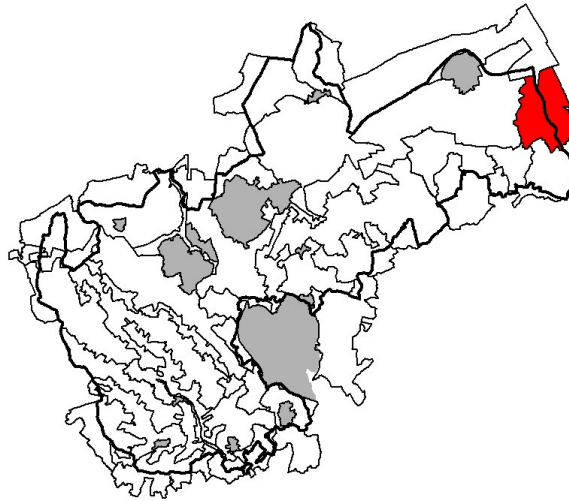


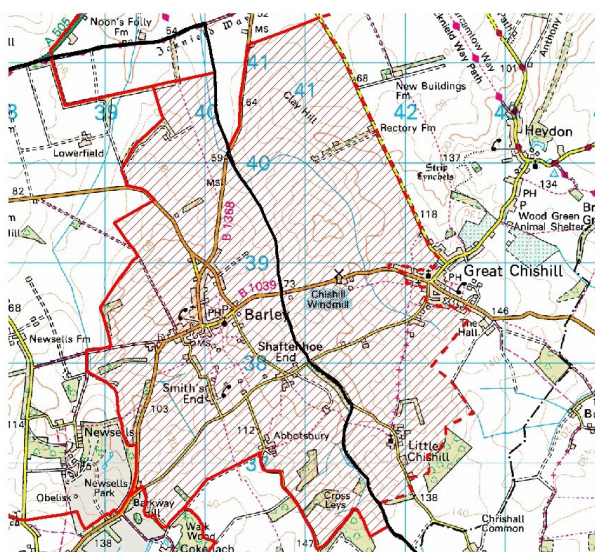
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The settlement of Barley sits within the chalk scarp south east of Royston. The Character Area, which is broadly rectangular shaped comes to a point just south of the confluence of Wardington Bottom Drain and Cumberton Bottom Drain. Along the southern boundary it extends to the boundaries of Newsells Park (see LCA 228) in the southwest corner and Little Chishill Road in the southeast. The character area extends northeastwards beyond the District boundary.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Chalk scarp slope incised by water erosion. Barley stands on sloping ground squeezed between Wardington Bottom to the west and Cumberton Bottom to the east forming a broad promontory of chalk which falls away on three sides. Land use is predominantly arable. This is an area of transition with a complex pattern of field sizes and boundaries. To the north and west, the field pattern is typical of the adjacent areas of large geometric rectilinear fields. Around the settlement and in particular to the south of the village centre the pattern changes to one of small to medium sized rectilinear fields often with curving boundaries, set within an earlier organic pattern of lanes and primary boundaries. To the southeast of Shaftenhoe End the pattern becomes more irregular, one of a more organic framework associated with the irregular network of winding lanes. There are pockets of woodland in the south. There are long distance views to the north from vantage points on the scarp.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Incised chalk scarp slope
- Complex pattern of field sizes and fields
- Open arable areas to the north
- Extensive woodland cover to the south. Linear shelter belts to the north

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Historically important architectural features
- Chishill Windmill

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

Chalk with patchy overlay of Boulder Clay. Shallow rendzina or calcareous loam soils.

Topography

Sloping landform falls from chalk plateau.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:10 on the upper slopes but falls slacken off at the point of transition where the scarp meets the lowlands to the north.

Altitude range

65m to 145m.

Hydrology

Local network of drainage ditches draining north feed into peripheral water courses. Network of ponds and drains at Newsells Park.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable.

Vegetation and wildlife

This Character Area contains limited ecologically valuable ancient woodland. Pondbottom Wood is an ancient woodland site dominated by oak, ash and maple. Wigney Wood has a similar character, but also contains elements of pedunculate oak and hornbeam woodland.

Exposed calcareous areas can produce diverse flora, such as that along Bogmoor Road verge, to the south of Barley.

Spring fed ponds at Smith's End, Broadmoor Pond and Newhill Pond are locally important.

Old barns support colonies of Natterer's bat and the open fields are historically important for stone curlew and in winter for golden plover flocks, grey partridge and birds of prey.

Barley village is important for brown long-eared, pipistrelle and Natterer's bats.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Barley a medieval settlement contains the 12th century parish church of St Margaret, where there is also an Iron Age farmstead and two Romano-British cemeteries. Earthworks, which may have formed part of a medieval manorial site lies at Abbotsbury to the south.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists largely of 18th century and later enclosure to the north with a mixture of prairie fields – post 1950s boundary loss, pre 18th century 'irregular' enclosure, post 1950s enclosure and ancient woodland to the south. There are pockets of 19th-20th century plantation and a 20th century stud farm lies to the east.

Transport Pattern

Barley is on a formerly important coaching road from Ware to Cambridge. Irregular network of lanes.

Settlements and Built Form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by farms and villages. Traditional buildings date from the 17th century and are represented by examples from Barley. Barley Lock Up is timber framed and dates to the 17th century. Early Tudor Town House with original timber roof is now a village hall and was restored in 1969-72. Margaret House incorporates later additions by Salvin (1831-3) to an earlier building in a gaunt Jacobean style.

EVALUATION**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

Barley stands on a local chalk promontory facilitating long distance views over the scarp to the north. To the south smaller more intimate field patterns and greater sense of enclosure.

Rarity & distinctiveness

The chalk scarp landscape is comparatively common within the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

The scale of visual impact is related to local development and infrastructure.

ACCESSIBILITY

Area to the north is less well served by rights of way compared to the complex network of winding lanes to the south of Barley.

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 HT 80 | Barley Lock Up: Barley |

EVALUATION

CONDITION

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Land cover change: | Localised |
| Age structure of tree cover: | Mixed |
| Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: | Scattered |
| 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: | Prominent |
| Impact of land cover: | Prominent |
| Impact of historic pattern: | Apparent |
| Visibility from outside: | Widely visible |
| Sense of enclosure: | Open |
| Visual unity: | Unified |
| Distinctiveness/rarity: | Frequent |

Matrix Score: **Strong**

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 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

- Chalk scarp slope incised by dry valleys. The landform is one of the strongest characteristics of the Barley Scarp Slopes
- The core of the Character Area, around Shaftenhoe End in the valley of Cumberton Bottom, has a sense of intactness that would be sensitive to intrusive development and significant changes
- Traditional materials of black weatherboarding, gault brickwork, painted render or pargeting, flint infill panels and thatch are common to buildings throughout the Character Area. These form part of the historically important architectural features of the Barley Scarp Slopes
- Limited woodland in belts and small blocks creates a largely open landscape, particularly in the north of the Character Area
- Some hedgerows have become relic and poorly managed, with others removed altogether, making them sensitive to further lack of management or removal
- The small scale and nucleated settlement predominantly located on the higher undulating ground.
- The interplay of the settlement within the Barley Scarp Slopes and the mixed pattern and scale of fields around them are a key feature
- Sunken lanes are located throughout the Character Area and would be vulnerable to upgrades or modifications
- Traditional built elements, such as windmills and individual properties, create focal points throughout Barley Scarp Slopes
- Groupings of non-native conifers around isolated buildings create visually intrusive elements in the landscape
- There are currently relatively few detractors within the Character Area

Overall Barley Scarp Slopes is considered to be of **moderate to high sensitivity**. The relatively intact valley core of the Character Area would be particularly sensitive to change.

Visual Sensitivities

- Long distance views over and towards the scarp in the northern part of the Character Area
- Greater sense of enclosure in the southern part of the Character Area, from woodland and landform
- Open views from roads and lanes throughout the Barley Scarp Slopes
- The Character Area is to a certain extent contained by a bowl landform with inward facing slopes, particularly in the valley core

In visual terms, Barley Scarp Slopes is considered to be of **moderate to high sensitivity**. Views across and towards the scarp slope are particularly sensitive to development.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Overall Barley Scarp Slopes is considered to be of **moderate high landscape value**. Aspects of particular value within Barley Scarp Slopes are the intactness of the valley, the good condition of many elements within the landscape, the lack of incongruous elements, a recognisable sense of place, the striking landform, the visual interest, memorable uninterrupted views, the sense of openness, the relative tranquillity and visible expressions of the local geology.

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 nature. It would introduce elements that would alter the character and affect the existing key characteristics such as the historic nucleated development form and the intact valley of Cumberton Bottom. Increased housing development could affect the sunken lanes, which could erode the character of the landscape. Extensive development could also disrupt the complex pattern of field sizes and boundaries. 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 entirely appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and undeveloped character. However, the undulating landform within the Character Area would allow some development to be accommodated without widespread visual intrusion in the wider landscape. Some small scale expansion of Barley, carefully designed and in keeping with the existing character of the village, could possibly be accommodated. The landscape capacity for small urban extensions is considered to be low to moderate.

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 roads and lanes could erode the character of the landscape, particularly if sunken lanes were to be upgraded. Additional traffic could also affect the relative 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 would not be appropriate in this character area. Whilst isolated developments are located within the Barley Scarp Slopes, and built development creates focal points, there are not currently any large scale developments of this type within the area. Any upgrading of the existing road network would cause damage to the landscape character. Extensive development could also disrupt the complex pattern of field sizes and boundaries. The landscape capacity for commercial/warehouse estates is considered to be low.

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 character and in keeping with the rural character. Black painted buildings with black painted weatherboarding could be an appropriate material. However, large buildings, if not carefully located, would erode the rural character of Barley and Sheltenhoe End villages. The landscape capacity for individual large/bulky buildings is considered to be moderate.

Large scale open uses

The varied scale of Barley Scarp Slopes would make it more difficult to accommodate large scale 'open' uses. The high visibility of the Scarp Slopes and the steep landform would make these 'open' uses visually intrusive. This would not be in keeping with the rural character of the area and could introduce new elements that would conflict with the existing characteristics. Extensive development could also disrupt the complex pattern of field sizes and boundaries. The landscape capacity for large scale 'open' uses is considered to be low.

EVALUATION

Mineral extraction/waste disposal

This Character Area is currently relatively rural in appearance with small scale nucleated development. Whilst it may be possible for some small scale mineral extraction to be accommodated with careful design and mitigation measures, larger scale extraction or waste disposal would not be in keeping with the complex pattern of field sizes and boundaries in Barley Scarp Slopes. Larger scale extraction could also disrupt the intact nature of the Cumberton Bottom valley. Restoration proposals for any consented schemes should be mainly at grade and include for some additional planting in character with existing patterns of small belts and copses.

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

Incremental small scale development

There may be some capacity for carefully located and designed small scale developments within the Character Area, particularly if they were of an agricultural nature and in keeping with the rural character. New developments would need to utilise traditional vernacular materials and styles, such as black weatherboarding, gault brickwork, painted render or pargeting, and flint infill panels, in order to respect the historically important architectural features of the built form within the Barley Scarp Slopes.

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

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

There are currently a limited number of detractors in the area. Further utilities developments or structures such as masts or wind turbines are likely to have a major impact on the rural character of the Barley Scarp Slopes. Large scale tall elements such as these would be highly visible within the Character Area, as well as in surrounding Character Areas.

The landscape capacity for utilities developments is considered to be low to moderate.

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
- 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
- Encourage the diversity of oak, ash and maple ancient woodland
- Encourage development of chalk grassland habitats on exposed calcareous areas

Built development guidelines

- Conserve the traditional character of Barley village, ensuring that any development within or located on the edge of the village uses appropriate vernacular materials and features
- Preserve and enhance the historically important architectural features of the Character Area
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Maintain the open character and the long distance views from the northern fringe
- Encourage the planting of appropriate broadleaved woodland, copses and native hedges to mitigate new development
- Retain the rural character of Barley Scarp Slopes, 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 visually exposed areas of scarp slope
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing hedgerows
- Ensure that lighting necessitated by new development minimises the impact on the Character Area
- Avoid the intrusion of built development into the largely intact Cumberton Bottom valley