

9 ORNAMENTAL, PARKLAND & RECREATION



Plate 6: Matfen Hall

Key Historic Landscape Characteristics

- Historic landscape types: designed landscape, other parkland and recreational, golf course, and sports ground
- The peak period of garden design was in the 18th century
- Some parkland included in the Register of Parks and Gardens
- Some areas under threat of development for tourism and leisure in the 19th to 21st centuries

Northumberland has a variety of ornamental and recreational landscapes, ranging from landscaped parks to sports grounds. Greatest and most extensive amongst these are the landscaped parks associated with country houses and landed estates, but there are other smaller designed landscapes such as urban parks, cemeteries, and country parks. Also included in this type are recreational sites and sports grounds, which include allotments, heritage and caravan sites. In recognition of their quality some of these landscapes have gained national recognition and are included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens.

The conscious design of landscapes for enjoyment and leisure was slow to develop in Northumberland. Defence and fortification had been the main consideration of landowners through much of the medieval and early post-medieval periods because of the border warfare between England and Scotland and later the activities of border reivers. Yet in the 17th century, as conditions on the border calmed, landowners looked to make their houses less defensive and design attractive and fashionable surroundings. The peak of garden design was in the 18th century when more naturalistic landscaped parkland was laid out, but the design process continued in the 19th and 20th centuries as new fashions and ideas were incorporated and new gardens were laid out. The 18th century also saw the first public park

opened in the county, at Hexham, but few others followed until the early 20th century; it is perhaps a reflection of the small amount of urban development in the county that there are few civic parks in Northumberland. The 19th and 20th centuries also saw the design of civil cemeteries as well as an increase in land dedicated to leisure and tourism such as golf courses, heritage sites, caravan parks, allotments, country parks and nature reserves.

The ornamental, parkland and recreation types identified by HLC are: **designed landscape, other parkland and recreational, golf course, and sports ground**. These types occupy a total area of 10,917ha (2.14% of the county) and comprise 405 polygons (2.6% of the total).

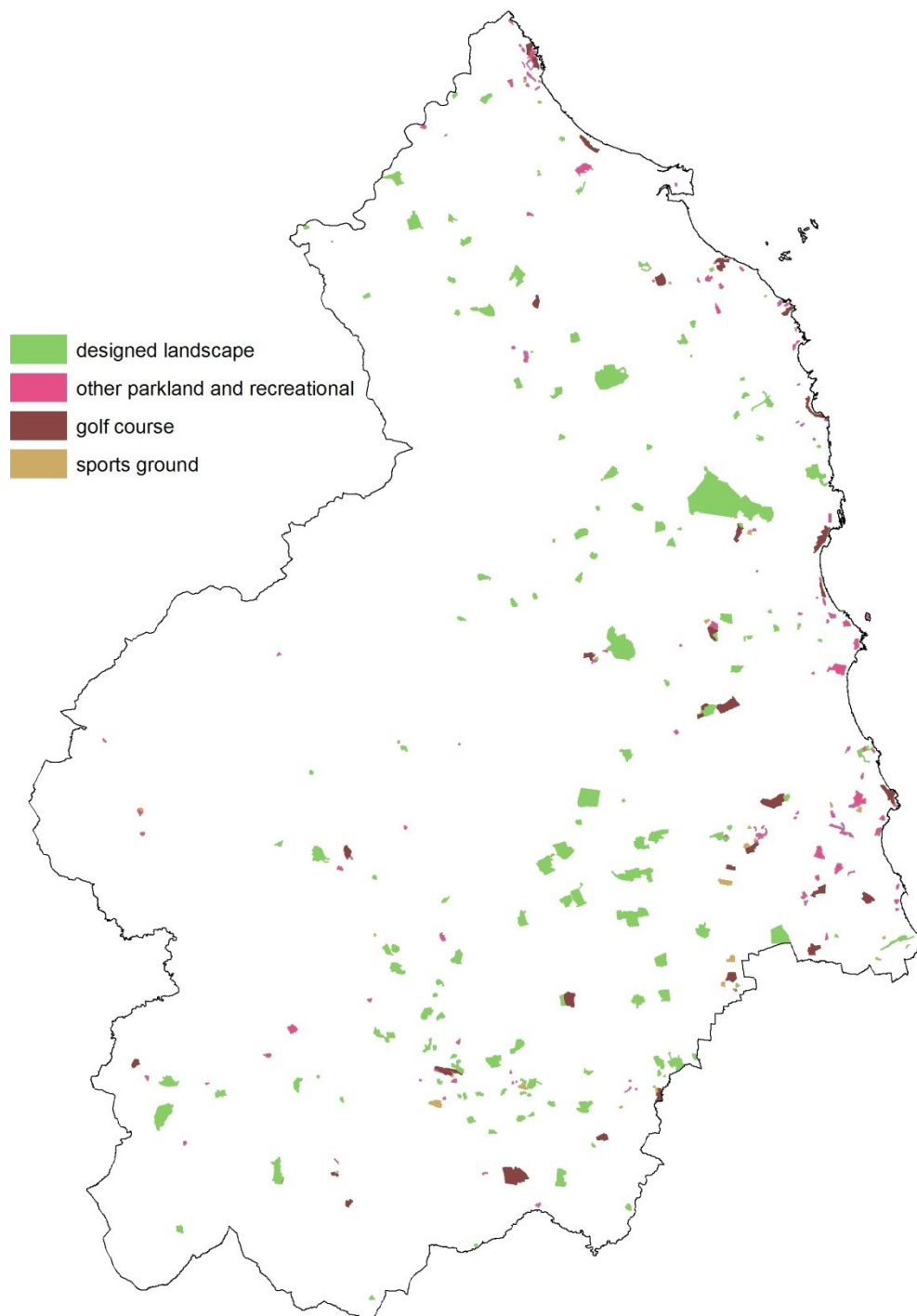


Figure 25: Ornamental, parkland and recreational HLC types.

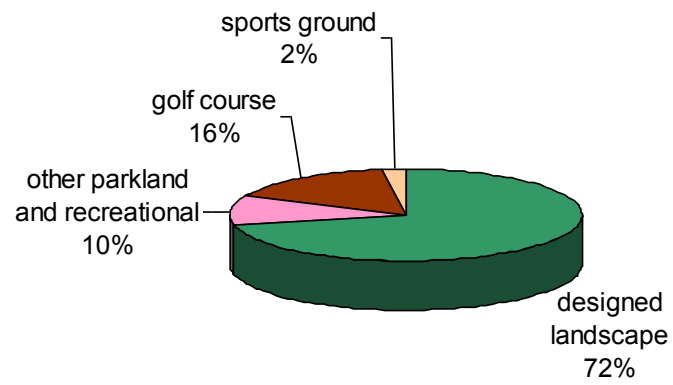
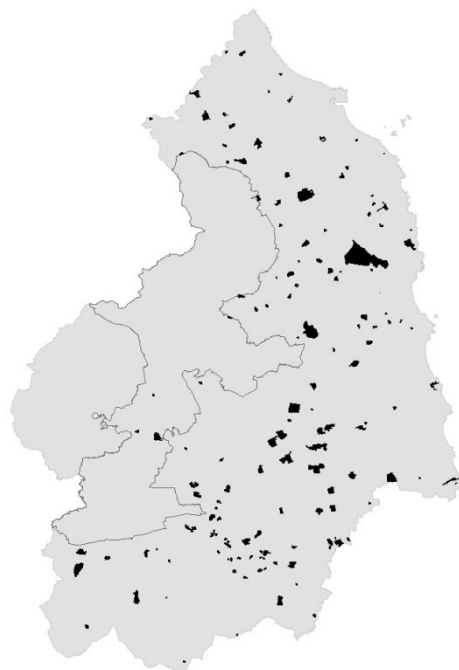


Figure 26: Proportions of ornamental, parkland and recreational HLC types.



Capheaton, Kirkharle, Belsay, and Blagdon. Another cluster lie along the valleys of the North and South Tyne, with Nunwick, Chipchase, Featherstone and Blenkinsopp. Further north, a number of parks lie along the Coquet and Aln valleys, and others lie close to the Till, Breamish and Tweed. Many of Northumberland's parks and gardens are still managed by family owners but there is an increasing threat to those closest to Tyneside for changes of use to housing, offices, golf courses, etc.

There is a wide range of archaeological sites of all periods in this HLC type, from 20th century garden structures and Second World War pillboxes, to Roman forts and

prehistoric settlements. Post-medieval sites are most numerous and comprise a variety of structures and monuments related to ornamental garden features and buildings as well as past industries. Medieval remains are mainly settlement and farming related sites with deserted villages, field systems, and chapels and churches, some of which have origins in the early medieval period. Roman and prehistoric records are relatively scarce but include Roman forts, roads, and part of Hadrian's Wall, as well as other military structures and finds. Prehistoric records range from the Neolithic to the Iron Age and include a range of finds, settlements, field systems and burial monuments.

Rarity: frequent

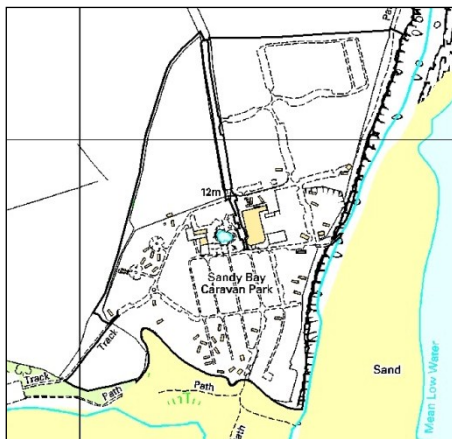
Trajectory of change: increasing slowly

Susceptibility: low

9.2 Other parkland and recreation

Key Features:

- Mainly creations of the 20th century
- Contain archaeological sites of all periods
- Total area = 1124ha
- Percentage of county = 0.22%
- Number of polygons = 138



A series of ornamental and recreational landscapes have been created in the county in the 19th and 20th centuries. They include cemeteries, civic parks, caravan parks, allotments, water sports, marinas, country parks and heritage sites. Nearly 90% of this type dates to the 20th century with the remainder largely present by the mid-19th century and depicted on the first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey. Many examples of this type are too small to be included in HLC as they are less than one hectare in area, and will have been incorporated into other HLC types.

The North-East was slow to develop public parks when compared to other parts of England and there are very few of any size in Northumberland. Those around Hexham Abbey make up 9.5ha and include what may be the oldest public park in the county, The Sele, which opened in 1753; two adjacent parks were opened to the public in 1911 and 1928. The largest public park in the county is Carlisle Park in Morpeth (about 10ha) which was opened in 1929. Later in the 20th century, as the mining industry declined and settlement continued to expand, country parks and local nature reserves have been created around many of the built-up areas in south-east Northumberland on land restored from mineral workings providing spaces for recreation.

Cemeteries began to be built in the North-East after the start of the 19th century, when overcrowding of churchyards was becoming a health hazard. In Northumberland there were several civil cemeteries by 1900, for example Hexham 1858, and Cowpen c.1875. The distribution of cemeteries, along with other parkland and recreational landscapes, like allotments, is mainly on the fringes of urban areas like Berwick, Hexham, Morpeth, Ashington, and Bedlington as these were the communities they served.

Other categories in this type are present to serve visitors to the county, eg caravan parks which lie along the coastal fringe, although further inland there are caravan parks associated with Kielder Water and around small towns like Wooler and Rothbury.

Archaeological sites of all periods are found in this HLC type. The majority are post-medieval in date, but modern, medieval and Roman sites are also well-represented. The modern records include a range of structures and buildings associated with parks and cemeteries as well as a large number of former coal mining buildings which are now in the grounds of Woodhorn Country Park near Ashington. Post-medieval

records also include a range of industrial sites which reflect the restoration of land on former coal mines for recreational purposes; there are also many structures associated with parks and gardens, for example gate piers, garden walls and lodges. The medieval records include deserted settlements and farmsteads, and castles which are now managed as heritage sites

for tourism. Early medieval and Roman remains are similarly heritage sites and include Bamburgh Castle, Vindolanda and Corbridge. Flint, stone and metal finds account for most of the prehistoric records and range in date from the Mesolithic to Iron Age, although there are a few burials and a promontory fort.

Rarity: rare

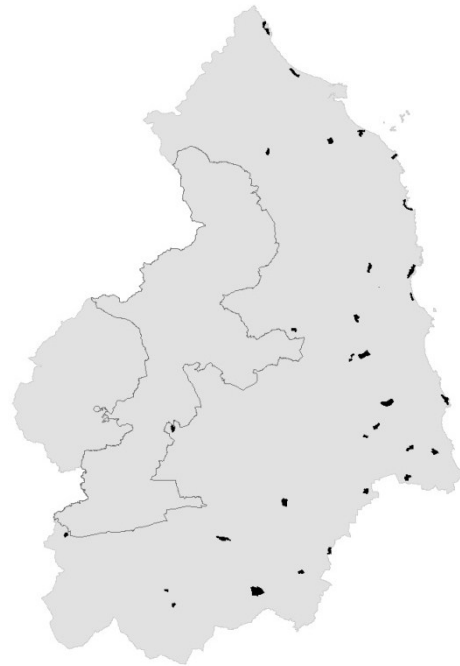
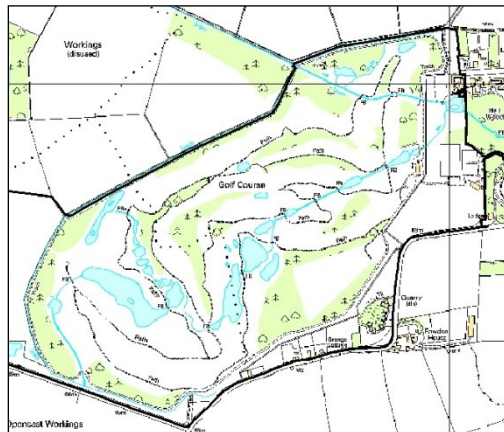
Trajectory of change: increasing significantly

Susceptibility: low

9.3 Golf course

Key Features:

- Mostly 20th century
- Eastern and southerly distribution
- Contain archaeological sites of all periods
- Total area = 1748ha
- Percentage of county = 0.34%
- Number of polygons = 50



The spread of golf courses across Northumberland is largely an eastern and southern one and most were created in the 20th century. A string of courses lie along the corridor of the A1 and east coast railway reflecting the importance of easy access to leisure facilities. Another group of golf courses are links courses which are dotted along the coast from Newbiggin to Berwick; this group includes the oldest golf courses in the county, at Alnmouth and Warkworth, which both appear on the second edition Ordnance Survey maps of the 1890s.

The range of archaeological sites on golf courses is quite varied and most periods are represented. Modern remains are all

Second World War structures and mainly part of the coastal defences found on links courses. Post-medieval records are more varied but include garden structures and buildings on courses that have been created on former landscaped parkland. The few medieval records are mainly deserted settlements and ridge and furrow field systems and there are no early medieval sites. Roman remains include parts of Hadrian's Wall, vallum and Stanegate near Haltwhistle. Prehistoric remains are more numerous and consist of finds and sites from the Mesolithic to Iron Age: they range from lithic working sites to cup and ring marked stones and a fort.

Rarity: occasional

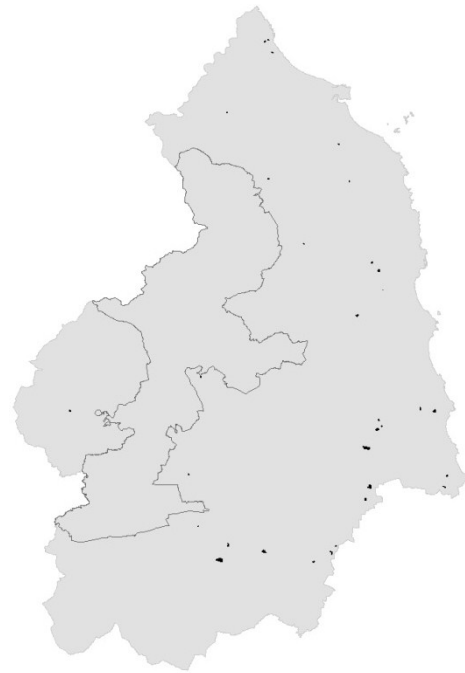
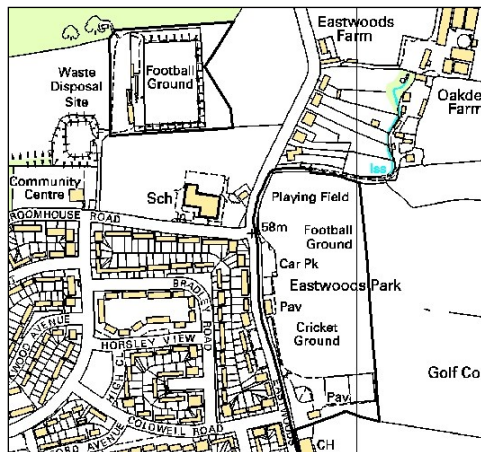
Trajectory of change: new

Susceptibility: low

9.4 Sports ground

Key Features:

- Close to urban centre
- Mainly 20th century
- Total area = 238ha
- Percentage of county = 0.04%
- Number of polygons = 33



Sports grounds account for a tiny proportion of landscape types and include cricket pitches, sports grounds, and racecourses. All date to the 20th century and are mainly located close to urban areas, for example Hexham, Morpeth and Alnwick, as facilities for residents. Only those sports grounds over one hectare in size have been recorded by HLC and there are many

smaller facilities within urban areas that will have been omitted and combined within 'settlement' types.

One seven archaeological sites lie in this HLC type and they range from post-medieval cultivation and clay pits, to a medieval deserted settlement and prehistoric henge.

Rarity: very rare

Trajectory of change: new

Susceptibility: low