

Liss

A Hidden Village



Parish
Landscape
Character
Assessment

The textile interpretation of Liss, A Hidden Village, was created by twenty members of the Liss Branch of the Embroiders' Guild.

Forward

The Liss Community Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken in 2006. It was organised by the Liss Village Design and Plan Partnership, a local community amenity group, on behalf of the Liss Parish Council. The process followed was based on the CPRE toolkit called 'Unlocking the Landscape'. The starting point for the work was the EHDC Landscape Character Assessment of 2006.

Considerable information was gathered on the Parish from local amenity groups and was used as background for the work.

An Outreach Day was organised in June 2006. Over 50 participants attended. Four groups divided the Parish of Liss between them;

- Group 1, Wheatham Hill and the western part of the upper Rother valley including West Liss
- Group 2, the eastern part of the upper Rother valley including the village of Liss
- Group 3, Longmoor and Liss Forest
- Group 4, Hillbrow Ridge and Rake

The morning was spent in the field, the afternoon in analysing the results. Later a draft description of the character areas was circulated to all participants.

In October 2006 a workshop was held, attended by 20 participants. Most had attended the June event. The workshop was divided into two groups who first considered the issues arising from the June Outreach Day and then the possible actions that could be taken to address the issues.

All participants considered the whole of the Parish during the course of the morning. A draft set of issues and actions was circulated to all participants of the June Outreach Day and the workshop for comments.

The Liss Community Landscape Character Assessment was approved by the Parish Council on 19 February 2007. The development issues will be carried forward into the update of the Liss Village Design Statement and, where appropriate, into the East Hampshire Local Development Framework.

The Liss Parish Council and Liss Village Design and Plan Partnership would like to thank the following organisations for their support, advice and participation: Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council, Liss Parish Council, Campaign to Protect Rural England, South Downs Joint Committee and Community First East Hampshire.

Above all, the Liss Parish Council and Liss Village Design and Plan Partnership would like to thank local amenity groups for all the information and local knowledge they supplied and the members of the local community who gave up their time to participate in the work.



Linear Wood Wheatham Hill



View from Wheatham Hill across Upper Rother Valley



Pastures Wheatham Hill

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 6A SELBORNE GREENSAND TERRACE

WHEATHAM HILL

Key Characteristics

- A terrace formed from the Upper Greensand with an escarpment prominent in the local landscape
- Cut by Batts Brook, a chalk stream that has eroded a narrow deep valley
- Linear woodlands protected for their biodiversity
- Surviving medieval field patterns
- A sunken lane with sharp banks revealing tree roots and sandstone geology
- Panoramic views across the upper Rother valley to high ground beyond
- Rights of way linking into Hangers Way

Location and Boundaries

- 6A1 This character area is confined in Liss Parish to the greensand terrace on the slopes of Wheatham Hill.

Physical Landscape

- 6A2 The whole of this character area in Liss Parish is underlain by the Upper Greensand. Wheatham Farm lies on the greensand shelf at the foot of the chalk. Below it the ground slopes away sharply to the valley below.
- 6A3 The area supports a mixed land cover of linear woodland and fields. The woodland is mixed remnant ancient semi-natural and is designated. Batts Brook, a typical stream of the Upper Greensand, flows through the area and is flanked to the east by Wheatham Woods.
- 6A4 The field patterns reflect their medieval assart origin.
- 6A5 The sandstone geology gives rise to a sunken lane to the north of Batts Brook, which is classified as a BOAT.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 6A6 The escarpment is prominent in the landscape both from the floor of the upper Rother valley, the Woolmer Forest/Weavers Down character area and the slopes of the Hill Brow ridge.
- 6A7 From the greensand terrace itself there is a panoramic view across the upper Rother valley in which the wooded upper slopes and meadows of Hill Brow and the hills of the Woolmer Forest/Weavers Down character area dominate. The transport links, including the A3(T) and settlements within the upper Rother valley and on Hill Brow are largely hidden from view, the relatively few buildings that are visible generally fit well into the landscape being of brick construction. The exceptions are East Hill House, the bulk and rendered façade of which is prominent, and the roofs of the Andlers Ash Farm owned by Hilliers nursery.

- 6A8 The characteristic linear woodlands sweep around the small, hedged fields in which trees are scattered. This is a deeply rural landscape though its tranquillity is sometimes marred by the noise of traffic on the A3(T); and a communications mast provides an artificial note in the otherwise unblemished scene.
- 6A9 A BOAT from Woolshers Cottages near Flexcombe links into Barefoots Lane and then ascends Wheatham Hill to link to the Hangers Way.

Biodiversity

- 6A10 The Parish boundary is bordered by internationally important woodland. Within the Parish there are 5 areas of ancient semi natural woodland that carry the SINC designation: the foot of Wheatham Hill, Naps Copse, Hazel Holt Copse, Roundabout Copse and Wheatham Woods.

History

- 6A11 The assarts represent a surviving medieval landscape.

Settlement and Built Character

- 6A12 The only buildings within the character area within the Parish belong to Wheatham Farm. The main house is of mixed vernacular and it is surrounded by mainly modern outbuildings.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Landscape Management Issues

- 6A13 Encourage the management of woodland and plan for long term woodland regeneration. Consider re-introducing traditional management techniques and encourage interest in and marketing of local wood products.
- 6A14 Encourage the conservation of the field and woodland patterns associated with the medieval assarts and the management of field boundaries that define the pattern.
- 6A15 Encourage the management of trees and shrubs alongside the sunken lane to the south of Batts Brook and prevent inappropriate use by motorised vehicles.
- 6A16 Encourage the conservation and management of the species-rich meadows and pasture.
- 6A17 Encourage the conservation and management of hedgerows and monitor regeneration of hedgerow trees.
- 6A18 Encourage the conservation of field trees.
- 6A19 Seek to ensure the good management of horse keeping including the retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of the sward, sympathetic integration of fencing, hardstanding, jumps and other associated paraphernalia and the avoidance of the proliferation of buildings, sheds etc.
- 6A20 Conserve designated areas of nature conservation and consider the designation of further areas of high habitat value, in particular species-rich meadows.

Development Issues

- 6A21 Conserve the character of the sunken lane. Seek to reduce traffic pressures and avoid road improvements which would alter its character or adversely impact upon its biodiversity.
- 6A22 Conserve the undeveloped nature of the area. Special consideration should be given to the potential impact of any proposal.



Fields on Gault Clay from Hawkley Road



River Rother



Fields on Lower Slopes of Hill Brow

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 7A ROTHER VALLEY MIXED FARMLAND AND WOODLAND

LISS AND THE UPPER ROTHER VALLEY

Key Characteristics

- Low lying clay and sandstone vale that contains the wooded course of the upper Rother and its tributaries
- Mixed farmland
- Thick high hedges, small blocks of scattered woodland and wooded field boundaries contribute to sense of intimacy and enclosure
- Medieval settlement of West Liss and more modern settlement of Liss, with its Victorian core, largely hidden in the landscape by the topography and tree cover of the upper Rother valley
- Wide variety of local stones from the Greensand used as building materials as well as brick, flint, and clay tiles
- Higher land of the Hangers and Hill Brow, that form the sides of the upper Rother valley, provide a strong backdrop and contribute to the 'sense of place'
- Network of drovers' roads and sunken lanes
- Railway and A(3)T hidden within the landscape but the noise from the A(3)T intrusive, especially on higher ground
- Good network of Rights of Way and other footpaths that link to the Hangers Way, Royal Woolmer Way and Sussex Border Path. Cycleway access to Petersfield and Bordon
- Local Nature Reserve on the banks of the River Rother providing high recreational and ecological value

Location and Boundaries

7A1 The Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland is the largest character area in the Parish of Liss and stretches from the lower slopes of Wheatham Hill in the west to the lower slopes of the Hill Brow ridge in the east, both of which form well-defined sides to the upper Rother valley. There are extensive views of this landscape from surrounding higher ground, in particular Wheatham Hill (part of the Selborne Greensand Terrace), Hill Brow Ridge and Longmoor (part of Woolmer Forest/Weavers Down).

The boundary of this character area between Hill Brow Road and Rake differs from the East Hampshire LCA in that it includes the meadows lying below the treed upper slopes of Hill Brow and follows more closely the underlying geology. It also excludes the whole of Liss Forest and the EHDC-owned part of the Riverside Railway Walk.

Physical Landscape

7A2 The western part of the area in the Parish, approximately west of Lyss Place, is underlain by Gault Clay, a formation of soft and silty mudstones. A substantial part of this formation in the Parish is overlain by gravelly 'head' deposits. This geology creates a flat, low-lying landform.

7A3 To the east of the Gault Clay there is an outcrop of Lower Greensand, successively of the Folkstone and then the complex Sandgate beds which together create a more undulating landform than the Gault. The sandstones of the Folkstone beds create an area of higher ground above the sandstones and clays of the Sandgate beds that form the lowest area of the valley floor. To the east, the older formations within the Sandgate series, in particular the calcareous sandstone known as Bargate, form the lower slopes of the Hill Brow ridge. Overlying most of this bedrock geology (but not the Bargate) are drift deposits of alluvium and 'head'.

7A4 The underlying clays create slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged soils, whereas the sandstones more well drained loamy soils. These give rise to a mixed farming landscape, mainly arable but with permanent pasture interspersed with woodland (eg Berrygrove Copse, a SINC for ancient semi-natural woodland).

7A5 This traditional farming pattern, together with irregular well-hedged fields with mature boundary trees, particularly oaks, have survived intact in the north-west and north-east of the Parish, the latter reflecting their medieval assart origin. There is evidence of horticultural use of the valley over a period of time, for example during World War II and later, soft fruit was grown; and the ponds at Palmers were used as watercress beds until comparatively recently. Between West Liss/Liss and Andlers Ash Road/Stodham Lane tree nurseries were established in the 1980s. The extent of these, particularly between West Liss/Liss Forest, has much reduced since 2000 and been replaced by more traditional arable farming and grassland. However, the field hedge boundaries that had been removed (the standard trees including oaks remain) have not yet been replaced. There is also some localised impact from the removal of some hedgerows, notably within Brows Farm, and here the traditional mixed farming has been replaced by monoculture, leading to soil erosion that impacts on the River Rother.

7A6 On the slopes of Hill Brow below the well-wooded ridge, lies a band of meadows that separates Hill Brow from Liss. These meadows are prominent in the views from Wheatham Hill. Some of these are now used as horse paddocks, with associated fencing.

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7A7 The valley is drained by the River Rother and its tributaries. Some of these, like Batts Brook rise on the chalk, others from the numerous springs that are a distinctive feature of the Lower Greensand and which are generally more acidic. This gives rise to a complex and not well understood hydrology. The upper Rother is a key component of the landscape but hidden within the undulating topography and the fringing wetland woodland, mainly of willow and alder carr. The river is unaltered and retains its natural course and wet meadows save in the centre of Liss. The floor of the valley is swampy.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

7A8 The relatively small fields, woodland, trees and thick high hedgerows contribute to a sense of intimacy and enclosure and this is also true of the river environs. These features also contribute to the lush lowland and 'hidden' character of much of the area.

7A9 The valley forms a convenient transport route. The mainline railway was built on the then sparsely populated and swampy valley floor of the Sandgate beds. In Liss Parish the A3(T) is built on the slightly higher ground of the Folkestone beds. The railway is largely invisible in the wider landscape. Though on higher ground, the A3(T) is within a cutting and is flanked by attractive and undeveloped countryside. This and the extensive native tree and hedge planting associated with it, already hides the road from most locations, its visual impact being confined to the sight of high-sided lorries from higher ground. Otherwise the main visual intrusion is the clutter along the roadside itself and the somewhat unsympathetic crossing bridges over it. However, at night the lighting associated with the Ham Barn Roundabout, situated just outside the Parish boundary, can be intrusive from some locations.

7A10 Depending on weather conditions, the noise from the road can be intrusive, most particularly on higher ground, for example the Hangers. There is also intermittent noise intrusion from military helicopters and some private ones serving local residents.

7A11 A feature of the area is the sunken lanes, mainly to the east of the area, which link the Hill Brow ridge to the valley below.

7A12 The area is well served by an extensive network of rights of way and BOATS, which link into the long distance paths of the Hangers Way, the Royal Woolmer Way and the Sussex Border Path. There is a cycle way linking to Petersfield to the south and Whitehill to the north, which has been re-aligned to avoid the Ham Barn Roundabout.

Biodiversity

7A13 The River Rother is a SINC throughout the Parish as is the wet woodland that lines its banks north of Liss (part of the Liss Railway SINC) and in the south of the Parish (Alder Carr north of Stodham Bridge SINC). The mixed woodland is mainly native trees, like ash, oak and holly. Tracts of alder and willow carr are found adjacent to the river. These areas are notable for their variety of woodland flowers (for example: ramsons, wood anemone, wood sorrel, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage, muscatel, broad-leaved helleborine and, in the southern part of the Parish, the more uncommon alternate-leaved golden saxifrage). Birds include the red listed lesser spotted woodpecker as well as kingfisher and grey wagtail. The fields by Princes Marsh sewage works, adjacent to the river, host large winter flocks of lapwing and, occasionally, golden plover.

7A14 Within the tree nursery at Kippences Farm there remain some fine ancient hedgerows, including those bordering the right of way between the Riverside Railway Walk and West Liss. A hedge line to the south of the entrance to Kippences Farm carries the SINC

designation. Bordering the River Rother, on the opposite bank to the Riverside Railway Walk, there is a meadow and hedge of ancient origin identified on the 1842 tithe map. Both of these are partially degraded (part of the meadow being encroached by oak scrub and the hedge is unkept) but both are important for biodiversity as well as the landscape, being particularly noted for their bat and badger populations and flocks of meadow pipits.

- 7A15 An area of springs, woodland and unimproved meadow to the north east of Liss (Wyld Green Farm) also carries the SINC designation. This area, together with the similar area at Duckmead Lane, attract good flocks of redwing, fieldfare, wintering linnet, yellow hammer and meadow pipit. Slow worms and glow worms are also found in these areas.
- 7A16 Another meadow of high biodiversity value lies to the north east of the West Liss recreation ground. This meadow is owned by EHDC and has recently been managed for its biodiversity with cattle grazed on it.
- 7A17 Fields to the west of the character area are good for farmland birds: lapwing, skylark, sparrows and garden warbler. The mature deciduous woodland stands (like Berrygrove Copse) are regularly used by owls and spotted flycatcher.
- 7A18 The sunken lanes are rich in biodiversity, the richest being at Reeds Lane (which carries the SINC designation), St Patrick's Lane and Ciddy Hall.
- 7A19 The built environment of Liss is the main area in the Parish for nesting house martins that have spread to the newer developments in the village. Nesting swifts prefer Syers Road and Mill Road. The hedges and bushes of this area also contain a significant colony of house sparrows.

History

- 7A20 The area has been inhabited since very early times. The earliest artefact is a small hand axe found in Riverside Close, Liss. Tremendous numbers of worked flints have been found that mostly date from 4000-5000BC. There are also iron-age burial mounds, the most notable of which is at Berrygrove in West Liss.
- 7A21 Excavations undertaken when the A3(T) was constructed revealed a bronze age settlement under what is now the Flexcombe flyover and there is evidence this was superceded by an iron age settlement just north of it. This in turn was replaced by a Romano-British settlement (possibly including a villa) further north still, dating from 3-4th centuries. The word Llys is Celtic meaning an important or Chieftain's Court and it is likely that Liss was then an important centre, later mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- 7A22 The earliest building within the Parish is St Peter's Church, West Liss. The tower dates from Saxon times though much of the structure is early 13th century with extensions dating from the 14th, 15th and 17th centuries. Because of the wet nature of the Parish and poor quality building stone, few medieval buildings have survived. However, a well developed network of paths and drovers roads criss-cross this character area and that to the east, Hill Brow ridge. The major road was part of the system that traversed the south of England and was mentioned in 13th century documentation. This follows the line of present day roads such as Rake Road and also unmettled sunken lanes like Dennis Lane, also known as Pig Lane, the best preserved sunken lane in the Parish.

- 7A23 The characteristic medieval landscape is still discernable in the field patterns, woodland and ancient hedgerows. A lynchet runs across the area from Whitegates to Lyss Place and although degraded from its original height is still a feature in the landscape viewed from the vicinity of the A3(T).
- 7A24 About a third of the area, much of it marsh, was common land and when the commons were enclosed in 1846 it enabled the building of the railway. The drainage of the land also allowed the previously undeveloped floor of the valley to be built upon.
- 7A25 There are no registered landscape parks in this character area. However, to the south of the Parish lies Stodham Park, an extensive area of parkland with a Georgian mansion. Its most noted residents were the Money-Coutts banking family and it was used during the Second World War by SOE for the training of Norwegian undercover agents.

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 7A26 The medieval village, now West Liss, built on the Folkstone beds, retains some of its original buildings notably Potwell, Burfulles, Weavers, Saddlers, Berrygrove and Plestor House, which lie within the West Liss Conservation Area. The Spread Eagle on the Plestor has cellars dating from 1450. These buildings, as well as St Peter's Church, demonstrate that a variety of building materials were used: malmestone, bargate, ironstone (from the Folkestone beds) with typical galletting, flint, brick and clay tiles. These materials are also found in the mainly 16th and 17th century houses lying along the main Drovers Road : Pophole Farm, Barn Place, London Gardens, Knights Cottage, Ciddy Hall, Crouch Readon, Palmers, Mangers, Reeds and Brewells. Apart from Barn Place and London Gardens these houses have retained their integrity and rest comfortably in the landscape.

- Another notable house is Lyss Place, dating back to the 15th century though remodelled after the dissolution and again in 1822. Three other important farmhouses, are Burgates in West Liss, Kippences between Liss and West Liss and Cumbers. The former two were replaced in the 19th century but their barns and outbuildings have survived, though modified into dwellings.
- 7A27 The coming of the railway moved the growing community to the valley floor, though the new Parish Church, St Mary's, built of Bargate stone, lies on the higher land of the Folkestone beds and is one of the most visible buildings in the Parish. The commercial centre built up rapidly surrounded by terraces of modest Victorian houses, notably Summerfield Cottages, Springfield Cottages and Shoterfield Terrace, all within the conservation area and many rendered. Much larger houses were built on higher ground bordering Hill Brow Road and Hill Brow, the most visually dominant being East Hill House, now an old peoples' home. The rendered façade of this building is one of the very few buildings noticeable in the wider landscape. It is particularly prominent at night, when the floodlit exterior is clearly visible from the valley settlements, the A3(T) and the higher ground beyond.
- 7A28 At the turn of the century the settlement expanded between West Liss and (the then) East Liss. Though outside the Conservation Area Western Road still retains its character as do the villas opposite West Liss Recreation Ground.

7A29 The earliest example of social housing is the group of bungalows built in the 1930s which form Yew Tree Place, located around a wooded 'green' of limes in Rake Road. On the opposite side of Rake Road is the entrance to the Inwood Road estate, built largely in the early 1950s. The original part of the estate is notable for its wide verges that are well planted with trees. These, together with the native trees surrounding much of the estate, and the trees and shrubs within gardens, contribute to the wooded nature of the valley.

7A30 The other major post war expansion is the Greenfield Estate, also built off Rake Road, in the 1960s and 1970s. A distinctive feature of much of it is the undeveloped areas on which trees, including substantial oaks, are found. This also contributes to the wooded nature of the valley. Parts of the estate, particularly the newer parts to the south west, on higher ground, lack this feature and have a more urban feel.

7A31 Adjacent to the Conservation Area in central Liss there has been more recent development. Much of this is in keeping with the Victorian Conservation Area. The notable exception is the 3 storey 'One Stop' or 'Tesco' development from the early 1980s that dominates the views out of the village from Rake Road towards Wheatham Hill. The lack of trees in this central part of the village also contributes to its urban feel.

7A32 The post-war expansion of Liss resulted in the loss of some green fingers into the centre of the village but did not expand the village into the countryside. It is largely hidden within the wider landscape because of the topography and treed nature of the valley. From Longmoor it is invisible. From Wheatham Hill a scattering of dwellings can be seen, though they are not prominent in the landscape. Only East Hill House, with its rendered façade, and the roof of the Hilliers-owned farm in Andlers Ash Road is noticeable.

From the Junior School on Hill Brow Road, only St Peter's Church, a few rendered dwellings in West Liss and the complex of buildings associated with the Elizabeth Fitzroy-owned Whitegates adjacent to the A3(T) are visible (the latter are being replaced by more sympathetic buildings). From the bridge over the A3(T) north of Flexcombe only Whitegates and St Mary's Church are prominent in the landscape.

7A33 A major contribution to the hidden nature of the settlement is the manner in which it has largely been confined below the 75 metre contour. Only a part of the Inwood Road estate, low density housing in East Hill Drive and along Hatch Lane, and the two schools are built on higher ground. The extensive tree cover and generally sympathetic design ensures that most of these buildings are not prominent in the wider landscape. Most notably the Junior School, a modern building with a white façade, is built into the hillside with a grass roof. The exceptions are East Hill House and the higher density dwellings in Inwood Road. The narrow extension of the village to the south, between Andlers Ash Road and the railway, although architecturally undistinguished, is not prominent in the wider landscape nor in views into the village, despite being situated in a more visually prominent area. This is because it is confined below the 65 metre contour and because of the single-storey nature of the housing close to Hill Brow Road.

7A34 Away from the main settlements there is a scattering of farms. A number of these are relatively prominent in the wider landscape and have unattractive outbuildings or other facilities, most notably Barefoots Farm (at the foot of Wheatham Hill), Summerdale Farm (on the lower slopes of Hill Brow) and Brows Farm (on the Folkestone beds close to the A3(T)). The extensive outbuildings of the latter, which form an industrial estate, are partially screened by non-native Lombardy poplars though these will be removed once slower growing species provide screening.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Landscape Management Issues

- 7A35 Conserve ancient woodland and plan for long-term woodland regeneration. Consider as appropriate re-introducing traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing and encourage interest in and the marketing of local wood products.
- 7A36 Encourage the management and restoration of hedgerows and monitor regeneration of hedgerow trees.
- 7A37 Encourage the conservation of field trees.
- 7A38 Conserve the pastoral character of the landscape and seek to manage and extend unimproved meadow grassland, in particular the field and woodland patterns associated with the early enclosures and manage field boundaries that define the pattern.
- 7A39 Seek to ensure good management of horse keeping including retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of sward, sympathetic integration of fencing, hardstanding, jumps and other paraphernalia and avoidance of the proliferation of buildings, sheds etc.
- 7A40 Retain and encourage the management of riverside trees along the Rother and maintain an uncultivated corridor alongside it.
- 7A41 Encourage the management and retention of small valleys and streams (like Batts Brook), including the establishment of uncultivated strips adjacent to the streams to enhance biodiversity.
- 7A42 Conserve designated areas of nature conservation and consider the designation of further areas of high habitat value.
- 7A43 Encourage land use that minimises soil erosion and promotes the management and restoration of ditches.
- 7A44 Ensure that water abstraction does not damage the River Rother.

Development Issues

- 7A45 Protect the 'hidden village' from development that would make it more prominent in the wider landscape. In particular ensure any development above the 75 metre contour in the built environment does not impinge on the wider landscape and is hidden within the tree cover. Ensure that any development along Andlers Ash Road is low rise and is confined below the 65 metre contour.
- 7A46 Ensure that the meadows that separate the built environment of Liss from Hill Brow are retained.
- 7A47 Conserve the views into the area from the Greensand Terrace, the Hill Brow ridge and Weavers Down and out of the area to the rural ridgelines. Particular attention should be paid to any proposals for wind turbines or communication masts.
- 7A48 Integrate any development on the edge of settlements into the rural landscape. Maintain the rural edge to the settlements by native planting. Ensure that such development is low rise, uses suitable building materials and is not of a bulk that would detract from the rural setting.
- 7A49 Ensure that the rural setting of the A3(T) is retained.
- 7A50 Consider opportunities to further mitigate the impact of the A3(T) on the rural character of the landscape through the conservation of existing visual screening, noise attenuation and minimising roadside clutter and light pollution.
- 7A51 Conserve and enhance tree planting within the settlements, particularly in Liss village centre, to contribute to the 'hidden village'.
- 7A52 Conserve allotments, which contribute to the rural feel of the built environment.
- 7A53 Maintain the character of conservation area; in particular reduce clutter and ensure that shop-front policies are implemented. Consider the expansion of existing conservation areas and the establishment of new ones.

- 7A54 Develop design guidance to help resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs and lighting and support traditional boundaries of hedging and walls.
- 7A55 Develop design guidance to ensure building materials and styles are sympathetic to their setting both for new build and extensions or alterations to existing buildings.
- 7A56 Protect sites of archaeological interest.
- 7A57 Protect the fabric and setting of buildings of local historical interest.
- 7A58 Ensure farm expansion, enhancement and diversification is sympathetic to the local setting and doesn't detract from the wider landscape.
- 7A59 Minimise the use of signage. Where appropriate use signage that is in keeping with the rural character of the landscape.
- 7A60 Conserve the character of sunken lanes and avoid any changes that would alter their character or adversely impact upon their biodiversity. Seek to reduce traffic pressures on those that are metalled or are designated as a BOAT.
- 7A61 Improve the rights of way network by removing obstacles and improving maintenance and signage.



Carr off Mint Road Liss Forest



Longmoor



Liss Riverside Railway Walk Nature Reserve

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 8B: WOOLMER FOREST/WEAVERS DOWN

LISS FOREST AND LONGMOOR

Key Characteristics

- In north west of area an undulating plateau used by the military formed from sandstone of the Folkestone beds
- Elsewhere, in drier areas, enclosed woodland of mainly conifer, oak, birch and holly
- Mires with alder and willow carr interspersed with iron-rich rivulets and seepages providing a sense of mystery and even menace
- Very high biodiversity value, including an internationally protected area
- The sylvan settlement of Liss Forest, of 19th century origin, set within areas of recent enclosures, merging comfortably into the surrounding woodland
- Extensive access on military land with numerous rights of way and other footpaths linking into it
- Local Nature Reserve on banks of River Rother providing area of high recreational and ecological value
- No examples of 'designed' landscapes but small park at The Wylds established in the 1850s

Location and Boundaries

8B1 The Woolmer Forest/Weavers Down character area lies to the north east of the Parish of Liss. In the north eastern corner of the character area within the Parish, it forms part of the elevated undulating plateau on Ministry of Defence owned land. Although part of Weavers Down, it is known locally as Longmoor, after the Army camp of the same name located elsewhere within the character area. The remainder of the area lies on lower land and is transitional to the Greensand Hills and the upper Rother valley. Its boundary generally follows the railway.

Note: the CLCA boundary is not co-terminus with that in the EHDC LCA, being drawn to include the whole of the settlement of Liss Forest and the part of the Riverside Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve that lies within EHDC ownership.

Physical Landscape

8B2 The north eastern corner of the area lies on the elevated undulating plateau formed by the Folkestone Beds. This gives way to the complex Sandgate Beds, a mix of sands and clays, which underlie part of the Ministry of Defence land, The Wylds and Liss Forest. In part the underlying geology is overlain with 'head' deposits containing flints.

8B3 Much of the Ministry of Defence land within the Parish is on well drained sandy soils and forms heathland with oak/birch and Scots pine scrub incursion. In the lower lying areas bogs and pools are found. Away from the Ministry of Defence land this character gradually gives way to a more wooded landscape, with oak, birch and Scots pine occupying the drier ground, interspersed with extensive wet bogs predominately of alder carr.

- 8B4 Closer to the railway the woodland gives way to meadows and paddocks which are characteristically boggy and wet, contrasting with the drier meadows of the upper Rother valley character area.
- 8B5 There are no examples of 'designed' landscapes but The Wylds is a small park established in the 1850s, with an extensive man-made lake at its core.
- 8B6 The area is drained by numerous rivulets that join the Rother, flowing through extensive areas of swampy woodland with distinctive iron-rich seepages.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 8B7 The extensive heathland that forms the north east part of the area is juxtaposed with stands of Scots pine, silver birch and scrub oak. It is an area with a strong sense of place because of the ever-present views of the chalk hills and greensand terrace of the Hangers. The landscape has a high sense of remoteness, the settlements in the upper Rother valley being hidden by the dense tree cover. The only visually significant building in the landscape is Le Court on the Greensand terrace at Empshott: the only other buildings that can be seen are a few scattered dwellings at Empshott and the spire of Greatham church. The A3(T), which bisects this area from Woolmer Forest, is invisible. This is a relatively tranquil landscape, though the hum of traffic on the A3(T) and the noise from military helicopters can fragment the silence. Visually, the only scars are the telecommunications masts on Weavers Down and another, less dominant mast, along the A3(T).
- 8B8 The area is rich in wildlife and it is unusual on a visit not to see deer, reptiles or an unusual bird or plant. This adds to the sense of a 'special place' unmolested by man.

- 8B9 As the land slopes down from Longmoor towards Warren Road in Liss Forest, the views of the Hangers give way to glimpses of the wooded slopes of Hill Brow. Here the landscape changes to a more wooded character with a strong sense of enclosure. This is the dominating character of most of the area, stands of Scots pine predominating on the higher, sandier slopes and unmanaged oak and birch woodland elsewhere. The latter are interspersed with areas of extremely swampy ground where in parts it is dangerous to venture even in the driest of droughts. The dark alder carr, the iron red rivulets, and the swampy ground give this area a strong sense of mystery and even menace.
- 8B10 The part of the Ministry of Defence land within the Parish is described as 'Managed Access'. In practice it is always open to the public and is criss-crossed by numerous rides, paths and tracks. This area is connected to the rest of the character area by Rights of Way (along the Riverside Railway Walk) and other paths. The Wylds is closed to the public. Areas away from the paths can be treacherous swamp.

Biodiversity

- 8B11 The Ministry of Defence land forms part of a SSSI and the Wealden Heaths SPA. This area supports a nationally important flora, being the stronghold in south east England of the hare's-tail cottongrass. Southern marsh and common spotted orchids are a common sight along the fringe of the area adjoining The Wylds and sundew can be found in the damper areas. This character area has internationally important numbers of heathland birds including nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler as well as commoner species like stonechat, woodcock, yellow hammer and whitethroat. Woodland birds are also found such as woodpecker, turtle dove and crossbill. Because it lies on a main migration route from continental Europe almost any species may be found in the spring or autumn. The area has numerous reptiles and amphibians including good numbers of adder and lizard. There are increasing numbers of deer: roe and muntjac.
- 8B12 Away from the heathland, the wet woodland is rich in wildlife including badger, deer, bats and 17 species of dragonfly. It has the largest recorded Hampshire roost of mandarin duck, and supports nightingale, turtle dove, lesser spotted woodpecker, marsh tit, kingfisher, grey wagtail, woodcock, spotted flycatcher and, increasingly, firecrest, with a breeding record. Little Egret have now become a winter visitor. Water vole have been reported as have dormice.
- 8B13 It is therefore unsurprising that the wet woodland and meadows adjoining the River Rother form part of the Liss Railway (disused) SINC and the Riverside Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve. The woodland is mixed, mainly deciduous, with alder and willow carr along the river and birch, oak, ash, holly and field maple being other common species. The finest specimen of ash in the Parish is found here. Of note is the stand of grey poplar straggling the path joining Rotherbank Farm Lane to the Riverside Railway Walk Right of Way. The late Dr Francis Rose, a distinguished resident of Liss Forest, was unsure whether these trees represented a natural cross between aspen and black poplar. This area is characterised by ramsons, lesser celandine, greater stitchwort, red campion, wood sorrel, muscatel, broad-leaved helleborine and the uncommon wood forget-me-not. In the same area is to be found a small colony of coralroot bitter-cress, albeit likely to be of garden origin. Because of the long thin shape of the SINC it is dependent for its rich biodiversity on wildlife corridors linking it into other habitats. Most notable is the undeveloped area between Newfield Road and Rotherbank Farm Lane.
- 8B14 Two areas of wet meadow are also designated SINC's: Field by Evangelical Church, Liss Forest and Mint Road Meadow and Carr. A field on the slopes below the plateau (Warren Hill Meadow) is designated as unimproved meadow and is especially important for its insects and invertebrates.

- 8B15 The area between Warren Road and Mint Road is an extensive tract of mixed woodland and swampy alder carr. It carries no designation but is as rich as other areas that do. It, like the Disused Railway SINC, has been recently invaded by the large, but slow growing Stink Cabbage, believed to be an escapee from The Wylds.
- 8B16 There are no public records of the biodiversity of The Wylds, which has an extensive variety of bird habitat and is known to have mandarin duck, swan and cormorant.

Historic Character

- 8B17 The tumuli that mark the most northerly point of the Parish are evidence of early settlement. The poor sandy soils were exhausted by the end of the Bronze Age and replaced by heathland on the higher plateau.
- 8B18 In the time of King John the area became part of the Royal Hunting Forest of Woolmer. Gilbert White recorded that in the early 18th century it had extensive herds of red deer though these had been poached by the time of his writings. But such was the importance of Woolmer Forest in the life of this part of East Hampshire, that he devoted a letter to it, describing a tract of land without a single tree, 'a lonely domain the very agreeable haunt for many sorts of wild fowls'. But he also described cottages on the verge of the Forest with timbers taken from its bogs providing evidence of an earlier treed landscape of oak, alder and willow.
- 8B19 In the 19th century Crown Rights were surrendered and the area became administered by the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods and Forests. Plantations of Scots pine were planted to the fury of William Cobbett.

- 8B20 In the 1870s the area was transferred to the ownership of the Army. It was used extensively during the 20th century, particularly during the Second World War, and from 1916 was the centre for training on military railways. An extension track was built in the 1930s to Liss station to connect to the mainline between London and Portsmouth, this track is now the Right of Way along the Riverside Railway Walk. This railway connection was used to move rolling stock from Woolmer Forest to Liss and thereon to Portsmouth and France following D-Day. The military railway was used for films including Young Winston, Inn of the Sixth Happiness and the St Trinians Great Train Robbery. The railway closed in 1965 and was dismantled in the late 1960s. Much of the scrub encroachment on the Ministry of Defence land post-dates this period.
- 8B21 Around the Royal hunting forest itself there were extensive tracts of common land, the better tracts being enclosed and forming the common-edge settlement of Liss Forest.
- 8B22 Although there are no traditional designed landscapes, The Wylds, built in the 1850s, though replaced in the 1930s following a fire, has extensive grounds centred on a man-made lake and has a notable garden.

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 8B23 The settlement of Liss Forest is a product of the enclosure of common land. Some of the oldest buildings are simple 18th century cottages found along Mint Road where the building stone is ironstone with galletting. Along Forest Road the oldest building is the Temple Inn built in 1849. There are also some terraced cottages of similar age built in Bargate stone. A notable feature in the centre of the settlement is the 'Tin Tabernacle' dating from 1906 and built as a missionary church for the then newly established settlement.
- 8B24 In the late 19th/early 20th century a number of large villas were built by Army officers based at Longmoor. Smaller, mainly red brick dwellings were also built along Forest Road. Some of the villas survive though others have been pulled down and replaced by small estates in the post-war period. Most of these are of low density and well treed and although not built in the local vernacular do not impinge significantly on the character of the settlement. The exceptions are the high density development adjacent to Newfield Road and a smaller one behind the Temple Inn, both built in the 1980s.
- 8B25 The key characteristic of Liss Forest is its sylvan quality, merging comfortably into the surrounding landscape and with oaks, birch, Scots pines and other non-ornamental trees within the settlement. This, together with the extensive use of hedging rather than wooden fencing, contributes to the settlement's peaceful rural nature. The most notable tree contributing to this characteristic is the oak on Forest Road at the entrance to Pine Walk. The well-maintained recreation ground on Forest Road and the undeveloped corridors of mixed woodland, mainly oak, between Rotherbank Farm Lane and Newfield Road are also important features. The only harsh urban edge to the settlement is to be found in the rendered dwellings

in Forest Rise, the Newfield Road development and Rotherbank Farm Lane. These impinge on the rural nature of the Riverside Railway Walk and its environs but the impact is tempered by the tree cover within the gardens and in their surroundings.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Landscape Management Issues

- 8B26 Manage the existing internationally protected heathland to prevent excessive encroachment of scrub. Assess the potential for creating new, interconnected heathlands, particularly on former common land. Encourage the restoration of coniferous plantations to heathland.
- 8B27 Encourage the conservation of the landscape features of The Wylde.
- 8B28 Encourage the control of invasive species like rhododendron ponticum or laurel where it poses a threat to semi-natural habitats. In particular encourage the eradication of bamboo adjacent to the Rother that threatens the areas designated for their habitat value.
- 8B29 Conserve areas of pasture and seek to ensure good management of horse grazing, including retention of hedge boundaries, management of the sward and avoiding overgrazing of pasture.
- 8B30 Retain and encourage the management of riverside trees along the Rother and maintain an uncultivated corridor along it.
- 8B31 Conserve designated areas of nature conservation and consider the designation of further areas of high habitat value, particularly the area of alder carr between Warren Road and Mint Road in Liss Forest.

Development Issues

- 8B32 Conserve the views into the area from the Greensand Terrace and out of the area to the rural ridgelines. Particular attention should be paid to the impact of any proposals for wind turbines or communication masts.
- 8B33 Conserve the characteristic settlement pattern of loose agglomerations where it exists and resist extensions and infill that would change this pattern. In particular resist infill that would impact on the long gardens between Warren Road and Mint Road because of its biodiversity value.

- 8B34 In order to protect the rural and sylvan qualities of Liss Forest, resist any development that would impact on the area between Liss Forest and the railway or between Newfield Road and Rotherbank Farm Lane in Liss Forest.
- 8B35 Integrate built development on the edge of settlements into the rural landscape. Maintain the rural edge to the settlement by native planting. Ensure such development is low rise, uses suitable building materials and is not of a bulk that would detract from the rural setting.
- 8B36 Consider opportunities to further mitigate the impact of the A3(T) on the rural character of the landscape through conservation of existing visual screening, noise attenuation and minimising roadside clutter and light pollution.
- 8B37 Seek to conserve and enhance tree planting within Liss Forest, particularly of native species, to contribute to the 'hidden village'.
- 8B38 Develop design guidance to ensure building materials and styles are sympathetic to their setting both for new build and extensions or alterations to existing buildings.
- 8B39 Develop design guidance to help resist suburban-style garden boundaries, kerbs and lighting and support traditional boundaries of hedges and walls.
- 8B40 Protect the fabric and setting of buildings of local historic interest.
- 8B41 Improve the rights of way network by improving maintenance and signage.



Assart Reeds Lane



Dennis Lane Liss



Coppiced Chestnut Hill Brow

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 9A:

HILL BROW RIDGE

Key Characteristics

- Forms the eastern ridge of the upper Rother valley
- Prominent in views from the upper Rother valley, Longmoor and Wheatham Hill
- Significant woodland cover including ancient woodland and plantations on former heaths that provide a sense of enclosure and mystery
- To the north, areas of assarts probably dating from medieval times
- Sandstone eroded to form deeply sunken lanes that form 'green tunnels' to the valley floor below
- Rich biodiversity and perceived naturalness away from B2070
- Settlement pattern typically dispersed and settlement density low, which together with the extensive tree cover contributes to the rural nature of the area
- Sussex border path dips into northern part of the area but otherwise limited network of pathways

Location and Boundaries

9A1 Hill Brow is the most easterly character area in Liss Parish. It forms the wooded upper slopes of the prominent ridge that forms the easterly boundary of the upper Rother valley. The boundary is drawn to the north of Hill Brow Road along the woodland edge to Rake, to the south along the line of Stodham Lane.

The boundary of this character area between Hill Brow Road and Rake differs from the East Hampshire LCA in that it excludes all the meadows lying below the treed upper slopes of Hill Brow and follows more closely the underlying geology.

Physical Landscape

9A2 Hill Brow lies on the Hythe formation of the Lower Greensand. The rocks are a greenish grey sandstone with beds of chert that are resistant to erosion.

9A3 The ridge is characterised by dense tree cover which is a mix of conifer plantations, mixed woodland, ancient semi-natural woodland and coppiced sweet chestnut. Interspersed amongst the woodland are clearings. The geology gives rise to poor, well-drained soils that support heathland.

9A4 In the northern part of the character area lies an area of assarts probably of medieval origin. In the southernmost part of the Parish lies Upper Adhurst Farm, an area of regular fields of probably 19th or early 20th century origin.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

9A5 The ridge is a dominant feature from the upper Rother Valley, the Hangers (for example, from Wheatham Hill) and from the Woolmer Forest /Weavers Down character area, south of the A3(T).

9A6 The old A3 London/Portsmouth road runs along the crest of the ridge and is bordered by mainly large villas with substantial grounds, wooded but with frequent panoramic views both across the upper Rother Valley to the Hangers and into the coombes and ridges of West Sussex. These views into beautiful and undeveloped countryside provide a sense of remoteness, though the white orbs of RAF Oakhanger in the distance add an artificial note to the landscape. This is a relatively tranquil landscape though at night the street lighting, left over from the days when the now B2070 was the main road from London to Portsmouth, can be intrusive. Roadside advertising clutter, on the West Sussex side of the border, is especially intrusive in the landscape.

9A7 Below the crest of the ridge the dense woodland provides a sense of enclosure. A series of deeply cut sunken lanes, some of which formed part of the network of Drovers roads and some of which, like Huntsbottom Lane, remain unmetalled, link the crest of the ridge to the valley below, providing natural tunnels that contribute to the 'hidden village' character of Liss Parish. This is a generally peaceful landscape though along Stodham Lane the noise of the A3(T) can be intrusive, depending on weather conditions.

9A8 Between Rake and Hill Brow Road and further south at Farther Common, there are a number of dwellings in a dispersed pattern. Although many have been extended in the recent past the dense tree cover hides them in the wider landscape and they do not impinge on the sense of peace and remoteness that characterises the area.

9A9 To the north the wooded character gives way to a more pastoral landscape with heavily wooded and hedged field margins. This is a remote and tranquil landscape, though in certain weather conditions the hum of the A3(T) is discernible. There is also some intermittent noise intrusion from military helicopters and private ones belonging to local Hill Brow residents.

9A10 The Sussex Border Path follows the line of Brewell's Lane, a sunken lane joining Rake to the upper Rother valley below. The unmetalled Huntsbottom Lane and Dennis Lane are BOATs. A series of unadopted and peaceful lanes also link the crest of the ridge to Stodham Lane.

Biodiversity

9A11 The sunken lanes provide a haven for wildlife and are rich in plantlife: as well as the common plants of the hedgerow like campion, speedwell, stitchwort and jack-by-the-hedge, they are also a haven in the shadier areas for the lower plants like ferns, mosses and lichens. The richest lanes in terms of their biodiversity are: Brewell's Lane, St Patrick's Lane, Reeds Lane (a SINC) and the lane south west of Highfield Wood. Some of the metalled sunken lanes have suffered damage from traffic and their biodiversity has suffered as a result.

9A12 The wooded landscape supports an extensive area of semi-natural mixed woodland at Adhurst Woods and Big Moor, a designated SINC, and elsewhere Patrick's Copse is also a designated SINC. This wooded area interspersed with clearings supports a good mix of bird species including marsh tit, occasional firecrest and breeding mandarin duck. There are also good populations of fox and badger, and bats are also found here.

9A13 The more open landscape to the north of the area supports one SINC, Newlands Field. It is an area rich in birdlife with skylark, spotted flycatcher and occasional nightingale being amongst the species found here. 23 species of butterfly have been recorded in a wildlife meadow in this area.

Historic Character

9A14 Evidence of early human colonisation is to be found: for example, the earthworks at Farther Common. However, the poor quality of the soils deterred settlement and the history of the area is one of exploitation of the natural resources, for example for fuel and pasture. The extensive areas of coppice probably date back to medieval times and have continued into the modern era though they are now neglected because of the lack of a market for wood products.

9A15 Most of the commons have been appropriated for plantations, mostly of conifers, Scots pine being the predominant species.

Settlement Form and Built Character

9A16 Pre-19th century settlement is confined to isolated farmsteads along drovers' roads and lanes, notably Pruetts and Stewards. The more modern settlement pattern is of small holdings and generally well spaced detached houses, often substantial villas. Many of these have been extended in the recent past and there has been an element of infill along some of the lanes behind Rake and London Road. There is no obvious vernacular though the dwellings are generally well hidden within the treed landscape.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

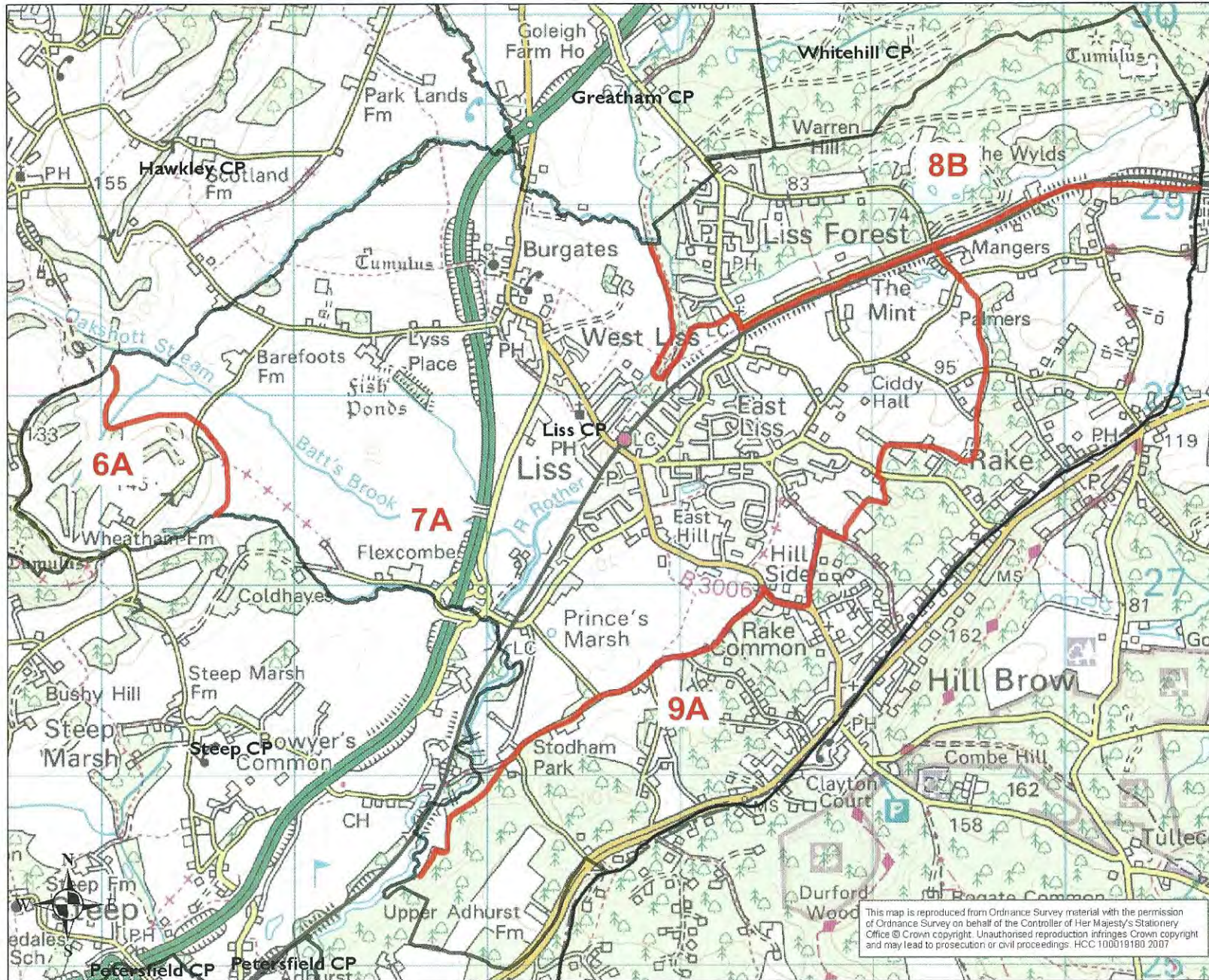
Landscape Management Issues

- 9A17 Encourage the conservation of pre-18th century woodland, monitor/check the spread of introduced invasive species, in particular rhododendron ponticum, laurel and bamboo in ancient deciduous woodland, and plan for long term woodland regeneration.
- 9A18 Encourage the conservation of the sense of remoteness and tranquillity. In particular resist the removal of trees for other than safety or the improvement or regeneration of woodland.
- 9A19 Encourage the re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, in particular in relation to the sweet chestnut plantations. Promote interest in, and marketing of, local wood products, including wood for fuel.
- 9A20 Encourage sensitive forestry practice within areas of plantation, particular of conifer, for example, mixing different species. This is particularly important on the ridge where any change is likely to be highly visible.
- 9A21 Seek to conserve features of archaeological features which provide a sense of the time depth from evidence of the prehistoric landscape.
- 9A22 Conserve designated areas of nature conservation and consider the designation of further areas of high habitat value.

Development Issues

- 9A23 Maintain the characteristic loose conglomerations of common edge settlement and avoid infill or extensions which would create a more compact, solid settlement form along roads and tracks or adversely impact upon the area's treed nature or its sense of tranquillity and remoteness. In particular consider whether further protection should be afforded to Farther Common.

- 9A24 Ensure the treed nature of the Hill Brow ridge is maintained in the longer term and that settlement within it remains hidden.
- 9A25 Enhance the rural character and setting of the ridge top road. Consider opportunities for reducing the prominence of the road (now traffic is largely carried by the A3(T)) and restoring the landscape as woodland/pasture. Monitor incremental small scale change/development along the road corridor.
- 9A26 Resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs and lighting and encourage traditional boundaries of hedges and walls. Conserve the remote rural character of the landscape.
- 9A27 Minimise use of signage in this rural landscape. Where necessary use signage that is in keeping with the rural character of the landscape.
- 9A28 Conserve the undeveloped wooded ridgeline and its important views. Special consideration should be given to the potential impact of any proposals for wind turbines or communication masts. Particular attention should be paid to views from key viewpoints as well as impacts on the less tangible aspects of character such as the special sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- 9A29 Conserve the character of sunken lanes and avoid any changes that would alter their character or adversely impact upon their biodiversity. Seek to reduce traffic pressures on those that are metalled.



Legend

HCC Parish Boundaries 2006

Landscape Character

- 6A** Wheatham Hill
- 7A** Liss and upper Rother Valley
- 8A** Liss Forest and Longmoor
- 8B** The Wylds
- 9A** Hill Brow Ridge

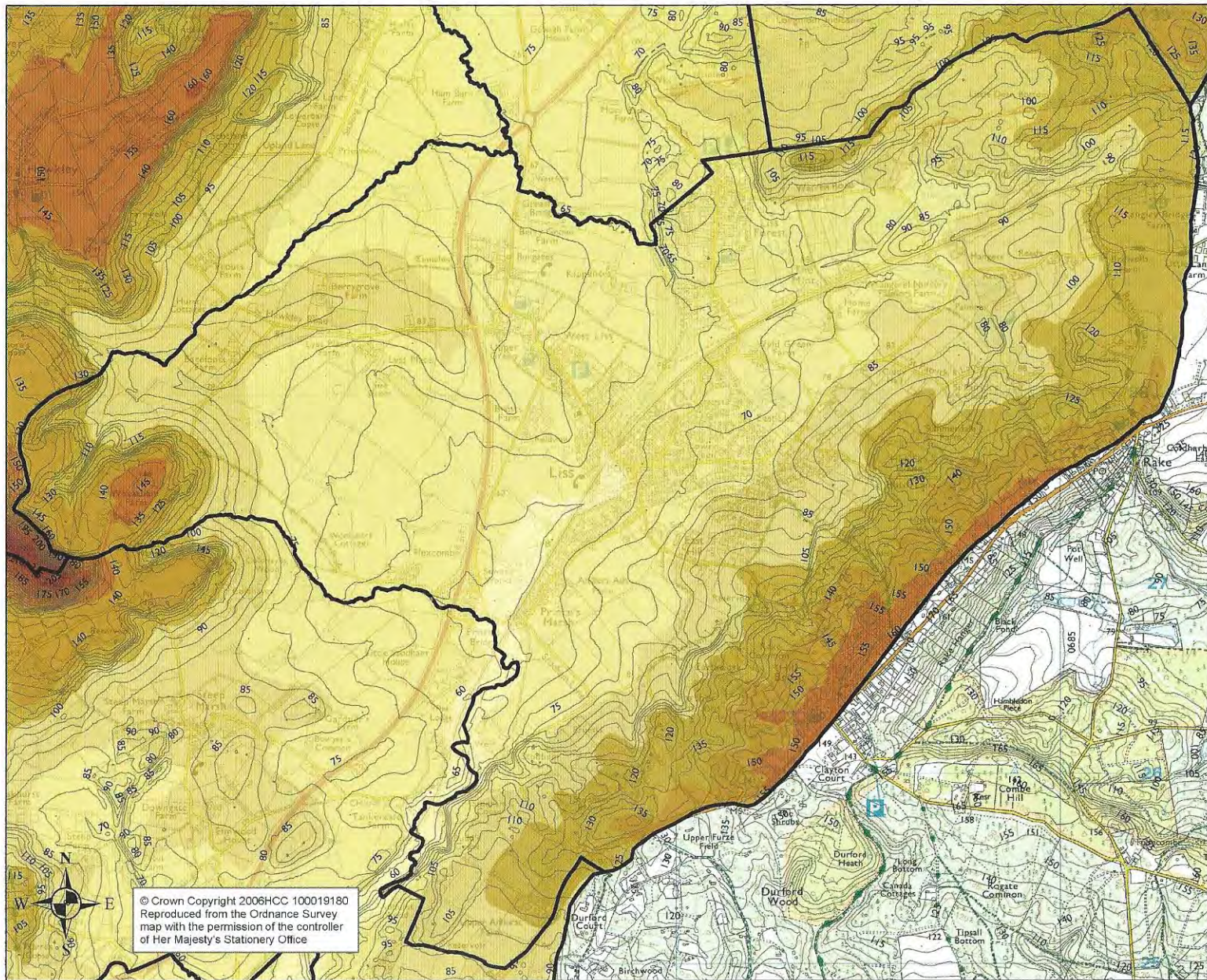
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Liss Parish Community Landscape Character Assessment

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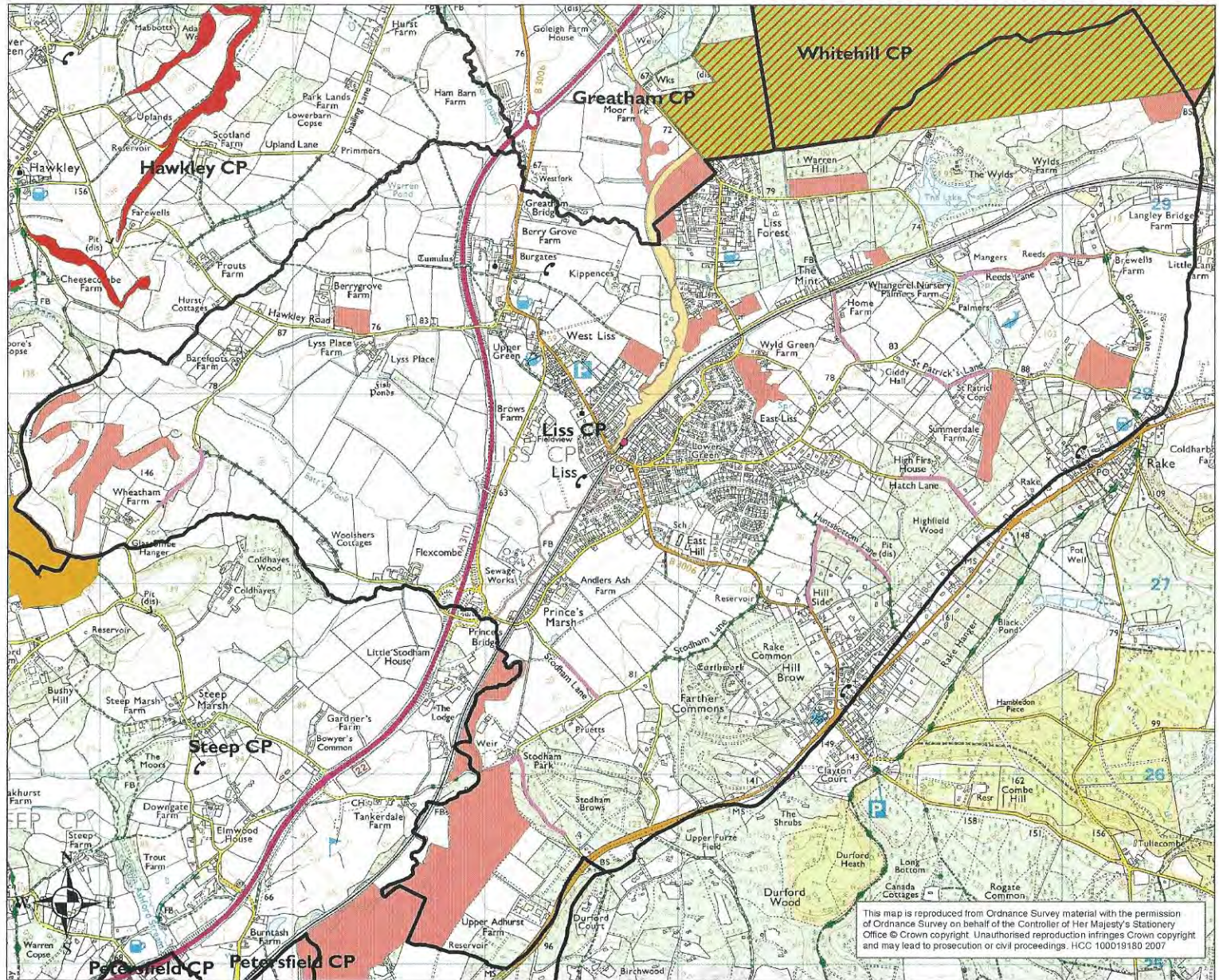
Hampshire
County Council



Liss Parish Community Landscape Character Assessment Altitude Mapping



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Legend

- HCC Parish Boundaries 2006
- Liss_Sunken_Lanes
- Liss_SSSIs
- Liss_SPA
- Liss_SINCs
- Liss_SAC
- Liss_NNR
- Liss_LNRs

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Liss Parish Community Landscape Character Assessment Wildlife Designations and Sunken Lane Mapping

