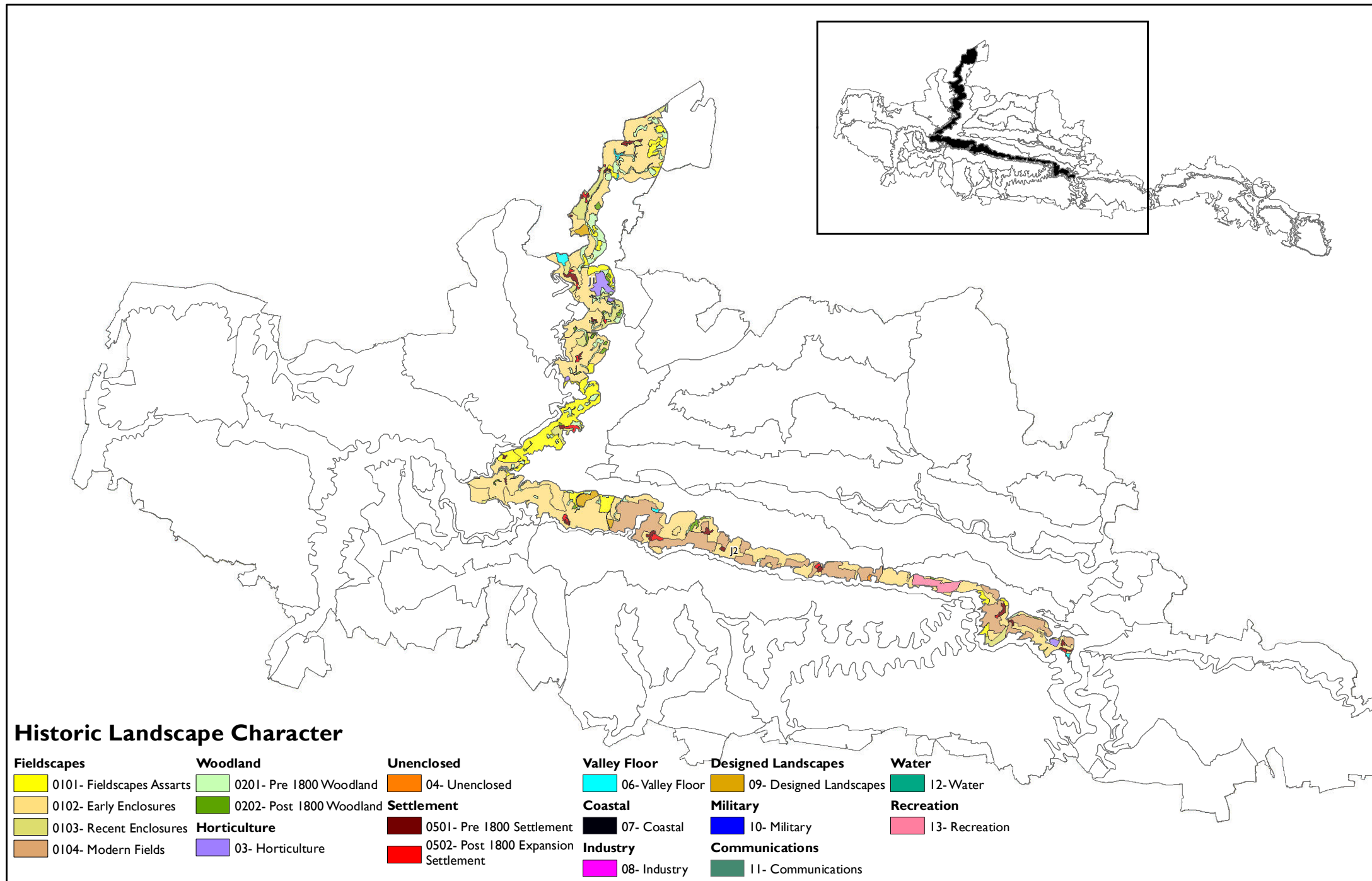


## J: Greensand Terrace





# J: Greensand Terrace



## LANDSCAPE TYPE J: GREENSAND TERRACE

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- J.1 The *Greensand Terrace* landscape comprises the bench of Upper Greensand which outcrops at the foot of the steep chalk scarps in the western part of the South Downs. The bench of Upper Greensand narrows towards the east, becoming almost imperceptible to the east of the Arun Valley - the *Greensand Terrace* landscape type therefore only occurs to the west of the Arun Valley where the Upper Greensand has the most visual influence on the landscape. To the east of the Arun Valley the Upper Greensand forms part of the wider *Scarp Footslopes* landscape type.
- J.2 There are views over adjacent lowland landscapes from the edge of the *Greensand Terrace*, as well as panoramic views over the *Greensand Terrace* from the adjacent chalk scarp.

### DESCRIPTION

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A distinct terrace formed from Upper Greensand with a locally prominent escarpment defining its outer edge.
- Cut by a series of small streams that rise from springs near the foot of the chalk escarpment, and have eroded narrow, deep valleys as they cross the Greensand terrace.
- Deeply sunken lanes have eroded downwards to reveal exposures of the Greensand geology and gnarled tree roots.
- Fertile soils supporting large fields of arable, interspersed with pasture, woodland and orchards. Road verges with botanical interest.
- Distinctive hanger woodlands, remnants of ancient woodland, cling to the steepest slopes.
- Areas of former hop gardens are marked by poplar shelter belts.
- Villages are located at regular intervals along the springline, often associated with artificially dammed mill ponds and mills. The chalk scarp often forms a dramatic backdrop.
- Buildings constructed from local 'Malmstone', with red and yellow brick detailing, and clay tile roofs.
- A strong sense of rural tranquillity resulting from the absence of overt human impact and a low density of settlement.
- Dominated by the adjacent steep chalk escarpment, with views over the adjacent lowlands from the edge of the Greensand scarp.

## Physical Landscape

- J.3 The *Greensand Terrace* landscape is formed from the calcareous sandstone and siltstone of the Upper Greensand Formation which lies between the rising slopes of the chalk scarp and the gently undulating lowland of Gault Clays. The Upper Greensand (known locally as Malmstone) is exposed as a distinctive 'shelf' or 'terrace' at the foot of the chalk. This sandy rock is more resistant to erosion than the neighbouring Gault Clays and this has resulted in a locally prominent escarpment at its junction with the Gault Clay.
- J.4 The *Greensand Terrace* is cut by a number of streams - these streams rise from springs at the foot of the chalk escarpment and have eroded narrow, deep valleys as they cross the Greensand terrace resulting in an undulating landform. Drift deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel occur in association with the streams.
- J.5 The underlying sandstone gives rise to generally well drained grey loamy soils with some areas of stoney or shallow soils and are generally classified as Grade 3 in the agricultural landscape classification which represents land with moderate limitations to cultivation. This gives rise to a mixed land cover of woodland and farmland. The woodland (oak, ash and hazel with some beech/ash) includes distinctive hangers, remnants of ancient woodland that cling to the steepest slopes. Amongst the woodland, a pattern of irregular geometric fields occurs with arable and pasture as well as rough grazing on the steeper slopes. Fields are often bound by tall hedgerows.
- J.6 The sandstone geology has been eroded resulting in deeply sunken lanes, with steep banks revealing tree roots and exposures of the bedrock geology.

## Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- J.7 This is a small-scale landscape of intimacy and enclosure provided by the woodland cover and sunken lanes contrasting with more open arable areas. The character area is unified by its 'terrace' landform and woodland hangers.
- J.8 This rural landscape has a strong sense of tranquillity as a result of its low noise levels, presence of semi natural woodland, thick hedgerows and grassland, absence of overt human impact, and low density of settlement.
- J.9 Views are restricted and often confined along sunken lanes. Where woodland is absent there are dramatic views to the chalk escarpment and, at the edges of the *Greensand Terrace*, there are views across the adjacent lower lying farmland.
- J.10 Although there is typically no open access land or common land on the *Greensand Terrace*, it is well served by rights of way linking into the adjacent chalk scarp as well as the surrounding lowlands.
- J.11 The *Greensand Terrace* landscape has inspired many writers and painters. Gilbert White lived in Selborne, a village nestled at the foot of the chalk scarp on the *Greensand Terrace*. The landscape around him inspired him to write '*The Natural History of Selborne*', published in 1789. William Cobbett, writing in 1830, found Selborne just as Gilbert White had described writing '*Nothing can surpass the beauty in these dells and hillocks and hangers, which last are so steep that it is impossible to ascend them except by means of a serpentine path*'.

- J.12 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings emphasised the tranquillity and simplicity of the landscape while in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a demand for stately views of country houses. Gilbert White's house at Selborne was one of those painted by Prosser. Edward Thomas, who moved to the parish of Steep in 1906, wrote many poems about the area. Two small lancet windows designed and engraved by Laurence Whistler were installed in the south wall of Steep church in 1978 to commemorate Edward Thomas' centenary.

### Biodiversity

- J.13 The *Greensand Terrace* is dominated by arable land, together with significant woodland cover, including ancient hanger woodland associated with the Upper Greensand, scattered copses of ancient and more recent plantation woodland. Other characteristic habitats of ecological note within the wider landscape include orchards, semi-improved neutral grassland, road verges and hedgerows.
- J.14 Of greatest ecological value are the ancient hanger woodlands, a habitat of international importance, and comprising a range of nationally uncommon woodland types such as those dominated by yew, beech, and ash/wych elm. Small streams often occur as features within these woodlands and add to their overall diversity. These hanger woods are important for their assemblages of vascular plants, bryophytes, birds, and invertebrates, as well as supporting many ground flora species indicative of ancient woodland.
- J.15 Occasional areas of meadow grassland also occur, supporting areas of damp neutral and dry acidic grassland. These open grasslands are also important sites for invertebrates, particularly where found in association with other habitats such as scrub and woodland.

Key Biodiversity Features	Importance
Hanger woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive areas of internationally important hanger woodland occur, including yew, beech, and ash/wych elm.</li> <li>The woodlands support a varied ground flora, including many ancient woodland indicator plant species, and are notable for their rich bryophyte assemblages. The woodlands also support a diverse invertebrate and breeding bird populations.</li> <li>Many sites carry statutory or non-nature conservation designation.</li> </ul>
Unimproved grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small areas of unimproved grassland, including many with non-statutory designation.</li> </ul>
A large network of non-statutory wildlife sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hanger woodland, copses, meadows and road verges form a network of rich ecological habitats.</li> </ul>

### Historic Character

- J.16 The soils of this area, juxtaposed against the chalk uplands and the clay vales/sandy heaths, are likely to have supported settlement for millennia. Evidence for prehistoric settlement is sparse across the character area, although this is probably the result of deposits being buried beneath several thousand years' worth of hillwash, a process exacerbated by early woodland clearance of the adjacent downland and

scarp slopes. In addition, any prehistoric landscape elements that may have escaped subsequent burial would have been vulnerable to centuries of arable cultivation.

- J.17 Roman villas were established at the centre of extensive agricultural estates, the boundaries of which often formed the basis for later Saxon and medieval manorial estates. Continuity of such use is an important facet of this landscape type.
- J.18 The medieval settlement pattern reflected and developed that of earlier centuries, forming a string of nucleated settlements comprising farmsteads clustered around a church and set within an area of open fields, primarily farmed communally, with parishes stretching from river valley up onto chalkland (although the overall pattern is less marked than that evident further east in Sussex). The bulk of the *Greensand Terrace* was subsequently enclosed, probably between the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, producing blocks of irregular fields. Isolated areas of recent (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century) enclosure, with characteristic straight boundaries, are representative of former parkland.
- J.19 Hop growing poplar belts are still visible in places which used to be grown around the hop gardens to protect them.
- J.20 A defining characteristic of this landscape type (particularly in the assart and early enclosure zones) is the presence of hangers, generally long, narrow remnants of ancient woodland clinging on to the steepest parts of the numerous small valleys that dissect this landscape. These hangers survive because the ground has always been too steep to cultivate. They are certainly of great antiquity, although likely to have been extensively exploited by past communities for woodland products such as coppice poles, particularly in the Roman and medieval periods.
- J.21 There are no examples of major designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks. This is probably a reflection of the agricultural value of the land – however, there are several small parks which are recognised on local registers of historic parks and gardens.

<b>Key Features of the Historic Environment</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Woodland Hangers	Surviving fragments of original woodland cover, albeit subsequently modified by exploitation.
Nucleated settlements	Indicative of the medieval manorial system based around open fields.
Early enclosures	Indicative of relative prosperity of character area, allowing early response to changing economic and social conditions.

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

- J.22 The settlement pattern in this area is characterised by nucleated settlement with an extremely low level of dispersed settlement. This conforms to English Heritage's rural settlement designation of East Wessex Sub-Province within the South-eastern Province. The typical settlement form comprises small nucleated villages, usually of mid-late Saxon origin but often incorporating earlier landscape elements indicating a much longer continuity of occupation. The villages form a 'zone of preferred settlement', situated on the best soils but with access to other resource types such as valley floor and chalk downland.



- J.23 A scatter of isolated farmsteads are also present, representing later medieval or Tudor enclosure of former open fields – new farmsteads would be established away from the old village centre to service outlying farms. Modern settlement is limited and largely unobtrusive, consisting of piecemeal infill on the margins of the nucleated villages.
- J.24 Building materials are typically local ‘Malmstone’, with red and yellow brick detailing, particularly around windows and doors. Flint is sometimes seen in buildings and walls and timber boarding is frequently used on agricultural buildings. Clay tile is the most typical roofing material although thatch is also seen.

## EVALUATION

### Sensitivity

- J.25 This landscape has many sensitive natural, cultural and aesthetic/perceptual features that are vulnerable to change. Key landscape sensitivities include:
- The ancient hanger woodlands which are important in providing a sense of time depth, reinforcing landform and enclosure, and contributing to a rich biodiversity, as well as providing a visual link to the woodlands on the adjacent chalk scarp.
  - The meadow grasslands, including damp neutral and dry acidic grassland, which are important sites for invertebrates, particularly where found in association with other habitats such as scrub and woodland.
  - Road verges which have botanical interest.
  - The locally prominent escarpment which defines the outer edge of the Greensand, and is visible from adjacent areas.
  - Ravine-like stream valleys that dissect the terrace.
  - The sunken lanes which provide a sense of antiquity and provide exposures of the underlying bedrock geology.
  - The small nucleated villages, usually of mid-late Saxon origin, with building materials reflecting local geology.
  - Patterns of early enclosures (including assarts) which are important in providing time depth, and contributing to the intimate scale of the landscape.
  - The strong sense of tranquillity as a result of its low noise levels, presence of semi natural woodland, thick hedgerows and grassland, absence of overt human impact, and low density of settlement.
- J.26 The gently undulating landform, hidden valleys and presence of woodland limits visual sensitivity of the landscape as changes could be screened by these existing elements. There is also some opportunity to mitigate potential visual impacts through appropriate new planting which would not significantly alter the character of the area. However, the terrace is clearly visible from the adjacent chalk scarps which enhances their visual sensitivity. The Greensand scarp edges, which are visible from adjacent areas, are also visually sensitive.

## Change – Key Issues and Trends

### Past Change

J.27 Observable changes in the past include:

- Low grazing pressure resulting in reversion of grassland to scrub.
- Removal of orchards and hop gradens.
- The appearance of apparently abandoned land which has been ‘set-aside’ as part of a requirement of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- An increase in fields used as paddocks resulting in fields separated using white electric fencing and over-grazed grassland.
- Lack of management of the distinctive hanger woodland, particularly on steeper slopes. Some localised re-introduction of coppicing.

### Future Landscape Change

J.28 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. On areas of pasture continued low grazing pressures could result in reversion of grassland to scrub. While extensive new development is not envisaged, local change in relation to individual properties such as lighting or introduction of (sub) urban style fencing and boundaries, or increased traffic pressures on rural lanes, may cumulatively start to erode the perceived rural character of the area and physically erode roadside verges and sunken lanes.

J.29 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 *Greensand Terrace* landscapes 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 hanger woodlands. These woodlands could also be affected by loss of trees as a result of storm damage. Future improved management of woodlands for fuel may also be a positive benefit, although the management of hangers on steep slopes is unlikely to be economic.

**Agricultural Change and Land Management:** Agricultural management will be driven by the changes in the world market and the CAP. It is possible that there will be pressure for increases in field size and farm units where topography is favourable. In other more marginal areas, such as the valley pastures, the land may be vulnerable to lack of management (with scrub encroachment) or purchase as hobby farms or for horse grazing. Such uses will require active management to ensure the rural character of the area is retained. Farm units also may be able to respond to environmental initiatives and opportunities. Positive landscape change could result

from regimes to promote enhanced environmental management of woodland and hedgerows.

**Development:** In this area the characteristic most vulnerable to adverse change is the tranquil, rural character. Although extensive development is not envisaged, this characteristic could be eroded by incremental small scale change including diversification of redundant farm buildings. It could also be affected by development in adjacent areas. Increasing traffic pressures on the narrow rural roads and sunken lanes that characterise the area is also a key issue.

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

- J.30 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the intimate scale and secluded rural and tranquil character of the landscape, derived from its ancient hanger woodlands, interconnected pattern of enclosed pastures, sunken lanes, and small rural villages.**

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

- Conserve ancient/hanger woodland and monitor/check the spread of introduced invasive species in ancient deciduous woodland. Control deer and grey squirrel.
- Continue to manage woodland and plan for long term woodland regeneration. Consider re-introducing traditional management techniques such as coppicing where these have been lost and promote opportunities for productive woodland management.
- Conserve the patterns of early enclosures (including assarts) that are surviving components of the medieval landscape.
- Protect existing, and seek to create new, unimproved and semi-improved grasslands.
- Encourage management and restoration of hedgerows and monitor regeneration of hedgerow trees, planting new trees where necessary. Encourage management of trees and shrubs alongside sunken lanes and sensitive management of road verges for their botanical interest.
- Encourage sensitive integration of fencing, tracks, hardstanding, jumps and other paraphernalia that are associated with hobby farms or private stables.
- Encourage the management and protection of the small valleys and streams that rise within the *Greensand Terrace*. Ensure that water abstraction does not result in loss of springs and encourage the establishment of an uncultivated strip adjacent to streams to enhance biodiversity interest.
- Discourage inappropriate use of historic lanes and tracks (including RUPPs and BOATs) by motorised vehicles.

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

- Conserve the nucleated form and rural character of the villages and maintain the low level of dispersed settlement.

- Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular – develop design guidance to help resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting.
- Ensure new farm buildings are sensitively integrated into the landscape through careful siting and screening of storage structures and working areas.
- Conserve traditional farm buildings and maintain their external fabric, appearance and setting. Refer to guidance contained in the Historic Farmsteads study<sup>28</sup>.
- Conserve the character of the sunken lanes – seek to reduce traffic pressures and road improvements which would alter the character of these ancient lanes.

### Character Areas

There are two distinct areas of *Greensand Terrace* in the South Downs – both are located west of the Arun Valley. They outcrop at the base of the steep chalk scarps where they form a distinctive ‘bench’ of Upper Greensand.

J1:	East Hampshire Greensand Terrace
J2	East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace

<sup>28</sup> Forum Heritage Services (2005) *Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in Hampshire, Pilot Project*. Report by Bob Edwards for English Heritage.

## J1: EAST HAMPSHIRE GREENSAND TERRACE

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

- J1.1 The *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* character area is a distinctive broad Upper Greensand 'terrace' occurring at the western edge of the Greensand and the Weald. Its western boundary is marked by the steeply rising chalk 'structural' escarpment of the *Selborne Hangers to East Meon Scarp* and its eastern edge is defined by the *Mixed Farmland and Woodland* landscapes on clay. This Greensand terrace and its escarpment are most clearly defined in the north – to the north of Selborne the greensand scarp becomes more dominant in the landscape than the chalk scarp. Towards the south (around Petersfield) the topography becomes more undulating, the greensand scarp merges with the chalk scarp, and the boundary between the *Greensand Terrace* and the *Mixed Farmland and Woodland* on the band of Gault clay becomes less distinct.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics

- A terrace formed from Upper Greensand with a locally prominent escarpment clothed in woodland defining its eastern edge.
- Cut by a series of small streams that rise from springs at the foot of the chalk escarpment, and have eroded narrow, deep valleys as they cross the Greensand terrace.
- The sandstone geology gives rise to sunken lanes where steep banks reveal tree roots and exposures of the bedrock geology and which have a high biodiversity.
- Fertile and well drained grey loamy soils which have supported a long history of settlement and cultivation, including orchards which are of biodiversity interest.
- Ancient hanger woodlands, a habitat of international importance, and comprising a range of nationally uncommon woodland types such as those dominated by yew, beech, lime, and ash/wych elm, cling to the steepest slopes forming a wooded silhouette.
- Meadow grasslands which are important sites for invertebrates, particularly where found in association with other habitats such as scrub and woodland.
- A strong sense of rural tranquillity resulting from the absence of overt human impact and a low density of settlement.
- The area is well served by public rights of way including the public right of way, Hangers Way, which runs the length of the character area and is accessible from Petersfield, Selborne and East Worldham.
- A diversity of field patterns and enclosure including, to the south, small irregular fields carved from woodland indicative of medieval assarts.

- Low density of settlement characterised by small nucleated medieval settlements comprising farmsteads clustered around a church.
- Building materials are typically local 'Malmstone', with red and yellow brick detailing, and clay tile roofs.
- There are dramatic views of the chalk escarpment where woodland permits.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the East Hampshire Greensand Terrace**

- J1.2 The Upper Greensand (known locally as Malmstone) of the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* is thickest at the northern end of the character area where it is exposed as a distinctive 'shelf' or 'terrace' at the foot of the chalk. Towards the southern end of the character area the Greensand narrows. Here the character area includes an area of distinctive undulating ground on the north-western edge of Petersfield which is underlain by Gault and Lower Greensand as well a narrow belt of Upper Greensand. This undulating area also has a different history, being comprised largely of assarts, small irregular fields of medieval origin carved piecemeal out of the woodland, reflecting the more convoluted and irregular nature of the topography in this area. The land has a poorer agricultural capability in this area and supports small scale pastures with paddocks a common feature. Dispersed settlement within this area may be of greater antiquity, as this area may never have seen open fields.
- J1.3 Of particular note in this character area is the extent of ancient hanger woodland, a habitat of international importance (e.g. East Hampshire Hangers SAC), comprising a range of nationally uncommon woodland types such as yew, beech, lime, and ash/wych elm woodland. These hanger woods are particularly important for the assemblages of vascular plants, bryophytes, birds, and invertebrates that they support, as well as many ground flora species indicative of ancient woodland. The biodiversity interest of the sunken lanes is also an important aspect of the ecological character of this area.
- J1.4 Small streams typically cut through these steep woodlands, adding to the ecological diversity of the landscape. Alongside streams are areas of species rich pasture, for example along the upper reaches of Oakhanger and Kingsley Streams, and along the upper reaches of tributaries of the Rother. These open grasslands are also important sites for invertebrates, particularly where found in association with other habitat such as scrub and woodland. One particularly notable site Bentley Station Meadow SSSI, on the northern boundary of the area, which supports areas of damp neutral and dry acidic grassland including many plant species that are indicative of unimproved grassland.
- J1.5 Although the majority of the landscape is classified as grade 3 or 4 in the agricultural land classification, an area of well drained grey loamy soils around Binstead supports some more fertile agricultural land which is classified as Grade 2 in Defra's agricultural land classification. Here the landscape is dominated by large arable fields with a range of summer crops including oil seed rape and lavender. Another notable land cover feature of this character area is the area of orchards around Selborne.

- Jl.6 Roman settlement within the character area is indicated by the presence of a villa at Wyck, a place-name of Saxon origin often indicative of Roman settlement. This site (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is located along the major Roman road between Chichester and Silchester towards the northern end of the character area. Other similar sites may well have existed to the south – the name Wick Farm to the south near Selborne may hint at such.
- Jl.7 Although the settlement pattern in this area is characterised by nucleated settlement with an extremely low level of dispersed settlement, there are a number of low density housing estates in the area around Steep, associated with the settlement of Petersfield.
- Jl.8 Thatch is typical of the cottages in Selborne and on some buildings the mortar between the stones shows galleting, i.e. small stones inserted in the mortar for decorative effect. Although there are no examples of major designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks, several small parks are known of which ‘The Wakes’ is the most well known - this was the home of the naturalist Gilbert White and is listed on the English Heritage’s register. Other parks were enclosed in the 18th-19th centuries, for example at Hawkley Hurst and Stonerwood Park.
- Jl.9 Typical of its landscape type, this area does not have any Open Access or Registered Common land. However, the area is well served by public rights of way including the long distance footpath, the Hangers Way, which runs the length of the character area and is accessible from Petersfield, Selborne and East Worldham. In addition, a small area of National Trust land on the edge of Selborne (Long Lythe) provides public access.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the East Hampshire Greensand Terrace**

- Jl.10 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- The large area of assarts between Langrish and Hawkley to the north-west of Petersfield.
  - The woodland hangers on Greensand that form part of the East Hampshire Hangers SAC.
  - The rich biodiversity of the sunken lanes.
  - The distinctive area of orchards around Selborne.
  - The small landscape parks such as ‘The Wakes’ (on English Heritage’s register), and others (including Hawkley Hurst, Stonerwood Park) recognised on Hampshire register of local historic parks and gardens.
  - Occasional views through woodland to the lowland landscape beyond.
  - Heightened visual sensitivity of the whole area in relation to the adjacent chalk scarp.

### **Change Specific to the East Hampshire Greensand Terrace**

- Jl.11 Past change specific to this area includes the expansion of built development close to Petersfield (e.g. Steep, and extensions to the villages). Although built development is limited by the area's designation as an AONB and the final designation of the area as National Park, there may be continued pressure for expansion of villages on the edge Petersfield that could change the settlement pattern that is characterised by nucleated villages with an extremely low level of dispersed development. Proximity to Petersfield may also result in the demand for horse paddocks.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the East Hampshire Greensand Terrace**

- Jl.12 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 field and woodland patterns associated with the extensive area of assarts between Langrish and Hawkley to the north-west of Petersfield – conserve and manage field boundaries that define the pattern.
  - Encourage management of trees and shrubs alongside sunken lanes and sensitive management of road verges to maintain and enhance their botanical interest.
  - Conserve the distinctive area of orchards around Selborne as a feature of the landscape.
  - Conserve the setting of the many small parks such as 'The Wakes', Hawkley Hurst, Stonerwood Park and others recognised on Hampshire register of local historic parks and gardens.
  - Conserve and manage the distinctive hanger woodlands to maintain their visual link with the adjacent scarp and maintain and enhance their high biodiversity.
- Jl.13 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:
- Ensure that any proposals for built development respect the settlement pattern that is characterised by nucleated villages with an extremely low level of dispersed development.





View of Selborne from the hangers.



Sunken lanes in the sandstone.



A terrace formed from upper greensand with a locally prominent wooded escarpment forming the eastern edge.



Orchards around Selborne.



Selborne High Street.



Hanging woodland associated with steeper slopes is a habitat of international importance.



## J2: EAST MEON TO BURY GREENSAND TERRACE

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Location and Boundaries

- J2.1 The *East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace* character area is a distinctive broad Upper Greensand 'terrace' occurring at the southern edge of the Greensand and the Weald. Its southern boundary is marked by the steeply rising chalk escarpment of the *Buriton to Arun Scarp* and its northern boundary is defined by a minor scarp slope which represents the edge of the Greensand terrace. This Greensand terrace is widest in the west. There are views from the edge of the terrace over the Rother valley to the north.

#### Integrated Key Characteristics:

- A terrace formed from Upper Greensand with a locally prominent northern escarpment clothed in woodland along part of its length.
- Cut by a number of narrow, steep sided valleys formed by small streams that rise from springs at the foot of the chalk escarpment and flow northwards towards the River Rother.
- Dammed mill ponds and ornamental ponds are features of the ravine like valleys.
- The sandstone geology gives rise to sunken lanes which link the scattered farms and villages.
- Fertile and well drained grey loamy soils which have supported a long history of settlement and cultivation.
- A diversity of field patterns and enclosure including small irregular fields carved from woodland indicative of medieval assarts at Nursted Copse.
- Contrast provided between the more open arable fields and intimacy and enclosure created by the sinuous bands of woodland and narrow stream valleys.
- Occasional woodlands and a well developed hedgerow network provide valuable ecological features.
- A strong sense of rural tranquillity resulting from the absence of overt human impact and a low density of settlement. Low density of settlement is characterised by small nucleated medieval settlements comprising farmsteads clustered around a church.
- Building materials are typically local 'Malmstone', with red and yellow brick detailing, and clay tile roofs.
- Roman settlement and remains of a major Roman villa at Bignor indicates the continuity of use of the landscape for agriculture through history.
- Dramatic views of the chalk escarpment.

### **Specific Characteristics Unique to the East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace**

- J2.2 The *East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace* is more consistent in character along its length than the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace* as a result of the fertile, generally well drained loamy soils which are classified as Grade 3 in the agricultural classification and which support a consistent land use of predominantly arable farming. This landscape character area also contains fewer hanger woodlands than the *East Hampshire Greensand Terrace*. However, occasional woodlands are present, for example Nursted copse SNCI and Millams Hanger SNCI.
- J2.3 This character area is typical of its landscape type in that much of the character area retains early enclosure patterns, particularly at the western end of the terrace. However, there are some areas of more recent enclosure e.g. between Nursted and South Harting, and east of Cocking. Small areas of chalk grassland extend into this character area, for example Barlavington Down SNCI.
- J2.4 Roman settlement within the character area is indicated by the presence of a major villa at Bignor. This was one of the largest in the Empire and is located along the major Roman road between Chichester and London. Other similar sites existed to the west of Bignor. The settlement pattern today is typical of the landscape type, consisting of nucleated villages at the scarp foot, with an extremely low level of dispersed settlement in-between. This leads to a strong sense of rural tranquillity. The nucleated villages (e.g. Bignor, the Hartings and Cocking) comprise farmsteads clustered around a church and linked by a rural sunken lane which follows the base of the scarp.
- J2.5 Although there are no examples of major designed landscapes, i.e. gentry houses and landscape parks, several small parks are known of which East Lavington and West Burton are listed on English Heritage's register of historic parks and gardens. In addition are a number of locally listed parks and gardens including Maple Durham and Nursted House. The area is served by a network of rights of way including part of the Hangers Way and Sussex Border Path.

### **Sensitivities Specific to the East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace**

- J2.6 All of the landscape and visual sensitivities listed in the landscape type evaluation apply to this character area. Specific to this character area are:
- The large area of assarts around Nursted Copse;
  - Copses and hanger woodland hangers, for example Millams Hanger SNCI, Brickkiln copse, Pondtail plantation, Millhanger copse SNCI.
  - Roman settlement and remains of a major Roman villa at Bignor which indicates the continuity of use of the landscape for agriculture through history.
  - The small parks such as Lavington and West Burton and others recognised on Hampshire's register of local historic parks and gardens.
  - Dramatic views of the chalk escarpment.

### **Change Specific to the East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace**

J2.7 Past change is as set out in the landscape type evaluation.

### **Landscape Management/Development Considerations Specific to the East Meon to Bury Greensand Terrace**

J2.8 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 field and woodland patterns associated with the area of assarts around Nursted Copse – conserve and manage field boundaries that define the field pattern.
- Maintain, restore and consider the creation of new characteristic landscape features such as unimproved grassland, traditional orchards, hedgerows and small woodlands.
- Conserve the setting of sites of Roman settlement.
- Conserve the setting of the many small parks such as Lavington and West Burton and others recognised on Hampshire's register of local historic parks and gardens.
- Conserve the dramatic views of the chalk escarpment.

J2.9 The following development considerations are specific to this character area:

- Ensure that any proposals for built development respect the settlement pattern that is characterised by nucleated villages with an extremely low level of dispersed development.







A terrace formed from Upper Greensand with a locally prominent northern wooded escarpment.



A low settlement density.



View of Lavington Park landscape, surrounded by more dense woodland, from Duncton Hill viewpoint.



Occasional hedgerow and woodland blocks provide important ecological habitats.



Narrow, sunken lanes cut through the landscape.