Character Area: E3

Hingham - Mattishall Plateau Farmland

Location within South Norfolk District

Extent of the Hingham - Mattishall Plateau Farmland Character Area

Deopham Stalland Airfield

Plateau view to farm buildings

View across plateau to isolated church

Village green at Hingham

Red brick barns
18. **E3: HINGHAM MATTISHALL PLATEAU FARMLAND**

**DESCRIPTION**

18.1. **Location and Boundaries:** Hingham-Mattishall Plateau Farmland occurs in the western part of South Norfolk district, the plateau extending beyond the boundary into the adjacent Breckland District. This character area forms part of a larger plateau beyond the district boundary and within South Norfolk forms five separate geographical areas - the largest part occurring in the extreme west of the district, with smaller isolated areas to the northwest. The plateau is delineated by land lying above the 50m contour.

18.2. The character of the **Hingham-Mattishall Plateau Farmland** is illustrated in Figure E3.

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- **Flat, plateau landform,** narrow and ridge like around High Oak.
- **An open, elevated landscape** with extensive views from and to the plateau.
- **Predominantly arable farmland** with large, regular, geometric fields.
- **Hedgerows and hedgerow trees** significant in an otherwise unwooded landscape.
- **Absence of water** with occasional ditches along roads.
- **Market town of Hingham,** otherwise sparsely settled.
- **Churches are a feature** within the character area as well as views from the higher ground to churches outside the character area.
- **Airfield at Deopham** is a more recent historical feature.
- **Quiet rural lanes dissect the area,** noticeably more winding than other Plateau Farmland character areas.
- **A remote, rural character** created by the absence of roads and settlement.

**Geology and Soils**

18.3. The Plateau Farmland Character areas are geologically the simplest in the district comprising a thick layer of chalky glacial till. The simple flat landform reflects the uniform geology.

**Landform, Topography, Scale and Enclosure**

18.4. The flat, elevated plateau landform and the scarcity of woodland provide a strong sense of openness. Panoramic views are obtained, particularly at High Oak where land rises above 60m and forms a narrow and ridge like landform.
Land Cover and Biodiversity

18.5. Large, geometric arable fields are the dominant land cover with some small blocks of deciduous woodland occurring but not as prominent features in the landscape. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are significant, providing height and texture in this otherwise unwooded landscape. In places where hedgerows have been lost and post and wire has been used as a substitute boundary, the sense of openness and scale of the landscape is intensified.

18.6. There is only one County wildlife site in this character area at Gurney’s Wood, which lies to the south west of Hingham. Apart from occasional ditches along roads, there is an absence of water.

Historic Character

18.7. The market town of Hingham has a Conservation Area containing over 100 buildings on the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (e.g. the Old Rectory listed Grade II). Hingham developed around two markets and a church, although the markets no longer function the market place with its surrounding Georgian architecture contributes to Hingham’s unique character.

18.8. From the most elevated areas, for example at High Oak, views to churches within the character area (at Wicklewood and Deopham) and outside the character area (at Hackford) are significant. Deopham and Hingham both have large churches with towers that have set-back buttresses connected in the same manor. An isolated church occurs east of Deopham Green.

18.9. More modern historical features are evident in the form of the disused airfield at Deopham Stalland.

Settlement and Built Character

18.10. Settlement is concentrated in one part of this character area, in the extreme west of the district. The nucleated market town of Hingham is located on the plateau and extends to the south into the adjacent tributary farmland character area (B2). From the south there is therefore a noticeable rise up to the town centre and village green with views of the church tower. Despite having a medieval market Hingham never grew, failing to expand in the c19 due to the absence of a rail connection.

18.11. The southern part of Wicklewood village, including its church and Deopham Green, a linear settlement of several farms also occur in this part of the character area, as well as scattered farmsteads.

18.12. Overall, this is a peaceful, rural landscape with relatively little settlement and main roads. Quiet rural lanes dissect the character area, noticeably more winding than those in other Plateau Farmland character areas.
EVALUATION

Significant Landscape Assets

National/International
- Historic buildings within the Hingham Conservation area (e.g. the Old Rectory, Grade II listed).

District/County
- Distinctive plateau landform.
- Important views (to churches) that provide a sense of place.

Local
- Distinctive plateau landform.
- Important views (to churches) that provide a sense of place.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities
18.13. The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the Hingham-Mattishall Plateau Farmland include:
- the peaceful undisturbed character;
- land occupied by former airfields and the threat of further neglect or development pressure;
- open views to churches and the threat of intrusion of development intruding on these views.

Landscape Strategy
18.14. The overall strategy is to conserve the peaceful, undisturbed character of the Hingham-Mattishall Plateau Farmland with its open views, particularly to churches. It would be beneficial to:
- continue to re-instate hedges along roads and field boundaries;
- promote a new generation of oak hedgerow trees.

Development Considerations
18.15. Any development in the area must respect the character of the Hingham-Mattishall Plateau Farmland:
- maintain essentially unsettled character with settlement limited to Hingham and rural dispersed farms;
- maintain the unique character of Hingham with its market place core;
- respect the site and setting of landmark features such as the churches in views;
• consider use of former airfields and their impact on the character of the landscape.

• conserve the character of the quite rural lanes that cross the character area;

• consider the effect of any further tall structures on the open views.
APPENDIX I

FIELD SURVEY SHEET
SOUTH NORFOLK DISTRICT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT: LANDSCAPE TYPE FIELD SURVEY SHEET

Sheet No: __________________________ Photograph Nos: __________________________
Location: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Direction of view: __________________________ Time: __________________________
OS Grid Reference: __________________________ Weather: __________________________

DRAFT LANDSCAPE TYPE

DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: __________________________
Keywords describing the landscape: __________________________

PHYSICAL FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND</th>
<th>Flat</th>
<th>Cliff/precipice</th>
<th>Escarpment</th>
<th>Broad valley</th>
<th>Rolling</th>
<th>Rock outcrops</th>
<th>Ridge</th>
<th>Narrow valley</th>
<th>Undulating</th>
<th>Plain</th>
<th>Knoll</th>
<th>Deep gorge</th>
<th>Steep slopes</th>
<th>Plateau</th>
<th>Basin</th>
<th>Gully</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WATER</th>
<th>River (size………..)</th>
<th>Streams</th>
<th>Drainage channels</th>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>River Meanders</th>
<th>Broads</th>
<th>Flooded gravel pits</th>
<th>Pond</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND COVER</th>
<th>Farmland</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
<th>Parkland</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Historic Parkland</th>
<th>Leisure/Recreation</th>
<th>Mineral Working</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VEGETATION COVER</th>
<th>Arable</th>
<th>Amenity grassland</th>
<th>Mixed woodland</th>
<th>Hedgerow trees</th>
<th>Perm. pasture</th>
<th>Common</th>
<th>Small farm woods</th>
<th>Hedgerows</th>
<th>Pasture</th>
<th>Parkland</th>
<th>Shelterbelts</th>
<th>Scrub/bracken</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS/FEATURES</th>
<th>✓ Subtle</th>
<th>✓✓ Evident</th>
<th>✓✓✓ Conspicuous</th>
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LAND USE CONSULTANTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motorway</th>
<th>Farm buildings</th>
<th>Fortifications</th>
<th>Nucleated settlem.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dual Carriageway</td>
<td>Manor/Parkland</td>
<td>Isolated Church</td>
<td>Linear settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Road</td>
<td>Landmark Building</td>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>Dispersed settlem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Lanes Track</td>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>Hill forts</td>
<td>Industrial workings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunken Lane</td>
<td>Lighthouse/beacon</td>
<td>Earthworks</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridleway</td>
<td>Wind turbines</td>
<td>Moats</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footpath</td>
<td>Mast/poles</td>
<td>Tumuli</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Ridge and furrow</td>
<td>Other</td>
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**FIELD PATTERNS**

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<tr>
<th>Banks</th>
<th>Fence - rural</th>
<th>Geometric</th>
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<td>Fence – ‘urban’</td>
<td>Sinuous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walls - rural</td>
<td>Hedge</td>
<td>Irregular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wall – ‘urban’</td>
<td>Hedgerow trees</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Other</td>
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**PERCEPTION**

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<th>VIEWS</th>
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<th>framed</th>
<th>intermittent</th>
<th>panoramic</th>
<th>corridor</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>restrained</td>
<td>tamed</td>
<td>disturbed</td>
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**LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION** (including notes about materials/condition)

Views to Norwich: .................................................................

Views to Bypass: .................................................................

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**LAND USE CONSULTANTS**
LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

(highlight condition/survival, threats/pressures, fragility/vulnerability, management issues and opportunities)

Agriculture

Field patterns/boundaries

Trees and woodland

Archaeology/historic components

Buildings/settlement/development

Linear features

Quarrying/mineral reclamation

Other land uses

General Notes

SKECTCH AND NOTES