

Enfield's Local Plan

EVIDENCE BASE

Area of Special Character Boundary Review

April 2012

Area of Special Character Review

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Introduction

The Council has carried out a comprehensive review of the area of special character designation in the Borough of Enfield to support the emerging policy in the Development Management Document Development Plan Document (DPD). This report identifies and recommends proposed changes to the Area of Special Character currently designated on the Enfield Plan.

The Enfield Plan, Enfield's Core Strategy adopted November 2010 comes with a Proposals Map to graphically show the physical extent of the policies contained within The Enfield Plan. The current Proposals Map carries over designations from the 1994 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as well as the strategic policies contained in the Core Strategy.

Core Strategy Policy 31 (Built and Landscape Heritage) states that the Council will implement national and regional policies and work with partners (including land owners, agencies, public organisations and the community) to pro-actively preserve and enhance all of the Borough's heritage assets. Actions would include:

- Reviewing heritage designations and their boundaries where appropriate, and continuing to maintain non-statutory, local lists and designations based on formally adopted criteria;
- Ensuring that built development and interventions in the public realm that impact on heritage assets have regard to their special character and are based on an understanding of their context. Proposals within or affecting the setting of heritage assets will be required to include a thorough site analysis and character appraisal which explicitly demonstrates how the proposal will respect and enhance the asset;
- Supporting appropriate initiatives which increase access to historic assets, provide learning opportunities and maximise their potential as heritage attractions, particularly at Forty Hall and the Area of Special Character in the north west of the Borough;

It is in this context that this review now details the map changes proposed as part of the emerging policy in the Development Management DPD.

Policy Background

The Countryside Commission, together with English Nature, English Heritage and the London Ecology Unit, proposed the designation "Heritage Land" on account of its combined landscape, historical and nature conservation interest. This advice suggested that these and other parts of London identified as Heritage Land or, as in the case of the Lee Valley, Areas of Special Character, should be protected by a special designation with appropriate policies in UDP's. It was therefore proposed to designate two Areas of Special Character (AOSC), which are identified on the UDP Proposals Map and also on the Core Strategy Proposals Map. They consist of:

- (a) The Enfield Chase Heritage Area AOSC in which the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the existing character of Enfield Chase as an area comprising woodlands, streams, designed parklands and enclosed farmland;
- (b) The Lee Valley AOSC in which the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the essential character of the area, as being one of predominantly open landscape characterised by rivers, streams, canals, reservoirs and other water-related features.

A map of the existing and current AOSC designation can be seen on page 8.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Council commissioned consultants to critically assess all urban and rural landform types into an identifiable character including areas of special character to ensure that Enfield continues to protect and enhance those features or characteristics that are essential to maintaining the historic and intrinsic visual quality of the area. Further information is documented within the Enfield's Characterisation study 2010 and should be referred to in conjunction with this report.

Methodology

The basis for this piece of work is subsumed within the Characterisation study that was produced in 2011, and included the following stages of work:

- Detailed desk-top analysis of the borough including analysis of digital mapping, historic mapping, socio-economic data and planning policy;
- Extensive site visits to the borough;
- An extensive photographic analysis of the borough;
- A workshop with stakeholders to identify key issues, characteristics and places in the borough;
- Use of site visits, aerial photography and web resources to build a comprehensive picture of the structure of the borough and the arrangement of different urban typologies; and
- An interim test and review workshop with the Council team to agree the working method and emerging outcomes.

The key output of the Characterisation study in relation to the Area of Special Character designation included a Landscape Character Assessment looking at:

- the Green Belt landscape as well as Enfield Chase and the Upper Lee Valley;
- recording the relationship between topography and significant views and the impact of development pressures of all kinds on landscape character and skyline; and
- the value placed on local landscaped areas outside of nationally designated areas, and the importance of landmark features and structures.

Recommendations

The following changes taken from the characterisation study are recommended to ensure the Areas of Special Character continue to reflect the important historic and exceptional landscape character traits that should be protected for their intrinsic quality.

It is proposed that the two existing areas of special character namely Enfield Chase and the Upper Lea Valley are separated into 9 distinct areas that have been based on Enfield's predominant landscape type and are listed below:

Salmons Brook Valley	}	Farmland Ridge and Valleys
Turkey Brook Valley		
Merryhills Brook Valley		
Theobalds Estate South		
Clay Hill		
Hornbeam Hills South		
Enfield Chase and Trent Park	}	Rural Parklands
Whitewebbs Park and Forty Hall		
Lee Valley Reservoirs	-	River Valley and Floodplain

The proposed areas of special character also show the deletion of:

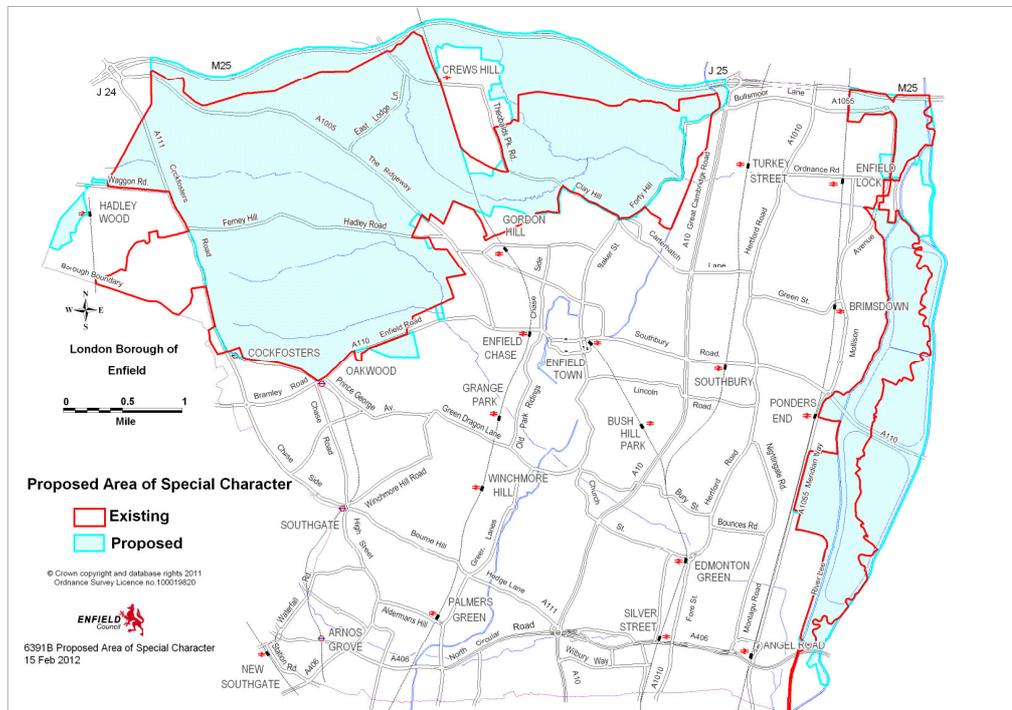
- Covert Way Field,
- Hadley Wood Golf club,
- Cockfosters Sports Ground,
- Lakeside,
- Lavender Hill Cemetery,
- parts of Strayfield cemetery,
- The Chace Hotel,
- area to the east of the Forty Hall Conservation area,
- Warwick Fields Open Space, and
- The southern extent of the River Lee Navigation (from Lee Park Way – to the borough boundary with the London Borough of Haringey)

Additional areas to be included with the proposed designation include:

- The area known as Hornbeam Hills South,
- Land south of Trent Park Cemetery,
- Land south of A110 Enfield Road
- Vicarage Farm, Hadley Road,
- Wolverton the Lodge and Coach House, 50-54 Hadley Road,
- The northern most extent up to the M25,
- Area north of Whitewebbs Road up to the M25,
- Innova Park open space,
- Enfield Island Village open space,

- The William Girling and King George V reservoirs, and
- Land east of Harbet Road.

Existing and Proposed Area of Special Character



Farmland Ridge and Valleys

The largest and most widespread landscape character type in the borough is 'Farmland ridges and valleys'. This is a very attractive undulating agricultural landscape which is sparsely populated and has a geometric field pattern. It is an important area of high quality open landscape with a special character which is highly valued. Much of the landscape is in productive agricultural use and all of it is protected as Green Belt.

Most of the area of the Farmland Valleys and Ridges landscape type is of high landscape quality and is highly valued by the borough's residents. The landscape is well-maintained, it has a good network of public rights of way and permissive paths and is a productive agricultural landscape which has not become weakened by the introduction of alternative urban fringe land uses. It has a strong network of woodland blocks (many of which are Ancient or Semi- Ancient woodlands) and many large mature hedgerow trees which punctuate the landscape and provide the character of a well wooded landscape. There are many points (particularly from the Ridgeway and Stagg Hill) where fine, long distance views across the rolling landscape can be enjoyed. Many of these feel very rural and remote in character and the area provides a valuable opportunity to enjoy a special rural landscape which is easily accessible from the adjacent urban areas.

Rural Parklands

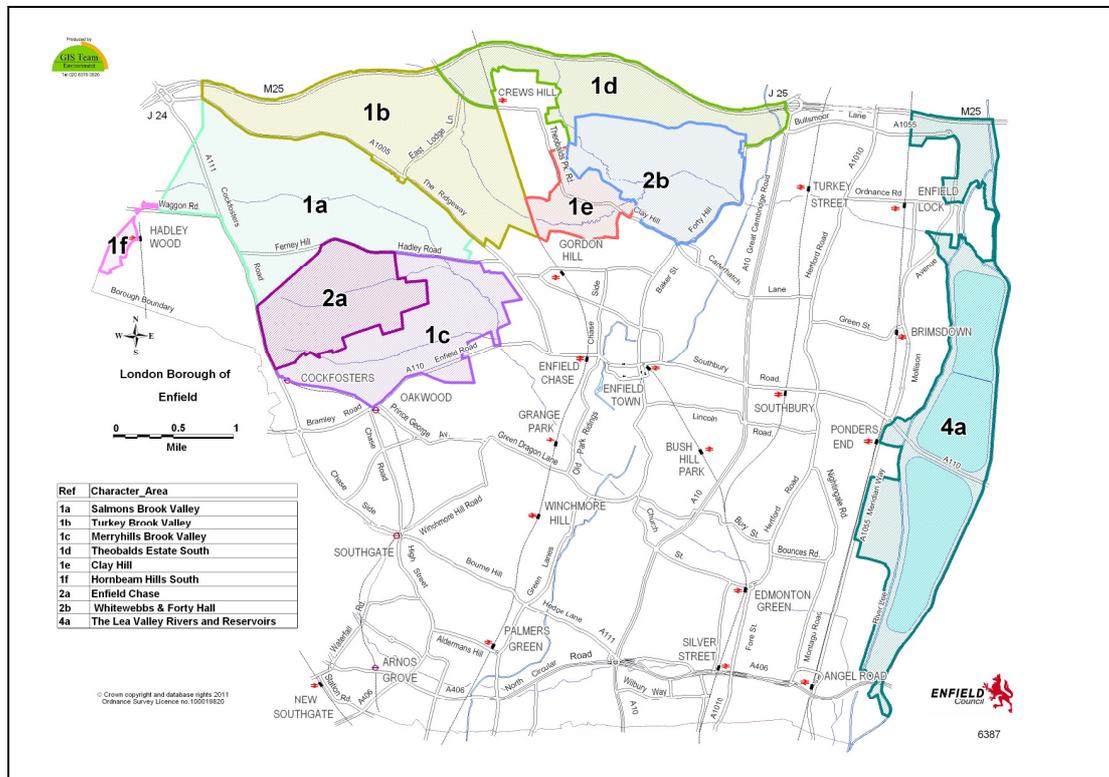
The rural parklands of the borough are popular destinations for recreational visits. They provide a range of opportunities for recreation including routes for cycling, walking, and riding, a golf course, nature walks, tea rooms and ornamental gardens and are well-used throughout the year. The undulating topography and complex pattern of woodlands, open areas, historic features and formal gardens creates a varied landscape full of interest and diversity.

Consultation was carried out as part of the Characterisation study identified Forty Hall and Trent Park as some of the most liked places in the borough. These landscapes are valued for the recreation facilities they offer and also for their visual qualities and the opportunities provided for contact with the rural countryside.

River Valley and Floodplain

The River Valley and Floodplain area is a landscape type commonly found in lowland England centred around the main watercourses. It is characterized by flat, low lying topography, fluvial soils, wetland vegetation and meandering, slow-flowing watercourses. In Enfield the key area of this landscape type is the valley and floodplain of the River Lee.

Proposed Areas of Special Character



Areas of Special Character

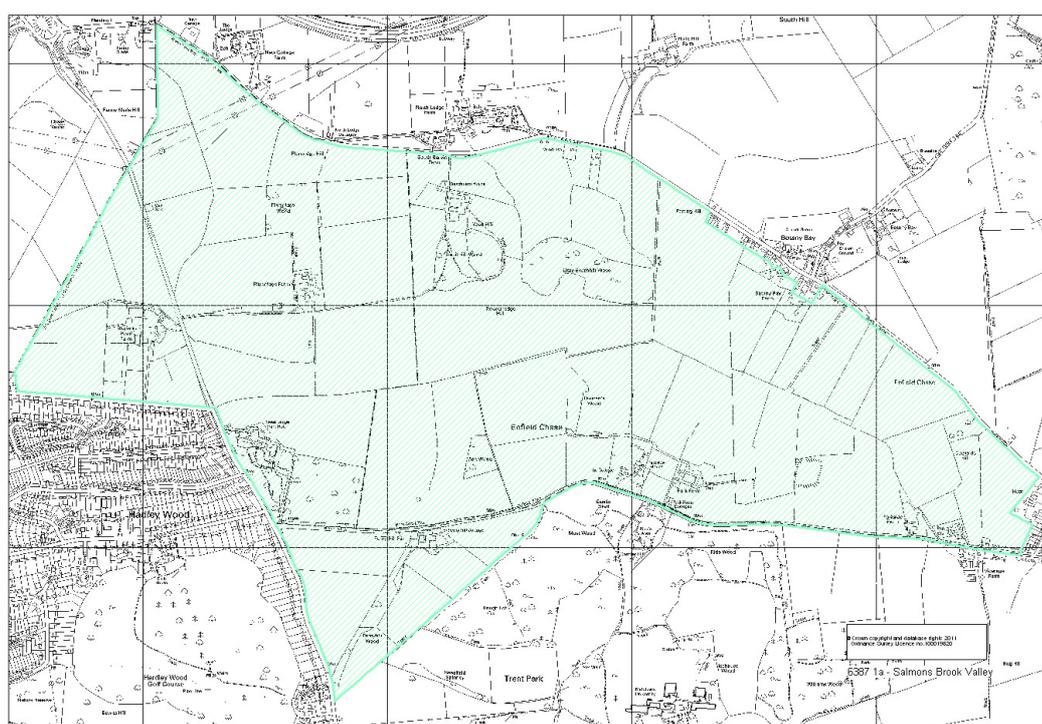
Salmons Brook Valley

The Salmon's Brook Valley is a rural farmed valley landscape with mixed arable and pastoral fields which follow a strong geometric pattern. The area has a well maintained network of mature hedgerows and large mature hedgerow trees. Mature oaks are a key characteristic of the area although in general, many are in decline. This area is generally secluded with few roads and little settlement other than scattered farmsteads. Despite it's proximity to the urban edge the area is quiet and rural and in some places remote. The area is drained by the Salmon's Brook and contains frequent small woodland blocks of mixed native species, several of which are Ancient or Semi-natural woodland which give the impression of a well tree-covered landscape.

Protected Characteristic traits: Frequent small woodland blocks | Valley drained by Salmon's Brook with undulating valley sides | Geometric fields of mainly pastoral farmland | Mature hedgerows with frequent large mature hedgerow trees (mainly oak) | Secluded with few roads | Views across the valley from Ferny Hill/Hadley Road and the Ridgeway | Views south towards Enfield Chase and Hadley Wood

Main Issues:

- The quality of this landscaped is achieved through the continued agricultural activities.
- Long distance views across the landscape are valued and key views should be protected.



Turkey Brook Valley

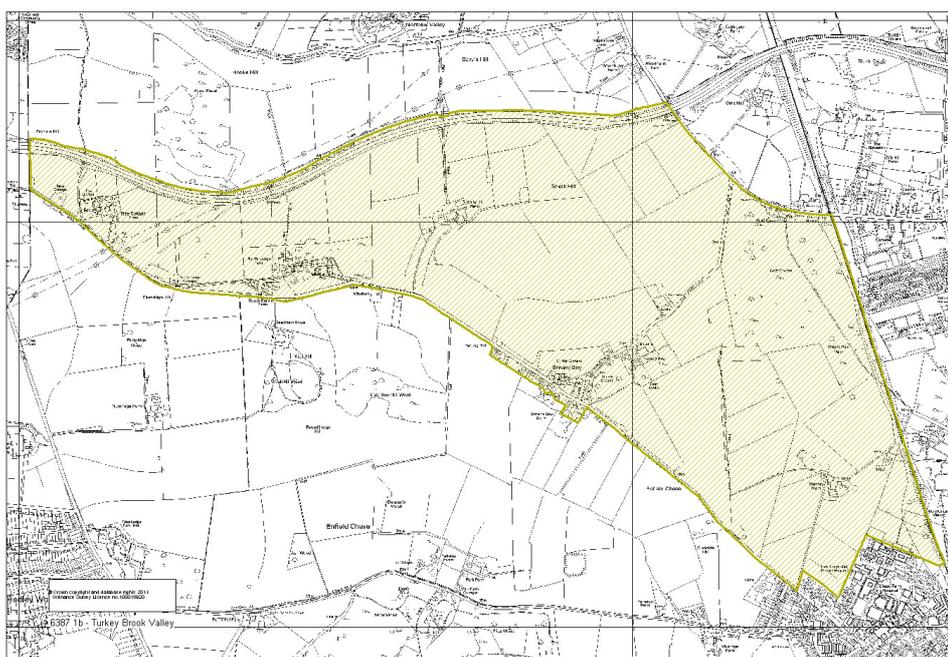
The Turkey Brook Valley is an area of open agricultural land with undulating topography. The area is characterised by large geometric field patterns most of which date back to the 1803 Enclosure Acts. Hedges are typically clipped, dominated by hawthorn with scattered hedgerow trees. The landscape is generally well maintained and regular farming activities provide seasonal variations in the appearance of the landscape. The area drops away to the north from the Ridgeway and is drained by the Turkey Brook and its tributary Holyhill Brook.

Although there are some Rights of Way crossing the area and way-markings indicating the London Loop and the Chain Walk, there is little settlement here other than the hamlet of Botany Bay and occasional scattered farms. Botany Bay is a relatively recent settlement established after the enclosure of Enfield Chase in 1777.

Protected Characteristic traits: Large geometric fields mainly arable, some pastures on eastern edge | Undulating landscape drained by Turkey Brook and its tributary Holyhill Brook | Secluded area with few roads or public rights of way | Mature, well-managed hedgerows with intermittent mature hedgerow trees (mainly oak) | The Red House – large and prominent private dwelling | St John’s senior school | The Ridgeway Water tower (built 1913 -14) | Botany Bay – small linear settlement | Crews Hill Golf course

Main Issues:

- Despite its proximity to the urban edge, the area has a strong rural character with a well maintained landscape.
- Opportunities should be sought for increasing the accessibility of the countryside for the Borough’s residents into the Hertfordshire countryside.



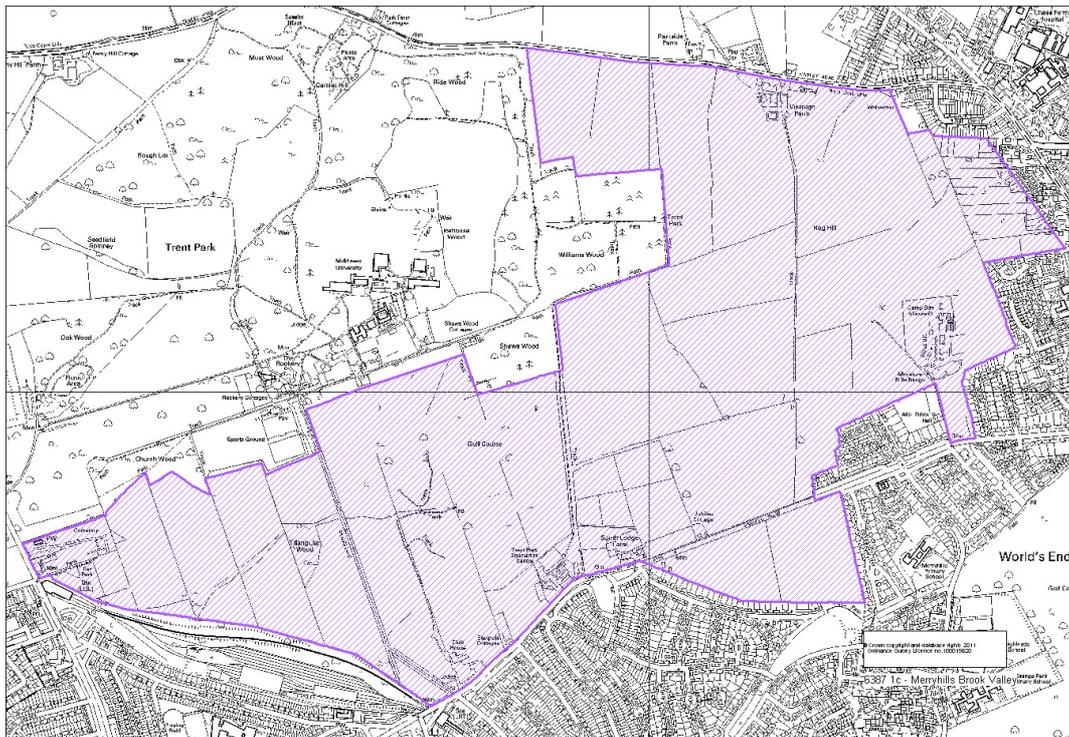
Merryhills Brook Valley

The Merryhills Brook Valley is a landscape of undulating fields and the Trent Park Golf Course. Hog Hill forms the highest point on the east side (60m AOD). The field pattern is geometric with large arable fields. Most of the fields are enclosed with mature hedgerows (mainly oak). Snakes Lane passes through the centre of the area and is lined by a fine avenue of mature oak trees which form a key site feature. The area is immediately adjacent to World's End and in many places there is a clear and well-defined boundary between the urban edge and the open countryside. The south-eastern and southern edge is strongly formed by the Cockfosters sidings Enfield Road and the rear boundaries to properties on Lowther Drive and Cotswold Way. Two fields extending to the south side of Enfield Road (near Boxer's Lake) perform an important function of extending the Green Belt up to the urban edge and creating a separation between Slades Hill (World's End) and Oakwood. This forms an important and valuable connection passing through the Green Belt.

Protected Characteristic traits: Undulating landscape drained by Merryhills | Brook and Leeing Beech Gutter | Geometric fields enclosed with hedgerows | Large arable fields to the east | Small pastoral fields to the west | Mature vegetation lining watercourses | Trent Park Golf course | Avenue of oak trees lining Snakes Lane | Trent Park cemetery

Main Issues:

- Further inappropriate development is likely to prejudice the future character of this area at the urban edge.



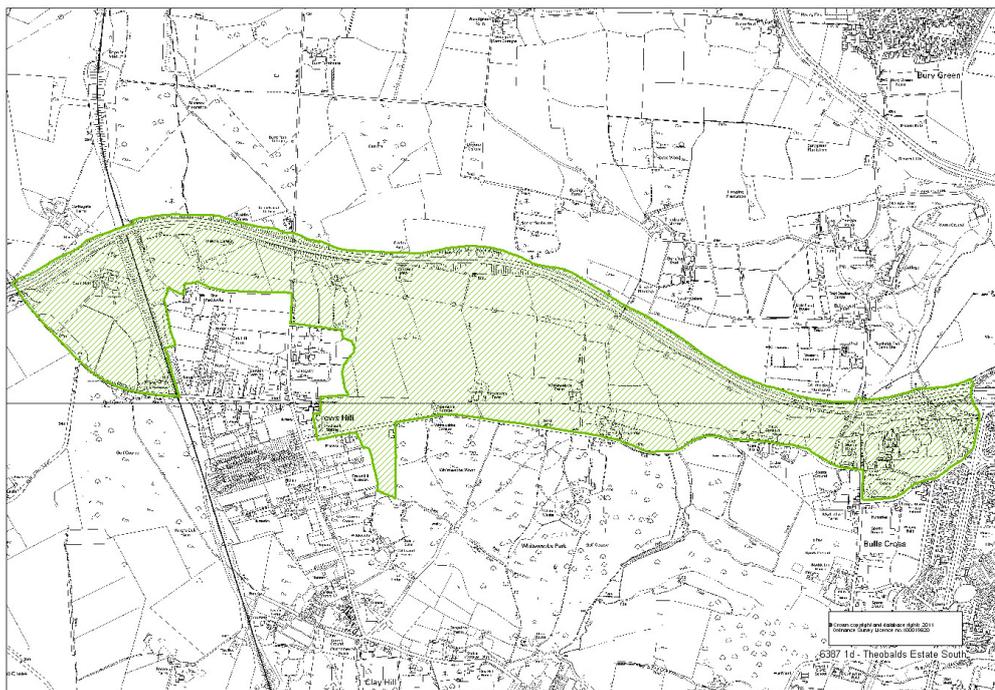
Theobolds Estate South

The Theobolds Estate is a large landscape character area which is identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for Southern Hertfordshire (HCC, 2000). It comprises the area which was formerly a hunting park known as Theobolds Park. The Park was created by James I and was attached to Theobolds Manor (which became a Royal Palace in 1604). In 1650, the park is recorded as covering 2,508 acres, containing 15,608 trees. After the execution of Charles I the estate passed into the hands of Parliament and the palace was demolished and the parkland deforested. The area was converted to a landscape of arable farmland and discrete woodland blocks. This general field and woodland pattern remains today albeit with the major intrusion of the M25 which severs this historic landscape in two.

Protected Characteristic traits: Gently undulating landform | Estate farmland | Geometric field pattern | Small woodlands | Mansions (e.g. Capel House) and isolated farms (e.g. Whitewebbs farm and Owls Hall Farm) | Low hedgerows | Owls Hall Farm and parkland.

Main Issues:

- Important historical landscape and connects with the Hertfordshire countryside to the north.
- Conversion of arable land to horse grazing, use of barbed wire fencing for boundaries, poor hedgerow management and abandonment of agricultural vehicles has had a detrimental effect on the quality of the landscapes in some places
- The two footpath routes (Burnt Farm Ride and PROW no.8) require protection and management.



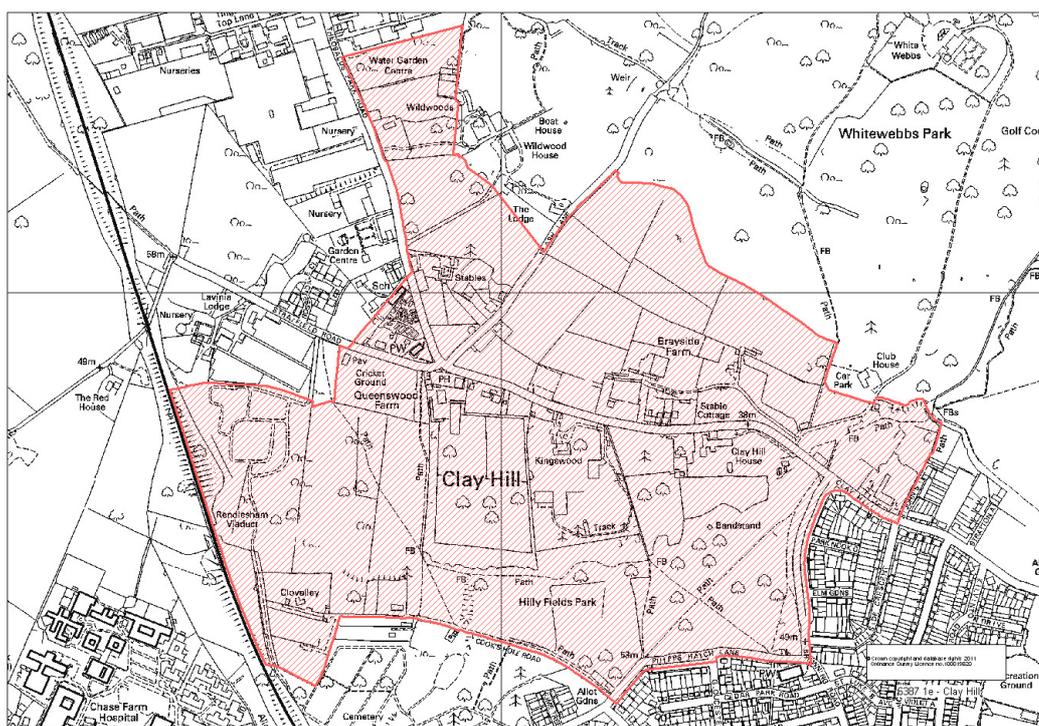
Clay Hill

The Clay Hill character area comprises an area of parkland and rural landscape with the small dispersed settlement of Clay Hill in the centre running along the ridge line. The village of Clay Hill is small comprising a mix of mainly large detached properties set back from the road in large private gardens often with high boundary walls. The village also includes two public houses (the Rose and Crown and the Fallow Buck) and the parish church of St John the Baptist and its associated primary school. The Rose and Crown is the older of the two pubs and is of local historic importance. It dates back to 1700 and was once owned by Dick Turpin's grandparents (it is also said that Dick Turpin used to use the pub as a hide-out). The church was built in 1858 originally as a chapel and is sited at a prominent site on the junction of Strayfield Road and Clay Hill road and forms a local landmark.

Protected Characteristic traits: M25 embankments | waymarked routes connecting under M25 to countryside to the north | St John the Baptist parish church (1858) | Hillyfields Park | London Loop waymarked path | Strayfields Road | Rose and Crown pub and the Fallow Buck pub

Main Issues:

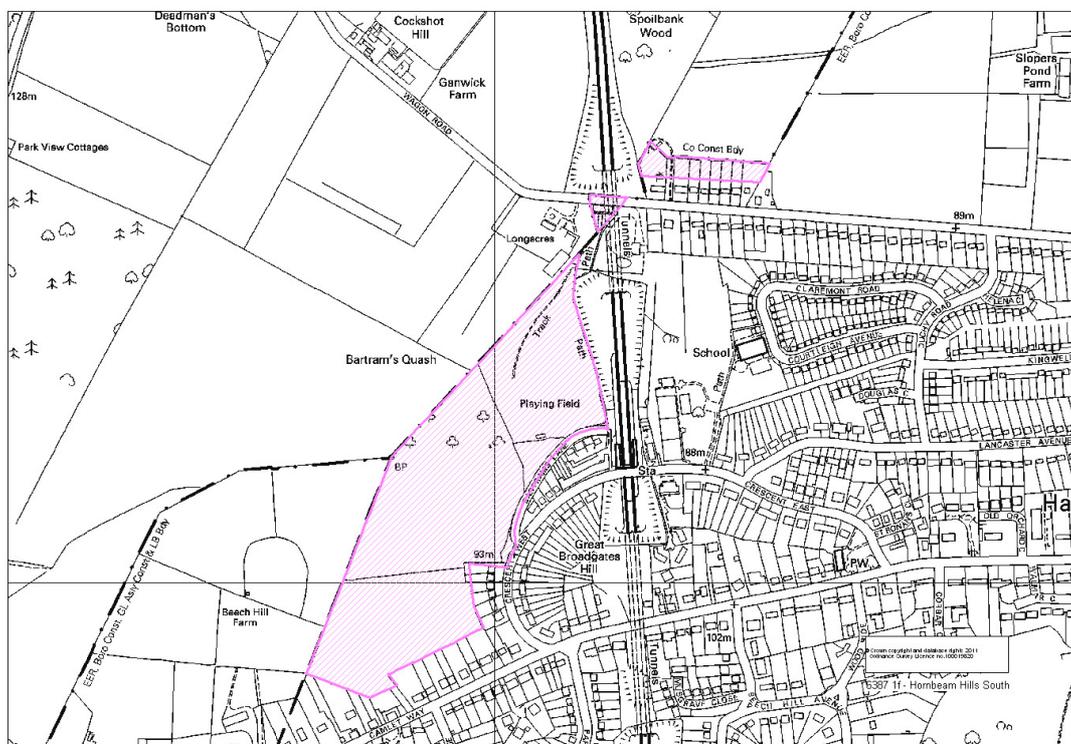
- Area of particular vulnerability to development pressures due to its proximity to the urban fringe.
- The area around the parish church, Fallow Buck pub and the southern end of Strayfield Road is the natural focus of the village and future village public realm improvements should be focused here to create an improved village centre.



Hornbeam Hills South

The Hornbeam Hills South Character area is the south eastern corner of a larger landscape character area identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for Southern Hertfordshire (HCC,2000) The area has a strong undulating arable landscape with a geometric pattern of large fields. This area is similar to the wider area to the west and is an attractive landscape of agricultural land with long distance views to the woods of Wrotham Park to the west. The character area is part of a larger area of significant Green Belt which separates Potters Bar from Hadley Wood.

Protected Characteristic traits: Sloping valley landforms | Geometric field pattern | Mainline railway in cutting/tunnel | Potters Bar and M25 to North West | Limited rights of way



Enfield Chase/Trent Park

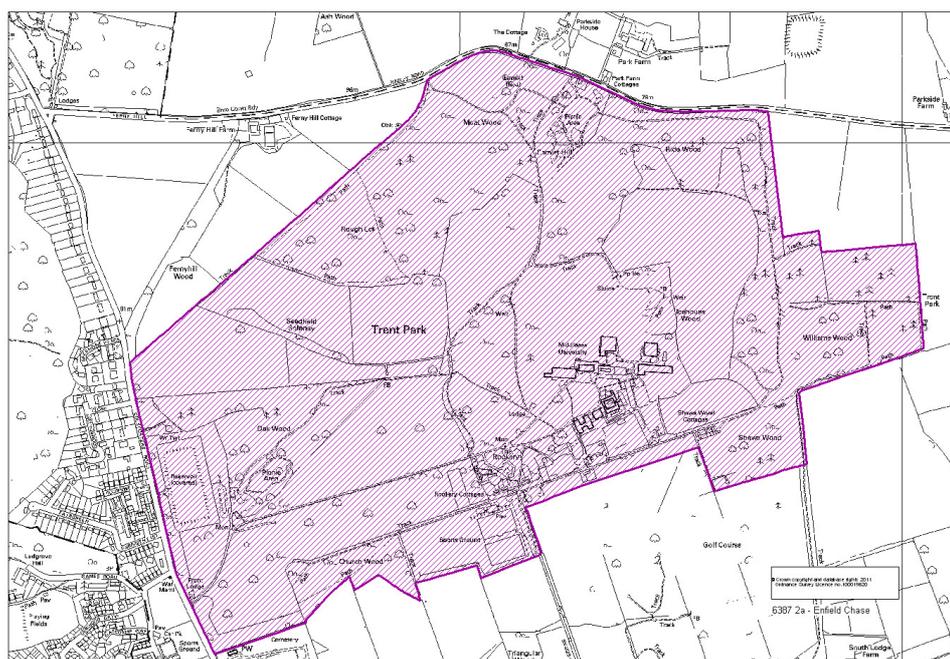
The Enfield Chase/ Trent Park character area is an area of undulating woodland and parkland containing Trent Country Park and part of Middlesex University. In the medieval times, Trent Park was part of Enfield Chase. A registered Historic Park formally part of the royal hunting forest. Camlet Moat on the northern side of the Park (now a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is believed to be the site of the medieval manor house but other than this, the area was uninhabited until the construction of the main mansion in its current location in the 1770's.

In 1947 a teacher training college was established and this gradually extended becoming Middlesex Polytechnic in 1974 and Middlesex University in 1992. The campus derives its current character from the historic mansion and formal landscape features, its spectacular landscape setting and the twentieth century buildings and infrastructure of the university. The mansion was well-sited originally to enjoy the fine views to the north over the parkland and these remain today with the ornamental lakes forming a focus in the centre of the view and the obelisk viewed in the distance beyond.

Protected Characteristic traits: Undulating landform | Mixed deciduous woodland | Pockets of arable farmland and grazing land | Network of public rights of way and informal footpaths | Trent Park mansion | Obelisk | Ornamental lakes | University campus buildings

Main Issues:

- A complex range of landscape, historic, ecological and recreation issues
- Progressive expansion of the university campus has put pressure on the site and has eroded the important historical character of the area.



Whitewebbs Park and Forty Hall

The Whitewebbs Park and Forty Hall character area is an area of undulating woodland, parkland and pockets of open fields drained by a criss-cross of watercourses. The area incorporates Whitewebbs Country Park and the historic gardens and parklands of Forty Hall and Myddleton House and much of it is publicly accessible open space. Each area has its own unique character and distinct identity but the boundaries between them are blurred and the area can be experienced as a single area.

Whitewebbs Park is the largest of the three areas and comprises a large area of woodland and an 18-hole public golf course. Most of the woodland is ancient or Semi-Natural woodland with a few pockets of Ancient replanted woodland. It includes a number of features including two ornamental lakes, Whitewebbs House (a large eighteenth century house – now a Toby Carvery), a club house for the Whitewebbs golf club and substantial public car park areas.

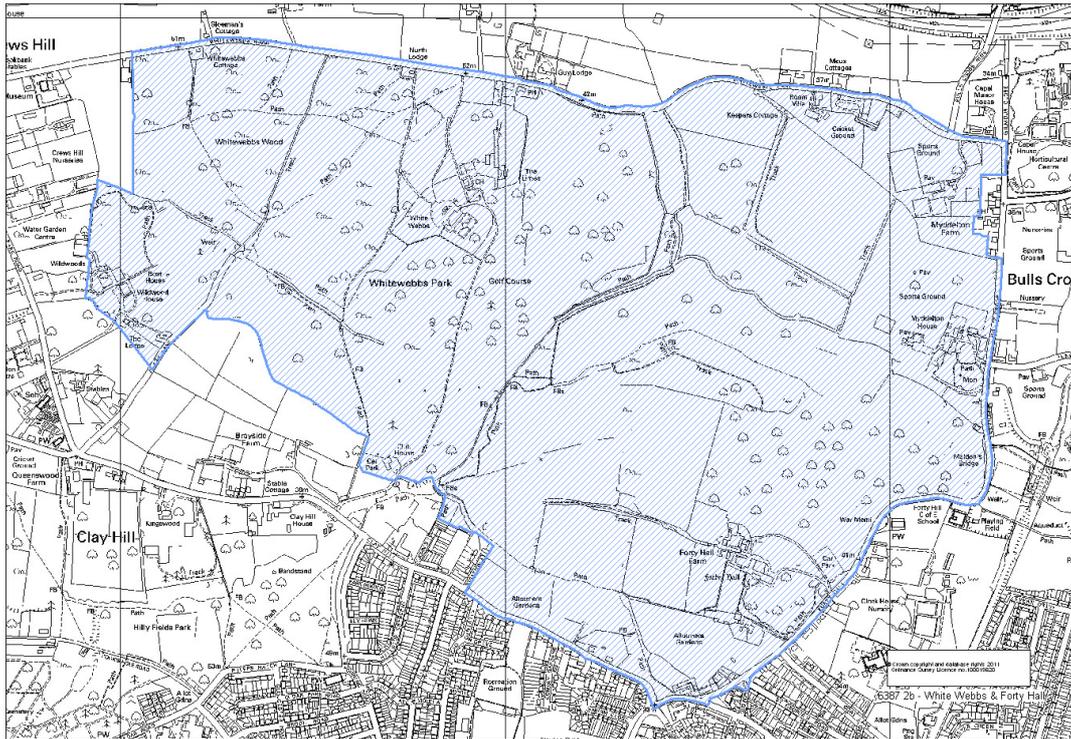
Forty Hall is an impressive historic designed landscape which acts as a gateway to the wider countryside beyond and allows views over the surrounding parkland and woodland landscape. The hall is a Grade I listed building built in 1629 and its 160 acre estate includes a working farm, fishing lake, parkland and woodland and a double lime avenue. The hall and its estate are an excellent example of a seventeenth century house in a designed landscape and are considered to be of outstanding national importance.

Myddleton House is smaller and more domestic in character than its neighbour Forty Hall but is also of historic importance. It is a large Regency house built in 1818 and set in gardens landscaped by E.A Bowles- the famous nineteenth century plantsman and includes a national collection of Iris plants. It is now used as offices for the Lee valley Regional Park Authority and the gardens are open to the public.

Protected Characteristic traits: Mature mixed species native woodlands | Network of small water courses including Turkey Brook, Cuffley Brook and New River (Old Course) | Network of waymarked routes, public rights of way and informal paths | Recreational activity hub including walking, cycling, riding and golf | Forty Hall and historic garden and parkland | Myddleton House and historic garden | Whitewebbs park golf course | Bulls Cross

Main Issues:

- This area plays a significant role in providing accessible countryside recreation for the urban areas of the borough. Progressive urbanisation of the landscape is weakening the qualities of this area.



The Lee Valley and Reservoirs

The Lee Valley and Reservoirs character area has a variety of uses and local areas of differing character. However, it is included as a single character area as it serves an important strategic body of open space for the borough providing recreation and wildlife. The Lee Valley is a single broad river valley which drains to the River Thames in the south. Its key features include King George V and William Girling reservoirs, the channel of the River Lee and the separate River Lee Navigation channel and pockets of marshland and open space. The Upper Lee Valley Landscape Strategy (2010) identifies two distinct sections of the Upper Lee Valley prevalent in Enfield:

- Forest and Green Belt – the area between the M25 and the southern edge of the King George V's reservoir characterised by the areas of farmland and woodland to the east and west.
- Suburban Infrastructural – referred to as Central Leaside, this stretches from Banbury Reservoir in the south to the northern end of the William Girling Reservoir.

Protected Characteristic traits: King George V and William Girling (Chingford) Reservoirs | The River Lee and Lee Navigation | Marshland and Grassland | Lee Valley Leisure Centre | large scale industrial buildings | Mature Willows and Poplars lining the canal | Gunpowder Park | Enfield Island Village

Main Issues:

- Major asset although remain difficult to access
- Area around Rammey Marsh is of poor visual quality. Enhanced landscaped measures would greatly improve the noise and visual impacts of the M25 and surrounding roads.

