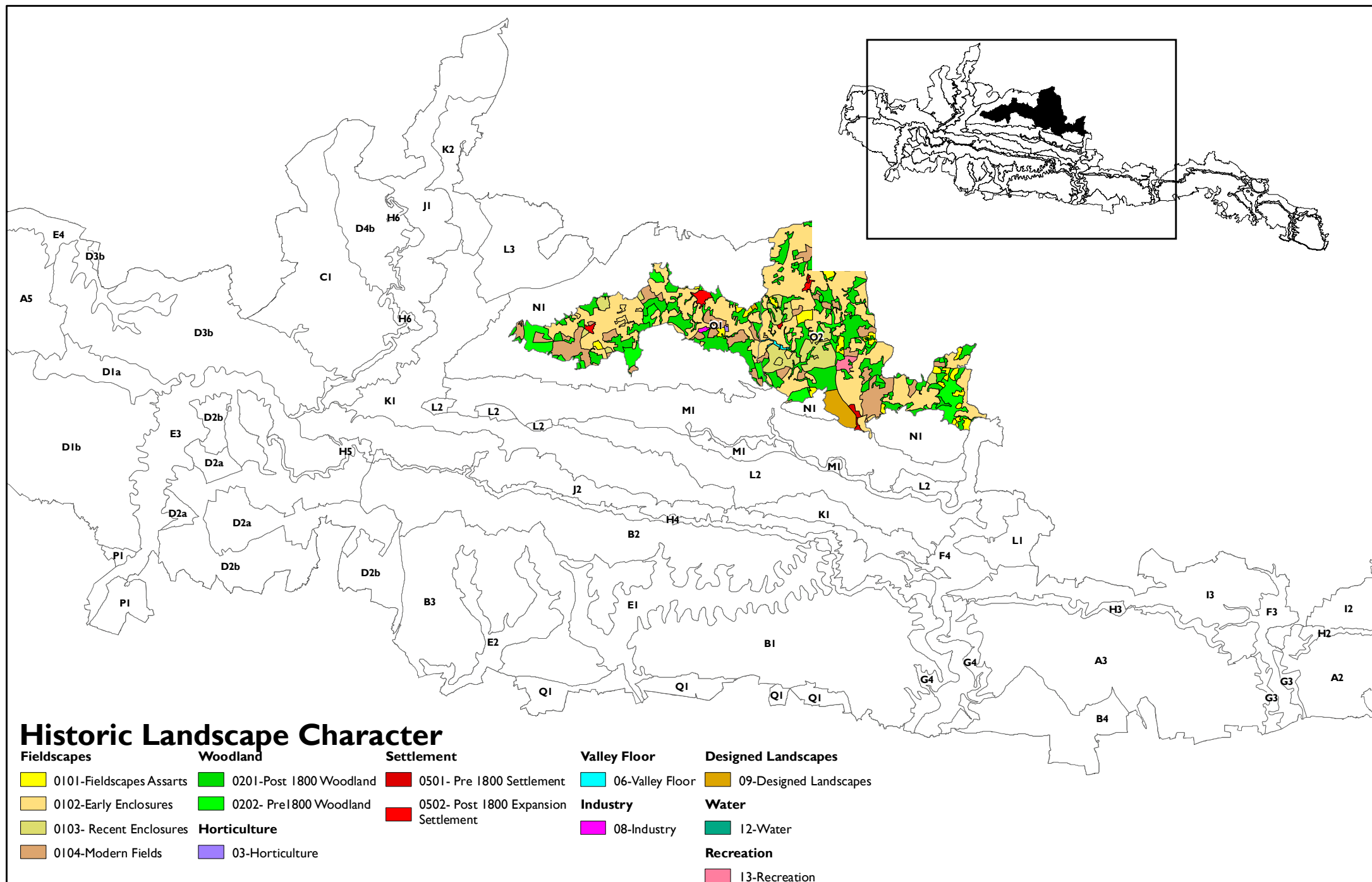


**O: Low Weald**



**O: Low Weald**

## LANDSCAPE TYPE O: LOW WEALD

---

- O.1 The *Low Weald* comprises a gently undulating lowland vale landscape found on the dense Weald clays that are located in the north of the South Downs. This landscape type forms only a small part of the area known as the Low Weald that extends north and east well beyond the boundary of the South Downs.

### DESCRIPTION

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Mixed geology of dense Wealden clays with limestone and sandstone bands gives rise to a gently undulating lowland vale.
- Drained by numerous branching streams, which have carved narrow valleys into the Weald clay. Ponds, marshes and damp, low-lying meadows alongside streams are key ecological features.
- Small-scale patchwork of irregular fields of arable and pasture divided by a well-developed historic hedgerow network with hedgerow oaks or bordered by sinuous woodland edges.
- Deciduous woodland copses are a feature, including ancient, species-rich and ecologically important woodlands that were traditionally intensively managed for fuel and timber.
- Linear strips of remnant woodland (shaws) are distinctive between field and along the narrow valley streams - this tree cover means watercourses are often indiscernible within the wider landscape.
- A number of large ponds, representing hammerponds associated with the Wealden iron industry or later mill ponds, add to the historic time depth and ecological diversity.
- Settlement pattern is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement – comprising isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland, often assarted fields.
- Later encroachment around the edge of the commons has resulted in common edge settlement around a ‘village green’.
- A deeply rural, tranquil and enclosed landscape with an essentially medieval pattern.

#### Physical Landscape

- O.2 The Low Weald is underlain by dense Wealden clays interspersed with more resistant bands of limestones and sandstones. This geology forms gentle ridges and high points and is responsible for the gently rolling and undulating landform. Erosional processes have exposed this area as a low lying area or ‘basin’ which lies at the foot of the Greensand escarpment. Streams have carved narrow valleys into the

Wealden clay. Although these water courses are often indiscernible in the wider landscape, hidden by tree cover, they are important to its structure and provide ecological interest. Ponds, formed historically by damming of the stream network, and often associated with the former Wealden iron industry, are a feature throughout the character area.

- O.3 The underlying clay gives rise to clayey or loamy over clay soils which are better drained than much of the Low Weald and this is reflected by the presence of arable farmland as well as pasture, paddock and some ungrazed grassland. Fields are of varying size with irregular boundaries defined by dense, mainly intact hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges. Sandstone outcrops are indicated by the presence of acidic vegetation including bracken.
- O.4 Woodland features prominently throughout the character area, interspersed with the farmland to form an intricate mosaic. Hedgerow trees (predominantly oak) add to the wooded character. Linear shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) are feature of this landscape, retained along the narrow steep valley sides. These add to the sense of enclosure and also provide an important wildlife corridor linking larger blocks of woodland.

### **Perceptual/Experiential Landscape**

- O.5 This is a landscape of varying scale with areas of openness associated with farmland and more intimate enclosure provided by the woodland cover. The encompassing Greensand hills provide further containment and, where woodland permits, provide a dark imposing backdrop to views.
- O.6 There are relatively few elements to this landscape but they combine to form a textured and colourful mosaic with a contrast between the light in open areas and the dappled shade of the woodland and wooded stream valleys. Visual unity across the character area is maintained by the consistent occurrence of farmland and woodland.
- O.7 The presence of deciduous woodland and the small streams which cut through this area contribute to its perceived naturalness. Some contrast is provided by the large arable fields which have a more tamed and managed character. Overall this landscape has a rural and tranquil character created by the absence of main roads, presence of narrow winding lanes, the dispersed sparse settlement and the perceived naturalness of the woodland, pasture and small stream valleys.
- O.8 The area is well served by public rights of way connecting places of interest including a Capability Brown's landscaped deer park at Petworth. However the Wealden landscape has to an extent avoided public notice with more attention paid to other landscapes within the South Downs. The feeling that it has been 'undiscovered' enhances its medieval, rural character.

### **Biodiversity**

- O.9 This landscape comprises a well wooded agricultural landscape, and includes several extensive an ecologically important woodland sites, some of which are recognised internationally for their lichen, invertebrate and breeding bird communities. Many ancient woodland sites occur through the landscape, many of which have been



designated as SNCI sites reflecting their ecological importance in the county context. Large areas of more recent mixed plantation provide additional habitat diversity.

- O.10 Fields of arable land and improved grassland are generally small and are typically bordered by well developed hedgerows, narrow woodland belts and/or woodland edges. Mature oak trees occur both as hedgerow trees and as individual features within fields, and ponds and streams provide additional ecological diversity. Occasional areas of marshy grassland and meadow also occur, and provide habitat for a range of declining plant species.

<b>Key Biodiversity Features</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Significant woodland cover, including many ancient woodlands, with good connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancient woodland provides an important habitat for woodland plant species, lichens, fungi, breeding birds and invertebrates. Their importance is recognised through designation at county, national or international level.</li> </ul>
Well developed hedgerow network, mature standard trees, ponds and streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These features provide additional ecological diversity.</li> </ul>

### **Historic Character**

- O.11 The development of deciduous woodland cover following the last glaciation (c.8500BC) saw the exploitation of the area by Mesolithic hunters. However, later prehistoric communities, dependent largely on agriculture, were deterred by the thick woodland and heavy, wet clay soils.
- O.12 Little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the Wealden interior, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress.
- O.13 A distinctive element of the medieval landscape, particularly on less productive soils, was the deer park, providing food, recreation and status for the landed elite. Former medieval deer parks are recognisable as compact islands of recently enclosed regular fields surrounded by irregular early enclosures. The boundaries (pales) are often still visible in the modern landscape as curvilinear field boundaries.
- O.14 During the post-medieval period, the character area became partly industrial in nature. This process began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the exploitation of the local iron ores and sands in the ironworking and glassmaking industries. These industries were manifested in the landscape as small-scale concerns, often set apart from the farmsteads and worked by non-local specialists (especially the glassworks), with the main effects on the landscape comprising extensive tree clearance and coppicing to provide fuel, and the damming of small valleys through the construction of earthen dams (pond bays) to create hammerponds, which fed water-powered machinery. Many of the pond bays still survive.
- O.15 The area today is characterised by a largely medieval landscape of isolated farmsteads set within irregular fields, some of which retain the original lobate form of medieval assarts, surrounded by woodland with evidence of the Wealden iron industry in the form of hammerponds.

<b>Key Features of the Historic</b>	<b>Importance</b>
-------------------------------------	-------------------

<b>Environment</b>	
Isolated farmsteads set within areas of early enclosure and surrounded by woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity and an indication of the marginal nature of the landscape
Extensive pre-1800 woodland	Landscape largely unchanged since the medieval period providing a strong sense of historical continuity
Designed landscapes - medieval deerparks and post-medieval landscape parks	Provide evidence of the use of agriculturally marginal land by the wealthy strata of society for recreational use
Archaeological remains of industrial activity	Provides evidence of a short-lived but important industrial component of the rural landscape

### **Settlement Form and Built Character**

- O.16 The settlement pattern in this area is characterised by a high density of dispersed settlement. This conforms to English Heritage's rural settlement designation of Weald Sub-Province within the South-eastern Province. The typical settlement form comprises isolated farmsteads of medieval origin set within areas of early enclosure surrounded by woodland, often assarted fields. Some of these farmsteads clustered around an area of common waste (generally used to pasture livestock), forming small agglomerations of 'less dispersed' farmsteads. Later encroachment around the edge of the commons has increased the amount of buildings around the perimeter in a 'common edge' settlement style. Many of these commons now appear as 'village greens'.
- O.17 Building materials are typically timber, local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Sensitivity**

- O.18 This landscape has many sensitive natural, cultural and aesthetic/perceptual features that are vulnerable to change. Key landscape sensitivities include:
- The irregular landscape mosaic of fields, hedgerows, woodland blocks and shaws which provide continuity and unity throughout the character area, conforming to a medieval landscape pattern.
  - The hedgerow network with mature oaks occurring as hedgerow trees.
  - The small stream corridors and ponds (including hammerponds surviving from the time of the Wealden iron industry) which are important features in the landscape but are often hidden from view by vegetation cover.
  - The original lobate form of medieval assarts that surround isolated farmsteads.
  - Extensive and ecologically important areas of ancient woodland and wood pasture.
  - The settlement form of a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads set around a central green.
  - The consistency in building materials - typically timber, local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

- The enclosure provided by the *Greensand Hills* which accentuates the low-lying character of the vale and forms a dramatic backdrop in views.
  - The secret ‘undiscovered’ tranquil, rural character.
- O.19 The undulating landform and high proportion of woodland cover limits visual sensitivity of the landscape as any changes could be well screened by these existing elements. There is also opportunity to mitigate potential visual impacts through new planting. However views into the landscape from the higher adjacent landscape of the *Greensand Hills* increases the visual sensitivity of the landscape.

## Change – Key Issues and Trends

### Past Change

- O.20 Observable changes in the past include:
- Decline in woodland management in the past century or so – since the medieval period woodland was intensively managed for fuel and timber by a combination of coppicing, thinning and wood pasture.
  - Field expansion and hedgerow loss in the last 70 years.
  - Expansion of villages and common edge settlements with modern infill which has added a suburban character to the villages.

### Future Landscape Change

- O.21 In the short term (5 years) change is likely to be on a small-scale basis. Individual changes may not be immediately apparent or have a clear (visible) landscape impact. However any small change such as boundary removal or incongruous new planting will have an effect on the organic landscape pattern of hedgerows, shaws, pastures and ancient woodland. There could be possible damage to ancient woodland and shaws if invasive exotic species remain unchecked.
- O.22 It is difficult to be prescriptive about long term change (20 years) as this will be dependent on prevailing policies and incentives. The South Downs Management Plan will be a key tool in managing change and ensuring a positive future for the area. Some potential changes and key vulnerabilities within the *Low Weald* are outlined below.

**Climate Change:** Potential adverse change could include changes in the streams, which are characteristic of the area with high water flows and increased erosion contrasting with periods of drought and low flows. There may also be a change in the species composition of habitats particularly affecting the ancient woodlands and remnant shaws. Woodlands and shaws could also be affected by loss of trees as a result of storm damage and increased susceptibility to attack from pests and diseases. Future improved management of woodlands for fuel may also be a positive benefit.

**Agricultural Change and Land Management:** Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the CAP. In this area of the Low Weald where soils are lighter and better drained it is possible that there will be pressure for increases in field size and hedgerow removal. The pastures are

vulnerable to summer drought and it is possible that set-aside will be seen more frequently in the landscape as a means of allowing pasture to recover from dry summers. Decline in grazing as a result of global competition may also see some areas become marginal to farming, with pastures being put to new uses such as horse paddocks. Regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of pasture, woodland and hedgerows would be a positive landscape change.

**Development:** In this area the tranquil, rural character and intact medieval landscape pattern is vulnerable to adverse change. Development pressures could be high given the proximity of the area to a number of towns beyond the designated National Park boundary which may result in further suburbanisation of the villages. Increasing traffic pressures on the narrow winding rural roads that characterise the area is also an issue.

### **Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines**

- O.23 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the rural, tranquil, ‘medieval’ character of the landscape created by historic fields, hedgerows, shaws, and ancient woodland and dispersed settlement.**

#### ***Landscape Management Considerations***

- Conserve the organic landscape pattern with its diversity in field and woodland size. Avoid establishment of regular field patterns and woodland blocks which would have a detrimental impact on the visual structure of the landscape.
- Maintain views to the enclosing wooded ridges of the *Greensand Hills*.
- Conserve and manage the linear shaws which are of historical and ecological importance and contribute significantly to the visual structure of the landscape.
- Continue to manage woodland and plan for long-term woodland regeneration. Consider re-introducing traditional management techniques such as coppicing, thinning and wood pasture where these have been lost.
- Manage the network of hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees. Conserve veteran oaks and consider re-planting new trees to become the veteran trees of tomorrow.
- Consider linkages between woodland blocks, shaws and hedgerows to enhance green corridor network which is particularly valuable for nature conservation.
- Conserve and maintain ponds (particularly hammer ponds associated with the Wealden iron industry) and small stream valleys and their associated landscape. Encourage areas of permanent pasture adjacent to these habitats, providing buffer strips in arable areas or areas of intensive grassland.

#### ***Development Considerations***

- Soften the built edges of villages by introducing small scale planting schemes using native broadleaved species. Planting should integrate with the surrounding landscape pattern.

- Consider impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land in relation to any proposed change.
- Maintain the dispersion of settlement at its current level and prevent infilling.
- Conserve the settlement form of a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads and later buildings set around a central 'village green'. Avoid infilling of these greens.
- Conserve the isolated farmsteads of medieval origin and their setting within areas of early enclosure.
- Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular – develop design guidance and seek to resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.
- Monitor the effects of incremental change to buildings and minimise such change by providing design guidance and encouraging applicants to enter into discussions at an early stage in the preparation of their proposals.

**Character Areas:**

There are two character areas representing the *Low Weald* landscape type within the South Downs. These are both located in the northern extremity of the study area – the *Milland Basin* is a distinct area that is enclosed by the *Greensand Hills* while the *Northchapel Basin* is a more extensive area.

O1	Milland Basin
O2	Northchapel Basin

## O1: MILLAND BASIN

---

### Location and Boundaries

- O1.1 The *Milland Basin* comprises two narrow valleys at the western extremity of the Low Weald. It is enclosed to the north, south and east by the steep scarp slope which defines the inner boundary of the *Greensand Hills*. The enclosure provided by the scarp landform accentuates the low-lying character of the vale and distinguishes it from the adjoining *Northchapel Basin*.

### Integrated Key Characteristics

- Lowland clay vale encompassed and enclosed by the steep scarp slopes of the *Greensand Hills*.
- Cut by a number of streams (e.g. Hammer Stream) which have carved narrow valleys into the Weald clay – some dammed to form hammer ponds or mill ponds (e.g. Cook's Pond).
- Areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland add to the ecological and visual diversity of the landscape.
- An organic mosaic of predominantly pasture fields interspersed with woodland and shaws, much of which is ancient and of ecological importance.
- Small-scale to medium sized irregular fields defined by intact dense hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges.
- Mature hedgerow oaks are a feature within hedgerows and also as specimen trees (remnant field boundaries) within pasture.
- Fernhurst and Milland, both of which are mostly post-1800 in date, represent modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core.
- Where woodland permits, the *Greensand Hills* provide a prominent, dark backdrop in views.
- A deeply rural, tranquil landscape with an essentially medieval pattern.

### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Milland Basin

- O1.2 This landscape character area is a low lying vale lying at the foot of, and encircled by, the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*. This undulating basin is cut by a number of streams (e.g. Hammer Stream) which rise from the springline at the foot of the Greensand escarpment. These are often associated with dammed ponds, which are associated with the former Wealden iron industry which once dominated the area, and occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, for example at Woolhouse Farm Meadows SNCI and Swards Meadow SNCI.
- O1.3 Historically, the traditional farming regime in this character area has been wood pasture, dairying and cattle rearing. This is reflected in the land cover which is

composed of a mosaic of pasture fields interspersed with fragments of woodland of varying size. There are also paddocks, a more recent introduction to the landscape.

- O1.4 Fields are generally small in size with irregular boundaries defined by dense, mainly intact hedgerows and sinuous woodland edges. Both field and woodland size increases towards the foot of Greensand escarpment and this is generally where the ancient woodland occurs, forming extensions of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the *Greensand Hills*, for example parts of Northpark copse to Snapelands copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound commons SSSI. Shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) are present as linear belts particularly on the sides of the small stream valleys. These have an important role as 'green corridors', connecting the larger blocks of woodland and providing a habitat for wildlife. Mature oak trees are a feature in hedgerows and also occur in isolation within fields as specimen trees or indicating lines of former hedgerows (e.g. at New Farm Barn).
- O1.5 Small areas of modern enclosure are scattered through the character area, reflecting the modification of areas of former early enclosure to allow more modern farming methods to be adopted (particularly around the Verdley Place Horticultural Research Station), and perhaps also woodland clearance. However, these small patches of modern fields do not affect the essentially medieval appearance of the landscape. The wooded nature of the countryside is reflected in the place-name Fernhurst, first recorded in 1195 and meaning 'wooded hill with bracken'.
- O1.6 Two nucleated settlements exist within the character area, Fernhurst and Milland, both of which are mostly post-1800 in date, representing modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core. Fernhurst grew as a dormitory town following the arrival of the railway in 1859, while Milland comprises a cluster of houses set around the church, which was a dependant chapelry of Trotton until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- O1.7 Evidence for Roman activity comprises a mansio (posting station) at Weston's Farm which was built to service people passing through the area. This site reinforces the marginal nature of the area as a landscape to traverse rather than settle. In fact, little attempt to clear the land was made until the Saxon period, when communities situated on better soils elsewhere in the region began to exploit the Wealden interior, initially as swine pastures within the woodland. By the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, piecemeal clearance of the woodland was in progress. The industrialization of this area from the 16<sup>th</sup> century resulted in extensive tree clearance and coppicing to provide fuel. Much of the woodland in this area is there post 1800 in date.

### **Sensitivities specific to the Milland Basin**

- O1.8 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this area. Of particular sensitivity are:
- The former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry.
  - The occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland which are high biodiversity interest, for example at Woolhouse Farm Meadows SNCI and Swards Meadow SNCI.

- The ancient woodlands which form part of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the *Greensand Hills*, for example Northpark Copse to Snapelands Copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI.
- Views of the area from viewpoints in the adjacent *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*.

### **Change specific to the Milland Basin**

OI.9 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific observable changes to this character area in the past include:

- Field expansion and hedgerow loss, for example around New Barn Farm where former oak hedgerow trees now stand alone indicating where hedgerows have been removed.
- Modification of areas of former early enclosure has resulted in rectangular plots, shelterbelts and examples of exotic species in the immediate surroundings of Verdley Place Research Station which appears inconsistent with the otherwise irregular landscape pattern.
- Modern infill and expansion of Fernhurst and Milland.

OI.10 At present these minor changes can be easily absorbed. However, if changes like this continue to occur the effect will be detrimental to the organic landscape pattern.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Milland Basin**

OI.11 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management considerations are specific to this character area:

- Conserve the former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, as features of the landscape and manage for habitat biodiversity.
- Conserve, and seek to extend, areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, particularly along stream corridors.
- Conserve the areas of ancient woodlands which form part of larger woodlands located on the escarpment of the *Greensand Hills*, for example Northpark Copse to Snapelands Copse SSSI, Rake Hanger SSSI and Woolbeding and Pound Commons SSSI.
- Encourage management of hedgerows, and replanting of former hedgerows.

OI.12 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Soften the built edges of Milland and Fernhurst by introducing small scale planting schemes of native broadleaved species that are in proportion with the surrounding landscape pattern. Avoid 'suburbanised hedges' containing exotic species.



- Improve the setting and identity of villages and developments (e.g. Verdley Place Horticultural Research Station) through appropriate planting which is in keeping with the existing landscape pattern.
- Consider impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land, e.g. popular viewpoints in the adjacent *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*, in relation to any proposed change.



Mature hedgerow oaks are a feature, some marking the line of former hedgerow.



Linear strips of remnant woodland (shaws) are distinctive features.



A lowland vale enclosed by Greensand Hills.



A deeply rural, tranquil landscape with an essentially medieval pattern.



Fernhurst village, set around a green.



Typical building materials are local sandstones, red brick and clay tiles.

## O2: NORTHCHAPEL BASIN

---

### Location and Boundaries

- O2.1 The *Northchapel Basin* character area lies in the northern extremity of the South Downs. The *Northchapel Basin* adjoins the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills* at its western and southern extents where the boundaries have been drawn along the bottom of the Greensand escarpment. The north and east the boundaries of the *Northchapel Basin* are defined by the designated National Park boundary. However, the landscape of this character area forms part of a wider landscape which extends beyond the designated National Park boundary into the Low Weald.

### Integrated Key Characteristics

- Lowland clay vale enclosed by the rising slopes of the *Greensand Hills* to the south and west.
- Lighter soils derived from sandstone on the higher ground supports arable farming.
- Intricate mosaic of arable/pasture farmland and deciduous woodland plus areas of parkland and common land.
- Rich in ponds and small streams (although often hidden in the landscape by vegetation) which have carved narrow valleys into the landform, including hammerponds associated with the former Wealden iron industry.
- A heavily wooded landscape with an abundance of ancient woodland and linear strips of remnant woodland along the narrow valley streams.
- Large wooded commons at The Mens and Ebernoe Common supporting important ecological assemblages including ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Medieval deer parks at Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park, and 19<sup>th</sup> century parkland landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee, add to the historic time depth of the landscape.
- High density of dispersed settlement typically comprising isolated farmsteads of medieval origin.
- Villages, for example. Lurgashall and Hampers Green, represent modern infill around an original dispersed medieval core.
- Restricted views due to woodland cover but, where woodland permits, the *Greensand Hills* form a strong backdrop.

### Specific Characteristics Unique to the Northchapel Basin

- O2.2 This landscape character area is a low lying vale located to the north-east of the *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*. This undulating basin is better drained than much of the Low Weald and this is reflected by the presence of arable farmland as

well as pasture, paddocks and some ungrazed grassland. Fields are medium to large in size with some smaller fields occurring around settlements.

- O2.3 Although much of the original managed medieval woodland was cleared or coppiced in the 16th-17th centuries (to provide fuel for the ironworking and glassmaking industries), the character area is still heavily wooded. There are some notable areas of wooded commonland and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common. These sites are of significant ecological value, for example Ebernoe Common and The Mens have developed from ancient wood pasture and are of international importance for their lichen, invertebrate and breeding bird communities, Ebernoe is the most important bat area. There is also a brick and tile works on Ebernoe Common. These commons now provide opportunities for countryside access as a result of their status as registered common land.
- O2.4 Streams, ponds and lakes are important features, some are hammerponds associated with the former iron industry or later mill ponds, although many of the hammerponds have silted up to form distinctive flat-bottomed valleys. Shillinglee Lake SSSI is notable for its aquatic plants, which includes cut-grass which is confined to only 10 sites in the UK. Mudwort, which is equally as rare, appears on the shore of Shillinglee in dry summers. Some of these water bodies also provide opportunities for fishing. There are also a number of unimproved meadows, for example at Old Orchard Meadows SNCI and Furnace Meadow SNCI, which support a number of locally notable plant species.
- O2.5 A distinctive characteristic of this area is the presence of deer parks which provided food, recreation and status for the landed elite during the medieval period. There are three medieval deer parks that formerly existed within the character area (Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park). These have subsequently been enclosed but are recognisable as compact islands of recently enclosed regular fields surrounded by irregular early enclosures. The boundaries (pales) are still visible in the modern landscape as curvilinear field boundaries. A further deer park at Petworth, situated at the boundary of the character area, was developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a major designed landscape park (notably by Capability Brown), and is now preserved by the National Trust. A smaller 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park exists at Shillinglee, part of which is used as a golf course.
- O2.6 Lurgashall and Hampers Green are villages that are typical of the settlement form in this landscape type, originating as a medieval agglomeration of farmsteads set around a central green. Petworth is a separate case, representing a deliberately planned settlement established around the medieval manor house and Northchapel is first recorded in the 16th century as a dependant chapelry of Petworth.
- O2.7 The A283 runs north-south down the spine of the character area and pylon lines cut east-west across the area in two locations. The sense of rural tranquillity is therefore affected locally in these areas. Aside from these elements there is little overt human impact in this landscape. The high perceived naturalness and dispersed settlement also contribute to the sense of rural tranquillity.

### **Sensitivities specific to the Northchapel Basin**

- O2.8 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this area. Of particular sensitivity are:
- The former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, and wetlands including Shillinglee Lake SSSI.
  - The areas of wooded commonland and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common which are of significant ecological value.
  - The occasional areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland which are high biodiversity interest, for example at Old Orchard Meadows SNCI and Furnace Meadow SNCI.
  - The former medieval deer parks - Petworth Park, Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park.
  - The 18<sup>th</sup> century designed landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee.
  - The sense of rural tranquillity that is already affected by the A283 and electricity pylons.
  - Views of the area from viewpoints in the adjacent *Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills*.

### **Change Specific to the Northchapel Basin**

- O2.9 In addition to the generic changes listed in the landscape type evaluation, specific observable changes to this character area in the past include:
- Enclosure of the medieval deer parks in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Upgrading of the A283 and introduction of pylons into the landscape in the past century.
  - Modern infill and expansion of Lurgashall, Northchapel and Hampers Green.
- O2.10 At present these minor changes can be easily absorbed. However, if changes like this continue to occur the effect will be detrimental to the organic landscape pattern.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the Northchapel Basin**

- O2.11 In addition to the generic landscape management and development considerations for this landscape type, the following landscape management considerations are specific to this character area:
- Conserve the former hammerponds, associated with the former Wealden iron industry, as features of the landscape and manage for habitat biodiversity.
  - Conserve, and seek to extend, areas of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, particularly along stream corridors and protect existing meadows at Old Orchard Meadows SNCI and Furnace Meadow SNCI



- Conserve the areas of wooded commonland and ancient wood pasture at The Mens and Ebernoe Common which are of significant ecological value. Consider re-introducing traditional management of wood pasture.
- Conserve the park pales and remnant features of the former medieval deer parks at Petworth Park, Lurgashall Park, River Park, and Stag Park.
- Conserve historic 18th century designed landscapes at Petworth and Shillinglee and their settings, encouraging the management/restoration of permanent pasture, parkland trees, avenues and clumps of trees.
- Seek to conserve the sense of rural tranquillity, despite the presence of the A283 and electricity pylons. Seek to mitigate impacts of the A283 through planting.

O2.12 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Ensure any new development is integrated into its landscape setting by introducing small scale planting schemes of native broadleaved species that are in proportion with the surrounding landscape pattern. Avoid 'suburbanised hedges' containing exotic species.
- Avoid ribbon development on the edge of Petworth and in association with the A283.
- Maintain the typical of the settlement form of villages such as Lurgashall, Northchapel and Hampers Green – maintain the pattern of farmsteads and later buildings set around a central 'village green' and avoid infilling of these greens.
- Consider impact on views into the valley from the surrounding higher land, e.g. popular viewpoints in the adjacent Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills, in relation to any proposed change.



Undulating arable fields and undergrazed fields.



Wooded lanes.



Chestnut and hazel coppice.



Rich in ponds and streams e.g. pond at Shillinglee.



Arable fields with a woodland boundary.



Lingshall Village green.