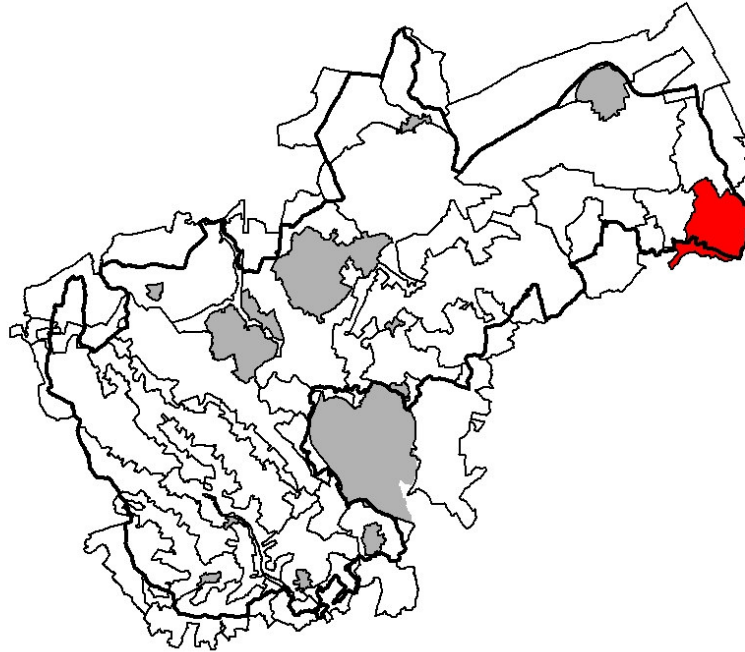


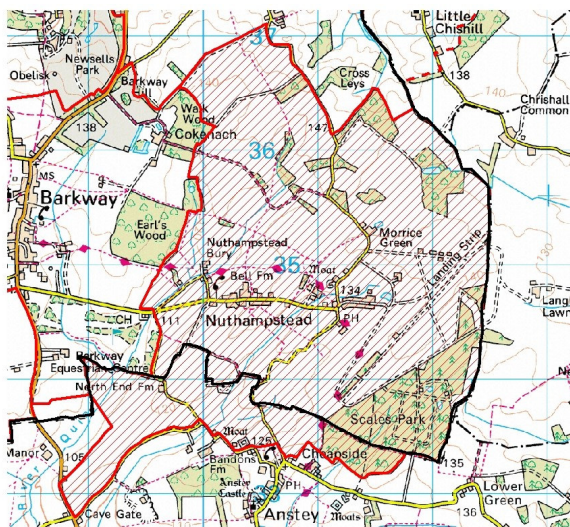
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

This Character Area lies to the south of Barley and to the east of Barkway. The area extends eastwards as far as the disused airfield and Scales Park Plantation. To the south the area extends just beyond the District boundary and the head of the River Quin catchment.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling plateau landform eroded into a series of shallow local valleys. Predominantly arable use but land to the southeast given over to former MOD airfield with more recent extensive plantation at Scales Park, to the southeast. Well wooded with a mixture of ancient woodland parcels and more recent plantations. Organic enclosure pattern associated with an irregular network of winding lanes. Field sizes are generally medium to large. Nuthampstead is a network of dispersed farmsteads strung out along the local road network.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling landform
- Arable land use with extensive woodland cover
- Irregular pattern of field boundaries
- Dispersed scattered farmsteads

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Former MOD airfield
- Hertfordshire Way long distance path

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

Glacial till over Chalk. Clay soils (pelosols).

Topography

Gently sloping land form falls to the southwest to join the River Quin catchment.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:40 but with plateau landscape over former airfield.

Altitude range

110m to 145m.

Hydrology

Two local streams drain the area south-westward into the River Quin catchment. The Stort rises at New England. Numerous old moats, surface ponds and lakes - some managed as commercial fishing concerns.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable but with other uses such as former military use and extensive recent plantations, mixed with ancient woodland cover.

Vegetation and wildlife

This Character Area encompasses an area of high biodiversity. Scales Wood lies within the south east corner of the area. It is a large (71ha) ancient woodland originally of ash, maple and hazel, formerly part of a substantial area of wood pasture (an historic woodland management regime) and has notably broad rides with species rich calcareous grassland. Wartime felling was replaced by conifer in the 1950's and 60's. All woodlands within this Character Area are typical of boulder clay habitats, and support a variety of invertebrate and mammal species, examples are Doctor's Grove/Oak Bushes, Cross Leys Wood and North Wood. Associated flora and fauna include, herb paris, early purple, great butterfly orchids, fallow deer and nightingale (Scales Park). Scales Park woodland is important for dormouse.

Areas of unimproved calcareous grassland occur occasionally within this Character Area, for example at New England Moor.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

A small well-preserved moated site lies in Sheepwash Grove in the north. It is probably a post medieval landscape feature. A moated site lies to the south at Little Cokenach. Cropmarks of enclosures lie to the south and east of Nuthampstead.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of ancient woodland, 18th century and later enclosure, prairie fields – post 1950s boundary loss, post 1950s enclosure pre 18th century 'irregular' enclosure, later enclosure – 18th century or later. 20th century leisure use lies to the west and informal medieval parkland to the south, and small pockets of prairie fields with relict elements within.

Transport Pattern

Irregular network of winding lanes. The Hertfordshire Way, a long distance path, terminates at Nuthampstead.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by a network of dispersed farmsteads, which are strung out along the local road network.

EVALUATION**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

Tree lined horizon widely visible from surrounding areas. Plateau area is complex with a mixture of open and smaller more intimate spaces.

Rarity & distinctiveness

The landscape type is comparatively frequent.

VISUAL IMPACT

Continuity of landscape pattern interrupted by former airfield at Scales Park.

ACCESSIBILITY

Northern and western parts are accessible by an extensive network of winding lanes and rights of way. To the south the network is sparser.

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 20607	Pains End Moated site: Anstey
SAM HT17003	Moated site Little Cokenach: Nuthampstead

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

ROBUSTNESS

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

Matrix Score: Moderate

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				

EVALUATION

INHERENT LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Landscape Character Sensitivities

- A gently rolling plateau, with localised shallow valleys formed by tributaries of the River Quin catchment area. The area is further characterised by numerous old moats, surface ponds and lakes
- A largely rural character area of arable fields and extensive woodland patches, with the exception of a former MOD airfield to the south-east. There is an absence of development and the area would be vulnerable to the addition of urbanizing features
- Scattered deciduous woodland of predominantly oak, ash, maple and hazel, some of which are ancient woodland. The woodland is vulnerable to lack of management or removal
- Scales Park to the south-east of the character area is characterised by a 71ha ancient woodland, predominantly consisting of Ash, Maple and Hazel. It is associated with species rich calcareous grassland. This area was degrading during the war and is vulnerable to further degradation or poor management
- Areas of a parkland style landscape, which are now arable fields. Specimen individual trees remain, which would be vulnerable to removal
- Medium to large arable fields with irregular hedgerow divisions would be sensitive to boundary removal
- The pattern of narrow and twisting minor lanes lined by hedgerows, some of which are raised would be vulnerable to improvements or upgrading of the roads
- The linear settlement pattern of Nuthampstead created by a network of dispersed farmsteads strung along the local road network would be vulnerable to inappropriate or unsympathetic development and any form of development not in scale with the village
- Areas of surviving ancient hedgerows, particularly along rural roads, are

vulnerable to loss

- Good public access through numerous rights of way, including the Hertfordshire Way.
- The former MOD airfield site is a detractor of the area as it has fragmented the landscape character and made the area less intact, while also reducing the representation of the areas typical historic character. The airfield has created a more extensive pattern of fields and boundaries on the plateau, resulting in a locally unbalanced character throughout the area.

Overall Nuthampstead is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity**. The gently rolling plateau, organic field patterns and woodland parcels create attractive characteristics, although the area has been degraded by the former MOD airfield.

Visual Sensitivities

- Woodland blocks interrupt views within the Character Area
- The visual continuity of the Character Area has been interrupted by the former MOD airfield
- Tree lined horizons are visible from neighbouring character areas and are a distinctive characteristic of the area

In visual terms, Nuthampstead is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity**. The complex patterns of open and enclosed spaces on the plateau would be sensitive to the introduction of urbanizing features.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Overall Nuthampstead is considered to be of **moderate landscape value**. Aspects of particular value within Nuthampstead are the lack of incongruous elements, the relative tranquillity and the sense of remoteness with few roads and a perceived distance from significant habitation.

EVALUATION**CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT****Large urban extensions and new settlements (>5ha)**

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and isolated character. Despite the existence of the former MOD airfield, it would be of an inappropriate scale and would introduce elements that would urbanise the landscape, altering the character and removing the existing key characteristics. Housing development would be likely to affect the existing narrow, lanes, or add new roads out of scale with the existing landscape, which could erode the character and pattern. The landscape capacity for major urban extensions or new settlements is considered to be low.

Smaller urban extensions (<5ha)

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and undeveloped character.

The landscape capacity for small extensions is considered to be low.

Major transport developments/improvements

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to the largely rural character of most routes at present. Upgrading of existing narrow, twisting lanes would erode the character of the landscape. Additional traffic would also affect the peace and tranquillity of the Character Area.

The landscape capacity for major transport developments/improvements is considered to be low.

Commercial/warehouse estates

This type of large scale development could be appropriate in this character area, on the site of the former MOD airfield. Shelterbelts and woodland parcel planting would have to be implemented to mitigate against the impact of such a development. Any upgrading of the existing network would cause damage to the landscape character.

The landscape capacity for commercial/warehouse estates is considered to be moderate.

Individual large/bulky buildings

There may be some limited capacity for sympathetically located and designed individual large buildings, particularly if they were of an agricultural or vernacular style and in keeping with the rural character. However, Shelterbelts and woodland parcel planting would have to be implemented to mitigate against the impact of such a development.

The landscape capacity for individual large/bulky buildings is considered to be moderate.

Large scale open uses

The former MOD airfield could potentially accommodate large scale 'open' uses. However the minor roads are unlikely to have capacity to accommodate development or would need considerable upgrading to be able to accept larger volumes of traffic and/or HGVs, which would further dilute the landscape character.

The landscape capacity for large scale 'open' uses is considered to be moderate to low.

EVALUATION**Mineral extraction/waste disposal**

The majority of the Character Area is currently relatively undisturbed and rural in appearance. Whilst some small scale mineral extraction could be accommodated with careful design and mitigation measures, larger scale extraction would not be in keeping with the character of Nuthampstead. The minor roads would need considerable upgrading to be able to accept larger HGVs, which could further dilute the landscape character. For any consented schemes, restoration proposals should be mainly at grade and include for additional planting in character with existing patterns.

The landscape capacity for mineral extraction is considered to be low to moderate. Waste disposal would be a problem in all character areas due to the presence of aquifers.

Incremental small scale development

There is capacity for carefully located and designed small scale developments within the Character Area, particularly if they were of a vernacular nature and in keeping with the rural character. Some small scale expansion of Nuthampstead, carefully designed, to prevent degradation to the elements of landscape value such as ancient woodlands and hedgerows could be accommodated.

The landscape capacity for incremental small scale developments is considered to be moderate.

Utilities developments e.g. masts, pylons, wind turbines

The former MOD airfield is currently the main detractor of the area and could provide an area in which new utilities developments or structures such as masts or wind turbines could potentially be installed. However such developments would have a significant impact on the rural character areas of Nuthampstead. Large scale developments or tall elements such as these would also be highly visible from surrounding Character Areas and could degrade the tree lined horizon, which is visible from neighbouring character areas and is a distinctive characteristic of the area. Any such development would have to be mitigated by the plantation of shelterbelts and woodland parcels, which are in characteristic of the area. The landscape capacity for utilities developments is considered to be moderate to low.

GUIDELINES

Nb. These guidelines apply only to land within North Hertfordshire

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE**Strategy: Conserve and Restore****Landscape management guidelines**

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora including replacement of conifers with native broadleaves
- 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
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network particularly to the south
- Encourage the development and management of calcareous grasslands
- Encourage the management of existing and development of new wood pasture
- Encourage the planting of trees and other appropriate vegetation along watercourses

Built development guidelines

- Protect and preserve the pattern of rural lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedgerows
- Encourage the planting of indigenous broadleaved woodland and vegetation to mitigate by screening new development that could intrude in rural views
- Encourage the use of existing brown field sites for commercial or bulky buildings
- Retain the rural character of Nuthampstead, ensuring that any new development is appropriately sited and of a scale, form and style appropriate to the Character Area
- Avoid the location of new development in visual intrusive locations, such as on higher ground or where they would be visible on the skyline
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or the loss of surviving calcareous grassland habitats and ancient hedgerows
- Ensure that lighting necessitated by new development minimises the impact on the Character Area