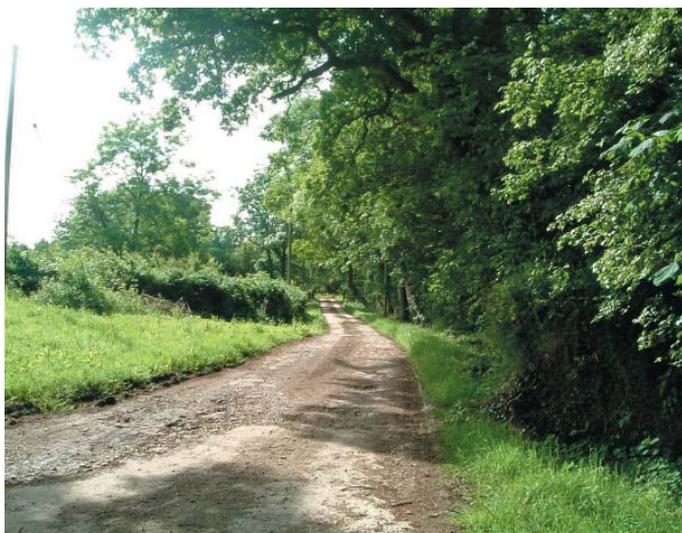
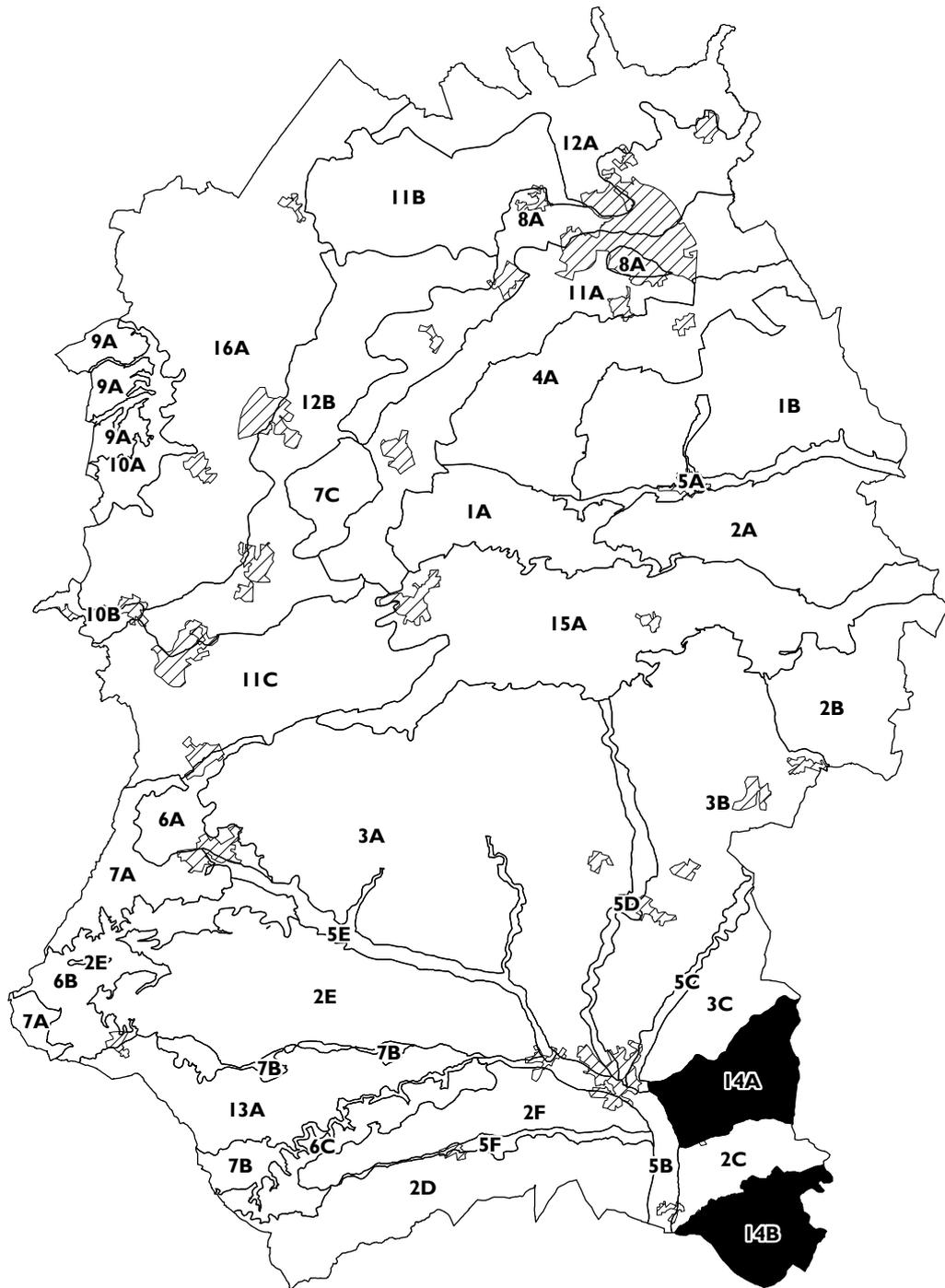


# LANDSCAPE TYPE 14: FOREST-HEATHLAND MOSAIC

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# I4: FOREST HEATHLAND MOSAIC



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

**I4A** Farley Forest - Heathland Mosaic

**I4B** Landford Forest - Heathland Mosaic

 **Urban Area**

# TYPE 14: FOREST-HEATHLAND MOSAIC

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## DESCRIPTION

### Location and boundaries

The *Forest-Heath Mosaic* Landscape Type occurs in the south east of the country, defined by the underlying clay and sand geology and the woodland cover that it supports. Within the *Forest-Heath Mosaic* Landscape Type there are two geographically distinct character areas. *Area 14A: Farley Forest* is the further north of the two, bounded by the less densely wooded higher chalk to the north, the Avon Valley to the west, the county border to the east with an area of *Wooded Downland* to the south separating it from *area 14B: Landford Forest*. The *Landford Forest* Character Area forms the south eastern corner of the county and most of the area is within the New Forest National Park.

### Key characteristics

- Gently undulating landform based on London and Reading Clay Formations and Bagshot Sand.
- A peaceful enclosed landscape of extensive woodland cover with intermittent views though to more open areas.
- Complex landscape comprising broadleaved and coniferous woodland, wood-pasture, heath, grassland and farmland offering a range of habitats.
- Pastoral and arable fields are bounded by full hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Substantial areas of woodlands of diverse and rich ecological value including ancient woodland, beech, high oak and wet woodland.
- Fragments of lowland bog and formerly extensive heath survive.
- Presence of mansions and historic parklands particularly former deer parks.
- A settled landscape with large villages, frequent small clusters of buildings along roads and a distinctive pattern of dense linear settlement fringing commons to the south.
- Buildings of red brick, tile and thatch.
- Shaded lanes, sometimes sunken, wind their way though the wooded areas, plus the busy A36 passes though the type.

### Physical influences

The *Forest-Heathland Mosaic* Landscape Type is underlain by a combination of clay and sand with London and Reading Clay formations and Bagshot Sand the most prominent. The topography is gently undulating, with shallow valleys containing tributaries of the Avon and low hills rising to a height of approximately 80 AOD.

## Biodiversity

The *Forest-Heathland Mosaic* is a complex landscape with a variety of habitats, including large areas of ancient broadleaved and coniferous woodland, wood-pasture, heath, grassland and several ponds. This abundance of habitats is reflected in the large number of designated sites of international and national importance (the New Forest SAC, Seven SSSIs and an NNR).

Langley Wood and Homan's Copse is a SSSI and part of the SAC. It is a large area of woodland that has seen very little modification though grazing or human impact. This has produced an unbroken high oak forest with a very large range of woodland stand-types reflecting variation in soils and drainage – an exceptionally rich and varied woodland, both structurally and botanically.

Whiteparish Common comprises an extensive area of ancient semi-natural woodland designated as SAC, SSSI and County Wildlife Site. It is predominantly a beech wood with pedunculate oak and ash, but also exhibits a large number of other woodland types. It supports an exceptionally diverse woodland flora and some uncommon butterfly species.

Other areas of important woodland include: Bentley Wood SSSI, a large site of ancient wood but mostly replanted in the post war period predominantly with oak, beech, Norway spruce, Scots pine and Corsican pine; and Blackmoor copse SSSI, a rich broadleaved woodland with wet ash-maple, pedunculate oak-hazel-ash and hazel-pedunculate oak and rich ground flora. Both are important for the very wide range of woodland butterfly species they support.

Other important sites include Landford Bog (SAC and SSSI) an internationally rare habitat of lowland bog and heath that supports many plant species decreasing in lowland Britain and a variety of bog mosses, along with Landford Heath (SSSI) a fragment of the extensive heathland which formerly linked Hamptworth and Plaitford Commons.

Hamptworth Common is a County Wildlife Site and is probably the largest area of wet heath in the county. Other habitat present is valley mire, giving this site great species diversity, including a number of sphagnum mosses, round-leaved sundew and green ribbed and star sedges. It is also the only site in Wiltshire for bog myrtle.

## Historic environment

The *Forest Heathland* Landscape Type has a long history of settlement, with the signs of Mesolithic occupation at nearby Downton (in the adjacent area 2C), and scattered Neolithic long barrows and Bronze age round barrows. The type is still largely wooded showing the enduring legacy of the New Forest to the south in area 14B and the Royal Hunting Forest of Clarendon and Melchet in area 14A. The remains of the Palace of Clarendon are a key site in area 14A. A royal residence from 1072 to 1475, this palace was abandoned after the close of medieval period and only recently made safe and opened to the public. Nearby is the grand mansion of Clarendon House.

Field patterns vary through the type with large scale regular fields dominant in area 14A along with the large blocks of woodland, some ancient with extensive replanting in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In area 14B there are sections of small intricate fields and commons more typical of the New Forest landscape.

## Settlement and built character

Settlement is concentrated to the west of the type, with linear villages, such as Alderbury and Whaddon. Elsewhere, villages are smaller and frequently associated with an area of common land. There are also scattered farmsteads, manor houses and loosely grouped settlement along roads. The buildings are mainly 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century two storey cottages constructed of red brick with slate, tile or thatch roofs, other materials include weatherboard and render. At the south of the area for instance at Landford, there are distinctive linear settlements with dwellings on long narrow plots skirting commons. The busy A36 cuts through the type, with settlement along it extending a more urban character.

## CHARACTER AREAS

### I4A: Farley Forest-Heathland Mosaic

*Farley Forest-Heathland Mosaic* forms a patchwork of woodland and medium sized geometric fields. The area contains part of the ancient forest of Clarendon which was centred on Clarendon Palace, the remains of which sit at the north west of the area. Although some areas of ancient woodland survive, the extensive areas of woodland are now predominately 19<sup>th</sup> century and post war plantations. There is also parkland with the remnants of the deer park of Clarendon Palace and the later parkland associated with Clarendon House. Fields are generally pastoral, although some are in a grass/arable rotation, and are bounded by thick hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees. The village of Alderbury merges with Whaddon to form a large linear settlement while to the north east of the area there is the substantial village of Middle Winterslow linked by scattered roadside settlement to nearby East and West Winterslow. Elsewhere settlement is limited with small nucleated villages occurring in clearings. Buildings are generally traditional in style and built of red brick although there has been modern infill. A network of rural roads and shady sunken lanes wind through the area connecting the villages and farmsteads.

### I4B: Landford Forest-Heathland Mosaic

The *Landford Forest-Heathland Mosaic* is a peaceful rural landscape dominated by large areas of ancient woodland and 19<sup>th</sup> century broadleaved and coniferous plantations. The dense woodland creates a strong sense of enclosure. Rhododendron is a visually dominant understory in some areas of the woodlands. Intermittent breaks allow short views though to more open areas of remaining heath, wood pasture and small irregular fields bounded by thick hedgerows. The landform is gently undulating with domed hills and a shallow valley containing the River Blackwater, a tributary of the Avon. The densest area of settlement is to the west of the area along the B3080, where recent development has effectively joined the villages of Morgan's Vale, Redlynch and Woodfalls. Other settlement in the area is more traditional, with linear settlements of red brick cottages backing on to commons such as at Landford.

## EVALUATION

### Positive landscape features of significance

- Peaceful rural landscape.
- Extensive areas of woodland, a large proportion of which is ancient, with intermittent views to more open areas creates an enclosed small-scale landscape.

- Thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Wide range of habitats of high ecological interest including broadleaved and coniferous woodland, wood pasture, peat bog and some remaining areas of heath.
- Parklands including medieval deer parks.
- Network of quiet rural roads and sunken lanes.
- Traditional red brick cottage settlements loosely grouped along roads and around commons.

### Forces for change

- Agricultural intensification and introduction of arable rotation threatens the medieval field patterns and traditional pastoral landscape.
- Hedgerow trees are generally mature with few new trees to replace them.
- Decline in traditional woodland management leading to weakening in condition of ancient woodlands and particularly areas of wood pasture and coppice.
- Pressure for further linear expansion of settlement along the rural roads, and new development changing the traditional relationship of settlements with the commons.
- Pressure to upgrade roads through additional kerbing and signage to accommodate an increase in traffic volume.

### Condition

The overall condition of the *Forest-Heathland Mosaic* Landscape Type is perceived to be **good** with varied woodlands including coppice and wood pasture interspersed with medium scale pastoral and arable fields enclosed by intact hedgerows with hedgerow trees. A large area of the type is covered by statutory designations highlighting its high ecological value. There are many traditional settlements of red brick and tile dwellings although changing patterns of settlement could be detrimental in joining together separate villages and breaking down the historic patterns of clustered red brick roadside cottages and dense linear settlements fringing the commons.

### Strength of character

This peaceful rural landscape is judged to have a **strong** character. The extensive areas of woodland with intermittent views to open farmland creates an intimate, rural and peaceful landscape with a strong sense of enclosure. Despite the zones of coniferous planting within the woodlands these retain a varied and ancient character with high biodiversity value. Open areas include a distinctive landscape of wood pasture and parklands as well as pasture grazed by cattle and enclosed by an intact hedgerow network with hedgerow trees. The settlements of red brick cottages, scattered farmsteads and small villages are linked by shady rural lanes.

## **Inherent landscape sensitivities**

- Peaceful rural landscape with strong sense of enclosure given by dense woodlands cover.
- Pastoral area with cattle grazing small to medium fields.
- Full hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Woodland habitats of varied and high ecological value including ancient woodland, coppice and wood pasture.
- Remnants of heathland and peat bog.
- Historic designed landscapes of parkland and deer parks.
- The structure of the rural villages and linear settlements.
- Quiet rural roads and lanes.

## **STRATEGY**

The landscape strategy is to **conserve** the peaceful rural and enclosed nature of the area and its rich diversity of woodland, wood pasture, parkland, heathland and pastoral and arable farmland along with the settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, roadside cottages, villages and dwellings alongside commons linked by rural roads.

## **Broad management objectives**

- Retain and manage the medium scale pastoral fields with dense hedgerow network and nurture new hedgerow trees.
- Promote appropriate management of arable land including retaining areas of fallow land and maintaining an unploughed margin around fields to encourage wildlife, particularly farmland birds.
- Conserve the remnant areas of heathland and peat bog, and take opportunities to extend and these habitats.
- Encourage sustainable woodland management of the varied woodlands using tradition techniques such as coppicing where appropriate to maintain the special historic character and ecological interest.
- Encourage new woodland edge planting of native deciduous broadleaved to reduce the visual and ecological impact of the coniferous plantations.
- Encourage management and restoration of the parklands that are characteristic of the area.
- Minimise small scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network which could change the rural peaceful character of the landscape.

- Consider developing guidance for built development to ensure both future construction and changes to existing buildings are designed to integrate with the existing character and structure of settlements.

## **THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT**

The character of the Wiltshire landscape has already been investigated in a number of studies as detailed above in Appendices 1 and 2. The *Forest-Heathland Mosaic* Landscape Type is covered, in part by the existing New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment.

The New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment includes the areas 9: Landford Forest Farmlands and 10: West Wellow Heaths and Commons which cover the same area as *14B: Landford Forest* in this assessment although the New Forest area 10: West Wellow Heaths and Commons extends beyond the Wiltshire County Border.