

8: Historic Landscape Characterisation in England and a Hampshire case study

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Abstract: *This paper describes English Heritage's national programme of 'historic landscape characterisation' carried out by local government. Historic Landscape Characterisation is a new GIS-based archaeological method for defining the historic and archaeological dimension of the present-day landscape. It can explain how and why the landscape looks as it does, identify landscape's 'time-depth' and facilitate sustainable management. One of the earlier Historic Landscape Characterisation projects, in Hampshire, is presented as an example. Its methods, techniques and results are summarised, and the paper concludes with reflections on the use of Historic Landscape Characterisation in heritage management.*

Introduction

This paper uses the broad definition of 'historic landscape' that was developed in England during the first half of the 1990s to help with protecting, conserving and managing historic landscape character. This definition is concerned with how archaeologists can see and interpret physical remains and other historical attributes of the present landscape as indicators of how that landscape's character has developed over time through the interaction of people with their environment. This particular focus sits alongside many other perceptions of landscape, notably those used by landscape architects and by archaeologists who study the past at landscape scale. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) does not do everything for historic landscape studies, but it does much more at its particular chosen scale than anything else that has been tried in England so far. Above all it is applicable to practical management and conservation.

There have been many debates on integrated conservation over recent years (eg Brown & Berry 1995; Grenville 1999; Lambrick 1985; Macinnes & Wickham-Jones 1992). The quest for fully integrated conservation is both the starting point and the eventual destination of historic landscape characterisation, using sustainability as its vehicle. Historic landscape character is related to many other realms of conservation and environmental planning and can unite many different strands of environmental or heritage value. Character, in this holistic sense, already has a place in many areas of conservation and planning in England (eg Countryside Commission *et al.* 1997; DCMS/DEFRA 2002, p.31).

Historic landscape characterisation is concerned with recognising the many ways in which the present countryside reflects how people have exploited and

changed their physical environment, and adapted to it through time. It considers this with respect to different social, economic, technological and cultural aspects of life, and the varied underlying influences of geography, history and tradition (Countryside Commission 1993; 1997; Fairclough *et al.* 1999). It seeks to identify patterns of change and important relics of past change, and to analyse how and why patterns consistently vary from one place to another. The core premise of historic landscape characterisation and its application in planning and conservation is that relationships between people and their environment are dynamic and ever changing. The key policy issue is how society can influence the direction and pace of future change whilst still maintaining links with the past in a way that enriches the present.

Origins and objectives

English Heritage's work on historic landscape started in the early 1990s. Its aims were to find a better way of incorporating historic depth and character into the process of general landscape assessment work carried out by landscape architects with particular concerns for the visual and scenic attributes of landscape. It sought to fill a widening gap in heritage conservation. There had been rapid and continual improvements in the ability to manage change to the historic environment at site, monument and building level but there had been little success in extending this work from sites to their wider landscape context or to the whole historic landscape. There was a need to do more to fulfil the aspirations of PPG15 if the 'all-pervasive' quality of the historic environment was to be addressed in spatial planning and conservation.

After some preliminary work (Fairclough 1991), in 1993–94 English Heritage commissioned a research project on

approaches to historic landscape from Cobhams Resource Consultants and the Oxford Archaeological Unit. The project explored theory and methodology, reviewed current practices in historic landscape work and recommended an overall approach to assessment based on well-established procedures. The conclusions led firmly away from suggestions to identify 'special' landscapes for a national register, and pointed us instead towards an approach based on universal character, serving many conservation purposes, and fitting the then newly-emerging ideas of sustainability. The results of the project were published under the title *Yesterday's World, Tomorrow's Landscape* (Fairclough *et al.* 1999). The title was chosen to emphasise the role of landscape characterisation in helping to influence decisions about the future appearance of the landscape, and to inform them historically and archaeologically, rather than trying to prevent all change in a few areas. It also carries the message that landscape, conceptually, only exists in the here-and-now or, in whatever form we choose in the future.

Through this project, we were looking for a method that would deliver multiple objectives. First was the promotion of awareness of local identity, and second characterisation and better understanding and appreciation of the historic landscape. Characterisation of the historic landscape was also designed to facilitate conservation and to protect historic landscape character. It aims to do this by strengthening conservation and management through local land management by farmers, spatial planning processes and development control by local authority action, integration with other conservation aims and through development itself, by the Environment Agency, for example. Above all, the study was used to explore the basis for a method that was both rapid to carry out and robust in its use, and that would allow archaeological and historic landscape interests to be incorporated into other landscape work.

English Heritage established a few precepts to guide the work. First, we recognised that the whole landscape is historic, but that landscape character encompasses ecology and scenic values as well, and involves appreciating and perceiving landscape, for example through its associations; there are also complementary social values. We assumed that historic landscape character now only exists in the present-day landscape, that it is indivisible, but locally distinctive and that all areas have historic landscape character. The historic landscape is an idea, not a thing, and historic character is part of a definition of wider landscape character, to which it makes a major, indeed dominant, contribution.

Most importantly, we worked on the assumption that the historic landscape is first and foremost the product of change: it is an artefact of past landuse, social structures and political decisions. The role of complex historic process in the landscape needs to be given full recognition, with

particular reference to patterns and inter-relationships within and between areas and to evolution, change and continuity, all of which are legible in the current landscape in various ways. Attributes such as causality, time-depth, diversity and transparency are all-important, but relict *landscapes*, as opposed to relict *components*, do not exist. Perception can define areas with high densities of relict components, but invariably within a landscape which has later and current layers.

As a consequence, it seems necessary to accept that future landscape change is inevitable because landscape is and always has been a product of change in an artefact of past activity and landuse and a living entity, the location for human, animal and plant life. Landscape conservation cannot be separated from landuse and management. The way the environment is exploited and managed determines how its historic character is retained, developed or changed, and how fast change takes place. The future of landscape character depends on its managed evolution, everywhere not just in special places. Finally, sustainability and landscape conservation go hand-in-hand: the historic landscape is a major aspect of environment capital.

The new method

The methodology we have developed is perhaps 'new' to archaeology, but was not completely new in other fields. It borrowed from current practice and ideas in mainstream landscape assessment. This was a conscious and deliberate borrowing in order to create a common language, to find ways to recast our archaeological information and understanding into words, concepts and above all images that would be readily understandable to non-archaeologists, and in particular to planners and landscape architects. The method also draws on well-established principles of archaeological resource management and on some aspects of archaeological landscape theory.

Crucial to the method is its scale and broad-brush approach. It adopts scales used by landscape assessment, normally county-wide in an English context, rather than the smaller, parish level, approach of earlier archaeological or historic landscape study, which tended to treat landscapes merely as large sites. It works through archaeological perspectives that are vertical and map-based, seeking chronological depth beneath, rather than the landscape architect's predominantly horizontal, surface-based aesthetic. From landscape assessment, the method borrowed the practice of analysing the present landscape, rather than just the partial remains and survivals of earlier periods (Countryside Commission 1993; 1997). This can lead to an emphasis that some might consider undue on the latest layers of landscape stratigraphy and on the post-medieval landscape, but as said above earlier phases, especially if surviving mainly as site-complexes, can be understood and managed by different means. Finally, the method treats landscape, not as a *view* to be

assessed aesthetically, but in an archaeological sense as material culture. It sees it as a thing that has been produced by human action and which can be read as a *text* and quarried for meanings that can be either implicit or externally inferred.

A controversial aspect of the approach is the distinction between fairly rapid characterisation of large regions and slower, more detailed work at more local scale. The former is based on quite broad general assumptions derived from the conclusions of local studies or broad-based morphological traits. The latter uses rather more traditional methods of painstaking archaeological fieldwork and historical research, often over long time periods and usually only in small areas.

The methodology was first fully developed and used in Cornwall (Cornwall County Council 1996; Herring 1995; 1998). This project drew on many years' work at a landscape scale by the archaeological staff of the Cornwall Archaeology Unit (CAU). It was supported by the ideas then just emerging from the English Heritage research project (Cobhams/OAU/English Heritage 1993) and from *Views From the Past* (Countryside Commission 1993), although the CAU's own expertise was crucial.

Since 1994, historic landscape characterisation has been carried out for many county councils and similar areas, and about half of England is covered. A list of historic landscape characterisation reports can be found in Annex A at the end of this paper. A similar method has been adopted for Scotland (Bruce *et al.* 1999; Dixon & Hingley this volume), and the approach has been tested in Ireland (Environment Resource Management & ERA- Maptec Ltd 2000). In methodological terms, progress in England has taken two forms:

- Application of the method to other areas at a similar, mainly county-level, scale.
- The development, modification and 'proving' of the techniques, both in Cornwall and in new areas.

Reviews of the position reached by 2001 are forthcoming (Fairclough forthcoming a; b; c).

Main areas of development have been the increased use of GIS, and experiments, largely successful, using historic maps, more advanced interpretative approaches and more complex classifications. Each project has drawn on its predecessors' experience and the methodology has therefore evolved through practice, as well as continuing to be informed by theory. The more recent projects (eg Hampshire described in this paper and more recently Lancashire, Darlington this volume) have brought in new approaches and techniques. We should not yet, however, assume that there is a definitive or perfect method, and a full review of all current methodologies will be completed during 2002, to help codify best practices and options.

The biggest challenge undoubtedly is to establish a stronger link between the characterisation process and peoples' personal perceptions of the historic character of their own area; building on historic landscape characterisation for this purpose in Lancashire (Darlington this volume) is part of an EU Culture 2000 three year project 'European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape' (<http://pcl-eu.de>; see Ermischer this volume).

Progress to the end of 2001

The progress of historic landscape characterisation in England is shown on figure 8.1. All the projects so far have been carried out (usually in-house but occasionally, as in Hampshire, by consultants) by local authorities (usually County Councils) using English Heritage grants. Local authority involvement and ownership (to ensure that the results are used within planning and conservation work), and the reliance on local authority staff expertise, are as essential aspects of the methodology as the choice of scale (neither local or regional) and the flexibility to adapt it to local circumstances. In the English context, this is not a programme of work that should be centralised and carried out by one national body.

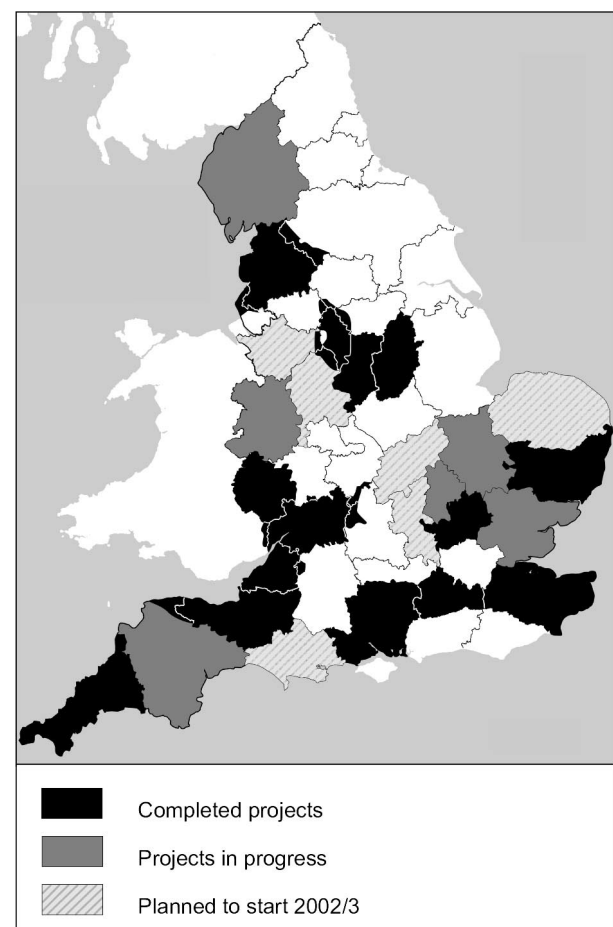


Fig.8.1: Progress at March 2002 with English Heritages programme of Historic Landscape Characterisation (Drawn by Vince Griffin, Centre for Archaeology, English Heritage).

The application of historic landscape characterisation confirms the Cornwall experience (Herring 1998) of its general flexibility, its ability to meet several objectives at the same time, and its sensitivity and adaptability to local circumstances. The various maps are generally comparable, but they are not identical because they have been adapted to local situations; they do not distort interpretation by forcing local distinctiveness into a national typology. Every county's map is different, but they differ in ways that reflect local and regional landscape diversity. Each county is different: their landscapes are different, as are their histories and archaeology, not to mention their contemporary culture and attitude to landscape. Furthermore the programme and its methodology has deliberately been established not as the basis for a definitive characterisation for each county but as a first attempt awaiting future refinement. This will allow for new methods and ideas to be explored and for future testing against both local perception and more detailed analysis of change in particular areas.

The point is also fast approaching when the individual county-level results need to be brought together, perhaps in a simpler, higher-level form, as regional and later national overviews. These will be distillations of all the county Historic Landscape Characterisation maps. They will need to be at a lower level of detail, however, calling for further generalisation of data and interpretation to reflect the higher scale. In simple terms, character is defined by the balance between similarity and contrast, and this balance varies with scale. Landscape character at regional and national level will, therefore, need to be assessed differently, not merely the sum of all local maps, but a different perspective.

National compatibility will also be attained by placing Historic Landscape Characterisation maps within other national frameworks, such as the two which already exist, the Countryside Character Map and the English Heritage Settlement Diversity Map produced by Brian Roberts and Stuart Wrathmell (Countryside Agency 1999; Countryside Commission 1998; Roberts & Wrathmell 2000). The latter sub-divides England into major zones of nucleated settlement and cleared land and of dispersed settlement and woodland, with more refined local sub-divisions and strong signs that the structure or pattern revealed has very early origins.

In conclusion then and as a preface to the Hampshire case study, the benefits of this new method are that it can be carried out relatively swiftly using available information, yet it creates new understandings of the present landscape (most importantly, about its historic dimension). This can generate future research; in particular it provides a context for existing archaeological and other data (for example ecological). It helps to understand the limitations of present knowledge, and thus offers a predictive tool; its products, unlike some archaeological work, are easily accessible to

other professions, for example, planners or to the general public.

Hampshire: a case study

This case study examines one of the early Historic Landscape Characterisation projects in Hampshire (fig.8.2). The pioneering Cornwall project has already been published, (Herring 1998), and Hampshire has been chosen as the example for this paper because it marked a major step forward in the use of GIS and interpretative approaches, and has heavily influenced later projects (eg Lancashire, Darlington this volume). The methodology and results are drawn in a much-abbreviated form from the project report written by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) and Scott Wilson Resource Consultants (formerly Cobhams) as part of a project carried out in 1998 for Hampshire County Council (HCC) and English Heritage (Lambrick & Bramhill 1999). The case study concludes with reflections on how the Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation has been implemented within local government conservation, planning, landscape and environmental practice.

Hampshire was already well covered by conventional landscape assessment carried out by the county council at scales from national to local, providing a rich and valuable source of different perspectives. The Historic Landscape Characterisation project was therefore carried out as a process of building on existing work. It sought to enrich the traditional approach by emphasising time-depth and historic process, and showing how different areas reflect different patterns and rates of change in the past.



Fig.8.2: Hampshire.

The project brief sought an approach based on the model applied by Cornwall, Avon, and more recently the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, drawing on the English Heritage research project mentioned above (Cobhams/OAU/English Heritage 1993; Fairclough 1999). The main objective of the project was to produce a digital interactive map of Hampshire's historic landscape character, compatible with the county planning department's GIS, that would be a framework for future district-level historic landscape assessment within the county, and that would inform development planning and control and countryside conservation. The work used maps at 1:25,000 scale of c.1996/7 and the product was to be supported by an explanatory report and archive.

Definition of Historic Landscape Types

A number of principles and practical considerations were established at the outset:

- The assessment should characterise the present day countryside of the whole county,
- The map should reflect different forms of human interaction with the environment and change through time,
- Interactions should be mapped as areas not as sites;
- Mapping should reflect current landuse characteristics and those earlier components with a substantial impact on visible landscape character.

A decision was taken that characteristics derivable only from historical evidence and not visible in some form in the landscape should not be mapped, including subsoil archaeology and the distribution of individual sites and monuments. Such data is too site-specific and the archaeological data at least can in any case be overlaid on the map from existing digital sources.

The first stage of the study involved creating a set of Historic Landscape Types, the basic approach to deciding the range of variants in the classification was pragmatic. It was decided that the morphological, spatial, functional or chronological distinctions of broad types must be reasonably easily identifiable and mapped. In addition, the classification should be set at a level that allows the definition of a sufficiently large range of types to avoid losing useful distinctions while not creating so many types that impossibly fine and unrepeatable distinctions would be required. On this basis, a total of 85 Historic Landscape Types were defined, grouped into 14 broad categories, and are listed in the Annex B.

Mapping and digitising

Two people, Rob O'Shea of SWRC and Matt Ridley of OAU, carried out the character mapping. Using two workers risks introducing inconsistencies from their different perceptions and interpretations, but it is faster, allows cross-validation, introduces continuous mutually supportive discussions of difficult interpretations, and more mundanely, brings flexibility to share more tedious

tasks during repetitive task of mapping. Independent checking and amendment by George Lambrick provided further crosschecks, so that the final map represents a three-way consensus of interpretation.

Six 10km squares were mapped to provide a test sample that covered representative parts of the county. This stage validated and refined the classification of types, with some visual assessment in the field. In the main mapping phase, the Historic Landscape Types were mapped manually in pencil on film overlays covering up to two adjoining 10km² at 1:25,000. A continuous mosaic of polygons, each identified by the appropriate type code, was created to represent areas assigned to the Historic Landscape Types. Commentaries on the mapping for each 10km² were completed as the work proceeded in order to record interpretation and decision-making. As part of the interpretative process, cross checking against sources was carried out as mapping proceeded and a constant process of map checking was a day to day aspect of the project.

When complete, the film overlays were scanned to create raster map tiles which were then joined together by geo-referencing each tile at two 10km² intersections (with hindsight four would have been better). The polygons were digitised by drawing vector lines over the raster scans, the polygon topology was created and the resultant polygons were labelled and colour-coded according to their type to create a visually effective map. Each type was assigned a separate GIS layer so that any combination can be switched on or off. The figures included in the main report (Lambrick & Bramhill 1999) illustrate a small selection of the innumerable possible combinations that can be generated from the 'map'. A few of these are included here (pl.8.1). In effect there is not a single map, but a highly interactive spatial data set that is capable of producing many combinations of mapped data or diagrams (pl.8.2).

Other map data sets were also added to the GIS. These include post-code classification data to provide a further insight into settlement pattern, the County Council's digital mapping of topographically-based landscape character areas and landscape types, modern civil parish and District boundaries; and the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey raster base map. Sites and Monument Record data and a continuous mosaic of air photographs were already available on GIS for parallel use.

Results and analysis

The flexibility of the GIS-based classification, and the potential for combining it with other data, allows the results of the project to be analysed in a large number of ways. It is possible, for example, to use the map to understand the patterning of archaeological sites recorded on the sites and monuments records, whether on the basis of survival in terms of later landuse, or of presumed original distribution. A number of analytical approaches were

tested during the project. Four main areas are summarised here:

- An overall assessment of landscape change.
- Time-depth in the current landscape.
- Historical attributes of the current landscape.
- Parish and community groupings.

Landscape Change

The last 125 years or so have had a major impact on the character of Hampshire and much of the county's landscape now reflects this. Large-scale urbanisation took place, expanding from key, long-standing centres of defence and trade at Portsmouth and Southampton. The growth of London and of surrounding military establishments has also had their effect on the proliferation of urban and sub-urban growth in north-east Hampshire. As a result of these 20th and late 19th century changes, it is only a few parts of Hampshire, for example areas bordering open areas of downland such as Martin Down on the edge of Cranborne Chase, that now clearly retain earlier historic landscape character in large measure.

Large parts of the county however, have field systems that reflect informal, mainly pre-parliamentary enclosure of the 17th to 19th century. Many of Hampshire's medieval open fields were enclosed before the general parliamentary enclosure movement and substantial parts of the chalk remained open downland until the late 18th century although much had previously been arable in late prehistoric and Roman times). During the 19th century large parts of the chalk areas, including much open down-land and large areas of heathland, woodland and extensive wood pasture of the former Royal Forests, were enclosed or re-enclosed with medium to large straight sided fields.

The many early medieval Royal Forests originally had substantial areas of heathland and woodland, established when their acidic soils suffered from over-exploitation and exhaustion as early as the Bronze Age. The New Forest is distinguished by its retention, to an unequalled degree, of the older historic patterns of open shared grazing lands mixed with scattered settlement and occasional villages, and woodland of varying dates (pl.8.2). These characteristics were once generally typical of the heathland areas of the county, and have survived in the New Forest by its continuing special status under the control of the Verderers (Verderers are a modern statutory body sharing the management of the New Forest with the Forestry Commission, including all forms of development and regulation of agricultural land use within the New Forest).

Hampshire was particularly well provided with woodland elsewhere. Except for the most open chalk areas, there is evidence everywhere in the county for the clearance of woodland in the form of distinctive field patterns derived from assarting, thought to have resulted from the gradual expansion of farmland (pl.8.2). The distinctive pattern of small, irregular fields with much surviving woodland is

typical of much of the eastern, northern and southern margins of the county. The chalk areas were probably predominantly agricultural by at least the (British) Iron Age and Roman periods, by which time these areas were possibly as clear of trees as they are today. Earlier evidence of human exploitation, from the Neolithic, survives on the chalk, where the relatively good soils were extensively exploited.

Time-depth in the current landscape

The historic landscape character map facilitates some preliminary high level analysis of change and continuity in the landscape through time. The mapping was not intended to provide the basis for detailed chronological analysis of the development of the Hampshire landscape, but the characterisation incorporates some definite chronological distinctions. It can be used for example to distinguish between those areas where present landscape character still owes much to pre-19th century components, and those which show substantial later change. It is possible to develop hypotheses from the work about how far earlier (for instance, pre-1650) landscape characteristics survive in the present landscape. Such hypotheses are not definitive but they provide signposts for further research, and the potential of the digital mapping system for juxtaposing different selections of Historic Landscape Types allows the generation of ideas and models. Such models can also act as the basis for developing conservation strategies to influence future landscape character.

Analysis of the GIS-based map can define chronologically related 'windows'. These are not 'phase plans' such as an archaeologist might devise from a well-stratified archaeological site, nor a picture of the landscape at any particular period. Rather, they provide a broad-brush view of the extent to which areas are characterised by landscape patterns deriving from different degrees of change through time. The maps showing the earliest survivals are understandably more patchy than the later ones, but they indicate which areas are likely to display greatest time-depth. This is perhaps especially relevant for development planning through indicating areas which are likely to be particularly sensitive to change.

This type of analysis therefore provides insight into which parts of the Hampshire landscape can be expected to retain the greatest feeling of time-depth, the least evidence for major, more recent change, and which parts reflect more recent radical change. But care needs to be taken in using the results. The so-called 'assart' fields for example need not be particularly early, and very broad-brush area characterisation may also conceal significant local variations and exceptions from any model. Areas where the predominant characteristics suggest a significant amount of post-medieval change will usually still contain medieval and earlier remains and even aspects of landscape character. The digital map can generate

insights and interpretations, but as always in archaeology they need to be treated mainly as a way of generating more detailed questions of landscape development.

Historical attributes of the current landscape

A third main area of analysis, tested so far, relates to the pattern and distribution of historic landscape character over Hampshire as a whole. Whereas the manipulation of the historic landscape type represents a basic digital mapping exercise, the measuring and spatial analysis of their interrelationship with other spatial entities more fully reflects the capability of the GIS. The categorisation of Historic Landscape Types provides a very generalised landuse related division of the Hampshire landscape. 52% of Hampshire is covered by field patterns, woodland accounts for 18%, and settlements and urban areas 13%. Heathland occupies 5%, and Valley floor and Parkland each account for 3%. Coastal areas (including intertidal foreshore areas) account for 2%. The remaining broad types (horticulture, commons, recreation, communication nodes, defence-related sites and Industry) account for less than 1% each, although some of these are not fully represented (for example much manufacturing industry is subsumed within 'settlement').

This broad categorisation is of interest for Hampshire as a whole, but does not really reflect the landscape or character spatial variation of the Hampshire landscape, since all areas reflect a mixture of types and historic processes. A more interesting exercise therefore is to look

at combinations of the individual Historic Landscape Types in relation to the whole of the county, to individual Landscape Character Areas already defined by the county council, or to parishes. Pie-charts to achieve this analysis were generated from the GIS system, exporting the spatial data through an Access database to an Excel spreadsheet.

Parishes and community groupings

The Hampshire historic landscape characterisation project also sought to explore long-term community-based territories and settlement patterns, in order to cut across the topographically and geologically-determined bias of much conventional landscape assessment. It related landscape character to communities, and settlements and their parishes to topography (pl.8.2). Both parishes and settlements are in some ways special in relation to historic landscape assessment. They are long-lived, ancient in origin, directly related to the socio-economic processes that have been responsible for shaping the physical character of the countryside, and they are usually related to the exploitation and management of a range of natural resources. In contrast, most Landscape Character Areas, and indeed some Historic Landscape Types, mainly reflect the influence of geology, soils and landform, at times being largely environmentally deterministic.

Other types of analysis

Many other issues that can be explored through the map, using a filter of parish and settlement using the GIS are summarised in the following sections.



Fig.8.3: A view over Winchester, the primary urban and administrative centre of Hampshire for nearly 2,000 years.

Relating specific Historic Landscape Types to parishes

Over much of the county, the map shows that woodland, whether analysed by date or type, can be seen to cluster along parish boundaries (pl.8.2). If true, this apparent pattern supports the expectation noted elsewhere, for example by Mick Aston, that woodland tends to be in peripheral locations away from centres of settlement, because it is a resource which only requires relatively infrequent visits. This model of woodland as spatially peripheral to land-utilisation territories reflects interesting questions about how parishes came to be defined. Do parish areas reflect pre-existing patterns of landuse and socio-economic territories, did their boundaries determine the pattern of landuse, or did parish boundaries simply follow pre-existing territories? The rather crude chronological division incorporated into the Woodland Historic Landscape Types reveals that this pattern applies to post-1800 plantation as well as to older woods.

A similar type of analysis looked at the relationship between parishes, settlements and rivers. Settlements in the chalkland catchments of each of the main Hampshire rivers are mostly located next to rivers, even in their seasonally dry, 'winterbourne' upper reaches. Where the rivers are small, however, parishes usually extend onto both sides of a valley; where the river is large enough to be shared, the river divides two parishes, each occupying one side of the valley. In chalkland riverside parishes there may well also be scope for comparing this with the rather different topographical relationships of settlement and landuse that appear to have existed in the late prehistoric and Roman period.

Relating parishes to Landscape and Historic Landscape Types

Parishes often cross the boundaries of different landscape areas, including some of the major character area divisions, most notably the northern scarp of the chalk. A map of the Historic Landscape Types overlaid with the parishes similarly reveals many cases where parishes straddle significant divisions within the broad pattern of the historic landscape mosaic. This tends to be most obvious along the northern, and to some extent, southern boundaries of the chalk, but can also be seen elsewhere. More generally, correlation of Historic Landscape Types with parishes reveals the considerable variation in the range and character of types present within parishes; some have a much more diverse range of types than others. Those in the New Forest and much of the western side of the chalk are amongst the most homogeneous in their different ways, while those straddling the northern scarp of the chalk and the western Weald are among the most diverse.

Community landscape groupings

Use of the GIS system to analyse the different proportions of Historic Landscape Types in each parish produces a simple historic profile for every parish. This allows contrasts between parishes to be seen. It also potentially

allows parishes with shared landscape characteristics to be identified. Further statistical analysis of the data would allow the parishes to be ranked according to similarity and thus grouped into what might be termed 'Community Landscape Areas'. Such community areas are easily recognised in some places, such as the parishes forming the core of the New Forest, those covering much of the western side of the chalk, or the heterogeneous parishes west of Andover and south-east of Basingstoke.

This approach represents a radically different perspective to most landscape assessment, being founded on understanding the evidence for past interaction of people with their environment rather than assuming that geology and topography are the only determinants and aesthetics the main criterion.

Settlement patterning

Only settlements with some degree of clustering or nucleation, such as towns, villages and hamlets, or dense concentrations of scattered settlement with paddocks, could realistically be plotted at the scale used. Although Hampshire is historically an area dominated by nucleated settlements (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000), there are also significant areas of dispersed settlement (in North Hampshire, the fringes of the New Forest and the western end of the Weald). The historic landscape characterisation does not yet deal very well with such areas.

A different approach was therefore explored, using modern computerised post-code (address) data, which measures number, density and clustering of houses, to capture a fuller picture of the present distribution of settlement. Seven categories of dispersed or nucleated settlement were defined by post-code analysis, from no settlement, through thin dispersed settlement and dispersed settlement to small, medium and then large nucleated settlements and urban. When mapped, this data shows significant correlation with the historic landscape map, and with the Hampshire Landscape Character Areas. It adds a useful further dimension in characterising the landscape's historic character, for example in noting the high levels of dispersed settlement in the areas with smaller fields, possible assarting and woodland, and more nucleated, less dispersed settlement within the main area of parliamentary-type fields on the chalk. At a more subtle level of variation, a distinction emerges between the western and eastern halves of north Hampshire, which appears to match distinctions in other historic landscape characteristics. For areas that are still essentially rural this approach largely agrees with Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000) analysis of the 19th-century patterns of nucleated and dispersed settlement undertaken at a national level for English Heritage.

The full project report prepared by OAU/SWRC for Hampshire County Council and English Heritage (Lambrick & Bramhill 1999) contains a more detailed

account of the method adopted than has been offered here. In particular, it contains a fuller description of the Historic Landscape Types and a broader range of better-illustrated examples. The digital map itself of course is the most important product of the Project. It is held by the County Council and is already being used for management, conservation, education, and planning purposes.

The learning zone: using Historic Landscape Characterisation in Hampshire

One of the many responsibilities of the County Archaeological Officer in Hampshire is to contribute to the council's Environmental Record. This record is used in association with specialist advice to influence landuse planning and land management by the county council and other agencies. It includes not just archaeological records but also nature conservation, landscape (including historic and designed landscapes), and historic built data, along with much broader environmental data, such as water and air quality data. These data sets find common expression through the department's GIS.

In 1997 Peter Atkinson, the department's Historic Landscape Architect, and David Hopkins, were asked to prepare a project design for an Historic Landscape Characterisation project for Hampshire, to be jointly funded by Hampshire County Council and English Heritage. Historic landscape characterisation was a topic with which we were familiar only in its broad principles. Graham Fairclough at English Heritage provided a full range of reading material regarding the methods and philosophy, and the Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation project, while Jon Hoyle from Gloucester County Council sent us a copy of Project Design being used for historic landscape characterisation in the Cotswolds.

This was a rapid and significant learning process, and one for which time might not have been available within a busy workload were it not for its direct necessity. Following a formal tendering process the Oxford Archaeological Unit and Scott Wilsons were appointed to carry out the project. The project steering group included landscape architects, landscape planners, the historic landscape architect and GIS experts as well as archaeologists. This was another rapid and significant learning process. By the time the results were delivered to the County Planning Department's GIS, the value and use of the data had been clearly demonstrated, but the amount that needed to be learnt about using it and applying it to landscape and archaeological heritage management was daunting. Other counties have carried out the historic landscape characterisation work themselves rather than by using external experts, and have therefore learnt as the project proceeded.

There were three areas to explore with the completed Historic Landscape Characterisation database:

- Using and understanding the data itself, and finding ways to make it facilitate the role of the County Archaeological Officer, particularly in planning, site management and agri-environmental schemes.
- Using it in conjunction with Sites and Monuments Record data, to add to the understanding of both data sets.
- Using the data to work more effectively with landscape architects, and so exert an influence at a landscape scale.

It has been possible to use the data in very practical ways to assist the County Planning Officer, in response to some larger-scale planning applications, and in discussions regarding the *Minerals and Waste Local Plan*. The information has been used in response to Countryside Stewardship Schemes (agri-environmental), and to establish landscape context for guide-leaflets for long distance walks across the county, thus in a preliminary simple way introducing the concept of historic landscape character to a wider public audience.

Cross-correlating the Historic Landscape Character data with Sites and Monuments Record data has given some fundamental new insights into the archaeology of the county, a county which is certainly among the most well-studied and closely-recorded in England. The Historic Landscape Characterisation has altered perceptions of data collection, enhancing understanding of the data that exists for particular landscape elements with archaeological importance. For example, the water meadows survey for Hampshire has been completed and it is hoped to do similar work for salt-production sites.

There are many practical applications of the data to Sites and Monuments Records, creating many opportunities. The Historic Landscape Character data within the department's database allows the historic environment to influence policy and landscape management at a number of levels. Perhaps most fundamentally the Historic Landscape Character Assessment provides a common language, and common parameters, and this facilitates effective discussion. Landscape architects no longer ask for Sites and Monuments point data to represent the historic environment because historic landscape character gives a more relevant data set to carry the information at a more appropriate level of detail and scale for landscape-scale assessment: a shared language with which to discuss the implications. This allows the historic environment to be properly reflected in landscape assessments and strategies.

There has for a long time been a fundamental recognition that the historic environment is the product of thousands of years of interaction between humans and the natural environment, and this view is held widely across

the whole spectrum of different types of landscape managers and landscape users, and increasingly in public opinion. But almost no landscape assessment or management plans took this recognition beyond a role merely as the opening 'colourful' chapter, setting the scene as if the past is merely background, just in the past rather than still being part of the living landscape. They rarely used historical understanding to improve detailed landscape character area descriptions, nor to inform discussion and analysis of the topics, issues, and management priorities that are needed to deliver effective landscape management and sustainable development. But it is by penetrating the entire document that the philosophy is able to exert a real and practical outcome in terms of landuse planning and land management. The historic landscape character assessments need to be integrated within the landscape assessment if the historic environment is to be properly reflected in a system of management that derives from assessment rather than designation, and this is what the County Historic Landscape Characterisation is beginning to make more achievable (Tartaglia-Kershaw 1999).

At county level

Structure Plans drawn up by county councils are currently the main strategic document for spatial planning in England. Policy E6 of the Structure Plan for Hampshire states 'To ensure that development maintains and enhances areas of distinctive landscape character, local planning policies will pay particular regard to: *inter alia* (a) the need to respect scenic quality, sense of remoteness and historic landscapes' ensuring that the historic environment, as a material consideration, can be addressed. It is the historic landscape characterisation, and its various flexible outputs, that now offers the most useful information to flesh-out this policy, allowing planners and landscape managers to assess any part of the county's historic landscape in its context, and at the right scale, rather than only focussing on sites and monuments.

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan, also drawn up at county level, was under review as the Historic Landscape Characterisation became available. The impact of large-scale mineral extraction, or of locating landfill waste sites, on any landscape is significant, and the initial studies will be able to address the historic landscape.

A new management plan being drawn up for the Forests of Bere and Eversley areas of the county (like the New Forest mentioned above, very longstanding areas of medieval hunting forest, with distinctive settlement and field patterns) was an early example of the Historic Landscape Characterisation data exerting an influence on the language of a document and the management it proposed. Use of the historic landscape information also influenced *The Vision for the Strategic Management of the South Downs AONB* (AONBs, Areas of Outstanding Natural (sic) Beauty (sic), are national large-scale

designations in England, within which special management and planning policies can apply). Whilst much in these areas is valued for its 'natural beauty', many of the assets that embody this 'natural beauty' are in reality the product of cultural, often very long-term, landscape management rather than purely natural processes. The data allows management plans to recognise this and articulate the significance from the principles to the priorities.

In the New Forest the proposed boundary for creating a new National Park has been fundamentally influenced by the historic landscape data. Protecting the historic dimension of the area's landscape is an overtly stated principle for defining the draft boundary.

At a district level

Below the level of Structure Plans in England is a more local level of spatial plans, the District or 'Unitary' Plan drawn up by district councils within the Structure Plan framework. Topic or thematic plans for the same areas often accompany these. In Hampshire the New Forest District Council has produced, with the County Council, English Heritage and Countryside Agency support, a *New Forest District Landscape Assessment* (New Forest DC 2000). In this district-wide integrated landscape assessment, historic landscape character is fully recognised throughout the document, the first time this has been possible in Hampshire (pl.8.3). The Assessment influences the appreciation of the landscape, the boundaries of the character areas and the issues and strategies that are set out. The purpose of the assessment is to guide landuse change and land management issues in the assessment area, and because historic landscape characterisation is so firmly embedded within it its implementation will advance considerable the conservation of the archaeological heritage of the landscape. As Supplementary Planning Guidance (supporting detail to the District Plan policies) it will influence the planing authority, land owners, and agencies, including those whose targeted grant aid fundamentally influences the character of the landscape, such as countryside stewardship.

At a local level

Historic landscape characterisation can also be used in greater detail at genuinely local level. 'The Manydown Landscape Study' for example was carried out in an area to the west of the town of Basingstoke. It drew in archaeological data, and historic landscape character assessed in detail, including field checking, which are built into the landscape review and strategy. It has been resolved by the council's Planning Committee that the contents, and the process used, be approved as best practice for major development areas in Hampshire and for the county council's estate management. The purpose of the assessment is to influence those making decisions that affect this landscape, such as planning authorities, landowners or landscape and planning agencies. In a

similar way, a study on 'The Setting of Winchester' used historic landscape characterisation extensively (fig.8.3), showing the way in which an historically important urban centre was considered within its landscape setting (Tartaglia-Kershaw 1999).

Conclusion

Historic Landscape Character Assessment has proved a valuable, even fundamental, data set in Hampshire's Environmental Record. The data in the Environmental Record supports the production of policies, strategies, priorities, advice and frameworks. These in turn bring about practical land use and land management change through a wide range of agencies. The Historic Landscape Characterisation has been available to the county for less than three years, yet already it has proved useful and there remain many untested potential uses. Critical to the effectiveness of this tool is a need for a much wider range of people to be competent and confident in using the information and for there to be a greater level of consistency in the use of language and terms, and for the historic landscape character to be more widely accessible.

The county is also moving towards making the historic landscape characterisation information available on the Web, which should greatly expand its value and influence.

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This paper has diverse origins, including a summary of Graham Fairclough's paper at the 2001 EAC Symposium, a version of George Lambrick's paper at the EAA 1999 conference in Bournemouth and a paper by David Hopkins given to the English Heritage seminar on Historic Landscape Characterisation at the Society of Antiquaries of London in December 2000. All have been rewritten and updated for this volume, and joined together mainly by Graham Fairclough, on whom any inconsistencies, duplications, contradictions and errors should be blamed.

APPENDIX A

Completed Historic Landscape Characterisation Reports in England

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APPENDIX B

Hampshire Historic Landscape categories and types

1. Field Patterns

- 1.1 Small irregular assarts intermixed with woodland
- 1.2 Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
- 1.3 Large Irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries
- 1.4 Regular assarts with straight boundaries
- 1.5 Enclosed strips and furlongs
- 1.6 Regular form with wavy boundaries (?late med to 17th/18th century enclosures)
- 1.7 Irregular straight boundaries
- 1.8 Regular 'ladder' fields (long wavy boundaries subdivided by straight cross divisions)
- 1.9 Small regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure)
- 1.10 Medium regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure)
- 1.11 Large regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure)
- 1.12 Variable size, regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure)
- 1.13 Not Used
- 1.14 Prairie fields (19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss)
- 1.15 Fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads, other rights of way
- 1.16 Small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries

2. Commons

- 2.1 Common heathland
- 2.2 Common downland
- 2.3 Other commons and greens
- 2.4 Wooded over commons

3. Horticulture

- 3.1 Orchards
- 3.2 Not Used
- 3.3 Nurseries with glass houses

4. Woodland

- 4.1 Assarted pre-1810 woodland
- 4.2 Replanted assarted pre-1810 woodland
- 4.3 Other pre-1810 woodland
- 4.4 Replanted other pre-1810 woodland
- 4.5 19th century plantations (general)
- 4.6 pre-1810 hangers (scarp & steep valley-side woodland)
- 4.7 Post 1810 hangers
- 4.8 Pre-1810 heathland enclosed woodland
- 4.9 19th century heathland plantations
- 4.10 Pre-1810 wood pasture
- 4.11 19th century wood pasture

5. Heathland

- 5.1 Unenclosed heath and scrub
- 5.2 Enclosed heath and scrub
- 5.3 Purlieus and other enclosed heathland pastures

6. Downland

- 6.1 Downland

7. Valley Floor, water management

- 7.1 Miscellaneous valley bottom paddocks and pastures
- 7.2 Valley floor woodlands
- 7.3 Marsh and rough grazing
- 7.4 Water meadows
- 7.5 Unimproved hay meadows or pasture

- 7.6 Watercress beds
- 7.7 Fishpond, hatchery complexes, natural ponds and lakes
- 7.8 Watermills, mill ponds and leats
- 8. Coastal**
 - 8.1 Coastal wetlands
 - 8.2 Salt marsh
 - 8.3 Salterns
 - 8.4 Reclaimed land
 - 8.5 Harbours and marinas
 - 8.6 Shingle and dunes
 - 8.7 Mud flats
- 9. Settlements**
 - 9.1 Scattered settlement with paddocks 1800 extent
 - 9.2 Scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent)
 - 9.3 Common edge settlement
 - 9.4 Common edge settlement (post 1800 extent)
 - 9.5 Not Used
 - 9.6 Post 1810 settlement (general)
 - 9.7 Village/hamlet 1810 extent
 - 9.8 Not Used
 - 9.9 Town & city 1810 extent
 - 9.10 Town & city post 1810 extent
 - 9.11 Caravan sites
- 10. Parkland & Designed**
 - 10.1 Pre-1810 parkland
 - 10.2 19th century and later parkland
 - 10.3 Deer parks
- 11. Recreation**
 - 11.1 Racecourses
 - 11.2 Golf Courses
 - 11.3 Major sports fields and complexes
- 12. Extractive & Industry**
 - 12.1 Active and disused chalk quarries
 - 12.2 Active and disused gravel workings
 - 12.3 Industrial complexes and factories
 - 12.4 Modern large scale industry (power stations; oil terminals etc)
 - 12.5 Reservoirs and water treatment
 - 12.6 Dockyards
- 13. Inland Communications**
 - 13.1 Station and sidings complexes
 - 13.2 Canal basin complexes
 - 13.3 Airfields
 - 13.4 Motorway service areas
- 14. Military and Defence**
 - 14.1 Prehistoric and Roman (eg hillforts, Roman forts)
 - 14.2 Medieval (motte and baileys, ring works)
 - 14.3 Post medieval (1500-1830)
 - 14.4 19th century (1830-1914)
 - 14.5 20th century (1914-)

