



**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SENSITIVITY
ASSESSMENT OF FINDON WEST SUSSEX**
PREPARED FOR FINDON PARISH COUNCIL

PART ONE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
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The copyright of the illustrations reproduced from other sources is gratefully acknowledged; these are either the British Library (figure 8) or Bury Art Museum (figure 10).

Whilst we acknowledge the assistance of other people and organisations, this report represents the views of David Hares Landscape Architecture alone.

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April 2014

"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." (***European Landscape Convention, 2000***)



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

This landscape study is a part of the Findon Neighbourhood Plan and is being prepared to inform the Parish Council of the character of the landscape and the particular sensitivities of land in the parish to potential development. Findon is situated in the West Sussex section of the South Downs. The village centre lies approximately 7 kilometres north of the coast at Worthing. The parish lies completely within the South Downs National Park, and extends to some 16 square kilometres. Prior to the creation of the national park in 2011, planning within the parish was the responsibility of Arun District Council who remain the local authority for the area with responsibilities for other matters. Neighbouring parishes include Washington to the north, Storrington, Clapham and Patching to the west, Worthing and Sompting to the south and Steyning and Combes to the east. The situation of the village and relationship to its neighbours is shown on the mapping at Figure 1.

1.2 Brief

The brief for the study was to undertake a two part study, the first being a landscape character and sensitivity assessment

of the whole parish, the second being a more focussed study considering the immediate area around and within the village in more detail and particularly in relation to the ranking of the sensitivity of potential small scale development sites. The work is to be undertaken in accordance with the relevant national guidance which for Landscape character assessment is provided in Countryside Agency Publication CX84ⁱ. This provides general guidance on the process of landscape character assessment, however the approach needs to be adjusted to the scale of the area and the ultimate aims of the study. In this case the study aim is to :

underpin the neighbourhood planning process and help identify areas with potential for development and identify which are important for conservation, enhancement and Green Infrastructure provision.

Consequently whilst the whole parish will be the subject of a LCA and sensitivity assessment, it is the immediate area of the village which is the main focus of sensitivity assessment. Guidance on landscape sensitivity assessment is provided in 'Techniques for Assessing Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity',ⁱⁱ.

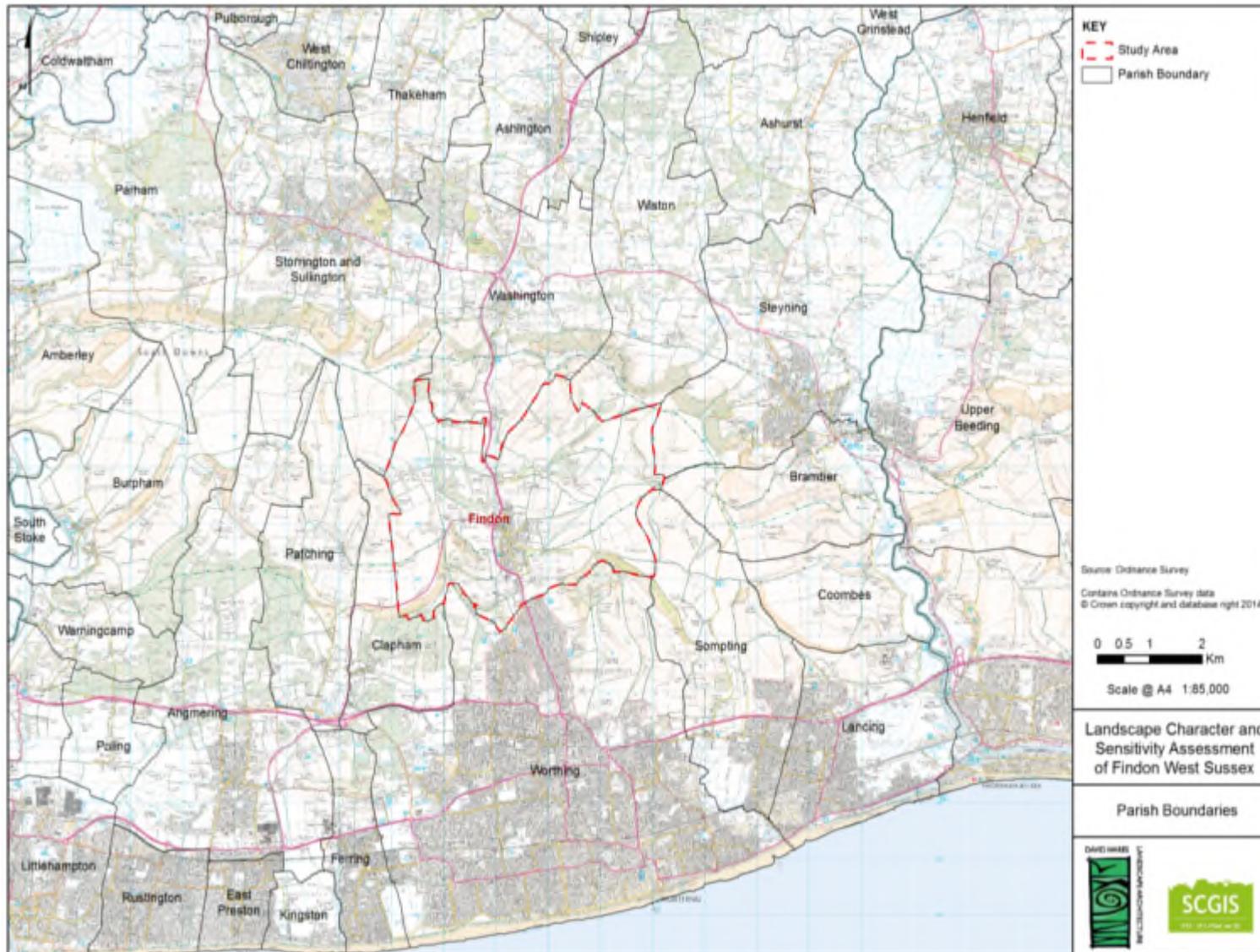


Figure 1 Location of the village and parish.

1.3 Context

Landscape character assessment is a process which has been developed over a period of some thirty or more years by landscape professionals as a way of classifying and analysing landscape.

Recent government guidance referred to and supported the LCA approach. This was originally developed and supported by the Countryside Commission, and its successor organisations, the Countryside Agency and Natural England, which have funded the application of this process on a national and regional scale.

Landscape Character assessments are designed to 'nest' one above the other such that more detailed description and analysis is provided at the regional county and local scales. A parish level study such as this is one of the more detailed local scale studies,

1.4 Report structure

The report consists of two parts, firstly a whole parish character assessment, and secondly a report which focuses on the sensitivity of the land parcels close to the village which might

come forward for development. This part one of the report consists of four sections. Section one being the introduction. Section two of the report explains how the landscape of the parish has been the result of natural processes affecting the geology of the area, and led to the landform and natural vegetation. Section three describes how human interaction has changed the landscape since prehistory and led to the landscape which we see today, it also considers how perceptions of the Findon landscape have been recorded through art and literature.

Section four is the landscape character assessment which describes the landscape types and within them, the landscape character areas. This section looks at the key characteristics for each area, particular threats to character, and considers the sensitivity of each character type. It also considers particular character weaknesses and opportunities for enhancement.

The second part of the report is a separate document and has been written as a stand-alone document, but which should ideally be read after part one.

2. THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE

2.1 Geology

Findon is situated on the dip slope of the South Downs, an area of higher land which was formed by the heaving up of horizontal geological strata during the movement of the earth's crust which formed the Swiss Alps. The land pushed up along an east west axis was the Sussex Weald, and erosion of the softer fractured material in the central section of this area has caused the formation of the escarpments of the North and South Downs. The dip slope is land which was pushed up to a variable angle of around 12 degrees to the horizontal and faces (dips) south towards the coast. The chalk layer which underlies the surface of the downs was formed on the sea bed from the fossil remains of microscopic creatures which lived in seas during the Cretaceous period. The chalk strata is of a variable hardness, and contains distinct silica nodules or flints which are scattered through the material, and sometimes found in layers. The chalk strata is traditionally classified as being one of three layers; upper middle and lower chalk. The different chalk strata within the Findon area are all classified as being from the upper (younger) chalk strata.

2.2 Topography and Drainage

The steep chalk escarpment lies just to the north of the parish boundary and the highest land within the surrounding area is situated at the top of the escarpment at Chanctonbury Hill, 350M from the parish boundary. There is a general north to south fall across the parish towards the coastal plain. Within this general south facing dip slope, a series of valleys were

carved by the erosion of rivers during the periods of extreme cold and wet, which we know as Ice Ages. The village is situated in one such large dry valley, and there are a series of branching smaller valleys forming a network of valleys leading up the slopes. This pattern of valleys is shown on the mapping at Figure 3. There are two distinctive hills to the east and west of the village, Church Hill to the west, and Cissbury ring to the East. The latter is just beyond the parish boundary which skirts around the lower rampart of the Iron Age hill fort.

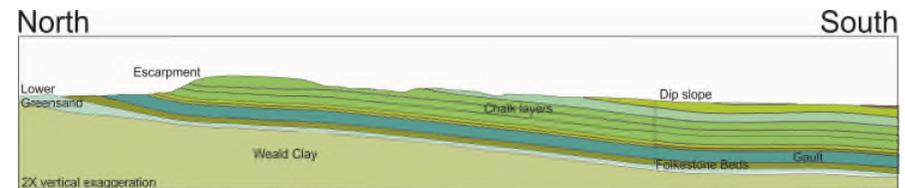


Figure 2 :Typical geological section through chalk of the South Downs to the east of the parish. Findon is situated on the Dip slope.

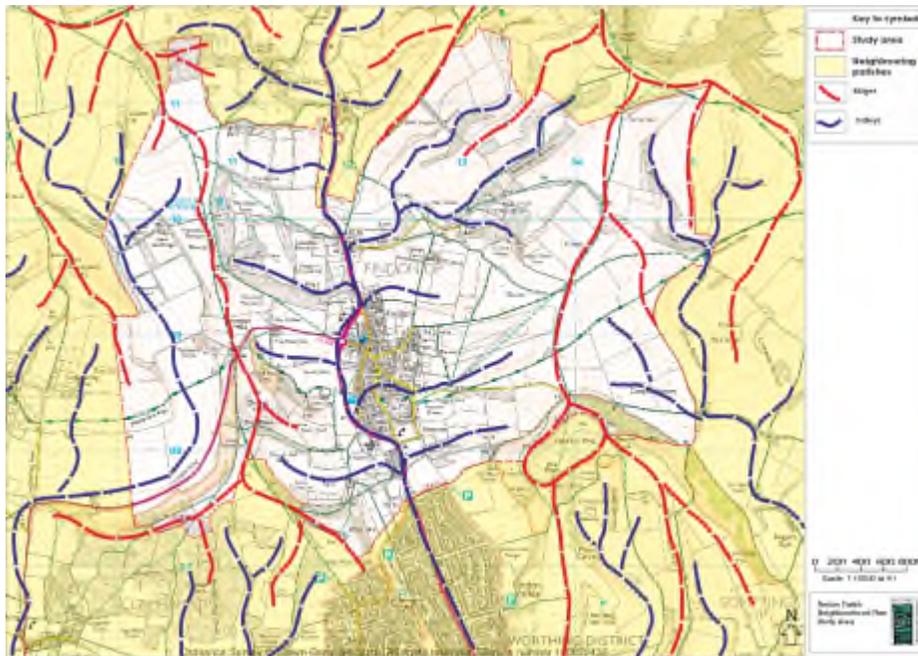


Figure 3 showing topography, and the pattern of branching dry valleys and ridges

Chalk is a relatively permeable soft limestone, and consequently in our current climate most precipitation falling on the downs percolates in to the surface and then forms artesian water layers within the chalk. These ground water layers flow from the surface as springs or seasonal rivers (winterbournes) unless water is pumped out for human consumption. Historically obtaining water would have been a difficulty in the area, few settlements exist within the higher downs for this reason, Findon was reliant on wells for water until the mains were installed in the 1920's.

2.3 Soils

Erosion of the chalk material by water and frost action produces a mixture of chalk rubble flints and clay. A thin layer of clay with flints is typically found on the tops of ridges, whilst lower down the slopes and in the valleys are deeper soils resulting from the washing down of eroded material over time. Both the main Findon valley, and subsidiary valleys hold variable depths of 'Head' deposits containing different proportions of clay flint and chalk rubble. These soils are classified as Coombe series soils and are considered to be generally suitable for cereal and grassland rotations, as well as some field vegetable crops. The thinner soils on the higher downs are classified as being within the Icknield series of soils which are more suited to permanent pasture or woodland on steep slopes, or for short term cereals and grass. The deeper valley soils generally have a higher agricultural land classification of grade 2 compared to the thinner soils on the upper downs, which are typically grades 3 or 4.

2.4 Ecology and Vegetation

The natural 'wildwood' which had developed on the downs after the last Ice age was slowly managed and cleared by colonising prehistoric peoples who spread along the Downs. Clearance of the woodland and early cropping led to the erosion of the soil from the upper downs and steeper slopes leaving very thin impoverished soils. As these soils were nutrient poor and generally unsuitable for traditional cropping they were used for extensive livestock grazing throughout much of the subsequent millennia. The consistent management with livestock (mainly sheep), combined with the low nutrient status led to the development of a particularly plant rich turf, in which no one plant group or

species was able to become dominant. This traditional downland turf can contain more than 100 different plant species in any one square metre, many of which are now uncommon or rare. The biodiversity of the turf supported a similarly diverse insect population with a similarly diverse set of insect predators and higher mammals and birds.

In past centuries some of the marginal downland soils were brought under cultivation if corn prices were high, then arable cropping moved up onto the higher downland. During the second world war the national food shortages led to cropping of land which was normally chalk turf. This process continued after the war with the advent of agro-chemicals, mechanisation, artificial fertilisers and changes to modern agriculture.

Consequently the traditional botanically diverse chalk grassland is now only found on steep embankments and other relic areas which have remained unploughed, such as nature reserves and ancient monuments.

The parish contains some small remnant areas of diverse botanical sward that have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), these include a part of Chanctonbury Hill in the north, and of Cissbury Ring in the south east. These are shown on the mapping at Figure 4. (Mapping by SCGIS to be substituted based on below)



Figure 4 Mapping of SSSI's pale green

The parish contains various areas of woodland which are thought to be situated on the site of areas which have remained as woodland since ancient times. These include two woods at Findon Park, Kings Wood at the entrance to the crematorium, an area of New Plantation south of Church Hill and Richardson Wood in the south west of the parish. These are shown on the woodland mapping at Figure 5 below.

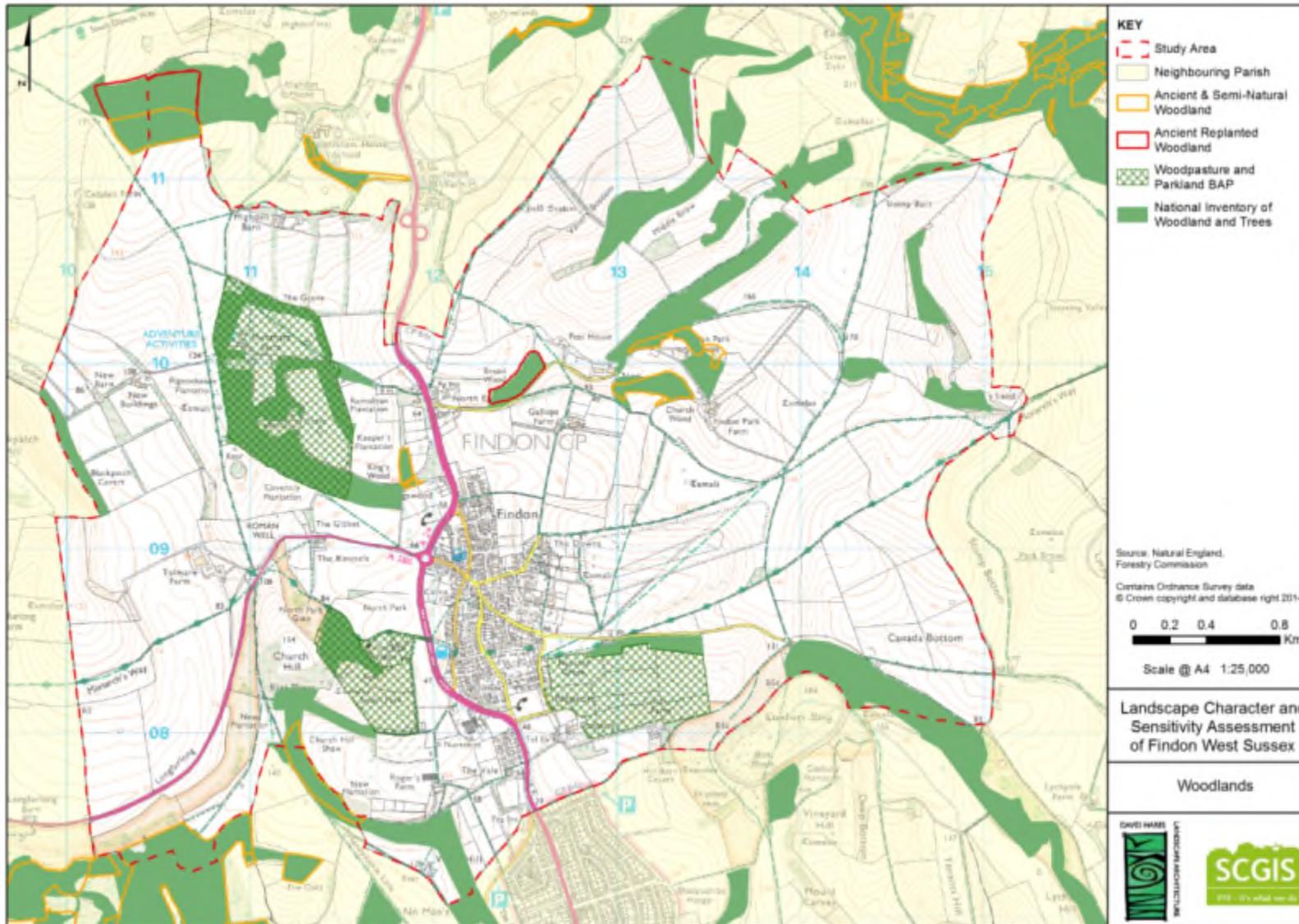


Figure 5 Woodland areas within and adjacent to the parish

3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

3.1 The pre-historic landscape

Recent discoveries at Boxgrove, near Chichester have indicated that the area of the South Downs and the shore were being used by nomadic hunter gatherer peoples from around 500,000BC. At that stage the vegetation and landscape in the area around Findon would have been very different to what we see today. It is likely that the hills were largely wooded, and the valleys may well have been less deeply carved into the chalk. Subsequent ice ages, freezing and thawing led to the deepening of the valleys primarily by water and frost action, and the deposition of chalk rubble flints and clay in the bottoms of the valleys.

3.2 Early human history

The move from a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle towards a more settled form of life is documented on the hills surrounding the village. Flint mining took place on Church Hill and Cissbury Ring, probably during the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods. This is likely to have coincided with the clearance of woodland from parts of the downs, by settlers who migrated between camps and began to farm, first on a temporary basis using slash and burn techniques before developing a more settled form of agriculture. The flint tools from sites such as Cissbury enabled trees to be cleared from the light downland soils and were highly valued.

3.3 Bronze and Iron Age history

A wave of new technologies seems to have been adopted in the area from around 2000BC onwards. These included the ability to forge bronze and make distinctively decorated clay beaker pots. These people are thought to have been responsible for the clearance of woodland for farming and it seems that this in turn led to the erosion of soil into the valley bottoms. Pottery remains found in a pit in Cross lane Findon have been dated to around 1400BC. The pit contained acorns and Ash charcoal, indicating two of the trees which were found in the area at that time.

The development of iron tools in the last millennium BC is likely to have enabled the wider settlement of the area around Findon. The impressive hill fort at Cissbury Ring on the edge of the Parish, dates from the middle period of the Iron age. Although apparently a defensive structure, some theories suggest that it played an important role as a focus for settlement in the surrounding area. There are remains of three settlements from this period in the area, two within the parish at Findon Park, and Muntham Court (now the Worthing Crematorium), and one to the east at Park Brow. In addition to the settlements and earthworks, there are the remains of burial barrows of different forms, including Bowl barrows at Cissbury House and near Findon Park and a platform barrow at Findon Park. These barrows are generally considered to date from the Bronze age, between 2000 and 1000BC.

3.4 Roman invasions and settled agriculture

The Roman occupation led to a period of settled agriculture, stable government and population growth, which in turn pushed arable cropping up further onto the thinner soils of the Higher downs. There is a record of a roman shrine within the scheduled Romano British settlement at Muntham. There is also a well included within this site. The location of the prehistoric and subsequent sites up to the roman times within the parish and surrounding area are shown on the mapping at Figure 6



Figure 6 mapping of known pre roman and roman sites



Figure 7 showing scheduled monuments

3.5 Saxon and Medieval history

The withdrawal of the Romans in the 5th century would have led to a reduction in the cropping of the downs and a move towards animal husbandry. The former arable land would have been allowed to tumble down to grass and wild flowers, similar to the diverse chalk downland of today. Many of the current villages in the area were founded during the Saxon period and the Manor of Findon was held by King Harold prior to the Norman conquest. The Domesday book records a sum of 58 people within the parish at that stage, and that the manor was held by William de Braose who must have had a descendant of the same name who is recorded as having died at a Manor in Findon in 1290. King Edward 1st is recorded

as having visited the manor 15 years later. There are records of a sub manor at Sheepcombe, which is likely to have covered part of the area of the parish which passed to Worthing Borough in the 20th century. Parts of Findon Manor appear to have been a part of Washington Manor during the early medieval period and from the 14th century to have been part of the Arundel estate. Henry VIII acquired and then sold the land in 1540's and it has been in private hands since. There are still various signs of the four different parks which have existed in the parish, the oldest was Findon Park, located in the north east of the parish, and recorded as parkland (for hunting) between 1229 and 1651. It is also likely to have held rabbit warrens, which were more valuable then, than they are today! The park area is roughly oval and bounded by bridledways. Sheep husbandry was an important feature of medieval farming in the area, the annual Findon sheep fair dating back to 1261.

Findon Village is thought to have been situated close to the church in the Middle Ages, and to have straddled the main east-west road along the downs from Lewes to Chichester. This route is now a part of the drive to Findon Place, and remains as a footpath linking around Church Hill to Long furlong.

3.6 Reformation and growth of estates and parkland (1540-1900 AD)

After the sale of Findon Manor by Henry VIII, the building and lands were subsequently let and the lords of the Manor were absentee landlords until the mid seventeenth century when the manor was bought by John Cheale who must have built the oldest part of the current Findon Place, which dates from that time. There have been various extensions and re-modellings of the building since that time but the core of the

building is 17th century. There were two park lodges, a north and south park, and the former hunt kennels (now a private dog and cat boarding kennels). The park was expanded in the 18th century and the two watercolour paintings at Figure 8 from the British Library collection by Samuel Grimm from the North show views from a similar point 9 years apart which reflect this planting the public road past the house was closed in 1823, as part of a wider programme of park creation in the early 19th century.





Figure 8: Samuel Grimm watercolours of Findon Place (from the British library). These show Findon place from the North, firstly in 1780, then again in 1789, there may be some artistic license in the growth rates shown for the trees!

© The British Library Board, Additional MS 5673 item f.65 (no 117) and Additional MS 5673 item f.57(no 101)

The former medieval manors lands were subdivided and sold from the 16th century onwards, first Findon Park, was sold to Wiston Estate, who retain the land today. The Cissbury estate lands were also split from the Manor lands in the 17th century, and consisted of some 600 acres of farm and downland, at times including the ancient manor of Sheepcombe

mentioned earlier. The original 18th century farm house being extended to form the current manor house. Subsequent rebuilding and parkland plantings appear to date from the Victorian period.

The manor of Muntham, situated to the north of the current A280, is recorded as being a separate entity in the Domesday book, and appears to have been unencumbered by a manor house until the 16th century when records indicate a resident owner John Apsley. There are subsequent references to resident owners. A new hunting lodge is recorded as being built in the 1740s for Lord Montagu, who also apparently laid out plantations and fishponds. The building was then enlarged for the next owner in the 1760's. The house had grown to a considerable size by the time it was purchased by the Marchioness of Bath in 1850. This purchase included the 600 acre Muntham farm and other land totalling some 1860 acres. The family oversaw further rebuilding of the house in the 1870's as well as the installation of a well house, ice house, lodges and fountains. There are an elaborate park and gardens shown on first edition Ordnance survey mapping from 1875 onwards. Muntham Court remained in the Thynne Family until 1957 when the owner died and the estate was split up. The site of the former house which was demolished in 1961 is now a part of Worthing Crematorium. Worthing Council own the crematorium and adjoining land.

The position of the main village of Findon has changed since the medieval period, it was once grouped around the church and manor (Findon Place) but subsequently moved east to the bottom of the valley and the position straddling the cross roads.



Figure 9 showing historic mapping of the village in the 1870's

3.7 Cultural Influences: Roads and coastal development

A series of roads were built or upgraded to turnpikes in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This included what is now the A24 north, the high street and A24 Findon valley road south in 1803, and the modern A280 which was built to link the village with towns to the west, via Tolmare in 1823. The growth of Worthing as a seaside resort in the 18th and 19th centuries meant that the north south route became more important than the east west route through the village. Increasing traffic particularly of holidaymakers heading to the coast at Worthing led to the construction of the by-pass around the village in 1938.

3.8 Cultural Influences: The 20th Century

The 20th century has seen rapid changes across the landscape of the parish. The former open sheep walks on the higher downs were enclosed and converted to arable cropping as a result of the U boat blockades during the Second World War. This process continued with post war government policy supporting agriculture to produce food from our own resources. This led to a reduction in the number and importance of sheep on the downs in the parish and this has only slowly recovered since the introduction of the South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme and its successors since 1987. Botanically rich downland had been either ploughed or agriculturally improved with fertilisers and herbicides in the war and post war years, leaving few areas of unimproved grassland.

The training of racehorses is a relatively recent practice which started in the 1850's making use of the downland turf as training gallops. There are still stables in the village and gallops

to the east of the oldest stables which are the Downs stables in Stable lane.

New housing has enlarged the village and taken the population from 930 in the 1930's to 2500 in the latest census in 2011.

The inclusion of the South Downs within the list of candidate national parks was considered prior to the Second World War. It was however left off the list of areas which were designated following the 1947 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. This was due to the changes which had been brought about by wartime ploughing and the prevalent thinking that National Parks should be primarily wilderness areas. The Sussex Downs and an area of the Weald were designated as the Sussex Downs AONB in 1966. A concerted programme of lobbying led to the designation of a much wider area as a National Park in 2010, including parts of the Hampshire Downs and Itchen valley.

3.9 Perception of the landscape by artists, writers and celebrated visitors in Art and Literature.

Various writers, musician and artists have been inspired by the landscape of the South Downs, these range from national to local figures. Although it has not been possible to identify particular views of Findon within national art collections, (other than the Grimm watercolours included earlier which are in the British Library) the parish and neighbouring land is likely to have provided inspiration for some of the general unnamed downland works which are in the national collections. The work by George Henry below illustrates a typical perceptions of the South Downs found around Findon, with the image of Chanctonbury Ring, or a similar hilltop tree clump, to the north of the parish an often popular and re-occurring image.



Figure 10 George Henry 1858–1943 'On the South Downs
© Bury Art Museum, Greater Manchester, UK

Anthony Van-dyke Copley Fielding (1787- 1855) was a well know watercolourist who lived in Worthing during the latter years of his life and is likely to have travelled and painted within the parish, although it is difficult to attribute any of his works to the immediate area.

A number of artists lived in Findon, and produced works around the village and parish these included Elliott Marten, Henry Heffer, Frederick Aldridge, Charles Taylor, Stanley Badmin and Ronald Windebank.

The Downs have featured in the works of local writers and poets such as Hilaire Belloc(The South Country) and Rudyard Kipling who described '*Our blunt, bow-headed whale-backed Downs*'.

A surge in the popularity of the area occurred in the early 20th century with the growth of the numbers of motor cars and popularity of sea bathing, ('Sussex by the Sea'), which led to a number of guide books being written to describe the area for visitors. These included Nature in Downland by WH Hudson, EV Lucas's Highways and byways of Sussex, and Arthur Beckett's The Spirit of the Downs. This idealised image of a wonderful Sussex countryside may not have been what was portrayed in Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons however!

An image of the downs was used as a wartime rallying call on posters entitled 'Your Britain fight for it now!' by Frank Newbould.

The downs have attracted various artistic colonies over the years, Eric Gill the artist engraver, sculptor and typographer with associated colleagues was based at Ditchling, whilst the Bells and Virginia Woolfe were based near Charleston with other members of the Bloomsbury group.

3.10 Forces for future landscape change.

Potential factors which could lead to landscape change, and which could affect the character of the landscape are numerous, they include:

- pressure for expansion of villages as populations grow, and more people aspire to village life
- potential road construction or improvements to existing roads
- changes in agriculture such as a move towards novel crops perhaps those which benefit from a changing climate such as vines.
- continuing scrub encroachment across unimproved downland leading to successional woodlands development.
- deterioration of existing woodlands plantations and parkland trees as a result of disease and a lack of management
- pressure from increasing numbers of visitors and recreation, due to the designation of the National Park.
- an accumulation of many small changes due to all of these pressures.

Whilst landscape change is continuous and almost inevitable, the changes do not need to be considered as deleterious unless they have been ill considered and poorly managed. The next section of the report considered each of the different landscape character types found across the parish and then suggests how these pressures might be controlled and managed.

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

4.1 Existing landscape character descriptions

Landscape character areas are designed to nest within each other such that broader scale descriptions for larger areas can be subdivided into smaller scale and more detailed character areas. In the case of the Findon study, at a Parish level the study is a Tier 4 level study and needs to 'nest' within the character areas at the level of the higher tiers. This is shown in table 1 below:

Tier	Level	Name
Tier 1	National	South Downs
Tier 2	Regional/ NP	South Downs
Tier 3	County	West Sussex
Tier 4	Parish	Findon

4.2 Existing landscape character descriptions National level

At a national Level Findon sits within the **South Downs** character area. Certain *key characteristics* of the area which are listed and described (and are relevant to the parish) taken from the Countryside Character volume 7 include:

- *Prominent Chalk outcrop rising gently from the South Coast Plain with a dramatic north-facing scarp and distinctive chalk cliffs formed where the Downs end abruptly at the sea.*
- *A chalk landscape of rolling arable fields and close-cropped grassland on the scarps, rounded open ridges and sculpted dry valleys*

- *Lightly settled landscape with scattered villages, hamlets and farmsteads - flint is conspicuous in the buildings, walls of villages, farms and churches.*
- *Roman roads and drove roads are common and characteristic features and the area is rich in visually prominent prehistoric remains, particularly Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows and prominent Iron Age hill forts.*
- *In the east, rivers from the Low Weald cut through the Downs to form river valleys and broad alluvial floodplains with rectilinear pastures and wet grazing meadows - a contrast with the dry uplands. Above these valleys, the high, exposed, rounded uplands white chalk have a simple land cover of few trees an absence of hedgerows, occasional small planted beech clumps, and large arable areas and some grassland*
- *Woodlands - both coniferous and broadleaved - are a distinctive feature of the western Downs.*
- *In the west, large estates are important features with formal designed parkland providing a contrast to the more typical farmland pasture.*

4.3 Existing landscape character descriptions Regional level

At the regional level the area sits within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) landscape character assessment and at this level the parish is divided into two landscape character types, the **open downland** and the **wooded estate downland**. the key characteristics of the former are described as follows:

- *Large scale open elevated landscape of rolling chalk downland, with dry valleys and scarp slopes. Secluded dry valleys are a special feature.*
- *Dominated by the solid chalk geology with very occasional surface clay capping and windblown sand creating local pockets of variation in the landscape.*
- *Large scale geometric arable fields, resulting from 20th century field reorganisation, in Sussex with fields of 18-19th century origin in Hampshire.*
- *Visually permeable post and wire boundaries. Few visible hedgerow boundaries and woodland cover limited to small deciduous woodland blocks and distinctive hilltop beech clumps.*
- *Ploughed arable fields on chalk dotted with flint contrasting with swathes of arable crops create strong seasonal variation in the landscape.*
- *General absence of water; the ephemeral winterbournes and distinctive dew ponds are an exception.*
- *Fragments of chalk downland turf and rare chalk heath, together with associated scrub and woodland habitats are confined to steep slopes where arable cultivation has proved difficult.*
- *Extensive use of the land for sport (shooting and game rearing) in some part of the Open Downland creating a distinct land cover pattern of open downland interspersed with small woodlands.*
- *Ancient earthworks and flint mines, including visually dominant Iron Age hill forts, crown the highest summits. Ancient chalk land track – now the South Downs Way National Trail follows the northern ridgeline.*
- *Sparse settlement, with occasional isolated farms and barns. Blocks of modern farm buildings punctuate the*

open landscape. At a more detailed level flint sheepfolds, barns and shepherds cottages are a visual reminder of the former extent of sheep grazing.

- *Large open skies and distant panoramic views – creating a dramatic and dynamic landscape changing according to prevailing weather conditions.*
- *A tranquil landscape, often seemingly remote and empty, with a windswept exposed character. Views to the sea from panoramic viewpoints in the east.*
- *Strong artistic and literary associations.*
- *Urban development, beyond the designated area apparent in views from this landscape.*
- *Good access opportunities associated with areas of chalk downland plus extensive areas of land in public ownership – with high recreational use, including sports such as paragliding.*

The wooded estate downland is described as :

- *Chalk geology forming an elevated ridge with typical folded downland topography, with isolated patches of clay-with-flints (part of a former more extensive clay cap) which has given rise to acidic soils.*
- *Supports extensive woodland including semi-natural ancient woodland plus beech, mixed and commercial coniferous plantation. The extensive woodland cover creates a distinctive dark horizon in views from the south.*
- *Woodland is interlocked with straight-sided, irregular open arable fields linked by hedgerows. A sporting landscape with woodland managed for shooting and areas of cover crops for game.*

- *Woodland cover creates an enclosed landscape with contained views, occasionally contrasting with dramatic long distance views from higher, more open elevations.*
- *Occasional areas of unimproved chalk grassland are found on the steeper slopes and ridge tops, for example at Harting Downs.*
- *Ancient settlement earthworks, field systems and other archaeological features are often buried beneath the woodland.*
- *Large number of prehistoric and later earthworks providing a strong sense of historical continuity; round barrows, cross-ridge dykes and forts situated on the ridge-line form important landmark features.*
- *Settlement pattern is characterised by villages and shrunken hamlets of Saxon or early medieval origin interspersed by scattered farmsteads of 18th -19th century origin. Chalk flint is the dominant building material, often edged with red brick.*
- *A landscape transformed in the 18th century with the establishment of great landed estates, with much of the downland bought up to create large holdings and planted up with woodland for economic and aesthetic reasons. The area remains an estate landscape with strong sporting traditions.*
- *Large number of designed parkland landscapes with important visual influences –estate walls, avenues, follies as at Stansted, Uppark, Goodwood, Arundel.*
- *A deeply rural secluded landscape with large tracts devoid of roads and settlement.*

4.4 Existing landscape character descriptions: County Level

As a National Park, which has been recently designated, the third tier county level character assessment has been partially superseded by the more recent work commissioned for the National Park. In fact the West Sussex County Council LCA is similar to the South Downs LCA in mapping two different character areas in the parish, with similar boundaries, however the two different reports use different names. The Open downland landscape character area is referred to as the Central Downs, whereas the SDNPLCA Wooded estate downland is identified specifically as Angmering Park.

The central downs are described as follows:

- *Elevated chalk hills*
- *Smooth, gently rolling landform, cut by trough-shaped dry valleys, sometimes branching*
- *Dramatic, steep, mostly open escarpment, deeply indented by rounded coombes*
- *Open, expansive landscape mostly with few trees and hedgerows*
- *Areas of woodland mostly limited to narrow belts along the edge of the scarp slope*
- *Spectacular panoramic views over the Low Weald to the north*
- *Arable farming predominates in large, rectilinear fields*
- *Surviving fragmented and isolated blocks of species-rich chalk grassland on steeper slopes and on the escarpment*
- *Distinctive historic landscape features including hill forts, barrows, cross dykes, ancient chalk tracks, field systems, windmills and dew ponds*
- *Isolated yet prominent farmsteads and barns*
- *Strong sense of remoteness and solitude in some areas.*

In contrast the Angmering Park area is described as:

- *Rolling chalk uplands with a bold combination of woodland, farmland and commercial plantations often connected by copses and dense hedgerows*
- *Steep, wooded northern escarpment*
- *Fairly evenly sloping dip slope with broad, branching dry valleys and ridges*
- *Mixture of medium to large, predominantly beech forests and distinctive beech hangers*
- *Larger fields and woodlands on the ridges, smaller in the valleys*
- *Large area of estates and parklands, especially on the dip slope*
- *Wealth of historic features including prehistoric earthworks, track ways, and ancient strip - lynchets*

- *Light covering of scattered flint villages and country houses linked by spinal valley roads joined via the A27 further south*
- *Concentrations of unimproved chalk grassland*
- *Sense of remoteness.*

4.5 Parish level landscape character descriptions

Based on our more detailed survey and analysis of the Parish of Findon we were able to consider the landscape of the parish in more detail, and where appropriate to further subdivide those character areas identified in broader scale assessments.

The character areas identified are mapped at Figure 11. Each parish type is described and its potential and sensitivity to change is assessed as follows.

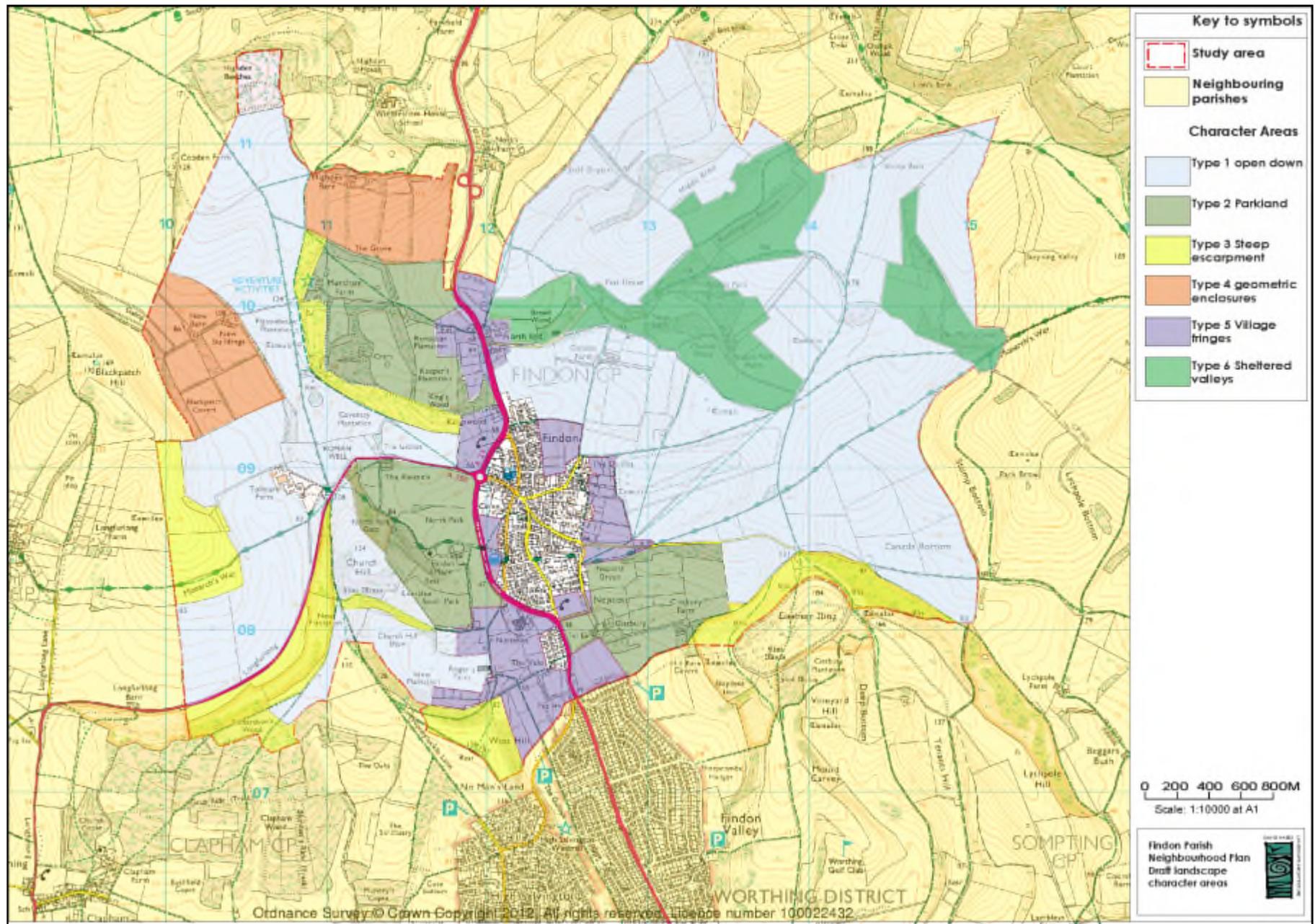


Figure 11 landscape character areas

4.6 Parish Type 1 Open Downs landscape character type description

The open downs landscape character type identified in Findon is substantially similar to the description of the two higher tier assessments above, however as a result of the smaller study area there are certain features which are absent from the parish which occur within the wider SDNPILCA open downland landscape character type which are omitted from the Parish level assessment.

It covers the more open and generally higher areas of the parish, typically the open sheep walks prior to enclosure and land ploughed in the wartime and post war periods. These areas are now predominantly arable land, or areas which have been reverted to pasture. A feature of these areas is the extensive wide views over lower land, with tree clumps such as Chantonbury Ring.

Key characteristics identified include:

- *A relatively open elevated landscape of rolling chalk downland, with dry valleys and secondary escarpment slopes visible from the elevated positions.*
- *A generally large scale pattern of fields, many due to the amalgamation of smaller fields in the post war period. The field boundary pattern is variable but mainly irregular often following the curving lines of established paths or bostals and the steep valley sides.*
- *Small areas of scrub and or woodland are visible alongside wider tracks or on un-plough able steep valley sides of the dry valleys and secondary escarpment.*
- *Predominantly arable land but with some permanent pasture grassland recently re-established under agri-environment schemes*

- *Tree clumps are sometimes visible on the skyline.*



Figure 12: Typical open down landscape, Canada Bottom viewed from Cissbury Ring

4.7 Potential for change

The open down landscape has been the major beneficiary of grassland reversion under the ESA and subsequent schemes which have encouraged farmers to revert the land with thinner soils and steeper slopes to extensive grass. Although some reversion to species rich grassland has occurred, and wild flowers have slowly colonised some of the reverted land, there is little likelihood of the land returning to the characteristic open sheep walks of the pre war landscape. The greater risk is that increasing world populations and

global cereal prices will lead to reverted land once more being ploughed to help satisfy world demand for food. The clump of trees on Chanctonbury, just beyond the parish boundary, is well known and has attracted the attention of many artists, a similar clump exists within the parish near Tolmare. It is also developing into a notable landscape feature. Trees need long term management and are vulnerable to gales and disease, which are increasing in the longer term as a result of climate change.

4.8 Sensitivity to change

The landscape of the open down is particularly sensitive to any form of built development due to the elevation of many of the footpaths crossing it, and the current undeveloped nature. Particular features which are visible in these landscapes include the tree clumps and communication masts.

4.9 Type 2 Parkland landscape character type description

The *Parkland* landscape character type is a subdivision of the SDILCA Open Downland type. This reflects the significance of the small landed estates to the landscape of the parish, which has been detailed in chapter 3. It covers three areas which were subject to 18th/ 19th century landscape plantings, including Findon Place, Muntham Court and Cissbury.

Key characteristics identified include:

- *Generally enclosed and secretive landscapes due to the characteristic enclosing perimeter tree belts.*
- *Historic buildings normally at the centre of the estate, set within generous mature tree plantings*

- *Historic landscapes with characteristic 18 century features such as entrance lodges, sweeping driveways, perimeter flint walls, iron railings and tree clumps and avenues, where these survive.*



Figure 13 : Typical parkland landscape.

4.10 Potential for change

The parkland landscape was planted by historical landowners who were financially able to maintain a 'luxury' landscape. In the current period there are fewer incentives for the modern landowner to spend monies on the maintenance of an 18th century landscape. It is consequently vulnerable to the effects of time and lack of maintenance. In addition land may no longer be held by a sympathetic landowner, and once parkland is ploughed the clumps of trees become

an obstacle to modern farm machinery. Each of the three different areas of parkland are different in terms of the historical legacy which remains, and the situation of the landowners. It may be appropriate for the local community to assess the benefits which accrue to them by the retention of the parkland features and whether they might wish to assist in their long term maintenance.

4.11 Sensitivity to change

Trees form an important element of the parkland landscape, and have wider landscape effects than many of the other features of the parkland landscape character type. Many are aging and will need to be replaced in the future. Like the hilltop clumps they are vulnerable to disease, gales, and to root and herbicide damage when located in or adjoining an arable field.

4.12 Type 3 Steep escarpment landscape character type description

This landscape character type is largely focussed on the secondary chalk escarpment which runs broadly east - west to the south of the village. It consists of steep land running parallel to Long Furlong, and runs east around the cricket field, Church Hill, above Rogers Farm and West Hill, the escarpment line continues to the east of the Findon Valley wrapping around the hilltop of Cissbury Ring. Most of the land is too steep to be ploughed and has, as a result of the decline in sheep grazing after the two wars, developed either scrub or woodland. The areas which have remained as grassland have the potential to become botanically diverse but are generally not subject to nature conservation designations (except part of the north-eastern embankment of Cissbury

Ring which is a mix of scrub and some grassland). Although the areas of wooded scarp are of some nature conservation value, they are not designated as such.

Key characteristics identified include:

- *steep gradients and sometimes floristically diverse turf, scrub or woodland*
- *extensive views from publicly accessible viewpoints.*
- *large scale irregular sweeping field boundaries which generally match the landform.*
- *land highly visible from the north.*



Figure 14 :Typical steep escarpment landscape

4.13 Potential for change

This particular landscape character type has been subject to some changes over the last century as a result of the decline in livestock grazing. The steep land which was once open

downland has developed into scrub or woodland, or has been planted as woodland, changing the character of what had once been open land with far reaching views to a more enclosed landscape. This character area extends to cover the West Hill communications mast, which is a modern addition.

4.14 Sensitivity to change

As this area of land is highly visible particularly from land to the north, it is particularly sensitive to change. Even relatively small scale operations such as the ploughing of land to establish game cover crops will be noticeable due to the white chalk soil.

4.15 Type 4 Geometric enclosure landscape character type description

Two areas of the parish situated to the west of the A24 have a relatively unusual characteristic, being defined by geometric blocks of shelter planting. Land to the south east of Highden Barn was planted with these predominantly north south linear shelter belts prior to the first edition Ordnance Survey in the 1870's. The block of land around New Barn was planted during the late 1930's or early 1940's. It is possible that the plantings at Highden may have been undertaken as part of the enclosure of common land, or possibly as part of the agricultural improvement of former open sheep walk in the case of New Barn. It is also possible that the change came about as part of the sale of land from one of the estates, either Highden estate (Windlesham School now occupy the former Highden House) or Muntham Court. Similar geometric enclosures formed from beech shelter belts on chalk down are found in Berkshire at the Highclere stud farm.

Key characteristics identified include:

- *generally medium sized regular pattern of enclosures*
- *enclosures defined by strips of tree planting.*



Figure 15: Typical Geometric enclosure landscape.

4.16 Potential for change

The distinctive character of this landscape is due to the presence of the tree belts. If these were to be felled or lost due to disease the character would undoubtedly change. The longer term replacement of the tree belts will need to be considered therefore as age starts to take its toll on the older trees, new replacements will need to be planted.

4.17 Sensitivity to change

The screening effects of the tree belts means that this particular landscape character type is less sensitive to change than the more open downland landscapes.

4.18 Type 5 Village fringes landscape character type description

The village fringes are generally small scale areas of land abutting the built up area. Some are relic paddocks which formerly housed livestock adjoining the farm buildings on the edge of the village, whilst others are more recent subdivisions of fields, often for horse grazing.

Key characteristics identified include:

- *generally a regular pattern of small scale enclosures, often used for horse grazing.*
- *field boundaries adjoin the village or are close to the built up area boundary*
- *dominated by presence of built up area of village or A24 road, with consequent loss of tranquillity.*
- *Many of the fields include horse shelters or temporary horse fencing which contributes to a slightly urban fringe quality.*

4.19 Potential for change

These areas fringing the village are most vulnerable to change. They experience the greatest people and development pressures due to their location. One area(former allotments) appears to have been abandoned possibly as a way of encouraging local people to accept development.



Figure 16 Typical village fringe landscape

4.20 Sensitivity to change

These areas are generally less sensitive to change than the more rural parts of the parish, specifically because of their situation fringing the edges of the village. Never the less whilst this character type may be less sensitive to development, care needs to be taken to identify potentially less sensitive sites within this type to accommodate future development areas, with the capacity to absorb housing in the least damaging way.

4.21 Type 6 Sheltered valleys landscape character type description

The sheltered valley landscape character type occurs in areas of valley bottom where woodlands help to provide a

secretive character to the area, which contrasts with the openness of the downland above. The areas concerned are smaller scale and generally irregular in shape, including woodland and pasture land. The key characteristics identified include:

- *A more intimate feeling due to the enclosure provided by a combination of the topography and adjoining woodland*
- *Tree lines, paths and tracks tend to run along the valley bottoms*
- *Field boundaries are normally wire fences.*



Figure 17: Typical sheltered valley landscape.

4.22 Potential for change

The sheltered valleys landscape character type is generally not subject to any particular potential change, other than the potential loss of trees due to age or disease which would

cause some deterioration in landscape character. Although some areas of this type are grazed by horses this use appears to be subject to fewer negative landscape factors such as temporary fencing, and shelters than the land which is nearer the village.

4.23 Sensitivity to change

As a result of being relatively well hidden from the wider landscape, this character type is less sensitive to landscape change than some of the more open landscape character types.

Terminology

AoLC: Area of Landscape Character: The smallest coherent landscape unit.. A unique finer grained classification used for this study to assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change at a detailed level.

LCA: Landscape Character Assessment: The process of assessing the character of the landscape

LDU: Landscape Description Unit. Individual units of the landscape which form a coherent block at the county wide scale.

Landscape character: A combination of topography, natural and man made patterns which together contribute to the appearance of the landscape.

Character: A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Elements: Individual components which make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Features: Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Characteristics: Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Characterisation: The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Land Description Units: Distinct and relatively homogenous units of land, each defined by their Physiography, Ground Type, Land Cover and Cultural Pattern that set the extent of each spatial unit.

Landscape Character Types: Combinations of Land Description Units that share the same key characteristics. Character Types often occur in more than one discrete geographical area.

Landscape Character Areas: Geographically discrete areas strongly associated with a place, and often comprised of more than one character type.

Sensitivity: The degree to which a landscape with a character is inherently sensitive or sensitive to a particular pressure. A landscape of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore.

Capacity: The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type

References.

- i. Landscape Character Assessment Guidance For England And Scotland For Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage Carys Swanwick & Land Use Consultants 2002
- ii. Topic Paper 6 Techniques for Assessing Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity, for Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage Carys Swanwick 2004