

County map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire County Council

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LOCATION

On western edge of Broxbourne, north of Wormleybury and south of Hertford Heath

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- twentieth-century amenity and leisure on former parkland
- ornamental parkland

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This area is now a mix of parkland, converted parkland and mixed farmland, with small areas of woodland scattered throughout and an extensive golf course in former parkland. The A10(T) cuts a swathe through it but it is surprisingly undisturbed by the urban area to the east.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- ornamental parkland trees



Cock Lane, Broxbourne •
(HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Deep stoneless well-drained silty soils over gravel, over Aeolian silty drift (Hamble 2 series)

Topography. Sloping gently from west to east, and even more gently from north to south, with a general impression of being quite level.

Degree of slope. 1 in 150

Altitude range. 60m to 75m

Hydrology. Spital Brook flows eastwards from Hoddesdonpark Wood towards the Lea, while an unnamed parallel stream to the south has been diverted to form ornamental waterbodies within the former parkland of Broxbournebury.

Land cover and land use. In this area the main land uses are leisure and arable farming, with some mixed farming and forestry. There has been mineral extraction in one northern section of the parkland, south of Cock Lane.

Broxbournebury is now an extensive golf course and there is mixed parkland and arable farmland around High Leigh

Vegetation and wildlife. Within this area there are significant small areas of woodland which combine to provide a generally wooded appearance, with important old hornbeam woodland and very important streamside wet woodlands by Spital Brook. Within the arable farmland hedges are generally low to medium, either young hawthorn or older (oak, ash, sycamore and field maple). Oak and ash are the dominant woodland species.

The A 10(T) is well vegetated, albeit with a standard mix of mainly indigenous, if not local, species. Broxbournebury Park is a key parkland site in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hertfordshire, with important veteran tree relics. The acidic sands and gravels produce gorse/birch heath when disturbed and there is some old acidic grassland, eg. at Hoddesdon Lodge.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This area was formerly an important complex of ancient parkland (Broxbournebury deer park) and adjoining minor parks (High Leigh, etc.) but has been much damaged since the break-up of the estate in the 1940s, especially from extensive gravel extraction, which may over time become ecologically valuable. The Broxbournebury estate belonged to the Knights Hospitallers before the Dissolution, and James I entertained there in 1603. The earliest record of a deer park there is 1695, predated by the record of 1227 for a deer park at Hoddesdon. South of Cock Lane, near Hoddesdonbury, lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the remains of a motte castle. High Leigh, on the edge of Hoddesdon, is mid-19th century parkland with ornamental conifers around the house. It had a formal parterre and a rocky valley complete with grotto and waterfalls, a characteristic piece of Pulham landscape, but has been simplified.

Field pattern. Where the field pattern has not been disturbed by parkland or golf courses, it is quite large in scale, and regular, with more irregularity against the woodland edge to the west.

Transport pattern. Until late into the 20th century the transport pattern reflected the cultural pattern, with curving lanes marking out the boundaries of the parklands. The diversion of the A10(T) cuts across this pattern but does not destroy it. The road is well planted to either side, which prevents many views out.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area.

- Although there is an ice-house in the grounds, indicative of a long-established site, the current Broxbournebury house is a 19th-century remodelling of a 16th-century house, of which some old brickwork and stone windows survive. The imposing red brick building is now the centrepiece of a golf club, within whose highly manicured lawns the parkland trees remain.
- High Leigh house dates from 1851 but the property was enlarged in 1871, with the formation of a new park, a lake, avenues and a parterre below the house. It is now a conference centre.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000). HCC data on historic parks and gardens.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Views of area from outside are so restricted by woodland that it is very difficult to get any views in, while views within the area are limited by blocks of woodland and topographical variation. The scale of landscape elements is small to medium, with a sense of containment from the woodland boundaries and a coherent, if mixed, character. It is a tranquil area away from the A10(T), from which there is a constant low hum.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The ancient parkland and veteran pollard trees in this area are internationally important, a mark of their rarity. The hornbeam woodland is important and the streamside wet woodland very important.

VISUAL IMPACT

Impact of built development: A10, golf club house, localised but high. Impact of land use change: parkland to arable or amenity - prominent; mineral extraction - not visible.

ACCESSIBILITY

Noted recreational land uses are golf, walking and informal play. There are few footpaths within the area, but waymarked routes along the boundary. Due to the density of vegetation there are few opportunities to view the scenery within the area.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

There is no evidence that this area is regarded as distinctive, although Barclay Park is mentioned(D).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	not obvious
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	moderate
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		STRENGTH OF CHARACTER		

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING**CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE**

- encourage the owners/managers of existing golf courses within historic parklands to adopt a management strategy that reflects and respects the historic context. New planting should reflect the historic planting mixes, groupings and species or, where considered more appropriate, be of locally indigenous species to increase biodiversity potential.
- encourage the owners/managers of existing golf courses to adopt management regimes that will maximise biodiversity, such as reductions in grass cutting and the establishment of scrub in roughs, where this will not conflict with the historic integrity of parkland
- within historic parklands a buffer zone should be established around historic artefacts to ensure that their integrity is not compromised by more modern land uses
- encourage woodland management to achieve a mixed age structure of locally indigenous species and a species-rich ground flora. Woodland type - high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards, wood pasture - should reflect and enhance local landscape character distinctiveness
- encourage the establishment of buffer zones alongside watercourses to provide additional habitat and protection from potentially injurious operations such as the use of pesticide, herbicide and fertiliser sprays
- ensure that future development proposals pay due regard to the integrity and setting of historic parklands and houses
- encourage the owners of historic houses and parklands to research and disseminate information about their surroundings, particularly where the house/gardens are in institutional use
- encourage the creation of a wider footpath network, with low-key, informal car parks at access points



• Barclay Park, Hoddesdon
(HCC Landscape Unit)