

# Using Historic Landscape Characterisation

Jo Clark, John Darlington  
& Graham Fairclough



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Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a process of identifying and describing the character of historic landscapes. It is a key component of the Historic Landscapes Programme, which aims to enhance our understanding of the historic landscape and its value. HLC is a multi-disciplinary process, involving the use of a range of sources, including historical maps, aerial photography, and fieldwork. The process typically involves the following steps:

1. Identification of the landscape: This involves defining the boundaries of the landscape and identifying the key features that define its character.
2. Research: This involves gathering information about the landscape's history, including its development, use, and management.
3. Analysis: This involves analysing the information gathered in the research phase to identify the key characteristics of the landscape.
4. Description: This involves describing the characteristics of the landscape in a clear and concise manner.
5. Mapping: This involves creating a map of the landscape that shows its key features and characteristics.

# Using Historic Landscape Characterisation

English Heritage's review of HLC  
Applications 2002 - 03

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& Graham Fairclough

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# Introduction



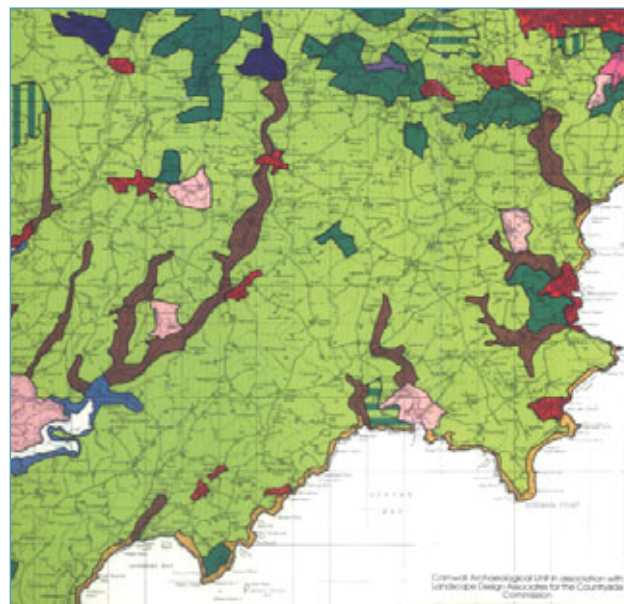
The historic landscape in the Hodder Valley, Lancashire  
© Lancashire County Council

Characterisation is an important new way of managing change in the historic landscape. Emerging in England and elsewhere over the past few years, it is particularly relevant at the landscape scale. It has distant roots in the 1960s, in the concept of 'character' articulated in the 1967 Conservation Area legislation, while more recent influences include Landscape Character Assessment and the English Heritage Historic Landscape Project of 1992-4 (summarised in *Yesterday's World, Tomorrow's Landscape*, Fairclough *et al*, 1999). In 1998 characterisation, by then endorsed by PPG7 and PPG15, was brought to the foreground by the joint Countryside Commission/English Heritage/English Nature project that produced the Countryside Character Map. It is also visible in the principles of works such as Roberts and Wrathmell's

Settlement Atlas of 2000. Finally it is a primary vehicle for achieving the goals and aspirations of the European Landscape Convention.

Initiatives such as this made the leap from the confines of selected special areas or sites, to the bigger picture of the historic environment as a whole, whether nationally or at the scale of a complete county or a town. They formed part of a general move towards more integrated and holistic modes of management and understanding, which paved the way for the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) programme.

Historic Landscape Characterisation was pioneered in Cornwall in 1994, and has developed rapidly and broadly into a major national programme that is now more than half complete. Its evolution is



Mapping the progress of English Heritage's HLC programme at April 2004, and an extract from the Cornwall HLC map for the Bodrugan Area (right). © Cornwall County Council

summarised in Part 1, and further detail is available in the report of a recent national review of the HLC method (Aldred and Fairclough, 2002). For present purposes it is sufficient to say that HLC has defined new territory in spatial historic analysis, in the scope of the terms 'historic environment' and 'heritage', and in the philosophy of how the historic environment is managed. HLC should also be considered as a microcosm and an exemplar of a much wider field of historic characterisation, which is now being extended to cover complex urban areas and expansive conurbations such as the Government's sustainable community Housing Growth and Pathfinder Areas.

Since the English Heritage/local government collaboration on HLC began, all the principles of this approach (and indeed those of the Countryside Agency's programme of Landscape Character Assessment) have been endorsed by the European Landscape Convention (ELC).

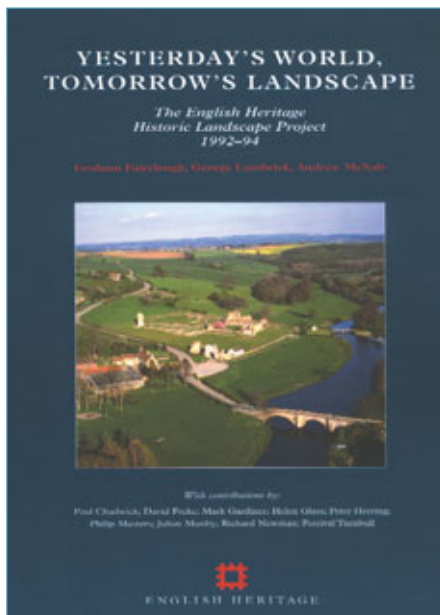
See <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/treaties/html/176.htm> for a copy of the ELC.

Published in October 2000, the Convention rapidly won widespread

support; it came into force on 1 March 2004 in those countries that ratified it. Like HLC, the ELC promotes landscape as a primary aspect of the common heritage, and one that requires comprehensive understanding, democratic participation and sustainable management.

In England, characterisation has partly been a reaction to a changed perception of the traditional designation system. This had proved effective for fifty years in the case of buildings and one hundred years for monuments, but was coming to be seen as ineffectual for the wide historic landscape. HLC in particular is concerned with questions of how to protect and manage dynamic rural landscapes. The drawing of 'red lines' around parts of the historic landscape was seen to risk devaluing the areas outside of the line; most importantly, it was not clear what would be achieved other than a flagging up of interest, an objective that can be reached more directly and clearly by other methods. More than any other part of the historic environment, the landscape is characterised and enriched by centuries of change and modification. If we celebrate the result of past changes, we must logically





accept further change, especially as so many aspects of HLC depend on living, shifting, ever-changing semi-natural patterns. It is not simply that it is impossible to fossilise the landscape—more than that, it is undesirable. A red line marking a designation in the landscape cannot, for example, mean no further change of any sort; this would be an unnecessary and unattainable goal.

We want landscape to change so that it continues to be cultural, as well as being a dynamic inheritance for our successors. The question, therefore, is one of what scale and type of change is most appropriate. Methods of deciding this are needed that are based on understanding time-depth in the landscape and on appreciating an area's sensitivity, vulnerability and capacity for change in the context of specific proposals. HLC was designed to provide the first of these requirements – a better, broader understanding – as a prelude to allowing the second – practical applications – to be achieved.

HLC brought large-scale characterisation into the heritage management field, and shifted our

objectives from protecting separate sites to managing change in all places. From the very beginning it was recognised that a method was required that would meet a wide range of uses, and would be flexible enough to meet many different demands. *Yesterday's World, Tomorrow's Landscape* identified a range of applications – “for example developing awareness of local identity, academic understanding, designations and planning policies, development appraisal, management or grant assessment” (Fairclough *et al*, 1999, 56), just as English Heritage thinking on landscape had earlier drawn attention to Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) management plans and Conservation Area Appraisals, Development Plans and development control as methods for positive management (Fairclough *et al*, 1999, 19). These ideas were also incorporated in 1994 into Planning Policy Guidance note 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (paragraphs 2.26, 6.2, 6.40).

This book demonstrates how all of these uses have been explored and new ones identified as the HLC programme has progressed. Some applications have proved easier to carry out than others. All require complex networks of partnership and collaboration, which cannot always be established rapidly. Nevertheless, great progress was being made by 2002. National HLC coverage was approaching its halfway point, and a handful of counties had demonstrated 3-4 years' experience of applying HLC in a variety of ways to support heritage management. The HLC Method Review was also being completed and it became clear that a parallel overview of current applications was also needed, to take stock of the position we had reached and to facilitate further development. We had a lot of anecdotal evidence, but a pulling together of all this

*Yesterday's World, Tomorrow's Landscape* - the report of the 1992 - 94 project that defined English Heritage's approach to the historic landscape.

The urban landscape of Liverpool, which is being characterised by the Merseyside HLC Project © Liverpool City Council



experience was a necessary next step, in order to press home to many audiences the value of HLC.

English Heritage therefore commissioned the Archaeology Service of Lancashire County Council (one of the local government leaders in HLC and its uses) to carry out a national HLC Applications Review. The present document is a high level summary of a more detailed Technical Report. It concentrates on a small number of examples that demonstrate some of the best practice currently identified, under several major headings that represent the main areas of HLC application, such as:

- Landscape Management (e.g. Agri-Environmental Schemes)
- Landscape Character Assessments and Strategies
- Spatial Planning and
- Partnership, Learning and Outreach.

The book concludes by looking forward in the light of this review to how HLC can

become even more useful in the future, taking into account lessons learnt and obstacles as yet unsurmounted.

Whilst this document is largely concerned with the character of the rural historic landscape, its general conclusions apply across the whole emerging and developing field of heritage characterisation. Some of the most innovative work at present concerns the post-industrial towns of Cornwall and Lancashire, the great conurbations such as Merseyside, and the ambitious regeneration programmes of the London-Stansted-Cambridge and Thames Gateway Growth Areas. There is exactly the same need in such areas as there is in rural landscapes to understand the general inherited character of both landscape and townscape. The general lessons learnt by the review of how HLC is being used, summarised in the final chapter, will have wider applicability beyond the HLC programme.

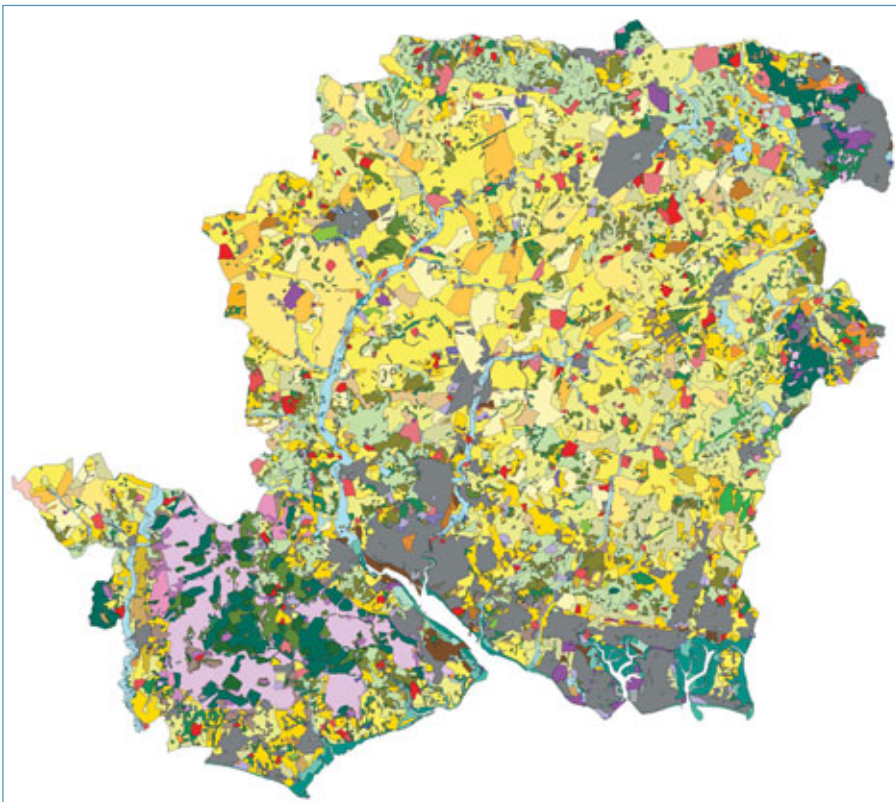
# Part 1

## Principles & Methods

### Background

The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) programme co-ordinated by English Heritage has always emphasised diversity of method and flexibility. In part this is a consequence of the differing capacities, data sources and requirements of the host organisations, who are united by the need to better understand the historic environment, some requiring planning outputs whilst others are more concerned with regeneration objectives. However, it also reflected the early experimental nature of the programme,

combined with the desire to test, extend and develop new methodologies. As a result there has been no single, national approach to carrying out HLC surveys. Instead, there exists a core of concepts and recognised methods, used successfully by all practitioners, and a suite of ancillary or peripheral methods which reflect the range of differing interests. The HLC *Taking Stock of the Method Report* (Aldred & Fairclough, 2003) is recommended for those wishing to understand the HLC method in more detail, but this section will provide a brief introduction.



Hampshire  
HLC map  
© Hampshire  
County  
Council

### Guiding Principles for HLC

- **Present not past:** it is the present-day landscape that is the main object of study  
Landscape as history not geography: the most important characteristic of landscape is its time-depth; change and earlier landscapes exist in the present landscape
- **Landscape not sites:** HLC-based research and understanding are concerned with area not point data
- **All aspects of the landscape,** no matter how modern, are treated as part of landscape character, **not just ‘special’ areas**
- Semi-natural and living features (woodland, land cover, hedges etc.) are as much a part of landscape character as archaeological features; **human landscape – bio-diversity is a cultural phenomenon**
- Characterisation of landscape is a matter of **interpretation not record, perception not facts;** understand ‘landscape’ as **an idea**, not purely as an objective thing
- **People’s views:** it is important to consider collective and public perceptions of landscape alongside more expert views
- Landscape is and always has been dynamic: **management of change, not preservation** is the aim
- The process of characterisation should be **transparent**, with clearly articulated records of data sources and methods used
- HLC maps and text should be easy to understand, **jargon free** and **easily accessible** to users
- HLC results should be **integrated** into other environmental and heritage management records (e.g. SMRs or HERs)

### Guiding principles

The principles behind historic characterisation are simple. They concern mapping the historic dimension of today’s rural and urban landscapes, and are about being comprehensive, not selective (leaving no ‘grey areas’), and viewing areas rather than individual sites. HLC is concerned with the commonplace and the locally distinctive and, through identifying and analysing time-depth, it expresses the dynamic nature of towns and countryside.

There are usually two stages to the characterisation process: a first in which the landscape or townscape is identified, mapped, described and interpreted – i.e. ‘this is what we have’ – and a second in which judgements, whether about value or more practical priorities, are applied to this initial assessment and objectives are agreed – i.e. ‘this is what we wish to do with it’. This second stage lends itself directly to a variety of land management and

conservation applications, which Part 2 will demonstrate.

Mapping plays a central role in historic characterisation, both in the process of defining Character Types and Areas, and in the presentation and manipulation of the results. The use of GIS, including digital historic maps, ensures flexibility and has now reached the stage where it is a requirement for the successful delivery of HLC projects.

### General approach

The aim of most HLC studies is to characterise the distinctive historic dimension of today’s urban and rural environment within a given area. Achieving this through the HLC process is relatively straightforward.

It begins with the systematic identification and description of many of the historic attributes of the contemporary rural and urban landscape, using a number of common sources.



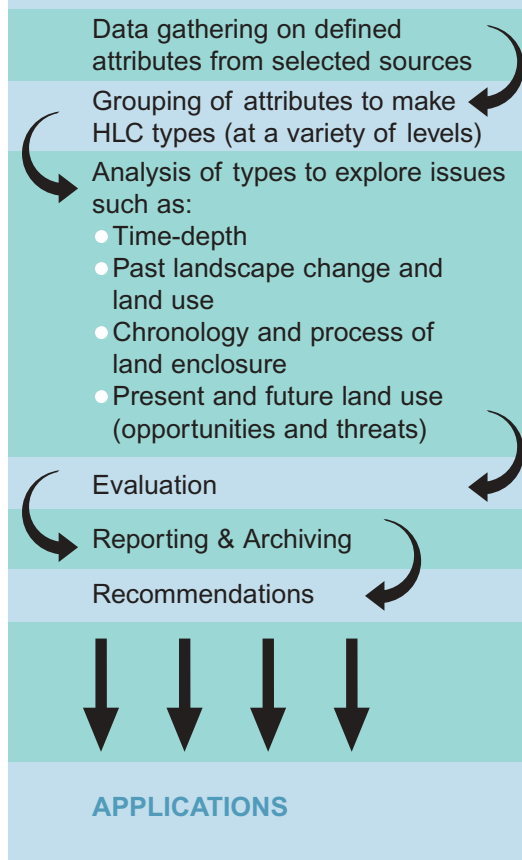
### Examples of HLC Attributes

- Current land use
- Past land use
- Field morphology (size, shape, group patterns)
- Boundary types
- Distribution and types of other resources (e.g. woodland, water, minerals)
- Distribution and types of buildings
- Placenames and earliest references
- Settlement types and patterns
- Communication types and patterns
- Archaeological and historic sites recorded on the SMR Common Sources
- Modern OS mapping (usually GIS-based)
- Modern land use and thematic mapping (e.g. Phase 1 Habitat Survey)
- Geological, soil, hydrological and topographical mapping
- Comprehensive historic mapping (e.g. OS First Edition)
- Selected historic mapping (e.g. Enclosure Awards, Estate Maps and Tithe Maps)
- Aerial photographs
- Documentary sources (e.g. VCH, place name surveys)
- SMR data (especially designations)
- Other research

These attributes include aspects of the natural and built environment that have been shaped by human activity in the past – the distribution of woodland and other semi-natural habitats, the form of fields and their boundaries, the lines of roads, streets and pathways, the disposition of buildings in the towns, villages and countryside.

Data gathering is followed by the grouping of attributes into Historic Landscape Character Types. The underlying philosophy is that particular patterns and groupings of landscape attributes can be shown to be determined by their similar land use history. For example, in the Lancashire HLC programme, an area possessing a pattern of small irregular fields, dissected by winding lanes and footpaths, associated with known medieval settlements, place and field names, and shown to be in existence prior to the earliest comprehensive map evidence, will be allocated to the Ancient Enclosure (i.e. pre AD1600) HLC Type. Long thin regular

### HLC – Typical Phases



enclosures, laid out to a grid pattern demarcated only by ditches and shown to post-date the earlier mapping, may be allocated to Modern Enclosure (i.e. post *circa* AD1850).

There are variations on this method, most notably in earlier projects, which used a predefined classification of HLC Types (the classification-led approach) and document-led approaches starting from the basis of historic maps, but the overall principles and logic remain the same.

#### HLC Broad Types

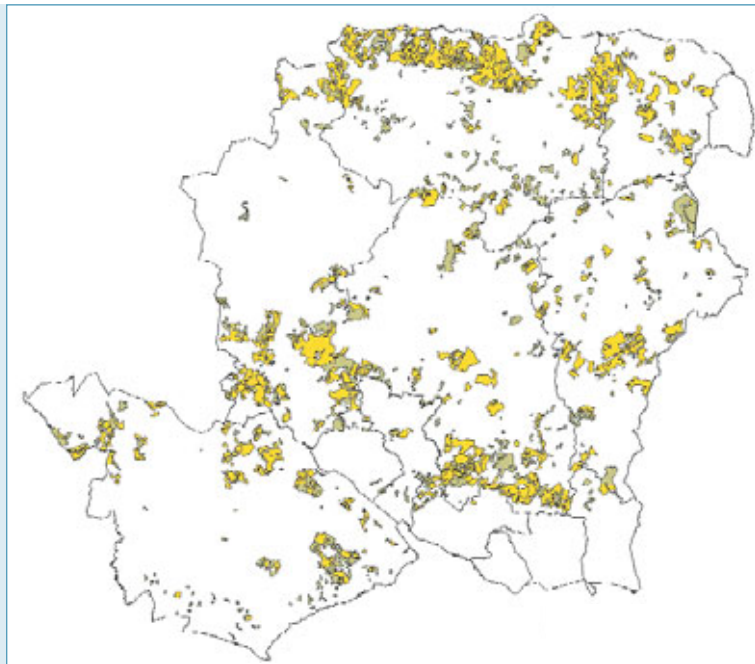
- Unenclosed or unimproved land
- Enclosed land
- Woodland
- Industrial land
- Military
- Ornamental and recreational
- Settlements
- Orchards
- Communications
- Water and valley floor
- Water bodies

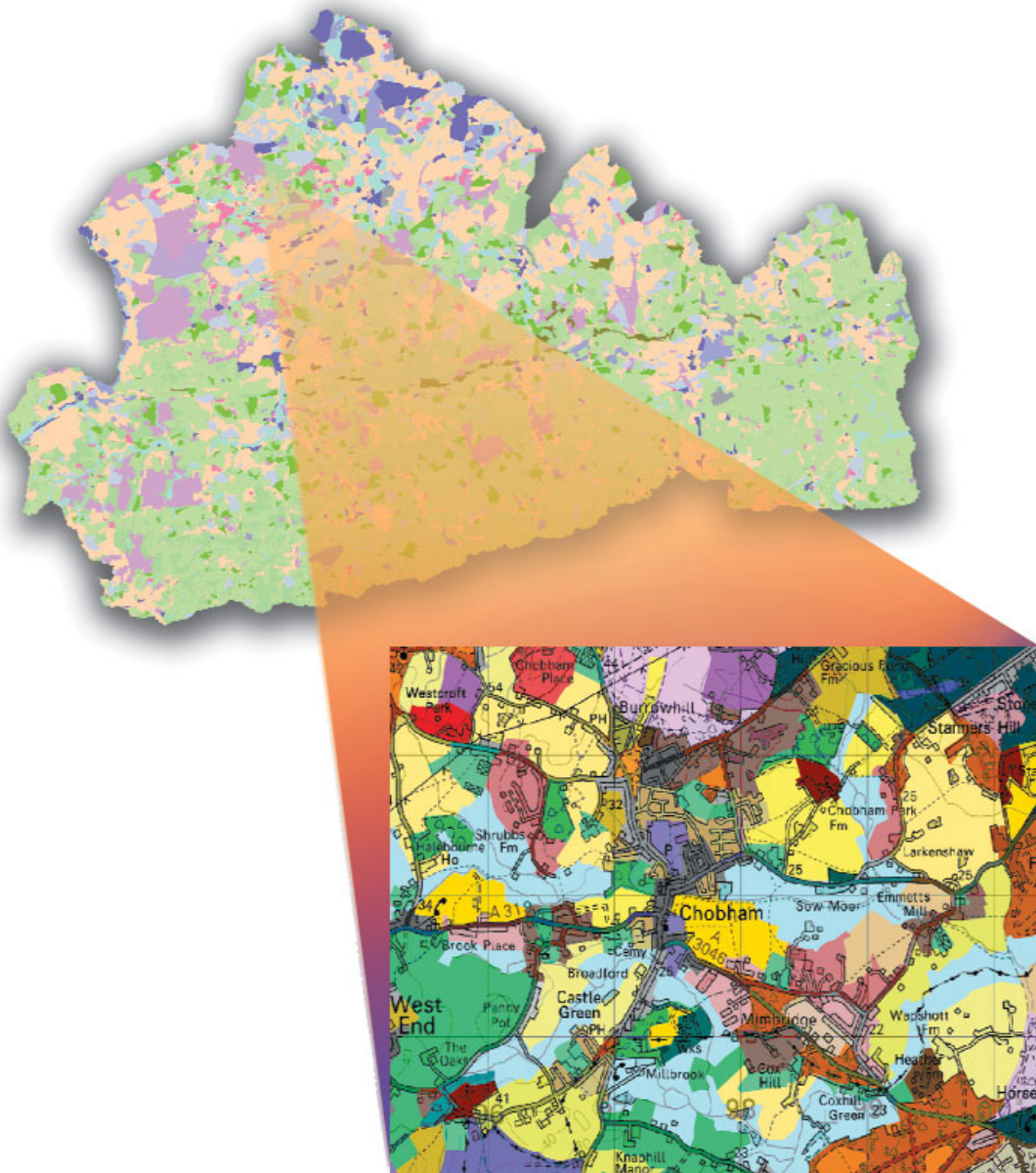
The number of HLC Types can vary depending on the purpose of specific types of analysis, individual project objectives and the landscapes encountered, but there is a common core of HLC Types (see HLC Broad Types Box) that will allow each to be joined at a regional level. In all cases these types are subdivided. Enclosed Land, for example, might have medieval, post-medieval or modern divisions, or Industrial Land may be divided between areas that are active and those that are inactive.

The result is hierarchical with, for example, the Surrey HLC possessing fourteen Broad Types and one hundred Sub-Types. The method is flexible enough to allow still further and more detailed characterisation below the sub-types at a more localised scale (e.g. for towns, Conservation Areas or building complexes).

Use of GIS ensures that all HLC projects can produce additional characterisation above and beyond the

Assorted  
land identified  
in the  
Hampshire  
HLC  
© Hampshire  
County  
Council





The HLC mapping process is focused upon the historic components of the present-day landscape. Its primary objective is not, for example, to map the former extent of medieval field systems in a given area (although this may be achieved indirectly), but instead to illustrate where today's landscape is broadly medieval in origin and in surviving character. It is this emphasis on the historic dimension of today's landscape that gives HLC its strength as a tool for managing change in the future.

The published  
Cornwall HLC  
report, Herring,  
1998



### HLC products

The main product of HLC is character mapping, available in GIS format. In addition to this, there are basic reports on method, which include a description of each Character Type or Zone and its main features. For some projects this information is very detailed; in the case of Cornwall, a particularly thorough example, for each Character Zone there are summary descriptions that outline the following:

- The defining, distinguishing attributes, e.g. field shape, basic topographical features or association with settlement

- The principal historical processes that have led to the creation of the landscape type
- Typical historical and archaeological components
- Rarity
- Survival
- Evidence for time-depth
- Potential for historical and archaeological research
- Typical values and perceptions
- Forces for change
- Recommendations

HLC projects produce extensive information, which makes possible complex interpretations to serve a variety of uses. Many of these uses were anticipated or planned at the outset of the programme (Fairclough *et al*, 1999, 56), whilst others have been developed as the programme has evolved, as the discussion of current and emerging applications in the following chapters will demonstrate. However, for HLC to inform the greatest possible number of applications, information needs to be made accessible to a wide audience in a user-friendly format, and the various ways in which this is being achieved are discussed in Chapter 4.



# Part 2

## The Applications of Historic Landscape Characterisation



The historic landscape in the Peak District  
© Peak District National Park

### Understanding the historic landscape

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has a wide range of applications because it provides a comprehensive overview of the historic landscape. It promotes a framework, a background understanding and a better informed starting point from which to consider issues and proposals. It provides information, not judgements – it does not identify the ‘best’ areas, but allows appropriate decisions to be made in the light of proposed change. HLC does not seek to answer every question about the historic landscape, but it focuses on one

highlight – surviving time-depth, the legibility and enjoyment of the past in the present landscape. It explains landscape’s cultural, historic and archaeological attributes and the importance of change through time as a primary characteristic.

HLC is not a stand-alone tool for advising on the mitigation of planning applications or agri-environment schemes. To be effective it needs to be used in conjunction with other datasets, such as other parts of Sites and Monument Records (SMRs), or Historic Environment Records (HERs) as they are increasingly known.

HLC provides a context for existing data. In the past the landscape as a whole has been overlooked as attention has been confined to specific monuments and point data recorded in SMRs. HLC demonstrates that the historic landscape has importance as a whole – the sum of all its parts – as well as being able to show how individual sites fit into their surroundings and the wider landscape.

HLC is a valuable method of raising awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape, and a successful means of ensuring that its needs are taken into account alongside those of the natural environment when development proposals are considered. However, it is not concerned to preserve the landscape unchanged, nor to return it to some past point in its evolution. We are not trying to protect the landscape of

the past, but to manage sustainably the past, history and origins of the landscape in the present – i.e. the historic character of the current landscape. The aim is not to determine how the landscape of the past shall stay, or how it should be maintained or recreated. Instead HLC is about identifying the traces of the past within the modern landscape, and recognising that essentially the landscape has its present character because of the changes it has undergone over the past millennia. The challenge, therefore, is to address how future change can sensitively respect local character and diversity.

The following chapters will explore how this information and understanding can be used to inform a range of applications:

**Chapter 1 Landscape Management** – the role of HLC in advising agri-environment schemes and influencing the targeting of Countryside Stewardship Schemes and Special Projects. How HLC is used by Historic Environment Countryside Advisors (HECAS), and how it is influencing the Countryside Agency's Landscape Management Initiatives.

**Chapter 2 Landscape Character Assessment and Strategies** – using HLC to define, understand and describe Landscape Character Assessment types, and to inform Landscape Strategies, at county and district level.

**Chapter 3 Spatial Planning** – using HLC to inform new planning policy and SPG in Development Plans, as well as to advise on planning applications and hedgerow removal applications.

**Chapter 4 Partnership, Learning and Outreach** – many projects and initiatives outside of the originally anticipated applications have recognised the value of HLC to support other aspects of environmental management as well as to inform research in both local authorities and universities; HLC information can be provided in a variety of formats (reports, mapping, Internet and CD ROM), helping to raise awareness of the historic landscape.

# Chapter 1

## Landscape Management

The holistic approach of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), which recognises the importance of character in all aspects of the landscape, makes it particularly suited to informing positive landscape management. Where local authorities provide HLC data on a regular basis to landowners, estate managers, farmers, or organisations such as English Nature, FWAG, the National Trust and the Wildlife Trust, all of whom have an interest or a stake in the management of the landscape, it is generally well received and understood. In some instances this information has helped to foster good working relations with key bodies; it helps to bond the interests of the historic landscape with those of the natural environment. It is therefore an especially relevant tool for advising on applications for agri-environment schemes.

The applications covered in this chapter include a variety of topics and programmes. Examples of best practice are provided for each of the following:

- Agri-environment schemes
- Historic Environment Countryside Advisory Services (HECAS)
- Stewardship targets and Special Projects
- Countryside Agency Landscape Management Initiatives
- Woodland grant schemes



Hedge laying  
in the Forest of  
Bowland  
AONB

### Informing agri-environment schemes

Assessment of the likely impact of agri-environment schemes on the historic environment has typically been limited to a search of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), to check the effect upon known archaeological sites. HLC has encouraged a shift in perspective from the site specific to consideration of the landscape as a whole, which is more complementary to the requirements of farm management.

Beyond its use for management of the historic environment, HLC is also a valuable starting point for many other types of assessment, as it presents a background explanation of the landscape and the processes of human action that have shaped it over the centuries. It allows responses to be less negative and reactive and more positive and proactive.

Each of the attributes that define an HLC Type (such as field patterns, boundaries, woodland or archaeological sites) has particular conservation needs and presents different opportunities. By amalgamating these needs and opportunities into a single list, HLC encourages a process of 'stepping back' and viewing landscape as a whole.

This change in perspective, adding to site specific information, is sympathetic to current and likely future management trends and may be used to produce

generic recommendations for individual Character Types. These provide a useful point of reference for land agents and others involved in drawing up agri-environment schemes and other land management strategies. In some cases these sustainable management issues are included in HLC project reports. For example, the Lancashire report includes a section entitled Enhancing and Safeguarding the Type, which identifies management recommendations for each Character Type.

#### Extract from the Lancashire HLC Project Report (Ede with Darlington, 2002, 70) Enhancing and safeguarding the type – moorland

- *Undertake survey.* With few exceptions the moorland of Lancashire has never undergone a systematic programme of research to identify its (historic) heritage assets (archaeological sites, palaeo-environmental resource, built heritage and historic landscape).
- *Conserve* the distinctive high altitude field enclosures, buildings and communications network. The network of walls, historic trackways and isolated agricultural buildings is a distinctive feature of the moorland landscape, providing time-depth and intra-county historical variation – priority should be given to those features according to their period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity and potential. Where stabilisation or restoration is not feasible the base courses and foundation stones of enclosure walls and buildings should be maintained as evidence of former activity.
- *Conserve* the evidence for relic occupation and land use. Moorland contains the best-preserved earthwork evidence for prehistoric settlement, ritual use and land management in the county. It also includes vaccary and forest features and industrial landscapes, which are distinctive to Lancashire. Priority will be given to the preservation of these characteristic attributes of moorland landscape.
- *Improve management.* Improve the management regime (and advice to it) to minimise the threat of overgrazing and erosion, and damage through the growth of bracken or furze, reversion and scrubbing up. Positive management should be encouraged, potentially with the aid of agri-environmental schemes. Maintenance of thin peat soils, and hence the archaeological remains within them, may be promoted through rotational heather burning. Bracken should be controlled by spraying as opposed to mechanical means that may damage the archaeological resource. Stone clearance and the use of cairns and buildings as sources of building material must be avoided.
- *Avoid* damage to the historic environment through mineral exploitation, tree planting and agricultural improvement. Full archaeological assessment prior to decision-making should be carried out where appropriate.
- *Enhance interpretation.* The role of humans in the creation and management of moorland is not well appreciated. Opportunities for increased and improved interpretation, and the appropriate extension of access, should be taken whilst at the same time deflecting visitors from sensitive historic attributes.



The Type specific sections in the Lancashire HLC report contain a great deal of relevant information that becomes useful when a scheme is being put together. The example on the previous page outlines the features that are likely to be encountered and how they are best managed, and makes a clear statement about the need for assessment prior to schemes such as tree planting. Under 'improve management' it highlights the need for positive management, and lists some of the preferred means of achieving this. HLC therefore provides a sound basis

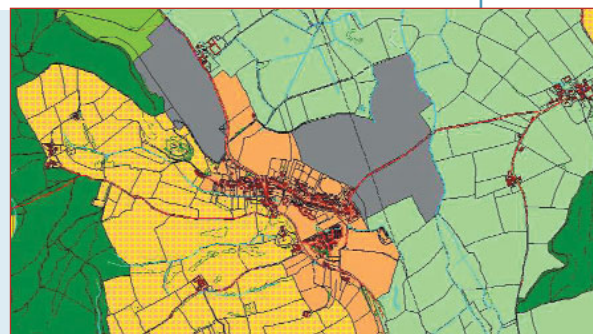
for considering the location and scope of agri-environment schemes. It identifies general issues that need to be looked at in detail and interpreted alongside historic maps and specific SMR information about the proposed area.

An example from Herefordshire demonstrates how HLC is being used to inform a Countryside Stewardship Scheme. In this case the area earmarked for inclusion was identified by the HLC as having modern character, which influenced the recommendations that were made.

### Countryside Stewardship, Wigmore, Herefordshire

In 2002 an application was made for a Countryside Stewardship Scheme near Wigmore, Herefordshire, for an area of large fields that had been created over the past few decades as farming techniques had intensified and necessitated the removal of boundaries. The HLC showed that this area had a character quite distinct from the surrounding landscape, which comprised either the enclosure of former common arable fields associated with medieval settlement at Wigmore, or the later redefinition of the landscape by the drainage and enclosure of the moor. Recognising that the more recent modification of the landscape was an historical process in its own right it was advised that, rather than reconstructing lost boundaries, the large fields should be subdivided in a way that reflected current farming practice (such as cropping regimes, or the addressing of concerns about soil movement), thus accepting Countryside Stewardship schemes as a recognisable cause of change in the modern landscape.

Extract from the Herefordshire HLC for the Wigmore area and photograph of the same area; the modern large fields (grey on map) are in the foreground  
© Herefordshire Council  
OS licence  
LA 09069L



- Modern degraded land
- Enclosure of common arable fields
- Woodland
- Redefinition of former common arable fields
- Adaption of the enclosure of former common arable fields

Historic field boundaries form an integral part of the character of the landscape of the Peak District National Park  
© PDNP



Lancashire County Council has taken the provision of HLC information a step further by providing a copy of the HLC to the DEFRA Rural Development Service team in the North West region, who are piloting the use of an HLC database in processing agri-environment schemes. HLC information is available when schemes are being drawn up, and is not just provided in response to individual proposals when they have already been formulated. It is proving to be a useful source of background information, and a more user-friendly version is in development that will directly link the HLC GIS mapping with text boxes describing the

archaeological potential and management issues for each type.

Farm Advisors in the Peak District National Park make regular use of HLC data. The Advisors receive regular training from the National Park's archaeologists, who provide them with interpreted HLC and SMR information. The National Park also provides its own financial incentives for protecting the historic landscape, offered independently of DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship. The following is an example of the information supplied by a National Park archaeologist for a Farm Advisor, and illustrates the value of HLC in informing such schemes:

### Historic walling grant, the Peak District National Park

An extract from advice provided for the renewal of an historic walling grant for a holding in the White Peak:

The Historic Landscape Characterisation classifies this holding as part of a much more extensive area of Ancient Enclosure with the medieval strip system of cultivation fossilised by later walls. The gradual loss of field boundaries from this type of landscape in the Peak District means that such fossilised strip field systems that remain intact are becoming rarer and are particularly worthy of preservation. The fields of this holding form an integral part of this important White Peak Landscape.

### The HECAS initiative

English Heritage provides funding for a number of local authorities to support Historic Environment Countryside Advisory Services (HECAS), whose work includes developing models of best practice for managing historic landscapes. A large proportion of this work is

concerned with advising agri-environment schemes and raising awareness of the historic environment in rural issues. HLC information is readily available to the HECAS Officer in Cornwall and Somerset, for example, where it is used on a daily basis to check schemes and to make informed recommendations.

Cornwall County Council has extensive experience of using HLC to advise agri-environment schemes. Here the HECAS Officer has devised a series of pro-forma paragraphs that relate to individual HLC landscape types, which are reiterated in each response before more detailed information relating to the

specific area is added. This allows the DEFRA case officer to place the farm, its components and the proposed scheme in their historic environment context, and enables HECAS to suggest works that will enhance historic landscape character.

### Countryside Advice in Cornwall using HLC

Generic definitions of HLC Types can be enhanced by additional professional interpretation and evidence from other sources. This can provide a consistent and contextualised starting point for advising on stewardship and similar proposals. The definition below is an example of this:

*Anciently Enclosed Land (AEL) – little altered and as such of high landscape value. This is defined as having irregular field patterns with medieval or prehistoric origins. Many blocks of AEL have the remnants of medieval strip fields, either the enclosed strips themselves or the enclosed cropping units which contained these strips. Winding lanes connect farming settlements that are documented before the 17th century and were usually originally small hamlets. The land tends to be relatively sheltered but can extend onto high downs.*

### Bodrugan Farm, Mevagissey, Cornwall

Bodrugan, a great medieval estate with a fortified house, chapel and deer park, lies in a particular form of Anciently Enclosed Land that is associated with barton farms (a term used for the home farm of the lord of the manor). In fact it is one of Cornwall's best-defined barton systems, with fields much larger and more rectilinear than those found with hamlets. However, the applicants wished to subdivide one large field with a new hedge, which would have effectively altered the character of the farm. The HECAS officer persuaded FWAG (the applicants' agent) and DEFRA to alter the boundary to a fence instead, which as a less visually intrusive boundary enabled the large-field character of Bodrugan to be maintained.

The HECAS Officer was therefore able to prevent the character of this area from being eroded while still supporting the agricultural and ecological needs of the scheme.



Bodrugan  
Farm,  
Mevagissey  
© Cornwall  
County  
Council

The open strip fields of the Isle of Axholme, North Lincolnshire  
© Keith Miller



### Stewardship targeting and special projects

HLC can be used to identify targets for Countryside Stewardship (or in future the proposed Higher Tier scheme). It has become an essential tool for informing and guiding agri-environment strategies at all levels from the local to the regional. It is often able to resolve issues such as hedgerow recreation because of its fine grain historical detail. At the regional level it has directly

influenced selection of stewardship targets and conservation strategies for various landscape types. In Cornwall and West Devon, Recently Enclosed Land established by miners on former rough ground is being suggested as one target, because of its specific historic origins and particular significance for local history and identity. In Axholme (North Lincolnshire), HLC has already been used to inform the targeting of Countryside Stewardship Schemes.

### Stewardship targeting and special projects – Axholme

The Axholme project was undertaken to test and develop the Cornwall HLC method at a fine grain resolution within a Countryside Character Area (the Humberhead Levels). It was intended to contribute towards land management, partly addressing the need for better informed conservation identified at regional Countryside Stewardship Schemes targeting meetings.

The 1997 Countryside Commission's Target Proposals for the Humberhead Levels (Character Area 39) stated key objectives as being to restore and conserve:

- the nationally important open strip field system on the Isle of Axholme
  - the unique cable systems (strip allotments) of the Thorne area
- (both of which had been mapped and identified by HLC).

Because of the specific characteristics of the open strip field areas a Stewardship Special Project was recommended as an option for conservation management, and further studies were undertaken on condition, vulnerability and management of HLC components. These studies, together with a detailed review of farm economics, have resulted in a Special Project launched by DEFRA in 2003, which should ultimately benefit not only the open strip fields of Axholme but also the other rare survivals of openfield landscapes in England.



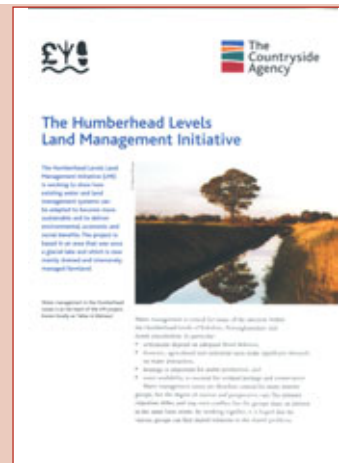
## Landscape Management Initiatives

The Countryside Agency has run a series of Land Management Initiatives (LMIs) across England to investigate how farming and land management can respond to changing demands on agriculture in a positive and sustainable way. There have

been nine LMI projects, which have looked at a cross section of the landscape – arable land, lowland pastoral, upland and the urban fringe. Two of these have been informed by HLC – the Severn Vyrnwy area in Shropshire and the Humberhead Levels in North Lincolnshire.

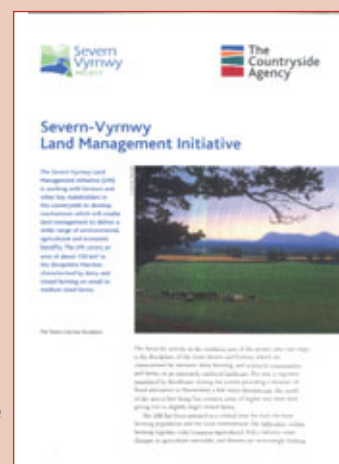
### Severn Vyrnwy, Shropshire

This is a lowland pastoral area characterised by intensive dairy farming and dispersed farms, located on the floodplain of the Severn and Vyrnwy Rivers. The Shropshire HLC, although in its early stages at the time, was able to contribute usefully to the Severn Vyrnwy Land Management Initiative. The work included an appraisal of HLC and its use for directing Countryside Stewardship towards aspects of the historic environment. It identified a number of HLC types particularly appropriate for targeting stewardship schemes (e.g. wetlands and piecemeal enclosure), as well as considering issues of landscape management that could be used to inform this.



### Humberhead Levels, North Lincolnshire

The Humberhead Levels LMI, known locally as 'Value in Wetness', is the national pilot for sustainable use of wetlands. The Axholme HLC is used alongside other data on soil types, drainage, water level management, archaeology and farm business. Outputs drawing specifically on HLC include publication of environmental guidelines for farmers and land managers, and proposals for a project officer to work with sustainable farming initiatives on pilot farms and agri-environment schemes in the wetlands. Specific targets for improved management cover landscape types highlighted in the HLC as especially significant and vulnerable, notably the Axholme openfields and the moorland allotments (or cables – long, narrow landholdings produced by colonisation of the lowland peat moors), which were identified for the first time by the HLC.



The  
Humberhead  
Levels Land  
Management  
Initiative  
© The  
Countryside  
Agency

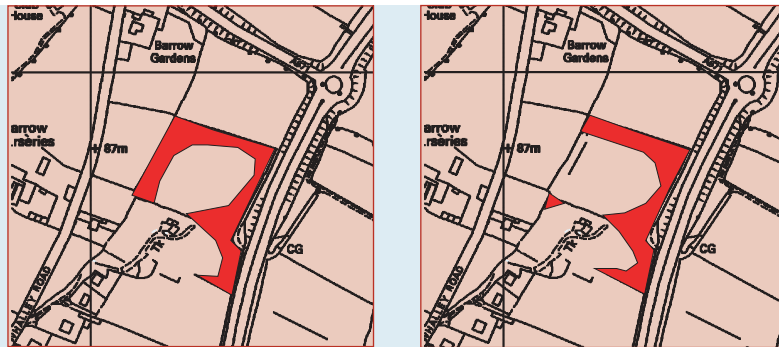
The Severn-  
Vyrnwy Land  
Management  
Initiative  
© The  
Countryside  
Agency

## Woodland grant schemes

HLC is used to advise Woodland Grant Schemes, administered by the Forestry Commission. There are well established woodland patterns in most counties, and the description of HLC types will clearly indicate whether planting is typical for that area or not. For example, upland moor is characterised as being an open treeless expanse; proposals to plant large blocks of woodland in such areas are therefore

contrary to landscape character – not necessarily a reason not to proceed with planting, but an influential factor in the decision process of whether to plant and if so how. Where woodland is proposed, HLC can be used to inform the location, extent and shape of planting. Further direction may be provided for those locations where HLC illustrates the presence of former woodland, through identifying areas of assarts.

The original design of a proposed Woodland Grant Scheme near Clitheroe (left) and the amended design following HLC consultation (right)  
 © Lancashire County Council.  
 OS licence 100023320



### Tree planting near Clitheroe, Lancashire

A planting scheme was proposed for an area just outside Clitheroe identified on the HLC as Ancient Enclosure. This comprised former common arable open fields that had been enclosed in the late medieval period and retained extensive remains of a strip field system. The proposal to plant a block of trees across some of the strips was unsympathetic to the character of the historic landscape. Recognising that a main aim of the planting was to provide a screen from the dual carriageway running through the area, it was agreed that planting was necessary, but the scheme was modified. Trees were planted in a pattern sympathetic to the grain of the landscape and not against it. Planting that followed the strips and accentuated their character rather than running at right angles to the field pattern was encouraged. This is a small example but is enough to show the importance of local character in informing such initiatives.

HLC is also proving to be very useful to boundary related projects:

### Forest of Bowland Boundary Survey, Lancashire

Within the Forest of Bowland AONB, a pilot project has assessed the condition of boundaries visible from public rights of way across a number of parishes, and HLC has been used alongside other data to provide criteria for assessing their importance.

For example, the project has identified repair of the boundaries of an expanse of Ancient Enclosure as a priority for the parish of Slaidburn. The character of this part of the parish, which is defined by small irregular fields bounded by hedgerows, is very distinctive when compared with the surrounding landscape, which is dominated by regular fields outlined by stone walls that belong to a later phase of enclosure and land reorganisation. However, many of the hedgerows have grown out and fencing is increasingly replacing them as a boundary type.

The poor condition of hedges in Slaidburn, Lancashire



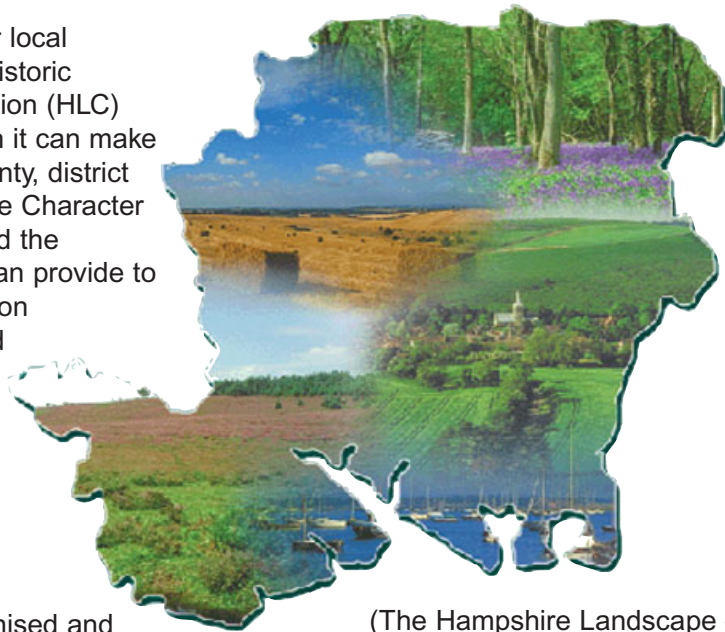
# Chapter 2

## Landscape Character Assessment and Strategies

An important stimulus for local authorities to carry out Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has been the contribution it can make to the preparation of county, district or AONB-wide Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs), and the supplementary detail it can provide to inform their implementation (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002; Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character, 2003).

LCA, like its historically informed cousin, is also increasingly being recognised and used as a tool for managing landscape change:

*It seeks to engage and guide all those who can influence management and change in the landscape. It informs and provides a framework for all agencies which are producing management plans and strategies. Ultimately it guides environmental action on the ground ...The Hampshire Strategy will be implemented through policy guidance in local plans and land management strategies, for topics as wide ranging as diversification of the economy; transport and communication links; and the siting of structures like telecommunications masts.*

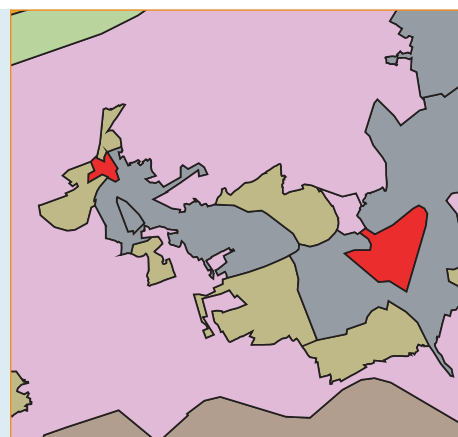


(The Hampshire Landscape – A Strategy For the Future, 2000)

LCAs are far-reaching documents, meant to have an holistic approach to landscape, but sometimes the historic depth and importance can be under-represented. The historic environment needs to be well and intelligently combined with LCAs, and integrating information from an HLC has proven to be the most successful way of doing this. The HLC work undertaken in Cornwall and Lancashire was planned in parallel with LCA, whilst the justification for HLC in Bath and North East Somerset, Gloucestershire and Hertfordshire rested upon the need for such information to underpin a future

The Hampshire landscape, from The Hampshire Landscape - A Strategy for the Future, 2000  
© Hampshire County Council

Urban areas identified by the Lancashire HLC (red) which are also used in the Landscape Character Assessment  
 © Lancashire County Council.  
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LCA. Also, counties like Dorset and Sussex were spurred on to commence HLC because of the need to produce AONB and proto-National Park plans that do not take an approach to Landscape Character based only on aesthetics.

### HLC-aided definition of LCA Types and Areas

One of the principal uses of HLC in Landscape Character Assessment has been to help define Landscape Character Types and Areas. During the process of producing an LCA, field-workers will use a number of sources to define landscape character by its geology, landform, soils, vegetation, woodlands and current land use, as well as looking at historical data. This desk-based work is followed by validation in the field and assessment of aesthetic and perceptual aspects of character. The subsequent classification and description of Landscape Types and Areas will result in a single landscape type, defined as having broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, landuse, settlement and field pattern in every area where it occurs.

HLC supports this process by providing the historic dimension to many of the patterns, for example, the human contribution to present-day soil or woodland cover – but it will also be one of the principal studies in defining the latter categories of land use, settlement and field pattern. The greater the human

contribution, the more prominent the detail contributed by HLC. HLC provides an overview of the historic dimension of the landscape. This broad character based approach links directly with LCA. When inspected on the ground, patterns of the historic landscape are much harder to identify without HLC, where topography and individual features may distract the viewer from the bigger picture. The wider and more vertical view of HLC is needed.

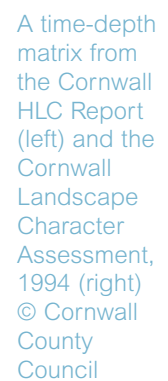
An example of how HLC can be used to aid the definition of landscape Character Types and Areas can be taken from Lancashire, where the urban areas were adopted wholesale from the HLC work, making HLC and LCA types one and the same. In other areas historic patterns of land reclamation identified in the HLC have been sufficiently strong to form the core of LCA types, or have contributed to their subdivision into unique areas. HLC can also be used during the consultation and review of suggested LCA divisions of types, acting as a prompt to correct and realign.

### HLC-aided understanding of LCA Types and Areas

HLC provides information at a number of different levels to help those carrying out LCA to understand the historical processes which have led to the current landscape. One example of this comes from the Cornwall HLC:



The Cornwall HLC – the first county-wide HLC – was carried out as part of the 1994 Cornwall Landscape Assessment, published in 1996 by Landscape Design Associates and Cornwall Archaeological Unit. In addition to the summary descriptions of each HLC Zone (CAU, 1998, 56) time-depth matrices are provided, which show periods against one axis and key historic landscape features on the other. This, combined with the use of symbols to differentiate between visible, subsurface and documentary evidence, allows a snapshot of the range of typical historic landscape components one might expect to see when exploring the Zone. These matrices have a range of uses, but in the case of LCA they serve to alert the fieldworker to visible and dominant historic elements in the countryside.



ing to Landscape Character Assessment also lies in the deep cultural appreciation of semi-natural elements of landscape that HLC provides. It also offers a clearer and more detailed understanding of how human action has shaped the environment, as the Lancashire example shows.

‘...small to medium scale field pattern with some areas of larger fields. Land is sparsely populated, with scattered isolated farmsteads.’

In contrast, the additional understanding of the area’s evolution brought about by the HLC results in a much more comprehensive and helpful description:

‘...small to medium scale field pattern comprising mostly Anciently Enclosed Land, although a large number of these fields have been amalgamated to form larger units in the 20th century. There are some pockets of Recently Enclosed Land, which indicate the loss of rough ground or wetland areas. This area is sparsely populated, with scattered isolated farmsteads. Buildings generally consist of small symmetrical cottages with sash windows, typical of around 1840 when areas of this landscape were enclosed or earlier boundaries altered.’

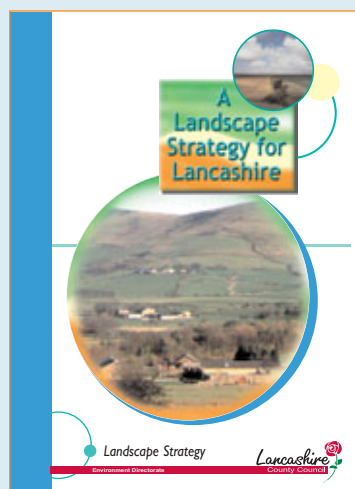
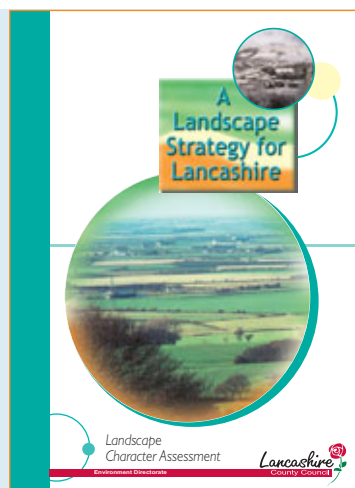
### The Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment

The Lancashire HLC was carried out before the Landscape Character Assessment and it therefore became one of LCA's primary sources, making a significant difference to the Assessment. The treatment of moorland landscapes is one example but similar examples can be found in other semi-natural types such as saltmarsh, sand dunes and water bodies.

The perception that Upland Moor does not have a historic or human dimension was clear in an early LCA for Lancashire (1993), where the only reference to human influence was the statement that 'settlement is restricted to isolated stone-built barns and farms in the vernacular style with stone flag or slate roofs'. The remainder of the description concerns non-historic aspects such as geology and landform, and biodiversity, including references to red grouse, hen harriers and merlins.

In contrast, the recent LCA (2000), which took account of the HLC, contains a whole section on human influences when describing the same area. This provides detail on the contribution of prehistoric peoples to the decline in tree cover and development of blanket peat (and hence the appearance of today's landscape), on the Anglo-Scandinavian place names and settlement of the area, its subdivision into Royal Forest, its medieval vaccaries, the processes in post-medieval improvement and encroachment, and later 19th century settlement desertion.

A Landscape  
Strategy for  
Lancashire,  
2000  
© Lancashire  
County  
Council



### HLC-informed landscape strategies

A detailed appreciation and understanding of landscape change promoted through HLC lends itself to a more specific and targeted contribution in the 'Making Judgements' stage of a Landscape Character Assessment – the point at which strategy is formulated. An appreciation of past change in the landscape and the forces for change today can provide an insight into the potential impact and direction of future change and measures of vulnerability. For example, the Cornwall summary paragraphs

- Recommendations for Safeguarding the Zone;
- Potential for historical/archaeological research;
- Potential for amenity and education;
- Vulnerability of components and
- Forces for Change

for each HLC Zone can be easily added to the Landscape Guidelines of the LCA. The landscape assessment also included policies and strategies derived from the HLC itself.

### The Lancashire LCA Strategy

In Lancashire the use of HLC has led to frequent reference to the historic dimension of landscape character and its component parts, throughout the LCA Strategy. For example, within the Enclosed Uplands Type the strategy identifies the following relevant Key Environmental Features:

**A high, exposed, undulating open plateau** with a distinctive pattern of enclosure;

**Network of gritstone walls and historic tracks** reinforces the landscape pattern and provides evidence of the extent of upland 18th and 19th century enclosure;

**Blanket bog** crowns the high summits providing landscape diversity, biodiversity and an important archaeological resource;

**Abandoned coal mines with day holes and bell pits** reflect the area's land use history and industrial legacy;

**Quarries** contribute to the character of the landscape and its hummocky, uneven landform;

**Distinctive pattern of settlement at high altitude**, including clusters of dwellings and short 'urban' terraces which reflect the area's industrial past as miner-farmer smallholdings and squatter settlements.

These are related to Local Forces for Change and their Landscape Implications, for example:

**Abandonment or amalgamation of agricultural holdings** due to economic pressures in the agricultural sector...there is a risk that the characteristic stone walls, upland farm buildings and historic upland enclosures will continue to become degraded and derelict.

The above feeds into the recommendations of the Landscape Strategy:

#### Strategy

Conserve the distinctive high altitude field enclosures

#### Recommendations

Consider management options for abandoned agricultural landholdings....

Repair upland enclosures and stone walls giving priority to those walls which are...historically important....

Conserve the base course and foundation of stone walls in areas where agricultural land has been abandoned as evidence of historic moorland enclosures....

### LCA and HLC at district scale

Both Landscape Character Assessment and HLC can be carried out at different scales. In Hampshire, for example, the Landscape Strategy (2000) was informed by the county level HLC as a broad scale initiative, dividing

Hampshire into eleven landscape units, but it was intended that each of the districts within the county would use this as the starting point for more detailed local LCA. This process is now completed, the report for the New Forest District being the last to be published.

### New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment, 2001

In the New Forest District, a Historic Landscape Assessment was undertaken at the same time as a Landscape Character Assessment. The objective of the former was to develop and refine the existing Hampshire HLC to suit the more detailed district level requirements, and to provide Historic Landscape Types that could inform the analysis of landscape types and character areas in the New Forest LCA.

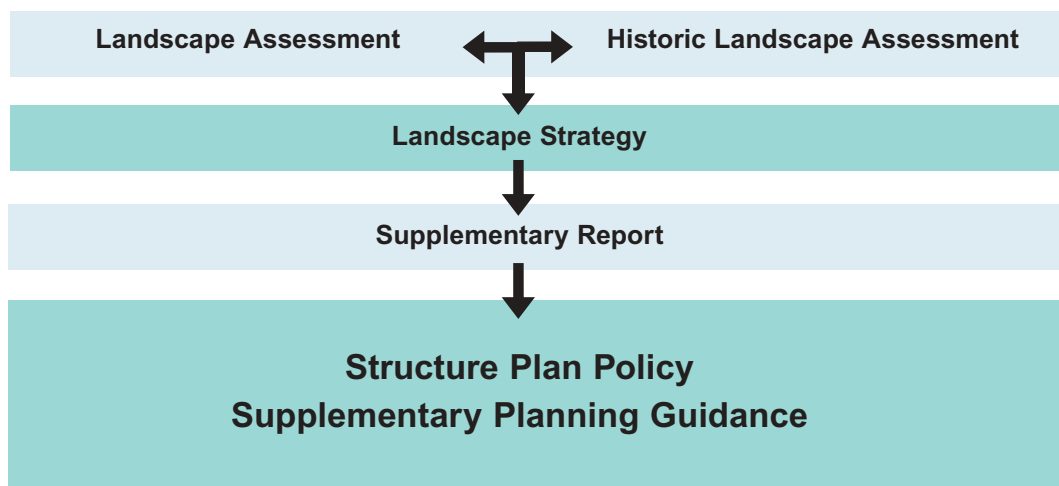
Heathland  
grazing in the  
New Forest  
© Charles  
Maunder



HLC has proved to be a useful tool for integration into LCA. Not only does it ensure that the historic and cultural aspects of the landscape are included in the LCA, but in some authorities HLC has contributed to the shaping of Structure Plan Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Lancashire provides an illustration of this process from HLC to LCA to Landscape Strategy to Structure Plan Policy and SPG. This will be explored further in the following chapter, which looks specifically at the influence that HLC has had upon development plans.

A flow  
diagram  
showing the  
links between  
the landscape  
assessment  
and the  
historic  
landscape  
assessment,  
strategy and  
policy of  
Lancashire  
County  
Council





# Chapter 3

## Spatial Planning



The role of archaeology in the planning process was firmly established in 1990 by Planning Policy Guidance note 16: *Archaeology and Planning*. This clearly stated that archaeological remains are an important resource but are often highly vulnerable to damage and destruction. It outlined the importance of development plan policy to balance the need for development with the interests of conservation, including archaeology. The effect of development on archaeology has since been controlled and mitigated through the planning process, supported by sympathetic development plan policies. Many plan policies, however, focus only

on individual sites and monuments. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) shows the need for broader historic landscape-based policies as well.

### Development plans

In most cases, HLC projects consist of two broad phases – an assessment (providing a description of the historic landscape and its distinctive Character Types) and a strategy (where recommendations for the conservation and sustainable management of each Type are outlined). In spatial planning neither is sufficient without further development – assessment is policy neutral, providing descriptive information and aiding understanding, while the strategy is wholly concerned with general management objectives, most of which will fall outside the development control system. For spatial planning purposes, therefore, HLC needs to be taken one step further, in conjunction with a broadening of the debate to include planners and others responsible for landscape management as well as archaeologists, so that it can more fully inform development plans and planning policy.

Despite the long time-scales involved in preparation and review, there are already several examples of how HLC is beginning to have an impact upon development plans, both as policy and as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). This chapter summarises these using examples chosen from the

The Historic  
Landscape in  
East Cheshire  
© Cheshire  
County  
Council

existing planning system. Terminology and approach will need to be modified to suit the new plan framework, but PPS 1's emphasis on spatial planning is supportive of this approach. More and more often, the LCA process is leading to the development of broad landscape-based policies. Where HLC has

informed this process, it too is being recognised within planning policy. A good example of this is the Lancashire HLC, which contributed to the county Landscape Assessment and Strategy and was ultimately used to inform both new Structure Plan policy and SPG:

Joint  
Lancashire  
Structure Plan  
2001-2016  
(Deposit  
Edition)  
(top) and  
Lancashire  
Landscape  
and Heritage  
Supplementary  
Planning  
Guidance  
(bottom)  
© Lancashire  
County  
Council



### Lancashire Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016 (Deposit Edition July 2002)

#### Policy 20: Lancashire's Landscapes:

Development must be appropriate to the landscape character type within which it is situated and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration, or the creation of appropriate new features. Proposals will be assessed in relation to:

- **Local distinctiveness**
- **The condition of the landscape**
- Visual intrusion
- **Layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces**
- **Quality and character of the built fabric**
- Public access and community value of the landscape
- **Historic patterns and attributes of the landscape**
- Landscape biodiversity and ecological networks
- **Semi-natural habitats characteristic of the landscape type**
- Remoteness and tranquillity
- Noise and light pollution



In Hampshire, the Landscape Strategy (2000), which was heavily influenced by HLC, has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and a policy on landscape character has been included in the Structure Plan. The Landscape Character Assessments of the Hampshire Districts, which integrated information from the County HLC and where appropriate carried out their own local level HLC, have also been adopted as SPG.

### Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review), 2000

**Policy E6:** To ensure that development maintains and enhances areas of distinctive landscape character, local planning policies will pay particular regard to:

- the need to respect scenic quality, sense of remoteness and historic landscapes;
- the sense of place, including the local character of buildings and settlements; and
- the setting of settlements.

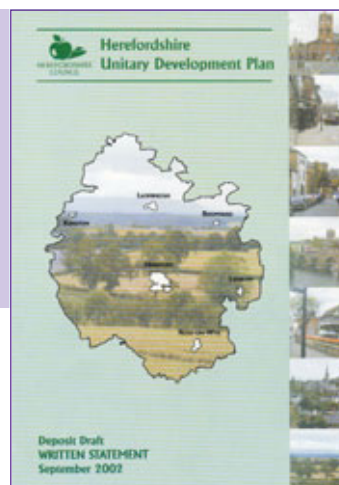
Other examples of Landscape Assessments in which HLC has shaped policy and SPG are the Isle of Axholme and Cornwall. There is also a rare

instance of HLC being cited in policy as a standalone document, from Herefordshire Unitary Authority.

### Draft Hereford Unitary Development Plan (2002) LA2: Landscape Character And Areas Least Resistant To Change:

Proposals for new development that would adversely affect either the overall character of the landscape, as defined by the landscape character assessment and the historic landscape characterisation, or its key attributes or features, will not be permitted.

HLC is also beginning to be used to guide and mitigate the impact of minerals and waste policies upon the historic landscape. For example, in Cornwall low-level characterisation has been used in conjunction with the China Clay Tipping Strategy, which is a form of SPG to the Minerals Plan. Characterisation has also been used to inform the Hertfordshire Minerals Plan:



Draft  
Herefordshire  
Unitary  
Development  
Plan, 2002  
© Herefordshire  
Council

### Hertfordshire Mineral Local Plan

The Hertfordshire HLC has been enhanced for the areas proposed for mineral extraction in the Mineral Local Plan, which is currently at public deposit stage and Public Inquiry stage. This work has been funded under the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. The enhancement has consisted of creating additional GIS layers showing 19th century and earlier map evidence for historic boundaries and buildings. These are now in the process of being field tested to see what survives, after which historic environment assessments for the proposed extraction areas will be produced for the Public Inquiry.



HLC  
enhancement  
for  
Hertfordshire's  
Mineral Local  
Plan  
© Hertfordshire  
County Council

### Special areas

A number of local authorities have used HLC to inform reviews of existing landscape area designations, such as Mature Landscape Areas in Nottinghamshire, which are areas that have strong landscape character and remain relatively unchanged over time when compared with the wider landscape. MLAs are protected by Structure Plan policy and are normally defined within the relevant local plan.

Some authorities have used HLC to assess the location and extent of new designations. For example, in the North Lincolnshire Unitary Development Plan, 2003, the national importance of the Axholme landscape as identified in the HLC led to the designation of part of the area as an Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest (ASHLI), supported by Policy LC14.

### North Lincolnshire Unitary Development Plan 2003 LC14: Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest:

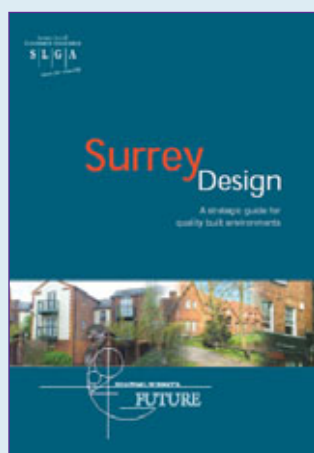
The Isle of Axholme is designated as an area of Special Historic Landscape Interest. Within this area, development would not be permitted that would destroy, damage or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the historic landscape, or any of its features.

### Other strategic documents

HLC is a flexible tool, and its contribution has been recognised in a variety of advisory documents. For example, the Axholme Countryside Design Summary (1999), adopted as

SPG, states that if development falls within the Trent Levels/Isle of Axholme area, the Axholme HLC should be consulted. The Surrey Design Guide also makes reference to the county HLC.

Surrey Design  
Guide, 2002  
© Surrey  
County  
Council



### Surrey Design, A Strategic Guide For Quality Built Environments, 2002

The purpose of this document is to promote the high quality design of new development in Surrey. It aims to supplement national and regional planning policy guidance, and to guide the implementation of the Surrey Structure Plan. Having recognised the value of understanding how the landscape has been shaped in the past in order to make informed decisions about how it can be managed in the future, it refers to the Surrey Historic Landscape Characterisation Project as '...county wide information on a GIS base that provides a valuable insight into how landscape types have developed'.

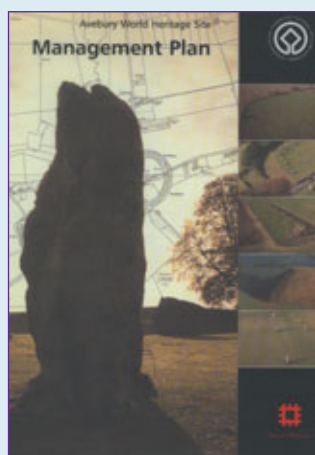
### Management plans

A significant number of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), National Parks and World Heritage Sites are beginning to recognise HLC as a useful source of information about the historic landscape. Their primary interest is in balancing an existing traditional historical narrative and site-specific approach and in filling the human and cultural landscape gap that exists in most management plans.

For example, the historic environment section of the Forest of Bowland AONB management plan has been based on the Lancashire HLC, which has ensured that attention is paid to the whole landscape and not just to specific sites of archaeological interest.

As more and more HLC projects are completed across the country in areas that overlap with AONBs, National Parks and World Heritage Sites, its use in this field is likely to increase dramatically.

Avebury World  
Heritage Site  
Management  
Plan, 1998  
© English  
Heritage



### Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan, 1998

Although this document was prepared without the benefit of an English Heritage county HLC, it demonstrates the principles of using archaeological and historic criteria (tailored mainly towards prehistory) alongside those of land cover and settlement. Eighteen landscape units were identified in a landscape assessment covering an area measuring 35km square. For each there is an explanation of Landform, Landcover and Visual Character, and a Summary of Management Objectives. For example, the Avebury-Silbury Valley unit (C3) includes the following objective: improve hedge structure in the valley bottom and encourage reinstatement of flood meadows.





Avebury  
© Jenny Nord

### Development control

In many local authorities, HLC mapping is routinely checked alongside the Sites and Monuments Record database (SMR) for responding to planning applications and enquires about the historic environment. For this work, HLC fills in the gaps that exist between the point data of the SMR, as well as providing a landscape context from which to appreciate site-specific information.

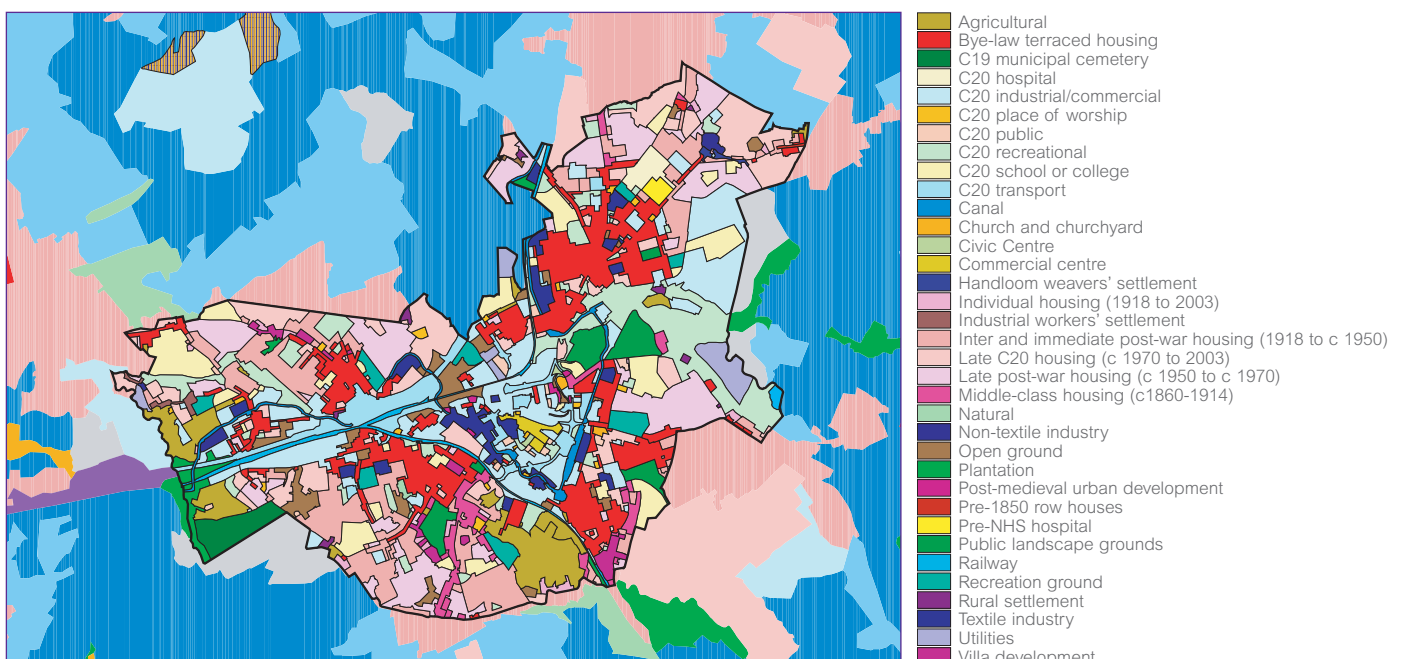
Numerous examples have demonstrated the usefulness of HLC as a tool that can inform planning decisions, in particular for schemes that are large scale and rural in nature such as new housing estates, roads and pipelines. However, HLC has also begun to look at urban character and the built environment, and in the next few years it will become

increasingly relevant for the assessment of planning proposals in towns and cities: in Cornwall, Lancashire and Merseyside, such work is currently being undertaken.

### Assessing the impact of development upon the landscape

HLC is used to gauge the likely impact that development will have upon the landscape, by assessing whether proposals are in keeping with the historic character of the area and whether they have an impact on any of the key cultural attributes. Such information can be used to make an appropriate response to a planning application, whether in support, recommending refusal, or suggesting that it is amended to take into account the needs of the historic landscape. A few examples are set out below.

The extensive urban survey character mapping for Burnley, nested in the context of the Lancashire HLC  
© Lancashire County Council.  
OS licence 100023320



### Monnow Court, Herefordshire

In this case, HLC was used alongside other sources to demonstrate the inappropriateness of a proposed scheme for a mock Tudor moated mansion on the top of a hill. The grounds for refusal included the adverse impact on landscape character, because such large houses traditionally occupy lower sites on the valley sides and valley bottom, where they fit well into topography and historic landscape character.

### Epworth, the Isle of Axholme

Epworth, in the Isle of Axholme, North Lincolnshire, is a settlement surrounded by unenclosed open fields that have been cultivated in strips since the medieval period. In some areas these have been amalgamated into wider units for modern cereal farming, while others have survived as narrow strips, often being used to grow different crops. An application to construct an agricultural storage and workshop building on one of these narrow strips was refused, prompting an appeal.

Two main factors were considered by the Inspector in determining this appeal: agricultural need, and the impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. The effect of the proposal on the historic landscape character was also considered alongside Policy LC14 in the draft North Lincolnshire Plan 1999 (based on the findings of the Axholme HLC), which identified that the area should be designated as an 'Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest' (see page 29). The appeal was refused.

Epworth  
(Isle of  
Axholme)  
© Keith Miller



### Baldock, Hertfordshire

HLC was used as evidence to support the case for the preservation of a medieval road at Baldock, Hertfordshire, in 2000. The road is a distinctive feature in an area shown by the HLC to be a rare example of historically unenclosed common arable land. The inspector recognised that the proposed destruction of the road was contrary to the protection afforded it by the Structure Plan, and ruled against the loss of this historic feature from the local landscape.



### Wokingham District, Berkshire

Evidence from the Wokingham District Historic Landscape Survey was used to demonstrate the importance of the historic landscape in 1999. A year-long Public Inquiry into three proposed large-scale areas of housing development, to the south of the M4 at Reading in Berkshire, concluded that conservation of historic landscape character was a material reason for refusal.

The proposal to build 2500 new houses and associated infrastructure at one of the sites, Grazely, was found to be contrary to both development plan policies and PPG15 (Planning Policy Guidance note 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment*. At Shinfield, the potential threat to the integrity of a field system to the east of the settlement was cited as one reason for refusing the scheme, while at the third site, Spencer's Wood, the threat to historic parkland constituted a material objection.

The Inspector concluded that '...as far as the historic landscape is concerned, drastic and undesirable changes would occur with all three proposals.'



Spencers Wood, Berkshire – the parkland threatened by the proposal for housing is to the left of the photograph © Wokingham District Council & Hunting Aerofilms Ltd.

As for agri-environment schemes, if HLC is consulted early enough it can be used to help design development programmes that are sensitive to the landscape and in keeping with their

surroundings. For example, HLC has been used in Hertfordshire for a large-scale landscape assessment ahead of housing construction to the west of the A1.

### Hertfordshire – HLC and the Stevenage West of A1(M) Proposal

The aim of this project was to provide information for the local planning authority's consideration of applications to build 3200 - 5000 houses on a site west of Stevenage in Hertfordshire. An area much larger than the proposal site was selected for analysis, allowing the site to be placed in its landscape context, with a remit to use the existing HLC to assess:

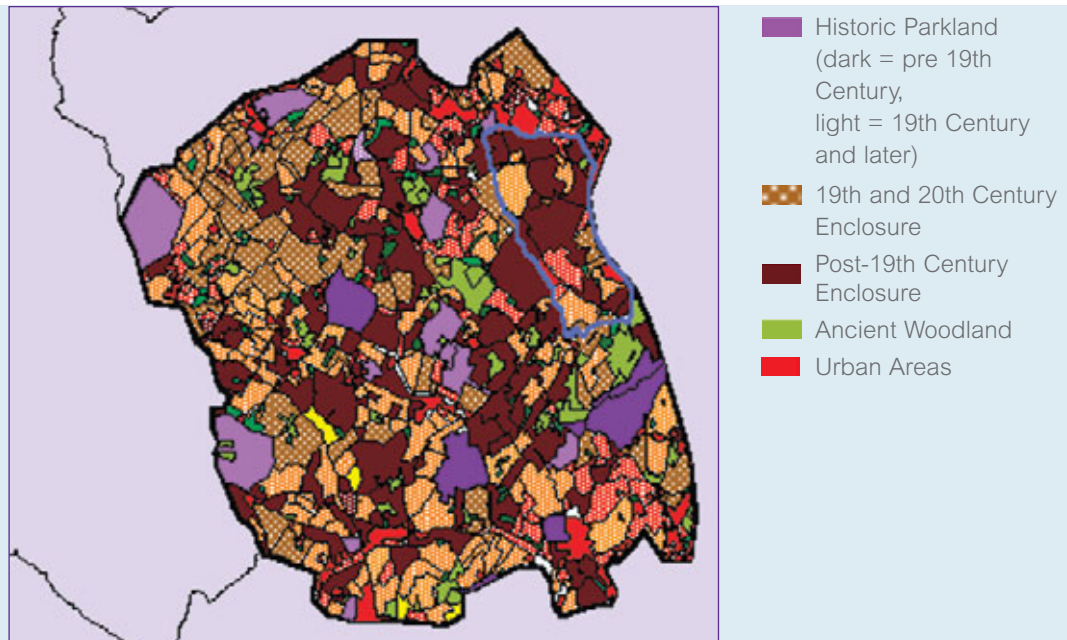
- The historic development of the landscape
- The extent of 'ancient field systems' (pre-18th century - date of the earliest survey map)
- The impact of landscape change since 1880
- The impact of post-1950 field boundary loss

Most of the field boundaries and other historic landscape features that were present in the Study Area by the 18th century still survive. Even though the environmental quality of the fields themselves has in most instances been considerably altered by agricultural development and their biodiversity much reduced, the historic landscape of the area retains much of its older character and integrity.

The progressing East of England HLC (which will eventually cover Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire) has shown that such a degree of survival is rare not only within Hertfordshire but also within the region.

The planning application for the development will go through the public inquiry process during 2004. It is anticipated that HLC will have some influence on the design of the development, if it is allowed to proceed. However, should it be granted permission, pressure will increase dramatically on the wider landscape included in the study, between Stevenage and Luton. HLC will therefore also be used to inform the strategy for the long-term management of the historic landscape of this area via agri-environment schemes and other management agreements.

Stevenage,  
West of A1  
© Hertfordshire  
County Council.  
OS licence  
LA 076678





The most ambitious example of using HLC strategically in relation to major development is in the Thames Gateway. Here, in response to the government's "sustainable communities" programme, HLC has been taken to new levels of complexity. The Thames Gateway

characterisation is a deliberately broad-brush overview designed to be the foundation for more future detailed work as the Thames Gateway proposals move from general masterplanning to specific site proposals.

### THAMES GATEWAY – the character of “sustainable communities”

The Thames Gateway characterisation, carried out by Chris Blandford Associates for English Heritage and Essex and Kent County Councils, took the Kent and Essex HLCs as its starting point. These two HLCs had used different methods, and were first combined in simplified form to produce a consistent sub-regional HLC, itself a useful step towards the next, regional, stage of HLC. From this was drawn a set of rural HLC character areas, for each of which 'key feature' type descriptions were prepared.

A second characterisation was prepared for urban, built-up areas, using some of the methods developed in townscape HLC, and townscape character areas were defined. A third set of character areas drew together our understanding of the archaeological resource, to highlight the probable as yet unresolved archaeological deposits in each area. A combined set of general historic environment character areas was produced, and finally basic sensitivity maps were produced of each of the three layers.

This large GIS-based dataset will be available for planners, architects and developers, enabling them to understand the starting point of their developments. It is not at this stage an impact assessment tool – further local work would be needed for that – but it gives sub-regional contexts for individual areas and, most important of all, reverses commonly held assumptions that this region has no historic significance.



Dartford Road  
Bridge over  
the River  
Thames  
© NMR

## Identifying the archaeological potential of gaps in the SMR

Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs) comprise data that has been drawn from a large and varied number of sources. These might include comprehensive surveys of discrete areas, but they also include the more haphazard results of individual research interests and access. SMRs reflect the pattern of discovery more than the extent of the archaeological resource and the historic environment.

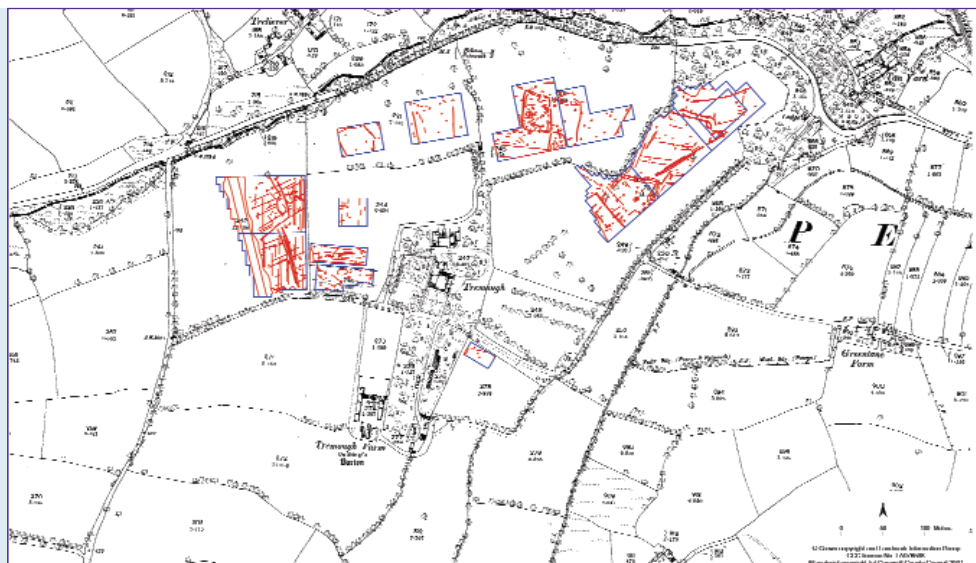
HLC, however, offers an understanding of the potential archaeological and

historical attributes of each HLC Type, regardless of an absence of SMR information. This generic prediction can then be applied to individual proposals. One way of looking at this information is by considering HLC Types as the 'habitats' of particular attributes (sites, features and patterns), analogous to the varying natural habitats that are likely to be home to certain flora and fauna. The time-depth matrices of Cornwall, for example (see page 23), show the correlation between HLC types and the features listed in the SMR, which is then used successfully to target evaluation and mitigation work.

### Tremough, Penryn, Cornwall

When an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the new Combined University for Cornwall was carried out, no SMR information was held for the affected area, but the proposed development site lay in the HLC Zone *Anciently Enclosed Land*, and there was obviously a potential for medieval and prehistoric buried remains to be found. This diagnosis from the HLC triggered various archaeological interventions. A geophysical survey showed a later prehistoric enclosed settlement with ditched field system. Fieldwalking produced Mesolithic and Neolithic flints (and a greenstone axe), Bronze Age, Iron Age as well as, Romano-British and medieval finds. Watching briefs during topsoil strips revealed finds and features from three main prehistoric settlement phases – Early Neolithic, Middle Bronze Age and Later Iron Age. HLC therefore led directly to the identification of one of Cornwall's most complex settlement sites. Had the EIA simply carried out a traditional SMR search this archaeology would probably not have been discovered until it was too late for any form of recording to have taken place, or without serious and costly disruption to the developer.

Results of  
geophysical  
survey at  
Tremough  
© Cornwall  
County  
Council





Excavation at  
Tremough  
© Cornwall  
County  
Council

### Hatfield Moors, North Lincolnshire

On the basis of the Axholme HLC, archaeological monitoring was extended to the length of the Hatfield Moors pipeline route, rather than restricting observations to sites identified on the SMR or through field survey. Special attention was paid to boundaries and areas highlighted in the HLC texts and time-depth matrices as having a history of intensive land use or settlement. The result was the discovery of new sites, including the first early Saxon settlement to be found in the area, as well as evidence for landscape development and early land use. HLC also formed the basis for landscape reconstruction.

HLC is therefore a practical tool for informing responses to planning proposals. As more planners and development control officers come to have this information at their fingertips, it is likely to become more of an established means of ensuring that the historic environment is taken into account in spatial planning and, importantly, at an early enough stage for development to be designed that is sympathetic to its distinctive and special character.

### HLC and impact assessment

Use of HLC as an environmental assessment tool – indeed, as the matrix for all historic and archaeological aspects of the environmental assessment of major development – has been codified by the Countryside

Council for Wales (CCW), Cadw and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts. Their recently published ASIDOHL method, as its name (Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales) shows, is in the first instance linked to the Welsh Register of Outstanding and Special Landscape Areas. Its basic principles and methods, however, can be applied to the whole of the historic landscape wherever an HLC exists in a GIS format. In Wales, the technique has been developed from the successful use of the Register to prevent or modify development affecting historic character, such as habitat-creation and a road construction scheme in the Gwent Levels.



**ASIDOHL** is a 5-Stage process, of which Stage 4 is the most interesting for HLC applications.

Cadw anticipates that Stage 2-4 results should be relatively readily agreed by all parties at a public inquiry, thus focusing debate constructively on the key issue of impact assessment in Stage 5.

**Stage 1** – summarise the context of proposed development, and scope of ASIDOHL.

**Stages 2 & 3** – qualify physical (direct) and non-physical (indirect – e.g. visual) impacts of the proposed development, measuring them against both the footprint of the proposed development and the large HLC Character Area(s) on which it impinges. The essential link between site assessment and landscape assessment, which provides landscape-scale context for historic features.

**Stage 4** – moves on to evaluating the importance of the various aspects of the historic environment affected by the proposed development. It does this by using the Register descriptions and also the more detailed mapped and text-based HLC characterisations that are prepared for register areas by the Welsh Trusts. This assessment operates at landscape scale by setting the evaluation in relation to

- the whole of the HL Character Area(s) affected, then
- the whole of the Registered landscape area(s) in which they sit, and finally
- an assessment of where these aspects fit in a Wales-wide national context.

In terms of English HLC, the relevant levels would be

- HLC Type and/or Broad Groups
- LCA character areas, in historic units such as parishes
- HLC at county level (other areas with similar mixes of HLC types)
- at national level (and in future regional too).

**Stage 5** – uses a predefined quantitative scale (with six levels, e.g. very severe, moderate, very slight) to measure overall impact.

ASIDOHL is a complex and sophisticated technique only crudely summarised here. The full method, with a recommendation that it should be used by 'archaeologists with historic landscape expertise or landscape practitioners, familiar with landscape approaches to the historic environment' can be found in the Guide to Good Practice in Using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process (Cadw 2003) and, with case studies, on the web pages of CCW ([www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)) and Cadw ([www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)) or those of the Welsh Trusts

[www.acadat.com](http://www.acadat.com), [www.cpat.org.uk](http://www.cpat.org.uk), [www.ggat.org.uk](http://www.ggat.org.uk), [www.heneb.co.uk](http://www.heneb.co.uk).

For characterisation – for its wider view, contextual framework and conceptual parameters – it is Stage 4 that is most relevant. Interpreted broadly, and through as wide a process of participation, this method should enable HLC to play a significant role in responding to known specific proposals and therefore takes its place in the EIA/Development Control process. As such it is one of the key areas of HLC's wide palette of applications. The nature of its use and value for this differs from the strategic evaluation contributed by HLC to, for example, work on the M11 and Thames Gateway Growth Areas, but HLC should be used at both stages – at the strategic masterplan level and at the stage of evaluating detailed proposals.



### Hedgerow protection

The 1997 Hedgerow Regulations form the main tool for hedgerow protection. However, they allow only data that existed prior to 1997 to be used, so that just the earliest HLCs qualify at present, until the

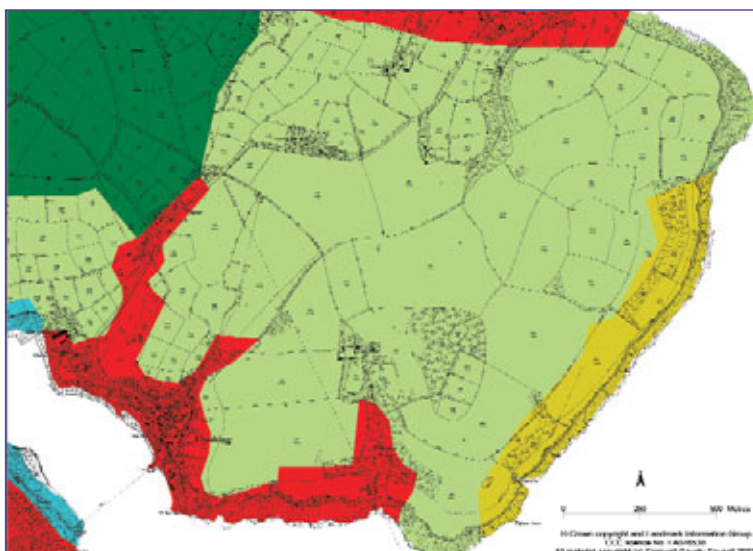
regulations are amended and the current date rolled forward. In Cornwall, the HLC is referred to when appropriate in county council responses to Hedgerow Consultations particularly since its use was endorsed at appeal.



Laid hedgerow,  
Lancashire

### Trefusis Barton, Mylor, Cornwall

Seven hedges subject to a removal application under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations lay in the 'Anciently Enclosed Land' HLC Type. Taking advice from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Carrick District Council decided that the hedges qualified as being important under, among others, criterion 5(b)(ii), as they were 'of a pattern which is recorded in a document [Cornwall Landscape Assessment, incorporating the Cornwall HLC] prepared before the relevant date [24.3.1997] by a local planning authority...for the purposes of development control, as a key landscape characteristic'. On appeal, the Inspector was satisfied that the Landscape Assessment was such a document, and noted that the document advises 'that every opportunity should be taken to encourage farmers to retain hedges and walls' in Anciently Enclosed Land.



- Anciently Enclosed Land
- Coastal Rough Ground
- Navigable Rivers
- Recently Enclosed Land
- Urban

HLC map of  
Trefusis Barton,  
Mylor  
© Cornwall  
County Council

Although other HLCs are not admissible under the present regulations, some local authorities

nevertheless find ways to use HLC information in support of their comments on hedgerow applications:

### Herefordshire

A Hedgerow Retention Notice was served near Ross on Wye in Herefordshire, as the affected hedge fulfilled the following criteria of Schedule 1, Part II of the Regulations:

- The hedgerow has existed for 30 years or more
- Criterion 5(a), since it was recorded as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Act (Tithe Map of 1840).

The HLC map was used to support the claim that the hedge was an integral part of a field system, the dominant character being the extensive but not total reorganisation of the landscape formalised during the medieval and post-medieval periods. The hedgerow in question was a key element in this pattern, which is extant and discernible, and the Appeal determined that this would no longer be the case were it removed.

A distinctive hedgerow boundary pattern, in southwest Herefordshire  
© Herefordshire Council



# Chapter 4

## Partnership, Learning and Outreach

### Partnership

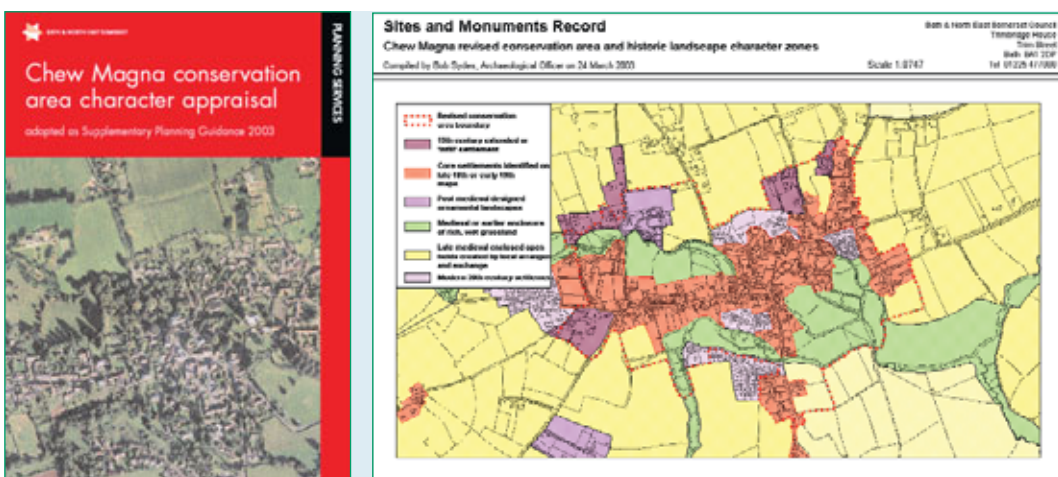
Chapter 2 showed that Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) strengthens Landscape Character Assessment, as both are character-based approaches that use a common language. It is therefore not surprising

that other initiatives built around the concept of character can also make productive use of HLC, particularly Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA), Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.

### Chew Magna CAA, Bath and North East Somerset, 2003

The Conservation Area of Chew Magna was first designated in 1978, and following the completion of the Avon HLC, the Avon Extensive Urban Survey and the Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset Project, it was recognised that a wider area of special architectural and historic interest should be included within it.

The Conservation Area of Chew Magna has therefore been extended; in addition to the historic village, reference to the HLC allows it now to include areas of medieval or earlier enclosure of rich, wet grassland, a post-medieval designed ornamental landscape, and late medieval enclosed open fields.



Chew Magna conservation area character appraisal and Chew Magna revised conservation area boundary overlying HLC mapping © Bath & North East Somerset Council. OS licence LA 09054L

Input into Conservation Area Appraisals is becoming an increasingly valued application of HLC, not least for its ability to provide the landscape context of settlement. This will see much greater use following the completion of the new urban character projects that

are currently under way. For example, district councils in Lancashire have recognised the value of using mapping from urban characterisation as a potential basis for future Conservation Area Appraisals.



HLCs contain significant information about the landscape of the past, and this has considerable environmental value as well as cultural relevance. For example, where HLCs have noted the various former land uses that have contributed to the development of an area, it is possible to build a profile of the broad changes that have occurred.

This might identify where land has been reclaimed from mossland or moorland, or where assarting (tree clearance) has taken place. Such information has been of particular use to English Nature's Lifescapes project, which demonstrates how a multi-disciplinary approach can benefit both the historic and the natural environment.

### English Nature's Lifescapes

The Lifescapes initiative has pilot areas across England, which are seeking to increase biodiversity throughout the countryside. Using an holistic approach to habitat creation, a key aim of the project is to understand the relationship between cultural, historic and natural features. In two of the pilot areas, Lancashire and Suffolk, HLC is a recognised dataset that is providing information with important uses including helping to identify the location and extent of former habitats.

Ecological  
networks in  
the landscape  
© Lancashire  
County  
Council



As mentioned in Chapter 3, HLC is receiving a great deal of attention from AONB Officers who recognise the value of this information for providing vital detail about the historic environment that would otherwise be overlooked. Many hope to follow the example of the Forest of Bowland and use HLC to inform future AONB management plans. In a similar way, a logical next step would be to use HLC information in the

management plans of private estates and land holdings, as they are of varying landscape scales and would benefit from input with an historic perspective. HLC might also prove useful in providing landscape context for smaller properties. The following example demonstrates how HLC is being used to inform the National Trust Property Management Plan of the Cotehele estate in Cornwall.



### Cotehele, Calstock, Cornwall

A large-scale HLC with five time-slices (present-day, 1907, 1880, 1840 and 1732) was commissioned by the National Trust to place the late medieval house into its historic landscape context and so improve understanding and enhance presentation. The work also served to provide a framework for management of the whole historic environment of an estate that extends to 513ha and includes former deer parks, industrialised valleys, tidal creeks with quays and wharves, medieval derived field systems, and 19th century market gardens. The intention is to attach management records and plans to the HLC polygons and so allow direct linkage to management from HLC text and mapping.



Cotehele House,  
Cornwall  
© The National Trust

The example from Cotehele demonstrates the flexibility of HLC and how nested datasets can be created that together improve our understanding. The Cotehele data sits below that of the countywide HLC, which allows the user to drop down to

the enhanced scale according to need, demonstrating how HLC can be targeted to answer specific questions about the historic landscape. HLC has also been tested and extended through the Culture 2000-sponsored European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape project:

### European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape

In Lancashire, the county HLC was the basis for the Historic Landscape of the Forest of Bowland and the Lune Valley project. This was one of twelve projects that are united in a common initiative called European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape, which was funded by the EU Culture 2000 programme (Clark *et al* 2003). The Bowland project was testing, refining and extending the HLC dataset by looking at the historic development of the modern landscape in detail and adding data about settlement patterns, boundary types, and resources. The project also aimed to raise awareness and to engage with a cross section of the people who visit, live and work in the area, in order to appreciate how the historic landscape is perceived and valued.

Carrying out a  
perceptions  
survey at  
Beacon Fell  
© Lancashire  
County  
Council



### Learning

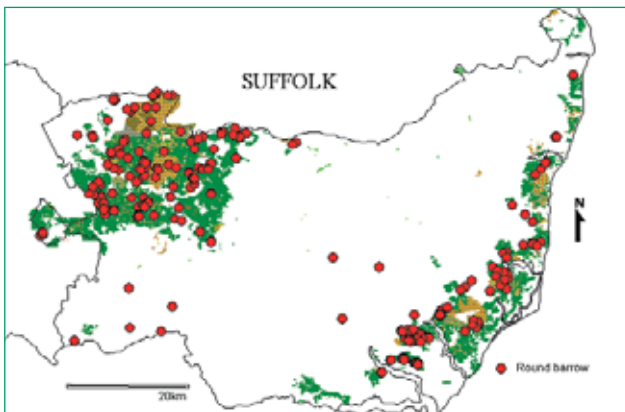
Use as a tool to raise questions, establish research agendas and provide wide-ranging data was seen from the outset as a primary application of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). This application is, however, relatively under-developed owing to the pressure of time on priorities such as development control and advising agri-environment schemes. Nevertheless, many local authorities have

experimented with HLC in this area, for example comparing HLC with information about archaeological features from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and trying to establish where patterns and correlations exist. HLC is also proving to be a useful method of identifying gaps in existing knowledge of the historic landscape, and is being used in the formulation of Regional Research Frameworks (in the North West, for example).



## Suffolk

The Suffolk HLC has been used for a number of analyses, including comparative landscape mapping (e.g. English Nature's Lifescapes and the Countryside Agency's County Landscape Character Assessment). It has also been used to examine aspects of the SMR. For example, plotting Bronze Age barrows against the HLC mapping revealed that these monuments are almost entirely restricted to areas covered by heathland, commons, late enclosed heathland or 19th and 20th century plantations. Further analysis using geological data demonstrated that these areas have predominantly sandy soils. The close correlation between round barrows and areas of late enclosure/marginal land may strengthen the claim that the distribution of barrows reflects a correspondence of geology and detection levels rather than the actual spread of prehistoric populations. HLC has thus prompted discussion about why certain landscape types feature particular patterns and concentrations of monuments.



The distribution of Bronze Age barrows compared with HLC types in Suffolk  
© Suffolk County Council



Round barrow known as Pole Hill, Foxhall Heath,  
© Suffolk County Council

### The Humber Wetland Survey

In its coverage of the Lower Trent Valley, the English Heritage Humber Wetland Survey drew on the Axholme HLC for analysis of settlement and land use. The HLC study highlighted the survival of historic features in the present landscape. Its identification of historic landscape character Types and Areas provided important insights into processes such as enclosure, marshland drainage and reclamation, and to patterns of earlier land use in the form of highly developed open arable fields and commons (Wetland Heritage of the Ancholme and Lower Trent Valleys, Humber Wetlands Project, University of Hull, 1998).

### Historic Field Systems of East Anglia

The Historic Field Systems of East Anglia Project has analysed in detail the character of field systems with regard to date, form, local diversity, soil type, associated settlement pattern and tenural and social background. The project has made extensive use of the HLC data available for this area and has overlaid it with data from a variety of sources, including Roberts and Wrathmell's *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (2000). This has led to the discovery of important correlations between the HLC character types and some of the other data. For example, HLC mapping has revealed significant differences between the distributions of early enclosed fields with a random layout and those that are broadly coaxial. The former seem to correlate with historical evidence for landholdings that were predominantly of a 'block' nature (i.e. fields grouped around individual farmsteads), while the latter are more frequent in areas where holdings were composed of, or included, strips in common or subdivided fields.

An area of  
early enclosed  
'random'  
fields and  
dispersed  
farmsteads  
in Hitcham  
© Suffolk  
County  
Council





The concept of Historic Landscape Characterisation is also beginning to emerge as a useful academic tool, and the English Heritage-sponsored method of HLC is starting to be tested by university research. A recent PhD thesis used the Cornwall HLC in an

adapted form to investigate the relationship between early churches and the wider landscape, while one on Exmoor illustrates the usefulness of the characterisation approach to historic landscape research.

### **Christianity and the Landscape of Early Medieval South-West Britain (PhD thesis submitted by Sam Turner to the University of York, 2003)**

Interpretive maps based on the HLC method were created to provide an approximation of the extents of agricultural land, woodland and unenclosed pasture in the medieval period, using a range of sources including field survey and all available historic maps. Analysis of the HLC mapping against the location of settlements and ecclesiastical centres strongly suggested that the early medieval landscape was divided into 'core' areas of settlement and farmland, surrounded by outer zones of rough moorland and woodland. So while it has previously been suggested that many of Cornwall's most important early churches were located in isolated positions, this is not supported by evidence from the HLC-derived model of the landscape. Instead, it has been shown that early ecclesiastical centres like St Keverne, St Neot and Tintagel lay at the heart of early medieval patterns of settlement.



Tintagel  
Castle on the  
north Cornish  
coastline  
© Cornwall  
County  
Council

### **The Medieval Landscape of the Exmoor Region: Enclosure and Settlement in an Upland Fringe (PhD thesis submitted to Exeter University, 2002) by Martin Gillard**

This thesis demonstrates the value of an HLC-type approach as a meaningful tool to inform research into the historic landscape. The study area of Exmoor has been divided into eight character types that together aim to explain landscape morphology and to articulate processes of change, based upon the 19th century Tithe and Ordnance Survey mapping. These types, for example, one which refers to strip fields associated with small rural nucleations and farmsteads, form the subject of further analysis using historical and archaeological sources, which flesh out the bones of the characterisation.

Reacting to development gives opportunities for using HLC to expand on knowledge. For example, linear developments such as new roads and pipelines allow adjacent Historic Landscape Character Types to be compared and understanding of the historic environment to be broadened. This also contributes to the conventional enhancement of SMRs. For example,

in Cornwall such work has generally confirmed the existence of complex prehistoric and medieval settlement in areas of Ancient Enclosure. In Somerset the evaluation of major boundaries along pipelines has met with fascinating results about the nature and variety of what had appeared to be very ordinary hedge lines.

### **Somerset Boundary Study**

A pipeline running to the west of Compton Durville in Somerset, through an area identified by the HLC map as ancient enclosure, was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in 2002. This included the recording of a section through each of the boundaries that the pipeline crossed. Two of these, both of which coincidentally followed the line of the parish boundary, proved to be of particular archaeological interest. The first produced evidence of a wide and deep undated ditch under the present bank and ditch boundary, while the second was found to contain Iron Age pottery fragments; further investigation has led to the suggestion that the latter may form part of a small Iron Age hillfort.

An aerial view  
of field  
boundaries  
west of  
Compton  
Durville,  
Somerset  
compared to  
the 1903  
Second  
Edition  
OS map  
© Somerset  
County  
Council



### **Outreach**

Most Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) projects exist in two parts – as GIS mapping and as written reports. Both contain extensive information about the historic landscape, which is usually held by the relevant local authority, from whom copies of reports and extracts from maps should be available. Mapping is usually in GIS format, although early projects (Axholme and Cornwall) have not been digitised and exist only as paper originals.

To ensure the greatest possible use of HLC information, its reports and the results of additional interpretations and research projects need to be widely available to the general public and students as well as to agencies, organisations and consultants. Some counties have ensured that copies of their final project reports are sent to local libraries, so that reference copies are easily accessible.

Local authority Internet sites are a useful means of providing and accessing this information. The Hampshire HLC report is available online along with map extracts and charts that show the HLC profile of parishes across the county ([www.hants.gov.uk/landscape](http://www.hants.gov.uk/landscape)). In Lancashire the HLC report is also available online at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/lhlcp/index.asp](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/lhlcp/index.asp), and on a CD-ROM that includes the GIS data itself.

In most local authorities GIS is provided on the general computer network. The dataset can therefore potentially be accessed in different departments by people other than the usual heritage specialists – the Development Control and SMR Officers. However, in all of its formats one thing is essential – if HLC is to be used by its target audience to its greatest potential, it needs to be presented in a user friendly format with jargon free text.

### Stakeholder seminars

Many local authorities hold presentations for outside agencies and

stakeholders during their HLC projects. This enables future users to keep abreast of developments, and ensures that when projects are complete there will be a certain level of familiarity with the information and how it might be used. It also allows questions to be asked and, where appropriate, the structure of an HLC to be influenced by identified needs.

### Raising awareness

Almost all HLC projects have been the focus of promotional events organised by local authorities, such as talks at local societies and workshops for potential users. The aim of these events is to raise the profile of the historic landscape and to improve understanding of what HLC is and how it can best be used. Presentations on HLC have been given at national and regional conferences, as well as seminars for professional audiences of various types.

Whilst talks to local societies can raise awareness of HLC itself, presentations on HLC projects can also be used to raise awareness of the broader historic environment. Most local authorities undertaking HLC have promoted these projects alongside other aspects of their work. Some have also given specific talks about HLC with a particularly local emphasis; in Lancashire individual parishes have been targeted for this as part of the Forest of Bowland project. In some areas authorities are looking to develop their outreach programmes further through a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) SMR project.



Presenting information about the historic landscape, including HLC mapping to local communities at Chipping Village Hall © Lancashire County Council

### Cornwall County Council

Senior Archaeologist Peter Herring has given numerous talks on Cornwall's HLC to local groups. Presentations have been met with a great deal of interest and enthusiasm; people are pleased to see that unlike in the past, when designated areas were the focus of landscape attention and other areas were dismissed, the places where they actually live and work have now been mapped and recognised as having historic character and diversity. This exercise in social inclusion has led to rewarding discussions about the historic environment, including the collection of local responses to particular HLC types.

Parish Plans and Village Design Statements also offer important opportunities for using HLC. HLC provides a useful framework for these by showing how a village or town fits into the surrounding historic landscape.

It helps discussion about the historic attributes of an area and their future management. One example of how HLC can become embedded into this process comes from Halton in north Lancashire:



The Viking long cross in St Wilfrid's churchyard, a feature of Halton's historic landscape  
© Lancashire County Council

### Halton with Aughton Parish Plan

Throughout 2002-3 officers from Lancashire County Council Archaeology & Heritage Service worked with parishioners from Halton with Aughton Parish Council (north Lancashire) to prepare a Parish Plan. The initiative, supported by a Countryside Agency grant, required local residents to identify the heritage assets of the area and issues relating to them. The process will lead to the implementation of a local Action Plan for the conservation and improvement of local heritage, and the adoption of SPG (or Area Action Plans as part of the emerging Local Development Frameworks).

HLC was an integral part of the work; its mapping was included alongside more conventional displays of heritage information. Consequently, the draft Action Plans for the area and the SPG make frequent reference to the importance of maintaining and enhancing local heritage 'character', for example:

- 'The people of Halton with Aughton are proud of their heritage and wish to protect the parish's historic landscape, including traditional field boundaries, and its archaeological sites and structures.'
- 'There is a need and desire to protect and enhance the historic character of the villages of Halton and Aughton.'
- '...work with the HLF and Lancashire local authorities to develop local records of heritage assets, and to pilot landscape management techniques (such as LCC and English Heritage Historic Landscape Character programme).'

Draft SPG policies also demonstrate awareness of the historic environment and the need for sustainable management:

- 'The distinctive form and layout of the parish, which stems from its long and important history, should be reflected in the positioning of future development. New development will be expected to 'nest' into the historic landscape of the parish, rather than cut across it, respecting and enhancing patterns of scale, land-use, materials and boundaries.'
- 'New development should respect and enhance the historically separate nature of the villages of Halton and Aughton, and the dispersed nature of the parishes' rural settlement. Proposals which detract from that pattern, through promoting village sprawl, or through increasing suburbanisation of the rural setting, should not be permitted.'
- 'Sites of potential historic or archaeological interest should be protected whenever possible. Special weight should be given to the protection of sites of local character and distinctiveness within the parish. These include prehistoric sites, the Roman Road, surviving medieval field boundaries and patterns, relict industrial sites and historic farm buildings.'



# Part 3

## Looking to the Future



The historic landscape of Lanreath  
© Cornwall County Council

### Taking stock and moving forward

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has now been with us for ten years. In that time, the range of successful HLC applications has grown from the landscape strategy and spatial planning focus of the early projects, through helping to deliver agri-environment schemes, to the more

recent emergence of interest in using HLC to expand research and outreach. Certain areas of use have already entered mainstream conservation practice – the enhancement that HLC projects bring to Landscape Character Assessment is acknowledged in Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage advice, where they are

said to 'make invaluable contributions to Landscape Character Assessment' (2002, 26 and Topic Paper 5), whilst there is a growing compendium of development plans that draw on HLC either directly or indirectly.

Elsewhere, the potential capabilities of the approach are being piloted, tested and extended into exciting new areas by certain key local authorities and agencies. Much of the work of these HLC 'champions' has been illustrated here, and will lead to consolidation born of use and familiarity. Dissemination of the character concept and of ideas for its use will see more applications entering the mainstream, as other authorities and organisations appreciate the value of HLC and devise ways of working with it which suit their own particular needs.

Completely new uses for HLC will continue to be found. Emerging government agendas for the wider issues concerning our towns and countryside will encourage further experimentation and development of HLC as a tool for managing change. The circle of users will also widen, with a broader application being embraced by local groups and the elusive 'general public' as understanding and confidence grow.

In this final section, we seek to build upon the solid foundation established for applied HLC by summarising elements of good practice and by looking at trends for the future, selecting areas of potential and highlighting possible barriers to development.

### Extending coverage and scale

The national HLC programme now covers over half of England, and complete coverage at a county scale is anticipated by 2010 or thereabouts. Parts of the country will soon have enough coverage to allow the preparation of regional HLCs, building upon the work already carried out in the

South West. Such assessment (and the identification of new ways of defining regional character and identity) will make a major contribution to the emergence of sustainable Regions. It will also greatly raise awareness of Historic Landscape Characterisation, and the historic environment generally, in regional agendas, informing issues such as regional targeting and prioritisation, communication with the regional agencies and emerging governance and of course within Europe. The sharing of a common approach at a regional level, with the Countryside Agency, English Nature and others, facilitates a new and fruitful dialogue, which will allow the historic environment to play a fuller role in opportunities for conservation and regeneration.

Similarly, a national synthesis based on common HLC Types will be developed to sit alongside work already completed on historic settlement character (e.g. Roberts & Wrathmell, 2000). More local HLC assessments have been successfully prepared for districts, for designated areas (AONBs and Conservation Areas) and for places of priority or special need (such as towns). These emerging areas of application for HLC at different scales and for different audiences will continue to grow, demonstrating a flexibility that allows it to be used at a range of levels from the national scale to that of the localised community, and to answer questions based upon hugely varied agendas.

### Guiding landscape management

A primary use for HLC is its role in promoting a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the historic environment and in providing recommendations for managing future landscape change. Here the strengths of the approach lie in establishing an overall framework in which discrete heritage assets may be located. This not only encourages a more inclusive

view of the landscape, but also lends itself to an holistic multi-agency approach to initiatives in which the opportunities of cultural heritage may be considered alongside those of the natural, the aesthetic, the social and the economic.

HLC has proven particularly useful for informing agri-environment schemes, ranging from CSS through to an exploration of the new higher tier system in the Severn Vyrnwy LMI. As DEFRA implement changes to their current grant format to a new two-tier system (broad/shallow and deep/narrow) this continues to be true, and the need for comprehensive landscape information can only increase.

Agri-environment targeting has always been a difficult issue for the heritage conservation sector, largely because of a lack of area-based information. Now, however, HLC can provide a base level against which parameters for such targeting may be usefully established. Work on heritage targeting is clearly at a development stage – but the potential is great. One way that such targeting can be justified to DEFRA is by establishing

the equivalents of the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) developed by the natural environment sector. Historic Environment Action Plans (or HEAPs) may be expected to deal with important types of site (cultural equivalents of plant and animal species), but would also make full use of HLC Types in developing strategies to appropriately manage ‘cultural habitats’. A suggestion for how HEAPs might be prepared is offered on the next page.

Another area where use of HLC will be extended in the future is in the consideration of hedgerows. DEFRA's forthcoming revision of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations, even if minimal, will bring all completed HLCs within the scope of the regulations, thereby rendering them as ‘active’ and useable sources for determining hedgerow removal notices (to date a status held only by the Cornwall HLC). The development of Forestry Commission Woodland Visions – strategic documents that outline areas for appropriate planting – will also benefit from the information and guidance contained within HLCs.



Osmotherley,  
North  
Yorkshire  
© NMR

Stages in the preparation of an **Historic Environment Action Plan**

<b>Phase 1: Character- isation</b>	<p>Define area for assessment and complementary area which influences landscape processes</p> <p><b>Characterisation</b> Refine characterisation at appropriate scale, identify components and time depth. Gather data, identify &amp; map HLC types, describe land use processes</p>
<b>Phase 2: Analysis &amp; Assessment</b>	<p><b>Character assessment &amp; statements of significance</b> Assess HLC types/components in local, regional &amp; national context using standard criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coherence, condition &amp; survival</li> <li>• relationship to other HLC components</li> <li>• evidence for time depth</li> <li>• visibility/landscape contribution</li> <li>• values and perceptions</li> <li>• research &amp; documentation</li> <li>• amenity &amp; education</li> <li>• rarity and significance</li> <li>• management issues</li> <li>• conservation designations</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3: Management</b>	<p><b>Forces for change &amp; effects of change</b> Assess the current condition and effects of historic change due to the main factors, processes and policies, e.g. natural processes, agriculture, land use planning, economic &amp; social factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse the processes of change and the forces driving them</li> <li>• assess positive and negative impacts, constraints and opportunities</li> <li>• map and describe the degree of sensitivity/vulnerability/risk</li> </ul> <p><b>Management strategies for conservation, enhancement or regeneration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify objectives, targets and options</li> <li>• develop strategies based on initiatives and policies for:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• farming/marketing</li> <li>• agri-environment schemes</li> <li>• land use planning (Local Plan, SPG)</li> <li>• wildlife/ecology</li> <li>• community &amp; education</li> <li>• tourism</li> <li>• access</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>with <b>special studies</b> where needed - e.g. farm economics, biodiversity and access.</p> <p><b>Adoption &amp; implementation of preferred strategies</b> e.g. Countryside Stewardship Special Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Plan policies/SPG</li> <li>• conservation ownership</li> <li>• community involvement</li> <li>• education &amp; promotion</li> <li>• access initiatives</li> </ul>



### Underpinning spatial planning

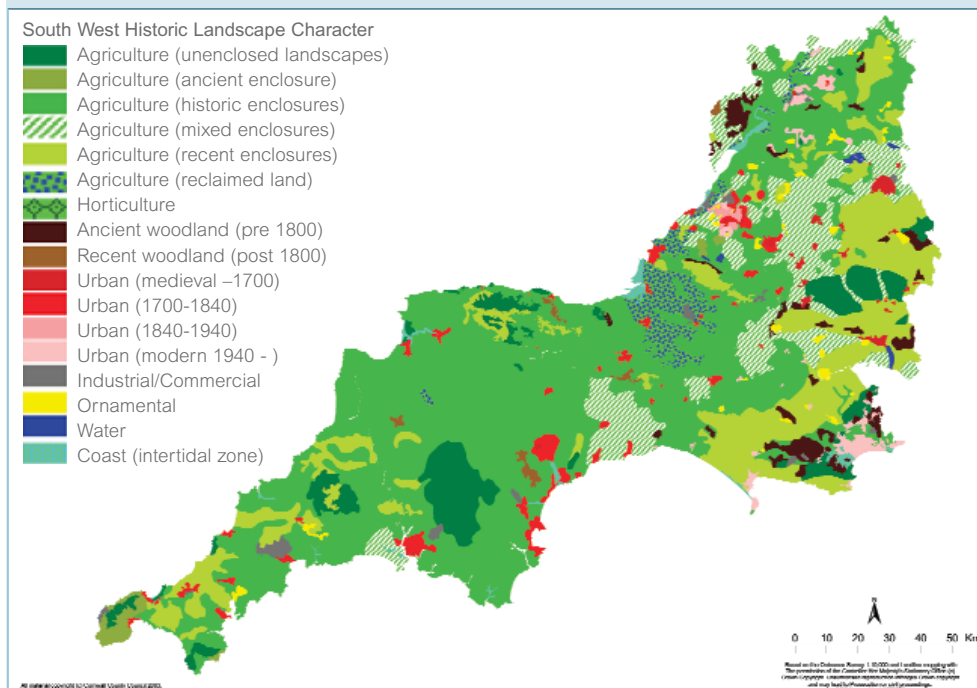
The planning system – and the role of heritage within it – is undergoing substantive change at present. Regional governance, the empowerment of local communities, housing market restructuring and renewal, urban and rural regeneration policies, designation reviews and greenbelt agendas all overlap and have far-reaching impacts upon planning and conservation. HLC will have a role, both as a tool and as an output that will facilitate the delivery of these new

agendas and ensure a voice for the historic environment. As the changes come into being and moves towards regional assemblies are realised, in addition, regional HLC syntheses will become increasingly relevant. HLC may be used to inform Regional Spatial Strategies, Planning Guidance, Economic Strategies and Sustainability Frameworks. Indeed the principles set out in draft PPS1 form a perfect context for HLC and for characterisation applied more widely.

### South West Regional Conservation Strategy

This strategy, prepared on behalf of the South West Historic Environment Forum, sets out to raise the profile of the historic environment and ensure it is reflected fully in the key strategies, plans and policies that will guide change over the coming years. Rather than using existing mapping of the region, such as the Countryside Character or Natural Areas mapping, a broad-brush HLC has been prepared. For those counties or authorities that already had HLC this involved simplification by local practitioners; for those without HLC a rapid characterisation was undertaken by officers of Cornwall County Council and English Heritage in conjunction with the relevant County Archaeologist. Other regions (e.g. NW and SE) will very soon be able to start work on regional HLCs that are wholly drawn by synthesis from the existing detailed county HLCs.

The result in the SW is an HLC map that shows the main divisions of the enclosure pattern (from prehistoric and medieval derived patterns to various forms of post-medieval and disturbed patterns) as well as large towns, areas of woodland, ornamental landscape, rough ground, marshes etc. The mapping provides a coherent historic environment image of the region, and so allows draft policies to be attached to particular parts of the region.



The HLC mapping for the South West Region, prepared on behalf of the South West Historic Environment Forum  
© Cornwall County Council

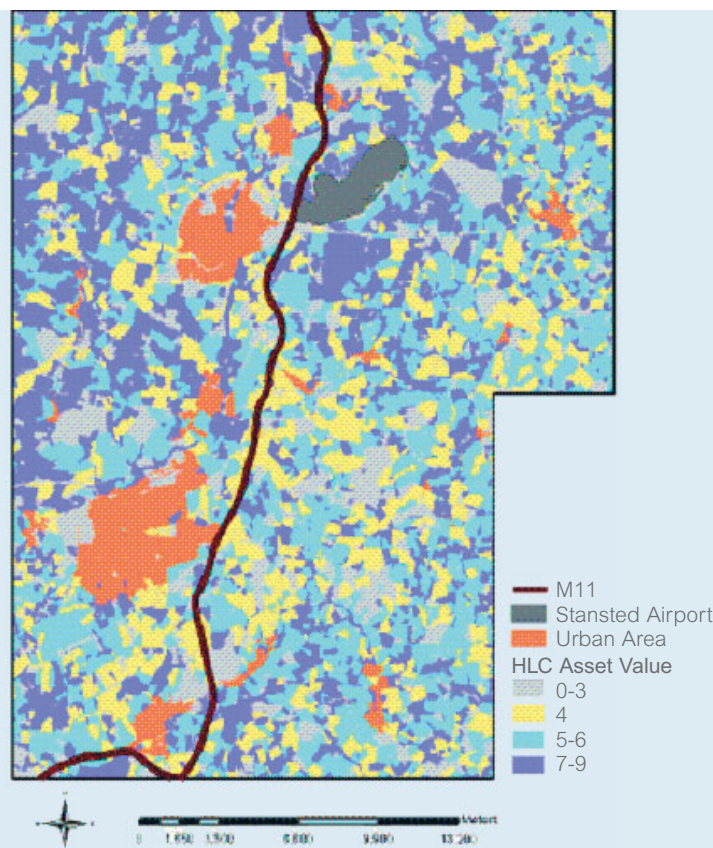
As HLC information becomes available at the national and regional level, its relevance for organisations that operate at these scales will increase. For example, on a national scale HLC could contribute to strategic documents such as the Highways Agency Design Manual, Roads and Bridges, volume 11, while at the local level, particularly in reference to planning, HLC could be included as an insert in Local Development Frameworks, thereby providing an invaluable overview of the historic landscape for reference alongside other data.

Development within towns has always been high on the agenda and will continue to be so. Consequently, a fast-developing area of innovation is the field of historic urban character studies, pioneered by authorities such as Cornwall, Lancashire and, most recently, Merseyside, the Black Country, South Yorkshire and the Sussexes. As HLC continues to develop in this field,

information will become particularly relevant to planning applications and development plans affecting these areas. Both the traditional mainly rural HLC and its urban townscape equivalent will be used to inform the large-scale development initiatives, such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Growth Areas and Pathfinder Areas.

Of the latter, existing HLC results have been used and refined as an early strategic reaction to the Government's Sustainable Communities plan for three Housing Growth Areas in greater South East England: in the M11 corridor, in the greater Milton Keynes sub-region, and in the Thames Gateway. The HLC work was carried out because the initial strategies that were rapidly developed to test the Government's projection for growth showed limited understanding of the extents of historic environment constraints and opportunities.

An HLC asset  
assessment  
for the  
London-  
Stanstead-  
Cambridge  
Growth Area  
© English  
Heritage,  
Essex County  
Council &  
Hertfordshire  
County  
Council  
OS licence  
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### London-Stansted-Cambridge (LSC) Growth Area

Government plans have identified this as being one of the areas capable in principle of meeting the country's major housing and economic needs over the next 20-30 years.

In the M11 corridor, English Heritage and its local authority partners produced a pilot study to demonstrate the value of a proper evaluation of the historic landscape based on HLC. Basic HLC maps for Essex and Hertfordshire were combined to provide a comprehensive picture of a key area 600 kilometres square surrounding Harlow, Stansted, Bishop's Stortford and Great Dunmow. Analysis of the HLC patterns – their origins, their coherence in the modern landscape and their vulnerability to change – provided the basis for a series of sensitivity scores. These scores were banded as High, Moderate, Low-Moderate, or Low, allocated to the GIS type polygons, and set alongside descriptive and prescriptive texts; see example below:

Sensitivity	Criteria	Capacity for change
Low - Moderate	Landscapes altered after the mid-20th century, primarily through the engrossment of field systems or the reorganisation of holdings adjacent to new landscape features such as motorways and peri-urban developments.  Historic landscapes of limited local significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic landscapes in which an existing mixture of modern and historic elements pre-supposes a capacity, in principle, to absorb most types/scales of essential, well-managed change.</li> <li>Desirable that development enhances the residual character and fabric of the historic environment.</li> <li>Assessment required to determine potential for unrecorded assets.</li> </ul>

NB: Extensive modern fields resulting from later 20th century CAP scheme economics may in their own right come to be regarded as significant indicators of past historic processes. After barely 50 years, it may be that these open landscapes with limited boundaries have become a significant characteristic in the eyes of the local population – a matter which should be addressed in further Quality of Life Capital Assessments.

When combined with other heritage data (SMR information and locations of protected sites, buildings and areas) this model can begin to guide the appropriate location, scale and type of new developments. It can limit impact on the historic environment by identifying constraints and promoting designs which draw intelligent inspiration from their surroundings to make a positive contribution to local character, or indeed to develop new and innovative landscapes where historic character is no longer a determining factor.

(Pilot report: English Heritage 2003. Historic Environment Issues in the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Area) [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

The LSC pilot method is intended to promote an holistic approach to historical and archaeological issues in both urban and rural settings throughout the LSC Growth Area. Similar approaches have been taken for Milton Keynes & the South Midlands and the Thames Gateway. The key to this research as ever is to discover 'what matters, why, and to whom?' HLC is a vital tool in this. It provides insight into landscape history and gives a context to

other heritage data. It also produces patterns that allow us to explain heritage issues to the communities affected by change, and to frame the questions which must be asked (e.g. through Quality of Life Capital Assessment) to determine the value of the historic environment to those who live, work or find recreation within it, and to define the role that these values can play in creating new communities.

### Informing other work areas

The range of other uses to which HLC is being put will continue to grow as new applications that recognise the value and need for historic landscape information are explored. One area that may well see further development in the future is the use of HLC in benchmarking for Indicators of Change.

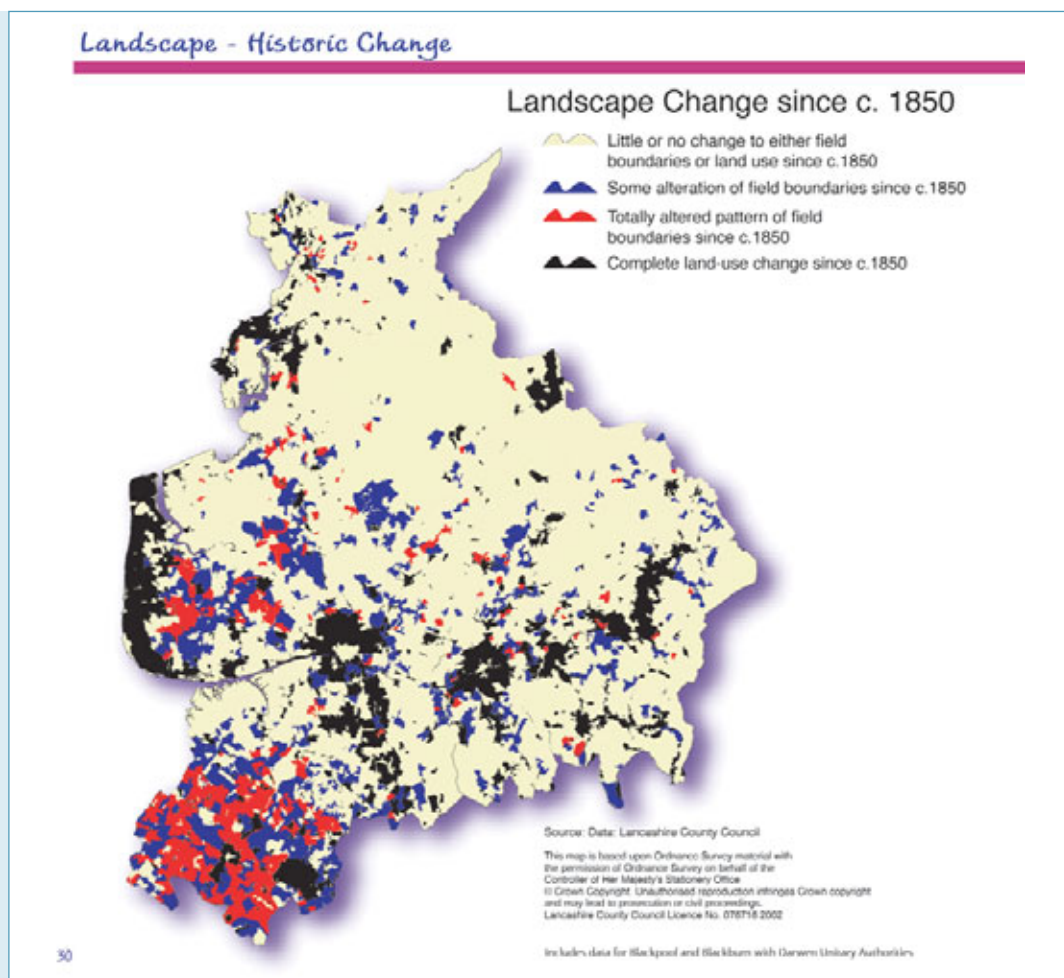
An example of this use is from the publication *Lancashire Environment 2002*, which provides a comprehensive picture of the state of the county's environment according to indicators ranging from water quality to traffic levels:

### Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Environment 2002

Through comparison of the OS First Edition Map c1850 with modern mapping, the Lancashire HLC demonstrates that since the mid-19th century there have been three main causes of substantial change in the landscape: the dramatic impact of urban growth, the final drainage of the West Lancashire mosslands, and the agricultural rationalisation of the Fylde and West Lancashire.

HLC recognises three categories of change, ranging from some alteration since 1850 through to complete land use change. It provides a broad overview of the nature of landscape change and of the origins of the modern landscape.

Extract from  
Lancashire  
Environment  
2002  
© Lancashire  
County  
Council





### Integrating research

The role of character-based studies in informing programmes of research or, more proactively, in contributing towards research agendas is highly likely to increase. We have seen the successful application of HLC in the applied research of local authority heritage advisors, where the need for archaeological intervention has been supported by the character study. This in turn has served as a useful test of the robustness of the approach, leading to modification and increased confidence. Where HLC has been used in the context of universities greater understanding has been paralleled by a growing appreciation of what the technique can bring to research studies (and, conversely, what it cannot). To date, use of HLC in research has been constrained by the limited availability of detailed HLC information and time to explore its potential. This situation is likely to change as practitioners become more familiar with the data and as it enters the public and academic realms.

### Promoting access and outreach

Access and outreach remain, perhaps, some of the least developed areas of HLC application but have a significance and a potential that extend beyond the narrow parameters of project reports. All projects have produced technical reports and most have data that makes a significant contribution to corporate GIS systems. Some authorities have gone beyond this and have sought to increase access by making information available on the Internet, on CD-ROM, or through the varied SMR portals. It is essential that the HLC product should be widely disseminated not only to those within the heritage sector, but also, and perhaps more crucially, to decision-makers outside it. Here the desirability of producing explanations of HLC (whatever the scale or focus) that are both jargon-free and in a user friendly format is paramount, and contributes significantly to the positive impact of the work.

Training through seminars and workshops for potential users, such as planners, agency or trust staff or consultants, has a role to play, but so too does the maintenance of a network of users that can provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and experience. An embryonic HLC user group already exists, through regular attendance at English Heritage's bi-annual Characterisation Seminar held at the Society of Antiquaries in London, but this should be extended perhaps at regional rather than national level, to include a broader range of practitioners.

Similarly, outreach is important and there have been several innovative examples of ways in which HLC projects have been used to raise both awareness and appreciation of the wider historic landscape, ranging from Parish Plans to walks, talks and events. A changing emphasis in the Government approach to decision-making will result in devolution of responsibility to bring it closer to local communities. HLC may help this process through fostering real understanding and ownership of the historic environment.

### Conclusion

There is a great deal of enthusiasm for HLC, which is set to increase as both HLC and historic characterisation in general become better known and their applications more established. Local authorities have achieved a lot in a short space of time – there have been uses developed above and beyond those originally anticipated, and this is likely to continue. The importance and function of HLC has also been consolidated by the creation of an English Heritage Characterisation Team. This small team with its local government partners is exploring HLC's potential, extending its use to new fields (e.g. conurbations, farmsteads and the marine historic environment) and to new uses (e.g. sensitivity and capacity), and helping to direct its path into the future as a key instrument for managing change.



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# Using Historic Landscape Characterisation

## Using Historic Landscape Characterisation

In 2002, as Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) reached its eighth year and half of England had been mapped by the programme, an applications review was commissioned by English Heritage to establish in detail how HLC was being used. The review revealed a number of good practice examples which demonstrate that HLC is a versatile tool, used to inform an extensive range of applications as well as an increasing number of new and emerging projects. This book showcases these examples, as well as providing an introduction to the HLC method and discussing future developments.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

