

# DOVER DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



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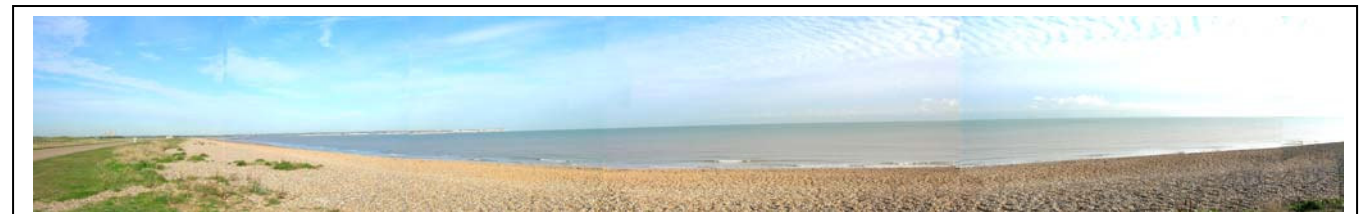
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# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GEOLOGY AND SOILS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LANDFORM AND DRAINAGE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LAND USE AND AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CULTURAL HERITAGE: HISTORY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: ECOLOGY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER AREAS: LANDSCAPE TYPES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER AREAS: LANDSCAPE AREAS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 1: LITTLE STOUR MARSHES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 2: PRESTON AND ASH HORTICULTURAL BELT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 3: ASH LEVEL</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 4: THE SANDWICH CORRIDOR</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 5: RICHBOROUGH CASTLE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 6: SANDWICH BAY</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 7: LYDDEN VALLEY</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 8: STAPLE FARMLANDS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 9: EASTRY ARABLE AND WOODLAND CLUMPS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 10: EYTHORNE ARABLE MOSAIC WITH PARKLAND</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 11: LYDDEN HILLS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>CHARACTER AREA 12: GUSTON HILLS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION, GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>27</b>

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Dover District Council have commissioned Jacobs Babtie to produce a landscape character assessment of the Dover District, excluding the land which falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The aim of the assessment is to identify and describe the local landscape character areas throughout the district.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The landscape character assessment has been undertaken in accordance with a recognised methodology, the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002 Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines.

The assessment has identified 12 landscape character areas, as illustrated in on page 13:

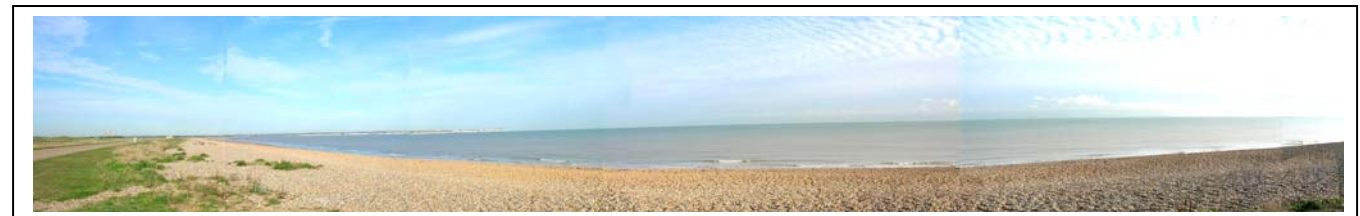
- Little Stour Marshes
- Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt
- Ash Level
- The Sandwich Corridor
- Richborough Castle
- Sandwich Bay
- Lydden Valley
- Staple Farmlands
- Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps
- Eythorne Arable Mosaic with Parkland
- Lydden Hills
- Guston Hills

Each of these areas has physical and cultural characteristics that are distinct and identifiable from the others. Some of the changes between the character areas are not immediately apparent until they are broken down to their basic landscape components. The transition between the areas on the ground may be quite gradual in some places but the essential characteristics are quite distinct from each other. Some character areas appear to change quite dramatically within themselves. These changes may be due to either very local variations or more typically due to changes in condition.

## CONCLUSIONS

The number of landscape character areas shows Dover District as having a highly diverse landscape, ranging from marshes, chalk downland, strongly patterned fruit producing landscape, and mosaics of mixed farming, parkland and native woodland. Within these landscapes are many attractive villages with historic buildings and parkland estates, which complement the natural environment and reflect its historic past.

Whilst some elements of landscape character are static, such as soils and geology, land use and condition are likely to change. Many farmed landscapes are under pressure due to intensification of arable cultivation.





## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The landscape assessment has been undertaken based on the methodology promoted by the Countryside Agency through their Countryside Character Programme and Landscape Assessment Guidance 2002.

The landscape assessment has identified 12 landscape character areas across the Dover District. Each of these areas has physical and cultural characteristics that are distinct and identifiable from the others. Some of the changes between the character areas are not immediately apparent until they are broken down to their basic landscape components. The transition between the areas on the ground may be quite gradual in some places but the essential characteristics are quite distinct from each other. Some character areas appear to change quite dramatically within themselves. These changes may be due to either very local variations or more typically due to changes in condition or land management.

This number of landscape character areas shows Dover District as having a highly diverse landscape, ranging from marshes, chalk downland, strongly patterned fruit producing landscape, and mosaics of mixed farming, parkland and native woodland. Within these landscapes are many attractive villages with historic buildings and parkland estates, which complement the natural environment and reflect its historic past.

Landscape character is not static. For example, many farming landscapes are under pressure due to intensification of arable cultivation.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS/ABBREVIATIONS

### Character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

### Characteristics

Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

### Elements

Individual components that make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

### Features

Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

### Characterisation

The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

### Sense of Place

Sense of place is the term used to describe the individuality and distinctiveness of a particular place or area. It is about the common identity and perception of a particular place to groups or individuals.

### Time depth

Time depth reflects how long that landscape has taken to establish. Ancient landscapes are uncommon in Kent but include those that have had very little

intervention by man or contain ancient or prehistoric features. Historic landscapes are generally from the medieval period onwards. This is when the pattern of most landscapes in Kent was established and is generally discernible today (although overlain with modern features). Recent landscapes are those where historic elements have been replaced with new elements or land management. They include reclaimed landscapes.

**Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)**

**Heritage Coast (HC)**

**Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

**Local Nature Reserve (LNR)**

**National Nature Reserve (NNR)**

**Special Landscape Area (SLA)**

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

**Special Protection Area (SPA)**

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

**Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)**

## REFERENCES

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CHARACTER AREA: Little Stour Marshes			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Dominant	Landform Very flat	Views out Relatively far reaching to poplar windbreaks and some housing outside the character area
<b>Tree cover</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Occasional willow and hawthorn along ditch lines	Views within Open across arable fields
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Enclosure defined by ditches	Pattern Ditches provide a pattern with associated shrub growth occasionally enforcing boundary
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Unsettled	Key visual elements Land under arable use, including conifer plantations	Seasonal variation Changes in crop cycles will cause visual alterations. Hawthorn blossom marks spring and provides colour
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Occasional willow and hawthorn along ditches and reeds. Arable crops dominated by wheat. Conifer plantations low rise		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Ditches		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	No roads within character area, but narrow winding lanes around its boundaries, enclosed by high native hedgerows including willow, hawthorn and sycamore		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Straight drove roads lead out onto marsh and stop-historic farming reference to draughting sheep out to marshland pasture		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Extremely flat arable farmland, separated by ditches stretches out to the extent of the character area. The fields are characteristically separated by ditches with occasional willow or hawthorn enforcing these lines as boundaries. The fields are all of a similar size but varied in their shape, creating no particular field pattern. Reedmace emerges from ditches in parts, but the more dominant and varied vegetation lies outside the character area alongside the winding lanes which border it. Here, tall mixed native hedgerows contain willow, hawthorn and sycamore, enclosing the lanes and only allowing views out across the marsh character area in parts.			

CHARACTER AREA: Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Apparent	Landform Flat-gently undulating in parts	Views out Relatively open in places and very enclosed in others, with shelterbelts and orchards and farm buildings
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Orchards, shelterbelts, hedgerows and clumps	Views within Vary-restricted in parts due to shelterbelts and orchards
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Roads enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts	Pattern Distinct linear formation of orchard plantations
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Clustered developments and farmsteads. Glasshouses, fruit packing barns	Seasonal variation Great-crops and deciduous plants
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native and poplar shelterbelts		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Orchards, pasture, varied roadside verges, some arable land, black currants and potatoes/other garden vegetables		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Variety-roads, post and wire, poplar shelter belts and native hedgerows		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Villages of Preston and Ash, with isolated farms, clusters of farm buildings including glasshouses		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Vernacular style older dwellings and farmsteads, oasthouses and large farm barns		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	A257 and A256 major road intersects area. Other roads consist of narrow winding lanes.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Telegraph wires distinct feature in places, chicken wire around orchards to keep rabbits/pests out		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Small fields with varied land use such as private grazing for horses, orchards, glasshouses and some arable and pasture land. Garden vegetables feature strongly, with large barns for packing/storing produce. Orchards are concentrated in parts-mainly growing apples-surrounded by poplar shelter belts.			

CHARACTER AREA: Ash Level			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Dominant	Landform Flat	Views out Far reaching to increases in level in distance. Roads and power station dominant
<b>Tree cover</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Occasional willow and hawthorn	Views within Wide and open across mixes farmland
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Ditches provide enclosure	Pattern No obvious patterns other than ditches providing consistency
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Unsettled	Key visual elements Land under arable and pastoral use- cows	Seasonal variation Changes in crop cycles
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Occasional willow and hawthorn and reeds along ditches. Grazing, mostly unimproved. Crops-wheat and barley		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Ditches		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Narrow, winding lanes along area boundaries, but no roads within area itself		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Straight historic roads-drove roads-lead up to marsh edges from people moving sheep out to marshland pasture		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
This area is similar to the Stour Marshes, with smaller field sizes and more pasture use. Cattle dominate the grazing. Sections of intensive farming with crops such as wheat lie on improved ground, providing visual variation to the pasture land. The land is very much low lying and flat, segregated by ditches. Occasional willows and hawthorn support the boundary definition. The landscape is very much open and unenclosed with wide views out to landmarks like the power station.			

CHARACTER AREA: The Sandwich Corridor			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Insignificant	Landform Generally flat with manmade bunds for screening	Views out Limited due to buildings and screening-bunds and vegetation
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Native trees and shrubs in lines for screening	Views within Limited due to buildings and screening. Some across river and lakes.
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Buildings segregate area and provide enclosure along road and in sheltered pockets between building blocks	Pattern Block like developments provide a certain level of consistency
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Dominant	Key visual elements Buildings extremely noticeable. Land also dominated by large car parks	Seasonal variation More views of built form in winter months due to leaf loss from trees
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native species-including hawthorn, oak, ash, holly, willow and birch		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Riverside vegetation-grasses and reeds		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Modern, American style, large scale, high rise, block like, brick, abundance of windows		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	1 main road-straight with speed bumps. Roadside screening vegetation on top of screening bunds borders main road in places. Small, semi-private, internal roads link sections of industrial estates.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Metal security fencing, pylons and barbed wire are dominant. Small pockets of riverside wildlife areas feature.		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Huge, square, modern brick buildings dominate the landscape and obscure views. They appear out of scale and character in comparison to the surrounding landscape and the small nearby historic settlement of Sandwich. Linear native planting bands attempt to screen the buildings, and large tarmac car parks beyond, from the roadside. The river claims a more peaceful atmosphere, blunted by the sight of the huge office buildings of Pfizer. Boats move along the river as it winds between reeds and small pockets of mudflats which clearly provide a habitat for birds.			



CHARACTER AREA: Richborough castle			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Apparent	Landform High knoll of land rises above flatter surrounds	Views out Open far reaching views out to Sandwich Industrial Estate and across open farmland
<b>Tree cover</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Few isolated native	Views within Clear with few vertical elements. Poplars and buildings dominate
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements English Heritage grounds defined by metal railings	Pattern Lack of pattern
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Few old houses, clustered together	Seasonal variation Some, with surrounding agriculture and crop cycles
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Hedgerow along English Heritage driveway-mixed native species		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Mown grass and surrounding arable land-cereals dominated by wheat		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Few hedgerows		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Few clustered houses		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Old, stone, Roman Castle and amphitheatre remains		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Very narrow, winding lanes		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Small high point of land with stone remains of a historic castle. The grounds appear manicured as they are managed by English Heritage, with metal railings enclosing the castle remains and mown lawns. Arable land surrounds the grounds and some old houses feature along a rough stony road/track. There are open views out, which were originally out to sea for defence purposes, across slightly lower land. Remains of a Roman amphitheatre create localised changes in topography. Isolated poplars and some native hedgerows feature in places.			

CHARACTER AREA: Sandwich bay			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Insignificant	Landform Undulating dunes and shingle	Views out Significant views out to sea and to Thanet, Ramsgate/Pegwell bay headland. Pzifers and power station inland
<b>Tree cover</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Occasional scrub,	Views within Open across grassy dunes
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Unenclosed	Key visual elements Dunes and sea	Pattern
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Large modern buildings, open plan private estate. Occasional smaller buildings in conjunction with golf course.	Seasonal variation Winter-remote and bleaker colours due to weather. Summer-Busier atmosphere with a difference in colours in the sea, sand and sky.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Clumps of sea kale and sea holly create rhythm like pattern and consistency. Coarse, coastal grasses populate dunes.		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	As above-large private estate. Large, modern houses.		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Varied vernacular. Mix of brick, mock arts/crafts and early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Simple, track like coastal road for beach and golf course access. Unenclosed with good views out.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Shingle and sandy/muddy beach. Sand diminishes towards the south		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Large open landscape dominated by scrubby coarse grass across dunes. Sea kale creates pattern across shingle. Large, open views across sea, shingle and sand to headland. Open golf courses (Links - 3) grassy and dunes. Manmade bumpy landform with a lack of enclosure and vertical elements.			

CHARACTER AREA: Lydden Valley			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	26/05/2005
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Dominant	Landform Very flat and open	Views out Extensive views out to slight rises in level with a colliery and clumps of woodland being prominent
<b>Tree cover</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Occasional shrub, such as hawthorn or gorse in association with ditches	Views within Extensive views across pasture with small clumps of shrubs and the occasional tree
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Enclosure defined by ditches	Pattern Distinct pattern of ditches and associated shrubs
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Unsettled	Key visual elements Occasional chalet type building. Land used almost exclusively for cattle grazing	Seasonal variation Weather and seasonal changes will cause visual changes, such as buttercups in summer brightening the landscape and leaf loss from shrubs in winter months.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Gorse, hawthorn, unimproved pasture with buttercups. Occasional wetter patches with sedges and associated grasses.		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Ditches with random shrubs and occasionally post and wire fencing define boundaries		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Occasional chalets and farm barns		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Single track with little grass verge and post and wire fencing, offering broad views out		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Lack of roads create an inaccessible area. Telegraph poles and wires cross the pasture		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
<p>This is a large, open landscape with very flat landform and an abundance of pasture. Cattle graze the short grass, with buttercups brightening the otherwise bleak paddocks. Ditches segregate the fields and occasional hawthorn and gorse shrubs emerge along ditch lines. Wetter patches of land are evident, with darker swathes of sedges and other grasses associated with wetter soils. Low rise, white chalets cluster in pockets within the area, and the occasional large dark farm barn is evident in a very much horizontal landscape. Telegraph poles strut across the pasture and their wires segment the sky. The views are extensive and there is an abundance of sky in this unenclosed landscape.</p>			

CHARACTER AREA: Staple Farmlands			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Insignificant	Landform Flat-gently undulating	Views out Relatively
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Few hedgerows and isolated trees	Views within Relatively open across arable farmland to orchards/market gardening areas
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Open arable with some vinyards	Pattern Lack of pattern-random mosaic
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Few small settlements and farms	Seasonal variation Strong-arable/horticultural variation
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Some native hedgerows border fields		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Crops and some horticulture-orchards and vinyards		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native hedgerows-few due to large fields		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Scattered groups of buildings and Staple		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Mixed building types-oasthouses, Flemish gable ends and flint walls		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Main roads run east-west with one north-south minor road		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
<p>Area forms a boundary between horticulture/market garden area to the north and mixed arable to the south. Land is gently undulating with a mosaic of landuse including both horticultural and dominantly agricultural land. Pockets of orchards and vineyards are scattered amongst large square arable fields.</p>			



CHARACTER AREA: Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Insignificant	Landform Gently undulating to flat in parts	Views out Relatively open across farmland beyond boundary
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Some woodland belts/tree clumps	Views within Open in parts. Stops at woodland clumps/settlements
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Open across arable land, enclosed by villages	Pattern Network of roads, small villages and wide fields in-between create rhythm
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Telegraph wires, large fields and flint buildings	Seasonal variation Strong-crop rotation, hedgerow leaf loss
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Woodland clumps and belts within farmland of native species		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Hedgerows diminished due to arabilisation. Native rows border fields in parts		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Crops, some pasture around farmsteads/settlements		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Roads, some woodland belts and native hedgerows		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Small villages with farmsteads-some isolated		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Old buildings of flint and thatch interspersed with more modern brick dwellings.		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Narrow and winding, follow field boundaries often in northeast-southwest direction. Close network of footpaths follow field boundaries.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Some parkland		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Although undulating in parts, flatter areas distinguish character area. Large, open arable fields with narrow, winding lanes. Views are open across farmland from the roads with a lack of enclosure. Small network of villages, narrow roads, flint buildings, farms and large houses provide a consistent mosaic like pattern.			

CHARACTER AREA: Eythorne Arable Mosaic with Parkland			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Apparent	Landform Undulating Downs-gentle rides and valleys	Views out Extensive across sections of open arable land. More enclosed around settlements.
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Woodland belts and hedgerows at field boundaries and blocks of mature woodland and some ancient isolated trees within parkland	Views within Feeling of being on higher ground in some settlements developed on ridges with wide views across farmland in places. More enclosing and limited by tree growth in others around parkland
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements More apparent around farms/villages with smaller, more sheltered fields and buildings.	Pattern Distinct mosaic of land use with rectangular field shapes becoming smaller and more square near buildings/farmsteads. Fields in northeast-southwest direction
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Clusters of villages and isolated farmsteads. Larger settlements with railway-mining towns eg Aylesham	Seasonal variation Pasture and larger settlements more static. Strong variation in crop cycles, loss of leaves in parkland and hedgerows
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-oak, ash, elder, hawthorn. Some mature woodland and ancient trees within parkland.		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-oak, ash, elder, hawthorn		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Some newer native planting blocks around A256. Ornamental planting within parkland and village gardens.		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Woodland belts and hedgerows, post and wire around some pasture.		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Small Kentish villages with some isolated farms. Historic estates-Goodnestone. Mining towns and some larger settlements-Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell.		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Some isolated farms with typical building fabric-corrugated metal, flint and weather boarding. Mix of vernacular in villages-flint, brick, weather boarding. Mining towns-brick buildings, large and redundant.		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Small and narrow in villages. A256 and A2 provide contrast-fast and busy but well screened with high native hedgerows.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Network of footpaths and bridleways. Pylons evident in places. Rounded windows feature in older flint buildings, particularly in Goodnestone Estate.		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
The land is farmed with sheep dominating pasture enclosed by post and wire situated mostly in smaller more enclosed fields near farmsteads and village outskirts. Arable land makes up a large proportion of the land, open with native hedgerow boundaries. Farms are scattered throughout the area with typical buildings such as large barns constructed of corrugated metal. Small Kentish villages are clustered throughout the area, with village greens, cricket pitches, pubs and ponds. Houses are varied in age and style and material with some older flint buildings and newer brick developments. Gardens are ornamental and colourful. Parkland features throughout the character area with a darker, more enclosed character. Large mature trees provide shelter, a darker light and enclosure. The area comprises a mosaic of land use, with sweeping arable fields, smaller square pasture around settlements, clustered villages and blocks of historic parkland. Older houses feature around the parkland, with a dominance of flint and round topped windows. Some settlements are larger and of a contrasting character. Some small towns were developed as mining towns, such as Aylesham, with large redundant brick buildings and a standard design of brick housing. Old collieries support derelict land, overgrown often surrounded by metal fencing.			

CHARACTER AREA: 11: LYDDEN HILLS			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Dominant	Landform Steeply undulating and dramatic in parts. Flatter towards A2, steeply dropping along road from here. Flattens within settlement.	Views out Limited due to landform, valley formation, and treed screening of A2.
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Clumps of native planting and tall native hedgerows. Some mature trees around churchyard.	Views within Extensive down into valley from north of area due to landform. Limited from within valley due to landform.
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Fields enclosed by hedgerows/clumps of vegetation.	Pattern Mosaic of trees/hedgerows/fields.
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Farmed-arable and pasture with clustered buildings within Lydden and Temple Ewell and some isolated farms.	Seasonal variation Great-loss of leaves, changes in arable crop cycles.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-elder, hawthorn, sycamore, oak and hazel.		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-elder, hawthorn, sycamore, oak and hazel.		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Arable crops/pasture.		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Hedgerows, some post and wire fencing and stone walls with flint around some farmsteads and Churchyard.		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Scattered isolated farms and clusters of houses more densely populated within settlements		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Church and some older houses hold reference to underlying geology with flint walls. Within settlements, vernacular is varied with slate, Kent peg tiles, thatch, brick and wood. Farm buildings –corrugated metal and some timber.		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Narrow, minimal, steep down to valley bottom. Flatter and wider through settlement.		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
Distinct change in landform and subsequent availability of views from A2 southwards. Arable fields, used mostly for wheat, directly south of the A2 are flatter, beginning to slope before the land drops down to valley. Fields interspersed by clumps of native woodland and large high and wide native hedgerows border fields. Fields are of medium size and no evident pattern, although they generally flow at 90 degrees to the contours for ease of fencing. Fields on the steeper slopes enclose rough grazing pasture, presumably too steep for tractor access. Fields around farmsteads also used for pasture-more sheltered and enclosed. Road into valley is steep, with flatter route through village.			

CHARACTER AREA: 12: GUSTON HILLS			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
<b>Topography</b>	Dominant	Landform Sloping valley sides	Views out Wide open views of Dover
<b>Tree cover</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Hedgerows and tree clumps/scrubby vegetation on slopes	Views within Limited in places due to trees/enclosure
<b>Enclosure Pattern</b>	Apparent	Key visual elements Hedgerows and tree clumps provide enclosure in places	Pattern Lack of enclosure pattern
<b>Settlement &amp; Land use</b>	Insignificant	Key visual elements Farmland dominant	Seasonal variation Great-leaf loss and crop cycles
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-species include oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn and birch		
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Native-species include oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn and birch		
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Hedgerows and some post and wire. Metal fencing is very dominant around Duke of York's Military School.		
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features	Few buildings-school, isolated Frith farm, cemetery		
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features	School buildings brick with noticeable curved brick wall entrance points.		
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features	Narrow and limited with open views of Dover in places travelling south		
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features	N/A		
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			
High lying with excellent views of Dover from the south of the area across scrubby vegetation. Steep valley slopes down to Dover. Arable and pasture fields, enclosed by hedgerows. School boundary very dominant with mature trees and substantial metal fence. Brick walls mark entrance points and brick school buildings can be seen within the boundary.			



# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

The countryside has evolved over many hundreds of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical, biological and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character.

There is a need to retain pattern and diversity in the landscape to ensure that character and local distinctiveness are maintained. This is not necessarily about keeping the landscape as it is but is more about preventing everywhere becoming the same. In addition we need to ensure that landscapes are visually satisfying and give enjoyment to those who visit them and those who live and work in them.

Government policy requires that planning authorities should ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. The use of landscape character assessments based on a formal and robust assessment of the qualities of the landscape concerned is advocated.

## CONTEXT

To support landscape and other planning policies, Dover District Council has commissioned Jacobs Babbie to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Dover District, excluding the land which falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The aim of the assessment is to identify and describe the local landscape character areas throughout the district. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with a recognised methodology, the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002 Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines.

This document is structured as follows:

- Landscape character context outlined.
- Methodology described.
- Existing influences on the landscape outlined, including geology and soils, land use and agriculture, cultural heritage, ecology and landscape designations.
- Identify and describe landscape character types.
- Description of 12 landscape character areas with key characteristics.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

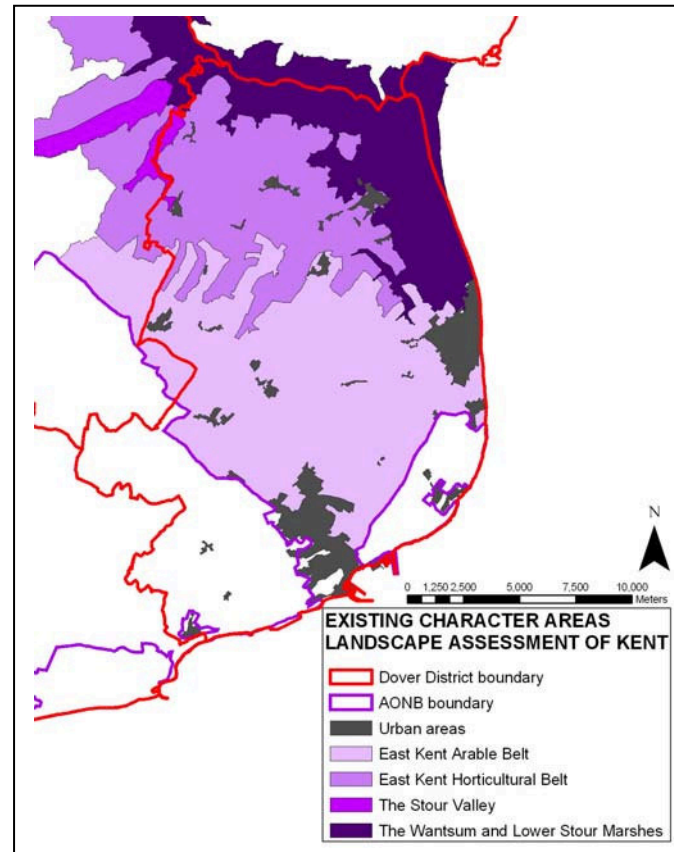
At a national level, there is an existing Landscape Character Assessment of England, undertaken by the Countryside Agency in 1999 as part of their Countryside Character Programme, which describes regional character areas across the country. This document defines six landscape character areas within Kent:

- Greater Thames Estuary,
- North Kent Plain,
- North Downs,
- Wealden Greensand,
- Low Weald,
- High Weald.

These areas coincide with the Natural Areas defined by English Nature. Those covering the Dover District are described in the Ecology section.

At a regional level, Kent County Council have defined a more detailed landscape character assessment through further refining and subdividing the national character areas. These character areas are described within the 'Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004.' Four landscape character areas fall within the Dover District study area, excluding the Kent Downs AONB, at this scale:

- The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes,
- East Kent Horticultural Belt,
- East Kent Arable Belt,
- The Stour Valley.





# INTRODUCTION

A summary of each of the character areas, covering the study area, at county level is given below:

## The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

### Key Characteristics:

- Flat, open and remote. No settlement on marshland.
- Reculver Towers and Richborough Fort mark the end of the Wantsum Channel.
- Regular field pattern fringed with dykes and drainage ditches. Flood defenses are characteristic elements.
- River courses, flooding and waterlogging.
- Coastal influences-climate, sand dunes and seabirds.

## East Kent Horticultural Belt

### Key Characteristics:

- Enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts, medium scale, gradually sloping or flat.
- Long views from higher ground.
- Coastal and marsh edges.
- Diverse agriculture with vineyards, soft fruit, orchards and glasshouses.
- Small isolated linear villages.
- Very narrow winding roads following the field and drainage pattern.

## East Kent Arable Belt

### Key Characteristics:

- Open, rolling landform with large arable fields and well-wooded hilltops.
- Simple pattern to the landscape.
- Narrow winding lanes and dispersed settlement.
- Parkland trees and 18<sup>th</sup> century estate villages.
- Pine trees on field boundaries.
- Disused collieries, and associated colliery
- The coast and sea defined.

## The Stour Valley

### Key Characteristics:

- Flat valley floor, widening towards the river mouth.
- Long distance views of Canterbury Cathedral.
- Wetland pasture drained by well vegetated ditches and dykes; small scale, well enclosed field pattern.
- Marshland, colourful reeds and grasses, lakes and open water.
- Rich and diverse habitats.
- Settlement on river at edge of floodplain and linear settlement surrounding the valley.

## THE DOVER DISTRICT

Dover District has a very rich landscape, comprising coastal cliffs and marshes, orchards and arable lands and the rolling chalk downs with numerous ancient woodlands and intimate valleys. It has three character-defining rivers: the Stour, the Wingham and the Dour. The countryside in Dover is marked by its high quality and its diversity. Distinctive characteristics range from the coastal landscapes, marshes, intense horticultural and arable farming to the rolling Kent Downs.

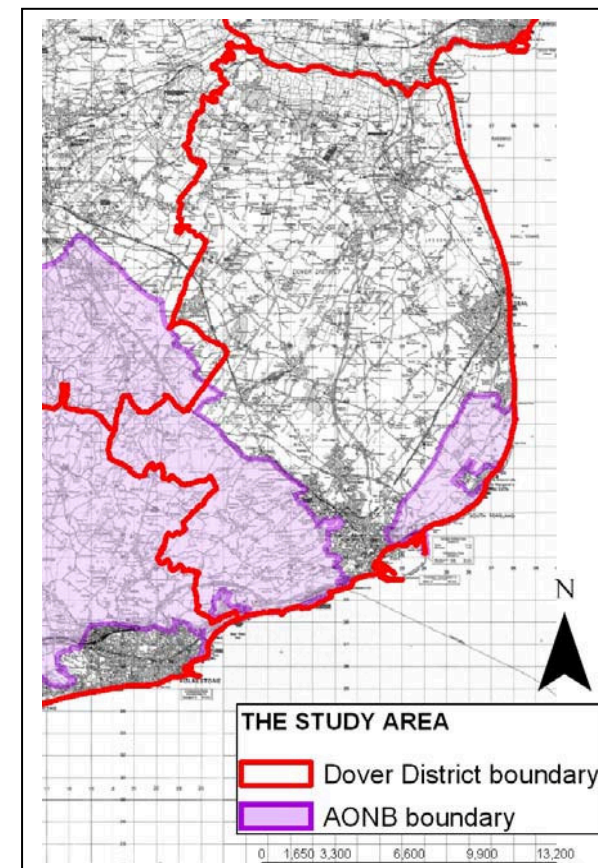
Predominantly rural, one quarter of the district is AONB, two thirds is Special Landscape Area (SLA). The only two Heritage Coasts in Kent are found either side of the town of Dover. An extensive area of Local Landscape Significance lies in the old Wantsum Channel. Associated with the landscape of the district are some immensely important wildlife sites – three terrestrial Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (including one of the finest vegetated chalk cliffs in the UK), one marine SAC, one SPA and Ramsar site, two National Nature Reserves (NNR), six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and over fifty Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

The District needs to consider ways to address future pressures so that change can be accommodated without losing the distinctiveness of its landscapes. These pressures are likely to include changes in agricultural practice, in particular the decline of orchards, and pressure from development proposals including housing, industry and possibly wind farms. Despite their variety of physical and cultural characteristics, many landscapes within Dover are highly visible and therefore are among some of the most sensitive in the county. A robust landscape assessment will assist Dover District Council in understanding the variety and distinctiveness of the local character.

## THE STUDY AREA

The Kent Downs AONB is protected nationally and there are no proposals to alter its boundaries. The Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) guides its management. While it would be desirable to have a characterisation of this landscape at a local level, it must be considered to be low priority because of its current management and protection.

Changes at the urban fringe can have profound impacts on local landscapes. However, it is considered that the complexity of work involved here would require a separate study. It would be expected that characterisation is extrapolated to the built-up area boundary such that the separate study can nest within the landscape itself.





# METHODOLOGY

## METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

The methodology for the landscape character assessment is consistent with the approach used for the Landscape Assessment of Kent and other district appraisals undertaken in the county, including the neighboring Canterbury District. This ensures a corresponding level of detail to the county strategic framework and allows it to join seamlessly with the Canterbury appraisals. Nesting and continuity are important when the District Council looks beyond this assessment to make judgments on policy, land management or development control issues that cross the borders of separate landscape appraisals.

The methodology used to undertake the landscape assessment is based on The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural heritage's *Landscape Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)*.

In the first instance the assessor interrogates the geological, soil and topographical information as well as accumulating as much information as is readily available regarding historic and cultural influences, nature conservation interests and land use.

Aerial photographs of the area assist with the identification of the landscape character areas as well as assisting with the appreciation of the conclusions subsequently reached.

Having initiated the desk based research, the fieldwork is undertaken. Normally two landscape assessors working together in the field debate and define the broad character distinctions using 'Field Assessment Sheets' and taking photographic records as data.

The Field Assessment Sheets for assessing the character of the landscape are designed to analyse the component factors of the landscape, to reach a series of decisions on:

- Aesthetics
- Key characteristics

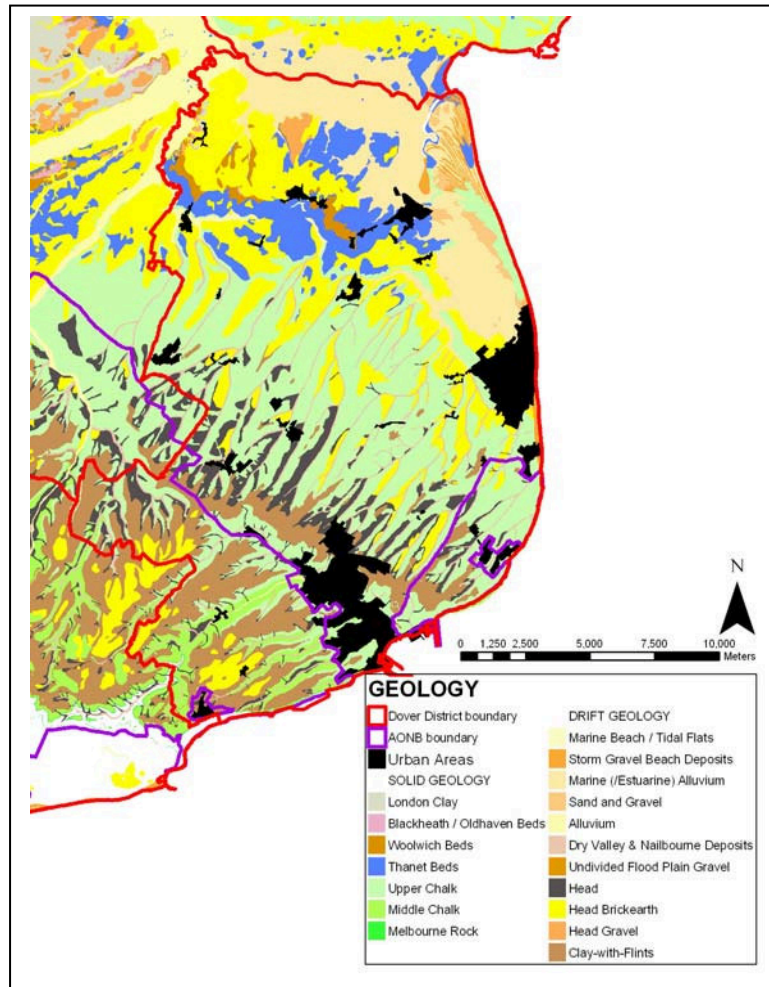
Landscape Character areas are defined and mapped as a series of largely homogeneous units. However, for proposals at field level, close to character area boundaries, more detailed assessment should be undertaken as changes in landscape character are sometimes subtle.

## EXAMPLE FIELD SURVEY SHEET

CHARACTER AREA:			
County context:		Photograph no.	
Regional context:		Map reference:	
National context		Date of Survey:	
AESTHETICS - what is your overall impression of this area?			
Topography	Dominant Apparent Insignificant	Landform	Views out
		Key visual elements	Views within
Tree cover	Dominant Apparent Insignificant	Key visual elements	Pattern
		Key visual elements	Seasonal variation
Enclosure Pattern	Dominant Apparent Insignificant Unenclosed	Key visual elements	
		Key visual elements	
Settlement & Land use	Dominant Apparent Insignificant Unsettled	Key visual elements	
		Key visual elements	
KEY CHARACTERISTICS - in what ways do the following contribute to local distinctiveness?			
<b>Woodlands:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Hedgerow &amp; hedgerow trees:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Other vegetation:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Field boundaries:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Settlements:</b> Villages/farmsteads Heritage features			
<b>Buildings:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Highways:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
<b>Other features:</b> Species associations Heritage features			
BRIEF DESCRIPTION			





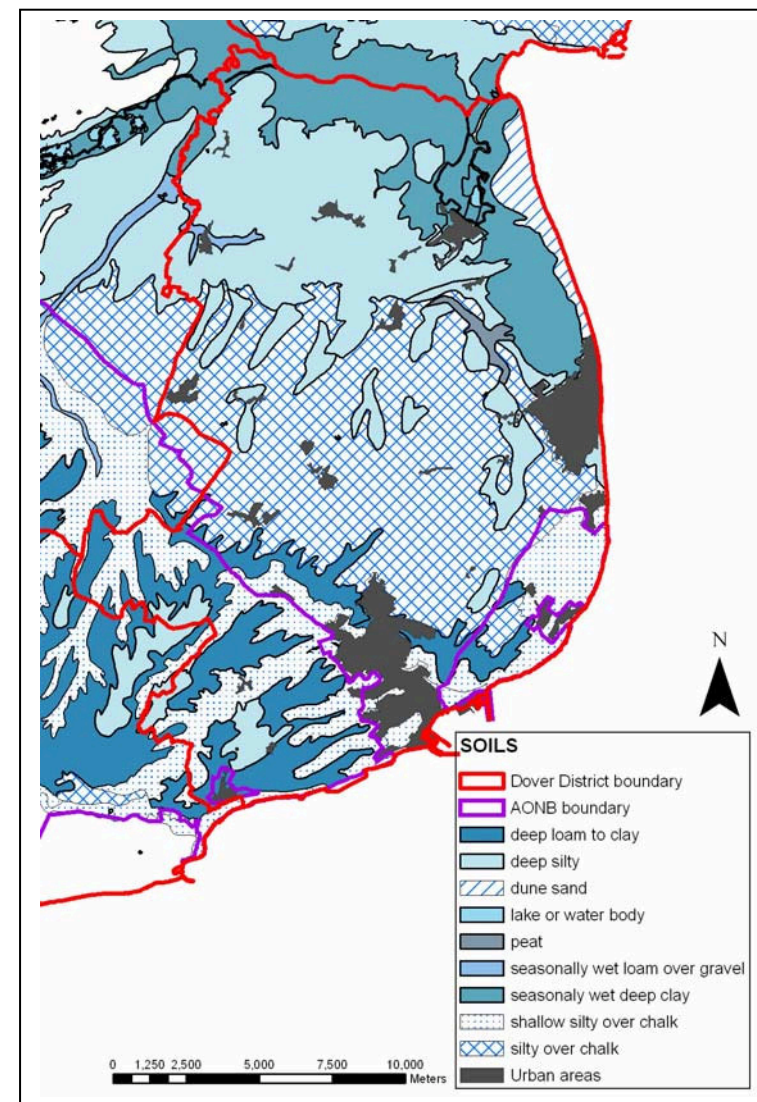


The landscape has evolved over many hundreds of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical, biological and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character. The following section provides an overview of those factors that have shaped the Dover District.

The north, north western and eastern sides of the study area, north of Ash and south east of Sandwich, are dominated by poor quality, heavy, Marine/Estuarine Alluvium clay, overlain by seasonally wet deep clay soils. The north east coast of the study area, adjacent to Sandwich Flats, comprises bands of Marine/Estuarine Alluvium and Storm Gravel Beach Deposits. Alluvial and peat soils surround the dykes and marshland of Hacklinge and the land adjacent to the Little Stour river, along the north western section of the study area. A small section of peaty soil lies over the Alluvium bed to the west of Sholden, to the east of the study area.

Head Brickearth dominates the west of the site around Stourmouth and Preston, overlain with seasonally wet deep loam to clay. Swathes of Thanet beds, Woolwich Beds and Head Brickearth cover the northern central area of the study area, west of Sandwich, overlain again with seasonally wet deep loam to clay. Smaller patches of Clay with Flints appear amidst the swathes, adding to the variation with silty soil.

The southern central section of the study area, south and west of Deal and north of Dover, encompassing Aylesham, Kingsdown, Nonington and Sheperdswell, supports generally well drained, good quality chalk of varying depths and silty soil. A distinct pattern of narrow strips of dry valley and Nailbourne Deposits, and wider bands of Head, follow a northeast direction north of a band of Clay with Flints at the very south of the site. The band of Clay with Flints supports deep loam to clay soil. Shallow silty soils lie across the Upper Chalk at the very south of the site.





# LANDFORM AND DRAINAGE

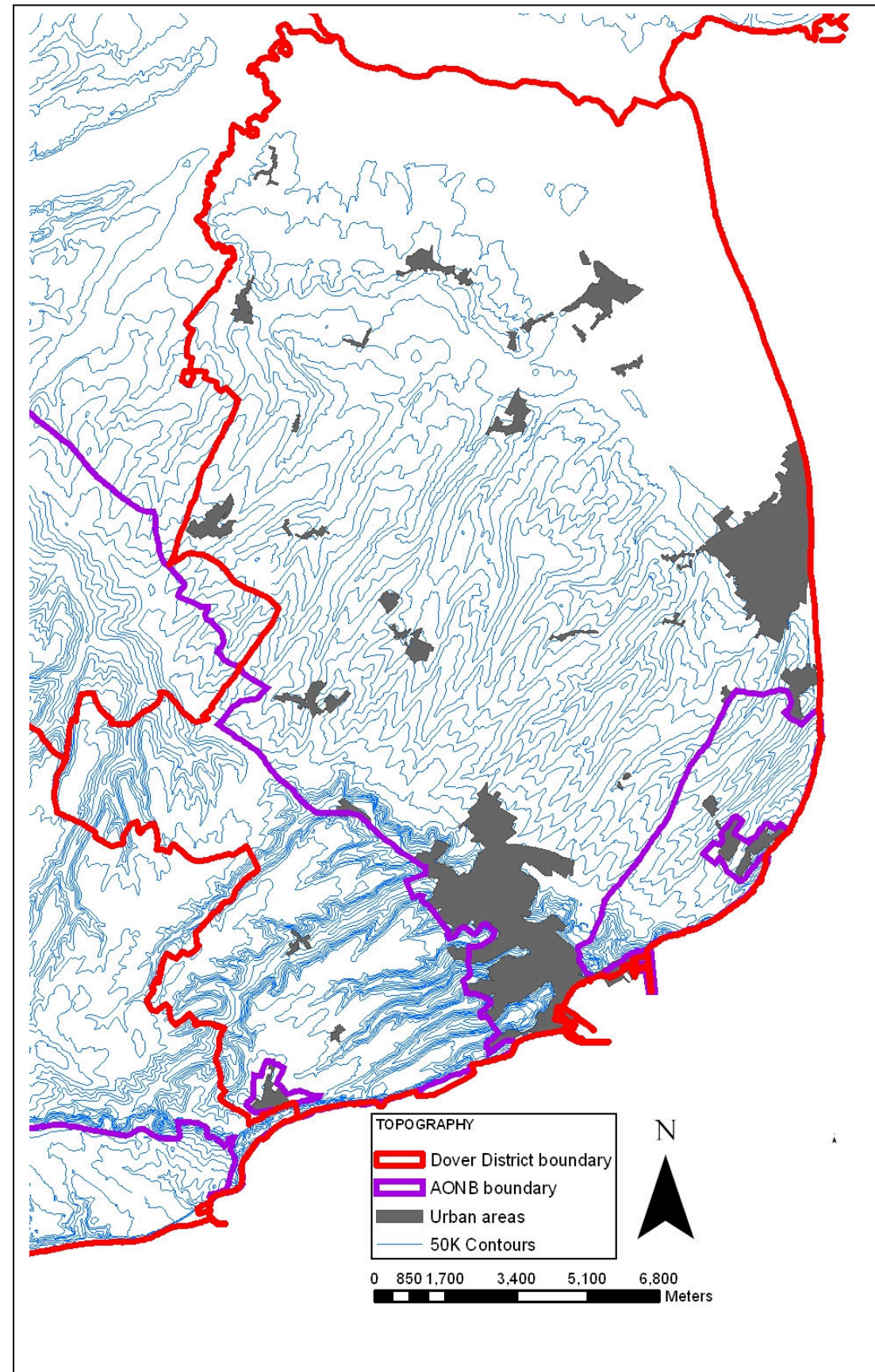
## DESCRIPTION

The topography within the Dover District relates closely to the underlying geology. Throughout the district, the land gradually rises to the south. The landform is flat to the north, north west and north east of the site over the Alluvium and deep clay soils. The landform is distinct at the coast with low lying dunes, shingle beaches and chalk cliffs. A Hercynian fault gave rise to the Dour Valley and Lydden scarp.

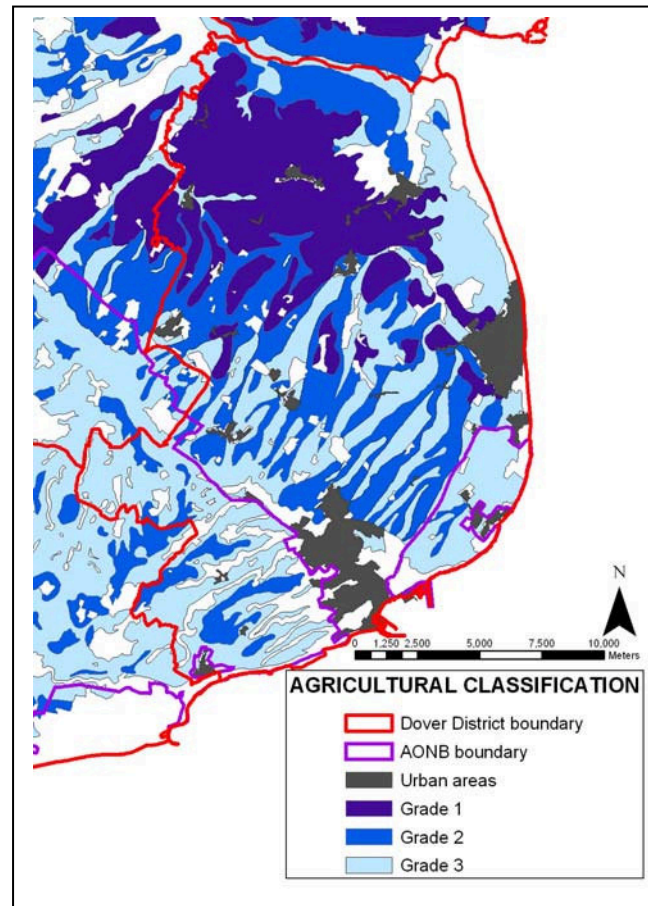
The landform becomes gently undulating northwest and west of Sandwich across the Head Brickearth and Thanet and Woolwich Beds.

As Upper Chalk begins to dominate the rock type around the centre of the study area, with ribbons of Dry Valley and Nailbourne Deposits, a distinct pattern of ridges and valleys starts to form. This pattern becomes more defined towards the south of the site as swathes of Head become apparent. This pattern informs the drainage, with a series of dry valleys and river valleys with marshes to the sea.

The topography becomes most dramatic at the very south of the study area, north of Lydden, where the true downland character of steep hills is most obvious.







Much Alluvium based reclaimed land to the very north and north west of the study area, once under water, is now used as permanent pasture. These areas are characterised by a lack of development and flat, open land. Drainage ditches and reed growth upon the marshland provide reference to the waterlogged past. Few roads cross these areas, again providing reference to the waterlogged past. Drove roads access the edges of the marsh, once used for moving sheep onto the marshland. Virtually no trees or hedgerows grow on the marshland, with a few scrubby specimens along ditch lines. Distinct building vernacular relates to past land use and farming prosperity with Flemish gable ends featuring on many houses, influenced by Dutch weavers. Many Dutch weavers came to produce cloth between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries which was in great demand in Europe and as far as the Orient.

The mid-northern section of the study area hosts a predominance of intensively farmed arable crops, with some less intensively farmed areas - particularly based around the Lydden Valley. Here the agricultural use is also pastoral, although stock rearing is generally uncommon in this area. Land use within the district reflects the topography, soil type and historic prosperity. Productive loams to clay across the northern section of the site support intensive horticultural land use, with orchards and garden vegetables. The small enclosed fields, used for the production of hops in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are sheltered making them ideal for such horticultural use. Hedgerows and shelterbelts provide enclosure and ecological links for wildlife. The land to the south and west of Sandwich, surrounding Wingham and Ash, is generally used for growing cereals, potatoes and field vegetables. The northwestern

boundary of the study area, adjacent to the Little Stour river, supports relatively poor agricultural soil. There has been some recent diversification around the settlement of Ash, from orchards to viticulture.

Land to the east of the study area adjacent to the coast, poor in agricultural terms, is populated by wildlife. The dune sands and sand and shingle provide an important habitat for birds. Recreational and wildlife land use combine, with little agricultural purpose.

Within the Dry Valley and North Downs landscapes, land cover is relatively homogenous being largely influenced by soil derived from the extensive occurrence of chalk and Clay-with-Flint. Land is used mainly as arable farmland, with smaller, more enclosed fields used as pasture surrounding farmsteads and village settlements. Arable fields are larger and more exposed, interrupted by blocks of native woodland. Species include oak, ash, hazel and beech. There is a distinct rectangular field format, with a consistency in size. With the downland character of undulating topography, views are more accessible across the open arable fields. Crops include wheat, oil seed rape, linseed oil and barley. Parklands diversify the land use and provide historic references with mature trees and woodlands and formal gardens. A small pocket of species-rich unimproved grassland lies at the very south of the area, rich in wildlife diversity.

A scattering of small settlements characterises the area, often positioned on higher ground with open views across farmland. The road network is formed of winding narrow lanes, linking the settlements, sometimes enclosed by woodland or hedgerows and sometimes adjacent to field edges with little verge at all. Locally distinct materials characterise the architecture, with an abundance of flint used within walls providing a link between the physical and cultural landscape. Kent peg tiles and thatched roofs are spread throughout the study area, providing a strong sense of place. Reeds from the marshes would originally have been used to construct the thatch. Oasthouses and windmills also feature strongly throughout the area, relating to past land uses such as hop growing, and providing strong and characteristic landmark features.

A swathe of Grade 1 agricultural land covers the belt used most intensively for horticultural land use, with the largest variety of crop types including orchards, garden vegetables and hops. Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural Land occur in bands reflecting the landform and soil type across downs to the southern section of the study area. Agricultural classification is lowest to the east of the study area adjacent to the coast.

Pressures for change include a reduction in hedgerows and a decline in orchards in favour of arable intensification. Housing pressures have led to an increase in modern development on the outskirts of more historic settlements. Commercial and industrial buildings spread out from the larger settlements of Dover, Deal and Sandwich. In some areas, major road and railway corridors introduce a discordant feature into an otherwise quiet and peaceful rural landscape. New and busy roads link these larger settlements, cutting through the landscape and providing potential for further development pressures and visual intrusion.





## CULTURAL HERITAGE: HISTORY

### GENERAL

South of the marshes which were under water, the agricultural landscape began to be developed as light soils were cleared during the Neolithic period. The central and southern part of the area would have been covered in deciduous woodland in prehistoric times. By Roman times, the north of the study area was densely settled, with influences like the Sandwich to Dover Roman road still evident. Traces of Roman and possibly earlier habitations have been discovered along river valleys in the central and southern part of the site, being the main areas of early settlement. Colonisation up to the middle ages created the settlement pattern of parishes. An alliance was formed between the five most important towns along this section of the coastline, known as the Cinque Ports. These towns were Dover, Sandwich, Deal, Romney and Hythe. The Cinque Ports provided ships and seamen, and gained privileges, such as trade without taxes, for being one of the most powerful organisations in the country.

There were early attempts at mining, such as Stonehall at Lydden, which were unsuccessful, although their traces remain in the landscape (the East Kent Light Railway). Successful mines were dug at Tilmanstone, Snowdown and Betteshanger, which maintained production into the 1980's. Mining villages such as Elvington were created. The settlements of Aylesham, Tilmanstone and Betteshanger were developed around the mines, with typical brick housing. Aylesham, a large planned mining community, was designed by Patrick Abercrombie, but never completed. The only remaining derelict colliery buildings are to be found at Snowdown, but they are destined for demolition in the near future. At both Betteshanger and Snowdown, mining gives way to new industry and country parks.

### DOVER

Dover is famous for its close proximity to the continent and for the striking white cliffs along its coastline. Dover holds strong historical importance, with archaeological sites and remains of international importance dating from the prehistoric period. Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and later defence stemmed from Dover's location as the "gateway to England". The first settlements in Dover were made around 6000 years ago by Stone Age people. Roman forces invaded Dover in 55BC, and the Roman Empire stood strong for over 400 years. Anglo-Saxon people began to settle in Dover, as in much of Kent, after the fall of the Roman Empire when it became a major settlement. Many important Saxon remains have been found in Dover, leaving a rich tapestry of history from the Bronze Age, the Roman Empire and the Saxon era. Dover is internationally famous for the finding of a Bronze Age Boat, suspected to have been large enough to ship substantial supplies, livestock and cargo across the channel. A Napoleonic fortress, built in 1804 at Western Heights, was developed to protect Dover's western side and port. Dover's importance as a bastion of defence continued up to World War II at which time the town suffered greatly from German artillery and bombers. The port continues to grow and is now the busiest RoRo facility in the world.

### SANDWICH

The first recorded mention of Sandwich was in 640AD but settlement is thought to date from Roman times. The name itself is Saxon in origin, meaning sandy place, or the place in the sand. The nearby Richborough Castle dates from the Roman invasion of 43AD with the walls being a later addition. The castle overlooked the Wantsum Channel, a strait between The Isle of Thanet and the mainland. Ports and harbours were founded and later lost along this channel and only Sandwich Haven itself remains from this period. Opposite the castle on the other shore of the Wantsum lay a shingle spit and the port of Stonar. This port competed with Sandwich in the early medieval times until it was overwhelmed in a great storm. Stonar Lake and the despoiled, somewhat derelict industrial landscape of the Sandwich Corridor originated with ballast extraction for the building of Dover harbour, continued with the construction of Port Richborough for troop transport in World War I, which then was followed by piecemeal industrial activity. The pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer, now dominates the area and attempts are being made to remove the air of dereliction.

Sandwich became very busy as a major port between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as ships would journey through the sheltered channel on their way to London and the continent. Sandwich was once the principal port of England after London. As the channel began to silt up in the fifteenth century, the port began to decline. All that remains of the channel is a narrow river-the River Stour. Sandwich became very prosperous in the sixteenth century, with an influx of French and Dutch Protestants fleeing religious persecution. These people introduced their skills to the area, such as weaving and market gardening. Flemish influence is still highly evident in the curved gable ends of existing housing. Sandwich became a market town from the seventeenth century. The town holds claims to one of the most historic in the country and is internationally recognised as one of the most complete medieval towns in England. Before the River Stour silted up (a few hundred years ago), the Cinque Port of Sandwich was one of the main ports of the UK. Today, the sailing ships have been replaced by small boats, but the many ancient buildings make it one of the best preserved medieval towns in England. The famous Royal St Georges golf course now lies on the sand dunes adjacent to Sandwich Bay.

### DEAL

Deal is also a town of national historic importance, with some 466 listed buildings. The District contains many listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and a network of historic routes. Historically, Deal was a popular area for sailors. Two hundred years ago, it was home to boatyard suppliers, ship chandlers, smugglers and grog houses. Deal had no harbour, but is recorded as being the third busiest port in England, with wars against France causing an increase in the size of the yard. Repair facilities included sawpits, a smith's shop, boat building house and sail loft. Here Nelson visited when 12 to 14 flat-bottomed boats were being built for his attack on Napoleon's flotilla off Boulogne in 1801. Although Deal had no harbour, the Small Downs lying between the notorious Goodwin Sands and the shore has for centuries provided safe anchorage for ships. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, coal mining at Betteshanger led to expansion of the town. Deal today is a fascinating mixture of old and new. Its special architectural character received early recognition when the Middle Street Conservation Area was the first to be so designated in Kent. (Civic Amenities Act, 1967).

### LOCAL SETTLEMENTS

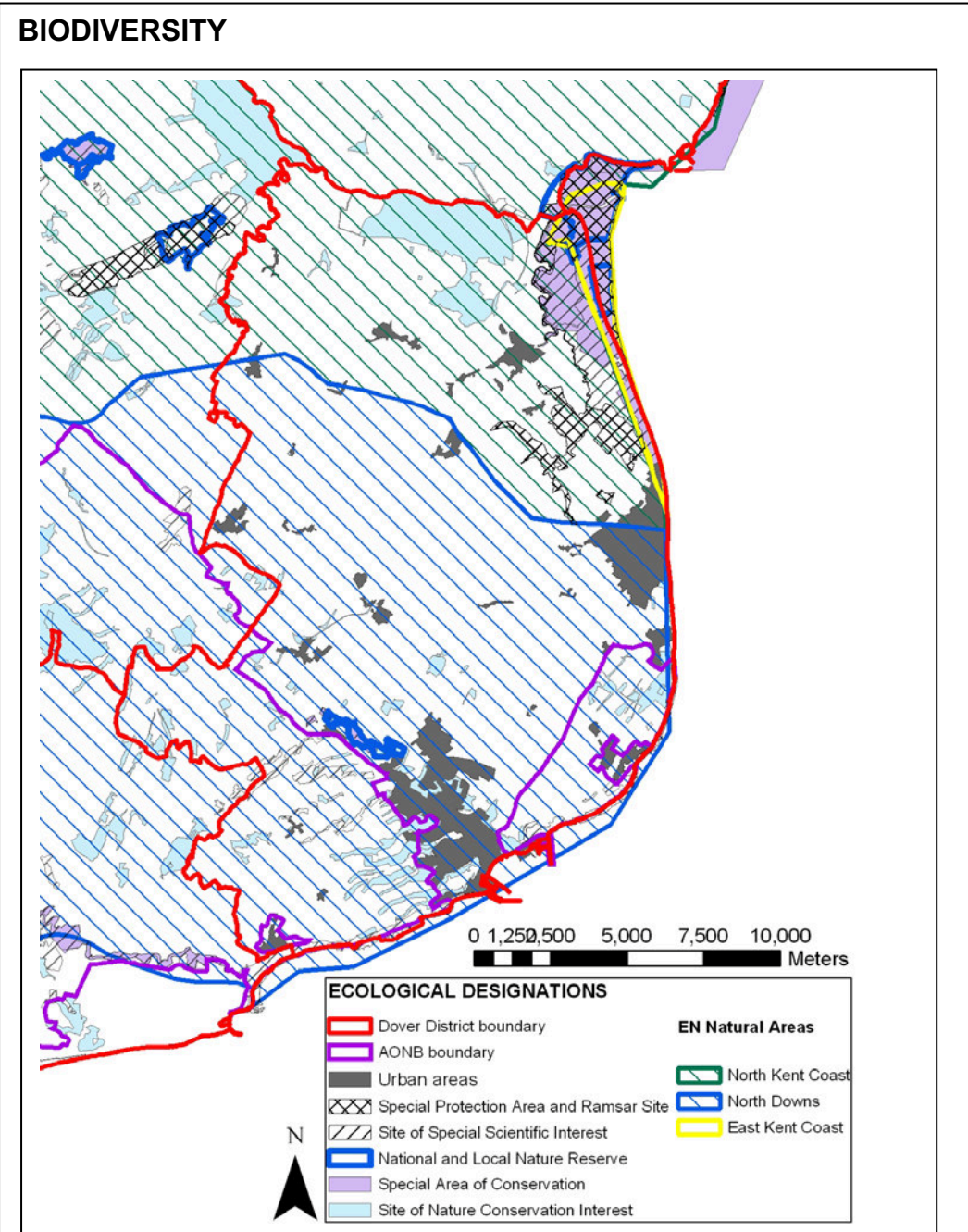
Settlements tend to be smaller towards the south of the study area. There are many places of special interest near Sandwich, including the villages of Ash, Eastry, Woodnesborough and Worth, which are only a mile or two away and have very close connections to the local towns. Ash holds strong historical interest, with parts of the Church dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Twelve manor houses and medieval houses still exist, creating a strong aged character with distinct vernacular style. Eastry is another historic village, with its name recorded in the 8<sup>th</sup> century as 'Eastorege', which means 'the eastern district'. Remains have been found from Anglo-Saxon times. Wingham is another historic village, and is mentioned in the Domesday book as one of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Manors. Permission for a market in the village was granted in 1252.

### LAND USE

Remnants of past agricultural land use and history are evident throughout the district. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hop gardens would have been located across the district, particularly towards the north. Suitable soils, enclosed fields, a good supply of wood for support poles and charcoal for hop drying and Kent farmer prosperity increased the popularity of the area for hop production. The pattern of small enclosed fields is still evident within the landscape, particularly to the mid-north of the study area, where poplar shelterbelts enclose the small fields now used for fruit and vegetable production. Flat, reclaimed land to the very north of the study area shows evidence of land which was once under water such as ditches, reed growth and treeless character.







The study area falls within three of English Nature's Natural Areas - East Kent Coast, North Kent Plain and North Downs. The location and boundaries of the Natural Areas coincide with the character area and boundaries set out in The Countryside Agency's 'Countryside Character Volume 7: South East and London, The Character of England's natural and man-made landscape, 1999'.

However, the eastern section of the study area, defined by English Nature as the East Kent Coast, is included within the Countryside Agency's 'North Downs' character area. These areas are identified by their physical, natural and land use features.

**East Kent Coast**

The East Kent Coast Natural Area stretches from North Foreland to Folkestone, therefore encompassing the entire coastline of the Dover district. The estuary of the River Stour at Pegwell Bay comprises mud, before the coast grades into sand dunes at Sandwich Bay, and alters to shingle south of Deal. The coastline hosts a broad range of habitats with mudflats, saltmarshes, freshwater marshes, sand dunes, cliffs and maritime grasslands.

**North Kent Plain**

The North Kent Plain Natural Area lies north of the coast at Sandwich, and stretches across the northern part of the study area towards the outskirts of London. The land in the area boasts highly fertile, and therefore productive, farmland, with a predominance of intensive arable farming and horticulture. The area also contains marshland which holds strong nature conservation interest. Although the area has been greatly influenced by centuries of human activities, there is a wide variety of vegetation cover. These include woodlands and grasslands as well as extensive wetlands to the east.

**North Downs**

The North Downs Natural Area lies to the south of the North Kent Plain, and to the west of the East Kent Coast Natural Area. Chalk geology is characteristic of this area, supporting downland habitats within the chalk grassland. There is a rich variety of plant and insect species, with grazing and aspect affecting the species composition. Scrub forms an interface between chalk grassland and woodland, supporting invertebrates and birds. Woodlands are generally native, providing a contrasting character and sources of habitat with deadwood invertebrates, dormice communities and nightingales.

**ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS**

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the study area: Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes at the north east of the study area and Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs to the south. The Hacklinge Marshes contain the finest sand dune system and sandy coastal grassland in South East England, and also includes a wide range of other rare and highly valuable habitats such as mudflats, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, scrub and woodland. Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs include some of the richest chalk grassland in Kent.

Sandwich Bay and Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are strictly protected sites designated by the EC Habitats Directive.

Sandwich Bay and Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs are designated as National Nature Reserves (NNR). Sandwich Bay is designated as a NNR of 610ha, under Section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which extends into the Dover District. It is under multiple ownership and management is overseen by a partnership, including Local Authorities, but is carried out by Kent Wildlife Trust. The NNR is a mixture of natural, semi-natural and artificial habitats. Although some of the designated land lies outside the study area, sand dunes and saltmarsh, semi-natural habitats including ancient dune pasture and coastal scrubland are within the study area boundary. Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs NNR is owned and managed by Kent Wildlife Trust. It is composed mostly of chalk grassland on the more inaccessible slopes, with improved grassland on the gentler slopes. It supports chalk downland of international importance with a high diversity of plants and invertebrates.





# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

There are three Local Nature Reserves (LNR) throughout the study area. 'Prince's Beachlands' which stretches between the north and south parts of the NNR is designated as a LNR and two urban fringe areas on the outskirts of Dover itself are designated LNRs: Whinless Downs and Western Heights.

A Special Protection Area (SPA) is designated within the north eastern part of the study area. SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC), also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, listed in Annex I to the Birds Directive, and for regularly occurring migratory species.

There is a Ramsar site, designated under the International Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention). The intertidal mudflats support nationally and internationally important numbers of waders and wildfowl, both on migration and over-winter. The sand dunes and ancient dune pasture contain huge colonies of southern marsh orchid, marsh helleborine, pyramidal orchid and the occasional lizard orchid. There are also a variety of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) throughout the study area, with Ash Level being the most extensive.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

The study area supports two major landscape designations. Designated land outside the study area may also have an impact on the character of the landscape. Although the land falling within the Kent Downs AONB is not within the study area, the designated land forms the site boundary for much of the southern part of the site. There will, therefore, be views into and out of the Kent Downs AONB from within the study area. The Countryside Agency designated this land with the main objective of maintaining its natural beauty. Part of the Kent Downs AONB on the southeast coastal section of the Dover District is also designated as Heritage Coast. The District includes the South Foreland Heritage Coast and the Dover-Folkestone Heritage Coast. These are the only stretches of Heritage Coast in Kent, with the objectives of conserving both natural and scenic beauty. Views from within the study area of this designated land may also be of significance to the landscape character within the study area.

## Special Landscape Areas

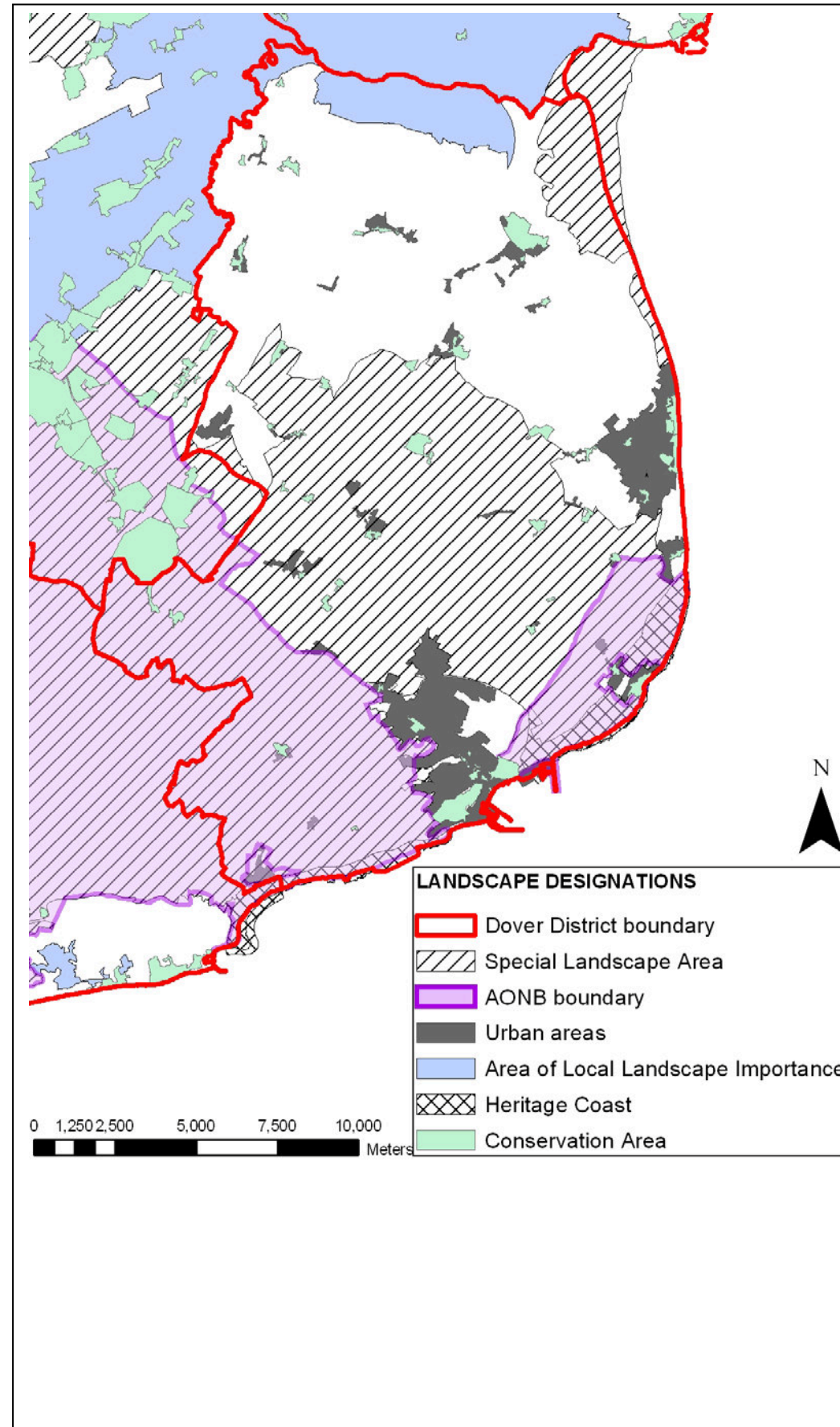
Much of the study area is designated as Special Landscape Areas in the Dover District Local Plan, adopted in 2002. The Sandwich and Pegwell Bay SLA is characterised by open and flat coastal landscape, which is largely unspoilt. The land designated as SLA to the south of the site is typified by gently undulating chalk downland, covered generally by open arable farmland.

## Area of Local Landscape Importance

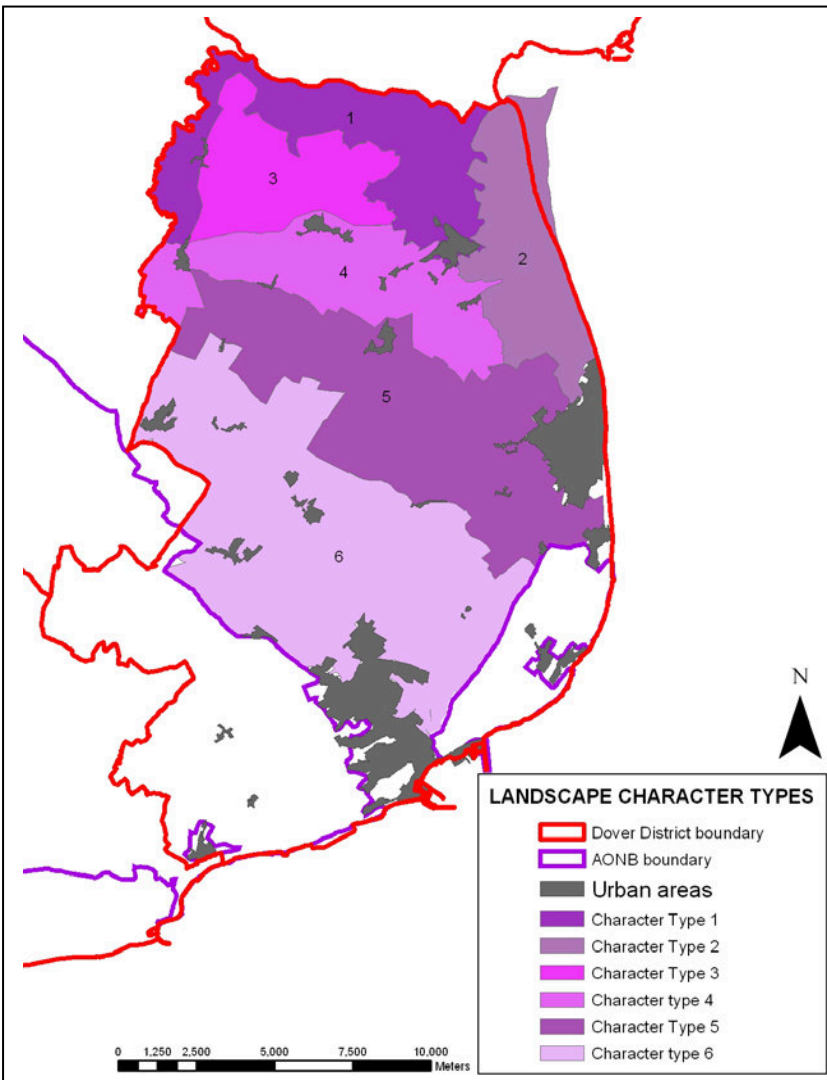
Ash Level, to the north of the site, is designated as An Area of Local Landscape Significance in the Dover District Local Plan, adopted in 2002. It is characterised by an open landscape segregated by a dyke system which drains the marshlands. A lack of roads, woodland and built development is typical.

## Conservation Areas

Several Conservation Areas are located within the district, often focused on historic towns and villages such as Ash, Sandwich, Wingham and Deal.







**LANDSCAPE TYPE 1**

**Geology:** Alluvium.  
**Soils:** Seasonally wet deep clay.  
**Landform:** Flat.  
**Enclosure:** Visually open, fields divided by ditches.  
**Tree Cover:** None/occasional scrub (hawthorn and willow) along ditches.  
**Pattern:** Small to medium scale fields  
**Land use:** Grazing—mostly improved pasture—with some arable.  
**Settlement:** Traditionally unsettled with much ‘reclaimed’ land. Former landfill industrial/commercial development north of Sandwich (Richborough Road/Pfizer development).  
**Highways/Access:** Access limited. Drove roads access marshland edges from neighbouring higher ground.  
**Cultural Associations:** Former Wantsum Channel was navigable between Canterbury (Fordwich) and the sea in Roman times until the 15<sup>th</sup> century.  
**Ecology:** Strong ditch network with associated birdlife and grasses. Often of little interest due to improvement and modern arable farming intensification.  
**Designations:** **Site of Nature Conservation Interest.**  
**Conservation Area covers Sandwich.**

**LANDSCAPE TYPE 2**

**Geology:** Marine Alluvium/Dune Sand and Gravels.  
**Soils:** Dune sand-becoming more silty towards mouth of Stour (Pegwell Bay).  
**Landform:** Irregular and low.  
**Enclosure:** Visually unenclosed. Occasional post and wire fence to mark boundaries/ownership.  
**Tree Cover:** Typically devoid of tree cover. Occasional scrub inland.  
**Pattern:** No pattern.  
**Land use:** Golf courses, nature reserve, beach.  
**Settlement:** Traditionally unsettled. Small self contained private estate developed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Large mostly detached houses of mixed vernacular. Arts and Crafts ‘Tudor’, ‘Hacienda’ and modern 1970’s Large golf club.  
**Highways/Access:** Limited/controlled public access with simple tarmac roads and tracks. Public footpath network.  
**Cultural Associations:** International Links Course at St Georges (holds the Open Championship).  
**Ecology:** Very rich and varied with sand dunes and coastal interest, supporting Sea Kale, Sea Holly and birdlife under designated land. Becoming wetter near mouth of Stour with coastal marshland, mudflats and extensive sands at low tide.  
**Designations:** **National and Local Nature Reserve.**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest.**  
**Special Landscape Area.**  
**Special Protection Area.**  
**Special Area of Conservation.**  
**Site of Nature Conservation Interest.**  
**Ramsar Site.**

**LANDSCAPE TYPE 3**

**Geology:** Thanet and Woolwich Beds (Tertiary Deposits) overlain with Head Brickearth.  
**Soils:** Deep silty.  
**Landform:** Very gently undulating to nearly flat.  
**Enclosure:** Very enclosed with high hedges and shelterbelts, although arable land is more open.  
**Tree Cover:** Woodland and hedgerow trees generally not present. Mature trees generally associated with buildings and settlement. Otherwise hedgerows form dominant cover.  
**Pattern:** Regular rectilinear, small to medium scale. Occasional arable fields with few internal boundaries, defined by surrounding roads.  
**Land use:** Orchards and market gardening. Mostly apples, some cherry and soft fruits. Arable increasingly positioned away from marshland edge. Occasional pasture and horse grazing.  
**Settlement:** Numerous small villages, hamlets and groups of buildings. Many medium-large country houses suggesting former agricultural wealth or proximity to Canterbury or the Church. Large timber barns. Small Churches scattered across the landscape. It is largely unspoilt by development, with little 20<sup>th</sup> century development, mostly confined to 1970’s bungalows at the edges of existing settlements. Strong vernacular styles of thatch, weatherboarding, soft red brick and Flemish influence dominate.  
**Highways/Access:** Narrow enclosed roads that follow field boundaries (right-angle turns) with Drove roads out to the marshes. Many roads are named as ‘Streets’, such as Cop Street and Cooper Street, and there are many ‘no through roads’.





# INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER AREAS: LANDSCAPE TYPES

**Cultural Associations:** Past agricultural wealth and prosperity. Flemish weavers influence in form of gable ends on housing due to immigration for sheep and marshland work.

**Ecology:** Limited due to intensification of agriculture. However, strong hedgerow/shelterbelt network providing good cover for common species.

**Designations:** **Several Conservation Areas.**  
**Site of Nature Conservation Interest.**

## LANDSCAPE TYPE 4

**Geology:** Deep silty soils over Head Brickearth, Woolwich and Thanet Beds.

**Landform:** Undulating-rising towards Ash and dropping towards Wingham and Staple.

**Enclosure:** Variable with land use. Many hedgerows lost to arabilisation. Roadside hedges.

**Tree Cover:** Woodland and hedgerow trees not typical. Hedgerows and tree cover associated with settlement.

**Pattern:** Regular rectilinear, small to medium scale. Occasional arable fields with few internal boundaries, defined by surrounding roads.

**Land use:** Arable dominant with some orchards, market gardening and nurseries.

**Settlement:** Larger villages of Ash, Wingham and Woodnesborough. Scattered farmsteads and oasthouses, country houses and small remnant parklands. Large parishes extend to include marshland.

**Highways/Access:** Major routes run east-west indicating historically important relationship between Sandwich and Canterbury and beyond. Other roads run north-south, with little verge and cultivated boundaries often running close to the roadside. Ditches run alongside roads in wetter areas.

**Cultural Associations:** The centre of Woodnesborough is thought to be either a Roman guard tower or ancient burial ground.

**Ecology:** Value limited due to arable intensification. Some interest in ditches and hedgerows, although often disjointed and suffering from close proximity to arable cultivation and agricultural chemicals.

**Designations:** **Several Conservation Areas.**

## LANDSCAPE TYPE 5

**Geology:** Free draining silty soils over chalk.

**Landform:** Gently undulating, rising to the south.

**Enclosure:** Lacking with large open arable fields and few hedgerows. Woodland belts and tree clumps add to enclosure in places. Field sizes increasing towards the south.

**Tree Cover:** Native woodland belts and clumps within arable farmland.

**Pattern:** Mixture of small, square fields, particularly around settlements, and regular rectilinear large arable fields.

**Land use:** Arable dominant with some pasture around settlements. Some parkland.

**Settlement:** Villages of Eastry, Betteshanger, Tilmanstone, Northbourne, Great Mongeham and Ripple. Distinctive high Church spires and strong vernacular style. Scattered farmsteads, windmills and oasthouses.

**Highways/Access:** Major route runs north-south, linking Sandwcih with Dover. Pattern of roads following northeast-southwest pattern developing, following field boundaries. Footpaths also follow field boundaries

**Cultural Associations:** The historic village of Eastry was present in Caesar's time and housed a palace for the king of Kent in A.D. 664. Thomas Becket was often in Eastry and went in hiding there in 1164. Tilmanstone and Betteshanger were collieries.

**Ecology:** Value limited due to arable intensification. Some interest in woodland belts, although suffering from close proximity to arable cultivation and agricultural chemicals

at edges.

**Designations:** **Several Conservation Areas.**

## LANDSCAPE TYPE 6

**Geology:** Free draining silty soils. Upper chalk with bands of Dry Valley and Nailbourne Deposits and Head and some patches of Clay with Flints.

**Landform:** Undulating, becoming steeper towards the south around Lydden and Temple Ewell.

**Enclosure:** Variable with open areas across arable land and more enclosure provided by woodland and mature trees within parkland.

**Tree Cover:** Woodland and hedgerow trees not typical. Hedgerows and tree cover associated with settlement.

**Pattern:** Regular rectilinear, small to medium scale. Occasional arable fields with few internal boundaries, defined by surrounding roads.

**Land use:** Arable dominant with parkland. Scattered disused collieries.

**Settlement:** Larger villages of Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell. Distinctive high Church spires and strong vernacular style. Scattered farmsteads and oasthouses, country houses and parklands.

**Highways/Access:** Major route runs north-south with a network of minor lanes following field boundaries in a northeast-southwest direction. Railways cross the area, linking Sandwich and Canterbury with Dover. Footpaths and bridleways follow field boundaries in general.

**Cultural Associations:** Parkland provides historical links with famous writers and Royalty.

**Ecology:** Mature woodland and parkland offers varied wildlife opportunities across the site. Chalk downland to the south supports comprehensive variety of species.

**Designations:** **Several Conservation Areas.**  
**Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.**  
**National Nature Reserve.**





# INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER AREAS: LANDSCAPE AREAS

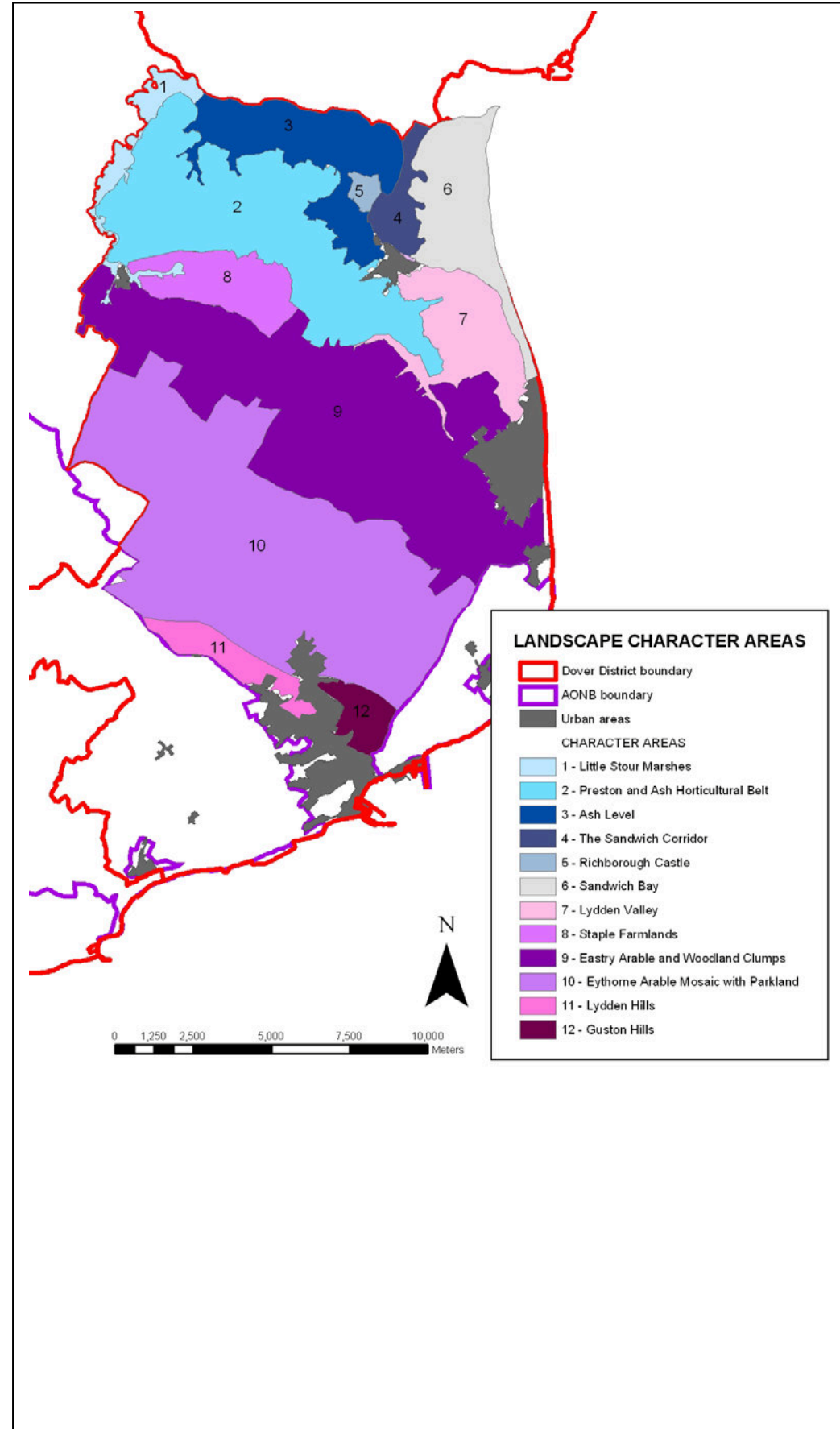
## CHARACTER AREAS

The field and desk studies have identified 12 local character areas. In the following sections these areas are described and their key characteristics noted. It should be noted that changes in the natural landscape are often gradual, relating closely to changes in geology and soil type. It is therefore common to find some characteristics of one area overlapping into another.

Not all areas within a landscape character area exhibit all the characteristics of that area and it is usual to have some pockets with very few distinctive features. Often this is due to changes in land use that have resulted in the loss of landscape features, or the addition of features not typically associated with that area. The proximity of the built environment often affects the condition of the landscape, particularly on the boundaries where pressures are greatest. The landscape character areas therefore identify common characteristics across an area rather than grouping areas that are identical. Where there are marked changes across an area these are described.

The titles of each character area are as follows:

- Character area 1: Little Stour Marshes
- Character area 2: Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt
- Character area 3: Ash level
- Character area 4: The Sandwich Corridor
- Character area 5: Richborough Castle
- Character area 6: Sandwich Bay
- Character area 7: Lydden Valley
- Character area 8: Staple Farmlands
- Character area 9: Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps
- Character area 10: Eythorne Arable Mosaic with Parkland
- Character area 11: Lydden Hills
- Character area 12: Guston Hills







**Little Stour Marshes**

The Stour Marshes encompasses three separate areas. The Stourmouth Valley lies to the northwest of the study area, encompassing the fields northwest of Stourmouth and east of the River Stour. The Preston and Deerson Valley lies south of the Stourmouth Valley along the study area boundary, east of the Little Stour River and west of Preston. North Wingham Valley consists of a narrow strip of land running to the east, north and west of Wingham.

The topography of the area is flat and therefore a dominant feature of the landscape character. The geology consists of alluvium, overlain with seasonally wet deep stone less mainly calcareous clayey soils. Groundwater is controlled mainly by ditches and pumps. The southern section of the area, around Wingham, consists of a slightly different geology, with chalky and gravelly river alluvium overlain with shallow calcareous and non-calcareous loamy soils over flint gravel affected by groundwater.

The land is used mainly as permanent grassland with some winter cereals, more so to the south. There are pockets of variation, with Christmas tree plantations in places. Although there is no obvious field pattern and the fields are of varying shapes, they are of a consistent size. The area holds reference to its underwater past with drainage ditches running along field boundaries, creating another consistency within the landscape and thereby strengthening the character.

The occasional hawthorn and willow, and some emerging reeds and Reedmace, complement the field boundary definition along ditch lines and along the rivers, increasing the variation in vegetation. Native hedgerows border the character area boundaries in places, alongside boundary roads. Species include hawthorn, brambles, oak, elder, willow and ash. Roadside verges add to the diversity with grasses, cow parsley, dock and nettles. Seasonal variation is likely to be well defined with leaf loss and crop cycles.

There is no built development within the area, creating a predominantly horizontal landscape with little to interrupt the view or focus the eye. Neither are there any roads, with access only reaching field edges on the perimeter of the character area boundaries in the form of straight 'Drove' roads, created for herding sheep out to marshland pasture in past times. Narrow winding lanes skirt the boundaries of the area, defining the boundaries. Footpaths follow the eastern River Stour and Little Stour boundaries within the Stourmouth and Preston and Deerson Valleys. The Saxon Shore Way follows the Little Stour from northeast-south west in the Stourmouth Valley. This footpath traces the historic coast line, linking points of modern and historic interest. A few other footpaths cross all three of the character areas, generally following field boundary lines.

The flat topography gives way to far reaching, uninterrupted views across the fields and a lack of physical and visual enclosure.

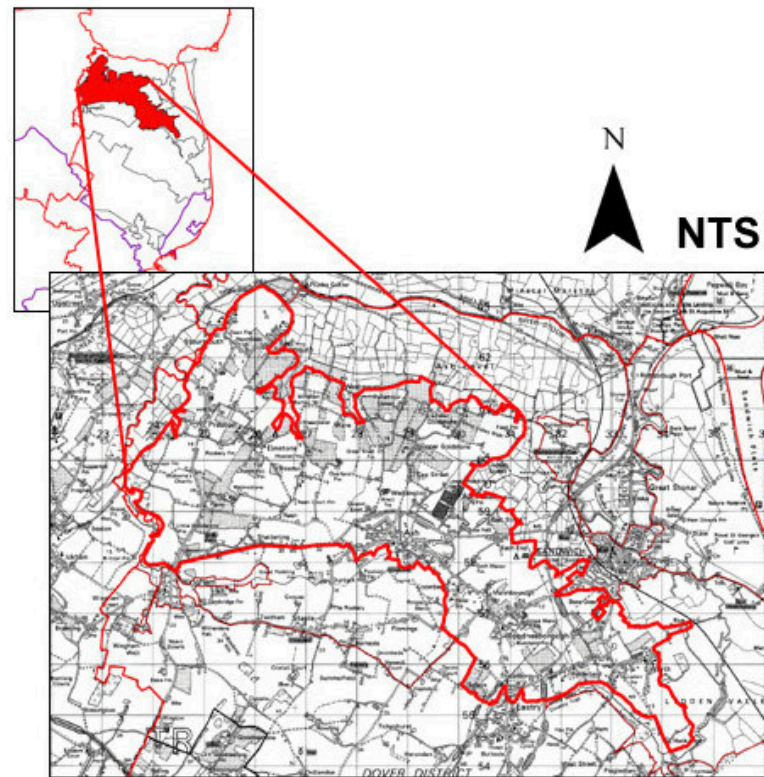


**Key Characteristics**

- Flat topography
- Alluvium soils
- Pasture land
- Drainage ditches as field boundaries
- Occasional hawthorn and willow, reeds and flax along ditch lines
- Dark patches of sedges in wetter areas
- Drove roads lead up to eastern boundaries
- No roads or buildings within character areas
- Footpaths follow waterways
- Extensive views across open arable farmland
- Exposed







**Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt**

The Horticultural Belt lies to the south and east of the Stour Marshes, covering the settlements of Stourmouth, Preston, Ash, Marshborough, Woodnesborough and Worth.

The topography is relatively flat, although slightly undulating in comparison to the adjoining Stour Marshes and Ash Level. The geology is predominantly head brickearth, with two small swathes of woolwich beds around Marshborough and Shatterling and Thanet Beds around Woodnesborough and Worth. Soils are deep, well drained, often stone less, fine and silty. Some is fine and loamy with slowly permeable sub soils and slight seasonal waterlogging.

There is a variety of agricultural land use, with orchards, vineyards, greenhouses, vegetables, pasture and arable land. Soils support fruit and horticultural crops, field vegetables, cereals and potatoes and hops. Orchards tend to be concentrated in areas of light settlement and patches of mixed agricultural land tend to be situated around the settlements, supporting larger and more open fields. The fields are generally small in comparison to the mixed agricultural land south of the study area. They vary in shape and size according to land use, with orchards tending to be within smaller fields, enclosed by poplar windbreaks and low mesh fencing. The arable fields are larger and more open in comparison. Pasture around buildings and farmsteads is often confined within smaller fields again, with increased enclosure by hedgerows for shelter.

Orchards and market gardening are more frequent to the north of the area. Apple trees, fruiting shrubs and vines are planted in a linear formation, providing a sense of pattern and order to the countryside. Chicken wire fencing surrounds the orchards and small enclosed fields growing fruits and vegetables such as blackcurrants and potatoes. There are large areas of glasshouses north of Ash, generally well hidden in the landscape. Some greenhouse nurseries are parallel rows of large polytunnels. Small enclosed pasture paddocks are situated near farms and other isolated buildings, grazed mostly by horses and ponies.

Arable crops include wheat and some root crops and brassicas. Tree cover is apparent with some native hedgerows and clumps of native trees and shrubs in places. Species include hawthorn, ash, hazel and elm. Poplar windbreaks and orchard plantations add to the tree cover, and roadside verges increase the diversity of plants with grasses, cow parsley and dock. Seasonal variation is great with crop cycles and leaf loss.

The settlements of Ash and Preston, Worth and Woodnesborough contain a mix of building types, from relatively modern brick houses to comparatively older types with Flemish gable ends and thatch. Several linear developments have formed along the roads, such as Upper Goldstone and Scantenborough. Oast houses and large farmsteads occur in clusters and isolated places. Adjoining farms, groups of large buildings associated with the farm produce and packing surround concrete courtyards, often bustling with farm workers and produce trucks. Large black timber barns are a strong visual feature.

Winding narrow lanes dissect the countryside, along field boundary lines. They are often enclosed by poplar windbreaks and hedgerows. In contrast to these quiet country lanes, the busier A256 and A257 run through part of the area to the east. A comprehensive network of footpaths and some bridleways cross the area, both along field boundaries and crossing fields, often linking roads and pedestrian routes.

There is a strong sense of enclosure in places with hedgerows and poplar windbreaks bordering the small fields and roads in places, and a moderate amount of tree cover with these in addition to the orchards. Views are limited due to tree cover and the reasonably flat landscape.

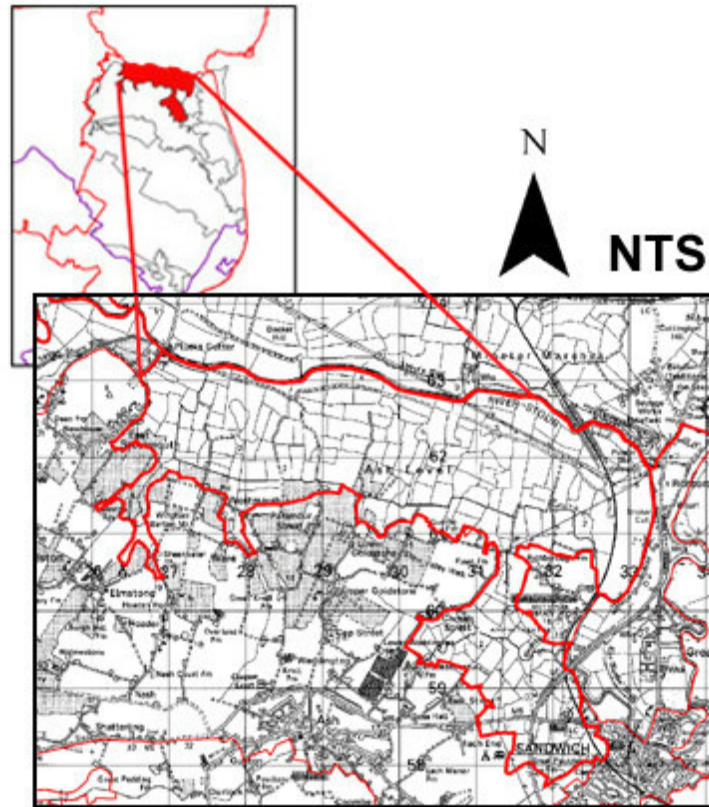


**Key Characteristics**

- Relatively flat topography
- Variety of plants and market garden character
- Orchards dominant
- Linear plantations
- Field use characterises field size
- Poplar shelter belts
- Native hedgerows and tree clumps
- Narrow winding lanes
- Footpath and bridleways network
- Variety of building types including Kentish oast houses and large timber barns
- Sense of enclosure and limited views







**Ash Level**

The Ash Level character area lies at the north of the study area to the north of Ash, curving down to the west of Sandwich. The north of the area is defined by the River Stour.

The area is characterised by topography and geology. The land is low lying and flat, providing a strong visual characteristic and the geology is dominated by marine (estuarine) alluvium, overlain by seasonally wet, deep, stone less, mainly calcareous clayey soils. Groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps.

Farmland is used as permanent grassland and for the growth of winter cereals including wheat and barley. Sheep and cattle graze the open, improved pasture land. Although there is no obvious field pattern and the fields are of varying shapes, they are of a consistent size-smaller than those within the Stour Marshes and the mixed agricultural land to the south of the study area. The area holds reference to its waterlogged past with drainage ditches running along field boundaries, providing a pattern to the landscape and a strong characteristic. Towards Sandwich at the southeast of the character area, low key developments such as small scale industrial estates, farm shops, a nursery and a white windmill occur.

The occasional hawthorn and willow, and some emerging reedmace, add to the boundary definition along ditch lines. Darker patches of sedges indicate wetter areas and add texture and variation to the landscape. Seasonal variation is likely to be only slightly noticeable with changes in crop cycles. Some native tree and shrub clumps and hedgerows mark the boundary of the area and change in landscape character, with species including hawthorn, elder, willow, bramble and oak. Grazing land should appear similar throughout the year, perhaps with an increase in darker areas of sedges during the wetter winter months.

There is little built development, creating a predominantly horizontal landscape with little to interrupt the view or focus the eye. Neither do many roads cross the area with access only reaching its boundary edges in the form of straight 'Drove' roads, created for herding sheep out to marshland pasture in past times. Narrow winding lanes skirt the edges of the area, defining its boundaries. In the south east, the busy A257 and A256 cross the landscape, creating a contrast with the remaining area. The railway cuts through the farmland to the east of the, running north south from Minster to Sandwich. Few footpaths and no bridleways or byways cross the area in comparison to the Horticultural Belt to the south. The few footpaths that do enter the area generally lead on from drove roads in a north-south direction, following field boundaries closely.

There are far reaching views across the fields due the flat topography and lack of tree cover, providing a subsequent lack of physical and visual enclosure. There are views to the higher ground of Thanet, north of the former Wantsum Channel. Buildings in the Sandwich Corridor are visible from within the character area, particularly Pfizer and the former Richborough power station.

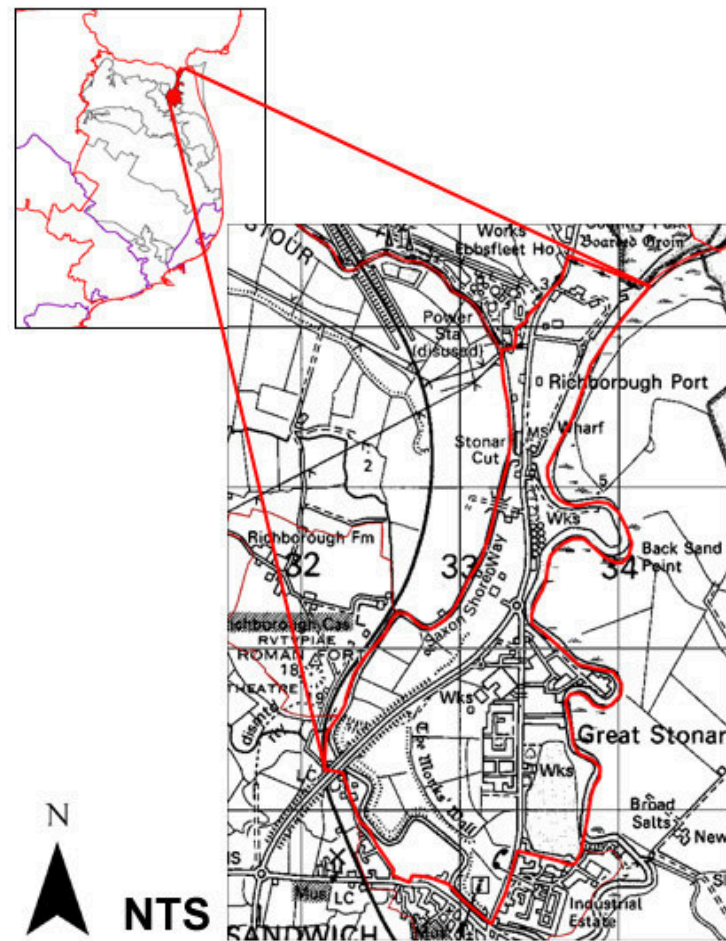


**Key Characteristics**

- Flat topography
- Alluvium soils
- Arable and pastoral use
- Grazed primarily by cows
- Small fields
- Ditches define field boundaries
- Occasional hawthorn or willow, reeds and flax along ditch lines
- Sedges define wetter areas
- No roads or buildings
- Few footpaths in north-south direction
- Unenclosed
- Open views







### The Sandwich Corridor

The Sandwich Corridor is located to the north of Sandwich, holding a character of its own despite being such a small pocket of land. It shares the inherent characteristics of the Ash Level, but land use has changed the character to such an extent that it is described as a separate area. The River Stour to the west and to the east border the area.

The topography is flat and the geology predominantly marine (estuarine) alluvium, overlain by seasonally wet, deep, mainly calcareous clayey soils. There is a small pocket of thanet beds to the west and Sand and Gravel in the southeast corner beneath the large Stonar Lake, with narrow river gravel surrounds. The lake was formed by gravel/ballast extraction. Minor man-made alterations in the landform attempt to aid visual screening of the large buildings in the form of small bunds running alongside roads. There are also areas of former landfill, which have raised the land and changed the character.

The land is used primarily as a large industrial estate for Pfizer, with a series of smaller individual industrial estates scattered within the area. Associated large scale car parks dominate significant sections of land. Tall metal fencing surrounds the car parking areas and some of the industrial estate grounds for security. Some arable and pasture land is located around the estate edges, between buildings and roads. Field shapes and sizes vary, creating a discordant landscape character. The River Stour defines the eastern and western boundaries, with river boating providing a stark contrast to the busy industrial character, with land adjacent to the water being used for boat storage. Stonar Lake reflects the large scale nature of the character area, in contrast to the surrounding landscape. The various land uses lead to a rather fragmented landscape, held together by its landmark features of the built environment.

A mix of grasses and reeds associated with waterways grow along the riverbank, and there are pockets of mudflats of interest to birds. Segments of permanent grassland and arable farmland lie on the outskirts of the cluster of large buildings, with crops such as oil seed rape seasonally brightening the landscape. A small number of pastoral fields also fill the gaps between the Pfizer development and the surrounding roads, with cattle grazing being popular. Broad native hedgerow boundaries attempt to screen the built development and their associated sprawling car parks. Species include willow, birch, hawthorn and ash. It is presumed that the effectiveness of these screens is seasonal, with broader sightings of the buildings and car parks being evident in the winter when some of the trees have lost their leaves.

There is an array of large scale, modern buildings, similar in style, with lots of windows, other glass panels and brick facades. The area is undergoing large-scale change with road widening and further industrial development. The lighting is dominant at night especially the roads and car parks which become more visible, the buildings are also heavily illuminated. The industrial buildings are square, high rise and built close together, producing a dominating and view blocking effect within the flat topography. They appear out of scale and character to the surrounding landscape and historic built vernacular of Sandwich itself. Associated industrial material spills out across the nearby landscape from some of the smaller industrial estates, such as pallettes, crates, boxes and oil drums.

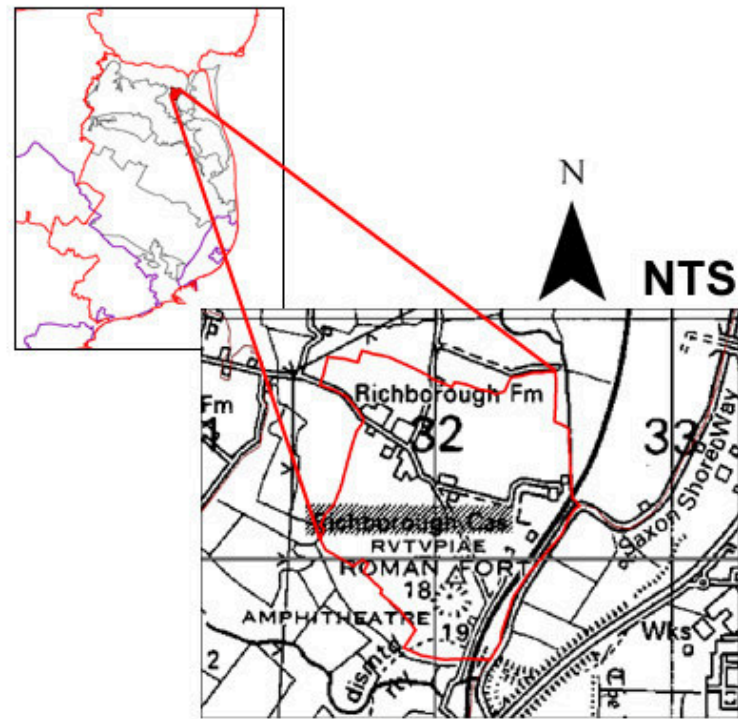
One wide, straight road runs through the centre of the estate, with speed humps and lighting. A network of smaller roads run within the industrial estates, linking buildings and providing vehicular access for loading/unloading and turning facilities. There are no footpaths within the area. Views from within the character area are blocked and dominated by the enormous scale of the Pfizer complex in an otherwise flat, open landscape. The area is physically open, whilst visually enclosed by the large buildings.



### Key Characteristics

- Flat landscape
- Broad native hedgerows and tall metal fencing along roads
- Huge, modern buildings with brick and glass dominant
- Large car parks
- River Stour and boat culture
- Associated mudflats and bird life
- Large lake
- Industrial pockets
- Straight, wide main road
- Limited views due to buildings dominating landscape





**Richborough Castle**

Richborough Castle and the land to the west form a small character area amidst the flat topography of Ash Level and the industrial character of Sandwich Industrial Estate to the east. Sandwich lies to the southwest of the area, approximately one mile away.

The area is positioned on a comparatively higher knoll of land, unusual within the flat surrounds of Ash Level which would have been under water at the time of development. It is due to this rise in topography, and subsequent views of the surrounding landscape, that the Roman Fort and amphitheatre were built on this former island following the AD43 invasion. Ditches and other manmade changes in the landform create variation in the topography quite unique and different from the remaining study area. Now an English Heritage site, the derelict stone walls are unusual within the landscape and the site is not easy to find as it is situated within farmland and a distance from any significantly sized settlements and main roads. The castle and amphitheatre sit upon Thanet Beds, with the remainder of the character area located upon an isolated patch of Head Brickearth and soils of seasonally wet deep loam to clay within the wider area of Marine/Estuarine Alluvium. Soils are fine, silty, deep, well drained and often stone less.

The surrounding land is used as arable agricultural land, with medium sized flat fields of no significant shape or pattern. Wheat is the dominant crop.

Native hedgerows lie within the area, lining field boundaries and some sections of road. A substantial hedgerow runs along the rough stony driveway to the castle towards the east of the character area, screening Sandwich Industrial Estate in parts. Species include oak, ash, hazel and hawthorn. Seasonal variation is likely to be notable around the English Heritage boundary, due to winter leaf loss and crop cycles in the arable fields. The boundary is marked by metal railings and short mown grass appears smooth and manicured, in contrast to the surrounding crops, around the castle remains.

The settlement of Richborough is situated to the west of the castle, hosting a scattering of houses of mixed style, age and building material. The housing, including Richborough Farm, front onto minor roads. The castle itself is constructed of flint, characteristic of the geology of the wider area. There is a small tourist information centre located south of the castle which, although modern, is constructed in such a manner as to appear discreet. It is made of wooden panelling, subtle in a soft grey colour.

The roads within the character area are minor, very narrow, quiet and winding. They run between the arable fields, and adjacent to the few houses situated within the boundaries of the character area. One access road leading to Richborough Farm reflects the history of the area as it is constructed of flint cobbles, uneven and textured in appearance. There are a few footpaths crossing the fields, the castle boundary being lined by such pedestrian access.

Views from the castle are relatively far reaching due to the rise in topography in comparison to the surrounding land. Sandwich and the Sandwich Corridor are visible, although screened in parts by hedgerows. The Pfizer industrial buildings are dominant in view, appearing out of scale and character.

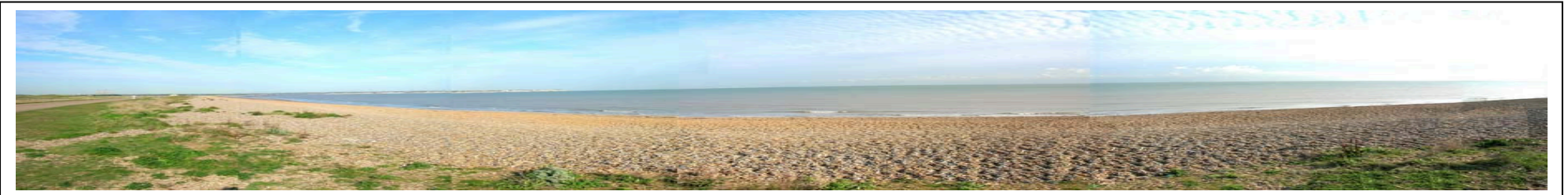
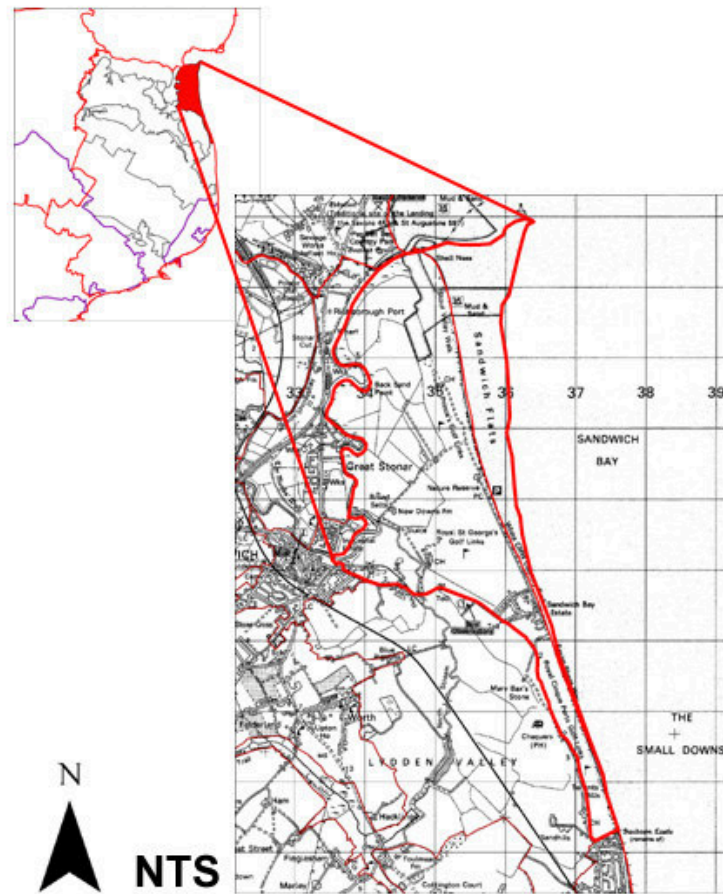


**Key Characteristics**

- Higher knoll of land
- Flint castle remains
- Manmade landform features, such as amphitheatre
- Mown grass
- Narrow winding lanes
- Surrounding arable fields
- Native hedgerows
- Variety of building types and ages
- Open views of surrounding area







### Sandwich Bay

Sandwich Bay character area is situated to the east of Sandwich along the coast, to the north of Deal. It covers three golf courses, including the Royal St Georges Golf Course which has been developed upon the dunes, and has been home to the famous Open Golf Championship. The Prince's Golf Links is located in the north of the character area and the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Course Links to the south.

The topography is generally insignificant as a feature, flat with small variations occurring throughout the gently undulating dunes and a descent towards the shoreline. The golf course exhibits a clearly manmade landform with small, varied alterations in level. The geology is distinct, with strips of marine beach/tidal flats and storm gravel beach deposits and a small patch of thanet beds at the north of the area, west of the sand and mud exposed at low tide. Patches of sand and gravel lie over most of the area to the south of Worth, with a band of chalk running along the south eastern edge. Soils are mainly sandy, deep and well drained calcareous and non-calcareous. There are some sparsely vegetated unstable soils and waterlogged soils in hollows locally. Shingle bars and spits are locally extensive.

Sand dune and wetland habitats cover the area with very limited agriculture and coniferous woodland. The beach and golf courses cover most of the character area, with some pasture consisting of large, flat open fields separated by post and wire fencing belonging to New Downs Farm. Fields are generally of a large open nature, with little sense of shape consistency or pattern. The land is therefore used primarily for recreational uses, with residential land use restricted to Sandwich Bay Estate between the southern golf courses. Some gravel extraction occurs in the south east.

Pale colours of shingle run in a band along the higher edge of the beach, with darker, flat, sand lying adjacent to the water. Coarse coastal grasses grow upon the dunes, which the wind blows in drifts. Textural clumps of sea kale and sea holly provide a natural pattern of rhythm and consistency upon the shingle. There are very few vertical elements, with no trees or woodland and little scrub. The landscape is very much horizontal. Seasonal variation is likely to be dramatic with changes in the colours of the sea and beach material, as well as changes in number of visitors. Quieter winter months are likely, with an increase in noise and activity in the summer.

Buildings within Sandwich Bay Estate are large and varied in their vernacular style, many in a mock arts and craft style. The estate is open plan and private. Some small, modern looking, buildings are scattered independently around the area. These are possibly used seasonally in conjunction with the golfing.

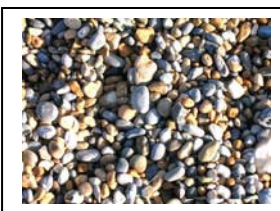
There is only one road within the character area, running along the seafront in the form of an informal track. This forms both golf course and coastal access. The main private access road with a toll gate is situated along the western boundary of the area. Several public footpaths run throughout the area. These generally run in a northeast-southwest direction in the north, crossing the Prince's and Royal St. George's Golf Links. In the south, the Saxon Shore Way runs north-south from Sandwich Bay Estate towards Sandown Castle in the south. The Saxon Shore footpath traces the coast as it was in historic times, linking points of modern and historic interest.

Views from the area are open across the unenclosed and exposed landscape and the sea. There is an abundance of light with the large skies, pale shingle and reflective sea. Many birds can be seen flying within the area, with likely habitats all around. Thanet and Pegwell Bay headland is clearly visible from the seafront, and The Pfizer Industrial Estate and the nearby power station dominate views in a landward direction.

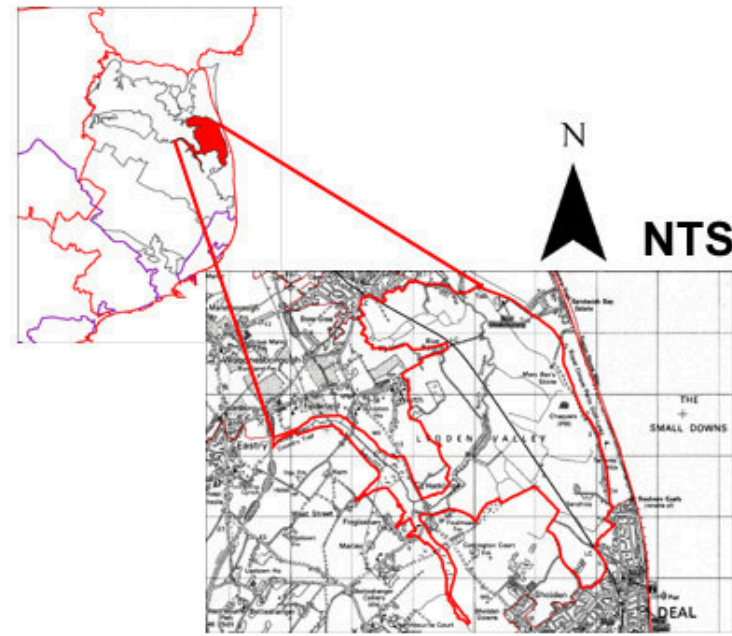


**Key Characteristics**

- Flat to gently undulating topography
- Dunes
- Sand and shingle
- Sea kale and sea holly along shingle
- Occasional scrub
- Birdlife
- Wide expanse of sea
- Golf courses
- Coarse coastal grasses
- Some farmland
- Large houses in open plan estate
- Few roads
- Seasonal change
- Exposed landscape with extensive views out to sea







**Lydden Valley**

The Lydden Valley is located to the southeast of Sandwich and northwest of Deal. The North and South Streams, running approximately north-south through the area, add to the low lying character of the landscape and drain the low-lying land of Hacklinge marshes. The water is then pumped at 'Roaring Gutter' into the Delf Stream that runs to Sandwich.

The area is unenclosed and open with extremely flat topography. The geology comprises mainly marine (estuarine) alluvium with some storm gravel beach deposits to the east, with seasonally wet deep clay soils. aeolian silty drift over tertiary loam lies to the south and west, with deep, well drained silty soils. Soils comprise seasonally wet deep clay. A section to the south west consists of fen peat, tufa and river alluvium under deep peat soils with associated calcareous mineral soils. There are also some deep stoneless silty and clayey soils with a humus surface horizon in places and high groundwater levels.

The land is used almost exclusively as permanent grassland and rough grazing, with some arable land use on improved ground. Cattle graze the large fields, separated by ditches and the occasional post and wire fence. There is a lack of field pattern, with fields of varying shapes, although they are generally small in size in comparison to the mixed agricultural land to the west. The series of ditches provide a pattern of consistency, however. Two caravan parks add to the seasonal tourist orientated character of the area.

Occasional clumps of hawthorn and gorse emerge along ditch lines, although wooded clumps and isolated trees are rare except near the North and South Streams. Wetter areas of ground are noticeable due to darker patches of sedges and other associated grass sprouting in darker, more defined, patches. Telegraph poles march across the flat open pasture, evident in an otherwise dominantly horizontal landscape. Little seasonal variety is likely with a lack of vegetation and arable crops. Buttercups within the pasture provide some seasonal colour, however, and the sky is a major composite of this open unenclosed landscape. Alterations in lighting and colour are possible throughout the year.

Occasional pale coloured, low rise, chalet type buildings feature within the two campsites. Large, dark, simple barn like constructions in association with farm use are also visible in places. The built fabric of the character area is relatively indistinct and does not draw the eye.

A narrow single track runs through the area with small grass verges and open views to the sides. The railway runs northwest-southeast through the farmland, linking Sandwich with Deal. A few footpaths and bridleways link to form circular routes and connections with the coast.

Due to flat landform, lack of tree cover and unenclosed nature, views across the area are wide and uninterrupted. A rise in level is evident with disused collieries and clumps of woodland outside the character area around Sholden drawing the eye.

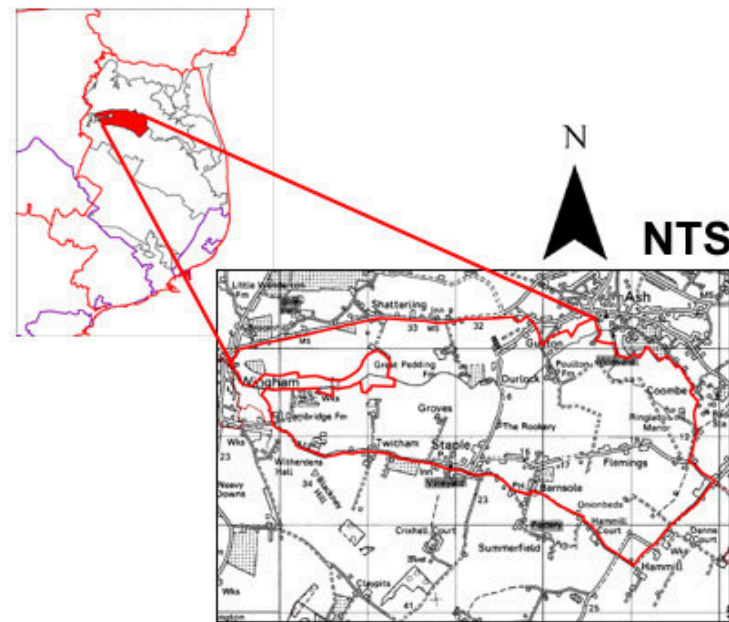


**Key Characteristics**

- Flat topography
- Pasture dominant land use
- Large fields
- Ditches define field boundaries
- Wet areas with dark sedges
- Little seasonal variation
- Telegraph poles and wires
- Chalet and farm out buildings
- Single track lane
- Wide, open views
- Unenclosed landscape with the sky as a major composite







**Staple Farmlands**

The Staple Farmlands are located east of Wingham and south of Ash, encompassing the north of Staple.

The topography is flatter to the south and more undulating by comparison as it rises to the north. The geology consists of Head Brickearth and Thanet Beds, overlain by deep, well drained, often stoneless, fine silty soils.

The area forms a boundary between the Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt to the north and Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps to the south, supporting characteristics and features from both. There is a mosaic of land use with pockets of horticulture in the form of orchards and vineyards around isolated farmsteads such as Great Pedding Farm, south of the A257 and Shatterling, and areas of larger mixed agricultural fields around Staple. Agricultural fields are more widespread than in the Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt, with fewer pockets of market gardening activity and some nurseries. Arable land is dominant with regularly sized fields of a square nature, slightly larger than those to the north and smaller than those to the south. Many of the fields are former hop gardens. Though random, there is a mosaic like pattern of agricultural land with pockets of horticulture, footpaths, narrow roads and isolated farmsteads. Hops are still grown at Shatterling and this area retained hops longer than many other areas, especially on south facing slopes between Shatterling and Guiton.

Tree cover is apparent with pockets of orchards, some native hedgerows, poplar shelterbelts and some isolated trees. Some clumps of native trees and shrubs occur within the arable land. Species include ash, hawthorn, elder and oak. Seasonal variation is strong, with changes due to leaf loss during the winter months increasing potential for views, and foliage in summer increasing enclosure.

Building types, materials and ages are varied with a rich mixture of traditional and modern Kentish oasthouses, used for drying hops, Flemish gable ends, relating to the historic integration of the Dutch, and flint material, relating to the underlying geology of the wider area. There are a number of isolated houses and farmsteads spread throughout the character area, which support these characteristics. The settlement of Staple, however, includes a mix of modern brick houses within a higher density.

The busy A257, connecting Sandwich and Wingham, runs across the northern boundary of the area from east to west. Few other roads cross the area, with one minor road connecting the A257 with Staple, and another minor road heads east towards Woodnesborough from Staple. A rich network of footpaths connect with one another across the area, often following field boundary lines. Several bridleways also flow across open fields from farm access tracks.

Views are relatively open within the character area and out towards other character areas, with the slightly undulating landform giving rise to moderate views in places and open areas of arable land with little tree cover. Enclosure is insignificant, with changes from areas partially enclosed by hedgerows to areas with clear views across agricultural land.

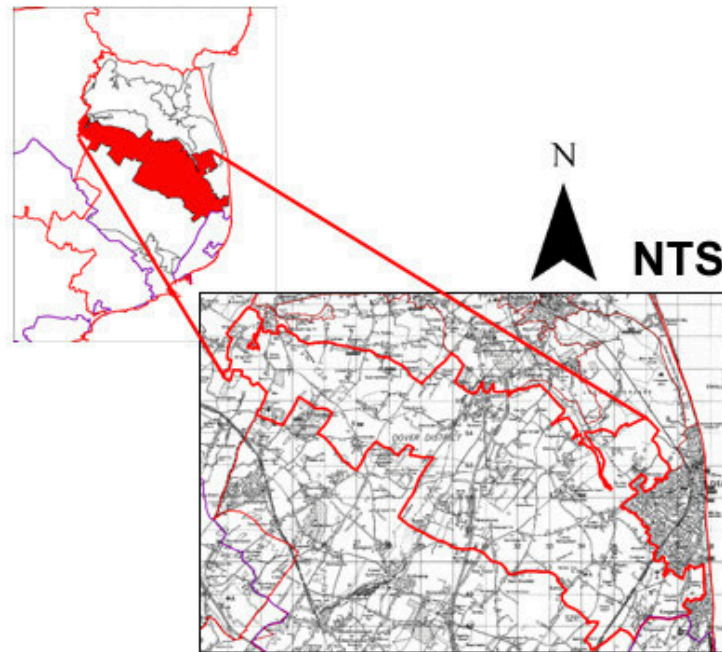


**Key Characteristics**

- Flat to gently undulating topography
- Mosaic of land use
- Orchards and vineyards
- Boundary land between character areas to north and south
- Poplar shelter belts
- Arable land
- Native hedgerows and isolated trees
- Strong seasonal variation
- Mixed building types
- Light settlement
- Minor roads
- Footpath network







**Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps**

The Eastry Arable and Woodland Clumps character area encompasses a large swathe of land central to the study area, stretching from east to west.

The topography is more undulating than that to the north. The landform rises and becomes more varied towards the south, with a distinct pattern of ridges and valleys developing. Settlements tend to be located on the higher ridges, giving way to wider views across open mixed farmland. The geology of the area reflects its location on the Downs, with bands of head brickearth lying in a northeast-southwest direction upon upper chalk. Narrow ribbons of dry valley nailbourne deposits lying in the same direction reflect the ridge and valley formation of the Down's topography. Soils are generally well drained calcareous and silty. It is deeper in the valley bottoms and shallower on valley sides in places. Some aeolian silty drift with deep, silty, stoneless, well drained soils lie in patches to the north.

Land is used primarily for arable farming, with large open fields supporting a mix of crops with linseed, wheat, barley and oil seed rape. Some pockets of pasture populate smaller, more enclosed, fields around settlements. Significant blocks of native woodland break the monotony of large open fields and provide texture, variation and shelter in the landscape. Arable fields follow a notable pattern in parts (particularly around Eastry), rectangular in shape with field boundaries following a northeast-southwest direction. Field pattern is less obvious to the west of the area north of Goodnestone.

Tree cover is apparent with wide native woodland belts and blocks. Species include ash, hawthorn, elder and oak. Seasonal variation is strong, with changes in woodland due to leaf loss during the winter months increasing potential for views, and foliage in summer increasing enclosure. Tree cover may appear less apparent and significant during winter months with more skeletal forms, revealing a more open unenclosed character. Cycles in crop growth may cause changes in colour and texture, with open expanses of brown ploughed land during the winter months.

Isolated houses and farmsteads and small clusters of houses frequent the area, linked by a network of narrow lanes. These buildings are often of an older nature, with a dominance of flint as a building material. Several small settlements lie within the boundary including Chillenden, Northbourne, Great Mongeham, Tilmanstone, Betteshanger, East Studdal and Ringwould. Timanstone and Betteshanger were developed around mining collieries, and have predominately brick buildings. The series of small settlements with open arable land in-between form a pattern and rhythm across the landscape. The slightly larger settlement of Eastry is located north central to the site and contains a mix of building types and houses, with some recent housing developments fitting in with the older fabric of flint buildings and large farm houses. Windmills have been built within some developed areas and out in the open farmland, providing distinct landmark features unique to the area.

Narrow roads connect the small scattered settlements, running along field boundaries in a dominant northeast-southwest direction in co-ordination with the contour pattern.

Views are relatively open within the character area and out towards other character areas, with the slightly undulating landform giving rise to moderate views in places of open areas of arable land with little tree cover. Telegraph wires march across the open fields as a notable feature. Enclosure is notable around settlements with built fabric, narrow roads, hedgerows and mature trees. Intermittent views from settlements are relatively far reaching with a feeling of being on higher land.

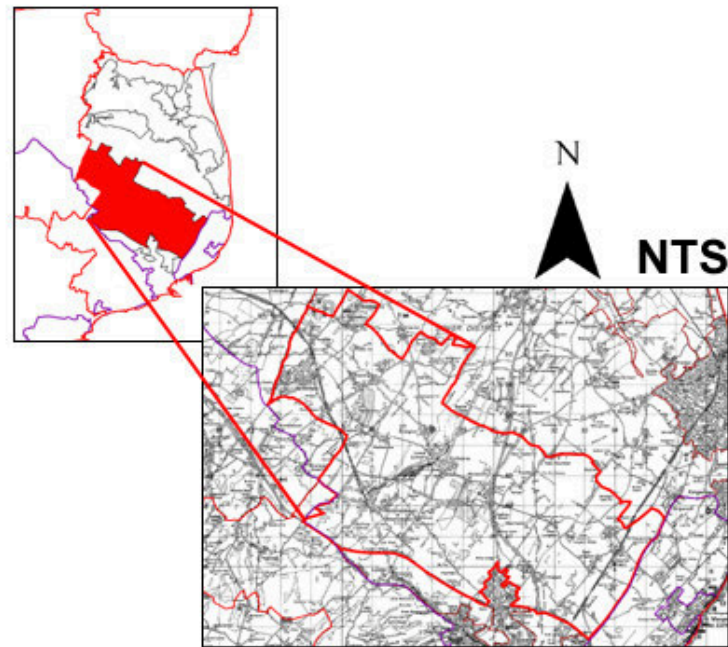


**Key Characteristics**

- Gentle ridge and valley topography of the Downs
- Small settlements enclosed
- Orchards and vineyards
- Poplar shelter belts
- Arable land
- Rectangular fields follow northeast-southwest direction
- Native hedgerows and isolated trees
- Strong seasonal variation
- Mixed building types
- Light settlement
- Minor roads
- Footpath network







**Eythorne Arable Mosaic with Parkland**

The Eythorne Arable Mosaic with Parkland character area covers a large swathe of land to the south of the study area, stretching from east to west, covering the former mining village of Aylesham to the west, and north of Whitfield to the south. The eastern boundary is formed by the AONB, running just east of Langdon. The southern boundary is formed by the A2.

The topography is undulating, with a distinct and regular pattern of gentle ridges and valleys flowing in a northeast-southwest direction. Settlements tend to be located on the higher ridges, giving way to wider views across open arable land. The geology is dominated by upper chalk, with some small pockets of head brickearth running parallel to narrow ribbons of dry valley and nailbourne deposits and slightly wider bands of head, running in a distinctly northeast-southwest direction. A strip of clay with flints runs across the south of the area, from northwest to southeast. Soils are well drained, fine and silty, deeper in the valley bottoms than on valley sides in some places with deep clay to loam soils to the south.

Land is farmed with both arable and pasture and there are some large areas of parkland within the character area. Pasture tends to be situated within smaller, more sheltered fields around settlement and farmsteads, with arable land stretching in-between settlements. Crops include wheat, barley and oil seed rape. Field sizes are smaller than those to the north, but continue in a northeast-southwest pattern, often rectangular in shape. They often become smaller and more square in shape around settlements. Native woodland tree belts border the fields in places. Parklands are extensive, with blocks of native deciduous woodland within.

The parklands hold historic references, with Fredville Park in the Parish of Nonington supporting several ancient trees and a derelict walled garden. To the northwest of the area are the historic gardens of Goodnestone Park. Developed in 1704, Goodnestone Park, gardens and woodland provide a location for outdoor events set within established ornamental planting and ancient trees. The parklands often hold landscape designations. For instance the 18<sup>th</sup> century 400 ha of Waldershare Park and country house, approximately central to the site south of Eythorne, is on the English Heritage register and Kent Gardens Compendium. The dominance of parkland, with ancient and established woodland, gives the landscape a strong historic reference and a matured and much established character. Tree cover is apparent with wide native woodland belt, hedgerows and woodland within parkland. Species include ash, hawthorn, elder and oak. Seasonal variation is strong, with changes in woodland due to leaf loss during the winter months increasing potential for views, and foliage in summer increasing enclosure. Cycles in crop growth and leaf loss may cause changes in colour and texture, with some open areas of brown ploughed land during the winter months.

Small, traditionally Kentish, village settlements characterise the area with narrow roads, village cricket pitches and public houses. The settlements of Coldred, Ratling, Barfrestone and Pineham are examples of these small village settlements, scattered across the character area. A mix of vernacular style occurs within the small villages, with corrugated farm buildings, wooden houses and newer brick developments. Old mining settlements hold historic reference, with disused collieries at Aylesham (Snowdown Colliery) to the west. Aylesham is characteristic of an old mining village, with derelict brick buildings and disused collieries. The larger settlements of Eythorne and Shepherdswell lie central to the area providing a mix of old and new buildings, densely developed and enclosed in comparison to the smaller settlements. Eythorne was a mining village too, supporting Tilmanstone Colliery, with disused colliery land to the north. The small villages near areas of parkland tend to be more historic, particularly Goodnestone Estate, with older buildings characterised by brick and Kent peg tiles and distinct narrow leaded windows with rounded top frames.

Narrow roads are fewer than those to the north, connecting the small scattered settlements running along field boundaries in a dominant northeast-southwest direction in co-ordination with the contour pattern. The busier A256 cuts north-south through the area connecting Sandwich with Whitfield, east of Eythorne and Tilmanstone. The A2, along the southern boundary, provides contrast to the narrow country lanes throughout the heart of the character area. A straight Roman road runs north south, connecting Eastry and Dover. Two railway lines run through the area, linking Canterbury and Deal with Dover. A network of footpaths and bridleways run throughout the fields.

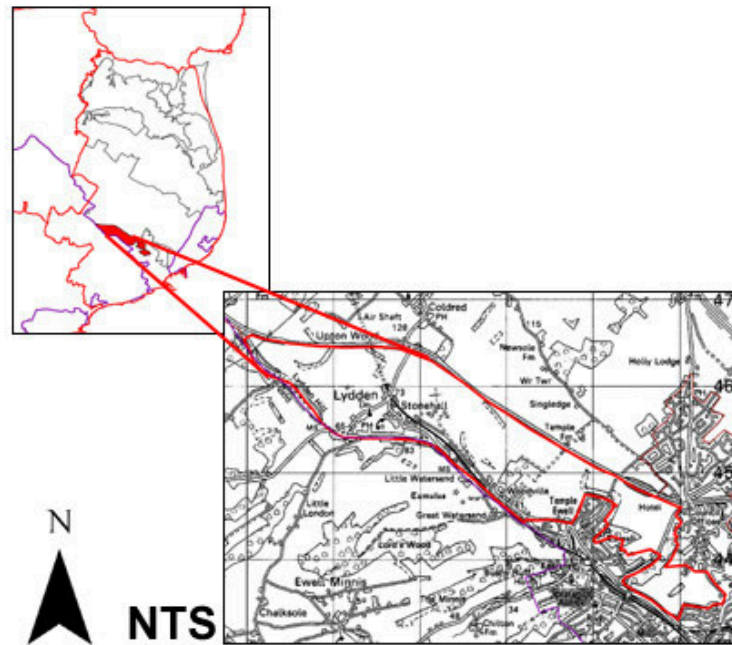
Views are relatively open within the character area and out towards other character areas, with the undulating landform giving rise to moderate views in places of open areas of arable land with little tree cover. Enclosure is notable around settlements with built fabric, narrow roads, hedgerows and mature trees. Intermittent views from settlements are relatively far reaching with a feeling of being on higher land.



**Key Characteristics**

- Undulating topography of the Downs
- Arable and some pasture land
- Rectangular fields follow northeast-southwest direction
- Parkland with historic buildings and trees
- Native hedgerows, isolated trees and woodland
- Mixed building types
- Flint buildings and narrow arched windows
- Small settlements enclosed
- Larger old mining villages-disused collieries and brick buildings
- Railway and A2 and A256 form contrast to narrow lanes





**Lydden Hills**

Lydden Hills character area is situated at the south of the study area, north west of Dover. It lies directly south of the A2 running between the north of Dover and Whitfield. The southern boundary is defined by the AONB.

There is a distinct change in character south of the A2 caused by a difference in the landform and subsequent availability of views. The Lydden Hills area is characterised by landform. The topography is flat directly south of the A2, becoming hilly, with steep south facing slopes overlooking Lydden valley towards the south of the character area. The village of Lydden nestles in the bottom of the valley, enclosed and protected by the hills to the north. The geology is dominated by upper chalk with some clay with flints to the north. A small ribbon of dry valley and nailbourne deposits runs along the contours of the downs above Lydden. Soils change from deep loam to clay to the north, to shallow well drained calcareous silty soils across the upper chalk.

Land is used for farming, with pasture being dominant. Pasture land is situated within small enclosed fields around farmsteads and arable land dominates the fields to the south of the busy A2. Most of the steeper slopes are used for rough grazing, presumably too steep for tractors to cultivate. Fields are small in comparison to those in character areas to the north and boundaries run at 90 degrees to the contours. Boundaries comprise native hedgerows and some post and wire fencing. A mosaic like pattern is formed by the rhythmical occurrence of trees, hedgerows and fields. The Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs SSSI stretches across the chalk and lowland grassland of the downs, designated for the comprehensive assemblages of plants and invertebrates. It is also designated as a National Nature reserve.

Stonehill Colliery lies directly at the base of the escarpment and there is a curious pattern of Corsican Pines on the hillside. These were planted as a shelterbelt for pit props and remain a living testament to the local industrial heritage.

Clumps of native vegetation and tall native hedgerows feature within the agricultural land and along the roads. Species include oak, ash, hazel and hawthorn. Some large mature isolated trees feature, such as around the Churchyard and alongside roads. Seasonal variation is likely to be moderate, due to winter leaf loss. Pasture should remain visually static, however.

Farmsteads, such as Lydden Court Farm, are set aside from the main village development with typical farm buildings including large corrugated metal barns. Flint is a dominant building material in some of the older buildings, such as the Church and its boundary walls, giving reference to the underlying geology of the area. The houses within Lydden village and Temple Ewell to the east are varied in style, materials and age with Kent peg tiles, slate, thatch, brick and wood. The housing is densely sited along the main road.

A minor road runs north-south through the area, providing a link between the A2 and Lydden Village. The road is narrow and winding, running down a steep hill, with open views down the valley towards Lydden. A railway cuts through the area, north of the housing. A footpath follows the Downs, joining a bridlepath at the western edge of Temple Ewell.

Travelling south along the road towards Lydden, views are open in parts across farmland to the buildings within Lydden. However, landform restricts the views in places. Due to the hilly topography, there is a lack of visual and physical enclosure in higher places, although hedgerows provide some visual blocking. Within Lydden, there is a sense of physical and visual enclosure as the village lies on lower ground, sheltered by the Downs.

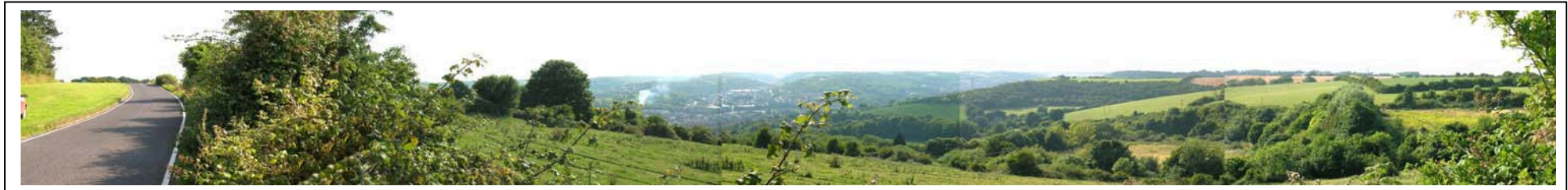
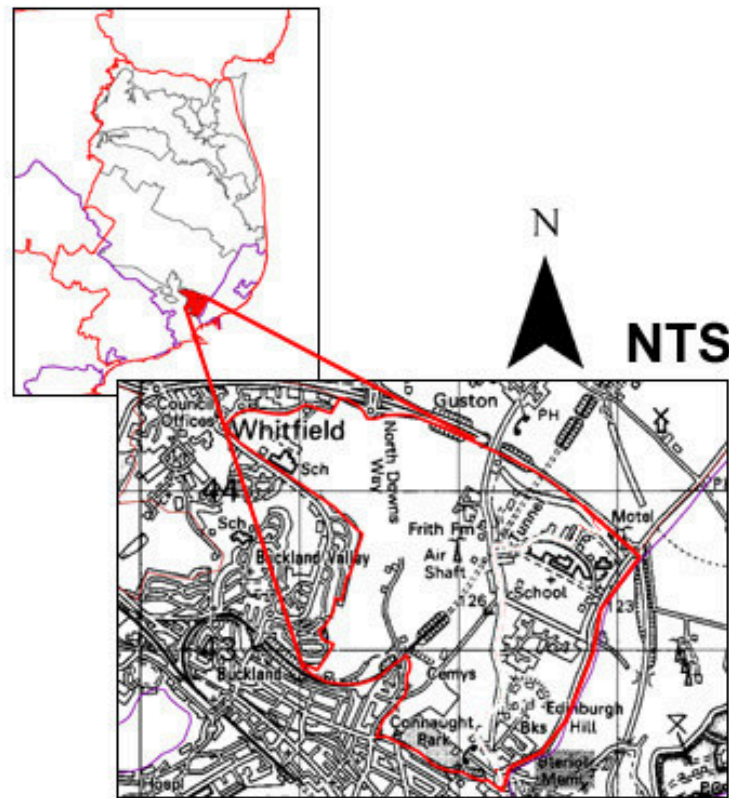


**Key Characteristics**

- Steep valley sides
- Native hedgerows and tree clumps
- Pasture and arable land
- Small-medium sized fields
- Lack of development
- Flint walls and church
- Mixed building materials-brick, thatch, slate and Kent peg tiles
- Few roads
- Open views from north of area
- Lack of enclosure to the north
- Sheltered village settlement







**Guston Hills**

Guston Hills character area is situated at the south of the study area, north east of Dover. It lies directly south of the A2 running between the north of Dover and Whitfield. Much of this land to the south of the A2 is scheduled for industrial development.

The Guston Hills area is characterised by landform. The topography is hilly, with steep south facing slopes overlooking Dover towards the south of the character area. The geology comprises upper chalk, with some head and clay with flints directly south of the A2. Soils vary from clay with flints south of the A2, deep loam to clay across and shallow silty over chalk to the south, well drained on slopes and crests.

Land is used for farming, with pasture and arable land enclosed by native hedgerows. Pasture land is dominant, with rough pasture on some of the steeper slopes supporting scrubby vegetation and clumps of native shrubs. A large proportion of the character area is enclosed by the notable metal railings of the Duke of York's Royal Military School. Fields are generally large, with little pattern in size and shape. Connaught barracks are located to the south of the area. Within the barracks site, Fort Bourgoyne was built in Napoleonic times to protect the landward side of Dover castle. A cemetery is situated to the north of the barracks, increasing the complexity and incoherence of the landscape.

Clumps of native vegetation feature within the agricultural land and substantial native hedgerows and mature trees enforce the boundary of the school grounds and lie within the former Connaught Park's boundaries. Species include oak, ash, hazel and hawthorn. Seasonal variation is likely to be notable, due to winter leaf loss and crop cycles in the arable fields.

There is a lack of built development, with the exception of the Duke of York's Royal Military School and Connaught Park Army Barracks. The buildings appear to be of a brick nature, with curved brick walls highlighting major vehicular access points. The school is well screened with vegetation and only small glimpses of the buildings are available through the foliage. Entrance points to the Army Barracks are highly evident with barbed wire security fencing and tall, wide metal gates. The entrances are guarded by soldiers from within brick structures.

A minor road runs north-south through the area, providing a link between Guston and Dover, crossing the A2. Although minor, the road is open in character with excellent views down the valley across Dover. The A258 runs along the eastern boundary of the character area with a distinct visual difference between the metal fencing of the school within the character area, and the rolling topography of the AONB on the opposite side of the road.

Travelling south along the road to the west of the school, views are open of mixed farmland and the town of Dover dominates the view. Due to the hilly topography, there is a lack of visual and physical enclosure. From certain locations, such as along the road running north-south through the area, views of heavily developed outskirts of Dover are available. From areas outside the character area boundary, views in suggest a rural character.



**Key Characteristics**

- Steep valley sides
- Native hedgerows and tree clumps
- Pasture and arable land
- Large fields
- Lack of development
- Duke of York school entrances prominent feature-brick walls
- Entrance to Army Barracks prominent-metal security fencing
- School enclosing fence prominent feature
- Few roads
- Open views from north of area with lack of field boundaries

