban edge to the southwest, introduce a suburbanised character to the northern part of the character area. Away from this main settlement corridor, however, settlement pattern is smaller scale, consisting of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads which are accessible via a network of quiet, often tree-lined rural lanes - for



example Old Church Lane. Church towers and small halls within Ingatestone and Mountnessing, for example, and Mountnessing windmill, are landmarks within views across the area and from surrounding character areas.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views to urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.
- Open views into the valley of the River Wid from fields within the northern half of the area.
- Views to wooded horizons both within the area and within adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Framed views to landmark church towers and halls (such as Ingatestone Hall) and also to Mountnessing windmill.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by irregular fields mixed in with the predominant co-axial field system of ancient origin. The co-axial fields are mostly aligned east to west. The commons were mostly enclosed by the 19th century, but part of their extent can be seen in the surviving field boundary pattern. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. There were also scattered farmsteads, and parkland associated with Ingatestone Hall.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with scattered woodland. The area contains 13 SINC's comprised of unimproved grassland, scrub and ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats, plus 9 ancient woodlands south of Ingatestone.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the B1002 and A12 roads and main railway corridor.
- Potential visually intrusive expansion of the urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential visually intrusive farm buildings.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature treed field boundaries, single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow tree-lined lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from linear historic settlement pattern and the presence of several areas of co-axial fields (of ancient origin). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 13 SINC's, predominantly comprising ancient woodland). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

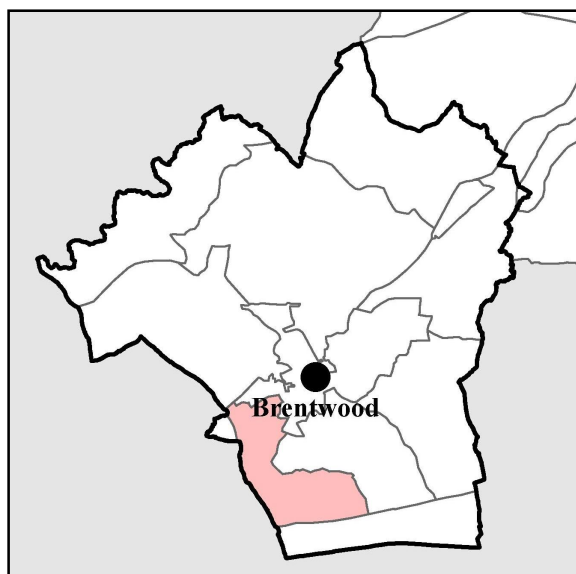
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Maintain views to landmark churches and halls and also to wooded horizons.
- Maintain open views into the Wid valley from the northern part of the character area.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape in accordance with existing landscape character.
- Seek measures to screen visually intrusive urban edges around Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

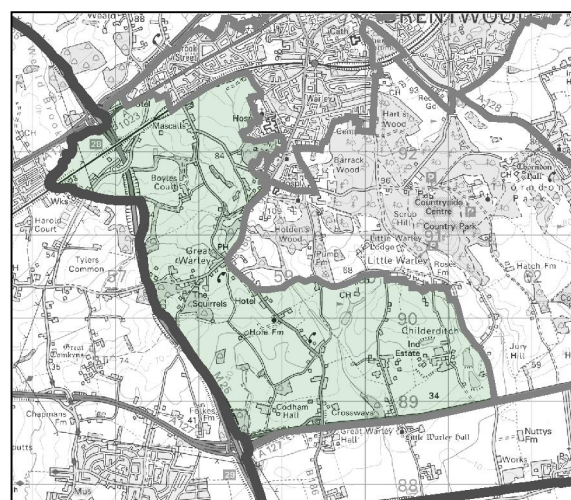
- Conserve and enhance mature hedgerow trees.
- Conserve and manage areas of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding, in keeping with local landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.

F13 GREAT WARLEY WOODED FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Strongly undulating wooded farmland/wooded hills.
- Extensive patches of woodland.
- Small-scale field pattern with mature treed field boundaries.
- Small-scale settlement pattern comprising small historic farmsteads and hamlets.
- Narrow, quiet sinuous rural lanes.
- Noise and movement associated with the M25 and A127 road corridors.
- Strong sense of place and orientation provided by views across Thames Chase to the west towards London and North Kent.



Overall Character

Situated to the southwest of Brentwood, this character area encompasses an area of strongly undulating wooded farmland/wooded hills. The area extends from the southwestern edge of Brentwood urban area in the north, to the A127 road corridor in the south. Character is dominated by the extensive patches of woodland, scattered amongst a small-scale (predominantly arable) field pattern. Mature hedgerows, generally in good condition and containing several mature deciduous trees, delineate fields. Pockets of improved meadows, streams and ponds speckle the area and contribute to an overall mature landscape structure. Settlement pattern consists of several dispersed historic farmsteads and the linear hamlet of Great Warley. Narrow, quiet sinuous rural lanes runs across and along the slopes. Despite a sense of enclosure and tranquillity within woodland clearings, tranquillity within the area is disturbed in several locations by background noise associated within the M25 and A127 road corridors, which delineate the western and southern boundaries of the area. Strong, recognisable sense of place is provided by open views across the M25 road corridor over the Thames Chase to London and North Kent.

Visual Characteristics

- Panoramic, open views across the M25 road corridor over the Thames Chase to London and North Kent.
- Views to wooded horizons within adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Open views to the southern edge/fringe of Brentwood urban area.
- Short-distance, framed views within woodland clearings.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a complex landform of undulating hills and ridges with panoramic views over the Thames and North Kent. It is heavily wooded. Where fields exist between the parks and copses, they are small and regular, and appear to have their origins as assarts into the woodland. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed around commons, including linear commons, and along roads. To a large extent this pattern survives. The main historic landscape features include:

- Smaller areas of ancient origin woodland, copses and shaws scattered across the landscape.
- Several small lakes, including dammed minor valleys.
- A strong linear grain to the landscape, running SE-NW, reflecting the historic functional integration of this area with the low-lying areas to the south.
- Fields of medieval origin or possibly earlier.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with frequent small woodland blocks. The area contains 7 areas of ancient woodland, the largest of 50 hectares near Great Warley.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Loss of mature field boundaries.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the main M25 and A127 road corridors.
- Increased pressure on historic lanes and minor roads.
- Potential visually intrusive expansion of Brentwood urban area.
- Loss of mature woodland.
- Potential expansion or widening of the M25 road corridor.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include extensive patches of woodland, mature treed-field boundaries, mature deciduous trees and pockets of improved meadows, streams and ponds which contribute to a mature landscape structure and are sensitive to changes in land management. The network of narrow tree-lined lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern (around commons). Other sensitive visible historic features include smaller areas of ancient woodland, copses and shaws scattered across the landscape, several small lakes including dammed river valleys and fields of medieval origin (or even earlier). There are also several important wildlife habitats consisting of 7 areas of ancient woodland. Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

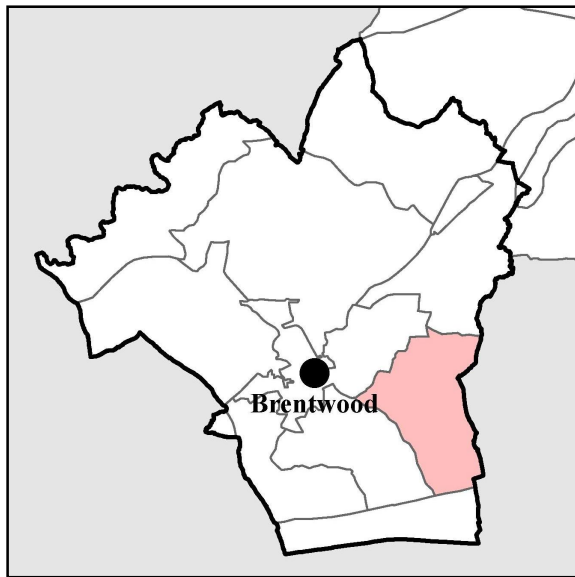
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that the design of new agricultural buildings reflects the local vernacular style and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Seek ways to ensure that potential new development at the fringes of Brentwood or the other smaller settlements is not visually intrusive within the surrounding landscape setting.
- Conserve the southern landscape setting of Brentwood.
- Conserve open views westwards across the Thames Chase towards London.
- Conserve views to wooded horizons within adjacent wooded farmland Landscape Character Areas.
- Seek ways to screen and mitigate the visual impact of the M25 and A127 road corridors through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelter belts.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Encourage linking of small copses and shaws, where appropriate to landscape character.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Retain and encourage the development of hedgerow trees, particularly existing oaks through sensitive management and replanting where necessary.
- Conserve historic, tree lined and covered lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.

F14 INGRAVE AND HERONGATE WOODED FARMLAND

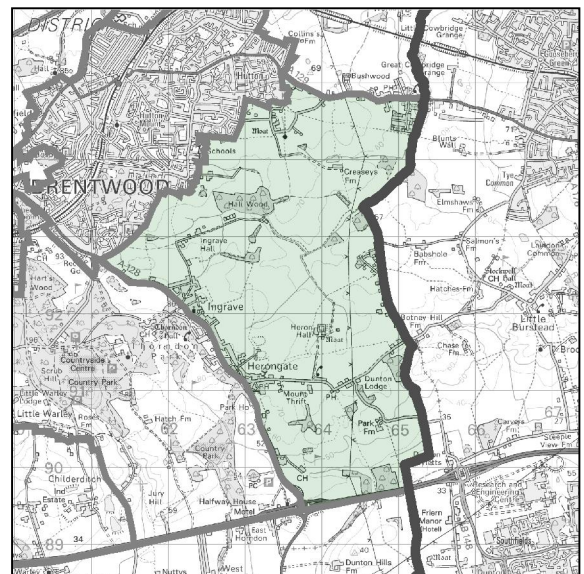


Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping wooded farmland.
- Medium to large-scale field pattern.
- Field delineated by mature hedged field boundaries.
- Patches of mature deciduous woodland dotted across the landscape.
- Small-scale linear and dispersed settlement pattern.
- Sense of tranquillity disturbed by noise and movement associated with the A127 and A128 road corridors.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses wooded farmland to the southeast of Brentwood urban area and extends from the urban edge in the north to the A127 road corridor in the south. Topography is elevated above the Crouch Valley to the south and is gently sloping, rather than strongly undulating. Character is dominated by a medium to large-scale pattern of predominantly arable fields, delineated by mature hedged field boundaries. Although patches of woodland are dotted across the landscape, providing some sense of enclosure and framing views of adjacent wooded farmland, there is less extensive woodland cover than within Thorndon Country Park (directly to the west of the character area). Settlement pattern is dominated by the relatively small linear settlements of Ingrave and Herongate (which line the A128 road corridor) to the west. Farmsteads are also scattered across the landscape. Several footpaths cross the farmland, providing access to Brentwood and Thorndon Country Park. The tower of Ingrave church is a visible landmark within views across the area. Framed and open views to adjacent wooded farmland also contribute to recognisable sense of place. Fewer rural lanes are present than within adjacent character areas, with noise and movement associated with the A127 and A128 road corridors disturbing tranquillity within southern and eastern parts of the area.



Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Open and framed views to adjacent Thorndon Country Park.
- Open views to the Brentwood's southern urban edge from the northern end of the character area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by fields with a strong north-south grain, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older. Originally the settlement pattern was dispersed with church/hall complexes, moated sites, and scattered farmsteads, and this is still evident in the landscape today although it has now been supplemented by linear roadside development and some plotland development particularly in the south and east. The main historic landscape features include:

- Significant north-south routes, although the grid-like pattern of fields is replaced by a more localised irregular pattern.
- Network of tracks/lanes and field patterns, which is bisected by the modern A127 in the south.
- Woodland, which varies significantly in size and form with occasional shaws, tree belts, and valley side woods, which perhaps reflects a process of assarting.
- Blocks of irregular and regular fields survive in the landscape, along with small blocks of woodland.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with infrequent woodland. The area contains no designated sites of nature conservation value but has eight small areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for visually intrusive development at the southern fringes of Brentwood urban area and also at the edge of Ingrave and Herongate and Billericay (outside the Study Area to the northeast).
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A127 and A128 road corridors.
- Potential road improvements to the A127 and A128.
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature woodland, single trees and hedgerows.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature hedges field boundaries and patches of mature deciduous woodland dotted across the landscape ditches which are sensitive to changes in land management. Open views to wooded horizons and to the adjacent Thorndon Country Park are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a network of tracks, lanes and field patterns (sliced through by the modern A127), shaws, tree belts and valleys side woods, which perhaps reflect a process of assarting. Eight small areas of ancient woodland also provide important wildlife habitats within the character area. Overall, this character area has moderate to- high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

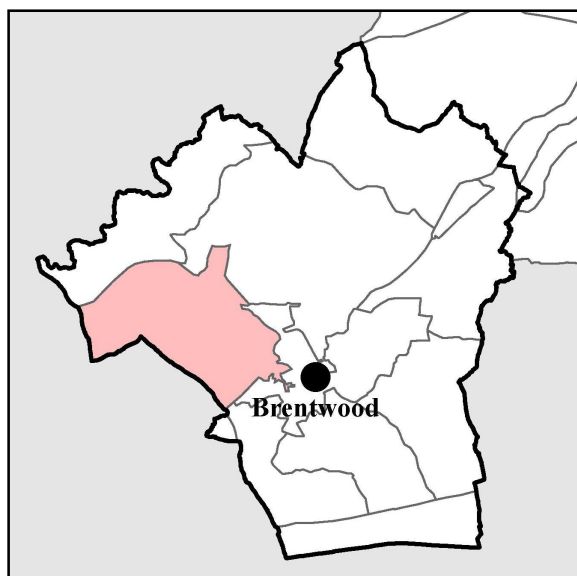
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Brentwood urban area and the settlements of Herongate and Ingrave.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve existing views across the area and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Conserve the setting of Thorndon Hall and Park.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as A127 and A128 road corridors, for example with planted shelter belts).

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that ploughing does not disturb mature trees within hedgerows.

F15 WEALD WOODED FARMLAND

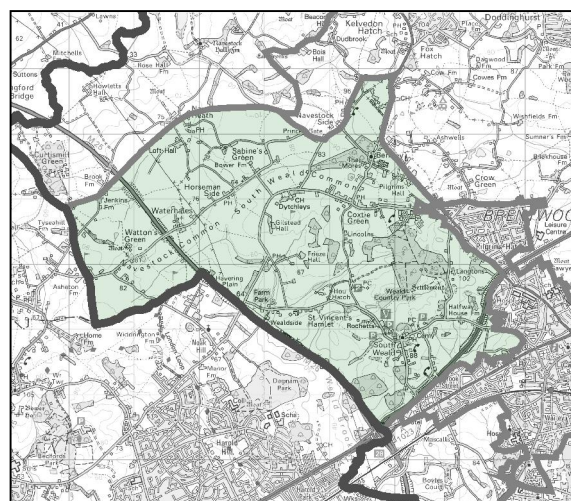


Key Characteristics

- Swathe of relatively open commons.
- Wooded rolling hills and slopes.
- Narrow, tree-lined roads.
- Intricate network of woodland and grassland within Weald Country Park.
- Sense of tranquillity away from main road corridors.

Overall Character

Situated to the northwest of Brentwood urban area, a long relatively open swathe of common land (Navestock Common and South Weald Common) dominates the character of the central belt of this area. The rolling hills and slopes within the area facilitate views across adjacent wooded slopes. A network of narrow lanes cross the area and are sometimes tree-lined, with canopies covering the road, providing a sense of enclosure. An intricate network of grassland, speckled with single mature parkland trees and woodland within Weald Country Park contributes to localised sense of place within the area. Settlement pattern consists of a small number of linear hamlets and scattered farmsteads peppered within the landscape. There is a sense of tranquillity away within woodland clearings and along several of the narrow rural lanes, however this is disturbed in close proximity to the M25, A12, A128 and A1023 road corridors, which border the area.



Visual Characteristics

- Open views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Long-distance views across farmland enclosed by patches of woodland.
- Unfolding views, moving through the undulating landscape and patches of woodland.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a complex landform of undulating hills and ridges with panoramic views over the Thames and North Kent possible in good weather. This Character Area contains the northern (and only surviving) portion of the medieval Royal Forest of Hainault. It is heavily wooded, and contains within its bounds the extensive historic parklands of Weald Park. Where fields exist between the parks and copses, they are small and regular, and appear to have their origins as assarts into the woodland. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed around commons and the edges of the forest, including linear commons, and along roads. To a large extent this pattern survives, although there has been a tendency for settlement to coalesce creating linear villages along roads modern development has infilled many of the gaps making it now largely linear in plan. The main historic landscape features include:

- Hainault Forest, which was disafforested in 1851 and in 1858 the Hainault Forest Allotment of Commons Act provided that 317 acres (128 hectares) in Chigwell, Lambourne and Dagenham should be allotted as common to the parish of Lambourne.
- The medieval Weald Park, which was extensively re-landscaped in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- Smaller areas of ancient origin woodland, copses and shaws scattered across the landscape.
- Several small lakes, including dammed minor valleys.
- A strong linear grain to the landscape, running SE-NW, reflecting the historic functional integration of this area with the low-lying areas to the south.
- Fields probably of medieval origin and maybe even earlier.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with pockets of woodland. The area contains Curtismill Green SSSI (part of) with woodland and grassland habitats, plus 3 small areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on major roads, rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development around the edges of Brentwood.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the M25, A12, A1023 and A128 road corridors.
- Potential major road improvements (M25, A12 and A128).
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include relatively open commons, narrow tree-lined roads, and an intricate network of woodland and grassland within Weald Country Park (including several single mature parkland trees), which are sensitive to changes in land management. Open views to wooded horizons and long distance views across adjacent farmland are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, with the northern (and only surviving) heavily wooded portion of the medieval Royal Forest of Hainault within the area, bounding extensive historic parklands of Weald Park, several small lakes and areas of ancient woodland and historic fields (of medieval or earlier origin). Overall, this character area has relatively- high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of small settlements.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve and enhance Weald Country Park.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Brentwood urban area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.

4.4 Fenland Landscape

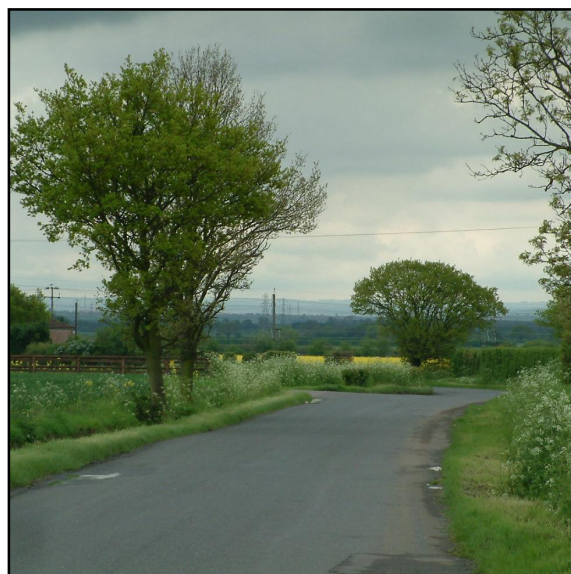
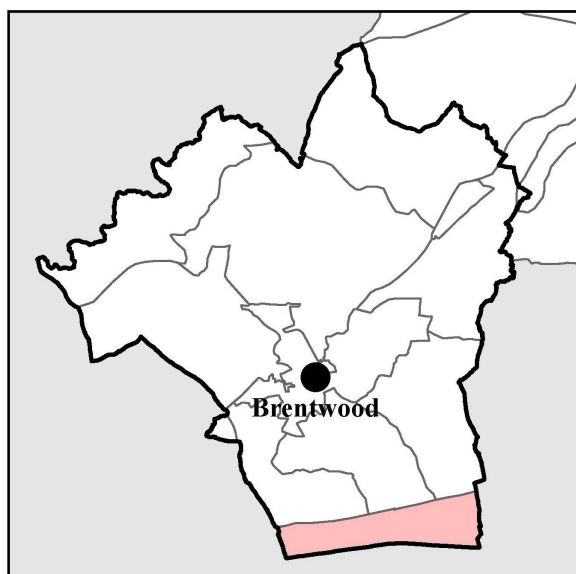
4.4.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Level relief
- Open, exposed landscape
- Large-scale arable and pasture farmland
- Gappy hedges
- Linear roads on causeways

4.4.2 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Area:

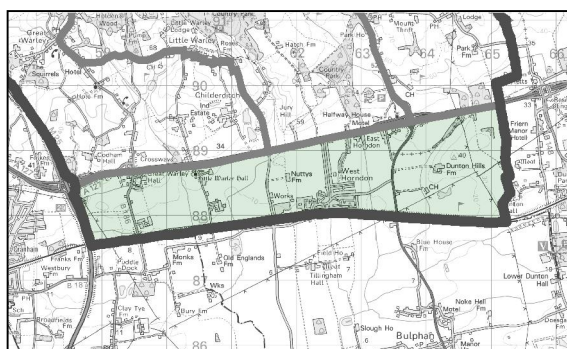
G1 - Horndon

G1 HORNDON FENLAND



Key Characteristics

- Large arable and pasture fields.
- Predominantly flat topography.
- Mature hedgerow field boundaries (sometimes gappy), which contain several single mature trees.
- Relatively sparse settlement pattern.
- Views to surrounding wooded hills to the north.
- Long distance views to pylons and Tilbury power station to the south.



Overall Character

This predominantly flat arable farmland is situated to the south of A127 and most of the Fenchurch Street to Southend railway line, and encompasses West Horndon settlement. Fields are generally large, with low hedgerows at field boundaries. These hedges often contain single mature deciduous trees, and although gappy in places, are usually trimmed. Sense of tranquillity within the area is disturbed by constant background traffic noise associated with the A127 and also the corridor to the south. To the north and east, a sense of general enclosure is provided by views to low wooded hills. Open views to pylons (which are dominant within several views) and Tilbury power station give a hint of the proximity of this area to a landscape, which is more greatly influenced by human activity around Thurrock¹ and the Thames Gateway to the south. Other than residential and small industrial areas at West Horndon, settlement pattern within the area consists of occasional single farmsteads dotted within the landscape.

Visual Characteristics

- Long and short distance, glimpse and open views to surrounding wooded hills to the north and east.
- Long distance views to pylons and Tilbury power station to the south.
- Views to Little Warley church and East Horndon church (landmarks to the north).

¹ For further information on landscape character to the south and east of this area, refer to Thurrock Landscape Capacity Study (Thurrock Council/CBA, March 2005).

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by fields with a distinctive grid-like grain to its layout of ancient origin. Dispersed farms are generally located along the roadsides, and settlement is clustered around the handful of nucleated settlements. The main historic landscape features include:

- Field boundaries marked by drains.
- Generally regular shaped fields, with long slightly sinuous boundaries running north/south.
- Distinctive tall hawthorn/elm hedgerows which follow wide verged historic lanes and tracks across the area.
- Small reservoirs, along with a scattering of smaller ponds and some medieval moated sites.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with infrequent narrow woodlands blocks in the fenland. The area contains 4 areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Visually intrusive extensions to the small industrial park (west of West Horndon).
- Potential expansion of West Horndon settlement.
- Highway improvements or potential widening of A127 (to the north of the area).
- Potential future decline and loss of field boundaries through lack of management and further introduction of intensive agricultural practices.
- Loss of hedgerow trees due to Dutch Elm disease and changing farming practices.
- Potential new pylons/utilities developments to the south.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature hedgerow field boundaries, often containing single mature deciduous trees. The flat and open nature of parts of the character area, combined with the fact that it is overlooked by wooded hills to the north and east, determines that the landscape is visually sensitive to new development (in particular tall development). There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic field boundaries (drains) and distinctive tall hawthorn/elm hedgerows, which follow wide verged historic lanes and tracks across the area and are sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has moderate sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

Restore – seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the relatively sparse settlement pattern and generally rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to the existing settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve the setting of West Horndon, through careful consideration of the existing landscape structure.

- Conserve views to landmark churches to the north.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as the edges of the small industrial estate in West Horndon, and large agricultural buildings).

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow network by planting hedgerow species appropriate to local landscape character.
- Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.
- Seek ways to mitigate the visual impact of the railway and A127 corridor through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelterbelts where appropriate.
- Introduce new woodland planting in the form of shaws and copses, as well as hedgerow trees.

