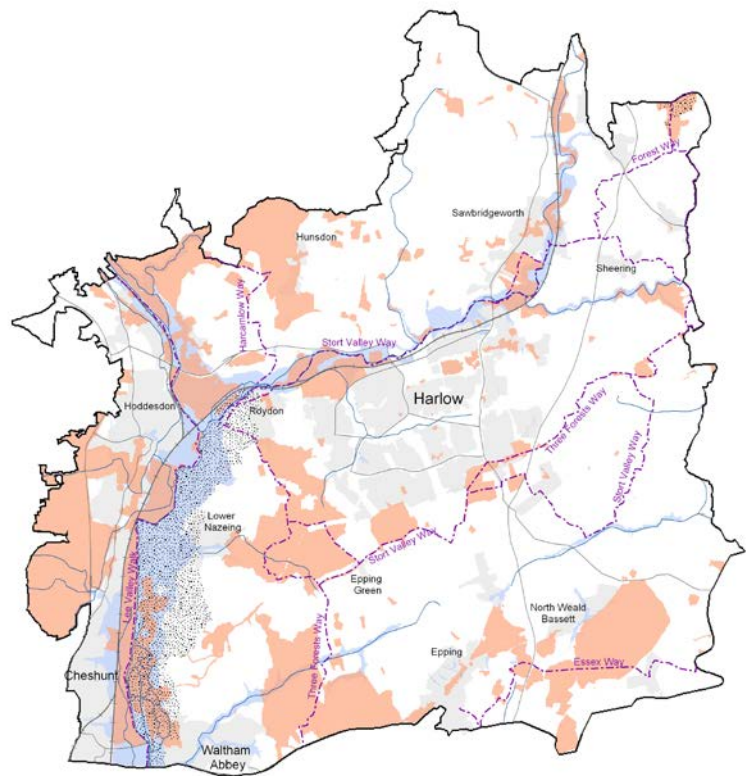

HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT STUDY

Volumes 1 - 3



February 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT STUDY

Volume 1 : Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of the Harlow Area

Volume 2 : Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes

Volume 3 : Framework for Sustainable Future Landscapes in the Harlow Area



Overview of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study Outputs

STRATEGIC SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF HARLOW AREA (Volume 1)

Purpose: provides a strategic understanding of variations in landscape character/environmental features and sensitivity to change across the Harlow Area as a whole.

Use: a broad-based strategic input to evaluation of the major constraints and opportunities for development as a guide to the overall direction of growth.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF HARLOW'S FRINGES (Volume 2)

Purpose: develops a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of the town that are desirable to safeguard.

Use: to guide evaluation of the location and shape of future development options for urban expansion around the fringes of Harlow.

FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES IN THE HARLOW AREA (Volume 3)

Purpose: develops an over-arching strategic vision for the future and establishes landscape planning/management principles.

Use: framework for developing an integrated approach to landscape protection, 'green infrastructure' improvements and urban development.

THE HARLOW AREA GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION LIBRARY (Digital Data Output)

Purpose: a consistent/up to date GIS-based digital 'library'/database of landscape and environmental baseline data.

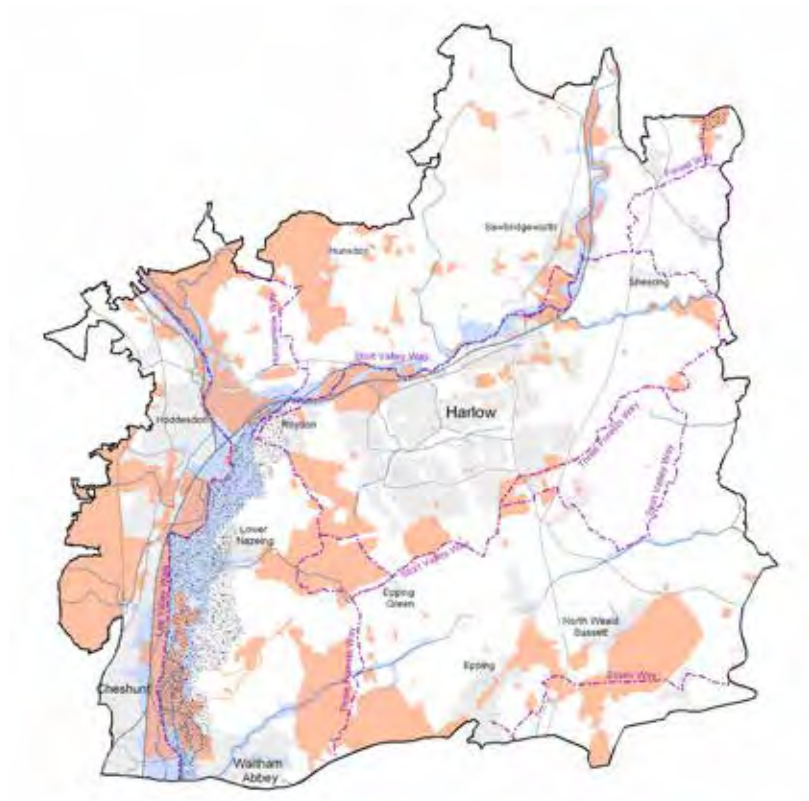
Use: spatial planning tool for use by all stakeholder partners



Harlow District Council and Partners

HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT STUDY

Volume 1 : Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of the Harlow Area



Final Report

February 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning


Harlow District Council and Partners

**HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE
& ENVIRONMENT STUDY**

**Volume 1 : Strategic Sensitivity Analysis
of the Harlow Area**

Final Report

February 2005

Approved By: Dominic Watkins
Signed: 
Position: Associate Technical Director
Date: February 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

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PREFACE

Chris Blandford Associates were commissioned in January 2004 by a Steering Group of key stakeholders to undertake the ***Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study*** to provide a key evidence base for informing input to the review of Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). The Harlow Area, which is identified by ODPM as a priority area for growth within the designated London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area, comprises the entire administrative area of Harlow District Council and part of Epping Forest District within Essex, and includes part of East Hertfordshire District within Hertfordshire. The Study is one of a number being undertaken in the Harlow Area funded by the ODPM from the Government's Growth Areas fund.

The key ***aim*** of the Study set by the Steering Group's brief is to "*identify the constraints on and opportunities for growth in the areas in and around Harlow, to inform the location and shape of future developments*" and to provide "*robust arguments for and against development in environmentally sensitive areas in order to inform RPG when strategic decisions are to be made on the location of future growth around Harlow and its possible future extensions*".

Specific ***objectives*** of the Study contained in the brief include:

- to identify and draw together a consistent baseline of landscape and environmental information based on existing data, supplemented by new additional information where necessary;
- to define and record the landscape and environmental information on a GIS;
- to identify and assess Sir Frederick Gibberd's approach to landscape in his original masterplan for Harlow and determine if this is appropriate for future growth of the town;
- to prepare a Landscape Framework to inform possible urban extensions around Harlow.

The main ***outputs*** of the Study include:

- Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of Harlow Area (Volume 1)
- Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes (Volume 2)
- Framework for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area (Volume 3)
- The Harlow Area Geographical Information Library (Digital Data Output)

The opinions and conclusions set out in the Study reports are entirely those of the consultants, and do not necessarily reflect the formal views of the Steering Group. The reports are made available solely for information purposes and have the status of background technical documents.

The ***Steering Group***, chaired by Harlow District Council, comprised:

- Dianne Cooper (Forward Planning & Regeneration Planning Manager, Harlow District Council)
- Vernon Herbert (Programme Director, Harlow District Council)
- Martin Wakelin (Landscape & Ecology Manager, Essex County Council)
- Ian White (Planning Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Chris Neilan (Landscape Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Simon Odell (Head of Landscape, Hertfordshire County Council)
- Simon Andrews (East Hertfordshire District Council)
- Catherine Cairns (Senior Countryside Officer, Countryside Agency)
- Dearbhla Lawson (Planner, Government Office East)

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(Digital Data Output)

Purpose: a consistent/up to date GIS-based digital 'library'/database of landscape and environmental baseline data.

Use: spatial planning tool for use by all stakeholder partners.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Purpose of Report

- 1.1.1 This report sets out a *Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of the Harlow Area*, and is Volume 1 of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study. It is supported by a wide range of datasets held within the *Harlow Area Geographical Information Library* developed specifically for this Study.
- 1.1.2 The main purpose of the report is to provide a strategic understanding of variations in landscape character, environmental features and their inherent sensitivity to change across the Harlow Area as a whole. Its main use is as a broad-based strategic input to evaluation of the major constraints and opportunities for development as a guide to the overall direction of growth. A more detailed analysis of the sensitive landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of the town that are desirable to safeguard is provided in Volume 2, which is intended to be used to guide evaluation of the location and shape of future development options for urban expansion around the fringes of Harlow.
- 1.1.3 These reports do not contain an assessment of the landscape or environmental impact of specific development options.
- 1.1.4 Together, Volumes 1 and 2 of the Study fulfil the following specific Study objectives contained in the brief:
- to identify and draw together a consistent baseline of landscape and environmental information for the Study Area based on existing data, supplemented by new additional information where necessary;
 - to define and record the landscape and environmental information on a GIS.

Study Area

- 1.1.5 For the purposes of this Study, the 'Harlow Area' is a broadly defined area encompassing both open countryside and urban areas focussed around the town of Harlow. The Harlow Area comprises the entire administrative area of Harlow District Council and part of Epping Forest District within Essex, and includes part of East Hertfordshire District within

Hertfordshire. In consultation with the Steering Group, the precise boundaries of the Harlow Area Study area shown on Figure 1.1 were chosen to align with the boundaries of whole landscape character areas (see Figure 2.9).

1.2 Overall Approach

- 1.2.1 The overall approach to the Strategic Sensitivity Analysis is based on the application of landscape characterisation techniques to inform the structured evaluation of landscape sensitivity, combined with an analysis of designated assets to identify environmental constraints within the Harlow Area.

Landscape Characterisation

- 1.2.2 Characterisation involves identifying, classifying and describing areas of distinctive character, i.e. what makes one landscape ‘different’ from another. A landscape can be assessed by disassembling and analysing its component parts. Such an assessment makes it easier to subsequently evaluate what is important or sensitive in a landscape, why it is sensitive and how best to accommodate change and identify enhancement needs for the future.
- 1.2.3 The landscape includes visible, physical components (e.g. landform, vegetation, land use, settlement), visible, spatial components (e.g. scale, pattern, texture) and non-visible components (e.g. sound and cultural associations). Whilst these do not lend themselves to accurate measurement, they can be easily described to give descriptions that are both relatively objective and meaningful, avoiding value judgements.
- 1.2.4 From an understanding of the component parts of the landscape, it is possible to identify how particular combinations of these interact to create distinctive character. This then allows the classification of the landscape into areas that share common combinations of components (Landscape Character Types) and single, unique areas which are discrete geographical areas of a landscape type (Landscape Character Areas).
- 1.2.5 A detailed description of the process involved in ‘characterising’ Harlow Area’s landscapes is provided in Section 2.4.

Landscape Evaluation

- 1.2.6 *Evaluation* of the landscape is associated with making informed judgements about the landscape. For the purposes of this Study, this is related to the evaluation of the ‘sensitivity’ of the landscape to particular types of change. A detailed description of the approach and methodology used to define the sensitivity of Landscape Character Areas within the Harlow Area to different scales of urban development is set out in Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

The Historic Environment

- 1.2.7 Whilst the approach draws on and incorporates historic landscape characterisation data, and identifies and maps designated historic environment assets such as scheduled monuments, Conservation Areas and listed buildings for example, in line with the brief it is not a detailed study of the archaeological resources in the Harlow Area. However, it is understood that Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council Archaeological Development Control Officers are currently preparing a separate strategic assessment of the relative significance (importance) of known and recorded archaeological/historical sites in the Harlow Area, based on a methodology developed by Essex County Council. This work will provide broad guidance on identification of sites that are desirable to safeguard *in-situ*, and those for which appropriate levels of mitigation may be appropriate. The output, in the form of a GIS data layer, will be suitable for inclusion in the Harlow Area Geographical Information Library (see 1.3 below) in due course.

The Natural Environment

- 1.2.8 Whilst the approach draws on and incorporates available information on the ecological character of the landscape, and identifies and maps designated nature conservation assets such as SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites for example, in line with the brief it is not a detailed study of the ecological resources in the Harlow Area. However, the Countryside Agency’s proposed *Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow Area* will identify and map detailed data on ecological features and habitats from interpretation of new air photograph coverage. The output, in the form of a GIS data layer, will be suitable for inclusion in the Harlow Area Geographical Information Library (see 1.3 below) in due course. The need for more detailed analysis of ecological interest, including a review of protected species records within the Harlow Area, is identified as a priority for action in Volume 3 of this Study.

1.3 The Harlow Area Geographical Information Library

- 1.3.1 All the existing and new landscape and environmental datasets used in the Strategic Sensitivity Analysis work have been defined and recorded on the Harlow Area Geographical Information Library.
- 1.3.2 The Geographical Information Library provides a consistent basis for future analysis and interrogation of datasets. It presents data in a structured and accessible format suitable for distribution to and use by all stakeholder partners as required. The data is presented in industry standard formats suitable for use within mainstream Geographical Information Systems (GIS). It is supported by a short users guide, which describes the structure and content of the Geographical Information Library, data licensing and copyright constraints and other information relevant to data management and updating requirements.

2.0 LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE CONDITIONS

2.0 LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE CONDITIONS

2.1 Physical Influences on Landscape Character

Topography

- 2.1.1 The Harlow Area predominantly comprises a low, gently undulating landscape dissected by two major river valleys: the Lee, running north-south across the western half of the Area, and the Stort, running northeast to southwest across the northern half of the Area (see Figure 2.1).
- 2.1.2 The floodplains for the rivers Stort and Lee are generally flat and wide, encompassing the floors of the two river valleys. The river valley sides, except for around Harlow, are steep up to approximately 60m ODN. Above this, the gradient reduces and the valley sides become more undulating. Radiating out from these two major river valleys are a number of smaller and narrower tributary valleys that divide the surrounding hills and ridges.
- 2.1.3 The highest land in the Harlow Area lies to the south, along the Epping Ridge and South Epping Ridge, where the land rises to 110-115m ODN. Both ridges run northeast-southwest across the southern half of the Harlow Area. The major ridge of Epping Upland has a gently undulating ridgetop and moderate to steep sides.

Drainage

- 2.1.4 The Harlow Area contains the two major rivers of the Lee and Stort, which converge to the east of the Harlow Area, from which the River Lee flows south until it meets the River Thames (see Figure 2.1).
- 2.1.5 A number of tributaries join the Lee and the Stort. These originate on higher ground and meander down the hillsides following the topography and underlying soils and geology. These tributaries tend to be small, steep and narrow in the upper valley reaches, becoming wider and more gently sloping in the main river valleys.
- 2.1.6 The rivers Lee and Stort originally defined the river valley landform in the Harlow Area. However, the engineered Lee Navigation and the extensive post-mineral extraction waterbodies and wetlands now dominate the character of these areas. The Old River Lee diverges from the uniform and engineered Lee Navigation canal at King's Weir. By the time the River Lee reaches the southern part of the Harlow Area the river has become a broad,

artificial, navigable channel. To the east of the main Lee valley a number of small tributaries such as Cobbin's Brook and Nazeing Brook are located in narrower, north-east to south-west aligned valleys separated by broad ridges.

Geology

2.1.7 The diverse landscape character of the Harlow Area has evolved as a result of a complex interaction between its physical structure, vegetation and historic land use, all of which have been strongly influenced by the underlying geology.

2.1.8 The oldest rocks in the Harlow Area were laid down between 440 – 360 million years ago. These mainly consist of hard, slaty shales, mudstones and sandstones. Overlying this base are a number of different geological layers formed between 135 million years ago to the present, leading up to and including the Harlow Area's surface geology. The basic stratigraphy of this geology is as follows:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|
| • Brick Earth | | Quaternary Period (1.8 million years ago to present day) |
| • Lowestoft Till | } | Tertiary period (66-1.8 million years ago) |
| • Thanet Sand Formation | | |
| • Bulhead Bed | } | Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago) |
| • Bagshot Sand | | |
| • Claygate Beds | | |
| • London Clay | | |
| • Reading Beds | | |
| • Upper Chalk | | |
| • Upper Greensand | | |
| • Gault Clay | | |

2.1.9 The surface geology of the Harlow Area (shown on Figure 2.2) overlies an occasionally exposed layer of London Clay interspersed with Claygate Beds. Lowestoft Till laid down during the Anglian Ice Age (472 – 428 thousand years ago) dominates the drift geology. As a consequence the majority of the surface geology is composed of clays, silts and sands with scattered boulders (erratics) known collectively as boulder clay. This originally formed a plateau that has been slowly dissected by the formation of the rivers.

- 2.1.10 The rivers and their valleys lie on alluvium composed of clay, silt, sand and gravel; products of fluvial erosion of the Kesgrave formation and Lowestoft Till deposited along the river floor and its surrounding floodplain. Sand and gravel is found adjacent to the alluvium along the outer extents of the valley floor. However the higher, smaller tributaries have exposed head and glaciofluvial deposits. On the steeper valley sides, especially to the east of the River Lee, the drift geology has been entirely eroded away to expose London Clay and the remains of a landslide south of the River Lee and Stort confluence.

Soils

- 2.1.11 Pelosols (chalky boulder clay) dominate the north and east of the Harlow Area, masking the upper and middle chalk beneath (see Figure 2.3). On the higher ground to the south of the Harlow Area, the surface water gley soils are dominated by slowly permeable calcareous clay with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey characteristics. Ground-water gley soils dominate the Harlow Area's floodplains.
- 2.1.12 The surface-water gley soils that dominate the undulating southern part of the Harlow Area are seasonally waterlogged, slowly permeable soils. These tend to be prominently mottled above 40cm depth. Within the area occupied by these surface-water gley soils the land quality varies from very good to moderate (grade 2 to 3).
- 2.1.13 The ground-water gley soils that are located in and adjacent to the rivers Stort and Lee are stoneless, mainly calcareous clayey soils, over alluvial drift. These soils suffer from a risk of flooding and a tendency to be affected by groundwater. Adjacent to the ground-water, gley soils are the brown soils, whose constituents and characteristics vary around the Harlow Area. They are generally deep and well drained brownish or reddish loamy over clayey soils with localised waterlogging, depending on their topography and elevation. Urban areas cover the majority of this soil in the Harlow Area. Outside the urban areas, the majority of this land is of very good to moderate quality (Grade 2 to 3).
- 2.1.14 The east and north of the Harlow Area is dominated by pelosols, which are slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils that may have a slight risk of water erosion. The quality for these soils is mainly very good (Grade 2) with a few areas of good to moderate land quality (Grade 3).

2.2 Historical Influences on Landscape Character

General

2.2.1 This section provides a brief overview of the historical influences on landscape character within the Harlow Area. It is not intended to be an in-depth or comprehensive analysis of archaeology (see 1.2.7).

2.2.2 The overview has drawn on a number of key primary and secondary sources for Essex and Hertfordshire, including:

- Historic mapping, particularly the early maps of the counties by Speed (1610) and the successive historic editions of the Ordnance Survey. For Essex, the 1594 Norden map and 1777 Chapman and Andre map were particularly important sources, whilst for Hertfordshire, the 1577 Saxton map was an important source;
- Interrogation of the GIS database of the two County Sites and Monuments Records (SMR);
- Designations information, including Scheduled Monuments and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Analysis of the Historic Landscape Characterisation data; and
- Analysis of existing secondary source material.

2.2.3 It should be noted that all of the above sources present issues as to their reliability, completeness and detail. The key issues to note are:

- The information obtained from these sources is necessarily broad and high level, and does not provide a detailed site-by-site understanding of the historical development of the Harlow Area. Such a detailed understanding lies outside the scope of this Study.
- The information sources outlined above tend to focus on designated and well known sites, which results in a bias towards sites that have been identified as being of significant interest and which are still extant.
- The *Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)* data for Essex and Hertfordshire is a highly useful source for obtaining an overview of the historic landscape, and the time-depth of that landscape over the past two centuries or thereabouts (depending on the dates of the map sources used by the HLC). The HLC data used by this Study for Essex is still

in draft form and has not yet been verified. Figures 2.4 to 2.7, which have been derived from the Essex and Hertfordshire HLC data, present analysis of this data. Given the draft nature of the data, the information on these Figures must be treated with caution.

- The use of the SMR GIS database enables a rapid overview of the archaeological resource of the Harlow Area. However, this source cannot be considered to be complete as it is biased towards areas where archaeological research has been conducted and where subsequent activity has not destroyed earlier remains. The absence of archaeological information in the SMR for certain types of activity, or for activity within certain geographical areas, cannot be taken to be an absence of previous activity. This Study has not produced a detailed analysis of the SMR data.

2.2.4 The landscape of the Harlow Area has been adapted by people since humans first inhabited the River Lee valley in the Palaeolithic (500,000- 8,500 BC). Throughout the subsequent millennia, the structure of the modern landscape - its settlements, fields, communications networks and parks - has evolved.

2.2.5 The following overview of the historic development of the Harlow Area identifies key land use themes or factors that have moulded the development of the landscape through time. These are:

- Settlement;
- The Church;
- Agriculture and Enclosure;
- Parks and Forest;
- Communication;
- Industry;
- Military and Defence.

Settlement

2.2.6 The broad settlement pattern of the Harlow Area can be seen to have developed through six key phases:

- The settlement pattern of the Harlow Area has its earliest origins in the prehistoric period: the valleys of the Lee and Stort contain a wide range of evidence for Mesolithic occupation including the important early sites at Rikof's Pit and Dobb's Wier,

Broxbourne. During the Neolithic, the period when farming was first introduced, numerous artefact scatters represent widespread settlement, whilst Causewayed Enclosures, major monuments of earth and timber, were built at Sawbridgeworth and Matching Green. During the Bronze Age, the period when a farming economy became fully developed, many finds of metalwork along the Lea and Stort valley and up into the valley of the Cam are indications, both of dense settlement focussed on these valleys, and a north south routeway; perhaps the first tangible evidence of the M11/Cambridge transport corridor. In the Iron Age the strategic significance of this corridor is marked by a line of hillforts Amesbury Banks, Loughton Camp, Wallbury, Ring Hill, and Wandelbury a most unusual occurrence in the East of England. By this time a landscape of great antiquity and complexity had been created which influenced the way in which each successive generation understood and used their surroundings. A striking example of this is a low hill in what is now Harlow, which was used as the site of a cremation cemetery and pond barrow in the early Bronze Age and became the site of an Iron Age shrine, which in the Roman period was replaced by a major temple.

- The second significant phase of development occurred in the Roman period, when small towns were established at Harlow, close to the Roman temple, and at Cheshunt alongside Ermine Street (in Cheshunt Park outside the Harlow Area). Both these settlements were located within a densely occupied rural landscape of farms and villa estates.
- During the Saxon period, a settlement was established at Harlowbury in Harlow; a minster Church at Nazeing; whilst a royal vill (division of a parish), major abbey and eventually a town were established at Waltham. In addition many of the present villages, for instance Epping and Roydon, have their origins in the Saxon period.
- In the medieval period the settlement pattern consisted of a mixture of small market towns at Harlow, Sawbridgeworth, Waltham Abbey and Epping; small nucleated villages and hamlets as at Hunsdon, Stanstead Abbots, Roydon and Epping Upland and widespread dispersed settlement in the form of farms and cottages. Two very high status moated manorial sites lie at Hunsdon and Rye House, and a scatter of other nationally important medieval moated sites are situated along the western side of the Lea Valley. The alternating expansion and rapid contraction of the population (the latter through plague) caused new towns to be established and others to be abandoned. Modern Epping, south of the Cobbin's Brook, was founded in the 12th century by Waltham Abbey to extract income from those travelling the alternative route from London to Cambridge, whilst Thorley and Gilston were abandoned. Medieval settlement layout is a familiar feature of

today's landscape: particularly to the south, north and east of Harlow, e.g. Matching Tye and Epping Upland. Through the medieval and post-medieval periods common edge settlement became a feature of the south of the Harlow Area, with settlements such as Hastingwood along the southern edge of Hazlewood Common, apparently having their origins in this practice.

- In the post-medieval, the growth of the London market and the development of the transport network led to an increase in settlement in the Harlow Area and the further development of country estates. Both Hoddesdon and Epping became major coaching towns in the 17th and 18th centuries, with Hoddesdon having over 30 coaching inns, and Epping having 26. With the development of the railway the coaching trade dramatically declined, however this new transport system enabled the construction of large housing developments, aimed at London's first commuters. This led to the expansion of the towns and villages of Cheshunt, Wormley, Broxbourne and Hoddesdon and eventually transformed the western edge of the Lee Valley into an extensive urban sprawl.
- In the 20th century, this pattern of new and expanding settlement in the Harlow Area gained a new pace and direction with the post WWII development of the New Town of Harlow (see section 2.3).

The Church

2.2.7 During the Saxon period the Christian church became a major driver in the formation of the modern landscape, through becoming an administrator and adjudicator for the local community in a new national parish system that formed the basis for our modern parishes. A number of historic medieval churches survive as key visible landmarks reminding us of the power of the church in the medieval and later development of the landscape: one of the oldest upstanding religious structures in the Harlow Area is the 12th century Harlowbury Chapel, originally a private chapel for the lord of Harlowbury Manor.

2.2.8 As the Church system developed through the medieval so did its lands and powers. A number of religious communities were located within the Harlow Area, with the most powerful being the 11th century Saxon foundation of Waltham Abbey. Waltham Abbey owned much of the land and estates in the Harlow Area and was a major influence in its medieval development, including the small-scale clearance of heath and woodland for agricultural land and the creation of the new settlement of modern Epping. With the

dissolution of the Abbey in 1540 the estates and lands were divided up and sold, and the landscapes of the Abbey's landholdings changed.

Agriculture and Enclosure

2.2.9 The agricultural landscape has been a feature of the Harlow Area since the adoption and gradual development of agriculture in the Neolithic (c.4,000 to 2,600 BC). The development of the agricultural landscape can be described through four key phases:

- Prehistoric agricultural activity took place within a variety of field systems and open landscapes, used, reused and abandoned across the generations. It is known that in many locations across Britain, the Romans and later the Saxons re-used earlier field systems, and there is thus the potential that some of the field boundaries within the Harlow Area may be of Late Iron Age/Roman origin.
- During the medieval period, the landscape was divided into estates and subdivided into manors owned by lords and farmed by tenants in networks of fields. This feudal form of landscape management would have been prevalent across the Harlow Area, and significant remains of the intricate system of linear 'long green' settlements with their associated field systems survive in the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area. Recent analysis of the agricultural landscape along the Hertfordshire/Essex border has established the presence of large medieval common fields, a landscape type that is very rare in the rest of Essex. These were largely enclosed and sub-divided in the later medieval period, however many of the original boundaries still survive.
- Both during and after the medieval, with the exception of Nazeing and South Roydon, much of the landscape has since undergone piecemeal enclosure, whereby the land has been rationalised into consolidated private ownership through a series of private land exchanges and through gradual enclosure of woodland, forest, heath and common. The draft HLC indicates that significant areas of these pre-18th century enclosed fields survive around the Harlow Area (see Figure 2.4).
- In the 20th century, changes in agricultural practice brought about by the Common Agricultural Policy led to the further rationalisation of fields within the landscape, with the stripping out of field boundaries to create large 'prairie fields'. According to the draft HLC, these are a feature of several areas of the Harlow Area (see Figure 2.7) where their outer boundaries still often conserve the outlines of earlier field systems.

2.2.10 In addition to the Harlow Area's field systems, the landscape also contains a number of other significant agricultural features, including:

- Common land, which survives as areas of open common, whilst other historic areas of common are now enclosed and parcelled into fields. Common land is a historic form of land management through which those with defined 'commoner's rights' are allowed to use the common for specific purposes. Historically these uses included common arable as well as pasturing and the gathering of woodland and other resources. Some of the more unusual uses of commons in the Harlow Area include clay extraction on Harlow Common for the pottery industry at Potters' Street. Since 1965 surviving Common Land has been registered and maintained under the Commons Registration Act (see section 2.5.29). Areas of common land and former common land derived from the draft HLC are shown on Figures 2.4 and 2.5, whilst registered common land is shown on Figure 2.11.
- Woodland and trees have long been a significant aspect of the Harlow Area's landscape and an important agricultural resource. Historically woodlands and trees were carefully managed as a crucially important resource through to the 20th century, providing fuel, fencing and timber for structures as well as materials for basketry and other local industries. The areas surrounding Cheshunt and Worley were particularly known for their fencing and basketry, and a number of the surviving field names contain tree management related words such as 'osiers' (willow whips). Whilst ancient woodland is an ecological designation provided by English Nature, the presence of ancient woodland in the Harlow Area does indicate areas of land that have been continuously wooded since 1600. Areas of designated ancient woodland are shown on Figures 2.4 and 2.10. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are also important features of the historic environment. Some hedgerows have great antiquity, stretching back to the late medieval and earlier, and can be identified on early to mid 19th century tithe maps.
- The Harlow Area's horticultural industry has a long history with its roots in medieval market gardens in the fertile river valleys. The industry blossomed after the removal of tax on glass in 1845, after which the landscapes from Hoddesdon to Cheshunt and from Roydon to Waltham Abbey were dominated by a 'sea of glass'. The industry continues today in a reduced form at Roydon, Nazeing and Lower Nazeing, and historic elements of older greenhouses and water towers can still be identified.

- Valley bottom pasture survives within the large river valley bottoms and historically was located in all of the small streams in the Harlow Area. Historically, valley bottom pasture was of considerable extent and significance, providing rich pasture regularly regenerated by the silts deposited by seasonal flooding.

Parks and Forest

2.2.11 Parks, and the large residences often associated with parks, are a distinctive feature of the Harlow Area's landscape. From the medieval onwards, parks were developed by the nobility as a means of enjoying outdoor pursuits and supplying their table; largely through hunting. The Harlow Area was particularly popular for this type of landscape use, and contains a significant concentration of parks and large houses. Notable clusters occur to the north of the Stort Valley (Pishiobury, Gilston, Briggens, Hunsdon, Stanstead Bury and Bonningtons); around Hoddesdon (High Leigh, Broxbournebury and Wormleybury); near Waltham Abbey (Warlies and Copped Hall) and around Epping (Gaynes Park, Coopersale House and Ongar Great Park). These clusters can be seen on Figures 2.4 and 2.6, as derived from the draft HLC data.

2.2.12 There are four key phases of park development in the Harlow Area:

- Deer parks first appear in the early medieval period. These were established by the nobility with the permission of the King. Medieval parks were not usually laid out to be ornamental, in the way that parks were designed in the 17th century and later, however, the medieval parks may have evoked an aesthetic response, and may have been manipulated to increase this response. Some early parks no longer survive as visible features of the landscape, such as Hunsdon Old Park, which was present by 1124 but whose landscape evidence was destroyed by the creation of an airfield in WWII. However, within the Harlow Area, several notable examples have survived, including Ongar Great Park near Coopersale, which is reputedly the earliest recorded deer park in Britain, dating from 1045; the earthwork boundary that once surrounded the park survives as visible feature in the landscape. Other surviving parks in the Harlow Area, such as those at Copped Hall and Pishiobury, were emparked during the next three centuries.
- During the Tudor period the use of parks for hunting gained even more popularity, largely through the passion of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I for this activity. Parks also began to be developed as aesthetic settings for mansions and manors. Warlies Park, Gaynes Park and

Copped Hall were all used in this way. 16th century earthworks survive at Stanstead Bury, which was emparked in 1577.

- During the 18th century the aesthetic value of landscape moved to the fore, with the development of the English Landscape Movement, and other later landscape design fashions. Down Hall's parkland was redesigned by Charles Bridgeman who was apparently also involved with the park at Briggens. Bridgeman was one of the fathers of the English landscape park and was superseded by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who redesigned Copped Hall's parkland in the mid 18th century. The owners of Coopersale House also consulted Brown about their park. The explosion of interest in parks in the 17th and 18th centuries led to several new parks being created in the Harlow Area, including Gilston Park, north of Harlow.
- The 19th century was particularly notable for the introduction of exotic plants, and Wormleybury Park is particularly famed for its 19th century plant collections. Hunting continued to be a feature of these landscapes, with copses provided specifically to enable the newly fashionable fox hunting. Several parks were redesigned in the 19th century, including Copped Hall.

2.2.13 The residences associated with the parks also went through several historic phases of development. This type of residence has its origin in the early medieval manorial halls, which were later supplanted by impressive halls with moats; many of these fell out of use during and after the 16th century and survive as moated mounds, as at Gilston and Epping Green. The 15th to 17th centuries are generally seen as a transition period in the architectural form of large private houses, with a number of new courtyard mansions created for the elite: one classic example is the unusual 15th century Nether Hall. This development was again superseded by the continual redesign, demolition and replacement of earlier structures with new 18th and 19th century grand houses, such as the Grade II listed 19th century Gilston Hall and the 18th century house designed by James Wyatt for the medieval park at Pishiobury.

2.2.14 A Forest was a particular form of medieval deer park, within which royalty, and certain privileged lords, could hunt deer, though the land itself may not have been owned by the Crown. The term Forest therefore denotes the presence of deer reserved for the royalty and not necessarily the presence of woodland, though woodland may have been part of a Forest. Waltham Forest, the larger precursor of Epping Forest, has its origins as a royal hunting area. The land was owned by Waltham Abbey, and both the Abbey and the Forest were favourite places of Henry VIII before the Dissolution.

Communications

2.2.15 People have always moved within the landscape for activities such as hunting, trading and social meetings. Trackways and the river probably formed the earliest communications networks in the Harlow Area, from early prehistory onwards. Historic routeways are important as the precursors of the modern communications system, but also as a significant influence on the siting of later settlement and other features within the landscape.

2.2.16 There are four key features of the historic communications network in the Harlow Area:

- The Rivers Lee and Stort have been important routeways since early prehistory, as well as being important environments for food, plant materials and other resources. During the medieval period the use of the River Lee became formalised as new cuts were made to improve navigation and the river was diverted for watermills. This process was completed with the establishment of the canal on the River Lee in 1799. The Lee became particularly important for the development of the area's post-medieval gunpowder industry, with special barges created to transport gunpowder from the mills at Waltham, along the River Lee to the Woolwich Arsenal alongside the Thames. The River Stort was also a navigable river and its development and canalisation paralleled that of the Lee.
- Though routeways and trackways had developed across the landscape during prehistory, the first formal roads in Britain were created in the Romano-British period: the east of the Harlow Area contains the line of a Roman road, whilst the very western edge of the Area contains a section of Ermine Street, the nationally important route that ran from London to Lincoln and York. Ermine Street later became one of the four main highways of Saxon England, and part of its line is still used in the London Road. The presence of the Ermine Street route and the north-south alternative route from London to Cambridge influenced the landscape development of the Harlow Area: enabling industry and agriculture through connecting the area with important markets, providing localised income from travellers (as evidenced by the 12th century establishment of modern Epping by Waltham Abbey), and providing access for the rich to develop their parks and estates. With the exception of Ermine Street, the exact origins of the road network in the Harlow Area are currently difficult to discern, with earlier roads being characteristically narrow, winding routes linking settlements. Much of the historic, 19th century and earlier transport network is retained within the landscape, however the Harlow Area is influenced heavily by the modern M11 to the east and the M25 to the south.

- Railways were introduced to the Harlow Area in 1845, when the area became more accessible for tourists, commuters and the transportation of cargo. In response, new housing was created for London's first commuters, eventually infilling settlement and urbanising land up to Hoddesdon, and influencing the development of Sawbridgeworth, Epping and North Weald. The presence of the railway was an important element that influenced the selection of the area for the development of Harlow New Town.
- With the development of modern communications technology, the Harlow Area became significant as the home of the 20th century Ongar Radio Transmitting Station. The Station once occupied a site of 730 acres south of North Weald Bassett; it was constructed in 1920 and was operated by Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company. The first radio-telegraphic services from Ongar in 1921 connected London with Paris and Berne using Morse code. The site was an increasingly central component of the UK's international communications network through the 20th century until the 1990s, when new technology finally replaced the aerials, and the site was gradually closed down.

Industry

2.2.17 There are five key themes in the industrial development of the Harlow Area landscape:

- Mills powered by water and wind were a particular feature of the medieval, when a number were built along the river and on hills to service the growing agricultural industry. At its peak Waltham Abbey had three mills used for grinding corn. A number of later post medieval mills survive within the Harlow Area along the Stort and Lee Valleys such as Harlow Burnt Mill, and earthworks mark the sites of others, for example Matching mill mound.
- Brick, tile and pottery manufacture took advantage of the area's clay soils. The antiquity of this industry is reflected in the mention of 'Cok the Pottereshull' in documentation dating from 1251, referring to Potters' Street south of Old Harlow. However, pottery has been made since the Neolithic, and its manufacture has probably been a feature of the Harlow Area landscape since that time. The industry reached its peak in the 17th century and by the 18th century Potters' Street had become a small town, remnants of which can be seen within modern Harlow.

- Gunpowder was manufactured at the nationally significant Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey since the 17th century, and possibly earlier. This site has the longest known continuous manufacture of explosives of any site in the country, and connects the Harlow Area's landscape with national and international themes of military power and defence. Initiated under private ownership, the site was sold to the government in 1787 and was a major supplier of powder to the Army during the Napoleonic Wars. With this came expansion, and the local economy became increasingly reliant on the powder mills. The site continued to supply the Army until 1945, after which it became a military research establishment.
- Malting, during which barley was malted to make beer or whisky, became an important industry within the Harlow Area with the 16th and 17th century growth in the popularity of beer. A number of malthouses were historically located along the Rivers Stort and Lee, and an extensive group of 19th century malthouses survive on either side of the London-Cambridge railway line, in the Lower Sheering and Sawbridgeworth Conservation Areas. Hoddesdon and Cheshunt were particularly important as the centre of the local malt industry.
- The extraction of gravel, deposited in the river valleys during the ice age, has become a major post-medieval and modern activity in the Harlow Area, with particular concentrations of sites around Ware and Waltham Cross. As the gravels become exhausted a number of sites have been reinvented as lakes and water parks for recreation and nature reserves.

Military and Defence

- 2.2.18 The Harlow Area is notable for its military history, containing sites such as King's Weir, where King Alfred pushed back the Vikings in the 9th century. Military developments have also made localised impacts on the landscape at sites such as the late 19th/early 20th century redoubt at North Weald (intended for storage of munitions and barracks; the most northerly fortified centre in the contemporary London Defence Scheme) and the post-medieval Royal Gunpowder Mills. However, it is only with WWII that the military has had an extensive impact across the Harlow Area landscape. This impact took two main forms: airfields and defence lines.

- 2.2.19 During the Second World War there was one RAF Fighter Station and three temporary USA Air Force (USAAF) bombardment airfields situated within the Harlow Area. The three USAAF airfields at Matching, Sawbridgeworth and Hunsdon are now disused; the latter two are scheduled monuments. The RAF Fighter Station was located at North Weald, which had been used as an RAF Flight Station from 1916 to 1919 and was an RAF airfield from 1922 to 1964. RAF North Weald played an integral role in the Battle of Britain as a Fighter Station. North Weald is still in use as a civilian airfield, though it is greatly altered.
- 2.2.20 The airfields still contain earthworks, concrete runways and defensive structures, including the ubiquitous pillboxes. The influence of these airfields extended across the landscape, with dummy sites or 'decoy sites' created to protect them, mostly using film props and sets. Although little now remains of this feature, Nazeing Common contained the decoy site for the North Weald Airfield.
- 2.2.21 The WWII Outer London Defence Ring is a second feature of the Second World War landscape that still survives today. This is a final defence line that takes the form of an anti-tank ditch running south of the Harlow Area, with associated pillboxes. A number of pillboxes are also visible around the River Lee, which would have been a key transport route from the Thames.

Summary

- 2.2.22 The Harlow Area's landscape contains surviving historic and archaeological features from all periods of its history and prehistory, which both illustrate and reveal the history of the area. Together these features constitute an important contribution to cultural heritage and local identity within the Harlow Area.

2.3 Development of Harlow New Town in the Landscape

- 2.3.1 There are twenty-one 20th century New Towns in Britain, established by statute and designated between 1946 and 1970. Harlow was one of the first four New Towns to be formally designated, alongside Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead and Crawley.
- 2.3.2 Sir Frederick Gibberd was appointed as the consultant architect-planner for Harlow in September 1946, and by November 1946 Gibberd's plans were advanced enough for the boundary of the town to be set. In January 1948, Harlow's Master Plan was formally deposited with the Minister of Town and Country Planning as a planning proposal. The first

of the New Town plans to reach this stage, it took 14 months for the Harlow Master Plan to work its way through the planning process, and it was approved in April 1949. Harlow was the first New Town to be approved by the Minister.

2.3.3 The site of the proposed new development of Harlow described a rough rectangle of 3½ miles (5.6km) from north to south and 4½ miles (7.2 km) from east to west across its widest parts. The valley of the River Stort formed the northern boundary, beyond which is the rising ground of Hertfordshire; Rye Hill formed the southern boundary. Gibberd's Master Plan had a mirror symmetry about a north to south axis extending from the Stort Valley to Rye Hill, with housing and industry balanced on either side. The boundary of the New Town was designed in order to retain as much of the good agricultural land to the east as possible.

2.3.4 The Master Plan was developed through the application of a number of key principles specifically developed for Harlow by Gibberd. These can be summarised as:

- ***The Pre-existing Landscape*** - Gibberd planned a strong relationship between the design of the New Town and the existing landform and other pre-existing historic and landscape features, through:
 - * The retention of the valleys with their streams, fine trees and natural undergrowth.
 - * The reuse of older buildings in order to "*retain a link with Harlow's historic past*" (Gibberd 1980, 6).
 - * The reuse of some of the pre-existing road network and the retention of removed older routes as cycle lanes or footpaths.
 - * The conservation of the character of the villages of Old Harlow and Potters Street and the restriction of urban development in hamlets like Netteswell Cross and Tye Green to low-density in-filling, so that their rural character was unspoilt.
- ***Landscape Pattern*** - This was based around a geometric pattern of four districts centred on the Town Park, separated by green wedges that cut into the very heart of the town and all surrounded by an encircling Green Belt.
- ***Open Space, Recreation and Access to the Countryside*** - At Harlow open space was not simply land that was not built on, but formed an inter-connected landscape in its own right. This included green routeways and linear parks as well as more traditional parks: "*Everyone has natural landscape within walking distance and he [sic] can walk to other*

parts of the town or out into the countryside without passing through other built-up areas" (Gibberd, 1980, 10).

- ***Tree planting and land shaping*** - Tree planting and land shaping were both important to the Harlow Master Plan. Tree planting was undertaken on a massive scale to enhance the green space within the town and to provide more variety and contrast within the built urban landscape. New topographic features, such as mounds, were created as screens and as new interesting landforms in their own right; several of these were designed by Dame Sylvia Crowe.
- ***Building Contrast*** - Buildings of more than two storeys had a broad landscape setting, to create visual contrast and to achieve maximum variety across the town. This was a particular feature of the Town Centre, which was the only part of the town designed to have vertical growth. Building groups were placed on high ground, leaving the valleys open and extended to separate the built-up areas from each other. At the edges of the town, contrast was achieved between the urban area and its surrounding rural setting.
- ***Building Density*** - Housing was concentrated in relatively high density designs across the entirety of the town: "*Housing on the edge of the town is of the same density as that near the Town Centre, and instead of gradually petering out into the suburbs, the town ends and the countryside begins*" (Gibberd 1980, 13). Space saved through this density of housing was distributed across the town, to separate one area from another. This also ensured a strong visual contrast between the town and the surrounding green belt.
- ***Districts, Neighbourhoods and Housing Groups*** - Three of the four districts that surrounded the Town Centre were built to be largely self-contained, with their own shopping and social centres and schools. The fourth drew on the resources available in the Town Centre. The districts operated like small towns, and were separated into neighbourhoods that focused on their Primary School, with associated shops, a pub and a small local communal hall. Within these neighbourhoods, more localised identities were created through the distinct architecture used for each housing group.
- ***Housing Design*** - The localised unification of housing design was used to create distinct and identifiable local 'housing groups', creating a varied local character across the town. The architectural forms of the different housing groups utilised common themes, including:

- * 'Open fronts', whereby the ground immediately in front of the dwellings was used as open space for all the residents;
 - * 'Mixed development', relating the type of dwelling to the family that is to occupy it;
 - * The provision of 'special housing', for example dwellings for older people and low rental flats for single people.
- **Work** - Places of work were dispersed across the entire town, with manufacturing industries set within two major estates and service industries located within the Neighbourhood Centres. Offices and specialised commercial and industrial buildings were distributed across the town, "*making their individual contributions to the urban scene*" (Gibberd, 1980, 24). Tall office blocks were to be confined to the Town Centre, "*increasing the urban scale and making the silhouette of the Town Centre more interesting*" (Gibberd 1980, 25), though several were eventually built in locations outside of the Town Centre.
 - **Town Centre** - This included an inner pedestrian core of precincts and squares surrounded by roads and car parks. This area was the heart for Harlow and contained shops, civic buildings, the Technical College and offices all set within a series of pedestrian 'rooms' with their own character and function. Landscape gardens within the Town Centre and lawns to the south of the area were used to provide landscape setting for the Town Centre's large buildings. The Town Centre had a concentrated urban form, and was the only site within the town designed to have vertical growth.

2.3.5 The thinking behind some of these principles was further elaborated by Gibberd in 1980:

"...the site of new towns were largely rural areas and so the designers based their designs on our way of urban life; a way which, among other things, prefers segregation of home and work, has an innate love of nature, enjoys open air exercise - and, whilst demanding privacy for the individual family, likes some measure of community life.

It is a way of life in which most families no longer like living in town centres, preferring a suburban environment of two-storey houses with private gardens, and it is one which is largely dependent on motorised transport, with the private car as the ideal. In a new town, it is a way of life largely dependent for its source of work in light industry and services.

To meet these social demands, the Harlow Plan, in common with those of other new towns, defines distinct areas for living in the form of neighbourhoods. Industry is in industrial estates and the focus of the design is the town centre. The zones of building are connected to

one another and to the region by a system of main roads, largely free of building frontage, and the whole is contained by Ebenezer Howard's surrounding Green Belt of agricultural land" (Gibberd in Gibberd et al 1980, 36).

- 2.3.6 The original plan was developed by Gibberd to accommodate 60,000 people. In 1952 this was expanded to 80,000 as it was felt that the services could support a larger population, and that this size of population would provide the town with a stronger financial base.
- 2.3.7 It was envisaged that the town would initially grow at a rate of about 2,000 houses a year. However, construction was slow to begin, with only 30 new houses being built by 1950 and only 2,000 completed by 1953. After 1953 the process gathered steam and developed on target. By 1957 over 10,000 homes had been built; by 1973 nearly 22,000 had been completed.
- 2.3.8 Through the 1960s and 1970s, attention turned from the fulfilment of the Master Plan to the expansion of Harlow, beyond the housing densities indicated in Gibberd's design. Two new housing areas at Katherines and Sumners at Tylers Cross were built, and further opportunities for expansion were sought. In the 1970s, the town's early baby boomers began to leave school and have children themselves and new resources were needed for them, including new jobs and new homes. This re-stimulated the expansion debate, which has continued ever since.

2.4 Landscape Character Areas in the Harlow Area

- 2.4.1 'Character' can be defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make each landscape or townscape different. The character of an area is influenced by particular combinations of ecological, historical, visual, settlement and built components. Added to this are other intangible factors such as tranquillity and sense of place.

Regional Characterisation

- 2.4.2 At a national level, the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) and English Nature, with help from English Heritage, produced a document entitled *The Character of England* (1996). This identifies unique regional areas that make up the fabric of the English countryside, for the first time bringing natural and landscape character together. This sets the scene for development planning and control, and aims to help local authorities and others consider how best to enhance and respect local distinctiveness.

2.4.3 Two national character areas identified in the *Character of England* cover the Harlow Area:

- South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86); and
- Northern Thames Basin (111).

Sub-Regional Characterisation

2.4.4 Against the background of the *Character of England* work, Hertfordshire County Council (September 1997) defined several Landscape Character Regions within the Harlow Area as part of a county-wide study. These are:

- Region 4: The East Hertfordshire Plateau;
- Region 5: The Central River Valleys; and
- Region 6: The South Hertfordshire Plateau.

2.4.5 These have subsequently been subdivided into County-Level Landscape Character Areas in the south of Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire County Council 2001).

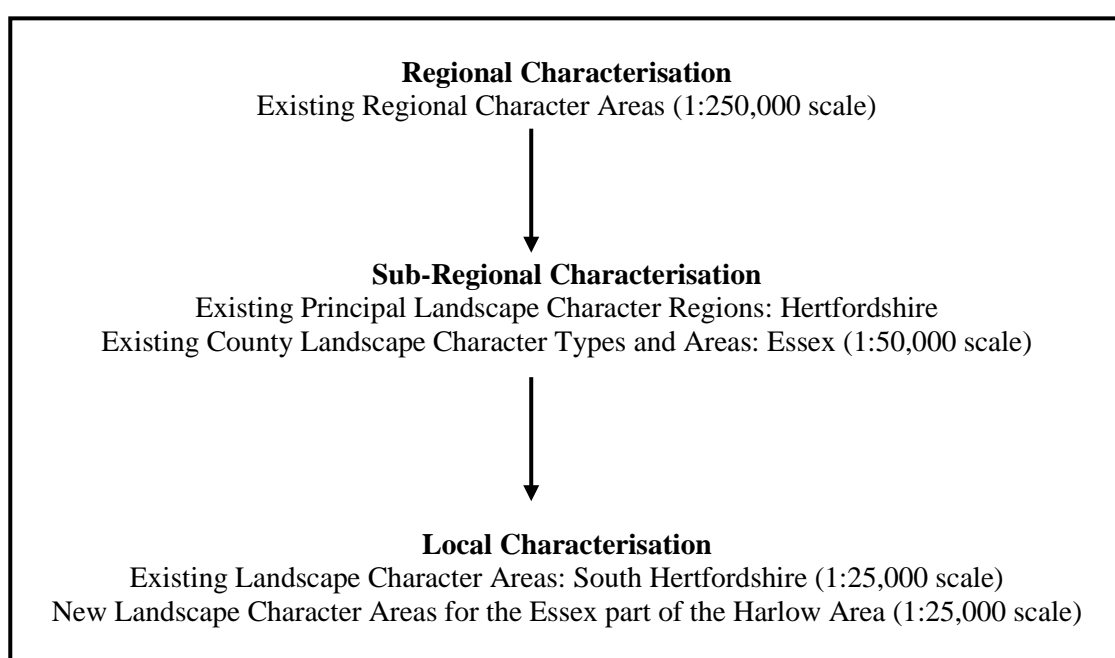
2.4.6 In a similar process, CBA (2002) defined County-Level Landscape Character Types and Areas for Essex County Council. There are five Essex County-Level Landscape Character Areas within the Harlow Area:

- C2 Stort Valley;
- C3 Lee Valley;
- B1 Central Essex Farmlands;
- D1 Epping Forest and Ridges; and
- G1 Harlow and Environs.

Local Characterisation

2.4.7 Using the framework outlined above, local Landscape Character Areas of the Harlow Area have been defined and mapped. For the Hertfordshire part of the Harlow Area, the local level characterisation work set out in the South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (Hertfordshire County Council, 2001) has been used without significant modification within this Study. Some minor alterations to character area boundaries have been made around the County boundary to ensure consistency of fit with characterisation within Essex.

- 2.4.8 For the Essex part of the Harlow Area, new local Landscape Character Areas have been defined specifically for this Study, using a methodology consistent with the South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment. The Essex Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, 2002) was used as the starting point for this process. Whilst the new local Landscape Character Areas fit predominantly within the boundaries of the Essex County-level Landscape Character Areas, some minor boundary changes were necessary due to the more detailed scale of working.
- 2.4.9 The relationship between the different levels of landscape characterisation are summarised below:



Landscape Character of the Harlow Area – An Overview

- 2.4.10 The Harlow Area has a rich and diverse landscape. The underlying topography of the area divides the environment between river valleys with associated landscapes (marshes and floodplain) and higher land (uplands, plateaus, ridges and slopes). The broad Lee Valley dominates the Harlow Area and contains a diverse mosaic of wetland landscapes and commercial and industrial development within its floodplain. The narrower Stort Valley runs across the northern half of the area, connecting with the Lee Valley in the east. Patches of dairy farming and parkland are associated with the more intricate landscape of the Stort Valley.

- 2.4.11 The upland and plateau landscapes are predominantly characterised by arable farmland, with varying field sizes. Whilst the majority of the fields are modern prairie fields, caused by the 1950s and later enclosure of fields and removal of field boundaries, smaller irregular pre-18th century field systems are apparent throughout the Harlow Area, with particularly significant concentrations to the west and south. Ancient woodlands, old buildings, parklands, commons, greens and some assarted fields grubbed out from the royal hunting ground of Waltham Forest and from common land and other non-agricultural lands, all provide further visible links with the past. Church towers and occasional modern water towers provide focal points within the landscape. Electricity pylons also straddle the Lee Valley, giving a dominant reminder of the vertical infrastructure connected with Hoddesdon and Cheshunt urban areas. Visually prominent glasshouses, a modern expression of an older market gardening tradition, dominate the plateau landscape to the east of the Lee Valley.
- 2.4.12 The settlement pattern within the Harlow Area's non-urban areas consists of predominantly small-scale rural medieval and post-medieval settlements. Farmsteads are scattered across the landscape, whilst the visible remains of the moated manor sites also scattered across the Harlow Area are indicators of earlier settlement patterns. Harlow New Town consists of a series of planned residential neighbourhoods and commercial and industrial areas, separated and connected by publicly accessible green corridors. Comparable in size to Harlow, a conurbation of settlements (Hoddesdon, Cheshunt, Broxbourne and Waltham Cross) has developed in a linear corridor along the main London to Cambridge road (A10) and railway in the west of the area.
- 2.4.13 Several major transport corridors dominate the Harlow Area. The M11 dissects the eastern half of the area, whilst the M25 forms the southern boundary of the Area. The A10 also has a dominant impact upon the west of the area.

Landscape Character Types

- 2.4.14 As part of the process of characterising the Harlow Area's landscape, ten Landscape Character Types have been identified. These are defined as broad tracts of landscape with common characteristics that may recur in different parts of the Harlow Area, without being directly related to specific locations. These generic Landscape Character types have been defined from an analysis of geology, soils, topography, land cover and settlement pattern. Their distribution is shown on Figure 2.8 and their key characteristics specific to the Harlow Area (which may differ from the key characteristics of similar Landscape Character Types outside the Area) are summarised below.

Major Urban Areas

- Combination of several residential, commercial and industrial areas
- Large areas of publicly accessible open greenspace
- Varying architectural styles
- Well connected to the major road network

Urban Areas

- Commercial areas with shops, restaurants and small offices, centred around a high street
- Residential areas comprising a mix of housing ages and architectural styles
- Apparent historic influence

Valley Floodplains

- River or series of water bodies flowing through the area
- Variation in urban impact, dependent on whether industry is water-related or not
- Pronounced wetland vegetation
- Variety of hydrological types that can include: meandering river; canalised navigation or extensive waterbodies from former mineral workings
- Flat landform

Marshes

- Linear area of wetland
- Mosaic of habitats with a wide variety of fauna: swans, geese and ducks
- Regenerating wetland scrub and woodland creating visual boundaries
- Flat landform

Ridges and Slopes

- Series of minor ridges and slopes
- Gently undulating or rolling landform
- Woodland with public access
- Isolated farmsteads
- Small areas of parkland

Plateaus

- Medium to large scale fields
- Series of winding lanes
- Scattered farmsteads

- Predominantly arable farmland
- Predominantly flat landform

Uplands

- Flat or gently sloping uplands
- Small-scale settlements
- Scattered farmsteads

Ridges

- Broad ridge-top landform
- Pronounced slopes leading up to elevated/exposed ridge-top

Wooded Ridges

- Strongly wooded/enclosed character
- Semi-natural and ancient woodland
- Distinctive ridge landform

Ridges and Valleys

- Series of broad valleys, encapsulated by minor ridges
- Undulating landform
- Predominantly arable farmland, interspersed with pasture

Landscape Character Areas

- 2.4.15 Thirty-one distinctive Landscape Character Areas have been defined within the Harlow Area. These are unique areas with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics, both physical and experiential, that combine to create a distinct sense of place. They represent discrete geographical areas of a particular Landscape Character Type; for example the Middle Lee Valley South (3) Landscape Character Area has a different character from Rye Meads (6), although they are both classified as the same Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Type. Some Landscape Character Areas have been further divided into sub-areas to identify locally distinctive variations within the overall Area. The distribution of Landscape Character Areas is shown on Figure 2.9 and structured descriptions or ‘profiles’ of their main characteristics are included in Appendix A. The relationship of Landscape Character Areas to the Landscape Character Types was shown on Figure 2.8.

2.5 Environmental Designations

- 2.5.1 This section provides a brief overview of the extent of nature conservation, historic environment, landscape and other relevant planning designations within the Harlow Area.
- 2.5.2 The locations and extents of the designations are shown on Figures 2.10, 2.11 and 2.12. The information source for each designation is noted under each designation listed below. It should be noted that some datasets are not complete for the entire Harlow Area due to a lack of availability of digital data.

Nature Conservation Designations (see Figure 2.10)

Ramsar Sites

- 2.5.3 Ramsar sites are designated under the international Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. This is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international co-operation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Information on Ramsar Sites in the Harlow Area was obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.4 There are three separate areas within the Lee Valley that contain seven Ramsar sites, at Turnford and Cheshunt Pits, Rye Meads and Amwell Quarry. The Ramsar sites are also designated as Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites.

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

- 2.5.5 Special Protection Areas are internationally important sites for birds, and are designated by the Secretary of State under the terms of the European Community Directive (79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Once designated, the Government is obliged to take steps to avoid any significant pollution, disturbance or the deterioration of the habitats on the site. Information on the Special Protection Areas in the Harlow Area has been obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.6 The seven Ramsar sites identified above are also designated as Special Protection Areas, sharing the same locations and boundaries. The SPAs are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

- 2.5.7 Special Areas of Conservation are designated under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (92/43/EEC). These are areas of land comprising habitats, and supporting species, which are rare in a European context and are subject to special protection from the time they are first identified as candidate sites. They are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest under national legislation. Information about the SACs in the Harlow Area was obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.8 There are two areas in the Harlow Area that are designated as part of a SAC. In the south of the Harlow Area, a small part of Epping Forest is included and also a small part of Broxbourne Woods to the west.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.5.9 Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated by English Nature under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to protect the nationally important nature conservation interest of a site. Information about the SSSIs in the Harlow Area was obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.10 There are 13 SSSIs in the Harlow Area, predominantly concentrated around the Lee Valley. SSSIs are located in the Ramsar/SPA areas and also alongside the Stort River tributary to the north west of Harlow and south of Bishop's Stortford. There are other sites on the southwest fringe of Harlow and to the north east of Epping.

National Nature Reserves (NNR)

- 2.5.11 National Nature Reserves are declared under section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or Section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as sites of national importance. Information about National Nature Reserves has been obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.12 There is an NNR to the north east of the Harlow Area that also extends beyond the study area boundary. The relevant area of NNR covers some 25 hectares.

Ancient Woodland

- 2.5.13 Ancient Woodlands are designated by English Nature and defined as areas having had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. Information about Ancient Woodlands was obtained from English Nature.
- 2.5.14 There are a number of Ancient Woodlands identified in the Harlow Area, particularly to the north and north east of Epping. Many of the Ancient Woodlands share SSSI and County Wildlife boundaries.

County Wildlife Sites

- 2.5.15 Within the Harlow Area there are approximately 100 wildlife sites of county or local importance. These sites are known as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), Wildlife Sites or County Wildlife Sites (CoWS). Information about these designations was obtained from Essex County Council and Hertfordshire Biological Record Centre.
- 2.5.16 The larger sites are located around the southern fringe of Harlow, to the east of Epping, and along the Lee River and Stort River valleys. The sites are otherwise scattered around the rural parts of the Harlow Area.

Local Nature Reserves

- 2.5.17 Local Nature Reserves are established by English Nature or by local authorities to promote the study of natural features and encourage their preservation. Information on Local Nature Reserves was obtained from Harlow District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Broxbourne District Council and the Hertfordshire Biological Record Centre.
- 2.5.18 There are LNRs identified in the Replacement Harlow Local Plan Second Deposit Draft, the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan and in the Broxbourne Local Plan Second Review. There are two LNRs within the Green Wedges to the north of Harlow and another to the south west of the town at Parndon Wood, which is also designated as an SSSI. Within Epping Forest District, there are three LNRs – the Nazeing Triangle, Roughtalley's Wood and Church Lane Flood Meadow. In Broxbourne Borough there is a LNR site identified on the urban fringe to the north west of Hoddesdon.

Protected Wildlife Verge

- 2.5.19 Protected Wildlife Verges have been identified in the Replacement Harlow Local Plan Second Deposit Draft due to their ecological value. This designation is unique to Harlow District, and information about this designation was obtained from Harlow District Council. There are eight Protected Wildlife Verges located within the Green Wedges and in the urban fringe.

Historic Environment Designations (See Figure 2.11)

- 2.5.20 There are a variety of historic environment designations within the Harlow Area. These range from designations of individual buildings e.g. Listed Buildings, through to designations for designed landscapes, such as Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.
- 2.5.21 Historic environment designations are currently under review by DCMS as part of the wider Heritage Protection Review. New legislation to support the review is currently expected in 2007. This Review seeks to simplify the designations system, and to place a greater emphasis on integrated management of designated sites and landscapes.

Scheduled Monuments (SM)

- 2.5.22 Scheduled Monuments are ancient monuments and archaeological sites included on a Schedule in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which recognises the national importance of such monuments. SMs are afforded statutory protection and require Scheduled Monument Consent for works affecting them. Information about Scheduled Monuments was obtained from English Heritage.
- 2.5.23 There are approximately 70 Scheduled Monuments in the Harlow Area, particularly around Hunsdon and Matham Wood in the East Hertfordshire District and at Waltham Abbey in Epping Forest District. There are also a number of sites within or close to Harlow.

Conservation Areas

- 2.5.24 Conservation Areas are areas of special local or regional architectural or historic interest and character. The designation, preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas is the responsibility of the local planning authority. Conservation Area status recognises the

importance of collections of historic buildings and their settings as critical assets of our cultural heritage that should be conserved for future generations. Information about Conservation Areas was obtained from the following District Councils: Epping Forest; Uttlesford; Harlow; Broxbourne; and East Hertfordshire.

- 2.5.25 There are 36 Conservation Areas in the Harlow Area, predominantly located in the historical centres of the towns and villages. There are also two large Conservation Areas in rural settings within the Epping Forest District area. They are located at Roydon and Nazeing to the south-west of Harlow, and around Copped Hall near Epping in the south of the Harlow Area.

Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

- 2.5.26 These are included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest compiled by English Heritage to draw attention to their importance as an essential part of the nation's heritage. This status does not currently provide any form of statutory protection; however, local planning authorities encourage the conservation, restoration and maintenance of historic parks and gardens within their plan areas. As with listed buildings, these landscapes are afforded grades of I, II* and II. Information about Registered Parks and Gardens was obtained from English Heritage.
- 2.5.27 There are nine such sites in the Harlow Area with the largest site located at Copped Hall to the west of Epping. There are further large registered landscapes at Down Hall in the north east of the Harlow Area, at Stanstead Bury to the north west of Harlow, Pishiobury to the south of Sawbridgeworth and Wormleybury to the north west of Cheshunt. Other smaller sites include Harlow Water Gardens; the House, Harlow; Coopersale House and Amwell Grove and Amwell Pool.

Ancient Woodland

- 2.5.28 See 2.5.13 – 2.5.14 above and Figure 2.10.

Registered Common Land

- 2.5.29 Whilst the term 'common land' has general application in describing a particular historic form of land management, designated Common Land in particular is land registered and maintained under the 1965 Commons Registration Act. This designated land is generally of

importance to wildlife, landscape, historic, archaeological and public interests. Information about Registered Common Land was obtained from DEFRA via the MAGIC website.

- 2.5.30 There are over 15 areas of Common Land in the Harlow Area. These range in size from the extensive Common Land at Nazeing Park (south of Harlow), to the cluster of Common Land areas at Parndon Mead (north of Harlow), to the small and isolated common at Housham Tye, to the east of the Harlow Area.

Ancient Landscapes

- 2.5.31 Ancient Landscapes are defined by Essex County Council as important areas of historic landscape that can include both man-made and semi-natural features that pre-date 1600. Information about Ancient Landscapes was obtained from Epping Forest District Council.
- 2.5.32 The Epping Forest Local Plan identified Ancient Landscapes near Waltham Abbey and North Weald Bassett (Ongar Park) in the south of the Harlow Area.

Other Designations (see Figure 2.12)

Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Conservation Areas

- 2.5.33 Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Conservation Areas are both local landscape designations that aim to protect the visual quality of important areas as defined in Local Plans. Special Landscape Areas are defined by Harlow District Council. Landscape Conservation Areas are defined by East Hertfordshire District Council. Information on their boundaries was obtained from the respective District Councils.
- 2.5.34 There are 4 Special Landscape Areas defined in the Replacement Harlow Local Plan Second Deposit Draft around the Harlow urban fringe areas to the southwest, west, northwest and northeast of the town.
- 2.5.35 The East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review Deposit identifies Landscape Conservation Areas extending from Hunsdon to the northern boundary of the Harlow Area, surrounding the urban conurbation of Cheshunt, Broxbourne and Hoddesden to the east.

Green Wedges

- 2.5.36 Green Wedges have been designated by Harlow District Council. Green Wedges are areas of green, open space to be kept free of new built development. They are part of the character of Harlow and an element of the original Master Plan for the town, and have been identified for protection in the adopted and deposit draft local plans for Harlow District. Data for Green Wedges was obtained from Harlow District Council.

Indicative Floodplain

- 2.5.37 The Environment Agency is responsible for identifying indicative fluvial floodplain areas that are at risk of flooding. There are significant floodplains around the Lee Valley and Stort Valley. Information on indicative floodplain boundaries was obtained from the Environment Agency. PPG25 on Development and Flood Risk introduced 'Flood Zones' which provide more detailed indications of the likelihood of flooding and the predicted extent of the natural floodplain and extreme flood events. Information on Flood Zones was not available for inclusion in this study.

Green Belt

- 2.5.38 Based on national policy guidance (PPG 2), local authorities designate Green Belts in their development plans. Green Belts are areas of land to be protected from development, to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Information about Green Belt designations in the Harlow Area was obtained from Epping Forest, Uttlesford, Harlow, Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire District Councils.
- 2.5.39 Almost the entirety of the Harlow Area has been designated as Green Belt. Areas not designated as Green Belt include towns and villages; the north of the Harlow Area around Hunsdon, and an area to the northeast near Hatfield Heath.

Country Parks

- 2.5.40 The 1968 Countryside Act empowered local authorities to purchase land for the provision of country parks. The aim was to offer increasing number of town dwellers the ability to enjoy open-air recreation, without travelling long distances and adding to road congestion.
- 2.5.41 There is one Country Park in the Harlow Area, at Hatfield Forest. This park is managed by the National Trust. Information about this Country Park was obtained from Essex County Council.

Regional Parks

- 2.5.42 There is one Regional Park in the Harlow Area, the Lee Valley Regional Park, which was the first Regional Park in Britain. The park consists of 4000 hectares of open space and is managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority to meet the recreation, leisure and nature conservation needs of London, Hertfordshire and Essex. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority was set up in 1967 by Act of Parliament, and produces its own Lee Valley Regional Park Plan, showing the future use and development of the Regional Park. Information on the Regional Park boundary was obtained from Essex County Council.

Protected Lanes

- 2.5.43 These are designated by Essex District Councils due to their significant contribution to the character of the countryside and their particular historic value. There are numerous Protected Lanes in the Epping Forest District and Uttlesford District that cover the majority of the south, east and northeast of the Harlow Area. Data for Protected Lanes was obtained from Essex County Council.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.5.44 The existing network of definitive rights of way is protected by County and District Councils. There are many footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes in the Harlow Area. Digital data for Public Rights of Way was only currently available for Essex, and therefore no data is shown for Hertfordshire on Figure 2.12.

3.0 EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY

3.0 EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY

3.1 Approach

- 3.1.1 There is no single agreed and adopted method for assessing the sensitivity of landscape character. As noted in the recent Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Swanwick 2004) *"This is a rapidly developing field in which practitioners are actively exploring different approaches in different circumstances"*. The methodology adopted by this Study (see Section 3.2) has been developed from approaches outlined in the Topic Paper and from other studies undertaken by CBA and other bodies.

Concepts of Sensitivity and Capacity

- 3.1.2 As outlined in the Topic Paper, it is vital to define and clarify what sensitivity and its partner term capacity mean. The following definitions set out in Topic Paper 6 have been adopted by this Study.

"i) Overall landscape sensitivity: This term should be used to refer primarily to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change that may be under consideration. It is likely to be most relevant in work at the strategic level, for example in preparation of regional and sub-regional spatial strategies.

Relating it to the definitions used in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, landscape sensitivity can be defined as embracing a combination of:

- the sensitivity of the landscape resource (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character);*
- the visual sensitivity of the landscape, assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape and the scope to mitigate visual impact.*

ii) Landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change: This term should be used where it is necessary to assess the sensitivity of the landscape to a particular type of change or development. It should be defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape itself, the way that it is perceived and the particular nature of the type of change or development in question.

iii) **Landscape capacity:** *This term should be used to describe the ability of a landscape to accommodate different amounts of change or development of a specific type. This should reflect:*

- *the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, but more specifically its sensitivity to the particular type of development in question, as in (i) and (ii). This means that capacity will reflect both the sensitivity of the landscape resource and its visual sensitivity;*
- *the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements in it."*

3.1.3 Given the development context for this Study, it was decided that the most appropriate approach was to assess **landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change**. This reflects the principle that different landscapes respond to different types of change in different ways. Certain types of change would not significantly adversely affect the character of some areas, whereas the same scale and type of change would substantially alter the character of other areas of landscape, even with mitigation.

3.2 Evaluation Methodology

3.2.1 The key stages involved in the sensitivity analysis methodology are:

Stage 1: Definition of Parameters for Analysis

Stage 2: Sensitivity Analysis of Specific Landscape Attributes

Stage 3: Sensitivity Analysis of Landscape Character Areas

3.2.2 Each of these stages is outlined below.

Stage 1: Definition of Parameters for Analysis

3.2.3 In line with the Topic Paper, the assessment of landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change requires the definition of:

- *‘The exact form and nature of the change that is proposed to take place;*
- *The particular aspects of the landscape likely to be affected by the change, including aspects of both landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity.’*

3.2.4 The following explores these two elements with respect to the Harlow Area.

Form and Nature of the Change

3.2.5 Given the likely nature of change within the Harlow Area, this analysis has focused on determining the sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas to three broad types of change:

- a) ***Very large scale urban development*** comprising a mixture of residential, commercial etc with transport and other necessary service elements. In terms of scale, these would broadly equate to a Harlow District. These very large areas could be accommodated as urban expansions or new stand-alone settlements.
- b) ***Substantial urban developments*** comprising a mixture of residential, commercial etc with transport and other necessary infrastructure. In terms of scale, these would broadly equate to a Harlow Neighbourhood. These areas would most likely be accommodated as urban expansions but may be small stand-alone settlements.
- c) ***Small-scale urban developments*** of c.50 to 100 houses. These small blocks of development would almost certainly be urban expansions attached to existing settlements.

Aspects of the Landscape likely to be Affected

3.2.6 In addressing the overall landscape sensitivity of an area (regardless of what type of change may occur), Topic Paper 6 identifies the following as the two key factors that should be taken into account:

- *"Judging the sensitivity of the landscape as a whole, in terms of its overall character, its quality and condition, the aesthetic aspects of its character, and also the sensitivity of individual elements contributing to the landscape. This can be usefully referred to as **landscape character sensitivity**;*
- *Judging the **visual sensitivity** of the landscape, in terms of its general visibility and the potential scope to mitigate the visual effects of any change that might take place. Visibility will be a function particularly of the landform of a particular type of landscape and of the presence of potentially screening land cover, especially trees and woodland. It will also be a reflection of the numbers of people who are likely to perceive the landscape and any changes that occur in it, whether they are residents or visitors. (Swanwick 2004, 5).*

- 3.2.7 In addition the Topic Paper identifies, when discussing capacity, the need to address issues of ***Landscape Value***. Issues of value such as designations, tranquillity and conservation interest are considered within the sensitivity to change analysis where appropriate.
- 3.2.8 The assessment of Landscape Character Areas likely to be affected by change has therefore been based on ***landscape character sensitivity***, ***visual sensitivity*** and ***landscape value***. The Topic Paper suggests that the following factors could be considered for each of the above aspects:

Landscape Character Sensitivity

Natural Factors

- Vegetation types
- Tree cover type/pattern
- Extent and pattern of semi-natural habitat

Cultural Factors

- Land use
- Settlement pattern
- Field boundaries
- Enclosure pattern
- Time depth

Landscape Quality/Condition

- Intactness
- Representation of typical Character
- State of repair of individual elements

Aesthetic Factors

- Scale
- Enclosure
- Diversity
- Texture
- Pattern
- Colour
- Form/Line
- Balance
- Movement

Visual Sensitivity

General visibility

- Land form influences
- Tree and woodland cover

Population

- Numbers and types of residents
- Numbers and types of visitors

Mitigation Potential

- Scope for mitigating
- Potential visual impacts

Landscape Value

Designations

- National
- Local

Other Criteria indicating value

- Tranquillity
- Remoteness
- Wildness
- Scenic Beauty
- Cultural Associations
- Conservation interests

3.2.9 Based on an analysis of the Harlow Area's landscapes undertaken for this Study, and drawing upon the experience of CBA and members of the Steering Group, the following key landscape attributes have been identified. At a strategic scale, these attributes reflect the sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas within Harlow Area to the three levels of potential change identified above:

- ***Landform*** - The scale and form of the landscape are important criteria in the case of urban development, indicating where a landscape could accommodate large-scale urban development such as new settlements and how these development forms could relate to the overall 'shape' and form of the physical landscape. It can also indicate what scale of urban development may be appropriate within the landscape.
- ***Landscape pattern*** - A small-scale and intricate landscape pattern may indicate landscape sensitivity to large-scale geometric development forms. This aspect of landscape character would also be an important criterion in guiding the form and layout of urban development in the landscape.
- ***Character of skyline*** - This would help indicate where new built elements could provide new interest, where they might threaten existing interest or where they might result in visual clutter.
- ***Inter-visibility*** - The sensitivity of the landscape in visual terms is influenced by views from and into adjacent landscape character areas.
- ***Rare landscape features*** - The density of rare landscape features e.g. historic parks and gardens, ecological habitats, ancient woodlands or certain topographic formations, can provide insight into the potential sensitivity of a landscape.

- ***Settlement pattern/communication routes*** - The surviving historic pattern of settlements and communication routes (e.g. road, rail, rights of way) gives an indication of the extent of human influences on the landscape and may highlight sensitivity to additional built elements.
- ***Sense of enclosure*** - A strong sense of enclosure provided by topography or vegetation may indicate the ability of the landscape to accommodate certain types of urban development.
- ***Sense of tranquillity/remoteness*** - The sense of tranquillity/remoteness within a landscape can provide an insight into the sensitivity of a landscape to urban elements that generate movement and activity.
- ***Historic landscape time-depth and stability*** - Areas of landscape that show considerable time-depth, either through periods of stability that have enabled the survival of integral historic landscape patterns or through the survival of relict elements of historic landscape features are considered to be more sensitive given their historic significance and relative rarity.

Stage 2: Sensitivity Analysis of Specific Landscape Attributes

- 3.2.10 Following the definition of the above parameters, each of the landscape attributes were reviewed on a Harlow Area-wide basis to briefly examine their nature and potential sensitivity. This rapid review was undertaken to increase transparency as to what was being assessed for each of these attributes and how this may influence the assessment of sensitivity within each Landscape Character Area in Stage 3. The results of this assessment are presented in Section 3.3.
- 3.2.11 The characteristics of each of the 31 Character Areas, and where relevant sub-areas, for the Harlow Area (see Appendix A) were examined by CBA using the information presented in this report (see Sections 2.0, 3.3 and Appendix A) and additional material held in the Harlow Area Geographic Information Library. The analysis was undertaken to provide information on each of the key landscape attributes identified above. This information is presented in Section 3.4.

Stage 3: Sensitivity Analysis of Landscape Character Areas

- 3.2.12 As recognised in the Topic Paper "...all assessments of sensitivity and capacity inevitably rely primarily on professional judgements,.." and "*The temptation to suggest objectivity in such professional judgements, by resorting to quantitative methods of recording them is generally to be avoided.*" This Study has sought to present the results of the assessment and the methodology used in the most transparent and logical manner possible. However, it should be noted that the evaluative step from analysis of attributes and characteristics (Stage 1 to 2) to an assessment of sensitivity (Stage 3) is wholly reliant on professional judgement. The sensitivity assessment therefore expresses the view of CBA within the structure of the agreed methodology.
- 3.2.13 The Topic Paper states that "*The outcome of a study of landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change or development would usually be a map of different categories of sensitivity, usually with either three (for example low, medium and high) or five (for example very low, low, medium, high, very high) categories of sensitivity.*" In accordance with this advice, the sensitivity for each of the 31 Character Areas (and sub-areas where relevant) has been assessed in a systematic fashion using the following three-point scale:
- **High Sensitivity** - Area unlikely to be able to accommodate the particular type of change without extensive degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to address potential landscape/environmental issues.
 - **Moderate Sensitivity** - Area may be able to accommodate the particular type of change with some degradation of character and value, but mitigation measures would be required to address potential landscape/environmental issues.
 - **Low Sensitivity** - Area should be able to accommodate the particular type of change with only very limited, if any, degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures should be able to address all potential landscape/environmental issues.
- 3.2.14 In accordance with guidance contained in the Topic Paper, this process necessarily includes a professional judgement on the potential success of possible mitigation measures. .
- 3.2.15 The results of the sensitivity analysis for each Landscape Character Area are presented in Section 3.4 and mapped on Figure 3.4.

3.3 Sensitivity of Specific Landscape Attributes

- 3.3.1 This section examines the nature and potential sensitivity of the landscape attributes identified in Stage 2.

Landform

- 3.3.2 The underlying landform of the Harlow Area is described in Section 2.1 and shown on Figure 2.1. For the most part, the landscape is considered to be gently undulating with relatively limited topographic variations. Notable topographic features include the river valleys with their generally well-defined steep valley sides and flat bases, and a series of ridges with associated slopes in the wider landscape.
- 3.3.3 The Harlow Area largely contains landscapes with a moderate or slight landform although there are a number of areas that have more pronounced, stronger landforms. Although for much of the Area, the landform would not be a major influencing factor in determining landscape character sensitivity, there are some areas where particular landform characteristics will influence the overall sensitivity of the area, and the sensitivity of a number of other landscape attributes e.g. sense of enclosure, character of skyline and inter-visibility.

Landscape Pattern

- 3.3.4 Within the Harlow Area there are a broad range of different patterns in the landscape reflecting different patterns of historic land-use and modern development. Given the rural nature of the area, the pattern of the field systems are major aspects of the overall landscape pattern, although other land-use types and communication networks also influence the pattern of the landscape.

Character of Skyline

- 3.3.5 The analysis of the skyline usually requires the establishment of particular viewing points for assessment purposes. In this case a more general overview of the nature of a Landscape Character Area's many skylines has been used to give an overall sense of the character of this attribute. Given the relatively gentle nature of the Harlow Area's topography/landform, the issue of skylines is generally limited to places with more pronounced topography; for instance, where the southern ridge gives a distinctive and open skyline that provides a green edge to the town.

Inter-visibility

- 3.3.6 Inter-visibility between character areas influences the relatively sensitivity of different places to change. Change within character areas with high levels of inherent visibility is more likely to influence the wider landscape of the Harlow Area than change in areas with more contained levels of visibility.
- 3.3.7 Figure 3.1 presents an initial overview of the relative visibility of the underlying landform of the Harlow Area. The model gives a value to cells with a 100m grid across the Area. These values reflect the number of other cells which can be seen from each cell. These values have been expressed as a percentage of the total number of cells within the Area. The analysis was undertaken using a 15km buffer around the Area to reduce issues with visibility cell counts at the edge of the Area.

Rare Landscape Features

- 3.3.8 The concept of rare landscape features covers a broad range of items including nature conservation sites, ancient woodlands, historic parks and gardens, historic field systems etc. Many of these are designated (see Figures 2.10 to 2.12) and others have been recognised through the Historic Landscape Characterisation process (see Figures 2.4 to 2.7). Many of these features are of national and regional significance and are protected by current designations (see section 2.5). Overall, the Harlow Area contains a relatively dense mix of rare landscape features. The relative density and mix of these within each character area is a good indicator of the relative sensitivity to change of the areas.

Settlement Pattern/Communication Routes

- 3.3.9 The Harlow Area has a relatively long history of occupation and utilisation. The analysis undertaken for this Study has begun to reveal a relatively complex historic pattern of generally dispersed small-scale nucleated settlement, often along roads or at road junctions, that has been dramatically altered in some areas by the development of late 19th and 20th century rail, road and urban areas, although it seemingly remains relatively intact in many other areas.

Sense of Enclosure

- 3.3.10 Enclosure reflects a variety of landscape elements including amongst others landform, landscape pattern, vegetation and modern land-use. For the purposes of this analysis a general statement on the overall sense of enclosure experienced in a character area has been developed based on an assessment of these and other attributes and supported by fieldwork.

Sense of Tranquillity/Remoteness

- 3.3.11 In 1995, the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) produced Tranquil Area Maps of England to provide an analysis of changes over the preceding 30 years on the availability of countryside free from intrusive noise, development and visual clutter.

- 3.3.12 The CPRE defined the boundaries of Tranquil Areas using the following criteria:

"A Tranquil Area lies:

- 4 km from the largest power stations;*
- 3 km from the most highly trafficked roads such as the M1/M6, from large towns (e.g. towns the size of Leicester and larger), and from major industrial areas;*
- 2 km from most other motorways and major trunk roads such as the M4 and A1 and from the edge of smaller towns;*
- 1 km from medium disturbance roads, i.e. roads which are difficult to cross in peak hours (taken to be roughly equivalent to greater than 10,000 vehicles per day) and some main line railways;*
- a Tranquil Area also lies beyond military and civil airfield/airport noise lozenges as defined by published noise data (where available) and beyond very extensive opencast mining" (CPRE, 1995).*

- 3.3.13 Figure 3.2 compares the 1960s Tranquil Area analysis with the 1995 Tranquil Area analysis, as prepared by the CPRE.

Historic landscape time-depth and stability

- 3.3.14 Based on an analysis of the draft Historic Landscape Characterisation data held by Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council, it has been possible (within acknowledged limits of accuracy – see Section 2.2) to rapidly identify areas that demonstrate

both time-depth and stability. Figures 2.4 to 2.7 show known areas identified by the HLC with surviving historic field patterns and other features such as historic parks and gardens. These have been brought forward to Figure 3.3 and broken down into a number of categories reflecting the relative stability and time depth of different areas. These categories are presented below in descending order of relative sensitivity:

- Highly stable areas with considerable surviving time-depth
- Relatively stable areas with moderate surviving time-depth
- Recently altered areas with relict historic landscape elements
- Recently altered areas with few, if any, historic landscape elements

3.4 Sensitivity of Landscape Character Areas

3.4.1 The following presents the results of the sensitivity analysis for each Landscape Character Area in turn. A summary table is provided at the end of this section, and maps of Landscape Character Area sensitivity to defined scales of development are shown on Figure 3.4. Section 3.2 provides details of the landscape attributes and definitions of types of development and sensitivity scores:

Character Area 1 - Wormleybury & Cheshunt Park (SHLCA 58)

- **Landform** - Gentle undulating valley edge, strong influence
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally open large-scale sub-divided area
- **Character of skyline** - Not a major factor
- **Inter-visibility** - Underlying visibility high, but restricted by vegetation
- **Rare landscape features** - Concentrations of historic/nature conservation features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed nucleated high-status settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained; openness of landscape moderated by woodland belts
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Reduced by urban influences
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Good with surviving historic parkland and woodland
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 2 - Lea Valley Marshes (SHLCA 59)

- **Landform** - Flat and low-lying valley floor
- **Landscape pattern** - Open waterscape dominates
- **Character of skyline** - Urban edge to west, more open to east
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited by vegetation and topography
- **Rare landscape features** - Some significant nature conservation elements (cSAC)
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Largely removed
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained by vegetation and topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited by urban influences
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very limited

- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 3 - Middle Lea Valley South (SHLCA 60)

- **Landform** - Flat valley floor
- **Landscape pattern** - Disjointed, dominated by water
- **Character of skyline** - Dominated by urban and glasshouse development
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited by vegetation and topography
- **Rare landscape features** - Limited
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Incoherent and degraded
- **Sense of enclosure** - Partial
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Minimal
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very limited

- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 4 - Hoddesdon & Cheshunt Major Urban Area

- **Landform** - Generally flat, rising to north
- **Landscape pattern** - Dense urban development
- **Character of skyline** - Generally rural, limited by urban foreground
- **Inter-visibility** - Relatively high
- **Rare landscape features** - Extremely limited
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Historic settlement and roads fossilised within urban area
- **Sense of enclosure** - High due to urban environment and valley floor location
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - None
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally very limited
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 5 - Broxbournebury (SHLCA 61)

- **Landform** - Undulating and varied, distinctive part of character
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally open, large-scale
- **Character of skyline** - Limited by internal woodland planting, but strong woodland influences to west
- **Inter-visibility** - Overall mixed, but tends to be limited by woodland and topography
- **Rare landscape features** - Many historic and natural features of high value
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Relatively intact dispersed network, severed by A10
- **Sense of enclosure** - Moderate to high
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited by influence of A10
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very high, bar former mineral extraction
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Moderate**

Character Area 6 - Rye Meads (SHLCA 80)

- **Landform** - Flat valley bottom
- **Landscape pattern** - Water dominated, large-scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Urban to west, rural to east
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate
- **Rare landscape features** - Valuable ecological habitats
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - 19th and 20th century communication routes dominate
- **Sense of enclosure** - Relatively contained
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Surprisingly high given urban influences
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Low, dominated by extraction and industry
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 7 - Great Amwell Ridge & Slopes (SHLCA 78)

- **Landform** - Gently undulating small-scale ridge based landform
- **Landscape pattern** - Disjointed moderate to large-scale pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open
- **Inter-visibility** - Relatively high
- **Rare landscape features** - Number of significant concentrations
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Relatively intact historic pattern, with some severance
- **Sense of enclosure** - Generally low
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited by transport and urban influences
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Degraded in parts with some survivals
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Character Area 8 - Amwell Floodplain (SHLCA 79)

- **Landform** - Flat valley bottom
- **Landscape pattern** - Large-scale open and dominated by water, with urban settlement at south
- **Character of skyline** - Strong valley edge skyline often undeveloped
- **Inter-visibility** - Low
- **Rare landscape features** - Nature conservation habitats in former quarry
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Some significant survivals
- **Sense of enclosure** - Generally strong due to topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate, but influenced by transport
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Limited
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 9 - Lower Ash Valley (SHLCA 88)

- **Landform** - Strong narrow valley form
- **Landscape pattern** - Small-scale, intricate organic landscape
- **Character of skyline** - Very contained and rural
- **Inter-visibility** - Low
- **Rare landscape features** - Numerous historic and ecological features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Intact dispersed settlement with historic routes
- **Sense of enclosure** - High
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - High
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Coherent historic landscape with good time-depth
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **High***

Character Area 10a - Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands (SHLCA 81)

- **Landform** - Undulating valley side and plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally large-scale and irregular
- **Character of skyline** - Extensive views to South/Southwest
- **Inter-visibility** - Many areas highly visible, some restricted areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Many historic parklands and early fields, some nature conservation elements
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Intact, dispersed settlement pattern
- **Sense of enclosure** - Low, generally open but contained in minor valleys
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Good, but degraded by Stansted flight path
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Many areas of good time-depth and stability
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 10b - Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands (SHLCA 81)

- **Landform** - Undulating valley landform
- **Landscape pattern** - Large-scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Rising rural to the north, Harlow dominates to the south
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally highly visible
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic parklands, early fields and ecology sites
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited dispersed settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - Low, generally open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Lowered by Stansted flight path
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Some areas of good time-depth and stability, many areas degraded
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 10c - Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands (SHLCA 81)

- **Landform** - Undulating valley landforms
- **Landscape pattern** - Large-scale and open form
- **Character of skyline** - Valley creates internal skyline, Harlow dominates to the south
- **Inter-visibility** - Ridges highly visible, other areas limited
- **Rare landscape features** - Large area of historic parklands and some nature conservation elements
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited dispersed settlement pattern
- **Sense of enclosure** - Moderate where topography contains views
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Lowered by Stansted flight path
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Divided, Gilston has good time-depth and stability, other areas degraded
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 10d - Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands (SHLCA 81)

- **Landform** - Valley edge ridge
- **Landscape pattern** - Large scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Urban dominates to the south
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally local views only
- **Rare landscape features** - Historic parkland dominates
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Not a major factor
- **Sense of enclosure** - Moderate
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Urban influences impact on area
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very good time-depth and stability for most part
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **High***

Character Area 11 - Hunsdon Plateau (SHLCA 83)

- **Landform** - High, slightly undulating plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally large-scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Wide open views, generally rural
- **Inter-visibility** - Often high, but limited in places
- **Rare landscape features** - Some ancient woodland but generally few
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Intact isolated historic pattern
- **Sense of enclosure** - Limited
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate to high, Stansted can influence
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Moderate but degraded in places
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 12 - River Stort (SHLCA 82)

- **Landform** - Narrow, flat valley bottom
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally small-scale and often discontinuous
- **Character of skyline** - Varied rural and urban, but generally immediate
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited by vegetation
- **Rare landscape features** - Some nature conservation and historic features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Intact historic waterway landscape
- **Sense of enclosure** - High
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate, often influenced by urban areas
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Moderate, generally intact historic landscape
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Moderate**

Character Area 13 - High Wych Slopes (SHLCA 84)

- **Landform** - Rising slope with some undulation
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally small-scale and intricate
- **Character of skyline** - Southern area dominated by urban, north rural
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate to high
- **Rare landscape features** - Some early field systems
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - More intact in north
- **Sense of enclosure** - Relatively high
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Decreasing through urban influence
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Moderate in north, low in south
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 14 - Thorley Uplands (SHLCA 85)

- **Landform** - Flat upland plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Large-scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Extensive, with urban influence to north-east
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally high, but limited inwards by vegetation and topography
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic fields and ancient woodland
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Few isolated settlements
- **Sense of enclosure** - Low
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Low, due to Stansted
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Moderate, but with significant degradation
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Moderate**

Character Area - 15 Little Hallingbury Ridges & Slopes (ELCA C2)

- **Landform** - Undulating ridge and slope
- **Landscape pattern** - Open and large scale
- **Character of skyline** - Variable dependent on location
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate, but mixed with some interconnections
- **Rare landscape features** - Some nature conservation and keynote historic features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed historic pattern, generally intact
- **Sense of enclosure** - Variable, reflecting topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Some notable elements, e.g. hill-fort but generally very limited
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area - 16a Hatfield Heath Plateau (ELCA B1)

- **Landform** - Plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Medium/Small scale and with woodland
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open and expansive outside of woodland
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally high
- **Rare landscape features** - Significant historic and nature conservation interest
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Generally intact historic linear settlement pattern
- **Sense of enclosure** - Strong in woodland, open outside
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Strong in woodland but degraded by Stansted
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Strong
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **High**

Character Area - 16b Hatfield Heath Plateau (ELCA B1)

- **Landform** - Gently rolling plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Large/Medium scale and generally open
- **Character of skyline** - Mixed, but generally open and expansive
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally high, but limited in areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Limited concentrations
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Generally intact dispersed historic pattern
- **Sense of enclosure** - Limited
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Limited
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 17a - Roydon & Nazeing Plateau (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Sloping valley side
- **Landscape pattern** - Medium scale and irregular
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open and extensive, particularly to north
- **Inter-visibility** - Widely visible
- **Rare landscape features** - Limited
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Nucleated roadside settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - Generally open outside of urban areas
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Some time depth, urban areas dominate
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 17b - Roydon & Nazeing Plateau (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Gently undulating plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Small scale and complex
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open and extensive, particularly to west
- **Inter-visibility** - Widely visible
- **Rare landscape features** - Limited nature conservation but extensive historic fields
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dense nucleations supported by intricate communication network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Generally open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Good time depth in areas but modern development has begun to dominate
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Character Area 17c - Roydon & Nazeing Plateau (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Undulating plateau and ridge
- **Landscape pattern** - Varied scale (often small) and complex
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open, particularly to south
- **Inter-visibility** - Widely visible
- **Rare landscape features** - Extensive historic and some nature conservation
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Linear roadside nucleations and intricate communication network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Generally open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally very good
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **High***

Character Area 18 - Harlow Major Urban Area (ELCA GI)

- **Landform** - Topographic bowl forms key component of character
- **Landscape pattern** - Highly structured dense urban form separated by important greenspace corridors/wedges
- **Character of skyline** - Bowl provides important edge
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited by topography
- **Rare landscape features** - Few, some historic and nature conservation
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Subsumed into modern development
- **Sense of enclosure** - High, with some long views down corridors
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - None
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Limited, modern dominates
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **Low***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Low***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Character Area 19 - Matching Plateau (ELCA B1)

- **Landform** - Gently rolling plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Medium to large scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate, with views to surrounding areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic fields, parks and features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed historic settlement along road network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Limited, generally open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Variable, affected by M11
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Variable, some pockets of considerable time depth, but generally moderate
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 20a - Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge (ELCA B1,C3,G1)

- **Landform** - Gentle ridge
- **Landscape pattern** - Mixed, but generally moderate to large in scale
- **Character of skyline** - Open
- **Inter-visibility** - Visible from local areas, key aspect of the setting of areas 18 and 21
- **Rare landscape features** - Dense concentrations of historic and nature conservation assets
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - Open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally good, but limited in places
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Moderate**

Character Area 20b - Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge (ELCA B1,C3,G1)

- **Landform** - Very gentle undulating valley head
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally moderate to large-scale and irregular
- **Character of skyline** - Contained to east by topography; urban to west
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited by topography and urban areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Few historic and nature conservation assets
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained by urban/transport and topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Very limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally limited
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Low**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Low**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 21 - North Weald Ridges & Valleys (ELCA B1)

- **Landform** - Gently rolling Plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Generally large scale and open
- **Character of skyline** - Generally open
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate, widely visible from neighbouring areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Few
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Nucleated historic settlement with interrupted communication routes
- **Sense of enclosure** - Limited
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally low, much recent change
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **Moderate**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **Moderate**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 22 - Magdalen Laver Ridges & Valleys(ELCA B1)

- **Landform** - Gently undulating plateau
- **Landscape pattern** - Irregular form of medium scale
- **Character of skyline** - Variable reflecting topography
- **Inter-visibility** - Limited, but connections to local areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Considerable blocks of historic landscape
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Intact dispersed settlement pattern and irregular communication network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Open
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Good in places
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Moderate**

Character Area 23 - Holyfield Ridges & Valleys (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Undulating prominent ridges
- **Landscape pattern** - Irregular and intricate
- **Character of skyline** - Mixed
- **Inter-visibility** - Some but generally limited
- **Rare landscape features** - Concentrations of historic and nature conservation features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed settlement pattern, now partially interrupted
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained by topography and vegetation
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Urban influences intrude
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally good, but some modern intrusions
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Character Area 24a - Copped Hall Ridges & Valleys (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Strongly undulating sloping landform
- **Landscape pattern** - Mixed, large-scale and small-scale irregular pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Mixed
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate views in and out
- **Rare landscape features** - Some good historic landscape survivals
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited dispersed settlement and some irregular routes
- **Sense of enclosure** - Moderate
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Relatively tranquil and remote from urban areas
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Greater in west than east
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **High***

Character Area 24b - Copped Hall Ridges & Valleys (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Strongly undulating landform
- **Landscape pattern** - Mixed, generally small-scale with large open areas
- **Character of skyline** - Mixed
- **Inter-visibility** - Relatively high
- **Rare landscape features** - Numerous historic and nature conservation features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed historic settlement and intricate network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Mixed, but generally strong
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Limited by M11
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very high in places, degraded in others
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Character Area 25 - Epping Ridges & Valleys (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Undulating plateau sloping south
- **Landscape pattern** - Medium to large scale irregular pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Ridge to North (20) provides important skyline
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate to local areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic fields and sites with a few nature conservation sites
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed settlement with irregular road network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Limited, generally an open landscape
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate in areas
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally low, some patches of interest
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 26 - Thornwood Common Ridges & Valleys (ELCA D1)

- **Landform** - Sloping
- **Landscape pattern** - Medium to large-scale sub-regular pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Rising slope to ridges to west, open to west
- **Inter-visibility** - Views from west edge to neighbouring areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Limited historic and nature conservation features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Larger nucleated settlement and few roads
- **Sense of enclosure** - Poor, generally open landscape
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Very limited, M11 is a major detractor
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Mixed, some areas of time depth
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 27 - Epping Urban Area (ELCA D1)

- **Landform** - Ridge top
- **Landscape pattern** - Dense urban
- **Character of skyline** - Limited by urban development but open around edges
- **Inter-visibility** - Generally good views to neighbouring areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic sites and nature conservation interest
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Large linear roadside settlement
- **Sense of enclosure** - High
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Low
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Well evidenced historic core
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development* - **High**
 - Substantial urban developments* - **High**
 - Small-scale urban developments* - **Low**

Character Area 28 - Coopersale Ridges & Valleys (ELCA D1)

- **Landform** - Undulating sloping bowl
- **Landscape pattern** - Small to medium scale varied pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Limited views, ridge encloses to North, East and West
- **Inter-visibility** - Very limited
- **Rare landscape features** - Significant historic elements and nature conservation interest
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Dispersed settlement with few roads
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained by topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Minimal due to M11
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Good in many places, degraded by M11
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 29 - East Epping Wooded Ridge (ELCA D1)

- **Landform** - Prominent ridge
- **Landscape pattern** - Large-scale woodland
- **Character of skyline** - Limited by vegetation but extensive at edges
- **Inter-visibility** - Highly visible from surrounding areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Area contains rare surviving historic woodland
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Limited settlement with irregular historic route network
- **Sense of enclosure** - High in wood, exposed at edges
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Good in places, reduced by M11
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Very good
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **High***

Character Area 30 - Toot Hill Ridge (ELCA D1)

- **Landform** - Prominent ridge form
- **Landscape pattern** - Mixed, but generally large-scale radial pattern
- **Character of skyline** - Varied local views
- **Inter-visibility** - Visible from some local areas
- **Rare landscape features** - Some historic and nature conservation sites
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Nucleated settlements with a radial network
- **Sense of enclosure** - Contained by topography
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Moderate
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - Generally limited, some pockets of stability
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **High***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Moderate***

Character Area 31 - Waltham Abbey Urban Area (ELCA C3)

- **Landform** - Flat valley
- **Landscape pattern** - Dense urban
- **Character of skyline** - Limited by development
- **Inter-visibility** - Moderate
- **Rare landscape features** - Numerous historic features
- **Settlement pattern/communication routes** - Major urban area
- **Sense of enclosure** - High
- **Sense of tranquillity/remoteness** - Low
- **Historic landscape time-depth and stability** - High in many places
- **Sensitivity to:**
 - Very large-scale urban development - **High***
 - Substantial urban developments - **Moderate***
 - Small-scale urban developments - **Low***

Summary Table

3.4.2 The following, table, together with Figure 3.4, presents a summary overview of the relative sensitivity of the 31 Landscape Character Areas and any sub-areas to the three types of urban development:

Character Area/Sub-area	Very Large-Scale Urban Development	Substantial Urban Development	Small-scale Urban Development
1	High	Moderate	Moderate
2	High	Moderate	Low
3	Moderate	Moderate	Low
4	Moderate	Moderate	Low
5	High	High	Moderate
6	High	Moderate	Moderate
7	High	Moderate	Low
8	High	High	Moderate
9	High	High	High
10a	High	High	Moderate
10b	High	High	Moderate
10c	High	Moderate	Moderate
10d	High	High	High
11	High	Moderate	Low
12	High	High	Moderate
13	Moderate	Moderate	Low
14	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
15	Moderate	Moderate	Low
16a	High	High	High
16b	High	Moderate	Low
17a	High	High	Low
17b	High	High	Low
17c	High	High	High
18	Low	Low	Low
19	High	High	Moderate
20a	High	High	Moderate
20b	Low	Low	Low
21	Moderate	Moderate	Low
22	High	High	Moderate
23	High	High	Low
24a	High	High	High
24b	High	Moderate	Low
25	High	High	Moderate
26	High	High	Low
27	High	High	Low
28	High	High	Moderate
29	High	High	High
30	High	High	Moderate
31	High	Moderate	Low

4.0 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

4.0 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

4.1 General

4.1.1 In summary, the key issues identified at a strategic level that indicate the opportunities and constraints of landscapes within the Harlow Area to accommodate urban development are:

- *Effects of development on the landscape resource* – i.e. the degree to which sensitive physical/tangible features may be lost or significantly damaged.
- *Effects of development on the landscape experience* – i.e. the degree to which sensitive perceptual characteristics (such as openness, enclosure, remoteness, sound etc.) that contribute to the experience of landscape are affected.
- *The visual effects of development* – i.e. the degree to which development would be conspicuous, intrude into key views, affect settlement approaches or their settings.
- *Effects of development on the cultural and historic components of the landscape* – i.e. the degree to which historic features may be directly affected or their settings subjected to change.
- *Potential for mitigation of development impact on landscape* – i.e. increasing landscape capacity through structural tree planting and safeguarding sensitive landscape features, perceptual characteristics and key views within development concepts.

4.1.2 In addition to landscape character, designated environmental assets are also a key constraint for determining the broad direction of growth and the location and form of development options in specific areas.

4.1.3 The influence of these factors on strategic opportunities and constraints to growth in the Harlow Area are summarised below.

4.2 Critical Constraints on Growth

Landscape Character Constraints

4.2.1 The key qualities of the Harlow Area landscape that place a critical constraint on growth can be summarised as:

- *Major landscape features providing the structural framework for the town*, i.e.:
 - * The Stort valley and rising land to the north;
 - * The ridge running south-west to north-east along the southern/eastern edge of the town;

- * Roydon/Nazeing plateau to the west;
 - * Network of green wedges running through the town, connecting with wider countryside;
 - * The woodland blocks, hedgerows and hedgerow trees providing a green edge to the town
- The individual *identity of rural settlements and their dispersed pattern* within the landscape
 - The *areas of sensitive historic landscape* not currently recognised through formal designation
 - The contribution of *sites and areas of nature conservation value* as significant elements of the landscape
 - Major *areas managed for recreation* and *areas of accessible open space* within and around the town
 - The *network of recreational paths and other rights of way* access routes providing important linkages between the town, its surrounding settlements and the open countryside
 - *Key views, landmarks and other landscape elements and features* that contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place

Environmental Constraints

4.2.2 At a strategic scale, the major areas of environmental constraint are summarised on Figure 4.1. These include:

- ***Designated areas of nature conservation value***, including:
 - * Ramsar Sites; Special Protection Areas; Special Areas of Conservation; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; National Nature Reserves; Ancient Woodland; County Wildlife Sites; Local Nature Reserves
- ***Designated areas of historic environment value***, including:
 - * Scheduled Monuments; Conservation Areas; Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; Registered Common Land; Ancient Landscapes
- ***Designated areas of landscape value***, including:
 - * Local Landscape Designations
- ***Flood risk areas*** – as defined by the Environment Agency (mainly the Lee Valley and Stort Valley)
- ***Major areas managed for recreation*** (the Lee Valley Regional Park and the Country Park south west of Hatfield Forest)

4.2.3 The most critical (statutory) designated constraints on the overall direction of growth in the Harlow Area are considered to include:

- Scheduled Monuments
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Ramsar Sites
- Special Protection Areas
- Special Areas of Conservation
- National Nature Reserves
- Floodplain
- Registered Common Land
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Historic Parks & Gardens

4.2.4 Less critical (non-statutory) designated constraints on the overall direction of growth in the Harlow Area are considered to include:

- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- Green Wedges
- Local Landscape Designations
- Ancient Landscapes

4.2.5 Together with the landscape character qualities in 4.2.1 identified above, these constraints form the framework for evaluating growth options in the Harlow Area.

4.3 Strategic Opportunities for Accommodating Growth

4.3.1 At the strategic scale, the evaluation of each Landscape Character Area revealed that the least sensitive landscapes with highest potential capacity for very large-scale and substantial scale urban development include:

- Area 18 - Harlow Major Urban Area
- Area 20 - Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge (Sub-Area 20b part only)

4.3.2 Other areas identified as possibly having some potential to accommodate very large-scale and substantial scale urban development included:

- Area 3 - Middle Lea Valley South
- Area 4 - Hoddesdon & Cheshunt Major Urban Area
- Area 13 - High Wych Slopes
- Area 14 - Thorley Uplands
- Area 15 - Little Hallingbury Ridges & Slopes
- Area 21 - North Weald Ridges and Valleys

4.4 Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes

4.4.1 The more detailed analysis of the immediate fringes of Harlow, as presented in Volume 2 of the Study, confirmed that the least sensitive area with the highest potential capacity for development is the majority of the Eastern Fringe (i.e. Sub-Area 20b as per 4.3.1 above). This analysis also highlights a range of landscape and environmental sensitivities within the other fringe areas that would need to be considered in any evaluation of development within these locations.

4.5 Framework for Sustainable Future Landscapes in the Harlow Area

4.5.1 The prospects for significant urban expansion within this part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area pose both opportunities and challenges for maintaining and creating sustainable landscapes in the Harlow Area.

4.5.2 New housing and associated development can have widespread effects on the character and identity of existing settlements and their landscape settings. Where developed with limited sensitivity to local character or a sense of place, a cumulative loss of landscape character and quality can result, particularly around the fringes of the urban areas.

4.5.3 Volume 3 of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study sets out a *Framework for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area*. This provides an over-arching strategic vision for the future, establishes landscape planning and management principles, and sets a framework for developing an integrated approach to landscape protection, 'green infrastructure' improvements and urban development within the Harlow Area.

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APPENDIX A
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA PROFILES
IN THE HARLOW AREA

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA PROFILES IN THE HARLOW AREA

A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 A series of Landscape Character Areas had been defined for Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire County Council 1997 & 2001) prior to this study. These have been incorporated within this Landscape Character Assessment for the Harlow Area. The existing County-Level Essex landscape character assessment (CBA 2002) have also been used as a basis for defining character areas. The numbers for these pre-existing county-wide Landscape Character Areas are provided in brackets at the end of each Character Area title, in the form SHLCA 1 or ELCA A1. SHLCA denotes a South Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area and ELCA denotes an Essex Landscape Character Area.

A.1.2 The boundaries for the Landscape Character Areas defined by Hertfordshire County Council remain as described in the county-wide Landscape Character Assessment (Hertfordshire 1997 & 2001), with only minor additions to areas 2 (SHLCA 59) and 13 (SHLCA 84).

A.2 List of Character Areas

- 1. WORMLEYBURY & CHESHUNT PARK (SHLCA 58)**
- 2. LEA VALLEY MARSHES (SHLCA 59)**
- 3. MIDDLE LEA VALLEY SOUTH (SHLCA 60)**
- 4. HODDESDON & CHESHUNT MAJOR URBAN AREA**
- 5. BROXBOURNEBURY (SHLCA 61)**
- 6. RYE MEADS (SHLCA 80)**
- 7. GREAT AMWELL RIDGE & SLOPES (SHLCA 78)**
- 8. AMWELL FLOODPLAIN (SHLCA 79)**
- 9. LOWER ASH VALLEY (SHLCA 88)**
- 10. STANSTED TO PISHIOBURY PARKLANDS (SHLCA 81)**
- 11. HUNSDON PLATEAU (SHLCA 83)**
- 12. RIVER STORT (SHLCA 82)**
- 13. HIGH WYCH SLOPES (SHLCA 84)**
- 14. THORLEY UPLANDS (SHLCA 85)**
- 15. LITTLE HALLINGBURY RIDGES & SLOPES (ELCA C2)**
- 16. HATFIELD HEATH PLATEAU (ELCA B1)**
- 17. ROYDON & NAZEING PLATEAU (ELCA C3)**
- 18. HARLOW MAJOR URBAN AREA (ELCA G1)**

- 19. MATCHING PLATEAU (ELCA B1)**
- 20. JACK'S HATCH TO CHURCH LANGLEY RIDGE (ELCA B1, C3, G1)**
- 21. NORTH WEALD RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA B1)**
- 22. MAGDALEN LAVER RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA B1)**
- 23. HOLYFIELD RIDGES & VALLEYS (ELCA C3)**
- 24. COPPED HALL RIDGES & VALLEYS (ELCA C3)**
- 25. EPPING RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA C3)**
- 26. THORNWOOD COMMON RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA D1)**
- 27. EPPING URBAN AREA (ELCA D1)**
- 28. COOPERSALE RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA D1)**
- 29. EAST EPPING WOODED RIDGE (ELCA D1)**
- 30. TOOT HILL RIDGE (ELCA D1)**
- 31. WALTHAM ABBEY URBAN AREA (ELCA C3)**

1. WORMLEYBURY & CHESHUNT PARK (SHLCA 58)

(i) Summary

Location

Discrete oval west of A10 at Wormley and Turnford, extending northwards between Broxbourne Woods and urban settlements to B1197.

Landscape Character

A palimpsest, with modified remains of ancient oak/hornbeam woodlands in parkland settings with 18th and 19th-century mixed plantations added. A complex mixture of land uses almost masks this area's history, but clear traces of a medieval deer park and later parklands are evident. These are now covered by arable farmland, pasture with parkland and recreational uses.

Key Characteristics

- Boundary woodland planting
- Relic parkland planting
- Planned arable farmland in north west corner
- New River forms strong boundary to urban development in east
- Parkland features (lake, etc) mainly concealed
- Mineral extraction not visible

Distinctive Features

- Two moats (inaccessible)
- Reservoir
- Golf course
- Former parkland bisected by A10
- Distinct settlement pattern along northern edge, nibbling into parkland edge
- Country park on former parkland

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The western part of this area has slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay soils over Tertiary clay (Windsor series), while the eastern part has deep stoneless well-drained silty soils over silty drift (Hamble 2 series).

Topography. Gently tilted towards the east, with undulations along the western side, becoming flatter to the east.

Degree of slope. 1 in 32.

Altitude range. 35m to 75m.

Hydrology. Several streams flow eastwards towards the river Lea. Some have been dammed to form lakes within parkland.

Land cover and land use. This area consists of a mix of wooded farmland and parkland, with recreational and utilities land uses at the southern end. Most of the parkland is used for grazing (sheep) while the farmland is in arable cultivation. The former parkland to the south (Cheshunt Park) now forms a country park and golf course, using the existing framework of hedges, parkland trees and woodland to create a well-integrated informal facility. There is evidence of mineral extraction within Wormleybury Park.

Vegetation and wildlife. Very densely wooded in part, with interlocking parkland boundary plantings of broadleaf woodland to screen views. There are also parkland standard trees, young plantations of silver birch and screening planting along the A10. Within the arable farmland hedges are generally low to medium, either young hawthorn or older (oak, ash, sycamore and field maple). Oak, hornbeam and ash are the dominant woodland species. Within Cheshunt Park there are some fairly extensive acid and neutral grasslands. At Wormleybury there is an old but important artificial waterbody, important for wildlife, especially bats. Wormley and Hoddesdon Great Park is important for its collection of pollards and their importance for invertebrates. Wormley West End Meadows are designated SSSI as acid grassland and are important as neutral grassland, too.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The historic pattern of this area is now discontinuous but still visible, with several historic layers apparent within the present landscape.

- Wormley retains the long rectangular shape of a Saxon village, rising from the river Lee to high ground.
- The boundaries of a medieval deer park (first recorded in 1226) can be clearly seen in the shape of Park Lane Paradise, Park Lane and Holy Cross Hill.
- There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Perrier's manor moat and fishpond and Hell Wood moat and enclosure, within the parkland in Spring Wood and Hell Wood.
- Cheshunt Great House was purchased in 1519 by Cardinal Wolsey and was used by Elizabeth I on hunting visits. The house burnt down in 1970.
- Cheshunt Park occupied the southern part of the former deer park, and is now a golf course and country park.
- Wormleybury is in the northern part, set within a landscape park of 57ha, developed in the 1770s from an earlier scheme. The relic early 19th-century gardens were famed as a plant collection, with many plant introductions between 1785-1825.
- The New River is a canal constructed in 1614 to transport fresh water to London and a unique local feature, linked by footpaths to the urban edge.

Field pattern. The field pattern is unsurprisingly fragmented and discontinuous, with a strong medium to large-scale regular pattern in the arable farmland to the west.

Transport pattern. A historic road network delineates the boundaries of the parks, except to the east, where the A10 cuts through the relic parkland. The New River acts as a strong boundary to the urban edge to the east and is a notable feature in its own right.

Settlements and built form. The only settlement in this area is along the northern edge of Wormleybury, whose buildings are either mansions or farmhouses. Wormleybury mansion is a square block of brownish-yellow brick, built 1767-69 on the site of a previous house, with a giant stone portico. The Lodge at Park Lane (late 18th century) was attached to Cheshunt Park and is a small thatched building faced with shells.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of area from outside are so restricted by boundary woodland that it is very difficult to get any views in. Views within the area are similarly limited by blocks of woodland and topographical variation, and to some extent by lack of access. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium within this contained landscape, but it has an incoherent quality due to the varied current land uses. Away from the A10 it is tranquil; close to a constant low hum is apparent.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The ancient parkland and veteran pollard trees in this area are important, and it is unusual to have such a clear deer park boundary still extant. The New River is unique and of national interest.

Visual Impact

There is significant but localised impact from built development in the form of the A10 and poor farm buildings. Land-use change from parkland to arable or amenity is also prominent locally, although mineral extraction is not visible. Distinctive features within the area are the parkland pasture and the New River, the latter very accessible by footpath from the urban edge.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses are golf, walking and informal play. Footpaths are localised and few, chiefly along the urban edge, with waymarked routes along the boundary. The footpath along the New River is discontinuous and mainly over a grass surface.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Discontinuous
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Very rare

2. LEA VALLEY MARSHES (SHLCA 59)

(i) Summary

Location

River valley on eastern edge of county, stretching from M25/Holdbrook in the south to Nazeing Marsh in the north.

Landscape Character

This is a wetland landscape of unified character, with nature conservation and recreation dominant. The Lee Valley Regional Park designation covers this whole area. The western edge is very crisp, the urban settlement held in by the railway, while the eastern edge is softer and more rural, with extensive woodland west of the B194 and mixed farmland and nursery production further north. Within the Park there are a range of sub-character areas, including savannah, orchid meadow, birchwood and canal towpath.

Key Characteristics

- Linear area of wetland: extensive waterbodies with wetland vegetation
- Low-lying flat valley floor
- Man-made
- Strong urban edge to west with rural eastern edge
- Mosaic of habitats with lots of fauna: swans, geese and ducks
- Lea Navigation: raised canal with locks and towpath as a linear feature
- Small River Lea is insignificant within the landscape
- Regenerating wetland scrub and woodland create visual boundaries
- Very limited views within or of area from outside

Distinctive Features

- County boundary lies within character area
- Extensive active and disused mineral workings
- Pylons along eastern edge
- Locks and bridges of Lee Navigation
- Sewage works

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Gleyed (poorly draining) often calcareous soils over alluvial drift (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat.

Degree of slope. 1 in 1125.

Altitude range. 19m to 23m.

Hydrology. Although it originally defined the river valley landform, the river Lea/Lee is no longer the major feature of the local landscape, which is shaped more by the Lee Navigation and dominated by the extensive waterbodies that are the after-effects of mineral extraction. The Navigation canal is uniform and engineered, but is lined with large mature trees in this area. The Old River Lea diverges from the navigation at King's Weir. This section carries surplus flows to the flood relief channel at Fishers Green. It then diverges from the Horsemill Stream at Fishers Green and splits to form the Cornmill Stream. Both channels border valuable SSSIs but low flows have led to their decline as fisheries. The Small River Lee is not large enough to provide recreational angling but is a valuable spawning /nursery area for fish. The Old River Lea is one of the most diverse habitats found within the North London Local Environment Agency Plan (LEAP). Holyfield Lake at Fishers Green is a large waterbody (c. 140 acres) known for its specimen fish. To the north of the area, a flood Relief Channel dissects Nazeing Marsh.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land cover in this area is open water with wetland vegetation. The primary land use is nature conservation and informal recreation - walking, fishing, sailing, birdwatching - using the extensive path and car park network. Cheshunt Marsh is an open area of rough and mown grass, resembling savannah, without trees and with the Small Lea meandering through as a polluted brook in a deep channel. Hooks Marsh is a Country Park, less formally managed, with mature trees, marginal vegetation and kingfishers. The Park becomes slightly wilder to the north, with fewer mown grass areas and more mature trees. Some of the waterbodies are very open, others sprinkled with many tiny islands bearing

willow and scrub. At Fishers Green there is a series of large open lakes. A large sewage works is located to the north of Nazeing Marsh.

Vegetation and wildlife. The present habitats in this area have mainly derived by natural colonisation from remnants of the natural floodplain grasslands and wetlands of the original landscape. There are also some important artificial habitats, derived from power-station fly-ash residues, which are now nationally important for marsh orchids.

- Turnford and Cheshunt Pits form part of the internationally important Lee Valley complex of wetland sites, which is a proposed Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive, proposed Ramsar site and SSSI. The pits were created between the 1930s and the 1970s and are of national importance for wintering gadwall and shoveler, and of regional importance for wintering coot. The aquatic invertebrate fauna and wetland flora are also rich, with some nationally rare species. Associated areas of marsh, grassland, ruderal herbs, scrub, woodland, part of the Small River Lee and Hall Marsh Scrape are all included within the SSSI designation.
- The tree cover in this area is very extensive and diverse, part planted and part natural regeneration, consisting of water-related species, such as willow, poplar and alder and reclamation species such as silver birch and aspen. Other species are ash, oak, hazel, field maple, whitebeam, rowan, sycamore, downy birch, silver and Lombardy poplars. Scrub regeneration includes hazel, elder, hawthorn and willow. Hornbeam, oak and hazel are remnants of a once far more extensive woodland cover. The eastern edge of the area supports grazing pasture with cattle and around Turnford Pit North there are a number of small relic areas of unimproved calcareous grassland with cowslips.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The Lea valley is a very disturbed area that has been transformed more than once. There are only relics of the former grazing meadows, on the eastern edge, beyond the county boundary, but the surviving alluvial deposits have a high archaeological and palaeo-ecological potential. During part of the 19th century the Lea valley was one of the largest centres of the malting and brewing industry in western Europe. Twentieth-century mineral extraction on a huge scale left extensive waterbodies in its wake. Since 1969 the potential of this area has been seized and acted upon, following recognition of its use as a popular venue for day excursions and holidays.

Field pattern. No original field pattern remains; the landscape scale has been considerably enlarged.

Transport pattern. There are no north-south roads within the river valley, but a railway and a canal - the Lea Navigation - run parallel throughout. There are no east-west crossings in this area, other than a footpath between Cheshunt and Holyfield (Fishers Green).

Settlements and built form. At the southern end Holdbrook now links Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey and screens the valley landform and vegetation. There are no other settlements within the valley in this area, but ample evidence of previous uses in the rather utilitarian bridges over the various watercourses and the tracks, both relics of mineral extraction. There are also several locks along the Navigation and an electricity station at Holyfield Marsh, upon which the pylons along the eastern edge of the valley converge.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

From outside this area is only locally visible, due to the density of vegetation and the presence of the railway along the urban edge to the west. Although there are occasional long views over waterbodies within the area, in most instances they are limited by woodland and scrub. It is therefore a very contained area, of mixed scale. It is coherent, due to the unity of land use, but noisy with road and rail traffic at the southern end. Further north it becomes more tranquil. Within this area there is an impressive range of different habitats, demonstrating the recreational and ecological potential of wetland restoration. Kingfishers, orchids and the scent of crushed watermint can be local experiences.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This area demonstrates the art of the possible in terms of wetland restoration to valuable ecological habitats and recreational use for a large urban population. It is recognised as being internationally important ecologically and its designation as a Regional Park demonstrates its amenity importance.

Visual Impact

The current situation must mark one of the most positive aspects of change ever to have influenced this area. Within the Park there are limited impacts from re-use of bridges and tracks installed during the mineral extraction phase, but most other impacts are screened by the extensive vegetation. Even this, however, cannot screen the pylons.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses: cycling/fishing/walking/canal boats/bird watching/sailing/BBQ/car park. There are clear waymarked routes throughout the park, wide and well surfaced, and an excellent network of car parks. The canal and towpath provide a linear route through the area. Poor disabled access to water in some areas, but generally good.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Young
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Extinct
Impact of built development:	Moderate
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Relic
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Unified
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unique

3. MIDDLE LEA VALLEY SOUTH (SHLCA 60)

(i) Summary

Location

Lee valley from the southern edge of Rye Marsh power station to southern edge of Nazeing Marsh, extending south west to include Silvermeads and Broxbourne Mead.

Landscape Character

Less 'watery' than either of the other two areas of the southern Lea valley, due to greater areas of dry land and the difficulty of gaining access to the river or waterbodies. A complex and varied mix of industrial, commercial, urban and rural land uses, with many glasshouses along its eastern flank and extensive operational and derelict minerals sites. The railway combines with housing development to provide a strong urban edge to the west.

Key Characteristics

- Flat river valley with extensive waterbodies
- Water-related leisure activities
- Urban edge of Hoddesdon intrudes into the river valley

Distinctive Features

- Extensive nursery production on eastern bank with many glasshouses
- Industry/utilities
- Housing within the floodplain in ribbon development
- Extensive active and unrestored mineral workings

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Stoneless clayey soils, in places calcareous, over river alluvium (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat river valley.

Degree of slope. 1 in 470.

Altitude range. 23m to 30m.

Hydrology. Within this area lie the River Lee Navigation, the river Lynch, the Flood Relief Channel and the river Lee or Lea which, with the numerous extensive waterbodies, in particular Nazeing Mead, provide a complex of habitats. The Navigation canal is uniform in size and shape and tends to have at least one engineered bank. It receives large quantities of treated effluent at Hoddesdon and carries a large amount of boat traffic, both of which have restricted its habitat, although it does support barbel (*Barbus barbus*), protected under the EC Habitats Directive List) and has EC designated cyprinid fishery status. The Broxbourne Mill Stream, just south of Dobb's Weir, is one of the few remaining 'old river' loops, with a relatively natural channel form and a diverse range of habitats. The Flood Relief Channel, completed in the 1970s after a major flooding incident in 1947, is heavily engineered and of limited, although not poor, ecological interest. The Nazeing Meads complex of lagoons covers some 127 acres and is renowned for its specimen tench, carp and bream.

Land cover and land use. This is a highly modified landscape with a diversity of land uses, ranging from industry and utilities to ribbon housing development and extensive glasshouses for the nursery trade, as well as extensive and focused leisure activities. At Nazeing Marsh there are sewage works and Keyser's (industrial) Estate, with the Carthagen Estate slightly to the north. Dobb's Weir consists of industrial use and housing, together with recreational facilities (caravan park, boat hire, etc.) associated with the weir and active or disused mineral extraction sites. The eastern bank of the valley is typified by glasshouses, with a country park tucked behind them below Clayton Hill and mixed farming just above the floodplain.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is little vegetation in this area compared to the valley north and south. The backfilling of mineral extraction pits has produced mainly species-poor rough grassland and scrub, while the watercourses and waterbodies tend to be poor in wetland habitats. The remnant grazing meadows at Silvermead are species-rich and important for wetland insects, especially dragonflies. The caravan park at Dobb's Weir is characterised by tall poplars. The natural regeneration of wetland species, such as willow, hawthorn and elder, and ruderals around disused mineral workings lends an air of dereliction. The Broxbourne Mill Stream, which diverges from the Lee Navigation just south of Dobb's Weir, is a loop of the 'old' river and supports a diverse range of habitats, including valuable stands of marginal

plants. It is also a valuable spawning and nursery site for coarse fish. The river Lynch provides good habitat and good water quality.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The area around Broxbourne has produced some of the most important early Mesolithic remains in Britain, and the remaining archaeological resource of the Lea and Colne valleys is one of the most critical archaeological assets of Hertfordshire. The river has been used extensively for transporting produce to London, and Broxbourne developed as a small settlement for milling at a river crossing point. The first bridge at Dobb's Weir was erected in 1604. During part of the 19th century the Lea valley was one of the largest centres of the malting and brewing industry in Western Europe, and the mills were also used for papermaking. Pressure from London led first to a change from pasture to nursery production, then to the development of utilities, such as refuse disposal sites and sewage works, while sand and gravel extraction began during the early 20th century. This area has not yet benefited significantly from the work of the LVRPA, as further south.

Field pattern. The original field pattern no longer exists and the landscape scale has been considerably enlarged.

Transport pattern. The B194 crosses the valley between Lower Nazeing and Broxbourne and, to the north, a minor road links Hoddesdon and Roydon via Dobb's Weir. The linear routes along the valley, including the railway, lie just above the floodplain on either side of the valley. Only the Lee Navigation lies within it, taking a meandering rather than direct route through this area, in contrast to the flood relief channel.

Settlements and built form. There is 20th-century housing within the floodplain at Dobb's Weir and Lower Nazeing and extensive glasshouses for nursery production on the east bank in this area. At Lower Nazeing this serves to block views of the valley and create an urbanised character.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

This is a very mixed and incoherent area due to the variety of land uses and screening of the waterbodies from general view, which prevents their use to unify the area visually. It is fairly

peaceful, but with traffic, rail and assorted industrial noises. Much of it is screened by built form, but there are some treasures within it, such as Dobb's Weir, with its suite of recreational spaces and the water thundering through the weir, contrasting with its more peaceful seepage into the lock nearby.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is certainly an unusual area, but it is likely that few people would regard it as currently attractive.

Visual Impact

The impact of urban and industrial development, the railway and housing along the urban edge are all very apparent, more so than the waterbodies within the valley, which are often screened from view. Where they are visible, they often appear derelict or neglected, lacking the vegetation that is characteristic of the restored sites further south.

Accessibility

Lea Valley Walk with footpaths across valley between waterbodies.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Poor
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Relic
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

4. HODDESDON AND CHESHUNT MAJOR URBAN AREA

(i) Summary

Location

This townscape character area is located in a north-south linear strip to the west of Rye Meads, Lower Nazeing, Holyfield and Waltham Abbey. To the south, this area is situated adjacent to the River Lee Country Park.

Townscape Character

Located in the Lee Valley and parallel to, and connected by, the railway line and the major A10 road, this linear urban area is comprised of several different settlements with little clear boundary distinction between them. The settlements all have historic origins, and possess distinct historic cores. The area is comprised of a mixture of predominantly residential and commercial development, with some industrial areas (predominantly comprised of a mixture of different-sized warehouse units). A more dominant industrial area with factories is located at Holdbook, to the south-east of Cheshunt.

Key Characteristics

- Linear settlements with historic cores bounded by the railway line, Lee Valley floodplain and major A10 road.
- Mix of residential, commercial and industrial development
- A mixture of post-war and 1960s to 1980s semi-detached houses, terraced houses and flats.
- Publicly accessible open green spaces scattered within residential areas.

Distinctive Features

- Eleanor Cross at Waltham Cross
- Several old coaching inns line the main route at Hoddesdon.

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. No data is available for soils within this area. The area is situated upon predominantly sand and gravel geology, interspersed with small patches of Enfield Silt Formation and Alluvium.

Topography. This area is situated within the western Lee Valley bottom and on the gradually sloping western side of the valley.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 12,
Min 1 in 30482
Mean 1 in 251

Altitude range. 20 m to 65m

Hydrology. Tributaries of the adjacent River Lee (Turnford Brook and Woolens Brook) run across this area. Trinity Marsh Ditch also delineates the eastern boundary of Hoddesdon.

Land cover and land use. A mixture of residential, commercial and industrial sites covers this area. Hoddesdon and Cheshunt have developed as linear settlements around the north-south running railway and main A10 road. The town centre of Hoddesdon is composed of many former brewery buildings. Coaching inns line the main route into the town. Tower Street shopping centre, built in 1967 is surrounded by several high street shops of a similar age. A civic centre and library were also built in the 1970's. To the north of Hoddesdon town centre, a residential area is set around Rye Park. An industrial area has developed to the east of the town centre. Shops and restaurants in Cheshunt are located along a linear high street. Residential areas branch off the main road. Throughout this urban area, residential areas have developed along the railway line, limited by the Lee Valley floodplain in the east and the A10 in the west. The small town centre at Waltham Cross, located to the south of Cheshunt is focused around the Eleanor Cross. To the southeast of Cheshunt a large works complex has developed at Holdbrook. This includes some small industrial units and larger warehouses and factories.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is no information currently available about the vegetation and wildlife within this character area.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The area contains the towns of Cheshunt, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Wormley and Waltham Cross. Cheshunt, Hoddesdon and Broxbourne are all mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book when Cheshunt was a large and valuable manor, and part of Hoddesdon was a 'berewick' of Cheshunt, that is an outlying member of the Cheshunt estate. The rest of Hoddesdon was divided into five further manors, forming a place of scattered settlement. At that time Broxbourne consisted of a single manor with a manorial watermill and a priest.

During the medieval period, the settlements of Hoddesdon, Broxbourne and Cheshunt grew with the increased importance of the Cambridge Road, brought about by the construction of a bridge at Ware in the 12th century making this road along the west bank of the Lea the favoured route. Further features were established near to the route of the road, including the 14th century or earlier Hospital of St Laud and St Anthony and a wayside chapel, both located between Hoddesdon and Broxbourne, and the settlements of Waltham Cross and Wormley, further to the south. Waltham Cross is famous for its Eleanor Cross in the centre of the town, but its name derives from the stone cross brought to the district many years earlier by Tovi the Proud in the 11th century, and which was the focus of the miracle that later healed King Harold (see Waltham Abbey, Character Area 31). During the medieval period the five settlements in this character area along the Cambridge Road would have been small-scale and distinct, separated by large areas of fielded rural landscape.

In the post medieval period the Cambridge Road became an important coaching route, with Hoddesdon emerging as the local coaching centre. At its peak Hoddesdon had over 30 coaching inns, and by 1835 the largest three alone had stabling for over 1,000 horses. Of these inns several still survive as public houses, including the Golden Lion and the White Swan. By 1840 the Northern and Eastern Railway reached Broxbourne and within a few years the coaching business collapsed. However, the advent of the railways eventually brought new development to the area, with the creation of commuter housing around and between the historic settlements. These developments have now created an almost indistinguishable urban area from Waltham Cross up to Hoddesdon. However the historic cores of the five towns survive, with many historic listed buildings and a number of Conservation Areas.

Field pattern. This area is predominantly urban and therefore this category is not applicable.

Transport pattern. This area is well served by major roads including the A10 and has a main railway line running along its length, from north to south, linking Cambridge with London. Several roundabouts are located throughout the area.

Settlement pattern and built form. Waltham Cross, Cheshunt, Hoddesdon, Wormley and Broxbourne settlements make up this major urban area. Whilst these settlements all have historic cores they are now linked by modern development into a linear urban corridor, which is delineated by the Lee Valley floodplain in the east and the A10 in the west. It is apparent that the railway and road corridor has had a high impact upon the layout of this major urban area. Residential areas have been set out in a number of different patterns. There is variation in the age of built form, however 1960s to 1980s development is predominant. The rhythm of the skyline is irregular, with buildings of varying heights visible throughout the area. There are, however, few tall tower block structures within the area.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

When moving through the area by car or train, the boundaries between settlements within this area are not clearly visible.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Certain features within this area are distinctive, such as the Eleanor Cross at Waltham Cross. The form, layout and scale of these settlements within the linear corridor is unusual in comparison to many other small-scale settlements within the surrounding character areas. This area is comparable in size to Harlow within the surrounding landscape.

Visual Impact

The railway line and major A10 road have a dominant visual and noise impact upon this area. The built form within this character area can also be seen from several other adjacent character areas.

Accessibility

This area is easily accessible via the road and rail network. Access for walkers from character areas to the west is difficult because of the dominant A10 road barrier. Access is, however, possible at strategic crossing points. Access from character areas to the east of this area is possible via a series of footpaths. The area is considered to be more accessible and permeable to vehicles than pedestrians, however, the area is well served by the railway line.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	N/A
Management of semi-natural habitat:	N/A
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Dominant
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Insignificant
Impact of land cover:	Dominant
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

5. BROXBOURNEBURY (SHLCA 61)

(i) Summary

Location

On western edge of Broxbourne, north of Wormleybury and south of Hertford Heath.

Landscape Character

This area is now a mix of parkland, converted parkland and mixed farmland, with small areas of woodland scattered throughout and an extensive golf course in former parkland. The A10(T) cuts a swathe through it but it is surprisingly undisturbed by the urban area to the east.

Key Characteristics

- Twentieth-century amenity and leisure on former parkland
- Ornamental parkland

Distinctive Features

- Ornamental parkland trees

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Deep stoneless well-drained silty soils over gravel, over Aeolian silty drift (Hamble 2 series).

Topography. Sloping gently from east to west, and even more gently from north to south, with a general impression of being quite level.

Degree of slope. 1 in 150.

Altitude range. 60m to 75m.

Hydrology. Spital Brook flows eastwards from Hoddesdonpark Wood towards the Lea, while an unnamed parallel stream to the south has been diverted to form ornamental waterbodies within the former parkland of Broxbournebury.

Land cover and land use. In this area the main land uses are leisure and arable farming, with some mixed farming and forestry. There has been mineral extraction in one northern section of the parkland, south of Cock Lane. Broxbournebury is now an extensive golf course and there is mixed parkland and arable farmland around High Leigh.

Vegetation and wildlife. Within this area there are significant small areas of woodland which combine to provide a generally wooded appearance, with important old hornbeam woodland and very important streamside wet woodlands by Spital Brook. Within the arable farmland hedges are generally low to medium, either young hawthorn or older (oak, ash, sycamore and field maple). Oak and ash are the dominant woodland species.

The A 10(T) is well vegetated, albeit with a standard mix of mainly indigenous, if not local, species. Broxbournebury Park is a key parkland site in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, with important veteran tree relics. The acidic sands and gravels produce gorse/birch heath when disturbed and there is some old acidic grassland, e.g. at Hoddesdon Lodge

Historical and Cultural Influences

This area was formerly an important complex of ancient parkland (Broxbournebury deer park) and adjoining minor parks (High Leigh, etc.) but has been much damaged since the break-up of the estate in the 1940s, especially from extensive gravel extraction, which may over time become ecologically valuable. The Broxbournebury estate belonged to the Knights Hospitallers before the Dissolution, and James I entertained there in 1603. The earliest record of a deer park there is 1695, predated by the record of 1227 for a deer park at Hoddesdon. South of Cock Lane, near Hoddesdonbury, lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the remains of a motte castle. High Leigh, on the edge of Hoddesdon, is mid-19th century parkland with ornamental conifers around the house. It had a formal parterre and a rocky valley complete with grotto and waterfalls, a characteristic piece of Pulham landscape, but has been simplified.

Field pattern. Where the field pattern has not been disturbed by parkland or golf courses, it is quite large in scale, and regular, with more irregularity against the woodland edge to the west.

Transport pattern. Until late into the 20th century the transport pattern reflected the cultural pattern, with curving lanes marking out the boundaries of the parklands. The diversion of the A10(T) cuts across this pattern but does not destroy it. The road is well planted to either side, which prevents many views out.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area.

Although there is an ice-house in the grounds, indicative of a long-established site, the current Broxbournebury house is a 19th-century remodelling of a 16th-century house, of which some old brickwork and stone windows survive. The imposing red brick building is now the centrepiece of a golf club, within whose highly manicured lawns the parkland trees remain.

High Leigh house dates from 1851 but the property was enlarged in 1871, with the formation of a new park, a lake, avenues and a parterre below the house. It is now a conference centre.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of area from outside are so restricted by woodland that it is very difficult to get any views in, while views within the area are limited by blocks of woodland and topographical variation. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium, with a sense of containment from the woodland boundaries and a coherent, if mixed, character. It is a tranquil area away from the A10(T), from which there is a constant low hum.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The ancient parkland and veteran pollard trees in this area are internationally important, a mark of their rarity. The hornbeam woodland is important and the streamside wet woodland very important.

Visual Impact

Impact of built development: A10, golf club house, localised but high. Impact of land use change: parkland to arable or amenity - prominent; mineral extraction - not visible.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses are golf, walking and informal play. There are few footpaths within the area, but waymarked routes along the boundary. Due to the density of vegetation there are few opportunities to view the scenery within the area.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Moderate
Impact of land-use change:	Moderate

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Rare

6. RYE MEADS (SHLCA 80)

(i) Summary

Location

Area around junction of rivers Lea and Stort, south of Stanstead Abbots and east of the northern part of Hoddesdon.

Landscape Character

A curious mix of utilities such as sewage works, leisure activities (marina) and the quasi-rural character of nature reserves and historic artefacts in partly restored former mineral workings, around highly important remnant floodplain grazing grasslands.

Key Characteristics

- Flat river valley
- Mineral extraction
- Industrial/utilities
- Wetland vegetation
- Extensive waterbodies

Distinctive Features

- Rye gatehouse
- Pylons
- A414 road bridge
- Marina on southern edge of Stanstead Abbots
- Nurseries on north-eastern edge of river valley

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Stoneless clayey soils, in places calcareous, over river alluvium (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat river valley.

Degree of slope. 0.

Altitude range. 30m throughout.

Hydrology. The Lower Lea flows from Feildes Weir south to the Thames, a distance of approximately 34km. This gives an average gradient of 1 in 1300, which is very shallow, but unsurprising given the low-lying floodplain catchment. The river lies on the London clay and demonstrates the typically 'flashy' nature of urban and clay run-off rivers. Much of the fluvial gravel has been extracted and the redundant workings now form lakes, many of them connected to the Flood Relief Channel. Below Stanstead Abbots the Stanstead Mill Stream joins the river Lea Navigation, the canalised river, which then splits into several channels south of the A414 road bridge. At Glen Faba the Lea Navigation splits to provide an additional Flood Relief Channel.

Land cover and land use. The dominant land cover in this area is a mix of utilities/industry and open water and wetland vegetation associated with former mineral workings. There is a rail-served aggregates depot, an ancillary asphalt plant and consent for a ready-mix concrete plant as well as extensive sewage works at Rye Meads. These contrast with leisure uses, such as the marina south of Stanstead Abbots and the stadium near Rye House railway station, on the edge of the residential area of Hoddesdon. On the eastern edge of this area there are also nurseries and glasshouses, a relic of a once more extensive industry.

Vegetation and wildlife. Much of the Rye Meads area has SSSI status and forms part of the proposed Lea Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive. The meadows are the last substantial remnants of ancient flood meadows in the Lea valley and support one of the largest areas of tall fen vegetation in the county, a valuable habitat for wet grassland plants and birds, including over-wintering bittern and breeding colonies of common tern and tufted duck. The 17 shallow sewage treatment lagoons are highly significant for breeding and wintering wildfowl and form an integral part of a large and rich complex of wetland habitats, including fen/mire communities, sedge swamp and sweet-grass swamp. The RSPB/HMWT reserves at Rye Meads/Rye House Marsh accommodate the largest area of reedbed in the county. The tree cover in this area is very extensive, part planted and part natural regeneration, consisting of water-related species, such as willow, poplar and alder and reclamation species such as silver birch and aspen. Other species are ash, oak, hazel,

sycamore, downy birch and Lombardy poplar. Scrub regeneration includes hazel, elder, hawthorn and willow.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The Lea valley is a very disturbed area that has been transformed more than once. The river was used to transport produce from the Hertfordshire area to London and began to be canalised in Elizabethan times, when the structure of which Rye Gatehouse is the last remaining part was built. The earliest record of a deer park here is 1443. The original grazing meadows within the river valley have been largely destroyed, having given way in the 19th century to nurseries and allotments to feed the increasing London population. In turn the Lea Valley became the focus for the development of utilities to service the continuing expansion of London and sand and gravel expansion began in the northern part in the early 20th century to serve the London construction industry. A scheme to beautify the Rye Meads area in the mid 19th century has also been and gone (see below).

Field pattern. The original field pattern no longer exists and the landscape scale has been considerably enlarged.

Transport pattern. Within the northern edge of this area the B181 crosses the river at Stanstead Abbots, while the A414 road bridge is a dominant feature further south above the valley and with extensive views out. There is also a minor toll road linking Stanstead Bury and Rye Park, a curious lane that provides a link between the many disparate features that make up this area.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this part of the Lee valley, although Stanstead Abbots, on the northern edge, lies partly within it and completely blocks any perception of the river valley extending northwards. Rye Common Pumping station is Italianate yellow brick, erected in 1882, and visible from the A414. Rye Mead gatehouse (SAM) dates from 1443 and is a red brick rectangle with blue brick diapering, standing on a moated site beside the river. Nearby is the Rye House Inn, part of a Victorian scheme of 1864 to convert the Rye House neighbourhood into a pleasure garden à la Vauxhall and Ranelagh.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

The strongest impression here is the contrast between industrial and nature conservation land uses. Despite the A414 road bridge overhead it is a surprisingly tranquil area and the ongoing restoration projects provide a dynamism that contrasts with the static nature of the sewage works. It is not unified, being a jumble of contrasting land uses, but is fascinating. The river, wedged between the urban edge and the industrial area, is a less dominant landscape feature than the waterbodies of the former mineral workings.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Designation as a proposed SPA denotes the special nature and national importance of this area for nature conservation - the bittern is now a rare and endangered species. It is also regionally important for its breeding bird colonies and as a focal point for bird migration routes, recognised in Rye Meads Ringing Station, one of the oldest bird-ringing stations in the UK. In landscape terms this is certainly a most unusual area at present, although it is likely that, as restoration proceeds, it will more resemble the Regional Park areas south of Dobb's Weir. Rye Gatehouse is unique.

Visual Impact

The impact of urban and industrial development, the transport corridor and utilities is especially apparent. Within this there are gems, such as Rye Gatehouse.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses include walking, bird watching and boating.

In some places the condition of footpaths is poor

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Relic
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

7. GREAT AMWELL RIDGE & SLOPES (SHLCA 78)

(i) Summary

Location

'Elbow' within curve of river Lea through Ware, south of Ware, extending westwards to Balls Park and south to Hertford Heath and the northern edge of Hoddesdon.

Landscape Character

A complex semi-urban area with two settlements and combined-urban edge and rural land uses.

Key Characteristics

- North west/south east ridgeline bounded by Lea valley slopes to north east and dry bowl landform to south west
- Parkland remnants
- 20th-century residential development
- Woodland with public access
- Flint walls and sunken lanes
- Severance by road transport network

Distinctive Features

- Redundant mineral workings
- Recreational use (golf course)
- Country houses in institutional use
- Monument at Great Amwell and source of New River

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Deep well drained silty soils, locally flinty or over gravel, sometimes affected by groundwater, over glaciofluvial drift (Hamble 1 series) or silty drift (Hamble 2 series).

Topography. Narrow north west/south east ridge with Lea valley to the north and shallow bowl to the south west, then rising to Hertford Heath plateau.

Degree of slope. Locally 1 in 20 and 1 in 27.

Altitude range. 31m to 90m.

Hydrology. The New River rises from a spring at Great Amwell and flows in canal south-eastwards to London.

Land cover and land use. This area is a complex mix of wooded farmland, parkland and forestry, with mineral extraction, recreational and amenity use, industry, nursery production and settlement. The farmland is a mix of pasture near the settlements and on the valley slopes, with arable around the A10(T). Formal and informal recreational facilities are located around the settlements and along the river valley.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is an ecologically mixed but generally impoverished area, due to the spread of arable cultivation. The oak/hornbeam woodland at Post Wood is mixed with other planted species, including weeping willow, alder, poplar, ash, horse chestnut, sycamore, hazel, holly and pine, with much secondary growth of sycamore. Hedges on the valley slopes are medium in height and of hawthorn and blackthorn. There is one small relic orchard near the floodplain. Hedgebanks define the boundaries of the sunken lanes, with elm, hawthorn and hornbeam present, often as medium height pure hawthorn hedges (modern), and often provide the only remnants of the natural mixed calcareous/heath grassland of this area. There are remnant old meadows between Great Amwell and Ware, containing meadow saxifrage, etc. on alluvial gravels.

Historical and Cultural Influences

This area has undergone many changes to its historic pattern, chiefly from the growth of settlements and the impact of the modern road transport network. There has been much 20th-century development in the triangle between the A10(T)/A119 and 21st-century development between the New River and the Lea Navigation, in an area which historically consisted of unenclosed grazing meadows. Former parkland has changed to institutional use and public amenity, with some relic features retained. The historic pattern of tracks has been retained as footpaths and bridleways and offers a very regular network over and along the small ridge.

- The space north of the church in Great Amwell is described in Pevsner as 'one of the most delightful spots in Herts', thanks to Robert Mylne. He erected a monument to the creator of the New River, Sir Hugh Myddelton, who achieved the feat of supplying water to London in only four years, between 1609 and 1614. The monument stands on a small island with weeping willows, a wellingtonia and a yew tree nearby on manicured lawns

Field pattern. Field sizes vary between small (pasture) and medium-large (arable), with a modern pattern of fences in the pasture and loss of boundaries in the arable. Hedgebanks mark the old tracks and the sunken lanes, while fields are either hedged or fenced, with some loss of field boundaries in the arable areas.

Transport pattern. Modern trunk and primary roads are a feature of this landscape area. The A10(T), A10, A414 and A119, plus B1502, B181 and other minor roads, all divide the area into discrete chunks and destroy its unity. The New River provides a strong linear element in the north-eastern section, as does the railway.

Settlements and built form. Although there are isolated farms on the valley slopes, the main form in this area is clustered and infilled settlements, probably old but with significant 20th-century components and generally lacking a coherent or vernacular style.

- Amwellbury is a large timber-framed farmhouse with a 17th-century polygonal dovecote with cupola.
- There are many flint walls associated with settlements, and some stone (ragstone?)
- In the 19th century Italianate pumping stations were built along the New River, the earliest of which is at Amwell Hill (1847).
- There is a notable flint house in Great Amwell, near the Myddleton monument (see above)

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

From outside the form of this area is quite visible, especially the low ridge near the river and the sloping ground in the south west, but the elements within it are generally concealed by vegetation. From within the area there are extensive views from high ground over a medium-scale, rather incoherent landscape, enclosed by the slopes to southwest and northeast. The vegetation along the river Lea acts to conceal the presence of the river and associated waterbodies, so that the natural boundary appears to be the slopes between Stanstead Abbots and Ware. This is not a tranquil area, due to the constant traffic on the many roads. The New River is, however, remarkably peaceful apart from the passage of trains on the railway.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is certainly an unusual area, due to the complexity of land uses, but its rarity lies in the historic associations with the creation of the New River and the limpid tranquillity of the area around the monument. The New River is unusual and its monument unique.

Visual Impact

This is a very visually disturbed landscape, with many different elements within it. The impact of built development in the form of the road transport network, housing and utilities is widespread and dominant, making this predominantly a suburban rather than a rural area. This is also demonstrated by the presence of degraded pasture and neglected orchards.

Mineral extraction has also had an impact on the local landform south of Great Amwell.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses include dog walking/fishing/narrow boating on the canal/cycling

There is a widespread network of footpaths, with a variety of surfacing, mainly good. Signage to and parking at the monument could be improved.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Poor
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

8. AMWELL FLOODPLAIN (SHLCA 79)

(i) Summary

Location

River valley east of Ware, south-eastwards to Stanstead Abbots.

Landscape Character

An area of man-made lakes and wetland vegetation with a 20th-century character belied by the presence of the manicured surrounds of the New River on the south-western edge. A significant transport route with an urban tinge to its character. An open wetland landscape within a flat river valley bottom, extensively wooded, comprising the River Lea Navigation, the Lea river and extensive flooded former mineral workings, some of which have been restored as nature reserves.

Key Characteristics

- Enclosed river valley
- Variety of hydrological types: meandering river, canalised Navigation and extensive waterbodies from former mineral workings
- Urban influences
- Sharp transition between rural and urban character
- Densely vegetated with wetland species
- Contrast between ordered Lea Navigation canal and apparent naturalness of flooded mineral workings
- Relatively tranquil, despite proximity of railway
- Screening effect of vegetation

Distinctive Features

- Extensive waterbodies and wetland vegetation
- Nature reserves

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Gleyed (poorly draining) soils over alluvial drift (Fladbury 1 series).

Topography. Flat floodplain.

Degree of slope. There is a slope of 1 in 966 between the eastern edge of Ware and Stanstead Lock.

Altitude range. 30m to 40m.

Hydrology. This stretch of the Lea valley contains the river Lea/Lee and the River Lea Navigation. This is an important stretch of the river (2km) for nature conservation interest, especially flora, but the two watercourses are not dominant landscape features within the valley, which is nonetheless characterised by water, chiefly in flooded former mineral extraction sites. At Amwell Magna a major enhancement programme has placed wetland shelves in a loop of a backwater to the Lee navigation to provide a fringe of marginal plants at the water's edge, to maintain an adequate depth of water for fish movement and to prevent siltation.

Land cover and land use. There is still a little grazing pasture within the valley, and pockets of arable cultivation, but the dominant land use is recreation and amenity, with nature conservation. Mineral extraction continues, and housing development is taking the place of former nurseries along the south bank to the east of Ware. There is a significant nature reserve at Amwell Quarry, a former mineral extraction site.

Vegetation and wildlife. The ecology of this area is dominated by Amwell Quarry SSSI, which is now a private nature reserve. The former floodplain grasslands and ditch systems were replaced in the 1970s-80s by gravel extraction and then restored for nature conservation, to include important spring-fed lakes, reed beds, wet grasslands and alder/willow woodland. It forms part of the proposed Lee Valley SPA. Beyond the SSSI woodland cover is extensive and consists of wetland species such as willow, poplar and alder, with ash and beech. Around the man-made lakes a variety of wetland tree species have either been planted or have evolved naturally. Amwell Quarry attracts overwintering wildfowl populations of national importance and outstanding assemblages of breeding birds, dragonflies and damselflies. It is

also important for mammals, grass snakes, common newts and frogs and supports a small area of reedswamp, an important habitat for bittern.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The organic character of this area is masked by the extensive impact of mineral extraction, which has created an artificial landscape. The Lea Navigation is also a planned element but the lush vegetation masks this artificiality with a cloak of naturalness. Former land uses have all but disappeared, with arable cultivation replacing grazing meadows in some of the remaining terrestrial areas, while most of the former farmland is now under water.

Field pattern. The historic field pattern of grazing meadows is no longer present.

Transport pattern. There are no roads within the river valley, rather they are set just above the floodplain. Both the Lee Navigation and the railway provide a strong linear element.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements or buildings within the river valley. All development is on the adjoining slopes, above the floodplain.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

This area is enclosed by landform and vegetation and is remarkably rural in parts despite its proximity to urban centres and a major road network, although the over-riding character is urban fringe.

Rarity and distinctiveness. In the context of the Lea Valley character areas this is a frequent landscape.

Visual Impact

Housing, development and the railway all have an impact on this area generally, which can be transformed locally by the screening effects of vegetation.

Accessibility

The Lea Valley Walk links Ware and Stanstead Abbots along the Lee Navigation, but there are no cross-routes or other access.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Extensive
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Relic
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Relic
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

9. LOWER ASH VALLEY (SHLCA 88)

(i) Summary

Location

Linear north/south river valley and tributaries with undulating side slopes between confluence with the Lea at Hollycross Road (Amwell Magna) and Mardocks Mill/Wareside within the valley to the north.

Landscape Character

Narrow flat river valley floor with steep, undulating wooded slopes on either side. Distinctive wetland vegetation and historic settlement with traditional dairy and sheep farming create a picturesque rural setting. The impact of settlement is absorbed and contained by topography. There is a clear distinction between the Ash and the Lea valleys, with the Ash valley concealed by extensive vegetation around its mouth. Within this area, Easneye stands out as a distinctive sub-area for its topography and vegetation cover.

Key Characteristics

- Narrow flat valley floor contained by steep side slopes
- Pronounced wetland vegetation
- Traditional pastoral agriculture and woodland with extensive estate character
- Isolated farmhouses and grouped farm buildings
- Tranquil and remote

Distinctive Features

- Dismantled railway now partly available as footpath/track
- Much narrower than the Lea valley
- The coherence and integrity of old dwellings and farmhouses, their vernacular architecture and careful siting within the valley
- Dominant position of Easneye woodland on southern promontory
- Dairy farming - traditional pasture with cows

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The lower end of the river valley consists of stoneless, mainly calcareous clayey soils over river alluvium (Thames series), as far north as Wareside, with deep, well-drained fine loams and clays over chalky tills on the valley slopes (Melford series).

Topography. The river meanders through a narrow floodplain with strongly undulating side slopes and spurs, the most prominent of which is on the southern bank at Easneye.

Degree of slope. 1 in 6 on the slopes, with a river gradient of 1 in 275.

Altitude range. 31m to 70m.

Hydrology. The Ash supports a low fish population except in its lower reaches. It is predominantly natural in form, although affected by impoundment, and is quite species-rich and of high invertebrate value.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly treed pastoral farmland, with woodland on the steepest slopes, especially on the southern promontory occupied by Easneye. There is some arable on the shallower slopes.

Vegetation and wildlife. Woodland cover tends to be linear along the steeper slopes. Easneye is characterised by acidic oak/hornbeam woodland on gravel hangers over chalk, with dog's mercury, bluebells and acid grassland below and in open rides, changing to neutral grassland on the valley floor. There is also some remnant floodplain ash/willow woodland, with spring-fed pools adjoining the river Ash and a number of old native black poplar, in one of their few remaining natural sites in Hertfordshire. Boundary hedgerows consist of thorn, elder, weeping willow and poplar. Most grasslands, formerly species-rich with a mix of calcareous and acid conditions on the slopes, are now 'improved'. The river Ash is one of the best rivers in east Hertfordshire, with relic native crayfish and water vole populations. It is characterised throughout by variable floodplain grasslands and wetlands, overhung by oak/hornbeam woods on gravel terraces, with native colonies of wood forget-me-not.

Historical and Cultural Influences

This area appears to be of a character that has altered little over the centuries. The dominance of pastoral production means that there has been little loss of field boundaries and most of the dwellings are 19th-century or earlier. There is a bowl barrow (SAM) in Easneye Wood. Easneye, now a college, is a mid-Victorian redbrick mansion with much diapering, stepped gabling and tracery details, and much use of red terracotta. It is set amid extensive woodland on the southern slopes of the river just above its confluence with the Lea. There is a record of a deer park here in 1322.

Field pattern. The field pattern is irregular and organic, following the base of slopes and the meandering river. Field boundaries are a mix of tree rows, fences, medium hedgerows and wet ditches, with the tree rows making a significant contribution to the local vegetation. Field sizes are small to medium, variable.

Transport pattern. In this area the B1004 clings to the plateau edge on the northern valley side, while Hollycross Road marks the divide between the Lea and the Ash. The dismantled railway occupies a direct route through the valley while the river meanders to either side.

Settlements and built form. Buildings in this area are isolated houses or farms with clusters of farm buildings, usually in the vernacular tradition. Materials are red and yellow brick with clay tile roofs, or weatherboard, with bargeboards, dentil courses, etc., generally dating from the 18th century and before. Watersplace Farm and Hall is a collection of various dwellings and farm buildings in the valley north of Easneye Wood. There are also disused railway bridges and Mardocks Mill, hinting at former industrial uses within the valley.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

From outside, this area is widely visible at the southern end. The landform is very obvious from the road and footpaths which run parallel to the valley and offer views in and across. Views within the area are generally framed by vegetation and landform, being extensive along the valley and up the valley slopes, but contained by the plateau edge. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium and there is a general sense of containment. It is unified, tranquil and coherent.

Rarity and distinctiveness. While the promontory of Easneye is quite distinctive, the lower reaches of the Ash valley are possibly the most typical representation in Hertfordshire of pastoral farming within the floodplain.

Visual Impact

The impact of built development (rural housing) is pronounced and positive in this area. There are scattered but extensive farm units and isolated houses nestling in the valley, which contribute to its settled and productive character. There has been some change from pastoral to arable production but, especially at the southern end, the pastoral tradition is very evident.

Accessibility

Noted recreational land uses: walking/riding.

Frequency/density of footpaths, bridleways and waymarked routes - localised but clearly marked.

Good access. Condition: good; wide

Surface: dirt/road planings; variable

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Extensive
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Intact
Impact of built development:	Good
Impact of land-use change:	Low

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Continuous
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Unified
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Rare

10. STANSTED TO PISHIOBURY PARKLANDS (SHLCA 81)

(i) Summary

Location

A broad band on the north bank of the Stort between Stanstead Abbots in the west and the south-western edge of Sawbridgeworth, divided into four sub-areas of parklands.

Landscape Character

Parkland and arable farmland on gently undulating south-facing slope interrupted by valleys of the Stort's tributaries. Cultural pattern overrides topographical change. An area of ancient settlements, dominated by the many parklands on the south-facing slopes above the Stort valley.

Key Characteristics

- Parkland: Stanstead Bury, Bonnington, Hunsdonbury and Briggens Park; Eastwick (relic); Gilston Park and former deer park around Sayes Park Farm; Pishiobury
- Large-scale arable farmland with little woodland out of the valleys
- Views of Harlow across river valley with taller buildings nestling in trees
- Change from floodplain to rounded slopes is apparent throughout
- Constant noise from cars and aircraft

Distinctive Features

- Country houses
- Southerly aspect
- Relic cultural pattern reflects topographic change and different landcover, e.g. Hunsdon Mead - Hunsdon Mill - Hunsdonbury
- Dovecote water tower at Briggens
- Historic moats at Eastwick
- Transition to adjoining area, with small parklands on boundary

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series) on the higher ground, with better drained loamy soils towards the river (Melford series).

Topography. South-facing undulating valley slope with minor tributaries of the Stort.

Degree of slope. 1 in 10 to 1 in 65.

Altitude range. 40m to 70m.

Hydrology. Hunsdon Brook, Fiddlers Brook and other un-named tributaries of the Stort flow southwards into the main river at gradients of 1 in 125.

Land cover and land use. This area consists of wooded farmland and parkland with well-integrated landholdings, a mix of parkland, open arable farmland, woodland and water meadow (sub-area A). The primary land use is arable cultivation (sub-areas A, B and C) but there is also significant parkland (all sub-areas except Eastwick), some of which is now being developed with secondary settlements around the original mansion (sub-area C).

Associated features: dovecote, water tower, moats, estate fencing. Some fly-tipping

Vegetation and wildlife. The south-western part of sub-area A has little woodland, while the north-eastern part contains several important, isolated blocks of old woodland, with elm, ash, hawthorn, willow and hornbeam. Around the parklands in this area there are extensive deciduous plantations, some grassland and ornamental lakes which are valuable locally for birds.

- The parkland at Bonningtons is scarcely visible, most having gone to arable production; the large lake is completely screened by vegetation from the B180.
- Eastwick is notable as being devoid of ecological value, except for the neutral/calcareous rough grassland associated with the old moats.
- Gilston Park has some notable veteran trees and a lake, but has lost much of its grassland to the plough.

- Sayes Park is mainly open arable, but has some important old woodland. Field boundaries are either medium hedgerows or rows of individual trees, such as a young lime avenue. Usual hedgerow species are blackthorn/hawthorn, hazel, willow and field maple, with wild clematis. There are many individual relic oak standards and some ash.
- Pishiobury has important riverside alder/willow woodlands, some good neutral pasture on its undulating slopes and a spring-fed lake on the line of an old meander.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The historic pattern of this area is very prominent, with the field pattern reflecting its planned, estate character.

- Sub-area A contains the parklands and associated farmlands of Bonnington, Hunsdonbury, Briggens and Stanstead Bury.
- Sub-area B consists of the farmland and village of Eastwick. To the north of the village are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, moated sites with associated earthworks which are the relics of a manor belonging to Edward III, which burned down in the 1840s. Although partly used as a local fly-tipping site, the low-key site is jointly managed by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency.
- Within Gilston Park (sub-area C) there is another SAM, a moated site with associated deer-pen enclosure and park pale, south of the existing house and indicating the location of the former deer park. This may have extended into or been adjacent to a deer park (pre-1676) on the land now occupied by Sayes Park Farm, and was possibly linked to either The Manor of Groves or High Wych Park, both of which lie on the boundary of the adjoining area.
- Sub-area D consists of the designed parkland of Pishiobury, south of Sawbridgeworth, somewhat isolated from the other parklands

Field pattern. The regular fields are generally small to medium size, with some larger arable fields.

Transport pattern. The transport pattern in this area is of narrow, winding, sunken lanes running north-south from the river valley. Most lanes are hedged on one side only, and are frequently ditched. Verges area usually absent. The A414 forms part of the southern boundary of the area and divides Briggens from the other parklands in this area.

Settlements and built form. Settlements are of varying sizes within this area, most of them at least Victorian in age, several older. Stanstead Abbots has a partly 15th-century church and several 17th and 18th-century houses, including Stanstead Hall, the Red Lion Inn and The Old Clock School, plus Victorian buildings such as the Mill. The streetscape has white weatherboard and black bargeboards on white rendered houses.

- Sub-area A:

Stanstead Bury dates from the late 15th century and has, according to Pevsner, 'an eminently picturesque exterior, the result of several centuries' alterations. The shapes and textures and colours of the approach side (W) must delight the eye of any painter'. It has a garden and park of some 25 hectares. Briggens was built in 1719 for a director of the South Sea Company. The grounds were worked on by Charles Bridgeman in 1720 and had a deer park from at least the 16th until the late 19th century. The house has been considerably altered over time and is now an hotel, with a young lime avenue and a golf course laid out among the mature parkland trees. Salmon described Briggens in 1728 as standing 'upon a beautiful hill overlooking the Meadows, the river Stort, and part of Essex', and its features included 'a graceful Plantation of Trees, with Variety of Slopes, adorned with Statues' (N. Salmon, History of Hertfordshire). 'The turfed ramps and terraces forming these "Slopes" are familiar elements in Bridgeman's designs' (Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden, by Peter Willis, London (1977)). Hunsdon House, adjacent to Hunsdonbury park and well south of the village, is of great historic significance, being a remnant of a great mansion belonging to Henry VIII, where the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth spent a great deal of their childhood. It had an established deer park in 1296. At Bonningtons there is c.86ha of informal parkland dating from pre-1760, much of which appears to be in arable cultivation.

- Sub-area B:

Eastwick church, with a 13th-century chancel arch, stands outside the ancient hamlet on the edge of the Stort floodplain. There is now no parkland here. Many of the cottages in the village are mid-Victorian, built by the Hodgson family who held both Eastwick and Gilston Park.

- Sub-area C:

Gilston Park was enclosed in the 17th century and its present house, replacing one demolished in 1851, is a 'large asymmetrical mansion of random rubble in the Early Tudor style with Gothic details' (Pevsner). The estate is now (2000) being refurbished and large new houses are being built within the parkland. The half-coppiced lime avenue, neat

hedges and estate fencing lend an estate influence to the surrounding arable farmland. The church of cut and uncut flint with red brick tower stands isolated from the park and village.

- Sub-area D:

Pishiobury is described as 'mildly medievalizing' in Pevsner. It is a red brick late Tudor mansion, remodelled or rebuilt by James Wyatt in 1782 with castellations. It had a deer park in 1343. The stables and barn are still essentially c.1600, while the lake (part of the river Stort) and planting are due to Capability Brown.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views within the area are extensive across the floodplain to the industrial edge of Harlow. The southern edge of the area is also widely visible from the A414, which forms part of its boundary. It is a fairly tranquil area away from the roads but has lost unity because of the different land uses to which the parklands have been put. Near-constant noise from planes in and out of Stansted also reduces tranquillity generally.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This area is most unusual in having so many associated parklands. Not all are in good condition and the landscape flow is broken by mineral workings between Gilston and Pishiobury.

Visual Impact

From the valley slopes there are views across the Stort valley to the northern edge of Harlow, its tall chimneys and industrial buildings in some contrast to the wetlands within the shallow valley.

Accessibility

The Harcamlow Way extends along various routes in this area through the river valley, but is not extensive on the slopes. There is little access to the parklands.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Low

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Continuous
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

11. HUNSDON PLATEAU (SHLCA 83)

(i) Summary

Location

Focused on Hunsdon village, bounded to the south by estate/parkland associated with the river Stort, to the east by less disturbed farmland, and to the north by the river Ash valley.

Landscape Character

Large-scale open arable farmland on flat upland plateau, with smaller fields and woodland to north west of Hunsdon.

Key Characteristics

- Few settlements: Hunsdon, Widford
- Significant woodland groups clustered in north east and south west
- Poor or fragmented hedges
- Quite remote
- Large-scale arable fields
- Heavy wet clay - ditched

Distinctive Features

- Former World War II airfield south-east of Hunsdon - very bleak and lacking in features
- Homogenous style of villages
- Pylons and overhead power lines
- Historic links down to river Stort
- Distinction between settlement and generally unsettled countryside

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Clay soils over till (glacial drift). Hunsdon village lies on fine loamy over clayey soils, with slowly permeable subsoils (chalky till and glaciofluvial drift) (Ashley

series), while the surrounding area lies on slowly permeable calcareous clay (Hanslope series).

Topography. Flat plateau.

Degree of slope. 1 in 375.

Altitude range. 66m to 81m.

Hydrology. There are many ditches in this poorly drained area, but few streams. To the south they flow into the Stort or Lea; in the north into the Ash.

Land cover and land use. This area is in intensive arable production, with areas of ancient woodland in an aggregated block to the north east of Hunsdon village and woodland plantations around Bonningtons, south west of the village. The impact of former land use as a World War II airfield is very apparent to the south east of the village, where all trees and hedgerows were removed and have not been replaced.

Associated features: ditches, moats.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a uniform area of arable farmland with wet boulder clay woodlands of transitional oak/hornbeam and ash/maple/hazel and a fairly diverse ground flora dominated by dog's mercury. The woodland is a mix of ancient woodland in the north east and plantations of between 50 and 120 years old in the south west. In both cases the individual blocks are quite large (5 to 15ha); the ancient woodland blocks are closer together and linked by hedgerows. Elm is a prominent species locally, with willow along the ditches. Hedge species are elm, hawthorn and sallow with standard oak or ash, but there are few of them and they are not in good condition. Marshland Wood contains field maple, hornbeam, hawthorn, spindle, ash, oak and elm. In the churchyard at Hunsden there is a veteran yew and veteran oaks are scattered through this area, as at Olive's Farm, Hunsdon.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The historic pattern of this area is apparent but very altered locally by the destruction of the field pattern on the former WWII airfield. Hunsdon House, on the outskirts of the village, was the favoured residence of Henry VIII, to escape the London plague and for hunting. There was an extensive deer park and the possible remnants of a hunting lodge survive as a

barn at Hunsdon Lodge Farm. The Tudor palace became a Georgian mansion in the early 19th century. The central block of woodland was formerly much more extensive but suffered from clearances in the early 1970s.

'It is perhaps typical of Hunsdon that where a medieval hunting ground has not been transformed into a later park, the ground has been radically altered by modern construction.' (Munby, *The Landscape of Hertfordshire*, p.134.)

Field pattern. Field sizes are generally large to vast, smaller and more regular immediately to the west of Hunsdon. They vary between very geometric north of Gilston to irregular within the ancient woodland, but are generally irregular (although this is difficult to see in the field, due to the scale). On the former WWII airfield the former field pattern has not been reinstated.

Transport pattern. One notable feature of this area is the difficulty of access. There are no public roads within the rectangle bounded by the B1004, the B180 and Hollycross Road, an area of c.1200ha. The remaining 550 hectares of the area are similarly un-roaded, and the B180 is the only road within the whole area. Despite an extensive network of footpaths, much of the area remains inaccessible by car or on foot. The B180 winds across the plateau, usually ditched and hedged along much of its length, although open between Widford and Hunsdon.

Settlements and built form. There are two villages within the area. Although Widford lies on the plateau edge, it is perhaps more associated with the Ash valley, unlike Hunsdon which is a focus for the whole area. Between Hunsdon and Widford there is linear settlement along the B180. Elsewhere there are only isolated farms.

- Hunsdon has a homogeneous character due to the extensive use of white weatherboard or render and uniform black-painted bargeboards for groups of houses of different styles. The date of some estate cottages is 1856, but there are older houses too, notably a timber-framed hall house in Widford Road.
- Widford is also a long-established village, with 12th-century fragments in the church and some 16th-century (Nether Hall) and 18th-century (Goddard House) houses.
- Widfordbury, perched above the river Ash, is a 17th-century farmhouse with 16th-century brick-wall relics.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of the area from outside are concealed by local topography, while views within are extensive. The scale of landscape elements varies between small and large, with an emphasis on the latter. This is a very open, incoherent but tranquil landscape.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Unique in the impact the WWII airfield still has on the area. The north-eastern part of the area shows the former cultural pattern of the whole area.

Visual Impact

Impact of built development: the airfield has altered the historic scale locally.

Distinctive features: former airfield, now large-scale arable - strong contrast with pre-existing/remaining landscape to north east and south west.

Accessibility

Frequency/density of footpaths and waymarked routes: extensive and widespread but unwelcoming across airfield.

Condition: fair.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Localised
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Mature
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Fragmented
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Open
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

12. RIVER STORT (SHLCA 82)

(i) Summary

Location

The valley of the river Stort between its confluence with the Lea at Rye Meads and the southern edge of Bishop's Stortford.

Landscape Character

An enclosed landscape, focused on the Stort Navigation with its locks and the more natural original river with its side loops. The landform is dominant, although the watercourses within it are relatively insignificant visually. The valley is predominantly rural with significant localised urban impact, varying with the degree to which industry is water related.

Key Characteristics

- River valley
- Generally rural in character
- Generally enclosed, lacking panoramic views, therefore focused on river
- Variation in urban impact, dependent on whether industry is water-related or not

Distinctive Features

- Narrowboats on river
- Relic water-related industrial, versus 20th-century non-related industry - graffiti etc
- Tranquil watercourse, willow-fringed with locks

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The flat valley bottom consists of stoneless mainly calcareous clayey soils over river alluvium (Thames series), with better drained loamy or clayey soils over chalky till on the lower slopes (Melford series).

Topography. Flat with gentle side slopes.

Degree of slope. The river has a fall of 1 in 750 between Bishop's Stortford and Rye Meads; the side slopes are between 1 in 100 and 1 in 500.

Altitude range. 32m to 55m along the river; 35m to 60m on the edge of the floodplain.

Hydrology. The river valley contains the original river Stort, the channelled Stort Navigation and tributaries such as Canons Brook. Parts of the original river channel are retained as 'side loops', as at Pishiobury. These support diverse ecological communities and are very rich in fish habitat.

Land cover and land use. This area is open farmland with wetlands and open water. The floodplain contains a mix of pasture and wetland vegetation, with some arable and the Navigation is a significant recreational amenity. The A414, set just above the floodplain on the northern slope, marks a break between this predominantly wetland vegetation and the arable slopes above. There has been significant mineral extraction within the river valley between Rodericks and Hollingson Meads.

Vegetation and wildlife. This natural floodplain of extensive riverside grasslands and wetlands is a major ecological and landscape resource. Wetland species dominate, mainly willow and alder, the latter an uncommon species elsewhere in Hertfordshire. The river's flora includes rarities such as shining pondweed, arrowhead, yellow waterlilies and red and flat-stalked pondweeds. It supports large numbers of invertebrates, birds and mammals, including water vole, although the canalised main river is now severely degraded. It can be divided into three ecological sub-areas.

- The upper Stort contains high quality alluvial floodplain grasslands and calcareous fen communities, together with some alder/ash/willow woodland. The SSSIs at Sawbridgeworth Marsh and Thorley Flood Pound are very important for tall wash grassland, marsh, reedbed and permanent grassland, which provides habitat for snipe, water rail, wildfowl and ground-nesting birds.
- The section of river between Sawbridgeworth and Pye Corner is rather degraded by mineral extraction but still contains some old alluvial pasture, as at Hollingson Mead. The post-extraction gravel pits are developing local value for wildlife.
- The most important floodplain grasslands in Hertfordshire occur in the lower Stort at Hunsdon (SSSI) and Parndon Meads. Hunsdon Mead is managed on the ancient Lammas

system of haymaking followed by winter grazing and supports an interesting and now uncommon flora, including green-winged orchid.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The historic landscape pattern of this area is generally less disturbed than many others and has largely retained its natural landform and, in part, land use. Traditionally it was grazing marsh for the historic parkland estates on the south-facing slopes to the north. The Stort at this point was probably an important boundary in pre-history. Within and adjacent to the towns the river is heavily influenced by water-related industrial use, dating mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Field pattern. The field pattern in this area is discontinuous and variable, relating to the traditional unenclosed pattern of grazing meadows but interrupted by mineral extraction.

Transport pattern. This is a busy area, with a dual carriageway (A414) on the northern edge of the lower reaches of the floodplain, a railway snaking to either side of it and the B181, A1184, B1004, A414 and other minor lanes crossing it.

Settlements and built form. Sawbridgeworth has an Edwardian character near the river, with 19th-century water-related industrial buildings, some now converted but retaining their scale. The maltings on both sides of the railway and along the Stort are the most extensive remaining range of pre-20th century maltings buildings in Hertfordshire. The southern edge of Bishop's Stortford, by contrast, has a 20th-century urban industrial character, with graffiti, industrial buildings and blank walls backing on to the Navigation. The estates associated with the middle reaches of the river are screened by vegetation (Wallbury) or topography (Hyde Hall) and lie outside the floodplain. (See also Area 81 for the parklands traditionally associated with the river, set on the northern slopes above the floodplain.)

Other built features: Locks - consistent black/white timber; bridges of 19th or 20th-century brick; lock houses; narrowboats.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of the area from outside are concealed by intervening vegetation and buildings, not landform, while views within the area are limited by vegetation. The scale of landscape elements is small and there is a significant sense of enclosure. This is a coherent but discordant area, with noise from railway, road traffic and planes. Although it lies outside the urban envelope it is heavily influenced visually by it.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Some of the habitats within the SSSIs are now rare within the county or nationally. This is one of the more intact river valleys in the county.

Visual Impact

The impact of built development is high but localised in this area, with the urban/transport corridor and a telemast.

Accessibility

Frequency/density of footpaths and towpaths - widespread in river valley, absent elsewhere.

Noted recreational land uses: walking, boating, fishing.

Frequency/density of waymarked routes - widespread.

Condition: fair; medium width; surface: gravelled but muddy.

Harcamlow Way along towpath and redundant railway

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Rare

13. HIGH WYCH SLOPES (SHLCA 84)

(i) Summary

Location

This character area includes Sawbridgeworth to the east; it is bounded by Hunsdon plateau to the west and the Stort valley to the south, with an open arable plateau to the north.

Landscape Character

A south-facing slope of mixed farming within a small irregular field pattern, usually ditched rather than hedged. An area of transition, showing increasing urban influence in the southern part and with links to the parkland area to the west. Around High Wych there are wide stretches of open farmland with old houses nestling in small coppices. The school, ancient houses and thatched cottages surround the flint church. The settlement of Sawbridgeworth is composed of a mix of residential styles and ages, and many historic buildings survive. Shops, restaurants and other commercial buildings have developed around a small rectangular market place and the town is accessible via a regular arrangement of roads.

Key Characteristics

- Isolated farms and houses
- Small-scale open farmed landscape
- Gently undulating south-facing slope
- Discrete blocks of woodland
- Tight network of narrow, winding, sunken lanes, usually ditched
- Small areas of parkland on the western edge
- Sawbridgeworth settlement

Distinctive Features

- High Wych retains village character despite links to Sawbridgeworth
- Golf course and hotel add suburban character to generally rural area
- High Wych Road is a commuter-run, therefore not tranquil
- Sawbridgeworth 16th century timber-framed buildings
- Sawbridgeworth maltings

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Gently undulating south-facing slope with slight dip to Fiddlers' Brook in west.

Degree of slope. 1 in 70 to 1 in 130.

Altitude range. 60m to 80m.

Hydrology. Fiddlers' Brook meanders southwards through Gilston Park (where it is dammed to form a lake) to the Stort. There are other minor streams flowing into the Stort.

Land cover and land use. Open arable farmland, small areas of parkland and suburban development, in a confusing mix. Few hedgerows and little pasture. Around the urban edge development is dense enough to completely mask the local topography. Sawbridgeworth is predominantly residential with some commercial buildings.

Vegetation and wildlife. This uniform area of boulder clay farmland contains rather species-poor remnants of semi-natural woodland, mostly ash/maple but formerly with frequent elm. The former hazel/maple/elm hedges have largely been removed and almost no natural grassland remains. Poplar, lime and horse chestnut have all been planted within the area.

Historical and Cultural Influences

This is arable farmland with a pattern of dispersed settlement.

Field pattern. Irregular, with a gradual increase in size away from settlements, varying from very small to very large. Generally unhedged and divided by ditches.

Transport pattern. A tight network of small lanes, with a rectangular pattern west of Sawbridgeworth, often enclosing small areas. Sawbridgeworth has a regular arrangement of roads. There is a historic route running east-west which crosses the River Stort at High

Bridge and several roads existing roads are known to date from the Medieval period. The main A1184 connects Sawbridgeworth with Bishops' Stortford and Harlow new town.

Settlements and built form. Sawbridgeworth settlement with its medieval core, influences this character area to the east. It has been suggested that Sawbridgeworth may have been deliberately planned by the Lord of the Manor - Geoffrey de Say during the early 13th century (Seddon & Bryant, 1999). The town has a regular, rectilinear form with a small rectangular market place. Several 15th century buildings survive alongside 16th century timber-framed buildings. During the 16th century, Sawbridgeworth further developed around the transportation of malted barley from local malthouses to London. The town continued to develop around this industry and several more recent malting buildings are visible within central areas. The post-medieval development of the transport network, with the improvement of the roads and the creation of the canal, provided an extra boost to the town.

'G.E.Pritchett's High Wych [church] of 1861 deserves to be specially mentioned as an eminently typical example of High Victorian design at its most revolting' (Pevsner).

- Other than Sawbridgeworth and the small village of High Wych, the built form is comprised of isolated houses or farms, often using black weatherboard and red brick.
- The hotel at The Manor of Groves, with its golf course, is almost an extension of the urban character of Sawbridgeworth, despite its geographical links to the former deer park and parkland of Gilston. Although screened, it is hedged with non-indigenous species, and the rear of the hotel backs directly onto the lane.
- Allen's Green is the only hamlet within the area, with its own tiny flint church.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

From outside this area is largely concealed from view by its topography, while from within it offers extensive views over the Stort valley to the industrial edge of Harlow and mineral workings. The scale of landscape elements is mixed and there is little visual unity, giving an appearance of incoherence, despite the openness. This is not a tranquil area, with commuter through-routes and the constant noise of traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The change within this area from north to south provides a good indication of the effect of creeping urbanisation. The regular, rectilinear form of Sawbrideworth is unusual in comparison with several other linear settlements within the area.

Visual Impact

There is a widespread and significant visual impact on this area from the transport corridor and urban development to the south and east. Farmland is being lost to the spread of suburban housing and the balance of the landscape is changing. This is particularly noticeable along Gangies Hill and West Road. West of the junction with Beaufield Road isolated farmhouses are strung along the lane with indigenous vegetation associated with them. East of the junction the development is cramped suburban with 'golf course' vegetation - laurels and cherry trees - set in the still predominantly agricultural landscape. On the western edge of this area there are links to the parkland beyond, at High Wych Park and The Manor of Groves, but these give the appearance of being relic rather than maintained historic elements. The built form within Sawbridgeworth is visually noticeable from several adjacent character areas.

Accessibility

Frequency/density of footpaths: network along former field boundaries.

Sawbridgeworth is accessible from Bishop's Stortford to the north and Harlow, the south, via the main A1184 road.

Condition: not known

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	High

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Relic
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

14. THORLEY UPLANDS (SHLCA 85)

(i) Summary

Location

Arable upland between the western edge of Bishop's Stortford and the upper Ash valley, bounded by the western Stort valley to the east and smaller-scale settled areas to the west and south. It divides into two sub-areas: the plateau farmland (A) and the sloping farmland (B).

Landscape Character

The western half of this area is an extensive area of monotonous flat arable farmland, lacking vertical elements except for infrequent large blocks of woodland, young roadside trees and the occasional large barn. Very large fields with no hedges are locally characteristic, while isolated farms with associated groups of farm buildings add incident and a sense of productivity. Cattle in meadows around the farms add occasional movement to what is otherwise a static landscape. The eastern half of this area consists of sloping arable farmland around a tributary stream on the west bank of the river Stort. It too is arable land, with some pasture and isolated farms with the occasional group of three or four cottages. The area is remote but lacks tranquillity, due to the aircraft overhead coming and going from Stansted.

Key Characteristics

- Almost flat upland plateau and east-facing slope
- Extremely open, with no hedges but infrequent large blocks of woodland
- Young hedgerow trees planted in threes are a local feature
- Roadsides have wide mown verges with ditches
- Few settlements or buildings
- Distinctive isolated farms, often with very large historic barns
- Mainly arable production, with pasture for pedigree cattle around farms
- Very rural, almost isolated, with negligible impact from southern edge of Bishop's Stortford
- Constant noise of aircraft from Stansted airport, plus visual impact

Distinctive Features

- Outstanding medieval aisled barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
- River valley is screened by linear development and vegetation, so little awareness of topographical change
- Farm buildings; fenced paddocks
- Matham's Wood has a significant local impact

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hanslope series).

Topography. Flat to gently undulating uplands, with minor valley of Spell Brook in east.

Degree of slope. 1 in 75.

Altitude range. 60m to 95m.

Hydrology. Several springs feed into Spell Brook off the high land, and there are many ditches and ponds throughout the area.

Land cover and land use. This area is dominated and has been simplified by intensive arable production and has very little woodland and few hedges. Locally there is limited pasture for horse and cattle grazing (pedigree Limousin herd) near farmhouses. There is a 20th-century industrial edge to the village of Spellbrook.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is one large (24ha) wood within this area, and a few scattered woodland fragments. There are very few hedges - this is one of the distinctive features of the area - but some young planting of hedgerow trees, occasionally in groups of three across a ditch. There is no grassland of any ecological importance. Matham's Wood is ancient woodland, wet boulder-clay woodland dominated by ash/maple/hazel, diversified by wartime disturbance and with some young plantations within. The sloping farmland to the east is species-poor, with relic woodlands of the ash/maple/hazel type and virtually no old grassland.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The historic pattern of this area is masked by current land use and agricultural intensification. Shingle Hall is the site of a medieval park, of which perhaps only the curving footpath around Matham's Wood and the moat and other earthworks within it are relics. The earliest record of a deer park at Shingle Hall/Matham's Park is 1477; it is shown on many of the historic maps of the county, with a certain lack of precision in its location. It is now a planned landscape of huge regular and irregular fields without hedges and very dispersed settlement. The remains of a WWII airfield are still apparent around Matham's Wood.

Field pattern. Although the field pattern varies between regular and semi-regular, this is not apparent, due to the large scale and lack of hedges.

Transport pattern. There is a curiously regular pattern of lanes through the middle of this area which, with the footpaths, creates a geometric network linking the valleys of the Ash and Stort. Although the lanes themselves are often sinuous, they create an angular pattern. They are unhedged, usually with a medium to wide verge and ditch.

Settlements and built form.

- Spellbrook is a small settlement on the edge of the Stort, intermediate between Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth and characteristic of neither river valley nor upland
- Thorley is now subsumed into the edge of Bishop's Stortford
- Thorley Hall is an 18th-century modernisation around a 14th-century aisled hall, just outside the ring road. Its associated village shifted to Thorley Street, a mile east, which is now a prelude to Bishop's Stortford
- Houses and farms are long-established, infrequent and isolated, often with an associated cluster of farm buildings. Large barns are a local feature, with an outstanding medieval aisled barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
- Bishop's Stortford itself is screened by new development and extensive planting along the A1184 ring road, including a new vernacular housing development at Brook Farm, complete with country park

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of the area from outside are very limited. It is visible from the A120, but otherwise screened by topography and vegetation within adjoining areas. Views within the area are extensive, with views from the eastern edge and Trims Green into the shallow wooded middle Stort valley, out to the notable treed edge to the west and, to the north, the wooded edge of Bishop's Stortford. The scale of landscape elements varies between large and vast but it is unified. There is no sense of enclosure. This would be a tranquil area, with little road noise, were it not for the constant noise from Stansted air traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is a most unusual area, elemental and simple and of a scale undreamed of in the cluttered south west of the county. No doubt it is also bleak in the winter.

Visual Impact

There is a minor impact of new built development (St Michael's Mead) on the urban edge of Bishop's Stortford, which is mainly screened by vegetation. Some farms have prominent large tin roofs. Pylons cross the area and there is a development of a sports field complex on the B1004 north of Exnalls Farm.

Accessibility

Frequency/density of waymarked routes - localised; Herts Way along western edge.

Condition: not known. Well signed but frequently narrow track through arable crop. Near Matham's Wood is a wide former concrete/tarmac track. There is a link route between Perry Green/Spellbrook but few north/south routes

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Low

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Insignificant
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Concealed
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Unified
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

15. LITTLE HALLINGBURY RIDGES AND SLOPES (ELCA C2)

(i) Summary

Location

This area runs parallel to the River Stort. Bishop's Stortford is located just to the north of the Harlow Area and Sawbridgeworth just to the west of the area boundary. The area is located within the Central Essex Farmlands (ELCA C3). The area contains Little Hallingbury.

Landscape Character

Undulating arable farmland ridges and slopes with winding lanes linking scattered farmsteads and small-scale settlements. Generally open with small-dispersed patches of broadleaved woodland. This character area includes the eastern valley side of the River Stort and there are key views of the River Stort navigation from several locations within the area. The area is dominated by medium to large open fields, which separate several areas of distinctive historic character. The local historic features of the area include a hillfort and several small areas of parkland.

Key Characteristics

- Small patches of broadleaved woodland.
- Predominantly arable farmland
- Mix of small, medium and large sub regular fields
- Series of winding lanes
- Scattered farmsteads

Distinctive Features

- Small manor houses and halls with associated parklands
- Wallbury Iron-Age hillfort
- Two small patches of ancient woodlands
- Gibberd's Garden

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is predominantly covered by brown soils over alluvium, Lowestoft Till and Head geology

Topography. This area lies upon a series of small ridges and slopes, giving the area an undulating appearance. The area slopes gradually downwards in proximity to the River Stort.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 10
 Min 1 in 1889
 Mean 1 in 70

Altitude range. 45m to 80m

Hydrology. This area contains the major eastern branch of the River Stort, with associated tributaries. A substantial eastern tributary of the River Stort (Pincey Brook) also permeates the area to the north of Lower Sheering.

Land cover and land use. The land use on the slopes is predominantly arable farmland with several small irregular patches of woodland. The latter are located in strips running parallel to the Stort Valley. Occasional grassland paddocks can also be seen. Small patches of small-scale parkland can be seen across the area, associated with small halls.

Vegetation and wildlife. This area comprises the east side of the floodplain of the River Stort and is therefore flat and is predominantly under arable with an intricate network of hedgerows and ditches. There is some plantation and small areas of semi-natural woodland. There are sites of old gravel workings. In the southern part of the area there are small broad-leaved plantations and a few small, improved grassland paddocks. Two small pockets of ancient woodland are located near Great Hyde Hall and at Gibberd Garden to the east of Harlow.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Whilst this area is dominated by large modern fields, which are the result of post-1950s boundary loss, the area does retain some local areas of notable historic character. To the

north there are the highly visible earthworks of the Iron Age hillfort at Wallbury, whilst to the south the character area contains the surviving remains of the informal Medieval parkland between Durrington Hall and Sheering Hall. Across the area are scattered several small areas of parkland associated with the historic halls of Great Hyde, Little Hyde, Little Hallingbury, Sheering and Durrington. Both Sheering Hall and Little Hyde Hall in particular are associated with earlier moated sites, which are visible in the landscape. To the south there is an area of surviving pre-18th century piecemeal enclosure whilst some of the prairie fields to the north contain relict elements of earlier field systems within them. Settlements are small scale, consisting of both nucleated settlement surrounding a green or common, and linear roadside forms. A number of isolated farmsteads and manors are found throughout the character area and many are linked with narrow, winding lanes and roads.

Field pattern. A mix of medium and large subrectangular prairie fields dominate the landscape. These are largely the result of post 1950s boundary removal, however, to the north of the character area these prairie fields contain some relict elements of earlier field systems. Low hedgerows, some with occasional associated hedgerow trees divide these fields. In the southern half of the area there is a significant concentration of irregular fields and pre-18th century fields surrounding Durrington Hall and Sheering Hall.

Transport pattern. The M11 runs through the area at Mott's Green. This creates some local noise and light intrusion. There are a number of historical routeways within the area, which are characteristically small winding narrow lanes. They link settlements across the river and also run north-south along the east bank of the river.

Settlements and built form. Settlement is predominantly dispersed and nucleated, however along the A1060 in the northern half of the area settlement has developed along the roadside.

- The scheduled monument of the Iron Age Hillfort at Wallbury is the earliest visible historic feature within the landscape, and may have been used for settlement. This survives as an earthwork, situated in the north of the Harlow Area.
- Isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the area may be the location of earlier settlement.
- A number of earlier settlement sites survive as earthwork moated sites e.g. Corwicks and Sheering Hall.
- Little Hallingbury Silk Mill is also found within the area.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Key long distance views of the Stort valley can be seen from Sheering Low Road (to the south of Lower Sheering). Views of the River Stort Navigation can also be seen from points within the north-western half of this area (around Gaston Green). There is a variable sense of enclosure, depending on location. This area can be viewed from adjacent character areas (Hatfield Heath Plateau and River Stort).

Rarity and distinctiveness. The combination of arable rolling farmland and scattered farmsteads is not unusual in comparison with much of the surrounding area.

Visual Impact

The impact of built development is only visible in the form of scattered farmsteads. There is no significant impact from major roads.

Accessibility

The Three Forests Way, Harcamlow and Stort Valley Way recreational routes dissect the area. Hallingbury B-road forms part of the western boundary of this character area, providing north-south vehicular links through the area. Although in close proximity to the M11, this area is not directly accessible from the motorway.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Widespread
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Interrupted
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

16. HATFIELD HEATH PLATEAU (ELCA B1)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is located to the south of Great Hallingbury and east of Sawbridgeworth. It contains the settlements of Hatfield Heath and Sheering. The M11 slightly overlaps the area near to the western boundary. This landscape character area lies within the Central Essex Farmlands (ELCA B1).

Landscape Character

Gently rolling plateau landscape with medium to large-scale open arable fields. An attractive and semi-tranquil combination of semi-natural ancient woodland (remnants of Hatfield Forest) and common is located within the north of the area around the historic settlement of Woodside Green. A number of narrow, winding lanes connect small-scale settlements and occasional scattered farmsteads.

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform
- Small scale settlements and occasional scattered farmsteads
- Medium to large-scale predominantly arable fields
- Small isolated patches of woodland
- Smaller extents of pre-18th century enclosed fields
- Narrow winding lanes

Distinctive Features

- Semi-natural ancient woodland at Wall Wood and Monk's Wood.
- Remnants of Hatfield Forest, including Wall Wood and Woodside Green
- Forest Way and Harcamlow Way marked routes
- Medieval agricultural ridge and furrow at Hall Common
- Hatfield Heath functioning mill
- Visible remains of moated sites

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils) over Lowestoft Till geology.

Topography. This area is located on a gently rolling plateau area. Around Woodside Green, to the north of the area, the topography is less rolling, giving a generally quite level appearance.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 15
 Min 1 in 15840
 Mean 1 in 207

Altitude range. 75m to 90m

Hydrology. Small tributaries of the main River Stort permeate this area in the north (near to Ryes Farm) and south (above Sheering). A tributary of Pincey Brook, which is also attached to the main River Stort network, also permeates the area (near to Pegerells Farm).

Land cover and land use. Hatfield Forest is located in close proximity to the northern Harlow Area boundary. Woodside Green, Wall Wood, and possibly Monks Wood (sub-area A), form part of this larger historic recreational Forest. Parts of Wall Wood and Monks Wood are designated as areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland and therefore contain many mature trees. Parts of Wall Wood are being actively managed. Woodside Green Common is situated adjacent to Wall Wood. This large patch of expansive and tranquil common is currently utilised for cattle grazing. The predominant land use in this area is arable farmland, with a few patches of mixed farmland (sub-area B).

Vegetation and wildlife. Monk's Wood, Wall Wood and the semi-improved neutral grassland of Woodside Green Common are all also designated as SSSI and SNCI. This includes woodland under woodland grant schemes and in the ancient woodland inventory. As part of Hatfield Forest the woodland includes ancient coppices and wood pasture likely to be managed relics of the original wildwood and now extremely rare, providing a last refuge for much rare and specialized wildlife, including dead-wood beetles and fungi, hole-nesting birds and bats. An area dominated by arable with species-rich and species-poor hedgerows,

many of which are also bordered by ditches (sub-area B). There is one small Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) at Town Farm near Hatfield Heath in the south of the area and in the north is part of the Hatfield Forest National Nature Reserve (managed by the National Trust).

Historical and Cultural Influences

- Sub-area A:

This area is an important grouping of historic landscape, containing an area of pre-18th century enclosed fields as well as the ancient woodland of Wall Wood and Monks Wood and the settlement and green of Woodside Green. Woodside Green settlement is thought to have been established by the 13th century.

Woodside Green, Wall Wood and possibly also Monks Wood were once part of Hatfield Forest, a medieval Royal hunting forest. Forest denotes land where the hunting rights are held by the King, or by high-ranking nobles, and not necessarily the presence of trees. It is thought that Hatfield Forest was established by William the Conqueror in c.1100, though it was only a minor forest and was very rarely, if at all, hunted by the kings. Whilst there were over 140 Forests across the country by 1215, the majority of these have since been removed or greatly altered. *‘Hatfield is of supreme interest in that all the elements of a medieval Forest survive: deer, cattle, coppice woods, pollards, scrub, timber trees, grassland and fen, plus a seventeenth-century lodge and rabbit warren. As such it is almost certainly unique in England and possibly in the worldThe Forest owes very little to the last 250 years Hatfield is the only place where one can step back into the Middle Ages to see, with only a small effort of the imagination, what a Forest looked like in use’.* (Rackham, 1976).

- Sub-area B:

Sub-area B has a generally modern character, with some isolated areas of historic landscape interspersed with large areas of modern 20th century prairie fields. The area largely consists of post 1950s prairie fields, created by the removal of field boundaries, with some areas of post-1950s enclosure of fields adjacent to the M11. Several smaller extents of pre-18th century field systems are isolated within this broad swathe of prairie fields. The area also contains the visible and non-visible archaeological remains of a large number of moated sites, which cluster around Sheering in particular, whilst modern settlement in the landscape takes the form of a number of small-scale settlements.

Sheering is mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. Agricultural ridge and furrow thought to date to the medieval period is visible at Hall Common, south of Sheering.

Field pattern. The area is predominantly comprised of medium to large-scale subregular prairie fields with apparent hedgerow boundaries. The majority of the fields are the result of post-1950s removal of field boundaries, with some post-1950s enclosure close to the M11, though there are also some significant areas of pre-18th century enclosed, irregular fields.

Transport pattern. The area is dominated by the M11 in the west, which creates some local noise, movement and light intrusion. There are also a number of small, winding narrow lanes, including the B183, which runs northeast to southwest linking the small roadside settlements.

Settlements and built form. The settlement pattern of the character area takes the form of roadside linear settlement, as at Sheering and some nucleated settlement, as at Hatfield Heath. All retain some historic buildings and their historic layout can still be recognised. The area contains the visible and archaeological remains of a cluster of moated sites, which represent an earlier pattern of settlement within the character area.

- Sub-area A:
Woodside Green common edge settlement is thought to date from the 13th century.
- Sub-area B:
Sheering is mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book, whilst the moated sites in the area represent the pattern of medieval settlement. Within Sheering, the Grade I listed Norman church of St. Mary survives with some later alterations. Hatfield Heath former Corn Mill survives as a fully functioning mill, and dates from the post medieval period.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

This area can be viewed from adjacent character areas (Little Hallingbury Ridges and Slopes and Matching Plateau. Views within the area extensive to the south, but more contained within Woodside Green area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Rolling arable farmland is common to much of this area. The attractive and tranquil nature of Woodside Green is relatively rare in comparison with much of the surrounding landscape. The Harlow Area contains a particular concentration of historic hunting Forests and their remains, and whilst this concentration makes Wall Wood, Monks Wood and Woodside Green relatively common, they are nationally rare and significant.

Visual Impact

The site and sound of the M11 presents a major impact on the east of the area. To the north, the combination of Wall Wood, Monk's Wood and associated Woodside Green common provide a distinctive and attractive landscape feature. Monk's Wood and Wall Wood also provide a distinct contrast to surrounding arable farmland within the south of the area.

Accessibility

The Three Forests and Harcamlow recreational routes intersect in the southern half of the area, close to Hatfield Heath. Access to the area is therefore good for walkers. Vehicular access to the area is good, via main roads from Bishop's Stortford (north), Sawbridgeworth (west) and Harlow (south west).

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

17. ROYDON AND NAZEING PLATEAU (ELCA C3)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is located to the west of Harlow new town and the east of Hoddesdon major urban area. It contains the settlements of Roydon, Roydon Hamlet, Nazeing and Lower Nazeing. The area is located within the broad Landscape Character Area - Lee Valley (ELCA C3).

Landscape Character

Located on gently undulating plateau, this area is dominated by arable farmland. Patches of pasture and broadleaved woodland can be seen alongside nurseries. Glasshouses visually dominate a central band within the character area. Remnants of Medieval field systems give an indication of former land use. Narrow, often winding lanes connect scattered farmsteads and a number of small-scale historic settlements such as Roydon and Lower Nazeing.

Key Characteristics

- Dominant visible glasshouses
- Mixed farmland and horticulture
- Patches of broadleaved woodland
- Narrow winding lanes
- Visible Medieval field systems
- Scattered isolated farmsteads

Distinctive Features

- Disused small water towers associated with farms
- Nazeingwood Common
- Small fragments of semi-natural and ancient woodland
- Netherhall Medieval Manor House
- Nazeing Grade I listed church

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The southern part of this area is covered by seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable surface-water gley, over a mixture of Kesgrave Formation, Lowestoft Till and Head geology. The northern part of the area, encompassing Roydon and Kings Mead is covered by pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils) over clay, silt, sand and gravel geology.

Topography. The area is located on an area of undulating plateau, which falls gently to the Lee Valley (located just to the west of the area). There is a distinctive topographical mound in the southwestern corner of the character area between Clayton Hill and Holyfield.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 7
 Min 1 in 11479
 Mean 1 in 64

Altitude range. 25m to 105m

Hydrology. The area is permeated by a number of small streams

Land cover and land use. Sub-area A is predominantly covered by small to medium sized arable fields with some pasture fields in the valleys. Land use within sub-area B is dominated by nurseries and associated glasshouses. Several small patches of broadleaved woodland are located within this area. Large open fields dominate sub-area C, where there is also a patch of coniferous woodland and common land surrounding Nazeing Park. Clayton Hill Country Park is situated to the south of Lower Nazeing (sub-area C).

Vegetation and wildlife. This area is predominantly arable (sub-areas A, B and C). Ancient woodland is found in small fragments within sub-area B including Nazeing Park, Longfield Spring and at Totwell Hill Bushes and the Grove. There are also ancient woodland pockets near Halls Green Farm comprised of dense scrub, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and some small ponds. There is also a patch of ancient woodland near to Worlds End (sub-area A) also composed of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland.

Historical and Cultural Influences

This area is dominated by a landscape pattern of narrow winding lanes, linear settlements and intimate fieldscapes formed in the early medieval period. This rare survival of an early medieval landscape is of regional significance, and as such the southern part of the area is situated within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area, which is the largest conservation area in the Epping Forest District. In addition the historic core of the settlement of Roydon, to the north of the character area, is also a Conservation Area.

The Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area cuts across sub-areas B and C, from Bumbles Green in the south to Halls Green in the north. This Conservation Area includes the settlements of Middle Street, Halls Green (sub-area B), Bumble's Green (sub-area C), Broadley Common (sub-area C) and Roydon Hamlet (sub-area A). All of these settlements have medieval or earlier origins and all retain parts of their medieval field systems, which give their settlements a distinctive setting as well as being of historic and landscape significance.

The historic character of the area has been slightly degraded with the creation of a modern golf course and it is also experiencing development pressure from the expansion of the neighbouring towns of Harlow and Hoddesdon.

- Sub-area A:

This sub-area is dominated by the settlement of Roydon, the historic heart of which is a Conservation Area, and Roydon Park to the west. In the Domesday Book, Roydon was already a substantial village of at least 20 village households at the centre of a manor of 720 acres, and the manor held Harlow as a less valuable outlier. Medieval Roydon contained four manor houses, one of which was granted to the Order of the Knights Templar, and Temple Farm on the High Street still carries the name of these crusaders. Roydon Hall, a second manor, was owned by Christ College Cambridge, until it passed to the Tudor monarchs. Henry VIII presented his infant son and heir, Edward, to the villagers at Roydon Hall in 1538. Whilst Roydon Hall was demolished in 1864, the village still contains several buildings of historic interest, including the 13th century church and the area of domestic closes behind the High Street.

The fields surrounding Roydon and Roydon Park are modern prairie fields, caused by the removal of field boundaries in the 1950s and later.

- Sub-area B:

Sub-area B contains a number of roadside settlements, and is dominated by the glasshouses of the horticultural industry. This industry has a long heritage, with its root in medieval market gardening. The industry received a boost in the mid-19th century with the removal of tax on glass, and blossomed in this area. Whilst the majority of the glasshouses in this area are of modern construction, older remains of this industry still survive, including older water towers and other features.

Lower Nazeing is a large settlement to the west of the sub-area. Once known as Nazeing Bury, the manor house attached to this settlement was home to Catherine Parr, wife of Henry VIII, for a period of time. The medieval settlements of Hall Green and Roydon Hamlet are also located within this area. This sub-area contains the impressive ruins of the 15th century Netherhall.

- Sub-area C:

Sub-area C is the least densely settled of all the sub-areas within this character area. Of note historically are the settlements of Bumbles Green and Nazeing. Nazeing was a possession of Waltham Abbey until the Dissolution. The Church of All Saints is a major feature of Nazeing, dating from the 12th century and is listed Grade I. The Nazeing Park estate, a feature of the modern landscape, was developed through the 18th century, with a grand house and designed landscape; this house and park is now used as a school.

Field pattern. The historic medieval field systems have been largely retained throughout the entire area, with some prairie fields and later enclosure along the northern edge of sub-area. These take a variety of forms with their rare closed field systems found near Hall's Green (sub-area B) and open field systems throughout the rest of the area. The field pattern within sub-area C is dominated by large, regular prairie fields, which have since the 1950's lost their boundaries. Some small remnants of the historic field system can be seen within these. The historic medieval field pattern is retained within the landscape as small intimate field systems within the southern end of the character area. Sub-areas A and B are characterised by large, regular, prairie fields, which have undergone boundary loss since the 1950's.

Transport pattern. A number of roads serve the area. The roads and lanes are largely historic and mark the communication system that led from the small settlements to the larger towns. The lanes are roughly orientated north east – south west which would have probably led to Waltham Abbey who until 1540 owned most of the area. There is also a small north – south road that leads to Roydon from Hall's Green. A number of roads serve the area. The

road that orientated north east – south west from Broadley Common to Holyfield across a number of settlements is thought to be historic in origin. Off this road is a north west – south east orientated road that leads to Lower Nazeing. The organic pattern of the road system indicates its gradual development in linking the settlements together.

Settlements and built form. There are a number of small-scale rural medieval settlements within the Area. There are several settlements medieval in origin within the area; Broadley Common, Roydon Hamlet and Hall's Green, Lower Nazeing, Nazeing, Bumbles Green and Nazeing Gate, which contain a number of listed buildings.

- Sub-area A:

Roydon is also Medieval in origin and is clustered around the church, village green and high street. The village has a varied mixture of building styles, forms and types, including several listed buildings. A mixture of traditional building materials such as clay tiles, red and yellow brick and weatherboarding can be seen, giving this village an attractive character. The centre of Roydon village is a designated Conservation Area. The church dates back to the 13th century and is possibly built on the site of an earlier church.

- Sub-area B:

A number of isolated farmsteads exist in the area and may be the location of earlier settlement. Netherhall, although ruined, is the last remaining medieval manor house of Roydon parish.

- Sub-area C:

The Church at Nazeing has distinguished viewpoints, which allow views of field enclosures and patterns. This church in Betts Lane dates to the 12th century and is Grade I listed.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views from the area, looking in a westerly direction towards the Lee Valley are extensive. From certain viewpoints within the southeast of the area, long distance views of a large proportion of the Lee Valley can be seen. Glasshouses are visible within the landscape from many viewpoints. Views within the areas area sometimes obscured by patches of woodland.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Glasshouses and derelict water towers add a distinctive element to this landscape. The arable farmland within this area is common to much of the landscape in surrounding character areas to the south.

Visual Impact

Glasshouses have a dominant impact upon this area of landscape. There are few dominant major roads within the area.

Accessibility

This area is connected to Harlow in the east and Cheshunt in the west by two major roads and a network of smaller winding roads. The Three Forests Way recreational route runs through the southeastern corner of this character area, but this does not connect with another recreational route within the north of the area.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Prominent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent - localised

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

18. HARLOW MAJOR URBAN AREA (ELCA G1)

(i) Summary

Location

This townscape character area is situated at the centre of the Harlow Area. It lies within the County Landscape Character Area of Harlow and Environs (ELCA G1). Sawbridgeworth is located to the northeast of the area and Broadley Common to the south-west. Roydon and Eastend are located close to the northwestern boundary of this area.

Townscape Character

This area comprises Harlow Newtown and Old Harlow. It is dominated by a combination of residential neighbourhoods and commercial/ industrial areas. Diverse areas of open greenspace, stream corridors and major roads connect these discrete areas. The surrounding topography limits views into and out of the area to the south and east. The area is widely accessible via a series of linked road, rail and footpath routes, and is well integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Key Characteristics

- A series of discrete residential neighbourhoods
- Separate industrial and commercial areas
- Integration of existing landscape and built features within New Town layout
- Sensitive location and design with regard to existing topography
- Series of interconnecting diverse stream corridors
- Series of interconnecting publicly accessible green corridors
- Varying architectural styles

Distinctive Features

- Churches, including Churchgate Street and Old Harlow
- Several listed buildings
- Old ice house - Mark Hall
- Parndon Hall

- Harlow Water Gardens
- Harlow Town Park

ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. No data is available for soils within this area. The area is located upon predominantly Lowestoft Till geology, with patches of Head and Glaciofluvial geology located adjacent to the brooks.

Topography. Delineated by the Lee valley in the west and the Stort valley in the north, Harlow lies within a topographical bowl. Rye Hill higher land formation lies to the south of the area. Curving round to the east, this landform creates a topographical distinction between land within the town and areas to the south and east. Topography within the area was modified when the New Town was built.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 13
 Min 1 in 2263
 Mean 1 in 71

Altitude range. 4m to 105m

Hydrology. Harlow major urban area is situated to the south of the River Stort and east of the River Lee. Several tributaries of these rivers flow through the area as brooks. Canons Brook flows through the north west of the area towards its centre, joining with Parndon Brook, which flows through the area in the southwest. Todd Brook flows through the centre of this townscape character area. Harlowbury Brook also flows through the north east of the area.

Land cover and land use. Harlow major urban area is divided into a number of residential neighbourhoods (Old Harlow, The Stow, Staple Tye, Bush Fair and Potter Street). These are separated from industrial and commercial areas to the north (Templefields) and east (Pinnacles and Roydonbury Park). The Town Centre is located in the centre of the area, slightly to the west.

Large town-wide areas of publicly accessible greenspace separate the housing neighbourhoods and the industrial areas, and at a local scale separate the neighbourhoods into housing areas. The town-wide greenspace is set out in predominantly north-south orientation corridors, connected by an east-west green corridor, running across the centre of the town. Features such as trees and buildings that existed before Harlow new town was built have been preserved within the area. The streams and their surrounding habitats are clearly visible. Wide grass verges line most major routes throughout the area. Footpaths and cycle tracks are also generally green-lined, although sometimes overgrown.

Each of the originally planned neighbourhoods has a commercial and services centre (containing shops, pubs, community centre, library and post office) within it. Within the general residential neighbourhoods, a number of smaller distinct residential areas are visible. Kingsmoor, Stewards, Little Parndon, Netteswell, Mark Hall north and south are all examples of such residential areas.

The industrial area of Templefields is composed of a mix of commercial warehouses and superstores, alongside heavier industrial factories. Pinnacles contains less heavy industry and is dominated by a mix of 3-4 storey offices and large storage warehouses, alongside the chemical factory. Roydonbury Business Park, situated to the east of Pinnacles, contains smaller office units.

Vegetation and wildlife. Although this area is predominantly urban, there are several areas of wildlife interest. Oak Wood SNCI is situated within the middle of Pinnacles industrial and commercial area. It is comprised of mixed semi-natural woodland, a remnant of ancient woodland. Small areas of amenity grassland, plantation and semi-natural broadleaved woodland are located within Little Parndon residential area. A small area of semi-natural habitat, comprised of Mark Hill Wood SNCI (ancient broad-leaved woodland), amenity and improved grassland is located within Mark Hill North. The centre of Mark Hill North also contains a second, smaller SNCI: Vicarage Wood, comprised of broad-leaved.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Old Harlow is thought to be the earliest settlement in the area, developing as a small but significant settlement beside a Roman road, and possibly having even earlier origins. The settlement was reused during the Saxon period, and is thought to have been continually settled ever since. The manor house of Harlowbury had a private chapel dating from the 12th

century, which survives today as a Grade I Listed Building, and the area contains the remains of a deserted medieval village.

The plans for Harlow new town were approved in April 1949. Before the new town was built the landscape of the area was dominated by arable farmland, which was framed to the north and west by the Stort and Lee Valleys. Whilst Harlow is still considered to be a 'new town', the process of master planning and construction begun over 50 years ago has created an important historic landscape in its own right. This landscape encapsulates the post-war idealism and dreams of a generation, as well as forming the stage for the lives of all the town's subsequent residents.

In addition, many of the historic features that pre-existed this post-war designed landscape were conscientiously preserved and incorporated into the layout of the new town. Such features include buildings, place names and roads: where old routes could not be retained they were often made into cycle lanes or footpaths. The existing villages of Old Harlow and Potters Street were retained within the new town masterplan. In addition to Old Harlow, several areas within the new town have notable historical influences. These include:

- The Mark Hall / Nettleswell cluster was located in the first quarter of the town to be built in the early 1950s. Nettleswell is named after the historic parish in which it lies and contains a 16th century aisled barn, whilst Mark Hall was named after the pre-existing historic estate. The main house of Mark Hall burnt down during the creation of Harlow new town, however the coach house and walled garden survived and were initially used by the Corporation as a nursery garden. The historic hamlet of Nettleswell Cross was retained and incorporated into the Town Park, which runs through Nettleswell Valley.
- The historic east-west road running from Nettleswell Cross to Old Harlow has been reused as a modern route within the new town master plan. Along this road a number of listed buildings survive, with concentrations at the site of Nettleswell Cross and at the western periphery of Old Harlow. In addition there are also a number of medieval and post-medieval buildings located along the east-west historic routeway that led from Roydon to Sheering.
- The modern neighbourhood of Little Parndon, built between 1955 and 1957 in the northwest of the town, takes its name from the historic parish it lies within. Previously the site of the medieval priory referred to as Cannons, the area developed and contained a

number of manors and small-scale farmsteads and hamlets that are no longer visible today. Parndon Hall survives as an attractive historic feature within the modern landscape.

- The historic settlement of Potters Street was first included within the plans as an appendage to the side of the new town, as with Old Harlow to the north. However, as plans to expand the population housed at Harlow came to the fore with the 1950s Macmillan government, a new neighbourhood was planned and constructed at Potters Street. The modern neighbourhood is named after the historical settlement of Potters Streete, which was first documented in 1251. Potters Streete was a historic linear roadside settlement orientated along a north-south route just off the main London to Cambridge route. Within this area a number of listed buildings survive.
- Bush Fair neighbourhood was constructed between 1955 and 1962 and is named after the historic fairs at which local crafts and produces were sold, including the pots from Potters Street.

Field pattern. This area is predominantly urban and therefore this category is not applicable.

Transport pattern. The railway line runs to the north of this character area. The A414, running from north to south, connects this area with the M11 at junction 7. Each neighbourhood is then joined to the main road network via a series of minor roads. A series of main roads connect each neighbourhood or area with each other, served by roundabouts.

Settlements and built form. The built skyline of Harlow is relatively uniform, as intended by Gibberd: housing within residential areas is predominantly of a uniform height, with taller tower block and commercial buildings located within Harlow Town Centre. Large factory chimneys dominate the skyline within Templefields industrial areas. Housing within the original new town housing areas is predominantly the same form and density. Newer housing developments within areas such as Sumners, Katherines, and very recently New Hall, provide some variation to this density and form. Existing old buildings have been incorporated into the modern built fabric.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Certain green areas within Harlow away from major roads are relatively tranquil. The main roads running through the area are often busy, but traffic is slowed by a number of connecting roundabouts. Key views within the area and to surrounding character areas can be obtained along several of the publicly accessible greenspace corridors. It is also possible to gain views out into surrounding character areas from many viewpoints along the periphery of the urban areas. Views of this area are also obtainable from points within several surrounding character areas.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The process of planning and creating Harlow New Town has created an urban area with a form and layout that is unusual in comparison with other nearby major urban areas. Such clear integration of landscape features and historic buildings within the modern fabric is also rare in comparison to other towns of similar era.

Visual Impact

The visual impact of Harlow new town on the surrounding area as a whole is relatively low. This is due to careful siting within the surrounding topography. Within the town, certain taller vertical structures (factory chimneys - Temple Fields) and large warehouses (Pinnacles) have a dominant visual impact upon the landscape.

Accessibility

This area is directly accessible from the M11 (junction 7) via the main A414 road. Major roads also connect the area to Hoddesdon and Cheshunt in the west and Epping in the south. Within the area a diverse and visually interesting network of public footpaths connects all neighbourhoods and other areas.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Prominent
Impact of land-use change:	Dominant

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

19. MATCHING PLATEAU (ELCA B1)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is situated to the east of Harlow New Town and to the west of Matching Green. Matching Tye and Housham Tye are located within the centre of the area. The area is situated within the Central Essex Farmlands (ELCA B1).

Landscape Character

Dominated by arable farmland and comprised of medium to large arable fields, this area is permeated by small patches of semi-natural ancient woodland, including Matching Park, and by parkland as at Down Hall. Within this character area, Pincey Brook minor river valley, with Down Hall parkland and associated woodland, creates an intimate and attractive landscape corridor. A series of small historic settlements (which are often nucleated around a common or green) are connected by narrow winding lanes. Farmsteads and small roadside settlements punctuate the rural landscape.

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform
- Medium to large arable fields, some with apparent hedgerow boundaries
- Small historic hamlets and villages
- Scattered farmsteads and abandoned moated sites
- Narrow lanes
- Large houses and parkland

Distinctive Features

- Down Hall and associated park and woodland
- Carter's Green and Matching Park woodland.
- Housham Tye Common and Matching Green
- Forest Way and Stort Valley Way footpaths
- Tye settlements
- Moated sites such as at Newman's End and Matching Park

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils) over predominantly Lowestoft Till geology.

Topography. This area is situated upon an area of gently rolling plateau landform. In the northern part of this area, a minor valley is visible within the surrounding plateau landscape.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 12
Min 1 in 15840
Mean 1 in 144

Altitude range. 50m to 90m

Hydrology. Pincey Brook, a tributary of the River Stort runs across the northern part of this area. Tributaries of Pincey Brook also permeate southwards throughout the area.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly used as arable farmland. A small area of enclosed common is situated at Housham Tye, adjacent to Carter's Green (predominantly broadleaved) woodland. A few small patches of broadleaved woodland are also scattered across the area. Within the north of the area, the woodland patches follow the meandering path of Pincey Brook. To the north of the area, Down Hall House, currently used as a hotel, has associated gardens and mixed woodland. Shaws (small strips of woodland) also delineate some field boundaries.

Vegetation and wildlife. This character area is dominated by arable land but has some small pockets of wildlife interest including several SNCIs with ancient woodland: Heathen Wood, Downhall Wood, Shearing Bridge, Matching Park and The Gorse, all with a variety of broadleaved trees and scrub species. Pincey Brook has small tributaries running down the valley with associated areas of wet grassland and a small number of ponds. Moorhall Wood, near the M11 is also a SNCI as is Moor Spring woodland to the east. There are a number of small ponds near Loyters Green, which may be of wildlife interest.

Historical and Cultural Influences

A number of small historic settlements are situated within the area, several of which are nucleated around a green or a common, whilst others are located along roadsides and at road junctions. The narrow winding lanes and footpaths within this character area often link these early settlements. Several of these historic settlements are Conservation Areas: Matching, Matching Tye and Matching Green.

Matching is located to the east of the character area, and comprises a unique collection of vernacular village building types, including an early 13th century parish church, an aisled tithe barn of c.1600 and the public hall of the 15th century Marriage Feast Room. Matching Green has one of the largest village greens in Essex, comprising nearly 14 acres. The green is lined with buildings dating from the 14th to the 19th century, twenty-eight of which are listed. The oldest surviving building in the Conservation Area is 'Lascelles', a Grade II listed hall house on the west side of the green, dating from the 14th century. At the centre of the character area is Matching Tye. 'Tye' settlements are post-Norman in date and are usually situated around a common or green. The houses and cottages in Matching Tye cluster around the green with its mature chestnut tree, at the heart of the Conservation Area. The settlement contains a number of listed buildings of a variety of dates; the earliest surviving buildings, Ployters Farmhouse and Little Brewers, date from the 16th century and are Grade II listed. Associated with Matching Tye is Matching Park, an area of ancient woodland containing the site of a medieval moated manor.

The character area contains a number of historic halls and manor houses, including Matching Hall at Matching, the Moat House at Matching Green and Down Hall to the north of the character area. Down Hall dates back to the medieval period, though the Hall and its current gardens date from the 19th century when they were redesigned by Alfred Parsons. The house and gardens are surrounded by a wider park for which Charles Bridgeman prepared designs in 1720; the implementation of Bridgeman's design is well documented. Bridgeman's landscape design was altered at the end of the 18th century, possibly by Humphry Repton.

Field pattern. The field pattern is dominated by post 1950s prairie fields, which are large in scale and sub-regular in shape. These modern fields are the result of boundary removal, as well as post 1950s enclosure, with a concentration of the latter near to the M11. Interspersed between these prairie fields are areas of surviving irregularly shaped pre-18th century field system, and, to the west of Down Hall, the remains of enclosed meadow pasture. The parkland, ancient woodland and modern tree plantations further break up the dominance of

the prairie fields. A mixture of different field boundaries is present, ranging from low hedgerows without trees to taller, treed hedgerows and rows of individual trees.

Transport pattern. The north-south M11 is the dominant transport system in the character area, running through the west of the area. This causes some localised noise and light pollution. Historic narrow, winding lanes and footpaths dissect the area, connecting the historic settlements.

Settlements and built form. A number of settlements are found within the area. The dominant type of settlement is small historic, medieval nucleated settlements that surround a green or common e.g. Housham Tye, Matching Green, Matching Tye, Carters Green. Matching Green possesses one of the largest greens in Essex. Several of these settlements are conservation areas, namely Matching, Matching Green and Matching Tye. The character area contains a number of larger houses and gardens, including Down Hall and Matching Hall as well as a scattering of moated sites that mark the former locations of medieval manor houses.

- The character area contains the remains of several earlier sites of abandoned settlement, including Housham Hall, which, though the current buildings date from the 18th century, the surrounding landscape contains the remains of a deserted medieval village. Moated sites, such as Newmans End at Parsonage Farm or the moat within Matching Park, mark medieval manor house settlement.
- The character area contains a number of larger houses with gardens, including Down Hall, formerly a medieval manor, which dated from 1320 if not earlier, when it was held by Hatfield Broad Oak Priory. The current building and gardens date from the 19th century, with 18th century parkland. The latter was designed by Charles Bridgeman and was later altered, possibly by Repton.
- Most of the surviving farmsteads and buildings across the character area date from the post medieval or modern periods, though some medieval buildings survive. Of note amongst the medieval buildings is the Marriage Feast Room at Matching, built c.1480 "*for the entertainment of poor people on their wedding day*", and which has since been used as a school and an almshouse.
- A pollard hornbeam at Newmans End in Matching marks the historic parish boundary.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views within this landscape character area are generally open and are only occasionally limited by topography or small patches of woodland. Views within Pincey Brook Valley to the north, however, are more enclosed and limited by Down Hall woodland. It is possible to gain views of adjacent character areas to the north, south and east from locations within this area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Undulating arable plateau is common to much of the surrounding landscape. Pincey Brook valley, crossing the north of the area is a semi-tranquil and intimate area of landscape, which is enclosed in places by Down Hall woodland. Housham Tye common and Carter's Green woodland provide a relatively unusual combination of enclosed common and associated woodland.

Visual Impact

The M11 has a dominant visual impact upon the landscape within the northwest of this area.

Accessibility

The Stort Valley Way and Three Forests Way recreational routes intersect with a network of publicly accessible footpaths running across this area. The area is not directly accessible from the M11 although vehicular access is possible via a network of minor roads.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Locally apparent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent/widespread
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

20 . JACK'S HATCH TO CHURCH LANGLEY RIDGE (ELCA B1, C3, G1)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is situated directly adjacent to the south and southeastern edges of Harlow New Town urban residential areas. Jack's Hatch is located at the western boundary of the area and Church Langley housing area to the east of the area. The area extends to the northeast as far as Churchgate Street housing area in Harlow. The area straddles several Essex Landscape Character Areas - Harlow and Environs (G1), Central Essex Farmlands (B1) and Lee Valley (C3).

Landscape Character

Comprised of varying-sized arable fields, this area is dominated by large woodland blocks. Patches of open common, used for horse and pony grazing, provide variation in character. The gradually sloping topography, culminating in a ridge at Rye Hill, allows extensive views of Harlow to the north, particularly from the ridge. Although located adjacent to several urban residential areas, this area has a predominantly rural feel, providing publicly accessible open greenspace areas.

Key Characteristics

- Large woodland blocks
- Patches of common land used for horse and pony grazing
- Occasional scattered farmsteads
- Gradually sloping topography which culminates in a ridge
- Publicly accessible open common

Distinctive Features

- Harlow Common and Latton Common
- Parndon Wood Local Nature Reserve and SSSI
- 2 dominant visual water towers
- Number of listed building around Harlow Common

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is predominantly covered by pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils), with a patch of surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils) running along the southwestern edge of Kingsmoor. The area is situated on a mix of London Clay and Head geology.

Topography. This area slopes gradually upwards in a north to south direction, culminating in an elevated ridge to the south. This ridge at Rye Hill runs just to the south of Latton Bush and Latton Park woodlands. The area is situated on the northern slopes of this ridge.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 16
 Min 1 in 3542
 Mean 1 in 71

Altitude range. 55m to 110m

Hydrology. One significant tributary of Todd Brook, which runs through the centre of Harlow, crosses this area in a north-south direction. Tributaries of the River Stort also run in a north-south direction through the eastern edge of the area around New Hall.

Land cover and land use. The majority of the character area is dominated by predominantly broadleaved woodland in regular blocks (Latton Park, Mark Bushes and Parndon Wood) and by a relatively large area of open common grassland (Harlow Common and Latton Common), interspersed with arable farmland (sub-area A). However, in the north of the character area (sub-area B), around Hubbard Hall, arable farmland is the dominant land use. Harlow Common (to the south of Potter Street housing) and Latton Common (to the south of Latton housing) in sub-area A are currently used for horse and pony grazing whilst also functioning as areas of publicly accessible open greenspace.

Vegetation and wildlife. Parndon Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and SSSI includes 54 acres of ancient woodland (Risden's Wood and Hospital Wood). There are also two small areas of woodland managed under woodland grant schemes to the north of the LNR (sub-area A). The woodland is composed of a canopy of oak tree standards with hornbeam trees growing beneath. These have traditionally been coppiced (cut down to the base and allowed

to grow up again) every 10-15 years to make use of the timber. This practise is still carried out for wildlife management keeping a diverse structure of the woodland to encourage species-richness. Latton Common SNCI in sub-area A is comprised of broad-leaved and pine woodland plantations with small areas of amenity grassland and semi-improved neutral grassland. A small part of Netteswell Plantation SNCI is in the north of the area and is comprised of semi-natural mixed woodland and semi-improved neutral grassland (many small species-rich hedgerows and trees).

Historical and Cultural Influences

The character area was an important part of Gibberd's historic design for Harlow, providing a distinctive greenbelt at the edge of his new town. In addition to providing a distinctive edge to the settlement, this area also accommodated the needs of the town's residents for accessible countryside, as well as providing essential services, in the form of the crematorium.

- Sub-area A:

At the end of the 18th century Harlow Common and Latton Common were part of a larger area of common named Harlow Bush Common, which linked with Hazlewood Common to the south-east, and formed a chain with Parndon Common, Broadley Common and Nazeingwood Common to the west. Much of this former extent of common has since been turned into arable farmland, with the exception of Harlow and Latton Common in this character area, and Nazeingwood Common to the west.

The common edge historically formed a focus for settlement, and a number of listed buildings survive along the edge of Harlow Common. A number of historic east-west and north-south communication links have been retained throughout the west of the area, along which a number of historic buildings are situated. Common edge and roadside settlement are the dominant forms of settlement pattern within the character area, which contains only one known moated site, representing the site of a medieval manor east of the modern Rye Hill reservoir. However, this site is particularly visible in the landscape, containing the earthwork remains of the moat as well as associated fishponds. Moated sites are relatively common across the rest of the Harlow Area.

- Sub-area B:

This area, south of Old Harlow, contains a significant cluster of prehistoric Bronze Age barrows, most of which have been ploughed out and survive only as ring ditches, though

one is 15 feet high, and visible in the landscape. This barrow is adjacent to the remains of another type of prehistoric monument, a cursus, which is again only visible as soil marks.

Field Pattern. A series of small, medium and large irregular fields are located within this area. The majority of these fields are the result of 1950s and later removal of field boundaries, resulting in large open prairie fields. Some of these fields, particularly around Hubbard's Hall Farm (sub-area A), retain the remnants of earlier field systems within their surviving boundaries. Hubbard's Farm has also been subject to post-1950s enclosure of previously open land. Field boundaries in this character area are delineated by a mixture of medium to tall hedgerows, some with trees. A set of small, linear fields is situated to the northeast of Hubbard's Hall Farm.

Transport pattern. The M11 runs through the eastern edge of this character area. The area is linked to Harlow New Town by a network of north-south roads that serve the fringe residential areas. It is possible to cross the area in a north-south direction along Rye Hill road, a busy link road that connects to London Road, leading to Junction 7 of the M11.

Settlements and built form. Although residential urban areas predominantly bound this area to the north, few settlements are found within the area. A line of large houses faces north onto Harlow Common, and are the result of historic common edge settlement. There are also a couple of farmsteads within this area. A few farmsteads with associated arable and pasture fields are located to the south of Stewards housing area. This character area was part of Gibberd's Harlow new town masterplan, as part of the encircling green belt. Gibberd's green belt was intended to prevent urban sprawl, to provide a sharp visual contrast between the urban and the rural, and to provide accessible countryside for the residents of the town.

- Sub-area A:

The moated site near Rye Hill Reservoir is the only known moated site within the character area, and is a scheduled monument. The earthwork remains include the remains of a fishpond complex, as well as the moat of the manor house. Common land is a particular historic feature of this character area. The remnants of common land at Harlow Common and Latton Common were once part of a large common called Harlow Bush Common that formed part of a chain of common land with several other commons outside the Harlow Area. Harlow and Latton Common remain as open access grassland, used for horse grazing and for informal recreation.

- Sub-area B:

The upstanding Bronze Age barrow south of Old Harlow is a particular feature of the north of the character area, though it is only locally visible. The barrow represents the prehistoric use of the character area, and is part of a prehistoric complex of which other remains, including an earlier cursus and other barrows, are no longer visible in the landscape.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of the adjacent southern character area (Epping Ridges and Valleys) can be seen from the south of this area at Rye Hill. Views from the north of this character area are limited and framed by Latton Park, Harlow Park and Parndon woodland blocks. There are prominent views into Harlow from numerous locations to the north of Dorrington Farm within this landscape character area. In the east of the area, views of Harlow and Matching Plateau can both be gained.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Large patches of open common are unusual features in comparison to the surrounding landscape. The arable land within this area, however, is common to many of the surrounding character areas.

Visual Impact

The water tower at Rye Hill has a dominant visual impact upon the area. This can be viewed from several other surrounding character areas. Another water tower, adjacent to the M11 and northeast of Church Langley residential area (Harlow) also has a dominant visual impact upon the surrounding area.

Accessibility

This area is adjacent to junction 7 of the M11 and is therefore directly accessible from the motorway. This area is also accessible from the A414 road, connecting Harlow to the M11, and from several other roads within the southern Harlow housing areas. The Forest Way and Stort Valley recreational routes cross the area. These are connected to a comprehensive series of publicly accessible footpaths.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Apparent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent - localised

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

21. NORTH WEALD RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA B1)

(i) Summary

Location

Situated to the southeast of Harlow New Town, this character area contains the settlements of North Weald Bassett and Hastingwood. Thornwood Common is located close to the southeast boundary of this character area. The area lies within the Central Essex Farmlands (ELCA B1).

Landscape Character

Located on a gently rolling landform, this area is predominantly covered by large arable fields, interspersed with smaller irregular fields surviving from the 18th century or earlier. Linear roadside settlements and scattered farmsteads interrupt the surrounding farmland landscape. The visible remains of earlier medieval manor houses are also apparent, particularly at Wynters Armourie. The area is particularly notable for its modern military remains, which dominate the southern half of the character area. These include North Weald Airfield, with its runways, buildings and WWII defensive features, the late 19th century redoubt south of North Weald Bassett and the 270 acres of the former 20th century Radio Transmitting Station at Ongar, with its surviving buildings.

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform
- Predominantly arable farmland
- Medium to large scale subregular fields with apparent hedgerow boundaries
- Linear roadside settlement and scattered farmsteads
- Modern Military remains and landscapes

Distinctive Features

- North Weald Airfield
- North Weald Redoubt
- Ongar Radio Transmitting Station
- Tyler's Green and Miller's Grove SNCIs

- Linear settlement of North Weald Bassett, Hastingwood and Foster Street

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The central part of this area is located on pelosols slowly permeable clayey soils whilst the peripheral areas are located on surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils). These soils lay on a base of predominantly Lowestoft Till geology.

Topography. This area is situated upon an area of gently rolling landform.

Degree of slope.

Max	1 in 18
Min	1 in 2240
Mean	1 in 92

Altitude range. 60m to 105m

Hydrology. This area is bounded to the north and east by Shonk's Brook and to the south by Cripsey Brook.

Land cover and land use. The area is covered by predominantly arable farmland, which is interspersed with occasional pasture fields. To the south west of the area, North Weald airfield dominates the landscape. This airfield is currently in use. Small patches of broadleaf woodland are scattered across the area. A sewage works and golf range are located to the east of North Weald Bassett and there is a golf course to the south of North Weald airfield.

Vegetation and wildlife. This area is predominantly arable with some scattered woodland. There are two SNCIs: Tylers Green (comprised of grassland) and Miller's Grove (comprised of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland). There is also a small pocket of ancient woodland at Reynkin's Wood with broad-leaved species. A few small semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands under Woodland Grant Schemes are located east of North Weald Basset.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The area largely consists of post-1950s prairie fields, with some small areas of surviving pre-18th century enclosure. In some instances the modern prairie fields contain remnants of earlier field systems within their boundaries. The area is dominated by the airfield and settlement at North Weald Bassett and Tylers Green to the south and the linear roadside settlements of Foster Street and Hastingwood to the north, with the M11 lying to the west. There are some moated manor sites visible across the character area, though these are in relatively low densities compared to other character areas within the study. Of particular note is the moated complex and 13th/14th century aisled hall at Wynters Armourie, Wynters Farm, and the moat at Paris Hall, now converted into a water feature in the garden.

This character area is particularly notable for its modern military remains. To the south of the character area, the North Weald Airfield was established in 1916 as a Flight Station, which operated until 1919. In 1922 it was reopened as an RAF Fighter Station and continued to be used by the airforce until 1964. North Weald Airfield was a key airfield in the WWII Battle of Britain and was also the airfield from which many fighters flew from on D-Day. The airfield was the WWII base for the Norwegian RAF and is considered to be the home of their modern airforce, created in 1940/41. This link is commemorated with a memorial stone dedicated by Princess Astrid Crown Princess of Norway in June 1952. There are a number of WWII defensive structures surviving at the airfield, including several pillboxes. To the south of North Weald Bassett are the adjacent sites of the Ongar Radio Transmitting Station and the North Weald Mobilisation Centre, or North Weald Redoubt. Both of these are significant modern historic features, of which substantial remains survive.

The south of the character area contains the settlement of North Weald Bassett. This was previously known as Weald Gullet and was once a rural farming community with settlement dating back to the Saxon period. The most visibly significant historic building within this settlement is the 17th century King's Head Inn, with its black timbers and white plaster. Close to the settlement is a 19th century redoubt (fort). Tylers Green, a small cluster of houses at the end of the 18th century, is now conjoined with North Weald Bassett by continuous roadside settlement. In the north of the character area, the linear settlements of Hastingwood and the western extent of Foster Street have their origins in post-medieval settlement of the common: the former on Hazlewood Common and the latter on Harlow Bush Common.

Field pattern. The fieldscape is dominated by modern prairie fields, which are the result of 1950s boundary loss, however, in some instances these fields retain the relict remains of earlier field systems. There are some areas of surviving pre-18th century field systems interspersed between the prairie fields. Medium hedgerows with apparent hedgerow trees delineate field boundaries.

Transport pattern. There are relatively few roads within this character area, though it is well-served with footpaths, particularly to the north of the area. The most dominant road is the M11, which forms the western boundary of the area. The modern transport link of the A414 dissects the character area from east to west. This is a historical routeway and has two 18th century milestones along its length within the character area. The B181 is also a historical route way, along which North Weald Bassett developed. The majority of the other communication links within the area also have historical origins, are curving and narrow, and link settlements and farmsteads. The course of the Roman road once ran north-east to south-west through the south-eastern part of the Harlow Area. The area also once contained a railway, now disused.

Settlements and built form. The settlement of the area is dominated by the linear roadside developments of Tylers Green / North Weald Bassett to the south and Foster Street and Hastingwood to the north. The modern form of Tylers Green / North Weald Bassett relates to its development as a linear roadside settlement along the B181, a historical routeway, and its further modern development as a commuter town following the creation of the railway, now disused. Both Hastingwood and the settlement west of Foster Street both have their origins in post-medieval settlement of common land and the edges of the common. Small-scale settlements are found in the north and east of the area and may date from the medieval period, if not earlier.

- North Weald Airfield is a distinctive feature of the area, and has been in almost continuous use as an airfield since its establishment as a Flight Station in WWI. The airfield has a distinguished history for its role in WWII as a base for the Battle of Britain and for the D-Day landings, as well as being recognised as the home of the modern Norwegian air force. WWII features still survive at the airfield, which is still partially in use as a civilian airfield.
- Ongar Radio Transmitting Station once occupied a site of 730 acres south of North Weald Bassett; it was constructed in 1920 and was operated by Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company. The first radio-telegraphic services from Ongar in 1921 connected London with Paris and Berne using Morse code. The site was an increasingly central component

of the UK's international communications network through the 20th century until the 1990s, when new technology finally replaced the aerals, and the site was gradually closed down and abandoned.

- The North Weald Mobilisation Centre or North Weald Redoubt was the first of 13 Mobilisation Centres constructed between 1889 and 1903 as part of the London Defence Scheme. The redoubt was built as a munitions store and barrack accommodation, and was the only fortified centre to be built north of the Thames as part of this scheme. The site is now a scheduled monument, and survives as extensive earthworks and buildings.
- Wynters Armourie is a moated hallhouse complex, which has its origins in a Saxon manor house. The current aisled hall dates from the 13th or 14th century, and additions have been made to this core over the centuries.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

This area is widely visible from surrounding character areas. Within the area, open views can be gained from numerous locations. Views of the North Weald Airfield are shielded from certain points within the area, due to surrounding vegetation. The airfield is, however, visible from the M11.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This area is generally considered to be common in terms of surrounding landscape character areas, although the cluster of military remains contained within the southern part of the character area is rare.

Visual Impact

The M11 delineates the western boundary of this landscape character area and therefore has a dominant visual and noise impact. The runway and associated buildings of the North Weald Airfield also has a dominant localised impact upon the surrounding landscape.

Accessibility

This area is directly accessible from junction 7 of the M11. The main A414 dissects the character area. The Stort Valley Way recreational route also crosses the area, allowing easy access for walkers.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Prominent
Impact of land-use change:	Insignificant

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Widely Visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

22. MAGDALEN LAVER RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA B1)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is located to the east of North Weald Bassett in the Central Essex Farmlands (ELCA B1). The character area includes Greenstead Green to the south and Moreton to the east.

Landscape Character

Small to medium-sized modern irregular arable fields are interspersed with small irregular historic field systems, also used for arable farming. Both ditches and hedges delineate field boundaries. The area has an intimate historic character, provided by its two small, nucleated historical settlements, which are connected via a series of narrow, winding and sometimes sunken lanes. The villages of Moreton and Bobbingworth both have strong historic characters, with their timber-framed houses and historic churches. The earthworks of previously abandoned medieval settlement are visible across the character area; the historic pattern of scattered manor houses indicated by the moat earthwork remains is continued in the present landscape by the scattered farmsteads and roadside houses. Small patches of broadleaved woodland provide breaks in the surrounding arable landscape.

Key Characteristics

- Small, scattered farmsteads
- Gently rolling landform
- Small to medium-sized irregular fields with both ditches and hedges for field boundaries
- Small historic settlements with prominent historic buildings
- Enclosed historic meadow pasture

Distinctive Features

- Blake Hall Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden
- Pre-18th irregular field systems, particularly to the south of the character area
- Visible earthworks of earlier historic settlement, particularly at Hall Farm and at Bobbingworth Hall

- 12th century church at Magdalen Laver
- Historic cores of Bobbington and Moreton

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by a mix of pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils); surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils) and brown soils. These lay over predominantly Lowestoft Till and small patches of London Clay and Head geology.

Topography. This area is situated upon gently undulating landform.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 17
 Min 1 in 1416
 Mean 1 in 76

Altitude range. 55m to 85m

Hydrology. The western boundary of this character area approximately follows a tributary of Cripsey Brook. Other small tributaries of this brook extend northwards across the area.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly used as arable farmland. Small patches of predominantly broadleaved woodland are also visible.

Vegetation and wildlife. This area is predominantly arable with an intricate ditch network. There are a few species-rich hedgerows and occasional fields of improved grassland. There is a woodland SNCI site along Cripsey Brook near Moreton, composed of broad-leaved species.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The area has a strong and intimate historic rural character, with winding lanes and roads and small-scale scattered settlement, much of which has medieval or earlier origins. These are set within a landscape dominated by post 1950s prairie fields. There is a distinctive strip of

enclosed meadow pasture running through the centre of the character area, north and west of Moreton.

The historic core of Moreton is a designated Conservation Area, and developed at the junction point of roads leading north-south and east-west, on the high ground overlooking the Cripsey Brook. The village contains several distinctive listed buildings, including the White Hart public house and Castle House, both dating from the 16th century and set opposite each other at a pinch point along the village's main road. Other significant buildings include the early 15th century hall house at Black Hall and the 16th century house adjoining the Nag's Head.

The historic hamlet of Bobbingworth, with its 13th century listed church, and the large 17th and 18th century house and parkland of Blake Hall, are also contained within a Conservation Area. Bobbingworth Hall, located near to the church, marks the site of a deserted medieval village. The setting of Blake Hall is characterised by its open parkland landscape, particularly to the east and west of the house. Woodland lines both sides of the southern approach drive, and there are other areas of substantial woodland to the north and along the eastern boundary of the park.

In the medieval period the area was scattered by moated manor houses, which now survive as earthworks, as at Ashlyns to the southwest of the character area and Bushes to the northeast. There is a complex collection of earthworks visible at Magdalen Laver, to the north of the area, relating to the fishponds and other features of the moated manor house that once stood here. The Church of St Mary Magdalen at Magdalen Laver is of particular interest: built in the 12th century and altered in the 15th and 16th centuries, this church contains Roman bricks within its fabric, indicating earlier Roman settlement in this area.

Field pattern. Within this area, ditches, rather than hedges delineate several field boundaries. The fieldscape is dominated by prairie fields, created by the 1950s and later removal of field boundaries. The majority of these prairie fields conserve the remains of earlier field systems within their surviving boundaries. Significant areas of pre-18th century irregular field systems can be found throughout the area, with a particular concentration of this type of field system to the south of the character area. Across the centre of the character area runs a distinctive band of enclosed meadow pasture, north and east of Moreton.

Transport pattern. The majority of the communication links have historical origins and are curving and narrow. The course of a Roman road once ran NE-SW through the south-eastern part of the character area; part of the line of this road coincides with the road from Bovinger to Lower Bobbingworth Green.

Settlements and built form. Settlement is dominated by the small-scale historical settlements of Bobbingworth and Moreton. A number of listed buildings survive within the settlements and both are designated as Conservation Areas. Other small-scale settlements and isolated farmsteads may indicate the locations of earlier settlement.

- Blake Hall is Grade II* listed and incorporates 17th century or older fabric, however it was largely rebuilt in the 18th century and further remodelled in 1822 by George Basevi. A number of the outbuildings and structures within Blake Hall and parkland date to the 17th and 18th centuries, including a granary and ha-ha dated to the 18th century and two barns dating to the 17th century.
- The historic Bobbington hamlet contains several notable historic listed structures, including the 17th century or earlier buildings at Bovinger Farmhouse; St Germain's Church, with its 13th century core, and the 1839 Rectory by Rev. W.M.Oliver.
- Moreton village contains several listed buildings, which combine to provide attractive façades enclosing the centre of the village. Notable buildings include the late 16th century structure of the Nag's Head and the adjoining house and the 16th century White Hart and Castle House. Black Hall is an early 15th century hall house, whilst Garden House is an 18th century timber framed house.
- The Church of St Mary Magdalen at Magdalen Laver is a distinctive local building, with its 12th century origins and 15th and 16th century alterations.
- A number of medieval moated earthworks mark the site of earlier settlement including, those at Ashlyns and Bushes.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views within and across this area are sometimes limited by the local topography. North Weald Bassett Plateau (21) can be viewed from the western edges of this area and Matching Plateau (19) from the northern edges.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The pattern and combination of arable fields with interspersed fields is considered to be common to many of the surrounding landscape character areas.

Visual Impact

There are no dominant visual impacts upon this landscape character area, although the small glasshouses at Bovinger nursery are apparent within the landscape.

Accessibility

This area is accessible via a series of winding lanes. The south of the area is accessible from the main Epping Road, which connects, with North Weald Bassett in the west. The Stort Valley Way recreational route crosses the top south-western corner of the area, however, the majority of the area is connected to a network of smaller footpaths.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	N.A
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Intact
Impact of built development:	Insignificant
Impact of land-use change:	Insignificant

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

23 HOLYFIELD RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA C3)

(i) Summary

Location

This area lies to the north of the Waltham Abbey urban area and to the east of the River Lee Country Park. It is located within the River Lee broad Landscape Character Area (ELCA C3). The small hamlet of Claverhambury is located at the eastern boundary of this area and Holyfield settlement lies close to the western boundary.

Landscape Character

This character area largely consists of large, medium and small scale irregularly shaped arable fields, some with wooded field boundaries, interspersed with broadleaved woodland set on the area's prominent ridges and slopes. The west of the character area contains a large area of pre-18th century irregularly shaped small fields, created through the gradual enclosure of the medieval royal hunting forest of Waltham Forest. Settlement consists of scattered farmsteads and two small historic linear settlements to the north of the character area. To the north, the landscape is dominated by two large areas of broadleaved ancient woodland, Galleyhill Wood and Deer Park Wood, whilst the south has several modern nurseries and glasshouses. Landform limits long views within the area, however extensive views across the Lee Valley can be gained from the west near to Holyfield.

Key Characteristics

- Large patches of broadleaved woodland, situated on prominent ridges and slopes
- Small-scale settlements and farmsteads
- Occasional glasshouses
- Mix of small, medium and large irregular field with visible, sometimes treed field boundaries (shaws)
- Mix of arable farming, pasture and horticulture

Distinctive Features

- GalleyHill and Deerpark Wood
- Glasshouses within the southern half of the area

- Obelisk supposedly marking the site of the death of Queen Boudicca
- Number of shaws leading to Monkham's Hall

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable (stagnogley) soils over predominantly London clay, with some Head.

Topography. This area covers a number of smaller ridges and valleys on the eastern side of the Lee Valley. Prominent mounds can be seen at Holyfield and Galley Hill (83 metres).

Degree of slope.

Max 1 in 7
Min 1 in 586
Mean 1 in 41

Altitude range. 25m to 100m

Hydrology. Tributaries of Cobbin's Brook (running west to east through the southern edge of this area) permeate northwards into the area. Cobbin's Brook is a tributary of the River Lee.

Land cover and land use. This area has a mix of arable and pastoral fields. To the south of the area, around Waltham Abbey, the land is being used for horticulture, with associated nurseries and glasshouses. To the north of the area, two large areas of mixed woodland (Galleyhill Wood and Deerpark Wood) are used for birdwatching and nature walks. There is also a lake within Deerpark Wood. Sewage works and a caravan park are located at Maple Springs in the east of the area.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a predominantly arable area to the north of Waltham Abbey which has a large number of small SNCIs including small ancient woodland pockets of broad-leaved species at Deerpark Wood (including a lake) and woodland at Galleyhill. The trackways including Claygate Lane and Puck Lane to the North of Waltham Abbey are also designated SNCIs.

Historical and Cultural Influences

At least part, if not all, of this character area once formed part of the extensive Waltham Forest, the larger precursor of Epping Forest, which survives as a remnant of this once great hunting ground in the east of the Harlow Area. The land of Waltham Forest was owned by Waltham Abbey, who managed the land and the deer it supported on behalf of the king until the 16th century Dissolution by Henry VIII. Forest denotes land where the hunting rights are held by the King, or by high-ranking nobles, and not necessarily the presence of trees, though trees and woodland were often a feature of forests.

In addition to Waltham Forest, this area also contained a private Medieval deer park, attached to Monkham's Hall to the west of the area, of which the earthwork boundary may still survive. Deer parks were generally smaller than forests, and whilst permission was required from the king to empark, hunting in private deer parks was not restricted solely to royalty, high-ranking nobility and their representatives.

After the Dissolution and through the post-medieval, Waltham Forest became encroached upon by gradual enclosure to form agricultural land, a process known as assarting. Assarting is a strong theme in the historic landscape development of this character area. Through this process the landscape became divided into small irregularly shaped agricultural fields, often with shaws (strips of woodland) surviving between the fields as thick field boundaries. Assarts can be seen at the edges of the area's surviving woodland blocks, and whilst these have often later been assimilated into modern prairie fields through the post 1950s removal of field boundaries, the small irregular pre-18th century field systems survive particularly well in the east of the character area. These form part of a much larger complex that extends into the adjacent character area 24, Copped Hall Ridges and Valleys.

Later agricultural developments in this character area also include the creation of a number of nurseries with glasshouses. In addition, the area also contains some modern military remains from WWII, including an anti-aircraft position on the high point of the hill behind Monkham's Hall.

Although the overall structure of the landscape of this character area is largely historic, urbanising pressures can be observed from the northern fringe of Waltham and from the industrial processes along the River Lea.

Field pattern. A mix of small, medium and large fields cover this area. There are some visible shaws (tree belts dividing fields). Medium hedgerows with trees and some rows of individual trees are also apparent but vary throughout the area. Much of the agricultural landscape has its origins in the gradual enclosure of medieval hunting forest and woodland, and areas of irregular historic fields created through this process survive throughout the character area, particularly to the east. These form part of a larger complex that extends into the adjacent character areas 24, Copped Hall Ridges and Valleys and 25, Epping Ridges and Valleys. A distinctive strip of enclosed meadow pasture runs along the line of Cobbin's Brook.

Transport pattern. There are few roads within this character area, and the narrow winding lanes and footpaths it contains are probably historic in origin, linking the small-scale historic settlements and manors. The orientation is usually north-south across the Cobbins Brook, which runs east-west at the northern edge of the area. One route runs east-west linking these settlements with Waltham Abbey.

Settlements and built form. The area contains the small hamlets of Aimes Green and Claverhambury, which are small historic linear settlements set along the roadside and which contain a number of listed buildings. Within the area are a number of isolated farmsteads that may be the location of earlier settlement.

- The linear settlements of the area contains a number of listed buildings.
- Isolated farmsteads may mark the location of earlier settlement e.g. Campions.
- A curving road peaking at Claverhambury may mark the boundary of an old park.
- To the west of the character area and obelisk is said to mark the site of the death of Queen Boudicca of the Iceni Iron Age tribe.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

The character area's ridges and slopes limit views within the area. Expansive views across the Lee Valley to the west, can be seen from Holyfield Hill. Galleyhill and Deer Park woods frame views of Nazeing Plateau, to the north. Views of the eastern adjacent character area (Copped Hall Ridges and Valleys - 24) are also limited by topography.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The combination of large blocks comprised of broadleaved woodland and topography provides unusual and striking variation in character when compared to surrounding landscape character areas. Whilst remnants of Medieval forest and deer parks are a relatively common feature of the Harlow Area, nationally these features are rare and significant.

Visual Impact

The glasshouses to the south of this area are visibly apparent but not overly dominant upon the landscape character of this area as a whole.

Accessibility

This area is accessible via a series of minor winding, sometimes narrow roads, which serve the small-scale settlements and scattered farmsteads. No major recreational routes cross this character area, however a number of smaller public footpaths provide access to parts of the area.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Insignificant
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of historic pattern:	Dominant
Visibility from outside:	Widely Visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

24. COPPED HALL RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA C3)

(i) Summary

Location

This landscape character area is situated between Waltham Abbey and Epping within the River Lee Valley (ELCA C3).

Landscape Character

This character area largely consists of arable fields, with parkland to the south, set upon a strongly undulating landform. Small to medium-sized patches of broadleaved woodland are scattered across the area, where visible assarts (fields cut into woodland) have been cut into them, reducing their extent. The field pattern largely consist of small, medium and large irregularly shaped fields, many of which have their origins in the piecemeal enclosure of the medieval royal hunting forest (Waltham Forest) that once covered the majority, if not all of this area. Settlement is concentrated to the south of the character area, where it takes the form of small historic linear roadside hamlets. The hamlets and small number of farmsteads in this area are connected by a series of narrow, sometimes sunken, lanes.

Key Characteristics

- Farmsteads and small scale linear roadside settlements
- Mix of arable farmland and parkland
- Small, medium and large irregular fields
- Small to medium sized broadleaved woodland blocks
- Narrow lanes
- Strongly undulating landform

Distinctive Features

- Copped Hall and associated gardens and parkland
- Long avenue of trees at Copped Hall
- Warlies Park
- Warlies Park House and parkland

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable) soils over a mix of London Clay, Head and alluvium geology.

Topography. This area is located on a number of small ridges and valleys. This gives a strongly undulating landform appearance.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 9
 Min 1 in 982
 Mean 1 in 35

Altitude range. 35m to 110m

Hydrology. Tributaries of Cobbins Brook permeate across this area.

Land cover and land use. This area has a mix of land-uses. A large proportion of the area is covered by arable farmland with some pasture fields interspersed. There are also patches of small-scale parkland, associated with Halls, such as Copped Hall (sub-area B). There is a nursery to the southwest of the area at Warlies Park Farm. Copped Hall and its associated lodge and gardens have a relatively dominant impact upon the surrounding landscape. Small patches of broadleaved woodland (some of which are plantations) are scattered across this area.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a dominantly arable area with a number of small SNCI's including small ancient woodland pockets of broad-leaved species at Oxleys Wood, Griffin's Wood, Sprat's hedgerow Wood, Scatterbushes Wood and Brood Meadow Wood (sub-area B).

Historical and Cultural Influences

There are two key historic influences on the historic development of the current landscape character: the piecemeal enclosure of medieval royal hunting forest, and the development of private parkland.

At least part, if not all, of this character area once formed part of the extensive Waltham Forest, the larger precursor of Epping Forest, which survives as a remnant of this once great hunting ground in the east of the Harlow Area. The land of Waltham Forest was owned by Waltham Abbey, who managed the land and the deer it supported on behalf of the king until the 16th century Dissolution by Henry VIII. Forest denotes land where the hunting rights are held by the King, or by high-ranking nobles, and not necessarily the presence of trees, though trees and woodland were often a feature of forests.

After the Dissolution and through the post-medieval, Waltham Forest became encroached upon by gradual enclosure to form agricultural land, a process known as assarting. Assarting is a strong theme in the historic landscape development of this character area. Through this process the landscape became divided into small irregularly shaped agricultural fields, often with shaws (strips of woodland) surviving between the fields as thick field boundaries. Assarts can be seen at the edges of the area's surviving woodland blocks, such as Sprat's Hedgerow Wood, and whilst these have often later been assimilated into modern prairie fields through the post 1950s removal of field boundaries.

The character area played a role in the national defensive plans for WWII, with a line of pillboxes and other defences marching from south to north across the eastern edge of the character area.

- Sub-area A:

This area is dominated in the west by a patch of small irregular pre-18th century field systems. These form part of a much larger complex that extends into the adjacent character areas 23, Holyfield Ridges and Valleys and 25, Epping Ridges and Valleys.

- Sub-area B:

The large houses and parkland of the adjacent Warlies Park and Copped Hall, both of which have their origins in the medieval period, dominate this area.

Warlies Park is part of the wider Upshire Conservation Area and was originally part of a larger estate. Its name derives from the owner Richard de Warley who owned land in Upshire in the 14th century. At its peak in 1848 the estate comprised 477 acres. The estate was purchased in 1915 by the charity, Dr Barnado's Homes, who turned the Warlies Park House into a school. The southern part of the park is now a modern countryside park and to the eastern end are a number of later plantations. The Conservation Area also includes the historic linear settlements of Upshire, Copthall Green and Wood Green. There is a

particularly attractive group of listed residential buildings at Upshirebury Green, comprising buildings dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries.

Copped Hall, also a Conservation Area, is an ancient hunting park and a rural estate. The deer park at Copped Hall was licensed in 1293, and by 1303 encompassed 60 acres. The estate was in the ownership of Waltham Abbey from 1350 to 1537, when it was exchanged with the Crown for other properties. Henry VIII visited the property occasionally, and Mary Tudor was held there as a house prisoner during the reign of Edward VI. Both the house and the gardens have undergone several phases of development and redesign: the present mansion dates from the mid-18th century and is the visual centrepiece and focus of the parkland extended and landscaped by Capability Brown in the same period. Both the house and the park were altered in the 19th century. The present parkland is broken up by long avenues of trees and a scattering of other features, such as a kitchen garden, small fenced enclosures, rectangular ponds and a mount, possibly the site of an earlier mill mound.

Field pattern. The area largely consist of small irregular historic fields, much of which are the remains of historic assarts cut into Waltham Forest, survives throughout the character area, particularly to the north and west of the area, and with concentrations around Warlies and Copped Hall to the south. These are part of a broader field pattern that extends into the adjacent character areas 23 and 25. To the east of the character area these fields have been supplanted by post 1950s prairie fields, created by the removal of field boundaries. A distinctive strip of enclosed meadow pasture runs along the line of Cobbin's Brook.

Transport pattern. The narrow winding lanes and footpaths are probably historic in origin and link the small-scale historic settlements and manors. The orientation is usually north - south across the Cobbins Brook, which runs E-W at the northern edge of the area. One route runs east – west linking these settlements with Waltham Abbey. The M25 delineates the southern boundary of this character area, however the area is not directly accessible from the motorway.

Settlements and built form. Settlement is concentrated to the south of the character area, with small-scale settlement with greens, such as Upshirebury Green and Copthall Green at the edges of the two parklands of Warlies and Copped Hall.

- Sub-area A:

There is a small number of isolated farmsteads scattered across the area, though the east of the character are is largely devoid of settlement of any form.

- Sub-area B:

The 13th century deer park and 18th century house and parkland of Copped Hall is a dominant feature within the south of the character area. The parkland is a Grade II* Registered Historic Park. Warlies Park House adjoins Copped Hall parkland, adding to the dominance of parkland within this character area.

- The small historic settlements with greens contain a number of listed buildings.
- Isolated farmsteads may mark the location of earlier settlement e.g. Campions
- The most attractive views of Warlies park can be gained from Upshirebury Green, which overlooks the valley of Cobbins Brook

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Landform and small patches of woodland limit views within this area. When on top of some of the small ridges, it is possible to gain views of surrounding character areas, especially the large patches of broadleaved woodland (Deer Park Wood and Galley Hill Wood), within Holyfield Ridges and Valleys (23). Background noise and light pollution from the M25 has a constant impact upon this landscape.

Rarity and distinctiveness. With a mix of arable fields, enclosed medieval hunting forest, parkland and patches of broadleaved woodland, this landscape is considered to be unusual within the Harlow Area.

Visual Impact

There are no dominant built features or vertical elements within this area. The area is visible from surrounding character areas.

Accessibility

Although located adjacent to the M25 in the south, this area is not directly accessible from the motorway. Instead, access is possible via a network of winding lanes running into and out of the area from the north, east and west. The Three Forests and Forest Way recreational routes bisect this area in a north-south orientation.

Condition

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Insignificant
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of land cover:	Dominant
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

25. EPPING RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA C3)

(i) Summary

Location

This landscape character area is situated to the west of Thornwood Common and the east of Bumble's Green. It is located within the County Landscape Character Area of Lee Valley (ELCA C3). Epping Green is located at the northern boundary of the area and Epping Upland is at the centre of the area.

Landscape Character

Composed of a mixture of modern, medium to large sub regular arable fields and areas of irregular historic fields, this area is a predominantly arable landscape. Isolated post-medieval farmsteads and small-scale settlements are spread across this upland plateau landscape, connected by a series of narrow winding lanes.

Key Characteristics

- Medium to large subregular arable fields
- Areas of irregular historic fields
- Small-scale settlements
- Isolated post-medieval farmsteads situated in small landform depressions
- Narrow, winding lanes

Distinctive Features

- Remains of Latton Priory
- Epping Upland, mentioned in the 1066 Domesday Book
- Unusual historic green, connected by historic routeways at Severs Green

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is covered by an even mixture of surface-water gley soils (slowly permeable soils) and pelosols (slowly permeable clayey soils). These cover a base of predominantly Lowestoft Till geology with patches of London Clay and smaller patches of Head.

Topography. This area is predominantly covered by undulating landform. The area slopes gradually downwards from Rye Hill ridge (at the northern boundary of the area) towards Epping Upland settlement and Cobbin's Bridge in the south.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 10
 Min 1 in 3541
 Mean 1 in 58

Altitude range. 95m to 105m

Hydrology. This area is permeated to the north and south by several tributaries of Cobbin's Brook.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly covered by arable farmland which is interrupted by occasional small patches of broadleaved woodland and scattered farmsteads.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a predominantly arable area (with small ponds sparsely scattered throughout) with two small areas of wildlife interest, one at Winter Wood SNCI comprised of ancient woodland of broad-leaved species. The other is a SNCI at Epping Upland including church grounds, semi-improved neutral grassland and species-rich hedgerows and trees. There are linear features of wildlife interest along the recreational path 'Forest Way' running southwest from Rye Hill to Epping Long Green, with areas of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland, plantation woodland and improved pasture. There are a number of small ponds and scrub pockets within the arable land.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The character area largely consists of modern prairie fields dating from the 1950s or later, created through the removal of field boundaries. In several instances these prairie fields contain the remnants of earlier field systems within their boundaries. At the edges of the character area there are also areas of surviving pre-18th century fields.

The Domesday Book of 1086 lists Eppinga as a small community of a few scattered farms and a chapel at the edge of Waltham Forest. This was the settlement that we now know as the modern Epping Upland. Epping Green was a later settlement that developed in the later medieval period along the road from Great Pardon to modern Epping.

Isolated farmsteads are situated in the small depressions on Epping ridge, the majority of which are listed and date from the post-medieval period, however, some may be the locations of earlier settlement. For example, Eppingbury Farm was once the site of Eppingbury medieval manor house, which belonged to the monks of Waltham Abbey. A number of abandoned medieval moated sites survive as earthworks across the character area, such as at Hayles and Takelys, indicating the sites of earlier settlement.

A third form of settlement in the area is Latton Priory. This moated ecclesiastical settlement was established by the 13th century and the remains of this establishment are located in the north-eastern corner of the character area.

There is a distinctive line of common running along the road at the northern edged of the character area, culminating in a green at Severs Green. The western extent of this linear common was probably part of the larger Nazeingwood Common located to the north, the southern part of which has been subject to post-1950s enclosure.

Field pattern. The field pattern is dominated by medium to large, sub regular prairie fields, created by field boundary removal in the 1950s and later. Areas of smaller, irregular pre-18th century fields survive at the edges of the character area, whilst some of the modern prairie fields retain historic elements.

Transport pattern. The winding and narrow B181 road leads from Epping in the south to Roydon Hamlet in the north. The Three Forests Way recreational bridleway along Epping Long Green to Rye Hill was also a historic route that led to Nazeing Gate and Rye Hill. The transport pattern is dominated by minor roads, which are narrow and winding in character,

generally leading from the south to the north of the area. The merging of two roads at Eppingbury Farm may relate to the site's heightened importance in the past.

Settlements and built form. The settlement pattern consists of small farmsteads set in depressions along Epping Ridge, along with the linear settlement of Epping Green and the smaller Epping Upland. Epping Upland was established as a settlement by 1086, whilst Epping Green was a later medieval settlement.

- The Grade I listed flint rubble All Saints Church at Epping Upland is first mentioned in 1177. Many of the original features have been removed although the nave dates to the 13th century.
- Isolated farmsteads are the main settlement type within this area and a number of these may be the location of earlier settlement.
- The medieval moated earthworks at Takeleys and Hayles indicate the site of earlier manor house settlement.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Prominent views of Epping Ridge (to the south east) can be gained from this character area. Open views across the area can also be gained. Harlow New Town is not visible from this area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although there are unusual patches of irregular historic fields, this predominantly arable landscape is common to many of the surrounding character areas.

Visual Impact

Although not within this character area, Rye Hill water tower is clearly visible from several locations within the area. There are no other dominant vertical impacts.

Accessibility

This area is accessible from the main London Road, connecting Harlow, Epping and Junction 7 of the M11. The area is also accessible from Epping in the south.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Reasonable
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	Insignificant
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent - localised

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Insignificant
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

26. THORNWOOD COMMON RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA D1)

(i) Summary

Location

Thornwood Common settlement is situated at the centre of this landscape character area, which is located within Epping Forest and Ridges (ELCA D1). The area is situated adjacent and to the north of Epping and to the south of Harlow New Town.

Landscape Character

This broad ridge is dominated by a series of modern medium to large sub-regular arable fields. Although there has been some modern field boundary loss, species-rich hedgerowed boundaries are still widely apparent. The small settlement of Thornwood Common is a dominant feature in the centre of the character area, with its associated common land.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly arable farmland
- Modern medium to large sub-regular fields

Distinctive Features

- The settlement of Thornwood Common
- The open area of Thornwood Common
- Number of 18th century milestones along the B1393

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is predominantly covered by slowly permeable clayey pelosols. A north-south strip of surface-water gley soils runs through the area. These soils lie on a predominantly Lowestoft Till base.

Topography. This area is situated on a relatively broad, ridge landform.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 21
 Min 1 in 490
 Mean 1 in 72

Altitude range. 75m to 105m

Hydrology. A tributary of Shanks Brook runs along the eastern boundary of this area.

Land cover and land use. The area is dominated by arable farmland with occasional pasture.

Vegetation and wildlife. There are small areas of improved grassland bordering buildings east of B1393 and some species-rich hedgerows bordering large arable fields. There is also a small area of semi-improved neutral grassland near Junction 7, M11.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The primary historic feature of this small area situated to the west of the M11 is by Thornwood Common and its associated historic nucleated settlement. Whilst modern medium to large sub regular prairie fields dominate the landscape, to the south of the character area are some patches of 18th century or later enclosure, interspersed with fields formed by pre-18th enclosure.

As with other commons within the Harlow Area, Thornwood Common was the focus for historic common edge settlement. This pattern of settlement is clearly shown on 18th century mapping of the area. The historic core of the settlement of Thornwood Common has its origins in a small settlement named Ducklane in the 18th century, located close to, but not adjacent to the old historic routeway from London to Cambridge, the B1393. Along this road a number of 18th century milestones survive within the character area.

Field pattern. The fieldscape is predominantly modern medium to large sub regular prairie fields. To the south of the character area are areas of older fields, enclosed during the 18th century or later, and consisting of small to medium sub regular fields.

Transport pattern. The main routeway through this area, the B1393, is a historic road that linked London to Cambridge. Whilst the age of the route is unknown, the development of modern Epping along the road in the 12th century (see character area 27) dates it to at least this period.

Settlements and built form. The B1393 forms the modern focus for settlement in the area, with farmsteads located along its length. Thornwood Common is the only historic hamlet in this area, and developed both along the edges of the common and along an old road that linked Wintry Wood with Thornwood Common. An older pattern of settlement in this landscape is indicated by the abandoned medieval moated manor located at the edge of the settlement of Thornwood Common.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Extensive views of the M11 and across the adjacent western character area (Epping - 25) can be seen from this area. Views across the area are only locally interrupted by taller-treed field boundaries.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although located on ridge landform, the field shape and size within this predominantly arable farmland is common to many of the surrounding character areas.

Visual Impact

The M11 has a dominant visual and noise impact upon this area. Even though the motorway only delineates the eastern boundary of this area, its presence can still be felt throughout the area.

Accessibility

The area is directly accessible from junction 7 of the M11 and the main London Road connecting Harlow and Epping. There is a lack of publicly accessible footpaths within the area and no recreational routes cross the area.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	Dominant
Impact of land-use change:	Insignificant

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - localised
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Open
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

27. EPPING URBAN AREA (ELCA D1)

(i) Summary

Location

This settlement is located south of Thornwood Common and south west of North Weald Bassett. It is located within Epping Forest and Ridges (ELCA D1). The small settlement - Coopersale, is situated to the east of this area.

Townscape Character

Epping urban area is centred around the High Street, which provides attractive long distance linear views. The historic settlement dates from the 12th century and several attractive buildings survive, which are now listed. Residential development (a mix of housing ages and styles) branches off from the main High Street. Pubs, some of which are historic coaching inns, shops and small offices also flank the main High Street.

Key Characteristics

- Linear roadside settlement
- Mix of housing ages and styles
- Mix of residential and commercial buildings/ land uses

Distinctive Features

- Attractive linear high street
- Bell Common Conservation Area
- A number of listed buildings, most dating from the 18th century, line the High Street
- Coaching inns surviving as public houses

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. Epping is situated on surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils). The area is located on a core of sand and gravel geology with claygate peripheral geology.

Topography. Epping is situated on a ridge which overlooks adjacent landform to the west.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 12
Min 1 in 2028
Mean 1 in 62

Altitude range. 55m to 110m

Hydrology. No major rivers or tributaries run through this area.

Land cover and land use. This settlement is composed of a mix of residential and commercial development. Shops, pubs and restaurants line the main High Street, which runs in a north-east to south-westerly direction. Residential areas, with a mix of different housing styles and ages, ranging from the 1800s to the present-day are set back from the main high street. All housing areas are connected to the main street via a series of smaller roads. An area of linear common runs alongside the High Street to the south-east of the area (Bell Common). The main school and associated playing fields is located to the west of Epping. Another recreation ground is located to the northeast of the settlement. There is also a hospital in the north of the area.

Vegetation and wildlife. This is a predominantly urban area with two designated SNCIs. The Old Pastures SNCI near Epping town centre is comprised of semi-improved neutral grassland and improved grassland. The SNCI near Ivy Chimneys is composed of acid grassland, semi-improved acid grassland, scattered scrub, small area of broad-leaved woodland, species-rich hedgerows and some improved pasture

Historical and Cultural Influences

The settlement of Epping, formerly known as Epping Street, was built in the 12th century and was a planned linear roadside settlement designed to increase the revenues of Waltham Abbey from travellers on the London to Cambridge road. The historic core of Epping is a Conservation Area. It is thought that there was also an earlier settlement, named Epping Heath, to the south of the modern town near Bell Common.

As the importance of the London to Cambridge route increased Epping expanded and by the 18th century modern Epping had cemented its current street pattern. By the early 19th century 25 coaches a day passed through the town en-route to Norwich, Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds; by the end of the 19th century, 26 coaching inns lined the High Street. A few of these still survive as public houses, including The Thatched House, The George and Dragon and The Black Lion. The advent of the railways put an end to coaching traffic and the town declined, reviving after the extension of a branch line from London in 1865 and the advent of the motor car. A number of listed buildings line the High Street, most dating from the 18th century, though many were heavily altered in the 19th.

The linear settlement of Epping has expanded to conjoin other, once independent settlements. To the south of Epping is Bell Common, once known as Beacon Common, which is also designated as a Conservation Area. Bell Common lies alongside the road and holds a number of attractive buildings although the common itself is no longer actively managed and is rapidly being taken over by scrub and young woodland. The M25 runs close to Bell Common, where it enters into a tunnel, allowing unimpeded overground access between the common and Epping Forest to the south.

Field pattern. The area is predominately urban and therefore this category is not applicable.

Transport pattern. A number of narrow, winding north-south historic routeways survive in the east of the area and the modern B1393 is a historic route way which existed before modern Epping and led from London to Cambridge.

Settlements and built form. Modern Epping was built in the 12th century and its popularity increased when it was given rights to hold a market in 1253, establishing the town as a centre of trade, which has continued to the present day.

- A number of listed buildings dating from the 18th century line both sides of the High Street although many were substantially altered during 19th century.
- Some of the oldest buildings in the town can be found at each end of the Conservation Area e.g. Belulah Lodge in Lindsay Street (17th century) and a group of 17th –early 18th century cottages along the High Street.
- By the 19th century 26 coaching inns lined the High Street, a few today survive as public houses including The Thatched House, The George and the Dragon and The Black Lion

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

There are clear views of character areas to the west (Epping Ridges and Valleys - 25 and Copped Hall Ridges & Slopes - 24). There are also attractive, long distance linear views along the linear High Street.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The linear settlement with its attractive listed buildings and historic coaching inns is considered to be unusual within the Harlow Area.

Visual Impact

Although close to the M25 and M11, these motorways are not visible from within the town centre.

Accessibility

Epping is situated on a main London Underground line to London. It is not, however, directly accessible from the M11 or M25, the closest motorway junction being Junction 7 of the M11. Epping is connected to Harlow by a main road (London Road). Smaller roads also lead out from the settlement to surrounding character areas in the east and west.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	N/A
Management of semi-natural habitat:	N/A
Survival of cultural pattern:	Intact and well managed
Impact of built development:	Prominent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Insignificant
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - localised
Impact of historic pattern:	Dominant
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

28 COOPERSALE RIDGES AND VALLEYS (ELCA D1)

(i) Summary

Location

This landscape character area is situated to the east of Epping and the south of Coopersale settlements. Located within Epping Forest and Ridges (ELCA D1), the area adjoins Epping Wooded Ridge to the east.

Landscape Character

This undulating area is predominantly covered by small to medium sized arable fields with visible hedgerow-treed boundaries. Relicts of informal Medieval parkland, later redesigned as landscape parks, and ancient woodland are also visible within the area. The tranquillity of this area is greatly disturbed by the proximity of the M11 and M25 motorways. The historic dispersed linear settlement of Coopersale Street is a distinctive feature in the centre of the character area, separating the two parks at Coopersale House and Gaynes Park.

Key Characteristics

- Small-scale linear dispersed settlements
- Small to medium-sized arable fields with visible hedgerows with trees
- Undulating/ ridge- top topography
- Patches of irregular historical fields
- Large houses and parkland

Distinctive Features

- Coopersale House
- Gaynes Park
- Coopersale Street linear settlement
- Relicts of informal Medieval parkland and ancient woodland

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. This area is located on surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils). The geology fans out across this area from south to north in the sequence: Head; London Clay; Claygate.

Topography. This area is situated upon Epping Ridge. However, the topography of this area slopes downwards towards the centre of the character area.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 10
 Min 1 in 186
 Mean 1 in 25

Altitude range. 50m to 110m

Hydrology. Several small tributaries permeate the area in a north-south orientation.

Land cover and land use. This area is predominantly covered by arable farmland and parkland. There is a small patch of broadleaved woodland at Redyn's Wood.

Vegetation and wildlife. This area is bordered by Epping Urban Area to the west and semi-natural habitats to the east and north, including Coopersale common. Most of the land is under arable with small areas of Improved grassland fields. Of interest is a lake to the north of Coopersale House and the recreational route 'Essex Way' passing through the northeast corner of the area.

Historical and Cultural Influences

Despite the fact that the area is divided in two by the modern M11 and has a number of modern elements, this character area has a well-settled historic character, provided by the houses with large gardens in the Coopersale Street Conservation Area; the large houses and parklands of Coopersale House and Gaynes Park and the farmsteads scattered across the character area.

Coopersale House lies to the west of the character area and is an 18th century villa with accompanying 18th century parkland on which 'Capability' Brown was consulted, but the extent of his involvement in the design is not currently clear. This parkland may have origins in informal Medieval parkland. The park and garden is Grade II Registered and the house is a Grade II Listed Building. Gaynes Park, located to the east of the character area was probably also an area of informal medieval parkland and the manor probably dates from the 13th century. This parkland has been subject to some modern enclosure in the 1950s or later.

Coopersale Street lies between the two parklands at the bottom of the Stonards and Houblons Hills. It is a small dispersed linear settlement that contains several distinctive buildings including the 15th century timber framed hall house of Coopersale Lodge. There is a thin strip of roadside common associated with Coopersale Street.

Although the fieldscape is dominated by post 1950s prairie fields, formed through enclosure and through removal of older field boundaries, there are some patches of pre-18th century fields to the southwest of the character area. In addition the fieldscape is also interspersed with small discrete areas of ancient woodland, common and 19 or 20th century woodland plantation.

Field pattern. Although the fieldscape is dominated by modern prairie fields, the area has a number of significant historic elements in the forms of informal medieval parkland, ancient woodland and scatters of pre-18th century field systems.

Transport pattern. A number of narrow, winding north-south historic routeways survive in the east of the area. The modern B1393 is a historic routeway leading from London to Cambridge and which was in existence by the 12th century.

Settlements and built form. There are two main forms of settlement within this area: the large houses of Coopersale House and Gaynes Park, and the linear dispersed settlement of Coopersale Street located between them. There are very few farmsteads within this area.

The buildings of the Coopersale Street Conservation Area are mostly set within large gardens, often containing significant groups of trees and hedgerows that help define property boundaries. The haphazard layout emphasises the dispersed nature of the settlement and the spaces between the buildings are important in maintaining this character.

- The oldest building in Coopersale Street is Coopersale Lodge, a timber framed 'hall house' with two crosswings which dates from the mid-15th century.
- Other listed buildings include: Yeomans 16th century formerly a terrace of four cottages, No.26 Coopersale Street and adjoining barn dated to the 16th century and South Lodge at the entrance to Gaynes Park a cottage dated to the 16th/17th century.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views of the landscape character areas to the north of the area are blocked by topography and by large woodland areas within East Epping Wooded Ridge (29). This area is dissected by the M11 and situated just to the north of a main motorway junction where the M11 and M25 meet.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This character area is unusual within the Harlow Area for its predominance of surviving informal medieval parkland, interspersed with an attractive historic dispersed linear settlement.

Visual Impact

The M11 has a dominant visual and noise impact upon this character area. The M25, running along the southern boundary of the area also has a dominant impact upon the tranquillity of the area.

Accessibility

Although this area is located in close proximity to the M11 and M25, direct access from the motorway is not possible. The area can be accessed via main roads leading from Epping and Thornwood Common to the north.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Poor
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted

Condition

Impact of built development:

Dominant

Impact of land-use change:

Apparent - localised***Robustness***

Impact of landform:

Prominent

Impact of land cover:

Apparent - localised

Impact of historic pattern:

Prominent

Visibility from outside:

Locally visible

Sense of enclosure:

Contained

Visual unity:

Coherent

Distinctiveness/rarity:

Unusual

29. EAST EPPING WOODED RIDGE (ELCA D1)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is situated to the east of Coopersale and Epping and to the southeast of North Weald Bassett. It is located within the broader landscape character area - Epping Forest and Ridges (ELCA D1). Thornwood Common settlement is situated adjacent to the northern boundary of this area.

Landscape Character

Set on a ridge, this area is predominantly covered by mixed woodland, the majority of which is categorised as ancient and semi-natural. Attractive ancient hornbeam pollards are located within part of the woodland, the Gernon Bushes SSSI, providing an unusual and historic landscape feature. Coppicing is a feature of some areas of the woodland. To the east of the character area is a discrete area of arable farmland with an associated farmstead. Some woodland edge settlement has taken place to the north and east of the character area.

Key Characteristics

- Semi-natural and ancient woodland
- Coppicing
- Small patches of arable farmland
- Scattered woodland edge settlement

Distinctive Features

- Disused railway
- Epping Plain
- Essex Way recreational route
- Wintry Wood - part of Epping Forest
- Ancient hornbeam pollards

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The southeastern half of this area is covered by surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable soils). The northwestern half is covered by slowly permeable clayey pelosols. The area is located on a mix of Lowestoft Till, sand and gravel, claygate and head geology.

Topography. This area is situated on a ridge landform.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 11
 Min 1 in 598
 Mean 1 in 63

Altitude range. 670m to 110m

Hydrology. Tributaries of Cripsey Brook permeate Wintry Wood (in the north of the area).

Land cover and land use. A large proportion of this area is covered by a number of different broadleaved woodlands (Wintry Wood, Roughtalley Wood, Gernon Bushes, Mountwood and Beachet Wood). Within this woodland, coppicing (a form of woodland management) is still carried out. A small patch of arable farmland separates Roughtalley's Wood from Mount Wood and Gravel Pit Wood. Gernon Bushes has many ancient hornbeam pollards incorporated within more recent woodland. Within this area of woodland, previously extracted gravel pits have developed into sphagnum bogs.

Vegetation and wildlife. Gernon bushes is in the north west of the area, and is designated as a Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a County Wildlife Site. The northern part of Gernon Bushes SSSI includes the old gravel pits, which have developed into diverse sphagnum bogs. These bogs include species such as lady fern, bog bean, marsh valerian, marsh marigold and ragged robin. This is a designated SNCI and comprises of ancient woodland including Beachet Wood (semi-natural broad-leaved woodland) and Roughtalley's Wood and Birching Coppice plantation woodland.

Historical and Cultural Influences

This character area contains a large area of ancient and semi-natural woodland. Though it has historically been continually wooded, the northern part of the woodland has been subject to replanting during the 19th and 20th centuries. Part of the woodland is being managed using the traditional woodland craft of coppicing. Attractive ancient hornbeam pollards are located within part of the woodland, the Gernon Bushes SSSI, providing an unusual and historic landscape feature.

The woodland was originally part of the Waltham Forest, of which Epping Forest survives as a remnant. Waltham Forest was a large royal hunting area owned and managed by Waltham Abbey, and within which the king had the right to hunt. High ranking nobility were also appointed as his representatives to hunt deer in the forest, to supply the royal table with venison. Waltham Forest was a favourite hunting area of Henry VIII.

Field pattern. This area is predominantly covered by woodland and therefore no field pattern is apparent. The few modern prairie fields that exist in the area are medium to large, and regular in shape.

Transport pattern. Epping Road, connecting North Weald Bassett and Epping, runs through this area (east-west orientation).

Settlements and built form. This character area is not a focus for settlement in the modern landscape. It contains only one farmstead and some woodland settlement to the north and east of the character area.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views looking out from within the woodland, are very limited by vegetation. Attractive views within the woodland of flora and fauna can be gained. This character area with its wooded ridge can be viewed from all surrounding character areas.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Large areas of designated and semi-natural/ancient woodland (Wintry Wood, Roughtalley Wood, Mount Wood and Beachet Wood) are unusual in comparison with the surrounding landscape.

Visual Impact

The woodland has a dominant visual impact upon the surrounding landscape. The M11 now dissects the woodland areas separating Wintry Wood (north and west) from Gernon Bushes and Beachet Wood to the south.

Accessibility

This area is not directly accessible from the M11, although vehicular access can be gained from the main Epping Road. No major recreational routes cross this area, however, the woodland is accessible via a series of publicly accessible footpaths.

Condition

Land cover change:	Insignificant
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Intact and well managed
Impact of built development:	Insignificant
Impact of land-use change:	Insignificant

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - localised
Impact of land cover:	Dominant
Impact of historic pattern:	Dominant
Visibility from outside:	Widely visible
Sense of enclosure:	Confined
Visual unity:	Unified
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

30. TOOT HILL RIDGE (ELCA D1)

(i) Summary

Location

This landscape character area is situated within Epping Forest and Ridges (ELCA D1). The area is located to the south of North Weald Bassett and east of Epping Wooded Ridge. Toot Hill settlement lies at the centre of this character area, and Greensted Green to the north east of the area.

Landscape Character

This upland ridge character area is dominated by arable farmland in medium and large modern prairie fields, interspersed with some small patches of pasture and some small blocks of woodland. The area also contains some medium and small irregular and sub-regular pre-18th century fields. Hedgerow field boundaries are apparent, some with incorporated trees. Small-scale historic settlements are linked by narrow winding lanes. Views within the area are locally dominated by topography.

Key Characteristics

- Small-scale historic, settlements and scattered farmsteads
- Predominantly arable farmland with some pasture
- Medium to large subregular fields with low, medium and high hedgerows with trees
- Narrow winding lanes

Distinctive Features

- Ongar Park Lodge
- Essex Way recreational route
- Concentrations of historic fields around Took Hill and near Greensted Green
- Ancient woodland to the west of Toot Hill

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. The northern half of this character area is covered by surface-water gley soils (seasonally waterlogged, slowly permeable soils). The southern half is covered by slowly permeable clayey pelosol. The area is underlain by a mixture of Lowestoft Till, London Clay, claygate and Head geology.

Topography. This area is situated on elevated ridge landform.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 15
Min 1 in 1180
Mean 1 in 63

Altitude range. 65m to 110m

Hydrology. A few short tributaries are visible within this area to the south of Toot Hill.

Land cover and land use. The area is predominantly covered by arable farmland, with small patches of woodlands, interspersed with small farmsteads and small-scale settlements. There is a golf course to the west of Blake's Farm and south of Freeman's Farm. A disused railway delineates the boundary between this area and the adjacent northern character area (Magdalen Laver Ridges and Slopes 22).

Vegetation and wildlife. There is ancient woodland scattered to the west of Toot Hill and throughout the area are a small number of ponds. Also at Greensted Wood in the east of the character area, there is a small area of broad-leaved woodland. Pensons Lane near Greensted has broadleaved woodland and species-rich hedgerows and trees.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The area is dominated by modern prairie fields, some of which contain the remnants of earlier fields within their boundaries, and some localised patches of pre-18th century fields. The area retains an intimate rural feel with a number of scattered small-scale hamlets linked by north-south narrow winding lanes.

The earliest historically identified deer park in Britain is located within this character area: Ongar Park, which dates to 1045. Of this emparked private hunting ground only the embanked boundary, or pale, partially survives, though the modern field system that overlies the park partially mirrors its previous extent. In the late 18th century a large area of woodland covered Ongar Park, though this has since been removed and made into agricultural fields.

Field pattern. The main form of field pattern within the character area are modern prairie fields, however, particular concentrations of historic irregular fields are found around Toot Hill, near to Greenstead Green and continuing towards Chipping Ongar. There are also a number of prairie fields with post 1950's boundary loss.

Transport pattern. The road network in this character area forms a grid linking the settlements of Greensted Green, Colliers Hatch, Toot Hill and Clatterford End. The line of Roman road runs through the area north-east to south-west and whilst the road is not visible on the ground, the line of the road is still in use west of Colliers Hatch.

Settlements and built form. The small-scale settlements of Toot Hill, Greensted Green, Colliers Hatch and Clatterford End dominate the settlement pattern of the area and have historical origins. Farmsteads tend to be clustered close to these settlements.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Views within this area are often limited by topography. Views to western character areas are blocked by woodland within East Epping Wooded Ridge (29). North Weald Bassett can be seen from certain locations within the northern half of this area.

Rarity and distinctiveness. Although there are a number of small woodland blocks, this predominantly arable landscape with interspersed pasture fields, is considered to be common to much of the surrounding landscape character areas.

Visual Impact

Apart from small-scale settlements, there are no dominant visual impacts upon this area.

Accessibility

This area is accessible via a series of narrow, winding roads which traverse the area. The Essex Way recreational route crosses this area in a west-east direction, making the area accessible to walkers.

Condition

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Poor
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Apparent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent - localised

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of land cover:	Apparent - widespread
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common

31. WALTHAM ABBEY URBAN AREA (ELCA C3)

(i) Summary

Location

This area is situated to the south east of the River Lee Country Park and Cheshunt.

Landscape Character

This urban area developed around a historic core and the ecclesiastical establishment of Waltham Abbey. The town centre is pedestrianised, however, outside of this area several busy often congested roads link the settlement with surrounding areas. A number of residential areas, with varying housing ages and layouts are located around the periphery of the town centre, whilst most commercial buildings are now located along a linear high street. The town contains several areas of public open space, including the market square and the Abbey Gardens.

Key Characteristics

- Historic core
- Mix of commercial and residential properties
- Small old town centre
- Mix of residential styles and ages

Distinctive Features

- Remains of Waltham Abbey
- Epping Forest District Museum in its 16th century building
- Number of listed buildings
- Royal Gunpowder Factory

(ii) Assessment

Physical Influences

Geology and soils. No data is available for soils within this area. The area is located upon predominantly London Clay with small patches of Lowestoft Till and Head geology.

Topography. This character area is located within the Lee Valley. The topography is therefore, predominantly flat.

Degree of slope. Max 1 in 14
Min 1 in 9095
Mean 1 in 226

Altitude range. 20m to 55m

Hydrology. Two tributaries of Cobbins Brook (a tributary of the River Lee) cross this area. One of these tributaries branches to the west and one to the north of the area.

Land cover and land use. This settlement is comprised of a mix of residential and commercial buildings. Commercial buildings (pubs, shops, library and small offices) are grouped into a town centre area around the remains of Waltham Abbey. The town centre is pedestrianised, with traffic going round the centre and not through it. Epping Forest District museum is also located in the town centre. Shops flank the short, linear high street, which leads to the Abbey Gardens with its ruins of Waltham Abbey in the west. Four schools and associated playing fields are interspersed within the urban residential areas. There is also a hospital in the centre of the area.

Vegetation and wildlife. Pockets of amenity grassland are dispersed throughout this area.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The town of Waltham Abbey is a small market town lying on a gravel terrace between the River Lea and the rising ground at Epping Forest. Though the town is now named after the Abbey, the town predates the Abbey and was mentioned in the Domesday Book as a substantial community. The town has a long history before the founding of the Abbey, with the settlement being converted to Christianity by Earkenwald, Bishop of London in the 7th

century and probably later destroyed by the Vikings. The town received a substantial boost from the creation of the 11th century Shrine of the Holy Cross, following a miracle at the site experienced by Harold, Earl of Wessex and later King of England. The first church at Waltham, previously built by Offa, the 8th century King of Mercia and probably destroyed by the Vikings, was rebuilt by Harold in 1060 as a college. The present church in the town still retains parts of Harold's building. Henry II replaced the priests in Harold's college in 1177 with Augustinian canons, and work began on a new church. The priory was given abbey status in 1184. By this time the surrounding settlement was a well-established market town. The Abbey continued until 1540 when it was the last monastic house to be dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540.

The Abbey buildings were almost totally demolished following the Dissolution, however some substantial remains still survive in the Abbey Gardens. The Abbey ruins and the gardens provide a major focal point for the town; the abbey tower is a prominent landmark from much of the surrounding countryside. The Abbey ruins suffered bomb damage during WWII.

The town of Waltham Abbey contains a number of listed buildings within its Conservation Area, the earliest of which forms part of Lychgate House, a 14th century house built for a pries attached to the Parish Church. Few other medieval buildings survive, though the Epping Forest District Museum occupies a building that was a merchant's shop and house of c.1520, and numbers 2,3 and 4 Church Street have origins in the early 16th century. A number of listed buildings survive within the market square part of the town the 16th century timber framed buildings include: The Welsh Harp and The Green Dragon.

The town also became known as the home of the Royal Gunpowder Factory. This 77 hectare site was used for manufacturing gunpowder since the 17th century and possibly earlier. The site has the longest known continuous manufacture of explosives of any site in the country. Initiated under private ownership, the site was sold to the government in 1787 and was a major supplier of powder to the army during the Napoleonic Wars. With this came expansion and the local economy became increasingly reliant on the powder mills. The site continued to supply the army until 1945, after which it became a military research establishment.

Field pattern. This is an urban area and therefore this category is not applicable.

Transport pattern. This area is connected to the surrounding landscape by a series of A-roads. The A121 runs in a west-east direction across the area and the A112 runs into Waltham Abbey from the south. The B194 allows vehicular access from areas to the north.

Settlements and built form. This area has developed as a predominantly linear settlement. Most commercial buildings within the town are located in relation to the linear High Street. Residential areas are set out in a number of different patterns and layouts, ranging from grids and blocks to cul-de-sacs. The market square is a prominent and important area of open space, as is the extensive publicly accessible Abbey Gardens.

(iii) Evaluation

Visual and Sensory Perception

Busy roads leading to the town centre mean that this area is often congested and disturbed. Around the remains of Waltham Abbey in the Abbey Gardens, calmer areas can be found. It is possible to gain views of the surrounding character areas from peripheral viewpoints within this area. Views from the town centre out are limited by built development.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The remains of Waltham Abbey are distinctive and unique within the surrounding area. Although other historic aspects remain, the modern expansion of the town centre and residential areas means that the character of the townscape area as a whole is common to several other urban areas within the locality.

Visual Impact

In some places, 3-storey 1960s flats can be seen on the skyline. The tallest visible skyline landmark, however, is the tower of the Abbey church.

Accessibility

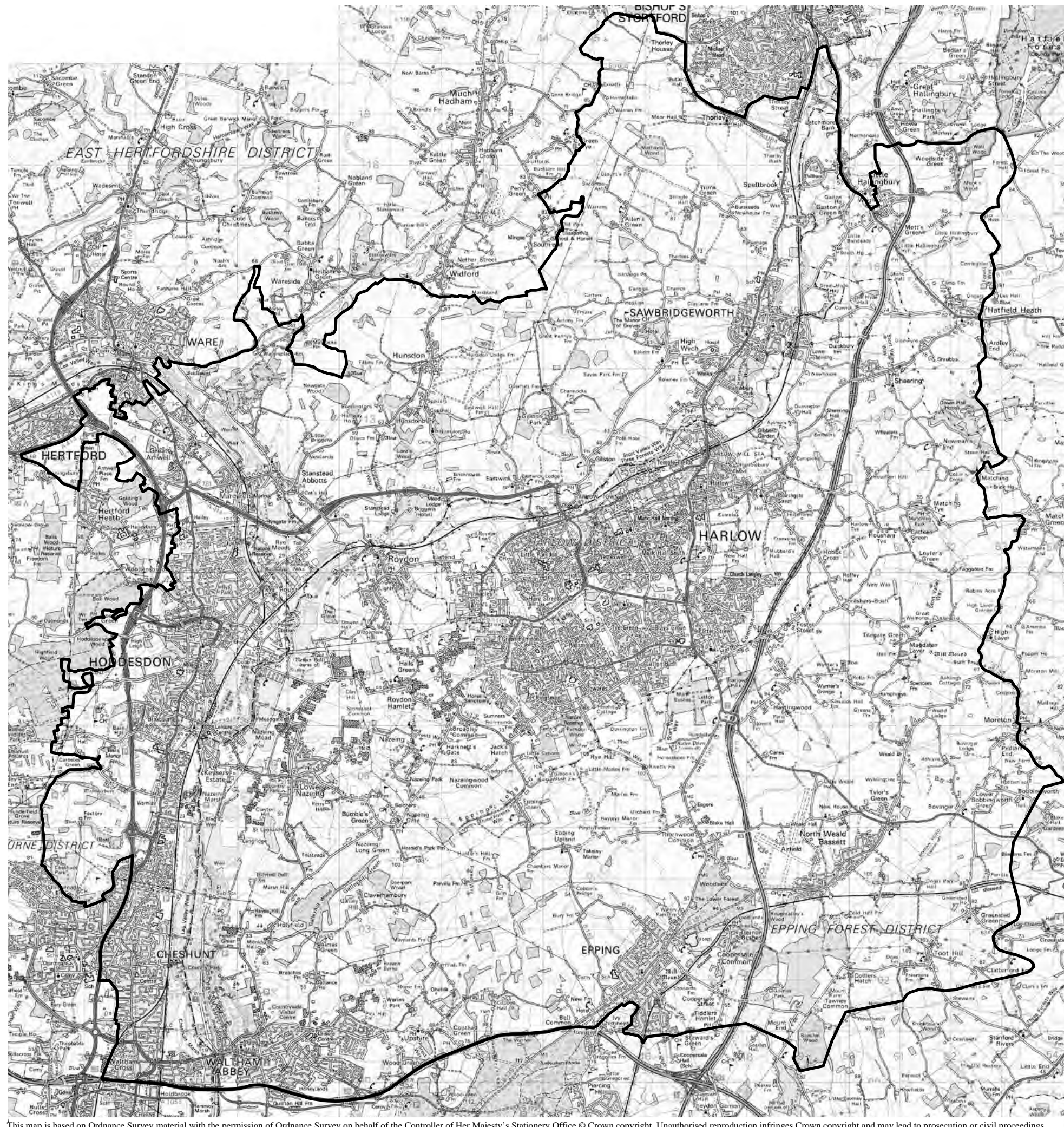
This area is not directly accessible from the M25. It is connected to the surrounding area by a series of major roads.

Condition

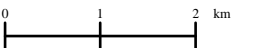
Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	N/A
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	N/A
Management of semi-natural habitat:	N/A
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Prominent
Impact of land-use change:	Apparent

Robustness

Impact of landform:	Insignificant
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Common



Study Area



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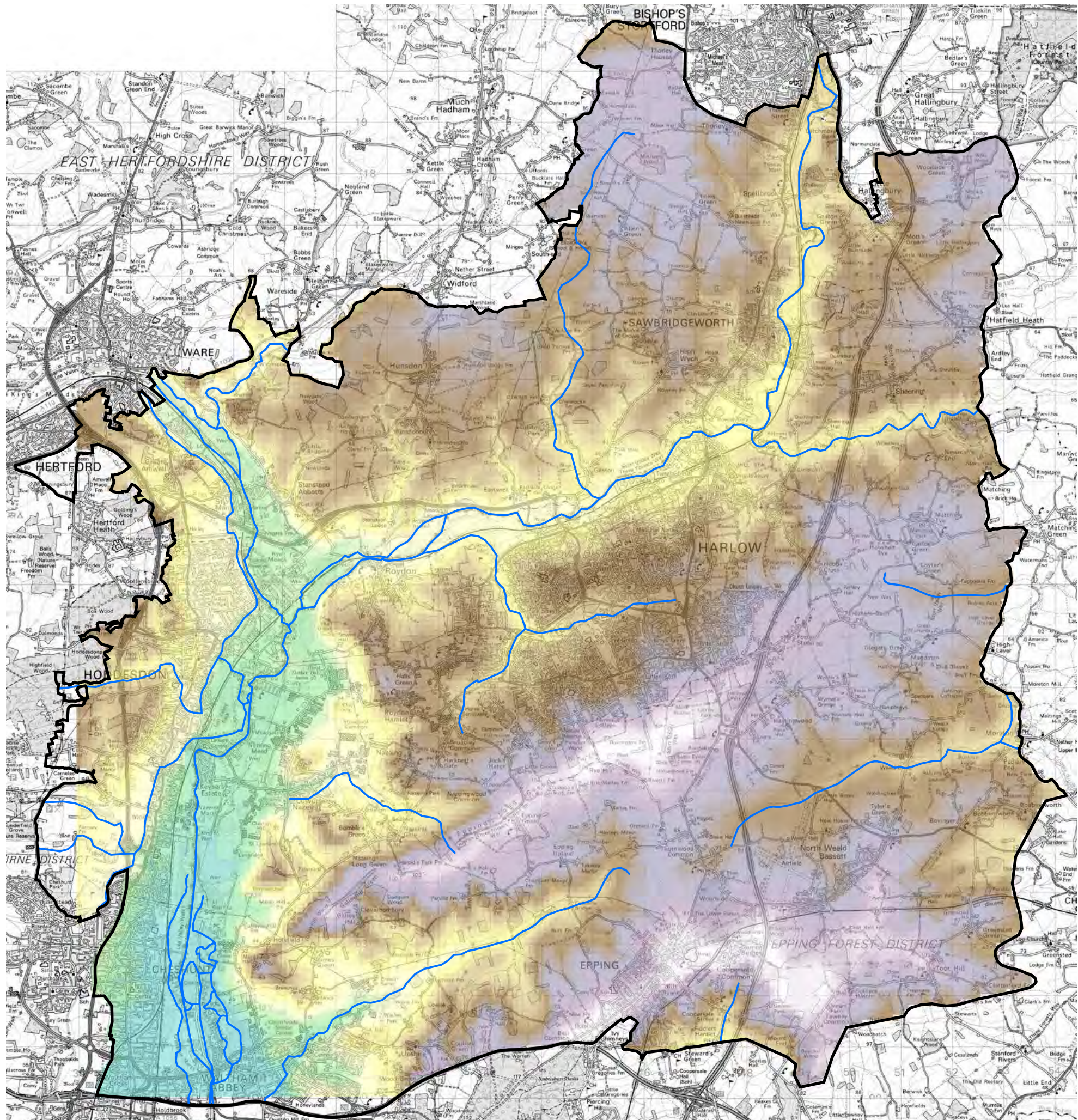
Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study



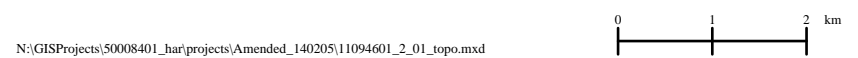
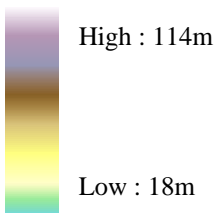
February 2005

Figure 1.1

Study Area



Elevation



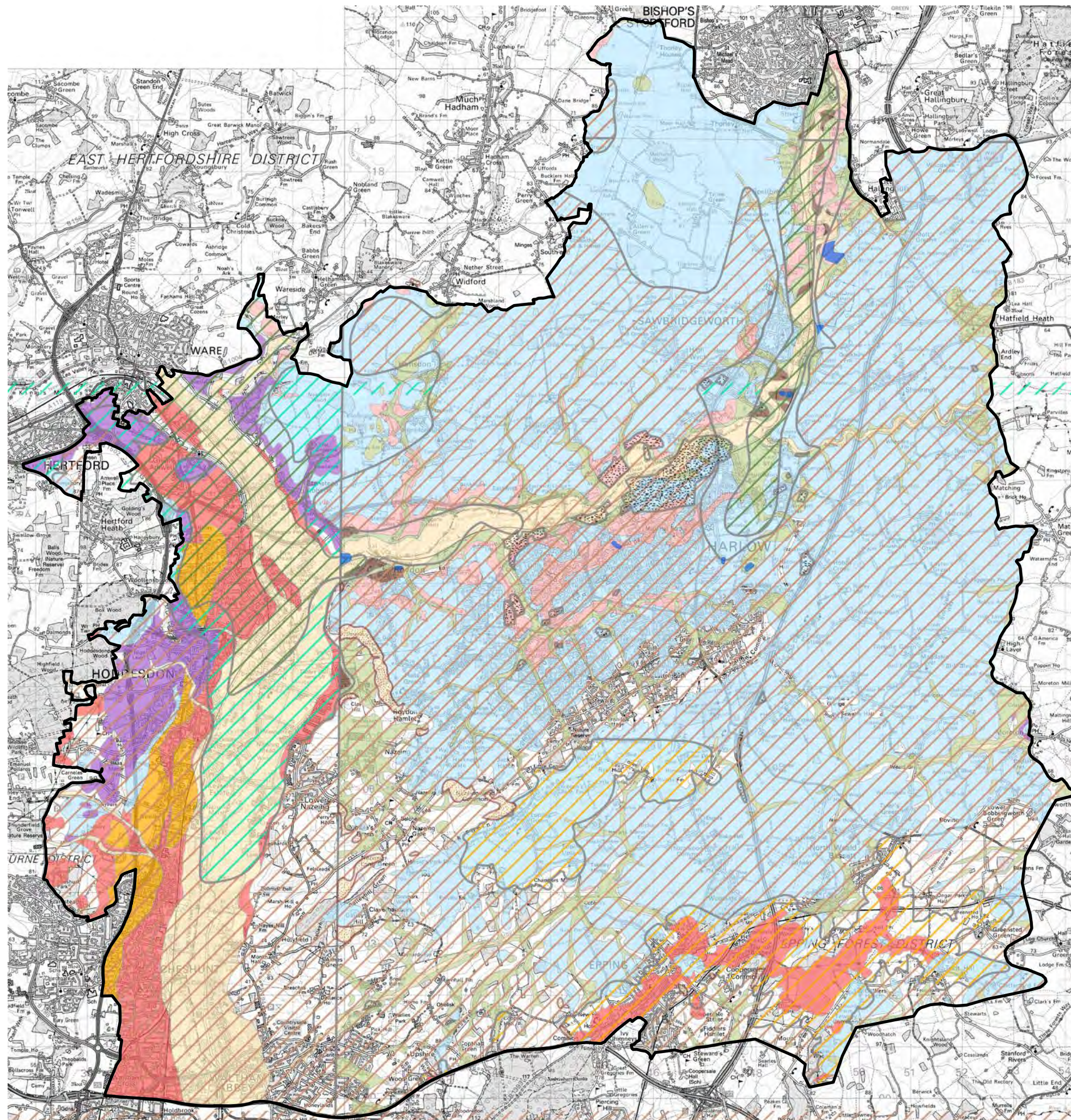
Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study

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Figure 2.1
Topography and Drainage

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Drift Geology

- Alluvium
- Enfield Silt Formation
- Glaciofluvial Deposits
- Head
- Kesgrave Formation
- Lowestoft Till
- River Terrace Deposits
- Sand and Gravel

Mass Geology

- Clay

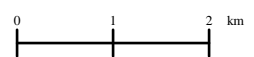
Solid Geology

- Lambeth Group
- London Clay
- Chalk Formations
- Claygate


Made Ground

- Open Waste
- Made Ground
- Study Area

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Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study

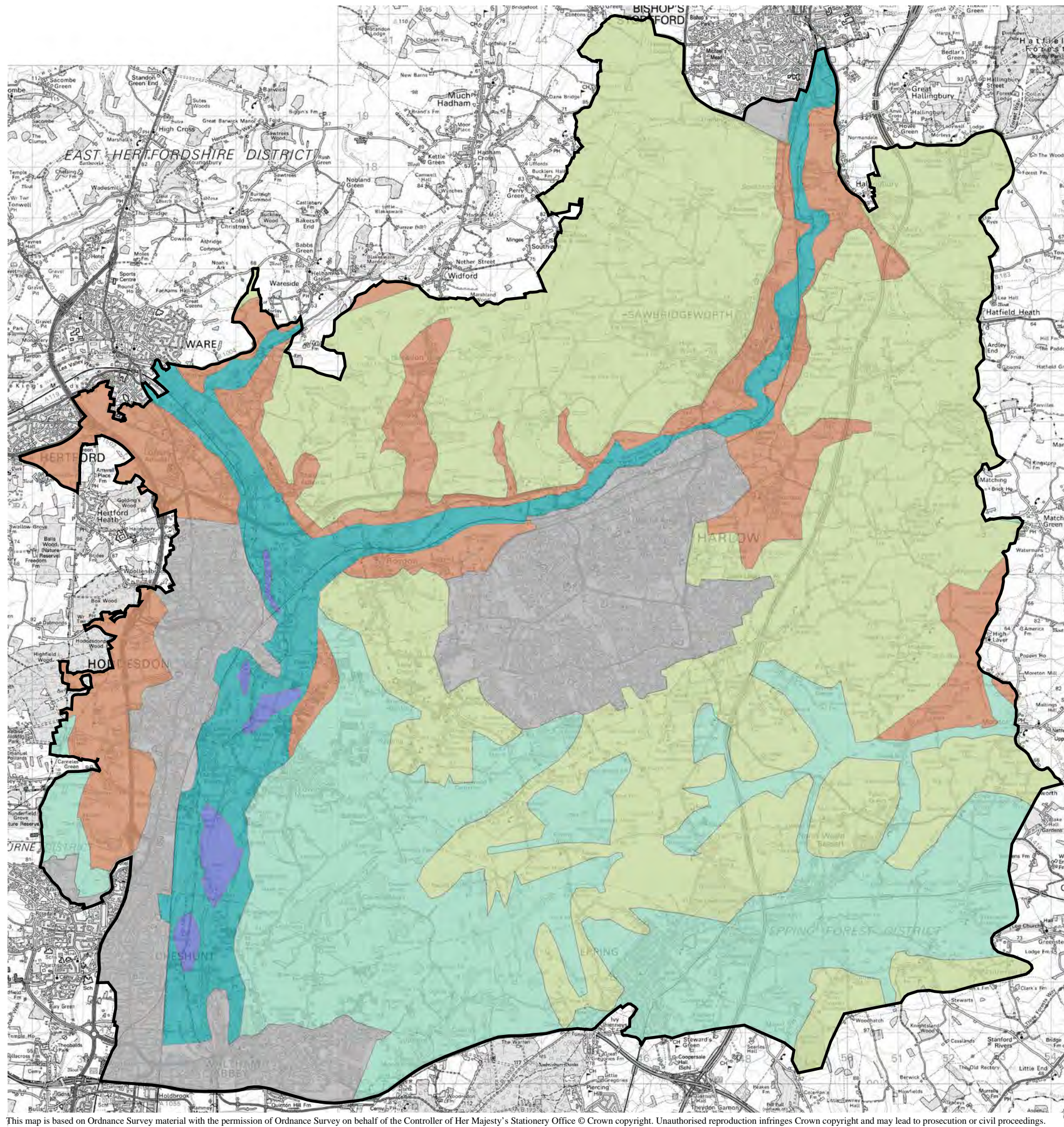
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Figure 2.2

Surface Geology

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Soils

- Urban Areas
- Pelosols
- Brown Soils
- Surface Water Gleys
- Ground-water Gley Soils
- Water
- Study Area

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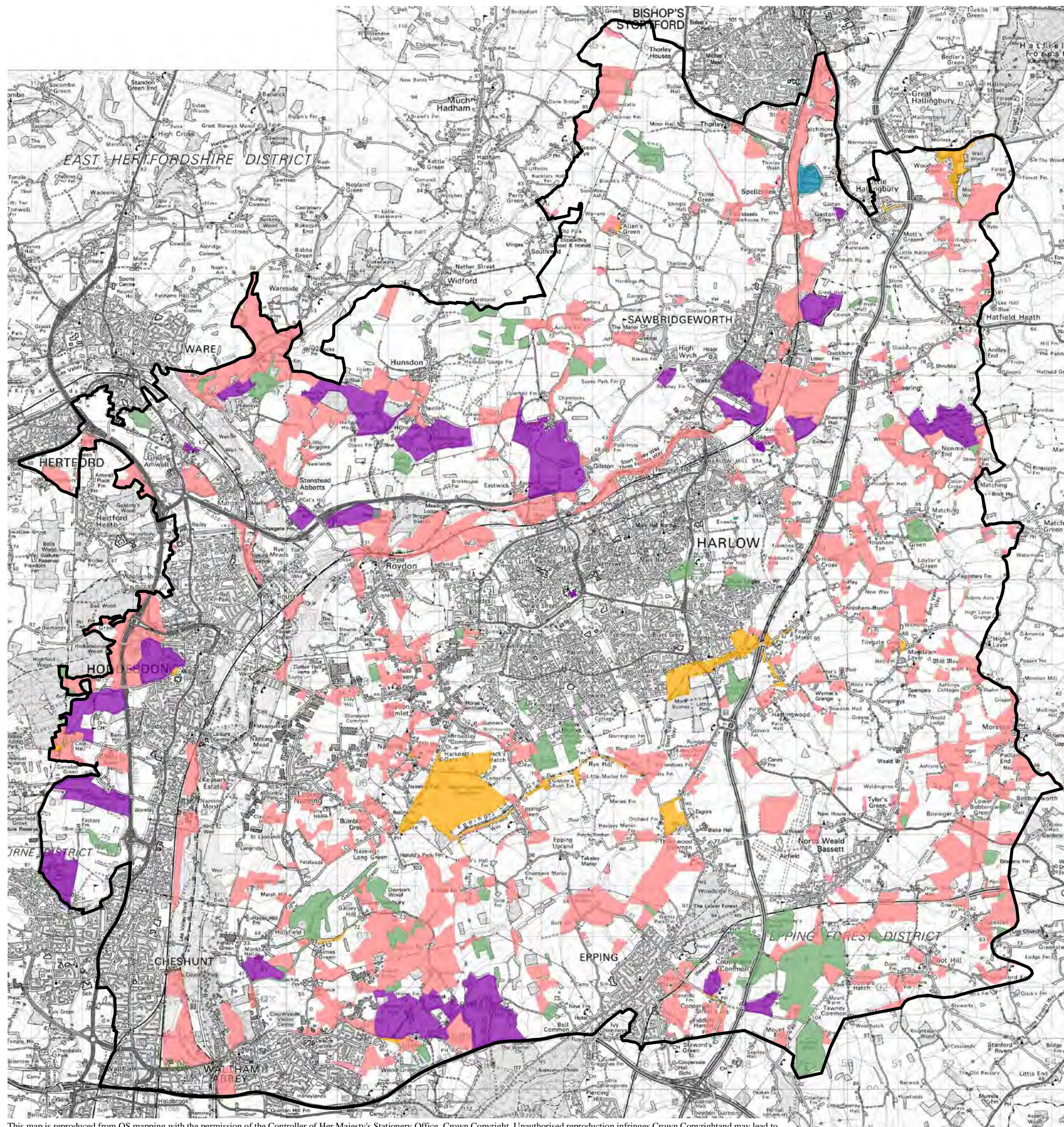
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Figure 2.3

Soils

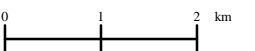


Surviving pre-18th Century Landscape Features

- Ancient Woodland
- Commons
- Areas of Pre-18thC Enclosure
- Historic Earthwork
- Historic Parks and Gardens (Date unverified)
- Study Area

Note: Derived from draft HLC data

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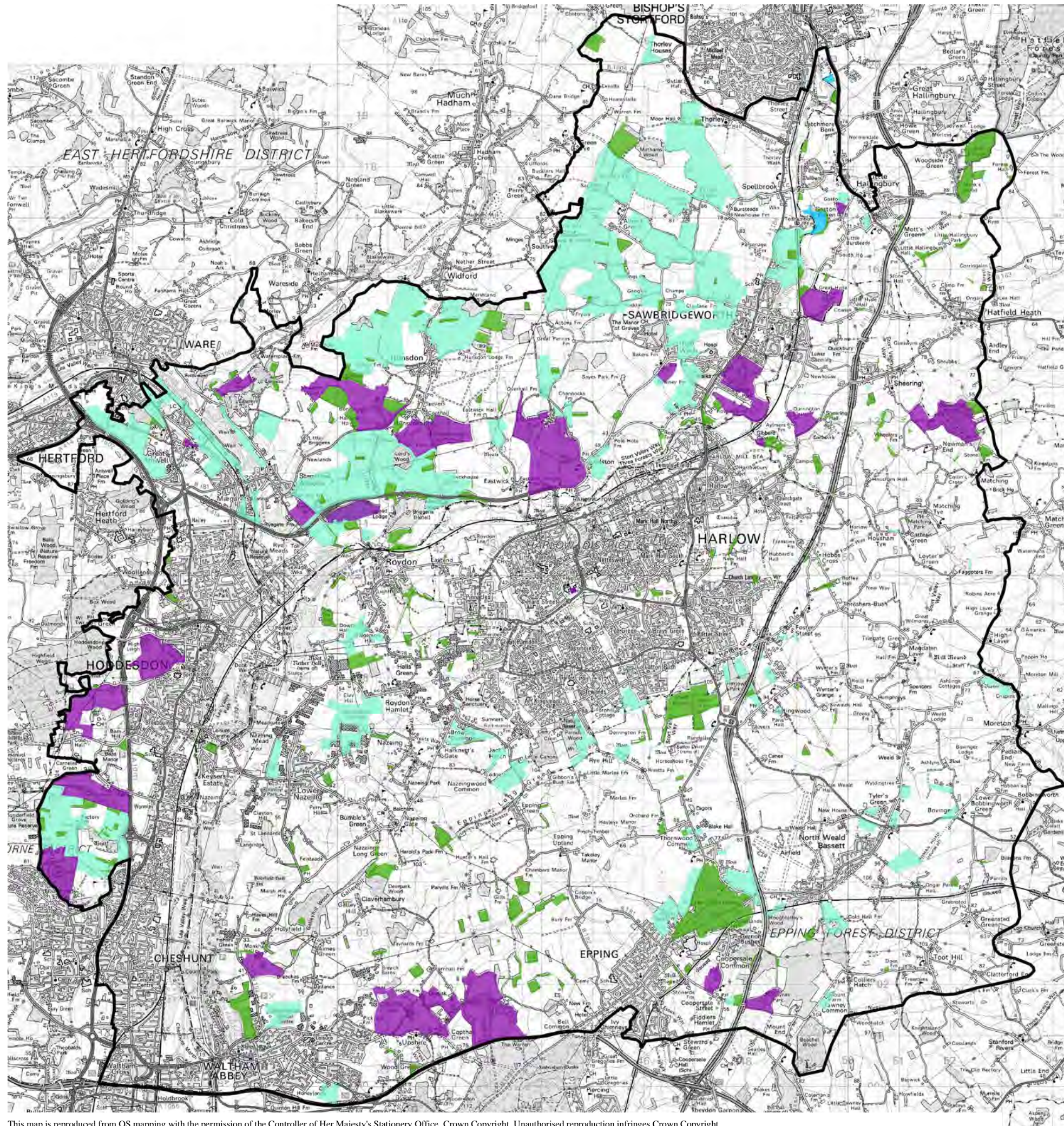


Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study



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Figure 2.4
Surviving pre-18th Century
Landscape Features



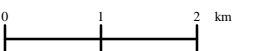
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Surviving 18th and 19th Century Landscape Features

- Areas of 18th /19th Century Enclosure
- Woodland Plantation (Date unverified)
- Water Meadow
- Historic Parks and Gardens (Date unverified)
- Study Area

Note: Derived from draft HLC data

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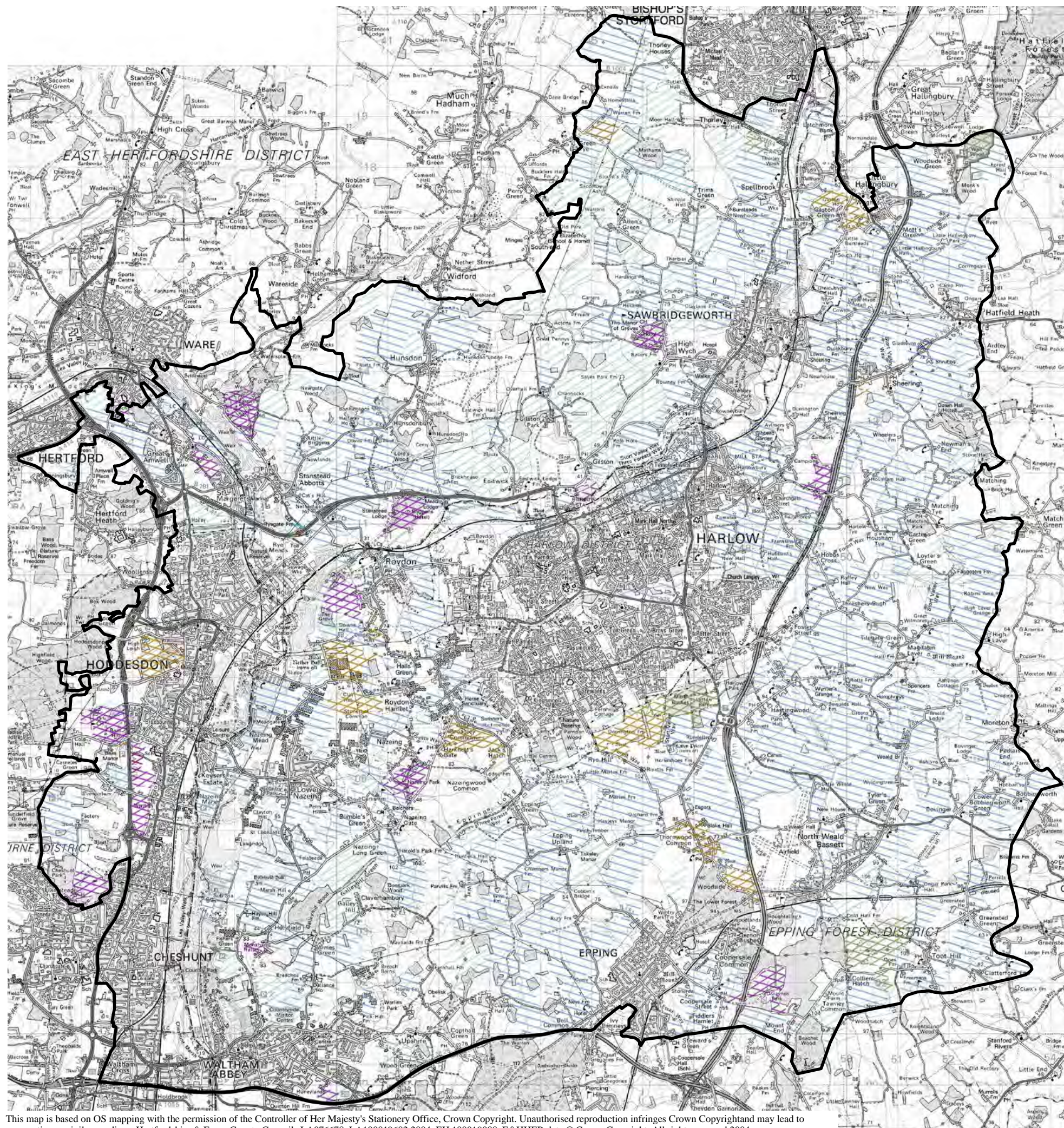
Harlow Area Landscape
and Environment Study



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Figure 2.5

Surviving 18th and 19th
Century Landscape Features



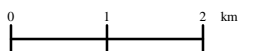
Former Historic Landscape Features

- Former Areas of pre-18th Century Enclosure
- Former Areas of 18th /19th Century Enclosure
- Former Woodlands
- Former Water Meadow
- Former Commons
- Former Historic Parkland

Study Area

Note: Derived from draft HLC data

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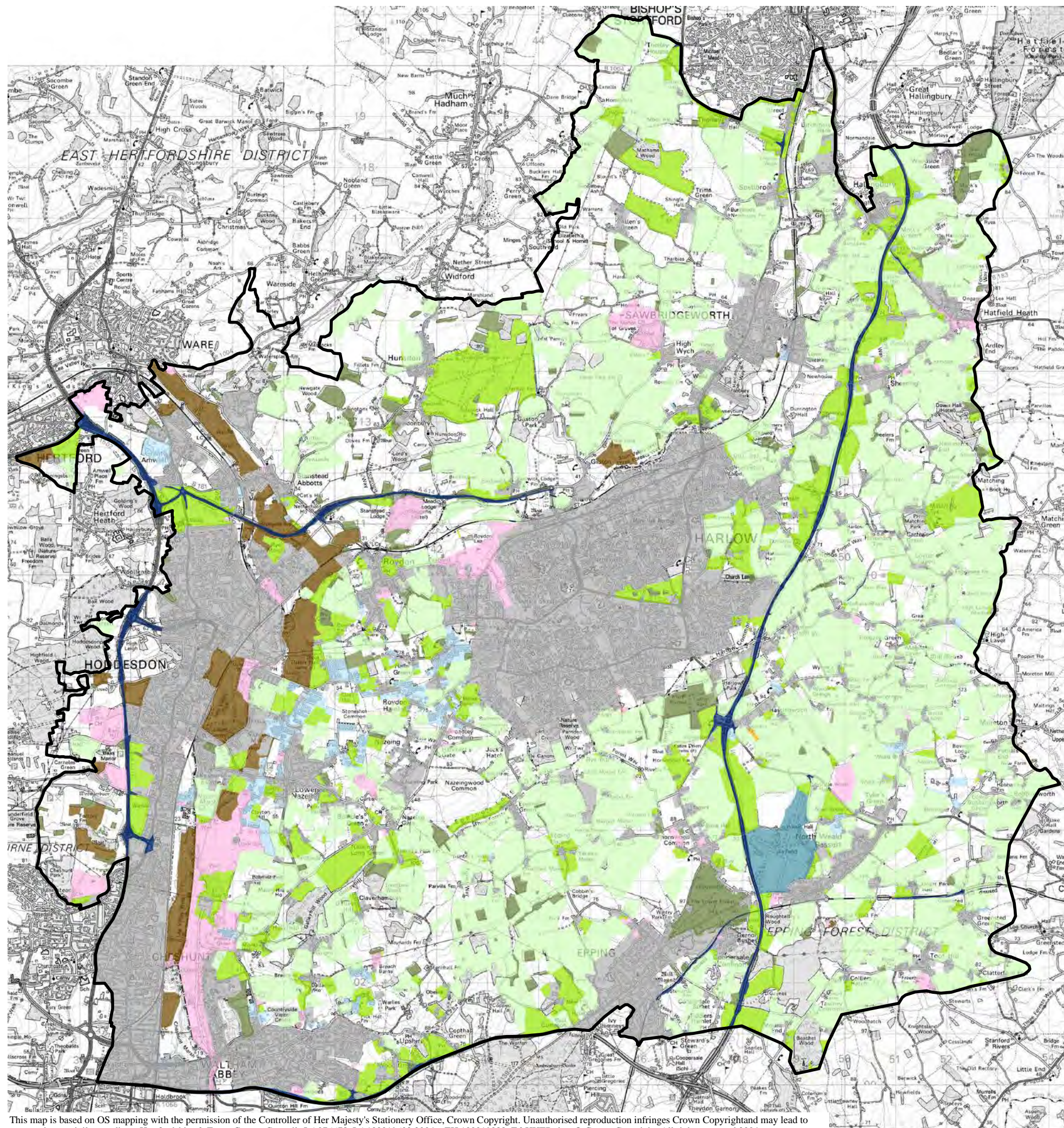
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and Environment Study



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Figure 2.6

Former Historic
Landscape Features

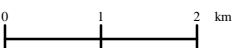


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20th Century Landscape Features

- Airport/Airfield
- Communications
- Prairie Fields
- Urban Areas (Historic Cores Not Identified)
- Mineral Extraction and Restored Land
- Nursery With Glasshouse (Some 19thC Elements)
- Plotlands
- Post 1950's Fields
- Leisure Land Use
- Woodland Plantation (Date unverified)
- Study Area

Note: Derived from draft HLC data
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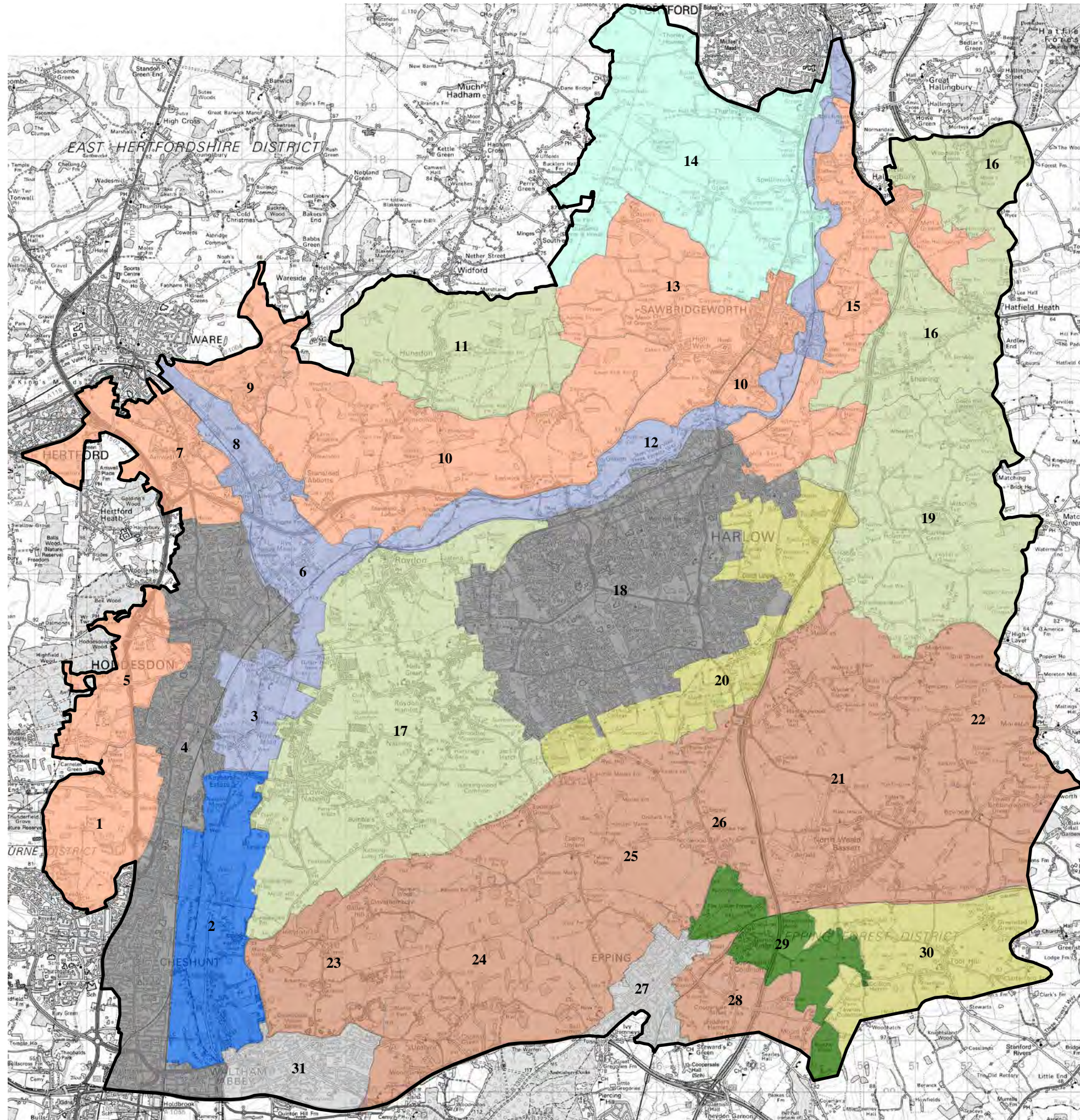


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Figure 2.7
20th Century
Landscape Features



Landscape Character Types

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Major Urban Areas | Plateaus |
| 4 Hoddesdon and Cheshunt Major Urban Area | 11 Hunsdon Plateau |
| Urban Area | 16 Hatfield Heath Plateau |
| 18 Harlow Major Urban Area | 17 Roydon and Nazeing Plateau |
| Valley Floodplains | 19 Matching Plateau |
| 27 Epping Urban Area | Uplands |
| 31 Waltham Abbey | 14 Thorley Uplands |
| Marshes | Ridges |
| 2 Lea Valley Marshes | 20 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge |
| Ridges and Slopes | 30 Toot Hill Ridge |
| 1 Wormleybury and Cheshunt Park | Wooded Ridges |
| 5 Broxbournebury | 29 East Epping Wooded Ridge |
| 7 Great Amwell Ridges and Slopes | Ridges and Valleys |
| 9 Lower Ash Valley | 21 North Weald Ridges and Valleys |
| 10 Stanstead and Pishiobury Parklands | 22 Magdalen Laver Ridges and Valleys |
| 13 High Wych Slopes | 23 Holyfield Ridges and Valleys |
| 15 Little Hallingbury Ridges and Slopes | 24 Copped Hall Ridges and Valleys |
| | 25 Epping Ridges and Valleys |
| | 26 Thornwood Common Ridges and Valleys |
| | 28 Coopersale Ridges and Valleys |
| | Study Area |

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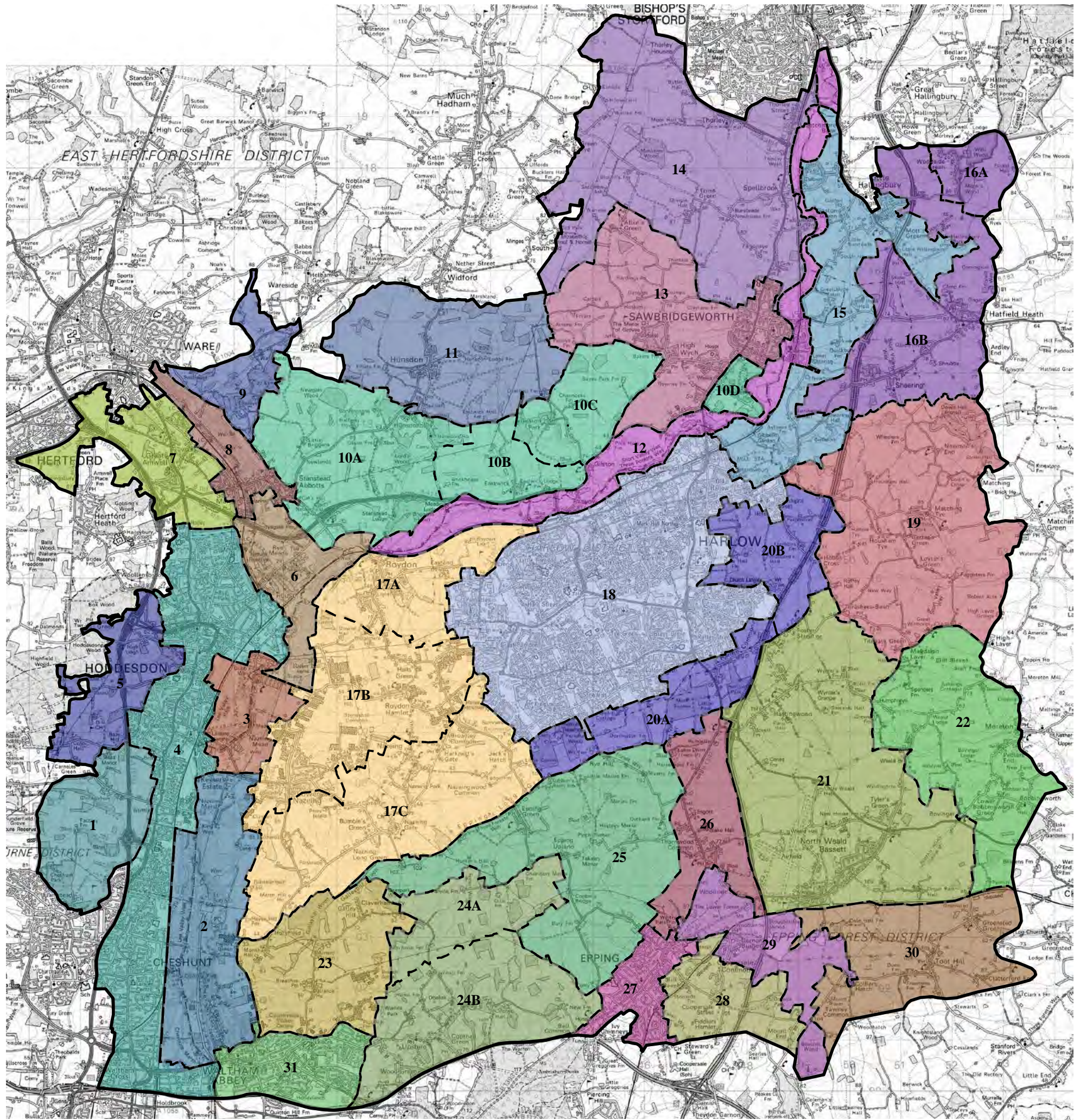
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Figure 2.8

Landscape Character Types



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Landscape Character Areas

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 Wormleybury and Cheshunt Park | 17 Roydon and Nazeing Plateau |
| 2 Lea Valley Marshes | 18 Harlow Major Urban Area |
| 3 Middle Lea Valley South | 19 Matching Plateau |
| 4 Hoddesdon and Cheshunt Major Urban Area | 20 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge |
| 5 Broxbournebury | 21 North Weald Ridges and Valleys |
| 6 Rye Meads | 22 Magdalen Laver Ridges and Valleys |
| 7 Great Amwell Ridges and Slopes | 23 Holyfield Ridges and Valleys |
| 8 Amwell Floodplain | 24 Copped Hall Ridges and Valleys |
| 9 Lower Ash Valley | 25 Epping Ridges and Valleys |
| 10 Stansted and Pishiobury Parklands | 26 Thornwood Common Ridges and Valleys |
| 11 Hunsdon Plateau | 27 Epping Urban Area |
| 12 River Stort | 28 Coopersale Ridges and Valleys |
| 13 High Wych Slopes | 29 East Epping Wooded Ridge |
| 14 Thorley Uplands | 30 Toot Hill Ridge |
| 15 Little Hallingbury Ridges and Slopes | 31 Waltham Abbey |
| 16 Hatfield Heath Plateau | |
- Landscape Character Sub-Area
--- Study Area

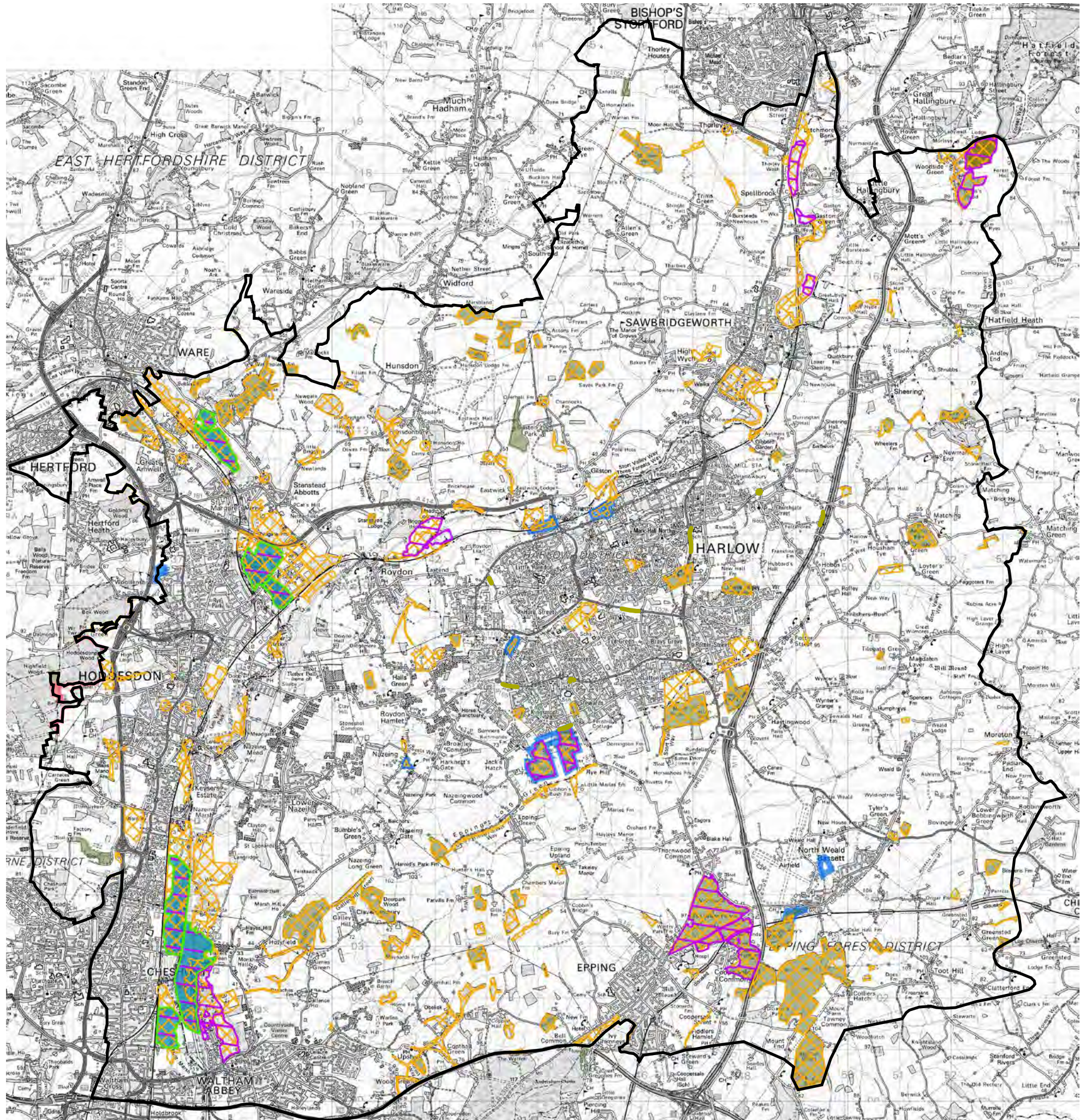
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Figure 2.9
Landscape Character Areas



Nature Conservation Designations

- Ramsar Site
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Ancient Woodland
- County Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Protected Wildlife Verge (Harlow designation only)
- Study Area

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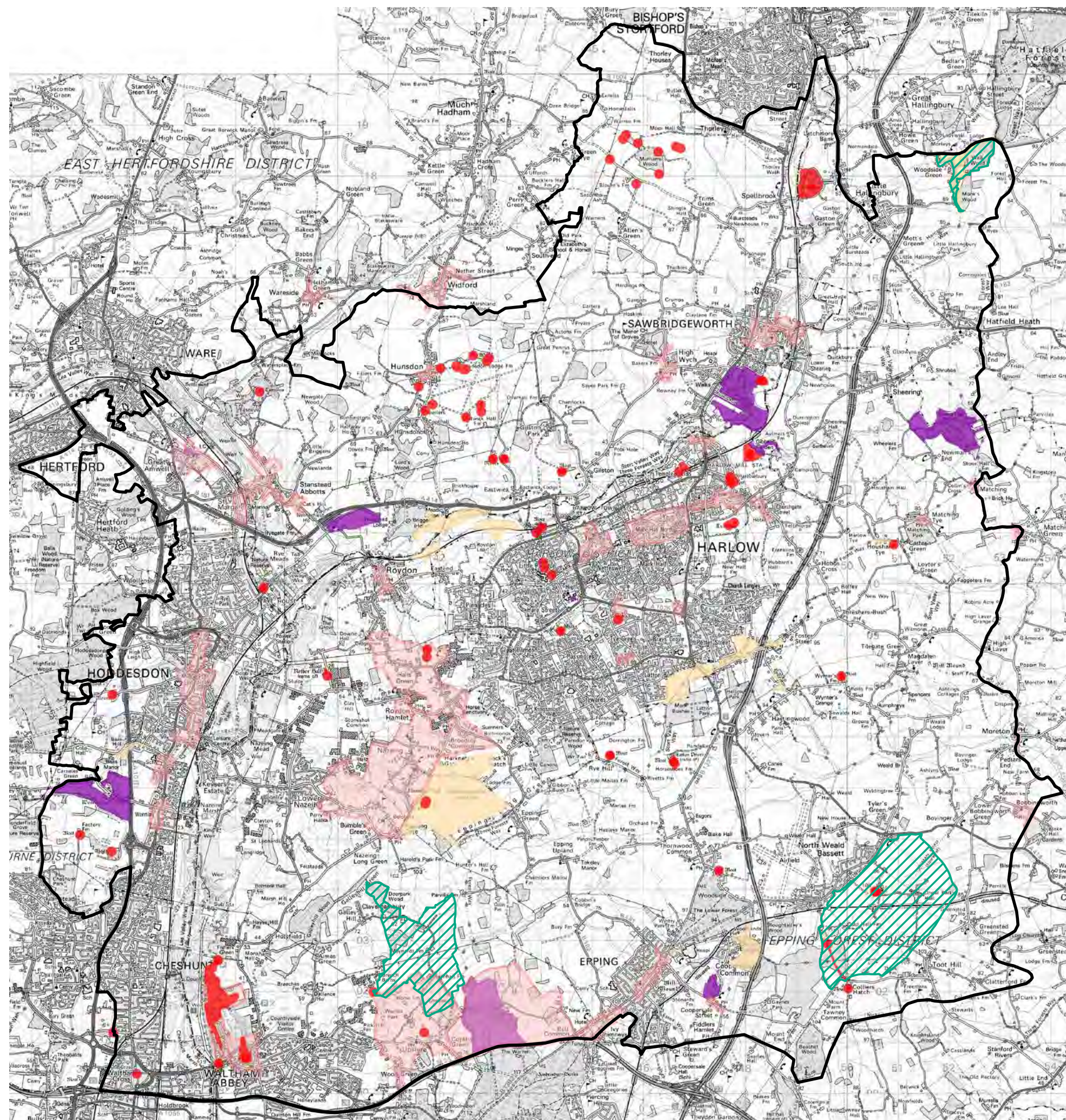
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Figure 2.10
Environmental Designations:
Nature Conservation

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Historic Environment Designations

- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest
- Registered Common Land
- Ancient Landscapes (Essex Co. Co. designation)
- Study Area

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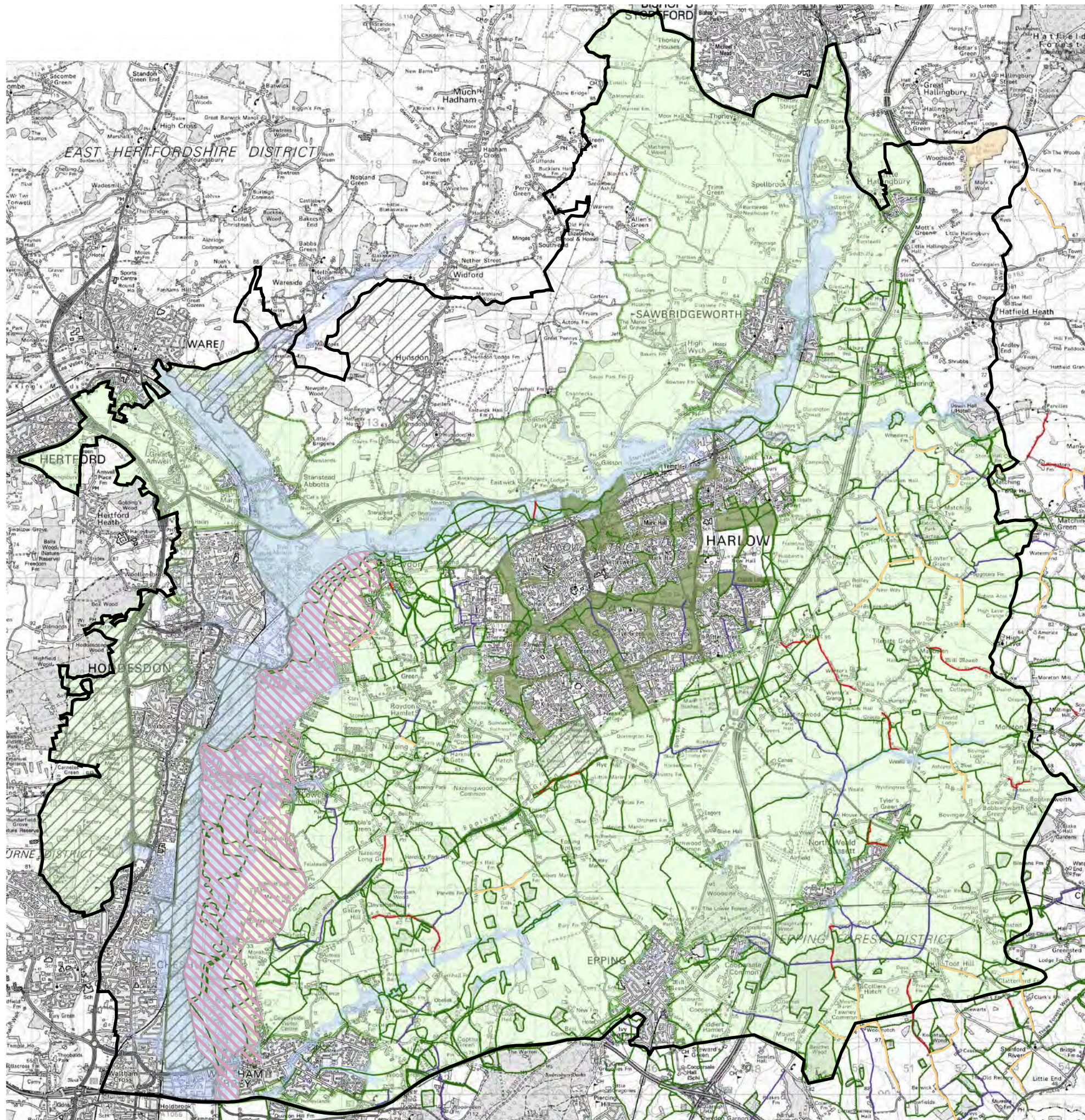
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Figure 2.11
Environmental Designations:
Historic Environment

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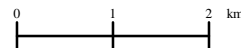


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Other Designations

- Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Conservation Areas (Harlow and East Herts only)
- Green Wedge (Harlow only)
- Indicative Floodplain
- Green Belt
- Country Parks
- Regional Parks
- Protected Lanes (Essex Co. Co. Designation)
- Public Rights of Way (Essex CC data only)
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Byway/Road Used as a Public Path
- Study Area

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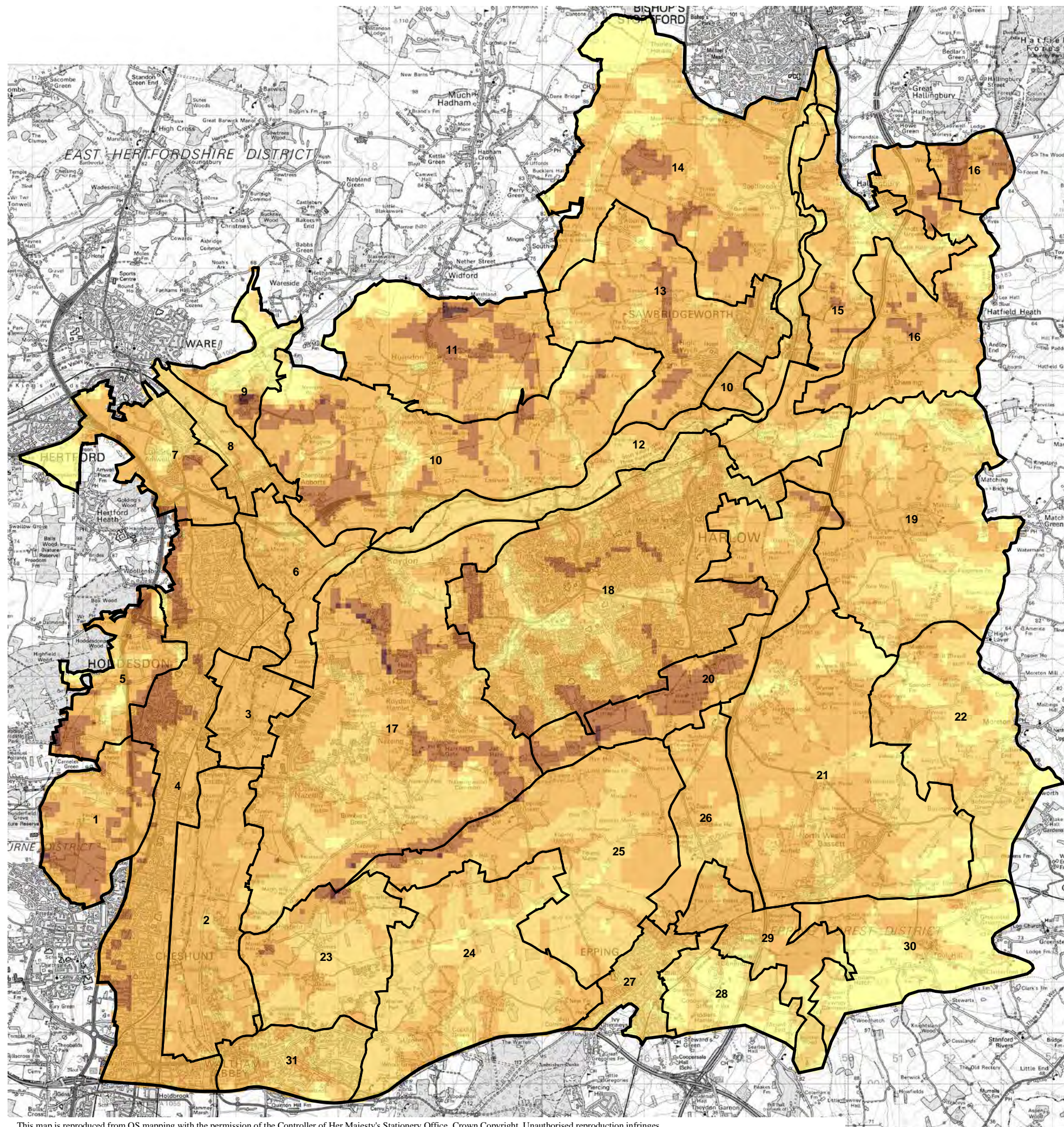


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Figure 2.12
Environmental Designations:
Other



Relative Visibility of the Underlying Landform

- Very Low (less than 1%)
- Low (1% - 5%)
- Moderate (5% - 15%)
- High (15% - 25%)
- Very High (25% - 35%)

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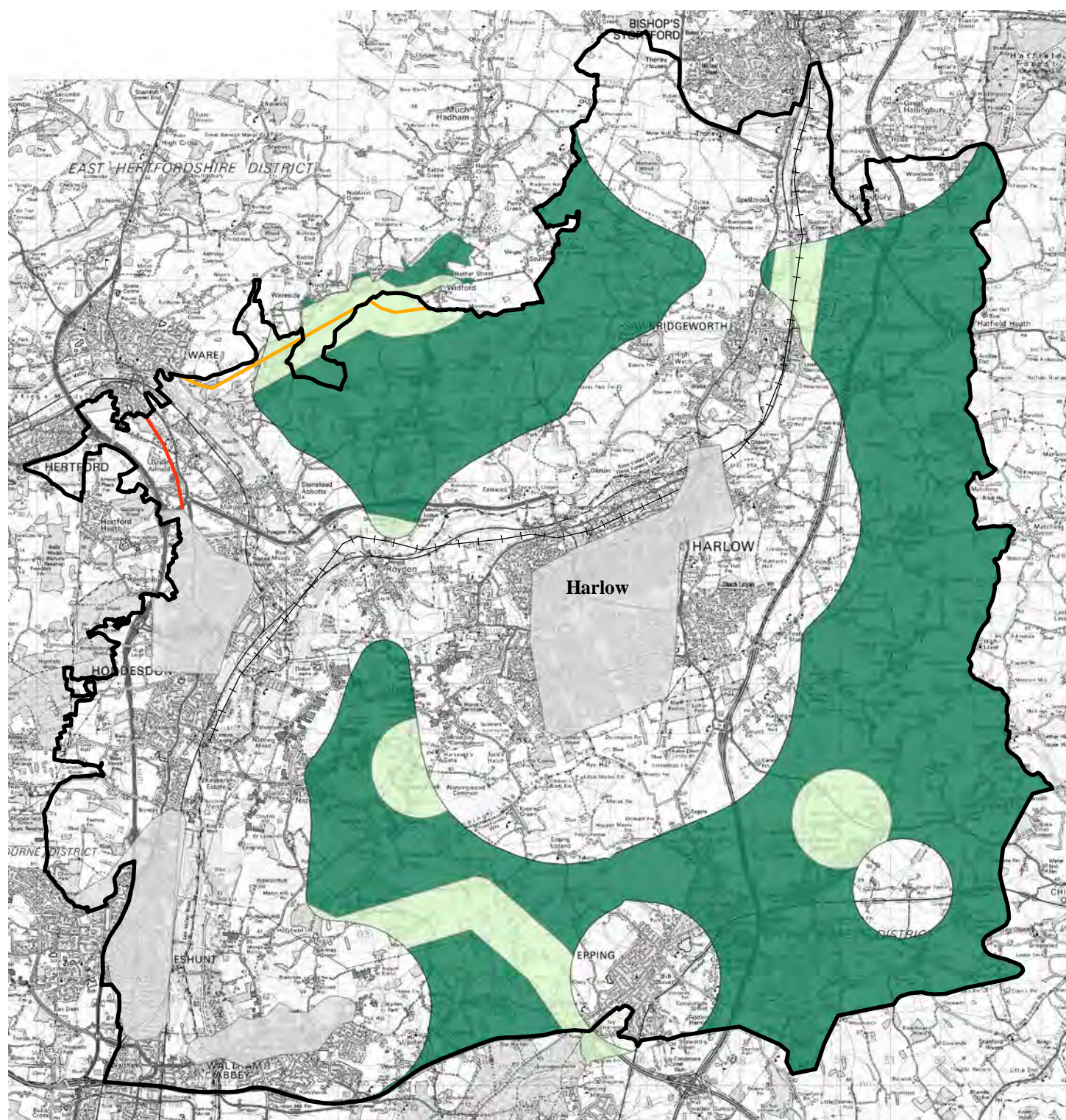
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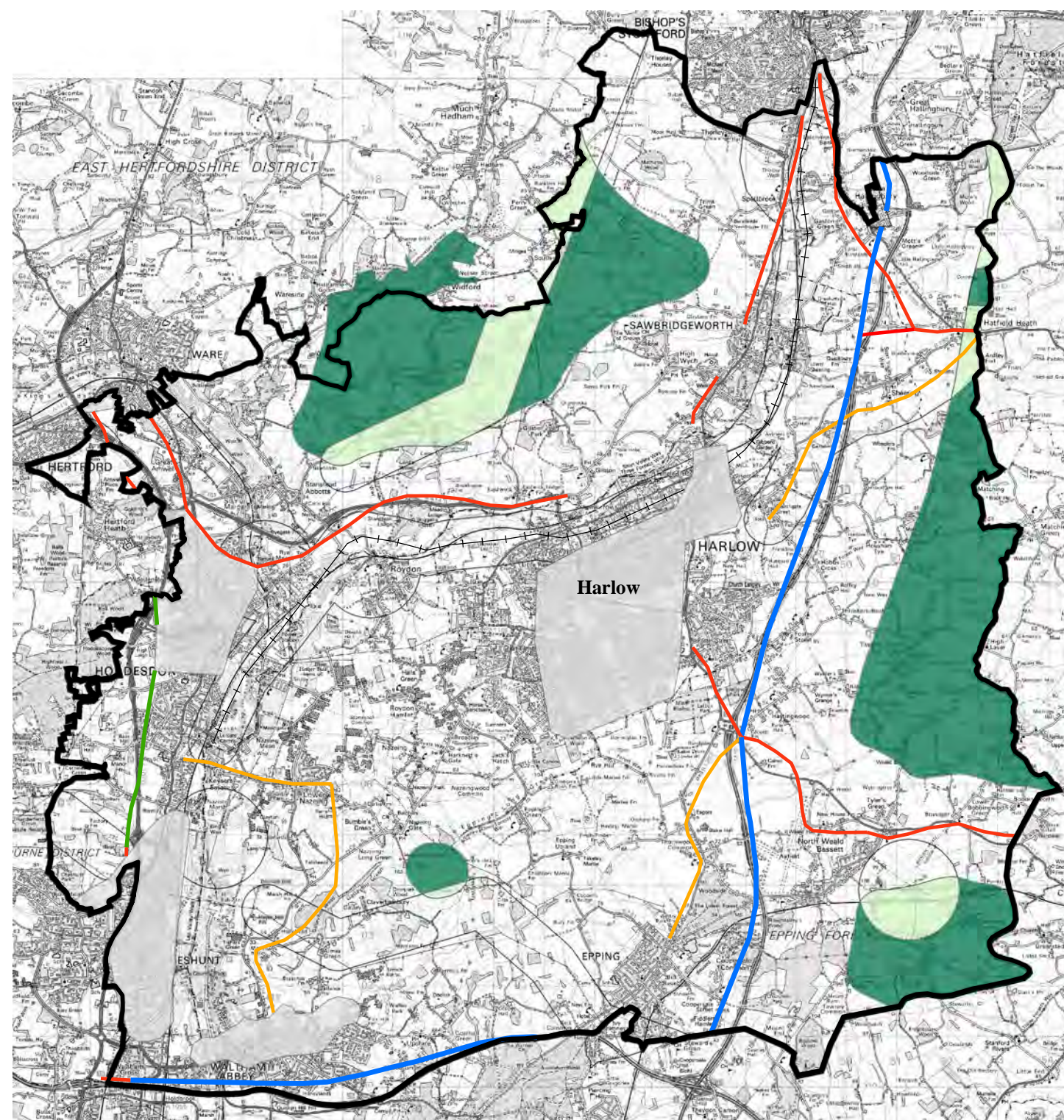
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Figure 3.1

Relative Visibility of the
Underlying Landform



1960's Analysis



1995 Analysis

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Tranquil Areas

Towns
Tranquil

Semi-tranquil
Motorway

Trunk Road
A Road

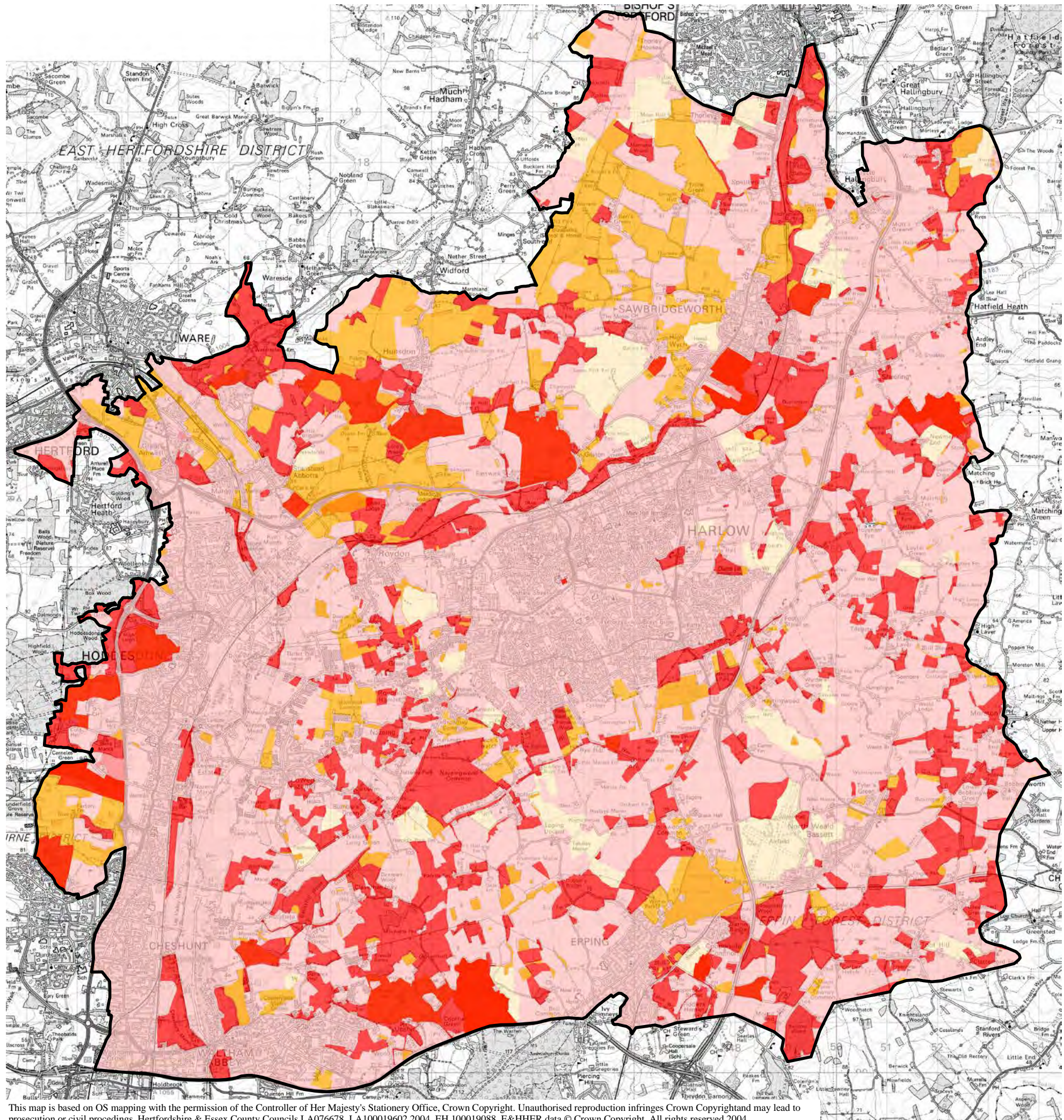
B Road
Railway

Harlow Area Landscape
and Environment Study

0 1 2 km

Figure 3.2

Tranquil Areas



- Highly Stable Areas With Considerable Surviving Time-Depth
- Relatively Stable Areas With Modrate Surviving Time-Depth
- Recently Altered Areas With Relict Historic Element
- Recently Altered Areas With Few, If Any, Historic Elements

Study Area



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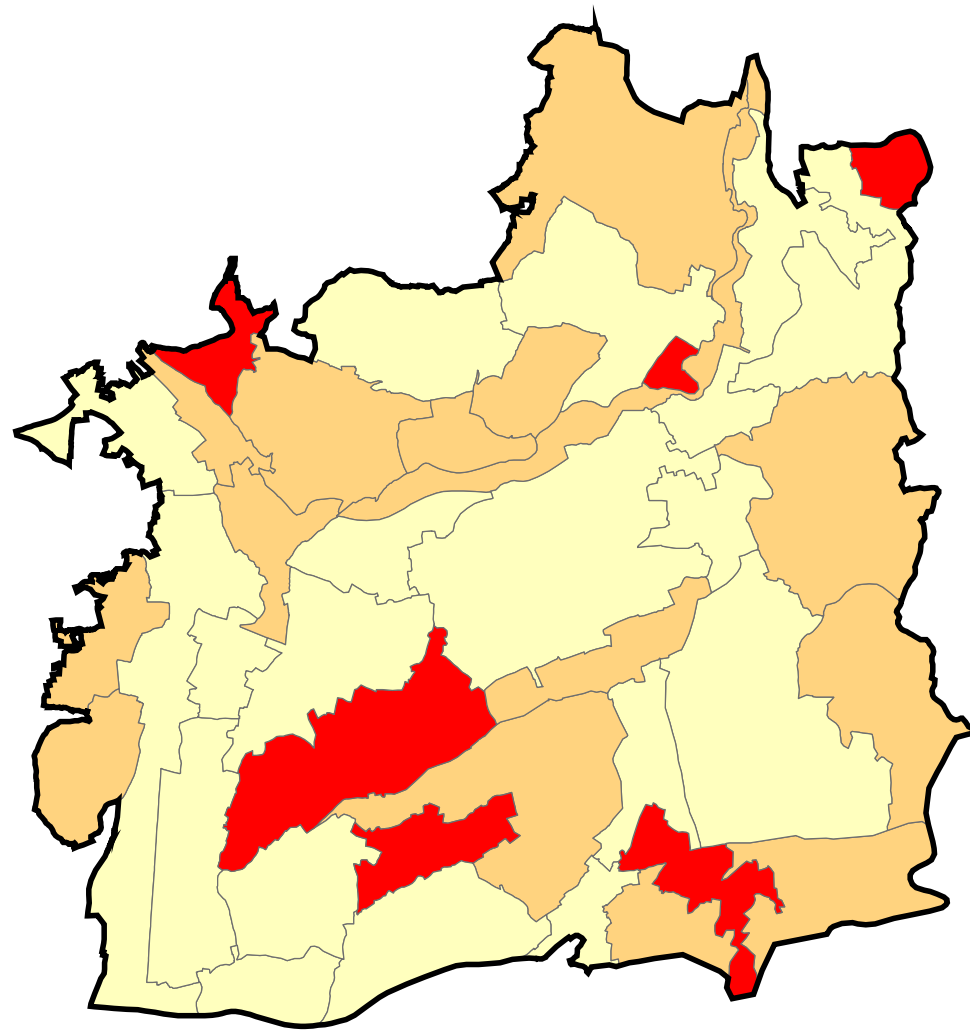
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Figure 3.3
Historic Time-Depth
and Stability

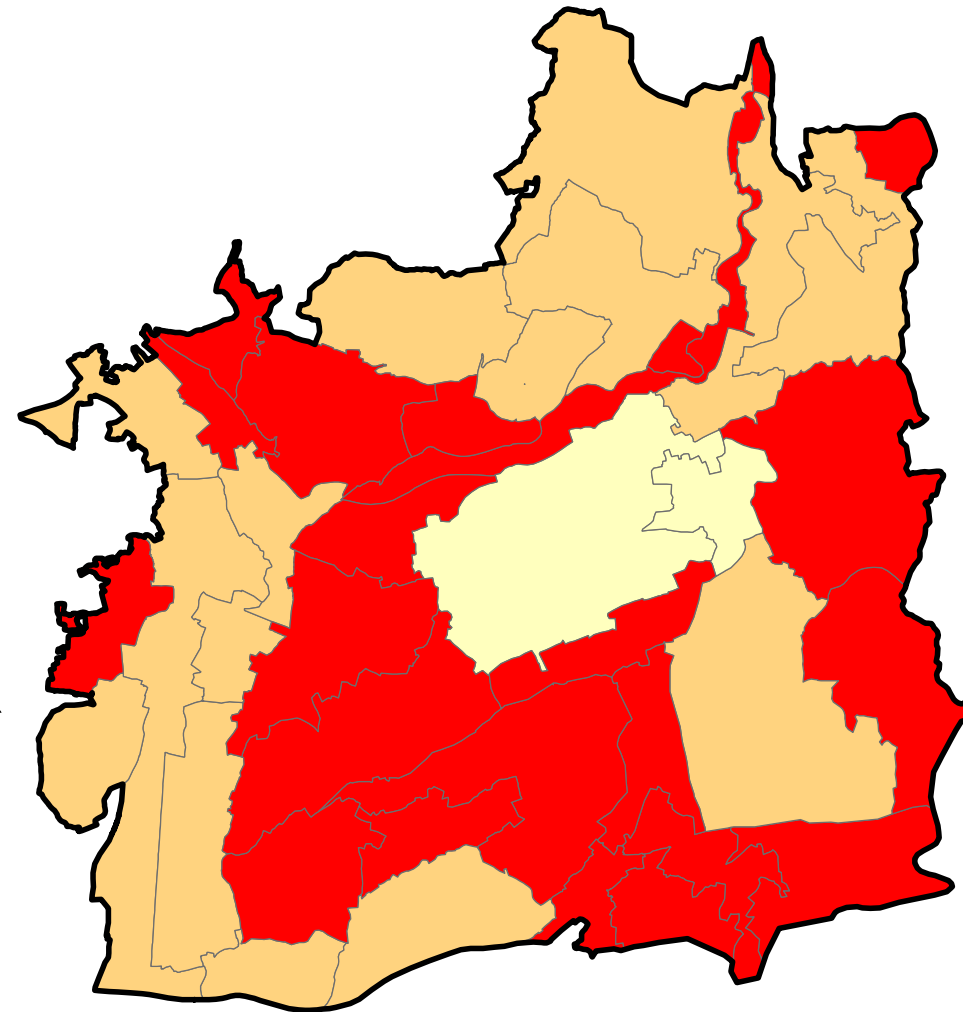
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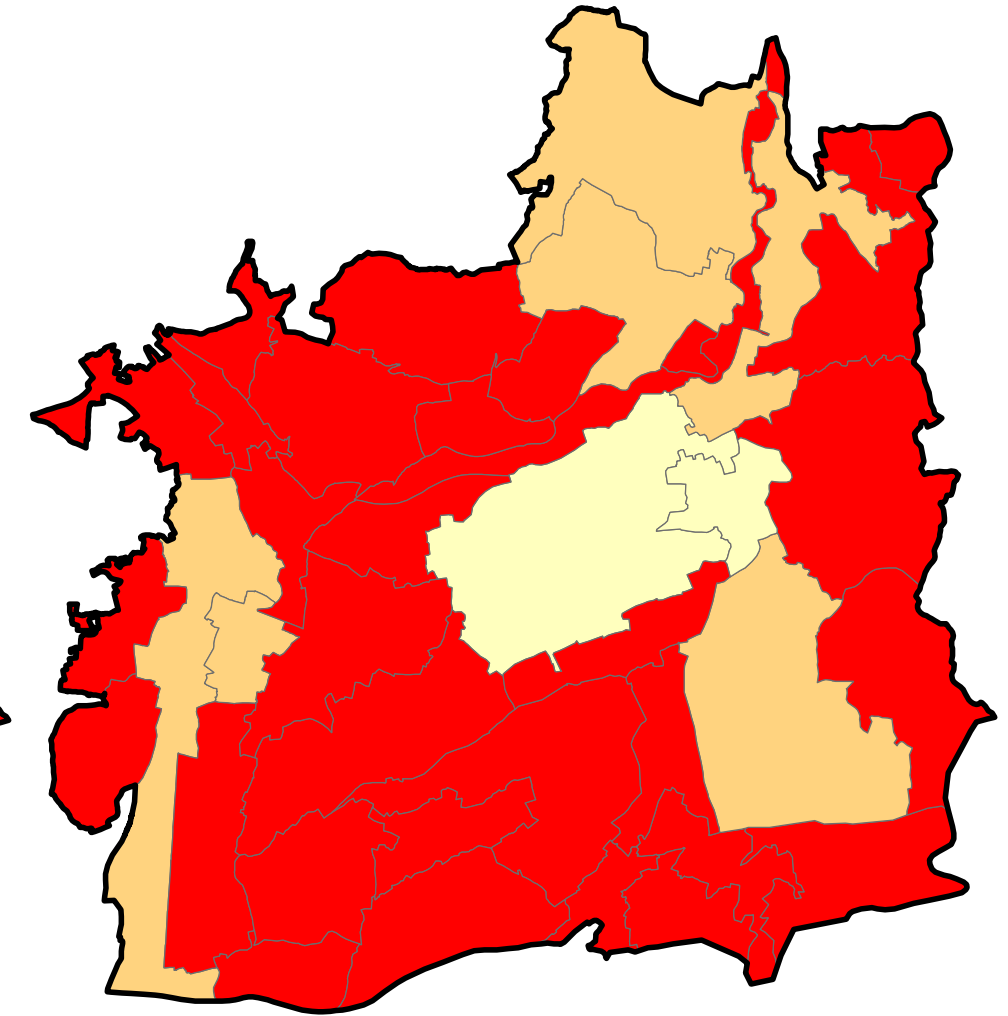
Sensitivity to Small-Scale Urban Development






Sensitivity to Substantial Urban Development



Sensitivity to Very Large-Scale Urban Development



Definition of Sensitivity Values

-  High Sensitivity - Area unlikely to be able to accommodate the particular type of change without extensive degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to address potential landscape / environmental issues.
-  Moderate Sensitivity - Area may be able to accommodate the particular type of change with some degradation of character and value, but mitigation measures would be required to address potential landscape / environmental issues.
-  Low Sensitivity - Area should be able to accommodate the particular type of change with only very limited, if any, degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures should be able to address all potential landscape / environmental issues.

Definition of Development Types

Very large-scale urban development comprising a mixture of residential, commercial etc with transport and other necessary service elements. In terms of scale, these would broadly equate to a Harlow District. These very large areas could be accommodated as urban expansions or new stand-alone settlements.

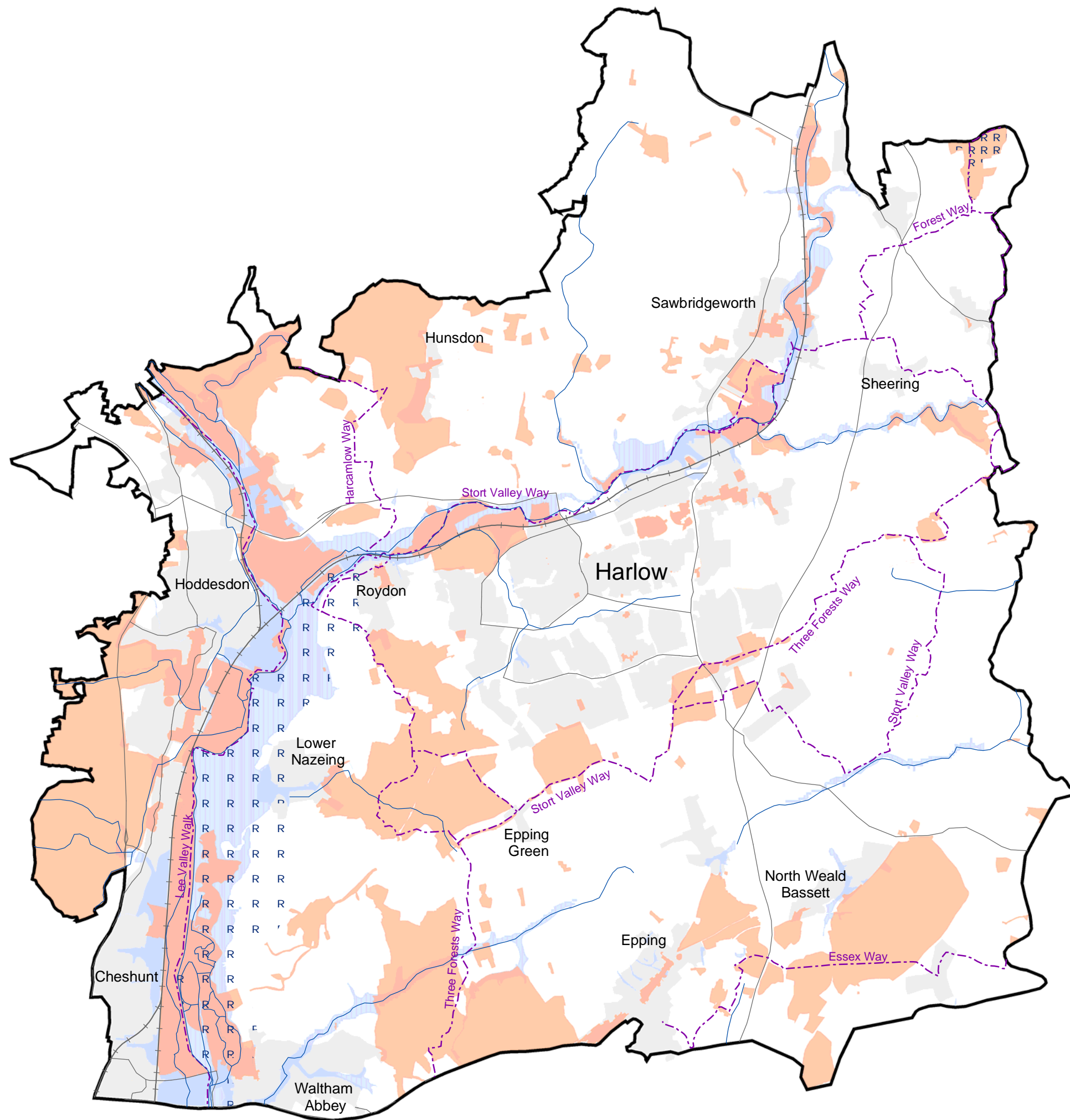
Substantial urban developments comprising a mixture of residential, commercial etc with transport and other necessary infrastructure. In terms of scale, these would broadly equate to a Harlow Neighbourhood. These areas would most likely be accommodated as urban expansions but may be small stand-alone settlements.

Small-scale urban developments of c.50 to 100 houses. These small blocks of development would almost certainly be urban expansions attached to existing settlements.

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These maps are intended to be only an indicative tool for highlighting broad variations in landscape sensitivity to the defined scales/types of developments between broad landscape character areas. They are strategic in nature, and should not be considered as absolute constraints on development. More detailed analysis of the landscape sensitivity of character areas within the fringes of Harlow is provided in Volume 2 of the study.



Environmental constraints shown on this map do not necessarily imply absolute constraints for development. This map is intended to highlight the major areas of environmental sensitivity that may require specific stringent conditions/mitigation measures to be met for development to be acceptable in landscape/environmental terms. In some site-specific cases, more detailed evaluation may demonstrate that particular types/scales of development are incompatible with environmental objectives.

- Key**
- Areas of Nature Conservation, Historic Environment and Landscape Value (Statutory & Non-Statutory Designations)
 - Flood Risk Areas
 - Major Areas Managed for Recreation
 - Urban Areas
 - Recreational Paths
 - Major Rivers
 - Major Roads
 - Railway Line
 - Study Area

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Figure 4.1

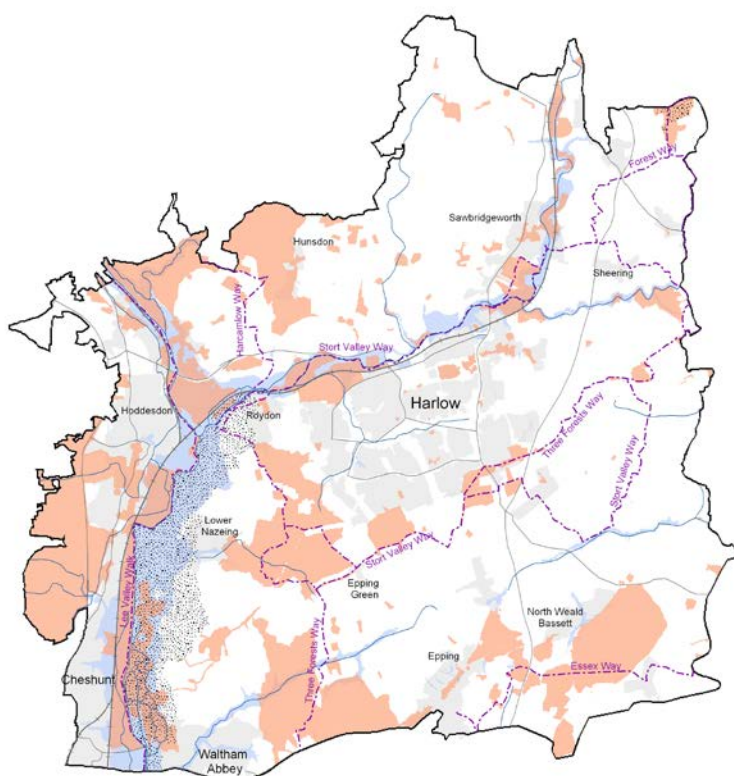
Major Environmental Constraints



Harlow District Council and Partners

HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT STUDY

Volume 2 : Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes



Final Report

February 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

Harlow District Council and Partners

**HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE
& ENVIRONMENT STUDY**

Volume 2 : Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes

Final Report

February 2005

Approved By: **Dominic Watkins**
Signed:

Position: **Associate Technical Director**

Date: **February 2005**

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

11094601R PLA_Vol2_DW_09-04

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PREFACE

Chris Blandford Associates were commissioned in January 2004 by a Steering Group of key stakeholders to undertake the ***Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study*** to provide a key evidence base for informing input to the review of Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). The Harlow Area, which is identified by ODPM as a priority area for growth within the designated London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area, comprises the entire administrative area of Harlow District Council and part of Epping Forest District within Essex, and includes part of East Hertfordshire District within Hertfordshire. The Study is one of a number being undertaken in the Harlow Area funded by the ODPM from the Government's Growth Areas fund.

The key ***aim*** of the Study set by the Steering Group's brief is to "*identify the constraints on and opportunities for growth in the areas in and around Harlow, to inform the location and shape of future developments*" and to provide "*robust arguments for and against development in environmentally sensitive areas in order to inform RPG when strategic decisions are to be made on the location of future growth around Harlow and its possible future extensions*".

Specific ***objectives*** of the Study contained in the brief include:

- to identify and draw together a consistent baseline of landscape and environmental information based on existing data, supplemented by new additional information where necessary;
- to define and record the landscape and environmental information on a GIS;
- to identify and assess Sir Frederick Gibberd's approach to landscape in his original masterplan for Harlow and determine if this is appropriate for future growth of the town;
- to prepare a Landscape Framework to inform possible urban extensions around Harlow.

The main ***outputs*** of the Study include:

- Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of Harlow Area (Volume 1)
- Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes (Volume 2)
- Framework for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area (Volume 3)
- The Harlow Area Geographical Information Library (Digital Data Output)

The opinions and conclusions set out in the Study reports are entirely those of the consultants, and do not necessarily reflect the formal views of the Steering Group. The reports are made available solely for information purposes and have the status of background technical documents.

The ***Steering Group***, chaired by Harlow District Council, comprised:

- Dianne Cooper (Forward Planning & Regeneration Planning Manager, Harlow District Council)
- Vernon Herbert (Programme Director, Harlow District Council)
- Martin Wakelin (Landscape & Ecology Manager, Essex County Council)
- Ian White (Planning Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Chris Neilan (Landscape Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Simon Odell (Head of Landscape, Hertfordshire County Council)
- Simon Andrews (East Hertfordshire District Council)
- Catherine Cairns (Senior Countryside Officer, Countryside Agency)
- Dearbhla Lawson (Planner, Government Office East)

Overview of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study Outputs

STRATEGIC SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF HARLOW AREA (Volume 1)

Purpose: provides a strategic understanding of variations in landscape character/environmental features and sensitivity to change across the Harlow Area as a whole.

Use: a broad-based strategic input to evaluation of the major constraints and opportunities for development as a guide to the overall direction of growth.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF HARLOW'S FRINGES (Volume 2)

Purpose: develops a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of the town that are desirable to safeguard.

Use: to guide evaluation of the location and shape of future development options for urban expansion around the fringes of Harlow.

FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES IN THE HARLOW AREA (Volume 3)

Purpose: develops an over-arching strategic vision for the future and establishes landscape planning/management principles.

Use: framework for developing an integrated approach to landscape protection, 'green infrastructure' improvements and urban development.

THE HARLOW AREA GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION LIBRARY (Digital Data Output)

Purpose: a consistent/up to date GIS-based digital 'library'/database of landscape and environmental baseline data.

Use: spatial planning tool for use by all stakeholder partners.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Purpose of Report

- 1.1.1 This report sets out a *Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes*, and is Volume 2 of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study. The mapping contained in this report is available within the *Harlow Area Geographical Information Library* developed specifically for this Study.
- 1.1.2 The main purpose of the report is to develop a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of the town that are desirable to safeguard. Its main use is to guide evaluation of the location and shape of future development options for urban expansion around the fringes of Harlow. The mapping of landscape/environmental features will also provide a useful starting point for the definition of existing and potential 'green infrastructure' provision within specific locations for development.
- 1.1.3 This report should be read alongside Volume 1 *Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of the Harlow Area*, which sets the context for this report in terms of the wider landscape and environmental constraints and opportunities for growth in the Harlow Area as a whole. Together, Volumes 1 and 2 of the Study fulfil the following specific Study objectives contained in the brief:
- to identify and draw together a consistent baseline of landscape and environmental information for the Study Area based on existing data, supplemented by new additional information where necessary;
 - to define and record the landscape and environmental information on a GIS.

Study Area

- 1.1.4 For the purposes of this report, 'Northern', 'Eastern', 'Southern' and 'Western' fringes around the town of Harlow have been defined as shown on Figure 1.1.

1.2 Approach

1.2.1 For each of the four Fringes in turn, Sections 2.0 - 5.0 describe and map the following information:

- ***Overview*** – a brief description of the landscape within the Fringe;
- ***Visual Character*** - analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute to the overall character of the landscape within the Fringe;
- ***Historic Landscape*** - analysis of historic patterns of land use and settlement and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the Fringe;
- ***Designated Environmental Constraints*** - analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within the Fringe related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains. The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical or ‘moderate’) status of individual environmental designations;
- ***Sensitive Environmental/Landscape Features*** - drawing on the above analysis, a summary of the key features that are considered desirable to safeguard;
- ***Key Opportunities and Constraints to Growth*** - a summary of the main landscape and environmental issues associated with conservation and development within the Fringe.

2.0 NORTHERN FRINGE

2.0 NORTHERN FRINGE

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The Northern Fringe runs east-west from approximately the southern/western edge of Sawbridgeworth to just west of Eastwick. The area encompasses parts of the following Landscape Character Areas:

10. Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands (SHLCA 81)

11. Hunsdon Plateau (SHLCA 83)

12. River Stort (SHLCA 82)

13. High Wych Slopes (SHLCA 84)

15. Little Hallingbury Ridges & Slopes (ELCA C2)

18. Harlow Major Urban Area (ELCA G1).

2.1.2 The Stort Valley occupies the southern part of the fringe area, and is characterised by a narrow flat floodplain. The floodplain, as well as being a potential constraint in its own right, has many surviving areas of early historic fields and numerous significant nature conservation designations. This valley also currently acts as the landscape edge of Harlow, although areas of industrial development have begun to change the visual character of the area and degrade this 'edge' role. The development of this area has often been accompanied by the creation of woodland screening and this, combined with other scrub and woodland, restricts visibility along the valley floor. The river corridor is also accessible on foot along the Stort Valley Way, and by boat along the navigation.

2.1.3 To the north of the Stort Valley lie the rising ridges and slopes around Gilston and High Wych. These undulating landforms and minor valleys form an attractive rural environment that contains a number of areas of historic and nature conservation interest, e.g. Gilston Park and its neighbouring woodlands. Gilston Park is currently being considered for inclusion on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The landform of the area is an important visual component in the wider landscape. The valleys and ridges also restrict and create both long-distance and short views out of and within the area.

2.2 Visual Character

2.2.1 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute to the overall character of the landscape within the Northern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 2.1, and described in summary below:

- There is a soft green urban edge, which dominates the boundary between Harlow and its surrounding countryside.
- Hard exposed urban edge occurs infrequently along the eastern extent of Harlow, situated between long stretches of soft urban edges.
- Most urban greenspace is adjacent to schools indicating that it is probably playing fields or sports grounds.
- The Town Park golf course is found to the southwest of Temple Fields and Harlow Sport centre lies adjacent to the A1019.
- There are four urban gateways within the Northern Fringe which lie on A roads.
- There are three major visual detractors (factory chimneys) within Temple Fields commercial and industrial complex.
- The electricity pylons crossing the countryside to the northwest of the Northern Fringe also form visual detractors. These are found on the rising ground peaking at an elevation of approximately 75m ODN.
- There are five main roads (A1184, B183, A414, A1169 and A1019) recognised as key traffic routes within the Northern Fringe. These lie in an approximate north-south, east-west grid format and join at roundabouts.
- There are several key pedestrian routes, transecting the countryside to the north, following field boundaries and other linear features.
- Several footpaths cross the River Stort, although the railway acts as a barrier to connectivity with the footpath network in the urban area.
- Several key long distance views have been identified, mainly located on higher ground surrounding the town. They are located on footpaths or roads around the area.
- The key short distance views are located around the urban edge, within 1 km of Harlow.

2.3 Historic Landscape

2.3.1 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and settlement and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the Northern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 2.2, and described in summary below:

Field Pattern/Land use

- The majority of the Northern Fringe is comprised of historic fields with boundary loss, which are a mixture of former pre 18th century fields and former 18th-19th century enclosed fields.
- The pre-18th century fields are predominantly located north of Harlow, but there are small fields in the southeastern corner of the Northern Fringe. The majority of field boundaries have been retained.
- The largest former area of 18th-19th century enclosure that has undergone boundary loss is in the parish of Gilston. Other small areas are scattered around the northern and western extents of the Northern Fringe.
- One area of former 18th- 19th century enclosure at Hollingson Meads has undergone mineral extraction.
- There are several areas of modern post 1950 fields within the Northern Fringe, which occur in areas with gently sloping topography.
- There are five historic parks and gardens within the Northern Fringe. The largest is Gilston Park (currently not registered) in the west, which is bounded by two roads.
- Pishiobury Park, enclosed by the present extent of Sawbridgeworth and the River Stort, is the other large historic park and garden in the northeast of the Northern Fringe.
- There are four areas of Ancient Woodland in the Northern Fringe - Home Wood, Golden Grove, Sayes Coppice (the wood within Gibberd Garden) and Markhall Wood.
- Markhall Wood, split into two areas by the A414 running north south through its centre, is located in the south of the area adjacent to Harlow.
- There are small areas of other woodland scattered throughout the Northern Fringe along field boundaries and within corners of fields.

Settlement/Communication

- Many of the 19th century and earlier roads have survived in the Northern Fringe as present day roads or tracks, such as the northern extent of the A1184 and a section of the A414.
- In the rural areas these have been retained as a network of lanes providing access to the isolated historic settlements and farms.
- There are a few short stretches of no longer surviving 19th century and earlier roads, scattered throughout the area.

- Historic settlements are scattered evenly across the Northern Fringe. Most are individual buildings or farms. Most of the isolated farms currently in the Northern Fringe correspond with historic settlements.
- Three areas of linear historic settlements have formed around junctions of 19th century and earlier surviving roads.

2.4 Designated Environmental Constraints

2.4.1 The analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within the Northern Fringe related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains, is illustrated on Figure 2.3, and described in summary below. The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical or ‘moderate’) status of individual environmental designations:

Critical Constraints

- There are 11 Scheduled Monuments within the Northern Fringe, which represent a range of features from different historic periods (including 3 moats and the site of a roman temple).
- There are clusters of Listed Buildings around the Northern Fringe. The largest cluster occurs within the Conservation Area of Old Harlow.
- Many of the Listed Buildings are adjacent to the 19th century and earlier road network that still exists. There are also a few listed buildings including mills located adjacent to the River Stort.
- There are no SSSIs within the Northern Fringe.
- The lower areas of the River Stort Valley and its larger tributaries such as Fiddler’s Brook and Pincey Brook are identified as flood risk areas.
- Parndon Mead is the only area of Registered Common Land within the Northern Fringe.
- There are four areas of Ancient Woodland in the Northern Fringe - Home Wood, Golden Grove, Sayes Coppice (the wood within Gibberd Garden), and Markhall Wood.
- There are six Conservation Areas within the Northern Fringe, five of which lie within the Harlow urban area (Mark Hall North, Town Park, Old Harlow, Harlowbury and Churchgate Street) and one in High Wych around its historic core.
- There are two Registered Parks and Gardens within the Northern Fringe - Pishiobury Park and Gibberd Garden.

Moderate Constraints

- There are 12 County Wildlife Sites within the Northern Fringe. Two of these are in the Ancient Woodland of Golden Grove and Sayes Coppice and five are associated with habitats found within the indicative floodplain.
- One County Wildlife Site is located within Pishiobury Park.
- The Green Wedges coincide with the open space, including school grounds and Town Park Golf Course within and surrounding Harlow.
- There is a linear green wedge surrounding the A1184 from Harlow Mill Station southwards and other areas of green wedge adjacent to the River Stort and Canon's Brook.

2.5 Sensitive Environmental/Landscape Features

2.5.1 Drawing on the above analysis, the key features that are considered desirable to safeguard within the Northern Fringe are illustrated on Figure 2.4, and described in summary below:

- Sensitive historic landscapes within the area include Pishiobury Park, Gibberd Garden and Gilston Park (which is being considered for the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). These historic landscapes are associated with pre 19th century historic fields within the River Stort corridor.
- Many areas of sensitive historic landscape are adjacent to historic communication routes.
- There are several areas of urban greenspace character within and adjoining the River Stort corridor to the north of Harlow. There are also substantial areas of urban greenspace character within the northern urban edge, for example, Harlow Town Park and the Sports Centre.
- The rising ridges and slopes to the north of Harlow, around Gilston and High Wych, are visually significant slopes which have an effect on the visual character of the area through their ability to restrict and control views between places.
- There are two sensitive recreational routes (Stort Valley Way and Towing Path), which follow the banks of the main rivers in the area.
- There are several sensitive woodland areas, which comprise small areas along field boundaries and within corners of fields, and larger areas of Ancient Woodland (Home Wood, Golden Grove, Sayes Coppice and Markhall Wood). Several of these areas are located in close proximity to the River Stort corridor.

- The higher ground of the slopes to the north of Harlow facilitates key long distance views of the town and the surrounding landscapes. These offer wide panoramic views in places.
- The River Stort's floodplain has many surviving areas of historic fields and numerous significant nature conservation designations.
- Important historic village cores, such as Eastwick - with some historic settlement cores designated as Conservation Areas, such as Churchgate Street within Harlow.

2.6 Key Opportunities and Constraints to Growth

- 2.6.1 The main landscape and environmental issues associated with conservation and development within the Northern Fringe are highlighted below.

The River Stort Valley Corridor and its Tributaries

- 2.6.2 The River Stort Valley is a significant landscape feature containing important habitats and a number of protected or notable species. The river valley is already widely used for recreation and river based leisure pursuits. Access in some areas is constrained, with roads and railways being significant barriers to north-south crossing of the valley. The river corridor landscape and its associated vegetation are important to the setting of Harlow and provide significant screening in the wider landscape for the existing riverside industrial development. The minor tributaries of the Stort are important elements of landscape pattern, and are relics of an ancient landscape that offer an ecological potential as reserves for wildlife and as corridors for species movement.

The Historic Parklands and Rural Lanes around Gilston Park and Eastwick

- 2.6.3 Gilston Park and the surrounding landscape have a rich heritage that is both visible and attractive. The historic trees and hedgerows are important for biodiversity and together with the network of rural lanes and public rights of way, are important elements of the landscape character of the area and provide a sharp contrast to the modern urban area of Harlow.

The Slopes and Ridges around High Wych

- 2.6.4 The visually significant slopes between Gilston and High Wych are part of the setting of Harlow and its visual containment to the north. Trees and hedgerows have been lost to changes in agricultural practice and Dutch Elm disease, resulting in an open landscape low in biodiversity.

Key Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Conserve and enhance wetlands habitats and woodland along the River Stort corridor and ensure that connections with tributaries are protected.
- Improve access and transport links for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians along the River Stort valley linking into adjacent green spaces and public rights of way networks and ensure that movement is not impeded or discouraged by new infrastructure.
- Improve facilities and access for waterborne users of the River Stort and their craft.
- Utilise Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), to seek landscape and ecological improvements in the area related to past mineral extraction.
- Conserve and strengthen the natural hydrology and vegetation of the minor river valleys, removing culverts where possible.
- Promote restoration and management of historic parkland landscapes including conservation of characteristic estate boundaries, replanting and perpetuation of specimen parkland trees and maintenance of distinctive estate buildings and cottages.
- Protect the character and setting of historical features and the historical parkland around Gilston Park and Eastwick and ensure ecological interest is sustained.
- Avoid intrusive development on the visually prominent open ridges and slopes around High Wych that are important as the countryside backdrop to the setting of Harlow.
- Following historic field patterns, plant new woodland blocks and hedgerows on the ridges and slopes around High Wych, connecting and enhancing existing features and linking potential areas for wildlife.
- Safeguard Gibberd's Garden including its landscape setting.
- Maintain a landscape buffer around historic settlements.

Key Opportunities and Constraints for Development

- Desirability of retaining the rural character of largely undeveloped/open countryside to the north of the Stort Valley, and avoiding an increased sense of urbanisation through erosion of individual identity of rural settlements and their dispersed pattern within the landscape.
- Scope for mitigating visual impact of development within landscape through careful siting of urban elements within undulating ridge and valley topography.
- Undeveloped, hidden and ‘green’ character of Stort Valley maintained by avoiding development within the floodplain.
- The potential major beneficial contribution of the Stort Valley as a new ‘green wedge’ providing a visual separation buffer between new and old urban areas.
- Scope for linking Stort Valley with new and existing green wedges/corridors to the north and south to provide a connected network of accessible open space and habitats for wildlife as part of a green infrastructure plan to deliver a new landscape framework of woodland blocks, hedgerows and hedgerow trees - with a strong focus on tributary river valleys.
- Scope for retention and linking of small nature conservation and historic environment sites and features such as woodland blocks and hedgerow field boundaries as significant elements of an overall green infrastructure plan for any urban extension.
- Desirability of maintaining and enhancing the character and fabric of sensitive historic landscapes within areas of designed parkland not currently recognised through formal designation.

3.0 EASTERN FRINGE

3.0 EASTERN FRINGE

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Eastern Fringe runs north-south from approximately Churchgate Street to Junction 7 of the M11. The area encompasses parts of the following Landscape Character Areas:

- 18. Harlow Major Urban Area (ELCA G1)
- 19. Matching Plateau (ELCA B1)
- 20. Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge (ELCA B1, C3, G1)
- 21. North Weald Ridges and Valleys (ELCA B1).

3.1.2 At its simplest the Eastern Fringe can be viewed as occupying a pocket of land defined by the urban edges of Harlow and the M11. The fringe area retains few areas of intact historic landscape, although the broad structure and grain of the landscape reflects earlier patterns of land use and enclosure. Key elements of historic interest include the surviving areas of Ancient Woodland, which also have considerable nature conservation value. Another feature of note is the scheduled Tumuli (prehistoric barrow) group south of Old Harlow. The presence of this group and other identified archaeological remains in the area, including a rare Neolithic Cursus, would indicate that this area has a high potential to contain further archaeological deposits.

3.1.3 One of the key characteristic landscape features of the Eastern Fringe is the slight ridge towards the east of the fringe area that broadly runs from the south of Harlow (see Southern Fringe) up towards the Stort Valley. This ridge edge plays an important role in the wider landscape as it acts as a visual screen between Harlow and the surrounding landscape character areas to the east and south-east.

3.2 Visual Character

3.2.1 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute to the overall character of the landscape within the Eastern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 3.1, and described in summary below:

- The majority of the Eastern Fringe is surrounded by soft green urban edge, which alternates in parts with hard exposed urban edge.

- The longest extents of hard exposed urban edge are located at the northern and southern extents of the fringe and the edge around Latton Bush is extensively hard and exposed.
- The majority of the urban greenspace is at the urban edge, which comprises school playing fields, sports grounds and open commons.
- There are three urban gateways in the Eastern Fringe, which mark the transition from surrounding countryside to urban area.
- There are two key visual detractors within the fringe; one (a water tower) east of Church Langley near the M11, the other, adjacent to the A414 the southeast edge of Temple Fields.
- The key pedestrian routes lie in a band running predominantly north south from approximately Churchgate Street through Church Langley to north of Hastingwood. All the key routes interlink following footpaths and tracks crossing the countryside.
- The key traffic routes in the area follow the main roads in the area including the M11, A1025, A414, B183, Foster Street and Green Lane.
- There are no junctions connecting the M11 with any of the other key traffic routes within the Eastern Fringe.
- There is one significant key long distance view from Harlow Common looking northwest across Potter Street at a height of approximately 95m ODN.
- There are several key short distance views within the eastern fringe, which are mainly situated on key pedestrian routes or along the Forest Way. To the south of the fringe, views across and of Harlow and Latton Commons are particularly open and significant.

3.3 Historic Landscape

- 3.3.1 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and settlement and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the Eastern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 3.2, and described in summary below:

Field Pattern/Landuse

- Latton Common and Harlow Common together form the main area of Common Land in the Eastern Fringe. There are also small areas of common land close to Shonks Farm, to the east of the M11.
- There are no past extents of common land within the Eastern Fringe.
- There is a predominant band of pre 18th century fields (Churchgate Street to Thresher's Bush) a cluster surrounding Hastingwood.

- Many of these fields are located in close proximity to historic settlements.
- A large proportion of the Eastern Fringe is covered by former 18th century historic fields with boundary loss.
- Three small areas of historic fields with boundary loss (surrounding Harlow Park woodland) have been identified as former areas of 18th-19th century enclosure. They are located in close proximity to areas of historic settlement.
- There are also a few small areas that have been identified as 18th-19th century enclosures close to Harlow Park in the southern half of the Eastern Fringe.
- The majority of modern fields post 1950 are located around the urban edge of Harlow, in the northern half of the Eastern Fringe. The largest extent lies to the north of Franklins Farm, east of Churchgate Street.
- There are six main areas of Ancient Woodland - Mark Bushes, Latton Park, Harlow Park, Markhall Wood, Brenthall Wood and Barnsley Wood, which are all located in the west of the Eastern Fringe.
- Small areas of other woodland are scattered throughout the Eastern Fringe.
- There are no Historic Parks and Gardens within the Eastern Fringe.
- There are no areas of mineral extraction within the area.

Settlement/Communication

- A lot of the 19th century and earlier road network still survives as present day roads.
- The roads tend to pass in close proximity to the historic settlements identified.
- There are a few sections of 19th century and earlier roads that no longer survive in the Eastern Fringe. They are however often currently used as footpaths or bridleways. The main loss of these roads occurs where they are intersected by the M11.
- All the roads that no longer survive are outside the urban area.
- Historic settlements are scattered throughout the Eastern Fringe, the majority of which are located on 19th century and earlier roads.
- Seven of the linear historic settlements are situated on nodal points of key road junctions.

3.4 Designated Environmental Constraints

- 3.4.1 The analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within the Eastern Fringe related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains, is illustrated on Figure 3.3, and described in summary below.

The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical or ‘moderate’) status of individual environmental designations:

Critical Constraints

- There are three Scheduled Monuments in the Eastern Fringe - Wynters Armouries at Wynters Farm, a Tumulus west of Churchgate Street and a Chapel east of Temple Fields industrial and commercial complex.
- Listed Buildings are distributed throughout the Eastern Fringe. They increase in concentration in Harlow with the greatest concentration lying in the Conservation Area of Churchgate Street and the historic core of Harlow. The majority of listed buildings outside the urban areas are usually located along the 19th century and earlier roads.
- There are no SSSIs within the Eastern Fringe.
- Latton Common and Harlow Common are the main areas of Registered Common Land in the Eastern Fringe. In addition, there are also small areas of Common Land following a track close to Mill House Farm and Shonks Farm.
- There are six main areas of Ancient Woodland - Mark Bushes, Latton Park, Harlow Park, Markhall Wood, Brenthall Wood and Barnsley Wood, which are all located in the west of the Eastern Fringe in close proximity to the edge of Harlow.
- There are three small Conservation Areas located in the northwest of the Eastern Fringe, which are all predominantly linear in shape reflecting the route of the surviving 19th century and earlier road network.

Moderate Constraints

- There are seven County Wildlife Sites in the Eastern Fringe.
- The largest two are located on the Common Land at Harlow Common, and Latton Common, Mark Bushes and Latton Park.
- There is a correspondence between Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife sites with Mark Bushes, Latton Park, Markhall Wood, Brenthall Wood, Harlow Park and Barnsley Wood all designated as both of the above.
- A large Green Wedge surrounds the eastern edge of Harlow. It is mainly comprised of school playing fields in addition to Markhall, Brenthall and Barnsley Woods.
- Linear areas of green wedge form a corridor along the A414 and A1025 and also along the narrow road adjacent to New Hall Farm.

3.5 Sensitive Environmental/Landscape Features

3.5.1 Drawing on the above analysis, the key features that are considered desirable to safeguard within the Eastern Fringe are illustrated on Figure 3.4, and described in summary below:

- Sensitive historic landscape within the area encompasses the band of pre 19th century fields (located between Churchgate Street and Threshers Bush) and an area to the south of Latton Bush and Potter Street which includes a series of linear Commons and a combination of Ancient Woodland blocks and small areas of 18th-19th century enclosure.
- There are several areas of urban greenspace character, close to the urban edge within the Eastern Fringe, which contribute to the landscape character of the area.
- The visually significant slope running to the east of the urban edge, limits views into the town from areas of countryside to the east of the M11.
- Two sensitive recreational routes cross the area, providing access to Harlow and the surrounding countryside. The Forest Way route runs from Housham Tye through Latton Bush.
- There are several sensitive Woodland areas, which encompass areas of Ancient woodland, which are also designated as County Wildlife Sites. For example, Harlow Park, Mark Bushes and Latton Park woodland are all areas of Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Sites. These areas of woodland are located close to the urban edge.
- Conservation Areas (areas of special local or regional architectural or historic interest and character) within the Eastern Fringe are often associated with clusters of Listed Buildings, such as within Churchgate Street, Harlow.

3.6 Key Opportunities and Constraints to Growth

3.6.1 The main landscape and environmental issues associated with conservation and development within the Eastern Fringe are highlighted below.

The Woodland, Common Land and Footpaths of the Broad Ridge

3.6.2 The ridge top area is an extension of the common land and areas of woodland to the south of Harlow and although less extensive, represents the continuation of an important landscape. The woodland provides a backdrop to the town and emphasises the topographical containment of the ridge. The Common Land provides opportunities for open vistas and views over the town and surrounding countryside. The ridge top coincides with the Forest

Way and footpaths connect with the edge of Harlow. Both the woodland and the Common Land are important for local biodiversity, although habitats are fragmented.

Connections with Harlow Town and the ‘Green Wedges’

- 3.6.3 The edge of settlement along the Eastern Fringe is generally well served by footpaths and significant ‘green wedges’ connecting with the countryside. The green wedges have been extended through recent development ensuring a continuity of green corridors.

The Historic Open Farmland

- 3.6.4 The farmland around the Eastern Fringe, whilst of historic interest, has been intensively farmed since the 1950’s, resulting in significant amounts of hedgerow removals and consequent loss of trees and decline in biodiversity.

Historic Settlements and New Neighbourhoods

- 3.6.5 The historic settlements of Old Harlow and Churchgate Street and their settings are important features of the area. The new development at Newhall is a distinct new neighbourhood which will require its own setting and landscape framework.

Key Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Conserve and enhance the sensitive woodlands and common land of the broad ridge.
- Use the existing footpath network of the ridge as a focus for new woodland and grassland to ‘bridge the gap’ in these important habitats and to reinforce the visual containment of the ridge in the setting of Harlow.
- Improve connections between the green wedges of Harlow and the footpath network and accessible open spaces of the countryside.
- Restore the landscape character and biological diversity of the arable farmland through replanting hedgerows and trees along historic field boundaries.
- Protect the character of the historic settlements having regard for their landscape setting and ensure new development is placed in an appropriate landscape setting for its form and design.
- Protect the settings of scheduled monuments/listed buildings and seek to place under appropriate management.

Key Opportunities and Constraints for Development

- The countryside between the town and the M11 retains few areas of intact historic landscape, and the landscape character does not exhibit a strong and distinctive sense of place – the M11 corridor provides an obvious ‘edge’ to urban expansion as experienced from landscapes to the east
- Very limited sites/features of nature conservation and historic landscape value.
- Desirability of maintaining the historic character of Old Harlow and avoiding urbanisation of its landscape setting and further erosion of its identity as a distinct settlement.
- Scope for further extending green wedges between the existing urban edge of Harlow and new neighbourhoods set in the wider countryside to ensure a continuity of green corridors for access and wildlife.
- Scope for softening hard, developed edge of existing/extended urban areas through a green infrastructure plan to deliver new landscape framework of woodland blocks, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

4.0 SOUTHERN FRINGE

4.0 SOUTHERN FRINGE

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Southern Fringe runs east-west from approximately Hastingwood to Epping Green. The area encompasses parts of the following Landscape Character Area:

- 17. Roydon & Nazeing Plateau (ELCA C3)
- 18 Harlow Major Urban Area (ELCA G1)
- 20. Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge (ELCA B1, C3, G1)
- 21. North Weald Ridges and Valleys (ELCA B1)
- 25. Epping Ridges and Valleys (ELCA C3)
- 26. Thornwood Common Ridges and Valleys (ELCA D1).

4.1.2 The Southern Fringe is particularly characterised by the broad ridge landform that forms part of the distinctive southern skyline of Harlow, and also of the character areas to the south. The ridge visually separates the urban mass of Harlow from the open countryside to the south, and this visual separation formed a key element of the original Gibberd layout for Harlow. This ridge provides distinctive long-distance views over Harlow and the surrounding area.

4.1.3 In addition to the distinctive topography of the Southern Fringe, this area is also notable for concentrations of sensitive historic landscapes and Ancient Woodlands. These reflect relatively stable patterns of land-use in the area. Some of the woodlands have also been designated as nationally significant SSSIs, reflecting their ecological significance. The area also contains a number of important open green spaces, many of which are historic commons.

4.2 Visual Character

4.2.1 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute to the overall character of the landscape within the Southern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 4.1, and described in summary below:

- There are only five stretches of soft green urban edge in the Southern Fringe, the majority of which are located in the west.

- Stretches of hard exposed urban edge border large areas within the Southern Fringe. They are extensive at Latton Bush and Stewards, whilst there is only a small extent of hard exposed urban edge at Kingsmoor.
- There are several areas of urban greenspace in the Southern Fringe, which are all broadly linear in shape.
- They vary considerably in size with the smallest two patches lying in between Latton Bush and Stewards, adjacent to a school.
- The largest areas of open space are Latton Common and the adjoining Harlow Common.
- There are six urban gateways in the Southern Fringe, which mark the transition between the urban area and surrounding countryside (Latton Bush on the A414/A1169 roundabout, Stewards-Rye Hill Road and Richmonds Farm).
- There are two visual detractors within the Southern Fringe, one of which is the water tower close to Rye Hill Reservoir.
- There is an interconnecting network of key traffic routes in the Southern Fringe including the A414 and the A1169. Junction 7 of the M11 is also located in the east of the Southern Fringe providing a key traffic route via the A414 to Harlow.
- There is a good network of pedestrian routes predominantly following field boundaries, which link with other routes to form a well-connected access network – the Forest Way runs northeast southwest across the Southern Fringe, the Stort Valley Way runs broadly east-west entering the Southern Fringe south of Paris Hall Farm, joining Forest Way at Mark Bushes, and the Three Forests Way is in the southwest corner forming a junction with Forest Way at the edge of Epping Green.
- There are several key long distance views of Harlow from the higher ridge to the south of the town.
- There is also a key long distance view at Harlow Common looking northwest into Harlow from the Forest Way.
- All the key long distance views are identified on footpaths or roads within the area. Several key long distance views of countryside to the south can also be gained from the ridge.
- There are also several key short distance views within the Southern Fringe, several of which denote views across and within areas of common such as Latton and at Severs Green.

4.3 Historic Landscape

- 4.3.1 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and settlement and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the Southern Fringe is illustrated on Figure 4.2, and described in summary below:

Field Pattern/Land Use

- There are seven areas of Common Land in the Southern Fringe, the largest of which is at Latton Common and Harlow Common.
- There is another area of Registered Common Land bounded on all sides by roads in the south, just to the north of Thornwood Common. A strip of Common Land forms a corridor around Rye Hill Road.
- Broadley Common also lies on the western boundary of the Southern Fringe.
- There are also three areas within the Southern Fringe that are identified as the past extent of Common Land - west of Mark Bushes extending south to Latton Priory Farm and west to Rye Hill Reservoir.
- To the south of the Fringe, historic fields with boundary loss are predominantly comprised of former pre 18th century fields. Closer to the urban edge, there is a mixture of former Common Land, pre 18th century fields with boundary loss and patches of former 18th – 19th century enclosure.
- There are two large areas of post 1950 modern fields in the Southern Fringe. One forms a corridor around the M11 southwards from junction 7; the other smaller area is between Horseshoe Farm and the remains of Latton Priory.
- There are five main areas of Ancient Woodland within the Southern Fringe - Harlow Park, Parndon Wood, Risden Wood (adjoining Hospital Wood), Burnett's Wood and a small area in Stewards by a school.
- Burnett's Wood and the wood in Stewards are the smallest areas of Ancient Woodland and are both within the urban area. The other areas of Ancient Woodland are all on the edge of Harlow bounded on most sides by agricultural land.
- There is one large area of other woodland around Mark Bushes and Latton Park.

Settlement/Communication

- The majority of the 19th century and earlier roads still survive in the Southern Fringe.

- Most of them have also retained their names such as Epping Road, London Road, Rye Hill Road and Canes Lane, and generally follow the natural topography and contours of the land, especially when running east-west.
- The 19th century and earlier roads, which have been lost within Harlow, are still used as footpaths and tracks in most cases.
- There are six large areas of historic settlement depicting the historic cores of settlements such as Epping Green, Latton Bush, Stewards and Parndon and there is also a much smaller historic settlement at Rye Hill.
- All of the historic settlements are linear in shape following the 19th century and earlier road network and many are located on key road junctions signifying nodal points.
- The other small, dispersed historic settlements are generally farms surrounded by agricultural land, which are also found adjacent to the 19th century and earlier road network providing a form of communication.

4.4 Designated Environmental Constraints

- 4.4.1 The analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within the Southern Fringe related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains, is illustrated on Figure 4.3, and described in summary below. The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical or ‘moderate’) status of individual environmental designations:

Critical Constraints

- There are two Scheduled Monuments at the centre of the Southern Fringe, one of which is the Moat close to Rye Hill.
- The other Scheduled Monument is the remains of the Augustinian Latton Priory and Moat at the southern extent of the site. Both are located on high ground (c.100m ODN) and command views to the south, down valleys.
- There is a large distribution of Listed Buildings in the Southern Fringe, which tend to cluster around the historic cores of settlements or at farms.
- There are two SSSIs that encompass the ancient woodlands at Ridsen’s Wood and Hospital Wood/Parndon Wood. Both of these are also County Wildlife Sites which are located on the relatively steep valley sides at the edge of Kingsmoor.
- Parndon Brook at the northwest corner of the Southern Fringe and a small stream in the southeast corner close to Delved Bridge are identified as flood risk areas.

- Registered Common Land is a relatively dominant form of open space within the Southern Fringe, with seven areas the largest of which is the strip comprising Latton Common and Harlow Common and smaller areas located within farmland to the south at Rye Hill road, Mill House/Shonks Farm, Thornwood Common, Skivetts Farm and Broadley Common. There are also small areas of common land following the track or drive on the opposite side of the M11 from Harlow Common past Mill House Farm to Shonks Farm.
- There are five main areas of Ancient Woodland within the Southern Fringe, Harlow Park, Parndon Wood, Ridsen Wood (and the adjoining Hospital Wood), Burnett's Wood and a small area in Stewards by a school.
- Burnett's Wood and the wood by the school are the smallest areas of Ancient Woodland and are both within the urban area. The other woods are all on the edge of Harlow bounded on most sides by agricultural land.
- Conservation Areas in the Southern Fringe include part of the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area to the west, and the Tye Green Conservation Area which is in the middle of Harlow and which contains a cluster of Listed Buildings. (Its shape reflects the 19th century and earlier roads that runs through the area).

Moderate Constraints

- There are 10 County Wildlife Sites within the Southern Fringe, several of which correspond with other designated areas.
- Ridsen's Wood and Hospital Wood and Parndon Wood, are also SSSIs and ancient woodland.
- All the common land within the Southern Fringe apart from Broadley Common and the area around Shonks Farm has also been designated County Wildlife Sites.
- The other County Wildlife Sites are areas of ancient woodland including Mark Bushes, Patten Park, Harlow Park and Burnett's Wood.
- The green wedges generally form a north-south east-west grid within Harlow.
- Many of the A roads are lined with green wedges forming a corridor effect.
- In the centre of the Southern Fringe, there is a wide band of green wedge running north-south along an area of urban greenspace.

4.5 Sensitive Environmental/Landscape Features

4.5.1 Drawing on the above analysis, the key features that are considered desirable to safeguard within the Southern Fringe are illustrated on Figure 4.4, and described in summary below:

- There are significant areas of sensitive historic landscape within the Southern Fringe - to the south of Latton Bush, Foster Street and Potter Street housing (surrounding Harlow Park Ancient Woodland) there is a cluster of Commons, surviving pre 18th century fields and 18th-19th century enclosed fields.
- A combination of Common Land, pre 18th century fields and several historic settlements surround Latton Priory Farm. This area is also bounded by London Road to the east and Rye Hill Road to the south, both of which are surviving 19th Century and earlier roads.
- To the south of Sumners housing, close to Jack's Hatch, a large area of Common Land is situated adjacent to several historic settlements and a cluster of pre 18th century fields. Several surviving 19th century and earlier roads also serve the area.
- Seventeen areas with urban greenspace character provide accessible areas for sport and recreation, whilst also contributing to the landscape character of the area.
- The ridge landform has visually significant slopes, and provides a number of distinctive key long distance views over Harlow and the surrounding area. The ridge also forms part of the distinctive skyline of Harlow. The ridge visually separates the urban mass of Harlow from the character areas to the south.
- There are three interconnecting sensitive recreational routes in the Southern Fringe - Forest Way, Stort Valley Way and Three Forest Way. These provide access for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the area.
- There are five sensitive woodland areas within the fringe, which are particularly significant elements within the local landscape. Several of these are defined as Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Sites, highlighting their importance as wildlife and nature conservation assets.

4.6 Key Opportunities and Constraints to Growth

4.6.1 The main landscape and environmental issues associated with conservation and development within the Southern Fringe are highlighted below.

The Woodland, Common Land and Footpaths on the Ridge

- 4.6.2 The ridge is rich in Common Land and areas of woodland. The woodland provides a backdrop to the town and emphasises the topographical containment of the ridge. The Common Land provides opportunities for open vistas and views over the town and surrounding countryside. The ridge is well served by public rights of way including two Trails (the Stort Valley Way and Forest Way), but in places poor management and connections inhibit access. Both the woodland and the Common Land are important for local biodiversity although existing habitats are fragmented with coverage in the middle section particularly poor.

Connections with Harlow Town and the 'Green Wedges'

- 4.6.3 The edge of settlement along the Southern Fringe is generally well served by footpaths and significant 'green wedges' connecting with the countryside, but it also suffers from suburbanisation and lack of landscape structure which discourage access. Access is impeded in some area by roads, physical barriers such as fences or gates, poor footpath connections and lack of interpretative information or signage.

The Open Farmland of the Uplands and Southern Slopes

- 4.6.4 The farmland on the slope south of the ridge, whilst of historic interest with good public access, has been intensively farmed since the 1950's resulting in significant removal of hedgerows and consequent loss of trees and decline in biodiversity.

Key Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Conserve and enhance the sensitive woodlands and common land of the broad ridge.
- Use the existing footpath network of the ridge as a focus for new woodland and grassland to 'bridge the gap' in these important habitats and to reinforce the visual containment of the ridge in the setting of Harlow.
- Enhance the landscape character of the rural urban interface to reinforce the sharp distinction between town and country and promote biodiversity.
- Improve connections between the green wedges of Harlow and the footpath network and accessible open spaces of the countryside.

- Restore the landscape character and biological diversity of the arable farmland on the uplands and southern slopes through replanting hedgerows and trees along historic field boundaries.
- Protect the ancient monuments and listed buildings, having regard for their settings and seek to place them under appropriate management.

Key Opportunities and Constraints for Development

- Desirability of maintaining the largely undeveloped/‘green’ character and well-defined edge/backdrop to Harlow’s townscape by avoiding development on the visually sensitive open ridge slopes and the distinctive ridge-top skyline as experienced from internal green wedges.
- Safeguard existing major areas of woodland/common land of nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value along the urban edge from development.
- Desirability of retaining the largely rural nature of the wider countryside as experienced from views south of the ridge, and avoiding an increased sense of urbanisation within the countryside gap between Harlow and Epping.
- Scope for softening hard, developed edge of existing/extended urban areas through green infrastructure plan to deliver new landscape framework of woodland blocks, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Potential of severance and amenity effects on key recreational routes such as the Stort Valley Way.

5.0 WESTERN FRINGE

5.0 WESTERN FRINGE

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The Western Fringe runs north-south from approximately just north of Roydon to Broadley Common. The area encompasses parts of the following Landscape Character Areas:

- 6. Rye Meads (SHLCA 80)
- 12. River Stort (SHLCA 82)
- 17. Roydon & Nazeing Plateau (ELCA C3)
- 18. Harlow Major Urban Area (ELCA G1).

- 5.1.2 The majority of the Western Fringe is situated within the historically significant and intricately grained landscape associated with Roydon and Nazeing. A considerable portion of the area has been designated as a Conservation Area reflecting its coherent and important historic character. The Conservation Area broadly corresponds with the area identified as a sensitive historic landscape. The landscape of the area, although inherently historic in terms of its fabric and grain, has been subject to 20th century alteration in the form of field boundary removal and glasshouse developments. Both of these changes have altered and degraded to some extent the historic landscape character of the area. The northern part of the Western Fringe includes the Stort River Valley (see Northern Fringe) with its highly sensitive concentrations of historic and nature conservation designations and the floodplain.

- 5.1.3 The Western Fringe straddles a shallow undulating north-south ridge. This ridge partially visually segregates Harlow from the surrounding landscape, although the undulating nature of the ridge does allow for some penetration of views into and out of the western edge of Harlow. The western urban edge of Harlow has a harsh character, and provides an incoherent and disjointed approach to the town from this direction.

5.2 Visual Character

- 5.2.1 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute to the overall character of the landscape within the Western Fringe is illustrated on Figure 5.1, and described in summary below:

- The majority of the urban edge in the Western Fringe is classified as soft green urban edge.

- The Town Park golf course lies to the southwest of Templefields.
- It is generally a continuous edge occasionally interspersed with sections of hard urban edge, the majority of which borders Pinnacles industrial and commercial area.
- There is a strip of urban greenspace running north south on the eastern boundary of the Western Fringe. The smaller areas of urban greenspace are associated with school playing fields.
- There is also a strip of urban greenspace creating a corridor effect around Parndon Brook.
- There are three urban gateways in the Western Fringe - the northern most urban gateway is on Roydon Road south of Barrows Farm where it forms a junction with the A1169, and another main urban gateway is on the B1133 where it enters Harlow by Parndon Brook.
- Two lines of pylons form the main visual detractors in the Western Fringe area - one line of pylons runs northwards from near Oldfield Spring to where it meets the other line of pylons at Netherhall Common, and the other runs east west to the Pinnacles.
- Another visual detractor is the large warehouse located within the southern part of the Pinnacles industrial and commercial area, by the roundabout on the A1169.
- There are three sensitive recreational routes in the Western Fringe - the Stort Valley Way crosses the area and the Three Forests Way runs northeast southwest between The Grove and at Roydon. Harcamlow Way also runs northeast southwest beside the river between Roydon and Stanstead Lodge.
- The key pedestrian routes are located in the rural areas of the Western Fringe, many of which follow field boundaries and contours.
- There is one key traffic route, B181 that runs into the Western Fringe from the northwest by Stanstead Bury Farm. This forms a junction with Roydon Road and then together with the A 1169 and the B1133 forms a circular route to the west of Harlow.
- There are 12 key long distance views within the Western Fringe, looking into Harlow and several key short distance views in the Western Fringe.
- All the key short distance views are on either sensitive recreational routes, key pedestrian routes or major traffic routes.

5.3 Historic Landscape

- 5.3.1 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and settlement and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the Western Fringe is illustrated on Figure 5.2, and described in summary below:

Field Pattern/Land Use

- There is a very small extent of Common Land at the southern extent of the Western Fringe.
- Three areas have been identified as past areas of Common Land (Broadley Common, Thorndon Common and Netherhall Common). Some areas of woodland are located in areas, which were once Common Land.
- In the south east of the area, the majority of the historic fields with boundary loss have been identified as former pre 18th century fields.
- There is a large expanse of pre-18th century fields in the north of the Western Fringe. They generally occur around the settlements such as Roydon, Roydon Hamlet and Broadley Common.
- There are four small areas of 18th –19th century enclosure within the Western Fringe.
- Only two areas of former 18th – 19th century enclosure are located within the Western Fringe.
- Modern fields post 1950 are scattered throughout the area and there are no large continuous areas of modern fields.
- There are three areas of Ancient Woodland within the Western Fringe, Totwellhill Bushes, Harold's Grove and Burnett's Wood.
- Totwellhill Bushes is a linear area of woodland on a steep slope, whilst Harold's Grove and Burnett's Wood are on roughly flat land. Harold's Grove is on the southern edge of the Pinnacles and Burnett's Wood is within Harlow.
- There are scattered other woodland blocks within the Western Fringe, which are present within the urban areas as well as the rural areas.
- Shaws and small woodland belts are also present in the centre of the Western Fringe and in the southwest corner of the area, lining footpaths and tracks.
- There is one Historic Park and Garden at Stanstead Bury in the northwest of the Western Fringe.
- There is a former historic park and garden in the north of the Western Fringe where Briggens Hotel is now located. Roydon Park is the other former historic park and garden in the western extent of the area.
- There is a large area in the northwest corner of the Western Fringe that has been identified as having been used for mineral extraction, and its pits are now used as lakes for water-based recreation activities.

Settlement/Communication

- The majority of the 19th century and earlier roads have survived especially in the rural areas linking historic settlements together.
- The 19th century and earlier roads that no longer survive have been built over with the development of the Pinnacles and the modern residential areas in Harlow. In the rural areas the loss of the 19th century and earlier roads coincide with areas where historic fields have undergone boundary loss.
- The historic settlements within the Western Fringe are situated along the 19th century and earlier road network.
- There are also linear settlements with historic cores such as Roydon, Broadley Common, Roydon Hamlet and Great Parndon.

5.4 Designated Environmental Constraints

- 5.4.1 The analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within the Western Fringe related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains, is illustrated on Figure 5.3, and described in summary below. The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical or ‘moderate’) status of individual environmental designations:

Critical Constraints

- There is a cluster of Scheduled Monuments around Halls Green Farm. This is situated in the middle of the Western Fringe to the west of Katherines.
- There are large concentrations of Listed Buildings within the Western Fringe, with a particularly large cluster in the historic core of Roydon lining the edges of the 19th century or earlier roads, and around Broadley Common at Tylers Cross. There are only a few listed buildings within Harlow.
- There is one SSSI in the Western Fringe at Hunsdon Mead, which lies within the indicative floodplain.
- The lower areas of the River Stort Valley are a flood risk area, along with a small area of the River Lee and Canons Brook running north south through the urban edges of Harlow.
- There is a small extent of Registered Common Land bordering the southern extent of the Western Fringe.

- There are three areas of Ancient Woodland within the Western Fringe - Totwellhill Bushes is a linear area of woodland on a steep slope whilst Harold's Grove and Burnett's Wood are on roughly flat land. Harold's Grove is on the southern edge of the Pinnacles and Burnett's Wood is within Harlow.
- There are two Conservation Areas in the Western Fringe.
- There is a small Conservation Area around the historic core of Roydon.
- There is also a very extensive Conservation Area encompassing a large rural area of the Western Fringe from Broadley Common northwards to the southern extent of Roydon.

Moderate constraints

- There are 10 County Wildlife Sites in the Western Fringe. The most extensive of which are within the SSSI and the floodplain areas.
- Three of the County Wildlife Sites are located in areas of Ancient Woodland.
- A County Wildlife Site also encompasses the strips of woodland by World's End, the woodland at Hall's Green Farm and the surrounding historic fields.
- There is a wide corridor of green wedge coinciding with the accessible open space adjacent to Canons Brook and Parndon Brook. This forms a boundary between Pinnacles and the residential areas to the east.
- There are also three strips of green wedge lying adjacent to the main roads that cross Harlow.

5.5 Sensitive Environmental/Landscape Features

5.5.1 Drawing on the above analysis, the key features that are considered desirable to safeguard within the Western Fringe are illustrated on Figure 5.4, and described in summary below:

- There is one large significant area of historically significant and intricate sensitive historic landscape located to the south of Roydon and stretching to Broadley Common, Tylers Cross and Roydon Hamlet. This area encompasses the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area, several interconnecting patches of pre 18th century fields and historic settlements. The area is also connected by a series of surviving 19th century and earlier roads.
- The substantial strip of urban greenspace running north south on the eastern boundary of the Western Fringe provides accessible open space for residents from surrounding

housing areas. Parndon Brook is also lined on the northern side by a strip of urban greenspace, which enhances the setting of the river corridor.

- The visually significant slope that encompasses the hilltop between Roydon and Katherines permits several key long distance views of the urban edge and over the town. This landform, limits views to a certain extent from the northwestern areas of the Western Fringe.
- The lower areas of the River Stort and River Stort Navigation river valley are a flood risk area, and encompass highly sensitive concentrations of historic and nature conservation designations within the floodplain.
- There are two sensitive recreational routes in the Western Fringe – the Stort Valley Way and Three Forests Way, which allow access to the area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There are several sensitive woodland areas within the Fringe. Three blocks are designated as Ancient Woodland (Totwellhill Bushes, Harold's Grove and Burnett's Wood), two of which are also County Wildlife Sites. These woodland blocks help to screen the urban edge, whilst also forming a key part of the landscape infrastructure for the area.

5.6 Key Opportunities and Constraints to Growth

- 5.6.1 The main landscape and environmental issues associated with conservation and development within the Western Fringe are highlighted below.

Historic Landscapes

- 5.6.2 A significant feature of the area is the Nazeing and South Roydon Rural Conservation Area and surrounding landscapes of historical interest. Historic landscape features are fragile and need careful management if they are to retain their historical interest. Interpretation is often difficult and the landscape often needs to be read in conjunction with built elements such as settlements or buildings and the pattern can often only be recognised from certain viewpoints.

Tributaries of the River Stort and Black Poplars

- 5.6.3 The minor tributaries of the Stort are important elements of landscape pattern and are relics of an ancient landscape that in some locations include nationally important stands of native black poplars. The ecology and natural drainage of these tributaries are in parts

compromised by culverts but nevertheless remain an important habitat for the black poplar and associated biodiversity.

The River Stort Valley Corridor

- 5.6.4 The Stort River Valley is a significant landscape feature containing important habitats and a number of protected or notable species. The river valley is already widely used for recreation and river based leisure pursuits. Access in some areas is constrained, with roads and railways being significant barriers to north-south crossing of the valley. The landscape of the river and its associated vegetation are important to the setting of Harlow and provide significant screening in the wider landscape for the existing riverside industrial development. The minor tributaries of the Stort are important elements of landscape pattern and are relics of an ancient landscape that offer an ecological potential as reserves for wildlife and as corridors for species movement.

Key Conservation and Enhancement Opportunities

- Promote restoration and management of the historic farmland landscapes in and around the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area. This should include conservation of characteristic field boundaries, replanting and perpetuation of veteran trees and historic hedgerows and maintenance of distinctive farm buildings and cottages.
- Conserve and strengthen the natural hydrology and vegetation of the minor river valleys, removing culverts where possible.
- Safeguard the nationally important black poplars that grow along the minor river valleys, allowing sufficient space for them to reach maturity and for perpetuation of the species.
- Restore and reinforce the landscape structure around the edges of Roydonbury Park industrial development to soften and screen the harsh edge.
- Development and highway maintenance works or 'improvements' should respect the character of the rural lanes and resist changes that add to or introduce suburban features and materials.

Key Opportunities and Constraints for Development

- Desirability of retaining the individual identity of rural settlements and their dispersed pattern within the landscape by restricting growth to narrow corridors along existing urban edge of Harlow.
- Desirability of safeguarding the large area of nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value on the plateau between Roydon, Lower Nazeing and Epping Green by restricting growth to a narrow corridor along the existing urban edge of Harlow.
- Scope for major improvement of harsh/poor visual quality of rural-urban transition through new urban environment and enhanced landscape treatment along western edge of Harlow.
- Desirability of major character change to the undeveloped nature of the southern slopes of the Stort Valley.



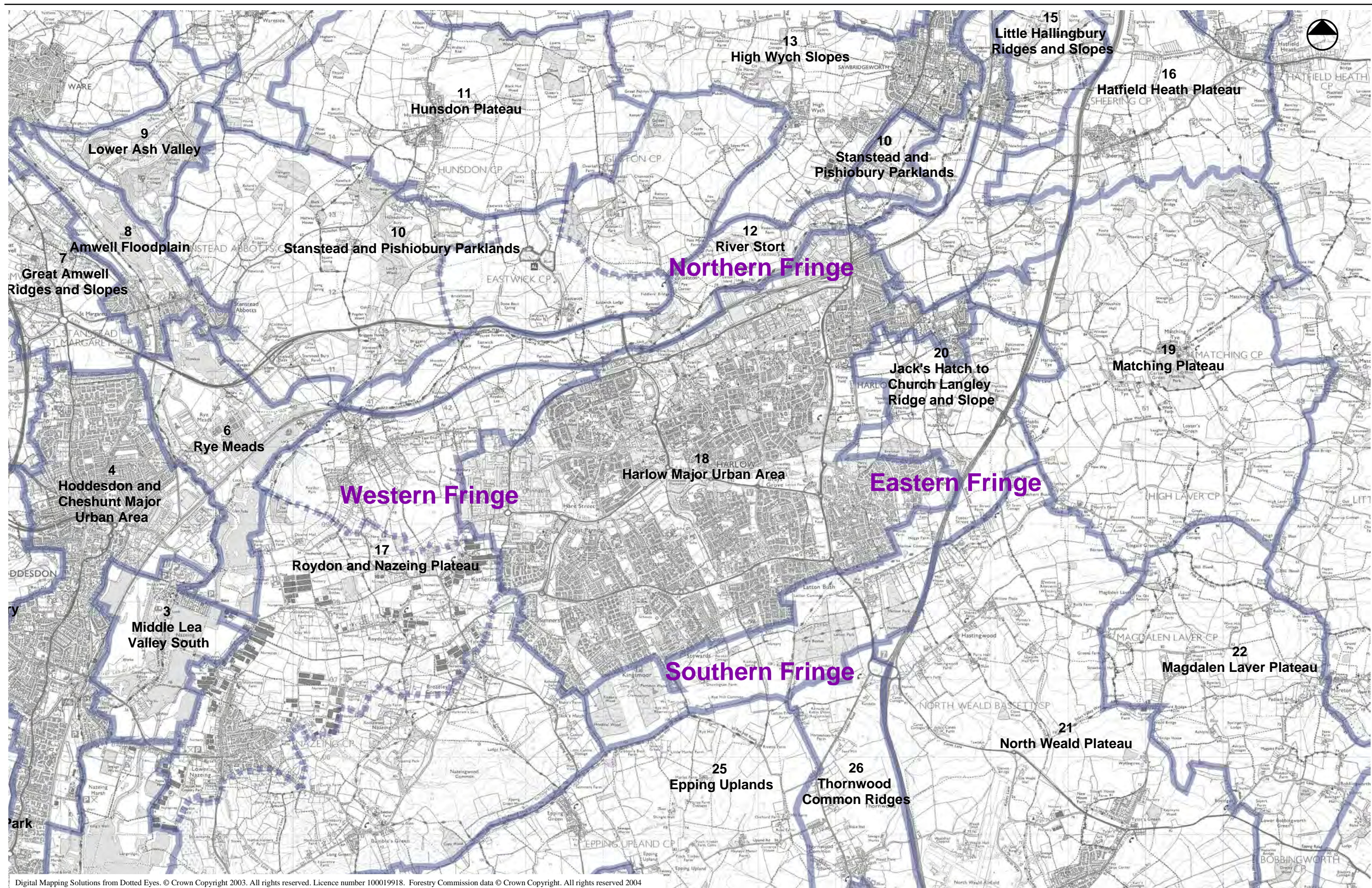
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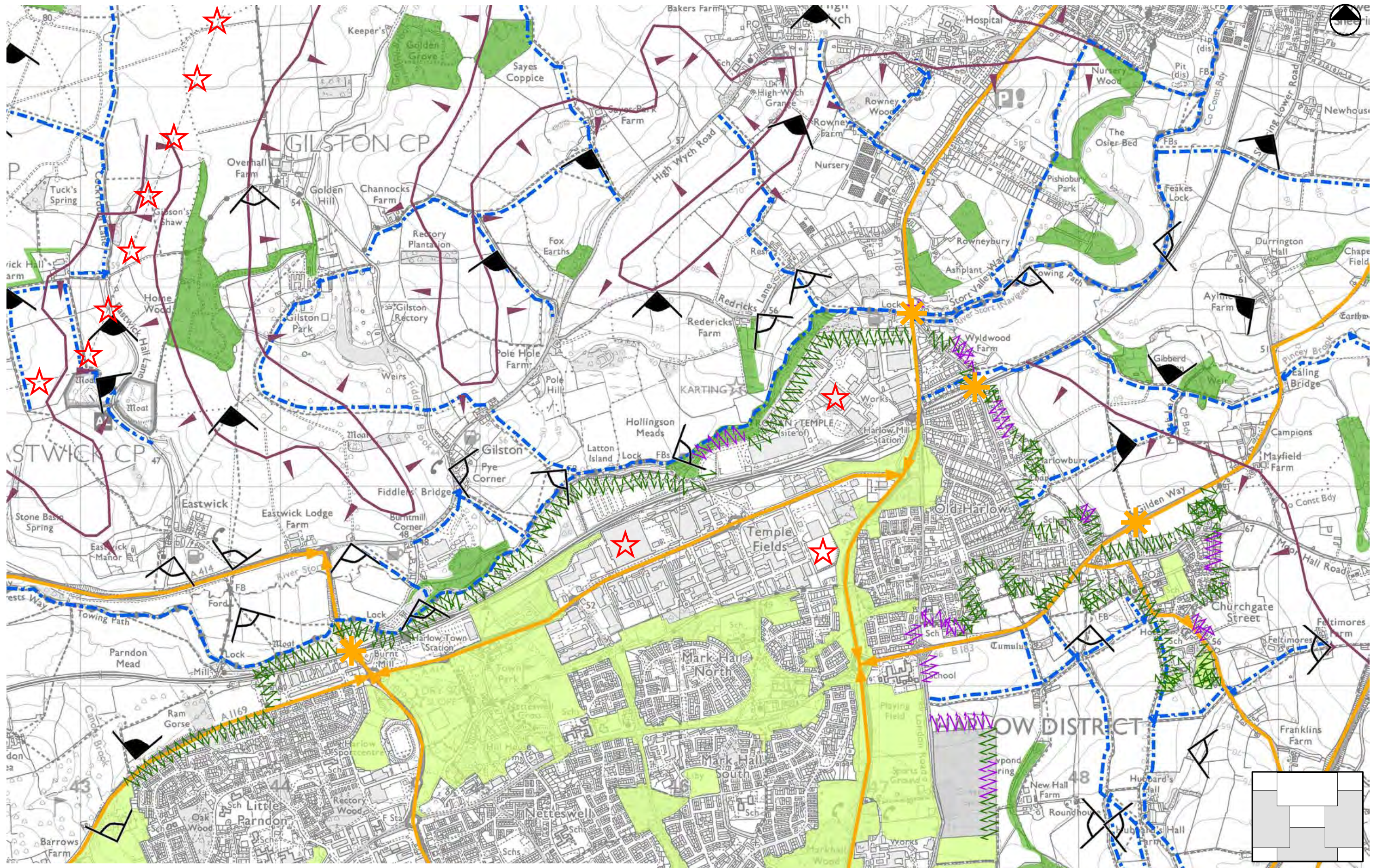
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Harlow and Environs Landscape
and Environment Study

Figure 1.1
Extent of Fringe
Study Areas



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Existing Features

- Visually Significant Slope
- Major Woodland Block
- New Development

Analysis

- Soft Green Urban Edge
- Hard Exposed Urban Edge
- Urban Greenspace Character

- Urban Gateway
- Visual Detractor
- Key Traffic Route

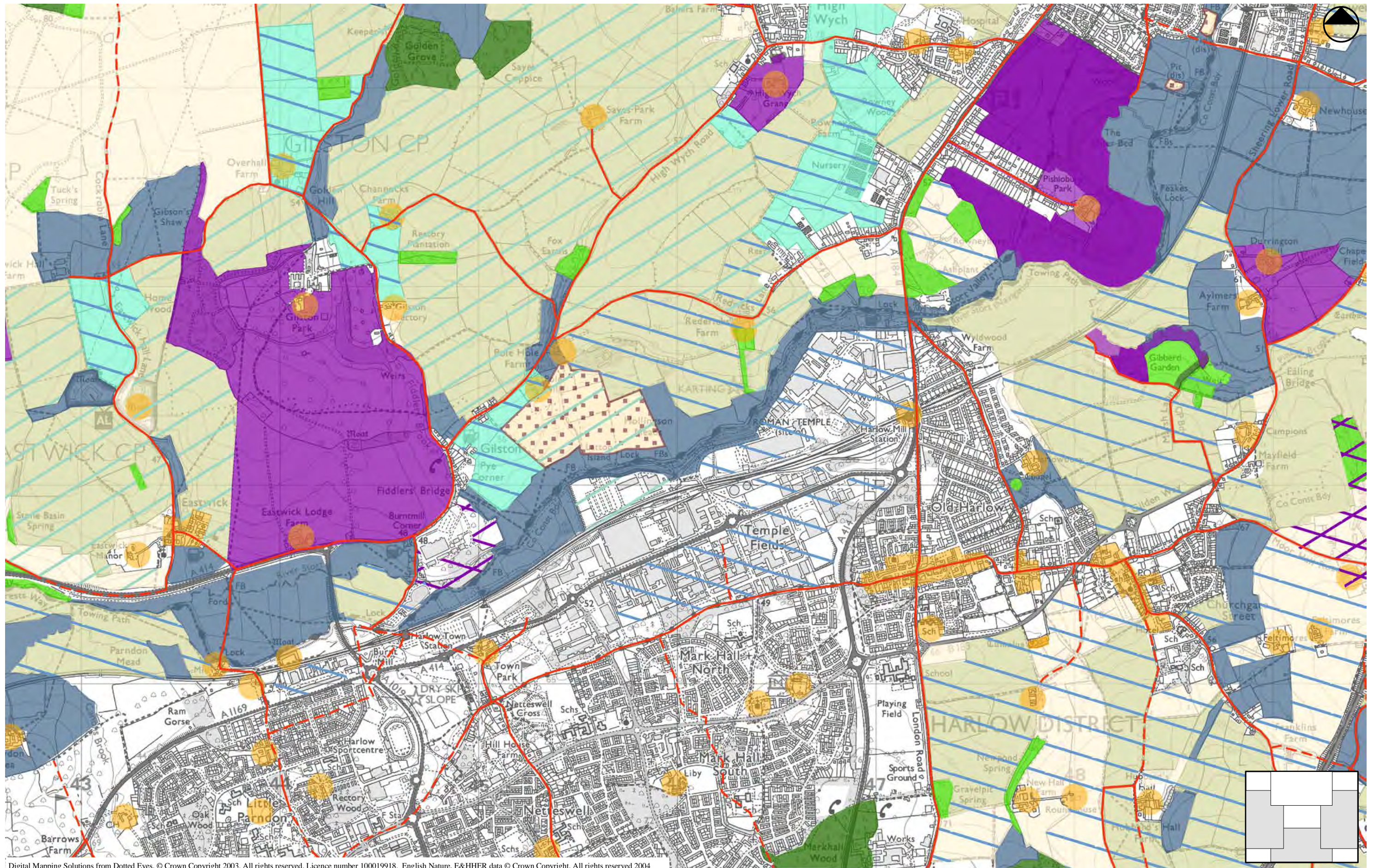
- Key Pedestrian Route
- Key Long Distance View
- Key Short Distance View

Harlow and Environs Landscape
and Environment Study

0 100 200m

Figure 2.1

Northern Fringe -
Visual Character
Analysis



Field Pattern / Landuse

- Common Land
- Common Land : past extent
- Pre-18th Century Fields
- Former Area of Pre-18th Century Fields

- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Former Area of Historic Parks and Gardens
- 18th-19th Century Enclosure
- Former Area of 18th-19th Century Enclosure
- Historic Fields with Boundary Lost

- Modern Fields: post 1950
- Ancient Woodland
- Other Woodland
- Mineral Extraction
- No Data/Unclassified

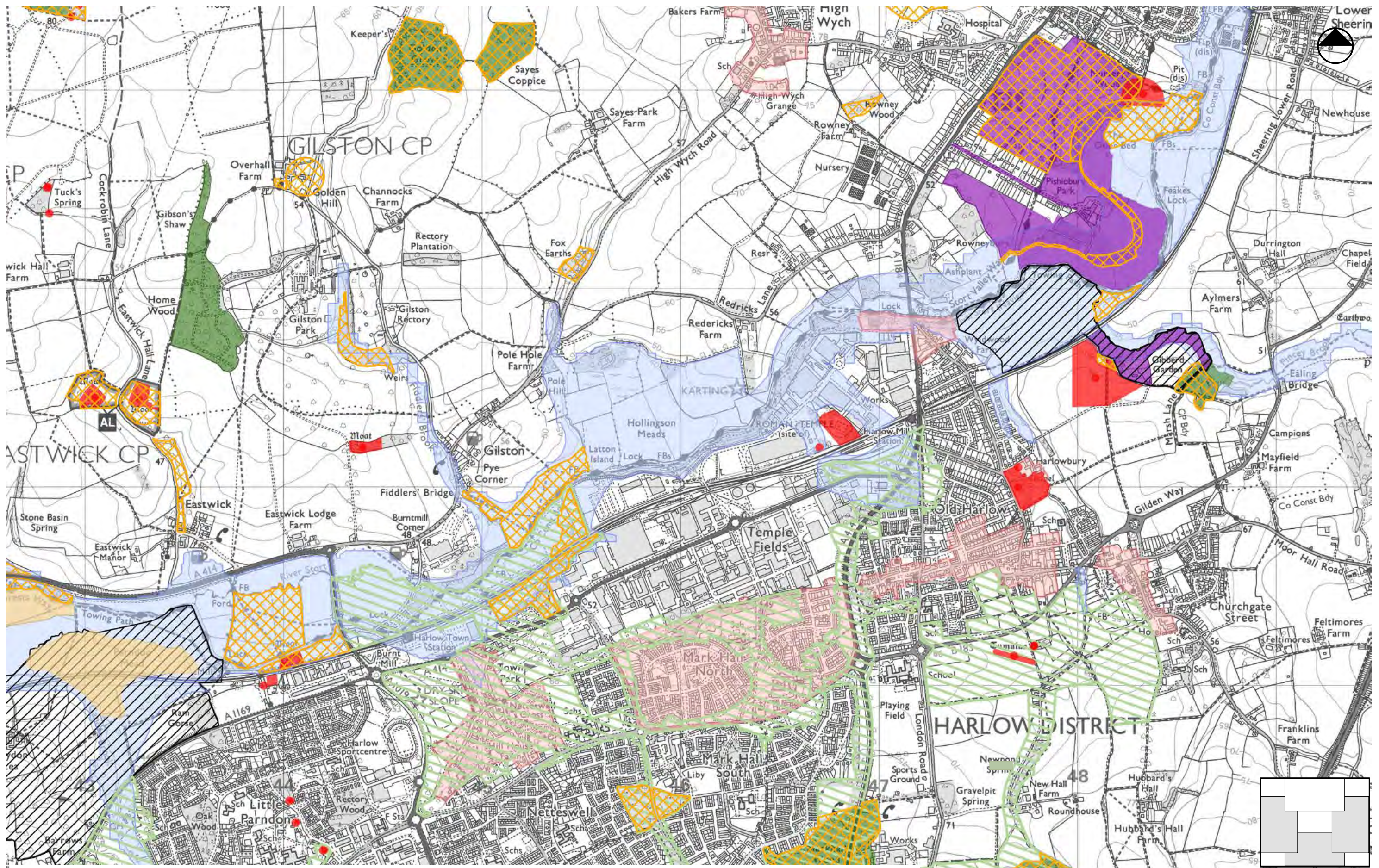
Settlement / Communication

- Road: 19th Century and earlier- surviving
- Road: 19th Century & earlier - no longer surviving
- Historic settlement

Harlow and Environs Landscape and Environment Study

0 100 200m

Figure 2.2
Northern Fringe -
Historic Landscape
Analysis



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Critical Constraints

- Scheduled Monument
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Indicative Floodplain

- Registered Common Land
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Registered Historic Parks & Gardens

Less Critical / Moderate Constraints

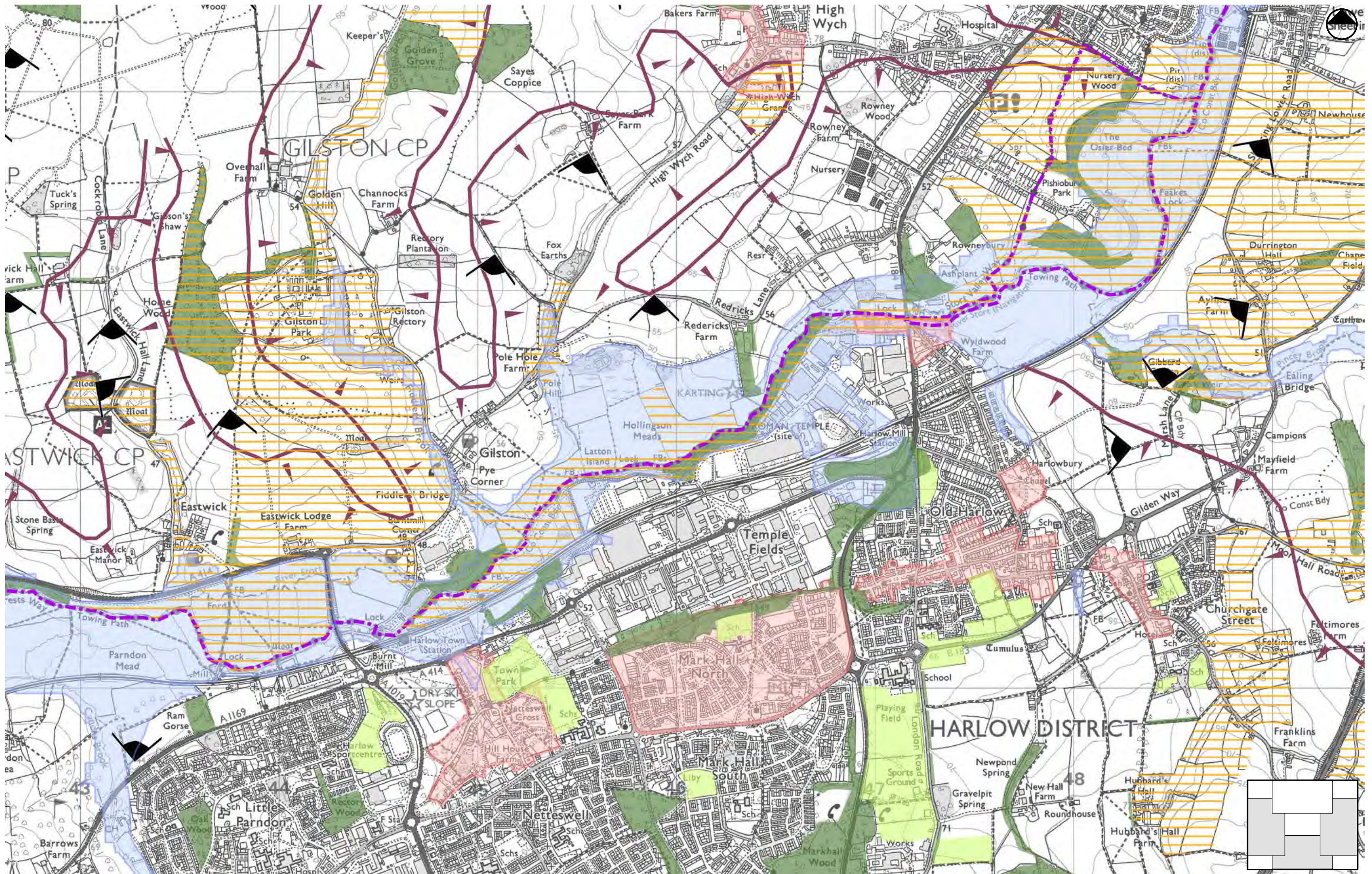
- County Wildlife Sites
- Green Wedge
- Local Landscape Designation

Harlow and Environs Landscape
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Figure 2.3

Northern Fringe -
Designated Environmental
Constraints



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Sensitive Historic Landscape

Urban Greenspace Character

Visually Significant Slope

Sensitive Recreational Route

Sensitive Woodland Area

Key Long Distance View

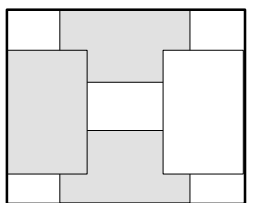
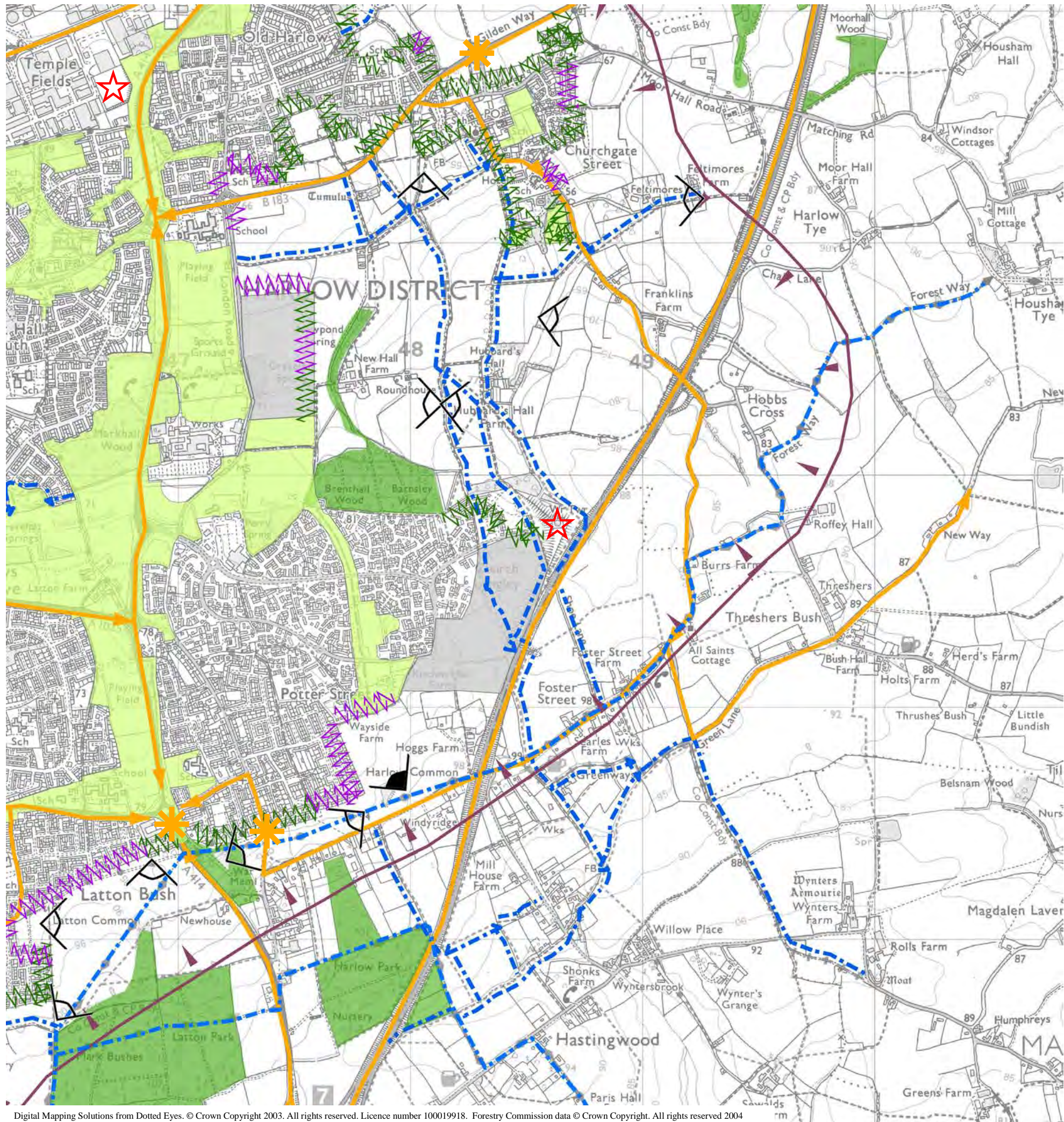
Floodplain

Conservation Area

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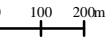
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Figure 2.4
Northern Fringe -
Sensitive Environmental
/ Landscape Features



- | Existing Features | Analysis |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Visually Significant Slope | Soft Green Urban Edge |
| Major Woodland Block | Hard Exposed Urban Edge |
| New Development | Urban Greenspace Character |
| | Urban Gateway |
| | Visual Detractor |
| | Key Pedestrian Route |
| | Key Traffic Route |
| | Key Long Distance View |
| | Key Short Distance View |

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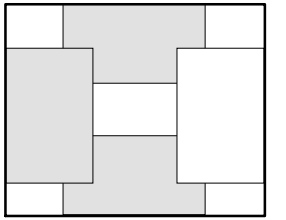
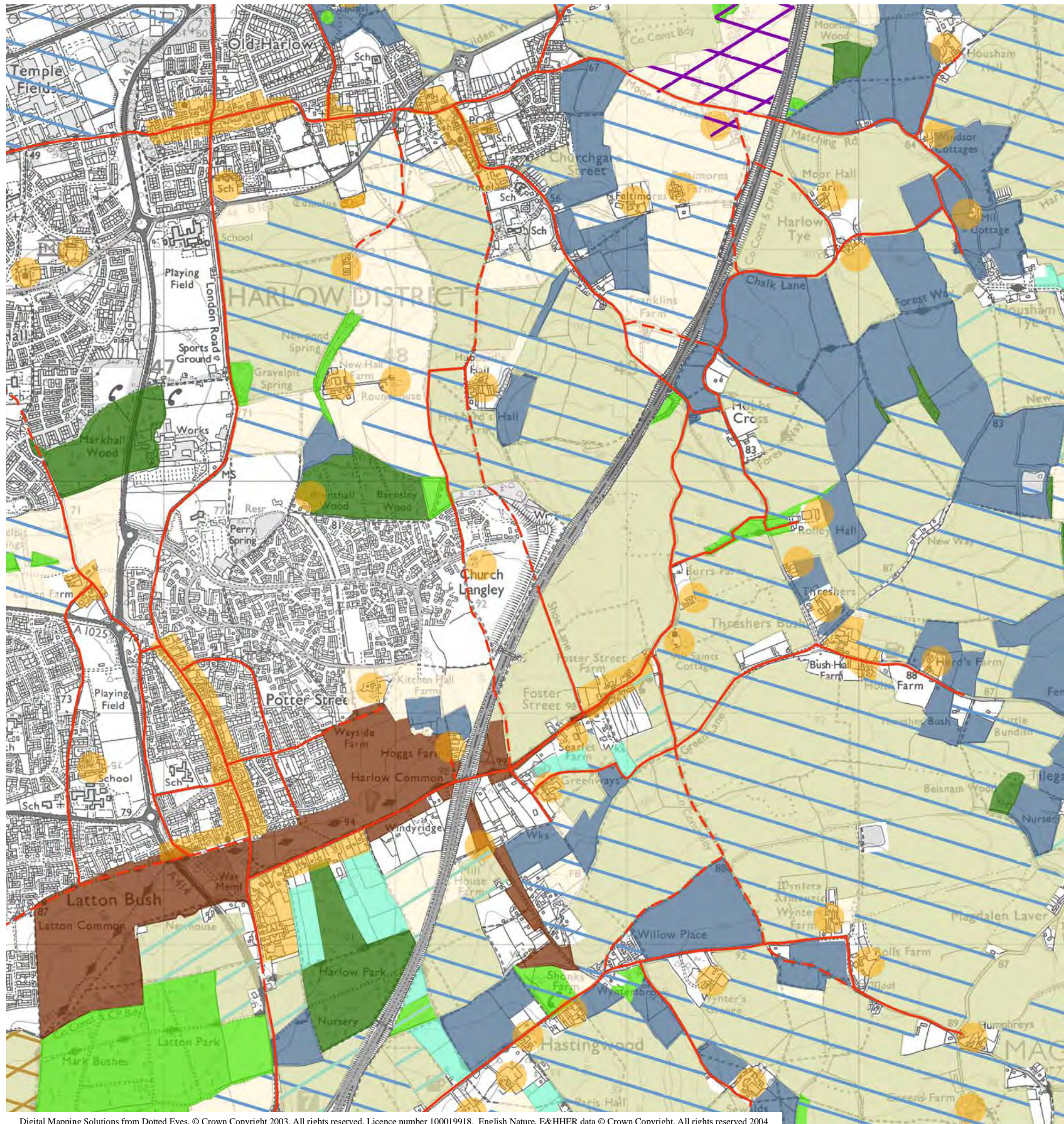


Harlow and Environs Landscape and Environment Study



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Figure 3.1
Eastern Fringe - Visual Character Analysis



Field Pattern/Landuse

- Common Land
- Common Land : past extent
- Pre-18th Century fields
- Former area of pre-18th Century fields
- 18th-19th Century enclosure
- Former area of 18th-19th Century enclosure
- Historic fields with boundary lost
- Modern fields; post 1950
- Ancient Woodland
- Other Woodland
- No data/Unclassified

- Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Area of Former Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Mineral Extraction (Current & Former)
- Settlement / Communication**
- Road: 19th Century and earlier- surviving
 - Road: 19th Century & earlier - no longer surviving
 - Historic settlement

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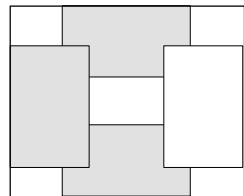
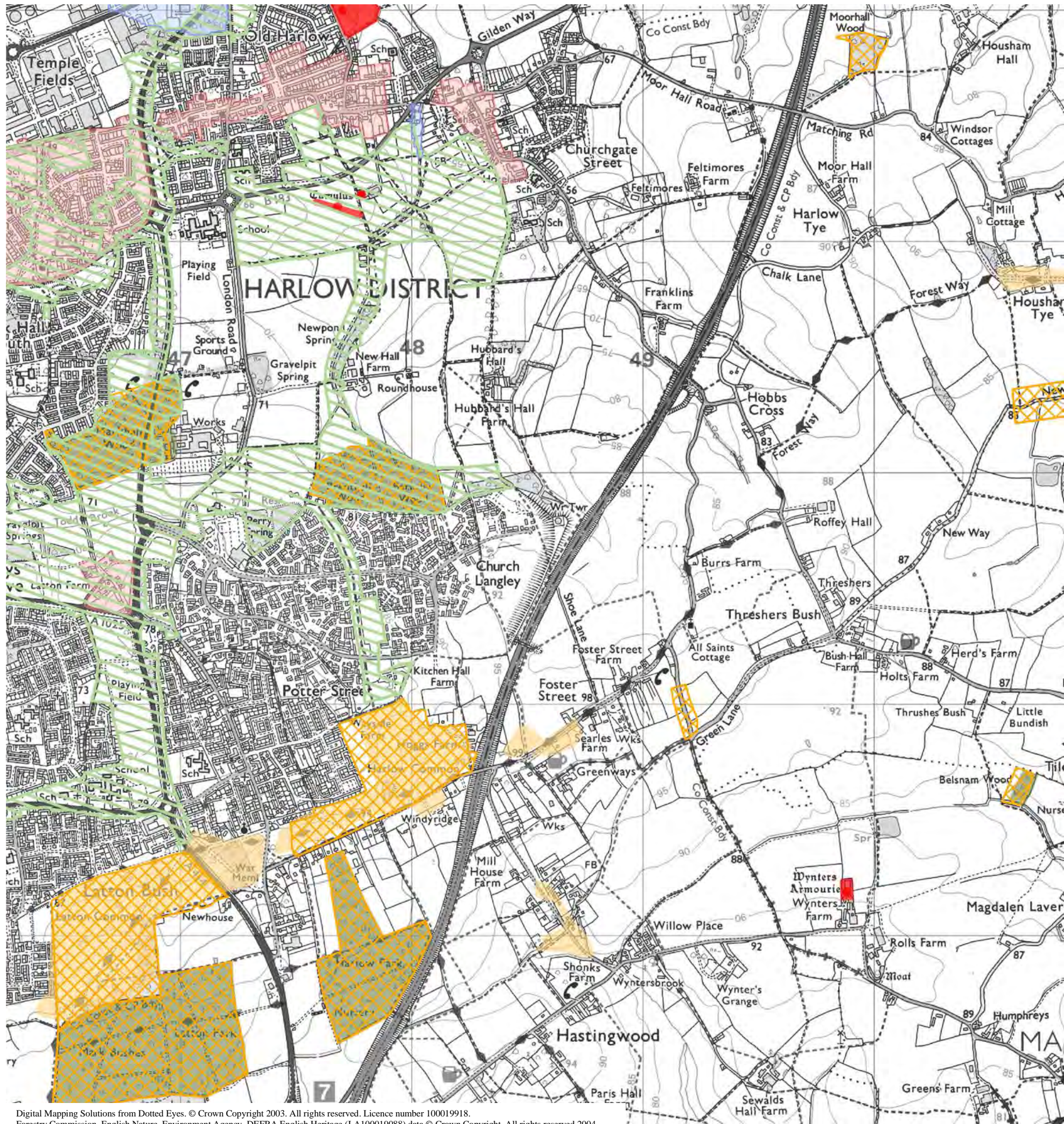
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Figure 3.2
Eastern Fringe -
Historic Landscape
Analysis



Critical Constraints

- Scheduled Monument
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Indicative Floodplain
- Registered Common Land
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Registered Historic Parks & Garden

Less Critical / Moderate Constraints

- County Wildlife Site
- Green Wedge
- Local Landscape Designation

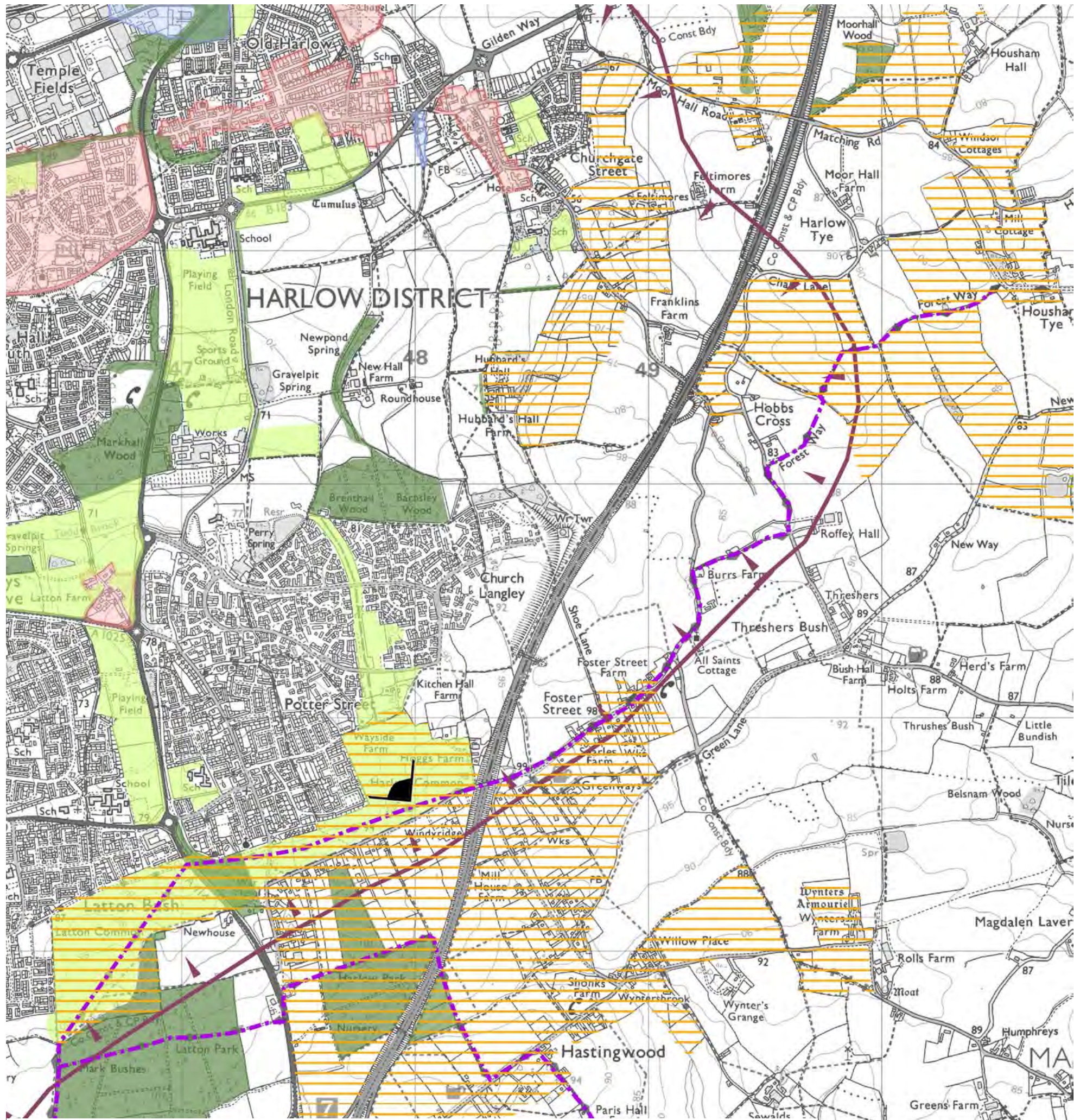
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Figure 3.3
Eastern Fringe - Designated Environmental Constraints



- Sensitive Historic Landscape
- Urban Greenspace Character
- Visually Significant Slope
- Sensitive Recreational Route
- Key Long Distance View
- Sensitive Woodland Area
- Floodplain
- Conservation Area

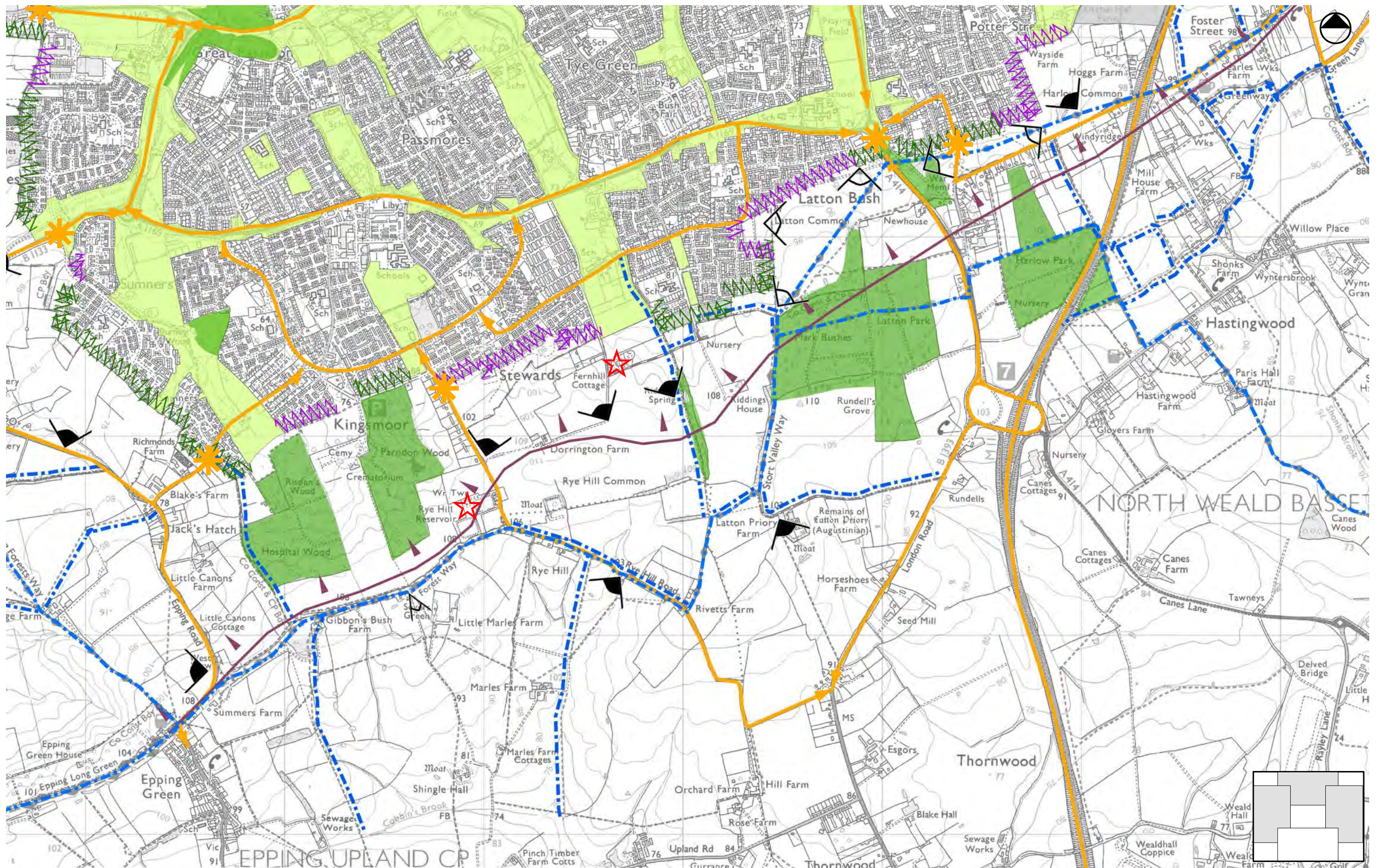
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Figure 3.4
Eastern Fringe -
Sensitive Environmental
/ Landscape Features



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Existing Features

- Visually Significant Slope
- Major Woodland Block
- New Development

Analysis

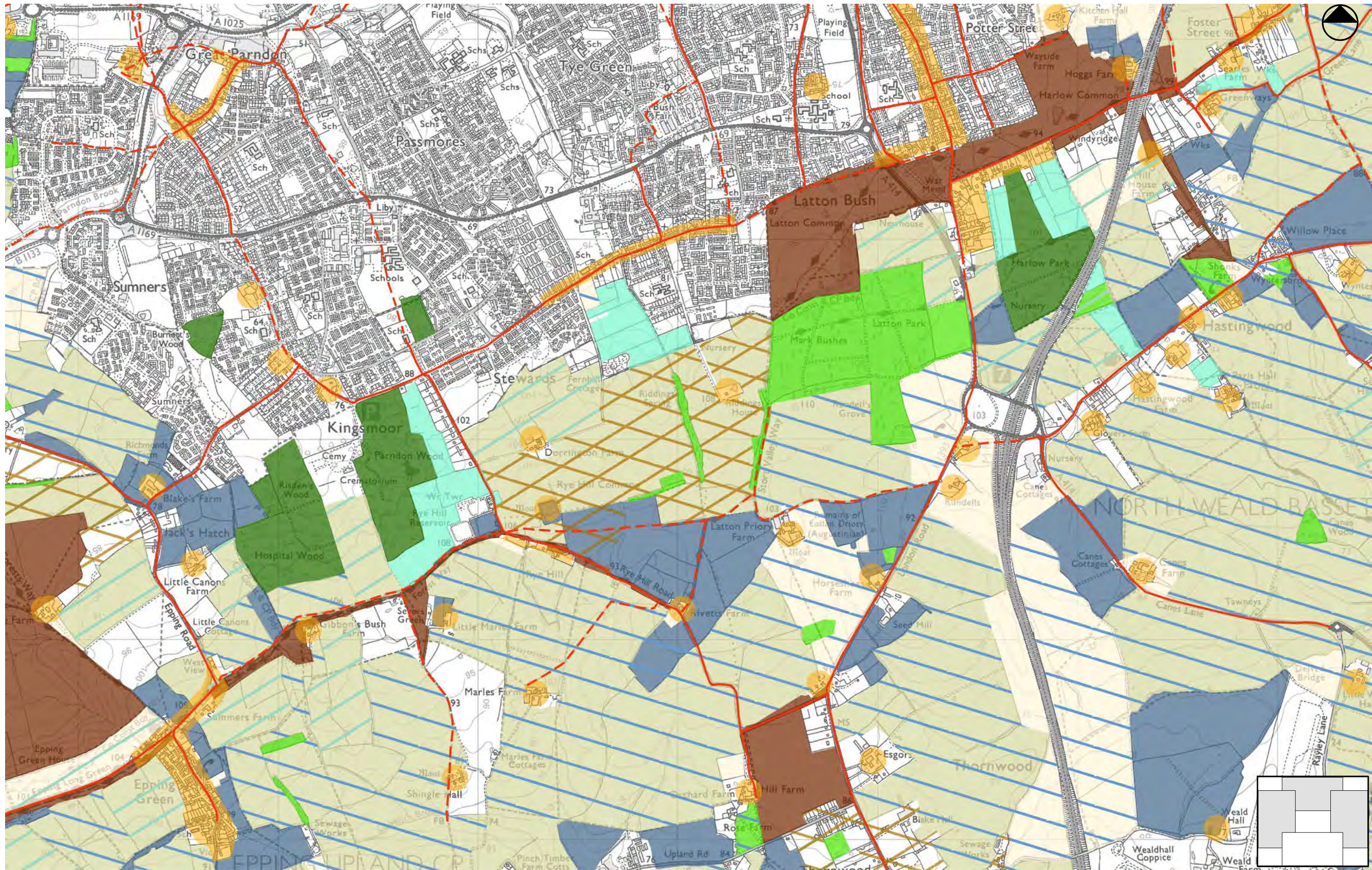
- Soft Green Urban Edge
- Hard Exposed Urban Edge
- Urban Greenspace Character
- Urban Gateway
- Visual Detractor
- Key Traffic Route

- Key Pedestrian Route
- Key Long Distance View
- Key Short Distance View

Harlow and Environs Landscape
and Environment Study

0 100 200m

Figure 4.1
Southern Fringe -
Visual Character
Analysis



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Field Pattern / Landuse

- Common Land
- Common Land : past extent
- Pre-18th Century Fields
- Former Area of Pre-18th Century Fields

- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Former Area of Historic Parks and Gardens
- 18th-19th Century Enclosure
- Former Area of 18th-19th Century Enclosure
- Historic Fields with Boundary Lost

- Modern Fields: post 1950
- Ancient Woodland
- Other Woodland
- Mineral Extraction
- No Data/Unclassified

Settlement / Communication

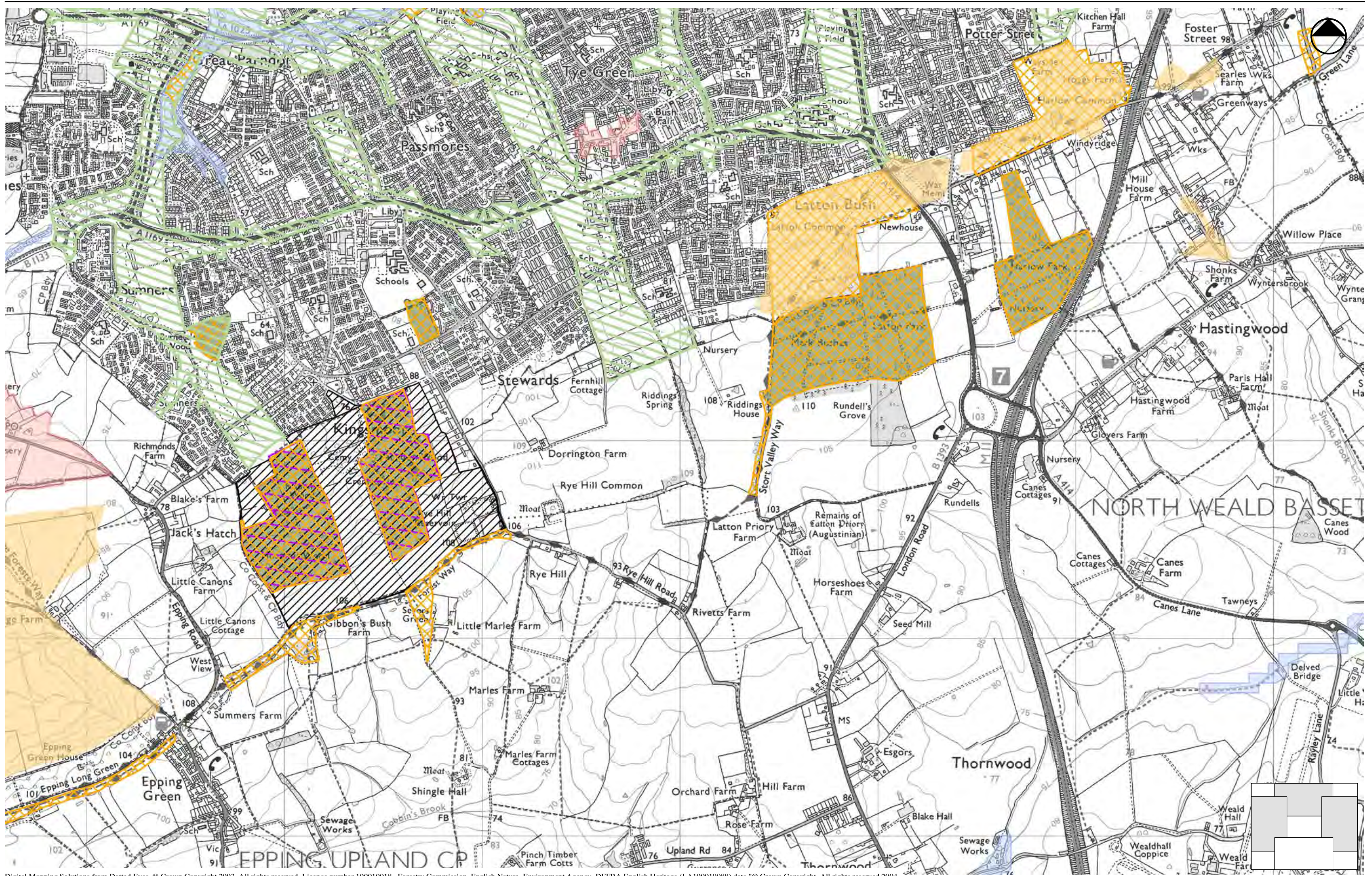
- Road: 19th Century and earlier- surviving
- Road: 19th Century & earlier - no longer surviving
- Historic settlement

Harlow and Environs Landscape and Environment Study

0 100 200m

Figure 4.2

Southern Fringe -
Historic Landscape
Analysis



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Critical Constraints

- Scheduled Monument
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Indicative Floodplain

- Registered Common Land
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Registered Historic Parks & Garden

Less Critical / Moderate Constraints

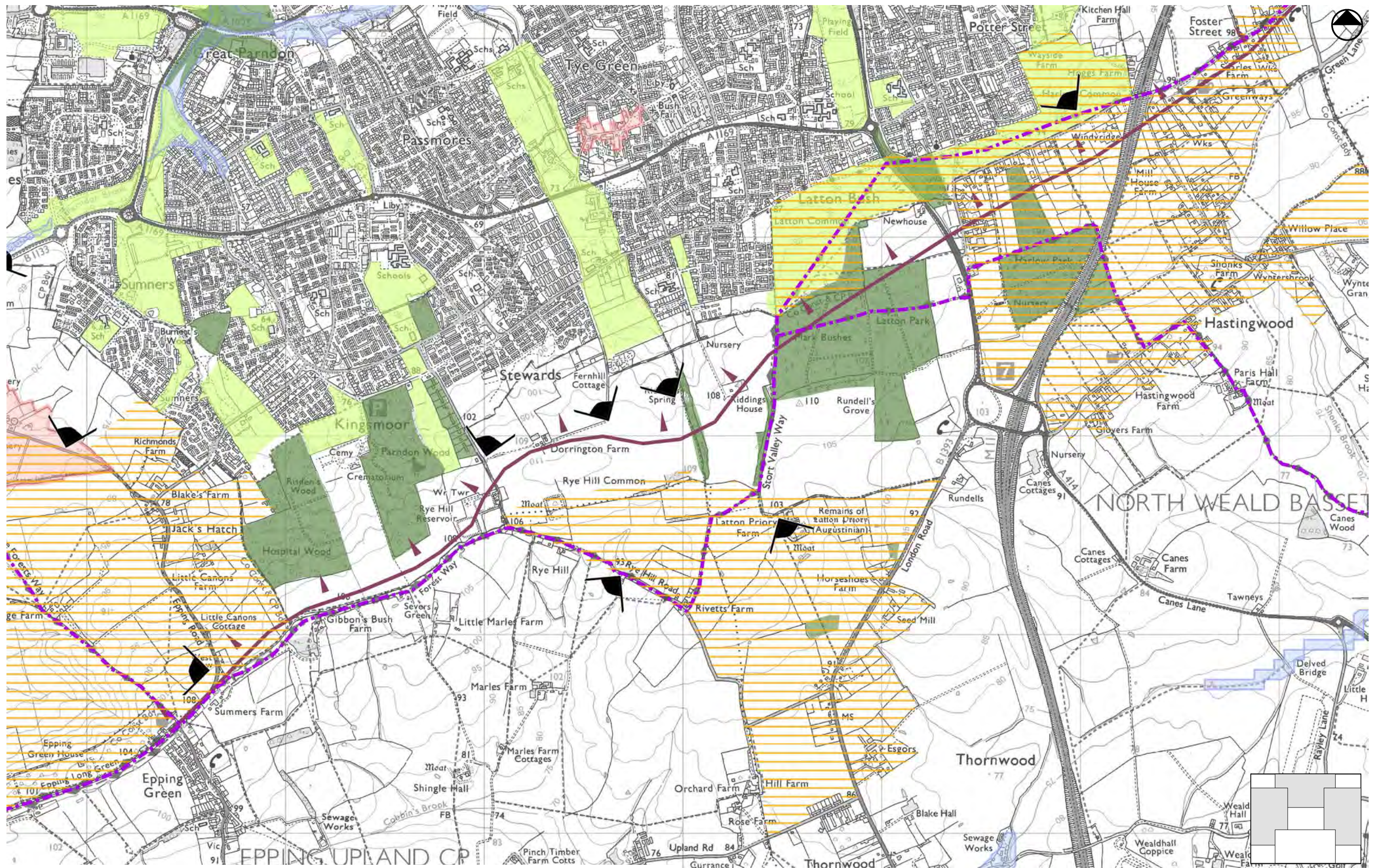
- ▨ County Wildlife Sites
- ▨ Green Wedge
- ▨ Local Landscape Designation

Harlow and Environs Landscape and Environment Study

0 100 200m

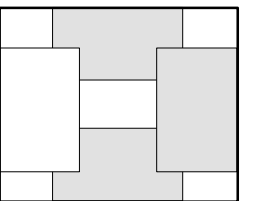
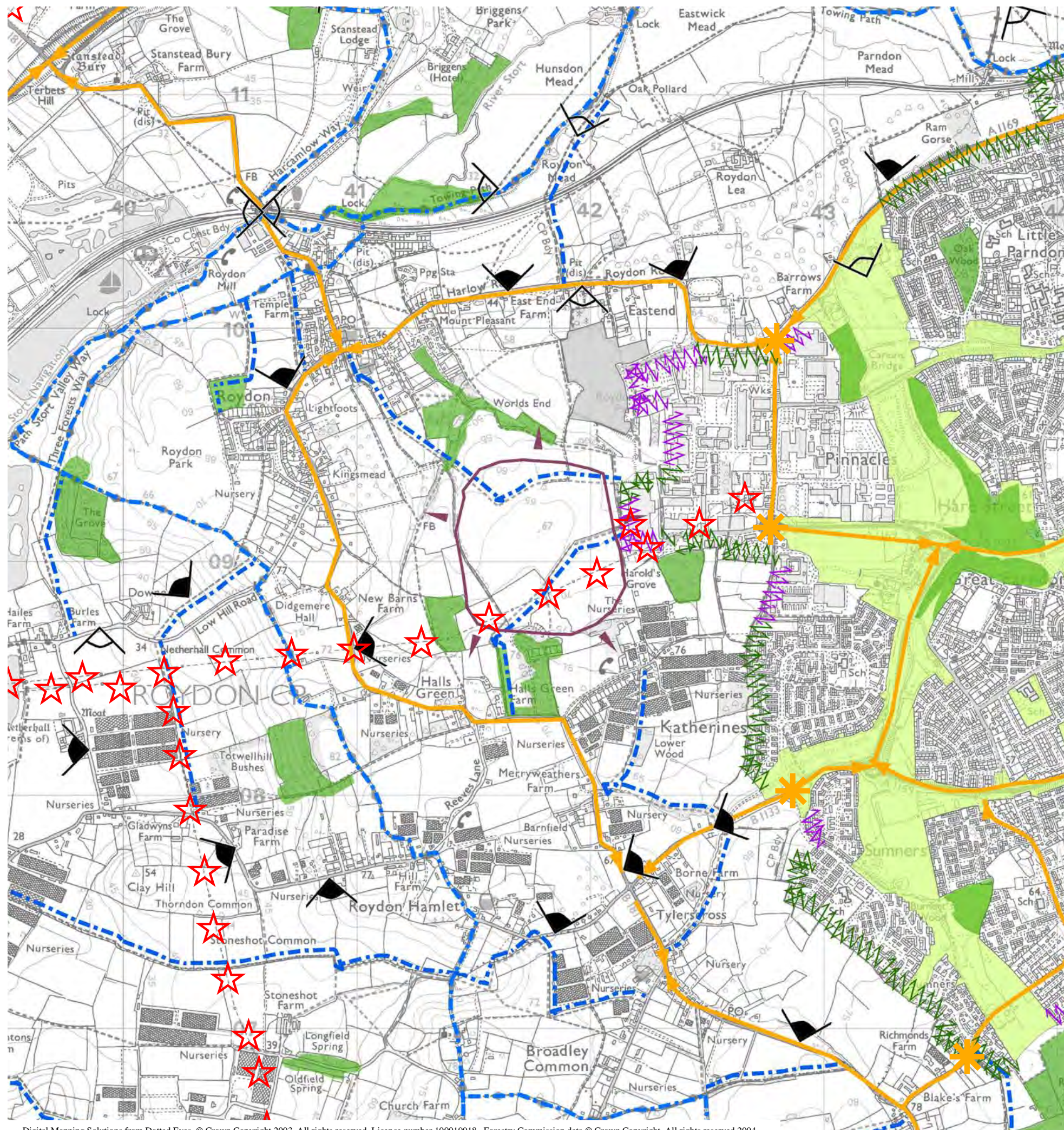
Figure 4.3

Southern Fringe - Designated Environmental Constraints



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Existing Features

- Visually Significant Slope
- Major Woodland Block
- New Development

Analysis

- Soft Green Urban Edge
- Hard Exposed Urban Edge
- Urban Greenspace Character
- Urban Gateway
- Visual Detractor
- Key Pedestrian Route
- Key Traffic Route
- Key Long Distance View
- Key Short Distance View

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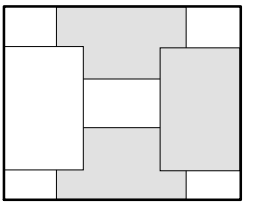
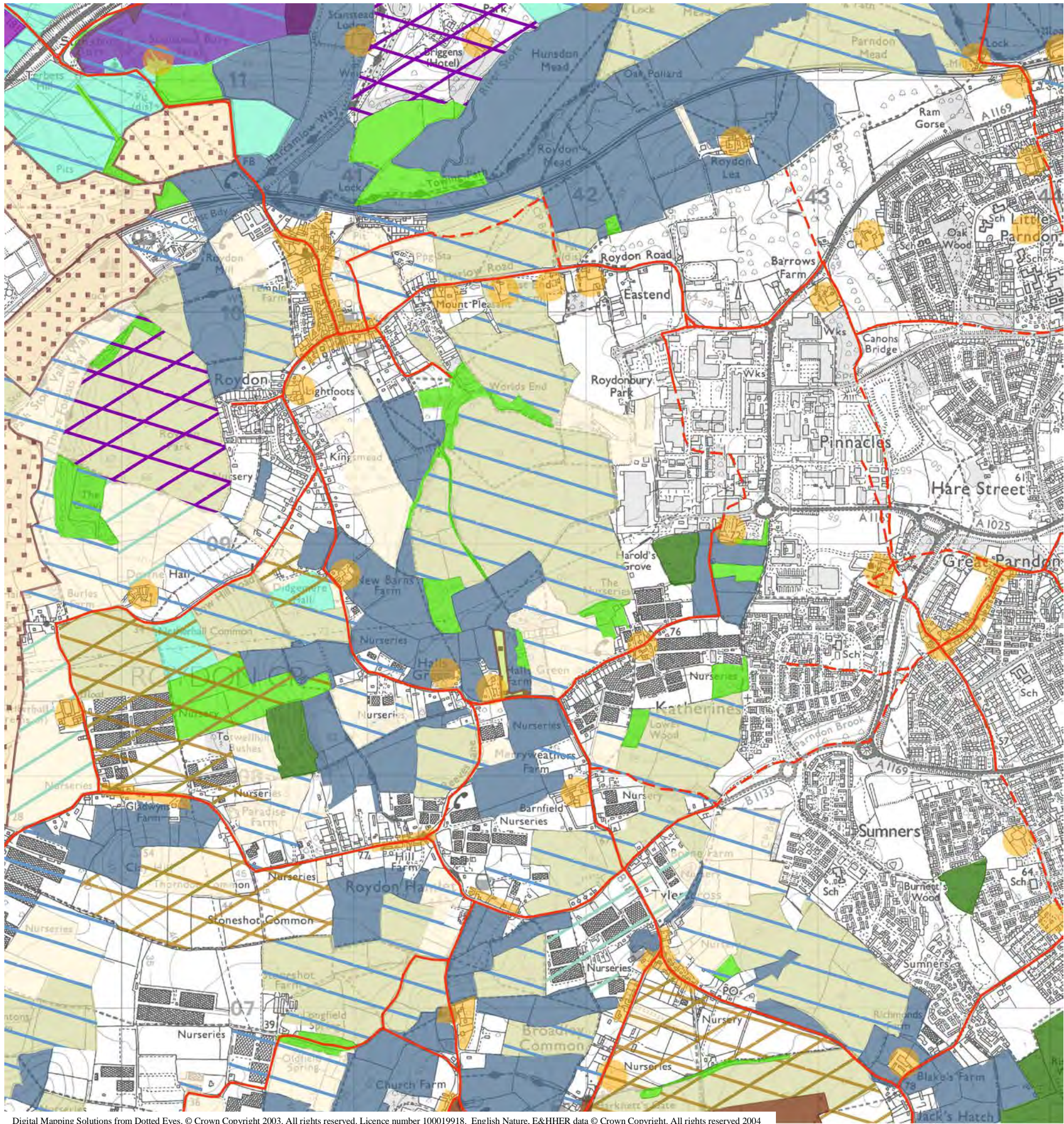
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CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
cba www.cba.uk.net

February 2005

Figure 5.1

Western Fringe - Visual Character Analysis



Field Pattern/Landuse

- Common Land
- Common Land : past extent
- Pre-18th Century fields
- Former area of pre-18th Century fields
- 18th-19th Century enclosure
- Former area of 18th-19th Century enclosure
- Historic fields with boundary lost
- Modern fields: post 1950
- Ancient Woodland
- Other Woodland
- No data/Unclassified

- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Area of Former Historic Parks and Gardens
- Mineral Extraction (Current & Former)

Settlement / Communication

- Road: 19th Century and earlier- surviving
- Road: 19th Century & earlier - no longer surviving
- Historic settlement

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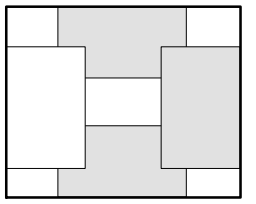
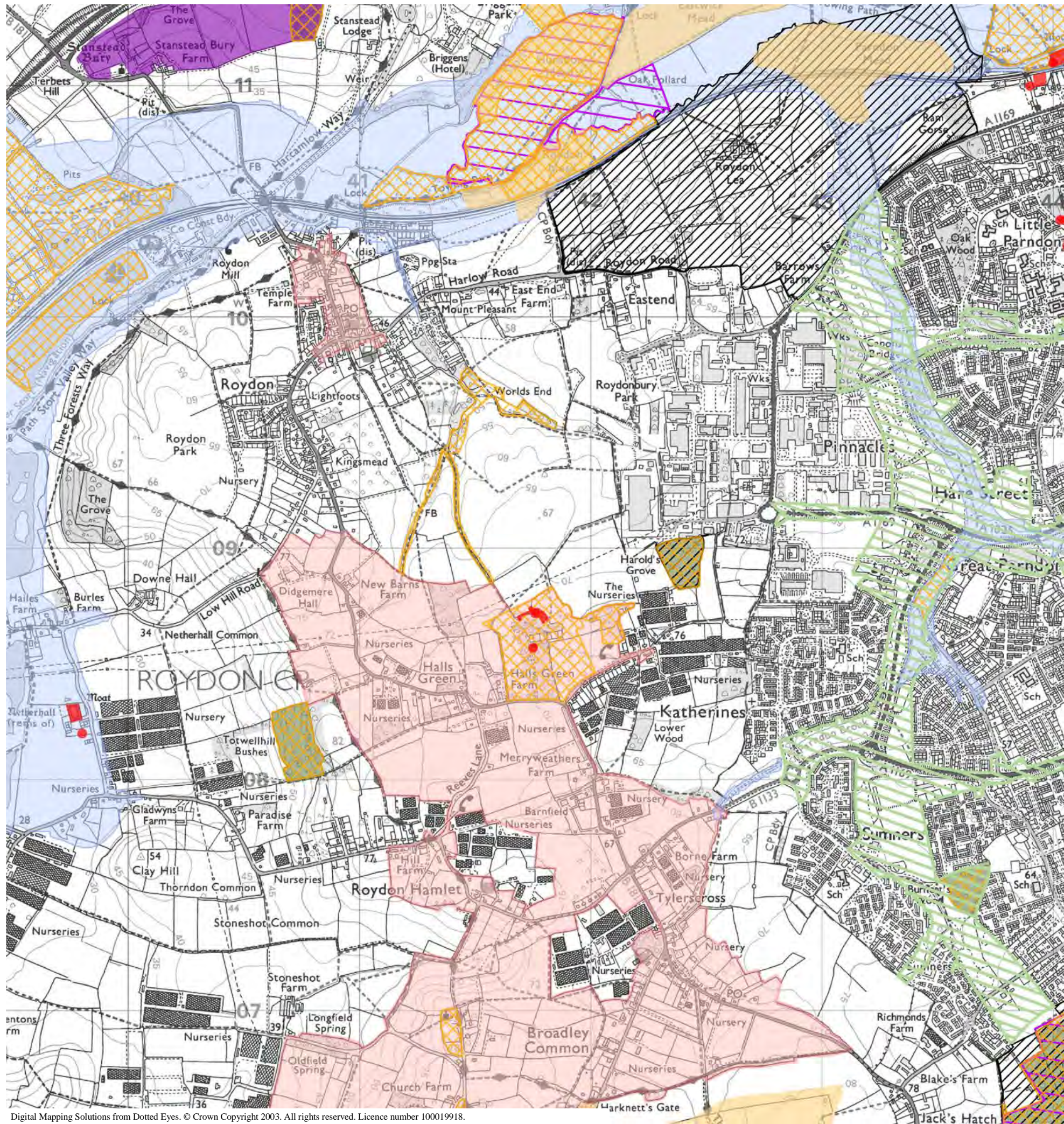
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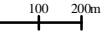
Figure 5.2

Western Fringe - Historic Landscape Analysis



- Critical Constraints**
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Indicative Floodplain
 - Registered Common Land
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Conservation Area
 - Registered Historic Parks & Garden
- Less Critical / Moderate Constraints**
 - County Wildlife Site
 - Green Wedge
 - Local Landscape Designation

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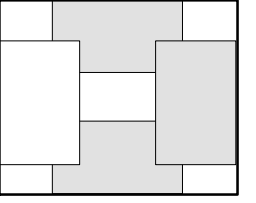
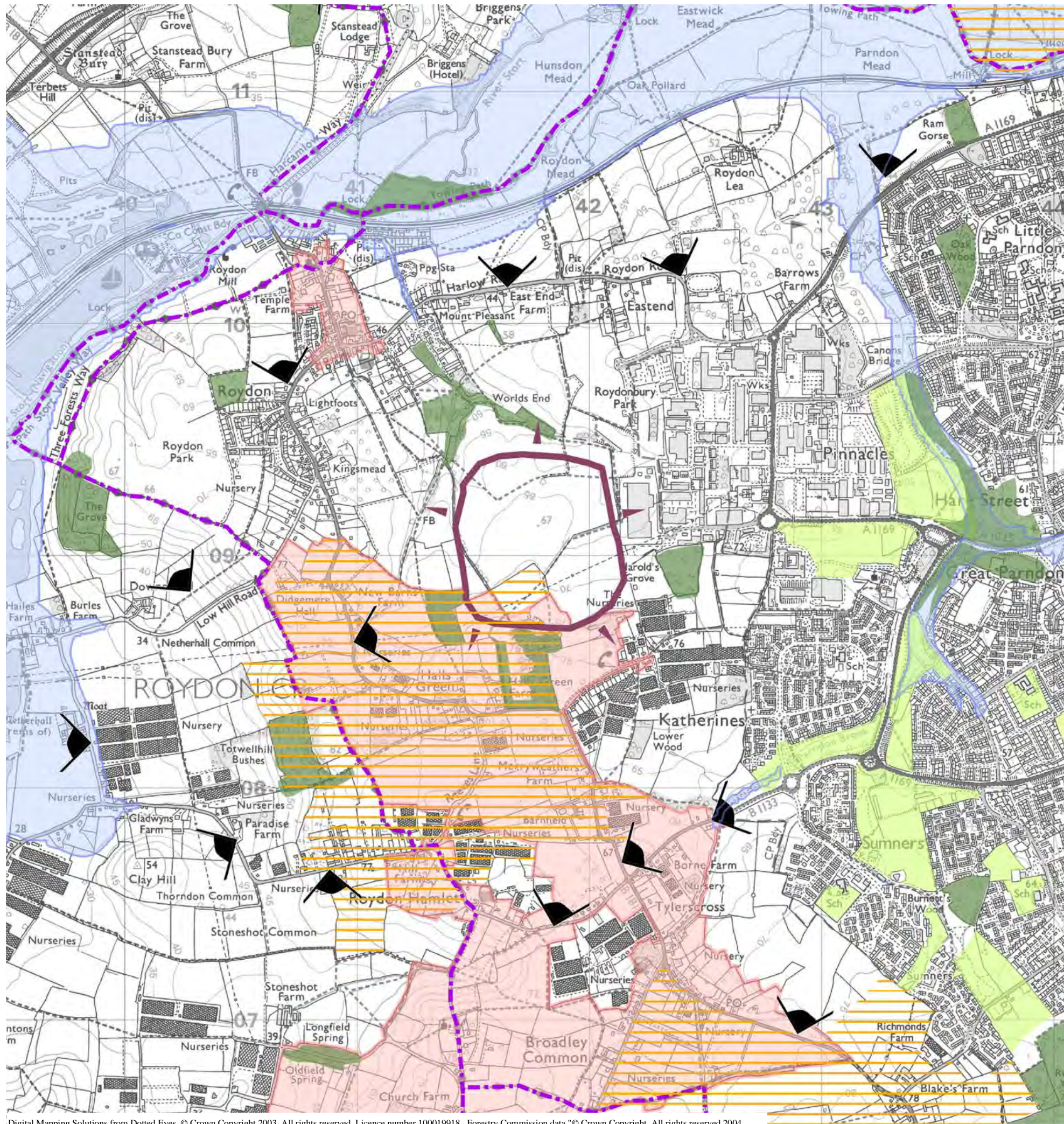


Harlow and Environs Landscape and Environment Study



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Figure 5.3
Western Fringe - Designated Environmental Constraints



- Sensitive Historic Landscape
- Accessible Open Space
- Visually Significant Slope
- Sensitive Recreational Route
- Key Long Distance View
- Sensitive Woodland Area
- Floodplain
- Conservation Area

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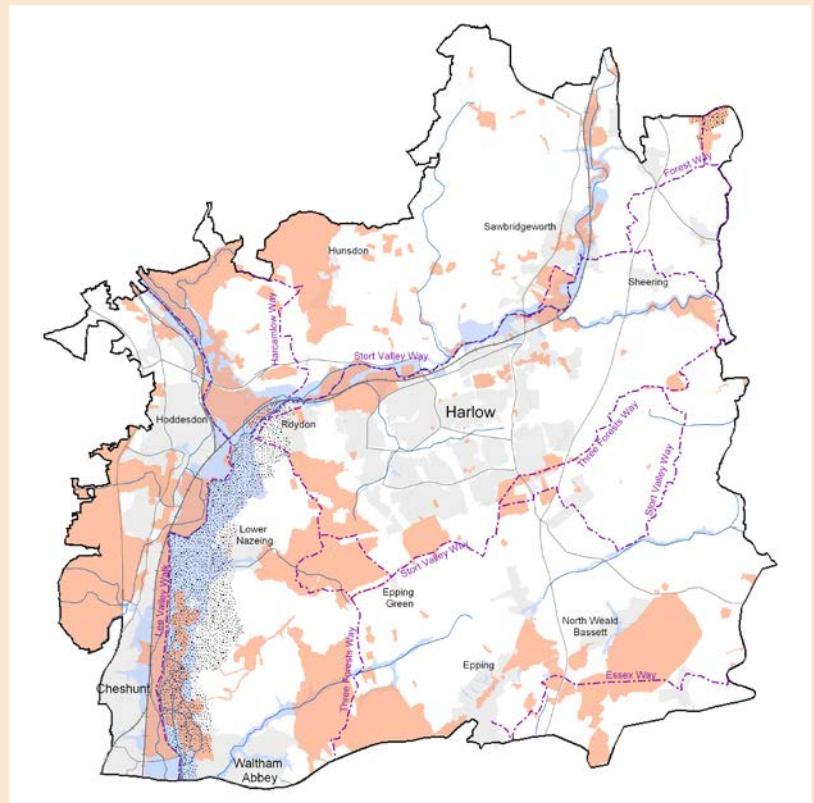
Figure 5.4
Western Fringe -
Sensitive Environmental
/ Landscape Features



Harlow District Council and Partners

HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT STUDY

Volume 3 : Framework for Sustainable Future Landscapes in the Harlow Area



Final Report

February 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

Harlow District Council and Partners

**HARLOW AREA LANDSCAPE
& ENVIRONMENT STUDY**

**Volume 3 : Framework for Sustainable Future
Landscapes in the Harlow Area**

Final Report

February 2005

Approved By: **Dominic Watkins**
Signed:

Position: **Associate Technical Director**
Date: **February 2005**

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

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3.1 Strategic Vision for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area

PREFACE

Chris Blandford Associates were commissioned in January 2004 by a Steering Group of key stakeholders to undertake the ***Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study*** to provide a key evidence base for informing input to the review of Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). The Harlow Area, which is identified by ODPM as a priority area for growth within the designated London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area, comprises the entire administrative area of Harlow District Council and part of Epping Forest District within Essex, and includes part of East Hertfordshire District within Hertfordshire. The Study is one of a number being undertaken in the Harlow Area funded by the ODPM from the Government's Growth Areas fund.

The key ***aim*** of the Study set by the Steering Group's brief is to "*identify the constraints on and opportunities for growth in the areas in and around Harlow, to inform the location and shape of future developments*" and to provide "*robust arguments for and against development in environmentally sensitive areas in order to inform RPG when strategic decisions are to be made on the location of future growth around Harlow and its possible future extensions*".

Specific ***objectives*** of the Study contained in the brief include:

- to identify and draw together a consistent baseline of landscape and environmental information based on existing data, supplemented by new additional information where necessary;
- to define and record the landscape and environmental information on a GIS;
- to identify and assess Sir Frederick Gibberd's approach to landscape in his original masterplan for Harlow and determine if this is appropriate for future growth of the town;
- to prepare a Landscape Framework to inform possible urban extensions around Harlow.

The main ***outputs*** of the Study include:

- Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of Harlow Area (Volume 1)
- Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes (Volume 2)
- Framework for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area (Volume 3)
- The Harlow Area Geographical Information Library (Digital Data Output)

The opinions and conclusions set out in the Study reports are entirely those of the consultants, and do not necessarily reflect the formal views of the Steering Group. The reports are made available solely for information purposes and have the status of background technical documents.

The ***Steering Group***, chaired by Harlow District Council, comprised:

- Dianne Cooper (Forward Planning & Regeneration Planning Manager, Harlow District Council)
- Vernon Herbert (Programme Director, Harlow District Council)
- Martin Wakelin (Landscape & Ecology Manager, Essex County Council)
- Ian White (Planning Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Chris Neilan (Landscape Officer, Epping Forest District Council)
- Simon Odell (Head of Landscape, Hertfordshire County Council)
- Simon Andrews (East Hertfordshire District Council)
- Catherine Cairns (Senior Countryside Officer, Countryside Agency)
- Dearbhla Lawson (Planner, Government Office East)

Overview of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study Outputs

STRATEGIC SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF HARLOW AREA

(Volume 1)

Purpose: provides a strategic understanding of variations in landscape character/environmental features and sensitivity to change across the Harlow Area as a whole.

Use: a broad-based strategic input to evaluation of the major constraints and opportunities for development as a guide to the overall direction of growth.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF HARLOW'S FRINGES

(Volume 2)

Purpose: develops a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of the town that are desirable to safeguard.

Use: to guide evaluation of the location and shape of future development options for urban expansion around the fringes of Harlow.

FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES IN THE HARLOW AREA

(Volume 3)

Purpose: develops an over-arching strategic vision for the future and establishes landscape planning/management principles.

Use: framework for developing an integrated approach to landscape protection, 'green infrastructure' improvements and urban development.

THE HARLOW AREA GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION LIBRARY

(Digital Data Output)

Purpose: a consistent/up to date GIS-based digital 'library'/database of landscape and environmental baseline data.

Use: spatial planning tool for use by all stakeholder partners.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Purpose of Report

- 1.1.1 This report sets out a *Framework for Future Sustainable Landscapes in the Harlow Area*, and is Volume 3 of the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study.
- 1.1.2 The main purpose of the report is to develop an over-arching strategic vision for the future and establish landscape planning and management principles. The report provides a framework for developing an integrated approach to landscape protection, ‘green infrastructure’ improvements and urban development within the Harlow Area.
- 1.1.3 This report should be read alongside Volume 1 *Strategic Sensitivity Analysis of the Harlow Area* and Volume 2 *Detailed Analysis of Harlow’s Fringes*, which together identify and describe the landscape/environmental constraints and opportunities for growth in the Harlow Area as a whole.
- 1.1.4 This report fulfils the following specific Study objectives contained in the brief:
- to identify and assess Sir Frederick Gibberd’s approach to landscape in his original masterplan for Harlow and determine if this is appropriate for future growth of the town;
 - to prepare a Landscape Framework to inform possible urban extensions around Harlow.

Study Area

- 1.1.5 For the purposes of this report, the ‘Harlow Area’ is a broadly defined area encompassing both open countryside and urban areas focussed around the town of Harlow. The Harlow Area comprises the entire administrative area of Harlow District Council and part of Epping Forest District within Essex, and includes part of East Hertfordshire District within Hertfordshire. In consultation with the Steering Group, the precise boundaries of the Harlow Area study area shown on Figure 3.1 were chosen to align with the boundaries of whole landscape character areas.

1.2 Approach

1.2.1 The Framework comprises the following elements:

- an *analysis of the key issues and opportunities* that are reflected in the vision (Section 2.0);
- a *strategic vision for future sustainable landscapes* (Section 3.0);
- a set of themed *landscape planning and management principles* (Section 4.0);
- the identification of *priorities for action* in relation to strategies/initiatives and *additional information requirements* to support the vision (Section 5.0).

2.0 KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.0 KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 General

2.1.1 A review of relevant strategic plans and guidance, together with the strategic landscape assessment of the Harlow Area presented in Volume 1, highlights a complex series of inter-related strategic issues that affect the character of the landscape and influence the development of the strategic vision. These, and the opportunities that arise from them, are considered below.

2.1.2 The key issues identified for the vision include:

- urban development pressures;
- connectivity of wildlife habitats;
- recent agricultural change;
- conservation and enhancement of historic landscape character;
- recreation pressures and conflicts; and
- flood risk.

2.2 Key Issues

Urban Development Pressures

2.2.1 Rapid urban expansion has had a major influence on the character of the Harlow Area. The relatively simple underlying pattern of the ridge and valley landscape has been dramatically fragmented and disturbed by the variety of urban land uses within the Area. Trends include intensification of urban settlement and the development of an urban fringe character to many areas. The proliferation of pylons, roads and other visually intrusive infrastructure has eroded the character of the urban-edge landscapes. This often results in a fragmented and unattractive setting for the urban areas. Opportunities exist to create new landscapes in these areas linked to the development of public open space and recreational facilities.

2.2.2 The main towns and villages are typically surrounded by substantial areas of undeveloped land, largely of rural character. Green Belt policies have acted to restrain urban development outside of the existing main settlements across much of the Harlow Area. Future development of urban land offers opportunities to restore watercourses as the focus of new development through imaginative designs and layouts.

2.2.3 The key urban development issues for the vision are:

- the improvement of urban fringe landscapes;
- accommodating urban growth without unacceptable adverse environmental effects; and
- relationship of urban capacity within Harlow to protection of green wedges/Gibberd's principles.

Connectivity of Wildlife Habitats

2.2.4 Within the Harlow Area, examples of key ecological features or habitats include:

- the main river channels and their tributaries;
- parkland and wood pasture;
- semi-natural woodland;
- hedgerows;
- semi-natural neutral grassland and pastures;
- marshes, open water bodies, flooded sand/gravel pits and reservoirs.

2.2.5 The main rivers and their tributaries provide important wildlife corridors through the area. Channel and bankside habitats are under continuing pressure from over-dredging, erosion and bank modification. Important features such as aquatic and marginal/emergent vegetation, bankside trees and woodlands, and riverside unimproved grassland are becoming increasingly fragmented and degraded due to inappropriate management, neglect, and loss through built development.

2.2.6 Many of the ecological features and habitats in the Harlow Area are of strategic importance for the flora and fauna that they support. A variety of local and national protective planning designations often apply to such sites and features. Opportunities exist to restore ecological features in appropriate areas, protect and enhance areas of existing value, and to create new features to improve the connectivity of ecological habitats and sites throughout the Harlow Area.

2.2.7 The key ecological issues for the vision include:

- the need to restore, enhance or improve features of ecological value;
- the need to secure the adequate protection of existing sites of nature conservation value;

- the need to maintain the connectivity and viability of ecological features and habitats throughout the area – focused on existing woodland, hedgerow field boundaries and river corridors;
- the need for sensitive design, layout and location of new urban development, agricultural activities, flood defence operations and recreational uses in ecologically sensitive areas.

Recent Agricultural Change

2.2.8 Farmland provides an important open countryside setting for Harlow and the surrounding settlements. The proximity of large urban areas and the dense network of transport corridors within the Harlow area has physically fragmented much agricultural land, and farming has become marginal in many areas as a result. The intensification of agricultural activity has led to the removal of traditional field boundaries, which has eroded the typically small-scale character of the agricultural land. Remaining areas of more traditional farmland character are also particularly sensitive to intrusion from urban fringe pressures, with garden centres, neglected land, fly-tipping and unattractive boundary materials as typical indicators of these continuing urban-edge pressures.

2.2.9 At a strategic level, changes in agricultural practices influenced by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have introduced new crops into the landscape, and have encouraged economies of scale and diversification into non-agricultural land uses. This has led to the loss of characteristic landscape features such as hedgerows, field trees and farm ponds. The imaginative use of agri-environmental schemes such as Countryside Stewardship present opportunities to restore and re-create appropriate landscape features, many of which are historic in origin, which can help reinforce local distinctiveness.

2.2.10 The key agricultural land management issues for the vision include:

- protection and enhancement of remaining areas of traditional farmland character which contribute to the character and quality of the Harlow Area landscape;
- improvement of urban fringe farmland, including restoration of characteristic landscape features and elements where appropriate.

Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Landscape Character

- 2.2.11 Despite the extensive urbanisation and the intensification of agricultural activities within the Harlow Area, historical settlement patterns and historic landscape features survive in the present day landscape. Hedgerows, woods, field boundaries and historic buildings make a particular contribution to the history and character of the landscape. Many of these are distinctive landmarks such as historic parks and gardens and groups of historic buildings, while others, such as buried archaeological remains or minor structures, are less visually evident but also contribute to the historic significance of the landscape. The protection and maintenance of these historic features is desirable if their distinctive contribution to the character of the Harlow Area landscape is to be conserved, and their importance as focal points for recreation and access maintained. Such features influence local distinctiveness and help reinforce a strong sense of place.
- 2.2.12 The importance of many historic features within the Harlow Area has been recognised by a range of designations. The loss of, or damage to, features of historic importance may be prevented by appropriate forms of protective designations afforded to them through the planning system and by sympathetic ownership. However, the insidious and inappropriate change to the character and setting of these features is a continuing threat to the character of the historic landscape in some places.
- 2.2.13 The key historic landscape issues for the vision are:
- the need to recognise and understand the grain and fabric of the rural historic landscape;
 - the need to ensure appropriate protection for, and sympathetic ownership of, historic buildings, sites and structures;
 - the need to protect and restore historic designed landscapes.

Recreation Pressures and Conflicts

- 2.2.14 The presence of large populations in urban areas has led to the intense use of the countryside for recreational activities, and the development of managed areas as important amenity resources. The riverside walks, marshes and waterscapes of the Lee Valley Regional Park make this a popular destination for local visitors and tourists alike. The riverside walks along the River Stort Valley and the navigation are also popular recreational resources in the Harlow Area. The high levels of use in these areas often give rise to conflicts between different recreation activities, and to conflicts between recreation and conservation. There

are a number of opportunities for improving the recreational experience within the Harlow Area. Improving access and informal recreation facilities can be linked to new development proposals, such as new and enhanced cycle routes or provision of cycle and pedestrian bridges to improve cross-river access.

2.2.15 Key recreation issues of relevance to the preparation of this vision include:

- the need for sustainable levels of recreation;
- the need to balance recreation and conservation of the natural environment;
- the need to maintain access to and along riversides for recreation;
- the need to improve information and signage for recreation;
- the need for improved visitor facilities;
- the need to manage and resolve recreational conflicts of use;
- the need to provide appropriate boating facilities and infrastructure along the navigation.

Flood Risk

2.2.16 The general hardening of river catchments over the past century due to urbanisation has increased the potential for flooding, and areas of existing and proposed urban land use located within river floodplains are at risk from major flooding. Flood alleviation schemes seek to minimise the risk to people and property, but can have impacts to local landscape character and ecology where poorly designed.

2.2.17 The key flood risk issues for the vision are:

- the need for urban growth to avoid areas identified as at risk to flooding;
- the need to secure environmental improvements in conjunction with flood alleviation schemes.

2.3 Key Opportunities

2.3.1 At a strategic scale, the major opportunities for the future landscapes of the Harlow Area, in terms of enhancement and conservation, are illustrated on Figure 3.1 and summarised below.

- ***Areas of nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value***, including areas designated as:
 - * Ramsar Sites; Special Protection Areas; Special Areas of Conservation; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; National Nature Reserves; Ancient Woodland; County Wildlife Sites; Local Nature Reserves;
 - * Scheduled Monuments; Conservation Areas; Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; Registered Common Land; Ancient Landscapes;
 - * Local Landscape Designations;
- ***Major areas managed for recreation*** (the Lee Valley Regional Park and the Country Park south west of Hatfield Forest).

2.3.2 The Historic Landscape Characterisation studies have identified tracts of landscape within the Harlow Area that retain a high degree of surviving historic features. These historic landscapes, which are not currently recognised through formal designation, include areas with relatively intact field boundary patterns for example. These areas are considered to be of value to the local historic environment, and offer a major opportunity for the future landscapes of the Harlow Area, in terms of enhancement and conservation.

2.3.3 The major areas of opportunity for significant ‘green infrastructure’ improvements include:

- The ***urban fringes and fabric of established urban areas*** – priorities include Harlow, Hoddesdon, Cheshunt, Waltham Abbey, Epping, North Weald Bassett, Sawbridgeworth, Roydon and Lower Nazeing;
- The ***transport system*** - including gateways and major rail/road corridors which are important to business and visitor image;
- Areas of the ***countryside visible from the public realm*** including recreational paths (the Harcamlow Way; Stort Valley Way; Forest Way; Three Forests Way; Lee Valley Walk; and Essex Way);
- The ***setting of industrial and commercial sites***;

- *Areas of disturbed landscape* associated with former, current and proposed mineral extraction works along the Lee and Stort river valleys, and other land uses requiring a rural location (e.g. former airfields).

2.3.4 The vision and landscape principles outlined in Section 3.0 and 4.0 respectively, seek to establish a framework for future landscape protection, green infrastructure provision and urban development that reflects the issues and opportunities identified above.

3.0 STRATEGIC VISION FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

3.0 STRATEGIC VISION FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

3.1 General

3.1.1 The strategic vision for landscapes in the Harlow Area focuses on opportunities for unlocking the potential of Harlow's rural urban fringe. This approach is supported by a current Countryside Agency initiative to develop a new vision for the rural urban fringe as an *'attractive, accessible, diverse and multi-functional'* area that *'serves the needs of both the rural and urban communities, strengthens links between town and country and contributes fully towards sustainable development'* (Unlocking the Potential of the Rural Urban Fringe, Consultation Document, Countryside Agency/Groundwork UK, 2004). The Agency's vision is to develop the potential of rural urban fringes to provide ten key functions as:

- a bridge to the country
- a gateway to the town
- a health centre
- a classroom
- a recycling centre
- a power plant
- a productive landscape
- a place to live sustainably
- an engine for regeneration
- a nature reserve.

3.1.2 Where appropriate in the context of local opportunities and constraints, this approach is reflected within the strategic vision for the Harlow Area set out below.

3.1.3 In recognising that expansion of the town is likely to be needed to meet future development needs, the strategic vision reflects the potential of sustainable new development with new green infrastructure provision to act as a positive catalyst for delivering environmental enhancement benefits in the rural urban fringe. This approach is consistent with the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan, which promotes *inter alia*:

- good quality public spaces
- high quality building design principles
- attractive places in which to live and work

- taking account of impact on existing communities
- integrating economic progress with protection of the environment
- reducing car dependency by early planning of walking and cycling routes
- using new construction standards and techniques to achieve sustainable water supply and tackle climate change.

3.2 Strategic Vision

Key Qualities of the Landscape

3.2.1 The analysis work presented in Volumes 1 and 2 highlights a series of qualities which underlie the essential character of the Harlow Area, and are considered key influences on the development of a strategic vision for future landscapes.

3.2.2 The key qualities of the Harlow Area landscape can be summarised as:

- *Major landscape features providing the structural framework for the town*, i.e.:
 - * The Stort valley and rising land to the north;
 - * The ridge running south-west to north-east along the southern/eastern edge of the town;
 - * Roydon/Nazeing plateau to the west;
 - * Network of green wedges running through the town, connecting with wider countryside;
 - * The woodland blocks, hedgerows and hedgerow trees providing green edges to the town.
- The individual *identity of rural settlements* and their *dispersed pattern* within the landscape.
- The *areas of sensitive historic landscape* not currently recognised through formal designation.
- The *contribution of sites and areas of nature conservation value* as significant elements of the landscape.

- ***Major areas managed for recreation and areas of accessible open space*** within and around the town.
- The ***network of recreational paths*** and other rights of way/access routes providing important linkages between the town, its surrounding settlements and the open countryside.
- ***Key views, landmarks and other landscape elements and features*** that contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

3.2.3 The following overarching strategic vision for the Harlow Area is based on achieving ‘***sustainable future landscapes***’:

‘Sustainable future landscapes’ envision landscapes in which the important environmental qualities and access opportunities of the countryside within the Harlow Area are sustained and positively enhanced, whilst enabling sensitively located and high quality new development to be successfully accommodated to meet strategic development needs.

The ***core themes*** of the strategic vision for sustainable future landscapes in the Harlow Area are:

- ***Conservation and enhancement of well-connected accessible open space, habitats and designated areas*** – as key ‘green infrastructure’ elements of a healthy landscape.
- ***Environmental limits to growth*** – respecting air, water, biodiversity, historic and landscape capacities.
- ***Cultural heritage and local identity*** – understanding the past to inform the future.
- ***New urban edge landscapes of distinction*** – creating an improved image for urban edge landscapes, gateways, transport corridors and other approaches through new and enhanced green infrastructure provision.
- ***Distinctive and appropriate development*** - raising expectations of better designed, higher quality, more environmentally sustainable and distinctive new development that enhances and sustains local character.

- 3.2.4 The vision is illustrated diagrammatically on Figure 3.1.
- 3.2.5 It is intended that the vision for the Harlow Area would complement and underpin the broader vision, strategic objectives and stakeholder aspirations for the wider '*Green Arc*' initiative. The Green Arc seeks to support the creation and protection of an extensive, attractive and valued landscape of well-connected and accessible countryside for people and wildlife in the green belt around the north and east of London and in the southern parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. The strategically important corridors of accessible open greenspace at the core of the Green Arc initiative area, linking the north London suburbs of Enfield and Barnet with the countryside around Harlow, Hoddesdon, Cheshunt and Epping, are within the Harlow Area.

4.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

4.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 For each theme of the strategic vision set out in Section 3.0 above, broad landscape principles have been identified to assist in guiding policies and proposals related to planning and land management within the Harlow Area. The principles are designed to set a positive framework for the development of more detailed landscape/environmental guidelines to inform specific initiatives - such as the Countryside Agency/Groundwork Hertfordshire proposed Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow Area, or specific development proposals. They are not intended to be prescriptive.

The Influence of Gibberd's Master Plan

- 4.1.2 The landscape principles set out below reflect an analysis of Sir Frederick Gibberd's original 1948 Master Plan for the Harlow New Town undertaken as part of the Study. The key aspects of the Master Plan which have influenced the principles are summarised as:

- The Master Plan was strongly influenced by the *underlying character of the landscape*, and Gibberd utilised the landscape pattern of hills, valleys and woods as a framework in which to set the town.
- The importance placed by Gibberd on the *relationship between town and country* – the rural urban fringe. The Master Plan envisioned a strong visual contrast between the town and the surrounding landscape to reduce urban influences on the countryside.
- Gibberd placed particular emphasis upon developing a *network of interconnected pedestrian and cycle ways*, which allowed relatively easy access to the surrounding countryside. Wherever possible, the Master Plan used former rural lanes as cycle tracks and footpaths, which ensured the conservation of their trees, hedgerows and wild flowers and promoted an accessible and relatively cohesive network of routes throughout the urban fringe.
- The Master Plan contained *provision for tree planting on a massive scale* to enhance green space within the town and to provide more variety and contrast within the fabric of the urban landscape. Much of this tree planting has now matured, and creates a soft green

edge to the town in several locations - for example, along the northern edge of the Temple Fields industrial/commercial estate.

- Gibberd also used *topographic features*, such as the mounds designed by Dame Sylvia Crowe, to create visually interesting landforms and to screen buildings along the Stort Valley from the riverside walk.
- One of the most distinctive aspects of Gibberd's Master Plan is the open green spaces or '*green wedges*' that visually separate and physically define the town's neighbourhoods. The green wedge network has recently been extended into new development areas on the eastern fringes of the town.
- The *historic village settlements* of Old Harlow and Churchgate Street, along with individual older buildings, were retained in the Master Plan to provide a link with the history of the area and to maintain a sense of place.

4.2 Principles for Conservation and Enhancement of Well-Connected Accessible Open Spaces, Habitats and Designated Areas in the Landscape

4.2.1 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and undeveloped land is an important theme of the vision. Woodland, hedgerow field boundaries, river corridors and their tributaries provide important ecological corridors within the Harlow Area landscape. Several habitats of value for birds and other wildlife are an essential component of the landscape, and their conservation and extension is critical to the maintenance of biodiversity in the Harlow Area.

4.2.2 Many areas of undeveloped open land in the Harlow Area are recognised for their nature conservation importance by protective designations, which seek to resist inappropriate change through the planning system. Positive management of these sites is needed to maintain their nature conservation value together with the creation and restoration of new and degraded habitats for the benefit of wildlife. Areas of undeveloped open land are also important as buffer zones to development and as areas of publicly accessible open space.

4.2.3 Priorities for conservation and enhancement of open space and habitats within the Harlow Area should be based on:

- the need to protect existing habitats of value for wildlife and important open spaces from inappropriate development or activity and to enhance them;
- the need to improve and maintain the connectivity of open space, wildlife sites and habitats throughout the landscape as a network of corridors by maintaining, enhancing and, in some places, restoring important ecological links with existing habitats, and linking new created habitats where appropriate;
- the need to identify and evaluate the existing non-designated wildlife resource in order to guide appropriate management and sensitive development.

4.2.4 The *principles for open space in the landscape* are:

- maintain the strategic balance of open land and urban areas, giving priority to the protection of river corridors, common land and other publicly accessible land;
- improve connectivity and circulation between adjacent areas of public open space;
- consider enhancement and provision of access opportunities along ‘green ways’, giving priority to proposals that reinforce linkages between existing and proposed areas of public open space and amenity land;
- protect areas of amenity space in urban areas from unrelated development and consider options for improving the visual and environmental quality of these areas through sensitive design and location of street furniture, facilities and tree planting schemes;
- secure opportunities to create new and varied public open space or amenity land arising from proposals for new development or redevelopment schemes;
- promote the value of undeveloped land as strategic gaps or buffer zones for protecting sensitive landscapes from encroachment by urban development and reducing the impact of agricultural ‘improvements’.

4.2.5 The *principles for wildlife and habitats in the landscape* are:

- manage known sites of nature conservation value or interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and County Wildlife Sites, as an integral semi-natural element of the wider landscape;
- base detailed enhancement schemes on a comprehensive evaluation of ecological management needs and priorities;

- identify the existing resource, using surveys by experts where possible, before any work is undertaken and integrate site specific knowledge with strategic proposals to target the optimal areas for construction or management activities;
- promote sensitive proposals which avoid or retain existing habitat or features of nature conservation value and which provide funding for their management, habitat creation or appropriate planting as required;
- where possible, encourage the planting of appropriate vegetation to link with and extend adjacent semi-natural woodland, scrub and grassland by reflecting species' composition to provide a linear corridor linking isolated habitats;
- encourage positive management of semi-natural or artificial habitats such as woodlands, grasslands, scrub and gravelpits, giving consideration to the reintroduction of traditional management regimes such as coppicing, pollarding or flood meadow habitat management;
- encourage restoration of semi-natural habitats along river courses - such as reedbeds, overhanging trees and submerged vegetation, and bays, beaches and shallow marginal habitats;
- reduce conflicts between recreation and nature conservation by restrictions on public access where it would be detrimental to wildlife;
- where appropriate, consider replacement planting programmes for mature trees.

4.3 Principles for Environmental Limits to Growth

4.3.1 The 'environment' is regarded as important in its own right, instead of simply a resource to support economic activity or to provide for human needs. It is now widely accepted that society will need to adapt to issues of resource depletion and climate change, and that environmental limits to growth are an increasing key constraint on development. This thinking underpins the concept of sustainable development.

4.3.2 The *key environmental capacity principles* are:

- minimising greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants;
- respecting water as a critical resource for the health of people and wildlife;
- accepting the need to adapt to effects of climate change such as increased flooding;
- maintaining a critical mass of connected habitats to support biodiversity;
- avoiding unnecessary loss of irreplaceable evidence of the past within the historic environment;

- accommodating change in ways that protect and enhance valued characteristics of the landscape, including provision of physical and/or structure landscape limits to expansion to define and contain urban development.

4.4 Principles for Cultural Heritage and Local Identity

4.4.1 Numerous places of historical and cultural interest make a positive contribution to the character and local identity of the Harlow Area and people's experience of it. In addition to prominent, nationally important and protected historic monuments, other less obvious structures and features add a strong historical sense of place. The following key features, elements and characteristics are priorities for the conservation and enhancement of historic character within the Harlow Area landscape:

- common land;
- historic riverside meadows;
- historic water control structures (locks, weirs, sluices);
- historic parklands and gardens;
- historic buildings;
- ancient woodland and mature trees;
- landscapes with strong cultural associations linked to important historical events;
- historic field and hedgerow patterns;
- historic river crossing sites and bridges;
- visible archaeological sites and monuments.

4.4.2 The appropriate protection and management of these heritage features connected to the use and development of the landscape is an integral theme of the overall vision.

4.4.3 *The principles for the management of historic sites and features in the landscape* are:

- give priority or particular attention to the significance and management requirements of historic buildings, sites and structures, and historic landscape features and elements;
- protect important views and vistas of historic landmarks and their settings from inappropriate landscape change or intrusion by new developments, having regard to opportunities for enhancement of views through redevelopment and improvement of degraded areas of built and natural environment;

- consider proposals for change at sensitive historic sites based on a detailed inventory of historic features, an evaluation of priorities for preservation, and a consideration of opportunities for restoration and repair of neglected or damaged features;
- encourage the appropriate re-use and renovation of neglected historic buildings and structures where this would ensure the perpetuation of these buildings as attractive and distinctive features;
- research and promote the historical and cultural associative value and interest of historic landscapes;
- have particular regard to the conservation and enhancement of designed parklands and gardens, giving priority to:
 - * avenues and designed vistas
 - * reversion of arable to grassland landcover
 - * specimen tree groups and field trees
 - * exotic plantings
 - * ornamental lakes and follies
 - * estate boundary features (tree belts, ‘deer pales’ and ornamental fencing, gates and gate houses);
- protect historic riverside buildings and structures from redevelopment or inappropriate changes of use;
- promote the historical use of the Rivers Stort and Lee for transport, improving where appropriate opportunities for access to and along the rivers via new piers and jetties.

4.5 Principles for New Urban Edge Landscapes of Distinction

- 4.5.1 New ‘landscapes of distinction’ is a key theme for improving the image of the Harlow Area. In recognising that expansion of Harlow is likely to be needed to meet future development needs, this theme reflects the opportunity to establish a new framework for urban-edge landscapes that offers varied and interesting open spaces as buffers to development, with distinctive edges, focuses, iconic landmarks, nodes and corridors of different size, scale and character. These new landscapes would help define and complement existing and new urban form, and differentiate, integrate and buffer a range of land use activities within the urban fringe landscape.
- 4.5.2 This theme is supported by the principles of the other four components of the vision for sustainable future landscapes.

4.6 Principles for Distinctive and Appropriate Development

4.6.1 Poorly designed new development erodes the established character of the countryside through a lack of respect for local diversity and distinctiveness. Common use of standardised building designs and layouts, and the sub-urbanisation of rural settlements through poorly designed town and village extensions, can have particularly significant effects on countryside character.

4.6.2 Good design is essential to providing high quality sustainable development that respects regional diversity, local character and distinctiveness, and achieves harmony or “good fit” between buildings, settlements and their landscape settings. Good design should also be about responding to local community needs, and encompassing sustainable construction practices in relation to energy efficiency and resource use.

4.6.3 Future proposals for development and improvement of existing developed areas should strengthen local landscape character (as described in Volume 1), and be based on an improved quality of design as a priority.

4.6.4 The *principles for new development in the landscape* are:

- maintain and improve established open space and existing patterns of public access;
- ensure that new development sites are not severed from their countryside setting by providing footpath and cycleway linkages to the wider access network;
- avoid adverse impacts on features of ecological, landscape, historical and amenity value;
- resist further intensification of tranquil rural areas unless absolutely necessary;
- fully integrate new development into the landscape setting by use of distinctive design details and materials which help reinforce a strong sense of identity;
- protect, and where appropriate enhance, existing views of key visual and historical landmarks;
- provide attractive built frontages that make a positive contribution to the experience of urban-edge landscapes;
- ensure that associated facilities such as car parks, storage areas and access roads are screened in key views;
- protect and respect the historic value, setting and function of existing built heritage through sympathetic location, design and layout of new development and appropriate re-use of redundant buildings;

- protect the small-scale and informal character of rural settlements from intensification and coalescence from inappropriate redevelopment, improvements or expansion;
- extend existing areas of residential development in environmentally acceptable locations only;
- seek opportunities to improve the visual and environmental quality of existing residential, commercial and industrial areas;
- wherever possible, give full consideration and priority to the reuse of redundant land and buildings over greenfield development;
- secure a high standard of architecture for all new urban development to improve the visual quality of landscapes and townscapes;
- consider opportunities for the creation of new landmark buildings to contribute to iconic or memorable places;
- consider the cumulative visual impact of the height, form and character of new buildings and structures on their landscape setting, both in long distance and local views;
- integrate publicly accessible land into new development sites, ensuring that opportunities to improve existing areas of open space or create new ones are fully considered in new development;
- ensure that, where possible, new development supports traditional activities and uses that contribute to local character and sense of place;
- consider options for the regeneration of transitional urban-edge areas through new development to restore visual and physical links with the surrounding countryside;
- consider options for comprehensive redevelopment of redundant land where this would provide greatest benefits for visual and environmental improvement of the local landscape.

5.0 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

5.0 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 This section identifies priorities for the development of strategies/initiatives and additional work required to provide additional information to assist in delivering the strategic vision, and to underpin the application of the landscape principles.

5.2 Priorities for Conservation and Enhancement of Well-Connected Accessible Open Spaces, Habitats and Designated Areas in the Landscape

- 5.2.1 *Strategies and initiatives* for achieving this component of the vision include:

- ***Biodiversity targets*** - implementation of local and national Biodiversity Action Plan targets for enhancing priority habitats and species through beneficial ecological land management initiatives;
- ***Harlow Area Connected Landscapes Initiative*** – develop a partnership-based approach to identifying areas suitable for promoting a network of habitats and corridors for wildlife based on watercourses (rivers, drains, ditches and streams), roadside and/or railway verges, woodlands and hedgerows;
- ***Understanding the resource*** – promote sharing of records between biological recording organisations to provide relevant and robust information to guide management and planning initiatives.

- 5.2.2 *Priorities for further work* required to develop additional information to inform the implementation of this vision theme include:

- ***Phase I Habitat Survey*** of the entire Harlow Area and incorporate into the Geographic Information Library developed by this study;
- ***Identification of protected species records and potential*** within the Harlow Area using Phase I Habitat Survey data and review of citations for designated sites and records held by biological recording organisations;
- ***Targeted surveys for key Biodiversity Action Plan species*** – e.g. white clawed crayfish, otter, bats, great crested newts, reptiles;
- ***Identification and mapping of existing and potential wildlife corridors*** onto GIS to inform a spatial strategy for enhancing the connectivity of habitats at the landscape scale.

- 5.2.3 The Countryside Agency's proposed *Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow Area* will address much of the above information requirements. This project aims to identify and map additional and more detailed environmental data to inform spatial priorities and guidelines for green infrastructure provision associated with development proposals within the Harlow Area.

5.3 Priorities for Environmental Limits to Growth

- 5.3.1 *Strategies and initiatives* for achieving this component of the vision include:

- ***Transport initiatives*** – promote integrated public transport within the Harlow Area linked to future growth that offers realistic alternatives to the car;
- ***Renewable energy initiatives*** – encourage development of renewable energy sources such as growing of energy crops on agricultural land to support diversification initiatives;
- ***Flood risk management*** – avoid development in areas directly at risk from flooding, and support floodwater retention initiatives in combination with securing wider ecological and landscape benefits within river floodplains;
- ***Planning initiatives*** – investigate setting of criteria for thresholds or limits of acceptable environmental change to shape development opportunities.

5.4 Priorities for Cultural Heritage and Local Identity

- 5.4.1 *Strategies and initiatives* for achieving this component of the vision include:

- ***Positive planning*** - local authorities are encouraged to incorporate specific policies into their local plans, which seek to safeguard and enhance historic features in the landscape by their incorporation into development schemes;
- ***Positive management initiatives*** – establish Heritage Lottery Fund supported schemes such as (i) Townscape Heritage Initiatives to provide grant-aid to assist private owners to undertake enhancement of urban Conservation Areas and (ii) Landscape Partnerships Projects for conservation and enhancement of whole landscapes in rural areas; and target Countryside Stewardship Schemes at funding restoration of historic parks and historic features in the wider countryside.

5.4.2 **Priorities for further work** required to develop additional information to inform the implementation of this vision theme include:

- **Strategic review of heritage resources** - support proposals to undertake a comprehensive strategic review of archaeology and the historic environment within the Harlow Area as currently planned by Essex and Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Teams;
- **Focused analysis** – prepare detailed study and analysis of the archaeological record within the Harlow Area;
- **Conservation planning** – prepare conservation management plans to promote understanding of the historical significance, identify management issues and set out policies for sites and buildings of historic importance; prepare Appraisals of all rural and urban Conservation Areas within the Harlow Area;
- **Historic Parks and Gardens** – undertake research into historic parks and gardens to inform review of sites included on English Heritage Register.

5.5 **Priorities for New Urban Edge Landscapes of Distinction**

5.5.1 Priorities for further work to develop additional information to inform the implementation of this vision theme include:

- detailed analysis of green infrastructure provision within key transport corridors and gateways to the town;
- detailed analysis of green infrastructure provision within the western edge of Harlow, particularly around the Pinnacles Industrial Estate;
- further analysis to integrate existing and proposed green infrastructure within the New Hall/Church Langley area between Harlow and the M11.

5.6 **Priorities for Distinctive and Appropriate Development**

5.6.1 **Strategies and initiatives** for achieving this component of the vision include:

- **Positive planning** - local authorities are encouraged to incorporate specific policies into their local plans, which seek to promote distinctive and appropriate development that respects the character of the local landscape, important views and the promotion of access in terms of layout, height and form, and encourage higher quality planning applications that reflect environmentally sustainable construction best practice principles;

- ***Preparation of character-based design guidance*** - such as countryside design summaries, village design statements and the design elements of Parish Plans to provide objective, robust and clear design criteria for developers which reflect local character and community views.

5.6.2 ***Priorities for further work*** required to develop additional information to inform the implementation of this vision theme include:

- ***Identifying examples of good practice development plan design policies*** from around the country to provide a model for use by local planning authorities in the Harlow Area;
- ***Reviewing recent examples of site masterplans*** to identify good practice principles for successful integration of new developments into their landscape settings.



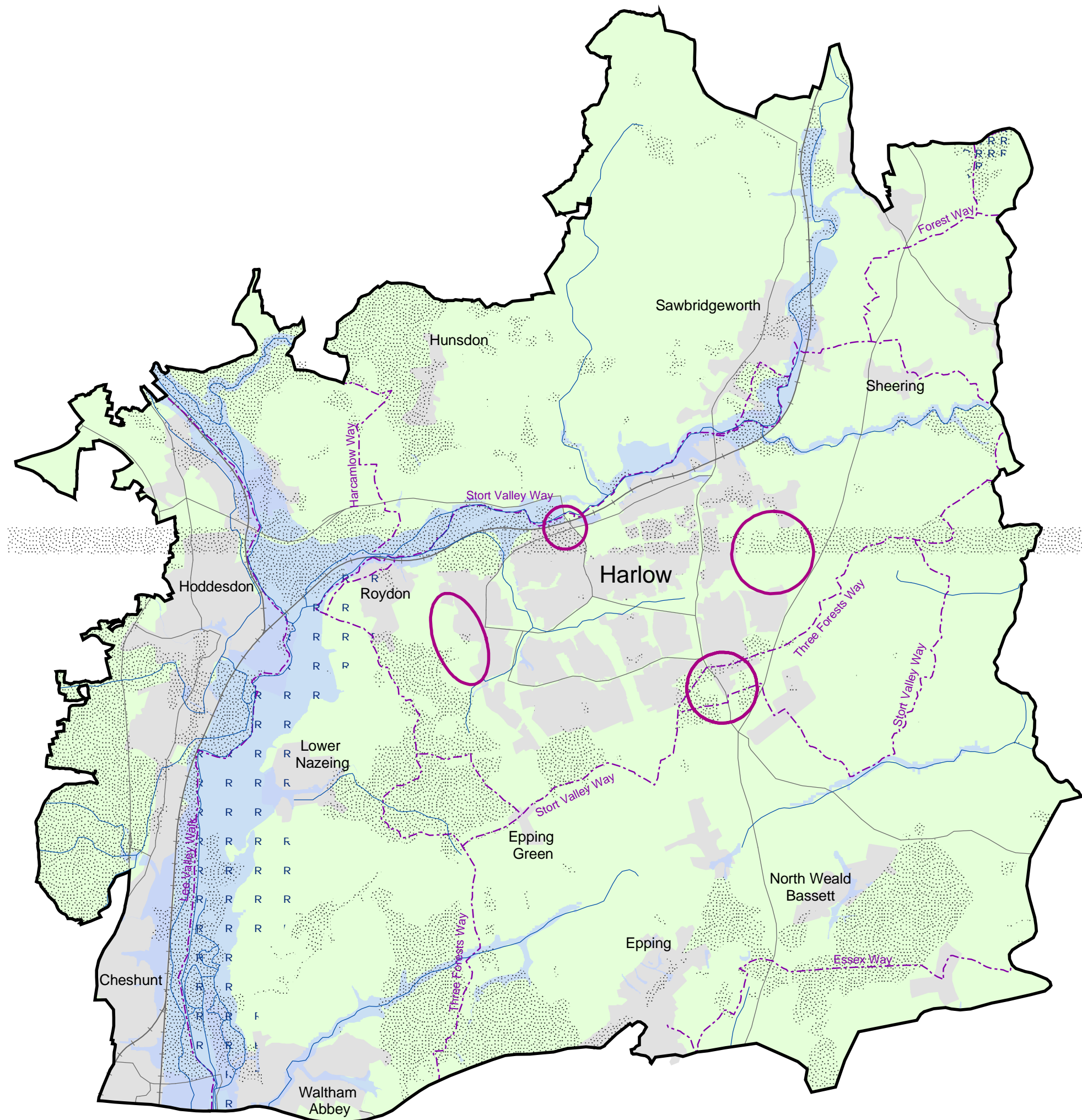
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Key

- Priority Areas for New Urban Edge Landscapes of Distinction
- Conservation & Enhancement of Green Spaces
- Designated Areas of Nature Conservation, Historic Environment and Landscape Value - Focus for Strategic 'Green Infrastructure' Network
- Flood Risk Areas - Key Environmental Limit to Growth
- Major Areas Managed for Recreation - Focus for Connected Network of Accessible Open Space
- Urban Areas - Environmental Improvements to Improve Image
- Recreational Paths - Key Links/Green Ways
- Major Rivers - Focus of Strategic Green Corridor Network
- Major Road Corridors - Focus for Environmental Enhancements
- Railway Line Corridor - Targetted Environmental Enhancements at Approaches to Stations
- Harlow Area



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Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study



February 2005

Figure 3.1

Strategic Vision for Sustainable Future Landscapes in the Harlow Area