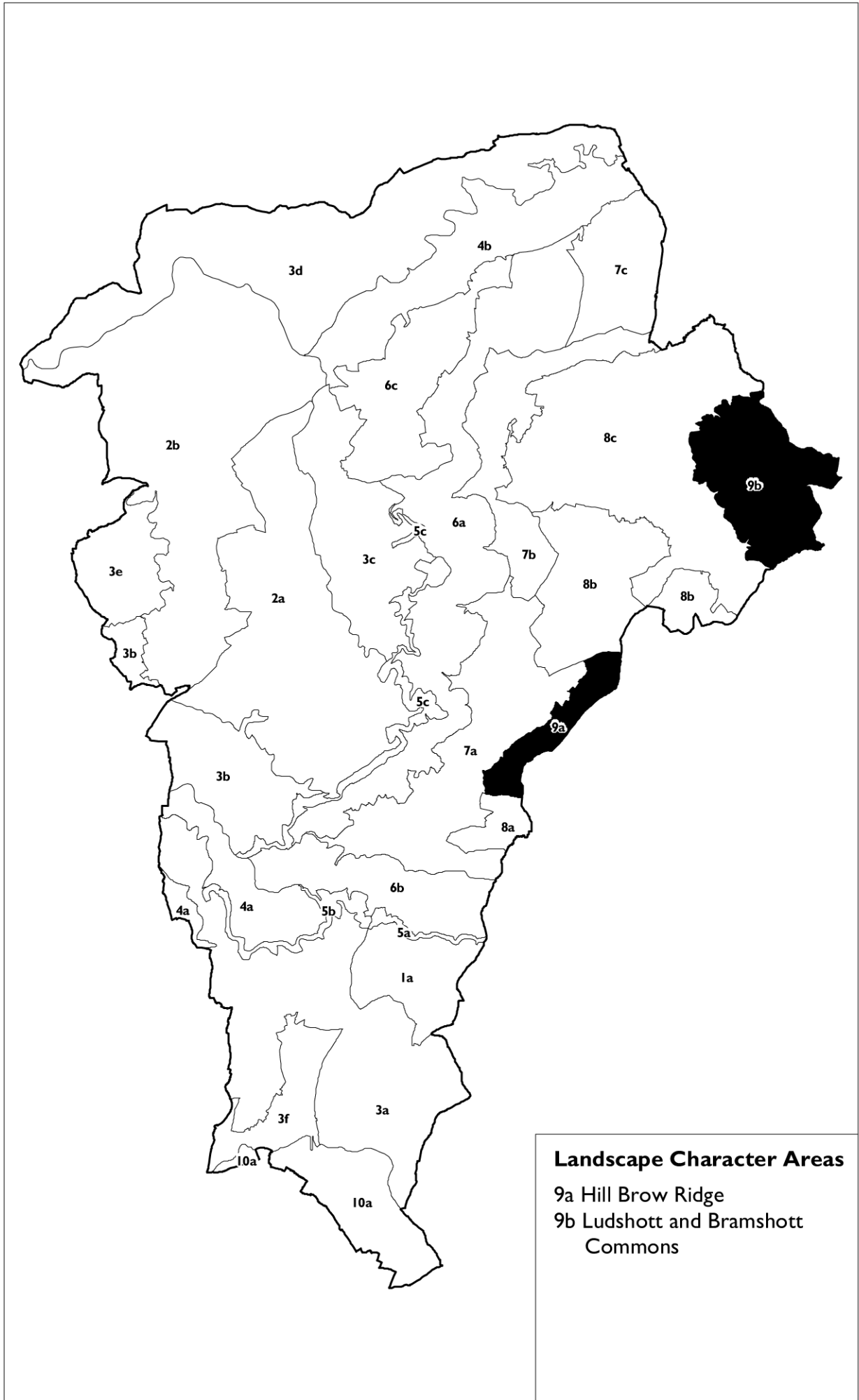
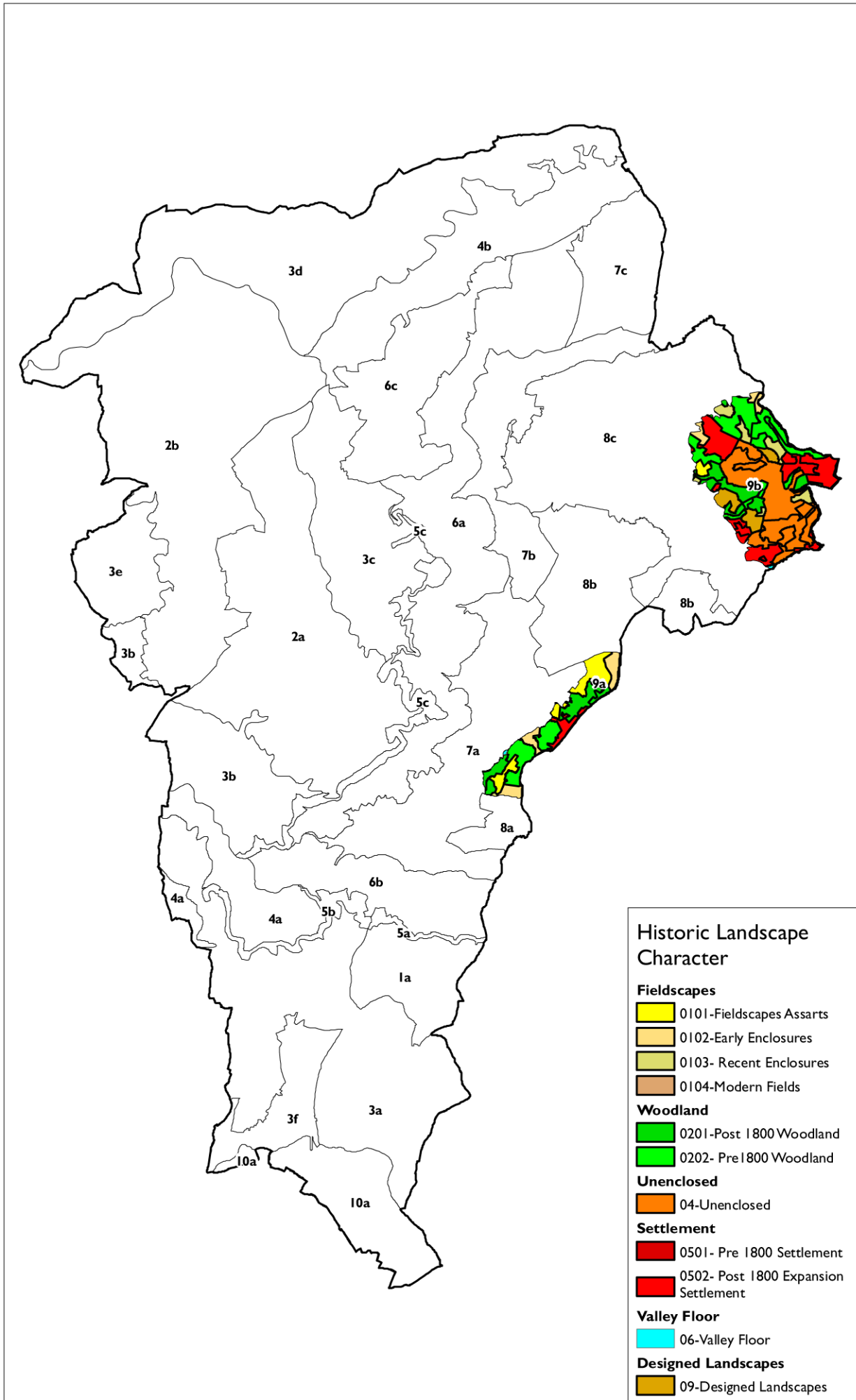


Landscape Type 9 : Greensand Hills



Landscape Type 9 : Greensand Hills



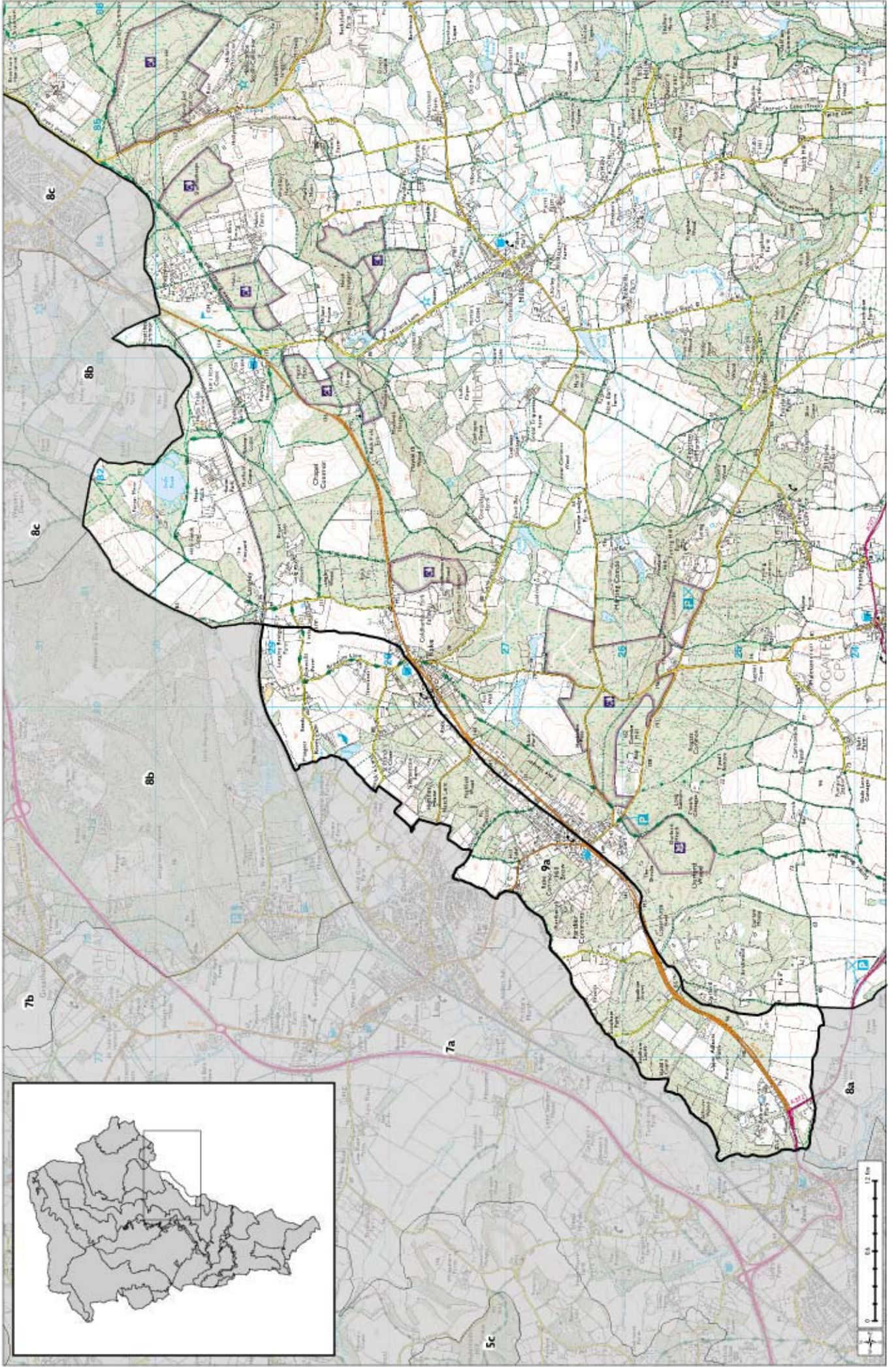
LANDSCAPE TYPE 9: GREENSAND HILLS

- 9.1 The *Greensand Hills* are steep, prominent hills formed by the resistant sandstones of the Hythe Formation. This landscape type forms part of a horseshoe-shaped escarpment which extends outside the district enclosing the Milland Basin.

Key Characteristics

- Prominent hills formed from sandstones and cherts of the Lower Greensand group with a steep escarpment at their inner edge.
- Streams drain the hills in deep ravine-like valleys.
- Significant woodland cover comprising an interlocking mosaic of different woodland types and structures - oak-birch woodland, beechwoods, mixed woodland and coniferous plantations on former commonland.
- Woodland clearings support heathy unenclosed commons including ecologically rich habitats - open heather heath, acid grassland, bracken, gorse, woody scrub, and oak-birch woodland.
- The irregular pattern of fields within clearings and woodland edges support rough grazing.
- Narrow, deeply sunken lanes wind up hillsides linking isolated farmsteads.
- Dispersed medieval settlement form with scattered early piecemeal enclosures around the edge of former commons.
- Extensive network of public rights of way and unenclosed commons open to public access.
- Hammer ponds along the foot of the hills associated with the former Wealden iron industry.
- Extensive panoramic views from open hill tops.
- Characterised by a sense of enclosure, mystery and remoteness.

Character Area 9a: Hill Brow Ridge





9A: Hill Brow Ridge

Location and Boundaries

- 9A.1 Hill Brow Ridge forms the western edge of a larger area of Greensand Hills which extends eastwards beyond the district boundary. The western boundary represents the transition between the dip slope of the Greensand Hills and the Rother Valley and is drawn along a combination of woodland edges, field boundaries and contour lines.

The character area is wholly within the South Downs National Park. It forms part of a much larger character area extending to the east beyond the district boundary.

Key Characteristics

- Forms the western edge of the prominent hills formed from sandstones and cherts of the Lower Greensand group.
- Important spring lines arise on the ridge. The sandstone has eroded to form deeply sunken lanes.
- Significant amount of woodland cover, including both ancient woodland (Aldhurst Wood and St Partrick's Copse) and plantations on former common and heath (Farther Common and Rake Common).
- Areas of early enclosure and a number of assarts of probable medieval date are evident, relating to piecemeal woodland clearance.
- Rich biodiversity and high level of perceived naturalness created by the mix of ancient woodland and pasture on acidic grassland.
- The settlement pattern is typically dispersed and density of settlement is low - this contributes to the rural nature of the hills.
- The Sussex Border Path dips into this character area otherwise the network of public rights of way is limited with no open access land.
- Extent of woodland cover contributes to the sense of enclosure, mystery and remoteness that characterises the ridge.
- Visually prominent ridge - with broad views out, where woodland cover permits. A strong landform feature in views to the ridge.

Physical Landscape

- 9A.2 Hill Brow forms the western edge of a more extensive area of *Wooded Greensand Hills* created by the sandstones of the Hythe formation which form part of the Lower Greensand group. The rocks are a greenish grey sandstone with beds of chert which is resistant to erosion.
- 9A.3 The ridge is characterised by dense tree cover in the form of conifer plantations, mixed woodland and ancient semi-natural woodland (coppice). Irregular patterns of

fields of pasture are found in woodland clearings where the acidic grassland is often used for horse grazing. Marshy grassland and ponds are also features of these clearings. The sandstone geology gives rise to well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils that are locally stony and support heathland.

- 9A.4 Hill Brow includes some areas of early enclosure mainly to the south and east of Liss. A number of assarts are also evident, relating to piecemeal woodland clearance. Irregular assarts in the northern part of the character area, east of Liss are of probable medieval date while a limited group of regular examples just north east of Petersfield (Upper Adhurst Farm) are of 19th- 20th century date.
- 9A.5 Steep, winding lanes accessing the hills have been eroded over many years to form deep sunken lanes where tree roots as well as the underlying sandstones are exposed.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 9A.6 The ridge provides contrasting experiences. The high proportion of woodland and the deeply sunken lanes provide a strong sense of enclosure while a sense of exposure is experienced on open hill tops from where there are panoramic views. The tree cover also contributes to the sense of mystery and remoteness that characterises the hills. The landscape is essentially still as a result of the low population density and lack of movement.
- 9A.7 The ridges are highly tranquil and has a high level of perceived naturalness (due to the presence of native deciduous woodland, and wetland habitats), lack of visible overt human impact, low density of settlement, and associated dark skies and low noise levels. The Old London Road which crosses the ridge top is now a local route, with main traffic now being carried by the A3(T) to the west.
- 9A.8 Although in close proximity to Liss and Petersfield, The Hill Brow character area is highly rural. The public rights of way network is limited to the Sussex Border Path which dips into the character area.

Biodiversity

- 9A.9 This landscape is heavily wooded and supports large areas of ancient woodland (Adhurst Wood and Patrick's Copse), which together with small remnant areas of open heath, acid grassland and meadow/pasture contribute to the rich and varied ecological character of the landscape.
- 9A.10 The character of the woodland resource is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types including those dominated by oak-beech, oak-ash, oak-birch, and sweet chestnut, as well as broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. Of particular note are the large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland which support a diverse assemblage of flora and fauna, particularly invertebrates, bryophytes and lichens. Very small remnant areas of lowland heath also occur within the woodland.

Historic Character

- 9A.11 The generally low fertility and marginal character of the sandy soils is evident in a historic land-use which, for several millennia, has been dominated by woodland and

heathy unenclosed commons, with earlier activity restricted to prehistoric exploitation of the woodland resources.

- 9A.12 Extensive blocks of pre-1800 woodland are still evident within the landscape. Much of this woodland is likely to be of medieval origin, probably involving areas of coppicing, a practice that would have continued into the modern period. There are distinctive areas of assarts (fields carved from woodland) in the north and south of the ridge, in the areas around Newlands and Upper Adhurst Farm respectively.
- 9A.13 The areas of commonland were originally cleared in the prehistoric period and utilised for centuries by communities based on more favoured soils as pasture, wood pasture and as a source of fuel. Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations, many of them coniferous. These, together with the earlier blocks of ancient woodland, produce the overwhelmingly wooded character. Some of the commonland land was enclosed for agricultural use, with some early enclosures present around medieval settlement and in woodland clearings.
- 9A.14 The landscape contains one landscape park at Adhurst St Mary (Hampshire Register).

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 9A.15 Post-medieval enclosure of the commons created new settlement types, represented by both straggling semi-nucleations/agglomerations of settlement and isolated farmsteads or small-holdings, situated around the edges of the former commons.
- 9A.16 Modern (late 19th-20th century) settlement is characterised by small-holdings and detached houses with gardens as at Rake which has spread along the Old London Road.
- 9A.17 Building materials are typically local sandstone, red brick and clay tiles

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

- 9A.18 Key sensitivities include:
- High level of perceived naturalness and lack of visible overt human impact.
 - The sense of remoteness arising from the low density of settlement with associated dark skies and low noise levels.
 - Areas of pasture, acid grassland, marshy grassland and ponds in clearings.
 - Ancient deciduous woodland which provides a sense of enclosure and mystery, a high perceived naturalness, woodland walks, and rich biodiversity.
 - Patterns of early enclosures and assarts which provide a sense of time depth, and contribute to the intimate scale of the landscape.
 - Views across the Rother Valley, where woodland permits.
 - A common edge settlement pattern which is vulnerable to infill and further linear extension.

- The prominent form of the ridge in views and the wooded skyline presented in views up from the Rother Valley, which is sensitive to any form of change including unsympathetic felling.

9A.19 The high proportion of woodland cover limits visual sensitivity of the landscape. However, the prominent undeveloped ridges and skylines that are visible from adjacent landscapes are visually highly sensitive.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

9A.20 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the rich mosaic of natural habitats, the sense of remoteness and tranquillity, views over the surrounding countryside and prominence of the wooded ridge and undeveloped skyline in views.**

Landscape Management Considerations

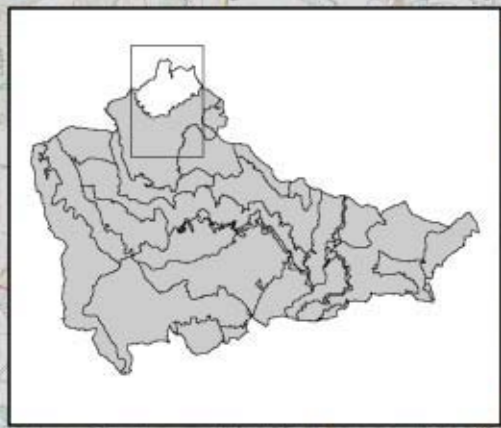
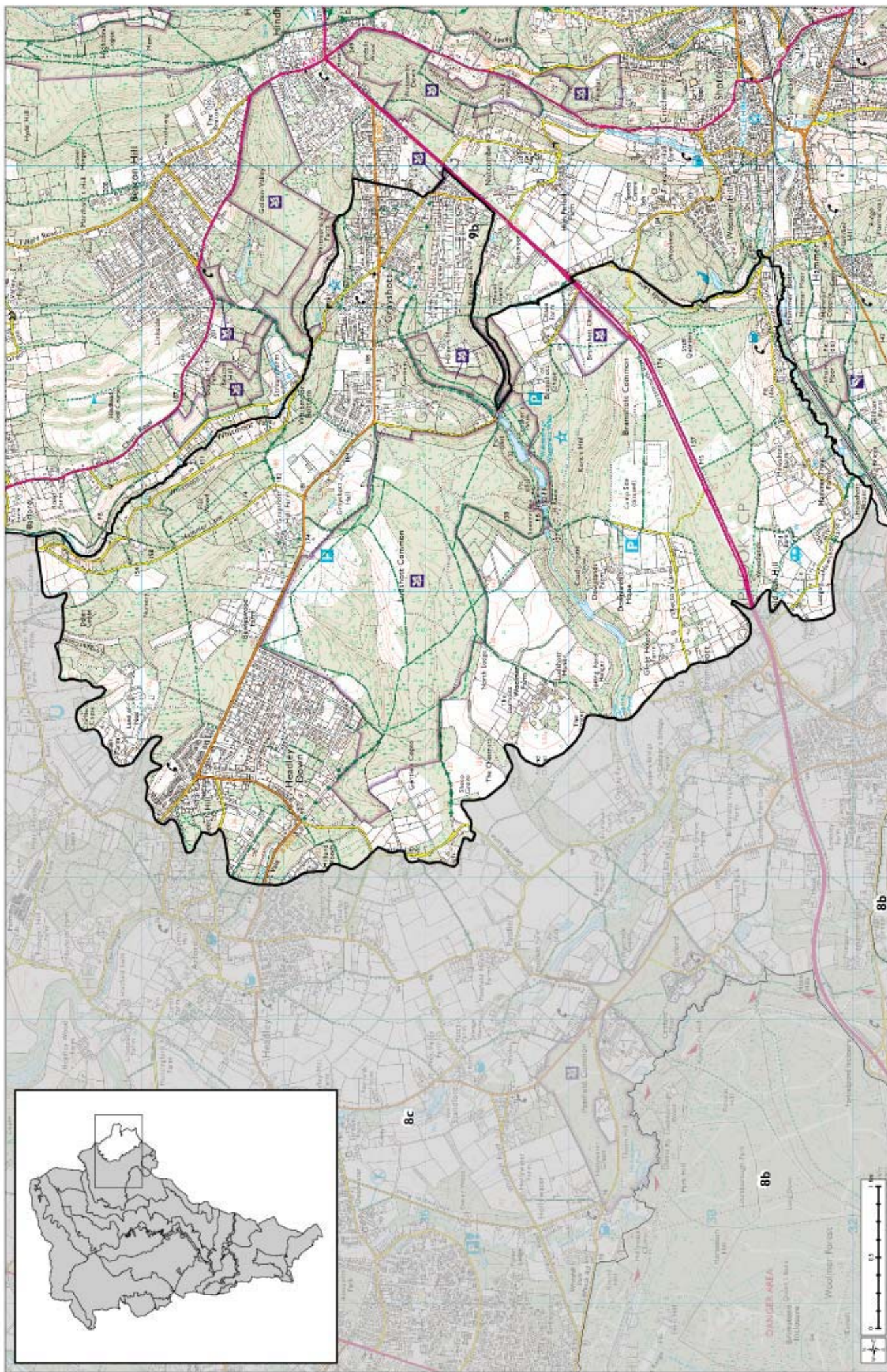
- Conserve pre-1800 woodland, monitor/check the spread of introduced invasive species in ancient deciduous woodland, and plan for long term woodland regeneration.
- Conserve the sense of remoteness and tranquillity of this character area, which is particularly valued in close proximity to areas of dense settlement.
- Encourage re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing, and promote interest in, and marketing of, local wood products, including wood for fuel.
- Encourage sensitive forestry practice within areas of plantation, for example mixing different species and felling small coupes. This is particularly important on the ridge where any change is likely to be highly visible.
- Assess potential for creating new, interconnected heathlands as part of wider initiatives in the area to the east (beyond the district boundary). Conserve the mix of ancient woodland, heathland and pasture on acidic grassland.
- Reinstate former field boundaries in the pastoral clearings. Conserve the pattern of assarts and early enclosures.
- Conserve areas of pasture and seek to ensure good management of horse grazing, including retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of the sward and avoiding proliferation of buildings/sheds etc.

Development Considerations

- Maintain the characteristic loose agglomerations of common-edge settlement and avoid infill or extensions which would create a more compact, solid settlement form along roads.
- Seek to limit the further linear spread of small-holdings and houses along the road which could erode the sense of tranquillity and remoteness associated with this area.

- Conserve and enhance the rural character and setting of the ridge top road. Consider opportunities for reducing prominence of the road (now traffic is largely carried by the A3) and restoring the landscape as woodland/pasture. Monitor incremental small scale change/development along the road corridor.
- Ensure that any built development reflects the local vernacular - resist suburban style garden boundaries, kerbs, and lighting. Conserve the remote rural character of the landscape.
- Minimise use of signage in this rural landscape. Where necessary, use signage that fits with the rural character of the landscape, drawing on vernacular designs.
- Conserve the undeveloped wooded ridgeline and its importance in views. Special consideration should be given to the potential impact of any proposals for wind turbines or communication masts. Particular attention should be paid to views from key viewpoints as well as impacts on the less tangible aspects of character such as the special sense of remoteness and tranquillity associated with this area.

Character Area 9b: Ludshott and Bramshott Commons





9B: Ludshott and Bramshott Commons

Location and Boundaries

- 9B.1 The Ludshott and Bramshott Commons character area lies in the east of the district. Its western boundary has been drawn along the 120m contour line; corresponding approximately with the extent of the Hythe beds of the Lower Greensand and the woodland edge. Its eastern edge is delineated by the district boundary. Steep slopes which form the valley sides of small streams define the north eastern and southern edges of the character area. The slopes of the western edge of the character area are more gentle.

The character area is not in the South Downs National Park.

Key Characteristics

- Part of a series of hills formed from the sandstones of the Lower Greensand group.
- Elevated and undulating landform informed by the resistant sandstone of the Hythe beds. Incised by Coopers stream which creates more pronounced undulations.
- A mosaic of woodland supporting variation in type and structure (including sessile oak and beech woodland, coppice and mixed and coniferous plantation) with some ancient woodland on the steeper valley sides.
- Internationally important areas of unenclosed heathland common (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI) part of the Wealden Heaths SPA within clearings in the woodland.
- Small regular pastoral fields occur in woodland clearings sometimes containing paddocks.
- Quiet rural lanes enclosed by woodland and sunk deeply into the sandstone occur in association with the valleys.
- Settlements of Grayshott and Headley Down are contained by woodland and well integrated into the landscape.
- Historic parkland with pre-1800 park at Downlands House, post-1800 parkland at Ludshott Manor and Grayshott Hall.
- A large area of National Trust land (Ludshott Common, Hunters Moon, Bramshott Chase and Waggoners' or Wakeners' Wells) with a comprehensive footpath network and access facilities.
- A rural and tranquil landscape with a sense of intimacy and secrecy. The corridor of the A3(T) in the southern part of the area is a local source of noise and disruption.

Physical Landscape

- 9B.2 This character area lies on the eastern edge of the Lower Greensand and is part of a series of hills which form an elliptical belt around the Wealden Clay. The resistant sandstone of the Hythe Beds, which form part of the Lower Greensand group create the elevated and undulating topography. Coopers Stream and a number of minor valleys incise the landform creating more pronounced undulations.
- 9B.3 The sandstone geology gives rise to a well-drained sandy soil which is often very acidic supporting a predominantly woodland and heathland land cover. Woodland varies in both type and structure (sessile oak, beech, coniferous plantation) with some ancient and semi-natural woodland on the steeper slopes alongside Coopers Stream. Bramshott and Ludshott Common (incorporating Bramshott Chase) form a significant extent of heathy commonland and are designated SSSI (part of the Wealden Heaths SPA). Clearings in woodland contain small regular fields of recent enclosure supporting pasture and paddock.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 9B.4 This is a landscape of both enclosure and openness associated with the respective areas of woodland and heathland. Heather, gorse, beech and birch provide a rich texture and seasonal colour. Views within and out of the character area are generally restricted by woodland and this brings an element of secrecy and intimacy to the landscape.
- 9B.5 The expanded villages of Headley Down and Grayshott connected by the B3002 are absorbed by woodland and well integrated into the landscape. The character area is also crossed by the A3(T) which introduces a local corridor of noise and movement. Otherwise there are a limited number of quiet rural roads, often enclosed by woodland and in places sunk into the sandstone. Combined with the extent of heathland and woodland cover these factors contribute to the tranquil quality of the area.
- 9B.6 Ludshott Common, Hunters Moon, Bramshott Chase and Waggoners' or Wakeners' Wells are areas of National Trust owned land. A comprehensive footpath network and a number of car parks ensure good access. Waggoners' or Wakeners' Wells consist of a series of stream-fed man-made ponds which may have originally been constructed as hammerponds for the local iron industry in the 17th-century. The ponds appear are an important habitat for wildlife today.
- 9B.7 Alfred Tennyson and his family rented Grayshott Hall, the site of the old Grayshott Farm, for several months in 1867 while their own house near Haslemere was built. It is said that he wrote his short ode 'Flower in the crannied wall' while he was here. This landscape also provided inspiration to the writer Flora Thompson who lived in Grayshott in the late 1800s.

Biodiversity

- 9B.8 This character area is of high ecological interest, supporting extensive areas of open heath, acid/neutral grassland, woodland, and improved pasture grassland. A range of woodland types occur, including sessile oak and beech woodland, and mixed and

coniferous plantation. Woodland of ancient origin is largely restricted to the steep slopes of Whitmoor Vale and the valley sides of Cooper's stream.

- 9B.9 The central part of the character area is dominated by Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI, an area which is also designated as part of the Wealden Heaths SPA. This area is dominated by dry and moderately dry heath communities, together with mosaics of acid grassland, bracken, gorse and birch and pine woodland. It is particularly notable for supporting an important population of smooth snake, and its diverse breeding bird assemblage that includes notable species such as Dartford warbler, woodlark, nightjar and hobby.
- 9B.10 A number of additional woodland, heathland and grassland areas carry non-statutory SINC designation.

Historic Character

- 9B.11 The generally low fertility and marginal character of the sandy soils is evident in a historic land-use which, for several millennia, has been dominated by woodland and heathy unenclosed commons, with earlier activity restricted to prehistoric exploitation of the woodland resources.
- 9B.12 Extensive blocks of pre-1800 woodland are still evident within the landscape. Much of this woodland is likely to be of medieval origin, probably involving areas of coppicing, a practice that would have continued into the modern period.
- 9B.13 Most of the commons have, since 1800, been appropriated for plantations. These, together with the earlier blocks of ancient woodland, produce the overwhelmingly wooded character. Small islands of recent enclosure, typified by very small fields and smallholdings, are scattered across the character area, together with blocks of post-1800 settlement at Headley Down, Grayshott and Bramshott.

Key Historic Characteristics

- Absence of archaeological monuments - Bronze Age barrow cemeteries may survive within the wooded commons.
- Historic parkland - Pre-1800 park at Downlands House, post-1800 parkland at Ludshott Manor and Grayshott Hall.
- Former military camp on Bramshott Common, occupied by Canadian Army in both world wars.

Settlement Form and Built Character

- 9B.14 Settlement is largely 20th century suburban development (Grayshott and Headley Down) representing the growth of dormitory settlements. Woodland contains these settlements, softening and integrating their built edges. Isolated farmsteads are found in the rural part of the character area, mainly of 18th century or later date. These are located on the edge of woodland as at Woolmer Farm and in woodland clearings as at Bewleswood Farm. Ludshott Manor, a Tudor manor house set in parkland and has been converted to flats. Building materials include sandstone, red brick and clay tiles.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

9B.15 Key sensitivities include:

- The areas of heathy commonland (which have SSSI/SPA status) support a rich biodiversity, provide a sense of time depth and offer opportunities for recreation access.
- The diversity of woodland types and remaining ancient woodland which require active management.
- Former hammer ponds and their associated habitats.
- Sunken lanes which contribute to the experience of travelling through this landscape and are vulnerable to traffic pressures and erosion of verges and banks.
- The small areas of enclosed pasture within the woodland which are increasingly used as horse paddocks with changes to boundaries and pattern.
- The sense of tranquillity and seclusion created by the woodland cover and the rural setting and containment of the settlements of Grayshott and Headley Down.

9B.16 The quiet, tranquil character is vulnerable to further development notably potential upgrading of the A3(T).

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

9B.17 **The overall management objective should be to conserve the rich woodland and heathland mosaic and the diversity of habitats, and the sense of tranquillity. The landscape should continue to provide a strong rural setting for the settlements of Grayshott and Headley Down.**

Landscape Management Considerations

- Conserve remaining ancient woodland on steeper slopes and encourage re-introduction of traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Manage existing heathland commons to prevent encroachment of scrub and bracken and consider opportunities for further heathland creation on former commons within areas of plantation to create a suite of linked heathland sites.
- Conserve open clearing with fields of recent enclosures within woodland. Seek to ensure good management of horse grazing, including retention of hedgerow boundaries, management of the sward and avoiding proliferation of buildings/sheds etc.
- Conserve the sense of tranquillity and seclusion which is particularly valued in close proximity to the settlements of Grayshott and Headley Down.
- Conserve the former hammer ponds and their associated habitats.

Development Considerations

- Conserve the individual identity of settlements and retain the important open gap along the B3002 which links Grayshott and Headley Down. Conserve the rural setting of the road.
- Conserve the character of sunken and enclosed lanes, manage traffic pressures and resist pressure for road improvements which would alter the experience of travelling through the landscape.
- Conserve the tree and woodland cover which contains and softens the edges of settlements.
- Ensure any future changes in association with the A3(T) respects the rural character of the area.