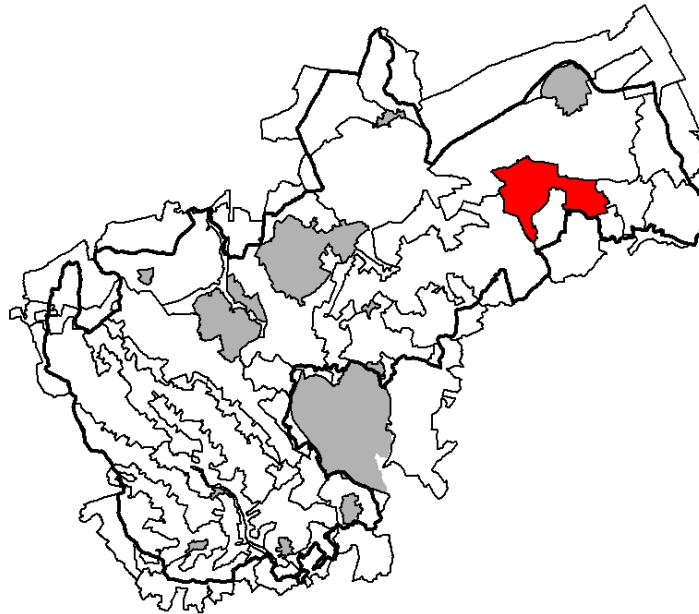


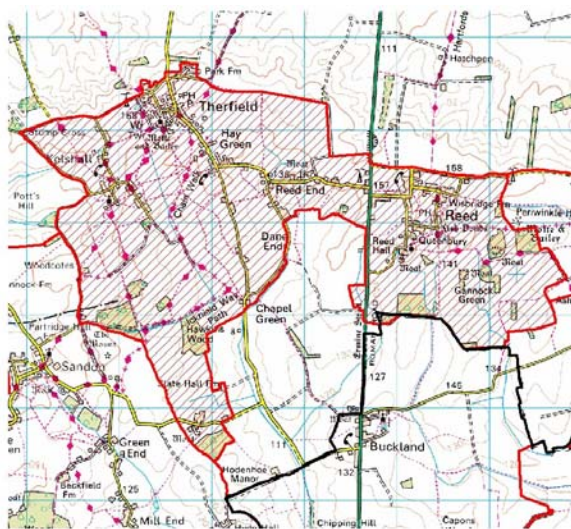
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

A broad band extending between the villages of Therfield / Kelshall in the west to the village of Reed in the east. The Character Area extends northwards to the break of slope defining the scarp edge and also extends locally to the District boundary in the south.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling plateau landform. Predominantly arable but with grazing land adjacent to settlements. Generally well wooded with small pockets of ancient deciduous woodland and densely scattered hedgerow trees. Network of ancient winding lanes and an extensive footpath network especially around the settlements. Organic enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes. Field sizes to the south generally medium to large sized, however, between Therfield and Reed fields are small to medium sized. Scattered farmsteads and wayside dwellings.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling landform
- Dominant arable land use
- Irregular pattern of field boundaries and ancient lanes
- Dispersed/scattered farmsteads

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Water tower at Therfield
- Telecommunications masts at Reed End
- Moated properties and fish ponds at Reed
- Upper Icknield Way

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Glacial drift (till) overlying chalk. Calcareous loam soils, occasionally poorly drained.

Topography

Gently sloping plateau falling towards the south east.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:30.

Altitude range

125m to 165m.

Hydrology

Area drained by headwater drains of the River Rib which extends to the east of Therfield. Notable for ponds and moated properties.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable.

Vegetation and wildlife

An area of high biodiversity is centred around the village of Reed typified by chalky boulder clay woodland and species-rich neutral grasslands. Unimproved neutral grasslands are a nationally scarce resource, but occur at several locations, for example Therfield Motte and Bailey and Fiddlers Green.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands of ash, maple and hazel coppice occur frequently with interlinking green lanes, the most notable being Reed, West and Philpotts Woods. Other examples include Hawkins Wood and Bush Wood.

Semi-natural grassland typical of the Character Area is a damp calcareous pasture with cowslip and pepper saxifrage but now limited to sites at Reed and Therfield. Locally important ponds occur at Reed End, Reed and Washingditch Green at Therfield. The scarce herb paris, fallow deer and long-eared owls can be found in some woods.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To the north of the area is the medieval settlement of Therfield. Earthworks of a probable medieval Motte and Bailey Castle lie within the village. Cropmarks of enclosures, prehistoric ring ditches and linear ditches have been revealed by aerial photographs. A medieval moated site lies to the southeast of Therfield

The Medieval settlement of Kelshall located to the southwest of Therfield was recorded in the Domesday Book as Cheleselle. The parish church of St Faith, Kelshall, dates to the 15th century. A Romano-British burial is recorded nearby.

To the east of the area lies the medieval settlement of Reed. The parish church of St Mary, Reed, dates to the 14th century. At least 10 medieval moated sites surround the settlement; two moated sites and a Holloway at Gannock Grove and Bush Wood, a double moat and fish pond at Queenbury, Moated sites at Reed Hall and Goodfellows. To the south of Reed there are cropmarks of an enclosure with associated linear ditches and a medieval moated site known as the Bull Moat.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of 18th century and later enclosure, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, prairie fields with post 1950s boundary loss, ancient woodland, post 1950s enclosure, prairie fields with relict elements within. There are pockets of 19th-20th century plantation and small areas of enclosed meadow pasture.

Transport Pattern

Network of ancient winding lanes and an extensive footpath network especially around the settlements. The Character Area is crossed by the Upper Icknield Way.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by villages, estates and dispersed/scattered farmsteads. There are a number of traditional buildings in the villages of Therfield, Reed and Kelshall. There are many good examples in the village of Therfield, these date from the 15th century. The Rectory, a former Manor House originally dates to the 15th century with later additions in the early 18th century. Elm House dates to the 16th century and Limes, a timber framed building with later additions dates to the 17th century. In Kelshall, a late Georgian five bay fronted Old Rectory lies close to the parish church. The village of Reed is unusual in plan with a number of buildings scattered around three greens and includes a large number of medieval moated sites. A Tudor chimney is all that remains of the original Reed Hall when it was altered in the 18th century.

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Complex area of arable farmland mixed with grazing and woodland cover. Tapestry of varying sized fields and corridor network of winding lanes.

Rarity & distinctiveness

Landscape type comparatively common within the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

Local visual impact on northern edge caused by water towers and telecommunications masts.

ACCESSIBILITY

Well covered by network of lanes, tracks and rights of way. The very straight and busy Roman Road – Ermine Street (A10) cuts across the Character Area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor’s responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

- LC2 Landscape Conservation Area
- SAM 20603 Double Moat and fishpond Queenbury: Reed
- SAM 20605 Moated Site Goodfellows: Reed
- SAM 20672 Motte and Bailey Castle and associated earthworks 100m south of Tuthill Farm: Therfield
- SAM HT11513/1 Gannock Grove Moated Site and Hollow way: Reed
- SAM HT11514 Bush Wood Moated Site and Hollow way: Reed
- SAM HT11569 Reed Hall Moated Site; Reed

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Low

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Dominant
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
ROBUSTNESS				

GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Conserve

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Encourage diverse woodland management practice
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the development of species-rich neutral grasslands on chalky boulder clays
- Encourage planting of new woodland of ash and maple species